

**A Sociolinguistic Description of the Peranakan Chinese of  
Kelantan, Malaysia**

by

Kok Seong Teo

B.A. (Hons.) (University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur) 1982

M.Litt. (The National University of Malaysia) 1986

M.A. (University of California at Berkeley) 1991

C.Phil. (University of California at Berkeley) 1992

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Committee in charge:

Professor Leanne L. Hinton, Chair

Professor James A. Matisoff

Professor James N. Anderson

1993

This dissertation of Kok Seong Teo is approved:

*Leanne Hinton* Dec 8, 1993  
.....  
Chair Date

*James A. Matson* Dec. 2, 1993  
.....  
Date

*James H. Anderson* Dec. 3, 1993  
.....  
Date

University of California at Berkeley

1993

**Abstract****A Sociolinguistic Description of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan, Malaysia**

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This dissertation investigates the language and linguistic behavior of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese society, a group who have assimilated extensively to the Kelantan rural Malays, and to some extent to the Kelantan Thai society as well, culturally and linguistically. An attempt is made in this work to incorporate historical, linguistic, and social anthropological materials within a single study so as to strike a better balance between linguistic and social analyses in sociolinguistics.

The major findings of this dissertation are reported in chapters II through IV. Chapter II focuses primarily on the ethnic formation, identity, and culture of these Peranakan Chinese. The discussion of the foregoing topics are dealt within the framework of assimilation to the local rural Malay community that has made the Peranakan Chinese part of their community. Despite retaining certain aspects of Chinese culture, the Peranakan Chinese show a high level of assimilation to the Kelantan rural Malay community, and have adopted many Kelantan Malay cultural traits. The adoption of the local Malay cultural features reflects the fact that they are willing to assimilate to another life-style, even though they will always identify themselves as Chinese.

Chapter III explores the form of language spoken by the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese. Its phonological, morphological as well as syntactic structures are thoroughly examined. A sociolinguistic history of the Peranakan Chinese and the varieties of their language are also discussed in detail. The language of the Peranakan Chinese is a form of Hokkien Chinese with local Malay and Thai elements. This is a reflection of the cultural synthesis of Chinese, Malay, and Thai, on the part of the Peranakan Chinese. Its structural similarities to Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai are discussed within the framework of language contact phenomena. The extent and character of Malay and Thai borrowings are also addressed. Its differences from standard Hokkien Chinese are also looked into in this chapter.

Chapter IV focuses primarily on the interethnic communication between the Peranakan Chinese and the Kelantan rural Malays. More importantly, the ways by which this group of Chinese became assimilated into the Malay social world are examined within the interethnic social interaction framework. The organization of discourse and patterns of communication which facilitate the existing interethnic social interaction between the two groups are the main areas of study in this chapter. The verbal as well as nonverbal aspects of communication are viewed together as interrelated elements of a process working to achieve the strong social bond between the Peranakan Chinese and the local rural Malays. Their communication with Kelantan mainstream Chinese (non-Peranakan Chinese) and the local Thais are also addressed in this chapter.

*To the people of Malaysia,  
especially the taxpayers,  
for their financial support  
in the realization of my dreams.*

*Jutaan terima kasih  
Jasa mereka tetap dikenang.*

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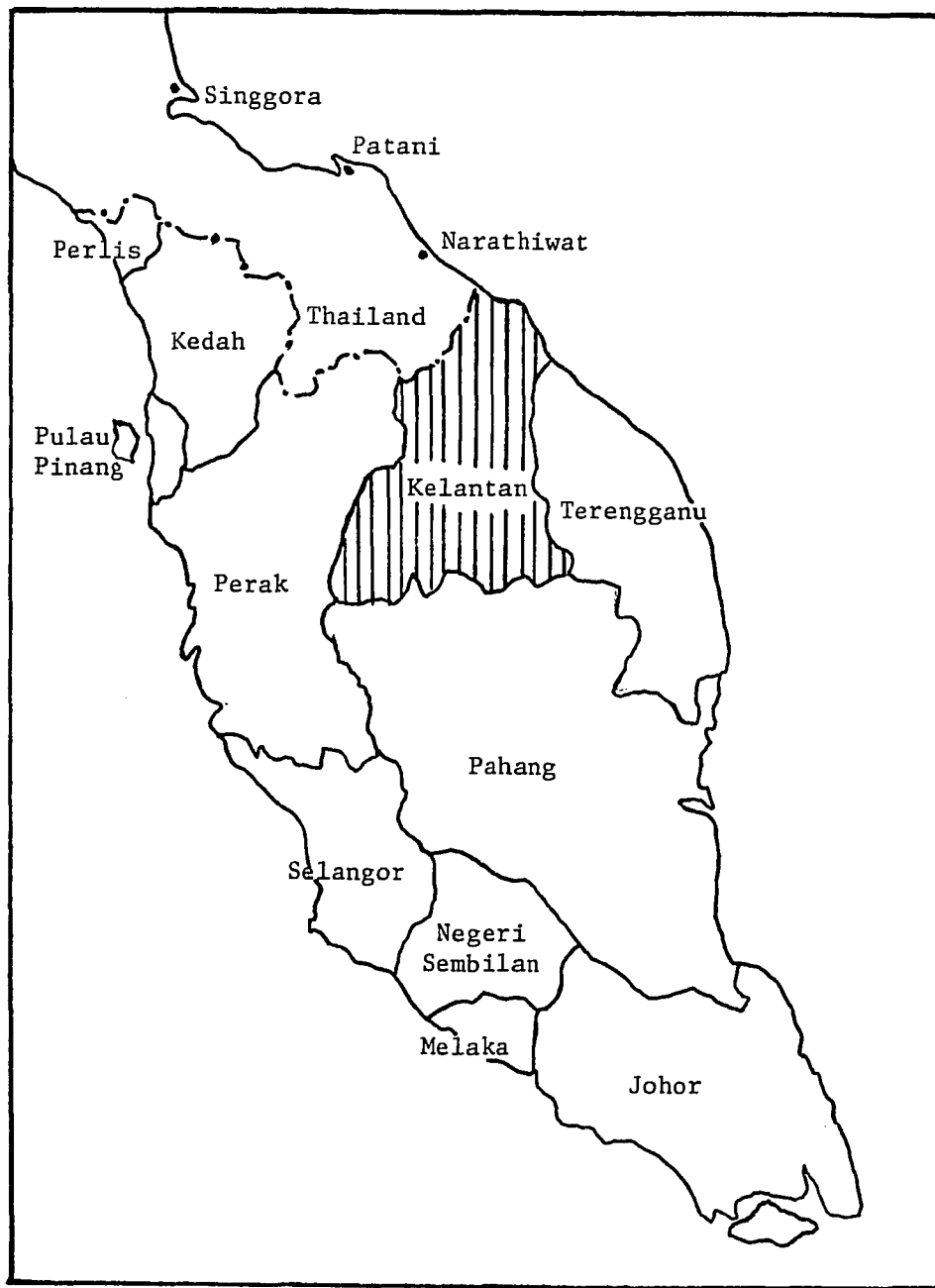
### List of Abbreviations

A (particle)	Adverb/Adverbial
AG (marker)	Agent
AP (marker)	Adversative Passive
CA (particle)	Completed Action
CL	Classifier
C	Conjunction
D (marker)	Dative
E (particle)	Emphatic
EX	Exclamation
FA (particle)	Future Action
G (marker)	Genitive
H	Hokkien (standard or mainstream Hokkien)
I	Interjection
IC	Interethnic (cultural) Communication
KM	Kelantanese Malay
KMS	Kelantanese Malay Speaker
KPH	Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien
KT	Kelantanese Thai
KTS	Kelantanese Thai Speaker
MBL	Melaka Baba Language
MCS	Mainstream Chinese Speaker
Mod.	Modifier
MP (marker)	Modifying Phrase
NM	Nominalizer
O (word/s)	Onomotopoeic

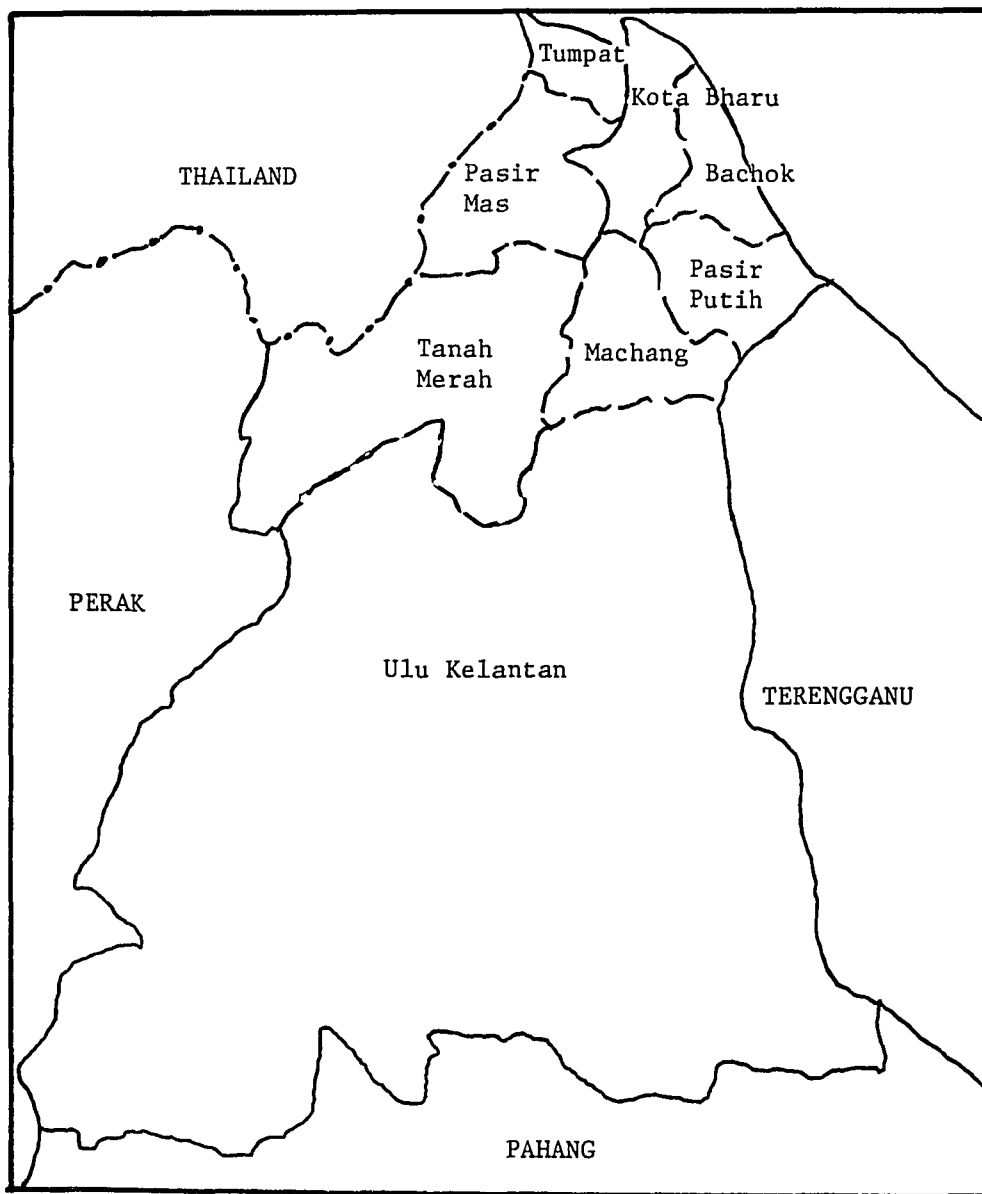
P (marker)	Possessive
P	Preposition
PA (marker)	Progressive Action
PCS	Peranakan Chinese Speaker
PS (marker)	Passive
R (pronoun)	Relative
RP (marker)	Reciprocity
Q (particle)	Question
S (particle)	Subordinate
T	Thai (standard Thai)
U/S (particle)	Urging/Suggesting

**List of Maps**

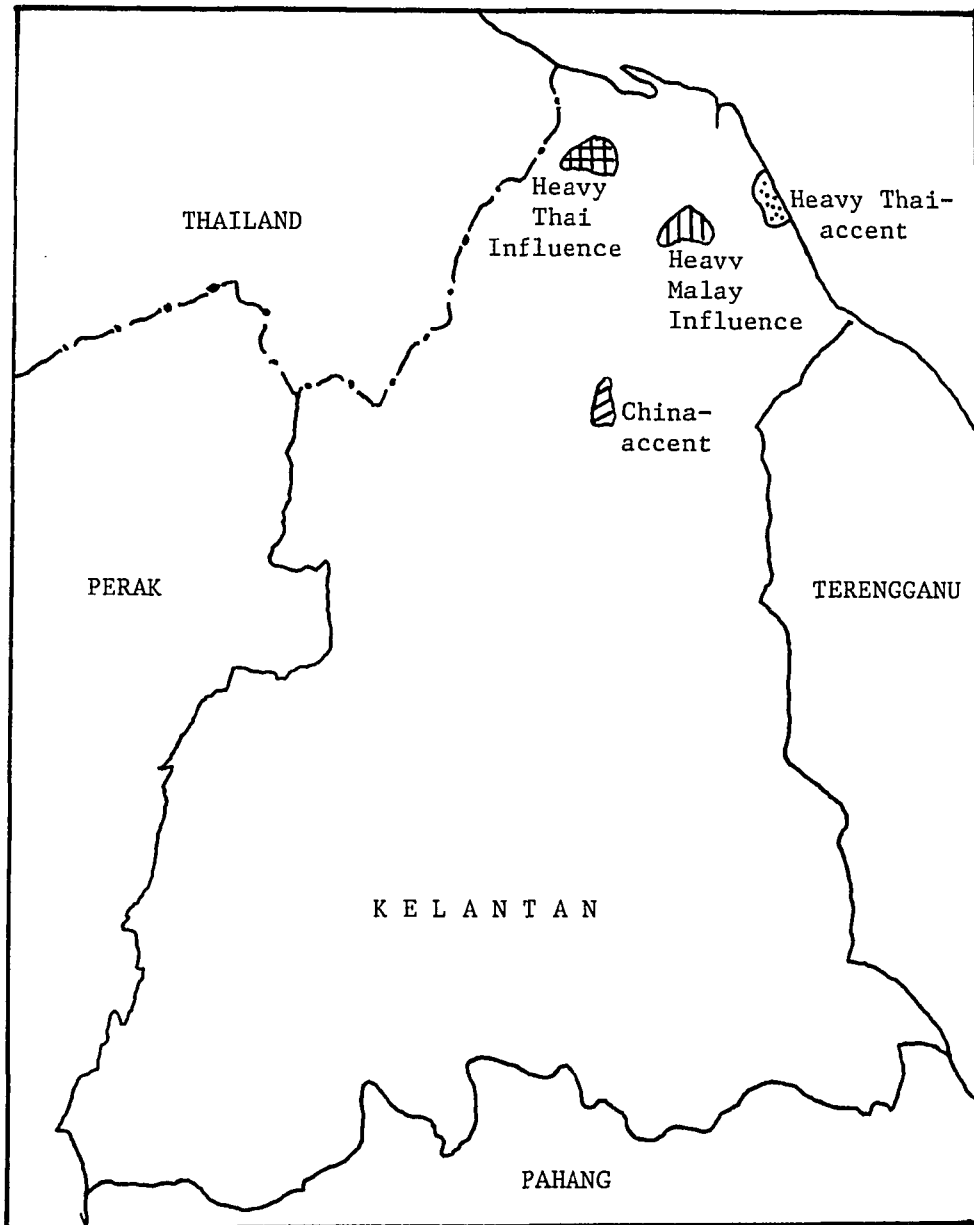
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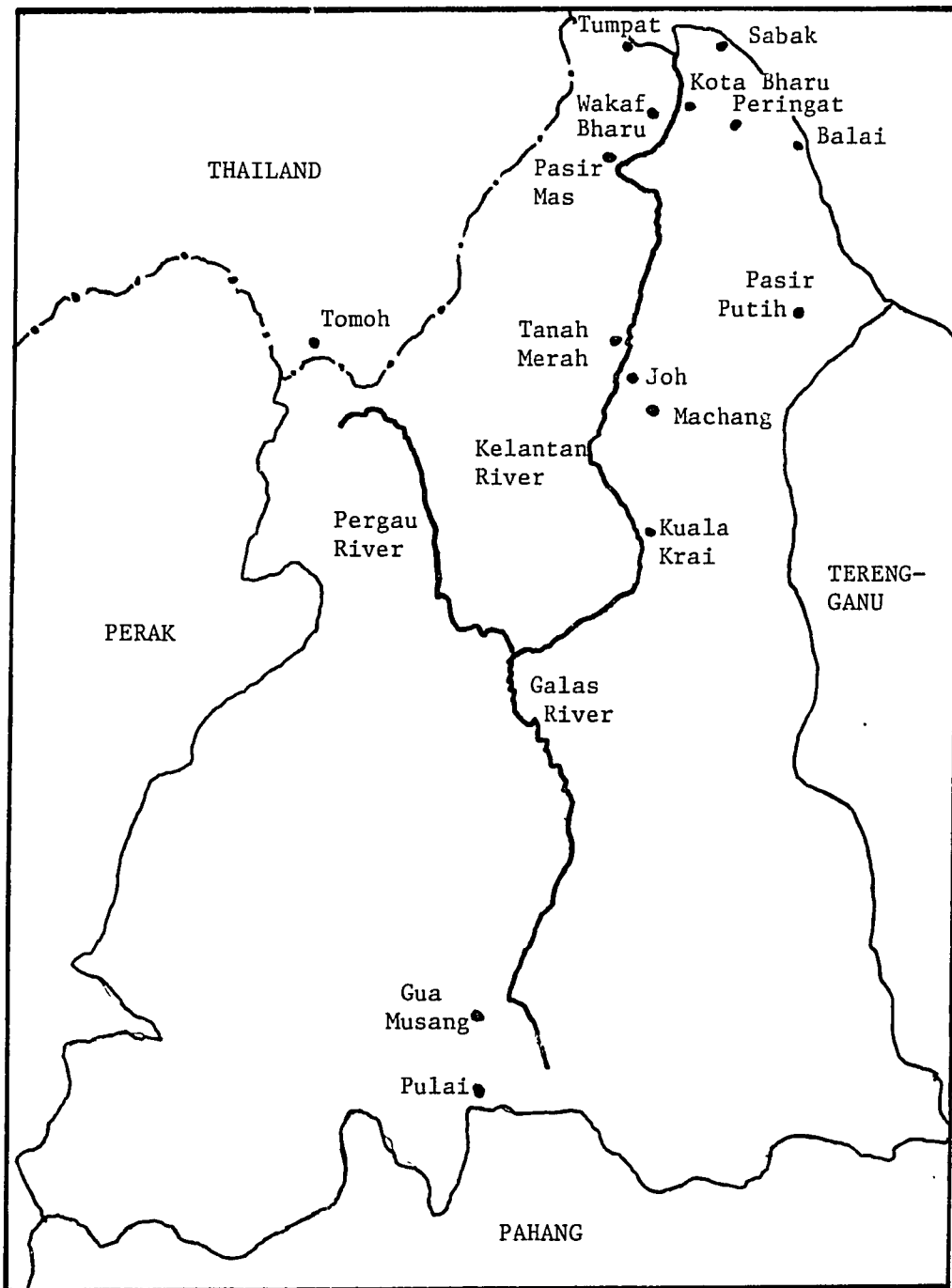
Map 1 - Peninsula Malaysia and Southern Thailand



Map 2 - The State of Kelantan and Its Districts



Map 3 - Distribution of the Varieties of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien



Map 4 - The Settlements of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese

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Kok Seong Teo

UC Village, Albany

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Chinese, over the centuries, have settled within many societies the world over, and have exhibited various patterns of adaptive configurations. The levels of adaptation to different host situations depend upon the interplay of forces between the Chinese minority and the political, economic and social conditions of the indigenous societies in which they settled.

A survey of literature on the Overseas Chinese or immigrant peoples of Chinese descent,<sup>1</sup> especially in Southeast Asia, suggests that there have been

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<sup>1</sup>Chinese populations of Southeast Asia or outside China are a set of distinct communities linked by culture and language to the mainland Chinese society, but yet in many respects are very different from that natal society.

Since 1949, this gulf has widened even further. Clammer (1983: 267-268) argued that the term "Overseas Chinese" should no longer be used, implying as it does that these people are merely some kind of colony or extension of the "real" Chinese society as well as culture of the mainland.

Rather the Chinese in Southeast Asia or outside China should be regarded as clearly differentiated variations and patterns of the tapestry of Chinese society and culture, demonstrating important variations within the Chinese communities as well as between the communities of the various Southeast Asian countries.

Tan (1988b: 2) is also of the idea that the term "Overseas Chinese" be dropped when geographical location is specified. When it is necessary to refer to the Chinese who are nationals of countries other than mainland China, Taiwan, Hongkong and Macau, the label "people of Chinese descent" may be used.

He proposes that the label "people of Chinese descent" should also include those who identify themselves with the land where they are born but who are categorized as "stateless" or not recognized as citizens due to legal problems or discrimination. The term "Overseas Chinese," however, can be used specifically to refer to those Chinese who claim to be citizens of the Chinese land (i.e., mainland China, Taiwan, Hongkong and Macau) but residing overseas as well as those "stateless" Chinese who identify themselves with the Chinese land rather than the country where they reside.

three such adaptive patterns ranging from assimilation<sup>2</sup> at one extreme, through various levels of acculturation to strong cultural maintenance at the other:

(i) assimilation of the (immigrant) Chinese (e.g., intermarriage and subsequent cultural disappearance) within a generation or two after arrival. The Chinese of Thailand, and to a certain extent, Indo-Chinese nations like Vietnam and Cambodia, and the Philippines are such examples.

In Thailand, many Chinese have married ethnic Thai, taken Thai names, opted for Thai ethnicity, embraced Buddhism, and have been fully absorbed into the Thai society (Skinner 1957: 128). The same is also true of many Chinese in the Philippines (Wickberg 1964: 89; Osborne 1979: 97-98).

A large number of Chinese who entered Cambodia married local women, and were also gradually absorbed into the social fabric of the Indo-Chinese kingdom (Willmott 1967: 43).

(ii) acculturation with only partial assimilation. The Peranakan Chinese of Java, Indonesia, the Baba of Melaka as well as the Peranakan

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<sup>2</sup>The terms "assimilation" and "acculturation" employed here are used with the meanings generally associated with the sociology/anthropology literature. "Acculturation" is the process of adopting the social patterns and cultural traits of another more dominant group, and "assimilation" is the merging of cultural traits from previously distinct cultural groups.

However, in this work, these terms are defined differently. See the later part of this section.

Chinese of Kelantan and Terengganu,<sup>3</sup> Malaysia, are such examples of this configuration.

These groups are often taken as partially assimilated: speaking either a home language which is one of the local indigenous languages, or a mixture of Chinese-Malay, or a pidginized Malay, or a sinicized form of Malay. Their culture is a unique amalgam of Chinese and indigenous traditions. Generally Islam is not one of the elements of their culture. Although their culture is syncretic, their identity is not. (cf., Gosling 1964; Suryadinata 1978; Clammer 1980; Winzeler 1981; Tan 1982; 1988a).

(iii) strong cultural maintenance where the Chinese undergo neither substantial acculturation nor assimilation in regard to the indigenous Southeast Asian society. The contemporary Chinese population of Singapore and much of Malaysia (especially the west coast of the peninsula<sup>4</sup>) constitute such a configuration.

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<sup>3</sup>These Chinese do not identify themselves as Peranakan Chinese. In its popular sense in local context, they refer to themselves and by others as "rural Chinese." Only researchers tend to employ the label "Peranakan Chinese" for want of a better label. E.g., Kershaw (1981: 74) and Tan (1982: 31) use the label but without cautionary remarks when describing the highly assimilated Chinese of rural Kelantan because there is no precise label applicable to their case. However, Tan (1988b: 8, 1991: 40) relabels them as "Peranakan-type Chinese." See Section 2.4.3 in Chapter II for a detailed discussion of this.

<sup>4</sup>Malaysia as a nation, was formed in 1963. It comprises the Malay Peninsula, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. However, in 1965 Singapore left the federation to become an independent republic. Prior to 1963, the Malay Peninsula was known as Malaya. Singapore was never part of Malaya or the Federation of Malaya. Malaya was colonized by the British through various stages since 1786. Malaya attained her independence in 1957.

Malaysia consists of two parts: West and East. West Malaysia (the former Malay Peninsula, or Malaya) is made up of 12 states: Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Wilayah Persekutuan (Federal Capital Territory of Kuala Lumpur), Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu, and Kelantan. East Malaysia comprises the former British Territories of Sabah

These Chinese strive to maintain an indisputable sense of Chinese heritage which is akin to Chinese chauvinism<sup>5</sup> (cf., Kua 1985: 161-174, 209-255).

The literature emphasizes the ease and regularity of total Chinese assimilation to Thai, and to a certain extent, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Filipino cultures and identities since early times. In these countries, there were fewer barriers to a complete merger between the Chinese and indigenous people. One of the factors facilitating the process was a certain compatibility of Chinese religious beliefs with that of the indigenous people. After a generation or two, many, if not most, Chinese in these countries had been absorbed into the indigenous societies.

By contrast, in Malaysia and to a certain extent in Indonesia and the Philippines during certain periods, there was little inducement for the early Chinese settlers to assimilate to the indigenous society. Total assimilation was

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(formerly British North Borneo), Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan (Federal Capital Territory of Labuan), and Sarawak.

West Malaysia, also known as Peninsula Malaysia is separated from East Malaysia by the South China Sea by some 400 miles at the closest point.

In this work, Malaysia refers to only West or Peninsula Malaysia. It is not my intention to treat Malaysia as two separate entities: West and East, but the research problem and discussion in this work do not involve West and East Malaysia as a unified whole.

<sup>5</sup>Throughout the history of the Chinese, they have always felt themselves as culturally superior over others. This attitude consists of a strong sense of cultural superiority together with an extreme reluctance to accept or acknowledge other peoples' cultures and civilizations. In the Malaysian context, these Chinese are perceived to believe only in the cultural superiority of their own ethnic group and who aggressively promote the interests of their own group, regardless of the sensitivities and needs of a multiracial nation. Their view of the native population is on the whole disdainful.

partly impeded by Islam, a religion which did not appeal to the Chinese. Acculturation only took place where these Chinese shared many attributes of the indigenous host cultures.

From the literature, it is clear that immigrant peoples of Chinese descent in Southeast Asia responded in at least two separate and contrasting ways at two different periods:

(i) in the early period (i.e., long before the large scale influx of the mid 19th and early 20th centuries), the influence was toward adaptation, accomodation, acculturation, and even assimilation into the indigenous host societies and cultures, and

(ii) in recent times (i.e., during mid 19th and early 20th centuries), the influence has been an emphasis of the maintenance of a "pure" Chinese culture.

Before the large scale influx began in the mid 19th century, the people of Chinese descent in Southeast Asia were not only acculturated and/or assimilated to the local ways of life, but were of mixed racial ancestry. Initially the immigrants were almost exclusively men. Female Chinese migration was negligible even in the 19th century. It was only in the 20th century that women migrated in significant numbers.

Of major interest to this study are those immigrant Chinese and their descendants, whose ways of life demonstrate major assimilation into the host societies and cultures. Their identity is intermediate in the sense that they are

distinct from the mainstream Chinese and the indigenous society. They maintain a form of Chinese identity termed "peranakan" in the literature.

The term "peranakan" is a Malay/Indonesian one, and is derived from the root "anak" which means 'child' by the morphological process of circumfixing "per- ..... -an," an abstract nominal morpheme. It originally meant 'womb'.<sup>6</sup> Eventually, its semantic range was metaphorically extended to mean 'local-born persons of non-indigenous races'.

The term is oftentimes spelled "pranakan" or "peranakan." It is interesting to note that "peranakan,"<sup>7</sup> a verbal phrase which is derived from affixing the root "anak" with the prefix "per-" and suffix "-kan," has the meaning "to accept as one's own child or children" or "to take in and incorporate as one's own child/children," or "to absorb into the indigenous

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<sup>6</sup>There is an entry for "peranakan" in the dictionary compiled by Bowrey in 1701 (quoted in Tan 1988a: 64). The only meaning given is 'womb'.

<sup>7</sup>An instance of such spelling is found in *Hikayat Abdullah* ('The Story of Abdullah'), first published in 1849, pp. 3, 14, and 22. Traill (1982: 129-130), while discussing Abdullah, writes "I tried to show that Abdullah's family were "Peranakan Keling" and "Peranakan Surati (i.e., his father came from Surat, north of Bombay)." Traill employs the exact spelling of it as used in the *Hikayat*.

The term "Peranakan Keling" is no longer used and has been replaced by "Jawi Peranakan." The derogatory "Keling," a label referring to Indians, both Muslim and Hindu, from India has been replaced by "Jawi" meaning "Malay," especially for the Muslim Indians, by virtue of the identical faith professed by them and indigenous Malays. Hence "Jawi Peranakan" with a reverse word order has the meaning of "Malay/Muslim Peranakan."

The word "Keling" probably is a back formation of "Kalinga," a semi-mythical kingdom situated on India's east coast, referring to its natives and their descendants. The term "keling" which is oftentimes spelled "king" is found on numerous occasions in classical Malay texts (e.g., *Sejarah Melayu*). At present, the term is regarded as abusive. In its place, the label "orang India" ('people from India') has been adopted.

Wilkinson (1959: 542) writes that "keling" is a Sanskrit word meaning "Southern India." He also mentions it as originally a famous name referred to in Asoka's edicts in Singhalese Mahawansa, and even in Pliny.

group." This suggests the acceptance by the host community of these people as new members. In rapid speech, the term "peranakan" or "peranakan" is often pronounced as "pranakan."

There were soon many local-born Chinese after the rapid large scale influx of immigrants in the mid 19th and early 20th centuries, and the term "peranakan" took another semantic component: offspring of race-mixing, i.e., between immigrants and indigenous groups, where the immigrants and their descendants became indigenized, leading to a hybrid culture in which their styles of life, patterns of behavior, food habits, and values were greatly influenced by predominant indigenous surroundings. The language they developed was another area where much assimilative change had taken place.

It might be an appropriate place here to define two concepts central to this work: the concepts of "acculturation" and "assimilation," though defined and used distinctively for specific purposes by some scholars and students of sociology/anthropology, will be treated somewhat differently in this work.

Scholars and students who see the two as distinct processes, define "acculturation" as a type of sociocultural change experienced by an entire or a section of an ethnic group as a result of interethnic contact with a dominant society and culture with a change in one or usually both entities. This change does not necessarily involve the loss of ethnic identity. "Assimilation" on the other hand is a process of sociocultural change which involves the loss of ethnic identity (Winick 1956: 3-4, 46; Simpson 1968: 438-444; Spicer 1968: 21-27; Singer 1968: 527-543; Teske and Nelson 1974: 351-367; Hunter and Whitten 1976: 1-2, 46-47; Pearson 1985: 2, 17; Seymour-Smith 1986: 1, 18, 35-36).

"Assimilation" is generally associated with only a total change in reference group. Within this general framework, "assimilation" occurs when the members of a group see them as belonging ethnically to another group. This criterion alone is insufficient. Most importantly, members of the out-group should fully recognize as well as accept their new members as "equals" and not differentiate between them and themselves. These requisites for "assimilation" are seldom discussed. It is not uncommon to find instances where "new" members even a couple of generations old are still being discriminated against by the "original" members of the group into which they are "assimilated."

The complete loss of ethnic identity on the part of the "new" members does not mean that there is ready acceptance of membership to another ethnic group by that ethnic group. The adoption of language and culture which are often cited as requisites for "total assimilation" are no longer important criteria. Recognition and acceptance as "equals" by the majority members of the dominant group are true criteria of "total assimilation." If and when the "new" members are not treated as "equals" at societal level, then it is only "partial assimilation" which is synonymous with "assimilation."

In this work, "acculturation" is broadly defined as contact of cultures. It is bilateral in nature. To understand the process of "acculturation," it is crucial to know the nature of the contact situation. In this connection, the ecological adaptations of the groups may have quite different results to the same environments. Of equal importance in the contact situation are the exact demographic characteristics of the population in contact. The amount, kind,

direction, and impact of "acculturation" depend on the communications which flow between the cultures in contact.

Long and continued "acculturation" may involve the fusion of two formerly autonomous groups - the result is the development of an entirely new cultural system with a new identity. Sometimes, several cultures work out a mutual accommodation in an area, perhaps in an asymmetric, symbolic relationship, which allows each to persist in its distinctive ways.

In this dissertation, "assimilation" (whether "total" or "partial") is defined as one of the possible outcomes of "acculturation." In other words, "acculturation" is the phenomenon which results when groups having distinct cultures come into first hand contact with subsequent changes, conscious or subconscious, in the original cultural patterns of both groups.

"Assimilation " unlike "acculturation", operates in one way only. A part or all of a community becomes similar but distinguishable, and at times indistinguishable from the dominant or larger community culturally. Another important criterion of "assimilation" is that there must be changes in the basic values and attitudes on the part of the members of the subordinate or smaller group to become similar to that of the members of the dominant or larger group.

Usually, the subordinate or smaller group identify themselves, and is identified, as "assimilating" the pattern of behavior, cultural traditions as well as the way of life of the dominant group. Generally, social scientists have

chosen to study only the impact of "assimilation" on the smaller and less powerful group in such contact situations.

## **1.1 FOCUS AND SCOPE OF STUDY**

This research project will involve a sociolinguistic observation of the rural Chinese<sup>8</sup> of Kelantan, a type of Peranakan Chinese, with special reference to their language and linguistic practices.

### **1.1.1 FOCUS OF STUDY: Main Focus - Language and Culture**

More specifically, this study will attempt to investigate the interplay between language and culture. Language and culture, also known as ethnolinguistics, is the study of language in its cultural setting. Language together with linguistic practices constitute one of the systems of culture. It functions within the holistic of culture, and relates to the patterns of the other component systems.

Language has always held a central place in the affairs of man. It has always mattered when human behavior is examined. There are at least three major ways in which language is related to culture (Fishman 1985: xi):

(i) language itself is a part of culture: language is inevitably part of culture since almost all human behaviors are language embedded. Rituals,

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<sup>8</sup>The terms 'rural Chinese', 'Village Chinese' and 'Peranakan Chinese' are used interchangeably in this work when referring to these Chinese.

songs, prayers, and not to mention conversations, are all speech acts or events that constitute the very texture of life.

To participate in or experience a given culture fully and meaningfully, one must first of all master the language of the group.

(ii) language as an index of culture: language can reveal the ways of thinking or organizing experience. Where indirectness is a central principle in a culture, this theme which controls social behavior in that culture is embedded in the system of the language of the group.

(iii) language is a symbol of culture: language is the most (or one of the most) elaborate symbol system of the society in which it is embedded and which it indexes.

The Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan are to a certain extent Malay and Thai in culture and language, reflecting the processes of cultural and/or language contact. The language spoken by these Chinese is a reflection of the processes of assimilation on their part to the local Malays and Thais. Being a minority group, these Chinese are a good vantage point for examining the consequences of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic experience.

#### **1.1.1.1 FOCUS OF STUDY: Other Research Foci**

A linguistic description of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese language (never before accomplished) will also be undertaken in this study within the

framework of descriptive/structural linguistics<sup>9</sup> and language contact phenomena.<sup>10</sup> An investigation of the relationship between assimilation and the expression of ethnicity/identity<sup>11</sup> will also be made.

This study will also discuss the processes of ethnic development, ethnicity/identity, and the traditions of the Peranakan Chinese of which language as an integral part of culture is the main focus.

How the Peranakan Chinese became assimilated into the local Malay social/cultural world is of equal importance. This will be examined within the general theory of communication, especially within the framework of interethnic communication, and a focus on the patterns of communication which facilitate the existing interethnic social interaction will be made. In other words, we will examine the larger socio-political context of the language and linguistic practices of the Peranakan Chinese.

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<sup>9</sup>Descriptive or structural linguistics views language as distinct and separable from other systems of behavior, and available to description without any reference to the social context or environment in which speaking or language use takes place.

In other words, this framework sees language as a system with its own internal logic and rules. Within this approach, features of language could be described and/or analyzed with no reference to the social context within which language is used.

<sup>10</sup>The result of "contact-induced language changes" (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 4) is evident linguistically, e.g., in the growth of borrowed words, patterns of phonological, morphological and syntactical change, mixed status of languages (like pidgins and creoles), and an increase in bilingualism of various sorts, such as code-switching and code-mixing.

<sup>11</sup>The approach adopted here is such that assimilation and ethnicity would be examined from the perspective of sociocultural adjustment to a larger society. In the process of adjustment, a combination of factors account for the rate and nature of assimilation. It is therefore necessary to analyze the context of interethnic social interaction as well as cultural, social, and political factors.

### 1.1.2 SCOPE OF STUDY

An attempt to incorporate historical, linguistic, and anthropological materials within a single study<sup>12</sup> will be undertaken here. This is to strike a better balance of social and linguistic analysis in sociolinguistic study.

This study is both macro and ethnographic in scope. As little research has been done on the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan, the macro approach is deemed appropriate in introducing them. In other words, this dissertation is a study of a society (or an entire society) and not a single community. Since language of a society is intimately linked to the social and cultural life and needs of the society, an ethnographic approach is preferred. Ethnography is more open-ended in its fieldwork procedures and an accurate description of "local" perceptions (life as the society under investigation sees it) can be analyzed more systematically and represented more extensively in their "own" terms (Hymes 1980: 88-118). This approach is also useful for the macro description of the structure of the rural Chinese society of Kelantan, in addition to determining the patterns and functions of their language in society, theirs as well as the wider society of Kelantan.

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<sup>12</sup>This methodology has been attempted by Clammer (1980: 11-18). The aim of such an approach is to provide a contemporary account of the history, language, and social organization of the society under investigation.

The history of these Chinese is crucial in that it can throw light upon various aspects of what went on in the making of the society and culture of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan.

By social organization, besides interethnic relations, it aims at asking questions like: "What are the boundaries of the Peranakan Chinese society of Kelantan? and "How are these boundaries defined and maintained?"

The linguistic aspect is important in reflecting the processes of cultural contact and assimilation on the part of these Chinese to the Malay and Thai ethnic groups.

A survey of literature on this group of Chinese in Kelantan (Winzeler 1974, 1976, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1986; Kershaw 1973, 1981; Golomb 1978; Dollah 1978/1986; Raybeck 1980; Tan 1982; Teo 1984, 1992a, 1992b) shows that all are sociological/anthropological studies with the exception of Teo (1984, 1992a, 1992b).

Most of the sociological/anthropological works have mentioned the language of this group of Chinese briefly, noting that it is different from standard or mainstream Hokkien (the Hokkien language as spoken by the mainstream Chinese), and that it contains a mixture of Kelantanese Malay and the local Thai language. Suggestions have been made in most of these studies that linguistic investigations of the language of these Chinese be conducted. Since language is an integral part of culture, linguistic studies can undoubtedly offer a better understanding of a society. My own papers (Teo 1984, 1992a, 1992b) are the only known published works so far that have filled up this linguistic gap in the research of this group of Chinese in Kelantan. This dissertation is a furtherance of the above linguistic studies.

## **1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study takes society as the basic starting point, and language as well as linguistic practices as issues and resources of the population. Linguistic practices are seen as influencing and contributing to a fuller understanding of the nature of both society and language. In other words, the objectives of this study are partly social and partly linguistic. Within this general theoretical framework, this study concerns the importance of language and linguistic practices of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan.

### **1.2.1 Perspectives in Sociolinguistic Studies**

Sociolinguistics, a branch of linguistics which studies all aspects of the relationship between language and society (Crystal 1985: 281-282), is a general term that covers works in the field of ethnomethodology, discourse analysis, sociology of language, and social psychology of language, to name a few. The objectives of these works are either purely social, or partly social and partly linguistic, or purely linguistic.

A survey of literature suggests that there are at least two main sociolinguistic traditions: variationist paradigm and ethnography of speaking/communication. Variationist paradigm research generally sees its objective as linguistic, e.g., issues central to the study of linguistic structure (Labov 1972: 184; Trudgill 1978: 11-18; Walters 1988: 126) whereas ethnography of speaking/communication encourages research of cultural contexts which inspire attitudes to language besides covering a range of language and linguistic practices, and following traditions in sociology/anthropology (cf., Gumperz and Hymes 1964, 1972; Fishman 1972: 1; Hymes 1980: 96).

Although this study prefers the more social/ethnographic aspects of sociolinguistics, nevertheless it will attempt to strike a balance between social and linguistic analysis, so as to provide a better understanding of both the nature of society and language of the society under investigation, by utilizing linguistic information as a starting point.

### **1.2.2 Ethnography of Speaking/Communication**

Language plays an extensive and fundamental role in society, and is unquestionably an integral part of culture. These issues of language and its relationship with culture are incorporated in the theoretical framework generally known as the "ethnography of speaking/communication," which is concerned with the study of language and linguistic practices as displayed in the daily life of a speech community (cf., Hymes 1962, 1964, 1972, 1974; Gumperz and Hymes 1964, 1972; Bauman and Sherzer 1974/1989, 1975; Ferguson 1977; Sherzer 1977; Saville-Troike 1982; Philipsen 1986; Philipsen and Carbaugh 1986). Methodologically, ethnography of speaking/communication combines several anthropological fieldwork endeavors of which participant observation in natural settings is an important technique.

One salient aspect of ethnography of speaking/communication has been its concern with social interactional strategies. Details and realities of everyday and ordinary face-to-face communicative behavior are analyzed along with the underlying, ongoing social and cultural themes (Baugh and Sherzer 1984: 165).

The entire speaking/communicating system of a society, often known as "communicative competence" which integrates linguistic competence with social, social interactional, and cultural competence, is a notion which is central to ethnography of speaking/communication. Its acquisition and development involves learning to produce and perceive functionally meaningful distinctions and to master rules for language use. The acquisition of linguistic competence and the acquisition of social competence are

interwoven (cf., Baugh and Sherzer 1984: 165; Gumperz 1972, 1981, 1984; Hymes 1972).

To understand language (in the sense that it is an important tool for communication) in a particular society, it is crucial to understand how language is culturally shaped and constituted. Ethnography, although deals with the scientific/empirical observation and description of societies, is more, a process of coming to the understanding of such shapings (Philipsen 1992: 7). In other words, accurate description of "local" (the society's) perceptions represented in the terms of the society, is crucial for validity in ethnography.

Ethnography of speaking/communication involves the researcher to observe and record linguistic or communicative conduct in its natural setting in an effort to formulate a theory of the ways of speaking/communicating of the society. Such a theory consists of statements about the culture, the local system of symbols and meanings, perceptual and value premises, as well as ground rules (ibid.: 7).

In other words, ethnography of speaking/communication studies the flow of social life in order to discover the portion of culture that is devoted to linguistic/communicative practices. It is a description/analysis from the cultural perspective of the uses of language in/of a group.

### **1.2.3 Language and Ethnicity/Identity**

In attempting to account for the relationship of assimilation and identity of these rural Chinese of Kelantan, I use here a general theoretical framework

of how language itself and intralingual features, such as lexicon, prosody and grammar, are used as ethnic markers (Giles 1979: 255-267).

Giles (ibid.: 254-255) in discussing ethnic speech markers, distinguishes three language-culture contact situations, i.e., language choice, accommodation, and assimilation.

The linguistic choice model is found in multi-ethnic societies where there are many ethnic groups coexisting, and speaking different languages, often not understood by the other. However, there is at least a language that is common to all. It is this language that all the ethnic groups use when communicating with each other.

The accommodation and assimilation paradigms occur in societies where an ethnic group (usually subordinate economically, culturally, and politically), either out of choice or necessity, has adopted the language of the other group (usually superordinate) in interethnic contact.

The accommodation paradigm occurs when the subordinate group has become bilingual, in their own language and that of the dominant group, in order to function effectively. However, the subordinate group maintains its language for in-group interactions.

The assimilation model occurs when the subordinate group has been assimilated in varying degrees by the policies and programs of the dominant group. Sometimes the subordinate group is only linguistically assimilated to the dominant group.

#### 1.2.4 Cultural Study

A cultural approach<sup>13</sup> (by way of ethnographic investigation) to the study of a community is essential in giving a better perception and dimension of the group under investigation. Culture being the total range of activities and ideas of a people, is embedded in the language system. Language is used to mark these activities and ideas.

#### 1.2.5 Linguistic Analysis

A systematic linguistic description or analysis of the language of the Peranakan Chinese is attempted within the structural framework. This purely linguistic study, besides providing a general coverage of what the language is like, can also give insights into the cultural world views, values, and so forth, of the speech community.

### 1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

While this study is ethnographic in approach in those portions where they are highly descriptive, there is less necessity to relate the data to schemes that have been offered in advance. Information about language and linguistic

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<sup>13</sup>Culture can be studied from a few approaches. Dodd (1977: 12-29) discusses four such approaches, namely ethnography, cognitive anthropology, ecological theory, and configurational theory.

An ethnographic investigation seeks to develop and utilize categories in its analysis of culture. Several category systems are well known in ethnographic research. Among them are material culture, social organization, art and play, world view, and language.

practices of the Peranakan Chinese, is a legitimate contribution to academic theory in its own right.

The potential significance of this work, which accounts for a relationship between language and culture (which includes a thorough discussion of the relationship between language and ethnicity/identity) will broaden our understanding of cultural maintenance and shift/change, especially the assimilative phenomena (in language contact situations) and provide important answers to the cultural history of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese.

This dissertation attempts to fill the linguistic gap in the knowledge and understanding of the Peranakan Chinese in Kelantan. Speech is so fundamental an activity of man that no study of a society can be considered complete without an undertaking of it. In fact, this research is the first detailed linguistic (as well as sociolinguistic) observation of the language of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese.

This study will also shed some light on the social development of Malaysia in general, and Malaysian Chinese in particular.

It is hoped that this study will also contribute to the sociolinguistic theory of language and culture, the general theory of communication, and finally the general theory of language.

#### **1.4 METHODOLOGY AND DATA**

The tradition of participant-observation, the basic methodology for all ethnography is adopted in this study. It is augmented by a variety of other data collection and validation procedures.

#### 1.4.1 Conducting Ethnography in One's Own Society

Ethnography is actually more than a systematic method of social observation and description of the lives of a particular group of people. It is an art for understanding and depicting human relations where the skills of an ethnographer is tested and tempered. The cultivation of these skills requires not only theoretical expertise on the part of the ethnographer, but also a high level of sensitivity in his/her role as a researcher in a familiar environment (as is the case in this work). Good rapport established in the initial stages of fieldwork between the ethnographer and the people whose lives s/he is intruding into, is crucial in ensuring the objectivity of the data collected. The trust and acceptance in the field shown by the informants/subjects to the ethnographer, will to a large extent avoid a certain degree of caginess where they may not fully reveal their lives (Lee 1987: 27).

The procedures assumed in this work are very much determined by the relationship that I have with the society of which I am a member. Conducting ethnography on one's own community may seem easy. Nevertheless, it involves the normal procedures of fieldwork - observing, interviewing, participating in certain activities of the society, and more importantly evaluating one's perceptions against the intuitions of one's fellow informants/subjects for objectivity.

As an insider, I am well-versed with the language itself, its patterns of usage, as well as the linguistic practices and the culture of the society studied. But I still find it extremely important to check hypotheses developed on the basis of my own perceptions with the perceptions of the informants/subjects.

As an insider also, it is easier for me to detect the "extent" of information provided by the informants/subjects. Subjectivity in scientific research in the form of distorted information as well as untruthfulness where the informants/subjects have greater control over the knowledge than the researcher, may be minimized when one is studying a society which is his/her own.

As this study is based on my observation and knowledge, and also ethnographic interviews as well as audio recordings of conversations in natural contexts, I am, as a matter of fact, engaged in an interpretive act while looking at and attempting to make sense of, and generalizing about categories of the various forms of life and linguistic behavior of the society under investigation.

As a social scientist/sociolinguist, most importantly as a researcher conducting ethnography in my own society, this study is not free from my values and viewpoints. My social/cultural background inevitably influences the way I conduct the study and also analyze the findings.

In other words, it is not ruled out that the possibility of my cultural biases and perceptions (although precautions are taken to avoid such a possibility) may find their way into this study.

To achieve a reasonable degree of objectivity in ethnography, I hope to make a clear separation of descriptive data, interpretation, and participant's (i.e., my personal professional) evaluation of the people and society I studied.

#### **1.4.2 The Descriptive Nature of Ethnographic Work**

This work is essentially qualitative as are most ethnographic works. Quantitative data which might enhance the reliability of qualitative descriptions of this study are not included. I realize the importance of quantitative procedures. Unfortunately, it is not within the scope of the present study to include a quantitative sociolinguistic survey of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan.

To compensate for the absence of quantitative data, I attempt to provide adequate information to enable the readers to fully understand the ethnography of the Peranakan Chinese.

Accounts of ethnography of speaking/communication are generally exclusively descriptive too, in which theories are implicit or largely unorganised (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 176). Ethnographic modes of description/analysis have been criticized as little more than systematic and clerical common sense (Hymes 1980: 105; Heath 1983: 339, 354). This is an unfair criticism, for scholarly ethnographic accounts consist of a (thorough) grasp of relevant research literature wherein a cumulative and comparative knowledge base is easily recognized.

Theory development and hypothesis testing in ethnography, especially ethnography of speaking/communication, have been far from successful, as far as its status as an intellectual discipline is concerned. A cohesive theory of human communication has not yet developed from an ever growing collection of ethnographic descriptions/analyses of speaking/communication (cf., Philipsen and Carbaugh 1986), that is precise enough to be tested for accuracy and general enough to be applied to any human society (Fasold 1990: 62).

The lack of theory development may be due to the fact that values discovered from societies/cultures are so specific that they have to be discussed/analyzed in the very terms of the societies/cultures investigated. In actuality, human societies/cultures are too complex and too varied to be captured by understanding the etic (observational) and emic (structural) levels of the relationship between language and sociocultural settings from relevant research literature with its cumulative and comparative theoretical as well as methodological impetus.

#### **1.4.3 Duration of Fieldwork**

Professional interest in this society started when I took up an academic position at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (The National University of Malaysia) at Bangi, Selangor Darul Ehsan in 1982. Intermittent field research has been conducted since then in various Peranakan Chinese settlements all over Kelantan. While in Berkeley as a graduate student, I went to the field twice for a total of 15 weeks - December 1991 to January 1992, and April to May 1993 to collect additional data. This 15 weeks of fieldwork provide the core data

of the present work, and supplement and validate notes and data collected during the span of the last 10 years.

#### 1.4.4 Research Samples and Research Ethics

The samples<sup>14</sup> (from a wide range of social variables such as age, and educational background) for this study were chosen at random, i.e., those who after being briefed on my identity and motives, the purpose and significance of the study as well as capacities of the recording devices, were willing to participate by giving information in interviews as well as in audio and video recordings of their speech and social activities respectively.

The subjects were informed of their rights in not permitting me to reveal their identity in my discussions of the data. Almost all subjects made known verbally their wish that their personal data as well as their speech, actions, and responses be kept confidential. It should be pointed out that if in any case, the information they gave were disclosed, it will in no way jeopardize their livelihood or reputation. To honor their wish and safeguard their reputation, no identity of any living or deceased<sup>15</sup> subjects is revealed, not even under pseudonyms.

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<sup>14</sup>A total of 108 informants participated in this research. They represent the three arbitrary age groups: old, middle-aged, and young, two sex groups: male and female, four ethnic groups: Malay, Thai, Indian, and Chinese (Peranakan and non-Peranakan), five Peranakan Chinese speech communities: heavily Malay, heavily Thai, "standard" Peranakan Hokkien, China-accent Hokkien, and Thai-accent Hokkien, and two broadly defined educational background: uneducated (little education) and educated (Malay, Thai, Chinese or English education).

<sup>15</sup>Two of the samples have already passed away. An 88 year old man from Pasir Mas passed away in early January 1992 just a few days after the first interview. I was supposed to have met him for the second time in mid January.

#### 1.4.5 Anonymity in Field Research

Protecting informants/subjects and their communities has become a canon in field research. Traditionally, the identity of informants/subjects is concealed by the use of pseudonyms. It is a further ethical justification not to even use pseudonyms in this work. I feel that I am indebted to the people I observed and studied, and I owe it to them to grant the absolute individual privacy they wish.

The nature of this study, being macro in the sense that it attempts to account for the language and linguistic practices of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan, makes it impossible to disguise its locales and the environs of these locales. Therefore, no locales are disguised. In this, I hope that no information provided here will bring discomfort to the people of these areas or cause them any great inconvenience.

However, anonymity in the locales would not allow for (empirical) verification and comparative studies. The use of pseudonyms would challenge the criteria of validity and replicability in field research in particular, and good scientific work in general. Furthermore, oftentimes anonymity interferes with ethnographic accuracy (Szkut and Reed 1991: 106).

Finally, the information about the locales is public information, i.e., information which is readily available and known to members of the entire Peranakan Chinese society of Kelantan in particular, and the people of

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Another informant, a 42 year old woman from Wakaf Bharu passed away in May 1992. May their souls rest peacefully.

Kelantan in general. The information is not in any way detrimental to the reputation or well-being of the communities and their members.

In other words, the decision not to disguise the locales even by the use of pseudonyms in this study, is viewed more as a scientific responsibility than an ethical one.

#### **1.4.6 Social Responsibility in Data Collection**

All recordings and note taking in the presence of the informants/subjects were given oral permission by them. There are no instances of recordings and note taking done without the subjects' awareness. Although some sociolinguists (cf., Labov 1972: 43-69) see audio recordings of speech without the subjects' awareness of their speech being recorded as very important so as to obtain natural utterances, I find this method unethical.

The method employed by Labov in gathering the linguistic variable of [r] in New York city departmental stores, though it showed his ingenuity, could be viewed unethical in some ways. In pursuit of "uninfluenced speech," i.e., speech when people are not being consciously observed, Labov had subordinated the rights and interests of the people he studied to the "rights" and interests of science. This violation was unquestionably committed to overcome the "observer's paradox," which springs from the effects of direct observation upon speech (ibid.: 209). Although the "rapid anonymous observation" (ibid.: 210) has not "damaged" the reputation of those being studied, since there was anonymity in their identity, and the information obtained from them (in the form of their speech) was not detrimental in any

way to the group of people represented by the samples, many researchers persist that there is nothing unethical about such "secret" data collecting method. The issue here is that researchers should disclose their research goals to those being studied, especially so before the research takes place.

The rights and interests of science must never override the rights of the subjects/participants of research, and it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure so. Efforts toward greater objectivity in (social) research must include respecting the rights and interests of the people to be studied.

To overcome the problem of obtaining samples of uninfluenced speech, Labov suggested that researchers, in this case, linguists, find ways of changing the structure of methods of data gathering by one means or another (ibid.). Such a suggestion seems to lack social and scientific commitment on the part of the researchers. Researchers must show respect for the dignity, integrity, and worth of their informants/subjects at all times and this should be taken as a professional commitment on their part.

Invasion of personal privacy and the discomfort of learning afterwards that they (the research samples) have been observed and studied, are among the various ethical issues that have to be recognized and respected by researchers working in the field.

Methodology is both important and problematic at all stages in sociolinguistic studies. In view of the problems faced by sociolinguists,

especially that concerning unethical methods of data collection, it should be a task of every sociolinguist to pay a good deal of attention to methodology.

#### **1.4.7 Specific Approach of Study**

In this work, I look at the language and linguistic practices of the group under investigation in terms of their usage in the context of the whole culture or society in which they occur. In other words, a holistic approach is taken here. This approach inevitably focuses on the social contexts in which language and linguistic behavior of the Peranakan Chinese occur.

A comparative/cross-cultural perspective is also undertaken here, in order to see how the Peranakan Chinese differ in the structure and use of language from the mainstream Chinese of Kelantan, local Thais and indigenous local Malays.

This study also includes the history of the Peranakan Chinese speech community and the development of their language. The historical processes discussed in this study are entirely of a historical sociolinguistic nature (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 4) and not that of historical linguistics.

This study undertaken from a holistic point of view, comparative/cross-cultural in form, with a historical dimension, and an ethnographic approach, is an anthropological perspective of sociolinguistics (Ferguson 1977).

### **1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION**

Chapter II, discusses the formation as well as the ethnic development of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan. This is followed by a discussion of their ethnicity/identity and culture.

Chapter III is a linguistic investigation of the language spoken by these Chinese. A sociolinguistic history of them is also addressed besides a discussion of the varieties of the language. Reference to as well as a comparison of the language of the Peranakan Chinese with the local Malay dialect, local Thai language and standard or mainstream Hokkien as spoken in the state of Kelantan, are also made.

Chapter IV discusses the communication patterns and discourse organization of their interaction with the wider society. The verbal as well as nonverbal aspects of language are discussed as a process of interrelated elements working together to sustain the strong interethnic bond between the Peranakan Chinese and the local Malays.

Chapter V sums up and concludes the discussions of the previous three chapters of the dissertation, with a discussion on the ethnolinguistic status of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan.

## **1.6 NOTE ON PRESENTATION OF LINGUISTIC DATA**

All recorded data in the form of speech are transcribed phonemically. The symbols employed have the values that they are usually associated with. When necessary, allophonic variants will be provided in phonetic transcription by

employing the International Phonetic Association symbols. Interlinear lexical/morphemic translations and gloss follow every transcribed data.

Part of the linguistic data for this study comes from my idelect of the language of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese and knowledge of Kelantanese Malay, the local Thai language, and standard or mainstream Hokkien. The rest comes from audio tapes and notes on natural language situations rather than elicitations. This includes conversations I had with my informants/subjects, family members, friends, as well as relatives. Observations made from the speech of participating informants/subjects constitute a major portion of the data.

Elicitations from my own speech in conversational exchanges and other interactions, so as to help speed up the conversation and lead it to a direction which would be favorable in giving the kind of data that is needed, are also used in this study.

The data were analyzed for phonological and morphological characteristics, lexical entries, and selected syntactic structures and discourse features. Not all the taped data were transcribed for the purpose of this work. Only those sections which provide for evidence of the selected linguistic features focused in this study were extracted.

The conventions and abbreviations used in the study will be explained in detail in appropriate parts of this dissertation.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PERANAKAN CHINESE OF KELANTAN

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Chinese contacts with Southeast Asia can be documented from at least the 3rd century A.D. (Wheatley 1961: 14), when an official Chinese mission was sent there, but it was not until the 11th century that there were indications of the presence of Chinese merchants, who by this time seemed well-established in the region (Wang 1959: 1-3).

It was especially during the mid 19th and early 20th centuries that Chinese emigrated on a large scale, mainly from the southeastern provinces of China, notably Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and Fukien. A combination of economic difficulties, such as poverty, unemployment, lack of opportunities, overpopulation, and natural disasters like droughts and famines, as well as warfare in China plus tales of opportunities in Southeast Asia, resulted in masses of destitute peasants and others leaving China to seek a living elsewhere. The harsh Manchu rule was also another reason.

These immigrants fell into broadly five groups,<sup>1</sup> namely the Cantonese who came from the provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi,

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<sup>1</sup>These groups describe the dialects/languages spoken in the provinces in China from where these groups of Chinese originated.

These dialects/languages are not always mutually intelligible though with a few exceptions: Teochews and Hokkiens can understand one another; so can Cantonese and Hakkas, but not Hokkiens and Cantonese.

Since the Chinese lack a common spoken language, the medium of instruction in all Chinese schools in Malaya, and later Malaysia, has been Mandarin. Mandarin is the major language in China, in terms of political importance and number of speakers which constitute some 70% of the total

**Hakkas** from Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and Fukien, **Teochews** from the vicinity of Swatow in northern Kwangtung and southern Fukien, **Hainanese** from the island of Hainan off the coast of Kwangtung, and **Hokkiens**<sup>2</sup> from mainly Chuan Chiu and Amoy in the province of Fukien (Blythe 1969: 43-44).

At about the same time, i.e., in the 19th century, colonial expansion in Southeast Asia particularly by the British led to the development of plantations, mines, and cities, which provided means for survival, as well as hopes for a brighter future for these emigrants. Improvements in transportation, especially the introduction of steamships, also facilitated the vastly increased Chinese emigration.

The mass migration of Chinese to Malaysia or more specifically, the Malay Peninsula, in the mid 19th and early 20th centuries, was to a large extent a response to the expansion of tin mining activities, and to a lesser extent the cash crop industries, created by the British through their imperial interest and rule. To the British, Chinese immigrants (and Indian too) provided a useful source of cheap labor, and Chinese merchants were to serve as middlemen in the functioning of a colonial economy. On the other hand,

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Chinese population. The Mandarin spoken in Malaysia is based on the Beijing variety but differ from the Mandarin spoken in China and Taiwan. All Chinese educated in the Chinese medium can thus communicate easily with each other. Uneducated Chinese (neither in Chinese or English medium) tend to remain much more within their own dialect/language group. Thus these Chinese tend to live in areas which are predominantly of their own dialect/language groups. These groups also display some cultural diversity in custom. E.g., Hokkiens have typically Hokkien customs.

<sup>2</sup>The Hokkiens were believed to be the earliest to settle in Malaysia. A partial evidence shows that Malaysia's coastal towns, assumed to be the country's oldest, are predominantly Hokkien. E.g., Melaka, Kelang, Georgetown, Kota Bharu, and Kuala Terengganu. The *lingua franca* of the Chinese in these places is Hokkien.

the British had created a useful political and economic system under which the Chinese immigrants could make rapid economic advancement. In this context, the creation of a large Chinese community in the Malay peninsula was closely related to the process of the creation and development of the British colonial economy in the region (Yen 1986: 4).

For these immigrants, who were almost exclusively men, a life away from their home villages was not, as a rule, thought to be permanent. In time, nonetheless, the Chinese population in the Malay Peninsula as well as other places in Southeast Asia grew and became stable. Many who succeeded in building their business establishments overseas found that they were not ready to give them up and return to their home villages. The majority of the immigrants who failed to become successful economically found that to return to their home villages would mean losing honor. They had no choice but to remain overseas. This resulted in the transformation of many of the immigrants from sojourners into settlers.

Besides the foregoing pattern of migration in the mid 19th and early 20th centuries, there were Chinese who visited or migrated to the Malay Peninsula long before this large scale migration. Their pattern of migration was on an individual or small group basis which was formally mostly unorganized in comparison to the larger kinship-based organized or surname group. These Chinese adventurers probably came to seek a better living or make a fortune. Like the latter immigrants, they too had at first no intention of making the Malay Peninsula their home. The Confucian idea of filial piety was a social bond which many early as well as later immigrants did not want to

break. They cherished the dream and hope of fulfilling their filial duties to their parents on their return as wealthy sons.

The individual or small scale migration of the Chinese to Southeast Asia long before the large scale influx in the mid 19th and early 20th centuries has not been well studied. This may be due to the difficulties in reconstructing their history, sociology, ethnography, and culture because of the scarcity of written materials. Scholarly work in this area is crucial for the better understanding of these people of Chinese descent in Southeast Asia, especially having being long established and highly assimilated.

## 2.1 THE FORMATION OF EARLY CHINESE SETTLEMENTS IN MALAYSIA: SOME HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The history of Malaysia before the founding of Melaka<sup>3</sup> at the beginning of the 15th century, is seldom attempted by historians. This is probably due to the lack of information which would make the reconstruction of early Malaysian history with certainty a difficult task. The founding of Melaka around 1403 has been the identifiable starting point in Malaysian history.

*Sejarah Melayu*,<sup>4</sup> the 'Malay (Court) Annals' written in the 17th century, which is a Malay perception of their past, contains valuable information on the founding of Melaka. It does not claim that Melaka was the

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<sup>3</sup>It was spelled in English as "Malacca." Other such instances are "Penang (Island)," "Johore," "Negri Sembilan," and "Trengganu." The Malay versions which represent official labels are "Pulau Pinang," "Johor," "Negeri Sembilan," and "Terengganu" respectively.

<sup>4</sup>It has been handed down in a number of different versions, the earliest of which is now dated from the early 17th century.

only and/or first Malay kingdom in Malaysia. The anonymous writer(s) of *Sejarah Melayu* was aware of earlier Malay kingdoms in the vicinity. Two such kingdoms were Gangga Negara and Ganggayu (Shellabear 1987: 9-10). It is unfortunate that historians, foreign and local alike, choose Melaka as their starting point in their discussion of Malaysian history, especially when making arguments about the political system of Melaka. Little do most realize that the political system of 15th century Melaka was based on the political systems of earlier Malay kingdoms.

The Melaka era is also taken as the identifiable starting point of the history of the Chinese society in the country although it too has earlier roots. Numerous references to Malaysia in particular, and the early Chinese settlements in general before the Melaka era, are found in Indian, Chinese, and Arab sources. Among these records, the Chinese ones are the most promising for a historical reconstruction of the early history of Malaysia (cf., Cushman and Milner 1979: passim; Andaya and Andaya 1982: 7), constituting the early part of the ethnic history of the Chinese in Malaysia.

Interests in Malaysia by the Chinese in early times probably stemmed from legends and reports of her rich gold deposits, and also tin which was extensively found. The reputation of Malaysia as an important source of gold was warranted by the titles "Golden Kersonese" and "Survanabhumi/Survanadhipa" ('The Land of Gold') by early Greeks and Indians respectively (cf., Wheatley 1961: xxi; Sandhu 1973: 5-11).

Since the 3rd century, luxury items from western Asia, particularly Persia, were reported to be most desired in China. This "Persia trade," as it is

known in Chinese chronicles, created an environment well suited for the emergence of ports in numerous places in the Malay archipelago, especially along the coasts of Malaysia. The ports along the west coast of the peninsula, especially in the Straits of Melaka, were better sheltered during the monsoons, compared to the ones along the east coast which were at the mercy of the often violent storms of the northeast monsoons.

The records of the Tang Dynasty (618-906) show that by the 6th century, Langkasuka which was believed to be in the present day region of Patani (sometimes spelled Pattani), in southern Thailand, Ch'ih tu<sup>5</sup> ('The Red-earth Land'), said to be located in present day Kelantan, and Tan-Tan, assumed to be situated in present day Terengganu near its border with Kelantan, were sending diplomatic and trade missions to China. Langkasuka, like Srivijaya (which was believed to be in present day Palembang), renowned as a center for the study of Buddhist scriptures as early as the 7th century to China (Bougas 1986: 85) was frequently visited by Chinese Buddhist monks from the beginning of the late 7th century through the 11th.

Besides the Persia trade, the prospect of the Southeast Asia trade, more localized in nature, mainly concerned with the distribution and exchange of products like rice, aromatic woods, rattan, iron, resins, camphor, and wax, was probably the other attraction which made the early Chinese remain in the region for a much longer period of time than initially intended, and eventually settle down. They must have entered this trade on a private basis, that is, they were trading on their own rather than on behalf of the Chinese

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<sup>5</sup>There is a place called "Tanah Merah" ('Red-earth') in Kelantan today. Can "Tanah Merah" be the 'The Red-earth Land' of Ch'ih tu?

rulers. Private trade was forbidden by Chinese emperors till as late as the 14th century. Overseas goods found their way into China through the guise of tribute missions (Andaya and Andaya 1982: 23).

These early private Chinese traders would have found that localized trading was profitable, not to mention the ever widening opportunities created by the commercial exchange between India and China, facilitated by the hospitable attitude of the natives toward foreign visitors, merchants, and missions, and the well-ordered governments in these early Malay kingdoms (ibid.: 29). All these factors could have contributed to a favorable climate for the establishment of early Chinese settlements in Malaysia.

Chinese travellers seemed to have more information about places on the east coast of Malaysia compared to other places in the peninsula. On the basis of sailing directions and itineraries, seven states have been listed in the isthmian region of [the Malay] peninsula with a possible eight in Johor (Wheatley 1961: 60). This implies that there were no early Chinese settlements on the west coast until the 15th century, which were the Chinese settlements of Melaka.

## **2.2 EARLY CHINESE SETTLEMENTS IN KELANTAN: SOME HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In the 3rd century, delegates from the Wu Dynasty made various expeditions to Southeast Asia. Other Chinese records mentioning Kelantan were annals of the Liang (early 6th century), Sui (581-618), and Ming (1368-1644) Dynasties. These annals did not mention any Chinese settlements in Kelantan. The

Chinese work which specifies the existence of Chinese settlements in Kelantan is *Hailu* ('A Record of the Seas').

*Hailu* is a work based on the narration of Hsieh Ching-Kao and recorded by Yang Ping-Nan who met the former in Macao in 1820. At eighteen, Hsieh Ching-Kao visited Southeast Asia, and spent fourteen years (1782-1795) abroad, including Europe and America (Tweedie 1953: 216; Wang 1960: 31).

In his account of Kelantan, Hsieh Ching-Kao mentioned that the Malay natives did not allow their women to marry Chinese men. This is not surprising at all for by the late 18th century, Kelantan was already a stronghold of Islam. Islam was said to have been adopted by Patani (Bougas 1986: 85), which had very close cultural, political, and religious ties with Kelantan, much earlier than did Melaka (Teeuw and Wyatt 1970: 4). Patani and Kelantan have been known for their Islamic puritanism. They were also known for their strong, conservative Islamic ideas. Kelantan was nicknamed "Serambi Mekah" ('The Annex of Mecca') in the middle of the 19th century, for the large number and size of its "pondoks" ('traditional religious centers of learning'). By this, Kelantan was the focal point for scholars of Islam in Southeast Asia to converge before receiving further knowledge in Mecca.

Marrying Malay women without conversion to Islam on the part of the Chinese men was most unacceptable under Islamic teachings. Hsieh Ching-Kao did not mention conversion to Islam as a prior condition for marrying Malay women. This might be due to his ignorance of this particular Islamic rule.

Another reason for opposing Chinese-Malay marriages even if there was conversion to Islam on the part of the Chinese men, was that probably these men were still essentially Chinese culturally, and did not or could not relate well to Kelantan Malay<sup>6</sup> "budi bahasa" ('code of courtesy') and "adat"<sup>7</sup> ('local customs'). "Budi bahasa" and "adat" were important elements of Kelantan Malay culture and a competent knowledge of it was deemed crucial in being fully accepted socially.

Kelantan Malays had been known not even to trust fellow Malays from other villages or areas within the state. The importance of local or village membership was manifested in labels like "orang sini" ('insiders' or 'people around here' or 'one of us') and "orang luar" ('outsiders').

Traditional Kelantan Malay identity was defined not so much in terms of a larger membership in a Malay "race" as a much more specific identity with "kampung" or village and even more with hamlet or neighborhood. Village members behaved with honesty and respect towards one another, but with suspicion toward outsiders,<sup>8</sup> especially when the new and culturally different Chinese from a distant place arrived in their midst. It was not surprising then

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<sup>6</sup>In this work, the attribute "Kelantan" is used for people, e.g., Kelantan Malays - the Malays of Kelantan, and "Kelantanese" for language, e.g., Kelantanese Malay - the language of the Kelantan Malays.

<sup>7</sup>The Malays take their "adat" so seriously that they have a saying which goes "biar mati anak, jangan mati adat" which means 'let the child perish, but not the "adat"'.  
Throughout the centuries, the Malays have worked out a framework of expediency such that those customs which are incompatible with their faith, i.e., Islam, are observed and perpetuated as "adat."

<sup>8</sup>This behavior of treating outsiders with suspicion by the Kelantan Malays still prevails till today. See Section 4.1.2 in Chapter IV for a discussion of this in contemporary Kelantan Malay society.

that Chinese men for this as well as religious reasons were not allowed to marry Malay women.

Early Chinese-Malay marriages did however occur in isolated and individual cases in the distant past,<sup>9</sup> especially before the influence of institutional Islam became sufficiently strong to effectively prevent them. Such intermarriages usually ceased after one generation, and the offspring of such marriages were absorbed into the Malay (Muslim) society where they were reared as Malays. This was in part due to the predominance of the Malay ethnic group.

After Malaysia became a stronghold of Islam in the 20th century, the marrying of Malays was first preceded by conversion to the Muslim faith by people of other religious beliefs. This conversion required a change not merely in religious belief, but, in effect, in cultural identity itself. This cultural shift could have discouraged the early Chinese settlers from becoming Muslims. Moreover, the doctrinal content of the Muslim faith could be another reason why the religion did not appeal to these Chinese. However, some Chinese might have been persuaded to embrace Islam when Islam was more established later.

Although Chinese-Malay marriages were not encouraged or officially allowed without conversion, Hsieh Ching-Kao reported that there were social interactions between the Malays and the early Chinese settlers during royal

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<sup>9</sup>Annandale (1900: 517) reported that there were intermarriages between Chinese males and Malay women in southern Thailand in the 18th century. However, he did not mention the obligatory conversion to Islam by the Chinese males.

festivities which often would last for months. The activities of gambling and prostitution reportedly permitted during these periods raise the question of whether the Islamic faith was actually strictly adhered to by the "Sultan" ('King' or 'Ruler') as head and patron of Islam in the state. The presence of promiscuous behavior among the natives was also described by Hsieh Ching-Kao. This could have occurred in the days when the influence and teaching of Islam were not strong enough to effectively curb such form of behavior.

It could be concluded then that the reason for not allowing the native women to marry Chinese men was apparently not entirely motivated by Islamic teachings since immoral and other non-Islamic activities were allowed to take place (Tweedie 1953: 218; Wang 1960: 34). In fact, the suspicion caused by their being "aliens" far out-weighted the Islam factor.

Hsieh Ching-Kao reported that the Chinese men rarely married in any case. Those who did marry, however took Siamese<sup>10</sup> women as wives. Since Kelantan was under Siamese rule for a substantial portion of her history (cf., Teeuw and Wyatt 1970; Salleh 1987; Saripan 1987), there was a free movement of the people, southern Thais into Kelantan, and Kelantan Malays into southern Thailand.

There were, in fact, a couple of positive inducements for Chinese men to marry Siamese women, besides the non-availability of Chinese women: the

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<sup>10</sup>The people of Kelantan do not normally use the label "Thai" in everyday speech to refer to the people of Thailand, or the people of Thai descent residing in Malaysia. Instead, the label "Orang Siam" ('Siamese') is employed (cf., Ismail 1980, 1982, 1987, 1990). All Thais north of southern Thailand are generally loosely referred to as "Orang Bangkok" ('Bangkok people').

In this work, the labels "Thai" and "Siamese" are used interchangeably.

restriction of marrying native women, and the non-existence of any significant religious barrier between the two ethnic groups. The religious pragmatism and eclecticism of traditional Chinese beliefs were well-catered to by Buddhism. Siamese women were also known to be capable traders, unlike their menfolk (Skinner 1957: 127). This was certainly an advantage to the industrious male Chinese traders.

It should be pointed out here that some of the early Chinese settlers already had wives and children in China. A few had the opportunity to return there to bring them to Kelantan at a later date. These newly arrived Chinese families lived along with their husbands' or fathers' households of Siamese spouses and their half-Siamese children.

These Chinese-Siamese intermarriages marked the beginning of the Peranakan Chinese society of Kelantan. The offspring of these marriages were brought up more as Siamese than Chinese. The mother's influence on the children was superior. Daughters more often than sons followed the mother's behavior and mannerisms, thus becoming more Siamese and less Chinese but sons were however not always influenced by the Chinese customs and mannerisms of their fathers. Hence, eventually, the sons too were influenced by the Siamese culture, and the Siamese language was soon adopted by both the boys and girls.

In the later stage of ethnic development of the Peranakan Chinese society of Kelantan, there was a process of gradual assimilation<sup>11</sup> to their

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<sup>11</sup>The Siamese and Malays also shared an almost identical, if not the same, belief system in magical charms, spirit mediumship and other forms of rituals

predominantly Malay surroundings. Language, diet, and clothing were among the many aspects of their life that were consciously or unconsciously assimilated.

This was the essence that shaped the characteristics of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese society which evolved into the unique culture that was later to be bequeathed to the later Peranakan Chinese and their descendants.

Gold mining activities were also reported by Hsieh Ching-Kao in his travel account. Tweedie (1953: 219) and Dodge (1977: 93) were of the opinion that present day Pulai could have been one of the places where gold was extensively mined. Pulai by the Galas River had been a gold mining site from ancient time (Wee 1987: 218). Wheatley (1961: xxvii) working on materials provided by the Greeks, in the form of maps drawn by Ptolemy, concludes that the Kelantan River in the area of Galas, and the Patani River in its upper region, were once rich in gold and tin deposits.

Pulai, in southern Kelantan, which is an old Chinese settlement, was established earlier than most Chinese settlements in Malaysia (Carstens 1980: 50). Pulai is the earliest settlement of any Chinese group in the state of Kelantan ever described in some detail by western writers (Middlebrook 1933: 151-156).

Pulai's date of origin, though it cannot be traced precisely, is believed to be at least around the late 18th century or possibly earlier (Carstens 1986: 89).

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which are outside the normal sphere of Islam and Buddhism (Cuisinier 1936: 1 as quoted in Ismail 1982: 262). Hence this made assimilation easier.

Although reputed to be the first Chinese settlement in Kelantan claiming five or six generations of local ancestors, Pulai Chinese, who were and are entirely Hakka, did not become assimilated in the same manner as other early Chinese settlers in Southeast Asia, e.g., the Indonesian Peranakan of Java (cf., Skinner 1961; Willmott 1960; Coppel 1973; Suryadinata 1978, 1981), the Baba of Melaka (cf., Chia 1980; Clammer 1980; Tan 1988a), the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan (cf., Kershaw 1973; Raybeck 1980; Winzler 1976, 1981; Tan 1982; Teo 1984; Dollah 1986), the rural Chinese of Terengganu (cf., Gosling 1964), and to some extent the Chinese of Thailand (cf., Skinner 1957; Tong 1988).

### **2.3 MEMORIES<sup>12</sup> OF EARLY PERANAKAN CHINESE SOCIETY OF KELANTAN: A COLLECTIVE PERCEPTION**

The reconstruction of the early stage of the ethnic history of this group of Chinese presents a variety of problems and challenges. There are no available written sources that have been compiled specifically on these highly assimilated Chinese, either by insiders or outsiders.

This study, besides being a sociolinguistic account of these Chinese, is the first-ever attempt to reconstruct the formation of the Peranakan Chinese society of Kelantan. The scarcity of written records, especially by western writers, could have been due to non-interest on the part of western colonial powers in Kelantan. It has been reported that both the Portuguese and Dutch, although have known of the existence of Kelantan in the 17th and 18th

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<sup>12</sup>I adopt the style of reporting as in Carsten (1980: 50-67) where she traces the history of the people of Pulai in Kelantan, from the late 18th century to the early 1940s. She draws on conversations with Pulai people to reconstruct a detailed and intimate description of the type of society which developed there some 200 years ago.

centuries, were not attracted to it economically (Graham 1908: 39). The British were also not interested in Kelantan which together with Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis were known as Unfederated Malay States<sup>13</sup> during their colonial rule of Malaysia. Kelantan was under Siamese rule, directly and indirectly at various points of her history. Britain's non-interest in Kelantan, and the other Unfederated Malay States, was also in part due to the agreement between Britain and Thailand before 1909. Thus there was no official intervention until the early 20th century. After 1909, these states (i.e., Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis) were placed under British rule until 1957 when Malaysia obtained her independence.

Kelantan was predominantly rural in character with most of the citizens involved in agriculture, especially wet rice and rubber cultivation. Fishing was the main occupation of Kelantan Malay men along the coastal area. Kelantan was isolated from the more developed states in the west coast by thick rainforests along Malaysia's central mountain range. Economically as well as socially, Kelantan was backward and traditional. The economy was of the peasant type, basically subsistence in nature. When labor was required than could be provided by the household, especially during the transplanting and harvesting of rice, a form of collective or mutual labor exchange called "gotong royong" or "derau/berderau" was practiced.

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<sup>13</sup>Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Perlis and Johor were not included in a Federation Agreement concluded between Britain and the other Malay states in 1895. See also footnote 26 for more information on Unfederated Malay States.

Personal reminiscences<sup>14</sup> about the past by members of this group of Chinese, most of whom were octogenarians at the time of the interviews, could be a reliable source for the earliest memories of the Peranakan Chinese society in Kelantan. Other oral accounts based on hearsay information on the former life of Peranakan Chinese, could also illuminate the picture of Peranakan Chinese society several generations ago. Local oral traditions from their contemporaries of the other ethnic groups, i.e., the Malays and Thais, are crucial in contributing to a clearer understanding of interethnic contact within the Peranakan Chinese society. These personal reminiscences, hearsay stories, and conversations are actually perceptions which are important social facts in determining how the Peranakan Chinese, as well as the Malays and Thais, viewed themselves and each other in the past and also in the present. Available written sources are also examined in order to place local events in the context of wider political, social, cultural, and economic settings.

Conversations with middle-aged Peranakan Chinese who have Thai maternal ancestors, are also carefully examined in order to reconstruct a more detailed and intimate description of the kind of society which developed in Kelantan some seven or eight generations ago of local ancestors: about two hundred years ago.

With this approach, I attempt a provisional reconstruction of developments in Peranakan Chinese society from the earliest times. Although many of my speculations on aspects of early Kelantan Peranakan Chinese history could well be overturned should any fresh evidence, in the form of

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<sup>14</sup>These are (historical) events, way of life, and the like, remembered vividly and narrated by living persons as first and second hand knowledge.

written documents, oral accounts, and archaeological findings, come to light, this study at least deserves the credit of being the first-ever attempt at such a reconstruction.

### **2.3.1 Early Chinese Settlers: Hokkien and Cantonese Groups**

The account of Hsieh Ching-Kao on the Chinese settlement in Kelantan made no mention of the date when the first Chinese settled there. But it was evident that by the late 18th century, the Chinese settlements there were already stable, with the Chinese men married to Siamese women, and their Chinese-Siamese families adopting many Malay customs. These long established Chinese-Siamese ties through intermarriage are constantly validated, recognized, and acknowledged by members of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese.

Hsieh Ching-Kao reported that there were two concentrations of Chinese, the **Hokkiens** (also known as **Fukiens**) who were traders and farmers, residing in the town, presumably the capital town of Kelantan as well as the Kelantan plain, and the **Cantonese** who were mainly gold miners living in the interior parts of the state.

### **2.3.2 Ethnic Development of the Cantonese Group**

From Hsieh Ching-Kao's account, it is safe to assume that these two groups, the **Hokkiens** and **Cantonese**, underwent different processes of ethnic development. The **Cantonese** mentioned by Hsieh Ching-Kao developed into the **Hakka** settlement of present-day **Pulai**, where no substantial assimilative change occurred, whereas the **Hokkien** settlements spread over a wide area;

urban as well as semi-urban (market towns), and rural areas, mostly along the Kelantan River.

In the interior of Kelantan and surrounded by thick jungles, the continued isolation of Pulai and its subsistence-oriented economy, made it independent of the rest of the wider Kelantan society. Gold is still mined there but not on an extensive scale anymore. Pulai has instead shifted to lumbering, growing padi, tapping rubber, and rearing fish. Although Pulai is only some three hours by road to Kota Bharu, the present capital town of Kelantan, Pulai Chinese seem to prefer to interact and intermingle with the nearby townships in northern Pahang (the neighboring state). Gua Musang, a town of recent establishment, some ten miles north of Pulai, is almost entirely made up of Hakkas as far as the Chinese population is concerned. Many of the present residents of Gua Musang are Chinese who moved there from the nearby northern Pahang towns. Gua Musang is reputed to have been the only place in Kelantan having Chinese residents who are incompetent in the Malay language in general, and Kelantan Malay dialect in particular. These Hakkas also cannot and do not relate well to the Kelantan Malay "budi bahasa" ('code of courtesy') and "adat" ('local customs').

### **2.3.3 Ethnic Development of the Hokkien Group**

Unlike the Hakka settlement in Pulai, the Hokkiens were dependent on and engaged in the social life and processes of the wider Kelantan society, and thereby underwent a different process of ethnic development with substantial assimilative change in their culture.

Within the Hokkien group, another further process of sub-ethnic development occurred. Those who lived in urban and semi-urban areas continued to be traders or engaged in business, and were not assimilated much to the Malays. This could have been due to the fact that Malay social and cultural influence was negligible in these areas since Malays were residing in villages in the countryside. This group of trader Hokkiens were later joined by a significant number of immigrants of the large scale influx of the mid 19th and early 20th centuries. They were out-numbered by the newcomers, and in due course, assimilated into the new group.

#### **2.3.4 Farmer Hokkiens: The Beginning of the Peranakan Chinese Society of Kelantan**

The farmer Hokkiens in the countryside, especially along the Kelantan River, who continued in small scale agricultural activities,<sup>15</sup> became highly assimilated to their predominantly Malay surroundings.

No accounts of the gold mining activities of their forefathers were ever recited among them, unlike the Pulai Chinese who were a totally different set of sub-ethnic group in the state. In fact, memories and stories of poverty and hardships as farmers were often told to the younger generation by these Hokkiens. Abundant land for agricultural activities was reported to be generously given to them by the central sultanate, and also by powerful regional royal families.

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<sup>15</sup>Norman (1895: 574) reported that he stopped at a village along the Kelantan River. The village composed of some 80 local born Hokkiens who were engaged in growing peas.

Peranakan Chinese settlements of varying sizes sprang up on both sides of the Kelantan River. The houses in these settlements were seldom located very far from each other, and were generally concentrated in clusters within predominantly Malay surroundings. Traditional Peranakan Chinese houses have not varied much since then and now in terms of their architecture, and plan, in all these settlements.

These settlements, which are still visible today, are distributed linearly facing the Kelantan River. This emphasizes the importance of the river which was used as the main means for transportation in the past. The houses were built to adapt to the local environment, with stilts of about three to four feet from the ground as a measure against the annual oftentimes violent floods due to the northeast monsoon rains.

Local oral accounts relate that the early Chinese settlers who were farmers planted fruit trees besides engaging actively in planting cash crops like groundnut, coconut, areca nut, and tobacco. Padi was also planted in areas where land holdings were extensive. Livestock such as pigs, cattle, and chickens were reared.

### **2.3.5 Peranakan Chinese of Patani**

Oral accounts tell us that some of the early Chinese, who were exclusively male, probably entered Kelantan or southern Thailand from China individually or in small unorganized groups. The major ports of Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Patani, and Songkla represent some of the oldest trading settlements known in the region. These ports are also thought to be the first

few areas of Thailand to which Chinese and other foreign traders were attracted. Patani and Nakhon Sri Thammarat are reported to have had a large Chinese population in the 16th and 17th centuries (Skinner 1957: 4-5; Schrock et al. 1970: 99).

It is almost impossible to write an account of Kelantan's history without having to mention that of Patani's (Rentse 1934: 44). Oral accounts have it that some of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan came from Patani. Patani, a region to the north of Kelantan, had strong cultural and linguistic ties with Kelantan. Many of the Malays and Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan have relatives in southern Thailand, and vice versa, even till today.

Patani was long established as a Malay kingdom which controlled a large area of territory in the region of the Isthmus of Kra, a site strategically situated to take advantage of both inland and maritime trade of the region. Names associated within the area appear in the Chinese accounts of the 6th century (Wheatley 1961: xx). At various points in time, both Patani and Kelantan came under Siamese suzerainty, and joined forces in the 1830s in an unsuccessful uprising against their local Thai rulers (Skinner 1965: 6-7). By the end of the 19th century, Kelantan was caught up within the web of Siamese southward expansion and British northward policy in northern Malaysia. In the early 20th century, an international border which separates the people of Patani and Kelantan was drawn, but close links between these peoples have always continued up to the present time.

The Peranakan Chinese of Patani were the offspring of Chinese-Thai intermarriages. These children were commonly known as "Luuk Ciin" in the

Thai language meaning "Chinese child/children" and were brought up as Thai-Chinese. Being in southern Thailand, a predominantly Malay area, the Thais themselves were also in one way or another influenced by the Malays socially as well as culturally. As an example, the Malay custom of raising their houses above the ground on stilts whether they were near the river or not, was adopted by the majority of the Thais in Patani. Thai houses in Singgora, about some thirty miles to the north of Patani where Malays were not a majority group, were not built on stilts. These Peranakan Chinese who were already exposed to Malay cultural influence in Patani had no difficulty in coping with life in the predominantly Malay state of Kelantan when they migrated there.

There are also narrations on these Patani Peranakan Chinese who fled from southern Thailand when Patani was attacked by the Siamese. The Siamese attack was probably in the late 17th century, as reported in the history of Patani (Rentse 1934: 59). A period of upheaval followed and for the first time a Siamese was appointed to rule Patani. Its new ruler sent the people of Patani to Bangkok as prisoners of war. Taxes levied were heavy, and many of Patani's inhabitants were enslaved. Thai families from other places were sent to live in Patani as a way to balance the ratio of the various ethnic groups so as to reduce the tension.

Stories of harsh treatment inflicted on the people of Patani by the newly appointed Siamese ruler were often told by the Peranakan Chinese elders. The attack, followed by a period of chaos and the unfriendly northern Siamese maltreatment of the people of Patani, even caused some of the Thais

who had been relocated in Patani to fear for their lives and take refuge in Kelantan. Such stories have often been told too by Thai elders in Kelantan.

Kelantan has the largest Thai population in Malaysia next to Kedah, another state on the northwestern part of peninsular Malaysia. The Thais are concentrated in the Tumpat district of Kelantan, the most northeastern part of the state. From this area, the Thais later spread out to other areas in Kelantan, and (northern) Terengganu. The evidence showing that the Thais in Kelantan were originally from Patani and its vicinity, especially Narathiwat, is linguistic in nature. The Thai language spoken in Kelantan with its various local variations is that of the Tak Bai group<sup>16</sup> (Kershaw 1973: 4; Winzeler 1985: 68; Brown 1985: 91-92).

A possible reason for the presence of long established Thai settlements in Tumpat, Kelantan, which is near the present border of Thailand, is that Patani in southern Thailand, a predominantly Malay area, was always an integral part of Kelantan (Malay) world and vice versa, whether under loose Siamese suzerainty or not. Patani's cultural affinities were more with Kelantan rather than Kedah or Perlis, the northernmost state in peninsular Malaysia. This could have probably been due to the geographical proximity of Patani to Kelantan. The Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 separated these two kingdoms, and by this, all Thai settlements on one side of the Thai border came under British administration.

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<sup>16</sup>Tak Bai Thai is full of "Malayisms." See Section 3.6 in Chapter III for a discussion of "Malayism" in Kelantanese Malay.

The Patani Peranakan Chinese migrated in substantial numbers to Kelantan via the province of Legoh. Tomoh, a market town and also the capital of Legoh, was reported as being entirely Chinese in population (Skeat 1953: 91). It was probably the place they started from when they embarked on their journey to Kelantan along the Pergau River, before turning east into the Kelantan River instead of south into the Galas River, where the Pulai Chinese were situated.

If these Patani Peranakan Chinese were to go southward, they would have reached the remote interior of Kelantan, which was the Pulai area and its vicinity. There were a number of gold mines near Tomoh, and there could have been the Kwangsi people, possibly Hakkas or Cantonese, who were involved in mining activities. The Patani Peranakan Chinese would have known about Pulai through them, and being farmers, they chose to remain as farmers, and thus had taken the journey eastward to the fertile land along the Kelantan River, a bigger river compared to the Galas River. But it was also quite possible that they could have been ignorant of the geography of Kelantan, and by chance sailed eastward along the bigger and wider river instead of southward. If they had chosen to continue southward, then probably they could have become assimilated to the Pulai Chinese in the Galas region.

### **2.3.6 Lives of the Early Peranakan Chinese**

These Patani Peranakan Chinese who were entirely rural dwellers, continued to be peasants on their new land - planting rice, vegetables, and fruit and later

rubber trees, and raising livestock, especially pigs and cattle, all but rubber on subsistence levels.

Unlike the Chinese of Pulai, the early and later Peranakan Chinese were never involved in local Malay politics, avoiding taking of sides in the frequent rivalries among the various regional royal factions and district nobles. In contrast, Pulai Chinese became involved in local politics at least on two occasions<sup>17</sup> in their earlier stage of their history (Graham 1908: 102-104; Rentse 1934: 57).

Perhaps because of their lack of involvement in politics, Peranakan Chinese settlements were not relocated during the Emergency<sup>18</sup> period which began in 1948. The Pulai Chinese were evicted and resettled following a series of communist guerilla incidents in the jungles of southern Kelantan (Carsten 1986: 80). Pulai Chinese were accused of being supporters of the jungle-based Chinese guerrillas of the Malayan Communist Party. In their incarceration, they were divided into smaller groups and together with other suspected Chinese supporters were placed in fenced and curfewed "new villages"<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>On one occasion, about 1800, as Purcell (1948: 102) writes the "Temenggong" ('Minister of Internal Affairs'), who was the brother of the "Sultan" ('King' or 'Ruler'), was murdered by the Chinese gold miners at Pulai. This was done on the insistence of the "Sultan" himself. One of the sons of the "Temenggong" took the matter up and exterminated the Chinese of Pulai.

<sup>18</sup>The term "Emergency" is derived from the British Colonial Government's declaration in June 1948 of a state of emergency throughout the country, following the decision by the Malayan Communist Party (whose members were mostly Chinese) to resort to an armed struggle and violence after failing to overthrow the Colonial Government. For more information on this, refer Kay Kim Khoo and Aduan Hj. Nawang (1984) and Stubbs (1989) among other works.

<sup>19</sup>As part of counter-insurgency measures adopted during the Emergency by the British Colonial Government in the early 1950s, "new villages" comprising Chinese squatters in controlled settlements were established together with the enforcement of food control. An estimated half a million Chinese were

under a forced relocation program (cf., Short 1975: 391-415; Strauch 1981: 60-73).

Conversations as well as interviews with the Peranakan Chinese elders suggest that the majority of today's Peranakan Chinese have been in Kelantan in their present settlements since four to eight generations ago. Evidence for this has been found on the domestic ancestral altars, where all their Malaysian ancestors are worshipped.

No stories were told of Peranakan Chinese claiming "Orang Asli"<sup>20</sup> ('Original/Primitive People' or 'aborigines') maternal ancestors. The "Orang Asli" who were descendants of aboriginal Mon-Khmer population, were pushed into the remote interior areas of Kelantan by ancestors of the present day Malays, long before the arrival of the early Chinese settlers. The Peranakan Chinese were never far from the banks of the Kelantan River. "Orang Asli" settlements were not to be found in the vicinity of such "civilized" environments.

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resettled in over 550 "new villages." These settlements became permanent townships after the Emergency ended in July 1960.

<sup>20</sup>The "Orang Asli" who are mainly of Mon stock represent the oldest element in the country's population and are commonly divided into three broad groups: the nomadic hunting and gathering "Negritos" in the northern and central regions, the semi-nomadic "Senoi" of the central area, who practice a form of shifting cultivation, and the so-called "Jakuns" of the southern part of the peninsula, often labelled as "Proto-Malays."

The "Orang Asli" are classified in Malaysian Population Censuses under the inclusive Malay category. The government has encouraged the settlement of the "Orang Asli" in permanent farming villages but has met with only modest success.

Unlike some of the Pulai Chinese males who had married "Orang Asli" women in the early part of their ethnic history (Middlebrook 1933: 153), the Peranakan Chinese have no such memories. The Galas region in which Pulai is situated had been the heartland of Kelantan's "Orang Asli" concentration. Contacts with "Orang Asli" were inevitable. Carstens (1980: 58) reported that today's Pulai Chinese are embarrassed to admit the early Chinese-"Orang Asli" intermarriages. As for the case of the Peranakan Chinese, there was no reason for them to feel so on such an issue because they never intermarried with "Orang Asli" women.

Liaisons with Siamese women became less frequent when Peranakan Chinese endogamy became the common norm for marriage in the later part of their ethnic history. Village endogamy was most likely the first development of such Peranakan Chinese endogamy. There is evidence for this since almost the entire population of a Peranakan Chinese settlement were related. Gradually, some wandering out of the settlement to other settlements by the men who dominated the public side of life took place. This could have been the beginning of the Peranakan Chinese endogamy in a wider geographical context. This kind of Peranakan Chinese endogamy was very much preferred then, and even now it is still so, because of the cultural similarity among these Peranakan Chinese settlements of Kelantan. It cannot be denied that the continuing existence of Peranakan Chinese endogamy<sup>21</sup> is a further

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<sup>21</sup>Endogamy is no doubt an essential feature of a group's ethnicity/identity. It helps to preserve the ethnic homogeneity of most of the units making up an ethnic group, thus assuring the inheritance of the culture of the society from one generation to another. At the same time, marriage within an endogamous culture inevitably enhances cultural uniformity.

determinant of the community's isolation from the wider Chinese society of Kelantan.

#### 2.4 THE CHINESE SOCIETY OF KELANTAN

The ethnic composition of Kelantan is not representative of that of Malaysia, which is approximately 55% Malay, 34% Chinese, and 10% Indian (which includes other South Asians), to mention the three main races. Kelantan is overwhelmingly Malay. According to the 1980 Population Census, the Malays constitute some 93%, the Chinese 5%, and the Indians 0.5% of a population of almost a million people.

The Malays form the predominant ethnic group in Malaysia. A distinction may be drawn between those Malays long settled in the country, especially the Malays of the east coast of the peninsula, e.g., Kelantan and Terengganu, and those who crossed the Straits of Melaka from Sumatra and settled in considerable numbers during the later part of the 19th and in the 20th centuries (Information Malaysia 1990-91 Yearbook 1990: 74).

In other words, the Malays of Kelantan are not of the stock of those who migrated since the 1850s from Sumatra, and other places from the region, especially Java and the Celebes. Ethnic groups from Java and the Celebes such as the Javanese, Banjarese, Boyanese and Bugis are regarded as Malays since racially and culturally they are similar, and above all, they profess the same religion, Islam.

Broadly speaking, the various ethnic groups in Malaysia fall into two main categories: "Bumiputra" ('Prince of the soil' or 'indigenous') are those with cultural affinities indigenous to the region (the Malay archipelago) and to one another, and "Non-Bumiputra" are those whose cultural affinities lie outside the Malay archipelago.

Arab, Indian and Pakistani Muslims who have settled in the country, have been legally, and to a certain limited degree, socially incorporated into the "bumiputra" community.

#### 2.4.1 Kelantan: Background Information

In historical terms,<sup>22</sup> Kelantan's politics by the beginning of the 19th century, were dominated by the Thais, as well as the Malays of Terengganu (Wyatt 1974; Sallch 1987; Saripan 1987). By 1900, Kelantan was recognized as a

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<sup>22</sup>From the point of view of research into the earliest cultural history of the Kelantan Malays, Benjamin (1987: 122) is of the strong opinion that Kelantan belongs more (though not exclusively) to the non-Malay world lying to the north than the Malay world to the south. Rentse ((1939)1986: 311; (1947)1986: 15-16) shares the same view (as quoted in Benjamin 1987: 122).

Benjamin claims that a partial confirmation of this view lies in the common recognition that "high culture" features such as the Kelantan "Mak Yong" ('dance drama') are essentially mainland traditions, finding their closest relatives in Thailand and Cambodia.

Cambodians, especially the Muslim Chams, have been known to sail across the Gulf of Thailand to maintain links with the people of Kelantan as well as to settle there. A place called "Chepa" in Kelantan is believed to have been such a settlement. I was told by the villagers that a Cambodian shrine was excavated in the area recently.

Mon has been one of the earliest languages of civilization in mainland Southeast Asia. A large number of inscriptions and other documents were written in Mon between the 6th and 16th centuries. Mon influence was also supreme in the Isthmian region.

The culture, of especially the court in early Kelantan, must have been Mon at one point of its history. Kelantan lies just on the borderline between the Austro-asiatic world in the north and the Austronesian world in the south. This situates Kelantan between the Mon and Malay world cultural traditions.

tributary state of Thailand, where a token of alliance and/or admission of Thai suzerainty in the form of "bunga emas"<sup>23</sup> ('golden flowers') was sent triannually to the Thais. It was only in 1909, as a result of a treaty reached between Thailand and Britain, that the overlordship of Kelantan was assumed by the British.

Kelantan together with Kedah and Perlis (in the far north) and Terengganu (on the east coast) had developed differently from the other states in the peninsula. This was due to the indirect rule of the British until 1909 when the British, bound both by the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1826, and their imperial policies, were committed to non-intervention of the affairs of these states (also known as "Malay Siamese States"). Siam's position in these states, especially Kelantan and Terengganu was dubiously defined under the 1826 treaty (Emerson 1979: 228-9). These states were left in a shadowy borderline of independence between the British and Siamese.

The differences between the developments of the west coast (the Straits Settlements<sup>24</sup> of Melaka, Pulau Pinang, and Singapore, as well as the Federated Malay States<sup>25</sup> of Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang) and the east

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<sup>23</sup>The golden flowers were accompanied by "bunga perak" ('silver flowers') and other costly gifts, weapons, cloth, and slaves. The necessary funds for these gifts were raised by the imposition of a poll tax on the inhabitants of the state.

<sup>24</sup>These settlements were founded by the British to further their trade with China. The British merchants viewed the Malay states, especially the ones on the west coast of the peninsula, as potential fields of investments, and the Straits Settlements became the springboard for British expansion into the Malay Peninsula.

<sup>25</sup>The "Sultans" ('Kings' or 'Rulers') of the four states accepted British Residents as advisors, who were accountable to the Resident-General, who in turn was responsible to the British Governor of the Straits Settlements. The

coast (the Unfederated Malay States<sup>26</sup> of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Terengganu, and Johor) were significant in various aspects. The Unfederated Malay States, besides having not formed any single political entity as their negative title indicates, continued to exist as independent monarchies and, were economically backward, except for Johor.

Another salient aspect of the differences was the low non-Malay population. Except for Johor, these four states saw little increase in their non-Malay population. As for Kelantan, the state which was essentially rural and agricultural had little to attract the Chinese immigrants of the large scale influx of the mid 19th and early 20th centuries who were more interested in mining and commercial activities. The immigrants from Sumatra, Java, and the Celebes too did not penetrate far enough to reach Kelantan. Being both rural and agricultural, there was little demand for labor unlike the west coast states which were more economically developed by the British since their formal intervention in 1874.

Even when Kelantan was placed under British rule exclusively in 1909, they pursued policies which were ostensibly favorable to the Malays. The British did not encourage either commercial development or non-Malay immigration which would have transformed the overwhelmingly Malay peasant society (Kessler 1978: 22-23; Milne and Mauzy 1986: 20). This policy of

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only sphere of advice that the "Sultans" were not obliged to follow was matters on Islam and the Malay customs.

<sup>26</sup>In 1909, by the Treaty of Bangkok or the popularly known Anglo-Siamese Treaty, the remaining five Malay states in the peninsula were transferred to British rule, and in time, all the "Sultans" ('Kings' or 'Rulers')) accepted British Advisors.

the British was in marked difference to that which prevailed in the Federated Malay States, and, of course, the Straits Settlements.

Besides the discouragement by the British, Kelantan's geographical isolation, cut off from the more developed western part of the country, by thick forest and steep mountain terrain, was yet another reason for it to be neglected in the early part of its social history.

The geographical isolation was also responsible for the unique<sup>27</sup> characteristics of the culture of the Malays of Kelantan (Firth 1966; Downs 1967; Nash 1974). The Malays of other states, especially the west coast states, perceive Kelantan Malays as being quite different from them. The Malays of Kelantan also note differences between themselves and the Malays of other states.

Due to the long period of geographical isolation from the west coast states and other states far south of the peninsula, communication with them was limited. Instead, close ties with the southern part of Thailand, especially

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<sup>27</sup>Could this uniqueness have been also due to the one-time Mon cultural influence? The Malay states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Patani (in southern Thailand) were virtually unmentioned in the earlier indigenous Malay literary texts, which in effect regarded only Perak and Terengganu as the northernmost extent of the "Alam Melayu" ('Malay World') (Benjamin 1987: 121).

Mon influence linguistically was evident in the form of the language of Theravada Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia and the Isthmian region. The inhabitants of the Isthmian region were Mon until the northern Thais conquered it in the 13th and 14th centuries. As indicated by archaeological evidence, Buddhism had been practiced in the region (Bougas 1986: 85).

The Thai spoken in southern Thailand is said to contain a significant number of Mon lexicon not found in other dialects of Thai (Benjamin 1987: 124). In Kelantanese Malay, at least one word shows Mon influence: the name of a river "Sungai Lebir" ('Lebir River'). The Mon word for river or sea is "lebir" (ibid.).

Patani, an important trading centre as well as a center of Islam, were forged. Together with Patani, Kelantan formed a distinct region of a Malay world which did not identify much with the Malay world of the rest of the country. This often leads Malays from other states to view the Malay culture of Kelantan as being uniquely traditional.

Kelantan is well known for its conservative commitment to Islam, which is expressed in various forms. However, it is in Kelantan that another religion, Buddhism, that has been able to flourish, co-exist with Islam. It should be pointed out that however, it has to operate within a Muslim and Malay-dominated social and cultural milieu. There are some 20 Buddhist temples located in the midst of Malay populated areas (Ismail 1990: 56). An interesting point about this is that the appointment of the chief monk and district ecclesiastical heads in the Kelantan "Sangha" ('Buddhist Order of Monks') is endorsed by the "Sultan" ('King' or 'Ruler') of Kelantan, who is also the sponsor of Islam in the state. The letters of appointment from the Sultan symbolize the patronage of a Malay/Muslim ruler (Ismail 1987: 242).

#### **2.4.2 Two Groups of Chinese: Town and Village**

Generally, the Chinese in Kelantan can be divided into two distinct groups. These groups are known locally as "Cina Bandar" ('Town Chinese') and "Cina Kampung" ('Village Chinese') unlike elsewhere in Malaysia where the Chinese are known by their speech groups: Hokkien, Hakka, Cantonese, Teochew, and Hainanese, to name a few. These labels for the Chinese of Kelantan reflect the fact that most of the "Cina Kampung" live in villages while most of the "Cina Bandar" live in towns, and they also embody an ethnic division which in turn

reflects the lengthy and complex pattern of Chinese settlement in Kelantan (Winzeler 1985: 14).

Upon closer observation, the categorization of these two groups is based essentially on cultural criteria. The first group also known by other names: "Cina" ('Chinese'), "Cina Luar" ('Outside Chinese'), and "Cina Benua" ('Chinese of the Chinese Continent'), refers to relatively recent immigrants and their descendants, mainly residing in urban and semi-urban areas.<sup>28</sup> These Chinese are seen by the other ethnic groups in Kelantan as generally maintaining the Chinese culture, and ignorant of traditional Kelantan Malay culture. Generally the Malays show a strong prejudice against members of this category. The second group also known by various other names: "Cina Kelantan"<sup>29</sup> ('Kelantan Chinese'), "Cina Asli Kelantan" ('Indigenous Kelantan Chinese'), "Cina Tempatan/Sini" ('Local Chinese'), and "Orang Cina Kita" ('Our Very Own Chinese'), refers to descendants of earlier waves of small scale migration from China. They usually co-reside in the countryside with the Malays, and assimilate traditional Kelantan Malay customs, code of courtesy, and culture into their behavior. Unlike the first group, these Chinese are perceived by the Kelantan Malays as non-threatening to their well-being.

The Siamese of Kelantan label the second group of Chinese, i.e., the 'Village Chinese' as "Ciin Bog/Ban" ('Rural Chinese'), "Ciin (Tong) Ni"

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<sup>28</sup>In this dissertation, the labels 'mainstream Chinese' and 'Town Chinese' are used interchangeably to refer to this group of Chinese.

<sup>29</sup>The Kelantan Peranakan Chinese are seldom referred to as just "Cina" or "Ciin" by the local Malays and Thais respectively. The label "Cina" or "Ciin" is considered derogatory by the Peranakan Chinese. If interjected with a jeering tone, it becomes an epithet. "Cina/Ciin + ....." (e.g., "Cina Sini," or "Ciin Raw") is a label of deference.

('Chinese of Here') or "Ciin Raw" ('Our Chinese') and the first group, i.e., the 'Town Chinese' as "Ciin Muang" ('Chinese from the Chinese Continent') or "Ciin Nok" ('Outside' or 'Foreign Chinese').

The Chinese of Kelantan, whether they are "Cina Kampung" ('Village Chinese') or "Cina Bandar" ('Town Chinese') are more assimilated<sup>30</sup> to the Malays in comparison to the Chinese in other states of the country, especially on the west coast. Various reasons could be suggested for this higher degree of assimilation of the Kelantan Chinese. One of the main reasons is that Kelantan has always been overwhelmingly Malay with the Malay ethnic group forming about 90% of the population. The other reason being that the majority of the Kelantan Chinese were not part of the large scale flow of the Chinese immigrants brought in by the British in the mid 19th and early 20th centuries. They had migrated to Kelantan on their own from various provinces in southeastern China long before the 19th century.

Between "Cina Kampung" ('Village Chinese') and "Cina Bandar" ('Town Chinese') where there are some noticeable cultural differences, the former is more oriented toward Kelantan Malay culture. The main factor responsible for this is the predominantly Malay environment which is found mostly in the countryside. Since most of the Kelantan Malay population live in the countryside, "Cina Bandar" ('Town Chinese') have less opportunity for interaction with the local Malays.

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<sup>30</sup>Assimilation should also be seen as a social process measured by the degree and intensity of social interaction. The degree and intensity of interaction with the Malays are higher in the case of "Cina Kampung" or the Peranakan Chinese.

The majority of the Kelantan Chinese are of the Hokkien speech group, which amount to some 60% of the Chinese population of the state. Hence Hokkien is the *lingua franca* of the Kelantan Chinese. "Cina Bandar" ('Town Chinese') are from various Chinese speech groups, but "Cina Kampung" ('Village Chinese') are solely Hokkien.<sup>31</sup>

The Hokkien spoken by the Chinese of Kelantan, even by the "Cina Bandar" ('Town Chinese') shows some degree of influence from Kelantanese Malay. Speakers of Hokkien from other states in the country, especially the west coast states, find Kelantanese Hokkien to contain a high degree of Malay influence, which at times impedes comprehensibility.

#### 2.4.3 The Term "Peranakan"

These highly assimilated countryside Chinese were not known as Peranakan Chinese until very recently, when they became subjects of research. Tan (1982) is the first local researcher to label them as Peranakan Chinese. Earlier studies mainly by foreign researchers, such as Kershaw (1973), Golomb (1978), Raybeck (1980), and Winzler (1976, 1981) did not employ the term "Peranakan." However, Kershaw (1981) uses the term "Peranakan," although in his 1973 work, he applies the term "Thai-Chinese." Dollah (1978/1986), another local researcher, did not use the term either to label these Chinese,

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<sup>31</sup>It has been cited in oral histories of the Peranakan Chinese that in the early part of their ethnic formation, a very small number of non-Hokkien men assimilated into and assumed Hokkien identity so as to be part of the larger farmer Hokkien society. These non-Hokkien men also married Siamese women. The Peranakan Chinese community of Alor Tar (or "Pha Khi Lek") in the district of Tumpat, bears an instance of such a case which is often cited by many Peranakan Chinese elders. The Chinese men who pioneered "Pha Khi Lek" were said to be of the Hakka speech group.

but used the term "kampung" meaning 'village' or 'rural' as did Golomb, Raybeck, and Winzeler.

Due to their close relationship with the Siamese, historically through intermarriage, and contemporarily by patronizing Siamese temples and participating in Buddhist rites and ceremonies, as well as being kinsmen in some instances by virtue of various marriages between these two groups, these Chinese are often referred to as "Hokkien-Siam" ('Siamese Hokkiens') by the 'Town Chinese', and "Ciin-Thai" ('Thai Chinese') by the local Siamese population. In other words, being linked to the Siamese mainly by virtue of being members in the same religious community, they are labelled Thai hyphenated Hokkiens/Chinese. More specifically, this term is better employed to Peranakan Chinese in areas of mixed Chinese-Thai population in the district of Tumpat.

Furthermore, some Peranakan Chinese are knowledgeable in the local Thai language and tend to use it along with Kelantanese Malay and their own version of Hokkien in daily village conversations among themselves.

In discussing the Chinese of Semarang, Indonesia, Willmott (1960: 14) observed that a group of Chinese, whom he calls "Kampung Chinese" ('Rural Chinese'), has closer and higher frequency of contact with their indigenous Indonesian neighbors than do the urban Chinese. These "Kampung Chinese" ('Rural Chinese') live in Indonesian-style houses and lead a similar way of life as their indigenous neighbors.

Tan's (1982: 31) employment of the term "Peranakan" for these Chinese probably stemmed from his extensive research on the Baba<sup>32</sup> of Melaka, another group of highly assimilated Chinese in peninsular Malaysia, which exhibits some parallels to the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese. It cannot be denied that both these Chinese of Kelantan and the Baba of Melaka, and their descendants adopted the behavioral pattern, cultural traditions, and way of life of the indigenous host society. The Baba of Melaka were known as "Straits Chinese" or "Straits-born Chinese." The Baba of Melaka also identify themselves as "Peranakan" or "Baba-Peranakan." Besides Melaka, there are also Baba in Pulau Pinang and Singapore. However, these Baba underwent different ethnic development, and are today not culturally identical to the Baba of Melaka. The Pulau Pinang Baba<sup>33</sup> are more Chinese culturally, whereas the Singapore Baba became anglicized in their culture. Pulau Pinang Baba culture has developed quite independently of Melaka Baba, and so has Singapore Baba. Both have till this day, retained their distinctive qualities. However, the Melaka Baba are regarded by the Baba of these two places as "true Baba" (Tan 1988a: 15-16).

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<sup>32</sup>The mainstream Chinese use the labels "Baba" and "Peranakan Chinese" in a derogatory sense. "Baba" and "Peranakan" have become metaphors of Malay assimilation to them.

The term "Baba" is of Middle Eastern (probably Turkish) origin meaning 'father', 'grandfather', or 'venerable man'. Tan (1988a: 13) claims that it was introduced to Southeast Asia through India. The term was originally not used by the Baba themselves but was applied to them by the indigenous people of the region.

In Kelantan, the term "baba" is used by the Malays as an address/reference term for respected old mainstream Chinese men.

<sup>33</sup>These Baba were believed to have links with the Hokkiens of Rangoon, Burma, thus, adding another dimension to their ethnic development, and turning them into more Chinese Baba.

A large portion of Hokkiens dominated the earlier phase of migration to Southeast Asia.

The highly assimilated Chinese of Java, Indonesia are also known as "Peranakan." In Malaysia, besides being used to label Chinese who have undergone substantial assimilative change, the term "Peranakan" is also employed for labelling offspring of unions between immigrant Arab, Indian and Pakistani Muslim males and Malay women. These "Jawi Peranakan"<sup>34</sup> speak Malay as their first language. By virtue of a shared religion, they have moved closer to the Malay community and assumed Malay identity after only a generation.

The Chitty community of Melaka, also known as "Straits-born Hindu" is another "Peranakan" group. The term "Peranakan Hindu" has been used on them (cf., Rebeendran 1977). These Indians portray themselves as a people who have "lost" their original mother tongue, presumably Tamil. The dominant language of this group is a form of Malay<sup>35</sup> which has been the case for several generations in most households. Their social and cultural beliefs as well as practices are Malay influenced.

The rural Chinese of Kelantan have never used the term "Peranakan" to identify themselves. They are also not referred to by that term by others, except for a few scholars who have studied and are studying them. They call themselves "T'ng Lang"<sup>36</sup> ('People of the Tang Dynasty') which simply means

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<sup>34</sup>See also footnote 7 in Chapter I.

<sup>35</sup>The mother tongue of the Chitty community of Melaka is a form of Malay which is very similar to that used by the Baba of Melaka, except that a fairly large number of Indian (Tamil) words have been incorporated into the vocabulary. The intonation, rhythm, and style of the language are entirely Malay (Narinasamy 1983: 256).

<sup>36</sup>Just as all the other members of the different dialect/language groups regard themselves as members of the Malaysian Chinese society, the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan also regard themselves as belonging to the

'Chinese', and mainstream Chinese or 'Town Chinese' as "T'ng Sua Lang" ('People of the Chinese Continent'), and will only identify themselves as hyphenated Chinese or Chinese with qualification such as "Thai-Chinese," "Siamese Hokkien," "Rural Chinese," "Village Chinese" or "Countryside Chinese," when asked to distinguish themselves vis-à-vis the mainstream Chinese, the less assimilated Chinese of Kelantan, who are generally found residing in urban or semi-urban areas. Most of them became aware of the term "Peranakan" only when a community association with the main aim of providing an internal social structure for these so-called Peranakan Chinese: "Persatuan Peranakan Cina Kelantan" ('Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Association'), was formed in August 1987 at the Kulim Buddhist Temple (Wat Pracacinaram), in the district of Tumpat.

The term "Peranakan" is now used only for two formal purposes: (i) academic - a term employed by scholars and students for people of Chinese descent in insular Southeast Asia to distinguish the more assimilated ("Peranakan") from the less assimilated ones ("non-Peranakan"), and (ii) cultural/identity - a term used by the more acculturated Chinese ("Peranakan") in peninsular Malaysia to distinguish their sociocultural life from that of the less assimilated Chinese ("non-Peranakan"). When addressed on these occasions as "Peranakan," however, these rural Kelantan Chinese do not seem to take offence.

Tan (1988b: 8, 1991: 40) has decided to rename them as "Peranakan-type Chinese," since they do not self-identify themselves as "Peranakan" at all in

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Malaysian Chinese society, and not the Peranakan Chinese community of Malaysia.

casual situations (unless in the two stated earlier), except for a few educated ones who are aware of such use of the term in researches (cf., Tan 1982; Teo 1992a, 1992b) and in the literature on the people of Chinese descent in Southeast Asia. The ready acceptance of the term by some of these Chinese may be due to a desire to be identified with the wider Peranakan Chinese society in peninsular Malaysia, especially the Melaka Baba who are studied extensively, thus receiving much publicity nationwide.

A distinctive characteristic of these Chinese which tends to differentiate them from the other Peranakan Chinese in Southeast Asia is that besides being highly or extensively assimilated to the Malays, they are also extensively assimilated to another indigenous group of Southeast Asia: the Thais. These Chinese are known so far as the only group among people of Chinese descent to have been assimilated to two indigenous groups with equal influence (cf., Winzeler 1985: 22).

#### **2.4.4 Peranakan Chinese Settlements**

Peranakan Chinese settlements are mostly found on both banks of the Kelantan River, as riverside villages, from the river mouth upstream to around Kuala Krai. There are Peranakan Chinese settlements in all districts in the state. These settlements exist among Malay and Thai settlements, and are generally seldom exclusively Chinese. Most of these houses, spaced out unevenly, are in a linear pattern facing the Kelantan River. There are also a considerable number of Peranakan Chinese houses that are not directly situated along the Kelantan River.

There are at least some forty seven<sup>37</sup> known Peranakan Chinese settlements in Kelantan (Mesyuarat Agung Persatuan Peranakan Cina Kelantan Kali Yang Ke-2 1991: 8-9). The district of *Bachok* has seven such settlements: Balai, Tawang/Jencrak, Kemudi/Pengkalan Cina, Senang/Jelawat, Mujur, Bekelam and Bukit Hanyut/Gunung. There are eleven settlements, namely Kampung Cina,<sup>38</sup> Sering/Pengkalan Datu, Chepa, Sabak/Pulau Gajah/Tebing Tinggi, Pasir Ara/Pasir Tumbuh, Peringat, Pendek/Salor, Aur Duri/Betong, Keladang, Lohong/Pulau Belangga, and Tok Kong in the *Kota Bharu* district.

Batu Jong, and Bedal are the only settlements in the district of *Kuala Krai*. In the district of *Machang* are settlements such as Mata Ayer, Joh, Temangan/Pasir Senor, and Kampung Cina/Chekok/Tok Chuba. Pasir Parit, Chetok/Semubal, Kelar/Lemal, Kasar, Sakar, and Tendong are settlements in the *Pasir Mas* district. There are three settlements in *Pasir Putih* district: Bukit Yong, Bukit Tok Chik, and the outskirts of the town of Pasir Putih.

Pasir Pinji, Cherang Lali, Jelatok, Banggol Kemunting, Pulau Raya, and Padang Bonggor are settlements in the district of *Tanah Merah*. The district of

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<sup>37</sup>This figure is not absolute and may expand in the near future when new settlements are located. At times two or three settlements are combined into one for the purpose of administration of the 'Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Association'. Some of these small settlements may consist of only one household (e.g., Alor Tar or "Pha Khi Lek" in the district of Tumpat), while the large ones comprise some 100 households (e.g., Pasir Parit or "Badna" in the district of Pasir Mas).

<sup>38</sup>Kampung Cina or its Chinese name "E Pho" ('Lower Settlement/Town' on the Kelantan River) is an old riverside settlement in the outskirts of the capital town of Kota Bharu. It is the lowermost Peranakan Chinese settlement along the Kelantan River while the Joh region is the uppermost settlement. The Peranakan Chinese of Kampung Cina have been assimilated or absorbed into the larger mainstream Chinese society of Kelantan.

*Tumpat* has nine such settlements, namely Kutan, Wakaf Bharu/Kulim, Kampung Tengah, Chenderong Batu, Kebakat, Berangan, Cherang, Taman Sri Delima, and Cabang Empat. There are also Peranakan Chinese residing in the district of *Gua Musang*.

Kershaw (1981: 84) estimated that there were some 10,000 Peranakan Chinese in Kelantan. Ismail (1987: 243) estimated that Peranakan Chinese constituted about 50% of the total Chinese population of Kelantan, or roughly 24,000.<sup>39</sup> It is difficult to determine from census figures the (exact) size of the Peranakan Chinese population in the state. Population Census conducted in Malaysia every ten years does not sub-categorize the Chinese in Malaysia into categories like Peranakan Chinese, Baba Chinese or mainstream Chinese. Instead the Chinese are sub-categorized according to their speech groups: Hokkien, Hakka, and Teochew, to name three. The "Persatuan Peranakan Cina Kelantan" ('Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Association') is currently carrying out a population census in the 47 settlements.

#### 2.4.5 Urbanized Peranakan Chinese

The Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan is an essentially rural phenomenon,<sup>40</sup> and this is reflected in their residence and the preference for a rural milieu

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<sup>39</sup>Ismail did not provide the figure, but based on the 1980 Population Census of Kelantan, there were 47,911 Chinese.

<sup>40</sup>Unlike the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese, the Baba are an urban group which is reflected in residence, occupation, material culture, and preference for an urban milieu for their life style. In the past when they were British subjects, Baba had social clubs of their own where they played billiards and bowled, and into which they would not admit other Chinese.

However, there are some small groups of Baba residing in the rural areas of Melaka.

for their way of life. However, as communications improved, small groups of Peranakan Chinese moved to the towns or semi-urban areas. Most of the Peranakan Chinese who left their villages for employment in towns work mainly as laborers, where they form a lower economic strata. Some take up shopkeeping alongside the 'Town Chinese' or mainstream Chinese. However, they are small scale traders when compared to the 'Town Chinese' entrepreneurs. Still, these "urbanized" rural (Peranakan) Chinese are not difficult to distinguish as a distinct group at all. Their physical features, dress, and language are real bearings on their Peranakan Chinese identity.

With more and better educational opportunities, more importantly when in the mid 1970s, the education system of the country was based upon a Malay perception of nation building, a significant number of Peranakan Chinese children have entered secondary and tertiary education. Their long time association with Malay culture is undoubtedly one of the factors for their success in a Malay oriented education system. A significant number of them became school teachers, clerks, and other middle income salaried bureaucrats. Some of these "educated" Peranakan Chinese chose to live in urban or semi-urban areas of the state, oftentimes in predominantly Malay sections. These Peranakan Chinese feel out of place in areas dominated by urban Chinese with whom they are not able to communicate, and differ extensively in their social worlds.

Some Peranakan Chinese girls married urban (mainstream) Chinese husbands, took up residence in urban areas, and in time became "urbanized." In time, probably due to pressure from their mainstream Chinese husbands and in-laws, these girls assimilated themselves to a "purer" Chinese mode of

life-style. They could have acquired standard or mainstream Hokkien or even Mandarin, which would then have enabled them to resinify - a process by which they increasingly come to identify with the wider Chinese society of Malaysia. However, their ancestral homes and families are still in the village, and their physical features are overt markers of Peranakan Chinese identity.

However, Peranakan Chinese have failed to establish a dominant, collective urban presence. Thus, they lack dominance and political power, and have yet to become a cohesive social force.

#### **2.4.6 Contemporary Peranakan Chinese Economy**

Economically and agriculturally, these Chinese are tied to the land.<sup>41</sup> It is estimated that for about twenty five miles on both sides of the Kelantan River, much of the land is occupied and owned by Peranakan Chinese. These Chinese practise a form of "dusun" ('orchard') and "kebun sayur" ('vegetable farm') farming that is basically similar to that of the neighboring Malay peasants. What is produced is consumed by the household and nearby relatives, and the surplus sold. This has been the case for several generations.

Dollah (1986: 68-69) provides a detailed description of the general pattern of agricultural activities of the Peranakan Chinese along the Kelantan River. He divides the settlements of these Chinese into three regions: upper course, mid course, and lower course of the Kelantan River. In the upper course region, rubber is the main crop, while rubber together with rice are

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<sup>41</sup>Income is oftentimes supplemented by waged labor obtained from outside their settlements.

the principal crops in the mid course region. Vegetable cultivation is important in the lower course region.

Some Peranakan Chinese work on Malay-owned rice land as share-croppers under the "pawah" system. "Pawah" ('divide into two') is basically a system whereby the rent of a piece of land is paid for by the tenant by handing over a portion, generally half, of the harvest to the land owner. This system is also applied to domestic animals, particularly cattle and buffaloes, where the offspring of the "pawah" animals are shared between the Malay owners of the animals and the Peranakan Chinese. Oftentimes, Peranakan Chinese also operate on this system between themselves.

Animals like pigs, cattle, fowls, and pigs are raised. Pigs are raised mainly for ritual slaughter and feasts, especially village feasts, like Chinese New Year celebration and other selected key Chinese festivals. Generally, Peranakan Chinese seldom consume pork on a daily basis. Pork is principally an item for ritual purposes. This is also true for alcohol. This almost non-existence of pork eating habit, unless really necessary during festivals, may be seen as a way of their respecting the Malay neighbors and surroundings. When pigs are reared for ritual purposes, very special care is taken so as not to let the pigs wander into Malay land and compounds. The Peranakan Chinese also do not want to offend the Malays who may have to visit or pass through their settlements. For this reason, pigs are penned in heavily camouflaged sheds.

Peranakan Chinese occupational patterns are more in line with that of the local Malays: typically peasants, "peraih" ('petty traders'),<sup>42</sup> and waged laborers for the non-educated, and low and mid salaried bureaucrats for the educated.

#### 2.4.7 Peranakan Chinese Kinship System

The basic unit of the Peranakan Chinese society is the household: the family grouping that shares a common residence, maintains a common altar and pools resources and labor in a common domestic economy (Winzeler 1985: 34). Their social customs are evidence of certain principles associated with traditional Chinese patrilineal descent. E.g., the Peranakan Chinese maintain the practice of children using their fathers' surnames to denote membership in the patrilineage. The traditional Chinese way of naming a child with three names has always been practiced. Children are also given names expressing good qualities and excellent virtues. Providing the right name for a child is of paramount importance to the Chinese. It is believed that the name given can influence the future fortunes of the child.

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<sup>42</sup>Peranakan Chinese have yet to possess a "big-time trader mentality." Peranakan Chinese are perceived by mainstream Chinese as inherently less capable and less hardworking businessmen.

Peranakan Chinese lack credit opportunities due to their rural as well as low income status. On the other hand, mainstream Chinese can ascribe part of their success to having a higher degree of mutual aid. There is more financial as well as moral support given among mainstream Chinese, oftentimes through clan or surname associations. Peranakan Chinese do not have such clan or surname associations, and usually are not members of such associations owned by the mainstream Chinese.

The cultural and linguistic differences widely felt by both groups are a hindrance toward mutual aid.

Marriages taking place between the same surname/family name<sup>43</sup> are discouraged - this is yet another traditional Chinese lineal descent adhered to by the Peranakan Chinese. However, matrilineal residence is common and considered normal in Peranakan Chinese society. This is not normal among mainstream Chinese. The reason for this could be traced historically when Chinese males, the forefathers of the Peranakan Chinese, married matrilineally into Siamese families (cf., Chia 1983: 24-25; Tan 1988a: 206 for some parallels in the Baba society of Melaka).

The western wedding dress and lounge suit are adopted as the standard marriage attire at Peranakan Chinese weddings. The Chinese almanac known as "tongshu" is referred to by them to select days for auspicious events, like weddings.

Peranakan Chinese prefer to marry within their own group, and improved internal communications in Kelantan have enabled them to conclude marriage arrangements<sup>44</sup> with the various scattered Peranakan Chinese communities in previously inaccessible remote places.

Like other Chinese groups, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese share basically a Chinese (Hokkien to be specific) kinship system. Though having strong cultural links to the local Malays and Thais, they do not adopt their kinship systems.

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<sup>43</sup>Those Chinese who follow this custom strictly may even forbid a marriage if it can be shown that the bride and the groom of two different surnames (let alone one) possess a common ancestor within a larger group.

<sup>44</sup>Marriages are generally still arranged by parents.

## 2.5 PERANAKAN CHINESE IDENTITY AND CULTURE

In studying the ethnic identity of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan, a few criteria are used in identifying their ethnicity. Ethnic identity in this work refers to a person's identity as a member of an ethnic group, namely a group of people who feel they are part of a certain group, say A rather than B, and are willing to be identified as such, based on, among them, sociocultural and sociolinguistic criteria.

Besides self-ascription/identification by others (cf., Barth 1969: 13), objective criteria such as cultural features are the normal criteria used in describing the ethnicity of a group. Ethnic identity is often expressed through certain cultural symbols, of which language and religion are two important ones. Cultural attributes, such as customs, are also crucial in accounting for ethnic identity. An analysis of the identity of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan in this work emphasizes the cultural attribute aspect of ethnicity.

The group of Chinese under investigation here, have assimilated in most ways to the local Malays, and use different aspects of their culture to emphasize the "Peranakan" identity<sup>45</sup> and/or the "Chinese" one. In the case of these Chinese, there is a close relationship between assimilation and ethnicity.

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<sup>45</sup>"Peranakan" identity is something "new" with elements of Malay and Thai cultures adopted and incorporated, and re-integrated with elements of the Chinese culture. Thus, it is a combination of Malay, Thai and Chinese cultural elements.

### 2.5.1 Peranakan Chinese Ethnic Markers

"Persatuan Peranakan Cina Kelantan" ('Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Association') identifies its members as those who are at least second generation Kelantan born Chinese, speak "Village Chinese (Hokkien)"<sup>46</sup> and Kelantanese Malay as their main languages, and practice "Village Chinese culture" (Undang-undang Bagi Persatuan Peranakan Cina Kelantan 1989: 2).

The above criteria seem problematic for Peranakan Chinese living in predominantly Thai areas as in the district of Tumpat, who speak no Chinese but the local Thai language, and practice a culture more Thai than (Peranakan) Chinese. These Chinese identify themselves as Chinese and not Thai. The only Chinese ethnic marker that they have is their Chinese surnames which oftentimes have been combined with Thai given names. They live in Thai-styled houses but with "lian" ('Chinese couplets on red rice paper') pasted at the front doors, and the ancestral altars in the halls.

#### 2.5.1.1 Malay Behavior as Frontstage and Chinese Behavior as Backstage

Goffman's (1959) conceptions of impression management, as well as front and backstage analogies, are most useful in discussing the identity and culture of the Chinese of Kelantan (cf., Raybeck 1980: 251, Carsten 1986: 83-87). It is very apparent that most of the adopted aspects of Kelantan Malay culture are

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<sup>46</sup>In this work, it is known as Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien or Peranakan Hokkien.

frontstage for the Peranakan Chinese and backstage for the mainstream Chinese. As for the Chinese culture, it is backstage for the Peranakan Chinese but frontstage for the mainstream Chinese. This is a very important difference between these two groups of Chinese although both are more assimilated to the Malay culture and society than Chinese elsewhere in the country.

For the mainstream Chinese, wearing of Malay clothing, eating of Malay food, as well as Malay eating habits are generally confined to domestic or backstage settings. It is interesting to note that the very things which change in domestic setting: clothing, food and eating style - appear in different forms as important symbols of Chinese cultural identity during public or formal occasions (Carsten *ibid.*: 85).

Thus the same mainstream Chinese women who wear "kain" or "sarong" ('a piece of "batik" (floral) cloth worn like a long skirt') around their home, change to traditional Chinese style or western style pants and blouses on public occasions. Food served on these occasions, is generally distinctively Chinese in ingredients and presentation. Generally, no mainstream Chinese would eat with their hands in public settings.

By placing Chinese and Malay identities in public and domestic spheres respectively, mainstream Chinese define themselves as Chinese, while at the same time assimilating to certain selected Kelantan Malay cultural elements.

Frontstage or public behavior for the Peranakan Chinese includes adopting the following: dress - wear Malay style clothing; food - do not usually

eat pork or Chinese food prepared with pork in public places; language - speak Kelantanese Malay among themselves; and Malay mode of life-style - observe Malay customs as well as holidays.

Backstage or private behavior includes maintaining certain traditional Chinese religious beliefs and customs, which are confined only to the home. Peranakan Chinese feel comfortable eating pork in the privacy of their home or in places not spotted by Malays. Pig slaughtering for ritual purposes are done secretly in secluded places far from the Malay neighborhood. Chinese (Hokkien) or specifically the Peranakan Chinese version of Hokkien is mostly spoken in the domestic domain among themselves. Chinese holidays are observed privately in their homes.

"Malay behavior" takes a variety of forms: the use of Malay nicknames; adopting and appreciating Malay cultural performances like "dikir barat," ('rapping/verbal duel') "wayang kulit," ('shadow play') and "Mak Yong" ('dance drama') as well as "silat" - the Malay art of self defense; "latah" ('startling'),<sup>47</sup> greeting, swearing, and cursing in Kelantanese Malay among themselves; and the ability of Peranakan Chinese to behave in ways most appropriate to Malays.

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<sup>47</sup>Some observers have taken it to be a mental and/or nervous disorder, however the Malays regard it as an amusing behavior which is clearly distinguishable from insanity.

Whatever the case, there seems to be a strong association between "latah" and middle-aged as well as older women with little or no education, from a lower class, and rural milieu.

The origin of "latah" is startling. Some of the features of "latah" include disorganization of speech, involuntary utterance of obscenities, especially that of the female genitals, and a compulsion to mimic the speech and/or action of teasers.

See Kenny (1978, 1983, 1990) for more details.

Malay and/or Thai forms of entertainment generally follow marriage ceremonies as well as religious events. Chinese forms of entertainment like the traditional operas, are never popular with Peranakan Chinese. The reason is that they are not proficient in standard or mainstream Hokkien and thus are unable to follow the story-lines in them, which are generally based on classical and folk narratives from China. Proficiency in Kelantanese Malay and the local Thai language has certainly helped them acquire the cultural taste for Malay and Thai performing arts.

Besides their "Malay behavior," their physical features also distinguish them from the mainstream Chinese. It is when these aspects of their life are highlighted against that of the mainstream Chinese that they see themselves as a group apart, a distinct sub-ethnic identity.

#### **2.5.1.2. Physical Features**

Physical features can often give a general impression of a person's ethnic identity. The Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan generally have darker complexion, and appearance<sup>48</sup> similar to that of Malays and Thais. Therefore, they can physically pass off as Malay or Thai, especially so for the men since males of the three ethnic groups generally always wear western style clothes. In addition, the Peranakan Chinese have wider eyes and wavy hair when compared to the mainstream Chinese.

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<sup>48</sup>Baba have Chinese appearance.

These physical features, especially the darker complexion and Malay or Thai appearance, constitute overt markers of Peranakan Chinese identity. Even the Peranakan Chinese themselves at times cannot identify their fellow members, and thus mistake them as Malay or Thai.

Even more striking than their Malay physical attributes, is the way Peranakan Chinese walk, gesticulate, shake hands, eat, chew betel leaves and areca nuts, smoke "rokok daun" ('straw cigarettes'), sit and squat, expectorate, defecate, laugh, and talk. These are some of the "Malay behavior" exhibited by them (cf. Gosling 1964: 212; Nash 1974: 29).

### 2.5.1.3 Clothing

As a general rule, an older Peranakan Chinese woman wears "kain" or "sarong" ('a piece of "batik" (floral) cloth worn like a long skirt') and a short sleeve blouse publicly. This type of Peranakan Chinese women attire is a distinct and an important symbol of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese identity. It distinguishes them from the mainstream Chinese who usually do not dress in that fashion publicly.

As for the menfolk, especially the elderly, "kain pelekot" ('a piece of checked sheath worn like a long skirt') is a popular garment worn publicly with a western style shirt. Oftentimes, a headwear typically worn by Kelantan Malay men called "semutar" and/or a piece of cloth tied around the waist known as "batik lepas" ('a piece of floral cloth') may accompany such style of dressing. This type of attire is becoming a rare sight these days, as the men, old and middle-aged prefer to adopt western style clothes - slacks and shirts.

For the young Peranakan Chinese, boys and girls alike, the way of dressing has ceased to be a cultural marker in distinguishing them from the mainstream Chinese youngsters.

The young Peranakan Chinese perceive and identify the "kain" or "sarong" and the typical Peranakan Chinese short-sleeved blouse of the women, and the "kain pelekat," "semutar," or "batik lepas" as a form of attire for the elderly only. The association of "kain" or "sarong" with middle and old age can be observed when some married women begin to discard the western style dressing of skirts and slacks for the "kain" or "sarong" and typical Peranakan Chinese blouse. These kinds of clothing items are perceived as well as identified as a sign of "rural" ('backward/not modern'), and "uneducated" Peranakan Chinese femininity.

Another type of blouse which is worn with the "kain" or "sarong" at formal functions is the "baju bandung" (cf., Tan 1988a: 109-110, for comparison of "baju kebaya" of the Nyonya (female Baba) of Melaka). It is made from semi-transparent lace with a border of flowery embroidery sewn on the collar continuing down the front flaps as well as along the edges, and at times at the wrists of the long sleeves even. It is usually tight-fitting and worn as an overblouse over the "kain" or "sarong," reaching down to the hips. This typically Peranakan Chinese style "baju bandung" is not popularly worn by the Malay women however. They prefer the "baju kurung" and Malay-styled "baju kebaya" which are closely associated with Malay identity. In other words, Peranakan Chinese women detach themselves from the Malays by emphasizing the uniqueness of their "baju bandung."

The "baju bandung" has no buttons on it. Instead, three single or chained brooches called "kerongsang" are used to pin the two front flaps of the blouse together. It should be pointed out that the "baju bandung" is not as popularly worn by old Peranakan Chinese women now as before.

The color and design of the "kain" or "sarong" preferred by the women are symbolic of Peranakan Chinese identity. It is observed that Malay and Thai women have different tastes for color and design. Color symbolism is important to the Peranakan Chinese when deciding which "kain" or "sarong," "baju bandung" and blouse to wear for a particular occasion. Black, blue and green are Chinese symbols of mourning and grief.

As far as the Peranakan Chinese old women are concerned, dress is a strong cultural marker. In other words, dress which is a salient external/ethnic marker of the Peranakan Chinese community, is now largely confined to the elderly and middle-aged women.

#### **2.5.1.4 Food**

Food is another important overt cultural feature. Mainstream Chinese describe Peranakan Chinese food and eating habits as Malay and Siamese-like.

All Peranakan Chinese use their right hands to eat at meals in their homes. Chopsticks are not usually used at home because most Peranakan Chinese do not know how to use them. However, they generally keep a few

pairs of chopsticks to be used in traditional Chinese religious observances. Chopsticks are a symbol of Chinese identity.

Peranakan Chinese "sacrificial food," i.e., special dishes for offering to deities and ancestors on festive occasions, is not totally authentic Chinese cuisines. They do not know how to use Chinese ingredients in cooking anymore, let alone prepare Chinese dishes. Most of the time, their daily cooking at home is totally Malay or Siamese in style and ingredients.

Food served in Peranakan Chinese homes for guests are prepared with Malay/Thai ingredients such as "serai" ('lemon/citronella grass'), "lengkuas" ('a type of wild ginger'), and "budu" ('a typical Kelantan Malay anchovy/fish sauce') which are freely used in their daily cooking.

"Nasi kerabu"<sup>49</sup> ('rice which is colored blue or grey and mixed with "budu," spices, grated mackerel, coconut, and vegetables'), "nasi dagang" ('oily reddish glutinous or sweet rice served with meat and/or fish curry') and "nasi kunyit"<sup>50</sup> or "pulut kuning" ('saffron glutinous rice served with meat curry or sweetened grated coconut'), are popular Kelantan Malay cuisines served by Peranakan Chinese to their guests at feasts.

Pork for "sacrificial" and daily cooking is usually cooked in Chinese style, which often is not as authentically Chinese as it should be when

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<sup>49</sup>The Thais have a similar cuisine called "khau jam" which is mixed with herbs in addition to the mentioned ingredients.

<sup>50</sup>It is a Malay as well as Thai ritual food. There are many similarities between Malay and Thai traditions.

compared to the mainstream Chinese way of cooking. Pork is not always prepared in Malay styles of cooking since the consumption of pork is associated with Chinese or at least non-Malay identity.

Due to their ignorance in authentic Chinese cooking, Malay or Thai dishes have become regular food items offered during Chinese festive occasions. Only some selected festivals<sup>51</sup> are observed by them, such as Chinese New Year, All Souls' Day, Festival of the Hungry Ghosts, and Winter Solstice Festival.

#### 2.5.1.5 Residence

The houses<sup>52</sup> of the Peranakan Chinese, though unique in architecture, are oriented to Chinese geomantic principles. They are built in a distinct rectangular traditional style showing a mixture of Chinese, Malay, and Thai architectural patterns. These houses have saddle-shaped roofs, obviously a

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<sup>51</sup>The Chinese New Year is the most important festival in the Chinese calendar. It is an important time for family and kinmen reunions.

All Souls' Day is a time to honor and pay respect to one's deceased ancestors and family members at the ancestral altar in the home. It is also an occasion for the whole family to clean the graves of their forebears, or to visit (Buddhist) temples if the deceased were cremated.

Festival of the Hungry Ghost is another occasion to remember the deceased. It is especially meant for souls of the deceased believed to be wandering.

Winter Solstice Festival is celebrated by making and eating a sweet soup of glutinous/sweet rice flour balls of red/pink/white. During the occasion, the Chinese never forget to offer this food to their ancestors and deceased family members on the domestic ancestral altar.

<sup>52</sup>The lay-out of the common type house of a Kelantan Peranakan Chinese has been described in some detail by Dollah (1986: 39-44); Winzeler (1981: 7-9, 1985: 24-27), and Tan (1982: 36-38). However, they have left out some important features which are crucial in maintaining their Chinese separateness.

Thai influence, "pelupuk"<sup>53</sup> or plaited-bamboo designed walls, and open verandas which may consist of two levels. The main entrance to the house proper or main part of the house, is by way of a wooden or concrete staircase, an undeniably Malay architectural feature. The staircase leads to the centre of the veranda. From here are a set of double doors made of fine wood, which open into the hall.

The hall or "thia" as it is called in Chinese (Hokkien) is where the household altar is placed. In the case of a funeral, the hall is used for the placing of the coffin and execution of most of the rituals concerned. The hall is never used as a place for receiving and entertaining guests. This may be due to the fact that the interior of the house proper is unventilated and extremely dark even during the daytime. Peranakan Chinese houses usually do not have windows, except for two small square openings fitted with iron bars on each side of the main entrance.

There is a "bendul"<sup>54</sup> (a Malay word for a horizontally raised plank from the floor) to separate the hall from the veranda at the threshold of the main entrance. Each room or section of the house proper is also separated from each other by a "bendul."

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<sup>53</sup>Skeat (1953: 116) reports that the one chief attraction of Patani, Kelantan, and Terengganu in the late 18th century was the "pelupuk" walls of the inhabitants' houses. Skeat reported that the "pelupuk" work was probably at its best in Kelantan.

<sup>54</sup>This is a Malay term. The Peranakan Chinese seem not to have a term for it in their mother tongue.

The veranda or "lau pin" in Chinese (Hokkien) is the center for most social activities to take place. It is the place where the Peranakan Chinese spend most of their time when they are at home. Guests are received and entertained here where they are invited to sit on the wooden planked floor of either the lower or upper level. Politeness and hospitality may be expressed by providing mats for the guests to sit on. Food and drinks for guests are also served here. The veranda is also the place for carrying out Thai Theravada Buddhist religious activities.

The veranda is the public part of the house, while the area beyond the set of double doors is the private domain of the occupants, used for sleeping during the night.

The large timber doors known as simply "mui" in Chinese (Hokkien) with two iron ring knockers are overtly Chinese. Such traditional Chinese doors with big rings are typical of doors at Chinese temples and some Chinese public buildings in some parts of Malaysia (Tan 1982: 55). On each door is usually a set of "lian" or 'Chinese characters written on red paper'. "Lian" are also found on both sides of the wall next to the doors. Chinese calligraphic characters in various forms symbolizing happiness, prosperity, and longevity, are usually found pasted on the doors, above as well as on the sides of the main entrance. The meanings of these "lian" are not precisely known by most Peranakan Chinese. Nevertheless, they are a decisive defining mark of a (Peranakan) Chinese household. These "lian" symbolize the continuation of an ancient cultural tradition to which Peranakan Chinese still feel closely bound.

To the left and right of the hall are bedrooms or "pang/pang keng" in Chinese (Hokkien). In these bedrooms, on the wooden floor are places with slits where one can use for easing oneself during the night or expectorate when one is ill. This is Malay or Thai architectural influence. A jar of water is usually placed near these openings for washing away any urine remnant.

The kitchen or "chau kha" in Chinese (Hokkien) built to the left of the house may include a bathroom in it. Unlike the rest of the house which is raised some three to four feet above the ground on stilts, the kitchen is on ground-level. Most of the kitchen floors are made of mud or beaten mud. The entrance to the kitchen is not always by way of the interior part of the house proper, but from the veranda.

#### **2.5.1.6 Language**

The role of language, particularly their version of Hokkien, was in the past and is in the present mostly taken as a salient characteristic of the Peranakan identity.

The Peranakan Chinese are also very fluent in Kelantanese Malay, and observe the Kelantanese Malay styles of speech, body gestures, as well as modes of social interactions. It is oftentimes difficult to note a difference in their accent from that of native Malays.

Educated Peranakan Chinese use Mandarin and English among themselves to encode authority, modernity and educational status. But for Peranakan Chinese solidarity, they use their version of Hokkien, Kelantanese

Malay, and the local Thai language. Thus, the language they speak serve as an important symbol of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese identity.

The Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan find some parallels to the Baba of Melaka, and the Peranakan Chinese of Java, Indonesia, as far as their syncretic culture is concerned. Their ethnic history has evolved a somewhat different pattern of assimilation as exemplified by the other two groups where language is concerned. The two groups lost<sup>55</sup> the use of Chinese and took in its place, though with some modifications, Javanese and other indigenous languages (e.g., Sundanese) as in the case of the Peranakan of Java<sup>56</sup> (cf., Wolff and Poedjosoedarmo 1982), and Malay in the case of the Baba of Melaka (cf., Tan 1980, 1988a).<sup>57</sup>

No group of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan has completely lost the use of Chinese or Hokkien to be specific. Instead the Chinese language or Hokkien is heavily modified by Kelantanese Malay and the local Thai

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<sup>55</sup>It is quite possible, for an ethnic group to lose its traditional mother tongue eventually without losing its sense of identity. Ethnic consciousness or identity is not necessarily dependent on the maintenance of a traditional language.

If an ethnic group tends to emphasize maintenance of its own traditional language, and loss of it is equated largely to the loss of group identity, then the group can be defined as an 'ethno-linguistic group'. See also Section 5.1 in Chapter V.

<sup>56</sup>Before World War II, they spoke "Bahasa Melayu-Tionghua" ('Malay-Chinese language') which was Malay in structure with Chinese (Hokkien), Dutch, Javanese and other local indigenous words extensively used. Besides the lexicon, "Bahasa Melayu-Tionghua" is similar to "Baba Malay," the mother tongue of the Baba of Melaka (Tan 1963: 15).

<sup>57</sup>Pakir (1984: 64) reports that Baba speak almost no Chinese. Their mother tongue is a dialect of Malay (Pakir 1986: 20). An examination of "Baba Malay," in comparison with the mother tongue of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan, is made in Section 5.2.1 in Chapter V.

language. No matter what the linguistic status of their language is, it is a crucial symbol of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese identity. When this language enjoys the status of a crucial symbol of identity, the consistent use of it by members of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese means the affiliation of these members with this particular (Chinese) identity.

Of course, religion, and in particular, the predominance of Thai Theravada Buddhism<sup>58</sup> and traditional Chinese beliefs, is yet another obvious ethnic marker of the Peranakan Chinese. The Peranakan Chinese have maintained their Chinese religion and at the same time assimilated to Thai religious beliefs, instead of Malay/Muslim religious practices.

Language and religion are often considered to be the most persistent cultural features, and are therefore crucial as symbols of Peranakan Chinese identity. The language spoken by the Peranakan Chinese detaches them from the mainstream Chinese but yet it is the cultural persistence of traditional Chinese religious beliefs that contributes to the maintenance of their Chinese identity.

More will be said in the next two chapters on their language and linguistic practice.

#### **2.5.1.7 Religion**

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<sup>58</sup>In Malaysia, it is practiced by the people of Thai descent found particularly in the border states of Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis which have been subjected to Thai infiltration over the past three centuries.

The Peranakan Chinese take great pride in their access to Thai Theravada Buddhism through their knowledge of its rituals and fluency in the local Thai language. The mainstream Chinese are also frequent patrons of Buddhist temples but are incompetent in the local Thai language.

Besides identifying themselves with Thai Theravada Buddhism, Peranakan Chinese also practice a syncretic religious system, drawing from and re-interpreting other religious traditions, including Taoism, Confucianism, and Kelantan Malay animistic beliefs and practices.

Although Peranakan Chinese are Thai Theravada Buddhists, when it comes to matters regarding death, burial rather than cremation has been the norm. Burial is an important mark of Chinese identity though Buddhist rites are observed for a funeral. In Thai Theravada Buddhism practice, burial follows only after "bad" deaths (e.g., death due to accident, suicide and the like) while cremation is for "normal" deaths (from natural causes). Peranakan Chinese, however, peculiarly interpretes that cremation is only for "bad" deaths which is the other way round.

Upon closer examination, Peranakan Chinese have their own system of traditional Chinese religious practice and ancestral worship as typified by beliefs in guardian gods of villages and patron dieties of the house (cf., Kershaw 1981: 105-6; Tan 1982: 41-47).

What Thai Theravada Buddhism together with their own system of traditional Chinese religious practice and ancestral worship is to Kelantan Peranakan Chinese identity is what Islam is to Malay identity in Malaysia.

While a very small number of Peranakan Chinese may have embraced Christianity and Islam,<sup>59</sup> the majority of them are known to be Thai Theravada Buddhists.

Despite their close association to the Malays: living in close proximity to Malays, their Malay-like culture, their long residence in a Malay-dominated state, and their linguistic link to Kelantanese Malay, Peranakan Chinese do not readily embrace Islam<sup>60</sup> in order to become "Malay" although they are already familiar with some, if not most, of the intricacies of Islam. No matter how "Malay" Peranakan Chinese may become in terms of their social and cultural behavior, they remain Chinese; the fact is that being not Muslims rules them out from being Malay.

Although Peranakan Chinese display cultural traits which are essentially Malay: subscribing to Malay customs, speaking Malay habitually among themselves, and living a Malay way of life, their religious faith is not Islam. The religious or Islam factor is very important in, at least technically, considering them as Malays. It is a common fact in Malaysia that by virtue of the same religious faith, Muslim immigrants are, technically, Malays, and are accorded special status within the Malay society and their descendants eventually become Malay and "bumputra" ('indigenous') or are able to legally claim to be so as a matter of expediency (Nagata 1974: 341).

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<sup>59</sup>See Section 5.1.1 in Chapter V for a discussion of this.

<sup>60</sup>The Kelantan Peranakan Chinese stress greatly on maintaining their religious beliefs as they feel that losing one's religious beliefs means losing one's identity. They are actually an 'ethno-religious group' afterall. See also Section 5.1 in Chapter V.

There is resentment among Peranakan Chinese as to the rightful and legitimate claim of being native to Malaysia. They feel themselves to be the "natives" as it is they, who have long identified Malaysia as their homeland, resided in the country longer than many Malay immigrants from Indonesia and other places in the Malay archipelago, have cultural and linguistic links with Malay society, are not better-off economically than their Malay neighbors, but who, paradoxically, are not qualified as "bumiputra" (cf., Clammer 1983: 162-163; Tan 1988a: 95 for similar subjective belief among the Baba of Melaka).

Though not qualified to be "bumiputra," Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan nevertheless have special privileges with regard to land ownership in the state. Together with the Siamese in Kelantan and other states like Kedah and Perlis, they are among the very few non-Malay minority groups who possess legal land titles in Malay reservation areas. Unlike the Siamese and the Melaka Portuguese community, Peranakan Chinese as well as Baba of Melaka are not allowed to participate in a government sponsored investment scheme called "Amanah Saham Nasional" ('National Unit Trust'), reserved specifically for Malaysians of "bumiputra" status. Regarding special privileges to land ownership, Peranakan Chinese are considered as "natives." But with regard to privileges available to "bumiputra," they are not considered so.

#### **2.5.1.8 Conclusion**

Fundamental to Kelantan Peranakan Chinese identity is the notion of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese culture which is embodied in language, religion,

historicity, tradition, and attributes considered typically Kelantan Peranakan Chinese.

As far as language, dress, and food as salient external markers for their identity are concerned, the Peranakan Chinese find their dignity, and hence some degree of their Chinese identity, in their ancient residence and Chinese religious practices, and a certain perceived quality of politeness, which is to be contrasted with the thrusting, competitive "tebolah" ('impolite') behavior of the mainstream Chinese (Kershaw 1981: 82).

Thus Kelantan Peranakan Chinese remain Chinese in several (selected) central cultural elements while at the same time exhibiting a great deal of social and cultural assimilation to local Malays and Thais. Continuous Malay and Thai influences take various forms: Malay oriented education, daily social interaction, participation at Buddhist temples, and occasional Peranakan Chinese-Siamese intermarriages.<sup>61</sup>

Despite the length and pervasiveness of Peranakan Chinese and Thai contact with the local Malays, Kelantan Malay culture is not influenced by the two groups. Little attention has been paid to why this is so.

The fast changing world (due to more and better educational opportunities, modernization, development, and urbanization) with its values

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<sup>61</sup>It is not uncommon for Peranakan Chinese men to take Thai wives, however, it is rare for a Thai man to marry a Peranakan Chinese woman.

has changed quite a bit of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese's original way of life.

## CHAPTER III

## THE LANGUAGE OF THE KELANTAN PERANAKAN CHINESE

## 3.0 INTRODUCTION

Kelantan Peranakan Chinese culture is Chinese culture that has incorporated many Malay and Thai elements: indeed it is an integrated culture of Malay, Thai, and Chinese elements.

Parallel to this two-century old development of this unique culture is the development of a unique language: Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien<sup>1</sup> which especially exhibits large scale Malay lexical and grammatical assimilation. Thai influence is limited to lexical borrowing.<sup>2</sup> This unique language is largely unstudied.

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<sup>1</sup>Hokkien is usually used as a general term referring to all varieties of the Southern Min language group. Its different varieties are popularly referred to as Hokkien dialects. There are at least six such dialects, i.e., Amoy, Huihua, Eng Chun, Tangua, Chiang Chiu and Chuan Chiu which are actually names of places in China. It was/is a common practice for Hokkien speakers to name a language or variety after the place where it was/is mainly spoken. Amoy was/is the standard variety (Bodman 1955: i; Ramsey 1987: 108).

Hokkien of various dialects were/are spoken in the southeastern part of Hokkien (Fukien) province in mainland China. It was from here that Hokkien speakers began to emigrate to Taiwan (formerly known as Formosa) and Southeast Asia in the latter part of the 17th century.

The Malaysian varieties are Melaka Hokkien, Pulau Pinang Hokkien, Kelantan Hokkien and Terengganu Hokkien, to name a few. These local varieties exhibit influences from languages like Malay and English (the Malaysian variety).

<sup>2</sup>In some instances, Thai grammatical borrowing instead of Malay grammatical borrowing could have been the case. There is no concrete way of knowing since Thai and Malay share many structural similarities, the most important being word order.

The Malay influence especially, in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, is so extensive that it is a constitutive part of the language. The mixed character of contemporary Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is the result of principally close linguistic contacts with the Thais and Malays since the late 1800s. The political, social, and cultural conditions of the contact led to 'intimate borrowing' (Bloomfield 1933: 444, 461), which was one-sided; Thai and Malay being the dominant languages in this case, did not borrow much from Chinese (Hokkien) except for some lexical items. This one-sided borrowing could also be viewed as a case of diglossia (cf., Ferguson 1959): Chinese being the low variety while the host languages, Malay and Thai being the high varieties in which the influence of the host languages on the migrant language was greater than the reverse. The mixed character of this variety of Hokkien is not a relic of the past or in the process of disappearing but a dynamic feature.

### **3.1 OBSERVATIONS ON KELANTAN PERANAKAN HOKKIEN**

#### **3.1.1 Scholarly Observations**

Scholarly observations of the mother tongue and linguistic practices of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan and substantial studies of the society have been made by researchers, mainly anthropologists.

Kershaw (1973: 5) observes that the speech of the Peranakan Chinese which is Hokkien, is fairly distinct from that spoken by the mainstream Chinese. He (1981: 82, 86) points out that these Peranakan Chinese speak a creolized version of Hokkien which contains Malay and Thai loanwords, syntactical convergence and adoption of Malay and Thai phonemes, or even

tonal simplification. He also observes that the Peranakan Chinese make a highly conscious point of speaking Chinese, in the form of a creolized version to their young children, which he claims is called Siamese-Hokkien by them.

Winzeler (1974: 50) notes that the Hokkien spoken by the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan is different from that of the mainstream Chinese and contains many words and phrases from Malay and Thai. He (Winzeler 1981: 6) observes that no group of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese community ever lost the use of Chinese entirely, but instead became bilingual in Chinese (Hokkien) and Malay (Kelantanese Malay), and in some cases trilingual with Thai (Kelantanese Thai). In yet another work (Winzeler 1985: 44), he reports that these Chinese have not given up their own Hokkien dialect, however much they may have modified it. He (Winzeler 1986: 138) also points out that some of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan are knowledgeable in the local Thai dialect and tend to use it along with Kelantanese Malay and their own version of Hokkien in daily village conversations among themselves.

Golomb (1978: 11, 82) observes that the language of these Peranakan Chinese is practically identical to Kelantanese Malay variations, and some of them use the local Thai dialect as their first or second language.

Dollah (1986: 36) describes the home language of the Peranakan Chinese as a local (Kelantanese) variety of Hokkien which has been heavily influenced by the local Malay dialect, and notes that it is difficult for speakers of Hokkien from other states in the country to comprehend it.

Tan (1982: 28) finds that the Hokkien spoken by the Peranakan Chinese has Thai and Malay influences and is such that it is not easy for a Hokkien speaker outside Kelantan to understand it during the first few encounters. He goes further to observe that the Hokkien of the Peranakan Chinese has undergone a remarkable change in intonation from that of the "purer" variety of Hokkien spoken elsewhere in Malaysia. Tan notes that Pulau Pinang Hokkien<sup>3</sup> is the only other Hokkien variety that shows strong Malay lexical influence. In another work (Tan 1983: 44), he observes that it is the Peranakan Chinese women who speak Chinese (Hokkien) more regularly than the men and the womenfolk<sup>4</sup> certainly play an important role in preserving the Chinese (Hokkien) language.

My work, (Teo 1984), provides a macro sociolinguistic work on the native/near-native competence of the Peranakan Chinese in speaking the local Malay dialect which helps tremendously in their social interactions with the Malays. I observe that their variety of Hokkien contains Malay and Thai elements. Another of my work, (Teo 1992a), is a brief linguistic investigation of the grammatical influence of Kelantanese Malay on some salient aspects of the language of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan. In another work (Teo 1992b), I discuss briefly the communication patterns and discourse organization in Peranakan Chinese-Kelantan Malay social interactions.

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<sup>3</sup>Chan (1982: 24) observes that Pulau Pinang Hokkien which is the Malaysian variety of the Chiang Chiu dialect of the southeastern part of mainland China, is characterized by a general simplification of syntax, shifts in its tone and pitch, and is graced by a great number of Malay words.

<sup>4</sup>It is my observation that the women generally have a better command of Chinese (Hokkien). This could be due to the traditional role of the Peranakan Chinese women in staying close to the home, looking after the children, preparing food, and tending the vegetable plots. Thus, they have less opportunity than men to meet or socialize with "outsiders" that would cause tainting of their language.

The linguistic works by me provide only useful starting points for further study rather than being comprehensive. The present and following chapters represent a furtherance of the above studies.

The general view of the language of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan as evident from these brief observations is that it is a Chinese (Hokkien) language with Malay and Thai influences.

### 3.1.2 Folk Perceptions<sup>5</sup>

Perceptions by the speakers of this variety of Hokkien as their mother tongue are worth noting. The folk accounts of their language reflect the concern of a self-conscious speech community.

The Peranakan Chinese themselves are most aware that their speech is sufficiently different from that of the mainstream Chinese to mark them off as a distinct group or sub-group. They show a subjective inferiority about their inability to speak or understand standard or mainstream Hokkien. Not only are they ignorant of the lexicon, morphology and syntax of standard or mainstream Hokkien, but their articulation of Hokkien words and phrases is different. It reflects a Malay and/or Thai manner of speaking.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>The opinions expressed in the form of a summary here are based on the analysis of interviews as well as my personal observations.

<sup>6</sup>Heavy traces of especially Kelantanese Malay intonation are evident in the speech of the Peranakan Chinese.

The Peranakan Chinese are aware that they speak the local Malay dialect more fluently than the mainstream Chinese or the other non-Malay ethnic groups in the state.<sup>7</sup> Their native/near-native local Malay accent coupled with their Malay-like appearance and dark complexion, as well as their Kelantanese Malay speech styles, oftentimes make it almost impossible to tell them apart from a native Kelantan Malay.<sup>8</sup>

It is when the Peranakan Chinese speak their mother tongue that they are recognized as "the other Chinese" by the mainstream Chinese as well as by other ethnic groups, and it is then that they see themselves as a group apart. This self-consciousness of being a separate group from the mainstream Chinese has evoked comments from themselves such as "we are local Chinese," "we are long established Chinese of Kelantan," and "we are Siamese Hokkien."

Although the extent to which the Peranakan Chinese have taken on certain local Malay modes of behavior and practices is impressive, never have these cultural behavioral similarities evoked comments such as "we are Malay-ized Chinese" or "we are Malay-speaking Chinese." Peranakan Chinese take offence when they are referred to as "Malay-speaking Chinese" as well as other derogatory labels such as "Malay Chinese," "Malay-like Chinese" and "Malay-faced Chinese."

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<sup>7</sup>Generally the Thais and Indians, being the other two minority groups, speak Malay, Kelantanese or the standard variety, with Thai and Indian accents respectively. Often these accents have become a medium of humor among the Kelantan Malays.

<sup>8</sup>Even Peranakan Chinese themselves cannot tell the difference at times. Winzeler (1985: 43) also observes this native/near-native fluency.

The general view of the mainstream Chinese on the language of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan is that it is a corrupted form of Hokkien which consists mainly of Malay and Thai words as well as phrases with a smattering of archaic Hokkien words and phrases of Malay intonation.

The general comment of local Thais is that it is a mixture of Chinese-Thai-Malay. They acknowledge the fact that Malay elements constitute a larger portion than do Thai, and are quick to point out that they do not understand the language except for the Thai and Malay words and phrases.

The Malays are generally aware of the Malay elements in the language of the Peranakan Chinese. They seem proud of the large scale lexical borrowing but are unaware of any grammatical assimilation,<sup>9</sup> which actually reflects the power relationship<sup>10</sup> between the two groups.

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<sup>9</sup>Unlike lexical borrowing, grammatical borrowing, i.e., the incorporation of foreign rules into a language, is not easily visible to a lay-person. Vocabulary is perhaps the most visible part of a language, and lexical borrowing is perceived as affecting the language in its very being.

<sup>10</sup>In Kelantan, political and to a certain extent economic power have been vested in the hands of the Malays as the dominant group. The structure of the dominant group also played a crucial role in language shift (in the initial stage) and linguistic assimilation in the case of the Peranakan Chinese. The Kelantan Malays have been known for their closed society and rigid structure. Unlike the Malays of other states, especially the west coast states (where they have been politically strong but economically weak), Kelantan Malays have been known for not accommodating their speech, whether out of choice or necessity, by speaking "Bahasa Melayu Pasar" or simply "Bahasa Pasar" ('Bazaar Malay'), a form of Pidgin Malay, in interethnic contact.

"Bahasa Pasar" is a contact language used widely in the country between the various ethnic groups in restricted social environments. Malays often adjust their style of "Bahasa Pasar" (e.g., Chinese or Indian styles) to the version being used by their interlocutors.

See Hassan (1969); Kader (1971); Collins (1987) for a discussion of "Bahasa Melayu Pasar."

The Indians also realize the dominant Malay elements in the speech of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan. However, they are not aware of the Thai influence.

In the eyes of lay-persons, the language of the Peranakan Chinese is an impure version of Chinese (Hokkien), or a mixture of Chinese-Malay-Thai. But in actual fact, Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is distinctive, in the sense that it has distinguishing features of its own which marks it off from standard or mainstream Hokkien, Kelantanese Malay and the local Thai language.<sup>11</sup>

## **3.2 THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC HISTORY OF KELANTAN PERANAKAN HOKKIEN**

### **3.2.1 Factors Affecting the Outcome of a Language Contact Situation: The Case of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese**

A discussion of the factors involved as affecting language shift<sup>12</sup> in the case of the Peranakan Chinese is crucial in understanding the mixed nature of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

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<sup>11</sup>Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien conversations are not completely understood by speakers of mainstream Hokkien, Kelantanese Malay, and Kelantanese Thai. The many lexical resources (i.e., Chinese (Hokkien), Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai) that the Peranakan Chinese have at their disposal are used when necessary to preserve the unintelligibility of their variety of Hokkien when it is spoken in the presence of others. See Section 3.8 for more details.

<sup>12</sup>Language shift which is taken as the yardstick of integration efforts, is the result of contact-linguistic factors, such as social pressure on a minority group, strength of identity consciousness, and attitudes of an ethnic group.

Inevitably, minority communities feel the pressure to increase their verbal repertoire with the inclusion of the language of the majority since there is greater contact with them.

The early Chinese males who migrated to the Malay Peninsula and the Patani region of southern Thailand long before the large scale migration of mid 19th and early 20th centuries, were mainly illiterate and of low socio-economic status from the Hokkien rural regions of southeastern China. Being illiterate and poor, these early immigrants left their homeland mainly for the purpose of improving their economic standing, rather than re-establishing the "Chinese order" in a new place.

The educational background of these immigrants was crucial in determining the outcome of language contact. A group with a better educational background would be in a better position to maintain its language than one which is less well educated. Thus these immigrants, a linguistic minority, had to face and survive in a new language contact situation.

One might want to hypothesize that in this case of very low literacy rate and education in Chinese, there was occurrence of language shift, i.e., the gradual passive use of Chinese (Hokkien) and active use of Thai, among the early Chinese male immigrants.

The small size of their group due to a spontaneous immigration pattern, when they left China as an individual or in small unorganized groups, was another factor important in contributing to language shift. There was also no continued arrival of new immigrants to increase the size of the group in order to maintain the language of their homeland. The pattern of extensive intermarriage of these early Chinese men to Siamese women, further enhanced language shift.

These early immigrants did not maintain much contact with their homeland. Contact with their homeland was partly made impossible because of the Imperial Decrees of China which prohibited Chinese from leaving and re-entering China (Morse 1910: 176). With heavy penalties awaiting them on their return to China, these immigrants conceived themselves as being "exiled."

The settlement pattern of matrilocal residence was also seen as favoring language shift. Also the remote setting of the local Siamese society did not favor any regular or intensive interaction with fellow immigrants who settled in more urban areas.

Being illiterate, poor as well as having a rural mentality which led to low ethnic consciousness in this case, they were also not able to develop an economic niche<sup>13</sup> for themselves, which was crucial in maintaining their homeland language and culture.

These early Chinese immigrants in their economically productive years,<sup>14</sup> were believed to have favored language shift for various reasons. Among them were needs and desires on the part of these Chinese men to assimilate to the Thais culturally and linguistically. Social advancement in a Thai settlement was undoubtedly attainable in part by language shift to Thai.

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<sup>13</sup>The Chinese in many parts of the world have succeeded in establishing and maintaining an exclusive economic niche for themselves, and thereby have maintained their language and culture in many areas.

<sup>14</sup>Men, especially young in age, are generally seen as leading language shift in the first generation (Haugen 1953: 45-46).

### 3.2.2 Patterns of Language Use

In time, these Chinese after acquiring Thai wives and having families, became a stable community. This was also the beginning of a society of Chinese-Thai households with interesting language behavior. The ethnolinguistic identity of the offspring of these mixed marriages was created through their interactions with their parents and other maternal family members in their homes and neighborhoods. Paternal relations were almost non-existent due to the nature of the immigration pattern of the early Chinese male adventurers. In some limited cases, in the earlier part of the ethnic history of this society, other male family members from China came to join the already established settlers. Female family members were not allowed to join until 1894 when China relaxed her emigration laws (Purcell 1965: 436).

The language behavior in the homes of these mixed marriages reflected a balance of two cultures which had no direct confrontation. Intermediate forms of language were used with either the dominant use of Chinese (Hokkien) supplemented by Thai or the dominant use of Thai supplemented by Chinese (Hokkien).

Another pattern of language used in the homes of the early Chinese-Thai households was the alternate use of two languages, Chinese (Hokkien) and Thai. For interactions between siblings, Chinese (Hokkien) or Thai was used whenever it suited them. A mixed language of Chinese (Hokkien) and Thai was also used. For interactions with parents, either Chinese (Hokkien) was used with the father and Thai with the mother, or a mixed language of Chinese (Hokkien) and Thai was used with both the parents.

Generally Chinese fathers tended to regard their children as Chinese while Siamese mothers tended to naturally extend the Thai way of life to the children and interacted with them in Thai. In most cases, the influence by the mother was greater.

Chinese fathers could have had two ways to react to the intermediate language situation they were confronted with. They could have asked their Siamese wives to learn Chinese (Hokkien) and communicate with them in that language or they could have acquired Thai themselves and used it as a language for everyday affairs, supplementing it when necessary with Chinese (Hokkien). In the former case, the Chinese fathers tried to pass on Chinese (Hokkien) to their children, whereas in the latter case, there was a language shift from Chinese (Hokkien) to Thai and hence a more frequent use of Thai in the homes.

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien could also have resulted from a fossilized interlanguage competence<sup>15</sup> by Siamese spouses which was then transmitted to the offspring. A fossilized interlanguage can become the recognized language variety of a group of people (cf. Selinker 1972; Richards 1972).

The historical origin of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien can be traced from these patterns of language use in the homes of these early Chinese-Thai households. The simultaneous use of Chinese (Hokkien) and Thai by the first

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<sup>15</sup>A fossilized interlanguage competence is a result of the Siamese spouses' realization that they know Chinese (Hokkien) well enough to communicate with their husbands, and thus stopped learning the language after this point. See Selinker (1972) for information on this linguistic concept.

descendants of the mixed marriages eventually led to massive interference and/or linguistic mixing in subsequent generations evolving into what is Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien today. Judging by the accounts of the early ethnic history of these Chinese, the linguistic origin of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien can be attributed to a language that had undergone structural change due to language contact.

### 3.3 VARIETIES OF KELANTAN PERANAKAN HOKKIEN

At least five types of speech are fairly distinguishable among the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan. Four of them are roughly regionally based.

#### 3.3.1 Heavily Malay in Lexical Content

The first of these is a speech form which is very heavily Malay in lexical content. This form is the home language of Peranakan Chinese residing in Peringat and its neighboring areas. Besides these regionally clustered areas in the Peringat region, Sabak and Pulau Gajah are the other areas renowned for this form of speech. These two clusters are quite a distance from each other. An obvious reason for the existence of a such a form of speech is the small size of the Chinese population residing in these predominantly Malay surroundings.

This variety which exhibits massive Malay borrowing, i.e., borrows heavily and permanently<sup>16</sup> from Kelantanese Malay, is perceived by other

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<sup>16</sup>Speakers of this variety are usually unable to supply suitable Chinese (Hokkien) equivalents to the borrowed words.

Peranakan Chinese groups as an indication of these Peranakan Chinese' wish to identify more with the Malay majority. Peranakan Chinese also observe that these Peranakan Chinese have more positive feelings toward the Malays than do other Peranakan Chinese groups. These positive feelings could have been an important outcome of (or could have led to) the massive language borrowing process. Strong identification with the local Malays could have also led to the monolingual use of Malay in many households.

Heavy lexical borrowing often goes hand in hand with a low esteem of the borrowing language, and in this case, this variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, is also viewed by the wider Kelantan Peranakan Chinese society as having gone through a process of the death or loss of Chinese (Hokkien) in the speech repertoire of these Peranakan Chinese. This variety of Peranakan Chinese speech is the most stigmatized variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

Many of the Malay loanwords in this variety are seen by the other Peranakan Chinese groups as largely unnecessary, particularly in core vocabulary.<sup>17</sup>

The following is a sample of the heavily Malay in content variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

(1) Speech Sample (KPH/3/A/1991)<sup>18</sup>: a narrative<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Core vocabulary refers to items basic to a society/speech. E.g., 'hand', 'two'.

<sup>18</sup>Detailed audio tape references are given only when speech samples are discussed. All dialogue transcripts are coded to the name of the language or

The breaks of speech samples in this section as well as in others in this work are sentence-based rather than turn-taking units as often done in conversational analysis. In this section Kelantanese Malay lexical elements are in bold, Kelantanese Thai in italic while Chinese (Hokkien) are in normal print.

Speaker A

/asa uso co lan ni i lai  
 origin great grandparent we this s/he come  
 daɣipado təŋ sua/  
 from China  
 'The origin of our great grandparent was China'

/i lai dəŋa ɕhun təŋ kaŋ ui? di sabo?/  
 s/he come with boat junk climb at Sabak  
 'He came in a junk which anchored at Sabak'

/pah tu i lai du? di pəŋiŋa?/

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tape, tape number, side of tape, and the year in which they were recorded. Thus, KPH/3/A/1991 would indicate the location where the dialogue is found, i.e. KPH (Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien) is the name of the language, 3 is the number of the tape, A is the side of the tape, and 1991 is the year in which the dialogue was recorded.

<sup>19</sup>In this type of discourse, a single speaker controls the floor for long chunks of speech time, actively producing the discourse. The role of the interlocutors(s), while important in terms of feedback, is relatively passive and nonverbal (i.e., non-oral), involving primarily gestures, facial expressions, eye contact or movement, etc.

after that s/he come live at Peringat  
 'After that he came to reside in Peringat'

/co                      lan namo lo ku/  
 great grandparent we name Lo Ku  
 'Our great grandparent's name was Lo Ku'

/tapi co                      t:ino lan em chai/  
 but great grandparent female we not know  
 'But we do not know much about our great grandmother'

/dega yoya? no              i lag teganun/  
 hear say E particle s/he people Terengganu  
 'It was said that she was from Terengganu'

/i nikoh duo tu e koj              lan/  
 s/he marry two that get grandfather we  
 'They got married and had our grandfather'

/koj                      lan co hato sini bayeka aka tho/  
 grandfather we make property here acre acre land  
 'Our grandfather acquired several acres of land'

/koj                      lan namo to? guan/  
 grandfather we name Tok Guan  
 'Our grandfather's name was Tok Guan'



/i pano? omo dəŋa səcaŋo səŋa i si/

s/he short life with way healthy s/he die

'He had a short life span, he died apparently in good health'

/si dələ təhon bəŋapo wa bo iŋa?/

die in year what I not remember

'I cannot remember the year in which he died'

An interesting point about this speech sample is that Chinese (Hokkien) kinship terms and pronouns are used. This confirms the fact that certain semantic and cultural domains which are typically Chinese in nature and origin do not take Malay borrowings at all.<sup>20</sup> The pronoun /lan/ 'we' in this speech sample actually means "I". It is deliberately used to avoid the first person singular pronoun /wa/ 'I' so as to be humble and polite to the interlocutor(s).<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, no Thai lexical items are found in this speech sample.

### 3.3.2 Heavy Thai Mixing

Peranakan Chinese in areas like Wakaf Bharu and its neighboring regions are known for adopting local Thai as their home language. Strong identification with the Thais could have led to the monolingual use of the local Thai language in many households. A variety of Peranakan Hokkien with heavy Thai mixing is sometimes used alongside Thai in most households. Kelantan Peranakan

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<sup>20</sup>See Section 3.7.2.1 for further discussion.

<sup>21</sup>It is not uncommon for some languages/cultures to use the plural forms of pronoun for politeness (cf. Friedrich 1966; Bosh 1968).

Hokkien and Kelantanese Thai code switching is also common. The Thai spoken by the Peranakan Chinese in these clustered areas around Wakaf Bharu, and other areas in Kelantan, is slightly different from that spoken by the Kelantan Thais which contains no significant influence from Chinese (Hokkien).<sup>22</sup> Wakaf Bharu is near Tumpat where the largest concentration of Kelantan Thai communities are found. Some 90% of the Thais in Kelantan are found in the Tumpat district.

Almost all Peranakan Chinese in Kelantan are Thai Theravada Buddhists.<sup>23</sup> Wakaf Bharu and Tendong, predominantly Peranakan Chinese as far as the non-Malay population is concerned, are the only places in Kelantan sponsoring the building and maintenance of Buddhist temples with ethnic Thai religious staff. Tendong (which is not too far from Wakaf Bharu) also adopts Thai as the home language.

Below are speech samples of the heavy Thai mixing variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

(2) Speech sample (KPH/5/B/1991): a conversation<sup>24</sup>

This speech sample can also be categorized as the Kelantanese Thai variety spoken by Peranakan Chinese.

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<sup>22</sup>Chinese words rarely surfaced in Kelantanese Thai spoken by the Thais.

<sup>23</sup>See also Section 2.5.1.7 in Chapter II for more details.

<sup>24</sup>This type of discourse involves frequent exchange of the speaker-hearer roles and control of turn-taking.

Speaker A

/ku: tɔŋ kin mu: ɣən me? lui pai ɔɔ ni/

I must eat pig house Mek Lui Friday this

'I have to attend a feast at Mek Lui's house this Friday'

/nikah lɔ:ʔ pɛŋiŋ bosu man/

marriage child female youngest s/he

'It is the marriage of her youngest daughter'

/mɛŋ tɔŋ mi/

you must Q particle

'Are you invited too?'

Speaker B

/rau mai tɔŋ/

we not must

'We are not invited'

/dɛ:n ni ma:g tɔŋ kin mu:/

month this a lot must eat pig

'This month, there are a lot of feasts to attend'

/paŋoʔ ha mai bɛ: noʔ hãĩ kʰa: kin mu:/

burden no money want give price eat pig

'It's a burden financially to attend the feasts'

/nikah ka? khəŋ nai/  
 marry with people which  
 'To whom is she going to marry?'

Speaker C

/pəŋe?so/  
 don't know  
 'I do not know'

Speaker A

/nikah ka? lɔ:ʔ kim buaŋ həŋ jo:  
 marry with child Kim Buang who live  
 tɔŋ khɛ: ɣən ku waŋ/  
 at near house uncle Wang  
 'She is marrying Kim Buang's son who lives  
 near Uncle Wang's house'

(3) Speech sample (KPH/2/A/1991): a narrative

Speaker A

/wa bə səbai həjat ci pai tu lo kun/  
 I not fine intend want go meet doctor  
 'I do not feel well, I intend to see a doctor'

/cep tin lai wan le:w/

pain leg few day CA particle

'My leg has been in pain for a few days already'

/tio? thi? teg lag ɣən t:ikoh

get nail behind house when

ci pai au bai p̃hu: /

want go take leaves betel

'I stepped on a nail when I was going to pick betel leaves behind the house'

/ca me ka? ca ki ni cep ka?loh/

last night and morning this pain quite

'It was quite painful last night and this morning'

/toŋ pha? ciam gamo? ni kɔ: toŋ maso? wa?/

must injection guess Q particle or must enter ward

'It needs an injection or would I be hospitalized?'

(4) Speech sample (KPH/1/B/1991): a conversation

Speaker A

/jadi toŋ ni ɲaŋ boŋ ɔɔ pəçhai/

so here this exist grave great grandparent male

'So, there is the grave of our great grandfather here'

/tɔŋ khɛ khəŋ laŋ ɣən/

at near side back house

'At the back of the house'

/bɔŋ co pəŋiŋ ha mai koh/

grave great grandparent female not Q particle

'Is there also the grave of our great grandmother?'

Speaker B

/co pəŋiŋ ŋəŋ təle?/

great grandparent female exist also

'There is also the grave of our great grandmother here'

/sɔŋ lo:ʔ bɔŋ le/

two CL grave E particle

'There are two graves'

Speaker A

/man huəŋ tʰi diə/

they bury together

'They were buried together'

Speaker C

/hɔŋ heʔ ɕhəp peʔ neŋ ɕhə bɔ/

NM NM eighteen that female

'On the eighteenth (date) is the death anniversary  
of our great grandmother'

/hɔŋ ɕhəp ɕhiʔ ɕhə pɔ/

NM seventeen male

'On the seventeenth (date) is the death anniversary  
of our great grandfather'

Speaker A

/ɕhəp peʔ ɕhəp ɕhit pəŋ ɣʒ:/

eighteen seventeen when

'Seventeenth and eighteenth of what month?'

Speaker C

/nəi kau goeʔ lɛ/

in nine month E particle

'During the ninth month (of the Chinese calendar)'

/rau tʰəm ɕɔ ki tʰəŋ sɔŋ/

we perform death anniversary both two

'We perform the death anniversary prayers for both'

Speaker A

/pi: ən ən/  
 year different different

'Is the year different?'

Speaker B

/pi: nəŋ ləʔ man cʰoʔ wan nəŋ yəh/  
 year that same they different day one only

'It was the same year, a difference of only a day'

/pai huəŋ tʰi dio/  
 go bury together

'They were buried together'

/tʰa dai bəŋ jo: tʰi dio/  
 wait able grave stay together

'This is why the graves are next to each other'

Speaker C

/tʰĩã man wa/  
 listen s/he say

'From what he (speaker B) said'

/kʰau pai sɿ: kʰrəŋ/  
 they go buy thing

/həŋ ni ha mai do leʔ/

NM this no also

'When they went to buy things for the funeral of our great grandfather, our great grandmother who was at home, died'

Speaker A

/hɔŋ pəchʰai kɔŋ/

NM male earlier

'Our great grandfather died first'

/pəh hɔŋ pəŋiŋ/

then NM female

'Then followed by our great grandmother'

/chut sua tʰi dio/

go hill together

'They were buried together'

Again Chinese (Hokkien) kinship terms, numbers, and terms referring to the customs regarding death, are used in the speech samples. The active use of these Chinese (Hokkien) words in this heavy Thai mixing variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien that otherwise mixes so heavily with Thai, reflects the fact that these cultural domains, especially that regarding death, are not influenced by the Thai culture at all.

### 3.3.3 Heavy Kelantanese Thai Accent

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien spoken with a heavy Kelantanese Thai accent<sup>25</sup> is the form of speech associated with Peranakan Chinese in places like Balai and its neighboring areas. Balai is another Thai concentration in Kelantan. One of the salient features of a Thai settlement is the existence of at least a Buddhist temple. Balai has two buddhist temples. The Thai population in the Balai region is higher than that of Peranakan Chinese. Most of the Peranakan Chinese here can speak Thai fluently. An interesting fact is that they do not generally adopt Thai as their home language unlike their counterparts in the Wakaf Bharu region. Although their Chinese (Hokkien) is heavily influenced by Kelantanese Thai accent, lexical borrowing from Thai is not as significant when compared to the Peranakan Hokkien of the Wakaf Bharu region. There seems to be a moderate identification with the Thais by this group of Peranakan Chinese.

The identity of the Peranakan Chinese who speak this form of speech is indelibly marked by linguistic stigmata (cf., Grace 1981: 171, Pakir 1984: 79-80 for a discussion of "branding-on-the-tongue"), in this case involving their accent and pronunciation which are different when they speak Chinese (Hokkien) or the local Malay dialect. Their pronunciation in terms of marked differences in vowel quality and length, due to interference of Thai phonology: phonic and intonation, is a tell-tale sign of their being members of another linguistic community. These subconscious "deviations" also serve as linguistic markers of solidarity between these Peranakan Chinese and the Thais of the area.

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<sup>25</sup>Accent is defined here as the cumulative auditory effect of those features of a person's pronunciation which identify where s/he is from regionally.

The following is a speech sample of the heavy Kelantanese Thai accent variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

(5) Speech sample (KPH/7/A/1992): a narrative

Speaker A

/bo: cḥai pɛ: ham mi?/

not know illness what

'I am not sure what the illness is'

/chia: io? sɔ:mo:/

eat medicine always

'I am always on medication'

/kalu: tḥĩ leŋ siŋ ku: ɣasɔ khua/

if sky cold body feel cold

'If the weather is cold, my body feels cold'

/kalu: juat e toŋ tam po?/

if warm able withstand little

'If the weather is warm, then I feel a little better'

/khi lo ku:n chu: ta? ui/

go doctor house every place

'I have been to every hospital'

/lo: kun giam ho: io? be: ha?/

doctor examine give medicine not suitable

'The doctors examined and gave me medicine which I found unsuitable'

/tua: lo ku:n chu: em chai: kui pai jiu?

stay doctor house not know how many time enter

kui pai chut/

how many time go out

'I have been in and out of the hospitals several times'

/u: ci pai ney tio? cha: ui bahu: tam po?/

exist one time that get wood place shoulder little

'There was an occasion when a piece of wood hit my shoulder slightly'

/khi: tua ci me: ci jit ney

go stay one night one day that

pha? ciam la? ki:/

injection six CL

'I stayed for a day and night and was given six injections'

/ce: pai ney khi tua: no le pai

one time that go stay two week

pa? ciam ce pa? kui ki/

injection one hundred how many CL

'There was an occasion when I was hospitalized for two weeks and was given over a hundred injections'

/paŋ neŋ baso: paŋke? nui/  
 time that type illness weak  
 'At that time I was suffering from paralysis'

/bo e: co kaŋ no sa: ni/  
 not able do work two three year  
 'I was unable to work for two to three years'

/tui: maŋ c'hia? iɔ? maŋ ku ku: ho/  
 massage also eat medicine also long long well  
 'With medication as well as massage,  
 I became well after a while'

Chinese (Hokkien) words which originally do not have vowel length are pronounced with length in this speech sample. This is undoubtedly an influence of Thai phonology. Malay words are also influenced by Thai phonology. Other Thai influences include vowel quality and stress. In other words, this variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien has a lot to do with the way sounds are pronounced, especially vowels, and also intonation.

### 3.3.4 China-accent Hokkien

"China-accent Hokkien" or more specifically the Amoy Hokkien dialect<sup>26</sup> of China spoken with little variation phonologically or syntactically, is the form

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<sup>26</sup>Amoy Hokkien is the best known representative of the Hokkien language spoken in the southeast of the Fukien Province in China. The early Chinese settlers who came to Malaysia were mostly not from the city of Amoy, but from the outlying districts of Chiang Chiu, Huihua, Tangua, Eng Chun and Chuan

of the speech of Peranakan Chinese in the Joh region. The Peranakan Chinese of Joh and nearby areas like Belimbing and Pulau Raya live closely to each other, and form a cluster that is very much isolated from the wider Kelantan society. Although Malays are still the predominant population in the Joh region, they live quite a distance from the cluster of the Peranakan Chinese settlements. The distance factor led to limited interaction between the local Malays and these Peranakan Chinese.

The early Joh region Chinese were reported to have a low competence in speaking Malay. Thai was alien to them. No Thai settlements ever existed in or near that region. Thais were and are only found in the northern part of Kelantan, no further south than the Pasir Putih district.

These Chinese were said<sup>27</sup> to be recent immigrants from China in comparison to the other groups of Peranakan Chinese in the state. The men were said to have come with their spouses, and thus did not intermarry with Thai women. No Thai or Malay influences were readily observable in the speech of these Chinese. However, today their sociocultural life is similar to that of other groups of Peranakan Chinese.

An interesting question here is: "Where did the Thai and Malay cultural elements in the life of these Chinese come from since they did not interact much with the local Malays, the Thais or other Peranakan Chinese in the

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Chiu. The Hokkien of Pulau Pinang and Melaka resemble the Hokkien dialect of Chiang Chiu. The Hokkien spoken by these Joh Chinese resembles that of the Amoy variety.

<sup>27</sup>This information comes from oral histories often cited in the region.

earlier part of their ethnic history?" The Peranakan Chinese of the Joh region lived in a closed society for some years. The main reason was geographical isolation since Joh was not easily accessible by road. There were very few roads in Kelantan some decades ago. The only way to reach the settlement was by inefficient water transport, as it was located along the southern section of the Kelantan River.

This self-contained community finally intermingled with other groups when water and land transportation improved. There were marriages between them and Peranakan Chinese from other parts of the state. Through these marriages,<sup>28</sup> the Malay and Thai cultural elements already incorporated in the lives of other Peranakan Chinese passed on to the Joh region Peranakan Chinese.

It should be pointed out here that mainstream Chinese accent which is "purer" or somewhat "more Chinese" than that of Peranakan Hokkien, is nowhere close to the accent of the speech of the Joh Peranakan Chinese. This form of speech which still maintains its "China-accent" virtually intact, and which shows typically Amoy phonological, morphological and syntactic structures, is, however, still part of the speech repertoire of the older generations who find it very prestigious to have a knowledge of it. The older generations have always looked back culturally and linguistically to China, with strong feelings of Chinese identity. This form of speech, although still the home language in some households in the region, is slowly disappearing,

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<sup>28</sup>The character of a language may change as a result of cross-dialectal marriages.

especially among the younger generations whose parents were not originally from there.

(6) Examples of regular sound correspondences between Joh (KPH) speech and Mainstream Hokkien:

Joh (KPH) speech - Mainstream Hokkien

(a) /ie/-/e/

/sieŋ/-/seŋ/ 'first'

/tieŋ/-/teŋ/ 'lamp'

/chieŋ/-/cheŋ/ 'wear'

/chin chie?/-/chin che?/ 'relatives'

/bieŋ pie?/-/beŋ pe?/ 'understand'

(b) /ə/-/ui/

/həŋ/-/hui/ 'far'

/məŋ/-/mui/ 'door'

/kəŋ/-/kui/ 'bright'

/ka chəŋ/-/ka chui/ 'buttock'

/hi həŋ/-/hi hui/ 'theatre'

(c) /ue/-/e/

/ue/-/e/ 'able'

/sue/-/se/ 'wash'  
 /pue?/-/pe?/ 'eight'  
 /kue/-/ke/ 'chicken'  
 /pun tue/-/pun te/ 'native; local'

(d) /ou/-/o/

/tou/-/to/ 'knife'  
 /sou?/-/so?/ 'rope'  
 /hou/-/ho/ 'good'  
 /tam pou?/-/tam po?/ 'little'  
 /ou lou/-/o lo/ 'praise'

From the foregoing, it can be seen that Joh speech represents an older form of mainstream Hokkien.

The following is a speech sample of the China-accent Hokkien variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

(7) Speech sample (KPH/6/B/1991): a narrative

Speaker A

/pia? tieŋ si gua e            ke lai e            siog/  
 wall on is I G marker family MP marker picture  
 'On the wall is a picture of my family'

/kin ni hip e/  
 this year take NM  
 'It was taken this year'

/tou pieg si gua e siag tua  
 left side is I G marker most elder  
 e ta po kia/  
 MP marker male child  
 'On the left side is my eldest son'

/i toj kim tua gua ko?/  
 s/he now live outside country  
 'He is abroad presently'

/ti ba? kia e si gua e bo  
 wear eye glass NM is I G marker wife  
 e sue ti/  
 MP marker small brother  
 'The one wearing glasses is my wife's younger brother'

/i si kio ho? lai toj kim khia tua tenkalo/  
 s/he is call Hock Lai now live in Terengganu  
 'His name is Hock Lai and is now residing in Terengganu'

/siag buoi te ji pai si gua e ca bo kia/  
 most end second row is I G marker female child  
 'The last one in the second row is my daughter'

/i ke ho sin se/  
 s/he marry to teacher  
 'She is married to a teacher'

/i e aŋ bo ti siog lai bin/  
 s/he Gmarker husband not at picture inside  
 'Her husband is not in the picture'

/chieŋ aŋ sã si gua e ca bo laŋ/  
 wear red blouse is I Gmarker female person  
 'The one wearing a red blouse is my wife'

No Malay and Thai lexical elements are used in this speech sample. The grammar underlying these sentences is purely Chinese (Hokkien).

### 3.3.5 Hokkien with Varying Degrees (Slight to Moderate) of Malay and Thai Admixture

Elsewhere in Kelantan where Peranakan Chinese settlements are found, the common form of speech used as the home language is a variety of Hokkien with varying degrees (slight to moderate) of Malay and Thai admixture. The Thai linguistic elements in this variety of Peranakan Hokkien have been long and fully integrated or assimilated lexically, syntactically, and stylistically into their speech through the early Chinese-Thai mixed marriages. It is noted here that this form of speech is the "standard" form of Kelantan Peranakan

Hokkien which the other groups of Peranakan Chinese strive to speak when they communicate with each other.

Competence in the local Malay dialect is common to all Peranakan Chinese,<sup>29</sup> irrespective of age. This knowledge of Malay is utilized whenever there are communicative difficulties in conversation with other Peranakan Chinese. All Peranakan Chinese identify themselves as Chinese of the Hokkien speech group specifically, and they try to speak Hokkien in the "purest" form they can at the first instance when they have to speak Chinese. Peranakan Hokkien in its various forms that are spoken as home languages often subconsciously appear in their conscious attempt to speak the "pure" version of Hokkien.

The following are speech samples of the Hokkien with varying degrees of Malay and Thai admixture variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

(8) Speech sample (KPH/8/A/1992): a narrative

Speaker A

/təŋ laŋ ui ni u juŋo? he? be hiau

Chinese place here exist also R pronoun not know

kəŋ təŋ laŋ uai/

talk Chinese language

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<sup>29</sup>Gosling (1964: 203-204, 213) observes that the rural Chinese of Terengganu whom he calls "Hokkien Babas" are also competent in Terengganu Malay besides speaking (archaic) Hokkien as their principal home language.

'There are also some Chinese here who do not know  
how to speak the Chinese language'

/kuan si kɔŋ huan na uai ku ku e be khi/  
always speak Malay language long long can forget

'Speaking only Malay can make them forget the  
Chinese language eventually'

/bo p<sup>h</sup>ieŋ liau be ke liau/  
not become CA particle no correct CA particle

'It is too late, it cannot be corrected anymore'

/təŋ laŋ laŋu ni hɔ təŋ sua laŋ  
Chinese type this give mainstream Chinese  
khua soi/

look unfortunate

'This type of Chinese are being looked down upon  
by the mainstream Chinese'

/ai kɔŋ cə le khuai e mi kia pɔŋ  
want talk one CL simple MP marker matter also

ai tio? cam huan na ua/

want must mix Malay language

'To even talk about a simple matter, they have to mix  
with Malay'

(9) Speech sample (KPH/6/B/1991): a conversation

Speaker A

/si tiam mai ro səʔ/  
 four o'clock not know realize  
 'I was unconscious at four o'clock'

Speaker B

/rau jo: sam khon yah/  
 we stay three people only  
 'Only three of us live in this house'

Speaker C

/khəŋ lo:m koh/  
 climb wind Q particle  
 'Was there an attack of colic?'

Speaker B

/əm chai lai khua neŋ bo chai cẽ doh/  
 not know come see that not know wake up CA particle  
 'I do not know, when I came to see him,  
 he was already unconscious'

/ha su doh ni wa ti siu/  
 why CA particle this I PA particle think  
 'I was wondering why it happened'

/kio cu: leŋ kia kim tuan ti  
 call Choo Leng child Kim Tuan PA particle

khun toŋ e nu:n/  
 sleep at down yonder

'I called Choo Leng, Kim Tuan's son,  
 who was sleeping down there'

/i poŋ bo thĩã/  
 s/he also not hear  
 'He too did not hear'

/wa poŋ paŋ hoŋ ni khi kio cu: leŋ  
 I then leave NM this go call Choo Leng  
 he? bo thĩã tu wa/

R pronoun not hear just now'

'Then I left this one to call Choo Leng who had not  
 heard me calling earlier on'

/koŋ li bo chai cẽ  
 grandfather you not know awake

be e koŋ uai doh/  
 not able talk CA particle

'"Your grandfather is unconscious, unable to talk!"'

/wa poŋ be? khi koŋ kə awaŋ/  
 I then want go tell to Awang

'Then I wanted to go and inform Awang'

/bəlɔŋ e khi neŋ wa pɛce? pɛce? tɔŋ ni kɔŋ/  
 before can go that I massage massage here this first  
 'Before I went, I massaged here first'

/pɛce? pɛce? pɛce? pʰəŋ dai e kɔŋ uai/  
 massage massage massage then can can talk  
 'I massaged him for some time, only then could he talk'

/susɔh he bo laŋ/  
 difficult E particle no people  
 'It was difficult since there was nobody around'

Speaker C

/baŋ kɔh/  
 dream Q particle  
 'Were you dreaming?'

Speaker A

/sa mai rɔ sə?/  
 feel not awake  
 'I felt unconscious'

/si tiam no? chɛŋ/  
 four o'clock want bright

'It was four in the morning'

Speaker B

/wa jo:                siu    ha su bo    in            t:ikoh wa kio/  
 I PA particle think why not answer when I call  
 'I was wondering why there was no answer when I called'

/səkalo i    jo:                in            so?mo/  
 usually s/he PA particle answer always  
 'Usually he answers when I call'

/bikah ui?    sələlu            lo            le/  
 quickly climb immediately that time E particle  
 'Immediately without wasting time, I got up'

/iŋa?    sũũ    be?    khun    khi            yah/  
 think think want sleep further E particle  
 'I thought of sleeping on'

/bo    e    səla?    ka choi            khi            ɣa?/  
 not can if            fall asleep further A particle  
 'I could not, if I did not get up, I would fall asleep again'

/kalu malah ui?            ɣa?  
 if lazy wake up A particle  
 əm    chai    le                neŋ/

not know E particle that

'If I had been lazy and not get up,  
I do not what would have happened'

(10) Speech sample (KPH/10/A/1992): a conversation

Speaker A

/be? mui an chũã hal hal an chũã

want ask how matter matter how

'What do you want to ask? What kind of things  
do you want to ask?'

Speaker B

/i co kajiyə be? co che?/

s/he do research want write book

'He is conducting a research and wants to write a thesis'

/jadi be? mui le tɔŋ laŋ hoŋ tua ui ni

so want ask E particle Chinese who live place here

asa i an chua kuan pɔ/

origin s/he how way A particle

'He wants to ask about the Chinese of this place  
and their origin'

/e dai tɔleŋ kʰe:ʔ maŋ thai maŋ/

can can talk Malay also Thai also

'That they are bilingual in Malay and Thai'

Speaker A

/mai rɔ no? bɔ? mai au cəŋa/  
not know want tell not take interest

'I do not know, I was not interested'

/no? rian naŋsɛ: le? nu: khɔn kə: rau ja?/  
want read book time that people old we difficult

'I wanted to study at that time but my parents were poor'

Speaker C

/li ta dai rian mi/  
you Q particle can read Q particle

'How about you? Did you study at all?'

Speaker B

/wa thə? han na chə?/  
I read Malay book

I read Malay book

'I attended a Malay school'

Speaker A

/ku: wat neŋ no? rian khə:ʔ mai dai rian/  
how about you no? read khə:ʔ mai dai rian/

I time that want read Malay not can read

'At that time I wanted to go to a Malay school, but could not'

/sami wat neŋ pʰəŋ pʰəŋ bəʔ səkoloɦ kʰe:ʔ/

actually time that just just open school Malay

'Actually, Malay education was just being introduced at that time'

/sami wat neŋ mai toŋ bia tʰi/

actually time that not necessary money E particle

'Actually, there was no fee then'

/muloh tʰia ku: doi ku: ie? ie? loi/

late father I die I small small still

'When my late father died, I was still very small'

/cam mai cam/

remember not remember

'I can remember him only vaguely'

/ku: habih oeka? no? rian/

I finish strength want read

'I really wanted to study'

/kʰon ən səsəʔ poŋ dai rian juŋəʔ/

people other poor also can read also

'Other poor families could afford to send their children to school too'

/ku: mai dai rian lasoŋ/

I not able read at all

'I was unable to go to school at all'

As evident from these speech samples, Malay and Thai borrowings are subconsciously used. This linguistic phenomenon can be seen as a case of integration (cf., Haugen 1956,1969) where the use of words and phrases from Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai have become a part of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. The Malay and Thai elements in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien are better seen as neither a case of code-switching nor interference unless in a historical sense.

#### 3.4 COMPREHENSIBILITY AMONG THE VARIETIES

There is mutual comprehensibility<sup>30</sup> among the three regionally based Peranakan Chinese speech varieties (i.e., Wakaf Bharu, Peringat, and Balai), with Peranakan Hokkien as the base language<sup>31</sup> and Malay and Thai mixing in varying degrees. Not all Peranakan Chinese speak and understand the local

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<sup>30</sup>It is the degree to which speakers of one variety understand the speech of another variety regardless of whether that understanding comes about through lexical and grammatical similarity alone, or through frequent exposure to each other's speech.

<sup>31</sup>How is the base language in language contact phenomena recognized? How is base language determined? These questions are not easy to answer. However, linguists analyzing language contact data, especially in conversations, often determine the base language by examining which language is spoken more and especially by looking at the determiners, verbs and word order.

A discussion of base language in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is attempted in Section 3.8.

Thai language; thus many Peranakan Chinese in the Wakaf Bharu region have another home language. Although they have Peranakan Hokkien with heavy Thai mixing as the other home language, these Chinese prefer to speak the local Thai language. The same goes for the Peranakan Chinese in the Peringat, Sabak and Pulau Gajah areas who prefer speaking the local Malay dialect among themselves to the variety of Peranakan Hokkien with heavy Malay lexical mixing.

The speech of the Peranakan Chinese in the Balai region in the district of Bachok is intelligible to other Peranakan Chinese even with the heavy Thai accent. The Thai accent in the speech of the Peranakan Chinese in the Wakaf Bharu region is not as strong as that of this Balai speech.

There is an exception for the form of speech of the Joh region and its neighboring areas. The "China-accented" variety of Peranakan Chinese Hokkien spoken in the Joh region and its neighboring areas is not easily comprehensible to the other groups of Peranakan Chinese. The "China-accent" still preserved is not so much of a problem when compared to the meaning of the archaic lexical corpus. The mainstream Chinese too find it hard to comprehend the speech of these Joh Peranakan Chinese due mainly to the archaic words.

(11) Examples of archaic words (in bold) in Joh (KPH) speech:

(a)

**/be? ta khə/**

want go where

'Where are you going?'

(b)

/lu lai kui        tian/

you come how many person

'How many of you came?'

(c)

/lu e            lau bu kina jit

you G marker mother today

u        kuat sŭ bo/

have cut rubber Q particle

'Has your mother tapped rubber yet today?'

The four regionally based speech forms of Peranakan Chinese (i.e., Wakaf Bharu, Peringat, Balai, and Joh) are not only stigmatized but ridiculed and stereotyped by those who do not speak any of them as a home language. Most of the Peranakan Chinese from these four regions are careful not to mix their conscious attempt at a "purer" version of Hokkien with their home language. It is interesting to note that the version targeted by them as the language of intra- and inter-regional Peranakan Chinese communication, is not the variety of Hokkien spoken by mainstream Chinese. Mainstream or standard Hokkien is not identified as a "group language" that is able to maintain and promote Peranakan Chinese solidarity. The attempt to speak the

"purer" version of Hokkien is always never realized. This could be due to the fact that a "purer" version of Hokkien has never existed in their linguistic repertoire. Hence even when there is a desire to use this "pure" form of Hokkien, it never materializes.

In intra- and inter-regional Peranakan Chinese communication, those involved will consciously or unconsciously employ whatever Hokkien elements existing in their speech continuum of the Peranakan Hokkien: with their home language at one extreme end and the target of a "purer" version of Hokkien at the other. It is found that Peranakan Chinese who speak Thai and the very heavily Malay and Thai Peranakan Hokkien as their home languages, will resort to the local Malay dialect for "help" when communication difficulties arise. Peranakan Chinese of the other speech types are found to speak the "purer" version of Hokkien with not as many unnecessary lexical borrowings from Malay.

A common speech that was needed for intra- and inter-regional Peranakan Chinese communication thus becomes the standard speech in the sense that it cuts across regional differences, and provides a unifying means of communication. The ability to speak this form of speech among fellow Peranakan Chinese who do not speak the other's home language, is viewed as necessary as well as prestigious by the Peranakan Chinese society. However, the mainstream Chinese view this form of language as sub-standard with negative attitudes attached to it.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien may be inferior to its corresponding standard variety spoken by mainstream Chinese in social status only; linguistically it is a full-fledged language. This view of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is confounded with the attitudes of mainstream Chinese toward Peranakan Chinese.

### 3.5 THE STANDARD VARIETY

The standard variety<sup>33</sup> of the language of the Peranakan Chinese is thus an on-the-spot attempt to communicate effectively in a speech event where the participants are Peranakan Chinese. It is a colloquial language and thus is not codified. Its salient features are that it is Hokkien on the conscious level where the speakers are always aiming for a "pure" version lexically, grammatically, and stylistically. The local Malay dialect lexical stock of all categories is sought after when they cannot recover Hokkien lexical items in a particular speech event. Thai lexical items are sought after only by those active speakers of the local Thai language, especially those in the Wakaf Bharu region. Hence Malay and Thai are needed as a source of lexical expansion. Malay and Thai grammatical as well as stylistic structures are also subconsciously used. These structures came into the standard variety through long-term language contact processes which also led to social and linguistic assimilation.

Oftentimes, mainstream Chinese when communicating with Peranakan Chinese will shift their own speech to a pidginized or simplified form of

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<sup>33</sup>It can also be called an acrolect, a term in the study of mixed languages to refer to a prestige or standard variety against which it is possible to compare with basilect and mesolect (Crystal 1985: 6, 32, 193). Basilect is the variety most remote from the prestige and/or standard variety. Intermediate varieties are known as mesolects.

The heavily Malay in content variety spoken in Peringat and its neighboring areas, as well as in Sabak and Pulau Gajah can be considered the basilect while the other varieties are mesolects, with the heavy Thai mixing and heavy local Thai accent varieties as the "lower" mesolects and the "China-accent Hokkien" of the Joh region as the "upper" mesolect.

standard or mainstream Hokkien, especially lexically and stylistically, and occasionally grammatically, after realizing that the Peranakan Chinese speech cannot get any "purer." It is not a difficult task for the mainstream Chinese since they too are competent in the local Malay dialect although speaking it still with an accent. It is merely filling up parts of the speech with a discourse of either a paraphrased version of simplified standard Hokkien or Malay-standard Hokkien code-switching. The paraphrasing and/or switching is done when communication difficulties arise, or when it is anticipated that such moments of miscommunication will occur.

Peranakan Chinese oftentimes due to their incompetence in standard or mainstream Hokkien self-identify themselves as Malays<sup>34</sup> when it is really necessary to communicate with mainstream Chinese, to avoid the embarrassment of being looked down upon, or at times even humiliated for speaking a variety of Hokkien with Thai and Malay admixture. Their situational ethnicity is reinforced by their physical features, dark complexion and Malay behavior. Mainstream Chinese are always unaware of the situational switch of ethnicity.

However, Peranakan Chinese never pose as the local Thais. This is due to the fact that the Thais who are also competent in the local Malay dialect, speak it with a Thai accent. Not all Peranakan Chinese speak Thai, and

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<sup>34</sup>Refer to Section 2.5.1.6 in Chapter II and Section 3.1.2 for discussions of language and ethnicity in the case of the Peranakan Chinese.

Generally when Peranakan Chinese take snacks in urban areas, they prefer to do that at Malay stalls rather than at Chinese ones. This preference is due in part to their inability to speak mainstream Chinese (Hokkien). And if they have to at Chinese stalls, then they will speak Kelantanese Malay and assume a "Malay identity" for that situation.

imitating the Thai accent when speaking Malay is not an easy task for them. Most Thais speak Kelantanese Malay with a brogue where Malay sentences have almost the same intonation as the Thai sentences.

### 3.6 KELANTANESE THAI<sup>35</sup>

This variety of Thai which is spoken by the Thai community of Kelantan is influenced by the local Malay dialect lexically, syntactically and semantically. Thai spoken by the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese has another dimension of influence, that is Chinese (Hokkien).

#### 3.6.1 Phonology

The syllable of Kelantanese Thai consists of a vocalic nucleus and a tone. The syllable structure may be represented by the following schema: (C)(C)(V)V(C). Like standard Thai, Kelantanese Thai permits initial consonant clusters: labials - /pɾ-/, /pʰɾ-/, /pɭ-/, /pʰɭ-;/ alveolars - /tɾ-/ and velars - /kɾ-/, /kʰɾ/, /kɭ-/, /kʰɭ-/, /kw-/, /kʰw-/. However, these initial consonant clusters are fast disappearing in the speech of most Kelantan Thais, especially among the younger generation.

#### (12) Examples of initial consonant clusters in KT:

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<sup>35</sup>Most of the data on Kelantanese Thai come from natural conversations (without any intervention from me) among members of the Kelantan Thai community as well as between the local Thais and Peranakan Chinese. Some of the examples to show its divergence from standard Thai are texts contrived by me, which have been approved as grammatically acceptable by Kelantanese Thai speakers.

/pr-/-/pratu:/-/bətʉ:/ 'door'  
 /phr-/-/phruŋni/-/bərʉ:/ 'tomorrow'  
 /pl-/-/pla:/-/pa:/ 'fish'  
 /phl-/-/phle:ŋ/-/pe:ŋ/ 'song'  
 /tr-/-/truad/-/tuad/ 'to check; to examine'  
 /kr-/-/kradu:ʔ/-/kədu:ʔ/ 'bone'  
 /khr-/-/khrɛaŋ bin/-/kiəŋ bin/ 'aeroplane'  
 /kl-/-/klua/-/kua/ 'afraid'  
 /khl-/-/khlɔŋ/-/khɔŋ/ 'canal; river'  
 /kw-/-/kwa/-/kwa/ 'more; more than'  
 /khw-/-/khwai/-/khwai/ 'buffalo'

### 3.6.2 Lexicon

There is a trend in the replacement of (standard) Thai words with renditions which are in fuller congruence with the Kelantanese Malay counterparts.

Kelantanese Thai /lɔ:ʔ pʰinɔ:ŋ/<sup>36</sup> has replaced Thai /la:n/ which means 'grandchild' as well as 'nephew' or 'niece'. /lɔ:ʔ pʰinɔ:ŋ/ is a loan translation of /anaʔ saudaɣa/, the standard Malay form, or /anɔʔ sədaɣa/ the Kelantanese Malay phrase for 'nephew' or 'niece'. /la:n/ in Kelantanese Thai means 'grandchild' and has ceased for some speakers to include 'nephew' or 'niece'. It can be seen here that standard Thai /la:n/ has undergone a modification in meaning, in this case, a restrictive one, so as to be in

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<sup>36</sup>This as well as the other examples have also been observed by Golomb (1978: 147-148; 185-187).

accordance with the local Malay dialect for 'grandchild' /cu cu/ (cf., Golomb 1978: 148-149).

The standard Thai word for 'ice' is /nam kʰe:ŋ/, literally 'hard water'. Kelantanese Thai rendition of ice is /nam hin/ literally 'stone water'. /nam hin/ is preferred over /nam kʰe:ŋ/ as it is parallel to the local Malay term of /ae batu/ (literally 'stone water'). A loan blend in the form of /nam batu:/ is also used (cf., *ibid.*: 155).

The standard Thai name for a popular lychee-like fruit grown in northern Thailand called "longan" in English is /lamyai/. Kelantanese Thai do not use the Thai term, instead use a calque from Kelantanese Malay which calls the fruit /mato kuciŋ/ (literally 'cat's eye') in the form of /lu:ʔ ta: mɛ:w/ 'the fruit of cat's eye' (cf., *ibid.*: 151).

Standard Thai employs the verb /su:b/ for 'smoking cigarette' whereas the local Thai language uses the verb /du:d/. /su:b/ is a more polite word for 'to smoke' a cigarette. /du:d/ has the meaning of 'to suck'. Probably the choice of /du:d/ over /su:b/ in Kelantanese Thai is preferred as it has the same concept as the Kelantanese Malay word /isaʔ/ meaning 'to suck' (cf., *ibid.*: 158).

(13) Examples:

(a) T

/su:b buri:/

smoke cigarette

'Smoke a cigarette'

(b) KT

/du:d rokɔʔ/

smoke cigarette

'Smoke a cigarette'

In standard Thai, the verbs /au/ meaning 'to take; bring' is used to refer to things, while /p<sup>h</sup>a:/ meaning 'to take; to accompany' is employed to refer to people. However, in Kelantanese Thai the content of the semantic category represented by /au/ has been extended to include the meaning of /p<sup>h</sup>a:/. /p<sup>h</sup>a:/ is rarely used by the local Thais (cf., *ibid.*: 148).

(14) Examples in KT:

(a)

/au ma: taŋ deʔ ni: tɔŋ ni: kɔŋ/  
bring here put child this at here first  
'Bring here and put this child here first'

(b)

/ma: neŋ au pai kin mɔʔ pla: ku:/  
dog that take go eat all fish I

'That dog took my fish and ate it all'

The Kelantanese Thai word for 'tobacco' is /bəkau:/. This is undoubtedly a loanword from standard Malay /təmbakau/ or Kelantanese Malay /təbakə/. The Kelantanese Thai loanword /bəkau:/ can be seen as a reduction (by deleting the initial syllable) of the literary Malay form where the diphthong /au/ in the final syllable is lengthened (cf., *ibid.*: 158). The native Thai word for 'tobacco' which is /ja:su:b/ (literally 'medicine to suck') or /buri:/ is not known by many Kelantan Thais.

The Thai words for 'week' which are /səb pəda:/ in literary Thai and /a: tʰid/ in colloquial Thai, are not in the lexicon of many local Thai speakers. They have replaced them with the Malay word /miŋgu:/ and assign Thai-like tones to the syllables.<sup>37</sup> The Thai words /wan/ for 'day', /dɛ:n/ for 'month' and /pi:/ for 'year' are still intact in their lexicon.

Standard Thai has the following words /sək/, la:ŋ/ and /səʔ/ meaning 'to wash'. Their usages depend on the direct objects following them. /səʔ/ is employed strictly for washing one's hair. For washing anything other than one's hair, /la:ŋ/ should be used. /sək/ is used only when referring to washing clothes or any garment-like materials. Kelantanese Thai uses only /la:ŋ/ to mean 'wash' irrespectively of the objects being washed. This again is in congruence with the local Malay dialect /basəh/ meaning 'to wash' and is not restricted to any specific item.

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<sup>37</sup>As in the word /miŋgu:/, the first syllable is not stressed while the vowel in the second syllable is lengthened, and Thai-like syllabic tones are applied to both the syllables. Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien does not assign tones to Malay loanwords.

/d̥i:n/ in standard Thai has the meaning 'to walk'. The Kelantanese Thai word for it is /d̥i:n t̥in/,<sup>38</sup> a calque of /j:alə kaki/ literally 'walk leg' from the local Malay dialect. The Malay word meaning 'to walk' has to have the complement /kaki/ to differentiate it from /j:alə/ which means 'to go or visit places by any means, such as walking or in vehicles'. Standard Thai has /t̥h̥iəu/ for 'going or visiting places'. Hence, /d̥i:n t̥in/ is unnecessary but is adopted merely for the sake of being in fuller congruence with the lexicon of Kelantanese Malay.

The standard Thai word /t̥ɔ:b/ meaning 'to answer' or 'to reply' is unknown to most local Thai speakers. Instead they assume the local Malay counterpart of /jawab/.

(15) Example in KT:

/man t̥h̥am ku: sɔʔ mɔ ku: yah            mai hɔn jawab/  
 s/he ask I    always I    E particle never    answer  
 'S/he always talks to me, it's I who never replies'

### 3.6.3 Syntax and Semantics

Syntactically and semantically, the local Thai language and Kelantanese Malay display parallel sentences while the standard Thai equivalent is noticeably different. In other words, the inter-translatibility between these two

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<sup>38</sup>See Section 3.8.3 for further discussion.

languages is high where the syntactic surface structure and underlying semantic categories have become practically identical in almost all contexts.

The semantic units of the two languages correspond to each other on a one to one basis in almost all instances. For instance, numeral + classifier phrases in Kelantanese Thai may directly precede the nouns being qualified instead of following the nouns as in Standard Thai. This rule is in accordance with that of Malay (standard as well as dialects), but not other Thai dialects.

(16) Example in Thai:

/kʰru: sam kʰon/  
 teacher three CL  
 'Three teachers'

The regular Malay order is numeral + classifier + noun.

(17) Example in Malay:

/tiga oraᅇ guru/  
 three CL teacher  
 'Three teachers'

The Malay order is used along with the Thai one in Kelantanese Thai.

(18) Example:

(a) Thai order

/ma: sam tua/

dog three CL

'Three dogs'

(b) Malay order

/sam tua ma:/

three CL dog

'Three dogs'

Some of the classifiers in Kelantanese Thai are literal translations of the ones in Kelantanese Malay. Most Kelantan Thais do not have a thorough understanding of the classifier system of standard Thai.

The classifier /tua/, literally 'body', is used to refer to animals, furniture, and clothing, to name but a few, in standard Thai. It is still used in Kelantanese Thai, but mainly in contexts where the local Malays would use /ekɔ/ ('tail') as a classifier when counting or referring to animals.

For counting or referring to furniture, Kelantan Thais would use /lɔ:ʔ/, literally 'child', in Thai as the classifier to be in step with the local Malay counterpart /buɔh/, literally 'fruit'.

(19) Examples:

(a) T

/kau i: so:ŋ tua/

chair two CL

'Two chairs'

(b) KT

/i: so:ŋ lo:ʔ/

chair two CL

'Two chairs'

The classifier /pʰɛ:n/ in standard Thai is strictly used for items which are thin and broad, like pieces of cloth, and mats, to name a few, except clothing. However, Kelantanese Thai uses /pʰɛ:n/ when counting or referring to clothing since Kelantanese Malay employs /la/ for clothing.

(20) Examples:

(a) T

/sɛ: so:ŋ tua/

shirt two CL

'Two shirts'

(b) KT

/sɨ: so:ŋ pʰi:n/  
 shirt two CL  
 'Two shirts'

Other instances of Kelantanese Thai classifiers which are modified so as to be in fuller congruence with the local Malay dialect equivalents are:

(21) Examples:

(a) T

/chɔn so:ŋ kʰan/  
 spoon two CL  
 'Two spoons'

(b) KT

/chɔn so:ŋ dun/  
 spoon two CL  
 'Two spoons'

(c) KM

/duɔ bəte sudu/  
 two CL spoon  
 'Two spoons'

/dʊn/ is the Kelantanese Thai equivalent of the Kelantanese Malay /batɛ/ literally 'trunk' used for items which are longish in shape: spoons, roads, cigarettes, and pencils, etc.

There are instances of Kelantan Thais using /dɔ:ʔ/ literally 'shoot' or 'bud' as a classifier for guns and letters<sup>39</sup> since the local Malay dialect uses /puɔɔʔ/ ('shoot' or 'bud') for such items.

A general classifier /an/ ('item') is normally used when no specific classifiers are known by Kelantan Thais.

Another example is the use of the word /ma:ɣ/ meaning 'many; much' in local Thai which precedes the noun rather than follows it as in standard Thai.

(22) Examples (in bold):

(a) T

/mi:    **khon**    **ma:ɣ**    nai    ba:n    ni:/  
 exist   people   many   in   house   this  
 'There are many people in this house'

(b) KT

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<sup>39</sup>Golomb (1978: 187) cites the instance of using /dɔ:ʔ/ for letters. The standard Thai classifiers for letters and guns are /cəbɔb/ and /kəbɔ/ respectively.

/paŋ ma:g kʰoŋ nai ɣən ni:/  
 exist many people in house this  
 'There are many people in this house'

#### 3.6.4 Discourse: Politeness

Kelantanese Thai does not have a complicated pronominal system like standard Thai with which to mark subtle differences in status. When formality is called for, most local Thais are at a loss for the proper usage of the appropriate pronouns. /pʰom/ (for male speaker) and /diɕʰan/ (for female speaker) are polite singular first person pronouns, while /kʰun/ and /kʰau/ are polite second and third person pronouns respectively used to refer to superiors. They are the ones commonly used in Kelantanese Thai. Generally, these are the only polite pronouns known to most of them.

The local Thai language does not commonly call for sentence final particles like /kʰrab/ used by male speakers and /kʰa/ or /kʰaʔ/ by female speakers to render the sentence more polite. Unlike the case in standard Thai, /kʰrab/ and /kʰa/ or /kʰaʔ/ are also seldom used by Kelantan Thais to mean 'yes' by male and female speakers respectively. Kelantanese Thai also lacks formal greetings and expressions for "please" /pro:d/, "excuse me" /kʰo:tʰo:d/ or /kʰo: apʰai/ as well as "thank you" /kʰo:b kʰun/ or /kʰo:b cai/ in everyday usage.

The local Thais do not generally use the more polite word for 'eat' /tʰan/ which is to be used in formal situations or when addressing or

inviting strangers, superiors or older people. Instead they use /kɪn/<sup>40</sup> which is more appropriately employed in informal situations or when talking to intimates.

Even in formal situations, local Thais do not normally use the polite title or reference /kʰun/ in front of given names of both men and women to express politeness, respect and/or regards for a person or to address a stranger.

(23) Examples:

(a) T

/kʰun                    tʰid   pen        mɔ:  
 polite title   Thid   become   physician  
 'Thid (with polite title) is a (traditional) physician'

(b) KT

/ø   tʰid   pen        mɔ:                bə:n/  
 -   Thid   become   physician   village  
 'Thid (without polite title) is a traditional physician'

By not employing these polite particles which are symbolic of the traditional requirements of Thai courtesy, does this mean that the Thais of Kelantan are less polite in their speech?

<sup>40</sup>A vulgar word for "eat" in the local Thai language is /tɛ ɣəd/, a blend from Kelantanese Malay /tɛ kə dəɣəh/, literally 'hit till one bleeds'.

The first person singular pronoun /ku:/ and second person singular pronoun /məŋ/ in the local Thai language are standard Thai first and second person pronouns used by parents when speaking to their child/children, or to inferiors as an expression of contempt or abuse. But in Kelantanese Thai, these pronouns are neutral in the sense that they are neither polite nor impolite. The same goes for the third person singular pronoun /man/ used for inferiors, and children, animals, inanimate things in standard Thai. It is assumed as a neutral pronoun for 's/he' in the local Thai language. /rau/ and /khaʉ/ are employed as first person and third person plural pronouns respectively in this local Thai language.

Address and/or reference in the form of /sad/, literally 'animal', in Kelantanese Thai is attributable to the influence of Kelantanese Malay /n:atə/ ('animal') which is a marker of good rapport, solidarity, familiarity and informality among the men.

(24) Examples:

(a) KT

/sad ni mai chə:b leŋ bi:/

animal this not like play money

'This animal (=person) does not like to gamble'

(b) KM

/n:ate ni to? suko judi/

animal this not like gamble

'This animal (=person) does not like to gamble'

### 3.7 THE FEATURES OF THE STANDARD VARIETY<sup>41</sup>

The study of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and the claims made here are based on data collected from various Peranakan Chinese settlements in Kelantan. This study is basically a synchronic study of the standard speech of the Peranakan Chinese and does not purport to be an exhaustive account of it. It is rather an investigation into its salient linguistic characteristics.

The purpose of this section is to present facts about the standard variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien from a language contact perspective. No effort is made to describe it formally according to any particular theoretical viewpoint.

#### 3.7.1 Phonology

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<sup>41</sup>All structures of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien (e.g., passive construction, word order within the noun phrase, subject-prominent clause, etc.) in this chapter are from the data base. They occur in natural conversations, and are therefore language samples which are spontaneous and unplanned. They are composed on the spur of the moment in response to immediate situational demands.

Some examples from standard Thai, Kelantanese Thai, Kelantanese Malay, (literary) Malay, and (standard/mainstream) Hokkien are my introspections which are later confirmed by speakers of the respective languages. Although introspective data are highly self-conscious (i.e., stylistically closer to the written/literary than spoken language), in this instance it is not the case. Except for standard Thai and literary Malay, the other languages are oral languages. Oral languages are representative of normal language use.

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien phonology is simple. Most surface forms directly represent underlying forms.<sup>42</sup> However, in analyzing the data for this section, a purely Bloomfieldian approach<sup>43</sup> was taken.

It is not within the scope of this work to describe the phonemes of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien either generally or individually. Phonological processes in this variety of Hokkien will also not be described.

### 3.7.1.1 Consonants

There appears to be a large consonant inventory.<sup>44</sup> This is mainly due to borrowings from Kelantanese Malay and the local Thai language as well as other sources through Malay. Many terms, especially technological and cultural innovations from English, entered this variety of Hokkien secondarily from literary Malay.<sup>45</sup> However, many fashionable expressions

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<sup>42</sup>When a generative model of analyzing phonology is employed, various levels of representation are recognized. See Kenstowicz and Kisseberth (1979: 25-43) for a discussion of phonological rules and representations within the framework of generative phonology.

<sup>43</sup>Bloomfieldian phonological theory (cf., Anderson 1985: 250-276) is mainly concerned with the basic procedures of identifying phonemes, e.g., minimal pair test, contrast in analogous environments, and suspicious pairs. Such an approach is felt adequate for the purpose of this study.

<sup>44</sup>Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien has an impressively large phonetic repertoire since it is a mixed variety of two other languages. I am faced with the question of whether the Malay and Thai sounds should be described under a single phonemic system or under a separate co-existent system.

Following Bynon's (1977: 226) suggestion that if the number of foreign words in a language is large and it may be found preferable to modify the system (phonology, morphology and syntax) so as to accommodate them, then the Malay and Thai sounds are described under a single phonemic system.

<sup>45</sup>Standard or literary Malay is acquired through the mass media or schools.

from English<sup>46</sup> that are widely used and understood often with some semantic widening found in the speech of the Peranakan Chinese include:

(25) Examples:

(a) Noun

/ɔpɛh/ 'office'

/ɛgrimiŋ/ 'agreement; contract'

/ɛʔsidiŋ/ 'accident; mishap'

(b) Verb

/pəh/ 'to pass, e.g., examination'

/tra/ 'to try'

/ceʔ/ 'to check, to inspect'

(c) Adjective

/stae/ 'well dressed; fashionable' (style)

/kelah/ 'of high social class or status' (class)

/stendeʔ/ 'of a high quality' (standard)

(d) Adverb

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<sup>46</sup>These English expressions which have become stabilized loanwords also occur in the speech of local Malay and Thai elders who know no English at all.

/fəri/ 'free'

/pəseŋ/ 'way' (fashion)

/stedɪ/ 'smart' (steady)

Further semantic widening in the speech of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese as well as Kelantan Malays and the local Thais can be illustrated by numerous cases of English or English-sounding brand names which have gained acceptance as generic terms. Usually the trade name of the product first introduced in the market becomes the generic term for subsequent products of the same kind but of a different brand.

(26) Examples:

Colgate - toothpaste and anything which comes in a tube

Fab - detergent

Kodak - film

Modess - sanitary towel

Sardine - canned food

The consonant inventory of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien:

### **Stops**

Unaspirated - /p/, /t/, /c/, /k/, /ʔ/

Aspirated - /p<sup>h</sup>/, /t<sup>h</sup>/, /c<sup>h</sup>/, /k<sup>h</sup>/

Voiced - /b/, /d/, /j/, /ŋ/

### **Fricatives**

Unvoiced - /f/, /s/, /ʃ/, /h/

Voiced - /v/, /z/

Nasals - /m/, /n/, /ɲ/, /ŋ/

Lateral - /l/

Flap (Trill) - /r/

Semi-vowels - /w/, /y/

### 3.7.1.2 Vowels

The nine primary vowels in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien are /i/, /e/, /ɛ/, /ɨ/, /ə/, /a/, /ɔ/, /o/, and /u/.

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien adopts the nasal and non-nasal vowel distinction of standard Hokkien as well as Kelantanese Malay words, the accompanying tones that provide distinctions in Hokkien and Thai words, as well as the vowel length distinction in Thai words.

(27) Examples of vowel length in T/KT:

/laʔ/ 'steal'

/la:ʔ/ 'pull; haul'

Nasal vowels are common in Hokkien and Kelantanese Malay. A vowel takes on the nasal feature by virtue of being preceded or followed by a nasal. However, there are cases in Hokkien and Kelantanese Malay where no nasal segment is present synchronically.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>In these cases, the quality of nasality may be the relic of nasal segments which once occurred in the environment of the vowels. The nasal segments which had nasalized the vowels and the conditioning environment had been

(28) Examples of nasalized vowels:

(a) H

/ti/ 'pig'

/tĩ/ 'sweet'

(b) KM

/ɣa/ 'scattered'

/ɣã/ 'erotic desire'

### 3.7.1.3 Diphthongs

The three diphthongs in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien are /ai/, /au/, and /oi/.

/ai/-/ai/ 'want'

/au/-/au ban/ 'stubborn'

/oi/-/oi/ 'cooking pot'

### 3.7.1.4 Tones

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lost, leaving only the nasalized vowels as evidence of the present of nasal segments at an earlier stage of the language.

There are seven distinctive tones<sup>48</sup> in this variety of Hokkien: five open and two checked.

**Open:** Low<sup>11</sup>, Mid<sup>33</sup>, Mid-falling<sup>31</sup>, Rising<sup>35</sup>, High-falling<sup>51</sup>

(29) Examples:

/kau/11 'monkey'

/kau/33 'thick'

/kau/31 'arrive/enough'

/kau/35 'hook'

/kau/51 'dog/nine'

**Checked:** Low<sup>11</sup>, Mid<sup>33</sup>

(30) Examples:

/cat/11 'paint'

/cat/33 'thief'

### 3.7.1.5 Syllable Structure

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<sup>48</sup>For the purpose of this study, I find it sufficient to assign numbers to mark the suprasegmental traits of a Chinese (Hokkien) word cited in this subsection, and to ignore the actual pitch features.

However, tonal indications are not included in the transcription in this work since they play no significant role in subsequent discussions of the linguistic data.

Syllable structure in this variety of Hokkien is relatively simple. It allows only a restricted number of consonants in syllable-final position. The consonants that can occur in syllable-final position are /p/, /t/, /k/, /ʔ/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/. The syllable structure of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is simple and may be represented by the following schema: (C)(V)V(C). Tone is obligatory on all native Chinese (Hokkien) lexicon and Thai loanwords. Consonant clusters<sup>49</sup> do not occur in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

### 3.7.2 Lexicon

It has been asserted that Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien contains many Malay borrowings. Thai borrowings, especially lexically, have become part of the general vocabulary of this variety of Hokkien. This happened in the early ethnic development of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese speech community. Integration of borrowed Thai lexical items was a gradual process, which might have taken generations. A particular linguistic change, in the form of lexical borrowing that probably started out with individual speakers, was later generalized, i.e., widely used, within the speech community.

It cannot be denied that Kelantan Chinese Hokkien has numerous Malay loanwords,<sup>50</sup> which are often evident from free-wheeling exchanges among

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<sup>49</sup>Thai loanwords with initial consonant clusters are broken up by inserting /ə/ or deleting the second consonant of the cluster. See Section 3.6 for a discussion of this.

<sup>50</sup>Loanwords from many foreign sources exist in Malay. Some of these sources include Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Hindustani, Tamil, Portuguese, Dutch, Thai, and Chinese. Many of these loanwords entered Malay a long time ago. English loanwords are recent borrowings.

Peranakan Chinese Hokkien speakers. The extent<sup>51</sup> and character of Malay borrowings will be addressed later in this chapter.

### 3.7.2.1 Chinese (Hokkien) Vocabulary<sup>5 2</sup>

Certain semantic and cultural domains which are typically Chinese in nature and origin do not take Malay loanwords at all. There is a large in-group vocabulary in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. Many of these are of foods, medicines, articles or items of everyday use, clothing, jewelry, and the like which are Chinese in origin. Religious, ceremonial, and magical terms; terms of commerce (including numbers); names of animals (from the Chinese calendar); and the like, are also referred to in Chinese and again all of which have to do with things Chinese in origin. In summary, Malay loanwords are not used for these ethnic items and concepts which are not part of the world view held by the local Malays. The active use of Chinese in the forms of Hokkien words in these domains, especially the non-material side of culture such as religious beliefs and customs, reflects the fact that these cultural domains are not influenced at all by the local Malay culture. However, Chinese (Hokkien) words in most domains are still very much alive in contemporary Peranakan Chinese speech.

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<sup>51</sup>This does not involve loanword count, i.e., to quantify lexical borrowing in relation to the total lexicon of the recipient language.

<sup>52</sup>A few Malay words have been integrated into the vocabulary of Chinese (Hokkien) spoken by mainstream Chinese. E.g., /sukaʔ/ ("suka") 'like', /sase/ ("sisir") 'comb', /balu/ ("baru") 'recently; just', /sama/ ("semua") 'all', /mana/ ("mana") 'no; not', /lo kun/ ("dukun") 'doctor' and /kau in/ ("kahwin") 'marry'.

(31) Samples of Hokkien words<sup>53</sup> in these domains:

(a) Pronouns and Kinship terms

/wa/ 'I'

/lan/ 'we'

/li/ 'you'

/i/ 's/he; they'

/pa/ /thia/ /ce?/ 'father'

/ma?/ /cim/ 'mother'

/ko/ 'elder brother'

/ci/ 'elder sister'

/so ti/ 'younger brother'

/so mai/ 'younger sister'

/ẽ?/ 'younger sibling'

/koŋ/ 'grandfather'

/ma/ 'grandmother'

/co/ 'great grandparent'

/pe?/ 'uncle (father's elder brother)'

/əm/ 'aunt (father's elder brother's wife)'

/ce?/ 'uncle (father's younger brother)'

/cim/ 'aunt (father's younger brother's wife)'

/ko/ 'aunt (father's elder or younger sister)'

/tĩũ/ 'uncle (father's elder or younger sister's husband)'

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<sup>53</sup>These words are gathered in the context of free-wheeling conversations among Kelantan Peranakan Chinese, and are certainly not exhaustive of the total possible Chinese lexical items to be found in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

/ku/ 'uncle (mother's elder or younger brother)'  
 /kim/ 'aunt (mother's elder or younger brother's wife)'  
 /i/ 'aunt (mother's elder or younger sister)'  
 /tĩũ/ uncle (mother's elder or younger sister's husband)'  
 /piau/ 'cousin'  
 /sun/ 'grandchild'

(b) Beliefs and Religion

/hĩũ/ 'joss stick'  
 /hĩũ lo/ 'joss stick holder'  
 /hu chua/ 'charm paper pasted on doorways'  
 /lo? taŋ/ 'go into a trance'  
 /taŋ ki/ 'medium'  
 /bio/ 'Chinese temple'  
 /sin/ 'deity'  
 /chia sin/ 'offerings for the deities'  
 /kio/ 'carriage for deity'  
 /toŋ su/ 'Chinese horoscope of 12 animals'  
 /chioŋ/ 'mismatch based on Chinese horoscope'  
 /huan/ 'offend a spirit'  
 /liam keŋ/ 'chant prayers'  
 /pai/ 'pray'  
 /ho? sai/ 'worship'  
 /pai bo? cu/ 'worship ancestral tablets'  
 /kim chua/ 'gold incense paper used in praying'  
 /gin chua/ 'silver incense paper used in praying'

/lian/ 'Chinese couplets on red rice paper'  
 /sieŋ/ 'fairy'  
 /kui/ 'kneel before idols or elders'  
 /hoi siu/ 'priest'  
 /li ko/ 'nun'  
 /tʰɿ kɔŋ/ 'god'  
 /aŋ kɔŋ/ 'a Chinese idol; a hero deity'  
 /tua peʔ kɔŋ/ 'a Chinese idol'  
 /kɔŋ tʰau/ 'black magic'  
 /chiam si/ 'a means of divination by using bamboo sticks'  
 /peŋ an/ 'peace and well-being'  
 /hoʔ khi/ 'luck'

**(c) Celebrations**

/taŋ cheʔ/ 'Winter Solstice Celebration'  
 /cheŋ beŋ/ 'All Soul's Day'  
 /chit goeʔ pua/ 'Hungry Ghost Festival'  
 /sin cia/ 'Chinese New Year'  
 /cap go me/ 'last day of Chinese Lunar Year Celebration'

**(d) Death**

/kue sin/ 'die'  
 /co chit/ 'seventh-day death anniversary prayer'  
 /peʔ jit/ 'hundredth-day death anniversary prayer'  
 /tui ni/ 'one-year death anniversary prayer'

/co ki/ 'death anniversary prayer'

/chut sua/ 'bury the dead'

/boŋ/ 'grave'

/boŋ pai/ 'tombstone'

/pan/ 'coffin'

/tua ha/ 'mourn'

(e) Marriage

/te? pai/ 'dowry'

/mui laŋ/ 'match-maker'

/tĩã hun/ 'wedding'

/ke/ 'to get married (of a woman)'

/kia sai/ 'bridegroom; son-in-law'

/sin niu/ 'bride'

/sim pu/ 'daughter-in-law'

/bo/ 'wife'

/aŋ/ 'husband'

(f) Foods

/ba? caŋ/ 'rice dumplings with meat'

/ti koe/ 'sweet hardened glutinous rice cake'

/pĩã/ 'biscuits'

/tau sa/ 'bean-filled cake'

/ba? uan/ 'meat ball'

/hu uan/ 'fish ball'

/ti baʔ/ 'pork'  
 /kiam chai/ 'salted and pickled mustard'  
 /chai pɔ/ 'dried and salted turnips'  
 /khun chai/ 'chives'  
 /kĩũ/ 'ginger'  
 /chaj/ 'onions'  
 /ɔ/ 'yams'  
 /peʔ chai/ 'Chinese cabbage'  
 /gu leŋ/ 'milk'  
 /nui/ 'eggs'  
 /tau cĩũ/ 'preserved soy beans'  
 /bi/ 'rice'  
 /han chu/ 'potatoes'  
 /teʔ sun/ 'bamboo shoots'  
 /taj hun/ 'dried vermicelli'  
 /mi sua/ 'fine wheat vermicelli'  
 /tau ki/ 'dried bean curd'  
 /ho chio/ 'pepper'  
 /iam/ 'salt'  
 /mi hun/ 'flour'  
 /chĩũ/ 'starch'  
 /cho/ 'vinegar'

(g) Cooking methods

/tim/ 'to steam'  
 /cha/ 'to fry'

/saʔ/ʷ/kun/ 'to boil'

/cu/ 'to cook'

/sio/ 'to roast'

The use of Chinese (Hokkien) words in the above semantic domains: kinship terms, beliefs and religion, celebrations, death, and to some extent marriage, foods and cooking methods, is still intrinsic in the speech of the Peranakan Chinese. The use of these words indicate their Chinese identity.

Lexical loss in the following categories is evident in the speech of some Peranakan Chinese. These Chinese (Hokkien) words are often replaced by their Kelantanese Malay counterparts.

#### (h) Fruits

/ke ci/ 'fruits'

/kam/ 'lime'

/chiam/ 'orange'

/ɔŋ lai/ 'pineapple'

/pu to/ 'grapes'

/ĩũ wa/ 'pamelo'

/pau/ 'mango'

/lai/ 'pear'

/peŋ ko/ 'apple'

/tho/ 'peach'

/leŋ geŋ/ 'longan'

/lai ci/ 'lychee'

/chɔ/ 'dates'

/kam tʰia/ 'sugar cane'

(i) Clothing

/mũã/ 'cloth'

/kʰɔ/ 'pants'

/sã/ 'shirt; blouse'

/kun/ 'skirt'

/sã kʰɔ/ 'clothes'

/nia/ 'collar'

/liu/ 'button'

/liu pʰan/ 'button hole'

/tʰiu əŋ/ 'sleeve'

/te ya/ 'pocket'

/bo/ 'hat'

/e/ 'shoes'

/ca kiaʔ/ 'clogs'

/buoʔ/ 'socks'

/tʰiu kin/ 'handkerchief'

/eʔ kun/ 'towel'

(j) Jewelry

/kim kʰi/ 'jewelry'

/ama liəŋ/ 'necklace'

/hi sũĩ/ 'ear rings'

/chiu lieŋ/ 'bracelet'

/chiu ci/ 'ring'

/kha lieŋ/ 'anklet'

(k) Houseparts

/thĩã/ 'hall'

/paŋ/∞/paŋ keŋ/ 'room'

/lau thui/ 'steps'

/chu teŋ/ 'roof'

/hia/ 'roof tiles'

/tho kha/ 'floor'

/chau kha/ 'kitchen'

/lau pin/ 'veranda'

/mui/ 'door'

/thaŋ ŋa/ 'window'

/thiau/ 'pillar'

/phia?/ 'wall'

/loŋ kau/ 'drain'

(l) Numbers

/khoŋ/ 'zero'

/cap/ 'ten'

/pa?/ 'hundred'

/cheŋ/ 'thousand'

/ban/ 'ten thousand'

**(m) Classifiers**

/keŋ/ 'for houses, temples, etc'

/liap/ 'for balls, fruits, etc'

/ki/ 'for knives, pencils, etc'

/nia/∞/tiau/ 'for clothes'

/siaŋ/∞/tui/ 'for things that are in pairs'

/tĩũ/ 'for sheets of paper, letters'

/kho/ 'for people'

/ciaʔ/ 'for animals, fish, birds'

/teŋ/ 'for vehicles'

/lui/ 'for flowers'

**(n) Natural phenomena**

/hoŋ/ 'wind'

/ho/ 'rain'

/li koŋ/ 'thunder'

/te/ 'land'

/hai/ 'sea'

/kaŋ/ 'river'

/sũã/ 'hill; mountain'

/chui tua/ 'flood'

**(o) Days and Months**

/ji?/ 'day'

/le pai/ 'week'

/goe?/ 'month'

/ni/ 'year'

/pai i?/ 'Monday'

/pai ji/ 'Tuesday'

/pai sã/ 'Wednesday'

/pai si/ 'Thursday'

/pai go/ 'Friday'

/pai la?/ 'Saturday'

/le pai/ 'Sunday'

/it goe?/ 'January'

/ji goe?/ 'February'

/sã goe?/ 'March'

/si goe?/ 'April'

/go goe?/ 'May'

/la? goe?/ 'June'

/chit goe?/ 'July'

/pe? goe?/ 'August'

/kau goe?/ 'September'

/cap goe?/ 'October'

/cap it goe?/ 'November'

/cap ji goe?/ 'December'

(p) Household equipment/utensils

/həŋ lɔ/ 'charcoal stove'  
 /chəu/ 'stove'  
 /aŋ/ 'earthenware for water'  
 /bin pʰun/ 'basin'  
 /u? tau/ 'iron (for pressing clothes)'  
 /tu/ 'cupboard'  
 /kau i/ə/i/ 'chair'  
 /bin chəŋ/ 'bed'  
 /jo? ʔa/ 'mattress'  
 /chio?/ 'mat'  
 /chin tʰau/ 'pillow'  
 /to?/ 'table'  
 /teŋ/ 'lamp'  
 /pũã/ 'plate'  
 /oi/ 'cooking pot'  
 /thĩã/ 'wok'  
 /to/ 'knife'  
 /təŋ si/ 'spoon'  
 /ti/ 'chopsticks'  
 /ũã/ 'bowl'  
 /poi/ 'cup'

(q) Diseases and Illnesses

/pẽ/ 'disease'  
 /thia tʰo kʰa?/ 'headache'

/thia pat tho/ 'stomachache'  
 /thia cu khi/ 'toothache'  
 /thia hong/ 'rheumatism'  
 /thia nui/ 'polio; paralysis'  
 /hin/ʷ/hin tho khaʔ/ 'giddiness; nausea'  
 /kam cheʔ/ 'worm infestation'  
 /thai ko/ 'leprosy'  
 /chu/ʷ/chut chu/ 'small pox'  
 /tioʔ sua/ 'colic'  
 /he ku/ 'asthma'  
 /ti chəŋ/ 'piles'  
 /sioŋ hong/ 'cold'  
 /lau sai/ 'diarrhoea'  
 /phiaʔ/ʷ/chut phiaʔ/ 'measles'  
 /pu ya/ 'prickly heat'

(r) Animals

/ke/ 'chicken'  
 /aʔ/ 'duck'  
 /go/ 'goose'  
 /hoi ke/ 'turkey'  
 /cui gu/ 'buffalo'  
 /ĩũ/ 'goat'  
 /chĩũ/ 'elephant'  
 /tho/ 'rabbit'  
 /chua/ 'snake'

/bɛ/ 'horse'  
 /hɔ̃/ /lau hɔ̃/ 'tiger'  
 /chɪm/ 'crab'  
 /hɛ/ 'prawns'  
 /ham/ 'cockles'

(s) Color

/aŋ/ 'red'  
 /ɔ/ 'black'  
 /lam/ 'blue'  
 /ui/ 'yellow'  
 /cẽ/ 'green'

### 3.7.2.2 Malay Loanwords

Conversations among Peranakan Chinese in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, extensive with Malay loanwords at times, are not readily understood by speakers of Malays. Malay speakers recognize a significant number of borrowings in the form of certain words as well as phrases and/or stretches of discourse, but yet cannot understand Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien fully.

Malay borrowings can be classified as simple loanwords, loan translations, and loan blends in specific semantic areas where items or concepts are typically Malay or when there are Malay equivalents in the general semantic areas. These Malay words are consciously or subconsciously borrowed. If they are consciously used in an utterance, it is done oftentimes

with a purpose of filling a lexical gap on the spur of the moment when a lexical item needs to be inserted in a syntactic structure which may be Chinese (Hokkien) or Malay (Kelantanese Malay).<sup>54</sup>

### 3.7.2.2.1 Simple Loanwords

Being very competent in the local Malay dialect, naturally certain Malay lexical items come to the minds of Peranakan Chinese more readily than Chinese (Hokkien) words. This 'most available word' (Grosjean 1982: 152) approach leads the (bilingual) Peranakan Chinese to borrow from Kelantanese Malay when s/he cannot find a particular word or has not learned it in Chinese (Hokkien). In other words, the pragmatic and semantic factors lead the Peranakan Chinese to resort to the elements of Kelantanese Malay.

In some cases, the loss of items in certain semantic and cultural areas in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien lexicon is irrecoverable. When this happens, Malay or Thai words are borrowed and become part of its general vocabulary. This phenomenon of lexical loss is of two types: loss in the lexicon of a speaker, and loss in the lexicon of the speech community.

Lexical loss in the lexicon of a speaker will lead him or her to resort to Malay lexicon to fill in gaps in his or her speech. Borrowing from Thai is not the norm because Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien speakers are aware that not

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<sup>54</sup>There may be a "borrowed Malay syntax" (adapted from Appel and Muysken 1987: 162-163) present in the grammar of this variety of Hokkien, with a separate status. This "borrowed separate Malay syntax" which may perhaps be related to the phenomenon of code-switching, co-parallels with "Chinese (Hokkien) syntax." See Section 3.8.2 for a discussion of this.

all Peranakan Chinese speak Thai as one of their languages. Lexical loss in the lexicon of the speech community is sometimes dealt with by "inventing"<sup>55</sup> words which are used and understood only by Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien speakers.

An etymological investigation into most of these "invented" words reveal that many were borrowed from Thai with or without changes. These Thai words are also part of the general vocabulary of the local Malay dialect. Some of the words entered Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien lexicon directly from Thai whereas others entered via Kelantanese Malay.

(32) Examples:

KPCH - KM - T

/ɔd/-/ɔʔ/-/ɔd/ 'be patient'  
 /gɔŋ/-/gɔŋ/-/kʰo:ŋ/ 'silly'  
 /kʰoi/-/kɔho/-/kʰoi/ 'gradually'  
 /ɣeŋ/-/ɣeŋ/-/re:ŋ/ 'strength'  
 /sud/-/suʔ/-/sud/ 'last; end'  
 /ŋɔ/-/ŋɔ/-/ŋɔ:/ 'silly'  
 /liʔ/-/liʔ/-/li:ʔ/ 'avoid'  
 /pʰɔ/-/bɔ/-/pʰɔ:/ 'enough'  
 /cam/-/cɛ/-/cam/ 'remember; recognize'  
 /tʰan/-/dɛ/-/tʰan/ 'in time'

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<sup>55</sup>As claimed by some research subjects. E.g. /ʔɛʔ/ 'baby; infant', /loi/ 'yet; still; somemore' and /ta/ 'a question particle'.

/nuŋ/-/nuŋ/-/no:n/ 'yonder'

The low frequency of occurrence of the following Chinese (Hokkien) words ensures the likelihood of their being replaced by Malay borrowings. According to Weinreich (1953: 57) "other things being equal, the frequent words come easily to mind and are therefore more stable; relatively infrequent words of the vocabulary are, accordingly, less stable, more subject to oblivion and replacement."

(33) Examples:

(a) Nouns

KM - H

/kapɔʔ/-/pɔ tʰau/ 'axe'

/kələh/-/pan/ 'classroom'

/hə/-/tai cĩ/ 'affair'

/nasehəʔ/-/ko bun/ 'advice'

/pəluwe/-/ki huə/ 'opportunity'

/ʔaʔyaʔ/-/koʔ bin/ 'citizen'

/nəgəʔi/-/koʔ ka/ 'country'

/taniɔh/-/koŋ hi/ 'congratulations'

/pəjanjiye/<sup>56</sup>-/hap taŋ/ 'agreement; contract'

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<sup>56</sup>This is a morphologically complex word. Often Malay words are borrowed together with the affixes. These words are treated as stems (consisting of a root morpheme and at least a derivational affix) in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. However, no Malay affixes by themselves are borrowed.

/pəŋalame/-/keŋ giam/ 'experience'  
 /pəsatuwe/-/huə kuan/ 'association'  
 /pəʃentoh k:uʃoŋ/-/kai giam/ 'curfew'  
 /k:təʃaŋe/<sup>57</sup>-/siau sit/ 'information'  
 /isələ/-/huə kau/ 'Islam'  
 /masjed/-/huə kau təŋ/ 'mosque'  
 /enjeŋ/-/ki k<sup>h</sup>i/ 'machine; machinery'  
 /pəʃatoh/-/paʔ sieŋ/ 'percentage'  
 /pəndapaʔ/-/hoŋ bin/ 'viewpoint'  
 /caʃo/-/hoŋ huat/ 'way; manner'  
 /cuaco/-/t<sup>h</sup>i k<sup>h</sup>i/ 'weather; climate'  
 /bomi/∞/dunio/-/se kai/ 'world/

## (b) Verbs

/lawe/∞/lawan/-/huaŋ tui/ 'oppose'  
 /pisoh/-/li kui/ 'separate'  
 /same/∞/saman/-/ko/ 'sue'  
 /bunuh/-/am sat/ 'assassinate'  
 /pəʃeʔso/-/sun/ 'inspect'  
 /m:lətuʔ/-/ca/ 'explode'  
 /keʃiʃo samo/-/hap coʔ/ 'co-operate'  
 /s:ləʃo/-/koŋ chio/ 'joke'

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In the example, /janji/ meaning 'to promise' is the root while /pə-/ and /-yə/ are derivational affixes.

<sup>57</sup>Kelantanese Malay tends to drop prefixes. The deleted prefixes actually leave traces of themselves in the form of lengthening the first sound of the stem. E.g. in /bəbini/ meaning 'to have a wife', /bə/ a prefix is usually deleted, and the resulting form is /b:ini/.

/puji/-/o lo/ 'praise'  
 /pahɛ/-/beŋ peʔ/ 'understand'  
 /hayaʔ/-/hi baŋ/ 'hope'  
 /tulɔŋ/-/tau kʰa cʰiu/ 'help'

The foregoing sample of Malay loanwords can be categorized as "replacive" loanwords (cf., Selinker 1992: 48). They replace the Chinese (Hokkien) ones which have disappeared entirely from the lexicon of most Kelantan Peranakan Chinese.

It is found that Peranakan Chinese tend and prefer to use Malay loanwords for terms of affective emotions, even if they know the Hokkien counterparts. These terms are mostly adjectives.<sup>58</sup> Lexical loss in this category is often irrecoverable among young speakers. For the older generations, the Malay as well as the Chinese (Hokkien) forms of a concept of affect exist side by side in their vocabulary. For these speakers, both the terms are equally acceptable and they use them interchangeably. There seems to be no social meaning to the choice of one or the other. In other words, the Malay loanwords are "additive" loanwords in the sense that the Malay and Chinese (Hokkien) forms exist side by side, usually with no apparent differentiation in meaning. For the younger speakers, the choice of the Malay forms over the Chinese (Hokkien) forms has social meaning.

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<sup>58</sup>This is the domain of vocabulary in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien where one finds a high percentage of Malay loanwords.

However, the use of the Malay or Chinese (Hokkien) forms as "doublets" (co-existing words for the same concept) by the older generation speakers is predictable in terms of the interlocutor involved. If the interlocutor is a female, young or old, the Chinese (Hokkien) forms are used, but if the interlocutor is a male and also young, the Malay forms are mostly used.

Various reasons could have led to the preference for Malay affective words. Certain types of words become obsolete at a greater rate than others and thus create an "onomastic low pressure" (Weinreich 1953: 58) where a constant flow of new words is required as replacements. Weinreich (1953: 60) and Hope (1964: 67-68) single out affective words as being particularly prone to rapid obsolescence.

Kelantan Peranakan Chinese, being bilingual, and familiar with the local Malay dialect, may come to feel that the semantic field of emotion in Chinese (Hokkien) is insufficiently differentiated, and consequently, resort to borrowing from Malay to fill the gaps. Malay words in this domain may be found to be more expressive as well as efficient,<sup>59</sup> and become stabilized. The Chinese (Hokkien) counterparts then become restricted in usage (by the older generation), and eventually discarded (by the younger generation).

(34) Examples:

H - KM

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<sup>59</sup>See Hope (1964: 72) for a discussion of the theory of comparative efficiency on this aspect.

/li hai/-/biso / 'cunning'  
 /kiam siap/-/kupit/☞/kəloŋe?/ 'stingy'  
 /ke? sim/-/ŋusiŋ/ 'broken-hearted'  
 /p̄hai p̄hia?/-/pəŋaŋa udoh/ 'bad character'  
 /u hau/-/juŋuh/ 'filial'  
 /put hau/-/dəhako/ 'not filial'  
 /ho mia/-/sənaŋ/ 'fortunate'  
 /au ban/-/babe/ 'difficult; unreasonable'  
 /kam guan/-/puah hati/ 'satisfied'  
 /iau kin/-/mustoh?/ 'urgent'  
 /lau sit/-/luŋuh/ 'honest'  
 /tham sim/-/təmo?/ 'greedy'  
 /chut mia/-/səho/ 'popular'  
 /khe? k̄hi/-/malu/ 'shy'  
 /pin tua/-/malah/ 'lazy'  
 /siau/-/gilo/ 'crazy'  
 /chau kuan/-/lia/ 'bad-hearted'  
 /cia? la?/-/təna?/ 'serious'  
 /sĩã/-/kəŋama?/ 'blessed'  
 /kau ce/-/payoh baso/ 'difficult'  
 /kan k̄ho/-/payoh/ 'difficult; miserable'  
 /gau/-/gagoh/ 'strong;capable'  
 /se ji/-/bəŋiŋa?/ 'cautious'  
 /kien siau/-/malu/ 'ashamed'  
 /ch̄o lo/-/təbolãh/ 'impolite'  
 /chia? co/-/dəki/ 'jealous'  
 /p̄hai seŋ te/-/pəŋoh/ 'bad tempered'

/jiau/-/kədu?/ 'wrinkled'  
 /kʰaŋ/-/kosəŋ/ 'empty'  
 /chəu chə/-/həpə/ 'fishy odour'  
 /hua hi/-/suko/ 'happy'  
 /lam/-/ləməh/ 'weak'  
 /ioŋ/-/kua?/ 'strong'  
 /ŋe/-/lasə?/ 'enduring'  
 /kĩã si/-/n:ako?/ 'scared'  
 /pʰeŋ siəŋ/-/biasə/ 'ordinary'  
 /giam/-/bəkəŋ/ 'strict'  
 /səŋ/-/sələsə/ 'comfortable'

#### 3.7.2.2.2. Loan Blends/Hybrid Loanwords

A loan blend involves the recipient language/culture borrowing part of the model and replacing part of it by words/terms already in the language. The combination of a Chinese term with a borrowed Malay modifier is common. For instance, the Hokkien generic term /hu/ 'fish' is placed before the name of most fish varieties in the local Malay dialect.

(35) Examples:

KPH-KM

/hu kəli/-/ikə kəli/ 'catfish'  
 /hu bilih/-/ikə bilih/ 'anchovies'  
 /hu səla kuniŋ/-/ikə səla kuniŋ/ 'small horse-mackerel'

Two sub-categories are evident in the classification of loan blends in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. These loan blends follow the Malay order of head + attribute.

(i) Chinese (Hokkien) Head - Malay Attribute

(36) Examples:

(a) Noun-Noun order

KPH - KM

/cui boh/-/ae boh/ 'flood water'

/pui kupi?/-/nasi? kupi?/ 'glutinous rice colored  
with tumeric'

/liap ləŋe/-/buəh ləŋe/ 'biceps'

/bi bəŋteh/-/bəŋah bəŋteh/ 'parched rice'

(b) Noun-Verb order

KPH - KM

/cun səle/-/kapa səle/ 'submarine'

/c'hia tolo?/-/kəŋeto tolo?/ 'cart'

/c'hia sodo?/-/kəŋeto sodo?/ 'bulldozer'

## (c) Noun-Preposition order

KPH - KM

/laŋ ɛ/-/oŋɛ bawɔh/ 'subordinate person'

## (d) Verb-Noun order

KPH - KM

/chia? gu/-/make gu/ 'to betray one's group'

/cho saeŋ/-/bua? saeŋ/ 'befriend'

/pĩ baŋua/-/jadi baŋua/ 'to become a fool'

/thia bako/-/sake? bako/ 'disease that is hereditary'

## (e) Verb-Adjective order

KPH - KM

/ti tho kasa/-/maen kasa/ 'rough play'

## (f) Verb-Adverb order

KPH-KM

/chãũ baŋa/-/busu? baŋa/ 'very smelly'

## (g) Noun-Adjective order

KPH - KM

/paŋpe tiŋi/-/pɔʔ tiŋi/ 'step father'

/laŋ buje/-/oŋe buje/ 'prostitute'

/laŋ tɔʔ pɔʔ/-/oŋe tɔʔ pɔʔ/ 'insane person'

## (h) Preposition-Noun order

KPH - KM

/lai bin patəŋ/<sup>60</sup>-/dale pate/ '40 days in confinement  
after birth'

## (j) Adjective-Adverb

KPH - KM

/ɔ ləŋe/-/itə ləŋe/ 'pitch black'

/peʔ ləpɔʔ/-/putəh ləpɔʔ/ 'pure white'

/aŋ ɲalo/-/meŋɔh ɲalo/ 'vivid red'

## (i) Adjective-Noun order

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<sup>60</sup>The Chinese (Hokkien) counterpart is /goeʔ lai/ literally 'within or in the month'. Often, Peranakan Chinese adopt this Hokkien phrase by adding the adverbial modifier /lai bin/ meaning 'in; within' to an already modified noun, thus producing a seemingly redundant phrase to a mainstream Hokkien speaker. E.g., /lai bin goeʔ lai/ 'inside month inside'.

KPH - KM

/teŋ nia?/-/keŋah nia?/ 'persistent'

/tua kəŋo?/-/bəsa kəŋo?/ 'deeply in debt'

(ii) Malay Head - Chinese (Hokkien) Attribute

(37) Examples:

(a) Noun-Noun order

KPH - KM

/atap sali/-/ata? zeŋ/ 'zinc roof'

/nomboŋ chu/-/nombo ŋumoh/ 'house number'

/kaki ciu/-/kaki aŋo?/ 'an alcoholic; drunkard'

/puyam ho/-/puyə uje/ 'rainy season'

/ŋoko? hiŋo?/-/ŋoko? daon/ 'straw cigarette'

(b) Verb-Noun

KPH - KM

/maen ca ho/<sup>61</sup>-/maen t:iŋo/ 'womanizing'

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<sup>61</sup>This loanblend can also take the form of /ti to t:iŋo/, adopting the Chinese (Hokkien) head-Malay attribute category. The reverse of order is apparently at the mere pleasure of the speaker.

## (c) Noun-Adjective order

KPH - KM

/kəʔaniŋ tua/-/kəʔaniŋ bəsa/ 'chief clerk'

/tʰau kʰaʔ bətoʔ/-/p:alo bətoʔ/ 'bald head'

/paʔ to buciʔ/-/peʔoʔ buciʔ/ 'big stomach'

## (d) Subordinator-Negation

KPH - KM

/kalu bo/-/kalu doʔ/ 'if not'

## 3.7.2.2.3 Loan Translations/Calques

Loan translations require more extensive bilingual knowledge than loan blends. They involve new items or concepts which are imported from Malay, a donor language/culture to Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, and are translated literally. These calques follow the Malay order of head/noun + attribute.

The conceptual content of words/terms and phrases of Malay cultural phenomena tend to assume more importance than their phonetic shape. There was never an attempt other than to "translate" into Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

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## (38) Examples:

## (a) Malay idioms

## KPH-KM

/chiu tɛŋ/- /tɛŋ panjɛ/ 'a character who likes to steal'  
 /gia lau/ - /pɔ tuɔ/ 'the wisdom of a person advanced in age'  
 /hin hɔ sin/ - /peniŋ lalaʔ/ 'slight giddiness'  
 /tɛŋ ciʔ/-/keʔah lidɔh/ 'having difficulty in speech'  
 /kʰin cui/-/ʔeʔŋe mulɔʔ/ 'a talkative person'  
 /taŋ kuʔ/-/beʔaʔ tule/ 'a lazy person'

## (b) Noun-Noun

## KPH-KM

/baʔ ciu to/-/mato pisa/ 'blade of knife'  
 /baʔ ciu biso/-/mato biso/ 'tip of an abscess'  
 /koko sai kau/-/kɛlabu tahiʔ aŋiŋ/ 'a shade of brown'  
 /cɛ̃ hioʔ/-/ija daɔŋ/ 'leaf green'  
 /hia ti kau/-/sɛdayɔ aŋiŋ/ 'siblings from the same  
 mother but different fathers'

## (c) Verb-Noun

KPH-KM

/ti t<sup>h</sup>o ba<sup>?</sup> ciu/-/maen mat<sup>o</sup>/ 'to flirt'/chia<sup>?</sup> hua/-/make bu<sup>o</sup>/ 'to earn interest'/cai ka ti/-/tahu di<sup>yi</sup>/ 'knowing one's place in society'/kia k<sup>h</sup>a/-/j:ale kaki/ 'walk'

(d) Verb-Negation-Verb

KPH-KM

/ka b<sup>o</sup> c<sup>h</sup>ia<sup>?</sup>/-/aja t<sup>o</sup>? make/ 'not receptive to advice'

(e) Verb-Adjective

KPH-KM

/lai la sam/-/ma<sup>yi</sup> c<sup>o</sup>ma/ 'menses'

### 3.7.2.3 Thai Loanwords

This sample of Thai loanwords can be categorized as "expansive" loanwords (cf. Selinker 1992: 46). They occur when Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien borrows the labelling of a concept and the name of an item along with the importation of that concept or item. These Thai words which are mainly in the religious domain are not reshaped to the phonemic pattern of Chinese (Hokkien).

(39) Examples:

/suad mon/ 'recite Thai-Pali incantations'  
 /suad kradu:ʔ/ 'recite prayers for the deceased'  
 /pʰraʔ/ 'god; lord; Buddhist priest'  
 /tʰan/ 'Buddhist priest; abbot'  
 /ne:n/ 'disciple of a Buddhist priest'  
 /me: chi:/ 'Buddhist nun'  
 /bua/ 'depository for cinerary urns'  
 /lu:ʔ bua/ 'urns'  
 /ʝan wat/ 'temple festivals'  
 /bun/ 'merit'  
 /bab/ 'sins'  
 /buad/ 'ordination'  
 /caw/ 'honorific prefix before given names of former monks'  
 /se/ 'prefix used before given names of non-ordained men'  
 /ke: bon/ 'making merit for a deceased relative'  
 /tʰe:wada:/ 'divine angels'  
 /sa:la:/ 'pavilion; resting place for monks'  
 /he:/ 'religious procession around the compound  
           of the temple'  
 /wan pʰraʔ/ 'the four Buddhist Sabbaths of each month'  
 /rod nam/ 'ritual bathing done by abbots; holy bath'  
 /liʝ pʰraʔ/ 'presenting food to the monks'  
 /au bun/ 'take (make) merit'  
 /bo:d/ 'consecrated sanctuary'

- /wiha:n/ 'place for meditation and sermons in the temple'  
 /duaŋ/ 'destiny'  
 /nam mon/ 'holy water'  
 /mon/ 'Thai-Pali incantations'  
 /dai bun/ 'receiving meritorious contributions'  
 /lu:ʔ pʰraʔ/ 'Buddha amulets'  
 /tʰiʔ təmon/ 'talisman'  
 /tʰo:d kəthɪn/ 'post-fasting festival'  
 /wipadsana:/ 'voluntary meditation retreat composed of  
                   groups of individuals under the tutelage  
                   of a specially qualified monk'  
 /sai pre:d/ 'offerings of food to wandering ghosts'  
 /soŋ kran/ 'Thai New Year'  
 /ram voŋ/ 'a type of Thai dance'  
 /mɔ: tʰai/ 'Thai magical and/or traditional  
                   medical practitioner'

Standard Thai demonstrative pronouns of /ni:/ 'this' referring to something or someone located very close to the speaker, /nan/ 'that' referring to something or someone located at a distance from the speaker, and /no:n/ 'over there; yonder' referring to something or somebody located very far from the speaker are used in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and Kelantanese Malay.

Kelantanese Malay /ni/ need not necessarily come from Thai /ni:/. It is a reduction of /ini/ meaning 'this; here'. However, Thai /nan/ becomes /nu/ in Kelantanese Malay and /neŋ/ in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, while /no:n/ takes the form of /nuŋ/ in both languages. The adverbs of place referring to 'here' /tʰi:ni:/, 'there' /tʰi:nan/, and 'over there'

/tʰi: no: n/ are also assumed by these languages. Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien adopts the modified forms of Kelantanese Malay - /n:i/<sup>62</sup>, /n:u/ and /n:uŋ/.

(40) Examples:

(a) KPH

/tua ui n:u/  
 locate place there  
 'It is located there'

(b) KPH

/tua ui n:uŋ/  
 locate place over there  
 'It is located over there'

(c) KM

/dɔʔ n:u/  
 locate there  
 'It is located there'

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<sup>62</sup>Long consonants in Kelantanese Malay signify compensatory lengthening. This lengthening is compensation for the loss of a morpheme from the original form. See also footnote 57.

(d) KM

/dɔʔ n:uŋ/

locate over there

'It is located over there'

Standard Thai's /kʰɔ:ŋ/ which is used in linking two nouns in a possessive relationship has assumed the form /hɔŋ/ in Kelantanese Thai. Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien borrows it in its possessive/genitive constructions.<sup>63</sup> However, possession can be shown equally well without the use of /kʰɔ:ŋ/ or /hɔŋ/.

The Thai particle /tʰəd/ which has the semantic effect of urging or suggesting a person to do something, is widely used in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

(41) Examples in KPH:

(a)

/tʰiaʔ hɔ pa tʰəd/

eat till full U/S particle

'Eat till you are full'

(b)

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<sup>63</sup>See Section 3.7.3.1.4 for a discussion of this.

/lai tʰəd            kalu be? kʰi ɣa?/  
 come U/S particle if    want go    A Particle  
 'Come, if you want to go along'

/kan/, another Thai particle which denotes reciprocity (hereafter RP) is widely used with Chinese (Hokkien) words and/or expressions.

(42) Example in KPH:

(a)

/ti            suka? kan            nɔ kʰɔ neŋ/  
 PA particle like    RP particle two CL    that  
 'They both like each other'

(b)

/tua    cʰia? baɬɔh    kan            so? mɔ  
 live eat    quarrel RP particle always  
 nɔ ɣe aŋ        bɔ    neŋ/  
 two CL husband wife that  
 'That couple quarrel a lot with each other'

Standard Thai's /cʰai mai/ has its parallel in the form of /cʰai mi/ in the speech of the Peranakan Chinese. /cʰai/ has the meaning of 'correct; right' while /mai/ is a question particle in standard Thai. When these two are

used in combination, they have the semantic of a tag question. /c<sup>h</sup>ai mi/ is a loan blend where /mi/<sup>64</sup> is the Chinese (Hokkien) particle for yes-no questions.

(43) Examples:

(a) KT

/nu      mia   məŋ   c<sup>h</sup>ai   mai/  
 there   wife   you   Q   particle  
 'Over there is your wife, isn't it?'

(b) KPH

/nu      bo      li      c<sup>h</sup>ai   mi/  
 there   wife   you   Q   particle  
 'Over there is your wife, isn't it?'

### 3.7.3 Intra-clausal Syntax

This section examines some salient syntactic features of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien as well as its syntactic links to Kelantanese Malay and local Thai. The syntactic links between Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and Kelantanese Malay

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<sup>64</sup>See section 3.7.3.1.7.

as well as Kelantanese Thai are analyzed by dealing with the similarities in surface structures of these languages.<sup>65</sup>

Only single clause phenomena are dealt with in this section. Reference is also made to Chinese (Hokkien) to show how Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien has "deviated" from it.

### 3.7.3.1 Word Order

The grammatical word order of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien syntax for distinguishing the relative position of the three most common or important elements: subject, verb, and object in a clause, is subject-verb-object. Standard Hokkien,<sup>66</sup> Kelantanese Malay and the local Thai language have this word order too. This is the basic<sup>67</sup> or usual word order in simple clauses for these four languages.

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<sup>65</sup>Malay and Thai borrowings are identified in this study by an approach that uses formal criteria, taking only the synchronic state of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien into consideration. The Malay and Thai elements are differentiated from the native (Hokkien) ones by determining the points in which the foreign elements fail to conform to Chinese (Hokkien) patterns. This is done by analyzing the Malay and Thai elements and their morphological as well as syntactic patterning. In other words, this method identifies borrowing by studying structural irregularities.

Perhaps, a better approach will be to make a comparison between earlier and later stages of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien to detect possible innovations and, subsequently, a comparison of the innovations discovered with possible forms in Malay and Thai with which it has come into contact.

<sup>66</sup>Chinese (and Hokkien in this case) is frequently said to be an SVO language. However, many linguists prefer to describe Chinese sentences as the topic-comment type. The topic being the main thing that is talked about, is placed at the beginning of the sentence, and then a sentence, which is consistently of the SVO type, says something about it. See Section 3.7.5 for a discussion of such sentence type.

<sup>67</sup>If there is a preference for one word order over the other(s) in determining a basic word order for the language as a whole, i.e., specifying the linear order of subject with respect to the other two constituents: verb and object, the

### 3.7.3.1.1 Word Order within the Clause

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is consistent and rigid with the SVO order in its clause constructions.

(44) Examples (in bold) in KPH:

(a) **Direct object**

**/wa pha? c̣hua/**

**I hit snake**

**'I hit a/the snake'**

(b) **Indirect object**

**/pa wa khi pasat be chai/**

**father I go market buy vegetables**

**'My father went to the market to buy vegetables'**

(c) **Sentential complement**

(i)

---

one which is more restricted than the other(s), is not chosen. E.g., English questions (wh-elements) with OSV order do not jeopardize the choice of SVO as the basic word order for the English language since questions of wh-elements are considered much more restricted (i.e., the more marked sentence type) than statements (cf., Comrie 1981: 82).

/wa bo cai o<sup>h</sup>u i tio? sio hoi/

I not know house his/her AP marker burn fire

'I did not know that his/her house was on fire'

(ii)

/i ai tui/

s/he want go back

'S/he wants/wanted to go back/home'

(iii)

/wa kio i tui/

I ask him/her go back

'I ask/asked him/her to go back/home'

(d) **Adjectival predicate**

/pa i pui/

father his/her fat

'His/her father is/was fat'

(e) **Adverbial predicate**

(i)

/i tan gua k<sup>h</sup>au/

s/he wait outside

'S/he waits/waited outside'

(ii)

/pa wa su? hun ki lat/

father I smoke cigarettes strong

'My father smokes/smoked heavily'

(f) **nominal predicate**

/ko wa lo kun/

elder brother I doctor

'My elder brother is/was a doctor'

/si/ equivalent to the verb "to be" in English is sometimes used in equational constructions to add emphasis. E.g., /ko wa si lo kun/ 'My elder brother is/was a doctor'.

### 3.7.3.1.1.1 Verb + Complement Constructions

The semantic of verb+complement constructions in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, like most languages, depends on the verb. The verb selects its arguments and sentential complements.

Complement-taking verbs in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien can be considered to fall into three categories: modality verbs, manipulative verbs, and cognition-utterance verbs.<sup>68</sup>

Modality verbs: verbs in this category take a verbal complement whose subjects are identical to the subject of the main verb itself. E.g., 'want', 'try', etc.

(45) Example in KPH:

/wa be? khi pa sa?/  
 I want go market  
 'I want to go to the market'

Manipulative verbs: these verbs take one nominal subject which is most commonly human/animate, thus assuming a role of a participant who plays a double part in the event denoted by the manipulative-verb construction.

(46) Example in KPH:

/wa kio i tui/  
 I call s/he go back  
 'I called him/her to go back/home'

---

<sup>68</sup>See Givon (1984: 117-124, 1990: 516-537) for more information on complement-taking verbs.

Cognition-utterance verbs: these verbs take a surface sentence as their complement, with its subject not necessarily co-referential to the subject of the main verb. E.g., 'know', 'say', etc.

(47) Example in KPH:

/i      kɔŋ      i      mai lai/  
 s/he say      s/he not come  
 'She said (that) she was not coming

### 3.7.3.1.2 Word Order within the Noun Phrase

As far as the relative order of nouns vs. modifiers in noun phrases are concerned, Chinese (Hokkien) largely and rigidly displays pre-nominal modifiers in its noun phrases. A very important rule for word order in Chinese (Hokkien) in this respect is that a modifier (in the form of word/s or expression/s) precedes what it modifies (in the form of the word/s or expression/s). This rule holds good for any category of words that may be modifiers.

(48) Examples of Chinese (Hokkien) word order:

(a) **adjective-noun**

/tʃi      hu/  
 fresh fish  
 'fresh fish'

**(b) demonstrative-noun**

/hi keŋ tiam/

that CL store

'That store'

**(c) numeral-noun**

/sa pun che?/

three CL book

'Three books'

**(d) genitive/possessive-noun**

/wa e che?/

I G marker book

'My book/books'

**(c) genitive/nominal-noun**

/gin haŋ e keŋ li/

bank MP marker manager

'Bank manager'

The rule for Malay and Thai word order is the reverse of that of Chinese (Hokkien). Modifying words/expressions follow the words/expressions they

modify. In other words, typically, nouns occur as the head of nominal expressions.

Among the clause-level phenomena that show Kelantanese Malay influence, the most salient is word order within the noun phrase.

(49) Examples:

(a) **noun-adjective**

/hu c<sup>h</sup>i/ (KPH)

/ike id<sup>o</sup>?/ (KM)

/pla: sot/ (KT)

fish fresh

'Fresh fish'

(b) **noun-demonstrative**

/cui gu neŋ/ (KPH)

/kuba tu/ (KM)

/k<sup>h</sup>wai neŋ/ (KT)

buffalo that

'That buffalo'

(c) **noun-genitive/possessive**

/c<sup>h</sup>e? he?<sup>o</sup> hoŋ wa/ (KPH)

/boʔ hoʔ aku/ (KM)  
 /naŋsɿ: hoŋ ku/ (KT)  
 book G/P particle I  
 'My book/s'

(d) **noun-nominal**

/mənɛja gin haŋ/ (KPH)  
 /n:ɛja beŋ/ (KM)  
 /mənɛja be:ŋ/ (KT)  
 manager bank  
 'Bank manager'

The Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien pattern is attributable to the influence of Kelantanese Malay or Kelantanese Thai syntax of word order.

In Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, just as in Chinese (Hokkien) a simple quantifier usually directly precedes the head noun.

(50) Example in KPH:

(a)

/ce laŋ/  
 many people  
 'Many people'

More complex quantity expressions (e.g., numeral + classifier) may also follow it.

(b)

/ce kʰə laŋ/  
 many CL people  
 'Many people'

There is a fairly simple numeral classifier system<sup>69</sup> with a set of classifiers selected by the semantic class of the head which intervenes between a number and the head. Each noun, depending on its nature or shape, has a specific classifier associated with it, and each time the noun is counted or used with a demonstrative pronoun, the classifier must always intervene.

The most generally used classifier is /le/ʷ/ɽe/. It is used when no conventional classifiers are known or when the Peranakan Chinese speakers are ignorant of them.<sup>70</sup> /le/ʷ/ɽe/ has the meaning of 'item'.

(51) Examples in KPH:

(a) General classifier

/si le cʰeʔ/

---

<sup>69</sup>See Section 3.7.2.1(m).

<sup>70</sup>See Section 3.6 for a comparison with the Kelantanese Thai general classifier /an/.

four CL book

'Four books'

(b) Specific classifier

/si pun cʰeʔ/

four CL book

'Four books'

### 3.7.3.1.3 The Order of Head Noun and Relative Clause in the Restricted Relative Clause Construction

Chinese (Hokkien) has no relative pronouns, where the word "that" would introduce a relative clause. However, Chinese (Hokkien) marks the clause with the subordinate particle /e/ (hereafter S particle) at the end.

As seen from a functional approach (Comrie 1981: 136), a relative clause consists of a head noun and a restricting or non-restricting clause. In the case of a restricted relative clause, the head in itself has a certain range of potential referents, but the restricting clause restricts this set by giving a proposition that must be true of actual referents of the overall construction. In other words, it codes a proposition of which one of its participants is co-referential with the head noun that is modified by the clause.

Relative clauses in Chinese (Hokkien) follow the head.

(52) Example of restrictive relative clause (in bold) in H:

/hi keŋ tiam wa ca hui ai khi e  
 that CL store I yesterday want go S particle  
 kham liau/  
 close CA particle  
 'The shop which/where I wanted to go to yesterday  
 was already closed'

/hi keŋ tiam wa ca huwi ai khi e/ is very much a relative clause because it has a head with a range of potential referents, namely /hi keŋ tiam/ 'that store'. However, the actual set of referents is limited to 'stores' (in this case one store) of which the proposition 'the store was already closed' is true.

(53) Example of non-restrictive relative clause in H:

/hi kʰo ca bo khia mui pi e  
 that CL woman stand near door S particle  
 si wa e so/  
 is I G marker sister-in-law'  
 'The woman, who stood near the door,  
 was my elder sister-in-law'

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien does not employ the Chinese (Hokkien) subordinate particle /e/ in the construction of its relative clauses. Instead it adopts the Kelantanese Malay relative pronoun /hɔʔ/ (hereafter R pronoun)

which is in the form of /heʔ/. The local Thai form of /hɔŋ/ is also adopted and used alongside /heʔ/.

(54) Examples of restricted relative clauses (in bold):

(a) KPH

/i        ca        heʔ<sup>o</sup> hɔŋ    wa    be    neŋ  
 chair wood R pronoun I buy that  
 phəŋ ki    doh  
 lost        CA particle  
 'The wooden chair which I bought is lost already'

(b) H

/hi    le    ca        e                    kau i    wa    be    e  
 that CL wood MP marker chair I buy S particle  
 phəŋ ki    liau/  
 lost        CA particle  
 'The wooden chair which I bought is lost already'

(c) KM

/kəyusi kayu hoʔ                    ambo bəli tu    hile    doh/  
 chair wood R pronoun I buy that lost CA particle  
 'The wooden chair which I bought is lost already'

(d) KT

/kau i: mai hoŋ          ku: si: neŋ   hǎĩ   le:w/  
 chair wood R pronoun I    buy that lost CA particle  
 'The wooden chair which I bought is lost already'

(c) T

/kau i: mai thi:          pʰom si: nan   hǎĩ   le:w/  
 chair wood R pronoun I    buy that lost CA particle  
 'The wooden chair which I bought is lost already'

(55) Examples of non-restricted relative clauses:

(a) KPH

/peŋ iu wa heʔ<sup>h</sup>hoŋ   cheŋ   sǎ   aŋ  
 friend I   R pronoun wear shirt red  
 pi      lo kun tua johoh/  
 become doctor in Johor  
 'My friend, who is wearing a red shirt, is a doctor in Johor'

(b) H

/wa e                  peŋ iu cheŋ aŋ   sǎ   e  
 I G marker friend wear red shirt S particle  
 co      lo kun tua johoh/  
 become doctor in Johor

'My friend, who is wearing a red shirt, is a doctor in Johor'

(c) KM

/saɛŋ      ambo hoʔ              paka baju      meʔoh

friend I      R pronoun wear shirt red

jadi      doʔto doʔ johoh/

become doctor in Johor

'My friend, who is wearing a red shirt, is a doctor in Johor'

(d) KT

/phɛ:n kan ku: hoŋ              nu:ŋ si:      de:ŋ

friend I      R pronoun wear shirt red

pen      mo:      ti: johoh/

become doctor at Johor

'My friend, who is wearing a red shirt, is a doctor in Johor'

It is obvious that the restricted relative clauses as well as the non-restrictive ones of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien are parallel to that of Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai.

#### 3.7.3.1.4 The Relative Order of Possessive (Genitive) and Head Noun

The Chinese (Hokkien) particle /e/ with its various functions is totally absent in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. At least three salient functions of /e/ in standard or mainstream Hokkien are identifiable.

The first, as a suffix, /e/ functions as a possessive marker (hereafter P marker) when used with nouns, and when used with pronouns, it forms the genitive case and is a genitive marker (hereafter G marker).

(56) Examples in H:

(a)

/gu e kha/

cow P marker leg

'The cow's leg(s)' or 'The leg(s) of the cow'

(b)

/li e toʔ/

you/your G marker table

'Your table'

The possessives of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien are formed by adopting the Malay sequential arrangement: Possessed-Possessor

(57) Examples:

(a) KPH

/k<sup>h</sup>a gu/

leg cow

'The cow's leg(s)' or 'The leg(s) of the cow'

(b) KM

/kaki ləmbu/

leg cow

'The cow's leg(s)' or 'The leg(s) of the cow'

(c) KPH

/tə? li/

table you/your

'Your table'

(d) KM

/məjə dəmə/

table you/your

'Your table'

The local Thai language has also the sequential arrangement of "possessed-possessor" in forming its possessives, similar to that of Malay.

(58) Example in KT:

/tin gua/

leg cow

'The cow's leg(s)' or 'The leg(s) of the cow'

Hokkien genitive pronouns formed by suffixing /e/ to pronouns are also absent in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

(59) Example in H:

/wa e/

I/my G marker

'My one(s)' or 'Mine'

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien does not have this genitive pattern but instead uses the Kelantanese Malay genitive marker /hɔʔ/ in the form of /hɛʔ/ or the local Thai genitive marker /hɔŋ/.

(60) Examples:

(a) KM

/hɔʔ ambo/

G marker I/my

'My one(s)' or 'Mine'

(b) KT

/hɔŋ        ku:/  
 G marker    I/my  
 'My one(s)' or 'Mine'

(c) KPH

/heʔʷhɔŋ    wa/  
 G marker    I/my  
 'My one(s)' or 'Mine'

The second, in Chinese (Hokkien), a phrase marked with /e/ is a modifying one. The /e/ functions as a phrase particle when it is attached to phrases or clauses and they become modifiers (hereafter Mod.). In other words, /e/ functions as a modifying phrase marker (hereafter MP marker). Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien does not utilize /e/ for such grammatical strategies, instead it uses /heʔ/ and /hɔŋ/.

(61) Examples:

(a) H

Mod. + MP marker + NP

/teŋ pai    e            cheʔ/  
 ancient    MP marker    book(s)

'Ancient book(s)'

(b) KM

NP + MP marker + Mod.

/bo? ho? jame dulu/  
 book MP marker era ancient  
 'Ancient book(s)'

(c) KT

NP + MP marker + Mod.

/napsi: hoj jaman taye?/  
 book MP marker era ancient  
 'Ancient book(s)'

(d) KPH

NP + MP marker + Mod.

/che? he?hoj jaman tey pai/  
 book MP marker era ancient  
 'Ancient book(s)'

In the above examples, /e/, /hɔʔ/, /heʔ/ and /hɔŋ/ connect temporal modifiers to their head nouns.

The third, when used with a deleted object, /e/ functions as a nominalizer (hereafter NM) with the meaning of "one which/who is .... "

(62) Examples:

(a) H

/teŋ pai e/

ancient NM

'One which is ancient' or 'The ancient one'

(b) H

/sai cʰia e/

drive car NM

'One who drives the car' or 'The driver'

(c) KM

/hɔʔ jame dulu/

NM era ancient

'One which is ancient' or 'The ancient one'

(d) KM

/həʔ b:awəʔ kəʔetə/

NM bring car

'One who drives the car' or 'The driver'

(c) KT

/həŋ jaman təʔeʔ/

NM era ancient

'One which is ancient' or 'The ancient one'

(f) KT

/həŋ kap rəd/

NM drive car

'One who drives the car' or 'The driver'

(g) KPH

/heʔəhəŋ jaman tɛŋ pai/

NM era ancient

'One which is ancient' or 'The ancient one'

(h) KPH

/heʔəhəŋ sai chia/

NM drive car

'One who drives the car' or 'The driver'

From the examples above, it can be seen that it is a salient feature of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien that the Chinese (Hokkien) particle /e/ is totally lost. Chinese (Hokkien) word order (where specific nouns and nominal constructions are preceded by modifiers with /e/ in between) is also not maintained in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. In Chinese (Hokkien), the presence of /e/ places greater emphasis on the modifier.

### 3.7.3.1.5 The Order of Adposition<sup>71</sup>

An adpositional phrase of place in Chinese (Hokkien) consists of a postposition (or postposed preposition) following its complement. In other words, in Chinese (Hokkien), adpositions expressing spatial relations normally occur after their noun phrase complements.

(63) Examples in H:

(a)

/c̣hu lai bin/

house inside

'Inside the house'

---

<sup>71</sup>A term to cover preposition and postposition (cf., Comrie 1981: 85; Huddleston 1988: 123). In general terms, an adposition expresses a relation of two entities, one that is being represented by the adpositional complement. The two obvious relational meanings are that of place and time. Prepositions normally precede their complements, while postpositions follow.

(b)

/chia e te/

car under

'Under the car'

The order of an adposition phrase in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien denoting spatial relations reflects Kelantanese Malay or Thai syntax. The adpositions take the form of prepositions which precede their noun phrase complements.

(64) Examples:

(a) KPH

/lai bin c'hu/

inside house

'Inside the house'

(b) KPH

/e te chia/

under car

'Under the car'

(c) KM

/dale ɣumoh/

inside house

'Inside the house'

(d) KM

/bawoh kəɣeto/

under car

'Under the car'

(e) KT

/nai ɣən/

inside house

'Inside the house'

(f) KT

/tai rod/

under car

'Under the car'

Relational meaning of time in Chinese (Hokkien) is expressed by an adpositional phrase consisting of a time preposition followed by a

prepositional complement. Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien has the same format for both place and time prepositions.

(65) Example in H/KPH:

/wa tan li kau sa tiam/  
 I wait you till three o'clock  
 'I waited for you till three o'clock'

Adpositions of time or temporal adpositions are very limited in Chinese (Hokkien). To express, e.g., duration, the following example is considered grammatical.

(66) Examples in H:

(a)

/wa tua hi peŋ go ni/  
 I live there five years  
 'I lived there (for) five years'

(b)

/wa tua hi peŋ ji goe? kau cap goe?/  
 I live there February till October  
 'I lived there (from) February till October'

### 3.7.3.1.6 The Order of Adverbs

At least three semantic characterizations of adverbs are evident in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien: adverbs of manner, time and place. Adverbs of manner tend to modify in some way the meaning of the verb itself.

(66) Example (in bold) in KPH:

/i tha? che? la?  
 s/he read book strength  
 'S/he studied hard'

Adverbs of time tend to characterize the entire event/state, and thus bring the entire sentence under their scope.

(67) Example (in bold) in KPH:

/wa thia tho kha? ca hui/  
 I pain head yesterday  
 'I had a headache yesterday'

Adverbs of place also take the entire sentence under their semantic scope.

(68) Example (in bold) in KPH:

/wa tu i tua ti pasa? teg le pai/  
 I meet s/he stay at market last week

'I met him/her at the market last week'

The syntactic or distributional characterization of adverbs in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and Chinese (Hokkien) vary enormously. This variation is inevitably attributable to Kelantanese Malay influence.

In Chinese (Hokkien), adverbs occur before verbs. In other words, adverbs precede the words they modify. Chinese (Hokkien) has two types of adverbs in terms of their distributional properties: fixed and movable. As the name implies, fixed adverbs have a fixed position in the sentence. They have a characteristic position within the phrase: obligatorily preceding the verb and following the subject.

(69) Examples (in bold) in H:

(a) Adverb of manner

/i     **gau**         **chau**/

s/he strength run

'S/he runs fast'

(b) Adverb of time

/i     ai     **mia chau**     tui/

s/he want tomorrow return

'S/he wants to return tomorrow'

## (c) Adverb of place

/i tua wa e cu koŋ ho se liau/  
 s/he at I Pmarker house talk good CA particle  
 'S/he has talked it over at my house'

Movable adverbs are "movable" in the sense that they have greater distributional freedom, occurring in either an initial (before the subject), medial (immediately before the verb), or final (after the verb) position within a clause.

## (70) Examples (in bold) in H:

## (a) Initial position

/ho ka cai i lai/  
 fortunately s/he come  
 'Fortunately, s/he came'

## (b) Medial position

/i ho ka cai lai/  
 s/he fortunately come  
 'S/he, fortunately, came'

## (c) Final position

/i      lai      ho ka cai/  
 s/he come fortunately  
 'She came, fortunately'

However, the preferred pattern of movable adverbs is their occurrence before the verbal complements (i.e., in the medial position).

Thus, the adverbs in Chinese (Hokkien) irrespective of their semantic type (i.e., adverbs of manner, time and place) or their fixed vs. movable categories, tend to retain a rigid word order: appearing medially within a clause obligatorily after the subject and before the verbal complement.

In Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, adverbs occur in initial and final positions only and normally not medially within a clause, although it is grammatically accepted. This order closely resemble that of Kelantanese Malay, yet another grammatical influence from the local Malay dialect.

If used medially, the adverb is not uttered as a single intonation contour within the clause. It is uttered with an obligatory separating pause between the subject and predicate of the clause where the adverb is incorporated within the predicate. When no separating pause is present, and is uttered as a single intonation contour, native Malay speakers tend to see it as a style of Malay spoken by the non-Malay community. Thus, to separate them from this non-Malay "flavor," the placing of an adverb in medial position within a clause is avoided.

(71) Examples (in bold):

(a) KPH

/ca me        wa lai    choi li/  
 last night I    come find you  
 'Last night, I came to find you'

(b) KPH

/wa lai    choi li    ca me/  
 I    come find you last night  
 'I came to find you last night'

(c) KPH

/wa #        ca me        lai    choi li/  
 I PAUSE last night come find you  
 'I came to find you last night'

(d) KM

/səməle        anbo maʔi    caʔi dəmo/  
 last night I        come find you  
 'Last night, I came to find you'

(e) KM

/ambo maʔi caʔi demo sɛmalɛ/

I come find you last night

'I came to find you last night'

(f) KM

/ambo # sɛmalɛ maʔi caʔi demo/

I PAUSE last night come find you

'I came to find you last night'

Peranakan Chinese have two stylistic options at their disposal: Chinese (Hokkien) or Kelantanese Malay syntactic characterization of adverbs. Subconsciously, the Kelantanese Malay syntactic characterization is the word order of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien adverbs.

### 3.7.3.1.7 Word Order within the Question

In Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, question-word questions are formed by the use of question words whose position is the same as non-question words and having the same function. Kelantanese Malay<sup>72</sup> has the same structure too as far as this is concerned.

(72) Examples (in bold) in KPH:

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<sup>72</sup>It is an oral language. All Malay dialects exist only in the spoken form. In literary Malay, the word order of questions in the form of "wh"-elements is OSV.

## (a) what

## (i)

/li mia ham mi? ʔ sam mi?/

you name what

'What is your name?'

## (ii)

/wa mia hok leŋ/

I name Hock Leng

'My name is Hock Leng'

## (b) Where

## (i)

/li tua ta lo?/

you live where

'Where do/did you live?'

## (ii)

/wa tua joh/

I live Joh

'I live in Joh'

## (c) When

(i)

/li lai ti si/  
 you come when  
 'When did you come?'

(ii)

/wa lai ca hui/  
 I come yesterday  
 'I came yesterday'

## (d) Why

(i)

/li lai ham mi? su/  
 you come why  
 'Why do/did you come?'

(ii)

/wa lai be? kio li khi cu wa pai go ni/  
 I come want call you go house I Friday this  
 'I came to invite you to my house this Friday'

## (e) How

(i)

/li co an chũã an chũã kuan/

you do how

'How do/did you do it?'

(ii)

/wa pa? ko? lai bin/

I tie manner inside

'I tied from the inside'

## (f) Who/Whose

(i)

/i ci cui ham mi? lag/

s/he who what people

'Who is s/he?'

(ii)

/i kia beg seng/

s/he child Beng Seng

'S/he is Beng Seng's child'

(iii)

/kʰo ci cui<sup>o</sup>ham mi? laŋ/  
 pants whose what people  
 'Whose pants are these?'

(iv)

/kʰo koŋ wa/  
 pants grandfather I  
 'My grandfather's pants'

(g) How many

(i)

/kui laŋ/  
 how many people  
 'How many people?'

(ii)

/caŋ kʰo laŋ/  
 ten CL people  
 'Ten people'

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien has several ways of forming yes-no questions. As in most languages, such questions can be signalled by intonation: a rising intonation with a declarative clause has an interrogative force.

Another way to signal yes-no questions is to use a question particle at the end of the sentence. The Chinese (Hokkien) particle /mi/ and /ni/ are employed for this purpose. /ta/, a typical Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien question particle is often employed as a substitute for the Chinese (Hokkien) /ni/.

(73) Examples (in bold) in KPH:

(a)

/li suka? i            **mi/**  
 you like him/her **Q particle**  
 'Do you like him/her?'

(b)

/wa cia? piu liau    li **ni/**  
 I eat rice already you **Q particle**  
 'I have already eaten, how about you?'

(c)

/kia wa tʰa? təŋ laŋ cʰe? kia li ta/  
 child I read Chinese book child you Q particle  
 'My child attends a Chinese school, what about your child?'

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien also has another method of forming yes-no questions: an affirmative and a negative version of the same proposition can be combined to make what can be called an 'A-not-A' question.

(74) Example (in bold) in KPH:

/li **suka?** bo **suka?** ca bo neŋ/  
 you like not like girl that  
 'Do you like that girl or not?'

The local Malay particle /ko/ meaning 'or' is sometimes inserted before 'not' in the 'A-not-A' question.

(75) Example (in bold) in KPH:

/li **suka?** ko bo **suka?** ca bo neŋ/  
 you like or not like girl that  
 'Do you like that girl or not?'

### 3.7.3.1.8 The Use of /sɪ/ in Verbal Phrases

The Chinese (Hokkien) syntactic device of using /si/<sup>73</sup> in verbal phrases to add emphasis is absent in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. It appears before the emphasis in the verbal phrase.

(76) Examples (in bold) in H:

(a)

/li co ham mi? kaŋ/  
 you do what work  
 'What work do you do?' (no emphasis)

(b)

/li **si** co ham mi? kaŋ/  
 you E particle do what work  
 'What work do you do?' (with emphasis)

(c)

/cə pun che? cin ho/  
 this CL book very good  
 'This book is very good' (no emphasis)

(d)

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<sup>73</sup>However, the use of /si/ to add emphasis in equational constructions is present in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

/cə    pun   che?   si            cin   ho/  
 this CL   book E particle very good  
 'This book is very good' (with emphasis)

To distinguish emphasis in sentences, especially verbal phrases, Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien employs sentence stress<sup>74</sup> with an increase in loudness on the part to be contrasted. This device is used by most languages including Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai.

The non-usage of /si/ for this purpose could have been an effort on the part of the Peranakan Chinese to assimilate linguistically with Kelantanese Malay or Kelantanese Thai.

### 3.7.3.1.9    Passives

Passive constructions are common among languages of subject-prominence. But among topic-prominent languages, passivization either does not occur at all (e.g., Lahu (cf., Matisoff 1973)), or appears as marginal construction, which is rarely used in speech (e.g., Chinese (Hokkien) (cf., Cheng 1974)). It may also carry an adversative meaning (e.g., Japanese (cf., Wierzbicka 1988: 256-292)).

In subject-prominent languages, the notion of subject is such a basic one that if a noun other than the one designated by a given verb as its subject

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<sup>74</sup>The term 'contrastive stress' is often used for this syntactic function (Crystal 1985: 288).

becomes the subject, the verb must be marked to signal this "non-normal" subject. While in topic-prominent languages, it is the topic, and not the subject, that plays a more significant role in sentence construction. Any noun phrase can be the topic of a sentence without registering anything on the verb. It is, therefore, natural that passive constructions are not widespread in topic-prominent languages unlike subject-prominent ones (Li and Thompson 1976: 467).

Chinese (Hokkien) verbs are not distinguished for voice. The direction of a verb can be either away from the subject (thus denoting the notion of an active) or toward the subject (denoting the notion of a passive). As an illustration, the verb /k<sup>h</sup>am/ meaning 'to close' can mean 'close (something)'.

(77) Examples in H:

(a) Active

/k<sup>h</sup>am chia e mui/  
 close car P marker door  
 'Close the car door'

(b) Passive

/chia e mui k<sup>h</sup>am liau/  
 car P marker door close CA particle  
 'The car door is closed'

There are a number of locutions that express an explicit passive (for instance adversity), but their use in Chinese (Hokkien) is very restricted. One of the ways is by using /hɔ/, a morpheme which has at least four other syntactic functions. One of the functions of /hɔ/ is that it plays the role of an agent marker (hereafter AG marker) (Cheng 1974: 286).

(78) Examples in H:

(a)

/man seŋ hɔ kau ka/  
 Man Seng AG marker dog bite  
 'Man Seng was bitten by a dog'

(b)

/man seŋ hɔ laŋ pha?/  
 Man Seng AG marker people hit  
 'Man Seng was hit (by someone)'

In standard Thai, passive constructions are marked syntactically by /tɰu:g/ and are limited, except to denote adversity.

(79) Examples in T:

(a) Active

/mi:d khom ba:d phom/

knife sharp cut I

'The sharp knife cut me'

(b) Passive

/phom thu:g mi:d khom ba:d/

I AP marker knife sharp cut

'I was cut by a sharp knife'

### 3.7.3.1.9.1 Canonical/Basic Passives

The canonical/basic passive voice in Kelantanese Malay is coded syntactically by the passive marker /pɔ/ which precedes the transitive verb and the use of a 'by' preposition in the forms of /di/ or /ko/ before the agent. The use of the 'by' preposition is optional and can be deleted if wished. However, its disappearance is compensated by lengthening the first sound of the agent.

(80) Examples in KM:

(a) Active

/doloh make pise aku/

Dollah eat banana I

'Dollah ate my banana'

(b) Passive

/pise     aku   po             make   di<sup>o</sup>ko   doloh/  
 banana I     PS marker   eat     P             Dollah  
 'My banana was eaten by Dollah'

(c) Active

/doloh   te   ade?                     minoh/  
 Dollah hit younger brother Minah  
 'Dollah hit Minah's younger brother'

(d) Passive

/ade?                     minoh   po             te     d:doloh/  
 younger brother Minah PS marker   hit   Dollah  
 'Minah's younger brother was hit by Dollah'

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and the local Thai language passives, as illustrated below, are obviously influenced by Kelantanese Malay.

(81) Examples in KPH:

(a) Active

/ban sen     c<sup>h</sup>ia?   kin   cio   wa/  
 Ban Seng eat     banana   I  
 'Ban Seng ate my banana'

## (b) Passive

/kin cio wa ɲo            chiaʔ kə ban seŋ/  
 banana I PS marker eat P Ban Seng  
 'My banana was eaten by Ban Seng'

## (82) Examples in T:

## (a) Active

/caw thid kin kue    ku:/  
 Chaw Thid eat banana I  
 'Chaw Thid ate my banana'

## (b) Passive

/kue    ku: ɲo            kin kə caw thid/  
 banana I PS marker eat P Chaw Thid  
 'My banana was eaten by Chaw Thid'

It should be pointed out here that neither Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and Kelantanese Thai assumes the stylistic variation of deleting the 'by' preposition which is compensated by lengthening the first sound of the agent. The 'by' preposition preferred is /kə/ which takes the form of /kə/. The preposition /di/ is not used at all by these languages.

### 3.7.3.1.9.2 Adversative Passives

The Chinese (Hokkien) /hɔ/ adversative passive construction is non-existent in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. Instead, Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien adopts the Kelantanese Malay adversative passive construction of /kənɔ/, which is an adversative passive marker (hereafter AP marker) besides having other syntactic functions.

(83) Example in KM:

/diɔ kənɔ behɛ/  
 s/he AP marker hit  
 'S/he was hit'

The Chinese (Hokkien) counterpart of /kənɔ/ is /tiɔʔ/. The word /tiɔʔ/ which suggests an adversative experience is restricted in its usage in Chinese (Hokkien) in informal speech. Adversative /hɔ/ (with obligatory agent which is specified) is preferred to /tiɔʔ/ (with unspecified agent) in formal speech.

(84) Examples in H:

(a)

/i hɔ laŋ hai/  
 s/he AP marker people betray  
 'S/he was betrayed by someone'

(b)

/i      tiɔʔ      hai/  
 s/he AP marker betray  
 'S/he was betrayed'

The use of /tiɔʔ/ in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien rather than /hɔ/ for adversative passive suggests that the local Malay passive /kənɔ/ construction has undoubtedly influenced Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, where the use of /tiɔʔ/ is semantically congruent with the use of /kənɔ/. It should be pointed out that speakers of standard or mainstream Hokkien who do not favor the use of /tiɔʔ/ for adversative passives find that the deletion of the agent means less importance is placed on the agent and more on the event. To them, the agent is significant and needs to be specified.

Malay speakers who use indirectness as a discourse strategy favor the deletion of the agent in describing such negative experiences, especially in certain instances to avoid open conflict, although oftentimes the agent is clearly implied. Kelantan Peranakan Chinese who are highly assimilated to the local Malay community are more comfortable with the agentless /tiɔʔ/ adversative rather than the agentive /hɔ/ adversative.

Non-adversative passive sentences do not occur at all in Chinese (Hokkien) or standard Thai. Instead a form of topicalization takes place when such experience is coded. Besides this syntactic device of topicalizing or object preposing (cf., Chung 1976: 60), Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and Kelantanese Thai have another syntactic operation borrowed from Kelantanese Malay (i.e., the canonical/basic passive) to code such experience.

## (85) Examples in H:

## (a) Subject-Predicate sequence

/wa sia hi tiu pe/  
 I write that CL letter  
 'I wrote that piece of letter'

## (b) Topicalization

/hi tiu pe wa sia/  
 that CL letter I write  
 'That piece of letter, I wrote'

## (c) Passive

No such pattern

## (86) Examples in KPH:

## (a) Subject-Predicate sequence

/wa sia pe neɣ/  
 I write letter that  
 'I wrote that letter'

## (b) Topicalization

/pe        neŋ    wa    sia/  
 letter    that    I    write  
 'That letter, I wrote'

## (c) Passive (Kelantanese Malay influence)

/pe        neŋ    ɲo            thia?    kə    i/  
 letter    that    PS marker    tear    P    him/her  
 'That letter was torn by him/her'

## (87) Examples in KT:

## (a) Subject-Predicate sequence

/ku    kʰian    naŋsɨ:    neŋ/  
 I    write    letter    that  
 'I wrote that letter'

## (b) Topicalization

/naŋsɨ:    neŋ    ku:    kʰian/  
 letter    that    I    write  
 'That letter, I wrote'

## (c) Passive (Kelantanese Malay influence)

/naŋsɨ: neŋ ɲo           chi? kə man/  
 letter that PS marker tear P   him/her  
 'That letter was torn by him/her'

This borrowed grammatical pattern can be seen as being of an expansive or additive nature, in the sense that it is borrowed for the purpose of expanding the resources that Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and Kelantanese Thai lack and to code non-adversative concepts within a passive voice notion.

The passive proper rather than topicalizing the object can be seen as a more effective device of presenting a passive voice meaning. It is the canonical passive since it has all the earmarks of a typical promotional<sup>75</sup> passive rule: the underlying direct object becomes the subject, the underlying subject appears in a prepositional phrase, there is a special marking on the verb, and finally it is semantically stative (cf., Chung 1976: 61; Givon 1990: 575).

The object preposing device which is semantically active, does not involve any syntactic treatment of the passive verb, and its underlying subject is not placed in a special oblique case, thereby producing surface forms which are more typical of an active voice construction.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Passive constructions in which the topic-of-passive undergoes full promotion to subjecthood also tend to: allow the agent-of-passive to appear, optionally, in a special oblique case; code the passive verb with more stative-intransitive grammatical form; and restrict the range of non-agent case-roles that can become topic-of-passive (Givon 1990: 575).

<sup>76</sup>The object preposing constructions in literary Malay are identified by some linguists (cf., Chung 1976: 57-98; Karim et al. 1986: 89-92) as passives rather than a type of topicalization.

The adoption of the Kelantanese Malay canonical passive for coding the passive voice by the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese and local Thai community is fundamentally pragmatic. It can be seen as a pattern co-occurring with their existing pattern which can provide them with stylistic options that can add a special "Kelantan community flavor."

### **3.7.4 Inter-clausal Syntax**

The inter-clausal connections to be discussed in this section are mainly of two main types: coordination and subordination which involve the linking of units.

#### **3.7.4.1 Coordination**

In Chinese (Hokkien), words, phrases, and clauses may be linked together by simple juxtaposition. It has connections that are ordinarily made explicit by conjunctions, and the like, but rarely uses them.

Informal or colloquial Chinese (Hokkien) tends to avoid the use of phrase or sentence connectors. In fact, spoken speech permits a great amount of flexibility in linking units if stress, juncture and intonation are taken into account.

Nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs in a coordinate relationship usually follow each other in succession with or without a pause in Chinese (Hokkien).

## (88) Examples in H:

## (a) Nouns

/wa be ɔŋ lai si kuai pau pu tɔ/

I buy pineapple watermelon mango grapes

'I bought pineapples, watermelons, mangoes, and grapes'

## (b) Verbs

/i cin gau chaŋ ko thiau bu

s/he very capable sing song dance

pha? kiu tha? che?/

hit ball read book

'S/he is very good at singing, dancing, sports and studies'

## (c) Adjectives

/hi kʰo ca bo kuan sui/

that CL woman tall pretty

'That woman is tall and pretty'

## (d) Adverbs

/i koŋ uai cin kin tua sia/

s/he talk very fast big voice

'S/he speaks very fast and loud'

Unlike Chinese (Hokkien), Kelantanese Malay, Kelantanese Thai as well as Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien coordinate units with an obligatory separating pause.

The Chinese (Hokkien) coordinate connectors: /ka/ 'and', /a/ə/a si/ 'or', and /put ko/ə/coŋ si/ 'but' are rarely present in the speech of the Peranakan Chinese except for /ka/ 'and' which takes the form of /ka?/.

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien adopts the Kelantanese Malay as well as Kelantanese Thai forms for the other two coordinate connectors: 'or' and 'but'.

Kelantanese Malay coordinate connectors:

/ko/ 'or'

/ke?po/ə/tapi/ 'but'

Kelantanese Thai coordinate connector:

/te: wa:/ 'but'

Standard Thai /rɨ:/ 'or' is not present in Kelantanese Thai which instead adopts the local Malay dialect 'or' in the form of /ko/.

(89) Examples (in bold) in KPH:

(a)

/li be? chia? pui koŋ ko be? chaŋ e? koŋ/  
 you want eat rice first or want bathe first  
 'Do you want to take your meal or shower first?'

(b)

/gin na neŋ cheŋ siŋ ka?loh tapi malah u ĩã/  
 child that clever quite but lazy very  
 'That child is quite smart but very lazy'

(c)

/i laŋ ho te:wa: poŋoh tam po?/  
 s/he person good but hot tempered little  
 'S/he is a kind person but a little hot-tempered'

#### 3.7.4.2 Subordination

Chinese (Hokkien) subordinate connectors are totally absent in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. All of the subordinate connectors present in this variety of Hokkien come from either Kelantanese Malay or Kelantanese Thai.

The following commonly used Chinese (Hokkien) subordinate connectors which almost sound strange to the ears of most Peranakan Chinese include:

/na/ə/na si/ 'if'  
 /na bo/ 'if not; unless'  
 /an ni/ 'thus; so'  
 /to/ 'then'  
 /in ui/ 'because; because of'  
 /hoŋ chia/ 'besides; moreover'  
 /khiam chai/ 'perhaps'

To code links: adverbial, conditional, concessive and the like, Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien resorts to the local Malay dialect or Kelantanese Thai. Below are some of the subordinate connectors adopted from the two languages.

Kelantanese Malay subordinate connectors:

/kalu/ə/səlaʔ/ə/wala/ 'if'  
 /pah/ 'then; after'  
 /bəloŋ/ 'before'  
 /səjoʔ/ 'since'  
 /t:ikoh/ 'when'  
 /m:aso/ə/t:ikoh/ 'while'  
 /geteʔ/ə/jugoʔ/ 'also; too'  
 /utoʔ/ 'for; in order'  
 /pado/ 'instead of; rather than'  
 /mugo/ 'so that'  
 /bakali/ə/k:ali/ 'perhaps; maybe'  
 /sabeʔ/ə/boʔ te/ 'because'

/lagu ni/ 'thus; so'  
 /wala poŋ/ 'although, though'  
 /səlaeŋ pado/ 'besides'

Kelantanese Thai subordinate connectors:

/tʰa:/ 'if'  
 /tʰiŋ/ 'even if; concerning'  
 /ko/ 'if; so; then; consequently'  
 /le:w/ 'then; afterwards'  
 /wa:/ 'thus; that'  
 /kan ni/ 'thus; so'  
 /we: la:/ 'while'  
 /paŋ/ 'when'  
 /maŋ/ 'also; too'

The following are examples of Chinese (Hokkien) subordinate connectors which are replaced by Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai equivalents in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

(90) Examples of 'if' (in bold):

(a) H

**/na si i**      bo lai li      tiɔ?      cʰua  
                  if            s/he not come you must bring  
 wa e                    kia      kuə      lo/

I G marker child cross street

'If s/he does not come, you must assist  
my child to cross the street'

(b) KPH (employing KM subordinate connector)

/səla? i bo lai li tio? chua  
if s/he not come you must bring  
kia wa kuə lo/  
child I cross street

'If s/he does not come, you must assist  
my child to cross the street'

(c) KPH (employing KT subordinate connector)

/tʰa: i bo lai li tio? chua  
if s/he not come you must bring  
kia wa kuə lo/  
child I cross street

'If s/he does not come, you must assist  
my child to cross the street'

(91) Examples of 'then' (in bold):

(a) H

/wa kʰi pa sa? tɔ wa kʰi kua lo kun/  
I go market then I go see doctor

'I went to the market, then I went to see a doctor'

(b) KPH (employing KM subordinate connector)

/wa khi pa sa? pah wa khi kua lo kun/

I go market then I go see doctor

'I went to the market, then I went to see a doctor'

(c) KPH (employing KT subordinate connector)

/wa khi pa sa? lə:w wa khi kua lo kun/

I go market then I go see doctor

'I went to the market, then I went to see a doctor'

(92) Examples of 'thus/so' (in bold):

(a) H

/an ni lan tio? ka ki cho/

thus we must oneself do

'Thus (so), we have to do it ourselves'

(b) KPH (employing KM subordinate connector)

/lagu ni lan tio? cho ka ki/

way this we must do oneself

'Thus (so), we have to do it ourselves'

(c) KPH (employing KT subordinate connector)

/kan ni lan tio? cho ka ki/

thus we must do ourself

'Thus (so), we have to do it ourselves'

### 3.7.4.2.1. Semantic Links

Among the semantic links (i.e., the relations between two adjacent clauses) in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, the following are evident from the data base.

(93) Examples (in bold) in KPCH:

(a) Temporal links of adverbial clauses:

(i) Employing KM subordinate connector

/bəloŋ li lai i tui doh/

before you come s/he go back CA particle

'Before you came, s/he had already left'

(ii) Employing KM subordinate connector

/t:ikoh wa ti khun i lai/

while I PA particle sleep s/he come '

'While I was sleeping, s/he came'

(iii) Employing KT subordinate connector

/paŋ li cẽ i cẽ maŋ/  
 when you wake up s/he wake up too  
 'When you woke up, s/he woke up too'

(b) Conditional:

(i) Employing KM subordinate connector

/kalu i lai ui ni toloŋ koŋ ho  
 if s/he come place this please tell to  
 i thĩã wa be? tu i/  
 s/he listen I want meet s/he  
 'If s/he comes here, please tell him/her that  
 I want to meet him/her'

(c) Counter-fact conditional:

(i) Employing KT subordinate connectors

/tħa: wa cai be? pi kan ni wa bo kio i sua/  
 if I know want become so I not ask s/he move  
 'If I had known it would be so, I would not have asked  
 him/her to move (to another place)'

(d) Concessive conditional:

## (i) Employing KT subordinate connector

/wa bo ai koŋ uai ka i doh

I not want talk with s/he CA particle

thing i pujo? wa/

even if s/he persuade me

'I have decided not to speak with him/her anymore  
even if s/he persuades me to'

## (e) Concessive clause:

## (i) Employing KM subordinate connectors

/wala poŋ wa bo suka? wa khi juŋo?/

although I not like I go too

'Although I did not like it, I went too'

## (f) Cause and effect clause:

## (i) Employing KM subordinate connector

/bo? te kia li hau le ẽ? wa cẽ/

because child you cry E particle baby I wake up

'Because your son cried, my baby woke up'

## (g) Purpose clause:

- (i) Employing KM subordinate connector

/uto? be? pah ko ni li tio? tha? u iã u iã/  
 in order want pass test this you must study really really  
 'In order for you to pass this examination,  
 you must study really hard'

- (h) Additive clause:

- (i) Employing KM subordinate connectors

/səlaeŋ pado siŋ hoŋ wa sau juŋo?/  
 besides fever I cough too  
 'Besides having fever, I have a cough too'

- (i) Substitutive clause:

- (i) Employing KM subordinate connector

/ho li khi tha? che?  
 good you go read book  
 pado ti tua sajo/  
 instead of PA particle stay nothing  
 'It is better that you study instead of doing nothing'

### 3.7.5 Subject/Topic-prominence

Topic/comment are terms in grammar occurring as part of an alternative binary characterization of sentence structure to that traditionally found in the subject/predicate distinction. The usefulness of the distinction between topic/comment and subject/predicate analysis of sentence structure is that topic/comment distinction<sup>77</sup> enables general statements to be made about the relationships between sentences which the subject/predicate distinction obscures. (Crystal 1985: 311).

Within this approach,<sup>78</sup> the primary syntactic division of a sentence is between the "topic" and the rest of the sentence called "comment" (Li and Thompson 1976: 459). The topic is a word or phrase that sets the "stage" for the statement or question that follows. It is what the sentence is about. Some sentences do not have a topic, but if there is one, it is generally uttered first. Sometimes an actual pause in speech sets the topic off from the rest of the sentence.

Discourse plays a role in the selection of the topic of a clause, but within the constraints of the discourse, a speaker still has considerable freedom in choosing a topic noun phrase regardless of what the verb is (ibid.: 463). The

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<sup>77</sup>The idea of the analysis of sentence structure using a topic/comment distinction has been mentioned in a number of studies (cf., Householder and Cheng 1967; Tai 1973; Huang 1973), but it is Li and Thompson (1976) that demonstrate the importance of the study of some languages to be analyzed using the topic/comment distinction.

<sup>78</sup>Current approaches, especially generative linguistics, does not represent any advancement in this area of syntactic analysis. The assumption remains that the basic sentence structure should be universally analyzed and described in terms of subject, verb and object.

topic is the "centre of attention" - it announces the theme of the discourse. Hence, topic-prominent sentences are employed as a discourse strategy by most speakers.

Chinese (Hokkien) is a fairly topic-prominent language, exhibiting most of the characteristics discussed in Li and Thompson (1976). Chinese (Hokkien) does have structures that could be analyzed as subject/predicate sentences. However, statistically, the topic/comment structures are most frequent as well as favored structures.

Another salient feature of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien syntax is that Peranakan Chinese speakers have a natural tendency to produce subject-prominent sentences. The topic-prominent feature of Chinese (Hokkien) is not extensive in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. The subject-prominent feature of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien again, undoubtedly, is due to the influence of the local Malay dialect. It should be pointed out that topic-prominent sentences do occur in Kelantanese Malay but it is not the natural habit of the speakers under normal circumstances to produce them. Subject-prominent sentences are the norm.

On the basis of reference grammar, Malay is typologized as a language of subject-prominence (*ibid.*: 460). In literary Malay, the preferred sentence structure favors the grammatical relation of subject/predicate. However in colloquial or informal Malay, and especially at discourse level, sentences favoring the grammatical relation of topic/comment also play a significant role.

A typical Chinese (Hokkien) sentence is made up of two major constituents: topic and comment.

(94) Example in H:

/hi tiau sã # aŋ se?/  
 that CL shirt PAUSE red color  
 'That shirt, it is red'

There is a pause or hiatus after the topic in topic-prominent sentences.

Chinese (Hokkien) topic-prominent sentences can be made subject-prominent by using /si/, an equivalent of English "be," and uttering the topic as a single intonation contour within the clause. In other words, /si/ is substituted for the obligatory separating pause.

(95) Example in H:

/hi tiau sã si aŋ se?/  
 that CL shirt is red color  
 'That shirt is red'

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien sentences are typically subject-prominent.

(96) Examples:

(a) KPH

/sa neŋ seʔ aŋ/  
 shirt that color red  
 'That shirt is red'

(b) KM

/baju tu warno meŋoh/  
 shirt that color red  
 'That shirt is red'

Kelantanese Thai too makes less use of topic/comment constructions although standard Thai is typologized as a topic-prominent language (ibid.).

(97) Example in KT:

/sɨ: neŋ deŋ/  
 shirt that red  
 'That shirt is red'

Most Chinese (Hokkien) sentences tend to be verb-final. In object initial constructions, this tendency is particularly strong. This feature is also totally absent in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien which tends to favor the SVO word order.

(98) Examples (in bold):

(a) H

/hi tiu pe i thau seq sia/  
 that CL letter s/he just now write  
 'That piece of letter, s/he wrote just now'

(b) KPH

/i sia pe neq thau seq/  
 s/he write letter that just now  
 'S/he wrote that letter just now'

(c) KM

/dio tuleh suya? tu ta?di/  
 s/he write letter that just now  
 'S/he wrote the letter just now'

The absence of verb-final constructions in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien can be seen as an influence of the local Malay dialect which has a rigid word order that does not permit verb-final clauses in a subject-verb-object relationship.

### 3.7.6 Aspects

Tense is not a feature of Chinese or Malay grammar. An act or event is located in time by time 'words' or 'context', not by the form of the verb. However, Chinese (Hokkien) and Kelantanese Malay have a common system of indicating aspect. Instead of showing "when" something happened or existed, a predicate in these languages will express whether the act has been completed or not; whether the situation described by the verb represents a continuation of a previous state or, rather, represents a change. In other words, a predicate in Chinese (Hokkien) or Kelantanese Malay may not reflect so much as "when" an act occurred, but "how" the act was performed.

### 3.7.6.1 Completed Action

Completed action particles (hereafter CA particles) in Chinese (Hokkien) are /**liau**/ and /**baʔ**/.

(99) Examples in H (in bold):

(a)

/wa c<sup>h</sup>iaʔ pa **liau**/

I eat full CA particle

'I have eaten already'

(b)

/i **baʔ** lai wa e cu/

s/he CA particle come I G marker house

'S/he has come to my house before'

/baʔ/ is an experiential particle, which means that something has happened at least once in the past.

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien has adopted the local Malay particle for completed action /doh/ to be used alongside the Chinese (Hokkien) /liəu/ and the Kelantanese Malay experiential particle /ʔajɛŋ/ for the Chinese (Hokkien) counterpart /baʔ/.

(100) Examples (in bold) in KPH :

(a)

/wa cʰiaʔ pa liəu<sup>o</sup>doh/

I eat full CA particle

'I have eaten already'

(b)

/i baʔ<sup>o</sup>ʔajɛŋ lai cu wa/

s/he CA particle come house I

'S/he has come to my house before'

### 3.7.6.2 Progressive Action

The progressive action particle (hereafter PA particle) in Chinese (Hokkien) is /ti/ or /tə/.

(101) Example (in bold) in H:

/i lai hi cun wa ti chia? pəŋ/  
 s/he come that time I PA particle eat rice  
 'When she came at that time, I was eating rice'

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien has adopted the local Thai progressive action particle /jo:/ as a synonym for the Chinese (Hokkien) /ti/ or /tə/. The Chinese (Hokkien) and the local Thai particles are often used simultaneously. However, the local Malay progressive action particles /dɔʔ/ and /təŋɔh/ are not borrowed.

(102) Example in KPH (in bold):

/pəŋ i lai wa ti jo:  
 when s/he come I Chinese PA particle Thai PA particle  
 chia? pui/  
 eat rice  
 'When s/he came, I was eating rice'

In standard Thai, /jo:/ as a progressive action particle has a rigid distributional characterization in which it can only occur in sentence final position.

(103) Example (in bold) in T:

/p<sup>h</sup>om rian naŋsɨ: jo:/  
 I read book PA particle  
 'I am studying'

In Kelantanese Thai, the progressive action particle has the syntactic characteristic of occurring before the verb. This distributional characteristic of /jo: / is due to the influence of Kelantanese Malay counterpart /dɔ? /.

(104) Examples (in bold):

(a) KM

/ambo dɔ?                    baco bɔ? t:ikoh dio maɣi/  
 I PA particle read book when s/he come  
 'I was studying when s/he came'

(b) KT

/ku: jo:                    rian naŋsɨ: paŋ man ma/  
 I PA particle read book when s/he come  
 'I was studying when s/he came'

/kamlaŋ /, another standard Thai progressive action particle having the syntactic characteristic of occurring before the verb, is not present in the speech of Kelantan Thais.

### 3.7.6.3 Future Action

Future action particles (hereafter FA particles) in standard or mainstream Hokkien are /ai/, /beʔ/, /a boe/, and /əm baʔ/. Interestingly Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien uses the Chinese (Hokkien) particles for denoting future action. The Kelantanese Malay form of /noʔ/ and the local Thai form of /ci/ are not borrowed. Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien seems not to favor the Chinese (Hokkien) /a boe/ form meaning 'not yet', instead a typical Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien equivalent in the form of /bo loi/ 'not yet' is used.

(105) Examples in KPH:

(a)

/maʔ      wa ai beʔ      khi pa sat/  
 mother I    FA particle    go    market  
 'My mother wants to go to the market'

(b)

/wa əm baʔ      khi cu      i/  
 I    FA particle    go    house    s/he  
 'I have not been to his/her house'

### 3.7.7 Comparison and Intensification

Like most languages, Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien has three degrees of comparison. It has also a set of words, i.e., intensifiers, that has a heightening or lowering effect on the meaning of another element in the sentence.

### 3.7.7.1 Comparison

Comparison in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is expressed by periphrastic forms in /k<sup>h</sup>aʔ/ denoting 'more' and /siaŋ/ or /səkali/ denoting 'most'. The adverbs used to modify an adverb or adjective in the comparative degree is Chinese (Hokkien) in the form of /k<sup>h</sup>aʔ/, but, to form the superlative degree, the Kelantanese adverb /səkali/ is oftentimes assumed as an alternative for the Chinese (Hokkien) counterpart /siaŋ/.

(106) Examples of KPH adjective and adverb modifiers:

#### (a) Adjective

absolute: /lau/ 'old'

comparative: /k<sup>h</sup>aʔ lau/ 'older'

superlative: /siaŋ lau/ /lau səkali/ 'oldest'

#### (b) Adverb

absolute: /ce/ 'much; many "amount"'

comparison: /k<sup>h</sup>aʔ ce/ 'more "amount"'

superlative: /siaŋ ce/ /ce səkali/ 'most "amount"'

**/kʰaʔ/** and **/siaŋ/** as Chinese (Hokkien) adverbs occur strictly before the elements they modify. The Malay adverb of **/səkali/** in forming the superlative is rigidly placed after the element which it modifies. **/habih/** is another form of Kelantanese Malay adverb which is often used to form the superlative of some adjectives and adverbs. It has the syntactic characteristic of occurring before the adjective or adverb. E.g., **/habih lau/** 'oldest' and **/habih ce/** 'most "amount"'.

The most common ways of making the basis of comparison explicit are by constructing correlative constructions introduced by:

(i) either the Chinese (Hokkien) conjunction **/kue/** or the local Malay dialect **/padɔ/**, both denoting the meaning of 'than'. These two conjunctions are correlative to the Chinese (Hokkien) **/kʰaʔ/** 'more' and **/kʰaʔ bo/** 'less'.

(ii) either the Kelantanese Malay word **/samɔ/** denoting the semantic of 'same', or the Chinese (Hokkien) word **/pe/** 'same'. These words have to be correlated to the Chinese (Hokkien) **/siaŋ kaʔ/** 'like'.

(iii) either by prepositional phrases with **/lai bin/** denoting the meaning of 'in'.

(107) Examples (in bold) in KPH:

(a)

**/i**     **kʰaʔ** juɣuh     **kue** kɔ                     **i/**

s/he more polite than elder brother s/he  
 'S/he is more polite than his/her brother'

(b)

/he? ni kha? bo sui pado he? neq/  
 NM this less pretty than NM that  
 'This one is less pretty than that one'

(c)

/i samo ju?uh sia? ka? ko i/  
 s/he same polite like elder brother s/he  
 'S/he is as polite as his/her elder brother'

(d)

/he? ni pe sui sia? ka? he? neq/  
 NM this same pretty like NM that  
 'This one is as pretty as that one'

(e)

/i ju?uh səkali lai bin lo? chəŋ gin na ui ni  
 s/he polite most in all child place here  
 'S/he is the most polite of all the children here'

(f)

/lai bin no le ni he? ni k<sup>h</sup>a? sui/  
 in two CL here NM this more pretty  
 'Of the two items in here, this one is prettier'

### 3.7.7.2 Intensification

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien intensifiers are mostly borrowed from the local Malay dialect. The local Malay adverbs of degree /pɔ/ 'so; too; very', /ka?lɔh/ 'quite; rather' and /bena/ /səŋɔti/ 'very; really' are adopted. However, another adverb /suŋɔh/ is not popular among Peranakan Chinese.

The Kelantanese Thai adverb of intensity /ʔe:ŋ/ 'really; very' together with its relative order in a clause is also adopted by Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. Kelantanese Thai also uses the local Malay adverbs /pɔ/, /ka?lɔh/, /bena/ and /səŋɔti/.

(108) Examples (in bold) in KT:

(a)

/ŋam pɔ mia man wan ni/  
 pretty so wife s/he today  
 'His wife is so pretty today'

(b)

/cep kaʔloh mi:d ta:d niu ku:/  
 pain quite knife cut finger I  
 'It was quite painful when the knife cut my finger'

(c)

/mai toŋ bəna man tham ku: kan neŋ/  
 not right very s/he do I like that  
 'It was not right at all for him/her to do that to me'

In Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien /pɔ/, /kaʔloh/ and /bena/ə/səŋoti/ have the syntactic characterization of following the adjectives or adverbs they intensify.

(109) Examples in KPH (in bold):

(a)

/li jaŋɔ? **səŋoti** kina jit/  
 you well dressed very today  
 'You are very well-dressed today!'

(b)

/bo sui ʔə:ŋ ma? i cheŋ kun/  
 not nice very mother s/he wear skirt

'It is not nice at all for his/her mother to wear a skirt'

(c)

/so ti                    li khiang ka?loh pah pəye?so  
 younger brother you clever quite    pass examination  
 jiu? tua o?/  
 enter university

'Your younger brother is quite smart to have passed  
 the university entrance examination'

(e)

/teŋ pə kʰə ni/  
 long too pants this  
 'This pair of pants is too long'

Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai intensifiers are oftentimes combined to add emphasis to the heightening or lowering effect on the meaning of certain words in sentences.

(110) Example (in bold) in KPH:

/bo som            **ʔe:ŋ**                    **bena**  
 not suitable **KT intensifier**    **KM intensifier**  
 ma?    i    cheŋ kʰə/  
 mother s/he wear pants  
 'It is really not suitable for his/her mother  
 to wear pants'

The Chinese (Hokkien) word for 'true' in the form of /u ĩĩ/ is popularly used in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien to denote intensity. It is used in congruence with the local Malay dialect /sugoh/ 'true'. /u ĩĩ/ is not used for comparing or intensifying in Chinese (Hokkien).

(111) Example (in bold) in KPH:

(a)

/jua? **u ĩĩ** kina jit/  
 hot very today  
 'It is really hot today'

(b)

/bo tio? **u ĩĩ** pa li koŋ lagu neŋ/  
 not suitable very father you say like that  
 'It is not proper for your father to say that'

Chinese (Hokkien) intensifiers like /iau/ 'quite; rather' and /cin/ 'very; really' are absent in the speech of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese.

### 3.7.8 Kelantanese Malay Interjections/Exclamations

Kelantanese Malay interjections and exclamations<sup>79</sup> also find their way into Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. Interjections and exclamations can express any emotion whatsoever depending on context, intonation and manner of uttering. The commonly used Kelantanese Malay interjections (hereafter I) include /**adɔh**/ encoding pain, /**chis**/ encoding anger, and /**we**/ encoding admiration.

(112) Examples (in bold) in KPH:

(a)

/**adɔh** thia ɲɔ kʰa wa tiɔʔ li taʔ/

I pain so leg I get you step

'Aduh! My leg hurts from your stepping on it'

(b)

/**chis** kuʔe aja u iã i me kia wa/

I lack education really s/he scold child I

'Chis! It's ill-mannered of him/her to scold my child'

(c)

/**we** sui ɲɔ kun li/

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<sup>79</sup>In this work interjections and exclamations are words whose function is purely emotive, and refer to the speaker's state of mind at the time these words are uttered. The main difference between these two concepts is that exclamations generally have referential meanings while interjections do not.

I beautiful so skirt you  
 'Wow! Your skirt is so beautiful'

Instances of Kelantanese Malay exclamations (hereafter EX) employed by the Peranakan Chinese which include words of Islamic reference or teachings are also present. The most common exclamations include "allah," ('Muslim name for god') "taubat," ('vow') and "kafir" ('infidel').

(113) Examples (in bold) in KPH:

(a)

**/olloh** wa be ki            the? lai sada? li/  
 EX        I not remember bring come sickle you  
 'Allah! I forgot to bring your sickle'

The use of "allah" in the foregoing example is an instance of expression of regret. It may also be used to express pain, relief, and irritation, to name just a few.

(b) To express pain

**/olloh** thia po biso        ni/  
 EX        pain so abscess this  
 'Allah, this abscess is so painful'

(c) To express relief

/olloh mujo bo jadi khi tu i kina ji?/

EX lucky not become go see s/he today

'Allah, luckily we do not have to meet him/her today'

(d) To express irritation

/olloh kia li ti hau ce ca khi doh/

EX child you PA particle cry one morning already

'Allah, your child has been crying the whole morning'

(e)

/toba? wa mai pua? kiau doh/

EX I not gamble already

'I vow not to gamble anymore'

(f)

/kape em si wa he? thau lui li/

EX not I R pronoun steal money you

'I would be an infidel if I stole your money'

### 3.7.9 Kelantanese Malay Onomotopoeic Words

Kelantanese Malay onomatopoeic words (hereafter O word/s) are also employed by the Peranakan Chinese in their discourse. The onomatopoeic words depict actions in an iconic way.

(114) Examples (in bold) in KPH:

(a)

/ha su i ti hau sɔ̃? sě̃? sɔ̃? sě̃?/

why s/he PA particle cry O words

'Why is s/he sobbing?'

/sɔ̃? sě̃?/ is the sound of sobbing. Its reduplicated form undergoes another reduplication process to indicate duration as well as intensity.

(b)

/cu go ham mi? neŋ cě̃ cě̃/

cook thing what there O words

'What are you cooking over there?'

/cě̃ cě̃/ is the sound of the initial frying stage.

(c)

/wa thiã pa li kətu? bũ? bũ?/80

I hear father you fart 0 words

'I heard your father fart'

/bu? bu?/ is the sound produced during farting.

(d)

/i thia? pe neŋ bæɣo? bæɣo?/

s/he tear letter that 0 words

'S/he tore that letter'

/bæɣõ? bæɣõ?/ is the sound of tearing.

(e)

/ce koŋ le be? tui an cua

sit first E particle want go back how

lo? ho bæɣə? bæɣə?/

rain 0 words

'Stay a while more, how are you going back now  
that it is drizzling outside?'

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80/bũ? bũ?/ here does not necessarily mean the person farted twice. It can be once, twice, or more than that.

The Kelantanese Thai version of these onomatopoeic words are /p<sup>h</sup>ũ? p<sup>h</sup>ũ?/.

The Kelantan Malays perceive the sound of drizzle as /bəɣə? bəɣə?/ and heavy rain as /bəɣo? bəɣo?/.

(f)

/ku bəna lo? ho tam thia  
 long really rain just now  
 lat pulo? neɣ bəɣo? bəɣo?/  
 heavy also it 0 words

'It was raining for a really long time just now,  
 and heavily too'

As evident from the foregoing examples, Kelantanese Malay onomotopoeic words occur in reduplicated forms and function as adverbs of manner. A set of onomotopoeic words can express another meaning in another context, as in the case of /bəɣo? bəɣo?/ which expresses the sound of tearing and also the sound of heavy rain.

Onomotopoeic words in Kelantanese Malay which can be substituted as predicates too are also adopted in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

(115) Examples in KPH:

(a)

/i kʰɔʔ tʰo kʰa? kia li ka? ciu cãĩ/  
 s/he 0 word head child you with finger

'S/he =knocked your child's head with his/her knuckle'

/k<sup>h</sup>ʒʔ/ in the above instance may be taken as a substitute for the verb 'knock'. It is the sound of knocking.

(b)

/pɔ cua li ɲɔ bəʒɔʔ kə ʒʔ i/  
 newspaper you PS marker O word P baby s/he  
 'Your newspaper was =torn by his/her baby'

A possible substitute for /bəʒɔʔ/ in the example above is the verb 'tear'. It is the sound of tearing as perceived by the ears of the local Malays.

(c)

/li əm t<sup>h</sup>əŋ t<sup>h</sup>uih kɔʔ se ke liaʔ kə mata/  
 you do not O word everywhere wait catch by police  
 'You can't simply =spit or you'll be fined by the police'

/t<sup>h</sup>uih/ is the sound of spitting. It can be substituted for the verb 'spit'.

### 3.8 Linguistic Status of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien can be said to be a mixed language with Chinese (Hokkien) as the base language. It can be viewed on the whole as a changed

form of Chinese (Hokkien) or a restructured Chinese (Hokkien): but many of its structures, including numerous syntactic patterns used with Chinese (Hokkien) words, are borrowed from Kelantanese Malay, and in some instances (e.g., relativization) the original Chinese (Hokkien) structures have simply disappeared.

Although the extent of Malay and Thai borrowing into Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is massive, the native language, i.e., Chinese (Hokkien) is maintained, though modified with the addition or replacement of 'foreign' incorporated features from Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai. It has always been the aspiration of Peranakan Chinese as a speech community to retain Chinese (Hokkien) as their home language no matter how much it has been modified. No Peranakan Chinese groups have given up using Chinese entirely.<sup>81</sup> The forms in which Chinese (Hokkien) is maintained in the Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien are subtle but pervasive.

### 3.8.1 Lexicon

Although the lexicon of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien demonstrates extensive Kelantanese Malay borrowings, the basic vocabulary is still Chinese (Hokkien) in a sense<sup>82</sup>. The choice of Kelantanese Malay words in most instances is done

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<sup>81</sup> Psychological variables, especially social psychological ones, should be considered when discussing linguistic variation. To neglect people's feelings, loyalties, aspirations, etc., would give a false impression of a speech community.

<sup>82</sup> Admittedly, it is a difficult task eliciting Chinese (Hokkien) basic vocabulary from subjects who may not have used Chinese (Hokkien) regularly for years. Nevertheless, despite the "irregular use" they could still provide Chinese (Hokkien) words for most of the basic items or concepts asked.

apparently at the mere pleasure of the speakers to add special stylistic dimensions to their speech, while in some it is for functional reasons or replacing lexical loss.

The lexicon with extensive lexical borrowing from Kelantanese Malay and to some extent Thai borrowing, provides a prolonged enumeration of parallel synonyms for most Chinese (Hokkien) words. The many lexical resources (i.e., Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai) that the Peranakan Chinese have at their disposal are used at times to preserve the unintelligibility of their variety of Hokkien when it is spoken in the presence of others.

The social need for safeguarding the unintelligibility of their speech arises at times in interethnic interaction. On such occasions, Peranakan Chinese respond to the need for linguistic privacy by employing synonyms from the three lexical resources they have at their disposal as well as ad hoc translations in the form of descriptive circumlocutory expressions in Chinese (Hokkien), Kelantanese Malay and the local Thai language (for those who speak Thai) depending on the specific contexts.

Hence, the Malay lexical items in the lexicon of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien can be considered as active vocabulary (adopted from Golomb (1978: 158)) for some speakers and passive for others. It is active for those who have experienced a Chinese (Hokkien) lexical loss due to irregular use of Chinese (Hokkien) or an inherited lexicon of an impoverished Chinese (Hokkien) language which is no longer rich enough to be used for most purposes. In this case, Malay lexicon (in some instances that of basic vocabulary) is needed

in intra-group communication (i.e., with fellow Peranakan Chinese). It is passive for those who only employ them for cultural and/or functional reasons (i.e., the use of non-basic words), parallel synonyms, and/or stylistic purposes. In other words, active vocabulary is the subconscious employment of Malay lexical items by the speaker, whereas passive vocabulary is the reverse. The use of Malay lexical items in the form of a passive vocabulary, especially for parallel synonyms, constitute an impressive repertoire of lexical styles on the part of the speaker.

Another important aspect in the use of Kelantanese Malay lexical items is that when they are intended to be used as 'Malay loanwords', they are pronounced according to the phonology of the local Malay dialect. When the Peranakan Chinese intend to use the Malay loanwords for 'their own (Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien) vocabulary', generally the literary Malay phonetic equivalents of local Malay terms are chosen. This is a highly puzzling linguistic practice, for many of them are not at all literate in literary Malay.<sup>83</sup> Peranakan Chinese, and for that matter the local Malay population, for the most part, especially the older generation, never acquired literary Malay. Some of them do not understand when literary Malay is spoken to them. It is not within the scope of the present work to account for the origins<sup>84</sup> of the loanwords from literary Malay.

If intended as Malay loanwords	-	If intended as KPH vocabulary
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<sup>83</sup>Golomb (1978: 157) also observed this among the Kelantan Thai community.

<sup>84</sup>I intend to study this in the near future.

/nikoh/-/nikah/ 'marry'  
 /tuloh/-/toloh/ 'help'  
 /ata?/-/atap/ 'palm roof'  
 /caɣo/-/cəɣa/ 'care'  
 /jawa?/-/jawab/ 'answer'  
 /lawe/-/lawan/ 'fight'  
 /jamɛ/-/jaman/ 'era'  
 /samɛ/-/saman/ 'fine'  
 /patɛ/-/patag/ 'forbid'  
 /tuke/-/tukag/ 'skilled person'  
 /puyɛ/-/puyam/ 'season'  
 /toʔ t:uʔ/-/toʔ mɛta/ 'parent(s)-in-law'

Some Kelantanese Malay loanwords are given 'new' lexical shapes<sup>85</sup> by Peranakan Chinese, so as to differentiate them from the local Malay dialect, especially when they are used in the Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien sense "strictly." The local Malay relativizer and nominalizer /həʔ/ and the 'by' preposition in passive construction /kə/ are changed to /hɛʔ/ and /kə/ respectively.<sup>86</sup>

The use of literary lexical shapes of the local Malay equivalents as well as the slight change in the shapes of some of the Kelantanese Malay lexical

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<sup>85</sup>This can be seen as a case of "socio-phonology" (cf., Moosmuller 1988: 77). It is the phonological intentions of phonemes being reinforced by social intentions. (This does not imply free choice of varieties) It also concerns the phonological perception being reinforced by social perception (i.e., evaluation of the phonetic realizations of the intended sounds).

<sup>86</sup>/hɛʔ/ and /kə/ do not constitute any lexical meaning in Kelantanese Malay.

items can be seen as an attempt to have a separate identity - a Chinese identity in the form of a modified lexical shape (which incidentally correspond in many cases to lexical shapes in literary Malay).

This is a case of speech divergence (cf., Bourhis and Giles 1977) or the opposite effect of speech accommodation (cf., Giles and Smith 1979). The distancing or modification of certain aspects of the language can be seen as an attempt to assert a separate identity.

No such instances are found in Kelantanese Thai loanwords in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. They are borrowed in their original lexical shapes. This can be seen as a reflection of Peranakan Chinese' wish to identify fully with the local Thais.

### 3.8.2 Syntax

Some of the structural properties of Kelantanese Malay borrowed into Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien involve new means of expressing functional categories not available in the existing Chinese (Hokkien) language or loss of previously existing categories. It is not within the scope of this work to ascertain whether the adoption or incorporation of these Malay grammatical loans simplify or complicate, or neither, the original system (i.e., Chinese (Hokkien)).<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>This is yet another potential area for further research.

The Kelantanese Malay canonical passive can be viewed as a new means of expressing functional categories absent in Chinese (Hokkien), while the adoption of Kelantanese Malay relativization can be seen as an instance of expressing new meanings of previously lost functional categories.

In other instances, the Kelantanese Malay syntax exists alongside the Chinese (Hokkien) syntax. E.g., the basic word order of possessives in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien shows a split, i.e., two word orders. The Chinese (Hokkien) word order for possessives and noun phrases is Attribute + Noun, whereas the Kelantanese Malay order is Noun + Attribute.

Unconsciously some Peranakan Chinese employ the Chinese (Hokkien) order. In actuality, the order of Attribute + Noun/Possessor-Possessed entered their speech secondarily via Chinese (Hokkien) possessive/genitive constructions and is restricted to a small number of phrases. Consciously, the Kelantanese Malay order of Noun + Attribute/Possessed-Possessor is adhered to consistently where the feasibility and grammaticality of combinations of Chinese (Hokkien) nouns and/or pronouns in forming noun phrases or possessive/genitive constructions are concerned.

(116) Examples of Chinese (Hokkien) order in KPH:

/kopi tiam/ 'coffee shop' \*/tiam kopi/

/ama lian/ 'necklace' \*/lian ama/

/an pau/ 'a gift (of money) wrapped in red paper' \*/pau an/

/tən sua lan/ 'mainstream Chinese' \*/lan tən sua/

/tua oʔ/ 'university' \*/oʔ tua/

The asterisked forms with the Noun + Attribute order are not considered ungrammatical by Peranakan Chinese since all of their noun phrases are of such pattern. These forms sound strange to them since they have been integrated and have since existed in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien in the Attribute + Noun pattern.

In assigning a basic order for these constructions in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, the Noun + Attribute/Possessed-Possessor pattern is chosen since this pattern is not restrictive, in the sense that it is employed to generate novel structures.

The Kelantanese Malay word order, especially the order of adpositions in a clause and the syntactic characterization of adverbs, in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, is an instance of borrowing acquired through language shift.

The borrowing of function words, which includes coordinating and subordinating conjunctions from Kelantanese Malay and the local Thai language, led in turn to a (partial or complete) loss of Chinese (Hokkien) means of expressing coordination and subordination.

Instances of Chinese (Hokkien) morphological means of expression replaced by Kelantanese Malay syntactic ones are also evident. To express the semantic of diminutive, Chinese (Hokkien) uses the suffix /a/.

(117) Examples:

(a) H

/to/ 'knife' - /toa/ 'small knife'

/cun/ 'boat' - /cuna/ 'small boat'

/bo/ 'hat' - /boa/ 'small hat'

(b) KPH

/to/ 'knife' - /to se/ 'small knife'

/cun/ 'boat' - /cun se/ 'small boat'

/bo/ 'hat' - /bo se/ 'small hat'

The absence of this Chinese (Hokkien) morphological process in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien could have been due to a previously lost functional category or a case of shift toward a more functional congruence with Kelantanese Malay.

### 3.8.3 Diglossic Situation

The existence of some instances of parallel synonyms and a parallel syntax system for most of the Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien native speakers can be seen as a diglossia in a broad sense.

The Kelantanese Malay variety, and the Chinese (Hokkien) variety though modified at times, co-occur throughout the Peranakan Chinese speech community, each with a distinct range of social function.

Each of the parallel synonyms is used in specific social contexts defined among them, with an ethnic consciousness to present a non-Kelantan Malay identity (a Chinese (Hokkien) identity in this case), and/or to safeguard linguistic privacy.

The Kelantanese Malay syntax is used in specific social contexts to provide Peranakan Chinese with stylistic options which not only structure conversations, but also add a special "Kelantan community flavor."

The shift to more functional congruence with Kelantanese Malay, the dominant language in this case, at times, is a conscious effort by Peranakan Chinese and the local Thai community to attain the "Kelantan community flavor."

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and Kelantanese Thai display parallel structures syntactically as well as semantically, while mainstream Hokkien and standard Thai do not. These three languages, i.e., Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, Kelantanese Thai, and Kelantanese Malay have become highly "inter-translatable" (cf., Gumperz and Wilson 1971: 154 for a discussion of this term). This high inter-translatability of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and Kelantanese Thai with Kelantanese Malay is not due to prestige borrowing (i.e., the emulation of Peranakan Chinese and local Thais of Kelantan Malays) but mainly the interference of colloquial (Kelantanese Malay) usage. The

colloquial Kelantanese Malay usage interfered with the original syntactic structure of the Peranakan Chinese and local Thais' which consciously led to a change in their grammar.<sup>88</sup> This structural change which started out with individual speakers, was later widely used within the speech community.

(118) Examples:

(a) KM

/diɔ j:alɔ kaki maɣi sini/  
 s/he walk leg come here/  
 'S/he walked here'

(b) KPH

/i kia kʰa lai ui ni/  
 s/he walk leg come place here  
 'S/he walked here'

(c) H

/i kia lɔ lai cə pɛɣ/  
 s/he walk road come this place  
 'S/he walked here'

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<sup>88</sup>See Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 45) for a more detailed discussion of colloquial usage as a reason for shifting to another syntactic pattern.

(d) KT

/man dɨ:n tin ma: tɔŋ ni/  
 s/he walk leg come of place here  
 'S/he walked here'

(e) T

/kʰau dɨ:n ma: thi:ni:/  
 s/he walk come of place here  
 'S/he walked here'

The above examples not only show high inter-translatibility between Kelantanese Malay-Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien-Kelantanese Thai but also the shift to be in congruence semantically with the colloquial usage of Kelantanese Malay. For the Peranakan Chinese to use the original Chinese (Hokkien) term /kia lɔ/ ('walk road/path') and the local Thais to use the original Thai term /dɨ:n/ ('walk') for 'walk', they must find that the original terms do not give them the "Kelantan community flavor."

The attempts by Peranakan Chinese as well as the Kelantan Thai community to modify certain aspects of their language and linguistic behavior in terms of a drive to approximate to that of Kelantanese Malay are clear instances of speech convergence or speech accommodation (cf., Giles 1973).

Following Le Page (1968, 1975, 1978) approach to study linguistic behavior, the linguistic modification in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien as well

as the selection and combination (by Peranakan Chinese) of linguistic forms from Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai can also be seen as motivated by a desire to portray an image of an assimilated group.

## CHAPTER IV

### COMMUNICATION WITH THE WIDER SOCIETY

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

Kelantan Peranakan Chinese communicate with the world outside their homes in the local Malay dialect.<sup>1</sup> Although Peranakan Chinese speak the local Malay dialect well, they are always seeking to perfect<sup>2</sup> their use of it (e.g., in the correct choice/use of words, since vocabulary alone can "short-circuit" the meaning of an utterance), especially so when the local Malay dialect is the sole code for interethnic communication.<sup>3</sup> In actuality, it is only in the use of language, especially oral language, that a person's attitudes, feelings and behavior can be determined.

#### 4.1 PERANAKAN CHINESE-KELANTAN MALAY RELATIONS

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<sup>1</sup>It is their insufficient linguistic knowledge of Chinese (Hokkien) that is responsible for the fact that Peranakan Chinese speak Kelantanese Malay to mainstream Chinese. Most Peranakan Chinese lack the relevant linguistic means to even engage in a simple meaningful conversation with mainstream Chinese.

<sup>2</sup>Language constantly evolves to keep pace with changes in culture. New words are being introduced to modify old ones. A language "grows," and this growth requires that its speakers continually update their vocabularies to symbolize a dynamic culture.

<sup>3</sup>The term 'communication' is used interchangeably with 'interaction'. 'Communication' is always 'interaction' and thus shares the characteristics of 'interaction' in general.

Communication is a situated activity: it is a process in which the participants involved co-ordinate their 'behavior' socially through the application of shared interpretive schemes (O'keefe and Delia 1985: 65). 'Behavior' is interpreted and organized at several levels: verbal (lexical and grammatical) and nonverbal (prosody and paralinguistics), to name two.

Data for this chapter come from observations in various settings of sustained everyday social interactions between Kelantan Peranakan Chinese and neighboring Malay acquaintances, as well as sporadic interactions between individual representatives (i.e., strangers) of both ethnic groups from widely separated settlements. Interactions of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese with mainstream Chinese and Kelantan Thais will also be discussed here.

I participated in a number of activities that bring together these two ethnic groups. Most of the interpersonal interactions between middle-aged male members of either the same village or adjacent Peranakan Chinese and Malay settlements, take place at the village and/or at favorite coffee shops which are mostly owned by Malays. These coffee shops, besides serving drinks and snacks, more importantly in the context of this study, also act as interethnic meeting places. A fixed group of men (usually between four to six) congregate almost daily at the coffee shop for long hours. Most of the time, these men do not order beverages or snacks, but sit outside the shop (in the corridor section) to chat about a range of topics or engage in or witness games of "haji" (the local version of checkers).

Another favorite interethnic meeting place is under the shade of a spreading tree at a favorite spot in the village. Usually this spot is not too far from a residence. Make-shift seats are built by those who congregate here on a daily basis for long chats or a series of card games or "haji." On rainy days, this fixed group of close Peranakan Chinese and Malay friends may adjourn to the village coffee shop.

Another form of activity which draws together members of the two ethnic groups is gambling. Some "deviant" Malay men<sup>4</sup> from neighboring and distant settlements are regular visitors to Peranakan Chinese settlements for card games as well as to bet in illegal Chinese dice games. Mahjong,<sup>5</sup> a form of gambling, is another popular interethnic activity.

On occasions, neighboring as well as distant<sup>6</sup> Malay drinking parties will converge at Peranakan Chinese' houses for alcoholic beverages or Kelantan Thai "tuak"<sup>7</sup> or toddy. This pastime is morally unacceptable within the Malay settlements. The Muslim fasting month of Ramadan is another popular time for "deviant" Malays to visit Peranakan Chinese settlements to have snacks before the permissible breaking of the fast at dusk. Hence, besides being an interethnic meeting place, Peranakan Chinese settlements are also the loci for some "deviant" Malays to take refuge from their socioreligious constraints.

Traditional Kelantan pastimes such as top spinning, kite flying, bird singing, or cock and bull fighting are the other activities for Peranakan Chinese and local Malays to form and strengthen friendships. Cock and bull fighting have been made illegal, but are carried out covertly in heavy

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<sup>4</sup>It is not customary for Malay women to participate publicly in such deviant activities. It is not uncommon however to see elderly Peranakan Chinese women constituting a gambling party. There have been no cases yet of Peranakan Chinese women forming a part of a drinking group.

<sup>5</sup>Mahjong is considered a permissible pastime by the government. Betting in mahjong games is usually for low stakes.

<sup>6</sup>They are Malays from other settlements who are or have become acquaintances of the local Peranakan Chinese.

<sup>7</sup>It is an intoxicating beverage made from the sap of a kind of palm tree called "tar" in the local Malay dialect.

camouflage and with security precautions in either Peranakan Chinese or Malay settlements. Fish fighting, another Kelantan pastime popular among boys, is another kind of activity that brings together the two groups.

Local Malay performing arts such as "wayang kulit" ('shadow play'), "mak yong" ('dance drama') and "dikir barat" ('rapping/verbal duel') also attract Peranakan Chinese. They are ardent fans of such performances. Some Peranakan Chinese men are part of the performing parties, especially as indispensable musicians playing typical Kelantan Malay traditional instruments.

Interethnic interactions also take place in situations where business transactions are carried out. Malay or Peranakan Chinese men visit each other's settlements regularly to purchase agricultural produce. Those Peranakan Chinese who share-crop on Malay land under the "pawah" system are also in regular contact with the Malay landlords. Here, women from both ethnic groups are often involved in this interethnic contact.

Sports provide other opportunities for members of the two ethnic groups to get together. Peranakan Chinese boys are often seen playing soccer with their Malay friends in a village clearing. Girls of the two ethnic groups may be seen together in each other's homes, discussing school homework or merely visiting. Peranakan Chinese teenagers are discouraged from spending too much time with Malay teenagers of the opposite sex to prevent them from developing any romantic notions of intermarriage. In cases of intermarriage

preceded by obligatory conversion to the Islamic faith by Peranakan Chinese, ties are severed between the families involved but no open conflicts<sup>8</sup> occur.

Peranakan Chinese children are usually seen playing with Malay friends. This helps to foster interethnic solidarity. Interethnic solidarity is socialized to Peranakan Chinese children as part of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese way of life from an early age. The stock of knowledge on interethnic interaction/communication besides being passed down by Peranakan Chinese parents, is also directly transmitted through the children's Malay friends. This affects their perception and behavior toward the Malays as they grow up. The perception of oneself as a Peranakan Chinese as well as the formation of his/her Malay oriented personality is very much influenced by this childhood socialization.<sup>9</sup>

Through their participation in social interactions,<sup>10</sup> Peranakan Chinese children come to internalize linguistic and sociocultural competence in the local Malay dialect. Peranakan Chinese children develop social and

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<sup>8</sup>Peranakan Chinese take great pains in trying not to offend the Malays openly. Great frustrations are evinced by only "cutting off" ties with the Malay families involved who can of course understand the feelings of their Peranakan Chinese friends. Both parties play down the issue openly. Generally, the wider Peranakan Chinese as well as the Malays in the village avoid discussing the matter.

Often, Peranakan Chinese attribute these intermarriages to Malay sorcery, claiming that their children have been love-charmed into them. The interethnic or social environment in the village makes it difficult to segregate their sons and daughters from neighboring Malays.

<sup>9</sup>This has also been observed by Tan (1983: 44).

<sup>10</sup>Language in use is a major tool for conveying sociocultural knowledge and a powerful medium of socialization. When adults use Kelantanese Malay in the presence of Peranakan Chinese children, they are providing information or cues concerning what members of the local Malay speech community are doing.

cognitive skills through participating in structured cooperative interactions with more mature members (or adults) of the local Malay society. Many formal and functional features of interaction and/or discourse carry sociocultural information: phonological, morphosyntactic and syntactic constructions, lexicon, types of speech act, conversational sequencing, exchange structure, genres, initiations, responses, interruptions, overlaps, gaps, silence, and turn-taking, to name a few. In other words, part of the meaning of grammatical and conversational structures is sociocultural. These structures are socially organized and hence carry information concerning social order.

As evident from the kinds of interethnic interaction described above, the relationships formed are of the primary nature (cf., Berreman 1972: 574) and generally continue for a lifetime.

Interethnic interactions between individual representatives (or strangers) from widely separated settlements take place in the form of sporadic encounters which display reciprocal hospitality. For instance, a Peranakan Chinese man from another place may stop by at the village coffee shop to have a snack. Usually the shop proprietor or a member of the group who patronizes the coffee shop regularly will greet him<sup>11</sup> by asking politely about his directions: /maɣi maŋo/ 'where are you from?' or /noʔ gi maŋo/ 'where are you heading?' Mainstream Chinese do not usually receive such

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<sup>11</sup>Peranakan Chinese men are not easily identifiable due to their Malay-like physical appearance and clothing. On most occasions, they can be mistaken for Malays.

Normally, Peranakan Chinese women do not patronize coffee shops on their own. If they do, they are usually in the company of a Peranakan Chinese man/men.

treatment. The greetings given to Peranakan Chinese men by the local Malays in the above instance can also be taken as a case of mistaken identity. The dark complexion of most Peranakan Chinese men and their native/near native fluency in Kelantanese Malay can be contributing factors to their being mistaken for Malays. There were also instances when a group of people easily identifiable as Peranakan Chinese (since they included females)<sup>12</sup> were greeted cordially by regular Malay patrons of the coffee shops. This certainly is not a case of mistaken identity.

#### 4.1.1 Camaraderie

Camaraderie between these two groups is primarily achieved by the total casting off (not even playing down) of their dissimilar social identities as well as cultural differences. From the Malay/Muslim perspective, Peranakan Chinese are seen as "kafirs" ("pagans," or "unbelievers," or "heathens") who profess a religion different from Islam, and whose dietary habits include eating pork and polluted animals<sup>13</sup> which are taboo meat for the Malays. Of course, this view of theirs is never uttered openly. The subject of pork<sup>14</sup> in interethnic relations cannot be underestimated. The local Malays accept the fact that Peranakan Chinese are pork eaters, and show tolerance regarding this dietary habit. They have great trust in the discretion of Peranakan

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<sup>12</sup>Peranakan Chinese females, young or old, are easily differentiated from Malay females by their clothing. Refer to Chapter II, Section 2.5.1.3.

<sup>13</sup>This implies that the animals (e.g., chickens, goats, and cattle) are not slaughtered in the ritual fashion prescribed by Islamic law.

<sup>14</sup>Pork eating is an emblem of Chineseness. Peranakan Chinese who choose not to eat pork for whatever reason(s) are generally "chided" by fellow Peranakan Chinese with the remark /be? pi huan na ko/ 'Do you want to be a Malay?'

Chinese as far as the subject of pigs is concerned and do not openly show their curiosity about their Peranakan Chinese friends' consumption of the forbidden meat. On the other hand, Peranakan Chinese realize this delicate issue can be a chronic source of potential interethnic friction. Great pains are taken on their part in concealing the slaughtering, preparing, and eating of pork.

Some Peranakan Chinese are perceived by their Malay neighbors as being more trustworthy than Malay in-group neighbors. Peranakan Chinese are not perceived as an economic threat, although they do share much of the economic niche occupied by the rural Malays of Kelantan. Their underprivileged economic status evokes Malay sympathies.<sup>15</sup> Mainstream Chinese are perceived by the Malays as dishonest due to their alleged commercial exploitation.

Members of the two ethnic groups do show up occasionally at each other's houses, mostly on errands. Peranakan Chinese entertain their Malay guests on the floor of the veranda. Drinks are not normally served. This is mainly due to their observing the strict Malay/Muslim dietary rules; a cup of drink prepared in the kitchen of a Peranakan Chinese home may well have been in contact with utensils previously "contaminated" with pork. Instead cigarettes in the form of "rokok daun" ('tobacco rolled up with dried "nipah" palm leaves') and betel leaves are served.

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<sup>15</sup>The Kelantan Thai community also receives such sympathies (cf., Golomb 1978: 52).

Exchange<sup>16</sup> of foods, especially uncooked ones (e.g., agricultural produce, fruits, and the like) is a crucial procedure for establishing and maintaining social relationships. In a village, foods received (even when in moderate amounts) are redistributed on the basis of a network of social obligations between individuals and extended families.

Distribution of surplus foods is common. In fact, there is a great deal of social pressure to distribute surplus foods. The local Malays use the expression /kəloŋe?/ or /kupit?/ 'stingy' to refer to someone's unwillingness to share foods with others.

The Malays also entertain their Peranakan Chinese guests in the veranda. The gesture of inviting the guests to sit on chairs (if there are any) in the hall is generally extended. Peranakan Chinese do not have any taboo against consuming any kind of food prepared in a Malay kitchen. Although eating together is one of the closest forms of interpersonal intimacy and a sign of social solidarity, the Muslim "halal/haram"<sup>17</sup> ('not forbidden/forbidden') code seems to separate Muslims from non-Muslims, and in this context Peranakan Chinese from the local Malays. In actuality, this difficulty in interdining in no way prevents or minimizes occasions for

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<sup>16</sup>Reciprocity of foods is a highly valued facet of social organization in traditional Malay communities.

<sup>17</sup>Non-Malay/Muslim eating stalls which sell food for Malay/Muslim consumption are required by law to post "Ditanggung halal" ('Guaranteed clean religiously') signs.

intimate interactions between the two ethnic groups since most of the interactions<sup>18</sup> occur outside the domain of the house.

Camaraderie is also enhanced by the adoption (through natural assimilation) of rural Malay cognitive and behavioral patterns. Identification as co-members of a joint rural peasant community/class, sharing the same feelings about their illiteracy and rustic appearance, deriving a livelihood from the soil by planting the same produce and employing the same agricultural practices, their endurance in coping with the hardships of rural/peasant life, their imagined qualities of gentleness and humility as well as the moral inspiration of "orang darat" ('countryside folks') from which they derive much pride, and their ancient residence in the area, are among the other factors that bring these two ethnic groups together despite the presence of many ritual barriers.

Of equal importance is the fact that they speak the same language - the language of "orang darat" ('countryside folk') which is archaic Kelantanese Malay. Elderly Malays and Peranakan Chinese evince a subjective inferiority about their inability to speak and understand modern Kelantanese Malay, and even more so of standard or literary Malay. Modern Kelantanese Malay is literary Malay grammatically but articulated with Kelantanese Malay accent.

A linguistic practice which undoubtedly promotes camaraderie between the two groups is worth mentioning here: Peranakan Chinese consider it very

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<sup>18</sup>Interactions between females of both groups are infrequent. Besides the errand visits, the local market is the other popular place for women of both groups to meet.

impolite to communicate unreservedly with fellow Peranakan Chinese in their mother tongue, irrespective of the ethnicity of onlookers. It is uncommon to find Peranakan Chinese chatting among themselves in their mother tongue amidst a crowd of Malay neighbors or strangers, let alone Malay interlocutors. To the Peranakan Chinese, to carry on long verbal exchanges in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, while the local Malays are excluded from a large portion of the conversation, is an unacceptable sociolinguistic behavior.<sup>19</sup> Peranakan Chinese will try to hold much of their conversations in the local Malay dialect in this context, and those portions unavoidably held in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien will be translated for the Malay interlocutors/listeners.

The majority of the everyday interethnic relationships observed are in the integrating and bonding stages.<sup>20</sup> These stages are evident from the kinds of interpersonal communication involved. These two stages are only reached in a relationship when the parties involved are close friends. Conversations typical of these stages include self-disclosure where intimate topics are discussed. The depth of self-disclosure depends on the level of acquaintance. When these two groups share their feelings through self-disclosure, they are

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<sup>19</sup>The local Thai community (cf., Golomb 1978: 193) and mainstream Chinese are well known for communicating unreservedly among themselves in their respective mother tongues irrespective of who their interlocutors are. The Malays show a particular frustration toward this use of "ethnic jargon" in their presence as interlocutors. The switch or use of another language other than the local Malay dialect in the face of the local Malays can also be seen as an insult to them as "host."

Peranakan Chinese do carry on short verbal exchanges in Chinese (Hokkien) among themselves in the presence of others for linguistic privacy. See Chapter III, Section 3.8.1 for a discussion of this.

<sup>20</sup>There are at least five stages in a simple model of interaction: initiating, experimenting, intensifying, integration, and bonding. See Knapp (1984: 35-39) for a discussion of interactional stages.

in fact sharing a part of themselves since self-disclosure indicates mutual trust, among other things.

There are reasons for entering into a friendship and nurturing it. Generally these reasons are taken for granted and seldom analyzed. Oftentimes, the reasons for maintaining a friendship are identical to the functions<sup>21</sup> of friendship. It should be pointed out that the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese-Kelantanese Malay relationship is asymmetrical<sup>22</sup> although there is mutual acceptance where ethnic differences are well appreciated. Peranakan Chinese are aware of their position in the power structure of a state which is predominantly Malay. They perceive the local Malays as legitimately dominant and themselves as legitimately subordinate.<sup>23</sup> This understanding and acceptance of the legitimacy of their relating positions is very crucial in the promotion of a successful interethnic interaction. The main outcome of this understanding and acceptance is their assimilation in various symbolic channels (i.e., diet, language, clothing, etc.) to their predominantly Malay surroundings.

#### 4.1.2 The Importance of Village<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>At least two vitally important functions are identifiable: to confirm social realities and express feelings.

<sup>22</sup>Asymmetrical relationships do not necessarily imply asymmetry in conversations.

<sup>23</sup> Mainstream Chinese do not readily accept their inferior position as legitimate in the power structure of Kelantan, or for that matter Malaysia. This leads among many things to the rejection of the culture of the dominant group. Instead of coming together, the process of coming apart between them and the local Malays or Malays in general is showing, such as in the form of strained and unnatural interactions.

<sup>24</sup>The importance of the concepts of village and village membership among Kelantan Malays has also been observed by Raybeck (1980: 246-250).

The village can be considered the largest unit in which a Peranakan Chinese and a Kelantan Malay are involved in daily social interaction. In Kelantan, geographical village boundaries are greatly emphasized and recognized. Patterns of interaction are determined by village membership. The village serves as a center for a number of activities, and those who participate in them are mainly members of the village. The village is very important to the residents because it is the area in which their identity is established and maintained. It is also the place where friendships are initiated and individuals socialize. Asymmetry again can be seen here in the process of socialization: it involves only Malay (rural Kelantan Malay to be specific) socialization where Peranakan Chinese assimilate to the culture of their Malay neighbors.

In the process of (Malay) socialization, the Peranakan Chinese not only coordinate their Chinese beliefs about the world with those of the larger sociocultural Malay group, but also embrace the entire universe of Kelantan Malay social reality, acquiring a range of socially and historically constituted Kelantan Malay vehicles (such as a common language, shared cultural understandings, typical modes of interpreting expressions and experiences).

The process of (Malay) socialization for Peranakan Chinese is important for interacting with the local Malays. This is because to pass off as members of the village, Peranakan Chinese must have adequate control over the strategic resources of Kelantanese Malay communication at the sociolinguistic level. Besides a polite speaking style which can be achieved in some instances by modifying the syntactic form of a clause, the use of 'Kelantanese Malay

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speaking style'<sup>25</sup> can be taken to imply that when Peranakan Chinese speak like Kelantan Malays, they are taking on certain feelings and attitudes that constitute part of an indigenous (Kelantan Malay) identity.

Residents of a village are referred to as "orang kampung sini" ('people of this village') while non-residents are known as "bukan orang kampung sini" ('not people of this village'). It has been observed that co-residents behave more politely to each other while non-residents are treated with less politeness and are also viewed with suspicion and even hostility at times. The concept of village membership, greatly emphasized by Kelantan Malays,<sup>26</sup> is crucial in the maintenance of harmony within the village.

The attitudes and behavior of Kelantan Malays toward Peranakan Chinese co-residents whose existence can be traced back to several generations in an immediate area, are positive. The long residence of Peranakan Chinese families in an immediate area provides "legitimacy" for the local Malays to include them as true co-residents of the village. Peranakan Chinese are known by individual names. This gesture can be seen as the local Malays' recognition of their significance in the village, and thus is an act of social approval. Oftentimes Kelantan Malay nicknames<sup>27</sup> are given to them by

<sup>25</sup>Among other things, it stresses the social and psychological identity of Kelantan Malays. See Section 4.3.1.2 for more details.

<sup>26</sup>The popular form of greetings especially /*mayi manɔ*/ "where are you from?" can be seen as a subtle way of finding out the identification of a stranger with reference to his/her village. /*gi manɔ*/ "where are you heading?" can also be seen as a means of finding out whether the stranger has any kinship ties or friendship with any of the village members.

<sup>27</sup>These nicknames are not only used by the local Malays to refer to those individual Peranakan Chinese but by the Peranakan Chinese community too. E.g., the male Peranakan Chinese name of "Ah Seng" is often given the Malay correspondence of "Hussein."

the local Malay neighbors. They seem not to take any offence but instead positively view this name giving as reflecting their inclusion to the local Malay community.

The fact that Kelantan Malays place great emphasis on village membership is evident in instances where Malay members of a village show a greater solidarity<sup>28</sup> toward their co-resident Peranakan Chinese than Malay outsiders from another village. Oftentimes when open conflicts occur between Peranakan Chinese of the village with Malays of another village, Malay members of the village will take the side of their Peranakan Chinese co-villagers. In other words, the Malay members identify with the Peranakan Chinese members on the basis of a common residence, and not with their fellow Malays.

It can be said that common residence and the importance of maintaining interpersonal harmony within the context of the village, are important reasons for maintaining interethnic friendship. The interests and values of rural Malay peasants are undoubtedly incompatible with those of "sophisticated" Malay townfolk. The interests and values of Peranakan Chinese, largely influenced by the local Malay culture, are also incompatible with those of the dynamic and competitive mainstream Chinese residing in urban areas. Hence, by virtue of common interests and values of a "darat"<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> There are instances when Peranakan Chinese candidates are proposed, seconded, and supported by a majority of the Malay members of the village in the event of district level elections, such as for positions in organizations at municipal level.

<sup>29</sup> Most cultural patterns in the urban community are not similar to those in the rural community. People function differently in each of these two environments, behave differently and, therefore, shape culture differently.

('rural') nature, these two ethnic groups are attracted to and need each other. These common rural interests, values and feelings enable them to live in the same social world, and enhance their social interaction.

The high level of village cohesiveness is in part due to: (i) the desire of both groups, especially Peranakan Chinese, to remain (i.e., keeping on living) in the village, have good communication between members of the two groups; and (ii) high consensus on beliefs and attitudes by the two groups that pertain to village functioning, and a sense of security within the village.

#### 4.2 USE OF KELANTANESE MALAY

It should be made clear that there are no wide variations in the abilities of individual Peranakan Chinese, irrespective of age and sex, in the use of Kelantanese Malay as a separate code. All Peranakan Chinese possess practically a native speaker's command<sup>30</sup> of the local Malay dialect. Kelantanese Malay<sup>31</sup> is acquired mainly through socialization with the local Malay neighbors.

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<sup>30</sup>By a native speaker's command, is meant the ability on the part of Peranakan Chinese to handle (speak as well as understand) connected Kelantanese Malay discourse in real time without prior rehearsal. In other words, it is the ability to improvise, maintain continuity in speech and comprehension, respond immediately to unexpected utterances in Kelantanese Malay, and make rapid topic changes, among other things (cf., Stubbs 1983: 36 for a discussion of native speaker's fluency).

<sup>31</sup>Kelantanese Malay is the habitual language of the Malay community in the state. It is distinguished from literary Malay as well as other Malay dialects, by a unique grammar, pronunciation, and figures of speech. See Karim (1965, 1985); Mahmood (1977, 1985); Omar (1985) for a detailed description of Kelantanese Malay.

It is their linguistic ability in speaking the local Malay dialect as well as their skills in relating extremely well to the Kelantan Malay politeness system that allows effective or successful<sup>32</sup> communication with Kelantan Malays to take place. The near-native/native fluency provides Peranakan Chinese with the opportunity to use the language accurately and vividly. Their good knowledge of the local Malay code of courtesy also provides them with the opportunity to use the local Malay dialect appropriately so as not to offend the Malays.

Using Kelantanese Malay correctly is critical: the choice of a wrong word not only distorts the intended message, but can also undermine the credibility of a Peranakan Chinese speaker and earn him/her the label of /to? ʔəti baso/ 'lack of linguistic skill' (literally) or 'ill-bred' (figuratively speaking). Vividness in language use makes the conversation exciting and alive, making it a forceful, direct and dynamic interaction. Appropriate use of language<sup>33</sup> includes the kind of language or rhetorical style most suitable in a certain situation.

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<sup>32</sup>By effective or successful communication, is meant there is a meeting of minds for the exchange of information and feelings in interactions. Communications of this sort, have the potential for developing and enhancing relationships. Unlike pseudo-harmonious interactions/communications that generate friendliness without friendship, this type of interaction/communication provides the opportunity to deepen relationships.

<sup>33</sup>It is sociolinguistic appropriateness (or appropriate communication behaviors) that is of concern here. It is defined in terms of cultural determination, i.e., each culture sets forth rules that determine which of the many possible communication patterns are acceptable and appropriate for any given situation.

Situation can only be understood through its relation to culture. What counts as a situation is determined by the culture and will differ from culture to culture.

The three variables (i.e., accuracy, vividness, and appropriateness) affecting the ability to use Kelantanese Malay effectively among the Peranakan Chinese are acquired in part through their active knowledge of a sufficiently large vocabulary of the local Malay dialect, besides having a high competence in its grammar as well as a good knowledge of the social rules of behavior known as "communicative competence" (cf., Hymes 1971). It includes the knowledge of discourse, i.e., the structure of speaking situations, turn-taking, and rules of sequencing.

Interaction or communication is governed by community understandings regarding how to begin speaking, how to gain or retain the floor, and when to speak or remain silent, to mention but a few. Being a competent member of a speech community requires the acquisition of rules of interaction<sup>34</sup> besides the rules of grammar.

Accurate pronunciation of words, with the sounds and accents conforming to the accepted norm in Kelantanese Malay not only helps in the effective use of the code, but also influences the way the local Malay community evaluates the Peranakan Chinese. Peranakan Chinese show a great concern for dialect words and how they are used. The use of words has a strong effect on creating and affecting behavior; it can either cause barriers to or enhance effective communication.

The knowledge and active use of a large number of dialect or indigenous Kelantanese Malay words by Peranakan Chinese (especially archaic words by

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<sup>34</sup>The emphasis upon language acquisition as a social process has led to the formulation of the concept of communicative competence.

middle-aged and elderly speakers) in their conversations with the local Malays not only help tremendously in leading the interaction to progress into topics that involve greater depths in discussion, but can also be taken as signs of solidarity.

The archaic dialect words employed by both rural Malays and Peranakan Chinese in their conversations can be seen as a jargon. These archaic dialect words oftentimes confuse younger Peranakan Chinese and Malays who have experienced such lexical loss. Younger rural Malays, who are generally literate, as well as the educated Malay townfolk still speak Kelantanese Malay as a home language, but the lexical items used are largely those of literary Malay pronounced according to the phonology of Kelantanese Malay. Only the most commonly used and understood dialect words surface in their conversations.

The following archaic dialect words are uttered by Peranakan Chinese as well as the local Malays. They are from the data base of Peranakan Chinese-local Malay interactions. These words are from the various sub-dialects of Kelantanese Malay.

(1) Sample:

(a) Nouns:

/gəʔiʔ/ 'a virgin'

/alah/ 'forest'

/eʔoŋ/ 'nose'

/bataʔ/ 'remainder'

/jo/ 'desire'

/aws/ 'effect'

(b) Verbs:

/akiʔ/ 'carry'

/adu/ 'stop'

/jəloʔ/ 'steal'

/aʔa/ 'compose'

/cədah/ 'walk in a fast manner'

/kədaʔ/ 'find'

/gadeʔ/ 'cover'

/boʔo/ 'spread'

/kəka/ 'quarrel'

/jəmaʔ/ 'agree'

/bidi/ 'invite' (in a polite manner)

(c) Adjective:

/babuʔ/ 'silly'

/ambi/ 'careful'

/mado/ 'attentive'

/gəʔioʔ/ /dəʔoʔ/ 'many'

/boya/ 'big' (for belly)

/kəkoʔ/ 'crooked'

/saʔo/ 'ripe'

/atah/ 'correct'

/sue/ 'shy'

/bubuh/ 'bald'

/dəʔeʔ/ 'lazy'

(d) Adverbs:

/lacuh/ 'always'

/cəʔaʔ/ 'sure'

(e) Conjunctions:

/bəcəh/ 'because'

/keʔpə/ 'but'

The usage of archaic dialect words by Peranakan Chinese elders not only enables them to accurately symbolize ideas and represent objects and concepts belonging to the local Malay culture, but also influences the way they are evaluated<sup>35</sup> by the local Malays. Their active knowledge of archaic dialect words gives them the legitimacy of being recognized and respected as "orang Kelantan betul" ('true Kelantan citizen'). The ability to understand and use these words accurately as well as appropriately implies that the Peranakan Chinese have a good knowledge of the sociocultural framework of values and feelings associated with the local Malay community.

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<sup>35</sup>Language use can help in establishing and defining a person's personality. In other words, language may form as well as represent one's personality.

Grammar is important since it gives meaning to a string of words arranged in the context of a sentence. Generally, the meaning of an utterance is determined not by its words alone, but by the whole arrangement and sequence of the words. But argued from the point of view of interethnic interaction within the domain of general semantics,<sup>36</sup> words can have a strong effect on the people who use them as well as the listeners. In other words, appropriate or inappropriate use of words can create strong effects on human behavior. Words have the power to communicate positive images or create confusion and miscommunication.

For effective or successful communication, words can be seen as far more important than grammar in the sense that they have the power to affect behavior. Consider the word /babi/ 'pig' in Malay. When uttered in front of or to the Malays (whose religious faith considers it a taboo animal), it will on most occasions, produce the same emotional response as would an actual pig - as if the word /babi/ were the actual thing! In this instance, it can be said that the meaning of the word /babi/ is not in the word itself but in the mind of the Malay community. In the culture of Kelantan rural Malays, the utterance of the word /ula/ 'snake' at any time, especially at night is superstitiously believed to be inviting the presence of one. Thus, the word /ula/ is avoided in rural Malay conversations unless it is inevitable. In these cases, a euphemism is likely to be used instead.

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<sup>36</sup>General semantics is the study of the way words affect attitudes and behavior. It is different from semantics - the study of meaning or the relationship between signs and symbols and what they represent.

The use of euphemisms can demonstrate politeness in deference to the local Malay custom. E.g., to spare a Malay friend's feelings in dealing with the demise of someone dear to him/her, a Peranakan Chinese might use the word /t a d ə ʔ/ 'no; not around' rather than /m a t i/ 'die'. Euphemistic use of language obviously can affect the way of response of the local Malays to Peranakan Chinese messages or interactions.

Selecting the accurate and appropriate word for one's message or interaction oftentimes involves finding a word which has the right connotation in a particular context. This process is made difficult by the fact that connotations change through usage. The connotational meanings to words are based on our social and personal experiences. The psychological or subjective meaning referred to by a connotation requires its user to have a good knowledge of the sociopsychological framework of values, feelings, and attitudes associated with a culture, in this context the local Malay culture. E.g. the word /k ə b ə ŋ/ 'farm; orchard' has different connotational meanings for Malay townfolk and peasant Malays. It is a place where crops are grown and animals raised for the Malay townfolk, but a home or livelihood to the rural Malays.

The ability of the Peranakan Chinese to speak the local Malay dialect fluently is undoubtedly the key to greater and more intensive interethnic interaction which leads to cultural assimilation. Their vast knowledge of Kelantanese Malay vocabulary enables them to engage in all aspects of talk. Active knowledge of a large vocabulary of Kelantanese Malay can be taken as an indication that Peranakan Chinese share the same cognitive reality (with

the native speakers) which enables them to engage in meaningful (successful) interaction.

#### 4.3 THE SUCCESS OF PERANAKAN CHINESE-KELANTAN MALAY COMMUNICATION

Much of the research regarding interethnic communication has been in the domain of communication breakdowns<sup>37</sup> or misunderstandings of the use of linguistic variants by members of different ethnic groups. Too little attention has been directed toward investigating the dynamics of language behavior and manipulation of speech by both groups, especially the subordinate group, to effect a successful interethnic communication.<sup>38</sup>

As is evident from the foregoing discussion, this work has interethnic friendship as its starting point. The exact nature of such relationships is examined within the framework of the 'contact hypothesis' (cf., Allport 1954; Butler and Stokes 1974; Husbands 1979; Hendriques 1984) which broadly posits that an increase of interethnic contact will help reduce prejudice.

More importantly, the role played by language in registering, influencing and providing a medium through which relationships are acted out constitute the main focus of this chapter. The dynamics of language in interethnic interaction - how Peranakan Chinese modulate both the content

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<sup>37</sup>See, e.g., Yashiro (1973); Peng (1974); Garfinkel (1972); Gumperz (1978, 1979); Ichheiser (1979); Grimshaw (1980); Varonis and Gass (1985); Lane (1985); Chick (1989); and Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1990); to mention but a few.

<sup>38</sup>E.g., Hewitt (1986) is one of the very few studies that investigate successful interethnic interaction.

and form of their speech to communicate effectively as well as to express respect for and solidarity with their Malay interlocutors - will be dealt with in detail.

Data in this chapter will be discussed from an approach that has drawn on sociology and that anthropological part of sociolinguistics known as ethnography of speaking/communication.<sup>39</sup>

#### **4.3.1 Discourse Organization**

The following discussion is based on my observation of the interactive mechanisms and the conditioning factors for the production of a successful interethnic interaction between Peranakan Chinese and Kelantan Malays. These mechanisms or conditioning factors constitute the complex discourse organization or structure<sup>40</sup> that traverses interactions between Peranakan Chinese and the local Malays. The organization of the discourse is overtly characterized by a 'Kelantan Malay presentation of self' by the Peranakan Chinese. This can also be seen as an indication of their desire to associate with the local Malays or a need for social approval in a predominantly Malay state besides the outcome of assimilation.

##### **4.3.1.1 Linguistic Competence**

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<sup>39</sup>See Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2.

<sup>40</sup>By discourse organization/structure, is meant the arrangement and interrelationship of the parts that construct a communication.

The medium of discourse is Kelantanese Malay.<sup>41</sup> As evident from the foregoing discussion, Peranakan Chinese have a high linguistic competency in Kelantanese Malay coupled with an equally high level of Kelantan Malay sociocultural knowledge. With their linguistic skill, they can explore deeper into those fields of experience shared by both. Their good sociocultural knowledge is apparent in both the content and structure of their discourse and interaction with the local Malays.

#### 4.3.1.2 Vocal Cues/Qualifiers

Unlike mainstream Chinese who are known for speaking "fast" and "loud," Peranakan Chinese's vocal cues or qualifiers<sup>42</sup> in terms of rate, pitch, intensity and quality, have a note similar<sup>43</sup> to that of the local Malays.

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<sup>41</sup>Kelantan Malays are generally monolingual. All Kelantan Peranakan Chinese can speak the local Malay dialect besides their mother tongue, but almost all Kelantan Malays are unable to reciprocate. The study of reciprocity is another nascent field of investigation in the interethnic interaction between these two groups.

<sup>42</sup>The term 'vocal cues/qualifiers' used here refers to (paralinguistic) features of the voice. Pitch is the attribute of auditory sensation in which a sound may be ordered on a scale from 'low' to 'high' and intensity/loudness from 'soft' to 'loud' (cf., Ladefoged 1975: 168-170; Fry 1979: 68, 90-92; Crystal 1985: 184, 234). Rate/tempo refers to the speed of speaking, while quality/timbre refers to the characteristic resonance of a sound, which is the result of the range of frequencies constituting the identity of the sound (cf., Ladefoged 1975: 72-78; Fry 1979: 69-70; Crystal 1985: 253, 256).

<sup>43</sup>I observe (by ear analysis) that the pitch, volume and quality of a speech sound produced by Peranakan Chinese (either in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien or Kelantanese Malay or the local Thai dialect) is similar in its acoustic structure to that produced by Kelantan Malays.

It is not within the scope of this study to analyze the voices of Peranakan Chinese and that of Kelantan Malays so as to describe the voices in acoustic terms by using the appropriate techniques of experimental phonetics. However, I intend to carry out an acoustic analysis in the very near future to prove this similarity or near-similarity in the vocal cues/qualifiers of the two ethnic groups.

By possessing 'Kelantanese Malay vocal characteristics',<sup>44</sup> Peranakan Chinese not only portray themselves as competent speakers, but are able to register Kelantanese Malay emotion (e.g., raising pitch to accompany surprise), signal attitudes, and give character and emphasis to words more naturally.

The 'Kelantanese Malay vocal characteristics' possessed by Peranakan Chinese undoubtedly influence the way the local Malays perceive them, and can thus affect Peranakan Chinese credibility. By possessing these vocal characteristics, Peranakan Chinese can enhance the image that the local Malays have of them, and also demonstrate their solidarity with the local Malays.

Although the "fast" rate of speaking by mainstream Chinese can be seen as generating a favorable impression of linguistic competence on their part, their verbal speed<sup>45</sup> (usually measured in terms of words per minute) is not considered to be within the norm of Kelantanese Malay discourse.

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<sup>44</sup>'Kelantanese Malay vocal characteristics' refer to the vocal cues/qualifiers typical of Kelantan Malays in their overall articulation in habitual or normal style.

<sup>45</sup>The problem of measurement is complex, for certain communications occur at faster verbal rates than others. The context or situation in which communication occurs is another obvious variable, as are pauses and rhythm patterns.

Again, the measurement of the rate of a typical Kelantanese Malay discourse at a habitual speed is not within the scope of this study. This is yet another area of potential research in Kelantanese Malay discourse or speech.

A very common fault among mainstream Chinese in their interaction with the local Malays (as perceived by them) is the former's "improper" projection of their voice. To the local Malays, mainstream Chinese use excessive "volume,"<sup>46</sup> i.e., they "shout" their messages or utterances across. The "perpetual whining" and "constant yelling" annoy and irritate the Malay listeners.

'Kelantanese Malay vocal characteristics' are acquired by Peranakan Chinese through their socialization with the local Malays. This stock of Kelantanese Malay phonetic features are not only socialized to Peranakan Chinese children by their parents but also directly by their Malay friends. The informal acquisition of these vocal features by Peranakan Chinese to create a "pleasant" voice for the ears of the local Malays can be seen as a case of linguistic assimilation or convergence.

#### 4.3.1.3 Object Language

The physical appearance of Peranakan Chinese through their clothing, grooming, and items (e.g., jewelry) they wear on their body plays an important part in the Peranakan Chinese-Kelantanese Malay discourse structure. The way Peranakan Chinese adorn their bodies and style their hair

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<sup>46</sup>They may do so from habit. It is observed that speaking "loudly" is an acceptable speaking style among the mainstream Chinese. The local Malay listeners' feedback signs are of no effect to them in adjusting their loudness. The average habitual pitch level of the language of the mainstream Chinese is supposedly high, hence causing the "volume" to go up as well.

Thus, in the context of "volume," mainstream Chinese are perceived to have "unpleasant" voices: high pitched and loud. To the ears of the local Malays, they sound shrill and grating as opposed to their own "pleasant" voices: comparatively lower in pitch and softer.

are also important for their interaction with the local Malays. Peranakan Chinese' choice of clothing: conventional in style, or that which is expected of them, greatly influences the perception of the local Malays. Their choice of conventional clothing makes a great difference in the way they are viewed in all respects, i.e., socially, culturally, sexually, etc. by the conservative local Malays.

It is a common observation that people tend to be attracted to others whom they believe possess attitudes, interests, beliefs and values similar to theirs. Cognitive similarity is attractive because it provides an individual with social validation of his/her beliefs and opinions about social reality. Similarity also makes for easier communication and synchronization of interaction, making understanding and prediction of the other person easier. Attractiveness as an attribute also depends on the developmental stage of a relationship.

#### 4.3.1.4 Chronemics<sup>4 7</sup>

Rural Kelantan Malay culture tends to emphasize time as an important element in their interaction. As pious Muslims, most local Malays present themselves as strictly abiding by the rule of praying five times a day. Peranakan Chinese, due to their high level of assimilation to the local Malay community, have

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<sup>47</sup>Introduced by Poyatos (1972), this is the conceptualization and handling of time as a biopsychological and cultural element lending specific characteristics to social relationships and to the many events contained within the communicative stream, from linguistic syllables and flitting gestures to meaningful glances and silences (Poyatos 1983: 210).

In this work, chronemics refers specifically to the conceptualization as well as the handling of formal time (certain time of the day and month).

high regard for these praying times. They show great sensitivity by not visiting their Malay friends before or during the praying time. Knowing when to visit/leave or when to stop a conversation is a time consideration. Oftentimes, if they decide to stay during the praying time, they will urge their Malay friends to perform their prayers while they wait.

In a similar fashion, Peranakan Chinese are careful not to offend their Malay neighbors by gossiping or discussing taboo topics (e.g., sex) especially during daylight hours of the Muslim holy/fasting month of Ramadan. It is their cultural knowledge that enables them to behave "properly" at such times.

#### 4.3.1.5 Trust and Acceptance

Trust and acceptance between the two ethnic groups can influence the nature of their discourse. The high level of trust between Kelantan Malays and Peranakan Chinese certainly affects their way and subjects of communication. Trust in a relationship offsets suspicion and also the tendency to attribute wrong motives in the other person (cf., O'Reilly and Anderson 1980), while acceptance creates a "climate" in which the parties involved can communicate and exchange information freely.

Interaction between the two ethnic groups is greatly affected in many ways by the 'Kelantan Malay oriented self-concept'<sup>48</sup> portrayed by Peranakan

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<sup>48</sup>This self-concept (cf., Goffman 1959: 208) is a major part of the personality of Peranakan Chinese as a people. Personality used here refers to the sum of a people's knowledge, motives, values, beliefs as well as goal-seeking patterns.

Chinese. In general, Peranakan Chinese expect to be perceived and treated in the ways that fellow Kelantan Malays are perceived and treated by the local Malay community.

Self-disclosure is one of the primary mechanisms that individuals use to manage self presentation and control the trajectory of a relationship. A person wanting to escalate a relationship must simultaneously convey a positive image of self and still convey his/her intentions of being trusting and trustworthy.

#### 4.3.1.6 Rhetorical/Discourse Sensitivity

The 'Kelantan Malay oriented self-concept' of Peranakan Chinese is effectively matched with rhetorical sensitivity, which is a particular attitude toward encoding spoken messages. It represents a way of thinking about what should be said and then a way of deciding how to say it (cf., Hart et al. 1980: 2).

Rhetorical sensitivity is a measure of a speaker's willingness to consider carefully the psychological environment before encoding messages. It is the ability to judge public as well as interpersonal encounters accurately and to sense when to be rhetorically sensitive and when to be rhetorically assertive (cf., Hart and Burts 1972: 76).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Hart and Burts (ibid.) offer five characteristics of rhetorical features which they believe if incorporated and operationalized in a dialogue, can contribute to an effective communication.

Peranakan Chinese are rhetorically sensitive<sup>50</sup> in their interaction with the local Malays for they know when to talk and when not to talk. Application of this concept by Peranakan Chinese in their interactions with the local Malays is evident from their attempts at playing appropriate roles, adapting their language, and discerning different ways, approaches, or speaking styles at a given situation. All these rhetorical skills are made possible largely in part due to their high competency in the local Malay dialect.

The skill of encoding and decoding information in a way that is appropriate to the given stage of a relationship is also crucial in relationship development.

#### 4.3.1.7 Information Structure

The free flow or exchange of information in a Kelantan Malay peasant community is quite rare. Kelantan Malay peasants do not generally volunteer information freely.<sup>51</sup> Informative answers to questions are not the norm. This social behavior is merely in conformity to the norm of non-committalism. Kelantan Malays do not generally commit themselves overtly to discussing the future for they believe that the future is in the hands of God.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>See Section 4.3.1.4 for an illustration of chronemics observed by Peranakan Chinese when interacting with the local Malays.

<sup>51</sup>This is the opposite of most western societies where information will ordinarily be given freely.

<sup>52</sup>The Muslims must place their future totally in the hands of Allah, their almighty God.

A prime example of a non-committal speech act is the expression "insya-Allah" ('God willing'). For instance, a response to an invitation of /jəmpu? kə ɣumah malam ini/ 'You're invited to my house tonight' usually takes the form of /inʃa allah/ 'God willing'. This speech act should not be taken as an indication of Kelantan Malays' being uninformative or uncooperative in their speech, but should be seen in the context of the information structure of the community.

Due to this, information is oftentimes imparted only piece by piece after a lengthy and difficult process. The Peranakan Chinese' assimilation to the local Malay community helps them understand this behavior, thus aiding them in their interpretation of such speech acts.

The Malay tradition places a high value on humility (Omar 1987: 46). As a commendable trait among the Malays, humility is likened to the avoidance of calling attention to oneself: boasting and indulging in self-praise. In other words, humility or "understatement" is the ideal.

Directness in Malay discourse is considered impolite and uncouth, even in warning a child (ibid.: 47). Directness is correlated with low breeding. Directness in discourse is perceived as being boastful and arrogant in certain contexts and ignorant of the genteel tradition of the Malay society. Generally, Malay discourse will go on for some time before the real intention is made known, and even then it will be imparted in an indirect way. The forms of utterances and the discourse structure reflect on participating parties who take a long time on preliminaries, and make hints at their intentions and responses.

These discourse features can also be seen as a discourse style, i.e., a Kelantanese Malay speaking/communicative style, which is partly verbal and partly nonverbal. They have primarily a social function, i.e., to manage immediate social relationships.

The foregoing discussion illustrates the point that structural factors are essential for the success or failure of a communication. In other words, successful interaction between the two groups depends heavily on the structures of discourse, such as linguistic skills, vocal qualifiers, object language, cultural as well as interactive fluencies, to name but a few. In all encounters of Peranakan Chinese and Kelantan Malays where the "power"<sup>53</sup> is in the hands of the Malays, the specimens of talk which have been recorded in real-life interethnic encounters do not show that communication is asymmetrical, though the relationship is.<sup>54</sup> There is ample evidence of equal exchange, empathy and rapport - all of which are crucial to a good environment in a successful communication or encounter.

#### 4.3.2 Patterns of Discourse

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<sup>53</sup>Being the dominant group, most of the relationships have a dimension of power where the Malays represent the institution of gatekeeping.

<sup>54</sup>It is the Peranakan Chinese who take much greater pains in following the Malay norms of politeness than do the local Malays. Peranakan Chinese can decode politeness gestures of their own group as well as those of the local Malays, but the local Malays are unable to reciprocate.

Peranakan Chinese will also communicate in the local Malay dialect when a Malay is present. They do so to guarantee that the Malays can join in their conversations. See also Section 4.2.

In describing the discourse patterns<sup>55</sup> of Peranakan Chinese-Kelantan Malay interaction, it is my intention to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. Besides being ethnographic<sup>56</sup> since language is part of human life, I include a discussion of the salient linguistic strategies in representative samples from the data base of the interethnic communication between the two groups.

In accounting for the discourse patterns, language is viewed as consisting of two components: verbal and nonverbal. Nonverbal rituals play a significant social role in interaction, i.e., to develop as well as maintain social relationships. Verbal channels have primarily cognitive functions, i.e., to convey factual information, give orders, make requests, etc. Nonverbal rituals as well as verbal ones operate as effective forms of communication. This aspect of language is usually overlooked when accounting for interethnic face-to-face communication.

Speech acts by both sides, i.e., Peranakan Chinese and Kelantan Malays, will be discussed but it is the side of the Peranakan Chinese that will be discussed in greater depth. The reason for this is not because the Peranakan Chinese are perceived as a "problem", but rather that they provide a good example of a group having found a "solution" to the problem of how to have successful interethnic communication.

#### 4.3.2.1 Greetings and Leave-takings

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<sup>55</sup>By discourse patterns, is meant the styles or representative samples of interethnic communication between the two groups.

<sup>56</sup>The discussion takes an ethnographic approach to language and culture in relation to a successful interethnic friendship.

A verbal encounter between the two groups typically begins with an opening remark which signals either the Peranakan Chinese's or Kelantan Malay's intent to start a conversation, followed by a response that shows a willingness to proceed; it ends when one of the parties indicates a desire to bring the conversation to a close with the other in agreement.

Greetings and leave-takings can perform other functions besides simply beginning and ending a conversation. E.g., Peranakan Chinese and Kelantan Malay strangers from faraway villages identify themselves, while Peranakan Chinese and Kelantan Malay acquaintances from the same or neighboring villages express recognition and friendship.

Peranakan Chinese-Kelantan Malay greetings often take the form of references to weather and/or conditions surrounding the encounter.

The following sample illustrates an encounter greeting. In this speech sample as well as others in this chapter, the glosses in English are idiomatic translations.

(2) Sample (IC/1/A/1993):

PCS: /panah səŋoti duə tigo haŋi ni/

'It's really warm these few days'

/kələh tu ɣupu? kəŋiŋ/

'Look at the dry grass'

KMS: /bapɔʔ meŋgu kaʔloh dɔh toʔ huje/

'It's been weeks already since it last rained'

/noʔ gi manɔ/

'Where are you going'

PCS: /hajaʔ noʔ gi g:utiŋ/

'I intend to go for a haircut'

/demɔ/

'You?'

KMS: /b:əli ʔokoʔ k:əda mamaʔ/

'I'm going to buy cigarettes at Mamat's shop'

PCS: /pah toʔ apo deh/

'Well, alright then'

/ambo gi dulu/

'I take leave first'

/toʔ apo deh/ or /pah toʔ apo deh/ is as popular as well as polite way of ending a conversation in Kelantanese Malay. The phrase does not have a specific meaning. It can be translated to have the English equivalent of "Well, alright then."

An illustration of leave-taking behavior in Malay is as follows: if the guests indicate that they are about to leave, letting them go would be seen as cold and inhospitable: usually, therefore the Malays try to prevent the guests from leaving, which is a display of warmth toward the guests and is perceived as more important than a display of respect for their wish. Peranakan Chinese hosts would not normally thank the Malay guests for coming or let them go when they indicate their intention of taking leave, but insist that they stay longer, and would shower them with reasons as to why they should stay longer. Cordiality as an important cultural value in the Malay community is reflected in Peranakan Chinese speech acts in their interaction with the local Malays.

The following illustrates a typical discourse of leave-taking behavior in a Malay community. It is between a Peranakan Chinese and a local Malay.

(3) Sample (IC/1/B/1993):

KMS: /pah to? apo deh sey ambo kəle? dulu/

'Well, alright then, Seng, I take leave now'

PCS: /gadoh apo ʔa? loh do? lah dulu/

'Why in such a hurry, Dollah, stay a while longer'

/nati make mo?te an? ambo kai? b:əlake ʔumoh/

'Wait for my son to return with some fruits  
from the orchard at the back of the house'

KMS: /tə? apə lah seŋ səmula lah/

'It's alright Seng, maybe next time'

PCS: /səmətə lagi kələ? lah diə/

'He'll be back soon'

KMS: /səmula lah seŋ pah tə? apə dəh/

'Next time, Seng, well, alright then'

Greetings on the village level can also take the form of "yelling out" from the house as someone passes by in the compound or along the pathway. It is also commonly expected of one, as a polite gesture when passing through someone's property and the owner is in the garden or in front of the house, to initiate a verbal exchange, (usually only a greeting), even if both interactants are strangers.

Adults meeting along the road or village pathways, in the gardens, or elsewhere would engage in a series of polite enquiries on each other's activities and well-being, even if they already know beforehand the answers to their questions. Culturally, these questions indicate one's interest in the well-being, problems, needs and welfare of others.

The local Malays as well as Peranakan Chinese are very concerned about the overt manifestation of respect for social ties. In verbal encounters, this takes place in greetings and leave-takings. Both groups make an elaborate display of respect for social ties, and much of this is reflected in the deep and extensive development of friendships. E.g., a friendship is not merely an

acquaintanceship between two friends, it is the friendship involving a Peranakan Chinese's family and his/her Kelantan Malay friend's family. Obligations are defined for both friends with regards to both families. In other words, friendship here involves an entire family.

Failure on the part of one party to show respect for any member of the other's family may most likely lead to conflict and strain the friendship. Friendship for both groups is not a "once-in-a-while thing." The bond of friendship must be continually reinforced, and it is given the highest priority in all social interactions by both groups. It is considered more appropriate to show respect to a friend or any member of his family than to be on time for an appointment in the Malay society.

This sample of speech illustrates the linguistic manifestation of social ties in a chance encounter:

(4) Sample (IC/5/A/1993):

KMS: /maʔi maŋɔ lɔŋ/

'Where do you come from, Long?'

/buke maen jaŋoʔ/

'You look well-dressed'

PCS: /lagu ni jaŋoʔ se/

'You call this well-dressed, Hassan'

/no? gi be?wəh ɣ:umoh səpupu kito di baco?/

'I am attending a feast at my cousin's house in Bachok'

KMS: /mo? mu to? gi ko/

'Isn't your mother going too?'

PCS: /to wəh dio to? bəyapo səga/

'No, she isn't, she is not feeling well'

/dəka? səbule doh to? tuɣɔɣ ɣ:umoh/

'It's been almost a month already that she's been ill'

KMS: /ambo to? tahu/

'I didn't know'

/duo tigo haɣi baɣu ni mo? ambo ado tapo/

'Just a few days ago, my mother did inquire about her'

/kato dio guano lamo to? juɣo mo? su me? gio? di məɣke?/

'She mentioned that she hadn't seen your mother  
at the local market for quite a while already'

/ce? mu səga/

'How about your father?'

PCS: /dio səga ɣ:itu/

'He is fine but just so so'

/maʔi puʔe sɛjɔʔ gaʔ bɛʔɔna la kaki diɔ/

'When the weather is cold, his leg starts  
to hurt again'

KMS: /de maʔi tuo gaʔ mace mace p:akeʔ/

'When people are old, they are vulnerable  
to all kinds of illness'

/hoʔ laen tadoʔ apo apo doʔ/

'I guess the other members of your family are fine'

PCS: /puoʔ demo lagu mano/

'How about your family?'

/poʔ maʔ ŋa moʔ naʔ sɛga doʔ/

'Your parents are fine, aren't they?'

KMS: /buaʔ maso ni duo duo tu sɛga bɛlako/

'Both of them are fine presently'

/pah toʔ apo deh/

'Well, alright then'

The foregoing exchange/conversation illustrates the point that friendship involves the entire family. A Malay kinship term is used to refer to

the Peranakan Chinese' mother. /məʔ su/ 'aunt' and her personal name /meʔ giʔ/ are also used by the local Malay speaker.

#### 4.3.2.2 Indirectness<sup>5 7</sup>

Indirectness is an important Malay<sup>58</sup> cultural theme. The Malays rely upon indirectness in many common social situations, especially when they are trying to be polite. Indirectness in Malay may be reflected in routines of offering and refusing, as well as in accepting gifts, food, and the like. A 'yes' or 'no' intended to be taken literally is more direct than an initial 'no' intended to mean 'ask me again'.

The Malays' reliance upon indirectness is consistent with their attitude toward verbal conflict. In the Malay society, a conversation is seen more as a way of creating and reinforcing the emotional ties that bind the members together, with the aim of social harmony. Overt expression of conflicting opinions is avoided.

Individuals in the Malay society may hold their own views, but, in the interests of group harmony, they should not express them if they conflict with the opinion of others, especially the elders. There is profound respect for wisdom and experience in the Malay society. As these qualities are always associated with age (or generation), respect for the elders is deeply ingrained.

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<sup>57</sup>By "indirectness" or "directness," is meant the degree to which the speaker's illocutionary intent is apparent from the locution.

<sup>58</sup>This observation refers to the Malay society as a whole. Kelantan Malays are no exception in this cultural aspect. Behaviors which are exclusively "Kelantanese" will be termed 'Kelantan Malay'.

Since they are reluctant to disagree with another's opinion or refuse a request, the Malays often feel pressured in giving their consent, even when they actually disagree or are unable or unwilling to comply. Saying 'no' oftentimes takes the following forms: silence, ambiguity, regret, doubt, and even lying and equivocation, to name but a few. 'No' is employed in a direct way at home, but very rarely in public.

In fact, lying is the most frequent means of declining requests. The reasons underlying the avoidance of 'no' include empathy with the addressee, whose feelings would be hurt, and concern about the potential negative results. In the Malay tradition, in interpreting the response to a direct question or request, therefore, one must be ready to guess what the speaker probably means to convey, even in spite of what may actually be uttered.

In Malay, where communication relies so heavily upon intuition and empathy, conformity to group norms can be seen as an essential aspect of communicative/speaking style.<sup>59</sup> This style of communication, i.e., indirectness, works well in a rather homogeneous community. A village community is homogeneous in the sense that it is composed of peasants experiencing the same rural heritage. The members (in this context the two ethnic groups) can actually anticipate each other's needs, wants, and reactions. Successful communication is in part due to the ability of the

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<sup>59</sup>This interrelationship between language and culture can be well illustrated in communicative/speaking style. It is the way language is used and understood in a particular culture. It also reflects as well as reinforces fundamental cultural beliefs about the way people are and the nature of interaction.

Peranakan Chinese to interpret the local Malays' thoughts and feelings often without any explicit verbal expression. These thoughts and feelings fall within the range of the Peranakan Chinese' ability in imagination and understanding. This ability to imagine and understand is attributable to their high level of Kelantanese Malay linguistic fluency as well as their deep familiarity with Kelantan Malay culture.

Peranakan Chinese' acquisition of Kelantan Malay culture-specific patterns can be analyzed as an extremely important part of their Kelantan Malay socialization and assimilation. The acquisition of Kelantan Malay communicative/speaking style plays a part in the development of Peranakan Chinese' social cognition - a Kelantan Malay social cognition, thereby helping to shape their (Kelantan Malay) world view.

#### 4.3.2.2.1 Proverbs and Idioms

Indirectness is oftentimes achieved through the use of "peribahasa" ('proverbs') and "simpulan bahasa" ('idioms'). Malay is extremely rich in "peribahasa" and "simpulan bahasa" which are employed to depersonalize what is said, thus allowing for more indirectness.

No Malay is without a stock of well-remembered verses of "peribahasa" and "simpulan bahasa" at his/her command. Peranakan Chinese too are well versed in most Malay "peribahasa" and "simpulan bahasa."

The following speech sample is to illustrate how skilful Peranakan Chinese are in using Kelantanese Malay metaphorically.

(5) Sample (IC/4/A/1993):

KMS: /panda cino kapon kece? n:ayu/

'Peranakan Chinese speak Malay well'

/panda pado oye n:ayu/

'More competent than the Malays'

PSC: /lamo mano bate kayu do? dale ae pon

dio to? leh jadi boyo jugo?/

'No matter how long a log lies in the water,  
it never becomes a crocodile'

The kind of response in the form of a metaphor by the Peranakan Chinese to the praise shown by the Kelantan Malay, not only shows that he is very competent in the local Malay dialect and culture, but also able to use language with vividness and stylistic elegance. It is the timely use of metaphors rather than their form that requires on-the-spot creativity on the part of the Peranakan Chinese.

"Peribahasa," "simpulan bahasa," and metaphors which are often employed by Peranakan Chinese in their speech convey not just concepts associated with their literal meanings, but often concepts which can be understood only with quite original metaphorical extensions or Malay culturally defined references. By using these proverbs, idioms and metaphors, Peranakan Chinese can be seen as members of the local Malay community.

To avoid causing offense when giving a Malay friend advice, oftentimes Peranakan Chinese resort to the use of traditional Malay proverbs. Even if the Malay friend receiving the advice feels resentment, it is difficult for him/her to show negative feelings when the advice is given in the form of a traditional<sup>60</sup> proverb that expresses and represents traditional wisdom. The proverb calls forth respect for the point being made by the Peranakan Chinese friend, or at least the manner in which it was presented.

The use of figures of speech, besides adding spunk and delight to a message, also shows the high level of linguistic competency on the part of Peranakan Chinese.

#### 4.3.2.2.2 Compliments/Praises

Compliment/praise behavior requires competence, both linguistic and cultural. The compliment behavior of the Malay society requires the knowledge of a special "grammar." In the Malay culture, by the act of speaking (complimenting/praising), one offers solidarity to the interlocutor, and s/he accepts such an offer by acknowledging the compliment in such a manner as to avoid/negate self-praise. In the Malay society, a normal reaction

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<sup>60</sup>Traditional proverbs and idioms (viewed from the process of cognition) are mostly categories found and used to transmit ideas, interaction, and meaning taken from the rural setting, or are the end results of a rural observation and experience (Tham 1977: 18). Almost all Malay "peribahasa" ('proverbs') characteristically suggest an agrarian eco-cultural system.

New cognitive preferences have emerged and new usages developed, hence giving rise to "peribahasa moden" ('modern proverbs') and "simpulan bahasa moden" ('modern idioms'). E.g., "Ada wang abang sayang, tak ada wang abang melayang" denoting a woman who is liked and/or loved only when she has money" and "Zaman atom" denoting a modern age (cf., Ahmad 1987: 3, 216).

to a compliment/praise is embarrassment,<sup>61</sup> disagreement in a verbal form or a downgrading response to the compliment. It is the Malay sociocultural convention to avoid self-praise.

Cultural competence in Malay compliment behavior consists of avoiding embarrassment to the interlocutor, by means of indirectness. It is not customary in the Malay society for guests to praise their hostess for the delicious meal served. The acceptable gesture here is to quietly tell the hostess that it must have been a difficult meal to prepare, and also taken up a lot of her time, and that the ingredients were certainly special, and so forth. The hostess gets the message that her cooking is delicious which she negates by offering to share the recipe (Omar 1992: 178).

Different types of indirect praising and complimenting acts require different degrees of interpretive effort (on the part of Peranakan Chinese) in terms of inferences to be disambiguated according to the Kelantan Malays' intention. Often these inferences are so subtle that they require immense Malay linguistic and cultural competence on the part of the Peranakan Chinese.

The analysis of language structure used in complimenting and praising reveals that their actual semantico-syntactic patterns are not constrained with respect to the selection of interactional mood. The interactional mood found in

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<sup>61</sup>This happens even in compliment behavior among intimates and acquaintances. Special conditions govern compliment behavior among strangers.

the data base are among others indicative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory, and conditional.

(6) Indicative (in bold):

KMS: /mu jə meŋ aɔ t:ikoh tu/

'You were fortunate that Meng was around at that time'

/kalu do? ʔa? mati ləmah doh mu/

'If he wasn't there, you would have drowned'

/mu hute ɲawo mu ɲa meŋ/

'You owe Meng your life'

/iŋa? mu ɲaŋe dəʔako ɲa diɔ/

'You are not to betray him'

(7) Interrogative (in bold):

PCS: /panda mu ɲapi/

'You sing well'

/mu tahu do? soʔo mu səda?/

'Do you know that you have a good voice?'

(8) Imperative (in bold):

PCS: /kəle? maʔi ta?di aku t:əmuŋ anə? gaʔi? musə/

'On the way home, I met Musa's daughter'

/come səŋoti buɔ? tu/

'She is a pretty girl'

/ma? nu kəno kələh sədiʔi/

'Mat, you have to see for yourself'

(9) Exclamatory (in bold):

KMS: /anə? asə pah pəʔe?so/

'Hassan's son passed the examination'

/buŋiŋ kaba lapan bute e/

'Heard that he obtained eight A's'

**/stedi stedi/**

'Smart! Smart!'

(10) Conditional (in bold):

PCS: /sələme mənə ɡocoh ste?/

'Sulaiman won the boxing match'

/ho? bəʔadu ŋa diə kato ɲo paʔo?/

'It is said his opponent was badly hurt'

KMS: /**kalu buke hero seleme sapo lagi**/

'If it's not our hero Sulaiman, who else?'

Peranakan Chinese' compliments and praises of the local Malays also comprise stylistic figures:

(11) Metonymy (in bold):

/dio pah pəɣe?so ŋa lape bute e/

'S/he passed the examination with eight A's'

/hoto? dio mole? do? koh/

'S/he has good brains, hasn't s/he?'

(12) Rhetorical question (in bold):

/tigo bute go ŋə suma? kə mama?/

'Three goals were scored by Mamat'

/biso do? dio/

'Isn't he great?'

(13) Litotes (in bold):

/ano? muŋ pah ŋa gəɣe? duo/

'Your son passed the examination with a grade two'

/buleh o? jugo? dio/

'He is quite good'

#### 4.3.2.2.3 Requests

Linguistic aspects of requests in the interaction between the two groups also show indirectness.<sup>62</sup> A normal request,<sup>63</sup> even a fairly urgent one, usually occurs in stages. E.g., a Peranakan Chinese approaches a Kelantan Malay and engages him/her in a conversation, often a lengthy one. Then s/he brings up the topic concerning his/her request but does not overtly make the request. The Kelantan Malay is then free to ignore the topic and move to something else if s/he would prefer not to entertain the request. S/he never has to confront the Peranakan Chinese friend with a denial; s/he need not recognize the speech act as a request at all. Of course, the Peranakan Chinese may persist and continually reintroduce a topic which concerns his/her needs, but if s/he is repeatedly ignored, s/he can still leave without feeling rejected openly, or shamed.

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<sup>62</sup>Empirical research in requesting behavior shows that more direct requests occur between family members and friends than between strangers. Also people in positions of power tend to request more directly than those in a powerless position. See Ervin-Tripp (1976); and Blum-Kulka et al. (1985) for discussions of request behavior.

<sup>63</sup>Directness of a request will vary with the magnitude of the request and the social relations that exist between the person making the request and the person to whom the request is directed.

Requests in the local Malay community are indirect in at least two ways: they are not made explicitly and they are often made by a third party on behalf of someone.

(14) Sample of a request made implicitly (IC/10/B/1993):

PCS: /haʔi m:aaʔ ni puoʔ puoʔ kito baleʔ nuŋ noʔ ɣ:otoŋ ʔoʔoŋ/

'The other villagers intend to have a  
combined effort community clean-up this Friday'

/noʔ tebaɦ roʔ noʔ buaʔ paɗe bola/

'We want to clear the bushes to make a soccer field'

/paŋe bələko pakaʔ tubeʔ rama rama/

'Everyone is invited to participate'

/haʔaʔ noʔ staʔ paŋi paŋi laŋi puko tuʔoɦ/

'We intend to start early, at seven o'clock'

KMS: /hɔ̃ moleʔ bəna tu/

'That is very good'

/pakaʔ samo kito b:uaʔ baiʔ utoʔ kapoŋ kito/

'Cooperation among us will make  
our village a better place'

PCS: /təbaɦ ɟa paɗe sadaʔ lamo kaʔloɦ noʔ buleh siaʔ/

'It will take a long time if we were to clear with long knives and sickles'

/no? bua? guano tu sajo ho? kito ado po/

'What else can we do for that is all we have'

KMS: /təpə? la kalu kito sənə kito gi la/

'Well, if I'm free on that day, I'll join you all'

PCS: /kəpətə sodo? buleh masu? jale dəka? ɣumoh kito tu/

'The road close to my house is big enough for a bulldozer to pass through'

/ləpah ɣ:umoh kito tado? masəaloh doh paka gi sətərə?/

'After my house, there shouldn't be any problem (for the bulldozer), just go straight ahead'

After quite a "lengthy" conversation, this is as far as the Peranakan Chinese, a representative of a large group, will bring himself to go in making a (direct) request. The Malay friend is still free to acknowledge the request that he actually bring his bulldozer to the village on that day.

In the case of a request made by a third party on someone's behalf, usually three parties are involved in the communication: the originator of the message (or request in this context), its transmitter, and its receiver (cf., Omar 1992: 185). The originator of the message does not participate actively (if he does, he speaks very little which is not even about the message) in the speech event as s/he has already communicated his/her message to the transmitter before the speech event actually occurs. Hence, verbalisation comes only

from the transmitter and the receiver of the message, but the originator is all the time present nodding his/her head to affirm certain portions of the communication and speaks only when spoken to.

Usually this type of speech event arises when there is a gap (in the form of status, age or camaraderie) between the originator of the message and its receiver. This type of a request made by a third party reflects a relationship in which the originator of the message holds the receiver in reverence or in awe, such that a face-to-face communication between the two would embarrass the originator of the message. Instead s/he chooses to speak "sideways" through a substitute.

Other request strategies (in various degrees of directness/indirectness) evident from speech acts of Peranakan Chinese in their interaction with the local Malays include:

Hedged performative: the illocutionary verb denoting the requestive intent is modified, e.g., by modal verbs or verbs expressing intention (cf., Blum-Kulka et al. 1989: 279)

(15) Example (in bold):

**/kawe kəno minta tuləŋ dəmo maŋi awa sikit esəʔ/**

**'I must/have to ask you to please come a little  
early tomorrow'**

/tulɔŋ/ 'please', a politeness marker (an optional element) is added to the request to bid for cooperative behavior. The adverbial modifier /sikit/ 'a little' is also used to soften the request.

Suggestive formula: the illocutionary intent is phrased as a suggestion by means of a framing routine formula (cf., *ibid.*: 280).

(16) Example:

/**q**uano kiyo ɲo kita paka? be?ki basa ni/  
'What if we get together to repair this shed?'

The lexical item /paka?/ 'cooperate' is added to "downgrade" the request.

Preparatory: the utterance contains reference to a preparatory condition for the feasibility of the request. In many cases, but not necessarily, the speaker questions rather than states the presence of the chosen preparatory condition (cf., *ibid.*).

(17) Example (in bold):

/ambo dɔ? m:i**k**e kalu dem**o** bu**l**eh tulɔŋ a**l**eh kəɣeto dem**o**/  
'I was wondering if you would/could move your car'

A politeness marker /tulɔŋ/ 'please' is added to soften the request.

Hint: the illocutionary intent is not immediately derivable from the locution; however, the locution refers to relevant elements of the intended illocutionary and/or propositional act. Such elements often relate to preconditions for the feasibility of the request (cf., *ibid.*).

(18) Example:

(With the intention of getting a lift home)

/dəmɔ nɔ? kələ? lɔ ni/

'Are you going home now?'

Hints require more inferencing activity on the part of the hearer.

#### 4.3.2.3 Respectful Language/Style

To speak in respectful language in Kelantanese Malay, like the local Malays do, Peranakan Chinese employ special words at times along with some syntactic devices of the local Malay dialect.

To speak respectfully is to avoid "tones" and rapid speech that characterize ordinary conversation: e.g., Kelantan Malays speak to elders and religious figures in the village in a deliberately subdued tone of voice and drawing out (respectful) words. Utterances in respectful Kelantanese Malay speech are soft, slow and restrained, contrasting sharply with ordinary speech.

At the same time, it is impolite to attempt physical proximity with elders and religious figures. When speaking to these "respectful" people, eye contact should be avoided. Eyes should be downcast or one should look slightly askance.<sup>64</sup> One's verbalization should not have any indication of directness.

In Kelantanese Malay speech, physical and spatial avoidance have an exact linguistic parallel. Indirectness in speech corresponds to avoiding eye contact and sitting sideways (when talking to elders for example). It has been observed however, that as physical distance between interactants increases, eye contact seems to increase. This may be a natural phenomenon due to a desire for information.

Silence is noticeable in situations where the Malays are concerned with showing respect. In traditional Malay life, children are taught to speak to elders only when spoken to. Silence on the part of children expresses their respect for the elders. People of low status are also to speak to people of higher status only when spoken to.

Peranakan Chinese are competent in the respectful style of Kelantanese Malay. Besides using a small set of special words considered to be appropriate for highly polite and respectful speech, words which refer to seemingly innocuous items are often avoided. For instance, when talking to a Malay elder, especially a woman, Peranakan Chinese males would not use the word /batu/ 'stone' or /təɭɔ/ 'egg' for fear that their impolite connotations of 'testicles' is projected. The word /lubɛ/ 'hole' is also to be avoided for fear it

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<sup>64</sup>This has also been observed by Omar (1992: 175).

might suggest its impolite connotative meaning of 'vagina'. Impolite connotations of these words are projected only in the presence of people who must be treated with "care." It is not that Malays or Peranakan Chinese cannot talk about stones, eggs and holes with elderly Malays, but only that they avoid using these words. Instead of saying /batu/, /təlo/ or /lube/, Peranakan Chinese just like the local Malays will not utter them, but often these words can be understood from the context of the conversations.

This speech sample between a middle-aged Peranakan Chinese man and an elderly Kelantan Malay woman illustrates the avoidance of the word /batu/ 'stone':

(19) Sample (IC/7/B/1993):

KMS: /bua? gapo tu po/

'What are you doing, Poh?'

/to? kəɣijo ko haɣi ni/

'Aren't you working today?'

PCS: /coti we mo? joh/

'I'm on leave Auntie Jah'

/do? b:asoh taki ike budo?/

'I'm cleaning my son's fish tank'

/tuka ae alih ...../

'I'm changing the water and rearranging  
the ..... (stones)'

KMS: /bapɔʔ bute kaʔloh/

'Quite a few of them'

/ambeʔ manɔ/

'Where did you get them from?'

PCS: /pəʔeʔsɔ əh budoʔ tu/

'I'm not too sure where he got them from'

/bakali s:uŋa/

'It could be from the river'

As evident from the conversation, the Peranakan Chinese speaker avoids the use of the word /batu/ 'stone', for its impolite connotation seems to inhere in the word itself. The Peranakan Chinese at the individual level, by his act of speaking, can be seen as offering respect and solidarity to the Malay elder. At the societal level, by engaging in respectful speech, the Peranakan Chinese also establishes solidarity with the local Malay community by behaving in accordance with the norms of Malay sociolinguistic behavior.

The syntactic devices of respectful language employed by Peranakan Chinese in their speech with those Malays who should be treated with "care" include softening a statement with a qualifying expression, hedging, and employment of the suffix "-lah."

(20) Sample of qualifying expression (in bold):

PCS: /**gamɔʔ** ɲo pɔʔ maʔ tɔʔ pəɣasɛ t:ikɔh tu/

'I guess you (Uncle Mat) were not aware  
of it at that time'

The statement /pɔʔ maʔ tɔʔ pəɣasɛ t:ikɔh tu/ is made more polite by adding the qualifying expression /**gamɔʔ** ɲo/ 'I guess so'.

(21) Sample of hedging (in bold):

PCS: /lagu ni napɔʔ ɲo tɔʔ ade **sikit** pɔʔ maʔ/

'It seems a little unfair, Uncle Mat'

PCS: /lagu ni napɔʔ ɲo tɔʔ **bəɣapɔ** ade pɔʔ maʔ/

'It seems somewhat unfair, Uncle Mat'

Expressions such as /**sikit**/ 'a little' and /tɔʔ **bəɣapɔ**/ 'somewhat' are usually used to play down negative feelings in messages.

(22) Sample of suffixing "-lah" (in bold):

PCS: /singɔh **lah** dulu gadɔh nɔʔ gi manɔ gaʔ/

'Stop by first, where are you hurrying to?'

In offering, requesting, inviting, and the like, it is not unusual for Malays to use the suffix particle "-lah" which is not only an emphatic particle but also a polite marker.

It is considered impolite to use the negative question in offering. Negative forms of offers are interpreted as "ajak ayam" literally 'invite a chicken' (a Malay idiom having the meaning of 'an insincere offer').

(23)

/tə? masə? kə/

'Don't you want to come in?'

The positive form which is considered polite is also associated with genuineness.

(24)

/masə?/ə/masə? lah/

'Come in; please come in'

#### 4.3.2.4 Pronouns and Pronominals

In Malay (standard Malay as well as the other Malay dialects), pronouns are a problem: not in the comprehension of their forms, but in the selection of the right one for the right context. The Malay pronoun system is as follows:

(25)

**First Person (Singular)**

saya 'I'

\*aku 'I'

**First Person (Plural)**

kita 'we' (inclusive)

kami 'we' (exclusive)

**Second Person (Singular)**

\*awak 'you'

\*engkau 'you'

\*kamu 'you'

**Second Person (Plural)**

\*awak semua 'you all'

\*engkau semua 'you all'

\*kamu semua 'you all'

**Third Person (Singular)**

dia/ia 's/he'

### Third Person (Plural)

mereka 'they'

The asterisked forms have been described as 'impolite' by the Malays. As can be seen, the second person pronouns are all in the 'impolite' category. As for the first person pronouns, they are of the 'polite' and 'impolite' types. The rest are of the 'polite' type.

The pronouns for 'you' in Malay are to be used with discrimination. To use any of the three forms of 'you', one has to take into consideration the age, social status, and social distance of the interlocutor(s). These forms, i.e., "awak," "engkau" or the shortened version "kau," and "kamu" can only be used when the speakers are intimate with the interlocutor(s).

The Malay address system is a complicated one comprising pronouns, kinterms, titles and personal names. As substitutions for 'you' when the interlocutors are not intimate, Malays usually make use of fictive kinterms, or titles which may or may not be followed by names, depending on their age and status. When addressing an interlocutor of one's own age, usually the term "saudara" (literally 'relative' but in this case 'male friend') or "saudari" ('female friend') is used.

The pronoun system of Kelantanese Malay is as follows:

(26)

## First Person (Singular)

/ambo/ 'I'

/kawe/ 'I'

/sayo/ 'I'

\*/aku/ 'I'

## First Person (Plural)

/kito/ 'we' (inclusive)

## Second Person (Singular and plural)

/demo/ 'you' or 'you all'

\*/mu/ə\*/muŋ/ 'you' or 'you all'

\*/awoʔ/ 'you' or 'you all'

## Third Person (Singular and plural)

/dio/ 's/he' or 'they'

Kelantanese Malay unlike standard Malay has both polite and impolite forms for the second person pronoun. /kito/ the plural form of the first person pronoun, is often used as a polite form of 'I'. The singular polite first person pronouns /ambo/, /kawe/ or /sayo/ are considered not as polite as /kito/ in certain contexts.

In Malay it is more respectful to designate the person spoken to by his or her name, title or other descriptions than by the use of second person pronouns.<sup>65</sup> Often no second person pronoun or address term is used at all.<sup>66</sup> Actually the dropping of the second person pronoun, and not substituting it with any kinterm or title, is compensated by a facial gesture of moving the head slightly forward toward the interlocutor when addressing him or her.<sup>67</sup> Sometimes, a polite hand gesture or pointing gesture is the compensation for the deletion of the pronoun or address term. In other words, the pronoun or address term is never totally lost.

(27) Example in KM:

/ø maɣi manɔ/

'Where are (you) from?'

Facial or hand gesture or both + /maɣi manɔ/

The facial and/or hand gestures, also known as kinesic pronominal markers (cf., Poyatos 1983: 105), however subtle, are practically always present as part of the verbal-paralinguistic-kinesic structure of Malay interaction.

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<sup>65</sup>Marsden (1812: 48) observed this behavior too.

<sup>66</sup>Winstedt (1957: 26) also observes this behavior by reporting that "Malays shun the use of personal pronouns. If the context and circumstances admit no doubt, they omit the pronouns altogether."

<sup>67</sup>This nonverbal behavior is also observed by Collins (1982: 672).

When the interlocutor is of the age of one's parents, either "pak" ('father') in standard Malay or /pəʔ/ in Kelantanese Malay or "mak" ('mother') in standard Malay or /məʔ/ in Kelantanese Malay is used, often accompanied by his or her name. This rule applies to the usage of other kinterms when the interlocutor is of the age of one's elder sibling or one's grandparent or great-greatparent (Omar 1987: 48).

This following speech sample shows the competence of Peranakan Chinese in applying the local Malay address system:

(28) Sample (IC/5/A/1993):

PCS: /dəʔ buaʔ gapə tu paʔ cu/

'What are you doing, uncle?'

KMS: /hɔ̃ siu tadoʔ apə dəʔ jəmə daon təbaka/

'Oh Siew, it's nothing, I'm only drying  
the tobacco leaves'

/siu toʔ ŋ:aji kə haɣi ni/

'Why aren't you at school today?'

PCS: /kito dəmə/

'I'm not feeling well'

/baɣu kəleʔ k:ələneʔ/

'I just came back from a clinic'

/dɔʔto bui cɔti duɔ haŋi/

'The doctor gave me medical leave for two days'

KMS: /kələʔ gi make ɔbaʔ pah tido siu/

'Siew, go home, take your medicine and have a nap'

PCS: /pah toʔ apɔ dɛh paʔ cu kito kələʔ dulu/

'Well, alright then, I take leave first, uncle'

In the conversation, the Peranakan Chinese teenage girl uses the Kelantanese Malay kinterm /paʔ cu/<sup>68</sup> 'uncle' to address the Malay man. She also uses the plural form of the first person pronoun /kitɔ/. To use /ambɔ/ or /sayɔ/ both meaning 'I' in the neutral form is unacceptable in this context. Another polite strategy is not to use any first person pronoun at all. The observance of this Malay sociolinguistic norm by the Peranakan Chinese teenage girl reflects that she has "budi bahasa" ('code of courtesy'), a good knowledge of the local "adat" ('customary laws'), and awareness as well as understanding of her own recognized position in the local community or in a particular social situation, i.e., to "tahu diri."

Since acknowledgement and maintenance of one's self relative to the position of others (i.e., "tahu diri") governs all social interactions in the local

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<sup>68</sup>The word /paʔ cu/ 'uncle' is the only instance in Kelantanese Malay where the standard Malay word /paʔ/ remains unchanged. All other instances of standard Malay /paʔ/ become /pɔʔ/ in this Malay dialect.

Malay community, this sociocultural knowledge is deemed proper by the local Malay politeness conventions.

Another salient feature of the Malay address system is that personal names, sometimes nicknames, can be used as pronouns.

(29) Sample (IC/1/B/1993):

KMS: /gi manɔ giɔʔ/

'Where are you going, Giok?'

PCS: /giɔʔ nɔʔ gi səkɔləh/

'I (but replaced by personal name "Giok")  
am going to school'

Malays consider it polite to use personal names, especially the shorter form, usually the last syllable, in place of pronouns, especially when interacting with familiar older interlocutors (cf., Karim 1981: 105). Karim (ibid.) notes that this practice of using one's name in place of pronouns, personal or possessive, is a good Malay virtue. This practice is believed to have started at home when interacting with family members as a loving gesture of baby talk, and is extended naturally beyond the family domain.

For the older speaker, s/he will add an appropriate kinterm before his/her personal name. This polite feature is easily noticeable among Malays of both sexes and all ages, irrespective of whether they are familiar or unfamiliar with the interlocutor, in both formal as well as informal situations.

This virtue is linked with humility, which is as important a Malay cultural theme as indirectness.

The following speech sample illustrates the use of personal names in place of pronouns.

(30) Sample (IC/2/A/1993):

KMS: /maʝi moʔ jɔh tulɔŋ uʝuʔ bui ləŋe/

'Let me (but replaced by name with kinterm)  
massage your arm'

/napɔʔ bəkɔʔ bəna/

'It looks very swollen'

PCS: /toʔ apɔ lah moʔ jɔh/

'It's alright, Auntie Jah'

/nati kito suʝɔh ceʔ kito uʝuʔ bui/

'I'll ask my father to massage it'

KMS: /moʔ jɔh moʔ jɔh ceʔ muʝ ceʔ muʝ/

'I'll massage my way, let your father do it his way'

In Malay, "saya" ('I') is also used as a backchannel signal, i.e., the response of the participant in conversation who is being spoken or addressed to. It is considered impolite to respond with inarticulate vocalizations such as

'mm', 'hm', and the like. The word "ya" ('yes') in standard Malay or /hɔ/ in Kelantanese Malay is also considered not as polite as "saya" ('I') in standard Malay or /ambɔ/ ('I') in the local Malay dialect. Head nods and/or postural shifts, to convey the hearer's passive acknowledgement of the speaker's opinions, suggestions, or propositions, or to actively encourage the speaker to continue talking, or approve of his or her change of topic are all considered impolite.

Malays also use "saya" ('I') to fill gaps in conversations. In this context, "saya" ('I') can be viewed as functioning as fillers which may mean "Saya faham apa yang dikatakan itu" ('I understand what you've just said') or "Saya bersetuju dengan pendapat itu" ('I agree with that opinion of yours'). Using "saya" as fillers is considered a good habit in Malay, and is equated with politeness.

In the Malay dialect of Kelantan, /ambɔ/ is used instead of "saya."

(31) Example:

KMS: /malɛ kɛmɛyɛn ambɔ pɔ hambaʔ kɔ apɪŋ lia/

'Last night I was chased by a wild dog'

/uʝa tɔʔ mudɔh/

'I ran for my life'

PCS: /ambɔ/

'I'

/ambɔ/ ('I') in the sample above can be understood as "I am listening." Saying /ambɔ/ ('I') is considered to be more polite than just nodding the head to show acknowledgement of the fact in this context.

To respond to someone calling one's name, it is also polite to say "saya" ('I') or /ambɔ/ instead of saying "ya" ('yes') in standard Malay or /hɔ/ ('yes') in Kelantanese Malay.

(32) Example:

KMS: /sɛŋ/

'Seng!' (a Peranakan Chinese male name)

PCS: /ambɔ/

'I'

/ambɔ/ ('I') can be understood here as "This is Seng responding" or "It's I, Seng" or "I'm here."

#### 4.3.2.5 'Self-restraint'<sup>69</sup> and Good Interpersonal Relations

Self-restraint is another Malay cultural value and is manifested in the concept of "sabar" ('restraint' or 'reserve'). One way of expressing "sabar" is

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<sup>69</sup>By 'self-restraint' (the opposite of 'self-assertion'), is meant not expecting one to say clearly and unequivocally what one wants, prefers, thinks, wishes, and the like.

to restrain oneself from expressing disagreement with whatever appears to be the opinion of the majority. The moral excellence or virtue of "sabar" is also to avoid displeasure for others besides conforming to group pressure (for the harmony of the group).

The Malay culture can be seen as a culture bent on preventing displeasure, i.e., being considerate. It can be noted in the speech of Malays that they frequently need to refer to "buat susah-susah," "menggangu," and "mengacau" (all meaning 'to trouble'), to another person, when not wanting to be in his or her way, or hurt his or her feelings. In actual behavior, too, the Malays tend to be circumspect and reserved, so as not to offend other people.

In the Malay tradition one is expected to be circumspect in expressing one's thoughts, wants, and feelings. It is not only a question of when to express them, but whether one should express them at all. Much of the definition of a "budi bahasa" person ('well-bred' person) involves restraint in the expression of personal desires and opinions.

The Malay culture "places a taboo" on direct expression of one's desires. It is also culturally inappropriate to ask other people directly what they desire, prefer, wish, think and the like.

Peranakan Chinese discourse with the local Malays is regulated by the concepts of "sabar" and "menggangu," along with ample linguistic devices to encourage empathy and consideration, and to avoid hurting the feelings of their Malay interlocutors.

Asking another person's wishes directly<sup>70</sup> is considered impolite in Malay. As a politeness strategy, oftentimes Peranakan Chinese ask for instructions rather than directly inquiring about the Malay interlocutors' wishes.

(33) Example:

PCS: /kawe bui demo ae koto? deh/

'Shall I give you a carton of drink?'

The above utterance is considered more appropriate than /demo no? minug ae koto?/ 'Would you like to have a carton of drink?'

It is also a cultural constraint that the Malays are discouraged from clearly stating their preferences, even when in response to direct questions. Malays, when asked about their time of convenience, will decline to state it. Instead they may say one of the following:

(34) Examples:

/iko?/ /iko? lah/ 'Anytime will do'

/kito boleh belako/ 'Anytime/any place will be  
alright for me'

/gapo gapo pon boleh/ 'Anything will be alright with me'

/panda pandai demo/ 'It's up to your discretion'

/boleh boleh/ 'Anything is fine with me'

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<sup>70</sup>Direct asking is acceptable only in the family domain and among intimates.

Peranakan Chinese have assimilated this aspect of Kelantanese Malay, not only in their speech when they interact with the local Malays, but in their own Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien language as well. The ethnography of speaking in the Peranakan Chinese society is based on a popular Malay proverb "terlajak perahu boleh diundur, terlajak kata buruk padahnya" ('It is possible to back up a boat if it has passed its destination, but it is impossible to retract one's words once uttered')

#### 4.3.2.6 Nonverbal Aspects of Communication<sup>71</sup>

Any discussion of interaction<sup>72</sup> is inadequate without touching on the nonverbal aspects of communication. Since interaction is a social behavior, i.e., interaction is socially motivated, it is only reasonable to say that one, especially a Peranakan Chinese in this regard, must know the local Malay

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<sup>71</sup>Nonverbal phenomena are those that are important in the structuring of interpersonal interaction and the moment-to-moment regulation of the interaction. In this work, dress, use of artifacts, and physical characteristics (e.g., appearance) are not considered as nonverbal phenomena of communication. See Section 4.2 for a discussion of dress, appearance, and the like.

Nonverbal aspects of communication refer to either intentional or unintentional (from the speakers's perspective) body movements, gestures, postures and the like, which whether perceived by the interlocutor(s) in isolation or together with other verbal and/or vocal behavior, provide a basis for making inferences about the speaker's personality: his/her assumption of appropriateness.

<sup>72</sup>In order to account for face-to-face interaction in modest terms, it is necessary to view language and kinesics as functional cohesive, interconnected behavioral systems. Prosody, another important feature in face-to-face interaction, is in closer relation to speech than is kinesics. Prosody is a communicative modality in its own right.

However, it is not within the scope of this work to discuss prosodic interpretations in the interaction between Peranakan Chinese and the local Malays. I intend to carry out a study on this too in the near future.

sociocultural system well enough to successfully produce "accepted" Malay behavior.

Discourse strategies cannot be adequately constructed from linguistic considerations alone; non-linguistic factors are equally, if not more important than their linguistic counterparts.

All the data discussed in this section are taken from real-life interactions. The data were recorded in writing. Gathering material on nonverbal aspects of communication in a systematic way is difficult for they occur unpredictably. However, by following the principles of careful observation in the tradition of social anthropology and linguistic research,<sup>73</sup> an essential preliminary to the development of a predictive and testable theory of nonverbals in Malay is attempted here.

In Malay, conversations are not based so much upon the lexical choices and syntactic structures that one has to decide on. The main emphasis in successful communication is the way the words and phrases are spoken, accompanied by facial gestures as well as the various movements of the hands and body, and postures of the speaker.

A Malay is taught to always use his/her right hand for touching food, and giving as well as receiving items. The use of the left hand should be avoided if only one hand is needed. It is bad manners to pass to or accept something from someone with the left hand. This behavior is in accordance

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<sup>73</sup>See Ferguson (1977: 1-12).

with Islamic teachings. Incidentally, most Asian cultures stress on the habit of using the right hand. Giving and accepting with both hands is the most polite. The use of the right hand with the left hand holding the right wrist, when accepting things, especially gifts, is considered more polite than just using the right hand alone.

The following sample illustrates the cultural fluency on the importance of using the right hand on the part of the Peranakan Chinese:

(35) Sample (IC/2/A/1993):

KMS: /cai tulɔŋ hɔlɔ piŋgɛ tu/

'Chai, please pass me the plate'

PCS: /hɔʔ manɔ sɔ sɔh/

'Which one, Soh?'

KMS: /ikɔt lah hɔʔ manɔ manɔ pɔŋ buleh/

'It's up to you, any one will do'

PCS: /tɔŋɛ kiŋi sɔh/

'Soh, I'm using my left hand'

In the conversation, the Peranakan Chinese whose right hand is soiled, informs his Malay friend that he will be using his left hand to pass him the plate. The speech act is important for it shows that the Peranakan Chinese is competent with the Malay "adat" ('Malay customary laws').

Limb discipline (cf., Goffman 1963: 27) which is the proper placing of limbs during interaction, is crucial in Malay culture. Malay children, especially the girls, are already taught from an early age to see that their legs are not exposed too much, let alone spreading them apart when sitting. Exposure of the legs is not only linked with a lack of self-control and rudeness, but more importantly with low breeding.

Sex differences in the habitual postures of men and women are culturally determined and enforced by scolding. E.g., /oʔe t:iŋə dəʔ duduʔ laɣu tu/ 'Women don't sit like that'. Any woman who sits with her legs stretched out is perceived as /ɟələɲa/ə/ɟata/ 'wanting attention from the opposite sex'.

The relationship between posture and interpersonal attitudes in social interaction, (in this case in the context of interethnic interaction) is important toward an effective or successful interaction. Certain postures are identified with arrogance or disdain, withdrawal, or more importantly "melanggar adat" ('not in accordance with the Malay customary law').

It has been a rural Malay tradition to conduct interaction at home in the veranda by having all parties seated on the floor. Men are required to "bersila," i.e., sit in a cross-legged position or in "Buddha" position (cf., Provencher 1971: 165). On the other hand, the womenfolk are expected to "bertimpuh," i.e., sit with their legs neatly folded on the left or right against their bodies. It is considered more polite if their feet can be tucked under the

hem of the dress. Contact between cultures lead to the diffusion of these postural habits among the Peranakan Chinese.

With modernization, some rural Kelantan Malay homes have furniture in the living room, but the practice of sitting on the floor is widespread, especially when entertaining guests. Politeness and hospitality may be expressed by providing mats for the guests to sit on. This additional gesture is seldom necessary among old acquaintances. When sitting on the chairs, especially in the presence of someone of higher status (in terms of age, occupation and the like), one should never cross his or her legs. Crossing of legs while seated in the presence of "superiors" is considered most rude.

The polite way of sitting in such a situation is by placing the two feet on the floor with the elbows and arms close to the body in the case of the man. For the womenfolk, a slightly raised knee is expected, more so if she is wearing pants. More importantly, this is an act of concealing the physical signs of her sexuality. This modest behavior is also a sign of Malay femininity.

If pointing has to be done at all during interaction or conversation with an elder, to indicate direction, or refer to a person, the forefinger is not to be used. It is more polite to point with the right thumb over the fist. Pointing with the forefinger is perceived as domineering on the part of the speaker. Pointing by protruding the lower lip in the direction of the object to be designated in the presence of an elder is also considered impolite.

When walking past or passing through "superiors" and elders, it is considered good manners to ask for their permission by saying "minta lalu" or

"tumpang lalu" ('May I walk/go past you?') while doing the act of passing. Since it is expected of them to say 'yes', one should not wait for the reply. The act of seeking permission can be replaced by a nonverbal act of slightly bowing the head, hunching<sup>74</sup> as one passes with the right arm and hand down. The simultaneous using of the expression "minta lalu" or "tumpang lalu" ('May I walk/go past you?') and the body movement when passing through is taken as a very polite act on the part of the speaker.

To walk or go past behind someone's back without informing him/her, especially when s/he is the older person, is considered rude in Malay culture. The speech act of informing or seeking permission takes the form of a formulaic expression: "minta lalu di belakang" or "tumpang lalu di belakang" ('May I go/walk past your back?')

Standing with one's back faced or turned to an elder or person of higher status is definitely disrespectful in Malay culture. As a politeness strategy, if one has to go/walk past an elder, one has to walk "backwards" all the way or to a certain point where one's back is out of sight of the elder.

Malays do not beckon with the forefinger or with the palm up. These gestures are considered rude. Instead, names, real or fictitious, or kinterms are used. Fictitious names for males may take the form of "Mat" or "Dollah," in standard Malay or /awε/ "Awang" (a generic name for boys) in Kelantanese Malay and for females "Minah" or "Timah" in standard Malay or /mε?/ "Mek" (a generic name for girls) in Kelantanese Malay. The familiar kinterm "adik"

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<sup>74</sup>Elaborate postures of submission and/or respect in the Malay culture involve lowering of the body.

('younger sibling') is utilized if the person who beckons is older. If beckoning has to be done at all, the palm of the right hand is turned down with the fingers waving inwards.

Hand-shaking in the Malay/Muslim tradition which is known as "bersalam" in Malay is also a good virtue in the Malay politeness system. This practice usually goes hand in hand with Islamic greetings.<sup>75</sup> The parties involved extend both their hands and clasp each other's hands briefly. After withdrawing, each party brings his/her hands either to the chest or the lower part of the face especially between the nose and mouth. This is a gesture symbolizing sincere acceptance of the greetings, as well as friendship, solidarity, love, sympathy, forgiveness, and so forth.

If a Malay/Muslim man has to "bersalam" with a woman, she would usually hold a small piece of cloth or handkerchief over her hands to avoid direct contact of touching. Among equals of the same sex, "bersalam" is normally made with only one hand. If one hand is used, it is considered more polite if a left hand is used to support the right wrist.

Peranakan Chinese do not greet the local Malays with the Muslim salutation. Some Malays consider it not only impolite but rather offensive for non-Muslims to even utter Arabic religious words or phrases, let alone saluting in accordance with the teachings of Islam in the Koran. However, the

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<sup>75</sup>It is considered good virtue in the Malay society to "beri salam" ('greet in the Islamic tradition which uses Arabic') in the form "assalamu'alaikum" ('Peace be on you') to fellow Malays/Muslims to which the obligatory reply (as required by Islamic teachings) is "wak'alaikumussalam" ('And on you be peace').

Malays seem not to mind Peranakan Chinese adopting the Malay/Muslim hand-shake gesture. Peranakan Chinese men interacting with their Malay friends and also Malay strangers have been seen bringing their hands to their chest or face after the hand-shakes. This gesture can be seen as a symbol of Malay solidarity.

Large body movements in public are not expected of Malay women. Bigger body gestures in public by men are acceptable though considered impolite since men are expected to be aggressive. Gender must be taken into account too when describing Malay politeness phenomena. Malay men may speak more boldly with a stronger voice while the womenfolk are expected to be more soft-spoken.

Peranakan Chinese' knowledge as well as adoption of Malay culture-specific gestures, undoubtedly contribute tremendously to their successful interaction with the Malays. The choice of a right gesture certainly plays an important role in coding the social values of Malay society during the interaction.

#### 4.4 SPEECH STYLES<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Despite the growing interest in the linguistic literature on style, it has proved difficult to define style in a way which enables the study of speech data to move systematically beyond the somewhat restrictive boundaries of sentence grammar.

In this work, style in speech is viewed functionally. A functionally oriented or sociological orientation to the study of speech style is one in which the negotiation of social relationship is considered more important than the simple exchange of factual information.

Conversational stylistics based on the five styles described by Joos (1962), makes the assumption that speakers habitually shift styles during the course of certain kinds of exchanges (ibid.: 17). These shifts have interpretable social or interpersonal meanings for their listeners (cf., Ervin-Tripp 1969).

Joos describes styles in speech as a social phenomenon. His description of stylistic varieties: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate (ibid.: 13) is not only based on their syntactic, structural, lexical, and semantic characteristics, but also involves the social situations in which they are likely to be used.

Joos characterizes the frozen style as a style for people who are to remain social strangers. The formal style is characterized by informativeness, detachment, and cohesiveness. It is less autonomous than the frozen style, but still, according to Joos, a style that basically discourages interaction. Joos comments that the use of the formal style discourages the speaker from being involved in a conversation. Consultative style (ibid.: 18) is characterized as a style suited to cooperation without being involved in a conversation. In contrast to frozen and formal speech, consultative speech invites feedback and listener participation. It supplies contextual information, but only as much as is necessary for cooperation. According to Joos, it is more or less the normative style for communicating with strangers with whom one shares sociocultural and situational assumptions in a general way, if not intimately.

The casual style, as claimed by Joos, is for friends, acquaintances or others whom the speaker temporarily wishes to define as "insiders." When addressed to a stranger, this speech style serves to integrate him/her into the

speaker's momentary circle by paying the compliment of implying that s/he understands without having to be given more background information. Joos claims that both casual and consultative styles routinely deal with public information, though somewhat differently. Consultative speech states this information (i.e., public information) as concisely and quickly as needed in the situation, whereas casual style tends to take it for granted. Intimate style excludes public information almost entirely. Its perspective is speaker-centered. By implication, the speaker assumes that the listener knows more or less what is being talked about, and often words are not needed.

Although I realize there are many individual differences among people, I believe that the patterns I describe here based on selected individual encounters, hold true in a general way and are representative of the patterns in Peranakan Chinese-Kelantan Malay as well as mainstream Chinese-Kelantan Malays interactions.

#### 4.4.1 Evidence of Frozen and Formal Styles

Generally interactions between Kelantan Malays and mainstream Chinese who are both strangers assume the frozen and formal styles. The following is one such sample where a mainstream Chinese man is asking a male Malay stranger for directions to a Buddhist temple.

(36) Sample (IC/4/A/1993):

MCS: /buleh tapo sikit manɔ jalɛ nɔ? gi kətɛ?/

'May I enquire about the way to the temple?'

KMS: /gi atah lagi/

'Go further up'

MCS: /jauh lagi ko/

'How far from here?'

KMS: /pəʔe?so/

'I don't know'

MCS: /səbatu/

'Is it a mile?'

KMS: /bakali/

'Perhaps'

The responses<sup>77</sup> by the Malay speaker discourage feedback or cross-questioning by the mainstream Chinese. They are also proportionately less into intonation<sup>78</sup> and nonverbal modes. The occasional gazes given by the

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<sup>77</sup>Virtually anything can influence an individual's behavior. In the case of this Malay speaker, it could have been fatigue due to over-exertion or a state of irritation caused by a previous tensed encounter. But, generally, rural Kelantan Malays evince a hostile attitude toward mainstream Chinese. This speech sample is representative of a chance encounter/interaction between strangers of both groups.

Communication, it should be noted from the speech sample, is as influenced by varied factors as any other human behavior. Hence, the question that must be addressed is how many of these factors (i.e., physical exhaustion, personality, and the like) should be reported as background information or considered as an integral part of the interaction. The question of what to include in the analysis is a difficult one to resolve.

<sup>78</sup>It is monotonous in the sense that the intonation reflects a lack of expression.

Malay speaker can be seen as a reflection of hostility. His gazes also indicate a lack of interest for continued attention or willingness to carry on the conversation. The responses also conspicuously lack emotive verbal force. There is also a tendency for the responses to invite multiple interpretations. E.g., /gi atah lagi/ 'Go further up' can have more than one interpretation: 'not so far', 'still farther', or 'quite a distance from here'. The level of involvement in the conversation by the Malay speaker is low.

The speech style that occurs here is partly due to the mainstream Chinese' uncertainty about his listener's potential reaction. The responses from the Malay listener prevent the mainstream Chinese speaker from getting involved in the conversation. While responding, the Malay speaker often averts his gaze from his mainstream Chinese conversational partner.

#### 4.4.2 Evidence of Consultative Style

Below is an instance of an encounter between Peranakan Chinese and Kelantan Malay strangers from widely separated villages occurring in the consultative style. A Peranakan Chinese woman asks a Malay woman about directions to the Buddhist temple in the vicinity.

(37) Sample (IC/3/A/1993):

PCS: / me? tupe tajo siki?/

'Mek, ( a generic name for females)  
may I ask you something?'

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/bale? mano jale no? gi kate?/

'Which is the way to the temple?'

KMS: /ko? pohon po tu/

'Follow the way of the coconut tree'

/mayi mano/

'Where do you come from?'

PCS: /pase mah/

'I come from Pasir Mas'

KMS: /ado kayijo apo k:ete?/

'Why are you going to the temple?'

PCS: /no? mito? oba? na to? rajo/

'I want to ask for some traditional medicine  
from the abbot'

KMS: /me? yajeŋ mayi kate? ni ko/

'Have you come here before?'

PCS: /sekali yah lamɔ dɔh/

'Only once, a long time ago'

/to? iŋa? lasoŋ jale ko? mano/

'I've forgotten entirely the way to the temple'

/pah to? apo dsh kito gi dulu/

'Well, alright then, I take leave first'

KMS: /gi ko? belake yumoh tu lah/

'Go by the back of the house'

/tado? selu? sikit ko? tu/

'There isn't much mud by that way'

The conversation shows cooperation. There is feedback and full listener participation in the form of emotive verbal force and intonation. Nonverbal modes in the form of smiles and full gazes are shown occasionally by the Malay speaker. The conversation above can also be seen as casual speech.

Below is another speech sample of an encounter between male Peranakan Chinese and Kelantan Malay strangers. It also concerns asking for directions.

(38) Sample (IC/7/B/1993):

PCS: /bale? mano jo yumoh to? ma?/

'Which is the way to Tok Mat's house?'

/to? ma? bomo/

'Tok Mat, the spiritual doctor'

KMS: /nuŋ bətə api gi lagi dəka? payə/

'There (yonder) by way of that electric pole,  
his house is next to the swamp'

/diə ədə d:uməh də?/

'I am not sure if he is at home'

/napə? diə ləlu kə? ni tə?di/

'I saw him walk past here a while ago'

/tə? təhu b:əkəli kələ? dəh/

'Maybe he is already home by now'

PCS: /oŋ ləən tədə? kə d:uməh diə/

'Is there anyone else in his house?'

KMS: /ədə bini diə ənə? ənə? diə/

'Yes, there are his wife and children'

PCS: /tədə? pəŋ tə? əpə kito tʊŋgu d:uməh diə/

'It's alright if he isn't around,  
I can wait at his house'

KMS: /məŋi jəəh kə/

'You must have come from somewhere far'

PCS: /salo jalə pase mah lamo/

'Salor, it is situated along the old Pasir Mas road'

KMS: /pəʔ ciʔ sakeʔ gapə/

'Uncle, what is your illness?'

PCS: /tadoʔ apə nəʔ mitəʔ toʔ maʔ uʔuʔ ləpə sikiʔ/

'It's nothing serious, I just want  
Tok Mat to massage my arm'

/ʔaso ləpəh lamo kaʔləh dəh/

'I've been feeling some numbness in it  
for quite some time already'

KMS: /hɔ̃ tu toʔ maʔ baʔu kələʔ s:uʔa gaməʔ pə/

'There he is, Tok Mat, I guess he must have  
come from the river'

PCS: /kitə ɡi dulu dəh/

'I take leave first then'

As evident from the content of the interaction, there is cooperation and casualness in the conversation. The conversation is typical of a chance encounter for interaction between strangers from the two groups who share the same sociocultural and situational assumptions.

#### 4.4.3 Evidence of Casual Style

Interactions between Peranakan Chinese and the local Malays living in the same village assume the casual style. The following conversation is between a Peranakan Chinese man and an elderly Malay man who are family friends. It occurs on the village main path. A range of topics are covered in the conversation: the well-being of the Malay speaker's son and his plans for the day; as well as the family of the Peranakan Chinese and his marital status.

(39) Sample (IC/6/A & B/1993):

PCS: /lamo kito to? jupo mama?/

'It has been a while since I last saw Mamat'

/gi mano weh dio/

'Where has he been?'

KMS: /ado sajo to? b:etule pa mun yah/

'He's around, it's just that both of you have not seen each other'

/ba?po po mun tapo dio/

'Why are you asking about him?'

/ado ha ko/

'Is there anything?'

PCS: /tado? apo ha mustoho?/

'No, there isn't anything important'

/po? leh to? gi m:otəŋ kə pagi ni/

'Uncle Leh, did you go to tap rubber this morning?'

KMS: /do? weh haŋi ni po? leh no? gi opeh tanoh/

'No, I intend to go to the Land Office'

/no? baya ase tanoh sikit/

'I want to pay some land taxes'

PCS: /oŋe ŋama haŋi ni haŋi sa?tu/

'There will be a lot of people today, a Saturday'

KMS: /no? buat guano kəno bəŋato lamo lah/

'What to do, I'll have to wait in a long queue'

/kako? muŋ ho? do? di kualo lupə tado? kəle? maŋi ko/

'Has your elder brother who lives  
in Kuala Lumpur been back lately?'

PCS: /ado eh səbule ləpah kəle? maŋi səməta yah/

'Yes, he came back for a while a month ago'

KMS: /lamo bəto po? leh to? kəleh dio limo ne tahon ado/

'It's been some five or six years since I last saw him'

/bəʔapə ɔʔe anə? doh dio/

'How many children has he?'

PCS: /tigo jate so t:ino duo/

'Three, a boy and two girls'

/ho? suləŋ jate ɔmo duo bəlah/

'The eldest is a boy, he is twelve'

KMS: /gua? pah bilə muŋ nə? b:iniŋ/

'Gua, when are you getting married?'

/tunggu apə lamə lamə ŋə/

'Why wait a long time?'

PCS: /nə? b:iniŋ ɡuanə ŋə pə? leh/

'How am I to get married, Uncle Leh?'

/kaseh pəŋ tado? lagi/

'I don't even have a steady girlfriend'

KMS: /ɡuanə kalu pə? leh kiŋə bui/

'What if I find you one?'

PCS: /ŋə sapə pə? leh/

'With whom Uncle Leh?'

KMS: /ŋa anɔʔ bɔsu paʔ cu ki ca/

'With Uncle Kee Chai's youngest daughter'

PCS: /tɔʔ sɛ ambo ɡəmuʔ buɔʔ tu/

'I don't want to, she is fat'

KMS: /baʔpɔ kə diɔ pɔ asa oʔɛ pɔ juʔuh/

'Why not, she is only fat but a good girl!'

/muŋ ni m:ileh tɛh ɡuaʔ/

'You are too choosy, Guat'

PCS: /buke ɡ:itu pɔʔ leh/

'It isn't that I am choosy, Uncle Leh'

KMS: /kalu ɔʔ ɡapɔ lagi/

'If you aren't choosy, then what else?'

PCS: /tahu/

'I don't know'

The conversation shows some intimacy between the speakers. This is evident from the topics discussed. The information dealt with is not public information, in fact it is private/personal information.

#### 4.4.4 Evidence of Intimate Style

Interactions between Peranakan Chinese and their Malay intimate friends occur in intimate style. Below is a sample of such intimate style between close acquaintances who constitute a fixed group congregating nightly at the village coffee shop.

(40) Sample (IC/3/A/1993):

KMS1: /wa ba?pə muŋ tə? tube? səmale/

'Hua, why didn't you come here last night'

/aku saleh səleme də? tuŋgu kəli? kəli?/

'Salleh, Sulaiman and I were waiting anxiously'

/puko səmile puko səpuloh puko səbelah/

'Nine o'clock, ten o'clock, eleven o'clock'

/tado? bayə poŋ/

'Not even your shadow'

PCS: /aku ado kəpəjo sikit d:umoh/

'I had some work at home'

KMS2: /wa aku də? c:ayo muŋ/

'Hua, I don't believe you'

/ko nate ni kəno kuŋoŋ b:ini/

'Or you were stopped from coming by your wife!'

/wa kito kəno kuin kontro/

'Our friend was "queen-controlled"!'

PCS: /tado? əh aku kəno bə?ki dapo sikit/

'I have to do some repairs on my kitchen'

KMS1: /bə?ki dapo apo ɲo təɲoh male/

'Repairing your kitchen at night!'

/muɲ ɟaɲe t:ipu aku la/

'You don't pull my leg'

/nate ni tako? b:ini/

'You are afraid of your wife!'

PCS: /iko? mu əh/

'It is up to you whether to believe me or not'

KMS2: /male ni kito lawe saleh ɲa mama?/

'Tonight we challenge Salleh and Mamat'

KMS3: /tunggu apo lagi ɲo/

'Let's not waste any more time'

PCS: /ambe? pape haji tu maɲi ga?/

'Bring the checker board here'

The conversation above is characterized by some degree of directness and humor. Utterances are direct and spoken with a falling intonation. Conversational partners are referred to by name, pitch prominence is normal, and the interactants smile and look at each other regularly. The effect of interpersonal acceptance is strengthened by shifting the reference to the partner(s) into a syntactic primary position as in the first sentence below. Compare the sentences.

(41) Example:

/wa baʔpɔ mun tɔʔ maɣi səmale/

'Hua, why didn't you turn up last night?'

/baʔpɔ mun tɔʔ maɣi səmale wa/

'Why didn't you turn up last night, Hua?'

There is involvement<sup>79</sup> (verbal as well as nonverbal) by all parties. Signs of involvement in the above conversation include features that can be labeled dramatic and animated, attentive and friendly, as well as relaxed. Close interpersonal proximity, forward lean of the body, high level of eye contact, and orientation of the body toward the other interactant(s) are some of the body gestures observed in the foregoing interaction. Responsiveness among the interactants is evident from the vocal activity, speech rate, speech volume

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<sup>79</sup>It concerns how people show their involvement in their words, voices, and gestures (Capella 1983: 113). The quality of involvement, whether positive or negative, depends on the situation, relationship between the interactants, individual preferences, as well as the intensity of the behavior itself.

and speech latency. Evidence of relaxation is cued by arm and leg positions, sideways lean, backward recline of the body and relaxed hand and neck positions. Laughing and verbal intimacy in the form of either self-disclosure or intimate questions or topics, occur intensely in a positive involvement.

A common descriptor for such a positive involvement in the foregoing interaction is that the interactants are "operating on the same wavelength." Of course, the welding and blending of interactional style between these friends have developed over time to attain such a high level of involvement.

Gazes are important in intimate style for they transmit information. In the above conversation, it has been observed that the speakers monitor the listeners for signals of attention and interest (evident from eye-contact) and listeners monitor the faces of the speakers because, after all, a good deal of information in conversation is transmitted visually.

It is observed that conversational involvement is "infectious," i.e., it tends to spread from one interactant to another. E.g., gaze tends to produce reciprocal responses, and postural congruence is another observation. Members of the group above not only take up similar postures, but also shift posture after one of them has changed position so that the group maintains identical postures<sup>80</sup> through a series of changes in bodily position. Postural

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<sup>80</sup> Condon and Ogston (1967) have also investigated "interactional synchrony." Kendon (1970: 103- 104) who documented the work done by Condon and Ogston, notes that when the speaker speaks and gesticulates, his/her listener(s) move or gesticulate as well, often in a similar direction.

"Interactional synchrony" is easily observed on the vocal level. E.g., One normally raises his/her voice or speaks faster if his/her conversational partner is speaking loudly or fast.

congruence<sup>81</sup> can be seen as an indication of rapport (Ellis and Beattie 1986: 47).

#### **4.5 PERANAKAN CHINESE-MAINSTREAM CHINESE COMMUNICATION**

If differences in the sociocultural knowledge of two subcultures (mainstream Chinese and Peranakan Chinese) of the same macroculture (Chinese (Hokkien)) are emphasized, the communication between members of these two subcultural groups may be conceptualized as intercultural communication. In other words, communication problems which can safely be called "intercultural" also exist in situations where people of the same ethnic group are involved.

Encounters between Peranakan Chinese and mainstream Chinese can be termed "intercultural" and their problematic communication as "miscommunication." Nearly all discussions of miscommunication appeal in some ways to misunderstanding (cf., White 1989: 70). One or more participants and their circumstances of interaction are accountable for misunderstandings in actual discourse.

##### **4.5.1 Barriers to Effective Communication**

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<sup>81</sup>Studies in posture and postural congruence as channels of human communication are scarce. See Schefflen (1964, 1965); Charny (1966); as well as Beattie and Beattie (1981) for some discussion of this.

Misunderstandings in Peranakan Chinese-mainstream Chinese encounters are attributable to barriers like language differences and differences of culture.<sup>82</sup>

#### 4.5.1.1 Language Differences

The medium of communication in encounters between the two groups is usually standard or mainstream Hokkien. The lack of linguistic knowledge of mainstream Hokkien, in the sense of knowing the denotative meaning of words on the part of the Peranakan Chinese, is clearly a barrier to effective communication between these two groups. Miscommunication due to language problems, i.e., inadequate linguistic performance, is usually recognized by both groups, and is not usually mistaken by mainstream Chinese as a deliberate attempt by their Peranakan Chinese conversational partners to mislead, confuse, or convey a negative attitude.

Most Peranakan Chinese evince a subjective inferiority about their inadequate knowledge of mainstream Hokkien vocabulary, and their inability to understand the language of the mainstream Chinese of the Hokkien speech group in urban areas. Most Peranakan Chinese do not understand simple mainstream Hokkien sentences. Their inability to do so is mainly due to their limited knowledge of mainstream Hokkien vocabulary.

(42) Sample:

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<sup>82</sup>There are differences in language and culture between the two groups. Mainstream Chinese' Hokkien language/dialect and culture are "purer" in their Chineseness than that of the Peranakan Chinese which are greatly influenced by Malay and Thai.

/ciau an ni hap gi/

'According to it/this, it is proper'

Most Peranakan Chinese do not know the meanings of /ciau/ 'according to' and /hap gi/ 'proper'. The only word known to some is /an ni/ 'like this'. With only the knowledge of /an ni/ the semantic analysis of the whole sentence cannot be made.

(43) Sample:

/au lai i tui c<sup>h</sup>u gia lai/

'Then, s/he went back to take it'

The word /au lai/ 'then' is not in the vocabulary of most Peranakan Chinese, irrespective of age. The sentence is comprehensible to them except for the adverb /au lai/ which is crucial in denoting time. The word 'then' in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is /pa<sup>h</sup>/, a Kelantanese Malay loanword or /ba<sup>?</sup>nia loi/ a Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien circumlocution for 'a while more'.

(44) Sample:

/i bo hiau tit/

'S/he does not understand'

The word /hiau tit/ 'understand' has been replaced by the local Malay word /pa<sup>h</sup>e/ in the vocabulary of most Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien.

(45) Sample:

/iau kin e tai ci/

'An important matter'

The word /iau kin/ 'important' is alien to most Peranakan Chinese. For 'important', they have integrated the local Malay word /mʊstɔhɔʔ/ into their lexicon. Some Peranakan Chinese do not know the meaning of /tai cɿ/ 'matter; affair' which to them is /hə/, a Kelantanese Malay loanword.

Even if these utterances occur in conversations where the topics discussed could provide the Peranakan Chinese with some clue as to the meanings of the words, their understanding would still be only partial.

This speech sample illustrates misunderstanding on the part of the Peranakan Chinese speaker caused by his inadequacy of his Hokkien vocabulary. The conversation takes place in a drug store.

(46) Sample (IC/11/A/1993):

MCS: /ai be ham miʔ/

'What do you want to buy?'

PCS: /u iɔʔ tʰĩĩ cʰu kʰi mi/

'Do you sell toothache medicine?'

MCS: /u tua li e cʰia peŋ/

'Yes, it is on your right side'

PCS: /ham mi?/

'What?'

MCS: /chu khi thia e io? tua li e chia peŋ/

'The toothache medicine is on your right side'

PCS: /li koŋ ham mi?/

'What did you say?'

The misunderstanding on the part of the Peranakan Chinese lies in the word /chia peŋ/ 'right side'. He does not know its meaning. To him, /kaŋe/ a Kelantanese Malay word is the only word he knows for the concept of 'right' (as opposed to 'left'). The above conversation is terminated when the shop proprietor realizes that his customer does not understand his utterances despite his repeating it in a louder tone. He goes over to take it down for him.

The following is another instance of miscommunication caused by the ignorance of Chinese (Hokkien) vocabulary on the part of the Peranakan Chinese speaker.

(47) Sample (IC/13/A/1993):

MCS: /gia lai ti thau/

'Bring the hoe'

PCS: /muŋo ham mi?/

'What is it?'

MCS: /wa ai ti t̪hau/

'I need a hoe'

In actual fact, the Peranakan Chinese does not know the meaning of the word /ti t̪hau/ in the first place although he pretends that he does not hear the mainstream Chinese in order not to lose face for his ignorance of the meaning of the word. But he goes anyway to get him a tool (by virtue of their job he knows /ti t̪hau/ is some kind of a tool).

PCS: /ã t̪he? ni/

'Here it is'

MCS: /bo si kia/

'Not a saw'

/wa ai ti t̪hau/

'I want a hoe'

PCS: /hõ ti t̪hau/

'Oh, a hoe!'

He goes again to take the so-called /ti t̪hau/ hoping to get the right tool. This time he brings a hammer.

/ni ti t̃hau/

'Here is the hoe'

MCS: /cə le bo si ti t̃hau/

'This is not a hoe'

/li cai bo ti t̃hau si ham mi? lai/

'Do you know what a hoe is?'

PCS: /bo cai/

'No, I don't'

MCS: /co ham mi? li t̃hau seŋ bo koŋ/

'Why didn't you say so earlier on?'

PCS: Embarrassed silence.

The mainstream Chinese goes to get it himself and shows him the tool. To the Peranakan Chinese, the tool is known to him by the name /coʔ/, a Kelantanese Malay word.

Another area of miscommunication caused by language differences is prosody, especially intonation. Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien has undergone a remarkable change in intonation from that of the variety of Hokkien spoken by mainstream Chinese in Kelantan. Due to differences in prosodic patterns, both groups find it hard to comprehend each other. But because it is one code, i.e., mainstream Hokkien that is being used, and the way of interpreting it is

also one, i.e., mainstream Hokkien, Peranakan Chinese become the "victims" of miscommunication,<sup>83</sup> and should acquire a strategy for self-diagnosis of communication difficulties (cf., Gumperz 1982a: 147)

In speaking Chinese (Hokkien), Peranakan Chinese feel handicapped not only by their own lack of fluency, but also by what they feel as an inadequacy of Chinese (Hokkien), in terms of lexicon, syntax and stylistic variation in monitoring audience or listener response. Unless Peranakan Chinese have a good command of Chinese (Hokkien), they will not be able to express all the nuances they feel they would require for a response in order to proceed in a conversation. The inadequacy of their Chinese (Hokkien) in obtaining feedback from the mainstream Chinese can also be seen as being complicated by a clear division in social relations with mainstream Chinese possessing power, hegemony and dominance.

Although Malay is the national language, it remains an interethnic language for the Chinese, except for the highly assimilated Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan. Communalism has hindered the Chinese from accepting Malay, be it the standard variety or a regional dialect, as one of their languages. Mainstream Chinese use either Mandarin or one of the Chinese languages/dialects when communicating among themselves. When two

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<sup>83</sup>Almost all studies of intercultural miscommunication focus on the minority group speakers being "misunderstood" by majority group hearers. Such imbalance is in part due to the power, hegemony, and domination of the "majority group hearers" in the relationship between the two groups.

Only an intercultural analysis of (mis)understandings (or (mis)interpretations) by native hearers of non-native speakers as well as non-native hearers of native speakers, and, most importantly, of how or whether these misconceptions entail the same sort of consequences, regardless of who is being misunderstood by whom, can help us understand what is involved in a miscommunication (cf. Singh and Lele 1989: 113).

mainstream Chinese cannot converse fluently in any Chinese language, they choose to speak in English or continue speaking the Chinese dialect of one of the interactants in a simplified or pidgin version but not in Malay (Tan 1983: 54).

In most cases of problematic Peranakan Chinese-mainstream Chinese interaction where signs of a communication breakdown are apparent, generally the mainstream Chinese would still either continue to converse in Chinese (Hokkien) or abruptly end the conversation rather than proceed in Malay (i.e., the local Malay dialect), in which both parties have high competency. This primordial sentiment prevents the mainstream Chinese of Kelantan from using Malay to another Chinese (even to their "half-caste"<sup>84</sup> Peranakan Chinese cousins), for they do not want to identify themselves with the Malays, or be judged by the wider mainstream Chinese society as "unChinese" for using the Malay language for intraethnic communication.

Often to avoid losing face due to their inability to understand or speak Chinese (Hokkien), Peranakan Chinese assume a temporary Malay identity in various speech events. This instant switch of identity is mainly due to their insufficient Chinese (Hokkien) linguistic and cultural knowledge. More importantly, the lack of relevant linguistic means to engage in a simple but meaningful conversation with their mainstream Chinese partners often results in Peranakan Chinese, especially the men, assuming Kelantan Malay identity for the duration of a speech event.

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<sup>84</sup>A derogatory label often used by mainstream Chinese.

#### 4.5.1.2 Differences in Culture

Another major source of miscommunication between these two groups is to be found in the differences between the two cultures.<sup>85</sup> In other words, this type of miscommunication is deeply embedded in abstract cultural norms. It does not reflect difficulties in expressive techniques, but rather incompatible concepts underlying the utterances/expressions.

Miscommunication from this source is often more problematic, since a failure in communicative competence is likely to be perceived as an intentional act and not a mistake. Sociocultural miscommunication may take the form of differences in politeness behavior or frame of reference. Limitations in sociocultural knowledge can be apparent in both the content and structure of the discourse of both groups. Choice of communicative behavior on the part of the Peranakan Chinese speakers is influenced by their low linguistic competence in Chinese (Hokkien).<sup>86</sup>

Communication between the two groups is complicated further by different assumptions about the presentation of self. Unlike mainstream Chinese, Peranakan Chinese do not speak well of themselves and avoid self-display: modesty or "understatement" is the norm.

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<sup>85</sup>Culture here is being loosely defined as a group's logic of expression, that its members accept as natural and foundational to the group's way of being.

<sup>86</sup>Almost any instance of intercultural communication involves the fact that at least one interlocutor is a second-language learner. In this perspective, Peranakan Chinese can be seen as second-language learners.

The following speech sample is an informal job interview attended by a Peranakan Chinese carpenter. The interviewer, who is also the business proprietor, is a mainstream Chinese. Another Peranakan Chinese who recruits workers for the mainstream Chinese is present at the interview. He (PCS2) plays the role of an interpreter.

(48) Sample(IC/17/A/1993):

MCS: /li e keŋ giam co ca kaŋ si kui ni/

'How many years of working experience  
have you in carpentry?'

PCS1: Looks at the interpreter for help with the word /keŋ giam/.

PSC2: /tau ke mui pəŋalame li jadi tukaŋ/

'The "boss" is asking about your experience as  
a carpenter'

PSC1: /wa pi tukaŋ ceŋ gina loi/

'I became a carpenter when I was still a teenager'

/b:akali u ji cap ni ke doh/

'Maybe some twenty-odd years already'

MSC: /li si co ki cu əm si/

'You've been building houses, right?'

PSC1: /hõ le tampo? tampo?/

'Yes, "a little"'

MSC: /cə peŋ kaŋ si kʰa? iu tampo?/

'The nature of the work here is of the fine type'

/co ke si/

'Building furniture'

/li u kuan si co iu e ca kaŋ bo/

'Do you have any experience in doing this  
sort of carpentry?'

PSC1: /u juŋo? haŋ haŋ/

'Yes, I have, once in a while'

/e tampo? tampo?/

'Just a little experience'

/co i to? tu teŋ cu/

'I've been making chairs, tables,  
and cupboards at home'

MCS: /wa si ai cai li u puŋ su co iu e kaŋ/

'I really want to know if you've the capability  
to do fine carpentry work'

/co cu si cʰo e kaŋ/

'Building houses is rough carpentry work'

/co ke si ai iu e ciu kaŋ/

'Making furniture needs finer carpentry work skill'

/balu tampo? tampo? an cūã khuan wa ai chĩã li/

'If you've only limited skill in furniture making, how am I going to employ you?'

PCS2: /thau ke i e ciu kaŋ co ke si si be phai/

'"Boss," his skill in furniture making is not bad'

/u laŋ thia ke si ka i/

'There are people placing orders from him'

/li lai i e cu ka ki kua/

'You come over to his house and have a look for yourself'

As this sequence shows, the Peranakan Chinese is indirect in asserting himself as capable of doing fine carpentry work whereas the "boss" wants to hear a more direct self-assertion from him.

Concepts of "privacy" vary between the two groups. To ask direct questions about a person's age, salary or even the price of an item is perfectly acceptable in the culture of the mainstream Chinese, but it is considered impolite to do so in Peranakan Chinese or Malay culture. These questions are

interpreted by Peranakan Chinese as "too pushy" when the mainstream Chinese is not a close friend.

Mainstream Chinese are observed to be always talking too directly about their future plans. Peranakan Chinese believe that it is extremely inappropriate and bad luck to predict the future, to anticipate good luck, display oneself in a good light, or to speak badly of a plan.

The following sample shows that the Peranakan Chinese speaker calls off a hunting trip when his two mainstream Chinese hunting partners engage in /la sam koŋ uai/ 'nonsense talk.'

(49) Sample (IC/15/A/1993):

MCS1: /cun li u ca? cheŋ ci kha? ke tampo? bo/

'Chun, did you bring extra bullets'

MCS2: /peŋ sioŋ la/

'As usual'

/co ham mi? li mui/

'Why are you asking?'

MCS1: /kha? ho ca? kha? ke cheŋ ci/

'It's better to have extra bullets'

/mana cai tui lau ho/

'Who knows we might meet a tiger?'

/pʰa? ka bo kau cheŋ ci tə si si liau i cun/

'If we run out of bullets at the time we  
meet a tiger, I guess that's the end!'

PCS: /meŋ an cũã li kəŋ ua laŋ neŋ/

'Meng, why do you say such things'

/lan be khi coi sũã ti ke/

'We're looking for wild boars, right?'

/ham mi? su kəŋ sabe? lau ho pulə?/

'Why do you talk about tigers again?'

/paŋ kalu bəloŋ jiu? pa kəŋ ua kə? se/

'It is a taboo to talk of such things  
before going on a hunting trip'

Name-calling, the use of unflattering or abusive names in ridiculing another person, is perfectly acceptable in mainstream Chinese culture, even to a stranger. Often the name focuses on a physical characteristic - a mainstream Chinese may refer to an overweight Peranakan Chinese as /t u a pui/ the Chinese (Hokkien) equivalent of the English "Fatso/Fatty."

This is a conversation between a Peranakan Chinese woman selling agricultural produce and poultry in the central market of Kota Bharu and a prospective mainstream Chinese woman buyer.

(50) Sample(IC/14/B/1993):

MCS: /sa cia? ke sui ji cap k<sup>h</sup>o tua pui/

'Count the price of these three chickens  
as twenty dollars, Fatso'

PCS: /be e a so/

'No, that is impossible, Madam'

MCS: /ji cap go k<sup>h</sup>o si sui kui/

'Twenty five dollars is too expensive'

/sui k<sup>h</sup>a? phi tam po? tua pui/

'Give me a lower price, Fatso'

PCS: /ji cap si/

'Twenty four dollars'

MCS: /ji cap ji e sai liau tua pui/

'Twenty two dollars should be reasonable, Fatso'

PCS: /be e a so/

'No, that's impossible, Madam'

The Peranakan Chinese is polite in using the kinterm /a so/ 'elder sister-in-law' when addressing the mainstream Chinese woman. This kinterm has taken another semantic component: madam, i.e., a polite term of address for a married woman.

#### 4.5.2 Patterns of Problematic Interaction

Peranakan Chinese-mainstream Chinese problematic encounters can be broadly divided into talk avoidance and misunderstanding.<sup>87</sup> In talk avoidance, no communicative event occurs although the given social conditions are present, such as the physical proximity of individuals of the two groups. On the other hand, in misunderstanding, an attempt is made to conduct either an interaction or a transactional conversation, yet problems arise in the transmission and/or reception of a message.

Peranakan as well as mainstream Chinese often avoid talking to each other, so as not to become engaged in what would turn out to be a difficult and stressful conversation. Such avoidance of communication happens when the perceived loss of time and energy necessary for communication outweighs the perceived benefit (social or otherwise) to be gained (cf., Gass and Varonis 1991: 124). Often, a communication breakdown occurs, and a conversational

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<sup>87</sup>"Misunderstanding" occurs when there is a mismatch between the speaker's intention and the listener's interpretation (cf., Milroy 1984: 8). However, even though speech performance errors (e.g., slips of the tongue, dysfluencies) are problems which can lead to "understanding difficulties" in the sense that they interfere with the smooth unfolding of the interaction, they are not considered to be misunderstandings as the term is used in this work.

interaction is abruptly terminated when either the Peranakan or mainstream Chinese realizes that continuing the conversation is in no one's best interest.

To avoid a difficult and stressful conversation or communication breakdown, often Peranakan Chinese men identify themselves as rural Malays, who being largely monolingual, do not speak any language other than the local Malay dialect. Peranakan Chinese women are easily identifiable because of their clothing.

#### 4.5.2.1 Mainstream Chinese Domination in Discourse

In interaction between the two groups, there tends to be domination of the discourse by mainstream Chinese. It has been observed that mainstream Chinese control the conversation even in first-time encounters between strangers, by trying to manoeuvre the Peranakan Chinese to change their attitudes and opinions by their frequent utterance of phrases like /bo si an ni/ 'not like this', and/or /si an ni/ 'like this'. Being the dominant partner in the interaction, there is no submission on the part of the mainstream Chinese, i.e., no acceptance of Peranakan Chinese "power" or "authority" concerning the opinions expressed. There is also no willingness to interact with mutual respect and they attach little importance to differences of opinion expressed by Peranakan Chinese. This may be due in part to the subjective superiority felt by the mainstream Chinese with respect to Chinese literacy and fluency in "pure" Chinese culture.

The following speech sample is typical of mainstream Chinese conversational dominance, illustrating their resistance to submitting to

Peranakan Chinese ways of doing things. A mainstream Chinese and a Peranakan Chinese, both strangers to each other, are helping an abbot to set up a tent at a Buddhist temple. The Peranakan Chinese suggests to his mainstream Chinese partner that the rope be tied in a particular fashion.

(51) Sample (IC/13/B/1993):

PCS: /pa? so? neŋ bəle? nɔ pai kɔ? tʰiau/

'Tie the rope by twisting it twice around the post'

/əm tʰaŋ pa? si so? neŋ/

'Don't tie a dead knot'

MCS: /li be sai pa? hi kʰuan/

'You can't tie like that'

/li ai pa? cə kʰuan/

'You have to tie it this way'

/pa? siaŋ ka li kɔŋ si bo tio?/

'Tying the way you said is not the correct way'

PCS: /iko? li tɔ?/

'Well, anything will do'

/wa bo ham mi? e hiau/

'I don't know much about tying'

MCS: /gia lai to kuat cə peŋ/

'Bring the knife and cut here'

The Peranakan Chinese is about to cut the rope at the place suggested by the mainstream Chinese.

/bo si an ni kuat/

'No, this is not the correct way of cutting'

PCS: /pah tio? kuat an cūã khuan/

'Then, what is the correct way of cutting?'

MCS: /si cə khuan/

'This is the way'

/tua hi peŋ ho i an/

'Pull that side so that it will tighten up'

/ban ban tua mai cə e tua/

'Pull slowly and not abruptly'

In the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese community, the collective is given more importance than the individual. Hence Peranakan Chinese rarely express disagreement<sup>88</sup> in conversation/interaction.

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<sup>88</sup>This depends too on the social relation between the interactants. Interactants may not have equal power; e.g., the more powerful one has the

The conversation shows that the mainstream Chinese does not accept Peranakan Chinese "power" or "authority", so the suggestions made by the Peranakan Chinese were viewed as "wrong" by the mainstream Chinese. He does not even agree with the Peranakan Chinese's method of cutting the rope. The mainstream Chinese is most of the time asserting himself in setting up the tent, especially in tying the rope. The conversation can also be seen as reflecting a negative stereotyping of the Peranakan Chinese as being an incompetent group by mainstream Chinese.

Miscommunication between the two groups is often the result of inaccurate negative stereotyping. Stereotyping is conceived as the blanket attribution of characteristics to groups and their members. Individuals' communicative behaviors are deemed to be predicated on that cognitive phenomenon (Banks et al. 1991: 114). Mainstream Chinese are perceived by Peranakan Chinese as loud, always bragging about themselves and interrupting, too direct in their requests, suggestions and the like, and not having a polite style of speaking. Peranakan Chinese as seen by mainstream Chinese are too silent, "talking off the topic," speaking with a flat tone of voice, being too indirect, and "not making sense."

#### 4.5.2.2 Pronouns and Pronominals

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien address and reference terms include borrowings from Kelantanese Malay. Chinese (Hokkien) pronouns are used where deemed

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chance to direct the conversation and reduce the turn-taking possibilities of the other.

appropriate; but when the power semantic (Brown and Gilman 1960: 225) is involved, the Kelantanese Malay system is employed. This is especially so for the second person Hokkien pronoun /li/ 'you'.

Peranakan Chinese children are taught to use /li/ 'you' with discrimination. The Malay rule applies: to use /li/ 'you' one has to assess one's relationship with the interlocutor in terms of age, social, and professional status or family rank, among other factors. Substitutes for /li/ 'you' normally take the form of kinterms, real or fictive, titles, or words denoting rank which may or may not be followed by given names.

Mainstream Chinese do not generally have this sociolinguistic practice and view this address behavior as a salient Peranakan Hokkien characteristic. Such substitution for /li/ 'you' in their discourse would be viewed as "unChinese."

This sample is a conversation between a young mainstream Chinese and a Peranakan Chinese elder meeting for the first time at the home of the latter.

(52) Sample (IC/15/B/1993):

PCS: /k<sup>h</sup>i lai ce teŋ cu/

'Come and sit up here (the house)'

MCS: /mieŋ la/

'It's alright to be down here'

PCS: /tua ti taloʔ/

'Where do you live?'

MCS: /wa tua pʰo te/

'I live in the town (Kota Bharu)

/a ceʔ wa siu ai mui li tam poʔ tai cĩ/

'Uncle, I am wondering if I could ask you some questions'

PCS: /beʔ mui go ham miʔ huə/

'What is it that you want to ask?'

MCS: /li cə peŋ u siu ku ca e bi kia bo/

'Do you have/keep antiques?'

PCS: /bi kia go an cũã/

'What sort of things?'

MCS: /li u ku ca e ut tau mi/

'Do you have the old iron?'

PCS: /go neŋ bo u ni/

'There is no iron here'

MCS: /pa haŋ e ku e bi kia li u bo/

'Do you have other antiques?'

PCS: /bo be? tʰe? lai talo? mugo lan laŋ səso?/

'No, we don't because we are poor people'

The young mainstream Chinese shows some notion of good manners by addressing the Peranakan Chinese elder /a ce?/ 'uncle' on his first conversational turn, but then reverts to the plain "democratic" Chinese (Hokkien) second person pronoun /li/ 'you' during the rest of the entire conversation with the Peranakan Chinese elder. /li/ 'you' is "jarring" to Peranakan Chinese when it is used in interaction, especially when addressing an elderly interlocutor.

#### 4.5.2.3 Nonverbals

Unlike mainstream Chinese, the Peranakan Chinese use only the fingers of their right hands for eating. The use of the right hand is also considered respectful for all manner of gestures if a hand has to be used. The use of the left hand is permitted only when the right hand is soiled. Either hand is considered polite for the mainstream Chinese, although the right hand is preferred.

Since use of the right hand is not a crucial part of the culture of mainstream Chinese, it is perfectly acceptable for them to pass or receive objects with their left hand. Peranakan Chinese consider the handling or passing of things to them with the left hand by mainstream Chinese as disrespectful.

Peranakan Chinese show great frustration when mainstream Chinese use their forefingers to point. Peranakan Chinese view pointing with the forefinger as a domineering behavior. Frustration on this score is typically expressed when mainstream Chinese are found not to observe the proper Peranakan Chinese (i.e., Malay) way of pointing: using the right thumb over the fist.

(53) Examples in KPH:

(a)

/cilaka? u iã təŋ sua laŋ bo ada? paŋ ki/

'Damn it! Mainstream Chinese have no manners when pointing'

(b)

/pə ki ka? jaŋi təlunjo? t:ikoh ki tui bin pə? tʰan/

'They point with their forefingers in front of the abbot'

(54) Examples in KT as spoken by Peranakan Chinese:

(a)

/ci:n no:ʔ mai rə ada? khəŋ təŋ ni/

'Mainstream Chinese are ignorant of our customs'

(b)

/cʰi kaʔ niu bon na: kʰoŋ/

'They point with their fingers at people'

(c)

/noʔ toŋ kʰe:ʔ toʔ ba:kali/

'Want to get slapped by the Malays'

The head is considered the most "respected" part of the body by the Malays. Touching another person's head gratuitously<sup>89</sup> is a tabooed behavior in the Malay society. If one has to gesticulate near the head of another person or when one has to hand an object over to another and his/her head is close to either the object or the act of handling, a formulaic speech act of the form "atas kepala" ('over the head') has to be uttered beforehand. Peranakan Chinese observe this behavior too and use the Chinese (Hokkien) or Thai calque of /bin teŋ tʰo kʰaʔ/ ('over the head') or /bon hua/ ('over the head') respectively.

Mainstream Chinese do not observe such behavior. Hence, behaving politely as far as the head is concerned is not in their repertoire of gestural politeness. They do not take special care when gesticulating near the head of their listeners. Often, Peranakan Chinese show their frustration when mainstream Chinese ignore this politeness convention.

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<sup>89</sup>Of course the contexts/relations of touching the head are important. A functional or professional touch by a barber or doctor is not interpreted as impolite. The relationship between the parties involved is another important factor in interpreting touch.

The following comments are typical of the frustration of Peranakan Chinese on this matter:

(55) Example in KPH:

/pɔ lakɔh e tɔ kʰaʔ laŋ/

'My head was "walked over"'

(56) Examples in KT as spoken by Peranakan Chinese:

(a)

/ci:n no:ʔ mai cəŋa bɔn huə kʰɔŋ/

'Mainstream Chinese do not care about people's heads'

(b)

/mai patəŋ lasɔŋ bɔn huə kʰɔŋ/

'They do not have any taboo at all concerning people's heads'

Another common gesture on the part of mainstream Chinese that is perceived as impolite by Peranakan Chinese is the former do not observe the Malay way of walking past someone. Mainstream Chinese do not perform the obligatory Malay formulaic speech act of "minta/tumpang lalu" ('May I walk past you?'). Walking behind the back of an elderly person without first

informing him/her is considered "kurang ajar" ('ill-bred'). These behaviors are simply not in the culture of the mainstream Chinese, and are thus not part of their repertoire of gestural politeness conventions.

It seems to the Peranakan Chinese that mainstream Chinese just rudely go/walk past them without showing them the consideration of uttering the Chinese (Hokkien) calques of "minta/tumpang lalu" ('May I go/walk past you?') in the form of /tʰɔ koi/ along with the gesture of slightly bowing their heads and hunching their bodies as they pass.

#### 4.5.2.4 Greetings

Different styles of greeting routines between the two groups also lead to misunderstanding at times. Mainstream Chinese usually use the "Have you taken your meal?" or "Have you eaten yet?" strategy to start some sort of verbal exchange with Peranakan Chinese. Peranakan Chinese who are more used to the "where to" or "where from" routines are found to be unprepared for such greeting routines from mainstream Chinese.

(57) Sample (IC/14/B/1993):

MCS: /cia? pui a boi/

'Have you eaten your meal yet?'

PCS: /bɔ iau loi/

'I am not hungry yet'

The Peranakan Chinese gives a "real" answer<sup>90</sup> (as opposed to a formulaic response) to the greeting routine. He is not aware that it is an encounter routine which is appropriately answered by a formulaic response like /cia? pa liau/ 'I've had my meal already' or /a boi/ 'not yet'. The

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<sup>90</sup>My personal experience may help to explain why a socially inappropriate response is apt to be given in this case. I personally find it hard to respond quickly to the American encounter routines of "What's up?" or "What're you up to?".

When I first came to the United States in Fall 1989, I just did not know how to respond to such greeting strategies, although I could guess by the context that they were a form of phatic communion. However, to a greeting like "What's up?" I would respond by saying "Nothing is up" meaning "Everything is just as usual." But my American friends suggested that it should be in the form of "Not much."

My first experience with "What're you up to?" was a tense one for me. Professor Fillmore once asked me "What're you up to this semester?" at the beginning of the Spring 1990 semester when we met while collecting our mail in the department office. I was upset with the question as well as with Professor Fillmore for two reasons: firstly it was being asked in public, and secondly I had not done well in my studies for the Fall 1989 semester (my first semester in Berkeley in an American education system; my education prior to coming to Berkeley had been entirely in the British system). Professor Fillmore was the head graduate advisor as well as my personal advisor for the 1989/1990 academic year. I understood his innocent question of "What're you up to this semester?" as meaning "What're you trying to prove to me this semester?" I thought such a personal as well as embarrassing question should not be asked in public.

Professor Fillmore was staring at me for taking such a long time to respond to what was merely an encounter routine to him, but a serious question to me. Based on my evaluation of his personality through my frequent weekly meetings with him, I knew him to be a very pleasant person. I could not believe that he would be so impolite as to embarrass me in public by asking such a question.

I was getting very uncomfortable for not being able to even respond to a question which I understood so well. I also felt ashamed of myself for appearing so stupid in his eyes.

After some uncomfortable moments, I told him that I did not understand his question and he was kind enough to rephrase it by saying "What courses are you taking this semester?" Only after that did I start listing to him one by one the courses that I had signed up for.

Even today (nine semesters later, when I am about to complete my graduate studies) I still need some moments to respond to "What's up?" or "What're you up to?" which I have to translate first into "How're you?" or "How're you doing?". My response now is "Fine, thank you" - actually a response more appropriate for "How're you?" or "How're you doing?" Responses like "Pretty good," "Not much" and the like are still not in my vocabulary. Perhaps, they will never be.

speech sample can also be seen as a mismatch due to differences in schemata and frame. An individual's assumptions and knowledge of his/her particular world (schema) interact with what is perceived to be happening at that moment in the interaction (frame). If people do not share the same schemata or do not agree on what frame they are in, the lack of understanding in one can easily make the other go wrong. In the encounter above where the mainstream Chinese and Peranakan Chinese have different contexts within which they have been socialized, there tends to be fewer shared schemata and more opportunity for misinterpretation of frame.

Mainstream Chinese also use encounter/greeting routines like "Where are you going?" or "Where are you from?" In their encounters with Peranakan Chinese who use these strategies, mainstream Chinese respond readily with socially appropriate formulae.

#### 4.5.2.5 Proverbs/Idioms

Miscommunication also occurs when both groups use proverbs in their conversation. Peranakan Chinese use Malay proverbs/idioms or figures of speech while mainstream Chinese would employ Chinese proverbs. In other words, by employing these different proverbs, both groups are living in different social worlds.

(58) Example of mainstream Hokkien idiom:

/cia? cin kiam/

'One who eats extremely salty food'

"One who charges high prices for his/her service"

Most Peranakan Chinese do not understand the idiomatic meaning of the above phrase. However, some Chinese (Hokkien) proverbs are fairly well understood by most Peranakan Chinese due to their transparent literal meanings.

(59) Example of a mainstream Hokkien proverb:

/laŋ bo cə cʰeŋ jit ho hua bo cə paʔ jit aŋ/

'People don't have a thousand good days,  
Flowers don't bloom for a hundred days'

"People have their ups and downs"

Malay proverbs whose literal meanings are opaque when used by Peranakan Chinese in the form of Chinese (Hokkien) calques are not readily understood by most mainstream Chinese.

(60) Examples of Malay proverbs in KPH:

(a)

/sau tua toŋ lau tui/

'To cough on the staircase/steps'

("Melepas batuk di tangga")

'To do a task in a haphazard manner'

(b)

/kuba tio? pa? pĩ kɔŋ/

'A buffalo that is tied through the nostrils'

("Kerbau dicucuk hidung")

'A person who follows orders blindly'

To be able to understand traditional proverbs, be it Malay or Chinese (Hokkien), implies that one has a knowledge of and appreciation for the sociohistorical frameworks of values and institutions that underlie them.

#### 4.5.2.6 Invitations

Peranakan Chinese culture stipulates that one should not sound too eager when accepting invitations as it may appear rather greedy. Accepting an offer/invitation in this manner is viewed by mainstream Chinese as unfriendly or not wanting to have a close social relationship with the person extending it. Peranakan Chinese employ their routine formula of /kua le/ /kua kɔŋ/ /kua tau seŋ/ 'let me see first' or 'I'll have to consider first' when accepting an invitation. This response amuses the mainstream Chinese extending the invitation. The mainstream Chinese routine formula for accepting an invitation would be /e sai/ 'sure' or 'I'll surely attend' or /kam sia/ 'thank you'.

The following speech sample illustrates the exasperation of a mainstream Chinese when his invitation is not accepted with "enthusiasm" by his Peranakan Chinese friend.

(61) Sample (IC/20/A/1993):

MCS: /pɔ cə lɛ paɪ ɡɔ wa ai cʰia li cə kɛ lai wa e cʰu/

'Poh, I'm inviting you and your family  
to my house this coming Friday'

/co wa e kia e mua goe?/

'It's the full month celebration for our baby'

PCS: /kin uia cə ko goe? liau/

'It has been a month already since your baby was born'

/kua lɛ kalu bo ham mi? su mɔ po? wa kʰi lɛ/

'Well, if nothing happens, all of us will go'

MCS: /li si koŋ li laŋ be lai si o/

'Are you saying that all of you are unable  
to come? Is that right?'

PSC: /bo si lagu neŋ/

'No, it isn't that'

/wa koŋ kalu bo ham mi? su ʔa? mɔ po? wa kʰi lɛ/

'I said if nothing happens, all of us will attend'

In the encounter, the mainstream Chinese interprets his Peranakan Chinese friend's responses to his invitation as meaning that he does not want to attend the celebration, which is tantamount to his not wanting to have a close relationship with him. But by responding to the invitation in this way, the Peranakan Chinese is merely applying the traditional communicative convention of the Peranakan Chinese society that one should not be overly eager or committal. To commit oneself to a future event overtly, and then not be able to fulfill it, would bring great shame upon oneself.

Finally, however, the Peranakan Chinese and his family attended the celebration. At the celebration, the Peranakan Chinese's compliments that the baby was healthy, in the form of /tua kə ɲə ɡina ni/ 'This baby is very healthy', was not happily accepted by the mainstream Chinese host. It is superstitiously believed by most mainstream Chinese that favorable or positive comments on the health of a person can bring about the opposite results. His culturally unwarranted compliments are to be attributed to his low Chinese (Hokkien) competency, coupled with low sociocultural knowledge of how "compliments" are acceptably formulated in the mainstream Chinese society. Hence, differential knowledge of culturally appropriate ways of complimenting can lead to the loss of face. The appropriate mainstream Chinese compliments in this situation include several expressions like /ki ɔŋ hi/ 'congratulations', /wa tau hua hi/ 'I am glad for you', or /li cin homia/ 'You're a fortunate person'.

If a "culture in contrast" is to be determined by identifying differences in shared knowledge, then the Peranakan Chinese and mainstream Chinese are significantly different both culturally and linguistically.

#### **4.6 PERANAKAN CHINESE-KELANTAN THAI COMMUNICATION**

The local Thais are seen by Peranakan Chinese as religious (Thai Theravada Buddhist) specialists. Siamese monks are called upon to recite prayers for the deceased at Peranakan Chinese homes. Oftentimes, respected Thais are invited to Peranakan Chinese functions for their advice whenever Thai Theravada Buddhist rituals are performed.

Kelantanese Thai is commonly used by the two groups during religious services and consultations. Kelantanese Malay is generally avoided when religion is the subject of discussion. Generally those Peranakan Chinese who speak the local Thai language well act as interpreters for those who do not speak it.

Some Peranakan Chinese men observe the custom of ordination. Usually their ordination is carried out by way of fulfillment of vows, e.g., during an illness. In some rare cases, Peranakan Chinese women have also been ordained as nuns. Peranakan Chinese men after leaving the monastic life are given the Thai honorific title of /cəu/ 'lord' in front of their Chinese names, e.g., Chaw Seng.

The local Thai community is also known by the people of Kelantan for their sorcery, whose charms and spells are reputed to be efficacious and dangerous. Thai priests are often summoned to exorcise evil spirits believed to be present in their midst. Kelantanese Malay is commonly used during services and consultations of this sort, if and when the local Thai language is incomprehensible to both groups.

#### 4.6.1 Thai as Medium of Discourse

Thai, or to be specific Kelantanese Thai, as a medium of discourse between Peranakan Chinese and the local Thai community is not widespread. Not all Peranakan Chinese speak and understand Thai. The following speech sample illustrates miscommunication due to lexical interference. It is a conversation between a Peranakan Chinese man and a Thai physician of traditional medicine.

(62) Sample (IC/20/A/1993):

KTS: /kâ:n mai naŋ tɔŋ bɔn ni/

'Come and sit up here'

/tai neŋ cha? kʰo?/

'It's dirty down there'

/kai kʰi: ko?se/

There are chicken droppings everywhere'

PCS: /mai toŋ doh naŋ tai dai doh/

'There is no need to sit up there,  
it's fine to sit down here'

/liɑŋ ma:g tua kai ko/

'Do you rear a lot of chickens?'

KTS: /sip k<sup>h</sup>ua tua ya/

'There are only about ten or so of them'

/ma ni paŋ tura? arai/

'What is the purpose of your visit?'

PCS: /rau ha ja? no? ɣia? cau bo:n pai ɣən/

'I wish to invite you (Chaw Boon) to my house'

/paŋ tura? it nəŋ/

'I have some matter'

KTS: /tura? arai/

'What's the matter?'

PCS: /koŋ puŋiŋ rau mai səbai/

'My wife has not been feeling well'

/pai le mo: do?to soŋ sam k<sup>h</sup>oŋ doh/

'She has been examined by two or three doctors already'

/k<sup>h</sup>oi mai səbai/

'Her health is deteriorating'

KTS: /noʔ bəla koʔ mo: ba:n le ni/

'So you want her to be cured in the traditional way'

PCS: /hajaʔ ɲo lagu neŋ le/

'That is my intention'

KTS: /wan su:ʔ ni rau pai le kaŋ kə:n/

'I will go on Friday night'

PSC: /wan su:ʔ k<sup>h</sup>e:ʔ ɣiaʔ arai/

'What is "Wan Suuk" in Malay?'

KTS: /wan ma:ʔ le/

'It's "Jumaat" (Friday)'

Thai or Chinese (Hokkien) lexical items are usually the source of miscommunication between the two groups. Thus both groups use the names of days and months in their respective languages, since the Thai names for the days of the week and months of the year are not generally known by Peranakan Chinese, and vice versa. Often, unconsciously, Peranakan Chinese use the Chinese (Hokkien) names, e.g., /wan pai sə̃/ 'Wednesday' which is not readily understood by the Thais except for the word /wan/ 'day'. The Thai word for 'Wednesday' is /wan pu:ʔ/.

Unlike the names of the days, the Thai names of the months are not known even by most local Thais. Names of the months are generally labelled by a syntactic pattern borrowed from the local Malay dialect: month + numeral. December which is /tən wəh kəm/ is replaced by /d̩i:n sip sɔŋ/ (literally '12th month') in Kelantanese Thai.

The miscommunication which arises from the names of the days and months is easily overcome by adopting the local Malay names for the days, and naming system for the months. Similarly, for any other lexical interference, Kelantanese Malay is the solution.

Miscommunication is also at times caused by Peranakan Chinese who unconsciously employ Chinese (Hokkien) words in their Thai speech while in conversation with their Thai partners.

(63) Sample (IC/15/B/1993):

KTS: /ci pai sɔŋkla pəŋ rə/

'When are you going to Songkla?'

PCS: /rau ti kʰid nɔʔ pai bəŋə:/

'I'm thinking of going the day after tomorrow'

KTS: /pai tʰiau kɔ/

'Are you going there for a vacation?'

PCS: /paŋ tuŋa? it nəŋ/

'I've some matter to attend to over there'

KTS: /pai ka? kiəŋ bin kɔ/

'Are you going there by plane?

PSC: /mai nəŋ hue cia yah/

'I'm taking the train only'

KTS: /nəŋ arai/

'You are taking what?'

PSC: /nəŋ hue cia leh/

'I'm taking the train' (with emphasis)

KTS: /go arai ni hue cia/

'What is "Hue Chia" actually?'

PSC: /hue cia nəŋ rod fai nai pasa thai/

'"Hue Chia" means train in the Thai language'

KTS: /padan pɔŋ k:u mai ŋajəŋ dai jin/

'That's why I haven't heard of the word before'

The Peranakan Chinese uses the Chinese (Hokkien) /hue cia/ 'train' unconsciously. Even after his Thai conversational partner indicates that he does not understand the meaning of that word, the Peranakan Chinese still

does not realize that he used the Chinese (Hokkien) word. Only after being asked directly, does he translate /hue cia/ into /rod fai/ the Thai word for 'train'.

#### 4.6.1.1 Thai Pronominal System

Peranakan Chinese are not well versed in the complicated Thai pronominal system. In their conversations with the local Thais, Peranakan Chinese employ the Kelantanese Malay politeness conventions for pronoun usage.

(64) Example:

PCS: /rau no? tham po? than it neŋ/

'I want to consult with Rev. Abbot'

In the Malay dialect of Kelantan, /kitə/ 'inclusive we' is used as the polite form of 'I'. Due to their ignorance, instead of using /pʰəm/ 'I' for male or /dican/ə/can/ 'I' for female, Peranakan Chinese translate the local Malay polite form /kitə/ into the local Thai first person plural form /rau/ 'we'.

Peranakan Chinese use the Malay kinterm /pə?/ 'father' (or a male who is in the age range of one's father) to show deference to Buddhist abbots. The local Thais address and refer to Buddhist abbots as /tʰan/<sup>91</sup> and do not use

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<sup>91</sup>The second person polite pronoun in standard Thai is /tʰan/. The standard Thai word for priest/abbot is /pra/ə/prə?/. When the local Thai community addresses or refers to Buddhist priests/abbots, the word /tʰan/ is used rather than /pra/ə/prə?/. In their conversation with abbots, the word /tʰan/ may not be used consciously in the sense of a deferential second person pronoun but more of a title. In other words, it is only incidental that /tʰan/

or add /pɔʔ/ as a politeness strategy. E.g., a certain abbot is known as /tʰan dɛ:ŋ/ by the local Thai community but as /pɔʔ tʰan dɛ:ŋ/ among the Peranakan Chinese.

Often, Peranakan Chinese employ the Kelantanese Thai calque /pʰi:n/ (literally 'friend') from the Kelantanese Malay /kawɛ/ 'friend' which is a polite substitute for 'I'.

(65) Example:

PCS: /pʰi:n sa pʰi:n mai dai ma wan rabu: ni/

'I think I cannot make it this Wednesday'

#### 4.6.2 Malay as Medium of Discourse

Communication between the two groups held in the local Malay dialect is common. There are wide variations in the abilities of Kelantan Thais to speak the local Malay dialect. There are Thais who cannot speak the local Malay dialect, let alone understand it. Various factors, the most important of which are age and location of residence, account for the low level or absence of Malay speaking skill. Most Thais, especially the older generation, speak the local Malay dialect with a heavy Thai accent which is known as /kɛcɛʔ pɛlɛʔ siɛ/ literally 'speak with a Thai accent', i.e., 'Malay with Thai phonic interference as well as intonation'.

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in the local Thais' conversation with abbots is an instance of a deferential second person pronoun.

Due to their lower competency in Kelantanese Malay compared to their Peranakan Chinese conversational partners, Thai lexical interference is predictable when Thais are conversing with Peranakan Chinese.

The following is a conversation between two friends who met in the village coffee shop. Thai lexical inference is evident in this speech sample. It is highly probable that the Peranakan Chinese knows the meanings of the Thai lexical items, for he does not ask for their translations; it may well be also that they are unimportant since the Thai words are part of the utterances of compliments and could be guessed from the context.

(66) Sample (IC/18/B/1993):

PCS: /dam stae demo hari ni/

'Dam, you look well-dressed today'

/no? gi mano/

'Where are you going?'

KTS: /gi koto baɣu/

'I'm going to Kota Bharu (the capital town)'

PSC: /ado ha gapo/

'Why are you going there?'

KTS: /ado intəbiu kəɣəjo/

'I've a job interview'

/dəʔəba bah ekspərəh/

'The job of an express bus driver'

PSC: /məleʔ tu/

'That's good'

KTS: /cʰeŋ lawa ka:ŋ ke:ŋ dəmo/

'Cheng, you've a nice pair of pants'

/lawa kala dio/

'The color is nice'

/namta:n kala come ŋa dəmo/

'Brown is suitable for you'

Two instances of Thai lexical interference occur in the conversation. /ka:ŋ ke:ŋ/ 'trousers' and /namta:n/ 'brown' may have been used consciously or unconsciously by the Thai speaker.

Miscommunication arising from cultural differences in Peranakan Chinese-Kelantan Thai interaction is minimal. Since Kelantan Peranakan Chinese culture is partly Thai, Kelantan Thai to be specific, and the local Thai community is also assimilated to the local Malay culture as are the Peranakan Chinese, the two groups are culturally more similar to each other than the Peranakan Chinese are to mainstream Chinese.

#### 4.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON INTERETHNIC COMMUNICATION

Successful interethnic<sup>92</sup> communication with the local Malays and Thais by the Peranakan Chinese is the result of their assimilation to the two groups. The assimilation which is of a high level is achieved not only through the Peranakan Chinese' constant and intensive contact with the local Malay and Thai communities, but by the fact that they live by the Malay and Thai cultural rules and norms.

Due to the high level of assimilation, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese are especially aware of the what's, the how's, the why's, the when's, and the with whom's of everyday behavior<sup>93</sup> of the Kelantan Malays with whom they have to interact.

The culture of a people is not only about values, beliefs and artifacts, but includes the many ways of communicating and establishing, or breaking, the flow of interaction (cf., Poyatos 1983: 18-19).

Linguistic fluency is crucial in communication, but around that core of language other paralinguistic fluencies have to be built up too, i.e., kinesic, proxemic, and chronemic, to name only but the most essential categories.

Cultural competency also has to be attained for successful communication. To attain this, a culture has to be analyzed accurately as to

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<sup>92</sup>The term 'interethnic' here is also taken to mean as intercultural.

<sup>93</sup>Adapted from Poyatos (1983: 18).

what is universal and what is culture-bound. Beyond the differences and similarities that separate cultures, studies on interethnic communication should include the analysis of the structure of the relationship<sup>94</sup> between the groups involved in the interaction. A sociopolitical approach to the study of the relationship is important in complementing the existing scholarship on interethnic communication.

Superficial misunderstandings due to cultural differences can be readily cleared up or resolved and may even be considered humorous at times. However, mistrust and non-acceptance are more difficult to overcome and may cause conflicts. It is common knowledge that when one converses with another, often that conversation is based on the image that one has of that person, rather than just the person s/he really is. For some people, this conversational image may hinder conversation and limit it to a level of superficiality. There are instances of those who are well aware of the pitfalls of stereotyping but still feel uncomfortable in an interethnic situation even when they are aware that their conversational partner(s) is unprejudiced. Perhaps the reason for such problems in communication resides in mistrust and non-acceptance (cf., von Raffler-Engel 1980: 124).

The political relationship between the groups to which the interactants belong is also an important factor in determining the extent to which difficulties arise from intergroup encounters. When there is an uneven power relationship between the interactants, mistrust and non-acceptance

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<sup>94</sup>Adequate knowledge of the cultures of the two groups is a prerequisite to a description of the relationship between the adherents of the two cultures.

ensue. The parties concerned are conscious of the fact that their relationship is frequently impaired by the lack of confidence in each other's intentions.

It is tempting to attribute the breakdown in interethnic interactions to language and cultural differences. No doubt linguistic and cultural differences are the major sources of interethnic miscommunication, but sometimes the power relationship between the groups plays a role. For instance, mainstream Chinese' dominating behavior in their interaction with the Malays (cf., Teo 1992b: 905) and for that matter with Peranakan Chinese and the local Thai community, can lead to some form of irritation. This attitude of dominance on the part of the mainstream Chinese should not be related directly to cultural differences, but rather to the sociopolitical differences in their power status. The ensuing irritation worsens, and the Malays, Peranakan Chinese, and the local Thais all tend to interpret this arrogant attitude as being due to cultural dominance.

The bulk of the literature on interethnic (mis)communication that analyzes differences in discourse strategies, is generally unidirectional (cf., Morris 1981; Gumperz 1982a, 1982b). The issue investigated here is how ethnicity and different cultural backgrounds determine interactants' linguistic and discourse strategies and more importantly how these differences account for breakdowns in communication.

The approach taken in contemporary interactional sociolinguistics to account for interethnic miscommunications, is despairing for the "underprivileged" (Singh and Lele 1989: 112). Often the problem of the so-called 'interethnic miscommunication' is not one of communication but rather

one of perception on the part of the dominant group who views the minority group with prejudice or negative stereotypes. Most of the studies on interethnic miscommunication suggest that the minority group, being the "victims" of misperception, need to acquire the rhetorical devices of the language of the dominant group.

Almost all studies on the subject focus on linguistic data of the minority group being misunderstood by the majority/dominant group. Few studies address the issue of this imbalance. Bidirectional investigations are not only necessary to correct this imbalance, but also to understand better what is involved in an interethnic miscommunication,

The important issues that need to be addressed in a bidirectional approach to interethnic miscommunication include: Are misunderstandings in interethnic encounters caused by the dominated group because they are misunderstood? Is the minority group the one that needs to acquire the discourse strategies of the dominant group to solve the problems of miscommunication? Does the majority group also need to learn from the dominated group rather than always teaching it?

## CHAPTER V

### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

This study has focused on three main issues of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese society: (i) its ethnic formation, identity, and culture, (ii) the form of its language, and (iii) its relations/communication with the wider Kelantan society.

Kelantan Peranakan Chinese identity was portrayed as a result of both assimilation and cultural persistence. The most prominent characteristic of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese identity is their language - a Chinese (Hokkien) language that has undergone major Kelantanese Malay and, to some extent, Kelantanese Thai assimilation. However, the process of linguistic assimilation does not involve the total loss of Chinese (Hokkien).

Another major marker of a separate Chinese identity is the use of Kelantanese Malay and, for some, Kelantanese Thai as one of their languages. The use of the local Malay dialect as well as the local Thai language also enable the Peranakan Chinese to further enhance their solidarity with the local Malay and Thai communities.

Besides their "impure" Chinese (Hokkien), their inadequacy or insufficient<sup>1</sup> linguistic knowledge in standard or mainstream Chinese

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<sup>1</sup>The Baba of Melaka is another group of Malaysian Chinese whose most salient feature of their identity lies in their language, "Baba Malay." The use of Malay as a home language and their inability to speak Chinese (Hokkien) also separate them from the other Malaysian Chinese (cf. Tan 1988a: 241).

(Hokkien) and illiteracy in Mandarin also separate them from the other Malaysian Chinese.

Religion is a domain which is not influenced by their assimilation to the local Malays. The great majority of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese still maintain allegiance to Buddhism - Thai Theravada Buddhism. Buddhism<sup>2</sup> as practiced by the Peranakan Chinese is also combined with many other elements of traditional Chinese religion.<sup>3</sup> These include some local elements such as the veneration of "Tua Ma," ('Eldest Goddess') "Ji Ma," ('Second Goddess') and "Sa Ma" ('Third Goddess') commonly dubbed as "the Goddesses of the Chinese of Kelantan" (Kershaw 1981: 98), as well as elements general to the wider Malaysian Chinese society, such as ancestor worship and the observance of the cycle of principal Chinese festivals.

The Kelantan Peranakan Chinese religious beliefs besides being a combination of Thai Theravada Buddhism with selected elements of traditional Chinese religion, also include a system of medical beliefs heavily dependent on practices of the traditional Kelantan Malay "bomoh" ('spiritual physician') or "dukun" ('traditional physician'). It should be stressed here that despite the Kelantan Malay elements, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese religious beliefs are still essentially non-Muslim, indigenized to its rural Malay environment no doubt, but still Chinese in most of its basic forms.

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<sup>2</sup>Buddhism, especially in its folk varieties, is a tolerant religion.

<sup>3</sup>Traditional Chinese religion is a rich admixture of pragmatism and transcendentalism, its clanship and familialism with its motivation and rituals (Clammer 1983: 161).

The basic features of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese culture, in short, are: (i) the use of a variety of Chinese (Hokkien) which is heavily influenced by Kelantanese Malay and to some extent by the local Thai language, (ii) the adoption (and adaptation) of a considerable body of rural Kelantan Malay customs with respect to dress and food, and (iii) a peculiar (unique to this group) interpretation of certain aspects of Chinese (Hokkien) culture.

These basic features are transmitted from generation to generation through endogamous marriages and socialization, and are maintained by having continuous contact with the Thais and Malays.

### 5.1 IDENTITY

It is quite possible for an ethnic group to lose its traditional language entirely, but in the case of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan, their traditional language of Chinese (Hokkien) though greatly modified by Kelantanese Malay and to some extent by Kelantanese Thai, has not lost its sense of Chinese identity entirely. Kelantan Peranakan Chinese ethnic consciousness is not necessarily dependent on the maintenance of a "pure" Chinese (Hokkien) traditional language, although linguistic change in this group of Chinese is to some extent an indication of Malay and Thai assimilation.

The degree to which an ethnic group feels that its identity is being eroded is related to the emphasis which the group places on language, religion, and/or customs as the keynote to group identity (Anderson 1979: 68). In other words, if an ethnic group has intended to emphasize maintenance of

its traditional language, loss of it will be equated largely with loss of group identity.

Language and religion tend to be important components of ethnic identity for most groups. A group which emphasizes maintenance of its language as the keynote to its identity can be defined as an 'ethno-linguistic group', while a group which places emphasis on religion as the keynote to its identity can be defined as an 'ethno-religious group'.

In other words, retention of a "pure" traditional language can be (and usually is) an important criterion of identity to a group, but it is not the only criterion, nor is it necessarily the most significant criterion for all groups. In this aspect, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese could well be readily defined as an 'ethno-religious group' rather than an 'ethno-linguistic group'.

This study shows that when the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese group largely loses the "purity" of its traditional language, it does not necessarily cease to exist as an identifiable Chinese entity. Another criterion, i.e., religion is emphasized as the main key to the group's consciousness.

#### **5.1.1 Main Trends of Current Peranakan Chinese Social Change**

Change is taking place in the language use of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese as well as their residential patterns, marriage patterns, and religious affiliation.

The linguistic change in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien assumes the form of a linguistic assimilation that implies change but not (total) loss.<sup>4</sup> No Peranakan Chinese groups in Kelantan has ever lost the use of Chinese entirely.

It is commonly supposed that all Peranakan Chinese lack a sufficient linguistic knowledge of standard or mainstream Chinese (Hokkien). There is a considerable number of Peranakan Chinese who, due to their continuous contact with mainstream Chinese (Hokkiens), have some knowledge/competence in standard or mainstream Chinese (Hokkien) for use when interacting with the wider Chinese (Hokkien) population.

Mainstream Chinese stress the need to know and/or maintain Chinese (their various languages/dialects for the oral forms, and Mandarin for the written form) to appreciate the Chinese historical and cultural identity. They believe strongly that knowing a Chinese language/dialect in its "pure" form would enable the Chinese to retain a sense of history and appreciate the fact that they were part of the great Chinese civilization.

It is the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese' illiteracy in Mandarin that is "hurting" their Chinese identity. A knowledge of Mandarin is the hall-mark of a true Chinese identity and the necessary base for the assertion of "pure" Chinese cultural values. A knowledge of Mandarin is also necessary for any Chinese who wishes to have influence in the Chinese community as a whole.

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<sup>4</sup>Linguistic assimilation in the case of the Baba of Melaka implies a loss of the traditional Chinese language and adoption of the prevailing dominant Malay language.

Due to their awareness of the importance of Mandarin in the eyes of the wider Chinese population, many Peranakan Chinese parents now intentionally send their children to Chinese-medium primary schools so that their children will have the opportunity to learn to speak and write Mandarin.

The problem of Chinese identity for the Peranakan Chinese does not end here, i.e. when s/he is able speak Mandarin. Even if a Peranakan Chinese speaks Mandarin well, it is not easy for him/her to identify or be identified fully with the mainstream Chinese. This is because of the Malay appearance s/he has.

It is indeed true that the wider Chinese society, especially those who have received a Chinese-styled education, have difficulty in accepting Peranakan Chinese as being genuinely or fully Chinese. This is simply due to prejudice.

As far as religion is concerned, two other religions are of considerable importance in the study of social change in Kelantan Peranakan Chinese society. Islam has made a noteworthy impact of late, and there are signs showing its increase in influence, especially among young Peranakan Chinese who have been educacted in the Malay-styled education of the National Education System.

There seems to be an association between language/type of education with religion. A large number of Peranakan Chinese Muslim converts tend to be drawn from the Malay-educated group. Their high level of Malay linguistic

skill as well as sociocultural competency are the considerable binding forces between them and the Malays. Islam and the Malay-styled education together form a basis for these Peranakan Chinese converts to establish fuller relationships with the wider Malay/Muslim society. For these Peranakan Chinese Muslim converts, these fuller relationships are needed by them to gain a fuller sense of security with the wider Malay/Muslim population politically and culturally.

Conversion to Islam requires not merely a change of religious beliefs but, in effect, a change of cultural identity<sup>5</sup> as well. Due to their long residence in Kelantan, a predominantly Malay/Muslim state, and also their adoption of many elements of the local Malay culture, the change of cultural identity from Peranakan Chinese to a Malay one, is not at all a drastic shift for the Peranakan Chinese Muslim converts. Assuming Malay/Muslim names and Malay style attire for them also do not create much difference since their original culture is almost identical (due to assimilation) in some aspects to the Malay one. In other words, conversion to Islam does not involve cutting off a Peranakan Chinese from his/her own original cultural affiliations to a fairly radical degree.

Another instance of an association between language/type of education and religion is found when there is conversion to Christianity. Most of the Peranakan Chinese Christian converts tend to come from the English-educated group or those who identify themselves with "Western" culture or wish to

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<sup>5</sup>The Malay reference for conversion to Islam is "masuk Melayu" literally 'entering Malaydom'.

appear "Western."<sup>6</sup> The English language itself is a considerable force in binding these converted Peranakan Chinese with English-speaking Christian mainstream Chinese. Hence, Christianity and the English language together form a significant link between Peranakan Chinese and mainstream Chinese.

Unlike the large number of Peranakan Chinese Muslim converts, cases of Christian conversion are few and have no bearing at all presently on the religious composition of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese.

There are some Peranakan Chinese Christian converts who do not read or speak English in the Wakaf Bharu region. They attend Chinese (Hokkien)-medium church services in the region. Besides becoming Christians purely for the sake of its religious appeal, there are a number of social benefits, however, that may have attracted would-be believers: it widens their contact and provides the link in establishing relationships with mainstream Chinese, which oftentimes lead to inter-communal marriages between the two groups.

'Modernization' processes which include among the most salient ones - education and urbanization, as a result of structural changes occurring in the state and country, have affected the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese society. With a moderate literacy rate, some Peranakan Chinese possess occupational structure similar to that of mainstream Chinese. Thus they reside in urban areas, and become urbanized (rural) Peranakan Chinese.<sup>7</sup> With residential

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<sup>6</sup>In Malaysia, there seems to be some degree of correlation between belief in Christianity and an orientation toward western intellectualism.

<sup>7</sup>A noticeable aspect of cultural change among urbanized (rural) Peranakan Chinese is the field of fashion. While middle-aged Peranakan Chinese women in the rural areas are recognizable in their Peranakan Chinese traditional costume (see Section 2.5.1.3 in chapter II), middle-aged urbanized Peranakan

proximity and casual interaction in everyday life activities, a closer relationship is forged between the two groups.

Although Peranakan Chinese endogamy is still very much alive, of late, the marriage pattern has changed from the strongly preferentially endogamous nature to Peranakan Chinese women marrying into mainstream Chinese (especially Hokkien speaking) society. This new marriage pattern which is quite extensive does not necessarily involve the mainstream Chinese spouses' becoming assimilated to the Peranakan Chinese way of life. In fact, it leads to a dilution of Peranakan Chinese culture. The cases of Peranakan Chinese men taking mainstream Chinese wives are few, although this marriage pattern does exist.

#### **5.1.2 Reformulation of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Identity**

The brief discussion in the foregoing on the components involved in the process of social change is incomplete if the Peranakan Chinese' own perceptions of their identity as a group, and of their future are not assessed.

There are a few social alternatives to be considered by the Peranakan Chinese as a group in maintaining or reformulating their identity. They could either move toward a fuller assimilation with the local Malays or local Thais. This may sound plausible as Peranakan Chinese' mode of behavior is Malay and Thai to some extent. However, moving into either direction is unacceptable to them for a number of reasons.

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Chinese women are not ethnically recognizable in terms of their dress. Their dress includes western style skirt, blouse, dress, and trousers.

Peranakan Chinese are unable to penetrate the Malay ethnic group without first taking the major step of embracing Islam, a step totally disagreeable to the vast majority of them. Embracing Islam or becoming a Muslim does not make one a "bumiputra," ('indigenous') though.<sup>8</sup>

Moving closer toward the local Thai society is also uncongenial to the vast majority of them. By virtue of their religious affiliation to Thai Theravada Buddhism, and the adoption of some Thai elements in their culture, one would be inclined to think that Peranakan Chinese would readily blend in with the local Thai society. But it is not to be so since Peranakan Chinese generally evince a subjective superiority over the local Thais. They regard them as a less industrious lot, a characteristic which, interestingly enough, is in turn ascribed to them by the mainstream Chinese.

To continue asserting a distinctive Peranakan Chinese identity, and remaining a perpetual disadvantaged minority within a minority, is also an unacceptable move. In some sense, Peranakan Chinese are victims of the irony of their own historical development. There is a constant widespread resentment amongst Peranakan Chinese for not being recognized as "bumiputra." If any group (except perhaps the "Orang Asli" ('aboriginals')) that has a legitimate claim to "bumiputra," it is them since they have long regarded Malaysia as their homeland,<sup>9</sup> resided in Malaysia longer than have many other Malay immigrants from Indonesia and other parts of the Malay

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<sup>8</sup>Refer to Section 2.5.1.7 in Chapter II for a discussion on this.

<sup>9</sup>For the Peranakan Chinese, Kelantan/Malaysia is home in every sense of the word.

archipelago, long spoken Malay (the Malay dialect of Kelantan) as one of their languages, and also not better-off economically than their Malay neighbors in rural Kelantan.

Hence, the only option left as seen by them is to gradually become integrated into the wider mainstream Chinese society of Malaysia. This move is plausible since ethnically, and in many respects socially, religiously, and sympathetically, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese regard themselves as Chinese, and it is also to the Chinese sector of the Malaysian society that they are increasingly looking for shelter, be it political or social.

Furthermore, the Chinese part of their behavior, no matter how modified, is never fundamentally discarded by them. Their integration or rather reintegration into a "more" Chinese form of linguistic and cultural organization will certainly help them to be readily identified with the wider mainstream Chinese society. The acquisition of Mandarin and a "purer" variety of Chinese (Hokkien) as languages of communication as well as the adoption (once again) of Chinese mores are the main components of a process for identification as "full" Chinese.

Although reintegrating into the mainstream Chinese society is about the best option Peranakan Chinese have, a vast majority of them still perceive mainstream Chinese as lacking a certain imagined quality of gentleness or humility, besides being thrusting.

A last option which is also acceptable to a vast majority of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese is to reformulate a "new" Peranakan Chinese identity with

a "new" breed of Peranakan Chinese. Linguistically, they should be able to speak a "purer" form of standard or mainstream Chinese (Hokkien) for communication with the wider Chinese (especially Hokkien speaking) society, while still maintaining their heavily Malay and Thai influenced Chinese (Hokkien) for intra-communal interaction, and have an oral as well as written competency in Mandarin, besides striving for a higher fluency in their sociocultural knowledge of the mainstream Chinese.

The rationale behind this move is to instill a "new" Peranakan Chinese identity as it would be too wasteful to discard the Malay and Thai assimilation of the earlier Peranakan Chinese which was a natural process with the absence of any political pressure.<sup>10</sup> The assimilated features of the Peranakan Chinese identity and culture have been passed down from generation to generation, and have been maintained by intensive continuous contacts as well as intimate social connections with the Malays and Thais. Kelantan Peranakan Chinese culture is a "truly"<sup>11</sup> Malaysian culture. This naturally evolved cultural heritage<sup>12</sup> is not well accepted as a contribution to the formation of a national cultural synthesis known as "Kebudayaan Kebangsaan" ('National Culture')<sup>13</sup> due to political pressure from the Malays.

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<sup>10</sup>It is indeed unfortunate that they are victims of their own historical development/ethnic formation in present day Malaysian political interest. However, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese are of outstanding academic interest especially historically, linguistically/sociolinguistically, and sociologically/anthropologically.

<sup>11</sup>The cultures of Melaka Baba and Melaka Chitties are the other two which can be considered "truly" multiracial in spirit.

<sup>12</sup>It is the Malaysian reality to be a multiracial, multilingual and multireligious nation.

<sup>13</sup>The National Culture supposedly a cultural synthesis of a set of common values, norms, and beliefs of the various societies of multiracial Malaysia, is postulated to be strictly based on three principles: (i) the culture indigenous to

Their success in merging elements of the Chinese, Malay and Thai way of life into a genuinely Malaysian form should make them a model of interethnic or cultural integration. By not undergoing any further assimilation to either the Kelantan Malays or local Thais, or integration with the mainstream Chinese, for the reformulation of their identity, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese are moving toward becoming a stable group.

## 5.2 KELANTAN PERANAKAN HOKKIEN: THE PROCESS OF BORROWING

Invariably, in the case of the borrowing situation in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, the first foreign elements to enter it, were words.<sup>14</sup> The strong long-term cultural pressure from the local Thai language as well as the Kelantan Malay dialect on the earlier Peranakan Chinese later led to structural borrowings. In other words, there was gradual convergence of Chinese (Hokkien) with Kelantanese Malay due especially to prolonged co-existence. The extensive Malay and some Thai structural borrowing also required extensive bilingualism among the earlier Peranakan Chinese over a considerable period of time.

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the Malay region, i.e., Malay culture must be the core, (ii) Islam must be an important component, and (iii) the features of other cultures must be suited to Malay culture as well as Islam.

With such a concept for the National Culture of Malaysia, there seems to be a desire to see Malay culture as the predominant (and/or sole) ingredient and a drive to Islamize the non-Malay sector of the population.

<sup>14</sup>The most important effect of cultural influence is lexical borrowing.

An intense contact situation with the two groups, i.e., Peranakan Chinese on one hand and Malays and Thais on the other, was also the cause of extensive structural borrowings. Peranakan Chinese, being the group that was under great cultural pressure from the other two speech groups, i.e., Kelantan Malays and Kelantan Thais, became bilingual and in some cases even, trilingual.<sup>15</sup>

In a comparably intense borrowing situation, as in the case of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, whole subsystems and even almost the entire grammar of Kelantanese Malay were borrowed along with a large number of words, thus bringing about the "death"<sup>16</sup> of Chinese (Hokkien).

The Thai grammatical elements in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien came from the two populations of Chinese and Thai who intermingled through intermarriages and intimate religious connections by professing the same religion - Thai Theravada Buddhism. The Malay grammatical elements in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien came from Peranakan Chinese who were bilingual and spoke Kelantanese Malay fluently and using it regularly as a medium of communication. In other words, intimate social contacts due to

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<sup>15</sup>Kelantan Malays and Kelantan Thais did not become bilinguals. This could have been due to their being relatively larger in number compared to that of Peranakan Chinese.

Cultural pressure is most obviously exerted by a politically and numerically dominant group on a subordinate population living within its sphere of domination.

<sup>16</sup>Language death is typically defined as a process involving the simplification of language form along with the restriction of language function (Knab 1980: 230). It is also the loss of domains of usage that leads to loss of stylistic resources, and ultimately, to loss of grammatical structures, as new generations of speakers fail to learn forms their elders never or rarely used (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 101).

prolonged co-existence were responsible for the incorporation of Malay grammatical elements in their mother tongue.

The Malay grammatical elements in Kelantanese Thai was also due to intimate contacts of the local Thai society with the Malays over a considerable period of time. Due to the proximity of Thailand, especially southern Thailand with Kelantan, the Thais were believed to have settled in the state much earlier than did the Chinese.

Through their mixed marriages with Thai women, the Chinese men did not only adopt the local Thai language, but also the Malay elements incorporated in it. Hence, the Malay grammatical elements in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien could have come directly through their contact with the Malays, or indirectly via their marriages to the Thais.

A social factor that is frequently invoked in discussions of language contact phenomena is prestige. Borrowing generally occurs from a dominant to a subordinate language. Chinese borrowing in Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai, if any, is largely lexical, whereas Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai contributions in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien are mainly syntactic as well as lexical.

Malay and Thai borrowing in Kelantan Peranakan Chinese is not "prestige borrowing" but the natural outgrowth of intimate language contact. The Peranakan Chinese' long-term bilingualism in the two languages interfered with their Chinese (Hokkien). In other words, the spreading colloquial usage of both Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai interfered

with the Chinese rules of sentence formation. In due course, the Chinese rules of sentence formation were dropped, and the Peranakan Chinese adopted and conformed consistently to Kelantanese Malay and Kelantanese Thai rules in their speech.

### **5.2.1 Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and the Language of the Melaka Baba: A Brief Comparison**

The obvious parallel to Kelantan Peranakan Chinese society in terms of Malay assimilation is the Baba of Melaka.<sup>17</sup> This work would be incomplete if a brief mention of the language of the Baba of Melaka as well as its comparison with the language of the Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan, are not attempted here.

From a language contact perspective, both languages underwent a major linguistic assimilation to Malay, but with a difference. The Melaka Baba linguistic assimilation took the form of a total or almost total loss of Chinese (Hokkien) whereas Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien's linguistic assimilation to Malay was in the form of a major linguistic change with much Chinese (Hokkien) remaining.

The language of the Melaka Baba is known as "Baba Malay."<sup>18</sup> It is categorized as a Malay dialect although Pakir (1986: 102-103) admitted that any of the conversation among her Baba informants would be fairly well, although

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<sup>17</sup>Besides Melaka, Baba are also found in Pulau Pinang and Singapore. Pulau Pinang and Singapore Baba appear always to have remained "more Chinese" and "more English" respectively than Melaka Baba. It is the Melaka Baba who went farthest toward abandoning a Chinese way of life (Clammer 1983: 161).

<sup>18</sup>See Shellabear 1913; Tan 1980, 1988a; Lim 1981; and Pakir 1984, 1986.

not completely, understood by speakers of Malay. From my analysis of speech samples of the language<sup>19</sup> of the Melaka Baba collected from Bukit Rambai and Kandang in 1987, I would say that the Melaka Baba language is a relexified Chinese (Hokkien) instead of a dialect of Malay.

A major portion of its vocabulary comes from Malay. Chinese (Hokkien) words for which the Malay language has no words for like: foods, customs, and religion, are retained. Its Chinese (Hokkien) grammatical structure (morphology and syntax) is maintained. In other words, the language of the Melaka Baba is overwhelmingly Malay in vocabulary but Chinese (Hokkien) in grammar. The massive relexification led to and/or was due to the death of Chinese (Hokkien) in the form of the loss of lexical skills.

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is a mirror-image of the language of the Melaka Baba. Although there is massive Malay lexical influence, it is lexical borrowing. In most instances, Malay loanwords exist as additions or synonyms<sup>20</sup> alongside the Chinese (Hokkien) equivalents. It is important to realize that lexical borrowing is something very different from relexification. Relexification is the process of word replacement in a minority language by the dominant one. In other words, Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is Chinese (Hokkien) in vocabulary, with extensive Malay (to some extent Thai)

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<sup>19</sup>Pakir's investigation of "Baba Malay" of the Singapore variety is to my finding not too distant from the Melaka variety of my data.

<sup>20</sup>For some, the Malay loanwords are primary synonyms, while for others, they are secondary ones.

loanwords as additions in most instances, and Malay, i.e., Kelantanese Malay additions<sup>21</sup> in grammar.

To categorize the language as a dialect of Malay, especially when the Baba (Melaka or Singapore for that matter) conversations involve topics of Chinese cultural concern, and where Chinese (Hokkien) words are overwhelmingly used, is not in line with the established concept of dialects as mutually comprehensible varieties of a language. Malay speakers<sup>22</sup> are able to only understand partially the language of the Melaka Baba in its normal form, i.e., when it is overwhelmingly Malay in vocabulary, but not when it is overwhelmingly Chinese (Hokkien) in vocabulary. This wrongly categorized Malay dialect is in part due to the fact that people<sup>23</sup> are more aware of the way a language sounds than the set up of the structure of the quantification system. Since vocabulary is the most visible part of a language, lexical borrowing is perceived as affecting the language in its very being. If the language of the Melaka Baba needs to be categorized as Malay, then it should be termed a variety rather than a dialect of Malay.

An important theoretical question arises from the categorization of the language of the Baba as a Malay dialect - what is more crucial in the

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<sup>21</sup>For the sake of this comparison, Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien is seen as having a Malay grammar in a broad sense. See Section 3.7.2.2 in Chapter III for a discussion on Malay grammar in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien as a "borrowed syntax" or "borrowed separate syntax" alongside Chinese (Hokkien) syntax.

<sup>22</sup>Most Malay speakers are monolingual as far as a Chinese language/dialect is concerned.

<sup>23</sup>By people, I mean lay-persons. Linguists should be more concerned with the structure of a language rather than just its lexicon.

categorization of a language which has undergone major linguistic assimilation or linguistic change due to contact: its vocabulary or its grammar? In the case of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, it is categorized as a variety of Chinese (Hokkien) in this work. The massive Malay lexical influence is lexical borrowing and the Malay grammar is "borrowed syntax" which exists alongside the Chinese (Hokkien) syntax.

In the case of the language of the Melaka Baba, the massive Malay lexical influence is in the form of relexification and the grammar is only Chinese (Hokkien). It is important to point out here that Chinese (Hokkien) and Malay are subject-verb-object languages so as to provide a clearer picture of certain aspects of the grammar of the language of the Melaka Baba and Malay when there are similarities between them. There is no evidence of the presence of a Malay grammar, not even as a "borrowed separate syntax" in the language of the Baba, Melaka or Singapore, except for the structural similarity between them.

The following samples will illustrate the case in point, that the language of the Melaka Baba is Malay in vocabulary but Chinese (Hokkien) in grammar:<sup>24</sup>

(1)

/pandu kəreta puja/ (MBL)

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<sup>24</sup>It is not within the scope of this dissertation to describe/analyze in details the language of the Melaka Baba, let alone compare it with Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. I have adequate data for such a description and comparison which I hope to publish in the near future.

drive car NM  
 /sai cia e/ (H)  
 drive car NM  
 'The one who drives a/the car'

(2)

/gua pupa kəreta/ (MBL)  
 I P marker car  
 /wa e cia/ (H)  
 I P marker car  
 'My car'

(3)

/məlaka pupa baba/ (MBL)  
 Melaka MP marker baba  
 /malaka? e baba/ (H)  
 Melaka MP marker Baba  
 'The Baba of Melaka'

(4)

/dəpan itu tiŋgi səkali pupa gua mau pigi pupa/ (MBL)  
 in front that tall most NM I want go NM  
 /tui bin hi keŋ siag kuan e wa ai kʰi e/ (H)  
 in front that CL most tall NM I want go NM

'That tallest (building) one is where I am heading to'

(5)

/itu jalan bapa? susah jalan/ (MBL)

that path very difficult walk

/hi tia lo cin phai kia/ (H)

that CL path very difficult walk

'That is a very difficult path to walk'

(6)

/gua sekarang mau pigi singapo/ (MBL)

I now want go Singapore

/wa toj kim ai khi singapo/ (H)

I now want go Singapore

'I am going to Singapore now'

(7)

/dia hanta wag kasi dia pupa ana?/ (MBL)

s/he send money D marker s/he G marker child

/i kia lui ho i e kia/ (H)

s/he send money D marker s/he G marker child

'S/he sends money to his/her child'

(8)

/gua masa? kari kasi lu orag makan/ (MBL)

I cook curry C you people eat

/wa cu kali ho li laŋ cia?/ (H)

I cook curry C you people eat

'I will cook curry for all of you to eat'

(9)

/ini buku lu bawa? pigi kasi dia/ (MBL)

this book you take go give him/her

/cə pun cʰe? li tʰe? kʰi ho i/ (H)

this CL book you take go give him/her

'Take this book to him/her'

(10)

/gua satu hari kena jalan turun buke? dua kali/ (MBL)

I one day must walk down hill two time

/wa cə ji? tiɔ? kia lo? sua nəŋ pai/ (H)

I one day must walk down hill two time

'I have to walk down the hill twice a day'

(11)

/ini kari gua mau kasi lu makan tego?/ (MBL)

this curry I want give you eat see

/cə ũã kali wa ai ho li chia? khua/ (H)  
 this bowl curry I want give you eat see  
 'I want you to taste this curry'

(12)

/itu pasəŋ kasut lu pakai teŋo?/ (MBL)  
 that pair shoe you wear see  
 /hi siaŋ e li cʰeŋ khua/ (H)  
 that pair shoe you wear see  
 'Try on that pair of shoes'

In Chinese (Hokkien), main verbs may be followed by the word /kʰua/ 'see' to form compounds. E.g., /meŋ/ 'ask' followed by /kʰua/ 'see' gives the compound /meŋ kʰua/ 'enquire'. In the foregoing samples (Nos. 11 and 12), these Chinese (Hokkien) compounds exist in the form of calques in the language of the Melaka Baba. The Malay equivalents of the compound calques of /makan teŋo?/ literally 'eat' and 'see', or 'taste' is /rasa/, and /pakai teŋo?/ literally 'wear' and 'see', or 'try' is /cuba/.

The foregoing samples lend support to the thesis that the vocabulary of the language of Melaka Baba is Malay, while the grammar is Chinese (Hokkien). The correspondence between sentence structure of the two languages is high. In other words, syntactically as well as semantically, the Melaka Baba language sentences and Chinese (Hokkien) sentences display parallel structures. In the case of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, the inter-translatability between it and the local Malay dialect is high.

### 5.3 INTERETHNIC COMMUNICATION: THE KELANTAN PERANAKAN CHINESE EXPERIENCE

Due to differences in data bases and in research questions, a generally accepted standard consistent framework for describing, analyzing, interpreting and explaining interethnic communication does not exist yet. Each researcher privileges as well as benefits from a/some method(s) and theoretical problem. However, at base, all studies on interethnic communication/contact represent work that has expressed an affinity with, or that which has appeared as part of, the ethnography of speaking/communication.

The study of interethnic communication here is ethnographic in scope and communication in design. There are a few assumptions underlying such a theoretical framework. Communication patterns are systematically structured and need to be studied on their own terms, communication patterns which are highly structured are intimately linked with the social as well as cultural life of the societies concerned, and the nature of communication itself is culture specific (cf., Carbaugh 1990: xvi). The data as well as their description and analysis in this study lend empirical support to each of the foregoing assumptions.

It is hoped that the particular strengths and weaknesses of the describing and analyzing of the data in chapter IV have become evident to the reader. The ethnographic approach to the study of communication taken in this study can provide an essential preliminary of a predictive and testable

theory of communication distinctive to a culture or society, and also a general theory of communication that holds across cultures and societies.

Looking at a particular society, e.g., the local Malay society, deep distinctiveness in the cultural patterning of communication is evident, and looking across the four societies involved in this study, i.e., Kelantan Peranakan Chinese, the local Malays, Kelantan Thais and mainstream Chinese, some commonalities are found.

The exploration of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese communication in various contexts also provides information on how communication displays membership in the various societies studied, and the dynamics involved, such as when a Peranakan Chinese communicates/interacts with a mainstream Chinese.

The two problems basic to both cultural practice in communication and theory of communication, i.e., shared identity and shared knowledge are also encountered in this study. As for shared identity or group membership, it is found that the particular ways in which each society organizes its communication are done distinctly and are associated with the society's perception of itself. At times, in organizing their speech during interaction, the members are indirectly demonstrating their identity.

A shared common knowledge of linguistic as well as cultural acts and meanings is crucial in interethnic communication. The ways of structuring discourse in the various contexts linguistically as well as culturally, and the meanings of those discourse patterns, i.e., patterns of politeness, are important

for the speakers as they (i.e., the discourse patterns) symbolically and interactionally affirm and reaffirm their identity.

#### 5.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present work is very far from being a comprehensive study of the Peranakan Chinese society of Kelantan, Malaysia. My contribution which takes the form of presentation and analysis, is only the beginning of a wider scope of sociolinguistic (from the historical, linguistic and social anthropological perspectives) study which I have every intention of carrying out later on.

Lack of space as well as inadequate data, however, has made it necessary to abridge the scope of this work and leave certain areas unstudied, such as the phonology of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien, with its tone system in particular.

Topics barely touched upon in this work are: the attitudes of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese toward their language, as well as the local Malay and Thai languages; the possibility that structural borrowing in Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Hokkien is in part due to an internally motivated evolution moving in the direction of the forms of Kelantanese Malay; and the utilizing of quantitative methods for measuring degree of consistency in behavior, and the amount as well as variation under different circumstances. These quantitative methods are crucial in confirming the reliability of qualitative observation like the one adopted in this work.

There is much scope for further research. The groundwork has been laid by this work as a sizeable amount of linguistic/sociolinguistic data has been collected, schemes for description, analysis, and interpretation evolved, and the general characteristic and trends in the grammar of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien abstracted.

## Bibliography

The following bibliography consists of two parts which contain all of the works referred to in this study as well as other works which have been found useful in the course of the research and writing of this study.

Abbreviation:

JMBRAS - Journal of the Malayan (Malaysian) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

### PART I

The ensuing list consists of all the works cited in this dissertation.

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## PART II

The ensuing list contains works that have been found useful in the course of research and writing of this dissertation.

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