

**LANGUAGE CHOICE AND LANGUAGE SHIFT: A TRI-GENERATIONAL STUDY OF
TAMIL FAMILIES IN MALAYSIA**

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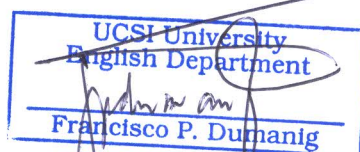
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ABSTRACT

This research examines the language choice and language shift of the tri-generational Tamil families in Klang, Malaysia. It specifically investigates the choice of language used in the home domains of the tri-generational Tamil families and to examine if the mother tongue of the family members is still maintained or facing shift. The shift is measured from the use of Tamil language to English. The research was carried out by gathering data from five tri-generational Tamil families in Malaysia. About fifteen respondents of five families participated in the study. After the process of interviewing was conducted, the interviews were then transcribed and analyzed. The study also based on the factors which influenced the tri-generational family members such as social and attitudinal factors. The finding shows that the Tamil language is still maintained in between the first generation (G1's) of all five families and also by the second generation (G2) and third generation (G3's) of the fourth and fifth family.

A clear shift starts from the G2 and G3 of family one, two and three. The study shows that the second generation plays a salient role in encouraging language shift to the third generations. The findings are able to bridge the gap between the first and third generation in their choice of language except family four and five. Based on the findings, there are supporting factors such as social factors, educational and attitudinal factors which influence language shift.