

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the findings of the study, which aims to examine the language choice among the Ceylonese community in Klang. Then suggestions for further research and recommendation are also presented.

5.1 Research Questions Revisited

5.1.1 Research Question One: *What is the language choice among the Ceylonese community in Klang?*

From the data this study concludes that the 1st generation clearly relied on the Ceylonese Tamil language as the most relevant medium of communication. As the generation that were the first to have migrated from Sri Lanka to Malaysia, they are been more inclusive within the community, as the data shows. This is highlighted further by their belief system that shows importance to the language and culture. The community however showed they developed other language skills, even though their proficiency level in the other languages were not as good in comparison with the Ceylonese Tamil language.

The 2nd generation community members having grow up in a multi cultural and multi lingual environment show that while the Ceylonese Tamil language remain the preferred language, Tamil Tamil also developed as a key language for communication. This can be related to the assimilation of the community with the larger South Indian migrant community that share a rather similar language, here

the Tamil Tamil language was utilised. The 2nd generation community also developed and bettered their skills with other languages in particular the English language and Malay language.

The data on the 3rd generation members of community is the most interesting. The data shows that both the Tamil languages are no longer the preferred languages among the members of the community. While the community has developed good skills in the Malay language, English remain the most prevalent and preferred language among the members of the generation. The data indicates that the generation are no longer interested in the Ceylonese Tamil and Tamil Tamil languages and therefore have not developed the skills and proficiency in these languages.

5.1.2 Research Question Two: *Is there a difference in language choice across the different domains?*

The data clearly highlights that there are indeed differences in languages choice across the domains of family, friendship, entertainment and religion.

Being a minority community, the use of Ceylonese Tamil in this community primarily depends on the ability of the community members to propagate the use of the language. The family plays a crucial role here but from the study of the sample respondents, it was found that the family domain is not being fully utilised for the transmission of the ethnic language. Even though Generation 2 are quite proficient in Ceylonese Tamil and use the language with their parents and grandparents, they seem to be more comfortable in using Tamil Tamil and English especially with their children and friends. Generation 2 reported that only half of their friends are Ceylonese Tamil and prefer using Tamil Tamil when conversing with their friends.

In the entertainment domain however there is a decline in the use of Ceylonese Tamil language across all the generations with an increase in the use of Tamil and English in this domain. This is due to the lack of entertainment programmes in Ceylonese Tamil which leads to insufficient exposure to the language. Generation 2 have shown their interest in listening to songs and watching movies and programmes in Tamil Tamil, however still prefer to listen to news and read newspapers and books in English.

As far as the religious domain is concerned, G2 have shown their interest to pray and speak in Tamil Tamil in the house of worship, but prefer to listen to preaching in English. Generation 3 shows the most important development with the rise of English as a medium of communication within the domain of family, with all members of the family especially with their spouses and siblings. English is also prevalent among G3 as they indicated that they prefer using English when communicating with their friends. In the entertainment domain, the English language dominated all the five fields of the survey over the Tamil Tamil language with none of the respondents indicating any preference at all for the Ceylonese Tamil language. In the religious domain however, the respondents have indicated that they prefer to pray in Tamil Tamil than English considering that majority of the respondents of this survey are Hindu's (74%) as such their prayers are mainly in Tamil. Nevertheless, they prefer to listen to preaching and speak to another Ceylonese in the English language.

However, there is still hope for Ceylonese Tamil among Generation 1 as data highlights that Ceylonese Tamil is the most prevalent language spoken within the family context. The data also shows that the Ceylonese Tamil language remains the dominant language among friends since they reported that all their friends are Ceylonese and they only use Ceylonese Tamil when conversing with their friends. In the entertainment domain as mentioned earlier, there is a decline in the use of Ceylonese Tamil due to the lack of entertainment programmes in Ceylonese Tamil. As such, Generation 1 has moved towards watching entertainment programmes in Tamil Tamil. The Ceylonese Tamil language also plays a significant role in the domain of religion among Generation 1 when praying and speaking in the house of worship. As there are no services conducted in Ceylonese Tamil in the churches in Klang, hence they have opted to listen to preaching in Tamil Tamil.

5.1.3 Research Question Three: *Is there a difference in language choice across the different generations?*

As explained in question one, there are major differences in the language choice among the Ceylonese community across the different generations. The members of the 1st generation may hold high preference to the Ceylonese Tamil as the community seems to have been an inclusive and a tight community given that being the first generation to have migrated from Sri Lanka had limited interaction with members of other communities. The 2nd generation members of the community through the data show development in numerous languages. The community however ensured that the Tamil Tamil remained the key language within the community. The community also shows development in the Tamil

Tamil language as there was a need to assimilate with the larger South Indian community. Generation 2 show that there has been a major shift from the Ceylonese Tamil language. This is due to the lack in development of the Tamil languages. The community while aware of their native Ceylonese language and its relevance as an identity, lack the urgency in enduring its survival. The community are more keen in development of an international language, in this case the English language. The community has also seen keen to develop strong Malay language skills as part of their assimilation to a Malaysian community.

5.1.4 Research Question Four: *Has there been a language shift from Ceylonese Tamil to Tamil Tamil or other languages?*

The 1st generation results show that there was no shift in language as the Ceylonese Tamil language remained the most important language. The 2nd generation on the other hand, while maintaining the relevance of the language, showed a shift to the other languages, in particular the Tamil Tamil language. The 3rd generation shows a major shift to other languages, in particular the English language. The Tamil languages have seemed to have lost their relevance within the community.

5.2 Recommendations

This documentation of the linguistic preferences of the Ceylonese community in Klang though limited has given an indication on the importance of their mother tongue which is not very encouraging. The findings of this study strongly suggest that the Ceylonese community take proactive steps without much delay to offset this decline in the use of Ceylonese. They should pursue language planning to

promote the maintenance of the Ceylonese language. However, it should work within the limits of being a minority language and the community should find its own resources towards this end. Firstly, pride in the Ceylonese language plays a very important role in maintaining it. Generation 1 and Generation 2 who are still conversant in Ceylonese should be proud of their heritage and transmit the language to the younger generation. This is because ultimately speakers themselves are responsible, through their attitudes and choices, for what happens to their ethnic language. Parents have a choice in choosing to speak Ceylonese in their homes and teaching it to their children. Elders can choose to speak the language on certain important occasions or insist on its use in certain important domains. They should at least ensure that the spoken language is maintained, as maintaining the written word might be beyond their means. Secondly, the entertainment domain could also be means of familiarising and exposing the younger generation to the language. Ceylonese movies, songs and books could be a potent force in teaching the language in a fun and exciting manner. There should be more local effort in producing CDs, VCDs and DVDs of Ceylonese entertainment programmes and watching these programmes together as a family.

5.3 Recommendations for Future Study

The key recommendation for future study is to understand the reason for the shift of language preference among members of Generation 3. Data shows that both the Tamil languages are no longer relevant within the members of the community.

This exercise also recommends that there be a study conducted on the assimilation of the comity with larger communities, in particular the South Indian community. This deals with the concept of identity within national perceptive.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has identifies that there has been a major shift in the Ceylonese Tamil community through the preference and perception of their native language. This finding plays an important development in understanding the concept of community and identity. The study is therefore an important research in understanding the language choice in within the Ceylonese Tamil community in Klang.