



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***DOMAIN ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE CHOICE AND ENGLISH
LANGUAGE USE AMONG LECTURERS IN A MALAYSIAN
PUBLIC UNIVERSITY***

TAM LEE MEI

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PUBLIC UNIVERSITY**

By

TAM LEE MEI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts (English Language)**

September 2014

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts (English
Language)

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Chair: Ain Nadzimah Abdullah, PhD. Associate Professor
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It is a norm for people from all walks of life to choose and use which language(s) to communicate when they come into contact with each other. In a multilingual and multicultural country such as Malaysia, almost everyone speaks at least two or more languages. Thus, the Malaysian multilingual situation resulted in speakers having to make decisions about which languages are to be used for different purposes in different domains. In order to explain the phenomenon of language choice, Fishman domain analysis (1964) was adapted into this research. According to Fishman's domain analysis, language choice and use may depend on the speaker's experiences situated in different settings, different language repertoires that are available to the speaker, different interlocutors and different topics. Such situations inevitably cause more barriers and difficulties to those professionals who work in education domain. Therefore, it is this research's purpose to explore the language choice and use of a Malaysian public university's lecturers in the domains of family, friendship, education and transaction. Besides, this research wants to examine whether any significant differences between ethnicity and field of study with the language choice and use of Malay, Chinese and Indian respondents in the domains of family, friendship, education and transaction. Another area of focus is to investigate the significant differences between English language choice and use of the respondents in relation to their ethnicity and field of study. 200 survey questionnaires were distributed to ten faculties of a Malaysian public university to examine the details of the lecturers' language choice and use. The findings of this research suggested that the language choice and use of Malay respondents generally preferred to choose and use Malay language across all domains identified except when they are in formal education domain. As for Chinese respondents, they preferred to choose and use the English language in all of the listed domains apart from the family domain. The Indian respondents also chose and used more English language than their own ethnic language in all of the domains. Besides, all of the respondents claimed that they chose and used more than one language in all domains. The ANOVA results showed that significant differences were found in the three ethnic

groups in their language choice and use of the English language in the four domains (family, friendship, education and transaction). As for the independent sample t-test, significant differences were discovered between Sciences and Social Sciences lecturers in their language choice and use in domains of friendship, education, and transaction; but not in the family domain. This means in the family domain, the use of English language between Sciences and Social Sciences lecturers did not differ significantly. This research found that the respondents chose and used their ethnic language more frequently in informal domains while English language was preferred more in formal domains. The findings in this research have provided a clear spectrum of the language choice and use of the Malay, Chinese and Indian respondents in the education domain complemented by family, friendship and transaction domains. In addition, this research suggested that the language and educational policy makers have been largely successful in raising the role and status of the English language as the medium of instruction in tertiary education while maintaining the Malay language as having an important role in the communicative acts characterizing the lecturers' language choice and use.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sastera (Bahasa Inggeris)

**PEMILIHAN DAN PENGGUNAAN BAHASA INGGERIS DI KALANGAN
PENSYARAH DI SEBUAH UNIVERSITI AWAM MALAYSIA DENGAN TEORI
DOMAIN**

Oleh

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Ia adalah kebiasaan bagi orang ramai dari semua lapisan masyarakat untuk memilih dan menggunakan bahasa untuk berkomunikasi apabila mereka berinteraksi antara satu sama lain. Dalam sebuah negara berbilang bahasa dan berbilang budaya seperti Malaysia, hampir semua orang mengetahui sekurang-kurangnya dua atau lebih bahasa. Oleh itu, keadaan berbilang bahasa di Malaysia menyebabkan pengguna bahasa perlu membuat keputusan mengenai bahasa yang akan digunakan untuk tujuan yang berbeza dalam persekitaran yang berbeza. Untuk menjelaskan fenomena pemilihan bahasa, teori analisis domain Fishman (1964) telah dipilih dalam kajian ini. Menurut Fishman, teori analisis domain, pemilihan dan penggunaan bahasa mungkin bergantung kepada pengalaman pengguna bahasa dalam persekitaran yang berbeza, bilangan bahasa yang diketahui oleh pengguna bahasa tersebut, pengguna bahasa yang berbeza dan topik yang berbeza. Situasi ini menyebabkan lebih banyak halangan dan kesukaran untuk kalangan profesional yang bekerja dalam bidang pendidikan untuk berkomunikasi. Oleh itu, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pemilihan dan penggunaan bahasa di kalangan pensyarah sebuah universiti awam dalam domain keluarga, persahabatan, pendidikan dan urusan niaga. Selain itu, kajian ini juga mengkaji sama ada perbezaan wujud antara bangsa dan bidang pengajian dengan pemilihan dan penggunaan di antara pensyarah-pensyarah Melayu, Cina dan India dalam domain keluarga, persahabatan, pendidikan dan urusan niaga. Tumpuan lain kajian ini adalah untuk mengetahui perbezaan antara pemilihan dan penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris di antara pensyarah-pensyarah dengan bangsa dan bidang pengajian. 200 soal selidik kajian telah diedarkan ke sepuluh fakulti di sebuah universiti awam di Malaysia untuk memeriksa butiran pemilihan dan penggunaan bahasa mereka di empat domain tersebut. Hasil kajian mencadangkan bahawa pensyarah Melayu lebih menyukai untuk memilih dan menggunakan bahasa Melayu merentasi semua domain yang dikenal pasti kecuali apabila mereka berada dalam domain pendidikan yang formal. Bagi pensyarah Cina, mereka lebih suka memilih dan menggunakan lebih banyak Bahasa Inggeris dalam semua domain yang disenaraikan selain daripada domain keluarga. Pensyarah India juga menyukai untuk memilih dan

menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris lebih daripada bahasa etnik mereka dalam semua domain. Selain itu, semua pensyarah mengatakan mereka memilih dan menggunakan lebih daripada satu bahasa dalam semua domain. Keputusan ANOVA menunjukkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan yang ketara dalam tiga kumpulan etnik dalam pemilihan dan penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris dalam empat domain tersebut (keluarga, persahabatan, pendidikan dan urus niaga). Bagi independent sample t-test, perbezaan yang ketara ditemui antara pensyarah Sains dan Sosial Sains dalam pemilihan dan penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris dalam domain persahabatan, pendidikan, dan urus niaga; tetapi, tiada perbezaan ditemui dalam domain keluarga. Ini bermaksud tiada perbezaan ditemui dalam penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris antara pensyarah dari Sains dan Sosial di dalam domain keluarga. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa pensyarah memilih dan menggunakan bahasa etnik mereka lebih kerap dalam domain yang tidak formal manakala pemilihan dan penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris lebih disukai dalam domain yang formal. Penemuan dalam kajian ini telah menyediakan spectrum yang jelas tentang pemilihan dan penggunaan bahasa antara pensyarah Melayu, Cina dan India dalam domain pendidikan selain daripada domain keluarga, persahabatan dan urus niaga. Selain itu, kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa perancang dasar bahasa dan pendidikan berjaya dalam meningkatkan peranan dan status bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa pengantar dalam pendidikan pengajian tinggi di samping mengekalkan peranan penting bahasa Melayu dalam komunikasi antara pensyarah dalam pemilihan dan penggunaan bahasa.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 19 September 2014 to conduct the final examination of Tam Lee Mei on her thesis entitled "Domain Analysis of Language Choice and English Language Use Among Lecturers in a Malaysian Public University" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Arts

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
BM	Bahasa Malaysia
CI	Confidence of Interval of Difference
DF	Degrees of Freedom
M	Means
Tukey HSD	Tukey Honestly Significant Difference



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter begins by introducing the background of the research and it also describes the sociolinguistic profile of Malaysia. Then, it presents the statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions. Subsequently, it illustrates the theoretical and conceptual framework for this research. Next, it discusses the significance of the research, delimitations and limitations of the research, and definition of terms that are operationalized in the context of this research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background of the Research

Which language to choose and use is a decision encountered by many people in their everyday lives. The decision making in choosing what language to be used in a monolingual country would be simple as the speaker only uses a single language in the communication. However, people who live in a bilingual or multilingual country inevitably face more decision makings in choosing what language to use as all of the people speak more than one language and it is unavoidable that not all of them would necessarily speak the same language as the speaker. Thus, domain analysis which is proposed by Joshua Fishman (1972) is crucial to provide a good understanding of the linguistics situation for a bilingual or multilingual country. Domain analysis defines that what language an individual choose to use may depend on who is the interlocutor, and the situation in which the conversation takes place.

According to Ethnologue Languages of the World, there are a hundred and forty languages spoken in Malaysia. Since so many languages are spoken by various ethnic groups in Malaysia, it is regarded as a multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural country in the international arena. Most Malaysians are at least bilingual as Malay language is the national language while English language is the second most important language whereas Chinese and the Indian languages are usually spoken by either Chinese or Indian respectively. In Malaysia, it is common for Malaysians to be able to have access to more than one language. Languages can be used for interethnic communication; and some are more restricted to just community use. In a multilingual society, individuals constantly have to make a choice of what language to use for which situation and this depends on the interlocutors who are also constrained by their own linguistic repertoires. For instance, a Malaysian Chinese would choose and use the Chinese language to converse with his parents, but he may find that it is more suitable to choose and use the Malay language when

conversing with his Malay friends or choose and use the English language when conversing with his employer.

In addition, it is rather a common phenomenon for code-switching and code-mixing to occur in a multilingual country. Generally, Malaysians code-switch and code-mix between three languages: namely Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil. For instance, a Malay speaker may choose and use the Malay language when conversing with his Chinese friends initially but may code-switch to English halfway for the rest of the conversation.

Some people view this as a problem since it could cause barriers and difficulties in communication. Nonetheless exercising a choice in language use in different contexts can be a complex task. This is due to the fact that the speaker often has to decide constantly what languages are appropriate to use for what purposes, and the decision is often instantaneous. Besides, the speaker might be influenced by the characteristics of the interlocutor such as their ethnicity, age, gender, educational level, proficiency level and domains in which the particular communicative event takes place. Domains refer to the settings where the interactions take place. For instance, we have domains of family, friendship, education and transaction – domains which are investigated in this research. In each of the domain, we have different sets of interlocutors, different matters to be discussed and different settings. Patterns of code switching or mixing may also be influenced by the nature of the jobs. In other words, there may be a difference between the professionals and the non professionals.

Malaysia, due to the exigencies of history, is a post-colonial nation with a diverse ethnic population possessing great social and cultural complexities. Malaysia has not just one but many significant languages, largely as a result of the immigrant ancestry of its multi-ethnic population. Thus, it is important to describe the historical backgrounds of the language choice and use in Malaysia. The next section will be detailing the sociolinguistic profile that shaped the current linguistic scenery in Malaysia.

1.2 Sociolinguistic Profile of Malaysia

The multilingual state in Malaysia has been a result of many events and developments in the nation's history and growth. In the past, Malaya was first conquered by the Portuguese, followed by the Dutch and Japanese. After that, it was the British who colonized all of Malaya and the colonization by the British had the most impact compared to the other colonizers.

During the colonial period, the British encouraged mass importation of Chinese and Indian workers to Malaya. Chinese workers migrated from China worked in

the tin mines and typically speak Chinese dialects such as Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew and Hainanese (Baskaran, 2005). On the other hand, Indian workers migrated from India worked in the rubber plantations and speak Indian dialects such as Tamil, Malayalee, Telugu, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujarati, Sri Lankan Tamil, Pakistani and Sindhi (Omar, 1992). In addition, there were a large number of Malayan aboriginals and Malay. There were also small groups of Siamese, Arabs and Proto-Malays who speak Malay. The Malays had inhabited Malaya long before the mass migration of Chinese and Indian workers. All these had brought about a diverse mixture of speech communities who constantly came into contact with one another and consequently shaped Malaya as a multilingual country.

During the British imperialism, the English language was the official language and it is the language used in the formal domains. The “formal” domains include the legal domain, government domain and education domain. The legal domain such as in courts required English to be used as the language between the judge and lawyer, while it was also used for administrative purposes in government domain. In addition, English was used in English medium schools to produce the elites of the then Malayan society. In fact, English was a prestige language used mainly by the educated. For most commoners, Malay was the lingua franca for people of various linguistic backgrounds in socialising with each other or in carrying out their trades in informal domains. Informal domains refer to domains where informal interactions take place such as in the vendor-buyers relationship in transaction domain, or between the employer and his servant who has a different ethnic group from himself in the workplace domain.

After independence, Malaya underwent drastic changes with regard to the language policy that spelt out the role and status of both Bahasa Malaysia (BM) and English. BM was declared as the sole national language and official language for the purpose of nation building and the creation of a Malaysian national identity in the year 1957. As for the English language, it was announced that it would be the second most important language (Asmah Haji Omar, 1993). In order to ensure the national language is a symbol of sovereignty, it has to be used in official functions and in the education system of the country. Hence, enormous effort and resources have been spent in implementing BM as the medium of instruction in schools and tertiary institutions and establishing it as a language that can cope with the demands of the fields of science and technology. This leads to English being gradually phased out as a medium of instruction. Despite the change in the language policy, the English language had not been completely neglected in the education policy. It is still taught as one of the compulsory subject in schools. In the Malaysian school system, there exist unique situations of the vernacular languages which are used as the medium of instruction in primary schools. As such, a large number of Malaysians who have gone through these schools are well trained in either Chinese or Tamil. The recognition of the importance of vernacular languages was an indication of multilingual harmony and these language rights are constitutionally recognised. At the same time, vernacular schools also taught English and Malay language to their students. From these

historical perspectives, it is clear that languages are given different emphases in Malaysia. While Malay is the official medium of instruction in national schools, Chinese and Tamil can be the medium of instruction in the primary national type schools. English is taught as a subject in both national and national type schools.

However, English language remains to be dominantly used in various domains in Malaysia such as business, education, politics, tourism, employment, law, media and translation. English is entrenched as a global language and the Malaysian government sees the need for its citizens to be multilingual.

The discussion above revealed the current state of bilingualism and multilingualism in Malaysia which has developed over the years. This sociolinguistic landscape was moulded by several changes in the language and education policies which set a formal direction for language choice and use of a speech community in a multilingual country.

1.3 Statement of Problem

Multilingualism has been a subject of great interest among sociolinguists. Much research has been conducted into language choice and use, for example, language choice and use among students, assembly-plant workers, ethnic groups and workplace communities in different domains (Callahan, 2005; David, 2006; Fishman, 1972; Morais, 1998; Nair-Venugopal, 2003; Ting & Sussex, 2002).

However, very little is known about the language choice and use of English language among specific segments of professional workers. Professional workers can be further sub-divided into specific categories depending on the nature of their work. In this research, university lecturers as a category merit an investigation to add to the knowledge of language choice and use among professionals. Their patterns of language choice and use are expected to reveal a profusion of choices in language use and the choices are exercised largely in a formal education context complemented by the informal contexts of family, friendship and transaction domains which together would provide a holistic picture of language choice and use among this group of professionals identified.

Besides, it is the focus of this research to investigate the extent English is recognized as a global language. In addition, previous research has found that the language choice and use of university lecturers would exert influence on the language choice and use of the university students (Sekharan Nair, G. K., Setia, R., Abdul Samad, N. Z., Mohd Zameri, N. N., A. L., Vadeveloo, T., & Che Ngah, H., 2014; Azizi. Y., Noordin. Y., Ooi, C. L., Abdul. T., & Sharifuddin. I., 2011). As such, this research would be able to source empirically the language use of lecturers that might influence the language choice of university students. In turn, a study of this nature could provide language evidence to help address issues that could arise as a result of the relationship between lecturer and

student use of language. Ultimately, these issues could be ironed out if the actual problems are worked on meaningfully. Indirectly, the research could facilitate the elevation of English language proficiency of the university students who are often labelled as having poor command of the English language which is considered to be a major cause of unemployment (Aruna, 2011). Furthermore, this research gives comparative data on the use of major languages used in Malaysia. This data will reveal the vitality status of the languages and the information could provide details for policy makers who are interested often in chartering directions of language initiatives that will benefit the country.

1.4 Research Objectives

This research aims to investigate the patterns of language choice and use of university lecturers in a Malaysian public university. It identifies the language choice and use of lecturers in the domains of family, friendship, education, and transaction. In addition, it examines whether any significant differences arise between ethnicity and field of study with the language choice and use of the English language in the domains of family, friendship, education, and transaction.

1.5 Research Questions

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the language choice and use of university lecturers in the domains of family, friendship, education and transaction?
2. Are there any significant differences across Malay, Chinese and Indian lecturers in their language choice and use of English languages in the domains of family, friendship, education and transaction?
3. Are there any significant differences in language choice and use of English language between lecturers in the sciences and social sciences in the domains of family, friendship, education and transaction?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The domain analysis framework as shown below was proposed by Fishman (1964, 1965, 1968, 1972) and adapted in this research. Fishman hypothesizes that domains are the theoretical constructs that can be explained through the phenomenon of language choice and use. It is very useful in capturing the language choice of large speech communities who are bilingual or multilingual.

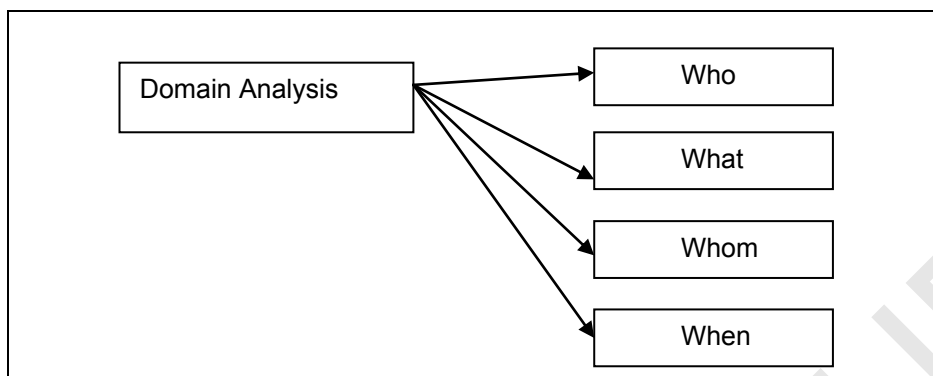


Figure 1.1. Theoretical framework on Domain Analysis adapted from Fishman (1964, 1965, 1968, 1972)

Figure 1.1 illustrates the theoretical framework of domain analysis addressing the issues of “who” speaks “what language” to “whom” and “when”. The keywords are “who”, “what”, “whom”, and “when”. “Who” refers to the bilingual or multilingual speaker, “what” refers to the language(s) of that speaker’s linguistics repertoire, “whom” refers to the interlocutors in different predetermined domains and “when” refers to the contexts or the domains of language use. In a multilingual country like Malaysia, a Chinese speaker may choose and use his/her ethnic language when interacting with the same ethnic group in family domain. However, he/she may choose and use other languages such as Malay or English when speaking to those from other ethnic groups in transaction domain. More specifically, a Chinese speaker may choose and use Mandarin, Hokkien or Teochew when speaking to her own ethnic group about family matters. However, he/she may switch to another language such as Malay or English language when speaking to Malay or Indian agents as in buying a car. From this illustration, it would clarify that the language choice and use of a speaker may depend on his / her experiences situated in different settings, different language repertoires available to the speaker, different interlocutors and different topics. This theoretical framework as mentioned was forwarded in 1964 and has been used by many researchers in the field. (Further explanation is provided in Section 2.8).

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.2 demonstrates the conceptual framework of the language choice and use of lecturers in a Malaysian public university.

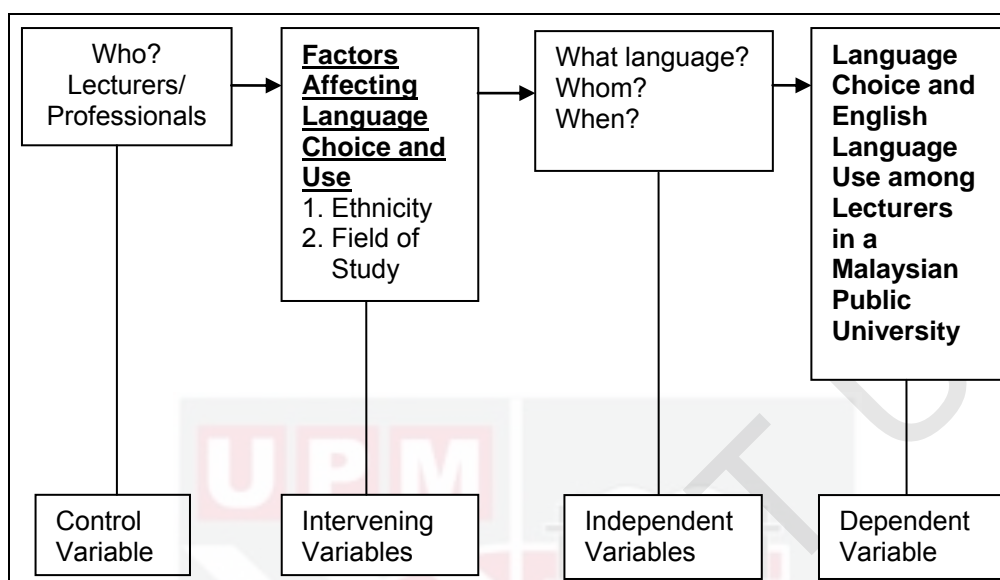


Figure 1.2. Conceptual Framework of Factors and Domains Affecting Language Choice and Use of Lecturers in a Malaysian Public University

There are four types of variables that were indicated in this research: control, independent, intervening and dependent. The first variable is the control variable, which is the lecturers or the professionals from a Malaysian public university that participated in this research. The second group is the independent variables which is derived from the “Fishman Domain Analysis”. It is concerned with what, where and when to account for the language choice and use. The third group of variables is intervening variables, which are the factors that affect the language choice and use of the lecturers in terms of their ethnicity and field of study. Ultimately, the output or the dependent variable will be the manifestations of language choice and use of the respondents in question. Overall, the conceptual framework explains the language choice and use of Malaysian public university lecturers who are influenced by various factors.

1.8 Significance of Research

Language choice and use in a multilingual context is a complex issue. It entails the speaker having to make a decision about which language(s) to use in a particular situation. Studying the multilingual context of language choice and use in Malaysia will provide clear indicators of characteristic use among bilinguals or multilinguals giving a profile of language repertoires available in the professional speech community of university lecturers. Of significance is also the defining of a specific speech community that exists and contributes to the contemporary composite of the study of language choice and use among multilingual language users. Given the dynamics of language use, it is pertinent to provide a continuous update of language change that occurs with the choice and use of language.

1.9 Delimitations and Limitations

Due to financial constraints, this research focused on a certain group of subjects at certain faculties in a Malaysian public university. Besides, the research did not take into account other minority groups such as the East Malaysian Bumiputera, Eurasian, or Punjabi. This is because either most of the minority groups are difficult to reach as most of them are very few in numbers or they are staying in East Malaysia which is not a site for investigation. Therefore, it might not reflect the views and perceptions of different ethnicity of lecturers in all Malaysian universities. However, the result of this research can be extended to a larger number of participants in the future.

1.10 Definition of Terms

1.10.1 Domain

Domain refers to the theoretical constructs that explain the context in which the particular language is used. It depends on the participants, their role relationships, the topic being discussed and the settings (Fishman, 1972), for instance, language choice and use in the domains of family, friendship, education or transaction.

1.10.2 Domain Analysis

Fishman (1964) domain analysis proposes that one language may be more appropriate than another in certain domain use. It can also be given the status such as a language being referred to as the standard language or a prestige language that is used in high domains. Alternatively, language that are not as prestigious can belong to the low domains (Yeh, Chan and Cheng, 2004).

1.10.3 Ethnic Language

Ethnic language refers to the language that belong to certain ethnic groups. Among them are the Chinese languages which refer to the Chinese dialects such as Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew and Hainanese in this research (Baskaran, 2005), Indian languages which refer to the Indian dialects such as Tamil, Malayalee, Telugu, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujarati, Sri Lankan Tamil, Pakistani and Sindhi in this research (Omar, 1992).

1.10.4 Language Choice

Language choice is defined as the language, variety or code utilized by a particular speech community for a particular purpose or function in verbal interaction (Fishman, 1972).

1.10.5 University Lecturer

The term 'university lecturer' refers to a person that gives lectures as his professional obligation in a university.

1.10.6 Malaysian Public University

A Malaysian public university is a university that is linked to the Malaysian government in terms of its operations. It is established and funded by the government and its student intake is processed through a government linked agency.

1.10.7 Mother Tongue

Mother tongue refers to the language first learned by a child.

1.11 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has provided the background of the research and reference is made through the concept of language choice and use in a multilingual setting. In addition, it stated the Malaysian sociolinguistic profile that governs the patterns of language choice and use of the Malaysians. It also presented the statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions. Subsequently, it illustrated the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that drive the research. Finally, it discussed the significance, delimitations and limitations, and provided definition of terms in the context of this research.

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