

# 50 years on, and we still don't have a common language

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WHY the fuss over referring to the national language as Bahasa Malaysia or Bahasa Melayu? Malaysia has been independent now for 50 years, but our language has still not united us as Malaysians. If Bahasa Malaysia is supposed to unite us all, why is the language not widely used among the different races?

It should be used in the office, at home and at official or non-official functions, and not only in schools. Advertisements and notices are still not fully in Bahasa Malaysia.

The Government cannot force all the races to speak and write in Bahasa Malaysia, but if all of us claim to be "Malaysian," we should be communicating in Bahasa Malaysia after 50 years of independence.

Yet, the Malays are more comfortable speaking Bahasa Melayu, the Indians either English or Tamil, and the Chinese their dialect or English. I have never seen non-Malay parents speak to their children in Bahasa Malaysia. We need to ask ourselves,

and answer from our heart.

Look at Indonesia. Everybody there speaks the same language, even though they still have their mother tongue at heart.

All Malaysians must make this sacrifice. If not, where is our direction in the usage of a common Bahasa Malaysia that we claim can unite us?

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