PERSATUAN LINGUISTIK MALAYSIA
Bahasa Sendi Tamadun Bangsa

www.plm.org.my

JURNAL LINGUISTIK Vol. 27 (2) November 2023 (089-102)

IBAN vs ENGLISH: The Language Choice among The Young Ibans

[1]Joanna Bridget Stanley Stewart, & [2]Suziana Mat Saad
joanna.bridget.jb@gmail.com , suziana@ukm.edu.my

[1]Program Kajian Bahasa Inggeris
[2]Unit Bahasa Asing dan Terjemahan
Pusat Kajian Bahasa dan Linguistik
Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, MALAYSIA

_____

Abstract

The loss of native languages is a phenomenon with major cultural, social, and linguistic implications. It refers to the slow elimination of indigenous or local languages, which frequently results in the domination of more widely spoken languages or a complete eradication of the language. Malay and English are the two most widely spoken languages in Malaysia, hence the loss of indigenous languages may be witnessed as more populations, mostly the people of Borneo, advance toward the dominant languages. The Iban language has lost its authenticity as people no longer use the Iban language's standard form. The Iban language has undergone significant changes with the rapid use of social media. The use of the Iban language in social media is also very widespread to the point where there is a significant language discrepancy. This study aims to identify whether Iban youngsters prefer using terms in the English language compared to the existing terms in the Iban language in their daily conversation. To gather data, the study used a questionnaire with several questions. A total of 30 participants were involved in this study. The findings revealed that there are some Iban speakers that are not badly influenced by the language used in social media, which is illustrated by the participants' preferences of terms used in their daily conversation. The study found that for certain categories, young speakers still prefer phrases in Iban while others prefer English terms. In conclusion, this study reveals a complex relationship between language choice and the context or cultural connotations of the choice of terms in the languages involved.

Keywords: Iban, English, preference, young, native language

IBAN vs BAHASA INGGERIS: Pilihan Bahasa dalam Kalangan Remaja Iban

Abstrak

Kehilangan bahasa ibunda adalah fenomena yang mempunyai implikasi budaya, sosial dan linguistik yang utama. Ia merujuk kepada penghapusan secara perlahan-lahan bahasa peribumi atau tempatan, yang sering mengakibatkan penguasaan bahasa lain yang lebih meluas atau pembasmian sepenuhnya bahasa itu. Bahasa Melayu dan Inggeris ialah dua bahasa yang paling banyak digunakan di Malaysia, justeru kehilangan bahasa peribumi mungkin dapat disaksikan apabila lebih ramai penduduk, kebanyakannya penduduk Borneo, cenderung memilih bahasa dominan. Bahasa Iban telah semakin hilang keasliannya apabila penuturnya tidak lagi menggunakan bentuk baku bahasa Iban. Bahasa Iban telah mengalami perubahan yang ketara kesan daripada penggunaan media sosial yang semakin meluas. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti sama ada anak muda Iban lebih gemar menggunakan istilah dalam bahasa Inggeris berbanding istilah sedia ada dalam bahasa Iban dalam perbualan harian mereka. Untuk mengumpul data, kajian menggunakan soal selidik yang mengandungi

beberapa soalan yang berkaitan. Seramai 30 orang peserta terlibat dalam kajian ini. Hasil daripada analisis, kajian mendapati terdapat sebilangan penutur Iban yang tidak terpengaruh dengan bahasa yang digunakan dalam media sosial, yang digambarkan oleh keutamaan peserta terhadap istilah yang mereka gunakan dalam perbualan harian. Kajian mendapati bagi kategori tertentu, penutur muda masih mengutamakan frasa dalam bahasa Iban manakala yang lain lebih mengutamakan istilah b a h a s a Inggeris. Kesimpulannya kajian ini menunjukkan terdapat perkaitan yang kompleks antara pilihan bahasa dengan konteks atau konotasi budaya pemilihan istilah dalam bahasa- bahasa yang terlibat.

Kata kunci: Iban, Inggeris, pilihan, remaja, bahasa ibunda

_____

1.   Introduction

Globalization has evolved swiftly today, to the point that technology is being improved to given better approach to education among the younger generation to increase their competencies. Globalization, on the other hand, has posed a threat to the existing fragile languages and civilizations. The English language is the most extensively utilized all over the world since it is more effective in terms of job, socialization, and education. Malay and English are the two most widely spoken languages in Malaysia, hence the loss of indigenous languages may be witnessed as more populations, mostly the people of Borneo, advance toward the dominant languages. Sarawak is the largest state in Malaysia. It is made up of various races and contributes to the diversity of language use in the state. Sarawak is made up of 27 ethnicities, and Iban is the largest ethnic group in the state (Department of Statistics, 2020). The Iban people arrived in Sarawak in the mid-16th century via the Indonesian border routes of KapuasUlu and Batang Ai. The Iban people live in longhouses, their traditional homes, which are generally found located in remote Sarawak areas, and the most prominent of the longhouse features is its numerous "doors," each of which is occupied by a different family. The Iban community in Sarawak is well-known for its historically popular ritual known as Head Huntingor 'Ngayau,' which illustrates the Iban male practice of seizing and conserving the enemy's head. The Iban community is particularly well-known for its slogan, Agi Idup, Agi Ngelaban,which translates to 'Still Alive, Still Fighting.', "I will fight as long as I shall live!". (Sandra Balentia Engkasan & Hamidah Yamat 2021).

In Sarawak, it is normal for an individual to master more than two languages. This shows that code-mixing has taken place in the Sarawakians' daily speech. However, on the other hand, the code-mixing situation might pose a threat to the authenticity of an indigenous language, which in this case is the Iban language. The non-standard form of the Iban languageis being used gradually due to the extensive use of social media, especially among the younger generation of the Iban community. According to the news written in Suara Sarawak by Alvester Bigol (2019) claims in comparison to its usage in entertainment like as radio broadcasts, news, and printed books, which have gone through several verification procedures by authorized editors, the use of Iban language on social media is unrestricted. As a result of this circumstance,the Iban language has been used in an increasingly improper manner, with grammar and spelling rules being arbitrarily disregarded.

1.1   Problem statement

Sarawak has undergone progress and changes over time in a variety of sectors, including education. As a result, the Iban children are not left behind in education because they attend mainstream school (Engkasan & Yamat 2021). The development ofthe education system has promoted a mixed code scenario, namely the acquisition of second languages in schools, particularly Malay and English which has resulted in the people of Sarawak, particularly the Iban younger generations being fluent in both languages. However, Stephen et al. (2017) stated that the practice of code-mixing among some native

speakers in their daily conversations is considered an action that can influence the authenticity of the mother tongue. The Iban language is still widely spoken among the Iban people. However, given Malaysia's complex multilingual ecology, indigenous languages are increasingly losing their domains to more dominant languages, namely Malay and English (Metom et al, 2021). Stephen et. al (2017) claim that the most common factor that leads to a code- mixing situation among Iban speakers is because the speakers are bilingual or multilingual, which means the speakers know more than one language.

Characteristics of code-mixing can be seen from the smoothness of the speaker's conversation, which means the speakers are able to converse spontaneously and maintain the smoothness of the conversation every time code-mixing occurs. Due to the code-mixing phenomenon, the Iban language has lost its authenticity as people are no longer using the standard form of the Iban language. The Iban language has undergone significant changes with the rapid use of social media. The use of the Iban language in social media is also very widespread to the point where there is a significant language discrepancy. This situation causes the non-standard use of the Iban language to be used freely by social media users, such as utilizing words from other languages namely English and Malay in both spoken and written discourse in Iban, instead of using Iban words. It is worse when the younger generation takes a careless attitude towards their own mother tongue. Kihob & Mahali (2020) claim that the use of today's technology, especially smartphones and the internet, is the culprit to the code-mixing phenomenon.

In some cases, it is unfortunate that many Iban children are not fluent in their own mother tongue because they are not trained to speak the Iban language by their parents (Indun Silong 2020). In a study conducted by Metom et. al (2021), the findings reveal that Iban respondents who resided in non-Iban dominating regions used English more often when writing SMS messages, suggesting that their social network may be more ethnically varied and contain a greater number of connections from other ethnic groups, demanding the usage of English.

1.3   Objective

The purpose of this study is to understand how the acquisition of the English language influences the mother tongue. In this study, two main issues will be studied. Firstly, the attitude of the Iban youngsters towards the Iban language and secondly, to identify whether Iban youngsters prefer using terms in the English language compared to the existing terms in the Iban language in their daily conversation. The stated objective is clear and focused.

2.   Review of Literature: The Iban Community and its Language

The Iban are the most prominent ethnic group on the island of Borneo. Previously, the Iban were referred to as "Sea Dayaks" during the colonial period. Their ancestral home is the island of Borneo, which is divided officially between Malaysia and Indonesia; the Iban are predominantly located in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. They have spread across Sarawak, including Kuching, Saribas, Skrang, Lemanak, Batang Lupar, Lundu, Miri, Bintulu, Kapit, Limbang, Lawas, and Sri Aman. This ethnic group is distinguished by dialect and is connected to the locations of their communities (Osup 2019). Furthermore, they are a broad group that may be found in all four parts of Borneo, namely Sarawak and Sabah of Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and Kalimantan province of Indonesia. In 2013, there were roughly 800,000 Ibans in Sarawak alone (Department of Statistics 2020). The Ibans have lived peacefully with other ethnic groups including the Malays, Chinese, Bidayuh, and Orang Ulu.

The dynamic relationships between Iban and other ethnic groups have resulted in progressive changes in the Iban society and culture. Those who reside near the same river system tend to have a shared culture and differentiate themselves from other ethnic groups by variances in dialect, rituals, and *adat* (way of life). The Iban community in Sarawak has a dynamic and comprehensive cultural mix. They have high intellectual power in creating

custom,culture, and heritage to form identity and self-identity. These cultural elements continue to exist and continue in the Iban community because they are passed down from generation togeneration. Despite experiencing some changes in terms of function, material, and cultural philosophy in the context of customs, the existence of these cultural artifacts can still be seen, touched, and experienced in all the long houses of the Iban community in Sarawak (Kiyai & Tugang 2020).

The Iban community emphasizes the importance of preserving traditions as their identity. The uniqueness of culture has prompted scholars from all over the world to study Iban society and culture to create ethnographic records for future generations (Osup 2015). There is a famous proverb in the Iban language that highlights the importance of preserving the languageas the identity of the community, "*Dikelala buah ari langgu, dikelala daun ari kayu, dikelala basa ari penyiru, dikelala bansa ari jaku*", which means "a race is known from its language",and it shows the emphasis of keeping a language as an identity to a group of races. Accordingto a study conducted by Osup (2015), the Iban language is spoken by a third of the people in Sarawak, the state's biggest indigenous community with a 47,000 square-mile area. Many linguists and anthropologists have attempted to investigate various aspects of the Iban language, but Omar's study was the first to make a thorough grammatical description of this ethnic language's grammar. This study, which was first conducted in 1969, has served as a valuable resource for linguists, anthropologists, and social scientists who wishto conduct more research on this ethnic language. Osup (2015) also conducted research on the Iban language, although his findings only provided a general look at the language's phonological system and phonemic inventory while also attempting to describe some of the language's morphology and intonation. As a result, there seem to be connections between the Iban and Malay languages. During the period of Rajah Brooke, this language waswidely spoken and used for commerce among Iban, Chinese, Malay, Bidayuh, and Orang Ulupeople. Speakers of the Iban language may be found in Kalimantan, Sarawak, Sabah, Brunei, and Brunei (Osup 2015). Iban is classed as a Malayic language, part of the Austronesian language family's Malayo-Polynesian branch. The language is connected to Malay, namely the Sarawakian Malay dialect (Osup 2015). Metom et al (2021) claim that the linguistic similarities between the Sarawakian Malay dialect and the Iban language have made it easier for the Iban speakers to adopt the Sarawakian Malay dialect in their daily conversation.

According to Kunyo & Mohammad Yasin (2021), the Iban language isthe mother tongue of the Iban community and is a subject offered in most schools in Sarawak.This subject has been offered as an additional subject in 675 primary schools and 79 secondary schools. At the upper secondary level, the Iban language is offered as 21 an elective subject (Sarawak State Education Department 2019). However, not all schools offer this subject in schools especially if the school is not in the Iban population.

In Sarawak, there are various initiatives carried out for the preservation of the Iban language, including church institutions and mass media such as news broadcasts by Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) and TV Sarawak (TVS), where the use of the Iban language in church activities such as mass, even as an official news broadcasting medium so that it can belearned by everyone and not exclusive only to the Ibans in Sarawak. Another initiative of preserving the Iban language is the establishment of the Tun Jugah Foundation in 1985. Its establishment signified the beginning of a persistent, comprehensive, and integrated effort to conserve and preserve the Iban language and culture. The primary objective of the Tun Jugah Foundation is to gather, record, translate, and explain Iban folklore in order to make it more convenient for current and future Iban generations to learn Iban literature and language (Osup 2015).

According to Darois & Mohd Yusof (2003) there are many terms from other languages such as English and Malay that have been adopted into the Iban language but adjusted to suit the local pronunciation. This is influenced by many factors, including the limited vocabulary of the Iban language. In the context of the Iban language, colonization is one of the factors contributing to this phenomenon. In a study conducted by Stephen (2017),

he stated that the clash between Western and Iban cultures during Brooke's reign in Sarawak was a factor that led to many English terms later being recognizedas Iban languages.

According to Metom et. al (2021), indigenous languages are gradually losing their identities in Malaysia's complex multilingual ecology to other more prevalent languages. Malay and English, two commercially and politically significant languages, pose a threat to these languages. According to research by Ting et. al (2021), indigenous language use is shiftingtoward Malay and English among Malaysia's many minority communities, including the Tindalin Sabah (Kijai et. al 2012), the Mah Meri in Selangor (Coluzzi 2016), and the Kejaman (Joan & Ting 2016), Kayan (Wan et. al 2015), Bidayuh (Coluzzi 2016), and Sihan (Mohamed & Hashim 2012) in Sarawak. According to Metom et. al (2021) in Iban-dominant regions in Sarawak such as Sri Aman,Betong, Miri, Sibu, Limbang, Kapit, Lubok Antu, and Sarikei, Iban is still extensively used in the family, neighbourhood, education, work, religious, and transaction sectors. However, Iban is only spoken often by the Iban people, and contact with other ethnic groups in these Iban-dominant regions is mostly in English, Sarawak Malay, and Standard Malay.

3.   Methods

In this study, close-ended questions are distributed to the participants ~~of this research~~ to obtain the primary data. The questionnaire was adopted from previous studies entitled The Iban of Sarawak, Malaysia: Ethnic Language Losing Ground to English and Sarawak Malay by Metom, Ting & Ling, (2021) and Code-Mixing Factors among Iban in Sarawak by Stephen, Osup & Abu Bakar (2017). The questionnaires were later adjusted according to the objectives of this study. The questionnairewas distributed through Google Forms, where the participants answered the survey in their respective locality. In this study, a questionnaire was employed, comprising three sections: thefirst section focused on demographics, the second section assessed the status of the Iban language among participants with 17 questions, and the third section investigated the choice ofterms used in everyday conversation, comparing English and Iban with 35 questions. This discussion will specifically address demographic information and the choice of terms used in everyday conversation. In the Google Form, there is a consent section to ensure that all participants answered the survey voluntarily, while also protecting the data confidentiality of each participant, and encouraging positive feelings before and after completing the survey. Theresearcher reached the participants via social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Telegram.

The Google Form is divided into three main sections, the first section (Section I) is the demographic section of the participants, and the second section (Section II) is a section that discusses questions related to the use of Iban language and their fluency in the language and finally in the last section (Section III) is the main part of this study, where participants will be given several terms in Iban and English and participants will choose terms that they commonlyuse in everyday conversation. For section II, data was collected through 5 points-Likert scale with the following indication: 1 - Strongly Agree, 2 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree. It enables researchers to compare and analyze data from various people or groups by measuring the strength and direction of attitudes or views (Batterton & Hale 2017)

A total of 30 participants participated in this study. Participants were selected based onthe following criteria: they were Sarawak residents who have lived in Sarawak for more than 10 years. They were born between the year 1998 - 2003, which is the same age group as the largest group of social media users in 2022. A research conducted by Auxier & Anderson (2021) reveals that a substantial majority of individuals within the 18 to 29 age group are active on various social media platforms, with 84% of them reporting regular usage. This data underscores the prevalence of social media engagement among young adults, suggesting that individuals in the younger age brackets are the primary users of social media. They had Iban parents or one Iban parent, and they spoke Iban in everyday conversation.

4.   Findings and Discussion

This section discusses the findings from the questionnaire.

4.1 Findings

The collected data was meticulously structured and presented with tables and charts. In the following sections, the researcher will provide detailed explanations of the results displayed ineach diagram.

Demography

There are thirty (30) young Ibans participated in this study, ten (10) were male, while 20 were female. Kuching has the most participants (7), accounting for 23.3% of the total among the listed divisions. Miri comes in second place with 5 participants (16.7%). Sibu and Sri Aman had 3 and 4 participants respectively, accounting for 13.3% and 10% of the total. Sarikei, Kapit,and Mukah each had two responses, accounting for 6.7% of the total. Other than the division of hometown mentioned, there are 3 hometowns of the participants that falls under the categoryof "Others", which are Song, Saratok and Simunjan that has one participant respectively, accounting for 3,3% of the total.

With regards to the parents' ethnicity, 22 participants (73.3%) claimed that their father's ethnicity is Iban while about 8 (26.7%) of participants claimed that their father is non-Iban. 20participants (66.7%) claimed that their mother's ethnicity is Iban while about 10 (33.3%) of participants claimed that their mother is non-Iban. There were 13 participants (43.33%) who claimed that both parents are Iban. The age groups shown in the data range from 20 to 24, which means this group of participants has a limited age range.

Table 1 : Participants' demography

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	10	33.3
Female	20	66.7
Age		
20	8	26.7
21	7	23.3
22	8	26.7
23	6	20
24	1	3.3
Division of Hometown		
Kuching	7	23.3
Samarahan	0	0
Sri Aman	3	10
Betong	0	0

Sarikei	2	6.7
Kapit	2	6.7
Mukah	2	6.7
Sibu	4	13.3
Bintulu	1	3.3
Miri	5	16.7
Limbang	1	3.3
Others	3	10
Father's ethnicity		
Iban	22	73.3
Non-Iban	8	26.7
Mother's ethnicity		
Iban	20	66.7
Non-Iban	10	33.3
TOTAL	30	

Participants' Attitude towards the Iban Language

A descriptive analysis was conducted by analyzing each statement to gain a better insight into the responses for each statement, and the findings show that a vast majority of the participants show a positive attitude towards the Iban language.

The Iban language, deeply intertwined with the cultural fabric of the Iban community, serves as a testament to the enduring heritage and identity of its speakers. A comprehensive study, meticulously analyzing the responses of participants, revealed profound insights into the community's attitudes and behaviors towards the language, shedding light on its significance in their daily lives and cultural practices.

Examining the first statement, a substantial 43.33% of the participants strongly agreed that the Iban language holds great importance within the community due to its widespread use. This finding highlights the language's integral role in facilitating communication and preserving cultural traditions. Furthermore, the second statement elicited an even stronger response, with 50% of participants strongly agreeing and an additional 30% agreeing that the multitude of Iban speakers signifies the language's continued relevance despite its non-national status. This response underscores the participants' recognition of the language as a symbol of cultural resilience and communal identity, transcending geographical boundaries.

Delving deeper into the participants' personal experiences, the study uncovered a strong inclination towards the use of the Iban language, with 40% strongly agreeing and 33.33% agreeing that they utilize the language whenever possible. This inclination reflects the participants' deep-rooted connection with their linguistic heritage and a commitment to preserving the essence of their cultural identity. However, the study also revealed challenges faced by some participants, as 40% agreed with the fourth statement, indicating a lack of confidence in speaking Iban, leading them to resort to other

languages. This finding emphasizes the importance of fostering linguistic confidence and creating a supportive environment to encourage the active use of the Iban language.

Furthermore, the data highlighted the community's strong support for the use of the Iban language during significant events, such as church mass services, with 46.67% of participants strongly agreeing and an additional 26.67% agreeing that the language should be employed on such occasions. This sentiment underscores the cultural significance of the language as a conduit for fostering communal bonds and upholding collective values during essential ceremonial practices.

Moreover, the study revealed a profound sense of pride among the participants in their ability to communicate in the Iban language, with 60% strongly agreeing and 16.67% agreeing that they are proud to use the language, even if occasional English terms are incorporated for clarity. This pride exemplifies the community's adaptive nature and their willingness to embrace linguistic evolution while safeguarding the cultural authenticity embedded within the language.

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis of the study showcases the enduring importance of the Iban language in preserving the cultural heritage and identity of the Iban community. The findings underscore the need for initiatives to promote the active use of the language, foster linguistic confidence, and integrate it into various formal and ceremonial domains. By recognizing the pivotal role of language in cultural preservation, the community can ensure the continued thriving of the Iban language as a symbol of cultural pride and resilience for generations to come.

The data reflects a sense of pride in being able to communicate in Iban, even if English terms are used for clarity.

Table 2 : Findings from the participants' attitude towards the Iban language

Likert Scale	Frequency & Percentage (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5
I think Iban is an important language because it is widely used among the community.	13 (43.30)	7 (23.30)	6 (20.00)	0	4 (13.30)
I think Iban is an important language because there are a lot of Iban speakers, and it is a good sign which shows the language is still relevant although it is not a national language.	15 (50.00)	9 (30.00)	0	3 (10.00)	3 (10.00)
I use Iban whenever I can.	12 (40.00)	10 (33.30)	0	2 (6.70)	6 (20.00)
I use other languages whenever I can because sometimes, I do not feel confident enough to speak Iban	2 (6.70)	12 (40.00)	6 (20.00)	8 (26.7)	2 (6.7)
I think Iban should be used often in special occasions like mass services in the church.	14 (46.70)	8 (26.70)	3 (10.00)	2 (6.70)	3 (10.00)

I think Iban should be used more often especially for formal purposes as one of the initiatives to preserve the language	14 (46.70)	9 (30.00)	2 (6.70)	3 (10.00)	2 (6.70)
I am proud to be able to converse in the Iban language although some terms in English are used to ensure that the messages are conveyed perfectly.	18 (60.00)	5 (16.70)	1 (3.30)	0	6 (20.00)

Participants' Preference of Terms

This section provides the findings on the participants' preference of terms. Some of thefindings are illustrated in graphs for different categories of terms.
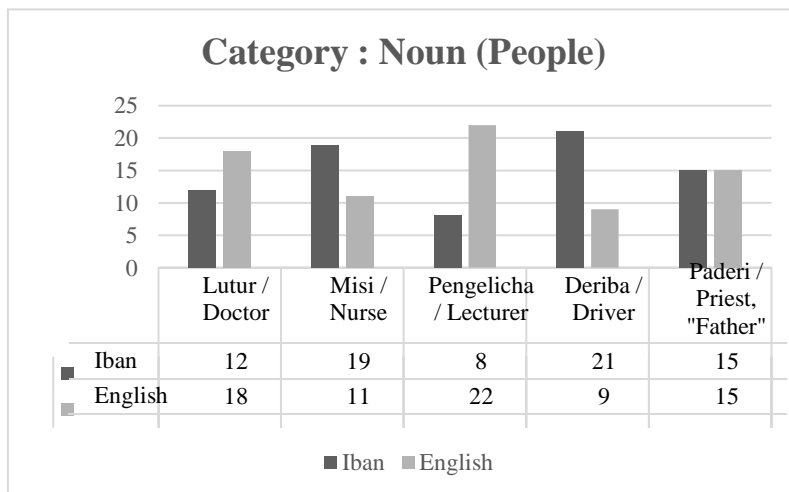

Figure 1: Participants' preference of terms under the category of Noun (People)

For the term "Doctor" (*Lutur*), a larger number of participants (18) preferred the English term, while a smaller number (12) chose the Iban term. Conversely, for the term "Nurse" (*Misi*), many participants (19) opted for the Iban term, while a smaller number (11) selected the English term. Regarding the term"Lecturer" (*Pengelicha*), the majority of participants (22) preferred the English term, while a smaller number (8) chose the Iban term. Similarly, for the term "Driver" *(Deriba)*, a higher proportion of participants (21) selected the Iban term compared to the English term (9). Interestingly, the term "Priest"generated an equal number of responses for both the Iban term "Paderi" and the English term "Father,"with 15 participants selecting each option. This indicates a balanced preference or familiarity with bothterms when referring to a priest.
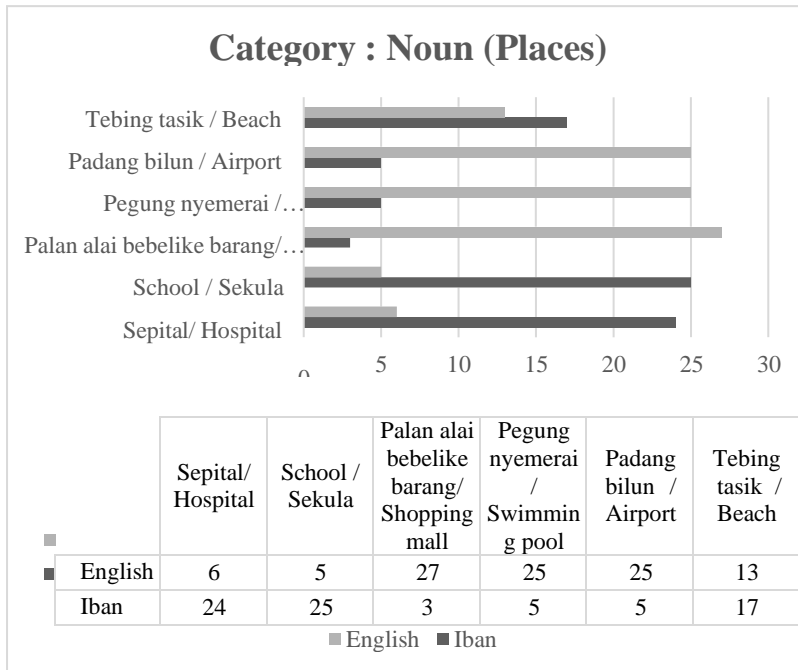
	Sepital/ Hospital	School / Sekula	Palan alai bebelike barang/ Shopping mall	Pegung nyemerai / Swimming pool	Padang bilun / Airport	Tebing tasik / Beach
English	6	5	27	25	25	13
Iban	24	25	3	5	5	17

Figure 2 : Participants' preference of terms under the category of Noun (Places)

It can be observed that for the term "Hospital" *(Sepital)*, the majority of participants (24) preferred the Iban term, while a smaller number (6) chose the English term. Similarly, for the term "School" *(Sekula)*, most participants (25) opted for the Iban term, whereas a minority (5) selected the English term. Regarding the term "Shopping mall" (*Palan bebeli barang*), a vast majority of participants (27) preferred the English term, while a small number (3) chose the Iban term. Similarly, for the term "Swimming pool" (*Pegung nyemerai*) and "Airport" (*Padang bilun*), a higher proportion of participants (25) selected the English terms compared to the Iban terms (5). For the term "Beach" (*Tebing tasik*), thepreference was relatively balanced, with 17 participants opting for the Iban term and 13 participants choosing the English term.

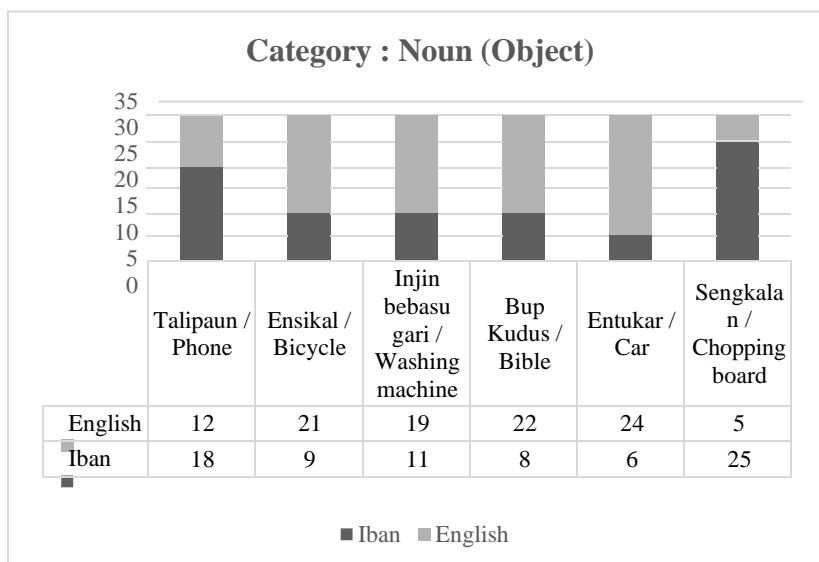|	Talipaun / Phone	Ensikal / Bicycle	Injin bebasu gari / Washing machine	Bup Kudus / Bible	Entukar / Car	Sengkalan / Chopping board
English	12	21	19	22	24	5
Iban	18	9	11	8	6	25

Figure 3 : Participants' preference of terms under the category of Noun (Objects)

For the term "Phone" (*Talipaun*), a larger number of participants (18) preferred the Iban term, while a smaller number (12) chose the English term. Conversely, for the term "Bicycle" *(Ensikal)*, a majority of participants (21) opted for the English term, while a smaller number (9) selected the Iban term.

Regarding the term "Washing machine" *(Injin bebasu gari)*, a higher proportion of participants (19) preferred the English term, while a smaller number (11) chose the Iban term. Similarly, for the term "Bible" *(Bup Kudus)*, the majority of participants (22) selected the English term, while a smaller number (8) opted for the Iban term. For the term "Car" *(Entukar)*, the majority of participants (24) preferred the English term, while a smaller number (6) chose the Iban term. Lastly, for the term "Chopping board" *(Sengkalan)*, a significant majority of participants (25) opted for the Iban term, while a small number (5) selected the English term.

4.2 Discussions

Participants' Demography

Firstly, some participants might have learned Iban through formal education, in addition to learning Iban only from their parents, where Iban is the medium of the household. In this case, the demography of the participants has been discovered thoroughly to support the hypotheses. Under the social factor, the researcher believes that the locality of the participants' division of hometown gives a significant impact on the study findings. Based on the data collected by the researcher, participants with Iban parents who hail from the non-urban area of Sarawak still prefer using terms in Iban in their daily conversation. This is supported by the findings from a study conducted by Ting et. al, (2020) has shown that Iban is still widely spoken as the main language among society such as family, friendship, transactions, and religious domains in Song. the participants hailed from three different divisions in Sarawak, namely Saratok, Sri Aman, and Kapit , and these divisions are the non-urban areas of Sarawak., and Iban is still the main medium of communication in the areas mentioned. According to a study conducted by Yamat & Engkasan (2021) on exploring the English language learning experience among Iban secondary ESL learners in Saratok, Sarawak, the Iban learners struggled to master the English language because they needed to balance their command of three languages: Malay, English, and their native language, Iban. The three languages are to be acquired during school, with Malay and English Language being compulsory subjects in three public examinations conducted in Malaysia, and Iban Language being a selective subject.

On the other hand, for some cases of a few participants, living in an urban area and mixed marriages can potentially be factors that influence the language preferences of Iban participants, including their inclination towards English terms compared to Iban terms. However, without specific data or research focused on these factors in relation to the Iban language, it is challenging to make definitive conclusions. Findings from a study conducted by Metom et. al (2021) reveal that in six of the seven language usage categories examined, except for the religious domain, the Iban respondents claimed to use more Sarawak Malay and/or English than Iban. Many Iban people have left their longhouses to study and work in the cities such as Kuching. This puts them in touch with ethnically varied social and professional networks that include Chinese and Malay from various dialect groups and other indigenous communities.

Language Interference

Interference with Malay may have an influence on the language preferences revealed in the data. The Malay language, which is widely spoken in Malaysia and has a large effect in the region, may lead to the adoption of specific loanwords or code-mixing among Iban youth. The Malay language is the national language, and it is also the main medium in most schools in Malaysia. According to Nahar and Abd Rahman (2018), the objective of Malay language education is also to foster individuals who are informed, noble, responsible, and capable of conversing in Malay. To achieve this goal, students must have self-awareness, positive attitudes, and a strong desire to acquire the Malay language. Following the Ministry of Education Malaysia's standardization of the Language Education Policy's implementation, learning Malay has become more significant to students. With the implementation of this policy, only Malay would be used as the language of teaching for public exams. As a result, students in Malaysia must be fluent in Malay. Additionally, based on the findings from a study

conducted by Ting Su-Hie, the Iban respondents choose Bahasa Malaysia over English whena standard language is required, such as when communicating with teachers at school, readingreligious materials, or using the media.

Other than that, the researcher believes that the similarities between Iban and Malay have given significant impacts on the participants' preference of term as illustrated in the figures. According to Sawek (2019), the Iban community has absorbed numerous Malayvocabulary into the Iban language through the process of sound integration. The process of word absorption has gone through a few stages from the oldest generation to the current generation. For instance, based on the findings from the survey for item (5) under the category"Colours": *"Mirah"* vs Red, most of the participants, which is 27 out of 30 (90%) of the participants chose "Mirah", and this is due to its similarity in the Malay language, *"Merah".* The similarities in pronunciation between Iban and Malay can lead to incorrect spelling and usage of Iban terms. Additionally, the lack of formal education in the Iban language for manyIban speakers further contributes to the challenges in maintaining language authenticity.

The outcomes highlight the nuanced relationship between language and cultural connotations. Language choice goes beyond a mere linguistic decision and can be influenced by cultural, social, and historical factors. Understanding these preferences can provide insights into the dynamics of language use within a specific community or context.

Expressions Shortening.

Table 3 : Comparison of syllables between English terms and Iban terms

Terms	Number of responses in English	Number of responses in Iban
Weekend / Ujung minggu	4	26
Washing machine / Injin bebasu gari	5	25
Shopping mall / Palan bebeli barang	3	27

The factor of shortening expressions appears to have some significance in the findings based on the data that has been presented in the table above. There is an obvious preference for English terms over Iban ones in all three cases, indicating that the tendency to simplify utterances may be impacting the selection of the language. Considering the syllable count strengthens the argument that shortening expressions plays a significant role in the preference for loanwords or code-mixing. According to a study conducted by Stephen et. al (2017),the findings claim that the message accuracy element is essential in code-mixing scenarios in Iban language communication. It is believed that using a language other than Iban in a conversation might help convey ideas more clearly. There are even some who believe that theinformation the recipient wishes to express is what matters most, regardless of how the messageis conveyed. In reality, the person switches to another language while still speaking in their mother tongue, switches back, and so forth. This indicates that the speaker is using a languageother than his mother tongue to convey a meaning that he is not familiar with in that language.

5. Conclusions

This study delves into the impact of globalization on the authenticity and survival of the Iban language spoken by the Iban population in Sarawak, Malaysia. It underscores the widespread use of code-mixing, particularly among the youth, influenced by bilingualism and social media.The research emphasizes the importance of preserving indigenous languages as a means of protecting cultural identity and traditional knowledge. Additionally, the study stresses the necessity of educating the Iban community, especially the younger generation, about the valueof their mother tongue. By identifying factors contributing to the integration of foreignlanguage terms, such as English, into the Iban language, the study aims to promote the authenticuse of Iban and prevent its further degradation.

The study's methodology relied on a quantitative approach using surveys to explore young Ibans' attitudes toward the Iban language and potential adoption of English phrases. Participants included Iban undergraduates from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia across various campuses. The research found that context and cultural connotations significantly influenced language choice across different categories. The study recognizes the Iban language's natural evolution, driven by historical, social, and linguistic factors, and advocates for a balanced approach between preservation and adaptation. It underscores the role of language awareness and education initiatives in addressing these challenges.

The study's implications extend to language preservation and revitalization efforts, offering insights into the authentic use of the Iban language and the importance of awareness among the younger generation. Future research can further investigate linguistic changes and the ongoing development of the Iban language. In conclusion, this study underscores the need for coordinated initiatives to safeguard indigenous languages like Iban, preserving cultural diversity and heritage in the face of globalization's challenges.

List of References

Auxier, B., & Anderson, M. (2021, April 7). *Social media use in 2021*. Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech. https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/04/07/social-media-use-in-2021/

Batterton, K. A., & Hale, K. N. (2017). The Likert Scale What It Is and How To Use It. *Phalanx*, *50*(2), 32–39. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26296382

Bigol, A. (2019, June 26). Sepil Jaku Iban Standard. *Suara Sarawak.* https://suarasarawak.my/sepil-jaku-iban-standard/

Coluzzi, P. (2016). Levels of vitality and efforts to maintain Bidayuh and Mah Meri. Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 16, 39–47. https://fass.ubd.edu.bn/SEA/vol16/SEA-v16-coluzzi.pdf

Darois, Z., & Mohd. Yusof, R. (2003). Perkaitan bahasa Melayu dan bahasa Iban: satu tinjauan ringkas. *Jurnal Bahasa, 3*(3), 457-475. Dicapai daripada https://jurnal.dbp.my/index.php/jurnalbahasa/article/view/8645

Department of Statistics. (2020). Malaysia.

Engkasan, S. B., & Yamat, H. (2021). English Language Learning Experience Among Iban Secondary ESL learners in A Rural Area. Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics,3(3), 59–65.

Joan, A., & Ting, S. H. (2016). Hierarchies of language status: Of Kejaman, Iban, Malay and English. In M. Basri, M. S. M. Salleh, & S. B. Ahmad (Eds.), Proceedings of the 4 th International Conference on Social Sciences Research 2016 (ICSSR 2016) (pp. 32–41). Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: World Conference Resources.

Kijai, J., Lampadan, R., & Loo, D. B. (2012). Factors related to language shift among the Tindal population in Ratau, Kota Belud, Sabah. Catalyst,7(1),4–13.https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/hbds/article/download/172410/123739

Kihob, A. J., & Mahali, S. N. H. (2020). Mixed Language in Essay of Secondary Students in Tuaran District, Sabah. Pusat Penataran Ilmu dan Bahasa, Universiti Malaysia Sabah. MANU Bil.31(2), 97-132.

Kiyai, G., & Tugang, N. (2020). Cultural Artefacts of the Iban : Heritage and Heirloom. Jurnal Kinabalu, 26(59). https://doi.org/10.51200/ejk.v26i.2261

Kunyo, R., & Yasin, R. M. (2021). Sikap dan Motivasi Pelajar Terhadap Kemahiran Berfikir Aras Tinggidalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Iban. Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH), 6(6), 60-72.

Metom, L., Ting, S. H., & Ling, H. N. (2021). The Iban of Sarawak, Malaysia: Ethnic Language LosingGround to English and Sarawak Malay. Human Behavior, Development and Society 2021.

Nahar, N. A., & Rahman, F. A. (2018). The Level of Malay Language Proficiency of Non-native Students and its Relationship with a Second Language Learning Motivation. International Journal of Education and Training (InjET), 4(1), 1-8.

Omar, A. (1982). Language and society in Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Osup, C. A. (2019). The oral literature of the Iban in Borneo. Muallim Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 3(2), 132-140.

Silong, I. (2020, October 30). Penyambung keaslian Bahasa Iban. Suara Sarawak. https://suarasarawak.my/00penyambung-keaslian-bahasa-iban/

Stephen, C. A., Osup, C. A., & Bakar, S. S. A. (2017). Faktor Campur Kod Dalam Kalangan MasyarakatIban Di Sarawak. PENDETA, 8, 108-115.

Ting, S. H., Tinggang, A, & Metom, L. (2021). Language use and attitudes as indicators of subjective vitality: The Iban of Sarawak, Malaysia. Language Documentation & Conservation,15, 190-218.

Sawek, Y., & Muhibah, R.W. (2015). Integrasi bahasa Melayu standard dalam dialek Melayu Sarawak dan bahasa Iban.

Wan, R., Renganathan, S., & Philip, B. (2015). What is the point of us talking? Ethnic language and ethnic

identity in Northern Borneo, Malaysia. Humanities and Social Sciences Review, 4(1), 109–120. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277013818_WHAT_IS_THE_POINT_OF_US_TALKING_ ETHNIC_ LANGUAGE_AND_ETHNIC_IDENTITY_IN_NORTHERN_BORNEO_MALAYSIA

United Nations. (n.d.). Protecting languages, preserving cultures. New York: United Nations.

Authors' biodata

Joanna Bridget anak Stanley Stewart is a final year student of Bachelor of Arts with Honours in English Language Studies at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) since 2020. Prior to that, she completed her Foundation in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at the Centre of Foundation Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, UiTM Kampus Dengkil from 2019 to 2020.

Suziana Mat Saad holds a Ph.D in Linguistics from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. She has been teaching French at the university for the past 26 years. Her research interests include Cognitive Linguistics, Teaching French as a Foreign Language, and Cross Cultural Comparison.