

LANGUAGE CHOICE AMONG MALAYSIAN TAMIL
YOUTH

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YOUTH**

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LANGUAGE CHOICE AMONG MALAYSIAN TAMIL YOUTH

ABSTRACT

Although some studies have shown that there is a pattern of language shift to English among Malaysians of Tamil descent, Tamil continues to be used as a first language by the majority of Malaysian Tamils. Whilst studies on the Tamil community tend to focus on language maintenance and shift, there is a dearth of studies looking at language choice among the younger generation of Malaysian Tamils in intra-group communications within a multilingual context. Thus, this study looks at the language choice of a group of Tamil youth in Malaysia. Previous studies have shown that domains of language use and social network play important roles in the patterns of language choice. This study, therefore, employs Fishman's (1972) domain model to explore the language choices in intra-group communication. Data were collected through 109 respondents, supplemented with audio-recordings of natural conversations from 42 of them. Interviews with 40 of the respondents were carried out to obtain in-depth information on patterns of language use and to confirm the reasons for the languages used. The findings revealed that in four of the seven domains, Tamil is used more frequently although it is mixed with English and Malay expressions. The domain of family shows a relatively higher use of Tamil. However, the use of Tamil with grandparents, parents, siblings and children (for married participants) appears to be decreasing among the four generations. The domains of education, workplace and transaction show language shift towards English and Malay. In addition, married participants seem to be shifting towards English as they see it as being important for their children's future. The findings also revealed the use of a different variety of spoken Tamil among the youth. The use and influences of English and Malay appear to have an effect on the use of socially appropriate varieties of Tamil among the youth.

BAHASA DALAM KALANGAN BELIA TAMIL MALAYSIA

ABSTRAK

Beberapa kajian lepas telah menunjukkan bahawa terdapat pola peralihan bahasa kepada bahasa Inggeris dalam kalangan remaja keturunan Tamil. Namun, bahasa Tamil terus digunakan sebagai bahasa utama oleh majoriti masyarakat Tamil. Walaupun kajian mengenai masyarakat Tamil cenderung memberi tumpuan kepada pengekalan dan peralihan bahasa, terdapat beberapa penyelidikan yang mengkaji pilihan bahasa dalam kalangan generasi muda Tamil Malaysia, dalam komunikasi intra-kumpulan dalam konteks pelbagai bahasa. Oleh itu, penyelidikan ini mengkaji pilihan bahasa sekumpulan belia Tamil di Malaysia. Kajian lampau telah menunjukkan bahawa domain penggunaan bahasa dan rangkaian sosial memainkan peranan penting dalam corak pilihan bahasa. Kajian ini juga menggunakan model domain Fishman (1972) untuk meneroka pilihan bahasa dalam komunikasi intra-kumpulan. Data dikumpul melalui soal selidik yang diperolehi dari 109 responden dan rakaman audio perbualan semulajadi dari 42 daripada mereka. Wawancara telah dijalankan dengan 40 responden untuk mendapatkan maklumat dengan lebih mendalam tentang pola penggunaan bahasa dan mengesahkan sebab bahasa-bahasa digunakan. Hasil dapatan mendedahkan bahawa dalam empat daripada tujuh domain, bahasa Tamil digunakan lebih kerap walaupun secara bercampur dengan ekspresi bahasa Inggeris dan Melayu. Domain keluarga menunjukkan penggunaan bahasa Tamil yang agak tinggi. Walau bagaimanapun, penggunaan Tamil dengan datuk nenek, ibu bapa, adik-beradik dan anak-anak (untuk responden yang sudah berkahwin) didapati semakin berkurangan dalam kalangan empat generasi. Domain pendidikan, tempat kerja dan transaksi menunjukkan peralihan bahasa ke arah bahasa Inggeris dan Melayu. Di samping itu, responden yang telah berumahtangga nampaknya beralih ke bahasa Inggeris kerana mereka melihat bahasa tersebut penting untuk masa

depan anak-anak mereka. Penemuan ini juga mendedahkan penggunaan pelbagai variasi bahasa Tamil yang digunakan dalam kalangan belia Tamil. Penggunaan dan pengaruh bahasa Inggeris dan Melayu kelihatan memberi kesan terhadap penggunaan pelbagai variasi bahasa Tamil dalam kalangan belia Tamil.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

LMLS	:	Language maintenance and language shift
B.C.	:	Before Christ
M.C.E	:	Federation of Malaya Certificate of Education
MUET	:	Malaysian Universities English Test
H	:	High variety
L	:	Low variety
SST	:	Standard Spoken Tamil
LT	:	Literary Tamil

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PRONUNCIATION KEY

The following symbols represent sounds from languages other than English to represent phonetic sounds of RP (adopted from Holmes, 2013).

VOWELS

Tamil	அ	ஆ	இ	ஈ	உ	ஊ	எ	ஏ	ஐ	ஓ	ஔ
Broad transcription	a	a:	i	i:	u	u:	e	e:	ai	o	o:

CONSONANTS

Tamil	Broad transcription	Tamil	Broad transcription	Tamil	Broad transcription
க்	g,h,k	ய்	y	ங்	ng
ச்	c,j,s	ர்	r	ஞ்	nj
ட்	t, d	ல்	l	ண்	n
த்	th	வ்	v	ந்	nth
ப்	b,p	ழ்	l	ம்	m
ற், ற்	r, tr	ள்	l	ன்	n

TRANSCRIPTION KEY (LANGUAGES)

Tamil – Normal & *italic*

CHINESE – NORMAL CAPITAL LETTER

Malay – ***Italic and bold***

English - **Normal bold**

Tamil has three different pronunciations of ‘l’, three different pronunciations of ‘n’ and two different pronunciation of ‘r’ with each giving a different meaning. Since the spoken Tamil of youth of Malaysia shows not much difference in the pronunciation of any of the letters, this study is not presenting a detailed transcription of the pronunciations; but only the circumstances determining the meanings of the words.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Language Choice

In all multilingual communities, speakers have choices from among different languages and varieties of the same language. People speak different languages in different social contexts. Romaine (2000) says, when one wishes to identify with a group he/she would choose a language or a particular variety or language of a group. Widespread multilingualism, global languages, social change and economic change have made minority communities inclined towards dominant languages. Generally, minority and immigrant communities adopt the dominant languages, cultures and educational, residential and occupational patterns of the country in which they live. At the same time, prerogative and onus are on them to adapt and assimilate into mainstream culture whilst preserving their heritage (Fishman, 1966, as cited in Dil, 1972).). Investigating people's choice of language in various social setting would reveal information about their language practices and their characteristics through their language use. As a minority language in Malaysia, Tamil is undergoing rapid changes due to the country's multilingual nature, the developing environment and globalization (David, 1996; David, Dealwis & Alagappan, 2011; David & Naji, 2000; Selvajothi, 2017).

1.2 Aim of the Study

In the late 18th century and early 19th century, Indian immigrants of South India origin (Tamils) to Malaya were largely brought in by the British colonial government as workforce in rubber, oil palm, coffee, tea and sugar plantations (see Chapter 2). In the second half of the 19th century, British colonial rulers needed English-educated personnel to assist in their administrative jobs and the establishment of their various departments due to the development in their economic motives, brought in Sri Lankan Tamils to Malaya to help them in their administrative offices and public services. Thus, Tamils from

Sri Lanka added to the number of Tamils in Malaya and made the Tamil-speaking population percentage even larger. Now, Tamils have been in Malaysia for more than two centuries. As a minority group i.e. 7.3% of total population, their language and language behaviour have gone through various historical, geographical and political changes. Studies on the language maintenance and language shift (LMLS) of minority groups have revealed that they face language change due to the education system and the need to fit into new social environments (Fishman, 1972; Holmes, 2013). This shift is a continuing process in nature (David, 1996), which can also be observed locally among Indians in Malaysia (David, 2001, 2006; David, Naji & Kaur, 2003; Nambiar, 2007), who are a minority group constituting only 7.3% of the Malaysian population. The Tamil population, including Sri Lankan Tamils, comprises only 6.5% of the total population or 88.5% of the Indian population in Malaysia (Data Banci Penduduk Malaysia 2010). The increasing importance and roles of Malay and English in the education system may have also led to changes in the use of Tamil in Malaysia. Tamil speakers in Malaysia are at the very least bilingual, with most of them being multilingual as they also speak Malay and English. The younger generation may become dominant in other languages, such as Mandarin. Besides that, Tamil seems economically unfavorable compared to, for example, English (David and Naji, 2000; Schiffman, 2002) and Mandarin. However, the Malaysian education system provides Tamil education from the primary level up to the degree level. There were 524 Tamil primary schools in year 2017 (“Tamil schools get huge allocations”, 2017), where Tamil is the main medium of instruction. There are two views about the status of Tamil language in Malaysia. According to the Vernacular Schools Reports (2012), Tamil education and Tamil language have been maintained in Malaysia. The second view is that, the Tamils are shifting away from Tamil to Malay and English (Balasubramaniam, 1983; David, 2006; Sankar, 2004). Hence, this study aims to

examine the language choice of Tamil youth in terms of what languages they use in particular contexts and why, as well as the extent of the use of Tamil among them.

Language shift can be observed by noticing the change in bilinguals'/multilinguals' language use/choice, particularly among minority communities, in different domains over time (Holmes, 2013). Bilinguals have different preferred languages in different domains (Fishman, 1972). Minority communities are more subject to language shift because of the social pressure of having to be absorbed into the wider society and to adopt global trends since globalization has also resulted in greater competition between languages, on both regional and worldwide scales. Thus, the present study seeks to investigate the present situation of the Tamil language use, specifically among the youth who are bilingual, have mastery of Malay and English languages, live in a multi-ethnic environment and are under the social pressure of adapting to global developments. This study focuses on youth because the younger generation plays a significant role in language change in the current and future generations (Eckert, 1997; Tagliamonte, 2005).

1.3 Purpose of this Study

Malaysians, including those of Tamil origin, live in a multilingual environment, undergoing rapid socioeconomic changes and an evolving education system. Globalization and advancement in technology, telecommunication and mass media in general do not only influence their lifestyles, but also their linguistic patterns. Previous studies in Malaysia and other parts of the world where Tamils live have indicated that they have begun to shift to English. Studies show Malaysian Tamils too have begun to shift to English and Malay or mix other languages in their intra-group communications (David, 2006; David & Naji, 2000; Omar, 2003). David (2006) has also said that Tamil families in Kuala Lumpur (urban area) are at the beginning stage of shifting away from

their ethnic language. The expansion of Malay and English is likely to have an effect on the Tamils using their language, particularly among the younger generation in Malaysia. Since the continuing effect of language choice determines language maintenance and language shift (Holmes, 2013), the intention of this study is to investigate the language choice and the trend of language use among the Tamil youth in Malaysia.

The Malaysian Ministry of Education provides Tamil education from the primary level up to tertiary education. Tamil primary schools all over peninsular Malaysia make Tamil education available to Tamils. There were 100,000 pupils (55%) enrolled in 524 Tamil schools with 10,000 Tamil teachers in the year 2016. Tamil schools have seen an increased student population over the last twenty years as a result of more middle-class Tamils opting for Tamil education for their children (Ramasamy, 2016). The performance of Tamil schools has shown gradual progress and the gap between National and National-Type primary schools has also been narrowing (see section 2.3). *The National Education Blue Print 2013-2025* also shows that there was significant academic improvement among Tamil primary school students in Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) results in the four years prior to 2013 (Omar, 2015). Unlike previous decades, support for Tamil education has grown as there is increasing awareness among Malaysian Tamils for the right to their mother tongue education. In addition, the efforts of Tamil enthusiasts and public interventions have also resulted in the enhancement in the learning and use of Tamil language in Malaysia (Rajaendram, 2016). While various initiatives do exist to preserve Tamil in Malaysia, spoken Tamil among the youth is displaying particular patterns of language use. However, studies on Tamil and the Tamil community tend to emphasis on language maintenance and there is a lack of studies looking at language use trend among the youth of Malaysin Tamils in intra-group communications within a

multilingual context. Therefore, this study aims to explore the patterns of language choice and language use among Tamil youth (see section 1.2).

There is a gap in the research on the choice of language among Tamils in different domains of use in intra-group communications, particularly from the perspective of Fishman's domains. Fishman's (1972) study was based on Puerto Rican community members who were equally proficient in Spanish and English. He generalized five domains (family, friendship, religion, education and employment) as typical situations for gathering self-reported information on language choice in which each domain was represented by similar people, places and topics. At the same time, Fishman suggested that in real circumstances there were many similar situations that existed and involved different varieties or languages that were used in that specific domains. He also suggested domain of transaction and cited Cooper (1971) who used 'neighbourhood' domain to analyse the language choice patterns of a speech community. Thus, in this study, Fishman's (1972) typical five domains i.e. family, friendship, education, workplace and religion were used, with the inclusion of two additional domains, the domain of neighbourhood and transaction as recommended by Fishman to analyse the patterns of language choice of the Tamil youth in Malaysia. Hence, this study examined language choice in these seven domains to determine the language choice of the Tamil youth.

Findings about their language choice patterns and understanding the reasons for the language choice will certainly contribute towards a thoughtful assessment for Tamil enthusiasts to improve their strategies towards development of Tamil in Malaysia. The findings from the pilot study (see section 4.10) and the current patterns of language use among the Tamil youth motivated this study. As emphasized by Holmes (1997),

researchers have a social responsibility and consciousness towards a language to study about its ongoing trends.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Studies in UNESCO report (Drude, 2003) have shown that thousands of local tongues and minority languages which are not a match for dominant regional and global languages or have no connections to business or educational opportunities face extinction. The primary aim of this research is to explore the patterns of language choice among the Tamil youth in Malaysia. This research aims to investigate mainly the language choice of the Tamil youth in intra-group communications. Their language choice in various domains such as family, friendship, educational institutions, workplace, religion, neighbourhood and transaction (business) were investigated. These are among the domains which were recommended by Fishman (1972) as determinants of language choice in a multilingual country like Malaysia. The language choice of the youth in the home domain with different family members were also explored to discover their language choice patterns with different generations, i.e. with grandparents, parents, siblings and relatives, while for the married youth (participants), their language choice with their spouses and children were also investigated. The education and workplace domains were investigated to determine the language choice of youth in intra-group interactions (with their Tamil colleagues and classmates).

The second objective of this study sought to discover the reasons for selection of different languages for different domains by the Tamil youth. The third objective looked at the varieties of spoken Tamil used by the participants (see section 2.4.2 and 3.6) since each of the variants has its specific functions in the Tamil community (Irulappan, 1980; Pillai, 1965; Schiffman, 1979, 1998). Therefore, this study investigates the patterns of language

choice among the Tamil youth from the district of Gombak, Selangor, Malaysia (see Figure 4.4) as a relevant representative for this study. In addition, the factors that influenced their language choice and their attitudes towards mother tongue were also obtained through this exploration. In sum, the main objectives of this study are:

- a) To investigate the patterns of language choice among the Tamil youth in Malaysia in intra-group communications;
- b) To determine the reasons for their language choice in all the selected domains for this study; and
- c) To discover the varieties of Tamil language used by the Tamil youth and the function of the varieties used.

1.5 Research Questions

This study deals with the following research questions to explore patterns of language choice among Tamil youth:

- a) What are the patterns of language choice of Tamil youth of Malaysia in the domains of home, friendship, education, workplace, religion, neighbourhood and transaction (business)?
- b) What are the reasons for their language choice in all the seven domains?
- c) What are the varieties of Tamil used by the Tamil youth?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study presents the scenario of Tamil language practice among Tamil youth who live in the multi-ethnic environment of Malaysia. There have been many studies on the Tamil language in Malaysia since 1960, focusing on the trends in linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of Tamil language over time (see section 1.2). However, there is a lack of current studies on the patterns of language choice in major domains among the Tamil youth.

Therefore, this study attempts to explore the language choice patterns among Tamil youth of Malaysia (see section 4.6). By investigating, discovering and analysing the patterns of language choice, this study contributes to the body of literature in the field of language choice studies among minority groups in Malaysia. This study also provides insights into the current pattern of spoken Tamil among youth which may affect language maintenance or shift (LMLS) where Tamil is concerned. In addition, this study is the first of its kind to explore the language choice of Tamil youth, including variations of Tamil language used by youth in Malaysia (see sections 2.4.2 and chapter 7) and how these variations have influenced their language choice. This exploration will provide more understanding in the language choice of Tamil youth in relation to their ethnicity in their intra-group communication.

1.7 Limitations

It was not possible to conduct a nation-wide survey to define the language use patterns of Tamil youth in Malaysia due to cost, time and other constraints. Thus, this study involved only 109 Tamil youth from Gombak (see section 4.6). The study was limited to the spoken form in the seven domains. Youth from mixed marriages were not included in this research.

1.8 Conclusion and Thesis Outline

This thesis is presented in eight chapters. Chapter 1 presents a general introduction of this thesis, a brief history of Tamils and Tamil Language in Malaysia, the aim and purpose of this study, the research objectives and the thesis outline of this study. Chapter 2 presents an overview of languages in Malaysia, Tamils and Tamil language in Malaysia and in other countries where Tamils live, history of Tamil education and Malaysian spoken Tamil. Chapter 3 provides explanation about language choice, reasons for language

choice, language attitude and bilingualism and provides a review of related sociolinguistic studies. Chapter 3 also discusses related theoretical concepts which helped in the development of this study. Chapter 4 provides the research methods, data collection methods, background information of the participants who contributed data for this study and explanation of the data analysis methods. Chapter 5 addresses the first research question. It gives the demographic details of participants and what influence the demographic facts had on language choice and the patterns of language choice of participants in all the seven domains, i.e. family, friendship, education, workplace, religious, neighbourhood and transaction. Chapter 6 addresses the second research question and discusses the reasons for the subjects' language choice in all the selected domains. Chapter 6 also gives a detailed picture of the code-mixing behaviour of participants, their reasons for code-mixing and their attitude towards their mother tongue, Tamil. Chapter 7 discusses the patterns of language choices of Tamil youth and reasons for their language variation choice, as well as their spoken Tamil variety. Chapter 8 concludes this thesis by reflecting and giving an overview of findings and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF TAMILS AND THE TAMIL LANGUAGE IN MALAYSIA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the history of Tamils in Malaysia, Tamil vernacular schools, Tamil education, Tamil language in Malaysia, the contributors to Tamil education in the beginning of 20th century, the diglossic nature of spoken Tamil, three varieties of spoken Tamil and previous studies found to be related to spoken Tamil in Malaysia which are linked to this study, i.e., the language choice of Malaysian Tamil youth. This chapter also gives a picture of the foundation that layered the basis for current-day Tamil youth's language choice.

2.2 Languages in Malaysia

A phrase from the Razak Report 1956 points out that there were about 80 languages “under the Malaysian sun” (Omar, 1992, p. 1). Languages in Malaysia comprise all the vernacular languages, indigenous and non-indigenous, Arabic, English, Thai, Baba Malay, Melaka Chettiars' language, Portuguese Creole, Sabah and Sarawak indigenous languages, Chinese and their various dialects, Indian languages and about twenty Malayan aborigines' (Orang Asli) languages. In addition, there have been other arrivals from neighbouring islands, such as Javanese from Java and Achenese and Minang and Mandailing from Sumatera who came in large numbers to settle in Malaya in the 18th century.

Omar (1992) says that the Malay language and the indigenous languages formed the basic linguistic layer of the Malaysian multilingual landscape. The other language families, namely Indo-European (English, Kristang), Indo-Aryan (Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi), Dravidian (Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam), Sino-Tibetan (Chinese, Thai), Semitic (Arabic)

and Austronesian (Javanese, Acehnese, etc.), which arrived later, constitute the secondary layers of multilingualism. In addition, the subsequent arrival of various Western languages further varied the languages in Malaysia. According to David (2006), there are at least a hundred languages in Malaysia. This number might have increased further by the year 2019 with the entrance of foreign workers from various countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and many other parts of Indonesia and its islands.

2.2.1 The Malay Language in Malaysia

Malay has been the national language of the country ever since Malaya achieved its independence in 1957. Malay is a native language of Malaysia. The language belongs to the Austronesian family of languages and has been the lingua franca of Southeast Asia for a long time. In earlier periods, when major religions of the world, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity reached insular Southeast Asia, Malay language was used as the medium of teaching. Thus, Malay was used in social life and religious teaching as well as in trade for centuries (Omar, 1992). After independence in 1957, efforts were made to establish a national education system. The first set of recommendations towards this goal was suggested by the committee of education in 1956, which was known as the Razak Report (Omar, 2015). Abdul Razak Hussain, the chairman of this committee, recommended a national system of education which was designed to make Malay language as the national language. The committee also recommended a common content syllabus for all schools and Malay as a compulsory subject in all government-aided schools. From 1957, the Malay Language was made a compulsory subject in the curriculum for all primary and secondary schools (How et al. 2015). A pass in the Malay language was made the condition for the Lower Certificate of Education and the Malaysian Certificate of Education (Omar, 2003). In 1960, a new education committee

under Abdul Rahman Talib, which was known as the Rahman Talib Committee, recommended and succeeded in implementing the Malay language as the main teaching subject in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in the country (Omar, 1992; Paramasivam and Farashaiyan, 2016). Following this recommendation, the examination of the Federation of Malaya Certificate of Education (MCE) was set in Malaya for the first time in 1962. In 1965, University of Malaya admitted the first batch of students who had undergone the Malay-medium education right from the primary level. The position of national language in the education system became stronger during the period of 1971 to 1975 (Le Ha, 2013). The Malaysian Ministry of Education took various steps so that by 1983 all courses from all streams would start in Bahasa Malaysia in the Malaysian universities. At the various universities in Malaysia, departments had been set up with nomenclatures, such as language centres and language units with the primary aim of teaching Bahasa Malaysia. Books and courses had also been produced to enhance Bahasa Malaysia (Omar, 1976; 2003). As a result, Bahasa Malaysia, holding the national language status is seen as a tool to unite people and a symbol of identity.

2.2.2 English in Malaysia

The English language in Malaysia has become the second most important language in education and social life. Every school in Malaysia has to teach English as a compulsory school subject right from Primary One level. Acquisition of this language is to prepare the students for the future when they get to higher levels as professionals. To ensure that Malaysians are ready to face the challenges of the modern world, English has become a compulsory learning subject of the Malaysian education system. At the university level, the basic degree is awarded only if the student obtains a pass (required grade) in the common English Language paper, MUET (Malaysian Universities English Test) since the year 1999 (Malaysian Examinations Council, 2015). The same goes with the media:

English is used extensively in both print and electronic media. In social life, English is used for communication among multilingual Malaysians in urban and suburban areas.

2.3 Tamils and the Tamil Language in Malaysia

Tamil is one of the major languages of the South Indians. It is the earliest of the South Dravidian languages with very ancient roots and grammatical forms. Tamil has a rich literary and grammatical tradition, heritage and history of its own dating back to the 3rd Century B.C. The earliest grammatical composition in Tamil is *Tolkappiyam*, which is a rich and valuable literary text in the form of sutras (formulas). It is an original piece of work which explains Tamil phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax, poetics and the lifestyle of the ancient Tamils. Consecutively, three Tamil Sangams (Zvelebil, 1974) went on to contribute a valuable collection of literary works to the Tamil language.

The history of the Tamil language itself reveals changes that have taken place during different periods of time. The Medieval Tamil Bakthi Literature was simplified by making use of less standard forms. The modern period in Tamil literature began from the 16th Century, when various native and European scholars contributed numerous literary creations, translations, lexicons and grammars of written (L) and spoken Tamil varieties that paved the way for the emergence of modern Tamil. Beschi, a European scholar, produced the first Tamil dictionary, similar to those for the European languages (Jothimuthu, 1965; Neill, 2002; Orsini, 2016). Later, Modern Tamil showed adjusted forms, coinages and so on due to the vast social, economic, cultural, industrial and scientific and other modern advancements of the 20th century.

Tamil is the native language of 70 million people and another 8 million speak Tamil as their second language (Parkvall, 2007). Tamil is also spoken by Tamils in various

countries like Malaysia, England, Canada, Mauritius, South Africa, Fiji, Germany, the United States, Netherlands, Australia, France, Myanmar and many other countries where Tamils have travelled. Tamil is also taught as a first or second language in Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Australia, Mauritius and many other countries (Bhat and Narayan, 2010).

2.3.1 The History of Tamil Vernacular Schools in Malaysia

The history of Tamil schools in Malaysia is related to the settlement of Indian labourers in plantations. The setting up of Tamil vernacular schools was one of the strategies of the coffee and rubber planters for long-term retention of the labourers in the country. The majority of the Tamils worked in rubber estates and lived in settlements provided by the rubber plantation managements. They lived in groups and spoke their mother tongue, including many dialects of the various provinces that they came from. Thus, the majority of Indian Tamils were monolinguals. The British colonial government had also provided Tamil vernacular schools for children of estate labourers under the Labour Ordinance in 1912 (Omar, 2015). In 1925, there were 235 Tamil schools in the Federal Malay States (Arasaratnam, 1970; Raja et al. (2015). Before Malaya's independence (1957) Tamil schools were mainly situated in rubber estates, where the majority of Indians lived. English schools were found only in big towns. A very small percentage of Tamils who lived in towns sent their children to English schools. The 1980 census shows that 90% of the Indians in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia, were Tamils and 90% of Indians could speak Tamil (Omar, 1992; Nagaraj et al. 2015), indicating that almost all Tamils could speak Tamil.

After independence in 1957, national-type Tamil schools started to bloom in the capital city of Malaysia under the implementation of the New Education Policy (Omar, 1992,

2003). Bahasa Malaysia (Malay) and English languages were taught as compulsory subjects in all types of schools. In the 1980s, though Tamil schools were provided for the Tamil children at the primary level, many parents preferred sending their children to national schools where the medium of instruction was Malay, while English was taught as an important language. Prior to that, in the year 1970, 50% of the Indians in Peninsular Malaysia could speak Bahasa Malaysia. This percentage increased tremendously to 86% in the year 1980. As for spoken English, 26% of Indians could speak in the year 1970 and 40% in 1980 (Omar, 1992, 2003).

The medium of instruction in all government schools is Malay. English is taught as a compulsory language in all types of primary and secondary schools and at the tertiary level in Malaysia. As of 2017, there were 524 Tamil primary schools nationwide (Timely aid for Tamil schools, 2017, Aug. 20). For Tamil primary schools, the medium of instruction is Tamil. Tamil and Chinese languages are also taught under the Pupils' Own Language (POL) regulation as an elective subject in secondary schools (Omar, 2015).

Only 55% of Tamils go to Tamil primary schools (Vernacular Schools Report, 2012). Those who are from primary Tamil school background with six years of schooling are able to write and speak in Tamil. As for those from non-Tamil education background, although generally they are not able to write, they can still be fluent in spoken Tamil as it is naturally acquired from their surroundings, being their mother tongue (Karunakaran, 2005). As a result, Tamils in Malaysia are mostly trilingual. However, the degree of use of formal Tamil differs between those who are from Tamil primary education and from those who are not.

Tamil is offered up to degree level (tertiary level) in University of Malaya and University Pendidikan Sultan Idris, in teacher training colleges and as a minor subject in a few other universities. All Malaysian students learn Malay and English as compulsory subjects under their school system. At the tertiary level, both English and Malay are used as the medium of instruction. Article 10 in the Education Act and the national language and school policy are the basis which justify the holding of Malay language as the nation's official language and at the same time maintain and encourage the continued development of the languages and practices of other races in the nation. Although Islam is the official religion of the country, Malaysia's system of education comprises all the major religion and practices of the different races of the country (Omar, 2015). Malaysia has a diversified education system due to its multireligion and multicultural society. The Vernacular schools reports (2012) have stressed that these influences and diversity have enriched Malaysians' pluralistic society and they are an asset and advantage to the country to cultivate talents with multilingual abilities and from multicultural backgrounds. These talents will allow this country to compete better internationally. These rational views have enhanced vernacular schools in Malaysia, including Tamil schools.

Later, with the introduction of the Dual Language Programme (DLP) under which Science and Mathematics were taught in English in all schools, the number of students enrolling in Tamil schools increased. In the year 2000, there were 80,000 students in Tamil schools. The number then increased to 110,000 over a period of nine years to 2009. The rise was because parents saw that their children would be able to learn more in English under the DLP. This education policy was introduced in 2003 to the pupils in Primary One and Form 1 in secondary schools by the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammad, to improve English language skills of the students. Tamil parents who were confused and uncertain about their children's language mastery,

between mother tongue education and global language (English), seemed relieved and started to send their children to Tamil schools. Under this programme Tamil schools progressed better over the last twenty years (Ramasamy, 2016).

After independence in 1957, from 1960 to 1990, Tamil schools did not progress well as most of the children were from the estates. During this period there were urgings from politicians to close down the Tamil schools because Tamil schools were impeding the performance of Tamil children. However, over the years, Tamil education gained more support. More and more parents sent their children to Tamil schools during the DLP programme (year 2003–2009) period. However, in 2009, the government reverted to the previous mediums of instruction, commencing in 2012. Under the new programme, year one students were taught in the previous language (all subjects in Malay except English in all national-type schools, whereas in Tamil and Chinese schools, all subjects were taught in vernacular language, except Malay and English). Students who were taught Science and Mathematics in English could maintain in English or change to the previous language. Though it was not accepted by educationists who wanted their mother tongue as medium of instruction in schools, the majority of Tamil schools continued teaching Mathematics and Science in English under the Dual Language Programme (DLP). More Tamil parents started to send their children to Tamil schools. They were contented under this programme, which fulfilled their expectations on the mastery of both Tamil and English. Tamils were proud of their Tamil education; Tamils realize that they are entitled to Tamil education and it simultaneously helps their children to excel in English to face the challenges of the 21st century (Arumugam, 2008). Hence, those pupils who were in primary schools (ages between 7 to 12 years) and secondary school students (ages between 13 to 17 years) who went through nine years (2003 to 2011) of schooling under the DLP programme were aged between 16 to 26 years old in the period the data were

collected for this study, which was between the years 2014 and 2015. This shows that the participants of this study were exposed to more English language through the three subjects, i.e. English, Science and Mathematics in all types of national primary and secondary schools. The Malaysian education system, which stresses the teaching of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and mastery of English through the DLP programme, has enabled the Tamil youth to become more competent in three languages, including their mother tongue.

2.3.2 Sri Lankan Tamils and their Contribution towards Tamil and Tamil Schools in Malaysia

Singam (1969), in his book about the Ceylonese in Malaysia and Singapore from 1867 to 1967, writes about the contribution of Sri Lankan Tamils towards the development of this country and Tamil language in Malaysia. Sri Lankans worked in large numbers in almost all public administration and other industrial sectors. They have contributed towards every field, such as government administration, medical services, the teaching profession and railway development. Many of the first non-white doctors and engineers in Malaya and Singapore were Sri Lankan Tamils (Nagarajan, 2008). Besides, being educated and having been part of middle- and upper-class society, they contributed towards the development and sustaining of Tamil language, as well, in Malaysia. In Kuala Lumpur, the Sri Lankan Tamils mainly lived in the Sentul and Brickfields areas. The majority of them were Saivaites (Hindus) and strongly believed they needed a temple nearby and Tamil classes to recite the Hindu religious scripts. They felt Tamil language was important and considered it a necessity for them, particularly as Hindus. Soon they formed associations, built temples, started Hindu religious classes and paid attention to the practice and recital of fundamental religious texts, such as *Puranas*, *Thevaram*, *Thiruvagasam*, *Thirumurukatrupadai* and *Kanthapuranam*, which are in Tamil

(Ramasamy, 1988; Burgio, 2016). They made sure their children received a Tamil education because they believed knowledge of Tamil was essential for Hindus as their Hindu scripts are mainly in Tamil. In their effort to enhance religious knowledge, they have also indirectly contributed to the enriching of Tamil language in Malaysia. Religion and language were important characteristics of Sri Lankan Tamils. Hence, they established many temples and churches and used them as their meeting grounds to generate ethnic sentiments and unity and to enhance their mother tongue, Tamil. Though the majority of them were Hindus, there were Christians among them, too. They were mainly Methodists and some were Anglicans and Catholics. Churches served their religious needs and they were the pioneers in the establishment of Tamil churches in Malaysia. As part of church activities, they started to teach Tamil language and formed Tamil schools. Sri Lankan Tamil Christians played a significant role in the development of Tamil language in Malaysia. It is evident in the history of Malaya that the first Tamil school was started in 1816 in the Anglican Church at the Penang Free School in Penang (Rajendran, 2008). Later, from the beginning of the 1900s, many Tamil schools started to bloom under the establishment of Tamil churches (Ramasamy, 1986). Besides temples, the Sri Lankan community has also established many cultural associations and Tamil schools in Malaysia. The Vivekananda Tamil School in Kuala Lumpur, which was established in 1914, was a highpoint of their efforts towards the development of Tamil language in this country.

2.4 Malaysian Spoken Tamil

Malaysian Tamils live in a multilingual society. They are also inspired by national progress and global development. Tamils in Malaysia speak at least three languages, i.e. Malay as the national language, English as the international and trade language and their vernacular language, Tamil. The Malay and English are taught as compulsory subjects in

all types of national schools. In addition, Tamils also have the chance to learn more languages through their Telugu, Malayalam and Chinese-speaking neighbours and also relatives through mixed marriages. At the same time, worldwide, the geographical spread of Tamils has resulted in varieties of Tamil language. The written Tamil does not show many changes, but on the contrary, spoken Tamil has undergone considerable changes at the phonological and morphological levels. Malaysian Tamil is one of the new varieties of Tamil, which displays different pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical and contextual features and usages. However, the sentence structure of Malaysian Spoken Tamil has not changed (Nalliannan, 2008; Schiffman, 2002; Thilagawathi, 1971).

Generally, spoken Tamil has the high (H) and low (L) varieties of Tamil (see section 2.4.2). Besides, Malaysian spoken Tamil has different linguistic features which may not be fully understood by Tamils from other countries. Malaysian Tamils have the Literary Tamil (LT), which is only the written form; the Standard Spoken Tamil (SST), which is a high variety of spoken form; and CT (Colloquial Tamil), which is a low variety of the spoken form in their linguistic repertoire. LT and SST forms are comprehensible by all Tamils who live in other parts of the world, as well. Conversely, the CT, which is a Malaysian colloquial variety, or the Malaysian dialect which shows more of the characteristics of the non-standard Tamil variety and mixture of Malay and Chinese features, might be difficult to understand by Tamils from other parts of the world (Nalliannan, 2008; Schiffman, 2003). Baskaran (1987) also says that the spoken Tamil of Malaysia contains numerous Malay and English words which are changed according to Tamil phonetic rules to sound like Tamil. She also has written a list of frequently found Malay lexemes in Malaysian Tamils' speech. These lexemes have been Tamilized phonologically and may not be fully understood by Tamils from other parts of the world because the Malaysian 'variety' of Tamil lexemes do not exist in the original Tamil

lexicon. She also has stated that Malaysian Tamil students in urban schools switch from Malay to English and vice versa effortlessly, use Malay in intergroup and intragroup communication and have begun to transfer sociolinguistic elements of one language to the other (Balakrishnan, 2018). Lim (2008), who did a study about code-switching behaviour, says that Malaysian youth (including Tamils) are making meaningful language choices (using Malay, English and Tamil) to communicate within the family, with their non-Tamil neighbours and with different races in the schools. Studies of Balakrishnan (2018), David and Naji (2000), Lim (2008), Nalliannan (2008), Paramasivam (2006) and Selvajothi (2017) all show that Malaysian Tamils, including the younger generations of each period of time, have begun to use elements of other languages (more Malay and English) in their spoken Tamil. Notably, the younger generation of 1980s and 1990s, who are adults now, will certainly pass on their linguistic behaviour to the next generation, who are the present day young people.

Tamils have been here in Malaysia for more than 200 years. Recently, in 2016, the Tamil schools of Malaysia celebrated their 200th year of Tamil education in Malaysia (Celebration of 200 Years Tamil Education in Malaysia, 2016), indicating the long existence of Tamils and Tamil education in Malaysia. Malaysia has always been a multilingual country and hence Malaysia's Tamil language has gone through many phases and changes (variations and adaptations).

2.4.1 Tamil as a Diglossic Language

Tamil is a diglossic language. Hence, a vision concerning diglossia is important for this study. The term 'diglossia' was introduced by Ferguson (1959). Diglossia is considered as a type of language situation where two varieties are used for carrying out different sets of social functions of the society. Ferguson's diglossic studies describe Arabic language,

where classical Arabic is the high (H) variety and regional colloquial varieties are low (L) varieties. Generally, diglossia situations only involve two different varieties, the H and L of a language. In later studies, the term diglossia was used in both a narrow and a much wider sense (Homes, 2013). In the narrow view, diglossia has three basic features: a) two different varieties of the same language are used in the community—the L and H variety, b) each variety has its different functions and both varieties complement each other and c) the H variety is not used in everyday conversation. Diglossia in a broader view defines the complementary functions of two different languages in a community; one is for H functions and the other for L functions. Thus, these situations are identified as diglossia without bilingualism and diglossia with bilingualism.

However, there are communities who habitually use more than three languages in their language repertoire. The term ‘polyglossia’ is used to describe such situations. For instance, the Cantonese-speaking community in Singapore speaks Mandarin (the H variety), Cantonese and Hokkien (the L varieties) and the H and L variety of Singapore English (Singlish) is a good example of a polyglossia situation. Thus, polyglossia is a well-defined term to describe conditions in which a number of different languages or varieties are used for different purposes (Holmes, 2013).

Tamil can be categorized as a highly diglossic language. Ferguson (1959) declares that Tamil has two varieties, namely the formal variety, which is known as the high variety (H) and the spoken variety (L) for informal speech. The H variety is learned through formal education, while the L variety is acquired naturally through day to day communication. Even if these two varieties vary, they complement each other in function. Tamil speakers do not agree to Tamil being written in the spoken Tamil variety. They prefer only the literary form in the written script. That is, one should not write as he/she

speaks. Hence, the spoken variety, or the colloquial variety (CT) and written Tamil, or the literary variety (LT), remain as two different varieties in Tamil, which is also known as diglossia.

Each variety has its role and they complement each other. The H variety is usually respected and admired because it is seen as reflecting prestige and a higher social status. Generally, the attitude towards the H variety is positive due to the fact that the H variety is the standardized variety in grammar books and thesauruses. On the contrary, people normally do not have high respect towards the L variety, though they are more comfortable with it in normal informal communications with friends and family and regard the L variety as the suitable variety to convey messages (Section 3.3.1).

As Asher & Annamalai (2014) stated, like many world languages Tamil also has its dialects or a colloquial variety (CT) which does not have institutional support or a writing system. The spoken Tamil has the colloquial or the L variety, which varies from region to region and with different social groups. The two distinct varieties of Tamil (written and spoken) existed from the early period of Tamil language (Tolkappiyam period 3rd BC–5th CE) and has parallel development and functional significance until today. Both of these varieties have different functional levels in different socio-cultural domains such as home, friends, education, administration, mass media and so on, i.e. at formal and informal levels (Karunakaran, 2005; Mesthrie, 2007).

2.4.2 Three Varieties of Tamil Language

LT is the literary variety, confined to written form and used in formal spoken settings such as in lecturing, reading news, meetings, formal debates, conferences, the judiciary and formal speeches. CT is the non-standard spoken variety of Tamil language. Primarily,

LT fulfils the formal needs of the Tamil society and the CT variety fulfils daily needs of informal verbal interactions. Henceforth, this study refers to LT as the formal literary variety (H) and CT as the non-standard dialect or colloquial variant (L) of Tamil.

Irulappan (1980), Krishnan (2004); Saravanan, Lakshmi & Caleon (2009) state that Tamil has both the high (H) and low (L) varieties for use, but those without Tamil education at all would have difficulty in understanding the high (LT) variety. Thus, a kind of ‘in between’ the ‘L’ and ‘H’ variety is needed to overcome the diglossic situation. Irulappan says non-standard spoken Tamil (CT) has dialect differences at the regional and social levels and is never used in written form other than the dialog (conversational portion) of novels and stories. Therefore, the need for an interpersonal communication, a common standard spoken variety, arose for the needs of non-Tamil educated people to understand LT. Meantime, the gap between LT and CT began to diminish in modern Tamil through the influence of films, radio and television programmes and a common variety or standard spoken variety started to emerge in South India in the 1960s among educated Tamils residing in the central part of Tamil Nadu. This variety is widely understood and accepted by Tamils (Asher & Annamalai, 2014). As a result, the common, modern spoken variety gained recognition as the standard spoken Tamil (SST) of the Tamil community, which is also mutually comprehensible among various dialects and serves its purpose as a standard spoken variety of Tamil (Saravanan, Lakshmi and Caleon 2009; Schiffman; 1978; Zvelebil, 1969). The process of standardization was not a problem for the Tamils at that point as the standard variety of spoken Tamil with which most speakers were comfortable and was accepted and spoken widely by Tamils all over the world already existed (Karunakaran, 2005; Krishnan, 2004).

In modern Tamil, SST is also used for certain high-register (formal) purposes as it eliminates the stigmatized, stereotyped, or marked features of the colloquial variety and is nearer to the formal Tamil or Literary Tamil, LT (Annamalai, 1976). Thus, LT and SST are considered as H varieties. SST is the standard variety for spoken form and CT is the non-standard variety of spoken form. With the emergence of this third variety, i.e. SST, the present situation introduces triglossia in Tamil (Fishman, 1967, 2000; Vaish, 2007). Mainly, SST is accepted and spoken widely in Malaysia, Singapore, Tamilnadu and other parts of the Tamil speaking world (Schiffman, 1979, 1999, 2002).

Annamalai (1976) and others too are of the view that SST is not only the representative speech of a region, social group, or religion but is also a speech obtained by eliminating the stigmatized, stereotyped, or marked features of the home dialect and is formed with natural, neutral items which are nearer to the formal Tamil (LT). Schiffman (1979, 2002) also agree that SST was spoken by the educated persons of different social groups and areas. People also learned it by listening to films, communicating with each other in colleges, hostels, work places and other places where educated people socialize and interact in Tamil. SST is mainly used in formal situations by educated people. Therefore, Tamil has three different varieties: a) literary Tamil (LT), which is confined to only written form; b) the standard spoken variety (SST) as an 'in-between' the LT and CT to overcome the diglossic situation; and c) the colloquial variety (CT), which is a non-standard spoken form.

SST is recognized and spoken widely in all the Tamil speaking communities world-wide, including Malaysia, though it shows regional variation. The wide usage of social media, for instance, the influence of Tamil movies and frequent contacts between Tamils from Tamil Nadu and Malaysia show effects on the Tamil language in Malaysia, as well. The

Tamil used in mass media was the only literary variety (LT) until the early 1960s. Later, in the middle of 1960s, a kind of standard spoken variety (in-between variety between H and L varieties) gained gradual popularity and replaced the literary variety in mass media (Pillai, 1965; Saravanan, 2009). The intermediate variety, or the third variety, has functional significance like the other two (LT and CT) varieties. This implies that the educated Tamil natives have both the high and low varieties for use. In certain situations, people with minimal Tamil education or no Tamil education would have difficulty in understanding the high variety (LT). Thus, the intermediate variety between the 'L' and 'H' varieties, i.e. SST as a standard spoken form, helps to overcome the diglossic situation (Karunakaran, 2005; Kumar, 2001).

2.4.3 Previous Studies Related to Spoken Tamil in Malaysia

Various previous related studies about spoken Tamil language in Malaysia reveal the ever-changing nature of the language, slowly but undoubtedly. Subbiah in 1966 had introduced a brief description of standard spoken Tamil and dialect variations in the Lower Perak region of Malaysia. In his study, he was concerned about the disappearing lexical items from the various dialects of Tamil, i.e. from the Tamil language repertoire.

Kanagaretnam (1971) and Karunakaran & Krishnan (2013), who analysed the phonological, morphological and syntactical behaviour of Malay loanwords in Tamil, says that the Malay loanwords in Tamil mainly occur at the spoken level and are meaningful only within the context of Malaysian Tamil. Her study also reveals that spoken Tamil started to undergo alteration according to the multilingual environment of Malaysian Tamils. In another study, Balasubramaniam (1983) and Aman et al. (2009) attempted to show how the borrowed linguistic elements from Malay are adapted by rural Tamils into the Tamil language. Baskaran's (1987) and Hoogervorst's (2015) researches

on “The Use of Bahasa Malaysia among the Urban Indians” reports that there are Bahasa Malaysia words which have been Tamilized phonologically and used in both Bahasa Malaysia discourse and in Tamil discourse. She has also listed numerous Malay words which have been absorbed and Tamilized by the Tamils in Malaysia. She argues that such words do not exist in the original Tamil lexicon and concludes that Bahasa Malaysia as Malaysians’ medium of education and lingua-franca of the country will make the new generation of Malaysian Tamils trilinguals with English as an important second or third language. In addition, David and Naji (2000) indicated that educated Tamils in big cities perceive English as a high-status language and therefore use more English in intra-group communications.

In a similar study, David (2017) adds that no language is ever permanently the same and that languages evolve and change continually to meet the needs of language users. Her study about the Tamil community in Malaysia reveals that the younger generation of Tamils use more English than Tamil and tend to use a mixture of all three languages, namely Malay, English and Tamil (David & Naji, 2000). Studies on Indian communities in Malaysia, i.e. the Sindhi community (David, 2001), the Punjabi Sikhs (David, 2003), the Malayalee community in Kuching (David, 2006), the Malaysian Tamil community (Naji & David, 2003) and the Tamil community in Sarawak (Alagappan, Dealwis & David, 2016; Selvajothi, 2017) also show that they are moving away from their native language for social and economic reasons. Sinayah (2006), Nalliannan (2008) and Paramasivam (2006) have done studies on code-switching behaviour of the Tamils in Malaysia. Nalliannan’s (2008) study shows that generally Malaysian Tamils use 30% of other codes (including the specific features of other languages) in their spoken Tamil (27% of English, 3% of Malay language and a very small percentage of Chinese words). Though there are many studies in the area of sociolinguistics, this work is mainly

descriptive of the Malaysian younger generation's spoken Tamil being the first of its kind in Malaysia. It is hoped to depict the present day spoken Tamil among the younger generation in Malaysia, who are influenced by different languages and cultures.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of Malaysian Tamils and the factors that could contribute to the language choice of Tamil youth. Malaysia's education system, the major factors that influence Tamil language use, variations of Tamil language and the social functions of the variations were presented and discussed in this chapter. Earlier studies which can be linked to this current study of language choice among Malaysian Tamils were also discussed.

CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES AND THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

3.1 Introduction

Only in recent decades language choice studies started to gain popularity among sociolinguists (e.g., Fishman, 1968; Haberland, 2005; Gumperz, 1971, 1982; Heller, 1988; Mesthrie, 1992). This chapter discusses the related works on language choice studies and related theoretical constructs that aided in the development of this study. Domain constructs and social network theory were used to provide both the macro (in general) and micro (more specific) views of this study (see section 3.5). The first part of the chapter provides the definitions of the terms language, language variation, language choice (which is the focus of this research), reasons for language choice and the attitudes of minority groups towards their mother tongues. In the second part, related sociolinguistic studies about language choice and reasons for language choice studies in Malaysia and other parts of the world are referred to for comparison purposes. Since language shift and language maintenance (LMLS) studies are also comparable (see also section 3.2.2) with language choice studies, reviews of related LMLS studies are presented as well, to form the outline about the language choice of the Tamil youth in Malaysia with their Tamil interlocutors.

The third part of this chapter describes the theoretical models which support the study and provide a strong basis in the data gathering and analysis and also looks at theories in detail which help to focus on the development of the theoretical framework. This study mainly looks at Fishman's (1972) domain concept to analyse the language choice patterns among a group of Tamil youth in Malaysia. The social network theory recommended by Milroy (1987) is also employed for an overview on how this theory influences language

choice of Tamil youth besides the sphere of domains. The domain construct is used to analyse the language use of Tamil youth at home, with friends and in various situations, such as in education, the workplace, religious activities, their neighbourhood and during transaction activities.

3.2 Language and Language Variation

People use language to convey thoughts and feelings to one another. Different groups of people use different language to communicate. Language can be in spoken form, written form, or printed form and people are constantly using language and linking to others through shared norms of behaviour (Fishman, 1972). Languages are used for socializing as well. Language can be a collection of dialects which are linguistically alike, used by different social groups who claim they are speakers of one language and which plays a role to unite and represent them to other groups (Holmes, 2013). In addition, language is described as a form of life through which our social relationships are perceptible. Language also gives insight into the consensual relationships that are obtained between speakers and is part of a social interaction that involves important agreements about meaning and social values between the interlocutors (Alam et al. 2016; Kramer and Brewer, 1984).

Fishman (1976) goes into details about sociolinguistic variations in different contexts. He says conversations change according to different situations, such as humor during a formal lecture. The switch from formal to informal variety involves underlying sociolinguistic regularities which are related to another. Fishman says these speech varieties are observed through the concepts of domain.

It is normal for a language to have many different ways of saying a same thing. Some words have same references; certain words have two or more pronunciations. Fishman (1972) and Sayahi (2007) states all speech communities reveal several varieties of language which are functionally differentiated from each other. Some varieties may represent occupational specialization and therefore have vocabulary, pronunciation and phrases which are not generally used wider in a speech community. Some varieties represent different social classes. Some communities even have many social class varieties and regional varieties (such as different varieties of English). In addition, communities who speak many languages may use all the varieties (within language) they know for intra-group communications. Different varieties show different backgrounds and are therefore associated with different functions according to interlocutors.

3.2.1 Code

Code is a system of symbols used as a means of conveying information. A code in sociolinguistics is a term for the relationship between a pattern of social structure and a pattern of language in use (Doughty, Pearce & Thornton, 1972; Poeste et al. 2019). Gumperz (1964) and Nilep (2006) view codes as the linguistic varieties in speakers' repertoire, including different languages and style. In the field of linguistics, code which also known as variety changes according to social reasons (Holmes, 2013). Wardhaugh (2006) says a language or a dialect chosen for a particular situation is called a code. Generally, when people speak in a particular language it can be expected that they would be competent in many varieties of the language. Whenever people want to speak, they have to choose a particular variety from the language repertoire.

3.2.2 Language Choice

Language choice refers to a speaker's selection between languages and a decision has to be made about which language or variety is to be used. Generally, social factors such as to whom a person is talking to, the social context of a talk, the function and topic of conversation determine language choice of a speech community. Domain, a term popularized by Fishman (1972), involves typical interactions between typical participants in typical settings (situations, role-relationship and speech events). Thus, domain is a general concept which involves three main social factors, which are participants, setting and topic in language choice, particularly in bilingual and multilingual speech communities (see section 3.3.2). Usually, if a minority group uses its native language in more domains, it is more likely that it will be maintained. The home, the one domain under any family's control, makes maintenance of a language possible. In larger minority communities, their native language can be maintained if more domains such as workplace, education and religious domains practice the language. Language shift largely occurs when one language takes place instead of another in the known languages of a speech community.

Generally, language choice takes place in all societies. In a monolingual society, it takes place among variants of a language, while in a multilingual society it takes place among different languages as well. For instance, in multi-ethnic countries like Malaysia and Singapore, language choice takes place among two or more languages and also occurs within a language, i.e. from colloquial to a formal style or vice versa. Generally, in social interactions, people know how to choose their language or adapt accordingly (Drobot, 2017). Wardhaugh (2006) refers to Fishman's (1980) description of the Spanish and Guarani languages in Paraguay as diglossic languages of which Spanish is the H variety used for official occasions, government dealings, in communication with strangers who

are presentable, with people from other countries and in most business dealings, while Guarani is used for casual occasions, such as with friends, for jokes, or to inferiors and strangers who are poorly dressed. Spanish is the city language, while Guarani is favoured in rural areas and among the lower classes. Wardhaugh says people should always make choices based on many different factors, such as what to say, how to say and what words to use for specific communications. Language requires choice in address terms, politeness and linguistic choices indicative of the social connection that the speaker perceives between the speaker and listeners.

Of late, global languages like English, French, Spanish and Mandarin have been dominant over minority languages through their economic and social power. This is happening to major languages as well. To compete in the world market, one has to master the dominant languages. Maybe this way, in recent decades, language choice studies have gained popularity among sociolinguistic researchers. This is especially so in bi- or multilingual speech communities where choices occur between varieties of a language, between different languages and dialects involving different settings and serving different needs. Bilinguals switch from one language to another. They have the choice to use languages and styles of each language available to them. Researchers such as Ferguson (1959, 2000), Fishman (1967, 2000) have studied language use by focusing on language choice. Bilingual or multilingual communities would have additional languages, language features and language styles compared to monolingual communities. It is common for bilinguals to use the significant features of all the languages they have acquired.

Gal (1979) and Hlavac (2013), from their observations, made it clear that there are no fixed rules for language choice. Habitually, people use a simple language at home, the work place and school. They state that situational factors, such as participants, occasion,

location, etc. determine the language choice. People may also use an unexpected language in a certain setting, even if the social situation and its components remain the same. In fact, it is perceived as the speaker's approach for expressing his/her intent. The authors mentioned that conversational language switch cannot be predicted as it depends on the momentary intent of the speaker. Simultaneously, language attitudes have a big part in determining the language choice. In Gal's (1979) study among bilingual Oberwarters it is revealed that they perceive German as a high-status language and the language of the future generation, leading to material success. Meanwhile, their native language, Hungarian, is often linked with its peasant speakers who symbolize the old way of life. Hitherto, Oberwarters prefer Hungarian language regardless of the variety for community solidarity, church services and other communal activities.

3.2.3 Reasons for Language Choice

The act of language choice can be influenced by various factors which can be divided as macro-level phenomena and micro-level occurrences. Governmental language policy decisions concerning which language is accepted for what purpose, nationally or regionally, which languages are to be used as teaching languages in schools and higher learning institutions and the language for government offices and business purposes are considered as determinants of macro-level language choices. Mixed marriages, speakers' attitude, religious conversion and easy accessibility to a wider population are the micro-level contributing factors to language choice. People may choose certain variety because they might find it is convenient to discuss a specific topic, considering the social distance between the interlocutors, status, social role, formality of setting and function or goal of the interactions, such as asking for favours, giving orders or to insult.

Holmes (2013) concludes that a combination of different factors in social contexts influences language choice of bilinguals as to whether to be a stable bilingual or shift to other languages. In general, economic, social, demographic and attitudinal factors play crucial roles in language choice. Among these, economic factors largely impact language choice and this leads to language shift of minority languages towards world languages. Opportunities for jobs created by industrialization are often linked with globalization and world languages, such as English, Spanish or French. Besides that, globally known notions, relics and different lifestyles label the worldwide languages to a greater extent. However, the degree of success in maintaining minorities' languages depends on their resistance to the influence of such global languages into all domains, particularly in the domain of family, which normally practices and governs the maintenance of the minority languages. For instance, the cases of Welsh and Hebrew indicate that minority languages can be sustained and even enhanced if a speech community regards their language as an important symbol and value their distinct identity highly. Holmes (2013) says that one could learn more than one language without giving up their own language. In general, language attitudes play a big role in determining the language choice in all communities; the more a language is valued and preferred or used in more domains, the more it will be maintained.

Socio-cultural, economic, political, institutional, demographic, attitudinal and educational factors are the main reasons for language choice. Fishman's language choice patterns in a domain are mainly determined by three social factors:

- a) The interlocutors of the conversation and the role-relationship of the speakers;
- b) The function and topic of conversation; and
- c) The social context or locale.

A number of such specific features, which are also known as domains, have been identified as determinants in describing language choice patterns in many speech communities, particularly in bilingual and multilingual speech communities. Domain is obviously a very general notion comprising three main social factors, as mentioned earlier: interlocutors, setting and topic. Generally, people choose a certain variety or language because they feel comfortable to handle the topic and language related to the domains. For instance, at home, people use language of the family domain. But then, if they discuss their work or school at home, they then use a language that is associated with the topic. Moreover, other than role-relationship, social settings and topic, bilingualism is an important factor in determining language choice of an individual. Bilinguals have different preferred language in different domains (Fishman, 1972). The degree of bilingualism does influence language choice. As Jacobson (2002) says, most of the world's population now is bilingual and it is a common practice for people to choose appropriate language according to domains. Bilinguals choose languages that they and the interlocutors know or understand.

3.3 Language Attitudes and Factors that Influence Language Attitude

Social psychologists are of the opinion that attitude towards languages and their varieties are associated with the attitude towards groups of different people. Some people who are well mannered, cultured and intelligent are normally associated with their language or variety. Some groups are thought to have attitudes, such as laziness, insolence, procrastination, aloofness, an unsympathetic approach and so on and consequently, their languages are perceived the same way (Preston, 2002). Thus, when a language is treasured and regarded with pride as the uniqueness of the minority group that has a good social standing and is used to express its unique culture, it then stands a better chance of being maintained. When a language is treasured and viewed as the identity of the minority

group, such optimistic views or positive attitudes toward a language will help to maintain the language.

On the other hand, pressure from the wider society has adverse impacts on the outlook of minority or immigrant groups and this adjustment influences the attitude towards their native language. For instance, minority groups like Gujarati, Italians and Vietnamese in predominantly monolingual countries such as the USA, England and Australia face various kinds of force to speak English. Good command of English is thought to be an indication of the ability to excel in their career. In addition, proficiency in English has an added advantage in material and social aspects. Thus, viewing English as a symbol of modernization and key to success, immigrant or minority groups gradually shift from their mother tongue to English. People tend to be influenced and form their opinion about languages through their observation of the languages spoken by other. Attitude to language is also largely associated with social and political factors (Holmes, 2013). Acceptance as official languages for use in schools and higher learning institutions promotes positive attitude towards the languages. For instance, Tamil language (Tamils form only 5% of Singapore population based on "Census of Population 2010", 2011), which has an equal official recognition as the other ethnic languages in Singapore, is regarded highly by the people in Singapore.

3.3.1 Diglossia and Attitude in Diglossic Situations

Diglossia is considered as a type of language situation where two varieties are used for carrying out different sets of social functions of the society (Britto, 1986; Ferguson, 1959 / 2000; Hudson 2002). Britto (1986) as cited in Ferguson (1959) divides and examines diglossia under nine sub-headings: i) function, ii) prestige, iii) acquisitions, iv) standardizations, v) literary heritages, vi) stability, vii) lexicon, viii) phonology and ix)

grammar. He summarizes the characteristics of H as associated with formal functions; perceived as more prestigious; learned formally at school; is highly standardized; has a vast amount of highly esteemed literature; is autonomous; with L, constitutes a single phonological structure and is grammatically more complex. The L variety is described as only used for conversation of L functions, is less prestigious, acquired naturally and informally since young, is poorly standardized, has less highly valued literature, is less autonomous, shares the bulk of vocabulary with H and is grammatically simpler (Britto, 1986; Gkaragkouni, 2009). According to Britto (1986) as cited in Ferguson (1959) the speakers in diglossic communities regard H as a prestigious and a more beautiful variety; they would rather attend a political talk or educational lecture or poetry reading in the H variety. Pillai (1965) also cited in Emeneau and Ferguson (2016), wrote that the Tamil community was not psychologically prepared to accept spoken Tamil as 'good' Tamil. Wallwork (1978) and Saravanan et al. (2009), pointing out Ferguson's (1959) findings about the L variety in some speech communities, noted that at times the feelings were so strong that H alone was viewed as real and L reported as non-existent in their language repertoire.

3.3.2 Bilingualism

Bilingualism is considered good proficiency in two or more languages or competence in more than one language. Bilinguals have a different preferred language in different domains (Fishman, 1972; Reverberi et al. 2018). Weinreich (1953) and Moradi (2014) describe bilingualism as two different languages spoken by a person interchangeably. Mackey (1968) as cited by Pandarangga (2015) describes bilingualism as the alternate use of two or more languages by a same individual. Paulston et al. (2007) states that bilinguals need not be competent in both the languages they use and there is no restriction on the degree of competence an individual has in the languages the person uses. The

person can be a balanced bilingual (equally competent in both or more languages) or a person with a good command in one language and uses it more frequently than his weaker language. Wei (2000) discusses further about passive or receptive bilinguals who understand a second language but do not necessarily use it. Jacobson (2002) held that most of the world's population now is bilingual or multilingual and that in the modern world, it is a common practice for people to select appropriate language according to domains and people. Bilinguals also often engage in language mixing when communicating with another person who also knows both languages. When languages come into contact socially in bilingual circumstances, they do not remain unchanged like physical objects in contact. The languages in contact change—the elements of one language can be found in the elements of another and a number of linguistic processes such as borrowing, diffusion, convergence, pidginization, creolization, switching and mixing occur (Annamalai, 2001). Therefore, bilingualism is often linked with language shift. Since multilingualism is a common occurrence among people throughout the world, using only a single variety of language is a rare phenomenon. Most speakers command several varieties of any language they speak. Speakers are required to select a particular code when they speak (Wardhaugh, 2006). Saravanan et al. (2009) cites Blom and Gumperz (2000) about Singapore Tamils' language practice where standard language is said to be used when conversing about official or formal matters, whereas dialect is selected when talking about family and personal matters. Saravanan concludes that topic, setting and interlocutors may influence which language to use. Thus, study concerning bilingualism is important as well, in any language choice study.

Bi/multilingualism are common phenomena, existing worldwide (Clyne et al., 2003; Jacobson, 2002; Romaine, 2000). It is necessary to know about bilingualism in some countries where Tamils live. Annamalai (2001) uses the term 'mixed language' to

describe the language phenomenon in Tamil Nadu (in South India) where a large number of Tamils live. He says mixing of English words in the mother tongue is a pan-Indian feature. The educated Indians communicate with each other more in English in their own speech community. Jacobson (2002) pointed out that in the modern world, it is a common practice for people to convey messages in different languages in different domains and to different people. The existence of bilingualism does not alone lead to language shift (Fishman, 1967/2000). The size of a bilingual group, the widespread attitudes towards the language, its socio-cultural characteristics and perceptions of a language as being stigmatized also may cause an individual to shift to other languages. If the members of a minority community take an active step, for instance, on language choice, it may help in maintenance of the language (Fishman, 1976). For instance, Singapore, as a multi-ethnic and a multilingual nation which is comparable to Malaysia, has very complex linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural, pedagogic and societal implications (Saravanan, 1993; Vaish, 2007). More than one language or language varieties (distinct varieties of the same language) exist in the speech repertoire of Singaporeans. Code-mixing and code-switching happen when words and phrases from one language mix with another. Malaysia has at least a hundred languages (David, 2006). Since Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country just like Singapore, code-switching, code-mixing and borrowing are common practices in Malaysia and among Malaysian Tamils as well.

3.3.3 Code-Switching and Borrowing

Studies about language choice in any multilingual contexts would not be complete without discussion on code-switching, borrowing and mixing of linguistic elements. When languages come into contact socially, code-switching, borrowing and code mixing take place. Codes are linguistic varieties in a speaker's gamut of languages including, in the case of bilinguals, different languages and styles (Gumperz, 1974 as cited in Nilep,

2006). A particular dialect or language that a person selects to use in any circumstance is a code: a system used for interaction between two or more speakers. The linguistic borrowings of one language from another happen only in a bilingual or multilingual situation. Bilinguals tend to code-switch, code-mix or borrow. These language phenomena can be viewed as indicators of the beginning of language shift. Code-switching is a skill of using two languages interchangeably. Ervin-Tripp (2001) defines code-switching as an action of alternation when a speaker changes his speech stylistically to suit different social roles. Watson (2005) and Maros et al. (2016) cited Kachru (1978), describing code-switching as a skill to switch from one code to another and the alteration of codes is decided by the situation, function and the interlocutors. Code-switching may reflect the lack of vocabulary in a language in the linguistic repertoire of the speaker. However, it is a common phenomenon among multilinguals who may be fluent in the languages they use when code-switching. Borrowing is different from code-switching. Borrowing occurs when there are no exact equivalent terms to use. Borrowing normally happens when words are copied from other languages and adjusted according to the speakers' main language. Borrowed words are pronounced and blended in as if they are the speakers' native language. The studies by Dhoraingam (2006), Kanagaretnam (1971) and Balasubramaniam (1983) which analysed the linguistic features of Malay loanwords in Malaysian Tamil illustrated the function of Malay and English borrowed words in Tamil. They concluded that the trilingual Tamils in Malaysia use Tamil with borrowed Malay and English words when communicating with another Tamil.

Code-switching is also defined as using two languages interchangeably within the same discourses where the speaker is aware of the switch. Code-mixing is an act of transferring linguistic elements from one code to another which is mixing of two or more languages or varieties in speech. The term code-mixing emphasizes the interchanging or mixing of

one variety or language with another variety or language, while the term code-switching is a switch from one language to another (Akhtar et al., 2016; Gumperz and Tannen 1979). Combining and interchanging languages probably occur to some extent in the speech of all bilinguals. Code-mixing is also described as the alternating use by bilingual speakers of two or more different languages within a single speech (Muysken, 2000). Since code-mixing and code-switching are similar in terms of their function, both are used interchangeably in this study.

Status of relationship between speakers, social distance (e.g. how well they are known to each other), function or goal of the interaction and aspect of formality determine the choice of code. Code-switching is a communicative ability of speakers as a verbal strategy to achieve particular social purposes. Code-switching takes place in conversational settings whose repertoire consist of more than one language or variety of a language. Rodriguez-Fornelis et al. (2012) and Chauncey et al. (2008) explain further that conversational code-switching is rapid, largely unconscious and used for communicative effect. The codes switched can be either recognized varieties of the same language or of different languages. Koban (2013) says code-switching occurs in conversations between speakers, intersententially or intra-sententially. Code-switching is an individual's choice or is used mainly as an identity marker for a group of speakers who deal with more than one language in their interactions. Code-switching is an ability to converse and communicate and to establish interpersonal relations, maintaining mutual benefits (Gal, 1988, as cited in Wardhaugh, 2006). In addition, Wardhaugh says that code-switching or shifting from one language to another is an accepted norm in a multilingual country like Singapore. The majority of its population consists of Chinese, Malays and Tamils. The government policy encourages English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil: English as a trade and global language; Mandarin as standard Chinese language; Malay as the regional

language; and Tamil language. Wardhaugh gives an example of a Chinese child in Singapore who uses his/her vernacular with parents (Hokkien), informal English with siblings and friends, the education in the standard English (Singlish), religious practices in a standard English or Mandarin, transaction (trade activities) in informal Singapore English or the colloquial Malay. Therefore, switching between languages is a normal occurrence in a such multilingual community.

Malaysia is a multi-racial country, whose multilingual scenario is similar to Singapore, where the majority of its population comprises Malay, Chinese and Indian ethnics. Therefore, code-switching is a common occurrence in Malaysia as well. Most Malays are bilinguals with Malay and English in their language repertoire. The majority of Chinese and Indians are trilingual, with the inclusion of their vernacular language (Omar, 2003). Discussions about code-switching occurrence in Malaysia will be invariably brought towards the subject of English being the major language that has crept in and dominated over the other ethnic languages.

3.4 Sociolinguistic Studies

The field of linguistics explains the properties of a natural language. Linguistics focuses on the component parts and inner system to discover the rules of the language regardless of what language it is. In earlier days, as far as bilingualism is concerned, linguists were interested in forms of the language and to what extent one language interfered with another in the phonological, grammatical or lexical systems and those studies were mainly on two standard languages utilized by one person or group of people. But later works went into more detailed studies focusing on standard languages and dialects of the languages. Subsequently, sociolinguists have become more attracted to the effects of the presence of more than one language in bilingual speech communities. Sociolinguistics

concerns the study of the use of language in its social and cultural contexts, such as questions as to which form and function are associated in language use when there are choices of languages and varieties within a language that exist in their language repertoire. Thus, sociolinguistics is the study of language in use and explores the context: the speaker who is using it, where, when and why and its social function. Trudgill (2000) says that sociolinguistics is a field of study that observes the relationship between language and society.. This field has come into the limelight after the pioneering work of Labov (1966). According to Labov, sociolinguistics is a field of study in linguistics concerning the use of a language in society, focusing on the speech behaviour of a society and speech varieties used by various groups under the area of linguistics previously known as social dialectology. Sociolinguistics views language as a socio-cultural phenomenon; both language and society are dynamic. Language use of society changes as changes take place in the lifestyle of a community. Fishman (2000) has also pointed out that what an individual does tell something about what his society does and study of what a section (group) of the populace does will depict something about what an individual is likely to do.

3.4.1 Sociolinguistic Studies on Tamil

Sociolinguistic study on Tamil was previously known only as the ‘study of social dialects’. Shanmugam (1983) and Murugaiyan (2013) give relevant details about the beginning of modern linguistic and sociolinguistic studies on the Tamil language. Shanmugam (1983) says systematic Tamil sociolinguistic study was started by Bloch in 1910 in which he described the differences between the Brahmin and non-Brahmin dialects of Tamil. Beschi, a well-known Tamil scholar, wrote a grammar for the High variety of Tamil language termed *shentamil* in 1730 and also a grammar for common dialect of Tamil (spoken Tamil), *kotuntamiz*, in 1728 and this was reprinted in the year

1971 (Bate, 2009). Pillai in 1943 (as cited in Emeneau, et al., 2016) and for the first time presented the differences between the written and colloquial varieties of Tamil and the different functions of the varieties. In the early sixties, only after the publication of the sociolinguistic studies by Bright in 1960 and Labov in 1966, a little attention was paid to speech variation studies. Several scholars such as Pillai in 1965, Ramanujan in 1968, Kamatchinathan in 1969, Karunakaran in 1978 and Irulappan in 1980 began to illustrate linguistic evolution and evaluate Tamil language and its changes (Emeneau, 2016).

Bean (1974), also cited in Annamalai (2018), in her work titled “Linguistic Variation and Caste System in South Asia,” carried out an assessment of linguistics across regional boundaries. Southworth (1976) did a sociolinguistic study on South Asian languages, in general and that of South Indian languages, in particular. Southworth in the last two sections of her work, *Ethnography of Communication and Applications*, gives a systematic study of the limitation on communicative behaviour which explains who can say, what, when and to whom. Later, Karunakaran (1981) as cited in Das (2016), studied the speech behaviour of urban communities and their linguistic variation with sociological parameters. This study was considerably important as it was the first of its kind in sociolinguistics which described the speech behaviour of Tamils.

3.4.2 Related Sociolinguistic Studies on the Tamil Community in Malaysia and in Other Countries

Like many other languages and speech communities, particularly the minority communities of the world, the Tamil language in Malaysia among the Tamils has also undergone changes to a certain extent. There are many linguistic and sociolinguistic studies on the spoken Tamil of Malaysia. Subbiah (1966) as cited in Hoogervost (2015), introduced a brief description regarding standard Tamil, dialect variations and

disappearing lexical items from the language repertoire of people in the Lower Perak region of Malaysia. The works of Balakrishnan (2018); Saravanan et al. (2009) talked about Malay words in spoken Tamil. Nalliannan (2008) and Paramasivam (2006) have done studies about code-switching behaviour of Tamils in multilingual contexts of Malaysia. Borrowing too often happens because the words of new languages are used so frequently that they become more accessible than the words in the first language (mother tongue). Malay words are often borrowed and used in spoken Tamil and they became more available words in Malaysian Tamils' linguistic repertoire. However, Malay words used in Tamil are treated as single nominal and as modifiers only; they did not affect the sentence structure of Tamil language (Kanagaretnam, 1971; Nalliannan, 2008). Besides Malay words (which are largely found in Malaysian spoken Tamil), numerous words have been borrowed from English language and are being used commonly in the day-to-day life of the Tamils. Hence, Malaysian spoken Tamil is found to be distinct from that of the spoken Tamil of the Tamils living in Tamil Nadu and other parts of the world. While there are many studies in the area of linguistics and sociolinguistics on Tamil language, particularly on its spoken form, this work mainly intends to focus on Malaysian Tamil youth's language choice patterns in intra-group communications and the reasons for their language choice. It is hoped to depict the present day's language use among Tamil youth in Malaysia who are influenced by different languages and cultures.

Balasubramaniam (1983/1997); Mani and Gopinathan (2013) and Muthusamy & Farashaiyan (2016) who focused on language use of the Tamils who are not educated and working in rubber plantations in Malaysia, stated that they used more Malay words in their intra-group communications. Based on the scholars' findings, the reasons for their language use are because there were no equivalents for Malay words in Tamil, work related terms are in Malay and the availability of Malay words made for ease of

expression. Therefore, they habitually used Malay words. He also stated that the educated Tamils in big cities in Malaysia used more English in intra-group communications. They perceived English as a prestigious language and used it to show that they were educated. Sankar (2004), who did a study focusing on language maintenance and shift among the Tamil Iyers in Malaysia, says language shift is drastic in all domains except in the domain of religion. David (2017) indicated that the younger generation of Tamils in Malaysia tends to use more mixed language. However, a study by Selvajothi (2017) on Tamils in Kuching shows the domains of family, religion and cultural activities help to maintain their mother tongue (Tamil) despite Malay and English being important languages to them.

Comparable situations exist in Singapore where the Tamils perceive English as a prestigious language and hence, use more English in intra-group communications (Saravanan et al., 2009). In Singapore, Tamil is connected with lower socio-economic status, regarded as a second language and has no economic value (Sobrielo, 1985). English has become the dominant language in many Tamils' homes, replacing their mother tongue and Tamil is only spoken by grandparents. Among other reasons, the diglossic nature of Tamil (see section 2.5) which has different varieties for spoken and written language, also has an effect on the younger generation's Tamil language use. Singaporean Tamil children find it difficult to apply written Tamil (LT) or the high variety, which they learn in school and in out-of-school contexts. Educationists are putting effort into promoting the use of the standard spoken variety (SST) (see Section 2.4) to reduce the difference between LT and CT (the non-standard spoken variety) among the Tamil students. Attempts were also made to make the students use a near similar variety of Tamil, both in the classroom and in social contexts and eventually to develop their Literary Tamil which is needed for educational success.

Current studies also explore Tamil language in other countries where the Tamils have migrated to live as a minority group and experience similar multilingual situations. Tamil language in Singapore shared a history similar to that of Malaysia before it was separated from Malaysia in 1965. Singapore is a multi-racial country with three major races, as is the case with Malaysia. The Singapore government has given equal official status to all four languages viz. Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English. English is also the teaching language and serves as the first language to all Singaporean children. According to Saravanan, Lakshmi and Caleon (2007), Singaporeans regard different language groups and cultures of the country with due respect and live peacefully, practising bicultural and bilingual custom. In Singapore, the mother tongue or the first language is regarded as a second language, more as a remnant of ethnic background. Tamils make up 58.25% of the Indian community (7.4%) in Singapore. Singaporean Tamil parents consider English as a symbol of prestige and higher social status (Kuo, 1980). Thus, the usage of English has increased as a dominant language in many of the Tamils' homes. A census in the year 2000 showed that amongst the Singapore population, the Tamil families showed the biggest shift from Tamil to English, with only 43% of Tamils using their mother tongue as their home language. Singapore's General Household Survey (2005) showed that the percentage of Tamil language use among family members (or in the family domain) had shrunk further to 38.8% (Lakshmi and Saravanan, 2008).

At the same time, studies conducted by educationists show Tamil children's lack of confidence in the command of their mother tongue and lack of opportunities to use their mother tongue due to its diglossic nature, which have tremendously influenced their shift from their native language to English. The Singaporean Tamil children view that the literary variety of Tamil language (LT) that they learn in classrooms is confined only to written form. No one speaks in LT and hence, children find it difficult and it is a separate

variety which has neither relevance nor use in communicating outside school activities (Saravanan et al., 2007). Lakshmi (2001) revealed that the variety the students used in the family environment, listening to radio programmes and in the cinema differed from the LT in the classroom. Singapore educationists realize this challenge and quote the basic theory of constructivism of Jean Piaget referred to Eggen and Kauchak (2010), which sees the link between learning and existing knowledge and prior experiences. Singapore educationists, who were concerned over the Tamil language that has to be a living language to be used actively by young Tamil students and who also strived to enhance the students' learning of their mother tongue, suggested SST (standard spoken variety) (see also section Section 2.4.2) as an added resource of learning of Tamil in Singapore schools. SST as a standard spoken variety (Schiffman, 2002) was recommended by researchers as a useful tool to encourage and motivate Tamil speaking children to practice their mother tongue continuously, even after they leave school. Saravanan et al. (2009) says that the reduction in interaction among Tamil children with their extended family members, parental preference for English and a lack of confidence to use Tamil have contributed towards the shift of Tamils to English in Singapore.

Likewise, a study by Canagarajah (2008) on the Sri Lankan Tamils, also proves that the Sri Lankan Tamil community in London, Toronto and California are moving away from their native tongue towards English. Language shift occurs among Tamils due to pressure on the minority to join the mainstream. Parents emphasize English to children for excellence in education. Tamil is used only for kin terms and cultural items. They use only limited Tamil words when there are no equivalent terms in English. Tamil youth were not fluent in their mother tongue; they claim English as their dominant language. Canagarajah's (2008) data show an obvious generational shift to English. He has highlighted that families are responsible for loss of Tamil in the diaspora. Meanwhile, a

study on Tamils in Melbourne by Fernandez and Clyne (2007) shows that Tamil children can understand Tamil spoken in the home environment but respond in English and the presence of grandparents helps in the maintenance of Tamil. Tamils in Melbourne emphasize learning of cultural and religious knowledge through Tamil language. Hence, the Hindus show maintenance of Tamil language. On the contrary, Tamil Christians emphasise more on English to their children and they do not see themselves as Tamils anymore. Educated Tamils in Melbourne consider basic Tamil would be sufficient as their mother tongue. Tamils with low levels of education help in the maintenance of their mother tongue, whilst Tamils with higher levels of education are associated with language shift. Meanwhile, Geetha and Kamatchi's (2010) study in Tamil Nadu also shows that Tamils who live in multi-lingual environments and who are exposed to increased social interaction in neighbourhoods not only mix linguistic elements from different languages but also mix English, Telugu and Urdu in their Tamil proverbs.

3.5 Related Theoretical Models and Theoretical Framework of This Research

Fishman's (1972) domain concept was used mainly to analyse language choice of Tamil youth in this research. The social network theory of Milroy (1980) was also used for an overview of this research, on how it influences youth's language and supports the domain concept. These theoretical models facilitated in providing a good basis for the data gathering, analysis and development of this study. In general, the methodological approaches used in language choice studies and language shift and language maintenance (LMLS) studies are comparable. Hence, this study also looks at LMLS studies to develop the research. The strength of a research study is governed by theories or frameworks of ideas to integrate the evidence. Since this study discusses the language choice of Tamil youth in Gombak and the social role of language, the concept of domain is employed to talk about communication of individuals in different settings. The concept of domain was

developed by Joshua Fishman (1972). This study employs the theory of Fishman (1972) to analyse and develop the current study. A domain comprises a typical communication of particular group of people in a typical situation. Notions or concepts such as home, friendship, school, work place, worship place, administration, transaction and specific settings are determinants of language choice in a bilingual community. The language choice in a bilingual community differs from domain to domain and the domains determine the particular kind of interlocutors in a particular kind of place and the particular kind of topic. Domain determines the language to be used. The speaker has to use his/her intelligence and imagination in deciding which language to use. Speakers learn that certain linguistic items are associated with certain types of circumstances or people. This model describes language use patterns in communities in terms of their functions in the high and low domains of language use as well. Fishman (1972) claims that the language choice patterns of communities and language shifts are also correlated with social variables, such as age, gender and socio-economic level.

At times, when people discuss school or work-related issues in the domain of family, they use the language linked with those domains, rather than the language of the home domain. This irregular situation is described as leakage - particular topics discussed in another domain regardless of the setting or addressee (Holmes, 2013). In a bilingual community like Singapore, this is a very normal and common language phenomenon. Singapore's multilingual nature is also similar to Malaysia. This study employs the domain concept to examine the language choice among a group of Tamil youth in Gombak, Malaysia in major domains such as family, friendship, education, workplace, religion, neighbourhood and transactions.

3.5.1 Fishman's Theory of Domain

Fishman in 1972, mainly describes people in multilingual speech communities who deal with many languages they know and who speaks what language to whom and when and what are the determining factors of their language choice. He explains further on his (Fishman, 1967/2000) work, which primarily deals with intra-group (within-group) multilingualism. He emphasized those multilingual settings and how the single community makes use of two or more languages or varieties of language for intra-group communications. Control of mother tongue and other tongues or switching between languages or varieties constitute the speech community's linguistic repertoire. They use all the available languages or codes they know to communicate with each other. Fishman (1972) says that usually the choice of language in multilingual speech communities is decided by interlocutors (role relationship), occasions and topic of discussion. In conclusion, he states that the setting, the subject matter and interlocutors determine the language choice (Fishman 1972, p. 583).

Fishman (1967/2000) also discusses the most appropriate parameters to describe the language choice patterns in order to get the best of the factual accuracy and theoretical importance to amalgamate the research. If one could clarify the problem of how to describe language choice in stable, intra-group (within-group) bilingual settings, he/she then could address the choice determinants of less stable settings, such as inter-group (between-group) multilingual settings, in general, more effectively. Fishman also defines stable intra-group bilingualism in a more realistic and neutral manner. For instance, he gives a hypothetical example of a Brussels's government employee who speaks standard French in his office, standard Dutch at his club where he goes for a drink after work and a distinct variety of local Flemish at home. In each place he identifies himself with a separate speech network to which he belongs, wants to belong and from which he seeks

acceptance. There might also arise needs for him to use French at his club and standard Dutch or even French at home. If he meets another staff member who had happened to be his childhood friend and schoolmate who grew up in a similar language background, they would tend to speak Flemish to each other, which represents for them the closeness that they share. When they converse on work related topics or world affairs, they switch to French or choose more French lexical items with Flemish influences, which show their mood of intimacy and familiarity throughout their conversations. According to Fishman (1967), the problems could be summed up as: a) to determine the pattern of selection of a preferred language from a variety of languages in a community that practises multi languages; and b) to determine the variations of a language in the patterns of social interaction between different ranks of society. At this point, Fishman says that the overall problems are: a) to recognize and describe the higher order regularities in choosing among the several varieties of the language repertoire of a multilingual speech community; and b) to recognize the interpersonal (social) fluctuation (lower order societal patterning) that remains even when higher-order societal patterning is established.

Fishman (1972) says that topic is a regulator of language use in multilingual situations. Certain topics are more appropriate to use in certain multilingual contexts. The language choice would depend on the language in which the speakers were trained to deal with the topic. For instance, certain subjects in university were taught in a particular language or the speaker lacks specialized terms to discuss a particular topic. Fishman (1972) says, at times, speakers of multilingual speech communities consider it odd or inappropriate to discuss topic X in language Y and at times, they use the language in which they are familiar and skilful with specialized terms for a satisfying discussion. According to Fishman, the selection of a particular language for the use is often determined by the trend and accepted standards of a multilingual community. Hence, for macro studies and

comparisons with studies on similar situations, it would be useful to examine to determine how the particular subject matter can be used repeatedly in other areas or transactions. In fact, such investigations might also reveal why a majority of people in a certain multilingual situation at a certain time have competency of one language over another language for the specific period of time. Without doubt, topic is an important consideration in understanding language choice variance in Fishman's hypothetical government functionaries, in that one should examine and relate the individual, momentary choices to relatively stable patterns of choice that occur in their multilingual speech community as a whole.

Recognition of the existence of domains in sociolinguistics enables the understanding on language choice of different speech communities. Domains also help in understanding language choice and topics which are relevant to the study of individuals' or particular sub-populations' verbal interaction patterns. Sociolinguistic domains are societal constructs derived from systematic and detailed analysis and summarization of patently congruent situations (Fishman, 1972). Domain is a helpful concept in recognizing a number of behaviourally separate social situations which are commonly associated with a particular variety or language. Therefore, in many bilingual speech communities, domains such as home, school, church, workplace and government have been tested and found to be congruent with a language or variety.

Domain is a socio-cultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators and locales of communications, in accord with the institution of a society and the spheres of activity of a speech community, in such a way that individual behaviour and social patterns can be distinguished from each other and yet related to each other. The domain is a higher order summarization which is arrived at from a detailed study of the face-to-face interactions in which language choice is imbedded. (Fishman et al., 1972, p. 249)

Domains begin from the integrative perception of the investigator. The social spheres of a speech community are generalized from congruent situations in which individuals intermingle in appropriate role-relationships, in the appropriate locales (settings) to discuss particular topics with each other (Fishman, 1972; Anchimbe and Mforteh, 2011). Fishman says, Greenfield's work in 1968 on Puerto Rican community members who were equally proficient in Spanish and English generalized five domains (family, friendship, religion, education and employment) as typical situations for gathering self-reported information on language choice in which each domain was represented by similar people, places and topics.

Domains also help in understanding the predominant language for particular topics for individuals or particular sub-populations of a speech community. Fishman (1972), via his findings, stresses that certainly, in immigrant-host contexts in which only the language of the host society is recognized for formal or official functions, for sure, particularly the young people gradually leave the immigrant society and enter the host society. Ultimately, the domain of language behaviour may also change from setting to setting at all levels. Therefore, referring to Barker (1947) and Barber (1952) as cited in Fishman (1972), went one step further, formulating domains at the level of sociopsychological exploration, i.e. intimate, informal, formal and inter-group levels and showed that the formal domain linked with religious activities, whereas the informal domains were connected to recreational activities. Hence, the interrelationship between domains of language behaviour is defined at a societal-institutional level and domains defined at a socio-psychological level may assist in the study of language choice in multilingual settings to yield more detailed and productive results.

However, Fishman (1968 as cited by King et al., 2008), himself has pointed out occurrences of incongruent situations within the social order in daily life. Though language choice is much more straightforward and polarized in normal situations governed neatly by sociolinguistic norms of communicative appropriateness, there are 'unusual' situations which must be resolved by individual interpretation. Fishman (1972) says, domains are analytical parameters for the study of large-scale sociolinguistic patterns. Moreover, Fishman (1972) also says data on Puerto-Rican bilingual children in Jersey City among individuals who knew Spanish and English, which was analysed in accordance with the domains, also yielded significant and instructive findings and showed that a particular language may be much more related to certain domains than others and also differently by age.

Fishman (1972) states that the degree of bilingualism determines language choice in each domain. Fishman (1976) compares 23 non-English mother tongue participants in the USA in the years 1940 to 1960. Based on his findings, most of the mother tongues underwent considerable losses during this 20-year interval, which is concluded to be due to bilingualism. Fishman (1972) describes four stages of domain overlapping processes and how, in bilinguals, the mother tongue was replaced by English. In addition, previous separate roles, values and norms in the domains of home change due to foreign migration and industrialization. Subsequently, the language of school or work comes and replaces the language of home. Fishman's (1972) domain overlapping model states that at the initial stage, English is used only in a few domains such as workplace and governmental administration. Only a few immigrants know a little English and begin to learn English via the mother tongue. In the second stage, they have more ability to converse in English. Therefore, they can use English and their mother tongue in in-group interactions. In the third stage, they become balanced bilinguals (see section 3.3.2) and as a result, the second

generation has started to learn and communicate in English during their childhood. At the fourth stage, English has replaced their mother tongue in most of their private or restricted domains. At this fourth stage, immigrants learned their native language through English. Fishman's (1968 and 1972) researches have mainly focused on the sociological perspective of minority languages and immigrant languages in bi/multilingual states. Similarly, the Tamils in Malaysia, besides the multi-ethnic environment, they also face development of industrialization and challenges from globalization. Therefore, as a minority group in a multilingual country, Malaysia (see section 2.4), the Tamils' native language can be compared with Fishman's (1972) domain concept to realize the evolution of Tamil language among the Tamils in Malaysia. Thus, the domain concept is the appropriate tool to analyse language choice among the Tamil youth in Malaysia and gain an overview of the Tamil language usage and its linguistic evolution in peninsular Malaysia.

Fishman (1972) explains the pioneering work of Schmidt-Rohr in (1932), who recommended nine domains to establish an overall status of language choice in various domains of behaviour among German settlers who were exposed to many different non-German speaking communities and various kinds of socio-cultural contact settings (Gallois et al., 2012). Cooper and Fishman (1971) also wrote about various scholars who have suggested on additional or fewer domains than Schmidt-Rohr's, such as Mak (1935), Frey (1945) and Dohrenwend and Smith (1962) as cited in Fishman, 1972, to establish language choice patterns in inter-group communications in various domains. Fishman (1972) has also pointed out Greenfield's (1968) work on language choice within a Puerto Rican speech community, which generalized that five domains, i.e. family, friendship, religion, education and employment were sufficient to explain inter-group communications. Domains are a higher-order generalization from consistent situations in

which individuals or a group of people interact appropriately according to role-relationships, locales and topics. Regardless of the number, domain concept can be applied to study the language choice in multilingual settings more effectively (Fishman, 1972, p. 588). Domains are social spheres which normally draw together a group of people for similar purposes. Role-relations in each domain require different approaches of language behaviour.

3.5.2 Social Network Theory

The social network model was developed and used by Milroy (1980) to analyse language use patterns and how they control language transformation. The term network in sociolinguistics refers to the pattern of informal relationships people are involved in on a regular basis. This theory puts forward the notion that the social network is responsible for linguistic change, including the language choice patterns and language maintenance as well. Milroy (1980) stated that the low variety of language was used to show close relationships amongst the people from the central urban areas in Belfast. On the other hand, the standard variety language was used for external relationships. A high degree of traditional values and similar speech style with the people within the network they belong to are shown by people from a closed network (a network of people who have frequent contacts with other members of the same network). On the contrary, people who do not belong to a closed network or have a looser relationship with the community show relatively lesser traditional values when compared to the speech norms of any closed network. Milroy classifies two types of networks: density and plexity (Milroy, 1987, p. 20-21). Density refers to people's intense network link with each other, whereas plexity measures the array of different types of communication a person has with different individuals. A uniplex link denotes the connection of a person with another person in a single area. For instance, a person could be linked to someone else in a workplace and

not in any other context. On the other hand, multiplex connections involve communications with others in a number of dimensions, such as neighbourhood, workplace and religion. Milroy's (1980) social network model shows that a person's speech and linguistic repertoire identifies him with the kind of networks he belongs to.

Meanwhile, Gal (1979) as cited by Hlavac (2013) says that a casual relationship amongst people from the same interest groups largely determines their preferred language. Norahim's (2010) and Ehala's (2015) studies have shown that the language choice patterns and maintenance of a language are influenced and shaped by the nature of their social groups. However, they have also said that the sustainability of a language is incumbent on its "ethnolinguistic vitality," which is determined by three main components: speakers' attitudes towards the language, the number of speakers who use the language and the extent to which the language gets institutional support (Giles, 1977).

Wei's (1994) study, which he also cited in his later study in (2009), used social network analysis on the Chinese community who migrated to Tyneside, Newcastle to ascertain their language shift to English. Wei's study is about a migrant community's language choice and language attitude in a multilingual context. Norahim (2010) also employs the social network theory to explain the dimensions of present day Bidayuh's (Sarawak, Malaysia) language in their community. She states that only those who live in Bidayuh areas and those who often return to visit the villages are maintaining the language with their social network. Interestingly too, Norahim has implied that there is a deep sense of ethnic loyalty and pride among the Bidayuhs, which may prove to be the catalyst in ensuring their native language remains relevant despite the pressures of modernization. This resonates close with the Tamil youth in this study. Norahim's findings are similar to Milroy's (1980) outcome from his investigations in Belfast and Wei's (1994) study about

the Chinese immigrant community in Tyneside, Newcastle, where it can be deduced that language maintenance is facilitated by a close-knit network of the community.

Milroy's (1987) results are based on his observations in Belfast and Gumperz's (1976) work and views were built via studies made in Oberwart and Gail Valley, which affirmed that adolescents were heavy users of nonstandard vernaculars. Adolescents were very consistent vernacular speakers compared to the adults. Peer group networks appeared to be the most close-knit around the age of sixteen. However, the burden of work, independence, changes in social status and the environment led to greater variability later in personal network structures. Milroy argues the usefulness of social network theory which treats language as a tool for network maintenance. He says in communities with strong and dense networks, chances of language maintenance are stronger. However, studies in Malaysian contexts show a different outcome. The Malaysian communities, such as the Sindhis (David, 2001), Punjabis (David, Naji and Kaur, 2003), Bengalis (Mukherjee, 2003), Malayalees (Govindasamy and Nambiar, 2003) and Malaysian Iyers (Sankar, 2004) despite strong and multiplex networks, are shifting to English and they maintain their cultural norms via English. Thus, David (1996) and Govindasamy and Nambiar (2003) have questioned the applicability of social network theory on minority communities. Hence, the present study only intends to compare the language choice among the Tamil youth in Malaysia in relation to Milroy's (1980) findings in Belfast. Therefore, this study finds Fishman's (1972) domain theory is a more applicable tool to determine the patterns of language choice among the Tamil youth in Malaysia and the underlying facts which influence their language choice patterns since. Malaysian Tamils are considered as a 'stable multilingual community' as they are in Malaysia largely from the end of 18th century and early 19th century (see section 2.1) making use of two or more

languages or varieties of a single language for intra- group communications (as described by Fishman, 1972, p. 437).

3.6 Language Variety and Variation

Initially, varieties represented divergent geographic variants known as dialects (Ferguson & Gumperz, 1960; Spolsky, 2011) and the study of varieties was known as dialectology. Now, there are two categories of language variation. One is linguistic variation and the other is sociolinguistic variation. In linguistic variation, languages have many different ways of saying the same thing; people select a particular variety to address or greet others, describe things and respond to others. Linguistic variation involves pronunciation, word choices, analyses word-structure, tone, grammar and vocabulary as well. Linguistic variation offers choices of ways of expression. Choices may involve different languages or different dialects of a language. For instance, the linguistic variation which involves two dialects in northern Hemnesberget, Norway, i.e. Ranamal and Bokmal. Ranamal is the local dialect and Bokmal is the standard dialect of the Norwegian language. Both have different phonological features and word-forms. The Hemnesberget villagers use Ranamal in the village and Bokmal, the standard dialect, to discuss topics associated with outside the village, in school, textbooks, in church, government offices and it is used in mass media. Ranamal, as their local dialect, was used to communicate with their family, friends and neighbours. People decide the variety or the dialect according to interlocutor, place, topic and other reasons. The choice between the dialects involves social considerations (Auer, 2014; Blom & Gumperz, 2000).

Furthermore, sociolinguistic variation identifies the social functions of languages and how a language is used to convey social meaning. Choice of language variety provides clues to social factors, such as role relationships and speakers' feelings towards the person

addressed. Sociolinguists are fascinated by the different types of language variation used to exhibit and to show social elements. Sociolinguists use the term variety to refer the linguistic forms which differ according to social motives. Thus, variety, in sociolinguistic terms, refers to language in context. Variety includes different accents, distinct linguistic styles, different dialects and also different languages, which contrast with each other for social reasons (Holmes, 2013). The varieties are unique by the way they are used according to social settings. Normally, the appropriate variety is selected according to social factors. In many bilingual speech communities, certain domains are linked with a language or variety that the community presumes as a high (H) variety and certain domains are connected with a language or variety perceived as a low (L) variety. Some varieties are associated with high cultural values, whereas some are linked with intimacy and folksiness values. Similarly, Tamil has three varieties (see also section 2.5), i.e. the L (low) variety which is the less prestigious variety or the colloquial variety (CT) and H (high) varieties are the LT and the intermediate or standard spoken variety (SST).

3.7 Conclusion

Previous language choice studies employed Fishman's (1972) domain analysis to examine the patterns of language use of a particular community. Domains are patterned to deal with congruent situations or incongruent occurrences and a higher order generalization from congruent situations in which individuals interact appropriately according to topic, role-relationship and locale. Therefore, Fishman suggests 'domains' as a relevant sphere to collect data on language choice studies to get substantial and informative data on language choice. As will be presented in the next chapter, this study made use of the theory of domain (Fishman, 1972) to collect data and analyse data as recommended by this theory to determine the patterns of language choice among the

Tamil youth. This study also made use of social network theory (Milroy, 1987) as an overview to compare findings of domain analysis.

In general, language choice studies are applied mainly to small and minority communities. Tamils are a minority community comprising 6.3% of the 28.3 million people (Data banci penduduk/ Population census, Malaysia). Hence, this (language choice) study fits the investigation of the language use patterns of the Tamil community, particularly among the youth in Malaysia. Minority communities are more subject to language shift because of the social pressures of having to be assimilated into the larger community and to adopt global trends, especially since globalization has also resulted in greater competition between languages, on both regional and worldwide scales (Maurais & Morris, 2003). Sankoff (1972) as cited by Karunakaran (2005) sees the language contact situation in relation to two broader characteristics: microlevel contact, which describes the convergence within a particular language (dialect mixing) and macrolevel contact, which describes the convergence between two languages. Linguists say that when convergence takes place in a diglossic situation, it takes place only through the spoken variety.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the main theory employed for development of this study i.e., the theory of domain, domains used to explore this study, the pilot study, the research design, research framework of this study, details of the research design, the data collection method and instruments used to collect the necessary data, the data analysis method, participants of this study, rationale for the sampling method and the design of instruments to attain the objectives of this study. Finally, research ethics are also presented in this chapter.

4.2 The Pilot Study

The domain concept of Fishman (1972) was used in this study. Fishman suggests five domains using the language behaviour of Puerto Rican bilinguals which were analysed from their self-reported information on language choice. Therefore, a pilot study on a small scale was carried out to ensure the reliability of the research instruments. Data were collected through questionnaires (to gather self-reported information), recording of natural conversations and interviews for this research. “Reliability” refers to the instrument employed and if it produces the right measurement to gather information required to answer the research objectives. Validating findings in quantitative research would require the determination of the accuracy or reliability of the findings through strategies, such as triangulation (Creswell, 2009). As a first step, questionnaires were distributed to 15 identified participants (Tamil youth) (see section 4.6). The first set of questionnaires had very long questions. Later, modified questionnaires were distributed to 10 participants (see 4.8.1). Among the 10 participants, five agreed for the recording of their natural conversations in different domains and interview. Then, data analysis was carried out. The pilot study showed the instruments used could provide a reliable outcome

as suggested by Creswell (2009). Thus, this study continued using the domain concept of Fishman (1972) to see language choice patterns of participants in this study. Social network Model of Milroy (1980) was used as comparison to support the findings (see section 3.5.2)

4.3 Theories Perspectives

4.3.1 Theory of Domain

As introduced in Chapter 1 (section 1.4), the primary objective of this study is to explore the patterns of language choice among Tamil youth in Malaysia in intra-group communications. In many language choice studies and LMLS studies, researchers have employed the concept of domain in their analyses (David, 2006; Dealwis, 2008; Lim, 2008; Nambiar, 2007; Norahim, 2010; Ramiah, 1991; Sankar, 2004; Selvajothi, 2017; Sobrielo, 1985). The theory of domain was recommended by Fishman (1972) (see section 3.5.1). Domains play a vital role as the determinants of language choice in all speech communities, particularly in minority communities like Tamils in Malaysia. Domains also reveal societally patterned variation in speech across all instances of one domain. The people of diglossic speech communities have specific interpretations with respect to their languages or varieties because these varieties are associated with the behaviour and attitudes of certain domains. Domains are patterned to deal with congruent situations or incongruent occurrences and a higher order generalization from congruent situations in which individuals interact appropriately according to topic, role-relationship and locale. Therefore, Fishman suggests domains construct as a relevant sphere for collection of self-reported data in language choice studies in which significant and informative data is obtained (Fishman, 1972, 1976). Fishman has generalized five domains (family, friendship, religion, education and employment) as the typical situations to determine language choice patterns from (see also section 3.5.1).

Fishman suggests that in real circumstances, there are many different situations of the same kind that exist and involve different varieties of language that is used in that specific domain. People interact according to role relations, topics and locale (settings) in which languages or varieties involved vary and go beyond restrictions and hence, the investigator's decision to determine the language boundaries and domains to gather intended data for empirical research in this descriptive sociolinguistic study. Fishman also says that each domain can be distinguished into role-relations that are specifically necessary in certain societies at certain times. For instance, "Pupil-teacher, buyer-seller (transaction), employer-employee[...]all refer to specific role-relations[...]in certain domains which certainly need to be described and analysed for their language use or language choice in a particular multilingual setting which is considered to be most revealing for that setting" (Fishman, 1972, p. 83). Fishman (1972) also cites Cooper (1971), who used the 'neighbourhood' domain to analyse the language choice patterns of Puerto Rican children. Therefore, after considering all the possible verbal interactions (or domains) within which Tamil youth have opportunities to intermingle with their own speech community, this study employs seven domains, i.e. the domain of neighbourhood and the domain of transaction (buyer-seller) besides the typical domains such as family, friendship, education, workplace and religion (see section 3.5.1), which are also recommended by Fishman (1972) to examine patterns of language choice among Tamil youth. This study had added (included) the domain of transaction to study the language choice of participants when they communicate with outsiders in their own speech community other than their family members, friends and colleagues. In summary, this study primarily employs the Fishman's (1972) theory of domain to explore language choice patterns of a group of Tamil youth in Malaysia.

4.3.2 Theory of Social Network

The main objective of this study is to measure the usage of Tamil language among the Tamil youth (participants) in intra-group communications. Generally, people who live in multilingual circumstances belong to overlapping social groups. They are simultaneously members of social, ethnic, gender and age group (Holmes, 2013). People make language choices depending on whom they are conversing with. The people they interact the most with often influence their speech style. The social network of regular contacts influences one's speech style and linguistic repertoire (Milroy, 1980). This study has therefore identified seven important domains (family, friendship, education, workplace, religion, neighbourhood and transaction) as basic spheres within where Tamil youth have all the possibilities to communicate with their speech community.

Wei (1994) and Norahim (2010) used social network model of Milroy (1980) to analyse their study on minority communities to ascertain their language choice and language attitude in a multilingual context. Wei's study focused on communication within the family context, while Norahim employed the social network theory to explore the dimensions of present day Bidayuh. This study also employs the social network theory to discover the influence of social network on language choice of Tamils in Malaysia (see section 3.5.2).

4.4 The Research Design

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative) survey allows the strength of one survey design to compensate for the weakness of another. This type of mixed research design is a method of collecting, analysing and merging qualitative and quantitative data in a single study (Creswell, 2009). Mixed method surveys are the most widely used form of social research

because of their adaptability, efficiency and generalizability (see Figure 4-3). This method, also known as exploratory mixed method design, has two stages. The first stage is to collect the quantitative data and the second stage is the collection of qualitative data. Hence, this study used quantitative data to obtain general statistical results, whereas the qualitative data is to support and aid the explanation of the quantitative outcome. In qualitative studies, researchers need to be present at the site where participants experience the problems in the study and gather information by talking directly to the participants or observe them behave within the contexts. Thus, audio recording of natural conversations and interviews were conducted personally for this study, besides the survey questionnaire. Such authentic data gathering (genuine audio recordings of natural conversations) is a major characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). In most qualitative studies, researchers gather multiple forms of data such as interviews, observation and audio/visual recordings and spend a lot of time in the natural setting collecting data. For that reason, this study used a survey questionnaire method to obtain quantitative results (see section 4.8) and audio recordings (see section 4.9) of natural conversations and interviews (see section 4.10) to obtain qualitative data to support the quantitative outcome. The audio-recording method also gives the opportunity to observe the participants' real-life speech patterns. This kind of multiple data gathering processes or triangulation (Creswell, 2009) in this research method is hoped to give a detailed view of language choice patterns of participants.

4.4.1 Research Framework

As Creswell (2009) suggested, this study made use of the concurrent triangulation strategy, a most popular approach for mixed method models. In a concurrent triangulation approach the researcher examines both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (interpretation) data simultaneously, compares both outcomes, determines similarity,

differences, or some combinations and cross validate or rationalize the findings. This mixed method offsets the weaknesses of one method with the strength of the other and the weight is equal between the two methods. The discussion section first provides quantitative statistical results followed by quantitative results that support or disapprove the quantitative results. Creswell says that though this is the traditional mixed method model, it is helpful because it is familiar to most researchers and can result in well-validated findings.

Figure 4-1 illustrates the research framework of this study.

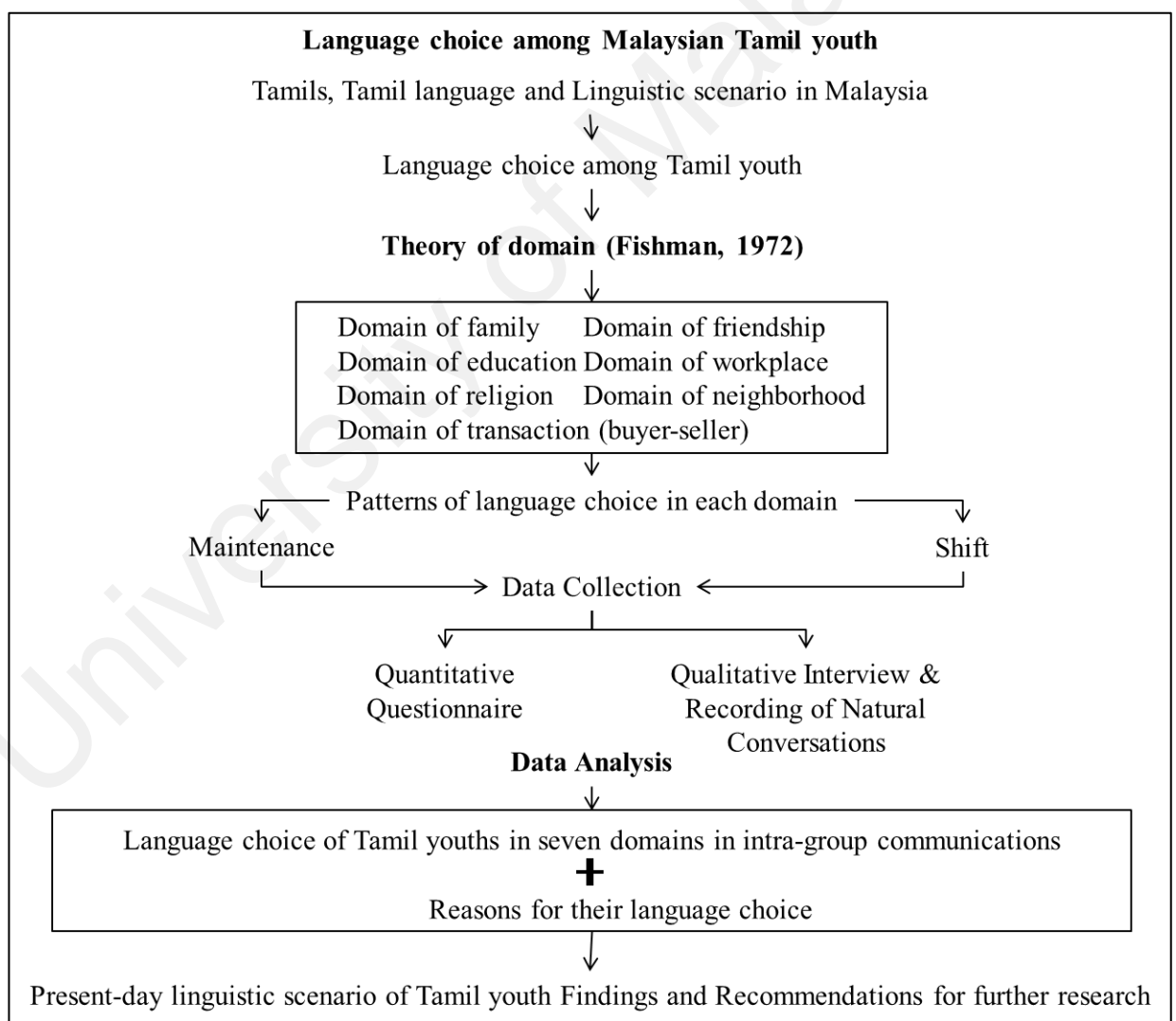


Figure 4-1: Research framework of the study

4.5 Data Collection Method, the Instruments Used and Data Analysis

This study employed a deliberate sampling method which also recommends the ‘snowball network’ technique or ‘friend of friend’ technique to collect data for a research. The snowball sampling technique helps participants who have certain characteristics needed in the research to refer to other participants with similar characteristics (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2006). As stated in section 4.6, participants for this study were Tamil youth aged between 15–30 years. It was easy to collect data from the youngsters as they were keen to cooperate because of the ‘friend of friend’ method (Milroy, 1987). In this approach those who had already been interviewed or had completed the survey questionnaire, identified other friends in their social network they knew who were fit for the selection criteria of this study to contribute for data collection. This method is suitable because it offers more advantages for studies that focus on a technical group, immigrants, minority groups and rural populations (Milroy & Gordon, 2003). Thus, snowball sampling was chosen as a relevant technique in this research on language choice and reasons for language choice of the younger generation towards their mother tongue, Tamil.

As stated in the discussion about the research design (section 4.4), this study used three instruments for data collection for this study, i.e. questionnaires, audio recordings and interviews. These three instruments involved three stages of data collection or the triangulation method to make this study more reliable. The first stage was distributing questionnaires and collecting questionnaires from the participants (see section 4.8.2). The second stage was audio recording of natural conversations of participants (see section 4.9) and the third phase was the interview sessions with the participants (see section 4.10). The third stage was the interviews to discover in-depth information about participants’ language choice and the motives for their language choice in their usual conversations

(which were audio recorded). It has been reported that in-depth information can be gathered by talking personally to people and seeing them in real contexts, which is a major characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009).

Figure 4-2 illustrates the three instruments used in the data collection processes and the number of participants who contributed for each technique of this study.

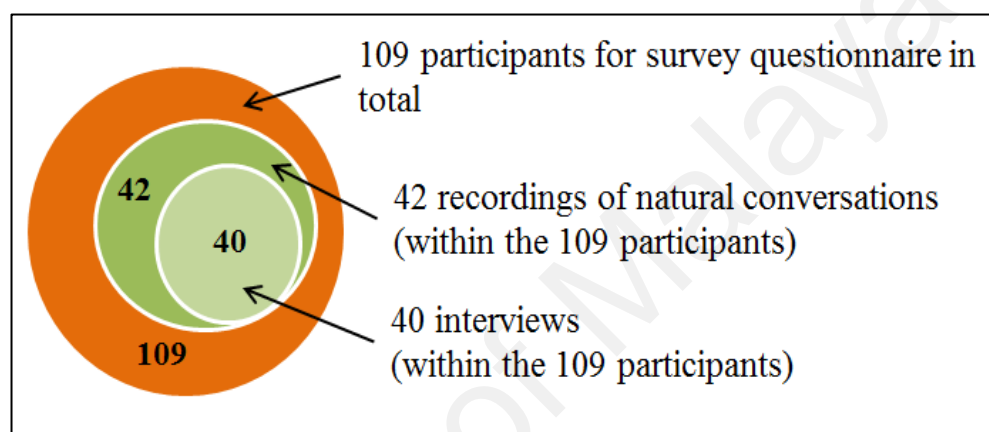


Figure 4-2 Data collection methods and participants

The data collected via questionnaires were analysed quantitatively and recordings of natural settings and interview methods were analysed qualitatively (see section 4.9 and 4.10) to acquire comprehensive information and are hoped to present a detailed depiction of pattern of language choice among Tamil youth. Figure 4-3 shows the outline of data collection and data analysis methods.

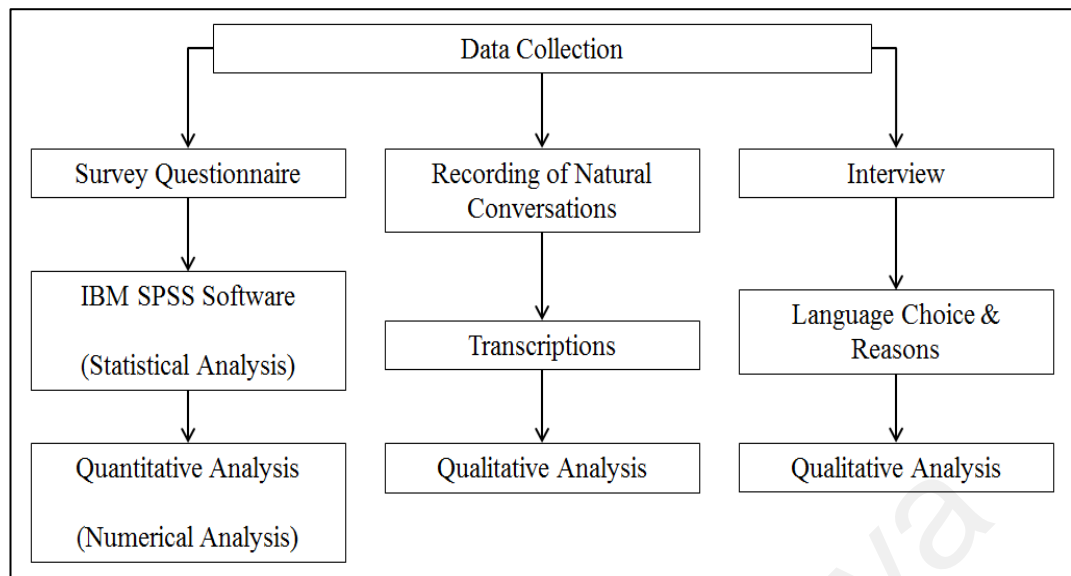


Figure 4-3: Outline of the data collection and analysis procedures

4.6 The Participants of the Study

The participants were young Tamils aged between 15 to 30 years. They were from the area of Batu Caves and Rawang, where a large number of Tamils live in the district of Gombak (see section 4.6). Tamil youth from these two areas were chosen as representatives of the Tamil youth of Malaysia. The United Nations (UN) defines ‘youth’ as those between the ages of 15 and 24, whereas some countries use the wider definition given by the African Youth Charter (en.unesco.org) where those between 15 and 35 years are also considered as ‘youth’ (Mufune, P. 2000). This study used the median of the two definitions, ages 15 to 30 years, to define youth. The participants were from the district of Gombak, a sub-urban district located adjacent to the city of Kuala Lumpur situated in the state of Selangor. Batu Caves is a town 18 kilometres away from the capital city of Kuala Lumpur and Rawang is a growing satellite town, which is situated 27 kilometres from Kuala Lumpur. There are eight primary Tamil schools in Gombak. Only these two towns (Rawang and Batu Caves) were having big Tamil primary schools within the district of Gombak. The Tamil school of Rawang had 1060 students and Batu Caves had

1500 students (according to the headmasters in 2016), whereas the other six Tamil primary schools had less than 500 students each. These indicate that a large population of Tamils lived in these two towns—Batu Caves and Rawang. Gombak was also considered to be a semi-urban (not urban or rural) area and chosen for this study because of its multi-ethnic environment and large population of Tamils and hence is assumed to be a fair representation of the Tamil youth of peninsular Malaysia. This study mainly explore the language practice of the selected group of Tamil youth. The presence of multiracial communities in this district may have also greatly influenced the native language of Tamil youth because of their socio-economic interaction.

Figure 4-4 shows the location of Gombak, Selangor in peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia). The two arrows show the location of the two towns, Batu Caves and Rawang in the district of Gombak.

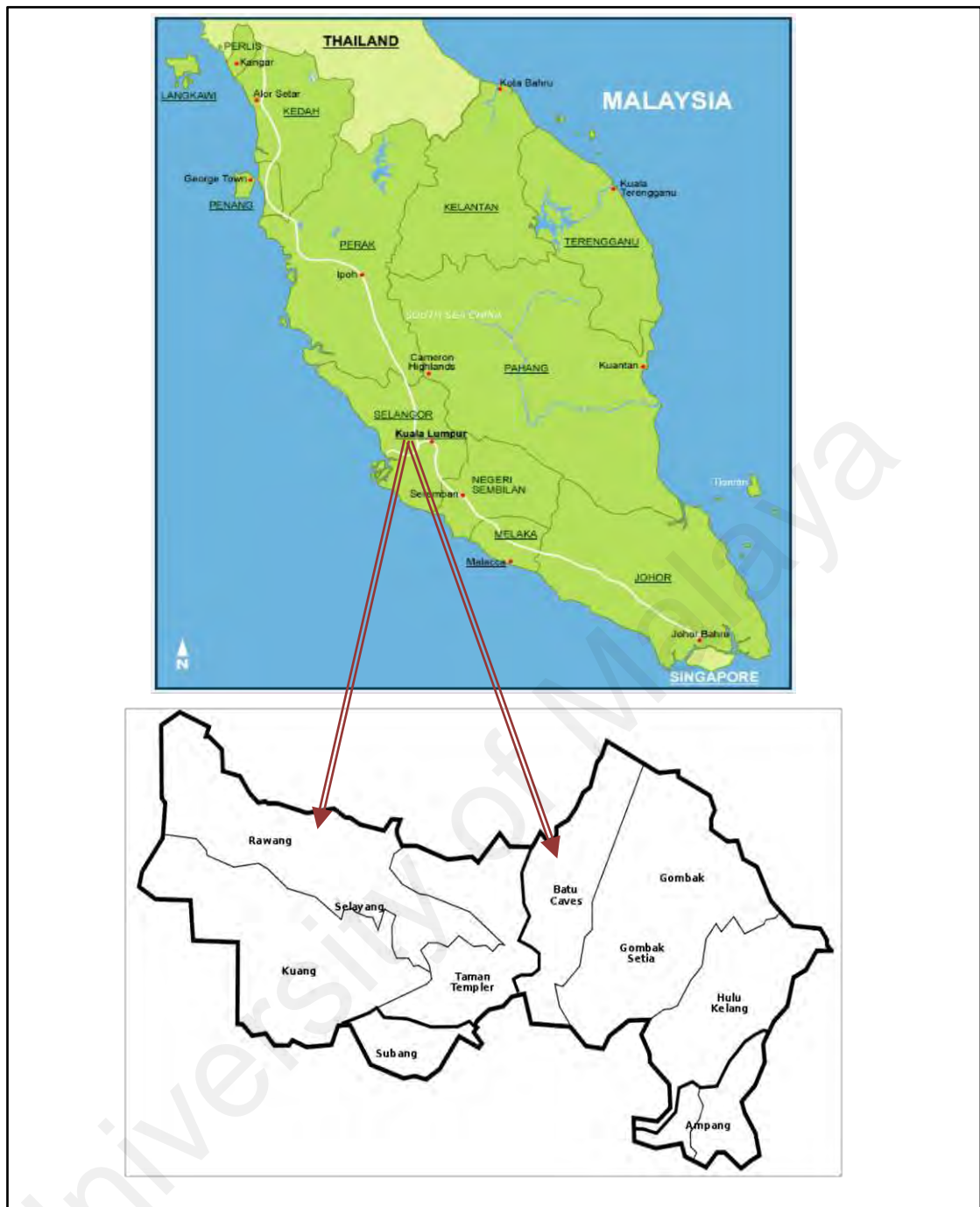


Figure 4-4: Map of West Malaysia, Gombak and the location of Batu Caves and Rawang

(Source: www.malaysia-maps.com/malaysia-states-map.htm#)

Table 4.1 shows the composition of ethnic Indians from the total population of Malaysia in the year 2010 (the latest survey data available), obtained from the Department of Statistics Malaysia (census of population 2010). The Tamil population in Malaysia at that

time was only 6.5% of the total population. Though the percentage of total Indians in Gombak is higher than the national composition, this study follows the national population proportions. Gombak is one of the districts in Selangor, which is situated in peninsular Malaysia and Selangor is a state where a large number of Indians live. The 2010 population census shows the total Indian population of Gombak was 74,968. Since the Tamil population is 88.5% of the Indian population (Census, 2010), the total population of Tamils in Gombak was 65,971 (Table 4.2). The total population of youth (15 to 30 years) for the district of Gombak is summarized in Table 4.3. Therefore, the total population of Tamil youth aged 15 to 30 years old in Gombak was 23,095 in 2010.

Table 4.1: Summary of Indians and Tamil ethnic group composition of Malaysia's population

Year	Total Population	Total Indians	Composition of Indians (%)	Composition of Tamils (88.5% of Indians)
2010	28.3 million	1.90 million	7.3 %	6.5 %

Table 4.2: Population details of Gombak, 2010

Year	Total Indian population of Gombak	Tamil population of Gombak (88.5% of Indian population)
2010	74, 968	65, 971

Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia (www.citypopulation)

Table 4.3: Indian and Tamil population in Gombak by age group, 2010

Age Group	Total population (Ref: DOSM, 2010)	Indian population	Tamil population (88.5 % of Indian population)
15-19	55,827	6,699	5,929
20-29	150,693	18,083	16,003
30	10,953	1,314	1,163
Total	217,473	26,096	23,095

Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia (web) (www.citypopulation - retrieved on 3-2-2018)

4.6.1 The Language Background of Participants

Tamil youth generally have Malay, English and Tamil languages in their linguistic repertoire. Bahasa Melayu (Malay) and English are compulsory subjects in all schools in Malaysia. Spoken Tamil is acquired naturally by the majority of Tamil children. Generally, those who attended Tamil primary school can read and write in Tamil and have H and L varieties of spoken Tamil in their language repertoire. The majority of those who do not have formal Tamil education are only competent in the L variety and part of SST (Karunakaran, 2005) (see also section 2.4).

4.7 Rationale for Sampling Method

This study mainly attempts to examine the language choice patterns of Peninsular Malaysia Tamil Youth. For such a study it is inevitable to resort to a deliberate sampling technique which is also called purposive sampling. According to (Kothari, 2004, p. 15), population samples are selected to facilitate a doable and convenient approach. Under this method, sampling elements are chosen specifically by the researcher to well represent the intended population. This study is planned carefully to narrow down the samples required. Such selection process is also time and cost saving for a study (Kothari, 2004). Under this

type of sampling technique, sampling elements required are selected deliberately to facilitate the provision of information for the understanding of the study (Creswell, 2012).

Since this study aims to seek patterns of language choice among Tamil youth of Malaysia, it is impossible for a single researcher to do a nation-wide study with limited time and resources. Therefore, the participants were chosen from Tamil youth from Gombak district to represent the youth of Peninsular Malaysia (see section 4.5). This 'deliberate sampling method' or convenience sample is hoped to give answers for this study's objectives. Lohr (2009) also suggests that such a sample would be of a reduced population size reflecting the entire population. However, given the complexity of the population it is always difficult to select a perfect sample size. A well thought out and executed sample would represent the true characteristic of the whole population and thereby, yield the desired results correctly. Often samples are selected from groups comprising willing participants to facilitate easy study. Under such sampling technique, Creswell agrees with Keppel (1991) that the individual identity of the sampling group can be determined with certainty (Creswell, 2009, p. 155).

According to Kothari (2004) a valid representative sample should be such that it can be applied, in general, for the target population with a reasonable level of confidence. Thus, this study hopes that the selected group of youth (participants) to represent the entire Tamil youth population in peninsular Malaysia. Moreover the Tamil youth in Malaysia are expected to be a homogenous group because of the similarity in the national education system and the wide spread of Tamil mass media across the country, which are available in every part of Peninsular Malaysia.

4.8 Questionnaire

The first stage of data gathering was mainly the quantitative part of the study. An eighty-five-item questionnaire was used for macro exploration to establish the participants' demographic backgrounds, language skills and language practices in various domains, their reasons for codes selected and their attitudes towards Tamil language. The survey questionnaire was designed and adapted after referring to the language choice studies of David (1996), Fishman (1972) and Nambiar (2007). Since using of questionnaire and adaptation involved ethical issues, the person who conducted the current study is thankful to previous research studies for their questionnaires that were adapted for this study. The questionnaire was designed mainly to investigate participants' language use patterns in intra-community communications, i.e. participants' interactions with Tamil interlocutors (see also sections 4.8.4). Domains help in understanding language choice in studies of individuals or specific sub-populations' verbal interaction patterns. As a typical situation for collecting self-reported data on language choice in each domain, the survey form was therefore divided accordingly, into eight parts (refer to Appendix A) with various choices of questions and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were designed to get participants' in-depth answers for their choice of language, the reasons for their language choice and their views, as well, regarding the mother tongue, Tamil.

4.8.1 Validation of the Questionnaire

This final set of survey questionnaire went through many alterations and adjustments. The first set of questionnaire, which was distributed to 15 participants, revealed many weaknesses. The questionnaire had repetition and long questions to read and grasp by the participants. Some of the participants showed disinterest in answering the questionnaire, which needed a long time to complete. On the suggestions of some of the participants, the questions were modified: the repetitive questions were reduced; the long questions

were shortened whilst some of the irrelevant questions were removed until it was found to be satisfactory and capable of collecting the planned data. The second set of the modified questionnaire was distributed to 10 participants, with a small reward (pen). The participants were able to complete the questionnaire within 12-15 minutes, indicating that the new questionnaire received better responses from the contributors (participants). It also required a shorter time to answer than the first set of questionnaire and was capable of collecting the intended data for this study. Therefore, the study was continued with the second set of questionnaire (see Appendix A).

4.8.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

There were 150 questionnaires distributed to Tamil youth who were willing to contribute to this survey. A snowball technique was used to distribute the questionnaire; some participants introduced their friends and relatives who fit into this research category. The distribution of questionnaires was relatively easy because some youth (participants) helped to circulate the questionnaire to their friends who fit into the category and collected back the completed forms. A total of 109 questionnaires were returned, while the rest of the youth gave reasons such as having misplaced the questionnaires and lack of time to complete the questionnaires. Finally, the number of participants who contributed to this survey through the questionnaire is shown in Table 4.4. Additional effort was taken to collect the survey forms to make sure the collected forms were nearly equal in terms of Tamil education and gender and to make the study a more reliable one. For the questionnaire responses, permission was sought from the 109 participants and verbal consent were obtained to use their data for the research purpose without revealing their names (see section 4.11).

The total number of participants was 109 youth, comprising 55 males and 54 females. Of these, 51 participants were non-Tamil educated and 58 were Tamil educated. Gender wise, there were near equivalent numbers of Tamil and non-Tamil educated males and females. Thus, there were no intentional biasness created gender wise, as well as in terms of Tamil educated or non-Tamil educated participants (Table 4.4)

Table 4.4: Participants of the survey questionnaire in this study

	Gender	Non-Tamil educated	Tamil educated	Total
Participants	Male	25 (23%)	30 (28%)	55
	Female	26 (24%)	28 (25%)	54
<i>Total</i>		51 (47%)	58 (53%)	109

In addition, the participants' Tamil education is also noteworthy in this research in determining the language choice patterns among Tamil youth, which comprise distinct varieties of Tamil, i.e., LT (Literary Tamil), SST (standard spoken Tamil) and CT (colloquial variety or casual variety) (see section 2.5). The term 'Tamil educated' refers to those who studied in Tamil primary schools up to standard six. The medium of instruction in Tamil schools in Malaysia is Tamil. Most subjects are taught in Tamil, except for Bahasa Malaysia, which is the national language and English as a second important language (except for 2003 to 2012, when Science and Mathematics were also taught in English) (see also section 2.3). Some of the participants had continued learning Tamil in their national secondary schools, where Tamil is taught as one of the optional subjects or as a POL (people's own language). However, the Tamil primary education is measured as the fundamental Tamil education for the participants in this study.

4.8.3 Data Analysis of the Questionnaire

This study utilized the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (Nie, N., Hull, C., & Bent, 2011) to analyse the information obtained through the questionnaire. This analysis assisted in showing the results of analyses and the detailed statistics from collected data. For instance, demographic facts which have influence on the language preference patterns, language skills of the participants and the patterns of language choice in various domains, including the patterns of language choice in domains needed, were analysed to get insight on the data. The reasons for the youth's language choice, their attitudes towards their native language and opinions of participants about languages of Malaysia and usefulness of the languages in the future were also quantitatively analysed.

4.8.4 Details of the Questionnaire

There were eighty-three questions with some sub-sections in the questionnaire. Most of the questions were open ended and had column for the additional informations such as 'why' questions (see Appendix A). The first part of the questionnaire (questions 1 to 9) focused on the demographic background of the participants and variables which may have influenced their language choice, i.e., age, gender, occupation, monthly family income and participants' and parents' education levels. Questions 10 to 15 gathered information about their language proficiency in Tamil as well as other languages. Questions 16(i) and 16(ii) were designed to know the people who had helped the participants in acquiring their Tamil language proficiency. Questions 17 to 42 captured the information about participant's language preferences in intra-group communications in various domains. Questions 43 to 57 investigated the extent of language mixing the participants did in the domains of family, friendship, education, workplace and transaction. Questions 58 to 60 were about the reasons for their language choice with their friends and neighbours.

Question 61–65 were to determine the Tamil language variety that participants practiced in different settings and the reasons for it.

Subsequently, Questions 66 to 71 were designed to obtain information about the attitudes of Tamil youth towards their mother tongue. Questions 72 to 78 were to determine how the participants addressed (in which language) their relations, including parents, maternal and paternal grandparents and maternal and paternal uncles and aunts. Question 79 sought participants' opinions about the main languages of Malaysia and usefulness of the languages in the future. Finally, Questions 80 to 83 were to determine the language choice among married participants, i.e., the language married participants used to communicate with their spouses and children and their preferred languages for their children to learn in their early developmental stages (see Appendix A). The following subdivision gives details of survey questions in each domain.

The home domain in this study is crucial as it is important to determine the language choice of participants among family members and extended family members. Questions 17 to 20, 61 to 62 and 72 to 78 were designed to discover the language participants' choices when talking to their grandparents, parents, siblings, uncles, aunts and cousins and identify the language they addressed their relatives in. These questions were designed with the aim of investigating the participants' selection of language when communicating among family members. Questions 80 to 83 were aimed at collecting data about the married participants' (31 participants) language choices with their spouses and children (see Appendix A).

The domain of friendship plays an important role, too, in determining the choice of language among youth, especially the mixed languages and code-switching behaviour

which shows an evolving nature due to the present-day multilingual environment and current developments. Thus, questions 21 to 23, 41 to 42 and 49 to 57 were to determine the language choice of participants who were a part of the present-day young generation of Tamils in Malaysia. Besides English and Malay, the Tamil variety the participants used in the friends domain was also identified in this study.

The age of participants in this study ranged from 15 to 30 years. Thus, the questionnaire was also prepared to obtain the patterns of language choice in the school, college, university and workplace domains. These questions were mainly regarding the language choice of the participants when conversing with their fellow Tamil students and colleagues (see Appendix A). Questions 25 and 26 were to determine the language participants preferred to use to communicate with their colleagues.

Questions 27–30 were designed to ascertain the language participants' used for religious purposes or in the religious domain. Since some studies show that religion plays a crucial role in maintaining Tamil language in Malaysia (Sankar, 2004; Selvajothi, 2017), this study aims to find out the pattern of language choice of participants in this (religious) domain. Hence, four questions were designed in the questionnaire to obtain language use patterns in the domain of religion and its influence on participants' speech patterns.

In this study, questions 16, 17, 35 and 36 were designed to discover the influence of the domain of neighbourhood in determining the language choice of Tamils, whereas questions 32, 33, 37, 38 and 44 to 48 were to determine the language choice patterns in the domain of transaction.

Question 61–65 were designed to find the Tamil language varieties (see section 2.4) used by participants. Generally, Tamils use different styles (varieties) of spoken Tamil according to person, topic and place. Hence, this study also intends to see the language patterns of youth in detail in a present-day setting.

4.9 Natural Conversations

This section describes the second stage of data gathering method i.e. recording of natural conversations. The questionnaires give a general view about the language choice patterns of participants. Meanwhile, audio recordings of natural conversations in real-life settings were hoped to support the findings from the questionnaire and give more accurate and reliable data for this study. 42 participants who were willing to volunteer (agreed) for audio-recording of natural conversations and interviews (see section 4.10) were approached with formal written consent letters.

4.9.1 Recording of Natural Conversations

However, the audio recordings of natural speech in real-life settings had its challenges. The participants seemed to be careful in their speech at the beginning, realising that their speech was being recorded. The methodological notion of the ‘observer’s paradox’ introduced by Labov (1972) suggests careful steps in collecting natural data. Labov says that presence of researchers with audio recorders will affect the naturalness of data. The participants will speak differently when they know their speech is being recorded. It is an ethical obligation that the participants should be informed that their conversations are being recorded. Hence, the observer’s paradox is inevitable and the presence of recorder is seen affecting the collection of natural speech. Labov aimed to minimize the possible effects of field workers and recording devices by eliciting highly involved stories or situations to make the speakers ‘forget’ that they are being recorded. Thus, he was able to collect the intended data. Gordon (2003) suggests researchers can minimize the

observer's paradox by discarding the first few minutes of recording or choosing to focus analysis of conversational moments in which the researcher is not in focus or sight. Participants seemed nervous at the beginning of the recording session. However, after their initial apprehension, they seemed to be their usual self. In fact, some participants even used offensive words in their conversations among friends which showed they were unperturbed by the existence of the person conducting the study and recorder. The selection of the data for analysis was guided by Gordon (2003) which is to ignore the initial part of the recorded speech which might be affected by the presence of the recorder and researcher. They also recommended collection of natural data where the participants themselves can record their conversations without the presence of researchers.

4.9.2 Administration of Recording of Natural Conversations

The audio recordings in the home domain were done with prior appointment visits to the participants' homes. The participants were informed about the aim of the study and that only the language use patterns would be noted in the audio-recording (see section 0). A Sony audio-recorder was used for voice recordings. Audio recordings for the domain of education were mostly done in classrooms during their interval hours and at their tuition places (with consent of tuition masters and students). Recordings in college or university (domain of education) and workplace settings were recorded by the participants themselves (within the 109 participants). They (three participants for the domain of education and two for the domain of workplace) agreed to record their conversations. The audio recordings in college/university and workplace domains were mostly short recordings (within 5 to 10 minutes) because of interruptions and some recordings were not clear. Only those clear audio recordings were used for analysis. The number of recordings made in the domains of home, friendship, education, workplace, neighbourhood, religion and transaction are shown in Table 4.5. For the audio-recordings

in the domains of transaction and religion, permission from the participants was sought to accompany them to places of worship and for shopping/marketing to record their conversations prior to the events. Two participants agreed. One of them was to a nearby provision shop owned by a Tamil family and audio-recorded conversations of the participant with the seller was obtained. The other participant went to a market place on a weekend and her conversation was audio-recorded. Only the participants' speech (conversations) with the shopkeepers (sellers) were audio-recorded. On another separate occasions, with two participants' permissions, audio-recordings of their speech were also done in temples while they were talking to a priest.

Table 4.5: Duration of recordings and number of recordings

Domain	Total number of hours	Total number of recordings
Home	6	10
Friendship	8	11
Education	2	7
Workplace	2	7
Neighbourhood	30 minutes	2
Religion	30 minutes	2
Transaction	2	3
<i>Total</i>	21 hours	42

4.9.3 Data Analysis of the Natural Conversations

These recorded conversations (audio-recordings) were then transcribed in Tamil. Later the relevant part of the Tamil transcriptions were transliterated into Roman letters (see Appendix C) to obtain more accurate and in-depth information about the patterns of language choice among the participants. Audio recordings under natural settings would depict the natural conversations of real scenarios and provide more reliable data for a sociolinguistic study (Labov, 1972). Hence, this study includes audio-recordings of participants' in real-life verbal interactions in all the selected domains. In some of the

transcriptions, since ethical issue is involved, this study only transcribed the participants' speech especially in the domain of religion and transaction.

4.10 Interviews

The third stage of data collection was interview sessions. Initially, 42 participants have agreed for the recording of natural conversations and interview sessions (see also section 4.9) but, only 40 could allocate time for the interview (see Figure 4-2 and section 4.5). Purposive sampling allows researchers to decide on relevant and sufficient information to provide needed data for a study (Cresswell, 2012). Hence, 42 audio recordings and 40 interviews were optimistically viewed to be workable and adequate to get intended qualitative data for this study. The survey questionnaire (from 109 participants) mainly provided quantifiable data, while audio-recordings depicted the actual speech patterns of participants. On the other hand, interviews helped to get in-depth answers on reasons for participants' language choice in particular domains and their attitude towards their mother tongue.

4.10.1 Administration of the Interview Session

The participants who showed interest and willingness to take part in this research were contacted for audio-recording and interview. For the interview meetings, the participants were informed of the interview prior to the meeting time. The meeting times were arranged according to participants' convenience. They were interviewed in their homes or friends' places. Students were interviewed after school hours while waiting for their transportation and in their homes. The duration of interviews ranged from 15 to 30 minutes due to time constraints of the participants. All interviews were conducted in Tamil except those for two teenagers who were not fluent in Tamil, the interviews were conducted in English. The interviews were conducted in an informal and friendly manner.

Semi-structured questions were used to obtain in-depth information on participant's reasons for language choice. The majority of the participants became familiar with this study over the duration of the field work. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed and comfortable mood with the hope of obtaining detailed reasons for participants' language choice and their view towards their mother tongue, Tamil and other main languages, i.e., Malay and English.

4.10.2 Data Analysis of the Interviews

During the interview sessions, the audio-recorded natural conversations were replayed. Their language choice and their reasons for their language selected were questioned. Participant's explained the reasons for their language choice. The interviews were also audio-recorded. However, for the interrupted parts of the interviews (such as noise in the surrounding or by family members) notes were taken. Questions were designed to avoid repetition and to allow interviews to be conducted smoothly in a short period of time. Thereafter, the needed parts of the interviews, reasons for language choice and views of participants about their mother language, were noted down in Tamil. The participants were informed that the interview was to know further details about their questionnaire responses and language use patterns in recordings of real/natural conversations and also to obtain their reasons for their language choice and their views about their mother tongue, Tamil. Participants were quite happy with the 'opinion seeking' approach and cooperated well. All the important and needed facts from interviews which were audio-recorded were later transcribed in Tamil and most part were romanised (see Appendix D).

The interview was divided into three parts. The first part examined additional information about the languages selected by Tamil youth in all the scrutinized domains of this study, while the second part was to discover the reasons for their language choice in audio

recording and their attitude towards their mother tongue. The interviews also compensated for the weaknesses of quantitative investigation like identifying the reasons for language choice and attitude towards their mother tongue, which were not apparent from the questionnaire. Semi-structured questions were used. Interview questions were planned and prepared ahead of time. This allowed the interview sessions to be conducted efficiently in the given time with required answers from the participants (see Appendix B). A total of 40 participants were interviewed to collect data for the qualitative information. Table 4.6 summarizes the breakdown of the number of interview participants of this study.

Table 4.6: Participants of the interview session

	Gender	Non-Tamil educated	Tamil educated	Total
Participants	Male	6 (15%)	7 (17%)	13
	Female	10 (25%)	9 (23%)	19
Married	Male	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	4
	Female	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	4
<i>Total</i>		20 (50%)	20 (50%)	40

4.11 Research Ethics

Participants were briefed about the research and informed that the data of audio-recordings (interviews and natural conversations) were to be used only for educational purposes. Consent (Appendix D) was obtained from the participants. In ensuring this study was performed in line with the expected ethical standards, several steps were taken. In data collection procedures researchers need to respect the participants. Some participants may prefer to remain confidential. Ethical issues might arise during the stage of data collection. Therefore, research ethics highlighted by Creswell (2009) were used as the fundamental guiding principles:

- i. The objective of the research and the purpose of the questionnaire and interviews were explained to the participants.

- ii. Researcher has obtained verbal permission and written consent from participants prior to audio recording of the interviews and natural conversations.
- iii. Participants' names were not displayed on the survey questionnaire to maintain privacy and confidentiality.
- iv. The researcher merely played the role of a facilitator during interviews and recording to prevent any sort of influence on the obtained responses and to ensure impartiality and authenticity of the responses.
- v. The researcher ensured and maintained confidentiality of the collected data.

Therefore, the current study made sure the participants were well informed about the data collection and the data in the final report. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the data and that no personal disclosures about the participants would be made and informed them about the consent form participants were to sign before they engaged in the research.

4.12 Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to investigate the language choice patterns among Tamil youth in Malaysia in their intra-community communications. Quantitative and qualitative assessments were conducted in this study to determine their language choice patterns in various domains such as home, friendship, education, religion, workplace, neighbourhood and business transaction activities. Fishman's (1972) domain concept largely helped to see detailed features or to do microanalysis of language choice patterns of participants in each sphere. Survey questionnaires gave an overview of language use patterns among participants, audio recordings of natural conversations in intended domains helped to do microanalysis of language use patterns among participants and interviews were held to find the reasons for their language choice. The social network

theory of Milroy explains the intense network link of participants with each other as friends, neighbours and schoolmates who influence their language choice as well. In other words, their multiplex connections of social network help in maintaining Tamil amongst the participants. The surveys for this study were carried out between the years 2014 and 2016. The following chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) discuss the survey results.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 5: LANGUAGE CHOICE IN THE SELECTED DOMAINS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the first research question on the patterns of language choice among Tamil youth of Malaysia in the domains of family, friendship, education, workplace, religion, neighbourhood and transaction (see section 1.5) and the function of Tamil language among them in order to analyse the trend of Tamil language in Malaysia. This chapter begins with the participants' responses from survey questionnaire on demographics which are associated with their language skill and have influence on their language choice as well as patterns of language choice in main domains in which they interact in day-to-day life. This study explores seven domains (see section 4.3) to examine the patterns of language choice among a group of Tamil youth (participants) in Malaysia (see section 4.6). This chapter presents information from the data collected from survey questionnaires which is tabulated and organized to provide an overall picture of the participants' backgrounds such as age, education level, religion, occupation (student or working), marital status, the level of their Tamil education, language skill and quantitative results of language choice patterns. Secondly, this chapter also depicts patterns of language choice among participants in natural settings which were audio recorded (see sections 5.10). Examining the language choice or the way people use the language in different social contexts indicates the way language works and functions in a speech community. Therefore, this chapter will deliver a detailed analysis of patterns of language choice in different domains among participants which is hoped to provide a sociolinguistic perspective about functions of different languages among the Tamil youth in Malaysia.

To further validate the patterns of language choice from the survey questionnaire, this chapter also depicts the patterns of language use in the audio recordings under natural

settings and includes extracts from a portion of recorded real-life scenarios. Sample speeches are extracted from the audio-recordings; parts of the recorded speech were transliterated into English and some of the parts were allowed to remain in Tamil to accommodate Tamil readers who would like to see it in Tamil characters (see Appendix C).

5.2 Participants' Demographic Profile

This section presents a detailed quantitative analysis of the demographic profiles and the patterns of language choice of 109 Tamil youth from Gombak, Selangor (based on question 2 in the questionnaire). Though this study is not intended to evaluate the language choice between genders, the current study ensures the distribution of male and female participants are nearly equal, i.e. 51.4% of participants are males and 48.6% of participants are females.

5.2.1 Age of Participants

The age of the participants in this study ranged from 15 to 30 years (question 1 of the questionnaire). A detailed age distribution is illustrated in Table 5.1, where the majority of participants (56%) are in the age group between 15 to 19 years (youth in their teens), whereas the remaining participants were aged between 20 to 30 years.

The participants are further grouped into three age groups; 15 to 17, 18 to 23 and 24 to 30 years (see Table 5.1), representing three categories according to their life-phases; typical high school students, pre-university and undergraduate phase and working young adult phase because they show different language patterns according to their age and setting. This is because the participants' language choice patterns in some domains with different age groups showed big differences in language choice, as reported in Fishman

and Greenfield's (1968) study among a Puerto Rican community who were equally proficient in Spanish and English (Fishman, 1972). The older children aged from nine to 11 years used more English than younger children aged from six to eight years. Table 5.1 shows nearly half (48%) of the participants are teens between the ages of 15 to 17 years who are all secondary school students. Of the remaining participants, 18% are in higher learning institutions and the balance 34% are young working adults.

Table 5.1: Age distribution and age groups of participants

Age	Count	Percentage	Age Group	Count	Percentage
15	14	12.8	15-17	52	48
16	11	10			
17	27	24.8			
18	3	2.8	18-23	20	18
19	6	5.5			
20	1	0.9			
22	5	4.6			
23	5	4.6			
24	3	2.8	24-30	37	34
25	3	2.8			
26	6	5.5			
27	2	1.8			
28	4	3.7			
29	6	5.5			
30	13	11.9			

The education backgrounds of participants are shown in Figure 5-1. The majority of participants were students either in public schools or institutions of higher education. The remaining 34% participants were employed and could be divided into either those who had degrees or those who did not. About 29 participants were degree holders working in private firms or government sectors, while a smaller group of nine participants were non-degree holders working as supermarket assistants, car mechanics or medical clinic assistants.

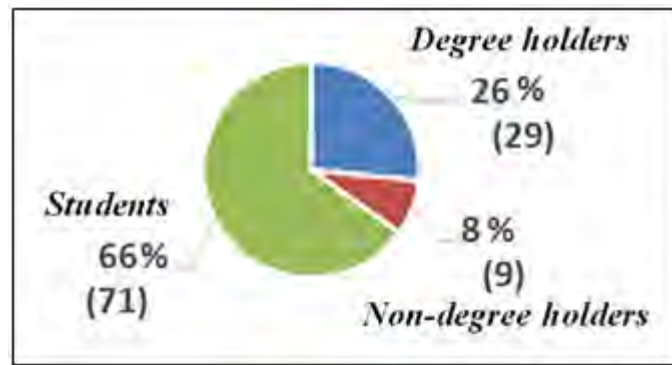


Figure 5-1: Education background of participants

5.2.2 Monthly Family Income of Participants

Table 5.2 shows the monthly income range of the participants. Cumulatively, the majority of the participants (71%) hailed from families who had monthly incomes below RM5000. Only a minority of the participants (29%) were privileged with monthly incomes above RM5000, indicating that the majority of participants come from middle income families.

Table 5.2: Participants' family incomes

Total income	No. of participants
Below RM3,000	41 (38%)
RM3,001-5,000	36 (33%)
RM5001-8000	15 (13%)
Above RM8,000	17 (16%)
Total	109 (100%)

5.2.3 Participants' Marital Status

There were 33 (30%) of the participants who were married, whereas the remaining were singles, as shown in Table 5.3. Married participants fell in the age group of between 24 to 30 years old. This study included married participants as well to see their language patterns as young parents or parents to be.

Table 5.3: Participants' marital status

Marital Status	No of participants
Married	33 (30%)
Single	76 (70%)

5.2.4 Participants Language Skills (in Tamil and Other Languages)

The present research revealed that all 109 (100%) of the participants could converse in three or more languages, among which were Tamil, Malay and English. Additionally, some of them knew Chinese, Telugu (see section 5.3), Arabic (see section 5.7) or Hindi languages, though youth from mixed marriages were excluded from this study (see section 1.7). The younger generation of Tamils in Malaysia is able to speak and understand English and Malay languages as a result of the national education system and the naturally acquired mother tongue (Tamil). The majority of the participants, i.e. 86 (79%) of them had the ability to converse in three languages. The remaining 20 (18%) of participants knew a fourth language, i.e. Chinese and another 3 (3%) participants had knowledge of a fifth language (Arab, Hindi, or Telugu), which shows that Malaysian youth are multi-linguals. These figures are summarized in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Participants' repertoire of languages, including Tamil

Number of Languages	No. of participants	Languages
3	86 (79%)	3 languages
4	20 (18%)	3 + 1 languages
5	3 (3%)	3 + 2 languages
Total	109 (100%)	

When it comes to participants' language proficiency levels, Table 5.5 shows participants' Tamil language proficiency was reportedly higher (74%) than English (70%) and Malay (67%). Table 5.5 shows 107 out of 109 participants could speak and only a small percentage, i.e., 2%, claimed that they knew little Tamil. These figures show 98% of the

participants were fluent in Tamil and they were equally proficient in English and Malay, as well. Additionally, 43 (39%) of the participants knew at least a little Chinese language as a fourth language. Further exploration shows 33% of participants knew a fifth language such as Arab, Telugu, or Hindi. Table 5.5 shows some of the Malaysian youth were fluent in many languages.

Table 5.5: Participants' proficiency in spoken languages

Language Proficiency	Number of participants				
	Tamil	English	Malay	Chinese	Other languages
Very fluent	81 (74%)	76 (70%)	73 (67%)	7 (6%)	4 (4%)
Can speak	26 (24%)	30 (27%)	35 (32%)	2 (2%)	7 (6%)
Very little	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	1(1%)	34 (31%)	25 (23%)
Nil	-	-	-	66 (61%)	73 (67%)

5.2.5 Education Level of Participants' Parents

It has been reported that financial positions and education status among Tamil community are also the determinants of language choice (Fernandez & Clyne, 2007; Sobrielo, 1985) (see also section 3.4.2). Table 5.6 shows that around 82% of participants' parents had education up to secondary level and above. Only 18% of parents had primary level education.

Table 5.6: Parents' education level

Parents' education level	Percentage of participants (%)		
	Father	Mother	Average
Standard 6	14	23	18
Secondary	57	50	54
Degree	28	24	26
Postgraduate	1	3	2

5.2.6 Level of Tamil Education of Participants and Their Parents

The medium of teaching in all types of national primary and secondary schools is the Malay language. English is taught as a compulsory subject at all levels of the education system in Malaysia. The medium of teaching in Tamil primary schools is Tamil. Tamil is

also taught under the pupils' own language (POL) regulation as an optional subject in secondary schools (see section 2.3). Those who are from Tamil primary school backgrounds are able to write and speak in standard Tamil or the formal variety (LT), whereas those from non-Tamil educational backgrounds are not able to write and speak in formal Tamil. However, they can be fluent in spoken Tamil (see section 2.5). Nevertheless, the degree of use of the standard variety of spoken Tamil differs between those who have prior Tamil primary education (six years) and those who do not have similar formal education.

As shown in Table 5.7, an average of 70% of parents had formal Tamil education of at least primary 6 level (based on the highest level of Tamil education for each parent). However, 56% of participants had formal Tamil education. This reveals a decreasing trend among the younger generation of Tamils acquiring formal education of their mother tongue, indicating that a lower number of parents have sent their children to Tamil primary schools compared to previous generations.

Table 5.7: Formal Tamil education of participants and their parents

Tamil education level	Tamil education (in percentage)			
	Participants	Participants' father	Participants' mother	Average of parents' Tamil education
Primary 6	17	30	32	31
Secondary	38	41	32	36
Degree	1	1	5	3
Formal Tamil Education	56	72	69	70
Nil	44	28	31	30

Further detailed illustration, as shown in Figure 5-2, revealed a declining trend from the previous generation to the younger generation in obtaining Tamil formal education. Though, Table 5.7 and Figure 5-2 illustrates similar findings, Figure 5-2 show a

noticeable view about the declining trend of Tamil education from previous generation to current generation. These figures also show that although it is possible to pursue a degree or a minor in Tamil language or Education in Malaysia, Tamil courses are still not popular among Tamils in Malaysia.

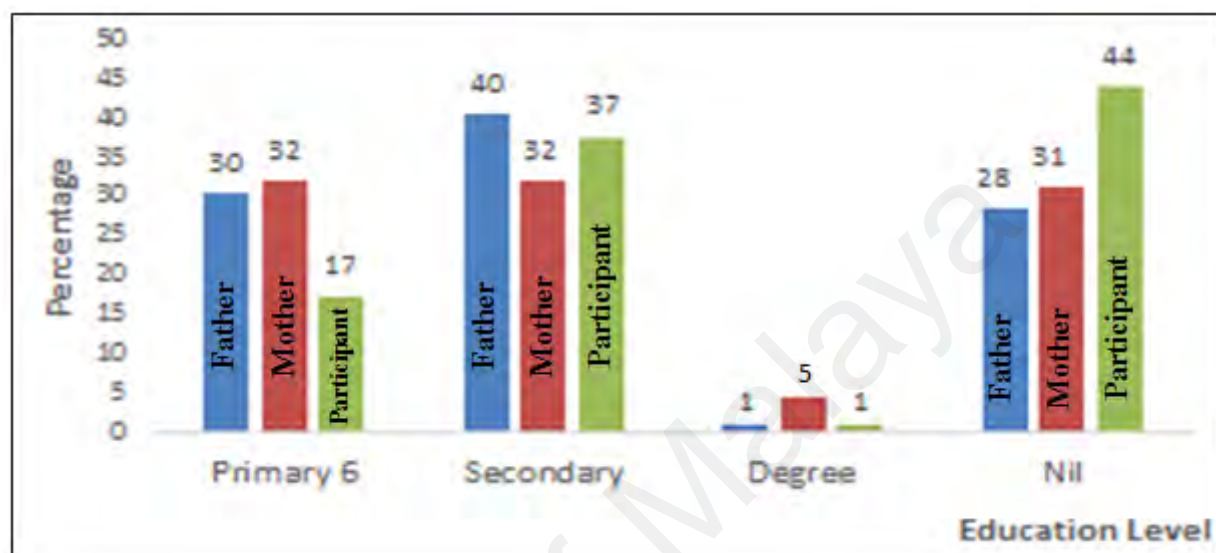


Figure 5-2: Formal Tamil education of parents and participants

5.3 Language Choice in the Domain of Family

The majority of participants conversed in Tamil at home (Table 5.8). On average, 75% of participants spoke Tamil at home with their parents, grandparents, siblings, uncles and aunts. However, the statistics reveal a declining trend of Tamil usage between the generation: for grandparents (84%), parents (74%) and finally, siblings (71%). It can be deduced that grandparents play a greater role in nurturing their mother tongue usage to the younger generation. According to Baker (1992), in a multilingual society especially, transmission of language from an elder generation (parents/grandparents) to the younger generation is highly important to avoid the extinction of any language. Tamils in Melbourne also reveal that the presence of grandparents helps in the maintenance of Tamil among children (Fernandez & Clyne, 2007). A similar situation exists in Singapore, as well. Tamil is only spoken with grandparents (Mani & Gopinathan, 2013; Ramiah, 1991; Sobrielo, 1985). These days, with the increasing trend of nuclear families in modern

life and of families where the grandparents have passed on, this vacancy might contribute to language loss. Table 5.8 shows that three participants spoke other languages with grandparents. Further investigation reveals that among those participants, two of them had Chinese paternal grandparents and one had a Telegu paternal grandparent. They therefore spoke Chinese and Telegu, respectively, with their grandparents, who also took care of them when they were young while the mothers were away at work. It is interesting to note that despite the briefing during the distribution of the survey questionnaire that the participants should be Tamils only (see section 1.7), these participants claimed to be Tamils because their mother tongue was Tamil. This is a typical scenario in Malaysia where mixed marriages also contribute to multilingualism. Mixed language occurs widely and is reflected in the younger generations' language use. (Although the Tamil usage in the current findings shows higher percentages, the spoken Tamil is mixed with more English and Malay words (see section 6.10).

Table 5.8: Participants' spoken language in the family domain

Language	Participants' spoken language with family				
	Parents	Siblings	Grandparents	Uncles & Aunts	Average
Tamil	80 (74%)	76 (70%)	92 (84%)	76 (70%)	82 (75%)
English	29 (26%)	29 (27%)	14 (13%)	33 (30%)	25 (23%)
Malay	0	4 (3%)	0	0	1 (1%)
Others	0	0	3 (3%)	0	1(1%)

Further analysis was performed on the participants' preferences to speak Tamil (question 17 to 20 in questionnaire) with their family members to determine the influence of their ages on their preferences and the summary is presented in Table 5.9 and Table 5.10(a), Table 5.10(b) and Table 5.10(c). Teens between ages 15 to 17 preferred to use more Tamil (77%) compared to the 18 to 23 year age group (70%) and 24 to 30 year age group (73%). However, it can be concluded that age was not a great determining factor in influencing their language choice since at least 70% of participants in each age group chose to

converse in Tamil with their parents and the rest in English. Participants do not use Malay to communicate with their parents.

Table 5.9: Main language spoken to parents by age group

				Count	Percentage
Age Group	15 to 17	Main language spoken with parents	Tamil	40	77%
			English	12	23%
			Malay	0	0%
	18 to 23	Main language spoken with parents	Tamil	14	70%
			English	6	30%
			Malay	0	0%
	24 to 30	Main language spoken with parents	Tamil	27	73%
			English	10	27%
			Malay	0	0%

Table 5.10(a), Table 5.10(b) and Table 5.10(c) show that Tamil still dominated as the most preferred language to be spoken with other members in the family like siblings, grandparents, uncles and aunts. The current findings are encouraging as opposed to the findings of Kadakara (2015) in Singapore, where only 40% of youth conversed in Tamil, whereas English was the major language spoken at home, despite strong institutional support from the government for Tamil language. However, it is imperative to note that in the 15 to 17 years age group, close to 6% of the participants prefer to speak to their siblings in Malay. Since this age group corresponds to schooling age, Malay language could be preferred due to the need to discuss school related matters, or in other words the language of education creeping into family domain.

Table 5.10(a): Main language spoken to siblings by age group

				Count	Percentage
Age Group	15 to 17	Main language spoken with siblings	Tamil	36	69%
			English	13	25%
			Malay	3	6%
	18 to 23	Main language spoken with siblings	Tamil	14	70%
			English	6	30%
			Malay	0	0%
	24 to 30	Main language spoken with siblings	Tamil	27	73%
			English	10	27%
			Malay	0	0%

Table 5.10(b) shows that grandparents still play a greater role (an average of 85%) in maintaining Tamil among the youth. Detailed analysis shows youth tend to speak more in Tamil with their grandparents as they grow older. At the ages of 15 to 17 the main language they used with grandparents was Tamil (81%), at the ages of 18 to 23 the table shows 85% and at the ages of 24 to 30, 89% of participants chose Tamil to communicate with their grandparents. This scenario also reveals the similar trend whereby as the individuals grow older, their emphasis on the usage of the mother tongue grows stronger in their attempt to accommodate the older generation with their mother tongue usage.

Table 5.10(b) Main language spoken to grandparents by age group

				Count	Percentage
Age Group	15 to 17	Main language spoken with grandparents	Tamil	42	81%
			English	7	13%
			Malay	0	0%
			Others	3	6%
	18 to 23	Main language spoken with grandparents	Tamil	17	85%
			English	3	15%
			Malay	0	0%
	24 to 30	Main language spoken with grandparents	Tamil	33	89%
			English	4	11%
			Malay	0	0%

Their choice of Tamil with their uncles and aunts in Table 5.10(c) also shows an upward trend, where the use of the mother tongue is greater as the participants grow older. Table 5.10(a) also confirms that participants' selection of Tamil with their siblings also shows an upward trend as they grow older and become more mature.

Table 5.10(c) Main language spoken to uncles and aunts by age group

				Count	Percentage
Age Group	15 to 17	Main language spoken with uncles and aunts	Tamil	35	67%
			English	17	33%
			Malay	0	0%
	18 to 23	Main language spoken with uncles and aunts	Tamil	14	70%
			English	6	30%
			Malay	0	0%
	24 to 30	Main language spoken with uncles and aunts	Tamil	27	73%
			English	10	27%
			Malay	0	0%

5.3.1 Kinship Terms Used by Participants

In order to ascertain the Tamil language usage in the family domain, further analysis was also carried out to determine the kinship terms used by participants when they addressed

their family members and relatives (see Appendix A, section viii, question 72-78). Table 5.11 illustrates that a huge number of participants heavily used Tamil terms in addressing their parents, such as their mother as *amma:* and their father as *appa:*. English has only a small influence in address terms in the family circle.

Table 5.11: Kinship terms used by participants when addressing family members

Mother		Father		Grandfather		Grandmother	
Terms	%	Terms	%	Terms	%	Terms	%
amma:	85	appa:	79	tha:ththa:	88	pa:tti	80
mummy	11	daddy	13	Grandpa	7	grandma	8
other	4	Other	8	Other	5	other	12
Paternal uncles		Maternal uncles		Paternal aunts		Maternal aunts	
Terms	%	Terms	%	Terms	%	Terms	%
citappa / periappa	82	ma:ma:	73	Aththe	74	periamma: / chinamma:	80
uncle	13	uncle	17	Aunty	22	Aunty	15
other	5	other	10	Other	4	Other	5

Similarly, Tamil terms also had a huge influence when addressing grandfathers (*tha:ththa*, 88%), grandmothers (*pa:tti*, 80%), paternal uncles (*periappa:/chiththappa:*, 82%), maternal aunts (*periamma:/chinnamma:*, 80%), maternal uncles (*ma:ma:*, 73%) and paternal aunts (*aththe*, 74%). Although Table 5.11 reveals 80% addressed their grandmothers as *pa:tti*, another 12% from the ‘other’ category still show the equivalent terms in different dialects of Tamil terms such as *ammamma*, *a:ththa:*, *amma:yi*, ‘*appa:ththa:*’ and ‘*amma:chi*’ are being used as well. These details are obtained from the columns provided in the questionnaire. The data indicates the majority of participants still preferred their native language terms to address their grandmothers (80% + 12% = 92%). The same goes for grandfathers. The data for ‘other’ (5%) shows equivalent terms for grandfathers such as *appu*, *appuchi*, *naina:* and *ayya:* in distinct Tamil dialects. Hence, 93% (88% + 5%) addressed their grandfathers in Tamil. Only 7% of participants addressed their grandmothers as ‘grandma’ and (7%) their grandfathers as ‘grandpa’ in

English. Overall, only an average of 10% of participants used English terms to address their immediate family members (mother, father, grandpa and grandma).

Comparatively, when referring to uncles and aunts, slightly higher percentage of English terms usage was observed, i.e. 17% to address uncles and 22% to address aunties than for the immediate family members. This preservation of kinship terms is important in language choice, as emphasized by Upadhyay and Hasnain (2017). He says, unlike English, Tamil has elaborative kinship terminologies specific for each relation, where consanguine (blood related) kin is addressed differently depending on whether from the father's side or mother's side of family relations, as described above. Upadhyay reported that Urdu-Hindi is facing infusing impact of English kinship terms such as 'uncle' and 'aunt', which is fortunately not observed in the current case study of Tamil youth in Malaysia. But the data may reveal that English has started to creep in and influence these specific kinship terms (mummy, daddy, etc). Kinship terms such as 'uncle' and 'aunt', which do not show the difference between father's side relations and mother's side relations, are becoming more widespread among the younger generation. However, no Malay words were found in Tamil kinship terms, thus far.

5.3.2 Factors Influencing Participants' Spoken Tamil Fluency

Several questions in the survey form (questionnaire) were carried out to determine participants' fluency in Tamil such as the influences of social circle, family income, parents' general education level and parents' Tamil education level.

5.3.2.1 The social circle

Table 5.12 which summarizes answers to question 16 (i) in questionnaire (Appendix A), exhibits that 78% of participants responded that they acquired Tamil language fluency through family and another 17% are able to speak their mother tongue fluently because

of their interaction with friends. Two participants (2%) picked up Tamil from their Tamil speaking neighbours. Interestingly, in the ‘Others’ category which represents 3% of the participants, this study found one participant who has acquired his mother tongue from their family’s Sri Lankan Tamil domestic helper. These findings indicate that about 78% of Tamil families still actively use their native language in the home domain. Friends also played a significant role in influencing Tamil language usage (17%) among the participants. Family had the highest influence on Tamil fluency. But once the youth had moved out from the home environment to pursue higher education or for work purposes, mother tongue usage would still be continued because the circle of friends helped to maintain their Tamil fluency (see Table 5.17 in Section 5.4).

Table 5.12: Factors influencing participants’ spoken Tamil fluency

Individuals	No. of participants & percentage
Family	85 (78%)
Friends	19 (17%)
Neighbours	2 (2%)
Others	3 (3%)

5.3.2.2 Family income

An analysis on the influence of the income level (question number 6 in questionnaire) of participants’ families showed that the income levels had little influence on participants’ spoken Tamil fluency (question number 10), as summarized in Table 5.13, which shows that the lower the income level, the higher was their Tamil language fluency level. Where family income is below RM3,000, data shows 78% of the participants were ‘very fluent’ in spoken Tamil, indicating that the lower income group parents spoke more in Tamil to their children. As the income level moves higher, participants’ fluency in Tamil is less as the parents tend to use more English to their offspring. For instance, parents who have

income levels above RM8,000 speak less in Tamil (71%) compared to those with lower family income.

Table 5.13: Influence of income level on participants' Tamil language skill

Income Level	Participants' language skill: Tamil	No. of participants	Percentage
Below RM3,000	very fluent	32	78%
	can speak	9	22%
	very little	0	0%
RM3,001–5,000	very fluent	26	72%
	can speak	8	22%
	very little	2	6%
RM5,001–8,000	very fluent	11	73%
	can speak	4	27%
	very little	0	0.0%
Above RM8,000	very fluent	12	71%
	can speak	5	29%
	very little	0	0%

5.3.2.3 Parents' education level

In investigating the correlation between parents' education level and the participants' Tamil proficiency, it emerged that as the education level of parents increases from Standard 6 to degree level, the participants' Tamil proficiency decreases, as shown in Table 5.14. An average of 77% of parents had education up to secondary level and above. There is a connection between education level and language choice; the higher the parents' education level, the more they (participants) shifted to English (Fernandez & Clyne, 2007; Sobrielo, 1985). For participants whose fathers were educated only up to Standard 6, about 87% of them were very fluent in Tamil. This figure drops to 81% and 55% for participants whose fathers were educated up to secondary and degree level, respectively. This emergent trend could be explained by the increasing level of English skill of the participants with increasing levels of their parents' education, as summarized in Table 5.14. In this analysis, the percentage of participants with 'very fluent' English proficiency increases from 53% (with fathers educated up to Standard 6 level) to 60%

(secondary level) and to 90% (degree level). Table 5.14 also points out that as the parents' education level increases, participants' English proficiency increases. For those fathers who had education level up to Standard six (primary level education), participants' influence on English proficiency (very fluent) is only 53%. As the fathers' education levels go higher, the English proficiency of participants also shows an increasing trend. Fathers with secondary school education influenced 60% of participants' English proficiency and when fathers had degree level education, 90% of participants could speak very fluent English. This clearly shows that as the level of parents' education gets higher, the preference for language proficiency tends to be towards English. However, Table 5.14 also indicates a different scenario where the father's postgraduate education did not affect participant's fluency in English because (as interview revealed) the father attained his postgraduate education at a later stage of his life. Moreover, this is based on one participant's information, which might not support the findings. Furthermore, higher education is linked with higher income level, which also shows that parents of participants who had higher education used more English in their domain of family (see also section 5.3.2.3).

Table 5.14: Influence of parents' education (general) level on participants' Tamil language skill

Parents	Education Level	Participants' language skill in Tamil	Count	(%)	Participants Language skill in English	Count	(%)
Father's education level	Standard 6	very fluent	13	87	very fluent	8	54
		can speak	2	13	can speak	4	26
		very little	0	0	very little	3	20
	Secondary	very fluent	50	80	very fluent	41	66
		can speak	11	18	can speak	21	34
		very little	1	2	very little	0	0
	Degree	very fluent	17	55	very fluent	28	91
		can speak	13	42	can speak	3	9
		very little	1	3	very little	0	0
	Postgrad (Others)	very fluent	1	100	very fluent	0	0
		can speak	0	0	can speak	1	100
		very little	0	0	very little	0	0
Mother's education level	Standard 6	very fluent	20	80	very fluent	24	53
		can speak	4	16	can speak	7	41
		very little	1	4	very little	2	6
	Secondary	very fluent	43	78	very fluent	27	61
		can speak	11	20	can speak	17	3
		very little	1	2	very little	0	0
	Degree	very fluent	16	62	very fluent	1	100
		can speak	10	38	can speak	0	0
		very little	0	0	very little	0	0
	Postgrad (Others)	very fluent	2	67	very fluent	-	-
		can speak	1	33	can speak	-	-
		very little	0	0	very little	-	-

5.3.2.4 Parents' Tamil education level

In spite of the declining trend in the above table which shows the link between parents' education and participants' Tamil language skill, fathers' Tamil education shows an optimistic trend towards participants' Tamil language. The participants' Tamil proficiency increases when fathers' Tamil education level increases. Table 5.15 shows that in the case of participants with 'very fluent' Tamil, the proficiency increases from 76% to 86% when their fathers' Tamil education level increases from Standard 6 to secondary level. A participant's Tamil proficiency is high (100%) when his/her father has Tamil education up to degree level. On the other hand, mothers' Tamil education did not

help Tamil fluency of participants as much as their fathers'. The number of participants who were very fluent in Tamil shows a slight drop from 89% to 86% when mothers' education of Tamil goes higher, from secondary to degree level. Parents who did not have Tamil formal education showed the least influence on their children's Tamil fluency. Only an average of 53% of non-Tamil-educated parents' children had fluency in Tamil if compared with the average of 82% of participants with parents who had Tamil formal education. As a conclusion from the statistics, mothers who are highly educated and parents who are non-Tamil educated do not use much Tamil and they have the tendency to use more English. Later, children who are less fluent in Tamil choose to speak Tamil only in the domains of friendship and family. Because they are not fluent in Tamil, they are not confident enough to use Tamil in other domains, hence they choose English.

Table 5.15: Influence of parents' Tamil education level on participants' Tamil language skill

				Count	Percentage
Parents' Tamil education level – father	Standard 6	Participants' language skill - Tamil	very fluent	25	76
			can speak	8	24
			very little	0	0.0
	Secondary		very fluent	38	87
			can speak	6	13
			very little	0	0.0
	Degree		very fluent	1	100
			can speak	0	0
			very little	0	0
	Nil		very fluent	17	55
			can speak	12	39
			very little	2	6
Parents' Tamil education level – mother	Standard 6	Participants' language skill - Tamil	very fluent	31	89
			can speak	4	11
			very little	0	0
	Secondary		very fluent	30	86
			can speak	5	14
			very little	0	0
	Degree		very fluent	3	60
			can speak	2	40
			very little	0	0
	Nil		very fluent	17	50
			can speak	15	44
			very little	2	6

5.3.3 Language Choice of Married Participants to Communicate with Their Children

Married participants fit into the category of the family of a new generation. Refer to Table 5.3 for the total number of married participants in this study. There are 33 (30%) of married participants in this study. This data on Table 5.16 were obtained from questions 80 to 83 in questionnaire (see Appendix A). Their language use and their language choice for children were likely to determine the language proficiency amongst them in the future. Participants' language choice and their children's language skill in the future can be observed through their current language use. The majority of married participants (64%) preferred to speak in Tamil with their spouses, followed by the remaining (36%) in English (Table 5.16). On the contrary, the majority of the participants who were parents or were going to be parents preferred English (67%) and only a small number (33%) preferred Tamil as their communication language to their children. For the preferred language for cartoon programmes for their children, two participants did not answer and only 31 participants answered this question. Data in Table 5.16 shows 30 (97%) of the parents (participants) have selected English cartoon programmes for their children and only 1(3%) married participant selected Tamil. In contrast, more than half, i.e. 17 (55%) of the married participants preferred their children to learn Tamil as their first language. However, their responses in the questionnaire did not match their actions and preferences, as revealed in Table 5.16 where 55% of married participants preferred their children to learn Tamil first, but they prefer English (67%) to communicate with their children. This shows their uncertain minds about their language choice for their children. However, married participants' language choice was more towards English for their children (for the reasons see section 6.3.1).

Table 5.16: Married participants' language preference

Choice of language for married couples	What language do you speak the most to your spouse?		What language do you prefer the most to communicate with your child?		What language/languages do you prefer your child to learn first?		Which language programmes or cartoons you prefer your children to watch?	
Language	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Tamil	21	64	11	33	17	55	1	3
English	12	36	22	67	14	45	30	97
-					2	-	2	-

Many studies have revealed the domain of family as the stronghold in maintaining the mother tongue in minority communities (Canagarajah, 2008, 2011; David, 2003; Fishman, 1971; Saravanan et al. 2009). However, the current study shows that participating young parents' preferred language was English to communicate with their children. Similar situation occurs in Singapore where English is the dominant language in Tamil families (Mani & Gopinathan, 2013; Ramiah, 1991; Sobrielo, 1985).

5.4 Language Choice in Domain of Friendship

Table 5.17 shows that for the language choice of participants with their Tamil friends, 91% of them used the mother tongue as their main language. Only a small number of the participants preferred to converse in English with their Tamil friends. This indicates that youngsters preferred to use more Tamil with their friends than in the family domain (75%, as shown in Table 5.8).

Table 5.17: Main language spoken to Tamil friends

		Count
Main language spoken with Tamil friends	Tamil	99 (91%)
	English	10 (9%)
	Malay	0 (0%)
	Others	0 (0%)

When further analysis was carried out to determine the age factor (within 15 to 30 years), the weight distribution was found to be almost equal for all the age groups, whereby age did not have an influence on the language choice of the participants when communicating with their friends. This is in contrast to the typical assumption that working adults would use more English language to communicate with friends due to working environment influences and the perception of English as a prestige language. The results in Table 5.17 and 5.18 show different outcome from Baker's (2007) findings, that the dominant language will replace the native language when it is perceived as a prestigious and powerful language in the job sector by bilingual communities. In the domain of friendship participants' most preferred language was Tamil. Table 5.18 shows the school-going participants' language choice was slightly more towards English (11%) when conversing with their friends. The age group of 18 to 23 years shows a relatively higher degree of Tamil language usage (95%) among friends if compared to the 15 to 17 years age group (89%) and the 24 to 30 age group (92%).

This data reveals further that participants of ages 18 to 23—the period after the schooling stage and before working life—prefer to communicate or interact in their mother tongue, though Milroy (1987) refers to Labov's (1972b) view that adolescents up to the age of about sixteen are the consistent users of vernacular forms. Table 5.18 shows that due to their multilingual nature and school system (compulsory language system and language of most subjects) these participants (or Malaysian Tamil youth) only reveal their built-in vernacular preferences in this (18 to 23 years) before they immerse in working life (see also Chapter 7). As they (participants) become immersed into working life, their language choice towards English shows an increasing trend, i.e., from 5% in the age group 18 to 23 years to 8% in the age group of 24 to 30 years. However, their language choice in the

domain of friendship shows that this sphere strongly upholds the mother tongue among the younger generation of Tamils.

Table 5.18: Main Language spoken with Tamil friends – by age group

				Count	Percentage
Age Group	15 to 17	Main language spoken to Tamil friends	Tamil	46	89
			English	6	11
			Malay	0	0.
			Others	0	0
	18 to 23	Main language spoken to Tamil friends	Tamil	19	95
			English	1	5
			Malay	0	0
			Others	0	0
	24 to 30	Main language spoken to Tamil friends	Tamil	34	92
			English	3	8
			Malay	0	0
			Others	0	0

5.4.1 Language of Secret Codes among Friends

The self-claim survey reports (question number 22 in Appendix A) show that about 80 (73%) of the 109 participants indicated that their language choice for secret codes to their friends (Table 5.19) was Tamil. Among them, 65 (81%) of the 80 participants also specified that they had created most of their secret codes in Tamil. The remaining participants 12 (15%) have created their secret codes in English. To sum up, the majority of participants preferred and were confident enough to create secret codes in Tamil. This also indicates their proficiency in spoken Tamil. Only 12 (15%) of participants selected English, 3% selected Malay and 1% created their secret codes in Chinese. Table 5.19 shows that the Malaysian Tamil youth create secret codes or make use of all the available languages in their linguistic repertoire in the domain of friendship. Their topic of discussion, interlocutors and domain (setting) determines the language choice (Fishman, 1972).

Table 5.19: Percentage of participants who created secret codes and their language of secret codes

Secret codes created?	Participants	%	Language preference for secret codes	
Yes	80	73	Tamil	65 (81%)
			English	12 (15%)
			Malay	2 (3%)
			Others	1 (1%)
No	29	27	-	

5.5 Language Choice in Domain of Education

Generally, the domain of education has huge influence on language choice among school-goers. This is because the language of education is often used to discuss the subjects among school friends and also among siblings at home rather than the language of the domain of friendship or domain of family. These language choice occurrences are known as domain overlapping (Fishman, 1966) and also known as leakage, i.e. the language of one domain spilling over to another domain which is a norm in multilingual communities (Holmes, 2013, p. 25). Table 5.20 is based on question 24 and 25 in questionnaire. 52 school-going participants (15 to 17 years old) have answered question 24. Table 5.20 lists languages used by these 52 participants to discuss their school subjects in intra-group interactions (with their Tamil friends). Among the 52 participants, Tamil was the preferred language i.e. 38% followed by Malay (33%) and thirdly, English (27%). The significant usage of Malay language could be due to the participants (15 to 17 years), who were from the national schools in which Malay is the important language in main stream education. Malay could also be a convenient language to be used for discussion of school-related matters as most of the subjects are taught in Malay. English is taught as a second important language in the Malaysian education system (see section 2.2). Mastery of English is regarded as crucial to gain access to vast amounts of information such as the latest knowledge via books, documentaries and internet resources. As Fishman (1972) says, topic decides the relevant language to use in situations involving many languages.

Accordingly, participants used more Malay and English which are more suitable to use in the domain of education due to the education system.

Based on Table 5.20, school going participants in this age group (15 to 17 years) language choice of English, Malay and Chinese (27% + 33% + 2% respectively) shows 62% and only 38% of Tamil was used for education related purposes among the school-goers. This shows that when these school-goers become the next generation in this multi-lingual nation, usage of Tamil might face a declining trend. There was a Chinese educated participant and he must have found peers who came from Chinese primary schools or were able to speak Chinese language.

Table 5.20: Language of communication in domain of education

Language used in in-group communications	School subjects or school work		University/college matters		Average %
	Count	%	Count	%	
Tamil	20	38	27	25	31
English	14	27	57	52	40
Malay	17	33	24	22	28
Chinese	1	2	1	1	1

For discussing university or college related topics (based on question 25 in questionnaire), English scored as the highest (52%) preferred language, as shown in Table 5.20. All 109 participants answered this question. If they were to discuss university- or college-related matters, their selection of language is as shown in Table 5.20. It is a known fact that colleges and universities in Malaysia are working towards attracting foreign students with the objective of being at par with world ranking universities in terms of education. Thus, most of the courses offered are taught in English. In addition, advertising and promotional materials are mainly in English too. With the availability of wider communication and electronic media, the younger generation is more exposed to this information, which is in English. Hence, they preferred to use English to discuss their higher-learning-related materials. For 27% of the school-goers, English was the language of choice and this

percentage went up to 52% for the participants to discuss matters relating to higher learning institutions. Tamil language usage was lower for discussion of university matters at 25% compared to school-related discussions at 38%.

Only one participant claimed to use Chinese since one of his (Tamil) friends was also from a Chinese primary school. Table 5.20 also indicates that around three quarters (75%) of the participants used other languages, i.e., English, Malay and Chinese languages. This clearly exhibits that only a relatively small number (25%) of participants (Tamil youth) used Tamil in intra-group interactions to discuss about higher education-related matters. In general, an average of 69% ($40\% + 28\% + 1\%$) of participants used other languages and only 31% of Tamil used in the domain of education in intra-group communications. This clearly reveals that the domain of education does not promote Tamil among youth. Moreover, the younger generation gives importance to English and Malay languages, which are important to excel in their education and for future career opportunities (for their reasons see section 6.5).

5.6 Language Choice in the Workplace Domain

In the workplace scenario, English was the most preferred language, followed by the Tamil and Malay languages (Table 5.21). This data was based on question number 24 in the questionnaire. A total of 37 participants have answered this question. A decreasing trend of Tamil and Malay language usage can be seen as the participants grow older and change from the student category to working life adults as they start to use more English. Generally, group aged from 24 to 30 years consisted of working participants and data shows that their usage of Tamil and Malay declined from 31% to 25% and 28% to 5%, respectively if compared with the domain of education (in Table 5.20). Data evidently indicates that the domain of workplace was dominated by English. This could be due to

the working environment, where English is commonly used in multilingual situations and because of the importance of English as a business language. Furthermore, their social network at the workplace may also have influenced their language use pattern. This assumption is supported by Milroy (1980), who stated that social network structure will eventually change linguistic behaviour. A similar finding was also observed in Singapore, where the nation that shares the same multi-culturalism as Malaysia, reported that working professionals preferred English in all forms of communication because they found that using English was most convenient as it is the international language for business (Yeo and Pang, 2017) (also see section 6.6) for their reasons for selecting English in the domain of workplace. Likewise, multinational corporations in Germany use English as a common corporate language and it is perceived that employees with good language proficiency in English are likely to achieve positions of power in an organization (Tenzer & Pudelko, 2017). It is similarly perceived locally, hence the higher tendency to use English in the workplace compared to Tamil and Malay.

Table 5.21: Language of discussion in the domain of workplace

		Count
Preferred language for work-related matters	Tamil	9 (25%)
	English	26 (70%)
	Malay	2 (5%)
	Others	0 (0%)
Total		37

Further analysis was then carried out to determine whether the working-class participants' occupations, divided into degree holders and non-degree holders, had any influence on their language choice when discussing work related matters (Table 5.22). For the degree holders, English was selected by the majority (69%) compared to Tamil (24%) and Malay (only 7%). This could be due to the use of extensive English at the workplace in Malaysia, especially in the private sector (Pillai, Khan, Ibrahim & Raphael, 2012; Zainuddin, Pillai,

Dumanig & Phillip, 2019) This also could be due to the lack of direct translation or interpretation in Tamil and Malay for certain complex terms, which makes English more conducive for working professionals. A similar trend is also observed in the non-degree holders working group. However, the usage of Tamil language was slightly higher (33%) amongst the non-degree holders compared to the degree holders (24%). There was also a significant drop in the usage of Malay language among the degree holders (7%), whereas the non-degree holders tended to use more Malay (22%) in their working environments.

Table 5.22: Language choice in domain of workplace based on education level

Language choice	Percentage of participants and occupation			
	Non-degree holders		Degree holders	
Tamil	3	33%	7	24%
English	4	45%	20	69%
Malay	2	22%	2	7%
Total	9	100%	29	100%
Others	-		-	

5.7 Language Choice in the Domain of Religion

According to Malaysia's Population Census 2010, 6.5% of the population (Malaysia's total population was then 28.3 million) in Malaysia were Hindus and 88.5% of Indians were Tamils. The data also show that the majority of this study's participants were Hindus and their language preference in the domain of religion was Tamil. Tamil is an important language for Hindus as their religious and Holy Scriptures such as *Thevaram* and its original lyrics are found in Tamil. Additionally, most of the priests, or *gurukkal*, in Hindu temples speak Tamil and temples conduct activities in Tamil. This domain plays an important role in maintaining Tamil language in Malaysia, as stated by Sankar (2004) and Selvajothi (2017).

Generally, Tamils in Malaysia consist of Hindus, Christians and Muslims. Table 5.23 shows that most of the participants of this study were Hindus (81%), followed by

Christians (12%) and Muslims (7%). This was based on question 3 in questionnaire. In order to obtain religious related information, an attempt was made to collect further details about participants' choice of language in religious practices (Table 5.24), based on questions 26 to 29 (see Appendix A). An average of 84% of participants used Tamil for prayers at home, at worship places, when communicating with their priest/imam and when talking about prayer-related matters. This is mainly due to the fact that among Hindus, prayers at home and at worship places are usually conducted in Tamil language as the religious books, chants and songs are mainly in Tamil. Tamil is also used extensively when communicating with priests as most of the priest are native Tamil speakers from South India with limited knowledge of Malay and sometimes English. In addition, the lack of direct translation to Malay and English, in turn, has resulted in the usage of Tamil language when discussing prayer-related matters (see Chapter 6, section 6.7). These statistics also reveal that the domain of religion and prayer-related matters plays a significant role in maintenance of Tamil language. On average, only 16% of participants used other languages such as English, Malay, or Arabic (for Muslim participants) for prayer related purposes. Table 5.24 shows that there were 1% of participants (Muslims) who used another language, i.e. Arabic language, for prayer-related matters. It is because the Muslims preferred to learn the original form of the Quranic verses, which are in Arabic Language- Muslim participants said that they went to big mosques which conducted talks in Malay. They also went to small *madrasah* where Tamil Muslims would meet for special gatherings and prayers and they spoke in Tamil. As for the Christians, those participants who attended churches that conducted prayers and talks in Tamil used Tamil as the main language. In other churches which had non-Tamil members or non-Tamil speaking priests, their practices or prayers were conducted in English. Hence, Christian participants used Tamil and English for their religion-related activities and Muslim participants used Tamil, Malay and Arabic in their religious

domain. However, Hindus mainly used Tamil in the domain of religion. Table 5.24 shows that only 12% of participants used English and 3% used Malay. The findings reveal that religion played a significant role in the maintenance of Tamil among the participants.

Table 5.23: Participants' religion

Religion	Count
Hindu	88 (81%)
Christian	13 (12%)
Muslim	8 (7%)
Total	109 (100%)

Table 5.24: Participants' language preference in the religious domain

Language	Activities of participants (in percentage)				
	Prayers at home	Places of worship	Communication with priest	Prayer matters	Average
Tamil	83	85	86	81	84
English	12	10	10	15	12
Malay	2	3	3	3	3
Others (Arabic)	3	2	1	1	1

5.8 Language Choice in Domain of Neighbourhood

In discussing language choice in major domains such as family, education, workplace, religion and transaction, the domain of neighbourhood also plays a significant role in influencing the pattern of language choice among people where they intermingle regularly. Milroy (1980) defines a social network as a pattern of casual interactions where people meet frequently. Children play together in their neighbourhood and go to the same school, adults mingle and socialise and generally share similar social environments. Thus, the neighbourhood plays an important role in influencing the linguistic behaviour of an individual. According to Milroy's (1980) social network theory, the language behaviour

of a person is influenced by the social link the person belongs to. If it is a 'dense' and 'multiplex' network, members of a person's network interact with each other in several dimensions. Most contacts in a community, particularly neighbours and school friends, belong to this type of social network. Hence, their language behaviour indicates the types of network they belong to. Normally, parents would notice their children's language begin to change, becoming more like the speech of the other children in the neighbourhood and school rather than that of the family. Hence, the current study intends to include the domain of neighbourhood as an important domain for revealing the patterns of language choice among the participants (youth) and how this domain influenced the language choice of participants in multi-ethnic context.

The questionnaire required participants to indicate their neighbourhood and the widely spoken language in their neighbourhood (questions 34 and 35 in Appendix A). Table 5.25 illustrates that 40% of the neighbourhoods of the participants were occupied by a Tamil speaking community. This shows that participants lived in environments where a considerably a large number of Tamils lived and had the opportunity to practice their native language (Tamil). Hence, the domain of neighbourhood had a great effect on the language choice of the participants. Malaysia is a multilingual nation; Malays, Chinese, Indians, Sikhs and other ethnic communities live in and share similar neighbourhoods. Neighbours who are proficient in English speak English to their neighbours, regardless of ethnicity. Those who cannot speak English communicate in Malay (national language). There are a small number of Tamils who speak Chinese to their neighbours. This is the typical Malaysian environment, where they live in a mixed ethnicity environment. This is similar to the findings of Ramiah (1991) among the Tamils in Singapore, who also live in a multi-ethnic environment and speak Tamil, English, Malay and Chinese languages in their neighbourhoods.

Further investigations were carried out to determine the language choice of participants with their Tamil neighbours. The current study shows that participants used Tamil (63%) when interacting with their Tamil neighbours, who may also have been their friends (see section 5.5) and attending the same school. Such a dense social network supports a high degree of language maintenance (Milroy, 1980). While 33% of participants preferred English, a small number used Malay (2%) and 2% chose Chinese language with their Tamil neighbours.

Table 5.25: Widely spoken language in neighbourhood and with Tamil neighbours

Language	Language situation in the neighbourhood of participants (in percentage)	
	Widely spoken in (multi-ethnic) neighbourhood	Spoken to Tamil neighbours
Tamil	40	63
English	32	33
Malay	25	2
Others	3	2

Remarkably, English was the second widely used language in the neighbourhood, rather than the national language, Malay. In this context, English was used as a neutral language in the multi-cultural society or neighbourhood where it enhances unity of the four major ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese, Indians and Sikhs) and allows comprehension and appreciation of each other's cultures, as has also been observed in Singapore (Yeo and Pang, 2017). Gradual adoption of English as a social lingua franca that unites the multi-cultured Malaysia seems prevalent. Although participants (Tamils) lived in a multi-ethnic environment they still dynamically used Tamil to mingle or communicate with their Tamil neighbours (for the reasons see section 6.8).

5.9 Language Choice in the Domain of Transaction (Business)

As stated by Fishman (1972 et al., p. 249), domain is a sociocultural concept based on subjects of conversation and communication between interlocutors and the settings of interaction of a speech community. 'Domain' makes a concrete connection between interlocutors and social situations. For further exploration, this study includes the domain of transaction to see the need for and use of Tamil language in other than the six main domains recommended by Fishman (1972) to explore language choice patterns of participants. The domain of transaction was investigated to obtain further patterns of language choice of the youth involved in this study. Table 5.26 depicts the language choice of participants in transaction situations. Data were obtained from questionnaire (question 31, 32, 37, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48). Data shows participants who go to Tamil restaurants, their language choice is Tamil (90%) in the dealing of ordering food. This practice is quite common as most of the restaurant attendants are Tamil native speakers who are from Tamil Nadu, India. English (8%) was the second preferred language compared to Malay language (2%).

Table 5.26 also shows that when dealing with numbers in the domain of transaction, particularly big numbers, participants mostly preferred to use English (more than half), secondly was Malay at $\frac{1}{3}$ and usage of Tamil only constituted of less than $\frac{1}{3}$. A similar situation arose when participants dealt with fractions ($\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, etc). English was the most preferred language to use to address fractions (57%), Tamil was the second preferred language (29%) and this was followed by Malay (19%). Usage of Tamil for addressing fraction is getting less common, due to the education system, whereby most subjects, including mathematics in secondary schools are taught in Malay or English (see also section 2.3). English is mainly used for referring to large numbers and fractions for reasons of ease and convenience (for reasons see section 6.9).

Table 5.26: Language choice in domain of transaction

Transactions/dealings	Tami l	%	English	%	Malay	%	Chinese	%
1. Ordering food (in Tamil restaurants)	98	90	9	8	2	2	-	
2. Big digits (e.g. 100,000)	33	30	61	56	15	14	-	
3. Fractions ($\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$)	31	29	62	57	21	19		
4. Local food (nasi lemak, leman)	30	28	27	25	50	46	2	2
5. Local fruits (durian, rambutan)	22	20	19	18	68	62	-	-
6. Local vegetables (sawi, kangkung)	26	24	49	45	33	30	1	1
7. Groceries	32	29	36	33	38	35	3	3
8. Seafood	22	20	15	14	71	65	1	1
Average		34		28		34		2

Table 5.26 also shows that other than for ordering food, in other circumstances, the choice of Tamil was very much less among participants. Statistics also reveal that on the average, only 34%, or one third of the participants, used Tamil for dealings in the domain of transaction (buyer-seller) (with Tamil interlocutors). When talking about local foods which are mostly in Malay such as *nasi lemak*, *kuih* and *teh tarik*, local fruits (*durian*, *rambutan*, *manggis*, *betik*, dan *duku*), local vegetables (*kangkung*, *sawi*, *bayam* dan *petai*), groceries and seafood, participants preferred to use Malay the most (34%) followed by English (28%). Participants also used Chinese words such as *kailan*, *tofu*, *pakchoy* and *char kuew tiow* in their domain of transaction with Tamils (dealers).

5.10 Occurrence of Language Choice in Natural Conversation

Audio recordings under natural settings depict natural conversations and real scenario and provide more genuine data for a sociolinguistic study. Thus, this study includes audio-recordings of 42 of the 109 participants (see Figure 4.2 in section 4.6) in real life verbal interactions in the domains of home, friendship, education, workplace, neighbourhood and transaction. Audio-recorded conversations were transcribed and part of the speech

samples were extracted and presented in this section. Below are the representation keys for transcript annotations used in the provided extracts (see page xxi for pronunciation key).

[Tamil = normal font or italic font, Malay words = ***italic bold***, English words = **normal bold** CHINESE = CAPITAL LETTERS]
 [..... = pause]
 [.....] = omitted sentences (due to limitations).

P = participant, F/M = gender, Y = age, T = Tamil educated, NT = non-Tamil educated
 C = Christian, I = Muslim, (if not stated = Hindu)

5.10.1 Language Choice in the Family Domain

The following section provides some conversations (extracts) of participants to show their language choice in the home domain with their family members.

Table 5.27: Language used by participants among family members

To grandparents	To parents	To siblings
<p>[Participant 10] இல்லீங்க தாத்தா (illi:ngka ta:tta:) (no, grandpa)</p> <p>நல்ல பையன் தான் தாத்தா (nalla paiyan tha:n ta:tta:) (good boy grandpa)</p> <p>புக்கு pinjam கேட்டான் (pukku pinjam ke:tta:n) (came to borrow book)</p> <p>நீங்கதான் தர மாட்றீங்க (ni:nkatha:n tara ma:tri:ngka) (only you don't allow me)</p> <p>விடுங்க தாத்தா (vidungka ta:tta:) (Leave it grandpa)</p>	<p>[Participant 1] ம்மா.... இங்க வாங்க (mma:... ingka va:ngka) (mother please come here)</p> <p>இவன பாருங்க. ஒரே manja (ivana pa:rungka ore: manja) (look at him)</p> <p>எப்படி போறீங்க? (eppadi po:ri:ngka) (how are you going?)</p> <p>பரவாலம்மா (never mind mother)</p>	<p>[Participant 1] வாலுக்குட்டி.... இங்க வாய்யா (va:lukutti.. ingka va:yya:) (little animal cub with tail come here)</p> <p>இன்னிக்கி kindergarten-லெ என்ன படிச்சீங்க? (innikki kindergarten -le enna padichingka?) (what did you learn today)</p> <p>வாவ் ... pitures-லாம் colourful ஆ இருக்கு (wow.. pictures-la:m colourfulla: irukku) (wow..! the pictures are so colourful)</p>

<p>[Participant 10]</p> <p>சரீங்க பாட்டி (<i>saringka pa:tti</i>) (ok grandma)</p> <p>நீங்கதான் என்ன காப்பாத்தனும் பாட்டி (<i>ni:nka tha:n enna kappa:ttanum pa:tti</i>) (please rescue grandma)</p>	<p>[Participant 2]</p> <p>உங்களுக்கு ஏன் கஸ்டம் (<i>ungkalukku e:n kastam</i>) (don't distress yourself)</p> <p>kelas tambahan இருக்கு (<i>kelas tambahan irukku</i>) (I have extra class)</p> <p>என்னம்மா சமையலு? செம பசி... (<i>ennamma: samaiyalu? sema pasi</i>) (what is the menu today?)</p>	<p>[Participant 10]</p> <p>டேய்.. டேய் அது சும்மா park பன்னியிருந்த mota:r ருடா (<i>de:i...de:I athu summa: park panniyiruntha mo:tta:ruda:</i>) (dei..that is just parked motorbike)</p> <p>disiplin... போன இல்ல சொல்றென் (<i>disiplin..po:na illa solren</i>) (I'll tell about your discipline problem)</p>
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Table 5.27 depicts the language patterns of participants among family members. The first column shows Participant 10's language choice with grandparents (see Appendix C). The grandfather is enquiring the participant about his friend and advising him to be careful with his new friend. Generally one does not use the word *ka:ppa:ththanum* (rescue please) in normal situations to family members. In this context, the participant was calling his grandmother to 'rescue' him from his grandfather's advice, humorously—a typical situation of grandson and grandparent casual conversations. The sample shows the participant's (grandson's) conversation is fully in Tamil except a few words. Only the Malay word **pinjam** was used, which has for a long time been borrowed and used in Malaysian Tamil as if a Tamil word (Thilagawathy, 1971).

Column 2 shows conversations with mothers in the family environment. Anger, complaint, concern, care, love, advice, warning and humour are typical emotional situations in the family domain. Participants conversed in Tamil although there was a little mixture of Malay and English words such as **manja** (pampered), which is typical in Malaysian Tamils' language. In Malaysian Tamil, the Malay word **manja** is borrowed and used very commonly, particularly among youngsters, instead of the Tamil word *chellam* (pamper). Participant 2 is asking her mother about the lunch menu and then

informing the mother about the extra class the next day and about the pickup time using the Malay word '*kelas tambahan*' because it is associated with her school activities. This also shows a typical Malaysian Tamil teenager's speech style. In a related article, Labov (1992, p. 339) has also stated that youth live and talk with peers who share to some extent their social world, including their language. Thus, this conversation depicts the speech style of the participant carried from the school environment to the home domain.

Column 3 illustrates how in a family domain, a participant is calling her little brother *va:lu kutti*, which means 'little animal cub with tail', showing that she is lovingly calling her brother. She praises her brother for colouring the animals' pictures beautifully (see Appendix C) in the family domain with her little brother. Her speech shows that she adores and cares for her little brother. She switches to English words because the little brother is attending English kindergarten. Participant 1 mainly used Tamil, though mixing of English occurred because of her little brother's learning associated with English. This was in line with Fishman's (1972) findings, i.e. topic is a regulator of language use in multilingual situations. Participant 1 had the choice of languages to show her different approaches toward little brother and her mother. She chose all three languages according to the topic of discussion and interlocutor (Fishman, 1972). These conversations of participants in Table 5.27 with different generations of family members reveal that Tamil language is maintained in the domain of family though there is a little mixture of Malay and English words which are very common among Malaysian Tamils. Conversations in Table 5.27 also reveal that the participants know how to select the language according to social situations and interlocutors - choose all Tamil words to grandparents, mix some Malay and English to their mother and siblings in conformity with Fishman's finding which states that domain is also a helpful concept in recognizing a number of

behaviourally separate social situations which are commonly associated with particular variety or language.

5.10.2 Domain of Friendship—Language Choice in Natural Conversations

Audio recordings of natural conversations show that participants' preferred language in intra-group communications was Tamil. All age groups (Table 5.28) also show similar language use in intra-group communications in the domain of friendship. Table 5.28 is based on recording of natural verbal communications. Participants spoke Malay or English in their inter-group communications (to Chinese and Malay friends). However, language choice in inter-group interactions varied according to their age (for reasons see section 6.4). In the 15-to-18-year age group participants spoke more Malay because their exposure to Malay was greater in the school system where most subjects are taught in Malay. As they grow older and they enter higher learning institutions or job sectors, they tend to speak more English (see section 5.6) and they carry it into their domain of friendship.

Table 5.28: Language choice of participants in the domain of friendship

Age group	With other races	With Tamil friends
15-17	More Malay Less English	More Tamil Malay + English
18-23	Malay English	More Tamil English Less Malay
24-30	More English Less Malay	More Tamil English Much less Malay

Extract 5.1 illustrates part of a conversation among two teenage boys in the domain of friendship. The 17-year-old male participant (P15) is talking with his Tamil friends after school while waiting for transport to go home. The participant uses Malay such as *sekolah rendah* (primary school), *tukar* (transfer) and *kes buang* (expelled from school) to refer

to terms related to school. Thus, the basic language (matrix language) is Tamil but with many embedded Malay words. This is to be expected given that they are in a Malay medium school. The participant also uses a mix of Tamil and English in the term ‘*pomple rowdy*’ (rowdy female) which shows how linguistic and social factors interact. The participant uses the English word ‘rowdy’ to describe a girl who is rough. This term is common among Malaysia Tamil speakers and appears to be used as if it is part of Tamil to refer to someone who behaves like a gangster or in a violent manner. It is interesting to note that the word order of *pomple* (noun) rowdy (adjective) resembles English noun+adjective structure. He also describes the girl as *sandaikko:li* (fighter-cock) which is a common term in spoken colloquial Tamil used to describe someone who likes to argue or fight.

Extract 5.1

[P15M 17Y T]

(After school. Discussing about a new student (girl) in their school)

P: Participant F1: Friend 1 F2: Friend 2

F1: *antha pillaiye pa:ruda: puthu pille.*

P15: *athu minthi **sekolah rendahle** engka **school** tha:n. ve:re **school-u** padichittu ippo inke puthusa: **tukar** panni vanthrukkuda:*

(Formerly, she was in my primary school. Now, she has just transferred to our school from another school.)

F2: *nalla: padikkuma:?*

(Does she study well?)

P15: ***kes buang-a:** iruntha:lum irukkum. padikkum. a:na: sariya:na pomple **rowdy.***

paiyanungke kitte la:m sandaikku varum. sariya:na va:ya:dida: ...

sandaikko:li. ippo theriyile...

(She could have been expelled from the other school. She studies but she’s a rowdy. She used to pick fight with the boys. A fighter cock. Very talkative. Now, I don’t know.....)

F1: *en class-u ta:n. innikki rompa onnum pe:sale. puthusu ille. ummunu pu:nai ma:ri ukka: nthirunthichida:*

(my class. Today she did not talk much. new to school may be. Just sat quietly like a cat)

Table 5.29 shows some of the Tamil expressions used by the participants in the domain of friendship. Consistent with social network theory, there is a particular linguistic pattern in the informal speech of the participants in what can be considered as a closed network

among close friends with the same linguistic background. Among these patterns are Tamil terms like *machi* (brother in-law in Tamil) for friends, common expressions used in informal speech by young Tamil speakers is *nalla: varuthuda: va:yile* which literally mean ‘I’m going to say nice words’. However, it actually has the opposite meaning and means ‘I’m going to say something very bad’ and usually used in an argument. The use of the particle *da:* among friends show solidarity. As the speakers are also fluent in Malay and the recordings were carried out in the school environment, many Malay words were also found in their speech as shown in Table 5.30. Another term commonly used among youth to say ‘something extra ordinary’ or too good is *ca:vadi-ya:* (killing) has used by Participant 55 (see Table 5.29). Participant 55 was talking about a new car and said the price must be very high. For more such words which is common among youth (see Table 5.29).

Table 5.29: Language choice of participants in domain of friendship

Terms/expression used by participants	Standard Tamil equivalent	English equivalent	Participant (see Appendix C)
<i>Derived from Tamil</i>			
<i>ko:kku ma:kka:</i>	viththiya:sama:	to not do something properly or as not expected	Participant 23
<i>Machchi</i>	machcha:n	Originates from the term <i>machchan</i> (brother-in-law) but is now used to address close friends	Participant 23
<i>chemmaya:</i>	sirappa:	very good	Participant 23
<i>ka:su thendam</i>	vi:n selavu	wasted	Participant 23
<i>pichakka:re na:ye</i>	pichaika:rane:	literally means ‘begger dog’ but is used to mean someone who is good for nothing	Participant 23
<i>Erume</i>	Erumai	Literally means buffalo but is used to refer to someone who needs to be directed, i.e. cannot think for themselves	Participant 44
<i>mu:dikittu pe:sa:me iru</i>	pe:sa:mal iru	to shut up/ to be quiet	Participant 40

<i>ka:the pulichi po:chchi</i>	ke:kka mudiyile	Literally means ears which have turned sour. Used to mean that one is unable to listen to someone any longer	Participant 40
<i>inji tinna korangu ma:ri</i>	solla mudiya:mal taviththal	An idiomatic expression which refers to a person who does not want to reveal what he has done although people can sense from his facial expression that he has. Literally mean like a that monkey which has eaten ginger	Participant 44
<i>de:y vengga:yam</i>	teriya:thavane:	Literally means 'hey, onion. Refers to someone who who acts like they know thing but who actually do not know anything	Participant 55
<i>nalla:varuthuda: va:yile</i>	enakku ko:bam varuthu	Literally means to say something good but means the opposite	Participant 23
<i>cha:vadiya: irukkum</i>	miga sirappa:	Refers to something that is very good/ excellent	Participant 55
<i>thiruntha:tha jenmam</i>	thiruntha ma:tta:ngke	Refers to a person who cannot change their character	Participant 40
<i>sema good</i>	Sirappu	Very good	Participant 23
<i>Malay</i>			
<i>lalang</i>	la:la:n pul	Literally is a type of long wild grass. Refers to someone who is switch camps or allegiance to his own benefit	Participant 44
<i>padan muka</i>	e:tra palan	To serve someone right	Participant 44
<i>alla:ma:k</i>	-	Expression of surprise and shock commonly used by Malaysians even when speaking their own languages	Participant 24
<i>tension kaki lah</i>	mana aluththam	To be always stressed	Participant 14

Furthermore, in the domain of friendship (Table 5.29), participants also used more Tamil and Malay idiomatic terms. Their speech shows that participants had fluency in Malay language, as well. Their expressions with mixed languages enrich their language repertoire and provide a wide range of language choices to use among friends. Language use among some participants in the domain of friendship also use more Tamil idiomatics

which are not heard commonly in multilingual circumstances if compared with other domains, including the domain of family in which only a limited vocabulary is used. In another communication in the domain of friendship involving Participant 14, a participant among friends in a university, has examples of expressions for showing concern, commenting, seeking friend's approval and helping each other (see Appendix C). Expressions of Malay origin included **tensin kaki lah**. **kaki** is Malay with the literary meaning of *leg* and the Malay idiomatic meaning of 'addicted/used to something' and **lah** is a Malay pragmatic particle which is widely used in Malaysia in all the languages (Omar, 2000). Here, the particle **lah** is used to seek support from the other friends for her statement and to emphasise someone's statement. This speech illustrates the typical Malaysian youth's speech style or language choice; a single utterance with mixture of Tamil, Malay and English words besides particles from different languages. This confirms bilinguals/multilinguals use all the significant features of all languages they know (Fishman, 1967; Ferguson, 2000). David (2006), says in multilingual Malaysia borrowing from other languages like Malay, Chinese and Tamil are inevitable. She says borrowing are means of word creation. The youth of today are expected to be skilled especially in English and Malay. Hence, as a result proficiency in these languages, code mixing and borrowing is spontaneous in informal and formal interactions are unavoidable.

In Extract 5.2, a teenage participant (P44) is talking to her Tamil-speaking friend about another friend who is not present in the conversation. She appears to be frustrated and refers to this friend as an *erumai* (buffalo) (see). She then emphasises the inability of her friend to think for herself by using a Malay term which has a negative connotation calling her a **lalang** (see Table 5.30). This type of long grass sways in the direction of the wind air, suggesting someone who has no direction. This friend had got into trouble with a

group of students that she went along with. P44 says in Malay that she ‘deserves it’ in Malay perhaps to emphasise her frustration. She then used Tamil again and ends with the idiomatic expression which best describes the person and situation: *inji tinna korangu ma:ri*. The intermittent use of Tamil and Malay expressions by the P44 illustrates how multilingual can draw from their linguistic repertoire to best express themselves (Jacobson, 2004; Kanthimathi, 2007). Møller and Jørgensen (2017) who studied about Copenhagen youngsters establish these findings, saying that young people have developed a method to use all the languages available in their linguistic repertoire.

Extract 5.2

[P44F17YNT-18]

(Two school friends talking in class during their interval)

F2: Friend and Participant 44

F2: *kichu pa:tte ille. Antha pillingka group ku:da ku:tta:liya: irunthichi ille. didiplin teacher kitte ma:ttiruchingke.*

P44: *antha erumai kitte appave connen. **Lalang** mari angkeyum ingke:yum se:ra:the:nu.. ke:ttuchcha: **memanglah... sudah kena.. padan muka.** ippe inji tinna korangu ma:ri ukka:nthirukku. atu*
(I told the buffalo earlier itself. Do not be friend with both groups like ‘long grass’. Now she got it right. Sitting like a ‘monkey which ate ginger’.)

F2: *athe namma gang-le irunthu thu:kkirala:m. ethukku-lah athu?*

P44 : *ippo: techer enna: solluva:ngka. ungke gang-e: ippaditha:nnu solluva:ngka. athuna:le namakkum ketta pe:ru..*

Extract 5.3 is about a working participant with his colleague-cum-friend were making suggestions for a lunch outing. It depicts the participant mentioning his desire to his friend about a banana leaf meal in a Tamil restaurant. Their talk reveals a reference about **Friday** and *saivam* (Friday and vegetarian food), which suggests that Hindus usually eat vegetarian meals on Fridays. This is a normal occurrence in the domain of friendship among working youth—planning their lunch. The participants used Tamil language connected with food to discuss about their lunch outing. There were also names of Chinese menu items in the participant’s friend’s speech. Though the participants were workplace colleagues, their discussion about a lunch outing and food menus (as friends)

consisted of Tamil and Chinese lexical items. They make use of all the ethnic languages available in Malaysia to name the food such as *wantan mee* – Chinese food (wantan noodles). Malaysian Tamils' degree of bi/multilingualism enables them to select vibrant words to enhance their mood. Their degree of bulingalism determines language choice in each domain according to their topic, setting and interlocutors (Fishman, 1972).

Extract 5.3

[P58M 30Y]

(At work place with colleagues) (F = Friend)

F: **lunch**-ku enke po:kapo:re? **WANTAN MEE** po:la:ma?
(Where are we going for lunch? Shall we go for wantan mee?)

P58: ille da: enakku so:ru sa:ppidanum. .. **restaurant** po:la:m. nalla: oru ele sa:ppa:du sa:ppidanum.
(No, I feel like eating rice; we go to a Tamil restaurant; can eat a nice banana-leaf meal)

F: ni: innikki saivama:? innikki vellikkilame illeye:.. **friday** taan eppavum ele sa:ppadunu po:vo:m
(Are you vegetarian today? Today is not a Friday. usually we will be going for banana leaf food only on Fridays.)

5.10.3 Domain of Education

Audio recoded speech of participants in the domain of education shows the mixture of Tamil, Malay and English languages. Extract 5.4 shows a participant and her colleague used Tamil as a matrix language embedded with more of education-related English words. There are eighteen words in total. Among the words, six are English indicating that 33% of this participant's speech is mixed with English. The participant was sighing and complaining to her friend about their assignments and upcoming exam and enquiring about her assignments' progress. This conversation took place in a higher learning institution. Hence, the language pattern shows more English terms in it.

Extract 5.4

[P14F 23Y-1]

(during interval in university)

(F = Friend) P = Participant

P14: **assignment** *mudikka mudiyile. hmmm... athukkulle exam ve:re varuthu. ni translation mudichittiya:?*

(I couldn't finish my assignment..hmm..but even before that, exam is already nearing. Have you finished your translation?)

F: *mudikka po:ren... final chapter.*

(I'm about to complete... Final chapter.)

P: *matra assignment la:m mudichittiya:?* (Have you finished the other assignments?)

On the other hand, communications in schools (among teens) show more Malay words embedded in Tamil speech (see Table 5.30).

Table 5.30: Language choice of participants in domain of education: in schools

Language choice	Meaning	Participant (Appendix C)
<i>Makmal</i> (Malay)	lab	Participant 86
<i>ketua kelas</i> (Malay)	class monitor	Participant 86
<i>Cikgu</i> (Malay)	teacher	Participant 86
<i>Karangan</i> (Malay)	essay	Participant 86
pass up	pass up	Participant 86
<i>cikgu... garang</i> (Malay)	strict teacher	Participant 86
jangan main main dengan dia (Malay)	do not play with her	Participant 86
binding	binding	Participant 40
<i>sukan t-shirt</i> (Malay & English)	sports t-shirt	Participant 40
<i>muka depan</i> (Malay)	front cover	Participant 40
<i>kedai buku</i> (Malay)	book shop	Participant 40

There were more Malay words in the speech of participants who were secondary school students. Extract 5.5 shows gossiping between a participant and her friend about a fellow student who was from a different race. They spoke fully in Tamil. In the same setting,

when they were conversing about studies, they mixed more Malay words. In total there were 40 words in this conversation (participant's speech in Extract 5.5). Among them, 16 are Malay words, representing 40% for Malay words and one English word (2.5%). One of the participants, who was a teenager (17 years old), was a student in a secondary school. In the Malaysian education system, the medium of instruction in secondary schools is Malay and most subjects are taught in Malay. Thus, teenagers are more competent in the Malay language. This sample (Extract 5.5) depicts Tamil teenagers' language patterns in the domain of education. They used more Malay in inter-group communications, which would influence their intra-group communications, as well (also see section 5.5).

Extract 5.5

[P86F 17Y]

(In classroom) (F = Friend)

P86: *atha: pa:ru ummana: mu:njiya:ttom ukka:nhthirukka:. na:matha:n **makmal** po:yitto:m. ithutha:ne **ketua kelas. Cikgu** sonnathe nammakitte sollela pa:thiya:.*

(Look at her, sitting with an unfriendly face. We went to the lab. As a kelas monitor she should have informed us. But she didn't...)

F1: **BM** *vi:ttupa:dam mudichittiya:?*

(Have you completed Malay language homework?)

P86: ***karangan** koduththa:re, athe na:n appave, ne:ththe **pass up** pannitte:ne:. ni: innum **hantar** pannaleya: **cikgu** ne:ththe: **hantar** panna sollitta:ngale:*

(He gave an essay, I have passed it up yesterday itself, haven't you submitted yet? Teacher has reminded us to submit yesterday itself.)

F1: *oh.. appadiya: ippeye: po:yi **bilik guru**-le vechchittu vanthurren*

(Oh is it? I will go to the staff room now itself and submit it.)

P86: *illena: **cikgu Fatima** garang teriyumille..? **jangan main main dengan dia.!***

(If you don't, you know that Fatima teacher is strict isn't it..? Don't play the fool with her..!)

5.10.4 Language Choice in Natural Setting in the Domain of Workplace

Working participants in this study were divided into two categories, i.e., as degree holders and non-degree holders. These two categories of participants show different patterns of

language choice, as shown in Extract 5.6, Extract 5.7 and Extract 5.8. Participant 82 was a non-degree holder (not highly educated) working in a supermarket as an overseer. In the Extract 5.6 she uses Tamil with a mixture of English terms with her Tamil colleague. In Extract 5.7 she uses Malay with her non-Tamil co-worker. But to gossip about her co-worker with her Tamil colleague, she uses Tamil without mixing with any Malay or English, as seen in Extract 5.8.

Extract 5.6

[P82F 28Y]

(Participant working at a super market. Talking to her colleagues)

P82: *eh! anta price tag pa:ru. customer wait pannura:ngke. si:kkiram. red apple ki:le. one fifty nine po:ttirukku... ..? Tengok cepat sikit*
(Eh! look at the price tag, customer is waiting, be quick. Below the red apple. Is it written as one fifty nine? Quickly.)

P82:(.....). *mior e ku:ppidu. inke puthu tag po:danum. inke (weighing machine) price ma:riyiruchi; innum items le ma:ththule. si:kkiram vara sollu. customers confuse a:vura:ngke. hei, avan engka po:yi tholanja:n pa:ru-lah konjam.*
(CallMior. Need to put new tag here. The price in the weighing machine here has changed; but the items' price haven't been changed. Ask him to be quick. Customers are getting confused.)
(Hey, can you please check where on earth he has gone missing to.) [(.....) censored upon request of participant]

According to the participant, she used an ill-mannered word to show her anger and she dared to use such a word because a non-Tamil person would not understand it.

Extract 5.7

[P82F 28Y]

(Participant as a supermarket supervisor of a section to her Malay and Tamil colleagues.)

P82: (to non-Tamil colleagues) *dei adik dua orang mari. Taruh ini yellow tag dulu. sudah pukul dua lebih. you tau masa yellow tag ka:n. cepat. manager mari .. marah.*
(Hey brothers, two of you come here. Put the yellow tag first. It's already past two. You know the time to put up the yellow tag right. Quick. If the manager comes, you will get scolded.)

P82: (to Tamil colleague) *mmm..nalla ne:ram customer korava: irukka:ngke.*
(Luckily, there are not many customers.)

In Extract 5.7 Participant 82 speaks in Malay because she had to give instructions to a non-Tamil and Tamil colleagues together. After her main instructions, she sighs and switches her speech to Tamil towards her Tamil colleague. The participant chose Tamil to express her displeasure to her colleague. This participant used more Malay because of her working environment with colleagues who were secondary school leavers and she was a non-degree holder (revealed in interview) and more fluent in Malay (see section 5.6).

Extract 5.8 depicts Participant 82 complaining about her non-Tamil co-worker to her Tamil colleague. She uses Tamil idiomatic terms like *sa:mbira:ni* (literally means ‘incense’); the situational meaning is ‘inefficient’. The participant uses Tamil in her speech so that non-Tamil colleagues will not understand her negative remarks. She also uses *elavu edukkuratha: irukku*, an idiomatic phrase (in colloquial Tamil) which has the literary meaning ‘like observing a funeral’, but its situational meaning is ‘a difficult task’. In this way, the participant expresses her emotional state.

Extract 5.8

[P82F 28Y]

(As a supermarket supervisor of a unit, to her colleague.)

P82:*sa:mbira:ni ma:ri ve:le seyyira:n. kaththukittu seyrathukkulle ve:re ve:le ma:tti po:yiruva:ngka*

engka uruppadiya: ve:le kattukkura:ngka. ivankale vechchi elavu edukkuratha: irukku.

(Working inefficiently. Before could learn the work properly, they change their job. When will they learn properly? It's difficult to handle them (like observing a funeral).)

Extract 5.6, Extract 5.7 and Extract 5.8 language choice patterns of Participant 82. Participants 82's language varies according to her interlocutor and topic. She uses Malay to Malay colleague, Tamil mixed English to discuss about work related matter to her Tamil colleague and chooses purely Tamil to gossip about a non-Tamil colleague. Fishman (1972), says social situations determine the language that appropriate to certain

place, role-relationship and topics; the decision is not made by the individual alone for there is socio-cultural measure of situations for the use of particular languages as in the circumstances of Participant 82.

A different language choice has been observed in Participant 58, who was a degree holder working in an office environment. Extract 5.9 demonstrates this participant used more work-related English terms in intra-group communication.

Extract 5.9

[P58M 30Y]

(At work place (accounts office))

P58: **file** *e pa: kkanum nu sonna: ru.* **refer pannanum a: antha client o: de.**

Third is dead line.. kitte varuthu. accounts complete pannanum.

(He asked to see the file; need to refer to the client's file. The deadline is on the third; nearing already..need to complete the accounts.)

The setting for this extract was a typical office work environment in which the employee was talking about files, clients, deadlines, accounts, etc. In a 'rigidly work only' sort of setting, the use of more English terms is to show seriousness in work. In total, there are 16 words in this conversation. Out of 16 words, nine words (56%) are English words. The participant's language choice with his colleagues as a friend about a lunch outing was totally different, as shown in Extract 5.3 in section 5.10.2, where he spoke in Tamil with his colleague. In conclusion, the workplace scenario can be divided into two sets: non-degree holders who used more Malay and degree holders who used more English in work related matters.

5.10.5 Language Choice in Domain of Neighbourhood

In the situation represented in Extract 5.10, a 15-year-old participant was talking to a neighbour woman who came to the participant's home, chatting with the participant's mother.

Extract 5.10

[P76F 15Y T]

(Talking with her neighbour). (NA = neighbour aunty)

NA: *ra:ni...! murali engkamma:... ungo:da varalaiya:?*

(Where's Murali....didn't he follow you?)

P76: *na: varumpo:tu pa:tte:n.. murali malaiyile nanainjikkittu a:ttampo:ttukittu irukka:n., aunty*
. na:n ku:ppitte:n va:da: vi:ttukku po:la:mnu. Varama:tte:nuttu . avano:de class pillingka
irukka:ngkale: aunty avungkalo:de ore: a:ttam aunty .

Kokurikulum *na:lu manikku mudinjiruchi. na:n si:kkirama: vanthutte:n...*

(I saw him on my way back. Murali was playing and getting wet in the rain, aunty. I called him and asked him to come home. He refused to follow me and continued playing with his classmates, aunty. Co-curriculum ended at 4 o'clock. I came home early.)

Participant 76, in Extract 5.10, is answering the neighbour woman who is asking about her son. The participant says she had called him, but he was playing in the rain - *a:ttam po:ttukittu* (unwanted play) with his friends. This specific word is normally only used with someone who is close to the speaker. The participant selected Tamil and was talking freely like in the home environment with her neighbour.

Participant 55, in Extract 5.11, was a 16-year-old teenaged student. He chose Tamil for interaction with his neighbour though his tone is inappropriate, showing he is talking casually to his neighbour uncle. The participant's tone and choice of words are as he would when speaking to his friends. In Tamil, this would be considered as inappropriate for the neighbour, who was very much older than the participant. Extract 5.11 illustrates that the participant (teenager) chooses Tamil to answer his neighbour. Domain of neighbourhood is similar to domain of family where people intermingle like family

members. Thus, Participant 76 in Extract 5.10 and Participant 55 in Extract 5.11 select Tamil to answer their neighbour. Domain of neighbourhood is an informal network of people who have frequent contacts. Such social network is responsible for language choice patterns of people who have frequent contacts with other members of the same network (Milroy, 1980).

Extract 5.11

[P55M 16Y NT]

(Talking to the neighbour uncle and aunty) (NU = Neighbour uncle)

P55: *aiyo: uncle na:n sonne:nu solla ve:na:m. avlata:n na:likku school-le sandaikku varuva:nka*
(Aiyo! uncle don't tell him that I told you. Finish. Tomorrow they will pick up fight with me.)

NU: *sandaikku varuva:na:? sandaila:m po:duva:na:..?*
(Will he fight? Is he brave for a fight...?)

P55: *ille ... avan varama:tta:n...avan ku:tta:linka varuva:nka...* (inappropriate tone)
[no..... he wont---his friends will come----- (for a fight)]
(with inappropriate tone)

5.10.6 Married Participants' Language Choice in Family Setting

Youth may have a carefree attitude towards their language choice. However, married participants who have small children might have more meaningful language choice. This study includes married participants' language choice patterns and their views about their choice of language. Married participants' language choice and language use may indicate language choice of Tamils in the future in the domain of family.

Participant 64 is a female, Hindu, Tamil educated, degree holder (highly educated), married and with a two-year-old baby girl. Participant 64, in Extract 5.12, uses Tamil as a matrix language but mixed or embedded with more English words to her child. A matrix language is supposedly the dominant language (Myers-Scotton, 1993). However, Extract 5.12 shows more embedded words (English) than the matrix language in the participant's speech. Myers-Scotton (1993) says that one of the languages in code-switching may take

a dominant role. This language is known as the matrix language and its grammar sets the morphosyntactic frame, while the embedded language is used in a single insertion or complex insertions in the matrix language. However, Participant 64's utterances in Extract 5.12 shows a different proportion. In her utterances, the total words are 40. Tamil words are only 40%, which was supposed to be the matrix language and English (the embedded words) are 60% although the morphosyntactic frame still exhibits Tamil structure. This example depicts married participants leaning towards English when speaking to their children. Although their sentence structure seems as though they speak Tamil, in reality, they use more words from another language (English). Participant 64 is a Hindu; she selects Tamil only for prayer related words (see section 5.7).

Extract 5.12

[P64 F 26Y T]

(at home with her child)

P64: *amma: inke va:da: inke pa:ru aunty. say good evening to aunty. say vanakkam*
(Come here, darling..Look at aunty. Say good evening to aunty. Say vanakkam.)

P 64: **come we go pray. say o:hmmm sa:my, o:hmmm sa:my O:hmmm ganेशha.....**
take vibuthi amma: nna: ... thi:rtham... show your little palm. Little ..thir:ththam....drink
slowly..... come ... come drink from amma:'s hand.

(Come, let's go and pray. Say "o:hmmm god, o:hmmm god...o:hmmm ganेशha"
(hindu chants)..take the 'vibuthi'(sacred dust), darling..here,'thirtham'(sacred water)..show me
your little palm..drink slowly..come, come drink from mom's hand.)

In a similar family environment, a 29-year-old participant spoke more Tamil to her child and all Tamil to her spouse, as shown in Extract 5.13.

Extract 5.13

[P67 F 29Y T]

(P: Participant, PH: Participant's husband)

P67: (to her husband).....**ling kitchen-le antha cooker-e konjam off pannirri:ngkala:.. na: ra:jkku padichi kudukka ukka:nhthutten**
(**ling**...can you please of the cooker in the kitchen. I've sat down to teach Raj.)

P67: (to her child).*va: aiya: intha:ngka colour. ithu enna colour...?. say blue..... this one... red....inhtha:ngka colouring book-u. colour here.... This page....*
(Come son..here are your colour pencils. What colour is this? Say..blue...this one is red...here is your colouring book..colour over here, this page...)

P67: *appu kutty... appadi illaiya..... amma:ve pa:rungka.....*
(Not like that darling...look at mom...)

P67: ...**ithu tree. Must colour green. Here The green colour. change your colour pencil....aiya....**
(This is tree, must colour green. Here..the green colour; change your colour pencil son..)

PH: *avanukku theriyuma:.... ippave... enna ennaa: colournu.... (laughing..)*
(How would he know to differentiate the colours now itself.)

Participant 67 chose Tamil to communicate with her child. On the other hand, to talk about books and education, the participant selected English (for the reasons see section 6.3). In other related family settings, Participant 20's language choice was English to his child (Extract 5.14) and not a single utterance in Tamil. This indicated that the participant preferred English to communicate with his child (for reasons see section 6.3).

Extract 5.14

[P20M 27Y CNT]

(Participant with her small child)

P20: ya....

P20: **joshu..... don't pull.. the table cloth..... zi....** (calling the wife) **see joshu.....**
Zi:...inka pa:ru friend vanthirukka:ngga. Drink eduththa:...
(zi...come here. Friend is here. Bring a drink..)

P20: **You want to ride bicycle. Be careful ah..... slowly.... Slowly...**

P20: **no...no.... mustn't tear the book.**

no.... cannot take the handphone. It's not for small kids.

The language choice of the married participants illustrates three different patterns of language choice with their children. The first pattern is more Tamil, less English (Extract 5.13), the second pattern is less Tamil, more English (education related talks) (Extract 5.13) and the third pattern is only English (Extract 5.14). These patterns of language choices establish Fishman's (1972) notion that language use patterns of communities and language shifts are also correlated with social variables such as age, gender and socio-economic level. Additionally, these married participants are aware of the importance of certain languages for their children in future and use in their communications as sort of preparing them for the future. Hence, it is noteworthy that they make a meaningful language choice (Lim, 2008).

5.10.7 Language Choice in Domain of Religion

Generally, most Tamils use Tamil in the domain of religion. Youth, either Tamil educated or non-Tamil educated, follow the norm of using Tamil in prayers and religious-related dealings. For example, Extract 5.15 shows a few utterances from conversations which occurred in temple between the participant and priest.

Extract 5.15

[P6F 30Y NT MARRIED]

(P6 = participant, PR = priest)

sami, oru archanai sa:mi. intha:ngka archanai si:ttu. sathayam natchatiram, samy
(sami (priest), one archanai (individual prayers) please. Here is the receipt, my star (zodiac) is 'sathayam'sami)
(after prayers)

PR: *ithu unka car a: nalla colour-u...?* (Is this your car?, good colour choice)

P6: *a:ma:ngka sa:mi. nandringka. pu:jai seyyanum...?* (yes sir thank you. Came to do a ritual (pu:ja))

PR: *konjam ka:ththirukkanum.. main archanai mudiattum....* (Please wait. Let the main prayers finish first.)

P6: *saringka sa:mi?ve:re enna: porul venuma:* (ok sa:mi. do we need anymore things for the prayers... sami?)

.....
P6: *elumichang kaniya: va:ngkittu varen..* (oh. ok I'll by the lime fruits)

These utterances took place in a temple between Participant 6 and a priest. There were a few English words mixed in this conversation, which is quite normal. They did not speak purely in Tamil but spoke a fairly good Tamil. These samples also show that the domain of religion helps in maintenance of Tamil (see section 5.7).

5.10.8 Natural Verbal Interactions (Dealings) in Domain of Transaction

The domain of transaction is another source that may possibly contribute to preservation of a language. This domain merely depends on speakers' choice of language without any influences from other factors like in the domains of education, workplace, or religion. It can have a great influence on maintenance of a minority language if the speech community uses the language in the domain of transaction. If a community gives up their native tongue in this domain for other languages, it will be a great loss to the speech community. This is evidenced from the language situation in Sarawak, where English and Bahasa Malaysia have dominated the domains of friendship and transaction and replaced their inter-ethnic languages (Ting, 2013). Therefore, authentic data from audio recordings of this domain might give further insight about the language choice patterns of Tamil youth in Malaysia. Extract 5.16 shows a few speech patterns of Participant 47 in the domain of Transaction. These utterances were recorded in different shops in a marketplace. In most of the transcription, since ethical issue is involved, this study includes only the speech of participants.

Extract 5.16

<p>[P47 F 26Y NT] (To Tamil dealers)</p> <p>P47 :uncle rendu u:thupaththi packet kudungga. floral brand uncle. nalla va:sama: uncle? (Uncle please give me two packets of incense stick. Floral brand. Is it fragrant, uncle?) uncle total evlo? (How much is the total?)</p> <p>apdina: lapan puluh sembilan ringgit a: uncle? (Is it eighty-nine Ringgit, uncle?)</p> <p>tenggiri mi:nu evvalau anne.? Fresh-a: irukka:...? potong pannu tara mudiyuma:...? (How much is the mackerel fish, brother? Is it fresh? Can you cut into slices..?)</p>
<p>(To Chinese dealers) nni berapa harga..? (How much is this?) Barupunya kah? (Is this fresh?) Oh..bagi setengah kilo saja... (Oh ..give me only half kilogram) cukup... cukup. Tiga orang saja makan (Enough..enough only for three persons)</p>
<p>(To Malay dealers) Sayur dari kampung ke? (Is this vegetable from village site?) nampak segar aje... Oh baru ambil pagi-pagi. patutlah segar. tolong bagi setengah kilo ye.. (Oh only harvested early morning..wonder very fresh. Please give me setengah kilo..ye) [ye is a polite form used to Malays]</p>

These three conversations from Participant 47 (Extract 5.16) were in different places and with different dealers in a day and depict the language choice of the participant in the domain of transaction. The language participant selected for Malay dealers was Malay. The participant also chose Malay language with Chinese dealers. The participant used Tamil with Tamil dealers with some mixture of English and Malay words. Participant 47 uses the polite form *ye* to Malay dealer. This form (particle) is used as a question and softener in a conversation among Malays. At the same time, she used ...*kah* to Chinese dealer as a question. Fishman (1964) describes a Brussels's government employee who

alters his language according to domain. In each place he identifies himself with a separate speech network to which he belongs, wants to belong and from which he seeks acceptance. Participant 47 establishes the notion of Fishman in her speech patterns. She alters her languages according to the needs of the interlocutors.

5.11 Discussion of Findings on Language Choice of Participants

This study made use of a survey questionnaire method and recordings of natural verbal communications to get an overview of patterns of language choice among the participants. Results show participants generally chose Tamil for intra-group communications though they mixed that with other languages (Malay and English). The summary or results of language choice in all the domains are provided in Table 5.31.

Table 5.31: Language use in intra-group communications (natural conversations)

Domain	Youth	Language use	Dominant language
Home	5 participants	1. Majority of them used Tamil. 2. Teenagers mixed more Malay words. 3. Youth above twenty code-switched more to English.	Tamil
Home	3 married participants	1. One participant used 100% English with their child. 2. 2 nd participant used more English and less Tamil with her child. 3. 3 rd participant used Tamil and English equally.	English
Friendship	7 participants and their friends	1. Used more Tamil. 2. Used more Tamil colloquial terms. 3. Used more idiomatic terms.	Tamil
Education	5 teenage participants (15-17 years old)	1. Their discussion about school subjects were more in Malay.	Tamil and Malay
	3 participants Above 20 years	2. In intra-group communications, Tamil mixed with more English	Tamil and English
Workplace	Degree holder	More English	English
	Non-degree holders	Tamil mixed with more Malay words	Tamil and Malay
Religion	2 participants	1. Predominantly Tamil 2. Tamil with very little English words	Tamil
Neighbourhood	2 participants	Tamil	Tamil
Transaction	3 participants	Tamil mixed with Malay and English	Less Tamil, more Malay and English

Table 5.32 illustrates that participants in the domain of family or in the home environment used more Tamil. Teenaged participants tended to mix more Malay and participants above 20 years of age tended to mix more English in their Tamil utterances. The married participants (young parents) used more English when conversing with their children. Only the domain of friendship and religion offered an affirmative view towards the progress of Tamil. In the domain of education, the sentence structure follows Tamil sentence structure with few Tamil words, while complex terms were taken from Malay and English. The domain of workplace also demonstrates the same scenario as the domain of education, English and Malay words were proportionately more than Tamil words. The domain of





religion was affirmed as maintaining Tamil among participants. Participants used more Tamil with priests and for prayer related undertakings. The domain of transaction again shows participants used more Malay and English than Tamil. A similar situation was also recorded by Alagappan, Dealwis and David (2016) in Kuching, Sarawak, where the Tamils are a minority community.

As a conclusion, the outcome of natural verbal communications (recorded natural conversations) of participants illustrates the same results as the questionnaire results, where participants selected more Tamil in the domains of family, friendship, neighbourhood and religion. As for the domains of education, workplace and transaction, English and Malay languages dominated these domains more than Tamil.

The mother tongue trend in all the minority communities can be compared with Fishman's (1971) theory of domain in which the domain overlapping model states that at the initial stage, English was used only in a few domains such as the workplace and governmental administration. Only a few immigrants knew a little English and began to learn English via their mother tongue. In the second stage, they had more ability to converse in English and used English and their mother tongue in intra-group interactions. In the third stage, they became balanced bilinguals (see section 3.3.2) and as a result, the second generation started to learn and communicate in English from their childhood. Consequently, at the fourth stage, English would have replaced their mother tongue in most of their private or restricted domains. At this fourth stage, minority groups referred to or learned their native language through English. Fishman (1972) has also warned that previous values and norms of the home domain change due to industrialization and new developments and the language of school or work comes and replaces the language of home. Findings of this study show that Fishman's (1971) domain overlapping model with minor modification is suitable to be compared with this study of language choice among Tamil youth

(participants). The arrows show the Tamil language direction according to data of this study, a declining trend in practising Tamil among participants with grandparents, parents, siblings and for married participants to their children.

Table 5.32: Modified domain overlapping model

Overlapping domains	Non-overlapping domains
Second stage – Parents of participants: Know more English and Malay and therefore can speak in English, Malay, or the mother tongue. 	First stage – Grandparents of participants: Tamils learn English and Malay via Tamil. English and Malay are used only in those few domains such as workplace and education. 
Third stage – Married Participants' children: During childhood shifting to English (language of the workplace or education creeps into family domain). 	Fourth stage: English will displace the mother tongue. In this stage, the mother tongue is learned via English. 

Note: Adapted and modified from domain overlap types from Fishman (1971) to compare with findings of the study of language choice among Malaysian Tamil youth.

Participants' language choice patterns in Table 5.33 shows a general view from the findings of chapter five about the domains and dominance language in each domain.

Table 5.33: The domains and language use

Domains	T –Tamil E - English M - Malay	Maintenance/ Shift	Models which help in maintenance
Family	T	Maintenance	Domain
Friendship	T	Maintenance	Social network and domain
Education	Less T More EM	Shift	
Workplace	Less T Less M More E	Shift	
Religion	T	Maintenance	Domain
Neighbourhood	T	Maintenance	Social network and domain
Transaction	Less T More EM	Shift	

Although domains of family, friendship and neighbourhood show high usage of Tamil language, code switching and code mixing with English and Malay happen extensively. Thus, these two major languages might gradually dominate all the remaining domains (see also section 6.10). The increasing trend of the nuclear family might also, in turn, have a negative effect on the development of the mother tongue where grandparents do not exist within consistent close contact to influence the use of native language among the younger generation.

Additionally, when individuals are in secondary school, from the age 13 to 17, they start to learn and speak more Malay and English languages because of the education system, the influence of friends at this stage makes their spoken Tamil cease to develop further and the command of English and Malay starts to progress. Within this age group of 13 to 17, too, the teen participants started to speak more Malay to siblings. Also, the higher the education level, the higher they shifted to English (Balasubramanian, 1989; Fernandez & Clyne, 2007). As reiterated by Baker (1992), transmission of language from an elder

generation (parents/grandparents) to the younger generation is highly important to avoid death of a language, especially in a multilingual society.

In the domain of friendship, use of Tamil among the participants is shown to be the highest across all domains, albeit with the mixture of English and Malay words in their Tamil in large quantity. The family domain shows an average of $\frac{3}{4}$ of Tamils (see Table 5.8) use Tamil at home, whereas the domain of friendship shows more than 90% (see Table 5.17) usage of Tamil. Interview sessions revealed some of the participants who did not learn their mother tongue from the family environment instead learned it from their friends. The social network theory developed and employed by Milroy (1987) seems to be adequate to describe this network of Tamil youth, where they often socialize in informal relationships and develop their mother tongue. Casual relationships amongst people from same interest group determined their preferred language. Language choice or language use patterns and maintenance of a language were influenced by the nature of their social groups. Hence, to be precise, the social network of friends among participants (youth in Malaysia) played an important role in maintaining their inheritance language.

Milroy's (1980) social network model emphasizes that a close-knit network structure is a key mechanism of language maintenance. Tamils live in large numbers in Gombak and West Malaysia in general and concentrated in some neighbourhoods. They go to school, places of worship and playgrounds together and subsequently mingle with each other often. Their social network is a dense network. Hence, they have the opportunity to practice their mother tongue without much limitation and are able to maintain their native language. Wei's (1994) study also stresses the important role of close relationships in a speech community which help to maintain a language. Although participants were from a multiethnic neighbourhood and there was a great tendency to use English or Malay,

more than half of them used Tamil with their Tamil neighbours (Table 5.25 in section 5.8). This clearly exhibits that the domain of neighborhood encourages practice of Tamil among the youth of Gombak.

5.12 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the language choice/language use patterns of participants in all the domains. Survey questionnaires and audio-recordings of natural conversations were explored to give a detailed picture of language choice patterns among participants. The following chapter (Chapter 6) will provide reasons for the language choice of participants in all the designated domains for this study.

CHAPTER 6: REASONS FOR LANGUAGE CHOICE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter delivers reasons of participants for their language choice in fulfilling the second research question, with extracts from portions of recorded real-life scenarios. These reasons in this section were acquired, analysed and summarized from the questionnaire and 40 interviews. This chapter also presents the outcome of survey questions 66 to 71, which asked about attitudes of participants towards their mother tongue. Additionally, participants' reasons for switching code and mixing other languages in Tamil speech are also analysed briefly in this chapter. Below is the Representation keys (see page xxi for pronunciation key).

[Tamil = normal font, Malay words = ***italic bold***, English words = **normal bold**]

[CHINESE = NORMAL CAPITAL LETTERS] [..... = pause]

[.....] = omitted irrelevant sentences.

P = participant, F/M = gender, Y = age, T = Tamil educated, NT = non-Tamil educated

C = Christian, I = Muslim, (if not stated = Hindu)

The findings related to participants' reasons for language choice were collected through their self-reported answers and the open-ended questions in the questionnaire (see Appendix A). Secondly, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B) helped to gather information about their reasons for their language choice. During the interview session, recorded conversations of participants in natural settings were replayed and the participants were questioned on the reasons for their language choices. Later, only the needed parts of the interviews were transcribed (see Appendix C). Questionnaires, recorded conversations and interviews helped to triangulate findings of the study in this chapter.

6.2 Reasons for the Use of Tamil in the Domain of Family

Generally, people tend to communicate using their mother tongue in the domain of family. Thus, question 59 in the questionnaire was designed to gather participants' main reasons for choosing their mother tongue, Tamil, to communicate with their family members. Based on Table 6.1 only 36% of participants preferred to use Tamil in the domain of family, with the awareness that Tamil is their mother tongue. This is most probably due to their realization of the importance of the mother tongue. Another 46% had the notion that it was comfortable to use, easy and effective to convey thoughts and feelings in their mother tongue. Others (18%), did select Tamil to express closeness or intimacy with their family members and to show solidarity when they conversed with their mother tongue, Tamil.

Table 6.1: Reasons for choosing Tamil with family members based on the questionnaire

Reasons	Frequency	% of participants
Comfort / easiness/ effectiveness	50	46
Closeness / team spirit	19	18
Being mother tongue	40	36
Total	109	100

The interview sessions revealed interesting reasons for the forty participants' selection of languages in the home domain. In every speech community, the important factors for language choice are the person being conversed with, social setting of the talk, function of the conversation and topic of the conversation (Fishman, 1972). Also, based on Holmes (2013), a typical family interaction would be involving family members and their topic would be about family matters or family activities. A number of such typical communications were identified and participants' reasons for their language choice were then obtained and summarized in this section.

6.2.1 Reasons for Selecting Tamil in Domain of Family

Table 6.2 presents a summary of participants' reasons for selecting Tamil in the domain of family which were obtained via the interviews. Semi structured questions (59 to 59ix in Appendix B) helped to get intended data for the participants reason for selecting Tamil to family members. The table shows that all the 40 interview participants indicated that they had deep affection for Tamil as their mother tongue. They felt Tamil was the language closer to their heart and they felt a sense of family unity if they spoke in their mother tongue. 32 participants said Tamil is their (Hindus) religious language; 38 of the participants felt Tamil was their own language and 36 participants said it came naturally when they mingled among family members. All of the 40 participants (100%) again echoed similar views that Tamil was their identity and 33 of them agreed with the reason that it is through Tamil that their culture is reflected. All participants (100%) agreed that Tamil is a beautiful language, which shows their unwavering loyalty towards their own mother tongue. 31 participants said they liked their mother tongue but were unable to explain why because it was from the bottom of their hearts. Only 18 participants said they used Tamil for secretive talk in the presence of other races. As a conclusion, Tamil has numerous reasons to be the most preferred language in the domain of family among the participants.

Table 6.2 Reasons for selecting Tamil in domain of family

	Reasons	Participants
A	Tamil is our mother tongue	40
B	Used to it since small	28
C	Feel closer to heart. I love to speak	32
D	I might feel awkward to speak different language at home	22
F	Easier to express feelings	31
G	It comes naturally and spontaneously	36
H	If speak Tamil, feel united as a family	32
I	Tamil is our language	38
J	Tamil is our identity	40
K	The language used for the generations	36
L	For secretive talk in presence of other races (family outing)	18
M	Tamil for religious purpose (Hindus). Hindus believe Tamil is language of god	32
N	I can't explain. But I like Tamil	31
O	I think in Tamil	29
P	Tamil reflects our culture via language	33
Q	It is a beautiful language	40

6.2.2 Reasons for Selecting English in Domain of Family

On average 25 (23%) of participants selected English as their home language (see Table 5.8 in Section 5.3). Participants' reasons for choosing English in the domain of family are obtained from 40 interviews are summarised and presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Reasons for selecting English in domain of family

	Reasons	Frequency
A	Parents speak English	2
B	Practicing English to be proficient in English	25
C	Important language /useful language	15
D	Not fluent in Tamil	22
F	Easier to explain new terms, technology related names	31
G	It comes spontaneously	4
H	I feel proud	12
I	Workplace/education influence	22
J	To show off to neighbours	8
K	To teach children (married participants – 3 of 4 participants)	3

Interview sessions have revealed more fascinating situations of participants' language choice behaviour. Though questionnaire results show higher usage of Tamil in the domain of family, the interviews show a different result where participants also do use more English in this domain. 25 participants out of 40 have said that they consciously use more English to increase their proficiency level in English to excel in their education and their profession. 22 interviewees said they use more English because they are not fluent in Tamil and 31 of them said they use English because it is easier to explain new terms and technology related words. 2 of them said they are used to speaking English since young. Table 6.3 also reveals a salient point that 3 out of 4 (3/4) married participants' (number k) choice of language is English as their main language to communicate with their children because they feel English is an important language for their children to excel in life (see section 6.3). Participant 49, a 17-year-old (Appendix D), said she could only speak very little Tamil because her parents spoke English at home. Thus, she was very fluent in English and felt it was convenient to speak in English. She also added that she was not confident to speak in Tamil and due to the worry of mistakes and

mispronunciations and continued speaking in English with her grandparents and siblings as well. She only had the courage to speak some Tamil when she was with her friends.

Participants 47 and 28 (see Appendix D) said English was an important language in the Malaysian education system. Hence, they should practise it more to excel in English. Another participant (49) said she could not speak Tamil fluently, was always at a loss for Tamil words and it was much easier for her to speak in English. Some participants felt proud and dignified when they spoke in English (Participant 49 and 65). Participants also selected English for other reasons such as availability, accessibility, precision in explanations, practicality and to excel in education and the job sector and above all, because it is an important language to communicate with people from all over the world. Participants also have expressed the importance of English as a global language. Meanwhile, an interesting fact from Participant 44 (see Appendix D) who revealed that her choice of language is English to stay secretive from her grandfather.

6.2.3 Reasons for Participants' Choice of Malay at Home

A very small percentage of participants (0.7%) spoke Malay at home (see Section 5.3, Table 5.9). Participants' language choice was Malay because they were very used to it as the school language and they were much more fluent in Malay than Tamil. When they talked about school subjects at home, they could not translate the Malay words or terms to Tamil, hence they ended up opting for Malay (Participant 10, see Appendix D). Participant 2 said he spoke Malay among his siblings and parents to tell secrets about his little sister or to hide something from her.

6.3 Reasons for Language Choice among Married Participants

In total there were 33 married participants in this study (refer to Table 6.4). The majority of married participants (64%) preferred to talk or chat in Tamil with their spouses, followed by the remaining 12 (36%) married participants who used English (based on question 80 in the questionnaire). The main reason given for using Tamil was that they were comfortable with the language as shown in Table 6.4. On the other hand, the participants who preferred using English with their spouses felt that it was easier and more effective to converse in English.

Table 6.4: Reason for married participants' language preference

What language do you use the most with your spouse?	Reason	Count
Tamil	Comfortable	22
	Intimacy/ loving	3
	Easy and effective	8
English	Comfortable	8
	Intimacy / loving	3
	Easy and effective	22

A total of 4 of the married participants were interviewed. Participant 67 said that if she was angry, she used English to express her anger as shown in the conversation below. The reason she gives for using English is that she feels that there is less likelihood of hurting her spouse in this language. Perhaps, the words and expressions in Tamil may be emotionally loaded and thus since P67 has both English and Tamil in her linguistic repertoire (along with Malay), she could choose (perhaps subconsciously) the language that fit the situation and her emotional state.

[P67F 29YT] married

P67: *a:na: ko:bamvantha: english le pe:suven. ...teriyile Tamille pe:suna: romba sensitive – a: po:yirumnu payam. Konjam detached feeling o:de pe:sa vasathi nnu enakku tho:num.*

(When I'm angry I use English. Tamil might be very sensitive to use. In English I can relay my message with a detached feeling, I guess.)

On the other hand, language preference to their children (based on question number 81 in questionnaire), participants preferred English (67%) and only a small number conversed in Tamil (see Table 5.16 in Chapter 5). Interviews revealed almost all the parents chose English as the preferred language of cartoons for their children compared to Tamil. This could be related to participants' future prospect concerns for their children since English is a universal language, thus they were preparing their children for school as well as their future. Slightly more than half of the married participants preferred their children to learn Tamil first (Table 5.16 in Chapter 5). Only half gave the reason that their choice was Tamil because Tamil is their mother tongue, whereas the other half had no reason for why they wanted their children to know Tamil first as shown in Table 6.6. Although the inherent loyalty to the mother tongue is obvious in married participants' preferences for the children to learn Tamil first, their actions eventually contradicted their preference. The other half of married participants who wished English to be the first language for their children found that learning English would provide a competitive edge for their children and communication with other races would be much smoother.

A total of 33 participants in this study were married (see Table 6.4). Based on question 81 and its sub-sections in the questionnaire (see Appendix A), only 11 out of the 33 participants selected Tamil as the language of communication or were determined to use Tamil with their children (see Table 6.5). Table 6.5 shows reasons for married participants' preferred language when speaking with their children. These reasons were

obtained from the questionnaire (see Appendix A). Nine of them who selected Tamil indicated that this was because Tamil is their mother tongue. Another one who selected Tamil said that this was to develop Tamil in the future. Another participant who selected Tamil did not provide any reason. On the other hand, 22 married participants' preferred language to communicate with their children was English. They wrote numerous reasons for selecting English in the questionnaire as shown in Table 6.5. Some participants have provided more than one response.

Table 6.5: Reasons for married participants' preferred language to speak to their children

Language	Reason	Number of participants
Tamil	No specific reason	1
	Mother Tongue	9
	To develop Tamil in future	1
English	No specific reason	6
	Easier to communicate	1
	Easier when she goes to school	5
	Prepare for future	2
	Easy to be spoken	3
	Easy to communicate with other races	5
	English is important, universal Language	4
	Globalization	1
	Good prospects and is a world language, easier among other races	3
	Tamil can be learned naturally. Hence, speak English first	1

The figures (in Table 6.6) were based on question 82 in questionnaire. Interestingly, married participants communication language with their children and their preferred first language to be learned by their children show contrasting numbers i.e. 17 (55%) participants said they prefer Tamil as their kids' first language to be learned but, only 11 (33%) preferred to communicate in Tamil with their children (see Table 6.6). Only 31

participants out of 33 have answered this question. Among these 31 participants 14 have selected English and 17 have selected Tamil as their preferred first language to be learnt by their kids. Some participants have given more than one answers for this column. One parent's (participant's) reason for selecting English was, it would be easier for their child to communicate with neighbours. Other reasons which influenced the married participants to choose English as their children's first language to be learned were to survive in the competitive word, it would be easier to communicate with other races, English is an easy language to learn, English is important for future prospects and English is important in globalization as the world language. Reasons for language choice for their children are shown in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6: Reasons married participants' preferred first language to be learned by their kids

Language	Reason	Count
Tamil	No specific reason	7
	Mother Tongue	9
	To develop Tamil in future	1
English	No specific reason	2
	Can communicate with neighbours	1
	Can communicate with other children	1
	Competitive	2
	Easier to communicate with both parents	1
	Easier to communicate with other races	3
	Easy to be spoken	1
	Future prospect	2
	Globalization	1

6.3.1 Reasons for Married Participants' Language Choice of Tamil

Interviews revealed numerous reasons for married participants' language choice to communicate with their spouses and children. [P12M 27YT] illustrates the reasons for

choosing Tamil by Participant 12 from the interviews (see Appendix D) and the salient point is the link to culture.

[P12M 27YT]

It is our mother tongue hence we are the one should speak it.

Tamil reflects our culture.

I want my child to learn Tamil with other important languages and our religious books must be read in Tamil, only then we can appreciate the meaning; otherwise, we would be reading like a puppet, without knowing the real meaning.

en friends sila pe:ru ippa varuththappadura:ngka. vayathu a:kumpo:thutha:n oru moliyo:de

importance *puriyuthu*

(Some of my friends are regretting now; only as you age, you will realize the importance of a language.)

6.3.2 Reasons for Married Participants' Language Choice of English

In reality, data reveals English is going to be the main home language of the next generation of Tamils in Malaysia. Participants claimed the main reason that they spoke Tamil with their children was only because it was their mother tongue. There was also no interest in speaking Tamil to their offspring, neither for Tamil development nor for communication with others. One participant (67) said even if she tried to speak in Tamil to her child, she ended up with talking more in English. This similar situation was also found by Kadakara's (2015) study of Singapore young parents who tried to speak equally in both languages (English and Tamil), but there was an unconscious tendency where they inclined towards English.

Interestingly, based on questionnaire, 17/31 of the married participants preferred their children to learn Tamil as a first language, but only 11 participants speak Tamil to their children (see Table 5.16). The other 22 married participants who wished English to be the first language for their children found that learning English would provide a competitive edge for their children and communication with other races would be much smoother. Young parents' (participants) choice of languages to communicate with their children

differ from their (participants) parents' language choice in the domain of family. Table 5.16 shows the young parents' (participants) language choice in their home domain had changed and the order had been reversed; Tamil as their language choice for their children was only 33% and English was 67%. Some of the participants' reasons for selecting English are shown in Extracts 6.1 and 6.2.

Extract 6.1

[P6F 30YNT]

Nowadays, education system has become so competitive. As such, English is vital. Our English must be strong in order to compete in international level. Now is the era of globalization we need to prepare our kids so that they are ready for the challenges

English is very useful. My neighbours are Chinese and Malay. My children need to know English in order to communicate with the other kids; so, we need to speak in English. Even at the nursery, the kids are all from different races; so definitely English is very important.

Extract 6.2

[P20M 27Y CNT]

Our mother tongue is definitely important. However, English is more important. I'm not Tamil Educated, neither is my wife. I'm afraid of teaching/talking Tamil inappropriately. Hence, we started to speak in English.

We are in a country of variety of races. If we know English, we can confidently communicate with everyone. If we don't, our children may be left behind.

We want our children to be equally good in education as the other children from different races. For that, English is extremely important.

In the future, English is important for job opportunities.

We need to know English in order to be able to use the internet

Participant 6 (P6) stated that her children must have the ability to compete globally in education and job sector. Hence, he would have to prepare his child to face the world challenges confidently. For that, English is important. Furthermore, the multi-ethnic nature of our country needs English to mingle around with neighbours, friends, or colleagues. Children need to play with their nursery friends or in playgrounds with multi-

ethnic friends. Participant 20, who was a Christian, had many reasons for his choice for English. He said he felt comfortable to converse religious matters in English and used it to mingle around in English with his English-speaking church friends. Also, it was easier for him to communicate with his child as the child only knew English because his wife communicates in English with the child. He also agreed that English is important for their children in this competitive world and wanted their children to be on par with the global advancement. He is convinced that English is very important. He wanted the child to learn English first. Once the child's English proficiency was established, then, he wanted to teach the child Tamil. Participant 20 was also of the opinion that English is more important and more useful than Tamil. Hence, he chose English to communicate with his child.

Findings of this study show choice of mother tongue in a decreasing trend from one generation to the next generation. Most married participants (the young parents) preferred English as the first language for their children. At the same time, they were also sensitive to the importance of the mother tongue. Hence, at the fourth stage, perhaps they started to teach the mother tongue to their children through English or Malay. This is also evident (via interview sessions) in the domain of religion in which a few participants (Participants 14, 17 and 47) read the *Thevaram* (Hindu religious hymns) in Malay or English transliteration scripts.

6.3.3 Reasons for Married Participants' Language Choice of Malay

Married participants, for certain reasons, choose Malay to communicate with their children. They saw Malay as the national language and that it was an important language to be proficient in, in order for their children obtain the Malaysian national education certification. Hence, some of the Participant 63's reasons were:

Extract 6.3

[P63M 30YT]

Malay is our national language. In order to pass the examinations, you need to pass the Malay subject. It's definitely an important language.

On the other hand, some participants did not limit their language choice as shown in Extract 6.2. They were of the view that all three languages are important. Parents could speak any language and that there should be no limitation in acquiring languages among children. They feel that with parents' effort, children are able to learn as many languages as they are taught.

6.4 Reasons for Language Choice in Domain of Friendship

Data (in Section 5.4, Table 5.17) shows 91% of participants preferred to communicate in Tamil with their friends. A close exploration of data in Table 6.7 shows (figures are based on question 58 in questionnaire) that only 11% of participants consciously used Tamil, only because it was their mother tongue. 85% of participants used Tamil with the feeling that Tamil was more comfortable to be used among friends, it brought closeness among them, it carried team spirit and it was easy and effective to convey friendly matters. Four of the participants did not answer this column. They might not have known why and how the mother tongue plays its part in the domain of friendship. Additionally, in another column in questionnaire (question number 23), participants also revealed that 80% of them had created their own secret codes in Tamil language.

Table 6.7: Reasons for language choice in domain of friendship

Reason	Count
Comfort	30 (27%)
Closeness	27 (25%)
Ease and effective	19 (17%)
Team spirit	17 (16%)
Being mother tongue	12 (11%)
Total	105 (96%)
Missing	4 (4%)
Total	109 (100%)

6.4.1 Reasons for Using Tamil among Friends

Participants said they felt comfortable to communicate in Tamil with friends. Tamil gave them a sense of pride and that they were able to express their innermost feelings and views and easily explain ideas. Participants said Tamil helped them to discuss secretly in the presence of other races and it reflected the bond and closeness between friends. They also said they were used to conversing in Tamil for their banter. Participants also added that they felt united as one group among friends if they spoke Tamil, which reflects team spirit and they could not be separated from their identity as *Tamilan* (Tamil). Some of them also proudly said they were pure *Tamilan*, had *Tamilan* blood running in them and could not be separated from Tamil and Tamil culture, as well as depicted in Extract 6.4.

Extract 6.4

[P15M 17YT]

நம்பனையும் நம்ப பண்பாட்டையும் பிரிக்க முடியாது, இல்ல....

(*nambalaiyum manba panpa:ttaiyum pirikka mudiya:thu, illa...*)

(We can't be separated from our tradition.)

நான் தமிழன்டா. பச்சை தமிழன்டா...ஓடுறது தமிழ் ரத்தன்டா.

(*na:n tamilanda: pachai tamilanda:... o:durathu tamil raththanda:*)

(I'm a pure Tamil and I have Tamilian blood running in me.)

[P15M 17YT]

We call names and use many secret word among friends. For example pig, monkey, dirty dog, makka:n, ma:kka:n, hat-headed, anchovy ... and most often used words are buffalo and donkey. Among us we do not get angry infact these ... words show closeness among friends.

Participants revealed more reasons for their choice of Tamil. For them, jokes were appreciated effectively and were much more humorous if said in Tamil or they could convey this better in Tamil. At times they also called people names or used secret words among friends. For instance, they called people pig, monkey, dirty dog, *ma:kka:n* (a coined Malay term from ***makan*** which means eat, to denote a person who only knows to eat), buffalo, donkey, ***ikan bilis*** (anchovies) and so on. And these terms would not make them angry, in fact, they felt closer by calling each other such names. ***Ikan bilis*** (Malay word for anchovy) is used to address a friend who is very thin. They also explained their group's meaning for other words they used, such as *makka:n* and *ma:kka:n*.

<i>makku+a:n</i> – <i>makka:n</i> (stupid person) , <i>ma:kka:n</i> – a person who eats a lot and doesn't know anything

Makku is a Tamil word meaning stupidity and *a:n* is a Tamil particle which means *male person*. ***ma:kka:n*** is a Malay word meaning eat. These words show their Tamil and Malay ability to create secret codes or for calling people names.

The domain of friendship exhibits participants' ability to coin words from different languages they know. In the future, the new generation will have more words in their linguistic repertoire from the languages they know and new coinages or fusions of words from the acquired languages, as well.

Extract 6.5

<p>[P15M 17YT]</p>

<p>We do speak vulgar words in Tamil. But, we only speak if there's no outsider or elderly person beside us.</p>
--

<p>We use the words: mango-thief, coconut-head, coconut-grinder teeth and many more...some words are too vulgar; we can't say them now. then stupid, sleepy face... The names will keep on changing according to new happenings.</p>

<p>Secret codes?... yes we have. For example, we usually say... python to refer to a friend who likes to stretch his body after each meal. We even use lots of proverbs.</p>
--

Oancea (2014), who studied the language of British and Romanian adolescents found similar patterns of swearing and bad language in their linguistic expressions. He also cites Allan and Burridge (2006) who stated that the act of using swearing words which are taken from a pool of dirty words show in-group solidarity among adolescents.

6.4.2 Reason for Using English in Domain of Friendship

Table 5.17 in Section 5.4 shows only 9% of participants used English to communicate in the domain of friendship. This indicates only 10/109 of the participants preferred English to chat with their friends. Only those not fluent in Tamil indicated that they used English to communicate with friends. Participants did not choose much Malay to communicate with their friends though they used more Malay words. However, participants used more English terms or words in their Tamil speech (see section 6.10.2). Participant 17, a 17-year-old male said that if he chose English, problems would be solved and no one would laugh at him. He said that in a mixed crowd (multi-ethnic) English was a suitable language and there would be no communication issues.

Besides, the many interesting talks among the youth are about games and the latest developments of technology and communication gadgets. Participants said that they could not be translating all the terms in Tamil in their spontaneous speech. They were more exposed to English terms via mass media and the terms were readily available in their vocabulary. Hence, it would come out naturally in their speech.

6.5 Reasons for Language Choice in the Domain of Education

Language choice of participants in the domain of education (school or college/university) shows only 31% choose Tamil and English as their first choice. Malay is popular among teenagers due to education system. Reasons were obtained from interview sessions.

Reasons for selecting Tamil and Malay are very few if compared with English. Participants had more reasons for their choice of English in the domain of education.

6.5.1 Reasons for Using Tamil in the Domain of Education

Interview sessions revealed the reasons for selecting Tamil in the domain of education. A participant said that she used Tamil almost fully in the classroom as she was teaching Tamil as a subject. Participants who were learning Tamil as a subject also used Tamil in their domain of education, however code-switching was present for technical terms. Some other participants said they used Tamil as their classmate-cum-friends were Tamils and they felt comfortable using Tamil; Tamil came spontaneously when they were among Tamils although it was the domain of education and discussing subjects which were in other languages. Moreover, 'Tamil comes naturally to another Tamil' was the reason for participants' language choice in Tamil.

6.5.2 Reasons for Using English in the Domain of Education

Participants selected English and gave their reasons for their language choice in intra-group communications in the domain of education. They found English to be more accessible because of its widespread use and because it is used extensively in almost all the fields. In the presence of other races, English was found to be convenient for smoother communication without any discrimination. For lesson-related terms and assignments, participants used English habitually with their Tamil course mates for convenience. Besides, usually technology, science, or new-development-related terms are all in English. Hence, they felt that English was the most convenient and appropriate language in the domain of education.

Participants also selected Malay as their language in the domain of education in intra-group communications. They gave reasons such as it has the most available terms in

Malay because of our education system in which most subjects in secondary schools of Malaysia are taught in Malay, understood easily because of daily affairs and they are so good in Malay that they habitually use Malay.

Three participants selected Chinese as their language of communication in intra-group interaction. Interviews exposed their reasons for choice of language. They were together in primary Chinese school and studied and played together as neighbours. They had affection towards the language and practiced it with their friends. For certain terms, Chinese language was found to be easier and more effective in explaining lesson-related matters to each other as their foundation (primary education) was in Chinese.

6.6 Reasons for Language Choice at the Workplace

Data for participants' language choice in the domain of workplace has been presented in Section 5.6 (Table 5.21) and is summarized in Figure 6.1 which gives a clear illustration about the language choice at workplace in intra-group communication because of their multi-ethnic environment. English seems to be the most favoured as the language choice of participants in the skilled workplace domain. The reasons for the participants' language choice in the workplace domain are discussed next.

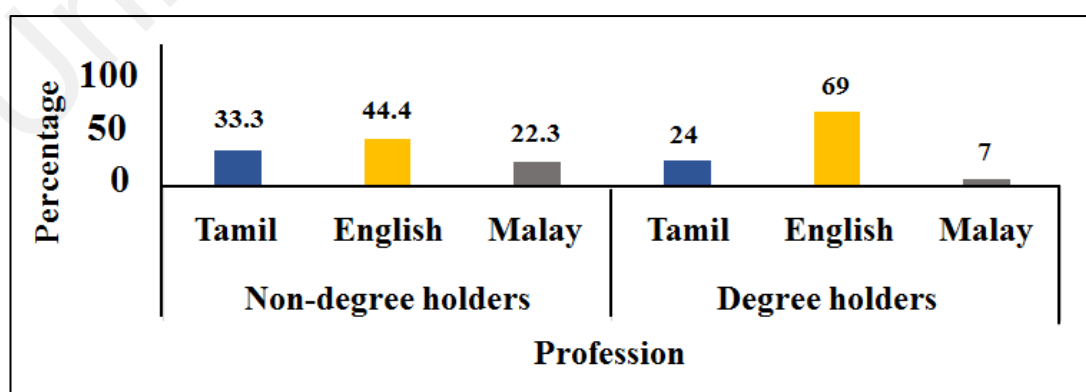


Figure 6-1: Language choice at workplace

6.6.1 Reasons for Selecting Tamil at the Workplace

Working participants have said that they chose Tamil at the workplace for discreet communication in the presence of other races, feeling closer and that it was natural and habitual when seeing Tamil colleagues for casual chats or explain work related matters. They felt closer as team mates, which came naturally because it was comfortable for them to discuss in Tamil and they feel relaxed conversing with colleagues about work-related topics and also for informal conversations (casual interaction). Speaking in Tamil also gave them a home-like atmosphere in the workplace.

6.6.2 Reasons for Selecting English at the Workplace

Participants who worked in multi-ethnic environments used more English. Their reasons for this are discussed in this section. According to the Participant 58 who works in an office environment (see Appendix D), the workplace comprises of many ethnic groups of people. Speaking in English to include all the colleagues without creating the feeling that anyone is left out in a particular conversation, makes everyone feel good and be part of the conversation and can help to avoid being viewed as being secretive in the presence of other races. Work-related terms are in English and are more accessible and convenient because they are useful in creating a smoother working environment. English is often found to come effortlessly. Therefore, he prefers English as a communication language among Tamil colleagues or other (ethnic) colleagues who are also his friends. Additionally, English is often the medium of instruction in the workplace and most work-related work, papers, files and documents are all in English. That makes the conversation in English more convenient for communication in the workplace. Employees commonly maintain technical or new terms in English regardless of their ethnic background. Translating them into other languages or to Tamil colleagues requires enormous effort.

Other reason for participants in this study for not being in competent in Tamil is because of their fear of making mistakes, which has compelled them to continue using English since they could speak English confidently. Even if they had tried to speak Tamil, they eventually end up speaking in English because they are at loss for technical terms in Tamil. Thus, the participants revealed that for fluent, effective and smoother communication, English was the best choice.

6.6.3 Reasons for Selecting Malay at the Workplace

Increasing the level of participants' education decreased the tendency to use Malay in the workplace, as shown in Table 5.21. Participants who left secondary school without higher education used more Malay language as well beside Tamil. All participants, regardless of their education, used Malay. Their reasons for selecting Malay were for dealings of official and government-related matters, to talk about Malay-related matters and casual conversation. Participants said jokes are well understood in Malay. This is because most Malaysians' foundation language is Malay. Therefore, they are well versed in Malay although they use it less in other contexts in which other vernacular languages (Tamil and Chinese) and English are preferred. Interestingly, participants preferred secondary school language was more towards Malay. At this crucial stage of schooling years, Malay seems to gain a strong foothold in the heart of Malaysians. Although interference of other languages may have made the participants (Malaysians) seemingly use less Malay, they were skilled enough to create jokes and puns and to do mimicry. Some participants stated they used Malay because of Malaysian spirit (*semangat Malaysia* in Malay).

6.7 Reasons for Language Choice in the Domain of Religion

As discussed in Section 5.7, participants of this study comprised of Hindus, Christians and Muslims. Hence, their language choice too varies according to their religion as

religions have great influence on language choice as summarized in Table 5.24. Subsequent sub-sections present participants' reasons for selecting Tamil or Malay in the domain of religion. Only Muslim participants in this study used Malay and Arabic.

6.7.1 Reasons for Selecting Tamil in the Religious Domain

Hindu participants said they have to speak in Tamil since all temple *gurukkal* (priests) only speak Tamil. This has become a norm. Besides, most of the priests are from Tamilnadu, India and they most likely do not know other languages. Proficiency (or lack of it) of the priests in other languages is not a concern for Malaysian Hindus because they do not use other languages than Sanskrit for prayer-related matters and chants. Prayer-related matters like *pooja*, speeches and temple activities are mostly delivered in Tamil. Religious hymns and prayer-related items are known well only in Tamil. The religious classes in temples are conducted in Tamil.

Christian participants also stated that their churches mainly used Tamil for Tamil Christians. Tamils speak Tamil in church activities and sing Tamil songs. As for Tamil Muslims, they may gather in ethnic Indian masjids (Muslim's prayer places) where they perform supplications in Tamil and their imam (leader of the prayers) is also a Tamil. They would then conduct these special prayers in Tamil and the Imam's speeches would also be in Tamil (see 6.7.3).

6.7.2 Reasons for Selecting English in the Religious Domain

Interviews revealed that only the participants who were not competent in Tamil used English in the temple, or *gurukkal*. These participants said they chose English rather than speaking inappropriate Tamil. They were confident and comfortable with English and had no fear of making mistakes. Meanwhile, in churches, if the priest was non-Tamil or

the church followers were mixed races, then the prayers were conducted in English to accommodate all.

6.7.3 Reasons for Selecting Malay in the Religious Domain

Tamil Muslim participants had their specific reasons for selecting Malay and Arabic as their religious languages. If they went to mosques which comprised of mixed races, Malay was used. Participant 107 said he went to a religious class which was conducted in Malay and the imam also preached in Malay. However, there is no indication of Malay language being used among Hindus in temple (interviews) or from the questionnaire.

6.7.4 Reasons for Selecting Arabic in the Religious Domain

Muslims' Quran verses are in Arabic, hence the participants would recite them in Arabic. Participant 107 learned Arabic as their religious books were in Arabic.

6.8 Reasons for Language Choice in the Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood is another domain that contributes to maintenance of Tamil. Figure 6-2 summarizes language choice of participants with their Tamil neighbours (from the questionnaire). The reasons for the language choice are presented next.

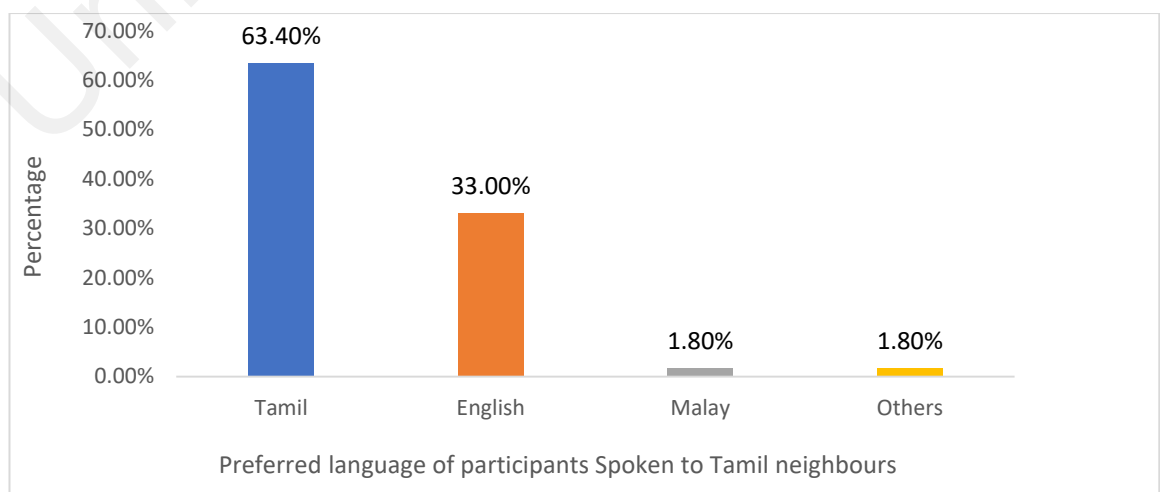


Figure 6-2: Participants' language choice with Tamil neighbours

6.8.1 Reasons for Selecting Tamil in the Domain of Neighbourhood

Participants revealed their reasons for their language choice in the domain of neighbourhood, in interview sessions. They used Tamil because it made them feel closer as if the neighbours were like their extended family members. Some of them said they used Tamil because they had been using it since young. Besides, they were Tamils and they shared and discussed matters comfortably in Tamil. They also felt respectful and humble when they spoke in Tamil, particularly with elderly people.

6.8.2 Reasons for Selecting English in the Domain of Neighbourhood

Although most participants (63%) preferred Tamil to communicate with neighbours, there was another 33% of participants who chose English to talk to Tamil neighbours. Interviewees shared their views and reasons for choosing English in intra-group communications with their neighbours during the interviews. Two of the reasons were to keep a distance from neighbours since closeness might cause problems and to gain respect from neighbours and to show status. Communicating in English ensures a diplomatic approach, which can maintain a relationship for a long time. Participants also found English to be a straight forward language in which they could interact without bonding and sensitivity and it was more easy to convey messages. One participant (17) said he used English because his Tamil was not fluent and hence he might sound impolite. Various meaningful reasons were given by participants who used English with their Tamil neighbours. Some used English with their neighbours just to show that they were English-educated among the neighbourhood inhabitants.

6.8.3 Reasons for Selecting Malay and Other Languages in the Domain of Neighbourhood

Malay and other languages, such as Chinese, for intra-ethnic communications were insignificant in the language preference of the participants for their own speech communities. However, there were participants who used Malay with Tamil neighbours because they were more competent in Malay. Muslim families, such as Participant 17, do speak Malay because their religion and circumstances (Malay influences) encourage them to communicate in Malay.

6.9 Reasons for Language Choice in the Domain of Transaction

Language choice of participants in the domain of transaction were discussed in Section 5.9. The reasons are discussed next.

6.9.1 Reasons for Selecting Tamil in the Domain of Transaction

According to participants in the interviews, Tamil is a convenient language to buy or explain Tamil culture and Hindu religious related items. This was because it was easier for them to convey details in transaction dealings. Some said Tamil came naturally as they saw Tamils and Tamil was their mother tongue, so they should speak it.

6.9.2 Reasons for Selecting English in the Domain of Transaction

Nevertheless, English seems to be the language choice for the majority of participants in the domain of transaction. Participants stated their reasons for their language choice. At times, when they were not sure of the dealer's race and mother tongue, participants tended to speak in English. Furthermore, not all of the Tamils knew Tamil or could speak Tamil, hence participants chose English as a neutral language. Some participants who had no formal Tamil education felt they were not fluent or competent enough to speak in Tamil to outsiders other than in the domain of friendship. They did not have the confidence to

speaking in the domain of transaction and had doubts that dealers would understand their language or that their Tamil might sound awkward and others would make fun of their language. Hence, they took the common ground, i.e., English, to deal with outsiders. Furthermore, one participant said if he tried to speak in Tamil, he was at a loss for exact words, often facing problems to recall suitable terms in Tamil and ended up speaking in English. Tamil has different appropriate words for elderly people. If he was not sure of exact words, he switched to English.

6.9.3 Reasons for Selecting Malay in the Domain of Transaction

Most Malaysian Tamils are trilingual. They use Tamil, Malay and English interchangeably in their daily dealings. The domain of transaction is another important domain to determine language maintenance in a community (see also section 5.10.8). This study shows in average of 34% of the participants used Malay in their dealings in the domain of transaction (see section 5.9, Table 5.26). Participants said that they had a deep sense of pride in being Malaysian and nothing could take Malay away from them. It came naturally when they went out in common places such as shopping places or public spaces. Malay is understood by every Malaysians regardless of ethnic group. Participants further elaborated that when they were not sure of a sellers' ethnicity or their language ability, it was common to use Malay. Malay is the lingua franca of Malaysians. Every Malaysian knows at least some basic Malay. Hence, the domain of transaction largely requires Malay language. "My Malay is good; I prefer Malay," said another participant. Generally, Malay terms for market or wet market items are well known in Malay to all races. "I don't really speak Malay, but mix more Malay word," said a participant. Usually, in the market place, the sellers are not highly educated. Hence, one participant said she uses Malay as a neutral language.

6.10 Code Mixing in the speech of the Participants

The questionnaire of this study was designed to obtain the code-switching and code-mixing behaviours of participants. Though objective of this study does not include code-mixing behaviour of Tamil youth, extensive code-mixing style of participants show unique features in language choice (see also section 3.3.3) and hence this study included a discussion on code-switching to see participants' language patterns. Participants' self-reported data from the questionnaire reveals all of them mixed other languages in their speech in all the domains. Data for this section is from questions 43 to 57 in the questionnaire. This code-mixing data also reveals the extent to which other major languages (Malay, English and Chinese) are being mixed with Tamil by the participants and to assess the possible advantages that Malaysian Tamils have in their linguistic repertoire. At the same time, extensive code-switching also can lead to shrinkage of their Tamil vocabulary. In ensuring the limitations of this study are adhered to, only the linguistic aspect of code mixing and reason for code mixing are assessed in this study.

Due to the multilingual nature of Malaysia's society and the obvious code mixing of participants and code switching between all major and minor languages in Malaysia, it was thought that some level of participants' code mixing tendencies of Tamil with other languages might be important in providing some additional insight on the reasons of participants' language choice. Cases have been identified where language death was preceded by bilingualism and extensive code-switching (Romaine, 2000). In a multilingual context like in Singapore, code-switching and code mixing happens commonly (Holmes, 2013). The term mixed language was used by Annamalai (2001) to describe the language phenomena in Tamilnadu and says that mixing of English words in the mother tongue is a pan-Indian feature where majority of educated Tamils mix English words in large quantities when speaking to other educated Tamil.

Although code mixing and code switching between all major and minor languages in Malaysia is obvious, it was thought that some level of participants' code-mixing tendencies with other languages might be important to provide some additional insight on the reasons of participants' code mixing. Spoken Tamil of youth in Malaysia consists of English, Malay and Chinese languages and this mixture is a common practice and inevitable in Malaysia like the other multilingual countries. Code mixing phenomena are inevitable in a multi-lingual nation where bilinguals have the choice to use different languages. Bilinguals switch from one language to another. They have the choice to use languages and styles of each language available to them (Gumperz, 1969).

6.10.1 Code Mixing in the Domain of Family

Interviews reveal that participants' code mixing happened with reference to technical terms, new terms, education-related words, work-related words and commonly used words in multilingual settings for such items as names of animals, fruits, vegetables, health issues, world news, sports, vehicles, festivals, etc. when they conversed with their family members. Also, participants admitted that Malaysian Tamils cannot speak Tamil purely without a mixture of other languages. The evidence for this can be seen in Chapter 5 in the depiction of language choices in the family domain and in other domains, as well. When a person loses a language, he/she is unable to communicate well with the respective speech community and thereby losing a culture (Hale, 2001, as cited in Upadhyay & Hasnain, 2017).

Hence, the current study intended to identify the expansion of other languages in Tamil, which can cause shrinkage in Tamil vocabulary, as reported in Upadhyay (2017) (see section 5.3). For example, Participant 2's (16 years of age) code-switched to Malay. Four-fifteenths of her utterances were in Malay and 2/15 is English, i.e., 6/15 or 40% of other languages were embedded in Participant 2's Tamil utterances.

Extract 6.6

[P2F 16Y NT]

(to her mother)

*sollama:tti:ngke.....! kollepasi ma:, nalikku **school**-ukku ni:ngka **one forty**-kku varave:na: **kelas tambahan** irukku. **tiga setengah**-po:le mudiyum. **oru tiga setengah** vanthaa po:thum.*

(Say what everI'm so hungry, tomorrow you don't come one forty to school. I have extra class. Finishes around three thirty. You come around three thirty).

This study also intends to gain some insight on the languages participants use to refer to kin with a third person in intra-group communications, such as ‘mummy’, ‘mum’, ‘daddy’, ‘cousin brother’, ‘uncle’, etc. Unlike English, Tamil has elaborate kinship terminologies specific for each relation, where consanguine (blood related) kin is addressed differently depending on whether from the father’s side or mother’s side of the family (see section 5.3.1). Data shows the majority of participants preferred English terms (87%) and 11% used Malay (Table 6.8) to refer their kin. One participant used Chinese kinship terms and another participant used different language terms (other than the major four languages) to refer his/her kin. Also a common practice of most Malaysians, regardless of race, is to refer to or address a stranger, someone older, or friends of their parents’ as either ‘uncle’, ‘aunty’, ‘*pak cik*’ or ‘*mak cik*’. If the person is slightly younger, they address as ‘bro’, ‘sis’, or ‘dik’ and if they are older they are addressed as ‘bang’ or ‘kak’. Thus, code mixing is unavoidable when it comes to kinship terms in a social setting. This shows Malaysian Tamils have adapted wider lexical and expressions in spoken Tamil or in their linguistic repertoire.

Table 6.8: Code mixing when referring to kinship terms

Language mixed with Tamil in discussion to refer to kinship terms	Frequency
English	95 (87%)
Malay	12 (11%)
Chinese	1 (1%)
Others	1 (1%)
Total	109

6.10.2 Code Mixing in the Domain Friendship

The domain of friendship shows the highest usage of Tamil language, i.e., 90% (section 5.4). In fact, although they spoke Tamil, participants mixed a large quantity of English and Malay words or terms in their Tamil. Generally, during discussions with friends on general topics (as in Table 6.9), participants agreed that they mixed a huge amount of other languages in their discussions. For instance, various names of vehicles were in English and so were the names for their parts and associated technical terms. Table 6.9 reveals the code-mixing occurrences among participants. Participants selected the languages only if they sensed they used or mixed more than one third ($1/3$) of another language in their Tamil speech (questions 43 to 57 in the questionnaire). The findings show all the participants selected that they mixed Malay, English or Chinese more than one third of their spoken Tamil.

Table 6.9: Code mixing during discussion about general topics among friends

Topics	English	%	Malay	%	Chinese	%	Total	%
1. Clothes and fashion Cultural matters	89	63	39	36	1	1	109	100
2. Vehicles	96	88	13	16	-	-	109	100
3. World issues	78	71	31	29	-	-	109	100
4. Sports	89	82	20	18	-	-	109	100
5. Communication gadgets	98	90	11	10	-	-	109	100
6. Travelling plans	96	88	13	11			109	100
7. Sickness / health	90	82	19	18	-	-	109	100
8. Education / courses	80	73	29	27	-	-	109	100
9. Greetings and giving condolences	84	77	25	23	-	-	109	100

Though domain of friendship show higher usage of Tamil (91%), youth admit (interviews) that they use more English terms to greet and wish their friends such as ‘happy birthday’, ‘good luck’, ‘bye’, ‘see you tomorrow’, ‘wish you all the best’ and etc. As for technology-based conversation such as discussion about computers or communication gadgets, almost 90% of the participants said they mixed more than one third of English words and the remaining said they mixed Malay words (Table 6.9). Age wise, all three age groups code mixed quite highly with English terms (more than 83%, 95% and 97%, respectively), as shown in Table 6. 10. Only the youngest age group (15 to 17 years old) code mixed more with Malay and this percentage shows a reduced trend in Malay and increasing trend in English as the age of participants increase. This could be due to Malay being the medium of teaching in national secondary schools (as pointed out in Chapter 5). When it comes to medical issues, the majority of the participants answered that they code mixed with English and a small percentage used Malay terms in intra-group communications (Table 6.9). This is due to the availability and accessibility of the medical terms in English rather than in Tamil. Similar to the previous finding, more than a quarter of participants from the 15 to 17 age group tended to code mix with Malay,

while the remaining mixed English. Data shows reliance on English language is substantial as the technical terms are almost entirely available only in English.

Table 6.10: Code mixing during discussion with friends - by age group

Age group	Discussion topic						
	Language	Vehicles	%	Sports	%	Computer gadgets	%
15 to 17	English	42	81	33	64	43	83
	Malay	10	19	17	33	9	17
	Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Others	0	0	2	3	0	0
18 to 23	English	17	85	19	95	19	95
	Malay	3	15	1	5	1	5
	Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Others	0	0	0	0	0	0
24 to 30	English	37	100	36	97	36	97
	Malay	0	0	1	3	1	3
	Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Others	0	0	0	0	0	0

As for the discussion regarding education and courses, almost three quarters of the participants responded that they code mixed English, whereas the remaining did so with Malay language (Table 6.9). Age wise, participants from the age group of 15 to 17 years old have more of Malay language (Table 6.10). This is in accordance with the previous findings (in Chapter 5), mixing of Malay words is high compared to English for the school-going participants. Use of Malay words reduces significantly for the more matured participants, probably due to exposure to more English terms in higher learning institutions or the workplace. However, while usage of English grows steadily with increasing age of participants, usage of Tamil terms seems to decrease. For instance, popular topics among youth such as vehicles, sports and computer and code-mixing behaviour were sought for an indepth study between the age groups. It shows participants use more English as their age increase. For example, Extracts 6.7 and 6.8 show

Participants 15 and 26 switched codes between languages effortlessly while talking to their friends. This utterances sho teenagers tended to mix more Malay and older youth (participant) mixed more English words in their utterances.

Extract 6.7

[P15M 17YT]

F1: *mathicha: ta:ne. school lle ve:le irunthichi nnu e:ma:thungke nnu nenaikkiren.*
(never respect I guess. they might cheat saying they have work in school)

P15: *namakku enna: udu.... na:laikku varrappe sukan t-shirt -a: po:ttu ttu varanum?*
lathihan sukan irukkunna: yngke. ungke class-ukkuma:?
(why should we bother? Should we wear physical education attire tomorrow?)

F1: *ille da: tingkatan lima mattum tha:n. atum separuh pertama tha:n. kelas G varaikkum tha:n.*
(no only form five should wear. Its only until the class 'G' only)

P15: *apdina: en class tak terlibatlah.*
(so my class is not involved)

Extract 6.8

[P26M 23YNT]

P26: *mudichittom. konjam compile pannittu binding pannanum. athu girls cenjiruva: ngke. a: na: na: likku innoru assignment anuppanum. athutha: n Dr. (Y) o: da assignment. avaru theriyum ille. rompa serious a: pa: ppa: ru. a: na: nalla manusannu senior la: m solliyirukka: ngke. nalla: present pannuna: nalla marks koduppa: ra: m.*

(have completed. Only compiling and binding. That part girls will do. But I have another assignment. To Dr (Y). You know him. He is serious but a very nice man. That's what our seniors told. If you present well, you'll get good marks)

6.10.3 Code-Switching or Code Mixing in the Domain of Transaction

Table 6.11 presents the quantitative statistics (questionnaire result) on code-switching behaviour during transaction activities in the local market such as buying or talking about local food. Participants were asked to answer the columns in the questionnaire only if they felt they used more than 1/3 of code mixing. Code mixing with Malay happened predominantly and was followed by English in intra-group communications. Chinese language was used as well, though in small percentages (see Table 5.26). This finding is usual as most of these foods originated locally and thus do not have direct translations in

Tamil. A similar scenario could also be said when ordering Chinese, Malay, Indian and Western food. For example, there is no direct translation in Tamil when it comes to ordering food such as *roti canai*, *nasi goreng kampung*, *nasi lemak*, *keaw tiou*, *kopi o* etc. At times, though there are equivalent names in Tamil, Malaysians prefer commonly known names by all races such *teh tarik*, *air suam*, *roti bakar*, etc.

When talking about local fruits, majority of the participants used mixed code or used more Malay names (see Table 5.26). Code mixing with Chinese language rarely happens as almost all the locally grown fruits have names of Malay origin. Though locally grown fruits have native Malay names, a small percentage of participants code mixed with English names. Presumably, for instance, people preferred to use the word ‘watermelon’ rather than *tembikai*, ‘papaya’ rather than *betik*, etc.

Next, it was determined if code mixing took place when participants talked about names of fish in the local market. Fascinatingly, 85% of the participants used Malay names, as depicted in Table 5.26. Generally, Malaysians are familiar with the local or Malay names when it comes to fish, for example, *ikan kembung*, *siakap*, *keli*, *bawal merah*, etc, where translation in Tamil is unavailable. A small number of the participants mixed English, perhaps for fish that were not of local origin such as ‘salmon’, ‘dory’, etc.

Normally, more code mixing with English and Malay was observed when participants conversed about vegetables. This could be due to the influence of the general population that perhaps prefers using certain words such as cabbage or carrot. Some names of vegetables of English and Malay origin do not have any translation in Tamil, such as ‘French beans’, *sawi* (leavy greens), *kangkung* (leavy green) etc, thus code mixing is seen as a common practice. Participant 27 says (see Extract 6.9) though some vegetables such

as carrot and cabbage have their respective words in Tamil, they are not used habitually.

Name of groceries also vastly known in English and Malay rather than Tamil.

Extract 6.9

[P 27 F 26 T]

P27: *na:n Tamil padichirukken. irunhtha:lum enakku neraiya palanggalo:de pe:ru, mi:nu pe:ru ella:me: Malay-le illa:tti english-le tha: theriyum. sayur pe:ru ko:de ella:me malay english tha:n. appadiye: Tamille the:di kandu pidichi local market-le po:yip e:sina:lum Tamarilar ella:rume: oru ma:riya: pa:ppa:ngke. ke:kkuravangkalukku puriya:thu. na:n nenaikkiran enakke: Tamil pe:ru ella:m theriya:thu. na:n iththanaikkum SPM varaikkum Tamil padichirukken.*

(I have learned Tamil yet if I go to marketplace, I don't know most of the fruits and vegetables names in Tamil. I only know in Malay or English. let's say I take the effort to find the names in Tamil and use at marketplace Tamil dealers will see me differently. They won't even understand the words. Though I have learned Tamil up to SPM, I don't know the Tamil names...)

To summarize the language choice trends of participants in the domain of transaction, the outcome of the survey shows that Tamil was only used as a basic communication tool, but all the terms or names imbedded in it were from Malay or English words. In other words, participants sentence structure is Tamil but embedded with more English and Malay words and sometimes Chinese words too in domain of transaction.

In fact, it was discovered from the interviews with participants that almost all of them did not know the correct terms or names for new terms in Tamil. This shows that the Tamil names of items and terms are long forgotten and started disappearing from the younger generation of Tamils' language repertoire. This is especially seen when Participant 27 disclosed her experiences in the domain of transaction. She said even if one tries to use purely Tamil words, others might see that differently as the current trend (norm) is to mix non-Tamil words. Participant 27 also said it was a bitter truth that in a multilingual environment, pure Tamil terms cannot be used in the domain of transaction in the present-day situation, although she feels that Tamils should have the courage to use Tamil terms to revive them.

6.10.4 Reasons for Code-Switching and Code Mixing

Though Tamils choose to speak Tamil in inter-group communications, code-switching and code mixing happened widely in spoken Tamil of the participants (the younger generation of Tamils). In this study, only relatively important findings (from survey questionnaire, interviews and natural conversations) and reasons for participants' code mixing behaviour are presented. Table 6.11 summarizes reasons for participants' language choice and language mixing behaviours.

Table 6.11: Reasons for code mixing behaviour

Reasons Interlocutor	Habitual use	Terminology	Widely accepted terms	Domain	More accessible	Proficiency in second language	Topic purpose	Mixed races	Fill lexical gap	Group identification	Influence of media	Prestige	No proficiency in Tamil	To express meaning better
With parents	16	35	35		30		16				27		16	
With siblings	21	35	37		30	23	30		12		30		27	21
With friends	33	37	41		40	20	33	25		31	31		15	26
With school mates	13	13	13	13	13	13	12	10	9	7	10	2	18	7
With workplace colleagues	12	7	8	22	16	14	24	17	9	18	15	21	20	23
Domain of Transaction	33	35	35	34	32	27	22	29	23	17	30	15	36	32
Neighbours	20	32	34		22	22	13		13		12	10	33	17
Priest		7	11		12				16				16	

Code mixing happened for many reasons. Participants' reasons from questionnaire (some participants have written their reasons in the questionnaire) and interview were simplified and tabulated in Table 6.11. Participants also stated that they extensively (more than one

third) mixed English and Malay words in their speech. Widely accepted terms, new terminologies, more accessible words in English and Malay, no proficiency in Tamil and ability to express better in other languages were the main reasons for participants to mix Malay and English in their Tamil speech. Since the aim of this research work is to survey the patterns of language choice among Tamil youth, it is inevitable to discuss their real language patterns. However, in adhering to the limitations of this study, participants' code-mixing behaviour is only discussed briefly in this section.

6.11 Attitude of Tamils towards Tamil Language

This study further explored the participants' attitudes towards Tamil language. It is perceived that the attitude of the community towards a language determines its maintenance. A favourable and positive attitude towards a language helps in language preservation, especially in intra-ethnic communications and intergenerational-language transmissions (Baker, 1992). Hence the participants were asked several questions related to their view towards their mother tongue. Questions 66 to 71 were to measure participants' attitudes and views about Tamil language in Malaysia. When asked whether the participants were proud to speak their mother tongue in front of other races, 96% of the participants responded that they were proud to speak in Tamil (Table 6.12). Figures indicating the percentages of participants who felt inferior about using Tamil were low, thus it can be concluded that most Tamil youth are proud to converse in their mother tongue.

Table 6.12: Participants' attitude towards Tamil language

	Proud to speak Tamil Count	%	Like to further Tamil Study Count	%	Tamil Should develop Count	%	Tamils should speak in Tamil Count	%	Mother tongue is Important Count	%	% Average
Yes	105	96	78	71	99	91	100	92	104	95	89
No	4	4	26	24	4	4	2	2	3	3	7
Not sure	-	-	5	5	6	5	7	6	2	2	4
Total	109	100	109	100	109	100	109	100	109	100	100

As for expansion and continuation of the mother tongue, this study seeks participants' responses on whether they would like to learn the formal Tamil or further their studies on Tamil. Questions 66 to 70 in questionnaire were designed to find participants' attitude towards Tamil. 71% of the participants mentioned that they would like to learn or further their studies in Tamil, whereas the remaining voted 'no' and 'not sure' (Table 6.12). The result shows only 24% did not indicate interest in learning Tamil.

To further emphasize on the preservation of the mother tongue, this study followed up on the question whether the participants thought that the Tamil language should be expanded (developed). 91% of the participants stated that they thought that the language should be expanded, with the remaining 4% and 5% strongly voting 'no' and 'not sure', respectively (Table 6.12). Interviews revealed that the more matured participants strongly felt that the Tamil language should be expanded, while in comparison, a small number of the younger participants did not think that the language should be widened. This finding reveals that the elder participants showed appreciation for and perhaps knew the importance of maintaining their mother tongue, whereas the younger participants might not have found any socio-economic value attached to preserving the language. Even though the working group participants (in interviews) expressed that they did not wish to pursue further

studies in formal Tamil, at the same time, they wished that their mother tongue could be broadened further.

When the participants were questioned further on whether the Tamils should speak Tamil, the majority of the participants (92%) agreed to the notion, whereas the remaining 2% and 7% voted ‘no’ and ‘not sure’, respectively (Table 6.12). The small percentage of participants who voted ‘not sure’ most probably did so due to their own personal experience where they could have been conversing in languages other than Tamil with their Tamil friends or family members, as was observed in the various domains. Next, the extent to which participants perceived their mother tongue as important was explored. Table 6.12 confirms 95% of the participants felt that it was important, with the remaining expressing ‘no’ (3%) and ‘not sure’ (2%). This shows that the majority of participants sensed their mother tongue was important (for reasons see sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5).

Finally, this study also explored the participants’ opinions on the progress of the Tamil language in Malaysia. Approximately 41% of the participants expressed negative views that the Tamil language in Malaysia is declining, followed by 33% who responded not sure and 26% showed a positive view about the progress of Tamil in Malaysia (Table 6.13).

Table 6.13: Development of Tamil language in Malaysia

		Frequency
Your opinion about the development of Tamil language in Malaysia. Is it progressing?	yes	28 (26%)
	no	45 (41%)
	not sure	36 (33%)
	Total	109

Language attitudes of the participants are also examined in this chapter. Language attitudes can play an important role in maintaining the mother tongue. If attitudes towards the minority language are positive and the language is viewed with pride as identifying the speech community, there is more chance to uphold the language. Maintenance of a language is supported when it has status in the community.

It is perceived that the attitude of the community towards a language determines its maintenance or shift. Hence, the participants were asked several questions (questionnaire) which related to their views towards the mother tongue. Majority of the participants responded they were proud to speak the mother tongue in front of other races (see section 6.11). Most of the participants also mentioned that they would like to learn or further studies in formal Tamil. A big portion of the participants stated that they thought that the language should be expanded. Although a small percentage of participants felt that they might not find any socio-economic value attached to preserving the language and did not wish to pursue further studies in formal Tamil, at the same time they wished that their mother tongue could be broadened further. Further exploration shows almost all of the participants perceived their mother tongue as important.

Overall, participants portrayed a positive attitude towards Tamil language, regardless of their age. They felt proud to speak Tamil in front of other races and would like to further studies in formal Tamil, if the opportunity arises. This seems encouraging when compared to a study conducted by the Forbes Research Group (2005) in Singapore, wherein the younger generation expressed feeling discomfort speaking in Tamil (cited in Saravanan, Lakshmi and Caleon, 2007). Moreover, as they grew older they were not inclined to learn Tamil and showed a lackadaisical attitude towards Tamil language. On the contrary, Tamil youth in Malaysia (participants) have an affection towards the language as they

perceive that Tamils should speak Tamil in intra-group communications and believe that Tamil should be expanded and that it is an important language to show their uniqueness.

Even more reassuring is that regardless of socio-economic status, almost 90 participants showed positive attitudes towards their mother tongue compared to the findings of Bokhorst-Heng and Caleon (2009) in Singapore. In their study, only the students from the lower income group showed a greater tendency to appreciate their mother tongue compared to the medium and higher income groups. Hence, in the current study, the affirmative attitudes displayed by the local youth (participants) point towards a sustainable linguistic ecology for Tamil language maintenance and preservation in Malaysia.

Some participants in this study were more concerned about their mother tongue and expressed views in that regard, such as this from one of the participants: “*win win situation solluva:ngkale: appadi mu:nu moliyum padikkala:m*”(Why should one give up one language for the other. This is an example of a win win situation. You could learn all three languages) (Participant P12M 27YT]. At the same time there were participants who felt English is greater and Tamil is next, as expressed in the following quote from a participant.

[Participant 20]

I feel comfortable to converse in English, feels decent as well, compared to speaking in colloquial Tamil. It's a competitive world, should know English first. Easy for my child to mix with neighbour's children. Malaysia is a mixed race country. My children should know English. Other languages are important too. My child must be steady in English first. Tamil is next. Tamil is important too.

Hence, this study also discloses that this dilemma (mother tongue or English) goes on in the minds of minority groups like Tamils. Mastery of English language is regarded as

crucial to gain access to vast and the latest knowledge via books, documentaries and internet resources. Thus, participants' attitudes and needs for English are high. In addition, as emphasized by Schiffman (2002), Tamil youth embrace English language as a survival mechanism in order to gain entry to tertiary education in English speaking countries abroad in the event they fail to gain entrance to local universities due to the ethnic-quota system admission policy.

Also, concerning external environment influence, intrinsically Tamil language is lacking in the practice of using modern scientific or technological terms, where even after lexicon updates with loan words, the terms become too long to pronounce or even remember. English equivalents are generally simpler and easier to remember and thus easily retrieved while speaking (Krishnasamy, 2015). This phenomenon is unavoidable, as has also been observed by Tamils in Tamil Nadu and Singapore (Kanthimathi & Reddy, 2005). For example, based on the conversations (recorded natural conversations), participants from the school-going age preferred to switch-code to Malay for words such as *karangan* (essay), *cikgu* (teacher) or *bilik guru* (teacher's room) rather than the equivalents in Tamil *katturai*, *aasiriyar*, or *aasiriyar arai*, respectively. Similarly, the college/university-going students were inclined to opt for easier English words such as 'exam', 'assignment', or 'final chapter' instead of *paritchai*, *idupani* or *iruthi aththiyaayam*, respectively, which are rarely used.

6.12 Discussion of Findings on Reasons for Language Choice

Language choice is subject to change. There is no fixed rule for language choice. However, the concept of domain helps to identify a language or variety used in particular domains or generally, domains help to determine language use patterns in a particular setting.

Participants had their reasons for their language choice. Generally, participants used Tamil with parents and grandparents. A participant used English with her younger brother when she talked about his pre-school work to accommodate him and help him to do his school work. Some participants' language choice with siblings to discuss their school subjects or school work was Malay because learning was associated with Malay and English. In all the domains, including the domain of family, participants used more English and Malay words to discuss about education, technical terms, new terminologies or vocabularies. Code-switching occurred in all levels of communications. In other words, some participants selected Tamil language only as a matrix language, but embed it with more of English and Malay words. Participants said that, although they were comfortable with Tamil at home, they used other languages unconsciously or involuntarily because they were more accessible and the use of terms in the major languages had become normal and habitual. The domain of family also showed participants used unsuitable varieties with elderly people such as fathers, mothers and grandparents as values and views changed for the reason that parents were treated like friends.

Married participants' language choice clearly indicated that Tamil had taken second place as the language of choice in communicating with their children. There were married participants who preferred their children to learn Tamil first but their actions contradicted their intentions. A married participant (Participant 64) used both Tamil and English to communicate with her child with the aim of training the child to be fluent in both languages. She expressed the importance of the mother tongue (Tamil) and the global language, English. There were different scenarios, as far as some married participants were concerned, as they wanted their children to be fluent in English first. The mother tongue could be acquired later as the children grew up. Participant 67 said that English is important for the reason that as a mother, she had to prepare her child for the increasing

globalisation of the world and consequently being proficient in English was important. At the same time, she also realized her duty to instill importance of mother tongue to her child. All 33 married participants of this study said they used Tamil with their children, driven by the consciousness that Tamil was their mother tongue. However, participants had more reasons for choosing English for their children. Due to the competitive nature of the global environment and the multi-ethnic situation, parents thought they had to get their children equipped with modern education and language to face the challenges of the future. They wanted their children's English to be strong in order to compete at the global level.

The domain of friendship plays an important role in the maintenance of Tamil. Participants' most preferred language in this domain was Tamil. They said they used Tamil for comfort, relaxed conversation, to express their innermost feelings and views, to talk discreetly in the presence of other ethnic groups and to reflect bonds and closeness. The domain of friendship shows the highest usage of Tamil language among participants. In reality, although they spoke Tamil, the participants mixed a huge quantity of English and Malay words in their mother tongue. Generally, during chats, when they discussed general topics, participants agreed that they mixed a huge percentage of other languages in their discussions. Participants also stressed the fact that reliance on English language was substantial as the technical terms were almost entirely available only in English. In domain of friendship, participants' language choice contained more idiomatic terms. This enriches the use of Tamil language. Language use in domain of friendship shows more of colloquial and idiomatic expressions if compared with the other domains including the domain of family. As revealed in interview sessions, participants talk and practise all their knowledge freely in the domain of friendship. For instance, Participant 44 in Extract 5.2 uses '*inji thinna korangu ma:ri*' (like monkey which ate ginger – a person who did

something wrong), '*sandai koli*' (fighter cockerel) (Participant 15 in Extract 5.1) and *ka:the pulichi po:chchi* (the ears have turned sour) (Participant 40 in Table 5.30).

Participants also used Malay proverbs as well as Tamil proverbs, making the linguistic repertoire of the Malaysian youth wider with more expressions. *lalang* (long grass – a person with no strength of mind) and '*sudah kena padan muka*' (got punishment for their wrong doing). Krishnasamy (2015), has also discussed the behaviour of code mixing in proverbs among Tamil-English bilingual children in Tamilnadu. It is a common behaviour among bilinguals to code mix the languages they know in proverbs or sayings. Such interesting proverbs, sayings, figures of speech and other such expressions are found largely in the speech of participants in this study.

In the domain of education, only one third of the participants chose Tamil to discuss matters related to their education. Factors such as the multi-racial environment, the other languages being more accessible and having more subject related terms and habitual and spontaneous speech actions were given by participants as reasons for the choice of English or Malay. Although participants who chose to communicate in Tamil they did not purely talk in Tamil. For discussions regarding education and courses, all the participants responded that they code mixed with English and Malay languages in more than one third of their spoken Tamil. Working participants were analysed in two categories as degree holders and non-degree holders. Degree holders were more proficient in English. Non-degree holders were from secondary-level education and were more capable in Malay. English was their medium of instruction at the workplace and work-related terms were more accessible in English. Participants also selected English as their language at the workplace for intra-group communications

For technical terms, work related words and trade terms, they used English. Therefore, Tamil seems to have been confined to basic usage. This could be due to the lack of direct translation or interpretation in Tamil for certain complex terms, which made English more conducive for the working professionals. A similar trend was also observed in the non-degree holders working group. However, the usage of Tamil language was slightly higher (33%) amongst the non-degree holders compared to the degree holders. There was also a significant drop in the usage of Malay language among the degree holders, whereas the non-degree holders tended to use more Malay (22%) in their working environment. Generally, it can be said that in the working environment, English was commonly used. Consequently, it can be concluded that the domain of workplace only leads to a shift of Tamils towards English and Malay due to the influence of the social network at the workplace. As stated by Milroy (1980), the social network structure will eventually change linguistic behaviour as stated by Krishnasamy (2015), the reasons for this behaviour are many and one of the obvious ones could be the habit, whether consciously or unconsciously, of adding some words of English into conversations to portray a level of sophistication and modernization, especially among working professionals. As for the less educated non-degree holders, a good amount of English words was used as well, which could have been due to exposure to the mass media, where many borrowed English words are used. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that code mixing in the local Tamil mass media is far less when compared to India, where English is used extensively in all the television and radio programmes (Krishnasamy, 2015).

Religion played an important part in the maintenance of Tamil among participants. The majority of participants were Hindus. This study comprises participants from three religions: Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Participants' self-claims on chosen language for religion-related matters show that the majority of them favoured Tamil. A small

number of them preferred English, Malay and only 1 participant chose Arabic language. Muslim participants' language choice were Malay and Arabic languages. Interviews revealed Christians had both Tamil and English-related church and religious activities. Hindu participants mainly used Tamil in the domain of religion. A few participants indicated that they used English because they were not fluent in Tamil.

For religious purposes, at places of worship and for prayer-related matters, majority of the participants used Tamil. Sankar (2004) and Selvajothi (2017) have also stated similar findings that language shift is drastic in all domains except the domain of religion among Tamil Iyers in Malaysia and Tamils in Kuching, respectively. The current study also revealed that religion plays a crucial role in maintaining Tamil among youth. This study shows that Hindu religion-related recitation (*thevaram*), prayers, *archanai* (*pooja* performance of priest) and temple talks are vastly performed in Tamil in Malaysia (information via interviews of participants). Tamil churches and Tamil Muslim madrasahs also hold sermons in Tamil apart from Tamil being their predominant language of choice for internal communication. Moreover, Tamils feel connected and close when they speak Tamil with others in the temple (Alagappar, Dealwis and David, 2016). Besides the encouraging usage of Tamil in religious institutions, Tamil is also majorly used during prayers at home (views collected through interviews). This is reassuring compared to the findings in Singapore, where Tamil is used exclusively in temples and code mixing with English takes places for prayers at home (Vaish, 2007). In addition, learning about Hindu religion is mainly conducted in English in Singapore, which is absent or negligible in the local scene. The high percentage of Tamil usage in the domain of religion surely helps to maintain Tamil among youth in Malaysia. Also, in a nutshell, it was found in this study that Tamil usage in the domain of religion was the second highest after the domain of friendship.

The neighbourhood was another domain which contributed to maintenance of Tamil if a particular speech community stays concentrated in a particular area to mingle around and practice their language regularly. Children from a neighbourhood generally attend the same school, become friends with each other and exercise their native language. Participants also revealed that they preferred Tamil because it was easier and comfortable to share and discuss their problems and contributed to closeness with their neighbours and was their medium of communication since small.

The domain of transaction is a significant domain in supporting a speech community to practice their ethnic language and to socialize outside the home and friends' sphere. Self-claim data from the questionnaire revealed that an average of only one third of the participants used Tamil in the domain of transaction and the balance two thirds used English or Malay. If occurrences of such situations where Tamils started to use more English and Malay instead of Tamil continued, Tamil would be gradually replaced by the national and global languages. This is further confirmed by Ting & Ling (2013), who stated that emergence of English and Bahasa Malaysia as the preferred language for interaction between people from various ethnic groups in Sarawak has pushed the minority languages down the pecking order in the choice of language preferred in the domains of friendship and transaction. Participants' highest choice of Tamil was in Tamil restaurants. Interviews revealed that the choice of Tamil was due to buying Tamil-related things and because of love for the language. On the other hand, many participants chose English and Malay because they were not sure of the race and language ability of the person they were dealing with. As for Malay, it is a common language that every Malaysian knows and it came naturally when they interacted with strangers, regardless of the ethnicity.

As stated by Holmes (2013), in multilingual contexts, code-switching and code mixing is unavoidable. Annamalai (2001) uses the term mixed languages to describe such language phenomena. Mixture of other languages in the mother tongue is common practice among Tamils in Malaysia (Kanagaretnam, 1971; Lim, 2008; Paramasivam, 2006). Participants seemed to like using Tamil but mixed more of other languages in their intra-group interactions. Data obtained from the questionnaire reveals all of the participants did mix other languages at roughly more than one third of their speech in all the domains. They have the options to use languages and styles of all languages available to them (Gumperz, 1969). Participants admitted Malaysian Tamils could not speak Tamil purely without a mixture of other languages. Evidence for this can be seen in Chapter five in the presentation of language choices in all the seven domains. Figure 6.3 shows the pattern of participants' Tamil and mixture of English, Malay and Chinese.

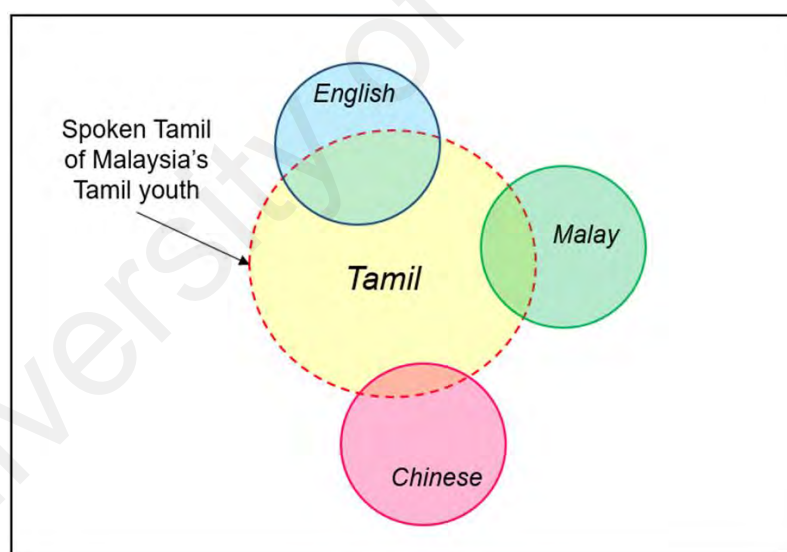


Figure 6-3: Participants' spoken Tamil and the mixed languages

Exposure to Malay language (mainly in schools) and English (from various sources such as radio, television, colleges and businesses) is the main reason for code-mixing when conversing in Tamil (Krishnasamy, 2015). At the same time, the lack of Tamil words usage in the domain of family is encouraging code-mixing further. In a separate study on youth in Tamilnadu, India by Krishnasamy (2015), code-mixing of Tamil and English

was observed when talking about movies, class activity, academic matters, nature, or fashion due to ease of pronunciation and comprehension and ease of expression in English. In the current study, a similar phenomenon was also observed, where English was code-mixed with Tamil when youngsters talked about movies and football jargon. Other reasons for code-mixing of English and Tamil were found to be that the youth do not know Tamil equivalents and lack of Tamil equivalents (Krishnasamy, 2015). This is similar to the current finding where certain phrases (which are linked to character) used by participants such as 'lalang' and 'orang utan' (see Chapter 5) have no equivalent words in Tamil. This was also observed by Bhatia and Ritchie (in Genesee, 2004), where some languages are viewed as more suitable for participant/social groups where certain quotations, idioms, or clauses are used.

Numerous factors contribute to this patterns of language use among Tamil youth in Malaysia (See Figure 6.4) such as only using the colloquial variety of Tamil, mixing of other languages extensively, no formal education of Tamil, different races of care givers, presence of dominant languages such as English, the Malaysian education system, lack of socialization within individuals' of own speech community, mothers as career women and absence of grandparents influence patterns of language choice among participants.

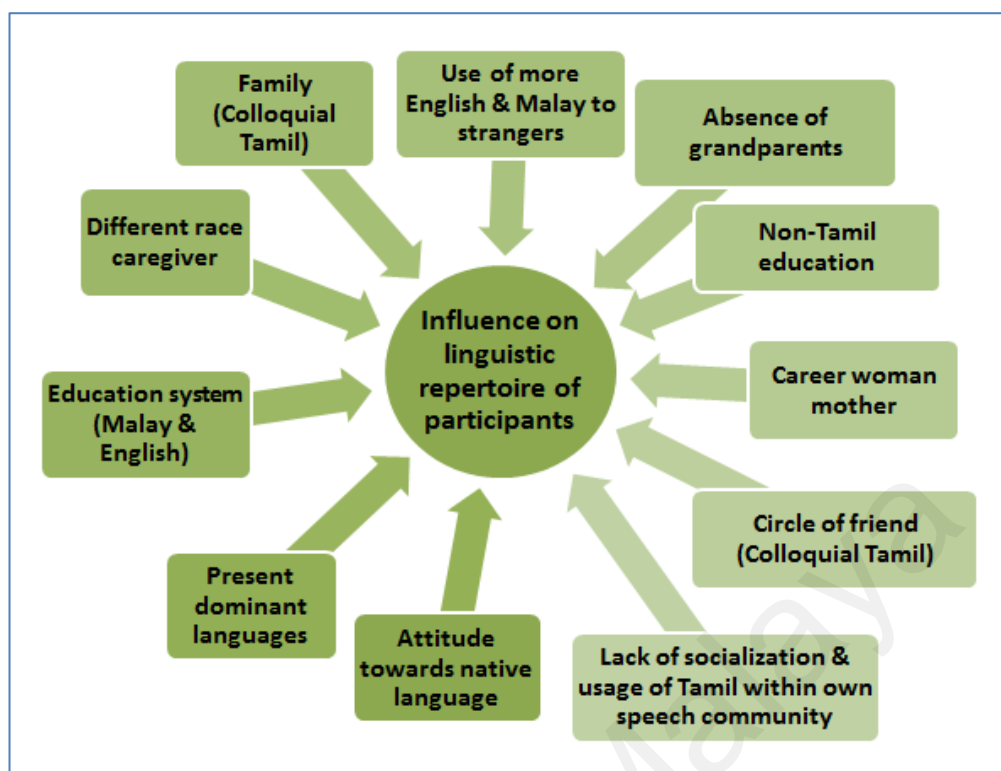


Figure 6.4: Factors that influence linguistic repertoire of participants

6.13 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the reasons for participants' language choice and the language attitudes of the participants. Participants had several reasons for their language choice and for using code mixing (code-switching is also called code mixing according to Wardhaugh, 2010). Bilinguals habitually switch between the languages they know to discuss particular topics in one code rather than another. Young children who are learning to speak more than one language habitually put together components from two or more languages. According to Romaine (2000) this kind of 'mixed' speech is intense among the younger generation of the Punjabi English bilingual community in Britain. They fear that the language will be lost in the future. She also adds that this anxiety is widely sensed by people of many other minority language communities. It has widely been noticed that bilingualism and extensive code-switching pave the way to linguistic extinction. Thus, language choice of participants which shows more code mixing was presented in this

chapter to realize the real language patterns of Tamil youth. Also, in most cases, the dominant languages slowly creep into minority languages and displace the languages (Gal, 1979).

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 7: THE DISTINCT VARIETY OF TAMIL LANGUAGE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LANGUAGE CHOICE AMONG YOUTH

7.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the third research question and presents an in-depth scenario of the linguistic repertoire of participants and the language choice of participants between varieties of Tamil language (see section 2.4.2). In chapter five, participants' language choice between languages in multilingual settings was surveyed and analysed. Chapter 6 explains the reasons for their language choice and their attitudes towards their mother tongue. Chapter 6 also briefly examines participants' code-mixing patterns with other languages in Tamil. Chapter 7 attempts to give an in-depth view of language varieties that the participants used in different domains. Variety is a sociolinguistic term that refers to language in context. Holmes (2013) says, language variety encompasses different accents, distinct linguistic styles, different dialects and different languages, which vary from each other for social reasons. The varieties of languages are distinguishable by the way they are used according to social settings. Normally, people are aware of and select an appropriate variety according to social factors (see section 3.6). This chapter therefore intends to see youth's speech (language choice) patterns or variations according to social functions.

Sociolinguists have established several means of classifying languages according to their prestige and social functions. Sociolinguists aim to define sociolinguistic variation and attempt to shed light on why it happens and have attempted to answer the questions of why people talk differently to different people and why a formal variety sounds sarcastic when used with family members. They have also tried to describe the social factors which lead to the use of one language or variety instead of another and to explain the relationship between linguistic choices and associated social settings. The choice between the dialects or variations involves social considerations (Blom & Gumperz, 2000). Since

sociolinguists use the term variety to refer to linguistic practises which vary according to social reasons, this study attempts to investigate how these parameters are applied to Tamil language, which also has three varieties (see sections 2.4.2 and 3.6), i.e. the colloquial variety (CT) as low (L) and less prestigious variety besides two high (H) varieties, the written language (LT) and the standard spoken language (SST). In addition to that, this chapter also explores how these three varieties (diglossic nature) have influence on participants' language choice.

In a multilingual speech community, the languages spoken by various ethnic groups are referred to as vernacular languages. Vernacular languages are the first languages acquired by people in multilingual communities naturally as these languages are normally their mother tongue. Holmes (2013) states that the term vernacular comprises of three components. First, it is an unstandardized variety. Second, it is learned naturally in the family environment as a first variety. Third, it is used only for limited functions. Generally, the term vernacular refers to the most colloquial variety or less prestigious variety in a person's gamut of linguistic experience which is for communication in the domain of home and close friends and is only appropriate in informal domains.

Tamil has a very long history. From the early days, the written form (LT) of Tamil has differed from the colloquial Tamil (CT). CT is restricted to only spoken form and is not accepted in written form (Annamalai and Asher, 2014). LT is learned through formal education and is confined to only written form (see section 2.5). A third variety in Tamil emerged between LT and CT to fulfil the need for a formal or standard spoken form, i.e. SST (see also section 2.5). LT and SST in Tamil language are considered as high varieties (H), while CT is perceived as a low (L) variety. A person with Tamil formal education will have three varieties (LT, SST and CT) of Tamil and those without formal Tamil education will only have one variety (CT) or sometimes have part of the intermediate

variety (SST) in their Tamil language repertoire (Karunakaran, 2005). In general, there are certain views linked with the use of the low variety.

There are certain attitudes associated with the use of the so-called low variety (koduntamil, kochchai valakku, etc.) – which is still considered as a kind of less prestigious one for formal use and treated as ‘kochai’ (an unsophisticated – vulgar speech or dialect) by the native speakers as well as pundits (Karunakaran, 2005, p. 10).

Basically, these kinds of differences and attitudes are purely based on the functional significance in the day-to-day language use. Every speech community shares a set of linguistic customs and expectations on how their language should be used. Attitude towards the H variety is respectful and it has high-status standing in the speech community. On the contrary, the L variety is considered as less prestigious and inappropriate to be used other than in the family and friendship domains. Usually people are comfortable with the L variety, perceive that the L variety is the finest way of expressing their real feelings and practice it all the time, even with strangers (Holmes, 2013). However, in the Tamil speech community, the L variety cannot be applied in all the domains as three varieties are required to cover the needs of the society. Thus, this study is attempting to survey the language choice of participants (Tamil youth) who are bilingual/multilingual as well, to identify the variety used, its function and its suitability in the community and to determine whether these varieties have influence on their language choice. Fishman (1972) says that sub-varieties are likely to exist within varieties of a language; however, the members of any given community may not agree with the presence of some varieties in their repertoire. In some speech communities, varieties change due to interlocutors with whom one speaks to and the role-relationship, which may indicate switching from one social class variety to another. He adds, “All varieties of languages are equally expandable and changeable under the influence of foreign

models. The features are in the eyes (or ears) of the beholders and their functions depend on the norms of the speech communities that employ them". However, Gal (1979) has written the following about monolingual speakers and their speech varieties:

A speaker's choice between varieties, whether these constitute styles, dialects, or languages, is also systematic. It is usually related to some aspect of the social context. This indicates the communicative ability which allows to speak in a socially appropriate and interpretable way, including implicit knowledge not only about the rules that distinguish the meanings but also the knowledge of when to use the varieties in their linguistic repertoire. The cultural knowledge underlying appropriate language use, includes, first of all, rules for speaking in explicitly defined speech events in most social groups (Gal, 1979, p. 6).

Gal also refers to Fishman (1972) who says in certain setting a appropriate language variety is expected according to social context in which youth neglect to learn the communicative skills.

7.1.1 The Three Varieties of Tamil and their Functions

Table 7.1 shows a depiction of the three Tamil varieties and their features and functions. Though the term colloquial variety (CT) has vast clarification and justification, the term colloquial in this study only refers to a casual, less prestigious variety (L), SST to good spoken Tamil (or known as good Tamil among participants of this study) and LT is the written form. Three varieties (LT, SST and CT) are used in the discussion of this section (see also section 2.4.2).

Table 7.1: The three varieties of Tamil and functions

High variety (H)		Low variety (L)
LT (Literary Tamil)	SST (Standard spoken Tamil) / good spoken Tamil / good Tamil	CT Casual (Colloquial Tamil)
Confined to written form	Spoken form	Spoken form
Prestigious	Prestigious Preferred forms	Less prestigious Dispreferred forms
Formal use	Formal and informal use	Informal use
Learned in school	Intermediate (between LT and CT), learned informally through socialization with one's own speech community.	Acquired naturally
All formal contexts	Informal contexts To outsiders To elderly persons To superiors	Appropriate only to family and friends Less preferred at times
Fixed forms	Standardized by a process of informal agreement	Shows dialect or in-group, social variations
Accepted and comprehensible worldwide	Accepted and comprehensible Worldwide	Only understandable to a particular speech community or social group
Standard	Standard spoken (widely accepted)	Variation in pronunciation, tone, word choices, word-structure, grammar, vocabulary and expression (Holmes, 2013)
<p>Those with formal Tamil education know LT, SST and CT.</p> <p>Those with no formal Tamil education know CT and part of SST.</p> <p>Normally, people are aware of these distinct varieties and select the appropriate variety according to social factors.</p>		

(Table 7.1: adapted and summarized from Annamalai and Asher, 2014; Karunakaran, 2005; Pandian, 1987 and Schiffman, 1999).

Sociolinguists use the term 'communicative competence' to refer to a speaker's underlying knowledge of the rules of grammar (including phonology, grammar,

vocabulary and semantics) and for their use in socially appropriate situations (Romaine, 2000). As for native speakers, they learn the non-literal meanings of the language used through socialization in a community of native speakers. Spoken language itself has two versions. One is the pure standard variety and the other is highly varied with regional and group dialects. Pandian (1987) uses the term diglossia and distinguishes between pure, standard Tamil and impure, colloquial Tamil.

As mentioned in section 2.4.2, from ancient times to the present, spoken Tamil has had the pure version (*suthatamil* or *chentamil*) and the impure variety (colloquial form). Pure Tamil has remained unchanged from its original form, while colloquial Tamil is responsive to changing existential conditions, functioning as the primary medium of verbal communications among the masses. In linguistics, coexistence of two varieties of the same language, one remaining as the pure form and the other receptive to change, is called diglossia. Pandian (1987) cites Lehmann (1972, p. 242) who says an elevated form of language exists alongside the spoken language and is reserved for special uses. This situation is referred to as diglossia. Meanwhile, Schiffman (1999) asserts that spoken Tamil is not 'standardized' by a committee or a panel but has become standardized by a process of informal consensus. It is in fact quite easy to get Tamil speakers to agree that certain forms are preferred and certain forms are not.

7.2 Choice of Tamil Language Variety in the Family Domain

This study attempts to study the variety used by the participants, the settings in which the chosen variety was used and the reasons for choosing the variety. Data for this fragment are obtained from questions 61 to 65 (see Appendix A). Henceforth, the terms SST and good Tamil are used interchangeably. For easier understanding for the participants, the questionnaire was explained with samples of speech and worded as formal Tamil (LT),

good Tamil (SST) and casual Tamil (CT). The survey results show that when conversing with family members, a huge percentage (79%) of participants preferred using the casual Tamil (CT), as represented in Table 7.2. Interviews revealed many of the participants knew only two different varieties, i.e. written and casual Tamil varieties. However, they were aware of the existence of a speech variety that should be used when talking to outsiders or superiors or in formal situations, i.e. good Tamil.

Table 7.2: Use of Tamil variety in the home domain

Which variation in Tamil language will you use to speak with your family?	Count
Written Tamil / Literary Tamil (LT) - very formal	2 (2%)
Good Tamil (SST) - spoken to outsiders or elderly persons	21 (19%)
Casual Tamil (CT) - used with family and close friends	86 (79%)
Total	109 (100%)

Data in Table 7.2 also reveals 19% of participants used the good variety at home. Based on audio-recording in some families, youth were using the good and deemed it a polite and respectful variety to be used with elderly people, parents and older family members. Two participants (2%) selected LT as their home language. This might be a misconception by the participants on the functions of Tamil varieties.

7.2.1 Language Choice (Variety) in the Domain of Family

Extracts from participants' conversations with their parents, siblings and grandparents are presented next to highlight of participants' language choice in actual contexts. Descriptions are then provided to differentiate between the three varieties.

Representation keys for the text annotations are as follows (see page xxi for pronunciation key):

[Tamil = normal font, Malay words = ***italic bold*** , English words = **bold**]

[.....= pause]

[.....] irrelevant sentences are omitted.

P = participant, F/M = gender, Y = age, T = Tamil educated,

NT = non-Tamil educated,

C = Christian, I= Muslim, (if not stated = Hindu)

In the conversation below (Extract 7.1), the participant addresses her mother the way she would address a friend (tone and words). For some families, it is acceptable for children to talk like Participant 92 to their mothers.

Extract 7.1

[P92 F 17Y NT]

(Conversation with mother, at home)

P92:mma:.... *tambiye pa:rumm:.. enno:de colour paper kudukka sollumma:*

(Mother, please reprimand younger brother. Ask him to return my colour paper.)

P92:ni: varaya...mma:..

(Are you coming?)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
<i>mma:....</i> (calling with high tone)	(<i>amma:</i>)	(<i>amma:</i>)	Mother
<i>pa:rumm:...</i>	(<i>parungke</i>)	(<i>pa:rungkal</i>)	Look here
<i>ni:... (you)</i>	(<i>ni:ngke</i>)	(<i>ni:ngkal</i>)	

Some families consider speech patterns such as in Extract 7.1 inappropriate to use with elderly persons. For example, in Extract 7.1:

mma:..... (calling with high tone)

tambiye pa:ru..... should be *tambiye pa:rungka.*

(inappropriate to address an elderly person or mother)

ni: varaya: should be *ni:ngka vari:ngkla:*

Though the participant's speech style is considered socially inappropriate, her (participant 92's) reason is acceptable as she says she talks to her mother like a friend. This also indicates that as society changes outlook, speech style also changes accordingly.

In Extract 7.2, the participant asks the father about the distance and arrival time at their destination. For a 17 year-old teenager, using *ennappa:* is not considered socially appropriate, but the father (parent) seemingly allows it. The appropriate word is *enna:ngke appa:* to elders. Just as in Extract 7.1, the participant's utterance is socially inappropriate. However, her reason that her father is like a friend makes the whole view change and now the utterance is considered an acceptable one.

Extract 7.2

[P92 F 17Y NT]

(Conversation with father, in the car)

P92:*evlo ne:rom ppa: a:vum. romba thu:rama:...*?

(How long it will take? Is it very far?)

P92:*tu enna:ppa:...*?

(What is this?)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
<i>evlo: ne:rom</i>	(<i>evvalavu ne:ram</i>)	(<i>evvalavu ne:ram</i>)	How long
<i>ithu enna:ppa:...</i>	(<i>ithu enna:ngkappa:</i>)	(<i>ithu enna:ngke appa:</i>)	Father, what is this?

The conversation in Extract 7.3 below shows a conversation between siblings. The participant's speech is of the colloquial type, appropriate to use between siblings.

Extract 7.3

[P92 17Y F, NT]

(Conversation with brother, at home)

P92:*ithu ya:ro:de..? onno:daiya..? olungka: kudu..*

(Whose is this? Yours..? Give it to me!)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
<i>Ithu ya:ro:de..?</i>	<i>(ithu ya:ro:de.?)</i>	<i>(ithu ya:rudaiyathu.?)</i>	Whose is this?
<i>onno:daiya..?</i>	<i>(unno:daiya..?)</i>	<i>(unnudaiyatha?)</i>	Yours?
<i>olungka: kudu..</i>	<i>(nalla: kuduththiru)</i>	<i>(nalla muraiyil kuduththuvidu)</i>	Give it to me!

Participants' language choice to communicate with grandparents (questionnaire results) is portrayed in Table 7.3. Although the colloquial variety is still the highest, the usage of good Tamil (SST) is 39% (see Table 7.3). A small number (4%) of participants said they used the literary variety when communicating with their grandparents. This is negligible because no one uses LT in the family environment and it is highly likely that this small percentage could be due to misinterpretation of the Tamil varieties by the participants. High usage of casual Tamil (CT) is shown in communicating with grandparents. Though Table 7.3 reveals more participants (57%) have indicated that they use CT to grandparents, 39% use SST to grandparents. This shows that participants are aware of socially appropriate variety to use when communicating with elderly people.

Table 7.3: Tamil variety used with Grandparents

Language variety	Count	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Written Tamil (LT)	4	4	4
Good Tamil (SST)	43	39	43
Casual Tamil (CT) or colloquial Tamil	62	57	100
Total	109	100	

Participant 10, in Extract 7.4, uses the good Tamil variety with his grandfather although he lacks formal Tamil education.

Extract 7.4

[P10 M 17Y NT]

(Conversation with grandparents, at home)

P10: *aiyo: tha:ththa: ungalukku ethe pa:tta:lum ya:re pa:tta:lum santhe:gamtha:n.*

pa:tti ni: tha:n enne ka:ppa:ththanum.....

(Aiyo grandpa, you are always suspicious. Grandma, please rescue me..)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
<i>aiyo:</i>		(unnecessary interjection)	Exclamation
<i>ungkalukku</i>	(<i>ungkalukku</i>)	(<i>ungkalukku</i>)	to you (polite form)
<i>ni:tha:n</i>	(<i>ni:ngkatha:n</i>)	(<i>ni:ngkatha:n</i>)	it's you (non-polite form)

Explaining this, Participant 10 said, “My mother has taught me to speak appropriate language to grandparents; one cannot speak like to siblings or friends to outsiders or elderly people. I learned this appropriate language over time. I can easily switch to appropriate variety to my grandfather and other elderly people”. This participant exhibits the use of different varieties according to social needs.

In Extract 7.4, the participant talks appropriately to his grandfather, but he talks to his grandmother as if talking to a friend. Extract 7.5 shows the participant using *ille* to his grandma. It should have been *illi:ngke*. Absence of the *ngka* form shows no respect to the addressee, the grandma, who is older. The form *ni:* cannot be used to strangers and people older than or superior to the speaker. The correct form is *ni:ngka* and *venuminikke* shows different pronunciation (see Extract 7.5).

Extract 7.5

[P10 M17Y NT- C21]

(Conversation with grandmother, at home)

P10: ille pa:tti ni: ve:re:. athu summa: **park** panniyiruntha mo:tta:ru pa:tti. aven ve: numinikkepo:ttu kudukkura:n.

(No grandma, it was only a parked motorbike. He intentionally..)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
<i>ille pa:tti</i>	(<i>illi:ngke pa:tti</i>)	(<i>illi:ngke pa:tti</i>)	no grandma (non-polite form)
<i>illi:ngke tha:ththa:</i>	(<i>illi:ngke tha:ththa:</i>)	(<i>illi:ngke tha:ththa:</i>)	no grandpa (polite form)
<i>venuminikke:</i>	(<i>ve:ndumendre:</i>)	(<i>ve:ndumendre:</i>)	purposely

The participant used *ni:* to his grandmother. In an interview session, he explained that although he knew the proper term, his grandma was more like his friend. Hence, he used *ni:* to his grandmother, a term he had been using since he was small. Although socially his utterance does not show respect to his grandmother, his reasons are valid, i.e. he uses the form to show closeness.

7.2.2 Reasons for Using Different Varieties in the Home Domain with Grandparents

Participant 10 said he respected both the grandparents. He used *ille pa:tti* (CT), which showed he and his grandmother were close like friends. But he used *illi:ngka thaththa:* (SST) to his grandfather because he respects the grandfather. Additionally, the grandmother accepted the addressing term since the participant was young and used to it. But although the participant was close with grandfather as well, he had a little fear and dared not address him without the *ngka* form. His mother had also emphasized the use of the *ngka* form and good Tamil to all those who were older than him. But the participant's preference was casual language (CT) because he and grandmother were friends. Also, *ni:*

to grandmother showed affection and closeness. And there was also the wrong pronunciation of the word *ve:numinikke* used by the participant. The correct pronunciation is *vendumenre:* as shown in description below Extract 7.5. He used a different pronunciation due to the lack of Tamil education and also the lack of awareness on the correct pronunciation.

7.2.3 Tamil Language Variety Used with Elderly People

Based on the questionnaire, Table 7.4 shows the majority (85%) of participants used good Tamil or the SST variety with elderly people. Only 11% used CT with elderly people, while 4% used LT. LT as a language choice for use with elderly people is negligible since no one uses LT in informal situations. Again, this perhaps could be due to the participants not being able to differentiate or recognize the different varieties of Tamil.

Table 7.4: Tamil language variety used when communicating with elderly people

		Count
Which variation in Tamil language will you use with elderly people?	Literary Tamil (LT) or written Tamil	4 (4%)
	Good Tamil (SST)	93 (85%)
	Casual Tamil (CT) or colloquial Tamil	12 (11%)
	Total	109 (100%)

7.2.4 Reasons for Using Good Tamil or Standard Tamil with Elderly People

Below are the reasons given by the participants as to why they used standard Tamil to converse with elderly people. Participants said they should use the SST with elderly people to show respect; that is the appropriate variety to talk to elderly people (see section 7.2.1).

7.3 The Colloquial Variety as Choice to Communicate with Siblings

The colloquial variety is used to communicate with siblings. A free, casual and informal talk is preferred by everyone in their home. Extract 7.6 by Participant 92 shows her language choice with her younger brother.

Extract 7.6

[P92 F 17Y NT]			
(Conversation with brother at home)			
P: 92De:..yy... si:kkiram tha...da..., na: seni ve:le seyyinum (calling the brother)			
:konda: daaaa...			
(Hey, please hurry-up and give me. I need to do art work... Hey....)			

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
de:..yy	(taimbi...)	(tambi...)	little brother
tha:...da....	(tha:...)	(tha:...)	give! (non-polite form)
konda:....	(kondu va:...)	(kondu va)	give! (non-polite form)

The addressing terms *dey* and *da:* in CT can only be used to younger siblings and close friends. Hence, participant 92 is using it with her younger brother.

7.3.1 Reasons for Language Choice in the Home Domain with Siblings

Participant 92, in Extract 7.6, calls the little brother *dey*. The terms *dey* and *da:* in Tamil are used to address someone younger (male) or close friends. This addressing term also involves non-linguistic elements, such as demonstrative expressions and voice tone. If *dey* is uttered in a loud voice, it shows someone is angry. If used in a long utterance, *de...y* it shows a demand for something. The participant calling the little brother *de..yy...* indicates that she is angry because he took her things. This utterance also exhibits the CT variety. The form *konda:* can only be used in CT. She alluded to a number of reasons for the language choice given by Participant 92 in the interview session.

In her view, as she was interacting with her younger brother, the usage of CT variety was justified. She also confessed that she felt closer and comfortable using CT. She justified her usage of CT saying that it had been that way in the family since she was young. Furthermore, she felt that talking to her brother in the the standard variety would appear to be funny. Finally, she said that she was also not competent in standard Tamil since she is not from Tamil medium school.

7.4 Tamil Language Variety Selected to Communicate with Small Children

Generally, small children will have difficulty in understanding dialects or distinct variations of a language. Hence, SST is appropriate to them. Table 7.5 shows (questionnaire result) that the majority (70.6%) participants stated that they chose the variety easily understood by small children.

Table 7.5: Tamil language variety used when communicating with small children

		Count
Which variation in Tamil language will you use with very small children?	Literary Tamil (LT)	1 (1%)
	Good Tamil (near SST)	77 (71%)
	Casual Tamil (CT)	31 (28%)
	Total	109 (100%)

Values in Table 7.6 show that participants' choice of SST variety with small children increases with their age. Older participants (age groups 18–23 and 24–30) show relatively higher percentages (80% and 84%) of using good Tamil than the younger participants (15–17 age group), where only 58% of them used good Tamil. These results show that (data from questionnaire and interview) younger participants have less awareness of the distinct varieties in Tamil. As participants grow older and go through socialization (Romaine, 2000) they realise the need and importance to use appropriate varieties in different social contexts. Hence, Table 7.6 shows that as the age increases, their usage of

SST also increases from 58% in the group of 15 to 17-year olds to 84% in the age group of 24 to 30-year olds. This shows that SST variety is naturally learned by youngsters through experience and interaction with their own speech community.

Table 7.6: Tamil language variety used when communicating with small children -by age group

				Count	Percentage
Age Group	15 to 17	Which variation in Tamil language will you use with very small children?	Literary Tamil (LT)	1	2
			Good Tamil (SST)	30	58
			Casual Tamil (CT)	21	40
	18 to 23		Literary Tamil (LT)	0	0
			Good Tamil (SST)	16	80
			Casual Tamil (CT)	4	20
	24 to 30		Literary Tamil (LT)	0	0.0
			Good Tamil (SST)	31	84
			Casual Tamil (CT)	6	16

Based on observation of a married participant (67) conversing with her 2 year-old child (Extract 7.7), the participant generally used good Tamil. The participant used *va:ngke* instead of the colloquial variety *va:.*, which is a polite form of saying ‘come here’. Likewise, she used *pa:rungke* (look here) and *sollungka* (say this) instead of the low variety *pa:ru* and *sollu*, respectively. Interview sessions revealed that Participant 67, a young mother, nurtured her child with a good variety of Tamil so that the child would build a proper vocabulary in Tamil.

Extract 7.7

[P67 F 29Y T, Married]

(Communicating with her 2-year-old child)

P67:*chellam intha: colour. come sit with amma: va:ngka padikkala:m*

(Dear, here is the colour. Come sit with amma:. Please come, we read.)

P67:*appu kutty... appadi illaiya..... amma:ve pa:rungka..... book-u ingka eduththu va:ngka..*

(Dear, it is not like that. Look at mother. Please bring the book here.)

P67:*Joshu, ingka va:ngka.vanakkam sollungka*

(Joshu, come here. Please greet, say *vanakkam*.)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
(<i>Vaa</i>)	<i>va:ngke</i>	(<i>va:rungkal</i>)	come here (polite form)
(<i>pa:ru</i>)	<i>pa:rungke</i>	(<i>pa:rungkal</i>)	look here (polite form)
(<i>Sollu</i>)	<i>sollungka</i>	(<i>sollungkal</i>)	say this (polite form)

The speech variety and reasons found in Extract 7.7 are the same for Participant 1 in Extract 7.8. She uses polite and gentle form of speech with her younger brother who was six years old. Participant 1, who was 22 years old, also favoured using the SST variety when conversing with her young sibling and using only a small percentage of the casual Tamil variety, confirming the findings in Table 7.6. The participant said that she normally uses good Tamil and speaks gently and smoothly to small children.

Extract 7.8

<p>[P1F 22Y T-B6]</p> <p>(Talking to her little brother, at home)</p> <p>P1: <i>va:lu kutti inke va:aiya:.. Innikki kindergarten-le enna: padichi:ngke</i> (Hi, little cub with tail, come here. What did you learn in kindergarten?)</p>			
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CT	SST	LT	Meaning
<i>va:yya:</i>	(<i>va: aiya:</i>)	(<i>va: aiya:</i>)	come (<i>aiya:</i> polite form of addressing with love)
(<i>Padiche</i>)	<i>padichi:ngke</i>	(<i>padiththi:rkal</i>)	have learnt (you) (<i>kal-</i> plural but in this context is polite form)

7.4.1 Reasons for Using Good Variety with Children

In Extract 7.7, Participant 67 used the good variety of Tamil (SST) with her child. She wanted her child to learn and speak good language. She did not like the CT variety because sometimes the way people speak in CT is neither pleasant nor appropriate in some contexts. She added, “Some use it inappropriately without realising the circumstances or to whom they are speaking to. Hence, I insist on speaking in good Tamil

besides English to my child.” She said she did not wish her child to learn the CT variety. She preferred her child to be fluent in English than the Tamil CT variety. The CT variety is inappropriate to all the social levels and all addressees. She also expressed her opinion that she chose the SST variety of Tamil because it is easily understood by small children.

Participant 1 also used good Tamil with her little brother. According to her, if she spoke fast or in casual language (CT), the young brother might not understand. Good Tamil (SST) is a clear and gentle form easily understood by small children. Small children might not understand CT, which can vary in tone, vocabulary and expressions. Participants 1, 10 and 92, in Extracts 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8, selected the good Tamil (SST) variety to communicate with small children. They gave valid reasons for their language (variety) choice, i.e. it is easier to understand and is socially appropriate. Normally, adults are aware that colloquial forms which vary according to social group, age, speech pace and pitch variation cannot be grasped by younger children. They are also aware that they have the social responsibility to teach a good language to small children. Hence, the sister was talking in good Tamil (near SST form) to her younger brother.

7.5 Tamil Language Variety Used with Friends

Extract 7.9 and Extract 7.10 show that participants heavily used the casual Tamil (CT) when conversing with friends, be it in the school environment or at the university. The casual variety of Tamil was their choice and was used by both participants as well as their friends.

Extract 7.9

[P72 F 15Y T-B9]

(Conversing with school girls) (F = friend)

F: *ey olunga pe:su illena: mu:kka pe:tturuven*

(Hey, mind your words. If not I will break your nose.)

P72: *a:ma: athu varaikkum en kayyi poo parikkum...?*

(Yes, by then my hands will pluck flowers.)

P72: *ata:n anta theva:nggu paiyen.... pakkattu class-u.. vantu ithe **disturb** pannikittu iruntha:n.*

(That's him the monkey boy next class.. came here and disturbed this girl)

'kenapa kamu layan dia' appadinnu tho: ithukku pa:ttu ulunthuuci.

(‘Why should you give face or entertain him’ she yelled at her)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
<i>Ey</i>	-	-	addressing term among friends (non-polite form)
<i>olungka:</i>	<i>(muraiya:)</i>	<i>(muraiya:ga)</i>	properly
<i>pe:ththuruven</i>	<i>(udaichiruven)</i>	<i>(udaiththu viduve:n)</i>	will smash
<i>(ulunthuuci)</i>	<i>(vilunthuuci)</i>	<i>(vilunthathu)</i>	fell (object)
<i>poo parikkum</i>	<i>(summa: irukkum)</i>	<i>(pe:samal irukkum)</i>	keep quiet (idiomatic term)

Extract 7.10

[P26 M 23Y NT-5]

(Conversing with friends, in university)

P26: *ippe ni engka po:va pore? **lecture** irukka? ille **room-ukku** po:riya?*

(Where are you heading to now? Are you having lecture? Or going to your room, instead?)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
<i>Ippe</i>	<i>(ippo:)</i>	<i>(ippoluthu)</i>	now
<i>Pore</i>	<i>(po:re:)</i>	<i>(po:kira:y)</i>	going (you)
<i>irukka:</i>	<i>(irukkutha:)</i>	<i>(irukkiratha:)</i>	have (class)
<i>po:riya:</i>	<i>(po:kira:ya:)</i>	<i>(po:kira:ya)</i>	are you going

7.5.1 Reasons for Using the CT Variety with Friends

Interviews revealed that participants were comfortable with the CT variety. Extract 7.9 illustrates that one participant heavily used CT with his friend, such as *ey olunga pe:su illena: mu:kka pe:tturuven* (Hi, speak properly or I'm going to smash your nose). This utterance sounds like the participant is going to smash her friend's nose if the friend does not speak in a proper manner. Interview sessions helped to get further understanding from the participants and it could be seen that the friends were very close. It was also clear that between them, there was mutual understanding and the use of harsh words in reality showed their closeness although it sounded as if they were having an argument.

7.6 Tamil Language Variety in the Domain of Education

The following (Extract 7.11) depicts the Tamil variety used in school during a Tamil lesson when talking about educational matters. Participant 7, a 17 year-old student in the Tamil class, was discussing their subject-related presentation with classmates.

Extract 7.11

[P7 M 17Y T-4]

(Discussion with friends, in school, Cm = classmate)

P7: *intha pembentangan-e ni: seyyi. na: ella:m eluthittu vanthutte:n. aven chart ella:me varainjitta:n. now your turn pembentangan. why creating hassle?* (CT to classmate)

(You present this. I have written everything. He has drawn all the charts. Now it's your duty to present. Why are you making troubles now?)

Cm: *na:n computer-le bahan ella: the:di kudththe:n.. paththa:tha:* (CT to classmate)

(I have searched for materials on the computer and provided already. Isn't that enough)

P7: (to teacher) *inke pa:rungke aiyai. Avunke avungke ve:leyyai pirichi koduththa:cchu.*

a:na: ippo:pirachanai pannura:n, gobi. (SST to teacher)

(See here teacher. We have divided the work to everyone. But he is causing problems now)

.....

P: *porulaatha:raththil na:du munne:ra ve:nduma:na:l na:ttu makkal kadumaiyaaka ulaikka ve:ndum. makkal munne:rinaa; na:du tha:na:ga uyarum....* (LT for oral Tamil oral test)

The discussion among classmates in Tamil class (first utterance) illustrates that CT is preferred with classmates though it was a formal Tamil class. They were able to converse

in three languages, i.e. Tamil, Malay and English. However, the participant used SST (second utterance) with the teacher. They were fussing over a lesson presentation and the participant preferred casual Tamil to solve problems among classmates. Finally, the participant came out to give his speech for a presentation (third utterance), which was in the LT variety. The presentation was formal and was for the purpose of Tamil oral test assessment, which was assessed and graded by the teacher.

7.6.1 Reasons for Using Tamil Varieties in the Domain of Education

An interview session showed Participant 7's reason for his different varieties of Tamil in his Tamil class. He said that classmates were friends and that they knew each other well. Therefore, he used CT though it was in a Tamil lesson. But a teacher is elder to students. Hence, he used the SST variety with the teacher to show respect (see Extract 7.11). He said the oral presentation was formal and for evaluation; therefore, LT is compulsory to get good marks. Hence, he used the LT variety for the oral test (see extract 7.11).

Based on an interview session, another participant had the following reasons for mixing casual Tamil and formal Tamil in the school environment:

Extract 7.12

[P40 F 17Y T]

I use Malay and English to my non Tamil classmates
I use casual Tamil to my Tamil friends. my casual speech has mixture of Malay and English words too. I use CT to my friends and classmates to discuss educational related matters. I use standard Tamil (SST) to talk to my Tamil teachers. But, I use LT form of Tamil for Tamil oral assessment. Because, it was an assessment, I used purely LT form without mixture of any other languages.

Participant 40 says she uses Malay and English to her non-Tamil classmates. She uses casual Tamil in school, mixed with English and Malay words among her classmates to discuss her school related matters. However, when speaking to her Tamil teacher regarding her Tamil subject, she uses SST form of Tamil and to do her Tamil oral test,

she uses LT form. Participant 40 says that she uses LT only in the Tamil class for Tamil speech or oral test. Normally, she uses SST to discuss with her teacher. For exam related talks and competition related Tamil speech, she uses LT. Hence, the language choice of Participant 40 consists of three varieties of Tamil apart from Malay and English.

7.7 Tamil Language Variety at the Workplace

The following discusses recordings made at the workplace, where the participants were talking to their colleagues or friends who were also Tamils. The expression in Extract 7.13, below, *intha... intha... pa:tti ma:ri noi noi nnu pulamba:the* (do not mumble like a grandmother), shows that the participant is ticking her friend off over her mumbling attitude about an ‘always missing knife’. She used the CT variety with idiomatic expressions and used *ni* (you/singular that is only appropriate to be used with friends or younger siblings). In SST, the appropriate pronoun is *ni:ngka(l)* (you/plural/polite form). The participant also mixes Malay and English words in her speech.

Extract 7.13

[P82 F 28Y NT]

(Conversation at workplace with colleague) C : colleague

C: *sari la: intha cabbage e renda vetti kudu customer ukku. kathti engka ka:nom. vecha idattule irukka ma:tte:ngkuthu...* (mumbling)

(Ok. Cut this cabbage into two for the customer. Where is the knife? It’s missing. It’s always not at the place where I always place it.)

P82 : *intha... intha... (passing the knife) .. pa:tti ma:ri noi noi nnu pulamba:the. mothalle tembikai cut panna ni:tha:ne eduththu antha counter pakkaththule vechche..!*

(Here it is... here it is... don’t keep grumbling like a granny. Didn’t you take the knife earlier and placed it beside the counter to cut the watermelon!)

However, when her supervisor came (Extract 7.14), she immediately changed to the SST variety: *Sollungka.... intha section vege ella:m ma:ththi puthusu vaikkamum.. ok*. She changed her variety because of the role relationship with her manager at the workplace.

Sollungka (please say) is the polite form. Good Tamil also comprises appropriate pronunciation and non-linguistic elements such as tone and expression manner.

Extract 7.14

[P82 F 28Y NT]

(Conversation with manager at workplace)

P82 : *Sollungka.... intha section vege ella:m ma:ththi puthusu vaikkamum. ok.*

(Say. All the vegetables in this section need to be replaced with new ones.ok)

When the supervisor left, the participant spoke in Malay to a non-Tamil co-worker, as seen in Extract 7.15, to explain about the co-worker's job.

Extract 7.15

[P82 F 28Y]

(Conversation with coworker at workplace)

P82: *dei adik mari. Taruh ini yellow tag dulu. sudah pukul dua lebih. you tau masa yellow tag ka:n.cepat. manager mari .. marah.*

(Hi, (little brother) please put the yellow price tag first. It is two o'clock. You know right the yellow tag time? Do fast, if manager comes will scold.)

To conclude, Participant 82, at her workplace, used Malay and English for inter-group communications and two varieties of Tamil (SST and CT) for intra-group communications, according to relationship.

In Extract 7.16, the participant is a Tamil teacher in a primary Tamil school and uses a mixture of LT and SST varieties to students. The phrase *ma:navarkale: vanakkam* is from the LT variety. The question sentence, *ne:traiya vi:ttu pa:dam seiyythu kondu vanthutti:ngkala:?* is in the SST variety.

Extract 7.16

[P56 F 28Y T-1]

(As Tamil teacher talking in the class)

P56: *ma:navarkale: vanakkam.*

ne:traiya vi:ttu pa:dam seiythu kondu vanthutti:ngkala:?

sari. payirchi puththakaththai me:sai mel:le vaiyungga

(students.... (good morning)

(Have you all completed yesterday's homework?

Ok please place your exercise books on your tables)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
-	-	<i>ma:navarkale:</i>	greetings to students
-	-	<i>vanakkam</i>	
-	-	<i>ne:traiya vi:ttu</i>	yesterday's homework
-	-	<i>pa:dam</i>	
-	-	<i>seiythu kondu</i>	have you done
-	<i>vanthutti:ngkala</i>	<i>(vanthuvitti:rkala:)</i>	did you come
	:		

It was a Tamil class lesson; therefore, the participant used the LT and SST variety.

Normally, in SST the tenses in verb will be shortened. For instance, in Extract 7.166:

vanthuvitti:rkala: → vanthutti:ngkala:.

Extract 7.17 exhibits a participant's casual talk with her colleague. This speech was in the SST variety.

Extract 7.17

[P56 F 28Y T-12]

(A Tamil teacher talking to her friends)

P56: *ama: romba ve:le. seyya seyya mudiyave ma:tte:ngkuthu.*

(Yes, more work. I'm doing and doing. But, can't finish it.)

.....

P: *na:likki ve:re: exam a:rambikuthu. athe ve:re thiruththi edukanum*

(On top of it, exam starts tomorrow.)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
<i>Romba</i>	<i>(romba)</i>	<i>(niramba)</i>	more
<i>ma:tte:ngkutu</i>	<i>(mudiyale)</i>	<i>(mudiyavillai)</i>	cannot finish
<i>na:likki</i>	<i>(na:laikku)</i>	<i>(na:lay)</i>	tomorrow
<i>a:rambikkuthu</i>	<i>(a:rambikkuthu)</i>	<i>(a:rambikkirathu)</i>	will start

Extract 7.16 and Extract 7.17 show Participant 56 used three varieties of Tamil in her day-to-day interactions. The SST and LT varieties are used for formal purposes, such as in the classroom as she is a teacher, whereas the CT variety is used to communicate with her friends who are also colleagues.

Participant 58 was a professional and working in an office. He used the CT variety with his Tamil colleague-cum-friend. He mixed work related English terms in his speech. Based on an interview, the participant said that he only learnt Tamil in primary school. His secondary school, university and subsequently career were all in a multi-ethnic environment. He said he spoke less Tamil and more English, thus now he could not speak Tamil fluently. Generally, when he was at a loss for Tamil words, he mixed English and Malay words or switched completely to English. Extract 7.18 portrays the participant's speech varieties in his workplace domain.

Extract 7.18

[P58 M 30Y, T]

(Conversing with friends, at office)

P58: *file e pa:kkanum nu sonna:ru. refer pannanum a:. antha client o:de. dead line kitte varuthu. accounts complete pannanum.*

(He says he wants the files. He wants to refer to the files. It's client's files. Dateline is nearing, need to complete the account)

In the next scenario (see Extract 7.19), Participant 27 used English at her workplace with a Tamil interlocutor. In the interview, she explained that because of her poor Tamil, she was afraid of making mistakes. She only spoke Tamil to family members and close friends. Her friends had always teased her because of her colloquial Tamil. As a result, she avoided Tamil when talking to outsiders, particularly to elderly people. Though she was Tamil-educated up to primary level completion (Standard 6), her spoken Tamil was

not fluent. She also added that English helped her to communicate with ease and confidence with fellow Tamils.

Extract 7.19

[P27 F 26Y T]

(At a medical clinic) (U = Patient)

P27: *minthi vanthi:ngkala: or new patient?*

(Have you been here before or new patient?)

U: *mmm..*

P27: **How long already, Uncle? About a year or two?**

U: *oru varusaththukku me:le irukkum....*

(Could me more than a year)

P27: **Ok, Uncle. I'll look for your card. Please sit, Uncle.**

P: **Uncle, I cannot find the card. Nevermind, Uncle, I will open a new card.**

7.7.1 Reasons for Using Tamil Varieties at the Workplace

Participant 82 was working in a super market. She used Malay with a non-Tamil colleague. For intra-group communications she used the CT variety with a colleague-cum-friend and the good Tamil (SST) variety with her superior. When interviewed on the reasons for her usage of different Tamil varieties, she said that CT was used to her friend as it showed solidarity and closeness and that it was also the comfortable variety for her use to share her teething troubles. The good Tamil variety was to show respect towards her superior. As for Participant 56, in Extract 7.17, she uses LT and SST in Tamil class. LT was for formal oral testing and SST was a prerequisite variety to be used during Tamil lessons with teachers. Therefore, participants are compelled to use SST during Tamil lessons.

Participant 58 used the CT variety with his colleague, who was also his friend. In an interview session, the participant said that he used Tamil with his friends to show solidarity and also for a casual and relaxed chat for the purpose of relieving work related stress. He also said that he mixed English work-related terms which were easily accessible

in communicating with colleagues. Participant 58 also mentioned that most of the time they used English, as their working papers, documents and files were in English. Furthermore, he was working with colleagues of other races and therefore, English was the main language used. The tendency continues with intra-group communications as well. He added that if he tried to communicate in Tamil involving technical and work-related terms, his speech and the conversation would not be fluent.

7.8 Tamil Variety Chosen at Places of Worship

When conversing with a priest in a temple or church, or imam in a surau, participants mainly used the standard variety of Tamil (SST) followed by a little casual and literary Tamil (Table 7.7). A similar pattern was observed in all the age groups, as shown in Table 7.8. However, in the 15–17-year age group, 7% of participants said they used the LT variety with priests. No one spoke the LT variety other than in very formal situations. Selection of LT in this age group (15 to 17) might be a misunderstanding about the varieties. The majority of participants opted for the SST variety probably as a gesture of respect. Table 7.8 also indicates that as the participants get more mature, they recognise the difference between varieties and with that, the appropriate varieties in different social situations. Therefore, the number of participants who selected SST increased with their age.

Table 7.7: Tamil language variety to priest

		Count
Which variation in Tamil language will you use to temple priest / church father / imam / religious leader?	Literary Tamil	8 (7%)
	Good Tamil (SST)	93 (86%)
	Casual Tamil	8 (7%)
	Total	109 (100%)

Table 7.8: Tamil language variety used when communicating with priest - by age group

Age group			Count
15 to 17	Which variation in Tamil language will you use to temple priest / church father / imam	Literary Tamil	8 (15%)
		Good Tamil (SST)	38 (73%)
		Casual Tamil	6 (12%)
18 to 23		Literary Tamil	0 (0%)
		Good Tamil (SST)	19 (95%)
		Casual Tamil	1 (5%)
24 to 30		Literary Tamil	0 (0%)
		Standard spoken Tamil (SST)	36 (97%)
		Casual Tamil	1 (3%)

Following are transcript extracts from recordings obtained at places of worship. Extract 7.20 shows Participant 17 using good Tamil to communicate with a priest in a temple. In Extract 7.21 and Extract 7.22, Participant 15 and Participant 24 are using LT for prayers and recital of Hindu religious hymns, respectively.

Extract 7.20

[Participant 17]

P17: *oru archanai si:ttu kudungga.... Eththanai velli?*

(Please give a *archanai* –prayer chit. How much?)

P17: *... ra:si kanni natchaththiram... uththiram*

(Astrological birth time)

Extract 7.21

[Participant 15]

(While attending prayers for SPM examination – follows the mass)

Ella:m valla iraiva: na:ngakal intha parichaiyai sirapp:ga seyya arulpuriva:ya:ga.

(Oh All Mighty, please bless us to do well in the exam.)

Extract 7.22

[P24M 15YT]

(15-year-old students, at religious class)

(Theva:ram song in Tamil)

ainthu karaththanai a:nai mugaththanai

inthin ilampirai..... (Religious song)

7.8.1 Reasons for Using LT and SST Varieties in the Domain of Religion.

When asked about language used at Hindu temples, participants (through interview) agreed that they tended to use SST or LT varieties to talk to priests about prayer-related matters. Another participant, who was not Tamil-educated, preferred using English or took along his friend, who was fluent in Tamil, to communicate with the priest (Participant 14). Participant 17 said that since it was an unwritten rule to use only SST in Hindu temples, he had to comply by it. However, he admitted that whenever he could not find the right words, he resorted to using English. In contrast, Participant 14 acknowledged that he was not fluent in SST and refrained from using it when communicating with the priest out of fear of making mistakes and not wanting to feel embarrassed. Thus, to avoid awkward situations resulting from him using Tamil improperly, he preferred to use English.

7.9 Tamil Language Variety with Neighbours

Recordings were also made in the neighbourhood domain. Below are example transcript extracts from the recorded conversations of participants with their neighbours.

Extract 7.23

[P55M 16Y nt]

(Conversation with neighbor, N = neighbour)

P55: ஐயோ **uncle** நா சொன்னேனு சொல்ல வேணாம். அவ்ளோதான். நாளைக்கி **school**-லெ சண்டைக்கி வருவான்க.

(aiyo uncle na: sonne:nu solla ve:na:m. avlo tha:n. na:laikki school-le sandaikki varuva:ngke)

(Uncle please don't tell him that I informed. Gone. Tomorrow they will fight with me at school.)

N: சண்டைக்கு வருவானா? சண்டைலாம் போடுவானா...?

sandaikku varuva:na:? sandaiyella:m po:duva:na?

(Fight with you? Does he dare to fight?)

P55: இல்ல ----- அவன் வரமாட்டான்-----அவன் கூட்டாளிங்க வருவான்க-----

Ille..... aven varama:tta:n... aven ku:tta:lingke varuva:ngke

(No he wont.his friends will come)

CT	SST	LT	Meaning
<i>varuva:n ke</i>	<i>(varuva:ngke)</i>	<i>(varuva:rkal)</i>	they will come
<i>Ille</i>	<i>(illi:ngke)</i>	<i>(illaingke..)</i>	no

Participant 55 was a 16 year-old teenager and a student. He spoke CT to his neighbour the way he would when speaking to friends. This speech is considered inappropriate as the neighbour was older than the participant. This speech therefore lacks socially appropriate features. Instead, the particle *.li:nga* (...லீங்க) should have been used with the addressee.

Following is another extract from Participant 76, from a conversation in a neighbourhood situation.

Extract 7.24

[P76 F16YC T]

(N = neighbour)

P76: **Aunty Murali** *enke? ku:ppida mudiya:?*

(Aunty, where is Murali? Can you call him?)

N: *irukka:n. ennamo: school vele seyyira:n.*

(Yes he is. Doing some school work.)

P76: *ille... oru visayama: pa:kkalum... .. aven eththanai manikku padang-kku po:va:n?*

(Just wanted to see him, I have a matter to ask. What time does he go to field?)

N: *teriyilaye:*

(I don't know)

P76: *teriyileya: ... ku:ppida mudiya:?* –

with ill mannerd tone:

(You don't know. Can you call him? – his tone sounds less polite.)

The teenager (Participant 76) was talking to an older lady who was his neighbour. His language and tone sounded impolite and showed the lack of socially appropriate forms, as if he was talking to a friend. Conversation with the neighbour exposed a few factors involved in his speech style, such as language choice, which showed inappropriateness and the lack of respect even when talking to an older person. Upon interview subsequently, it was found that as Participant 76's parents were both working and he was left in the care of a non-Tamil speaking foreign maid since he was young. His spoken Tamil was relatively poor since early childhood. Once he entered secondary school, his speech style started to change, having been influenced by his friends. He started to speak more in Malay and English or mix more Malay and English words in his speech. He said since he spoke very little Tamil with others, his Tamil did not improve further. He also admitted that his Tamil was not suitable for conversations with older persons. As a result, he avoided speaking in Tamil to those other than his family, friends and neighbours, as he only had the confidence to use Tamil with people he was very familiar with.

7.10 Tamil Language Variety in the Domain of Transaction

During an interview session, this question about participants' language use was raised. A total of 22 out of 40 participants said their language choice was Tamil for intra-group communications. 12 participants said that they used English or Malay because they were afraid of making mistakes in Tamil as they could not speak good Tamil. When asked about spoken Tamil varieties they used, the non-Tamil educated participants said that they were not able to precisely differentiate between casual speech and standard language. On the other hand, the Tamil educated participants were confident enough to talk in Tamil, even to strangers, because of their awareness of the appropriate language to use with outsiders. Two participants, despite their Tamil education, preferred to mix or switch to Malay and English because they were familiar with the languages. They only spoke Tamil at home and amongst friends. One of them (Participant 17) added that he seldom used Tamil in public places as he spoke only the casual variety at home, which was not suitable for conversing with outsiders. Hence, he switched to English with which he was comfortable, as shown in the quotation below.

[Participant 17]

I can speak casual Tamil. I know when speaking to outsiders one should use proper Tamil. I'm not Tamil-educated. Hence, I can't speak Tamil appropriately. Later, I did not develop to speak proper Tamil because of my friends in secondary school spoke different Tamil. To add, with interference of English and Malay my Tamil became worst, I guess. For that reason I'm shy to speak Tamil. I can't speak good Tamil. Therefore, I prefer English or Malay to outsiders (Tamil).

With the consent of Participant 4, her verbal communication was recorded. At the market, Participant 4's Tamil speech was very casual. Just to question with the word *evlo* is quite impolite to address to an outsider. It would be socially appropriate to ask *evlo:ngke* instead of *evlo*. Additionally, her choice of words shows that she was not proficient in Tamil. Besides this, she used more Malay names for vegetables and measurements.

Extract 7.25

[P4F 24Y NT]

Participant with dealer in a wet market.

SP: Sales person

P4: *Aunty*, *intha sayur* *evlo*?

(Aunty, how much is the vegetable?)

SP: *ithu oru kilo mu:nu ambathu*.

(One kilogram is three fifty...)

P4: *ok enakku setengah kilo kudungke... ithu kacang panjang.....*

(ok give me half kilo..... how much is the long beans?)

SP: *ve:numa: innikki konjam vele ku:de*

(Do you want? Today slightly expensive)

P4: *evlo Aunty?*

(How much Aunty?)

SP: *na:lu embathu*.

(Four eighty)

P4: *o.. sari ithum setengah kilo ve:num*.

(Ok this too I want half kilo.)

7.10.1 Reasons for Language Choice in the Domain of Transaction

The following are reasons collected from interview sessions.

Participant 4 said that as she was not confident enough to speak in Tamil to shopkeepers, she would normally communicate in Malay or English. She felt that it was easier to use English and she faced no problem in finding the right terms to use when addressing the interlocutors, which varies in Tamil according to age, position and situation, such as *ni:* or *ni:ngka*. and the form *...ngka*. She also agreed that resorting to using Malay and English, instead of Tamil did not help develop her Tamil proficiency further.

The domain of transaction is important for a speech community to practice their native language and socialize to learn appropriate or standard language from outsiders. Since this domain shows only one third of Tamil language use and further a huge amount of code mixing behavior among participants, it means that a domain which can help to practice good Tamil is slowly vanishing. This study has also discovered that a lack of

proficiency in Tamil among participants added with Tamil's diglossic nature leads further to language shift.

7.10.2 The Domain of Religion

Extract 7.26 reveals that the participant, who was not Tamil educated had difficulty in understanding the LT variety of Tamil as most of temple activities and *Thevaram* (Hindu hymns) are in Tamil. She also regretted that she did not have formal Tamil education. She also prefers hearing the horoscope narration in Tamil. This shows that the domain of religion still needs Tamil to a great extent and that it has an influence on the attitudes of Tamils towards their language

Extract 7.26

[P8F 30Y NT]

(Female, Non-Tamil educated, 30 years old)

P8: *Ko:yilil pu:jai , archanai, samaya urai ella:me Tamil. Ko:yille nadavadikkaikal, vila:kkal ella:m tamille seyira:ngkae. Enakku ippo varuththama: irukku. Samayattulu nalla tamil puriya ma:tte:ngkuthu. ko:yilletha:n tamil valaruthunnu sollanum. Ra:sipalan padikkum po:thu Tamille ya:rum padichi sonna: nalla:puriyithu. Englishle padicha:lum avvalava: thirupti ille. Enn irunhtha:lum enakku tamille ra:si palan pdikkurathe ke:tta: tha:n manasukku neraiva: irukku.*

(In temple all activities are conducted in Tamil. Prayers and speeches also in Tamil. Most of the times I do not understand high Tamil. I understand the *rasipalan* (horoscope and astrology) narration. However I am only satisfied to hear *rasipalan* in Tamil. I regret now I did not have formal Tamil education).

7.11 Discussion of Varieties of Tamil Used in Different Domains

According to Gumperz (1958), small differences in speech can distinguish sub-groups in society from one another. Choice of language symbolizes social category and membership of a particular group. Language or variation is chosen for specific interactions to convey that individuals belong to a particular group (Gal, 1979). This can be noticed in Tamil youth's speech, as well, which shows linguistic variation.

Overall, there were signs of language shift in some domains, whereas there was language maintenance in others. The domains of education, workplace and transaction showed obvious signs of language shift, where Tamil was used only as a matrix language with excessive code mixing and code-switching with English and Malay languages for important terms and expressions, or simply to have a better speech flow. Similar occurrences took place in the domain of friendship, where participants mixed more English and Malay words, which in future would limit Tamil vocabulary among Malaysians.

Tamil is a diglossic language. The casual (colloquial) variety cannot be used with strangers or elderly persons. However, findings from the survey (natural conversations and interviews) show that participants, particularly teenagers who had had no formal Tamil education, sometimes found it difficult to choose appropriate forms in the domain of transaction according to the addressee (interlocutor). Thus, they ended up using the casual variety inappropriately and the most difficult part was inquiring and questioning about the things they wanted to buy (Participants 55 and 76). For instance, the particle *...li:nga* (...லிங்க) should be used at the end of verbs directed to the addressee as a sign of respect when talking to an elderly person. Some teenagers involved in this study were not aware of the appropriate component (particle) for their superior addressees (see Section 5.10.5 and 7.9) and that if added with an unsuitable tone, it would make the utterance more disrespectful. In such situations, addressees might feel uncomfortable or become offended. Such speech style occurs because participants were not competent users of Tamil; participants also did not know social meanings as some have conventional meanings. Lack of socialization (using Tamil language) with elders in a speech community would deprive the Tamil youth of a valuable opportunity to gain knowledge of appropriate terms and subsequently, usage and knowledge of these terms would slowly

shrink. Participants expressed their dismay when asked about their language. They said they were not aware of the difference as they were not well versed in Tamil. They often used Malay or English and this made their command of Tamil language poor. Their choice of words sounded very crude and coarse and it seemed that this might be becoming a norm among youth. For example, Extracts 7.27 and 7.28 illustrate such speech of participants.

Extract 7.27

[P44 17 F]

P44: *angka pa:rulah nalla copy adikkura:n..... nalla: va:yile varuthu.. po:y va:ngkittu va:..*
(Look at him, he is copying my book. Go bring that. Or I'm going to say something bad.)

Extract 7.28

[P 55 16Y M]

P55: *dei !.....pa:ruda: nna: na:liki pa:kkura:na:....* (-----crude word)

(dei.... told you to see. Telling. tomorrow.....(....crude word)

Participants 44 and 55 were using crude words. These extracts show that teenagers of both genders were using foul language and offensive words with their friends despite knowing that their speech was being recorded for the purpose of this study. Participant 44 said that it was common among the youth; therefore, he constantly tried to keep up with them to show that he belonged to the group. When questioned further, they said such words showed their friendship and closeness. According to participants, use of harsh words among them indicated their close friendship. This shows the real spoken language of the participants, where the relationships were not compromised despite the harsh words. Similarly, Canagarajah (2012) stated that these forms of playful and friendly use of insult words is called self-styling, which youth feel will enhance bonding among them and maintain in-group solidarity. From this, it shows that although Tamil was used more

in the domain of friendship, it was confined to shallow words and socially undesirable expressions among participants (Tamil youth).

Variation in word-structure or pronunciation can also be noticed largely in the speech of participants. Some of the participants' different ways of pronunciation and accents further showed that they had different social backgrounds such as absence of parents' guidance or Tamil neighbours to practice their language. For example, see Extract 7.28. Variation of pronunciation, slang and colloquial terms are found in the speech of Participant 55, a 16-year-old male:

Extract 7.28

[P55M 16YNT]

P55: அண்ணன் கலியாணம் செஞ்சிட்டாங்க. அண்ணன் பொண்டாட்டி வேல செய்யலை.

annan kaliya:nam senjitta:ngke. annan ponda:tti ve"le seyyile
(elder brother got married. Sister in-law not working.)

P 55: அக்கா இருக்காங்க பதனொம்போது வயசு. College படிக்கறாங்க.

akka; irukka:ngke pathanompo:thu vayas. College padikkara:ngke
(I have sister. nineteen years old. Studying in college)

P 55 அன்னாடிக்கும் அப்டிதான். வருவாங்க.

anna:dikkum appaditha:n varuva:ngka
(daily she comes like that)

P55 நான் படிச்சி பெருசா ஆவி தம்பி தங்கச்சியெ படிக்க வெக்கனும்.

na:n padichchi perusa: a:vi tambi tanggachiye padikka vekkanum
(I will study, grow big, will help little bother and sister to study)

Distinctiveness	Standard pronunciation	Meaning
CT	SST	
<i>annan ponda:tti</i>	(<i>anni</i>)	sister- in-law
<i>pathanompo:thu</i>	(<i>paththompo:thu</i>)	nineteen
<i>anna:dikkum</i>	(<i>andra:dum</i>)	daily
<i>perusa: a:vi</i>	(<i>peritha: a:yi</i>)	grow big

These samples are only part of the speech of participants of this study which show variations.

Extract 7.29

[P17 25M]

P17: *en ku:ta:lingka mitta pe:ru ella:m vandu ve:re ve:re ve:la seyyira:ngka. na:n..... ve:le seyyiren.*

(My friends are working in other places. I'm working here.)

Participant P17, though he is 25 years old, he too shows a distinct pronunciation which is common among the younger Tamils in Malaysia. Some of other words that are found to have distinct pronunciation are as follows:

Distinctiveness	Common pronunciation	Meaning
<i>mitta pe:ru</i>	(<i>mattavangka</i>)	the others
<i>vandu</i>	(<i>vanthu</i>)	hesitation

Chapter seven explores the Tamil language varieties found in the linguistic repertoire of participants. Secondly, it examines if the different varieties of Tamil have any influence on language choice of participants. The three varieties LT, SST and CT do exist in the linguistic repertoire of any Tamil speaker. All the Tamil speakers will definitely realize the H and L variety (see section 2.4.2). The H variety is limited only to written form and for formal speech like lecturing and reading news bulletins on radio or television. The CT variety, which is acquired naturally since childhood from the family and friends' environment is only appropriate for low functions (home and friends). The CT variety varies from region to region and from social group to social group. SST, an intermediate variety, is the most widely used and understood (Annamalai and Asher, 2014; Karunakaran, 2005). Since one cannot talk in the H variety and L is a less prestigious variety, SST is the socially accepted and sophisticated high variety for communications with outsiders or strangers. Variety is a sociolinguistic term referring to a language in

context. Language variety encompasses different accents, distinct linguistic styles, different dialects and also different languages which contrast with others for social reasons (Holmes, 2013). The varieties are distinguishable by the way they are used according to social settings. Normally, people are aware of this and select an appropriate variety according to social factors (Blom and Gumperz, 2000) (see section 3.7.2). Hence, a Tamil person who is competent in Tamil knows when to use the three different varieties appropriately.

The participants who were from Tamil primary education were relatively better in using the language. However, when they moved on to secondary school from the ages of 13 to 17, they started to learn and speak more Malay and English languages. Their spoken Tamil subsequently stopped from developing further while at the same time improving on their English and Malay languages. At this stage, as participants used Tamil mainly when interacting with friends, they only learn youth's language (see section 8.8). They did not have the opportunity to practice good Tamil with others because they only used English and Malay with them. Hence, these youth's language is inappropriate and exhibit certain distinct features due to the lack of socialization with their own speech community members.

Milroy (1987) have stated that adolescents are heavy users of nonstandard vernaculars. They are very consistent vernacular speakers compared to the adults. Peer group networks appear to be the most close-knit around the age of sixteen. However, burden of work, independence, changes in social status and the environment lead to greater variability later in personal network structure. This notion is consistent with Tamil youth's (participants') attitudes regarding their mother tongue. In the younger age group of the participants, the domain of friendship, Tamil usage is more than 90%. However married

participants showed different attitudes towards their native language. Only 1/3 of them spoke Tamil to their children and the remaining 2/3 spoke English to their spouses. This situation is similar to most cases where the dominant languages slowly creep into minority languages and eventually displace the languages (Gal, 1979). Choices made by individuals on a day-to-day basis have an influence on the long-term situation of particular languages (Romaine, 2000). Hence, attitude and values towards the mother tongue are important in maintaining the language and the mother tongue should be regarded as an identity marker and important in preserving individuals' culture and distinct identities.

Moreover, it has been widely said that bilingualism leads to linguistic extinction. This concern is widely sensed by members of many minority language communities, as well. It has been found that a language shift is preceded by bilingualism and extensive code-switching (Romaine, 2000). Thus, the language choice patterns and language use patterns of participants that showed a high level of code mixing as presented in this study indicate that in the future, the spoken Tamil will not be the same as it is now.

Cultural assimilation is the practice in which a group's culture is adopted by another group in contact situations. Peer group influence is greater among teenagers. In Malaysia the teenagers socialize with multi-ethnic friends in school. Their secondary education goes on for five years. In this duration they mix largely with Malays, the largest population group in Malaysia. During this period, they become indistinguishable from their peers (schoolmates) and tend to follow their friends' speech style. When enquired about their 'exclamations' (see Extract 7.30), which is culturally different, participant said that these exclamations came impulsively as their friends used them frequently.

Extract 7.30

[P24 M 15 Hindu]

P: *Allamak .. adutha ma:sama:... en book-u avan kitte ma:ttikiche..!*

(Allamak ... next month... my book stuck with him.)

P: *ya..rabbi avungkala: na:nu ma:ttune pa:ru annikki... pas illa:me tandas-ku po:yitten.*

habislah... disiplin cikgu kitte anuppi.. perachane a:kkitta:ngke

(ya rabbi...is that her?... I got caught once. Went out to washroom without a pass. Finished. She sent me to the discipline teacher.)

Participant 24's (Extract 7.30) reasoning was that he was very used to the exclamation *Allamak*, as he mingled a lot with Malay Muslim friends. "I always chat with my Malay friends and feel like I'm part of the group. I use the term *ya rabbi* just like the rest in the group impulsively. Actually, I use it without much thought."

To conclude, results from questionnaires and interviews show that Tamils have high regard on standard variety of Tamil. Formal Tamil—LT and SST—requires certain proficiency in Tamil as a pre-requisite. Thus, in most instances only Tamil-educated participants were confident enough to use formal Tamil. According to some of the participants they do not have the confidence to converse in good Tamil (SST) because of presence of other languages, i.e., Malay and English. Hence, in need of SST variety, they switch to English or Malay. For them CT is convenient, fluent and accessible in their language repertoire, but SST is not. Participants prefer the CT variety to mingle with family and friends. As Fishman says, language choice also occurs at the sociopsychological level, for instance, informal language for intimacy and recreational activities and formal language for religion and official activities. The current study also provides evidence (interview) to show that participants used casual Tamil in domains of family and friendship where they felt stress-free and comfortable and try to use standard language in certain situations and domain of religion.

Though the result shows a higher practice of Tamil language in the domain of friendship than the family domain, the data also shows a high occurrence of code mixing and code-switching behaviour of the youth in their speech. For instance, Extract 7.9 and Extract 7.10 (see section 7.10) are good samples to depict the current trend of youth' language choice. Sample speeches show that Tamil was used only to converse about basic functions, whereas technical terms, new technological terms, current issues and work-related words were all being taken from the Malay and English languages. Besides, Extract 7.9 and Extract 7.10 also show that participants in the domain of friendship used Tamil idiomatic expressions extensively. This trend can be seen developing in the spoken Tamil of participants. Although Tamil was used more in domain of friendship, it was confined to shallow words and negative expressions; technical terms, new terms and official terms in all topics spoken amongst friends were vastly found to be in English.

7.12 Conclusion

Results of this chapter show that Tamils have high regard for the standard spoken variety. Some participants (youth) had learned the appropriate variety as they socialized and grew up. However, they preferred to speak freely, using casual Tamil or the colloquial variety in informal domains with family and friends. Good Tamil is learned through socialization with the speech community. Interviews revealed that Tamil educated participants were confident enough to use formal Tamil. Some of the participants, despite being from Tamil primary schools, did not have the confidence to converse in good Tamil (SST) because of lack of practice in Tamil in social spheres as they used more Malay and English in intra-group communications. Only through socialization do young children learn socially appropriate verbal communications (Romaine, 2000). Presence of other languages, i.e., Malay and English, in their linguistic repertoire causes lack of practice in Tamil. Results in Chapter 5 also prove that participant selected more of other languages in domains of education and later in the workplace. Additionally, absence of Tamil education also

decreased their confidence level in choosing Tamil to communicate with outsiders (other than family and friends). Lacking confidence in using socially appropriate terms, they chose Malay and English in which they were more competent. Children who do not practice Tamil much with outsiders are shy to speak in Tamil when they become youth because of its diglossic nature, hence as a way out, they switch to Malay or English, which are more accessible in their linguistic repertoire. CT is convenient, fluent and accessible in their language repertoire because they practice at home and among friends. However, SST is only learned via socialization with outsiders who are competent in using domain appropriate terms.

CHAPTER 8: REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This study was intended to explore the language choice patterns of Tamil youth in peninsular Malaysia in the domains of family, friendship, education, workplace, religion, neighbourhood and transaction and the reasons for language choice in all the above mentioned domains. Tamils have been in Malaysia for more than 200 years and their language has gone through various changes due to Malaysia's multi-ethnic nature, the national education system and globalization. The Tamils in Malaysia have also become trilingual with Tamil, English and Malay in their linguistic repertoire. The languages of education and workplace domains are creeping in and Tamils are slowly adding English and Malay languages into their 'supposedly' Tamil domains. The findings show that Tamil is used more frequently in the domains of family, friendship, religion and the neighbourhood. Though these domains play an important role in upholding Tamil, the findings show increasing influence of English and Malay in their Tamil speech.

8.2 Findings

Detailed findings of this study are found in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 5 presents results of survey forms (questionnaire), i.e. the demographic details of participants, participants' language skill, their choice of language in each domain and the patterns of language used in all the domains. Chapter 5 and 7 answers the first research question, i.e. the patterns of language choice of Tamil youth of Malaysia in seven domains. Chapter 6 presents the reasons for the participants' language choice in all the seven domains explored in this study. Chapter 7 also answers the third research question, the varieties of Tamil used by the Tamil youth in each domain and reasons for selecting those varieties. Study on language choice patterns of Tamil youth moved into deeper exploration after the realisation that their patterns of language choice occur between languages, i.e. Tamil,

English and Malay and within Tamil varieties. Hence, details of the Tamil language variety and the reasons for language choice were presented together in Chapter 7 for a thorough explanation.

This study employed a 'purposive sampling' method which was doable within the capacity of a single study to get a holistic and detailed scenario of the patterns of language choice in 7 domains and also to enable reasons for their language choice to be studied analytically among a group of Tamil youth in the semi-urban area of Gombak, Selangor. These sample participants were considered to be a homogenous group and hence, hoped to mirror the Tamil youth of Malaysia.

Generally, says Holmes (2013) patterns of language choice of a society determine the prospects of a language in a particular community. Tamil is still preferred more in the domains of family, friendship, religion and neighbourhood. Tamil youth who have parents with higher education and higher income had the tendency to use more English at home; the domain of friendship shows the highest practice of Tamil among youth. Youth from English speaking homes learn Tamil via their circle of friends. Although their spoken Tamil shows more of a colloquial variety of Tamil, code mixing and youth language style, on the whole this domain upholds the practice of Tamil.

Married participants' choice of Tamil to their children show a declining trend. Tamil usage within four generations faces a decreasing trend (grandparents, parents, siblings and children). Additionally, the increasing trend of nuclear families decreases transmission Tamil from the elder generation to the next generation. Tamil youth who grow up in Malaysia are becoming more dominant in Malay and English due to the education system, multi ethnic nature and globalization. Married youth have a dilemma

in selecting languages for their children. Young parents are seemed to be confused between their ethnic language, culture and identity and dominant language, i.e. English. However, there are also some young parents who introduce all three languages, i.e. Tamil, Malay and English to their children for the purpose of ensuring the child does not lose any language. Religion plays a crucial role in upholding standard Tamil. Particularly, the Hindu participants give importance to learning Tamil because their holy scripts are in Tamil. Although Christian and Muslim participants too do have their sermons in Tamil, Christians choose more English (Leo and Abdullah, 2013). Hence, domain of religion promotes the use of Tamil besides the usage of standard Tamil (LT and SST) via the activities. Generally, the shift away from Tamil is not obvious (David, 2017), although it indeed occurs gradually. The domains of education, workplace and transaction show that youth are using more English and Malay. In these domains Tamil is seemingly used only for basic, simple and as connecting words, whereas English and Malay are used more for names and complex terms. To be precise, Tamil is used as a matrix language embedded with more English and Malay words/terms. Lacking in the practice of using modern, scientific and technological terms in Tamil too affects the utilisation of Tamil among youth in these domains. In secondary schools, in higher learning institutions and later in their workplaces when their command of Malay and English improve further, youth are more inclined toward English and Malay.

Normally, in the family circle, the conversation is about family routines and daily affairs. The linguistic range is therefore limited to a small sphere. Although they practiced their mother tongue, when participants discussed other topics, such as holidaying, information technology, cars, sports, education and other similar topics, participants largely code mixed with English or Malay. Thus, usage of Tamil seems to have been confined to a limited vocabulary. When a language of school/work is brought home, there is an

impending threat of language shift (Fishman 1972) whereby there is a risk of the community giving up its language completely for another (Fasold, 1984).

Attitude of a community towards their native language is fundamental in selecting a language. Survey shows the majority of youth showed a positive attitude towards their mother tongue. They revealed that they were proud of their mother tongue. They wished Tamil could be expanded, though a small percentage of youth said they did not find any economic value in furthering their formal Tamil education.

Furthermore, this study shows that the diglossic nature of Tamil also has a part in affecting the youth's language choice. Tamil varieties are distinguishable according to social settings. Youth who are not competent in Tamil and indecisive about appropriate words, select Malay or English, which are more accessible in their linguistic repertoire. The declining trend in formal Tamil education also can lead to less competency in Tamil and the diglossic nature is further influencing the language choice of youth towards dominant languages, i.e. English and Malay

8.3 Implication of Theory

Domains were considered as theoretical constructs that can explain language choice which were supposed to be a more powerful explanatory tool than more obvious (and observable) parameters like topic, place (setting) and interlocutor (Haberland, 2005). The number of domains can vary between groups and has to be generalised for each multilingual group from careful observation. Hence, 7 domains were selected to attain microlinguistic view of the patterns of language choice for this study.

Primarily, this investigation employed Fishman's (1972) theory of domain to explore the patterns of language choice among a group of Tamil youth mainly in intra-group communications. Fishman (1972) says certain topics are more appropriate to discuss in a particular language in a multilingual context. Fishman's (1972) theory of domain assisted in determining language choice of Tamil youth according to domains and topics. Data gathering and data analysis which are recommended in the theory of domain helped to identify the patterns of language choice of Tamil youth in each domain. Sometimes, people prefer the language in which they are skilful with specified terms for satisfying and easier discussions. Therefore, Fishman (1972) says that besides domains, the degree of bilingualism also regulates language choice of a community. He also recommended investigating why people in a particular multilingual setting have mastery in specific languages rather than their native language in a particular period. Thus, this study identifies the major factors that have contributed to the patterns of language choice among the Tamil youth in Malaysia, besides the topic, domain and the degree of bilingualism. Obviously, the national education system and impact of globalization have influence on patterns of language choice among Tamil youth.

Fishman (1972) also defines the four stages of the domain overlapping processes and, in bilingual communities, how the mother tongue is gradually replaced by other languages. The current patterns of language choice among Tamil youth show how the global language and national language are progressively entering into the domains of family, friendship and religion: the domains in which Tamil was previously intensely practiced. The findings by Fishman depict the natural phenomenon taking place in all the minority groups who are living in a multilingual society. The current study reveals that Malaysian youth are somewhat similar to the second stage of Fishman's (1972) domain overlapping model. The second stage of the domain overlapping model states the ability to converse

in dominant languages within intra-group interactions, which will subsequently be followed by the third stage of balanced bilingual ability and eventually, in the next generation, the dominant language finally replaces the mother tongue. These language changes might further weaken the values and norms of the community. The tendency to use other languages also further leads to shrinkage in Tamil terminology.

Milroy's (1980) social network model was also used to see how the social network theory helps in upholding Tamil in Malaysia. Social network theory explains that a large number of ethnic members living together and practicing their language in a dense area will help to maintain the language and that if a group is large enough with a significant number of speakers, some domains would have the chance to maintain the language, as claimed by Milroy's (1980) model. Closed and dense networks with the condition that communication occurs in the mother tongue will lead to native language maintenance. In Malaysia, Tamils generally live in close proximity. They mostly live in places where higher density of Tamils is found. They have a reasonable frequency of contact and opportunities to interact in their mother tongue.

Milroy's (1980) social network theory analyses the language use patterns of people in the informal relationships which control language transformation. People from 'close networks' and 'dense social networks' who have frequent contacts with other members of the same networks show a high degree of traditional value in their speech. Milroy (1980) also states that adolescents are very consistent vernacular speakers compared to adults. This is apparent in this study where the domain of friendship shows the highest practice of Tamil.

Additionally, Tamils have temples where they have the opportunity to meet often and have religious classes and cultural activities which can also help to uphold their native language, Tamil. Besides, Malaysian Tamils also have the opportunity to study their vernacular language (see Chapter 2). The education system provides Tamil vernacular schools all over peninsular Malaysia for Tamils wanting to pursue Tamil education. Students of these Tamil schools have the opportunity to mingle with their own ethnic group and obtain formal education in Tamil.

8.4 Implication to Society

In the current situation, Tamil language is only being spoken in the domains of family, friendship, religion and the neighbourhood. Hence, it requires effort from all in the community to help Tamil language to develop further and stay relevant to the young. If Tamil is to be a living language, it has to be used actively in more domains by Tamil youth. However, the current the study shows that Tamil is only used more in informal domains, i.e. the family, friendship and the neighbourhood and exhibits more of the casual variety or colloquial variety, which can vary according to social group and region. Hence, formal education needs to be widened and the standard spoken Tamil should be used for the benefit of its speakers in the future and to be understood by Tamils from other parts of the Tamil speaking world, as well. Only a spoken language has the advantage and can help in maintenance of a language. The best way to ensure one does not lose their heritage language is to speak in the mother tongue.

Furthermore, attitude towards the minority language and its status in the community will help to sustain the language further. If a language has the ability be used in a wide range of contexts (or in more domains) both in formal and informal circumstances, it is more likely to be maintained. If a language is only confined to informal context and

conversations between family, friends and used for expressions in day to day lives, it is vulnerable to being replaced by a language of a higher status which is used more widely by the wider society (Holmes, 2013). The use of the language in more domains would improve its chances of being maintained. Ideally, language shift should not take place because of economic factors and job opportunities. There are more than economic factors involved, such as culture, tradition, inheritance, birth right, legacy and so on in the native language of a community.

A living language not only varies, it changes according to the needs of the speech community (Wardhaugh, 2010). At the same time, language is also an important indicator of a community's identity. Despite evolving continuously to cater to the needs of the speech community, the originality must also be maintained to be able to appreciate the existing and precious old literature. Tamil has great prestige and is rich in its literature; it has a vast amount of invaluable canonical literature and numerous culture-related scripts. If the youth move away from the standard Tamil, the future generations may not be able to appreciate and assimilate the deep values of the Tamil collected works, ancient poetries and Hindu religious literature. More importantly, Tamil is not just a language; it is a way of living. It is a deep inherited culture with a strong historical background. So, when a language is preserved, it preserves the culture and inheritance too (Fishman, 1972; Granhemat, 2017).

8.5 Implication of Policy

Since independence, Tamil education in Malaysia has seen various developments and progress. A standardised curriculum for Tamil was introduced and Tamil education was given an equal importance as other vernacular languages. However, to preserve the standard language, materials should be widely available at reasonable prices for quick

references and to enhance the learning in Tamil. It should also be regulated by an authorised organisation in Malaysia to address the Tamil language's needs for reference and standardisation to conform to the linguistic forms, similar to Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka which exists for Malay language in Malaysia. It is hoped that the Tamil language is utilized to serve more functions in the community, such as the official language used in meetings among the ethnic members, temple functions, wedding functions, formal and informal gatherings and also that the standard Tamil (SST) is used in mass media (radio and television channels) and without mixing with other languages. The influence of mass media is believed to be great enough to inspire the style of the spoken language of a community, especially the minds of the youth who are at a tender impressionable age. Therefore, the mass media plays a huge role in forming and trend-setting the spoken language in Tamil. If standard Tamil (SST) is used extensively in mass media without code mixing, there are higher chances that it would have sufficient needed language terms and have a positive impact in the community on the usage of a good spoken Tamil.

8.6 Limitation of this Research

This study explored patterns of language use of only a small group of Tamil youth in Malaysia. Though it is expected to mirror the wider group of Malaysian Tamil youth, it might have its limits in terms of region. This focused group was from a semi-urban area where there is a high population of Tamils. A study from places where Tamils live in less dense areas or in urban area like Kuala Lumpur, Bangsar or Petaling Jaya might show different patterns of language choice. Therefore, later studies should focus on patterns of language choice among Tamils who live in rural and less dense regions or in urban areas.

8.7 Conclusion

This study has depicted the detailed patterns of language choice in Chapters 5 and 7 and the reasons for language choice in Chapter 6 and partially in Chapter 7. Tamil youth in Malaysia, despite showing some distinct variation from standard spoken Tamil, practise Tamil and help in the maintenance of Tamil. The domain of friendship is the stronghold for Tamil in Malaysia besides the domain of family. However, when individuals enter the job sector and become parents who consider English as an important language for their children's success, the tendency is shown to lean towards English. The domain of religion shows high practice of Tamil. Other domains such as the domains of education, the workplace and transaction show high usage of English and Malay. On the other hand, as stated by Fishman (1972), people who live in multilingual environment have vast opportunity to use all the available languages in their linguistic repertoire for better communication in a multilingual context. Thus, Malaysian Tamil youth have all the chances to use the languages that exist in their linguistic repertoire. This fact is further emphasised by Lim (2008) that Malaysian youth make meaningful language choice to communicate in intra-group and inter-group communications. In conclusion, Malay as an important national language and English as a modern and international language are changing the patterns of language choice of youth in Malaysia. It was a noteworthy and significant observation that Malaysian Tamil youth's language choices reflect their ethnic identity on top of their equally important national identity as Malaysians.

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