

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summary of the findings in Chapters 4 and 5 and discusses the prospects for future research.

6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research questions for this study were:

1. What types of structures are used to form questions by the speakers?
2. What patterns emerge in the use of the different structures by the speakers?
3. To what extent are the DSE able to use the standard forms when forming questions?

Four types of questions were examined: *wh* questions, *yes/no* questions, tag questions and questions in the indirect form in order to answer these research questions. The findings from the verbal response revealed that there was a preference for the standard form of *wh* questions in informal speaking context. This contrasts with the other three types of questions where the non-standard forms of the questions were used more frequently especially in the case of tag questions and indirect questions. The typical structure of non-standard *yes/no* question forms was generally where the subject and the auxiliary are not inversed whereby taking a declarative structure, ellipsis of the auxiliary or pro-drop.

The use of sentence final particle was more common in standard forms in *wh* questions and in non-standard *yes/no* type of questions with the most common particle being *eh* and *ah* respectively. The purpose of the particles in *wh* questions is probably to reduce the importance of the subject (see 4.1). However, in *yes/no* questions, the purpose of the particle is to enable the hearer to identify the structure as a question (see 4.2).

In *yes/no* questions beginning with *has/have*, there were no cases of the of the subject and the auxiliary but there was a high incidence of ellipsis of the auxiliary. In the non-standard *yes/no* questions beginning with *is/are*, the occurrence of non inversion of the subject and the auxiliary, ellipsis of the auxiliary or pro-drop was quite the same. However, the test scores reveal that the respondents knew how to use the standard forms of the *yes/no* questions and the *wh* questions and they were aware of their non-standard use in the informal verbal discourse. Thus the DSE is able to move along the lectal cline from SME to CME for both these types of questions.

In the tag questions, most of the verbal responses were tagged with the lexical particle *right* rather the expected *isn't it* and *is it* tag identified in the literature. Perhaps this was because the tag *right* signals that the question aims to seek confirmation. The test scores also reveal that there were many respondents who were unaware of their non-standard use of the tag questions. This was more obvious in the negative tag questions.

Most of the verbal questions in the indirect form were also of non-standard responses. The non-standard responses were all due to the non inversion of the subject and the auxiliary. Thus the word order of the direct question is retained in the indirect form. The similar results were obtained in the test and thus revealing that the DSE are unaware of their non-standard use in questions in the indirect form as seen in many varieties around the world. Thus for questions in the indirect form, most of the DSE are probably unable to move along the full range of the lectal cline and are 'stuck' at a level where they are unable to reach SME.

6.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are two systems of English for ME: one used for standard English while the other for non-standard English which they use according to context of use. With the exception of the *wh* questions, the non-standard forms dominate in informal speaking context. However, in formal situations many DSE are unable to present the standard forms of tag questions and indirect questions. This suggests blurring between the two categories for these two types of questions. This can result in seepage from non-standard to standard forms. This is a case where a nativised variety undergoes restandardisation (Kachru, 1992).

It is clear that the DSE have two systems. Firstly, there is the standard system which consists of SME. It is normally used in the formal context symbolizing education and power, more often in the written context such as in tests. Secondly, there is the non-standard colloquial system (CME) which is used in the informal speaking context. This system is needed to strengthen solidarity, to reduce distance between speakers and it lends a sense of identity to the users. The SME can create 'invisible barriers' that is easily broken down by CME (Rajadurai, 2004). Thus, it is possible for a person to possess the ability to use both the distinct systems. As such, ESL teachers need to help students to understand that the use of SME and CME is not an issue of 'correct' or 'incorrect' English but rather the appropriateness of the context in which the variety is used.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I have studied the communication of Indian youths whose dominant language is English. This can be repeated with non DSE Indians. The results of the two groups can then be compared to see the extent of the MT influence. This can also be done to study the language of DSE of other ethnic groups.

ME can also be studied using other question forms such as *yes/no* questions beginning with *do/does/did* or modals to see if the results are consistent with this study. Another aspect to be studied can be based on the gender of the respondents. The similar research modal can be applied to different age groups of boys and girls.

Finally, research on the Englishes used by the various generations can be done using the similar research technique. The use of English by the older generation can be identified and then contrasted against the TG in this research.

6.4 CONCLUSION

The pervasive and dominating influence of the modern media coupled with the technological advancements of the multimedia has greatly impacted the language of today's younger generation. English used by the younger generation is greatly influenced by the norms set by the youngsters from L1 countries namely the United States of America. Added to this, cultural norms, lifestyles, MT and exposure to other languages and the National Language Policy affect the English used by the younger generation and create a variety of English unique to this group. Thus languages evolve and change; they are never static. A language structure which would be considered a norm today may become obsolete and not be used again by the future generation. Thus, when discussing ME, it is also important to consider the age of the speakers. That is probably why studies in the 1970's and 80's saw the structures of tags in tag questions in ME to have the generalised tag *is it* and *isn't it* while in this study it was found that the younger generation used the lexical tag of *right* in the place of the tag.

This new variety of ME is in no way inferior to SE. It is a variety unique to this group of speakers (DSE) and it is a product of the various influences. Thus language teachers especially those teaching in the urban areas have to keep abreast of the latest

development in the language. They must be able to identify the students' non-standard use of the language and be able to make them aware of the differences from their own variety. This will increase the DSEs' repertoire.

With English being of global currency and with more people around the world learning the language it is important that the youngsters of this nation be able to use SE as this can ensure that they will be understood and be able to function globally.