THE USE OF ENGLISH AMONGST URBAN MALAYALEE YOUTHS IN SEREMBAN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to study English usage amongst Malayalee youths between the ages of 17 and 24. This study focused on the language preference of youths when they communicate with other Malayalees in different domains. The researcher used mixed methods that employed the questionnaire as an instrument for the collection of quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion for qualitative data were also carried out to elicit qualitative data on their use of English and their perception towards their own mother tongue, Malayalam. The study was also aimed to investigate what these youths considered to be their identity markers as Malayalees. The results showed that on the whole, Malayalee youths preferred English compared to Malayalam in most domains selected for this study. However, when gender preference was compared, this study showed that male youths preferred English while the female youths preferred to use Malayalam. Among the reasons forwarded by the youths for preferring English was that Malayalam was not being offered in schools and it was not used beyond the domains of family and home. In addition, their parents did not teach Malayalam to them nor emphasised the importance of this language. To these youths, English was considered to be more important than Malayalam in their daily life for communication and in particular for a better career prospect. This study hopes the findings have shed some light on the English usage among Malayalee youths as well as the choice of language of the different genders and the identity markers of Malayalee youths in this particular study.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji penggunaan bahasa Inggeris di kalangan belia Malayalee yang berumur di antara 17 dan 24 tahun. Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada pilihan bahasa belia apabila mereka berkomunikasi dengan Malayalee lain dalam beberapa domain yang berbeza. Pengumpulan data adalah secara kaedah campuran melalui soal selidik sebagai instrumen untuk mengumpul data kuantitatif. Temubual separa berstruktur dan perbincangan kumpulan fokus untuk data kualitatif juga digunakan untuk mendapatkan maklumbalas mengenai penggunaan dan persepsi terhadap bahasa ibunda mereka, Malayalam. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui penanda identiti kumpulan belia Malayalee ini. Kajian ini adalah untuk memperolehi persepsi belia Malayalee terhadap bahasa ibunda mereka. Hasil kajian secara am menunjukkan bahawa bahasa pilihan belia Malayalee adalah bahasa Inggeris berbanding dengan Malayalam bagi kebanyakkan domain yang dipilih untuk kajian ini. Walau bagaimanapun, apabila perbandingan antara jantina dibuat, kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa belia lelaki lebih cenderung untuk memilih bahasa Inggeris manakala belia perempuan lebih cendurung kepada bahasa Malayalam. Antara sebab yang dikemukakan oleh para belia mengapa Bahasa Inggeris dipilih ialah Malayalam tidak ditawarkan di sekolah dan ia tidak digunakan luar dari domain keluarga dan rumah. Tambahan lagi, ibu bapa mereka tidak mengajar bahasa ibunda kepada mereka atau pun menekankan tentang kepentingannya kepada mereka. Bagi peserta kajian ini, bahasa Inggeris adalah lebih penting dalam kehidupan harian mereka untuk berkomunikasi dan demi prospek kerjaya yang lebih baik. Adalah diharapkan kajian ini dapat memberi gambaran tentang penggunaan bahasa Inggeris oleh kumpulan belia Malayalee ini serta pilihan bahasa antara jantina dan penanda identiti bagi kumpulan belia Malayalee dalam kajian ini.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

I shall start with an incident that was conveyed to me by my son's kindergarten teacher when he was just four years old. The teacher was asking the children to introduce themselves. One boy said he is a Malay, another said he is a Chinese and a girl said she is an Indian. When it was my son's turn, he said he is English. The astonished teacher probed further and asked why. My son's response was very simple as he said, "Because I speak English."

The response above clearly indicates how we relate our ethnicity with language. We tend to associate ethnicity with the language spoken by the interlocutors. Language according to Spolsky (1999) is the main feature of human identity. He added that we can identify someone's profession, gender, the level of education and origin based on the language they use. According to Spolsky (1999), more important than these individual characteristics, language is a symbol of ethnic identity.

Naturally, language is the most essential in establishing an ethnic identity but with globalisation and influences of other dominant languages, many communities prefer to use other more dominant languages compared to their mother tongue. The study by David (1996) among the Sindhis and another study by David and Faridah Noor (1999) among the members of the Portuguese Eurasian community show that the minority immigrant communities show a preference towards English than their own mother tongue.

The Malayalees in Malaysia is another community that prefer English compared to their mother tongue, Malayalam. Nambiar (2007) established that the Malayalees in the urban area of Klang prefer English compared to their mother tongue.

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This phenomenon or the preference of Malayalees to English is not limited only in Malaysia but can be observed in other countries too. The study in India by Nair and Mysore (2005) in comparing the Malayalam and Kannada language users concluded that the language situation among the Malayalees is different compared to Kannada because the Malayalees are very flexible towards Malayalam and its survival. Nair and Mysore (2005) concluded that the Malayalees have no high attachment to their mother tongue compared to the Kannada speakers. The Malayalees will forsake their mother tongue in favour of English or any other dominant languages.

Even though there is a trend where the Malayalees seem to prefer using English rather than their mother tongue, their identity is still prevalent. The connection between language, identity and ethnicity cannot be denied. Research in these areas is well documented such as by Fishman (2001), Harris (2006) and Omoniyi and White (2006). There is an abundance of literature on this topic not only in other countries but also locally (David: 2001, 2006) and Nambiar (2007).

Despite past studies on language choice, language preference and role of language and its usage among immigrants and minority groups, not enough attention has been given to the usage of English among Malayalee youths. Most of the research conducted emphasise on the first and second generation. Even though the trend is changing and many studies are being carried out among the Malayalee youths but they are inadequate.

Not many studies on youths have been conducted regarding their language preference. There were not many in-depth studies been carried out involving the Malayalee youths in the urban locality of Seremban, the capital of Negeri Sembilan Darul Khusus. This study will address this problem.

The incident of my son is not an isolated case. There are many such cases where the people or the minorities are laden with the task to establish an identity if the language is no longer the main marker of ethnic identity.

In this study, the researcher focuses on the usage of English and the importance given to it by the Malayalee youths. This study also will also look at the language preference and how Malayalee youths perceive their ethnic identity.

1.2   Background of the Malayalees

According to K.S Sandhu (2010), the Indians present in Malaysia can be traced beyond 1511, even before the arrival of Portuguese. The majority of Malaysian Indians are descendants of immigrants brought by the British mainly from Sri Lanka or Ceylon and the Southern Indian states, namely, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andra Pradesh. Between 1786 and 1957 the British colonists brought in Indian workers due to the demand for labourers to work in the rubber and sugar plantations and also to build railway tracks and roads.

The Malayalees originated from the state of Kerala in the southern part of India and speak the Malayalam language. Kerala has the highest literacy rate up to today. A 2012 census shows that Kerala has the literacy rate of 94.6%. Given the literacy rate of Malayalees, the Malayalees were employed as 'kangani' or supervisors. The Malayalees were also employed as clerks and as administrators under the British.

At the beginning when they migrated to Malaysia, the Malayalees had always maintained their language, even though their working environment required them to communicate not only in English but also in Tamil when they had to deal with the Tamils who were the majority of Indian immigrants in Malaya then.

After 1957, with birth of Malaya and later Malaysia, the language and education policy of Malaysia have undergone tremendous changes. The new government had introduced many changes in the country's policy, especially language policy. The importance has been given to the Malay language as the national language of Malaysia (Gill, 2005). It is further stressed that with the implementation of this language policy since 1970, all the English medium schools were phased out to give way to Malay medium school. Asmah Hj Omar (2003) claims that the function of English was first as an official language before independence and then, as a second language.

As the second language in Malaysia, the English language is given due recognition by the policy makers. This is evident when the government introduced the "Teaching of Mathematics and Science in English (PPSMI"). Even though it was later replaced by 'To Uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to strengthen the English language' (MBMMBI) policy in 2012 by the Education Ministry, it has shown the importance given to the English language by the government at the level of National schools or 'sekolah kebangsaan'. In 2016, to further strengthen the usage of English, the government through the Ministry of Education (circular 18, 2015, MOE) introduced the Dual Language Programme (DLP) to 300 selected schools. The objective has been to expose the pupils to more English speaking environment and to prepare them to compete globally and to improve their marketability in the work sector. It shows the government's continuous effort in improving the usage of English.

The government's approach towards the vernacular school is different compared to the National type schools. Gill (2005) said that the vernacular school, namely, Tamil and Chinese are also given recognition in the National policy. Even though vernacular schools are recognised by the government but they only get partial support in the form of manpower.

However, other minority languages like Malayalam and Telugu are not offered in schools. With the introduction of such policy only Malay, Chinese and Tamil medium schools exist today, the Malayalees are in a quandary of sending their children either to Tamil school or Malay medium school.

The study by David (2002) and Nambiar (2007) show that the minority immigrant community learned and assimilated with other ethnic groups. The study by Nambiar (2007) shows that the Malayalees have successfully assimilated with other race and ethnic group. In the process of assimilation, they have chosen either Malay, English or Tamil as the language of communication. Their language preference goes according to whom they speak to. Usually, they use Malay when they speak to Malays, Tamil with Tamil people and English with other ethnic groups who can speak English.

The Malayalee youths have also shown preference to use English rather than their mother tongue outside their home domain when they speak to each other (Nambiar, 2007). Hence, the Malayalam language has become a home language which is spoken only among the family members (Sharin, 2005).

1.3   Statement of the Problem

Due to the changes in the country political and social need, the Malayalees have to assimilate themselves with other races and communities to face the future and in the process, they have to make a difficult decision regarding their language. The study by Nambiar (2007) carried out among Malayalees in the urban area of Klang Valley shows that English has become a lingua franca among themselves and it plays very important role in the Malayalee community.

Can this be the same for the Malayalee youths in the urban area in Seremban? What are the role of English and its importance for these Malayalee youths in the given domains?

This study was carried out in Seremban, an urban area and the capital of Negeri Sembilan while the study by Nambiar (2007) was carried out in Klang Valley, Selangor. This study aims to find out if the data collected concurred with the previous study carried out by Nambiar (2007). If the Malayalees do abandon their mother tongue, these youngsters are left with the task to define their ethnic identity. In that case, what does this group of Malayalee youths consider to be their ethnic identity markers?

The study by Sharin (2005) also shows that the Malayalee youths prefer English to their mother tongue and they face difficulties to blend in with other Malayalee communities who are not proficient in English or other major languages. According to Sharin (2005), English has become the language of choice and plays a major role among the youths in the Malayalee community. With their preference for English, these youths have to institute new key markers of ethnic identity to connect with their own community.

Crystal (2000) states that language has a vast influence not only on the people's identity but also of the community. In addition, he pointed out that language gives evidence of the people's past and the cultural connection by means of words. David (2003) and Nambiar (2007) found that in the urban area in Malaysia there is a tendency among the minority community to move towards English. In line with this, the Malayalees being a minority community may have the same tendency. According to Nambiar (2007), the Malayalee Hindus and Malayalee Christians are moving towards English while the Malayalee Muslims are moving towards the Malay language. Based on the above studies, if the Malayalees were to abandon their mother tongue for English, they would also lose their ethnic identity. They have to find other markers to connect themselves with their communities (Sharin, 2005).

This study seeks to investigate the choice of language among the Malayalee youths of Seremban in their daily life. In preparing to face challenges of the future, which language,

English or Malayalam, would play a bigger or equal role in their daily life? Hence, it would be interesting to investigate what would constitute ethnic identity markers for this group of Malayalee youths.

1.4 Objectives

This study examines the use of English among the Malayalee youths and how they perceive their ethnic identity. The study was carried out based on the objectives below.

Objective 1:   To examine the use of English among Malayalee youths in different domains

Objective 2:   To compare the use of English and Malayalam by the Malayalee male and female Malayalee youths

Objective 3:   To investigate the ethnic identity markers of Malayalee youths

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions formulated for the purpose of this study are as follows:

1. In which domains is English used by Malayalee youths?

2. What is the frequency of use of English and Malayalam by Malayalee youths based on their gender?

3. What do Malayalee youths perceive as their ethnic identity markers?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study aims to investigate the importance and usage of English among Malayalee youths in an identified urban area, Seremban. The domains in which English and Malayalam are used will be an indication of the roles and importance of these languages in the lives of these youths. Consequently, it is hoped that the findings of this study will benefit the community

and inform them of the future of the Malayalam language. Their choice of either Malayalam or English provides an indication to sociolinguists on the trend of use and preference of this language in this community in Seremban. The findings will add to the pool of knowledge of language vitality among the Malayalee community in general. Based on the findings may emit some interest among older members to increase the use and teaching of Malayalam at the home and the community level to spread the use of the language.

Secondly, this study will provide insight on how the Malayalee youths perceive their ethnic identity. Again, this will be of interest to the community members as to what youths perceive to be identity markers as a Malayalee of that community. This may be of some impact to the Malayalee community in general.

1.7   Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that the Malayalee communities are spread and scattered around Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. Therefore, this study could not be conducted as extensively as desired to cover the urban, semi-urban and rural areas due to logistic and time constraints.

This research is limited to the selected area, namely, Seremban, and may not represent the total population of the Malayalee community in the whole of Malaysia. This study focuses only on the Malayalee youths between the age of 17 and 24 years old. The Malayalee youths' language usage with other ethnic groups such as the Malays, Chinese, Tamil and other ethnic groups is not part of this study.

The location is limited to the Seremban area that is the capital of the Negeri Sembilan state, which is more urban than rural, although it is not as cosmopolitan and urban as Kuala

Lumpur. Therefore, findings can be considered to be indicative and reflective of Malayalee youths living in a township of a smaller state.

1.8   Summary

The chapter presents the introduction to the research, the background of the focus group, the objectives and the research questions and also the limitations of the study conducted in Seremban, Malaysia.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss in general the role and usage of English language in the world and particularly in Malaysia which will include past studies pertaining to this topic and how it influences the ethnic identity of immigrant communities.

Several factors contribute to determining the status, development and regression of a language. Its acceptance as a language of wide communication depends not only on who, when and where a language is being used but also by the implemented national policy pertaining to the use of that particular language in general (Alexander, 1991).

It is important to have a better understanding of the spread of English language around the globe in the last few centuries and how the language is being viewed today around the global. Smith (1976) claims that English has become a world language, freed from its tie with the country of origin where it is the native language.

The importance and spread of English can be justified by the choice of the language not only as the official and second language in many countries but also on its role in diplomacy, world communication, commerce, international business, information technology and science.

There are ample studies pertaining to the importance given to English and how its usage in different domains has great influence on the minority languages. Many studies on language preference (Cashman, 2005), language usage (Hakimzadeh, S., & Cohn, D. V, 2007), language choice (Chiswick, B. R., & Miller, P. W, 1994), language attitudes (Berry, 2006) and ethnicity (Nakamura, 2013) have been conducted around the world in different domains. These studies have implications on language preference and language choice and the effect on the use of

minority language, the usage of language in defining not only the ethnic identity but also the conflict that arise due to the preference of one language over the mother tongue.

In this chapter, the relevant literatures related to the study will be reviewed. To begin with, the concept and definition of language will be presented. It will be followed by language and ethnicity and ethnic identity. Finally, the two main theories will be discussed.

2.2   Language

The word "language" is defined as "A human system of communication which uses structured vocal sounds and which can be embodied in other media such as writing, print, and physical sounds" by the Oxford Companion to the English Language online dictionary. The origin of the word can be traced back to old French word *langue*, which in turn is derived from the word *lingua* in Latin which means tongue or speech.

According to Van Lier (1995), language is the main mode of communication among human beings and an important factor that separates man and animals and he emphasised that the main factor distinguishes humans from non-humans is the language.

Language is the basic of communication among human being (Van Lier, 1995). It is the tool that binds them socially and the guide in their social interactions. Language helps the human being to convey their ideas, opinions, suggestions, objections, happiness and sadness. Without language, they will be unable to express all their feeling effectively. Even though it is not denied they can still express some of their feeling such as happiness, sadness and anger through their facial expression, action or mimicry but the effectiveness of language is better. How can we compare the utterance of the three magic words, "I love you", both between a mother and her children, a teacher and the participants, the guru and the disciples, the boy and the girl and between the god and the faithful. Language is very powerful and it can leave a

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prolong effect not only to others but also to the speakers themselves. The researchers realised the importance, the power of language and the effects of language on a community therefore many researches had been carried out systematically and scientifically to support the usage of language in different communities.

This scientific study of human language is known as linguistics and it has many subfields where sociolinguistics is just one part of the many. Sociolinguistics is the study of the relation between linguistic variation and social structures. It studies various ways in which language and society are entwined. It also studies on how the human being is shaped by the language they use and the effect on their social nature.

It is estimated that there are more than 7,000 living languages around the world today (www.ethnologue.com). Chinese language is the most spoken language with more than one billion speakers in 33 countries around the world but mostly in China which has about 1.37 billion people. Meanwhile, English is the third most spoken language with an estimated 335 million speakers in 101 countries and has the reputation as the language spoken in the most number of countries (http://www.ethnologue.com/statistics/size). Comparing the Chinese language and English, even though the former has more speakers but English is more evenly spread around the world.

English as a language spoken in over 100 countries has been well accepted around the world. As a language wide accepted around the world, English usage in daily life cannot be denied. English language is being used in many different setting and countries. English language has earned terms such as an international language, a lingua franca, a global language, language of business and as a world language (Seidlhofer, 2004).

Issues regarding the English language and its usage from various perspectives have been continuously discussed. Crystal (1997) studied the social, political and economic value of English. Kachru, Kachru and Nelson (2006) researched on features and norms of English represented by World Englishes. Roshid and Chowdhury (2013) carried out research on economy and employment with their research titled English language proficiency and employment: A case study of Bangladeshi graduates in Australian employment market. A study on language death or linguistic genocide on the loss of minority languages was done by Nettle and Romaine (2000). Canagarajah (2007) studied the description of Lingua Franca English focusing on how speakers accommodate and negotiate linguistic forms and meanings. Many other studies also were carried out on English and mother tongue. The study by Okebukola, Owolabi and Okebukola (2013) emphasised on the usage of mother language as the language of instructions in primary school, while another study by Muriungi and Mbui (2013) emphasised on the usage of mother tongue in secondary schools in Kenya. While these studies give attention to mother tongue's importance, there are many other studies on the importance of English.

It is largely assumed that when people from different mother tongue (L1) background meet, they will communicate in English. The document ''Japanese with English abilities'' by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (2003) has provided evidence on this particular notion. It shows the usage of English as the common international language in linking people with different mother tongues is sadly at the cost of the mother tongue. As Fishman (1991) suggested, the use of a dominant language in any community, in this case, English, will decrease the use of mother tongue. As it very obviously clear, the research on the English language is very wide, covering diverse field and topics. English apparently with its influence in the minority communities is noticeable.

The influence of English is so widespread that Brown (2015) carried out a study to determine if the English speaking footballers are better in penalty taking compared to footballers from other non-English speaking countries. He found that, the footballers from the English speaking countries are better than the player from non-English speaking countries.

2.3   Usage of English

Globalisation, advance in technology and the introduction of Internet and all the related applications have further widened the path for the spread of English language. Hence, the English language is increasingly used in many different areas and fields such as in economics, politics, arts and sciences, electronic communication and socialization across cultures.

Many countries have started to emphasise the importance of English in education. Kubota and McKay (2009) pointed out that English is given emphasis in Japanese schools due to the perception among the community that it is essential to be proficient in English to be efficient in business, tourism, information technology and other domains. This is one study that is similar to other studies carried out around the world to show the prudence use of English in different contexts and situations. In the following sections, we will see the usage of English and the importance accorded to it in the different surroundings.

2.3.1   English Usage in Employment and Economy

Employer as the person or company that provide the job for the employee will always have certain criteria in selecting the best possible person for the job. Apart from basic paper qualification, language proficiency and the ability to use the language play an important part in determining either a person will be selected for the post. With globalisation, the proficiency in English has become an important criterion for employment. Studies by Dustmann and Fabbr

(2003) and also by Erling, Seargeant, Solly, Chowdhury and Rahman (2015) show that English competence and communication skills play a crucial role in employment. One of the most prominent impacts of neoliberal globalisation on language is the rise of the importance of English (Heller, 2002). Heller (2002) added that struggles over English have created social differences and inequality based on the language fluency alone. Kassim and Ali (2010) in their study emphasised the important of fluency in English as an opportunity in the engineering field to advance towards becoming a global engineer.

In studies carried out in Hong Kong by Saville-Troike (2006) and Mee-Ling Lai (2015) in comparing English, Cantonese and Putonghua in the four key service industries that have been the backbone of Hong Kong's economy in the past decade and the students attitude about these languages found that English continues to function as the unmarked medium of written professional communication, whereas Cantonese remains the usual language of oral communication. Even though there was a gradual effort to decrease the use of English in Hong Kong and there was a perception that English has declined in use but the findings from this study show otherwise. It shows there is an increase in the use of English by professional and the frequency of language use increase across rank (Saville-Troike, 2006). The study shows that the English language has always been important in the workplace and in employment. Mastering the English language as the lingua franca in business is important element for successfully acquiring the overall business experience. The findings suggest that proficiency in English can be considered an important part of human capital in the labour market and the report from European Commission (2002) suggested English proficiency is an essential skill in landing a job.

Apart from landing a successful job, proficiency in English also associated with a better chance of promotion and better salary. Toomet (2011) found out there is a 15% wage premium

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for those with English knowledge in the Estonian labour market. Thus, improvement and the ability to use English will serve as an appealing factor for the employer.

2.3.2 English Usage for Socializing

Socializing is defined as relating to or involving activities in which people spend time talking to each other or doing enjoyable things with each other and living in unity and friendliness (Merriam Webster.com). We learn to socialise and the other social skills from an early age through our observation of our parents, family, friends and people around us. Through times we learn to build a good social skill that helps in building a strong bond with others.

We tend to connect and intermingle with others through different social institutions. The family is the main contributing factor that moulds a person's social life and behaviour for they depend on the family since young to guide them (Ainsworth, 1991).When they grow up, other establishments such as religion, economy, peer group, gender and language will start to have influence in their social life.

Language will be a very important factor in the social life of people, especially in multilingual surroundings. People will learn to mingle with others differently depending on the language and culture in which they live. Minority communities will tend to give more importance of wide communication especially English rather than their mother tongue and they prefer their children to use English and other languages of wide communication (Nambiar, 2007).

The children from the minority immigrant communities are exposed to different language from the young age. Their ability to use English will influence their social life in the future. At the early stage, they tend to code switching due to their poor comprehend of English and also the influence of their mother tongue. At one stage, the children will learn to

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differentiate the proper language to use when coming in contact with people of different ethnic languages and English is usually will triumph to be the language of choice. This is when the children learn to behave in accordance with the languages used in their lives. They use separate languages at home and in peer groups and mainly in educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities (Morita, 2009). Harris (1995) said depending on the language and situation at any given time, people will socialise differently.

English language usage has been gaining popularity among the language user around the world. The influence and the amount of English used will have great consequence on the language user. This is true not only in any particular country but globally (Mori, 2000). He stressed that language difficulties seem to be the most difficult task for the students since a lack of English skills is likely to affect not only their academic performance but also their psychological adjustment. When these student face problem in mastering English, it will be distressing them because many of them are academically successful and high achiever and their failure to express their academic ability in English will affect them socially (Pedersen, 1991).

Hayes and Ling (1994) through their study have indicated that language barriers or their inability to use English often hinder international students from socially interacting with their American peers. They also indicated higher frequency of use, fluency level and the degree to which participants felt comfortable in speaking English will lower the level of distress among the student and it will help for smoother interactions and socializing of the students with majority group (Barratt and Huba, 1994).

When the students can converse fluently in the English language, it will give them confidence and they will feel less embarrassed and less self-conscious of their ethnic background (Barratt and Huba, 1994). Thus, they will be more willing to interact and socialise confidently in their daily life. Higher fluency levels of English will improve their self-esteem

and they will feel more comfortable speaking in class and participating in discussions (Kao and Gansneder, 1995).

2.3.3 English Usage in Technology

The definition of technology has undergone tremendous chance in meaning. In 1946, Funk and Wagnall's New Practical Standard Dictionary defined it as theoretical knowledge of the industry and the industrial arts. The Pocket Oxford Dictionary defined it as the science of the industrial arts and practical arts collectively in 1969. In 2002, Cambridge Learner's Dictionary defined it as knowledge, equipment, and methods that are used in the science and industry while in 2003, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defined it as new machines, equipment and ways of doing things that are based on modern knowledge of about science and computers. The meaning of technology will keep on changing over time with the discovery of new knowledge.

The advancement in technology and the introduction of computers have changed how we communicate with each other's and it has a drastic impact on our social life. The birth of information technology and the progress made in it has changed our perceptive of technology. The Internet, Short Message Service (SMS), Twitter and Facebook have overwhelming influence among the youngsters and older generation alike. These technology's mass appeal to stay connected regardless of distance and speedy exchange of information through email and other modes of communication has changed on how people live.

The changes in technology, especially Information Technology (IT) has also influenced the English language and vice versa. The English language is widely used in this developing technology. Due to technology, the internet, cell phones and other advancements have changed the way we communicate. These innovative forms of communication have also changed the

English language. It has to adapt itself to suit with the developing technology to embark and advance together.

A study conducted by the American Management Association International (AMAI) in 1998 revealed that the use of e-mails was taking over the place of face-to-face and telephone communication as a means of business communication. Email is also very popular among students with more than 95% of university students in the United States using the internet to conduct research and stay in touch with friends (Diederich, 1998).

As a non-face to face media of communication, email is said to create emotional conflict. This can mean miscommunication among friends and family members. Even though the study by Polites and Karahanna (2013) found an increase in the interpersonal conflict while using email but another study (Walther, 1996) contrast this finding and found it to build interpersonal relationships.

The growth in the usage of the English language around the world as the lingua franca for economic, scientific, and political exchange is undeniable. Presently English has a great influence in technology and means of communication. According to Crystal (1997), 85% of the world's international organisations use English as their official language in transnational communication and 90 % of the published academic articles are written in English.

On the Internet side, a study in 2016 by http://w3techs.com on 10 million top websites shows that 53.5% of the content language in those websites is in English. The content language of a website is defined as the natural language of the text on the site.

A survey on a number of internet users done by world bank in 2015 shows that Malaysia is placed at 58th place with 71.1 % per 100 users. It indicates Malaysia has one of the fastest growing internet users in the world. The growing number of internet users will require a high level of English proficiency. With the higher number of users, the usage and knowledge of

English and the capability to use it is an important indicator of the reason for choosing English instead of the mother tongue by the minority communities. A study by Chen (2010) shows that the more settled Chinese immigrants, use more English and less Chinese on the Internet than recent immigrants in Singapore. It is an indication of how the immigrant communities adopt a new language particularly English in their daily life.

2.4   Language Preference

In this section, the preference of one dominant language over a mother tongue is reviewed and also the domains where this preference is widespread.

Aitchison (1991) described language shift as a slow process that takes over a decade and its occurrence is almost undetected. The shift is usually to a more dominating language and in this case, English. Language shift indicates that a community is in the transition from predominate use of one language to invariable use of another (Rottet 2001; Blyth 1997). More precisely, language shift can be defined as an abandonment of the native language of a given group in favour of another more prestigious language (Winford 2003). A study by Offiong and Mensah (2012) shows that language shift is very common in the developing world compared to developed countries. In the same study, Offiong and Mensah (2012) listed the reasons for the shifting towards English, one of which language policy of the country in which English is used widely in major institutes.

In Malaysia, this trend is obvious among the Malayalees. As a multilingual, speaking English, Malay, Tamil, and Malayalam and in some cases Chinese dialects, the Malayalees are prone to prefer a more dominant language. The Study by Nambiar (2007) among the Malayalees shows there is a constant shift towards other languages, especially English.

One of the factors that contributes to language shift is bilingualism. Fasold (1984) in the study among the Gaelic contended that the bilingualism among the first generation immigrants is a threat to both languages; English and also Gaelic. The coexistence of English and Gaelic in the home domain will result in the demise of Gaelic. The next generation of the bilinguals will tend to communicate in English but only able to understand Gaelic and not able to speak the language. It will result in the subsequent generation become monolingual in English. Fasold (1984) said that, even though Gaelic is a favourable language in the home, and religion domain but in the formal domain such as school, court, and administration, English is preferred.

Diglossia is also pointed out as a contributor to language shift. Diglossia is the use of different language in different domains. Fishman (1972) described diglossia as a situation where different functions require different languages. This is exactly what is happening in the Malayalee community. A gradual shift has taken place over the last few decades. The Malayalees are shifting to the language of wide communication namely English (Nambiar, 2007). She further emphasised that even though the shifting is very advance but there are still some domains where the mother tongue is still prevailed.

2.5   Role of Interlocutors

The role of the interlocutors in language choice cannot be denied. Dorian (1981) through her study found that interlocutors have a pivotal role in language choice and the older a person is, the more important is the role. Even though there is no assurance that language maintenance will take place but the role played by the interlocutors is decisive.

Meanwhile, Gal (1979) found that there is an active switch in exchanging advice between Hungarian and German language. Expert advice was given in German, while friendly or informal advice was in Hungarian. It shows how the interlocutors use different languages in

the different settings. Fasold (1984) supports this finding with his own study and stressed that the choice of language of the interlocutor depends on the setting, interlocutors and functions.

The language choice or language preference can be measured by studying the usage of ethnic language among the young generation (Sridhar, 1985). He points out that the high level of use of ethnic language shows language maintenance while the low level of use is a clear indication of language shift. Therefore it is important to study the language use of the young generations especially those are educated, the level of usage among themselves and also with the older generations to determine the language shift.

The language they choose can also contribute to level of proficiency of the interlocutors in the language based on their age, social and status. David (1996) draws attention to the fact that low competency in ethnic language will make the young generation prefer another prestigious language, namely English. While Gal (1979) through the study indicated language as a status symbol. The Hungarian language is considered of lower status compared to German. Mufwene (2002) noted that lack of pride among the interlocutors in using certain language contributing to its endangerment. He said any efforts for language maintenance by developing a writing system and literacy will be futile without the interlocutors. Mufwene (2002) cites the Latin and Sanskrit as examples of the languages that had diminished even with the existence of the writing systems and literacy effort.

This notion is also supported by Asmah Hj Omar (1998) stressing that English has become a symbol of prestige and urbanisation among the urban residents. The English language is used in the household with the intention to improve the children's proficiency, not only at school but also outside their house in their daily communication. She says the English language exert pressure on the people especially the upper class as social identification and urbanisation.

The increase in the importance given to English is due to the changing family value and tradition. It was a norm to have an extended family living together where the youngsters have the chance to use their mother tongue with the grandparents or other elders. But now the young generation prefers nucleus family. It creates a vacuum in the family relationship and less contact between young and old generation; grandchildren and grandparents are only able to meet during the festivals or in special functions such as the wedding, birthday or funeral. It results in the loss opportunity for the young to be exposed to the mother tongue and an environment to practice the language. This changing tradition also creates a distance between the young and old generation where the youngsters are not as close as if they stay in an extended family.

Aitchison (1991) states that under normal circumstances, members of young generation will learn the mother tongue from their parents but at the same time they will be exposed to another more fashionable and socially useful language at school. Accordingly, Gal (1979) found that the young generation will prioritise the language learnt in school and use it more. In the case of the Oberwant people, it was the German language compared to their mother tongue, Hungarian language. Gal (1979) added that which subsequent generation more German words will be included in their speech and active borrowing of words occur in their daily conversation.

This phenomenon can be observed in the Malayalee community in Malaysia currently. Apparently, code switching will take place and mother tongue will diminish its usefulness and importance and replaced by the more dominant and prestigious language.

2.6   Language and Ethnicity

The origin of the word ethnicity can be traced to the Greek word 'ethos' which means nation, people, caste, tribe and such others (Chakraborty and Ghosh, 2013). The Webster Third New International Dictionary 1967 among other defined ethnicity as a community of physical

and mental traits possessed by the members of a group as a product of their common heredity and cultural traditions; indicates the racial, linguistic and cultural ties with people with the specific group. Ethnicity therefore stands for the ethnic quality of a group bearing different meaning in varied situational context (Chakraborty and Ghosh, 2013). Sharin (2005) meanwhile equated ethnicity to a group of people owning some extent of solidarity and coherence among themselves who are covert, conscious of possessing common origins and interests. She described ethnic group as not a mere sector of a population or aggregate of speakers but a self-conscious set of members unified and closely linked by shared experiences.

According to Eriksen (2002), ethnicity is formed when groups of people see each other as different and they go on to develop racial stratification within a society. Hence, ethnicity is socially constructed only when there are the 'others'. The ascribed aspect a person has is important when the person is engaging with others from a different background (Eriksen, 2002). It is then ethnicity comes into existence and plays an important role.

Eriksen's (2002) view of ethnicity is an ideal illustration of the Malaysian society. As a multiracial and multi-cultural society, Malaysia is laden with people of various different groups. During social gatherings or different types of congregations, each group will try to establish their own identity. In one study by Lee (2009), it was found that Chinese people tend to use their ethnocentric perceptions about other ethnic groups in Malaysia to construct their own identity.

Language is one of the tools used to establish their identity. When different groups come together, language is used to differentiate between the many groups and reckon as the member of a certain ethnic group. Language has an important usage in establishing identity (De Fina, 2007). The usage of language goes beyond mere signalling or reflecting of speakers' identity.

It enables speakers to find, establish and adjust to their own space within a larger social context (De Fina, 2009).

In any multilingual communities, ethnicity plays a very profound importance in the choice of language and language use. Being a member of one of the ethnic group is an important basis in multilingual communities. The identity of a person is defined based on the ethnic group they belong too. Clammer (1982) described Malaysia as one of the countries well defined in-group and out-group divisions. Ethnic differences are accentuated by the official practice of categorising people along ethnic lines. The various ethnic groups include the Malays, Chinese, Indians, Kadazans, Ibans and others depending on where they are located in East and West Malaysia (Muzaffar, 1983).

Another factor that contributes to the usage of mother tongue among youths is the age when it is introduced to them. Chakrabothy and Ghosh (2013) argued that the use of mother tongue in early stages of schooling will improve the chances of them learning the language and also reinforces their self-esteem, sense of identity and belonging. They added, if these steps are taken, language loss can be avoided. The opposite is also can be concluded when the mother tongue is not exposed to the speakers at an early age or since birth, the chances of them to be proficiency in their mother tongue is decrease and it might lower their self-esteem and sense of belonging to the ethnic group they belong to.

2.6.1 Language as Ethnic Identity

The term ethnic identity is often used interchangeably with race to refer to a group of people. But terms are distinct from each other. Markus (2008) points out that both these terms refer to the possibilities of grouping people according to some similar characteristics such as physical, social and religion. While race is perceived differences based on appearance or

behaviour done by others. Ethnicity according to Markus (2008) is commonalties such as language, history, nationality, region of origin, religion or physical appearance that people identify themselves with others.

Ethnic identity is also constructed as multidimensional and dynamic (Phinney and Ong, 2007; Smith and Silva, 2011). The sense of belonging, affirmation and commitment is a component of ethnic identity (Phinney and Ong, 2007). This sense of belonging shows the individual attachment towards their own ethnic group.

2.6.2 Malayalam Language

Fishman (1991) states that the increase in the usage of dominant language will decrease the ethnic language. Among the Malayalee community, the usage of their mother tongue, Malayalam, is limited at home or in informal domains. They could not use their ethnic language in a formal domain like the workplace, education, government and administration due to lack of interlocutors that use the language and also the poor comprehend of the language users, in this case, Malayalam (Nambiar, 2007). She stressed that even in informal situations like socialising, the Malayalees have to use other languages of wider communication, in this case, English, Malay or Tamil.

The survival and maintenance of the ethnic language rest in the home domain. The gradual changes that are taking place towards English will diminish the ethnic language if left unchecked (Rokshana Abdullah, 1989)

2.7   The Fishman Domain Theory

Fishman (1972) propagated Schmidt-Rohr's domain concept which can be traced back to 1930s. He suggested that domains were considered as theoretical constructs that can explain language choice (Haberland, 2005). It is considered a powerful explanatory tool that is obvious (and observable) with parameters like topic, place (setting) and interlocutor. The domain theory or concept is an attempt to sort out different areas of language use in multilingual societies, which are relevant for language choice (Haberland, 2005). As with the case of Malaysia, the multiethnic and multilingual society has the choice to choose the language to communicate with others. As the Malaysian Malayalees form one of the minority groups, they tend to always need to choose an appropriate language to communicate with others.

The domain theory is not without objections from the scholars and the public. Some of the objections are deep rooted in the theory itself. Those who oppose the domain theory rationalised that domains are parameters of language choice but not properties of languages. Since it has no domains, there is no risk or possibility of losing them (Haberland, 2005). A second objection is from Padraig (1997). According to him, some multilingual situations are best not to be described in terms of domains. The study in the Danish-German border area in the multilingual community supports this argument (Padraig, 1997).

As mentioned earlier, the concept of domains was the brainchild of Schmidt-Rohr back in the 1930s but it was not taken up seriously by the researchers. Fishman (1972) revived the concept with some modifications.

The number of domains varied according to groups and how it been generalised for each multilingual communities. For example, Greenfield (Greenfield and Fishman 1971) established there are five domains in the New York Puerto Rican speech community, namely, Family, Friendship, Religion, Education and Employment (Haberland, 2005). Haberland (2005), further

warned that domains are to be used with some precaution. He suggested the extended domain theory by Fishman to be more suitable.

Based on these arguments, the researcher will use the extended Fishman theory which gives the flexibility to be modified based on the needs of a research. Fishman (1972) classified the domains into two categories: intimate and formal. The intimate domain consists of family, home and place of worship. The formal domains are school, workplace, court and administration. The researcher will use the locale and intimate domains as mentioned in the Fishman domain theory. The locale is defined as a place of work, temple, cultural functions, festivities, sending SMS, chatting and social network usage.

Fishman (1972) classified domain into two categories: intimate and formal. The intimate domain consists of family, home and place of worship. The formal domains are school, workplace, court and administration. The people know which language to be used in certain given situations. They may use one language like English to communicate at their workplace, with friends from different ethnic and dealing with administration, media and education. In the intimate domains especially at places of worship, David (1996) found that religion contributes in maintaining the ethnic language in some communities but it may not be the same for all the minority communities.

There seems to be the fact that the ethnic language is not used in the religious domain. The churches use English, the temple use mostly Tamil and Sanskrit while the mosques use either Arabic or Malay. It is in line with the study by Nambiar (2007) in which she had pointed out that the Malayalees prefer languages based on the religion they profess. Muslim Malayalees were found to prefer the Malay language, the Christians prefer English, the Hindus especially those who are not very well educated prefer Tamil and the educated Hindus mostly prefer

English (Nambiar, 2007). In the present study, it would be interesting to find out which language is used by Malayalee youths of Seremban.

2.8   The Theory of Ethnolinguistic Vitality

Ethnolinguistic vitality 'is that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations' (Giles et al. 1977: 308). Ethnolinguistic Vitality proposes that a group will consciously and collectively behave in a certain way in order to preserve their culture and traditions.

Giles (1977) stressed that the communities with high vitality will survive while those with low vitality will cease to exist. Giles et al divided the ethnolinguistic vitality into two main categories namely objective and subjective vitality (Bourhis et al.1981). Objective vitality has three structural variables which form its core. They are demography, institutional support and status (Giles et al. 1977). While the objective vitality determines the existence of the communities in different variables, subjective vitality is important in determining the sociolinguistic and the inter-ethnic behaviour of each community's objective vitality that is based on members' assessment of in and out group vitality (Harwood et al. 1994: 175). Vitality is related to ethnic or linguistic identity. Omoniyi and White (2006) said that the sociolinguistics of identity focuses on how people position or construct themselves and also on how others position or construct the community by the socio-cultural situations through the language spoken and variables that comprise identity markers for the community.

The objective vitality as drawn out by Giles (1977) has three variables, namely, status factor, demography and institutional support, which are pertinent to the Ethnolinguistic framework. Status factors include social, socio-historical aspects, economic and the prestige accorded to a certain language. In this study, it is related to how the Malayalee youths perceive

their mother tongue, Malayalam. While demography includes the number of interlocutors from the community, the birth rate and geographical concentration. In the case of the Malayalees in Malaysia, they are scattered all over the country in very small numbers. Another contributing factor to be considered is inter-racial marriages.

Institutional support includes recognition of the groups of speakers, the language in media, education and government. Giles et al (1977) further noted that the more linguistic vitality is embedded within an ethnolinguistic group, the more are the indications for short or long term language maintenance strategies. He further proposed that ethnolinguistic groups can be roughly classified as having low, medium or high vitality as mentioned earlier.

Landweer (1991) in the study specified ethnolinguistic vitality as a collection of factors indicating the direction of the speech community. Landweer (1991) further proposed eight indicators of ethnolinguistic vitality, namely, the domains in which the language is used; the relative position on the global continuum; the population and group dynamics; the distribution of speakers within their own social networks; the frequency and type of code switching; the social outlook regarding and within the speech community; access to a stable and acceptable economic base and the language prestige. He further stressed that no one factor is given more importance compared to others and these indicators merely point to the direction of the language rather than language death (Landweer, 1991).

In this study, ethnolinguistic vitality is assumed as a perception of 'groupness' or togetherness including their emotional attachment to their community and their willingness to act collectively as a group to preserve the language and their ethnicity (Ehala, 2010)

2.9   Summary

In this chapter, the literature related to the language use and language preference among different communities around the world had been discussed. The researcher also relates the literature regarding the importance given to English in different domains across many aspects such as in technology, in employment and learning institutions. This study also discussed the theory related to research to allow a better understanding of the focus and the scope of this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

This research involves employing the mixed methods with a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to improve the validity of the data collection. This study examined the usage of English among youths of the Malayalee community in Seremban. Three distinct research methods were used in the form of a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. The aim of this study is also to investigate how Malayalee youths perceive their ethnic identity.

The following sections present the theoretical framework, a description of the methods and instruments used as well as the selection criteria and sampling of respondents and the research design.

3.2   Theoretical Framework

The framework of this study comprised of two main components. The first theory is Fishman Domain Theory to answer research questions 1, 2 and 3. This theory was developed by Fishman (1972) and refers to domains of language use in relation to any speech community. According to this theory, the factors which influence the concept of the domain are the topic, role relation, and locale.

The selected domains are family, friendship, locale and social media as the main focus. The family domain consists of grandparents, father, mother, uncles, aunties, siblings, nieces, nephews and cousins. The locale is defined as a place of gathering. In this particular study, the following settings were selected: the workplace, temple, festivities, cultural gatherings and

recreation places. The friendship domains refer to friends and neighbours. The social media domain focus on sending Short Message Service (SMS), chatting and other medias such as Facebook, Myspace and twitter. These are the specific domains for the present study.

With regards to criticisms regarding the Fishman Domain Theory as pointed out by Riagáin (1997) that it may be difficult to describe language choice using the domain concept in a bilingualism community. Another criticism was the difficulty in applying the domain concept where extensive code-switching takes place. Fishman (1972) however elaborated that in any given situation only one language will be chosen as the main language during the communicative process. He added that the interlocutors have the choice to choose several or even all of the languages available to them. The choice made is not in a random fashion but in congruent patterns of behaviour. He emphasised these congruent patterns fall in the five domains of language use; family, friendship, religion, education, and employment (Fishman 1972). Therefore, based on Fishman's arguments the researcher opined that this theory is still relevant to study the frequency of use of English among the Malayalee youths at the selected site.

The second theory is the Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory (EVT) by Giles (1977). This theory deals with the research question related to the ethnicity markers in RQ3. This component looks at how a group behaves as a unique and active collective entity in intergroup situations. Ehala (2010) added that vitality manifests itself as the readiness of any given group to participate in a collective action. For this research, the ethnolinguistic vitality refers to the perception of youths towards their native language and the identity markers as Malayalees and speakers of Malayalam.

3.3   Research Design

This study uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The mixed method used gives strength to the data collected and the analysis to be conducted as well as to rectify the weakness of any individual approach (Creswell, 2013). In line with Creswell's view, the researcher used questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion to elicit the data for this study. The research design is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│          DATA COLLECTION            │
│           • Quantitative            │
│           • Qualitative             │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│       Stage 1: Quantitative Data    │
│           * Questionnaire           │
│       * Sample size: 78 Respondents │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Stage  2:  Qualitative Data  │
│   Semi-structured Interview -4 respondents │
│    Focus Grou1 group , 4 respondents │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Stage 3: Transcription       │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│          DATA  ANALYSIS             │
│           • Quantitative            │
│           • Qualitative             │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Stage 1 : Quantitative Data Analysis │
│        • Data from questionnaires   │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Stage 2: Qualitative Data Analysis │
│              Interviews             │
│          Focus group discussion     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│            Report writing           │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 3.1: Research Design

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3.4 Methodology

The triangulation of data was done by combining both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Snider (2010) opined that even though numbers impress, but unfortunately they also conceal far more than they reveal. This shortcoming was solved by using not only the quantitative method in analysing the data collected but also qualitative method was used to analyse the data collected through the interview and focus group. The triangulation in analysing the data using quantitative and qualitative is to ensure the higher reliability.

The data collection was carried out in three stages. For Stage 1, the researcher collected quantitative data through a questionnaire administered to Malayalee youths in Seremban.

In stage 2, the qualitative data were collected through two steps using two groups of volunteers comprising of Malayalee youths living in Seremban. Snowballing sampling technique was used to gather data due to small number of respondents at the identified site of study. The goal of qualitative research is to study the occurrence of various views and opinions of the respondents in the selected sample for this study. First group of four (4) respondents who volunteered were interviewed individually using the semi-structured interview approach. Secondly, a focus group discussion was conducted to probe further on what they perceive to be salient ethnic identity markers as Malayalees.

Stage 3 refers to transcription of the interviews and focus group discussion. The participants were coded for easy reference upon selection of excerpts from the transcripts.

This was followed by data analysis in two stages. In Stage 1 of data analysis, the questionnaires were coded and then the researcher used MS Excel for statistical analysis. The data gathered was stored and tabulated using Microsoft Excel. The percentage of use for each domains were tabulated and the results were analysed to answer the research questions.

In Stage 2 the transcribed data elicited from interviews and focus group discussion were analysed. Report writing ensued once analyses were completed.

3.5 Sampling

In this study snowball sampling, a subset of purposive sampling was used as the population of Malayalees youths in Seremban is small and could not be determined even though a population census (census, 2010) was conducted by Department of Statistics Malaysia. According to Nambiar (2007), only 35,000 Malayalees lived in Malaysia. Therefore, this method of sampling is useful in situations where it may be difficult to locate samples.

Snowball sampling was used in this study in locating respondents for the questionnaire and participants for the interviews and focus group discussion. Although sampling using snowball method means that respondents may choose people they know well who may share same traits and characteristics as indicated by Castillo (2009), this was the best method possible for this study and was found to be effective for a small population of Malayalees in Seremban.

Each respondent was asked to recommend another person who might be willing to participate in the research. Then the researcher contacted the person and once consent is given, they would answer the questionnaire with the researcher available to answer any enquiries.

The researcher also obtained the help of All Malaysian Malayalee Association (AMMA) in recommending some willing and suitable respondents. This also allowed the researcher to reach the target population.

In this study, certain criteria were used in selecting the suitable sample. The criteria for the selection of the sample is presented in the next section.

3.6 Selection Criteria

The sample for both respondents of the questionnaires and participants of the interviews and focus group discussion had to meet the following criteria set for this study:

1. Malayalee youths selected are between the ages of 17 to 24 years old.

2. Parents of participants are both Malayalees. This step is important to preserve the validity of the data collected so that they come from the background of Malayalam speaking families. This criterion is considered important due to the fact that, in mixed marriages, sometimes only one language, either from the mother or the father become dominant and the other will be given less emphasis.

3. All youths have a permanent address in Seremban to ensure that they have grown up in that township. The choice of Seremban as the site is relevant as an "urban" setting for this study.

4. All youths speak English and have a working knowledge of Malayalam. Based on the pilot study, it was found that the respondents with only basic knowledge of the language could not communicate in the language. Therefore, the sample for this study needs to have some fair understanding of the language although they may not be proficient in Malayalam.

3.7   Sample Size

Determining the optimal sample size is a critical step in the design of a planned research protocol (Suresh and Chandrashekara, 2012). The following sections describe the background and the sample size for the various data collection stages.

3.7.1   Profile of Respondents

The respondents in this study are from Seremban, the capital of the state of Negeri Sembilan. The respondents were youths between the age of 17 and 24 years. For this study the definition of "youth" by United Nations (UN) was adopted which defines youth as people between 15 and 24 years old (www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/). The respondents were classified as shown in the table below.

Table 3.1: Age Group of Respondents

	Age Group		Total
	17-19	20-24	
Male	20	20	*40*
Female	20	18	*38*
Total	*40*	*38*	**78**

Table 3.1 shows the profile of respondents which has been classified by age group and gender. In the age group 1, 17-19, there are 40 respondents with 20 male respondents and 20 female respondents. In the age group 20-24, there are 20 male respondents and 18 female respondents. In total there are 78 respondents, 40 male respondents and 38 female respondents.

Table 3.2: Highest Level of Education of Respondents

	17-19		20-24	
	n	%	n	%
Primary	0	0.0	0	0.0
Secondary	38	95.0	31	81.6
College	2	5.0	4	10.5
University	0	0.0	3	7.9
TOTAL	40	100.0	38	100.0

Table 3.2 shows the level of formal education received by the respondents in this study. In the 17-19 age group, 95 %(n=38) have received at least a secondary level education. It is because most of the respondents had just finished their form five education at the secondary level. Only 2 respondents, 5.0%, had started their education at the college.

Among the 20-24 years old respondents, 81.6 %(n=31) had received at least a secondary level education. Another 10.5 %(n=40) had finished their college and started working. There were 3 (7.9%) respondents at tertiary level. Out of the 3 respondents, 2 of them already graduated while another was in her final year.

Table 3.3: First Language of Respondents

	17-19		20-24		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
English	21	52.5	19	50.0	40	51.3
Malayalam	18	45.0	17	44.7	35	44.9
Others	1	2.5	2	5.3	3	3.8
Total	40	100.0	38	100.0	78	100.0

Table 3.3 shows the respondents' first language when they were children. Almost equal number of respondents, 52.5% (n=21) from 17-19 age group and 50.0 %(n=19) indicated their first language were English. A total of 51.3% (n=40) of the respondents' first exposure were English.

About 44.9% (n=35) of the respondents said their first language as a child was Malayalam. Out of those 35 respondents, 45.0% (n=18) are from 17-19 age group and 44.7 %(n=17) are from 20-24 age group.

Table 3.4: Main Language Use of Respondents

	17-19		20-24		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
English	18	45.0	14	36.8	32	41.0
More English Than Malayalam	8	20.0	7	18.4	15	19.2
English and Malayalam equally	4	10.0	5	13.2	9	11.5
More Malayalam Than English	5	12.5	5	13.2	10	12.8
Malayalam	3	7.5	4	10.5	7	9.0
Others	2	5.0	3	7.9	5	6.4
Total	40	100.0	38	100.0	78	100.0

Table 3.4 shows the language use of the respondents. A total of 32 respondents or 41.0% uses fully English as their main language of communication. Out of the 32 respondents, 45.0% (n=18) are from 17-19 age group and 36.8 %(n=14) are from 20-24 age group. Another 15 respondents (19.2%) use more English than Malayalam while 11.5% (n=11) use English and Malayalam equally.

Among the Malayalam use, 7.5% (n=3) from the 17-19 age group and 10.5 %(n=4) from 20-24 age group use fully Malayalam. Another 12.8% (n=10) said they use more Malayalam than English.

There were 5 respondents (6.4%) indicated that they use other language in their daily life. In this study, 'other' refers to languages such as Malay and Tamil. However, the majority of the respondents indicated Tamil as the other language.

Table 3.5: The Language Fluency of Respondents

	17-19		20-24		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
English	22	55.0	21	55.3	43	55.1
Malayalam	11	27.5	9	23.7	20	25.6
Both	7	17.5	8	21.1	15	19.2
Total	40	100.0	38	100.0	78	100.0

Table 3.5 shows the language fluency as appraised by the respondents themselves. About 55.1% (n=43) of the respondents indicated they are fluent in English compared to only 25.6 %(n=20) of them are fluent in Malayalam. Another 19.2% (n=15) said they are fluent in both languages.

3.7.2 Interviewees

The interviewees were selected based on their willingness to volunteer as participants in this study. There were four (4) participants for the interviews. One male respondent and one female respondent from each age group were chosen. The male respondents were 18 and 21

years old while the female respondents were 17 and 23 years old. They were contacted by the telephone to get their consent and a written consent was obtained during the interview.

3.7.3 Participants of Focus Group Discussion

As of the interview, the participants for the focus group discussion were selected through word of mouth from other respondents. The volunteers were contacted through telephone to get their prior permission to participate in this study.

There were four (4) participants in this focus group discussion. There were 2 male respondents; one from each age group while the other 2 are female respondents from the 20 to 24 age group. They were given a topic to discuss regarding their preference of language and also what they consider to be their identity markers as Malayalees.

3.8 Instruments

The researcher used three instruments as described in the following sections.

3.8.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is the main data collection tool used by the researcher. The selection of this method is due to direct method in data collection.

The questionnaire had four (4) sections. Section A was to elicit background information about the respondents such as age group, gender, education level, language use, fluency in the English and Malayalam languages and their exposure to Malayalam as a child.

Section B had questions regarding the preference of Malayalee youths in using English or Malayalam in different domains including workplace, recreation place, at home, in using social media such as Facebook and Twitter. It also elicits data such as the language usage in

chatting and sending out SMS. It elicits data such as their language of choice in different domains.

Section C was aimed to elicit data on the youths' language preferences when they communicate with members of their own family and their Malayalee neighbours and Malayalee friends.

In Section D, the Malayalee youths were asked to rank the items listed which reflect and symbolise the identity of the Malayalees in the order of importance. This section was supposed to shed light on the perception of the Malayalee youths regarding their ethnic identity and what are the markers they use to identify themselves as Malayalees.

The questionnaire was built through consultation with the supervisor and every care was taken to avoid biases towards any particular result. The questionnaire used by Nambiar (2007), has been adapted to cater to this study. Nambiar (2007) studied the language shift among the Malayalee community in Klang Valley. The questionnaire was built to cater to the different generation and also across different religion. In this study, however, the focus is on the use of English among the Malayalee youths and the perception of ethnic markers among them in Seremban.

Another adaptation from Nambiar (2007) was the questionnaire in this study was supplied with boxes for respondents to tick their choice from the options of responses provided. This questionnaire was also constructed as such so as not to burden the respondents with the task of writing long written responses. This method was chosen for its reliability and it saved a lot of time on the part of the respondents concerned and also the researcher.

A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed personally by the researcher. Out of 120, only 78 met the criteria as set out earlier in Section 3.6. Among those that had to be rejected included some respondents who came from a mixed-marriage family where Malayalam language not used at all.   Some other respondents were unable to understand or communicate in simple Malayalam.

3.8.2   Interview

The interview is one of the tools used to collect qualitative data in this study. The researcher expects through the triangulation of the various methods used in collecting the data, the reliability and the validity of the data collected will be enhanced.

The interview was a semi-structured interview involving four (4) respondents, two from each age group. Each interview was between 10-12 minutes. They were assigned coding as follows:

(I) – Interviewee, numbers one to four;

(M) – male respondents, (F) for female respondents;

(G) – age group 1 or 2

(L) – transcription line

The questionnaire provided the perspective of the respondents' linguistic choices while the interview provided a deeper understanding of the respondents' language choices, the usage of English and perception of their ethnic identity. During the interviews, they were asked regarding their use of English in their daily life and their perception towards English and also their mother tongue, Malayalam, and how they see the survival of Malayalam with the usage

of other languages by them. They were also asked about the importance of English in their daily life compared to their mother tongue.

The interviews were to elicit more authentic data based on the respondents' perception and reasons. It provided the reason for the language choice and the usage of English and also how the Malayalee youths perceive what was symbolising their ethnic identity. These interviews were recorded and transcribed before the data were analysed.

3.8.3 Focus Group Discussion

Focus groups are group discussions which are arranged to examine a specific set of topics (Kitzinger 2005). The group is focused because 'it involves some kind of collective activity' (Kitzinger 2005: 56). Based on literature given, in this study, the researcher employed the less structured focus group method to get a more authentic data.

The researcher played the role of the facilitator during the whole discussion. The group was given the topic "Malayalam or English is my identity". The respondents were asked to speak freely on this topic. The respondents were given the opportunity to express their opinions, ideas and their perception of their ethnic identity and the use of English. The researcher only interfered to clarify certain points and verify the points argued among the respondents.

In this research, four respondents who had volunteered took part to discuss the topic given. They were free to express their views and opinions. Even though some of the points raised were objected by others in the group but it was done in a friendly and jovial manner. The researcher took a passive role and only interfered to clarify certain points that were discussed and to put back the discussion on track when the respondents deviate from the topic given.

The respondents for this discussion was coded as below.

(FG)   – Focus Group
(1)   - Participant, numbers one to four
(F)   - Female
(M)   - Male
(L)   - transcriptions line

For example, FG1FL21 refers to Focus Group participant 1, Female and L refers to the transcription line 21.

The whole discussion took about around thirty minutes. The researcher managed to elicit information that is important, reliable and related to the study.

3.9   Ethical Considerations

The respondents were briefed on the purpose of the research and were made clear that their participation in this study was voluntary. They were given the option to drop out of the research at any time. The researcher ensured all the respondents of the confidentiality of the details provided in the research. The respondents or the parents of the respondents below the age of 18 years old gave written consent to participate either in completing the questionnaire, taking part in the interview and also in focus group discussion.

3.10 Methods of Analysis

This study analysed both the qualitative and quantitative data and the findings were tabulated.

For the questionnaire, the researcher collected all the responses and entered the data in Microsoft Excel. The data were analysed for frequencies according to the categories set by the researcher. Findings were first tabulated and the presented in graph and percentile formats.

The data for the interviews and the focus group discussion were based on the responses to the interview questions and the group discussion. The interviews and the focus group discussion were recorded. They were transcripted and the responses were presented in the form of a narrative.

3.11 Pilot Study

A pilot study on the questionnaire was conducted with 10 respondents randomly selected from the Malayalee community in Seremban. The pilot study was to detect any weaknesses of the instruments used and to rectify the shortcoming in the procedures.

The respondents were given the questionnaire to complete. The researcher intended to find out if the questionnaire could elicit the kind of data that are expected from it. The unclear questions and all the tasks that required rectification were handled accordingly. After the rectification, the questionnaire was tested again until the researcher got satisfying responses from the respondents. Only then the questionnaire was administered to the respondents in the real study.

Similarly, a pilot study was conducted to check the questions for the interview. For this purpose four (4) candidates were chosen in random and they were asked about their opinion on the usage of English, their mother tongue, Malayalam and their ethnic identity perception.

Any shortcomings from the pilot test either the wording, instructions or the designing were rectified. All necessary modifications in the operational procedures were done. As anticipated, all these rectification and modification provided a valuable experience to the researcher in carrying out the data collection properly.

3.12   Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presents the various methods used to gather information and data as well as details about the sample population. It also explains how all the information and data was analysed and presented.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the analysis on the data collected from Malayalee youths from two different age groups and genders. Data was collected through the administration of a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. The main aim of the study was to find out the use of English among Malayalee youths in Seremban, an urban setting, and how it relates to their ethnic identity.

This study was guided by the objectives as set out below:

1. To examine the use of English among Malayalee youths in different domains.

2. To compare the use of English and Malayalam by Malayalee male and female Malayalee youths.

3. To investigate the ethnic identity markers of Malayalee youths.

In this study, the data collected were through a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. The data collected were analysed following the research questions formed to look at the language choice in different domains, namely, home, locale, family, and cultural and religious activities.

Excerpts from the interviews and the focus group discussion are provided as part of the discussion of findings. The interviewees and focus group participants were coded as follows:

Example 1

My grandmother knows no English, so I have to talk to her in broken Malayalam.

I3MG1L5

In Example 1, I3MG1L5 refers to Interviewee 3, a male from Age Group 1 and L5 refers to Line 5 of the transcription. The Age for Group 1 is between 17-19 years while the Age Group 2 is between 20-24 years.

The following example illustrates the excerpts from the focus group discussion:

Example 2

I think Malayalam is still important to show our identity.

<div align="right">FG1FL21</div>

In Example 2 above, FG1FL21 refers to the participant of Focus Group 1, a female and L21 refers to the transcription Line 21.

The following sections present the findings followed by the discussion of the salient points and excerpts from the transcriptions selected as examples.

The following two sections will present the findings based on the following research questions:

RQ1: In which domains is English used by Malayalee youths?

4.2 English Usage in Family and Friends Domains

Family domain is the last bastion of maintenance for mother tongue (Holmes, 2001). Respondents were asked in the questionnaire on the choice of language with their family members and the findings are presented in the following sections.

4.2.1 Language Use with Grandparents

In this study, grandparents are not distinguished in terms of their gender since the main idea is to obtain the choice of language used with a generation older than their parents. Figure 4.1 on English usage by the respondents with their grandparents shows more Malayalam is

being used compared to English. Almost 40% (n=30) of the respondents indicate that they use only Malayalam with their grandparents compared to 30.7% (n= 23) who use fully English.

Although the difference is not a vast one, it is clear that more respondents use only Malayalam with their grandparents. The choice for Malayalam is due to the fact that many of older generation do not speak the English language and might not have received any formal education in English.
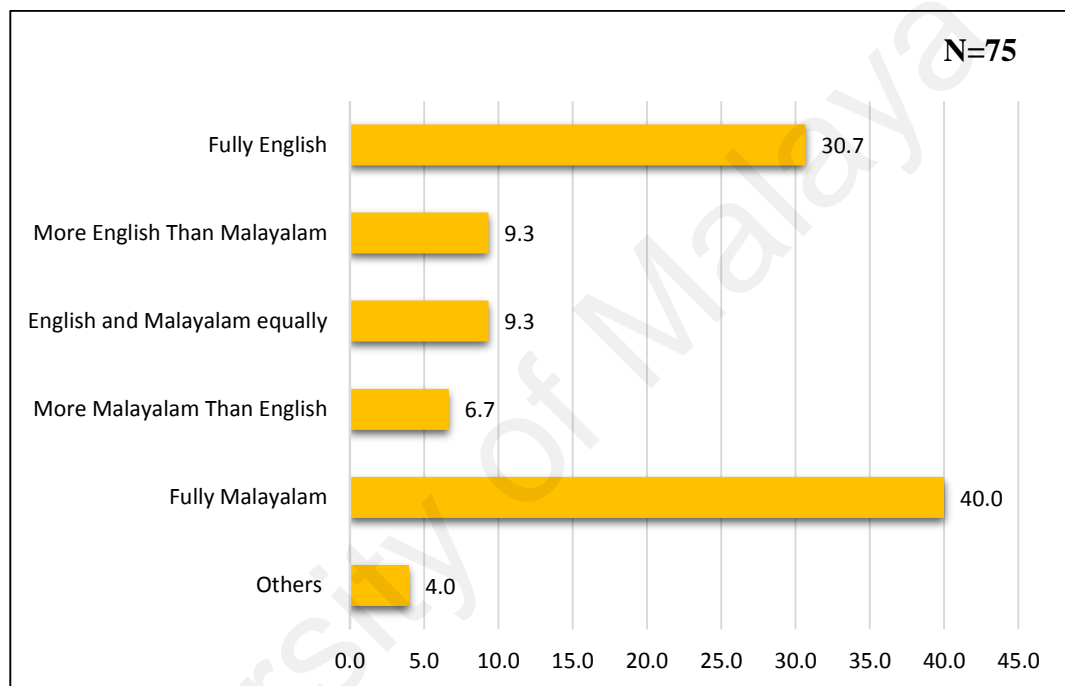
Figure 4.1: English Usage with Grandparents

In relation to the above, when an interviewee was asked this question, she expressed her view as such:

Excerpt 1

> My grandmother knows no English, so I have to talk to her in broken Malayalam and my Malayalam is not good. What choice do I have?
>
> I3FG2L14

This may reflect the same situation with other youths as the above respondent in this study. Therefore, the use of Malayalam is to mainly communicate with grandparents who do not speak any English or other languages.

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Based on the data elicited through interviews and the focus group, Malayalee youths who fully use English (30.7%, n=23) have grandparents who have been educated in English or have picked up the language through their daily interactions with English-speaking Malaysians.

Apart from this, the respondents perhaps have no choice but to use English with their grandparents because of their poor literacy in Malayalam.   So they have to use English as the only means of communication. One of the interviewees when queried the reason for her language choice, she said,

Excerpt 2

I use English because my Malayalam is not good.

I3FG2L19

Figure 4.1 also shows that there seems to be a tie between these two categories. Usage of more English than Malayalam and that of English and Malayalam equally are tied at 9.3 % (n= 7). Perhaps it can be summed up that although both languages are being used, Malayalam may seem to be more dominant as a lingua franca with grandparents. The category "other" in this study refers to languages such as Malay and Tamil. However, the majority of respondents refer "other" as Tamil, and this was indicated in the questionnaire.

4.2.2 Language Use with Father

Next is the usage of English by the respondents with their fathers as shown in Figure 4.2 below:
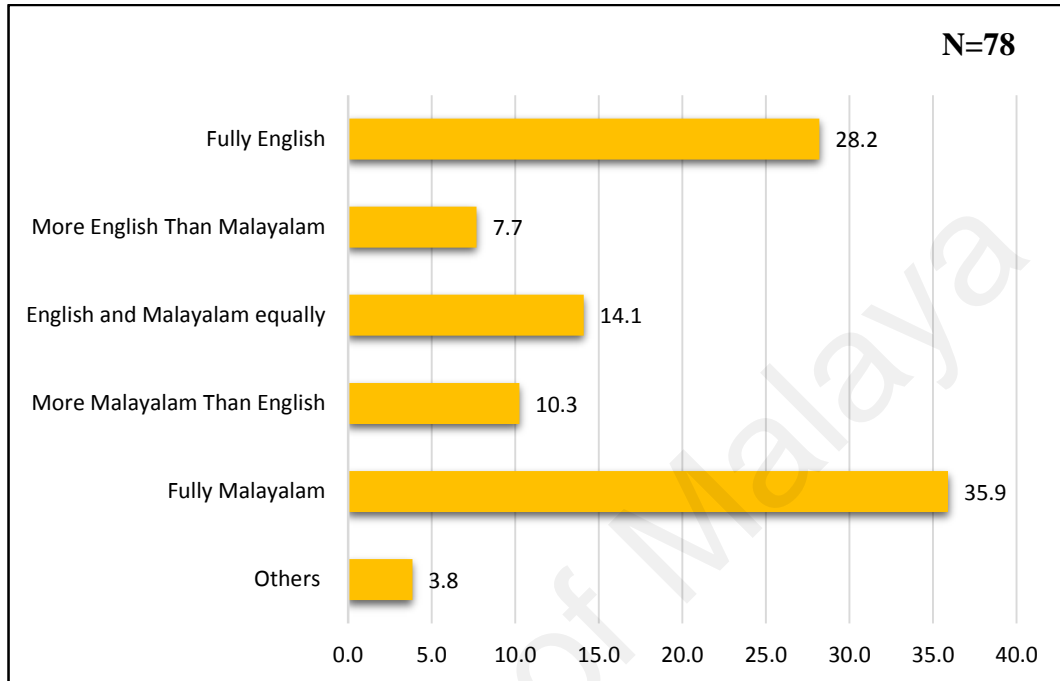
Figure 4.2: English Usage with Father

Based on Figure 4.2, in this study, there are more Malayalee youths who use only Malayalam (35.9%, n= 28) compared to those who use only English (28.2%, n= 22). This situation might have arisen as this group of fathers may use only Malayalam at home just like their own parents, that is, the grandparents in this study. Even those who use more Malayalam than English is slightly higher compared to those who use more English than Malayalam, 10.3% (n=8) and 7.7% (n= 6), respectively. This shows that Malayalam is given more importance at home compared to English.

4.2.3 Language Use with Mother

Respondents were also asked about their choice of language with their parents. Next, Figure 4.3 presents the respondents' usage of English and Malayalam with their mothers.
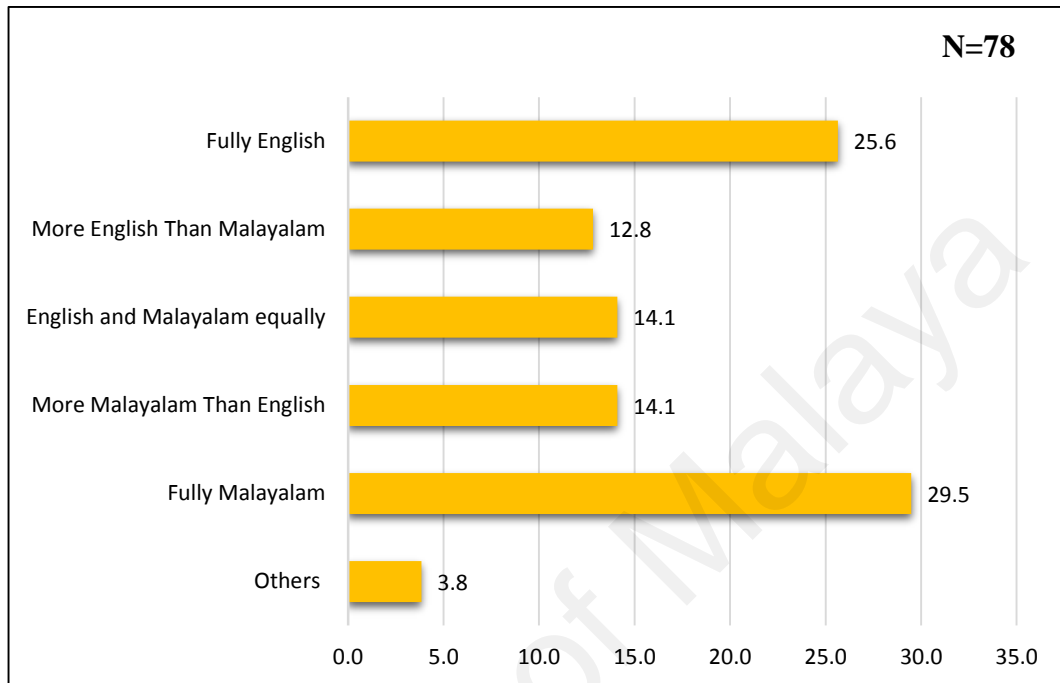
Figure 4.3: English Usage with Mother

Figure 4.3 indicates that respondents' usage of only Malayalam (29.5%, n= 23) with their mother is slightly higher than only English (25.6 %, n=20). This might also be due to mothers and grandparents are most likely use more Malayalam at home. On the contrary, those who can speak English tend to use English with their children and as a result, the children might not be familiar with Malayalam. Hence, some Malayalee youths in this study do not have a working knowledge of Malayalam. Only a small group in this study reported that they use more Malayalam than English (14.1%, n=11) with their mothers. Even less is the use of more English than Malayalam (12.8%, n=10) with their mothers. The choice of language with the mothers is Malayalam among this group of Malayalee youths but not English.

4.2.4 Language Use with Siblings

The questionnaire also asked respondents about the choice of language when communicating with their siblings. Figure 4.4 presents the usage of English with their siblings.
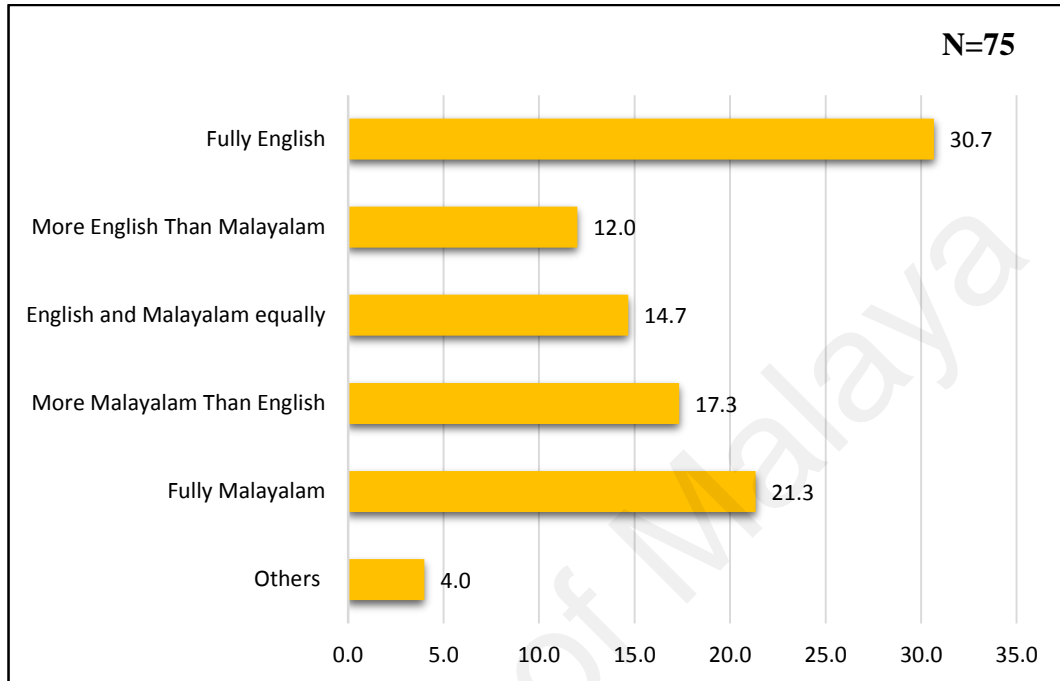
Figure 4.4: English Usage with Siblings

As presented in Figure 4.4 above, the usage of English is a more apparent choice for the respondents with their siblings. About 30.7% (n=23) of the respondents indicated that they use only English with their siblings compared to 21.3% (n=16) who use only Malayalam. The usage of English is higher as this might be because of their formal education where they are exposed to conversing in English at school. One of them said she found it easier to use English with her sibling:

Excerpt 3

I rather use English with my sister. I can convey my thoughts easily compared to Malayalam.

I2MG2L13

As indicated by respondent I2MG2, the use of English is preferred by the respondents with their siblings compared to their mother tongue because they find it easier and more convenient to express their thoughts with each other in that language. Other factors such as social media and entertainment that offer music and movies in English tend to be more familiar to the youths and could have also influenced them to use more English than Malayalam.

It is also found that only a small group, 17.3% (n= 13) indicated that they use more Malayalam than English. On the whole, more chose English when compared to Malayalam for interacting with their siblings.

4.2.5 Language Use with Uncles and Aunts

Respondents were also asked about the language used with their uncles and aunts. The findings are presented in Figure 4.5 below:
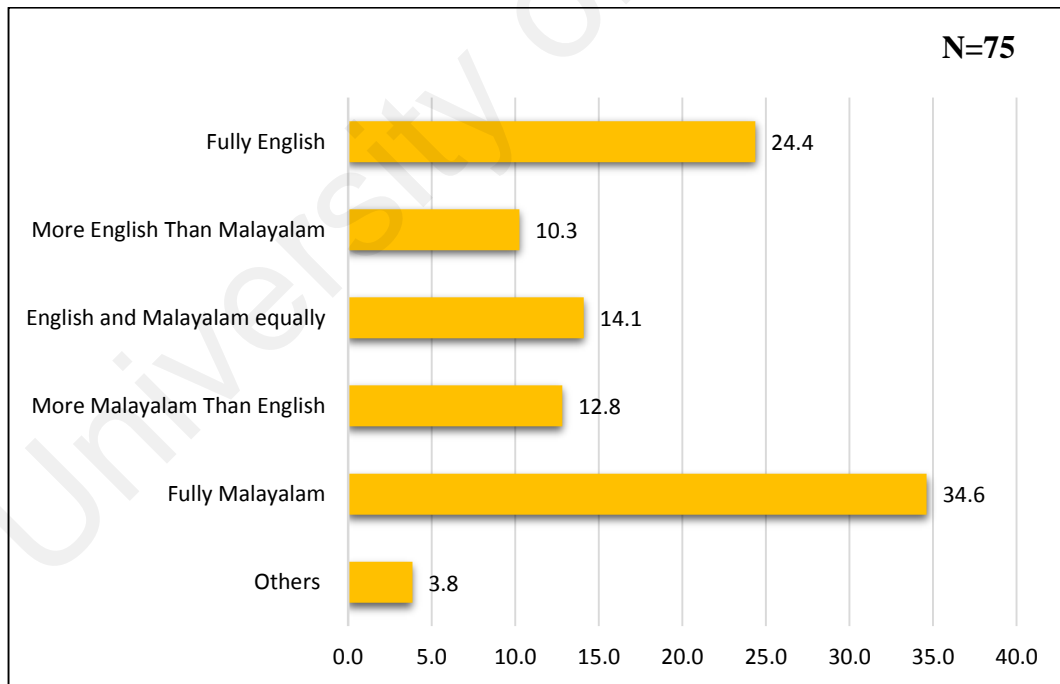
Figure 4.5: English Usage with Uncles and Aunts

Figure 4.5 shows more respondents use only Malayalam with their uncles and aunts (34.6%, n=27) compared to 24.4% (n= 19) who use only English. A similar response was also

given with the choice of language with their grandparents. According to the responses given, these respondents meet their uncles and aunts during family gatherings that include the presence of the elders. An interviewee when questioned about language use with their aunts and uncles, he said,

Excerpt 4

Whenever possible I try to speak broken Malayalam with others.

I1MG1L6

Hence, youths make attempts to use Malayalam with their elders, even when they are not proficient mainly because the elders do not speak English at all. In this study, about 14.1% (n= 11) of the respondents indicated that they use both English and Malayalam equally with their uncles and aunts. Only a small percentage, 12.8% (n=10) of respondents, indicated that they use more Malayalam. Overall, most respondents use Malayalam with a mix of English with their aunts and uncles.

4.2.6   Language Use with Cousins

Another question on the use of English with family members is that with their cousins. The findings are presented in Figure 4.6 below:
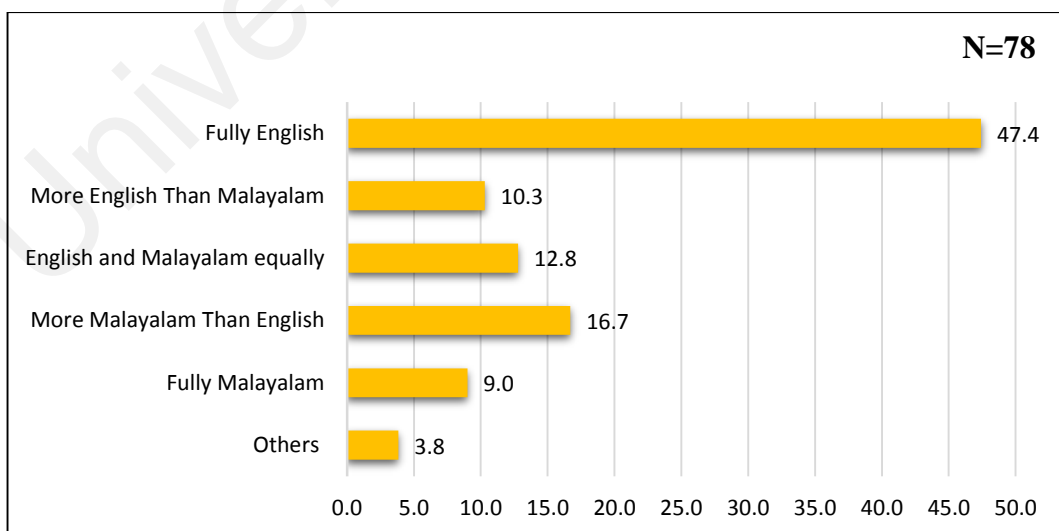

Figure 4.6: English Usage with Cousins

Figure 4.6 clearly shows that nearly half or 47.4% (n= 37) of the respondents use only English with their cousins compared to only 9% (n= 7) who use Malayalam only. The findings of this study show that English is preferred as most of them are proficient in English and have gone through formal education where English is being taught. Therefore, conversing in English is much easier for them as they are well versed in it compared to Malayalam. Apart from that, when the conversation is about school and social media, it would be easier to use English rather than Malayalam. English too is generally the language of the internet and social media of which youths tend to be immersed in. An interviewee thinks it is easier for them to express themselves in English as one of them puts it as follows:

Excerpt 5

I can express my thoughts better in English. My Malayalam is broken.

I3MG2L11

In Excerpt 5 respondent 13MG2 admits to having low proficiency in Malayalam and his ability to express is better in the English language.

Again, only about 16.7% (n=13) of the respondents said that they use more Malayalam. An interesting observation here is that most of the interviewees said they only use Malayalam with their older cousins who are 35 years old and above as their older cousins are more proficient in Malayalam than English. With the younger cousins, they prefer to use English as this language is more common among their age group and is used everywhere by them.

4.2.7 Language Use with Nieces and Nephews

Another question is on the use of English and Malayalam with the nieces and nephews who may be younger than the respondents. The findings are presented in Figure 4.7.

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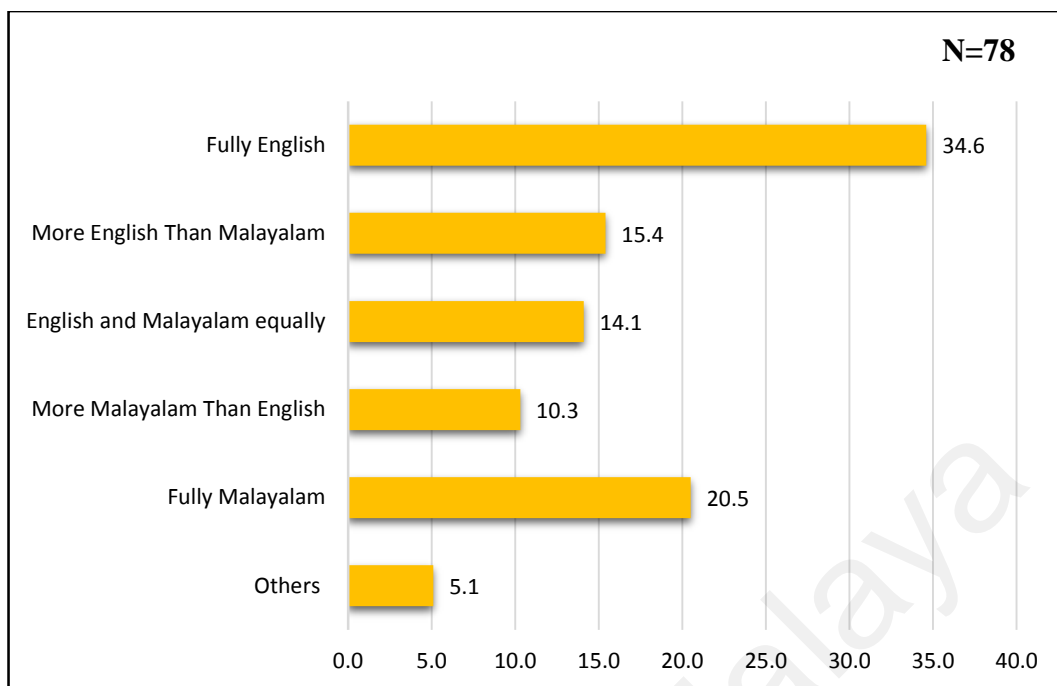
Figure 4.7: English Usage with Nieces and Nephews

As with the cousins, the tendency of speaking in English seems to be more apparent compared to Malayalam with their nieces and nephews. Here again, this age group is more likely to be more proficient in English. As presented in Figure 4.7, 34.6% (n= 27) of the respondents indicated that they use only English while in comparison, 20.5% (n= 16) of the respondents indicated they fully use Malayalam. Some of the interviewees said that they have to use Malayalam when talking to their nieces and nephews during family gatherings when the elders are around. This is mentioned in Excerpt 6 below:

Excerpt 6

Amma will stare if I speak in Tamil when others are there. Have to speak Malayalam.

I2FG2L34

The above excerpt shows the use of Malayalam is expected by the elders with the younger generation whenever possible. Hence, this may explain the two choices of language, namely, only English and only Malayalam in the above figure.

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4.2.8   Language Use with Malayalee Friends

Figure 4.8 presents the findings on the use of English with Malayalee friends.
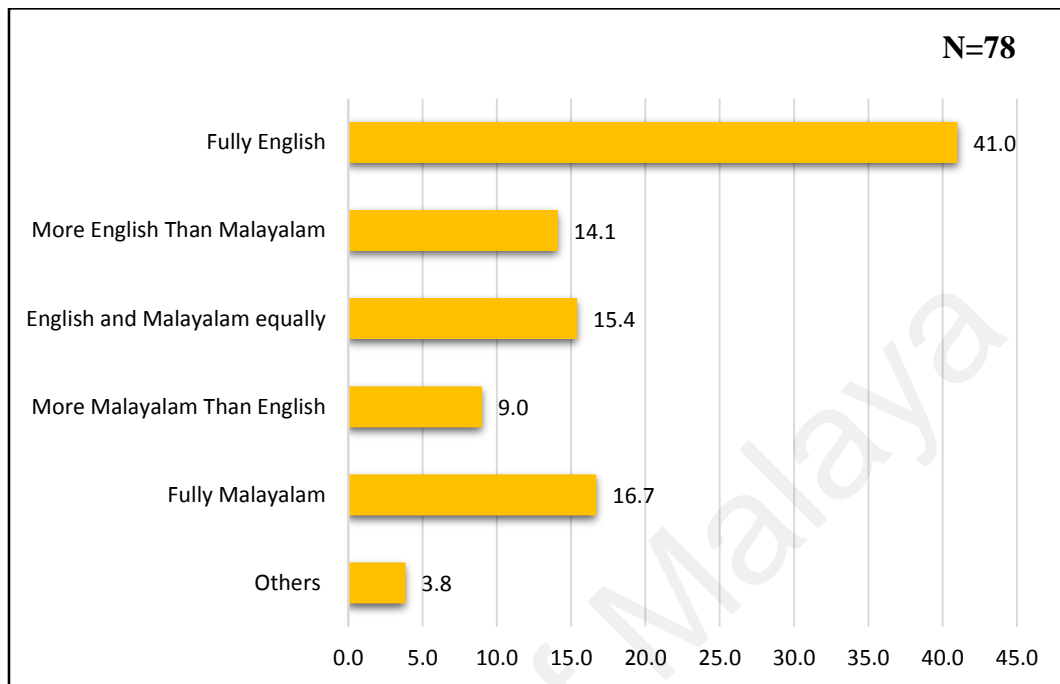
Figure 4.8: English Usage with Malayalee Friends

Figure 4.8 shows that among Malayalee friends, the majority of respondents (41%, n=32) use only English while only 16.7% (n= 13) use fully Malayalam. Most of the respondents said they are more comfortable with the English language even with Malayalee friends. Another factor is these friends belongs to the same age group who are more proficient in English and similarly cannot speak Malayalam. In this scenario, they choose to speak in English because with Malayalam, they would be mixing Malayalam with English as testified by one of the interviewee below:

Excerpt 7

My Malayalam is not good and I have to use 'rojak' when we talk.

I2FG2L15

'Rojak' in the above excerpt refers to mixing Malayalam with other languages.

Only 9% (n=7) of the respondents indicated that they use more Malayalam with their friends. When asked for the reason, a similar response was given, that is, it is due to their low proficiency in their mother tongue, Malayalam. Hence, the choice is English among their peers due to the ease of use and confidence in the English language for communication.

4.2.9 Language Use with Malayalee Neighbours

Related to the home domain, respondents were asked about the use of English and Malayalam with their neighbours. The findings are presented in Figure 4.9.
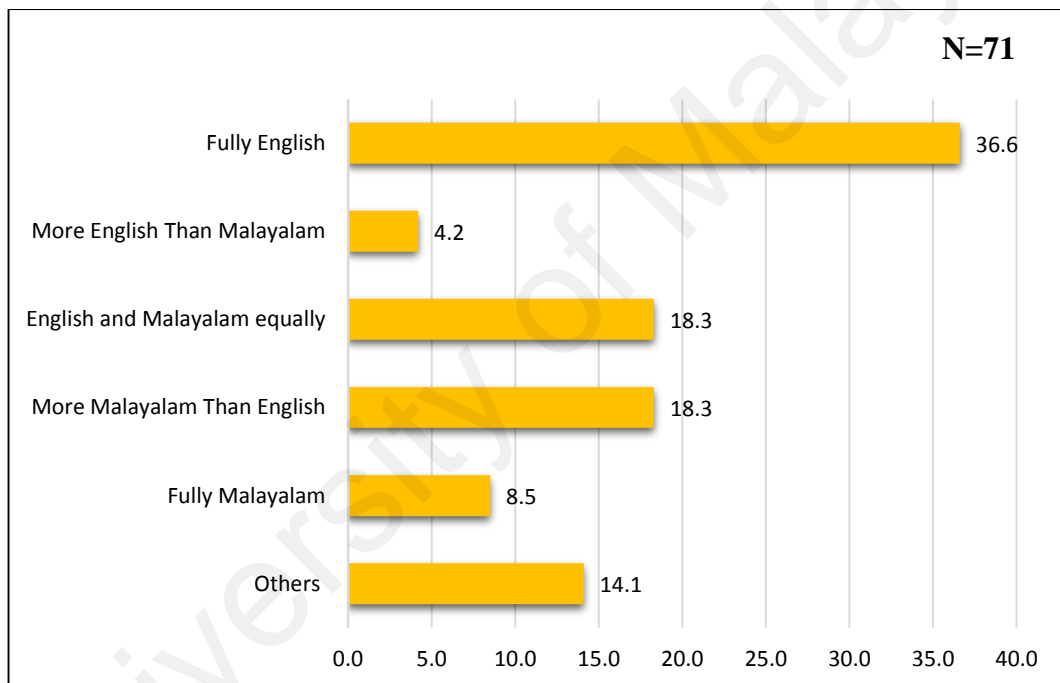
Figure 4.9: English Usage with Malayalee Neighbours

In Figure 4.9, as with their Malayalee friends, English is the preferred choice with their Malayalee neighbours from the same community. Almost 36.6 % (n= 26) of the respondents said they use English with these neighbours while only 8.5% (n=6) use only Malayalam. The reason given is again low proficiency of their mother tongue and also their neighbours who are Malayalees are also not proficient in Malayalam either. It seems to indicate that generally, the neighbourhood to which respondents live in are not proficient in Malayalam.

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This study shows that when such a situation arises, a common language selected tends to be English as the medium for communication for these respondents. About 14.1% (n=10) of them indicated the use of other languages and in this study, respondents indicated it was Tamil to communicate as more people are familiar with Tamil compared to Malayalam.

4.2.10 Summary of English Usage in Family and Friendship Domains

This section shows the summary of English usage in family and friendship domains.

Table 4.1: Summary of English Usage in Family and Friendship Domains

		Fully English	More English Than Malayalam	English and Malayalam equally	More Malayalam Than English	Fully Malayalam	Others
Cousins	%	**47.4**	10.3	12.8	16.7	9.0	3.8
	n	37	8	10	13	7	3
Friends	%	**41.0**	14.1	15.4	9.0	16.7	3.8
	n	32	11	12	7	13	3
Neighbours	%	**36.6**	4.2	18.3	18.3	8.5	14.1
	n	26	3	13	13	6	10
Nieces and nephews	%	**34.6**	15.4	14.1	10.3	20.5	5.1
	n	27	12	11	8	16	4
Siblings	%	**30.7**	12.0	14.7	17.3	21.3	4.0
	n	23	9	11	13	16	3
Grandparents	%	30.7	9.3	9.3	6.7	**40.0**	4.0
	n	23	7	7	5	30	3
Father	%	28.2	7.7	14.1	10.3	**35.9**	3.8
	n	22	6	11	8	28	3
Uncles and aunts	%	24.4	10.3	14.1	12.8	**34.6**	3.8
	n	19	8	11	10	27	3
Mother	%	25.6	12.8	14.1	14.1	**29.5**	3.8
	n	20	10	11	11	23	3

Table 4.1 shows the summary of language use in Family and Friendship domains. It can be observed that, the highest use of fully English is among the cousins (47.4%, n=37). It is followed by with friends (41.0%, n= 32) and neighbours 36.6% (n=26).

For the Malayalam use, the highest usage is between the respondents and their grandparents (40.0%, n=30). It is followed by with fathers (35.9%, n= 28), uncles and aunts, 34.6 %(n=27) and mothers (29.5%, n=23).

4.3 English Usage in Workplace and Locale Domains

This section will also answer the first research questions based on the workplace and local domains. Findings are presented in this section on the use of English by a group of Malayalee youths in eight different domains, namely, the workplace, recreation place, temple, cultural functions, religious festivals, sending Short Message Service (SMS), chat and social network. Each domain is analysed separately, starting with the general trend in English usage across all eight domains.

4.3.1 English Usage at Workplace

The first domain analysed was the workplace and the results are tabulated in Figure 4.10.
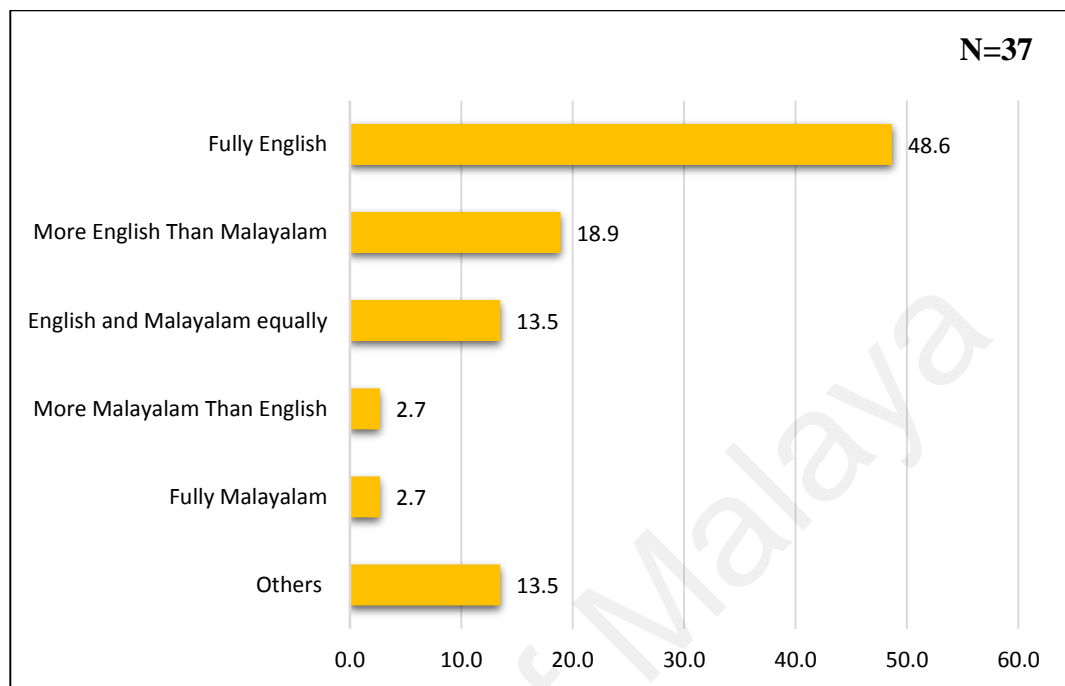
Figure 4.10: English Usage at the Workplace

Figure 4.10 shows that the usage of English is quite high among the Malayalees at their workplace. When asked about using English at the workplace, 48.6% (n=18) of the respondents said they fully used English at the workplace. About 18.9% (n=7) of the respondents said they use more English than Malayalam. Those who said they use both English and Malayalam equally is 13.5% (n=5) since there are Malayalam speakers in the workplace. The same number of respondents, 13.5% (n=5) also indicated the other language used is Tamil at their workplace.

The fact that there may not be any other Malayalam speaker at the workplace may be a contributing factor for using less Malayalam. When an interviewee was asked regarding this, she said,

Excerpt 8

My workplace has no other Malayalees, so how to speak the language?

I2FG2L9

Hence, the opportunity to use Malayalam is definitely dependent on the presence of another Malayalee speaker. It shows the usage of English is higher due to the absence of other interlocutors who speak Malayalam at the workplace.

4.3.2   English Usage during Recreation

Findings on the use of English in other domains in Figure 4.11 show the usage of English by Malayalee youths during their recreational activities. When asked about the use of language during recreational activities like sports, 25.5% (n= 14) respondents said they use fully English to converse with other Malayalees. Interestingly, an equal number of respondents, 25.5% (n=14) also said they use more Malayalam than English at recreational places as voiced by the following interviewee:

Excerpt 9

Whenever I got a chance I will try to use Malayalam but most of the time it is
English.

I2MG2L19

Respondent 12MG2 above indicated her preference to use English over

Malayalam.
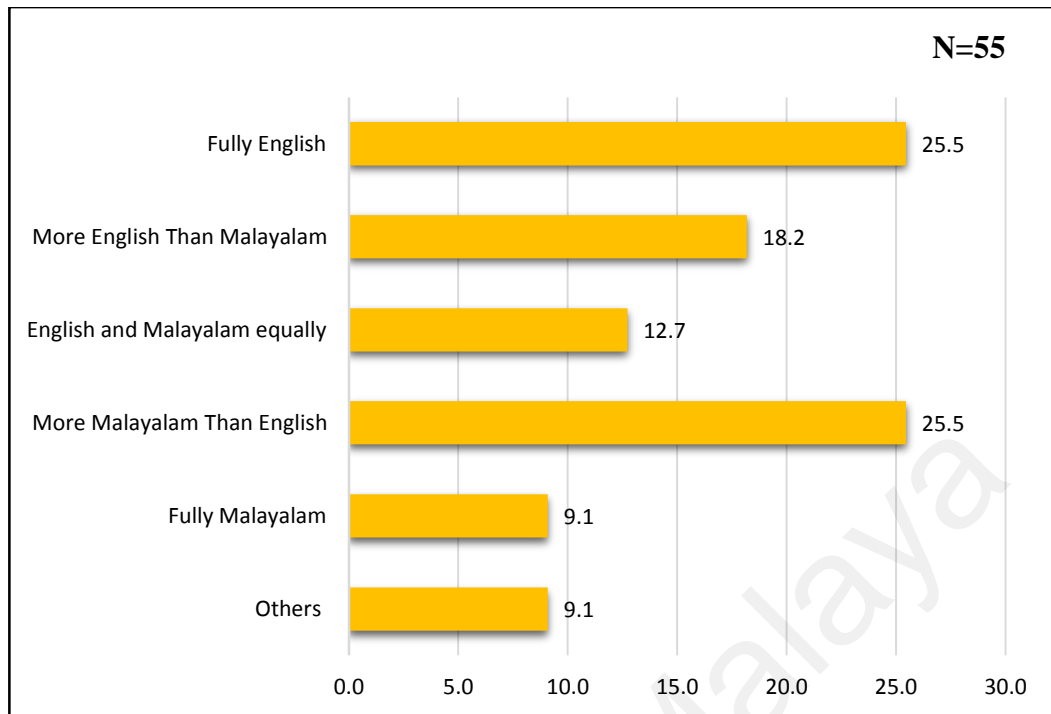
Figure 4.11: English Usage during Recreation

Overall, Figure 4.11 shows that more respondents seem to use more English compared to Malayalam. It seems that respondents use their own judgement which language to use as how it is required and how comfortable they are with the chosen language. As said by one interviewee:

Excerpt 10

Some of them don't understand English and those understand English, I speak English.

I1FG1L21

This shows the usage of English is high among the Malayalee youths at the recreation places.

4.3.3 English Usage at Temple

Next, Figure 4.12 presents the findings on the usage of English at the religious site, in this case, the temple.
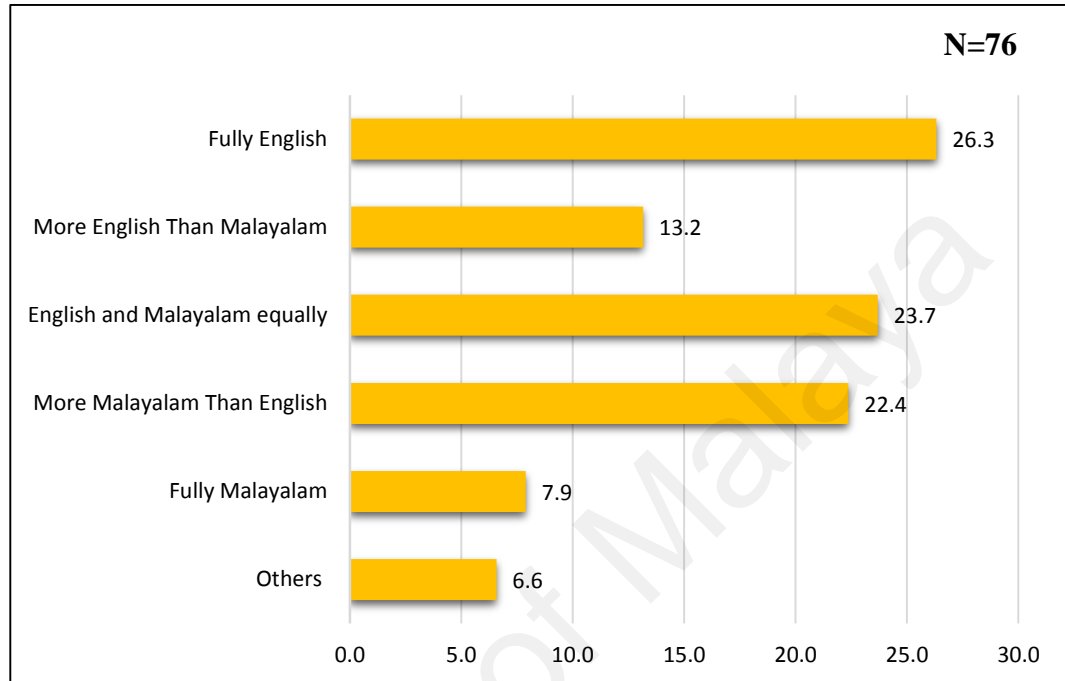
Figure 4.12: English Usage at the Temple

As indicated in Figure 4.12, even at temple more English is used compared to Malayalam. A total of 26.3% (n=20) respondents indicated that they use only English compared to only 7.9 % (n= 6) who said that they use fully Malayalam. However, this trend is the opposite as more respondents use more Malayalam than English at temple. A total of 22.4% (n=17) said they use more Malayalam than English while only 13.2% (n= 10) use more English than Malayalam. However, on average, English is used more than Malayalam. This may be because the respondents came from English speaking family background. An interviewee has this to say regarding the reason for using English.

> Excerpt 11
>
> I want to speak in Malayalam but my vocabulary is not good. I rather use English because it is easy to use.
>
> I1MG1L26

4.3.4 English Usage during Cultural Functions

Besides the choice of language at the temple, they were also asked about their choice of language for cultural functions. Cultural functions in this study refer to celebrations such as Onam night, Mohiniattam or the dance of the enchantress, Kannyar Kali dance and Kalaripayat, one kind of martial arts. The findings are presented next in Figure 4.13.
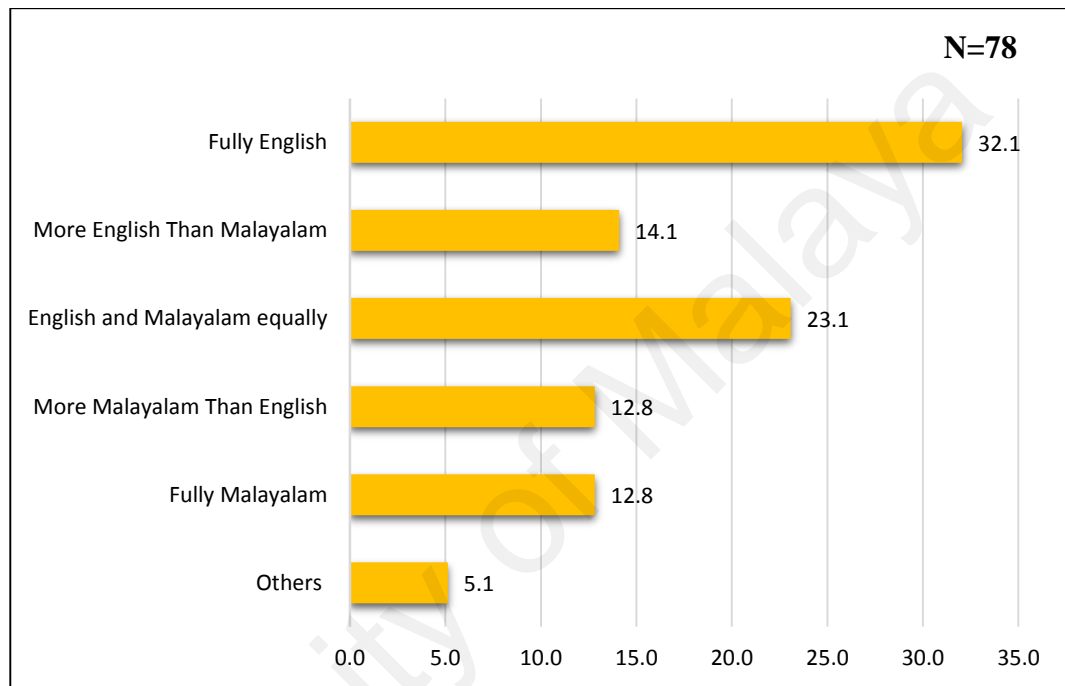
Figure 4.13: English Usage during Cultural Functions

Findings as shown by Figure 4.13 clearly show that English is used more than Malayalam during cultural functions.

The respondents indicated that they use only English (32.1%, n = 15) compared to only 12.8% (n= 10) who use only Malayalam. Those using more Malayalam than English is also 12.8% (n=10) of the total respondents. The respondents' preference for English is due to the convenience it provides and also the lack of mother tongue vocabulary as mentioned by I1MG1.

Excerpt 4

Whenever possible I try to speak broken Malayalam with others.

I1MG1L6

68

The broken Malayalam as indicated by the respondent refers to his lack of vocabulary to convey his message. However, the usage of English is more dominant than Malayalam even during the cultural functions.

4.3.5 English Usage during Religious Festivals

When asked about the usage of English during religious festivals by the youths who are respondents of this study, the following responses were obtained and tabulated in Figure 4.14. The usage of English during religious festivals among the Malayalees is higher compared to Malayalam. Religious festivals in this study refer to occasions when the Malayalees gather to celebrate festivals such as Onam, Vishu, Navarathri and Theyyam. Onam is a religious festival celebrated at home with family, while Onam Night is a Cultural performance where the Malayalees' traditional dance, music and songs will be performed. The Onam night usually involving the Malayalee community in that particular area or state. As presented in Figure 4.14, a total of 25.3% (n=19) indicated that they fully use the English language with other Malayalees compared to 18.7%, (n= 14) who use only Malayalam. This may be due to the language competence of the youths. The lack of Malayalam vocabulary is contributing to the choice made by these youths to use English.
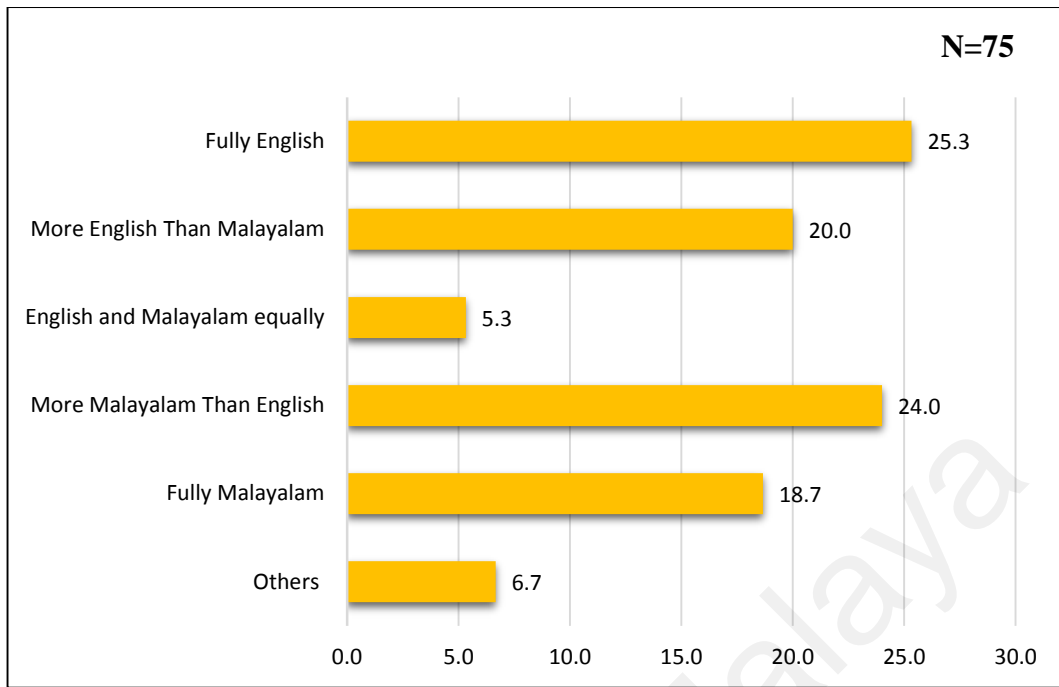
Figure 4.14: English Usage during Religious Festivals

Findings as illustrated in Figure 4.14 show that more Malayalam (n= 18, 24%) is used than English (n = 15, 20%). Most of the respondents who use more Malayalam than English during religious festivals have some knowledge of Malayalam to enable them to communicate with their friends, family and the elders in Malayalam.

The three figures that follow present the findings on the usage of English by Malayalee youths for the social media, Short Message Service (SMS), online chats and their social network.

4.3.6 English Usage in Sending Short Message Service (SMS)

Figure 4.15 presents the language choice for sending SMS and the findings are tabulated in Figure 4.15.
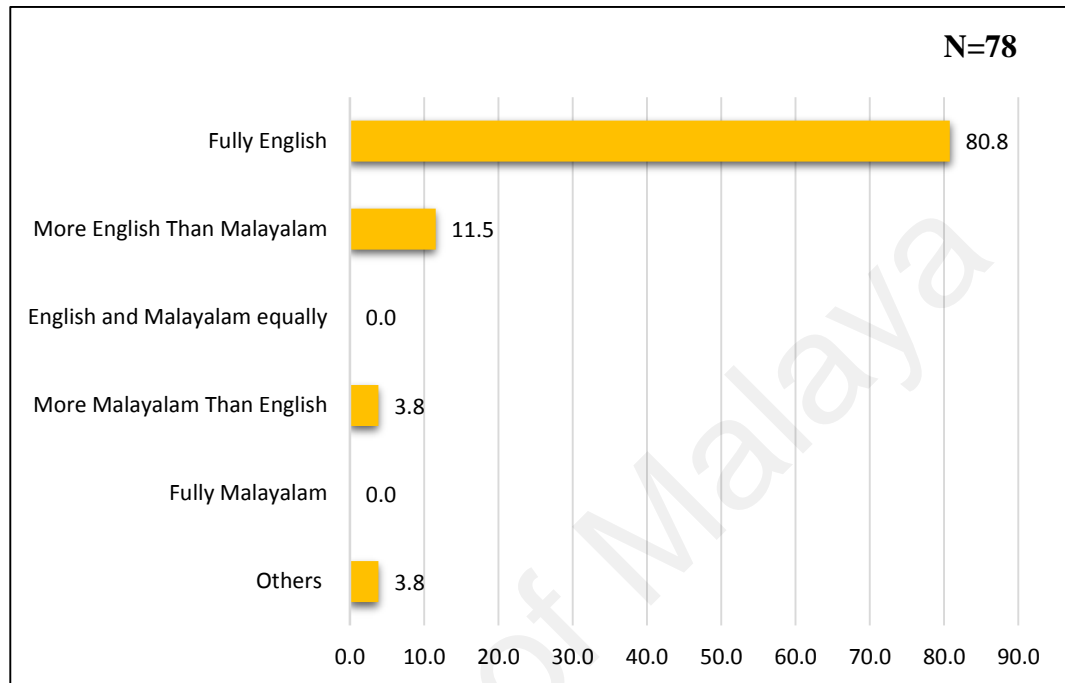
Figure 4.15: English Usage in Sending Short Message Service (SMS)

Figure 4.15 shows that in sending SMS, 80.8% (n=63) of the respondents use only English and another 11.5% (n= 9) say they use more English than Malayalam.

None indicated the use of only Malayalam to send out SMS. This probably either spelling the words in romanized version is not convenient to do or texting in English is faster and more convenient.

However, there are 3.8% (n= 3) of respondents who say that they use more Malayalam than English to send out SMS. They use romanized Malayalam because they are not proficient in the Malayalam fonts. Even though the Malayalam fonts are available in the mobiles but most of the respondents didn't use it because of their poor proficiency in the language. The interviewee has this to say,

Excerpt 12

My Malayalam is not good. I can't read or write the language so I use only English to send message.

It indicates that respondents find it also more practical and perhaps more comfortable in using English in sending messages or text through phone instead of Malayalam, even with romanized version to spell the words.

4.3.7   English Usage in Online Chats

The same trend can be observed in the chatting as shown next in Figure 4.16. The study found that in chatting, 61.1% (n=44) of the respondents indicated that they use fully English compared to only 5.6% (n=4) who use fully Malayalam. The respondents who use either more English or more Malayalam were 12.5% (n=9) and 9.7% (n=7) respectively.
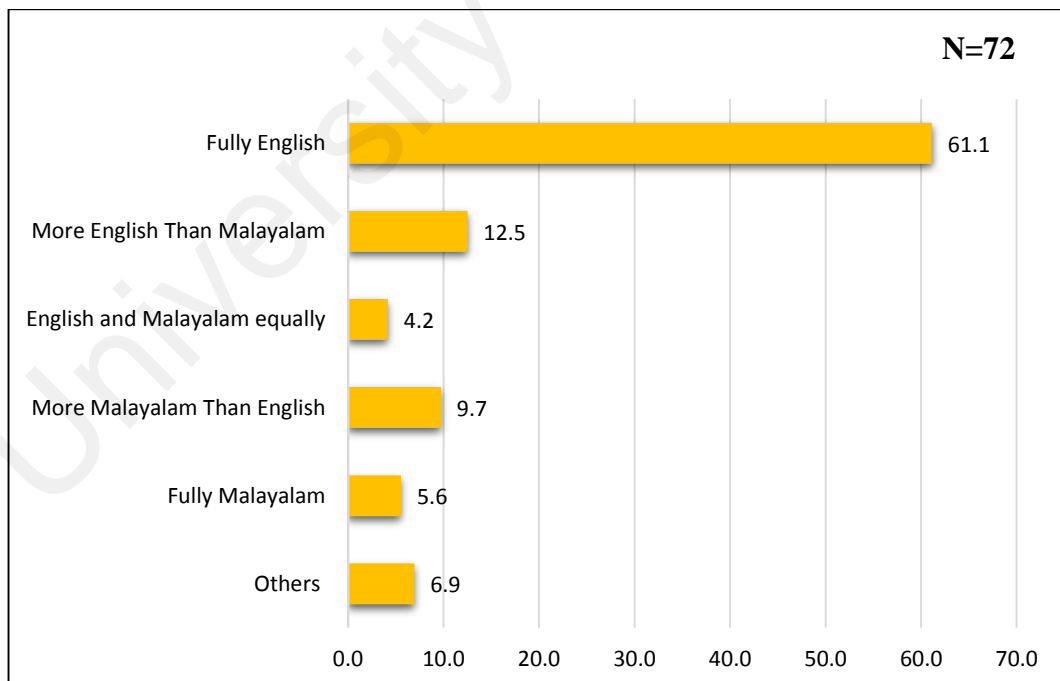
Figure 4.16: English Usage in Online Chats

It was indicated that those who use Malayalam are mostly on voice chat or on romanized writing. The interviewee said this regarding her English preference,

This again shows the fluency of their language plays a major role in choosing English over Malayalam in chatting. Another factor that may contribute to the lack of using Malayalam is the language surrounding.

It can be observed in the use of other languages, for this group of respondents, Tamil seems to be the choice instead of Malayalam where the number of respondents is slightly higher for choosing Tamil in chatting, 6.9% (n=5) than those who use fully Malayalam 5.6 % (n=4), although their native language is Malayalam.

4.3.8 English Usage in Social Network

Another domain that shows the influence of English is the choice of the language in the social network. Figure 4.17 shows the findings for the usage of English in the social network.
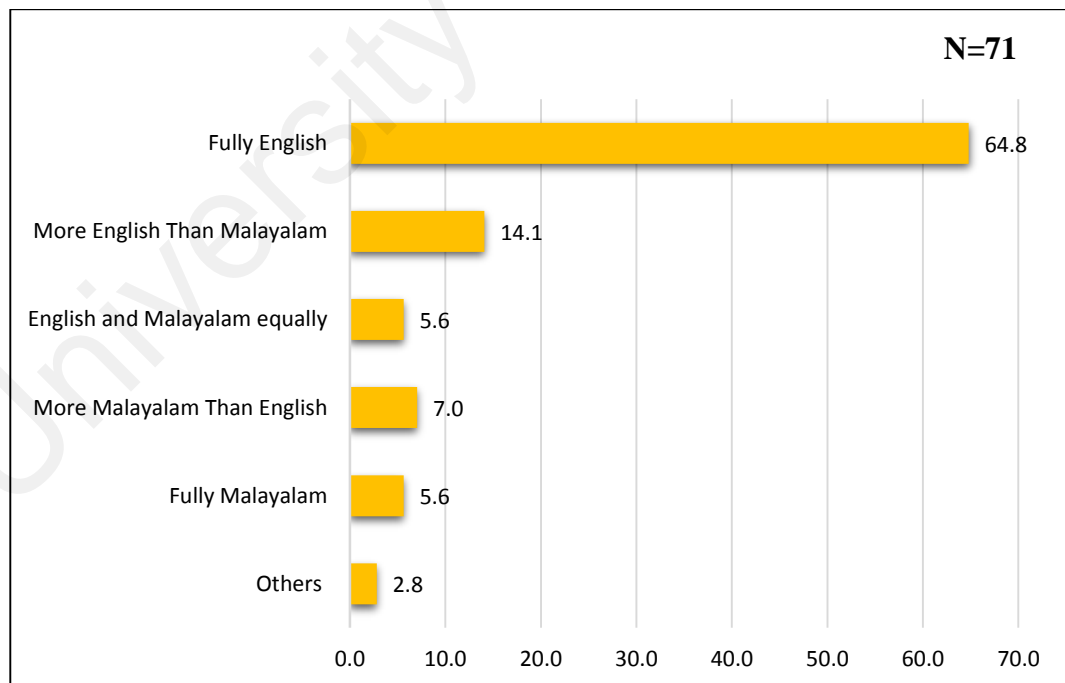
Figure 4.17: English Usage in Social Network

As presented in Figure 4.17, the language choice for social network such as Facebook is fully English (64.8%, n=44) while only 5.6% (n=5) of the respondents used fully Malayalam. Another 14.1% (n = 10) indicated they use more English than Malayalam. This is double the total who use more Malayalam than English. English as the international language plays important role in the social network. The 64.8% of the respondents may be inclined to choose the international language, English, for the language of mass communication.

4.3.9   Summary of English Usage in Workplace and Locale Domains

Table 4.2 shows the summary of English usage in workplace and locale domains.

Table 4.2: Summary of English Usage in Workplace and Locale Domains

		Fully English	More English Than Malayalam	English and Malayalam equally	More Malayalam Than English	Fully Malayalam	Others
Send SMS	%	**80.8**	11.5	0.0	3.8	0.0	3.8
	n	63	9	0	3	0	3
Social network	%	**64.8**	14.1	5.6	7.0	5.6	2.8
	n	46	10	4	5	4	2
Chat	%	**61.1**	12.5	4.2	9.7	6.9	5.6
	n	44	9	3	7	5	4
Workplace	%	**48.6**	18.9	13.5	2.7	2.7	13.5
	n	18	7	5	1	1	5
Cultural functions	%	**32.1**	14.1	23.1	12.8	12.8	5.1
	n	25	11	18	10	10	4
Temple	%	**26.3**	13.2	23.7	22.4	7.9	6.6
	n	20	10	18	17	6	5
Religious festivals	%	**25.3**	20.0	5.3	24.0	18.7	6.7
	n	19	15	4	18	14	5
Recreation	%	**23.6**	16.4	12.7	27.3	9.1	10.9
	n	13	9	7	15	5	6

The Summary of English usage in workplace and locale domains is shown in Table 4.2. In these domains, the highest use of fully English by the respondents in this study is for sending SMS with 80.8% (n=63). The other two internet related domains are second and third respectively with social network 64.8 %(n=46) and online chats 61.1% (n=46). The English use is the lowest at recreation places, 23.6% (n=13).

4.4   The English Usage in Family Domain Based on Gender

In this section, the second research question will be discussed on the use of English in family domain based on gender.

RQ2: What is the frequency of use of English and Malayalam by Malayalee youths based on the gender?

In section 4.4 and 4.5, the total number of male and female respondents are labelled as NM and NF respectively.

4.4.1   English Usage with Grandparents Based on Gender

This section will present findings that were presented earlier but are based on the gender of respondents. Figure 4.18 presents the usage of English by respondents with grandparents based on the gender of respondents.

NM=39
NF=36
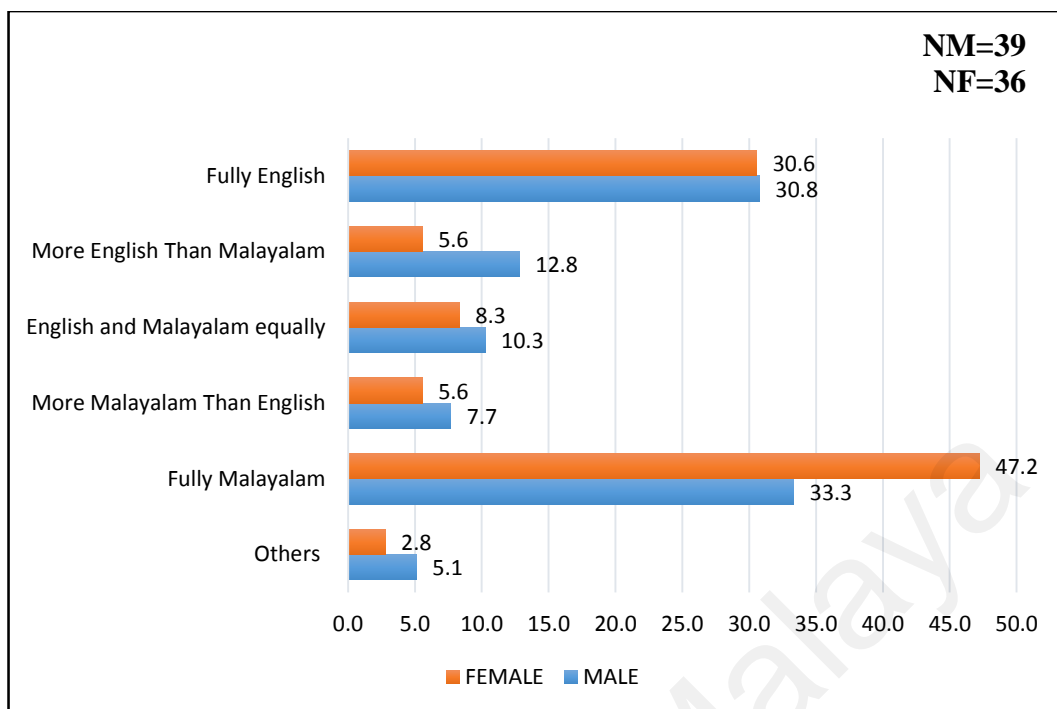
Figure 4.18: English Usage with Grandparents Based on Gender

Figure 4.18 shows more female (47.3%, n=17) than male (33.3%, n=13) respondents use fully Malayalam with grandparents as their grandparents might not be proficient in English. This is supported by a female respondent who testifies that:

Excerpt 14

But with my grandmother, I speak Tamil or Malayalam. She can't speak English.

I1FG1L25

For the usage of fully English, it shows almost equally both male (30.8%, n=12) and female (30.6%, n=11) respondents indicate that they use this language with their grandparents.

Another interviewee when asked about language choice with the grandparents, she responded by saying:

Excerpt 15

If I need to speak in Tamil, I speak Tamil, otherwise always English.

I3FG2L8

76

As stated by I3FG2, her choice is either Tamil or English but not Malayalam as she is not proficient in that language.

4.4.2 English Usage with Father Based on Gender

Next is on the usage of English by the respondents with their fathers as shown in Figure 4.19.
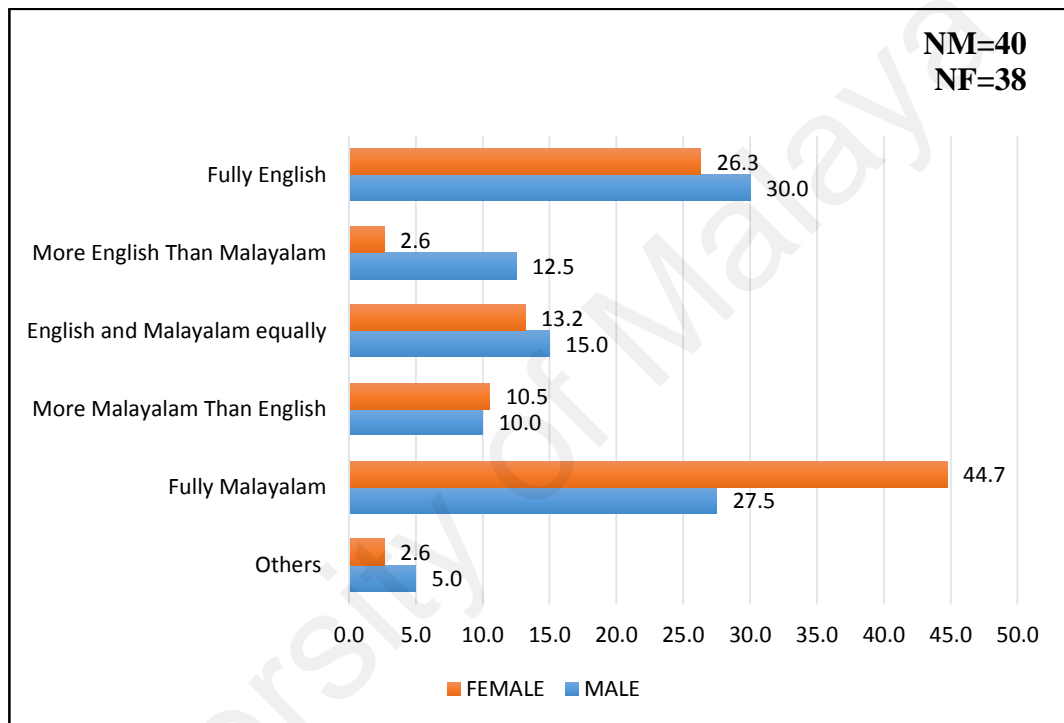
Figure 4.19:   English Usage with Father Based on Gender

Figure 4.19 shows the usage of English with fathers based on gender. There seems to be quite a distinct difference between male respondents and female respondents in terms of their choice of language. Almost 30% (n=12) of male respondents indicates that they tend to use fully English with their fathers compared to only 26.3% (n=10) of female respondents. Even for those who use more English than Malayalam, it was more male respondents (12.5%, n=5) compared to only 2.6% (n=1) female respondents.

For the female respondents, Malayalam is fully used by 44.7% (n=17) while it is used by only 27.5% (n=11) male respondents. The findings show that while female respondents tend to choose Malayalam as the language with their fathers, a majority of male respondents prefer to use English instead.

4.4.3 English Usage with Mother Based on Gender

The following Figure 4.20, presents the findings on the use of English by respondents with their mothers based on gender.
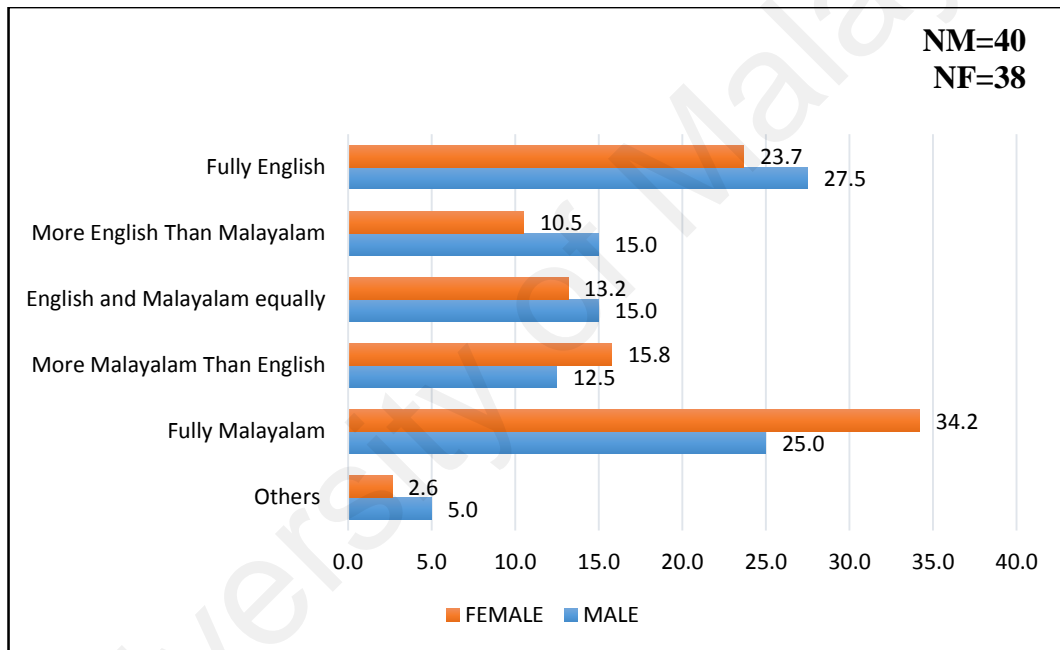
Figure 4.20: English Usage with Mother Based on Gender

Figure 4.20 shows a similar finding as with the choice of language with fathers. The frequency of English usage with mothers is slightly higher for male respondents(27.5%, n= 11) than female respondents (23.7%, n=9). As for using fully Malayalam, it is higher for female (34.2%, n= 13) than male respondents (25.0%, n=10). This might be the norm in families where the mothers use the mother tongue in the traditional Malayalam households while fathers tend to use a second language such as English or Tamil. Perhaps this may be seen as a future trend

in which mothers or more so, the female speakers, tend to be the preservers of the mother tongue, Malayalam, in their community. Fathers, and in general the male figures in the family tend to speak more English that is the more dominant language at the workplace and other domains.

4.4.4   English Usage with Siblings Based on Gender

Next is Figure 4.21 that presents the usage of English of respondents with siblings based on gender.
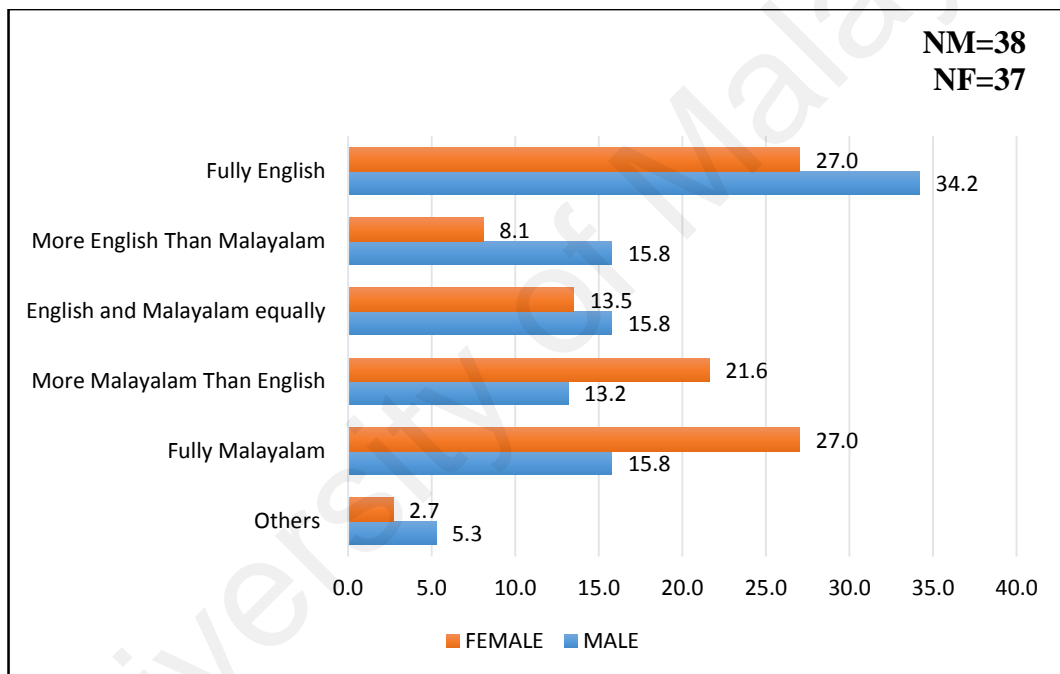
Figure 4.21: English Usage with Siblings Based on Gender

Figure 4.21 shows the breakdown based on gender for the usage of English by respondents with their siblings. Siblings encompass both sisters and brothers for this study. The findings show that it is the male respondents (34.2%, n=13) who seem to prefer using fully English with siblings compared to female respondents (27.0%, n=10).

On the other hand, more of the female respondents (27.0%, n=10) tend to use fully Malayalam with their siblings compared to the male respondents (15.8%, n=6). The number of

female respondents using more Malayalam than English is also higher compared to male respondents, that is, 21.6% (n= 8) and 15.8% (n=6) respectively. This is just the opposite among male respondents who indicated that they prefer to use more English than Malayalam.

If combined with the use of more English than Malayalam, male respondents' choice of language with their mothers is English as with their fathers. In this study, it is the female respondents who use less English with their parents, both fathers and mothers.

4.4.5   English Usage with Uncles and Aunts Based on Gender

Respondents were asked about the use of English and Malayalam with their uncles and aunts. The findings based on gender are presented in Figure 4.22.
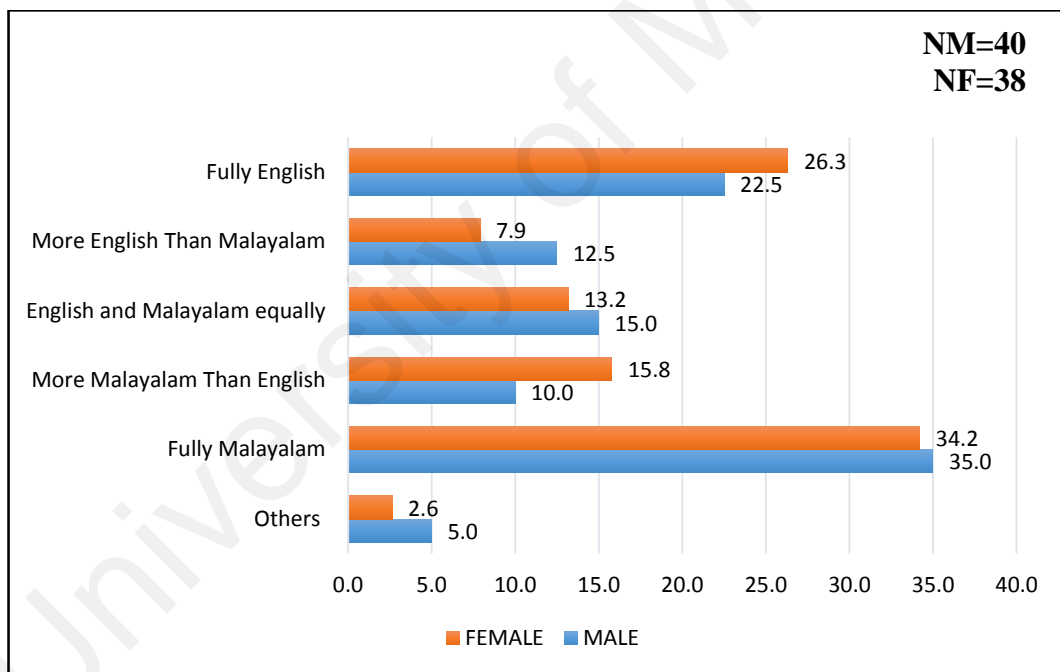
Figure 4.22: English Usage with Uncles and Aunts Based on Gender

Figure 4.22 shows the usage of English with uncles and aunts based on gender has two distinct groups. The larger proportion of male and female respondents seem to prefer using fully Malayalam with them. Almost equally, 34.2% (n=13) female respondents and 35.0% (n=14) male respondents use fully Malayalam with their uncles and aunts. The other group which is

80

smaller are those who use fully English. Surprisingly, slightly more female respondents (26.3%, n=10) than male respondents (22.5%, n=9) use fully English with their uncles and aunts.

4.4.6 English Usage with Nieces and Nephews Based on Gender

The following Figure 4.23, shows the findings on the use of English by respondents with nieces and nephews based on gender.
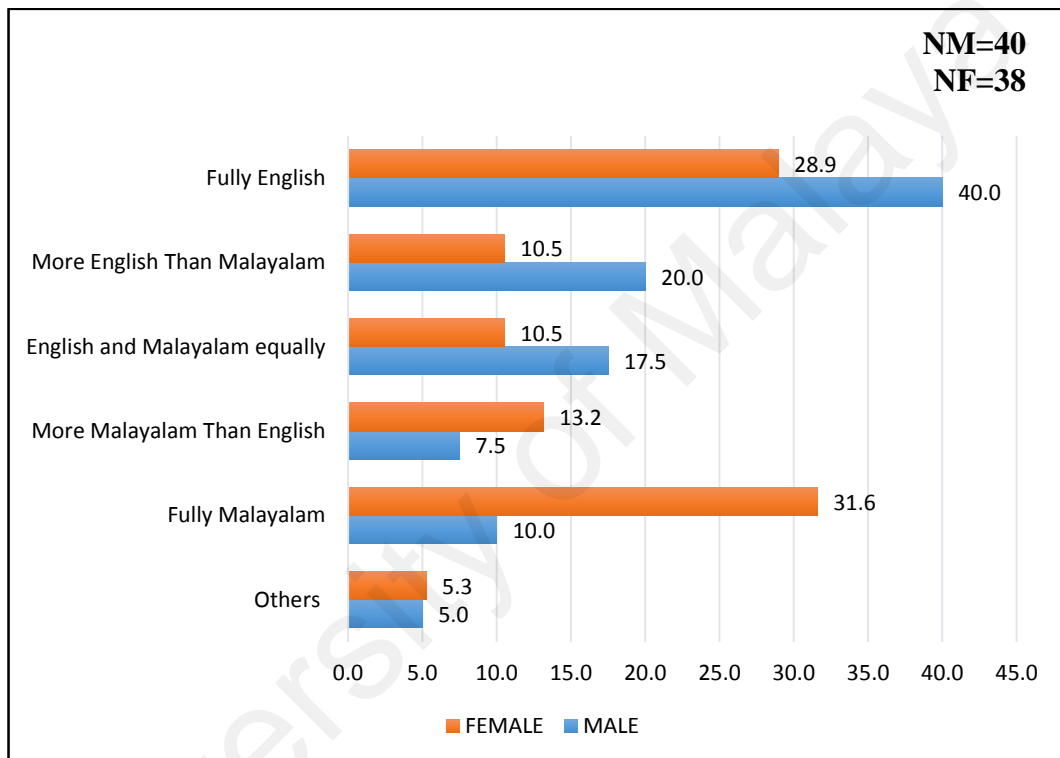

Figure 4.23: English Usage with Nieces and Nephews Based on Gender

Figure 4.23 shows an interesting contrast on the usage of English with nieces and nephews based on gender. It was established in the earlier section that English is the preferred language among the male respondents. When compared, it shows that 40.0% (n=16) of male respondents seem to prefer using fully English with nieces and nephews compared to 31.6% (n=12) female respondents use fully Malayalam. However, the other group of female respondents, 28.9% (n= 11) in this study indicated they use fully English. The graph also shows

that female respondents use more Malayalam with their nieces and nephews while male respondents prefer to use more English.

4.4.7 English Usage with Cousins Based on Gender

Figure 4.24 presents the findings on the usage of English by respondents with cousins based on the gender of respondents.
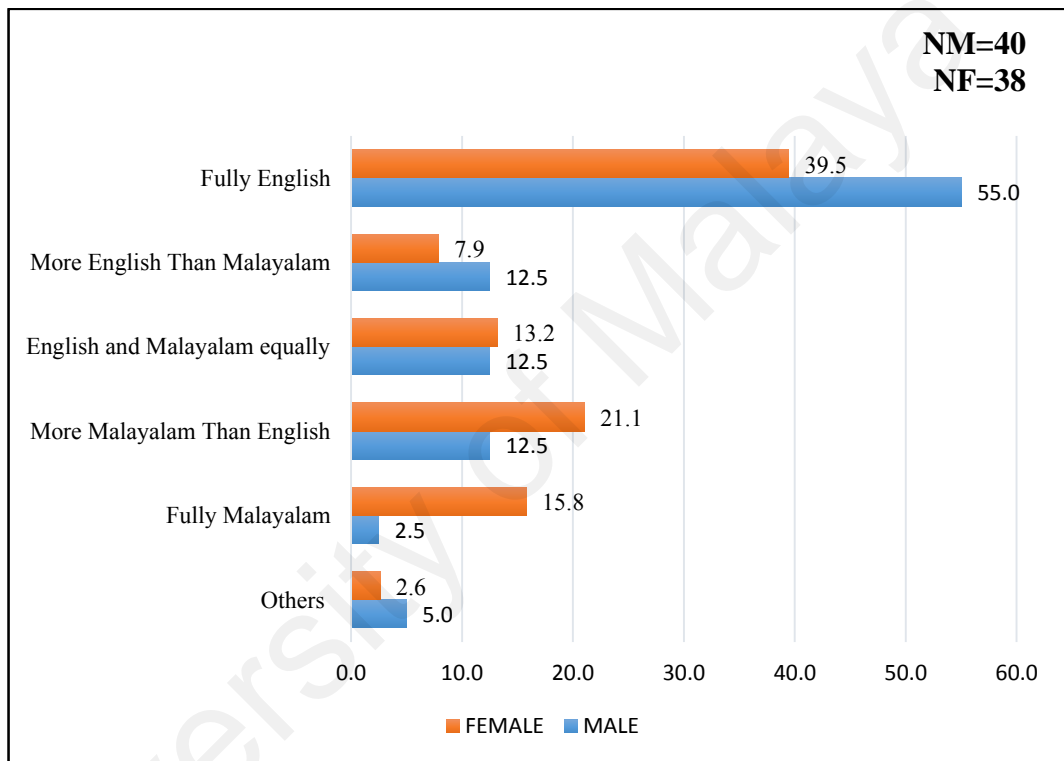
Figure 4.24: English Usage with Cousins Based on Gender

Figure 4.24 shows a similar and overall choice of language for male and female respondents with their cousins. Although English with cousins is used more by male than female respondents in general, that is, 55.0% (n=22) and 39.5% (n=15) respectively. It is a change for female respondents to choose English only with their cousins. For those using fully Malayalam, it is again more female respondents than the male respondents. Even so, only 15.8% (n= 6) female respondents said they use fully Malayalam with their cousins. One female interviewee explained:

82

Excerpt 16

I will try to communicate with my relatives and cousins in Malayalam.

<div align="right">I2FG2L13</div>

Even among those who use more Malayalam than English, it is more for the female respondents than the male respondents. About 21.1% (n=8) female respondents are in this category compared to only 12.5% (n=5) male respondents. It can be concluded that in this case, female respondents prefer using English rather than Malayalam, with their cousins. The male respondents seem to maintain their preference for English with their cousins.

4.4.8 English Usage with Malayalee Friends Based on Gender

Next is on the usage of English by respondents and their friends as shown in Figure 4.25.
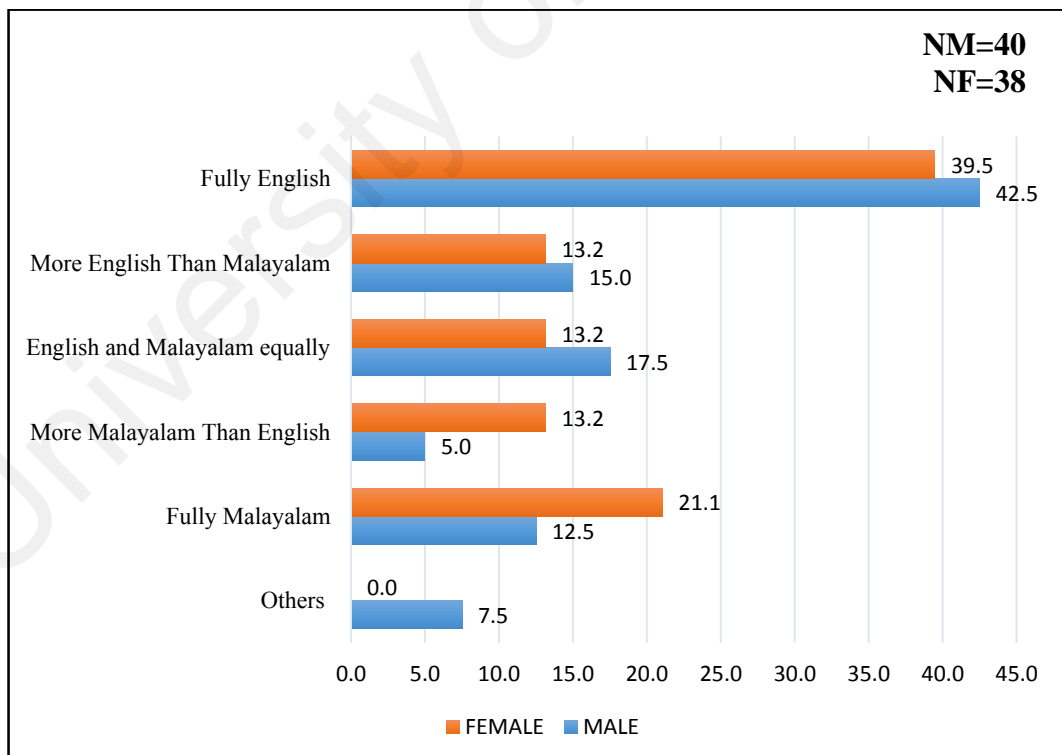
Figure 4.25: English Usage with Malayalee Friends Based on Gender

With reference to Figure 4.25, although it generally shows an almost similar pattern as with nieces, nephews and cousins, for both genders to have preference for English, there seem to be a change for female respondents again. There seem to be an increase in the use of English with friends, that is, 39.5% (n=15) for female respondents and just slightly higher for the male respondents (42.5%, n=17). These interactions usually take place outside the family domain where there are other language choices besides Malayalam. As a female respondent said earlier,

Excerpt 6

Amma will stare if I speak in Tamil when others are there. Have to speak Malayalam.

I2FG2L34

At home domain, according to respondent I2FG2, her mother or "Amma" would look disapprovingly if she speaks a language other than Malayalam.

Fully Malayalam is used more by female (21.1%, n=8) than male (12.5%, n=5) respondents with their friends.

The use of English tends to be the general choice for both male and female respondents in this study.

4.4.9 English Usage with Malayalee Neighbours Based on Gender

Respondents were asked about the use of English with their neighbours based on gender. The findings are presented in Figure 4.26.
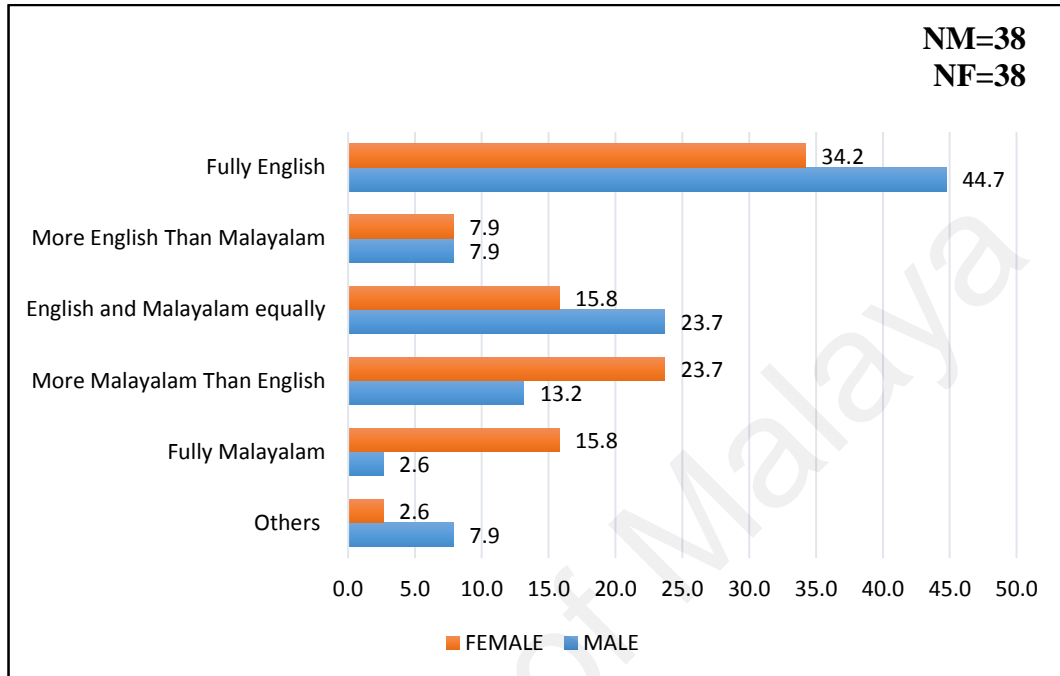
Figure 4.26: English Usage with Malayalee Neighbours Based on Gender

Figure 4.26 shows the usage of English among the male respondents with their neighbours is higher compared to the female respondents. Almost half of the male respondents or 44.7% (n=17) indicate that they use fully English with their neighbours compared to 34.2% (n= 34) female respondents. More English seems to be used as neighbours may not necessarily speak Malayalam, and English is a practical choice for communication within the neighbourhood. The graph also shows that while 23.7%, (n=9) male respondents use English and Malayalam equally, the same percentage, 23.7%, (n=9) of female respondents use more Malayalam than English with their neighbours who speak Malayalam. Generally, English is the preferred language for both female and male respondents with their neighbours.

4.4.10 Summary of English Usage Based on Gender in Family and Friendship Domains

The summary of English usage in family and friendship domains is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Summary of English usage in Family and Friendship Domains among Male Respondents

		Fully English	More English Than	English and Malayalam equally	More Malayalam Than	Fully Malayalam	Others
Cousins	%	**55.0**	12.5	12.5	12.5	2.5	5.0
	n	22	5	5	5	1	2
Neighbours	%	**44.7**	7.9	23.7	13.2	2.6	7.9
	n	17	3	9	5	1	3
Friends	%	**42.5**	15.0	17.5	5.0	12.5	7.5
	n	17	6	7	2	5	3
Nieces and nephews	%	**40.0**	20.0	17.5	7.5	10.0	5.0
	n	16	8	7	3	4	2
Siblings	%	**34.2**	15.8	15.8	13.2	15.8	5.3
	n	13	6	6	5	6	2
Father	%	**30.0**	12.5	15.0	10.0	27.5	5.0
	n	12	5	6	4	11	2
Mother	%	**27.5**	15.0	15.0	12.5	25.0	5.0
	n	11	6	6	5	10	2
Uncles and Aunts	%	22.5	12.5	15.0	10.0	**35.0**	5.0
	n	9	5	6	4	14	2
Grandparents	%	30.8	12.8	10.3	7.7	**33.3**	5.1
	n	12	5	4	3	13	2

Table 4.3 shows summary of English usage in family and friendship domain among male respondents. The English use among the male respondents is the highest among the cousins, 55.0% (n= 22), followed by with neighbours (44.7%, n= 17) and friends (42.5%, n=17).

For the Malayalam use, the highest use of the language among this group of respondents is with their uncles and aunts (35.0%, n=14). The Malayalam use with grandparents is second with 33.3 %(n=13). This is in contrast to the general trend as set by table 4.1, where the use is the highest with grandparents.

Next, Table 4.4 is the summary of the English usage in Family and Friendship Domain among female respondents.

Table 4.4: Summary of English usage in Family and Friendship Domain among Female Respondents

		Fully English	More English Than Malayalam	English and Malayalam equally	More Malayalam Than English	Fully Malayalam	Others
Cousins	%	**39.5**	7.9	13.2	21.1	15.8	2.6
	n	15	3	5	8	6	1
Friends	%	**39.5**	13.2	13.2	13.2	21.1	0.0
	n	15	5	5	5	8	0
Neighbours	%	**34.2**	7.9	15.8	23.7	15.8	2.6
	n	13	3	6	9	6	1
Siblings	%	**27.0**	8.1	13.5	21.6	**27.0**	2.7
	n	10	3	5	8	10	1
Grandparents	%	30.6	5.6	8.3	5.6	**47.2**	2.8
	n	11	2	3	2	17	1
Father	%	26.3	2.6	13.2	10.5	**44.7**	2.6
	n	10	1	5	4	17	1
Uncles and Aunts	%	26.3	7.9	13.2	15.8	**34.2**	2.6
	n	10	3	5	6	13	1
Mother	%	23.7	10.5	13.2	15.8	**34.2**	2.6
	n	9	4	5	6	13	1
Nieces and nephews	%	28.9	10.5	10.5	13.2	**31.6**	5.3
	n	11	4	4	5	12	2

Table 4.4 shows the summary of English usage in family and friendship domain among the female respondents in this study. The highest use of English is among the cousins and neighbours with 39.5% (n=15) respectively. It is followed by English use with neighbours (34.2%, n=13). The language use among siblings are equally divided between English and Malayalam with 27% (n=10).

The female respondents in this study follow the general trend on the use of Malayalam. The highest use of Malayalam among this group of female respondents is with their grandparents (47.2%, n=17). The next highest use is with their fathers (44.7%, n=17).

4.5   The English Usage Based on Gender in Workplace and Locale Domains

In this section, the second research question will be discussed based on the use of English in workplace and locale domains. This section will present findings that were presented earlier but are based on the gender of respondents.

4.5.1   English Usage at Workplace Based on Gender

Figure 4.27 presents the usage of English by respondents at the workplace based on the gender of respondents.
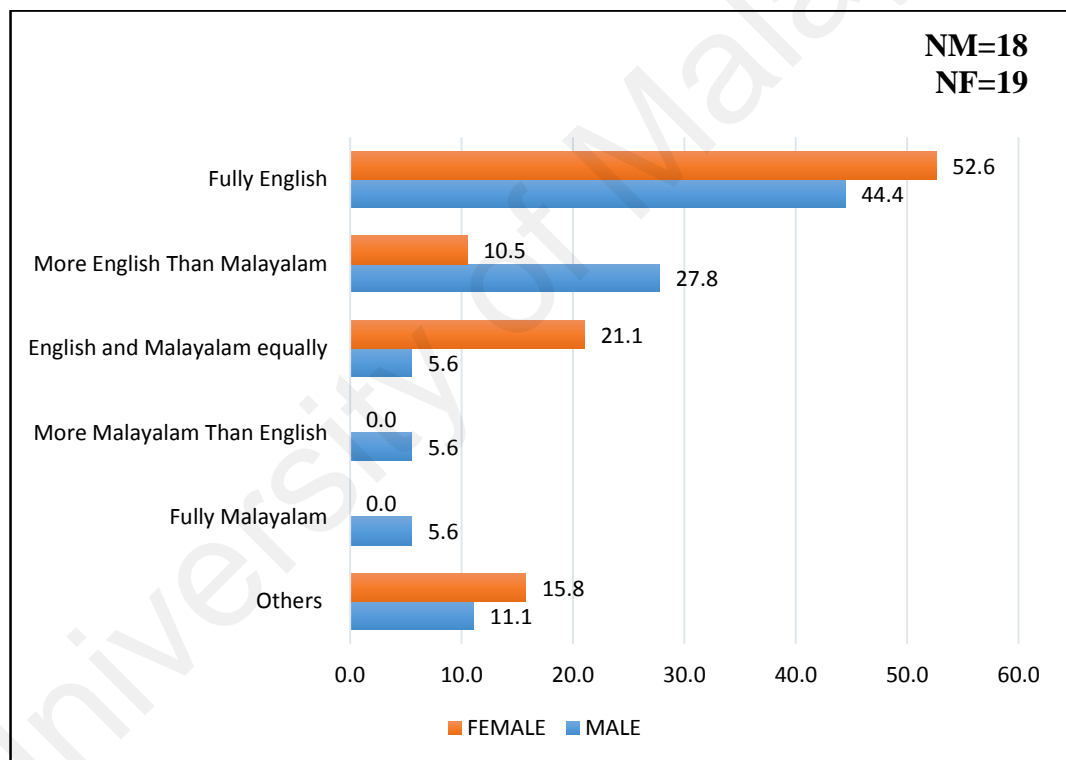
Figure 4.27: English Usage at Workplace Based on Gender

As indicated in Figure 4.27, English is the preferred language at the workplace and most use fully English at their workplace. A total of 44.4% (n=8) of male respondents and a significant 52.6% (n=10) of female respondents use fully English, that is, more than male respondents. Even though male respondents (27.8%, n=5) use more English than Malayalam,

more female respondents (21.1%, n= 4) indicated they use English and Malayalam equally at the workplace. On the whole, English is the language most used at the workplace by both genders.

4.5.2 English Usage at Temple Based on Gender

When the respondents were asked about the language they use at the temple, the choice of language seems to be spread out for the female respondents almost equally. About 27.0% (n=10) indicated they use more Malayalam than English, 24.3% (n=9) used English and Malayalam equally and 24.3% (n=9) use fully English at the temple. This total up to almost three-quarter of the female respondents.

As for the male respondents, almost 28.2% (n=11) said they use fully English followed by 23.1% (n= 9) indicated their choice for using English and Malayalam equally. At a place of worship, male respondents perhaps the obvious choice would be English as the aim is to communicate and tend to use more English. These findings are presented in Figure 4.28.
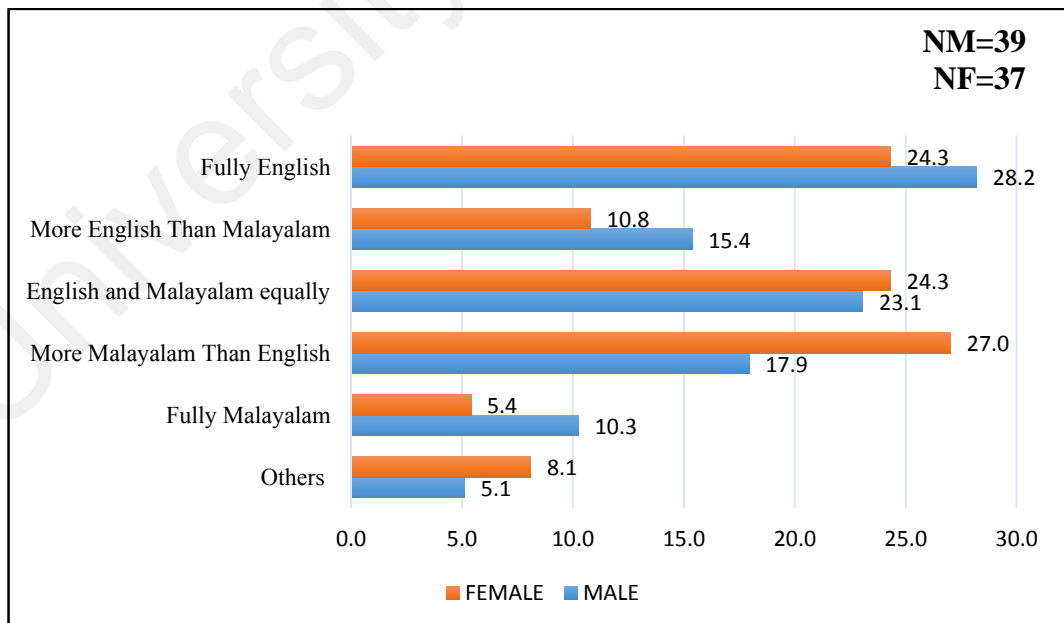
Figure 4.28: English Usage at Temple Based on Gender

As shown in Figure 4.28, in this domain, a higher proportion of male respondents 10.3% (n=4) use fully Malayalam compared to female respondents, (5.1%, n= 2).

4.5.3 English Usage at Recreational Places Based on Gender

In this section, English usage at recreational places based on gender is discussed. Figure 4.29 shows the findings on the use of English by respondents.
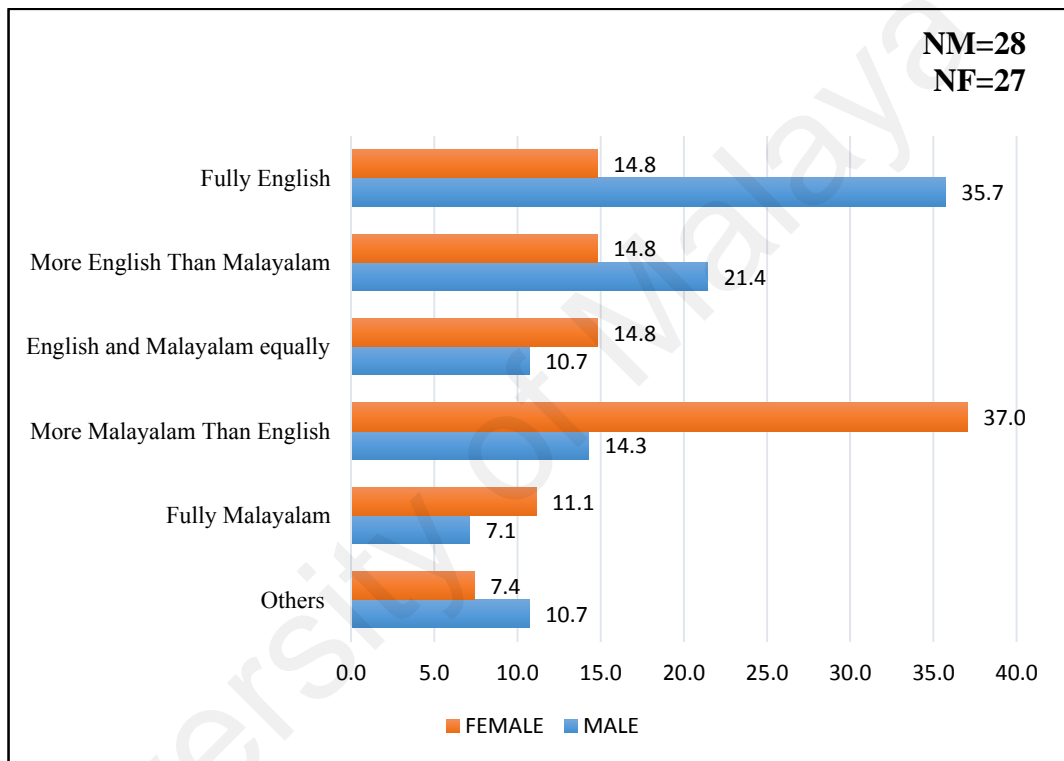
Figure 4.29: English Usage at Recreational Places Based on Gender

Figure 4.29 shows two contrasting choices of language that respondents make for recreational purposes. A total of 37% (n=10) female respondents use more Malayalam than English during recreation compared to 14.3% (n= 4) male respondents. Perhaps, they tend to join sporting activities with friends of the same gender and ethnicity. On the other hand, male respondents (35.7 %, n=10) use fully English during recreational activities compared to the female respondents at only 14.8% (n=4). Perhaps, apart from English being a practical choice, this might be also because many sports-related terminologies are in the English language.

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In summary, the usage of English is relatively low for female respondents but higher for male respondents.

4.5.4 English Usage during Religious Festivals Based on Gender

Generally, findings show that both genders use both English and Malayalam almost equally during religious festivals. This is contradictory to the assumption that during religious festivals which involve customs and culture, more of the mother tongue would be used rather than English. The graph shows otherwise. As a comparison, 16.2% (n=6) female respondents use fully Malayalam while only 21.1% (n=8) male respondents use fully Malayalam as shown in Figure 4.30 below.
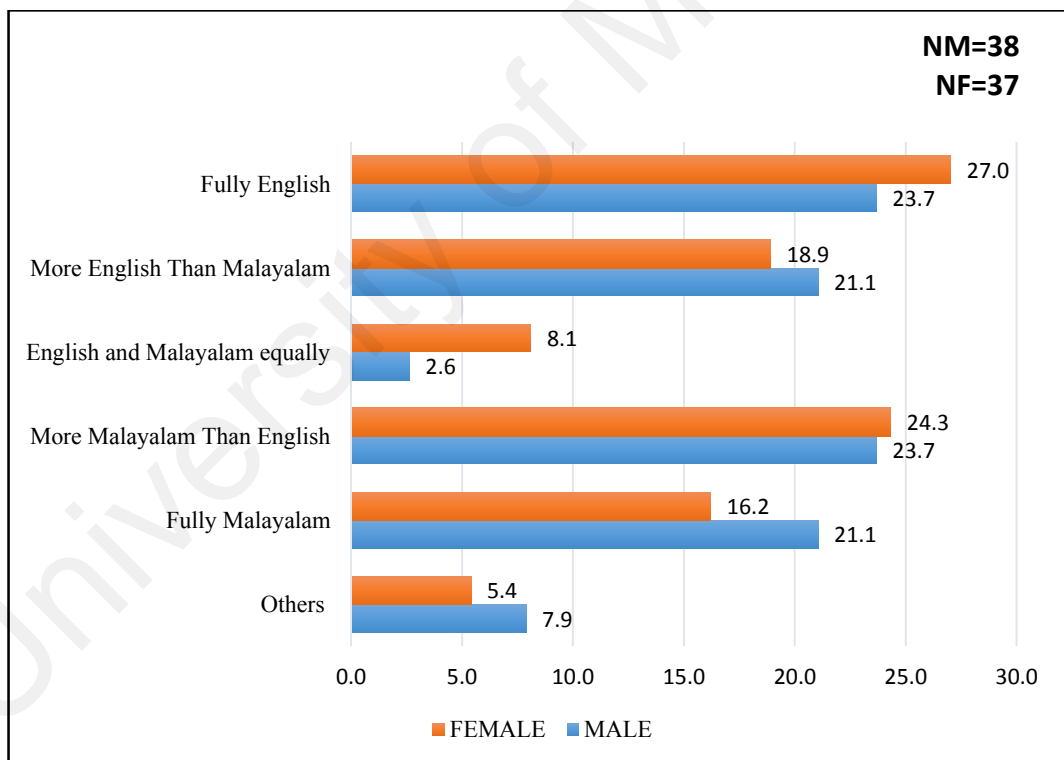
Figure 4.30: English Usage during Religious Festivals Based on Gender

Figure 4.30 shows that the use of fully English is more by female respondents (27%, n= 10) compared to male respondents (23.7%, n=9) during religious festivals.

Interestingly, as indicated earlier more male respondents (21.1%) seem to prefer to use Malayalam only during religious festivals compared to 16.2% female respondents. This may be due to the expectation by the elders for the male family members to use the native language whenever the opportunity arises. Religious festivals are also attended by family members that would include the elders who tend to speak Malayalam. Therefore, almost an equal percentage of respondents of both genders (male=21.1%, female=18.9%) admit they use more Malayalam than English.

4.5.5 English Usage at Cultural Functions Based on Gender

Next is the usage of English by respondents at cultural functions as shown in Figure 4.31.
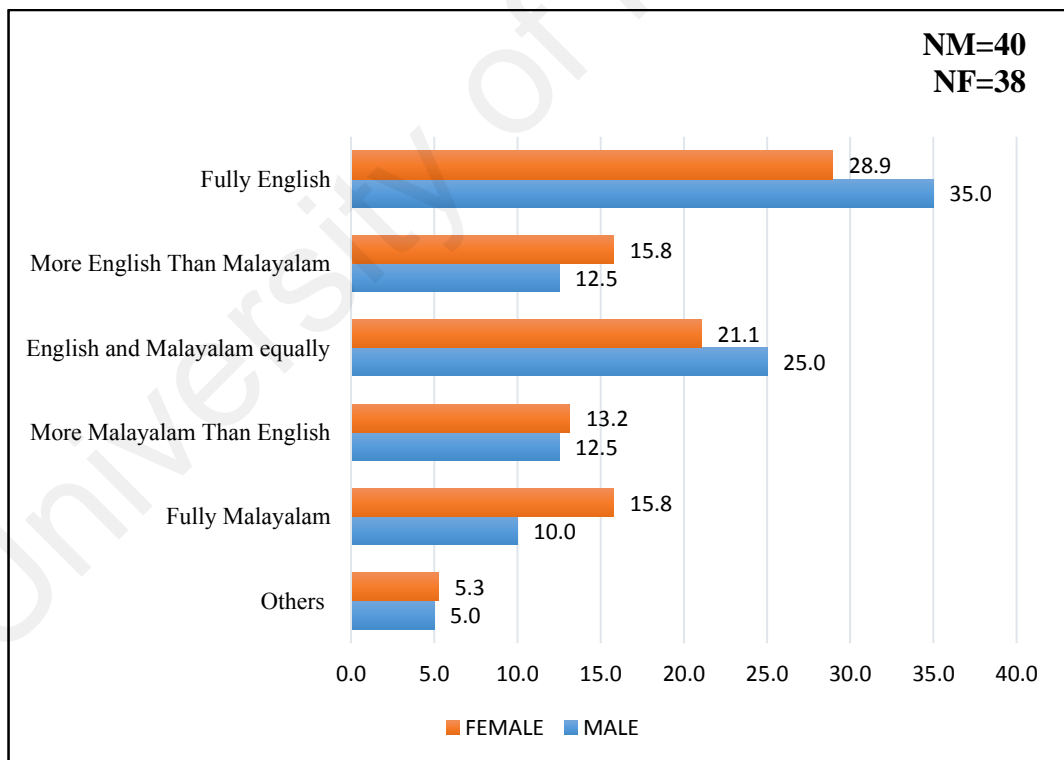
Figure 4.31: English Usage at Cultural Functions Based on Gender

Figure 4.31 shows the usage of fully English is the choice at cultural functions such as Onam night, Mohiniattam dance, Kannyar Kali dance and Kalaripayat. The graph shows that

more male respondents, 35.0% (n=14) compared to female respondents 28.9% (n=11) prefer to use fully English at cultural functions. In contrast, more female respondents, 15.8% (n=6), prefer to use fully Malayalam compared to only 10% (n= 4) of male respondents. This might be because as during cultural festivals, more female respondents are involved directly in the functions and they have to use their mother tongue during these functions.

It is to be noted that almost a quarter of respondents, that is more male respondents (25%, n=10) than female respondents (21.1%, n=8), use both languages equally at cultural functions. Overall, it can be concluded that the male respondents prefer to use English, while the female respondents prefer to use Malayalam at the cultural functions. This is due to the fact that some respondents indicated they have to use Malayalam in the present of the elders.

4.5.6 English Usage in Online Chats Based on Gender

Figure 4.32 presents the usage of English by respondents in online chatting through mobile with their friends, family and colleagues based on the gender.
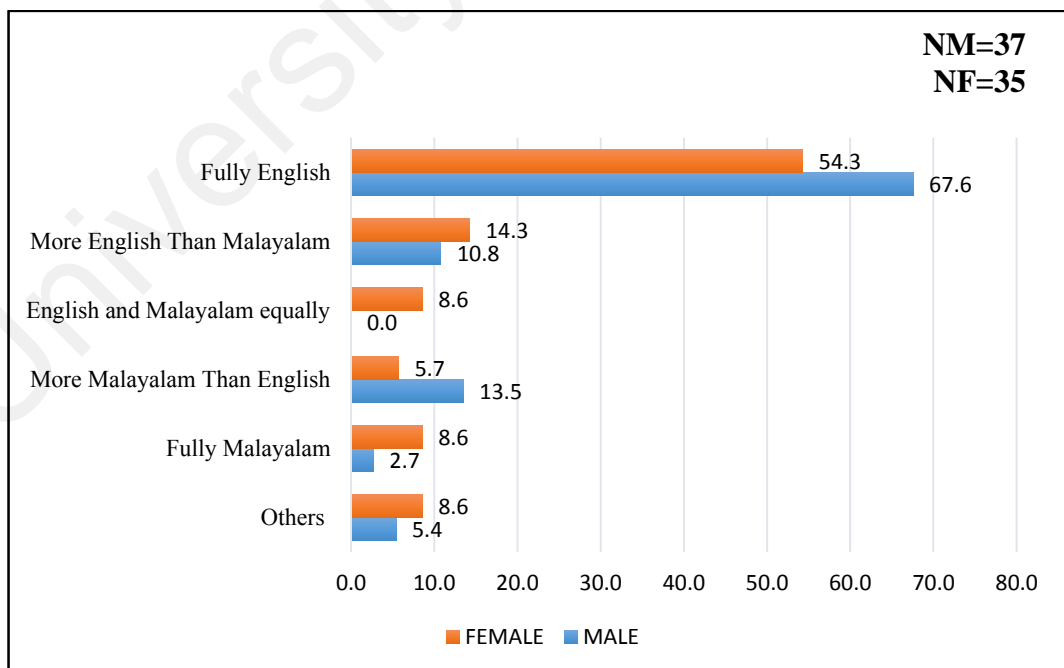
Figure 4.32: English Usage in Online Chats Based on Gender

Figure 4.32 shows the major language used for both genders is English. The distribution in the graph shows the use of fully English more apparent among the male respondents, namely, 67.6% (n=25) of male respondents compared to 54.3% (n=19) of female respondents. This might be because in chatting, it is easier to use English rather than Malayalam. Comparatively, a very small number of respondents use Malayalam in chatting. For those using fully Malayalam, the number of female respondents is higher than the male respondents. Only 8.6% (n=3) of the female respondents compared to 2.7 % (n=1) male chat fully in Malayalam than English. Interestingly, for the category more English than Malayalam, more female respondents, 14.3% (n=5) than male 10.8% (n=4) use English than Malayalam. In conclusion, more male respondents than female respondents use English compared to Malayalam in chatting.

4.5.7 English Usage in Sending Short Message Service (SMS) Based on Gender

Next is Figure 4.33 that presents the usage of English in sending SMS based on gender.
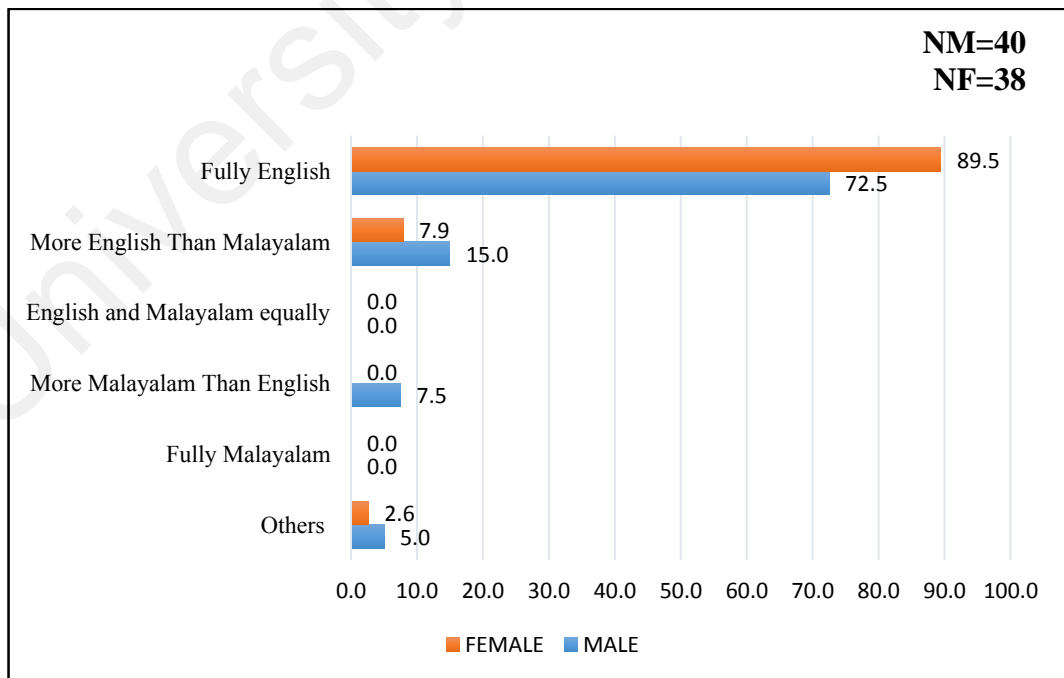
Figure 4.33: English Usage in Sending SMS Based on Gender

Figure 4.33 shows a similar finding as for chatting in which English is the main language used to send SMS messages based on gender. Both male and female respondents overwhelmingly prefer English in sending SMS. The graph shows that the usage of English is very high compared to Malayalam. About 72.5% (n=29) of male respondents and 89.5% (n=34) female respondents use fully English. Both genders shows English as their language of preference in sending SMS but the number of female respondents is higher than the male respondents. Among those who use more English than Malayalam, the male respondents, 15% (n=6) is higher than those female respondents, 7.9% (n=3). Overall, the female respondents use more English in sending SMS compared to male respondents.

4.5.8 English Usage in Social Network Based on Gender

The following diagram, Figure 4.34, shows the findings on the usage of English by respondents in social network based on gender.
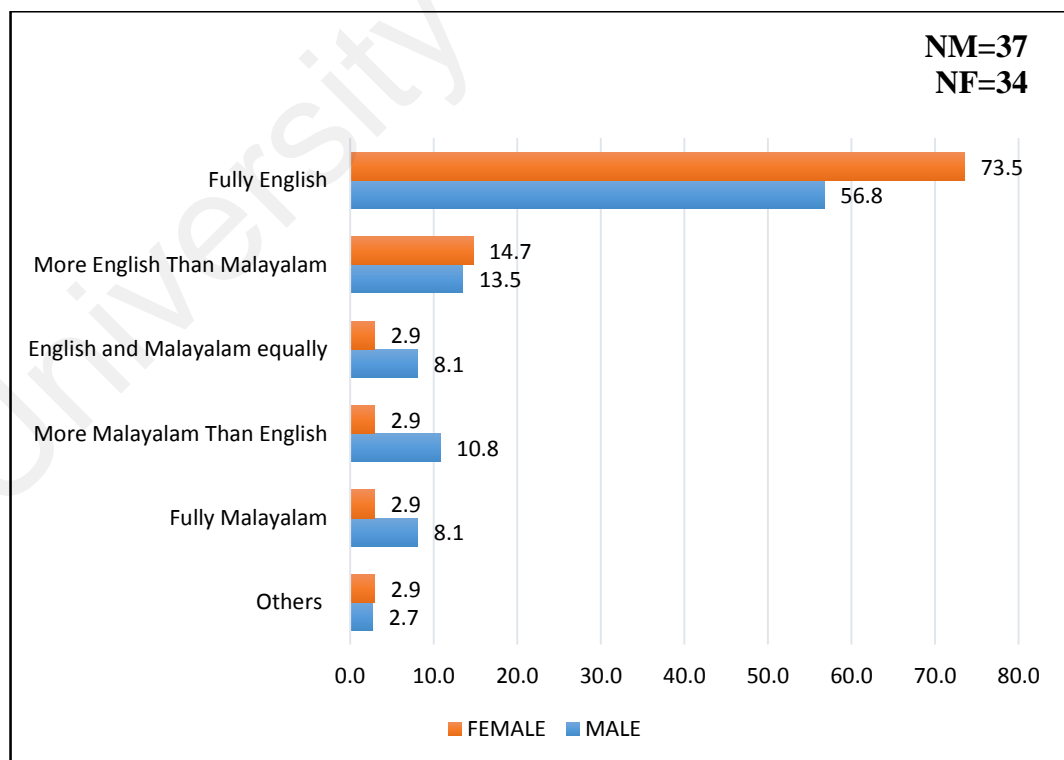
Figure 4.34: English Usage in Social Network Based on Gender

Figure 4.34 shows the usage of English in the social network based on gender. About 73.5% (n=25) of female respondents and 56.8% (n=21) of male respondents use fully English on the social network as all the social networks are generally Anglo-centric based. In conclusion, female respondents use English more than male respondents on the social network.

4.5.9   Summary of English Usage Based on Gender in Workplace and Locale Domains

Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 are the summaries of English usage based on gender in workplace and locale domains respectively.

Table 4.5: Summary of English usage in Workplace and Locale Domain among Male Respondents

		Fully English	More English Than Malayalam	English and Malayalam equally	More Malayalam Than English	Fully Malayalam	Others
SMS	%	**72.5**	15.0	0.0	7.5	0.0	5.0
	n	29	6	0	3	0	2
Chat	%	**67.6**	10.8	0.0	13.5	2.7	5.4
	n	25	4	0	5	1	2
Social network	%	**56.8**	13.5	8.1	10.8	8.1	2.7
	n	21	5	3	4	3	1
Workplace	%	**44.4**	27.8	5.6	5.6	5.6	11.1
	n	8	5	1	1	1	2
Recreation	%	**35.7**	21.4	10.7	14.3	7.1	10.7
	n	10	6	3	4	2	3
Cultural functions	%	**35.0**	12.5	25.0	12.5	10.0	5.0
	n	14	5	10	5	4	2
Temple	%	**28.2**	15.4	23.1	17.9	10.3	5.1
	n	11	6	9	7	4	2
Religious festivals	%	**23.7**	21.1	2.6	23.7	21.1	7.9
	n	9	8	1	9	8	3

As shown in Table 4.5, the English use among the male respondents in workplace and locale domains is the highest in sending out SMS (72.5%, n=29). Online chats 67.6% (n=25)

and the use of social network, 56.8% (n=21) are second and third respectively. It is followed by workplace (44.4%, n=8). The lowest use of English among the male respondents is during festivities (23.7%, n=9).

Next, Table 4.6 shows the summary of English usage in workplace and locale domain among the female respondents in this study.

Table 4.6: Summary of English usage in Workplace and Locale Domain among Female Respondents

		Fully English	More English Than Malayalam	English and Malayalam equally	More Malayalam Than English	Fully Malayalam	Others
SMS	%	**89.5**	7.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6
	n	34	3	0	0	0	1
Social network	%	**73.5**	14.7	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9
	n	25	5	1	1	1	1
Chat	%	**54.3**	14.3	8.6	5.7	8.6	8.6
	n	19	5	3	2	3	3
Workplace	%	**52.6**	10.5	21.1	0.0	0.0	15.8
	n	10	2	4	0	0	3
Cultural functions	%	**28.9**	15.8	21.1	13.2	15.8	5.3
	n	11	6	8	5	6	2
Religious festivals	%	**27.0**	18.9	8.1	24.3	16.2	5.4
	n	10	7	3	9	6	2
Recreation	%	14.8	14.8	14.8	**37.0**	11.1	7.4
	n	4	4	4	10	3	2
Temple	%	24.3	10.8	24.3	**27.0**	5.4	8.1
	n	9	4	9	10	2	3

As in the general trend as shown in Table 4.2, the use of English is the highest in sending SMS, 89.5%(n=34) among this group of female respondents. It is followed by English use in social network such as Facebook and Twitter (73.5%, n=25). The next two highest are the online chats (54.3%, n=19) and workplace 52.6% (n=10) respectively.

For Malayalam use, the highest is at recreation places, 37.0 %(n=10) and followed by at temple (27.0%, n=10).

4.6 Ethnicity Markers

This section is on identity markers and will answer the third research question.

The respondents were asked to select identity markers which in their opinion represent their ethnicity. There were nine choices. They were not given an open-ended question regarding this choices because, during the pilot test, the responses received were widely varied. The researchers found it very hard to categories those responses. Based on the pilot test, the researcher narrowed down the choices to ease respondents to respond. The data were consolidated based on the nine choices given and they were analysed using the percentage.

Figure 4.35 presents the findings of their responses.
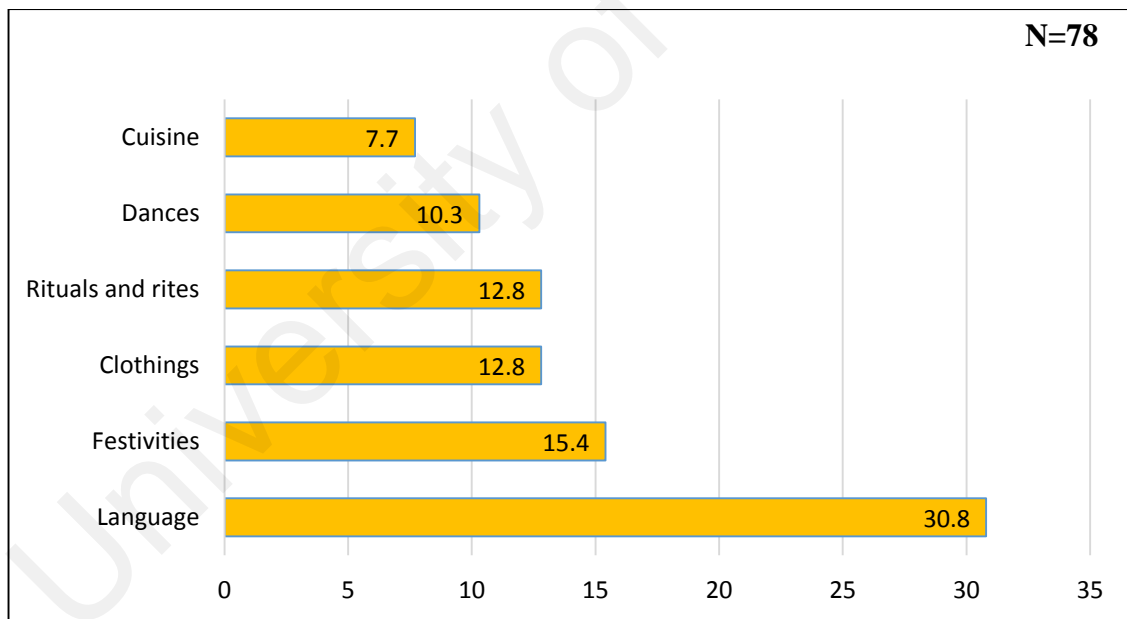
Figure 4.35: The Ethnicity Markers

Figure 4.35 shows that most of the respondents still perceive the language or their mother tongue as the most important marker to identify their ethnicity. Almost 30.8% (n=24) of the respondents indicated language as their main marker as a Malayalee. When they were

asked about their perception of being a Malayalee and their mother tongue, Malayalam, they gave some interesting responses. Some of the responses from the interviewees are as below:

Excerpt 17

I always love Malayalam…, I think it is the language.   I2FG2L22

Excerpt 18

From my perspective, the language is really important for the identity.

I3FG2L11

The interviewee, when asked if he considers Malayalam as important to reflect his identity as a Malayalee, his response was very precise.

Excerpt 19

Yeah, it is very important.

I2MG2L23

While another interviewee expresses her view as follows.

Excerpt 20

Even though the food are yummy but the language is still important…, I hate it when they call themselves as Malayalees but can't speak a single word of Malayalam other than Acha, Amma or Muthi.

I3FG2L17

The next key marker after language is religious festivals. About 15.4% (n=12) of the respondents indicated several religious festivals as their key marker as a Malayalee. When asked for key markers other than the language which she thinks reflect her identity as a Malayalee, her response was as below:

Excerpt 21

Ummm, the festivals we celebrate, we celebrate like Onam, Vishu, we know more about our culture all.

I2FG2L25

When probed further why she thinks festivals are important, she said,

Excerpt 22

This is the time we got to know our own tradition and got the chance to mingle with our relatives from them we learned about the reason for the celebration.

I2FG2L27

The clothing and the rituals are given equal important by the respondents and are tied as the third most important key markers. The Malayalees have their own traditional clothing and they have their unique rites and rituals. Clothing that the Malayalees wear such as Mundu and rites and rituals followed by the Malayalees are given equal important by the respondents. About 12.8% (n=10) of the respondents choose these two markers as very important for them.

When an interviewee was asked, what are the other key markers, other than language that reflects his identity, he said,

Excerpt 23

My clothing, actually, I don't know what, what the boys wearing for during their…what…The Malayalees wear, the Malayalees should wear. I am not sure what it is called…

I2MG2L27

The next key marker is Malayalee's traditional dances. About 10.3% (n= 8) of the respondents said the dances like Kathakali and Mohini dance are also a symbol of their ethnicity.

The respondents indicate cuisine or some specific food well known in Kerala such as aviyal, uppari, inchipully and pachadiy as the next key marker. About 7.7% (n= 6) of the respondents connect these food with their ethnic identity.

As the interviewees said,

Excerpt 24

I love Malayalam but I always love the cooking.

I1FG1L12

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When the interviewee was asked the other things she thinks that reflects her identity as a Malayalee, she answered,

Excerpt 25

Food, I love uppari and aviyal. I miss it since my grandmother passed away.

<div align="right">I3FG2L23</div>

When she was asked further about the cooking, she answered in the negative.

Excerpt 26

I am a lazy number one to cook. My mother only cooks those during Onam. The taste is not the same. My ammma is the best.

<div align="right">I3FG2L32</div>

It shows that even though some of the respondents thinks the cuisine is important as an identity marker but not enough attention or importance given to preserve the cuisine or to learn to cook them.

Other ethnic markers the respondents connect with are the martial art with 6.4% (n=5), Kerala lamp 2.6% (n=2) and musical instruments 1.3% (n=1).

The martial arts such as Kalaripayattu and Marmashastram are unique to the Malayalees in Kerala and worldwide. The other marker is the Kerala lamp. The design of the lamp is unique compared to the traditional lamp found in the southern India and it is related to the Malayalees.

When the Malayalee youths were asked why they prefer the English language compared to their mother tongue when they said their mother tongue was so important to identify themselves as Malayalees, they responded by saying that it is not their fault that they are not proficient in their mother tongue. Some of their responses are as follow:

Excerpt 27

Acha doesn't like us like to speak Malayalam with him. So we speak English.

<div align="right">FG1FL8</div>

Excerpt 28

I do understand Malayalam but the thing is, I was not, my parents didn't teach me to speak Malayalam and they speak in Tamil at home, so I speak a bit of Malayalam.

<div align="right">FG1ML38</div>

Excerpt 29

Actually, I like to speak in Malayalam but my parents didn't teach from small. So I... so I when now they teach means, I will feel difficult to, this one.

<div align="right">FG2FL28</div>

According to them, their lack of proficiency in Malayalam can be contributed to their parents and lack of opportunity to communicate in Malayalam. They said the exposure they gain is mostly from English. Most of them said they only use Malayalam with their grandparents because some of the old generation are not proficient in English.

4.7   Summary of Findings

The discussion above clearly shows that the Malayalee youths prefer English more than Malayalam. Based on the interview carried out, most of the respondents opined that English is more beneficial than Malayalam in terms of learning and speaking. The preference of language between the genders is also obvious. The male respondents prefer English while the female respondents prefer Malayalam.

This study with this set of respondents shows that there is a tendency among the youths to move towards English. The study by Nambiar (2007) and Sharin (2005) in Malaysia among

the Malayalee community came out with the same trend. Studies by Chiswick, B. R., & Miller, P. W. (1994) and Huntington, S. P. (2013) among the Latin American in the United States of America show that the children and grandchildren of the Hispanics have the tendency to use English compared to their mother tongue or the Spanish.

4.8   Implications

The study shows that English is the preferred language among the youths and it should be encouraged to prepare them to face globalisation. The English language will be the dominant language in the youth's life in facing the friends, education and employment.

4.9   Summary

This chapter presented findings of the data collected via three methods, namely, questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion. The frequency of use of English in comparison to Malayalam by this group of Malayalee youths was tabulated and discussed.

In general, it was found that the Malayalee youths are keener on the usage of English compared to Malayalam.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1   Introduction

The findings of the analysis on English usage and identity markers of the Malayalee youths were presented in Chapter 4. This study investigated the usage of English among the Malayalee youths in Seremban and which identity markers relate to their ethnic identity. In this chapter, the researcher will present a summary of major findings in relation to the research questions formulated for this study. Some recommendations for future research are also included.

5.2   Revisiting Research Questions

In this section, the researcher will review the overall findings based on the research questions presented in Chapter 1.

RQ 1. In which domains is English used by Malayalee youths?

Based on the responses to the administered questionnaires, it was found that English usage is prevalent in all the family, home, locale, and technology domains selected for this study. Findings show that English is also the major choice in all family and friends domains, except for the older generation. It was found that Malayalam is the preferred choice for communication with grandparents, father, mother, uncles and aunts. The findings of this study clearly show that English is the preferred language among the Seremban Malayalee youths compared to their mother tongue in most domains selected for this study.

Chapter 4 presented also the comparison between genders on the use of English in selected domains mentioned above. The findings are summarised in the discussion of RQ2.

RQ 2. What is the frequency of use of English and Malayalam by Malayalee youths based on gender?

In the selected domains based on gender, English is found to be the preferred choice by male respondents for the locale and technology domains that include the workplace, recreational places, temple, during cultural functions and religious festivals. On the other hand, the female respondents use English in all the domains except at recreation places, temple and cultural functions.

Female respondents most probably prefer to use Malayalam at the temple and cultural functions due to their involvement in organising such functions and also the female respondents are more exposed to norms at the temple and the appropriate vocabulary to use. Perhaps this is due to the upbringing of the male and female respondents by the family. The female respondents are regarded to be the symbol of family honour and they are brought up to respect the cultural and traditional values of the community more strictly compared to the male respondents.

For the family and friendship domains, the findings are quite contrasting between the male and female respondents. The male respondents still prefer English as their main mode of communication in most of the domains except with the elders - grandparents, uncles and aunts. It is interesting to observe that male respondents prefer English to converse with their fathers and mothers but they use Malayalam with their uncles and aunts who are considered as in the same group of their elders.

Among the female respondents, they only use fully English with their cousin, friends and neighbours. In all the other domains, they prefer to use Malayalam. Again it can be contributed to the strict upbringing where the female respondents are given more stringent rules to upkeep. The female respondents are expected to be more obedient and follow the culture and tradition more stringently.

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RQ 3. What do Malayalee youths perceive as their ethnic identity markers?

This question was intended to elicit the data regarding the Malayalee youths perceived identity markers, if Malayalam is not their language of choice to communicate with other Malayalees. Even though most of the youths prefer to communicate in English, a high percentage (30.8%) still perceive their mother tongue as their main identity or ethnicity markers. It is followed by religious festivals and also clothing that they can identify with as a Malayalee.

Unfortunately, the findings show the language is not the main identity markers of the youths. Even though the highest number of the youths (30.8%) perceive Malayalam as their identity marker, a great numbers of others (68.2%) perceive others markers such as religious festivals, clothing, rituals and rites, dances, cuisine, martial arts, Kerala lamp and musical instrument as the markers of their ethnicity. Therefore, this group of Malayalee youths tends to consider cultural items rather than language as identity markers of their ethnicity.

5.3   Recommendations for Further Research

This study was conducted with a small number of respondents. It is hoped that similar studies with a much larger sample can be conducted in the future. A similar study can also be carried out in the rural and semi-urban settings, where the level of English proficiency is lower. It can also be studied from the point of different religious backgrounds, social and economic status, as well as other demographic factors.

The other aspect may be to probe on the possible language maintenance and language shift in the state of Negeri Sembilan. As reflected by this group of youths, the use of Malayalam is less compared to the use by the elders.

5.4 Summary

This chapter presented the main findings of the study that was set to explore the usage of English amongst Malayalee youths in an urban setting. The findings showed a preference for English language in all the domains chosen for this study including family domain. Additionally, in terms of preference among genders, the findings of this study show while English is the preferred language, male respondents tend to prefer English in most of the domains while female respondents seem to show a stronger preference for their mother tongue in certain domains.

These findings show that although there is a tendency among these Malayalee youths to use more English than their mother tongue, Malayalam, they still have a strong sense of belonging to their ethnicity. They express their identity not only through language but also through other identity markers such as clothing, cultural and religious festivities.

To conclude, this study has met the objectives of the study. It is hoped that the findings may be of relevance for further study on ethnolinguistic vitality among Malayalee youths in the future.

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