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LANGUAGE CHOICE AND USE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES AT A MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

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By

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TO EBRAHIM

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

LANGUAGE CHOICE AND USE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES AT A MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

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Multilinguals, consciously or unconsciously are often confronted with having to select one linguistic code over another from within their linguistic repertoires. The choice of a proper linguistic code enables effective communication and could also lead to the promotion of solidarity among interlocutors. The focus of this study was to describe the language choices of the Malaysian undergraduates in the five domains of language use, i.e. education, family, friendship, religion, and transaction. Furthermore, the study aimed to determine whether individual/social factors, such as age, gender, education background, ethnicity, language proficiency and ethnic identity exert any influence on the choice of languages of the Malaysian undergraduates in the investigated domains of language use. Fishman's (1968, 1972a, 1972) views on domain analysis, Giles and Smith's (1979, 1973) Social Accommodation Theory (SAT), Tajfel and Turner's (1986) Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Erikson's Identity Theory were utilized as theoretical bases in order to conduct the study and answer the research questions. Based on a Random Proportional Stratified Sampling Strategy, a total of 498 undergraduate local students in a Malaysian public university were selected as respondents of the study. The respondents mostly belonged to three main ethnic groups, i.e. the Malays, Chinese, and Indians that together comprise Malaysian society. Also some other ethnic minority groups' respondents as members of the Malaysian society were included in the study. Data about the demographic profiles of the respondents and the choices of languages in the domains of language use was collected through a self administrated questionnaire survey. SPSS software was used to run analyses such as computing mean scores of the respondents' used languages. Besides, Chi-Square Test was used to find out the relationships between variables. According to the results, the linguistic situation in Malaysia is similar to a diglossic situation. Results of the study also point to the fact that younger generations of Malaysia are highly proficient in all four basic skills of the Malay language and the majority of them are fluent users of the English language as well. The factor of age was found to be a determinant of language use unless in the education domain. Besides, the factors of education profiles and ethnicity were found to be influential in the choice and use of linguistic codes among the Malaysian youths. But gender was not found to be a determinant of language choice at all. Language proficiency was not a determinant of language choice except in case of the Malay language in the religion and transaction domains.

In conclusion, it seems that in multilingual contexts the choice of language is a concomitant of any social interaction.

Abstrak tesis yang dibentangkan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia dalam memenuhi keperluan Ijazah Doktor Falsafah.

PILIHAN DAN PENGGUNAAN BAHASA DI KALANGAN PRA-SISWAZAH DI UNIVERSITI AWAM MALAYSIA

Oleh

MEHDI GRANHEMAT

Jun 2015

Pengerusi: Profesor Bersama Ain Nadzimah Abdullah, PhD
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Penutur pelbagai bahasa, secara sedar atau tidak sering berdepan dengan keperluan untuk menggunakan satu kod bahasa lebih dari yang lain dalam rekod linguistik mereka. Pilihan kod linguistik yang lebih baik membolehkan komunikasi yang lebih efektif, dan ini membawa kepada jalinan hubungan yang baik di antara interlokutor. Fokus kajiaan ini ialah untuk menghuraikan pilihan bahasa pra-siswazah Malaysia dalam lima domain penggunaan bahasa, i.e. pendidikan, keluarga, persahabatan, agama dan transaksi. Tambahan lagi, kajian ini bertujuan menentukan sama ada faktor-faktor individu/sosial seperti usia, jantina, latar belakang pendidikan, etnisiti, profisiensi bahasa dan identiti etnik memberi sebarang pengaruh ke atas pilihan bahasa pra-siswazah Malaysia dalam domain bahasa yang dikaji. Pandangan Fishman (1968, 1972a, 1972) ke atas analisis domain, Giles and Teori Akomodasi Sosial (SAT) Smith (1979, 1973), Teori Identiti Sosial (SIT) Tajfel and Turner (1986) dan Teori Identiti Erikson telah digunakan sebagai asas teori untuk menjalankan kajian dan menjawab soalan-soalan kajian. Berdasarkan kepada Strategi Persampelan Berkadaran Secara Rawak, sejumlah 498 pelajar pra-siswazah tempatan di sebuah universiti awam di Malaysia telah dipilih sebagai responden kajian. Responden kebanyakannya terdiri dari tiga kumpulan etnik utama, Melayu, Cina dan India yang bersama membentuk masyarakat Malaysia. Kumpulan etnik minoriti yang lain, yang juga menjadi ahli masyarakat di Malaysia, turut sama menjadi responden dalam kajian ini. Data tentang profil demografi responden dan pilihan bahasa dalam domain bahasa dikumpul melalui tinjauan soal-selidik yang dikendalikan sendiri. Perisian SPSS telah digunakan untuk mengendalikan analisis seperti mengkomputasikan skor min bahasa-bahasa yang digunaakn oleh responden. Di samping itu, Ujian Chi-Square telah digunakan untuk mengkaji perhubungan-perhubungan di antara pembolehubah. Mengikut keputusan, keadaan linguistik di Malaysia adaah serupa dengan situasi diglosik. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa generasi lebih muda di Malaysia sangat fasih dalam semua kemahiran asas bahasa Malaysia dan kebanyakan mereka juga adalah pengguna Bahasa Inggeris yang fasih. Faktor usia didapati menjadi penentu kepada penggunaan bahawa kecuali di dalam domain pendidikan. Di samping itu, faktor profil pendidikan dan etnisiti didapati berpengaruh dalam pilihan dan penggunaan kod linguistik di kalangan belia di Malaysia. Namun demikian, jantina bukanlah satu penentu kepada pilihan bahasa. Profisiensi bahasa juga bukanlah penentu kepada pilihan bahasa melainkan dalam

konteks bahasa Malaysia dalam domain agama dan transaksi. Kesimpulannya, nampaknya dalam konteks pelbagai bahasa, pilihan bahasa begitu seiring dalam apa sahaja interaksi sosial.

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This thesis submitted to the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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SAT: Speech Accommodation Theory which was proposed by Giles, Taylor and Bourhis (1973) and Giles and Smith (1979) seeks to explain the strategies that individuals utilize to adjust their behavior in order to further and achieve their social goals in their daily interactions.

SIT: Tajfel and Turner's (1986) Social Identity Theory, which postulates that in interacting with others, individuals try to categorize their surroundings into social groups.

MEIM: Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measures, a global scale for measuring ethnic identity. The MEIM was first proposed by Phinney (1992).

EFA: Exploratory Factor Analysis as a statistical method was used to highlight the two components of the MEIM.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter begins with the background of the study, discussing the issues of language choice in multilingual settings in general, and the linguistic situation in Malaysia in particular. A statement of the problem follows, explaining the need for performing a thorough study about the relationships between linguistic practices in the domains of language use and individual differences i.e., age, education, gender, language proficiency, ethnicity, and ethnic identity in the Malaysian heterogeneous linguistic context. The objectives of the study are also presented, together with the theoretical framework, and organization of the study. Finally, a summary, which covers the main content discussed, concludes the chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

The phenomenon of language choice is explicably linked to individuals' tendencies towards the use of a particular language in a particular domain of language use in multilingual environments (Rahman, Chan, & Ain Nadzimah Abdullah, 2008). The choice of a code in a domain of language use can be affected by language policies of multilingual countries (Ridge, 2004). Moreover, there are significant individual differences in affecting variables, such as age, education, gender, and language Proficiency, which may affect the choice of a language in a particular domain of language use (Yeh, Chan, &Cheng, 2004; Lu, 1988). To compound the situation, multilingual individuals' identities are also significant in choosing a language from their linguistic repertoires (Wong, Lee, K. S., Lee S. K., & Azizah Yaacob, 2012; Mensah, Emmanuel, & Nyarko, 2012; Ho & Lin, 2011; Mee, 2011).

As above-mentioned, language policies of multilingual countries affect the choice of language. In multilingual ecologies, different speech communities that are relatively isolated from each other may integrate into a unified society as a result of language policies. The process of unification can be performed by the promotion of a community language such as the national language of a country (Ridge, 2004; Gonzales, 2003; Wardhaugh, 1990; Cooper, 1989; Fishman, 1975). Often, in the process and efforts for integration, the promoted language, as a unifying factor becomes dominant as it spreads into isolated speech communities (Fishman, 1975). The individuals within the ethnic groups, however, maintain and appreciate the use of their local languages as the carrier of their cultures (Dorais, 1995, p. 295). On the other hand, they may also tend towards the use of the dominant language (Elias, 2008, p. 5). Learning a dominant language may provide them with social advancements such as better job opportunities and accessibility to higher education. Furthermore, fluency in the formal language of a country provides many advantages: it assists people in maintaining their social positions; it brings confidence during public occasions such as attending a court of law; and it is generally effective in making people become more aware of the social, economic and political climate of

their country. In view of the plethora of language choice, individual members of multilingual communities are always faced with the dilemma of choosing—both for themselves and for their children—a local, traditional, or dominant formal language for use.

Individuals' or communal identities may also affect language choices in multilingual environments (Hall, 2002; Lu, 1988; Gal, 1979). Hall (2002, pp. 8-9), who believed in a firm relationship between language use and identity, attested that through language use: "We articulate and manage our individual identities, our interpersonal relationships, and memberships in our social groups and communities."

Yeh et al. (2004) investigated language choices in a bi-lingual Austrian society. They found that the use of German as the High language was associated with the national identity of the speakers; whereas, the use of Hungarian as the Low language was a reflection of individuals' tendencies towards language choice that reflected communal language use. More recently, Wong et al. (2012), in a study of the use of English and identity construction among Malaysian youth, established a relationship between language use and individuals' identities. In the same line of argument, Fishman (1975, p. 44) maintained that in modern societies language is regarded as, "A defining characteristic of a nationality".

The notion that language is a marker of identity has been asserted by both sociologists (e.g., Tabourt-Keller, 1998; Bourdieu, 1977) and language researchers (e.g., Wong et al., 2012; Lee, S. K, Lee, K. S, Wong & Azizah Ya'acob, 2010; Elias, 2008; Hall, 2002). Wong et al. (2012, p. 149) asserted that the spoken language(s) of individuals and their identities are inseparable. In a linguistically heterogeneous ecology such as that of Malaysia, boundaries are drawn about language choice that would mark one community as different from another. This can also show that ethnic identity may impact their language choice. However, where a language serves a specific purpose, such as one promoted as the national language of a country, then different speech communities may be motivated to use a national language for more formal communication purposes. In such case, the choice of an ethnic language in different domains of use may serve to mark their ethnic identity.

In view of such diversity of linguistic codes, as Maya Khemlani David (2008, p.219) maintained, the choice of language is an issue that often arises in daily interaction in the multilingual Malaysian context. In particular, Malaysian youths, consciously or unconsciously, are constantly confronted with selecting a linguistic code whenever they interact with people from their own race or with those from other races in different domains of language use. Given this context, the present study sought to describe the linguistic codes and choices of Malaysian youths and also to investigate the significant factors that may motivate Malaysian youths to choose one language over another in their linguistic repertoire. Moreover, the study attempted to examine the relationships between the chosen linguistic codes and ethnic identity of Malaysian youths. Thus, to provide a background of the linguistic repertoire of Malaysian youths, a description of the linguistic situation in Malaysia was appropriate.

1.2.1 The Linguistic Situation in Malaysia

A sociolinguistic discussion that language is associated with practical use (Adams, Matu, Ongarora, 2012, 99) is particularly fascinating in the context of Malaysia's rich linguistic milieu. In the Malaysian multilingual context, people in their daily interaction select different languages from their linguistic repertoires. In fact, Wong et al. (2012, p. 145) maintained that there are 140 spoken indigenous languages in Malaysia. As such, the variety of languages and cultures that co-exist in Malaysia makes communication a complicated, but intriguing issue and, hence, this would also apply to language choice.

Malaysia gained its independence in 1957. At the threshold of independence, like any other newly established country, the feeling of nationalism was at its peak. Therefore, as a manifestation of national identity the Malay language was highlighted by the independent government (Gill, 2005). The emphasis on the Malay language, which was in line with the desires of the Malay population, required a change in the country's language policy. Consequently, as a result of the new language policy of the independent country, the Malay language gained status as the formal language as well as the medium of instruction (Asmah Hj. Omar, 1994; 1979). Asmah Hj. Omar, (1994, p. 69) attested:

> No doubt the birth of an independent nation was imbued with a set of symbols of nationalism, one of which was language. And the Malay language, now better known as *bahasa Melayu*, was chosen to be this particular symbol.

The majority of other races also approved the use of the Malay language as a pivot on which a Malaysian national identity could be constructed (Gill, 2005, p. 246). This means that the independence of Malaysia was not performed solely through independence from the British government, but, for all Malaysian ethnic groups, the formation of an independent nation meant the birth of a new national identity that was, in large part, performed by the promotion of the Malay language, or bahasa Malaysia, as the national language of the country. This language policy is in agreement with Fasold (1984, p. 3), who pointed out that "Language, together with culture, religion and history, is a major component of nationalism."

On the other hand, the use of English in Malaysia has a history of 250 years from the 18th century onwards (Wong et al., 2012; Rajandran, 2011; 2008). In the 18th century when the British arrived and administered the land as Malaya, the use of English began burgeoning in the Peninsula. During the period of supremacy of the British as the sole colonial power of the peninsula (1819-1957), Christian religious missions endeavored to set up English schools to educate the local population (Hafriza Burhanudeen, 2006, p. 22). The English medium schools were open to all the ethnicities, although the Malays, because of religious considerations, were less inclined to attend the English medium schools at that time (Asmah Hj. Omar, 1994, p. 67). It can be concluded that there were two main influential factors that affected the spread of English in Malaysia. The first factor was its antiquity, which is perceived as a legacy of colonialism (Asmah Hj. Omar, 1994, p. 66). The second one was (and still is) the instrumental role of the English language in education, research, financial transactions, inter-ethnic communication, and international relationships

(Wong et al., 2012; Lee et al. 2010). However, the use of English lost its foregrounding, especially in schools, after independence in 1957.

Consequently, with a Malaysian outlook, The Malay language or bahasa Malaysia was not only highlighted as the national language, but also as the language of instruction (Hafriza Burhanudeen, 2006). The importance of a national education system was firstly proposed in 1951 by the Barnes Report (Hafriza Burhanudeen, 2006; Gill, 2005). Later, in 1955 a governmental committee in a report, which is well known as the Razak Report emphasized a national educational system with bahasa Malaysia considered as the medium of instruction (Hafriza Burhanudeen, 2006, p.18; Gill, 2005, p. 245). Because of this governmental policy, for a decade from 1957 to 1967, the language policy concentrated on the creation of the Malaysian identity and, therefore, English lost its supreme status in the education system of the country (Gill, 2005; Ridge, 2004). As a result, studying at governmental secondary schools required competence in the Malay language (Ridge, 2004).

This new approach towards language use resulted in encouraging mono-lingualism for the Malays, but bi-lingualism for other ethnic groups (Ridge, 2004). In the 1990s, in tandem with a booming economy and technical advancements, competence in English again gained significance in the language policy of the country (Rajandran, 2011; Ridge, 2004). The new green light for the use of English encouraged the educational institutions to seek for government approval to carry out English medium programs. Ridge (2004, p. 409) reported that by: "early 2003, the government had also introduced the teaching of science and maths in junior primary and secondary classes via English medium." However, as it is attested by Asmah Hj. Omar (1994, p. 69), even when the national feelings were at their peak, the role of English was never completely forgotten in the political arena of the country.

As a consequence of the above-mentioned language policies, since independence, the Malay language, as the mother tongue of the main ethnic group—the Malays—has been used as the formal language of the country (Ridge, 2004). The two other major ethnic groups—the Chinese and Indians—have been using Malay as the national language of the country, and Malay was recommended as the medium of instruction (Hafriza Burhanudeen, 2006). However, the Chinese and Indian ethnic groups still maintain their ethnic languages and enjoy communicating in their ethnic languages as indicative of their ethnicity in other domains of language use. Furthermore, Malaysia made the concession for English to be used as the language of access to research and knowledge and as the global language of international communication (Rajandran, 2008; Hassan, 1994). Therefore, Malaysia, with its multi-ethnic communities, shows a rich heritage of languages and a thriving use of many ethnic languages, which may be regarded as markers of ethnic identity. English is well established as a strong second language, while the Malay language has been sustained as the national and official language for the nation. Malaysia thus has a very rich multilingual linguistic landscape worthy of study.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The focus of research on language practices in Malaysia has traditionally been on describing the linguistic choices of the Malaysian multilingual speakers within particular communicative events. For examples, Abdullah (1979) examined the language choices of Malaysian Malay bilinguals in different domains of language use, while Meedin (1987) investigated the language choices of the bilingual Malaysian Malays in the United States (Washington, D. C.) in a variety of domains, and the findings supported those of Abdullah. Additionally, Hafriza Burhanudeen (2006) explored the language choices of the bi-lingual (Malay and English) Malays between the ages of 16 and 35 years in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor in various domains of language use. Her findings not only indicated the diglossic distribution of Malay and English among the participants of her study, but also demonstrated a correlation between the linguistic code and social factors such as age, education, and ethnicity in the Malaysian domains of language use. Another study that focused on communicative events and language choice was carried out by Maya Khemlani David (2008), whose respondents were urban Sino-Indians (young children of mixed marriages between Indians and Chinese in Kuala Lumpur). Maya Khemlani David reported that language choices of Sino-Indians are influenced by some variables such as age and identity. Lim (2008) described the language choices of the major Malaysian ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indian) in the four domains of family, friendship, neighborhood and schools. He found that while the Malay and Indian ethnic groups have a tendency towards the use of their ethnic languages, they switch between their indigenous language and English on a mainly Malay—less English basis for the Malay respondents and a majority Tamil—less English basis for the Indians. On the other hand, the Chinese patterns of language use, according to Lim, were found to be of two categories. The first category adopts a majority Chinese, less English approach, and the second category adopts a Majority English, less Chinese approach. Furthermore, Lim found that the domains of language use and proficiency in languages are significant factors in the choice of languages among the three main ethnic groups in Malaysia. Rahman et al. (2008) conducted a more detailed study of the linguistic choices of the three main Malaysian ethnic groups in different domains of language use. In their study, the relationships between language choices and significant variables (age, educational background, gender, race, and language proficiency) among the three main Malaysian ethnic groups were examined. Rahman et al. (p.2) reported that: "ethnicity, proficiency and domains of use" were impacted the language choices of their participants.

To date, as far as the present study's literature review has revealed little research has examined the relationship between language choice and the construct of ethnic identity in the Malaysian domains of language use. More specifically, despite the extensive body of literature describing the language choices of the multilingual Malaysian society, what seems to be under-researched is the comprehensive study of significant factors that influence the particular linguistic choices of Malaysian youths in particular domains of interaction. Therefore, the present study focused on Malaysian youths who form the bulk of the population that will set a trend for the views of Malaysian emergent adults who would also form the voice of the current phenomenon of language choice. Such an investigation requires an understanding of why the multilingual younger generation prefers one linguistic code over another in various domains of language use. In other words, the study led to some answers

about what motivates the younger generation to shift from one language to another. Additionally, the study addressed the question of how language choice is related to ethnicity and ethnic identity.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Although individual members of speech communities have a natural tendency towards the use of their mother tongue, the language policies of the country could affect their choice of language in society according to domain of use. In newly established independent countries, governmental policies often serve as a unifying factor for isolated speech communities in nation building (Ridge, 2004; Fishman, 1975). However, a multilingual country may have unique language practices. In the heterogeneous Malaysian context of language use, speaking different languages may have linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes for the speakers (Gao, Yuan, & Ying 2007; Maya Khemlani David, 2006). This means that the choice of language can be regarded as a linguistic outcome of multilingualism, while a non-linguistic outcome can be seen in a more concerted effort in nation building as in the use of Malay as a language of unity.

Therefore, the present study sought to investigate the extent to which socio-demographic factors of age, gender, education background, language proficiency, and ethnic identity exert an influence on linguistic outcomes and non-linguistic outcomes in the Malaysian context of language use. These objectives were found to be in harmony with a quantitative paradigm of inquiry. Creswell (2013, p. 18) asserted that:

> A quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses post-positivism claims for developing knowledge (i.e. cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurements and observation, and the test of the theories), employs strategies of inquiries such as experiments and surveys, collects data on predetermined instrument that yield statistical data.

In line with this view, in study of language choice and use in Malaysia, Hafriza Burhanudeen (2006) as well as Rahman, Chan and Ain Nadzimah Abdullah (2008) utilized quantitative survey questionnaire as data collection instrument of their research. Hence, to obtain relevant data, a survey questionnaire as a way of obtaining quantitative data was used. This study specifically sought to answer the following research questions.

1.4.1 Research Questions

1. What are the linguistic practices of Malaysian youths in the five domains of language use (education, family, friendship, religion, and transaction)?

2. How are the linguistic practices of Malaysian youths related to socio-demographic factors of age, gender, education background, ethnicity, and language proficiency?

3. What is the relationship between linguistic practices and ethnic identity among Malaysian youth?

1.4.2 Definition of Terms

Language use in this study is definable in terms of multilingual individuals' use of any particular language according to different social situations, referred to as domains of language use.

Linguistic practices are viewed as the products of language use. For example, in everyday conversations in multilingual settings linguistic practices are definable in terms of multilinguals' decisions to consciously or unconsciously use a particular language in order to communicate with their interlocutors. This definition has theoretically derived from the notion of community of practice. According to Wenger (2000) and Lave and Wenger (1991), a community of practice is a group of people that are involved in a particular social activity and use a particular language comprehensible to all community members. The notion of community practice is important for sociolinguistics and language studies since it identifies social grouping in virtue of shared language(s).

Domains of language use refer to social contexts of language use. Fishman (1768, 1972) introduced the concept of domain as a way of examining language choice in social context. Fasold (1984, p. 183) summarized domains of language use as institutional contexts in multilingual settings, which in communication one particular language may be more appropriate than other languages. This study investigated and analyzed its respondents' language choices in the five domains of language use namely, education, family, friendship, religion and transaction.

Undergraduates refer to UPM's students who have already finished their post-secondary (high-school) education and were studying for their first (bachelor's) degrees. They were belonged to four age groups (17-19, 20-22, 23-25 and 26-28) studying at 15 different faculties of UPM during the first session of the academic year of 2013/2014. Specifically, this definition is applicable to those UPM's male and female undergraduates who belonged to the main three ethnic groups (the Malays, Chinese and Indians) and a few members of other minority ethnic groups that all together comprised Malaysian society.

Ethnic identity refers to individuals self identifying characteristics according to their membership in a particular ethnic group. As such, ethnic identity provides the individuals with an insight so that they can understand themselves and interpret their surroundings with reference to their ethnic group's norms and values (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Motivation for language choice refers to multilinguals' adjustment to social context in terms of choosing (consciously or unconsciously) a proper language to communicate efficiently.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

The present study utilized a quantitative approach in order to investigate the language choices of the Malaysian undergraduates and to examine individual/social factors that may influence the respondents' choice of language in the five domain of language use. The choice of the research method was subject to rigorous selection and design process (see Chapter 3); however there are some limitations that the researcher wishes to highlight, in order to ensure the reader is aware of issues that may have confounded the validity and/or interpretation of results. For this purpose limitations of the study in terms of location of the study and research instrument have been discussed below.

Although the location of the study encompassed a population–undergraduate students who were studying at 15 different faculties of UPM–that comprised of the main three ethnic groups that altogether constitute Malaysian society, it might not necessarily reflect the view and perceptions of the Malaysian youths in general. In order to gain access to a more representative sample size it would be more plausible to select also respondents from other communities of the Malaysian society such as youths who are involved in business or industrial activities.

In addition, due to quantitative nature of the present research, the study employed a questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. However, a mixed methodology that would also utilize interview as a qualitative technique for data collection not only might have enriched the view and perception of Malaysian younger generation but also could have been intensified the validity of the study's results by triangulation technique.

The above discussed limitations are intended as an acknowledgement of the shortcomings of the study as well as to shed light on areas that future research may wish to avoid or explore and expand upon.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This thesis was comprised of five chapters. Chapter 1 discussed the background of the study, which focused on the issues of language choice in multilingual settings in general and the Malaysian linguistic situation in particular. It also presented the statement of the problem, the objectives, theoretical framework, and the organization of the study. Finally, the chapter culminated in a summary.

Chapter 2, Literature Review, covered three major topics. Firstly, a review of pertinent literature about the domains of language use was presented. Secondly, seminal studies were presented in relation to the constructs of ethnic identity. Thirdly, the chapter provided a concise report of Malaysian language policies, the spread of English and its effects on the local identities within the Malaysian society. Discussion of the three major topics of the chapter provided explication of the theoretical frameworks of the study, as well as providing a practical setting in order to answer the research questions and support further discussion in the following chapters of the study.

Chapter 3 discussed the methodology; which was a quantitative methodology that utilized a survey questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The chapter justified the rationale for the selected methodology, as well. The quantitative methodology provided numerical data, the analysis of which in this study resulted in the description and prediction of the behavior under study. Furthermore, the chapter informed and discussed the characteristics of the respondents, the site of the study and the instruments employed the collection of the quantitative data.

Chapter IV presented the results of the quantitative analysis plus the integration and discussion of the findings from the utilized methodology.

Finally, Chapter 5 provided a summary of the study as well as discussion of the findings of the study. This last chapter also presented suggestions for the further studies.

1.7 Summary

Individual members of multilingual societies use different languages in different domains of language use. Therefore, language choices in multilingual contexts as predictable phenomena are affected by both the domains of language use and country's language policies. Furthermore, the individual social variables of age, ethnicity, education, language proficiency, ethnic identity can play roles in the choices of linguistic codes in the domains of language use in multilingual settings.

Because of the varied ethnic groups who live inside the geopolitical borders of Malaysia, the linguistic situation in the country is very rich. Besides, the spread of the English language has enriched the Malaysian context of language use and made the linguistic situation more colorful.

The focus of research on language practices in Malaysia has traditionally been on describing the language choices of the Malaysian multilingual speakers. As far as the present study's literature review revealed, there is little research that investigated the relationships between linguistic codes and the variables of ethnic identity. Therefore, the present research tried to perform a comprehensive study of language choices of the Malaysian youths. Besides, in the rich Malaysian context of language practice the study endeavored to examine the relationships between the chosen linguistic codes in the domains of language use from one side and the socio-demographic factors as well as ethnic identity from the other side.

Giles and Smith's (1979, 1973) Social Accommodation Theory (SAT), Tajfel and Turner's (1986) Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Fishman's (1968, 1972a, 1972) views on domain analysis were integrated as a theoretical foundation in order to conduct the study.

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