

**MALAY IMAGES IN THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF  
MALAYSIA'S PERANAKAN CHINESE: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE  
TO KELANTAN PERANAKAN CHINESE**

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**Introduction**

The Chinese in Malaysia may be divided into two broad categories: Peranakan Chinese<sup>1</sup> who are the more assimilated Chinese and the so-called Pure Chinese who are less assimilated, although they are also influenced by Malay and/or other indigenous cultures (of the region/Southeast Asia).

Peranakan Chinese are Malay-speaking Chinese and are found in Melaka, Pulau Pinang, Kelantan and Terengganu (Tan 2000: 48). The origin of these Chinese can be attributed to the early and long history of interaction between the Chinese and the local people, especially Malays, Indonesians and Thais. Assimilation with local cultures was made easier amongst others by intermarriage in the early period of the development of Peranakan communities.

Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese settlers married local women because the migration of Chinese women to Malaysia (or Malaya) began only after the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Lim 1967: 66-67). Intermarriage between early Chinese settlers and local women is well reported in many writings. Lim (1917) and Newbold (1839/1971: 172) mentioned about intermarriage and formation of the Peranakan Chinese (Baba/Nyonya) in Melaka. Gosling (1964: 215-219) who wrote about the Peranakan Chinese in Terengganu, made mention of the Chinese settlers intermarrying with Malays. A Chinese work of 1820 called "Hailu" (Tweedie 1953, Wang 1960) and Teo (2003: 27-32) reported on Chinese settlers intermarrying with Thai women in Kelantan. In Pulau Pinang, early Chinese settlers were known to intermarry not only with Malays but also Thai women of the Sam-Sam community (Teoh 1957).

As a result of these intermarriages, it is therefore not surprising that the offspring of these Chinese settlers and the indigenous women of Southeast Asia were assimilated into the local cultures and even spoke Malay and Thai as their first language besides practising Malay and Thai cultures.

### **Baba Communities of Melaka, Pulau Pinang and Singapore**

Melaka Baba culture was formed before the arrival of the British and the Baba prospered under British rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Baba identity and society became distinct during this century. By the end of this century, the Baba had also begun developing a literature of their own. Baba writers published newspapers and magazines, and compose *pantuns* (poems) as well as short stories in the romanised Baba-style Malay language. Throughout the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Baba writers translated numerous volumes of Chinese literary works into the Baba-style romanised Malay (Tan 2000: 50).

The centres of Baba communities were Melaka, Singapore, and Pulau Pinang. The Baba in Singapore were originally migrants from Melaka and so they were culturally similar to the Melaka Baba. The emphasis on English language in post-independent Singapore has reinforced the status of English as a home language amongst Singapore Baba, even at the cost of abandoning their ethnic/ancestral language: Baba Malay (Tan 1993: 68).

There were Baba who migrated from Melaka to Pulau Pinang, but there was relatively less contact between the Baba of the two settlements. Pulau Pinang Baba have intermarried extensively with non-Baba Chinese and it is difficult to identify a clear category of Pulau Pinang Baba today. However, some Baba/Malay features can be seen in Pulau Pinang Hokkien which is the *lingua franca* of the Pulau Pinang Chinese, as well as food and clothing of elderly Chinese women in the state.

Today in Malaysia, only Melaka has a distinct Baba community. The most distinct aspect of Baba culture is their language called Baba Malay. It is a Malay-based creole originally developed from Bazaar Malay and has distinct and systematic linguistic features (Tan 2000: 51). This is their everyday language although the

more English and Chinese educated Baba also speak English and Mandarin among themselves.

There are also Malay influences in clothing and food. The older generation (for the females) still wear Malay style dress of *kain batik/sarung batik* and *baju kebaya*. Baba cooking is a unique combination of Chinese and Malay culinary art but is more Malay-like.

### **Kelantan and Terengganu Peranakan Chinese**

Terengganu Peranakan Chinese live amongst Malays, and are found residing in certain settlements, especially in Pulau Bahagia, Tirok, and Wakaf Tapai, along Sungai Terengganu (Terengganu River). These Chinese speak Hokkien which is heavily influenced by the local Malay dialect, wear Malay-style dress like *kain sarung/batik* for elderly women, and *kain sarung/pelekat* for elderly men, and eat and cook Malay-style food (Tan 2002: 74-76).

The Chinese of Kelantan are broadly categorised as Town (Pure) and Peranakan Chinese. There are noticeable social as well as cultural differences between Town Chinese and Peranakan Chinese who are more culturally Kelantan Malay and Kelantan Thai oriented.

The majority of Kelantan Chinese are from the Hokkien speech group and amount to 60% of the Chinese population in the state (Teo 2003: 47). Hence, Hokkien is the *lingua franca* of these Chinese. Town Chinese are from various speech groups such as Cantonese, Hananese, Teochew and Hakka to name a few, but Peranakan Chinese are solely Hokkien.

The Hokkien spoken by Kelantan Chinese shows an intense degree of influence from the Kelantan Malay dialect, and to some extent from the Kelantan Thai language. Hokkien speakers from other states, especially the west coast, find the Kelantan Hokkien language incomprehensible. This is due to a high degree of linguistic influence of the Kelantan Malay dialect.

### **Ethnic Development of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese**

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, delegates from the Wu Dynasty made various expeditions to Southeast Asia. Other Chinese records mentioning Kelantan were annals of the



Liang (early 6<sup>th</sup> century), Sui (581-618), and Ming (1368-1644) Dynasties. These annals did not mention any Chinese settlements in Kelantan. The Chinese work which specifies the existence of Chinese settlements in Kelantan is *Hailu* ('A Record of the Seas').

*Hailu* is a work based on the narration of Hsieh Ching-Kao and recorded by Yang Ping-Nan who met the former in Macao in 1820. At eighteen, Hsieh Ching-Kao visited Southeast Asia, and spent fourteen years (1782-1795) abroad, including Europe and America (Tweedie 1953: 216; Wang 1960: 31).

In his account of Kelantan, Hsieh Ching-Kao mentioned that the Malay natives did not permit their women to marry Chinese men. Hsieh Ching-Kao also reported that the Chinese men rarely married in any case. Those who married, however, took Thai/Siamese women as wives. These Chinese-Siamese intermarriages marked the beginning of the Peranakan Chinese society of Kelantan. The offspring of these intermarriages were brought up as Thai/Siamese rather than as Chinese due to the dominant influence of the mothers. Hence, Thai/Siamese culture and language were soon adopted by the children. At a later stage, there was a process of gradual assimilation to their predominant Malay surroundings. Language, diet, and clothing were amongst the many aspects of their life that were assimilated. This was the essence that shaped the characteristics of the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese community which evolved into the unique culture that was later to be transmitted to the later Peranakan Chinese and their descendants, whose settlements are mostly found on the banks of Sungai Kelantan (Kelantan River), as riverside villages, from the river mouth in Kota Bharu upstream to around Kuala Krai in the south.

There are Peranakan Chinese settlements in all districts in Kelantan: Kota Bharu, Tumpat, Pasir Mas, Pasir Putih, Bachok, Tanah Merah, Kuala Krai, Machang, and Ulu Kelantan at Gua Musang and Jeli (Teo 2003: 51-52). These settlements exist among rural Malay and Thai settlements, and are generally seldom exclusively Chinese.

There have some small groups of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese who move to the towns and semi-urban areas from the rural milieu for employments where they form a lower economic strata, working mainly as labourers besides being small-

scale shopkeepers. However, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese have so far failed to establish a dominant collective urban presence.

### **Kelantan Peranakan Chinese Culture and Identity**

Peranakan Chinese of Kelantan have assimilated in most ways with the local rural Malays and Thais, and employ various aspects of the assimilated elements of their culture to emphasise their Peranakan identity.

Goffman's (1959) conceptions of impression management, as well as front and back stage analogies, are most helpful in discussing the culture and identity of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese (Raybeck 1980: 251 & Carstens 1986: 83-87). It is most evident that most of the adopted aspects of Kelantan Malay and Kelantan Thai cultures are frontage behaviour for them, and backstage behaviour for Town Chinese. As for the Chinese culture, it is backstage behaviour for Peranakan Chinese but frontstage behaviour for the Town Chinese. This is a very important difference between these two groups although both are more assimilated with the Malay culture than Chinese elsewhere in Malaysia.

Frontage or public actions for Peranakan Chinese include adopting the following:- *Dress* – as a general rule, older Peranakan Chinese women wear *kain batik* or *sarung* and short sleeve blouse publicly. This type of attire is a distinct and an important symbol of Kelantan Peranakan identity. It distinguishes them from the Town Chinese who do not dress in this fashion at all. As for the menfolk, especially the elderly, *kain pelekat* is a popular garment worn publicly with a Western style shirt. Often, a headwear typically worn by Kelantan rural Malay men called *semutar* and a piece of cloth tied around the waist known as *batik lepas* (a piece of floral cloth) may accompany such style of dressing. This type of clothing is becoming a rare sight these days, as the men, old and middle-aged, prefer to adopt Western style clothes - slacks and shirts.

Another type of blouse that is worn with the *kain batik* or *sarung* at formal functions is the *baju bandung*. It is made from semi-transparent lace with a border of flowery embroidery sewn on the collar continuing down the front flaps as well as along the edges, and at times even at the wrists of the long sleeves. The *baju*



*bandung* is usually tight-fitting and worn as an overblouse over the *kain batik* or *sarung*, reaching down the hips. It has no buttons on it. Instead, three single or chained brooches called *kerongsang* are used to pin the two flaps of the blouse together.

However, this typically Kelantan Peranakan style *baju bandung* is not popularly worn by the Malay women who prefer the *baju kurung* or Malay-styled *baju kebaya* which are closely associated with Malay identity. In this respect, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese women detach themselves from the Malays by emphasising the uniqueness of the *baju bandung*.

**Food** – Town Chinese describe Peranakan Chinese food and eating habits as Malay and Thai/Siamese-like; their sacrificial food, i.e., special dishes for offering to deities and ancestors on Chinese festive occasions, is not totally authentic Chinese cuisines.

Food served in Peranakan Chinese homes for guests are prepared with Malay ingredients such as *serai* (lemon/citronella grass), *lengkuas* (a type of wild ginger), *kunyit* leaves and/or powder (fresh turmeric leaves and/or turmeric powder), and *budu* (a typical Kelantan Malay anchovy/fish sauce).

*Nasi kerabu* (rice which is cooked blue or grey and mixed with *budu*, spices, grated mackerel, coconut, and vegetables), and *nasi dagang* (oily reddish glutinous or sweet rice served with egg, meat or fish curry) as well as *nasi kunyit* or *pulut kuning* (saffron glutinous rice served with meat curry or sweeten grated coconut) are popular Kelantan Malay cuisines served by Kelantan Peranakan Chinese to the guests at feasts. This is in part due to their ignorance of authentic Chinese cooking, thus making Malay or Thai dishes regular food items offered during Chinese festive occasions.

**Residence** – the ancestral houses of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese are unique in architecture. They are built on stilts in a distinct rectangular traditional profile containing the hall, veranda(s), and rooms, and show a mixture of Chinese, Malay, and Thai architectural patterns.

The saddle-shaped roofs and rectangular profile are obviously Thai influences. The stilts and wooden or concrete staircase at the main entrance which

leads to the hall, are undeniably Malay architectural features. There is a *bendul*, (a horizontally raised plank from the floor), yet another Malay architectural hallmark, to separate the hall from the veranda. Each room or section of the house is also separated from each other by a *bendul*.

A large timber door with two iron ring knockers are overtly Chinese. Such traditional Chinese doors are typical of doors at Chinese temples and some Chinese public buildings in some parts of Malaysia. Chinese calligraphic characters pasted on both sides of the door are decisively defining marks of a Chinese household.

**Physical features** - Kelantan Peranakan Chinese generally have dark complexion, and appearance similar to that of Malays and Thais. They therefore can physically pass off as Malay or Thai, especially so for the men since males of the three ethnic groups generally wear western style clothes. In addition, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese have wide-set eyes and wavy hair when compared to Town Chinese.

These physical features, especially the dark complexion and Malay or Thai appearance, constitute overt markers of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese identity. Even Kelantan Peranakan Chinese themselves at times cannot identify their fellow members, thus mistaking them for Malay or Thai.

**Life style** – Kelantan Peranakan Chinese observe Malay customs and folkways as well as Kelantan Malay style of speech and modes of interactions, such as walking, laughing, gesticulating, shaking hands, eating, chewing betel leaves with areca nuts, smoking *rokok daun* (straw cigarettes), sitting as well as squatting, and *latah* (startling), the use of Malay/Thai nicknames, swearing, and cursing in Kelantan Malay dialect and/or Kelantan Thai language amongst themselves, and the ability to behave in ways most appropriate to Kelantan Malays.

Kelantan Peranakan Chinese teach their children Malay limb discipline, the proper placing of limbs during interaction. The girls especially are already taught at an early age to see that their legs are not exposed too much, let alone spreading them when sitting.

While conducting interaction at home on the veranda by having all parties seated on the floor, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese men adopt the position of *bersila*



(sit cross-legged) and the womenfolk *bertimpuh* (sit with their legs neatly folded on the left or right against their bodies), which are Malay polite and habitual sitting postures.

When walking past or passing through “superiors” and elders, Kelantan Peranakan Chinese consider it good manners to follow the Malay non-verbal act of slightly bowing the head, hunching as one passes with the right arm and hand down while asking their permission by uttering *tumpang kuo* (a hybrid linguistic construction of the Malay *tumpang lalu* (May I walk/go past you?)) while doing the act of passing.

Backstage or private actions also involve maintaining certain traditional Chinese religious beliefs and customs, which are confined only to the home. Peranakan Chinese feel comfortable eating pork in the privacy of their homes or places not spotted by Malays.

Despite their close association with the Malays i.e living in close proximity to the Malays, their Malay-like culture, their long residence in Kelantan, a Malay-dominated state, they do not readily embrace Islam although they are already familiar with some, if not most, of the intricacies of Islam.

**Language** – Kelantan Peranakan Chinese speak the Kelantan Malay dialect and/or Kelantan Thai language as an intra-community language. Their proficiency in the Kelantan Malay dialect and Kelantan Thai language has certainly helped them to acquire the cultural taste for Kelantan Malay and Kelantan Thai performing arts, such Malay *wayang kulit* (shadow play), *dikir barat* (rapping/verbal duel) and Thai *menora* (dance drama) and *rambung* (an ethnic dance).

Their ethnic language, a version of Hokkien with heavy influences from Kelantan Malay dialect and Kelantan Thai language, is mostly spoken amongst themselves in the domestic domain. It has been a very salient characteristic of their culture and identity. They, especially the males, use the local Malay dialect (and local Thai language for some) for intra-group communication, especially in the public domain.

Kelantan Peranakan Chinese find some parallels with the Baba of Melaka, and the Peranakan Chinese of Java, Indonesia, as far as their syncretic culture is



concerned. However, their ethnicity has evolved a different pattern of assimilation as depicted by these groups who lost the use of Chinese as their ethnic language and replace it with Malay for Melaka Babas (Tan 1980, 1988) and Javanese/Sundanese for Java's Peranakan Chinese (Wolff & Poedjosoedarmo 1982), though with modifications.

No Peranakan Chinese group has completely lost the use of Hokkien as the ethnic language. Instead it is heavily modified by Kelantan Malay dialect and Kelantan Thai language.

### **The Ethnic Language of Kelantan Peranakan Chinese**

Kelantan Peranakan culture is a heritage that has incorporated many Malay and Thai elements. Indeed it is an intergrated culture of Chinese, Malay, and Thai elements (Teo 2003: 71).

Parallel with this unique culture is a unique language: *Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien*, which exhibits massive Malay lexical and grammatical assimilation. Thai influence is limited to lexical borrowing. In some cases, Thai grammatical borrowing instead of Malay grammatical borrowing might as well be the case. There is no concrete way of knowing this synchronically since Thai and Malay share many structural similarities, the most important being word order. The Malay influence especially is so extensive that it has become a constitutive part of the language. Its mixed character is not a relic of the past or in the process of disappearing, but a dynamic feature.

At least five varieties are fairly distinguishable in the Kelantan Peranakan Chinese speech (Teo 2003: 80-100). Four are regionally based: (i) heavily Malay in lexical content (ii) heavy Thai mixing (iii) heavy accent of Kelantan Thai language, and (iv) China-accent. The fifth is the standard variety.

### **The Standard Variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien**

It is colloquial and thus is not codified. Its salient features are that it is Hokkien on the conscious level where the speakers are always aiming for a "pure" version lexically, grammatically, and stylistically. Kelantan Malay dialect lexical stock of

all categories is sought after when they cannot recover Hokkien lexical items or words in a particular speech event. Thai lexical items are sought after only by those active speakers of the Kelantan Thai language, especially amongst those who speak the heavy Thai mixture.

Hence Kelantan Malay dialect and Kelantan Thai language are needed as a source of lexical expansion. Malay and Thai grammatical as well as stylistic structures are also subconsciously employed.

The facts of the standard variety of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien (Teo 2003: 104-186) presented below are synchronic in nature besides being data from contact linguistics.

### Loanwords

The standard variety has numerous Malay and to some extent Thai loanwords, which are often evident from free-wheeling exchanges among Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien speakers.

Kelantan Malays and Thais recognise a significant number of Kelantan Malay dialect and/or Kelantan Thai language borrowings in the form of certain words as well as phrases and/or stretches of discourse, but yet cannot understand Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien fully.

Kelantan Malay dialect borrowings can be classified as (i) simple loanwords (ii) loan translations, and (iii) loan blends.

Examples of simple loanwords:

#### (1) Nouns

KMD	H	
<i>Kelah<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>pan</i>	'classroom'
<i>negeri</i>	<i>kok ka</i>	'country'
<i>bomi</i>	<i>se kai</i>	'world'
<i>peluwe</i>	<i>ke hue</i>	'opportunity'
<i>nasehak</i>	<i>ko bun</i>	'advice'



(2) Verbs

KMD	H	
<i>pisah</i>	<i>li kui</i>	'separate'
<i>bunuh</i>	<i>am sat</i>	'assassinate'
<i>same</i>	<i>ko</i>	'sue'
<i>perekso</i>	<i>sun</i>	'inspect'
<i>puji</i>	<i>o lo</i>	'praise'

It is found that Kelantan Peranakan Chinese prefer to use Malay loanwords to denote emotions, even if they know the Hokkien counterparts. These terms are mostly adjectives. Lexical loss in this category is often irrecoverable among young speakers. For the older generations, the Malay as well as the Chinese (Hokkien) forms of a particular concept exist side by side in their lexicon.

The preference for Malay affective words by the young speakers of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien may be due to the feeling that the semantic field of emotion in Chinese (Hokkien) is insufficiently differentiated, and consequently they resort to borrowing from Malay. Malay words in this domain may be found to be more expressive as well as efficient, and become stabilised in the speech of these young speakers who are found to have discarded the Chinese (Hokkien) counterparts.

(3) Adjectives

KMD <sup>3</sup>	H	
<i>biso</i>	<i>li hai</i>	'cunning'
<i>rusing</i>	<i>kek sim</i>	'broken hearted'
<i>senang</i>	<i>ho mia</i>	'fortunate'
<i>malah</i>	<i>pin tua</i>	'lazy'
<i>malu</i>	<i>kien siau</i>	'ashamed'

<i>lemoh</i>	<i>lam</i>	‘weak’
<i>suko</i>	<i>hua hi</i>	‘happy’
<i>gilo</i>	<i>siau</i>	‘crazy’
<i>seleso</i>	<i>song</i>	‘comfortable’
<i>nakok</i>	<i>kia si</i>	‘scared’

A loan blend involves the recipient language borrowing part of the model and replacing part of it by words/terms already in the language. The combination of a Chinese (Hokkien) term with a borrowed Malay (Kelantan Malay dialect) modifier is common in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien. For instance, the Hokkien generic term “hu” for ‘fish’ is placed before the name of most fish varieties in the Kelantan Malay dialect.

Examples of loan blends:

(4)	KPH	KMD (Source)	
	<i>hu bilih<sup>4</sup></i>	<i>ike bilih</i>	‘anchovy’
	<i>hu keli</i>	<i>ike keli</i>	‘catfish’
	<i>hu ayo</i>	<i>ike ayo</i>	‘tuna’
	<i>hu bawa</i>	<i>ike bawa</i>	‘pomfret’
	<i>hu kembong</i>	<i>ike kembong</i>	‘mackerel’

The above loan blends follow Malay order of “head + attribute”.

Two sub-categories are evident in the classification of loan blends in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien: (i) Chinese (Hokkien) head + Malay (Kelantan Malay dialect) attribute, and (ii) Malay (Kelantan Malay dialect) head + Chinese (Hokkien) attribute.

Examples of Chinese (Hokkien) head + Malay (Kelantan Malay dialect) attribute loan blends include:-



(5)	KPH	KMD (Source)	
	<i>chui boh</i>	<i>ae boh</i>	'flood water'
	<i>chun sele</i>	<i>kapa sele</i>	'submarine'
	<i>thia bako</i>	<i>sakek bako</i>	'hereditary disease'
	<i>ti tho kasa</i>	<i>maen kasa</i>	'rough play'
	<i>o lege</i>	<i>ite lege</i>	'pitch black'

Malay (Kelantan Malay dialect) head + Chinese (Hokkien) attribute loanwords involve:-

(6)	KPH	KMD (Source)	
	<i>atap sali</i>	<i>atak zeng</i>	'zinc roof'
	<i>puyam ho</i>	<i>puye uje</i>	'rainy season'
	<i>maen cha bo</i>	<i>maen tino</i>	'womanising'
	<i>paga thik</i>	<i>paga besi</i>	'iron gate'
	<i>kalu bo</i>	<i>kalu dok</i>	'if not'

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien loan translations or calques involve new items which are imported from Malay (Kelantan Malay dialect), a donor language/culture. These loan translations follow Malay order of "head/noun + attribute".

Examples of loan translations/calques:-

(7)	KPH	KMD (Source)	
	<i>che hiok</i>	<i>ija daon</i>	'leaf green'
	<i>kia kha</i>	<i>jale kaki</i>	'walk'
	<i>lai la sam</i>	<i>mari chema</i>	'menstruate'
	<i>chiak hua</i>	<i>make bungo</i>	'to earn interest'
	<i>hia ti kau</i>	<i>sedaro anjin</i>	'siblings from different fathers'

### Intra-sentential Constructions

This section will examine some salient sentential features of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien as well as its sentential links to Kelantan Malay dialect and Kelantan Thai language. The sentential links, mostly of single clauses, will be analysed by dealing with the similarities in the surface structures of these languages. Reference is also made to standard Hokkien to show how Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien has “deviated” from it. In other words, Kelantan Malay dialect and Kelantan Thai language elements are differentiated from the native (Hokkien) ones by determining the points in which the foreign elements fail to conform to Chinese (Hokkien) patterns. This is done by analysing the Kelantan Malay dialect and Kelantan Thai language elements and their structural patterns.

### Word Order

The grammatical word order of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien syntax for distinguishing the relative position of the three most common or important elements:

(i) subject (ii) verb and (iii) object in a clause, is **subject-verb-object**.

Standard Hokkien, Kelantan Malay dialect and Kelantan Thai language have this word order too. In ordering words, the basic or usual word order in simple clauses for these languages is SVO (subject-verb-object).

As for word order within the noun phrase, standard Hokkien largely and rigidly displays pre-nominal modifiers in its noun phrases. A very important rule for word order in standard Hokkien in this respect is that a modifier (in the form of word/s or expression/s) precedes what it modifies (in the form of word/s or expression/s). This rule holds good for any category of words that function as modifiers.

Examples of standard Hokkien word order:-

(8) Adjective – Noun

*chi hu*                    ‘fresh fish’



<i>sin chu</i>	'new house'
<i>ang chia</i>	'red car'
<i>tua kaw</i>	'big dog'
<i>law ke</i>	'old hen'

(9) Genitive/Possessive<sup>5</sup> – Noun

<i>wa e kaw</i>	'my dog'
<i>i e niaw</i>	'his/her cat'

(10) Genitive/Nominal<sup>6</sup> – Noun

<i>gin hang e keng li</i>	'bank manager'
<i>ok teng e chai hu</i>	'school clerk'

(11) Demonstrative<sup>7</sup> – Noun

<i>hi chiak chui gu</i>	'that buffalo'
<i>che keng chu</i>	'this house'

The rule for Malay (Kelantan Malay dialect) and Thai (Kelantan Thai language) is the reverse of that of Chinese or standard Hokkien. Modifying words or expressions follow the words and/or expressions they modify. In other words, typically, nouns occur at the head of nominal expressions.

Examples of word order within the noun phrase:-

(12) Noun – Adjective

<i>hu chi</i> (KPH)	'fresh fish'
<i>ike sega</i> (KMD)	'fresh fish'
<i>pla sot</i> (KTL)	'fresh fish'

## (13) Noun – Genitive/Possessive

<i>kaw wa</i> (KPH)	‘my dog’
<i>anjin aku</i> (KMD)	‘my dog’
<i>ma ku</i> (KTL)	‘my dog’

## (14) Noun – Genitive/Nominal

<i>neja gin hang</i> (KPH)	‘bank manager’
<i>neja beeng</i> (KMD)	‘bank manager’
<i>neja beeng</i> (KTL)	‘bank manager’

## (15) Noun – Demonstrative

<i>chui gu neng</i> (KPH)	‘that buffalo’
<i>kuba tu</i> (KMD)	‘that buffalo’
<i>khwai neng</i> (KTL)	‘that buffalo’

**Conclusion**

Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and Kelantan Malay dialect displays parallel structures syntactically as well as semantically. The two languages have become highly inter-translatable. This inter-translatability of Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien with Kelantan Malay dialect is due to the interference of Kelantan Malay dialect elements through language/cultural contact.

Kelantan Peranakan Chinese remain Chinese in several selected central cultural elements while at the same time exhibiting a great deal of social and cultural assimilation with Kelantan Malays. Continuous Malay influence takes various forms: Malay oriented education and daily interaction.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Peranakan* is a Malay word deriving from the root “anak” which means ‘child’ by the morphological process of circumfixing “per ..... an”, an abstract nominal morpheme. It originally meant ‘womb’. Eventually, its semantic range was metaphorically extended to mean ‘local born of non-indigenous races’ and/or as a metaphor of ‘Malay assimilation of non-Malay ethnic groups’.

<sup>2</sup> These words are not transcribed according to the International Phonetic Alphabet.

<sup>3</sup> KMD is the abbreviation of Kelantan Malay dialect, so are H, KPH and KTL for Hokkien (standard Hokkien), Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien and Kelantan Thai language respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Linguistic elements of Kelantan Malay dialect are printed in **bold**, while Chinese (Hokkien) element are in normal print in Kelantan Peranakan Hokkien speech.

<sup>5</sup> The terms “genitive” and “possessive” are grammatical concepts relating to the expression of possessive relationship, i.e., to have or own something by someone, and/or to indicate relationship between someone who possesses something and the thing that she or he possesses, eg. *the baby's arm*, *my father's book*, and *the coat is Jane's* in the English language.

<sup>6</sup> A grammatical term used here to mean noun and/or noun phrase, eg. “*bank*, *manager*, *the short one* and *the rich*”.

<sup>7</sup> Also a grammatical concept and it refers to location of a referent in relation to a speaker, an addressee, or some other person referred to, eg. *this* (physically and thence subjectively closer to the speaker and *that* (physically or subjectively remote from the speaker) in the English language.

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