

Liaw Yock Fang 1999. *Malay Grammar Made Easy: A Comprehensive Guide*. Singapore: Times Book International, viii + 392.

This text is a grammar of Malay. If the Malay grammar is what the author claims, Malay speakers should worry. An anglicised Malay grammar is an obvious sign of language shift. Massive foreign linguistic loan and transliteration in Malay lexicology, especially from English has resulted in the emergence of an English-like lexical paradigm in Malay (cf. Sew 1996a). What is new this time from reading Liaw's book is a grammar shift from Malay to English-like structures (cf. Thomason 2001: 60), which is quite feasible since English has long been an economic, political and social fascination to the educated speakers of Malay and other Asian languages.¹

Authentic Malay grammar might suffer the same fate of minor languages in the world, which are dwindling rapidly in number at the moment (cf. Sew 2001, Nettle and Romaine 2000). We need to maintain linguistic diversity and sustain this multicultural world through the conservation of multilingualism.

Preserving linguistic diversity does not mean that language repertoires and cultures must remain unchanged. It is obvious that more and more people will require a knowledge of English and the other world languages, as they seek to tap into the exciting and profitable services that the global economy offers. This need not necessarily conflict with the maintenance of diversity. Languages have coexisted in complementary functions since time immemorial (Nettle and Romaine 2000: 173).

Language certainly holds the culture of its speakers and the dynamics of social order of a community. One can gauge the order of things within a particular society through the counting system, personal pronouns, gender marking, social and political addressing terms, and the psycho-semantic make-up of the language uttered by the speakers in a locality. Style of communication is also culturally specific (Sew 1997a).

I shall discuss the major Malay grammar points in this book and supplement them with additional explanation. My intention is to add more authentic grammatical discussions pertinent to Malay with the hope that readers are not led to believe that Malay grammar is similar to English's when they read the book. I must mention that this book is quite acceptable by school standards. It is not necessary a misrepresentation of Malay grammar but rather an under-representation to those who read beyond prescriptive school grammar.

This book has 40 units and each unit has a grammatical annotation to qualify and elaborate on the information put forth. The first 26 units discuss Malay word-classes such as nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, and particles. Units 28-33 concern basic sentence type in Malay. By accident, the author claims, the Malay syntactic patterns in this book are similar to those in English *a la* Randolph Quirk (p.v).

Two things come to mind immediately. One might wonder, as three of Quirk's works are used as references, if the author actually writes the grammar based on the English grammar offered by Quirk. How could a grammar of one language be so similar to the grammar of the other when both belong to different language families? If the Standard Malay structures are actually similar to the Standard English structures it would indeed be good news to English speakers who want to pick up Malay as a foreign language.

The discussion of grammar points in this book follows a thematic basis. Unit 34-38 deal with the functions of Malay structures, namely declarative, interrogative, and imperative constructions, as well as minor sentences. The last two chapters are about compounds and reduplication in Malay.

Four characteristics of Malay nouns are outlined and examples are accorded in the first unit. The second characteristic stipulates that a numeral or a quantifier can precede a noun in Malay

(p.2). This point needs to be qualified because a mass noun cannot be preceded by a numeral (cl = classifier):

Count noun	Count Numeration	Mass noun	Mass Numeration
<i>rumah</i> house	<i>dua buah rumah</i> two cl house two houses	<i>udara</i> air	* <i>tiga udara</i> three air
<i>kereta</i> car	<i>lima buah kereta</i> five cl car five cars	<i>asap</i> smoke	* <i>lima asap</i> five smoke five smokes

Only count nouns in Malay follow the numeral modification above. A discussion on countability is required as the counting of Malay count nouns is not straightforward. A Malay count noun N reduplicates into N-N. A reduplicated count noun does not follow a numeral to form numeration. The following contrasts illuminate the point:

Count noun	Numeral + Noun	Reduplication	*Numeral + Reduplication
<i>meja</i> table	<i>dua buah meja</i> two cl table two tables	<i>meja-meja</i> table-table tables	* <i>dua buah meja-meja</i> two cl table-table two tables
<i>bola</i> ball	<i>tiga biji bola</i> three cl ball three balls	<i>bola-bola</i> ball-ball balls	* <i>tiga biji bola-bola</i> three cl balls

From the point of language universals, Malay is a classifier language. In the typology of classifiers Malay classifiers belong to the numeral classifier system. Malay classifiers almost always appear in the context of quantification and usually they co-occur with a number or a quantifier. This means a classifier must be inserted between the noun and the numeral in order to form a grammatical expression. The shape of a noun usually determines the choice of its classifier. Consequently, numeral classifier is an inevitable category whenever Malay noun

phrases are invoked. As shown in the table above, classifiers surface most prominently when enumeration occurs in Malay.

Discussions on classifiers are only found in Unit 6. A list of 37 classifiers is listed with examples in this book. One particular classifier used during festive occasions like *Eid* and Chinese New Year can be added to the list. The classifier *papan* is used to classify *mercun* (firecracker), a cultural artifact. *Papan* is also used for *petai* (stinking beans, that have a longish structure). Classifiers like *butir* (for classifying roundish objects) and *orang* ('man', for human beings) are used in the examples (p.2). This unit also contains a discussion on the syntactic function of Malay nouns (p. 31). All discussions on nouns can be incorporated under the earlier noun units in an organised fashion.

Generics are not discussed in this book. The bare noun in the subject position of a sentence such as *air* in *Air susah didapati di sini* 'Water is difficult to get here' is commonly used in Malay discourse. Malay generics do not reduplicate. A noun can designate a single reference or a mass reference in Malay. Following Langacker (1991: 106), a noun may represent all possible designations in the structural world and this is why a Malay noun can have a generic reading like *Rokok Merbahayakan Kesihatan* 'Cigarette is bad for health' or *Rasuah Musuh Negara* 'Bribery is national enemy'.

In this book, gender is said to be non-existent in Malay, after loan words that show the gender difference from Sanskrit and Arabic are discounted (p.5-6). This, however, is not true. Words like *emak* or *ibu* 'mother' and *ayah* or *bapa* 'father' are genuine Malay words that denote gender difference. Furthermore, we have words like *kakak* 'elder sister' and *abang* 'elder brother' as well as *laki* 'man or husband' and *isteri* 'wife' or *'bini'* 'wife or mistress'. There are also *nenek* 'grandmother', *pakcik* 'uncle', *makcik* 'aunt', *tuan* 'sir', *puan* 'madam'. Apart from

kinship term, there are *haji* and *hajjah* the male and female counterpart for addressing Muslims who have completed pilgrimage a in Mecca.

In his pioneering study of sound symbolism, Jespersen (1922/1947) expounded that [i] symbolises the sense of small, weak and trivial. He also noticed that this high front vowel is closely associated with female names and feminine description in European languages. The same can be said for the Malay [i] in terms of femininity. I hasten to add that the high front vowel [i] is a feminine marker in Malay. The following comparison shows that Malay female words have more [i] than the male counterparts (Sew 1999a):

<i>Female terms</i>	<i>Male terms</i>
<i>puteri</i> princess	<i>putera</i> prince
<i>pramugari</i> air stewardess/female model	<i>pramugara</i> air steward/male model
<i>mahasiswa</i> female undergraduate	<i>mahasiswa</i> male undergraduate
<i>angkasawati</i> female astronaut	<i>angkasawan</i> male astronaut
<i>permaisuri</i> queen	<i>sultan/raja</i> king
<i>seniwati</i> actres	<i>seniman</i> actor
<i>datin</i> female aristocrat in Malaysia	<i>datuk</i> male aristocrat in Malaysia
<i>isteri</i> wife	<i>suami</i> husband
<i>ibu</i> mother	<i>ayah</i> father
<i>bini</i> mistress	<i>laki</i> male partner/male
<i>gundik</i> maid of palace	<i>hulubalang</i> soldier

More examples of addressing terms that pertain to gender difference are provided in Unit 5 in this book. However, instead of claiming Malay to be indifferent to gender, it is better for the author to point out that gender is not differentiated syntactically in Malay in comparison to French and German.

Furthermore, the relation between sound and meaning need not be arbitrary as have been contested recently in Landsberg (1995) and Hinton et. al (1994). Phonetic symbolisation is a pertinent feature in Malay semantics (Tham 1979, McCune 1985, Sew 1999a, 1996c). This feature is regarded as *a priori* iconicity in Malay (Benjamin 1993: 386). There is no mention of

phonestheme or sound symbolism in this book. A brief introduction of Malay morphophonemics or phonosemantics can provide a fresh learning topic to students and researchers alike. The Malay [i], for example, is also similar to Jespersen's Indo-European [i] in designating the sense of small and trivial. Here is a minimal contrast of some small-phonosemantic examples of Malay [i] (Sew 1996c: 123):

<i>puteri</i> princess	<i>putera</i> prince
<i>bendahari</i> treasurer	<i>bendahara</i> Prime Minister
<i>negeri</i> state	<i>negara</i> country
<i>ini</i> this	<i>itu</i> that
<i>sini</i> here/proximal	<i>sana</i> there/distal
<i>angkat</i> lift light objects	<i>angkat</i> drag
<i>lekit</i> beginning to stick	<i>lekat</i> adhere or fixed
<i>cicit</i> great grandchildren	<i>cucu</i> grandchildren

Malay exhibits phonosemantic data. These data are an important check to linguistic authenticity as Waas (1997) expounds that the first pointer to language shift and language loss in German is the lost of sound symbolic lexical items pertinent to a particular language.

If this book is also intended for school children then the examples should adhere to the Malay prescriptive grammar adopted in Singapore and Malaysia. This seems to be the case as the author sanctions the prescriptive grammar advocated in school (p.310). Consequently, the second example on page 10 should use the preposition *daripada* instead of *dari*: *Penjelasan dari orang it belum diperoleh* 'Explanation from that man has not yet been obtained'. *Dari* in the prescriptive Malay grammar is used as a conjunction of two points either in time or physical space, and to refer to a direction from which someone or something is coming. Subsequently, the second example under (iii) *Saringan itu terbuat dari kain yang tipis* 'The sieve is made from a thin piece of cloth' should use *daripada* instead of *dari* (cf. p.16). Ironically, the author does list out the function of *dari* (p. 221-223), yet there is no sign of *dari* being used with a human or thing as the source of origin to support the examples mentioned on pages 10 and 16.

There has always been confusion in the use of personal pronouns by speakers of Malay as second language as well as modern native Malay students. Although *aku* 'I' is being used among Malays casually in Sabah it is not a normative term in daily usage. *Aku* is considered a rude pronoun and normally used by elderly speakers to young listeners. *Aku*, however, can be used in the dyad between two people of equal social and professional status, who are very close to each other. Interesting enough, *aku* is an appropriate first person pronoun in prayer among the Malay Muslims when communicating with their God.

The same can be said for *engkau* 'you', which is considered to be an impolite term if used by a young speaker. No teacher of Malay would like to hear *aku* or *engkau* from his students. Students of Malay should also avoid using *kamu* to address their teachers or parents because *kamu* is a term used to address one's subordinate. *Saya* is the better choice of first person pronoun in a neutral Malay dyad. The teacher should always be addressed as *cikgu* 'teacher' and the parents must be called *ayah* 'father' and *ibu* (mother).²

In note 6 of the first unit, the author did not include the pronoun *kau* which is the short form of ' *engkau* 'you'. It should also be mentioned that *kau* stands on its own whereas *-mu* and *-ku* must be suffixed to the noun. *-mu* is derived from *kamu* 'you' and *-ku* is the shorter version of *aku* 'I'. *mu-* is also the second person pronoun used in the Malay Muslim prayer. Furthermore, '-nya' is a clitic that should not be confused with *Nya* (written with upper case N) as the latter is used to refer to the Islamic God in Malay.

Ia used as the third person pronoun in *Ia seorang pembohong; jangan percaya dengan kata-katanya* 'He is a liar; don't believe his word' may not be appropriate in Malay (p.13). This pronoun is used for inanimate referents in Standard Malay (cf. p. 53). In note 2 of the second unit, *pelatih* is used to mean 'trainee'. In one of my Malay lessons, the Malay students

understood *pelatih* as ‘trainer’ whereas the Indonesian student used it as in this text. A quick look in "Collins Malay Gem Dictionary" affirms my point.

Without the preposition *pada* ‘at’ between the verb *berlaku* ‘broke out’ and the temporal complement *pagi ini* ‘this morning’, the example *Kebakaran besar telah berlaku pagi ini* ‘A big fire broke out this morning’ sounds colloquial, if not odd (cf. p. 20). The Malay expression reads like a direct translation of the English counterpart. The copula *ialah* should be used instead of *adalah* in *Bahasa Melayu adalah bahasa kebangsaan kita* ‘Malay is our national language’ (p. 21).

Normally, *adalah* and *ialah* are rare in colloquial Malay as exemplified by this example in Zaharah and Sutanto (1995: 80) *Wanita yang memakai baju merah itu emak saya* ‘The woman who is wearing a red dress is my mother’. In Standard Malay the example above would have the copula *ialah* inserted between *itu* and *emak*: *Wanita yang memakai baju merah itu ialah emak saya*. The different functions of Malay copulas are teased out in Singapore schools. Students are reminded to use them accurately either for writing Malay essays or during oral tests of Standard Malay, especially in the GCE ‘O’ level Malay examination.

In Standard Malay, the difference between *adalah* and *ialah* is that *adalah* elaborates the quality of a noun phrase and mediates a noun phrase with a prepositional phrase whereas *ialah* is used to coordinate two noun phrases:

<i>Adalah as quality elaborator</i>	<i>Ialah as noun coordinator</i>
Dia adalah gemuk. S/he is fat S/he is fat	Dia ialah guru saya She is teacher I S/he is my teacher
Tindakan itu adalah bijak Action that is smart That is a smart move	Rumah saya ialah rumah pusaka house I is house heirloom My house is an inheritance.

<i>Adalah as connector to preposition</i>
Rumah saya adalah di tepi sungai house I is by side river My house is by the riverside.
Waktu makan adalah pada pukul satu time eat is at strike one Meal time is at one o'clock

Adalah and *ialah* are not genuine lexical items. They are grammaticalised words. One can easily traced the formation of these terms from the combination of *ada* ‘have’ and *ya* ‘yes’ with the particle *lah* respectively through the analysis of Malay conversation (Sew 1996b). When one replies with affirmation and emphasis, *ada + lah* and *ya + lah* the two lexical items tend to fuse as one and through this pragmatics of confirmation these two grammar words are formed.

The test to this claim is a phonetic one. The pronunciation for *adalah* remains [adelah], irrespective of whether one speaks Standard Malay or not. The lenition of [a] in the second syllable is a clue to the origin of this word. If *adalah* had been a genuine lexical item the phoneme [a] in the second syllable would be voiced in full. The same is true for *ialah*, as it is not pronounced [yalah] but rather [yelah] (Sew 1996d).

The *se-* that designates the amount of one is not mentioned in his discussion of affixes and numeral (p. 60). This meaning of *se-* is obvious in *sepuluh* ‘ten’, *seratus* ‘one hundred’ and *seribu* ‘one thousand’. The affix is listed as an adverbial forming prefix in *serentak* ‘simultaneously’, *seketika* ‘at the moment’ and *semata-mata* ‘alone’ (p.186). Two important Malay adverbial formed from the affixation of *se-* should be included, namely ‘seakan-akan’ (resembles), and *seolah-olah* ‘as though/if’. The first one is usually followed by a noun phrase whereas the latter normally precedes a verbal or adjectival phrase:

<i>Seakan-akan</i>	<i>Seolah-olah</i>
<i>Wajahnya seakan-akan wajah ibunya</i> face-clitic resemble face mother-clitic His resembles his mother	<i>Dia berdiri seolah-olah hendak balik</i> S/he ber-stand as though want return S/he stood up as though she is leaving
<i>Masalah itu seakan-akan suatu rahmat</i> problem that resemble a blessing That problem seems like a blessing	<i>Lipas itu kaku seolah-olah telah mati</i> Cockroach that stiff as if already die That stiff cockroach looked as if it's dead

In Unit 7, the Malay adjectives are categorised syntactically into adjectives +: *dengan* 'with', preposition, verb, and noun clauses. Alternatively, one can classify the adjective according to dimension such as shape, size, and colour (dimension of spectrum), emotion, qualitative measurement and verbal dimension, namely adverbial. A new formation is noticed when *cemburu* 'jealous' is prefixed with *peN-* in the derivation of *pencemburu* 'a jealous person; being jealous'. This is interesting as it debunks the claim that Malay morphology is not productive beyond three-syllable words.

Unit 8 shows many examples of adjectives as predicator. While nouns and verbs are known to be polysemous not many would think that adjectives are equally complex in terms of semantics. Of the two examples that follow the former is bad but not the latter: *Epal itu menjadi hijau lagi* 'the apple turns green again'; *Lampu isyarat itu menjadi hijau lagi* 'the traffic light turns green again'. This is an example of multiple meanings of green where one is temporal and the other is not, hence the first example being unacceptable. It is through the predicative role of an adjective that the polysemy in an adjective is fleshed out.

About 80 Malay verbs that do not affix are listed with examples (p.103-106). There is little attempt by the author to tease out the varying event structures of the verbs (cf. Sew 1999b). The verbs are categorised syntactically, primarily in terms of transitivity. The applicative *-kan* is introduced as a benefactive marker (p. 136). This is not quite the full story as Kaswanti Purwo

(1995) has argued that the semantics of benefactive is already predetermined in the verb itself according to the relevant verb prototype. It should be mentioned that the benefactive expression is a ditransitive construction whereby only the direct object, which is the patient can be passivised (Chung 1976). Examples of passive construction in comparison with the benefactive expressions would elucidate the point.

In Unit 16, *memper-* is regarded as a verb-forming affix when added to adjectives and nouns in Malay (p. 158). It is mentioned that the affix is also added to verbs occasionally. While the functions of *memper-* when added to nouns and adjectives are explained, no such discussion is offered for verbs in the book. *Memper-* actually invokes the meaning of inchoativity and/or causativity when it is affixed to a verb. Examples of verbal prefixation with *memper-* are *mempertikai* ‘to cause something to become an issue’ and *mempertimbang* ‘under consideration’.

By the same token, it is not accurate to claim that the suffix *-i* has the meaning of indicating an action is directed at a certain location (p.148). It is rather the verb itself that contains such meaning, and the locative expression in Malay is constructed with the suffix in question. In a minimal syntactic contrast with *-i*, the suffix *kan* has an additional meaning that denotes an intentional sense as in this pair of examples, *Dia menyakiti hati saya* ‘He hurt me’; *Dia menyakitkan hati saya* ‘He hurt me intentionally’ (cf. Prentice 1990:196). It is interesting to note that the suffix *-i* initiates the beginning of a process when it is suffixed to *mula* ‘begin’ as in *mulai* ‘henceforth, onwards’. There is some kind of force dynamics emanating from this suffix (cf. Talmy 1988).

The functional difference between the two Malay negative operators *tidak* and *bukan* is always confusing to non-native speakers and their syntactic difference should be teased out in the pedagogy of Malay grammar. The author has provided many examples to tease out the

difference between the functions of these negation operators (p. 260-261). It is elucidated in the book that *tidak* is used to negate adjective and verb phrases only, and *bukan*, which implies an alternative, is usually followed by noun and prepositional phrases that function as subject complements (p. 261).

In Unit 28 to Unit 33, the author provides six Malay structures namely subject-complement, subject-predicator-adverbial, subject-predicator-object-adverbial, subject-predicator-complement-adverbial, subject-predicator-object-complement, and subject-predicator-object (p. 266). The classification is too complicated in comparison to the formal prescriptive grammar (Nik, Safiah, Karim, et al. 1986/1996) that only posits four basic structures for Standard Malay. The four standard Malay patterns are:

Standard Malay Syntactic Structure	Example
Noun Phrase + Noun Phrase	<i>Ali guru</i> Ali teacher Ali is a teacher
Noun Phrase + Verb Phrase	<i>Ali menangis</i> Ali cry Ali wept
Noun Phrase + Adjective Phrase	<i>Bunga itu cantik</i> flower that pretty That flower is pretty
Noun Phrase + Preposition Phrase	<i>Bunga itu di dalam beg</i> flower that in inside bag That flower is in the bag

In terms of pedagogy, the fewer patterns a student needs to learn the better he will remember them. With a closer look at the six patterns one can easily trace a preoccupation with syntactic terminology that would otherwise be structurally simpler.

In his discussion on reduplication, noun reduplication like *rumah-rumah* ‘houses’ and *pelajar-pelajar* ‘students’ is said to designate plurality (p.367). However, as shown in his previous examples, noun stems can also designate plurality: *Saya suka buku* ‘I like books’, *Murid sekolah sedang menyanyi* ‘The school children are singing’, and *Harga buku pelajaran bahasa tidak mahal* ‘The price of language textbooks is not expensive’ (p. 7). In fact, the example on page 9, *Saya tidak suka makan telur rebus* ‘I don't like to eat boiled eggs’ cannot have a singular reading because a bare noun that is in the direct object position must have narrow scope with respect to logical operators (Chung 2000: 161). The polysemous nature of Malay noun stems should be noted, as Malay bare nouns are semantically complex.

Three functions of noun reduplication are provided, namely plurality and diversity, similarity and name formation (p. 367). Malay noun reduplication can designate metonymic-metaphorical meaning like *hati* ‘heart’ > *hati-hati* ‘careful’; *umang-umang* (‘hermit crab’ >) ‘a person who uses the clothing of others to flaunt himself’.

The last unit discusses Malay compound words. The Malay word for train is compounded into two words *kereta* ‘car’ + *api* ‘fire’ in this book. Elsewhere, the author reduplicates this compound into *kereta-kereta api* (Liaw 1985: 140). I am quite certain that train is a one-word compound *keretapi* because it is compounded with phonetic coalescence, i.e., the deletion of *a* between the two compounding words. Like all count nouns, which reduplicate completely to instantiate plurality, *keretapi-keretapi* is the plural designation.

The dynamics of language use enables a compound like *mata* ‘eye’ + *kucing* ‘cat’ to take on additional metaphorical meaning. At least three meanings are detected. Firstly, it is the Malay name for the popular tropical ‘longan’ fruit that has a round brown seed inside the succulent white flesh. Secondly, it is the Malay name for a precious stone commonly known as ‘cat’s eye’,

where the light brown illumination on the dark brown surface of the gem looks like the cat's eye. Thirdly, the metaphorical representation of the green light which indicates the channel to which a transistor radio is tuned (cf. Sew 1997b: 200). The problem at hand is to determine the most prototypical meaning among the three meanings (cf. Taylor 1995).

Apart from grammar, there are certain metaphorical expressions commonly used in Malay discourse. Metaphorical phrases are a good source of vocabulary anecdotes to complement a comprehensive grammar simply because grammar is made of words that are strung together in a systematic way.³

The importance of time in Malay culture seems to escape the attention of the author. Asmah (2000) highlights many Malay grammatical aspects in relation to time. One particular area relevant to this book is temporal prepositions. There are at least two types of temporal prepositions in Malay, namely prepositions of a temporal point like *pada* 'at', *di* 'on'; and prepositions of a time frame like *daripada...hingga* 'from...to', *sejak...sampai* 'since...until', etc. (cf. Asmah 2000: 39-40). These temporal prepositions are crucial to categorise Malay verbs in terms of aspectuality (cf. Sew 1999b).

English should not be taken as the absolute answer to prosperity and economic development. If English were the magic remedy there would be no dropouts in the English worlds (Sew 1994). The above observations are intended to be complementary. Despite all that is said, this book offers many grammatical points otherwise left unattended in many pedagogical grammars of Malay. The discussion is concise and straight to the point. Plenty of examples are provided to illustrate the grammatical point put across. Many of the examples can be used as exercise or enrichment tests in the classroom. This book is a handy reference to Modern Standard Malay.

Teachers who intend to use this book might want to build their own teaching aid to optimise the learning of the students. As many language teachers would know, no one method nor a single linguistic theory is good enough to do the job. Each lesson merits individual attention of the teacher to tailor-make an approach that delivers the content of the lesson to its fullest. Audio teaching supplement along with visual materials stimulate learning. CD records of spoken Standard Malay from native speakers' conversations, radio programmes, literary recitations, charts, pictures, illustrations, photographs, Malay emails, websites of Malay dailies like *Berita Harian* and *Utusan Malaysia* are good pedagogy materials.

Notes

¹ Currently the Hong Kong government is trying very hard to improve English proficiency in the education system of the country with all kinds of measure as English is regarded as "the dominant mode of communication in global trade, commerce and finance ... an important instrument in linking up with the rest of the world ... not just for Hong Kong but for the rest of Asia" (Asiaweek 2001: 16).

² *Ibu* can be used as a polite term to address women in Indonesian. This term is equivalent to madam in English.

³ According to Asmah (2000: 30) grammar is a device that arranges man's way of thinking in his utterance, whereby the vocabulary items form the contents of thought that are arranged according to grammatical rules. Of course this is a basic definition that fails to take into consideration the communicative rules that predetermine the content of one's thought and utterance in many cultural settings. The importance of culture in language has brought forth the term language as languaculture in view of the fact that each speech act is bounded with culture (Agar 1994), and also gender difference to a certain extent (cf. Sew 1997c).

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