The complexity of languages and scripts used in Thailand's deep south[1]
ความซับซ้อนของการใช้ภาษาและอักษรในพื้นที่จังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้

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Abstract

Thailand's deep south is a complex area of languages and scripts. The purpose of this article is to explain the complexity of the use of languages and scripts in the life of people in Thailand's deep south. This study uses a qualitative research method carried out by using interviews, participant observation, and documentation.

The study found that there are six main languages used in the region: Patani Malay, Standard Thai, Classical Malay (Jawi script), Standard Malay (Jawi script), Standard Malay (Rumi script), and Arabic. Patani Malay is used for daily communication with family, friends, and people in the community of Patani Malay people. Standard Thai is used mainly for daily communication, with non-Patani Malay speakers and also used increasingly with family, friends, and people in the community. Thai is also used as the medium of instruction in all government schools. Classical Malay (Jawi script) is used in the religious domain, especially in traditional Islamic education institutions called *pondoks*. Standard Malay (Jawi script), is used in teaching the Standard Malay language and for writing signs such as village names, school names, mosque names, etc. Standard Malay (Rumi script) is used in teaching the Standard Malay language and some signs. The Arabic language is used in teaching and learning Islamic studies in the Tadika, pondok and private Islamic schools as well as in some government schools. In addition, Arabic is used in studying the Qur'an and for writing the names of religious institutions.

บทคัดย่อ

พื้นที่จังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้มีความซับซ้อนในการใช้ภาษาและอักษร บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่ออธิบายความซับซ้อนของการใช้ภาษาและอักษรต่างๆ ในชีวิตประจำวันของคนในจังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้ โดยใช้การศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพ ได้แก่ วิธีการสัมภาษณ์ การสังเกตแบบมีส่วนร่วม และการศึกษาเอกสาร

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า พื้นที่จังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้มีการใช้ภาษาจำนวน 6 ภาษาหลัก ซึ่งได้แก่ ภาษามลายูปาตานี ภาษาไทย ภาษามลายูคลาสสิก (อักษรยาวี) ภาษามลายูมาตรฐาน (อักษรยาวี) ภาษามลายูมาตรฐาน (อักษรรูมี) หรือภาษามาเลเซีย และภาษาอาหรับ โดยภาษามลายูปาตานีเป็นภาษาที่ใช้สื่อสารในชีวิตประจำวันในครอบครัว กับเพื่อน และคนในชุมชน ภาษาไทยใช้สื่อสารกับผู้ที่ไม่ใช่เจ้าของภาษามลายูปาตานี ปัจจุบันมีการใช้ภาษาไทยเพิ่มมากขึ้นทั้งภายในครอบครัว กับเพื่อน และคนในชุมชน นอกจากนี้ภาษาไทยยังเป็นสื่อการสอนในโรงเรียนของรัฐในระดับต่างๆ ในขณะที่ภาษามลายูคลาสสิก (อักษรยาวี) เป็นภาษาที่ใช้ในบริบททางศาสนา โดยเฉพาะในสถาบันการศึกษาปอเนาะ สำหรับภาษามลายูมาตรฐาน (อักษรยาวี) และภาษามลายูมาตรฐาน (อักษรรูมี) ใช้ในการเรียนการสอนภาษามลายูมาตรฐานและใช้สำหรับเขียนป้ายต่างๆ ภาษาอาหรับมีการเรียนการสอนวิชาอิสลามศึกษาในโรงเรียนตาดีกา สถาบันการศึกษาปอเนาะ และโรงเรียนเอกชนสอนศาสนาอิสลาม และใช้สำหรับการเรียนการสอนอัลกุรอานและการเขียนป้ายชื่อสถานที่ทางศาสนา

คำสำคัญ :   ภาษา, อักษร, มลายูปาตานี, จังหวัดชายแดนภาคใต้

1. Introduction

The majority of the population in Thailand's deep south (Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces, as well as Thepha, Nathawi, Chana, and Sabayoi districts of Songkla Province) are Patani Malay speaking people (Nookua, 2011, p. 28), comprising approximately 83% of the local population (Premsrirat et al., 2008). The Patani Malay speaking people have a unique identity in terms of history, politics, and socio-cultural identity (Pitsuwan, 1985, p. 27).

The use of language in this region is complex. The people speak the Patani Malay language[2] in their daily life for various social activities. At the same time, they use Classical Malay written with the Jawi script for Islamic studies, as well as in religious textbooks. As for Standard Thai, it is used in Thai government schools at various levels, from preschool to higher education, as well as in government documents, radio, and TV. Besides this, the Standard Malay written with the Jawi and Rumi script is used to teach Standard Malay in Tadika and private Islamic schools. Also, Arabic is used in religious teaching, especially for reading the Qur'an.[3]

Based on the main author's experiment of living and researcher in the region, the complexity of languages and the scripts used in the area has created confusion and misconceptions. As a result, local people seem to lack an awareness of the unique aspects of the Patani Malay language, not understanding the differences between Patani Malay, Bahasa Malaysia and Classical Malay, or the differences between Arabic and Classical Malay written in Jawi script.

A language situation survey was carried out in 2007 among 1,255 PM speakers in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat Provinces to provide a clearer understanding of the language use, language ability and language attitudes of the speakers in the area. This language situation survey was conducted by Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia (RILCA) of Mahidol University. Some of the survey results are shown in the graphs below:
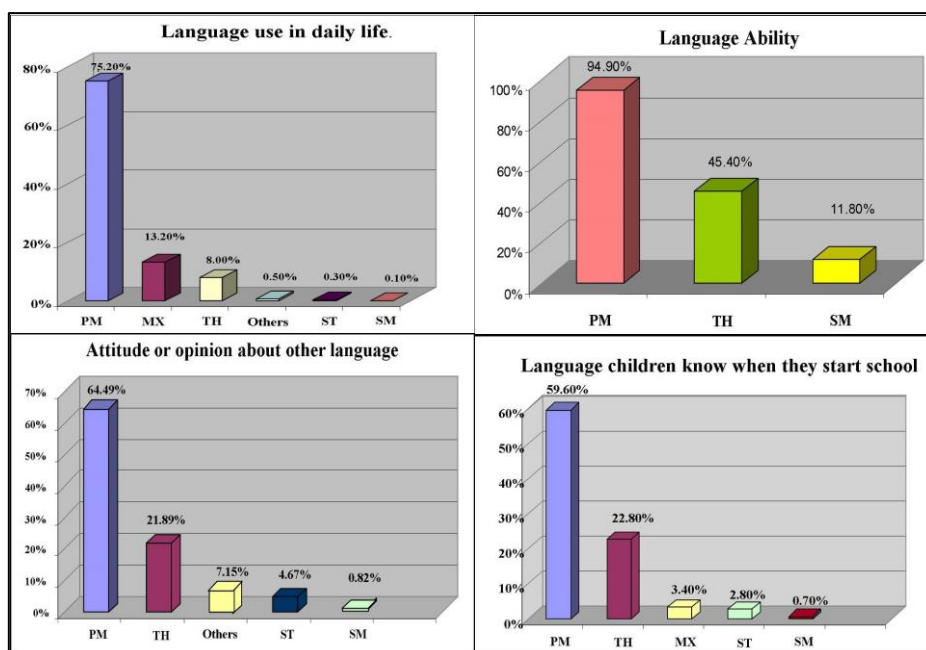
Figure 1 Language situation survey in the southernmost provinces of Thailand

(Premsrirat et al., 2008)

As shown in the upper left-hand part of figure 1, Patani Malay (PM) is the most commonly used language in daily life, while a mixed language (MX) incorporating elements of Patani Malay and Standard Thai (TH) is second, followed by Southern Thai (ST) and "Other languages" (which some survey respondents thought might include languages such as Arabic, Chehe Tai[4], Maniq (Sakai or Kensiw) and Chinese) ranked fourth, after which came the southern Thai (ST) language and Standard Malay (SM), respectively (Premsrirat et al., 2008).

A "mixed language" combining words from Patani Malay and Standard Thai is developing and being used more commonly in daily life, especially among people who live in urban areas and those who have regular contact with government agencies, educational institutions and mass media. Patani Malay, the mother tongue, is declining. From the interviews, we can see that the people in the deep south are concerned about language mixing (between Patani Malay and Standard Thai), especially among young people who increasingly borrow words by replacing Patani Malay words and adding specialized vocabulary from Thai or code switch from PM to TH. This can be seen from the following interview:

> ผมสังเกตจากเด็กๆ แถวบ้าน เด็กสมัยใหม่เรียนสามัญไปด้วย และมักจะพูดภาษาท้องถิ่น
> ปนกับภาษาไทย ซึ่งทำให้ปู่ย่าตายายหรือคนเฒ่าคนแก่ที่ยังไม่ได้เรียนภาษาไทยก็จะงงๆ
> เพราะเด็กๆ มักจะใช้ภาษาไทยทับศัพท์กับภาษามลายูท้องถิ่น คำศัพท์ลึกๆ ของภาษา
> มลายู เด็กอาจไม่รู้เลยใช้ภาษาไทยแทน เลยต้องเรียนภาษามลายูเชิงวิชาการเพื่อให้เด็กมี

กระบวนการคิดและอ่าน เรียนรู้ภาษามลายูท้องถิ่นได้อย่างลึกซึ้ง และสามารถพูดคุยกับ
คนสมัยก่อนได้อย่างไม่มีปัญหา (19)[5]

I have seen among the village children that the new generation who study in government schools tend to speak the local language mixed with Thai words. This leaves the elders who have not studied Thai confused because the kids use Thai loan words along with Melayu. The more difficult words in Melayu are not known to these kids. They use Thai words instead. Thus, the kids need to study Melayu with an academic approach so they can understand Melayu at a deeper level and speak with their elders without problems. (19)

In addition, misunderstanding and lack of awareness of their mother tongue is another issue that leads to the loss of the Patani Malay language.

2. Domains of language and script used in Thailand's deep south

Most countries in the world are multilingual (Paulston & Tucker, 2003). This is also true of Thailand's deep south which is an area of multiple languages and scripts. There are six main languages; Patani Malay, Classical Malay (written in Jawi), Standard Thai, Standard Malay (written in Jawi), Standard Malay (written in Rumi) and Arabic used in this area. Along with the six main languages, three scripts are used; Jawi, Rumi and Thai. The Jawi script (Arabic-based script) is used for writing Classical Malay, not Patani Malay. This script is widely used in Islamic domain (Islamic religious texts). Most people see it as their identity. The young Patani Malay speakers do not read and write it proficiently. The Rumi script (Roman-based script) is popular only among people educated in Malaysia, Indonesia or Brunei. As for the Thai script, most people in the area have better literacy skills in Thai than in any other languages. It is used to write Patani Malay, used as medium of instruction in non-formal education, in lessons for Thai government officials, and as a tool for documentation of cultural texts and local knowledge, which are seldom written in Jawi or Rumi. However, for place names such as schools, government offices, and cemeteries several languages and scripts are used, especially Jawi and Rumi script. Below is an illustration of the six main languages and three scripts that are used in the area.
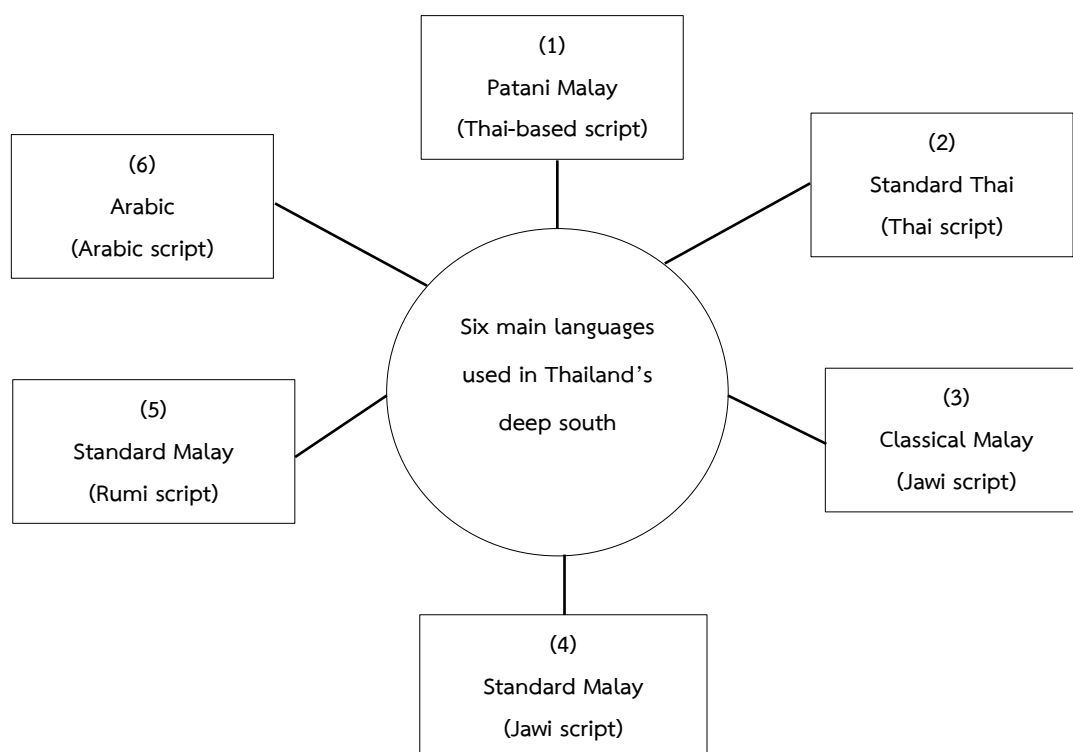
Figure 2 Languages and scripts used in Thailand's deep south (Samoh, 2016)

All of these languages and scripts are used in Thailand's deep south. The domain of use of each language and script is divided into two categories as 1) spoken language and 2) written language, as in the following tables.

Table 1 The domains of spoken language use in Thailand's deep south (Samoh, 2016)

Spoken languages			
Domain of use	Patani Malay	Standard Thai	Standard Malay
1. Conversations with family and friends, among Patani Malay speakers anywhere in society such as schools, mosques, markets, coffee/tea shops, offices, etc.	X	X	
2. Conversations with non-Patani Malay speakers (especially government officers).		X	
3. Communication at (Thai) government offices.	X	X	
4. Instruction in Islamic institutions (Tadika schools, private Islamic schools and traditional Islamic education institutions (pondoks).	X		

Spoken languages			
Domain of use	Patani Malay	Standard Thai	Standard Malay
5. Instruction in Thai government schools and universities.		X	
6. Used in Islamic and Qur'anic teaching at mosques and in communities.	X		
7. Used in Patani Malay lessons for non-Patani Malay speakers (especially government officers).		X	
8. Used in local radio and television programs.	X	X	X

Table 2 The domains of written language use in Thailand's deep south (Samoh, 2016)

Written language						
Domain of use	Patani Malay	Standard Thai	Classical Malay	Standard Malay	Standard Malay	Arabic
	Thai script	Thai script	Jawi script	Jawi script	Rumi script	Arabic script
1. Local written mass media.		X		X	X	X
2. Islamic textbooks in Tadika schools, private Islamic schools and traditional Islamic education institutions (pondoks).		X[6]	X	X	X	X
3. Textbooks used in Thai government		X		X[7]	X[8]	X[9]

Domain of use	Written language					
	Patani Malay	Standard Thai	Classical Malay	Standard Malay	Standard Malay	Arabic
	Thai script	Thai script	Jawi script	Jawi script	Rumi script	Arabic script
schools and universities.						
4. Patani Malay textbooks for teaching non-PM speakers (especially government officers).	X					
5. Textbooks in Standard Malay subject in Tadika schools, private Islamic schools and government schools.					X	
6. Collecting Patani Malay wisdom and literature.	X					
7. Teaching Islamic studies at mosques.			X			
8. The Qur'an (holy) book.						X
9. Names of institutions such		X		X	X	X

Domain of use	Written language					
	Patani Malay	Standard Thai	Classical Malay	Standard Malay	Standard Malay	Arabic
	Thai script	Thai script	Jawi script	Jawi script	Rumi script	Arabic script
as government offices, schools, mosques, and village names, etc.						

2.1 Patani Malay (Thai-based script)

The Patani Malay language is the first language (mother tongue) of people in Thailand's deep south, which consists of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces, and four districts of Songkhla province (including Thepha, Chana, Nathawi and Sabayoi). The number of Patani Malay speakers in the region is about two million people (National Statistical Office, 2010). Sometimes, Patani Malay can be found written with informal Thai-based, Jawi or Rumi script. This language is widely used in various contexts, as described below.

2.1.1 Conversations with family, friends and among Patani Malay speakers anywhere in society, such as schools, mosques, markets, coffee/tea shops, offices, etc.[10]

Patani Malay is an important language for communication in daily life. The people use this language to communicate in almost every context of daily life, such as conversations with family, friends and among Patani Malay speakers in any place in society (schools, markets, offices, and mosques). The following excerpts are from the interview data, where *Melayu* in fact refers to the Patani Malay language:

...กาลู ดีองา ยีแร ยีแร กาปง ตุฮ โดะบากา บาฮาซอ มลายูถิ่น นิฮ ซือบะ ดาแล กาวาแซ ยอ ออแร อิสลาม มลายู กีตอ ซายอ (5)

...With the neighbors I use Patani Malay because this area is a local Melayu Muslim speaking area. (5)

...ในกิจวัตรประจำวัน ปกติก็เวลากินข้าว ที่โรงเรียน แล้วก็กับคุณพ่อ คนแก่ทั่วไป ส่วน ใหญ่ก็จะใช้ภาษามลายู (8)

... In daily life, at mealtimes, at school, with father, with elderly people, most [of us] use Melayu. (8)

...บาฮาซอ มือลายู เตอปะแต ปากา ดืองา เกอลูวาร์กอ ดูเมาะฮ ออแร กาปง (กีตอ) กนอ บาฮาซอ มือลายู เตอปัตแต บือลากอ (24)
...the local Melayu language is used with family and community members. (We) always use the local Melayu language. (24)

...บอ โดะ ดูเมาะฮ นิง กีตอ เนาะ สื่อสาร ดืองา ออแร กาปง ออแร มานอ ปง กีตอ กือนอ แกแจะ บาฮาซอ นิง มลายู กาปง มลายู ตานิง (19)
When we are at home and need to communicate with community members or anyone we should speak this language [that is] the local Melayu or Patani Malay. (19)

...ถ้าเป็นในครอบครัว ที่บ้านก็เป็นภาษามลายูถิ่นหนึ่งร้อยเปอร์เซนต์ (9)
...With family members at home [we] use Melayu 100 percent. (9)

2. 1. 2 Instruction in Islamic institutions such as Tadika schools, private Islamic schools and traditional Islamic education Institutions (pondoks)[11]

In Thailand's deep south, Patani Malay is used as the main language for oral language instruction in the three kinds of Islamic institutions, as follows:

Tadika (stands for Taman Didikan Kanak- Kanak) is the first or basic Islamic learning for children (from 5 to 12 years old). Most classes run from grades 1-4, although some schools start from class A, B and then teach grades 1-4. Most of the teaching materials and textbooks come from " Pustaka" (the local organization that is responsible for Tadika schools in the Southern Border Provinces); some also came from the Thai Ministry of Education. The Tadika schools offer classes in the evenings and weekends, thus most small children study at the Tadika schools when their normal schools are closed. Virtually every Patani Malay village has a Tadika school, usually close to the mosque. The teachers can be anyone with a good knowledge of Islam.

Private Islamic schools are popular in the local society among Patani Malay parents. Patani Malay children have a chance to study both Islamic track and academic track. There are two levels in private Islamic schools: 1) kingdergarten and primary, and 2) secondary. The

private Islamic schools (at the secondary level) in the southern provinces mostly developed from the traditional Islamic education institutions or pondoks.

*Traditional Islamic education institutions (pondok*s) are the oldest institution of Islamic teaching (Binchi et al., 2007, p. 325). The teaching at this institution uses a textbook called *Kitab* which is authored by Islamic scholars such as Sheikh Daud Al-Fathoni, Shiekh Ahmad Al-Fathoni and others. Pondoks only teach about the Islamic religion, and the teachers can be anyone with a very good knowledge of Islam. Students are usually teenagers or adults, but even seniors may attend.

The language used to explain the content and for interactions between learners and teachers in these three types of school is Patani Malay because it is the language that both learners and teachers understand best. Even when the teachers are explaining things in Arabic or Jawi textbooks, they mostly use Patani Malay.

2.1.3 Local radio and television programs[12]

Local radio and television programs are popular among people in the area (Samoh, 2010). There are various programs that reflect their ways of life and can meet the needs of people in the area such as local news, Islamic teaching and local music programs etc. These programs use the Patani Malay language, which is particularly useful for people who do not understand Standard Thai well.

2.1.4 Patani Malay teaching textbooks or Patani Malay lessons for non-Patani Malay speakers (especially government officers)[13]

Some non-Patani Malay speakers, especially government officers who work in Thailand's deep south, try to learn Patani Malay in order to facilitate communication with local people, especially elder visitors who cannot speak Standard Thai. Sometimes an informal Thai-based script is used for Patani Malay teaching textbooks to make it easier for these leaners to understand the lessons.

2.1.5 Collecting Patani Malay wisdom and literature[14]

Patani Malay is the language of the local wisdom and literature, which is transmitted from one generation to the next generation orally since, until recently, it could not be written because Patani Malay had no writing system. In fact, many of the local words cannot be written in the Jawi script because Jawi lacks symbols for representing some of the sounds in Patani Malay.

After the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia (RILCA), Mahidol University began developing the Thai-based Patani Malay writing system, it is now possible for local wisdom and literature to be systematically collected and documented, including local poetry, Patani Malay proverbs, local stories, Patani Malay folklore, Patani Malay traditional foods and so on.

2.1.6 Communication at (Thai) government offices[15]

Although people primarily use Standard Thai at government offices, people are more familiar with Patani Malay and prefer to use it. Therefore, Patani Malay is permitted to be spoken in government offices with officials who are Patani Malay speakers, and other non-Pattani Malay speaking staff are also trained in basic Patani Malay for better communication with the locals.

2.1.7 Islamic and Qur'anic teaching at mosques and in the community[16]

Although the Qur'an is written in Arabic, explanations on how to read it are usually in Patani Malay. This could not be done in Arabic because neither instructors nor learners have good enough command of Arabic to handle instruction in the one language, and as with Islamic studies, the teaching and explanations are in Patani Malay even though the textbooks are in Arabic.

2.2 Standard Thai (Thai script)

Standard Thai is the second language for most people in the area and is therefore very important. It is learned in the government school system. Standard Thai is used in different contexts, as described below.

2.2.1 Conversations with family, friends and among Patani Malay speakers anywhere in society such as schools, markets and government offices)

Although Patani Malay is the language daily communication that people use the most, Standard Thai is another language that is commonly used in everyday life. This is especially the case in urban communities or market communities where there is a mix of Patani Malay and non-Malay speakers. Standard Thai is the best choice for communication in such situations. Moreover, the majority of people in this area are considered to have good skills in Standard Thai, especially the younger generation, who typically use more Standard Thai than Patani Malay.

In addition, in government offices such as provincial halls, district offices, police stations and hospitals, Standard Thai is used a lot more because many government officers are transferred from outside areas and speak little if any Patani Malay. For this reason, it is more

convenient to use Standard Thai, although Patani Malay is generally used in cases where the customer cannot understand Standard Thai.

2.2.2 Instruction in Thai government schools and universities

Government schools and universities in Thailand's deep south are the same as elsewhere in Thailand, meaning that only Standard Thai is used as the language of instruction, as dictated by Thai education policy. It is hoped that by using Standard Thai as the language of instruction in school it will help students to have success in education and thereby achieve a good quality of life. On the other hand, using only Standard Thai in education often creates problems for students who do not use Standard Thai as their first language or mother tongue. For example, when Patani Malay children (who use Patani Malay at home) come to school (where only Standard Thai is used), the students encounter a major learning impediment because the school language is different from their home language.

2.2.3 The textbooks in Thai government schools and universities

Most teaching materials (particularly textbooks) in Thai government schools and universities in Thailand's deep south are in Standard Thai. Therefore, Standard Thai is an important language for learning and success in education.

However, since Standard Thai is a new language for Patani Malay children, the teaching materials should be designed appropriately for second language speakers. Also, those teaching should be aware of the differences between the languages so they can help the children understand better. But this has not been done in Thai schools, resulting in many children facing problems coping with lessons in Standard Thai in early schooling (preschool and elementary levels). The children simply do not have enough Standard Thai vocabulary for communication; moreover, they do not have enough skills to begin reading and writing in Standard Thai.

2.3 Classical Malay (Jawi script)

Classical Malay (Jawi script) refers to the language used in traditional Islamic textbooks called *kitab jawi* (Islamic textbooks written in Jawi) or *kitab tua* (old Islamic textbooks) or *kitab kuning* (yellow textbooks). These Islamic textbooks were translated from Arabic textbooks or produced by Patani scholars such as Sheik Daud Al-Fathoni, Sheik Ahmad Al-Fathoni, and others. *Kitab jawi* have been used in *pondok* schools and also in private Islamic schools in the higher grades (*Sanawi* level). In addition, Classical Malay (Jawi script) is also used for Islamic teaching at mosques in the communities.
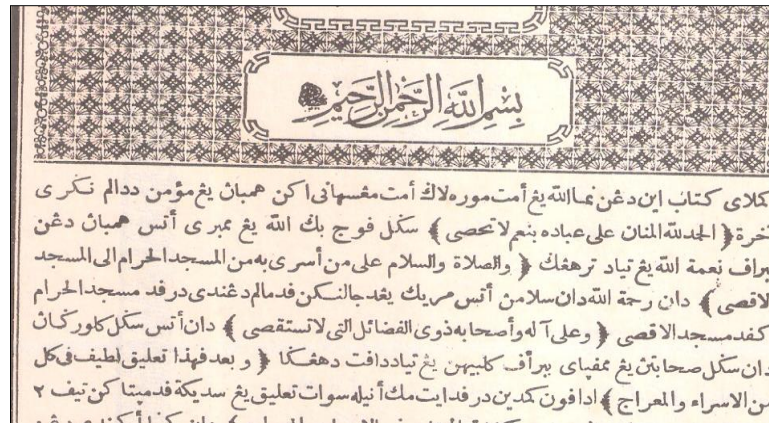
Figure 3 Picture of the Kitab Jawi (Samoh, 2018)

The example of Kitab Jawi above shows that Classical Malay has borrowed Arabic words (such as مؤمن , آخرة , صحابة , تعليق , رحمة). In Thailand's deep south, Classical Malay is widely used in Islamic domains.

2.4 Standard Malay (Jawi script)

Standard Malay written in the Jawi script in this study refers to the Standard Malay language of Patani Malay people in Thailand's deep south. This language combines the systems of Classical Malay and Standard Malay with elements of Patani Malay, depending on the ability of the individual. Those who have only studied in pandok schools tend to use the Classical Malay style of Jawi, while those who have studied in private Islamic schools use a mixture of Classical Malay and Standard Malay elements when writing Jawi. Those who have studied in Malaysia use the Standard Malay style. This is supported by a study by Paramal et al. (2015), which found that the people of the three Southern Border provinces of Thailand use Standard Malay (written in Jawi script) depending on their ability and use it in a mixed system.

In Malaysia, "Standard Malay" using the Jawi script has been standardized and is continually updated by a language governing body called the *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.* However, in Thailand's southernmost provinces, only scholars and university professors follow the work of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. Some people in southern Thailand do not fully agree with the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka's standards; they prefer the old system of Jawi script in Malaysia known as the *Za'ba* system. In most cases, ordinary people in the South are not aware of the standardization efforts and thus read and write using a mixture of systems. In Thailand's Deep South, Standard Malay (Jawi script) is used in:

2.4.1 Islamic textbooks used in Tadika schools and private Islamic schools

The textbooks on various subjects that are used in the Tadika schools are mostly in Standard Malay written in Jawi script. The teachers buy their textbooks from the *Pustaka* - the local organization that oversees the Tadika schools in the three southernmost provinces - for all basic subjects, although they can also buy books from Malaysia.

2.4.2 Local written mass media

The Standard Malay language using Jawi script is used in various written and printed media in the area, including documents that are issued by the Islamic organization, government offices and NGOs. The use of Jawi script for written material in the local mass media reflects the identity of people of the region and is an effort on the part of the government to directly communicate and liaise with the local population.

2.4.3 Institution names such as government offices, schools, mosques, and village names, etc.

Standard Malay using Jawi script is widely used for writing the names of institutions such as government offices, schools, mosques, and village names, etc. The use of Jawi script symbolizes the Islamic identity of the people of this region and demonstrates the government's recognition of this identity.

Figure 4 Cemetery sign in Pattani province (Samoh, 2016)

2.5 Standard Malay (Rumi script)

In Thailand's Deep South, Standard Malay (Rumi script) is used in:

2.5.1 The textbooks on Standard Malay subjects in Tadika schools, private Islamic schools and government schools

Most educational institutions in the region teach Standard Malay as a subject. For example, Tadika schools offer the subject of reading and writing in Standard Malay using the Rumi script on a simple level in order for students to be able to read and write words and short sentences. Standard Malay is taught under the subject titles *bacaan* Rumi (reading) and *rencana* Rumi (writing), and some schools includes additional subjects beyond these two. The people who teach Standard Malay in the Tadika schools are usually young graduates from private Islamic schools or those who have completed the highest level (thanawi) at an Islamic schools, a grade, equivalent to the 8th, 9th or 10th in regular school. Thanawi certificates are accepted by Muslim countries for further studies, especially in the Malay world, or in Egypt, Syria, Libya, Sudan and Saudi Arabia, countries where many Patani Malay students choose to continue their religious studies.

The teaching materials used in Tadika schools are provided by the Pustaka, which oversees the work of Tadika schools in the three Southernmost provinces. Teachers need to buy their materials from the Pustaka for all basic subjects, and they can buy books from Malaysia to teach additional non-basic subjects. The following is an example of a Standard Malay (Rumi) textbook used in a Tadika school. The Thai Ministry of Education has also recently produced textbooks for use in Tadika schools for teaching Rumi or Standard Malay.

In private Islamic schools, Standard Malay is taught at a higher level than at Tadika schools as there is greater emphasis on reading, writing, and grammar. Most of the teachers are people who have earned a Sanawi certificate or studied in Malaysia, Indonesia, or Brunei. Thus, the teaching materials in the Islamic schools come from the wider Malay world. Standard Malay is taught as a foreign language (like English or Chinese) in some government schools, but the teaching materials come from the Thai Ministry of Education.

2.5.2 Local radio and television programs

The use of oral Standard Malay in radio and television programs in the South has been common for a long time. Presenters use Standard Malay to the best of their ability, often mixed with Patani Malay and Thai, and despite the local Thai authorities trying to raise the standard of presenters and the public broadcaster using Standard Malay on the radio and TV, these broadcasts still contain a mixture of Standard Malay and Patani Malay, or Standard Malay and Thai. Regardless, it creates a good atmosphere and a positive attitude toward the use of Standard Malay, which is becoming regarded more favorably as a high prestige variety.

2.5.3 Local written mass media

Standard Malay using Rumi script is used in various written and printed media, including signs and billboards, as well as some documents issued by government agencies such as Southern Border Province Administration Center (SBPAC), local health authorities, hospitals, and local universities. The use of Standard Malay reflects the diversity of the region and the efforts made by the government to ingratiate itself with the local population.

2. 5. 4 Institution names such as government offices, schools, mosques, village names, etc.

The Standard Malay language written in Rumi script is used for various signs in the area to write the names of the institutions such as schools, government offices, and universities. Using the Rumi script for these signs reflects efforts towards impartial and efficacious communication in the diverse linguistic environment found in the region.

2.6 Arabic Language

In Thailand's Deep South, Arabic is used in Islamic domains such as Islamic and Arabic textbooks in Tadika schools, Islamic private schools, traditional Islamic education institutions (pondoks) and for some classes at local universities such as Fathoni University, Prince of Songkla University, Yala Rajabhat University and Princess of Naradhiwas University, all of which offer Islamic studies and Arabic studies. Moreover, Arabic is also used in Qur'anic learning because the majority of the population in this area are Muslims for whom it is necessary to learn how to read and understand the Qur'an.

In addition, the Arabic language is used for writing the names of mosques, schools or government offices (such as at the Provincial Islamic Committee or police stations), as in the following examples:

Figure 5 Mosque names written in Arabic (Samoh, 2010)

Most people in the area are proud of the Jawi script used for writing Classical Malay and Standard Malay, and they believe that the Jawi script and the Arabic script are the same.

In fact, the scripts are different, but they are related because Jawi script is based on the Arabic script, moreover, because Jawi script is widely used in writing Islamic textbooks, most people believe that Jawi is a high prestige script and its use maintains or strengthens their Islamic identity.

3. Discussion

3.1 The importance of the Jawi script to Patani Malay identity

The Jawi script is closely linked to the Islamic religion; thus it is a powerful symbol of the local identity. People are very sensitive about anything that they feel could damage the Jawi script. For this reason, any project that involves the Jawi script must be very undertaken with caution because Jawi is not just an alphabet; it is felt deeply in the heart of Patani Malay people as an important symbol of their religious identity.

A clear example can be found in the work of the MTB MLE[18] project. The project team encountered problems because people did not understand why the Thai script was being used to write Patani Malay. They feared that the project was a tool used by the Thai state to replace the Jawi script. In reality, spoken Patani Malay and Classical Malay written in the Jawi script are different languages, although people see them as one language. In reality, Patani Malay was an unwritten language, with no standard alphabet, and that is the reason the Thai based script created confusion and fear.

3.2 Language loss and language revitalization

Not only is the complexity of language and scripts situation in Thailand's Deep South obvious in terms of number, different statuses and domains of language use, but Patani Malay – which is the mother tongue – is also in clear decline despite the feeling of ownership and ethnic identification. Current attitudes and usage by the younger generation and people in urban areas indicate that if nothing is done, Patani Malay may face language loss. According to linguists such as Krauss (1992, p. 7), 90% of the world languages will be extinct by the end of this century or a little after.

This researcher believes that Patani Malay is an especially important language in the region because it is the mother tongue, ancestral or heritage language, and the most intimate language that represents the Patani Malay identity. Since it is generally a spoken language which is used at home and in the community in everyday life, Patani Malay speakers are not aware of the value of this language. On the other hand, the Malay varieties written in Jawi script (Classical Malay and Standard Malay) are considered to be more important and

valuable. Thai-based Patani Malay writing is actually used all over the region for the names of government offices, schools, mosques, cemeteries, streets and villages, as well as for personal names. However, it is not standardized and its status has never been raised to that of a formal written language. For this reason, it has been promoted and standardized by a group of well-known linguists and language experts who have compiled a Patani Malay-Thai dictionary and made great efforts to realize the success of the Patani Malay-Thai Multilingual Education (PMT-MLE) project. Because of ignorance, some of the elite have even suggested that Patani Malay should only be a spoken language. They do not see the value of PM and think that it is substandard and therefore not worth promoting as a written language. As a result, Patani Malay is under serious threat.

According to the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale or EGIDS (Lewis & Simons, 2010), Patani Malay can be considered as being at levels 6a and 6b. Patani Malay in the rural areas is at the 6a level, described by Lewis and Simons (2010, p. 117) as "used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language". On the other hand, Patani Malay in urban areas has been judged to be at the 6b level, which according to EGIDS is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children" (Lewis & Simons, 2010, p. 117). Patani Malay speakers in the city and nearby use their mother tongue less and use Thai most of the time, with family and friends and at government offices etc. Even in rural areas, the younger generation use Patani Malay less while Thai is increasingly used because of the education policy and mass media. So, the Patani Malay language situation is now under considerable threat, but given that it is still spoken in the family, now is the crucial time to try to preserve it. The Patani Malay writing system should be developed, standardized and used in the Deep South, especially in the early grades of primary school. And because it is still widely respected, the younger generation must also be given the opportunity to appreciate the true value of their mother tongue. This can be done by introducing it at secondary school and university levels to keep the language alive and help it become more widely used – an initiative that would be in line with United Nations (UN) campaigns for preserving language and culture for future generations and improving the quality of education. Using the language in education is very important for Patani Malay speakers; it can help improve the quality of education and is the best way to revitalize the mother tongue. Lewis and Simons (2010) have determined that if a language is developed to have a written form and is used in education, then it will move to less critical levels 5 or 4. In summary, the researcher proposes that the Patani Malay language be developed and standardized and subsequently

used in the formal education system to help preserve and use it as an effective tool for Patani Malay students' educational development.

3.3 Using a Thai-based script to write Patani Malay destroys the Jawi script

People in the southernmost provinces have been using an informal system for writing their Patani Malay language in the Thai script for many years, and it is well known to people throughout the region because they have studied Thai in the government education system, and even at private Islamic schools. By contrast, only people who have studied religion in depth are comfortable using the Jawi script, and those who are most familiar with the Rumi script have typically studied or worked in the wider Malay World (Malaysia, Indonesia, or Brunei). For the researcher's opinion, the local people are not very happy using Thai script for writing Patani Malay because the Thai script represents Siam, which is considered a foreign power against whom they fought in the past. In addition, the Thai script is seen as representing the Buddhist religion. Although people in the region were Buddhist prior to their conversion to Islam, they do not like to talk about that part of their history. Thus, people in the area do not take pride in the Thai script, whereas they are very proud of the Jawi script as a symbol of their religious identity.

But seeing the Thai script as a Buddhist symbol is really a misconception since scripts do not have a direct link to religion; scripts represent a language, not a religion. In the distant past, the Brahmin Pallawa and Rencong scripts were used in the region, but out of loyalty to the Islamic religion and Jawi's link to Arabic, Arabic became the preferred choice of script, resulting rejection of the Thai script. This misconception has had a great impact on language development and education in the region. In the opinion of this researcher, there should be more emphasis placed on building understanding and acceptance of the Thai script among the people of the South, and the topic of religion should be separated from the script issue. Otherwise, the Patani Malay language will not have an effective language development plan. Even though people in the area love the Jawi script, it does not represent their language. Rather, it represents Classical Malay or Standard Malay, and if it is to be used to represent the Patani Malay spoken language, additional diacritics would need to be added — something that is not acceptable to the local people. In addition, it would be difficult to use the Rumi script adapted to Patani Malay given the small number of people who are skilled in writing Rumi. It is not a good option for those reasons. They are however willing to use Rumi with diacritics, perhaps because they do not love it so much — in part because it is seen as the legacy of British colonialism. Furthermore, they are willing for Thai to have diacritics, likewise because they do not love it much due to it being the

Buddhist colonial script. Thus, it is very difficult to find a script that would be pedagogically and socially acceptable. Perhaps a regional script referendum is needed, although some people would not see the importance or even the necessity of having any sort of writing system for Patani Malay. This contrasts with the view of others, including academics and language activists, who see that, without some sort of standardized writing system, the Patani Malay language cannot be preserved.

4. Conclusion

This article presents the languages and scripts used in Thailand's Deep South. The related study was based on interviews, documentary evidence, and participant observation. It was found that six languages are used in the region: Patani Malay, Standard Thai, Classical Malay (written in the Jawi script), Standard Malay (written in the Jawi script), Standard Malay (written in the Rumi script), and Arabic, and these languages are used in different domains. Patani Malay is used for daily communication with family, friends, and in the community of Patani Malay people. Standard Thai is used for communicating with non-Patani Malay speakers such as government officials and also as the medium of instruction in all government schools from the pre-primary to university level. As for Classical Malay written in the Jawi script, it is used in the religious domain, especially at traditional Islamic educational institutions or *pondoks*. Standard Malay written in Jawi script is used in teaching the Standard Malay language and for writing signs such as the names of villages, schools and mosques. With regard to Standard Malay written in the Rumi script, it is used in teaching the Standard Malay language in Tadika schools and in private Islamic schools, as well as in some government schools and universities. In addition, Standard Malay written in Rumi script is used in writing some place name signs. Arabic is used in religious studies at Tadika, pondok and private Islamic schools, as well as for some government schools. In addition, Arabic is used in studying the Qur'an and for writing the names on signs for religious institutions such as mosques and offices of the provincial Islamic councils.

Also, the researcher presents information about the mixed language commonly used in the region, which combines Thai and Patani Malay. This situation has resulted in language change as Thai dominates everyday usage, especially among the youth. This trend has older members of the community worried about the vitality of the language and whether their children and grandchildren will continue to speak Patani Malay – a concern shared by researchers and language experts alike.

Notes

[1] This article was developed and adapted from the first author's Ph.D. dissertation entitled *"A study of the complexity of language, script, and identity in Thailand's Deep South"* at Mahidol University.

[2] In this article, the authors have defined Patani Malay as a language -- not a dialect -- based on the sociolinguistic criteria. Patani Malay has a systematic and standardized writing system. It can be used to record the Patani Malay language and various kinds of local knowledge. Patani Malay has more than a million speakers in the southern border provinces of Thailand (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and some districts in Songkhla province). In addition, Patani Malay language has its own unique history and a direction of language change different from other Malay languages.

[3] The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam. All Muslims should learn to read and understand the verses from this holy book.

[4] A displaced Tai language spoken in the area by a number of people whose history is not clear. The language they speak is close to the language spoken in the lower part of northern Thailand.

[5] The number represents the interviewee.

[6] Only for some Islamic subjects in private Islamic schools.

[7] Only for some Islamic studies and Standard Malay subjects.

[8] Only for Standard Malay subject.

[9] Only for Islamic studies subjects.

[10] Using Patani Malay as a spoken language.

[11] Using Patani Malay as a spoken language.

[12] Using Patani Malay as a spoken language.

[13] Using Patani Malay as a written language.

[14] Using Patani Malay as a written language.

[15] Using Patani Malay as a spoken language.

[16] Using Patani Malay as a spoken language.

[17] Or the holy Arabic.

[18] Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB MLE) project.

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