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## Lexical and Discoursal Nativisation in Baba Malay: Portraying Ethnic Identity in Malaysian Fiction

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the nativisation of Baba Malay in Malaysian English literature, focusing on how its lexical and discoursal elements shape the ethnic identity in selected short stories. The primary objective is to examine how the Straits Chinese author Lee Su Kim integrates Baba Malay into English narratives to reflect cultural hybridity. Using a qualitative approach, the study applies Kachru's (1986) framework to analyse nativisation strategies, categorised into contextual, cohesive, and rhetorical adaptations. A selection of 19 short stories from *Kebaya Tales* and *Sarong Secrets* was made based on their incorporation of Baba Malay expressions, cultural themes, and linguistic adaptation. The analysis was validated through an expert informant review to ensure linguistic and cultural accuracy. The findings reveal that Lee Su Kim strategically employs Baba Malay lexical borrowings, hybridised expressions, and culturally embedded discourse styles to construct a distinct Peranakan identity. This study contributes to discussions of language adaptation, ethnic representation, and bilingual creativity in postcolonial literature, reinforcing the role of nativised English in preserving cultural narratives.

**Keywords:** nativisation, Baba Malay, ethnicity, Malaysian English, literary identity

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### Introduction

The Baba Nyonya, or Peranakan Chinese community, is a culturally mixed group formed through intermarriages between Chinese immigrants and local Malays in the Straits Settlements. Their language, Baba Malay, combines Malay and Chinese elements, serving as a means of communication and a marker of ethnic identity. Baba Malay helps the authors express their cultural values and experiences in Malaysian English fiction. This study explores how Lee Su Kim uses lexical and discoursal features of Baba Malay in her English-language short stories to portray Peranakan identity. Research on Malaysian English (ME) shows it undergoes nativisation, where local cultural and linguistic elements are blended

into English (Mohd Nasir, 2021). According to Thirusanku and Yunus (2012), lexical variation is one of the main ways ME reflects a local identity. This process supports Kachru and Smith's (2008) view that writers should include elements of their native language in English writing to express cultural meaning. Sridhar (1982) adds that non-native writers often "transplant" culturally rich expressions into English to keep the original cultural context. In this way, the use of Baba Malay in English fiction is more than a stylistic choice—it is a way to assert cultural identity and resist the dominance of standard English varieties. Using Baba Malay vocabulary, idioms, and discourse patterns, Malaysian English authors show a local perspective and highlight the cultural hybridity of the Baba Nyonya community, which contributes to research in sociolinguistics, postcolonial literature, and World Englishes by showing how language adaptation in fiction can reflect and preserve ethnic identity. It also shows how nativised English supports and reflects Malaysia's multicultural and multilingual society.

## **Literature Review**

The term "nativisation" refers to how English is adapted within non-native sociocultural contexts (Stanlaw, 1982), often described interchangeably with "indigenisation" or "hybridisation" (Richards, 1982). Kachru (1985) advanced this concept by categorising English varieties into three concentric circles—inner, outer, and expanding—emphasising how English in the Outer Circle (e.g., Malaysia, India, Nigeria) evolves through contact with indigenous languages. This contact results in lexical borrowing, syntactic restructuring, and semantic innovation (Pandharipande, 1987). These changes are not simply structural but are deeply rooted in social and cultural interactions.

Kachru's (1986) framework for analysing nativised English introduces three major adaptation strategies: contextual, cohesive, and rhetorical. Contextual nativisation refers to embedding English with local sociocultural and historical references, while cohesive nativisation entails lexical and grammatical innovations, such as loan translations and hybrid expressions (Bamgbose, 1998). Rhetorical nativisation reflects the adoption of local discourse strategies such as idioms and oral storytelling patterns that deviate from Western literary norms (Parakrama, 1995). These strategies are seen across global postcolonial literature and are reflected in the works of authors such as Chinua Achebe, whose texts demonstrate linguistic hybridisation and Africanisation of English (Bamiro, 2006). Bamiro's study on Achebe illustrates how nativisation is also a semiotic act that probes the distinction between underdetermined and overdetermined languages, enriching the interpretive depth of fiction.

Complementing Kachru's model, Canagarajah (2006) highlighted how speakers in multilingual societies actively negotiate linguistic norms, reinforcing that nativisation is both structural and agentive. Sridhar (1982) similarly emphasises that nativisation reflects local ways of thinking, which shape how English is used and how meaning is constructed. Fadillah (2000) applies this idea to Malaysian literature, identifying Malaysianism and rhetorical innovations as tools that allow writers to convey identity and resist cultural dominance.

Within this framework, Baba Malay serves as a site for cultural and linguistic hybridity. Shellabear's (1913) early documentation of Baba Malay, later cited by Clammer (1980), positioned variety as both a creole and a form of intra-group communication. Clammer's sociological analysis underlines the community's integration of Malay, Chinese, and European elements, highlighting Baba Malay's role in maintaining cultural distinctiveness. Although Clammer stopped short of a detailed linguistic analysis, later studies by Lim (1981), Pakir (1986), and Thurgood (2001) explored Baba Malay's structural features, sociolinguistic context, and use of address terms.

As Tan (1993, 2009) described, the Baba Nyonya identity is complex, fluid, and historically shaped by intermarriage and evolving notions of heritage and authenticity. While traditional definitions emphasise Hokkien-Malay ancestry and fluency in Baba Malay, modern interpretations allow for greater variability, reflecting broader discussions on hybridity in postcolonial studies. Chua (2001) suggested that Baba identity exists on a continuum, allowing for dynamic interpretations over time.

Together, these theoretical and contextual insights form the analytical foundation of this study. Combining Kachru's (1986) structured model with more recent perspectives on hybridity, linguistic creativity, and postcolonial identity, this study examines how Baba Malay is used in English-language

fiction to represent ethnic identity. In doing so, it highlights the evolving functions of nativised English in portraying Malaysia's diverse cultural narrative.

### ***Linguistic Studies on Baba Malay in Literature***

Linguistic research on Baba Malay, particularly within literary works, remains scarce. Earlier studies primarily examined Baba publications written in Romanised Malay, which were often translations of Chinese literary works. Much of the research on the Straits Chinese or Baba community has historically focused on cultural and historical aspects rather than language, as noted by Tan (2009), who observed that studies have concentrated mainly on the community's cultural and social structures (Tan, 2009, p. 11). In recent years, sociolinguistic interest in Baba Malay has intensified, driven by concerns about the language's decline and the need to document its social and historical usage. Several scholars have explored different facets of Baba Malay: Tan (1980) analysed it as a Malay dialect; Lim (1981) examined its usage among the Straits Chinese; Pakir (1986) conducted a linguistic analysis, and Thurgood (2001) discussed forms of address and reference. Although these studies offer valuable insights, they lack focus on Baba Malay's presence in Malaysian Literature in English. Tan's annotated bibliography lists 1,534 works by the Straits Chinese community, highlighting a rich yet underexplored literary contribution to Malaysian literature (Tan, 2009). This study builds on research on linguistic nativisation in non-native English texts, such as Bamiro's work on Nigerian literature, and studies on Malaysian literature by authors such as K.S. Maniam and Mohamad Hj Saleh, who embed cultural identity in their writing. Existing research on Malaysian English literature broadly addresses Malaysianisation within a multiracial context. However, few studies have specifically examined the ethnic and cultural expressions of the Straits Chinese in English texts. To address this gap, the current study investigates the nativisation strategies employed by Lee Su Kim in her anthologies of short stories, which uniquely showcase the Straits Chinese ethnicity and cultural elements. This study seeks to identify the lexical and discoursal features of Baba Malay within her works, exploring how these features function as markers of ethnic identity.

### ***Research Objectives***

1. Identify the lexical features of Baba Malay in the selected short stories.
2. Examine the discoursal features of Baba Malay in the selected short stories.
3. Investigate how the lexical and discoursal features serve as markers of ethnicity.

### ***Research Questions***

1. What are the lexical features of Baba Malay in the selected short stories?
2. What are the discoursal features of Baba Malay in the selected short stories?
3. How do lexical and discoursal features function as markers of ethnicity in the selected short stories?

## ***Methods***

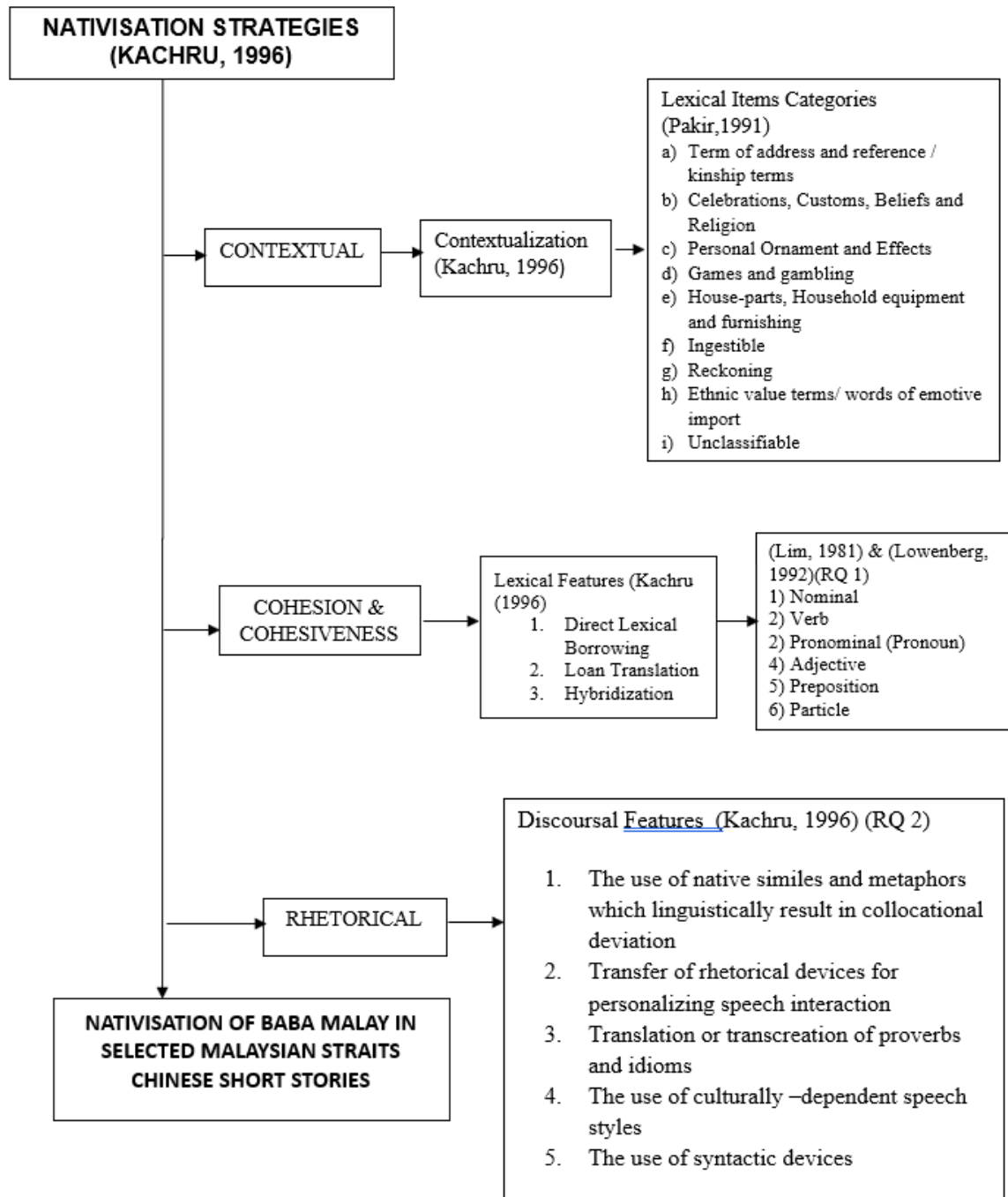
### ***Proposed Conceptual Framework of the Study***

As outlined in Figure 1, the conceptual framework for the analysis employs Kachru's (1986) three nativisation strategies to categorise the identified nativised features. These strategies include: 1) contextual, 2) cohesion and cohesiveness, and 3) rhetorical. Using this adapted framework, the researcher examined the lexical features identified within the short stories. The data were compared across Chinese dialects (Hokkien, Cantonese, Mandarin) and Standard Malay before being confirmed with informants who were native speakers of Baba Malay and the relevant Chinese dialects. Five informants, fluent in Baba Malay and Hokkien, participated in reviewing the linguistic data. The informants were aged 24-55, with heritage ties to Peranakan communities in Malacca and Penang. They validated translations, cultural meanings, and lexical authenticity. This process aligns with Kachru's view that "the discoursal interpretation of such lexicalisation depends on the meaning of the underlying language" (Kachru, 1986, p.166). Therefore, interpretation relies on those familiar with language. Finally, the researcher explores how lexical and discoursal features signify ethnicity within these short

stories. This study adopts Kachru's (1986) framework on nativisation strategies, categorising nativisation into three main types: context, cohesion and cohesiveness, and rhetorical strategies.

**Figure 1**

*Proposed Conceptual Framework*



### *Sample*

To meet the study's objectives, the selection process focused on short stories by Straits Chinese writers, particularly those incorporating the Baba Malay lexicalisation. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select short stories that prominently featured Baba Malay linguistic elements. An initial

pool of 47 stories from Lee Su Kim's *Kebaya Tales* and *Sarong Secrets* and Shirley Lim's *Life's Mysteries* was reviewed. The selection was guided by three main criteria: (1) the presence of Baba Malay lexicalisation; (2) the extent of nativisation strategies employed; and (3) the representation of cultural identity markers in dialogue, narration, and thematic development. For this study, only stories containing Baba Malay lexicalisation were chosen based on the supervised features outlined in the conceptual framework. Each selected story was coded and analysed using Kachru's (1986) framework, which categorises nativisation strategies into (1) context, (2) cohesion and cohesiveness, and (3) rhetorical strategies. The identified features within each story were then systematically classified into these categories. Each story was screened for the presence of Baba Malay lexical and discoursal features such as code-switching, loanwords, hybrid expressions, and culturally grounded idioms. To qualify for inclusion, a story must demonstrate the minimum threshold of these nativised elements within the dialogue or narration. Based on these criteria, 19 stories (11 from *Kebaya Tales* and 8 from *Sarong Secrets*) were selected for in-depth analysis. Stories by Shirley Lim were excluded due to the limited or inconsistent use of Baba Malay features, ensuring that the dataset reflected a rich and focused representation of Peranakan linguistic hybridity.

## **Data Analysis**

### ***Nativisation Strategies in Malaysian Literary Writing in English***

Regarding nativisation in Malaysian English literary writing, Fadillah (1997) argues that literary works are 'constructions, drawn from life experiences but are crafted and shaped so that the interplay of characters, setting, story language and thematic concerns is as satisfying as the creator can make it' (Halimah & Ng, 1997, p. 107). According to Fadillah, language creativity allows writers to express their identities, realities, and surroundings. She notes that Malaysian writers focus on familiar themes—the 'place' they inhabit. Her work is pivotal to this study as it highlights how Malaysian writers use English to offer unique insights into Malaysian life. For writers who cannot creatively express themselves in their native language, English is a versatile tool for articulating their perceptions of Malaysian life. In relation to this study, Fadillah's exploration of Malaysian English nativisation in novels and short stories aligns closely with the researcher's framework. Her study categorises nativisation into three types: 1) nativisation through Malaysianism, 2) nativisation of context, and 3) nativisation of rhetorical strategies. The first category highlights Malaysian English features, while the latter two correspond to Kachru's nativisation framework, encompassing discoursal and rhetorical strategies used by bilingual writers.

## **Findings and Discussion**

A qualitative method was adopted as the primary research design for this study, utilising a descriptive approach to explore the nativisation of the lexical and discoursal features of Baba Malay in selected short stories. By investigating these features, this study addresses the central research question: How do the lexical and discoursal features of Baba Malay function in marking the writer's ethnicity? This analysis provides significant linguistic insights into the nativisation of Baba Malay in Malaysian literature. Although prior research has examined Baba Malay linguistically, little attention has been given to its nativisation within literary texts in Malaysian Literature in English. Therefore, this study fills an essential gap in identifying how specific lexical and discoursal features signal the writer's ethnic identity within these stories. These findings hold considerable value in expanding the existing literature on Baba Malay, offering a current perspective on literary works by Straits Chinese writers. Existing literature, documented mainly between the 1890s and the 1990s, is limited and often accessible only in archival formats, such as microfilms (Lim, 1981; Pakir, 1986). Rather than making broad claims about identity, the analysis in this study is grounded in explicit linguistic patterns such as lexical borrowing and culturally specific idioms, which native speaker informants validated to accurately reflect Peranakan cultural knowledge and practices.

### ***Lexical and Discoursal Features of Baba Malay in the Short Stories***

This section explores the integration of Baba Malay into English-language short stories through lexical and discourse features guided by Kachru's (1986) nativisation framework. Across the 19 selected

stories, three forms of nativisation were identified: contextual, cohesive, and rhetorical. These strategies show how localised expressions portray ethnic identity within the Peranakan context.

### ***Lexical Features and Contextual Nativisation***

The lexical features of Baba Malay appear prominently in reference to cultural practices, beliefs, and emotionally charged terms. These include vocabulary related to celebrations, religion, social customs, and taboos. The data revealed many borrowed words stemmed from Hokkien, Cantonese, and Malay, reflecting the community's bicultural influences. Informants fluent in these languages confirmed that such terms, especially those related to food, dress, address forms, and familial roles, are commonly used in Peranakan households. The presence of expressions such as *mahjong kakis*—a blend of Hokkien, Malay, and English—illustrates how hybridised vocabulary forms part of everyday Peranakan speech. Cultural references to wedding customs, funerary rites, and folk beliefs enrich the stories and function as ethnolinguistic markers, supporting Kachru's (1986) claim that localised vocabulary contributes to contextual embedding of English.

### ***Discoursal Features and Rhetorical Nativisation***

Discoursal patterns in stories reflect rhetorical nativisation through culturally embedded idioms, proverbs, personalised speech, and bilingual discourse. The study identified four common strategies: (1) hyperbole, metaphor, and simile; (2) culturally dependent speech styles; (3) translated or *transcreated* idioms and proverbs, and (4) personalised rhetorical structures. Code-switching between English, Malay, and Chinese frequently evokes familiarity, authenticity, and character identity. For instance, the proverb "Don't judge a kluak by its shell" demonstrates transcreation of cultural wisdom using Malay linguistic structures. Informants noted that these discourse patterns mirrored everyday Peranakan interactions, where multilingual expressions are common. These features affirm Kachru's (1986) concept of rhetorical adaptation and bilingual competence, revealing how cultural values are preserved in narrative form.

### ***Nativisation of Context***

Fadillah (1997, p.112), drawing on Kachru (1987), describes the nativisation of context as "the way cultural presuppositions overload a text and demand serious cultural interpretation." This strategy enables non-native writers to 'contextualise' their literary works by embedding cultural or religious presuppositions using non-native elements. In this study, contextualisation involves the incorporation of the Baba Malay lexis, reflecting the cultural fusion of Chinese and Malay traditions throughout the short stories, thereby enhancing their cultural depth. Kachru exemplifies this in Indian literature, where culturally specific texts such as Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, laden with Hindu mythological references, illustrate how readers, unfamiliar with Indian culture, need to rely on an understanding of the cultural context to grasp the references fully. Similarly, in this study, the nativisation of context underscores the hybrid identity of the Peranakan community, in which elements of both Chinese and Malay cultural traditions coexist within the linguistic fabric of Baba Malay. For example, in *Boxed-In Bibik*:

"After I am dead, I want to be dressed in my most expensive kebaya—Janet knows which one—my best kerosang, and my diamond earrings. My favorite slipper, the red-beaded *kasut manik*. do not anyone dare go against my wishes" (*Kebaya Tales*, 2011, p. 42).

This passage highlights the fusion of Chinese and Malay cultural influences within the Baba Nyonya identity, where language, attire, and traditions are intertwined. For instance, the *kebaya* and *kasut manik* (beaded slippers) are traditionally associated with Malay dress. Yet, their use by Peranakan women reflects how Chinese and Malay cultural elements merge in everyday practice. Such instances illustrate how material culture, attire, and personal identity in the stories embody this hybrid tradition, reinforcing the Baba Nyonya community's dual heritage. At the linguistic level, untranslated cultural terms and context-specific lexicons highlight this Chinese-Malay synthesis, encouraging readers to engage with unfamiliar vocabulary. Kachru (1986) notes that such historical and cultural nuances, deeply embedded in the language, differ from those traditionally found in English literature and thus require interpretation beyond the grammatical level. Through the nativisation of context, the text universalises English by enriching it with new cultural dimensions (Fadillah, 1997, p. 112), allowing

language to function as both a cultural marker and a literary device. This linguistic and cultural blending mirrors real-life Peranakan hybridity, in which ancestral Chinese customs coexist with Malay social practices, shaping a distinct identity. By embedding these hybrid elements in the narrative, the author not only foregrounds cultural distinctiveness but also immerses readers in the unique world of the Baba Nyonya, inviting them to decode and interpret the cultural meanings embedded in the text.

### ***Nativisation of Cohesion and Cohesiveness***

Next, the nativisation of cohesion and cohesiveness revolves around grammatical and lexical innovations such as structural and syntactic simplification, lexical shift, hybridisation, and loan translations. Usually, writers use this strategy to enhance the characterisation and ethnicity of their characters. For this study, alongside Kachru's framework, Lim's (1981) and Pakir's (1986) frameworks were also used to analyse Baba Malay nativisation. Departing from Kachru's original nativisation strategies, Fadillah (1997) introduces 'Malaysianism' as a primary strategy, capturing the local speech patterns and vernacular rhythms within dialogues and internal monologues. This process reflects the distinctive linguistic qualities of Malaysian English, particularly how Chinese and Malay linguistic influences are fused within Baba Malay expressions. Kachru described the nativisation of cohesion and cohesiveness as a process involving lexicalisation, collocational extension, and grammatical adaptation. These strategies enrich the text with local meaning and identity, showcasing how Peranakan speakers blend Chinese and Malay elements into the English literary discourse. For example, the phrase *mahjong kakis* demonstrates linguistic hybridity—*mahjong* (a Chinese tile-based game) and *kakis* (a Malay term for companions or buddies)—blending Chinese and Malay into a single expression. This reflects how the Peranakan community navigates linguistic and cultural traditions and integrates them into everyday discourse.

This study identified several lexical features involved in the nativisation process, including

- Direct Lexical Transfer/Borrowing: Words directly adopted from Baba Malay, Hokkien, or Malay without translation.
- Loan Translation: Literal translations that capture the essence of Baba Malay expressions.
- Hybridisation: Blending Chinese, Malay, and English elements to create culturally embedded expressions.

All lexical borrowings, loan translation, and hybridisation are classified into six categories: 1) nominal [n], 2) verb [v], 3) pronominal/pronoun [pro], 4) adjective [adj], 5) preposition [pre], and 6) particle [part].

### ***Nativisation of Rhetorical Strategies***

Kachru describes the nativisation of rhetorical strategies as techniques bilingual speakers use, consciously or unconsciously, to transfer patterns of interaction from their native culture into English. This adaptation infuses English with culturally specific rhetorical elements that reflect the native discourse styles. Kachru outlines five primary strategies for nativisation in non-native English.

- Native similes and metaphors with collocational deviation
- Transfer of rhetorical devices for personalising speech interaction
- Translation or transcreation of proverbs and idioms
- Culturally dependent speech styles
- Syntactic devices

The use of native similes and metaphors with collocational deviation is a key rhetorical device in this process, as it allows writers to evoke their cultural context within literary works. For example, Kachru illustrates this with similes such as "like a bushfire in the Harmattan, like a yam tendrils in the rainy season" (Kachru, 1986, p.167). Here, terms such as *bushfire* and *yam tendrils* are culturally specific to

the African context. *Harmattan* refers to a dry, dusty wind that often causes bush fires, and *yams* are a staple food and significant crop in African agriculture. Using these expressions, writers create a unique cultural resonance as the terms deviate from typical collocational meanings and enrich the text with culturally embedded references.

### ***Transfer of Rhetorical Devices in Personalising Speech Interaction***

Rhetorical devices for personalising speech interaction provide what Kachru calls "ancestral sanction," grounding English expressions in the cultural roots of Asian and African contexts. These devices serve as "speech initiators" that embed cultural identity into discourse. For instance, phrases like "our people have a saying," "as our people say," or "the elders have said" (Kachru, 1986, p.167) are common ways to introduce culturally sanctioned wisdom, passed down through generations, to personalise speech interactions and offer cultural legitimacy to the message.

### ***Translation or Transcreation of Proverbs and Idioms***

Translating proverbs and idioms is a creative strategy that adapts local sayings into English, allowing for cultural preservation and linguistic accessibility. This approach not only universalises specific events but also softens potentially harsh expressions. For example, the common English proverb "Don't judge a book by its cover" is transcreated as "*Jangan nilai kluak dari kulitnya.*" (*Don't judge a kluak by its shell.*) Here, "*kluak*" refers to a black nut commonly used in Peranakan cuisine, making the proverb culturally resonant for the Baba Nyonya community while retaining its original meaning. According to Kachru, culturally specific adaptations serve as a means of transmitting ancestral wit and wisdom to future generations. These rhetorical modifications preserve cultural identity and enhance relatability, ensuring that the stories remain meaningful and engaging to local audiences.

### ***Culturally Dependent Speech Styles***

According to Kachru, drawing on Lindsfors (1975), culturally dependent speech styles bring a "naïve-tall-tale" tone to storytelling, creating a sense of folk tradition. This style can be observed in the storytelling of local folklore or legends unique to a culture. For example, in *Heaven Has Eyes*, a short story from *Kebaya Tales* by Lee Su Kim, Chinese ancestral beliefs are passed down, revolving around the idea that "heaven" watches over people's actions. Such culturally specific narratives immerse readers in community folklore.

### ***Syntactic Devices***

Finally, specific syntactic devices were employed to engage readers in the text actively. Writers might use direct or rhetorical questions within the narration to draw readers into the story. However, in this study, the researcher excluded syntactic devices from the analysis because of limited data on this strategy within the available text.

These findings resonate with Canagarajah's (2006) idea that language use in postcolonial texts is a form of negotiation between global and local norms. While Kachru emphasises structural adaptation, Canagarajah foregrounds speaker agency, evident in how Lee Su Kim's characters manipulate language to claim a cultural space. Bamgbose's (1998) view of "innovations by users" is reflected in Baba Malay expressions' creative coinage and rhetorical strategies. Fadillah's concept of "Malaysianisms" also emerges, especially in the fusion of English with Malay and Hokkien discourse patterns, confirming that the literary language is a site of cultural affirmation and resistance.



### ***Tables of Lexical Items and Discourse Markers***

To further support transparency and analytical rigour, the following tables present the representative lexical items and discursial features identified in the selected short stories:

**Table 1**

#### *Lexical Items in Baba Malay and their Functions*

<b>Baba Malay Term</b>	<b>Literal Meaning/Translation</b>	<b>Source Story</b>	<b>Function/Category</b>
kebaya	traditional blouse-dress	Boxed-In Bibik	Cultural attire
kasut manik	beaded slippers	Boxed-In Bibik	Material culture
mahjong kakis	mahjong companions	The Breadman's Bicycle	Hybrid phrase
nyonya kuih	traditional Peranakan desserts	Tok Panjang Tales	Food-related vocabulary
anak dara tak seronoh	improper young woman	Various stories	Idiomatic/cultural norm
tok panjang	long dining table for feasts	Tok Panjang Tales	Cultural tradition

**Table 2**

#### *Discursial Features and Their Symbolic Implications*

<b>Discursial Feature</b>	<b>Example Phrase</b>	<b>Cultural Function</b>	<b>Narrative Role</b>
Idiomatic expression	"Don't judge a kluak by its shell"	Cultural proverb adapted into English	Moral lesson, localised metaphor
Personalised interaction	"Our people say..."	Elders' validation, oral tradition	Ancestral wisdom, authority in dialogue
Cultural narration	References to death/marriage rituals	Preserving communal values	Embedding belief systems in narrative
Code-switching	Mixed Malay-Hokkien-English	Linguistic hybridity	Authenticity of voice and identity

These tables consolidate core linguistic evidence from the stories and illustrate how nativisation operates at lexical and discursial levels. They also provide readers with concrete data to assess how ethnic identity is linguistically performed in Peranakan literary discourse.

### ***Lexical and Discursial Features Nativisation as Ethnic Identity Markers***

Integrating Baba Malay into short stories is a marker of ethnic identity by embedding cultural knowledge into narratives. Lexical items such as food names, familial titles, and gender-specific terms such as *anak dara ta' seronoh* convey linguistic and cultural meanings. These expressions reflect the social expectations of Chinese Confucian values and the Malay moral codes. Informant feedback

confirmed these elements' authenticity and relevance to daily Peranakan life. Beyond vocabulary, code-mixing and code-switching enhance narrative voice and contextual realism, demonstrating how bilingualism serves both expressive and symbolic functions.

Two lesser-explored features, swearing and onomatopoeia, have also emerged. The informants cited swear phrases and sound-based expressions, particularly among Nyonya characters, as authentic and culturally grounded. The deliberate phonetic variation of terms such as *seronoh* highlights lexical creativity rather than error and shows how English is reshaped to reflect cultural identity. These findings align with Kachru's view of multicultural innovation in contact literature and reinforce the idea that language adaptation in fiction is both a literary strategy and a form of cultural affirmation.

In summary, the short stories analysed in this study reveal how Baba Malay is nativised at multiple linguistic levels. The stories function as cultural texts that articulate and preserve Peranakan identity in a multilingual literary space through lexical borrowing, hybrid phrases, code-switching, and rhetorical adaptation.

## **Conclusion**

This study comprehensively explores how Baba Malay is nativised within selected short stories, demonstrating how its lexical and discursive features function as powerful ethnic markers in the Baba Nyonya community. Rather than serving as a purely linguistic investigation, this research highlights how language operates as a cultural bridge, encoding the hybrid Chinese-Malay identity within Malaysian literature. The findings reveal that Baba Malay's linguistic adaptations, including code-switching, hybridisation, idiomatic expressions, and onomatopoeia, are not merely stylistic choices but critical elements of identity construction. This study also highlights previously under-examined features, such as the strategic use of swearing, culturally embedded address terms, and discourse patterns that blend Chinese and Malay influences. These aspects deepen the authenticity of Peranakan storytelling, reinforcing Kachru's (1986) framework of nativisation as a transformative process that redefines English in contact literature. By situating Baba Malay within a literary and cultural framework, this study enriches the discourse on language adaptation, bilingual creativity, and cultural hybridity in postcolonial literature. More importantly, it underscores the role of nativised English in preserving minority cultural identities, ensuring that the linguistic and historical legacy of the Peranakan community remains visible in contemporary Malaysian literature. Moving forward, this research serves as a foundation for further studies of Baba Malay's evolving linguistic patterns, its influence on modern literary expressions, and its place within the larger discourse of Southeast Asian multilingualism. As linguistic landscapes continue to shift, it is crucial to document and analyse the cultural richness embedded in Baba Malay, ensuring its legacy is preserved and appreciated in academic and literary circles. Beyond literary analysis, these findings have pedagogical implications for teaching Malaysian Literature in English. Using nativised languages, such as Baba Malay, offers authentic material to explore cultural identity, bilingual creativity, and historical hybridity in the classroom. Educators can draw on such texts to foster students' awareness of Malaysia's multilingual heritage while promoting inclusive narratives representing minority voices. This aligns with the current curriculum goals that emphasise local content, intercultural understanding, and the critical appreciation of postcolonial literature.

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## **Conflicts of interest**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

### **Author Contribution Statement**

MM: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Methodology, Validation, Writing – Original Draft Preparation.  
NSMR: Project Administration, Writing – Review & Editing.

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### **Ethics Statement**

This study did not require IRB approval because it analysed publicly available or selected textual materials. To date, no direct research involving human or animal subjects has been conducted. However, expert validation was performed to support the credibility of the data analysis process. All experts participated voluntarily, and informed consent was obtained prior to their participation.

### **Data Access Statement**

The data supporting this study's findings are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

### **Author Biography**

Mahfuza Musa is a Ph.D. candidate at the School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia. She holds a bachelor's degree in TESL from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and a master's degree in English Linguistics & Literature from Universiti Sains Malaysia. Her research interests include Malaysian Literature in English, with a particular emphasis on language and cultural representation, as well as ESL teaching and learning.

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## Appendix A

*Entries for Nativisation of Context (Contextualization) Adapted from Kachru (1986) and Pakir (1986)*

Nativisation of Context	Baba Malay Lexical Category
Terms of address and reference	<p>(1) “Oh, sorry-<i>ah</i> Ah Pek. I didn't mean to squash you,” (KTS2 p. 36)</p> <p>(2) “<i>nanti sarong jatuh</i>,” croaked the old Bibik, enjoying her own bawdy humour as she winked at Janet and glared at Rosie. ( KTS3 p.42)</p> <p>(3)“Boy-boy where are you? Come down from at once from the rambutan tree!” yelled another frantic aunt. (KTS4 p.61)</p> <p>(4)“But Popo,” Fiona teased her grandmother one day..” (KTS5 p. 69)</p> <p>(5)“Ummph, <i>anak dara ta'seronoh</i>,” she would grumble. An unladylike young maiden was what Grandma called Fiona. (KTS5 p. 69)</p> <p>(6)“What’s <i>anak dara</i> got to do with it, Popo? I don’t enjoy doing all the sissy stuff like sewing, crocheting and knitting which sis likes. I love cycling Popo, try to understand that...” (KTS5 p. 69)</p> <p>(7)" Okay, now listen carefully and don't ask me again anymore after this. You were the firstborn and you were a girl. The other side didn't like it so they said, no she should not be called a Chong, she will just have to follow the mother's surname. So you were called Tan which is my maiden surname. That's why your name appears as Tan Ghek Kim on the birth certificate, when it should be Chong Ghek Kim. (KTS7 p.102)</p> <p>(8)“Thank you, Second Aunty,” I said shyly.(KTS7 p.103)</p> <p>(9)Well...it’s like this. Actually your parents aren’t your parents. Your mother isn’t your mother. Second aunt is your real mother. And your mother is actually your Third Aunt,” he said. (KTS7 p. 104)</p> <p>(10) “I’m Jade, Nyonya Jade Tan Swee Neo from Tengker.” KTS8 p.129)</p> <p>(11) I learnt that I had been rescued and taken in by a Chinese family in Malacca. Chinese and yet not completely one hundred per cent Chinese. They called themselves Straits Chinese, baba for the men and nyonya for the women folk. To become one of them, I had to learn their ways. (KTS8 p.130)</p>

	<p>(12) My mother-in-law, Bibik Chim was an excellent teacher. (KTS8 p. 130)</p> <p>(13) Always walk slowly and gracefully. Don't run, Bibik Chim says. A nyonya looks ridiculous if she takes big manly strides and her sarong will flap and create a wind. Speak softly, a loud woman is crass and ugly.</p> <p>(14) Bibik Chim always spoke in the gentlest of tones but everyone respected her. (KTS8 p. 131)</p> <p>(15) Nyonyas are always seronoh, Bibik says. <i>Seronoh</i> was her favourite word. Everything must be <i>seronoh</i>, which means to be refined and graceful. (KTS8 p. 131)</p> <p>(16) Respect your elders. Never forget your ancestors. They are our link to our past. Worship them by offering prayers in their memory, piara abu, take care of their cremated ashes, Mother in-law Bibik Chim taught me. (KTS8 p. 131)</p> <p>(17) Learn how to cook. The secret in pleasuring a man is not just in the bedroom, but also in the kitchen, Bibik says, winking and chuckling. Wonderful food, presented beautifully, is as tempting and as seductive as a woman beckoning with her body. The way to a man's heart is through the stomach, she declared though she thinks that comes from an English proverb, not from the Nyonyas. (KTS8 p. 132)</p> <p>(18) She remembers Bibik Chim's words... Put bedak sejuk everyday on your face to keep it cool and smooth, scent your clothes with potpourris of bunga rampei, wear diamonds and intan on your ears. Make your house a home.. (KTS8 p. 133)</p> <p>(19) Ah Sum, her Cantonese <i>amah</i> and house cook predicted it would be a boy.(KTS9 p.140)</p> <p>(20) "Bebe, it wasn't a <i>hantu</i>. It was the <i>chettiar</i>." ( KTS9 p. 143)</p>
<b>Celebrations, Customs, Beliefs and Religion</b>	<p>(21) Respect your elders. Never forget your ancestors. They are our link to our past. Worship them by offering prayers in their memory, piara abu, take care of their cremated ashes, Mother in-law Bibik Chim taught me. (KTS8 p. 131)</p> <p>(22) "Chinese people always say, mother's stomach pointed and mother looking good, then surely Boy. Mother's stomach round and mother looking ugly, untidy, then</p>



	<p>surely Gil. You Ah Tai Soh, very neat-looking, stomach pointed. For sue, you getting Boy!” (KTS9 p.140)</p> <p>(23) “ Hai-yah, I mean Bebe got chiung. She got shock by chettiar this morning. She got chiung-lah..baby come out same colour like chettiar! Aiyah, Ah-Tai Soh, why you open the door in the middle of the night? Why you no call me? Got so many servants, for what? Now how-ah baby black in colour?” ( KTS9 p. 149)</p> <p>(24) Bebe’s mother interjected, “Ah Sum is correct. I think my daughter <i>kena chiung</i>. ‘Spooked’ as the English educated would put it.It has happened before. My sister was eight months pregnant, a real busy body <i>kaypoh</i>, cannot sit still for one minute. She tried to hammer a nail in the wall to hang up a picture or something. She accidentally hammered h, her finger. When her baby was born, he had a cleft lip. ( KTS9 p. 149)</p> <p>(25) " Oooww, ye-oohh, I think Bebe kena chiung. ( KTS9 p. 149)</p> <p>(26) “Can you help me find a <i>bomoh</i>? Use black magic-make him come back to me.” (SSS3 p.69)</p> <p>(27) He pressed the doorbell. No one answered. He tried again and again. Finally, the door creaked open slowly. <u>An elderly woman in a white blouse and a blue and white sarong appeared</u>. Her silver hair was tied in a bun on the top of her head, untidy wisp of hair fluttering about her face. (SSS5 p. 95)</p> <p>(28) The table was decorated beautifully for the ancestor worship ritual. He had started the preparations weeks ago and awakened before dawn to cook the feast. Swathed in a red satin cloth with embroidered prancing lions in gold, the table and its contents looked like a banquet for the gods. Two brass candlesticks holding red candles were positioned on each side of a turquoise-green incense burner for holding joss sticks. Eight rice bowls and eight tiny cups of wine and tea with spoons and chopsticks to match sat neatly spaced. (SSS7 p. 153)</p> <p>(29) No pork. Anybody here got bring pork? <i>Tolong buang</i>. Throw away. Or else I not going to the island. And you not going too,” the boatman reminded us one more time before we boarded the boat for Pulau Besar. ( KTS11 p.g 169)</p> <p>(30) “Why all this strange <i>pantang-larang</i> about Pulau Besar?” Mum asked aunty Bee Neo, as we tucked into a delicious spread of crabs smothered in a spicy-sweet sauce. (KTS11 p.g 171)</p>
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	<p>Pulau Besar is a holy place. There are many graves there. They have been there for hundreds of years. The locals believe the spirits on the island have supernatural powers. Powerful <i>keramat</i> we must not offend. (KTS11 p.g 172)</p>
<b>Personal Ornament And Effects</b>	<p>(31) Nona remembered her mother grimly drying her hands on her faded purplish <i>samfoo</i> top with the daisy patterns. ( KTS1 p. 20)</p> <p>(32) She looked up and down at plump, flabby Poh Lin in her cheap polyester <i>samfoo</i> and scoffed. (KTS2 p. 36)</p> <p>(33) “After I am dead, I want to be dressed in my most expensive kebaya- Janet knows which one- my best <i>kerosang</i> and my diamond earrings. And my favourite slippers- the red beaded <i>kasut manik</i>. Don’t anyone dare go against my wishes.” ( KTS3 p. 42)</p> <p>(34) She had hoped that Bibik’s gorgeous <i>kerosang</i>- three delicate brooches of filigree gold metalwork studded with intan diamond flakes, link by a dainty gold chain- would fall into her hands when the bossy old cow died. ( KTS3 p. 42)</p> <p>(35) “And don’t forget my gold anklets. I want to go out in style as they say..heh heh. And my silver belt- the one with the biggest buckle.. make sure my sarong is fastened properly..., <i>nanti sarong jatuh</i>,” croaked the old Bibik, enjoying her own bawdy humour as she winked at Janet and glared at Rosie. ( KTS3 p. 42)</p> <p>(36) She was always dressed elegantly in beautiful cheongsams which showed off her slim, hapely figure. (KTS7 p. 104)</p> <p>(37) Instead of wearing a kimono, I had to learn how to wear a sarong and the beautiful voile blouse called <i>kebaya</i>-it’s a hard work. One has to practise and practise in order to pin the <i>kerosang</i> correctly. The <i>kerosang</i> has three brooches linked with a delicate chain and I feared that I would make big holes in my kebaya. The kebaya must hug the body nicely with both sides exactly symmetrical. Its two tails must point out at exact and similar angles. The sarong must wrap around gracefully, not flarig out like a tent. I had to learn not to take mincing steps like a geisha, but to walk with a gentle sway of the hips, like a nyonya.(KTS8 p. 130)</p> <p>(38) Always walk slowly and gracefully. Don’t run, Bibik Chim says. A nyonya looks ridiculous if she takes big manly strides and her sarong will flap and create a wind. Speak softly, a loud woman is crass and ugly. Bibik Chim always spoke in the gentlest of tones but everyone respected her.(KTS8 p. 131)</p>

	<p>(39) She remembers Bibik Chim's words... Put bedak sejuk everyday on your face to keep it cool and smooth, scent your clothes with potpourris of bunga rampei, wear diamonds and intan on your ears. Make your house a home.. (KTS8 p. 133)</p>
<b>Games and gambling</b>	<p>(40) Poh Lin Chee used to come over to our house occassionally to play mahjong or <i>chiki</i> with my mother.( KTS2 p. 31)</p> <p>(41) We were kept busy the whole day long whenever my mother had her mahjong kakis over, serving tea, coffee, running out to the coffee shop nearby to buy snacks and just trying to to be helpful, filial daughters. (KTS2 p. 31)</p> <p>(42) "Aiyohh, very itchy-<i>lah</i>.I am playing mahjong and you know-<i>lah</i>, I can't stop the game and scratch, otherwise everyone wont like it, so come Ah-girl, scratch here..right side.." (KTS2 p. 32)</p> <p>(43) "You know what..you wont believe it! Last week he won a few thousand ringgit in the <i>empat nombor ekor</i> and he bought e a huge diamond ring. <i>Sui ga beh si</i>, so beautiful until can die one-<i>oh</i>.. (KTS2 p. 33)</p> <p>(44) She could hear Guan offering to pay Param the money which the servants owed him, and Mother-in-law lecturing the servants on the horrors and pitfals of gambling although she herself played a mean hand at <i>chiki</i>, her favourite card game.( KTS9 p. 148)</p> <p>(45) "<i>Choy choy! Tai kat lai see!</i> Spare us the details, girls. How to play mahjong like this? Sure lose <i>money-oh</i>," groaned aunty Tong in her heavily accented Cantonese English. ( SSS1 p. 42)</p>
<b>House-parts, Household equipment and furnishing</b>	<p>(46) The two daughters seized the two porcelain <i>kum chengs</i>, the embroidery pieces, the heavy brass candelabra and a huge yellow porcelain joss stick holder.( KTS3 p. 48)</p> <p>(47) More guest arrived and wedding presents began piling up on the old <i>barlay</i>. The wedding <i>angpows</i> from the guests were stashed in a big plastic bag which Yang clutched tightly under her right arm." (KTS4 p. 60)</p> <p>(48) She had tubes sticking in and coming out of her. Her colonoscopy bag- what she jokingly called her <i>jamban</i> bag- contained a few ugly streaks of greenish-yellow bile. ( KTS3 p. 44)</p> <p>(49) Grandma herself never saw her bridegroom until her wedding day. She remembered reading about how, on the morning after the wedding night, the white gown that the</p>

	<p>bride wore had to be placed in a <i>bakul siah</i>, a lacquered nyonya basket ... (KTS5 p.71)</p>
<b>Ingestibles and Food Preparation</b>	<p>(70) The aroma of thick black coffee, the crusty smell of bread being toasted on the charcoal grill, the rich redolent scent of custardy <i>kaya</i>, piquant sour-spicy <i>assam</i> curries, the <i>clack-clack</i> of mahjong tiles. She could hear chants of long-ago melodies- the knocking of chopsticks by the Fishball soup man, the <i>tok-tok</i> sounds of <i>Mee Sua</i> man, the clang of two metal rods by the Sticky Candy man, the calls of itinerant hawkers plying their wares along the street where she used to live. ( KTS1 p. 18)</p> <p>(71) A cup of cold watery coffee and a slice of bread for breakfast while her cousins had toast laden with strawberry jam, marmalade and butter, or thick satiny <i>kaya</i>. ( KTS1 p. 18)</p> <p>(72) Ask her if she can pay for the electricity or not? It cost money to toast the <i>roti</i>, you know!! Who's paying the bills here?( KTS1 p. 20)</p> <p>(73) "I want to cook <i>curry tumis</i> for dinner tonight" (KTS2 p. 32)</p> <p>(74) Every afternoon, neighbours could smell the overpowering aroma of <i>belachan</i> from Lian's kitchen, followed by the <i>tok-tok</i> rythms of the <i>belachan</i> being pounded, for Lian's father loved to have <i>sambal belachan</i> with every meal.(KTS4 p. 53)</p> <p>(75) I can be Jade again, cook my favourite dishes, <i>ayam pong teh</i> and <i>babi buah keluak</i>, eat my favourite nyonya cakes, walk along the streets of Malacca without fear, ride the trishaw to the market to buy my <i>sireh</i> and fresh <i>santan</i>, take care of my child and my husband and Bibik, love them the way they have loved me. (KTS8 p. 133)</p> <p>(76) Her mother-in-law's standards were very high. A tongue lashing in the kitchen if the ingredients were not prepared properly and lacked finesse, a smack on the hand if the <i>bunga kantan</i> or kaffir lime leaves were not cut finely enough, or the potato cubes were not of the same consistent shape. A yelling if the <i>sambal belachan</i> had no oomph. (KTS9 p. 141)</p> <p>(77) In the mornings, the unmistakable rhythmic tune of chili and <i>sambal belachan</i> being pounded in a stone mortar, or the grinding <i>batu giling</i> as fresh red chili morphed into glistening paste. (SSS6 p.103)</p> <p>(78) He had enough of her Nyonya curries and raging hot sambal dishes. I loved Mum's woderful Peranakan dishes</p>

	<p>but Dad complained they were too ‘heaty’ and gave him indigestion. ( KTS 10 p. 161)</p> <p>(79) “ Cucumber ? Err, can I have the <i>sambal hae bee</i> ones instead?”.. .( SSS2 p. 51)</p> <p>(80) “ Told you to emigrate but you <i>dowan!</i> You and your <i>char kway teow! Cherkhek darah!</i>” .( SSS2 p. 55)</p> <p>(81) ...my sambal sandwich half eaten.Lucinda placed her tea cup down shakily and adjusted her gold-rimmed glasses tremulously on her sweaty nose. .( SSS2 p.55)</p> <p>(82) She always served them with her homemade <i>Acar Awak</i>, a delicious concoction of pickled vegetables and pineapple in a peanut-laden spicy <i>rempah</i>. The peanut cookies, <i>kueh bangkit</i>, <i>kueh kapit</i>, fruit cake and pineapple tarts were all prepared by Molek. For Peter, the piece de resistance was her <i>kaya</i>, a rich golden custard of egg and <i>santan</i>, steamed to a perfect consistency, served on dainty squares of <i>pulut tai tai</i>, glutinous rice coloured in bright-blue extracted from the blue pea flowers in her garden. ( SSS4 p. 73)</p> <p>(83) In the mornings, the unmistakable rhythmic tune of chili and <i>sambal belachan</i> being pounded in a stone mortar, or the grinding <i>batu giling</i> as fresh red chili morphed into glistening paste. (SSS6 p.103)</p> <p>(84) ..a spicy dry smell that would make your eyes smart, sometimes the hint of a <i>babi pongteh</i> simmering in a cavernous claypot causing Kai’s tastebuds to tremble with anticipation. (SSS6 p.103)</p>
<b>Reckoning</b>	<p>(85) “ Oh he’s here. <i>Lai leow, lai leow</i>. The bridegroom has arrived. (KTS4 p. 60)</p> <p>(86) “Some more-<i>ah</i>, his business is doing very well...” (KTS4 p. 58)</p> <p>(87) “He takes her out to swanky restaurants and trips abroad. First class ticket to London, Paris. <i>Loh mor liau!</i> Gone cuckoo!” (SSS3 p. 68)</p>
<b>Ethnic value terms/ words of emotive import</b>	<p>(88) “What kind of <i>soey</i> luck is this? Thank your lucky stars you’ve got something to eat. Toast, your head!” ( KTS1 p. 20)</p> <p>(89) Grandma would stand at the verandah watching her and start muttering about how ‘<i>ta seronoh</i>’ her granddaughter was. Grandma clearly did not approve. (KTS5 p. 69)</p> <p>(90) “Ummph, <i>anak dara ta’ seronoh</i>,” she would grumble. An unladylike young maiden was what Grandma called Fiona. (KTS5 p. 69)</p>

	<p>(91) She would mutter, “ I don’t know why your father bought you this huge bike. And a man’s bike too! It is so unladylike of you to <i>si kang kang</i>-open up your legs- all around the neighborhood. So improper for a young lady!” (KTS5 p. 69)</p> <p>(92) Grandma would grumble gently under her breath, <i>ta’ seronoh budak ni</i>,” as she ambled into the cool interior of her home, her beautiful brown Pekalongan sarong with the ornate red green and purple phoenixes and flowers rustling gently along with her. (KTS5 p. 70)</p> <p>(93) “Nyonyas are always <i>seronoh</i>”, Bibik says. <i>Seronoh</i> was her favourite word. Everything must be <i>seronoh</i>, which means to be refined and graceful. KTS8 p. 131</p> <p>(94) “<i>Mak datuk, tak seronoh betul anak dara ni!</i>”exclaimed Grandma in horror, hitting her forehead with her palm in exasgeration. ( SSS1 p. 37)</p> <p>(95) “<i>Choy choy! Tai kat lai see!</i> Spare us the details, girls. How to play mahjong like this? Sure lose <i>money-oh</i>,” groaned aunty Tong in her heavily accented Cantonese English. ( SSS1 p. 42)</p>
Unclassifiable	<p>(96) “<i>Shoo!</i> Don’t touch it!” ( KTS1 p. 19)</p> <p>(97) <i>Amboi</i>, bread is not enough, now she wants toast. Who does she think she is?( KTS1 p. 20)</p> <p>(98) Greedy, ungrateful, good-for-nothing relatives. Bah!” ( KTS1 p. 20)</p> <p>(99) “Aiyohh, very itchy-lah...” (KTS2 p.32)</p> <p>(100) “<i>Amboi</i>, the way she behaves, giving herself all kind of airs...” ( KTS3 p. 48)</p> <p>(101) “ <i>Aiyah</i>, Aunty, why you no double eyelid-wan ah? Close your eyes while I drawing a line for you.. <i>aiya</i>, donch blink so much,..(KTS4 p. 59)</p> <p>(102) “Alamak! He is crooked!” Gaspd the bride. (KTS4 p. 62)</p> <p>(103) A yelling if the sambal belachan had no <i>oomph</i>. (KTS9 p. 141)</p> <p>(104) “What will people say? What will people say? <i>Aiyo, malu.</i>” ( KTS9 p. 148)</p>

	<p>(105) “ Hai-yah, I mean Bebe got chiung. She got shock by chettiar this morning. She got chiung-lah..baby come out same colour like chettiar! Aiyah, Ah-Tai Soh, why you open the door in the middle of the night? ( KTS9 p. 149)</p> <p>(106) " Oooww, ye-oohh, I think Bebe kena chiung. ( KTS9 p. 149)</p> <p>(107) “ Bah, you and your English literature and your bloody English heroes. Why can’t you be more Chinese? ( KTS 10 p. 156)</p> <p>(108) “<i>Choy choy! Tai kat lai see!</i> Spare us the details, girls. How to play mahjong like this? Sure lose <i>money-oh</i>,” groaned aunty Tong in her heavily accented Cantonese English. ( SSS1 p. 42)</p> <p>(109) “ <i>Aiyah</i>, why they all <i>ne’er</i> teach <i>anything</i> in school <i>one-ah?</i> School <i>ne’er</i> tell you all this <i>ting one-meh?</i> Complained Aunty Tong.( SSS1 p. 42)</p>
Swearing /cursing	<p>(110) “ Yah,all of us are normal upright people and now look at you, <i>celakak</i>, you got some crooked type into our family. Told you how many times to check everything. Stupid!” Chin butted in, furious. (KTS4 p. 63)</p> <p>(111) "Hopeless! You women all tak guna!" Mother-in-law would grumble incessantly. ( KTS9 p. 142)</p> <p>(112) “Sial, sial” under her breath, jabbing at the sepia photos with the brown and black chicken feathers. ( KTS9 p. 142)</p> <p>(113) Mother-in-law, startled out of her wits, started to incant, “ Oh <i>chetti chetti lu mau mati</i>.” ( KTS9 p. 148)</p> <p>(114) Chee sin... Fatt sun keng...Chan hai ow huit lor!” ( KTS 10 p. 161)</p> <p>(115) “ <i>Apa lu bawaak, huh? Celaka, budak ta’ dengeh</i>. I cannot swim. Want me to drown? Didn’t I tell you hundred times- no pork? What did you throw out just now?” (KTS11 p. 177)</p> <p>(116) Aunty Kongah butted in again, “Must be <i>satan-lah!</i> Oow, <i>Celaka!</i> Stop kicking <i>me-har</i> you two,” she protested, giggling, curling up her short stubby legs and glaring at the two other ladies. ( SSS1 p. 42)</p> <p>(117) “Aiiyee..<i>gua tak mau dengeh</i>...I don’t want you to say that word, you understand! <i>Hantu</i>, go and wash your mouth! <i>Celaka betul!</i>” Joo Li screamed. ( SSS2 p. 53)</p> <p>(118) “<i>Ala sial!</i>” yelled Joo Li ( SSS2 p. 52)</p>

	<p>(119) “<i>Alamak! Betul sial budak ni. Shaddup!</i> There are ladies present here. You dont use such language in the presence of fair sex, or any kind of sex. <i>Bodoh</i>, stupid!” shouted Joo Li.( SSS2 p. 53)</p> <p>(120) “Stop it Joey, Aiye.. Give it to me. Right now, you hear me? Celaka sial!” Joo Li gasped as she huffed and puffed after her recalcitrant son. .( SSS2 p. 55)</p> <p>(121) <i>Cherkhek darah!</i>” .( SSS2 p. 55)</p> <p>(122) “No money, don’t take <i>taxi-lah! Chee sin!</i>”( SSS4 p. 75)</p> <p>(123) “Crazy-ah? Gila! I almost ran into you!” Zaid exclaimed, shaken. ( SSS5 p.92)</p> <p>(124) “Go wash your foul mouth with chili powder! <i>Pergi mampus!</i>” May Joon retorted, turned and stormed downstairs. (SSS7 p. 143)</p>
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## Appendix B

Adopted Lexical Features from Kachru (1986), Lim (1981) and Pakir (1986)

Lexical Features	Categories	Example of Baba Malay Lexis
Nativisation of Cohesion & Cohesiveness	<b>1) Nominal (Nouns)</b>	<b>Food/attire/house parts</b> Babi pongteh, kebaya, sarong, tim chae
	<b>2) Pronominal (Pronoun)</b> I (1 <sup>st</sup> person singular) you (2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular) he/she (3rd person singular) we (1st person plural) you (2nd person plural) they (3rd person plural)	gua (1 <sup>st</sup> person singular) lu (2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular) dia (3rd person singular) kita (1st person plural) lu-orang (1st person plural) dia-orang (3rd person plural)
	<b>3) Verbals (Adjective and Verbs)</b>	<b>1. <u>gemok</u></b> (adj) punya orang <b>2. <u>nyanyi</u></b> (v) punya orang
	<b>4) Adjunct /Reckoning</b> 1. Verbal adjuncts 2. Sentence adjuncts (words/phrases that are adjoined to a sentence to extend meaning)	Verbal adjunct (inflexible) <i>Makan <u>pelan-pelan</u> → *<u>pelan-pelan</u> (makan)</i>  Sentence adjunct (freer position) <i><u>Sana mahal</u>, <u>sini tak kena baya</u>, <u>tadi Fong dapat surat</u></i>
	<b>5) Particles</b>	Occurs in phrase-final or sentence-final :  “Suddenly I thought of you- <i>lah</i> . Why not- <i>eh</i> ? Surely you don’t want to spend the rest of your life alone?” “Some more- <i>ah</i> , his business is doing very well...”
	<b>6) Determiners (that and this)</b>	[ <i>ni</i> ]/ <i>Ini</i> (this) , <i>itu</i> (that)  “ <i>Alamak! Betul sial budak <u>ni</u>. Shaddup!</i> There are ladies present here....”