

GET TO KNOW BAHASA I

Differences Between the Malaysian and Indonesian

In the translation industry, it is paramount to provide the client with anticipant linguistic service and a high-quality finished product.

What do you do when you are been asked to do Bahasa translation?

I believe most of people will take it as Indonesian for granted. Once the client asked to Bahasa translation, Indonesian jumps into our mind right away.

However, it also means Malay besides Indonesian. If what the client needed is Bahasa Malaysian, there will cause a big trouble and waste time, also lead loss for both two sides.

So it is necessary to know well about Bahasa and avoid any confusion.

What is Bahasa?

It is the dialect of Malay used as the national language of the Republic of Indonesia or of Malaysia. Both Malaysian and Indonesian can be called "Bahasa", so it is very easy to cause confusion.

Both *Bahasa Malaysia* and *Bahasa Indonesia* are standardized "isolects" of Malay, a major language of the Austronesian family. (The term "isolect" is a neutral term, often used in Malayic linguistics, to refer to those Malay languages that are neither strictly a language nor a dialect. However, for simplicity in this article, I refer to them both as languages.)

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Yet, while both these languages are considered “Malay”, they differ greatly because of how they were impacted by the geography of the islands, and how they were

historically influenced by outside interaction.

Sanskrit, the earliest linguistic influence on the islands, came from India in the form of Buddhist and Hindu traders. Next came Muslim traders who brought

both a significant Arabic influence (most often seen in borrowed vocabulary), as well as a potent Islamic influence that created the area’s prevailing religious culture.

The largest language influences, however, came during the years of European exploration and colonization. Portuguese influence came in the early 1500s, but was restricted primarily to the islands of Indonesia, as the English had control over the areas to the north.

The Dutch arrival in the 1600s pushed Portuguese influence out, and treaties with the English solidified Dutch rule in Indonesia (the Dutch East Indies), and English rule in the Malaysian archipelago and northern coast of Borneo. These colonial influences irrevocably changed the Malay language in two very distinct ways.

Bahasa Malaysia:

Bahasa Malaysia (or Malaysian in English) refers to the standardized and official language of the nation of Malaysia. The term “Bahasa” simply means “language of.” Therefore, Bahasa Malaysia translates as “the language of Malaysia.” While “Malaysian” is the name given to the version of Malay found in Malaysia, it is nearly impossible to identify a

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“standard” dialect of Malaysian spoken indigenously in Malaysia.

For example Bahasa Malaysia, the standardized and official dialect of Malaysian business and government, is similar to Bahasa Melayu, the dialect commonly spoken in Peninsular Malaysia. However in East Malaysia and Brunei, they speak a dialect called *Bahasa Baku* that differs in vowel pronunciation and tends to be spoken much faster.

One of the major ways Malaysian differs from Indonesian is its influence by and incorporation of the English language. When speakers of Malaysian incorporated English vocabulary, they rarely changed the pronunciation of the word. For example, the word “immigration” in Malaysian is “*imigrassen*”. While the spelling has changed, the pronunciation has little to no variation.

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