

## THE SUPERIORITY OF MALAY LANGUAGE AND THE PIONEERING WORKS OF RAJI ALI HAJI

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### ABSTRACT

This paper elaborates on the superiority of Malay language and the pioneering works of Raja Ali Haji on developing and cultivating the language. Raja Ali Haji asserted that with language skills, humans can attain the status of a civilized human being with a noble character and useful knowledge. Thereby, the content of a language should represent the subtlety of its people. With that belief, Raja Ali Haji strived towards realizing it by codifying Malay language and managed to produce two works in the field of language: *Bustan al-Katibin* (1850), a book on spelling and grammar, and *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* (A Book of Language Knowledge, 1858), a monolingual dictionary. Besides, he used to write works in various fields of science in a standard Malay. He was the first person to codify Malay. In a Dutch colonial education system, Malay that was developed by Raja Ali Haji was made as a reference for the introduction in education for the locals. In its prime, Malay was used as a weapon to fight against the Dutch colonialists and was later promoted as the national language of Indonesia as of October 28, 1928, under the name of the Indonesian language.

**Keywords:** superiority; Malay language; noble character; pioneering; Raja Ali Haji

### INTRODUCTION

The Malay language has gained international recognition from global societies for centuries. As Srivijaya and Malay Kingdoms were established, Malay language had started to play its pivotal role as a connecting language spanning across the archipelago. In fact, during those times, Malay has become an international language as recognized by researchers and linguists, especially foreign researchers and linguists (Chambert-Loir, 2019; Collins, 2011; Hijjas, 2010). That consistent attitude applied within archipelagic kingdoms policies has then given rise to the Malay language among international societies, particularly foreign leaders who are in contact with local authorities. During the Johor-Pahang-Riau-Lingga Sultanate era, the Malay language has shown signs of its increasingly influential role in the nation. Antonio Galvão, the Governor of Portuguese in Maluku (1536–1539) once wrote it. Today, Malay has become a trend; most of them [North Maluku people] use it and they develop their selves with that language throughout their regions, like Latin in Europe (Collins, 2011). According to Francois Valentijn, a priest, and a Dutch historian, in the 18th century, under Riau-Lingga-Johor-Pahang Sultanate, Malay had made rapid progress and had

become equal to other European languages. At that time, Riau-Lingga-Johor-Pahang Sultanate was led by Sultan Mahmud Riayat Syah (1761–1812), a Malay Sultan who took a keen interest in all aspects of state development including religious, socio-cultural, and language development; apart from political-governmental, economic, and security-defense. He aimed to restore success and regain Melaka, which had fallen into the hands of colonists (Malik, 2018, 2019a).

In this archipelago, apart from being used as the mother tongue by its native speakers, the Malay language has also been used as a second language by the majority of residents since the era of the Srivijaya Kingdom. This specialty is due to its widespread presence in Asia, especially in Southeast Asia, making it one of the five languages with the largest number of speakers in the world (Malik, 2019a). During Riau-Lingga Sultanate, the role and the potentials of Malay language was further emphasized by Raja Ali Haji through his ventures into developing and cultivating the Malay language to become a high standard language.

Raja Ali Haji's literary works have been widely studied by researchers and scholars for a long time ago. The results of their studies were written in the form of research reports stored in libraries, reference books, journal articles, and seminar papers. Among others are as follows. Netscher (1854) translated *Gurindam Dua Belas* by Raja Ali Haji into Dutch which was published at the same time with Arabic-Malay (Jawi) text. This publication was an attempt by Netscher to introduce Raja Ali Haji and his very famous *Gurindam Dua Belas* to the audience of Dutch-language text readers. Another scholar, van Ronkel (1900) translated the work of Raja Ali Haji *Bustan al-Katibin* from Malay into Dutch. Besides, Matheson & Andaya (1982) translated the book *Tuhfat al-Nafis* by Raja Ali Haji into English. The purpose of those translations is to introduce Raja Ali Haji's literary works to the world.

Mahdini (1999) described both manuscript A (Jakarta, Cod. No. DLXIV W. 18) and manuscript B (Leiden, UBL Cod. Or. 8196) of *Thamarat al-Muhimmah* by Raja Ali Haji. He also elaborated comparison of both manuscripts, background of the birth of both manuscripts, edited manuscripts, and discussion of the concept of justice (court). Malik and Junus (2000) described the literary works of Raja Ali Haji that had been collected so far, the results of a review of the shape and the content in general, and a comparison of the quality of these works with similar works that had been written by Western Orientalist writers. Musa (2005) conducted a research to find the contents of Raja Ali Haji's literary work in the field of Malay grammar entitled *Bustan al-Katibin*. He also outlined a summary of *Bustan al-Katibin* consisting of three parts: (1) Introduction, (2) Contents, and (3) Closing. He also described the views of several scholars at the time about Raja Ali Haji's literary works, Riau as the center of Malay writing and culture in the 18th and 19th centuries, Raja Ali Haji's background in a glance, Raja Ali Haji's literary works, and versions of the *Bustan al-Katibin* manuscripts. His research also contains a manuscript written in Jawi and its transliteration in Latin. Besides, he also made a list of words and terms in classical Malay and Arabic contained in the text described in present-day Malay.

The relevant researches described above show that Raja Ali Haji's literary works have been widely investigated by scholars from various disciplines. That was caused by Raja Ali Haji indeed the famous author in his time. Research conducted by scholars were also reviewed from various points

of view following the interests and expertise of the researchers. Even so, there has been no research that specifically examines the relationship between studies or fostering the Malay language conducted by Raja Ali Haji with the use of Malay in Indonesian native schools during the Dutch colonial period, the election of the Riau Islands Malay language as the national language of Indonesia so that it is called Indonesian in 1928, and the use of Malay (Indonesia) as the language of struggle against the invaders in Indonesia since 1928.

This paper proves that Raja Ali Haji, through his struggle to develop and foster Malay language, had pioneered the unity of the Indonesian people so that the Indonesian people succeeded in seizing independence on August 17, 1945. Thus, the superiority of the Malay language had been utilized by Raja Ali Haji to be standardized so that it was suitable to become a language of modern science, language of instruction in education, as well as national and state languages. In turn, Raja Ali Haji's efforts could unite the Indonesian people who previously used their respective regional languages – Indonesia has more than 700 regional languages. By using a national language, namely Malay or Indonesian, in the not too distant future, the Indonesian people managed to regain their independence again. Before that, the Indonesian people had struggled for hundreds of years to be independent, but to no avail, because they used different regional languages making it difficult to unite.

## **METHOD**

By utilizing the method of historical writing, this research opted to discover the particularity of Malay language according to the work of Raja Ali Haji. In the initial step of source gathering, we managed to have various primary sources, such as manuscripts, poems, and other works of literature, as well as the already existing works of academics. However, we focused on elaborating our findings on several classical kinds of literature and discussed the following issue within the approach of public history. According to Lewis (1987), history was re-explained for it had three types: (1) Remembered History; (2) Recovered History; and (3) Invented History. Remembered history is history based on memories of the public, gathered as collective memories, and identified by a certain group of people in the process of remembering, recalling, and retelling. It is a collection of “selected” memories, a part of reality imposed and perceived by a group of people as mass truth. Recovered history, on the other hand, is history coming from the process of rediscovering the past, to generate actual definition (history as it happened), and then established as the rejuvenating proposition toward such mass truth. Recovered history also reconstructs the past from “the forgotten memory”; a piece of consciousness discovered by historians through the method of history. At last, invented history is the type of history that is written in the means to combine the remembered and recovered history (Zuhdi, 2019).

## **Intellectual Patriotism of the Nation's Fighters**

In Riau-Lingga Sultanate, after the London Treaty of 1824, cultural and scientific development gained full support from the Kingdom. At the same time, intellectual figures who developed Malay civilization emerged. Among these figures is Raja Ali Haji ibn Raja Ahmad ibn Raja Haji

Fisabilillah (Yang Dipertuan Muda IV Riau-Lingga-Johor-Pahang Sultanate). Raja Ali Haji rahimahullah (1808–1873) was the most renowned figure among the intellectuals of Riau-Lingga Sultanate in the 19th century. He wrote two books in the field of language (Malay): *Bustan al-Katibin* (1850), the book on spelling and grammar, and *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* (1858), a Malay dictionary. Both are the first books in his field, both in grammar and dictionary, written by Malay authors. Besides, he has written works in the fields of Islam, literature, philosophy, law-politics-government, and history (Malik, 2015a). Throughout his career as an author, he has produced a minimum of 20 works.

In Riau-Lingga Sultanate, since the mid-19th to the early twentieth century, the creativity of science and culture development had experienced rapid growth. In Riau Islands province, those intellectual activity and creativity, which has been a hallmark of Malay civilization since the time of Srivijaya, are on the rise. It would be commonly accepted that during the centuries, Riau-Lingga Sultanate soon became the hub of Malay-Muslim civilization, after the Sultanate of Malacca's rule ended (Malik, 2013a). Bilal Abu, Raja Ahmad Engku Haji (a father of Raja Ali Haji), and Daeng Woh were the pioneers of authorship attribution in Riau-Lingga Sultanate. In addition to their works, there are two other early works with anonymous authors: *Syair Menyambut Sultan Bentan* (unidentified year) and *Syair Hari Kiamat*, written by an Arabian poet who had been living in the Island of Penyengat Indra Sakti, the hub of Malay-Muslim civilization development in the 19th century to early 20th century.

When authoring about the victory of Sultan Mahmud Riayat Syah against the Dutch on the waters of Tanjungpinang in Riau War II (ended May 13, 1787) in his work of *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, he commented in a very loud and enthusiastic tone. Not even a Dutchman could no longer live in the State of Riau (Malik, 2019b). This statement emphasizes that Raja Ali Haji was strongly opposed to the colonization. The same standing is also implied in the advice verse, verse 40, in his work of *Tsamarat al-Muhimmah* (Malik, 2013b; Septiani et al., 2019).

Ayuhai segala raja menteri (Oh thy all kings and ministers)

Serta pegawai kanan dan kiri (and all employees)

Hendaklah jaga ingatkan negeri (Keep the country be safe)

Perampok penyamun perompak pencuri (from the robbers, thieves, and burglars)

With his strong principles together with his ability and expertise, Raja Ali Haji fought against the invaders in many different ways. In this case, he used intellectual, linguistic, and scientific ways. With scientific and cultural development, it was expected that his people would be comprehensively smart so that they would not be easily deceived by colonialism, the Dutch, or the British colonists. Furthermore, by language, it was expected that his people can be united in fighting against the invaders by using the same language. It was historically discovered that an intellectual-based strategy used by Raja Ali Haji was highly effective in driving the colonists out of the Archipelago.

### The Blend of Courtesy and Language

The spirit of developing and building the Malay language in Riau-Lingga Sultanate was driven, triggered, and provoked by Raja Ali Haji. In his preamble to his grammar work, *Bustan al-Katibin* (1850), he emphasized the connection between good language skills, high knowledge, and good manners. The importance of utterance is because manner and courtesy can be seen from the words that appear in language behavior. If intending to speak politely and mannerly, we ought to understand the knowledge of correct and good orderly speech (Mohamed, 2018; Musa, 2005).

Raja Ali Haji viewed language as playing a strategic role in humans. With language skills, humans are capable of achieving a civilized, dignified, and highly knowledgeable nation. With that belief, Raja Ali Haji spurred and encouraged the spirit of authorship. That message was passed onto his successors. In *Bustan al-Katibin*, he also advised that All works of sword making could be made out of words, while the work of words could not be made out of sword... and, how many thousands and tens of thousands of swords have been unsheathed, with a streak of words they are sheathed (Mohamed, 2018). Well-mannered words are capable of making thousands and tens of thousands of unsheathed swords covered in the sheath. Indeed, when a human's mind has been enlightened, in any form of devotion to God the Creator, the sword is no longer needed. It reminds us of Allah's first revelation to his chosen prophet, Muhammad SAW.

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ (1) خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ (2) اقْرَأْ  
وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ (3) الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ (4) عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ  
(5)

The meanings of the above Arabic language are: 1) Recite in the name of your Lord who created; 2) Created man from a clinging substance, 3) Recite, and your Lord is the Most Generous, 4) Who taught by the pen; 5) Taught man that which he knew not. (Q.S. Al-Alaq: 1-5). Furthermore, Raja Ali Haji was convinced in the power of words in building human civilization. Words as a symbol of knowledge are capable of defeating the power of weapons (swords). In such a way should Malay-Muslim civilization be preserved, maintained, and expanded. Scientific development will enable Malay-Muslim civilization to rise and to defeat the Dutch colonial political and military forces that have begun to put their feet on Malay soil at that time. It was through this strategy that he fought to save his nation.

In addition to various disciplines of interest, Raja Ali Haji paid particular attention to the field of language. He believed that the distraction of a nation was highly determined by its language. Isn't a language that expresses human dignity and character? However, in his observation, by that time, the Malay language had become threatened. Quite a large number of people use the Malay language which defies standard Malay language rules. Therefore, Malay language should be preserved and the Malays, in turn, will be preserved as well. Mohamed (2018) states that some of them went here and there to take wages and salaries from the great nations and from the great people who were supposedly Malay writers, though he was not yet fully informed. Sometimes anger and wrath came out of those Kings and sometimes the Kings whose language is not their own, they did not evaluate it since they merely rely on their typist who claimed to be fully knowledgeable, so he has given him something to do that, indeed, he gave the example. If in other

languages they want to translate it into Malay, it can sometimes be as heavy as it sounds and if he does not take good care of his vows and thoughts, there will come the incidents later.

Raja Ali Haji was very concerned about the tendency of using sloppy Malay deviated from the true rules by some people at that time. If such a condition was not improved, the Malay language would have perished. Therefore, he worked hard to preserve the Malay language. In cultivating the language, he had the conviction as expressed in Gurindam Dua Belas, the fifth article, verse 1 (Haji, 1846).

*Jika hendak mengenal orang berbangsa* (If a nation's person you would identify)  
*Lihat kepada budi dan bahasa* (Observe their kindness and courtesy)

Thus, Raja Ali Haji was convinced that courtesy and language are the ones that could save a nation, including the Malays. Therefore, the Malay language should be preserved, maintained, cultivated, and developed. In that way, he fought to save his people. The conviction of how important a courtesy is in a language encouraged Raja Ali Haji to be obligated to explain the concept of courtesy in a poem that he put in as an entry explanation in his work *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* (Haji in Yunus (Ed.), 1986/1987). Based on the poem, some characteristics of a courteous man are: (1) following the examples of anbia (prophets) and aulia (leaders), (2) being consistently happy, (3) being humble, (4) being generous, (5) behaving nobly (virtuous), (6) speaking gently and sweetly, (7) not hurting others, (8) not despising others, (9) leading everyone well, (10) being wise, (11) hating cruelty, (12) hating to look down on underprivileged people, and (13) hating to make fun of others.

The concept of courtesy explained by Raja Ali Haji indeed leads to the teaching of Islam. In his view, courtesy is a spiritual realization of the heart. That spiritual element should be preserved so that it can take control of all functions of the soul and the elements of human communion. Based on that, Raja Ali Haji emphasized the importance of courtesy and language. The reason is that language is the foundation of knowledge and ethics. Therefore, each person should properly acquire the language correctly, especially the learning of language be associated to achieve the knowledge of knowing God, glorify Him, and gratifying God's grace and blesses for the knowledge and intellect He has bestowed upon humans to become a more noble human being compared to other creatures. The importance of language and courtesy is further emphasized by Raja Ali Haji through his poems, verses 21 and 67 in his work of *Tsamarat al-Muhimmah* (1858). Outlined below both verses (Malik, 2013b; Septiani et al., 2019).

Tutur yang manis anakanda tuturkan (Sweet words would you say)

Perangai yang lembut anakanda lakukan (Gentle temper would you have)

Hati yang sabar anakanda tetapkan (Patience would you have)

Kemaluan orang anakanda pikirkan (Your own privates would you keep)

.....

Setengah yang kurang akal dan bahasa (Half that doesn't have courtesy and language)

Tingkah dan laku bagai raksasa (Action and behavior like a giant)

Syara' dan adat kurang periksa (Shari'ah and customs are not checked)

Seperti harimau mengejar rusa (Like a tiger chasing a deer)

Raja Ali Haji wanted to emphasize, through his poetry above, that human dignity lies within his language. In other words, the language used by humans should contain, typify, and imply the delicate courtesy and or character of the speakers. Without it, humans can potentially behave like animals. The statement reminds us of the wisdom held by the Malays, contained, among others, in poetry.

Nyiur gading puncak mahligai (Elevated ivory, castle peaks)

Gunung Daik bercabang tiga (Mount Daik with three peaks)

Hancur badan tulang berkecai (Body is damaged and bone is broken)

Budi yang baik dikenang juga (Good manners shall be remembered)

With language, man has a civilized life that can continue to improve and be renewed to the highest level. In this case, Raja Ali Haji has an advanced and modern point of view, even surpassing the scholars who claim himself modern (Malik, 2015a). Therefore, many modern scholars have misunderstood the philosophy and linguistics developed by Raja Ali Haji. In the study of the language, Raja Ali Haji gave the main emphasis on the formation of concepts on the systems of Malay-Islamic ontology (existence), cosmology (nature), and epistemology (science). To him, the study, learning, and use of Malay language should be the means and platforms for bringing humanity towards acknowledgment, understanding, comprehension, pronunciation, expression, delivery, worship, praise, and confession of God, which in turn bringing human beings into justice, happiness, and prosperity in the world and the hereafter (Mohamed, 2018). Based on the above description, the concept of courtesy proposed by Raja Ali Haji is indeed sourced from Malay-Islamic teachings. The concept is summarized in figure 1.

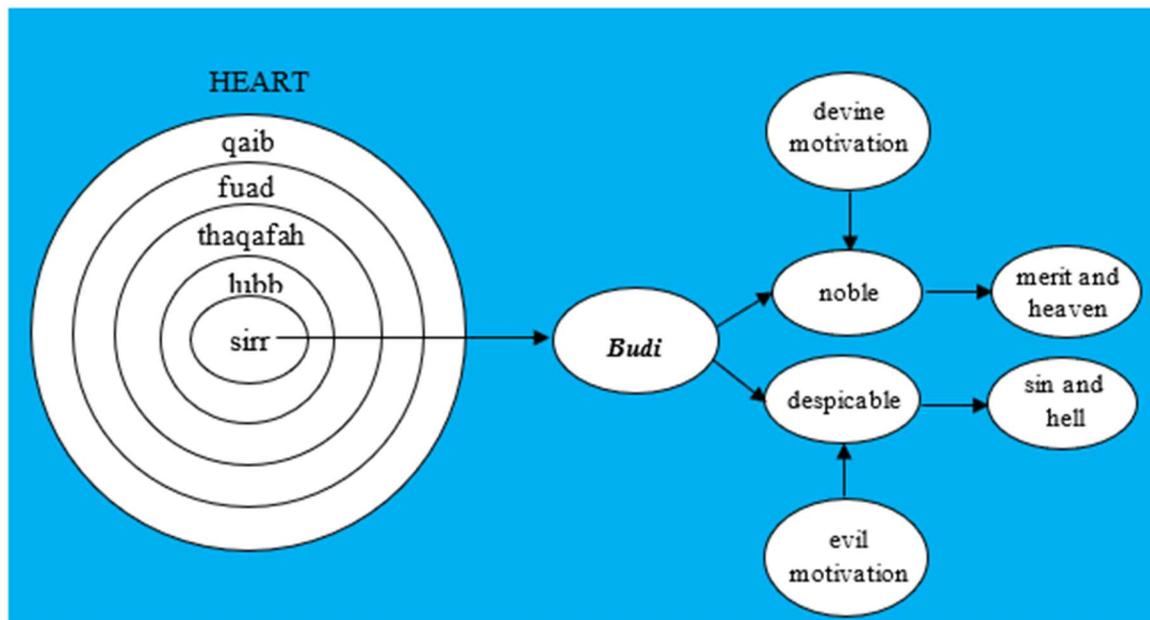


Figure 1. Relationship between Heart and Budi (Malik & Shanty, 2019)

The Malay language that was cultivated and developed during the Malay Imperium era from the 14th to the 19th centuries is called classical Malay. This is indicated by the intimate blend of Malay language with Islamic culture. Therefore, the civilization under its auspices is well-known as the

Malay-Islamic civilization. From that civilization, the Malays inherited Jawi or Arabic-Malay writings. During Riau-Lingga Sultanate, owing to its author's creativity, the Malay language has shown transitive characteristics from classical Malay to modern Malay and has maintained its function as the main language of communication in the archipelago and as an international language.

### **Medium Language in a Colonial Education**

During his colonization in the archipelago, the Dutch Colonial Government consistently sought to interfere with Malay language's special position. They wanted to replace it with Dutch. In 1849, the Dutch Government established a school for the Javanese. At that time, the issue of a language arose: which language should be used as the medium of instruction? In line with that, Dutch leaders disagreed. However, Governor-General Rochussen who ruled at that time firmly maintained that the teaching should be delivered in Malay as it has become a communication tool throughout the Indian Ocean (now Indonesia).

Gurindam Dua Belas had been published in ancient Jawi (Arabic Malay) and at the same time translated into Dutch by E. Netscher in his book entitled "The Gurindam 12: a Malay poem by Radja Ali Hadji from Riau, published and provided with the translation and notes by E. Netscher" published in Magazine of the Bataviaasch Genootschap, 1854, pp. 11-32. This book seems unique as it contains Raja Ali Haji's preface which describes the fundamentals for producing Gurindam Dua Belas (Malik & Junus, 2000). For that reason, the Dutch Colonial Government had to make Riau-Lingga Malay language as a medium language of instruction at educational institutions they had established for the locals, including in Java. In other words, the decision was indeed rational and appropriate by taking into account the linguistic situation in the Dutch East Indies at that time. This fact is in line with the subsequent policy of the Dutch Colonial Government. In 1855, they appointed Von de Wall as a language staff. He is a German-born Dutch employee, who previously served as a soldier. He was assigned to compile Malay grammar books, Malay-Dutch dictionaries, and Dutch-Malay dictionaries. The compilation of a Malay-Dutch dictionary was important at the time as the Dutch East Indies Government required standard spelling and vocabulary for education in Dutch East Indies Islands. In connection with this task, Von de Wall was sent to Riau-Lingga Sultanate in 1857. To complete this task, he collaborated with Raja Ali Haji and Haji Ibrahim and appointed Abdullah (son of Haji Ibrahim) to be his typist. He lived in Tanjungpinang until 1860. Two years later, on February 14, 1862, he came back to Tanjungpinang. Ever since, he continued to commute Batavia-Riau-Lingga until 1873 to complete his assignments and to go deep into Malay language (van der Putten & Azhar, 2006).

Afterward, the Dutch Colonial Government further affirmed and or confirmed the policy on medium language of instruction for indigenous education. In the book *Jalan ke Barat: Bahasa Belanda di Hindia Belanda 1600—1950 Sejarah Politik Bahasa* (Wielzen & van Dijk-Groeneboer, 2018) specified in Article 28 on the Regulations for Indigenous Primary Education which began to be effective in 1872, saying as follows. For education in folk languages, the purest spoken language is used and the most developed in these places ... Malay will be taught according to the

rules and spelling of the pure Malay language used in the Melaka Peninsula and the Riau Islands, and the remaining languages will be determined later (KG 25-5-1872, Stb. No. 99, Brouwer 1899, Appendix I). The Dutch Colonial Government's consideration of the Malay language, specifically Riau-Lingga Malay language, can also be referred to from Ch. A. van Ophuijsen, a language professor from Dutch. He wrote multiple works on the Malay language. In his book, *Maleische Spraakkunst* (1910 and 1915), translated by T.W. Kamil into Indonesian as *Malay Grammar*, the compiler of *Malay Spelling with Latin letters* (1901), among others, outlined the following points (Hijjas, 2010).

1. The Malay language is the language of the people who call themselves Malays and who are native to parts of the Malay Peninsula, Riau-Lingga Islands, and the east coast of Sumatra.
  2. Malays are among the seafarers and traders, making the language having influences on a large number of Malay settlements on the coast of various islands in the East Indies Islands (Indonesian Archipelago, HAM), including Kalimantan.
  3. All foreigners, both Europeans, and Easterners, almost only use Malay in their daily communication among themselves and in association with people from the entire East Indies Islands.
  4. Various tribes among the inhabitants of the islands use it as the language for daily communication.
  5. Among the native Kings used the Malay language for correspondence purposes with the government (the Dutch East Indies Government, HAM) and among themselves.
  6. All correspondence among the European and indigenous civil servants is done in that language.
  7. The spread of Malay has taken place for centuries making it an international language, which is mainly used for diplomacy by the Kings who foster relationships with other Kings.
  8. The Malay language stands out as it is simple in order and has a pleasant sound, no sound difficult to pronounce by foreigners.
  9. The Malay language can carry out its role as an international language because its steadiness requirements have been fulfilled, which is one of its most important characteristics.
- Additionally, Ophuijsen also explained that Malay, like the Dutch language, has multiple accents. Among the various accents, the most used Malays accent is the one spoken in Johor, in parts of Malay Peninsula, and in Riau-Lingga Islands (especially in Penyengat Island, where the Viceroy of Riau used to live and in Daik, Lingga Island which recently became the home to Sultan Lingga). Riau-Lingga Malay language was referred for two reasons. First, most of the written works of literature are in Malay. Second, at several Malay palaces, the language is still mostly used, both in association and in correspondence by educated groups. In that area, the influence is scant from other languages; that's where its special character is best preserved. For those who are about to study other native languages, the insight of Riau-Lingga or Riau-Johor Malay language will shed some light.

### **Indonesian National Movement Language**

Entering the 20th century, Malay language has played a pivotal role as a national movement language. At this time, the role of the Malay language became even more important. The nation's leaders were aware that there had to be a solid unity in the entire nation to fight for Indonesian independence. For this reason, a unifying language was needed to unite entire Indonesia to facilitate the struggle for gaining independence. It is recorded that the figure who first proposed the importance of unifying language for Indonesia to fight for independence and post-independence was R.M. Soewardi Soerjaningrat (Ki Hajar Dewantara). He presented a paper on 28 August 1916 at the Colonial Teaching Congress in Hague, Netherlands. He proposed that Malay should be used as the language of unity as he observed Malay underwent rapid development at that time (Malik, 2013a; Nilan, 2012).

When People's Council was sworn in 1918, the desire for the language of unity was re-proposed. On June 25, 1918, based on the Decree of Dutch King, members of the People's Council were given the freedom to use Malay. It went on until Balai Pustaka (a publisher's body) was established with Panji Pustaka Magazine, New Pujangga Magazine, Bintang Timur Newspaper (Jakarta), *Pewart* Deli (Medan), social and political organizations, all of whom were using Malay. Following that, at the 1st Indonesian Youth Congress, two opinions emerged for naming the Indonesian national language (Kridalaksana, 2010). Muh. Yamin proposed Bahasa Melayu (Malay language), as its original name, while M. Tabrani proposed a new name for the language, namely bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language). As a result, the 1st Indonesian Youth Congress on May 2, 1926, approved bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian) as the name of the national language as proposed by M. Tabrani.

At the 2nd Indonesian Youth Congress held in Jakarta, October 28, 1928, Malay language which was politically named bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian), as proposed by M. Tabrani, was accepted by acclamation by the Congress participants, officiated as the language of unity or national language of Indonesia. Thus, the use of the name "Indonesian language" which linguistically named "Malay language" was agreed based on mutual political decisions to strengthen Indonesian national unity based on the initiative taken by youth leaders at that time. As a result, in just 17 years since 1928, using Malay language or its political name "Indonesian" as a weapon to fight, Indonesian people managed to regain their independence. Long before that, Indonesian people had struggled for more than hundreds of years separately using their respective regional languages but were unable to dispel the invaders.

### **The Preparation for National Language**

R.M. Suwardi Soerjaningrat or Ki Hajar Dewantara was the first person to propose Malay language as the language of unity in a national movement and the realm of independent Indonesia in 1916, as well as in the Netherlands. In a paper entitled "Indonesian Language in an Education, which was presented at the First Congress of Indonesian Language in Solo in 1938, he firmly stated, the so-called "Indonesian" is Malay . . . which originally comes from 'Riau Malay' . . . (Nilan, 2012). Harimurti Kridalaksana was opposed to an opinion stating that the Indonesian language came from

Malay creativity. He said that among other things, when appointed as the Indonesian language, 1928, Malay language was substantially a full-fledged language and has become a mother tongue of people living in eastern Sumatra, Riau Islands and Kalimantan, and has developed pieces of literature – commonly referred to as Angkatan Balai Pustaka or Batch 20 – which is historically related to Classical Malay literature that has developed since the 14th century. Furthermore, according to Kridalaksana, “Before officiated as the Indonesian language, Malay language had undergone a standardization process mainly through the Dutch colonial education system,” (Yusuf, 2016).

The works of Raja Ali Haji, Haji Ibrahim, Raja Ali Kelana, Abu Muhammad Adnan, and other authors joined in a Rusydiah Club in various fields of science, especially in the field of language, made it possible for high Malay language (standard Malay) to be special and widely influential throughout the archipelago. This is possible since there is a clear reference to the High Malay language system as recognized by many foreign researchers and many Indonesian-language experts. The standard Malay language was used in the education system in the archipelago, both before the entry of foreign nations and during the Dutch colonial periods.

### **Strengthening the National Unity**

Muhammad Hatta, the Declaration father of Indonesia’s Independence and the 1st Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia, in his article in *Pelangi* stated as follows. In the early 20th century, Indonesian was unknown. What was known as the lingua franca is Riau Malay? The Dutch call it *Riouw Maleisch*. Some say that it originates from a small island called Penyengat Island in the environment of Riau Island (Hatta, 1979). His statement about the very importance of Riau-Lingga Malay language as the nation unifier and the origin of the Indonesian language was re-confirmed by the nation’s leader which was then the Republic of Indonesia. On Saturday, April 29, 2000, the 4th President of the Republic of Indonesia, K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) opened the Grand Summit I Thariqat Mu’tabarah in Sumatra, at Annur Great Mosque, Pekanbaru. In his speech, he stressed that the Government of the Republic of Indonesia acknowledged the services of Raja Ali Haji in uniting the nation and creating the national language. “Without his services, we would not have been a sturdy nation as we are today,” he said (Malik, 2019a).

Finally, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia bestowed the title of Father of Indonesian Language and the National Hero of the Republic of Indonesia to Raja Ali Haji, the main figure in the struggle of Malay language. The award was given through Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Number 089/TK/2004, November 6, 2004. The National Hero Plaque for Raja Ali Haji was handed over by the 6th President of the Republic of Indonesia, General (Ret.) Dr. H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, to Raja Ali Haji’s zuriat representative, Raja Ahmad (Raja Halim) bin Raja Mukhsin at the State Palace, Jakarta, November 11, 2004, at the same time with the anniversary of Heroes’ Day was held. By conferring the title of National Hero to Raja Ali Haji, it means that the Government of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Indonesian nation and people officially recognizes and respects two matters (Malik, 2013a). First, Raja Ali Haji is the

most instrumental figure in creating a national language, Indonesian. Second, Riau-Lingga Malay is officially recognized as the origin of the Indonesian language.

## CONCLUSION

The intensive cultivation pioneered by Raja Ali Haji in Riau-Lingga Sultanate from the 19th to early 20th century facilitated Malay language, including its literary works, Riau-Lingga Sultanate to be preserved as the standard language, commonly called as High Malay language. That High Malay language is in Indonesia, at the 1st Indonesian Youth Congress, May 2, 1926, a new name was given and in the Youth Pledge, October 28, 1928, it was politically confirmed it is called the Indonesian language.

The choice was following the policy of the previous Dutch East Indies government which considered that Riau-Lingga Malay language is the purest in pronunciation and had the best grammar and spelling making it a medium language of instruction for native education (indigenous people) in the entire Dutch East Indies government. The policy was based on the fact that if it was not a mother tongue and/or the first language, the Riau-Lingga Malay language (school language) would become the second language for the majority of people in the nation. Therefore, when it was proposed by Ki Hajar Dewantara, Muh. Yamin, and M. Tabrani (the last name proposed by politically changing the name into Indonesian), the founders of Indonesia at that time – despite their ethnic background, culture, and mother tongue – unanimously accepted it as the Indonesian national language. The effort was accepted sincerely by the Javanese, Sundanese, and other tribes whose number of speakers of their respective native languages outnumbered those of Malay. Likewise, Malays were also willing and sincere for their native language to be used as the national language to strengthen the struggle and national unity of Indonesia. In its prime, the Malay language was recognized as an international language for its superiority as a primary communication medium in various life spheres in the nation, including those that engaged foreign nations. The firmness of the leaders' stand (the nation's Kings) and the nation's people at the time enabled the Malay language to be honored and respected including by foreign nations. In conclusion, it is the task of today's generation to value the Malay language as an international language.

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