

NEGOTIATING MALAY LANGUAGE AMID ENGLISH INFLUENCE IN *ALI BABA BUJANG LAPOK* (1960)

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Abstract: This study explores portrayals of Malay nationalism in P. Ramlee’s film adaptation of *The Thousand and One Nights*, specifically in *Ali Baba Bujang Lapok* (1960), through the lens of Shamsul A.B.’s nation-of-intent framework. Focusing on the element of *bahasa* (language), the study analyses how the film reflects the socio-political context of Malaya’s early postcolonial nationhood, where the Malay language was navigating its growth amidst the continued influence of English. Incorporating Kress and Van Leeuwen’s Visual Grammar and Bordwell and Thompson’s film theory, the analysis examines visual and narrative elements that contribute to the portrayal of Malayness in the film. The findings reveal the significant presence of English, mirroring the compromises made by the Alliance coalition during the decolonisation process. While Malay was designated the national language, English continued to dominate in administration, law, and education, reflecting the challenges of transitioning from colonial structures. Ultimately, the study situates *Ali Baba Bujang Lapok* (1960) as a reflection of both authority-defined ideologies and everyday realities, highlighting the complexities of forging a national identity in a multilingual society.

Keywords: authority-defined, Malay language, nation-of-intent, P.Ramlee, visual grammar

INTRODUCTION

Set against the backdrop of postcolonial Malaya, *Ali Baba Bujang Lapok* (1960) portrays the intricate relationship between language and nation-building. The film reflects the socio-political tensions of the time, where *Bahasa Melayu* was emerging as a marker of national identity, yet the influence of English remained deeply entrenched in the country. Using Shamsul A.B.’s framework on nationalist factions and the nation-of-intent, Shamsul identifies three factions of Malay nationalists—the aristocrats, the Malay left, and the Islamic nation advocates—who, despite differing ideologies, converge on the foundational pillars of Malayness: *bahasa* (language), *agama* (religion), and *raja* (royalty). These elements are analysed in light of Malaya’s (later Malaysia’s) Constitution, which formalises them as markers of Malay identity. While the aristocrats emphasised royalty as the protector of Malay culture and religion, the Malay left challenged its symbolic importance, and the Islamic faction

elevated Islam as the pinnacle of Malay nationhood. This study focuses on the first identifier, which is 'bahasa' (language) in *Ali Baba Bujang Lapok* (1960) to trace their representation within the socio-political context of Malaya's early nationhood, framed by challenges such as being of a new postcolonial nation. Malay films produced by P. Ramlee in the adaptations of *The Thousand and One Nights* reflect the growth of the Malay language in the postcolonial period that was permeated with other languages, especially English. The analysis also incorporates Kress and Van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar and Bordwell and Thompson's film theory to deepen the understanding of visual and narrative elements contributing to Malayness in the film. Visual Grammar allows for the exploration of shot composition, subject positioning, and visual weight to assess how these contribute to storytelling. Bordwell and Thompson's elements, such as mise-en-scène, costumes, props, and acting, will uncover socio-cultural narratives embedded in the film. Ultimately, the study aims to discern the nation-of-intent depicted in *Ali Baba Bujang Lapok* (1960), situating P. Ramlee's adaptation as a reflection of both everyday social realities and authority-defined ideologies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hanita Mohd. Mokhtar Ritchie (2011) argues that P. Ramlee's films, be it social dramas, romantic comedies, historical epics, or even comedies, in general are laden with social commentary, criticism, or satire. Throughout his life as a filmmaker, P. Ramlee exposed the weaknesses of the Malay society. Additionally, she also states that P. Ramlee criticised sociocultural conservatism, opposed feudalism, mocked the aristocracy and their hypocrisy, satirised polygamy, advocated for more open attitudes regarding sex and aspired to bring about social transformation by teaching Malays to recognise their own deficiencies. To him, movies and music were important tools for addressing society's concerns, especially those of the Malay community, as they were undergoing "decolonization, rapid modernisation, and confronting issues pertaining to race, citizenship, communism, and the issue of the merger between Singapore and Malaya" (Mohd. Mokhtar Ritchie, 2011, p.62). Her study employs *Penarek Becha* (1955) and *Ibu Mertua Ku* (1962) as examples of melodrama that dramatise the struggle of the Malay society against modernity through binary opposition. In *Penarek Becha* (1955), modernity is set at night which suggests danger and hidden threats. Meanwhile, in *Ibu Mertua Ku*, (1962), the contrast between the modern city of Singapore and the kampung, an underprivileged hero and an affluent heroine is juxtaposed to show the struggle of coping with modernity.

Hassan Muthalib (2009) also views P. Ramlee's films as social commentaries on the Malay culture and the struggle with modernity, particularly in the three films that he directed, *Penarek Becha* (1955), *Semerah Padi* (1956) and *Bujang Lapok* (1957). A sharp criticism in *Penarek Becha* (1955) is directed to the aristocrat who refuses to help the unfortunate. The impoverished trishaw peddler in *Penarek Becha* (1955), whom he insulted, turned out to be kinder than others, especially the elites. In *Semerah Padi* (1956), P. Ramlee calls for the application of Islamic teaching. The struggle of the Malay community against modernity is illustrated in *Bujang Lapok* (1957). The Malays are depicted as living in poverty through several characters, including an old man who almost sold his adopted daughter to pay off his debts. He also appeared to be involved in drugs, alcohol and gambling. Another character, a manager, is depicted as preoccupied with horse racing and exploiting women. According to Hassan Muthalib (2009), these behaviours reflect a clash with modernity that the characters find overwhelming and challenging to reconcile with their values.

Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied (2005) in his study entitled "Film as Social History: P. Ramlee's *Seniman Bujang Lapok* and Malays in Singapore" (1950s-60s) provides a critical

analysis of one P. Ramlee's comedy films, *Seniman Bujang Lapok*. The Malay community depicted in the film struggles to maintain traditional values while adapting to the inevitable modernity that takes place after a series of world wars. In the film, the Malays are portrayed as poverty-stricken and plagued by diseases. The Malay society does not have proper access to education resulting in either unemployment or working as menial labourers. On the understanding of Islam, the Malays are illustrated to be in a confused state. Many still believed in superstitions and were oblivious to Shari'ah law.

Bahrawi (2016) argues that contemporary adaptations of *The Thousand and One Nights* aim to resonate with modern audiences by incorporating current aesthetic and intellectual trends. In P. Ramlee's *Ali Baba Bujang Lapok* (1960), this is achieved through the use of anachronism, such as the appearance of a motorcycle in an ancient Middle Eastern setting, which provides comic relief while also offering deeper interpretative possibilities when viewed in a historical context. Similarly, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade* (1845) reimagines the narrative through the lens of scientism, replacing mystical elements with scientific progress, as seen in Sinbad's fantastical descriptions of scientific advancements. While Bahrawi (2016) highlights these adaptations as examples of modernisation, my research explores how anachronism, though not a central focus, serves as a subtle tool to enrich the narrative's connection to nation-building, blending historical and contemporary elements to reflect evolving cultural identities.

Existing scholarship on P. Ramlee's films, as discussed by Hanita Mohd. Mokhtar Ritchie (2011), Hassan Muthalib (2009), Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied (2005) and Bahrawi (2016), extensively covers their role as social commentaries, particularly in the context of modernisation and cultural challenges within the Malay society. However, there is a notable absence of detailed exploration into how P. Ramlee's adaptations of *The Thousand and One Nights* specifically engage with and portray the nuanced aspects of Malay identity such as language, religion, and royalty, and how these films reflect the evolving concept of nationhood during a period of significant social and political changes in Malaysia. Furthermore, the subtleties in depicting various forms of national intent in these adaptations, and their contribution to a unified national narrative in the period, remain under-examined. My study seeks to delve into these aspects, exploring the depth and breadth of P. Ramlee's cinematic adaptations in a way that reveals their intricate connection to the sociohistorical fabric of the Malay society during that era.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs Shamsul A.B.'s (1996) nation-of-intent framework to analyse the portrayal of language in P. Ramlee's film adaptations of *The Thousand and One Nights*. The nation-of-intent framework is central to understanding how different interpretations of Islam are constructed and represented in Malaysian society, particularly through cinematic narratives. The framework distinguishes between the authority-defined reality, shaped by the state's formal policies and regulations, and the everyday-defined reality, which encompasses the lived experiences and practices of ordinary people (Shamsul, 1996). This dichotomy offers a comprehensive lens through which the complexities of religious identity in Malaysia can be examined.

Key Concepts in the Nation-of-Intent Framework

The nation-of-intent refers to the competing visions of what a nation should be, as constructed by different groups or institutions within the country. In Malaysia, the state (through its authority) defines the Malay language (*Bahasa Melayu*) as a crucial component of national

identity, particularly after independence. This vision of a nation centred on the Malay language is shaped by formal policies, legal frameworks, and government narratives that position *Bahasa Melayu* as a key marker of Malayness and, by extension, Malaysian identity (Shamsul, 1996). In contrast, the everyday-defined reality emerges from the diverse linguistic practices of ordinary citizens, where languages like English, Chinese dialects, and Tamil coexist alongside *Bahasa Melayu*. This linguistic hybridity reflects personal and collective experiences shaped by multicultural interactions rather than institutional policies (Shamsul, 1996).

Authority-Defined Reality vs. Everyday-Defined Reality

In the authority-defined reality, *Bahasa Melayu* is framed as the national language and the primary medium for communication and education. Article 152 of the Malaysian Constitution declares *Bahasa Melayu* the national language, while safeguarding the rights of others to use and learn their own languages (Malaysia, Federal Constitution, 1957). This legal recognition places *Bahasa Melayu* at the heart of the state's nation-building efforts, emphasizing its role as a unifying force and a key symbol of Malay nationalism (Shamsul, 1996). The state enforces this vision through institutions like the education system which promote the prominence of *Bahasa Melayu* in shaping national identity. However, the everyday-defined reality tells a different story. In *Ali Baba Bujang Lapok* (1960), the characters often switch between *Bahasa Melayu* and other languages, including English, reflecting the linguistic diversity and hybridity of postcolonial Malaya. This deviation from the state-sanctioned narrative highlights how everyday linguistic practices adapt to multicultural realities, challenging the homogenised vision of the authority-defined nation-of-intent.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

***Ali Baba Bujang Lapok* (1960): Reflecting the Postcolonial Struggles of the National Language**

P. Ramlee's modern rendition of *Ali Baba and Forty Thieves* (1960) contains diverse cultural influences that is integral in the discussion of the Malay language as one of the markers of the Malay nation-of-intent. The film is set in an idealised Middle Eastern setting where the actors speak in an Arabised Malay accent, suggesting the director's craftsmanship in visualising the tale on the silver screen. The use of an Arabised Malay accent however caused for the film to be temporarily banned in Singapore, fearing that it would offend the Middle Eastern population (Barnard & Barnard, 2002). Besides the Arabised Malay accent, Chinese and Japanese accents are also found in the film through the characters, Apek, a Chinese cobbler and Momotaro-san, a Japanese thief. Additionally, a Javanese phrase is also appropriated as a substitute to the well-known phrase, 'Open Sesame' as a key to open the cave which contains the hidden treasure. The localised version '*Niat ingsun matekaji Semar ngising*' is articulated in a specific melody known as the "pelog scale" of "Javanese Gamelan music" (Johan, 2018, p.1). Adil Johan (2018) discusses the literal meaning of the phrase which can be interpreted as "*Niat insan, dengan tekad hingga Semar terberak*" which either means "my wish is so resolute that even the deity Semar will be forced to defecate" or "my need is so great deity Semar, I wish to relieve myself" (p.2). While the former is read as a great strength required to open the cave that a mythical deity has to defecate, the latter relates the wish of a person to relieve oneself by asking permission from a spirit. Johan (2018) highlights that the ancestral deity, Semar, functions as an intertext that can be linked to screen entertainment, as it is a reference to Javanese shadow puppet play (*wayang kulit*).

Other than that, most characters in the film also switch to English language, mostly in words or phrases. For instance, Marjina (Kassim's slave) is looking for *belacan* (shrimp paste)

at the market, so she asks the seller if the item is available. The man raises his hand, signaling Marjina to lower her voice, fearing that the authorities would be able to hear their conversation. Marjina looks confused so the seller clarifies “*Jual candu ada lesen. Jual ganja ada lesen. Tetapi jual belacan tak ada lesen. Saya smuggle dari Malaya*” (Selling opium is licensed. Selling marijuana is licensed. But selling shrimp paste is not licensed. I smuggle it from Malaya) [11.31]. In this scene, P. Ramlee ridiculed the enforcement of laws whereby the selling of a food product, shrimp paste was illegal and required a license, while the sale of opium and marijuana were legal. The English word ‘smuggle’ is used in the conversation, instead of the Malay word ‘*seludup*’. Likewise, Ali Baba introduced himself to the Chief Thief during his first encounter, in a natural manner, “*Hai. Saya reporter*” (Hi, I’m a reporter) [18.24]. The Chief Thief on the other hand, in another scene, rewards Sarjan by granting him a day off for locating Kasim Baba’s house by saying, “*Sarjan, ini malam awak off-duty*” (Sergeant, you’re off-duty tonight) [1.22.08- 1.22.13] as if it has been internalised as a normal phrase in a conversation.

The use of English words or phrases can also be found in other scenes including, “*malam ini kita kerja overtime*” (tonight, we’ll work overtime) [23.40], “*kerja lapan jam, Sabtu half-day, hari minggu public holiday* (work 8 hours, Saturday half-day, weekend public holiday) [41.10- 41.31]. Even the payday that took place at the end of the month, as illustrated in a calendar dated “*31st July*”, on “*Saturday*” is written in English (Figure 1.1). These temporal motifs are portrayed in several scenes. The close-up on the calendar date, as emphasised by Bordwell and Thompson’s (2013) focus on framing, highlights the filmmaker’s intention to establish a specific timeframe within the narrative. This detail has the potential to foreshadow future events or mark a significant turning point in the story. In the film’s denouement, where all the thieves meet their demise, the significance of this detail becomes evident. It exemplifies how even small details, such as the close-up shot of the calendar date, can carry significant narrative weight.

Fast forward to a few minutes after that, another record is shown in a close-up shot. It is an IOU (abbreviation for ‘I Owe You’), an informal note consisting of the sum owed, and the debtor’s signature which will be either returned to the debtor when the debt is settled. Sarjan owes 130 dirhams to the Chief so the Chief shows the IOU note to him (Figure 1.2). The calendar, IOU note, and other terms related to the workplace reveals a greater consonance with the coloniser as they are spoken or written in English. In this case, it could be a reference to legislations related to working conditions, except for the IOU. Labour enactments were enforced in Singapore and Malaya following a series of strikes in the post-war era after the Japanese occupation due to the decline of social and economic conditions, protecting workers from being exploited (Mohamad & Trakic, 2015). During the mid-to-late 1950s, labour conflict emerged in the film industry which led to intense strife (Barnard, 2009). Several ratifications were implemented based on British legislations since both Singapore and Malaya were under British rule (Mohamad & Trakic, 2015). It was known as the Labour Ordinance of 1955 in Singapore, or the Employment Act in Malaya. Henceforth, any work that is carried out more than the regular hours of work is considered overtime and workers have the right to have a day off, on weekends, as shown in the dialogue in the film.



Figure 1.1: The calendar written in English

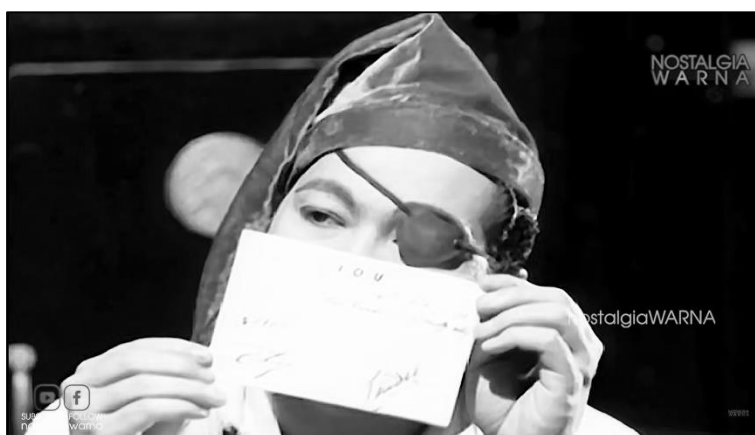


Figure 1.2: The IOU note held by the Chief

Beyond this labour rights issue, it is salient to draw attention to the use of English words and phrases in the Malayan legal system itself. Throughout the film, words and phrases that are mentioned related to legislations such as ‘overtime’, ‘half-day’, ‘public holiday’, ‘off-duty’ and an offence like ‘smuggle’ are spoken naturally (as if it has become a habit) with the Malay language. This code-switching reflects the historical context of Malaya’s recent independence as the film was produced in 1960, just three years after Malaya gained its independence in 1957. While Malay was established as the national language in the constitution, English likely remained prevalent in the legal system during this transitional period (Mohd Rus & Sharif Adam, 2008). The film’s portrayal becomes even more intriguing when considering Singapore's position in 1960, the year the film was produced. Singapore, under internal self-governance but still a British colony (Lau, 2003), had leaders campaigning for a merger with Malaya. This proposed merger raises the possibility of a shared legal system, where English terminology might have continued to hold weight alongside Malay.

One challenge they faced was translating foreign terms, especially legal terminology from English. This difficulty stemmed from cultural differences. The crux of the issue lies in the legal systems themselves. As highlighted in an article published by DBP's own magazine, *Dewan Bahasa*, the traditional Malay legal system relies on customary law (*Undang-Undang Adat*). This stands in contrast to the English system, which has a legislative authority that actively creates laws. The article itself exemplifies this challenge by using both English and Malay terms, reflecting the ongoing process of integrating new concepts into the Malay language. *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka* (DBP), Malaysia’s national Language and Literary

Development Agency, was established in 1956 with the purpose of regulating the development of the Malay language. As an official agency, DBP had the responsibility of translating foreign terms, particularly English, as administrative documents and academic reference books were mostly available in English at the time. In an article published in *Dewan Bahasa*, a periodical magazine under DBP, the challenges of researching the local legal system were discussed. One of the main difficulties stemmed from the absence of a legislative authority, as found in other legal systems. Instead, the Malay legal system had long relied on traditional or customary laws known as *Undang-Undang Adat*. The article highlights the complexities of navigating between English and Malay terminology. It demonstrated the ongoing efforts by DBP to integrate foreign terms into the Malay language context. In some instances, English words were used directly, while in other cases, they were accompanied by explanations in Malay to ensure clarity and understanding. In the article itself, several words are written in English with and without explanation in Malay. For example, in *Dewan Bahasa* (1964):

- i. *...adat dan undang2 Melayu tidak pernah di-buat oleh suatu badan pembuat hukum atau Legislative Authority. (Malay customs and laws have never been made by a law-making body or Legislative Authority.)*
- ii. *Ada-nya sikap murah atau lenient pada adat dan undang2 Melaka ini (There is a generous or lenient attitude towards the customs and laws of Melaka...)*
- iii. *Pengaruh Hindu tentang hukuman yang berdasarkan incarnation dan magic sudah tidak ada lagi pada adat dan undang2 Melayu (Hindu influence on punishment based on incarnation and magic no longer exists in Malay customs and laws).*
- iv. *... Islam datang ke-daerah Melayu melalui proses acculturation... (...Islam came to the Malay world through acculturation...)*

Ada berbagai sebab mengapa mereka meminjam dengan sa-chara langsung akan perkataan2 Inggeris itu. Yang jelas sa-kali ia-lah tidak ada-nya perkataan2 Melayu yang berhampiran ma'ana-nya dan tidak dapat pula di-chipta istilah2 Melayu yang agak memuaskan (There are various reasons why they borrow directly the English words. The main reason is because the Malay words do not have a similar meaning, neither a good Malay term created, for that matter) (Dewan Bahasa, 1964)

The article demonstrates the challenge of translating legal terminology. Its use of both English and Malay terms that reflects the ongoing process of incorporating new legal concepts, often through loanwords, into the Malay language. In this film, the loan words are exemplified in a scene where Sarjan is about to enter a night club. Sarjan is shown in medium shot, positioned in the frame on the right side. Using Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) framework, the use of a medium shot positions Sarjan prominently on the right side of the frame. This 'salient framing', as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) would call it, directs the viewer's attention towards Sarjan and their interaction with the environment. The representational elements within the frame further guide the viewer's focus. The description of the entrance doors as a western saloon (vintage cowboy door) and the sign reading "For Members Only" create a specific connotation (Figure 1.3). This interplay between framing, positioning, and representation suggests a potential narrative or hidden meaning within the image. Bordwell and Thompson's (2013) framework would likely point to the use of shot size here. The medium shot keeps Sarjan central, while a wider shot of the interior with the dancing crowd creates a sense of overwhelming chaos. The camera likely follows Sarjan throughout the scene (camera movement), mimicking their search pattern and keeping us focused on their perspective. This,

along with potential cuts between Sarjan, the crowd, and close-ups of details like the private area (editing), would further heighten the tension and suspense.

The fact that Sarjan stands there while looking at the sign for a few seconds may suggest the intended gaze that the director wishes the viewers to see. The camera then cuts to reveal the surroundings inside the saloon. As Sarjan is rushing inside, he is positioned in front of the swinging batwing door while looking for the Chief Thief in a crowd. It is revealed that the place does not look much like a western saloon other than the entrance and the partitions that separate the crowds from a private area. Bordwell and Thompson's (2013) framework would likely point to the use of shot size here. The camera likely follows Sarjan throughout the scene (camera movement), mimicking their search pattern and keeping us focused on their perspective. This, along with potential cuts between Sarjan, the crowd, and close-ups of details like the private area would further heighten the tension and suspense. The camera then continues focusing on Sarjan who is searching for the Chief Thief amidst the crowd who are mostly dancing [1.05.08- 1.05.14]. The medium shot keeps Sarjan central, while a wider shot of the interior with the dancing crowd creates a sense of overwhelming chaos. Sarjan then walks straight into a private space, barely concealed by hanging beads. There he finds the Chief Thief with presumably a female host who is entertaining him, dressed in a highly ornate top with shalwar pants (loose, drawstring waist type of pants). The Chief Thief on the contrary, looks more westernised, with a typical cowboy hat. Note that the repertoire of setting and costume in this scene seem to be conflicting (Figure 1.4). An extension of this is accentuated in the dialogue between the Chief and the hostess, and the Chief and Sarjan. The interplay between the visual elements (setting and costume) and the language (Malay with western loanwords) reinforces the scene's dissonance.



Figure 1.3: Sarjan is looking at the entrance door

The conversation between the Chief Thief and the Hostess unfolds in a scene depicted through a medium shot (Figure 3.3). While the specific camera angle potentially with an eye-level camera angle, the positioning of the characters – the Chief Thief on the right and the Hostess on the left – suggests a balanced composition. Within Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) framework, the scene creates a sense of neutrality for the viewer. We observe the conversation directly, seemingly positioned as an impartial witness. The conversation between the hostess and the Chief Thief is mostly in Malay, with a few English loan words [49.33-49.45]. The hostess asks, “*Kanda ini meniaga apa?*” (What kind of business do you run?). The Chief Thief replies, “*Um...kanda meniaga...um...import*” (I’m in the import business). The hostess then asks again (probably for clarification), “*Oh.. import export?*”. The Chief Thief denies the statement by saying that he does not export anything, he is only involved in the import business, “*Tidak...tidak... Kanda tak pernah export. Lain orang export, kanda import. Ya kekasih tolong*

bawakkan kanda sedikit minuman”(No no, I’ve never involved in exporting. Others do that. Mine is import. Dear, could you please bring me a drink?”). Note that the word ‘import’ and ‘export’ are used naturally in the conversation. In fact, the first Malay dictionary published by DBP retains the word ‘import’ similar to the English spelling. ‘Export’ on the other hand is spelled as ‘*eksepot*’. According to the dictionary, which was published in 1970, modern Malay words are adopted from *Kamus Bahasa Melayu* (the Malay Dictionary) by R.O. Windstedt which was first published in 1920.



Figure 1.4: The hostess dressed in eastern style while the Chief looks westernised

While waiting for his drink to be served, Sarjan reveals his intention of coming over to the club. He is alerted to a wealthy man who is giving away his gold coins to the pauper at the market. Sarjan convinces the Chief that the man is affluent. The Chief immediately orders Sarjan to gather all the thieves to rob the man. Sarjan however reminds the Thief about their working policy by saying, “Ah sorry, Chief. *Ini hari, hari Sabtu...setengah hari. Besok hari minggu...holiday. Kalau Chief nak rompak, hari Isnin bolehlah. Sorry...daa*” (Sorry Chief, today is Saturday.. half-day. Tomorrow is weekend, holiday. If you want to rob him, it should be on Monday. Sorry) [50.15-50.27]. Sarjan teases the Chief Thief over a strict attitude about work. In contrast to the Chief, Sarjan, who serves as the Chief’s subordinate, uses more Malay terms in his speech. For instance, he refers to ‘half-day’ as ‘*setengah hari*’ and uses the word ‘holiday’ instead of ‘public holiday’. This linguistic difference between Sarjan and the Chief may carry suggestive implications. One possible interpretation is that the Chief represents a colonial trait inherited from the British. The use of more English by the Chief, coupled with his adherence to certain colonial practices and laws, can be seen as a reflection of the influence of colonialism. In this context, the mockery of the imposed colonial law becomes apparent. The Chief’s use of some English loanwords suggests a selective compliance with colonial practices. He might be picking and choosing which aspects of colonial culture to adopt, creating a situation where the imposed law is not fully followed or integrated into the local system. This portrays a lack of respect or seriousness towards the law itself. Furthermore, the film highlights the complexities of decolonisation during that era. It illustrates the challenges faced in replacing English words or phrases with their Malay equivalents. The use of English terms by the Chief and the selective use of Malay terms by Sarjan indicate the intricacies involved in navigating the linguistic landscape during the decolonisation process.



Figure 1.5: The Chief looks frustrated when Sarjan reminds him about labour's policy

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis, it can be deduced that English is used widely in this film, as illustrated in the previous discussion. This is parallel with the Malay aristocrats' aspirations reflected in the Alliance coalition. The Alliance coalition which was the ruling elite representing Malaya's three main ethnic communities were forced to compromise on various issues including the status of the national language. Because of that, a ten-year grace period was given before Malay officially became the national language. The use of other languages was also not discouraged. Following decolonisation, the Alliance Coalition had the task of forging a national identity. The compromises made during this process are evident in the film's depiction of the continued prominence of English in different sectors. In the realm of administration and law, colonial bureaucracies heavily relied on English, and it is likely that the legal system was based on English common law. Scenes depicting administrative tasks or legal proceedings may showcase characters using English terms, highlighting the enduring influence of these colonial structures. Similarly, in the field of education, English was widely used. This reflects the historical reality where English remained a dominant language in education, despite Malay being designated as the official national language. This depiction highlights the complexities involved in educational reform and the time required for transitions to take place. The film's portrayal of the extensive use of English can be seen as a consequence of colonialism and a reflection of the compromises made during the decolonisation process. It shows viewers the challenges faced by newly independent nations in dismantling established systems and establishing a national language within a multilingual society.

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