

GIS MAPPING OF DIALECT VARIATIONS IN NORTH PERAK

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The aim of this study is to describe dialect variations of the Malay language spoken in north Perak and accordingly representing their distribution in a geolinguistic map by employing a Geographical Information System (GIS). The analysis on dialect variations is based on phonological differentiation involving the realisation of liquid segments word finally (e.g. /bantal/ ‘pillow’ and /air/ ‘water’). Dialect data which were collected in 24 different villages in the districts of Larut Matang Selama (LMS) and Kuala Kangsar (KK) are manually transcribed and classified into variants based on their phonological realisations. The liquid segments undergo three different phonological rules, namely deletion, coalescence and feature changing mechanism. These variants represent regional dialects of Malay. For instance, liquid word-final deletion variants represent Kelantan or Patanni Malay, coalesced variants signify Perak Malay, and feature changing variants refer to Kedah Malay. In addition there are also subvariants with a combination of two Malay dialects. These variants which are initially recorded in the excell program are then transfered into the GIS where the linguistic data are processed systematically. The GIS programme produces geolinguistic maps demonstrating the distribution of dialect variation and catographic profiling of the region. It is apparent that there is a correlation between the two where the latter plays a significant role in determing the distribution. Kedah Malay spreads along the Krian river, whereas Perak Malay stretches along the Perak river. Spreading of dialect is hampered in the area where there is a range of hills and mountains. In the lowland area where two dialects converge, a new form of subdialect emerges with coalesced dialectal features.