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# Applied Linguistics and Future-proofing professionals: The case of Business Malay in Singapore

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## Résumé

This paper details the considerations adopted in the formulation of a basic proficiency course in the Malay Language. The course is designed for working adults who are businessmen and administrators who are keen to acquire basic Malay proficiency. It is an attempt to teach language for the workplace to Singaporeans with very little or no Malay competence for posting to a Malay speaking country like Malaysia and Brunei. I will explain how language and culture are intertwined in the course to socialize the students to Malay cultural sensitivities and concepts and why this is important for professionals in the Singapore context. The development of the lessons has a two pronged approach of not just language proficiency but to help the non-Malay speaking businessman reduce culture shock and connect with his Malay speaking audience. I will detail how the attempts by Singapore to penetrate the regional markets in South East Asia can be seen as not just trade and business initiatives but an attempt to future-proof its human resource to better work in the region. Language competence is now seen as a tool to enhance employability not just on a national scale but a regional one. The course is developed over 10 lessons and has a novel way of introducing basic Malay language to students within a business context whilst at the same time providing cultural instruction and training to a specific area of cultural competence in Malay.

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