

Perspectives on Malay Language Use and Autonym Preference Among Urban Malays in South Thailand

Christopher M. Joll

Ph.D., Research Associate, Religious Studies Program, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand;
Research Fellow, The Center of Excellence for Muslim Studies, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand
cmjoll@gmail.com

Srawut Aree

Ph.D., Director, The Center of Excellence for Muslim Studies,
Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand
tfarida@hotmail.com

Abstract

This article offers theoretical and ethnographic perspectives on language ideology and autonym preference among bi-lingual urban Malays in Pattani's provincial capital. The first of its two substantive sections presents a concise summary of the most relevant insights provided by linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists who have written on language ideology and the role of language in identity formation. The primary purpose of the second section is to explore the heuristic utility of these theoretical insights on a range of ethnographic vignettes where a range of language-related issues have historically represented a significant source of mistrust between the local Malay majority and Bangkok. We develop insights provided by interactionalist perspectives on language and identity formation to Malay identity formation, specifically which autonyms are strategically adopted.

Keywords

language – identity – Thailand – Pattani – Thai Muslim – Malay – ethnonym – autonym

1 Introduction

Bucholtz and Hall (2004) summarize that anthropologists of language share a fascination with the “multiple, complex, and contextually specific” connections between language and identity, and the role of the former in the production of culture (2004, 369, 375).¹ Schiffman (1999, 341) defines the concept of linguistic culture as the total of “ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths, religious strictures,” along with any and all cultural expectations connected with language. Notwithstanding a steady stream of studies interrogating issues of language, ideology, and identity in recent decades, we concur with Kroskrity (2004, 496), who argues that language remains a neglected, dismissed, and denigrated object of study and concern. On the subject of attachments between culture and language(s), Fishman (1999) refers to language and culture having “grown up together.” The former symbolizes and indexes the latter, and for many “language *is* the culture.” This is for the simple—but lamentably overlooked—reason that without language, law, education, religion, government, politics, and social organization would not exist (Fishman 1999, 444–445). The importance of language might be located in the role it plays in *speakers* producing and reproducing particular identities, but Bucholtz and Hall (2004) point out that what counts as membership in specifically *linguistic* terms often differs from other equally important “social, cultural, historical, and political criteria.” Furthermore, the role of language remains unacknowledged despite many insights on identity drawing on linguistic evidence. Language may be only *one* of a number of symbolic resources, but it is among the most “flexible and pervasive” (Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 369–370). In this article, we set ourselves the task of discussing how language ideology among bi-lingual Malays in the provincial capital of Pattani impacts their preferred autonyms. We do so by summarizing the relevant theoretical literature, which we bring into dialogue with ethnographic vignettes of bi-lingualism among urban Malays.² Readers will presumably be aware that this is a context in which a range of language-related issues has historically been a source of mistrust between the Thai state and the Malay majority.³ Our treatment of these issues is roughly divided into two substantive sections. The first summarizes perspectives on language ideology and the role of language in identity formation provided by

1 Readers wishing to consult introductions to linguistic anthropology should refer to the following: Doe (1988); Duranti (1997); Duranti (2003); Hickerson (2000); Jourdan and Tuite (2006); and Ottenheimer (2006).

2 See Joll (2011; 2013).

3 For studies of language issues in Malay South Thailand, refer to Premsrirat (2008); Boonlong (2007); Arya (2006); and Herriman (2005).

linguists, sociolinguists, and social theorists over the past century. The second section addresses how the Thai and Malay languages form national and ethnic identities, which range from the way in which regional identities are based on the pronunciation of consonant clusters and vowel glides, to how boundaries of nation-states *follow* the linguistic landscape. We then apply insights from interactionalist perspectives on language and identity formation to Malay identity formation and articulation in South Thailand, specifically through a discussion of autonym choice and frequency.

2 Language and (National and Ethnic) Identities

Over the past century, Piller (2005, 490) has referred to the topic of language and identity as a “lively and diverse field of research” that has encompassed a “wide array of issues and implications.” Since the beginning of the twentieth century, numerous links between language and identity have been suggested. Notwithstanding Boas (1911) having viewed language more as categorization systems, he has increasingly been criticized for perceived preoccupations with linguistic structure that led to dismissing other notions of language worthy of attention. Despite rightly regarding language as an “indispensable part of the totalizing analysis of anthropology,” American structuralist linguists such as Bloomfield (1935) have been referred to by Kroskrity (2004) as taxonomic structuralists who largely neglected ideology. This approach was replaced in the second half of the twentieth century with Chomsky’s transformational-generative version (1957). Chomsky (1957) referred to “linguistic intuitions,” which were “highly circumscribed”, and which “bracketed” or “heuristically ignored” their social worlds. For Chomsky—as well as those who followed him—speakers were neither part of language nor “capable of being agents of linguistic change.” More than agents, they were hosts.

Labov (1966; 1969) famously argued that language *reflected* one’s social class, gender, and ethnicity. Variationists following his approach ascribed significance to the following characteristics of spoken Thai and Malay in the far southern provinces, documented by Joll (2011). These include the manner in which most urban Malays in Pattani routinely spoke what he refers to as a “Malay-ized Thai” which lacked clearly defined tones, was replete with glottal stops, and contained numerous Malay lexical borrowings. As a result of sustained language contact with Central Thai, Pattani Malay was also increasingly tonalized. Some Malay words were pronounced with Thai-like high tones – a distinctive element of Southern Thai. Pattani Malay has also been influenced by Thai phonology, such as the replacement of /ɟ/ sounds for /j/ sounds (e.g.,

Jawi becoming *Yawi*). There are also extensive lexical borrowings from Thai. As a result, although Standard Malay is comprehensible to Pattani Malay, the reverse is not the case (Joll 2011, 76–77).

Writing in Boas' North American context, Silverstein (1979) articulated alternatives to Labov's interest in variation. A generation later, Kroskrity's (2004, 500) review of semiotic models of communication contained references to a broad variety of "sign-focused 'pragmatic' relations between language users, the signs themselves, and the connections between these signs and the world." A key advantage of this semiotic approach was the recognition that linguistic forms have many meanings for their speakers. Silverstein defined linguistic ideologies as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein 1979, 193). More than ideas stemming from the "official culture" of the ruling classes, Kroskrity (2004, 497) argued that language ideologies relate to a more "ubiquitous set of diverse beliefs [...] used by speakers of all types as models for constructing linguistic evaluations and engaging in communicative activity." They are beliefs—even feelings—about languages as used in their social worlds.

Semiotics also featured in Bourdieu's conceptualizations of language, one of a number of habitual social activities referred to by Bourdieu as *practice* (1977). Like gender and social class, language was a practice which through repetition plays an integral part in shaping a speaker's *habitus*. In addition to being unavoidably "culturally reified as the basis for the inculcation of differentiated practice," these are associated with differential values as "symbolic capital" or resources through which social and economic success is achieved (Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 377). Ideological representations of linguistic features or varieties congruent with the group are also "iconized" and "essentialized", which leads to the creation of naturalized links between the linguistic and the social, viewed as even more inevitable than the associations generated through indexicality. Bucholtz and Hall (2004, 378) refer to this as the "semiotic operation of juxtaposition"—one entity points to another. Certain signs/indices may also function via repeated and nonaccidental co-occurrence. Certain linguistic structures are routinely (and often indirectly) associated with social categories through a series of semiotic associations. Practice might be habitual (and often unintentional), but "performance" or self-aware social displays with often highly aesthetic components in front of (often changing) audiences are deliberate. Far from practice, *performance*, and ideology operating separately in the creation of identity, Bucholtz and Hall (2004) explain that "*Ideology is the level at which practice enters the field of representation. Indexicality mediates between ideology and practice, producing the former through the latter.*" Finally,

performance is the “*highlighting of ideology through the foregrounding of practice*”. Bucholtz and Hall (2004, 381) add that these processes must conceptually be kept distinct. As with the study of language and identity, there are often differences between cultural ideologies and social practices. The former is concerned with how people of various social backgrounds, “*should, must, or do speak and act*”, and are regenerated through indexicality. By contrast, linguistic and social practices are performed in specific social contexts that are often highly complex and strategic.

We argue that it was the inclusion of *speakers*—not just languages—that permitted new insights by linguistic anthropologists which this article seeks to develop. From the late 1970s, linguistic anthropology was increasingly influenced by anthropology’s engagement in practice theory, the social agency of social actors, and attempts to combine what Kroskrity (2004, 500) refers to as “Marxist materialism with a Weberian idealism.” As Marxism was a widely consumed staple, it is no accident that language and discourse were conceived as political/economic resources employed by individual speakers, ethnic and other interest groups, and nation-states. Silverstein (1985, 220) referred to language as an “unstable mutual interaction of meaningful sign forms, contextualized to situations of interested human use and mediated by the fact of cultural ideology.” As we describe below, this position challenged a number of orthodoxies within both anthropology and linguistics. Interactionalist perspectives on identity argued that group membership was negotiated through a range of interactions. In contrast to the variationist interest in phonetics, interactional sociolinguists such as Piller are concerned with discourse and questions about how group membership is “negotiated, challenged, or upheld in conversation”. Far from individuals belonging to a homogeneous group, this brings into focus that speakers are simultaneously members of a number of different groups. It is no accident that the linguists most conscious of identity’s “hybrid and heterogeneous” nature are those most familiar with multilingual contexts. For Piller (2005, 498), language use among bilinguals clearly exemplifies that speakers do not “only have one single identity but rather a repertoire of identities.”

Social constructionists have also impacted conceptions of language and identity, generally seeking to argue that ethnic and national identities are more than merely in the minds of individuals. Rather, such identities are relational, cultural and contingent, and are located—as well as negotiated—in relationships and connections made between people. Furthermore, these articulations of collectivity and connectivity are assumed, learned, and shared *cultural* understandings and practices that are both strategic and context-specific performances capable of misfiring. Linguistic repertoires may be strategically deployed to project a chosen identity. Nevertheless, performances

involve interlocutors capable of responding in a number of ways. Piller (2005, 89) therefore refers to identities being “co-constructed” as they depend on relationships between the interactants. Language practices might alternatively be referred to as reflective rather than constitutive of social identities on account of identity inhering in actions—not people. In contrast to views conceiving identities as “unitary and enduring psychological states or social categories,” such perspectives view them as products of “situated social action(s)” capable of shifting and recombining to “meet new circumstances” (Bucholtz and Hall 2004).

While the focus of the preceding section was on how theoreticians have conceptualized language, identity, and ideology, in the section that follows we interrogate the role of language in ethnic and national identities. Our approach follows the interactionalist perspectives summarized above, which we occasionally illustrate with ethnographic vignettes based on Joll’s fieldwork in the Malay South of Thailand. Commentators such as Mesthrie and Tabouret-Keller (2001, 167) have referred to nationalism as a form of ethnicity writ large, and that borders between states “seldom coincide with dialect areas.” As such, for Woolard (1998, 16), equating a language with a nation has been missed as an ideological and a historical construct. Nationalist language ideologies, which were often first exported through colonialism, led to the creation of structures and state politics which challenge “multilingual states, and underpins ethnic struggles to such an extent that the absence of a distinct language can cast doubt on the legitimacy of claims to nationhood” (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994, 60). Marxist social theorists assert ideology to be the tool, property, or practice of dominant social groups who distort, mystify, and rationalize in defense of power (Woolard 1998, 23). Nationality has long been viewed as “intricately linked to language.” In the postcolonial period, many states in East, South, and Southeast Asia have adopted the unilingual vision of “one nation, one language”. Wherever this happens, every aspect of language is contested, including the orthographic systems. Far from merely recording and disseminating spoken language, these systems functioned as “symbols that themselves carry historical, cultural, and political meanings” (Woolard 1998, 23). Ironically, evaluations of oral language are frequently based on *literate* standards, oblivious to the fact that minority languages are often esteemed by those able to speak them precisely because they are *not* written. Initiatives concerned with saving minority languages are often based upon “the same received notions that have led to their oppression and/or suppression” (Woolard 1998, 17). Minority language activists “impose standards, elevating literate forms and uses, and negatively sanctioning variability in order to demonstrate the reality, validity, and integrity of their languages.” Linguistic purism—viewed by

some as essential to the survival of minority languages—may be inappropriate where multilingualism is the norm, and a population's linguistic repertoire is “fluid or complex” (Woolard 1998, 18, 24).

Perceptions by ethnolinguistic minorities of discrimination by dominant ethnolinguistic groups are often based on past revalorization of their language and the assumption that their mastery of the national language and/or dialect symbolizes an allegiance to the state. Whenever language is instrumentalized in the construction of national or ethnic identities, unity is often achieved at the cost of subordinating minority languages. In other contexts, fluency in two languages permits a celebration of hybridity. As is well known, Appadurai (1991, 191) coined the neologism “ethnoscape” that many anthropologists added to their conceptual repertoire. According to Kroskrity (2004, 511), anthropologists have shifted from studying “tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogeneous” regions, to culturally hybrid “borderscapes” (see Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007) where the focus is on how languages are co-opted by speakers, groups, and governments. Along borderscapes between Thailand's southern provinces and the Malaysian states of Perlis, Kedah, and Kelantan, a variety of ethnoreligious and ethnolinguistic communities have long been present.⁴ Bilingual Thai-Buddhist communities have lived in Kedah and Kelantan—many since the Ayutthaya period.⁵ Throughout the Malay South of Thailand, Thais and Thai-Chinese speak Pattani Malay (see below). Thai-speaking Muslim communities have long existed in Kedah, Satun, and Songkhla.⁶ As part of the Malay Sultanate (SM. *kerajaan*)⁷ before the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 (Marks 1997), Muslims living in coastal areas of Satun, Trang, Krabi, Phang-nga, and Phuket spoke Thai and Malay. In 2000, only 10 percent of the population in Satun spoke Malay, a figure that drops to 5 percent in Songkhla (Albritton 2010).

To offer another example from the Malay world south of the Kolok River, in 1957, when the Malayan constitution was ratified, defining who the Malay were was less than straightforward, given the “tangle of hybrid identities” that had long existed (see Barnard 2004; Kahn 2006; Milner 2008). Malayness became officially defined by one's language, one's customs (*adat*), and Islam. Nagata (2011) has observed the conspicuous absence of references to blood, race, or *bangsa*, and that these porous boundary markers are capable of being adopted by non-Malays. Joll (2011, 14) has argued that although a number of similarities

4 Those interested in this area should consult Montesano and Jory (2008).

5 See Carstens (1986); Winzeler (1985); Mohamed Yusoff Ismail (1993); Chan Johnson (2012).

6 See Nishii (2000); Suwannathat-Pian (2008); Banks (1980).

7 We employ the following abbreviations to denote Standard Malay (SM.) and Pattani Malay (PM.).

exist between language and religion, both are resolvable—the former through conversion. Holst (2012, 15) states that language and religion constitute ethnicity and are cultural materials that shape national identity. Both affect the shape and context of the state and are objects of state policies. Language and religion have both been instrumentalized by nations, republics, and empires; they are institutionalized and officialized, domesticated and reformed, ignored and depoliticized, privatized, neutralized, or banned. He furthermore points out that the well-known and oft-cited phrase in Malaysia that the Malay language is the soul of a nation/race (*bahasa jiwa bangsa*) is intriguing for the following reasons. Over and above the numerous lexical borrowings from Sanskrit (Tham 1990; Sneddon 2003) and Arabic (Ricci 2011), speakers of Bahasa Malaysia are able to communicate with Indonesians, citizens of Brunei, and Malay-speaking minorities in Singapore (Syed Mhd. Khairudin Aljunied 2011), South Thailand, and the southern Philippines (Curaming 2011). Furthermore, elderly Malays from rural Kelantan are unlikely to be capable of communicating with young cosmopolitan urbanites from Kuala Lumpur. *Bahasa jiwa bangsa* must therefore be understood in the context of ethnicized policies (Holst 2012, 97).⁸

A number of theories of ethnicity exist between the extreme poles of circumstantialism and primordialism.⁹ As is well known, circumstantialists claim that ethnic groups play an ongoing and active role in redefining the cultural elements constituting their identity. Despite this dynamic fluidity of cultures, ethnic groups also possess an essential core that distinguishes them from others. Thus, there are both primordial constants in ethnicity and fluid, multilayered dimensions that are continually adjusting to changing circumstances.¹⁰ “Ethnicity” is therefore related to behavior and identifications that are adopted or shed according to what is required in any given social situation. Boundaries between ethnic groups also expand and contract. Therefore, although “ethnic collectivities” possess a base, from it a number of variations may evolve.

8 Holst also recounts the range of ways that Malaysia's national language has been referred to. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj (prime minister of Malaysia, 1957–1970) referred to the language as Bahasa Malaysia. This was changed to Bahasa Melayu by Anwar Ibrahim, serving as education minister, in 1986, before reverting back to Bahasa Malaysia under Prime Minister Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (2003–2009). The media again began referring to Bahasa Melayu during Najib Razak's tenure (2009–2018).

9 Primordialism is associated with the ideas of Clifford Geertz (1963), whereas circumstantialism was first argued for by Leach (1954).

10 Primordialist studies of Muslims in Thailand that assert the persistence of ethnic constants include those by Surin Pitsuwan (1985), Astri Suhrke (1977), and M. Ladd Thomas (1982). Those representing a circumstantialist perspective, arguing that identity is altered and reconfigured depending on context, include Saroja Devi Dorairajoo (2002a), Christopher Joll (2011), Pierre Le Roux (1998), Chavivun Prachuabmoh (1980), and Chaiwat Satha-Anand (1993; 2005).

Fishman (1999) argues that the social sciences have had to recover from Anderson's (1983) depiction of ethnonational groups as "imagined." Ethnicity may be imagined on account of the group being an abstraction that must be understood and identified with, but it is neither "blindly primordial nor completely manipulable." Rather, it represents "principles of collective identification and social organization in terms of culture and history, similarity and difference" (Fishman 1999, 447). Anderson's (1983) arguments about the role played by the print media in the formation of "imagined communities" are well known, but how has the rise of the Internet affected this aspect of his thesis? In an increasingly globalized world, language helps individuals maintain a sense of "continuity in the midst of modernity's constant discontinuity" and "community in the midst of its constant influx of strangers". Languages that have been learned and utilized in specific times and places enable speakers to "move ahead toward global social relations in ways that do not reduce them to either 'homeless minds' or 'objects of abstract internationalism.'" As such, national and regional languages permit mediations with the local and the global. Globalization has, after all, led to new emphases on the local, which more often than not involves local languages. The interrelatedness of language and ethnic identity is also demonstrated by the anti-primordial (and anti-Herderian) observations that (a) language influences the formation and articulation of ethnic identity, and (b) ethnic identity influences language attitudes and usage (Fishman 1999, 450–451).

3 Malay Language and Identity in South Thailand

Klein's (2010) quantitative study of the Malay South, based on interviews with 750 Muslims and Buddhists, included questions about mother tongues. The results confirm Pattani Malay as the mother-tongue language of 83 percent of those surveyed in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. By contrast, Central Thai is the mother tongue of only 13 percent of those surveyed—although this figure rises to 25 percent in urban areas. Not surprisingly, only 4 percent speak Southern Thai. Pattani Malay is the mother tongue of 88 percent of Muslims in the Deep South, although 10 percent learned Central Thai from birth. Among Buddhists, 55 percent speak Central Thai, 41 percent Southern Thai, and 4 percent Pattani Malay. On the issue of the province in which mother-tongue speakers of Central Thai and Pattani Malay reside, the highest concentration of the former are found in Yala, with the lowest living in Narathiwat.

These results roughly corroborate what we have observed among urban Malays in South Thailand. While a mixture of monolingualism and bilingualism

can be encountered, Malays are rarely equally fluent in both languages. Conversations are routinely conducted in more than one language. Indeed, extensive switching between Thai and Malay sometimes makes it unclear which language is being used—a situation locally referred to as talking *bah-aso bide*. Bilingualism in South Thailand urban centers also exhibits signs of dependent multilingualism—where one language is filtered through another (Smalley 1994, 308). Below we provide a range of ethnographic vignettes illustrating the dependent and interdependent multilingualisms in which discrete linguistic components begin to affect each other in both directions. These illustrate the shape that situational bilingualism in South Thailand takes where the topic, discussants, and location all affect the choice of language. This is followed by a discussion of how the choice of language, location, and (real or perceived) identity of interlocutors also impact the choice of the autonyms.

Jamilah is in her mid-thirties and was born, bred, educated, and married in Cabetigo, Pattani. In the innumerable conversations that Joll had with this neighbor before becoming a client at the small accountancy firm she worked at, observations had been made that—like many other bilingual Malays born in Pattern—she spoke Malay-ized Thai, and Thai-ized Pattani Malay. It was not until after his first interaction with Jamilah in her accountancy office that Joll heard her speak over the phone with a client in impeccable Central Thai. We argue that this was necessitated by (1) where she was at the time, (2) who she was speaking with, and (3) what she was speaking about. This is a specific example of the wider sociolinguistic phenomena in Malay-dominated South Thailand of certain topics being associated with specific places, and different localities possessing different default language settings.

Many children in Joll's primary fieldwork site in Pattani studied the Qur'an between evening (*magharib*) and night (*isha*) prayers at Pok Ma' Gu's ramshackle house on the edge of the Pattani River. Pok Ma' Gu speaks absolutely no Thai. The complete absence of Thai in this first chapter of Islamic education explains some of the reasons why Malay became the default language at Surau Rim Khlong, located 100 meters upriver. While Pok Ma' Gu's house and Surau Rim Khlong teach religion, a wide range of topics are discussed in Pattani *keda kopi*. This is done in a mixture of Thai and Malay. Furthermore, there are numerous factors that determine which language is chosen, as the follow anecdote from a fieldnote entry illustrates.

One morning, I arrived as the eight o'clock news was being broadcast in Omar's *roti* shop. I took my seat at the completion of a news item analyzing the latest developments in Thai politics. This was the topic of discussion thereafter, all of which was conducted in Thai. There followed a spe-

cial report concerning a fatal bombing in the fresh market in Yala, which everyone immediately turned to watch. People then returned to their *roti* and tea, and began talking about their reactions to the bombing—this time in Malay. Not long after this, a Thai-speaking friend appreciated for his wit and his eye for the ridiculous joined us. He was invited, in Thai, to add his opinion to those which had just been shared. He obliged by regaling us with red-hot intelligence obtained from his mother-in-law, an *ore meneko* in the fresh market.¹¹

While these vignettes from Jamilah's office, Pok Ma' Gu's house, Surau Rim Khlong, and Omar's *roti* shop illustrate the influence of the topic and the location on language in Pattani, the presence of a European researcher also had some impact on the language employed by informants. On one memorable occasion with Joll, a Thai-speaking Muslim informant referred to "Phra Muhammad." When Joll observed that he had never heard someone use this term, the informant explained that this was a way of talking about a religious leader in Thai. He continued: "If I was talking to another Muslim, I would say *nabi* [Ar.] or *sasada* [Th.] Muhammad, or *Rasul-Allah* [Ar.]. We use this when we are talking about Islam with non-Muslims."

How does the choice of language, location, and (real or perceived) identity of interlocutors impact the choice of the autonyms? Following a brief discussion of *ore melayu/nayu*, *ore jawi*, and Thai Muslim, we discuss the factors influencing autonym selection in the Malay-dominated provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. Malay, or Melayu (SM), is an exonym completely absent in official Thai state discourse. Montesano and Jory (2008) have commented on the rarity with which the approaches to Malayness advocated by contributors to Barnard's *Contesting Malayness* (2004) have informed identity politics in South Thailand. They note the irony of Barnard's publication coinciding with those by local and foreign scholars who insist on emphasizing the primordial characteristics of Patani/Pattani Malay identity (Montesano and Jory 2008). Mudmarn's (1994, 32) position is representative: he posits "Malay" as a noun that reflects the major traits of a distinctive ethnic group, with the double-barreled "Malay-Muslim" giving expression to the inseparability of Islam from Malay ethnicity. Satha-Anand (1992, 30–31) questions not only Mudmarn's foreclosure of the possibility of the conversion of Malays to other religions but also the legitimacy of race replacing religion. Islam, he argues, is more universal than Malayness, and Malayness is less accommodating than Islam. The "Malay" element of "Malay-Muslim" functions as a subordinate adjective.

11 Author's fieldnotes, May 5, 2006.

Malays are commonly referred to as *ore nayu*. While we view this as the Pattani Malay dialect's truncation of "Melayu," others have argued that this represents an important and distinctively local autonym.¹² Dorairajoo (2002b) has argued that key elements prompting coastal Malay fishing communities to develop closer contacts with the Thai state included (a) their adaption of *ore nayu* as their default everyday-defined autonym, and (b) their willingness to learn and/or improve their Central Thai. Malays in South Thailand occasionally also refer to themselves as *ore jawi*. Le Roux (1998) claims this to be one of the most spontaneous autononyms used in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. While it is widely known that Jawi refers to Malay written in a modified Arabic script, in the Middle East this also functions as a generic term describing Southeast Asian Muslims. Political independence provided Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia with exportable nationalities, but Malays from South Thailand continue to refer to themselves as *jawi* while abroad.

The least common autonym employed by Malays in South Thailand is Thai Muslim. Some Malays raise no serious objection to others employing this ethnonym, given that since the nationalist governments of the 1930s, it has functioned as the Thai state's default exonym. Malays rarely employ this as an autonym. Among older Malays, "Thai Muslim" sounds oxymoronic, like "Buddhist Muslims" (Le Roux 1998). These are, of course, non-issues for Thai converts to Islam, immigrants from Thai-speaking provinces, and members of Arab (PM. *ore ara'*) and Pakistani (PM. *ore kabul*) immigrant communities.

As a Thai Muslim of Indian background, Satha-Anand (2008) comments on having "less in common with the people of Pattani than they have in common with people in northern Sumatra let alone Malay Muslims in Kelantan or Terengganu". While it is commonly accepted that to be Malay is to be a Muslim, in Thailand a Muslim need not be Malay. Among bilingual urban Malays, there is a widespread rejection of suggestions that Malays become Thai Muslim simply by speaking Thai. Those tempted to endorse the proposals that southern Malays and monolingual Thai-speaking Muslims living north of Malay-speaking districts of Satun and Songkhla represent the two cultural poles of Muslim society in Thailand need to consider the following. First, this downplays the Malay origins of many Muslim communities in both the Upper South (commented on above) and Bangkok.¹³ Second, the vast majority of mosques

12 Although first discussed by Prachuabmoh (1989; 1980), *ore nayu* has been most extensively discussed by Dorairajoo (2002b; 2002a), and has been adopted by Tsuneda (2009).

13 Golomb's (1985) study of multiethnic healing between Buddhists and Muslims in Pattani, Songkhla, and Bangkok notes that the majority of Bangkok's Muslims continue to share many traits with the Malay communities of the southern border provinces of their ancestors. For more on Malay communities in Bangkok, see studies by Scupin (1980), Bajunid (1992), Tadmor (2004), Umar (2003), and Mustafa (2011).

in Bangkok were built by the descendants of Malay prisoners of war taken by Rama I and Rama III. By the end of the 1832 campaign in South Thailand, an estimated ten thousand Malays from Pattani had been forcibly relocated to Bangkok.

Similar to topic, location, and interlocutors affecting language use among urban Malays as described above, following Le Roux (1998), we argue that the choice of autonym is also influenced by (a) the language in which identities are being articulated, (b) the interlocutor's ethnicity, and (c) the status of those involved. The role played by language in the autonym selection is illustrated by an incident involving a Malay neighbor while entering Kelantan at the Tak Bai border crossing. While a Malaysian official (himself a Malay) was processing paperwork the traveler needed to drive his Thai-registered vehicle in Malaysia, he inadvertently referred to a Malay born in Pattani as an *orang siam*. Although there is ambiguity about whether this denotes "Thai Buddhists" or "Thai nationals," in South Thailand this is how Malays refer to Thai Buddhists. While this particular traveler was furious, Malays in Cabetigo respond in more than one way to being called *khon thai* and *khon malay*. Some accept the former, largely due to wanting to be accepted as full Thai citizens.

Whenever speaking Malay, Malays in Cabetigo refer to themselves as *ore taning* (Patanians), *anok taning* (a child of Patani), *ore sining* (a local), *ore Melayu*, *ore nayu* (Malay), *ore jawi*, or *ore isle* (Muslims). When speaking Thai, Malays may use any of the following terms: *khon thi ni* (people from here), *khon phueng thin* (a local), or *khon thai muslim* (a Thai Muslim). Despite the ethnonym *khaek* being widely accepted and used among Thai-speaking Muslims from the Upper South (see Merli 2009), we note that no one in the Malay South refers to him or herself in this manner. While outsiders are strangers in *tanoh melayu* (P.M. Malay lands), they are not *khaek*.

How does status affect the choice of autonym employed by Malays? For instance, when forced to deal with Thai officials suspected of discriminating against Malays, some may refer to themselves by their Thai name, wear trousers rather than a sarong, and leave their Muslim hat (P.M. *piyo'*) in their pocket. Indeed, Le Roux (1998) claims that urban Malays only rarely refer to themselves as *ore jawi*, as this carries connotations of being a hillbilly. Consider the autonoms that might be chosen when addressing a Malaysian, a friendly Thai, and a less-friendly Thai (in Thai). To a Malay from Malaysia (especially Kelantan), he may refer to himself as *ore taning* or *anak tani*. It is immediately obvious that he is a Malay (as he speaks a particular dialect), a Muslim (due to the greeting used), and from Thailand (everyone knows where Pattani is situated). To a friendly Thai, Malays may refer to themselves in Thai as *khon melayu*, since their Thai citizenship is so obvious that it does not warrant being

mentioned. To a less friendly Thai, however, they might prefer to use the term “Thai Muslim.”

4 Conclusion

Once-isolated villages where state schools and satellite dishes have become ubiquitous, cosmopolitan centers where ethnic strangers have become neighbors, and transnational borderscapes are examples of ethnoscapings where a range of language-related dynamics play important roles in the production and communication of ethnic, regional, and national ideologies and identities. How does this discussion of how linguists, sociolinguists, and anthropologists have conceptualized language, ideology, and identity assist anthropologists? We have argued that it is not the phonetic details or grammatical elements of either ethnic languages or regional dialects that are of primary importance to anthropologists interested in ideology and identity. Attention to how speakers of language interact is more important than the languages they speak. Identity is relational, cultural, and contingent; it is located and negotiated. Identity is negotiated not in the minds of individuals but in relationships. Identity is also cultural in the sense that it involves assumed, learned, and shared understandings and practices. Although the vernacular terms employed by an ethnolinguistic community to refer to objects, rituals, concepts, and cosmology must be learned by anthropologists, what are some of the details that social scientists must dedicate both ears to diligently documenting? Interactionalist perspectives highlight the range of languages which are locally spoken, where and with whom these are employed, and for what reasons. Related to this, which dialects and languages are intentionally passed on, and which and for what reasons are these pragmatically discarded? Are comments made about how increased literacy in a national language has affected orality in a community's mother tongue? What autonyms have currency, and which exonyms are accepted? Attention to such details will increase not only the empirical richness of language-related studies but their relevance to policy as Thailand considers the future viability of its linguistic and cultural diversity.

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