

Pahang Rohingya Language School Opening Day in Malaysia

Kampong Kurnia, Batu 3, 25150 Kuantan, Pahang

(Bring Rohingya Language from tongues to papers)

Date: 18/07/2013

Assolamu alaikum waraha motullahi wobrokatohu.
Good morning, Dear Brothers and Sisters

I am Eng. Mohammed Siddique from Buthidaung, Arakan State, Burma and now living in London with my family. I graduated in Mechanical engineering from Rangoon Institute of Technology, Burma and post graduated in Management Information Technology from Sunderland University, UK. I am a Rohingya and the founder of Modern Rohingya language (or Rohingyaish) writing system.

I am going to talk today about:

“How did Modern Rohingya Language (or Rohingyaish) come into existence & Why do people love it?”

1. **First of all, I would like to thank our honorable chief guests:**

Dr Norlelawati (Malay),
Dr Marwan Saad Azzubaid (Iraq),
Dr Salah Uddin Mohd Arief (Indonesia), and
Dr Wan Mohd Azizi Wan Sulaiman (Malay).
in this precious occasion:

And also many thanks to:

Chairperson: Rafique (Rohingya Social & Welfare Association Pahang)
Vice chair person: Mr Kyaw Khin (Md Sultan)
Sponsor: Ali Jafor
Project Manager: Zahiruddin Mohd Babar
Police Officer (Special Branch): Shahr Nizam Mustaffa

for their hard work and dedication for this novel works.

2. **Secondly, I am going to talk about, when was the seed of the Rohingyaish actually planted.**

I can still vividly recall the day I received a small book of *Surah Yasin* as a gift while I was studying in the State High School in Maungdaw. I used to recite it daily in the morning. One day, I felt very upset that I cannot understand the meaning of any word from the book and I heartily wished to learn the meaning of it. So I prayed to Allah to give me a chance to be able to translate *Sura Yasin* and distribute it among our people.

Probably, Allah has listened to my wishes far more than I had ever expected. A number of years later, by the grace of Allah I managed to translate *Surah Yasin* and I was able to distribute it to hundreds of people. The most amazing part here is that my wishes has been fulfilled along with our own modern writing system *Rohingyalish* which I have never dreamed before. There is no doubt that we got one of the most wonderful writing systems which is known as Modern Rohingya language or simply **Rohingyalish**.

3. **Thirdly, I am going to talk about, “How was Rohingyaish started?”**

One day I realized that we need to record our history and culture from older people before it is too late. So, I started recording on cassette tapes and I have collected a number of tapes. I thought of how to distribute them to other people.

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As Internet is the only easiest and cheapest method of distribution through websites, I quickly thought of which language to use for the media. Shall I use Burmese, Urdu or English? Can we convey everything using these languages? The answer is no. There are some Rohingya words which are not available in other languages, and cultural poems and sayings are not translatable without losing taste. So I realized that I first need to develop our own writing system.

4. Fourthly, I am going to talk about the struggle to create Rohingyalish?

It was late 1999; I decided to develop our own writing system using only English alphabets A to Z. I made a pledge to try for at least six months and if I failed, I would abandon the idea. Since my workplace used to have a number of Filipino staff, I got help from them as they use English letters to write. But it did not help me much as our language is much harder. I have tried hard with many methods for 6 months but without any success.

On the last day while I was standing in front of the computer at home, I was about to abandon the project. But suddenly, I got a new idea to use accented vowels (áéíóú) and surprisingly I found 50% of my problem had been solved. As I progressed I found a number of other obstacles but each time I was stuck, a new idea appeared and I was easily able to solve the problem. However some decisions are very tough to make. It took 3 months of concentrated studies just to select two Latin characters from 30 international character sets. Every decision has been very carefully taken always keeping in mind that our language should have no ambiguity and must be very easy to learn and should work on all devices hassle free and should not cost any single penny to use it because our people are mostly poor and less educated.

Solutions I found to some obstacles are:

- a. creation of **6 basic vowels** (a, e, i, o, u, ou)
- b. creation of **4 circular vowels** (ai, ei, oi, ui)
- c. creation of **3 extended vowels** (aa, áá, áa)
- d. borrowing of **2 Latin letters (ç and ñ)** for retroflex and nasal sounds
- e. Defining (**o**) as (au) sound
- f. Defining (**e**) as (sh) sound and finally,
- g. Defining (**d**) and (**dh**), and (**t**) and (**th**)

I believe all these achievements are not mine but a gift from Allah, otherwise I could not have developed such an easy and beautiful writing system without the guidance of Allah.

5. Fifthly, I am going to talk about our achievements?

1. It has been recognized on 18th July 2007 by ISO (International Organization for Standardization) providing ISO Code 6393 rhg
2. Rohingya language has been added in the 16th edition of World Ethnologue Book.
3. Rohingyalish is currently used in worldwide translations by Governments, NGOs, Red Cross and so on

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4. Rohingyalish has been accepted as an international language in Canada and they are teaching in School
 5. The whole Quran has been translated in this language
 6. Rohingya to English dictionary has been built up to 40 thousand words
 7. Two years Rohingya grammar study has been done by ISO to release as a book
 8. There are a number of Rohingya to English dictionaries prepared by different organizations and you can buy them online.
6. **Sixthly, I am going to talk about few points, "Why do people love Rohingyalish?"**
- a. Rohingyalish uses only 28 widely used Latin letters including vowels
 - b. It has been recognized by ISO
 - c. It has been built on strong established concepts
 - d. It is extremely easy
 - e. It takes only less than 15 minutes to learn
 - f. Writing and reading exactly match to each other to an amazing degree, making "What You Write Is What You Read *or vice versa*"
 - g. You can write on computers, mobile phones, iPad and many other devices
 - h. You do not need any fonts, keyboard design and any other tools
 - i. You can master it within very short times
 - j. Many online dictionaries are available online
 - k. School syllabus books are available, finally
 - l. it is superior than any other writing systems in all respects

7. Conclusion:

The Modern Rohingya Language writing system has been recognized by ISO. It has been built, on strong established concepts making it easy and ambiguity free. You can learn it within 15 minutes. However, we still need to work harder to complete 80,000 words dictionary, complete the Quran translation, to release grammar book, and many other school syllabus books. Moreover, we need enough funds to fine tune the Quran translation before we can finally release it to the public. One last point is that we can make our illiterate people to literate in no time once situations permit because we have got the most easy and wonderful language.

Our web links are:

<http://www.rohingyalanguagefoundation.com>

<http://www.rohingyalanguage.com>

<http://www.compudirectory.com>

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