# Generation Z's Perceptions of The Malay Language in The Industrial Revolution 4.0 Era: A Sociocognitive Analysis

## Siti Nurul Jannah Fital, Faten Khalida Khalid
Universiti Malaysia Perlis Malaysia

## Junaini Kasdan
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Malaysia

**Abstract**
Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0) which emphasizes on Science and Technology and the need to master these fields in English is seen to have an impact on the perceptions of Generation Z (Gen Z) towards Malay language. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyse the levels of perception towards Malay language among Generation Z, who are born and grew up in this era. Data was obtained from 660 respondents through a survey conducted through Google Form. The respondents consisted of the Generation Z throughout Malaysia who received invitations based on the set criteria, including urban, suburban and rural groups. The research instrument developed specifically for this study has a high level of validity and reliability, which is $\alpha$ = .75 to $\alpha$ = .91. Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25.0. This study utilizes Sociocognitive Theory and the sociocognitive approach to describe the relationship between social background and the levels of perception of the Malay language among Gen Z. In general, this study found that only 14.0% of Gen Z have a positive perception and 13.0% have a highly positive perception of the Malay language. While 56.0% of Gen Z in this study had a negative perception and 17.0% had a highly negative perception of the Malay language.
**Keywords:** Perception, Identity, Gen Z, Sociocognitive, Industrial Revolution 4.0

**Introduction**
Malaysia is based on a pluralistic society that brings together differences of will and desire while at the same time also wants to protect its own race and ethnicity. In order to create unity among races, a country needs a medium which can be used by all races regardless of religion and culture. The medium which is held by all races will finally become an identity for the country. In Malaysian context, using and practicing Malay language in all aspects is a symbol of Malaysian identity. However, the recognition of Malay language as national and official language once upon a time was an urgent need before Malaya achieved independence. After more than six decades the country has achieved independence, the language patterns of Malaysians who have different ideologies have shown significant

changes. The strength of Malay identity cannot be ascertained without a comprehensive study. In addition, with the progress of IR 4.0 which places great importance on the mastery of foreign languages is seen as capable of eroding the identity of Malay speakers.

Hamzah (2012) stated that globalisation is a specific phenomenon in human civilization that moves directly in the global population and is a part of the global human process that touches aspects of life comprehensively. Hamid et al (2010) who found that teenagers aged 20 and under tend to choose and be influenced by foreign cultures. The researcher's study also shows that modernisation, globalisation and the development of science and technology have influenced the teenagers' minds, causing the lack of confidence in the ability of the Malay language in a globalized world. The same symptoms also happened to the Malay language of Brunei when Chuchu's study (2008) found that the generation aged 20 and below already considered the Malay language of Brunei in the family greeting system as obsolete in their time because they were more comfortable using the greeting language in English. According to researchers, the Malay language of Brunei is also seen as having no importance and economic value since the use of English is more dominant in driving Brunei's economy. Globalisation has a bad implication towards the identity of a nation which is also supported by Marsudi (2009) who found that the rapid development of the digital technology era has demanded a high mastery of the English language thus marginalising the position of Indonesian language. The study also found that the sense of pride in the Indonesian language which is a symbol of identity among the Indonesian nation has decreased due to the society's attitude on preferring foreign language over Indonesian language. Yusuff & Zakaria (2018) found that the decline in the use of Kelantanese dialect among Kelantanese is the result of the current modernity and globalisation.

The progress of the IR 4.0 era was also found to have an impact on the country's education system. This phenomenon has become a catalyst for the importance of mastering the English language in Malaysia. Beginning on 19 July, 2002, as a measure to overcome the weakness of English language proficiency among students, the council of ministers proposed to implement the policy of Teaching and Learning of Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI). The decision was announced by the Minister of Education on 20 July 2002. PPSMI was implemented in stages starting at the beginning of 2003 involving Year 1, Form 1 and Lower Form 6 students. The policy change process continued until all levels of primary and secondary education were involved in 2008. The implementation of this PPSMI policy has involved Gen Z students born between 1995 to 2010.

A study conducted by Chew (2008) found that, within three years of the implementation of PPSMI, students had already shown changes in their attitudes, perceptions and ways of speaking. Students tend to mix Malay-English (BM-BI). The study also found that Malay language teachers showed less satisfaction with PPSMI because PPSMI affects the use of the Malay language. The students were found to be more inclined to use English in discussions in class and with peers. The researcher predicted that PPSMI will affect the status and position of the Malay language as the main language of instruction and communication for students in the long term.

The implementation of PPSMI according to Sani (2009) has caused a decline in the use of Malay as the language of instruction and communication among students. According to the researcher, the percentage of the use of the Malay language through subjects is decreasing

according to the level of education. At the primary school level, the allocation of time for subjects using the Malay language is as much as 60%, becoming 62% at the lower secondary school level, then the percentage plummets to 36% at the upper secondary level. The use of Malay language at the upper secondary level further declined to 20%. The situation became increasingly bleak at the higher education level until only 9% of courses were offered in Malay.

The impact of IR 4.0 does not only involve changes in educational patterns at the school level, but also involves changes in the academic structure at the higher education level. All higher education institutions, whether public or private, strive hard to ensure that the products produced through the programs offered meet the demands of the job market which are based on the IR 4.0. Sawal Hamid, cited in Noorashid (2019) sees the Malaysian Higher Education system as moving forward in the development of IR 4.0. A study of Malay language identity among public university students conducted by Mahamod et al (2017) found that the aspect of practicing the Malay language among students, was found to be the lowest compared to the aspect of comprehension and appreciation in all public universities studied. According to the researcher, this phenomenon occurs due to the university's emphasis on oral and written proficiency in English language, thus affecting the formation of the level of Malay identity in terms of comprehension, appreciation and the practicing of Malay language among the public university students involved. Sariyan (2008) thought that the reduction of the Malay language roles in the education system, the effects of several decisions and exclusion of Malay language teaching as a compulsory subject, give a brief overview of the position of Malay language in Malaysian education system, as well as a reflection of attitudes and perceptions of the Malay language speakers towards the language itself.

Studies by Yamasaki (2020); Zwisler (2018); Akinkurolere (2018); Beck & Lam (2008) that looked at the extinction of indigenous language due to the demand of globalisation noted that the problem actually stems from the speaker's weak identity. The fade of identity eventually sees the foreign language as having a higher value than one's own language, and ultimately destroys the efforts to preserve the indigeneous language. The attitude of taking pride in the foreign language eventually changes their identity towards the original language and culture. Such a negative attitude is the impetus for the decline of the heritage language. A study by Venturin (2019) shows that strong sentiments or emotions can influence the relationship between identity and language, especially among the respondents of the study. The findings of the study also show that a person's cognitive ability plays a big role, which is able to influence a person's perspective on the role of their language in building their identity.

IR 4.0 which emphasizes the field of Science and Technology and the need to master those fields is seen to have implications for the construction of Malay language identity. According to Graf (2020), technological change in IR 4.0 can not only affect the position and role of Malay language as the national language, but also affect individual identity, the concept of Malay race and Malaysian nation. The researcher asserts that the position of the Malay language as a symbol of identity of its speakers will not be affected, as long as active efforts to uphold and preserve the Malay language are continuously made by the speakers. Researchers also suggested that Malay language should become a more important language as the main language in the IR 4.0.

## Methodology

This study is a descriptive quantitative study that utilizes data obtained from a questionnaire. Research instruments developed specifically for this study have a high level of validity and reliability, namely $\alpha$ = .75 to $\alpha$ = .91. Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 software. There were two parts of the questions asked in the questionnaire. First, part A on the background of the respondents covers aspects of gender, location of residence, race/ethnicity and field of study. Second, part B on the perception of the respondents which consists of 10 questions with five answer choices namely agree (A), strongly agree (SA), not care (NC), disagree (DA) and strongly disagree (SDA).

## Objectives

Most of the attitudes and behaviours in human life are influenced by perception. Perception is often associated with a person's evaluation process of a certain object. Salleh (cited in Joanes et al., 2014) defines perception as a process of interpretation or a person's reaction to a stimulus or a thing and then giving meaning to that thing. This orderly process of interpretation and understanding, according to him, takes a long time and does not happen automatically. Perception in the context of this study is defined as a student's interpretation or response to the Malay language through his senses which is greatly influenced by experience, learning process, and other factors within the student himself. In this regard, Malay language is seen as an object observed by humans with their senses, and coloured by the values of each individual's personality, whether negative or positive.

Therefore, a study on Gen Z's perceptions of the Malay language as well as its relationship with the social background in which they are based is conducted to achieve the following objectives:

i.    Identify the perceptions of the Malay language among Gen Z.
ii.   Explaining the phenomenon of perception of the Malay language among Gen Z based on Sociocognitive theory.

## Hyipotheses

The scope of the study conducted by the writer is limited to the following hypotheses:

$H_1$      There is a significant difference in the perception of the Malay language among Gen Z who have different social backgrounds.

$H_2$      There is a significant relationship between perception of the Malay language among Gen Z who have different social backgrounds.

## The Influence and Relationship of Social Background with Gen Z's Perceptions of the Malay Language

Based on data insights, this study found that Gen Z's social background in this study, namely gender, place of residence, race and field of study influenced the formation of Gen Z's perceptions of the Malay language. This section will analyze the influence of social background on Gen Z's perceptions of the Malay language in this study. Perception is often associated with the process of a person's evaluation of a certain object whether he likes it or not and depends on how the individual responds to the object. According to Kotler (2000), perception is a process of how a person chooses, organizes, and interprets information input to produce a meaningful overview. Besar and Jali (2012) defined perception as a process

where an individual selects, receives, organizes, and interprets information from his environment. Perceptions are diverse and challenging to deal with if they are not managed well.

Overall, the result of the study shows that Gen Z has a very negative perception. The detail of Gen Z's perceptions of the Malay language are illustrated in  Figure 1.0 below.
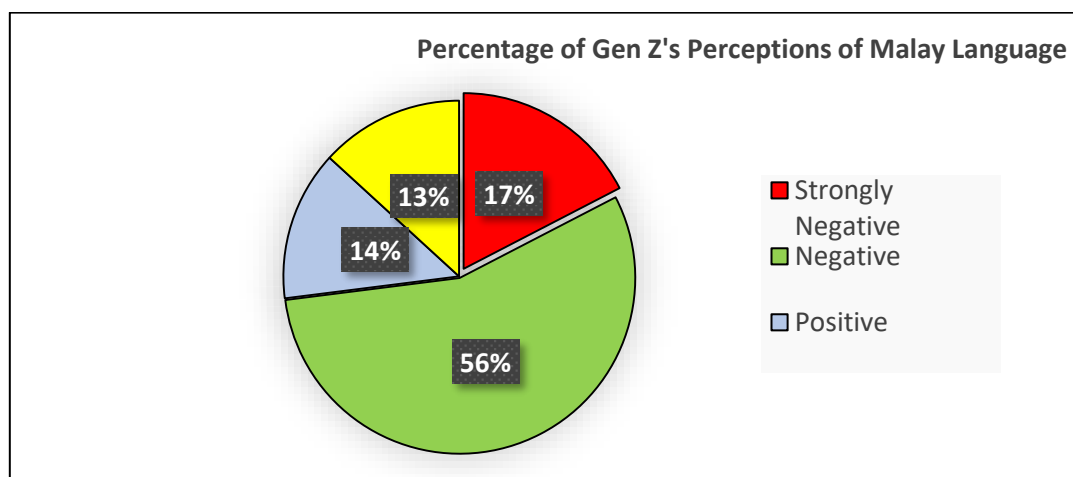


Figure 1.0. Distribution of Gen Z's Perceptions of the Malay Language

Figure 1.0 generally shows that the majority of Gen Z have a negative perception of the Malay language. It can be seen through the perception items tested in the questionnaire. These items are considered to be able to provide a detailed picture of the respondents' perceptions of the Malay language. For analysis purposes, only the perception component items with the lowest mean values that are seen to greatly influence the negative perception of Gen Z towards the Malay language will be elaborated. Details of the results of the perception items tested in the questionnaire to the respondents can be seen through Table 1.0.

Table 1.0

*Questionnaire Analysis of Gen Z's Perceptions of Malay Language*

| Dimension/Item | Percentage of Agreement | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | STS | TS | TK | S | SS | MIN |
| P1. *There is no need to make Malay language as an international language because the world today is already dominated by English language. | 28.9 | 21.8 | 20.6 | 14.8 | 13.8 | 4.7 |
| P2. All Malaysian citizens need to know the National Language Policy and the Malay language program approved by the government. | 1.4 | 3.5 | 16.7 | 31.5 | 47.0 | 7.0 |
| P3. Malay language is still relevant to be the National Language of Malaysia. | 15.2 | 7.1 | 10.8 | 17.3 | 49.7 | 3.7 |
| P4. I feel respected when I speak using good Malay language. | 1.5 | 3.9 | 23.3 | 26.2 | 45 | 6.7 |
| P5. Malay language is easier to speak and master than English or other languages. | 3.8 | 8.3 | 15.3 | 24.4 | 48.2 | 6.7 |
| **P6. Malay language is important in the development process of Malaysia.** | **47.6** | **18.6** | **11.5** | **7.4** | **14.8** | **3.8** |
| P7. Malaysian citizens need to master the Malay language well because the Malay language is important for business at international level. | 43.9 | 15.3 | 16.8 | 8.6 | 15.3 | 4.0 |
| P8. *Malay language is unable to express complex things. | 9.7 | 24.4 | 21.2 | 1.5 | 3.2 | 4.5 |
| **P9. Malay language successfully unites Malaysians who are made up of various races.** | **46.5** | **19.4** | **11.7** | **7.7** | **14.7** | **3.8** |
| P10.*English is more appropriate and accurate in terms of its meaning to express more scientific matters. | 7.4 | 16.8 | 28.0 | 19 | 18.8 | 5.5 |

*For negative statements, the value is reversed for the purpose of calculating the mean.

Looking at the possibility that gender can also influence Gen Z's perceptions of the Malay language, this study has put forward the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between gender and Gen Z's perceptions of the Malay language.Nevertheless, the results of the Chi square, $\chi^2$ = 27.684[a], p = 0.000 < 0.05,as shown in Table 1.1 shows that the the study found enough evidence to accept the hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis ($H_0$). Therefore, it is proven that there is indeed a relationship between gender and Gen Z's perceptions of the Malay language. Throughout the table, it can also be seen that Gen Z females have more positive perception than Gen Z males. Gen Z females who have a very positive perception are 20.1% (66), while Gen Z males are only 6.3% (21).

Table 1.1
*Relationship between Gender and Gen Z's Perceptions of Malay Language*

| Gender | Perception % | | | | Total | χ2 | P | w |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Highly Negative | Negative | Positive | Highly Positive | | | | |
| **Male** | 18.4 | 60.8 | 14.5 | 6.3 | 332 | 27.684 | 0.000 | 0.205 |
| **Female** | 16.5 | 50.3 | 13.1 | 20.1 | 328 | | | |

The result of the T-test in showing the value of t = -4286, p = 0.000 < 0.05 reinforces the finding that there is a significant difference in attitude among Gen Z males and females towards the Malay language. The mean for females is 5.6698, while the mean for males is 5.0967. Based on this mean value, it can be concluded that Gen Z females have a more positive perception, compared to Gen Z males with a mean difference of 5.0967.

In addition, the results of the data also show that the location of residence, i.e. urban, suburban and rural, also influences Gen Z's perceptions of the Malay language. The Chi-square test that was carried out explained that the perceptions of Gen Z in rural areas were found to be more positive towards the Malay language compared to those from urban and suburban groups although the difference was not that great. The results of the Chi-square test are as shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2
*Relationship between the Location and Gen Z's Perception of Malay Language*

| Location | Perception % | | | | Total | $\chi^2$ | P | w |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Highly Negative | Negative | Positive | Highly Positive | | | | |
| **Urban** | 20.1 | 58.9 | 14.4 | 6.7 | 389 | 57.803 | 0.000 | 0.209 |
| **Suburban** | 10.6 | 58.8 | 15.0 | 15.6 | 160 | | | |
| **Rural** | 18.0 | 39.6 | 9.9 | 32.4 | 111 | | | |

Based on the data insights in Table 1.2, the study shows that Gen Z in rural areas have more positive perception of the Malay language compared to those from urban and suburban areas. Gen Z in the urban area have a high negative perception followed by Gen Z in the suburban areas. The results from Chi-square test , $\chi^2$ = 57.803[a], *p* =0.000 < 0.05, show that this study has strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) which says that there is no significant relationship between the residential location and Gen Z's attitude towards Malay language. In fact, the location of the teenagers has a direct relationship with their attitude towards Malay language. Nevertheless, the relationship that occurs is only a weak/small relationship based on the value of p (w = 0.209).

The results of the ANOVA test, F = 18.020, p = 0.000 < 0.05 prove that there is a significant difference in perceptions among Gen Z reinforcing the finding that there is a significant difference in attitude among Gen Z in the city, suburbs and rural areas. Based on PostHoc and Sheffer values, the study recorded the mean for the city is 5.0684, the mean for

the suburbs is 5.5981, while the mean for the countryside is 6.0946. Based on this mean value, it was found that the level of perception towards the Malay language of rural Gen Z is more positive than that of Gen Z in the city and suburbs.

Furthermore, the results of the observation found that apart from gender and location, race is also one of the factors that create differences in perceptions of the Malay language among Gen Z. The results of the Chi-square test found that χ2 = 39.774a, p =0.000 < 0.05, has sufficient evidence to reject (H$_0$) null which says there is no significant relationship between race and Gen Z's perceptions of the Malay language. However, the relationship is small with Cramer's V value w = 0.142. The results of the Chi-square test are as shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3
*The Relationship between Gen Z of Different Races and The Perceptions of Malay Language*

| Race | Perception% | | | | Total | χ2 | P | w |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Highly Negative | Negative | Positive | Highly Positive | | | | |
| Malay | 19.6 | 52.2 | 10.6 | 17.6 | 414 | 39.774 | 0.000 | 0.142 |
| Chinese | 10.3 | 67.1 | 20.5 | 2.1 | 146 | | | |
| Indian | 20.3 | 49.2 | 18.6 | 11.9 | 59 | | | |
| Bumiputera | 17.1 | 58.5 | 14.6 | 9.6 | 41 | | | |

To see whether or not there is a difference in perceptions among Gen Z of different races, an ANOVA test was performed. The results of the ANOVA test, F = 1.297, p = 0.274 > 0.05 prove that there is no significant difference in perceptions among Gen Z of different races/ethnicities. Based on the ANOVA test results, the H$_0$ null which says that there is no significant difference in perceptions among Gen Z of different races/ethnicities is accepted. Based on the PostHoc and Sheffer values, the study recorded the mean overall perception for the Chinese is 5.1370, the mean for the Indians is 5.3814, the mean for the Bumiputera is 5.3878, and the mean for the Malays is 5.461. The mean for the Chinese is the lowest and the mean for the Malays is the highest. It can be assumed that Gen Z from the Malays have a more positive perception than other races.

Furthermore, the study also looked at the field of study as a factor that can influence the perceptions of Gen Z towards Malay language. The Chi-square test results, χ$^2$ = 304.849$^a$ , *p* = 0.000 < 0.05, as depicted in Table 1.4 show that this study has a strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H$_0$) which says that there is no significant relationship between Gen Z's field of study with attitudes towards Malay language. Gen Z's field of study does have a direct relationship with their perceptions of the Malay language. Nonetheless, the value of π (w = 0.392) indicates that the relationship that occurs is only at moderate level.

Table 1.4

*Relationship between the Field of Study and Gen Z's Perceptions of Malay Language*

| Field of Study | Perception% | | | | Total | χ2 | P | w |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Highly Negative | Negative | Positive | Highly Positive | | | | |
| **Engineering Technology** | 21.8 | 63.7 | 12.1 | 2.4 | 372 | 304.849 | 0.000 | 0.392 |
| **Science & Technology** | 16.7 | 72.2 | 11.1 | 0.0 | 72 | | | |
| **Medicine** | 21.6 | 70.6 | 7.8 | 0.0 | 51 | | | |
| **Economics/ Business/ Accounting** | 2.6 | 31.2 | 23.4 | 42.9 | 77 | | | |
| **Communication** | 0.0 | 11.8 | 11.8 | 68.6 | 51 | | | |
| **Language & Literature** | 16.7 | 36.7 | 20.0 | 26.7 | 30 | | | |
| **Others** | 0.0 | 42.9 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 7 | | | |

Based on the ANOVA test conducted, *F = 75.090, p = 0.000 < 0.05*, sufficiently proves that there is indeed a difference in attitude among Gen Z from different fields of study. Based on PostHoc and Sheffer values, the study recorded the highest mean for Gen Z majoring in Communication with a mean value of 8.0588, followed by the Economics/Business/Accounting 7.1675, Language & Literature 6.1833, others 5.4143, Science & Technology 4.8681, Engineering Technology 4.7984 and the lowest mean is the Medicine 4.5098. It can be concluded that in general, Gen Z majoring in Communication has a more positive perception of the Malay language and Gen Z in the field of Medicine has a negative perception of the Malay language.

**Gen Z's Perceptions of Malay Language from a Sociocognitice Perspective**
A total of 10 questionnaire items related to the perception of the Malay language were addressed to the respondents. Among the perception component items with the lowest mean values that are seen to greatly influence Gen Z's negative perception of the Malay language are related to (i) Malay language is important in the development process of Malaysia. This component item will be described in depth based on sociocognitive theory and approach.

A person's perception of the Malay language is not built by simply depending on the person's own behaviour. This is also generally influenced by other factors such as the speaker's background and environment. According to Bandura (1986), a person learns through observation, reading other people's behaviour, ang making general assumptions about the world. Bandura believed that behavior, personal variables, and the environment

will influence the formation of a person's personality. This three-way relationship is called reciprocal determinant. These three elements are interrelated in influencing a person's behavior. In the context of this study, the perception of Gen Z is a cognitive element formed from the influence of their social background. The personality formed from the reaction with the environment when highlighted in society can be a model for others to follow. This phenomenon can certainly be explained using the appropriate theory.

Through the output of this study, it was found that Gen Z's loss of identity towards the Malay language is also caused by their negative perceptions of the Malay language. Through testing the step-by-step item on the role of the Malay language in the national development process, the study found that 66.2% of Gen Z believed that the Malay language was not important in the national development process. Focused interviews conducted with Gen Z, reinforce this finding.

> *"Bukan nak cakap BM tu tak penting. Sebagai rakyat Malaysia kita kenalah mahir bertutur dalam bahasa Melayu. Tapi... kalau dalam konteks pembangunan negara ni... bahasa Inggeris tu lagi penting rasanya. Macam kitorang kat universiti ni semua buku rujukan dalam BI. Pensyarah mengajar pun dalam BI"*
> (Source: Gen Z 1)

Based on the interview, this study obtained the impression that the Gen Z involved in this study is more confident in the role of the English language compared to Malay language. This fading of identity occurs due to the influence and imitation of linguistic events received by them. Gen Z is a generation that was born and grew up in the IR 4.0 era that emphasizes the use of foreign languages, especially English. The importance of the English language in the national education system has been revealed to Gen Z through PPSMI and Dual Language Programme (DLP) policies. When the PPSMI policy was introduced by the government at that time, this situation has further strengthened the perception of some groups that mastery of the English language is very important to live in this modern era. These Gen Z children have been prepared by their parents with various added values to ride the tide of globalisation, including the ability to master foreign languages, especially English. Parents wish for their children to efficiently master the English language skills so that they will not drop out and fall behind in learning as well as be able to thrive themselves in the competitive job market. This circumstance causes some of the Gen Z to have been exposed to the use of bilingualism since they were born.

The importance of mastering the English language to be more competitive has been instilled in the minds of Gen Z by their parents since they were children. Gen Z will imitate the living model that feels most accurate and appropriate. In the sociocognitive context, parents and family are living models that have influenced the thinking and linguistic behavior of Gen Z. This is in accordance with the sociocognitive theory which emphasizes that learning occurs by observing the behavior of others and identifying the consequences of imitation. The importance of being competent and proficient in English has been reinforced in the cognition of Gen Z, in accordance with the stimulus given by the education system, that mastery of English is an advantage to market oneself in the competitive competition of the career sector. This cognitive effect takes many forms. Sociocognitive theory says that most human behavior is determined by what they think includes personal goals to be achieved. The higher their

confidence, the higher the goals set and the higher the commitment placed in achieving their goals:

> Self-efficacy values influence self-help or self-destructive thinking habits. These mental effects come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Many aspects of human actions are influenced by forethought embodied in cognized goals, and personal goal-setting is influenced by self-assessment of skill. The higher the expectations people set for themselves and the more committed they are, the greater their perceived self-efficacy.
>
> (Bandura 1989: 1175)

Apart from that, society nowadays has shown a change in the way of thinking and lifestyle. Most parents do not only prepare their children with English proficiency, but also strive to ensure that their children have other language skills such as Mandarin, Japanese, German and so on. These foreign language courses have not only been made compulsory in some schools, but have also been made as one of the elective subjects at the higher education level that students must take as their graduation requirements. The perceptions of Malay language among children nowadays to some extent, have been eroded by changes in education patterns, thinking and lifestyle in today's society. Attention to linguistic events happening around them has been recorded and stored in their memory. So that for a long period of time, without realizing this recorded memory has become ingrained in them which ultimately affects their identity towards the Malay language.

The results of the questionnaire data analysis show that Gen Z in this study, who stated that Malay language is not important in the process of national development, as many as 64.3% came from those living in urban areas and 23.4% who lived in suburban areas. Gen Z who live in cities are more exposed and influenced bu foreign languages, especially English. The progress in the cities also affects the Gen Z in the suburbs as a result of the rapid urbanisation.

The use of English is indeed higher in urban areas. However, due to the rapid urbanisation and the advancement of broadband network access, Gen Z in the suburbs and rural areas are equally affected. People living in villages begin to imitate by using English to communicate with small kids. Marzuki (2016) reported in Astro Awani reinforcing this point byu saying that every year, the level of English language use in rural and urban schools has shown a gap that is getting smaller. This news report also quotes the statement of the former Deputy Minister of Education, Chong Sin Woon, who stated that English literacy among students in the city is at a level of 89.9% while students in the countryside recorded English literacy at a level of 83.3%. Seong (2019) argues that economic changes such as modernization, industrialization and urbanization are factors that cause a person or group to switch to a language associated with modern life and a high and sophisticated standard of living. English is among several other languages that are often associated with economic progress (Seong, 2019).

This study also found that the importance of the Malay language in the national development process was denied by 92.2% of Gen Z studying Medicine, 81.9% from Science & Technology and 78.8% from Engineering Technology. Since birth, Gen Z has been exposed

to the use of English language, then followed by the education system that uses English as medium of instruction for several subjects at the primary and secondary schools, and further welcomed by the system at the higher education institutions where 90.0% use English as the main medium of teaching and learning sessions. Based on the interview, it can also be detected that there is a reciprocal relationship between the surrounding, cognition and Malay language identity among Gen Z. They are in accordance with the reciprocal relationship that become the basis of sociocognitive theory.

**Conclusion**
In conclusion, this study has explained the phenomenon of perception of the Malay language among Gen Z, using sociocognitive theory and has achieved the objective of the study. This study found that the formation of the perception of Gen Z in this study begins with the process of observing and imitating the behavior of role models. Living role models such as parents, immediate family, the surrounding community and teachers are the strongest influences on the formation of Gen Z's perception of the Malay language. Living role models often respond to the cognition of Gen Z to form their identity, which is to accept the form or pattern of language that occurs in society. The analysis of the relationship between the social background of Gen Z and the perception of the Malay language shows that the social background also plays a role in influencing the formation of the perception of the Malay language. The results of the study analysis prove that social background such as gender, place of residence, race/ethnicity and field of study have a significant relationship and difference with the level of perception of the Malay language among Gen Z.

**Corresponding Author**
Faten Khalida Khalid
Universiti Malaysia Perlis Malaysia
Email: faten@unimap.edy.my

**References**
Akinkurolere, S. O. (2018). A Study on the Extinction of Indigenous Languages in Nigeria: Causes   and Possible Solutions. *Annals of Language and Literature, 2*(1), 22-26.
Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Faoundations of Thoughts and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory.* Englewood Cliffs. NJ.: Prentice-Hall.
Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist,* 1175-1184.
Beck, D., & Lam, Y. (2008). Language loss and linguistic suicide: A case study from the Sierra Norte de Puebla, Mexico. *Toronto Working Papers in Linguistics, 27.*
Besar, J. A., & Jali, M. F. M. ( 2010). Pemansuhan dasar PPSMI : tinjauan daripada persepsi parti politik , ahli akademik dan NGO serta pengalaman di sekolah. *Jurnal Melayu,* (5), 177-197. Retrieved from http://journalarticle.ukm.my/3025/1/01ADNAN_JUSOH.pdf.

Chew, F. P. (2008). Pengajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris (PPSMI): penerimaan dan kesannya terhadap status Bahasa Melayu. *Jurnal Sarjana, (*23), 52-71. Retrieved
from http://www.myjurnal.my/filebank/published_article/14562/Art_4.PDF.

Chuchu, J. (2008). Bahasa Melayu Brunei dan identiti: hala tuju ke depan.*Jurnal Linguistik Indonesia, 2*, 185-196.

Graf, A. (2020). Cabaran Pelestarian Bahasa Melayu Menjelang Revolusi Industri Keempat. *Melayu: Jurnal Antarabangsa Dunia Melayu, 13*(1), 161-172. Retrieved from http://jurnal.dbp.my/index.php/Melayu/article/view/5776

Hamid, Z., Aman, R., & Harun, K. (2010). Sikap Terhadap Bahasa Melayu: Satu Kajian Kes Di Pantai Timur Semenanjung. *Jurnal Melayu,* (5), 163-176.

Jalaluddin, N. H., Kasdan, J., & Omar, M. (2013). *Penguasaan Bahasa Melayu Remaja Sabah dan Sarawak. 1st Edition*. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Joanes J., Soffian, A. A., Goh, X. Z., dan Kadir, S. (2014). *Persepsi dan Logik*. Johor Baharu: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

Yusuff, N. U., & Zakaria, K. (2018). Loghat Kelantan pemangkin jati diri rakyat Kelantan: kelestarian dan pemerkasaannya. *International Online Journal of Language, Communication, and Humanities*, 1(2): 25-39. Retrieved from http://insaniah.umk.edu.my/journal/index.php/insaniah/article/view/ 24 [30 Januari 2021]

Marsudi. (2009). Jati diri bahasa Indonesia di era globalisasi teknologi informasi. *Jurnal Sosial Humaniorah, 2* (2), 133-148.

Marzukhi, H. (2016). Jurang Literasi Bahasa Inggeris Antara Bandar dan Luar Bandar Semakin Kecil. *astroawani*. Retrieved from
https://www.astroawani.com/berita-malaysia/jurang-literasi-bahasa-inggeris-antara-bandar-dan-luar-bandar-semakin-kecil-121801

Mahamod, Z., Yusoff, N. M. R. N., Awang, M. M., & Peng, C. F. P. (2017). Tahap pemahaman, penghayatan dan pengamalan jati diri bahasa Melayu dalam kalangan pelajar aliran pendidikan Universiti Awam. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Melayu – JPBM, 7*(1), 1-10

Noorashid, N. A. (2019). Revolusi industri 4.0: impak terhadap perkembangan pendidikan tinggi di Malaysia. *Journal of Sciences and Management Research*, 5, 55-67.

Nasir, Z. M., & Hamzah, Z. A. Z. (2014). Sikap dan motivasi pelajar terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 134: 408-415. Retrieved from http://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S1877042814031735

Sariyan, A. (2018). *Mencari Makna Diri Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka

Sani, K. S. A. (2009). Bahasa Melayu akan pupus. In. Hassan, A. (Pnyt.), *Mengapa kami bantah! Pengajaran & pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam bahasa Inggeris (PPSMI). Edisi Kedua.* 113-130. Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Penterjemah Malaysia.

Venturin, B. (2019). "I Don't Fit in Here and I Don't Fit in There:" Understanding the Connections between L1 Attrition and Feelings of Identity in 1.5 Generation Russian Australians. *Heritage Language Journal*, 16(2), 238-268.

Yamasaki, E. (2020). Yucatec Maya Language on the Move: Considerations on Vitality of Indigenous Languages in an Age of Globalization. In Siragusa L. & Ferguson J. (Eds.), *Responsibility and Language Practices in Place*, 99-114. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society.

Zwisler, J. J. (2018). Language Policy and the Construction of National Identity in Colombia. *Enrevista Encuentros, 16* (01), 133-146.