Kodramintu di KRISTANG
A Revitalization Plan for an Endangered Language in Singapore

Kevin Martens Wong
National University of Singapore

Mostramintu di ICLDC 5
Unibersidadi di Hawaii na Manoa
4 Marsu 2017

Kodrah KRISTANG sigih kung fors di
Part 1

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What is Kristang

001 DOS TRES KWATU SINGKU SEIS
Part 2

KODRAH KRISTANG
Reawakening Kristang
Part 3
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NGUA  DOS  TRES  KWATU  005  SEIS
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Part 1

KI KRISTANG

What is Kristang
Kristang, Cristang, Papiá Kristang, Malaccan Portuguese, Malacca Creole Portuguese, Portugis di Malacca, Serani, or Bahasa Serani is the endangered heritage language of the Portuguese-Eurasian community in Malacca and Singapore.

**FLUENT SPEAKERS IN SINGAPORE**

Less than 100
The language is critically endangered in Singapore and stands on the precipice of extinction.
Kristang is a creole language, with Portuguese as the main lexifier of its vocabulary, and strong grammatical influence from regional languages Malay and (possibly) Hokkien.
It also has vocabulary from Hokkien, Hakka, Cantonese, Dutch, English, Konkani, Malayalam, Hindi, and Indian varieties of Creole Portuguese, among others (Baxter & Bastos, 2012; Baxter & de Silva, 2004, p. vii).
Today’s talk is about the language in Singapore.
Singapore has always been a highly multicultural and multilingual society.
Modern Singapore is an island city-state with 4 official languages. English is the “common” language, while the other three languages are the ‘mother tongues’ of three of Singapore’s major races: the Chinese, the Malays and the Tamils.

(Bolton & Ng, 2014, p. 309)
Starting from independence in 1965, Singapore’s language policy mandated that the four official languages were the only languages of instruction in schools.

(Bolton & Ng, 2014, p. 309)
However, by 1987, virtually all Chinese, Malay and Tamil-medium schools had closed due to falling enrollment, leaving English-medium education dominant.

(Bolton & Ng, 2014, p. 309)
Today, most young people in Singapore speak English as their home language.
There is now a body of sociolinguistic research that indicates that the use of traditional languages in Singapore is declining among younger generations of Singaporeans.

One reason for this is that many Singaporeans no longer identify with the languages their ancestors once spoke — they identify more with English (and Mandarin).
Kristang has been established in the region for over 500 years.
Hey, we’re looking for spice and you have a nice city along the way! Can we have it?
Sultan MAHMOOD SHAH: L40

AFONSO DE ALBUQUERQUE: L15

Player got $100,000, gold, jewelry, women and a lucrative new spice route!
The Portuguese took control of Malacca; to maintain that control, they intermarried with local Malay residents to create a mixed class known as *casados* (Baxter, 2005, p. 10). They were also joined by converts from other communities in the city (Baxter & de Silva, 2004, p. viii).

These were the first speakers of Kristang.
1641-1824
The Dutch

The language and community survived two more colonial changeovers.
1824-1960s
The British

The language and community survived two more colonial changeovers.
The language and community survived two more colonial changeovers.

Singapore, also under the rule of the British from 1819, became host to a large Kristang-speaking community after the city became a free trading point, and Malacca began a long period of decline.
However, the language also began a slow decline under the British, as many Kristang speakers shifted toward English and British middle class prestige norms. This decline was further exacerbated when Kristang was not given any institutional status at independence in 1965.
In 1989, the Ethnic Integration Policy introduced racial quotas for neighborhoods and apartment blocks, dispersing the community throughout the island and further exacerbating Kristang’s decline.
Today, most younger people of Portuguese Eurasian descent in Singapore today barely even know Kristang exists.
But not us.
In January 2015, I discovered the language still existed while doing research for a feature on endangered languages in the region for a general audience linguistics magazine, *Unravel*.

**Part 2**

**KODRAH KRISTANG**

Reawakening Kristang
With fellow *Unravel* editors Anirudh Krishnan, Frances Loke Wei and Fuad Johari, we met Joan Marbeck, the Kristang poet of Malaysia, Sara Santa Maria, teacher of Kristang in Malacca, and Dr Stefanie Pillai.
Inspired by their dedication to Kristang, we decided to learn the language and teach it to anyone who wanted to learn it too.

With fellow *Unravel* editors Anirudh Krishnan, Frances Loke Wei and Fuad Johari, we met Joan Marbeck, the Kristang poet of Malaysia, Sara Santa Maria, teacher of Kristang in Malacca, and Dr Stefanie Pillai.
KAMINYU DI KODRAMINTU
REVITALISATION PLAN
FOR THE KRISTANG LANGUAGE

Adult classes
Audio course
Vocabulary course
Social media

Kodrah Kristang is a multimodal revitalization initiative for Kristang in Singapore.

KARNILISANG CURRICULUM PLAN
for REVITALISATION PHASE ONE

All our classes and material are free and run by volunteers.
Classes are the centre of the initiative because they bring people together.

Not only do we (current learners, supporters and Elders) hold up the ‘bridge’ of our language by working together, but our shared effort connects us to each other, to friends and family members who have passed on, and to the learners of the future, who we are laying the groundwork for.

They are open to adults from all races, ages and backgrounds.

Build as broad a range of public support as possible for language revitalization efforts. (...) Open immersion programs to all individuals of all backgrounds. This greatly increases the population from which potential attendees can be drawn.

Classes are led by me.

You do not defend yourself, your own language fluency, or lack of fluency. You do it. Action is the key.

I am assisted by Anirudh Krishnan, a researcher at Duke-NUS;
Fuad Johari, a civil servant;
Frances Loke Wei, a fellow NUS undergraduate;
Luis Morgado, a researcher at NTU;
Andre D’Rozario, a fulltime National Serviceman;
Drawing in the different segments of the community—for example, the elders, the tribal council, tribal employees, parents, and children—underscores the fact that the language revitalization project belongs to everyone and therefore all have a responsibility to its continuation.

233 people have signed up for classes since they began in March 2016.

Affective networks can thus support language commitment among language revitalization activists. For those who are less fluent, they can also support their language development. (...) Fostering social networks, using measures such as those suggested above, would enable more native speakers to maintain fluency and to pass the language on to others while fluent native speakers are still alive.

Learners include my Eurasian grandparents, Peter and Maureen Martens.

My grandmother Maureen is a heritage speaker of the language.

We younger generations of language learners must look to elders and ancestors in order to construct a firm foundation on which to build our homes. In doing so, we create space to celebrate and protect our languages and cultures. Importantly and in turn, we must nurture the family at the heart of the language reclamation process.

Class is free and we produce all our materials ourselves. Our materials are also freely available online.

The danger of commodification in retarding or nullifying language revitalization is a limiting factor on any project of language revitalization or revival.

Lesson pedagogy draws heavily from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT).

What kind of teaching method would be most appropriate for Less Commonly Taught Languages? (...) Communicative language teaching (CLT), closely associated with the influential proficiency movement, emphasizes the development of learners’ ability to communicate, express themselves, get their meaning across, and engage in social interactions. Pedagogical practices developed to accomplish this mission produce relatively quick results, empowering the student with a sense of gains made, and not just effort invested.


Task-based language learning provides learners with meaningful opportunities to explore the peculiarities of the language through a set of tasks in order to be exposed to practical, authentic and functional language uses in a systematic way. (...) [It emphasizes] learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.

The materials available can work to support language learners with a variety of learning styles, and listening to grammar explanations, drilling grammar points, repeating useful expressions and vocabulary, and practicing listening and pronunciation, as well as learning about the cultures of the target language, are very valid and worthwhile activities to do whilst commuting, or whenever the listener accesses the podcasts on their portable media player.


New media environments offer the possibility for evolution of new identities, which challenge the way in which speakers of endangered languages have understood themselves and been understood in majority-language media.

Computer-based mediation (as indeed radio and television broadcasting) in endangered languages is seen as a means of generally raising the status of the language in question and associating it with prestige and modernity.


It doesn’t matter how much activism you engage in on behalf of the language if you don’t attract the teenagers, the parents of the next generation of children. And what turns teenagers on more than the internet these days? If you can get language out there, the youngsters are much more likely to think it is cool.

Some sort of plan, assessment and syllabus was crucial to ensuring the initiative continued to remain sustainable, renewable and learner-focused.
In July 2016, I was invited to attend the 2016 Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. There, in consultation with language revitalization experts from around the world, and community members back home, I developed two guiding plans for the revitalization of Kristang in Singapore.
The Revitalization Plan presents the plan for the overall initiative across a time period of thirty years (2016-2045).
The Curriculum Plan details learner needs and the syllabus, proficiency goals and assessment for the Kodrah Kristang adult classes.
KARNILISANG di KRISTANG
The Substance of Lessons
The Curriculum Plan details learner needs and the syllabus, proficiency goals and assessment for the Kodrah Kristang adult classes.
Part 3
KODRADOR -KODRADOR
The new Kristang learners
Before beginning a revitalization program, a community needs to determine what it really feels about the language and why it wants to revitalize it, or to confront such questions as whether the desire to revitalize represents more of a nostalgia for the past than a vision for the future.

There is a tendency to talk about ‘the community’ as a single unit with agreed ideas...there are profound disagreements within such communities about language, its status, domains, functions, policy – and about who has the authority or legitimacy to decide any of these.

Three groups of learners

**HERITAGE**
LANGUAGE LEARNERS

**SECOND**
LANGUAGE LEARNERS

**RELATED**
LANGUAGE LEARNERS
HL learners are the focus of the initiative.

They usually have some exposure to Kristang at home thanks to an elderly family member, and already know a number of Kristang phrases and expressions, usually profanities, exclamations and food-related items.

They are of (Portuguese-)Eurasian descent or have ties to (Portuguese-)Eurasian heritage.

They want to learn the language to reclaim a perceived missing aspect of their identity, and hope to pass the language on to their children.
L2 learners are shaping Kristang’s place in contemporary Singapore society.

They hail from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences often divergent from the Portuguese-Eurasian community norms. Non-ethnic minority communities represented in the first three Kodrah Kristang iterations include LGBTQIA+ individuals, Singapore expatriates and third-culture individuals, Eurasian Muslims, and atheists.

If non-Eurasian, they are passionate about Singapore’s heritage and the heritage of its constituent communities.

If non-Eurasian and Singaporean, learning the language makes them feel more Singaporean.
RL learners bring a new depth to the language by showing others its unique characteristics.

They are native speakers or advanced learners of related languages and have a very high awareness of cognate vocabulary and structure.

They usually have some academic background in linguistics and are well-informed about linguistic issues, recognizing the urgent situation of language endangerment and the importance of preserving and protecting linguistic heritage.

They want to be part of a language revitalisation movement and understand how such movements start, grow and succeed.
Part 4

KAMINYU DI KODRAMINTU
The Path of Awakening
2016

1
NGUA

03/2016
KODRAH KRISTANG ADULT CLASSES: KOMESAH

06/2016
KONTAH KRISTANG AUDIO COURSE

07/2016
KRISEH KRISTANG VOCABULARY COURSE

2017

05/2017
KRISTANG LANGUAGE FESTIVAL
2020

3
TRES

2021

KODRAH KRISTANG ADULT CLASSES: KORUAH

03/2021
TEACHER TRAINING SYLLABUS

04/2021
KARA DI KRISTANG

06/2021
KARTAH KRISTANG TEACHER TRAINING

09/2021
NEW CHILDREN
Part 5

ISTORIA DI KINYANG 1

Phase One Implementation
KODRAH KRISTANG ADULT CLASSES: KOMESAH

233 LEARNERS

Full and refined set of lessons and lesson material for 40 hours of instruction in Kristang

Pilot Level 1 summative assessment, to be formally introduced starting from intake 3 in May

5 families now speaking Kristang at home as a direct result of classes

DATE STARTED | INTAKE | KODRAH KRISTANG
---|---|---
MAR 19, 2016 | 1 | 20 HOURS
JUL 30, 2016 | 2 | 40 HOURS
NOV 15, 2016 | 3 | 26 HOURS
NOV 17, 2016 | 4 | 20 HOURS
JAN 3, 2017 | 5 | 16 HOURS
JUN 27, 2017 | 6 | NEW 1A IN JUNE

FIRST 2A IN JUNE

REPAIRU KRISTANG
KODRAH KRISTANG ADULT CLASSES: KOMESAH

END-OF-COURSE SURVEY FOR LEVEL 1A (INTAKES 1-4, 46 RESPONDENTS)

AFTER THIS COURSE, I BELIEVE... (N=46)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree + Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kristang is worth preserving.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristang is worth revitalizing.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristang is an important part of Singapore’s heritage.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AS A EURASIAN, LEARNING KRISTANG HAS MADE ME... (N=40)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feel more Singaporean.</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel more Eurasian.</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel more whole as a person.</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KODRAH KRISTANG ADULT CLASSES: KOMESAH

END-OF-COURSE SURVEY FOR LEVEL 1A (INTAKES 1-4, 46 RESPONDENTS)

AS A SINGAPOREAN, LEARNING KRISTANG HAS MADE ME... (N=46)

- more interested in the languages of other cultures in Singapore. 80.4%
- more interested in the heritage of other cultures in Singapore. 78.3%
- more interested in Singapore’s history. 82.6%
- more interested in how contemporary Singapore society is developing. 80.4%
- feel more Singaporean. 65.2%
- feel more whole as a person. 67.4%
Festa di Papia
KRISTANG
Saturday, May 20 and Sunday, May 21
A weekend of Kristang on the national stage
at the Asian Civilisations Museum
With speakers, performers and friends from around the world
With Gala Dinner Guest-of-Honour

SINGAPORE’S DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

TEO CHEE HEAN
• Conceived in October 2016 as a way of reaching out to general Singaporean public on a large scale, thanks to Singapore’s nature as a “campaign nation”

• Project has so far raised US$51,000 from government and university grants and private donations

• Ticket sales opened on Wednesday; almost 20% of all event seats already reserved as of this morning
Ila-Ila di Sul
The Southern Islands
A Kodrah KRISTANG game

Isti pintura: ‘Lim Chu Kang Floating Jetty’
di Ruby E. Wyse
Azeti na ekrang 30cm x 39.5cm
Southern Islands began as a pedagogical board game developed for ongoing Kristang classes. Learners found the game to be fun and competitive, so it will be turned into a full fledged board game to be sold at the Festival, and presented to DPM Teo and our other invited speakers as a token of appreciation.
Part 6
TRABALU-TRABALU
Challenges
The goal of bringing an endangered language back into use again, to once more have native speakers using their language in a speech community, is a long-term goal and one that takes generations of people who continue to engage in language activism.

Few programs have any hope of succeeding without an individual or individuals who are willing to sacrifice greatly over many years’ time—nascent programs must be nurtured by individuals who not only have a personal stake in the outcome but also have the time, health, and energy to do so.

The three historical groups of Eurasians

Portuguese Eurasians  Dutch Eurasians  British Eurasians

Portuguese conquest of Malacca: 1511
Dutch conquest of Malacca: 1641
British possession of Malacca: 1824
Represented by the Eurasian Association

- **Portuguese Eurasians**
  - Portuguese conquest of Malacca: 1511

- **Dutch Eurasians**
  - Dutch conquest of Malacca: 1641

- **British Eurasians**
  - British possession of Malacca: 1824
Kristang is the heritage language of only the Portuguese Eurasians; hence, it is difficult for the EA to support Kristang.

Portuguese Eurasians

Conquest of Malacca 1511

Dutch Eurasians

Conquest of Malacca 1641

British Eurasians

Possession of Malacca 1824
We were brought up in English-speaking homes and learned English in school. We had no ‘mother tongue’. Other races had Chinese, Malay and Tamil. We were ‘others’.

Now with Kristang we can trace our roots as Singaporeans through a language that goes back centuries.

Peter and Maureen Martens
Yo sa aboh-aboh
Kodramintu di KRISTANG
A Revitalization Plan for an Endangered Language in Singapore

Kevin Martens Wong
National University of Singapore

MUTU MERSEH

Kodrah KRISTANG powered by