

Malay youth language in West Malaysia

Tom HOOGERVORST

Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies

This paper typologises the sociolect of ‘young people’ – in the broadest sense of the word – in West Malaysia. The focus is on speakers of colloquial Malay, a language variety which is itself poorly documented. Linguistic scholarship has thus far prioritised the standardised Malay variety promoted by language planners and, more recently, regional dialects. Sociolects and contact varieties have received relatively scant attention, especially in Malaysia. I start by situating the Malay youth language in Malaysia’s language ecology. The next three sections describe, respectively, three distinctive lexico-semantic characteristics of this youth language: common processes of shortening words, semantic innovation, and the influence from languages in contact, including English and Chinese varieties. The final section addresses the ways in which young speakers of colloquial Malay write down their language informally. Throughout this paper, I will compare the Malay youth language used in West Malaysia with its much better known Indonesian equivalent.

1. Introduction¹

To those who have learned Malay academically, an everyday conversation between young people often proves to be a linguistic *terra incognita*. This study offers a preliminary description of the youth language (*bahasa remaja*) of West Malaysia – i.e. the Peninsula – charting the speech habits of young speakers of colloquial Malay, the words they use and the new meanings they give to existing words. In recognition of this volume’s general theme, I will make comparisons with the much better known Indonesian youth language (*bahasa gaul*) wherever possible.

Although the official languages of Indonesia and Malaysia, respectively *Bahasa Indonesia* ‘Indonesian’ and *Bahasa Malaysia* ‘Malaysian’, are both standardised varieties of Malay, they exhibit numerous differences in pronunciation, orthography, lexicon and grammar. As a result, in certain domains the two languages are mutually unintelligible – a long-time point of contention of the transnational Malay language organisation (*Majlis Bahasa Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia* or MABBIM). Unsurprisingly, the differences are even greater between the numerous vernacular varieties of the Malay language. A comparison of some common colloquial words in Malaysian and Indonesian in Table 1 will suffice to illustrate this point:

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to Keng We Koh, Azam Othman, Kartini Abd Wahab, Janet Yong and two anonymous reviewers for their valuable suggestions and points for improvements. Some of the field notes used in this paper are collected during my (unrelated) fieldwork for the Sealinks Project (University of Oxford) and I am grateful for funding received from the European Research Council, as part of Grant Agreement No 206148 awarded to Nicole Boivin.

Malaysian	Indonesian	
<i>awék</i>	<i>céwék</i>	‘girl’
<i>bapuk</i>	<i>béncong</i>	‘transvestite, sissy’
<i>bengap</i>	<i>goblok</i>	‘stupid’
<i>biul</i>	<i>sinting</i>	‘crazy’
<i>borak</i>	<i>ngomong</i>	‘to chat’
<i>cintan</i>	<i>cintrong</i>	‘love’
<i>gempak</i>	<i>dahsyat</i>	‘awesome’
<i>jiwang</i>	<i>sénsi</i>	‘sentimental’
<i>jom</i>	<i>yuk</i>	‘let’s go’
<i>konék</i>	<i>kontol</i>	‘penis’
<i>lawa</i>	<i>comél</i>	‘pretty’
<i>lépak</i>	<i>ngécéng</i>	‘to hang out’
<i>mak nyah</i>	<i>waria</i>	‘transsexual’
<i>menyampah</i>	<i>sebel</i>	‘frustrated, disgusted’
<i>ponténg</i> ²	<i>bolos</i>	‘to skip, to be absent’
<i>sékéh</i>	<i>tonjok</i>	‘to hit with the first’

Table 1: Colloquialisms in Malaysian and Indonesian

This study relies on a corpus of data collected during several short trips to Kuala Lumpur and its satellite cities in April 2007, February 2008, February 2009, November 2009, March 2011, June 2013 and July 2014. Eleven of my consultants were men and five were women, all between the age of 16 and 35 at the time of consultation. I am particularly grateful to Shuhaiza Soib and Muhammad Zuhri Soib, who kindly provided me with shelter and enlightened me on several aspects of the Malay youth language.

This study is divided into five sections. First, some background is given on the concept of youth language and its sociolinguistic position in the Malaysian context. The following section deals with the phonological process of syllabic shortening for a certain set of frequently used lexical items, which is common in colloquial Malay varieties in general but displays certain unique features in the Malay youth language. I then call attention to some of the slang words used in Malay youth language and the process of attributing slang meanings to existing vocabulary. Subsequently, the lexical influence of other languages is addressed, especially English and Chinese dialects. The last section examines the ways in which Malay youth language is written down, including in digital messages. I will conclude by summarising the issues identified in this study and suggest some directions for further research.

Lastly, a note on the spelling should be included here. Regional dialects of Malay, in West Malaysia and elsewhere, exhibit vast phonological differences. The (historical) word-final /a/, for instance, may be realised as /ɔ/ in Negeri Sembilan and parts of the northern Malay Peninsula, as /a/ in the vicinity of Penang and as /ə/ in Johor, whereas the word-final /ɪ/ is pronounced as /y/ or /t/ in some regions and omitted altogether in others (cf. Omar 1977, 2008). In addition, several but not all West Malaysian dialects display vowel lowering (*i → e, *u → o) in closed final syllables. For the sake of consistency, this study adheres to the standard orthography (with the orthographic <e> denoting /ə/ and <é> denoting /e/) (but see

² Some authors have proposed a Hokkien etymology of *ponténg* (cf. Hamilton 1924: 55; Jones 2009: 151), but this remains uncertain.

section 6 for examples of non-standard writing of Malay youth language). For Hokkien, I use Pèh-ōe-jī romanisation and the dictionary of Douglas (1899); for Cantonese, I use the Jyut⁶ Ping³ romanisation and the online dictionary of Sheik (2003-2014).

2. Defining Malay youth language

The concepts of slang and youth language merit some clarification here. I will use the term slang in reference to lexicon and other linguistic habits restricted to speakers from a specific social group, such as young people, criminals, the gay community, etc. Slang is almost invariably situated outside the domain of standardised or official language. By definition, most slang words are ephemeral and prone to intergenerational replacement, although they may occasionally enter the mainstream vernacular or even official speech strata (cf. Zuckermann 2003: 23). Slang also tends to incorporate vulgar language, taboo words and other expressions considered inappropriate in formal communication. Colloquialisms are different, as they encompass informal speech styles known to and used by a more general segment of the speech community. The extent to which colloquialisms are considered an integral part of the standard language – as used in public discourse, politics and media – differs from one speech community to another. In Malaysia, both slang words and colloquialisms are typically absent in locally compiled dictionaries.

Youth language is defined here as slang used by young people. In general, the social use of language is learnt during adolescence, a phase in life characterised by the development of peer-group participation, orientation to vernacular culture, opposition to legitimised institutional culture, and the formation of ‘popular’ groups with the associated speech styles and identities (Eckert 1997). Much more than adults, the speech of young people exhibits playfulness, flexibility and the desire to innovate. Youth language can thus be classified as an ‘antilanguage’; it serves the social function of marking group identity and distinguishing insiders from outsiders (cf. Halliday 1978). Youth language is meant to be incomprehensible to outsiders; language forms are deliberately manipulated to achieve this incomprehensibility and the linguistic norms are rapidly changing to sustain it (cf. Kiessling & Mous 2004). It also often serves as an interethnic bridge in a typically multicultural large city, whether in Malaysia, Africa or the western world. Consequently, youth language tends to draw its lexical inspiration from different speech communities in contact. The influence of English is extremely common across the world’s youth languages and evidences a deliberate embrace of ‘global’ culture. Indeed, the urban youth culture associated with hip-hop, Hollywood and hamburgers is as common in Malaysia as anywhere.

While essentially a subset of colloquial peninsular Malay, the Malay youth language is not used nor understood by the entire Malay speech community. To complicate matters, colloquial Malay has itself received scant academic attention. Although recent scholarship has drawn attention to colloquial Malay varieties of West Malaysia (Koh 1990), Singapore (Aman 1999), Indonesia (Sneddon 2006; Ewing 2005) and Sabah (Hoogervorst 2011), much remains to be done in this field. Most studies on Malay youth languages available to me deal with the speech of at least one generation ago.³ The modern Indonesian youth language (*bahasa gaul*) is described in several popular publications (e.g., Constantine & Marching 2004; David 2007). With regard to Malaysian slangs, specific in-group vocabulary has been documented for students (Ariffin 2006: 25-6), motor gangs (Hamzah 2006: 14-5; Yong 2009;

³ See e.g., Dreyfuss (1983) and Van der Meij (1983) on Jakarta’s “youth” language (then known as *Prokém*) and Purnama (1993) on that of Brunei Darussalam.

Ismail 2010: 5), drug addicts (Mohamad Azhari et al. 2012) and the gay community (Prentice 1994). For the use of slang words in Malaysian English, we may call attention to a book chapter by Amir Muhammad (2009) aptly titled ‘Unwelcome words’. Despite having largely remained outside the academic gaze thus far, both colloquial Malay and the Malay youth language feature prominently in Malaysian popular culture. We encounter it in TV-shows and sitcoms (e.g., *Pi Mai Pi Mai Tang Tu*), movies (e.g., *Baik Punya Cilok*), popular comics and magazines (e.g., *Ujang*, *Gempak*) and youth novels known as *cerpén remaja*. It is also found abundantly on the Internet.

The popularity of colloquialisms and slang in Malaysia stands in stark contrast with the more official attitudes towards the use of substandard language. The Malaysian government has deemed it in the best interest of the multi-ethnic nation to develop and foreground the Malay language as one of the hall-marks of a collective Malaysian identity. Consequently, anything that could damage the prestige (*martabat*) of Malay was, and continues to be, shunned and discouraged (cf. Ahmad 1999: 108). This attitude has materialised through the establishment of the *Déwan Bahasa dan Pustaka* (‘Institute of Language and Literature’, henceforth DBP), an influential governmental body responsible for the use and coordination of the Malay language in Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. Through conferences, campaigns, publications and other activities, DBP encourages ‘correct language’ (*bahasa yang betul*) and constantly expands the Malay vocabulary to meet the demands of the modern era. In addition to the ungrammatical or otherwise incorrect use of Malay, DPB is known to take issue with excessive foreign influence, both lexical and grammatical, and code-mixing.⁴ Both phenomena have been criticised and regarded as a threat capable of polluting (*mencemarkan*) the purity (*kemurnian*) of the Malay language (Sulaiman & Karim 2010: 18; also cf. Ahmad 1999: 296; Baharom 2006; Said 2010; Majed 2011). In the journal issued by the DBP, one author goes as far as calling substandard Malay a ‘parasite’ (Osman 2010). Some Malaysian scholars, however, have internalised less hostile attitudes (cf. Amir 2006: 18; Zahid 2006: 22), asserting that the phenomenon of slang (*bahasa slanga*) and its users – who belong to specific social groups and are therefore incapable of damaging the Malay language in its entirety – should not be ridiculed or belittled (*mencemuh atau memandang rendah*). In concurrence with the above statement, the present study aims to document the contemporary Malay youth language from a purely descriptive point of view, leaving notions of correctness and appropriate language usage for more qualified authorities to pursue.

3. Syllabic shortening

This section addresses the process of syllabic shortening or ‘clipping’ in the Malay youth language. Before calling attention to examples specific to Malay youth language, however, it needs to be pointed out that this reflects a common – and hitherto rather poorly documented – tendency in colloquial Malay varieties in general. First-syllable dropping is particularly common in frequently used vocabulary, e.g., *dah* ‘already’ from *sudah*. We also encounter contracted interrogative pronouns, such as *apesal* ‘how come?’ from *apa pasal*. In addition, vowel sequences and liquid consonants (/l/ and /r/) are often assimilated, e.g., *cerita* ‘story’ → *cita*, *keluar* ‘to go outside’ → *kuar*, *dia orang* ‘they’ → *diorang*, etc. Some examples of ‘clipped’ forms in colloquial peninsular Malay are listed in Table 2.

⁴ Code-mixing is somewhat condescendingly called *bahasa rojak*, referring to a popular dish consisting of mixed vegetables.

shortened form	full form		shortened form	full form	
<i>amacam</i>	<i>apa macam</i>	‘like what?’	<i>ngah</i>	<i>tengah</i>	‘middle, currently’
<i>amenda</i>	<i>apa benda</i>	‘what (is it)?’	<i>ngan</i>	<i>dengan</i>	‘with, by’
<i>apesal</i>	<i>apa pasal</i>	‘how come?’	<i>ngok</i>	<i>téngok</i>	‘to watch, to look’
<i>cam</i>	<i>macam</i>	‘like’	<i>ni</i>	<i>ini</i>	‘this’
<i>camni</i>	<i>macam ini</i>	‘like this’	<i>omputih</i>	<i>orang putih</i>	‘white person’
<i>camtu</i>	<i>macam itu</i>	‘like that’	<i>pa</i>	<i>apa</i>	‘what’
<i>caya</i>	<i>percaya</i>	‘believe’	<i>pala</i>	<i>kepala</i>	‘head’
<i>cemana</i>	<i>macam mana</i>	‘how’	<i>papa</i>	<i>apa-apa</i>	‘something’
<i>cita</i>	<i>cerita</i>	‘story’	<i>pas</i>	<i>(se)lepas</i>	‘after’
<i>dah</i>	<i>sudah</i>	‘already’	<i>pasni</i>	<i>(se)lepas ini</i>	‘after this’
<i>dahlah</i>	<i>sudahlah</i>	‘enough, not only’	<i>pastu</i>	<i>(se)lepas itu</i>	‘after that’
<i>dahtu</i>	<i>sudah itu</i>	‘moreover’	<i>pehal</i>	<i>apa hal</i>	‘what’s the case?’
<i>dak</i>	<i>budak</i>	‘kid’	<i>pempuan</i>	<i>perempuan</i>	‘woman’
<i>diorang</i>	<i>dia orang</i>	‘they’	<i>sapa</i>	<i>siapa</i>	‘who’
<i>duk</i>	<i>duduk</i>	‘to sit, stay’	<i>sian</i>	<i>kasi(h)an</i>	‘pity’
<i>gak</i>	<i>juga(k)</i>	‘also’	<i>sib</i>	<i>nasib</i>	‘luck’
<i>gi</i>	<i>pigi</i>	‘to go’	<i>sikit</i>	<i>sedikit</i>	‘a bit’
<i>gitau</i>	<i>bagitau</i>	‘to inform’	<i>sok</i>	<i>ésok</i>	‘tomorrow’
<i>ja</i>	<i>sahaja</i>	‘just’	<i>sorang</i>	<i>seorang</i>	‘somebody, alone’
<i>jap</i>	<i>sekejap</i>	‘a while’	<i>suma</i>	<i>semua</i>	‘all’
<i>kang</i>	<i>karang</i>	‘later’	<i>tah</i>	<i>entah</i>	‘unknown’
<i>kat</i>	<i>dekat</i>	‘close by, at’	<i>tak</i>	<i>tidak</i>	‘no, not’
<i>kéta</i>	<i>keréta</i>	‘car’	<i>takda</i>	<i>tidak ada</i>	‘not there, have not’
<i>kitorang</i>	<i>kita orang</i>	‘we (all)’	<i>takkan</i>	<i>tidak akan</i>	‘will not’
<i>Kolumpur</i>	<i>Kuala Lumpur</i>	‘Kuala Lumpur’	<i>takléh</i>	<i>tidak boléh</i>	‘cannot’
<i>kong</i>	<i>kosong</i>	‘empty’	<i>taknak</i>	<i>tidak hendak</i>	‘not want’
<i>korang</i>	<i>ko orang</i>	‘you (pl.)’	<i>takpa</i>	<i>tidak apa</i>	‘nothing’
<i>kuar</i>	<i>keluar</i>	‘go outside’	<i>takyah</i>	<i>tidak payah</i>	‘not need’
<i>kuarga</i>	<i>keluarga</i>	‘family’	<i>tima</i>	<i>terima</i>	‘to receive’
<i>lak</i>	<i>pula(k)</i>	‘too’	<i>tu</i>	<i>itu</i>	‘that’
<i>lau</i>	<i>kalau</i>	‘if’	<i>tul</i>	<i>betul</i>	‘correct’
<i>léh</i>	<i>boléh</i>	‘can’	<i>wat</i>	<i>buat</i>	‘to do, for’
<i>lum</i>	<i>belum</i>	‘not yet’	<i>watpa</i>	<i>buat apa</i>	‘what to do, for what?’
<i>nak</i>	<i>hendak</i>	‘want’	<i>ya</i>	<i>iya</i>	‘yes’
<i>napa</i>	<i>kenapa</i>	‘why’			

Table 2: Commonly shortened forms

A different process of syllabic shortening in colloquial peninsular Malay is partial reduplication, which is used – alongside full reduplication – to indicate plurality or diversity; standard Malay only allows the latter construction. Partially reduplicated forms are created according to the Ce-RED principle, e.g., *makan-makan* ~ *memakan* ‘to have a relaxed meal’ and *budak-budak* ~ *bebudak* ‘people’.⁵ Word-final nasals are retained and assimilated to the

⁵ I cannot assess whether these forms represent innovations or retentions. The process of partial reduplication is quite common in Austronesian languages and is also attested in a limited set of standard Malay nouns, e.g., *lekaki* ~ *laki-laki* ‘man’, *kekura* ~ *kura-kura* ‘turtle, tortoise’ and *lelangit* ~ *langit-langit* ‘canopy, palate’. It has been revived by Malay language planners to facilitate the production of new vocabulary, e.g., *rambut* ‘hair’ → *rerambut* ‘(blood) capillaries’, *kunci* ‘key’ → *kekunci* ‘keys on the computer board’ and *jari* ‘finger’ → *jejari* ‘radius (in a circumference)’ (Ahmad 1999: 257-8).

word-initial phoneme of the reduplicated stem, e.g., *jalan-jalan* ~ *jenjalan* ‘to go out’ and *kawan-kawan* ~ *kengkawan* ‘friends’.

Malay youth language displays a third process – unknown in mainstream colloquial Malay – in which the final syllable is dropped, e.g., *berap* ‘how much’ (*berapa*), *bran* ← *beran* ‘to dare, to be brave’ (*berani*), *kenap* ‘why?’ (*kenapa*), *lem* ‘slow (esp. of brains)’ (*lembap*), *pen* ‘important’ (*penting*), *pon* ‘to skip school’ (*ponténg*), *seng* ‘stupid’ (*sengal*) and *steng* ← *seteng* ‘half’ (*setengah*). Consider the following examples:

- (1) *Aku tak bran nak buat camni.*
 1s not dare want do like.that
 ‘I’m afraid to do so.’
- (2) *Ko ajar aku lah, aku lem sikit.*
 2s teach 1s PART 1s slow little
 ‘You should teach me, I’m a bit slow’
- (3) *Aku nak pon kelas ja sok.*
 1s want skip class PART tomorrow
 ‘I just want to skip class tomorrow.’
- (4) *Kenap takléh datang pe-pagi?*
 why cannot come RED-morning
 ‘Why can’t you come in the morning?’

Malay youth language also exhibits a number of words and phrases that can be shortened as a whole, e.g., *baktang* ‘bring (it) on’ (*bawak datang*), *bancau* ‘k.o. grass jelly syrup’ (*bandung cincau*), *cikadung* ‘a girl wearing a head-scarf’ (*cikaro tudung*), *koktang* ‘a cigarette’ (*rokok sebatang*), *léklu* ‘take a break’ (*riléks dulu*), *naslem* ‘a fragrant rice dish’ (*nasi lemak*), *pacer* ‘what’s up?’ (*apa cerita*), *rotcai* ‘k.o. flatbread’ (*roti canai*), *sado* ‘huge’ (*besar bodoh*), *sapkok* ‘to smoke’ (*hisap rokok*) and *trimas* ‘thanks’ (*terima kasih*), as well as profanities such as *kimak* ‘motherfucker’ (*puki mak* = ‘mother’s vagina’) and *sengsengub* ‘idiotic’ (*sengal-sengal ubi* = ‘stupid like a yam’). Consider the following examples:

- (5) *Macam mana nak sado cam kau?*
 How want huge like 2s
 ‘How can I get huge like you?’
- (6) *Aku nak ucap trimas se-sangat kat korang.*
 1s want say thanks RED-very LOC 2p.
 ‘I’d like to say a big “thank you” to you guys.’
- (7) *Pacer muntah-muntah ni?*
 what’s.up RED-vomit DEM
 ‘How come you keep throwing up?’
- (8) *Léklu, nak sapkok jap.*
 take.a.break want smoke a.while
 ‘Take a break; I’d like to have a smoke.’

- (9) *Hari tu, aku memang cam sengsengub sikit.*
 day DEM 1s really like stupid a.bit
 ‘I really felt quite stupid that day.’

Shortened forms in which the last syllable is dropped also occur in the Indonesian *bahasa gaul*, but the actual words used are different. Well-known Indonesian examples include *cé* ‘girl’ (*céwék*), *co* ‘boy’ (*cowok*), *ker* ‘work’ (*kerja*), *kul* ‘college’ (*kuliah*) and *say* ‘sweetheart’ (*sayang*). We also find similar processes of creating compound forms, including *bispak* ‘slutty’ (*bisa* ‘can’ + *pakai* ‘to use’), *gapsos* ‘socially clueless’ (*gagap* ‘to stammer’ + *sosial* ‘social’), *gapték* ‘technologically clueless’ (*gagap* ‘to stammer’ + *téknologi* ‘technology’), *jaim* ‘concerned about one’s image’ (*jaga* ‘to protect’ + *iméj* ‘image’), *mupéng* ‘overtly eager’ (*muka* ‘face’ + *péngén* ‘want’) and *pérék* ‘an easy lay’ (*perempuan* ‘woman’ + *ékspérimén* ‘experimenting’).

4. Semantic innovation

The Malay lexicon, like any other non-endangered language, is constantly enriched with new vocabulary, while infrequently used words fall into oblivion. Malay neologisms often remain lexicographically undocumented when created spontaneously, rather than deliberately through the efforts of language planners. Table 3 lists examples of Malay slang words absent in the prestigious *Kamus Dewan* (Baharom 2007) published by DBP, arguably the most authoritative Malay dictionary.

slang	meaning	Indonesian equivalent
<i>balaci</i>	‘errand-boy, shoeshine boy’	<i>kacung</i>
<i>caras</i>	‘to steal’	<i>nyolong</i>
<i>cikaro</i>	‘flirty chick’	<i>pérék</i>
<i>cinonét</i>	‘very small (e.g., of children)’	<i>cilik</i>
<i>gedik</i>	‘coquettish’	<i>centil</i>
<i>hawau</i>	‘uncivilised, vulgar’	<i>norak</i>
<i>kantoi</i>	‘discovered, caught red-handed’	<i>kepergok</i>
<i>kékwat</i> ⁶	‘arrogant’	<i>juték</i>
<i>kongkék</i>	‘to have sex’	<i>ngéntot</i>
<i>lados</i>	‘to smoke’	<i>ngokar</i>
<i>lenjan</i>	‘to race’	<i>ngebut</i>
<i>makwé</i>	‘girlfriend’	<i>céwék</i>
<i>oték</i>	‘police’	<i>plésong</i>
<i>pakwé</i>	‘boyfriend’	<i>cowok</i>
<i>pencacai</i>	‘yes-man, sycophant’	<i>pengangguk</i>
<i>sekodéng</i>	‘to peep, to watch secretly’	<i>ngintip</i>
<i>selénga</i>	‘stupid’	<i>bégo</i>
<i>siut</i>	‘very (much)’	<i>banget</i>

Table 3: Malaysian slang words

Consider the following examples:

⁶ Originally used in *bahasa nyah* (gay slang). Prentice (1994: 41) gives *kéwat* ‘thinking o’s. handsome and behaving in an appropriately arrogant manner’. Some consultants derive the word from ‘catwalk’.

- (10) *Kéta dia kena caras.*
car 3s got steal
'His car got stolen!'
- (11) *Wah gedik=nya makwé dia!*
PART coquettish=3s girlfriend 3s
'Wow, his girlfriend is so coquettish!'
- (12) *Kantoi lah, korang selalu sekodéng aku.*
discovered PART 2p always peep 1s
'Gotcha! You people are always peeping at me.'
- (13) *Laju siut kéta dia! Ko dah cuba lenjan ka?*
fast very car 3s 2s already try race PART
'His car is really fast! Have you tried to race with it?'

Some words in Malay youth language have undergone slight changes in pronunciation. The word *masyuk* 'profitable, rich', for example, comes from *masuk* 'to enter' and the word *usha* 'to stare at, to check out' appears to be derived from *usaha* 'effort'. These examples reflect the common process of giving new meanings to existing words. In the Malay youth language of the 1970s, the word *bergetah* 'rubbery, sticky' came to mean 'sexy', while *jambu* 'guava' became 'pretty' and *kodok* 'frog' was used for 'woman' (Teo Kok Seong 2006: 8). Along similar lines, Table 4 lists a set of semantic innovations in the contemporary Malay youth language.

slang	meaning	original meaning	Indonesian equivalent
<i>anak ikan</i>	'catamite'	'young fish'	<i>gemblak</i>
<i>balak</i> ⁷	'penis, boyfriend'	'log, timber'	<i>batang</i>
<i>bapak</i>	'freaking (adj.)'	'father'	<i>buanget</i>
<i>barai</i>	'broken, whacked'	'scattered'	<i>caur</i>
<i>barang</i>	'breasts'	'goods'	<i>tokét</i>
<i>bodoh</i>	'damn (adj.)'	'stupid'	<i>sialan</i>
<i>cara</i>	'excellent(ly)'	'method'	<i>dahsyat</i>
<i>gila</i>	'super'	'crazy'	<i>gila</i>
<i>jamban</i>	'buttocks, ass'	'toilet seat'	<i>bokong</i>
<i>kemut</i>	'stingy'	'throbbing motion'	<i>pelit</i>
<i>kopék</i>	'breasts'	'emptied of milk'	<i>tokét</i>
<i>kutu</i>	'tout'	'parasite'	<i>calo</i>
<i>lalang</i>	'indecisive'	'k.o. tall grass'	<i>plinplan</i>
<i>lapuk</i>	'broke'	'mouldy'	<i>bokék</i>
<i>lembap</i>	'slow'	'moist, clammy'	<i>lélét</i>
<i>lembik</i>	'effeminate, homosexual'	'soft'	<i>lembék</i>
<i>masak</i>	'screwed, in trouble'	'cooked'	<i>berantakan</i>
<i>menonggéng</i>	'crazily'	'to stick one's buttocks in the air'	<i>gila-gilaan</i>
<i>panas</i>	'pissed off'	'hot'	<i>gondok</i>
<i>sangap</i>	'horny'	'to yawn'	<i>sangé</i>
<i>sengal</i>	'stupid'	'pain in the joints'	<i>goblok</i>
<i>sentap</i>	'offended'	'to pull sharply'	<i>bété</i>
<i>toyol</i>	'a cheat sheet'	'a type of ghost'	<i>contékan</i>

Table 4: Slang meanings of existing words

⁷ This word is probably derived from Dutch *balk* 'beam, log' (Prentice 1994: 39).

Consider the following examples:

- (14) *Dia dah kapel-kapel sikit ngan balak dia.*
 3s PART RED-make.love a.bit with boyfriend 3s.
 ‘She’s already made love a bit with her boyfriend.’
- (15) *Bapak gila laju=nya dia bawak motor.*
 Freaking crazy speed=3s.POS 3s drive motorcycle.
 ‘He drives the motorcycle [with] freaking crazy speed.’
- (16) *Téngok dia punya jamban!*
 Look 3s POS ass
 ‘Look at her ass!’
- (17) *Aku rindu bodoh tempat ni!*
 1s miss damn place DEM
 ‘I miss this place a damn lot!’
- (18) *Cara siut korang édit!*
 excellent very 2p edit
 ‘You guys have edited it amazingly!’
- (19) *Aku tengah sibuk menonggéng.*
 1s currently busy crazily
 ‘I’m crazily busy at the moment.’
- (20) *Cam sentap dah aku kat sini.*
 like offended PART 1s LOC here
 ‘I’m getting offended here.’
- (21) *Cikgu gua ni sengal dan lembap.*
 teacher 1s DEM stupid and slow
 ‘My teacher is stupid and slow.’

The same phenomenon is observed in a set of frequently used verbs and verbalised nouns, as listed in Table 5.

slang	meaning	original meaning	Indonesian equivalent
<i>anjing</i>	‘to scold’	‘dog’	<i>nyomélin</i>
<i>ayat</i>	‘to chat up’	‘sentence’	<i>pédékaté</i>
<i>bahan</i>	‘to ridicule’	‘object’	<i>ngerjain</i>
<i>belah</i>	‘to go away, to fuck off’	‘to split in two’	<i>minggat</i>
<i>cengkadak</i>	‘to stuff’	‘praying mantis’	<i>nguntal</i>
<i>gébang</i>	‘to boast’	‘to chat’	<i>nyombong</i>
<i>geli-geli</i>	‘to fool around’	‘to tickle’	<i>néko-néko</i>
<i>goréng</i>	‘to fabricate stories’	‘to fry, to butter up’	<i>ngarang</i>
<i>kapur</i>	‘to steal’	‘chalk; to calcify, to whitewash’	<i>nyolong</i>
<i>kelentong</i>	‘to tell a fib’	‘a rattle’	<i>ngomong kosong</i>
<i>kencing</i>	‘to deceive’	‘to urinate’	<i>ngadalin</i>
<i>layak</i>	‘to have sex’	‘to trample down’	<i>ngéntot</i>
<i>lentok</i>	‘to sleep’	‘to incline to one side’	<i>bobok</i>
<i>meroyan</i>	‘to flip (out)’	‘complications following childbirth’	<i>ngamuk</i>
<i>pangkah</i>	‘to get turned down’	‘a line drawn across’	<i>ketolak</i>

slang	meaning	original meaning	Indonesian equivalent
<i>payung</i>	'to treat, to cover'	'umbrella'	<i>nraktir</i>
<i>perasan</i>	'to flatter oneself'	'to be aware, conscious'	<i>gé-ér</i>
<i>pulun</i>	'to do sth. excessively'	'to bunch up'	<i>gak habis-habisan</i>
<i>rémbat</i>	'to snatch'	'to whip, to kick'	<i>nyerobot</i>
<i>rémhés</i>	'to ejaculate'	'to ooze'	<i>ngecrét</i>
<i>ronggéng</i>	'to go on a trip'	'to dance'	<i>ngléncér</i>
<i>ular</i>	'to sneak out'	'snake'	<i>bolos</i>

Table 5: Verbs with slang meanings

The following examples illustrate how some of the words listed above can be used:

- (22) *Te-tiba dia nak payung makan kat hotél.*
 suddenly 3s want treat eat LOC hotel
 'Suddenly he wanted to buy me dinner at a hotel.'
- (23) *Macam mana nak ayat awak omputih?*
 how want chat.up girl Caucasian
 'How does one chat up white girls?'
- (24) *Dahlah, sebelum kena anjing dengan cikgu.*
 enough before get scold by teacher
 'Stop it, before we get scolded by the teacher.'
- (25) *You takléh ular lah camni!*
 2s cannot sneak.out PART like.this
 'You can't sneak out like this!'
- (26) *Amenda lah Hadi duk meroyan pasal aku?*
 what.is.it PART Hadi stay flip.out about 1s
 'How come Hadi keeps flipping out about me?'
- (27) *Ko ni apesal lentok le-lebih?*
 2s DEM how.come sleep RED-more
 'Why are you sleeping so much?'
- (28) *Sapa kencing gua pancung!*
 who deceive 1s behead
 'I'll decapitate whoever deceives [me]!'
- (29) *Takyah nak gébang sangat lah.*
 not.need want boast much PART
 'There is no need to boast too much.'
- (30) *Belah lah ko! Pindah negara lain!*
 go.away PART 2s move land other
 'Fuck off you! Move to another country!'

Colloquial Malay has a rich repertoire of terms used to characterise people. The word *jinjang* 'old-fashioned, uncivilised (esp. Chinese people)', for example, is said to derive from *Jinjang*,

a predominantly Chinese district of Kuala Lumpur. The words *mat* ‘guy’ and *minah* ‘girl’ go back to the common Malay names Mamat and Aminah and can be used in a variety of combinations. Since the 1970s, the derogatory term *minah karan* ‘voltage girl’ came to refer to a generation of female workers who moved from the countryside into the cities to work in the emerging Malaysian electronics industry, and who often faced criticism for going against the traditional Malay values (e.g., Ackerman 1991; Razak 2006). Another generic term applied to a specific social group is *mat motor* ‘motor guy’, later replaced by *mat rempit* (Razak 2006).⁸ A *mat rempit* is somebody involved in illegal street races, a Malaysian subculture often associated with stealing motorcycles, drug abuse and other types of undesired behaviour (cf. Ismail 2010). Another commonly used term is *mat saléh* (female: *minah saléh*), which refers to Caucasians. Folk etymology has it that this word is derived from the English phrase ‘mad sailor’. More likely, to my mind, it is a reference to the name Mat Salleh, an aristocrat from Perak who was one of the first Malay rulers to embrace and work for the British regime during the late 19th century (cf. Gullick 1987: 77-8). By analogy, we find the ethnonyms *mat melayu* ‘Malay’, *mat cina* ‘Chinese’, *mat india* ‘Indian’, *mat bangla* ‘Bangladeshi’ and *mat indon* ‘Indonesian’. Several more combinations with *mat* are found in Malay youth language, as listed in Table 6.

slang	meaning	source	meaning
<i>mat belia</i>	‘youngster’	<i>belia</i>	‘young’
<i>mat bodék</i>	‘brown noser’	<i>bodék</i>	‘testicles’
<i>mat botol</i>	‘alcoholic’	<i>botol</i>	‘bottle’
<i>mat cabul</i>	‘pervert’	<i>cabul</i>	‘indecent’
<i>mat dadah</i>	‘druggie’	<i>dadah</i>	‘narcotics’
<i>mat disko</i>	‘clubster’	<i>disko</i>	‘disco’
<i>mat gaduh</i>	‘hoodlum, brawler’	<i>gaduh</i>	‘to fight’
<i>mat gayut</i>	‘phone addict’	<i>gayut</i>	‘to hang from a rope’
<i>mat gian</i>	‘junkie’	<i>gian</i>	‘addicted’
<i>mat lépak</i>	‘slacker, loafer’	<i>lépak</i>	‘to hang out’
<i>mat jiwang</i>	‘a romantic’	<i>jiwang</i>	‘sentimental’
<i>mat karok</i>	‘karaoke freak’	<i>karok</i>	‘karaoke’
<i>mat kencing</i>	‘deceiver, cheat’	<i>kencing</i>	‘to urinate, to deceive’
<i>mat pau</i>	‘moocher’	<i>pau</i>	‘protection money’
<i>mat pen</i>	‘egoist’	<i>pen(ting)</i>	‘important’
<i>mat ragut</i>	‘pickpocket’	<i>ragut</i>	‘to snatch’
<i>mat rok</i>	‘rocker’	<i>rok</i>	‘rock (music)’
<i>mat sailang</i>	‘girlfriend-stealer’	<i>sailang</i>	‘to steal someone’s lover’
<i>mat samun</i>	‘robber’	<i>samun</i>	‘to rob’
<i>mat sunglap</i>	‘grafter’	<i>sunglap</i>	‘trick’
<i>mat tiang</i>	‘electrician’	<i>tiang</i>	‘pole’
<i>mat tiarap</i>	‘soldier’	<i>tiarap</i>	‘to lie prone’

Table 6: Combinations with *mat*

As can be seen from the examples above, terms with *mat* are often used in a rather derogatory way. In all these examples, *mat* can be replaced by *minah* for females. The usage of *mat* and

⁸ This word is presumably derived from ‘ramp it’ (i.e., the throttle), hence the verb *merempit* ‘to race a motorcycle’.

minah to characterise people is unique to Malaysian slang and has no direct Indonesian equivalent.⁹

5. Influence from other languages

In a country as ethnically diverse as Malaysia, it is not surprising that young people draw on a variety of sources to keep their language and subculture dynamic and up-to-date. Chinese Malaysians have at their disposal a diverse blend of popular culture from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, in such languages as Cantonese, Hokkien, Mandarin, Hakka and others (cf. Koh 2008). Young Malaysians of South Asian origins do not restrict themselves to the dominant Tamil culture, but also incorporate North Indian elements, particularly Bollywood-related, into their lifestyles (Mandal 2007). A similar type of hybridity can also be seen in the Malay youth language. Before addressing the important roles of English and Chinese varieties, let us first explore some other lexical sources that have contributed vocabulary to the Malay youth language.

The colloquial term *réndék ~ meréndék* ‘to be together with so.’ has been connected to Tamil *renḍi* (ரெண்டி) ‘two’ (cf. Teo Kok Seong 2006: 8). Other loanwords from colloquial Tamil include *anéy* ‘brother (used to Indian male)’ from *aṇṇe* (அண்ணை) ‘older brother’, *maca* ‘dude’ from *macca*: (மச்சா) ‘brother-in-law’, *pondan* ‘effeminate’ from *ponḍan* (பெண்டன்) ‘woman, wife’ and *pundék* ‘cunt’ from *punḍe* (புண்டை).¹⁰ The word *syok* ‘pleasant, attractive’ is presumably a borrowing from Urdu *śauq* (شوق) ‘desire, love, cheerfulness’,¹¹ whereas *aci* ‘fair’ – mostly used in the combinations *tak aci* ‘unfair’ and *mana aci?* ‘how is this fair?’ – appears to reflect Urdu *acchī* (اچھی) ‘good, proper, reasonable’. The words *cilok* ‘to steal, to weave through traffic’ and *lalok* ‘daydreaming’ go back to the Minangkabau language, with the original meanings of ‘to steal’ and ‘to sleep’. The word *hampéh* ‘useless’ appears to be derived from a regional pronunciation of Malay *hampas* ‘residue’. Interestingly, we also encounter the Korean loan *samdol* ‘dumb’, apparently from the stereotypical bumpkin character Sam-dol (삼돌) in Korean movies and sitcoms.¹² Along similar lines, we find *gaban* ‘epic’, which is taken from *Space Cop Gaban*, a popular Japanese television series in the early 1980s.¹³ Consider the following examples:

- (31) *Cita ni lawak tahap gaban!*
 story DEM funny level epic
 ‘This story is funny on an epic level!’

⁹ Needless to say, comparable phenomena exist cross-linguistically. Illustratively, Dutch exhibits *Jan met de pet* ‘Joe sixpack’, *Jan Modaal* ‘average Joe’, *Jan Splinter* ‘person on a low income’, *Jan Soldaat* ‘soldier’, *Jan Hen* ‘fool’, etc.

¹⁰ See Hoogervorst (2015:270) for more examples.

¹¹ The word is spelled *shio* in Singaporean English. Alternatively, it may be derived from Hokkien *sioh* (惜) ‘to love’.

¹² If this etymology is correct, the word was borrowed as early as the 1960s; it features in P. Ramlee’s movies in the meaning of ‘a simple man’ (Azam Othman, pers. comm.).

¹³ In Japanese: *Uchū Keiji Gyaban* (宇宙刑事ギャバン).

- (32) *Mana aci dia seorang ja dapat?*
 How fair 3s alone PART get
 ‘How is it fair that only she gets one?’
- (33) *Ko ni jantan paling samdol di dunia.*
 2s DEM male most dumb LOC world
 ‘You’re the dumbest man on earth.’
- (34) *You cakap you sayang I, tapi you duk meréndék
 2s say 2s love 1s but 2s stay be.together
 ngan orang lain.
 with people other
 ‘You say you love me, but you keep meeting other people.’*
- (35) *Lu bawak motor cam hampéh tul, cilok sini cilok
 2s take motorcycle like useless really weave here weave
 sana!
 there
 ‘You’re such a useless motorcyclist, weaving in and out of traffic!’*

From colonial times into the present era of globalisation, English has asserted a profound influence on colloquial Malay. Code-switching and code-mixing between Malay and English is widespread in urban Malaysia, much to the chagrin of language purists. The delicate balance between the two languages remains a complicated issue and the Malaysian government frequently undertakes measures to promote the use of Malay at the cost of English. The government-run television station RTM (*Radio Télévisyen Malaysia*), for example, has recently banned the use of English, including the widespread use of the personal pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’ (Khoo Gaik Cheng 2006: 109). These borrowed personal pronouns are extremely common in colloquial Malay, presumably because they provide a welcome opportunity to circumvent the somewhat complicated high-low and formal-informal distinctions characterising the conventional pronominal paradigm. Other frequently occurring English loanwords in the Malay youth language include *brader* ~ *bro* ‘brother’, *dono* ‘don’t know’, *hénsem* ‘handsome’, *koman* ‘common’, *kompem* ‘confirm’, *konpius* ‘confuse’, *péberet* ‘favourite’, *pémes* ‘famous’, *popla* ‘popular’, *retis* ‘artist’, *riléks* ‘relax’, *sémpoi* (← *sémpol*) ‘simple’, *sis* ‘sister’, and *tenét* ‘internet’. Consider the following examples:

- (36) *Awék tu buat dono ja kat dia.*
 girl DEM do don’t.know PART LOC 3s
 ‘That girl is pretending she doesn’t know him.’
- (37) *Kamera ni sémpoi sikit dari yang lama punya.*
 camera DEM simple a.bit from REL last POS
 ‘This camera is a bit simpler than the last one.’
- (38) *Jangan duk nak main tenét ja.*
 don’t stay want play internet PART
 ‘Stop playing around on the internet all the time.’

- (39) *Ni kedai péberet aku. Pémes gila!*
 DEM store favourite 1s famous crazy
 ‘This is my favourite store. It’s super famous!’

The Malay youth language also exhibits a set of English loanwords with changed meanings (see Table 7). As mentioned in the introduction, the word-final /r/ is omitted in pronunciation in the southern dialects.

Slang	English	changed meaning
<i>bajét</i>	budget	‘to estimate’
<i>bést</i>	best	‘great’
<i>bler</i>	blur	‘ignorant’
<i>éksyen</i>	action	‘snobbish, show-off’
<i>kapel</i>	couple	‘to make love’
<i>kéndu</i>	can do	‘attractive’
<i>kerék</i>	crack	‘snobbish’
<i>konar</i>	corner	‘to talk in circles’
<i>laser</i>	laser	‘to criticise, to scold’
<i>mémber</i>	member	‘friend’
<i>power</i>	power	‘great’
<i>riki</i>	recce ¹⁴	‘to gain information about so.’
<i>romén</i>	romance	‘to make out’
<i>saman</i>	summon	‘(to issue) a fine’
<i>selamber</i> ¹⁵	slumber	‘laid-back, not serious’
<i>slék</i>	slack	‘dodgy, suspicious’
<i>sound</i>	sound	‘to inform’
<i>térer</i>	terror	‘terrific, good at sth.’

Table 7: English loanwords with changed meanings

Consider the following examples:

- (40) *Muka laki aku tak kéndu sangat.*
 face husband 1s not can.do much
 ‘My husband’s face isn’t too attractive.’

Takyah nak cakap konar-konar sangat!
 not.need want talk RED-corner much
 ‘No need to talk in circles!’

- (41) *Jangan nak éksyen ja tau.*
 don’t want snobbish PART PART
 ‘Just don’t be so snobbish.’

- (42) *Suma orang buat muka slék bila dia cakap camtu.*
 all people make face suspicious when 3s say like.that
 ‘Everybody made a suspicious face when he said so.’

¹⁴ Slang for ‘reconnaissance’, ‘reconnoitring’, etc.

¹⁵ Possibly also influenced by the (in southern dialects) homophonous Malay word *selamba* ‘shameless’.

- (43) *Kau ni takyah se-sedap mulut nak laser orang*
 2s DEM not.need RED-nice mouth want criticise person
lain.
 other
 ‘You don’t have to criticise other people whenever you feel like it.’
- (44) *Dia wat muka kerék kat I te-tiap hari.*
 3s make face arrogant LOC 1s RED-every day
 ‘Every day she gave me an arrogant look.’
- (45) *Aku tak bajét lak dia fikir camtu.*
 1s not estimate also 3s think like.that
 ‘I also didn’t expect that he would think so.’

This type of semantic innovations is not automatically understood by Malay-English bilinguals. The phrase *mémbèr sound* in the meaning of ‘a friend told (me)’, for example, is unintelligible to outsiders even if they understand the individual words (Teo Kok Seong 2006: 6). Along similar lines, the combination *kontrol hénsèm* (‘control’ + ‘handsome’) has come to mean ‘to look nonchalant’ in Malay youth language.

Other English-derived constructions that do not occur as such in mainstream English include *otai* ‘o(ld-)ti(mer)’ → ‘leader’, *paipon* ‘pipe on’ → ‘smoking cannabis through a pipe’, *pengkid* ‘punk kid’ → ‘an androgynous lesbian’, *poyo* ‘p(roud) o(f) yo(urself)’ → ‘arrogant’ and hybrid forms such as *cagla* ~ *mencagla* ‘to seek popularity’ (*mencari* ‘to seek’ + ‘glamour’), *capap* ~ *mencapap* ‘to seek attention’ (*mencari* ‘to seek’ + ‘publicity’), *lampi* ‘of slow understanding’ (*lambat* ‘slow’ + ‘pick up’),¹⁶ *wikang* ‘k.o. motorcycle trick (“stoppie”)’ (‘wheelie’ + *belakang* ‘back’) and *mapléy* ‘a *mamak* restaurant’ (*mamak* ‘Tamil Muslim’ + ‘place’),¹⁷ the latter also yielding the verb *memapléy* ‘to eat at a *mamak* restaurant’.

Malay youth language also exhibits hybrid (Anglo-Malay) phrases, such as *potong stim* ‘to cut steam (i.e. to interrupt enjoyment)’ and *tukang spin* ‘a spinner (i.e. a person who likes to quibble)’. A frequently used abbreviation is *BBNU* (*budak baru nak* ‘up’) ‘a kid about to reach adolescence’, exhibiting the Indonesian *bahasa gaul* equivalent *ABG* (*anak baru gedé*) in the same meaning. We may also call attention to the phenomenon of literally translating certain English expressions into Malay, e.g., *kacang* ‘easily solvable’ from the word’s literal meaning of ‘peanuts’ and *kipas susah mati* as a word-for-word translation of ‘die-hard fan’.¹⁸

Consider the following examples:

- (46) *Tak habis-habis nak cagla ni!*
 not Red-finish want seek.popularity DEM
 ‘She’s so desperately seeking popularity!’

¹⁶ The corresponding Indonesian term is *télmí*, a portmanteau consisting of *telat* (from Dutch *te laat*) ‘too late’ and *mikir* ‘to think’.

¹⁷ This may also be a pun to the colloquial Tamil word *ma:pple* (மாப்பிள்ளை) ‘bridegroom, cousin, in-law’, which is used by some Malaysians to address South Indian males.

¹⁸ Originally, Malay *kipas* only referred to ‘fan’ in the sense of a device for creating a breeze, not in the sense of an admirer.

- (47) *Macam* *pengkid* *ja* *rambut* *Justin Bieber.*
like butch.lesbian PART hair Justin.Bieber
'Justin Bieber's hair is like [that of] a butch lesbian.'
- (48) *Otai* *punya lagu* *mémang* *bést.*
old-timer POS song really great
'Old songs are really great.'
- (49) *Poyo* *gila* *ko* *mamat!* *Takyah* *nak* *mencapap*
arrogant crazy 2s dude not.need want seek.attention
wéh!
PART
'You're so arrogant dude! No need to come look for attention!'
- (50) *Mémang* *kacang* *lah* *bagi* *yang* *pandai,* *tapi* *budak*
really peanuts PART for REL skilled but kid
lampi cam *ko* *ni* *léh* *pecah* *pala.*
slow like 2s DEM can break head
'It's really easy for skilled people, but a slow kid like you might break his head over it.'

Malaysia's Chinese languages provide an additional source of vocabulary. The personal pronouns *gua* 'I, me' and *lu* 'you' are taken from Hokkien *góa* (我) and *lí* (汝) respectively;¹⁹ they were probably borrowed for similar reasons as English 'I' and 'you'. Another frequently used Hokkien loan that entered the Malay language in the 1980s is *bohsia*, from Hokkien *bô-sia*ⁿ (無聲) 'silent', used in this case to label girls in search of a good time and easy money (Razak 2006; Jones 2009: 184). The male equivalent is *bohjan*, a portmanteau of *bohsia* and *jantan* 'male' (Chow Chai Khim 2010: 38). Analogously, the popular compound *bohlayan* 'fed up with' appears to be a compound consisting of Hokkien *bô* (無) 'not' and Malay *layan* 'to entertain'. Another hybrid construction is the word *tokan* 'drug dealer', which consists of *toké* 'businessman' (from Hokkien *thâu-ke* (頭家) 'the master of a house or shop') and Malay *ikan* 'fish', thus denoting a wealthy fish proprietor. More Hokkien loanwords in Malay youth language are listed in Table 8. The line between youth slang and generic slang is somewhat obscure here, as some of the words listed are also understood by people of other age groups, especially those who interact regularly with Hokkien speakers.

slang	meaning	Hokkien	Meaning
<i>bojio</i>	'to not invite so.'	<i>bô-chio</i> (無招)	'not invite'
<i>cau</i>	'to go (away)'	<i>cháu</i> (走)	'to run'
<i>cibai</i>	'vagina'	<i>chi-bai</i> (膾辰)	'vagina' ²⁰
<i>cincai</i>	'arbitrarily, not careful'	<i>chhin-chhái</i> (清采)	'at random; no matter how'
<i>cun</i>	'pretty'	<i>chún</i> (準)	'suited, correct' ²¹

¹⁹ Cf. Indonesian *gua* and *lu* in the same meaning. Standard Hokkien has *lí* (你) 'you', whereas *lí* is only found in specific sub-dialects (Jones 2009: 56-8).

²⁰ The Indonesian slang word *céwék* 'girl' is sometimes derived from the same form (e.g., Torchia 2007: 34), which strikes me as unconvincing on a phonological level.

²¹ Jones (2009: 112) translates this word as 'just nice'.

slang	meaning	Hokkien	Meaning
<i>gian</i>	'addicted'	<i>gièn</i> (癮)	'craving for sth.'
<i>kakilang</i>	'friends, buddies'	<i>ka-kī lāng</i> (家己人)	'our own people'
<i>kamcéng</i>	'to be close'	<i>kám-chêng</i> (感情)	'emotion, state of the feelings'
<i>kaw</i>	'very hard'	<i>kàu</i> (夠)	'enough'
<i>képoh</i>	'a nosy-parker' ²²	<i>ke-pô</i> (雞婆)	'a talebearer'
<i>kia-kia</i>	'to have a good time'	<i>kiá"-kiá"</i> (行行)	'to take a walk'
<i>kiamsiap</i>	'stingy'	<i>kiâm-siap</i> (鹹澀)	'bad-tasted'
<i>limtéh</i>	'to go out for a drink'	<i>lim-tê</i> (飲茶)	'to drink tea'
<i>pailang</i>	'criminal'	<i>phái"-lāng</i> (歹人)	'a mean person'
<i>paiséh</i>	'feeling ashamed'	<i>phái"-sè</i> (歹勢)	'unsuitable, awkward, inconvenient'
<i>pangsai</i>	'to defecate'	<i>pang-sái</i> (放屎)	'to release faeces'
<i>séngkék</i>	'poor, out of money'	<i>sin-kheh</i> (新客)	'a new immigrant'
<i>suéh</i>	'bad luck'	<i>soe</i> (衰)	'to lose good fortune'

Table 8: Slang words from Hokkien

Consider the following examples:

(51) *Napa you orang bojio aku?*
 Why 2s people not.invite 1s
 'Why didn't you people invite me?'

(52) *Budak tu kena pukul kaw-kaw dengan cikgu.*
 kid DEM got beat RED-very.hard by teacher.
 'That kid got beaten very hard by the teacher.'

(53) *I mémang banyak kakilang di kelab ini.*
 1s really many friends LOC club DEM
 'I really have a lot of friends in this club.'

(54) *Oké géng, gua cau dulu. Jumpa lagi.*
 okay gang 1s go first meet again
 'Okay gang, I'm off. See you later.'

²² Also compare Singapore English *kaypoh* 'a nosy-parker' and Indonesian bahasa gaul *képo* 'someone who wants to know everything or pretends to know everything'.

- (55) *Aku kenal budak tu tapi tak kamcéng ah.*
 1s know guy DEM but not close PART
 ‘I know that guy, but we’re not too close.’
- (56) *Cemana you boléh tau awék cun tu syok kat you?*
 how 2s can know girl pretty DEM attractive LOC 2s
 ‘How do you know that pretty girl is attracted to you?’

Cantonese, another widely spoken Chinese variety in Malaysia, has also influenced Malay youth language. Several of these loanwords are crime-related and may have been confined to criminal slang before they were adopted by young people.²³ The word *pau* ‘protection money’, for example, reflects Cantonese *baau*¹ (包) ‘a package’, yielding the expressions *kena pau* ‘to be robbed of money’, *mat pau* ‘moocher’ and *kaki pau* ‘extortionist’. From the same source is the compound *tapau*, from Cantonese *daa*² *baau*¹ (打包), which carries the less nefarious meaning of ‘doggie-bag’. The word *langsi* ‘ill-mannered’ comes from the Cantonese slang term *lan*² *si*² (關屎), which literally translates as ‘dick shit’ and refers to obnoxious people or behaviour.²⁴ The Cantonese term *saai*³ *laang*^{5*1} (晒冷) ‘to display one’s men; to show one’s hand (in cards)’ presumably became *sailang* ‘all or nothing; to steal someone’s chance’ in generic Malaysian slang. In Malay youth language, it is mostly used in the context of stealing someone’s lover. The word *kapcai* ‘underbone motorcycle’ (*motor bébék* in Indonesian) is a hybrid form consisting of ‘cub’ (originally the Honda Super Cub) and Cantonese *zai*² (仔) ‘little’. Other Cantonese loanwords in Malay youth language are indicated in Table 9.

Consider the following examples:

- (57) *Kalau nak dua harga boléh kawtim tak?*
 If want two price can make.a.deal PART
 ‘Can we make a deal on the price if I take two?’
- (58) *Léngzai tak léngzai takpa lah.*
 Handsome not handsome doesn’t.matter PART
 ‘It doesn’t matter whether [a boy] is handsome or not.’
- (59) *Budak tu suka sailang awék mémbér sendiri.*
 guy DEM like steal.away girlfriend buddy own
 ‘That guy likes to steal the girlfriends of his own buddies.’
- (60) *Mémbér ko kena pau ngan samséng.*
 friend 2s robbed with gangster
 ‘Your friend had to pay protection money to a gangster.’

²³ This development does not stand in isolation. See Van der Meij (1983) on the same phenomenon in Jakarta’s slang.

²⁴ Clearly unaware of this meaning, the otherwise rather strict Malaysian film censorship board (*Lembaga Penapisan Filem*) passed a 2011 crime film entitled *Kongsi: Lu Langsi Lu Mati* (‘The Society: If You Misbehave, You Die’).

- (61) *Mana léh masuk camni, dahtu duit pokai.*
 where can enter like.this moreover money broke
 ‘How can I enter [dressed] like this? And I’m also out of money.’

Slang	Meaning	Cantonese	meaning
<i>along</i>	‘loan shark’	<i>aa³ lung⁴</i> (阿隆)	‘loan shark’
<i>kancong</i>	‘anxious’	<i>gan² zoeng¹</i> (緊張)	‘nervous, tense, intense’
<i>kawtim</i>	‘to compromise, to make a deal’	<i>gaau² dim⁶</i> (搞掂)	‘to get sth. done’
<i>lénglui</i>	‘pretty girl’	<i>leng^{3/3*1} neoi^{5*2}</i> (靚女)	‘pretty girl, little girl’
<i>léngzai</i>	‘handsome guy’	<i>leng^{3/3*1} zai²</i> (靚仔)	‘good-looking boy, lad’
<i>pokai</i>	‘broke’	<i>puk¹ gaai¹</i> (仆街)	‘falling on the street’ ²⁵
<i>samséng</i>	‘thug’	<i>saam¹ sing¹</i> (三星)	‘three stars’ ²⁶
<i>sohai</i>	‘asshole’	<i>so⁴ hai¹</i> (傻閩)	‘silly cunt’
<i>taiko</i>	‘gangster, big-timer’	<i>daai⁶ go¹</i> (大哥)	‘oldest brother’
<i>tailong</i>	‘loan shark’	<i>daai⁶ lung^{4*1}</i> (大隆)	‘loan shark’

Table 9: Slang words from Cantonese

In addition, the Malay youth language of the 1980s contains certain words that strike me as Chinese borrowings on account of their form, but whose exact origins remain unknown to my consultants, e.g., *aihong* ‘to stay over, reside somewhere illegally’, *cékai* ‘lousy, cheap’²⁷ and *cokia* ‘low-quality (esp. electronics)’.

Where the youth language of West Malaysia relies on English, Hokkien, Cantonese and other sources for lexical inspiration, Indonesian slang draws upon regional languages and English. In the latter case, however, a largely different set of loanwords has become popular, e.g., *busyét* ‘damn’ (← ‘bullshit’), *mérit* ‘marriage’ (← ‘married’), *miskol* ‘missed call’ and *sip* ‘okay’ (← ‘safe’).

6. Written Malay youth language

This section explores how Malay youth language is typically written down; it can be found online, on Facebook, in text messages, tweets, graffiti and other types of street art. The data on which the present section is based encompasses field notes as well as the author’s personal communication with consultants. The language of youth novels, comics and cartoons typically occupies a middle ground between orthographically written Malay and the often erratic formulations observed in everyday practice.

Despite a fair degree of inconsistency, several more or less regular orthographic deviations from standard Malay can be given. The vowel <i> is normally written as <e> in final closed

²⁵ This idiom is typically interpreted as ‘broke’ in the Cantonese varieties of Southeast Asia (hence also colloquial Indonesian *bokék* ‘out of money’), but in Hong Kong its implication is ‘left to die on the streets’ and the phrase can be used as an insult.

²⁶ ‘Three stars’ was a nickname for the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), a guerrilla movement consisting predominantly of Chinese communists, whose symbol was a red flag with three yellow stars. Alternatively, the term has been connected to Hokkien *saⁿ-seng* (三牲) ‘three sacrificial animals’, apparently denoting the recklessness with which criminals expose themselves to danger (cf. Giles 1886: 207). The term *samséng* is commonly used in reference to Chinese triads in both Malaysia and Singapore (cf. Yeoh 2003: xxv).

²⁷ Pronounced as *ce¹ gai¹* in Malaysian Cantonese slang, where it designates the lowest score in a card game; hence the secondary meanings of ‘lost’ or ‘broke’ (Janet Yong, pers.comm.). The term is unknown in Hong Kong.

syllables, e.g., *sikit* ‘a little’ → *siket*, *amik* ‘to take’ → *amek* and *rempit* ‘motorcyclist’ → *rempet*, whereas <u> in this position often becomes <o>: *ikut* ‘to join’ → *ikot*, *masuk* ‘to enter’ → *masok* and *mampus* ‘to die’ → *mampos*.²⁸ The <h> tends to be omitted, e.g., *hati* ‘heart’ → *ati*, *kahwin* ‘to marry’ → *kawen* and *sekolah* ‘school’ → *skola*. As the last example demonstrates, the schwa <e> between consonants is also typically omitted: *berapa* ‘how much’ → *brapa*, *belah* ‘to go away’ → *blah* and *semua* ‘all’ → *smua*. The word-final <ɾ>, which is not pronounced in southern peninsular Malay dialects, is also omitted in writing, e.g., *hantar* ‘to escort’ → *antar* → *anta*, *tidur* ‘to sleep’ → *tidor* → *tido* and *pikir* ‘to think’ → *piker* → *pike*. Conversely, the word-final <a> is often written as <er> or <e>: *muka* ‘face’ → *muke(r)*, *sapa* ‘who’ → *sape(r)* and *bila* ‘when’ → *bile(r)*. The word-final diphthong /au/ can be written as <aw> or <ao>, e.g., *kalau* ‘if’ → *kalaw* ~ *kalao* and *tahu* ‘to know’ → *tau* → *taw* ~ *tao*, whereas the word-final /ai/ is written as <ay>: *sampai* ‘to arrive’ → *sampay* and *ramai* ‘many (of people)’ → *ramay*. The /e/ and /eh/ are occasionally written as <ey>: *pémes* ‘famous’ → *peymes* and *boléh* ‘can’ → *boley*.

SMS language or text slang is generally characterised by the use of abbreviations, especially in texts and other electronic messages that permit a limited amount of characters. While Indonesian text slang has received some attention (e.g., David 2007: 107-11), Malaysian text slang remains largely unexplored territory. Interestingly, the DBP also operates in this domain to ensure that texting will not go at the cost of correctly used Malay. Hence, an official list has been issued prescribing how words should be abbreviated (Ismail 2008; Said 2010; Rohman 2011). Unsurprisingly, this list does not contain common English-derived text slang, popular in Malaysia as elsewhere, such as the widely used terms *bf* (boyfriend), *gf* (girlfriend), *n* (and), *o* (or), *ok* (okay), *thx* (thanks) and *u* (you).

The following observations can be made with regard to the use of abbreviations in Malay text slang. Vowels between consonants are frequently omitted, e.g., *bukan* ‘not’ → *bkn*, *cita* ‘story’ → *cte*, *jugak* ‘also’ → *jpgk*, *masa* ‘time’ → *mse*, *ramai* ‘many’ → *rmy* and *ngan* ‘with’ → *ngn*. The <g> in the digraph <ng> – representing the velar nasal /ŋ/ – is normally preserved, whereas the <n> is omitted: *ingat* ‘to remember’ → *igt*, *tunggu* ‘to wait’ → *tgu* and *yang* ‘which’ → *yg*. Reduplicated forms are given the number <2>: *budak-budak* ~ *bebudak* ‘kids’ → *bdk2*, *kadang-kadang* ~ *kengkadang* ‘sometimes’ → *kdg2*. Thus far, these rules do not differ much from those observed in Indonesian text slang. Uniquely to Malay text slang, numbers and capital letters are used to represent the approximate sounds of their English pronunciation, e.g., *aQ* ← *aku* ‘I, me’, *Cni* ← *sini* ‘here’, *in4maC* ← *informasi* ‘information’ and *on9* ← ‘online’. The <x> is used to represent the segment *tak*, hence *xde(r)* ‘not there’ (*takda*), *xley* ‘cannot’ (*takléh*), *xtaw* ~ *xtao* ‘don’t know’ (*tak tau*) and *mnx* ‘to ask (for)’ (*mintak*). In Indonesian text slang, on the other hand, <x> represents the syllable *nya*, e.g., *nmx* ‘his/her/the number’ (*nomornya*), *gmn kbrx* ‘What’s up?’ (*Gimana kabarnya?*) and *xmuk* ‘mosquito’ (*nyamuk*). The following examples illustrate the use of Malay text slang:

- (62) i bley wt pe ske sbb xde org kt Cni.
I boléh wat apa suka sebab takda orang kat
 I s can do what like because not.there person LOC
sini.
 here
 ‘I can do whatever I like because nobody’s here.’

²⁸ This transcription approaches the phonology of the southern peninsular Malay dialects better than does the standardised orthography. It also corresponds to earlier transliterations used by the British.

- (63) aQ pon xfhm ngn bdk2 ni.
Aku pun tak faham ngan be-budak ni.
 1s also not understand with RED-kid DEM
 ‘I don’t understand these kids either.’
- (64) aQ bnci ngn mat tu sbb die ske usha aQ.
Aku benci ngan mat tu sebab dia suka usha aku.
 1s hate with guy DEM because 3s like stare.at me.
 ‘I hate that guy because he stares at me all the time.’
- (65) smpy ble bnde ni akn slsy?
Sampai bila benda ni akan selesai?
 until when thing DEM will over
 ‘When will this thing be over?’

In addition, Malay text slang exhibits a set of frequently used abbreviations that behave somewhat unpredictably because of competing rules and the occasional omission of the word-initial letter (see Table 10).

Text slang	Full form	
<i>ag</i>	<i>lagi</i>	‘again’
<i>ane</i>	<i>mana</i>	‘where’
<i>askm</i>	<i>assalamualaikum</i>	‘peace be upon you’
<i>at</i>	<i>kat</i>	‘at, in’
<i>da</i>	<i>dah</i>	‘already’
<i>de</i>	<i>ada</i>	‘is (there), have’
<i>dy</i>	<i>dia</i>	‘s/he’
<i>j</i>	<i>ja</i>	PART
<i>kje</i>	<i>kerja</i>	‘to work’
<i>msia</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>	‘Malaysia’
<i>p</i>	<i>tapi</i>	‘but’
<i>pe</i>	<i>apa</i>	‘what, something’
<i>r</i>	<i>lah</i>	PART
<i>sy</i>	<i>saya</i>	‘I, me’
<i>sti</i>	<i>mesti</i>	‘must’
<i>t</i>	<i>kot</i>	PART
<i>td</i>	<i>tadi</i>	‘just now’
<i>tpon</i>	<i>télepon</i>	‘telephone’
<i>ue</i>	<i>tu</i>	‘that’

Table 10: Malay text slang

Consider the following examples:

- (66) lao ke ane2 sti dy ikot.
Lau ke mana-mana mesti dia ikut.
 If to RED-where must 3s join.
 ‘If you go anywhere he’ll surely tag along.’

- (67) t ag rmay tao, mmg r xbest.
Kot lagi ramai tau, memang lah tak bést.
 PART more many know really PART not great
 ‘More people might find out, that would be really bad.’
- (68) mle2 aQ rmay r kwn at skola ue...
Mula-mula aku ramai lah kawan kat sekolah tu...
 RED-begin 1s many PART friend LOC school DEM
 ‘Initially, I had a lot of friends at that school...’
- (69) I td tpon p u x agkt ek!
I tadi telepon tapi you tak angkat ék!
 1s just telephone but 2s not pick.up PART
 ‘I just phoned you but you didn’t pick up!’
- (70) so korg ngok jer r x main pon.
So korang téngok ja lah tak main pun.
 so 2p watch PART PART not play PART.
 ‘So you just wait and see; I’m not playing around.’

7. Concluding remarks

The Malay youth language of West Malaysia constitutes an important element of Southeast Asia’s linguistic landscape. This typological sketch demonstrates that it is markedly different from – and often unintelligible to – other youth languages of the Malay World, in particular the better documented *bahasa gaul* from Indonesia. As a subset of mainstream colloquial Malay, Malay youth language distinguishes itself through the process of final syllable clipping to shorten words, a set of slang words not used nor understood by the entire speech community, and its unique writing conventions. As is the case with other youth languages, its vocabulary is prone to replacement and semantic innovation. Malaysia’s ethnically diverse society and Anglophone tradition offer ample opportunities for lexical borrowing. English, Hokkien and Cantonese in particular have influenced the Malay youth language and continue to do so, also giving rise to a number of hybrid constructions consisting of loanwords combined with ‘indigenous’ vocabulary.

Our poor understanding of Malay youth language in particular and of colloquial peninsular Malay in general is due in part to the perceived importance of language purity, which makes linguistic research on Malaysia’s non-standard languages relatively difficult but no less interesting. This study does not pretend to completeness and acknowledges that several aspects of Malay youth language are in need of further research, code-switching and code-mixing between Malay and English being only one of them. The language and sociolinguistic habits of young people from Chinese, Indian and other ethno-linguistic communities also remain underexplored. I can only hope that this preliminary study and the other papers in this volume may help rekindle and sustain the academic interest in youth languages across (pen)insular Southeast Asia.

Abbreviations

1	first person	p	plural
2	second person	PART	particle
3	third person	POS	possessive
C	consonant	RED	reduplication
DEM	Demonstrative	REL	relative marker
LOC	Locative	s	singular

References

- Ackerman, S. 1991. Dakwah and Minah Karan: Class formation and ideological conflict in Malay society. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 147(2-3): 193-215.
- Ahmad, Hassan. 1999. *The language policy of Malaysia*. PhD thesis, University of Leiden.
- Aman, Norhaida. 1999. *How to ask what in Malay: The acquisition of wh-questions in Singapore Malay*. PhD dissertation, University of Delaware.
- Amir, Jeniri. 2006. Slanga mengungkap realiti. *Dewan Bahasa* 6(12): 17-8.
- Ariffin, Raja Masittah Raja. 2006. Slanga: Positif atau negatif? *Dewan Bahasa* 6(12): 24-6.
- Baharom, Hajah Noresah bt. 2006. Baik punya cilok: Antara realiti dan tuntutan pemartabatan bahasa. *Klik DPB* (13-01-2006): 2.
- Baharom, Hajah Noresah bt. 2007. *Kamus Dewan*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. Fourth edition.
- Chow Chai Khim (周凯琴). 2010. *马来西亚汉语和马来语借词相互渗透之研究* (The study of loanwords between Chinese language and Malay language in Malaysia). PhD thesis, National University of Singapore & Peking University.
- Constantine, Peter, and Soe Tjen Marching. 2004. *Making out in Indonesian*. Tokyo et al.: Tuttle Publishing.
- David, Bettina. 2007. *Indonesisch Slang: Bahasa Gaul*. Bielefeld: Reise Know-How.
- Douglas, Carstairs. 1899. *Chinese-English dictionary of the vernacular or spoken language of Amoy, with the principal variations of the Chang-chew and Chin-chew dialects*. London: Publishing office of the Presbyterian Church of England. New edition.
- Dreyfuss, J. 1983. The backward language of Jakarta youth: A bird of many language feathers. *Nusa* 16: 52-6.
- Eckert, Penelope. 1997. Age as a sociolinguistic variable. In Florian Coulmas (ed.), *The handbook of sociolinguistics*, 151-67. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Ewing, Michael C. 2005. Colloquial Indonesian. In Alexander Adelaar & Nikolaus P. Himmelmann (eds.), *The Austronesian languages of Asia and Madagascar*, 227-58. London and New York: Routledge.
- Giles, Herbert A. 1886. *A glossary of reference on subjects connected with the Far East*. Hongkong: Lane, Crawford & Co, Shanghai & Yokohama: Kelly & Walsh, London: Bernard Quaritch. Second edition.

- Gullick, J.M. 1987. *Malay society in the late nineteenth century: The beginnings of change*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, Michael A.K. 1978. Antilanguages. In Michael A.K. Halliday, *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*, 164-82. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hamilton, A.W. 1924. Chinese loan-words in Malay. *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2: 48-56.
- Hamzah, Zaitul Azma Zainon. 2006. Slanga milik siapa? *Dewan Bahasa* 6(12): 12-6.
- Hoogervorst, Tom G. 2011. Some introductory notes on the development and characteristics of Sabah Malay. *Wacana* 13(1): 50-77.
- Hoogervorst, Tom G. 2015. Tracing the linguistic crossroads between Malay and Tamil. *Wacana* 16 (2): 249-83.
- Ismail, Rokiah, Muhamad Fuad Abdul Karim, and Zaidah Mustapha, 2010. Golongan muda mat rempit: Suatu ekspresi sub budaya (Activities and social expressions of a mat rempit youth group: A sub-cultural study). *Jurnal e-Bangi* 5(1): 1-10.
- Ismail, Zaidi. 2008. Panduan singkatan SMS berbahasa Melayu. *Klik DPB* (16-07-2008): 9.
- Jones, Russell. 2009. *Chinese loan-words in Malay and Indonesian*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya.
- Khoo Gaik Cheng. 2006. *Reclaiming adat: Contemporary Malaysian film and literature*. Vancouver & Toronto: UBC Press.
- Kiessling, Ronald, and Maarten Mous. 2004. Urban youth languages in Africa. *Anthropological Linguistics* 46: 303-41.
- Koh, Ann Sweesun. 1990. *Topics in colloquial Malay*. University of Melbourne. Dissertation.
- Koh, Keng We. 2008. A Chinese Malaysian in Taiwan: Negarakuku and a song of exile in the diaspora. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 8(1): 50-79.
- Majed, M. Jasni. 2011. Menangani isu bahasa rojak. *MyMetro* (27-10-2011). Accessed from www.hmetro.com.my/myMetro/articles/Menanganiisubahasarojak/Article/index_html on 29 December 2011.
- Mandal, Sumit K. 2007. Indianness in Malaysia: Between racialized representations and the cultural politics of popular music. *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 22(2): 46-67.
- Meij, Th.C. van der. 1983. *Enige aspecten van de geheimtaal in Jakarta*. Leiden: University of Leiden. Thesis.
- Mohamad Azhari Abu Bakar, Nor Hasniah Ibrahim, Mohd Razali Othman, Siti Norazilah Mohd Said, Aina Razlin Mohammad Roose, Edris Aden, and Muhamad Sophian Nazaruddin. 2012. Istilah-Istilah yang digunakan penagih dadah dalam proses berinteraksi: Panduan kepada bakal kaunselor di agensi pemulihan dadah. Paper presented at the *Regional Conference on Cross Cultural Communication and National Integration*, 19-21 June 2012, Kuala Lumpur.
- Muhammad, Amir. 2009. Unwelcome words. In Amir Muhammad (ed.), *New Malaysian Essays 1*, 181-200. Kuala Lumpur: Matahari Books.

- Omar, Asmah Hj. 1977. *The phonological diversity of the Malay dialects*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Omar, Asmah Hj. 2008. *Susur galur Bahasa Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. Second edition.
- Osman, Wan Robiah Meor. 2010. Bahasa Slanga: Parasit Bahasa Melayu. *Dewan Bahasa* 10(10): 32-5.
- Prentice, D.J. 1994. Malay homosexual and other slang. In Jan van der Putten (ed.), *Bahwa inilah tanda kasih yaitu persembahan persahabatan kepada yang termulia Prof. Dr. Muhammad Haji Salleh*, 32-45. Leiden: Rijksuniversiteit Leiden.
- Purnama, Karyono. 1993. *Slang Bahasa Melayu Brunei*. Presented at *Simposium Internasional Ilmu-Ilmu Humaniora II: Bidang Sejarah & Linguistik*, Yogyakarta, 26-27 April 1993.
- Razak, Dato' Dzulkifli Abd. 2006. 'Mat' this and 'Mat' that. *The New Straits Times* (03-12-2006). Accessed via <http://legal.tmcnet.com/news/2006/12/03/2133582.htm> on 29 December 2011.
- Rohman, Mohd Anwar Patho. 2011. Bahasa terlarang. *Berita Harian Online* (07-06-2011). Accessed from <http://www.bharian.com.my/bharian/articles/Bahasaterlarang/Article/> on 29 December 2011.
- Said, Rozita Radhiah. 2010. Bahasa dalam komunikasi SMS. *Dewan Bahasa* 10(3): 16-8.
- Sheik, Adam, 2003-2014. *CantoDict*. Accessed from <http://www.cantonese.sheik.co.uk/dictionary/> in January 2012.
- Sneddon, James Neil. 2006. *Colloquial Jakartan Indonesian*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics 581.
- Sulaiman, Zuraidah Mohd, and Muhamad Fuad Abdul Karim. 2010. Slanga "Mat Rempit" yang menghimpit. *Dewan Masyarakat* 48(5): 18-9.
- Teo Kok Seong. 2006. Slanga "kosa kata buangan". *Dewan Bahasa* 6(12): 6-9.
- Torchia, Christopher. 2007. *Indonesian idioms and expressions: Colloquial Indonesian at work*. Tokyo/Rutland, Vermont/Singapore: Tuttle Publishing.
- Yeoh, Brenda S.A., 2003. *Contesting space in colonial Singapore: Power relations and the urban built environment*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Yong, Janet. 2009. The slang ways of Mat Rempits in Malaysia. Paper presented at the *Thirteenth International Symposium on Malay/Indonesian Linguistics (ISMIL 13)*, 6-7 June 2009, Senggigi, Indonesia.
- Zahid, Indirawati. 2006. Slanga: Rahsia dalam kalangan penutur. *Dewan Bahasa* 6(12): 20-2.
- Zuckermann, Ghil'ad. 2003. *Language contact and lexical enrichment in Israeli Hebrew*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Corresponding author:

Dr Tom Hoogervorst
 Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies
 Reuvensplaats 2, 2311 BE Leiden, The Netherlands
 Email: hoogervorst@kitlv.nl