

**LANGUAGE CHOICE AND USE AMONG SINO-NATIVE FAMILIES IN  
PENAMPANG, SABAH**

**JANE WONG KON LING  
CHEONG SHAW MEI  
Universiti Malaysia Sabah**

[jane@ums.edu.my](mailto:jane@ums.edu.my)  
[meicheong71@gmail.com](mailto:meicheong71@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT**

Language choice and use that can be observed in a multilingual society is an interesting study. This phenomenon is quite compelling because of the ethnics' diversity in Sabah, Malaysia. This paper discusses the language choice and use among the Sino-Natives families in Penampang, Sabah. Previous studies on the younger generation of the Kadazan ethnic (Nor Aina Dani and Syeril Patrisia Mining, 2016) and on Sabahans, in general (Wong, 2002 & 2012) found that Sabah Malay is used widely in everyday communication as compared to the native languages. Sabah Malay is also used more frequently than their mother tongues. This proves that Sabah Malay has become the lingua franca in everyday interactions of the multi-ethnic society in Sabah. This raises the question on the pattern of language choice and use among the Sino-Native families. The study involved 123 participants of Form 4 Sino-Native students from six schools in the district. A constructed questionnaire was used as the instrument in this study. Data analysis focused on the language choice and use in the family domain. An initial review found that Sabah Malay is widely used in daily communication among the family members of the respondents.