

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the language choice of the Ceylonese community in Klang. This chapter will describe the methodology that will be used to obtain and analyse the data, according to the research objectives stated in Chapter One. The chapter begins with a description of the respondents, a description of the selected domains, the procedures of data collection, and finally the data analysis employed in this study. The sociological approach will be applied in the analysis of the respondents' language use in the selected domains.

3.1 Respondents

The total sample comprised of 150 respondents (70 Males and 80 females) who are categorised into three different generations. According to the Jaffnese Cooperative Society (JCS), there are about 573 registered members in Klang. Based on this number, there are about 100 families and hence fifty Ceylonese families will be randomly selected to participate in the study. These families will comprise of members across three distinct generations which makes it to about 150 respondents, taking into account the important variable of age, gender and socio – economic standing. Table 3.1 presents the breakdown of these categories.

Table 3.1 Profile of Respondents

Gender	First Gen (N)	Second Gen (N)	Third Gen (N)	Total (N)
Male	15	32	23	70
Female	18	37	25	80
Total	33	69	48	150

N - Numbers

Table 3.1 shows that there are 33 respondents (15 males and 18 females) who are from the first generation, 69 respondents (32 males and 37 females) from the second generation and 48 respondents (23 males and 25 females) from the third generation.

Respondents are categorised according to their place of birth. The first generation (G1) are those born in Sri Lanka and the second generation (G2) and third generation (G3) are those who were born in Malaysia. This is clearly explained to the respondents in the questionnaire for their better understanding in terms of the generation they belong to.

The first generation had migrated to Malaya in the early part of the 19th century. They had come to Malaya with knowledge of Ceylonese Tamil and English. The history of these Ceylonese Tamils (as explained in Chapter 1) shows them to be a literate and educated community. The second generation, born in Malaysia, are the children of first generation Ceylonese. Some of them studied in the English medium while others had Malay medium education. And finally, the third generation are the children of the second generation Ceylonese. All of them had Malay medium education with English as a subject.

Only respondents from Klang were considered for this study as the researcher is from Klang. The respondents chosen for this study are those who are members of the Ceylonese community in Klang. Most of them are members of the Jaffnese Cooperative Society (JCS) which the researcher is also a member. Others who were part of the sample included family, neighbours, friends and colleagues of the researcher.

3.2 Background Information of the Respondents

This section provides a profile of the subjects of this study. The purpose of providing the background information of the respondents is to help build a linguistic profile of the respondents to better understand their patterns of language use in the domains studied. It will also provide a clearer picture of the language choice towards the Ceylonese Tamil language and the other languages used.

The table below shows the distribution of the sample respondents according to their age group. Tabulation for all the tables in this chapter are in frequencies and percentages.

Table 3.2 Distribution of Respondents According to the Age group

Ages	11 - 20		21 - 30		31 - 40		41 - 50		51 - 60		61 & above		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
G1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33	100	33	100
G2	-	-	-	-	25	36	32	47	12	17	-	-	69	100
G3	15	31	30	63	3	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	48	100

F - Frequency
 % - Percentages

All respondents from G1 are from the 61 years and above category. For G2, 36% (n=25) are from the 31 to 40 years category, 47% (n=32) from the 41 to 50 years category and 17% (n=12) from the 51 to 60 years age category. This is concurrent with the immigration patterns of the Ceylonese Tamils community whereby the majority of G1 migrated in early 1940s. In the late 40s and 50s, many of them were of marriageable age and their children were born in the 50s and 60s. As such, a high percentage (47%) of G2 is from the 41 to 50 year age category. For G3, majority (63%) are from the 21 to 30 year age category with most of them studying in colleges or who have just entered the working world.

The table below shows the highest level of education obtained by the sample respondents.

Table 3.3 Highest Level of Education

Education	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
G1 Male	1	7	8	53	6	40	15	100
G1 Female	5	28	8	44	5	28	18	100
G2 Male	-	-	5	16	27	84	32	100
G2 Female	-	-	4	11	33	89	37	100

F - Frequency

% - Percentages

All of the G1 respondents have gone to school and have acquired more than a primary education except for one male and five females who acquired only primary education. In addition to that, six males and five females had tertiary education. This data shows two important factors. Most of them have more than primary school education and there is no describable distinction in the level of education between males and females in this sample of respondents.

For G2, 84% (n=27) males and 89% (n=33) females have acquired tertiary education while 16% (n=5) males and 11% (n=4) females have at least a secondary education.

G3 members are either schooling, in college or are working. It is worth noting that all those in G3, who are beyond secondary school age, have obtained tertiary education. The level of education of G2 and G3 again points to a community that places a high premium on education.

Table 3.4 shows the medium of instruction in school for Generation 1 sample respondents. The medium of instruction is important in order to understand the language preferences of this community.

Table 3.4 : Medium of Instruction in School – Generation 1

Language (s)	Ceylonese Tamil		English		Malay		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Primary	4	67	2	33	-	-	6	100
Secondary	10	62.5	6	37.5	-	-	16	100
Tertiary	-	-	11	100	-	-	11	100

F - Frequency

% - Percentages

From the table, it shows that 67% of G1 had primary education in Ceylonese Tamil and only 33% had primary education in English. As it was the norm then, as it is now, English was offered as a second language. In secondary school, 62.5% (n=10) of G1 had Ceylonese medium education, 37.5% (n=6) were in English medium. 100% (n=11) of the G1 had tertiary education in English.

Table 3.5 shows the medium of instruction in school for Generation 2 sample respondents.

Table 3.5 Medium of Instruction in School – Generation 2

Language (s)	Tamil		English		Malay		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Primary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Secondary	-	-	7	78	2	22	9	100
Tertiary	-	-	59	98	1	2	60	100

F - Frequency

% - Percentages

As for Generation 2, the medium of instruction depends on the age of the respondents. Up to the late sixties, members of this community had attended English-medium schools in Malaysia. In the early seventies, the English medium schools were slowly phased out. The policy of using Malay as the medium of instruction in schools was implemented progressively, starting with Year One primary school in 1970. This was done to establish a National system of education in accordance with Razak Report of 1956, Government of Malaysia (Report of the Education Committee, Ministry of Education, 1956). As such, those born after 1962 had Malay as the medium of instruction in schools instead of English.

Most of the Generation 2 members had secondary education and above. 78% (n=7) had secondary education in the English medium, while only 22% (n=2) had secondary education in Malay. Out of 60 Generation 2 respondents who had tertiary education, 59 (98%) studied in English while only 1 (2%) was in the Malay medium. All those who studied in the Malay medium in universities, would have gone to public universities.

As for Generation 3 (no table shown), primary and secondary education are or were in Malay while tertiary education for Generation 3 are all in English.

In conclusion, as far as the medium of instruction is concerned, there is no institutional support at all for the Ceylonese Tamil language. English was dominant before independence and from 1970s onwards more prominence was given to the national language, Malay, which is also the language of administration and education. Presently, the government has given more emphasis to English due to its global appeal. Mandarin is also gaining reputation as a language of commerce and industry and is becoming a world language. The position of Tamil though not secure is better than Ceylonese Tamil. It is offered in primary schools and is also the language of wider communication among the Tamils in Malaysia.

3.3 Instrumentation

The instrument that will be used in this study is a three-part questionnaire in English with 28 items. The three different sections are as the following:

Part One (Questions 1-17) is designed to obtain information on the background of the respondents including their proficiency of the different languages. Questions 1 to 8, were designed to acquire some background data of the respondents such as their age, gender, occupation, country of birth, generation, etc. These questions are considered to be important for the study to examine whether variables like generation could influence the choice of language and the respondents response towards the different languages, in the different domains. Information on their educational background will be collected through question 9.

Questions 10 to 17 deals with verbal repertoire, i.e. the language that they can speak and their own assessment of their proficiency (understanding, speaking, reading and writing skills) of the language (s) they have indicated. These questions are aimed at

finding out what languages they are proficient in and whether a shift from Ceylonese Tamil has taken place and if so, what languages are used when shifting from Ceylonese Tamil.

Part Two (Questions 18 – 23) are to elicit the main language used among the respondents in the four selected domains. Questions 18 to 21 focus on the family and friendship domains, Question 22 on the entertainment domain and Question 23 on the domain of religion.

Part Three (Questions 23-28) is aimed mainly to collect data on the attitude of the respondents towards Ceylonese Tamil. Question 23 is to obtain information on the respondents attitudes towards the four languages that they are mainly conversant in; Ceylonese Tamil, Tamil Tamil, English and Malay. Question 24 wants to gauge the respondents' sense of identity by determining whether he or she is conscious of being a Ceylonese. Questions 25 and 26 are aimed to obtain information on the respondents' perception on language shift from Ceylonese Tamil to Tamil Tamil or English. Finally, Question 27 and 28 is to determine the respondents' perception and importance on the survival of the Ceylonese Tamil culture in Malaysia. (A copy of the questionnaire is included in the Appendix).

3.4 Selected Domains

Four domains are selected for this study. These are the family domain, friendship domain, entertainment domain and the domain of religion.

In the family domain, which is the main domain in this study, questions will focus on the respondents' frequency of language used with immediate family members such as spouse, parents, siblings, children and grandparents. The choice of language in the family domain is the main focus of this study since any maintenance of a minority group language would most likely be the use of the ethnic language in the family

domain. This is because the language of administration, education and communication will inevitably be the dominant language of the environment.

In the friendship domain, the respondents were asked how many of their friends were Ceylonese Tamils and also their choice of language among their Ceylonese friends.

After family, friends are the most important interlocutor in a person's life.

In the entertainment domain, questions were asked about their language preference for programmes in the mass media – movies, songs, news as well as written media, for example newspapers and magazines. The given languages are Ceylonese Tamil, Tamil Tamil and English. The study did not take into account Malay in this area of the questionnaire because the researcher wanted to focus on the preferred languages used especially in the domain of entertainment. Also, during the researcher's informal talks with the respondents, none of them indicated their use of Malay when it came to speaking with family and friends or in the entertainment domain.

In the religion domain, respondents were asked the language they preferred to listen to during their religious services. They also asked about the preferred language for their personal prayer and when communicating with other Ceylonese people in the house of worship.

3.5 Data Collection

The respondents were assured that all information given was for the purpose of research and anonymity would be maintained. The data was collected through the questionnaire method which showed notably a number of advantages as follows:

- a. Subjects feel a greater sense of anonymity
- b. The format is standard for all subjects and is not dependent on mood of interviewer

- c. Large samples, covering large geographic areas, compensate for the expected loss of subjects
- d. A greater amount of data over a broad range of topics may be collected
- e. This approach is less expensive in terms of time and money

The researcher self-administered the questionnaire to ensure reliability and effectiveness. Also, if the respondents did not understand any of the questions, the researcher was able to provide clarification and explanation.

The questions were administered for a period of one week in April 2010. They were distributed to members of the Jaffnese Cooperative Society (JCS), family, neighbours, friends and colleagues who were all Ceylonese. It was easier for the researcher in the sense that she herself is a Ceylonese Tamil so she has better contacts and network. The researcher briefed them on the purpose of the study and the content of the questionnaire. The majority of the respondents did not have a problem understanding the questionnaire. The researcher read and explained the questions for 15 of the older respondents who were not well versed in the English language. Some of the respondents' family members helped as well to read out and explain. A total of 150 questionnaires were personally distributed and collected by the researcher.

3.6 Data Analysis

As the primary purpose of this study was to determine the language choice of the Ceylonese community living in Klang, the data collected will be presented in the form of frequency distribution and percentages to allow for comparison across generations. The comparison is done based on the analysis of the four domains selected for this study. The patterns of language choice and use among the sample

population are studied based on the different generations and then determine if there has been a shift from Ceylonese Tamil to Tamil Tamil or another language.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter described the methodology that will be used to obtain and analyse the data, relevant for achieving the research objectives stated in Chapter One. It looked into how the research will be carried out. The chapter gave a brief outline on the respondents involved in the study including some relevant background information, a description of the instrument and the procedures involved in data collection and data analysis. It is hoped that the data gathered from the questionnaire would reveal information regarding language choice of the Ceylonese Tamil community in Klang. The results and findings will be presented in the next chapter.