UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

LINGUISTIC CONSTRUCTION OF ETHNOCULTURAL IDENTITY OF MANDARIN-SPEAKING AND ENGLISH-SPEAKING URBAN CHINESE IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

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By

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The population in Malaysia consists of various races and hence there is a significant need of looking into the language and identity of different races. This study mainly focuses on ethnic Chinese. Historically, Chinese in Malaysia originated from China and they could only speak their own mother tongue, and have their own tradition. However, this phenomenon has changed due to various reasons. Chinese in Malaysia today may speak more foreign languages such as English and there is a high possibility that some of them do not even speak Mandarin at all. It is important to ascertain one's ethnocultural identity as it is used to represent a person's cultural background regarding their ethnic. Identity can also be referred to who a person 'really is' and how a person is characterized or represented. When identity is considered in the context of ethnocultural identity, it is mainly the identity of a person which is constructed through face to face interaction in their daily livings. Hence, the ethnocultural identity in this study has been sought out through participants' linguistic construction.

This study attempts to describe the language use of the Mandarin speaking and English speaking urban Chinese with the family, describe the language use of the participants with non-family members, compare the influence of socio-economic status on the language use of the participants with non-family members and lastly in to compare the cultural practice of the participants. Language choice among the ethnic Chinese in west Malaysia is very much influenced by the individual's perception and interpretation of the label Chinese, which in turn determines their acceptance or rejection of it. On the basis of language choice, there are two subgroups of Chinese that can be noted: those who speak English in public and private domains; and those who speak Mandarin regularly.

Orders of discourse by Norman Fairclough (1989; 1995; 2001) are an important approach in this study. There are three areas of analysis to find out the linguistic construction of ethnocultural identity among ethnic Chinese in west Malaysia, which are discourses, genres and styles. This study explores the differences of Mandarin speaking and English speaking Chinese from the aspect of linguistic construction. The sampling of this study is a convenience sampling. The survey covers about 300 participants (Chinese) which are randomly selected between aged 17 to 30 years old. They stay in urban area in Peninsular Malaysia. The statistical tests and significance of relationships or differences were being tested in this study. The results are then grouped and compared based on two language groups which are English speaking and Mandarin speaking group. Their language choice can be easily identified through interview and questionnaire, and hence the belonging to either group can be determined. Through this study, it can be concluded that the factors which influenced the ethnocultural identity are friends, parents and educational background. The factor of friend has the strongest influence on participants' ethnocultural identity. Furthermore, the overlapping in their ethnocultural identity is inevitable as this study is done in Malaysia context. The result has shown that although the language choice for both speaking groups is different, they have similarities in ethnocultural identity. They present similarities in ritual activities and festivals. It is possible that participants' cultural practices and their thinking may not match. From here, there is a strong justification that both groups exhibit association in Chinese and western culture in the way of their cultural practice.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia Sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sastera

PEMBINAAN LINGUISTIK DALAM IDENTITI BUDAYA ETNIK ANTARA PENGGUNA MANDARIN DAN BAHASA INGGERIS KAUM CINA DI KAWASAN BANDAR SEMENANJUNG MALAYSIA

Oleh

SHIK PEI YEN

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Penduduk di Malaysia terdiri daripada pelbagai kaum. Oleh itu, mengkaji bahasa dan identiti kaum adalah penting. Kajian ini terutamanya memberi tumpuan kepada kaum Cina. Dari segi sejarah, kaum Cina di Malaysia berasal dari China dan mereka hanya boleh mengguna bahasa ibunda mereka, dan mempunyai tradisi yang tersendiri. Walau bagaimanapun, fenomena ini telah mengalami perubahan. Kaum Cina di Malaysia massa kini lebih mampu berkomunikasi dalam bahasa asing seperti Bahasa Inggeris dan berkemungkinan besar bahawa sebahagian daripada mereka tidak mampu berkomunikasi dalam Mandarin. Keperluan untuk memastikan identiti budaya etnik seseorang adalah penting kerana identiti ini mewakili latar belakang budaya dan etnik seseorang. Apabila identiti dibincang dalam konteks identiti budaya etnik, ia merupakan identiti seseorang yang dibina melalui interaksi harian dengan masyarakat. Oleh itu, identiti budaya etnik dalam kajian ini telah dikaji melalui pembinaan linguistik responden.

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara pilihan bahasa dan faktor-faktor sosiobudaya seperti latar belakang pendidikan, hiburan, penggunaan bahasa antara ahli keluarga dan pilihan bahasa dalam rangkaian sosial. Pilihan bahasa di kalangan kaum Cina di Barat Malaysia banyak dipengaruhi oleh persepsi individu dan tafsiran label China, yang kemudian akan menentukan penerimaan atau penolakan mereka itu. Berdasarkan pilihan bahasa, terdapat dua kumpulan kaum Cina yang dikaji: responden yang domonan dalam pengguanan bahasa Inggeris dan mereka yang dominan bertutur dalam bahasa Mandarin.

"Orders of discourse" oleh Norman Fairclough (1989; 1995; 2001) adalah satu pendekatan yang penting dalam kajian ini. Terdapat tiga bidang analisis untuk mengkaji pembinaan linguistik identiti budaya etnik dalam kalangan kaum Cina di

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Semenanjung Malaysia, iaitu wacana, genre dan gaya. Kajian ini juga mengkaji perbezaan antara pengguna Mandarin dan bahasa Inggeris kaum Cina dari aspek pembinaan linguistik mereka. Kaji selidik itu merangkumi kira-kira 300 responden (Cina) yang dipilih secara rawak, berusia antara 17 hingga 30 tahun. Mereka tinggal do kawasan bandar Semenanjung Malaysia. Semua data yang dikumpul dianalisis dengan menggunakan SPSS. Keputusan kemudiannya dikumpulkan dan dibandingkan berdasarkan dua kumpulan iaitu kumpulan yang bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris dan kumpulan yang berkomukasi dalam Mandarin. Pilihan bahasa dapat dikenal pasti melalui temu bual dan soal selidik, dan pengkaji dapat mengesan kumpulan bahasa mereka sengan mudah. Melalui kajian ini, dapat disimpulkan bahawa faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi identiti budaya etnik adalah kawan-kawan, ibu bapa dan latar belakang pendidikan. Tambahan pula, pertindihan dalam identiti budaya etnik responden tidak dapat dielakkan kerana kajian ini dikaji dalam konteks Malaysia. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa walaupun pilihan bahasa kedua-dua kumpulan adalah berbeza, tetapi mereka mempunyai persamaan dalam identiti budaya etnik. Mereka mempunyai persamaan dari segi aktiviti perayaan. Dari sini, terdapat justifikasi yang kukuh bahawa kedua-dua kumpulan menunjukkan perhubungan dalam budaya Cina dan Barat dari segi pemikiran dan amalan mereka.

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Last but not least, my greatest appreciation should be conveyed to my fiancé, Ze Sean who supported me all this while.

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on (February 2015) to conduct the final examination of (Shik Pei Yen) on her thesis entitled "Linguistic Construction of Ethnocultural Identity of Mandarin-Speaking and English-Speaking Urban Chinese in Peninsular Malaysia" 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.

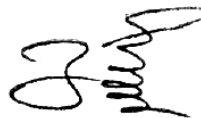Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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I hereby confirm that:

- This thesis is my original work;

- Quotations, illustrations and citations have been referenced;

- This thesis has not been submitted previously or concurrently for any other degree at any other institutions;

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This is to confirm that:
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with the background to the study, statement of the research problem, objectives and research questions. Following these sections is a description of theoretical perspectives of the study before, scope of the study, the significance and limitations of the study. The chapter ends with a definition of key terms used in the study.

1.1   Background to the Study

According to the Department of Statistics in Malaysia, Malaysia's population reached 30.3 million in 2014, with Malays making up the majority at 50.4%, followed by Chinese at 23.7%. Indigenous people stand a smaller percentage than the Chinese, which is 11%. Besides that, Indian set the lowest percentage in the demographics which is 7.1% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2014).

Table 1. Malaysia Demographic Profile

Ethnics in Malaysia	Percentage (%)
Malays	50.4
Chinese	23.7
Indian	7.1
Indigenous	11.0

(Adapted from:
http://www.statistics.gov.my/portal/download_Population/files/anggaran/Anggaran_Perangkaan_Demografi_Terpilih_Malaysia2014.pdf, 14/7/2014)

The indigenous people in Malaysia are known as "Orang Asli". The indigenous ethnic groups are found in both East and West Malaysia. In West Malaysia, they are divided into three main tribal groups: Semang (Negrito) from the North, Senoi in the middle and Proto Malay in the south of Malaysia. The Semang from the North, which consists of Kensiu, Kintak, Lanoh, Jahai, Mandriq, and Batiq. The Senoi from the middle includes Temiar, Semai, Semoq Beri, Jahut, Mah Meri, and Che Wong and the Proto Malay in the south consists of Temuan, Semelai, Temoq, Jakun, Kanaq, Kuala, and Seletar. In East Malaysia, there are 28 indigenous groups in Sarawak. The Sea Dayak and Land Dayak are names referring to the Iban and Bidayuh during colonial period. The Iban make up the largest ethnic group in Sarawak. The Bidayuh represent the third largest group and sub-divided into five different dialectic components namely the Bukar Sadong (Serian), Biatah (Kuching), Jagoi (Bau), Selakau and Lara (Lundu). In addition, the Orang Ulu is a collective name given to the indigenous peoples generally

found in the interiors of Sarawak which includes the Bukitan, Bisaya, Ukit, Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit, Lisum, Seping, Lun Bawang, Tagal, Penan, Sihan and Tabun. The largest indigenous ethnic groups of Sabah's population are the Kadazan Dusun, the Bajau and the Murut.

Malaysia is located in Southeast Asia and is a formerly colony of the British. It is a good example of a polyethnic state which is often used as the prototype of a particular ethnic pluralism (Nagata, 1976, p. 247). During the reign of the British in the Malay Peninsular, ethnic Chinese migrated to the peninsula to work in the mines or rubber estates and most have resided as citizens of the relatively newly formed nation-state since then. Hence, together with similar migrations of ethnic Indians and other smaller groups, as well as with the formation of the present-day Malaysia with the addition of Sabah and Sarawak in 1963, the nation is now a plural society. It therefore comprises many ethnic groups, which are Malays, Chinese, Indians and indigenous people.

Regarding the definition of race, Tun Mohamed Suffian Hashim (1917-2000) who is the former Lord President of the Federal Court has once claimed that, on the basis of the Malaysian constitution, the term "Malay" refers to person who is born locally, habitually speaks Malay, follows Malay custom and professes Islam (Hirschman, 1987, p. 555). The Malays identify themselves the basis of their being speakers of the Malay language and "the practice of a distinctive body of custom (adat), together with certain ideas of moral propriety and etiquette (Nagata 1976, p. 248). The Malay population can be divided into at least two distinct social classes, which is the rulers and the landlords, and another social class is the peasantry (Nagata, 1976, p. 248).

The Chinese is the largest minority in Malaysia. Chinese have their own religions, which are Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity and Taoism. Besides that, they have "distinctive languages and food habits, and a body of kinship beliefs and practices" (Nagata, 1976, p. 248). The Chinese are "generally believed to control the bulk of Malaysia's industrial and commercial economy" (Nagata, 1976, p. 248). They were holding the reins in the fields like mining, construction, most commerce and the professions (Nagata, 1976, p. 248).

There is a variety of dialects from Southern China. The classification of the varieties of Chinese into dialects is based primarily on a comparison of the sound structure (Li & Thompson, 1989, p. 2). There are seven major dialects which consist of Mandarin, Hainanese, Teo Chew, Fu Zhou, Hakka, Hokkien and Cantonese. The word Mandarin "denoting the major dialect family of China is an established linguistic term in the West" (Li & Thompson, 1989, p. 1). The term Mandarin represents the speech of Beijing, which for centuries has been recognized as the standard language of China due to the political and cultural significance.

Li and Thompson have highlighted that "it is traditional to speak of the different varieties of Chinese as 'dialect' even though they may be different from one another to

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the point of being mutually unintelligible" (Li & Thompson, 1989, p. 2). As referred to them, these Chinese varieties may not have the same pronunciation and sound structure, but they are spoken in the same country and they origin from the same language family. Hence, they are called as different "dialects". On the other hand, English is primarily a West Germanic language that originated from the Anglo-Frisian dialects. In other words, it is originated from another family of language compared to Mandarin.

In Malaysia, ethnic Chinese is a social member group who share the same language and common attitudes but this phenomenon has been changed. Ethnic Chinese may speak more foreign languages like English and there is a high possibility that some of them do not speak Mandarin at all. Besides Mandarin and English, they may be well conversed in different dialects. From our observation, we realized that both Mandarin and English-speaking groups are able to converse in their chosen dialects as well, thus we decided to narrow down our target group to only compare Mandarin and English-speaking groups.

In the earliest studies, the Indian population encompasses Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians and is also distinguished by a variety of Indian, Pakistani and Sri Lanka mother tongues (Clarke, 2002; Lyman, 1997). The Chinese population is having the same situation with Indian population, for which they are similarly distinguished by their religion and language (mother tongue). The Indians dominants in the field of plantation (non Indian owned), commerce and trade (where the majority of the Muslim Indians are concentrated), the professions and various levels of the civil service (Nagata, 1976, p. 248). The British colonial policies are greatly responsible for Malaysia's current multiethnic citizenry because they imported Indian labor to work in the bureaucracy and on rubber plantations. This division of labor stemming from the British colonial legacy is mirrored in the contemporary stereotyping of Malaysian ethnic identities, which is Malays control politics, Chinese control economics, and Indians are prominent in manual labor on plantations and in the professions as well (Furlow, 2009, p. 199). The Malaysians are diversified, not purely on the ethnicities but also language use and religion. Target of this study is ethnic Chinese. The context in Malaysia is different from many other countries; they are living in a multicultural context. From this special context, they inherit multiple background from this context, thus we think it may have impact on the ethnocultural identity.

According to Clammer, a minority of Malaysian-Chinese, known as Peranakan or Baba Chinese, have adopted much of Malay culture, including language, attire and cuisine (Hirschman, 1987, p. 555). In addition, according to Nagata, conversion to Islam and the adoption of Malay language and custom typically allow a person of any ancestry to be considered Malay (Hirschman, 1987, p. 555). Thus, in terms of the definition of race, Malay, Chinese and Indian who are pure and not mix do not cause much argument. The difficulty of defining mixed marriages offspring or mixed race children's identity is, however, a challenge to formal definition.

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Studies about ethnocultural identities have emerged prominently in recent years (Young, 2008; Khemlani, 1998; Dion & Dion, 2004). A particularly interesting area of investigation has been in the role of language in identity construction (Young, 2008). Young has done a study in Asia which is about English and its identity in Asia. He believes that the factor in the construction of ethnocultural identity is through face to face interaction. He has argued that identities are fluid and co-constructed instead of the speakers and writers creating identities by participating in practices with others. There is a consequence of viewing identity as tactics of intersubjectivity in that "contact between local language and a hegemonic language like English neither endangers the local languages nor the identities of people in a multilingual society" (Young, 2008, p. 12).

Young (2008) has highlighted that English rise and it proof against the historical processes of language change in order to adapt to local needs and circumstances. The local English, such as Manglish, Singlish, Konglish and the international Standard English are in constant contact and flux. He finds that the outcome of the contact is subject to the relations of power between speakers and also the political attitudes of the community. Hence, the conclusion of his study is that "the identities of speakers inhere in their actions not the language they speak, actions that differ from practice to practice and from speaker to speaker" (Young, 2008, p. 12)

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The population in Malaysia is diverse and multiple, and hence the need looking into the identity of each race is significant. People who identify themselves as members of a certain social group (family, neighborhood, professional or ethnic affiliation, and nation) acquire common ways of viewing the world through their interactions with other members of the same group. Specifically, these views are reinforced through institutions like the family, school, government, workplace and other sites of socialization throughout their lives. Thus, common attitudes, beliefs and values are reflected in the way members of the group use language.

In Malaysia, ethnic Chinese is a social member group who share the same language and cultural practice, but this phenomenon has been changed. Ethnic Chinese nowadays may well verse in other ethnicities' languages, especially English and Bahasa Malaysia. In addition, there is a high possibility that some of them do not speak Mandarin at all.

These changes are closely related to the ethnocultural identity as it is an identity that maintained by day-to-day lifestyle, religion, views, attitudes and cultural norms. Ethnic Chinese has shown a change their ethnocultural identity, as they do not present their pure Chinese identity nowadays. Thus, this study investigates the socio-cultural factors, which are related to ethnocultural identity construction.

Even though ethnocultural identity is an important scope of study especially in this fast evolving century, not many studies about ethnocultural identity are done in

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multicultural society in this region, particularly in Malaysia. Nevertheless, the ethnocultural identity of ethnic Indians in Malaysia has been investigated by Khemlani (1998). As for the ethnic Chinese, there is a notable gap in this area. It is even more essential to acknowledge the language varieties in the study of ethnocultural. In the case of Malaysia, and also Singapore and Hong Kong, which were under British governance at one time in history, there is a need to investigate their ethnocultural identity by comparing English-speaking and Mandarin-speaking urban Chinese.

Although most of the significant areas have been covered by researchers in the past, there are more areas yet to be investigated. The current scenario is getting even more complex due to the rapid changes in social factors, including mobility of people, advancement in technology, choices in education and so on. This study would like to investigate ethnocultural identity of Mandarin-speaking and English-speaking urban Chinese in West Malaysia from the aspect of linguistic construction. Language use of both speaking groups with their family and non-family would be identified and the cultural practice of both speaking groups would be discussed to ascertain one's ethnocultural identity.

1.3   Objectives and Research Questions

The study aimed to compare the linguistic construction of ethnocultural identity of Mandarin-speaking and English-speaking urban Chinese in West Malaysia. The specific objectives of the study were:

a.   to investigate the language use of the Mandarin-speaking and English-speaking urban Chinese with family members.

b.   to investigate the language use of the Mandarin-speaking and English-speaking urban Chinese with non-family members.

c.   to compare the influence of socio-economic status on the language use of the Mandarin-speaking and English-speaking urban Chinese with non-family members.

d.   to compare cultural practice of the Mandarin-speaking and English-speaking urban Chinese.

In the light of the abovementioned statements and needs for further research in the Malaysian context, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

i.   How does language choice contribute to linguistic identity construction?

ii.   What are the social factors related to ethnocultural identity construction among urban Chinese in West Malaysia?

iii.   What are the differences of Mandarin-speaking and English-speaking Chinese from the aspect of cultural practice?

1.4   Theoretical Perspectives

There are three areas of analysis to find out the linguistic construction of ethnocultural identity among ethnic Chinese in West Malaysia, which are discourses, genres and styles (see Fairclough, 1989, 1995, 2003 on order of discourse). Further, in accordance with Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) term "projecting", the social constructionist perspective on identity is "people constructing identities in social interaction" and this is well captured by both scholars (Coupland, 2007, p. 111). This has pointed out an important perspective that not only the social determination of language use, but also the linguistic determination of society. Thus, for instance one wish to know to what extent the positons which are set up for members of the public in the order of discourse of policing are passively occupied by them. In other words, language use can contribute to changing social relationships.

Discourses, genres and styles have been crucially involved in determining how particular identities are made salient in discourse. Social interaction leaves "many or most potential social identities latent, and the linguistic features and styles that might index them are just inactivated meaning potential" (Coupland, 2007, p. 112). In addition, "linguistic and other semiotic features and styles need to be contextually primed before sociolinguistic indexing happens" (Coupland, 2007, p. 112).   This implies that order of discourse of a social institution, which structures constituent discourses in a particular way, order of discourse of the society can be referred as a whole, which structures the orders of discourse of the various social institutions in a particular way. How discourses are structured in a given order of discourse, and how structuring change over time. These are all determined by changing relationships of power at the level of the social institutions or of the society.

Discourses, genres and styles are the important features in forming orders of discourse. Orders of discourse are sets of interactions associated with social institutions. Conventions refer to rules, principles and codes of behavior. On the contrary, social institutions refer to the practices, organizations and relationships in the society or culture. Hence, society is structured into different areas of action, situations and practices. Social areas related through different discourses and practices. Nevertheless, discourse and practice are constrained by interconnecting or networked discourses and practices as they are arranged in some way. Order of discourse consists of three particular areas, which are discourses, genres and styles (Coupland, 2007, p. 112).

One's styles of speech and written communication reflect and express not only aspects of their ethnicity, age, gender, and social background; they also indicate the contexts in which language is being used. In a more formal context, for example, the way people talk in court, in school, at business meetings and at graduation ceremonies reflects and constitutes the formality of those contexts and the social roles people take. On the contrary, in an informal context, we use more relaxed language at home with those we know well. Hence, in this study, language use of urban ethnic Chinese for both groups would be identified in order to compare the influence of socio-economic status on the language use.
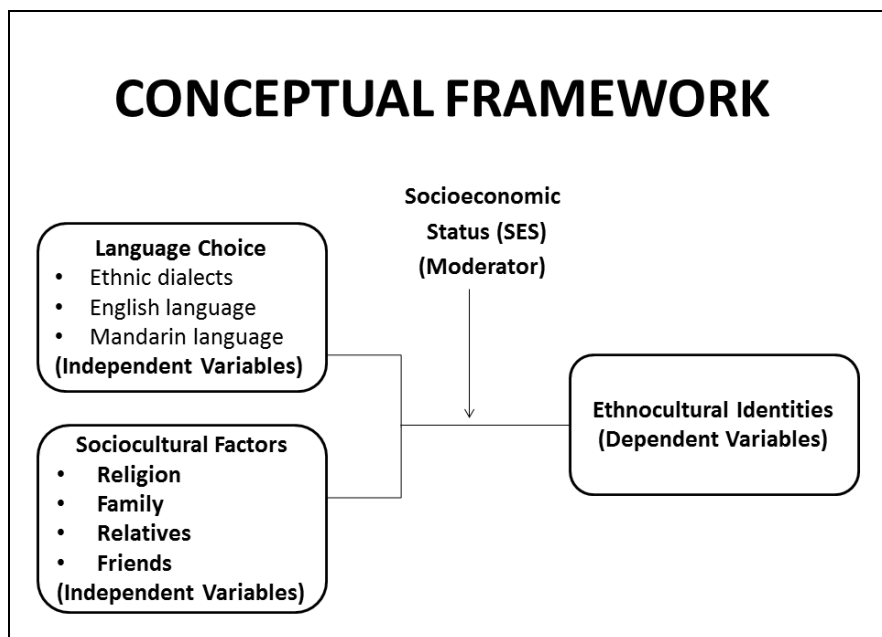
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Language Choice
- Ethnic dialects
- English language
- Mandarin language
(Independent Variables)

Sociocultural Factors
- **Religion**
- **Family**
- **Relatives**
- **Friends**
(Independent Variables)

Socioeconomic
Status (SES)
(Moderator)

Ethnocultural Identities
(Dependent Variables)

Figure 1. The conceptual framework of the study

Dependent Variable (DV) = Linguistic construction of Ethnocultural Identities
Independent Variables of interest (IVs) = Language Choice + Selected Sociocultural
Factors (Religion, family, relatives and friends)
Moderator Variables (MVs) = Socioeconomic status

Figure 1 is the conceptual framework for this study. The language choice and sociocultural factors are the independent variables and the linguistic construction of ethocultural identities is the dependent variable. Nonetheless, the socioeconomic status (SES) is the moderator variable. The reason for determining SES as the moderator in this study is it can be a valid and reliable instrument to make direct comparisons between ethnocultural groups. On the contrary, the participants of this study were divided into two main categories, those speaking Mandarin as dominant language and English as dominant language.

1.5   Scope of the Study
This study only covers 300 participants (Chinese) between aged 21 to 30 years old. The participants are of English-speaking background and from Mandarin-speaking background which is equally distributed (150 for each speaking background). They lived in urban areas in Peninsular Malaysia.

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As stated in the title, the scope of this study only covers the Chinese who live in West Malaysia. The reason for not choosing East Malaysia Chinese is due to the possibility of acculturation among East Malaysia Chinese and other ethnic groups such as Iban, Bidayuh, Melanau, Kadazan and so on. The process of linguistic construction may be affected by other ethnic group dialects and other sociocultural factors. Hence, the linguistic construction of ethnocultural identity among East Malaysia Chinese might be different from West Malaysia Chinese.

1.6   Significance of the Study

It is important to ascertain one's ethnocultural identity as it used to represent a person and more precisely is to identify and recognize such a person. Identity can also be referred to identity as to who a person 'really is' and how a person is characterized or represented by himself or by others. When identity is considered in the context of ethnocultural identity, it is mainly the identity of a person which constructed through face to face interaction in the daily livings. Moreover, it is also related to one's cultural practice. Hence, the ethnocultural identity in this study has been sought out through participants' linguistic construction and cultural practice in their daily livings.

Another significant feature in this study is language choice. One of the roles played by language is that 'it serves as a marker of group boundaries and people can use it to establish and refute claims of ethnic group membership' (Kharusi, 2005, p. 346). Language choice among the ethnic Chinese in West Malaysia is very much influenced by the individual's perception and interpretation of the label "Chinese", which in turn determines their acceptance or rejection of it. On the basis of language choice, there are two subgroups of Chinese can be noted: those who speak English in public and private domains; and those who speak Mandarin regularly.

There is a need for this study to investigate the linguistic construction among ethnic Chinese as the number of English speakers (domain group) has increasing among them. The ethnic Chinese in Malaysia are aware of the situation that is they are not having mono cultural background but they do not mention it verbally and yet there is no researcher do in depth study on this situation. From the result, education is not the only reason for contributing to this phenomenon, as many of the participants attend the local Chinese primary school, but they are still using English as the domain language in their daily livings. Hence, this phenomenon has inferred a sense of importance to this study.

1.7   Definition of Key Terms

This study finds it is necessary to define several terms. Definitions of important key terms are as follows:

Ethnocultural Identity: Young (2008) believes that one's ethnocultural identity is constructed through face-to-face interaction (p. 1). Ethnocultural identity is maintained by day-to-day lifestyle, religion, views and attitudes, cultural norms and dense networks (Khemlani, 1998, p. 75) and it has been defined as "a combination of a person's ascribed ethnicity and the language she speaks best and uses most commonly" (Agadjanian & Qian, 1997, p. 317). Ethnocultural identity in their perception, it is the "combination of ethnicities and language use. (Agadjanian & Qian, 1997, p. 318). Fishman J. A. (1989) has mentioned in his study that "any particular language (or variety) will become symbolic for any particular ethnocultural identity" (p. 84). Ethnocultural identity is defined as the combination of the cultural practices and the language use in this study.

Identity: Tuner higlighted that identity is "a process of self-categorization and self-understanding" (Aguiar & Francisco, 2009, p. 552) and Mead proposed that identity is a set of beliefs that answer the question, "Who am I?" (Foreman and Whetten, 2002, p. 618). Brubaker and Cooper stated that identity is a process of "identifying with others, and of commonality, connectedness, and groupness (Aguiar & Francisco, 2009, p. 552). According to Norton, identity deals with "how people understand their relationship to the outside world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future" (Barnawi, 2009, p. 65). West has defined identity as "a concept related to desires, that is to say, desire of recognition, safety, membership and materials acquisition." (Barnawi, 2009, p. 65). Norton has different perception on identity, she pointed out that the term identity should refer to how a person comprehends his or her relationship to the world, how that certain relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person comprehends possibilities for the future (Norton, 2000, p. 5). In line with Baumeister, Mach, Tajfel and Turner, identity is complex and having a multilayered relationship between an individual and a group or number of groups (Lowrance, 2006, p. 168). Park defined identity as "an inherently social product that is jointly created by interactants, rather than as a pre-determined, psychological construct that is lodged within each individual's mind (Barnawi, 2009, p. 65). On the contrary, Choi noticed that the identity formation has become a complex task for immigrant adolescents who are growing between new and traditional cultures (Choi, 2009, p. 78). Identity in this study reflects that how an individual perceive himself or herself in this society. Identity can be co-constructed due to its complexity in the construction.

Linguistic Construction: In accordance with Tomasello (2005), he finds that human beings use their linguistic symbols together in patterned ways which is also known as linguistic constructions. His thinks that linguistic construction is "deriving partly from the meanings of the individual symbols but, over time, at least partly from the pattern itself" (Tomasello, 2005, p. 1). In addition this, the process by which this occurs over historical time is called grammarticalization and grammatical constructions add still another dimension of communication power to human languages by enabling all kinds

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of unique symbol combinations. He defines linguistic construction as "a unit of language that comprises multiple linguistic elements used together for a relatively coherent communicative function, with sub-functions being performed by the elements as well. Consequently, constructions may vary in their complexity depending on the number of elements involved and their interrelations" (Tomasello, 2005, p. 8). There is another perspective for linguistic construction. Coeckelbergh (2011) finds that the relation between human and robot would be a social, linguistic construction. He proposed that language mediates the relation between human and robots relation. He has highlighted that "talking to robots thus changes talking about humans, perhaps also to humans." and "the language we use reveals and shapes the social ontologies in which we live as much as it reveals and shapes ourselves" (Coeckelbergh, 2011, p. 68). Linguistic construction is this study is based on the macro level of the language, which is not particularly about grammar, semantics and structure. Linguistic construction is defined in this study as the constructions of language through daily interaction.

Language Choice: Identity dwells in the individual or groups' perception of themselves which is closely linked with their past and future and how they want to be understood and categorized in the present (Busayo, 2010, p. 3049). Language choice happens when individuals try to communicate in certain language which could help them to be categorized into a certain group. In accordance to Hogg and Vanghan, the perceived membership of certain social groups can be deriving into the individual's self concept (Busayo, 2010, p. 3048). This implies that it is an individual-based understanding of what is exhibited for others to see which can be the best to define their group identity. Busayo (2010) has stated that "the attitude of people towards languages of communication can sometimes influence their own choice of language, dialect, type of vocabulary and pronunciation, and often their style of writing, which may lead to an international modification of the 'self' which they present in speech or text" (p. 3049). In line with Giles, "different languages are, of course, markers for different ethnicities or nationalities". (Michael, 1984, p. 347) Ethnic groups can be distinguished from one another by their languages, attitudes, values and norms. According to Sterling, individuals started to use language to define their personalities with one another since they were born and in the pace of growing, they continue to use that language to define themselves and also the various roles they play in the community (Busayo, 2010, p. 3047). In line with Grosjean, language represents social or group identity. He stated that language as "an emblem of group membership and solidarity" (Busayo, 2010, p. 3048). Language choice and the usage of language have significant meaning for the identity of multilingual people (Busayo, 2010, p. 3048). Language choice may influence one's identity, comprises of ethnic identity, social identity, cultural identity, language identity and the motivation behind the choice of language is significant. Language choice is defined as the chosen language that used to be a tool to communicate with others in order to blend well into a certain community. Language choice in this study refers to English, Mandarin, Malay and other Chinese dialects as ethnic Chinese is the main focus group.

Urban: The definition of urban areas which used by the Department of Statistics Malaysia is "gazetted areas with their adjoining built-up areas, which had a combined population of 10,000 or more at the time of the Census 2010 or the special

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development area that can be identified, which at least had a population of 10,000 with at least 60 % of population (aged 15 years and above) were involved in non-agricultural activities" (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2014). Built-up areas were contiguous to a gazetted area and had at least 60% of their population (aged 15 years and above) engaged in non-agricultural activities (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2014). Special development areas are areas of development that can be identified and separated from any gazetted area or built- up area more than 5 km and the area had a population of at least 10,000 with 60% of the population (aged 15 years and above) were involved in non-agricultural (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2014).

Family: Family is well defined by McDaniel et al. (2005). They have highlighted that "any group of people related either biologically, emotionally, or legally. That is, the group of people that the patient defines as significant for his or her wellbeing" (McDaniel et al, 2005, p.2). Family in this study refers to parents, siblings and parents' relatives.

Non-family Members: The definition of the non-family members has the opposite meaning with family. It can be referred as any group of people that are not related biologically, emotionally, or legally. Non-family members in this study refer to friends and the general public.

Socioeconomic Status: Socioeconomic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. Socioeconomic Status refers to participants' parents' occupation and academic credentials. The parents' socioeconomic status (SES) was estimated using four categories of occupational status: (a) blue collar (b) white collar (c) retired (d) housewife. In terms of education, these categories correspond more or less to (a) completed primary level (b) completed secondary level (c) diploma or a pre-university certificate (d) completed a university degree (e) obtained Master's degree (f) obtained PhD.

Cultural Practice: Cultural practice generally refers to the manifestation of a culture, especially in regard to the traditional and customary practices of a particular ethnic or other cultural group. Cultural practice in this study refers to languages of movie or music, chopstick usage, restaurant, traditional costume, involvement in ritual activity and activity during leisure time of the participants.

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