LANGUAGE SHIFT AMONG MUSLIM TAMILS IN THE KLANG VALLEY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to contribute sociolinguistic knowledge on intergenerational language shift across three age groups of Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley area of Malaysia whose mother tongue is the Tamil language. Two research questions are investigated: (1) Is there an intergenerational decrease in the use of the Tamil language among Klang Valley Muslim Tamils in crucial domains such as family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events? and (2) What are the probable motivators behind the language choices of the Klang Valley Muslim Tamils? The first question was answered through domain-based enquiry within the framework of Fishman's domain theory (1965) and the second question was answered based on Karan's Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (2001). Ninety respondents in the Klang Valley, which comprised Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, provided the principal data. With the aim of studying intergenerational language choices, these respondents were categorised into three age groups of 18 to 30, 31 to 50 and, 51 and above, with each age group corresponding to a generation. The data was collected through a triangulation of methods – questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation. This information was then analysed qualitatively and quantitatively for specific patterns of language use which might denote a shift away from or maintenance of the Tamil language in the Muslim Tamil community under scrutiny. Findings show sharp intergenerational decline in the use of the Tamil language from the oldest age group (first generation) to the youngest age group (third generation) in all the six domains which were examined. While the oldest age group still used its mother tongue in most of the domains, the second oldest age group used a mixture of Tamil, Malay and English and the youngest age group displayed a more pronounced use of Malay and English with Tamil being relegated to

very minimal functions. This language shift over time is strongly associated with the communicative, economic, social identity and, language power and prestige motivators classified by Karan (2001). Overall, findings support a rapid intergenerational shift from the Tamil language to the Malay and English languages in this community.

ABSTRAK

Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk menyumbang pengetahuan berunsur sosiologikal mengenai penganjakan bahasa dari satu generasi ke generasi yang berikut di kalangan tiga golongan umur orang Muslim Tamil di Lembah Klang, Malaysia yang bahasa ibundanya adalah Tamil. Dua soalan kajian telah diselidik, iaitu: (1) Adakah penganjakan Bahasa Tamil berlaku antara generasi di kalangan orang Muslim Tamil di Lembah Klang dalam domain penting seperti keluarga, persahabatan, pendidikan, pekerjaan dan acara sosial? dan (2) Apakah sebab-sebab mungkin yang mempengaruhi pilihan bahasa orang Muslim Tamil di Lembah Klang? Soalan pertama dijawab menerusi penggunaan kajisiasat domain berpandukan teori domain Fishman (1965) manakala soalan kedua dijawab berpandukan Karan's Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (2001). Sembilan puluh orang Muslim Tamil di Lembah Klang, yang meliputi Selangor dan Kuala Lumpur, telah memberikan data utama. Dengan tujuan menyelidik pilihan bahasa antara generasi, mereka ini telah dikategorikan di dalam tiga kumpulan umur, iaitu 18 hingga 30 tahun, 31 hingga 50 tahun serta 51 tahun dan ke atas, dengan setiap kumpulan mewakili satu generasi. Data dikumpul menggunakan tiga kaedah, iaitu, borang soal-selidik, temubual separa struktur dan pemerhatian tanpa penglibatan. Maklumat yang dikumpul kemudiannya dianalisa secara kualitatif dan kuantitatif untuk pola penggunaan bahasa yang berkemungkinan menunjukkan penganjakan atau pengekalan Bahasa Tamil di kalangan komuniti Muslim Tamil yang diselidik. Hasil penyelidikan menunjukkan penurunan yang tinggi dalam penggunaan Bahasa Tamil dari kumpulan umur tertua (generasi pertama) kepada kumpulan umur termuda (generasi ketiga) di dalam kesemua enam domain yang disiasat. Manakala kumpulan umur tertua masih menggunakan Bahasa Tamil di dalam kebanyakan domain tersebut, kumpulan umur yang kedua tertua menggunakan campuran Bahasa Tamil,

Bahasa Malaysia dan Bahasa Inggeris dan kumpulan umur yang termuda pula lebih menggunakan Bahasa Malaysia dan Bahasa Inggeris, dengan Bahasa Tamil digunakan untuk fungsi yang sangat minimal. Penganjakan bahasa ini berkait rapat dengan motivasi komunikasi, ekonomi, identiti sosial serta kuasa dan prestij bahasa yang telah diklasifikasi oleh Karan (2001). Secara amnya, semua hasil penyelidikan menyokong wujudnya penganjakan antara generasi yang pantas dari Bahasa Tamil kepada Bahasa Malaysia dan Bahasa Inggeris di dalam komuniti ini.

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This dissertation arose from the realisation that language shift bore personal relevance to me. As the daughter of Muslim Tamils who had migrated to Malaysia from Ilayangudi, a village in the south of India, I became aware early on that I was much more fluent in English and Bahasa Malaysia than in my own mother tongue, Tamil. From this realisation came interest in investigating whether other Muslim Tamils in Malaysia also faced the situation of having minimal grasp of the language of their family and forefathers.

Many individuals have had a hand in helping me make this dissertation a reality. First in my gratitude list is my supervisor Associate Professor Dr Mohana Kumari Nambiar, who ignited my interest in language shift in a class she taught and then guided me in my research work. Her confidence in my abilities spurred me to persist and persevere. I am also thankful to my mother V.M.P. Pathumuthu Sohra, with whose support I managed to find most of the respondents in the age category of 51 years old and above. I would also like to record my appreciation for Joydeep Choudhury who constantly motivated me, checked on my progress and even edited my work.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The life of a language is very much dependent on the speakers who use it. If a society of speakers which has been using a particular language from the time of its forefathers finds it no longer adequate for the fulfilment of its needs, there is a possibility of the society moving away from that language towards one that does. Eventually, the society may stop using the original language altogether. Neither new nor uncommon, the incidence of this phenomenon has been noted over the years in diverse parts of the globe, as evidenced by studies in the United States (Fishman, 1966; Gal, 1979), Kazakhstan (Davé, 1996), Morocco and Algeria (El Aissati, 2001), Nigeria (Igboanusi & Lothar, 2004), Australia and Western Europe (Yagmur, 2004), Sudan (Mugaddam, 2006), Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, 2008), Botswana (Letsholo, 2009), Greece (Gogonas, 2009) and Malaysia (Nadhratunnaim, 2010; David & Dealwis, 2009; Nambiar, 2007).

This movement from one language to another, which has been termed as language shift by sociolinguists (Fishman, 1964; Fasold, 1984), is not an overnight occurrence. Rather, it is a gradual process which takes place over decades and across generations (Clyne & Kipp, 2002; Kipp et al.; 1995; Prabhakaran, 1995; Li, 1994). The gradual disappearance of a language from the linguistic repertoire of an individual or community has been much noted among immigrants (Gogonas, 2009; Hatoss, 2006; Holdeman, 2002; Rasinger, 2005). It was noted that in migrant families, the first generation steadfastly held onto their language but in their children and grandchildren's attempts to assimilate into the mainstream society, they began using their mother tongue less frequently, until one day, it remained just a piece of historical family data (Schüpbach, 2006).

Scholars have argued that immigrant languages disappear through language shift within three generations when immigrants or their offspring do not teach their language to the next generation. There are two types of shift – intra-generational language shift (when individuals shift to the use of another language over time) and inter-generational language shift (when the language repertoires of children and their parents do not match) – which contribute to the disappearance of a mother tongue among its traditional speakers (Clyne, 2003). Fishman's "three-generation model" summarises the stages of inter-generational language shift: the immigrant generation continues to speak the native language; the second generation becomes bilingual by learning the mother tongue within the home while learning and using another language in social realms outside the home; and the third generation learns only the new language (Fishman, 1965).

Language shifts which occur within families and communities might be construed as a natural phenomenon which merits neither attention nor research into its incidence, causes and effects. It might be supposed that people would always require language for purposes of communication and if they replaced one language with another which better served their needs, then that would be a pragmatic decision. However, besides being a medium of communication, language is also a basic tool for people to maintain contact and express solidarity with their ethnic group. On a societal scale, language is a marker of ethnic identity and a carrier of cultural forms (Hatoss, 2006; El Aissati, 2001).

Some sociolinguists call the language of a community its heritage language, as it is associated with the community's cultural background (Fishman, 2001; Valdes, 2001; Cho, 2000). According to Cummins (2005), the term "heritage language" first emerged in Canada in 1977 and began to be used by scholars in the United States in the 1990s. This implies that a community's language is just as culturally relevant as its cuisine,

clothes, celebrations and customs. In fact, it is the primary instrument in expressing and transmitting culture from one generation to the next (Lee, 2003).

Diamond (1993) states that the fate of languages is a cause for concern because of the close link between language and culture. He argues that when a language is lost, much more than its sounds and structure are gone. Language, he states, is inextricably tied up with a unique view of the world, belief system and literature, regardless of whether the literature is written. Moreover, a language is the culmination of thousands of years of a people's experience and wisdom. Thus, when a community loses grasp of its mother tongue, it is akin to losing a vital component of its identity. In the process, its character becomes irreversibly altered. This close link between language and culture, whereby the deterioration or loss of the former could affect the latter, provides the impetus for the current research to be conducted.

1.2 Background of Study

This is an exploratory study based on two concepts – intergenerational transmission of language and domain-based use of language. Though there are two types of language shift – intra-generational and inter-generational – as mentioned earlier, the present study chooses to focus on the latter, which has been described by Fishman (1991) as a crucial element in the process of language shift and maintenance in a community. Meanwhile, domain is a concept introduced by Fishman (1965). He defined it as "a socio-cultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication, in accord with the institutions of a society and the spheres of activity of a culture, in such a way that individual behaviour and social patterns can be distinguished from each other and yet related to each other" (Fishman, 2000: 94). Family, school, the playground and the media are some examples of domains (Fasold, 1984). When a community moves away from its mother tongue, it

uses the language in fewer domains, giving preference to other languages. Thus, the present study is a domain-based inquiry into the intergenerational transmission of the Tamil language in the Muslim Tamil community living in the Klang Valley in Malaysia. The following sections provide background information on the language, people and geographical location concerned.

1.2.1 Tamil Language and People

The term "Tamil" describes both a language and an ethnic group. Hence, the Tamil language is spoken by an ethnic group also called Tamil. The Tamil language belongs to the Dravidian family of languages used in the Indian subcontinent. Other major Dravidian languages include Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada. Malayalam is the language most similar to Tamil (Freeman, 1998).

The history of the Tamil language goes back several centuries. The earliest records of the Tamil language were found on rock edicts and hero stones around third century B.C. (Maloney, 1970). A hero stone refers to a stone used to mark the death of a hero in a battle (Altekar, 1934). Tamil literature has existed for more than 2,000 years (Zvelebil, 1992). The earliest written work in Tamil, *Tolkappiam*, dates more than 500 years from the middle of third century B.C. (Arunachalam, 1990). In recognition of its long background, Tamil was declared a classical language by the government of India in 2004, making it the first Indian language to receive this status (Gordon, 2005). The Tamil language is marked by diglossia, as it comprises both a high variety and a low variety (Britto, 1988). The high variety is a literary and formal style called *centamil* while the low variety is a modern colloquial form named *kotuntamil* (Schiffman, 1997). In written form, the Tamil script comprises 18 consonants, 12 vowels and a special character called the *āytam*, classified by Tamil grammarians as a dependent or restricted

phoneme (Krishnamurti, 2003). The consonants and vowels combine to form another 216 compound characters. Thus, the Tamil script has a total of 247 characters.

As for the people who speak this language, they originate from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. However, due to widespread and continuous migration, they can now be found throughout the world. Large-scale migration began in the 18th century when the British colonial government sent many Tamils as indentured labourers to other parts of its empire, such as to Malaysia (formerly known as Malaya), South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius and the Caribbean. At the same time, many Tamil businessmen also settled down in other parts of the British empire, especially in Myanmar (previously known as Burma) and East Africa (Guilmoto, 1993).

1.2.2 Malaysia and Its People

Malaysia, a country located in Southeast Asia, comprises 13 states – Selangor, Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Penang, Perak, Perlis, Sabah, Sarawak and Terengganu – as well as the three federal territories of Kuala Lumpur, Labuan and Putrajaya. All of these locations are in Peninsular Malaysia except for Sabah and Sarawak, which lie across the South China Sea. Peninsular Malaysia lies to the south of Thailand and to the north of Singapore.

Malaysia has approximately 28 million people, with 1.6 million living in its capital, Kuala Lumpur, and another 5.4 million living in Selangor (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010). Both Kuala Lumpur and Selangor make up the Klang Valley, which was developed by a booming tin mining industry in the late 19th century. The valley's name was derived from the principal river which flowed through it, the Klang River.

The people of Malaysia come from various ethnic backgrounds with the main ethnic community being Malay. Together with various indigenous groups in the country,

Malays form about 63 per cent of the population with the remainder consisting of the Chinese (24.6 per cent), Indians (7.3 per cent) and other ethnic groups (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010). The Muslim Tamils who are the subject of this study share some commonality with the dominant population of Malays, specifically in terms of religion and way of life. In fact, the definition of a Malay person, as provided in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, provides leeway for Muslim Tamils to be also described as Malays. According to Article 160, "Malay" refers to a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language and conforms to Malay customs besides having been born or living in Malaysia before or after it gained independence from the British on 31 August 1957 (Abdul Aziz & Farid, 2009).

There is incentive for individuals to be identified as Malays as they enjoy *bumiputera* status. The term "bumiputera," originally a Sanskrit word which literally means "sons of the soil," is used to refer to Malays and other indigenous groups in Malaysia. In 1971, the government introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP) to facilitate the economic and educational upward mobility of Malays (Stark, 2009). However, although the NEP was aimed at fostering national unity by reducing inter-ethnic resentment due to socio-economic disparities between Malays and the other ethnic groups, it was seen as pro-bumiputera, or more specifically, pro-Malay (Jomo, 2004). As David (2003) noted in the case of Pakistanis living in Kelantan who married Malays, sharing the same religion, speaking the Malay language and practising the Malay way of life enabled the Pakistanis to comply with the constitutional definition of being Malay and assimilate into the Malay society. This had weighty implications for language shift (David, 2003). It is of particular interest to the present study as Muslim Tamils are also Muslim, habitually speak Malay and practise the Malay way of life.

With regard to the languages spoken by Malaysians, there are approximately 140 languages (Grimes, 2000). However, two languages dominate the country's linguistic landscape – Malay and English. The Malay language began to gain prominence after the country attained its independence from the British in 1957 and the government set about establishing Malay as the national and official language, to be used in all government functions and as the medium of instruction in the education system. The English language, recognised by the government as the second official language, also rose in importance due to the pressures of globalisation which demanded that those who took part in the business and industrial spheres communicate using this lingua franca. Consequently, the two languages began to be used in wider domains and are viewed as compulsory for those who wish to enhance their socio-economic status.

1.2.3 Malaysian Indians

The history of Indians in Malaysia can be traced back to two major waves of Indian migration. The first wave began a few centuries ago as since pre-Christian times, Indians were reported to have travelled beyond their shores and to have had an impact on the culture of Southeast Asia and the Malay people (Van der Veer, 1995). It was said that the emergence of Melaka, one of the states in Malaysia, was due to the efforts of an Indian prince called Prince Sri Parameswara Dewa Shah who led a band of Hindu exiles there (Umi, 2010). After the prince, a Hindu, was allegedly slain in a coup in 1445 and replaced by his Muslim half-brother, Sultan Mudzaffar Shah, the religion of Islam, which was believed to have been introduced to the Malay people primarily by Muslim traders and missionaries from India, began to be more firmly entrenched in Melaka (Umi, 2010; Milne & Mauzy, 1986:11). These Indians, who arrived via the Indianised empire of Indonesia and sea trade routes, mingled with Malay aristocrats and taught the Malays about Islam (Milne & Mauzy, 1986; Sandhu, 1993).

While the first major wave of Indian migration involved Muslim traders, the second major wave involved mostly Hindu Tamils who were brought in as labourers by British colonialists (Umi, 2010). This Indian labour migration began in 1786 with the establishment of Penang as the first British crown colony and continued until the recession of the 1930s (Appudurai & Dass, 2008).

Smaller waves of migration followed these two major waves. For instance, the British also brought in literate Indians from Ceylon and South India to provide administrative and technical services and North Indians, mainly Sikhs, to provide defence and security services (Appudurai & Dass, 2008). Free migrants – lawyers, doctors, merchants, petty traders and moneylenders – also came to Malaysia to cater to the needs of their countrymen (Appudurai & Dass, 2008). Adding to this mix was the arrival of considerable numbers of English-educated Indians, mostly Hindu and Muslim traders from the Coromandel and Malabar coasts, whose numbers increased in the late 1930s and again after the partition of the Indian subcontinent (Umi, 2010).

In 2000, Tamils formed the bulk of the Indian community, at 88 per cent (Department of Statistics, 2000). The rest comprised Malayalees, Telegus, Sikhs and Punjabis. Sri Lankans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are also classified as Indians. Religion-wise, 84 per cent of Malaysian Indians are Hindus and their second main religion is Christianity, followed by Islam (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2000). As this study is focused on Muslim Tamils in particular, it would have been helpful to know their approximate number. However, although the census categorises Indians by ethnicity and religion, it does not delineate them according to ethnicity and religion simultaneously. Therefore, although it is known that the majority of Malaysian Indians are Tamil by ethnicity and Hindu by faith, there is no clear approximation of the number of Tamils who are Muslims.

1.2.4 Malaysian Muslim Tamils

In Malaysia, Tamils are a part of the Indian community and Muslim Tamils are a part of the Tamil community. Muslim Tamils may be defined as people of Tamil origin who profess the religion of Islam. However, not all Muslim Tamils may acknowledge themselves to be as such, preferring instead to be identified as Malays. This situation posed a problem in the sampling procedure of the present study, as elaborated in Section 3.4.4.

Being the subset of a subset presents an enumeration challenge for those who wish to gauge the population size of the Muslim Tamils. Accurate statistics are also difficult to gather because Muslim Tamils are often grouped together with other Muslim Indians, who are more commonly referred to as Indian Muslims. An official estimate placed the number of Malaysian Indian Muslims at 69,043 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2000). In contrast, an estimate published a decade later in *The Star*, a leading English newspaper in Malaysia, claimed that there were 648,000 Indian Muslims in the country ("President: Kimma will remain as a self-governing party," 2010). This implies an almost tenfold increase in population size in 10 years. It must be noted that there may be a tendency on the part of some ethnic minority groups to claim a large population size. Nambiar (2007) stated that population figures differed between official numbers and community perceptions not only for the Malaysian ethnic minority under study, Malayalees, but also for other minority groups such as Punjabis and Telegus.

Just as it is challenging to provide a reliable estimate for the number of Indian Muslims in the country, it is even more difficult to provide an estimate of the number of Indian Muslims who live particularly in the Klang Valley. Census records showed that there were approximately 658,000 Indians living in the Klang Valley with 511,387 in Selangor and 146,621 in Kuala Lumpur (Department of Statistics, 2000). However, it

was not stated how many of them were Indian Muslims and further, how many of them were Muslim Tamils. It is also difficult to extricate the history of Muslim Tamils from that of Indian Muslims as they are often treated as one and the same. As noted by Umi (2010), Indian Muslims were part of the first wave of Indians who arrived in Melaka in the 15th century as well as the Indians who arrived in Malaysia in the years which followed. One more recent wave of Indian Muslim migration has been noted by the Federation of Malaysian Indian Muslim Associations (known in the Malay language as Persekutuan Pertubuhan India Muslim Malaysia or Permim), which states in its website that large numbers of Indian Muslims arrived in Malaysia in the 19th century, setting up food and sundry shops and also taking part in the field of pharmacy. The website also notes that the Indian Muslims set up mosques and religious schools as well as about 50 social and religious associations, 40 of which joined Permim in the 1970s to create a stronger Indian Muslim voice in the country (Federation of Malaysian Indian Muslim Associations, 2011). Permim, based in Kuala Lumpur, was set up in 1973 as a non-governmental organisation to take care of the interests of Indian Muslims and on 3 April 2011, its building in Kuala Lumpur, Wisma Permim, was launched by Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop, then a Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federation of Malaysian Indian Muslim Associations, 2011).

Another Indian Muslim organisation, the Malaysian Indian Muslim Congress (known in the Malay language as Kongres India Muslim Malaysia or Kimma), has been making political inroads. In August 2010, it became an associate member of the country's largest Malay political party, United Malay National Organisation (Umno), with observer status at the party's general assembly and division meetings ("President: Kimma will remain as a self-governing party," 2010). Umno is the main component party in the National Front (known in the Malay language as Barisan Nasional) which is

the ruling political coalition in Malaysia. Through this forging of links with Umno, Kimma aimed to provide political representation for Indian Muslims, who despite close ties with Malays, did not enjoy access to bumiputera status and political representation by Umno (Stark, 2009). At the societal level, this move enables more formal assimilation of the minority community into the majority community.

Economically, many Indian Muslims have succeeded in small and medium scale privately owned businesses, especially in the food and beverages industry. Their eateries are popular with Malaysians of diverse ethnicities. One indication of this popularity is that the Malaysian Indian Muslim Restaurant Owners Association has 3,000 members in the country ("Harga dijamin tidak naik," 2011). The community also enjoys some success in the jewellery business, with Habib Jewels and K. M. Oli Mohamed being among the popular goldsmiths in the Klang Valley. Another feather in the cap for the community was achieved in October 2010 with the launch of the Malaysian Indian Muslim Chamber of Commerce by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak ("Kimma's Affiliation with Umno Beneficial for Both Parties – Najib," 2010).

1.3 Purpose of Study

There have been concerns that Muslim Tamils are facing a case of shifting identities, as may be seen in their assimilation into the Malay community on the basis of shared religion and culture. With language being a vital aspect of culture, it may be surmised that in adopting the Malay culture, Muslim Tamils may have also adopted the Malay language, in place of their mother tongue. This study is aimed at investigating the probability of Muslim Tamils living in the Klang Valley shifting away from their mother tongue and identifying the probable reasons in the event of such a shift. Based on these objectives, this study will answer the following research questions:

1. Is there an intergenerational decrease in the use of the Tamil language among Klang Valley Muslim Tamils in crucial domains such as family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events?
2. What are the probable motivators behind the language choices of the Klang Valley Muslim Tamils?

1.4 Significance of Study

Language is a marker par excellence of ethnic identity and plays a crucial role in demarcating one society from another. This can be gauged from historical records, which show for example, that ancient Greeks had used a derogatory term, “varvaros” for people who neither spoke their language nor shared their culture (Karoulla-Vrikki, 2004). Thus, it may be carefully surmised that a mother tongue is generally held by its people in high esteem. Therefore, when individuals or a group of individuals born into a speech community break away from their language and adopt another, it gives rise to understandable concern and the quest to find out the causes and effects. Another matter to consider is that due to myriad advancements in human society, there is so much more intermingling between people of different and distinct linguistic backgrounds. However, the presence of multiple languages is not always a boon for the speakers. Instead, it has often served as a seed for linguistic tensions, with stronger languages eventually vanquishing weaker ones. In fact, numerous studies have unearthed the slow but steady erosion in the use of many languages due to the dominance of other languages (Thutloa, 2010; Gogonas, 2009; Nicholas, 2009; Lasagabaster, 2008; Oyetade, 2007).

This situation is especially evident in multiracial societies and migrant communities, as migration is a key element in bringing about the co-existence of two or more languages in one location. Studies by researchers on some migrant communities in Malaysia have brought the existence of this phenomenon in the country to light. Research on the ethnic

minority communities of Banjarese (Nadhratunnaim, 2010), Indian Muslims (David & Dealwis, 2009), Malayalees (Nambiar, 2007), Telegus (David & Dealwis, 2006), Ceylon Tamils (Rajakrishnan, 2006), Tamil Iyers (Sankar, 2004), Punjabis (Kundra, 2001), Portuguese Eurasians (Ramachandran, 2000; David & Faridah, 1999) and Sindhis (David, 1996) show a shift from the mother tongue towards the more widely spoken Malay and English languages. In light of such findings, it might be questioned whether the community of Malaysian Muslim Tamils is also facing a similar situation. However, due to little research in this area, an evaluation of the current status of the language may not be reliably conducted. The present research aims to contribute to the filling of this knowledge gap.

The core purpose of this study is to determine whether Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley are shifting away from the Tamil language and to identify the probable reasons. In addition, it seeks to add more flesh to the skin and bones of the linguistic history of the Muslim Tamils in Malaysia and raise awareness on the state of their mother tongue. If language shift is revealed by the study, it can serve as a wake-up call for them so that they realise that the language of their forefathers might one day not be the language of their descendants. Efforts can then be initiated by the community, if desired, to increase and sustain the use of the Tamil language. If instead, language maintenance is revealed, it can still increase awareness of the importance of continuing to sustain the mother tongue in the community's linguistic repertoire.

It is worth noting again here that language shift is not restricted to one community or one country alone and instead, is a worldwide trend which has raised international-level concern. Therefore, by providing another piece of the puzzle, even if it is just a small piece, this study will benefit the research database on language shift and maintenance all over the world. This study is also significant in that it is able to provide an insider view,

which people outside the community might face difficulty in obtaining, because the researcher is also a Malaysian Muslim Tamil, a fact which facilitated her entry into the community for purposes of interviewing, audio-taping and observing the community.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of Study

As this study is specifically focused on Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley, the findings cannot be generalised to all Malaysian Muslim Tamils as those living in other parts of the country might in all likelihood be different in their experience of language shift and maintenance. The sample population comprises only 90 respondents, which may also make it difficult to generalise the findings to the larger population of Malaysian Muslim Tamils. The reason for the limited number of respondents is explained in Section 3.4.

However, the 90 respondents comprise people from diverse backgrounds who have been placed in five broad categories – professional, executive, teacher, housewife and retiree. They also comprise three broad age categories – 18 to 30 years old, 31 to 50 years old and lastly, 51 years old and above. Therefore, Muslim Tamils from a wide age spectrum are part of this study.

1.6 Conclusion

Language shift is taking place in all corners of the world, especially in places where there are multilingual communities. The aim of this study is to look at the language preferences of a linguistic minority in Malaysia, the Muslim Tamils who live in the Klang Valley. There has been very little research on this particular group and the present study is aimed at filling this gap. This chapter has provided a background to this study as well as its objectives, research questions, significance, scope and limitations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The very first systematic study of language shift and maintenance is "Language Loyalty in the United States" (1966) by American linguist, Joshua A. Fishman. Since then, numerous other researchers have attempted to also systematically define, describe, measure and explain language shift and maintenance in various parts of the globe. This worldwide effort to chronicle the situation of the languages of the world is one which this study aims to emulate. This chapter begins with an exploration of various terms linked to language shift and maintenance. Next, studies on language shift and maintenance will be presented, followed by focus on the factors which may contribute to language shift and maintenance.

2.2 Explanation of Relevant Terminology

Six terms will be explained in a concise manner so as to facilitate understanding of the context and content of this study. Language shift and language maintenance will be explained together as they are closely related. The same will be done for bilingualism and multilingualism, which essentially mean the ability to use two or more languages skilfully for communicative purposes. This will be followed by explanation of code switching and finally, intergenerational shift.

2.2.1 Language Shift and Maintenance

Studies on language shift and maintenance focus on the "extent of change or retention of language and language features among a group that has more than one code for communication both within and outside the group" (Sercombe, 2002: 1). Based on this

definition, it may be said that language shift and maintenance are relevant only in scenarios where two or more languages come into contact with each other. The first spoken language is also called mother tongue, heritage language and native language. When people begin to use less of their mother tongue and more of other languages, they are deemed as having shifted from their language. According to Holmes (2001: 68), language shift generally refers to the process by which a language displaces another in the linguistic repertoire of a community and the results of this process. Clyne (2003) concurs with Holmes, saying that language shift means the gradual reduction of the use of one's mother tongue and the shift to the use of the dominant language in certain domains. The term "dominant language" here refers to a language (or languages) most widely used in a particular context or community (Granville et al., 1997).

As mentioned earlier in Chapter One (Section 1.2), domain is a sociolinguistic notion introduced by Fishman (1965), who says that in a multilingual society, different settings require the use of different languages. He states that, "Domain is a socio-cultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication, in accord with the institutions of a society and the spheres of activity of a culture, in such a way that individual behaviour and social patterns can be distinguished from each other and yet related to each other" (Fishman, 2000: 94). The notion of prestige is brought into the definition by Rottet (2001: 2) who states that in the shift process, "a socially dominant and more prestigious language gradually displaces a less prestigious one from more and more of its functions in a given community until the minority language entirely ceases to be transmitted to any new speakers."

The "opposite" of language shift, in sociolinguistic studies, is language maintenance. According to Valdes et al. (2006: 36), it refers to the continued use of an indigenous or

immigrant minority language in a majority language context. They also assert that the process of language maintenance involves both the retention of language and its transmission over several generations.

For the purposes of this research, more focus will be given to language shift in line with its objective of finding out whether Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley are gradually moving towards the use of other languages and in the event that they are indeed doing so, the probable motivators behind this shift.

2.2.2 Bilingualism and Multilingualism

Linguistic theories have traditionally assumed monolingualism, which is proficiency in one language, to be the norm (Pavlenko, 2000; Romaine, 1995) but according to many researchers, in practice, bilingual (able to use two languages) and multilingual (able to use more than two languages) speakers outnumber monolinguals in the world (Hamers & Blanc, 2000; Dewaele et al., 2003). According to Bloomfield (1935: 56), bilingualism is the "native-like control of two languages." In contrast, McNamara (1967) says that it requires minimal competence in only one of the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening in a language other than one's mother tongue. Between these two extremes is the view of Titone (1972) who defines bilingualism as the capacity to speak a second language while following the concepts and structures of that language instead of paraphrasing the mother tongue.

Similarly, sociolinguists differ in their definition of multilingualism. While some say multilingual individuals are native-like in more than two languages, others argue that multilingual persons may have minimal grasp of the languages at their disposal. They may use a number of languages due to many different social, cultural and economic reasons. They may live in a multilingual community or overlapping bilingual

communities or be in contact with several monolingual communities (Aronin & Hufeisen, 2009). Their proficiency in each of their languages may differ and may fluctuate over time (Herdina & Jessner, 2002).

Bilingualism, usually present in cases of language shift as people acquire another language in addition to their mother tongue, is of two types – individual and societal – whereby individual bilingualism is a psycholinguistic phenomenon as it happens at the level of the individual and societal bilingualism is a sociolinguistic phenomenon as it happens at the level of society (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Bilingualism differs from another phenomenon called diglossia. While bilingualism refers to an individual's ability to use more than one language, diglossia, according to Fishman (1967), is the distribution of more than one language variety to serve different communicative functions in society. Thus, while bilingualism relates to the ability to use two languages, diglossia is the functional use of more than one language variety (Fishman, 1967). Bilingualism is spread due to human interdependence whereby if two people with different mother tongues meet, they require a common language in order to express themselves to each other. This common language can be either person's native language or a third language (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Thus, people who are originally monolingual learn to use an additional language for the very basic reason of satisfying their communicative needs. The significance of bilingualism is noted by Fishman (1972) who proposes a four-stage process of language shift in his theory of "bilingual functioning and domain overlap." It is explained in Mugaddam (2006) as follows:

- Stage 1: Immigrants learn a new language and use it in a few domains where their mother tongue cannot be used.

- Stage 2: The number of immigrants who become satisfactorily fluent in the new language increase significantly and they could choose to communicate with each other in either language.
- Stage 3: Most of the immigrants are bilinguals who are capable of using both languages independently.
- Stage 4: The new language displaces the mother tongue from all domains of communication.

His view is supported by Myers-Scotton (2006: 68) who states that language maintenance and shift are the possible results when people become bilingual. She says that when presented with a second language, people will choose one of three options – maintain their mother tongue and not learn the second language; learn the second language as an additional language and retain both the languages; or learn the second language and use it as their main (and generally only) language. If people choose the first or second outcomes, their mother tongue will be maintained. However, if they pick the third outcome, shift happens. Bilingualism is very much evidenced in Malaysia, where migrants who come to work and settle down in the country learn to use either or both Malay and English. If they do not do so, they will not be able to communicate with the locals or carry out their work. According to Fishman (2001), bilingual speech communities almost always prefer the dominant language because of the greater number of economic, social and political advantages it gives, in contrast to their mother tongue.

Multilingualism may be more relevant in the case of Malaysia, as it is a multi-ethnic country. However, although Malaysians typically have access to at least three languages – Malay, English and their mother tongue – they may not be equally competent in all three languages.

2.2.3 Code Switching

Code switching, like bilingualism and multilingualism, is a phenomenon which presents itself in societies with access to more than one language. When a person is engaged in code switching, it means that he is using two or more languages while speaking. The mixing of languages has been categorised more specifically by sociolinguists into three types – code switching, code mixing and code alternation (David, 2004). Code switching involves the use of more than one language within a turn or utterance while in code mixing, two languages are used in a turn but there is token use of the second language. Code alternation is the phenomenon whereby a speaker uses one language in one turn and another language in the following turn.

According to Crystal (1987), the term "code switching" refers to the practice of switching between languages while speaking to another person which commonly happens among bilinguals and takes the form of alteration of sentences; the successive use of words, phrases and sentences from both languages; and switching in a long narrative. People resort to code switching in their communication for various reasons, three of which are provided by Crystal (1987). First, a speaker may be unable to adequately express himself in one language so he seeks help from another. For example, a Tamil person speaking to another Tamil on the subject of climactic concerns might switch to English even though he originally began conversing in the Tamil language as he does not know the Tamil terms for global warming and the ozone layer. Second, a speaker might want to express solidarity with the person he is speaking with. So, he says certain things in the language he thinks the other person might favour. However, besides establishing rapport, this type of switching may also be used to exclude others, who do not speak a particular language, from a conversation (Crystal, 1987). For example, if two Tamil speakers were buying goods from a non-Tamil speaker, they

might use the Tamil language so that they could discuss the purchase in confidentiality. Third, code switching displays a speaker's feelings towards his listener, whereby while monolinguals can show their feelings only by increasing or decreasing the level of formality of their speech, bilinguals can show their feelings by choosing which language to use with which listener in which situation (Crystal, 1987). For example, a Tamil speaker who is also proficient in Malay might use Tamil for normal conversations but in times of anger might resort to Malay swear words.

2.2.4 Intergenerational Shift

As explained in Chapter One (Section 1.1), language shift is of two types – intra-generational and intergenerational – whereby while the first involves only one generation, the second includes the second and third generations (Clyne, 2003). So, while intra-generational shift means structural (attrition) or functional (shift) reduction in the mother tongue of an immigrant generation, intergenerational shift means structural or functional reduction in the use of the immigrant language in the second and third generations (Clyne, 2003). However, there are no straightforward distinctions between these two types of shift and they often take place together (Hatoss & Sheely, 2009). The present research is concerned with intergenerational shift as it seeks to study the transmission of the Tamil language over three generations.

The concepts of bilingualism, multilingualism and code switching, which have been explained earlier, can be witnessed in the process of intergenerational shift. Three generations of a family is how long it takes for an intergenerational language shift to happen, says Fishman (1966). The first generation, comprising individuals who leave their homeland to settle down in another land, will speak mostly in their mother tongue and will learn and use the dominant language for the purposes of getting and keeping a job. Their children, who form the second generation, usually use their mother tongue

mainly with their families and use the dominant language for most of their interactions outside the home. Thus, they become bilingual or multilingual and their primary language of interaction is the dominant language. When the third generation emerges on the scene, they usually have little or no knowledge of their mother tongue. Through this gradual process, the migrant families lose their heritage language ability. In all three generations, there is competition between the language they grew up with and the language they come into contact with outside their home. In this scenario, when the first generation speakers pass away, they are not replaced by fluent younger speakers. Subsequently, the community becomes increasingly monolingual or bilingual in the dominant languages.

Myers-Scotton (2006) agrees with Fishman that the process of language shift generally takes place over three generations, whereby the first generation speaks the mother tongue, the second generation becomes more bilingual, speaking both the mother tongue and another language and the third generation loses grasp of the mother tongue altogether and uses only the second language. The view of Fishman (1966) and Myers-Scotton (2006) of language shift as a process that happens over three generations is particularly relevant to this study as it focuses on a community to examine whether a three-generational shift is taking place.

A language needs to be transmitted from one generation to another in order to survive through the ages. Grenoble and Whaley (2006: 6) state that, “the intergenerational transmission of a language is typically, and appropriately, used as a benchmark for whether a language will maintain its validity into the indefinite future.” With few or no speakers, a language loses its reason and means to live.

2.3 Studies on Language Shift and Maintenance

As home to a population of diverse ethnic backgrounds, Malaysia is prime ground for contact between languages. On a daily basis, the languages in use meet and compete for survival and dominance. Consequently, the language situation in Malaysia is one of shift and maintenance. The stronger languages increase in use while the weaker ones lose their grasp on the people who used to speak them. This situation has been the focus of numerous Malaysian researchers, who have added to the global database on language shift and maintenance.

The Javanese living in a village in Sungai Lang, Selangor, are the focus of one such study. Mohamad Subakir (1998) says this minority group is shifting from the Javanese language to Malay because of their wish to be identified as Malays. According to Mohamad (1998: 84), "The Javanese perceive themselves and are perceived by other ethnic Malays negatively because they speak a minority language." Consequently, they have switched to using Malay in order to present themselves in a more positive light. This shift is facilitated by the fact that they resemble Malays in appearance and are also Muslims. This study is of particular interest to the present research because although Muslim Tamils do not look like Malays, they do share a common faith with them.

Portuguese Eurasians living in Malacca are the subject of another study which compared the language choice and use between older and younger Portuguese Eurasians in Malacca (David & Faridah, 1999). In order to determine whether their mother tongue Kristang still had a foothold in the community, the researchers sampled 62 homes and found that while 70 per cent of the community members consider Kristang as their mother tongue, the younger ones also consider some other languages as their mother tongue, engage in code mixing and mostly use English, leading the researchers to conclude that a language shift is indeed taking place in the community. These findings

are corroborated by another study on the same community by Ramachandran (2000), which shows declining use of Kristang and the rapid rise of English as the dominant language among the younger generation. However, the study finds that the respondents in the youngest age group, who are 12 to 19 years old, actively use Kristang to communicate with their grandparents. The researcher notes that the survival of Kristang in the community will depend on community members' concern for their language and its significance to their ethnic identity against the pragmatic reasons of social and economic upward mobility, which promote language shift.

Although Portuguese Eurasians and Muslim Tamils are two distinctly different ethnic groups with different religions, the two studies conducted on the former have some relevance to the present research as Portuguese Eurasians are facing problems in the intergenerational transmission of their mother tongue, which may be the case for Muslim Tamils as well. Members of the youngest age group may speak in Kristang to their grandparents, as Ramachandran (2000) notes, but they are gradually shifting towards the English language, as shown by David and Faridah (1999).

Banjarese people, originating from Banjarmasin in Kalimantan and now living in the Malaysian states of Johor, Perak, Pahang and Selangor, have also come under scrutiny. Having undergone ethnic and linguistic assimilation into the Malay majority population, the Banjarese maintain their mother tongue for situations of accommodation and shift to Malay in more competitive settings (Nadhratunnaim, 2010). The findings also highlight that the Banjarese language thrives in close-knit communities in rural areas but struggles in plural urban societies because of the more dominant Malay and English languages. Thus, different settings result in different destinies for the Banjarese language. This research is of significance to the current study as like the Banjarese, Muslim Tamils may also be undergoing ethnic and linguistic assimilation into the

Malay community. Having investigated three non-Indian communities – Javanese, Portuguese Eurasians and Banjarese – and found some common grounds which may be of relevance to the present study, a narrower focus is adopted by highlighting language shift research specifically on Malaysian Indians, who comprise diverse subgroups.

One of these subgroups, the Malayalees, is found to be shifting towards languages other than their mother tongue, Malayalam (Nambiar, 2007). The shift is greatly divided along religious lines with Hindu and Christian Malayalees embracing English while Muslim Malayalees are moving towards Malay. Nambiar (2007) cites the economic factor as the main reason for this linguistic turn of events, noting that the special economic privileges enjoyed by Malays attract Muslim Malayalees to assimilate into the community, which is facilitated by a common faith. Being of different religions, Hindu and Christian Malayalees do not have the option of assimilating into the Malay majority population. Consequently, their tool for upward mobility is not Malay, but the English language, which is considered a language of international importance, prestige and economic mobility. The researcher also finds a generation gap in the community members' linguistic abilities with the younger generation being much less proficient in Malayalam and much more proficient in English and Malay compared to their elders. Overall, the decline in heritage language ability is so sharp that Malayalam is not the main language in any of the domains surveyed, even home and religion. This research is especially significant to the present study as both Muslim Malayalees and Muslim Tamils are minority groups whose ancestors are from India and who can use religion as a tool for assimilation into the majority group.

Malayalees are the subject of another research, although this time the focus is specifically on those who also happen to be Syrian Christians. In a three-generation study, Thomas (2007) finds a gradual shift away from Malayalam across the

generations, whereby the first generation uses Malayalam mostly with peers and less frequently with the second generation, which in turn uses even less Malayalam with the third generation. Accompanying this shift is a rise in the importance of English from one generation to the next. The study finds the Malayalees lacking intergenerational transmission, proficiency in Malayalam and use of Malayalam in domains such as print media and entertainment, which contribute to language shift (Thomas, 2007). However, there is a tinge of language maintenance, whereby the mother tongue is still used in the domain of religion, with church services continuing to be conducted in Malayalam.

Coming closer to the ethnic subgroup of Tamils, there have been researches on language shift and maintenance conducted among Malaysian Tamils such as Schiffman (1995), David and Naji (2000), Sankar (2004) and Ting and Mahadhir (2009). Schiffman (1995) states that while less educated Malaysian Tamils maintain their mother tongue, those who are well-educated tend to adopt the English language. He notes that Muslim Tamils are an exception as those who intermarry with Malays tend to embrace the Malay language instead (Schiffman, 1995). Here, education and inter-marriage served as factors in determining choice of language. According to Schiffman (1995), Tamil is deemed as having no economic value for Malaysian Tamils and is "maintained by the socio-economically destitute only as a last vestige of primordial ethnicity."

David and Naji (2000) looked at the use of the mother tongue among Tamil undergraduates at a university and their families. A 25-item questionnaire was presented to 90 undergraduates and their families to determine the future of their mother tongue and to compare language choice and use between the older and younger respondents. The researchers found that while the oldest age group used mainly the Tamil language, the middle age group used mainly English and the youngest age group used a mixture of Tamil, English and Malay (David and Naji, 2000). They state that because of migration

to Malaysia, the Tamils tend to move towards English and Malay, which they perceive as languages that empower them (David and Naji, 2000).

Another research, by Sankar (2004), found a similar shift among Tamil Iyers, who are a part of the Hindu Tamil community. The research, which focused on the home, social, religious and formal reading and writing domains, found the Tamil Iyers moving towards English and Malay in all domains except for religion. Sankar (2004: iii) states that the shift is largely due to "external pressures such as government language policies and the influence of English as the language of business." The findings of Sankar (2004) were corroborated by Ting and Mahadhir (2009) who studied the languages used by parents with their offspring in Kuching, the capital of the state of Sarawak. Of the 17 families studied, five were Tamil families. The study found that four out of the five Tamil families used English for family communication. The Tamil language was especially viewed in lesser regard by educated parents. The findings imply that English is becoming the main language for family communication.

These studies have helped to shed light on language shift and maintenance among Malaysian Tamils but not particularly on those who are Muslim Tamils. Thus, the present study aims to help fill the gap by focusing specifically on this particular segment of the community. Having examined earlier studies on language shift and maintenance, the study now turns to the probable reasons for language shift in a community.

2.4 Factors Contributing to Language Shift and Maintenance

Various studies have been conducted to identify, analyse and explain the reasons for language shift. The findings essentially reveal that language shift cannot be attributed to one particular reason and in fact, a combination of reasons work together in causing a

shift away from the use of a mother tongue (David, 2004). These reasons have been analysed from both a macro-societal and a micro-societal point of view. The macro-societal perspective has been presented by Fasold (1984), who highlights community-level factors such as industrialisation, urbanisation, migration and government policies. Mufwene (2001, 2004) adds to these factors, saying that languages are becoming extinct at an increasing rate largely because of colonisation and globalisation, whereby the language of the economically powerful takes over. In contrast, the micro-societal perspective, as presented by Edwards (1985), touches on factors directly related to the goals and motivations of individuals. He states that language choice and shift depend on "pragmatic decisions in which another variety is seen as more important for the future" (Edwards, 1985: 71). These pragmatic decisions include power, social access and material advancement (Edwards, 1985). His view is of interest to the present study as it is based on the belief that the survival of a language today may have less to do with the sentimental attachments of its speakers than the ability of the language to fulfil the needs and aspirations of its speakers in communicating with others. Thus, it is the micro-societal factors at the individual level which the present study is interested in.

These factors, according to Karan (2000), could be seen as motivations which drive one towards or away from a language. He says that "language shift occurs because individuals, consciously or subconsciously, make decisions to use certain languages in certain situations" and "these individual decisions are motivated by what people consider to be their personal good" (Karan, 2000: 68). The Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (Karan, 2001) is his effort to explain these motivations. Basing the model on the similarities between the mechanisms of language change and language shift (Labov, 2001), and building on the postulates of Bourdieu (1982) and Edwards (1985), Karan (2001) explains that individuals select from their linguistic repertoire the

language which would best serve their interests in a particular situation and learn languages based on which ones would serve their interests well. And if they view the use of or association with a language as not beneficial to them, they will often "cognitively, socially and emotively distance themselves from that language so that it becomes less and less a part of their linguistic repertoire" (Karan, 2011: 139). As individuals move towards and away from languages, it results in a society-level effect. Thus, according to Karan (2008), societal language shift is the consequence of many individual language choice decisions.

Karan (2008) developed a basic taxonomy of six motivations that influence language shift which comprise communicative, economic, social identity, language power and prestige, nationalistic and political, and religious motivations. He explains these motivations in light of efforts to revitalise endangered languages and reverse language shift, stating that the individual motivations serve as crucial factors to encourage people to return to using their mother tongue (Karan, 2008). However, for the purpose of the present study, these motivations will be studied based on how they turn people away from a language and not based on how to return people to a language. These motivations are explained as follows:

1. *Communicative motivations*

   According to Karan (2008), individuals learn and use languages which they believe will best facilitate communication. Thus, migrants will learn and use the languages predominantly used in their new location and members of ethnic minority groups will learn and use one or more languages which are more widely used among the larger population.

2. *Economic motivations*

These motivations could be related to job, trade or network, says Karan (2008). People choose to learn and use certain languages in order to secure, sustain and improve their jobs, trades and networks that bring in profits. The ultimate aim is the same – to make financial gain. This economic motivation is evidenced in Malaysian language shift studies such as those on the shift to English by Punjabi Sikhs (David, Naji & Kaur, 2003), Christian and Hindu Malayalees (Nambiar, 2007) and Tamils (David & Naji, 2000). The Melaka Chitty (Ravichandran, 1996), the Punjabis (Kundra, 2001) and the Sindhis (David, 1996) have also been noted to use English in order to obtain jobs in the private sector. Schiffman (1995) shows that the Tamils in Singapore and Malaysia are shifting from the Tamil language, which is seen as being of low economic value, to English as it is more economically viable.

Similar findings have been made in East Malaysia by Akter (2008), who studied the language attitude of the Remun people who live in a broad cluster of villages in the Serian district of Sarawak's Samarahan Division. Four questions on attitude were put forth to 37 Remun respondents in three villages by Akter (2008). The first question was on what languages the Remun community considered as the most important for their livelihood. Their answers put English at the top, followed by Malay, Iban and only then their mother tongue, Remun. The same pattern of answers is given for the second question i.e. which language they feel should be taught in their schools. There is a possibility that the mother tongue has become insignificant to the Remun people because it is unable to help them progress and improve their social and economic standing. This is backed by Brenzinger et al.

(2003: 11) who note that if "communities do not meet the challenges of modernity with their language, it becomes increasingly irrelevant and stigmatised."

3. *Social identity motivations*

These motivations relate to whether people want or do not want to be identified with a certain individual or group (Karan, 2008). These motivations can be prestige group, solidarity, distance or hero/villain related, states Karan (2008). Prestige-related social identity motivation is in evidence when people choose to learn or use the language of an individual or a group whom they consider as bearing higher prestige than them or avoid using a language which belongs to an individual or a group whom they consider as beneath them in terms of prestige (Karan, 2008). According to Karan (2008), when people acquire or use a language in order to create or maintain a bond with a particular individual, group, culture or sub-culture, it means they are being driven by solidarity-related social identity motivations. But when they do so in order to create or maintain a distance between themselves and an individual, group, culture or sub-culture, they are said to have distance-related motivations. The final subcategory of social identity motivations relate to people choosing whether to use or learn a language in order to associate themselves with a well-known person. The language used by the figure might be adopted by others if he is seen as a hero and shunned if he is seen as a villain.

Among others, social identity motivations are also evident in language shifts among the minority groups of Malaysia. A case in point is that of the Indian Muslims of Kuching who wish to socially identify with Malays (David & Dealwis, 2009). In their desire to be seen as Malays, they have replaced their mother tongues with Sarawakian Malay for use at home, together with English and standard Malay. As the Indian Muslims not only share the same religion with Malays and have

intermarried with local Malay women, changing their language is just another step in the process of assimilating into the Malay community for social identification and other purposes. Similarly, in wanting to be identified as Malays, the Malayalee Muslims of Malaysia (Nambiar, 2007) and the Pakistanis of Kelantan (David, 2004) have also shifted to using Malay as their primary language. Thus, when there are majority and minority ethnic groups in a particular location, there is likelihood that members of the minorities see the majority group's culture as more appealing and modern and abandon their traditional culture and language. The negative attitude towards one's mother tongue by a minority group in the presence of a larger group with another language as its mother tongue can be seen throughout the world. For example, a study in Botswana by Letsholo (2009) reveals negative feelings among native speakers of a minority language called Ikalanga about using the language when there are non-speakers of Ikalanga present, resulting in a shift from Ikalanga to the more dominant languages of Setswana and English. The study on the language use and attitudes of the respondents, who are 17 to 25 years old, particularly around people with a different mother tongue from them, shows that they use Setswana often, even in domains where they can use their mother tongue, such as when speaking to friends with the same mother tongue (Letsholo, 2009).

In New Zealand, Kuncha and Bathula (2004) find Telugu migrants clearly shifting based on their attitude towards the Telugu and English languages. As English is useful for them to integrate and settle in the English-speaking country, they encourage their children to learn and use it and feel proud to use it. On the other hand, they feel it is not necessary to learn Telugu and that learning it is a waste of time. In Khartoum, Sudan, Mugaddam (2006) finds that a positive attitude towards

Arabic contributes significantly to it being adopted as a mother tongue by 14 ethnic minority groups who originally spoke some other language.

In Thailand, Morita (2003) states, many Chinese people prefer to speak Thai instead of their mother tongue, partly due to positive attitudes towards Thai society and language. He asserts that few governments in Southeast Asia, apart from the Thai government, have managed to convince the Chinese that assimilation is both possible and desirable, and that consequently, the degree of assimilation into Thai society is among the highest in the region.

Meanwhile, Perlin (2008) describes a research project in southwest China on the language attitudes of the Dulong people, whose mother tongue, a Tibeto-Burman language, is increasingly being endangered. The study on 48 people of Dulong ethnicity in two villages shows that they view the Chinese language as important in all aspects of life although few of them speak it well. While some villagers see their mother tongue as a language of solidarity, others say it is irrelevant in their current life (Perlin, 2008). In addition, women and individuals over 50 years old prefer Lisu, a regional lingua franca, while Dulong youth seem uncertain of their mother tongue's future and in what spheres to promote its use although they are proud of it as a marker of ethnic identity.

4. *Language power and prestige motivations*

A language can be associated with power and prestige, thereby determining whether it is used. According to Karan (2008), in diglossic situations, high languages are accorded high prestige while low languages are accorded low prestige. Language power and prestige motivations exist when people choose to learn and use a language in order to gain power or prestige and choose to avoid

learning or using a language that has neither power nor prestige in order to not be associated with the lack of those two qualities (Karan, 2008).

A research by Canagarajah (2008) on Sri Lankan Tamil migrant families in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada reveals that Tamil language loss is occurring among the families due to the higher prestige associated with the English language. One survey respondent says it is due to the deeply ingrained attitude of treating English as superior, which began with colonisation by Britain (Canagarajah, 2008). In Singapore, a series of studies conducted by Saravanan show that lack of confidence among Tamil children and their parents in speaking Tamil (2001) and strong parental preference for English (2004) have contributed to their shift towards English.

5. *Nationalistic and political motivations*

Sometimes a language is associated with a nation, thereby marking it for wider use among the population. According to Karan (2008), some people adopt a language to show national affinity or pride while others do so in order to be seen as good citizens. He adds that there can also be associations between language forms and political camps or parties (Karan, 2008).

6. *Religious motivations*

Certain languages are associated with certain faiths and this link influences people in deciding whether to use these languages. People may select a language for use based on the belief that it is the preferred language of the faith they profess or the greater being they worship. Some languages are also seen as special or sacred by certain religions, motivating their followers to learn and use it. In other cases, the sacred writings of a particular faith might be in a certain language, thereby

compelling followers of the religion to learn and use it so that they can have access to these writings. Some languages are also acquired for purposes of proselytising, whereby some individuals are motivated to learn and use a language in order to communicate their religious ideas to others.

These six motivations often work together in moving an individual towards or away from a language, according to Karan (2011) who cites as an example that when an individual has financial motivations to use a particular language, he might also harbour social prestige motivations to use it. He adds that the taxonomy of motivations presents the different motivations with the understanding that they are often complex and combined (Karan, 2011). These motivations may also be seen as attitude, which has a significant role in influencing language shift and maintenance. In a volume of essays on language endangerment and language maintenance, Bradley (2002: 1) says, "Perhaps the crucial factor in language maintenance is the attitudes of the speech community concerning their language."

The researcher managed to find only one other study based on the Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (Karan, 2001). This research, which focused on the perceived benefit of the Ishkashimi language in Tajikistan, asked respondents to assess how important Ishkashimi and two other languages, Wakhi and Tajik, were in three domains, which were communication, earning money and gaining respect (Müller et al., 2010). For each domain, the respondents are asked to indicate whether the language is very important, important, somewhat important or not important with the aim of finding out their motivations for speaking each of the languages (Müller et al., 2010).

Thus, Karan's model may be said to be relatively new in the sphere of identifying factors behind language shift and maintenance, since not many studies have been found

to use this model as yet. The present study, thus, seeks to expand on this fresh perspective by analysing the Muslim Tamil community's language use and preferences in light of the six motivations as defined by Karan (2001). Furthermore, as no sample questionnaire for the model managed to be found, questions were formulated by the researcher based on the taxonomy.

2.5 Conclusion

As established in Chapter 1, Indians are a minority ethnic group in Malaysia and Tamils make up the majority of Indians. Divided by religion, the largest segment of Tamils is Hindu Tamils, followed by Christian Tamils and then Muslim Tamils. Very few proper studies have been conducted on the Tamil people; for example, a research by Schiffman (1995) which highlighted language shift among Tamils in Malaysia was based on secondary data. Although the research by Sankar (2004) was on Tamils, she focused on Tamil Iyers, who were a part of the Hindu Tamils. This study is significant in that it focuses on another segment of the Tamil community, Muslim Tamils.

Muslim Tamils are in the unique position of being able to belong to two communities instead of one as due to their ethnicity, they belong to the Tamil-speaking component of the Indian population and due to their religion, they can claim solidarity with the Malays. This leads them to be in an interesting position that merits research, which this study aims to do, particularly on their language use. The present study is also noteworthy in that it involves Muslim Tamils living in the Klang Valley, which is an urban area. The following chapters will describe the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a detailed discussion of the research methods used to obtain and analyse the data required to answer the research questions stated in the first chapter. This chapter will begin by explaining the theoretical framework of the study. Next, it will present a description of the instrumentation used, the respondents, the data collection procedure, the pilot study and finally, the data analysis employed.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The pioneering work on language shift and maintenance by Fishman (1966) has been a platform or starting point for subsequent researchers who have tried to explore and explain the relationship between change in habitual language use and the cultural, social, economic and psychological factors which cause this change to happen. One of the concepts introduced by Fishman, in relation to this, is the domain theory. It provides the theoretical framework for the present study.

3.2.1 Domain Theory

According to Fishman, "domain is a socio-cultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication, in accord with the institutions of a society and the spheres of activity of a culture, in such a way that individual behaviour and social patterns can be distinguished from each other and yet related to each other" (Fishman, 2000: 94). The concept of domain is the traditional theoretical construct used in sociolinguistic analysis of language maintenance and shift (Fasold, 1984). Based on this theory, when a community moves towards

another language, it uses its own language in fewer domains than previously and the majority language becomes the primary language of the community in more and more domains. The investigation of domains aids in the process of determining preferences or even exclusivity in the use of languages for different domains (Hu, 2010). The original domains, as recommended by Schmidt-Rohr (Fasold, 1984), are nine: (1) family; (2) playground and street; (3) school; (4) church; (5) literature; (6) the press; (7) military; (8) courts; and (9) governmental administration. Other studies have added more domains to the list such as institution (Saghal, 1991: 299) and the workplace.

Domains play a significant role in the study of language maintenance and shift as it is in these domains that interactions take place. Language use in a domain is determined by three important elements – the respondents and their role relationships with each other, the topic under discussion and the setting (Rubino & Bettoni, 1991). Different respondents may choose to use different languages based on factors such as their age, gender, social status, socio-economic background and closeness of role relationship. According to Fishman (1972), the language used in each domain by a person is examined against all the different people with whom he interacts in that domain. For example, in the home domain, the language used by a person with his father, mother, grandparents and siblings is examined to see if there is a difference in the languages used. Different topics may require the use of different languages. For instance, the topic of science usually necessitates the use of English as scientific issues and information are usually explained in that language. Different settings bring about the use of different languages as well. For example, if the setting were a mosque in Kuala Lumpur, the languages used would usually be Arabic and Malay. In contrast, if the mosque were in India, an Indian language, instead of Malay, would be used in accompaniment to the compulsory Arabic component. Sociolinguistic studies of bilingual and multilingual

communities usually focus on the language used in different domains by minority ethnic groups. Often, the mother tongue is used in the domains of family, friendship and religion while the dominant language is used in other domains such as education, employment, administration and entertainment.

In Malaysia, there are two dominant languages. The first is Malay, which is the mother tongue of the Malay people, who form the majority population. It is officially recognised as the national language of Malaysia. The second is English, which is the global lingua franca. There is no overall "one language per domain" rule. Instead, as can be seen in the case of the multiracial society of Malaysia, some domains witness the use of two or more languages. For example, a child in a minority community might use his mother tongue with his parents and grandparents but employ the dominant language in speaking to his siblings. If one wishes to find out which is the main language used in a particular domain, one can measure the relative frequency with which a language is used (De Vries, 1992). For instance, if a 60-year-old man uses mostly Tamil at home while his 18-year-old granddaughter uses mostly Malay at home, it can be said that language shift has occurred in the family domain. The type and number of domains to be studied for a particular community depends largely on the nature of the group and its contact with society at large (David, 1996). Earlier studies focusing on domains of language use in a community differ in terms of the numbers of domains highlighted. Nevertheless, the family domain is always consistently included (David, 1996). The reason could be that the home is the "last bastion of a subordinate language in competition with a dominant official language" (Dorian, 1981: 105).

For the purpose of this research, six domains will be investigated – family, friendship, education, employment, entertainment and social events. Some researchers such as Nambiar (2007) and Thutloa (2010) included religion as one of the domains

investigated as it has a potential part in affecting the language used. However, the present study does not include religion as a domain because the main act of Islamic worship, the performance of five daily prayers, involves the compulsory use of the Arabic language. Although the domain of religion may include other acts besides prayers such as religious meetings and activities as well as personal invocations, the present study has chosen not to delve into these areas.

3.2.2 Domain Analysis

This method of measuring language shift is a macro approach which is very useful in describing language variation and identifying societal norms. However, macro studies often rely on questionnaire surveys or interviews with inherent limitations, such as respondents' answers not always reflecting actual behaviour (Vassberg, 1993: 29). Nevertheless, understanding the language of intra-community talk and inter-community talk by investigating language use in different domains can aid in the investigation of whether a language is being maintained or shifted away from. Domain analysis is common in language shift and maintenance studies and has been used in Malaysia by Kundra (2001), Ramachandran (2000) and David (1996).

3.2.3 Criticism of Domain Analysis

Domain analysis may be very useful for investigation into language use in language shift and maintenance studies but it may be seen as rigid and demarcating an area for language use that may not be easily identifiable in reality (David, 2002). The theory assumes that only one language is used in a domain consistently all the time while in practice, this is not so as speakers make informed decisions of the appropriateness of a language during interactions or could code switch from one language to another depending on the situation (David, 2002). Furthermore, findings from quantitative

approaches such as domain analysis can be misleading or manipulated if not supported by other methods (Saxena, 2002). Therefore, a study of language use in domains should preferably be accompanied by another research method which is ethnographic or qualitative in nature such as the examination of authentic taped speech events. The data gathered through domain analysis would then give a macro picture of language use while the complementary method would provide a micro picture of actual language use. When the two methods are used together, a more accurate picture would emerge. In the present study, a domain-based questionnaire is accompanied by semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation.

3.3 Instrumentation

A research can be conducted using the quantitative method, the qualitative method or a combination of the two. In addressing methodological questions in bilingualism, Li Wei (2000: 481) recommends that a study use research methods that are the most appropriate for the research agenda and can provide evidence for answering the research questions. So, whether a research is conducted using quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods should depend on which would best achieve the objectives of the study. Therefore, the researcher determined that mixed methods, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, would be the best fit for the present study.

The quantitative method of questionnaire was used to facilitate the collection of straightforward data on language use. A questionnaire is less intrusive than an interview, where the respondents could be wary of the researcher, resulting in the former trying to impress the latter by reading her verbal or non-verbal cues to see what responses she appeared to be seeking. A questionnaire is one way to overcome this problem and can also serve as a buffer against what Labov (1972: 209) terms as “observer’s paradox,” stating that “the aim of linguistic research in the community must

be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation." The qualitative method was chosen by the researcher due to a few reasons. First, it enabled in-depth investigation into the Muslim Tamil community's language behaviour and attitudes. It also allowed the research to more credibly delineate which languages were dominant in actual practice. In addition, the qualitative method enabled the researcher to obtain an insider's insight into how the Muslim Tamils viewed their mother tongue as well as the other languages available to them. Not just one but two qualitative methods were employed – semi-structured interview and non-participant observation.

Thus, the study employed a triangular approach, which was noted by Thompson (2006) as enabling the researcher to take multiple perspectives on the phenomena being investigated and consequently arrive at more complex and comprehensive understandings. More importantly, triangulation was employed in this research to produce more credible findings. The research instruments employed for the purpose of triangulation are questionnaire, semi-structured interview and non-participant observation, which are explained as follows.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Language use of the respondents was investigated through the questionnaire. The questionnaire format was developed in such a way that it was easy to capture as much data as possible through standard multiple choice questions within the limited timeframe of the study. The questionnaire was structured according to a simple format that demanded minimal literacy, as long as the respondents could understand the questions and provide the relevant answers. In cases where the respondents could not understand a question, the researcher explained it in a simpler manner. Efforts were made to ensure that the study was not affected by the literacy levels of the respondents.

Where necessary, the researcher read the questions out to the respondents and explained them further. The questionnaire (see Appendix A) comprised 30 items. Questions 1 to 5 focused on the personal demographics of the respondents. Questions 6 to 22 focused on the respondents' preferred language for different domains. In particular, these questions on the language used in education, employment, entertainment and communication aimed to gauge whether the occurrence of language shift could be linked to the view of Malay and English as the languages needed to improve social mobility and employment opportunities as well as obtain better educational opportunities. This leads back to Karan's Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (2001) which notes that certain motivations cause individuals to use or not use a language. Questions 23 to 26 focused on the respondents' language skills in the four areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Questions 27 to 30 focused on their ability to understand, speak, read and write in Tamil, in order to more specifically gauge their grasp of their mother tongue.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interview

The interview method was chosen because it enabled respondents to express their views more freely. Through the interview method, respondents would be able to discuss not only their personal language use but also present their perception of language use in their community. The interview was used in this study based on the reasons provided by Gray (2004: 371):

1. There was a need to obtain highly personalised data;
2. There were opportunities required for probing;
3. A good return rate was important;
4. Respondents not fluent in the main languages of the country or had trouble in writing down answers could be assisted in taking part in the study.

For the purpose of this research, a semi-structured interview (see Appendix B) containing six open-ended questions was used. These questions aimed to find out which language the respondents were most comfortable communicating in; whether they believed their peers in the same community were fluent in the mother tongue; whether they viewed the Tamil language as useful for work purposes; whether they believed the ability to communicate in Tamil was necessary in order to be identified as a Muslim Tamil; whether Muslim Tamils should be encouraged to use the Tamil language and how the Tamil language was regarded in comparison to Malay and English by Muslim Tamils. The interview also sought from the respondents the possible reasons for these views in order to make sense of the roles played by the communicative, economic, social identity, language power and prestige motivators mentioned by Karan (2000) in affecting the language use of the Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley.

3.3.3 Non-Participant Observation

In order to corroborate the findings collected through the questionnaire and semi-structured interview, non-participant observation was used. The researcher observed language use in three domains – family, friendship and social events. Two situations involving interaction among Muslim Tamils were examined for each domain. Participant observation was not employed as the researcher wished to avoid influencing or affecting the choice of language used in interaction by the respondents. During these observations, audio-taping was done to catch snippets of conversation. Field notes were also taken to identify which language was mainly used.

3.4 Respondents

As three research instruments – questionnaire, semi-structured interview and non-participant observation – were to be used, a few sample populations were selected for

the instruments. In total, eight sets of respondents were involved in this study. The first set, who responded to the questionnaire, comprised 90 respondents divided into three age categories of 30 members each. The second set, who participated in the semi-structured interview, comprised 30 respondents chosen from among members of the first set. The remaining six sets of respondents were observed for language use in different settings. They comprised two sets of families, two sets of friends and two sets of Muslim Tamils who attended two social events.

As was mentioned in Section 1.5, it would be difficult to generalise the findings of the present study to the larger population of Malaysian Muslim Tamils as it involved only 90 respondents. It must be noted that the small size of the sample population is not for the lack of trying. Almost 250 individuals were approached in person, by telephone and through online communication to take part in the study. The refusal by almost 160 individuals to participate is due to reasons best known to them. However, a few assumptions might be made. First, the refusal to take part may be due to a desire to be identified as Malay and not Muslim Tamil, despite a clear indication of Tamil ancestry. Such individuals might not have wished to formally acknowledge that they were indeed Muslim Tamils. Second, the information requested might have been perceived as sensitive because language is linked to identity, which may be a touchy issue for some Muslim Tamils. Third, others who refused to participate might have done so because they did not want to disclose information which they perceived as private. There may also be other reasons for refusing to take part in the study such as lack of time and interest. Despite the difficulties in getting a reasonable number of respondents, it is believed that the 90 respondents who took part in the study as well as those whose communication was observed could help shed light on the current situation of language use in the Muslim Tamil community. An informed consent form was presented to the

respondents of the questionnaire and the interview (see Appendix C). Each sample is explained as follows.

3.4.1 Questionnaire Sample

For the questionnaire, a sample of 90 Muslim Tamils living and working in the Klang Valley were selected through the method of snowball sampling. An official estimate placed the number of Indian Muslims throughout Malaysia at 69,043 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2000). However, there are no census records on how many of them live in the Klang Valley. Therefore, the sample of 90 Muslim Tamils might be seen as small as it represents only 0.13 per cent of the total number of Indian Muslims in the country but it could very well be an adequate sample size for the specific population of Muslim Tamils living in the Klang Valley. The questionnaire process involved contacting Muslim Tamils through family and friendship circles. Those who agreed to participate in the study then suggested other Muslim Tamils who could also be approached. In addition, some respondents were found through Indian Muslim groups. Contact with the respondents was made in person, through the telephone and by e-mail.

Initially, the study was aimed at interviewing three generations of a family – grandparent, parent and child – in 30 households. The basis for this is that as Lieberson (1972, 1980) stated, most cases of language shifts which take place in societies occur through intergenerational switching. Thus, the concept of generation is significant for studies aimed at measuring the extent of language shift in societies (Nambiar & Govindasamy, 2002). However, there were obstacles in the way of reaching this objective. Firstly, due to the relatively small number of the community being sampled, it was difficult to find enough respondents, what more respondents who lived with two other generations in one household. Secondly, more often than not, the three generations of a family often lived separately. The grandparents might be living in India or had

passed away and the children might be living separately from the parents because they were pursuing their studies at an institution of higher learning which provided them with accommodation or they had married and settled down in another home with their spouse and children. Visiting the separate households and the institutions of higher learning would have required time and manpower resources which the researcher did not have during the data collection process. Some respondents were also unwilling to have their family members fill in the questionnaire or be interviewed. Thirdly, if the researcher were to persist in finding 30 Muslim Tamil households with three generations each, it would have been much more time consuming and required the assistance of others in data collection. It is with these constraints in mind that the present study was modified so that the 90 respondents were selected as individuals and not as members of a family. However, as this study focuses on intergenerational transmission, the 90 respondents were categorised into three age groups to represent three different generations.

There is a problem in associating generation with age, as Nambiar and Govindasamy (2002) pointed out, whereby in immigrant communities, the two variables do not always coincide. Not all members of a particular age will belong to the same generation as possibilities exist for members of the first generation to be younger than members of the second or third generation depending on when migration took place. However, this research follows in the steps of Anandan (1995) who overcame the problem by fixing the age group for each generation in her study of language use among three generations of Malayalees living in Singapore. Anandan (1995) divided her 60 respondents into a first generation of those above 60 years old, a second generation of those in their forties and a third generation of those in their teenage years. Similarly, for this study, efforts were made to ensure that generation coincided with age groups. The 90 respondents

chosen to answer the questionnaire were categorised into three age groups of 30 respondents each, whereby Group 1 comprised individuals aged 51 years and above, Group 2 consisted of those aged 31 to 50 years and Group 3 was made up of individuals aged 18 to 30 years. These age groups were chosen on the basis that they closely represented the three generations whereby the first age group of 51 years and above covered grandparents, the second age group of 31 to 50 years covered parents and the third age group of 18 to 30 years covered children. In Group 1, all except two respondents had migrated from India while all of Group 2 and Group 3 members were born in Malaysia.

Due to the use of snowball sampling, the respondents selected for the questionnaire sample were not equally distributed in terms of gender, education and occupation. In addition to these three variables, the variable of identity was also investigated by asking the respondents which ethnicity they stated as belonging to when filling up official forms. The answer to this question was expected to help in distinguishing whether the social identity motivation as propounded by Karan (2001) had an impact on the language choices of the Muslim Tamils. The information gleaned on the four variables of gender, education, occupation and self-determined ethnicity are presented as follows.

(a) Gender of Respondents

The respondents comprised 52 males and 38 females. In the age group of 51 years and above, 10 of the respondents were male and 20 were females. In the age group of 31 to 50 years, there were 17 males and 13 females. In the age group of 18 to 30 years, there were equal numbers of males and females. The original intention of the researcher was to expend as much effort as possible to find equal numbers of males and females for each age group. The researcher reached this objective with the youngest age group but was unable to do so for the other two groups. Consequently, gender could not be used as

a variable in distinguishing differences in language use and attitudes in the community being studied. Table 3.1 lists the gender of the respondents.

Table 3.1: Gender of Questionnaire Respondents

Gender	Number/ Percentage			
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**	**Total**
Male	10 (33%)	17 (57%)	15 (50%)	42 (47%)
Female	20 (67%)	13 (43%)	15 (50%)	48 (53%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	90 (100%)

(b) Education Level of Respondents

With regard to the level of education of the respondents in the youngest age group, half of them had taken the Penilaian Menengah Rendah (Lower Secondary Assessment) examination at the age of 15 or the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian Certificate of Education) examination at the age of 17 and then stopped schooling. The other half had pursued tertiary education, obtaining diplomas, bachelor's and master's degrees. The education level of respondents in the two older groups were not as easily determined as most of them preferred to state only that they had studied up to the primary, secondary or tertiary level. The education level of the respondents is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Highest Level of Education of Questionnaire Respondents

Education	Number/ Percentage			
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**	**Total**
Primary School	19 (63%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)	22 (24%)
Secondary School	5 (17%)	7 (23%)	15 (50%)	27 (30%)
Tertiary education	6 (20%)	20 (67%)	15 (50%)	41 (46%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	90 (100%)

(c) Occupation of Respondents

Efforts were made to find respondents from various occupational backgrounds. The efforts bore fruit in terms of the diversity of jobs listed by the respondents. There were also respondents who did not hold jobs such as housewives and students, therefore enabling the study to cover a wide spectrum of people from different socio-economic levels. A third of the respondents in Group 1 were housewives while half of the respondents in Group 3 were students. Table 3.3 shows the diverse range of occupations of the respondents.

Table 3.3: Occupation of Questionnaire Respondents

Occupation	Number/ Percentage			
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**	**Total**
Professional	2 (7%)	5 (16%)	4 (13%)	11 (12%)
Executive	2 (7%)	12 (40%)	4 (13%)	18 (20%)
Non-executives	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	2 (7%)	11 (12%)
Teacher/ Lecturer	1 (3%)	2 (7%)	4 (13%)	7 (8%)
Self-employed	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	1 (3%)	4 (4%)
Housewife	20 (66%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	22 (24%)
Retired	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
Student	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	15 (50%)	15 (18%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	90 (100%)

(d) Ethnicity of Respondents

All the respondents admitted to the researcher that they were Muslim Tamils. However, in answering the question on which ethnic group they stated themselves as belonging to on official forms, while the majority of the respondents said they wrote down Indian, there were some who identified themselves as Malay. To be more precise, 26 out of the 30 respondents in each age group said they stated themselves as Indian on official forms while four identified themselves as Malays.

It was purely coincidental that the same number of respondents in each category admitted to identifying themselves as Indian or Malay for official purposes. Table 3.4 shows a breakdown of the respondents based on the ethnic group they had stated as belonging to in official forms.

Table 3.4: Self-Determined Ethnicity of Questionnaire Respondents

Ethnic Group	Number/ Percentage			
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	Group 2 (31-50 years)	Group 3 (18-30 years)	Total
Indian	26 (87%)	26 (87%)	26 (87%)	78 (87%)
Malay	4 (13%)	4 (13%)	4 (13%)	12 (13%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	90 (100%)

3.4.2 Semi-Structured Interview Sample

The respondents for semi-structured interviews were selected from the respondents who were chosen to answer the questionnaire. Thus, out of the 90 respondents who answered the questionnaire, 30 respondents were selected to undergo the semi-structured interviews. More specifically, 10 respondents were picked from the 30 respondents in each of the three age groups belonging to the questionnaire sample. Efforts were made to have equal numbers of males and females in each age group selected for the interview sample. They were mainly chosen based on their willingness to undergo further questioning on the matter of their language use and choices. Their gender, level of education, occupation and the ethnicity they chose to state on official forms are presented as follows.

(a) Gender of Respondents

Equal numbers of males and females made up the 30 respondents chosen for the semi-structured interviews. Therefore, each of the three age groups (51 years and above, 31 to 50 years and 18 to 30 years old) had five male and five female respondents.

(b) Education Level of Respondents

All 30 respondents had tertiary-level qualifications except for four members of Group 1 who had only secondary school education. Thus, tertiary education was attained by 100 per cent of the Group 2 and Group 3 respondents as well as 60 per cent of the Group 1 members. However, the remaining four respondents (40 per cent) from Group 1 had obtained education up to secondary school.

(c) Occupation of Respondents

The 30 respondents comprised professionals, executives, teacher, lecturers, housewives and retirees. The 10 respondents from Group 1 comprised two professionals, two executives, a teacher, three housewives and two retirees. The 10 respondents from Group 2 comprised five professionals, four executives and a teacher. Meanwhile, the 10 respondents from Group 3 comprised four professionals, four executives and two teachers. Table 3.5 illustrates the range of occupations of the respondents.

Table 3.5: Occupation of Interview Respondents

Occupation	Number/ Percentage			
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	Group 2 (31-50 years)	Group 3 (18-30 years)	Total
Professional	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	11 (37%)
Executive	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	10 (33%)
Teacher	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	4 (13%)
Housewife	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (10%)
Retired	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)
Total	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	30 (100%)

(d) Ethnicity of Respondents

While all the selected respondents from Group 1 acknowledged themselves as Indian on official forms, not all members from the two younger groups did so. In fact, two

members of Group 2 and four members of Group 3 admitted to stating themselves as Malay for official purposes. These figures are illustrated in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Self-Determined Ethnicity of Interview Respondents

Ethnic Group as stated in official forms	Number/ Percentage			
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	Group 2 (31-50 years)	Group 3 (18-30 years)	Total
Indian	10 (100%)	8 (80%)	6 (60%)	24 (80%)
Malay	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)	6 (20%)
Total	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	10 (100%)	30 (100%)

3.4.3 Non-Participant Observation Sample

Investigation of language use in three of the six domains included in this study – family, friendship and social events – required the use of non-participant observation. The observation of the family and friendship domains was conducted for the purpose of corroborating evidence found through the questionnaire and interview. As for the domain of social events, non-participant observation was the sole method of investigation used to identify the main languages used. The following is more detailed explanation of each selected sample.

(a) Respondents for the Family Domain

Two sets of families were observed for their language use during interactions. Named as Family 1 and Family 2 for ease of reference, the former comprised a grandmother, a mother and a daughter while the latter comprised a grandfather, a father and two sons. The observations were conducted in the month of June 2010. In each case, interaction between three generations of Muslim Tamils was observed in order to find out what were the languages used in speaking with one another.

(b) Respondents for the Friendship Domain

Two sets of friends were observed in order to distinguish the languages they used in conversations. The first set comprised two female Muslim Tamils aged 37 years old whose conversation was noted during a visit to one of the two respondents' home in Sungai Buloh, a sub-district of Selangor, in April 2010. The second set was a group of six Muslim Tamil friends, comprising three males and three females, whose conversation was observed by the researcher during an outing to break fast at a restaurant near a mosque in Kuala Lumpur during the fasting month in August 2010.

(c) Respondents for the Social Events Domain

Two functions involving Muslim Tamils was attended by the researcher in order to observe the language used during social events. The first was the wedding reception of a Muslim Tamil couple which was held in Kuala Lumpur in April 2010. The second was a dinner organised by the Malaysian Indian Muslim Congress/Kongres India Muslim Malaysia (Kimma) together with a few other Malaysian Indian Muslim non-governmental organisations at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur in October 2010.

3.4.4 Ancestry versus Self-Identity

As was mentioned earlier in Section 1.2.4, not all Muslim Tamils may acknowledge themselves to be as such, preferring instead to be identified as Malays. This was seen in the present study, whereby from the 90 respondents, 12 identified themselves as Malay although it was clear that they had Tamil origins. Thus, it has to be noted here that self identity is different from ancestry. The situation of Muslim Tamils is unlike that of Tamil people of other faiths, such as Hindu and Christian Tamils, who profess allegiance to one community, which is the Tamil community. In contrast, Muslim

Tamils may seem to be caught between allegiance to two communities, namely, Tamil and Malay. They share a common language with other Tamils and at the same time, they share a common religion with the Malays, who form the majority community in the country. Consequently, they are able to identify themselves as Tamil in some circumstances and as Malay in other circumstances, such as in filling official forms which require identification of ethnicity.

Nevertheless, the data collected from this exploratory research can provide valuable insight into the likely patterns of language shift and maintenance as well as the language preferences of individuals in the Muslim Tamil community living in the Klang Valley.

3.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out to test the questionnaire on nine respondents (three from each age group) from the Muslim Tamil community in the Klang Valley. Based on the pilot study, some changes were made to the content and format of the questionnaire before the final version was distributed to the respondents of the present study. In the pilot study, it was found that some respondents had trouble answering in English. So, the questionnaire was modified to include translations in Malay.

One question was changed because it was unable to detect which language stood out as the most used for listening, speaking, reading or writing as well as the respondents' proficiency in the Tamil language. The nine respondents sometimes rated two or more languages the same. The original question and the questions which emerged from the modification are shown in Table 3.7. As shown in this table, the answers underlined by one respondent demonstrates how more than one language can be selected in each category of skill.

Table 3.7: Question Modification

Original Question – How fluent are you in these languages?

a. High b. Average c. Poor d. None

Language	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Malay	a/ b/ c/ d	a/ b/ c/ d	a/ b/ c/ d	a/ b/ c/ d
English	a/ b/ c/ d	a/ b/ c/ d	a/ b/ c/ d	a/ b/ c/ d
Tamil	a/ b/ c/ d	a/ b/ c/ d	a/ b/ c/ d	a/ b/ c/ d

Modified Questions –

23. Which language are you most capable listening to?
24. Which language are you most capable speaking in?
25. Which language are you most capable reading in?
26. Which language are you most capable writing in?
27. Can you understand Tamil? Yes/No
28. Can you speak in Tamil? Yes/No
29. Can you read Tamil? Yes/No
30. Can you write in Tamil? Yes/No

Thus, the pilot study helped immensely in making the data collection process easier and more precise in obtaining the required and relevant data.

3.6 Data Collection

The respondents were assured that all information given would only be used for the purpose of research and anonymity would be maintained. They were also given the choice of finding out the outcome of the research if they wished. The researcher's telephone number and e-mail address were given to all respondents in case they wished to enquire about the study at any point during or after the study. The study was explained in Tamil, Malay and English before the researcher began the data collection process. The questionnaire and interview were administered for four months from April

to July 2010 while the non-participant observation was carried out for six months from April to October 2010. The prolonged period of data collection was due to the difficulty in finding Muslim Tamil individuals who were willing to take part in the study.

As 90 questionnaires needed to be answered, different approaches were used to make it easy for respondents to answer the questions. For the age categories of 18 to 30 years and 31 to 50 years, the questionnaires were e-mailed to them as it was the most convenient and time-efficient method for them. However, for the age group of 51 years and above, the questionnaires were administered in person and by phone. After the questionnaire was administered to the 90 respondents, 30 of them were chosen to be interviewed. They were chosen based on their willingness and interest in articulating their views on the topic of language shift and maintenance in their community as well as their expressed readiness to participate further in the study and to provide more detailed answers to questions. Efforts were made to conduct the interviews in person and by phone.

The questionnaire was presented in English but for the convenience of respondents who were not conversant in the language, it was verbally translated by the researcher into Malay and Tamil in cases where the questionnaire was presented in person or by phone. The Tamil language was not used, however, as the researcher was illiterate in written Tamil. As for the interviews, these were conducted in Tamil, Malay and English, depending on which language the respondents seemed to be most comfortable using. The researcher provided explanations for questions as and when deemed necessary in order to help the respondents understand and answer accordingly.

3.7 Data Analysis

For the purpose of determining whether Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley were shifting from their mother tongue, the data collected will be presented in the form of percentages to allow for intergenerational comparison of language use in six domains – family, friendship, education, employment and entertainment. Data gathered from non-participant observation in three of the six domains, namely, family, friendship and social events, will be qualitatively analysed to determine the main language used in Muslim Tamil gatherings and functions as well as to corroborate the findings of the questionnaire and semi-structured interview. This qualitative analysis will be done based on the audio recordings made and field notes taken. For the purpose of identifying the probable motivators in the event of language shift, a qualitative analysis will be conducted on the findings of the semi-structured interview.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter described the methodology which was used to obtain and analyse data to answer the two research questions presented in the first chapter. In this chapter, the three research instruments used in the study – questionnaire, semi-structured interview and non-participant observation – were highlighted. This was followed by explanation of the different sets of respondents involved in the study. A brief outline of the respondents, such as their gender, highest level of education, occupation and self-determined ethnicity, was provided. This was followed by a description of the pilot study, which resulted in the modification of one question. Next to be explained was data analysis, which would help to shed light on whether language shift was taking place among Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley and in the event of such a shift, the probable motivators behind it. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings made through the use of the three research instruments.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data collected for the purpose of this study, which has been grouped into two sets of findings. The first set of findings is drawn from the questionnaire and highlights the language use of the three age groups of sample respondents. These are analysed to find out whether there are any significant generation-related differences. The second set of findings is drawn from the interview and is used to analyse the probable motivators for language shift. These motivators are analysed according to the Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift introduced by Karan (2001), which was explained in Chapter Two (Section 2.4). In brief, the main aim of this chapter is to answer the two research questions posed in Chapter One (Section 1.3), which are as follows:

1. Is there an intergenerational decrease in the use of the Tamil language among Klang Valley Muslim Tamils in crucial domains such as family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events?
2. What are the probable motivators behind the language choices of the Klang Valley Muslim Tamils?

Intergenerational decrease, in the context of this study, is measured in terms of age, whereby Group 1 comprised individuals aged 51 years and above, Group 2 consisted of those aged 31 to 50 years and Group 3 was made up of those aged 18 to 30 years. For the purpose of clarity, Section 4.2 will focus on answering the first research question while Section 4.3 will answer the second research question.

4.2 Research Question 1

Is there an intergenerational decrease in the use of the Tamil language among Klang Valley Muslim Tamils in crucial domains such as family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events?

This research question aimed at finding out whether the Tamil language is being used less over three generations of Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley. Six domains of language use were investigated – family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events. The questionnaire and non-participant observation methods provided the findings to answer this question. From the 30-item questionnaire, the first five questions focused on presenting a demographical profile of the participants. Based on the findings, their age, gender, highest academic qualification, occupation and race as filled in official forms were presented in Chapter Three (Section 3.4). These were followed by questions which focused on their language use in five of the six domains – family, friendship, education, entertainment and employment. To corroborate the questionnaire's findings on language use, non-participant observation was conducted in three of the six domains, namely, family, friendship and social events, whereby two situations were examined for each domain. According to Hu (2010), once the family domain is affected by language shift, it leads to the interruption of natural intergenerational language transmission and endangerment of the language's use, so the family domain will be examined first.

4.2.1 Family Domain

The language used with seven categories of family members was examined to identify the main language used in the family domain. These seven categories comprised grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, siblings, spouse and children. By

investigating language use with members of a respondent's family, it may be possible to identify whether the respondent is actively using the mother tongue in the home or gravitating towards other languages such as Malay and English.

(a) Languages Used with Grandfather

In the questionnaire, the first family member listed was the grandfather. All of the respondents from the three age groups stated which language they had used or continued to use with their grandfather. The findings showed that all members of Group 1, who were aged 51 and above, had used the Tamil language as the sole medium of communication with their grandfather. Members of Group 2, who were aged 31 to 50, registered similar findings, with 28 out of 30 respondents (93 per cent) having used only Tamil with their grandfather. The remaining two respondents (seven per cent) had used a combination of Tamil, Malay and English. Group 3, which comprised individuals aged 18 to 30, were also found to have used mainly Tamil in communication with their grandfathers. Out of the 30 respondents in this category, 21 (70 per cent) had used Tamil alone with their grandfathers. However, another five (17 per cent) had used Malay alone while the remaining four (13 per cent) had used a mixture of Tamil, Malay and English.

These findings show that in interactions with their respective grandfathers, 100 per cent of Group 1 respondents used only Tamil, which may be because it was the main or only language of communication available to them as they had lived in Tamil Nadu, India, where the predominant language was Tamil. The Tamil language remained the sole language of communication for the majority of Group 2 members as well as all of them except two respondents had grandfathers who had lived in Tamil Nadu. However, in the case of Group 3 members, the figure went down to 70 per cent as their grandparents lived in Malaysia. In fact, five respondents admitted to not using the Tamil language at

all and using only Malay in speaking with their grandfather. Nevertheless, perhaps due to the grandparents' lack of proficiency or ability to speak in the dominant languages of Malay and English, the practice of communicating solely in Tamil was continued in the case of most of the respondents. The figures for all three groups are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Languages Used With Grandfather

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	30 (100%)	28 (93%)	21 (70%)
Malay	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (17%)
English	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Tamil, Malay and English	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	4 (13%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

An intergenerational decline is evidenced, based on the decrease in the use of the Tamil language with the grandfather from 100 per cent in Group 1 to 93 per cent in Group 2 and then 70 per cent in Group 3. It was thus found that although Tamil was the main language used with the grandfather by all three age groups, its use was in decline from the oldest group to the youngest group. Thus, from the seven categories of family members – grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, siblings, spouse and children –it can be seen that intergeneration decline in the use of the mother tongue is already evident in the first category investigated. Figure 4.1 illustrates the three groups' different choices of language for communication with their grandfather.

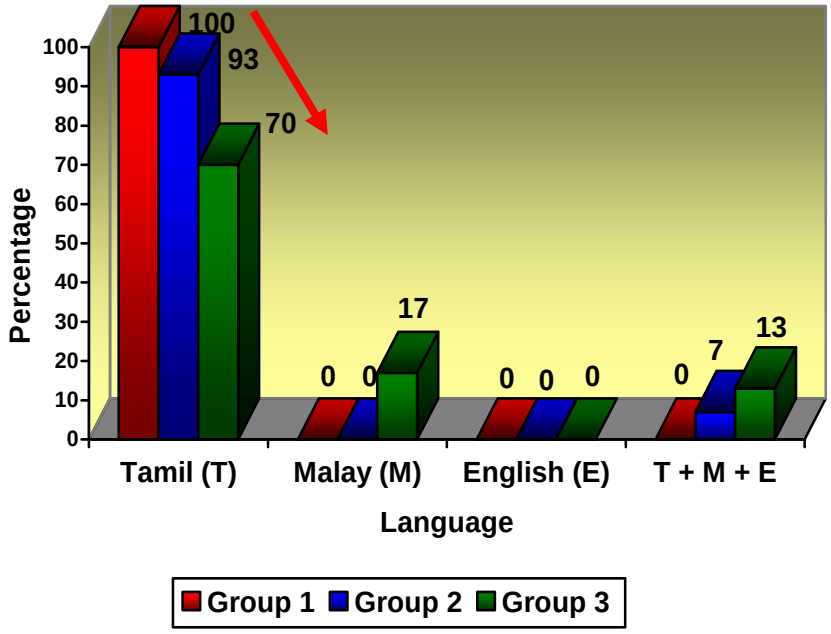

Figure 4.1: Language Use with Grandfather – Comparison across Groups

(b) Languages Used with Grandmother

Investigation of language use with the second category of family member, the grandmother, presented similar results as those found on language use with the grandfather. The findings of the questionnaire indicated that all members of Group 1 had used only the Tamil language with their grandmothers, just as they had done with their grandfathers while 27 members of Group 2 used only Tamil with their grandmothers while two respondents used a mixture of Tamil, Malay and English and one respondent used only the Malay language. A more marked difference was detected in the findings for Group 3 which showed that only 21 members communicated in solely the Tamil language with their grandmothers. Of the remaining nine respondents, five used a mixture of Tamil, Malay and English while four used only the Malay language. Thus, while the entire Group 1 had used only the Tamil language with their grandmother, 90 per cent of Group 2 members did so too, followed by 70 per cent of Group 3 members. For further clarity, these figures are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Languages Used With Grandmother

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	30 (100%)	27 (90%)	21 (70%)
Malay	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	4 (13%)
English	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Tamil, Malay and English	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	5 (17%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

In the bigger picture, Tamil remained the main language used with the grandmother for all the three age groups studied in this research as the majority of respondents in all three age groups acknowledged using their mother tongue as the sole means of communication with their grandmother. Nevertheless, the decline from 100 per cent for Group 1 to 90 per cent for Group 2 and then 70 per cent for Group 3 underlines the fact that the use of the mother tongue with the second category of family member was eroding as well, as illustrated in Figure 4.2.

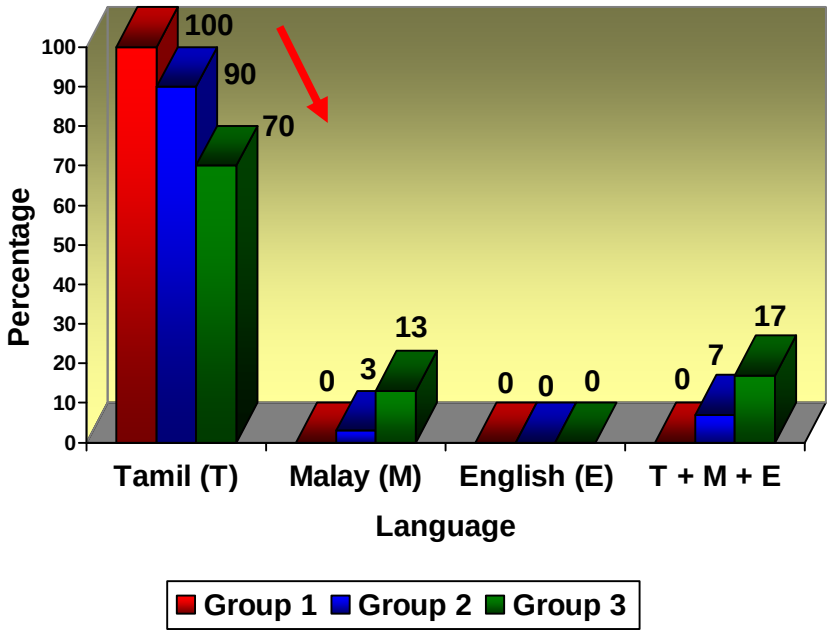

Figure 4.2: Language Use with Grandmother – Comparison across Groups

(c) Comparison of Language Use with Grandparents

A comparison of the results found on language use with the grandfather and language use with the grandmother revealed only a very minor difference whereby in Group 2, while 28 respondents (93 per cent) had used only the Tamil language with the grandfather, the figure decreased to 27 respondents (90 per cent) for sole use of Tamil with the grandmother. Thus, except for one respondent, the remaining 89 respondents presented similar language use with both their grandparents. In addition, the results show that communication with both grandparents largely involves the use of the Tamil language. Pauwels (2005), in noting that one of the most important factors which determine whether a community maintains or shifts away from its mother tongue is the pattern of language use in the family, recognised the important role played by grandparents in influencing the languages used in the family domain. This is corroborated in the present study which indicates a high level of Tamil language use between grandparents and grandchildren across all three age groups. Several reasons may be presented to explain this, such as the likelihood that the grandparents had originated from and lived in Tamil Nadu, India, where the main language was Tamil; the Tamil language was the language the grandparents were most comfortable using as it was the language they had grown up with and were most proficient in; or that the respondents had grown up with the use of the Tamil language in the household, thereby prompting them to also use the language in communicating with their elders. Figure 4.3 illustrates the differences among the three groups in terms of their language use with both grandparents.

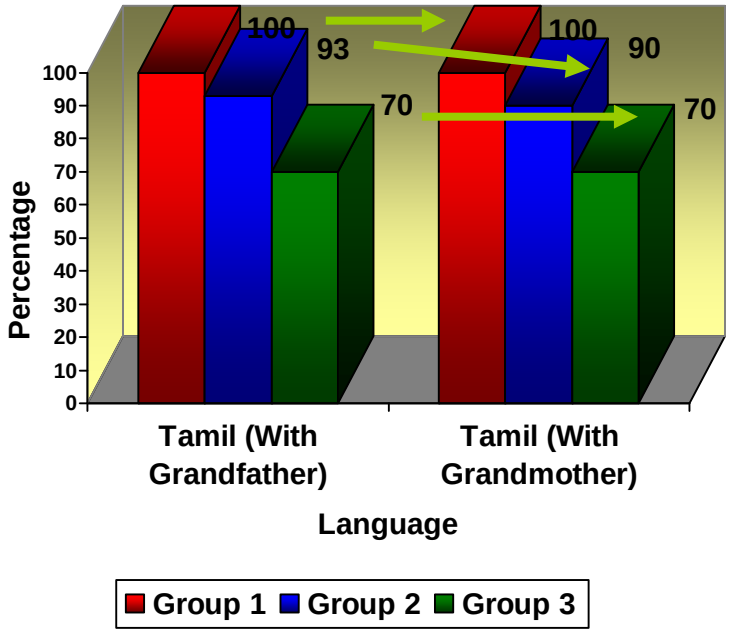

Figure 4.3: Comparison of Use of Tamil with Grandfather vis-à-vis Grandmother

From the grandparents, the study turned its focus to language use with parents. The findings are highlighted and explained below.

(d) Languages Used with Father

The father is the third category of family member listed in the questionnaire on language use within the family. The findings showed that Group 1 respondents, all of whom had used only the Tamil language with their grandparents, had continued the practice with the traditionally accepted head of the household. It was also found that 21 of the 30 respondents (70 per cent) in Group 2 had used solely Tamil with their father while another eight (27 per cent) had used their mother tongue together with English and Malay. In total, Tamil was used by 29 of the 30 respondents (97 per cent) in Group 2 while only one person used solely Malay. A bigger contrast was seen in Group 3, which had only 12 respondents (40 per cent) who used solely Tamil with their fathers. Another 12 respondents (40 per cent) used a mixture of Tamil, Malay and English while the remaining six (20 per cent) relied on either Malay or English to communicate with

their father. So, only a total of 24 respondents (80 per cent) in Group 3 admitted to using Tamil with their father, as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Languages Used With Father

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	30 (100%)	21 (70%)	12 (40%)
Malay	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	2 (7%)
English	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (13%)
Tamil, Malay and English	0 (0%)	8 (27%)	12 (40%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

Overall, the Tamil language was the main medium of communication with the father for all three age groups. The gravity of the decline in intergenerational use of the Tamil language with the father, as revealed by the study, is shown in Figure 4.4.

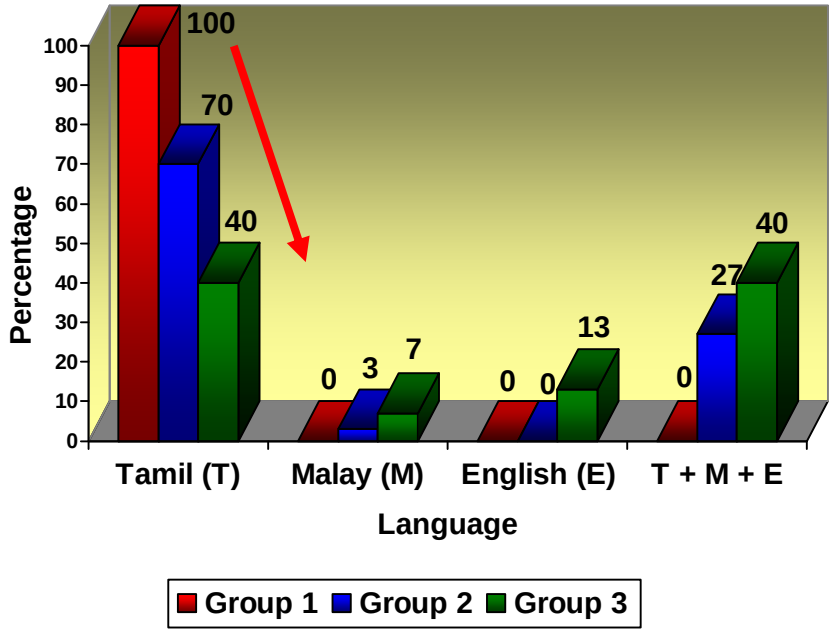

Figure 4.4: Language Use with Father – Comparison across Groups

As can be seen in Figure 4.4, when the three age groups were compared in terms of how many of them used only Tamil with the father, a downward slide was identified with

100 per cent use by Group 1, 70 per cent use by Group 2 and 40 per cent use by Group 3. This is a steeper decline than that indicated for language use with grandparents, which showed a decline from 100 per cent (Group 1) to 93 per cent (Group 2) and then 70 per cent (Group 3) for language use with the grandfather and a decline from 100 per cent (Group 1) to 90 per cent (Group 2) and then 70 per cent (Group 3) for language use with the grandmother.

(e) Languages Used with Mother

The language which respondents in Groups 1, 2 and 3 used in communicating with their mother, the fourth category of family member listed in the questionnaire, was surveyed next. As the questionnaire had found that all Group 1 respondents had used only the Tamil language with their fathers, it might be hypothesised that all of them had also used only Tamil with their mothers. This hypothesis proved to be true for this study, as the responses to the questionnaire showed that all 30 respondents who were aged 51 and above had indeed used only Tamil with their mothers. The same could not be said for Group 2, however, as the findings revealed that although the majority of its members, who numbered 25 out of 30 (83 per cent), did use only Tamil with their mothers, there were five respondents (17 per cent) who used a combination of Tamil, Malay and English. Access to and the ability to communicate in either or both Malay and English might be seen as one of the deciding factors for this result.

The findings also revealed a decline in the use of the Tamil language by Group 3 members with their mothers, similar to what had been evidenced in their language use with their grandparents and fathers. Only 16 of the 30 respondents in the youngest group spoke solely in Tamil with their mothers. Thus, the sole use of the Tamil language with the mother, which decreased from 100 per cent for Group 1 to 83 per cent for Group 2, was reduced further to 53 per cent. While one respondent (three per cent)

used the Malay language and two respondents (seven per cent) used the English language, the remaining 11 respondents (37 per cent) used a mixture of all three languages in speaking with their mothers.

There was increasing multilingualism among the two younger groups, with five respondents (17 per cent) in Group 2 and 11 respondents (37 per cent) in Group 3 using more than just Tamil with their mothers. The findings are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Languages Used With Mother

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	30 (100%)	25 (83%)	16 (53%)
Malay	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
English	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)
Tamil, Malay and English	0 (0%)	5 (17%)	11 (37%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

The marked decline from the oldest group (Group 1) to the youngest group (Group 3) in the use of the Tamil language with their mothers is illustrated in Figure 4.5. Nevertheless, Tamil was the main medium of communication with the mother for all three age groups.

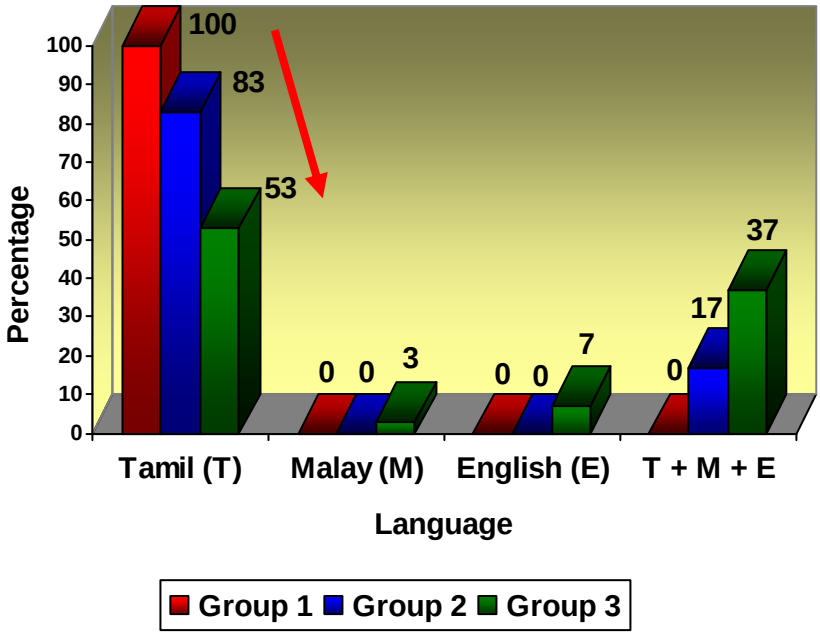

Figure 4.5: Language Use with Mother – Comparison across Groups

(f) Comparison of Language Use with Parents

For further comparison, Figure 4.6 depicts the variance in the use of the Tamil language alone in communication with both parents by the three groups. As the figure shows, the use of the Tamil language is higher with mothers than with fathers for both Group 2 and Group 3. Among Group 2 members, 70 per cent used Tamil alone with their father while a higher figure of 83 per cent did so with their mothers. Similarly, in Group 3, while 40 per cent used solely Tamil with their father, a higher figure of 53 per cent did so with their mother. It may be possible that the fathers, in contrast to mothers, had more access to and were better able to use one or both of the dominant languages of Malaysia, thereby enabling the respondents to communicate more with their fathers than their mothers in either or both Malay and English.

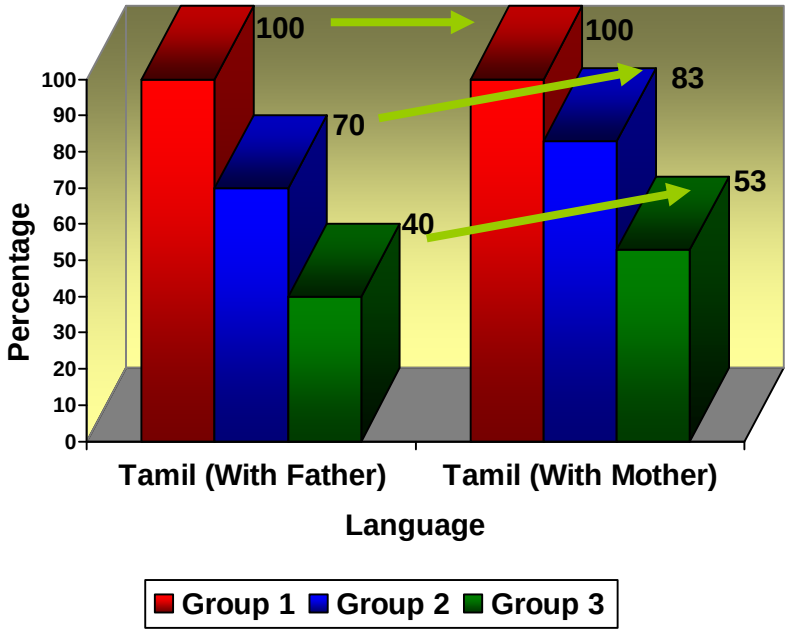

Figure 4.6: Comparison of Use of Tamil with Father vis-à-vis Mother

Thus far, the language used with four older members of the family – father, mother, grandfather and grandmother – have been examined and the conclusion reached has been that although Tamil was the most used language with all the four family members, it was used to a lesser extent by the two younger groups, Groups 2 and 3. Next to be examined is language use with the remaining three other categories of family members – siblings, spouse and children – to see whether it shows a similar pattern to that found for the first four categories of family members, whereby the sole use of the Tamil language for purpose of communication declined from Group 1 to Group 2 and from Group 2 to Group 3.

(g) Languages Used with Siblings

With siblings being closer in age to each other than to their parents and grandparents, it might be surmised that if one sibling had access to just one language, it might also be the same for the other siblings and that if one sibling knew more than one language, the other siblings might too. Consequently, the range of languages used for communication

between siblings may be wider than as seen earlier with grandparents and parents. This supposition found support in the findings obtained through the questionnaire, which showed that while 26 respondents (87 per cent) in Group 1 used solely Tamil with their siblings, the remaining four (13 per cent) used a mixture of Tamil, Malay and English. The high percentage of members who used solely Tamil with their siblings in Group 1 declined with Group 2, in which only a third of the respondents (33 per cent) used Tamil alone for the purpose of communication with their brothers and sisters. In fact, half of Group 2 (50 per cent) used all three languages with their siblings. As for Group 3, the questionnaire found that only eight of the members (27 per cent) admitted to using only Tamil with their siblings. The remaining 22 respondents (73 per cent) used Malay alone, English alone or a mixture of Tamil, Malay and English. Thus, the percentage of respondents who used solely Tamil without combining it with other languages went down from 87 per cent in Group 1 to 33 per cent in Group 2 and then 27 per cent in Group 3. As shown in Table 4.5, the Tamil language occupied the main spot for Group 1 but not for the other two groups, which showed a higher rate of multilingualism.

Table 4.5: Languages Used With Siblings

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	26 (87%)	10 (33%)	8 (27%)
Malay	0 (0%)	4 (13%)	8 (27%)
English	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	2 (6%)
Tamil, Malay and English	4 (13%)	15 (50%)	12 (40%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

Interestingly, although multilingualism rose from 13 per cent in Group 1 to 50 per cent in Group 2, it did not rise further in Group 3. In fact, only 40 per cent of Group 3

respondents conversed in Malay, Tamil and English with their siblings. Instead, Malay was tied with Tamil in the top position as the sole language used by Group 3 members with their siblings. In fact, the findings show the rise of the Malay language for use in communicating with siblings from zero respondents (0 per cent) in Group 1 to four respondents (13 per cent) in Group 2 to eight respondents (27 per cent) in Group 3. Figure 4.7 illustrates the decline in intergenerational Tamil language use with siblings.

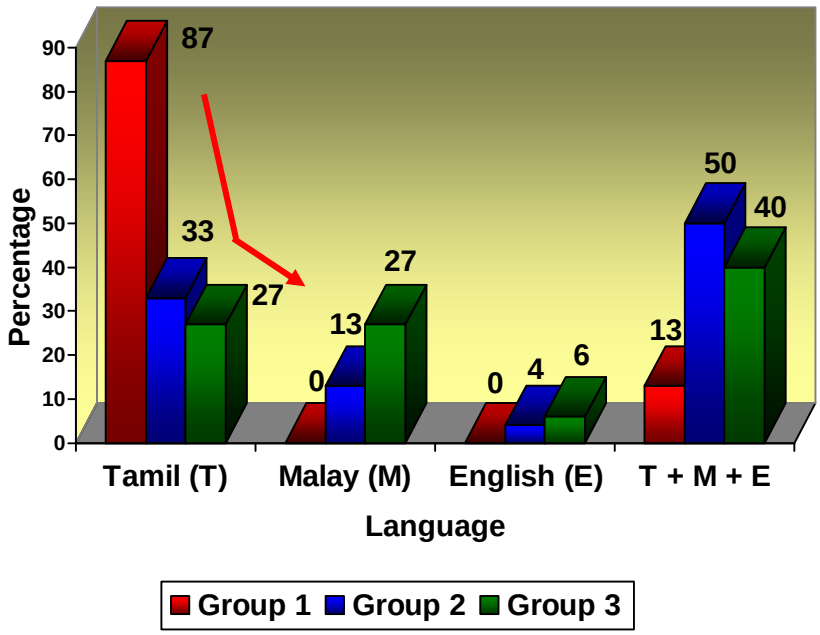

Figure 4.7: Language Use with Siblings – Comparison across Groups

Thus far, the focus has been on the family that the respondents were born into. Now, attention will be shifted to the family that some of the respondents formed when they married and had offspring.

(h) Languages Used with Spouse

Not all the respondents were married at the time of the research. While all of the members (100 per cent) in Group 1 were married, the number of those in wedded state reduced to 21 respondents (70 per cent) in Group 2 and eight respondents (27 per cent) in Group 3. As a result, the number of respondents who were qualified to respond to the

question of language use with spouse was not equal for all three age groups. Nevertheless, the findings based on the married respondents may be used to provide a glimpse into intergenerational language use with husbands and wives. The findings showed that 21 out of the 30 (70 per cent) married respondents in Group 1 used Tamil alone with their spouses. In Group 2, out of the 21 respondents who were married, only a third (33 per cent) did similarly. And in Group 3, none of the eight (zero per cent) married respondents spoke solely in Tamil with their spouses. Thus, in the matter of using Tamil alone for spousal communication, the percentage of use plunged from 70 per cent for Group 1 to 33 per cent for Group 2 and zero per cent for Group 3. This intergenerational decline in the sole use of the Tamil language for spousal communication is illustrated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Languages Used With Spouse

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	21 (70%)	7 (33%)	0 (0%)
Malay	1 (3%)	3 (14%)	3 (38%)
English	5 (17%0	2 (10%)	1 (13%)
Tamil, Malay and English	3 (10%)	9 (43%)	4 (50%)
Total	30 (100%)	21* (100%)	8* (100%)

* Numbers are below 30 because not all respondents are married

The main language used with the spouse was clearly Tamil for Group 1 but the other two groups displayed more multilingualism in their communication with their life partners. Thus, the number of respondents who relied on the combined use of Malay, English and Tamil rose from three (10 per cent) in Group 1 to nine (43 per cent) in Group 2. However, this figure was reduced slightly to four respondents (50 per cent) in Group 3, in which of the remaining four married members, three respondents (38 per cent) used only Malay and one respondent used only English with their spouses.

Based on the questionnaire's findings, it had earlier been discovered that the use of solely Tamil declined from the oldest age group to the youngest in communication with grandparents, parents and siblings. Figure 4.8 shows that the use of the Tamil language decreased from 70 per cent for Group 1 to 33 per cent for Group 2 and then zero per cent for Group 3. Thus, the use of the Tamil language as the sole medium of spousal communication showed a sharp intergenerational decline, whereby while the majority of those aged 51 and above spoke in only Tamil with their spouses, only approximately a third of those aged 31 to 50 and no one aged 18 to 30 did so too.

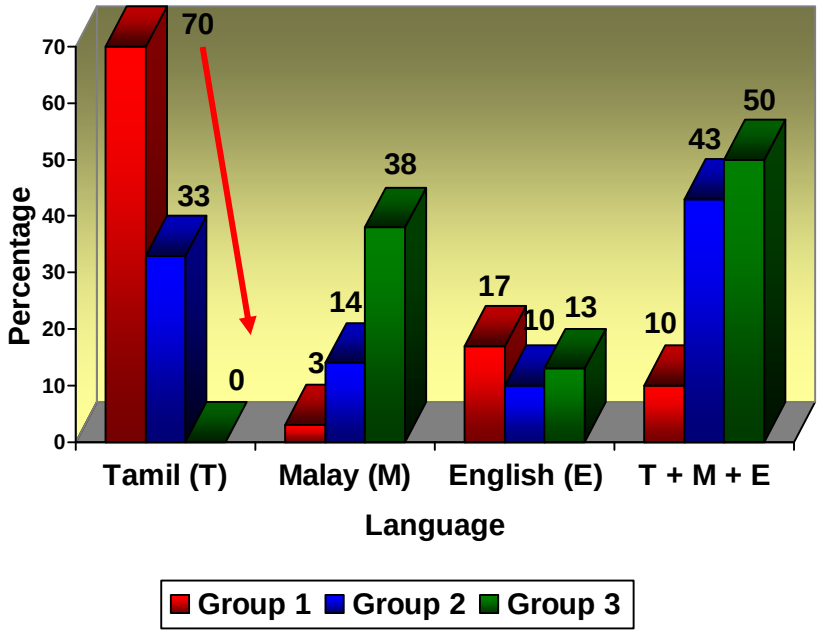

Figure 4.8: Language Use with Spouse – Comparison across Groups

This intergenerational decline, from 70 per cent for Group 1 to 33 per cent for Group 2 and finally, zero per cent for Group 3, is steeper than is seen in language use with siblings, in which the sole use of the Tamil language decreased from 87 per cent for Group 1 to 33 percent for Group 2, followed by 27 per cent for Group 3. However, the Tamil language has not disappeared totally from the linguistic repertoire of the married

respondents in Group 3 as half of them still use it in combination with either or both Malay and English in interacting with their spouses.

(i) Languages Used with Children

It was explained in Chapter Two (Section 2.2.2) that language shift can occur over three generations. When this happens, according to Fishman (1966) and Myers-Scotton (2006), the first generation speaks mostly in the mother tongue, using a second language for functional purposes such as for work, while the second generation relegates the mother tongue to the home and uses the second language for most interactions elsewhere. Later, the third generation emerges, with little or no knowledge of how to speak the mother tongue. So, gradually a community that is originally monolingual in one language becomes monolingual or bilingual in other languages. This point is of significance here as language use with children by the three age groups in the present study has been found to follow this pattern. Again, not all the respondents had children of their own. While all (100 per cent) of Group 1 respondents had children, only 19 respondents (63 per cent) from Group 2 and six respondents (20 per cent) from Group 3 had offspring. As seen in Table 4.7, Tamil was the sole language used by 18 (60 per cent) Group 1 respondents with their children. In contrast, only four of the 19 (21 per cent) respondents in Group 2 showed a similar practice. This group is also more multilingual, with 10 of the 19 respondents (52 per cent) using Malay, Tamil and English with their offspring. In the case of Group 3 respondents who had children, none of them used the Tamil language either solely or in combination with other languages in communicating with their children. Instead, four (67 per cent) of them used only Malay and the other two (33 per cent) used only English, as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Languages Used With Children

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	18 (60%)	4 (21%)	0 (0%)
Malay	3 (10%)	3 (16%)	4 (67%)
English	5 (17%)	2 (11%)	2 (33%)
Tamil, Malay and English	4 (13%)	10 (52%)	0 (0%)
Total	30 (100%)	19* (100%)	6* (100%)

* Numbers are below 30 because not all respondents have children

Thus, it was discovered that the use of the Tamil language alone for communication with one's children went from 60 per cent for Group 1 to just 21 per cent for Group 2 and then zero per cent for Group 3. The members of Group 3 did not use Tamil at all with their children, not even in combination with other languages. Of the language use with the seven categories of family members – grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, siblings, spouse and children – the one which showed the steepest decline in the use of the mother tongue by the respondents was language use with children. The lack of transmission of the mother tongue by the respondents to their children may, in all likelihood, render the children not only unable to use their own mother tongue but also unable to pass it on when they have children of their own. Figure 4.9 illustrates this stark decline in language use with children.

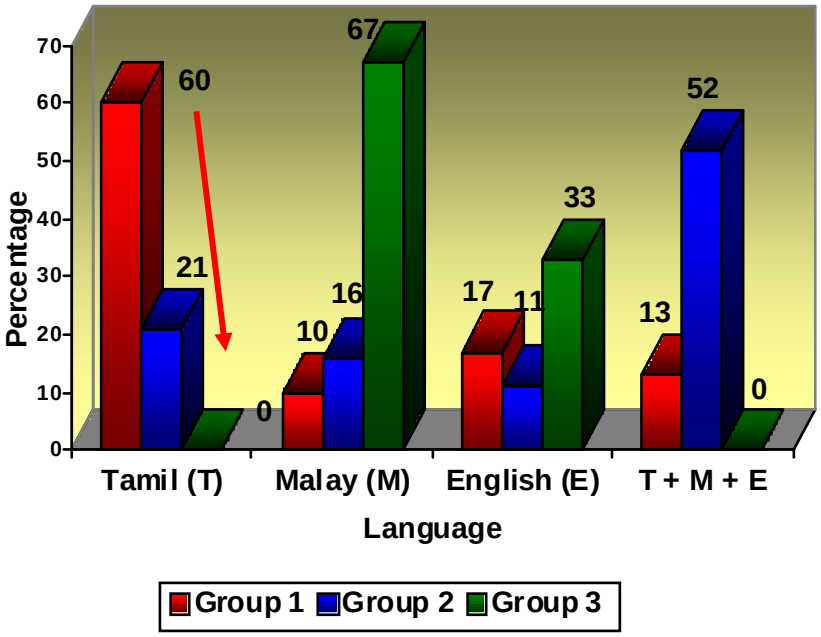

Figure 4.9: Language Use with Children – Comparison across Groups

With intergenerational decline in Tamil language use the main focus of the present study, the following segment provides a comparison of the sole use of the Tamil language by each of the three age groups with all seven categories of family members. The purpose of this comparison is to highlight the differences between Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3 in the extent to which the mother tongue is used in the family domain.

(j) Intergenerational Decline in the Use of Tamil

The following three figures show the level of interaction in solely Tamil by each age group with the seven categories of family members – grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, siblings, spouse and children. Group 1, as shown in Figure 4.10, displayed 100 per cent use of Tamil alone with their grandparents and parents. However, the number of Group 1 respondents who used the mother tongue alone declined to 87 per cent in their interactions with their siblings. The number reduced further, to 70 per cent, for communication with their spouse and even further, to 60 per cent, for communication with their children. Thus, the use of the Tamil language was highest with the oldest

category of family members and lowest with the youngest category of family members.

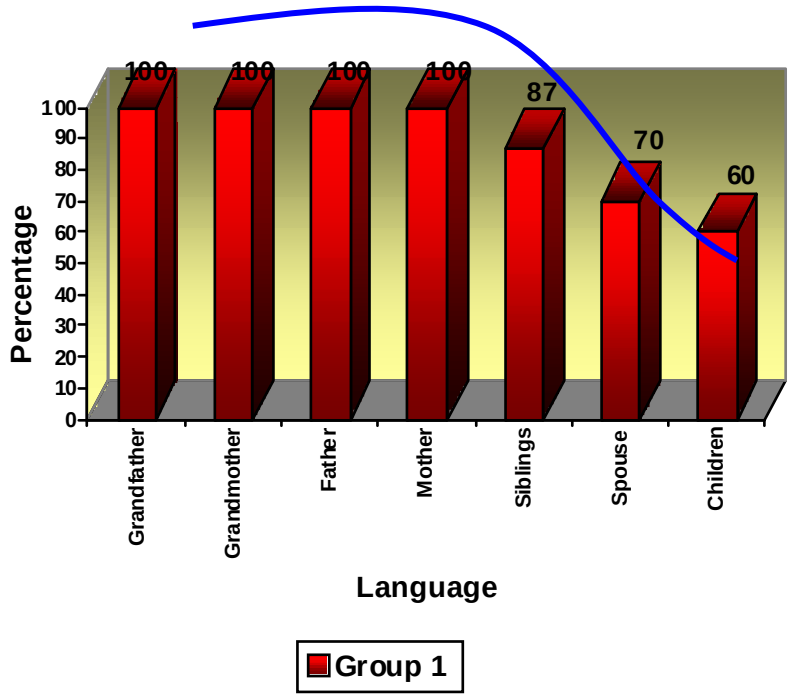

Figure 4.10: Intergenerational Decline in Use of Tamil in Group 1

Most Group 2 members, as shown in Figure 4.11, used solely Tamil with their grandfathers (93 per cent) and grandmothers (90 per cent). More of them used solely Tamil with their mothers (84 per cent) than with their fathers (70 per cent). However, when it came to interacting with other family members, the use of Tamil alone declined. Only 33 per cent did so with their siblings and spouse and only 21 per cent did so with their children.

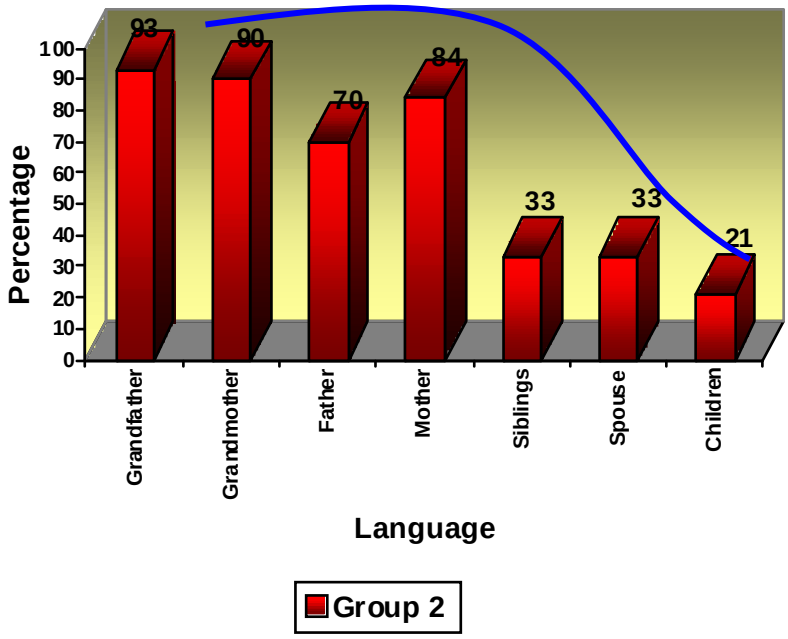

Figure 4.11: Intergenerational Decline in Use of Tamil in Group 2

The highest number of Group 3 members who used solely Tamil (70 per cent) did so with their grandparents, as shown in Figure 4.12. This number decreased in communication with parents. Only 40 per cent of Group 3 respondents used solely Tamil with their father and only 53 per cent of them did so with their mother. And then only 27 per cent used solely Tamil with their siblings. As for communication with spouses and children, not a single Group 3 member used solely Tamil. Group 3 respondents' use of solely Tamil decreased in use with their siblings and spouse but it went totally off the map in their communication with their children. As the respondents did not use the Tamil language on its own or even in combination with other languages in interactions with their children, it can be said that Group 3 showed the steepest decline in intergenerational language use. There is a possibility this could very well ring a death knell for the intergenerational transmission of the Tamil language in the community of Muslim Tamils living in the Klang Valley.

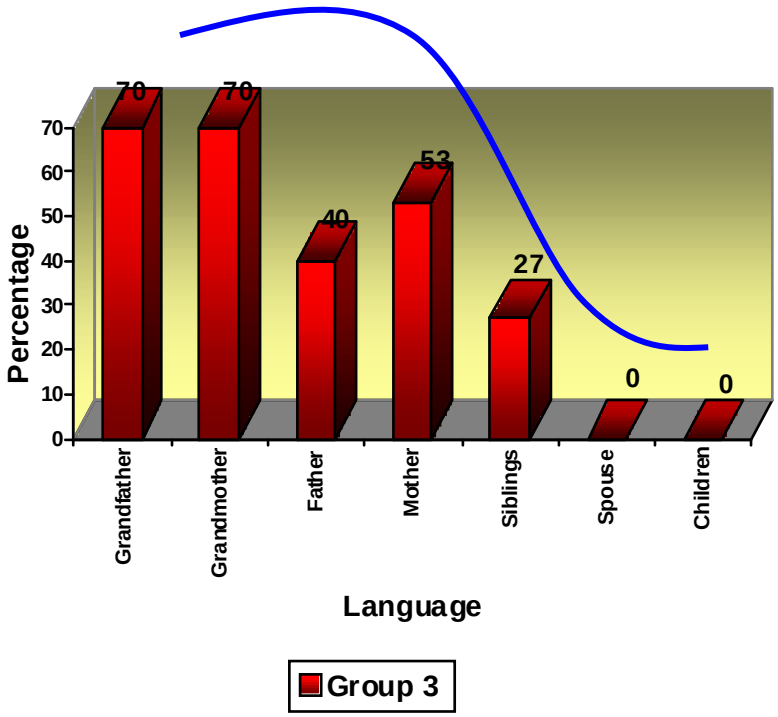

Figure 4.12: Intergenerational Decline in Use of Tamil in Group 3

(k) Observation of Families

In order to corroborate the findings of the questionnaire, non-participant observation of two families, which had three generations – grandparent, parent and child – was conducted in June 2010. The findings were used to determine whether the community's mother tongue was indeed being displaced as the main language in the domain of the family. The findings are as follows.

Family 1

This family comprised a grandmother, mother and daughter. For ease of reference, the grandmother is noted as A, while her daughter is B and her granddaughter is C. A was born in Ilayangudi, a village in the state of Tamil Nadu, India, in 1943. From the age of five to 12, she attended school where the medium of instruction was Tamil. As was the custom in her village, her schooling was stopped when she reached puberty. After her marriage in 1961, she migrated with her husband to Malaysia where she learnt to speak

the Malay language by herself. At the time of the non-participant observation, she lived with her husband in Cheras, which is a suburb in Kuala Lumpur. B, who is the second of A's six children, was born in Malaysia in 1964. She grew up in a Tamil-speaking household where both her parents used the Tamil language with her and her siblings. She attended primary and secondary schools where the main medium of instruction was Malay and also learnt English at school. B lives with her husband and three children in Sungai Buloh, a sub-district of Selangor. The granddaughter, C, who happens to be B's eldest child, is a 23-year-old who was also born and raised in Malaysia. For her, English was the language spoken at home and a school subject while Malay was the main medium of instruction at school. The researcher knew the family personally and had observed over the years that A was fluent in Tamil and spoke a smattering of Malay but was unable to converse in English. As for B, she could speak in Tamil but was much more fluent in both English and Malay. C, meanwhile, spoke only English and Malay.

Non-participant observation was conducted during a visit to A's home during a weekend, when B and C had come to pay her a visit. When they arrived, B greeted A in Tamil while C did so in Malay. During the visit, A spoke to B in Tamil but while B replied in mostly Tamil, she also used Malay words and sentences at certain points in the conversation when she appeared to struggle to express herself in Tamil. A's interaction with C took place in Malay as it was the only common language between them. In contrast, the interaction between B and C took place in English. At a few instances when A and B conversed in Tamil with each other, C interrupted in Malay, wanting to know what they were talking about, as she did not understand Tamil. It would appear that C used Malay, not English, so that A could also understand her query. An extract of the conversation which took place is presented in Table 4.8 (see Appendix D for the transcript).

Table 4.8: Conversation among Members of Family 1

Conversation	Language Used	Translation
B: ***Eppedi irukke****?*	Tamil	How are you?
A: ***Nalla irukken****.*	Tamil	I am fine.
C: Hello, *nenek*.	English and Malay	Hello, grandma.
A to B: ***Malai le nalenjetiya****?*	Tamil	Have you got wet in the rain?
B: ***Konjum te****.*	Tamil	Just a little bit.
A to C: *Sudah basahkah?*	Malay	Have you got wet?
C: *Kaki saja, nek*.	Malay	Only the legs, grandma.
A: ***Netele irinde sariyana malai***.	Tamil	There has been heavy rain since yesterday.
B: ***Ama, neite toveche sattai lam*** *belum kering*.	Tamil and Malay	Yes, yesterday's laundry has yet to dry.
C: *Apa*?	Malay	What?
B: I am telling grandma that our laundry hasn't dried yet because of the heavy rain.	English	
C: *Ya nenek, hujan teruk. Nenek masak apa hari ini*?	Malay	Yes grandma, very heavy rain. What have you cooked today, grandma?
A: *Kari dhal dan ikan saja*.	Malay	Just dhal curry and fish.
C: Ma, let's go buy pizza.	English	
B: No, we will eat rice with *nenek* today.	English and Malay	*nenek* = grandma
C: *Nenek buat apa kat rumah*?	Malay	What are you doing at home, grandma?
A: *Tengok TV saja lah*.	Malay	Just watching TV.
B: ***Thambi tangachi lam vareliya***?	Tamil	Aren't younger brother and younger sister coming?
A: ***Von thambi nalaiki varuvan. Von tangachi intha varum varemudiyade de sonna***.	Tamil	Your younger brother will come tomorrow. Your younger sister said she can't come this week.
B: ***Yen***?	Tamil	Why?
A: ***Yennemo velai irukkan sonna. Velivoorke pohenuma***.	Tamil	She has some work to do, she said. She has to go overseas.
C: *Apa nenek cakap? Saya mau tahu*.	Malay	What are you saying, grandma? I want to know.
A: *Makcik tak boleh datang. Dia banyak kerja. Kena pergi luar negeri*.	Malay	Aunty cannot come. She has a lot of work. She has to go overseas.

From the conversation, it was observed that while A and B were able to converse in the Tamil language, C could not do so at all. Consequently, the exchanges between A and C took place in the Malay language while the exchanges between B and C took place in the English language. The languages used by the three generations are depicted in Figure 4.13 for further clarity.

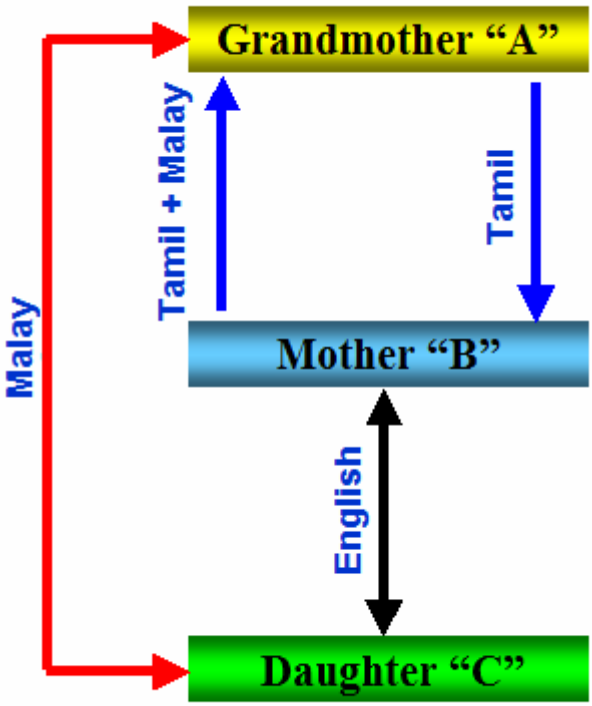

Figure 4.13: Communication Flowchart of Family 1

Family 2

This family comprised a grandfather, father and two sons. For ease of reference, the grandfather is noted as A and his son as B while the grandsons are C and D. A was born in the Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu, India, in 1930. He had received formal education only from the age of five to 14, in a school where the primary medium of instruction was Tamil, after which he began working to help support his family. He left India for Malaysia in the 1950s to set up a business. In order to cope in the new country,

he brushed up on his command of the English language, which he had learnt a little during his brief stint in school, and learnt Malay on his own. He lived in Petaling Jaya, a city in Selangor, with his wife and two of their five children.

B, his eldest child, was born in 1961 in India but came to Malaysia at the age of two with his mother. He grew up using the Tamil language with his family. He studied from primary up to secondary level at convents where the medium of instruction was English while Malay was a school subject. He has two sons, C who was born in 1997, and D, who was born in 2000. Both sons, who were born in Malaysia, attended primary and secondary schools where the medium of instruction was Malay while English was a school subject. Both children grew up using the Malay language at home, with both their parents using that language to communicate with them. This family was also known to the researcher, who from experience had observed that while A was fluent in Tamil and English and fairly conversant in Malay, B could also speak in the Tamil language but not as fluently as his father and was more fluent in Malay and English. As for C and D, they were able to speak in Malay and English but not in Tamil. Interaction between the three generations of males was observed by the researcher during a visit to their home one weekend afternoon. When the family sat to partake of their lunch, the researcher noted that while A and B spoke to each other in Tamil, both of them spoke to the boys in Malay. The two boys responded to A and B and spoke with each other in Malay. In one instance, when A attempted speaking in Tamil to C, the latter did not understand him and as a result, A had to repeat himself in Malay.

Thus, the findings for Family 2 mirrored that of Family 1 in that proficiency in the mother tongue went from high in the first generation to medium in the second generation and non-existent in the third. An extract of Family 2's lunchtime conversation is presented in Table 4.9 (see Appendix E for the transcript).

Table 4.9: Conversation among Members of Family 2

Conversation	Language Used	Translation
A: ***Onnum sote yedeteke da.***	Tamil	Take more rice ("da" is a term of endearment)
B: ***Ithe podum***.	Tamil	This is enough.
B to C and D: *Nak nasi lagi?*	Malay	Want more rice?
C: *Nak*.	Malay	I want.
D: *Tak nak*.	Malay	I don't want.
A to D: *Tambahlah nasi. Nanti lapar*.	Malay	Take more rice or you will be hungry later.
D: *Tak nak*, ***nanna***.	Malay and Tamil	I don't want, grandpa.
B to A: ***Kaal vaali onnu irukka?***	Tamil	Is your leg still hurting?
A: ***Konjum korenjedeche***.	Tamil	It has reduced a bit.
B: ***Eppa aspitrike poringge?***	Tamil	When are you going to the hospital?
A: ***Adeta varam***.	Tamil	Next week.
C to D: *Nanti nak gi main bola?*	Malay	Want to play ball afterwards?
D: *Boleh jugak. Papa nak main*?	Malay	Yes, sure. Would you like to play, Papa?
B: *Tak. Kamu mainlah.*	Malay	No, you go ahead and play.
C: *Alaaa, papa pun mainlah.*	Malay	Papa, please play too.
B: *Papa nak berehat.*	Malay	I want to rest.
C: ***Nanna*** *boleh main*?	Malay	Can grandpa play?
A: *Boleh*! (laughs) ***Ningge valaiyadengeda.*** ***Naan vaisa ayiten.***	Malay Tamil	Can! You two go ahead and play. I have grown old.
C: *Apa* ***nanna*** *cakap?*	Malay and Tamil	What did you say?
A: ***Nanna*** *cakap kamu sajalah main.* ***Nanna*** *sudah tua.*	Malay and Tamil	I said both of you go ahead and play. I have grown old.
B to C and D: *Lepas makan, cuci pinggan sendiri tau.*	Malay	After you finish eating, wash your own plates.
C and D: *Yelah, papa.*	Malay	Of course, papa.

The languages used by the three generations of Family 2 are depicted in Figure 4.14 for better comprehension of the communication pattern.

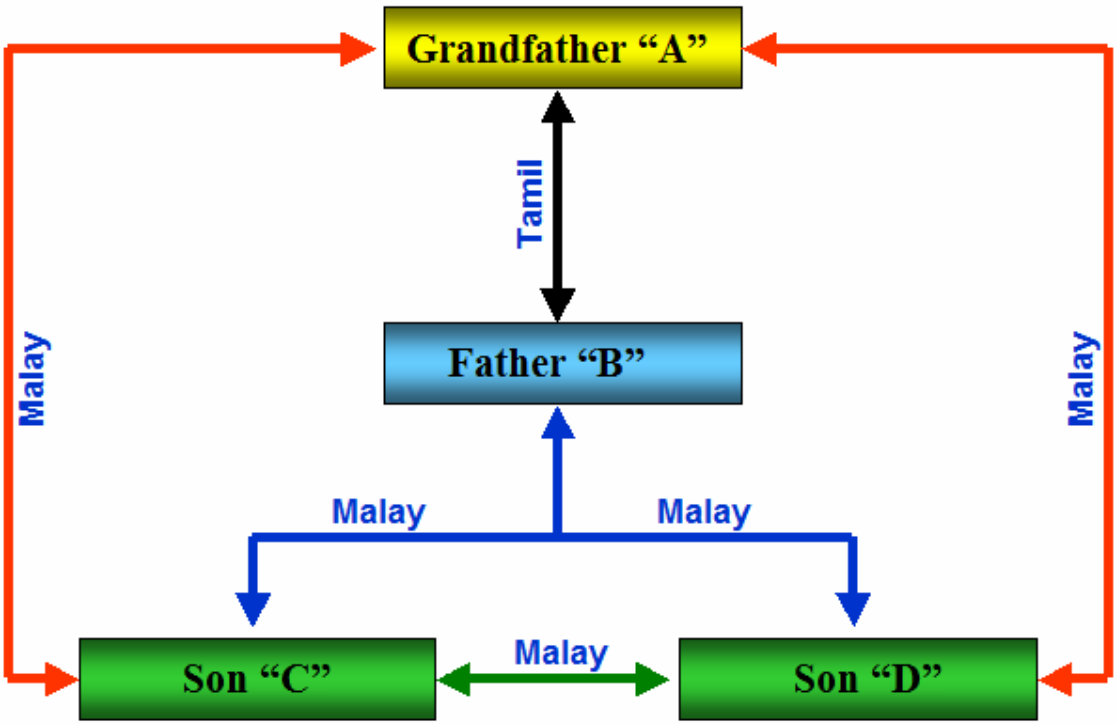

Figure 4.14: Communication Flowchart of Family 2

The findings from the non-participant observation conducted with Family 1 and Family 2 corroborated the findings gathered from the questionnaire, which showed intergenerational decline in the use of the Tamil language in the homes of Muslim Tamil families in the Klang Valley. The non-participant observation focused on one gender in each family in order to examine whether there was a difference in language shift and maintenance patterns along gender lines and found none.

4.2.2 Friendship Domain

The second domain to be investigated in the present study is the friendship domain. Earlier findings showed that Group 1 respondents used the Tamil language the most with family members. Group 2 did so to a lesser extent and Group 3 used the Tamil language the least in family interactions. To find out whether the friendship domain would display similar results, the language used with two categories of friends – close friends and Tamil acquaintances – was examined. These two categories comprised only

those of Tamil ethnicity and language use with friends of other ethnicities was not examined in the present study as it would not have been possible for Tamil language to be used with non-Tamil speakers unless they had learned the language.

(a) Languages Used with Close Tamil Friends

Close Tamil friends was the first of the two categories of friends listed in the questionnaire on language use. Interaction with close Tamil friends was examined to identify whether the use of the Tamil language faced intergenerational erosion in the friendship domain as well despite similarity in ethnicity and mother tongue. The study found that while the majority of Group 1 members used the Tamil language with their close Tamil friends, with 19 respondents (63 per cent) using the language on its own, only two respondents (seven per cent) in both Group 2 and Group 3 used only Tamil with their close Tamil friends. Table 4.10 presents the figures.

Table 4.10: Languages Used with Close Tamil Friends

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	19 (63%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)
Malay	2 (7%)	4 (13%)	13 (43%)
English	4 (13%)	5 (17%)	3 (10%)
Tamil, Malay and English	5 (17%)	19 (63%)	12 (40%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

Figure 4.15 provides a graphical depiction of the languages predominantly used by the respondents in the three age groups for communication with their close Tamil friends. It illustrates clearly the sharp intergenerational decline in the use of the Tamil language on its own in this area of communication. There is a high evidence of multilingualism in Group 2 as 63 per cent of its respondents used Tamil, Malay and English in interactions

with their close Tamil friends. Although 40 per cent of Group 3 respondents also used all three languages with their close Tamil friends, a slightly higher number, 43 per cent, are monolingual in Malay with their good friends. Thus, it can be concluded that in speaking with close Tamil friends, Group 1 predominantly used the Tamil language, Group 2 mostly used a mix of all three languages and Group 3 used mostly Malay. The conclusion that the third group used mostly Malay is based on the finding that not only did 43 per cent of Group 3 respondents use only the Malay language, another 40 per cent also used Malay in combination with Tamil and English, in communication with close Tamil friends.

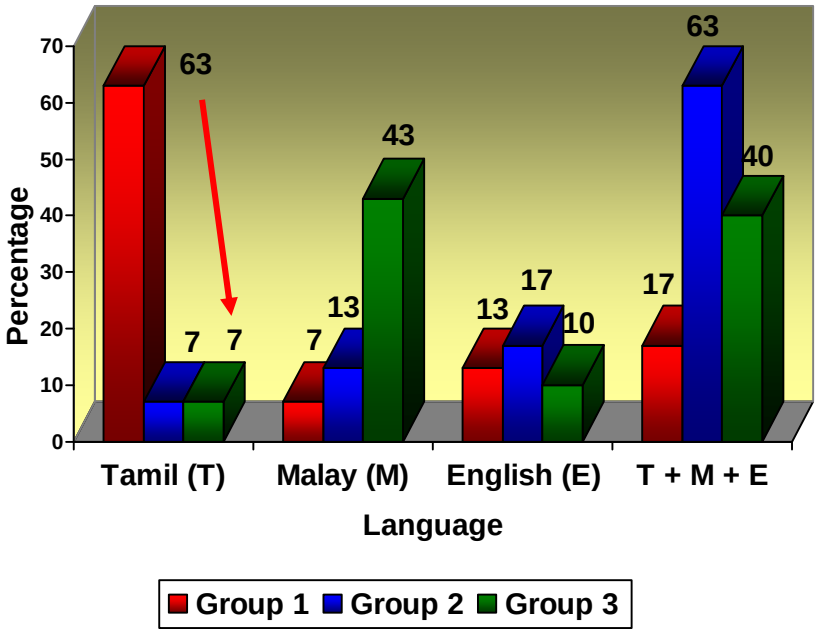

Figure 4.15: Comparison across Groups – Language Use with Close Tamil Friends

As seen in Figure 4.15, while the sole use of the Tamil language with close Tamil friends was relatively high among Group 1 members, it was very low in the case of Group 2 and Group 3 members. The findings indicate that although Group 2 and Group 3 respondents and their close friends shared the same ethnicity and mother tongue, only a small percentage relied on the sole use of the Tamil language for communication

compared to Group 1 members. The findings indicate intergenerational decline in the use of the Tamil language for communication in the friendship domain.

(b) Languages Used with Tamil Acquaintances

The second category of friends listed in the questionnaire on language use was Tamil acquaintances. These acquaintances, like the close Tamil friends, shared the same ethnicity and mother tongue with the respondents. In terms of the language used by the majority of respondents with their acquaintances who were also Tamil people, it was found that 18 respondents (60 per cent) in Group 1 used only their common mother tongue. It was also found that 16 respondents (53 per cent) in Group 2 used Tamil together with either or both Malay and English. As for Group 3, while 13 respondents (43 per cent) used the Malay language, another 12 respondents (40 per cent) used all the three languages in speaking with their Tamil acquaintances.

The number of respondents who used only the Tamil language with their Tamil acquaintances declined sharply from 18 respondents (60 per cent) in Group 1 to four respondents (13 per cent) in Group 2 and then none in Group 3. In contrast, the number of respondents who employed the combined use of Tamil together with other languages rose from four respondents (13 per cent) in Group 1 to 16 respondents (53 per cent) in Group 2 and then decreased slightly to 12 respondents (40 per cent) in Group 3. As was the case for communication with close Tamil friends, it was found that Group 3 respondents also highly favoured the Malay language for communication with their Tamil acquaintances. While 43 per cent used exclusively Malay with their Tamil acquaintances, another 40 per cent used the language in combination with either or both Tamil and English in doing so, as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Languages Used with Tamil Acquaintances

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	18 (60%)	4 (13%)	0 (0%)
Malay	2 (7%)	5 (17%)	13 (43%)
English	6 (20%)	5 (17%)	5 (17%)
Tamil, Malay and English	4 (13%)	16 (53%)	12 (40%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

Once again, the findings show that while the oldest group, which was akin to the first generation of Muslim Tamils, was mostly monolingual in Tamil, the second oldest group, akin to the second generation, was mostly multilingual and the youngest group, which was akin to the third generation, was predominantly becoming speakers of the Malay language. As seen in the language use with close Tamil friends, Group 3 members also shied away from the sole use of the Tamil language in conversing with Tamil acquaintances. In fact, the decline is steeper in the case of language use with the second category of friends as while seven per cent of Group 3 members admitted to using solely Tamil in speaking with their close Tamil friends, none of them admitted to doing so with their Tamil acquaintances. Figure 4.16 provides a clear depiction of the situation.

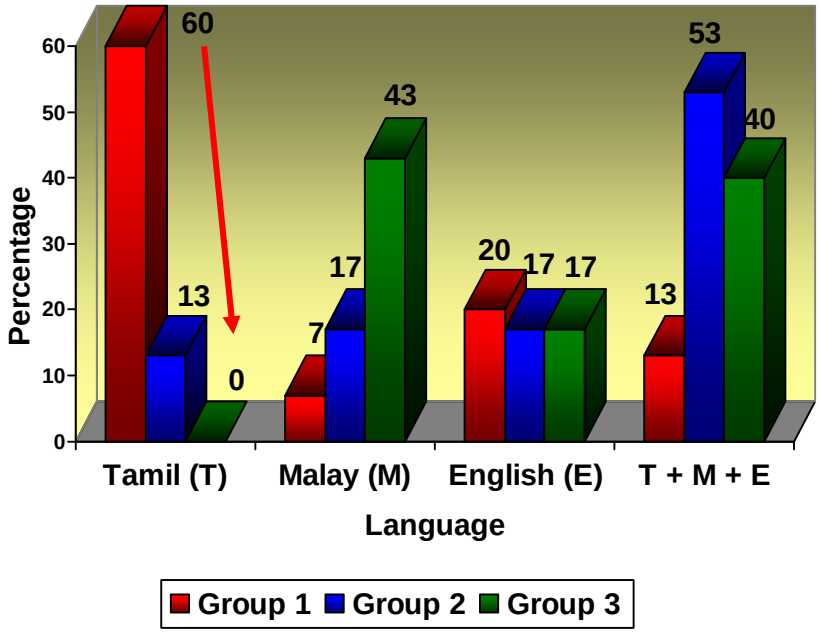

Figure 4.16: Comparison across Groups – Language Use with Tamil Acquaintances

The questionnaire findings indicated intergenerational erosion in the use of the Tamil language by the respondents in the present study with their close friends and acquaintances who were also of Tamil ethnicity. In addition to the questionnaire, non-participant observation was carried out to further investigate language use in the friendship domain.

(c) Observation of Friends

In order to corroborate the findings of the questionnaire, non-participant observation was conducted in two situations involving conversations among Muslim Tamil friends. The first situation involved two women while the second situation involved a group of six Muslim Tamils who had gathered at a restaurant near a mosque to break their fast together during the fasting month. All of those observed were known to the researcher, who joined in the meetings but made sure conversations were initiated and mostly carried out by the other participants in order to prevent the selection of language for communication being made by the researcher herself.

In the first situation, the researcher informed two female Muslim Tamil friends, both of whom were 37 years old, about the present study and sought permission to observe their conversation during a visit to one of the two respondents' home in Sungai Buloh, a sub-district of Selangor, in April 2010. An extract from the conversation of the two friends, named here as M and N, is presented in Table 4.12 (see Appendix F for the transcript).

Table 4.12: Language Use between Two Muslim Tamil Friends

Conversation	**Language Used**	**Translation**
M: Hi! Please come in.	English	
N: Wow, what a lovely house. ***Pulenggelam yengge*****?**	Tamil and English	Where are the children?
M: Thanks. School ***le*** programme ***irukka, kaleile pochengge***.	Tamil and English	There is a programme at school, they went in the morning.
N: ***Unnode veetukarar*****?**	Tamil	Your husband?
M: ***Avar vela visayamma veliya poitar. Rattiri ki taan tirumbevaar***. How about your husband?	Tamil and English	He has gone out on a work matter. He will only return at night.
N: He's at home, playing a video game on TV. I asked him to come with me but he refused, saying he didn't want to join in girl talk.	English	
M: (laughing) I understand! My husband feels the same.	English	
N: ***Inthe*** curtain ***yengge vangene***?	Tamil and English	Where did you buy this curtain?
M: ***Athe va,*** Nilai ***le. Rombe cheapa*** curtain ***tuni vikkerangge. Oru*** metre ***anje velli taan. Naa sondemma tachchen.***	Tamil and English	Oh that, in Nilai. Curtain fabric is being sold very cheaply there. One metre was only RM5. I sewed it myself.
N: ***Rombe alaha irukke. Ye veetu*** curtain ***mattelam ninaikiren.***	Tamil and English	It is very beautiful. I am thinking of changing my house curtains.
M: Thanks. ***Nilai ke po, nalle*** designs ***la kadaikum.***	Tamil and English	Go to Nilai, you will find nice designs there.

N: Okay, how about our plan to go to Bandung? My husband has agreed to let me go, he says he'll send the children to his mother while I'm away.	English	
M: Oh, bad news. My husband says no.	English	
N: Why?	English	
M: There's no one to look after the kids and he doesn't know how to cook. He says if I went, I'd probably return to find them dead from starvation.	English	
N: That's melodramatic! ***Rombe Tamil padam la pakeraro***?	Tamil and English	Does he watch a lot of Tamil movies?
M: I don't know what to say. I really want to go. I need a break!	English	
N: ***Kalyanam panna ithan*** problem.	Tamil and English	If we get married, this is the problem.
M: Yes, have to take care of husband and children!	English	

From the extract of the conversation, it could be seen that both women, who could be classified as Group 2 as they were within its age category of 31 to 50, used a mixture of English and Tamil. There was also evidence of code switching, as the women peppered their utterances in the Tamil language with English words such as *school*, *programme*, *curtain*, *metre* and *designs*. The use of these English words in the conversation may be a sign of a lack of knowledge of the equivalent Tamil words, which in turn, may indicate a lack of proficiency in the Tamil language. The finding that more than one language was used between the two friends is in keeping with earlier findings from the questionnaire which showed that Group 2 members were more multilingual in communicating with their close Tamil friends and Tamil acquaintances.

In the second situation, a group of friends who comprised six Muslim Tamils, comprising three males and three females, all of whom were in their early twenties,

agreed to be observed by the researcher while they were waiting to break fast at a restaurant near a mosque in Kuala Lumpur in August 2010 during the fasting month. The men (referred to as Y1, Y2 and Y3) and the women (referred to as X1, X2 and X3), all of whom were single at the point of observation, were discussing, among other things, the rate of dowry for marriage. An extract of their conversation is presented in Table 4.13 (see Appendix G for the transcript).

Table 4.13: Language Use between Six Muslim Tamil Friends

Conversation	**Language Used**	**Translation**
X1: *Korang tau, nilai hantaran kawin ikut taraf pelajaran dan campur cukai enam peratus! Kalau belajar sampai tahap PMR, RM1,000 hingga RM3,000; kalau sampai SPM, RM3,000 hingga RM8,000; kalau STPM atau diploma, RM8,000 hingga RM12,000 dan kalau ada degree, RM12,000 hingga RM15,000. Ini belum campur lagi cukai enam peratus!*	Malay	Do you know that the price of dowry is based on education status and there is a tax of six per cent? If the woman studied until PMR, the dowry is RM1,000 to RM3,000; if until SPM, it is RM3,000 to RM8,000; if until STPM or diploma, it is RM8,000 to RM12,000 and if she has a degree, it is RM12,000 to RM15,000. This does not include the six per cent tax!
X2: Impossible!	English	
Y1: *Mahal sangat ni. Suruh mak bapak simpan saja anak depa!*	Malay	This is very expensive. Tell the parents to just keep their daughter!
Y2: *Last-last tu tak kahwin dan jadi andartu*.	Malay and English	In the end, the women won't get married and become spinsters.
X3: *Enam peratus* government tax *tu wat pe? Baik tak kahwin*.	Malay and English	What is the six per cent government tax for? It is better to not get married.
Y3: *Daripada bagi hantaran, baik beli saham, cukup tahun dapat untung*.	Malay	Instead of giving dowry, it would be better to buy stocks, can get profit at the end of the year.
Y1: *Saya sokong! Ini nak jual anak atau kahwinkan anak*?	Malay	I support! Are the parents selling or marrying off their children?
X1: *Ini yang perempuan mintak kat lelaki. Yang laki mintak kat perempuan lagi banyak kot. Dowri RM50,000 dan emas 50 hingga 60 paun pun ade*.	Malay	This is what the women asked from the men. The men might be asking for more from the women. There have been dowries of RM50,000 and 50 to 60 pounds of gold.
X3: *Dowri yang laki minta dari*	Malay and	The dowry that men ask from

perempuan boleh guna untuk beli rumah, for second wife *dia*!	English	women can be used to buy a house for a second wife!
X1: *Sebenarnye, yang mintak tu mamak pure yang mai dari India, kad pengenalan merah dan pasport India, cakap Melayu pun terbalik. Depa la dok mintak macam-macam. Bukan orang sini,* as far as I know *lah.*	Malay and English	Actually, those who ask for the dowry are pure mamak who come from India, have red identity card and Indian passport, and speak broken Malay. They are the ones asking for this and that. Not the people here, as far as I know.
X2: *Yang perempuan yang tak mau dan tak suka bagi apa-apa dowri* must be firm. It is their parents who are scared their daughter won't get married.	Malay and English	Women who don't want and don't like dowry must be firm about it.
Y2: Must change the mindset like you change the handset.	English	

Observation of the conversation among the six friends, who could fit into Group 3 (aged 18 to 30) because all of them were between 23 and 30 years old, showed that they did not use the Tamil language and instead, used a mixture of Malay and English. In addition, Malay was seen to be the most used language.

Overall, the findings gathered from non-participant observation of the two situations corroborate the findings of the questionnaire on the languages used with close Tamil friends and Tamil acquaintances, in that it showed that while Group 2 retained some use of the Tamil language with friends, Group 3 was shifting towards English and Malay, especially the latter.

4.2.3 Education Domain

The education domain is the third domain investigated in the present study to find out whether Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley were shifting from the Tamil language. This domain may have some influence on language use and choices as shown in a study by Sofu (2009) which indicated that second-generation respondents in a case study of three generations of three Arabic-Turkish bilingual families in Turkey were shifting

from the home language of Arabic to Turkish as it was the medium of instruction in school. Learning to read and write in Turkish and socialising with classmates who only spoke Turkish led to the move away from the Arabic language (Sofu, 2009). Thus, the present study sought to determine which languages took up the main position in the education spheres of the respondents' lives. The questionnaire was used to identify the medium of instruction at the primary school, secondary school and institution of higher learning which the respondents attended.

(a) Medium of Instruction in Primary School

The questionnaire found that Tamil was the main language of instruction at primary school for 22 (73 per cent) of Group 1 respondents. For the remaining eight respondents, the main medium of instruction was English for six respondents (20 per cent) and Malay for two respondents (seven per cent). In the case of Group 2, the main medium of instruction was Malay for 25 respondents (83 per cent), Tamil for four respondents (13 per cent) and English for one respondent (three per cent). Group 3 was even more different, as 29 (97 per cent) of its members had studied in Malay. The sole remaining Group 3 member had studied in the Tamil language. These percentages are detailed in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Medium of Instruction in Primary School

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	22(73%)	4 (13%)	1 (3%)
Malay	2 (7%)	25 (83%)	29 (97%)
English	6 (20%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

As can be seen from the table, the main medium of instruction in primary school was Tamil for Group 1 and Malay for the other two groups. While administering the

questionnaire, it was found that Group 1 members who said that either Tamil or English was the main medium of instruction at primary school for them had studied in India while members of the other two groups had studied in Malaysia.

Figure 4.17 delineates these differences, showing how the use of the Tamil language as a medium of instruction in primary school decreased sharply from 73 per cent for Group 1 to 13 per cent for Group 2 and then three per cent for Group 3. In contrast, the use of the Malay language as a medium of instruction in primary school rose from seven per cent for Group 1 to 83 per cent for Group 2 and then 97 per cent for Group 3. This shows that the Malay language has replaced the Tamil language as the main medium of instruction at the primary school level.

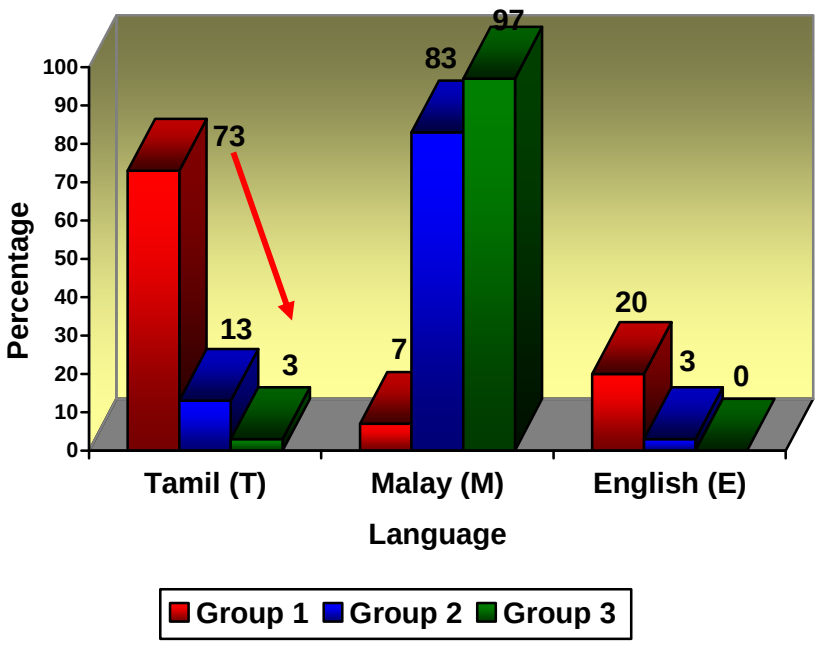

Figure 4.17: Medium of Instruction in Primary School – Comparison across Groups

The findings indicate that the Tamil language as a medium of instruction in primary school ceased to be the case for most of the members in the two younger groups compared to the majority of the respondents in the oldest age group. There are 523

Tamil schools in Malaysia ("Upgrading for Tamil schools", 2012), therefore the respondents in Group 2 and Group 3 who had attended Malay-medium primary schools could have been enrolled in Tamil schools instead. However, this did not happen for the majority of respondents in the two younger groups, with only four (13 per cent) of Group 2 respondents and one (three per cent) Group 3 respondent having had a Tamil-medium education at the primary school level. So, the medium of instruction was a matter of choice whereby the parents of the majority of the respondents in Group 2 and Group 3 chose to enrol them in Malay-medium schools.

To investigate whether the shift away from the Tamil language continued, the medium of instruction at the secondary school was investigated next.

(b) Medium of Instruction in Secondary School

Only 68 of the total 90 respondents had secondary school education – 11 respondents from Group 1, 27 respondents from Group 2 and 30 respondents from Group 3. Through the questionnaire, it was found that nine of the 11 respondents (82 per cent) in Group 1 had studied in English at secondary school. So, English was the main medium of instruction for most of Group 1 respondents who had secondary school education. In contrast, 26 of the 27 respondents (96 per cent) in Group 2 had studied in Malay. As for Group 3, all of its members had also studied in schools where Malay was the main medium of instruction. These numbers are further detailed in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Medium of Instruction in Secondary School

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	2 (18%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)
Malay	0 (0%)	26 (96%)	30 (100%)
English	9 (82%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	11* (100%)	27* (100%)	30 (100%)

* Numbers are below 30 because not all respondents had attended secondary school

The above table shows that Tamil was a medium of instruction at the secondary school level for only three of all 68 respondents. These three respondents comprised two Group 1 members and one Group 2 member. While administering the questionnaire, it was found that Group 1 members who said either Tamil or English was the main medium of instruction at secondary school for them had studied in India while members of the other two groups had studied in Malaysia. The main medium of instruction was English for Group 1 and Malay for the two other groups. Figure 4.18 provides further clarity.

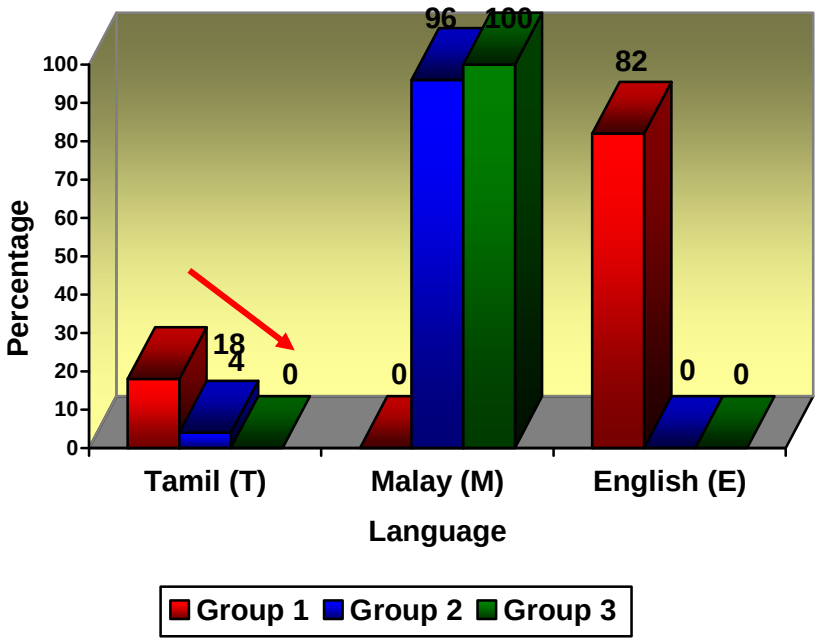

Figure 4.18: Medium of Instruction in Secondary School – Comparison across Groups

Similar to the findings on the medium of instruction at the primary school level, these findings show a shift from Tamil to Malay as the main medium of instruction at the secondary school level. However, while there were Tamil primary schools, there were no Tamil secondary schools in Malaysia. National secondary schools provided education in the Malay medium.

(c) Medium of Instruction in Tertiary Institutions

The lack of use of Tamil as a language of instruction was even more pronounced at the tertiary level, as revealed through the questionnaire. As shown in Table 4.16, none of the respondents in all three groups had access to the Tamil language as a medium of instruction at college or university.

Table 4.16: Medium of Instruction in Tertiary Institutions

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	Group 2 (31-50 years)	Group 3 (18-30 years)
Tamil	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Malay	0 (0%)	15 (75%)	30 (100%)
English	6 (100%)	5 (25%)	0 (0%)
Total	6* (100%)	20* (100%)	30 (100%)

* Numbers are below 30 because not all respondents had tertiary education

All six respondents in Group 1 who had studied at the tertiary level had done so in the English medium whereas 75 per cent of Group 2 and the entire Group 3 had studied in the Malay language, as shown in Figure 4.19.

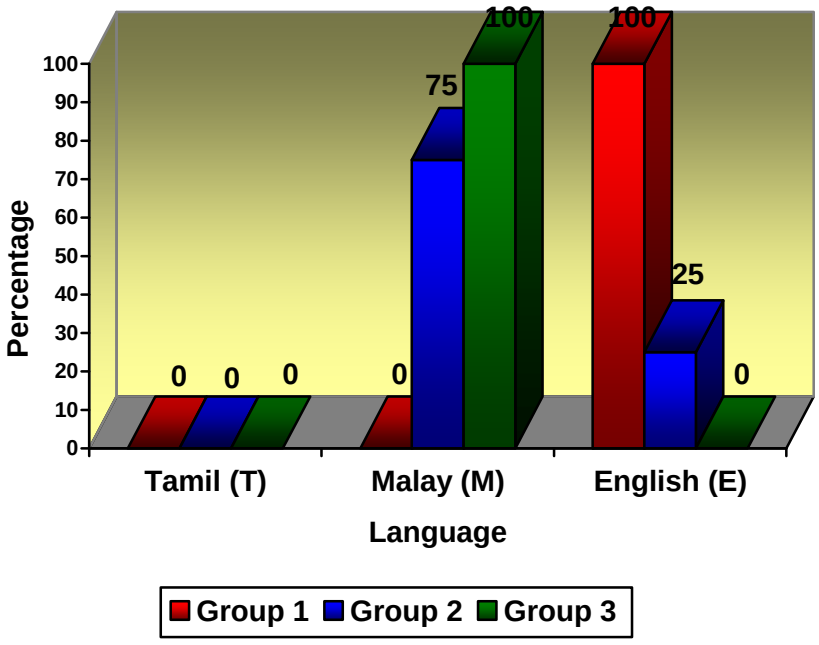

Figure 4.19: Medium of Instruction in Tertiary Institution – Comparison across Groups

Overall, the downward slide in the use of Tamil as a medium of instruction at primary school, secondary school, college and university is evident for all the three age groups. For Group 1, Tamil was used.. by 73 per cent of them in primary school, 18 per cent of them in secondary school and then zero per cent of them in tertiary institutions. For Group 2, Tamil was used by 13 per cent of them in primary school, four per cent of them in secondary school and zero per cent of them in tertiary education. For Group 3, Tamil was used by three per cent of them in primary school and then zero per cent of them in secondary school and tertiary institutions. These figures indicate that the Tamil language served as a medium of instruction only at the primary school level and that too only for the majority of Group 1 members.

4.2.4 Entertainment Domain

The entertainment domain was the fourth domain investigated in the present study. For the purpose of this study, the entertainment domain was restricted to the books and newspapers read, the songs listened to and the movies watched by the respondents. The first to be examined was whether the respondents preferred to read books which were in the Tamil, Malay or English language.

(a) Languages Preferred for Books

The study investigated the languages in which the respondents were most comfortable reading by determining the language of the books they preferred to read. These books did not include required reading materials for their studies or work. Instead, these were books which the respondents preferred to read in their leisure time. The study found that 18 respondents (60 per cent) of Group 1 preferred to read books in their mother tongue. Meanwhile, half (50 per cent) of Group 2 respondents preferred to read books in both Malay and English, with another 11 respondents (37 per cent) preferring English-

language books. Thirteen respondents (44 per cent) from Group 3 preferred to read books in English while another 10 respondents (33 per cent) preferred to read Malay-language books. Table 4.17 shows the percentages of respondents who preferred to read books in the Tamil, Malay and English languages in clearer detail.

Table 4.17: Languages Preferred for Books Read by Respondents

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	18 (60%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
Malay	2 (7%)	3 (10%)	10 (33%)
English	8 (27%)	11 (37%)	13 (43%)
Malay and English	2 (7%)	15 (50%)	7 (24%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

The respondents in Group 2 and Group 3 were able to read books in the Malay language as it was the main medium of instruction in school. They could also read books in the English language because it was a subject taught in school. However, the Tamil language was not a medium of instruction at school for the majority of the respondents in these two groups. In fact, the Tamil language was a medium of instruction at the primary school level for only four Group 2 respondents and one Group 3 respondent. At the secondary school level, it was a medium of instruction for only one Group 2 member from the two groups. As a consequence, most Group 2 and Group 3 members did not have the ability to read in the Tamil language, which played a major role in influencing their reading preferences. The sharp decline in the ability to read in the Tamil language across the three age groups is shown in Figure 4.20.

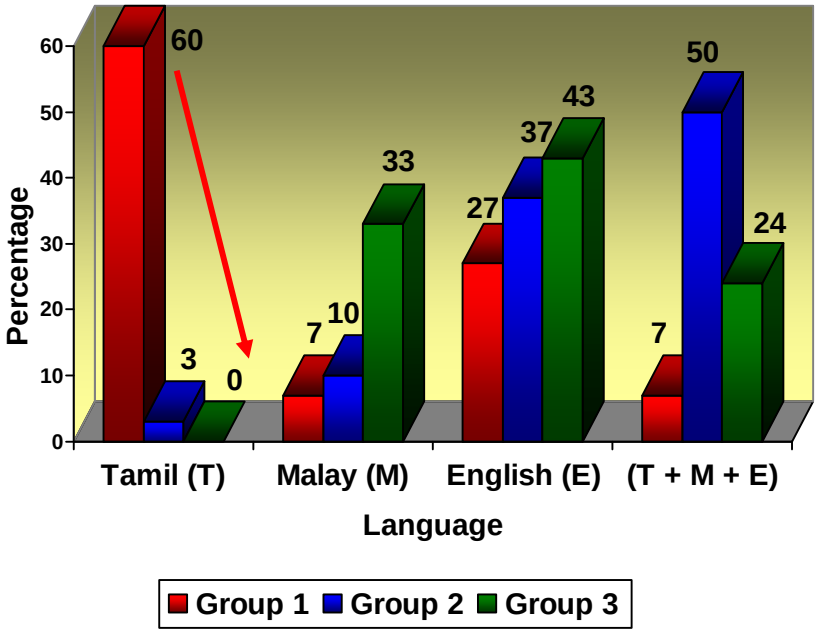

Figure 4.20: Language Preferred for Books – Comparison across Groups

The figure shows that although the main reading language was Tamil for Group 1, it was either or both Malay and English for the other two groups. So, Tamil as the language preferred for books read in leisure time by the three age groups went from 60 per cent for Group 1 to three per cent for Group 2 and then zero per cent for Group 3. When the figures of all the three age groups in the area of languages preferred for books are combined and examined, the lack of preference for the Tamil language becomes even more evident. Through the questionnaire, it was found that from the overall total of 90 respondents, 32 (36 per cent) preferred English-language books, 24 (27 per cent) preferred books in both Malay and English and 15 (17 per cent) preferred Malay-language books. So, 71 (79 per cent) of the total of 90 respondents did not prefer Tamil-language books.

(b) Languages Preferred for Newspapers

The questionnaire also sought to identify the preferred language for newspapers, where the three age groups were concerned. It was found that while 18 (60 per cent) of Group 1 respondents preferred to read Tamil-language newspapers, only two respondents (seven per cent) in Group 2 and none (zero per cent) in Group 3 shared their preference. Moreover, Group 2 had 13 respondents (43 per cent) who preferred to read English-language newspapers and another 13 respondents (43 per cent) who preferred to read newspapers in both Malay and English. As for Group 3, the most preferred language was English, as 18 (60 per cent) of them preferred to read English-language newspapers. The percentages are detailed in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Languages Preferred for Newspapers Read by Respondents

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	18 (60%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)
Malay	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	4 (13%)
English	8 (27%)	13 (43%)	18 (60%)
Malay and English	2 (7%)	13 (43%)	8 (27%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

Once again, a shift was detected from the Tamil language to the Malay and English languages across the three age groups or generations. This shift may be partly attributed to the ability of the respondents to read in the languages concerned. If all the respondents had been given opportunities to learn to read in Tamil, a higher percentage might have been able to read newspapers in their mother tongue. However, only partial attribution could be made as even if they had the ability to read in their mother tongue, whether they would do so also depended on other factors such as interest and availability of Tamil-language newspapers. Figure 4.21 shows the wide gap in the preference for newspapers in Tamil between Group 1 and the other two groups in

clearer detail, whereby the preference for Tamil-language newspapers slides from 60 per cent for Group 1 to seven per cent for Group 2 and then zero per cent for Group 3. It also shows the rise of preference for English-language newspapers from 27 per cent for Group 1 to 43 per cent for Group 2 and then 60 per cent for Group 3.

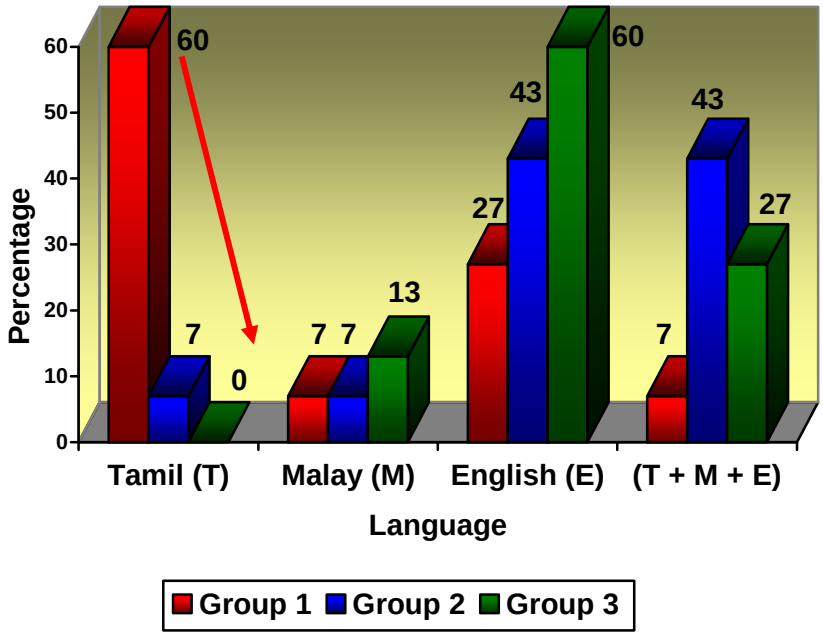

Figure 4.21: Language Preferred for Newspapers – Comparison across Groups

(c) Languages Preferred for Movies

The figures in favour of the Tamil language, the questionnaire revealed, were more encouraging when it came to movies, with more respondents showing a preference for Tamil movies. The most preferred movie language for 22 (73 per cent) of Group 1 respondents was Tamil. Although fewer respondents in the other two groups also preferred Tamil movies, they showed a higher inclination for these than they did for reading Tamil books and newspapers, as shown in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Languages Preferred for Movies Watched by Respondents

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	22 (73%)	8 (27%)	10 (33%)
Malay	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
English	5 (17%)	12 (40%)	10 (33%)
Malay and English	2 (7%)	10 (33%)	9 (30%)
Total	30 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

The table shows that eight respondents (27 per cent) from Group 2 and 10 respondents (33 per cent) from Group 3 preferred watching Tamil movies compared to movies in the two other languages. Another 10 respondents (33 per cent) from Group 2 and nine respondents (30 per cent) from Group 3 liked to watch movies in the three languages of Tamil, English and Malay. The most preferred language, the study found, was Tamil for Group 1, English for Group 2 and both English and Tamil for Group 3. The percentages are illustrated in Figure 4.22.

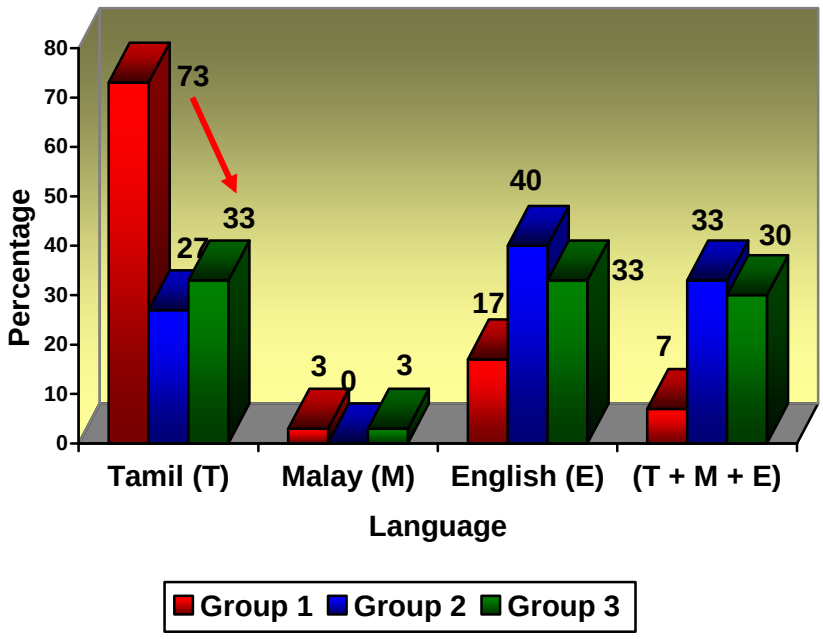

Figure 4.22: Language Preferred for Movies – Comparison across Groups

As can be seen in Figure 4.22, the preference for watching only Tamil movies decreased from 73 per cent for Group 1 to 27 per cent for Group 2 but rose slightly to 33 per cent for Group 3. The preference for watching only English movies rose from 17 per cent for Group 1 to 40 per cent for Group 2 and then decreased slightly to 33 per cent for Group 3. Very few respondents preferred watching only Malay movies, with three per cent for Group 1, zero per cent for Group 2 and three per cent for Group 3. Thus, while Group 1 showed a strong preference for Tamil movies, a slight majority of 40 per cent of Group 2 preferred English movies. Group 3 has almost equal percentages of respondents who preferred watching only Tamil movies, watching only English movies and watching a mix of movies in the three languages.

(d) Languages Preferred for Songs

The next item in the questionnaire sought to find out which of the three languages the respondents preferred for songs. It was discovered that a high majority of 23 respondents (88 per cent) from Group 1 preferred only Tamil songs. In contrast, only 14 respondents (47 per cent) from Group 2 and 11 respondents (37 per cent) from Group 3 preferred only Tamil songs. These numbers are detailed in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20: Languages Preferred for Songs Listened to by Respondents

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	23 (88%)	14 (47%)	11 (37%)
Malay	1 (4%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
English	1 (4%)	6 (20%)	10 (33%)
Tamil, Malay and English	1 (4%)	9 (30%)	8 (27%)
Total	26 (100%)	30 (100%)	30 (100%)

The main preferred language for all three groups, when it came to songs, was Tamil, although the two younger groups showed only a slight majority. Nevertheless, as seen from Table 4.20, the total percentage of those in Groups 2 and 3 who enjoyed listening to Tamil songs was higher when the study took into account those who preferred a mix of Tamil, English and Malay songs. Figure 4.23 further illustrates these findings.

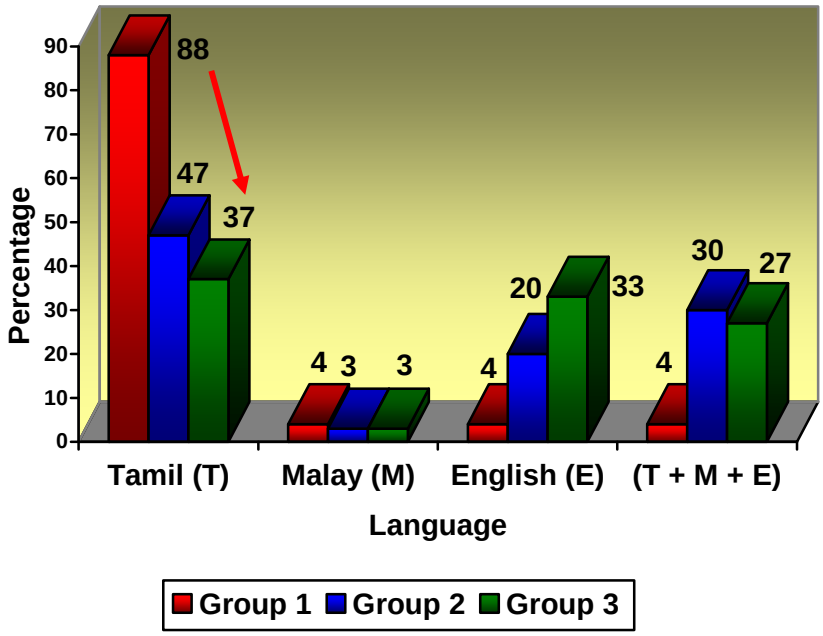

Figure 4.23: Comparison across Groups – Language Preferred for Songs

The preference for only Tamil songs decreased from 88 per cent for Group 1 to 47 per cent for Group 2 and then 37 per cent for Group 3. Songs in only the Malay language was preferred by only four per cent of Group 1, three per cent of Group 2 and three per cent of Group 3. Songs in only the English language were preferred by only four per cent of Group 1, 20 per cent of Group 2 and 33 per cent of Group 3. And songs in all three languages were preferred by only four per cent of Group 1, 30 per cent of Group 2 and 27 per cent of Group 3. Thus, although the preference for Tamil songs decreased from Group 1 to Group 2 and from Group 2 to Group 3, the findings showed that Tamil songs were the most preferred by all three groups.

4.2.5 Employment Domain

For the purpose of this study, the languages most used by the respondents in their places of work were examined to find out the predominant language in the employment domain. They were asked which language they spoke in most frequently with their employers, employees, colleagues and clients who were Tamils. With the respondents in Group 1 being 51 years old and above, only nine (30 per cent) of the 30 respondents were working at the point of study. Everyone except one respondent (97 per cent) in Group 2 was employed. As Group 3 comprised respondents aged 18 to 30, not all of them held jobs as some were still studying. Consequently, only 22 respondents (73 per cent) were employed.

Based on the findings gathered from the questionnaire, it was found that not even one of the nine respondents in Group 1 who were working used the Tamil language with the Tamil people they encountered at work. In fact, five of the nine respondents (56 per cent) used English, two respondents (22 per cent) used Malay and another two respondents (22 per cent) used a mixture of English and Malay. Of the 29 respondents in Group 2 who were working, 16 respondents (55 per cent) used a mixture of Malay and English, seven respondents (24 per cent) used only English, four respondents (14 per cent) used only Malay and two respondents (seven per cent) used Tamil. Of the 22 respondents in Group 3 who were working, 12 respondents (54 per cent) used a mixture of Malay and English, eight respondents (37 per cent) used Malay, one respondent (five per cent) used only English and another respondent (five per cent) used only Tamil. These figures are listed in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Languages Used with Tamils at the Workplace

Language	Number/Percentage		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Tamil	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	1 (5%)
Malay	2 (22%)	4 (14%)	8 (37%)
English	5 (56%)	7 (24%)	1 (5%)
Malay and English	2 (22%)	16 (55%)	12 (54%)
Total	9 (100%)	29 (100%)	22 (100%)

Across all three age groups, the use of the Tamil language with Tamil people at the workplace is low. The language was used for work purposes by no one (zero per cent) in Group 1, only two respondents (seven per cent) in Group 2 and only one respondent (five per cent) in Group 3. This overall lack of use of Tamil as a workplace language is depicted in Figure 4.24, which clearly shows that the main workplace language for Group 1 is English and both Malay and English for Group 2 and Group 3. Thus, the Tamil language was the least used with other Tamils in the workplace domain.

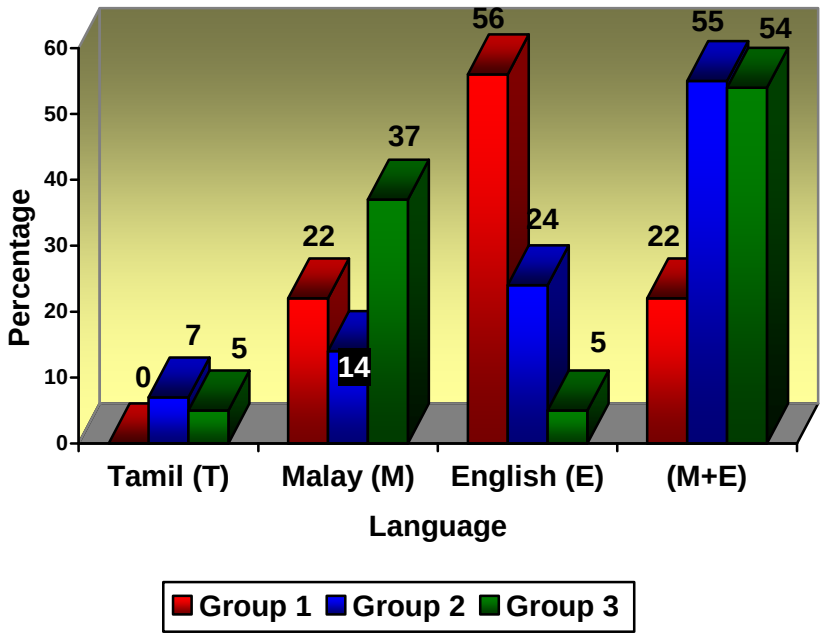

Figure 4.24: Languages Used with Other Tamils at Work – Comparison across Groups

4.2.6 Social Events Domain

The languages used in two social settings were also observed for the purpose of this study in order to investigate what languages were used by Muslim Tamils during large gatherings. While the first setting involved a wedding reception, the second was a dinner.

In the first setting, both the bride and groom were Muslim Tamils in their twenties who lived and worked in Kuala Lumpur. Their wedding reception was held at a hall in Kuala Lumpur in April 2010 and most of their guests were from the Muslim Tamil community, although there were also guests from other ethnic groups. The language used by the groom, bride and others were observed for three hours to examine their choice of language. The wedding reception began with a welcome address by the emcee, who spoke in both Malay and English. This was followed by a speech in English by a friend of the groom and another in Malay by a friend of the bride. The newlyweds appeared to use little Tamil in speaking with their family members and guests. For example, when some older Muslim Tamils said, “Kalyana valthukkal” (“Congratulations on your wedding”), the bride and groom replied with “Thank you”. The non-participant observation conducted found them communicating more frequently in Malay and English. Longer exchanges were also conducted in the Malay and English languages instead of the Tamil language. So, in short, the newlyweds used a smattering of the Tamil language with their elders, Malay with Malay guests and both Malay and English with non-Malay guests. As for the guests, the older ones who appeared to be Tamil speakers used the Tamil language among themselves while also using the Malay language to speak to younger children.

The second setting during which languages used in social interaction were observed was a dinner organised by the Malaysian Indian Muslim Congress or Kongres India Muslim

Malaysia (Kimma) with cooperation from Indian Muslim non-governmental organisations in Malaysia. Themed “Dinner with the Prime Minister,” it was held at the Putra World Trade Centre in October 2010. Non-participant observation was conducted for four hours for the purpose of the study. The Malay language was used in addressing the audience by the event’s two emcees, a male and a female Muslim Tamil who both appeared to be in their twenties. The Prime Minister and the Kimma president also spoke in the Malay language. The older members of the audience appeared to interact mostly in Tamil while the younger members appeared to interact mostly in Malay and to a lesser extent, English.

The non-participant observation conducted at the wedding reception and dinner showed that the Muslim Tamils preferred to conduct the more formal part of the events, i.e. the speeches, in the Malay language, except for one speech in English delivered by the groom’s friend at the wedding reception. At both functions, the older generation used mostly the Tamil language while the younger generation used mostly Malay, which was also used for communication between the two generations. These findings indicate a shift away from the Tamil language by the younger generation, which is another sign of intergenerational decline in the use of the mother tongue by the Muslim Tamils.

Thus, six domains have been investigated – family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events. In each of these domains, intergenerational decline in the use of the Tamil language from the first generation of those aged 51 years and above to the second generation of 31 to 50 year olds and then to the third generation of 18 to 30 year olds was detected. These findings will be discussed further in Chapter 5. The second research question will be answered next.

4.3 Research Question 2

What are the probable motivators behind the language choices of the Klang Valley Muslim Tamils?

As explained in Chapter Two, both macro-societal and micro-societal factors had been presented in various studies of language shift and maintenance in other communities around the globe. This study will focus only on micro-societal factors as it is based on the premise that whether a language is used depends on whether it could fulfil the needs and aspirations of its speakers in communicating with others. Thus, in examining the probable factors, Karan's Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (2001), which highlighted six motivators – communicative, economic, social identity, language power and prestige, nationalistic and political, religious – is used as a framework. In order to answer this second research question, findings from two tools were used. The first tool was the questionnaire which was completed by 90 respondents, comprising 30 respondents in each of the three age groups of 51 years and above, 31 to 50 years and 18 to 30 years. In particular, answers to 11 questions in the questionnaire were used. These questions are as follows:

15. The medium of instruction at the primary school I attended was (Tamil/ Malay/English).
16. The medium of instruction at the secondary school I attended was (Tamil/ Malay/English).
17. The medium of instruction at the tertiary institution of learning I attended was (Tamil/ Malay/English).

23. Which language are you most capable listening in?
24. Which language are you most capable speaking in?
25. Which language are you most capable reading in?

26. Which language are you most capable writing in?
27. Can you understand Tamil? Yes/No
28. Can you speak in Tamil? Yes/No
29. Can you read Tamil? Yes/No
30. Can you write in Tamil? Yes/No

The second tool, a semi-structured interview, contained the following six questions:

1. Which language are you most comfortable communicating in? Why?
2. Do you think people your age are fluent in Tamil? Why?
3. In your opinion, how useful is the Tamil language for work purposes?
4. Is the ability to communicate in Tamil necessary in order to be identified as a member of the Muslim Tamil community?
5. Should Muslim Tamils be encouraged to use the Tamil language? Why?
6. How is the Tamil language regarded in comparison to Malay and English by Muslim Tamils?

The interview, which was designed to be semi-structured as explained in Chapter Three (Section 3.3.2), was administered to 10 respondents from each age group. The respondents were selected based on their willingness to take part in the interview and their ability to provide longer answers as some respondents were unwilling or unable to venture beyond multiple-choice and brief answers. Their responses were examined to determine whether these fit into any of the six motivations outlined by Karan (2008). The following motivations were detected by this study:

4.3.1 Communicative Motivations

According to Karan (2008), individuals learn and use languages which they believe would best facilitate communication. Thus, migrants learn and use the dominant

languages of the people in their new location and members of ethnic minority groups learn and use the dominant languages of the wider population. They have to do so; otherwise, they will not be able to speak with people who do not know their mother tongue. In order to be able to employ a language for communication purposes, people need to have learned how to use it.

Based on the answers of 90 respondents to items 15 to 17 (medium of instruction in primary school and secondary school as well as at the tertiary level) in the questionnaire, it was found that while Group 1 had some exposure to the Tamil language during their student years, the other two groups had less or none. The main medium of instruction in primary school was Tamil for Group 1 but Malay for Groups 2 and 3. At the secondary school and tertiary levels, Tamil was not a medium of instruction for the respondents of all three groups.

To item 23 in the questionnaire on which language the respondents were most capable listening and speaking in, 20 respondents (67 per cent) of Group 1 said they were most fluent listening and speaking in Tamil. The same number of respondents in Group 2 said they were most fluent listening and speaking in all three languages. In contrast, 24 respondents (80 per cent) in Group 3 said they were most fluent listening and speaking in Malay. Thus, while the majority of Group 1 said they were most able listening and speaking in their mother tongue, the majority of Group 2 claimed that they were most able to do so in all three languages and the majority of Group 3 said they were most able to do so in the Malay language.

To item 24 in the questionnaire on which language the respondents were most able to read and write in, 18 respondents (60 per cent) in Group 1 said they were most fluent in reading and writing in Tamil. In contrast, 26 respondents (87 per cent) of Group 2 said

they were most fluent reading and writing in Malay and English. As for Group 3, Malay was the language 22 respondents (73 per cent) said they were most fluent reading and writing in. Thus, while the oldest group was most able reading and writing in the mother tongue, the other two groups were not. Instead, most Group 2 respondents named Malay and English while most Group 3 respondents named Malay, as shown in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22: Language Ability of Respondents

Language Most Fluent In For:	**Number/Percentage**		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Listening	Tamil – 20 (67%)	Tamil, Malay and English – 20 (67%)	Malay – 24 (80%)
Speaking	Tamil – 20 (67%)	Tamil, Malay and English – 20 (67%)	Malay – 24 (80%)
Reading	Tamil – 18 (60%)	Malay and English – 26 (87%)	Malay and English – 22 (73%)
Writing	Tamil – 18 (60%)	Malay and English – 26 (87%)	Malay and English – 22 (73%)

In order to clearly determine the respondents' ability to communicate in Tamil, the 90 respondents were also asked whether they could understand, speak, read and write in Tamil. It was found that the majority of the respondents in all three groups said they could understand and speak in Tamil but they varied sharply in their ability to read and write in the language. The findings are presented in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23: Ability to Use Tamil

Able to do in Tamil	**Number/Percentage**		
	Group 1 (51 years and above)	**Group 2 (31-50 years)**	**Group 3 (18-30 years)**
Understand	30 (100%)	29 (97%)	28 (93%)
Speak	30 (100%)	29 (97%)	28 (93%)
Read	23 (77%)	13 (43%)	3 (10%)
Write	23 (77%)	12 (40%)	3 (10%)

The findings in Table 4.23 showed that almost all respondents were able to understand and speak in Tamil, except for one respondent in Group 2 and two respondents in Group 3. Therefore, the decline is slight, from 100 per cent for Group 1 to 98 per cent for Group 2 and then 97 per cent for Group 3, in both the areas of understanding and speaking the Tamil language. The decline is much more pronounced in the areas of reading and writing in Tamil whereby while 23 of Group 1 members are able to read in Tamil, only 13 Group 2 members and three Group 3 members could do so. So, the intergenerational transmission of the ability to read in Tamil decreased from 77 per cent for Group 1 to 43 per cent for Group 2 and then 10 per cent for Group 3. Similarly, while 23 of Group 1 members could write in Tamil, only 12 members of Group 2 could do so, followed by only three members of Group 3. The results for both reading and writing are almost identical, except that in Group 2, while 13 of them can read Tamil, only 12 can write in the language. Thus, the decline is from 77 per cent in Group 1 to 40 per cent in Group 2 and 10 per cent in Group 3.

These findings show that the respondents are far more able to understand and speak in Tamil than they are able to read and write in the language. In fact, not all Group 1 members are able to read and write in Tamil, with seven of the members admitting they are unable to do so. Similar findings were made by Nambiar (2007) who noted in her study of Malayalees in Malaysia that while 57 per cent of her 341 respondents rated themselves as being fully proficient in speaking Malayalam, only 22 per cent could read and only 21 per cent could write in the language. Nambiar (2007) indicated that most of the respondents had very little opportunity to attain the skills of reading and writing in Malayalam and furthermore, these skills were not as important as the ability to read and write in the English and Malay languages. Likewise, the present study showed that

most of the respondents in Group 2 and Group 3 had little or no opportunity to formally study Tamil and consequently, could not read or write in the language.

After the study distinguished the respondents' grasp of their mother tongue, it set about finding the answer to the next question, which was whether there were overall differences among the three groups in the use of Tamil in the six domains of family, friendship, education, employment and social domains. As was revealed earlier in answering the first research question using responses to items 6 to 22 of the questionnaire, it was found that Group 1 used the Tamil language the most while Group 2 used a mix of Tamil, Malay and English and Group 3 used the Malay language the most. Group 1 and Group 2 were similar in that most of them admitted to using the Tamil language with family members, relatives and friends and using the Malay and English languages with other people. On the contrary, it was found that Group 3 used mainly the Malay and English languages in communication, even at home.

The first question in the semi-structured interview was also used in investigating whether the communication motivator played a part in determining the Muslim Tamil respondents' language use. This item is as follows:

Question 1: Which language are you most comfortable communicating in? Why?

In Group 1, only three respondents said they were most comfortable using the Tamil language. Of the remaining seven, five chose English, one chose Malay and another claimed to be comfortable using all three languages. Of the three who said they were most comfortable using Tamil, they said it was because they grew up speaking it with their family, relatives and friends. They also studied it in school. Thus, formal education and practice had made it easier for them to communicate in Tamil. The five respondents who said they were most comfortable using the English language explained that they

had formal schooling in the language. Some of them also needed to use English for their work purposes. Said one Group 1 respondent, “Since Standard 1, I had been studying in English and had to excel in it. One had to understand and be good in English in order to understand other subjects such as history and math. I used mostly English in childhood as other languages were not so important in those times. I used Malay for Malay language and religious classes. I had to be proficient in English. In 1969, things slightly changed. More than 50 per cent of the lessons had to be in Malay. In our time, it was barely five per cent. English and Malay were examinable subjects while Tamil was not. Importance was not given to teaching and learning the Tamil language. We had to learn Malay so that we would get at least a credit for it in the SPM examination. When dealing with the government, we must use Malay. Tamil is used only because of parents. I had no formal education in Tamil. I only know simple sentences and words which my father taught and I copied down when I was a child.” His response was echoed by another respondent who said he became even more proficient in English because he became a teacher of the language. The respondent who said he was most comfortable using Malay said it was because the language was easy to use while the other respondent who claimed to be comfortable in all three languages gave the reason that she had internalised all of them.

Interestingly, while only three Group 1 members said they were most comfortable using Tamil, a higher number of Group 2 members – five – said the same. The reasons provided were that it was the mother tongue and thus had been internalised and that it was the easiest to use and understand. However, one of the five respondents claimed to be most comfortable using Tamil but then said other languages were used more often for communication purposes. The respondent said, “I am most comfortable in Tamil as I was born with it in my blood. No matter how seldom I use it as a communication tool

with my friends and colleagues, it is mine and inseparable from me." Thus, comfort here was linked more to sentiment than actual practice.

Another two of the 10 respondents in Group 2 said they were most comfortable using the English language for communication. Of the two, one said, "As a teacher who has taught in international schools and now teaching at an international university, I use English more than any other language." The remaining three respondents said they were comfortable using two or all three languages, showing the existence of multilingualism in Group 2.

Group 3 was clearer in its preference for languages other than Tamil, as seen from the responses of its 10 respondents. Six respondents favoured the Malay language, saying it was easy to understand and use. Furthermore, they said they needed to use Malay because they had friends who were Malays and they also encountered Malay people in their daily lives. A respondent elaborated, "I am most comfortable in Malay because I am fluent in this language. I use it for more than half the time of the day compared to Tamil which I use only about four to five hours a day."

The remaining four respondents in Group 3 said they were most comfortable in English because they had been using it in communicating with family members, friends and others. The more they used it, they said, the more comfortable they were in that language compared to Tamil. One respondent said he was most comfortable using English because he could deliver his ideas freely in that language. However, two of the respondents mentioned that they were more comfortable using Tamil with their relatives, further confirming that of all the six domains, it was the home where the Tamil language was most often spoken.

Besides self perception, the respondents were also asked about their perception of the language use of their peers. The following question was posed to them:

Question 2: Do you think people your age are fluent in Tamil? Why?

In Group 1, nine respondents believed that people their age were fluent in Tamil. They said their peer group's fluency in the mother tongue was because they came from Tamil Nadu in India, had a Tamil education and were exposed to the Tamil language. The sole respondent who differed in opinion believed that his age group was not fluent in Tamil because they did not receive formal training in the language. Furthermore, said the respondent, Tamil was no longer necessary for career development and had lost its importance for earning a livelihood, thereby justifying the Muslim Tamils' loss of interest in gaining proficiency in the language. In Group 2, six of the respondents believed that people in their age group were fluent in Tamil because they had exposure to the language from their early years and used it with family and friends. According to one respondent, watching Tamil movies added to their proficiency. The remaining four respondents believed their peers had a poor grasp of Tamil because most of them had studied in Malay medium schools and used Malay more often. In contrast, they did not practise speaking in Tamil and were even embarrassed to converse in Tamil. According to one respondent, English was used more, especially at work.

Group 3 respondents were equally divided in their view of whether their age group was fluent in Tamil. Five respondents believed their peers spoke proficiently in Tamil, saying that they were fluent because they used the language with their family. They still kept in touch with relatives in India. They also watched the Tamil channels on satellite television which provided direct telecasts from India. In addition, they had to communicate with Tamil-speaking workers from India who were employed in the shops

and eateries they frequented. Thus, their surroundings, family and communication needs required them to be fluent in the Tamil language.

But the remaining five Group 3 respondents said their peers had a weak grasp of the Tamil language. This, they said, was because they did not learn the Tamil language formally and did not practise using it. From these findings, it may be asserted that the younger the age group, the less fluent they were in their mother tongue. In terms of their Tamil language listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, Group 1 was more competent than Group 2, which in turn was more competent than Group 3. Consequently, the frequency of Tamil language use declined from the oldest age group to the youngest. The Tamil language could not fulfil the younger respondents' need to communicate with others and they resorted to depending on those languages in which they were more fluent, which was either or both Malay and English. So in terms of communication motivation, the oldest group was most motivated to communicate in Tamil, the middle group was partial to more than one language and the youngest group was more motivated to communicate in Malay.

4.3.2 Economic Motivations

These motivations can be related to job, trade or network, according to Karan (2008). People choose to learn and use certain languages in order to secure, sustain and improve their jobs, trades and networks that bring in profits. The ultimate aim is the same – to make financial gain. This economic motivation is evidenced in Malaysian language shift studies such as those on the shift to English by Hindu and Christian Malayalees (Nambiar, 2007), Tamil Iyers (Sankar, 2004), Punjabi Sikhs (David, Naji & Kaur, 2003) and Tamils (David & Naji, 2000). The Melaka Chitty (Ravichandran, 1996), the Punjabis (Kundra, 2001) and the Sindhis (David, 1996) have also been noted to use English in order to obtain jobs in the private sector. Schiffman (1995) also shows that

the Tamils in Singapore and Malaysia are shifting from the Tamil language, which is seen as being of low economic value, to English as it is more economically viable. In contrast, the Chinese are successfully maintaining the use of their language as they possess economic superiority.

For the purpose of finding out whether economic gains is a motivator behind the choice of language use of the respondents, the following question was posed to the 30 respondents who answered the semi-structured interview:

Question 3: In your opinion, how useful is the Tamil language for work purposes?

In answering this question, two of the 10 respondents in Group 1 distinguished the language use between two groups – businesspeople and professionals. The former operated or worked in small businesses such as restaurants, book stores and sundry shops while the latter were better educated and employed in professions such as law, accountancy, medicine and so on. According to the two respondents, the Tamil language was useful for the businesspeople while the English language was useful for the professionals. They added that the Tamil language was used the most by the businesspeople because it was the language they came into contact with the most. According to the respondents, even if the clientele of the businesspeople were multiracial, they also had a sizeable portion of Tamil-speaking customers, thus motivating them to use their common tongue for economic benefit. The respondents said Muslim Tamil professionals used more English because it fit their economic motivation. They needed to be fluent in English so that they could carry out their job functions as well as interact with their employers, employees, colleagues, clients and other work associates. One respondent said, “Professionals such as teachers, doctors, lawyers and accountants speak in English because of their upbringing and work.

Businesspeople tend to speak in Tamil because their contacts are among themselves and they are not highly educated. They might know basic English, for instance, to use at the bank but their command is not that good. It depends on exposure. Restaurant workers are not degree holders." The respondent added, "The medium of instruction at school and work is not Tamil. It is either Malay or English. If you know other languages on top of Malay and English, it is okay, as this will add value to you. English is learnt not for the love of Britain but for the greater opportunities it offers."

Tamil lacked economic value according to another Group 1 respondent, who said, "Because there is no formal training in the Tamil language, it is no longer necessary for career development. It has lost its importance for earning a livelihood." This response is supported by another respondent in the same age group who said that he used English the most because he was an English language teacher. The lack of formal training is a matter of choice as there are 523 Tamil schools in Malaysia but the parents of the majority of the respondents in Group 2 and Group 3 chose to enrol them in Malay-medium schools instead. Thus, the findings show that Tamil as the language of economy is valid for traders who engage in small enterprises but not for professionals, who need the strength of one of the main languages of business and industry, English.

Group 2 respondents held Tamil's economic value in lesser regard than Group 1 respondents. According to one respondent in this group, Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley might one day even stop speaking in Tamil altogether because they have succumbed to socio-economic pressure and ceased to see their mother tongue as possessing any economic value. Another Group 2 respondent commented that some Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley had shifted from the Tamil language to the Malay language so that they could pass themselves off as Malay people, thereby qualifying for

certain government tenders. “They stop talking in Tamil because they believe it will not help but push them down in the competitive and monetary world,” said the respondent.

The economic value of other languages was reinforced by the response of one Group 2 respondent who said, “As a teacher who has taught in international schools and is now teaching at an international university, I use English more than any other language.” Thus, in the battle between the languages for position in the economic sphere, Tamil has given way to English and Malay. As half of the respondents in Group 3 were still studying, they did not elaborate much on the economic value of the languages they used or did not use. Nevertheless, from the responses from Group 1 and Group 2 respondents, it could be seen that the Tamil language was viewed as possessing lower economic value than English and Malay.

Based on the responses of the respondents in the semi-structured interview to Question 3 (In your opinion, how useful is the Tamil language for work purposes?), it may be asserted that the Tamil language was overshadowed by the Malay and English languages in terms of economic value and importance. Both Group 1 and Group 2 respondents found Malay and English to be of more use and benefit in the workplace, although some Group 1 respondents did highlight the value of the Tamil language for businesspeople who needed to communicate in that language in order to carry out economic transactions. Similarly, the study by Nambiar (2007) found that about 30 per cent of the Malaysian Malayalee respondents said it was not important to learn their mother tongue, giving several reasons, the main one being that it was not useful for their career. The other reasons, which were that Malayalam could not be used with non-Malayalees and was not useful for education, further strengthened the notion that the respondents saw their mother tongue as not having any utilitarian value for them in Malaysia (Nambiar, 2007).

4.3.3 Social Identity Motivations

As explained in Chapter Two (Section 2.4), social identity motivations relate to whether people want or do not want to be identified with a certain individual or group. People might choose to use the language of a group they consider as bearing higher prestige than them or shun the language of a group they consider as bearing lower prestige. They might also try to show solidarity with a group by adopting its language. Conversely, if they want to distance themselves from a group, they might shun the use of the group's language. Social identity motivations have played a key role in motivating many non-Malay Muslims to shift towards the language of the dominant Muslim population, the Malays, as shown in earlier studies. For example, the Indian Muslims of Kuching (David & Dealwis, 2009), the Muslim Malayalees of Malaysia (Nambiar, 2007) and the Pakistanis of Kelantan (David, 2004) have shifted to using Malay as their primary language.

In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked which ethnicity they stated as belonging to when filling up official forms. It was found that while 26 respondents in each of the three age groups identified themselves as Indian, the remaining four respondents in each group identified themselves as Malay. Thus, while 87 per cent of all 90 respondents stated as belonging to the community of Indians, the remaining 13 per cent claimed to belong to the community of Malays. This change of identity for official purposes raises the question of whether some Muslim Tamils are more motivated to identify themselves with another community instead of their own and whether this encouraged them to move away from the Tamil language and towards the Malay language. In order to find out whether social identity was a motivator behind the choice of language use of the respondents, the following question was posed to the 30 respondents who took part in the semi-structured interview:

Question 4: Is the ability to communicate in Tamil necessary in order to be identified as a member of the Muslim Tamil community?

From Group 1, seven respondents said all Muslim Tamils must be able to speak in Tamil in order to qualify as Muslim Tamils because the language was part of their ethnic identity and served as a communication tool with the Indian community. Furthermore, it was the mother tongue and so it must be transmitted to future generations. The respondents concurred that the Tamil language was a common ground and a form of identification for them as Muslim Tamils.

The three other respondents in Group 1 disagreed with these seven respondents. Instead, they said, they were not in India so they should be speaking the language of the place to which they currently belonged. One of them explained, "You can be a Muslim Tamil by following the culture. If a Muslim Tamil is able to speak English well it does not mean he has forgotten his roots. If you only focus on Tamil and ignore other languages, you are putting yourself at risk and depriving yourself of opportunities. If you learn Tamil but cannot apply it, what is the use? A language is driven by how you can use it to communicate with others. English is learnt not for the love of Britain but the greater opportunities it offers."

In Group 2, seven of the 10 respondents believed that all Muslim Tamils must be able to speak in Tamil in order to be considered as Muslim Tamils because it was their mother tongue. They equated forgetting Tamil with forgetting their roots and said that they needed to preserve the language so that their identity as Muslim Tamils did not become extinct. It is a tool of unity, explained one respondent. However, three of the remaining respondents in Group 2 believed that Muslim Tamils need not be able to speak in the mother tongue in order to be considered as Muslim Tamils. One of them explained,

"The greatness of a Muslim does not lie in the race or ethnicity but in true faith and righteousness. Islam recognises the natural tendencies for one to love one's race, language and culture. But one should not be fanatical about it. Being fanatical is going against the *sunnah* (practices) of the Prophet. This feeling can go against the philosophy of universal brotherhood preached by Islam." The second of the three respondents said priority was given to the Malay language while the third said whether a Muslim Tamil was able to speak in Tamil or not did not change the fact that he was a Muslim Tamil.

Group 3 was equally divided in the members' responses to this question. Five of the 10 respondents in this youngest age group believed that all Muslim Tamils must be able to speak in Tamil because the language was part of their identity. One of these five respondents explained, "Through their language use, they will be identified as Muslim Tamils. Language is the most noticeable aspect in determining a person's race." The remaining five respondents disagreed, saying that Muslim Tamils need not be able to speak Tamil in order to be known as Muslim Tamils. According to one of them, just because a person could not speak Tamil did not mean he was not a Muslim Tamil. In some cases, the respondent elaborated, some Muslim Tamils were not exposed to the language so they did not know how to speak it; therefore, they could not be blamed for their circumstances. Four of the five respondents who said it was not necessary to speak Tamil in order to be known as a Muslim Tamil said that Tamil was just another language and that while knowing the language could be advantageous, not knowing it would not take their identity away from them.

Based on the responses of some Group 3 respondents, it was found that some Muslim Tamils were ashamed to use the language. One of the respondents explained, "They were not exposed to the language and many of them were embarrassed to even admit that they were Indian Muslim. Using the Tamil language might reveal them to be Indian

Muslims and not as Malays." This issue of wishing to be identified as Malays instead of Muslim Tamils will be discussed later in this chapter.

Another respondent said that the Tamil language was considered to be of low status and its importance was not instilled in them by their parents. Therefore, said the Group 3 member, some preferred to use English instead.

According to Group 1 respondents who answered the semi-structured interview, the younger generation of Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley mixed more with Malays and it was becoming a trend for them to also marry Malays. The Group 1 respondents also said Tamil was being viewed as no good and more Muslim Tamils were proud to use Malay instead. They even viewed themselves as Malays, said another Group 1 respondent. Group 2 respondents concurred with Group 1. According to one Group 2 respondent, many Muslim Tamils wanted to be identified as Malays, adding that it was worse among their leaders. Inferiority complex was cited by the respondent as the reason for Muslim Tamil children choosing to speak in Malay instead of their mother tongue. Another Group 2 respondent shed more light on the impact of the inferiority complex on the choice of language, saying, "They don't want to be identified with Hindus in public by speaking the same language but in privacy they will understand and enjoy Tamil movies. Muslim Tamils suffer a great level of inferiority now more than ever before. It is embarrassing to read that in recent times some Muslim Tamil leaders have been asking the government of Malaysia to recognise the community they represent as Malays and to give us all the rights enjoyed by Malays. With such an appeal, we have become the laughingstock of Punjabis, Hindus and the Chinese."

The inferiority complex and desire to be identified as Malays instead of Indian Muslims may be due to the fact there is a close association between the status of a people and the

status of their language. People from minority groups tend to adopt the dominant languages in order to uplift themselves. One case in example is the Basarwa people of Botswana who shifted from their ethnic languages to the more dominant language, Setswana because they occupied the lowest rungs in society and saw Setswana as a crucial means of improving their socio-economic status (Mafela, 2009). Thus, the desire of some Muslim Tamils to be identified as Malays, as mentioned by a few of the present study's respondents, may be due to the fact that Malays form 63 per cent of the Malaysian population while Indians make up just 7.3 per cent (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010). Consequently, the former form the dominant community in Malaysia and hold economic and political power while the latter are a minority community with much less power.

The Group 2 respondents who were interviewed also believed that more Muslim Tamil men were marrying Malay women and not communicating in the Tamil language with their children. One Group 2 respondent said, "I have been telling my children that Tamil is a beautiful language. But the problem faced by my children is that in their schools and tuition centres, they don't have Indian friends. About 96 per cent of the people in my neighbourhood are Malay." The respondent went on to elaborate on the problems he faced in encouraging his children to converse in their mother tongue – "When I joke and communicate with my children in Tamil, they will reply in English or Malay. During my leisure time, I watch DVDs of old Tamil songs, which are mostly in black and white, and it is only my daughter who likes to join me."

The respondents of Group 3 said the Tamil language was being replaced by the Malay language by Muslim Tamils who perceived themselves as Malay and *bumiputra*. In fact, all three groups appeared to agree that there was an increasing trend for Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley to distance themselves away from their mother tongue so that they

would not be identified as Indians and to adopt the Malay language so that they would be identified as Malays.

To further gauge the 30 respondents' perception of the Tamil language in terms of its importance for social identity, the following question was asked:

Question 5: Should Muslim Tamils be encouraged to use the Tamil language? Why?

Eight of the 10 respondents in Group 1 answered that Muslim Tamils should be encouraged to use the Tamil language. Their reason was that it was their mother tongue and part of their identity, so it should be practised in order to prevent it from becoming extinct. However, the remaining two respondents differed in opinion. One respondent felt that the Malay language must be given priority. Tamil was a beautiful language, added the respondent, so it could be learnt as well but if given a chance, Muslim Tamils should learn Chinese. The other respondent felt that the choice of language was driven by necessity. He said that by speaking the Tamil language, Muslim Tamils were often mistaken for Hindu Tamils and even if they were recognised as Muslims, they were assumed to be converts to the religion. So in order to avoid this misconception, the Muslim Tamils switched to using the Malay language instead in their daily lives. Six of the 10 Group 1 respondents mentioned that Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley were mixing more with Malay people and using the Malay language instead of the Tamil language. They added that there were also many inter-marriages between Muslim Tamils and Malays. Usually, the children born out of these marriages were taught to speak Malay instead of Tamil, said the respondents.

All 10 Group 2 respondents who took part in the semi-structured interview believed that Muslim Tamils should be encouraged to use their mother tongue. Eight of the 10 respondents said this was because Tamil was their mother tongue and formed a part of

their identity. The remaining two gave another reason – they said it was good to know a language as it could aid in communication. However, one Group 2 respondent made an observation made earlier by a Group 1 respondent – Muslim Tamils were assumed to be Hindus if they spoke in the Tamil language and so in order to be seen as Muslims, they spoke in Malay.

Group 3 had eight respondents who agreed that Muslim Tamils should be encouraged to use the Tamil language. Their reasons were familiar – it was their mother tongue and a part of their identity. “It is embarrassing if you don’t know your own language,” said one respondent. Another respondent explained, “If they do not like the language, it would be a shame as their forefathers had fought for the survival and importance of the Tamil language.” However, two more Group 3 respondents felt otherwise. One of them said that as Tamil was their mother tongue, they should have the initiative to learn and use it without having to be encouraged by others. The other respondent believed that it was more important to encourage Muslim Tamils to learn and use languages which were considered universal so that they could communicate with others.

Based on the responses given by the 30 respondents to Question 4 (Is the ability to communicate in Tamil necessary in order to be identified as a member of the Muslim Tamil community?) and Question 5 (Should Muslim Tamils be encouraged to use the Tamil language? Why?), it may be noted that a larger majority of respondents in all three age groups link the Tamil language to their ethnic identity. They stated that Muslim Tamils should know the Tamil language in order to be identified as Muslim Tamils and that they should be encouraged to learn the Tamil language as it was their mother tongue and defined their race.

Similarly, Nambiar (2007) noted that about 70 per cent of the respondents in the study of language shift among Malayalees in Malaysia believed that learning Malayalam was important. The main reason was that it was important to uphold the sense of pride in knowing one's own language as well as to use it to maintain the Malayalee culture and to impart a sense of identity (Nambiar, 2007). This is supported by a case study in Turkey which shows that the younger generation may seek to maintain their mother tongue if they see it as an important marker of identity. In the study of three generations of three Arabic-Turkish bilingual families, members of the third generation were found to value their mother tongue more, seeing its maintenance as a way to preserve their cultural identity (Sofu, 2009).

Nevertheless, quite a few of the respondents in the present study pointed out the Tamil language's fading significance in the pursuit of assimilation with the Malays. They noted the intermarriages between Muslim Tamils and Malays and the replacement of the Tamil language by the Malay language as the medium of daily interaction as signs of efforts by some Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley to be identified as Malays. They also highlighted the tendency to shift away from the Tamil language in order to avoid being identified as Hindus by the Muslim Malay population. All these factors have an impact on the Muslim Tamils' evolving social identity.

4.3.4 Language Power and Prestige Motivations

People gravitate towards languages which they identify as bearing high prestige and shun those they feel are of low prestige and they may use a language to gain power or prestige and avoid a language that can accord them neither power nor prestige (Mafela, 2009). For the purpose of finding out whether language power and prestige is a motivator behind the choice of language use of the respondents, the following question was posed to the 30 respondents who took part in the semi-structured interview:

Question 6: How is the Tamil language regarded in comparison to Malay and English by Muslim Tamils?

The overall consensus of the Group 1 respondents was that the younger groups were shy to use the Tamil language, compared to the two other languages. According to one of the 10 respondents in the oldest age group, the community might stop using the Tamil language in the future if they were embarrassed of it, if it was made to look inferior by mainstream Malaysians and if it received no support from the government for its preservation. Both unintended and deliberate racial discrimination could lead to Muslim Tamils deciding to stop using their mother tongue, the respondent explained. Another Group 1 respondent said, "In a country like Malaysia where race is paramount, a minority group is subject to inequities. Muslim Tamils have always been the subject of ridicule and jokes in Malaysia. Muslim Tamils are made fun of in Malay television comedies which make them look inferior or silly. They are often portrayed in mainstream media as stall keepers and hawkers although they have contributed to numerous professions and various areas of endeavour. Peer pressure from other races which seem to take them as some kind of a joke might push them away from the use of the Tamil language. They are currently suffering from identity crisis because of this situation. They are not sure where to fit in because of the racial issues facing them. The racial bias has led to a kind of confusion of their identity."

One Group 2 respondent said, "The present generation, which is educated, feels that Tamil is of little importance and prefers to use Malay and English." Group 3 respondents concurred with the two older groups in the view that the Tamil language had a low prestige, compared to the Malay and English languages. One Group 3 respondent explained, "More people think Tamil is not a high-class language and opt for English instead." Another respondent commented, "More Muslim Tamils are getting a good education and consider the Tamil language as being of low standard." A second

Group 3 respondent said that Tamil was not a universal language, so it was not regarded highly like English.

Embarrassment of their own mother tongue was found to be a factor which affected the use of the Tamil language among the Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley, based on the responses of the Group 3 respondents. One Group 3 respondent said, “Many are embarrassed to even admit that they are Indian Muslim.” This embarrassment has affected their choice of language for communication, based on the viewpoint of one respondent who remarked, “They pretend not to be fluent in Tamil.”

Based on the 30 respondents’ answers to the semi-structured interview’s sixth and final question (How is the Tamil language regarded in comparison to Malay and English by Muslim Tamils?), it may be asserted that the Tamil language enjoyed lower power and prestige than the Malay and English languages. The older respondents noted the embarrassment of the younger groups in using the Tamil language. Lack of governmental support, inferior reputation in the perspective of non-Tamils and depiction of Muslim Tamils in entertainment media as comical or silly despite their actual achievements were highlighted by the respondents in the oldest age group. According to the respondents in the two younger age groups, the Tamil language was seen as a low prestige, low-class and low-standard language compared to Malay and English. Thus, it may be surmised that overall, the Tamil language was accorded lower power and prestige by the Muslim Tamils as they viewed the two other more dominant languages, Malay and English, as being more powerful and prestigious.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the two research questions were answered based on the findings from three tools, namely, the questionnaire, semi-structured interview and non-participant observation. From the total figure of 90 respondents who took part in the study, while all of them answered the questionnaire, only 30 of them took part in the semi-structured interview. To further corroborate the findings from the questionnaire and the interview, non-participant observation was used. Based on the findings, conclusions were reached which showed that the use of the Tamil language was undergoing intergenerational deterioration in all the six domains of family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events. The probable reasons for this deterioration were investigated from the standpoint of Karan's Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (2001). Four of the six motivators he highlighted – communicative, economic, social identity and, language power and prestige – were found to be responsible for the shift from the Tamil language to the Malay and English languages by the Muslim Tamil community in the Klang Valley.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Language shift is not an uncommon issue in Malaysia, as this is a multiracial country with a diversity of tongues. Studies have been conducted to examine language shift in various minority communities such as the Banjarese (Nadhratunnaim, 2010), Portuguese Eurasians (Ramachandran, 2000) and Javanese (Mohamad Subakir, 1998). Similar studies have also been conducted on the Indian population, such as on Indian Muslims in Kuching, Sarawak (David & Dealwis, 2009), Malayalees (Nambiar, 2007), Telegus (David & Dealwis, 2006), Ceylon Tamils (Rajakrishnan, 2006), Tamil Iyers (Sankar, 2004), Punjabis (Kundra, 2001) and Sindhis (David, 1996). However, little research has been found specifically on the Muslim Tamil community so the present study aimed to fill this research gap. This study also used a relatively new model, Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (Karan, 2001), to examine the probable reasons for language shift in the community. As the model provided no sample questions, attempt was made to formulate questions based on the framework provided. This study is therefore significant for the above two reasons.

This final chapter of the dissertation will present a summary of the study, covering the theoretical frameworks, the research design and the findings. It will also discuss the implications of the study for future research and implications for the Muslim Tamil community in Malaysia.

5.2 Summary of Study

This is an exploratory study of language shift in a community with two objectives. The first objective is to investigate the probability of Muslim Tamils, particularly those living in the Klang Valley, shifting away from their mother tongue, the Tamil language. In the event of such a shift, the study sought to identify the possible reasons. Based on these objectives, this study attempted to answer the following two research questions:

1. Is there an intergenerational decrease in the use of the Tamil language among Klang Valley Muslim Tamils in crucial domains such as family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events?

2. What are the probable motivators behind the language choices of the Klang Valley Muslim Tamils?

In order to address these research questions, two theoretical frameworks were adopted (see Chapter 3). The first is the domain-based inquiry introduced by Fishman (1965) while the second is the Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (Karan, 2001). Fishman's concept of domain is a traditional theoretical construct used in sociolinguistic analysis of language maintenance and shift (Fasold, 1984). Based on this theory, there are several domains in an individual's life such as family, playground and street, school, church, literature, the press, military, courts, governmental administration, institution and workplace (Fasold, 1984; Saghal, 1991). The movement of a community away from its mother tongue and towards another language is examined by investigating which languages were used in these and other domains and such investigation is said to help determine preferences and even exclusivity in the use of languages in the different domains (Hu, 2010).

This study investigated language use in six domains – family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events. While Fishman's domain theory (1965) is an established concept which has been used in countless studies throughout the world, the Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (Karan, 2001) is a much newer model. However, despite its newness, the latter may prove to be useful in investigating language shift as it examines language use from the perspective of motivation, with the reasoning that individuals seek to use languages which they perceive as beneficial to them and avoid or reduce the use of languages which they perceive as not beneficial. There are six motivations outlined by Karan (2001), which are communicative, economic, social identity, language power and prestige, nationalistic and political, and religious motivations. The first four motivations listed were examined in this study as probable causes for the language shift in the Muslim Tamil community.

While language shift may occur within one generation or across several generations, the present study was concerned with the latter, which is termed as intergenerational transmission. The importance of this concept was highlighted by Grenoble and Whaley (2006: 6) who said that, "the intergenerational transmission of a language is typically, and appropriately, used as a benchmark for whether a language will maintain its validity into the indefinite future." Specifically, this study focused on intergenerational transmission over three generations of respondents, in order to identify whether there was erosion in the use of the mother tongue from the first generation to the third. The significance of studying this is that it may bring to the fore a phenomenon previously unnoticed by the community concerned.

There was one issue of contention, however, in that generation did not necessarily correspond with age (Nambiar, 2007). For instance, a 70-year-old Muslim Tamil whose grandparents had migrated to Malaysia from India would be considered as third

generation while a 20-year-old Muslim Tamil who has just arrived in Malaysia from India would be considered as first generation. In order to resolve this issue, it was decided that an age range would be set for each of the three generations of study respondents.

Having stipulated the theoretical underpinnings of the study, the next step consisted of identifying the research instruments which were to be used to obtain the data required in order to answer the two research questions. The mixed methods approach was selected to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. For the quantitative aspect, the questionnaire method was used as it was effective in terms of time and cost for collecting a large amount of data from a large number of respondents. The questionnaire (see Appendix A) comprised 30 items whereby questions 1 to 5 focused on the respondents' personal demographics, questions 6 to 22 focused on their preferred language for five of the six domains, questions 23 to 26 focused on their language skills in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing and questions 27 to 30 focused on their ability to understand, speak, read and write in the Tamil language.

To corroborate the questionnaire findings, the qualitative data-gathering tools of semi-structured interview (see Appendix B) and non-participant observation were utilised. The interview method was chosen because it enabled respondents to express their views more freely and expand on their answers to the questions posed. The interview comprised six open-ended questions. The second qualitative tool, non-participant observation, was used to corroborate the questionnaire findings by observing language use in three domains – family, friendship and social events. During these observations, audio-taping was done to catch snippets of conversation and field notes were taken to identify the languages mainly used.

The questionnaire respondents comprised 90 respondents who were divided into three groups of 30 respondents each. Care was taken to ensure that age and generation corresponded for the purpose of this study. Thus, the first generation comprised respondents aged 51 years old and above (Group 1) while the second generation comprised respondents aged 31 to 50 years old (Group 2) and the third generation comprised respondents aged 18 to 30 years old (Group 3). These respondents were chosen through snowball sampling and contacted in person as well as through phone and e-mail. The interview respondents comprised 30 individuals chosen from the questionnaire sample, with 10 respondents representing each group. The non-participant observation respondents comprised two families with three members each, two friends, a group of six friends, people at a wedding reception and a larger group of Muslim Tamils who attended a dinner organised by Indian Muslim organisations.

Having explained the structure of the study, the findings will be summarised next. The first research question was whether there was intergenerational decrease in the use of the Tamil language among Klang Valley Muslim Tamils in crucial domains such as family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events. In order to find the answer, Questions 6 to 22 of the questionnaire were used to obtain data on language use in the first five domains. What language the respondents used with seven categories of individuals – grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, siblings, spouse and children – was probed to find out the predominant language in the family domain while the language the respondents used with their close Tamil friends and acquaintances who were of Tamil ethnicity was scrutinised to identify their main language in the friendship domain. Then, the medium of instruction at the primary and secondary schools as well as the tertiary institutions the respondents had attended were investigated to determine the main language used in the education domain. As for the

entertainment domain, the questionnaire sought to find out whether the respondents preferred to read books and newspapers, watch movies and listen to songs in the Tamil, Malay or English language. Respondents who were working were asked what language they used with Tamils at the workplace in order to distinguish which language was predominantly used by the three groups of respondents in the employment domain. Next, non-participant observation was utilised for the sixth domain of social events.

The findings derived from the investigation of all six domains showed that Group 1 respondents maintained the use of their mother tongue the most, using it for the majority of the domains. The only domain which showed no use of the Tamil language by this group was the workplace. Meanwhile, Group 2 respondents showed traces of bilingualism and multilingualism, with the majority using Tamil in combination with either or both Malay and English in communicating with others in the six domains. However, when it came to Group 3, the Malay language seemed to triumph over the Tamil language as the main medium of communication. Evidence also pointed towards absence of transmission of the Tamil language to children by Group 3 members who were parents. Of the six respondents in Group 3 who had children, four spoke to them in Malay and two spoke to them in English. Non-participant observation corroborated these findings as scrutiny of two families, two sets of friends and two social events showed that while the oldest respondents preferred the Tamil language for interaction, the second oldest group was comfortable code switching in Tamil together with either or both Malay and English while the youngest group was more comfortable conversing in Malay.

Thus, to answer the first research question, it may be said that there is indeed an intergenerational decrease in the use of the Tamil language among Klang Valley Muslim Tamils in the domains of family, friendship, education, entertainment,

employment and social events. In the family domain, this decrease is starkly evident in communication with three categories of family members – siblings, spouse and children. As the family may be seen as the most important domain for intergenerational language transmission, the lack of mother tongue use by Group 3 respondents with family members close to their age and younger to them suggests that the Tamil language may eventually disappear from the linguistic repertoire of the Muslim Tamil population in the Klang Valley. The little use of Tamil in the other five domains increases the chances of the language facing a sort of death within the community.

The second research question sought to identify the probable motivators behind the language choices of the Klang Valley Muslim Tamils. The answer to this question was sought with guidance from Karan's Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (2001). Four motivations were investigated – communicative, economic, social identity, language power and prestige – through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

According to Karan (2008), individuals learn and use the languages which they believe will best facilitate communication. Thus, migrants will learn and employ the languages predominantly used in their new location and members of ethnic minority groups will learn and use the languages widely used by the larger population (Karan, 2008). This was borne out in the case of the respondents, especially those in Group 2 and 3, who were more inclined towards the use of Malay and English, compared to Group 1 who still preferred the Tamil language. The younger respondents' communicative motivation may be partly due to the fact that they did not receive formal Tamil language instruction and consequently, were less proficient in using the language in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Tamil was the medium of instruction only for the majority of Group 1 members and that too only in primary school. With proficiency in Tamil decreasing from one age group to the next, it might be inferred that the two younger

groups would be less comfortable in their mother tongue than the oldest group. However, the semi-structured interview, which was conducted with 10 respondents from each of the three groups, threw up a surprising answer – while only three of the 10 respondents in Group 1 stated that they were most comfortable using the Tamil language for communication, a higher number of five out of 10 respondents in Group 2 shared their sentiment. However, intergenerational decline became evident with Group 3 as none of the 10 respondents who agreed to undergo the interview said they were most comfortable communicating in the Tamil language.

More members in Group 3 than Group 1 and Group 2 also rated their peers of Tamil ethnicity as being less fluent in their mother tongue. Fluency was attributed to the peers having originated from Tamil Nadu in India, Tamil education and exposure to the use of the Tamil language with family and friends and the need to communicate with Tamil speakers. Lack of fluency was attributed to lack of formal education and practice in Tamil. As the Tamil language could not fulfil the younger respondents' communication needs, they resorted to using the other two languages. So in terms of communication motivation, the oldest group was the most motivated to communicate in Tamil, while the second oldest group was partial to more than one language and the youngest group was more motivated to communicate in Malay. Thus, the Muslim Tamils, who are both a migrant and an ethnic minority community, are more predisposed to using the languages used by the majority of Malaysians, which are Malay and English.

The next to be investigated was whether the respondents had the economic motivation to use the Tamil language. From the responses gathered from all three groups, it was found that Tamil was seen as having a far less utilitarian value than Malay and English. Group 1 noted that Tamil was useful for traders who engaged in small businesses but not for professionals, who needed to use the English language. Group 2 respondents

held Tamil's economic value in even lesser regard than Group 1 respondents, with some of them saying Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley might one day stop speaking their mother tongue because of socio-economic pressure and cease to see it as possessing any economic value. Both Group 1 and Group 2 respondents found Malay and English to be of more use and benefit in the workplace. As half the respondents in Group 3 were still students, they did not elaborate much on the economic value of the languages they used or did not use. However, the responses of the two older groups were enough to indicate that the Tamil language was seen as possessing less economic value than English and Malay.

Having established that the Tamil language was perceived by the respondents as having less communicative and economic value than the other two more dominant languages, the study sought to examine whether the Tamil language provided the respondents with a sense of identity. To find out the social identity motivations of the community with regard to their language use, the 30 interview respondents were asked two questions – whether it was necessary for an individual to be able to communicate in Tamil in order to be identified as a Muslim Tamil and whether Muslim Tamils should be encouraged to use the Tamil language. The findings indicated that seven respondents from Group 1, seven respondents from Group 2 and five respondents from Group 3 felt that Muslim Tamils must know their mother tongue in order to be identified as a member of the community. The Group 1 respondents said the Tamil language was a part of their ethnic identity, a communication tool with the Indian community and their mother tongue so it must be transmitted to future generations. The Group 2 respondents equated forgetting the Tamil language with forgetting their roots and said they needed to preserve the language so that their identity as Muslim Tamils did not become extinct, adding that it was a tool of unity. Group 3 respondents also saw the Tamil language as a part of their

identity. Thus, 19 out of all 30 respondents (63 per cent) believed in the Tamil language's role as a marker of identity. Their regard for their mother tongue is corroborated by earlier studies which suggest that identity, belonging and the symbolic value of language combine to influence the attitudes of migrants towards their ethnic languages (Koven, 2007; Blackledge, 2005).

But the remaining 11 respondents from all three age groups thought differently. Three respondents from Group 1 believed that since they were not in India but in Malaysia, they should speak the languages of the place to which they currently belonged. They did not believe that speaking other languages meant that they had forgotten their roots, and felt that the other languages provided them with greater opportunities. Three respondents in Group 2 believed that whether a Muslim Tamil was able to speak in Tamil or not did not change the fact that he was a Muslim Tamil and that they should not be fanatical about their mother tongue. The Group 3 respondents who said it was not necessary to speak Tamil in order to be known as a Muslim Tamil stated that it was just another language and that while knowing the language could be advantageous, not knowing it would not take their identity away from them. Their sentiments are echoed by a study of African communities in the state of Victoria in Australia which challenged the assumption that language is a prime marker of people's identities and argued that proficiency in multiple languages is the norm for the majority of people from Africa (Ndhlovu, 2009).

To further gauge the 30 respondents' perception of the Tamil language in terms of its importance for social identity, they were asked whether Muslim Tamils should be encouraged to use their mother tongue. Eight respondents from Group 1, all 10 respondents in Group 2 and eight respondents from Group 3 believed that Muslim Tamils should be encouraged to use the Tamil language. All of them, except for two

respondents from Group 2, gave similar reasons – it was their mother tongue and a part of their identity. The two respondents gave another reason – they said it was good to know a language as it could aid in communication. So, 26 out of 30 respondents (87 per cent) who took part in the interview believed that Muslim Tamils should be encouraged to use the Tamil language.

The remaining four respondents who disagreed gave various reasons such as that the Malay language should be given priority; that speaking in Tamil led to them being mistaken for Hindus; that as Tamil was their mother tongue, they should have the initiative to learn and use it without having to be encouraged by others; and that it was more important to encourage Muslim Tamils to learn and use languages which were considered universal so that they could communicate with others. Another respondent in Group 2 had also commented about Muslim Tamils being mistaken for Hindus when they spoke in Tamil so this is an issue worth researching, as it may well be one of the reasons some Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley may be shunning the use of their mother tongue. Muslim Tamils share a common religion with Malays, who are the dominant population in Malaysia, and share a common mother tongue with Indians, who are largely seen as a marginalised people. While Malays hold political and economic power, the majority of Indians mostly live on the peripheries of bustling modern Malaysia, lacking education and occupying under-class jobs in industries and services of the production economy (Appudurai & Dass, 2008). So, it may be that in a bid to associate more with the Malays and disassociate from the Indians, who are mostly Hindus, the Muslim Tamils resorted to using Malay more than Tamil.

Based on the overall results, it may be concluded that the majority of Muslim Tamils still had some social identity motivation to use the Tamil language as it gave them a sense of identity and belonging to the Muslim Tamil community. Nevertheless, a

sizeable number believed it is not key to their identity as Muslim Tamils and it is all right to give more priority to other languages.

The final question in the six-item interview was used to find out the Muslim Tamil respondents' language power and prestige motivations. The 30 respondents were asked how the Tamil language was regarded in comparison to Malay and English by Muslim Tamils. The findings indicated that the Tamil language was seen as having lower prestige than the Malay and English languages. The older respondents in Group 1 noted the embarrassment of the younger generation in using the Tamil language. Lack of governmental support for the use of the Tamil language, the inferior reputation of the Tamil language in the perspective of non-Tamil people and the depiction of Muslim Tamils in entertainment media as comical or silly characters despite their actual achievements were highlighted by the respondents in Group 1. As for Group 2 and Group 3 respondents, they stated that Tamil was seen as a low prestige, low-class and low-standard language compared to Malay and English, which were seen as more powerful and prestigious.

Thus, the investigation of the respondents' communicative, economic, social identity and language power and prestige motivations pointed towards them being more motivated to use the Malay and English languages compared to the Tamil language. Though the respondents valued the Tamil language in terms of the social identity it provided them, they appeared to give more priority to the two other languages because these were seen as having more communicative and economic value and possessing more power and prestige.

5.3 Comparison with Earlier Studies

There have been other researches conducted earlier on language shift and maintenance among Tamils in Malaysia such as Schiffman (1995), David and Naji (2000), Sankar (2004) and Ting and Mahadhir (2009). From a comparison made between these studies and the present study, it was found that Tamils who were moving away from their mother tongue did not all move towards the same replacement language. Instead, different languages were chosen by different segments of Tamil society to become their main language for use in daily life. As an example, Schiffman (1995) states that Tamils in Malaysia are shifting from the Tamil language, which is deemed to be of lower economic value, towards English as it is viewed as more economically viable. Schiffman (1995) notes that many Tamils, especially those who are well-educated, are embracing the English language while less-educated Tamils, especially, those living in plantation communities, continue to hold on to their mother tongue. Here, education served as a factor in determining choice of language. Inter-marriage also seems to play a part as he notes that Muslim Tamils who marry Malays and whose children grow up speaking Malay tend to use the Malay language (Schiffman, 1995).

Meanwhile, David and Naji (2000) who conducted a questionnaire study among Tamil respondents found that those in the oldest age category used mainly the Tamil language, the middle age category used mainly English and those in the youngest age category tended to use a combination of Tamil, English and Malay. A shift towards English was discovered among Tamil Iyers by Sankar (2004). The study focused on the language use of this minority group within the Tamil community in the domestic, social, formal education and religious domains. The study found them using mainly English and Malay in the first three domains and retaining Tamil mainly in the religious domain, where it is used for prayers. Ting and Mahadhir (2009) corroborated the findings made

by Sankar (2004) in their study of the languages used by parents with their offspring in Kuching, the capital of the state of Sarawak. Of the 17 families studied, five were Tamil families. The study found that four out of the five Tamil families used English for family communication. The Tamil language was especially viewed in lesser regard by educated parents. The findings imply that English is becoming the main language for family communication.

These earlier studies, which involve non-Muslim Tamils, indicate a move towards the English language. This is mainly because English is seen as the language which would facilitate upward mobility in terms of socio-economic status. With proficiency in English, they could look forward to better education and career prospects. However, English is not the main language which the Muslim Tamils who took part in the present study seemed to be moving towards. Instead, the respondents in the present study seem to have chosen Malay as the route to better socio-economic standing.

Their religious commonality with the dominant Malay population can be said to facilitate this shift. The Tamil community in Malaysia all have the same mother tongue, the Tamil language. But different segments of the community profess different religions. As a community, they too possess the aspiration for socio-economic survival and growth, even if it meant having to take on a more dominant language and relegate their mother tongue to fewer spheres in their lives. As these studies show, the means to achieve that end differs. Non-Muslim Tamils, as seen from the earlier studies, tend to move towards the English language while Muslim Tamils, as the present study shows, tend to move towards the Malay language.

These findings parallel those on another minority Indian community in Malaysia, the Malayalee community. Nambiar (2007) found that Malayalees who professed the Hindu and Christian faiths tended to shift towards English while those of the Muslim faith

tended to move towards Malay. This shows that people who share a common mother tongue could shift towards different languages despite being driven by the same reasons, such as the quest for socio-economic progress.

5.4 Implications of Study for Muslim Tamils in Malaysia

Although the sample size comprised only 90 respondents, the data-gathering tools of questionnaire, semi-structured interview and non-participant observation showed that language shift was taking place. The questionnaire which was answered by all the respondents showed a move away from Tamil to Malay and English by the youngest age group. The interview which involved 30 respondents indicated that the respondents were aware of the shift away from the Tamil language and saw it as a prevalent phenomenon. The non-participant observation provided field-based evidence that the younger generation was more comfortable communicating in the Malay language. The fact that these findings, obtained through different tools, all point in the same direction have contributed to the validity and reliability of the study.

What happens at the micro-societal level may well effect changes at the macro-societal level. Thus, this study is an eye-opener for the Muslim Tamil community in Malaysia. It has provided evidence that language shift is indeed taking place in the community. If this shift is left unchecked, it may increase and eventually lead to language loss in the future. The first step towards stopping language shift is awareness that it is taking place. This study is aimed at raising that awareness, by highlighting the importance of communicative, economic, social identity and language power and prestige motivations.

The second step would be for the community to seriously reflect on the situation and ponder on whether they wish to maintain their mother tongue and if they do, what steps they could take to achieve this goal. Just as language shift is a gradual process that takes

place across generations, language revitalisation may also take a long while. It is hoped that this study will serve as a catalyst for the community to undertake language revitalisation efforts.

5.5 Implications for Further Research

According to Karan (2011), language shift which occurs in a society is the result of many individual-level language choice decisions, which were made based on motivations. In short, people are motivated to use the languages which serve their interests and if they begin moving away from their mother tongue towards another language because it fulfils their needs better, then language shift takes place. The present study has shown that studying motivations is a plausible way of determining why language shift takes place at the micro-societal level. In addition, motivations were found to be important contributing factors in helping the Muslim Tamils in the present study decide whether to move away from or maintain their mother tongue in diverse spheres of life. Thus, it may be worth their while for future researchers to also study language shift from the perspective of motivations, using the Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift (Karan, 2001) as the framework of their research.

In addition, each of the motivations presents great scope for investigation as Karan (2001) has presented a taxonomy which can be expanded and elaborated upon. For instance, future research could embark on formulating a sample questionnaire for use in investigating the six motivations, just as the present study has attempted. More questions could be devised for each of the motivations in order to find out more comprehensively about a particular community's motivations in moving away or maintaining the use of its mother tongue.

5.6 Conclusion

This study has shown that like most immigrant communities throughout the world, the Muslim Tamil community in the Klang Valley is also shifting away from its mother tongue. This study attempted the use of an established concept, the domain-based investigation of language use introduced by Fishman (1965), and the relatively new Perceived Benefit Model of Language Shift by Karan (2001). Through the use of both approaches, the study revealed that language shift was occurring in the six domains of family, friendship, education, entertainment, employment and social events and highlighted the probable causes which were attributed to communicative, economic, social identity and language power and prestige motivations.

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APPENDIX A – INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Research: Language Shift among Muslim Tamils in the Klang Valley

RESEARCHER'S STATEMENT

I am pursuing the Master of English as a Second Language programme at the University of Malaya. I would like to invite you to be a part of a research I am conducting in order to write my dissertation. This informed consent form will give you the information you need to help you decide whether to participate in the research so please read it carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, your role, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a respondent and anything else about the research which is not clear. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide whether to take part in this research.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

This is a research on language shift in the Muslim Tamil community living in the Klang Valley. It aims to examine the language use of the community and will cover three age groups – 18 to 30 years, 31 to 50 years and, 51 years and above. I hope to find out what languages you use in your daily interactions with your family, friends and other people, record my findings and then determine what languages are used the most by the community. You have been selected to participate in this research because you are a Muslim Tamil, you live in the Klang Valley and you are in one of the three age groups.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

If you choose to take part in this research, you will be required to answer a 30-item questionnaire, which should take you less than 15 minutes. After you answer the questionnaire, you may be asked to take part in an interview session. Only a third of the questionnaire respondents will be chosen to be interviewed, so you may or may not be involved in this second session which will take no more than 30 minutes.

OTHER INFORMATION

All the information you provide will be kept confidential. You will not be referred to by name in the dissertation or any other work that results from this research. You may refuse to participate in or withdraw from this research at any time.

For further information about this research, you may contact:

Azeezah Jameelah Bt. Mohamed Mohideen (Researcher) – azeezah@um.edu.my

Assoc Prof Dr Mohana Kumari Nambiar (Supervisor) – mohana@um.edu.my

APPENDIX B – QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Highest qualification obtained:
4. Occupation:
5. When filling forms, you state yourself as: Malay / Indian / Indian Muslim / Others
6. I use (Tamil/ Malay/English) the most with my father.
7. I use (Tamil/ Malay/English) the most with my mother.
8. I use (Tamil/ Malay/English) the most with my grandfather.
9. I use (Tamil/ Malay/English) the most with my grandmother.
10. I use (Tamil/ Malay/English) the most with my siblings.
11. I use (Tamil/ Malay/English) the most with my spouse.
12. I use (Tamil/ Malay/English) the most with my children.
13. I use (Tamil/ Malay/English) the most with my close Tamil friends.
14. I use (Tamil/ Malay/English) the most with my Tamil acquaintances.
15. The medium of instruction at the primary school I attended was (Tamil/ Malay/English).
16. The medium of instruction at the secondary school I attended was (Tamil/ Malay/English).
17. The medium of instruction at the tertiary institution of learning I attended was (Tamil/ Malay/English).
18. My work requires me to use (Tamil/ Malay/English) the most.
19. I prefer to read books which are in the (Tamil/ Malay/English) language.
20. I prefer to read newspapers which are in the (Tamil/ Malay/English) language.
21. I prefer to watch movies which are in the (Tamil/ Malay/English) language.
22. I prefer to listen to songs which are in the (Tamil/ Malay/English) language.

23. Which language are you most capable listening in?

24. Which language are you most capable speaking in?

25. Which language are you most capable reading in?

26. Which language are you most capable writing in?

27. Can you understand Tamil? Yes/No

28. Can you speak in Tamil? Yes/No

29. Can you read Tamil? Yes/No

30. Can you write in Tamil? Yes/No

APPENDIX C – SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

1. Which language are you most comfortable communicating in? Why?
2. Do you think people your age are fluent in Tamil? Why?
3. In your opinion, how useful is the Tamil language for work purposes?
4. Is the ability to communicate in Tamil necessary in order to be identified as a member of the Muslim Tamil community?
5. Should Muslim Tamils be encouraged to use the Tamil language? Why?
6. How is the Tamil language regarded in comparison to Malay and English by Muslim Tamils?

APPENDIX D – EXTRACT OF CONVERSATION

AMONG MEMBERS OF FAMILY 1

Conversation	**Language Used**	**Translation**
B: ***Eppedi irukke****?*	Tamil	How are you?
A: ***Nalla irukken***.	Tamil	I am fine.
C: Hello, *nenek*.	English and Malay	Hello, grandma.
A to B: ***Malai le nalenjetiya****?*	Tamil	Have you got wet in the rain?
B: ***Konjum te***.	Tamil	Just a little bit.
A to C: *Sudah basahkah?*	Malay	Have you got wet?
C: *Kaki saja, nek*.	Malay	Only the legs, grandma.
A: ***Netele irinde sariyana malai***.	Tamil	There has been heavy rain since yesterday.
B: ***Ama, neite toveche sattai lam*** *belum kering*.	Tamil and Malay	Yes, yesterday's laundry has yet to dry.
C: *Apa*?	Malay	What?
B: I am telling grandma that our laundry hasn't dried yet because of the heavy rain.	English	
C: *Ya nenek, hujan teruk. Nenek masak apa hari ini*?	Malay	Yes grandma, very heavy rain. What have you cooked today, grandma?
A: *Kari dhal dan ikan saja*.	Malay	Just dhal curry and fish.
C: Ma, let's go buy pizza.	English	
B: No, we will eat rice with *nenek* today.	English and Malay	*nenek* = grandma
C: *Nenek buat apa kat rumah*?	Malay	What are you doing at home, grandma?
A: *Tengok TV saja lah*.	Malay	Just watching TV.
B: ***Thambi tangachi lam vareliya***?	Tamil	Aren't younger brother and younger sister coming?
A: ***Von thambi nalaiki varuvan. Von tangachi intha varum varemudiyade de sonna***.	Tamil	Your younger brother will come tomorrow. Your younger sister said she can't come this week.
B: ***Yen***?	Tamil	Why?
A: ***Yennemo velai irukkan sonna. Velivoorke pohenuma***.	Tamil	She has some work to do, she said. She has to go overseas.
C: *Apa nenek cakap? Saya mau tahu*.	Malay	What are you saying, grandma? I want to know.
A: *Makcik tak boleh datang. Dia banyak kerja. Kena pergi luar negeri*.	Malay	Aunty cannot come. She has a lot of work. She has to go overseas.

B: ***Yende vooruke pora***?	Tamil	Which country is she going to?
A: Taiwan ***de sonna***. Taiwan ***yenge iruke***?	Tamil	She said Taiwan. Where is Taiwan located?
B: China ***kitte irukethe. Yettene nalaiki***?	Tamil	It is near China. For how many days?
A: ***Anje naalende sonna. Yennemo*** conference ***nadeke poheda.***	Tamil and English	She said five days. Some conference is going to take place.
C: Conference *kat* Taiwan *ke nenek*?	Tamil and English	A conference in Taiwan, grandma?
A: *Ya. Makcik cakap dia pigi* conference.	Malay	Yes. Aunty said she is going to a conference.
C: Ohhhh. *Nanti boleh dapat hadiah dari* Taiwan!	Malay	Ohhhh. Then can get a gift from Taiwan!
B: (*smiling*) Yeah, sure!	English	
A: ***Ava vella vella inde nikkera, avala engga vanga pora***.	Tamil	She is focused on work, she is not going to buy.
C: *Apa nenek cakap*?	Malay	What are you saying, grandma?
A: *Nenek cakap makcik kerja-kerja saja, mana mau beli hadiah.*	Malay	I'm saying that your aunty is focused on work, she will not be buying gifts.
C: *Alaaaaa nekkkk…*	Malay	Oh grandma…
B: Your aunt is attending a conference, not going shopping!		
C: She can buy when she is free.		
A: *Sekarang punya budak mau hadiah saja.* You *belajar betul-betul, dapat kerja bagus, nanti* you *pun boleh pigi* Taiwan.	Malay	Children nowadays want gifts only. You learn properly, get a good job, then you can go to Taiwan.
C: *Itu kena tunggu lama, nek.*	Malay	That is a long wait, grandma.
B: ***Inthe kalete pulengge sariyane*** *manja.* ***Ellam venum, athum ippeve venum.***	Tamil and Malay	Children in this era are very spoilt. They want everything and they want it now.
C: What are you saying, ma?		
B: I am saying that today's children are spoilt. They want everything and they want it now.		
C: Fine! Don't get me anything.		
A: *Sudah, sudah. Mari makan*.	Malay	That's enough. Let's eat.
B: Help grandma put the plates on the table.		
C: Okay. *Nenek, mau ambil nasi*?	Malay	Okay. Grandma, shall I take the rice?
A: *Ya, guna ini mangkuk*.	Malay	Yes, use this bowl.
C: Ma, can you find me the spoon?	English	

B: Look in the drawer.	English	
C: Which drawer?	English	
B: The one on your right.	English	
C: Oh, ok.	English	
A: *Mari nenek ambik. Ini kari letak atas meja*.	Malay	Let me take. Put this curry on the table.
C: Ok, *nek*. Ma, what are you doing?	English and Malay	Ok, grandma.
B: I'm looking for scissors. The thread on my blouse is coming out.	English	
A: ***Katrikol venuma***?	Tamil	You want scissors?
B: ***Aama, inthe satte vode noole veliya vandereche***.	Tamil	Yes, the thread on this blouse is coming out.
A: ***Ire, kontuvaren***.	Tamil	Wait, I'll bring it.
B: Okay.		
A: ***Intha katrikol. Vetti tare ta***?	Tamil	Here's the scissors. Shal I cut it for you?
B: Okay, ***inthe nool***.		Okay, this thread.
C: *Nenek mau gunting baju mak*?	Malay	Grandma, you want to cut mother's blouse?
A: *Potong itu benang saja la*.		Cut the thread only.
B: Put the fish on a plate and go put it on the table.	English	
C: All right.	English	
A: ***Intha vettiyache. Va saapedelam***.	Tamil	Cut already. Let's eat.
B: Okay. (*turning to C*) Let's eat.	English	
C: Okay.	English	
A: *Cuci tangan dulu lah.*	Malay	Wash your hands first.
C: *Sudah cuci, nek.*	Malay	I washed already, grandma.
(A puts rice on the plates.)		
C: *Cukup, cukup, nek*.		Enough, enough, grandma.
A: *Ini saja ka makan? Mana cukup?*	Malay	You are eating only this much? Where got enough?
C: *Tak boleh makan nasi banyak nek, nanti gemuk.*	Malay	Cannot eat a lot of rice, grandma, then will become fat.
A: *Tada gumuklah. Nasi tada makan, nanti sakit-sakit.*		You won't become fat. If you don't eat rice, you will fall sick.
C: Ma, I don't want so much rice!	English	
B: Just eat what you can. (*Turning to A*) ***Ava konjumma ten timba.***	Tamil	It is her practice to only eat a little.
A: ***Intha, ni sappede***.	Tamil	Here, you eat.
B: ***Naan*** diet ***le irukke. Sore konjuma pottu tange.***		I am on a diet. Please give me just a little rice.
A: Diet ***li ya? Sariya sapdati seeke***		On a diet? If you don't eat

varepode.		well, sickness may come.
B: ***Varathe la. Rombe tindaten seeke varum!***	Tamil	It won't. It will come only if I eat a lot!
C: *Nasi, nasi, nasi*! Boring!	English and Malay	Rice, rice, rice!
B: Shut up and eat your rice.	English	
C: If I shut up, how am I to eat?	English	
B: Don't be a smart aleck!	English	
A: *Apa*?	Malay	What?
C: *Mak suruh tutup mulut. Kalau tutup mulut, macam mana nak makan*?	Malay	Mother said to shut up. If I shut up, how to eat?
A: *Ini budak banyak pandai*!	Malay	This child is very clever!
B: ***Vongge paeti taane***!	Tamil	She is your granddaughter after all!

APPENDIX E – EXTRACT OF CONVERSATION

AMONG MEMBERS OF FAMILY 2

Conversation	Language Used	Translation
A: ***Onnum sote yedeteke da.***	Tamil	Take more rice ("da" is a term of endearment)
B: ***Ithe podum***.	Tamil	This is enough.
B to C and D: *Nak nasi lagi?*	Malay	Want more rice?
C: *Nak*.	Malay	I want.
D: *Tak nak*.	Malay	I don't want.
A to D: *Tambahlah nasi. Nanti lapar*.	Malay	Take more rice or you will be hungry later.
D: *Tak nak*, ***nanna***.	Malay and Tamil	I don't want, grandpa.
B to A: ***Kaal vaali onnu irukka?***	Tamil	Is your leg still hurting?
A: ***Konjum korenjedeche***.	Tamil	It has reduced a bit.
B: ***Eppa aspitrike poringge?***	Tamil	When are you going to the hospital?
A: ***Adeta varam***.	Tamil	Next week.
C to D: *Nanti nak gi main bola?*	Malay	Want to play ball afterwards?
D: *Boleh jugak. Papa nak main*?	Malay	Yes, sure. Would you like to play, Papa?
B: *Tak. Kamu mainlah.*	Malay	No, you go ahead and play.
C: *Alaaa, papa pun mainlah.*	Malay	Papa, please play too.
B: *Papa nak berehat.*	Malay	I want to rest.
C: ***Nanna*** *boleh main*?	Malay	Can grandpa play?
A: *Boleh*! (laughs) ***Ningge valaiyadengeda.*** ***Naan vaisa ayiten.***	Malay Tamil	Can! You two go ahead and play. I have grown old.
C: *Apa* ***nanna*** *cakap?*	Malay and Tamil	What did you say?
A: ***Nanna*** *cakap kamu sajalah main.* ***Nanna*** *sudah tua.*	Malay and Tamil	I said both of you go ahead and play. I have grown old.
B to C and D: *Lepas makan, cuci pinggan sendiri tau.*	Malay	After you finish eating, wash your own plates.
C and D: *Yelah, papa.*	Malay	Of course, papa.
A: Nasir ***patti kelvi pattiya***?	Tamil	Did you hear about Nasir?
B: ***Illaiye***. ***Yaa****?*	Tamil	No. Why?
A: ***Avanukku velai kadaichiriche***.	Tamil	He has found a job.
B: ***Engga***?	Tamil	Where?
A: US ***le***, ***oru IT company le. Nalle samblamma***.	Tamil	In the US, at an IT company. Good salary.
B: ***Kandippa nalle samblam kadaikum! Inga marila illai***.	Tamil	Definitely will get a good salary! Not like here.
A: ***Athan unnode cinnama ke***	Tamil	That is why your aunt is

rombe sandosham. Neitu vandechengge.		very happy. They came yeaterday.
B: ***Neita? Ethna manikke*?**	Tamil	Yesterday? At what time?
A: ***Ratrile vandechengga. Saptetan pochengge***.	Tamil	They came at night. They left after eating.
B: ***Sonna nanum vandreppene***. Nasir***re paate rombe naala ache.***	Tamil	If I was told, I would have come too. It has been a long time since I last saw Nasir.
A: ***Tedirnde vandechengge, da. Kadave yaro tatre mari irindeche, torende paata, cinnamawum Nasirrum nikkerange veliye***.	Tamil	They came suddenly. It felt like someone was knocking on the door and when I opened it, your aunt and Nasir were standing outside.
B: Oh.	English	Oh.
C: *Papa! Papa! Nak seringgit!*	Malay and English	Papa! Papa! I want a ringgit!
B: *Buat apa?*	Malay	For what?
C: *Nak beli gula-gula.*	Malay	I want to buy sweets.
B: *Baru makan nasi, mau gula-gula?*	Malay	You just ate rice and now you want sweets?
C: *Seringgit saja, pa.*	Malay and English	Only a ringgit, Papa.
B: *Tak boleh, baru minggu lepas pergi* dentist. *Tak cukup sakit gigi?*	Malay and English	Cannot, just last week you went to the dentist. Your tooth is not aching enough?
C: ***Nanna***, *bagi seringgit boleh?*	Tamil and Malay	Grandpa, can give me a ringgit?
A: *Tak boleh. Nanti you beli gula-gula, habis gigi!*	Malay	No, then you will buy sweets, your teeth will be damaged!
B: *Mari sini, duduk!*	Malay	Come here, sit!
C: *Tanak. Nak main kat luar. Bye*!	Malay and English	Don't want. I want to play outside. Bye!
B: *Mana adik?*	Malay	Where is your brother?
C: *Kat luar!*	Malay	Outside!

APPENDIX F – EXTRACT OF CONVERSATION

BETWEEN TWO MUSLIM TAMIL FRIENDS

Conversation	**Language Used**	**Translation**
M: Hi! Please come in.	English	
N: Wow, what a lovely house. ***Pulenggelam yengge*****?**	Tamil and English	Where are the children?
M: Thanks. School ***le*** programme ***irukka, kaleile pochengge***.	Tamil and English	There is a programme at school, they went in the morning.
N: ***Unnode veetukarar*****?**	Tamil	Your husband?
M: ***Avar vela visayamma veliya poitar. Rattiri ki taan tirumbevaar***. How about your husband?	Tamil and English	He has gone out on a work matter. He will only return at night.
N: He's at home, playing a video game on TV. I asked him to come with me but he refused, saying he didn't want to join in girl talk.	English	
M: (laughing) I understand! My husband feels the same.	English	
N: ***Inthe*** curtain ***yengge vangene***?	Tamil and English	Where did you buy this curtain?
M: ***Athe va,*** Nilai ***le. Rombe cheapa*** curtain ***tuni vikkerangge. Oru*** metre ***anje velli taan. Naa sondemma tachchen.***	Tamil and English	Oh that, in Nilai. Curtain fabric is being sold very cheaply there. One metre was only RM5. I sewed it myself.
N: ***Rombe alaha irukke. Ye veetu*** curtain ***mattelam ninaikiren.***	Tamil and English	It is very beautiful. I am thinking of changing my house curtains.
M: Thanks. ***Nilai ke po, nalle*** designs ***la kadaikum.***	Tamil and English	Go to Nilai, you will find nice designs there.
N: Okay, how about our plan to go to Bandung? My husband has agreed to let me go, he says he'll send the children to his mother while I'm away.	English	
M: Oh, bad news. My husband says no.	English	
N: Why?	English	
M: There's no one to look after	English	

the kids and he doesn't know how to cook. He says if I went, I'd probably return to find them dead from starvation.		
N: That's melodramatic! ***Rombe Tamil padam la pakeraro***?	Tamil and English	Does he watch a lot of Tamil movies?
M: I don't know what to say. I really want to go. I need a break!	English	
N: ***Kalyanam panna ithan*** problem.	Tamil and English	If we get married, this is the problem.
M: Yes, have to take care of husband and children!	English	
N: ***Enna seiyemudiyum. Nalla maatikettum***.	Tamil	What to do. We are really trapped.
M: ***Athe karekta sonne. Nalla maatikitachu***. From first thing in the morning till last thing at night, have to worry about husband and kids. Wait, I forgot to serve you a drink! What would you like?	Tamil and English	What you say is correct. We are really trapped.
N: Oh, don't worry about it. Anything also can.	English	
M: Don't be like that*lah*. Just tell what drink you want and I'll make it for you.	English and Malay	
N: Ok, ok, ***seromo vekke kudade ninaiche, parvalle***.	Tamil and English	Ok, ok, I thought don't want to give trouble, never mind.
M: ***Ithelam vore serommomma? Konje naretil kalekki kudeterven***	Tamil	Is this a difficulty? I will make it in very little time.
N: Oklah, I'll have Milo.	English	
M: ***Vaa, adeppa kareyla kudikelam.***	Tamil	Come, let's drink in the kitchen.
N: Ok.		
M and N enter kitchen.		
M: Please have a seat.	English	
N: Ok, thanks.	English	
M: Sorry about the mess. The children had to do that before they go.	English	
N: What? Make a mess?	English	
M: Yes! They can't stand to see their mummy having some free time.	English	
N: (*laughing*) Need to teach them to clean up *lah*.	English and Malay	
M: Oh, I know you do. You are	English	

very *garang*!	and Malay	
N: I have to be! Or else the kids will walk all over me.	English	
M: How about their father? Is he *garang* too?	English and Malay	
N: Oh no, he spoils them. Buys them this toy, that toy. I tell not to buy and does he listen? Nooooo.	English	
M: Mine cannot be expected to buy any thing. He will give you the money and ask you to go buy yourself!	English	
N: Ah, each person is different.	English	
M: ***Athe*** correct!	Tamil and English	That is correct!
N: Oh ya, in case you don't know, Nasirah has moved house. She's going to hold a *kenduri doa selamat* next week.		(*kenduri doa selamat* = feast with prayers)
M: Oh! Where did she move? I didn't know. When did she tell you? I haven't spoken to her for months.		
N: I bumped into her last week at Tesco. She told me that she has moved to a house in Damansara. Just moved recently. She asked me to invite you to the *kenduri*. I'll SMS you the address afterwards. It's in my handphone.	English and Malay	
M: Why couldn't she tell me herself? Must ask you to tell me?	English	
N: She couldn't *lah*. Her handphone got stolen, she said. It's that Galaxy S3 thing. She left it on the counter at some shop for a little while and when she turned around, it was gone. So she has a new phone and a new number now. She asked me to give the number to you.	English and Malay	
M: Ohhhhh, in that case, let me go take my phone. I'll give her a call afterwards.	English	
N: ***Seri***.	Tamil	All right.

APPENDIX G – EXTRACT OF CONVERSATION

BETWEEN SIX MUSLIM TAMIL FRIENDS

Conversation	**Language Used**	**Translation**
X1: *Korang tau, nilai hantaran kawin ikut taraf pelajaran dan campur cukai enam peratus! Kalau belajar sampai tahap PMR, RM1,000 hingga RM3,000; kalau sampai SPM, RM3,000 hingga RM8,000; kalau STPM atau diploma, RM8,000 hingga RM12,000 dan kalau ada degree, RM12,000 hingga RM15,000. Ini belum campur lagi cukai enam peratus!*	Malay	Do you know that the price of dowry is based on education status and there is a tax of six per cent? If the woman studied until PMR, the dowry is RM1,000 to RM3,000; if until SPM, it is RM3,000 to RM8,000; if until STPM or diploma, it is RM8,000 to RM12,000 and if she has a degree, it is RM12,000 to RM15,000. This does not include the six per cent tax!
X2: Impossible!	English	
Y1: *Mahal sangat ni. Suruh mak bapak simpan saja anak depa!*	Malay	This is very expensive. Tell the parents to just keep their daughter!
Y2: *Last-last tu tak kahwin dan jadi andartu*.	Malay and English	In the end, the women won't get married and become spinsters.
X3: *Enam peratus* government tax *tu wat pe? Baik tak kahwin*.	Malay and English	What is the six per cent government tax for? It is better to not get married.
Y3: *Daripada bagi hantaran, baik beli saham, cukup tahun dapat untung*.	Malay	Instead of giving dowry, it would be better to buy stocks, can get profit at the end of the year.
Y1: *Saya sokong! Ini nak jual anak atau kahwinkan anak*?	Malay	I support! Are the parents selling or marrying off their children?
X1: *Ini yang perempuan mintak kat lelaki. Yang laki mintak kat perempuan lagi banyak kot. Dowri RM50,000 dan emas 50 hingga 60 paun pun ade*.	Malay	This is what the women asked from the men. The men might be asking for more from the women. There have been dowries of RM50,000 and 50 to 60 pounds of gold.
X3: *Dowri yang laki minta dari perempuan boleh guna untuk beli rumah,* for second wife *dia*!	Malay and English	The dowry that men ask from women can be used to buy a house for a second wife!
X1: *Sebenarnye, yang mintak tu mamak pure yang mai dari India, kad pengenalan merah dan pasport India, cakap Melayu pun terbalik. Depa la dok mintak macam-macam. Bukan orang sini,* as far as I know *lah.*	Malay and English	Actually, those who ask for the dowry are pure mamak who come from India, have red identity card and Indian passport, and speak broken Malay. They are the ones asking for this and that. Not the people here, as far as I know.

X2: *Yang perempuan yang tak mau dan tak suka bagi apa-apa dowri* must be firm. It is their parents who are scared their daughter won't get married.	Malay and English	Women who don't want and don't like dowry must be firm about it.
Y2: Must change the mindset like you change the handset.	English	
X2: Guys! *Nak tak pergi Sungai Congkak bulan depan? Kita pergi* camping.	Malay and English	Guys! Want to go to Congkak River next month? We can go camping.
Y1: *Sungai Congkak*? *Main congkak* I *tahulah*.	Malay and English	Congkak River? Congkak game, I know.
Y3: *Awak tahu main congkak*? *Jangan kelentong lah. Awak main batu seremban pun tak tahu*!	Malay	You know how to play congkak? Don't lie. You don't even know how to play five stones!
X2: *Sungai Congkak tu kat Selangor jugaklah, dekat Hulu Langat. Tempat* best *pergi* camping.	Malay	Congkak River is in Selangor also, in Hulu Langat. It is a great place for camping.
Y1: *Laki pompuan sama-sama ke?*	Malay	Males and females together?
X2: *Hish, taklah! Kita duduk asing-asing!*	Malay	Hish, no! We will stay separately.
X3: *Bila nak pergi? Bulan depan kakak aku kawin.*	Malay	When do you want to go? My elder sister is getting married next month.
Y2: *Awak bila nak kawin?*	Malay	When are you getting married?
X3: *Kau diam! Sendiri belum kawin nak cakap orang lain.*	Malay	Shut up! You have yet to marry and you want to talk about others.
X1: *Sudah, sudah. Tak payah nak gaduh* in public.	Malay and English	Enough, enough. No need to fight in public.
Y1: *Bila nak pergi ni?*	Malay	When are we going?
X2: *Kita pergilah petang Jumaat mana-mana minggu bulan depan. Lepas tu, balik hari Ahad. Amacam?*	Malay	We can go on a Friday any week next month. After that, we can return on Sunday.
X3: *Bagus jugak*.	Malay	Good idea.
Y1: *Aku teringin nak* join *tapi tengoklah cam mana.*	Malay	I want to join but let's see how.
Y3: *Kenapa, wei*?	Malay	Why? (wei is a rough way of addressing a friend)
Y1: *Aku kena tolong ayah aku jaga kedai Sabtu Ahadlah*.	Malay	I have to help my father take care of the shop on Saturdays and Sundays.
Y2: You *mintak adik laki* you *tolong jagalah.*	Malay and English	Ask your younger brother to help take care.

Y1: *Adik I? Dia pergi tuisyenlah*.	Malay and English	My younger brother? He attends tuition.
X2: *Okay, jadi yang lain nak pergi* camping *ke Sungai Congkak ke tak ni?*	Malay	Okay, so do the rest of you want to go camping at Congkak River or not?
X3: *Insya Allah*, I join.	Arabic and English	God willing, I will join.
X1: I *kena tanya mak bapak* I *dulu*.	Malay and English	I have to ask my parents first.
Y2: *Lima orang je mana cukup?*	Malay	Five people where got enough?
X2: *Kita carilah orang lagi*. You *kan ada banyak kawan. Tapi* make sure *lelaki perempuan sama ramai*.	Malay and English	We can find more people. You have many friends. But make sure there are equal numbers of males and females.
Y3: *Kenapa*? *Nak* dating *ke*?	Malay and English	Why? Want to go dating?
X2: *Bukan* dating. *Nak* make sure *kitorang tak kena buli dengan korang!*	Malay and English	Not dating. Want to make sure we don't get bullied by you guys!
Y1: *Kahkahkahkahkah*!		Laughter
Y2: *Tengok-tengok, korang yang buli kita*!	Malay	Maybe it is you who will bully us!
X3: Eh, *tidakkk, kita baik. Kita sangat baik.*	Malay	Eh, no, we are good. We are very good.
Y2: *Yelah tu*!	Malay	Yeah, sure!
X1: You guys *ni kelakar. Jumpa je mesti buat lawak.*	Malay	You guys are funny. When we meet, you must crack jokes.
X2: Laughter is the best medicine, kan?	Malay and English	Laughter is the best medicine, right?
Y1: Ya, ya, I agree, I support!	Malay and English	Yes, yes, I agree, I support!
X1: *Dah azan lah. Jom buka*!	Malay	The azan has been said. Let's break fast!