

VITALITY OF HAKKA CHINESE IN JOHOR, MALAYSIA*

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the vitality of Hakka Chinese in Johor using the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS). The questionnaire survey on language proficiency and language choice involved 153 Hakka youths aged 15-30. The results showed that the vitality of Hakka is at EGIDS Level 6b (Threatened). Hakka is still used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users. The identity function of Hakka is that of a home language, with weak intergenerational transmission. Only 8.50% of the respondents speak Hakka with their parents, and 33.55% speak Hakka with their paternal grandparents. The Hakka youth are the youngest generation who can speak Hakka, but the percentage of Hakka usage is only 5.17%. They speak Mandarin in all domains, except employment and education domains where English and Standard Malay are also used. Mandarin also dominates in the family, friendship, and religious domains. Their Hakka proficiency is moderate, and a majority of them could only follow the main points of everyday conversation and speak simple sentences. Hakka parentage and religious background influence Hakka youths' Hakka proficiency and Hakka usage.

Keywords: Hakka, Chinese, vitality, language attitudes, identity, Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Hakka are a Chinese ethnic group as are other Chinese dialect groups such as the Cantonese, Foochow, Hokkien, and Teochew. There are variable estimates of the number of Hakka speakers globally. The Ethnologue assessed Hakka as a stable language with a large speaker population of more than one million speakers (Eberhard, Simons, and Fennig, 2020). However, international Hakka associations estimate the Hakka population in the world at 75 million, with 30-35 million living outside of China, but Constable (2005) considers this to be an overestimate. On the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), which measures the vitality and endangerment level of languages, Hakka is considered a stable language. Hakka is ranked at Levels 5-6a, meaning that Hakka is not being sustained by formal institutions, but it is still the norm in the home and community that all children learn and use the language (Eberhard et al., 2020).

The Ethnologue provides a range of EGIDS levels for Hakka, because the vitality of Hakka in different locations varies. To our knowledge, the vitality of specific Hakka diasporic communities has not been reported in academic papers although studies have been conducted to determine Hakka usage in various settings such as East Timor (e.g., Chew and Huang, 2014), India (Oxfeld, 2007), Taiwan (Young, 1988), Thailand (L J Wang, 2017), and Malaysia (Carsten, 2005; Jones, 2010; Kow, 2003; X Wang, 2012, 2015, 2017). From these studies, researchers draw conclusions on the severity of the shift from Hakka to Mandarin, but the conclusions are subjective as they are based on different yardsticks. Laitin (2000) stated that a common framework is needed for data collection and comparison so that findings can be comparable across settings. The Ethnologue assessment of the vitality and endangerment level of languages is based on EGIDS, which offers “a feasible common metric with sufficient precision and granularity by which to assess vitality and endangerment” of languages (Lewis and Simons, 2011, p. 3).

This study aimed to assess the vitality of the Hakka dialect in Johor. The specific aspects studied were the language choices of the Hakka youth in six domains, and their proficiency in Hakka and other languages.

This is a step forward from language use and language choice studies because using a common metric like EGIDS enables the findings on the endangerment level of Hakka to be compared with studies of the Hakka diaspora throughout the world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Migration Trajectory of the Hakka

The Hakka people are now recognized as a member of the Han Chinese nationality (Fan, 1997). Hakka are found in large numbers in China, Taiwan and Southeast Asia, and in small numbers in South Asia, Africa, Oceania, Europe, and America (Constable, 2005). In Malaysia, Hakka are considered a Chinese dialect group, alongside Cantonese, and Southern Min subgroup languages (Hainanese, Teochew, and Hokkien, also referred to as Southern Min in Taiwan), Eastern Min sub-group languages (Foochow), and Northern Min sub-group languages (Jian'ou) (X. Wang and Chong, 2011). Most of the Hakka-speaking people in Malaysia are originally from the Hakka heartland in eastern Guangdong. In this paper, the Hakka language will be termed as a Chinese dialect, because the study is situated in Malaysia where Chinese sub-groups are referred to as Chinese dialect groups.

The Hakka are different from the other Chinese groups because they do not have a clear place of origin in China. The origin of other Chinese groups is indicated by the name of the group, like the Hokkien who come from Hokkien (Fujian) Province. Scholars have traced the migration path of the Hakka from China to other parts of the world. According to scholar Xu Xuzeng, the Hakka came from the northern part of China but in the twelfth century they moved southward to avoid Mongol rule (Leong, as cited in Carsten, 2005). The Hakka are said to have settled among the Cantonese, possibly in Meizhou, located in Guangdong Province (Ungsitipoonporn, 2011). The Cantonese referred to them as “guest families”, that is, “Kejia” in Mandarin (Hashimoto, 1973, p.1) and “Hakka” in Cantonese and Meixian Hakka. “Hakka” became their ethnic label in the seventeenth century. Prior to the Hakka

coming into contact with other Chinese sub-ethnic groups, the Hakka people were said not to have ethnic consciousness. They developed a collective group identity and ethnic consciousness when they came in contact with other non-Hakka groups (Constable, 2005; Jones, 2010). The Hakka did farming in the hilly, less fertile regions, whereas the locals lived on fertile plains (Constable, 2005). However, the reserve for Hakka refugees in Guangdong was too small, and this prompted Hakka emigration to other parts of China (Jones, 2010). In 1867, a Cantonese-Hakka war broke out and the Hakka migrated into the Guangzhou area (Luo, as cited in Jones, 2010). The other areas that the Hakka lived in were Southern Fujian, Jiangxi, Guangxi, Hunan and Sichuan (Egerod, 1967; G. Wang, 2003; Ramsey, 1987, as cited in Ungsitipoonporn, 2011).

The Hakka began to migrate out of China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to Taiwan (Young, 1988). At the present time, 4.54 million of the 23.49 million people living in Taiwan speak Hakka based on the 2015 Research Report on National Hakka Population and Basic Language Data (Wang and Peng, 2018). In the past, most of them lived in farming villages in the north (Taoyuan, Hsinchu, and Miaoli areas) and in the south (Kaohsiung and Pingtung), but now many Hakka live in urban areas (Taiwan Government, n.d.).

The Hakka were the last among the Chinese dialect groups to come to Thailand to fulfil the need for Chinese labour for railway construction, and it is documented that they arrived in 1809 (L. J. Wang, 2017). The Chinese constitute 14% of the Thailand population, and Hakka (16%) is the second largest Chinese dialect group after Chaozhouese (Teochew, 56%) (L J Wang, 2017). The Hakka in Thailand are concentrated in Bangkok, Hatyai and Betong.

In Malaysia, Penang also has a large Hakka population. There are records of Hakka Christian missionaries arriving in Kudat, a town in the Malaysian state of Sabah, as early as 1883, but later more were brought in as labourers and agriculturalists under immigration schemes (Wong, 1999). The early Hakka migrants came as traders, coolies, and sojourners to Malaysia (G. Wang, 1991, as cited in Jones, 2010). The Hakka were involved in gold mining in Sarawak (Bau) and Kelantan (Pulai) (Carsten, 2001). In places they have migrated to, the Hakka men were known for their martial arts, and the women were noted for their fieldwork, which

was made possible because they did not adopt the practice of foot-binding (Leong, 1985, in Carsten 2005). The Hakka take historical and cultural pride in their round earthen houses called *tulou*, a cultural relic (Jones, 2010). Wherever they settled, the Hakka established Chinese schools, which used Hakka as the medium of instruction. From agriculture and construction, the Hakka moved up to succeed in academia, politics, and the professions – including becoming president or premier of China, Taiwan, Singapore, Myanmar (Ling and Levinson, 2007), and Thailand (L. J. Wang, 2017). In recent years, the Hakka migrated again to places like Australia (G Wang., 1991, as cited in Jones, 2010).

2.2 The Hakka Language

The Hakka language belongs to the southern dialect of the Chinese language, which is a sub-branch of the Sino-Tibetan family (Ramsey, 1987, as cited in Ungsitipoonporn, 2011). Different Hakka diasporic communities speak a range of particular Hakka dialects. In Thailand, the main Hakka dialects include Meixian, Taipu, and Xingning (Ungsitipoonporn, 2011). The Hakka in Taiwan speak the Szuhsien or Hai-lu Hakka dialects (Young, 1988). In Penang, Malaysia, X. Wang's (2015) Hakka participants were from the Meixian, Huizhou, Hepo, and Lufeng dialects. In Johor, the Hakka dialects spoken are Jiaying, Chayang/Dapu (Taipu), Huizhou, Fengshun, Zengcheng/Zenglong, Yongding, and Hepo (X. Wang, 2012). The mutually intelligibility of the Hakka dialects is high, and Cheng (1994) found a high similarity of 0.84 between Hakka and Beijing dialect (the base dialect of Mandarin) based on their phonological structures (as cited in X. Wang, 2017).

The primary identity marker of the Hakka is the Hakka language. Researchers writing on the Hakka people have portrayed the Hakka as having a strong ethnic identity (Chew and Huang, 2014). The importance of Hakka identity is expressed in an old Hakka saying “I would rather sell the lands from ancestry than abandon the ancestral dialect” (宁卖祖宗田，不忘祖宗言) (X. Wang, 2017:96). However, “[l]anguage and ancestry are becoming less and less useful markers for defining ethnic identity in a world where cultural boundaries are being constantly

diffused and shifted” (Jones, 2010:345). Other Hakka identity markers include the song “Shange” (in Mandarin) or “Sanko” (in Hakka) about Hakka culture, often sung during the mid-autumn festival celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month (Ungsitipoonporn, 2011). Further, the song “ngiet guang guang” and Hakka lullabies are still sung at Hakka conferences to mark Hakka identity (Ungsitipoonporn, 2011). Interestingly, in Thailand the Hakka Halls (associations) play an important role in reviving Hakka awareness, and they anchor the promotion of Hakka identity, music, festivals, and language to the Taiwanese Hakka culture. L. J. Wang (2017) did not think that China’s promotion of the “pilgrimage remembrance of the global Hakka” would be effective and was merely a means to extend political, economic, and cultural control on overseas Hakka communities.

In Malaysia, there is evidence of Hakka words being incorporated into Malay, producing *pasar* Malay (colloquial Malay), in the early twentieth century. A Hakka-Malay dictionary called “Zheng Ke Yin Yi Yi Mu Lai You Hua” was printed by Di Qi Fu Yi Wen Shu Ju in 1926 in Guangzhou (X Wang, 2012). The vocabulary was for daily communication. The dictionary is meant for Hakka immigrants who can read Chinese characters so that they can speak Malay in Southeast Asia, and earn a better livelihood. The pronunciation of the Malay words is written in Chinese characters in the dictionary and meant to be read aloud as Hakka words.

2.3 Usage of the Hakka Language by the Hakka Diaspora

Research findings reveal a common pattern, that is, Hakka usage among Hakka communities in different diasporic settings is being pushed out by Mandarin. Chew and Huang’s (2014) fieldwork in East Timor revealed that the first generation Timorese Hakka spoke Hakka at home and Mandarin for official purposes and some daily communication with other Chinese, but subsequent generations lost some fluency in Hakka and adopted Mandarin. Taiwan provided institutional support for the spread of Mandarin in East Timor through their consulate in the capital of East Timor, but in 1975 the consulate was closed down when East Timor took over the rule from Indonesia. Prior to Indonesian rule,

academically-inclined Timorese Hakka pursued tertiary education in Taiwan. In settings where the Chinese community is small like Calcutta, India, the Hakka community speaks Hindi, English and Bengali in daily communication (Oxford, 2007).

Even in Taiwan, the Hakka dialect is not safe from the spread of Mandarin. Hakka people accounted for roughly 19.31% of the total population in Taiwan in 2015, but Wang and Peng's (2018) analysis of the results of the national surveys conducted in 2004, 2011 and 2017 showed a decline in Hakka language proficiency among the older and younger birth cohorts. For Hakka born before 1960, at least 64% of the Hakka could speak the Hakka language fluently and more than 80% of them could understand spoken Hakka well. In contrast, for Hakka born after 1960, only 50% could speak the Hakka language fluently and about 70% of them could understand spoken Hakka language. The latest national survey report published in 2017 showed that less than 15% of people who self-identified themselves as Hakka could speak the Hakka language fluently. In fact, as early as the 2011 national survey, 31.5% of Hakka already reported that they could not speak any Hakka (Jan et al., 2016).

In Taiwan, the shift away from Hakka has been attributed to the promotion of Mandarin as the national language in 1945, which led to the reduction of dialect programmes on television stations to 12% (Young, 1988). Besides Mandarin in education, Young (1988) identified rural-urban migration and intermarriage as potent forces threatening the survival of Hakka. Wang and Peng's (2018) findings showed that the older rural Hakka can speak the Hakka language more fluently than the older urban Hakka who live in areas of smaller Hakka populations. The out-marriage rate is high (58.4%) among the Hakka (The National Hakka Population Basic Data Survey, as cited in Jan et al., 2016). The out-marriage rate is particularly high in cities and among the younger generation (Wang and Peng, 2018). Intermarriage reduces transmission of Hakka within families. Wu (2016) found that Hokkien and Hakka education in school did not improve the younger generation's proficiency in Hokkien and Hakka. This is because the parents and grandparents did not learn Hokkien and Hakka in school but their proficiency in Hokkien and Hakka is higher than that of the children.

The situation may look more positive for Hakka with the passing of amendments to the Hakka Basic Act (客家基本法) on 29 December 2017 to make Hakka an official language of Taiwan by the Legislative Yuan (Lai, 2017). It remains to be seen whether younger generations will have a better ability in their ethnic dialects in future national surveys.

It is not surprising that studies have shown that the youngest generation is losing their ability to speak Hakka in Malaysia (e.g., Carsten, 2005; Kow, 2003; X. Wang, 2017). In Penang, Hokkien is the dominant Chinese dialect in Georgetown (the capital), but Hakka is the majority dialect group in Balik Pulau (X. Wang, 2017). In X. Wang's (2015) study on the Catholic community in Balik Pulau, Penang, she found that only one-third of the 10 children interviewed were proficient in Hakka, and only two spoke Hakka as their mother tongue despite having Hakka parentage. This is linked to whether both parents speak Hakka with each other and their children. From the parents' perspective, speaking Mandarin with their children would help them to easily adapt to Chinese school. X. Wang's (2017) interviews with 14 Hakka families in Balik Pulau showed that the Hakka dialect is no longer valued because it is only a home language (compared to Mandarin which is an international language), hardly used by other people (versus Mandarin which can be understood anywhere), and there is nothing special about the dialect (as opposed to the belief that Chinese must speak Mandarin). Jones's (2010) fieldwork in Beruas showed that children from only two out of the 12 families retained the ability to speak Hakka. Beruas, located in the state of Perak, is an area with a sizable Hakka population that was involved in tin-mining. Jones (2010, p. 358) found that the parents were not all motivated to get their children to speak Hakka because it is "irrelevant for the development and success of their offspring". In one generation, the Hakka had moved from having no formal education to having degrees in finance, engineering and business, and with this progress, the Hakka language has been lost. Jones (2010) also found that Hakka born in the early 1950s are proud of their Hakka heritage and know Hakka history but Hakka born in the 1970s knew little about their ancestral roots.

The domains for Hakka usage are also shrinking due to external forces, notably Mandarin education. At one point in time, the Dongguan

Hakka was the lingua franca in Beruas for communication with the Hokkien and Hainanese (Jones, 2010). X. Wang (2015) found that the language of Catholic religious rituals (whether personal, family, or group prayer) was Mandarin for most parents and all children in the study. X. Wang (2015) noted that before 1963, mass was conducted in Latin and the homily was in Hakka. Chinese medium education is a potent factor causing the younger generation to lose their dialects (Lee and Ting, 2016; X. Wang, 2017). “The teaching of Mandarin in Malaysia started in the 1920s” (Mak 1985, as cited in X. Wang, 2017:90). When the school language enters the home and becomes the language for family communication, the functional differentiation between Mandarin and Chinese dialects is lost. Therefore, by choosing the medium of education the parents are choosing the home language (Lee and Ting, 2016) because the school is a strong external influence on family language policy (Luykx, 2005; Schieffelin and Ochs 1985; Spolsky, 2012). An additional external force are the Chinese politicians advocating Mandarin as the mother tongue of Chinese Malaysians to unite the dialect groups (X. Wang, 2017). The only place for the Hakka dialect to be extensively used is in Hakka enclaves, that is, in New Villages in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor (e.g., Serdang, Seri Kembangan, Ampang (X. Wang and Chong, 2011).

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The theoretical framework used to assess the vitality or the endangerment level of the Hakka dialect is EGIDS (Lewis and Simons, 2010).

EGIDS is an expansion of Fishman’s (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), which described eight stages in reversing language shift. EGIDS incorporates the salience of intergenerational transmission and emphasis on the weaker end of the scale from the UNESCO Language Vitality and Endangerment (LVE) scale (Brenzinger et al., 2003). EGIDS has an additional five levels, compared to GIDS, namely, Level 0 (International), Level 9 (Dormant) and Level 10 (Extinct), Level 6a (Vigorous), Level 6b (Threatened),

Level 8a (Moribund), and Level 8b (Nearly Extinct). Two levels were split to show the endangerment level of a language more precisely (Appendix A).

Lewis and Simons (2010) constructed the EGIDS Decision Tree (Appendix B) to assess the language vitality or the endangerment level of a language using five diagnostic questions on the identity function of a language, vehicularity, state of intergenerational language transmission, literacy acquisition status and societal profile of generational language use. The description here is based on Lewis and Simons (2010).

Firstly, the identity function of a language is evaluated based on the scope of its official use. If a language is an official language internationally, it is ranked at Level 0. If a language is an official language nationally, it is ranked at Level 1, but if it is used for official communication regionally, it is ranked at Level 2. However, if a language is used for wider communication but not officially, such as in trade, government, education, and other communicative purposes, it is ranked at Level 3. Languages at these three levels are considered vehicular languages, that serve many functions in society and are spoken by L1 and L2 speakers. If a language is not a vehicular language, then the other diagnostic questions need to be answered to identify it as one of these: home, heritage, or historical.

Secondly, to be ranked as a home language, both parents must be transmitting the language to their children. If there is 100% intergenerational transmission, then the literacy status of the language has to be ascertained. If children learn the language in school, and the newspapers, magazines and textbooks are printed in the language, then the language is ranked at Level 4 (educational). If the language is learnt informally by a small portion of the L1 community, but there are institutions supporting language literacy (e.g., churches, cultural organizations, etc.), then the language is ranked at Level 5 (Written). However, if there is no institutional support, then the language is ranked at Level 6a (Vigorous).

However, if not all the parents are transmitting the language to their children, the youngest generation that has some proficient speakers needs to be identified to pinpoint the extent of language shift. Lewis and Simons (2010:19) define “proficient speaker” to mean “a person who

uses the language for full social interaction in a variety of settings”. If the youngest proficient speakers are children, then the language is ranked at Level 6b (Threatened). A language at Level 6b may have some published literature, but a large proportion of the children are not learning the language. If the youngest proficient speakers are only adults (parents), then Level 7 (Shifting) is assigned. If most of the L1 community (20%-80%) speaks the language, Level 6b is assigned, but if the language usage is less than 20%, the language is ranked at Level 7. If the youngest proficient speakers are the grandparents and great grandparents, then Level 8a (Moribund) and Level 8b (Nearly Extinct) respectively are assigned.

Thirdly, if some speakers have symbolic proficiency for ceremonies but are unable to use it for communicative purposes, and the language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community, then the language is ranked at Level 9 (Dormant). A dormant language has no L1 speakers but there may be some L2 speakers. Its identity function is that of a heritage language.

Finally, if the language is no longer used and does not symbolize the ethnic identity for any community, the language is ranked at Level 10 (Extinct). Its identity function is that of a historical language.

EGIDS is an appropriate framework to use, judging by the number of studies that have employed it to evaluate the endangerment status and vitality of languages. Minority languages assessed to be at Level 6a include the So language in Thailand (Tehan and Markowski, 2017), and the Tibetan language in China (Roche, 2014), the Sihan or Sian community (Mohamed and Hashim, 2012) and the Bidayuh, Kelabit, Kenyah, Kayan, Melanau, Murut, Penan, and Saban (Ting and Ling, 2013) in Sarawak, Malaysia, and the Kadazandusun language in Sabah, Malaysia (Ting and Tham, 2014). However, the Iban language has EGIDS Level 5 vitality as it is a vehicular language with a lingua franca status at the local level, and is spoken as a second language by other ethnic groups (Ting and Ling, 2013). Thus far, the vitality level of Chinese languages has not been systematically studied using EGIDS, although Coluzzi (2017) has given a glossed-over ranking of levels of some Chinese dialects using secondary data in published papers.

4. METHOD OF STUDY

4.1 Research Context

The study was conducted among the Hakka youth in Kluang, located in the Malaysian state of Johor. Kluang is one of 10 districts in Johor (the others are Tangkak, Segamat, Muar, Batu Pahat, Mersing, Pontian, Kulai, Kota Tinggi, and Johor Bahru). Johor is the second most populous state in Malaysia, after Selangor. In Kluang, the largest Chinese dialect group is Hokkien, followed by Hakka and Cantonese, but the Teochew and Hainan population is small (X. Wang, 2012). The percentage of Chinese in Kluang is larger than in Johor and Malaysia (Table 1).

Table 1. Chinese population in Kluang, Johor, and Malaysia

Ethnic group	Malaysia ¹	Johor ¹	Kluang ²
Malay	62.51%	55.08%	55.95%
Chinese	20.56%	29.32%	34.17%
Indian	6.18%	0.49%	9.47%
Others	10.75%	8.68%	0.41%
Total	100%	100%	100%
(Population)	(32,581,400)	(3,764,300)	(253,682)

Source:

¹Malaysia Department of Statistics (2020a).

<http://pqi.stats.gov.my/result.php?token=5807c9b9b54242f7ba3ce87bf73fc229>

²Malaysia Department of Statistics (2020b).

<https://www.citypopulation.de/php/malaysia-mukim-admin.php?admlid=0103>

4.2 Respondents

The data were from 153 Hakka youth in Kluang, Johor. The selection criteria for respondents were individuals with Hakka parentage (at least one of the parents), and aged between 15 and 30. The definition of youth adopted in this study is the latest definition of youth in Malaysia as announced by the youth and sports minister (Yunus and Landau, 2019), and not the earlier definition of 15-40 years old (Government of Malaysia, 2007). A majority of the respondents were Buddhists, Chinese-educated in primary school, and 51.63% were in the below-RM1500 monthly income bracket because they were mostly students (Table 2). In Malaysia, Chinese are referred to as Chinese-educated based on the medium of instruction in primary school, and 98.69% of the respondents are Chinese-educated in this study.

Table 2 Demographic details of respondents (N=153)

Demographic Characteristics			Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female		87	56.86%
	Male		66	43.14%
Age	15-19		16	10.46%
	20-25		82	53.59%
	26-30		55	35.95%
Religion	Buddhism		143	93.46%
	Christianity		10	6.54%
Medium of instruction	Primary school	Mandarin	151	98.69%
		Standard Malay	2	1.31%
	Secondary school	English	6	3.92%
		Mandarin	16	10.46%
		Standard Malay	131	85.62%
	University	English	84	54.90%
		Mandarin	13	8.50%
		Standard Malay	13	8.50%

	Not Applicable	43	28.10%
Monthly income	< RM1,500	79	51.63%
	RM1,501- RM3,000	15	9.80%
	RM3,001- RM4,500	18	11.76%
	RM4,501- RM6,000	18	11.76%
	RM6,001- RM7,500	17	11.11%
	>RM7,501	6	3.92%
	Socio-economic status	Low	86
Medium		53	34.64%
High		14	9.15%
Father's ethnic/dialect group	Hakka	119	77.78%
	Cantonese	12	7.84%
	Hokkien	11	7.19%
	Hainan	4	2.61%
	Teochew	4	2.61%
	Foochow	1	0.65%
	Guangxi	1	0.65%
	Chinese	1	0.65%
Mother's ethnic/dialect group	Hakka	77	50.33%
	Hokkien	39	25.49%
	Cantonese	16	10.46%
	Teochew	7	4.58%
	Hainan	6	3.92%
	Guangxi	3	1.96%
	Foochow	2	1.31%
	Chaoshan	1	0.65%
	Chinese	1	0.65%
	Indonesian	1	0.65%

Note:

Socio-economic status (SES) was determined based on monthly income and occupation. Based on the Malaysian context, low SES was assigned to technical staff, labourers, or unemployed persons with a monthly

income less than RM3,000. Medium SES was assigned to teachers, business people, sales assistants, or chefs, earning RM3,000-RM6,000 per month. High SES was assigned to managers, doctors, pharmacists or engineers with a monthly income more than RM6,000.

4.3 Instrument

An online questionnaire was employed to collect data on the Hakka youth's language proficiency and language choices towards Hakka (Appendix C). The items on language choice in six domains (family, friendship, religion, education, mass media and employment) were adapted from Bissoonauth (1998). The Cronbach Alpha values were high for the questionnaire (language proficiency, 0.769; language choice, 0.801). Open-ended items were also included to find out the Hakka youth's views on maintenance of Hakka in Malaysia encompassing reasons and methods, so as to explain the questionnaire results from their perspective.

4.4 Data Collection Procedures

The online questionnaire prepared in Google Forms was spread to the second researcher's friends and relatives. The purpose of the study, voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses were explained in WhatsApp and Facebook, and those who met the selection criteria were invited to participate in the study. The snowball sampling technique was used, whereby the second researcher's contacts were asked to help send the questionnaire to their friends or relatives with Hakka parentage and aged between 15 and 30.

The online questionnaire was first posted on Facebook and Instagram. The second researcher also sent individual text messages to her contacts to invite them to fill in the questionnaire. Altogether 156 responses were received after 16 days (February 10-25, 2020). The responses were checked, and three non-Hakka respondents were excluded, leaving 153 for the final analysis.

4.5 Data Analysis Procedures

For the data on language proficiency, group means were calculated for the ranked responses to obtain the respondents' level of proficiency in Hakka. As for language choices in the six selected domains, frequencies and percentages of various languages were calculated. In addition, the percentage of Hakka usage out of 22 situations was computed as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Total number of situations in which Hakka is used}}{\text{Total number of situations (which is 22 in this study)}} \times 100\% =$$

The percentage of Hakka usage was later correlated with Hakka dialect proficiency. T-tests were conducted to determine if there was significance in the respondents' Hakka proficiency and Hakka usage due to their background (gender, socio-economic status, religion).

5. RESULTS

5.1 Determining the Vitality Level of Hakka Based on EGIDS

In this section, the results on language choice in six domains are presented to address the diagnostic parameters to assess the vitality of Hakka in Kluang, Johor, based on the EGIDS diagnostic questions (Appendix B). The identity function of Hakka in Kluang is identified at EGIDS Level 6b (Threatened) by answering four diagnostic questions.

5.1.1 Level of official and unofficial use of Hakka in Kluang

In the context of EGIDS, the first diagnostic question is the level of official use of the language. It is clear that Hakka is neither a provincial nor an educational language as it is not an official language in Malaysia (Appendix A). To assess whether Hakka is a language for wider communication (EGIDS Level 3), the results for language choice in public and private domains are presented. The public domains include

work, mass media, and education domains. Table 3 shows that Hakka was used by only 2.06% of the 98 Hakka youth who were working, showing that the Hakka dialect was irrelevant in the employment domain. The respondents relied on Mandarin to communicate with their colleagues. The respondents used more Mandarin than English with customers. English was mainly spoken with non-Chinese work-related interactants, and the percentage of English usage was higher in interaction with colleagues at a higher hierarchical level (employer or supervisor). While Mandarin may be used for work communication in Chinese-owned companies, more English is used in multinational corporations and companies owned by non-Chinese.

Table 3 Percentages showing language choices of Hakka youth in the employment domain (N=98)

Work-related interactants	English %	Mandarin %	Standard Malay %	Cantonese %	Hakka %
Employers/ Supervisors	34.69	62.24	3.06	-	-
Colleagues	22.68	67.01	7.22	1.03	2.06
Customers	40.21	53.61	4.12	-	2.06

Note: The respondent number is 98, and not 153, because 55 Hakka youth were not working.

In the mass media domain, the preferred languages for reading news (printed/online), and listening to news or radio broadcasts were examined. A majority (90.85%) of the Hakka youth preferred Mandarin, and only 9.15% preferred English. Understandably, Hakka has no place in the mass media domain because news is not broadcast in the Hakka dialect. Few know or are interested in the five-minute evening news segment aired in four Chinese dialects (Hakka, Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew) by the national Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM) (David et al., 2009). Based on this assessment of common languages used by Hakka youth in the employment and mass media domains, Hakka is not a language for wider communication.

Hakka is not the medium of instruction in Malaysian schools, but it is also not used for unofficial communication with people in the education domain, that is, the principals (deans in universities), teachers (lecturers), office staff, and classmates. Table 4 shows that English and Standard Malay were almost equally used for unofficial communication in the education domain with educators and office staff. The Hakka youth spoke more Mandarin with classmates than either English or Standard Malay, because they were interacting with Chinese classmates. Hakka was used by only one respondent, showing that Chinese dialects have no place in the education domain, not even for unofficial communication. Schools have a no-dialect rule, and students caught speaking dialects are punished. Despite Hakka being the second largest dialect group in Kluang, the use of the Hakka dialect among classmates is almost non-existent. The results on the Hakka youth's language choice for unofficial communication in the education domain confirm that Hakka is not a language for wider communication in Kluang.

Table 4 Percentages showing language choices of Hakka youth in the education domain (N=153)

Interactants in education domain	English %	Mandarin %	Standard Malay %	Hakka %
Principals/Deans	41.18	12.42	45.75	0.65
Teachers/Lecturers	50.33	11.76	37.25	0.65
Office Staff	43.79	15.03	40.52	0.65
Classmates	29.41	43.79	26.80	-

Next, results on the use of the Hakka dialect in private domains (friendship and religious) are described. In the friendship domain, the Hakka youth's choice of language to speak with Chinese friends (Hakka and non-Hakka), neighbors, and strangers were examined (Table 5). Strangers may seem anomalous to the conventional notion of the friendship domain, but it is a good indicator of what the language of wider communication is, and it expands the scope of language choice beyond the Chinese community. Table 5 shows that Mandarin (60.78%) and English (32.68%) are the languages of wider communication in

Kluang. Mandarin is the main language for communication within the Chinese community (neighbors, Hakka and non-Hakka friends). Most Chinese live in Chinese-dominant neighborhoods in Malaysia. Hakka was used by only 8.50% of the Hakka youth with their Hakka friends. Table 1 shows that 77.78% of the respondents had Hakka fathers, and 50.83% had Hakka mothers (25.49% were Hokkien). A majority of the Hakka youth are speaking Mandarin with their Hakka friends.

Table 5 Percentages showing language choices of Hakka youth in the friendship domain (N=153)

Interactants	English %	Mandarin %	Standard Malay %	Cantonese %	Hakka %	Hokkien %
Hakka friends	1.31	89.54	-	0.65	8.50	-
Chinese friends who were not Hakka	0.65	96.08	-	1.31	0.65	1.31
Neighbors	3.27	93.46	1.31	1.31	0.65	-
Strangers	32.68	60.78	5.23	1.31	-	-

Table 6 shows that the Hakka youth used Mandarin for religious communication, whether it was for praying on their own or talking with a religious leader. Although the number is small, it is interesting that the only three respondents who spoke Hakka in the religious domain were male (two respondents or 1.32% praying in Hakka; one respondent or 0.66% talking with a Buddhist leader). However, the result is not unexpected because literature has indicated that boys are more likely to retain their ethnic language (Lutz, 2006). The observation is supported by the respondents' higher percentages of Hakka usage with grandfathers, fathers and uncles, compared to grandmothers, mothers and aunts (Table 7).

Table 6 Percentages showing language choices of Hakka youth in the religious domain (N=153)

Religious situations	English %	Mandarin %	Standard Malay %	Cantonese %	Hakka %
Praying	0.66	96.03	0.66	1.32	1.32
Talking with a religious leader	3.29	91.45	4.61	-	0.66

To sum up, whether it is a public or private domain, Mandarin is the main language used by Hakka youth for communication in their daily life. Hakka is certainly not a language of wider communication for the Hakka youth aged 15-30 in Kluang. The final domain to examine is the family domain to establish whether Hakka is still a home language.

5.1.2 Literacy status of Hakka

The second EGIDS diagnostic question is the literacy status of the language. Hakka is a spoken language and not taught in school. Hakka is definitely not at EGIDS Level 4 (Educational). Therefore, Hakka will not be able to move to Level 5 (Written). Now there are some Romanised materials in Hakka to help people learn to speak Hakka. Some websites offer audio recordings of pronunciation of Hakka words (e.g., Learning Hakka Language, 2007). Schools using Hakka as the medium of instruction is a thing of the past, like in East Timor in the 1970s (Chew and Huang, 2014) and Malaysia (Tan, 2015). Malaysia is unlikely to proceed along the same path as Taiwan, where the teaching of Hakka in primary school has been made possible with the Local-Language-in-Education policy in 1993 (Jan et al., 2016). For Malaysian Chinese parents, community leaders and politicians, what is important is the continuance of Chinese schools as it is one of the three pillars of Chinese identity, along with Chinese media and Chinese associations (Gill, 2009).

5.1.3 Intergenerational transmission of Hakka to children

The third EGIDS diagnostic question is whether all parents are transmitting the language to their children. Based on results on Hakka usage in the family domain across three generations, the answer is “no” (Table 7).

Table 7 Percentages showing language choices of Hakka youth in the family domain (N=153)

Family member	English %	Mandarin %	Standard Malay %	Cantonese %	Hakka %	Hok-kien %
Paternal Grandparents*	-	59.21	-	5.26	33.55	1.32
Maternal Grandparents	0.65	75.16	0.65	5.23	15.03	1.96
Parents	-	88.24	-	3.27	8.50	-
Paternal Uncles and Aunts*	-	84.21	-	0.66	15.13	-
Maternal Uncles and Aunts	1.31	83.66	0.65	1.96	11.11	-
Siblings	-	91.50	-	1.31	7.19	-
Paternal Cousins*	1.32	94.74	-	0.66	3.29	-
Maternal Cousins	1.31	92.81	0.65	1.31	3.92	-

Note: *Some totals are 152 because a respondent’s grandparents had passed away, while another respondent’s parents did not have siblings, and the respondent did not have aunts, uncles or cousins.

5.1.4 Hakka proficiency of the youngest generation

The expected decrease in Hakka usage from grandparents to their own next generation is seen, co-occurring with an increase in Mandarin usage. Only 33.55% and 15.03% of the respondents spoke Hakka with their paternal and maternal grandparents, respectively. The percentage dropped to 8.50% with parents and between 11% and 15% with uncles and aunts. The bulk (91.5%) of the Hakka youths' parents was not transmitting the dialect to them. This is why only 7.19% of the respondents spoke Hakka with siblings. With such a small percentage speaking Hakka at home, even fewer will pass on Hakka when they have children of their own.

The fourth EGIDS diagnostic question is answered by identifying the youngest generation that has some proficient Hakka speakers. The youngest generation of Hakka speakers are the children, that is, the Hakka youth aged 15-30. This ranks the Hakka dialect in Kluang at EGIDS Level 6b (Threatened), meaning that the language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users. However, the truth is only a small percentage of the Hakka youth were still proficient in Hakka (Table 8). In this study, the 15-30 age group is considered the youngest generation (i.e. the children's generation vis-à-vis their parents' and grandparents' generations). However, the present study did not include respondents below the age of 15 because they might not understand the questionnaire items. Based on the results obtained in this study, if children below the age of 15 were studied, it is likely that the percentage of the youngest generation who are still proficient in Hakka would be even lower.

Table 8 shows that the respondents' proficiency in Hakka was the lowest among the languages in their linguistic repertoire. Their ability to understand Hakka is 2.86 (on a scale of 0 to 5), meaning that they could generally follow main points of everyday conversation that is conducted clearly. Their ability to speak Hakka was lower (2.14), meaning that they could say simple sentences to describe something but they were unable to speak quite fluently to describe something familiar. In comparison, their proficiency in Mandarin was close to five, the highest level given in the questionnaire item. They could easily follow complex conversations

conducted at a natural speed, as well as give clear, detailed descriptions on complex topics and speak smoothly.

Table 8 Proficiency level of Hakka respondents in four languages (N=153)

Language	Ability to understand the language ¹	Ability to speak the language ²	Average
Mandarin	4.78	4.78	4.78
Malay	3.78	3.58	3.68
English	3.49	3.25	3.37
Hakka	2.86	2.14	2.50

Notes:

¹Ability to understand the language: 0, Not at all (2.61%); 1, Can understand some words if spoken slowly and clearly (18.30%); 2, Can get the topic of the conversation that is conducted slowly and clearly (23.53%); 3, Can generally follow main points of everyday conversation that is conducted clearly (15.03%); 4, Can get the content with some effort but may find it hard to participate effectively in the conversation (27.45%); 5, Can easily follow complex conversations conducted at a natural speed (13.07%).

²Ability to speak the language: 0, Not at all (16.34%); 1, Can say some words (24.18%); 2, Can say simple sentences to describe something (22.22%); 3, Can speak quite fluently to describe something familiar (11.11%); 4, Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of topics (18.95%); 5, Can give clear, detailed descriptions on complex topics and speak smoothly (7.19%).

The youngest generation that has some proficient speakers are the children, but their Hakka proficiency is wanting. The percentages of respondents who were at each of the five levels of Hakka proficiency are shown in the Notes of Table 8. For the ability to understand Hakka, surprisingly a sizable proportion of the respondents could not understand (2.61%) or speak Hakka (16.34%). A bigger percentage knew a few words: 18.3% could understand some Hakka words, while 24.18% could speak some Hakka words. Taken together, 40.52% of the respondents

could not carry on a conversation in Hakka. This is to be expected, given that only 8.50% of them spoke Hakka with their parents (Table 7).

To determine the EGIDS level of languages, Lewis and Simons (2011) used the guideline that if 20% to 80% of the ethnic language community speaks the language, the language is assigned Level 6b (Threatened), but if the percentage is below 20%, then it is assigned Level 7 (Shifting). For this purpose, the percentage of Hakka usage out of 22 situations was computed for the Hakka youth, and it is 5.17%, showing Hakka is used for a limited range of social interactions. Hakka has lost almost all of its functions to Mandarin. Thus, the EGIDS level for the Hakka dialect in Kluang is Level 6b (Threatened). In another generation, Hakka may decline to Level 7 (Shifting), because the Hakka youth may not be transmitting their dialect to their children, since only 26.14% were able to speak Hakka fluently on complex topics (Table 8, Notes). In conclusion, the identity function of Hakka in Kluang is that of a home language, but it is on shaky ground.

5.2 Relationship between Hakka Proficiency and Hakka Usage

Table 9 shows the Pearson correlation test results on the relationship between the ability to understand Hakka, the ability to speak Hakka, and the frequency of Hakka usage.

The Hakka proficiency of Hakka youth was significantly correlated with their ability to understand Hakka ($r=0.447$, $p<0.01$). The correlation was also significant between Hakka proficiency and the ability to speak Hakka ($r=0.599$, $p<0.01$). The correlation values were moderate and positive, suggesting that Hakka youth with better proficiency in Hakka were more likely to speak Hakka in the six selected domains of language use. The results are consistent with the link drawn between proficiency and extent of language usage by Lewis and Simons (2010:19) who defined a proficient speaker as one who uses “the language for full social interaction in a variety of settings”. Better ability to understand Hakka was strongly correlated with better ability to speak Hakka ($r=0.811$, $p<0.01$), indicating the close relationship between receptive and productive oral ability in Hakka.

Table 9 Pearson’s correlation test results for relationship between Hakka proficiency and Hakka usage (N=153)

	Frequency of Hakka usage	Ability to understand Hakka	Ability to speak Hakka
Frequency of Hakka usage	1		
Ability to understand Hakka	0.447**	1	
Ability to speak Hakka	0.599**	0.811**	1

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5.3 Influence of Respondents’ Background on Hakka Proficiency and Hakka Usage

The results showed that religious background and Hakka parentage influenced the Hakka youth’s Hakka proficiency and extent of Hakka usage. As for religious background, the t-test results showed that there were also no significant differences in the Hakka usage of respondents who were Buddhists and Christians. However, the Hakka proficiency of the Buddhist and Christians was significantly different at $p=0.06$. The confidence level is slightly less than the conventional 95%. Nevertheless, the mean values suggest that the Hakka youth who were Buddhist ($M=2.56$) may be more inclined to speak Hakka better than those who were Christians ($M=1.55$). A closer examination of the language choice data revealed that the Christian respondents only used Mandarin for both praying and talking with religious leaders, whereas some Buddhist respondents also used Chinese dialects, in addition to Mandarin. Based on these results, Buddhist religious practices can be an avenue for the maintenance of the Hakka dialect.

As for Hakka parentage, 70.78% of the Hakka youth had full-Hakka parentage (both parents are Hakka) and 29.22% had half-Hakka parentage. The t-tests showed a significant difference in the Hakka usage of respondents with half- and full-Hakka parentage ($p=0.003$). The respondents of half- and full-Hakka parentage were also significantly

different in their Hakka proficiency ($p=0.01$). The mean values show that the respondents with full Hakka parentage spoke more Hakka ($M=9.40$) than those with half-Hakka parentage ($M=3.46$). The results indicate that when both parents are Hakka, there is better intergenerational transmission of the Hakka dialect. Respondents with full Hakka parentage ($M=2.99$) were also more proficient than those with half-Hakka parentage ($M=2.30$). The results indicate that mixed marriages with other Chinese dialect groups caused Hakka to lose speakers.

The t-tests showed that there were no significant differences between female and male respondents in their Hakka usage and Hakka proficiency. The Pearson correlation tests showed that there were no significant relationships between the respondents' socio-economic status and Hakka usage, and no association was found between the respondents' socio-economic status and Hakka proficiency. In sum, Hakka parentage has a stronger influence on the intergenerational transmission of the Hakka language because it influenced both Hakka usage and Hakka proficiency, whereas Buddhist religious practices allowed the Hakka youth to develop their proficiency further but did not increase their Hakka usage in other domains of language use.

6. DISCUSSION

The study on Hakka youth showed that the vitality of Hakka in Johor is at EGIDS Level 6b (Threatened). Hakka has the identity function of a home language, and it is used for face-to-face communication by all generations, but the number of speakers in the youngest generation (i.e. the Hakka youth) has severely declined.

Hakka is threatened by Mandarin to the extent that Hakka is used in only 5.17% of communicative situations in six domains, namely, family, friendship, religious, education, employment, and mass media. The family domain, which is the stronghold of Chinese dialect usage, has already been conquered by Mandarin due to Mandarin education and mixed marriage. To begin with, almost all (98.69%) of the Hakka youth were Chinese-educated, which makes the school language into a home language (Lee and Ting, 2016; Luykx, 2005; Schieffelin and Ochs 1985;

Spolsky, 2012; X Wang, 2017; Young, 1988). In addition, a majority (70.78%) of the Hakka youth had half-Hakka parentage. The results showed significant differences in both Hakka usage and Hakka proficiency between the Hakka youth with half- and full-Hakka parentage. The inevitable consequence of Mandarin education and mixed marriage is weak intergenerational transmission of the Hakka dialect, because only 8.50% of the Hakka youth spoke Hakka with their parents, and only 33.55% spoke Hakka with paternal grandparents. This is the maximum proportion of respondents who could carry on conversations in Hakka. Their proficiency in Hakka is wanting, because only 25.97% could speak fluently enough to give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of topics. A majority of the Hakka youth had difficulties conversing in Hakka. Therefore, their Hakka proficiency is not sustainable for transmission of the language to the next generation, as their proficiency level would not allow them to converse properly with their future children in Hakka. The easy alternative is Mandarin, which the Hakka youth are already using about 95% of the time in daily communication.

While the current situation is sustainable for the Hakka dialect (EGIDS Level 6b), an impending language shift is inevitable. The fact that Hakka is the second largest group in Kluang does not help the situation. Although Hokkien is the largest Chinese dialect group in Kluang, there was not much evidence of Hokkien usage (less than 2%) among the Hakka youth. This is because the parents and the youth are swept along by the tide to use Mandarin, a symbol of Chinese identity propagated by Chinese politicians through mass media (Sim, 2012; X. Wang, 2017). Among the Chinese dialect groups, the Hakka are the first to reject Hakka identity in favour of a pan-Chinese identity, based on studies on the younger generation in Kuching, Sarawak (Ting, 2018; Ting and Chang, 2008). In contrast, the younger generation of the Foochow qualifies their Foochow identity by identifying themselves as “half-Foochow who cannot speak Foochow” (Ting and Mahadhir, 2009). The Hokkien are proud of their Hokkien identity and speak their dialect (Puah and Ting, 2015; Ting and Puah, 2015).

This study has uncovered three factors that may delay the impending language shift among the Hakka, namely, Hakka-Hakka marriages,

fathers speaking Hakka to their children, and intensification of Hakka usage in Buddhist religious practices. The results showed that the Christian Hakka youth used only Mandarin in the religious domain but the Buddhist Hakka youth also used dialects for praying and speaking with religious leaders. The findings suggest that the Buddhist religious arena can be a good avenue to intensify use of the Hakka dialect. Studies have highlighted the functions of Hakka associations in revitalizing Hakka awareness (Ungsitipoonporn, 2007; L. J. Wang, 2017), but the younger generation are not interested in cultural and dialect-based associations. Many of the association activities are conducted in Mandarin, although Ong (2018) has encountered representatives of Hakka clan associations who consider themselves as language promoters, and make it a point to deliver speeches in Hakka at the association events, but they are at least in their sixties. Nevertheless, if they are Buddhists, then they are involved in Buddhist religious practices, and temples have an opportunity to work at Hakka language maintenance. Among the three factors that may slow down the loss of the Hakka dialect, this is probably the most feasible strategy. It is quite impossible to dictate Hakka-Hakka marriages in this modern era when prearranged marriages are out of the question. The incidence of fathers speaking the Hakka dialect to their children is rather improbable, which is why transmission of the ethnic language by mothers receives more attention. However, not all is lost because if the Hakka parents realize that their dialect may no longer be passed on by their grandchildren, they may speak more Hakka to their children – and this is possible because currently, the male relatives of the Hakka youth are speaking more Hakka with them than the female relatives.

A limitation of this study is the overwhelmingly large number of Chinese-educated respondents, which limits the findings of this study to Hakka youth with a Chinese educational background. Based on the medium of instruction in primary school, 98.69% of the respondents are Chinese-educated in this study. The tipping towards predominantly Chinese-educated respondents is unavoidable in studies because about 90% of Chinese children enrol in Chinese primary schools (Lee, Ting, and Lo, 2017; X. Wang, 2017). Nevertheless, researchers can conduct studies among the Malay-educated Chinese youth to verify if Mandarin

usage is as threatening to Chinese dialect usage as for Chinese-educated youth. The extensive use of Mandarin shows clearly that Hakka youth no longer hold on to the traditional belief that the Hakka language is a symbol of their ethnic identity (Jones, 2010; L J Wang, 2017; X Wang, 2017). They are, in fact, quicker to drop their Hakka identity in favour of a pan-Chinese identity, compared to other Chinese dialect groups. Therefore, cross-dialect group studies should be conducted to contextualize the internal and external forces engendering the willing disengagement from the Hakka dialectal identity. These studies will shed light on the changeable Hakka identity, which is undergoing continual self-construction and reconstruction through the influence of contemporary developments at the local, national, and global levels (L. J. Wang, 2017).

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APPENDICES

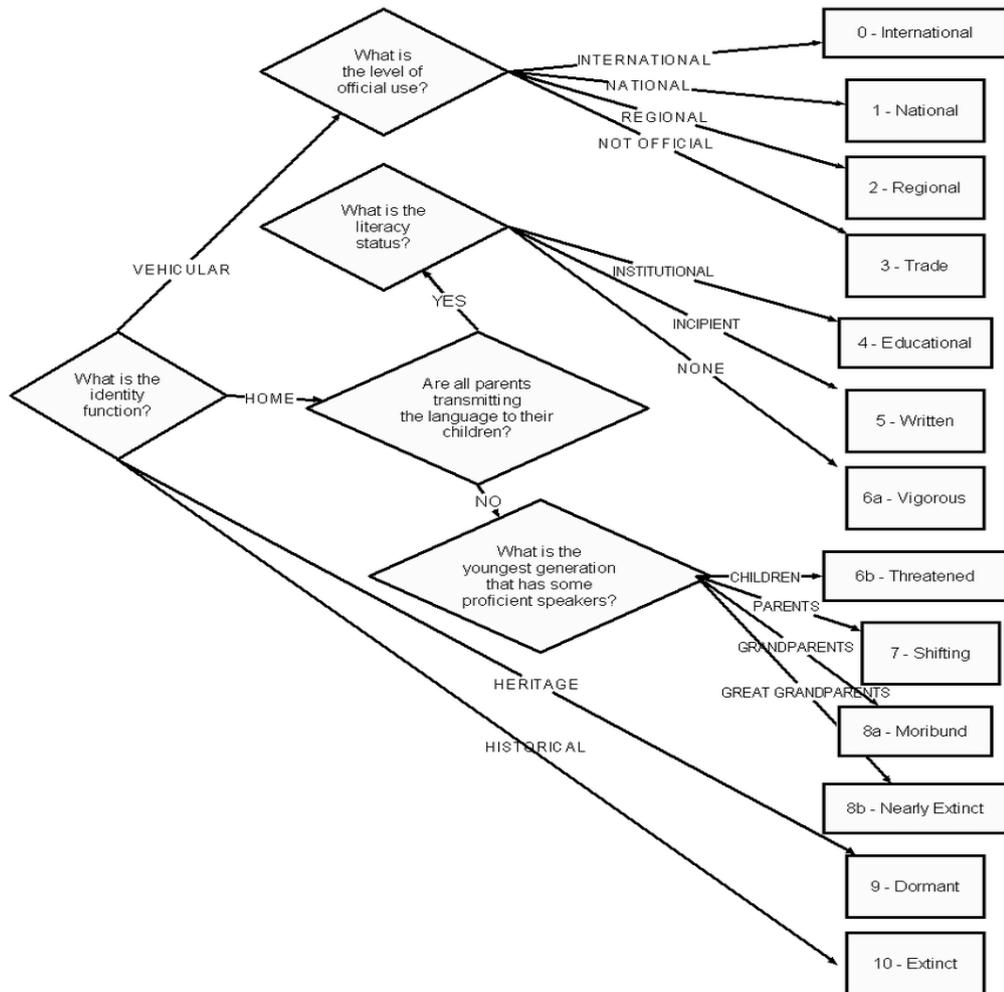
Appendix A. EGIDS levels for vitality of languages (Lewis and Simons, 2010)

Level	Label	Description
0	International	The language is widely used between nations in trade, knowledge exchange, and international policy.
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the national level.
2	Provincial	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government within major administrative subdivisions of a nation.
3	Wider Communication	The language is used in work and mass media without official status to transcend language differences across a region.
4	Educational	The language is in vigorous use, with standardisation and literature being sustained through a widespread system of institutionally supported education.
5	Developing	The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardised form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
6a	Vigorous	The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable.
6b	Threatened	The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users.
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation can use the language among themselves, but it is not being transmitted to children.
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older.

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8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining users of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community, but no one has more than symbolic proficiency.
10	Extinct	The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Appendix B. EGIDS decision tree (Lewis and Simons, 2010)



Appendix C. Hakka Vitality Questionnaire

Hello everyone. I am Hoo Hui Yee, a third year student of Bachelor of Arts (Linguistic) in University Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas). My final year project is on language choices and attitudes of Hakka youths in Kluang, Johor. Your information will be kept confidential. If you are a Hakka who aged between 15 and 30 that came from Kluang, Johor, and agree to participate in this study, I invite you to fill in the questionnaire. This questionnaire will only take less than 15 minutes from you to fill in.
(大家好。我是何慧仪，来自马来西亚砂劳越大学的第三年语言系学生。我的毕业宿题是关于柔佛州居銮县客家青年的语言选择以及对客家话的看法。您的参与是自愿性的，您可以随时退出此研究。您的所有信息将被保密。如果您是来自于柔佛州居銮县、年龄介于 15 至 30 岁之间的客家人，并且同意参加本研究，我邀请您填写此问卷。此问卷只需您不到 15 分钟的时间来回答。)

1. Gender (性别)
 - a. Male (男)
 - b. Female (女)
2. Age (年龄)
 - a. 15-19
 - b. 20-25
 - c. 26-30
3. Religion (宗教)
 - a. Buddhist (佛教)
 - b. Christian (基督教)
 - c. Other (其他): _____
4. Medium of instruction in primary school (小学教学语言)
 - a. Mandarin (华语)
 - b. English (英语)
 - c. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - d. Other (其他): _____
5. Medium of instruction in secondary school (中学教学语言)
 - a. Mandarin (华语)
 - b. English (英语)
 - c. Standard Malay (马来语)

- d. Other (其他): _____
6. Medium of instruction in university (大学教学语言)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Other (其他): _____
 - Not applicable (不适用)
7. Please write down your occupation. (请写下您的职业。)
- _____
8. Monthly income (月收入)
- Less than RM1,500 (少于 RM1,500)
 - RM1,501-RM3,000
 - RM3,001-RM4,500
 - RM4,501-RM6,000
 - RM6,001-RM7,500
 - More than RM7,500 (多于 RM7,500)
9. Please write down your father's ethnic group. (请写下您父亲的籍贯。)
- _____
10. Please write down your father's occupation. (请写下您父亲的职业。)
- _____
11. Please write down your mother's ethnic group. (请写下您母亲的籍贯。)
- _____
12. Please write down your mother's occupation. (请写下您母亲的职业。)
- _____
13. How well do you UNDERSTAND the languages when you listen to the language being spoken? (您在聆听以下语言时，您对该语言的理解程度如何?)
- Mandarin
 - Can understand some words if said slowly and clearly (当对方的语速慢且清楚时，能理解某些词语)

- (ii) Can get the topic of the conversation that is conducted slowly and clearly (当对方的语速慢 且清楚时，能明白对话时的话题)
- (iii) Can generally follow main points of everyday conversation that is conducted clearly (当日常 对话很清楚地进行时，我可以大概掌握对话要点)
- (iv) Can get the content with some effort but may find it hard to participate effectively in the conversation (需要一些时间来明白对话内容，但可能难以有效地参与对话)
- (v) Can easily follow complex conversations conducted at a natural speed (可以轻松地跟上以自然速度进行的复杂的对话)

b. English

- (i) Can understand some words if said slowly and clearly (当对方的语速慢且清楚时，能理解某些词语)
- (ii) Can get the topic of the conversation that is conducted slowly and clearly (当对方的语速慢 且清楚时，能明白对话时的话题)
- (iii) Can generally follow main points of everyday conversation that is conducted clearly (当日常 对话很清楚地进行时，我可以大概掌握对话要点)
- (iv) Can get the content with some effort but may find it hard to participate effectively in the conversation (需要一些时间来明白对话内容，但可能难以有效地参与对话)
- (v) Can easily follow complex conversations conducted at a natural speed (可以轻松地跟上以自然速度进行的复杂的对话)

c. Standard Malay

- (i) Can understand some words if said slowly and clearly (当对方的语速慢且清楚时，能理解某些词语)
- (ii) Can get the topic of the conversation that is conducted slowly and clearly (当对方的语速慢 且清楚时，能明白对话时的话题)

- (iii) Can generally follow main points of everyday conversation that is conducted clearly (当日常 对话很清楚地进行时，我可以大概掌握对话要点)
- (iv) Can get the content with some effort but may find it hard to participate effectively in the conversation (需要一些时间来明白对话内容，但可能难以有效地参与对话)
- (v) Can easily follow complex conversations conducted at a natural speed (可以轻松地跟上以自然速度进行的复杂的对话)

d. Hakka

- (i) Can understand some words if said slowly and clearly (当对方的语速慢且清楚时，能理解某些词语)
- (ii) Can get the topic of the conversation that is conducted slowly and clearly (当对方的语速慢 且清楚时，能明白对话时的话题)
- (iii) Can generally follow main points of everyday conversation that is conducted clearly (当日常 对话很清楚地进行时，我可以大概掌握对话要点)
- (iv) Can get the content with some effort but may find it hard to participate effectively in the conversation (需要一些时间来明白对话内容，但可能难以有效地参与对话)
- (v) Can easily follow complex conversations conducted at a natural speed (可以轻松地跟上以自然速度进行的复杂的对话)

14. How well do you SPEAK the languages? (您对下列语言的对话能力如何?)

a. Mandarin

- (i) Can say some words (能表达某些字)
- (ii) Can say simple sentences to describe something (能运用简单的句子来描述某些事)
- (iii) Can speak quite fluently to describe something familiar (能流利地描述熟悉的事物)

- (iv) Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of topics (对于广泛的主题能给予清晰，详细的描述)
- (v) Can give clear, detailed descriptions on complex topics and speak smoothly (对于复杂的主题能够流畅地给出清晰，详细的描述)

b. English

- (i) Can say some words (能表达某些字)
- (ii) Can say simple sentences to describe something (能运用简单的句子来描述某些事)
- (iii) Can speak quite fluently to describe something familiar (能流利地描述熟悉的事物)
- (iv) Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of topics (对于广泛的主题能给予清晰，详细的描述)
- (v) Can give clear, detailed descriptions on complex topics and speak smoothly (对于复杂的主题能够流畅地给出清晰，详细的描述)

c. Standard Malay

- (i) Can say some words (能表达某些字)
- (ii) Can say simple sentences to describe something (能运用简单的句子来描述某些事)
- (iii) Can speak quite fluently to describe something familiar (能流利地描述熟悉的事物)
- (iv) Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of topics (对于广泛的主题能给予清晰，详细的描述)
- (v) Can give clear, detailed descriptions on complex topics and speak smoothly (对于复杂的主题能够流畅地给出清晰，详细的描述)

d. Hakka

- (i) Can say some words (能表达某些字)
- (ii) Can say simple sentences to describe something (能运用简单的句子来描述某些事)
- (iii) Can speak quite fluently to describe something familiar (能流利地描述熟悉的事物)

- (iv) Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of topics (对于广泛的主题能给予清晰，详细的描述)
 - (v) Can give clear, detailed descriptions on complex topics and speak smoothly (对于复杂的主题能够流畅地给出清晰，详细的描述)
15. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your PARENTS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与父母沟通?)
- a. Mandarin (华语)
 - b. English (英语)
 - c. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - d. Hakka (客家话)
 - e. Other (其他)
16. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your SIBLINGS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与兄弟姐妹沟通?)
- a. Mandarin (华语)
 - b. English (英语)
 - c. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - d. Hakka (客家话)
 - e. Other (其他)
17. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your GRANDPARENTS ON FATHER'S SIDE? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与爷爷和奶奶沟通?)
- a. Mandarin (华语)
 - b. English (英语)
 - c. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - d. Hakka (客家话)
 - e. Other (其他)

18. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your UNCLAS AND AUNTS ON FATHER'S SIDE? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与伯伯，叔叔和姑姑沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)
19. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your COUSINS ON FATHER'S SIDE? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与父亲家的堂/表兄弟姐妹沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)
20. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your GRANDPARENTS ON MOTHER'S SIDE? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与外公和外婆沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)
21. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your UNCLAS AND AUNTS ON MOTHER'S SIDE? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与舅舅和阿姨沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)

22. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your COUSINS ON MOTHER'S SIDE? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与母亲家的表兄弟姐妹沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)
23. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your HAKKA FRIENDS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与客家朋友沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)
24. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your CHINESE FRIENDS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与华人朋友沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)
25. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your NEIGHBORS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与邻居沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)

26. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with your STRANGERS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与陌生人沟通?)
- a. Mandarin (华语)
 - b. English (英语)
 - c. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - d. Hakka (客家话)
 - e. Other (其他)
27. Which language / dialect did you use **MOST** frequently FOR PRAYING? (您在祈祷时最常使用什么语言/方言?)
- a. Mandarin (华语)
 - b. English (英语)
 - c. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - d. Hakka (客家话)
 - e. Other (其他)
28. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently when talking with RELIGIOUS LEADERS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与宗教领袖沟通?)
- a. Mandarin (华语)
 - b. English (英语)
 - c. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - d. Hakka (客家话)
 - e. Other (其他)
29. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently in with PRINCIPALS / DEANS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与校长/院长沟通?)
- a. Mandarin (华语)
 - b. English (英语)
 - c. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - d. Hakka (客家话)
 - e. Other (其他)

30. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently in with TEACHERS / LECTURERS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与老师/教授沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)
31. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently in with OFFICE STAFF? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与办公室职员沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)
32. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently in with CLASSMATES? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与同学沟通?)
- Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)
33. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with EMPLOYERS / SUPERVISORS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与雇主/主管沟通?)
- Not applicable (不适用)
 - Mandarin (华语)
 - English (英语)
 - Standard Malay (马来语)
 - Hakka (客家话)
 - Other (其他)

34. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with COLLEAGUES? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与同事沟通?)
- a. Not applicable (不适用)
 - b. Mandarin (华语)
 - c. English (英语)
 - d. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - e. Hakka (客家话)
 - f. Other (其他)
35. Which language / dialect did you speak **MOST** frequently with CUSTOMERS? (您最常使用什么语言/方言来与客户沟通?)
- a. Not applicable (不适用)
 - b. Mandarin (华语)
 - c. English (英语)
 - d. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - e. Hakka (客家话)
 - f. Other (其他)
36. What language do you PREFER for news reading [printed / online / radio]? (您喜欢阅读哪种语言的新闻【印刷/在线/广播】)?
- a. Mandarin (华语)
 - b. English (英语)
 - c. Standard Malay (马来语)
 - d. Hakka (客家话)
 - e. Other (其他)
37. Should people do more to keep the Hakka strong among the young people? (是否有更多行动来鼓励年轻人持续使用客家话?)
- a. Yes (应该)
 - b. No (不应该)

38. Please explain your response above. If “yes”, why? How? If “no”, why? ***Please kindly fill in this part, as this is very important for my study.

(请解释您上述的回答。如果“应该”，为什么？人们应该如何鼓励年轻人持续使用客家话？如果“不应该”，为什么？)

***请大家填写此部分，因为此部分对于我的研究十分重要。

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

*** 谢谢大家的合作。***

馬來西亞柔佛州客家語的生命力

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馬來西亞砂拉越大學

此研究利用擴大世代失調分級表(EGIDS)考察了柔佛州客家語的生命力。有關語言熟練程度與語言選擇的問卷調查涉及了 153 位年齡介於 15 至 30 歲的客家青年。結果顯示客家語的生命力位於 EGIDS 中的 6b 級別（威脅級）。客家語仍然被使用於幾代人中間對面的交流，但它的使用人口正在流失中。客家語的身份為家庭語言，具有較弱的代際傳播能力。僅有 8.50% 的被調查者與他們的父母說客家語，以及 33.33% 的被調查者與他們的祖父母說客家語。客家青年被視為會說客家語的最年輕一代，但是客家語的使用率僅有 35.95%。他們在各個場域都使用華語，除了也使用英語和馬來語的就業與教育場域。此外，華語也在家庭，友誼，以及宗教場域中佔據了主導地位。他們的客家語熟練程度適中，並且大多數人只能遵循日常談話的要點以及述說簡單的句子。客家血統與宗教背景影響着客家青年的客家語熟練程度以及客家語的使用量。

關鍵字：客家、華語、生命力、身份、擴大世代失調分級表 (EGIDS)