SPEECH BY
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VICE-CHANCELLOR OF UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA PAHANG

THE OPENING CEREMONY OF
THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING (ICOLLT) 2015

THURSDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2015, 11:35 AM
HIBISCUS HALL, SWISS-GARDEN BEACH RESORT, KUANTAN

SALUTATION

Yang Berhormat Dato Norol Azali Sulaiman,
Pahang State Executive Councillor for Health, Human Resources
and Special Task Affairs;

My colleagues from UMP:

Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Nubli Abdul Wahab,
Dean, Centre for Modern Languages and Human Sciences;

Dr. Zuraina Ali,
Director of the International Conference
on Language Learning and Teaching 2015;
Our distinguished speakers:

Yang Berbahagia Professor Dato’ Dr. Hassan Basri Awang Mat Dahan;

Professor Dr. Maya Khemlani David;

Professor Dr. Goh Yeng Seng;

Professor George Robert Maclean;

Dr. Musaev Tailaibek

Distinguished guests, conference delegates;

Ladies and gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Ta’ala Wabarakatuh

Salam Sejahtera and Salam 1Malaysia.
1. I am indeed very much delighted to have been invited and to be given the opportunity to address this intellectual gathering of language enthusiasts this morning that marks the commencement of ICOLLT 2015, organized by the Centre for Modern Languages and Human Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Pahang.

2. On behalf of the management of this University, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to all of you who made it here today for the conference.

3. The management of UMP applauds the initiative taken by the Centre of Modern Languages & Human Sciences in organizing this conference which is another step forward for UMP to position itself as a credible higher education provider both nationally and internationally.
4. **Ladies and gentlemen,**

   From its most simple and primitive form, language has developed over the centuries to its modern and complex structure that we know today. While there are approximately 6,500 languages that managed to survive until today, the rest had gone into extinction.

5. Nevertheless, we all acknowledge that language is the most powerful and effective medium of oral communication. Through that way, people could interact, and from that interaction, societies develop, trades flourish and civilizations grow.

6. Because of language too, human beings become more cultured and with language too, one can define his or her national identity. It is language too that could bridge different civilizations.
7. Thus language is what distinguishes the human race. It is the characteristic that sets us apart and makes us unique. So is the case of the English language for example; a language that turns to become the richest language in the history of humanity and has taken 2,000 years to reach its present feat.

8. In the words of the late Nelson Mandela, “without language, one cannot talk to people and understand them; one cannot share their hopes and aspirations, grasp their history, appreciate their poetry, or savor their songs.”

9. The quotation was taken from Mandela’s own memoir – The Long Walk to Freedom. Language, as fascinatingly perceived by Mandela is so much more than just words and a tool of communication. Because to him, through his life, language was seen as part and parcel of his long walk to and South Africa’s arduous plight for liberty.
10. Therefore, the role of language in resolving conflicts in this case illustrates one out of the many hats that a language is capable of putting on so as to cope with a myriad of its constantly changing roles and functions.

11. **Ladies and gentlemen,**

Today marks another significant occasion for “language” as we could virtually imagine an arsenal of assorted yet wonderful hats being worn in the name of Language Learning and Teaching.

12. ICOLLT 2015 serves as a testimony of our dedication to exalt and foreground the pivotal roles of language learning and teaching, particularly in the context of a technical university and public education in general.

13. With the strength of its focus areas in engineering, science and technology, UMP is ever committed in its strategic pursuit towards becoming world-class technological university.
14. Therefore, in ensuring our graduates’ appealing disposition to international employment markets, we are obliged to follow the key rule of thumb in putting languages at the heart of teaching and learning in UMP.

15. Within the ambience of such critical concerns and trials, the demand for UMP to live up its role to the ever-growing, ever-changing global needs and expectations has forced us to strive for effective communication and language competence in multiple linguistic codes.

16. Echoing this reality, we take great pride in our carefully designed language courses of English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin, German, Arabic, Japanese, Spanish, and the newly added, Turkish, for being able to yield proficient polyglots in this global system of increasingly driven by knowledge, information and ideas.
17. Ladies and gentlemen,

The complexities of current issues in language learning and teaching within the local and international settings offer great impetus for all concerned parties to engage in constructive intellectual discourse like this.

18. Hence, I am confident that this conference will not only place contemporary issues and accomplishments in the limelight but also the challenges and opportunities that may arise. I am therefore very proud that UMP is capable of holding a platform for such intellectual discourse that could lead to the betterment of language education 
per se.

19. With so much to raise and discuss, it is our honour to have your presence here at the ICOLLT 2015 for without your support, participation and commitment we are not able to make great strides towards debuting our very first international conference on language learning and teaching.
20. Last but not least, I wish you all a fruitful discourse throughout ICOLLT 2015 and a wonderful experience here in Pahang, Malaysia.

Thank you.