CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The aim of this study was to gain insights about the nativization of rhetorical strategies by a writer from my own country and tradition. Towards this end, I examined three short stories by K.S Maniam, a Malaysian English writer of Indian origin. Kachru’s (1986) model came in extremely useful in the analysis of these rhetorical strategies as did Strevens’ (1987) framework.

The findings (in Chapter 4) revealed that Maniam has drawn upon a variety of cultural elements to create innovative linguistic realizations under the five rhetorical strategies examined. Based on these innovations, several conclusions can be drawn about the nativization of rhetorical strategies in the Malaysian English context. These conclusions will be discussed in depth below (see 5.1 to 5.3).

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section (as mentioned above), will discuss the conclusions that can be drawn from the findings. The second section, on the other hand, will highlight suggestions for further research into this interesting and dynamic area of study.

5.1 The Concept of Community

In The Eagles (1976), the study revealed five instances of native similes and no metaphors. It was observed that Maniam has drawn upon social relations within the community in which the story is set to create these similes. These patterns are an indication that the sense of community is extremely strong among the characters of the story. It was found that Maniam captures and transfers ancient wisdom, traditions, social
values and cultural thought patterns through his characters. The same was observed in The Dream Of Vasanthar (1981) and The Third Child (1981). These regularities reveal that by presenting the immediate reality of the Malaysian Indian community as accurately as possible, Maniam has avoided using timeworn Western similes and metaphors, which reflect a foreign culture and people.

The accurate representation of the community in which the story is set is made even clearer through Maniam's transfer of rhetorical devices for "personalizing" speech interactions. In The Eagles (1976), the study found four instances of rhetorical devices for "personalizing" speech interactions. It was observed that Maniam draws upon social conventions that are followed by characters when they discuss the deceased in their community. These characters refer to the deceased in a reverent manner and Maniam uses rhetorical devices that "personalize" speech interactions between members of the community to portray this. The effect achieved is a sense of tradition and orality to the discourse.

Besides that, the sense of community is also transmitted through Maniam's accurate depiction of common forms of address in traditional Indian culture. In The Dream Of Vasanthar (1981), Maniam has drawn upon these conventions to create rhetorical devices like "lady of the house" and "lord of the house." In Indian culture, these terms are used as a mark of respect by someone who is of a lower status to address someone of a higher status. However, when used among people of the same social status it functions as a medium of sarcasm to mock each other.

The study also found that Maniam has created suitable rhetorical devices to "personalize" the description of personality traits in a character. He achieves this through
idiomatic expressions like “escaping back” in *The Eagles* (1976), to characterize the speed in which a character moves and “business eyes” in *The Third Child* (1981), to portray someone who is swift and alert in business matters. These expressions may appear meaningless to readers who do not belong to the community in which the story is set. However, these expressions are very much a part of the Malaysian Indian community and Maniam has successfully transmitted them by drawing upon common speech interactions among its members.

Proverbs are another rich source of linguistic innovation and creativity in the non-native writer’s attempts to capture the beliefs of the community in which the story is set. In *The Eagles* (1976) and *The Third Child* (1981), the study revealed beautiful and eloquent proverbs that were translated from Tamil to English. It was observed that these proverbs captured the traditional wisdom that is centered around communal bonds and values. To create them, Maniam has drawn upon the rich depth and intensity of interpersonal relationships that exist within the Malaysian Indian community.

Furthermore, it was discovered that the sense of community within the Malaysian Indian context appeared to encompass an even deeper circle than just people living together in a particular district. Instead, social relations within the Malaysian Indian context also takes into account the basic family unit and Maniam has transferred this element via a proverb that speaks of a husband, wife and child (see (37) in Table 4.3). Here, it appears that the sense of community within a non-native context takes on a different meaning compared to a Western context. As pointed out earlier (in Chapter 4), the term “community” in a Western context is defined as “the people living in one locality.” (The New Collins International Dictionary Of English Language). However,
the study revealed that in the stories examined, the concept of community can be expanded to include members of a family.

The study also revealed that Maniam has used a speech style that is traditional in nature, and which reflects the ancestral roots of the Malaysian Indian community. In The Dream Of Vasantha (1981), it was observed that Maniam has drawn upon the speech style of a meandering village storyteller. This type of speech style varies from community to community. It is indeed an effective method of nativization because it not only reflects the culture of the community in which it is set, but it also enhances the mood of the story. Unlike the written word, oral literature relies on the storyteller’s ability to heighten suspense, create interest and capture the shifting moods of the story through effective voice control and choice of words.

The study found a range of speech stratifications and conversational conventions that were used to capture the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic environment of the non-native sociolinguistic setting. These syntactic devices brought forth the sense of community in a lively, vibrant manner, taking into account the authentic speech patterns its members. The syntactic devices used by Maniam to achieve this include collocations, loan translations, sentences with no subjects, verbless sentence fragments and questions without inversions (each syntactic device was explained and exemplified in Chapter 4).

The study found that Maniam created these linguistic innovations by drawing upon the social relations between members of the community. In The Eagles (1976), the data revealed ten instances of syntactic devices. It was observed that there were two collocations, six loan translations and two sentences with no subjects. In The Dream Of Vasantha (1981), the study found six instances of syntactic devices and they are two loan
translations, three verbless sentence fragments and one question without inversion. In *The Third Child* (1981), the data revealed four instances of syntactic devices and they are two collocations and two loan translations.

The findings of the study are represented numerically in the table below.

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### 5.2 The Individual’s Response to Nature

Another particularly interesting finding is Maniam’s representation of the individual’s response to Nature. In *The Eagles* (1976), Maniam has drawn upon the relationship between Man and Nature to create vibrant and colourful smiles. By referring to the individual’s response to Nature, Maniam compares the bountiful nature of food to rich colours like “golden” and “silver”, whereas the mysterious nature of “painted eyes” is compared to “blood” (see (2) and (3) in Table 4.1). Here, the mood of the writing is highly influenced by the way the characters in the stories perceive the natural world around them. According to Peck (1990), the manner in which an individual perceives the natural world around him is dependent upon the culture he or she belongs to. He states,
"We tend to believe what the people around us believe, and we tend to accept as truth what these people tell us of the nature of the world as we listen to them during our formative years (Peck, 1990:203). This regularity was also reflected in The Dream Of Vasantha (1981), where Maniam has drawn upon the natural world to create a number of native similes (see Table 4.1).

The study also found that in The Eagles (1976), Maniam has drawn upon the manner in which members of the community perceive the movement of time. In (29) (see Table 4.3), the idiomatic expression "tucked away" was created to describe the arrival of Friday. The expression reveals native cultural thought patterns and perceptions. Ordinarily, "tucked away" would be used to describe objects, but in this case, Maniam accurately depicts the native Indian community's response to the natural world. The effect of such a nativization strategy is that the reader gets a realistic sense of how long and slow the movement of days are for characters in the story.

It was observed that Maniam draws upon the natural world to create a loan translation in (40) (see Table 4.4). Loan translations accurately represent native cultural thought patterns as they are literal translations from the non-native writer's first language. Even though they are literal translations, they have the quality of transparency, which makes them accessible to a wider audience. In (40), Maniam draws upon the individual's response to the natural world and has translated a fairly common Tamil expression to the Malaysian English context. This is indeed effective because it not only captures native cultural thought patterns but also conveys particular shades of feeling from the first language of the characters, which, in this case is Tamil, into the Malaysian English context.
5.3 The Spiritual Dimension

The study found several references to religious texts and customs in Maniam’s nativization of rhetorical strategies. In The Eagles (1976), a simile was created by drawing upon Hindu mythology (see (4) in Table 4.1). Maniam’s reference to an “elephant’s back” would seem empty and meaningless to readers who do not share the same religion as Maniam’s characters. However, the expression “elephant’s back” is a reference to Lord Ganesha, who is the most popular Hindu deity. He is represented with an elephant’s head. Here, Maniam has relied upon the spiritual realm of the characters in his stories to create an authentic simile, which is reflective of the cultural and spiritual background of his characters.

Similarly, in The Third Child (1981), a metaphor was created by drawing upon religious practices (see (13) in Table 4.1). Here, Maniam compares the long silence to the endless flow of incense smoke. This is a metaphor that captures native cultural thought patterns because in Indian culture, incense is part of the religious realia used by priests in temples and individuals at home when they pray. By itself, incense smoke is just the by-product of a flame. However, by using the adjective “pious”, Maniam manages to capture and portray the sacred power that is evoked by Indians when they use incense smoke in prayer. The effect is a sense of peace and calm which is parallel to the idea of silence.

The spiritual dimension in the stories is presented even more clearly through the transfer of rhetorical devices for “personalizing” speech interactions. This is achieved by making direct references to gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon. In The Eagles (1976), the data revealed a reference to “Lakshmi” in (22) (see Table 4.2). This is a direct reference to the goddess Lakshmi who is worshipped by Hindus for the good fortune,
wealth, agriculture and trade she bestows upon her believers. Here, Maniam has drawn
upon the spiritual dimension of his characters and by doing so, has provided cultural
roots to the text.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study has only investigated the nativization of rhetorical strategies. Based on
Kachru’s (1986) framework, this study has examined and analyzed the nativization of
rhetorical strategies which consist of native similes, transfer of rhetorical devices for
“personalizing” speech interactions, translation of proverbs and idioms, culturally
dependent speech styles and syntactic devices.

However, there are other types of nativization processes outlined by Kachru
(1986) which have not been examined in this study. These processes include
“nativization of context” and “nativization of cohesion and cohesiveness.” Also, this
study only investigated three short stories. Further research involving a larger corpus of
data can be undertaken to produce a more detailed and representative account of various
linguistic processes that influence the nativization of non-native texts. These studies can
investigate the nativization of context, cohesion and cohesiveness, and also, of the five
rhetorical strategies examined in this study. This will provide a more holistic
representation of the nativization strategies used in a non-native text.

Besides that, a contrastive analysis can be carried out to examine the differences
and similarities in the nativization strategies employed by writers in different
sociolinguistic settings. For example, a contrastive analysis between Nigerian English
writing and Malaysian English writing can be done to observe the types of nativization
strategies employed in each variety of English as well as its impact on cross-cultural communication. Such studies are an essential contribution to the growing body of research on non-native literatures. Furthermore, they can help provide appropriate interpretative methodologies and frameworks for analysis to encourage further research in the field of discourse analysis of non-native literatures.