MALAYSIAN GENERATION Z's ATTITUDES TOWARDS LOCALISED ENGLISH

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Abstract

Language attitudes could be a basis for indicating the acceptance and development of a language variety within a society. These language attitudes could be derived from the language users who provided insights that could be used as an indicator to show either the development or regression of the variety as well as the acceptance of it within the social context. This study aims to disclose their acceptance of this variety by discovering the attitudes of Malaysian Generation Z towards the use of Malaysian English (ME). This study used a mixed-method approach where a 16-item Likert scale online questionnaire was used to explore the attitudes of 87 participants that belong to generation Z. An online interview was also conducted to obtain further information from 10 out of 87 participants towards the use and acceptance of ME. Findings from this study reveal that most participants show positive attitudes toward ME and acknowledge the usefulness of variety in the classroom setting. However, the participants still lack perspective of this variety as they are only exposed to the mesolect level of ME. The result entails further research on this matter by focusing more on the three levels of ME.

Keywords: Attitudes, Malaysian English, Malaysian Generation Z, Standard English, Usefulness

INTRODUCTION

The development of English in Malaysia has been shaped by historical, political, and cultural forces (Hashim & Tan, 2012). It was first started when the British colonized the country in the nineteenth century. After colonization, Schneider (2003) mentioned that English-medium schools were established due to the increasing demand for English. English was used widely in the country until independence in 1957. After independence, the National Language Policy in 1967 was created and it was decided that Malay should be the national language of the country. According to Asmah (1981), no official status was given to English at that time. However, in 1970, Darus (2009) stated that it was later formally accorded as the second language of the country (as cited from Lim, 2013) and was widely utilized in different domains in Malaysia such as in media, education, law, business, tourism as well as in translation field (Hanapiah, 2004). Nowadays, the relevancy of this language is still prominent seeing that Malaysians are placed as the third most proficient English users among other Asian countries according to the EF EPI (EF English Proficiency Index, 2020).

Kachru (1985) introduced the Three Circles of Englishes where he described the spread of English into 3 groups; Inner Circle (IC), Outer Circle (OC), and Expanding Circle. Malaysia and the Philippines are among the countries that are placed in the OC. The countries that belong to this circle are said to be using English as the second language and are usually the ex-colonies of the United Kingdom or the United States. These countries are described as norm-developing where they are developing their norm of English in terms of pronunciation, grammar and lexicon. ME falls under the OC and is described as norm-developing where it develops its pronunciation, grammar and lexicon.

According to Thirusanku and Yunus (2012), ME has ensued to phase 3 of Dynamic Model where it is extensively established in terms of its domain usage and sociolinguistic status in the

country. To move to phase 4, it is crucial to have ME being standardized like other varieties such as Singapore English. The existence of ME as a standard non-native variety would cater to the current needs of society and global expansion. It is important as these standard non-native varieties of English language could be used within the community that is confined to the socio-cultural context in Malaysia (Mahir & Kibtiyah, 2007). It would be possible for this movement to take place with the acceptance of this variety in the speech community. Therefore, the attitudes of the current generation Z in Malaysia is explored in order to disclose their acceptance of localised English.

ME has been accepted by Malaysians to be used in casual settings. However, some still perceive this variety negatively by condemning the use of it in formal settings. To support this statement, an article written by Ang (2019) shows how people were mocking Mat Sabu's speech at Shangri-La Dialogue when he was using this variety. Jolene (2017) also wrote an article on how Faiz Subri received backlash and criticism for his speech at the FIFA Puskas Award. These reactions given by Malaysians towards people who do not portray similarity with speakers from IC in their usage of English portray a negative perception. These attitudes indicate that the negative connotations of ME still exist now. Even though there are positive attitudes shown, it might still not be enough to change people's views of ME. ME is under Phase 3 according to the Dynamic Model by Schneider (2003). As Malaysia is now growing and developing, we are now looking forward to moving into Phase 4. However, to do that, we have to acknowledge the usability of ME and to what extent society would use it in formal settings such as classrooms.

This study aims to disclose the acceptance of ME among Generation Z by examining this generation's attitudes, especially on its use in formal settings such as education. Through this study, Malaysian Generation Z can voice out their opinions on a few issues including international comprehensibility, the standard of spoken and written English, implications for language planning, behavioral planning, and international recognition of and respect for spoken and written ME. Therefore, the research questions for this current study are:

1. What are the attitudes of Malaysian Generation Z towards Malaysian English?
2. To what extent do Malaysian Generation Z consider Malaysian English useful?

Dynamic model by Schneider

Schneider (2003) introduced a dynamic model that suggests that some synchronically observable differences between varieties of English may be regarded as consecutive stages in a diachronic process. He explained that this model consists of 5 phases which are Foundation, Exonormative Stabilization, Nativization, Endonormative Stabilization, and Differentiation. Each phase is explained according to 4 categories which are History and Politics, Identity Construction, Sociolinguistics of Contact/Use/Attitudes, and Linguistic Developments/Structural Effects. For this study, only Phase 3, Phase 4, and one category will be focused on which is the Sociolinguistics of Contact/Use/Attitudes.

Phase 3 of the dynamic model is the emergence of local patterns, often associated with political independence or the striving for this. In sociolinguistics, bilingualism is common in the country and English is widely spread with regular contacts between speakers. Additionally, 'complaint tradition' where people start discussing the old norm and the new norm is getting popular and people are trying to figure out which is the right one. Contrarily, phase 4 is the gradual adoption and acceptance of an indigenous linguistic form, fostered by a new, locally rooted linguistic self-confidence. If Malaysia wants to be in phase 4, it is crucial to accept local norms and positive attitudes towards it. This phase also can be seen when the new variety is used in literary writing and understanding is reached about the new local form of English and is accepted as adequate in formal usage.

Language attitudes towards English in Malaysia

Language attitude is commonly studied in linguistic and sociolinguistic research (Crismore et. al.,1996). According to Ryan and Giles (1982), language attitudes refer to an affective, cognitive or behavioural indices of evaluative reactions toward different language variations of their speakers (as cited in Melander, 2003, p. 2). ME has been receiving both positive and negative attitudes from the speakers.

Crismore et. al. (1996) found that Malaysian speakers of English are comfortable using ME among themselves and foreigners. They are eager to acquire Standard English (SE) because they see ME as 'mistakes' that need to be eradicated. Another study conducted by McGee (2016) found that ME's awareness but with a strong preference for British English and accent is used in school settings. McGee (2016) also found that ME was recognized as a useful variety but with limited applications within Malaysia (p. 190). Lin et. al. (2018) found that students appreciate their local-accented English and ME by agreeing on the importance and usability of the language, but it is limited to casual situations only. The students feel the need to use SE in formal and international purposes. These show the attitude towards ME is positive when it is used for casual conversation but when it is used for formal occasions, it is seen as negative and improper.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a sequential explanatory design, led by a quantitative method and followed by the qualitative method. The quantitative method is to obtain data on the participants' demographic background and their opinions and perspectives on the two aspects that this study is trying to investigate. While the qualitative method is to obtain explanations for the obtained quantitative data.

Instruments

This study adopted a questionnaire by Crismore et. al. (1996) which was used to investigate attitudes of students and lecturers' attitudes on English in Malaysia. Due to Covid-19, no physical and face-to-face meetings can be done, thus this study adapted to the situation and uses an online portal and website to conduct both surveys and interviews. For the questionnaire, Google Forms was used and the link to the survey was distributed on social media. The online survey consists of 4 sections including the consent form, demographic background, 16 Likert-scale questions, and invitation to participate in an online interview. The first section includes explaining the procedure, the risks and benefits, the time involved, participants' rights, and contact information. By proceeding to the next section, participants are said to agree to the terms. The second section includes 5 demographic background questions while the third section includes 16 Likert-scales questions that allow participants to express their opinions regarding both varieties. These Likert-scale questions are expected to provide data on 2 main aspects; attitudes toward ME (Item 1-8), and opinions on the usefulness of ME (Item 9-16). The last section is an invitation to participate in an online interview where the participants are required to provide their contact number or e-mail address for the researchers to contact them regarding the online interview session. This online survey was validated and approved by an expert to ensure the instruments' validity. For the online interview, video conference software 'Zoom' was used to avoid face-to-face interaction with the participants.

Participants

Participants for this study are 87 Malaysian Generation Z born in 1997 – 2002, which includes 69 female and 18 male participants. All participants are labeled as P1-P87 to ease the flow of the study. Besides, the anonymity of the participants is important which leads this present study to label all participants. The participant's information will not be revealed to the third party and will only be used for research purposes. The age range for the participants is 18-23 years old in 2020 and the participants must come from the same age group because this study aims to study Malaysian Generation Z's attitudes towards ME. The specific distributions for the age are as follows: 18 (33%), 19 (16%), 20 (15%), 21 (15%), 22 (6%) and 23 (15%).

Next, Crismore et. al. (1996) explained in their study that students are streamed into different specialization areas in secondary school and usually remain in that stream until pre-university levels. This information is crucial to be collected because as Crismore et. al. (1996) stated Science major students usually have more exposure to English as their academic references are majority found in written English. Thus, the breakdown for participants' stream in secondary school is as follows: Arts (21%), Sciences (51%), Commerce (22%) and Technical (6%). Another element that may be of interest is the student's proficiency in English. Since the participants are from different ages, the proficiency level is measured by their achievement in the national Malaysian Certificate of Examination (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia) taken by Malaysians at the age of 17, after 11 years of formal schooling. The participants' achievement in this examination is as follows: A+/A/A- (53%), B+/B (31%), C+/C (12%), D (3%) and E (1%).

For this study, purposive sampling specifically homogenous sampling was chosen in selecting the participants for the online survey. This sampling type focuses on possible participants who share similar traits or specific characteristics (Etikan, 2016). In this case, participants need to have one shared characteristic which is their age. This is crucial because it aims to study Generation Z's perspectives towards ME. That leads to the choice of homogenous sampling in selecting the participants. Etikan (2016) mentioned that for purposive sampling, "subjects are selected based on study purpose with the expectation that each participant will provide unique and rich information of value to the study" (p. 4). Hence, this present study aims to ensure the results for the online survey to answer the research questions. Next, for the interview sessions, a convenience sampling was chosen in selecting the participants. Due to the current situation with Covid-19, online interviews were chosen to replace face-to-face interviews. Participants who are willing and available to be interviewed are selected from the list of participants that participate in the online survey. Suen, Huang, and Lee (2014) explained that subjects for convenience sampling are more readily accessible making it easier for the researcher to conduct their study.

Data Analysis

For the analysis, the responses collected from the online survey are calculated in terms of percentage to provide a clearer view of the findings. Descriptive and inferential analysis is used in analyzing the data collected from both the questionnaire and interview. Laird Statistics (n.d.) stated that descriptive analysis is 'the term given to the analysis of the data that helps describe, show or summarize data in a meaningful way such that, for example, it might emerge from the data'. Hence, in the findings section, this study explained the data collected from the questionnaire by calculating the percentage for each accumulated answer provided by the participants. After that, inferential analysis is used for the discussion "to make inferences from our data to more general conditions" (Trochim, n.d.). This analysis is crucial because it allows the data to be generalized about a population that is Generation Z (Glen, 2018).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section is explained in two sections which are based on the study's research questions. The first research question investigated Malaysian Generation Z's attitudes towards ME meanwhile the second research question explored to what extent Malaysian Generation Z consider Malaysian English useful.

Research Question 1
What are the attitudes of Malaysian Generation Z towards Malaysian English?

Table 1. Item one

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree (Total)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree (Total)
1. If we want to be understood internationally, we must use Standard English.						
Participants	47% (n= 41	51% (n=44)	98% (n=85)	2% (n=2)	-	2% (n=2)

The findings for item one show that most of the participants (98%) agreed with the statement and have the opinion that for international and global use, SE is preferable. However, a few different opinions were obtained during interview sessions. Two of the interview participants who are currently living abroad led their responses to lean in favor of the use of SE. The responses are extracted in (T1) and (T2) shown below.

T1:   Personally, yes. Based on what I have experienced, being a Malaysian student who's currently studying overseas, I have a lot of international friends coming from various countries and I have experienced being with a friend that has low fluency in English. For my second-year project, I had to work with five people. One of them is from England, one from China, and one from Turkey. The one from China, had a little trouble conversing in English and honestly it was pretty hard for the group to get a dynamic from the get-go *cause* she wasn't using complete sentences and she had trouble constructing the sentences to convey her message and sometimes we had to use Google and she had to repeat her sentences a few times. My point is I think the likelihood of people understanding us would increase the use of Standard English in my personal opinion. (P62)

T2 :   In my opinion, currently I live in Japan, yes I think we should use SE to be understood internationally because for now, in my own experience, I live in Japan. I have a really hard time understanding the English used by Indian, Taiwanese, and other countries such as Vietnam. They didn't use SE. they *kinda* mix with their own slang like Singaporean. For Japanese, cannot understand the English used by the Singaporeans, they use it like 'lah'. (P73)

A few other participants also agreed and stated that SE is the global language as compared to ME, making it easier for people to understand the speaker. The transcripts are extracted in (T3) and (T4) as follow.

T3 :   Yes, I think so. Because it's like the common language for all people around the world using it. So, it will be easier for us, and for other people to understand. I do not mind if others used ME, but I prefer using SE. (P11)

T4 :   Yes, I think we have to use SE because it is a spoken language of the world. (P64)

However, most participants viewed ME as acceptable to be used as long as the message is delivered successfully. This can be supported by the transcripts in (T5), (T6) and (T7) below.

T5 :   For formally matter, I think we must. But for informally, I think it just fine to use ME because some foreigners could understand our spoken by finding the keywords in the sentence. (P19)

T6 :   Must is a strong word. For me, I don't really care that much because either using SE or ME, you can still deliver the message and you can still understand it. (P5)

T7 :   I don't think so. I think we can use ME. (P3)

Therefore, it can be reported that the participants preferred SE to be used in formal context and internationally but ME is also acceptable to be used if it is in Malaysia and in an informal setting, as long as the message is successfully delivered.

Table 2. Item two

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree (Total)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree (Total)
2. Newsreaders and reporters who speak Standard English are good examples to others of how English should be spoken.						
Participants	50% (n= 43)	47% (n=41)	97% (n=84)	2% (n=2)	1% (n=1)	3% (n=3)

The responses for item two show that people who use SE portray good examples of spoken English. Most participants agreed with this which contributed to 97% of the responses. During the interview session, participants also mentioned a few public figures and specific occupations that they view as portraying good spoken English. Interview responses T8, T9, and T10 could be referred to support this statement.

T8 :   Mostly from the reporters in TV and sometimes on radio. Because I think the reporters must use SE for the information to be understandable by all people. (P5)

T9 :   Maybe Syed Saddiq, I think. The way he spoke, and you know for a fact that he has won many debate competitions and he speaks English, I think it's very clear. (P62)

T10 :   I think, for Malaysians, we can try and follow and imitate Dr Amalina. But she *kinda* have British accent but I think she has a good English pronunciation. Maybe we can follow her to improve our English. She has lived in a different country for years. I think she has good use of words for SE. (P76)

Besides, a few participants including P19 and P64 in (T11) and (T12) mentioned that educators use good spoken English and people can learn from them. Thus, this study found that participants viewed people who use SE around them as a good example to follow.

T11 :   I think educators because most of us as students, we learn English from teachers so what we heard from them is what we learn and implement in our life. (P19)

T12 :   Teachers.. because they have knowledge and experience to explain and share with us. So, we can learn English through them. (P64)

Table 3. Item three

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree (Total)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree (Total)
3. The standard of spoken English in Malaysia has dropped (according to The Star Online, 2018)						
Participants	22% (n= 19)	55% (n=48)	77% (n=67)	22% (n=19)	1% (n=1)	23% (n=20)

The responses for item three show that 77% of the participants agreed that the standard of spoken English in Malaysia has dropped. Thus, it can be reported that the majority of the participants agreed that the standard of spoken English in Malaysia is now not meeting the expectations that they have.

Table 4. Item four

	4. I prefer Standard English to be used in daily conversation					
	Strongly Agree	*Agree*	*Agree (Total)*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree (Total)*
Participants	30% (n= 26)	45% (n=39)	75% (n=65)	25% (n=22)	-	25% (n=22)

Meanwhile, the responses for item four show that 75% of the participants agreed that they prefer SE to be used in their daily conversation. However, the remaining 22 participants found ME is preferable to be used in daily conversation. Findings from interview sessions with the participants also found that most of them preferred both varieties to be used in daily conversation for several reasons. These can be found in interview transcripts extracted in (T13), (T14), (T15), (T16) and (T17).

T13 : Yes I do. For me personally, I think as a teacher, I need to use standard English with my students and if we talk with the students, with authorities, also when you write something, report or whatnot, I think that's the use. Because students are following the teacher's right. So maybe even in the slightest, like your intonation, I think the students will follow you and been watching you what to do because teachers are usually role model, especially for primary students. (P39)

T14 : I think SE should be used in daily conversation because it would improve our speaking skills. But honestly, usually I would use ME for my daily conversation because of the people around me. It is also easier for them to understand me better when I use ME. (P5)

T15 : For me, I think it is preferable to speak SE. But as Malaysians, we are so used to ME, so it is normal for us to use it in conversation. Even if we used SE, sometimes people would not understand. So, to me, I think people used ME most of the time because it is easier for their flow of the conversation. (P3)

T16 : Honestly, when I'm in Malaysia, I don't use SE with my Malaysian friends cause you know being in Malaysia, surrounded by Malaysian friends you tend to get influenced. But when I'm overseas, being surrounded by international friends I think sometimes I do use SE when I'm conversing with them cause you can't help it being influenced by the way they talk. When you're surrounded by British friends and your friends are using full English sentences, you automatically switch to your English mood. At the end of the day, I think it depends on your social environment and the circle of friends that you are in. Perhaps. (P62)

T17 : Yes for now.. yes.. I use English most of the time right now because I already started working here. I use SE because they cannot understand if I'm not using SE. My colleagues cannot understand ME. (P76)

Based on the responses, it can be concluded that participants switch between both varieties according to the situation and social environment that they are currently in. SE is preferable to be used in a formal context and in a community that uses different native languages because SE allows them to communicate better. Contrarily, ME is preferable when they are in Malaysia, the community who uses ME because it is comprehensible between each other. P62 in (T16) mentioned that she used SE when she is outside Malaysia to help her converse better with other people but switch to ME when she is in Malaysia. This shows that their preferred language changes depend on the situation.

Table 5. Item five

	5. Those who do not speak and write Standard English should attend classes to learn it.					
	Strongly Agree	*Agree*	*Agree (Total)*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree (Total)*
Participants	40% (n= 26)	45% (n=39)	75% (n=65)	25% (n=22)	-	25% (n=22)

Table 5 reports that most of the participants (92%) agreed that those who do not speak or write SE should attend classes to learn it. From the interviews conducted, P3 and P11 in (T18) and (T19) stated that it is necessary to attend classes to improve their SE.

T18 : No, not necessarily uneducated…but the need to attend classes to improve their SE, yes of course. I mean who does not want to be better and speak good English. For now, maybe we can use ME, but after the class maybe we will be good enough to use SE. (P3)

T19 : I think it's fine for them to use ME because they are trying. Maybe by speaking that way, they will feel like they are learning. Since they are not able to use SE, so maybe they used ME. And I think if they want to improve SE, they should attend classes. I mean for how long they will use ME. For someone who use ME, if they want to be better, they should attend classes. (P11)

Apart from that, 8% of the participants disagreed with the statement as they do not think it is necessary for someone who does not speak or write SE to attend classes. This can be supported from interview transcripts extracted below in (T20) and (T21).

T20 : No I don't think they are uneducated. I think using ME is good enough. Even if you are in the states, it's much better if you use ME. They still would understand you. It doesn't matter if you use SE or ME, they still can understand you. As long as the message is delivered successfully, it's okay to use ME. (P19)

T21 : As a Malaysian I don't think we should attend special classes. Most of Malaysian, right now they are using SE already. Most of the time, they speak in English and there are a lot of movies, exposures from YouTube. I don't think they have to attend classes. (P76)

By referring to the table above, the accumulated responses revealed that most of the participants considered it is necessary for those who do not speak or write SE to attend classes as it would help them to improve their skills in the language.

Table 6. Item six

	6. If we use Malaysian English, people will think we are uneducated.					
	Strongly Agree	*Agree*	*Agree (Total)*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree (Total)*
Participants	13% (n= 11)	14% (n=12)	27% (n=23)	18% (n=16)	55% (n=48)	73% (n=64)

The response from item six shows that 27% of the participants agreed that people would presume individuals who use ME as uneducated. Contrarily, most of the participants (73%) disagreed with such a statement. Based on the interview conducted, P39 and P62 reasoned that the use of language should not be used to measure intelligence and that the proficiency level of a language does not equate to being uneducated. The interview transcripts are extracted in (T22) and (T23) shown below.

T22 : No actually because the language itself is not the measurement of your intelligence. Also, as long as they can convey the message and if someone, they are not using proper English, it's up to them to improve themselves or not to use the standard English. As for example, maybe farmers. Maybe they are not using SE in daily conversation or someone they need to connect with so it's up to them to level up, step up their SE. But still if they can talk in English and someone can understand what they want to say.Depends on the occasional like maybe their profession or *yeah* it's up to them. but as you can see the government, we have our standard British. I think from kindergarten, especially for children from kindergarten, they are exposed to SE and I think your question only apply to those maybe someone age like our parents or someone older that they don't have as good as opportunity as now to learn English, to learn proper English. (P39)

T23 : I think you should not label someone as uneducated based on their language proficiency cause after all English is our second language. When someone is using ME, we don't really know that knowledge of SE or how strong that knowledge is. We might use it as a choice. However, if there is a need for them to use SE, then I think they should attend classes. For example, if they are working in a company, I think it's

important for them to improve their SE. Or if they have a speaking test or the MUET test or something, I think they should get their SE before that test. (P62)

Therefore, the finding for item six shows that the usage of ME would not be presumed as uneducated as participants stated that the use of it could be on the individual's own accord and should not be accounted as a parameter of their intelligence.

Table 7. Item seven

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree (Total)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree (Total)
6. Malaysian English is actually mistakes made by people who speak poor English.						
Participants	14% (n= 12)	36% (n=31)	50% (n=43)	42% (n=37)	8% (n=7)	50% (n=44)

From the table above, half of the participants (50%) agreed with the statement that ME as a mistake made by those who speak poor English. Referring to the interview, P3 and P64 In (T24) and (T25) indicate the use of it as a mistake. According to them it is only understood among Malaysians and cannot be used as a means of communication with foreigners.

T24 :   Truthfully, for me, I think it is. Because ME is used only in Malaysia, so we are so used to our own way. So, if and whenever we encounter foreigners, it will be hard to converse with them because ME are understood only among us. So, I think it is a mistake, but not so big. Just a little mistake. (P3)

T25 :   Yes I think ME is a mistake because if we want to communicate in English we have to use fully English and not mix it with another language. (P64)

Another 50% of the participants disagreed with the statement and state that the usage of ME is not a mistake. Based on the interview, P5 and P39 in (T26) and (T27) describe the usage of ME as unique and consider it as a learning process, rather than a mistake.

T26 :   For me, I do not think it is a mistake. Because I think it is a unique way of Malaysia adapting the use of English to our own context. I mean the use of it acceptable, so I do not think it's a mistake. (P5)

T27 :   I don't think it's not a mistake. Maybe in between, someone want to learn standard English, they still learning. I think that's why there's the term ME in order to meet SE. So I think it's a learning process to go to the SE. (P39)

Finding from Table 7 discloses an equal result where half of the participants agreed that ME is a mistake made of those who speak poor English where half of them disagreed. However, since the participants' total consists of an odd number, the result leans more towards participants disagreeing with the statement.

Table 8. Item eight

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree (Total)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree (Total)
6. We will not be respected by other speakers if we speak Malaysian English.						
Participants	6% (n= 5)	24% (n=21)	30% (n=26)	53% (n=46)	17% (n=15)	70% (n=61)

Table 8 shows that 30% of the participants agreed that other speakers will not respect an individual if they speak ME. P64 expressed his thoughts in the interview (T28) by stating that foreigners would be unable to understand as they would get confused with the usage of ME.

T28 : I think the foreigners will not understand and respect us if we use ME because they don't know how to use Malay. So, they will be confused and not understand what we want to tell them. (P64)

However, most of the participants (70%) disagreed that other speakers will not respect an individual if they use ME. Based on the interview, both P19 and P23 in (T29) and (T30) stated that they think other speakers would still respect those who use ME, especially the effort of at least knowing the language.

T29 : I think yes. I think foreigners would actually respect us... we can at least converse with them even using ME. It's much better for you to know a little bit about it instead of knowing nothing about it. (P19)

T30 : I think some of them will get it, but not all. And yeah, they should respect us. I'll give this example of situation. This foreigner came to visit here, and there is a Malaysian who does not know how to speak the SE so they could only speak to the foreigner with ME and only use the English that they know. I think the foreigner will respect us because we can still speak their language and because of our efforts. (P23)

This is supported by other participants who they stated that being respected for the use of ME should not be an issue and foreigners should not expect Malaysians to be able to use their language fluently. This can be supported from the interview transcript which is extracted in (T31) as follows.

T31 : Personally, I think they can understand us if we use ME. Provided that the sentence is not that complicated when we converse. Because most people in Malaysia, I think if they bumped into foreigners, they tend to speak ME and I think they are doing just fine. They're asking for directions and all that and then in terms of respect, as I said before English is our L2 after all so I don't think it should be an issue and I don't think they will disrespect us. The foreigners come to our country, and they can't expect us to speak English fluently. (P62)

The table displays a finding that reveals a high disagreement towards the statement that other speakers would not respect the usage of ME. Participants believe that ME is acceptable by foreigners and they would respect the effort of Malaysians using their language. Other than that, participants also pointed out that languages are not the only factor in commanding respect from people.

Research Question 2
To what extent do Malaysian Generation Z consider Malaysian English useful?

Table 9. Item nine

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree (Total)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree (Total)
9. Foreigners could understand us even though we use Malaysian English.						
Participants	24% (n= 21)	65% (n=56)	89% (n=77)	10% (n=9)	1% (n=1)	11% (n=10)

Based on Table 9, 89% of the participants agreed that foreigners could still understand even if an individual uses ME to converse. During the interview, P5 in (T32) clarified that the usage of ME is still understandable by foreigners.

T32 : Of course, because I don't think they ever mind when Malaysians use their own way of speaking. I also have several foreign friends in my class, and looking at them, I think they adapted themselves to the Malaysian culture and sometimes they would include the use of "lah" at the end of their English sentences. (P5)

Furthermore, 11% of the participants disagreed with that statement. According to P64 in (T28), foreigners would be unable to comprehend ME as they do not know the Malay language and would be confused and unable to understand the message that is being conveyed. The

accumulated responses from item nine reveal such findings where most of the participants believe that foreigners could still be able to engage and understand even if the other speaker communicated using ME. They also added that based on their own experience as well as their outlook into this matter, the use of ME is acceptable among foreigners.

Table 10. Item ten

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree (Total)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree (Total)
10. Using words from our context (Malay/Chinese/Indian) enables us to communicate better with each other.						
Participants	38% (n= 33)	46% (n=40)	84% (n=73)	11% (n=10)	5% (n=4)	16% (n=14)

From the table, 84% of the participants agreed that using words from different background contexts would enable speakers to communicate better. Following this statement, P3 in (T33) further explained that the use of certain words from different backgrounds would ease the flow of teaching in a classroom.

T33 : Yes, definitely. Because I think not all teachers can really speak SE…and sometimes they are already used to using ME too. I mean sometimes it is also not easy to explain to students using the SE. I think by using ME, it could ease out the flow of teaching because students could understand better when the teacher explain. (P3)

This is supported by another participant who exclaimed that the use of terms from different contexts would help better communication. According to P5 in (T34), in terms of classroom setting, it would be much more convenient for both teacher and student, as well as enabling certain terms to be expressed better.

T34 : I'm not so sure but maybe I think yes. Because I think it is convenient for both teacher and students to understand and use ME in the classroom. Like for example, when teachers express their ideas using some of Malaysia's expressions or terms, students can understand them well like students would have better understanding of the examples by the teacher. But on the other hand, I also think the use of ME could also hinder the learning of SE. (P5)

Moreover, a total of 16% of the participants showed disagreement with that statement. P39 stated in (T35) that the use of SE in the classroom would set an example for the students to follow, thus making it more reasonable for the teacher to opt for SE in their teaching. This implies that the use of certain terms from different contexts would not help set an example for students in the classroom.

T35 : ..but I think teachers should use SE because students will follow the teacher…will only use ME if students do not understand. (P39)

Table 11. Item eleven

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree (Total)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree (Total)
11. Using Malaysian English allows me to express my thoughts better in the classroom.						
Participants	31% (n= 27)	50% (n=44)	81% (n=71)	14% (n=12)	5% (n=4)	19% (n=16)

Table 11 illustrates the result for item 11 which shows 81% of participants agreed that using ME allows them to express their thoughts better during the learning process in the classroom. Whereas 19% of the remaining participants stated otherwise. P76 in (T36),

mentioned that the surrounding or the environment can be the factor why students struggle to speak SE and added that it is better for the students to start learning it as early as standard 4.

T36 : Yes because some of the students cannot speak SE and there are some places in rural areas, most of the students cannot even speak English. So, I think as long as they are trying to speak in English, that is okay. But I think for now, it is kind of hard to start early because … most of Malaysians do not use English in daily conversation so it's hard to start early. Maybe they can start in standard 4 or 5. I think it is easier to start at the age of 10 or 11. (P76)

However, few participants did not agree on using ME in the classroom setting and this was noted from the interview transcript extracted in (T37) shown below. P19 believed that ME can be learned somewhere else and students should practice using SE in the classroom to encourage the learning process.

T37 : I think if any subjects then it would be okay. If in English, I would say, you need to use SE because that's the only place where you learn to use it. I mean you won't talk in SE outside of the class anymore. English classroom is where you can learn SE. We can learn ME anywhere else. (P19)

In sum, responses from item eleven disclosed that most of the participants believed that ME is useful in aiding the teaching-learning process as not all learners could use and speak SE. They also added that learners could better understand the topic if ME was used in the classroom.

Table 12. Item twelve

12. The use of Malaysian English by educators in the classroom is acceptable					
	Strongly Agree	*Agree*	*Agree (Total)*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree (Total)*
Participants	17% (n= 14)	58% (n=48)	75% (n=62)	20% (n=17)	9% (n=8)	29% (n=25)

Item 12 shows that 75% of participants agreed on the acceptability of using ME by educators in the classroom. On the other hand, 29% of the participants opposed the statement. P64 in his statement in (T38) mentioned that using ME in the classroom will allow the teachers to communicate with the students better thus indirectly helping the students to improve their English slowly.

T38 : I think using ME in the classroom enables teachers and students to communicate better because students are in the process of learning so the teachers can help them improve their English slowly. (P64)

However, there were also findings reported on those who disagreed with the use of ME in the classroom by the educators as extracted in (T34), (T35), and (T39).

T39 : I think yes, obviously. Because we're Malaysians in the first place, so when the teacher uses ME, I think the students will understand it better. But, I don't think it should be normalized. I think in the classroom the teacher needs to SE as an example for the students. Maybe use ME when the students have difficulties in understanding certain topics. Maybe then the teacher should opt to use ME. but in the first place, they should use SE. (P62)

All in all, item twelve disclosed a finding where more than half of the participants accepted the use of ME in the classroom. The two-way communication between the students and teachers is important to have a clear understanding of the topic itself. They also added that using ME in the classroom setting will slowly improve students' understanding of the English language.

Table 13. Item thirteen

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree (Total)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree (Total)
		13. Language choice by educators in the classroom should not be limited to only Standard English.
Participants	25% (n= 22)	61% (n=52)	86% (n=74)	12% (n=10)	2% (n=2)	14% (n=12)

Based on Table 13, the responses for item 13 showed that most (86%) of the participants agreed with the statement. Educators should consider the language choice in the classroom and not limit it to only the usage of SE as not all students can fully understand English and the use of ME could ease the flow of teaching. The findings can be referred to in the interview transcripts in (T33) and (T40).

T40 : I think it is because not all of the students could understand better if the teacher uses full English that's why we have a grammar translation method. (P19)

Contrary, 14% of the participants did not agree with this statement as a few of them stated they are more comfortable using SE in the classroom setting. This can be supported by interview responses extracted in (T41) shown below.

T41 : Well, in English class, if we use ME, teacher will correct us because he is the English teacher, so he doesn't prefer us using ME. Some of the teachers used ME too, but so far, my teacher in Form 5, he doesn't prefer the ME… like if someone is using ME, he will correct us. (P11)

Overall, it may be said that item thirteen reveals a result where participants believed that language instructors should not use SE all the time as it will not be an effective strategy to teach L2 learners. They also added that teachers should opt to use other varieties of English which are in line to students' mother tongue as it could help the learning process of achieving a meaningful learning environment.

Table 14. Item fourteen

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree (Total)	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree (Total)
		14. Standard English should be taught right from Year One in primary school.
Participants	60% (n= 52)	36% (n=31)	96% (n=83)	3% (n=3)	1% (n=1)	4% (n=4)

The responses for item 14 show that 96% of the participants agreed that SE should be taught right from Year One in primary school. The remaining percentage (4%) contributes to participants who disagreed with the statement as they have a different perspective on such a statement. Based on the interviews conducted, a few participants stated in (T42) and (T43) that if L2 learners acquire the language at an early age, they might be proficient enough to use SE.

T42 : Personally, yes. They should be exposed to SE in an early age… cause as we all know children at their early stage is critical… cause that's when their brain develops most rapidly compared to other times of their life. So, I think we should expose them to SE in their early age so that they have an idea of how English should really be. Children learn new things at an early ages. (P62)

T43 : Yes they should because if they are exposed to SE in the early ages, then when they are at my age or even younger, they could already use SE. they can converse better with other people. Rather than using ME, they can actually use SE. For me, I don't think it's a bad thing, but I do think people in the center like KL, they should start to learn or improvise it… using better English like SE... it's not like you need to improve all in one day, improve it slowly. Because I think SE is not used in daily conversation, some people use it like Chinese and Indian use SE but I don't think Malay people use SE... they use ME. (P19)

As stated in the table above, there are only 4% of the participants who did not agree to the statement. P76 stated in (T39) that not all learners could speak SE due to the area they are living in. As a whole, item fourteen disclosed that almost all participants believed that SE should be taught at an early age as it could help the learners to master the structure of the language. They added that at a young age, learners are still active in receiving new information and exposing SE at such an age, could help them to acquire the language more easily.

Table 15. Item fifteen

15. Even if I can't use Standard English, I can still use Malaysian English in the classroom.					
	Strongly Agree	*Agree*	*Agree (Total)*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree (Total)*
Participants	29% (n= 25)	60% (n=52)	89% (n=77)	10% (n=9)	1% (n=1)	11% (n=10)

Table 15 shows that most of the participants (89%) agreed to use ME in the classroom when they are unable to use SE. P23 in (T44) claimed that not all students master SE, so the use of ME helps aid the learning process.

T44 : Oh, I think so. Because I think not all the students have mastered the language. Some students know ME, so it is okay for teachers to use ME in the classroom for them to understand the teaching lesson. I think maybe it also depends on the school. In some schools like MRSM, maybe they can use the SE. If the school is in a suburban area, then maybe use more ME. (P23)

However, 11% of the participants clearly stated that they did not agree with the statement. In sum, item fifteen shows that participants are favorable in using ME in the classroom if they face a situation where they cannot properly use SE to deliver their message. The participants considered learners who are still in the process of mastering the English language as they might have difficulties in conveying their questions or confusion to the teacher. Therefore, it explains the high percentage of this statement.

Table 16. Item sixteen

16. Suppose I have children who can use Malaysian English well, I will still pay for extra tuition classes to make them learn Standard English.					
	Strongly Agree	*Agree*	*Agree (Total)*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree (Total)*
Participants	45% (n=39)	49% (n=43)	94% (n=82)	4% (n=3)	2% (n=2)	6% (n=5)

Based on Table 16, 94% of the participants agreed on the statement whereas the remaining 6% chose to disagree. Most participants preferred to pay extra for tuition classes to make their children (suppose they have children) learn SE. This can be supported by interview transcripts in (T18) and (T19). Contrarily, those who opposed the statement mentioned that using ME is much more comfortable and casual. This can be supported by interview transcripts in (T20) and (T45).

T45 : I do not think so because I think some people use ME because for them, it is much more comfortable and casual. Plus, it helps me to express my expression better. And also, it accommodates our own culture. I don't think they have to go to class just to fix their way of English speaking but if someone wanted to, it is their choice. (P5)

In brief, most participants expressed their approval of item sixteen. They stated that the necessity to master SE is still needed for future benefits. English is a global language where it helps to connect to people around the world. Based on participants' responses, it can be said

that while using ME, the importance of SE needed to be highlighted too in making sure the learners' SE proficiency is improving.

Discussion

Based on the overall result of Items 1 to Item 8, it reveals that the participants show positive attitudes towards ME. However, their responses somehow are limited to the formal context in which SE is preferable to be used in formal settings. The participants do not acknowledge ME as a variety but rather think that it is a broken English used among Malaysians which is improper to use in formal contexts specifically in education. In Malaysia, English had a dominant status during the British Administration; it was the ruling class's language, the Christian religion, and the administration (Bhathal 1990 cited in Talif & Su Hie, 1994, p. 70). Thus, this traditional misleading idea of the need to use only SE has been planted in the minds of Malaysians. So, participants might consider the need to "understand the importance of the varieties of Englishes, and how they enrich the language with their sociolinguistic background" (Mohammed Ishaque, 2018, p. 97).

Based on the quantitative findings, it is statistically proven that the participants did not consider ME as a mistake done by the speakers but rather the lack of proficiency among the speakers where it is considered as a mandatory process L2 speakers need to go through towards possessing a good spoken and written English language. Therefore, it can be concluded that Malaysian Generation Z accepts the use of ME as it positively contributes to certain aspects of life. Speakers use English and their mother tongue concurrently to greater or lesser extents, switch from one to the other and back, and regularly draw on elements or features from several of these languages to index certain social meanings (Leimgruber, 2013, p.3-4).

In the light of Items 9-16, the findings disclose that Malaysian Generation Z considers ME as one of the useful mediums of instruction to be used in a classroom setting. Concerning the Malaysian education system, English is placed as the L2 (Gill, 2002) in line with the education policy. English language is made a compulsory subject at all levels of education implying its existence "side by side with strong indigenous languages, wide use in speaking, and intranational outstanding, sometimes official functions, as the language of politics, the media, jurisdiction, higher education, and other such domains" (Thirusanku & Melor, 2012, p. 2 cited in Darmi & Albion, 2013, p. 175). Extracted from the online interview, a few of the participants stated that the use of ME in a classroom setting is acceptable in aiding the teaching and learning process as to make sure the message is successfully delivered to the learners. However, there are a few perspectives from the participants saying that ME is acceptable to be used in the classroom at only a certain level as it will affect the learners' performance in gaining knowledge of SE. Concerning this, participants are more concerned about the necessity to master SE for future benefits such as conversing with native speakers of English, enrolling in the tertiary level of education, securing a job position, etc. In Malaysia, English is used for some tertiary education, and quite widely as the language of business, where many firms are still dominated by Chinese or Indian personnel (Thirusanku & Md. Yunus, 2012, p. 11).

Overall, most of the participants concurred on the usefulness of ME in the classroom setting as it enables teachers and students to connect and communicate better for a meaningful learning process. Taking their perspectives into consideration, the presence of ME in the classroom could make a big change in learning as not all learners could use and speak SE. Quoted from You Speak Manglish?, (2006), "when everyone is scrambling to be proficient in English, the butchered forms of English are frowned upon. However, language in any form is part of culture. We have to understand that not everyone can speak "global English" (whatever that may be), therefore, knowing how to speak Manglish or other hatched forms of the English language can come in handy. We can also learn a lesson or two from the chameleons, those

who for example, can switch from Manglish to the Queen's English without skipping a beat"
(as cited in Lee, 2015).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this present study found that Malaysian Generation Z's acceptance towards ME is positive since it contributes to certain aspects in life and the usefulness of ME is positively viewed in aiding the learning and teaching process in the classroom.

It is recommended to move beyond phase 3 of the Dynamic model and raise the acceptance of ME among society and a form of distinct grammar of the variety should be established. It needs to be flexible to adjust to the sociocultural needs and confines to the Malaysian socio-cultural context. This form of grammar can be based on ME and Singaporean English publication dictionary (by Times Chambers Essential English Dictionary, 1997). It is also hoped that this would lead to a higher acceptance of the ME, thus setting forth this variety to phase 4 in enabling network construction. Furthermore, it is also recommended that the role of ME should be portrayed positively instead of binding it to its old portrayal of only colloquial form where it exists in three forms: acrolect (official), basilect (unofficial), and mesolect (colloquial). Participants from the survey only seem to have the colloquial form of ME in their minds, thus prodding them to exhibit a low acceptance of this variety. Television shows such as 'Oh My English!' are a prime example of these three forms being used and it should be promoted extensively as it could help spread a good portrayal of ME.

There are a few limitations of this present study that hinder the findings from achieving the best results. The first limitation was the challenges of acquiring data for the research due to the pandemic situation and the restrictions that we had to abide by. With that, we were left with no option but to go through an online survey. Due to that, we were also unable to provide further enlightenment to the participants about the questionnaire for them to understand it better. Another limitation of this study is that the sample may be unable to represent the actual target respondents. We could not clarify nor guarantee that those who filled out the survey legitimately belong to the actual Generation Z. Another additional constraint that we faced was that the different levels of ME which are the acrolect, mesolect, and basilect were not explained and taken into consideration, thus limiting the participants' understanding towards the variety. This affected the study as participants most probably comprehend the use of only basilect instead of the other two levels. Thus, the findings of this present study could not be concluded based on the dynamic model introduced by Schneider.

In relevance to the limitations of the study, it is suggested that researchers should explain and guide the participants in answering the survey to make sure that each participant understood each question for them to be able to answer it without any confusion. Apart from that, since the sample of the study was limited and only accessible through online surveys and online interviews due to the pandemic, future studies should inspect the authenticity of the sample's demographic information to obtain a genuine representation of a particular group. Besides, future studies are suggested to include explanations on the three levels of ME as this could affect the views and acceptance of society towards this variety. For instance, if ME is being introduced only in colloquial form, it could be perceived negatively whereas the use of ME in acrolect level could gather a much more positive outlook.

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