Language policy and attitudes toward the Kadazandusun language in Malaysia

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The critical implications of failed language policy and language planning by an authoritative body can be language decline and eventual language death. There are interrelated essential components of language development that must be taken into account. These components include language acquisition, language attitudes, language use, and language choice that determine the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) of language survival in a multilingual society.

This research study attempts to investigate and identify the essential components that contribute to the decline of Kadazandusun language, a language exclusively confined to the native people of Sabah, Eastern Malaysia. The study is based on student performance and attitudes towards Kadazandusun since the introduction of Kadazandusun language as a school subject in 1995. It attempts to determine the effectiveness of language policy and language planning in a the multilingual education system in Malaysia.

The role of various institutions (beginning at home) provide the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), the attitude of parents and the community at large on the issues of language use and choice together determine the CSFs of language policy and language planning in a multilingual society. This exploratory research highlights those CSFs and the underlying challenges for academic and analytical purposes.

It is hoped that the findings of this research study will provide insights and useful information to promote further discussions and develop a new intellectual paradigm that will enhance language development through language policy and language planning.