SOCIAL MEANING, INDEXICALITY AND ENREGISTERMENT OF MANGLISH IN YOUTH WHATSAPP CHATS

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ABSTRACT

Manglish, a variety of Malaysian English, has often been stereotyped in Malaysian media (i.e., local newspapers) as 'improper English' (Why Speak Manglish, 2007; Manglish-English Dilemma, 2007) or labelled by scholars as a type of 'poor', 'broken' English (Nair-Venugopal, 2013: 455). In fact, speakers of Manglish have been associated with 'rural background', 'low-status' in society, as well as 'uneducated' (Mahir, and Jarjis, 2007: 7). In recent years, there have been increasing debates on the status and use of Manglish, where it is a preferred variety of linguistic expression and is widely employed within certain contexts. The rise of Manglish has been hardly ignored in various social media platforms. This raises questions on how and why Manglish is employed or chosen as a language to communicate within online settings such as Instant Messaging. Thus, the (social) meanings that underlie Manglish communicative practices deserve exploration.

This thesis seeks to contribute to the current discussion in linguistic studies on Manglish among three ethnic groups in Malaysia which are Malay, Chinese and Indian, by exploring how in-groupness and ethnic identity is reflected in the way speaker use Manglish features in WhatsApp conversation. More specifically, it focuses on the use of Manglish through the perspective of indexicality (Silverstein, 2003), social meaning (Eckert, 2003) and enregisterment (Agha, 2003). This present study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection namely WhatsApp chat, online ethnography, online interview and online questionnaire to aid in the interpretation and analysis process. The quantitative analysis derived from the WhatsApp chats demonstrate the differences in the distribution of Manglish features across ethnic groups. Further statistical analysis shows that there is a significant correlation between specific Manglish features such as *lor, leh* and *de* with ethnicity. This correlation is further explored through qualitative analysis, where data was collected through online ethnographies and interviews. It shows that speakers tend to utilise Manglish in various ways to denote ethnicity, in-

groupness, stances or regional identity. These meanings are dynamic as they shift according to speaker and addressee as well as the context of conversation. Moreover, some Manglish features (e.g *lor, leh, de* and *lah*) identified in the dataset may have double indexicalities, namely second and third-order which eventually results in the enregisterment of these features. For example, data analysed from the online questionnaire shows that Chinese speakers in this thesis associate specific features such as *lor* and *lah* with Chineseness, as well Malaysianness; this implies second and third-order of indexicality which relates to the process of enregisterment. It follows that this thesis contributes to the notion of enregisterment as it shows that linguistic features are not only enregistered to region or place as observed by existing studies so far, but also ethnicity.

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List of Abbreviations

ME	Malaysian English
CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
SME	Standard Malaysian English
SBE	Standard British English
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
IS	Interactional Sociolinguistics
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
SOD	Singlish Oxford Dictionary
DBP	Malay Institute of Language and Literature

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

English was introduced to Malaysia over a 150-year period of British colonial rule and is widely used in all aspects of Malaysian life, from education and administration to casual interactions and socialising. This widespread use of English has led to variations within its 'institutionalised' varieties (Kachru, 1985) in Malaysia, which are subsumed under the umbrella term 'Malaysian English' (henceforth ME). A common variety of ME is Manglish, an English variety comprised of native language elements of multi-ethnic groups in Malaysia. Over the years, the status, values, and perceptions of Manglish among Malaysians have become subjects of increasing attention and debate amongst researchers.

This chapter first draws observations from previous research data and debates surrounding the use of Manglish. These observations and gaps within the literature on Manglish provide the current study's rationale. The chapter then lists the research questions, where attention is drawn to the theoretical framework comprising of 'New Englishes' (Schneider, 2003b), 'style' (Eckert, 2004), 'indexicality' (Silverstein, 2003), and 'enregisterment' (Agha, 2003). I next outline the data collection methods employed, namely WhatsApp chats, online ethnography, online interviews, and questionnaires. These data collection methods serve to triangulate the findings and contribute to the strength of my study. My study also contributes to the literature of 'New Englishes' and specifically Manglish and to theoretical concepts underpinning sociolinguistic studies such as indexicality (Silverstein, 2003) and enregisterment (Agha, 2003) as it highlights ethnicity as a parameter of enregisterment. The final section of the chapter presents an outline of the thesis with an overview of each chapter.

1.2   Study Rationale

Technology has given rise to various forms of communication, which consequently have affected linguistic practices used around the globe. In Malaysia, the development of mediated communication, mainly Facebook and instant messaging, has exposed younger generations to numerous cultures. This exposure has contributed to the transformation of Malaysian youths' communication patterns and attitudes in the online sphere (Stapa & Shaari, 2013: 132). My personal experience is that technological communication, particularly WhatsApp Messenger, has played an important role in my life as a student. Throughout my postgraduate studies at a university in Malaysia, I used WhatsApp to connect with my classmates and friends. A key turning point in my study interests came when I found myself struggling to explain an academic task assigned to one of my friends. I realized later that the explanation of this task relied significantly on code-switching between English and Malay. This event prompted me to investigate further functions of code-switching in WhatsApp, which later became the subject of my Master's dissertation in 2014. However, the study focused on limited functions of code-switching between English and Malay, such as code-switching to emphasise a point or express emotions on an interactional level. When examining my dissertation's data a year later, I became intrigued by the richness and diversity of WhatsApp interactions. Within a small dataset, there were occurrences of features (e.g., *lah* and *ah*) from a number of languages (Malay, Chinese, and Tamil varieties) in Malaysia that I had not noticed before. The data showed that these features were employed by speakers from different ethnic groups. Various languages embedded in Manglish raised my awareness of ethnic variables when examining the data, which led to the consideration of other social factors, such as social distance and relationships between speakers. With my newly acquired linguistic knowledge, I became aware of which varieties the utterances in the data belonged to. This embeddedness of other languages in Malaysia is often labelled as 'Broken Malaysian English' (Loga Baskaran, 2005: 20), mostly known as 'Manglish' (definition discussed in Section 2.3), with its own syntax, vocabulary, idioms, and metaphors (Lee, 1998).

In a wider context, the 'appropriateness' of speaking Manglish compared to Standard Malaysian or British English has been the subject of ongoing debate. One specific sitcom of Malaysian origin, *Oh My English!* (OME), explicitly illustrates this phenomenon. In 2012, I started watching OME myself. The show features humorous explanations of common errors made by Malaysians. The sitcom portrays the use of English both within and outside of the school context, with students and teachers correcting one another's errors. For example, Manglish features, such as 'gostan' and 'action', are corrected by other characters in the sitcom using Standard British English. These Manglish terms are translated as 'reverse' and 'show off', respectively. This sitcom is one of the government's initiatives to educate Malaysians in 'correct' English (OME! Laught at your Manglish, 2012), implying that Manglish is 'incorrect'. Despite this perception, I encountered other arguments on the importance of Manglish in online news. These arguments were made by scholars and individuals where they started to argue through media platforms that Manglish is useful and should gain recognition from Malaysians (Proud of Manglish?, 2012; Linguist: It's okay to speak Manglish, 2012).

My encounters with Manglish have given rise to several intuitive observations which formed the basis of my subsequent research. Firstly, Manglish seems to be important for its speakers. Secondly, there appear to be factors affecting the use of Manglish (such as social distance and topic of interaction). Thirdly, public perceptions of Manglish merit further investigation.

1.3   Research Aims and Questions

The linguistic features of Manglish and its functional roles have been described in a number of studies (Kuang, 2017; Lee, 2015; Preshous, 2001; Tay, Chan, Yap, & Wong, 2016b). Recent research has also addressed Manglish as a new variety of English in Malaysia and explores its importance in identity construction (Lee, Lee, Wong, & Ya'acob, 2010; Lee, 2003). However, a significant gap in existing literature is the lack of studies on sociocultural and meaning-making aspects in the use of Manglish. Additionally, no research has examined Manglish enregisterment, a central concept that addresses whether it is a recognised

variety or if it has social values among speakers. The current study therefore aims to fill this gap by analysing the features of Manglish and its practices among young Malaysian speakers in an online setting, namely WhatsApp. I address these gaps with the following research questions:

1. Why and how does the use of Manglish features vary in WhatsApp conversations? To what extent, and in which contexts, is Manglish used by speakers?
2. What are the social meanings and values represented in the ways that speakers employ the features of Manglish?
3. How are Manglish varieties enregistered in the Malaysian context?

There are several underpinning concepts used to answer these research questions. This current study brings together the concepts of New Englishes, style, indexicality and enregisterment. I use the terms 'New English', 'style', 'indexicality', and 'enregisterment' following Schneider (2003a), Eckert (2004, 2012), Silverstein (2003) and Agha (2003), respectively. These concepts are discussed in further detail in Chapter 2 and 3. The starting point underlying the theoretical premises lies in Schneider's (2003a: 44) view that there was a sense of awareness among indigenous people during post-colonialism to construct a local identity drawn from a newly- emerging variety of English. This view lies within the Dynamic model of New Englishes. This awareness contributes to the emergence of varieties of Malaysian English (Manglish), where local languages spoken by Malays, Chinese, and Indians influenced English use in Malaysia. Schneider's approach to New Englishes deviates from the traditional view of World Englishes, which has paid little attention to meaning-making aspects of language (Mahboob, 2010: 8-9; Mahboob & Liang, 2014). Some New English varieties, which are known as post-colonial English, have undergone the nativisation process and portray characteristics that are unique to its speakers. Therefore, I adopt a dynamic approach to Manglish, which moves beyond a static characterisation of English (e.g. English is divided according to geographical

region) and shows how Manglish is unique and recognised as a socially significant variety among its speakers.

Style lies in Eckert's views that linguistic forms 'do not come into a style with a specific, fixed meaning but take on such meaning in the process of construction of the style' (2004: 43). This perspective underscores aspects of meaning-making in the sense that meaning is constructed and embedded within the way in which speakers use linguistic features or resources in speech. This perspective suggests that the process of meaning-making practices is fluid as there are various ways of expressing the same thing. Social meaning explores the 'social significance of language' (Coupland, 2007), which encapsulates cultural values and norms, ethnicity, social power and status, intimacy and distance, and personal beliefs and attributes. This implies layers of meaning-making practices surrounding speakers' sociocultural contexts. Therefore, I adopt the approach to style and social meaning that explores the functions of Manglish features on an interactional level and its relation to a wider sociocultural context.

Indexicality (Silverstein, 2003) refers to the link between linguistic variables or features and semiotic meaning. A linguistic feature (Manglish features such as *lor, leh, de*, and *lah*) can have different or multiple indexical meanings dependent on aspects such as context, speaker and listener, and relationships between speakers. This approach bridges the gap between micro- and macro- levels of social frames and examines the construction of situated identities represented in WhatsApp conversations that are part of my dataset. Indexicality is also central to the process of enregisterment.

The concept of enregisterment focuses on speakers' awareness levels of Manglish features. Aside from considering how Manglish is enregistered to its local context (to the place or region), this study considers ethnicity as a variable and explores features enregistered to specific ethnic groups such as Malay, Chinese, or Indians. This awareness level interconnects between linguistic features and social meaning, making it compatible with the concept of indexicality.

The data consist of 248 sets of naturally occurring WhatsApp conversations that emerged from two years of online study. It also includes online questionnaire responses from 52 students between 18-24 years old. Each conversation varies in terms of length, topic(s), and Manglish features used. Using online observation and subsequent interviews, I became acquainted with the participants to address follow-up questions which emerged throughout the research period.

This study employs an integrative approach of quantitative and qualitative analyses. Data analysis is divided into two halves, namely WhatsApp data and online questionnaires. The analysis begins from WhatsApp conversations, where commonly occurring Manglish features are identified and coded in table form. The results are interpreted by considering factors such as ethnic variables, where features are quantified according to ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese, and Indians). Ethnic variables are important in the current study because. As emphasised by Wong and Hall-Lew, speakers 'cannot be separated from their lived experience of ethnicity' (2014: 30). It is also important to acknowledge heritage language background and immigrant generation status because they all contribute to patterns of linguistic production (ibid).

Analytical tools such as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) are used to identify the correlation between ethnicities of speakers and addressees and the distribution of Manglish features. This tool is used to address the macro-context of the analysis. The analysis then moves to more micro-level analysis by employing indexicality as a tool to address the multiple meanings of Manglish features (Chapter 5).

As linguistic features may have different meanings in different contexts, the analysis continues with a qualitative analysis of the micro-social aspects and examines the shift in meaning of Manglish features, namely *lah* (Chapter 6). I argue that the indexical value of Manglish features such as *lah* seems to have lost its ethnic specific connotations. These values are reproduced based on the context of the conversation, as well as the relationship between speakers. *Lah* is therefore seen as an ingroup code within a particular group of speakers.

The second half of the analysis focuses on questionnaire results. Using Cooper's (2013) enregisterment framework, I analyse multiple-choice results and features that speakers provide when they are asked to list Manglish features that they know. These results show that Manglish features such as *lah, lor, leh* and *de* are associated with social values such as localness, ingroupness, and ethnicity.

The strengths of this study lie in the systematic analysis of Manglish, both quantitatively and qualitatively. From the quantitative analysis, I conclude that ethnicity is an important variable that affects the use of Manglish features in conversations. The qualitative data is then triangulated through an in-depth analysis of the WhatsApp conversation where meaning making is explored. The triangulation of data types and methods strengthens the present study's contribution because it involves varieties of data such as WhatsApp conversations, online ethnography, and online interviews. The in-depth analysis contributes to the current understanding of Manglish in local, social and interactional contexts, where Manglish features can have double indexicalities such as ingroupness, localness, or ethnic-ness. Unlike previous studies that have mostly focused on the functional aspects of Manglish features, the social-indexical values I identify contribute substantially to the study of Manglish. This indexical correlation between linguistic features (or semiotic forms) and groups of speakers pinpoint features relevant to enregisterment. Features such as *lor, leh* and *de* are indexical of ethnicity or socially recognised as ethnic-attributed features. The findings, therefore, expand upon the notion of enregisterment, where linguistic features are not only enregistered to place/region, but also ethnicity.

1.4   Organization of the thesis

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the thesis. Chapters 2 and 3 connect the theoretical framework underlying the study. In order to understand the enregistering process of Manglish, it is important to understand the language's historical and current status. To this end, chapter 2 focuses on the sociohistorical context of English in Malaysia. The chapter

addresses the different varieties of English spoken by native speakers, as well as those spoken by non-native speakers, through the lens of New Englishes. Limitations of the World Englishes (henceforth WE) approach are discussed, which also calls into question the need to employ other views or notions, such as Schneider's Dynamic Model, concerning the meaning-making aspect of Manglish. The historical background of the English language in Malaysia is then presented. Since ethnicity is an important variable in the present study, information is provided on ethnic groups found in Malaysia, as well as the ethnic populations. This information is followed by a description of languages spoken in Malaysia. Finally, examples of research in online settings in Manglish are discussed. The online platform used in this study, WhatsApp, is then described. The chapter argues that Manglish should be examined with regards to several factors, such as social distance and ethnic identity.

Chapter 3 mainly focuses on style and enregisterment. An overview of the three waves of variation studies (Eckert, 2012) within sociolinguistics are presented, starting with brief introduction to the first and second wave studies. The majority of the chapter is devoted to discussing the third wave of variation studies and examples of studies highly relevant to the current study. Following this, the term 'style' (Coupland, 2007; Eckert, 2004) is defined as a way of talking that consists of 'social meaning' (Coupland, 2007; Moore & Podesva, 2009). As a component of the theme of style, examples of studies that have dealt with style-shifting are discussed. Style-shifting is important in the analysis as it is an analytical tool identified in the interaction of tracing speakers' speech behaviour (alignment/disalignment). The style-shifting aspect in the dataset is then presented by identifying a cluster of Manglish features (swear words and the feature *lah*), which initiate a shift in interactions. The second half of the chapter presents the indexicality (Johnstone, Andrus, & Danielson, 2006) and enregisterment (Agha, 2003) frameworks. As the current study aims to shed light on social meaning of Manglish, it builds on theories of indexicality, where there are dimensions or various levels of meaning that have dominant line for speakers' identity or sense of belongings. The notion of indexicality is also important to the process of enregisterment, where speakers are able to

differentiate Manglish practices and position themselves into different groups such as ethnic groups, a group of Malaysians, or ingroup speakers. The awareness levels that speakers have of Manglish are considered, and it is proposed that Manglish orients itself towards an enregistered variety, though it may also be enregistered in different levels.

Chapter 4 presents the data types and methods. The collection of WhatsApp chats and questionnaire results is rationalised as well as the method of online interviews, and online ethnography. Sampling techniques and ethical considerations including the researcher-participant relationship are discussed. Translation and transliteration issues are also addressed. Finally, data analytical tools such as SPSS are also presented in this chapter.

Chapters 5 to 7 comprise of quantitative and qualitative analyses of the dataset. Specifically, the results and discussion based on the frequency of Manglish features in WhatsApp interactions are presented alongside their distribution across ethnic groups, as well as data from online questionnaire. Specifically, chapter 5 looks at the ethnic-specific features that emerged as one of the factors affecting Manglish in interactions. Ethnicity, in my dataset, proves to be a salient variable of Manglish use. The ethnic-specific features I identify prove to serve double indexicalities namely intimacy and ethnic identity. To this end, indexicality is used as the concept that contributes to multiple meanings in the use of said feature.

Chapter 6 focuses on micro-analytical aspects namely the use of the most frequently occurring Manglish feature *lah* associated with swear words. I analyse the indexical values of these cluster features in the local contexts of interaction. The results suggest consistencies in how Manglish features, specifically swear words and *lah*, are deployed to achieve specific communicative intents. The repeated use of swear words and *lah* in the context lead to style, where specific stances such as alignment or disalignment are achieved. These stances are expressed through style shifting. I argue that the ways in which speakers use swear words and *lah* in the interaction index intimacy and in-groupness. I note there has been a shift in meaning of *lah*. Unlike previous studies on *lah* that have

associated it with specific ethnic group (Malay or Chinese), my study reveals other, more complex social meanings.

Chapter 7 discusses how Manglish is enregistered in a Malaysian context. I adopt Cooper's (2013) methodology, which consists of an online questionnaire that aims to determine which features are strongly or weakly associated with Manglish. A meta-commentary section is also analysed in the questionnaire to identify speakers' perceptions of Manglish. Based on these sources, I argue that Manglish can be enregistered in multiple ways (Johnstone, 2011), with specific consideration of ethnicity.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis by bringing together the key issues in my study of Manglish. The answers given to the research questions justify the contribution of my study to the wider literature; this relates to the contribution to the field of new Englishes, the growing work within third wave sociolinguistics, and to the notion of enregisterment. The strengths and limitations of this study, as well as the possibilities for future research, are also discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Malaysian English: Socio-historical Background and Status in Malaysia

2.1   Introduction

This study aims to identify the social values of Manglish among its speakers. To better understand the role of Manglish in daily life, I review the socio-historical background and status of English in Malaysia. I discuss Kachru's (1985) Circle Model, in which varieties of English used around the world can be grouped according to their historical context. Malaysian English (ME), therefore, belongs to the 'outer circle'. Although Kachru's model categorises the types of English around the world, these varieties of English are not simply limited to geographical areas. Schneider (2003b) expands on Kachru's notion of English by introducing aspects or variables that influence the use of English within a country or a group of speakers. Following his model, I discuss Manglish, a variety that has its own unique functions and features. I discuss examples of Manglish interaction and how this form of English is employed in conversation. I then review the existing studies that have dealt with Manglish in online communicative settings, as online settings are an important medium in this thesis. Based on this review, I propose that Manglish has transcended its stigmatised status as a 'broken language' to become now a form of communication that has its own social values among Malaysian youths, including a capacity to indicate ethnicity or Malaysian identity.

2.2   Malaysian English as Part of World Englishes

This section introduces the terminology and concept of World Englishes. The section thereby outlines the categorisation of Malaysian English and rationalises this grouping with that of other varieties of English around the world.

The expression 'World Englishes' 'is the most widely used term to refer to varieties of English spoken around the world' (Bonnici, 2010: 13). The term was coined by Kachru (1985) to describe regional and national as well as non-native English varieties in addition to new varieties of the language (Bolton, 2013: 240). The term encompasses the native English spoken in Britain, Australia, America, and New Zealand. The term also encompasses non-native varieties of English such as those in the aforementioned countries and in other countries such as Malaysia. Kachru (1985) notes the similarities and differences among these English varieties (native and non-native) across the world and groups the varieties in terms of each one's status, role, and historical and geographical context. He demonstrates this grouping process with a three-circle model, which includes an inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle, as illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.
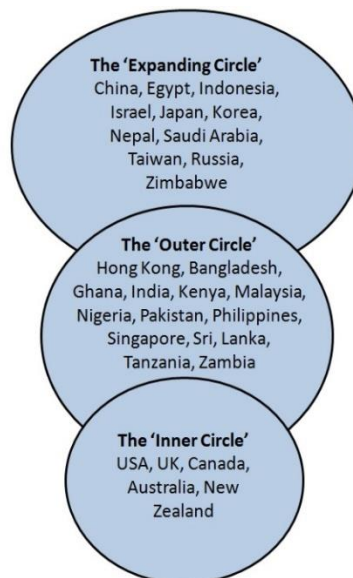
Figure 2.1. Concentric circle model

(Source: Kachru, 1985: 13-14)

In Kachru's (1985) model, the inner circle contains the primary varieties used by and belonging to native English speakers in the United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The outer circle refers to the English varieties spoken by second-language English speakers; in these varieties, English serves as an additional language and institutionalised functions (Bhatt, 2001: 529). The English varieties spoken in the outer circle do not deviate significantly from the native variety, and speakers retain the standard forms and structures. Most varieties in the outer circle have originated in former colonies of the UK or the US, such as Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and India. Finally, the expanding circle, which includes countries such as China, Japan, and Korea, refers to locations where English plays a role as a foreign language and tool for international communication.

Kachru's (1985) model above demonstrates various degrees of difference between native and non-native varieties of English, especially in terms of their functional use. This model serves as the basis for explaining the distinctiveness of English around the world. Chalaya (2007: 6) describes the characteristics of Englishes in the expanding and outer circle:

> "Many of the countries in the 'expanding circle' and 'outer circle' have been influenced by English for more than a century. English in these countries has inadvertently undergone changes through the adaptation of local linguistic features as a result of contact with various languages in these diverse cultural, economic, political and geographical settings."

Chalaya suggests that intense, prolonged contact between English and local languages in multilingual countries in the outer and expanding circles likely caused substantial changes in terms of structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling in English usage. Kachru (1992: 6)asserts that English spoken by worldwide, non-native speakers has undergone nativisation and acculturation, such that each particular English variety has acquired a linguistic and cultural identity (e.g., Scottish English, Indian English and Malaysian English).

In Malaysia, the long-term contact of English with local languages is also observed. English was introduced to the country during the British colonial era more than a century ago and possesses an important status and function in the Malaysian context, which is discussed further in Sections 2.3 and 2.4. The multilingual nature of Malaysians, who include various ethnic and cultural groups, serves as the important variable in producing their own English varieties, because the multilingual societies in Malaysia used their own local languages in addition to English in their conversations. Therefore, the Standard English language initially brought into Malaysia has been altered and transformed into a new, localised form of English that incorporates the cultural and language elements of non-native English users (Yeh, 2013: 330). This localised or nativised English belongs to the sub-variety of Malaysian English, namely Manglish (see Section 2.4.3 for the varieties of Malaysian English). Even countries in the inner circle, such as Britain, have varieties of English, such as the Yorkshire and Geordie dialects, which produce localised features, or forms of identity that represent locality and are regionally based. Drawing upon this premise, I later show that this identity is not only limited to geographical region, but also to macro- and micro-social categories, such as ethnicity, social class and others, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. Thus the English used by speakers does not just represent a particular region (for instance, Malaysians use Malaysian English or Manglish). Rather, speakers employ a specific sub-variety of Malaysian English (e.g., Manglish) to represent or reflect information about themselves, such as their ethnic groups, social distance between themselves and their interlocutors, and their affective orientation or stance. In this sense, the World Englishes notion is limited. In his model, Kachru's (1985) three circle categorisations are limited to historical and geographical contexts. Bucholtz and Hall (2008: 417) point out the limitation of Kachru's model:

> "....Kachru's association of world Englishes with national boundaries – where national Englishes such as Australian English or Indian English are categorized as belonging to either 'Inner,' 'Outer,' or 'Expanding' Circles – carries its own set of problems, not the least of which is an inability to evaluate

diverse, or even oppositional, materializations of English within a single-nation state."

As discussed above, Kachru's model of World Englishes focuses solely on English language practices in the nation without considering other sub-varieties of English within the nation and how English interacts with local surroundings, such as cultural values and norms. The model also suggests clear-cut boundaries between native and non-native varieties of English with straightforward categorisations of the postcolonial countries, thereby implying that Kachru's model is a static notion. The model is static in terms of its external groupings: countries in the outer circle are grouped based on historical information that shows they were once controlled or greatly influenced by the UK and the USA. As previously mentioned, this thesis explores Manglish with respect to locality and social indexicality. These aspects should be considered when analysing Manglish because the values attached to language usage vary with social background. Similarly, different varieties of English are spoken in different British social classes, or with certain attributes/personae associated with English varieties, such as youthfulness, laziness, masculinity and so on. These values can only be captured through analyses of the varieties in local contexts. The aspect of locality are later defined and discussed in Chapter 3. Based on the above, this thesis endorses a more dynamic approach to World Englishes compared with the one Kachru proposed.

Additionally, this thesis concurs with Bonnici (2010: 26), who studied the variations in Maltese English and argued that language should be studied in terms of its variations, local establishments, and social groups, rather than being nationally based. Therefore, this thesis examines the use of Manglish in its social context, and the meaning or identity acquired or constructed among its speakers. Manglish is situated within a paradigm that challenges rigid and straightforward national delineations. Nevertheless, Kachru's three-circle model has influenced the formulation of the stages/phases of formation of local English varieties within a country. Over time, a more comprehensive model to describe English varieties was developed. Schneider (2003b) proposed a dynamic model, comprising five phases that trigger the formation of localised varieties. In his

model, Schneider differentiates the varieties of English that have undergone certain modification by labelling them the New Englishes, varieties that have been localised or nativised by adopting certain local language features, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words and expressions (Jenkins, 2003: 22). Varieties include Ghanaian English, Indian English, Philippines English, Singapore English, and Malaysian English.

Schneider's five stages are foundation, exonormative stabilisation, nativisation, endonormative stabilisation and differentiation. Phase 1, foundation, indicates the initial contact between colonisers, who speak English, and the local communities, which employ various languages. In Malaysia, the initial contact occurs between the British colonials and Malaysians. This contact contributes to the emergence of bi- and multi-lingual speakers; however, it is with minimal influence of local languages toward English usage. The foundation phase is very similar to Kachru's circle model, above, which retains the Standard English usage brought by the colonials.

After some time, English spread across the region and employed in formal sectors like administration and education. Schneider refers to this as the second phase, exonormative stabilisation. English also contributed to social division among indigenous populations, dividing the indigenous elite from other indigenous populations unable to speak English. During this phase, the English language spread by the colonials started to be influenced by borrowed local words (e.g., names for flora and fauna) and slowly emerged into standard and non-standard varieties. It is within the next phase where there is a clear differentiation between the standard and local variety; thereby, the nativised form of Malaysian English varieties was established.

In the third phase, nativisation of Malaysian English (Manglish) was achieved when there was awareness in terms of the 'correctness' of speech (Schneider, 2003b: 248). For example, speakers might say, 'that's the way people speak Manglish' or 'educated people speaks like that', assuming the appropriate cultural norms in speaking in specific ways. They may have shifted style and oriented toward more standard forms because they perceived Standard English

to be the correct way of speaking (and also associated it with being educated). This illustrates their awareness of perceived differences between Manglish and other varieties (i.e., that Manglish became a socially recognised register of forms) and of the associated social values indexed by Manglish (i.e., being incorrect, less educated/uneducated, etc.). Phase 4, endonormative stabilisation, marked the new English variety as an independent variety, or, in Bonnici's (2010: 29) words, there was 'no longer cultural reliance on the colonizing country'. In this phase, Schneider (2003b) claims there will be minor resistance to changes created by the new English, although most new English speakers valued these changes. The local usage of the new form of English is also considered as more established, since it is recorded and published in various sources, such as dictionaries and literary writings. In the present study, these sources are identified in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 7 in relation to enregisterment. The final phase of Schneider's model is differentiation, in which the new language variety emerged in the postcolonial country. The focus on identity construction narrows from the national to the immediate community scale, and identity is further constructed according to parameters such as age, gender, ethnicity, regional background and social status.

The Dynamic Model above introduces anchor point milestones of new Englishes, or in this context, Manglish, in that the variety is associated with the social and cultural ecologies and therefore not restricted to demographic context. This thesis draws from the model's observation on language contact and identities by investigating how multilinguals may use their multiple languages to enact a range of indexically associated identities. I return to the notion of indexicality in Section 3.3 (Chapter 3). As noted previously, phases of endonormative stabilisation and differentiation indicate a major linguistic effect in which there is internal diversity within the new varieties that marks the identities of a subgroup within the overall community. The following point notes the transformation of Manglish in phase 4 (endonormative stabilisation) and indications of the variety in phase 5 (differentiation).

Schneider's model (2003a: 59) argues that ME, specifically the Manglish variety, has moved, or is currently moving, beyond the nativisation phase (third

phase) because there is early evidence of ME being recorded with Singaporean English in several dictionaries, including *Grolier International Dictionary* (2000), *Macquarie Junior Dictionary: World English- Asian Context* (1999), and *Times-Chambers Essential English Dictionary* (1997) (Schneider, 2003a). This suggests an early transition of more established local features, indicating phase 4 of the model. This thesis illustrates the use of Manglish through various sources, such as online comics, blogs, videos, and the Manglish dictionary. These sources serve as evidence to affirm Manglish's full transition into a more established variety. I refer to Lee's (1998) work on her compilation of Manglish phrases and expressions, known as a dialect dictionary. This dictionary has been recently updated with the latest phrases and features through a collaborative work of Lee and Hall (2019) titled *Manglish: Malaysian English at Its Wackiest!* These sources indicate that Manglish has already met the parameters set for phase 4, and that this phase may be dawning in the development of Manglish.

I argue that Manglish is in the differentiation phase, that it no longer relies on colonial English but has its own identity and culture. To demonstrate the identity that Manglish represents, I analyse the features used at the interactional level and the values Manglish represent among the Manglish-speaking community, as well as speaker perceptions of the variety in Chapter 7. To understand the speakers' perception of Manglish, I draw on important dialect works, such as Yorkshire, Pittsburghese and Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where speakers align themselves with specific cultural values in relation to their dialects. The focus of this thesis is the local functions and social meanings (defined in Chapter 3) of Manglish within the Manglish-speaking community. This thesis, therefore, addresses the development of Manglish, and presents the evidence for differentiation.

It is important to note that the emergence of Manglish is interrelated to the divergent ethnic and cultural landscape in Malaysia. The multilingual phenomenon in Malaysia occurs through waves of migration during pre-historic times where the region surrounding Malaysia was called Malacca. A huge migration wave then occur during the British colonial era. The following sections

discuss the geographical background of Malaysia and historical background of the region which changes the linguistic scenery and practices in Malaysia.

2.3   The Malaysian Geographical Background

Malaysia is a Southeast Asian country, consisting of two regions, namely Malaysian Borneo, and Peninsular Malaysia, which are separated by the South China Sea. The total land mass of Malaysia is 330,603 square kilometers (*The World Bank*, 2015). It consists of thirteen states, and three federal territories. The current population of Malaysia is estimated to be around 32.6 million (*Department of Statistics Malaysia*, 2018). Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multilingual country where at least 80 languages are spoken (Omar, 1992: 1). This is discussed in greater detail in the next section. The ethnic groups in Malaysia mainly comprise of the Malays, Chinese, Indians, and the indigenous communities in East Malaysia. Table 2.1 shows the percentage of the population, according to these ethnic groups.

Ethnicity	Percentage
Bumiputera (Malay and other non-Muslim indigenous groups)	69.1
Chinese	23.0
Indian	6.9
Other	1

Table 2.1 Malaysian population by ethnic group

(Source: *Malaysian Department of Statistics 2018*)

The Malays, and the indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak, are referred to as 'Bumiputera' or 'sons of the soil' (David and McLellan, 2014: 131), and as the above table illustrates, they constitute the majority of the Malaysian population (69.1%), followed by the Chinese (23%), and Indians (6.9%), with other minority ethnic group forming the minority (1%).

As Figure 2.2 demonstrates, the Malays are a subset of the Bumiputera, and the study with which this thesis is concerned investigated the Malay ethnic groups, rather than the Bumiputera as a whole, since the study was conducted in Peninsular Malaysia, which is predominantly inhabited by Malay ethnic groups.
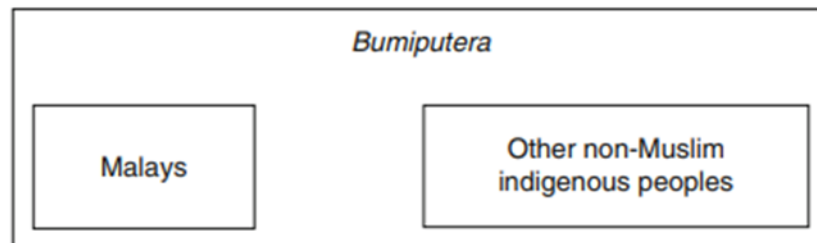
Figure 2.2. Malays as a subset of Bumiputera

(Source: David and McLellan, 2014: 132)

Figure 2.3 presents the geographical location of Malaysia and its neighboring countries, such as Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Some of these countries, such as Singapore and Malaysia, share similar linguistic characteristics in their English varieties, due to their shared geographical and historical background. The similarities can be observed in terms of the roles of the English language in both countries, structures of the sentences as well as lexical items (see Norizam (2014) for comparison between Singlish and Manglish in blogs).

Figure 2.3 Geographic map of Malaysia

(Source: Google maps, 2017)

2.3.1   Linguo-historic context of Malaysia

Malaysia's strategic location in the middle of a trade route, as well as its natural resources, resulted in a long history of colonization, in which various groups laid claim to power over the region over the course of hundreds of years. The history of Malaysia and the Malay World commenced in the 15th century, when Malacca, which is currently one of the states in Malaysia, was founded by a Sumatran fugitive prince, Parameswara, who fled to the minor port of Malacca to avoid Majapahit's attack on Sumatra (Anand, 1983: 28). Prior to the foundation of Malacca, which is also spelled 'Melaka' in the early years of the 15th century, 'Melayu', which can be translated as 'Malay', referred solely to Sumatra (Andaya, 2001: 324). Therefore, the foundation of Malacca by Malay immigrants marked the emergence of the Malay world, with Malacca as the center of Malay civilization in the 15th and early 17th centuries (Andaya, 2004: 71-75).

Throughout its history, Malacca has been claimed to be the primary representative of 'Malayness' (Potimu, 2005: 29). Parameswara established Malacca as an international port, due to its strategic maritime location on the major route between India and China, through the Straits of Malacca (Lopez, 2001: 7), which attracted merchants and traders from Java, the Arab countries, India, and China, over the centuries. According to Vann (2014: 22), Malacca was one of the world's richest trade emporiums, the most important trading center in Southeast Asia. With this prosperity, the young city grew. Merchants, laborers, and slaves from throughout Southeast Asia, East Asia, and South Asia soon filled Malacca. Cultural diversity became the norm, and one could hear dozens of languages spoken in the cosmopolitan city's bustling streets (Steinhauer, 2005: 70).

The presence of traders from a range of countries in Malacca produced a diverse society with different cultures and languages. As an international port, all activities occurred in a Malay-speaking environment (Potimu, 2005: 36), with the Malay language serving as the 'lingua franca' (Blagden, 1917: 99) for international traders from different nationalities. Some of these traders and merchants eventually settled in Malacca, marking the first wave of immigration in the Malay Peninsula. The contact with these traders eventually influenced the nature of the Malay language, which has loanwords taken from Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, and Indian (ibid: 99). According to Pires (1944 cited in Baxter, 1988: 3), 84 languages were spoken in the port. In addition, when Parameswara adopted the Islamic religion spread by the Arab traders, Malacca emerged as a center for Islamic learning, and Malays become familiar with Arabic words that referred to prayers, or religious activities (ibid). Figure 2.4 illustrates the location of Malacca, the Malay Peninsula, and the Straits of Malacca, during the 15th century.
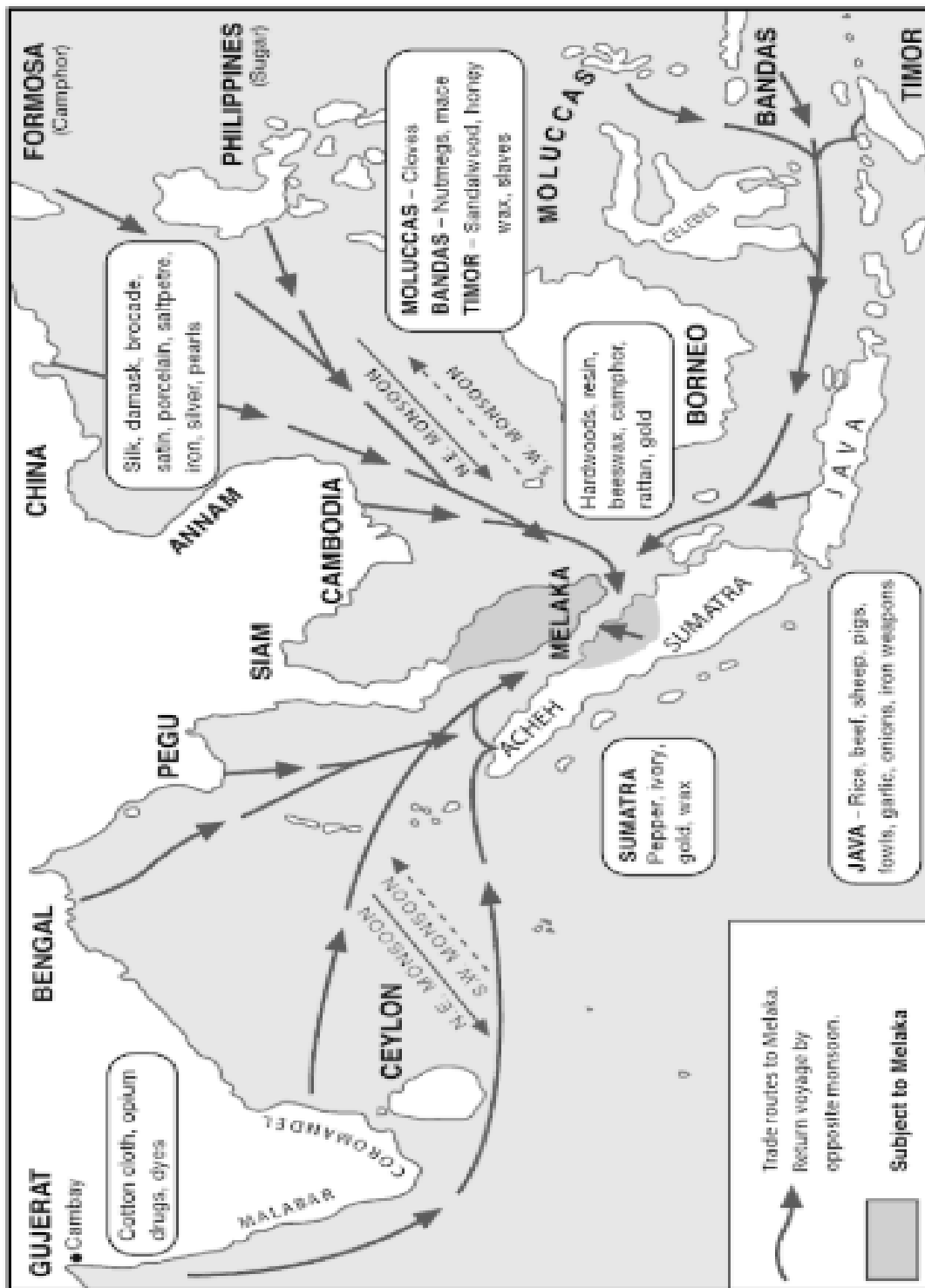
Figure 2.4. Map of 'Melaka' (Malacca) and the trade routes

(Source: Baker, 2008: 45)

Due to its strategic location and maritime importance, Malacca was desired by the European powers, and from the 16th century onwards, Malacca, which was also known as Malay Peninsula Malacca, was colonized by three European powers: Portugal, The Netherlands, and Britain. This process of colonization lasted for almost 500 years, from 1511 to 1957. The first to colonize the country were the Portuguese, who were present for 130 years, followed by the Dutch, who were present for 154 years, and then British expanded their influence over the Straits of Malacca and the whole of Malaya, where they were present for 162 years from 1795-1957 (Ooi and Lai, 2014: 164).

The period of British colonization left remarkable traces on the region, especially in terms of the linguistic landscape of the Malay Peninsula. Under the British colonial rule, between the middle to the late 19th century, there was a high demand for laborers to work in commerce and tin mines, and on estates and in commercial agriculture (Lopez, 2001: 22). To cater for this need, the British brought a vast number of Chinese and Indians into the Malay Peninsula, and divided the labor segments according to ethnic groups. This marked the second wave of immigration in the Malay Peninsula region, and the Chinese and Indians involved had an important influence on Malaysia's socio-demographic status. This immigration shaped the ethnic diversity in Malaysia, and was the most important variable in the present study since, while the Malay speak the Malay language, the language use of the Chinese and Indian immigrants are heterogeneous. The Chinese speak Mandarin, Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka Teochew, Fuzhou, Hainanese, and Foochow (Zhiming and Aye, 2010: 166), while the Indians primarily speak Tamil, followed by Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi, Punjabi, and Gujarati (Lim, 2008: 3).

English language further altered the linguistic landscape in Malaysia as, while Malay and other local languages were used in daily conversation, English was also employed and spoken in various contexts. This use of English, along with Malay, and other local languages, has affected the linguistic ecology in Malaysia ever since, to which I turn in Section 2.4. The historical background of the ethnic groups and ethnic languages in the region was pertinent to this study as the

languages spoken by these groups were the contributing languages towards the emergence of the New English variety in Malaysia.

2.4   Use of English Language in Malaysia

The main focus of this thesis, the English language in Malaysia, is discussed in this section. It commences with an overview of the status of English in Malaysia since the country's colonisation by Great Britain. English is a language historically inherited by Malaysians, and it plays an important role in the country's education and administration. The role of English in Malaysia has become significant and established as a second language. Section 2.4.3 details the various ME types, since their evolution has engendered different types of English in Malaysia, some of which are used in formal contexts, while others are spoken in informal contexts. As Kachru (1997) argued, the English language has undergone a process of indigenisation, and multiple norms are still developing according to local contexts. Section 2.4.3 also discusses the extant studies of Manglish, presupposing that Manglish is more than just a form of broken ME. Rather, Manglish has its own 'linguistic repertoire' that is 'differentiable . . . as a socially recognized register of forms' (Agha, 2003: 231).

2.4.1   The Status of English in Malaysia

Due to British colonization in the 18th century, English was introduced to Malaya, now called Malaysia, and the language had a dominant status during the pre-independence era (Talif and Hie, 1994: 70). It was employed as the official language in the sectors of administration, education, trade, and commerce (Lee, 2003: 141). Hanapiah (2004: 105) discusses how English gradually replaced the Malay language in trade and commerce:

> "Later, the expansion of commerce and trading especially in town areas had influenced the level of use of English among the people. [....] Although in the sixteenth century Malay was the lingua franca for business communication purpose, the

> presence of British power in the Peninsula of Malaysia had changed it to English…"

The use of English in these sectors represented power and prestige (Jan, 2003: 43). Moreover, the ability to learn and understand the language was considered to be an indicator of social success, especially for the local population, which was mainly comprised of Malay, Chinese, and Indians. Another major reason for the widespread use of English was the fact that it was introduced to the education system in the 1950s, when the British introduced English medium schools to the region, which made use of books imported from the UK (Hanapiah, 2004: 107). Initially, these schools employed British teachers who used Standard British English, but as the quantity of these schools increased, local teachers were employed, and consequently teaching was conducted in nativized English (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014: 254). It was a privilege for students to receive the English-based education, especially for those who wanted to work as civil servants for purposes of upward social mobility. It follows that English had become the dominant language of the elite or urban middle class and therefore as an indicator of social identification (Lee, 2003; Benson, 1990: 21).

The spread of English caused the rise of the so-called 'English class educated' (Hanapiah, 2004: 107), a term that refers to the members of the local communities, such as the Malays, Chinese, and Indians, who received education from the English-medium schools. Although there were also schools established for the Malays, Chinese, and Indians, many chose to continue their studies in the English secondary schools. In fact, (Wong *et al.*, 2012: 146) observed that this education system succeeded in producing extremely proficient English speakers. Supporting this observation, Benson (1990) described the role of English in schools in the following way:

> "The English-medium schools were multi-ethnic institutions in which English was both a medium of instruction and a lingua franca for pupils of different mother tongues" (Benson, 1990: 20).

Benson argued that students who attended the English-medium schools were of different ethnicities and tended to use English to communicate. Therefore, up to then English carried social values of prestige and implications of education in Malaysia.

Nevertheless, the role of English decreased in the region, following its independence in 1957, the status of English began to change, and its role declined when the *Bahasa Malaysia* (Malaysian language) was introduced as the official language of the region, and as the medium of instruction in schools in the 1970s. The Malaysian language was adopted as the official language of Malaysia, since it was the language of the indigenous ethnic group, the Malays, who formed the majority of the population (Gill, 2004: 137). Nevertheless, English continued to be the second most important language after *Bahasa Malaysia* (Darmi and Albion, 2013: 177), and maintains its status to the present day, as well as continuing to be a compulsory subject taught in all Malaysian schools, both primary and secondary, including the national Chinese and Indian schools.

However, within the past two decades, there have been further changes in the role of the English language in the Malaysian education system, and English might recover part of its lost status as a result of the modern era of science and advanced technology, as, in 2002, English was implemented as the medium of instruction for science and mathematics at secondary level (Foo and Richards, 2004: 237). Moreover, the use of the English language in higher educational institutions is greatly encouraged at both private and public ones. Therefore, English is now 'universally the sole medium of instruction in science, medicine and in all programs in private higher institutions' (Hashim and Leitner, 2014: 19). The above facts also reflect an ever-evolving shift in attitudes towards English and ethnic languages in Malaysia which are addressed in the following section.

2.4.2 Language shift, attitudes, and perceptions towards English and ethnic languages in Malaysia

Over the years, there has been ongoing debate regarding the importance of the English language in Malaysia, and the changes to the medium of instruction introduced to the country's education system has engendered a drastic change in attitudes and perceptions towards English, Malay, and other languages in the country. These perceptions concern both Standard British English (henceforth SBE), and the Malaysian varieties of English, and are documented in various studies of the language choices and preferences in Malaysia. For example, in his study of Malaysian undergraduates' attitudes towards English, Rahman (2008) demonstrated that the majority of his participants recognized the value of mastering the English language, considering knowledge of English to be an indicator of being educated, and a stepping-stone for social success and securing a job. The participants in his study also supported the government's implementation of English for teaching maths and science in schools. When asked about the variety of English that should be employed for this purpose, a considerable number of the participants agreed that it should be standardized, as other English languages exist, such as Australian English, Canadian English, and even Singapore English. This finding indicated that the Standard English language, and the other different varieties of English in Malaysia, shared the same value in their lives, and were considered to be equally important for their linguistic repertoire. Rahman's (2008) finding highlights the rising awareness and positive values associated to the varieties of English in Malaysia. Although the speakers in his study show preference for the Standard English, they recognize the importance of other varieties of English in Malaysia, and the fact that these varieties should be recognised as a standard form. It is the aim of this study therefore, to look deeper into the practices of this variety of English, (specifically Manglish) and identify the social values that are attached to the variety as well as the goals of the speakers when using it.

Rahman extended his investigation on the perceptions of English across the other ethnic groups in the country and found that the Indians displayed a more significant preference for using English academic texts than the other ethnic groups, namely Chinese and Malay. This may be driven by the fact that Indians are generally more proficient in English. He concluded that proficiency in English contributed to various attitudes towards the English language. Similarly, we observe different forms of English use from the WhatsApp data in this present study whereby Indian speakers are prone to employ Standard English forms with the correct grammar and structures, with limited use of Manglish in their conversations. Different preferences or perceptions between standard and non-standard are also illustrated through their questionnaire responses. I return to my argument on language shift among the Indian speakers in Chapter 7.

Rahman's findings also resonated with those of Lee *et al.* (2010), whose study also found that half of the multilingual Malaysian undergraduates involved in their research reported that English was their preferred language in their linguistic repertoire. However, the use of English alongside other local languages, as in the case of Manglish, seemed to characterize and represent the participants, according to their own ethnic group. This categorization was explained by Lee *et al.*(ibid: 96) as 'othering', in which 'us' referred to those who can speak mainly English, while 'them' referred to those who mainly speak local languages, such as Malay, Tamil, or Mandarin. In the interviews conducted, the participants associated their use of English, or English alongside ethnic languages with the adoption of different conversational roles: 'talkers' versus 'doers', or 'direct' versus 'being indirect' in speech (ibid). Therefore, ethnic languages embedded within the English language reflect certain values and social meanings, in this case, illustrating a specific persona for the speaker, but also serve to contextualize the speech itself.

Furthermore, the aforementioned studies demonstrated a language shift in which the ethnic languages of the region no longer serve as the first language. For instance, there may have been a language shift in the Indians' first language, as the perceived importance of English in education, and eventually social

success, might have repositioned English as their first language, instead of Tamil or Malay. This shift was corroborated by Leo and Abdullah's (2013) survey of language choice among Tamil youths. The data they collected from 60 Tamil youths showed that English was their preferred language in the domains of family, friendship, and religion. For instance, speaking English among their friends was considered to be 'cool' (ibid: 159), whereas using it in church symbolized a pure Christianity of the kind practiced in the West. English is therefore, associated with attributes such as modernism or westernization, and deemed as appropriate in preaching since much of the outsourcing originates from the English-speaking Western nations.

The idea that English, as well as the other ethnic languages, carry specific meanings among its speakers and contribute to identity construction was crucial for the present study, as multiple identities and meanings can be projected through language choice. Therefore, viewing ME from the SBE perspective is no longer relevant, as ME speakers have begun to embrace the influence of local languages in their repertoire, as this is 'no longer seen as a weakness in their proficiency of English language, but rather as expanding the repertoire and enriching the English language' (Pillai and Ong, 2018: 153). As previously explained, the present study focused on the investigation of the specific type of ME known as Manglish. The next section addresses Manglish and its differences from other types of ME. It is important to understand the characteristics or the emergence of Manglish (e.g other languages constitute the variety) since the meanings of Manglish features are both locally and historically derived, and important to the analysis chapters of the present study.

2.4.3   Sociolectal features of the varieties of ME

ME is mainly referred to as a local non-standard variety of English (Mahir and Jarjis, 2007). The term is generally equated with colloquial English, and is known as 'Manglish', a socially stigmatised variety of English similar to Konglish (Korean English) and Japlish (Japanese English) (Pillai and Ong, 2018: 149). These various labels and definitions of ME often cause confusion. This thesis endorses a recent

definition by Govindan and Pillai (2017: 74), employing the term 'ME' as a generic, or umbrella term for all the sub-varieties of English used in Malaysia. In his study of Malaysian English varieties, Baskaran (1987, 2005) divided this variety of English into three lectal groups: acrolect, mesolect, and basilect. Figure 2.5 illustrates each lectal group, according to its variety and context.
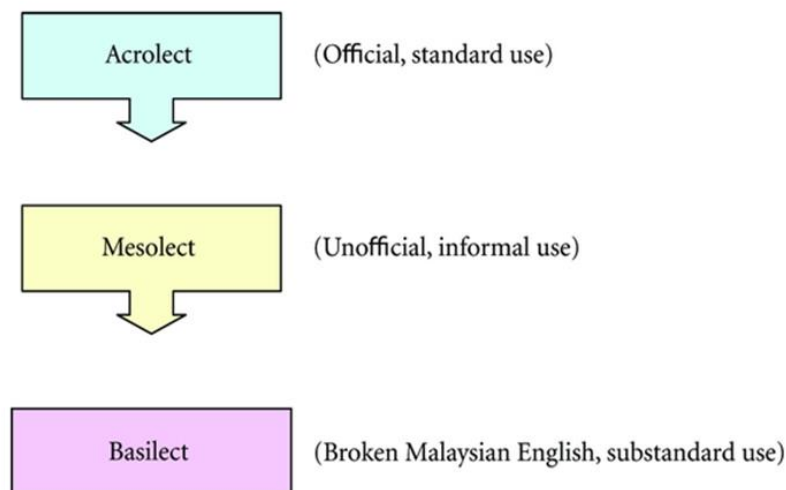
Figure 2.5. Lectal continuums of English in Malaysia

(Source: Baskaran, 1987: 45)

In Baskaran's (1987) work, the 'acrolect' was considered to be the most standard use of English, known as SME. Originating from British English, SME follows a similar model of RP, in terms of spoken and written communication (Ismail, Ismail and Ramakrishnan, 2007: 5). It is considered to be the most prestigious form of English in both its spoken and written forms, and is internationally intelligible, and is therefore appropriate for formal contexts (Baskaran, 1987: 53). Meanwhile, according to Baskaran (2005), the 'mesolect' is less prestigious than 'acrolect', and is a variety of only national intelligibility. Considered to be a local dialect, it is primarily employed in informal situations (Thirusanku and Yunus, 2012: 11). Finally, the 'basilect' is considered to be a 'low' social dialect. It is described as Malaysian Colloquial English (Ismail, Ismail and Ramakrishnan, 2007: 3). This variety of English tends to be referred to as 'Manglish', or 'Malaysian-styled English' (ibid). Table 2.2 below presents the three main

varieties of ME, together with their definitions and categorizations, based on the extant literature in the field.

Malaysian varieties of English			
Scholar	**Acrolect**	**Mesolect**	**Basilect**
Baskaran (1994)	The 'high' social dialect; used for official and educational purposes; internationally intelligible.	The 'middle' social dialect; used in semiformal and casual situations.	The 'low' social dialect; used informally and colloquially as a 'patois', and shades into a pidgin.
Morais (2000)	ME Type I; SME; used by middle-class Malaysians in formal communication.	ME Type II; colloquial variety; used by working class Malaysians in informal contexts.	-
Benson (1990)	Anglo-Malay; the formal variety of English used by older English-educated speakers.	CME, known as an informal variety, incorporating localized features of pronunciation, syntax, and lexis.	Malay-influenced ME; characterized through bilingual code-mixing in the conversations of the younger generation.
Merican (2000)	Educated Malaysian English (EME); the differences depend on the regional background of the speakers; Malaysian acrolect closest to International English.	CME.	Pidgin or broken English.

Table 2.2 Three main varieties of ME, according to the extant literature (adapted and adopted from Ong, 2016: 50)

As the table illustrates, there are similarities in terms of the domain and context of English usage. For instance, the acrolectal group is classified as Standard Malaysian English (henceforth SME), which is used in formal and

official settings, while English in the mesolectal group is considered to be a colloquial variety (henceforth CME) (Benson, 1990; Merican, 2000; Morais, 2000). These differences in the use of English between acrolect and mesolect were demonstrated in Gill's (2009) study of English usage among bank executives in oral presentations. In her study, six bank executives were required to deliver a business presentation to their work colleagues, in a formal work environment. Among the six presenters, only three were considered to be appropriate to deliver a business presentation to senior executives, external organizations, and clients, due to their phonological and syntactic use of English that conformed with Standard English, which was the form considered appropriate for the official setting. The other three speakers were only considered appropriate for presenting to their colleagues, due to their local accents. Therefore, their English usage was categorized as the mesolectal variety. Within the same continuum, basilect is associated with pidgin and 'broken' English (Baskaran, 1987; Merican, 2000). As Baskaran (1994: 29) explained, 'broken' English in Malaysia is heavily infused with items from local languages, including Malay, Chinese, and Indian dialects, as well as other indigenous languages. Meanwhile, Abu Bakar (2009: 99) labeled this 'broken' English with the metaphorical term 'bahasa rojak' (*rojak* language), which refers to a local mixed fruit and vegetable salad, believing that the term represents the nature of this form of English, in which two or more local languages are juxtaposed mixed with English words. Furthermore, Abu Bakar exemplified the 'broken' English phenomenon with Manglish, explaining that Manglish has been labeled an 'undisciplined' (ibid: 100) language use, and is banned from national TV stations.

From the previous works discussed and definitions shown in Table 2.2, we have seen that Manglish is often associated with negative connotations such as 'broken', 'undisciplined', 'uneducated', and many others. However, the discussion on attitudes towards English in Section 2.4.2 above highlighted some important values attributed to using Manglish in daily life. For example, the use of Manglish can no longer be associated with educational levels as the variety is widely employed by speakers from all groups including university students. Ong (2016: 54) demonstrated that speakers of the acrolectal variety of the language

have the advantage of being able to shift down to the basilectal varieties. This shift can be employed, for instance, to construct different identities of the speakers, to emphasize solidarity or distance, and to articulate a particular stance or emotion (Pillai, 2008: 43). This current thesis therefore extends the values associated with Manglish and deviates from the stereotypical perceptions (that it is broken) of Manglish use among the speakers.

As discussed later in the thesis, Manglish should be viewed from the perspective that other English varieties, such as Pittsburghese and Yoopanese, also deviate from Standard English, and have their own social meaning and uses. Since the use of specific English varieties is often associated with a speaker's social identity (i.e. place) as in the case of Pittsburghese and Upper Peninsula of Michigan (UP), I later argue that Manglish indexes a form of 'Malaysianness'. This point is highlighted throughout my discussion chapters in this thesis. The discussion on social values and identity suggests that Manglish cannot be divided according to the lectal continuums as suggested by Baskaran above, but should be considered as another variety that emerges under the umbrella term Malaysian English. In fact, Lee Su Kim, the author of the *Manglish* dictionary, was one of the earliest pioneers of the term 'Manglish', explaining in a radio broadcast interview that she does not consider Manglish to be either broken English, or grammatically incorrect (Ong, 2016: 33). Rather, it is the ability to master another variety of the language that adds to an individual's repertoire. The current thesis approaches Manglish from a similar perspective, that is, from the point of view of Lee Su Kim by investigating what Manglish means to the speakers, and therefore, that departing from earlier prescriptive attitudes that view it as broken or a linguistic ruin of the English language.

The next section discusses the definition of Manglish, according to previous studies conducted on the language variety, highlighting some of its unique features in relation to the Malaysian identity.

2.5   Manglish: Criteria and Examples

In this section, I present several types of Manglish features commonly used by the Manglish speakers and detailed in other works of previous scholars. Understanding the origins and functions of these features contributes to the further understanding of the interactional meaning of the conversations, as well as the personae or identity that speakers are reflecting through their speech. To give an example, there are differences between speakers who employ ethnically originated features with their own ethnic groups, but avoid using these when conversing with other ethnic groups. In other cases, speakers would only speak in certain ways with certain groups of speakers, and their style of speech would change according to context, situation, or social distance. Therefore, understanding Manglish ways of speaking is important as I argue that there are socioculturally grounded meanings underlying this variety.

Manglish differs from Standard English in a variety of ways, such as in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary (Karim, 2014), because Manglish includes various features, namely expressions, discourse markers and interjections from ethnic languages. The most popular Manglish features are 'tail-ender expressions' (Tan and Richardson, 2006: 332), such as *lah* (also spelled *la, laa, lar), lor, leh, de, mah,* and *liao*. These features are derived from various ethnic languages, primarily from Chinese dialects, such as Hokkien and Mandarin (Robertson, 2000: 144; Stapa and Shaari, 2013: 13). Among these tail words, *lah* is often associated with Manglish. Some scholars speculated that *la* is derived from Hokkien, although others argued that it originates from Bazaar Malay (Kwan Terry, 1978; Lim, 2007; Richards & Tay, 1977). Although the etymology of the word is not entirely clear, it has both Chinese and Malay roots, and is employed by speakers from all ethnic backgrounds (see Lim, 2007).

Lee (1998), among others, suggested that tail words do not carry meanings by themselves, but are used by Malaysians in specific contexts. The language of origin of the features contributes to their specific connotations and functions that accord with the speaker's intention (Kuang, 2017: 150). In their study, Tay *et al.* (2016) demonstrated various functions of Manglish particles used on Facebook by Chinese Malaysian youths, ranging from their use in a

positive context, such as mitigation, emphasis, and advice, to negative contexts, such as to express unhappiness and sarcasm. Table 2.3 presents examples of the tail words noted in respective studies.

Author(s)	Year	Medium	Discourse particles
Tay *et al.*	2016	Facebook	*Lah, lor, leh, mah, ah, wor, meh, de, one, o, ya, wei, kah, bah, what, hor, gua, geh, nah, kan*
Norizam	2014	Blog	*Ah, lah, man, liao*
Stapa and Shaari	2013	Facebook	*Lah, lor, eh, lar, ni, lo, lor, de, kot, yar, liao, meh*
Hassan and Hashim	2009	Various CMC corpora (blogs, chat, instant messages, email, short messages)	*Bah, meh, ler, la*
Tan and Richardson	2006	SMS	*lo, lar, ar, arr,*

Table 2.3 Tail words recorded in the extant literature

Features in Table 2.3 above that are normally found in oral communication, have spread widely into online settings, and among the examples collected from previous studies, similarities are apparent in terms of the functions of each of the markers discussed. Moreover, these features are not necessarily constrained to a single function, but can perform several ones, and can be expressed as either positive or negative intentions (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 505-509). Table 2.4 presents the various functions and examples of discourse particles in the Malaysian context as listed in Tay *et al.*'s study (2016).

Discourse Particle	Function	Examples
1. La/lah	a) to agree in a friendly manner	i. Ok lah. ii. Can lah.
	b) to soften an order/advice	i. You come to sg lah! ii. You see doctor lah.
	c) to express resignation or concession	i. Ok lah. Buy next time. ii. Forgive you lah since you got good reason.

2. lor/lo	a) to express resignation about someone else's action or (own) belief	i. Ya lo. I also don't want to go back to Penang.
	b) to indicate sincerity in expressing sympathy	ii. Since you're busy, forget about going to the mines lo.
	c) to indicate that one understands the situation and has acted accordingly	i. I understand howyou feel lo. ii. U miss the call then missed liao lo…
	d) to soften an order/advice e) to tease in a playful manner	i. I thought you were doing your assignment so I didn't date you lo. ii. Ya lo ya lo~ agree with ben lo ~
	e) to tease in a playful manner	i. So next time I call you sexy lo since you have a sexy tongue. ii. I think you must be collected from dumpside
3. leh	a) to contradict or disagree in a polite manner	i. I cannot watch now leh. Got cctv in office here. It's not the one that I want leh
	b) to soften a warning	i. Youwant me to sprain your leg? Very pain one leh. ii. This is already the third time in a year you dye your hair liao leh.
	c) to soften an order/advice	i. Intro to me leh. ii. Don't dye your hair so many times leh. iii. I'mwaiting for you to belanja (treat) leh.
	d) to give a compliment in a flattering tone	i. Your dog is cute leh. ii. Package looks not bad leh
4. ma/mah	a) to soften an order/advice	i. You shouldwait until holiday only dye your hair mah. ii. Come on. Don't embarrass me in public mah.
5. ah	a) to keep two interlocutors in contact/to indicate more is to follow in the conversation	i. tmd (damn) ah..tired ofwaiting forwater to come. ii. I got eat ah.. more thanmy frens.. don worry k? =)
	b) to soften an order/request	i. You come back early ah. ii. Let's go to Melaka ah!
	c) to show surprise or disbelief	i. You are not going out ah? ii. Really ah? So kelian!
6. wor	to soften a contradiction or disagreement	You sure youwant to take photos? I remember you always hide yourself wor. ii. No wor. Not good to eat panadol. (I don't think you should take panadol.)
7. meh	a) to soften an expression of disbelief or disagreement	i. You are sexy meh? (I don't think you are sexy.) ii. a: Nobody will be here towelcome you. b: Really

		meh? Bernard and Ping are quite free tomoro wat. (I don't believe you.)
	b) to admit that one has made an incorrect assumption about others	i. You are not paid meh? (You mean you are not paid?) ii. tat one not dkap meh? (That's not the dkap?)
	c) to correct another's wrong assumption about oneself in a gentle manner	i. U think i am cooking a feast meh (You think I am cooking a feast?) ii. ..is true…haih…tot like u meh, richman.. (You think I am rich like you?)
8. de	a) to emphasize with the intention of rendering one's assumption as shared knowledge	i. I can sponsormy place for you to stay de. (You know I will let you stay atmy place.) ii. Go wif ur heart lo~~but urmumsure ask u towork 1st de. (We both knowyour mother is sure to ask you to find a job first.)
9. one	a) to emphasize with the intention of rendering one's assumption as shared knowledge (this particle has the same function as de)	i. She's always late one. (You must knowshe is always late.) ii. Then sure got some other thing one la. (You knowthere will be other problems.)
10. o	a) to give advice in a friendly manner	i. Sleep early o
	b) to end a conversation in a friendly and polite manner	i. Take care o.
	c) to emphasize with the intention of rendering it as shared knowledge	i. Sleep early o. i. Take care o. i. We will be having bbq & steamboat next week o. ii. Kitty angry oledi o..
11. ya	a) to soften an order/advice	Remember to buy clothes for me ya.
	b) to end a conversation in a friendly and polite manner	i. Enjoy yourself ya. ii. Lu apasal? Take care ya. (What's up? Take care, ok.)
12. La/lah	a) to show exasperation/unhappiness with someone	i. No lah! Your head lah! ii. Next time next time…Donno howmany next time liao lah! iii. Dr. Lau, my baby is a cat lah! Not a dog.
	b) to contradict in a defensive tone, usually by expressing the implicit assumption that the hearer should know better	i. I meant 'dry swimming' lah! ii. Iwon't be around today lah. iii. I will upload the photos later lah. iv. She's younger than me lah! Otherwise, I'll report to the police asap
13. Leh	a) to contradict in a harsh manner	i. You are Hokkien meh? Even your mom doesn't know she's Xing Hua or Hokkien leh.

		ii. I don't know where is he leh!
14. Ma/mah	to point out an obvious fact (which the speaker assumes the hearer should have known)	i. Very easy mah. Just followwhat they say. (It's so easy, don't you know!) ii. It's Deepavali mah. So I can go Penang for three days. (Don't you knowit's Deepavali?!)
15. meh	a) to admonish or challenge in a judgemental or hostile manner	i. U bukan tengah exam meh? (Aren't you in the middle of an exam—you should be studying.) ii. Cannot meh? (You have a problem with that?)

Note: No 1-11 represent particles that reduce social distance, no 12-15 represent particles that increase social distance

Table 2.4 Functions of Malaysian English Discourse Particles

Source: Adopted from Tay *et. al* (2016: 505-509)

Based on Table 2.4 above, Tay *et al.* (2016) suggested that the choice of ME tail words is therefore dependent on the social distance between the interlocutors. These functions aim to either increase or decrease the social distance between the speakers. For example, the use of *lor* mitigated the warning in the sentence "u don't called yr gor pui kia, angry *lo*" (don't call your brother fat, he will get angry *lo*) to a form of advice. This mitigation found in a conversation between a mother and daughter sought to save the daughter from embarrassment, since it occurred in the public domain of Facebook, thereby maintaining a positive relationship between the parties concerned. Meanwhile the study also revealed that these particles convey different meanings when they are attached to different words, including nuances of meaning of the particle *lah*, ranging from friendly agreement ('ok *lah*'), to mitigation ('you see doctor *lah*'), to expressing resignation ('Forgive you *lah* since you got good reason'), and unhappiness ('No *lah*! Your head *lah*!'). The inclusion of the particle *lah* helped to modify the utterance into a polite form, especially in the context of conflicting issues, which concurred with the finding that *lah* is 'a code marker which identifies informality, familiarity, solidarity and rapport between the participants' (Jaafar, 1999: 43).

Other than tail words, there are also Manglish interjections that originate from ethnic specific languages, such as the words *walao, aiyoh,* and *aiya,* which are used to express irritation (Chua, 2009: 449), surprise, or displeasure (Preshous, 2001: 50). Meanwhile, both *Dey* and *macha/machi*, meaning 'buddy' or 'brother' (Saraceni, 2013: 201), and 'hey' (Britto, 1986: 194), respectively, are forms of address that originate in the Tamil language. In addition to the ethnic languages incorporated into Manglish, there are also English words that deviate from their Standard English meaning, and indicate specific functions, such as *got*. According to Abu Bakar and Tung (2018: 29), *got* can be used to replace the verb 'have', as illustrated in the sentence, 'He got tell you meh?/Has he told you?'. A more interesting usage of *got* is evident in idiomatic expressions, such as the use of *where got* to express 'disbelief and amazement to skepticism and denial' (Lee, 1998: 70). This demonstrates that the use of *got* on its own possesses a wider meaning than that in SBE. A similar phenomenon is also observed in the context of Nigerian English, in which common English terms are found to extend their meaning. This includes a range of kinship terms, such as *father*, which can also be used to refer to brothers, and anatomical terms, such as *head*, which is used to refer to a human's spirit, life, and destiny (Alo and Mesthrie, 2008: 337).

In the Malaysian context, another expression that undergone nativisation is the Manglish question tag. In Standard English, the question tag is posed in a negative form when the question is conveyed in a positive sentence, such as 'you will write, won't you?' (Lee, 1998: 68). However, the use of question tag, such as 'is it', among Manglish speakers possesses a wider connotation, as it is employed to express mild disbelief, such as 'You're coming over, is it?', or for confirmation, as in 'You don't want your mom to step in, is it?'. These two examples of the use of *got* and *is it* exemplify how certain expressions taken from Standard English are employed in Manglish and their meanings are locally adapted, thus differentiating this variety of English from others.

Other Manglish features that differentiate the variety from Standard Malaysian English and Standard British English are swear words, as modern Malaysians have begun to adopt the culture of swearing which is regarded as foreign practice (Azman *et al.*, 2017: 47-8), and these values are reflected to a

considerable degree in their informal style of conversation. Swearing is defined as an attempt 'to invoke harm on another person through the use of certain words or phrases' (Jay, 1996: 8). However, the use of swearing among young, contemporary Malaysians seeks to convey a 'hip' and 'cool' style (Ariffin, 1995: 359). Moreover, swear words do not necessarily indicate impoliteness, rather they serve as a marker of solidarity within a group of speakers (Andersen, 2001: 17). This suggests that there has been a shift in the motives behind the use of swear words, as they are no longer intended as harmful, but represent a sense of identity and social intimacy among the speakers. In the Malaysian context, recent studies claimed that Manglish speakers have a wider repertoire of swear words to express their feelings (David, Kuang & Tayyebian, 2016: 125-128). For example, swear words such as *doongu/goondu* which means 'stupid' are usually employed for the purpose of teasing (Lee, 1998: 20). Similarly, the expression *bladiful* which stands for 'bloody fool' can be used playfully (ibid). Further, examples of Manglish swear words derived from various languages are *chibai*, which means 'shit' or 'bastard', and *siao,* which means 'mad' or 'crazy' (Norizam, 2014: 118). There are also direct translations of curse words from the Malay language such as 'thick-faced' which means 'shameless' or 'overly sensitive' (ibid: 129). Another direct translation of swearing in Manglish is derived from the Cantonese or Hokkien word *die*. Tayyebian (2015) pointed out the use of 'die' in his work on features and functions of inflammatory language in Malaysia. He found that Malaysians employ 'die' as in the sentence "hahahaha stupid, die" or "Die...die...die...." when cursing or giving an unfriendly suggestion (Tayyebian, 2015: 114). The word die is no longer constrained to its Standard English definition, which means 'to lose life' (Oxford English Dictionary, henceforth OED), but used in various situations in Manglish conversations such as when one is in trouble. A word such as 'die', mentioned above, proves the nativisation of English because this word has undergone linguistic readjustment as influenced by socio-cultural factors. This is common in ME or other new English varieties to fulfil the linguistic needs of the local community (Rahim, 2006). This present study observes Manglish speakers of various ethnic groups employing these swear words, despite their language of origin, to fulfil different social purposes. In terms of multilingual swear words, Auckle (2017) demonstrated the benefit of

swearing using different languages, such as Mauritian Creole (MC), French, English and Hindi/Urdu. In one of his examples, a group of speakers discussed a troubleshooting problem regarding a video game and requested help. Speaker 31, an expert in solving technical problems, agreed to help, but not immediately. This delay invited disapproval from his friend, Speaker 32, who used the MC swearword 'gogot' (male genitalia) (Auckle, 2017: 71). The swear word framed the intended message the speaker wished to deliver to the addressee, and Speaker 31 subsequently had a change of attitude and provided the technical support needed. In his commentary, Auckle suggested that this change in Speaker 31's attitude reflected the speaker's in-group understanding of a shared vocabulary. This finding indicated that swear words can be used to frame the subsequent utterance or to deliver the speaker's underlying message. In the Malaysian context, while the origins and definitions of Manglish swear words have been recorded, further study is required to understand their use in different languages.

Based on these local observations of Manglish, I argue that this new English variety is still in communion with its ancestral home but has been altered to suit its surroundings. As discussed previously, the alteration of English can be seen through the incorporation of local languages, such as Malay, Chinese, and Tamil dialects, direct translation from these local languages, as well as English expressions that have gained new meanings. The way Manglish works as a new English variety is dynamic since speakers use Manglish to negotiate meaning and construct various social identities, implying the differentiation phase in Schneider's model. In other words, Malaysians have a repertoire of identities whereby they use Manglish to represent themselves as members of a group, or to seek membership, i.e., macro-level identities, such as ethnicity and to represent themselves as Malaysians. A new English variety such as Manglish, like other examples like Singlish, African English, or Taglish, is used by speakers to interact locally with places and cultures to accommodate their speech to that of their interlocutor.

Throughout this section, I have presented types of Manglish along with examples and definition of tail words such as *lah, lor, leh, de,* and Manglish swear

words such as *cibai* and *sioa*. However, the most captivating part is that Manglish does not only occur in face-to-face contexts such as education and workplace settings (see for instance, Nair-Venugopal, 2000; Idrus, 2012), but it appears widely in the online setting. The growing influence of the internet has caused the spread of English use in online discourse, and, as discussed earlier in this section, Manglish features have also been identified in social media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and so on as listed in Table 2.4 above.

2.6   Manglish in Online settings

The earliest researchers to study ME online discourse included Hassan and Hashim (2009), whose data were taken from a corpus of two million words from four genres in online communicative settings: blogs, chat and instant messages, emails, and text messages. Their preliminary findings revealed abbreviations and acronyms of many universal features, such as 'ppl' (people), 'abt' (about), 'omg' (oh my god), and 'hru' (how are you), which are specific to Computer Mediated Communication (henceforth CMC). Moreover, features typically found in spoken ME were present in the online setting, including borrowed words, particles, and Standard British English affixes, combined with local words. The authors suggested that the online users constructed their youth identity through the features and medium used. This research study constituted the preliminary overview of the use of ME in online settings, establishing the direction of future research seeking to understand the dynamics of ME (e.g. Manglish), in relation to online identity.

Identity formation through language use was reported in Stapa and Shaari's (2013) study concerning the online language features and patterns of young Malaysians in a Facebook setting. They proposed that the language used on Facebook has been transformed into a new variety of English, forming a new linguistic community of mainly young speakers. The use of fillers and localised spelling among these multilingual speakers indicated the speakers' position in a linguistic community sharing the same language in an online sphere, thus the identity construction of young Malaysian speakers who employ Manglish features in their communication. Stapa and Shaari also explained that their

findings indicated the presence of several functions of Manglish features, and the frequent use of a specific suffix or slang, such as *lah* and *kan*, at the end of a sentence. They claimed these tail words were used to establish rapport and signify familiarity between users. However, the study offered only a limited explanation of how and why the particular variety developed into an intimacy marker.

An extensive study of Manglish features, and specifically discourse particles, was conducted by Tay *et al.* (2016) among Chinese youths in Malaysia. They proposed a framework for analyzing these features in interactions consisting of the positive and negative use of the particles that can reduce, or increase the social distance between the speakers. Although ME is often stigmatised, Tay *et al.* (2016) argued that this English variety is meaningful to the local speakers, as it serves to fulfill the communication needs in a multilingual environment. They further explained that even Malaysian speakers speaking Standard British English or Standard Malaysian English shift to Manglish when interacting with their friends and colleagues, or when conveying attitudes and stances in 'local' ways (ibid: 18). Since Manglish is a new English variety that is still developing to fulfil the communicative needs of the speakers, this suggests that social distance between the speaker and addressee is one of the determining factors in their language use. In a similar approach, the present study analyses Manglish features and forms in WhatsApp interactions by attending to the relationship between the speaker and addressee.

A growing sense of pride toward Manglish usage was observed in Ong's (2016) study of young Malaysians' linguistic use in weblogs, informal diary-style writings that consist of a series of entries. Employing a social constructivist approach, Ong described the blogosphere platform as a form of dynamic social action continually lent meaning by its social participants. In her analysis of 69 weblog entries, and the questionnaire surveys and interviews she conducted, Ong found that the participants preferred to use English, since it is internationally intelligible, to capture a wider audience. She reported various occurrences of linguistic features typically found on the internet, such as capitalisation, punctuation, and text-based emoticons. However, what

differentiated these blog entries from other worldwide blogs was the presence of Manglish features similar to those reported in the aforementioned studies; and it is interesting to note that Ong's participants were all members of Chinese ethnic groups who used Hokkien, Cantonese and Mandarin in their blog entries. In fact, they were proud of using their ethnic languages, as they represented their ethnic identity. However, there was also evidence of Malay features in the entries, which represented their identity and linguistic repertoire as Malaysians. In a broader language usage perspective, the participants employed Manglish as a coded form of expression for their intimate audience and used Standard English for a wider audience. The participants were proud of their ability to 'encode' their messages and writings using the ME varieties (Ong, 2016: 327) and felt close and connected to their interlocutors. Moreover, the use of derogatory words in Chinese languages was not considered to be an impolite exercise, but rather a type of bonding strategy in an online sphere. The participants' language choice demonstrated how language was treated as a strategic, meaning-making resource in this context, establishing social intimacy with their Manglish interlocutors, between the blogs' readers and commentators. The present study contributes to the literature on Manglish by recruiting speakers from different ethnic groups, mainly Malay, Chinese, and Indian, and thereby taking into account participants' ethnicity. I identify in what ways, and with whom, speakers use Manglish expressions, phrases, and swear words to represent themselves, their identities or their social groups.

The most recent study of Manglish deviated from the typical Manglish forms and functions, as Rusli *et al.* (2018) identified newly emerged Manglish jargon in social media. In their study, 50 participants, aged between 18 and 50 years, were asked to list Malaysian jargon they found, or read, on the four social media platforms of Facebook, Instagram, blogs, and Twitter, and two mobile messaging applications. More than 200 Manglish words were subsequently found, with more being added every day, for example, *kipidap* (keep it up), *dongibap* (don't give up), *uols* (all of you), *iols* (all of us), and *lebiu* (love you). The authors also conducted an online survey to determine whether the participants recognized the meaning of these words, and the analysis found that only 30% of

the participants were able to guess the meaning of the words, while 60% were unable to comprehend the meanings. Based on these results, Rusli *et al.* (2018) proposed the development of a Manglish jargon translator to record the latest jargon words. Their study demonstrated the impact of technology on Manglish, which has resulted in the modification of English words in the online sphere, where they are spelled using the Malay phonology system.

The studies above underscored several important aspects that the present thesis addresses and expands upon, such as Manglish forms and functions in an online sphere and ethnic identity construction. The use of technology in a multilingual society has impacted linguistic and sociocultural change and also the continuous practice of the use of localised English variations. As Graddol (2000: 2) notes:

> "Everywhere it is at the leading edge of technological and scientific development, new thinking in economics and management, new literatures and entertainment genres. These give rise to new vocabularies, grammatical forms and ways of speaking and writing. Nowhere is the effect of this expansion of English into new domains seen more clearly than in communication on the Internet and the development of 'new English'."

The linguistic changes and innovations triggered by technology are most apparent in technologically mediated communications, such as communication devices, including mobile phones for SMS messaging, and on social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and instant messaging. Given the relevance and crucial use of social media for the emergence of Manglish, this present study explores a specific form of online interaction: instant messaging, specifically WhatsApp. The online sphere has also become a platform for the emergence of these nativised varieties. Since Manglish is increasingly developing its status in the new media (Stapa and Shaari, 2012), it is likely that some Manglish features identified by previous studies also occur in this context, and similar functions of Manglish features might be present in the interactions.

Stapa and Shaari (2013) consider the forms of English used in online settings to be a new emergence of the ME variety. The online use of Manglish is not merely a norm or the usual netspeak codes, but a variety of English that has its own identity and represents its speakers (i.e., communicates Malaysianness, or unity among Malaysians). Squires (2010: 463) supports the idea that language used in an online setting should not be labelled netspeak or chatspeak since the language is not used uniformly among internet users. Squires (2010) suggests there are factors that shape the language used in an online sphere, such as social distance between users, social groups or social distance between interlocutors. For example, individuals can choose specific styles from their linguistic repertoires and use these as their own codes within a particular social group to differentiate in-group from out-group conversations (Gillespie, 2006). This way, identity is fluid and dynamic and shaped by the social context. Eventually, community members will share similar values, characteristics and common social identification spotted through their interactions. These changes, illustrated in Chapter 6 of this thesis, show how role relationships change between two speakers: they start their chats as colleagues with formal topics involving assignments and subsequently become closer with intimate conversations as evidenced by their use of Manglish.

This thesis adds to these studies by explicitly delineating the ecological factors influencing the reasons for employing Manglish in WhatsApp Messenger. Factors influencing the use of Manglish range from projection of macro-level identities such as Malaysian-ness to personal establishment such as ingroupness. The present study delve deeper into the process of how macro and micro level identities is represented through the use of Manglish feature.

2.7   Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed the concept of World Englishes in terms of the historical context and the varieties of English around the world. I suggested that the analysis of new Englishes should be viewed from a wider perspective, i.e., the local context, instead of viewing it based on its geographical boundaries. For example, the English language in Malaysia is not limited to standard Malaysian English, but many varieties of English that appear under the umbrella term Malaysian English, such as colloquial English and Manglish. These varieties emerged from contact between colonial English and local languages in Malaysia. To understand the linguistic ecology in Malaysia, the chapter outlined the language situation in Malaysia, from its socio-historical context to the present day, and also discussed the language demographics that explain multiculturalism in Malaysia. The essential point is that Manglish is undergoing the differentiation phase where it is no longer dependent on the English brought by the British, but has important social values among the speakers. In other words, Manglish should not be considered as a broken variety, but as a newly emerging English variety. The discussion on attitudes toward Manglish and Standard English/Standard Malaysian English in Section 2.4.2 shows that participants in previous studies acknowledge the importance of Manglish in their daily lives, although they recognise the importance of standard Malaysian English for their career and social mobility. This is similar to the case in England, where there are many varieties of English that have emerged in regions such as Yorkshire, Sheffield and Scouse, which are socially significant to the speakers. This will be discussed in Chapter 3. These varieties not only represent regional identity, but in the context of the current study, can also represent ethnic identity. The investigation of Manglish is firmly related to some of the functional aspects of its features (*lah, lor, leh*, and *de*); in other words, it should be examined in parallel with what the features actually signal in conversations and to the interlocutors. For this purpose, Manglish should be explored in the local, interactional context in which it emerges, and the dynamics of the interactions must be addressed at the local context, which is a point of departure in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

Style, Indexicality and Enregisterment

3.1   Introduction

Chapter 2 argued that Manglish is shaped by not only geographical region but also the social values among the speakers. To this end, this chapter addresses the third wave of language variation studies, in which attention is given to style and social meaning. Following Eckert (2012), I present layers of social meaning on the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels that are conceptualised into indexicality approaches (Ochs, 1992; Silverstein, 2003). I discuss the relationship between orders of indexicality; even though the meaning of linguistic variables is context dependent, similar features such as *lah, lor, leh*, and *de* can denote multiple indexicalities, such as ethnicity, stances, and localness. I then present Johnstone *et al*.'s (2006) interpretation of Silverstein's indexical order framework, which is central to the process of enregisterment (Agha, 2003). The indexical approach is a useful concept in confirming that Manglish is an enregistered variety to the region and ethnic group. Finally, I discuss the analytical tools used in examining the micro-context of the interactional data. These relate to swearing, contextualisation cues, and style shifting which are approached from an interactional sociolinguistic angle.

3.2 Third-Wave Variation Studies: Attention to Style and Social Meaning

Labov (1966), with his 'Social Stratification of English in New York City' study, is among the early scholars who established a solid foundation for language variation research. The traditional paradigm identifies individual variables and examines how these variables correlate with categories such as socioeconomic class, age, gender, and ethnicity (Eckert, 2018: 2). Labov's methods were widely replicated by several scholars such as Wolfram (1969), who demonstrated a relationship between language, gender and socioeconomic status. The static correlation of macro-social categories with language features which was one of the main challenges to Labov's paradigm (Eckert, 2012) was later refined in second-wave variation studies that paid attention to network types (kinship, work) with vernacular forms of community members (see for instance, Milroy, 1980). The studies above solely focused on the macro-social aspects of identity (Eckert, 2012; Moore, 2003), thus treating identity as a static social concept. The most recent paradigm in sociolinguistic studies is what Eckert calls third wave variation studies, in which identity is seen as dynamic and shaped through speech patterns.

Within third wave studies the focus is shifted from linguistic variables to style. Firstly, linguistic variables are part of a broader sociolinguistic style that, associated with other social practices, contributes to the construction of identity. Secondly, attention has been given to social meaning: the meaning of linguistic variables is not deterministic and varies for different groups (Eckert, 2005; Coupland, 2007; Moore and Podesva, 2009 among others). Social meaning refers to social personae or the expression of who the speaker is; social meaning motivates speakers to use one variant over another when performing and/or shifting to a particular persona (Moore and Podesva, 2009: 449).

Through her third wave of variation framework, Eckert (2012) discusses several studies that demonstrate how social meaning of variant forms are combined into 'style' (see Eckert, 2003; Moore, 2003; Moore and Podesva, 2009). Moore and Podesva's (2009) study demonstrate a holistic approach to 'style' in

terms of characterizing social groups. For instance, 'style' in their study embodies not only linguistic sources such as realization of /t/ in tag questions but also other semiotic signals of social differences such as habits, appearances, and clothes. Moore and Podesva (2009: 449) define styles as follow:

> "styles are clusters of features rather than singular and isolated forms divorced from other language. They are terms of use, embedded in social practice and occurring across linguistic levels, such that syntax, phonology, and discourse work synergistically rather than independently of one another. We also note that style is not simply an array of meaningful signs, because such arrays do not take on meaning unless they contrast against another array of signs."

'Styles' constitute a broad axis of speech practices. The speech style of one group can be distinctive from that of another group in terms of the phonological features in emphasis/stress, the sounds and pronunciation, and the words and phrases as well as in terms of discourse style for certain subject matter, audiences, experiences, occasions, and so on. In the same vein, Eckert (2012) presents a similar conception of style:

> "Individuals can create their own unique styles, and these new styles are meaningful and carry certain meaning amongst them which others can interpret."

Coupland, refers to it as 'ways of speaking' (2007: 2). A person's ways of speaking/using linguistic features carry social meaning, project different identities, and create different social relationships. Social meaning is a core aspect of stylistic variation. In his discussion on style and social meaning, Coupland (2007: 112-113) suggests that when approaching linguistic variation as a meaningful resource, social meaning refers to the construction of identity of the speakers that takes place in social interaction. Coupland introduces Le-Page and Tabouret-Keller's concept of identity projection, namely targeting, framing, voicing, keying, and loading. Among these concepts, Goffman's (1974) concept of

framing is the most crucial for this thesis, as his concept represents layers of social meaning.

Framing can be divided into three fragmentary levels, namely macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level social frames. The macro-level social frame, which is apparent for variationist sociolinguistics, is demonstrated in Labov's first-wave studies, in which identity refers to social class, age, gender, and ethnicity. The meso-level social frame is associated with genre of speech, such as business speech or informal conversation. Therefore, in the meso-level social frame, identity refers to the social role that speakers carry within a particular speech genre. The micro-level social frame refers to interpersonal aspects, such as how the use of a particular speech feature might allow an individual to style himself as intimate or powerful.

Coupland (1980) illustrates the framing concept in his analysis of recorded phone conversations that had taken place at a Cardiff travel agency. The recordings captured conversations between Sue, a travel agency assistant, and her clients as well as Sue's simultaneous conversations with her colleagues in their workplace. Coupland found that in Sue's conversations with her colleagues, she used 'working-class' sounds such as diphthongs, as in 'my' and 'I', and the flapped (t). In contrast, when speaking with her clients, Sue shifted to 'middle-class' sounds, using an open onset (ai) in 'Friday', for example. This shift in phonological sounds is indicative of social identity. Thus, in Sue's speech, Coupland identified a clear transition between professional discourse and everyday speech. The professional discourse emerged when Sue was making deals with the clients; Sue's usage of professional jargon (including trying to sound 'smooth') was a marker of her professional persona. However, when Sue spoke about sandwiches and dieting with her colleagues, she used everyday speech, and her personal persona was demonstrated. Coupland argues that these two personae can be differentiated because Sue's professional discourse and her Cardiff dialect represent different levels of social frames. The micro-level social frame was apparent when Sue styled herself as 'powerful' within a conversation with her client, such as when she insisted that she had to 'take full payment' before proceeding with the booking (Coupland, 1980: 115). Coupland thereby

shows how identity is projected or styled by Sue through phonological variations and how social meaning is embedded within talk. The concept of framing is similarly useful to the analysis in the present study's Chapter 6, as it is apparent that the speakers perform personal identity work through their use of Manglish feature *lah*. Specifically, these speakers' use of *lah* may style a relationship as more or less intimate.

Similarly, Moore and Podesva (2009) address the layers of social meaning from their participants' speech style. Moore and Podesva examined tag questions among female students in Midland High (based on the previous study of Moore (2003)). Based on linguistic and social styles, the female participants were categorised into four social groups, namely Townie, Popular, Geek, and Eden Village. The social styles included the categories 'anti-school' attitude, 'streetwise dress style', 'active in school activities', 'trendy teen style', etc. Moore and Podesva (2009) analysed tag questions based on the questions' agreement function (i.e., based on whether the tag question indicated solidarity). Agreement function was determined based on the realisation of the word ending /t/, which was associated with youth norms. Moore and Podesva concluded that tag questions across the four social groups shared a similar 'conducive' (2009: 458) function, in that the tag questions all encouraged the listener to agree with a proposition. However, the tag questions also indexed different social meanings, namely stances, personae, and social type.

Popular social group used tags when criticising or taking an evaluative stance towards other girls at the school (e.g. 'they changed for the worse, some of them, din[ø] they?'). In contrast, Townies used tag questions to construct authority and indicate experience (e.g. 'But he liked all the Beatles and Elton John and everyone, [din[ø] 'e?'), and the Geeks used tag questions to construct authority and emphasise their knowledge (e.g. 'You walk home, though, don't [you?]'). Eden Villagers collaboratively used tags to indicate mutual alignment and convey friendships (e.g. 'You – [Me and] Lucy didn't, did we?'). The recurring stances among the Popular group set the Popular participants apart from their peers and characterised them with locally meaningful 'popular', 'cool', or 'evaluative' personae. The Townies, who portrayed themselves as rebellious, had

been exposed to the working-class culture of the wider community. Moore and Podesva claim that the tag questions employed by the Eden Village participants had a 'feminine' style as described in Holmes's (1995) work on language and gender. Therefore, these tag questions have overlapping social meanings ranging from macro to micro social frames, which is conducted through stances or meso-social personae.

The present study aligns with the view that social meaning operates on different levels. I focus on social meaning on an interactional level, though I employ a broader range in describing the stances, namely agreement, disagreement, alignment, disalignment, or politeness (micro-social frames). These stances encapsulate the functions of Manglish features that were outlined in the previous chapter. The characteristics that compose the persona are captured in terms such as 'playful' and 'serious' (or referring to meso-social frames), and social type refers to 'Malay', 'Chinese', 'Indian', or 'Malaysian' (macro-social frames).

Based on the definitions of style and social meaning, my study aligns with the studies of Coupland (1980) and Eckert (2003) and with Moore and Podesva's (2009) framework on social meaning. I analyse Manglish speakers' speech styles and the meanings attributed to the use of specific Manglish features. Style refers to the use of a Manglish feature/a cluster of Manglish features, combined with non-linguistic signals that unveil statements about oneself, one's group membership, how a speaker perceives her relationship to her hearers (social distance), and the types of speech events that the speaker considers herself to be engaged in. Since the present study is conducted in an online sphere, non-linguistic resources refer to emoticons, symbols, tones, and manners in interaction.

Another crucial aspect within the third-wave studies is the implication that variation is a source of information. Kirkham (2013), in his study of phonetic variation in a Sheffield secondary school, points out that language contact contributes to the phenomenon of cross-language phonetic influence. Such variation can be indexical of local identity or indicate the ethnicity of the

speakers. Using the Community of Practice framework, Kirkham shows how his speaker moves across the boundary of ethnicity towards other variables such as gender, social class, or local context. In the same sense, Alam (2015) demonstrates the importance of ethnicity, identity, and language in her socio-phonetic analysis of young Scottish-Pakistani girls. Alam (2015: 25) found that the social and ethnic identity of the girls was reflected in their accent features of spoken English. Alam also analyses her participants' social patterns using the Community of Practice framework. She reveals that the girls are exposed to various types of social practices, which she characterizes into six different groups: Conservative, Religionista, Modern, Shifter, Messabout, and Wannabe. Through various sociophonetic pronunciations such as /t/ (e.g. *tin*, *talk*) and six unchecked vowels /i, e, a, ɔ, o, uː/ (e.g. FLEECE, FACE, CAT, COT, GOAT, BOOT) vowels, the girls align themselves not only with distinct social groups but also with specific ethnicities. Alam's study shows that 'ethnic' features may not always indicate ethnicity; such features may coincide instead with other factors such as stances or social class. Both Kirkham's (2013) and Alam's (2015) studies show that similar linguistic variables can index various things. As Coupland (2007: 121) argues,

> "…the variation resources available to speakers are multi-valenced. They are 'called into meaning' by discursive frames and have their effects in diverse social dimensions."

Similarly, the present study discusses how specific Manglish features derived from specific ethnic groups not only represent or are meaningful to their ethnic groups but also, to varying degrees, mark shifts in meaning.

Ethnic-attributed features may soon lose their original ethnic markedness to be associated instead with other identities such as a local urban youth identity (Marzo & Ceuleers, 2011). Marzo and Ceuleers (2011) demonstrate the use of Citétaal, a language spoken among speakers in Limburg, with both immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds. Based on surveys and interviews conducted on 720 participants, the researchers found that Citétaal is a vernacular language intended for peer communication. Citétaal is either associated with 'toughness'

and 'rebellion' or linked to the Genks territory, where the multicultural population is the largest in the country. The study suggests that long-standing language contact may become indexical of local youth identity. Similarly, the language situation in Citétaal is similar to the context of the current study, and I propose that ethnicity plays an important role in Manglish speakers' identity construction, as discussed in Chapter 5. Therefore, the speakers in this present study may shift from their ethnic identity or adopt interactional roles throughout the conversations (interactional roles as demonstrated in Coupland's example of telephone conversation above).

Another important aspect demonstrated in Marzo and Ceuleers is the expression of 'in-group favouritism' (2011: 459). Participants are asked to describe differences between the language spoken in Genk and Dutch spoken in other regions. In the interviews, the participants explicitly compliment language spoken in Genks and denigrate Belgian accents. The sense of 'in-group favouritism' in this context was therefore characterised by participants' speech, which represented in-group dynamics and in-group solidarity. This perspective of 'in-group favouritism' is applicable within the ethnic context of the current study as elements of in-group vs. out-group bias and prejudice were present.

Understanding the use of language varieties or forms associated with social or ethnic groups is crucial in the present study as ethnicity is the most important variable in the study context. As discussed in Chapter 2, the ethnic variable is rooted in the nature of the linguistic landscape in Malaysia. Generally, ethnicity is defined by certain boundaries that divide people of the world into opposing categories of 'us' and 'them' (Reyes, 2010: 399). Ethnic groups in Malaysia are categorised based on common ancestral origins, cultures, and history (Jiménez, 2010: 1757). Ethnicity in my study is important as it integrates with in-groupness in certain conversations that enable speakers who come across one another as belonging to one ethnic group.

Other than ethnicity and in-groupness, Coupland asserts that linguistic variables may be viewed as resources to represent 'place' (2007: 121). Coupland demonstrates the relationship between style of speech and place in a study of

Cardiff radio DJ dialect. In the study, Frank, a well-known radio presenter and entertainer, launched a show to celebrate Cardiff's cultural norms (ibid: 123). In the show, Frank's employs Cardiff dialect, which allows him to style himself as a Cardiff speaker. Frank's 'Cardiffness' is manifested through several phonological aspects, including fronting and raising of the long (a:) to (æ:) in 'dark' and 'park', alongside other stylistic forms. Alongside the sense of 'Cardiffness', values such as intimacy, nostalgia, and personal niceness are expressed throughout the show. In line with Coupland, the present study demonstrates that the use of Manglish features represent not only ethnic-ness or in-groupness, but also Malaysianness. Despite negative opinions of Manglish as pointed by participants in previous studies (Chapter 2), some of them are aware of the importance of the variety and attribute a sense of belongingness to a particular group of the population (as Malaysians). I refer to this concept again in Section 3.3, which discusses how dialect resources are associated with a strong local identity.

This chapter, so far, has discussed how linguistic variables and speech styles are treated in third-wave variation studies and inform my analytical practices. Third-wave studies have not focused solely on the frequency of variant use between two or more social groups, but also on the social meaning, or motivations, of realising a particular variant. Moreover, third-wave studies have acknowledged that layers of social meaning are attributed to similar linguistic variables, i.e., that meanings are manifested through speech style. This thesis demonstrates that there are layers of social meaning attributed to specific Manglish features. Participants express ethnicity through Manglish choices, but these choices are also indexical of micro-social categories such as intimacy. This observation further aligns the present study with third-wave research. I propose that the social meaning of Manglish variables is not deterministic. This research is the first of its kind to explore social meaning in Manglish. Investigating social meaning manifested in selective Manglish features suggests that Manglish has passed nativisation, and that variety is currently undergoing a differentiation phase, as shown throughout this thesis.

Linguistic features may index social categories, such as a speaker's region, ethnicity, style, or stance (e.g. *lah* index Malaysianness, as discussed in Chapter

7). These indices vary based on time, setting, speaker, and listener (Squires, 2010: 459). Specific orientation towards these indices may be explained through 'order of indexicality' (Silverstein, 2003; Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson, 2006). The concept asserts 'groupness', in which speakers routinely draw linguistic resources that reproduce norms that situate them with other norms (Blommaert, 2005: 393).

3.3 Indexicalities and Enregisterment

This section begins by outlining influential works on indexicality, namely Ochs (1992) and Silverstein's (2003) indexical approach. Both approaches are important to the analysis in later chapters.

According to Ochs, social meaning is indirect and mediated through stances. Du Bois (2007: 169) refers to stance as 'a linguistically articulated form of social action whose meaning is to be construed within the broader scope of language, interaction, and sociocultural value'. Generally, stance can be categorised into affective, evaluative, and epistemic. According to Ochs, stances and acts index in-group identity indirectly. Stances, as a means of identity potential, is demonstrated in Moore and Podesva (2009), who investigated tag questions. The tag questions used by Eden Village such as 'haven't you', 'wasn't it', and 'aren't you' index being a woman, though they also index an agreement/alignment stance, which then indexes a type of feminine voice, as studied in language and gender literature (Holmes, 1985; cited from Moore and Podesva, 2009). The tag questions, therefore, indirectly index gender. Moore and Podesva's work allow us to understand the link between social identities (macro-social categories) and micro-level linguistic practices. In the present study, Och's concept is applied in the analysis of Chapter 6, in which speakers use swear words and *lah* in creating stances (alignment), which indirectly links to their in-groupness.

Another influential approach to indexicality is Silverstein's (2003) order of indexicality. Silverstein argues that it is unsubstantial to identify cultural conceptualisation through the content of speech, arguing that cultural

conceptualisation should be identified based on interactions that take place between expressions or features used and in light of stereotypical social roles, identities, and relationships that trigger these expressions. Silverstein's understanding of cultural conceptualisation refers to indexicality. Indexicality links linguistic form and social meaning. For instance, a variant may index that the speaker is from a specific place or of a particular ethnicity. Through 'orders of indexicality', Silverstein posits that there are layers of indexical meanings that 'relate between micro-social to the macro-social frames in any sociolinguistic studies' (ibid: 193). There exists a correlation between each order of meaning as linguistic variables emerge and change, causing language to progress from one order to another. Silverstein theorises the indexical order as n-th and n+1st order values.

N-th order indexicality occurs when a linguistic form is associated with a particular social group. For instance, Coupland's (1980) association between standard variants and middle-class individuals represents the first indexical order (travel agency telephone conversation). Silverstein (2003) states that n+1st order indexicality is a secondary layer of meaning embedded within the n-th order. For example, standard variants in Sue's telephone conversation had an n-th order of middle social class and an n+1st order meaning of professionalism. However, standard variants in Sue's telephone conversation may also index professionalism instead of social class. Meaning is therefore reconstrued on this level. This idea is further explored in Chapter 5, where use of Manglish feature overlays other social values.

Silverstein's notion of indexicality was adapted, among others, by Johnstone, Andrus and Danielson (2006), who explained how variables in a region become 'enregistered' as dialects or local variants, even if they were originally attributed to a social class or ethnic origin. Agha defines enregisterment as a series of 'processes through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognised register of forms' (2003: 231). Central to this process of enregisterment is 'indexicality' (Silverstein, 2003; Johnstone *et al.*, 2006). Johnstone *et al.* (2006: 82-83) associate indexical orders with speakers' ascending level of awareness. First-

order features are not ascribed with social meaning by speakers because everyone in that place or group speaks in the same way. In the second-order, social mobility leads to awareness of local features, such as style shifting, that speakers use in social interactions. Increased geographical mobility among locals has contributed to increased awareness of distinctive regional features. This awareness has characterised the third indexical order, in which dialect is linked to place. Johnstone *et al.*'s (2006) interpretation of indexicality is central to the present study as it leads to understanding the social importance of Manglish, which is recognised among its speakers. This form of recognition, therefore, rejects negative associations and existing stereotypes related to Manglish, as will be discussed in Chapter 7.

This thesis explores the enregisterment of Manglish in Malaysian society and how it is a site for the expression of cultural values linked to ethnic groups and being Malaysian. By mapping questionnaire data and frequency of Manglish features identified in WhatsApp conversations, I propose that Manglish is an enregistered variety of English. To understand the processes of enregisterment, I discuss Johnstone *et al.*'s (2006) and Remlinger's (2009) research on regional speech varieties.

Johnstone *et al.*'s (2006) study in the U.S. city of Pittsburgh demonstrates how local Pittsburghese features have gone from being unnoticed to indexing socioeconomic class and subsequently indexing the place itself. This first-order indexicality is demonstrated in an interview conducted with one of the participants, Dottie. In the interview, Dottie uses a regional speech form, namely monophthongal variants of /aw/ at almost every opportunity in her speech. Although Dottie had grown up in a working-class neighbourhood, Johnstone et al. found no correlation between being working class and the use of regional speech forms. Because the regional speech form is spoken by everyone around her, Dottie did not feel that using this form (e.g. 'yinz', /aw/) made her different. Dottie's assessment suggests that these features have not yet been enregistered. This awareness is illustrated in the interview with Dr. John K., in which he associates the monophthongal variant of /aw/ with the working class, as well as with a lack of education. For this speaker, the notion of 'correctness' is illustrated

as he linked regional speech forms to incorrectness (e.g. pronunciation of [ha:s] versus [haws]).

Remlinger (2009) discusses how a particular local language variety in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, identified as *Yooper*, is enregistered as a dialect variety. *Yooper* is used to characterise the dialect and speakers in the region. Similarly, the correlation between language, people, and place is part of the enregisterment of the dialect. The processes of enregisterment of the *Yoopanese* dialect is shaped through history and economy. The Upper Peninsula of Michigan was once a copper mining area, which then attracted immigrants from Cornwall, and followed by many others from Finland, and subsequently immigrants from Croatia, Slovenia, Poland, Germany, French Canada, Ireland, and Italy. Contact with immigrants' native languages, particularly Finnish, has an impact on the English language in the area. The dialect is drawn from cultural values with the immigrants who are mostly Finnish, as well as labourers and woodsmen, which are often ethnic and working-class identities. Example of features of the dialect are the omission of prepositions or articles, such as in 'Let's go post office'. The awareness that people have when talking with working-class immigrants corresponds with second-order indexicality. The second-order shifts to the third-order when language use begins to elicit 'talk about talk' (ibid), which refers to when people or the news media began to recognise the features of the *Yooper* and believe the features to be unique to the area. 'Talk about talk' is an explicit metapragmatic discourse that identifies the social meaning of linguistic features (Johnstone *et al*., 2006). Scholars have drawn on metapragmatic discourse from newspapers and sociolinguistic interviews to determine how speakers use and talk the dialect and how it relates to class and region (ibid). Remlinger conducted an interview on the enregisterment of *Yoopanese* feature and found that 'heh' signified that there is a single, common dialect spoken by residents. This conclusion is based on the interviewee's statement when asked about the local dialect:

> "A lot of people from the UP say heh after everything, like that
> was fun, heh. I haven't heard that anywhere else" (Remlinger,
> 2009: 125).

The interviewee above relates 'heh' with the region establish local identity and reinforces perceptions of a specific dialect spoken by people in the Upper Peninsula or Michigan. This association, therefore, links local identity, place, and dialect.

Remlinger (2009: 126) believes that the enregistered features index 'bad English'. In a series of interviews, the Yooper speakers highlight that they only realised that they spoke differently when the differences are pointed out by others. Speaking differently includes non-standard usage of 'dis' and 'dat' in their speech (ibid). The usage of 'bad English' demonstrates the way of speaking in the Upper Peninsula and establishes the idea that 'good English' is spoken by outsiders. The interviewees however, expressed pride in using the dialect despite the negative social values associated with it. For example, a female university student claims that 'Many people think we talk very ungrammatically, but as native speakers of this language we really cannot.' This statement implies that within the rules of her 'language', they are in fact speaking grammatically since they claim themselves as the 'native speakers' of the language. This ideology is shaped within the local region and thus, represents the relationship with dialect and place. Similar to the case of *Yoopanese*, Chapter 7 discusses how local identity is defined by those who speak Manglish in contrast to outsiders. To outsiders or those who do not speak the variety, Manglish is incorrect/inappropriate in terms of grammatical structure and pronunciation compared to Standard Malaysian English.

Based on Johnstone *et al.* (2006) and Remlinger's (2009) studies, I argue that Manglish features also have indexical links to specific social values such as ethnicity and the region. Therefore, this present study investigates enregistered Manglish features through metapragmatic discourse. Cooper (2019: 70) claims that 'third-order features tend to appear in relatively standardised lists of features such as dialect dictionaries'. Similarly, Beal (2009: 144) claims that dialect dictionaries play a role in enregistering words as belonging to a certain dialect. Although Manglish features have been documented and published by Lee Su Kim (1998) in The Manglish Dictionary (*Manglish: Malaysian English at its wackiest*), I argue that this publication is only part of enregisterment. Evidence

such as 'talk about talk' is needed when Manglish speakers are consciously drawing on recognisable linguistic features and social meanings that link dialects, people, and places. Speakers' awareness of Manglish must be present before Manglish can be confirmed as an enregistered variety, and this is shown in Chapter 7 of the present study. To understand speakers' awareness of Manglish, I draw on Cooper's (2013) enregisterment framework in a study of the Yorkshire dialect.

Cooper (2013) proposes a framework in which he combines perceptions outlined of Yorkshire dialect participants, examples of dialect features from the online survey, and a quantitative frequency analysis of linguistic features based on Yorkshire dialect research. The online survey consists of two sections. The first section inquires the speakers to list Yorkshire features with which they are familiar, with while the second section requires them to rate Yorkshire features with multiple-choice answers. A meta-commentary section is also provided in the questionnaires, where speakers can comment on anything that they know about the dialect. Cooper's framework incorporates three levels of speakers' awareness of the features in relation to enregisterment, namely strongest association with Yorkshire, average association with Yorkshire, and weakest association with Yorkshire. The framework provides a systematic method of analysing individual features. Analysing individual features is important in the present study because ethnic attributed features appear in the dataset. Therefore, the application of Cooper's framework allows this present study to identify features strongly associated with ethnicity, or other identities that speakers associate themselves with.

3.3.1 Acts of Identity

According to Nair-Venugopal (2000: 207), identity is

> "either constructed by the individual based on her exclusion form
> or inclusion within groups and in the course of her life's
> experiences in relation to others, or it is defined for the individual

by society and its power structures and in terms of the out-group/in-group, majority/minority polarities."

In other words, identity is determined via the use of codes in speech that differentiate an individual from in-group or out-group conversations. Identity can also be classified according to race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture (Deng, 1995: 1). Examples of identity projection through speech style are evident in numerous studies, as discussed in the previous sections, such as in the way in which speech style represents an individual's geographical identity, such as in Pittsburghese, or Yorkshire. In other cases, identity can also represent ethnic groups, as well as place (see for instance Marzo and Ceuleers, 2011). As is evident in the study by Marzo and Ceuleers (2011), Citétaal speakers construct their local urban youth identity in a way that differs from their ethnic identities. Concurrently, there is a clear boundary, or link, between the use of Citétaal and the local territory (in Genk, before it spread to the outside neighbourhoods). Multilayers of identity were also illustrated in the study conducted by McGinnis *et al*. (2007) regarding identity work in online spaces. Using three respondents, the authors analysed how the youths represented themselves on their personal webpages and blogs, and how they negotiated the multilayer social relationships within the local, national, and global contexts. These youths employed images, videos, and music, and manipulated the size of the font and print they used to express their emotions. For example, the first respondent, Julia, employed code-switching and combined Spanish and English, as in the line "eventho' la mayoria in thisz timez son todos fake." (Even though the majority in these times are all fake) (ibid: 289), which not only retained the grammaticality of the sentence, but also expressed her dual identities. Concurrently, her Colombian identity was presented and shared through her use of Spanish and her list of social networks, in which her audience demonstrated their shared knowledge through their responses. Other respondents in the study, such as Amanda, employed Hebrew to connect with religion and Jewish culture, as well as when expressing meaningful thoughts. By employing these examples, McGinnis *et al*. (ibid.) demonstrated that layers of identity were projected through the respondents' use of languages, media, or style of speech.

According to the findings of these studies, there are two important points regarding identity. Firstly, identity can range from a personal construction to that of a group or a nationality. Secondly, identity is multi-layered, since it is possible to project multiple identities. For instance, an individual can identify themselves as part of an ethnic group, and at the same time as a youth, or as part of the online community, or in terms of their femininity or masculinity. Identity can also be constructed, or formed, through moment-to-moment negotiations in interactions. For example, in her study of ethnic constructions, Schilling-Estes (2004) illustrated the way in which two male speakers employed linguistic resources to shape and re-shape their identities within their speech. In the study, Schilling-Estes (ibid.) examined the interviews conducted between two students originating from Robeson County, in south-eastern North Carolina. The community in the county divided themselves according to the ethnic groupings labelled 'Whites', 'African Americans', and 'Lumbee Indians' (or 'Lumbee Native Americans'). The interviewee, known as Lou, identified a Lumbee Indian, while the interviewer, Alex, identified as an African American. In the interview, both speakers projected their ethnic and ingroup identity simultaneously. For instance, there were different frequencies for monophthongal/ay/. For example, the phrase 'You got Blacks that are really unorgan[a:]zed' (ibid: 178) was used in topic involving race relations, in which both speakers emphasized their ethnic identities. Conversely, the two speakers reduced their linguistic differences, and emphasized their ingroup identity, when discussing their family and friends, as was apparent in the use of third-person singular-s absence (for example, 'He like ice cream'), and copula deletion (for example, 'He a nice guy').

The principles described in Schilling-Estes's (ibid.) study constituted the core of social constructionism, in which identity is dynamic, shaped, or reshaped, on a moment-to-moment basis in an interaction. Similarly, the present study explored the discursive construction of identity in interaction through the use of Manglish features, such as *lor, lah, leh,* and *de.* This is because speakers can interweave different modes and language forms to particular group practices, nationalities, or in the case of the current study, to ethnic groups, in order to express multiple identification and/or ingroupness. For example, Malaysian

identity can be reflected or reinforced through the way in which an individual speaks. However, ethnic identities in the Malaysian context are complex, due to the region's extremely diverse cultural landscape. The multiplicity and dynamic aspects of identity are analysed in Chapters 5 to 7 of this thesis. In order to analyse aspects of identity, the following approach was employed to examine the detailed discourse analyses, and interpretations of talk in action.

3.4   Interactional Sociolinguistic Approach

The Interactional Sociolinguistic approach employs concepts such as indexicality and contextualization as analytical tools to aid the understanding of the processes involved in communicative activities (Günthner, 2008: 55). According to Günthner (ibid.: 54), the study of interactional sociolinguistics concerns "the interrelationship between language, language use, and sociocultural processes by focusing on situated, context-bound processes of interpretation". Therefore, in order to understand the words, it is necessary to rely on details, such as a background knowledge of the topic. This includes the cues that are present in the speaker's speech, such as "words, prosody, register shifts, and bodily orientations" (Bailey, 2015: 1). Contextualization cues represent the speaker's means of signalling and providing information to the interlocutor(s) and the audience at specific points in the ongoing conversation (Gumperz, 1996: 366). However, these cues do not have a fixed referential meaning. For instance, the use of Manglish features does not solely indicate social distancing. In their study, Gumperz and Gumperz (2007: 484-5) observed that meaning in speech can be interpreted in two ways: denotatively or socially. Specifically, the meaning is contextually, or culturally, bound, and can be indexical of ethnicity, ingroupness, stance, and localness (examples of previous studies concerning contextualization cues are discussed in Section 3.4.2). Therefore, speaker-listener coordination is important in a speech event, in order that the parties involved are able to convey and interpret the intended meaning (Gumperz & Gumperz, 2007). The present study analysed the social indication of Manglish features in macro or micro level categories, together with the denotative meaning of the features, since they function differently, according to the context of the conversation.

The analysis of representative conversations in Chapters 6 and 7 draws upon an interactional sociolinguistics approach focusing on 'how language works along with participants' understanding of social context to allow inferencing of meaning' (Schiffrin, 1996: 320). The implementation of this approach in the current study provides a useful framework in determining the meaning of the features in relation to the context of the conversation and the indexical values as well as the projection of identities. To be exact, the micro-analysis or situated analysis of the WhatsApp conversations allows me to examine how specific Manglish feature is indexical of a persona at specific point in the conversation, other than the indexical values in the macro context. This approach is relevant to the analysis of this thesis as it allows me to explore the aforementioned aspects using various analytical tools and concepts (including the concept of indexicality). These are swearing, contextualization cues and style-shifting as discussed in the following sections.

3.4.1 Swearing

There is a cluster of Manglish features (i.e. swear words and *lah*) that speakers employ to express their affective orientations or alignment towards the subject matter or interlocutors in conversation. Speakers routinely employ swear words alongside *lah*, which eventually generate meaning in their speech. In this thesis, I explore the indexical meaning of swear words and *lah* when situated identity is projected in conversations (identity in a particular moment of interaction).

Literature on Manglish has demonstrated how wide a range of functions linguistic variables such as *lah* or swear words can have. However, in the present study, I analyse the indexical meaning of new forms of Manglish; *lah*) alongside swear words. Christie (2013) highlights the importance of parameters in an analysis of the indexical potential of swear words. Although linguistic variables may have ranges of meaning, it is important 'to provide a sufficiently descriptive and explanatory account' (ibid: 157) for this type of study. According to Christie, it is necessary to take into account 'what specific meanings a resource can index, or how context plays a part in the selection of one meaning rather than another'

(ibid). In analysing stances conveyed through swear words and *lah*, I consider parameters illustrated in Table 3.1 at the end of this section. The following paragraph presents conventionalised meanings of swear words and definitions adopted for my study.

Christie (2013: 153) proposes that the interactional effects of swear words are context dependent. Swear words refer to 'social and cultural taboos, such as sex and bodily functions' (Stapleton, 2010: 289). Swear words have numerous functions, serving interpersonal, social, and psychological uses (ibid). Swearing not only expresses emotions, attitudes, and taboos but also has indirect implications (Andersson and Trudgill, 2007: 195). Stapleton (2010: 290) categorises swear words into three categories, namely excretory, or related to bodily functions (e.g. '*shit', 'arse', 'piss'*), sexual (e.g. '*fuck', 'prick', 'cunt'*), and profanity (related to religious taboos, e.g. '*damn', 'bloody', 'goddamn'*). Murphy (2011: 62), in comparison, views swear words as insults, categorising insults into six categories, namely (1) mental insults (e.g. 'mad' and 'crazy'), (2) social status slurs (e.g. 'hash-head' and 'loser'), (3) sexual insults (e.g. 'bitch', 'fucker', 'cunt', and 'pricks'), (4) homosexual insults (e.g. 'gay' and 'lesbian'), (5) intellectual insults (e.g. '*stupid', 'idiot', 'thick', and 'dumb'*), and (6) animal insults (e.g. 'donkey'). Based on these definitions, the current study employs the term 'swear words' to represent all types of swearing, insulting, and cursing words. Murphy observes that swearing fulfils communicative functions such as humour, emphasis, and solidarity and construct and display various aspects of identity. According to Ross (1969), swearing can be divided into two types, namely (1) annoyance swearing and (2) social swearing. Annoyance swearing is intended to be offensive because the speaker is in a stressed condition, while social swearing occurs in a relaxed situation to promote solidarity (as cited in Beers Fägersten, 2012: 37).

Swearing in the present study aligns with social swearing, a speech style that does not connote abusiveness or hostility towards the listener. The functions of social swearing have been briefly discussed in the following studies. Lantto (2014), in a study on code switching and swearing in Basque in Greater Bilbao, demonstrates that swearing may also become a speech style indexical of specific

group membership. Lantto illustrates the repetitive use of swearing in speakers' utterances. In one conversation, a male speaker is telling a story to friends about a beer booth at a festival held in his hometown. The speaker states that when he approached the booth, the person serving him did not speak Basque. The speaker expresses his frustration to his friends with the phrase 'what the fuck'. Lantto proposes that, through repetitive swearing, the words are likely to lose their expressive and taboo force, thus forming part of the speech style.

Murphy (2011) found that a group of male speakers in their 30s tended to use swear words in indirect contexts, referring to a non-present third person to create humour (i.e. 'he is a fat cunt'). The participants claim that the use of swearwords is a norm between them, which characterises their close relationships. Overall, the use of swearing among male speakers in Murphy (2011: 65) mainly served to express solidarity, camaraderie, and informality. Though swearing stereotypically entails negative perceptions and impoliteness, it can still be used for a positive effect, such as managing relationships between speakers.

Culpeper (2011a) addresses swearing within the framework of (im)politeness, explaining the effect of swearing on (im)politeness based on participants' experiences. The explanation entails the cultural mismatch between the British participant and a friend. The British participant explains that he was having a meal with his parents and a Norwegian friend, when his parents asked the friend about his group of peers. The Norwegian friend excitedly describes his peer group while repeatedly employing the word 'cunt' in lieu of 'guy' or 'dude'. Although 'cunt' is considered one of the most offensive British swear words (McEnery, 2004; Williamsson, 2009), among the Norwegian friend's peers, it was used as a friendly greeting, as in 'Hi cunt'. Culpeper's example showcases that the interpretation of swear words is not limited to (im)politeness, and that swear words can also be used as a speech style within a group of friends. However, swear words can nonetheless still be interpreted as (im)polite and cause offense if the listeners, such as the participant's parents, hold a different set of linguistic and cultural norms.

This review of studies on swearing has raised a number of key points. Firstly, there is a range of indexical meanings of swear words generated according to culture and context without being subjected to the core meaning of the linguistic variable (Christie, 2013). For example, when a speaker uses swear words to express negative orientations with the interlocutor, emotional stance may be indexed. Repetitive use of swear words, as illustrated in Latto, developed as a norm between the speaker's friends allow them to lose negative connotations. The speaker's speech style indicates a set of solidarity-based interaction and indexes in-group identity. The shifts in meaning are highly context-dependent because they can be associated with positive or negative meanings. Therefore, the interpretation of a swear word is dependent on factors such as addressee(s) (wherein social distance and social identities are keys), context and tone of conversation, as well as symbols or facial expressions that accompany swear words.

Beers Fägersten's (2012) research on the social aspects of swearing captures the important variables in analysing the communicative intent of swearing. Table 3.1 presents variables used in analysing swear words as documented by scholars.

VARIABLES	QUESTIONS	RELEVANT POINTS
SETTING	Where did the utterance occur?	On- and off-campus sites including classrooms, dormitories, private homes, busses, cars, etc.
SPEAKER/LISTENER	What were the sex and race of the speaker/listener?	Possibilities for race included Malay (M), Chinese (C), Indians (I)
RELATIONSHIP	What was the relationship of the speaker to the listener(s) in terms of social distance and social status, or with regards to intimacy and solidarity?	Suggestions for descriptors included friends, acquaintances, intimates, relatives, or strangers, If the interlocutors' relationship could be described in terms of an association relevant to the context in which the swearing utterance occurred, this association was noted, e.g., co-workers, roommates, classmates, club members, etc. Social status was noted when the context of interaction revealed a relevant difference in co-

		participants' social status, such as teacher/student.
TOPIC	What were the interlocutors talking about at the time of the utterance?	Knowledge of the topic aided in determining the tone.
TONE	In what key or spirit did the utterance occur?	The choice of tones was modelled after Jay's (1986) field note categories for manner (i.e., yelled, anger, loud, frustrated, conversational, sarcastic, soft, joke, whisper, and other).
UTTERANCE	What was the actual swearing utterance?	An utterance was one or more sentences produced by one speaker containing swearing as defined.
REACTION	How did the listener(s) react?	Possible reactions included the following: No noticeable reaction – the listener(s) did not overtly react to the occurrence of swearing and the flow of conversation was not affected; Laughter – the listener(s) responded by producing a swearing utterance; Rejection – the listener overtly reacted to the swearing utterance, interrupting the flow of the conversation.

Table 3.1 The documentation of a variety of sociolinguistic variables in analysing swearing

(Adapted and adopted from Beers Fägersten, 2012: 28)

Table 3.1 establishes parameters that must be considered when analysing swear words and *lah*. The variables are setting, speaker/listener, relationship, topic, tone, the utterance, and interlocutors' reactions. As Christie (2013) argues, contextual assumptions are necessary in the interpretation of the use of specific swear words. Similar to her analysis, this present study adopts a similar approach by adding a socio-pragmatic dimension to the analysis informed by the parameters presented in the table.

The first parameter refers to setting, which refers to online space in this study. However, the offline setting in which the conversations take place is important since it helps to interpret speaker's current activity, emotional

circumstances, etc. Therefore, I consider speakers' indications of their current location as this contributes to their speech behaviour. For example, Chapter 6 shows a speaker's haste at the bus station provoking the use of swear words and *lah*, contextualising the speech into seriousness. Speakers' location in which the conversation takes place helps in understanding the context, as well as factors that influence the speech attitude. The second parameter is ethnicity or language spoken by the speaker and listener. The third parameter is the relationship and social distance between interlocutors, which allows me to deduce whether swear words are intended for harm or social purposes. The fourth and the fifth parameters are interrelated in that the topic determines the conversational tone. Different ranges of tones will be discussed as the conversation topics in Chapter 6 vary from work to intimate or personal. Tone is a crucial variable in analysing swear words and *lah*. The tone demonstrated in online interactions (determined through paralinguistic cues or context) create alignment/disalignment stances, which then determine in-groupness between speakers.

Next, the language aspect or origins of the swear words are an important aspect of the analysis because the use of L1 (first language) or L2 (second language) may alters the degree of harmfulness of the swear words since swearing can serve for social purposes. Further example of how languages affect the harmfulness of the swear word is discussed in Chapter 6. Following this, it is important to determine listeners' reactions to swearing utterances. This reaction is key in interpreting how the utterance is perceived/interpreted by listeners and its impact on the interaction.

3.4.2   Style-shifting and Contextualization Cues

A number of studies have shown how different levels of speech production contextualise talk. One of those levels is style shifting. Georgakopoulou (2011) studied private email messages with a focus on various code-alternations (including style shifting) between Greek and English as well as shifts within the Greek varieties. She found that style shifting within the Greek varieties in formal discourse contextualises the speech as humorous and helps to establish a familiar

frame and increase intimacy between speakers (ibid). In contrast, switches into English were used to mitigate potentially face-threatening acts. Sophocleous and Themistocleous (2014), in studying Facebook chat conversations, observed that while style shifting within dialects such as Greek-Cypriot contextualises an utterance as humorous and incites laughter, style shifting in Standard Modern Greek (SMG) contextualises the utterance as formal and serious. In line with Georgeakopoulou (2011), Sophocleous and Themistocleous (2014) found that, in digital communication, style shifting within a dialect can project various social and discursive identities. Both studies supported the past finding of Gumperz (1982) that dialect and language shifting work as cues that contextualise people's 'speech activity'. Namely, dialect and language shifting provide expectations and indicate assumptions that a listener/reader must pick up on in order to interpret an utterance correctly and continue the intended conversation. Style shifting in particular, which invites a 'playful' or 'serious' frame, directs participants to respond playfully or seriously. Sophocleous and Themistocleous (2014) further found that style shifting can contextualise the topic of an interaction in a serious mode and subsequently direct the participant's response patterns. For example, in one of the sample conversations, the participant Ioulia, who is in charge of organising a class reunion, shifts to Standard Modern Greek in discussing the plan and thereby contextualises the topic as 'serious'. In response, another participant also shifts to Standard Modern Greek (henceforth SMG) to accommodate Ioulia, while others continue to switch between SMG and Greek-Cypriot dialect. This inconsistency highlights the importance of analysing addressee's response patterns, as discussed in Chapter 6, to determine whether the addressee has understood the cues realised through a stylistic shift. Tannen (2005: 36) describes the implications of speakers understanding one another's conversational styles:

> "The fact that people understand each other's ways of signalling
> meaning is in itself evidence of shared background and context.
> The implication is not that speakers necessarily or consciously
> attempt to invoke solidarity when they speak, although that may

> be the case more or less consciously, when a recognizably in-
> group style or code is used."

Recognition of conversational style may invoke speakers' 'in-groupness', a term widely explored throughout this present study. In their discussion of culture and social identity, Halloran and Kashima (2006) assert that this shared background must first be coordinated by speakers to achieve group consensus. This could happen *in situ* (ibid: 143), where speakers share knowledge, activities or memories (any stimulus) concerning the group, and thereby reactivate the relevant shared knowledge.

As demonstrated by Sophocleous and Themistocleous (2014), style shifting also occurs when a speaker attempts to align with one's perceived identity in a given situation. Style shifting (language and dialect resources) on an interactional level functions as a contextualisation cue and constructs a persona or local identity. Ioulia, for example, uses style shifting to construct a persona first as the 'planning coordinator/organiser', and then as a 'joke-teller' when switching to the Greek Cypriot Dialect, which works as a humorous cue. This shift is understood by one of her listeners, indicating that Ioulia and the listener share an in-group identity. A shift in persona may also be triggered by the topic and context of interaction or by addressees themselves.

Double voicing is another act of identity projection indexical of a social group. To explain this, I use Trester's (2009) research on discourse marker 'oh' in constructed dialogue. The data emerged from a long-term study and observations of members of an improvisational troupe in Washington, DC. The members, addressed as 'improv', work in a spontaneous theatrical performance. In interviews with the improv, Trester found that the speakers tended to use the pre-faced *'oh'* with other people's voices, not only for functional roles such as introducing new piece of information, but also for achieving alignment. The 'oh' realisation through double-voicing by the improv (e.g. 'oh I know that guy' or 'oh I've gotta be funny') allows Trester to consider the perspective or figure in the story from speakers' perspectives. This shared information routinely occurs in 'oh' and double voicing create alignment stances, exhibiting a sense of in-

groupness between Trester and the improv. Trester observes that 'information about identity was being displayed' (ibid: 159) in the constructed dialogue. Identity is indirectly accomplished through the improv's responses (such as representing themselves as experienced and seasoned improvs). In the present study, the concept of stance aligns with the micro-social aspects of the analysis in Chapter 6. When disagreeing with or disoriented by somebody else's point of view, speakers in this study employ swear words and the most commonly occurring Manglish feature *lah*, which coincides with stylistic shifts in the interaction.

As well as dialect shifting and double voicing, language shifting (between an L1 and L2) can also serve as a contextualisation cue that contributes to the tones of a conversation. Beers Fägersten (2017) highlights the use of English as a framing device that contextualises swear words as humorous in Swedish-language contexts. Although swear words are typically associated with negative emotions, abuse, aggression, and hostility, they can also be employed to convey solidarity and intimacy (2017: 176). In a Swedish comic strip, the character uses English swearing expressions such as 'I'm fucking dying', a form of appropriation from the dialogue of classic Hollywood films such as *Reservoir Dogs*, to invite humour. The English swearing contextualises the comic strip as humorous due to the audience's exposure to the Anglophone culture through film, allowing the language to serve as mimicry or parody. However, Beers Fägersten emphasises the importance of shared background knowledge in appreciating the humour, as the jocularity of a language, local speech, or style needs to be 'conventionalised' (Siegel, 1995: 102). Beers Fägersten's (2017) principal conclusion is that the Swedes have a shared body of knowledge with regards to English. Therefore, uses of English swearing, such as in the comic strip, are regarded as humorous among them. In line with Beers Fägersten's study, the present study discusses how Manglish speakers strategically index social meaning by drawing on a cluster of Manglish features, namely swear words and *lah*, which are relevant to utterance interpretation. Similar to the Swedes, Manglish speakers have shared knowledge that enables the use of cues (in this case, swear words and *lah*). These cues aid in addressees' interpretation of the speaker's intention as the intention

is made noticeable through stylistic shifts. This thesis argues that Manglish cues can implicate local identities, changing tones, shifting roles, addressees' obligations, certain topics, and degrees of intimacy.

3.5   Conclusion

This chapter has discussed different approaches within the third-wave of language variation research. Ways of speaking are no longer limited to socioeconomic categories, and different kinds of social meaning may be enacted through the use of specific linguistic features. The present study aligns with Eckert's third-wave variation studies, where attention is drawn to social meaning. In order to explain layers of social meaning, I use Silverstein's (2003) and Ochs' (1992) indexicality approaches. Indexicality refers to the links between linguistic variables and social meanings. These linguistic variables index different meanings ranging from macro-level social categories (ethnicity, age, gender), and micro-level social categories (stances, personae, in-groupness). Following Silverstein (2003) and Ochs's (1992) approaches, I investigate the indexical meanings of Manglish features identified in WhatsApp conversations. Increasing awareness of the linguistic features among speakers and its association to cultural values is what Agha (2003) defines as enregisterment. I then reviewed Johnstone *et al*.'s (2006) adaptation of indexicality to understand the processes of enregisterment of the Pittsburghese and how the dialect is ideologically linked to people and the region. Using her indexical approach to enregisterment, Chapter 7 discusses values associated with Manglish despite negative stereotypical perceptions towards the variety. The analysis of linguistic features in relation to social and cultural context draws insights from analytical frameworks within the Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) approach. To this end, the final section of this chapter discussed the analytical framework as they aid in understanding how conversational meanings are signalled and interpreted by speakers in a conversation. A crucial concept in Interactional Sociolinguistics is contextualisation cues, where speakers use mechanisms such as style shifting or culturally specific swear words (alongside *lah*) to embed an in-group message, thereby signalling in-group identities between speakers. Drawing on these conceptual frameworks, Chapter 6 analyses swearing and *lah*, which trigger stylistic shifts in the conversation. Before proceeding to the analysis of my dataset I deal with methodology which is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the study's dataset and the specific data collection and analysis methods. The first section outlines the characteristics of WhatsApp Messenger and its demographics among Malaysian users. I then address data collection, namely the sampling technique and sample size in correspondence to other studies in online settings. Next, I discuss the ethical considerations inherent in the data collection process. Following the principles of online ethnography, I discuss researcher–participant roles and relationships, including how I developed intimacy with speakers. I then rationalise the four sources of data, namely WhatsApp chats, online interviews, online ethnography, and online questionnaire. I highlight the implications of the various data collection methods that contributed to the study's validity and data triangulation. I then deal with translation and transliteration of the data. Finally, I introduce the data analysis tools used in this study for quantitative analysis, namely WordSmith 5.0 and SPSS.

4.2   Data Site: WhatsApp Messenger

WhatsApp is an instant messaging application created by Brian Acton and Jan Koum. Launched in 2009, the application has been downloaded by more than one billion people across 180 countries (*WhatsApp*, 2019). WhatsApp was initially designed as an alternative to text messaging to make global communication easier. The application's various features include not only voice and video calls but also private and group chat conversations, in which users can share emoticons, GIFs, stickers, their location, documents, media (photos and videos), and voice recordings. Figure 4.1 shows a sample of WhatsApp conversation comprised of several of the aforementioned features.

Figure 4.1 Sample of WhatsApp Chat

(Source: *WhatsApp*, 2019)

Features that were recently added to the application include WhatsApp stories and statuses, as well as end-to-end encryption to ensure user privacy. These features were very important in the present study as they facilitated the process of eliciting information from the speakers. For instance, WhatsApp stories or

status might relate to speakers' emotional state or being dedicated to a person. It therefore, helps to interpret speakers' intention towards the addressee.

WhatsApp allows synchronous communication, and the conversations take place in real time, in order that the interactions occur without delays (Baron, 2010; Ngaleka & Uys, 2013: 282; Petitjean & Morel, 2017). In WhatsApp, instantaneous reply is expected, compared with the asynchronous, delayed mode of communication on platforms such as Facebook, in which the status update is the main feature, and in emails and forums (Barton & Lee, 2013: 53). Also, the sequences of conversations in WhatsApp contribute to conversational coherence, thus resembling the sequences in real conversational interactions. This sequential characteristic, which resembles turn-taking, would be less efficient on other social media platforms, particularly those platforms serving a larger and public audience such as Facebook or Twitter. Androutsopoulos (2013: 246) highlights the importance of considering sequences and intervals in analysing online data in interactional sociolinguistic studies. Although sequences of conversation can be collected through Facebook wall conversations, the intervals between exchanges in conversations may be disrupted by new posts (Androutsopoulos, 2013). The aforementioned features of WhatsApp thus enable speech-like interactions and show WhatsApp to be a medium consisting of naturally or naturalistically occurring conversation. In some cases, WhatsApp also can serve as an asynchronous type of communication when there are technical interruptions during the conversation that therefore delay the response. As Ling (2005: 347) argues, it is not possible to expect the attention of the other interlocutor in the same way that occurs in spoken interactions. Therefore, such delays were expected in the WhatsApp data of the present study. In this study, the time interval was not emphasized, provided there was continuity of the topic of interaction after a pause. However, in some chats, for example when they concerned a sensitive topic, the time interval was calculated and discussed when the sender's text did not receive an immediate response from the receiver.

According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (2018), WhatsApp is the most commonly used communication application in

Malaysia; 98.1% of the Malaysian population uses the application. Given its widespread popularity, many individuals and members of specific groups have adopted WhatsApp as their preferred form of communication. The informal nature of the chat platform encourages the expansion of chatting as a social practice associated with its own set of values (Diananda & Hayuningtyas, 2018: 102). Although WhatsApp has taken on a significant role in daily life, this private-mediated interaction has not been explored in CMC studies (Tagg & Asprey, 2017; Herring, 2018).

While many studies have focused on language features, as well as the educational and interpersonal aspects of WhatsApp (see for instance, Amry, 2014; Izyani and Mohamed Amin, 2016; Sampietro, 2016), it is greatly under-researched from a discursive point of view (Sánchez-Moya & Cruz-Moya, 2015). From a discursive perspective, Idris and Shabri (2017) examined code-mixing and code-switching practices among undergraduate students on WhatsApp. Using questionnaires collected from 80 undergraduate students, the researchers analysed the participants' perceptions on code-switching and code-mixing, as well as the factors that affected the participants' choices. The results indicate that speakers tend to code-switch to accommodate their interlocutors and convey accurate messages. Furthermore, speakers use features such as *lah*, *kan*, and *haah* to express affection as part of a politeness strategy to enhance communication between the speakers. The results of Idris and Shabri's study provide a valuable introduction to the discursive practice of WhatsApp conversations and code-switching and other Manglish features to maintain rapport between speakers.

As discussed in Chapter 2, studies on Manglish so far have focused on its use on online platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. In contrast, instead of examining public social media, the present study looks at the occurrence of Manglish on a private application. WhatsApp is considered a more private platform than Facebook (Robinson *et al.*, 2015). This privacy facilitates the open expression of feelings and sharing of personal and sensitive topics (Pearce, Thøgersen-Ntoumani, & Duda, 2014), thus offering rich personal information and nuances as spoken interactional data. The present study aims to contribute

to the limited but growing body of research on WhatsApp by examining how Manglish speakers employ the application to perform language and identity work.

4.3   Data Collection and Overall Dataset

It is difficult to collect data from an entire population because 'populations are usually too large to be studied in their entirety' (Rasinger, 2008: 47). Therefore, a sample, or a subset of the larger population, is selected for study. This study uses snowball sampling, or what Milroy (1987: 53) terms as 'friends of friends'. The first stage in recruiting participants involved contacting my own former lecturers from my university in Malaysia. I asked for these individuals' permission to circulate an email regarding my research to their current students. The email explained this study's general objective and the required criteria for potential participants. It also provided my contact information if further clarification was required regarding the study. After initial contact was made with the potential participants, several participants were secured. The number enrolled in this study then began to grow through snowball sampling. Namely, the next participants were chosen based on referrals from the initial participants, who suggested friends from their social network who would be willing to be sampled. This process thus allowed a sample to be gathered of individuals who used WhatsApp and were of a similar age.

A number of specific factors drove me to recruit participants in Malaysia instead of the UK for the study. Firstly, my first attempt in looking for the participants in the UK received minimal response. Though I circulated information for the current study through WhatsApp to several Malaysian WhatsApp groups in Liverpool, only two people expressed interest in participating. Secondly, while my social network in the UK is comprised of older friends, I have friends in Malaysia within the age range requirement to participate in this current study. As a result, 50 of the 52 speakers resided in Malaysia, while only 2 were Malaysian speakers residing in Liverpool. The participants were students from various higher institutions in Malaysia,

including the National University of Malaysia, International Islamic University Malaysia, and Kuala Lumpur University.

I wanted to recruit as many participants as possible to quantify Manglish features and collect interactions to delve deeper into specific aspects of the dataset, such as determining the micro-social meaning of Manglish features. Collecting a sufficient number of chats aided the analysis process as the chats provided information that revealed, for example, the social distance between the speakers, the frequent topics of interactions, and the linguistic patterns used when dealing with certain speakers or topics. This information is part of the parameters that should be taken into account when interpreting the use of Manglish feature in the interactions. The rationale for using integrative methods in the present study is supported by a number of scholars (Angouri, 2007; Belling & de Bres, 2014; Mc Laughlin, 2014; Pérez-Sabater, 2015). Further justification on the integrative method adopted is explained in section 4.6.

The data used in this study consisted of 248 sets of naturally occurring WhatsApp conversations. The data were collected between July 2015 and January 2017, with a total of 714,999 words. The data were obtained from participants' one-on-one existing WhatsApp conversations; this approach prevented pre-planned interactions and ensured that all conversations had occurred naturally. Each participant was required to supply at least 5, 000 words worth of conversations. In terms of the number of words, some previous studies have been conducted using similar corpora. Table 4.1 presents the data size of previous studies that have examined similar topics in an online setting.

Study	Register	No of words
Ling (2005)	SMS	5, 414
Thurlow (2003)	SMS	7, 616
Baron (2004)	IM	11, 718
Hård Segerstad (2005)	SMS	17, 024
Ferrara, Brunner and Whittemore (1991)	e-messages	18, 769
Herring and Paolillo (2006)	blogs	35, 721

Paolillo (2001)	Internet relay chat	37, 902
Pérez-Sabater (2015)	IM (WhatsApp)	41, 000
Jones and Schieffelin (2009)	IM	83, 135
Verheijen and Stoop (2016)	IM (WhatsApp)	332, 657
Stapa and Shaari (2012)	Facebook	500, 000
Tagliamonte and Denis (2008)	IM	> 1 million

Table 4.1 Data size in CMC studies

(Adopted and adapted from Tagliamonte, 2016: 8)

The data size in the present study is not directly comparable to any existing body of data recorded in Table 4.1 above. The closest comparison of my sample size is to the data collected by Staapa and Shaari (2012) and Tagliamonte and Denis (2008). Both studies comprise of written materials from Facebook posts and Instant Messaging. Comparisons can be made of the number of tokens collected in Tagliamonte and Denis's study as there are 26,795 tokens in their studies, whereas there are 23,545 tokens of Manglish features collected in the present study.

The participants in the present study represented the three major ethnic groups, namely Malay, Chinese, and Indian. Table 4.2 presents the demographic information of the participants in this study. The speakers' names were changed to maintain their anonymity.

Number	Speaker	Age	Gender	Ethnic Group	No of words
1	Atilia	24	Female	Malay	5067
2	Mila	23	Female	Malay	5001
3	Zara	21	Female	Malay	9662
4	Suri	25	Female	Malay	11,891
5	Mary	22	Female	Dusun	7347
6	Adele	22	Female	Chinese	7441
7	Lydia	22	Female	Chinese	6747
8	Paula	20	Female	Chinese	7104

9	Laura	22	Female	Chinese	5042
10	Siuling	21	Female	Chinese	27,199
11	Jessie	21	Female	Indian	42,320
12	Nur	22	Female	Malay	20,673
13	Tina	21	Female	Chinese	7200
14	Suki	22	Female	Chinese	12,878
15	Chloe	21	Female	Kadazan	8477
16	Lily	21	Female	Chinese	6470
17	Niki	21	Female	Chinese	6921
18	Cherry	20	Female	Chinese	36,622
19	Cincin	21	Female	Chinese	14,055
20	Aina	19	Female	Malay	9631
21	Amalina	20	Female	Malay	50,070
22	Winnie	21	Female	Chinese	7667
23	Xora	22	Female	Chinese	30,814
24	Shalbanah	23	Female	Indian	6058
25	Sherry	22	Female	Chinese	9317
26	Sally	22	Female	Chinese	5000
27	Fiona	21	Female	Chinese	6160
28	Jane	21	Female	Chinese	29,526
29	Ivana	21	Female	Chinese	8668
30	Chompoo	21	Female	Chinese	8397
31	Ameesha	21	Female	Indian	15,218
32	Preeya	21	Female	Indian	11,298
33	Sunita	22	Female	Indian	6252
34	Jojie	20	Female	Chinese	6256
35	Wincci	21	Female	Chinese	5863
36	Farjana	22	Female	Indian	18,595
37	Joalyn	22	Female	Chinese	8185
38	Jerrica	21	Female	Indian	5345
39	Billy	23	Male	Chinese	5402
40	Ben	18	Male	Chinese	5994

41	Stuart	24	Male	Chinese	61,444
42	Mahesh	20	Male	Indian	9035
43	Yaozu	21	Male	Chinese	8990
44	Kaizo	20	Male	Chinese	7375
45	Ken	22	Male	Chinese	9738
46	Won Bin	21	Male	Chinese	9441
47	James	20	Male	Kadazan	15,076
48	Oui	22	Male	Chinese	33,813
49	Kang	21	Male	Chinese	5519
50	Hoon	21	Male	Chinese	28,477
51	Kim	22	Male	Chinese	6096
52	Enlai	22	Male	Chinese	12,232

Table 4.2 Demographic Information of Participants

As illustrated in Table 4.2, there were 52 participants between the ages of 18 and 24 during data collection process. The rationale for selecting this age group was due to their active engagement in online communicative practices (Cutler & Røyneland, 2018: 14). The participants originated from different geographical locations throughout the country, though they were mainly from Kuala Lumpur. 38 female and 14 male speakers were involved in the current study. Gender is a manipulative variable since it is not analysed in the current study. On the other hand, ethnicity serves as an important variable and taken into consideration when analysing the features. The sample consisted of 7 Malays, 34 Chinese, 7 Indians, and 4 participants from other ethnic groups.

Table 4.2 also presents the number of words collected from each participant. The lowest number of words collected were from Atilia's, Mila's, Laura's, and Sally's conversation with 5,067, 5,001, 5,042, and 5,000 words respectively. These conversations do not come from a single chat, but from multiple chats with different speakers. The highest number was from Stuart's conversations, with 61, 444 words. The other conversations ranged from 6000 to 10, 000 words. Some of the Malay speakers were withdrawn from the current study because they were not able to provide a sufficient amount of data.

As discussed above, snowball sampling allowed me to recruit participants from various demographic backgrounds. However, there is a drawback in the sampling, namely that some ethnic groups were under-represented. For example, only seven Malay and Indian speakers were able to provide English WhatsApp conversations. A similar challenge was faced by Kirkham (2013) in a phonetic study in a Sheffield secondary school. According to him, it was difficult to recruit white boys in the school, and some did not produce enough tokens to be recruited. Despite these shortcomings, Kirkham claims that there is variability in his sample in terms of individual social backgrounds and communities of practice. In my study, there is variability in terms of relationship between speakers regardless of ethnic groups, which is important in the micro-analysis of the conversation. I overcame ethnic differences by comparing the total number of Manglish features from each ethnic group over 1, 000 words. Further discussion on normalisation is discussed in section 4.8. Other alternative employed was the exclusion of data from Malay and Chinese speakers from immediate comparison, as discussed in Chapter 5.

4.4   Ethical Considerations

I initially approached speakers through an informal WhatsApp conversation and asked whether they were interested in participating in the study. Our conversations solely occurred through WhatsApp. Once I approached the participant, the Participant information sheet (Appendix 1) was distributed for them to understand the purpose of the study and their role as participants. This document included information on confidentiality concerning the participants. For instance, participants' names were changed to maintain their anonymity. All of the participants and their interlocutors (secondary speaker or addressee) involved were asked to provide consent (initial agreement offline or online before the consent letter was appended) and agreed to the use of the conversations for research purposes (Appendix 2). Only conversations between participants who had given consent were analysed. The above steps were taken in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR). Since such ethical imperatives are essential for the

protection of both the subjects and the researchers, the confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent of the participants were prioritized when conducting the research.

I complied with multiple ethical considerations in the data collection. Firstly, as a researcher, it was important for me to follow the appropriate practices when engaging with the participants. During data collection, participants were not forced or pressured to send WhatsApp conversations. The participants were given a flexible time frame to email their conversations to me. Secondly, very sensitive contents in the conversations were not included in the analysis. Sensitive contents may have been related to racism, attitudes toward racist language, and knowledge (Bloomer & Wray, 2006: 174). Baran (2013), in a study of power and identity in working with adolescents, faced ethical dilemmas during ethnographic research with a high schooler. In the interview, Baran introduced a potentially sensitive topic when she elicited a question about the student's reason for transferring class. The student spoke about some issues that she had had with her previous classmates that caused depression and led her to having suicidal thoughts. This unprompted story led to dilemmas as Baran questioned whether she should discuss this matter with responsible person (e.g the authorities). Baran decided to exclude the topic from her study and chose to no longer contact the participant. This issue is an example of a sensitive topic that was found in my dataset. To avoid this issue, conversations of this nature were excluded from further analysis. Moreover, one of the ways to identify a sensitive topic is when there is hesitancy to talk about the subject (Cheshire & Fox, 2016). I detected hesitancy during an online interview when a male speaker laughed and provide a short reply when asked about his romantic relationship. Taking this response as a sign of refusal, I did not elicit further information and diverted the conversation to other issues.

Another ethical issue that should be noted when conducting online data collection and analysis is that of third parties, namely those who are involved, or discussed, in the course of the research. According to the National Committee of Research Ethics (NESH), researchers should consider, and be aware of, sensitive information received from the primary informants regarding third parties, and

should consider whether this might affect or harm the third parties. Third-party representation includes that present in audio and visual media, and in the interpersonal context (McKee & Porter, 2008: 729). In the case of the current study, it was not necessary to request consent from the third parties involved, since they were not included in the analysis in any form. Moreover, there was no potential to cause harm to anyone, as the participants primarily cited the names of their friends. Nevertheless, pseudonyms were used throughout the thesis to minimize the potential for harm, and to protect speakers from excessive exposure of their identity.

In establishing the ethical framework, Wolfram (1998: 273) proposes a 'principle of linguistic gratuity', suggesting that researchers should actively engage with participants. I followed this principle in the present study, and engagement with the participants is discussed in the following section. Although I have never met my participants in a direct/offline context, there was a sense of intimacy between us considering the topics, advice, and emotions shared. These themes are discussed in detail in the following section.

4.4.1   Researcher's Position and Relationship with Participants

Researchers have many responsibilities and play various roles in data collection. It is important for the researcher to develop personal relationships with participants to collect (qualitative) data. Establishing a rapport with participants encourages these participants to share personal or private conversations, thus contributing to the accuracy of the information reported (Kawulich, 2005). Given (2008: 334) observes that researcher positionality, such as age, gender, race, and class, affects the relationship between the researcher and participants, thus affecting the nature of the data collected. Participants may speak differently to a researcher who belongs to different social group. To tackle this issue, I invested some time to develop familiar relationship with my participants. I became friendly by disclosing some information about myself, such as sharing my scholarship, student life in Liverpool, and the struggles that I experienced in this study. I also shared my travel photos as some of the participants were interested

in knowing more about travel abroad. Given (2008) underscores another attribute that determines the relationship between researchers and participants, namely dialect. In the WhatsApp chats, I used Manglish and employed Manglish features such as tail words and informal online languages containing innovated spelling (such as 'perrrfect') with excessive use of emoticons to establish rapport and elicit participants' responses from the interview. With these features, I aimed to make the conversations more involving, casual, and less tense for the participants. Because my age was close to the participants' ages during the data collection, it may have also reduced the social distance between us. Similar researcher positionality is observed in Lampropoulou's (2012) methodology in her study of direct speech as she underlines the aforementioned attributes in the establishment of power relations. Lampropoulou also emphasizes the importance of further engagements and involvement with participants in grafting in-group solidarity and achieving trusting relationships to elicit important information from them. Using the principle of advocacy (Cameron, Fraser, Harvey, Rampton, & Richardson, 1993), Lampropoulou describes her participation in the speakers' social activities (e.g. driving the participants to certain places).

In the same line, my engagement with the participants followed Cameron *et al.'s* (1993) advocacy framework, where research centres *on* and *for* social subjects. The principle underlying this framework is that, researchers should feel indebted to the subjects and have a corresponding duty to help them through expertise or knowledge. Using this principle, I helped some of the participants in their daily lives. For example, one of the participants sought my help in answering her linguistic tasks, specifically in a morphology assignment. Using my knowledge on the subject matter, I was able to help her solve a tree diagram. In other case, one of the participants consulted me in choosing her best signature and warned me not to laugh at it. At some points during the data collection, I also shared the linguistic patterns that I identified in conversations. My participants became enthusiastic about reading about their Manglish practices and requested copies of my thesis.

All of the above tactics established rapport with my participants. As a result, I obtained full cooperation from some of the participants regarding information on the context, the background of their interlocutors, or other parties discussed in the conversations. The information that I gathered through this relationship that I developed with some of the participants contributed to my data analysis and interpretation. For example, one of the male participants was willing to share the background of his relationship with one of the female interlocutors. This participant also admitted that his WhatsApp status was directed at the female interlocutor, and he openly shared his feelings and their relationship status, which contributed to an ethnographic understanding of the roles and relationships between the two participants.

On top of that, the benefit of such repeated and prolonged contact with my participants was the ability to obtain translations for Chinese dialectal features and phrases used in the conversations – which is crucial for interpretation and analysis.

4.5   Data Types and Methods

Data collected in this research consisted of WhatsApp conversations, online interviews, online ethnography, and online questionnaires. Each data collection method is discussed in the following sections.

4.5.1   WhatsApp Chats

The primary data source for this thesis was WhatsApp chats; a form of written conversations on WhatsApp. As this study aims to identify the occurrence of Manglish features in WhatsApp conversations, the first stage was to collect chats for quantitative analysis. Quantitative approach is necessary in understanding the interrelationship between linguistic features and macro-social categories such as ethnicity.

The importance of quantitative analysis was underlined by Labov's (1966, 1972) work on variation studies as he accounts for the relationship between

language variations and sociolinguistic variables such as sex, ethnicity, and social class. Melefa, Chukwumezie and Nwodo (2019), in sociolinguistic studies of WhatsApp interaction among Nigerian university students, observe the importance of quantitative analysis in relation to speaker's social categories. Linguistic features can convey important information about the speaker. In the current study, quantifying the chats revealed overall patterns relating to Manglish practices among speakers and trends of Manglish features across ethnic groups. There were some Manglish features dominated by specific ethnic group, and this finding steers the direction and focus of the present study. A case for integrating quantitative approach also can be seen in Ribbens-Klein's (2017) study of social meanings of Afrikaans rhotic variations. I consider this study an example of integrative methods between quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative data revealed that the occurrence of uvular-r is correlated to macro-social types such as young, men, and local establishments. A thorough qualitative analysis shows the rationale for uvular-r varies and how they correspond to meaningful moments. The study above has shown how quantitative data complements the micro analysis of naturally occurring data. In the same vein, the numeric representation of quantitative data directs the focus of the present study into understanding how ethnic identity, or ingroupness is constructed within the interaction.

In terms of collection the WhatsApp chats, participants were required to follow the instructions as illustrated in Figure 4.2 to send their current or past WhatsApp conversations to my university email address. These participants could directly email the conversations to me by clicking on the button <email chat> from WhatsApp messages. The emails appear in a form of .txt format, which avoids time consumption as the conversations are ready to be analysed.
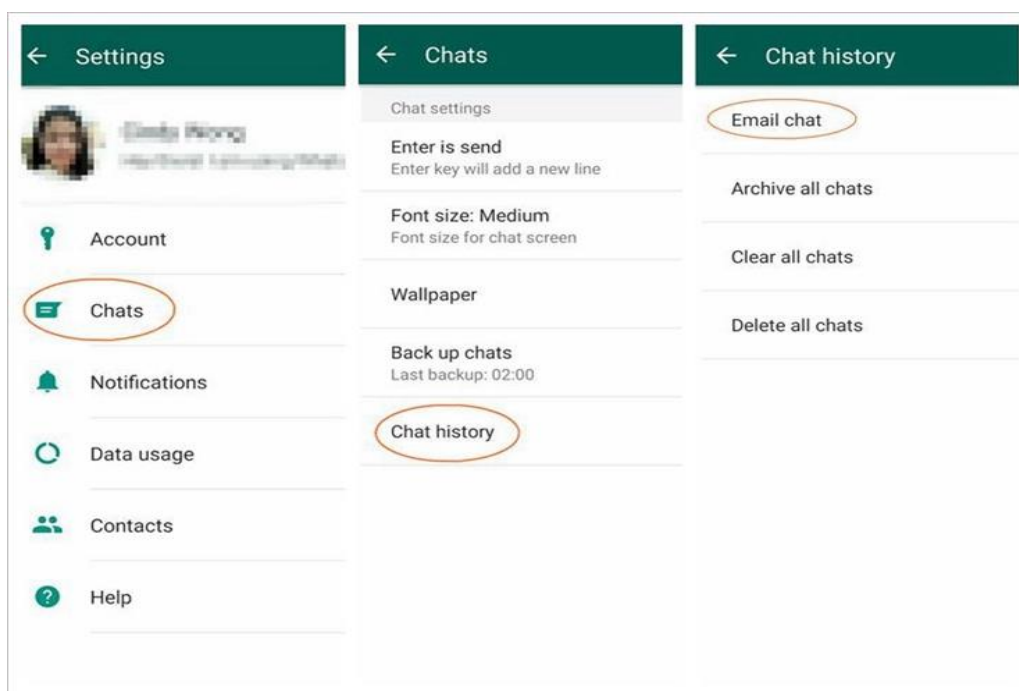
Figure 4.2 Instructions to Email WhatsApp Chats

No changes were made to the data collected. Any misspellings, grammatical errors, use of capitalisations, abbreviations, shortened forms, and symbols remained to avoid altering the meaning and message contained in data.

Two types of interactions/chats were dismissed from this study. Firstly, group chats were not included due to practical reasons: it was difficult to get consent from all members of groups. Secondly, conversations that take place in languages other than Manglish were also excluded as the focus of this study was Manglish. It was expected that there was occurrence of chats from various languages given the multi-ethnic backgrounds of the participants. Therefore, conversations that occurred predominantly in ethnic languages such as Malay, Chinese, or Tamil were dismissed since the aim of this research was to look at Manglish practices in WhatsApp interactions. Therefore, the conversations were required to be predominantly in English. A similar criterion was also used in other studies of Malaysian English (Stapa & Shaari, 2012; 2013; Tay et al., 2016; Lee, 2015), such as in Facebook or blogs, from which the dataset gathered was written in English.

4.5.2 Online Ethnography

Analysing the functions of Manglish features, social meanings and identity are central to answer the second research question, where micro-social aspects of analysis are emphasised. The initial observations through the conversations led to deeper data analysis. I identified frequent occurrences of Manglish features, which were significant throughout each speaker's conversations with different addressees. The use of Manglish features with different addressees led to deeper observations of the textual conversations.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the qualitative approach is an important aspect in third-wave sociolinguistic studies because frequencies alone do not reflect the linguistic practices of the speakers. Therefore, studies have begun to complement quantitative data with qualitative findings (Moore & Podesva, 2009; Ribbens-Klein, 2017). However, understanding linguistic practices by examining conversation texts alone is insufficient. There are other variables, as pointed out in Chapter 3, that must be considered to understand the linguistic practices in a micro-social context. Among these aspects are relationship between speaker and addressee, topic of interaction, and frequency of contact. Examining the use of linguistic features as a whole, or in relation to other aspects, is one of the aspects of discourse-centred online ethnography (DCOE) proposed by Androutsopoulos (2008).

By adapting his principle, the speakers' activities, or what they 'do' in WhatsApp, were observed. In Androusopoulos' (2008) terminology, this is known as 'systematic observation', which, and in the context of the present study, concerned that fact that the entire conversation (previous to present) that was sent was read, in order to observe the frequency of the chats, the topic of interaction, and the use/effect of Manglish features in the interaction. A similar approach was adopted by Lenihan (2011) in his study of Facebook translation, and he found that "virtual ethnography involves 'deep looking' in online environments and paying careful attention to language content and interactions between users" (ibid.: 54). Similarly, the present study ultimately sought to understand what online spaces, such as WhatsApp, can offer to the

understanding of interactional activity. In his study, Lenihan (ibid.: 55) assumed the role of "lurker", or what he described as a silent reader, whereby he observed the conversations sent in a non-participatory manner. The situation was slightly different in the case of the present study, since the conversations were observed after they had been sent to me. This was because they were personal conversations between two speakers, and my participation in the chats in real time would have hindered the authenticity of the conversation.

As Androusopoulos and Lenihan showed, observations in their studies took place within a Facebook forum. Therefore, more time was spent to identifying the main participants. In the present study, the main participants were the speaker and listener in each chat collected since this is a one-to-one conversation, and they were identified as potential participants even before data collection. When observing their chats, it was noted that the participants tended to share information, jokes, various topics, photos, and videos, as well as their emotions, such as grief, joy, and excitement. While work and sports were frequently discussed in the male speakers' conversations, the women tended to discuss problem-related issues. Importantly, it was possible to observe specific uses of Manglish features when the speakers interacted with specific addressees.

Through Androutsopoulos's (2008) principle of repeated observations of the data, I identified topics of interest that coincide with Manglish practices among the speakers, such as topics concerning romance and relationships. I compared conversation topics between speakers of higher usage of Manglish with speakers with the fewest occurrences of Manglish. Topics of conversations may help in determining points of commonality or interests between the speakers. As Bell (1984: 181) argues, 'intimate topics… elicit speech appropriate for intimate addressees – family friends.' The frequency of contact is also among the factors that determine social distance between the speakers. Brown and Gilman (1972: 258) explain the frequency of contact as a key determinant of social distance that can lead to solidarity. Based on these parameters of social distance, I counted the frequency of contact (in specific conversations) based on monthly conversations and number of words presented in each episode of the

conversations. These aspects coincide with one another and characterise the social distance between speakers in this study.

Similarly, Barton and Lee (2013: 172) also viewed these online observations, such as textual observations, as a component of ethnographic approaches. These observations highlighted individuals' views, and located their activities in broader cultural contexts. However, the authors emphasised the importance of interviews for exploring participants' lives in greater depth. Following a systematic observation, the second aspect of Androutsopoulos's (2008) DCOE approach suggested that contact should be made with the internet actors involved after an observation. In his study, Androutsopoulos (ibid) made contact with his participants primarily via face-to-face interviews, and in some cases, via telephone and email. However, he conducted only 25 interviews, due to the limitations of geographical location. In the present study, the interviews were fully conducted via the online medium of WhatsApp Messenger. Therefore, there were no limitations in terms of the number of contacts (interviews conducted) with the participants, since it was possible to access them virtually throughout the study. It was also possible to interview the participants personally, regarding the specific choices they made in their conversation, namely regarding the different functions of 'la/lah'. This method therefore established an informed research strategy, since, as D'Arcy and Young (2012: 535) explained, the digital data involved "provide[d] an unprecedented opportunity for statistically-informed and ethnographically-informed perspectives to complement each other". The way in which the online interviews were conducted is discussed further in the next section.

4.5.3 Online Interviews

I conducted online interviews via WhatsApp messenger to facilitate qualitative analysis. These interviews focused on specific areas of the conversations, as well as confirmations and answers to the observations on the data, thereby addressing the second research question, specifically in terms of the construction of situated identities, or what the speakers intended to convey through the use

of specific Manglish features. In doing so, I was able to pay close attention to details about actual situations of Manglish use.

Barton and Lee (2013: 170) listed several advantages of online interview. Firstly, online interviews are useful for researching data that involves personal and private communication that participants would not have been comfortable discussing with researchers elsewhere. This idea is compatible with the nature of the research data in my study because there are personal topics involving relationships, romance, and trauma that speakers discussed with the researcher. Furthermore, physical presence is not required by both parties, thus creating a relaxed atmosphere and avoiding any possible embarrassment that might exist in a face-to-face context (ibid). Since almost all of my participants reside in Malaysia, WhatsApp serves as an important tool to communicate and conduct interviews.

Approximately six online semi-structured interviews were conducted (Appendix 3). In preparing to interview each of these participants, I customised the interview questions to reflect the observations noted in the participants' interactions. The interviews covered topics concerning specific interactional contexts, namely participants' linguistic practices (L1 and L2, language preferences), information related to participants and addressee (ethnicity, relationship status), and speakers' intentions and emotions. To obtain these expressions, I sent the screenshots of the conversations for further clarification of the situation to elicit awareness of their chosen linguistic styles.

4.5.4 Online Questionnaire

The data collection methods used helped to identify the most frequently occurring Manglish features, functions, and values associated with the variety. Furthermore, these methods aided in more comprehensively examining conversations, interpreting the use of Manglish features, and contributing to local interpretations of said features in relation to identity. At the same time, the current thesis aims to understand participants' awareness levels in using Manglish, thus exploring enregisterment processes. This addresses the third

research question of the present study. An online questionnaire was conducted to identify how speakers associate specific Manglish features with their linguistic practice.

The online questionnaires were created using www.surveymonkey.com. The questionnaires were adapted from Cooper's (2013) online survey design, which had been conducted to examine the Yorkshire dialect's linguistic practices. Through online surveys, Cooper (2013) maps his speakers' awareness levels of Yorkshire features and how they identify with certain dialect features, which is representative of the enregisterment framework. The online survey design was divided into three separate sections. In the first section of Cooper's online questionnaire, participants were asked to provide Yorkshire features with which they were familiar. In the second section, participants were asked to rate 23 Yorkshire features according to given criteria. Similar to Cooper's (2013) survey structure, the questionnaire for the present study was divided into two sections (Appendix 4). In the first section, participants were asked to identify Manglish features with which they were familiar. The second section was a multiple-choice questionnaire in which participants were asked to rate 21 features based on Cooper's (2013) multiple- choice criteria listed in Table 4.3. These features were chosen for the questionnaire considering the following aspects**.** Firstly, there were similarities in the features identified within the WhatsApp data with features compiled in the studies of previous scholars. This repeated occurrence of the features within conversations may represent a pattern with specific social meaning, thus becoming worthy of being rated by the participants. These features were also commonly identified in other sources, such as the *Manglish dictionary* (Lee, 1998), *The Coxford Singlish Dictionary* (2002), *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), and social media platforms. These records represent the awareness of distinctive features within the ME varieties.

No	Manglish features	Sources
1	La/lah	Manglish Dictionary (p. 95), WhatsApp data, OED
2	Got (*got sick, also got, where got)	Manglish Dictionary (p. 48, 84-85), WhatsApp data
3	Aiyoo	Manglish Dictionary (p. 93), WhatsApp data, OED

4	Aiyaa	Manglish Dictionary (p. 92), WhatsApp data, OED
5	Lepaking (or adding -ing)	Manglish Dictionary (p. 198), OED
6	Dey/Dei	Manglish Dictionary, WhatsApp data
7	Can also/also can	Manglish Dictionary (p. 64), WhatsApp data
8	Reduplication of word (can can)	Manglish Dictionary (p. 63), WhatsApp data
9	Is it?	Manglish Dictionary (p. 68), WhatsApp data
10	Liao	Singlish Coxford Dictionary, WhatsApp data
11	Lor	Singlish Coxford Dictionary, WhatsApp data
12	Lar	WhatsApp data
13	Meh	Manglish Dictionary (p. 97), WhatsApp data
14	Ma	WhatsApp data
15	Macha	WhatsApp data
16	Kiasu	Manglish Dictionary (p. 22), OED
17	Village people	Social Media
18	Kipidap	Social Media
19	Dongibap	Social Media
20	Ba	WhatsApp data
21	din (didn't)	WhatsApp data

Table 4.3 Manglish Features Listed in the Multiple-Choice Questionnaire

As displayed in Table 4.3, there were several features included in the questionnaire not found in the WhatsApp chats or dictionaries, such as *village people, Kipidap,* and *Dongibap*, which emerged from social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. These features were included in the analysis because of their increasing trend in 2016 and spelled with local pronunciation. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to observe via the questionnaire responses whether participants identified the locally pronounced words as Manglish features. Rusli *et al.* (2018: 121) identified *kipidap* and *dongibap* as new vocabulary words used in social media (discussed in Section 2.6). Generally, *kipidap* and *dongibap* originate from a particular person's local pronunciation of 'keep it up' and 'don't give up', which went viral across Malaysia. Since then, Malaysians began to use the hashtags *kipidap* and *dongibap* on social

media. An online newspaper described the man who started this trend as 'Tok Daddy' (The Stars Online, 2016), even reporting that there would be a film titled 'Kipidapp: Selamatkan Hari Jadi'. This newly emerging Manglish words therefore, investigated within the framework of enregisterment.

The term *village people* was then popularised by a Malaysian 'Instafamous' (Instagram famous) known as Nasrul Faiz Abu Azal through his Instagram account 'Faizdickie'. This individual created short videos performing different characters' portrayals of typical Malaysian attitudes, with some videos performed using Manglish accents and varieties. The *village people* community, comical characters, and trends on Instagram (hashtag *villagepeople*) indicate the possibility of emerging Manglish words resulting from social media, which were therefore included in this study's questionnaire.

The responses to the online questionnaire enabled the identification of participant perceptions of Manglish use. It is necessary to elicit such questions because it allows for the identification of whether the speakers are familiar with newly emerging Manglish words and whether some are considered outdated. In completing the questionnaire, one section had to be completed before moving on to the next. This structure was an important step in data collection and helped avoid bias towards answering questions in the second section (Cooper, 2013). The questionnaires also were distributed to the participants only when the participants had provided enough conversational data for the study. The participants were thereby prevented from understanding the objectives of the study or purposely initiating its features in their conversations.

Criterion	Implication
I use this word (written/spoken)	
I have heard of this	Strong association with Manglish
This is Manglish	
This is a modern Manglish feature	
I have never heard of this	
I would never say this	Weak association with Manglish
This is old-fashioned Manglish	
Nobody uses it anymore	

Table 4.4 Criteria for Multiple-choice Questionnaire

(adapted and adopted from Cooper, 2013: 100)

Table 4.4 illustrates sets of criteria asked in the online questionnaires and the strength of association to Manglish. Criterion such as 'I use this word', 'I have heard of this (written and spoken)', 'This is Manglish', and 'This is a modern Manglish feature' represent strong associations with Manglish because they are recognised and currently under use. On the other hand, criterion such as 'I have never heard of this', 'I would never say this', 'this is old-fashioned Manglish', and 'Nobody uses it anymore' represent weak associations with Manglish as the features were considered outdated, that some have never heard of it or had even stopped using it. Some of these criteria were combined to facilitate the analysis process, as discussed in Chapter 7.

4.6   Data Triangulation

As well as collecting WhatsApp chats and online questionnaires, I also conducted semi-structured interviews and observations. Zohrabi (2013: 254) asserts that different methods of data collection are important as they complement one another in the analysis and interpretation of the data, contributing to the overall validity of the study. The importance of data triangulation has been highlighted

by several researchers who have incorporated online tools in corroborating their data. In a study of disagreement and impoliteness in two online forums, Angouri and Tseliga (2010) used various methods of data collection to complement their findings. Having collected 200 postings, the researchers conducted a Skype interview to understand the context of the representative sample used for data analysis. Similarly, the use of an online questionnaire for data triangulation was demonstrated in Bolander's (2013) study of language and power in blogs. Six of eight bloggers were asked to complete 53 questions related to blogging and language use in the online questionnaire. The online questionnaire in the present study not only addressed the research question on enregisterment as discussed in Chapter 7, but also triangulated relevant WhatsApp conversations. Specifically, the online questionnaire attempted to address the reasons for which specific Manglish features are commonly used in WhatsApp and their indexical values.

Data triangulation was also applied in studies in the Malaysian context. Kasuma (2016: 47) studied informal Facebook interactions among Malaysian students and emphasises the importance of data triangulation in obtaining an accurate interpretation of the data. In the study, the Kasume employed three methods of data collection, namely questionnaires, Facebook interactions, and semi-structured interviews. Figure 4.3 shows an overview of the relationship between the online tools used for collecting data.
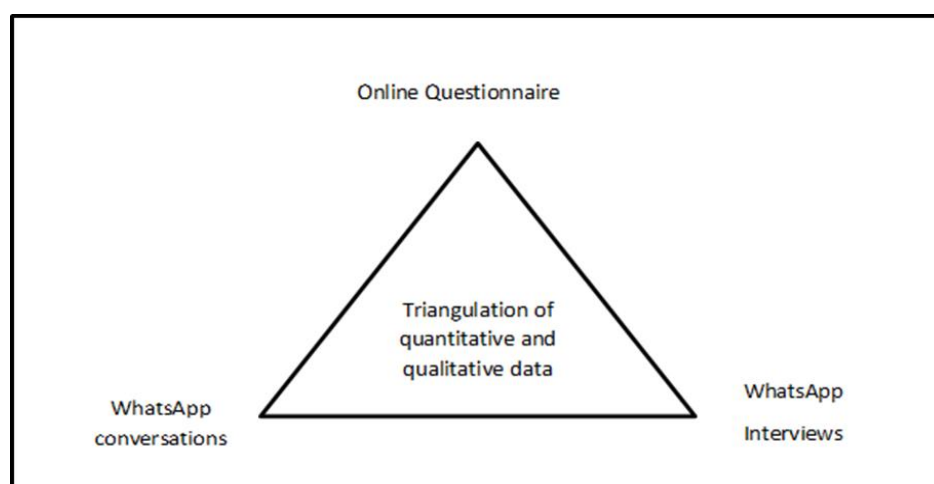
Figure 4.3 Data triangulation using three methods of data collection

(Adopted and adapted from Kasuma, 2016: 115)

Based on the figure, semi-structured WhatsApp interviews and online questionnaires triangulated the findings from WhatsApp interactions, in which participants provided information on the situations surrounding their conversations, including their emotions and intentions, and confirmed the relationship and social distance between the interlocutors.

4.7   Data Presentation: Translation and transliteration Issues

Since the data in my study are in written online format, there was no need to transcribe the conversations as would be the case for other types recorded conversational data. Through WhatsApp's features, the participants were able to email their conversations to me, which were then copied into Microsoft Word. However, since the conversations were largely in Manglish, there was a need to translate the interactions into Standard British English to make them accessible to the readers of this thesis and enable them to understand the context of conversations. The translation process itself was a challenge because I had to first understand the Manglish conversations derived from the various ethnic groups before translating them into Standard British English. My translation aimed to capture the pragmatic meaning of the participants' words spoken in either Chinese or Indian dialects rather than the exact definition of the word. Understanding speakers' overall meaning in an utterance is more important than only understanding a particular word. This situation is similar to the example emphasised in Chapter 2, where the word 'die' does not carry the literal meaning but draws its meaning from cultural context.

Similar translation challenges are reported by Halai (2007) in dealing with bilingual interview data. Halai (2007) followed specific rules when translating Urdu interviews into English language. It suffices that the translated text makes sense, captures the essence of the original meaning, and uses comprehensible expressions (2007: 351), to which the author's knowledge of Urdu was essential. In the current study, I only possess the knowledge of my ethnic group, which is Malay, rather than other ethnic languages. Hence, translating Manglish words derived from other dialects was a challenge, and

cooperation from the participants was required. However, the close relationships between the participants and I facilitated cooperation in translating ethnic-dialectal words used in the conversations. Understanding the sentences allowed me to proceed with standard translation. For accuracy, I consulted with a native speaker of English for the translation of the chats to ensure that specific translated phrases were pragmatically comprehensible. I also provided explanations for culturally specific words such as swear words.

Although the data is in the form written text, there are other forms of interactions that co-occur in the chats that need to be transcribed. The other forms of communication refer to emoticons or symbols. When analysing the extracts, the coding of emoticons is also essential as different types of software or mobile phones affect the emoticon in the conversations. Some of the emoticons appear in the form of internet jargon, as seen in the following figure. The following sample codes are adopted in this present study when encountering these smileys. Emoticons and symbols play a crucial role in analysing the conversations because these paralinguistic cues alter the tones of the interaction and how the addressees perceive them (Mukherjee, 2014).

Figure 4.4 Sample codes for Emoticons

(Taken from Annamalai and Salam, 2017: 94-98)

Figure 4.4 presents samples of emoticons found throughout the WhatsApp conversations. Further lists of WhatsApp emojis are included in Appendix 5. Annamalai and Salam (2017) show that an emoji can be interpreted differently by different individuals. However, the researchers suggest that these meanings are highly dependent on the context of conversations and speakers involved (2017: 98). Therefore, the emoticons in my WhatsApp are transliterated according to the symbols in Figure 4.4 with ranges of meaning depending on the context involved. The following conversation is a brief example on how emoticons are translated based on context.

Example:

Melanie	Dad been sleeping few days
	Dad has been sleeping for a few days
	Mum say he sick dao his brain got prob
	Mum says he not sick but he has problem with his brain
	Cuz he keep asking me to eat tomyam la
	Because he keeps asling me to eat tomyam
	Ikan bakar la
	Grilled chicked
	Hahaha
	Hahaha
Atilia	😂😂😂

In the conversation below, Atilia asks Melanie about the wellbeing of her family. Melanie starts describing everyone in her family, including their parents' health. Melanie's father had been resting due to an ongoing fever. Under the influence of medication, their father keeps telling Melanie to eat local cuisine such as 'tomyam' (spicy soup with a mix of vegetables and chicken) and 'ikan bakar' (grilled fish). Melanie laughs at her father's response to medication, as seen in the line 'hahaha'. As seen in the following line, Melanie's story incites laughter from Atilia. Atilia uses three emoticons of 'face with tears of joy'. This emoticon is often characterised as happiness or tears of joy, as illustrated in Annamalai and Salam's (2017) research on WhatsApp emojis. However, in this context, I consider another definition of the emoticon as offered in their study, that it represents a 'funny' expression because Atilia was laughing at her father.

4.8   Data Analysis Methods

This section presents tools used to analyse the data collected. The first stage in collecting the WhatsApp interactions was identifying the frequency of Manglish features in the data using WordSmith 6.0. The occurrences of the features were not only analysed based on frequency. The qualitative functions of the features

were also determined in the interactions. During the qualitative analysis, data or information obtained from the interviews and observations was used to support the context and the speaker's intentions. The analytical concepts for qualitative analysis were discussed in Chapter 3. The following sections outline the quantitative tools employed to quantify the collected data.

4.8.1 Quantitative analysis

After collecting WhatsApp conversations, the next stage of data analysis included finding prominent Manglish features in the conversations. An electronic search was required in order to achieve this in a systematic way. Scott's (2010) WordSmith 5.0 tools allowed me to generate a list of 'keywords' from the data. In this case, 'keyword' refers to features associated to Manglish. To use the software, the conversations received from the speakers had to be converted into plain text files. The files for each speaker's conversation were individually run through WordSmith Tools and organised according to alphabetised word lists. The beginning of this word list is shown in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.5 Alphabetised word list in WordSmith 5.0 for speaker 1 conversation

As seen in Figure 4.5, the feature *ah* is used frequently (in 22 instances) compared with other words in the lists. Further investigation of this feature can be conducted using the concordance tool. The concordance tool was used to examine the words in context and participants who used the feature. Concordances also revealed repeated co-occurrences in language systems (Koteyko, 2010). The cumulative evidence in concordance lines may reveal different patterns of meaning, signalling different connotations that words have, as well as 'the assumptions that they embody' (Stubbs, 1996: 172).

The aim of the present study was to collect 5,000-word samples from each participant. However, several conversational episodes were fewer than 5,000 words. In these cases, the participant was asked to provide multiple conversations to add to the word count. Several conversations also exceeded 5,000 words. The data were normalised by Biber's (1988) method, such that the density of features in each speaker's conversation was normalised to 1,000

words. For instance, the occurrence of features was divided by the total number of words and multiplied by 1,000, as exemplified in Table 6.2 (Chapter 6). Five instances of *lah* within 2,812 words of the conversation, for example, would be calculated as (5/2812)*1000 = 1.8. A similar calculation method was also used by Karachaliou and Archakis (2015) in the study of swearwords in Greek storytelling. Karachaliou and Archakis collected narratives from two male participants' conversations with them, normalising the occurrence of the Greek particle 're' and swear words per 1,000 words as there are different narrative words in each conversation: 10,700 and 7,200 narrative words. This approach allowed the researcher to compare the occurrence of *re* and swearwords within 1,000 words between both conversations and analyse identity work behind these differences. Normalised frequencies aim to demonstrate differences between ethnic groups and Manglish features, thereby highlighting the variability in each linguistic feature across different ethnic groups.

4.8.2 Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

A SPSS analysis was used based on observations from WhatsApp interactions. A general observation of the interactions showed frequent use of Manglish features within specific ethnic groups. This observation raises questions in terms of the correlation between Manglish features and ethnic groups, thereby addressing the second research question. The analysis focused on three Manglish features among the Chinese speakers, namely *lor, leh*, and *de*. The participants were divided into two categories, namely Chinese-Chinese speakers and Chinese non-Chinese speakers. The correlation between features and ethnic groups through SPSS revealed the significance of distribution of said features and, subsequently, allowed for further interpretation of the data for indexical links.

4.9   Conclusion

This chapter looked into the data collection and analysis processes used in this study. The methodological approaches adopted in this study involve quantitative and qualitative methods derived from online sources namely WhatsApp, online ethnography, online interviews, and online questionnaires. The qualitative analysis is important in the present study as it identifies the relationship between linguistic features and macro-factors. However, further understanding of the data in the form of micro-level analysis is important in understanding speakers' linguistic practices of the speakers.   The data may be understood using a qualitative approach such as online ethnography and interviews. Based on Androutsopoulous' (2008) principle of ethnography, the conversations were observed repeatedly in relation to other factors such as social distance, frequency of contact, and topic of conversation. Data collected from online interviews and questionnaires serve to triangulate the observations and WhatsApp data. The researcher's positionality and the principle of 'advocacy' (Cameron et al., 1993) were among important aspects in the current study in building rapport and establishing solidarity with the participants. Finally, quantitative analysis tools were outlined where normalisation was addressed in relation to sample size.

Chapter 5

Frequencies, Distributions and
the Construction of Ethnic Identity

5.1   Introduction

This chapter commences by examining the overall results obtained from the quantitative data; namely, the frequencies and distribution of commonly occurring Manglish features in WhatsApp conversations. The data demonstrates that some features are used more frequently by particular ethnic groups. The analysis confirms that ethnicity is a significant variable in the specific dataset. The focus then moves on to an in-depth examination of the group of features mainly used by the Chinese ethnic group. Using SPSS, it emerged that the Chinese speakers use *lor, leh* and *de* significantly more often when interacting with their Chinese addressees, than when interacting with their non-Chinese addressees. This finding is interpreted from the perspective of indexicalities (Silverstein, 2003; Johnstone *et. al*, 2006), specifically the users' awareness of social values associated with ethnic-attributed features and their correlation with a specific group. To address the specific functions of these features, I discuss three samples from a WhatsApp conversation between Chinese interlocutors, followed by a sample in which the addressees were non-Chinese. The analysis revealed the Chinese speakers use *leh* for the purpose of ethnic alignment, and to generate a sense of in-group belonging and express empathy. Additionally, the occurrence of *leh* serves to attenuate authoritativeness and reduce social distance between speakers. However, it is suggested that Manglish features can be used by other ethnic groups (although at a lower rate) to construct a Manglish identity. I therefore conclude that the use of *lor, leh* and *de* draws on an indexical field of meanings including not only ethnic belonging but also stances of solidarity and alignment.

5.2   Common Manglish Features in the WhatsApp Data

This section presents the frequency and distribution of Manglish features in the WhatsApp conversational data. Table 5.1 outlines the percentages for commonly occurring features, per 1,000 words within each ethnic group in Malaysia (Malay, Chinese and Indians); followed by the raw number of occurrences of Manglish features in the data.

Manglish Features	Overall Frequency	Malay			Chinese			Indian		
		Frequency	% to total (F) (1667)	% in 1000 words	Frequency	% to total (F) (18, 361)	% in 1000 words	Frequency	% to total (F) (3517)	% in 1000 words
Lah	7035 (29.88%)	827	49.61	0.7	4483	24.42	0.98	1725	49.05	1.59
Got	4240 (18%)	343	20.58	0.31	3261	17.76	0.71	636	18.08	0.58
Ah	2241 (9.51%)	185	11.10	0.17	1204	6.56	0.26	852	24.23	0.78
De	2083 (8.85%)	2	0.12	0.00	2075	11.30	0.45	6	0.17	0.01
Leh	1981 (8.41%)	22	1.32	0.02	1954	10.64	0.43	5	0.14	0.00
Lor	1728 (7.34%)	26	1.56	0.02	1702	9.27	0.37	0	0	0.00
Ma	1661(7.05%)	58	3.48	0.05	1595	8.69	0.35	8	0.23	0.01
Liao	1546 (6.57%)	30	1.80	0.03	1516	8.26	0.33	0	0	0.00
Meh	724 (3.07%)	169	10.14	0.15	555	3.02	0.12	0	0	0.00
Dey	306 (1.30%)	5	0.30	0.00	16	0.09	0.00	285	8.10	0.26
TOTAL	23, 545 (100%)	1, 667	100	1.61	18, 361	100	4.13	3, 517	100	0.74

Table 5.1. Frequencies and Distribution of Common Manglish Features across Three Ethnic Groups in the WhatsApp Dataset

According to table 5.1, there are 10 Manglish features commonly employed in WhatsApp conversations as shown in rows 1-10; these comprise of tail words and Manglish expressions, namely *lah, got, ah, de, leh, lor, ma, liao, meh* and *dey*. The second column on the far left describes the average percentage of the features across the superset of all conversations. As the column shows, the tail word *lah* accounts for 29.88% of the Manglish features arising in the overall WhatsApp conversation; this is the most common Manglish feature overall. The frequency and consistency of *lah*, which was used by 51 out of 52 speakers, regardless of their ethnicity, prompted me to further investigate its function and effect among speakers, or within conversations. Therefore, the following chapter (Chapter 6) is devoted to the use of *lah*. The next recurring result in Table 5.1 is followed by the expression *got*, with a rate of occurrence of 18%, *ah* with 9.51%, *de* with 8.85%, *leh* with *8.41%, lor* with *7.34%, ma* with *7.05%, liao* with *6.57%, meh with* 3.07% and *dey* with 1.30%. These frequencies highlight Manglish features, which are highly preferred by these speakers when conversing to others. These preferences are interrelated with factors such as the ethnic origins of the features and the speakers themselves, as will be discussed below. This also yielded data regarding how ethnic origins narrow down the focus of the analysis in this study. Figure 5.1 presents the average percentage of 10 commonly occurring Manglish features in the WhatsApp dataset by ethnic group.
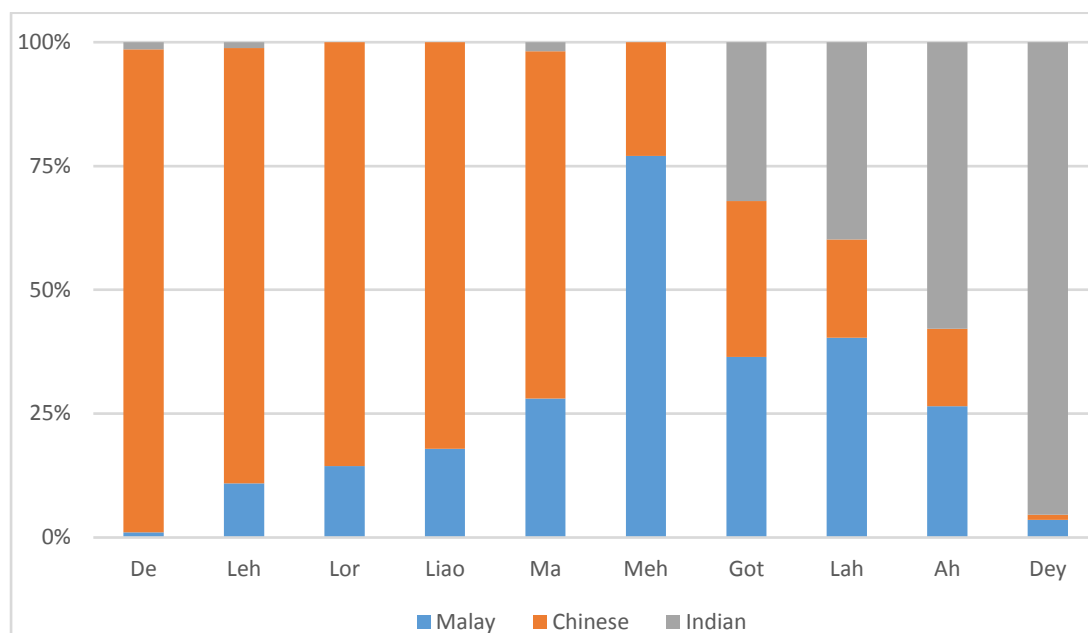
Figure 5.1. Commonly occurring Manglish Features in the

WhatsApp dataset

Figure 5.1 details the average percentage of Manglish features in the WhatsApp conversations of each ethnic group varies. One of the reasons for the distribution of these results is the historical origins of the noted features, which partly account for their high usage among specific ethnic groups. For instance, features such as *de, leh, lor, liao* and *ma* were highly employed and used much more frequently amongst Chinese speakers, with an average rate of occurrence of between 8% and 11% compared with other Manglish features identified in their conversations. Malays appear to employ less than 4% of the aforementioned features, but the use of *meh* dominates in their conversations, with 10.14% of occurrences. Similar pattern appears with the Indian speakers as less than 1% of them employed *de, leh, lor, liao, ma* and *meh* in their conversation, but frequently use specific features such as *dey* and *ah* at an average percentage of 8.1% and 24.23% respectively. The observation of ethnic-attributed features was one of the primary reasons for categorising or grouping the data according to ethnic groups. The categorisation is also driven by the fact that speakers in this study mainly converse with addressees from a similar ethnic group (see Table 3 in Chapter 3).

As shown in Figure 5.1 above, the analysis becomes more focused where it reveals a pattern largely found amongst the conversations of the Chinese speakers in the study; some specific features occur at a high rate among them. The qualitative analysis observed that the features described above tend to occur in conversations among Chinese participants (speaker and addressee). To obtain a reliable and accurate result, quantitative data was analysed using SPSS as a means to determine the correlation between Manglish features and the ethnicity of the speaker and addressee. The analysis purposely focuses on three Manglish features (*de, leh* and *lor*), as these are frequent Manglish features in the data highly employed by the Chinese ethnic group. Of the 52 participants in this study, 34 were Chinese. For the purpose of SPSS analysis, these Chinese speakers were divided into two groups: Chinese-Chinese conversation (speaker and addressee) and Chinese-other conversation. The results are shown in Table 5.2 below. Detailed SPSS results are given in Appendix 6.

Table 5.2 below demonstrates the results of comparisons involving the occurrence of *lor, leh* and *de* between speakers from two ethnic groups; Chinese and non-Chinese. The significance of the differences was measured and compared between Chinese and non-Chinese groups using the Mann-Whitney U-test to ascertain whether the ethnicity of the addressees influenced their usage of *lor, leh* and *de* by Chinese speakers. The selection of the Mann-Whitney U-test mirrors other sociolinguistic studies, which compare two sociolinguistic contexts; ethnic groups (see for instance, Jalilzadeh-Mohammadi & Sarkhosh, 2016; Otwinowska & Angelis, 2014). Moreover, it is suggested that the Mann-Whitney U test allows us to compare the frequencies of occurrence of linguistic variables (in this case *lor, leh* and *de*), while also taking into account variations between individual speakers (Brezina & Meyerhoff, 2014).

Mann-Whitney Test

Features per 1000 words	Ethnicity	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Chinese	162	95.06	15399.00
Lor	Others	19	56.42	1072.00
	Total	181		
	Chinese	162	93.97	15223.50
Leh	Others	19	65.66	1247.50
	Total	181		
	Chinese	162	95.31	15440.50
De	Others	19	54.24	1030.50
	Total	181		

Table 5.2 Mean ranks and sum of ranks for *Lor, Leh* and *De*, produced by Chinese-Chinese Conversations and Chinese-others Conversations

Table 5.2 represents the results for the differences between Chinese and non-Chinese speakers in response to the features *lor, leh* and *de*. It is crucial to note that the Mean ranks between Chinese and non-Chinese speakers indicate a tangible difference for *lor, leh* and *de* for each group of speakers. Then, in order to test the significance of the discrepancy in the occurrence of these features between Chinese and non-Chinese speakers, the MannWhitney U-test is applied, and the results are reported in Table 5.3.

	lor per 1000	*leh* per 1000	*de* per 1000
Mann-Whitney U	882.000	1057.500	840.500
Wilcoxon W	1072.000	1247.500	1030.500
Z	-3.107	-2.254	-3.287
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	**.002**	**.024**	**.001**

Table 5.3 Mann-Whitney U- test results for *lor, leh* and *de* per 1000 words in Chinese conversations

Table 5.3 shows the Mann-Whitney U-test's results, which were used to investigate the significance of discrepancies relating to each dimension (*lor, leh* and *de*), affecting Chinese and non-Chinese conversations. Z and Sig rates must be considered based on this data for the value of Z; for instance, – 3. 107 and with a significance level of P=0.002 for the feature *lor* (p<0.05), which shows a significant variation between Chinese and non-Chinese speakers. Furthermore, Z with the value of – 2.254, and with a significance level of P=0.024 (p<0.05) for *leh*, and Z with the value of – 3.287 with a significance level of P=0.001 (p <0.05) for feature *de*, confirming that the differences identified are significant. From this data, it can be concluded that use of *lor, leh* and *de* among Chinese speakers is statistically significantly higher than it is when conversing with other ethnic groups (p < 0.05). Specifically, the results show Chinese participants typically prefer to employ these specific features when conversing with their Chinese friends, more so than when relating to their non-Chinese friends. These quantitative results highlight how Manglish use relates to ethnic identity.

5.3   Intimacy and Ethnic Identity among Manglish Speakers

The previous section noted the correlation between the ethnicity of the speaker and addressee, and the use of Manglish features in the dataset. To discuss this, it is necessary to contextually and locally delve deeper to find the correlation between features *lor, leh* and *de* with how they serve as a marker of ethnic identity for the Chinese speaker. In addition to ethnic group, the discussion in this section seeks to establish how, and in what situation, these features operate. Since there is an important correlation between the ethnicity of speakers and addressees concerning the use of *lor, leh* and *de*, the discussion in this section draws selectively from speaker 9, known as Laura, who engaged in multiple conversations, including with addressees from both similar and different ethnic groups. It is important to note that *lor, leh,* and *de* are emphasized in the analysis below, since these were the features most frequently employed in the WhatsApp conversations overall. The discussion below involves the examples taken from Chinese ethnic groups, since these features were used frequently by their members. Therefore, this thesis serves as a foundation or framework for

Manglish studies that seek to determine the links between the features illustrated in Figure 5.1 above, and their respective ethnic groups. In other words, future research concerning Manglish should undertake similar SPSS tests to identify the correlation between other Manglish features, such as *meh* or *dey*, and Malay or Indian ethnic groups. Table 5.4 presents the distributions of *lor, leh* and *de* per 1,000 words in Laura's WhatsApp conversations, when she interacts with her Chinese and non-Chinese friends.

Ethnicity	Speaker-Addressee	Relationship with speaker (Laura)	Lor		Leh		de		Total no of features	No of words
			n	n/1000 words	n	n/1000 words	n	n/1000 words		
Chinese-Chinese	Laura and Xora	Course mates and friends	3	5	2	4	5	9	10	560
Chinese-Chinese	Laura and Jezmin	Course mates	22	5	39	9	14	3	75	4303
Chinese-Malay	Laura and Aisya	Colleagues	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1251

Table 5.4. Distribution of *lor, leh* and *de* per 1,000 words in Laura's Conversations

The table shows that *lor, leh* and *de*, in the conversations between Laura and Xora tend to appear every five, four and nine times within 1,000 words respectively. A similar frequency of *lor, leh* and *de* occurred in the conversation between Laura and Jezmine (five, nine and three times respectively). These features were present in different conversational episodes throughout the conversations. However, it is noteworthy that the speakers were linked by their different levels of intimacy. For instance, in the information obtained from the online interviews, Laura regards Xora as her course mate and her friend, whereas Jezmine is viewed simply as a course mate. Laura, Xora, and Jezmine are studying Environmental Sciences at the same university in Malaysia. Therefore, their conversations often discuss work-related issues. However, Laura appears to share jokes and personal

topics with Xora. It is important to note that these features appear to occur at a very similar rate regardless of the relationship between speakers. Therefore, the discussion concerning the samples below focuses on how these features are used by Chinese speakers in different social groups. Most importantly, it is interesting to undertake the qualitative approach below to observe how Laura constructs her identity by signalling her ethnic in-group membership. Through features such as *lor, leh* and *de,* Laura is not only able to project her views to her interlocutors, but also affiliates or disaffiliates herself from specific groups (such as disafiliating herself from other ethnic groups, as seen in extract 1). As discussed previously, whilst *lor, leh* and *de* have slightly different functions, they are mainly employed to reduce social distance between the speakers (Tay *et* al., 2016).

Extract 1: *Leh* and Shared Ethnicity

The first conversation extract compares use of ethnic-attributed features according to social distance. The extract below is taken from Laura's conversation with her Chinese friend Jezmine. As mentioned earlier, Laura views Jezmine only as a course mate, not as a friend. Both are studying Environmental Science, and their conversations principally discuss work-related issues, such as the examination, assignments, deadlines, course registrations, and other university-related issues.

In the following extract, the two are discussing their work plans for the current semester break. Their conversation prior to the extract below concerned their individual and group assignments, which centred on tasks and reports relating to entrepreneurship. Laura complains that no-one has initiated the group work. She refers to one of the group assignments to be completed during the semester break. It is a self-reflection assignment, for which they have to evaluate their course of action during a hands-on activity, and learn how to better perform tasks. However, Jezmine is having difficulty contacting the other course mates to form an assignment group. This has led her to become frustrated, as she wishes to complete the assignment before the end of the semester. Working from home provides her with the necessary Internet access to complete the work, in

contrast with when she is at the university campus. The frustration has led to biases against their course mates, who appear to be Malays. In terms of tone, this extract focuses on the group assignment problem, which appears as serious. It is vital to note that the extracts presented throughout the analysis detail the sequences/dialogue lines, prior to the features employed to help understand the context, the relational distance between the speakers, and the other important features used (such as CMC) to indicate the mood and tone of the interaction, or indicators that represent the characteristics of the speakers. The Standard English Translation for all extracts is presented in italics:

Line	Speaker	Conversation
1	13/04/2016, 11:20 a.m. - Jezmine:	N u knw the refleksi[1] how to ask everyone to form group? *And do you know how to ask everyone to form a group?*
2	13/04/2016, 11:20 a.m. - Jezmine:	Cuz *we* dun even can contact *them*... *Because we can't even contact them*
3	13/04/2016, 11:20 a.m. - Jezmine:	Tot I wan to do at home cuz got internet... *I thought I can do work at home because there is internet...*
4	13/04/2016, 11:22 a.m. - Laura:	ohhhh
5	13/04/2016, 11:22 a.m. - Laura:	dun know **leh**....the others all malay🙁 *I don't know leh....the others are all Malay*
6	13/04/2016, 11:22 a.m. - Jezmine:	Ya**lor,** very annoying **le** *Yes lor, it's very annoying le*

The conversation starts with an enquiry about whether Laura knows how to contact other course mates, since they need to complete the assignment with

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[1] Reflection refers to group assignment for one of the courses.

group members. In the excerpt, Jezmine starts by asking Laura how to contact everyone to discuss their group assignment. Here, it is important to note that the majority of their course mates are Malays or non-Chinese speakers. This is often the case, especially in the Malaysian public University setting, due to the ethnic quota admission policies, which limit the number of non-Malays (Guan, 2005: 218). Jezmine goes on to categorize 'everyone' as *we* and *them* in line 2. The contrasting use of *we* and *them* in line 2 distances both girls from the students of the other ethnic groups (Ciotti, 2016: 28). The distance is then explicitly reinforced in the later sequence. Jezmine continues to express her frustration at being unable to complete the assignment at home; especially as there is Internet access there: 'Tot I wan to do at home cuz got Internet/ I thought I want to do at home because there is Internet access'. Unlike Laura, Jezmine has chosen to return home during the short semester break. This is so she can easily access online resources to complete all her assignments. Her inability to work as a result of her classmates' lack of consideration renders her decision to go home to work invalid.

In terms of CMC features, the analysis of extract 2 also illustrates that the position of ellipsis at the end of the turn plays a significant role. The ellipsis dots in line 2 'Cuz we dun even can contact *them*...' seems to serve as an 'open' and 'unfinished' sentence (Vandergriff, 2013: 5). Ellipsis is also a form of non-verbal expression, intended to indicate a thought, or continuation of a thought (Maness, 2008: 33); and is made explicit in the following sequence 'Tot I wan to do at home cuz got Internet/ Thought I want to do work at home because got Internet'. This repetitive thought not only helps Laura understand Jezmine's state of mind, but also reflects Jezmine's desire to encourage Laura to empathise with her so that she can enlist Laura's help to complete the assignment. Jezmine is presenting herself as a frustrated student concerned about her work and assignments. Her work-related concerns are also reflected later in the conversation (not included in the table), when she asks Laura about her other assignments, and offers solutions to the work problem. She seems eager, and determined to finish all the assignments before the end of the semester.

In line 6, Laura acknowledges Jezmine's complaints and frustrations about her situation, through the typographic repetitions of the token 'ohhhh'; a form of vocal connotations (Yus, 2005). This conveys an emotional reaction to the situation. It highlights a slight hint of surprise in Laura's response and conjures an awareness of Jezmine's underlying reasons for spending the short break at home. Following this display of emotional involvement, Laura then posts her follow-up response in line 5. Laura inserts a non-linguistic gap in the form of a pause after the feature *leh*, before continuing with the statement 'the others all Malay'. Here, it is suggested that the phrase 'dun know leh' frames what comes next, as a kind of indirect confession. The turn-medial ellipsis which occurs in line 5 indexes some kind of perception towards the Malays. Laura's perception is further reinforced through the 'Neutral Face-😐' emoticon at the end of her sentence, which indicates that 'someone is unimpressed, indifferent, or awkward' (*Emojipedia*, 2013). The turn-medial ellipsis articulates that Laura is speechless, and the emoticon can be substituted for the phrase, "no comment!" or "I am speechless" (Al Rashdi, 2015: 66). This response evokes the negative tension in play with the Malay ethnic group.

In line 5, the use of *leh* can also be used to minimize any potential threat to the relationship between the speakers. Tay *et al.* (2016: 496) describe similar use of *leh* in their Facebook study. In their example, Speaker B employs *leh* when rejecting Speaker A's suggestion that they watch a YouTube video, as they are in a working environment. Speaker B's response, with the inclusion of *leh* ('I cannot watch now leh. Got CCTV in office here') suggests a politeness strategy to minimize the chances of hurting Speaker A's feelings. Similarly, it is suggested that *leh*, in line 5 above, has an identical function to the example given by Tay *et al.* (2016); namely, to minimize harm between Laura and Jezmine. Laura employs *leh* in the sentence to mitigate any likelihood of being seen to disregard Jezmine's complaints and frustrations previously. In other words, it is a face-saving strategy. If the particle *leh* were to be omitted, the utterance would have a more ignorant tone, which would be rather 'inappropriate when seeking to express concern for a friend' (ibid: 494).

In the following sequence, Jezmine announces her agreement with Laura regarding her feelings towards the Malays. The insertion of her 'feeling' (annoyance) before the feature *leh* reflects the endorsement of a negative perception towards the Malays. Line 6 therefore evokes the stance of disliking Jezmine's feelings towards the Malays; thus aligning herself with Laura. Moreover, the effect when using *lor* in the initial turn in line 6 'yalor/yes' emphasizes Jezmine's feelings towards the Malays. *Lor* evokes a high degree of understanding and 'togetherness' ('I am with you in this') (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 495), implying implicitly that Jezmine feels much the same as Laura. The use of *lor* grafted onto 'ya' is an affirmation of opinion and feelings, as uttered in the following sentence. As seen in the extract, there is no further explanation or justification for either of their responses in terms of their bias towards the Malays. In fact, their communication evokes a sense of shared understanding. That is, the implication is not only that Laura knows 'something' related to the Malays, but also that Jezmine does. This is supported by Jezmine's response in line 6 ('Yalor, very annoying le'). They are not only annoyed with the unresponsive attitude shown by their Malay course mates, but are specifically irritated that Laura's other course mates are Malays and that she has to work with them. Consequently, Jezmine is strongly affiliated with Laura's emotional stance, indicating a sense of shared knowledge and culture between the speakers (Anderson, 2008: 116). It is therefore safe to assume both the speakers are talking and making judgements based on their prior engagement with their Malay course mates.

Another important factor to be examined in this analysis is the relationship between speakers. Throughout their conversations, Laura and Jezmine have discussed work-related issues and regarded each other as course mates. Laura and Jezmine reaffirm the social relationship between them, as they appear to be less aware of each other's problems (for example Jezmine's reason to go home), although they often chat. This is also shown in Laura's casual admittance that she does not know how to contact her course mates. Despite showing her concern, Laura shows an indifference towards Jezmine's problem, by not making any effort to offer a solution to help Jezmine. Laura simply

continues to condemn the Malays and show her hatred towards them. It is safe to assume that Laura does not regard Jezmine's problem as her own, since she is still on the university campus and already has her own group to complete the reflection assignment. Although Laura appears to empathise with her dislike of Malays, her lack of response or unwillingness to direct attention to Jezmine's problem shows she is an individualistic person. Despite their huge social distance, in this extract, Laura and Jezmine align themselves and meet on a similar stance, by creating distance from their Malay classmates. *Leh* in line 6 functions as an agreement marker aligning the speakers with each other and showing a high level of in-group formation and preference, despite their relative social distance at the personal level. In particular, Laura and Jezmine develop in-groupness that stems from their Chinese ethnic identity. Thus, the occurrence of *leh* in this extract is triggered by the shared ethnicity between the speakers. Extract 2 below addresses intimacy as a parameter triggering the use of similar features.

Extract 2: *Leh* and Intimacy

The second example is taken from the conversation between two friends, Laura and Xora. In this extract, Xora plans to bathe at Laura's accommodation following their elective class, as the water supply in her hostel block is disrupted. However, the conversation diverges into a discussion of Laura's plan to skip the elective class in favour of visiting a shopping mall. The conversation is illustrated in the following extract:

Line	Speaker	Conversation
1	08/04/2016, 8:15 a.m. - Xora:	Hey Laura *Hey Laura*
2	08/04/2016, 8:15 a.m. - Xora:	Ur kolej got water? *Your college got water?*

3	08/04/2016, 8:15 a.m. - Xora:	If yes then later after class I follow u back ur kolej to bath ok? Btw are you going anyway after class?
		If yes then later after class I'll follow you back to your college to bath okay? By the way, are you going anywhere after class?
4	08/04/2016, 8:35 a.m. - Laura:	got water, but i dun go the class oh, haha, i skip class!😜
		Got water, but I don't go to class oh, haha, I want to skip class!
5	08/04/2016, 8:40 a.m. - Xora:	Chiu[2]
		cool
6	08/04/2016, 8:40 a.m. - Xora:	Later will at kolej? I go find u ok
		Later will you be at college? I'll go find you okay
7	08/04/2016, 8:40 a.m. - Xora:	Why skip class o
		*Why skip class **o**?*
8	08/04/2016, 8:47 a.m. - Laura:	i go out **leh**, haha
		*I want to go out **leh**, haha*
9	08/04/2016, 8:47 a.m. - Laura:	but u can come also **lor**
		*buy you can come also **lor***
10	08/04/2016, 8:47 a.m. - Laura:	just dun go block d 😜
		just don't go to block D
11	08/04/2016, 8:47 a.m. - Xora:	Haha, ok **lor** 😊
		*Haha, okay **lor***
12	08/04/2016, 8:47 a.m. - Xora:	Pergi mana
		Where are you going?

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[2] Chiu refers to *Cool*. Translation obtained from Xora.

13	08/04/2016, 8:47 a.m. - Laura:	the mines[3] 😜😜
		the mines
14	08/04/2016, 8:48 a.m. - Xora:	With commates?
		With computer classmates?
15	08/04/2016, 8:48 a.m. - Laura:	Yup
		Yes

The conversation starts with an online greeting from Xora. Although online chats often include typical salutations, the use of a vocative in line 1 ('hey Laura') can be seen as a call, summons, greeting, or a combination of all these (Walkley, 2009: 38). Xora summons Laura by employing vocatives (Leech, 1999: 116) and announces her difficulties relating to the water disruption in her block. Through this summons, Xora not only intends to greet Laura, but also to draw her attention to important questions/ requests in the following sequences: the availability of water in Laura's block, and Laura's whereabouts after the class. These inquiries are known as the 'probe' phase, in which speakers aim to establish a sense of physical and social context relative to the addressee (Bock, 2013: 78). Through these sequences, it is apparent that Xora is putting forward a proposition (to follow Laura back to her hostel) in a generally assertive manner, without waiting for Laura's permission or response. Here, Xora is presented as someone who is assertive and insistent.

After some time has elapsed, Laura's responses elicit an exchange of news about her plans. In response to Xora's discussion about the water shortage, Laura reassures her that there is a supply of water at her hostel block, stating in line 4 ('got water'). However, the sentence that follows represents an implicit denial of Xora's request to go to her hostel. She acknowledges there is indeed a water supply, following her confirmation with the contrastive marker 'but' to preface her reason for rejecting Xora's request: 'but I don't go to class oh' and tagged with

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[3] The Mines is a name for shopping Mall located in Kuala Lumpur.

laughter 'haha'. Laura then clarifies that she intends to skip the class, expressing her excitement with a 'tongue-out-😛' emoticon. It is suggested that such an emoticon conveys 'a sense of fun, excitement, playfulness, happiness and hilarity' (*Emojipedia*, 2013). With laughter and an emoticon accompanying her unconventional plan, Laura depicts herself as a playful and mischievous student. Another interpretation that could be obtained from line 4 is that this is Laura's indirect way of informing Xora that she has other plans and is therefore unable to meet her after class. In Malaysian societies, intentionally refusing a request without providing any reason demonstrate one's insensitivity to the person's difficulties, and does not represent neighbourliness disposition (Hei, 2009: 37). Therefore, Malaysians tend to employ indirect refusal strategies, such as reasoning, giving reasons, or avoiding responding to the other interlocutor (ibid). This extract shows Laura neither confirms nor denies whether Xora can go to her hostel. Instead, Laura simply repeats that she will not attend the class later (lines 4 and 8). It is suggested here that an excuse indicates that one would respond to the other's needs, unless in the case of a setback (Sarfo, 2011: 9). The excuse provided indicates solidarity, which is a politeness strategy, intended to enhance the addressee's positive face (ibid). Furthermore, Laura's refusal is tempered by chuckles ('haha') both times (lines 4 and 8), to soften the refusal. It can thus be argued that the refusal (*yes* and *but*), as projected by Laura in this extract, is a dispreferred response (Park, 1998: 287).

In the subsequent turn, Xora resists Laura's dispreferred responses by reinforcing her assertiveness, and reformulating the question form as seen in line 6: 'Later will you be at kolej? I go find u ok/ Will you be at the college later? I'll go and find you okay'. Here, Xora appears to be insistent about her plan to have a bath at Laura's hostel. However, Xora also appears to be concerned and intrigued by her friend's reason for skipping class: 'Why skip class o'. It has been proposed that the use of the feature 'o' is employed when one wants to give a friendly advice (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 505). In this context, 'o' seems to be a friendly gesture of concern about Laura skipping the class. Laura then admits that she intends to go for an outing: 'I go out leh, haha'. In this line, Laura employs the feature *leh* and tags the sentence with an indicator of laughter. It has been proposed that *leh* is

often employed by Manglish speakers to reduce the social distance between them. Here, the sentence occurs in the form of a warning directed at Xora, as she insists on her original request despite knowing that Laura will not be able to meet her after class. Therefore, Laura warns Xora of her absence at the time Xora intends to visit her room. The inclusion of *leh* partly softens the warning (2016: 505), which is further mitigated with laughter. It is safe to assume this sentence is a form of warning, following several attempts at emphasizing that she is not available after class. By indicating laughter explicitly through 'haha', the warning appears jocular, and further mitigates Laura's repetitive excuses and unavailability to respond to Xora's request or attend to her problem.

However, the following sequence 'but u can come also lor' displays Laura's engagement with Xora's difficulties, as she proposes other alternatives. Laura prefaces her sentence with 'but', contrasting with her prior excuses or reasons for not helping Xora. The line 'but you can come also lor' displays an emphatic response to Xora's situation. Here, Laura issues an alternative to Xora's problem in the form of a remedial suggestion; this is a form of mitigation strategy for her prior reasons or excuses: Xora can still have a bath at her hostel room. It has been suggested that the inclusion of *lor*, at the end of sentence 11, is an expression of sincerity and expression of sympathy (ibid). In other words, Laura would only be keying her suggestion as friendly and warm, yet requires understanding of her plan. Laura therefore reduces the distancing effect of the earlier refusal, and shows rapport with Xora. Laura further elaborates on her suggestion in a subsequent conversation, not included in this extract. She suggested to Xora that she could follow her housemate, Pearlynne, back to the hostel room. Subsequently, Xora aligns herself with her suggestions, and takes them up, as seen in line 11.

Laura continues to show her support to Xora, as she warns her to not mistakenly visit Block D. She marks her sentence with a 'tongue-out-😜' emoticon, indicating a sense of playfulness and hilarity (*Emojipedia*, 2013). Here, Laura's warning may imply a tone of humour and non-seriousness, corresponding to the mood of this conversation from the beginning of the extract. In the sentence, Block D is the male block. It has been suggested that humour can

measure the degree of 'otherness' and 'in-ness' in casual conversations (Eggins and Slade, 2005: 155). Most importantly, it signals, among others, alignment and solidarity between speakers.

Likewise, Norrick (1994: 409) claims, 'if the attempt at humour is understood and accepted, participants in the conversation may enjoy enhanced rapport'. In response, Xora burst into laughter; prefacing her sentence with 'haha', and a 'laughing tears emoticon- 😂', which symbolises shedding a tear from laughing so hard (*Emojipedia*, 2013), indicating she understands the joke. Here, the emoticon is often used to show something is funny or pleasing to her (ibid). Specifically, both of them share the understanding that Block D is part of the male block. Therefore, a female student finding herself in a male block is problematic. This shared understanding posits a form of in-group girl identity, as emerged from their roles as close friends. Most importantly, Xora accepts Laura's suggestion, as indicated through her response in line 11, 'ok lor'. It has been suggested that *lor* conveys the meaning that one understands the situation and has acted accordingly (Tay *et al.*, 2016). Similarly, *lor* in this extract is employed to express Xora's understanding of the situation, and Laura's plan, and so she agrees to take Laura up on her suggestion. Their conversation continues by exchanging some information regarding Laura's plan and ends on a good note with emoticons.

Several aspects of the conversation are discussed in the extract above. Crucially, it has been shown how Xora and Laura build interpersonal closeness, solidarity and in-group identities through linguistic choices such as the use of vocative, and Manglish features such as *lor* and *leh*, to enhance their friendship or in-groupness. This is realised by showing their involvement and alignment. Bock (2013: 68) labels such features as a 'register of intimacy'. Therefore, the extract above shows how the use of *lor* and *leh* affirms the intimacy between speakers in terms of their relationship, regardless of their ethnic group.

Both the previous extracts have shown that *lor* and *leh* comprise an indexically rich resource; signalling not only ethnic alignment through shared feelings, but also multiple social meanings such as intimacy. In the first extract, we consider in-groupness between Chinese-Chinese speakers who are not close

friends. In the second extract, we witness enhanced intimacy between Chinese-Chinese speakers who already have an established friendship. Although there are different layers of social meanings to be derived from both extracts, they share a similar effect; *lor, leh* and *de* brings the Chinese speakers closer. This was perhaps driven by the ethnic origins of features, whereby Chinese speakers develop in-group camaraderie by using *lor, leh an*d *de*. Having discussed the quantitative data and the qualitative reasoning of *lor, leh* and *de* between Chinese-Chinese speakers, the focus of the discussion now reverts to the quantitative dataset, or *lor, leh* and *de* between Chinese and non Chinese speakers. From the data, a number of the Chinese speakers who interacted with the addressees belonged to the non-Chinese ethnic group. This small amount of diversity, in terms of speakers and addressees, was taken into account and observed. In the overall dataset comprising 38 Chinese speakers, there were a total of 143 addressees from different ethnic groups. A subset of 124 addressees were Chinese, while 19 were non-Chinese (Appendix 7). A subsequent theme of analysis follows the line given here: the ethnicity of speakers and addressees may have a significant effect on adoption of Manglish features. The qualitative analysis of the features shared between Chinese and non-Chinese speakers concluded that the ethnic specific features *lor, leh* and *de* had lost their ethnic specific connotations and were used to attenuate authority and index Manglish identity, contrary to the values identified in extracts 1 and 2, which were Chinese ethnicity and intimacy.

Extract 3: Feature *Leh* as a Marker of Alignment/Solidarity

The following extract is taken from conversations held over a five-month period between a Chinese speaker (Won Bin) and a Malay speaker (Haliza). The excerpt below is part of a conversation addressing work-related matters. They are university colleagues assigned to organize a charity run for their university. Both are treasurers, and so responsible for finding a suitable venue for the event; Won Bin and Haliza cooperated and found a venue for the charity run: a field in Taman Bukit Jalil, located in Kuala Lumpur. They then allocated duties between them: Won Bin prepared the documentation and money required to rent the space, while Haliza retrieved the deposit after the event. As will be shown, some

issues/problems arose when Haliza and Won Bin tried to retrieve the deposit money they paid the company that manages the event space. Note that the first conversation regarding this deposit money occurred in early July, when Won Bin asked Haliza to call the rental office and check the status of the payment. However, Haliza delayed making the call for 10 days, after which time she was informed the rental company had not yet processed the deposit and that she would need to send another document to the officer. By the end of July, Won Bin once again asked her about the deposit money, but whilst she promised to update him as soon as she could, she failed to do so. On 23 August, Won Bin raised the issue again, but Haliza admitted she had not contacted the financial department to follow up on the status of the deposit. After several attempts asking Haliza for updates on the venue deposit, Won Bin becomes more serious, reiterating the significance of the deposit money to Won Bin. She then presents a sample image of the documentation required to process the money. It is then that Won Bin employs *leh*, and receives a similar response from Haliza, as detailed in the following extract:

Line	Speaker	Conversation
1	25/08/2016, 13:17 –Won Bin:	Haliza the taman bukit jalil[4]? *Haliza, how about the event at Taman Bukit Jalil?*
2	25/08/2016, 14:42 - Haliza:	Hi Won Bin ah. I've called the office twice but no response yet. Ill try to call again later. 😬 *Hi Won Bin, I've called the office twice but there is no response yet. I'll try to call again later.*
3	25/08/2016, 14:56 - Haliza:	Won Bin. I contacted the lady through whatsapp. They said they want diff penyata bank. 😕😕😕 the one I sent previously is a diff one she said. The jabatan kewangan rejected that penyata. *Won Bin. I have contacted the lady through WhatsApp. They said they want a different bank statement. The previous one is a different document. The financial department rejected the document.*

[4] Taman Bukit Jalil is a name of place.

4	25/08/2016, 14:56 - Haliza:	<Media omitted>
		Screenshot of the document

5	25/08/2016, 14:56 - Haliza:	She said the jabatan kewangan needs something like this.
		She said that the financial department needs something like this

6	25/08/2016, 14:57 - Haliza:	Still x proses lg the money. 😭😭😭
		They haven't processed the money yet

7	25/08/2016, 14:57 – Bin Won:	Har this one we don't have **leh**
		*We don't have this one yet **leh***

8	25/08/2016, 14:57 – Haliza:	Kannnn
		That's right

9	25/08/2016, 14:57 – Bin Won:	Then she got say what?
		Then what did she say?

10	25/08/2016, 14:57 - Haliza:	I told her. Its under university. So its hard to get this. And we might not get it.
		I told her the bank statement can only be issued by the University. So it's hard to get this. And we probably won't get it.

11	25/08/2016, 14:58 - Haliza:	N she said if dont hv this the jabatan kewangan cant process **leh**
		*And she said if you don't have the bank statement the financial department cannot continue the process **leh***

12	25/08/2016, 14:58 - Haliza:	😟😟😟

In the extract, Won Bin opens the conversation by enquiring with Haliza about the progress she has been made with regard to retrieving the money. Here, the use of the vocative 'Haliza' allows Won Bin to direct the conversation to the issues that particularly concern him. Moreover, it can be suggested that such an opening to the chat – skipping normative greetings – but using initial-vocative prefaces an interrogative sentence, frames the question in a serious tone. In contrast, Haliza responds to Won Bin's question with a polite normative greeting: 'Hi Won

Bin ah'. However, Haliza punctuates her sentence with the Manglish feature *ah*. In this line, *ah* is employed to ensure the flow of the conversation, as it indicates more points will follow (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 505). Here, Haliza appears to understand that she owes Won Bin an explanation regarding the follow-up, as she has not been punctual before. Therefore, the inclusion of *ah* in line 2 represents her anxiety and eagerness to explain the efforts and actions she has taken thus far in handling the issue. Haliza's explanation that she has contacted the rental office twice proves she has taken some action to resolve the problem. Haliza shows further commitment towards this issue by assuring Won Bin that she will try to contact them again, since they have not yet responded. As expressed in line 2, her sentences are punctuated by the 'grinning face with smiling eyes-😆' emoticon. Online resources identify 'mischievous', 'excited', 'agitated' and slight embarrassment as emotional meanings for the grinning face (*Emoji Meanings*, 2015). In this context, it is safe to assume that the emoticon displays a form of nervousness or agitation; since Haliza has failed to update Won Bin on this matter several times. There is a 14-minute difference between turns 2 and 3. During this period, Haliza immediately WhatsApp the officer in charge of the event space and inquiries about an update. This is reflected in line 3, when Haliza reports back to Won Bin about the feedback that she received. The officer requires another document (Haliza claims a bank statement), which is different from that she had submitted earlier. The finance department (which handled the renting of the venue) has therefore been unable to process the deposit money. Here the 'helpless face-😣' emoticons convey a sense of 'exerting great effort' (*Emojipedia*, 2013). The inclusion of three 'helpless face' emoticons following her explanation also portray feelings of frustration, helplessness as characterising her struggle getting the deposit money, despite her efforts towards resolving this issue. Haliza then shows a screenshot of the sample document required to retrieve the deposit money. She has repeatedly shown her frustration, as seen in line 6: 'Still x proses lg the money. 😩😩😩 /Still haven't processed the money'. Again, the feelings are reinforced through repetitive emoticons. It has been suggested that 'tired face-😩' emoticons display a sense of tiredness, frustration, and sadness (*Emojipedia*, 2013).

The next sequence contains an immediate response from Won Bin: 'har this one we don't have leh'. Won Bin prefaces the sentence with the feature 'har', which is the equivalent of the English 'What?' (*The Coxford Singlish Dictionary*, 2002), to express slight surprise at the requirement of the document which he is aware they do not have. Other than surprise, Won Bin punctuates the sentence with the feature *leh* to lend emphasis to the point. In fact, both Haliza and Won Bin are aware that they do not have the required documentation. This is shown in the next sequence, in which Haliza agrees strongly with Won Bin in a form of elongated spelling: 'kannnn/right'. The shared understanding, realised through *leh* in line 7, appears to have a similar function to the Manglish features *de* and *one*. It has been suggested that *de* and *one* can be used to render the assumption as shared knowledge (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 507). Specifically, *leh* in line 7 can be translated into 'Har we both know that we don't have this one'. At this stage, the use of *leh* aligns them as 'helpless' at the request of the document, and Haliza's previous lack of commitment is undermined thereby foregrounding their shared helplessness. Most importantly, the employment of *leh* in line 7 serves to maintain the social relationship between the speakers. Won Bin's silence and seriousness in the earlier part of the conversation is now mitigated by several attempts at explanations, and with emoticons used by Haliza. Line 7 marks the change in the tone of the conversation when Won Bin responds to the screenshots, and is then finally persuaded by Haliza's commitment and immediate actions.

This extract shows Won Bin's tolerance when responding to Haliza's frequent excuses. On the other hand, Haliza appears to be less committed to the treasurer position than she maintains. This is reflected in her delaying of her work and failure to give updates about the deposit money. The conversation continues when Haliza reports that it is difficult to obtain the required document, since they have to request it from the university. In line 11, Haliza draws Won Bin's attention to the importance of obtaining the document, which could potentially cause a processing delay in the financial department: 'N she said if dont hv this the jabatan kewangan cant process leh/And she said if don't have this the finance department can't process leh'. Here, Haliza punctuates the

sentence with the feature *leh* to soften the warning tone in the message; there is a possibility that they might not recoup the deposit paid to the venue. It is suggested that Haliza's employment of *leh* helps mitigate her warning tones and is subsequently intended to reduce Won Bin's unease. This is because Haliza feels guilty that she failed to inform him about this matter sooner. This guilt is portrayed in a further sequence, when Haliza claims she does not know what to do after rejecting the previous statement (not included in the extract). Moreover, Haliza's frequent use of emoticons, including the 'frowning face-😕' in line 12, conveys a feeling of 'disappointment' (*Emojipedia*, 2013) towards herself or this issue. This is further reinforced when she apologises to Won Bin.

The discussion in extract 3 reveals that Won Bin and Haliza took on multiple roles in the interaction. Firstly, when acting as treasurers when organising the Run for the university. They subsequently position themselves as 'helpless' when discussing getting the necessary document to claim back their deposit. Within their interaction, there are different linguistic varieties serving different dynamic roles. There are clear transitions between formality of speech and informal features. From the conversations, it is apparent that Haliza's speech is moving into the role of formality after greeting Won Bin (lines 3 to 5). Haliza is aware of the seriousness of the matter posed in the discussion, and explains to Won Bin the current situation. Therefore, she may feel that there should be clear and precise use of language when explaining this to Won Bin. However, the formal style shifts to informal, representing Haliza's personal opinion, and various suggestions concerning the matter (line 8 and 11). Moreover, Haliza's use of *leh*, following Won Bin's use of *leh* could also be used to reciprocate his style. In his study of dialect enregisterment in a Melanesian speech community, Slotta (2012: 8-9) discusses a reciprocation form in the actions and speech of his Nian participant. In one of the speech events presented in his data, Slotta discusses a form of dialect shift in a thank you speech given by the leader of the Nian congregation's Women's Group to Tapmangke's leader and villagers. The Nian leader's act of giving gift reciprocates the good works performed by the Tapmangke's leader on their behalf. The Nian leader also uses the Tapmangke variant 'taka' (meaning thanks) when bestowing a gift on the Tapmangke's

leader. Further, Slotta (2012) describes how the use of another's dialect can transform the social relationship between speaker and addressee. It has been suggested that the recipient eventually recognized this act and reciprocated it using a few words and expressions from the initial speaker to create interpersonal affiliation (ibid). Similar to these people living in the Yopno alley, the non-Chinese speakers in my study did not speak Chinese fluently, but they were aware that a few words or expressions that could be used to reciprocate strategically in a speech event.

In this interaction involving a Chinese and non-Chinese speaker, I argue that the feature *leh* is construed beyond matters of ethnic identity. Haliza and Won Bin use Manglish according to the stance they want to take towards one another. They shifted between formal and informal, or serious to laid back speech, as realized through *lor*, *leh* and *de*, to form a bond and create a sense of collaboration for solving problems. The concept of language shifting is discussed by Ioannidou (2017) in reference to young children's linguistic practices during play time in the Greek Cypriot context. In her study, Ioannidou found that pre-schoolers use Standard Modern Greek and Cypriot Greek depending on the social situation, or the roles that they want to perform during play. For instance, in one of the extracts, the participant uses the dialectal address-form "mana mu/honey" for emphatic purposes when encountering a communication gap with his interlocutor (ibid: 62). He also uses the pronoun "mu/my" to express affection and bond with his addressee. In a situation where one of them lost an item, the other suggested pretending that the lost item belongs to both of them. This creates a sense of shared loss and further enhances their bond. Similar to the use of *leh* in extract 3, the use of the Manglish form realised through *leh* does not only mitigate the seriousness of the situation, but also generates a sense of shared 'helplessness' among the speakers. Therefore, the linguistic choices used in this extract indicate the solidarity between the speakers.

The overall discussion in this section reveals how Chinese ethnic specific features, such as *lor, leh* and *de,* are used to establish solidarity; their use depends on the ethnicity of the addressees. However, when not used as in-group markers, these ethnic specific features function as alignment markers established over a

period of time, as seen in Extract 3 above. Moreover, the analysis of *lor, leh* and *de* shows these features can be employed to communicate similar social signals, for instance to position speakers as good friends or to maintain the relationship between them.

5.4   Discussion

The analysis of the WhatsApp samples presented in this chapter has examined a cluster of ethnic-attributed Manglish features in the dataset, namely *lor, leh* and *de*. Given the previously defined sociocultural landscape of this study (Chapter 2), it is unsurprising that the ethnic origin of the speakers has an important effect on the distribution of these features across the three ethnic groups. Indeed, the SPSS results show *lor, leh* and *de* are more frequently used when the Chinese speakers interact with addressees from similar ethnic groups, than when the same Chinese speakers interact with non-Chinese addressees. In this respect, the findings of this study correspond to those of other sociolinguistic studies on dialect use in conversations between in-group and out-group members. For example, in his study of word-final nasal velarization, Hernandez (2009) compared the use of nasal velarization between interviewers from different ethnic groups: Mexican Spanish and Salvadoran Spanish. He found that Salvadoran participants interviewed by a Salvadoran Spanish interviewer tended to employ a higher rate of nasal velarization, compared to when the same informants interacted with a Mexican interviewer. Therefore, linguistic features play a significant role in identifying the member of an ethnic group, and often negotiated (reduced) to accommodate the outgroup speakers.

Additionally, this analysis addressed two aspects: firstly, the use of ethnic-attributed features between in-group and out-group members, and secondly, how Chinese speakers negotiate their identities via the use of these features. In terms of the latter, it suggested that the use of ethnic-attributed features does not exclusively index affiliation with a specific ethnic group, but instead adds to the indexical field of qualities associated with intimacy and friendship. Therefore, the relationship and social distance between the speakers are further important criteria that have emerged from the analysis. In terms of quantitative findings,

the results shown earlier in this chapter, and the examples presented in extracts 1 and 2, demonstrate the speaker's awareness of *lor, leh* and *de* as ethnic-attributed features, and selectively use them with their Chinese interlocutors to form in-groupness and to overcome social distance. Evidently the Chinese-Chinese interactions enfolded the notion of indexicality. As pointed in Chapter 3, Johnstone *et. al* (2006) discuss how a set of features associated with the Pittsburgh underwent three orders of indexicality to become enregistered. In the case of extracts 1 and 2, *leh* seemingly indexes 'Chinese' for Chinese speakers – indicating that they are already associated with particular speakers and social contexts. This is therefore indicative of (at least) a second-order of indexicality.

A close examination of the qualitative analysis suggests the use of *lor, leh* and *de* corresponds to how individuals, when negotiating their ethnic identity, orient themselves according to local and ethnically indexed personae. This is illustrated in the extracts presented in the analysis above, which permit a comparison of how speakers employ ethnic-attributed features with addressees of similar and different ethnic groups, and create a sense of in-group identity, as well as reflecting the degree of intimacy with their interlocutors. The first two extracts show how Laura interacts with addressees from similar ethnic groups. Both conversations centred on talking about difficulties, where Laura had taken a different approach to dealing with the issue. The first extract demonstrates a typical context in which one's ethnicity is emphasized in a race-relations topic; that is, a context where the boundary between 'us' and 'them' can be expected to be most salient. Although Laura and Jezmine regard each other as course mates only, they gradually achieve an interpersonal consensus with each other. This is symbolised through the alignment marker *leh*, where Jezmine shared a similar emotional stance with Laura, namely hatred and annoyance towards their Malay course mates. As Jefferson, Sacks and Schegloff (1987) note, 'the introduction of improper talk can mark a move into intimate, in-group interaction' (Cited in Lo, 1999: 470). It is suggested that the use of *lor* and *leh* in the extract evokes heightened feelings of in-group belonging between speakers. Although *lor, leh* and *de* are not indicative of racialized features (they are ethnic-specific features), they are implicitly tied to notions of belonging and othering, dependent on

speaker stance and context. In this case, they may be used to create social and ethnic closeness and distancing.

Meanwhile recognizable Manglish features, such as *lor, leh* and *de*, are used to construct ethnicity. Becker (2014) notes that the concept of indexicality highlights the role of linguistic features in instrumenting social meaning to a broader social category (ethnicity). That is to say, *lor, leh* and *de* draw on an indexical field of meanings, including locality (ethnic belonging) and stances of solidarity, which are used to construct aspects of speakers' multidimensional identities. This identity is portrayed in the second extract in the conversation between Laura and her Chinese friend, Xora. Unlike Jezmine, Laura regards Xora not only as her course mate, but also as a friend. This is reflected in various features in the conversation that are indicative of closeness of relationship: vocative and self-disclosure. For instance, Xora's deployment of the vocative 'hey' accentuates the intimacy of their categorical relationship of friends, since the use of 'hey' for the second person singular usually connotes a negative meaning and occasionally interpreted as an insult (Atoofi, 2013: 878). However, the usual responses and replies from Laura show that such greetings contain a form of solidarity, as well as indicating a normal salutation or greeting from a friend. Another important point which defines the relationship between speakers is the sharing of secrets and personal plans; Laura is going to skip class and go to the mall. In line with this, Bock (2013: 72) suggests 'the establishment and maintenance of intimacy, whether between lovers or friends, requires several criteria, such as dialogue, reciprocity and vulnerability through the sharing of feelings, secrets or self-disclosure'. In terms of the social distance measure, as the relationships described became more intimate, the indexical relationship of *lor, leh* and *de* to ethnicity is reduced and becomes an indicator of friendliness and affiliation.

The two extracts above show that despite their social distance from the interlocutors, Laura employs *lor, leh* and *de* when interacting with her Chinese addressees to portray her 'Chinese-ness' and friendship, friendship being the indexical value added in the second extract. Crucially, Laura begins to characterize the different ethnic groups to which her friends belong, and the role

of Manglish features in marking the ethnic group. The data suggests there is no occurrence of Chinese specific features (such as *lor, leh* and *de*) when Laura is interacting with her Malay friend, Aisya. This situation did not only arise with Laura, but also with most of the speakers in this study. In rare cases, such as extract 3, *leh* is found in the conversation between a Chinese and non-Chinese speaker, although this was in the third month of their interaction. The occurrence of *leh* indicates that the talk has become more relaxed, informal and direct.

In extract 3, it is interesting to note that the conversation begins with a serious intonation before shifting to a more casual conversation. From the overall conversation between Won Bin and Haliza, including extract 3, it is safe to assume Won Bin has a higher position as a treasurer. There are several instances where Won Bin demonstrates authority towards Haliza. Firstly, Won Bin has specifically assigned Haliza a task, namely retrieving the deposit money for the venue that they rented for the university event. Haliza is obliged to give him updates on the matter. In the later segment of extract 3, Won Bin has also given several options to Haliza to solve the problem. This includes asking Haliza to seek their friend's help to obtain the required document. However, after hearing feedback and explanations from Haliza, Won Bin mitigates his authoritativeness using the feature *leh*. Most importantly, Won Bin starts to look for a collective way to retrieve the financial deposit. The serious and formal atmosphere in the initial utterance then shifts to a more casual and communicative atmosphere. Haliza tactfully upgrades her emotional stance towards the challenge raised using her linguistic repertoire. She uses the Manglish feature *kan* to elicit agreement from Won Bin, and the subsequent feature *leh* to strongly affiliate herself with Won Bin's affective stance, displaying concern and regret concerning this problem. As a result, Won Bin does not only attenuate the power relations between them, but subsequently offers a few solutions (not included in the extract); 1) going to the school and asking for the document; 2) referring this problem to another friend to find a solution. Therefore, *leh* does not only align the speakers, but rather achieves more of a local establishment between them. When evaluating the inferences regarding the role of language choice in extract 3, I proposed that the use of *leh* between Chinese and non-Chinese speakers

indexes Manglishness. This argument is further supported on the commentary section of the online questionnaire (discussed in Chapter 7) when speakers reflect awareness of known Manglish features. Won Bin and other speakers' typical responses suggest using Manglish is not only a common behaviour, but one that is recognised as unique to Malaysian culture. This awareness might indicate a possible evolution in the representation of Manglish from one of indexical of ethnicity to a more localised Manglish identity. As seen in the extracts, Manglish features are not only associated with informality, friendship and solidarity; indeed, the fact that speakers from different ethnic groups employ them within their conversations construct an identity that is Malaysian based on Manglish-ness. Auckle (2017) reports similar finding in his study concerning manifestations of Mauritius youth identity in online settings. He suggested that written Mauritian has a double indexicality. Written Mauritian not only equates to informality, friendship and solidarity, but also links to Mauritian identity and nationhood (ibid). Similar to Manglish, Cockney is known as a local language variant, which is strongly associated with London. As described by Sebba and Tate (2002: 80), Cockney is strongly identified with locality, informality, and solidarity, as well as mitigating the speaker's relation to authoritativeness and power. In Hewitt's terms (1986: 151), Cockney can be defined as a 'local multiracial vernacular' as it is practised by both black and white young people in London, and does not signify/represent a specific ethnicity. This, community English is ethnically mixed as it is created and deconstructed from fragments at ethnic sites (ibid). The indexical association and language landscape of Mauritians and Cockney are very similar to Manglish.

Based on the discussion in this section, I have shown how ethnic identity is constructed between Chinese-Chinese speakers, and how it is projected through the content and form of their utterances. Moreover, I have also discussed the potential indexical values of the features used during Chinese and non-Chinese conversations (extract 3). This allows us to delve more deeply into the speakers' understanding of Manglish features, and how they associate them with being Malaysian. Chapter 7 elaborates on this by presenting a detailed analysis of the questionnaire surveys from the speakers.

5.5   Conclusion

The investigation of Manglish features in the dataset identified several features common to specific ethnic groups. Specifically, *lor, leh* and *de* occur at a significantly higher rate in interactions between Chinese speakers. Thus, building on both the basis of ethnicity and the frequency of their occurrences, the focus of this chapter was to examine the usage of these features among speakers in this study. It has been shown that Chinese speakers prefer to use *lor, leh* and *de* with their Chinese addressees, and typically avoid using it with their non-Chinese friends. To analyse how *lor, leh* and *de* are used in the conversation, three representative samples were presented. Although the Chinese speaker (e.g Laura) differentiates her intimacy levels with her addressees, the fact that she employs them at the same rate of occurrence indicates of the construction of Chinese-ness with her speakers; Chinese-ness only in the first extract, Chinese-ness and friendship/intimacy in the second extract. Moreover, the lack of occurrence of these features in her conversation with her Malay friend, Aisya (refer Table 5.3), suggests she has a sense of awareness of the specific features attributed to their ethnicity. Drawing on the indexical order theory (Johnstone *et. al*, 2006; Silverstein, 2003), this study proposes that *lor, leh* and *de* have progressed into a second- order of indexicality linked with membership of an ethnic category; that is, Chinese in-group markers. However, it is argued that linguistic features, which are employed alongside other non-linguistic resources (CMC features) do not have a singular stance or social meaning, but rather several potential ones. Looking at the use of *leh* in extract 3, and also among non-Chinese speakers, this study has demonstrated that all ethnic groups use Manglish, although at a very low rate. This suggests it is not only indicative of ethnic identity in the strict sense of the word, but it is a feature of a localized Manglish identity. This form of localised and shared identity is similar to that discussed by Rajah-Carrim (2009) in her study in the Mauritian Creole online setting, where she highlights that common language use among these young Mauritians can help them to establish a shared identity, where 'they foreground their national identity and background' (2009: 505). We can therefore conclude that the practice of using Manglish online creates a similar environment to that reported

by Rajah-Carrim for young Mauritians. As Rajah-Carrim puts it, language use 'transcends ethnic barriers and unites people from various ethnolinguistic communities' (2009: 485). To give a clearer sense of how particular Manglish features are associated with specific social values, I discuss in chapter 7 the responses to the online questionnaire and the metalinguistic commentary. The discussion draws on the notion of indexicality (Silverstein, 2003) where I measure the speakers' awareness of the Manglish features. The awareness which occurs at three levels of associations, will serve as evidence for the enregisterment (Agha, 2003) of Manglish. Having discussed the awareness level and associated social values in terms of ethnic and Manglish speaker's identity, the next chapter (6) discusses how specific features becomes strongly associated with other aspects of identity associated with Manglish speakers. The discussion focuses on the most frequently occurring features in the WhatsApp data across all ethnic groups, namely *lah*. Interestingly, the use of *lah* in the data appears to occur side by side with Manglish swear words, as speakers consciously mark the tone of speech and style shift within their interactions. Unlike the macro-level social frames analysis (ethnic identity) in this chapter, Chapter 6 delves deeper into the meso- and micro-level social frames. This relates to the relationship between the speakers, whether informal, serious or intimate, during a specific interactional moment.

Chapter 6

Lah and Swearwords in In-group Conversation

6.1   Introduction

This chapter examines more closely the most recurrent Manglish feature present in my data; i.e., *lah*. It takes a step further than the macro social frames of *lor, leh* and *de*, which were the focus of the previous chapter, and demonstrates the meso- and micro-social frames of *lah*. Unlike *lor, leh* and *de*, which have ethnic-specific connotations (macro-social frame), this chapter argues that the feature *lah* has lost its ethnic specific connotations and Manglish-ness due to its wide usage among the speakers. In the first section, the typical function of *lah* as an intimacy marker – a characteristic identified and confirmed by previous scholars – is discussed. The following section discusses the use of swear words with *lah*, as these function as a cluster of contextualisation cues. Observation of the dataset reveals that speakers in the study routinely deploy a swear word with *lah* as part of their repertoire when aiming to achieve specific communicative effects and meanings. Applying Gumperz's (1982) approach to contextualisation cues, I present the various examples that emerged from the WhatsApp data of *lah* used with swear words, ranging from mild to strong intensity. These contextualisation cues serve to frame the speaker's upcoming utterances, demonstrating attitudes towards the current topic and overall interaction. I also discuss interpretation of these cues, such as the addressee's response patterns in relation to intonation and topic shift. Ability to interpret and respond to these cues represents the speakers' shared background and in-groupness, thus indicating intimacy among these young Manglish speakers. Through the discussion of *lah* and swear words, Chapter 6 presents the versatility of the Manglish feature *lah*, being associated with a range of information – both linguistic and indexical.

6.2 *Lah* in my Dataset

The overall dataset includes 7428 instances of *lah* emerging from 51 of the 52 participants (see Appendix 8 for the distribution of *lah*). The results confirm that *lah* (sometimes spelt *la* or *laa*) is frequently used by young Malaysians conversing via WhatsApp Messenger. Stapa and Shaari (2013: 138) describe *lah* as one of the unique identities in Malaysian English. In their studies of Malaysian English in online communicative settings, namely Facebook, Stapa and Shaari (2013) report that several other features, including *lah*, are used by the speakers from different ethnic groups, and they therefore characterise them as one linguistic community sharing a similar language on an online platform. Stapa and Shaari associate the use of Malaysian English within an online setting with youth culture, due to the extensive use of such features, including the localised spellings of certain words. The findings in my study demonstrate similarities in terms of ethnic and youth aspects. *Lah* is employed by 51 speakers, regardless of their ethnic groups, and also in online communication, i.e. WhatsApp Messenger. However, my study ultimately expands on ethnic aspects by analysing swear words, as my analysis reveals that the use of Manglish features (in this case, *lah*) along with swear words constructs intimacy between the speakers. This marks the expansion of *lah* beyond ethnicity-specific factors, as demonstrated by *lor, leh*, and *dei*, discussed in Chapter 5. Before delving deeper into the occurrence of *lah* with swear words; it is useful to determine the frequency and gradual increase of the occurrences of *lah* in speakers' WhatsApp conversations. Lowenberg (1992: 49) identifies *lah* as a tool with which to establish rapport between close friends and families. The analysis from the conversations of one my participants below will demonstrate how *lah* gradually reduces social distance between speakers; thereby increasing the intimacy between them. The discussion surrounding *lah* allows us to observe the impact of *lah* upon the context, and the intonation of the interaction, or the surrounding words, which are subsequently important when co-occurring with Manglish swear words which is discussed throughout this chapter.

6.2.1   The use of *lah* in Hoon's WhatsApp conversations

My dataset reveals Speaker 50, named Hoon, uses *lah* most often, with a total number of 926 instances appearing in his WhatsApp conversations. This means, *lah* occurs 33 times in every 1000 words of conversation. Following Stapa and Shaari (2012), who recorded 12 months of Facebook conversations among 120 young Malaysians from different ethnic groups, I analyse one year of data in respect of WhatsApp conversations for Hoon. Stapa and Shaari (2012) claim that conversations recorded within this period of time supported their evaluation using content analysis, in order to interpret and capture the attitudes and communicative trends of certain words, and the phrases of characters within a sentence. Similarly, collecting observational data over one year, focusing on *lah* as used in conversations, allowed me to address the patterns of occurrence of *lah*, and to provide appropriate samples of conversations with regard to the functioning of *lah.* Here, I intend to demonstrate quantitatively how the use of *lah* gradually increases in a friendlier context.

In part of the dataset, Hoon converses with his female friend, Melrose. They are both law students, studying at a university in Malaysia. Throughout the 12-month period of the observation, different phases of the relationship between the speakers are apparent. These begin with a senior-junior relationship, and progress towards friendship; subsequently developing into a more intimate relationship. Initially discussing formal topics involving work matters, they begin to share interests, daily routines, past relationships, and intimate feelings. This increasingly results in the increasing frequency of the use of *lah*, in a manner that is influenced by speakers' degree of intimacy and their relationship to each other. Figure 6.1 below presents the frequency with which conversations take place between Hoon and Melrose.

Figure 6.1 Frequency of Monthly Conversation in Correspondence to *lah*

In Figure 6.1, the frequency of the conversations parallels the instances of *lah* found in their conversations. During the first few months (January to August), the total number of uses of *lah* appear to be fewer than five instances. However, the use of *lah* increases over time, reaching maximum rate of occurrence with 148 instances in November. The increasing frequency of the use of *lah* from August onwards is a probable indication of the growing intimacy between speakers. Within this period, Hoon and Melrose begin to discuss their personal life and express their affection for one another. Also, in an online questionnaire, Hoon claims that he employs Manglish features (such as *lah*), only when conversing with close friends. This assertion parallels findings noted in other studies relating to Manglish (Tay *et al.*, 2016), as exemplified in Chapter 5, where I discuss the use of *leh* between friends (refer to extract 2). Moreover, it is suggested that Manglish can be used to convey interpersonal relationships between friends and colleagues (ibid: 480). The association between specific particles and intimacy between friends was also discussed by Squires (1994: 23), within the Japanese context. In his examples, he noted that speaker A uses the feature ne to acquire empathy from speaker N, such as in topics involving marriage. Speaker A states that he does not want to think about marriage, ending his sentence with *ne*.

Squires suggests the use of *ne* asserts common ground and understanding between speakers, due to their close relationships (ibid: 23). To illustrate how *lah* operates as a marker of intimacy, I refer to a sample conversation demonstrating how *lah* is used to reduce social distance between speakers.

This stereotypical function of *lah* as an intimacy marker (Tongue, 1974: 114; Bell & Ser, 1983: 14) is apparent in the following example. The conversation below occurs between Melrose and Hoon taking place at the outset of their friendship. Hoon is a senior law student at a local university, known for achieving good grades. In an earlier part of the conversation, Hoon offers to assist his junior, Melrose, by teaching her. The conversation takes place after the first discussion session has just finished when they are planning a second session. The Standard English translation for the conversations in this extract, and the other samples are presented in Italics.

Line	Time	Conversation
1	23/01/2016, 14:13 - Melrose:	Enn I think next week I will ask u a lot questions haha
		I think next week I will ask you a lot of questions haha
2	23/01/2016, 14:13 - Melrose:	Be ready ya 😝
		*Be ready **ya** 😝*
3	23/01/2016, 14:15 - Hoon:	I will try my best to answer **laa** 😅
		*I will try my best to answer **laa** 😅*
4	23/01/2016, 14:15 - Hoon:	Coz I'm not really good on it[5] too
		Cause I'm not really good at it too
5	23/01/2016, 14:19 - Melrose:	Haha I think I will ask u a lot basic stuff only **la**
		*Haha I think I will only ask you a lot of basic questions **la***
6	23/01/2016, 14:19 - Melrose:	Coz I got no basic ma 😁

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[5] Hoon is referring to one of the modules for the law course.

		Cause I don't have the basic knowledge **ma** 😁
7	23/01/2016, 14:22 - Hoon:	I'll try my best <u>**laa**</u>
		I will try my best **laa**
8	23/01/2016, 14:22 - Hoon:	😄😄😄

In the conversation, we can see Melrose playfully warning Hoon that she intends to ask more questions during their next discussion, so he needs to prepare himself. However, the utterances in Lines 1 and 2 are followed with a range of mitigating strategies, such as laughter (*haha*), 'cheeky face-😝' emoticon (*Emojipedia*, 2013), and the feature *ya* (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 507), suggesting Melrose is generally intending to convey joviality and humour in her utterances. Following the warning, Hoon expresses an intention to give his best in the next session. Here, the sentence is punctuated with a 'grinning face-😄' emoticon, conveying the suggestion of a nervous/dubious tone (*Emojipedia*, 2013). The inclusion of *laa* preceding the emoticon, contributes to the reduction of epistemic commitment, playing down his expertise, and thereby increasing solidarity between the speakers. Hoon's modesty is reinforced in the following utterance, where he suggests he is only moderately good at the subject. In terms of politeness, Melrose's request could threaten Hoon's negative face and her playful warning functions as a mitigating device; therefore, Hoon explicitly positions himself as 'lacking knowledge' to manage Melrose's expectations.

Following this exchange, Melrose clarifies that she only requires basic knowledge about the subject, prefacing her sentence with laughter '*haha*' (Line 5), and employing *la* to moderate her previous warning in Line 1. Her qualification is clarified by her indication that she has no basic knowledge concerning the subject. Her lack of knowledge is then made explicit in the next sequence through use of the particle *ma*, which suggests her weakness is shared knowledge (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 508). This would be logical, since Hoon is aware Melrose is only in the first year of her bachelor's degree program, and has not therefore been exposed to the module as yet. In response, Hoon repeats his utterance in Line 3, affirming his commitment to trying his best. This is followed

with three 'grinning face-😁' emoticons, indicating a warm smile and gratification (*Emojipedia*, 2013) with regard to assisting her with her studies. The repetition of the utterance ('I will try my best laa'), and the use of emoticons are probable indicators that Hoon is delighted someone is acknowledging his expertise in this way.

In reference to the above example, I have discussed the prototypical function of *lah* in the study, namely its use as an intimacy marker which corresponds to the functions of *lah* noted in previous studies. The role of CMC features is also important in this analysis, especially in an online context, where it contributes to interpretation and understanding of the speaker's attitude and intonation. Above all, Figure 1 has proven that *lah* signals the presence of intimacy between speakers, as it corresponds to the establishment and development of a relationship between them. The questionnaire results corroborate this recognition of *lah* as an intimacy marker, as it is widely recognised as a Manglish feature preferred between friends and family.

Reviewing Hoon's data, it is apparent that as the relationship between himself and Melrose develops from a senior-junior relationship to one of friends, and then from friends to intimate friends, various additional functions of *lah* emerge from their conversations. *Lah* is often used as an emphasis marker, and here it is used to stress Hoon's affections towards Melrose. It is also used to reduce social distance between them, by altering sentences through mitigation, indicating friendly agreement, and concession. However, closer observations of the data show that Hoon tends to employ *lah* in conjunction with swear words when discussing more sensitive topics (i.e. jealousy, reference to third parties). Interestingly, Melrose appears to recognise Hoon's intentions, and starts mitigating her utterances through a variety of strategies, including clarification and face-saving. This data-driven finding prompted me to further investigate how *lah* and swear words function in the local context including how they are interpreted by the addressee/listener. To explore how swear words and *lah* are being used in the data, I introduce what Gumperz (1982) labels contextualisation cues below. Building upon this aspect of contextualisation cues, I analyse the

conversations based on relevant aspects, such as topic, the tone of the utterance aided by CMC features, and the reactions of listeners.

6.3   Swearing and *Lah*

The previous section identified the intimacy function for the most recurrent Manglish feature, i.e. *lah*. However, we may observe in the extract above that *lah* is also a 'clitic particle' (Goddard, 1994: 148), referring to features that are 'capable of being appended to words of varying word-classes' (ibid.). They further explain that *lah* will impact not only on the words to which it is attached, but also the whole utterance. For instance, *lah* can function as an intensifier when combined with other words (Preshous, 2001: 50). *Lah* as an emphasis marker is reported in Rustinar's (2018) study of Bengkulu-Malay swear words. In her comparison between cursing sentences, Rustinar shows that sentences with the feature *lah* — as in the line 'Mati beranaklah kau!/You'll die when you give birth to your baby!' — exert more pressure on the context, or the person to whom the speaker is referring (ibid: 176).

This section discusses the use of *lah* when grafted to swear words, as present in the data. Chapter 2 offered various definitions of swearing (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008; Ljung, 2011); however, throughout this thesis, all forms of swearing are referred to as 'swear words'. It is relevant that some of these swear words are also listed as Manglish in the online questionnaire. Examples of the listed swear words include 'GG' ('stupid'), 'kanasai' ('like shit'), and 'sohai' ('so'-'crazy'; 'hai'- 'pussy'). Other swear words present in the data, although not listed by the speakers on the questionnaire, appear in the *A Dictionary of Singlish and Singapore English* (2004) and *The Coxford Singlish Dictionary* (2002). Due to similarities shared between some Manglish and Singlish words (discussed in Chapter 2), we might as well consider these swear words as Manglish. In this thesis, the Singlish dictionaries – lists of documented Singlish features – serve as the guidelines in defining some of the swear words found in the data. In this section, swear words and *lah* are treated as clusters of Manglish features, which are contextualised to indicate different forms of meaning, such as degree of seriousness when talking, or degrees of intimacy between speakers.

The overall data identifies 22 speakers employing *lah* and swear words as contextualisation cues. Although this is a relatively small distribution of swear words and *lah*, there is remarkable consistency in the production of Manglish clusters as cues foreshadowing the speaker's following utterances or signalling 'an upcoming change in context' (Couper-Kuhlen and Auer, 1991: 2). The speakers regularly employ swear words and use *lah* to express disapproval. Disapproval can relate to the interlocutor's attitude, or a range of particular activities; such as mockery, or disapproval, which can occur when the speaker feels threatened by other interlocutors. Table 6.1 depicts the distribution of *lah* and swear words per 1000 words, for three speaker conversations that were selected for analysis. Four WhatsApp extracts were selected drawing evidence from the three speakers. The speakers were selected for two reasons; 1) due to the prominence of the occurrence of swear words and *lah*; 2) to demonstrate the representative functions of *lah* when used with different Manglish swear words.

Speaker	Relationship with Addressee	*n*	*n* per 1000 words
Ben	Friend	5/2812	1.8
Hoon	Friend	40/28, 477	1.4
Amalina	Friend	23/32, 519	0.7

Table 6.1 Distribution of *lah* along with swear words per 1000 words

Table 6.1 presents instances of swear words with *lah* for Ben, Hoon and Amalina, within the overall duration of WhatsApp conversations. The relationship between the speakers and the addressees employing these Manglish clusters was one of good friends. The type of relationship plays an important role in determining how well interlocutors understand one another, and whether contextualisation cues are shared. The first two samples were drawn from the Hoon-Melrose conversation, which initially triggered the investigation. There is then a sample from Ben's conversation, which shows continual usage of swear words and *lah*. The final sample presents the conversation between Amalina and

her friends, who consistently use swear words and *lah* in the form of address terms. This highlights the importance of the address term relative to other uses of *lah* with swear words. The various intensity levels of swear words are also discussed in this analysis. My discussion draws on my observations from chats, the social backgrounds of research subjects, and media resources; such as the online symbols and the emoticons chosen. These sources are combined when presenting the uses and functions of the cues.

Extract 1: Playful Matchmaker to Serious Relationship Talk

The first sample is drawn from a conversation between the same two friends introduced above: Hoon and Melrose, who are studying at the same university and taking the law course. Hoon is a senior student, and Melrose a junior one. Within the year of reported conversations, the two progress from a 'senior and junior' relationship to one of close friends.

Hoon and Melrose's conversation prior to the extract included below concerned Hoon's apparent crush on Zailin, a mutual friend. This occurred in the 13th month of their interaction. Melrose initiates the topic of relationships with Hoon, expressing her curiosity about whether he has been approached by any girls at the university. Hoon reluctantly tells Melrose that Zailin confessed her affection for him, but that he does not return her feelings. The extract below captures Melrose's reaction. She mentions an occasion when Hoon had gone out to buy Zailin a McDonald's porridge at 3 AM, which Melrose identifies as a caring gesture that led Zailin to feel especially valued by him. Melrose expresses incredulity at his statement that he is not interested in Zailin. She then starts to criticise Hoon for giving Zailin the wrong impression. Her indignation grows as she questions evidence of Hoon's attentiveness towards Zailin. Their conversation is as follows:

Line	Speaker	Conversation
1	17/01/2017, 22:59 - Melrose:	She not bad eh *She is not bad right eh*
2	17/01/2017, 22:59 - Hoon:	Then only *shun bian*[6] buy for her *Then only casually buy for her[7]*
3	17/01/2017, 22:59 - Hoon:	😔😔
4	17/01/2017, 23:00 - Hoon:	不要害人啦 [8] *don't frame people **la***
5	17/01/2017, 23:00 - Melrose:	Haha I tot the other way?? Wanna tapao[9] for her sunbian go eat 😛 *Haha I thought it's the other way?? You want to buy food for her so straightaway have dinner*
6	17/01/2017, 23:00 - Melrose:	Dunwan consider meh *Why don't you consider[10] meh*
7	17/01/2017, 23:00 - Hoon:	Ur head[11] ***la*** *Your head **la***
8	17/01/2017, 23:00 - Hoon:	Never *Never*
9	17/01/2017, 23:03 - Melrose:	Bo feeling at all?? *No feeling at all??*
10	17/01/2017, 23:03 - Hoon:	Bo *No*
11	17/01/2017, 23:03 - Melrose:	A little bit pun takde? *Not even a bit?*

[6] Shun bian is a Mandarin translation meaning in passing, conveniently.

[7] Line 2 refers to a casual act of buying McDonalds.

[8] Translation obtained from Hoon.

[9] Tapao is a Mandarin translation referring to take-away food.

[10] This line refers to considering Zailin as Hoon's girlfriend.

[11] 'Your head' is an English translation of Mandarin 你的头 nǐde tóu, which has been quoted in Singapore's *The Straits Times* (www.singlishdictionary.com).

12	17/01/2017, 23:03 - Hoon:	Takde *No*
13	17/01/2017, 23:04 - Hoon:	Why u think I got feeling towards her? *Why do you think that I have feelings for her?*
14	17/01/2017, 23:04 - Melrose:	Coz u treat her very good ar *Because you treated her nicely ar*
15	17/01/2017, 23:04 - Hoon:	Call me and let me explain to u *Call me and let me explain this to you*
16	17/01/2017, 23:04 - Hoon:	😪😪
17	17/01/2017, 23:04 - Melrose:	maiii let me slowly interpret myself *nooo let me slowly interpret myself*
18	17/01/2017, 23:05 - Melrose:	U see ar *Well you see ar*
19	17/01/2017, 23:05 - Melrose:	U listen first *You listen first*
20	17/01/2017, 23:05 - Melrose:	U won't simply buy stuff for Kyra kan *You won't simply buy stuff for Kyra right?*
21	17/01/2017, 23:06 - Melrose:	But u purposely buy for her wor *But you purposely buy for her wor*

At two points in this conversation, Melrose teases Hoon, assuming the role of matchmaker. For example, in Line 1, Melrose attempts to elicit evidence of his feelings towards Zailin, and in Line 6, she encourages Hoon to consider dating Zailin. Hoon makes several attempts to downplay his relationship with Zailin, including dismissing the McDonalds episode that Melrose refers to.

From the follow-up interview, it is important to note here that the McDonald's incident happened on a night when Hoon and Melrose had been eating dinner together. Hoon had left their meal early to fetch the McDonalds. Melrose perhaps then felt aggrieved that Hoon fulfilled Zailin's request at this time. The sentence 'Then only shun bian/casually buy' in line 2 refers to Hoon's suggestion that buying the McDonalds was only a casual act/incidental; he was already off campus having dinner with Melrose, so buying the meal for Zailin was easy to do. Line 5 creates heightened tension; as Melrose refuses to accept Hoon's

explanation and continues teasing him. Her rhetorical question, 'Haha I tot the other way??' implies she finds his explanation far-fetched, and so she is sarcastic. The sarcasm is reinforced in the following sentence 'Wanna tapao for her sunbian go eat' as Melrose assumes that Hoon's primary intention to eat out that night is to buy McDonalds for Zailin instead of having dinner with her. Melrose is perhaps indignant as she was out with Hoon that evening, hence her assertion that Hoon prioritises Zailin rather than herself.

In Line 6, when Melrose encourages Hoon to consider dating Zailin, the inclusion of the feature *meh* challenges Hoon in a hostile manner (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 509). Challenging utterances such as *meh* are present frequently throughout Hoon and Melrose's conversations. Melrose considers Hoon's every encounter or conversation with another woman as scandalous; possibly stemming from her dissatisfaction over the treatment she receives from Hoon herself, when contrasted with the care he shows for other women. From these utterances, it is apparent that Melrose's stance is judgemental. Returning to Line 6, for example, the sentence 'Dunwan consider meh/why don't you consider' is a challenge; Melrose does not intend for Hoon to actually consider dating Zailin, as her eager confirmation of Hoon's feelings for Zailin displays jealousy. Culpeper (2011a: 135) characterises such assumptions and unpalatable questions, which are demonstrated by Melrose as impolite. We can assume that Line 6 is intended as an intentional provocation, since she is aware of Hoon's feelings for her, but is purposely matching him with another girl. These sequences can be seen as provoking the utterance in Line 7: where, in response to her, Hoon immediately replies 'Your head la', following this with a token of certainty, 'never'. Here, *la* indicates exasperation or unhappiness with someone (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 509). This form of unhappiness is illustrated in Tay *et al.*'s example, within the context of rejection. In their example, Speaker A has extended an invitation to Speaker B, who has come out with various excuses, and postponed invitations to other times. Feeling angry, Speaker A expresses his unhappiness in the sentence: 'Next time, next time… dunno how many next time liao la', which can be translated as 'Next time, next time! How many times have you given me that?'. A similar use of

lah can be observed in this context, where Hoon is expressing rejection towards Melrose's suggestions.

Additionally, the use of *la* with 'your head' shows the intensity of Hoon's disappointment and irritation over Melrose's assumptions (Line 5), as well as her assumption of the role of matchmaker during the preceding interaction. Evidence of his unhappiness can first be seen in his initial attempt at explanation in Line 2, wherein he states that he casually buys McDonald for Zailin, to avoid agreeing with Melrose's previous statement. In Line 3, Hoon uses two 'frowny-😔' faces to express disappointment (*Emojipedia*, 2013) at Melrose's assumption, given that Melrose was with him the night they went to McDonalds and, therefore, should understand what happened. It is also noteworthy that Hoon's employment of Mandarin characters in Line 4 are a form of strategic code switching, the aim of which is to reinforce his emotions and prior utterances. Research suggests that emotions are better expressed in one's native language (Kedsuwan, 2011: 62); thus the propositional content in Line 4 ('don't frame people'*)* is most effectively expressed in Hoon's mother tongue (Mandarin). The code switch, occurs after several denials of Melrose's assumption, affording further evidence of his displeasure of the topic.

From Line 5 it is clear that Melrose responds to this switch by repeating her assumptions. However, she marks her sentence in Line 5 with a 'cheeky face 😜' emoticon, implying she is joking, or being jovial (*Emojipedia*, 2013). By indicating humour explicitly through an emoticon, she can guarantee humour recognition and minimise social risk, even though Hoon might not find the joke funny (Vandergriff, 2013). Humour, thus, works as a mitigating strategy for the propositional content of the utterance, which is otherwise contextualised as offensive. However, this mitigation through applying jocular tone does not appeal to Hoon who does not find the joke funny, as evidenced in Line 7. Hoon, initially seeks to resist potential conflict by underplaying the tense situation, as with the response, 'your head la'.

There is very limited literature describing the heritage of this insulting phrase; however, it is widely used in Malaysian and Singaporean online and

offline, and is recorded in the Singlish online dictionary. 'Your head' is defined as referring to a mild curse, often used to refer to someone who is being foolish, talking nonsense, or making an incorrect assumption (*The Coxford Singlish Dictionary*, 2002; *A Dictionary of Singlish and Singapore English*, 2004). We can see the occurrence of 'your head la' arises at a climatic point in the conversation, as a result of repeated provocation. Here, the phrase refers to Melrose's erroneous assumptions. Additionally, it co-occurs with *la*, aiming to strengthen the speaker's emotions and indicating the negative effect associated with the interlocutor's presupposition. The feelings are further reinforced using the certainty marker, 'never', in Line 8, as Hoon assures that he will never consider Zailin as a girlfriend. Thus, this WhatsApp scene emphasises Hoon's rebuttal of Melrose's assumption.

The phrase in Line 7, 'your head la' highlights the speaker's communicative intent; i.e. Hoon's desire to be taken seriously. It also marks a switch in speech style and tone, from jocular to serious. This is apparent in the following sequences. First, we see the questioning and answering sequences that follow from Line 7. Melrose's eagerness to understand Hoon's feelings for Zailin is clarified in her question 'Bo feeling at all??/No feeling at all??', which is repeated. The former is punctuated with repetitive question marks, which are then used to express positive and negative emotions, including extreme disbelief and excitement (Tan, 2014: 77). In her study of identity construction among Malaysian youths on Facebook, Tan exemplifies the function of repetitive question marks in Facebook status updates. Through the status update 'so Cheap?!?!', the speaker is meant to express simultaneous shock and surprise about the price of a camera sold on a website (ibid). The function of question marks in Tan's example is analogous to Melrose's questioning expression above; i.e. disbelief and shock, since she assumes Zailin and Hoon are in a relationship, at the same time as being excited because she has feelings for Hoon. This repetition leads Hoon to suspect what is being said is not credible; this motivates him to question Melrose's presumption. Melrose explicitly states that Hoon's good treatment of Zailin led her assume he is interested in Zailin. Hoon then suggest to speak directly to Melrose by phone to discuss the situation. The

grumpy and displeased looking emoticons (😖-line 16) underline his distaste for her assumptions (*Emojipedia*, 2013). Hoon is offended by Melrose's suggestion, from the outset of the conversation. This is because both know that Hoon has romantic feelings towards Melrose, which she is disregarding through a veil of jocularity. Segarra (2007: 141) suggests that disregarding or underestimating a hearer's feelings is a form of rudeness.

Following Hoon's offer in line 15, Melrose refuses to call him, but continues the WhatsApp chat by offering an explanation, which takes the form of a defensive strategy to save her own face (Bousfield, 2007: 2200). What follows is an explanation that relates to her assumption. We can see Melrose prefaces her explanation with 'you see ar' and 'you listen first', when framing the rationale of her assumptions. These explanations mitigate the assumptions that triggered Hoon initially. She justifies her position by asking ('U won't simply buy stuff for Kyra kan/ you won't simply buy stuff for Kyra right?'), and pauses for a minute to give him chance to answer. She then prefaces her sentence with 'but', contrasting Hoon's treatment of Kyra and Zailin. Here, she punctuates her sentence with 'wor' to counter Hoon's attitude. Their conversation continues with several other sequences, eventually switching naturally to another topic without further conflict.

During the course of the extract discussed above, we see Melrose's matchmaking role shift to that of a jealous potential girlfriend. In her matchmaker role, Melrose initially acts from an apparent position of ignorance, joking about Hoon's feelings; however, acting ignorantly in a jocular fashion does not necessarily mean one is truly ignorant (De Fina, 2007: 71). It is likely that the contextualisation cues, as realised through swear words and *lah,* signify a change from the jocular manner of her former speech to a more serious style. Hoon attracted his interlocutor's attention, as denoted through the shift in Melrose's speech style. With this, Melrose responds to Hoon's prompt for a change in behaviour, demonstrating a repair of her previous behaviour. This is a representative example of how swear words and *lah* are used by Malaysian youths in social media interactions, with a resultant shift in the communicative style on the part of the addressee.

The following extract offers another sample from a conversation between Hoon and Melrose. It includes another provocation by Melrose, resulting in the use of swear words and *lah*. The following sample demonstrates the use of a stronger degree of swear words and *lah*, which invites a similar response from the addressee. Moreover, it is interesting to observe switches between positive to negative attitudes and feelings, aided or realised by the feature *lah*. Prior to the conversation that takes place in the extract below, Hoon and Melrose have promised to see one another at the library. Their conversation becomes unpleasant when Melrose informs Hoon that she plans to meet him and bring along her girlfriends. Hoon, who initially seems thrilled to meet her, feels frustrated and labels her as 'chibai/cunt'; occasionally spelt as cheebai or chye bai (*A Dictionary of Singlish and Singapore English*, 2004). Their conversation then ends here. After almost 3 hours, Melrose initiates the following conversation, assuming the role of a loving (girl) friend atoning/ compensating for Hoon's rudeness. The tone of their conversation turns bitter when Hoon resents Melrose's trick, and potentially serious consequences are framed through the more direct exchanges towards the end of the extract.

Extract 2: Playful Lover to Serious Talk: Switches from Positive –*lah* to Negative -*lah*

Line	Speaker	Conversation
1	24/11/2016, 00:00 - Melrose:	Love you max *Love you to the maximum*
2	24/11/2016, 00:01 - Melrose:	Miss you so much *Miss you so much*
3	24/11/2016, 00:06 - Hoon:	I know right *I know right*
4	24/11/2016, 00:21 - Melrose:	I love you😍 *I love you*
5	24/11/2016, 00:21 - Melrose:	Do you love me? *Do you love me?*
6	24/11/2016, 00:33 - Hoon:	love **laaa**~~~~~ 😖 *love/of course I do*

7	24/11/2016, 00:50 - Melrose:	Yayyyyy
8	24/11/2016, 00:50 - Melrose:	😁😁😁
9	24/11/2016, 00:51 - Hoon:	**celaka**[12] **la** you *damn you*
10	24/11/2016, 00:52 - Hoon:	cus you **sampat**[13] **la** *because you are crazy*
11	24/11/2016, 00:52 - Hoon:	Sampat *crazy*
12	24/11/2016, 00:52 - Melrose:	U not **sampat la**[14] *You're crazy too, aren't you?*[15]/*aren't you crazy as well?*
13	24/11/2016, 00:52 - Melrose:	U flirty
14	24/11/2016, 00:52 - Hoon:	Where got?
15	24/11/2016, 00:52 - Melrose:	U huaxin *You are unfaithful*
16	24/11/2016, 00:52 - Hoon:	you flirt me first *You flirt with me first*
17	24/11/2016, 00:53 - Melrose:	Lulz who flirt u *LOL who wants to flirt with you?*

In the extract, Melrose assumes the role of a loving girlfriend when expressing her affections towards Hoon. However, there is a long pause (5 minutes) where there is a lack of response from Hoon. Hoon then responds, 'I know right', indicating acknowledgment of her confession, in a form of sarcasm. It has been

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[12] DBP (Malay-English Dictionary) translates celaka as 'damn', a curse/taboo word.

[13] Sampat is a Mandarin translation of 'crazy'. Translation provided by the speaker (Hoon).

[14] In this utterance, Melrose is dissatisfied with Hoon's description of her as crazy, attributing insanity to him.

[15] Translation obtained from a native speaker of English (PhD in English). In this utterance, Melrose intends to imply Hoon is crazy as well.

suggested that delaying a response might encourage a speaker to feel anxious and frustrated (Kato, Kato, & Ozawa, 2019: 66). Certainly, we can see that Melrose initiates another sequence 15 minutes later. This time, Melrose boldly claims she loves Hoon, following this with a 'Smiling Face with Heart-Eyes - 😍' emoticon, signifying positive affection for Hoon. Following this, she asks whether Hoon shares similar feelings for her. In response, Hoon admits he loves her in Line 6, 'love laaa'. In this case, the positive feelings are followed with an elongated-vowel 'laaa', emphasising his feelings. It is suggested that *lah* can be used defensively to highlight an implicit assumption that the hearer should know better (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 509). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the use of *lah* in such ways attempts to increase social distance between speakers (ibid: 509); however, I argue that *lah* in this specific context functions simply as a comparison when used in a positive manner Here, 'laaa' not only emphasises Hoon's feelings, but also that Melrose should already be aware of them, as there have been many instances of Hoon stating this throughout other conversations (i.e. 'I still love you', 'lovee you too'). Additionally, the utterance is punctuated with the emoticon, '😆', indicating the excitement attached to Hoon's feelings (*Emojipedia*, 2013).

To date, the discussion of the previous sequences (Lines 1 to 5) clarifies that Melrose is trying to attract Hoon's attention. This is especially apparent when she initiates Line 4 after attaining a short response from him, subsequently gaining his attention and trust. In Line 7, Hoon's confession excites Melrose, and she announces her 'victory' in successfully tricking him into responding to her fake confession with the exclamation 'yayy' and a 'beaming face-😁' emoticon, indicating gratification (*Emojipedia*, 2013). Notice that Melrose initiates this conversation after a previous conversation in which Hoon labels her with the swearword 'chibai/pussy'. It is therefore safe to assume that this interaction represents her successful attempt at countering and avenging Hoon's ill-mannered speech ('Chye Bai Mel/Pussy Mel'). Melrose's excited response also indicates that she is now out of the role of loving girl(friend), and shifting back to their established role relationship which comes with a 'normal'/ less loving style of speech. Her playful sequences trigger Hoon to make impolite responses, as

shown in the following sequences. These illustrate how the tones of both speakers transform dramatically into negative speech when employing swearwords; producing negative responses, such as sarcasm. The response rates between the speakers are also more rapid at this stage indicating a more involving and dramatized communicative style.

Hoon immediately replies 'celaka la you/damn la you' after realising Melrose is playing a trick on him. The swear word 'damn you' is in vocative form, meaning it is directed to the addressee (Goddard, 2015: 201). In terms of its expressive function, when a speaker utters the phrase 'damn you', it means they are hurt or intends something bad to come to the addressee (ibid). Although Hoon confesses his feelings to Melrose, his impoliteness appears in this extract to be a result of trickery, giving a false impression; thereby belittling his feelings for her. Subsequently, Hoon reinforces his negative feelings, by repeatedly labelling Melrose as 'sampat/crazy' ('cus you sampat la/because you are crazy'). Additionally, the co-occurrence of *la* with 'damn' and 'crazy' intensifies his unpleasant feelings regarding Melrose's trickery. Therefore, in this WhatsApp segment, it is apparent that Hoon, who initially acknowledges Melrose's confession ('I know right') and provides a positive response ('love laaa'), switches to serious and impolite utterances. It is important to emphasise that so far swear words and *lah* stereotypically occur in contexts involving romantic feelings. Similar to the previous extract, we can see that Hoon hopes his feelings will be taken seriously. Indeed, in both extracts, by playing the roles of matchmaker and fake lover, Melrose is belittling the sincerity of Hoon's romantic feelings towards her.

The next sequences mark a shift in Melrose's conversational style. She responds seriously by explaining herself further. First, we see Melrose's sarcastic inquiry in Line 12, 'u not sampat la/ you're crazy too, aren't you'?, to counter Hoon's insult. The rhetorical question refers to Hoon's prior intention to meet her alone at the library instead of bringing along her friends; hence indicating his flirtatious intention. As noted, she does not wait for a response, labelling Hoon as 'flirty'. Additionally, Melrose's use of *la* in this utterance carries an overtone of sarcasm, which arises from frustration about Hoon's serious and insulting

remark. In particular, *la* here has a similar function to the Cantonese final particle *la* (Leung & Gibbons, 2009). In their study of a Hong Kong courtroom, Leung and Gibbons identified the use of *la* in one of the witness's responses to the lawyer. During the interrogation/questioning session about a sum of money that he/she should be receiving, the witness answers that "…if I had received the money (.) at least I am sitting here I would not argue for SO LONG. *La* (1)/". Leung and Gibbons (2009) suggest that *la* has a similar tag function to the English tag question "I wouldn't be sitting here arguing, would I?', indicating emphasis and sarcasm. Just as with the Cantonese particle *la*, I suggest *la* in the sentence 'you not sampat la' functions to some degree like the English tag question 'you're crazy too, aren't you?', implying a tone of sarcasm. In this line, Melrose attempts to respond to Hoon by referring to an earlier conversation; when Hoon intended to meet her alone. Therefore, the notes of sarcasm in line 12 can imply that his intention is absurd and crazy. Through this verbal sparring in a serious banter, Melrose denies any accountability or mistake; conveying it was reasonable for her to tease Hoon in the earlier part of the extract.

In vigorous denial, Hoon claims Melrose had started flirting with him and accuses her of being jealous. Their argument becomes more heated when Melrose blames Hoon, labelling him as unfaithful for associating him with other girls, such as Pamela and Kailing, although Hoon has repeatedly stated that he loves only her and views them as friends. We may reasonably assume this is typical behaviour for Melrose; in the extracts, she appears to be insecure and jealous. On the other hand, Hoon has attained the image of a 'playboy', having often been associated with many girls and scandals.

The shift in Melrose's conversational style also includes some characteristically defensive counter strategies. According to Bousfield's (2007: 2200) definition, the kind of exchanges in the extract, such as 'cus you are sampat', and the response pair 'you not sampat la', and 'u flirty' with its response pair 'you flirt me first', are forms of 'direct contradiction', arising from a desire for revenge (ibid). These response pairs denote the speakers' lack of alignment with one another. The misalignment is reinforced through sarcasm in line 17 'loll who flirt u'. Although *lulz* may indicate laughter, in this context it denotes a kind

of 'cheap laughter' or 'false laughter' (Joy, 2009: 21). Insincere laughter leads to a rejection or dismissal of Hoon's accusation that she is the flirt; while both are aware that the earlier confession was just playfulness. Melrose's attitude here demeans Hoon's feelings for her, exploiting his sincerity and weakness with trickery. As in the previous sample, Melrose recognizes particular cues when shifting into a more serious style. However, her antagonistic response when following the cues differs from the mitigating strategies used in the previous sample (maintaining a serious tone), probably being triggered by the intensity of the swear words employed. Notice that Melrose seems to be attentive towards the Mandarin swear word 'sampat', following her repetitive utterance, which compares to the Malay word 'celaka' in Hoon's utterance. This relates to the different weight/forces that native languages carry in terms of the emotional content, as will be addressed in the discussion section.

So far, extracts 1 and 2 have shown the interactional function of *lah* in the conversations. The discussion shows that *lah* alongside swearwords functions as a signal to the listener that the speaker (Hoon) is displaying a negative orientation (in Du Bois' term *stance*) thus establishing swear words and *lah* as disalignment markers. Similar observation occurs in Bucholtz's (2004) study of quotative markers among white teenagers in a California high school. She found that the quotative *all*, realised through prosody or voice quality, can signal to the listener that the speaker is taking a negative stance. I suggest that the same may be said for swear words and *lah*, since use of *lah* in conversations, representing a range of interactive tones, is mainly associated with negative feelings. Another similar finding is reported in Trester's (2009) study of the discourse marker 'oh'. She argues that 'oh' can signal a speaker's negative stance towards the reported speech (*oh*, I know that guy). Additionally, Trester suggests that 'oh' triggers a shift of the focus of interaction (from the speaker's perspective to the story world), thus marking 'oh' as indexical of the shift (ibid: 157). In one of her sample dialogues, Trester presents the speech of a performer, named John, in an improvisational theatre (improv) through his own voice and that of other people at the workshop he attended. In the dialogue, John adopts a negative stance by cueing his speech with 'oh', describing the challenges of performers that he heard

in the workshop; for instance, '*oh*! I've gotta be funny, I've gotta make this scene funny, I've gotta think of the right thing to say'. Trester argues that the negative stance realised through 'oh' positions John in the role of an improv, thus navigating alignment with the interviewer (Trester) in relation to shared understanding of the challenges. In my study, swear words and *lah* are not only indexical of the shift between playfulness to seriousness, but help the speakers to position themselves and align with other interlocutors to achieve a specific identity. In both extracts above, the speakers, who are in a romantic role relationship style, shift to clear misunderstanding and, thus, to increase intimacy between them.

The following example discusses swear words and *lah* within a social group of close friends.

Extract 3: Switches from Insistence to Seriousness among Close Friends

The next example examines the use of swear words/insult phrases and *lah* by two male friends living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In the conversation, both are planning to attend church together; Jason is going to share a ride with Ben, as Ben owns a car and they live in different accommodation. Ben also informs Jason will fetch his sister from home before collecting him. That morning, while waiting for Ben, Jason appears restless and eager to depart earlier, and so the following conversation takes place:

Line	Speaker	Conversation
1	02/06/2016, 08:54 - Jason:	Why soo lateee
		Why are you so late?
2	02/06/2016, 08:54 - Jason:	Ask her[16] go earlier
		Can we ask her to go earlier?
3	02/06/2016, 08:54 - Jason:	Saya lapar ni 😂
		I am hungry now
4	02/06/2016, 08:54 - Ben:	How early

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[16] 'Her' refers to Ben's sister who is getting ready at home.

		How early could that be?
5	02/06/2016, 08:54 - Jason:	Now
		Now
6	02/06/2016, 08:54 - Jason:	Hahaha
7	02/06/2016, 08:54 - Ben:	Mai **siao**[17] **la**
		don't be crazy la
8	02/06/2016, 08:55 - Jason:	930?
9	02/06/2016, 08:55 - Jason:	I very lazy to walk to church
		I'm very lazy to walk to the church
10	02/06/2016, 08:55 - Jason:	And its fucking hot😂
		And it's fucking hot
11	02/06/2016, 08:55 - Jason:	My bicycle is at church
		My bicycle is at the church
12	02/06/2016, 08:55 - Ben:	10 **la sial**
		10 la bastard
13	02/06/2016, 08:55 - Jason:	Ya **laa**
		Yes
14	02/06/2016, 08:55 - Jason:	See how **la**
		Let's see the situation later
15	02/06/2016, 08:56 - Jason:	If i msg u no need means i walk there d
		If I texted you 'no need' means I have already walked there
16	02/06/2016, 08:56 - Jason:	Check ur phone before u leave
		Check your phone before you leave

In the conversation, Ben informs Jason he will depart at 10AM, as he needs to wait for his sister to get ready. Jason is surprised by the time and communicates a series of complaints using paralinguistic cues, such as letter repetition, in his utterances. The repetitive letter in 'why soo lateee' suggests a form of reinforcement that affects/ emphasizes the tone of the message (McSweeney, 2018). The word 'lateee' indicates a sense of urgency, given the explanation that

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[17] 'Siao' is a Hokkien translation for 'crazy'. It is translated by native speakers of the Hokkien dialect.

he is hungry and so should have breakfast before going to church. This urgency is reinforced in the following lines. Jason uses imperative forms; i.e. 'ask her go earlier' and 'now', to urge Ben to communicate to his sister the need to get ready to go to church immediately. However, the laughter 'haha' token could be considered mitigatory if he reframes the imperative forms as non-serious and playful. From his utterances, it is apparent that Jason can be construed as impatient and demanding from the perspective of someone who wants to share a ride.

Following this, we see two insulting phrases/swear words employed by Ben: 'mai siao la/don't be crazy la' and '10 la sial/10 la bastard'. In the first sequence, Ben uses 'mai siao la' when responding to Jason's reply, 'now', in Line 5. Initially, Line 4 shows Ben being considerate when asking how early they should depart, as he is aware Jason is hungry. Jason's unexpected response triggers Ben to initiate the sequence 'mai siao la'; therefore, the sentence 'mai siao la/don't be crazy la' is a form of negative surprise. From his analysis of swear words in a movie, Aditia (2011) found several types of swear words that speakers used to express various emotions. For instance, swear words, such as *shit*, *fuck* and *God* can be used to convey feelings including frustration and surprise. In one of the examples, Aditia references a situation wherein a speaker named Silas utters the words 'Oh shit, Mikey. Hell no!', when his friend Mikey arrives at his house (ibid: 25). Similarly, I argue that swear words, such as mai siao/don't be crazy can be used to denote a feeling of surprise. This surprise is evident when Ben ignores Jason's laughter, producing an overlapping negative utterance. The OED defines 'crazy' as 'of unsound mind', meaning 'insane, mad, demented, or cracked'. The negative surprise registers disapproval of Jason's proposition, which can also be taken to mean that an immediate pick-up is perceived as a ridiculous or absurd idea. Ben addresses this disapproval later in the conversation, underlining that he believes it is pointless to reach the church too early in the morning. The use of swear words for expressing disagreement is compatible with Culpeper's (1996: 358) impoliteness strategies. The correlation between impoliteness and disagreement was further reported by Shum and Lee's (2013) study of a Hong Kong internet discussion forum. In their example, the

participants discussed the top colleges in the country. Upon finding points of disagreement, Person A uses the vulgar phrase 'Don't jerk off' (the implied meaning in Cantonese being 'Don't be too self-obsessed') when s/he disagrees with Person B (ibid: 60). Shum and Lee (2013: 71) assert that based on Chinese cultural values, a short, vulgar phrase is perceived to be a suitable disagreement strategy. Similarly, the use of the Chinese dialect, 'mai siao la' in the above extract, represents Ben's disagreement with Jason's suggestion, as it is associated with their cultural meaning.

Interestingly, Jason shifts into a negotiation frame, by proposing a delayed arrival at the church at 9.30AM. Following that he rationalises his reasons for sharing a ride instead of walking due to the hot weather, noting that he left his bicycle at the church. This rationalisation is a probable indicator that Jason is trying to mitigate the imperative. However, Line 12 shows Ben approaches the apex of the conversation by initiating the turn '10 la sial'. Here, 'sial' is used as a form of address referring to Jason. 'Sial' is a curse word originating from Malay, and the Malay Institute of Language and Literature (henceforth referred to as the DBP) defines it as 'tidak menguntungkan', 'jahanam', and 'celaka', which can be translated into 'bad luck', 'damn', or 'bastard', respectively. A sequence of events triggers Ben to utter the phrase. Earlier in the conversation, Ben had informed Jason that he would depart at 10 AM; however, Jason forcefully requested an earlier time frame. His persistence on this point prompts Ben to employ 'sial' and *la* to emphasise his desire to keep to the original time. Adding an offensive address term to attract attention marks his divergence from the surrounding talk, which is a contextualisation cue directing a stylistic change in the addressee's frame, from a non-serious to serious mode.

The climax is recognised by Jason, who employs two instances of *lah* in the following sequences. We can see Jason is beginning to respond to Ben rather more seriously. This is perhaps most apparent in Lines 13 and 14, where Jason complies with Ben's insistence, possibly signifying a move towards topic closure. In Line 13, this comes immediately, as Jason shows his understanding stating 'ya/yes' to indicate his compliance with what Ben wants. Additionally, the elongated *laa* serves as an expression of resignation (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 505) and a

sign of submission to Ben's persistence. Here we can see that Jason is no longer complaining about the timing. In terms of impoliteness, Bousfield (2007: 2200) would label Jason's style of agreement as insincere for several reasons. First, insincere agreement is denoted by the utterance 'see how la', which is a Manglish expression that can be taken to mean a 'person in a not totally agreeable mood' (SOD). In this case, Jason's employment of the phrase represents a partial disagreement over the chosen pick-up time (10AM). However, *la* can be treated as a solidarity marker (Richards & Tay, 1977; Wee, 2004), and the inclusion of *la* mitigates partial disagreement as part of the sentence. Therefore, Jason employs the expression 'ya la' and 'see how la' to convey insincere agreement, which indicates he is compromising; thereby, minimising any potential conflict.

This excerpt is particularly interesting for several reasons. First, the first sequence, 'mai siao la' signifies a shift in Jason's conversational style, from a joking reprimand to a form of negotiation frame. Here, Jason starts to rationalise his reasons for mitigating prior utterances. However, despite Ben's disapproval, Jason continues to negotiate with Ben concerning time frame. This in turn triggers Ben to initiate a stronger swear word, including *lah* to emphasise persistence. This prompts Jason to compromise with Ben, limiting negotiation and the demand for a specific time frame. A further indication of the seriousness/ force of Ben's use of *lah* with swearwords is that Jason eventually claims he might decide to walk to the church himself.

The sequences in this WhatsApp segment emphasise Ben's reluctance to comply with Jason's demands; his attitude of superiority manifests as impoliteness triggers, which he repeatedly produces. However, arguably the vulgarity of 'sial' correlates to the 'sia' particle in Singaporean English (Khoo, 2012); which is considered inappropriate or rude when used with unfamiliar people due to its negative connotation (ibid). However, 'sial' in this extract was contextualised by marking a shift in intonation/seriousness of speech within a group of familiar people.

Extract 4: **Style shifting from personalised to impersonal expressions**

In the following conversation, swear word with *lah* serves as an address marker. A conversation is taking place between two close friends, Amalina and Bibi. Both are studying at a local university and taking similar academic courses. Throughout their conversations, Amalina and Bibi constantly express recognition of and gratefulness for having each other as best friends.

Prior to the conversation included in Extract 4, there are several sequences in which Bibi insists Amalina needs to return her calls. She appears to be eager to talk with Amalina, since she has just received a birthday surprise from her. However, Amalina had just finished an examination, which she felt went badly, and so is feeling disappointed. Amalina then makes a spontaneous decision to return to her hometown, located in Johor in southern Malaysia. Amalina never returned her call and instead went straight to the bus station. We can see that Amalina is trying to find a suitable bus in the conversation below.

Line	Speaker	Conversation
1	06/04/2016, 16:10:16: Bibi:	FASTER **LAH** I WANNA CALL *FASTER I WANNA CALL*
2	06/04/2016, 16:10:36: Amalina:	I still waiting for bus **la** cb *I'm still waiting for the bus, cibai*
3	06/04/2016, 16:10:57: Amalina:	You think I better naik from tbs or seremban[18]? *Do you think I should take the bus from tbs or Seremban?*
4	06/04/2016, 16:11:27: Bibi:	Seremban tak banyak sangat bas tu jb *There are limited buses to Johor Bahru*
5	06/04/2016, 16:11:30: Bibi:	Kau try **lah** usha *You should try to find*
6	06/04/2016, 16:11:33: Bibi:	Online *Online*

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[18] Tbs and Seremban are names of a bus station.

7	06/04/2016, 16:11:45: Bibi:	I takut you go seremban then takde ticket
		I'm afraid that there is no ticket if you go to Seremban
8	06/04/2016, 16:11:56: Amalina:	Kayz
		Okay
9	06/04/2016, 16:11:58: Amalina:	Sat
		Wait a minute
10	06/04/2016, 16:12:39: Amalina:	But like my friend usually balik from there
		But my friends usually catch the bus from there
11	06/04/2016, 16:12:40: Amalina:	Idk
		I don't know
12	06/04/2016, 16:12:44: Amalina:	Should I try
		Should I try?
13	06/04/2016, 16:12:49: Amalina:	Or should I just tbs?
		Or should I just go to tbs?
14	06/04/2016, 16:12:51: Bibi:	Wait I usha for u
		Wait I'll help you find the ticket
15	06/04/2016, 16:14:10: Bibi:	Transnational[19] is at 6
16	06/04/2016, 16:14:18: Bibi:	And one more i found at 8

In the conversation, Bibi is eager to call Amalina and thank her for sending her a surprise bouquet. Line 1 describes Bibi's insistent call to Amalina. The co-occurrence of *lah* with the imperative 'faster' serves to indicate impatience (Brown, 2000: 127). I suggest here that the *lah* in the sentence 'faster *lah'* also works as an emphasis marker (Lee, 1998: 82; Lim, 2008: 160 ; Norizam, 2014: 106), and is employed by Bibi to exhort Amalina to call her. This is based on several observations. In terms of CMC cues, the sudden decision to use capitalisation in Line 1 might express emphasis in the form of 'shouting' (Bieswanger, 2013: 473), resulting from her excitement about her birthday surprise. This device is also used in the prior conversation, when she demands

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[19] Transnational refers to a bus company in Malaysia.

that Amalina call her back: 'CALL ME BACK LATER!!!!!'. Excitement is also illustrated in the later conversation (not included in the extract), in which she continues to barrage Amalina with questions regarding the bouquet. She is curious about this surprise arrangement, including the fact that it includes hydrangeas, her favourite. The use of *lah* in its capitalised form denotes Bibi's assertive insistence; this could be threatening to the negative face of her interlocutor.

Line 2 provides the immediate response from Amalina, which takes place after 20 seconds. Her reply completely redirects the subsequent conversational sequences to her current situation, as she says 'I still waiting for bus *la* cb'. On the surface, the occurrence of *la* here serves to emphasise her current statement that she is at the bus station. However, her use of *lah* signals the speaker's implicit intention to encourage the hearer to accommodate a mutual proposition (Ler, 2005: 265). Here, use of *la* shows the speaker is trying to modify the addressee's behaviour (Wong, 2004: 765) by addressing the fact that she is unable to call her at that moment. Additionally, this expression is reinforced by the choice of address marker, *cibai*[20].

The SOD refers to 'cibai/chee bye', as the 'rudest' Singlish swear word referring to female sexual organs. The English equivalent would be 'cunt' (SOD) or 'vagina' (*The Coxford Singlish Dictionary*, 2002). It can also mean 'shit' or 'bastard' (Norizam, 2014: 127). The imposition marker *lah* was followed by the swear word cibai after several attempts to communicate to Bibi that she had been busy dealing with other issues (e.g. 'Later when I free I tell you/Have to settle stuffs first' — which occurs 1 hour and 20 mins before the conversation in the extract). As in the previous examples, the use of an insulting phrase arises at a climactic point in the interaction, serving as a contextualisation cue redirecting their conversational styles. Bibi, who initially seems assertive and insistent, observes the situation and complies with her interlocutor.

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[20] Cheebai is a Hokkien translation for vagina (Singlish Online Dictionary, Coxford Singlish Dictionary).

The following line ('You think I better naik from tbs or Seremban?') is the follow up response from Amalina. Amalina's question, which occurs after a 21 second pause, can be taken to mean she intends to mitigate her previous impoliteness because she received no response from Bibi. Here she is trying to elicit responses from Bibi by seeking her opinion regarding the most appropriate bus station. This question is an attempt to reset the tone of the conversation and re-establish her positive relationship with Bibi. In contrast to Amalina's mitigation, the episode of serious speech is then again framed through Bibi's responses. Although Amalina's question was greeted by 30 seconds of stunned silence, her reengagement with her personal opinion, in the line 'There is limited buses to Johor Bahru' signifies her realignment and reorientation to the context. These sequences do not mention the flowers, but rather focus on solving Amalina's problem through an exchange of information communicative format. The speech style seems to shift from expressive, emphatic and interpersonal to factual and less personalised style of talk. This leads to a minimal response, i.e. 'kau try *lah* usha/why don't you check', and then another short response, 'online'. This exchange contrasts markedly with the earlier segment of the conversation. Here, the occurrence of *lah,* occurring with the imperative 'try', mitigates the authoritative sentence (Tay *et al.*, 2016: 505) to create a suggestive utterance, including the advice that Amalina should first check the timetables online before going to the bus station in Seremban, to avoid wasting her time travelling there. We can see that Amalina agrees with Bibi, who then volunteers to check the timetables for Amalina; Bibi's helpfulness shows her intention to create further interactional alignment and engage with Amalina.

In this extract, Amalina successfully shifted the focus of the conversation onto her situation using swear words and *lah*. The conversation moved from a series of imperatives and assertions, such as 'call me' and 'faster lah', to an exchange of information about bus timetables. In this extract, by using conversational inferences (John J. Gumperz, 1982), Bibi acknowledges the seriousness of the contextual framing. After they have discussed bus choices, Amalina suggests to Bibi that she could give her a call once she is on the bus. The tone of their conversation is then restored through the collaborative play of a

concerned mother to her child (Bibi as a mother advising her daughter to be careful). The conversation then proceeds with an air of excitement and questions about the bouquet of flowers. Another important aspect to be noted here is the use of Hokkien swear words by a Malay speaker. This is indicative of 'language-crossing' (Rampton, 1995), when speakers use features associated with other groups to which they do not belong. This will be addressed in the following section.

6.4   Discussion

The analysis of the WhatsApp samples presented in this chapter focuses on the most frequently occurring Manglish feature present in the dataset, *la*; specifically its co-occurrence with swear words, ranging from mild to strong intensity. My analysis addressed two different conversational criteria: firstly, swear words and *lah* as contextualisation cues, and secondly, changes in the tone of the conversation, which temporarily affected the role relationship between the speakers. In the case of the latter criterion, I analysed the addressee's interpretation of and response to the cues by focusing on the shift in their conversational styles.

The analysis of the samples of *lah* revealed that although there is no direct equivalent to *lah,* as claimed by previous studies, its co-occurrence with swear words encapsulates consistent representations of the speaker's underlying intention; in particular how they want to be perceived by their interlocutors. In this respect, swear words and *lah* can be counted as what Gumperz (1982) calls 'contextualisation cues', which suggest that the addressee would then need to 're-evaluate the context of interchange before and after the swearing' (Ainsworth, 2016: 35). By applying Gumperz' approach to contextualisation cues, this chapter draws attention to these speakers' use of Manglish features as linguistic cues to construct intimacy, this is explained following the interactional functions of *lah* below.

The analysis has also highlighted several observations, especially with regard to the speakers' speech style. Firstly, the speakers selectively use swear

words and *lah* at climactic parts of the conversation. The young speakers consistently employ curse words with *la* to intensify the emotions they are directing towards the addressee, a third party, or the conversational topic itself. Secondly, clusters of cues draw the addressee's attention to particular aspects of the interaction; inferring that certain aspects of communication are especially serious. Gumperz (1982: 135) demonstrated that recipients are able to interpret the speaker's utterances based on several cues, such as code switching, and voice quality, which include prosody and intonation. In my study, the speakers use swear words and *lah* here as contextualisation cues when deliberately developing a particular stance, as if to emphasise 'Please take my words seriously'. To clarify how this seriousness is contextualised, the reaction of the addressees, as well as their speech styles before and after the cues was explored and is summarised below.

In the first two samples Melrose initiates a playful frame, to which the addressee (Hoon) responds rather seriously. This sample demonstrates the shift in the speaker's fabricated speech style (i.e. matchmaker and lover), suggesting that a non-jocular style can serve as a significant linguistic strategy that signals a serious domain. It is suggested that a mutual understanding of the meanings signalled between speaker and addressees provide evidence of shared knowledge and context (Tannen, 2005: 36). In Hoon's case, this shared knowledge refers to Hoon's feelings for Melrose, and reflects on the entire history of their relationship; as Hoon enacts a positive and affectionate orientation towards Melrose, by displaying interest in her personal life. Melrose is aware of Hoon's dislike for being associated with other female friends, and this background knowledge is significant grounds for the addressee to evaluate the received cues as serious speech. In relation to style shifting, Sophocleous and Themistocleous (2014) demonstrate how the use of Greek-Cypriot Dialect (GCD) and Standard Modern Greek (SMG) contextualises utterances differently. In one example; when discussing a reunion between old classmates, a speaker named Ioulia switches from GCD to SMG, marking a shift in topic, as well as contextualising the topic as having a serious tone. SMG is preferred over GCD when discussing the reunion, since it involves factual information, and is

therefore considered appropriate. On the other hand, GCD contextualises speech as jocular and humorous, although it occurs as a form of criticism. This style shifting, which is marked by GCD and SMG represents similar functions to how swear words and *lah* contextualise the speech in the extracts. In some of the extracts, the shift from a jocular to a serious mode is marked by the use of Manglish features, while in others it indicated a shift in the tone and topic of interaction (as discussed below).

The shift in conversational style in the addressee's speech corresponds to the concept of 'keying' (Hymes, 1974). Downes relates a speaker's 'key' to their 'tone, manner or spirit of the act, whether mocking or serious' (1998: 303). The signal transition for the 'key' (playful to serious) within the conversations is clearly marked with the use of swear words and *lah*. *Lah* contributes to interactive tone, and serves to emphasise the feelings of the speakers, communicating emotional information about level of annoyance, unhappiness, and irritation. In all the cases, the addressees are clearly not outraged or offended by the use of swear words with *lah*; but they acknowledge them by displaying a readiness to clarify the direction of the communication with the speaker. Therefore, the speakers do seem to respond to this way of speaking as meaningful, by mitigating their presuppositions and reiterating earlier sentences.

Thus far, my analysis lends importance to the need to analyse the prior utterances that triggered the cues, as well as the addressee's reaction following the conversation. Much like the other contextualisation cues (i.e. code switching, prosody, style shifting), I proposed that combining swear words with *lah* might function to allow addressees to signal how speakers' utterances are meant to be interpreted. The mechanism of swear words and *lah* in this study is similar to that in the work of Georgakopoulou (1997) on code-switching in email communication. In her work, Georgeakopoulou demonstrates a shift in the Greek variety that reframes the conversation between speakers as relaxed, jocular and playful. According to her, the humorous effects help to establish a familiar frame between speakers, indicating intimacy (ibid: 152). In this study, I suggest that the use of combined Manglish words (swear words and *lah*) is a form of intimate

speech usually used between close friends, or between equally ranked speakers in an intimate relationship/friendship. Their conversations start with humour and teasing, framing their level of familiarity and subsequently being redirected towards an in-depth level of emotions and seriousness (through swear words and *lah*), implying increasing intimacy between them. Swear words and *lah* are a form of emphasis that conveys connotations that can be clearly understood by both speakers. In the majority of cases the addressees recognise the cues from the speaker; they maintain focus on the topic of interaction, and shift 'key' (playful to serious) within the conversations. However, in Sample 4 (Amalina and Bibi), there is a shift in both the topic and the conversation 'key'. Bibi, who initially urges Amalina to call her to discuss the flower bouquet, recognises the cues requiring her to drop the topic, and shifts her focus, helping her friend get a bus ticket. Similar conceptualisation has also been reported in other studies, focusing on style shifts between standard and regional dialects to signify a new topic of conversation. When studying regional speech in an online community, Androutsopoulos and Ziegler (2004) discussed style shifting between a group of friends conversing about a football match between Germany and Hungary. In that conversation, speaker A uses regional dialect to inquire about the player who scored the goal 'jo un ver wen' ('yeah but for whom?'). After several sequences of conversation are completed in regional dialect, Speaker A brings up a new topic, which relates to a computer magazine. This change in topic is indicated by a shift to standard German. Similar to how dialect and standard language shifts are contextualised as cues to mark a shift in topic, swear words and *lah* augment upon the power of contextualisation cues, being employed to mark a shift in the topic of the conversation. This is evidenced in sample 4, when Amalina's query following the swear word and *lah,* marks a change in topic of conversation; Amalina ignores Bibi's query and asks about which bus station to use. Here, I suggest that the cues have been successfully recognised; Bibi's reply is ultimately a reaffirmation of the intimacy frame and participants' in-group membership. This is congruent with Georgakopoulou's (1997: 157) work, discussed earlier, where code choices that introduce humour between the speakers prove to be a form of joint membership in which they are able to accurately interpret the style of speech.

An important observation made in reference to one of the conversation samples (Sample 3: Ben and Jason) was that contextualisation cues can sometimes be only weakly attended to by the listener, due to differences in the speakers' culture, background knowledge, or group membership (John J. Gumperz, 1982). The sample between Ben and Jason, shows continual use of swear words and *lah,* ranging from mild to a stronger intensity. Ben initially uses a mild swear word, 'siao/crazy', but then subsequently a stronger swear word, 'sial', within the same extract to emphasise his decision regarding the best time to arrive at church. Jason's failure to recognize the first cue ('mai siao la') is a probable indication of his lack of familiarity with Ben; thus, Jason continues by making a half-hearted effort to negotiate with Ben, aiming to change his mind. As well as suggesting a new time frame ('9.30?'), Jason outlines his reasons for not travelling to the church independently; due to the hot weather and having previously left his bicycle at the church. This explanation is punctuated with 'laughing tears' emoticon, commonly used to indicate a humorous or pleasing situation (*Emojipedia*, 2013). The use of an emoticon following the unfavourable situation encountered by Jason indicates a funny event is taken lightly by him. Additionally, it is suggested that speakers tend to rely on the nature of their relationship with the addressee, as well as their expectations, to interpret cues as playful (Matoesian & Coldren, 2002). Following this, we can assume Jason interpreted the first cues ('mai siao la') as playful and jocular speech and not as it was originally meant by ben. This leads to a further negotiation about leaving church early. This triggers Ben to initiate another attempt to contextualise his speech in a more serious domain. Ben uses a stronger swear word ('sial'), and an emphasis marker *lah* to reiterate his statement that he wants to stick to the original time of 10 AM. The swear word, 'sial', now suggests growing annoyance, conveying a more explicit indication of his decision. Relying on the discussion of samples so far, we see that swear words and *lah* function to activate common responses from hearers, such as an insincere response (Jason's response pattern) and coarseness (Melrose's response).

We can deduce from the regularity and systematicity with which the use of swear words and *lah* occur among this group of speakers that this form has

some associated social meanings. The processes of contextualisation suggest the versatility of *lah,* as observed in the previous literature on Manglish, which is emphasised as a mitigating marker. In this chapter, I argue that the employment of swear words + *lah* itself should be considered a meaningful act and viewed in terms of a socio-cultural dimension; i.e., considering the social identities of participants and the participants' stances. Regarding social identities, the employment of swear words and *lah* has framed the relationships between the speakers, indexing intimacy. It is interesting to note the various social meanings of *lah* that have emerged throughout the literature. The variations in the meaning of *lah* are similar to those observed in Kiesling's (2004) work on *dude* and Denis's (2013) work on the Canadian Marker *eh*. Taking Kiesling's work as an example, *dude* actually started as an insult to make fun of male fancy dressers. The men in these groups turned this insult into a solidarity form of address to each other, which then spread through California subcultures, such as jazz fans and hippies. It gained meaning and strengthened its connection to masculine speakers before being adopted by women in the 2000s. It also indexed the relationship between the men who used the term with their addressees. While Kiesling argued that the relationship was a stance of cool solidarity, the men did not use *dude* with someone who was intimate with them.

In my study, the meaning of *lah* varies, as observed throughout the literature. It first started as an ethnicity marker when some Chinese claimed that it was used by the Chinese and some claimed that it was used by the Malays (Section 2.5). It also indexes low prestige and is associated with those who lack fluency in English. Although *lah* was subsequently accepted in the workplace, it was considered a feature of informality when speakers used it with colleagues. In this thesis, I have shown the relationship between speakers who used *lah* and swear words. Unlike *dude*, speakers use *lah* with someone who is intimate with them.

In relation to its association with swearwords which this chapter addresses, swearing practices have been witnessed spreading and developing among youths in Asia. It is now a part of general youth culture. In Malaysia,

swearing is considered to be trendy (Fernandez, 2008), normal, natural, and acceptable amongst youngsters (Tian, 2014: 104).

Crucially, the fact that swearwords as linguistic cues occur within the specific multilingual setting is not to be ignored. The first conversational sample from Melrose and Hoon reveals mild use of the insult phrase *lah* (your head *lah*), which was uniquely highlighted as originating from a Chinese character despite its translation into English. It has also been suggested that swearing in a second language, especially English, is perceived as less rude than swearing in one's mother tongue (Mohd Noor, Abdullah and Syed Abdul Rahman, 1996: 61). This is further supported by the second example, as Hoon utters the Malay swear word, 'celaka', which is a Malay translation of 'bastard'. It has been noted that multilingual speakers prefer to swear in their L1 rather than their L2, possibly because swearing in a non-native language distances the speaker emotionally from the content (Gawinkowska, Paradowski, & Bilewicz, 2013). Therefore, in the case of both samples, the swear word uttered in Hoon's second (English) and third (Malay) languages might have reduced significance or carry less emotional weight. Moreover, it is possible that a speaker's preference for using swear words in their native or other language is heavily reliant on the speaker's intentions (Dewaele, 2004: 95). Therefore, in this study, the speakers' reluctance to use their native language when swearing relates to their desire to reduce the impact of any offensiveness towards the addressees, thereby aligning with solidarity-based relationships between speakers. We can therefore observe how swear words and *lah* in-group contexts overlap within a multilingual context. In this study, Manglish speakers with a multilingual background seem to have reclaimed multilingual Manglish swear words and *lah* for in-group use.

Although the Chinese speakers in Samples 1 to 3 employ Malay words when swearing, Malay is the heritage language in Malaysia, and so it is compulsory to learn Malay in all schools there, both public and vernacular, in Malaysia (discussed in Chapter 2). It is the dominant language of communication in electronic and online media, and is the official language of Malaysia. Therefore, Malaysians, including the Chinese speakers in this study, acquire Malay at a very young age, so that it becomes part of their identity as Malaysians. In contrast,

languages, such as Chinese and Tamil are not taught in public schools. The Malay speakers who study in public schools are only exposed to Malay and English in school. Therefore, I suggest that the in-group use of swear words and *lah* in Sample 4 is a form of 'crossing' (Rampton, 1995: 71); i.e. 'the use of language varieties associated with social or ethnic groups that the speaker does not normally belong to'. Swearing is also one of the most reported uses of cross-ethnic crossing (Rampton, 1991: 230). Language crossing has been noted by researchers as a common practice among Malaysians (Hashim, 2006: 105), and is evident in Sample 4. As shown in sample 4, Malay speakers employ the Chinese word 'chibai/vagina' when swearing; the addressee, who is also a Malay speaker, clearly understood the cues when shifting the topic of conversation. The use of Chinese among members of the Malay group is an interesting finding, as it is evidence of language-crossing practices used among youths who are not fully competent in Chinese dialects. In her study of language choice in an Australian high school, Willoughby (2009: 428) found that multilingual students were language-crossing mainly when greeting or swearing. She discovered that exchanging multilingual swear words, greetings and insults was a norm among many of the friendship groups at Ferndale. In fact, one of the students associated swearing with crossing, according to one's intention. They were able to distinguish their communicative intent when swearing in their own language (English), or when using other people's languages (ibid: 429). Willoughby (2009) added that crossing could be perceived to build bonds between friends, rather than to express genuine annoyance. As seen in extract 4 above, the swearwords employed in Chinese contextualised swearing are a weaker degree of swearing. It is suggested that speakers who code cross are either not competent in a particular language, and/ or are not primarily associated with a specific group identification (Johnstone, 1999). For the Malay speakers in this study, the following sources confirm their exposure to Chinese. It is suggested that exposure to media plays a vital role in the frequency of swear word usage among youths (Tian, 2014). This includes online and printed sources, such as comic strips and online videos (MGAG-The Daily Dose for Malaysian Humour), which not only uses Manglish as the principal form of communication; but incorporates multilingual swear words and *lah* into conversations. Additionally,

the surrounding multicultural environment is another primary contributor determining the use of multilingual swear words among speakers.

Overall, the discussion on swear words and *lah* in this chapter has shown the versatility of *lah* and its various indexical meanings, unlike ethnic-specific features discussed in Chapter 5. Through swear words and *lah*, speakers construct alignment/disalignment with their addressees, primarily through style-shifting. It is argued that the purpose of this is to form the major contextualisation cues that frame footings of symmetrical relationships and intimacy. In conclusion, although *lah*'s status as a stereotype of Manglish is well known (as seen through literature), this study has attempted to capture the multiple and intersecting social meanings (meso-level and micro-level social frames) that led to that status. The most salient social meaning of *lah* is relevant in terms of intimacy and Manglish-ness. However, because *lah* is so widely used, unlike *lor, leh* and *de*, as addressed in chapter 5, it has lost its Manglishness and functions as an intimacy/solidarity marker.

6.5   Conclusion

The analysis of the samples above illustrated how youth speakers graft together individual Manglish features, such as swear words and *lah* in in-group interactions. These contextualisation cues can be strategically employed as marked activities, and call for displays of misalignment. The shifting or switching of addressees' conversational styles also serves to contextualise the successive development of activities. In the CMC context, cues can only be a marking device aided by online features, such as emoticons. To clarify how cues alter the speech styles of speakers and addressees, four representative samples/ extracts of different intensity swear words were analysed. It was observed that swear words and *lah* can be used to contextualise the climax of a conversation. Shifting away from a series of imperative or playful styles can also be a strategy employed to contextualise the transition from the climax itself to the composure of the topic, and to close a topic. Speech styles in these samples, therefore, indicate interactional accomplishments, where choice and alternation of tones in speech styles hold interactive meanings. Returning to the broader argument presented

in this thesis, I proposed that Manglish cues are a local variety in its own right, shared by the Manglish speakers regardless of ethnic group. The habitual use of specific cues affects the role relationships and reflects the degree of intimacy among friends. This implies that certain features have lost their Manglish/ethnic dimension, having been recontextualised as in-group markers. It is interesting to investigate how a cluster of Manglish features can be associated with particular identities among youth culture, such as contextualisation tools. I propose that swear words used with *lah* are a newly emerging practice and indicative of not only Manglish-ness but also intimacy. Although the speakers in this study might not be fully or explicitly aware of the usage of swear words with *lah* as a cluster of contextualization cues, the fact that speakers subconsciously use and respond to them represents certain shared values such as in-groupness and intimacy marker associated with this linguistic practice. In the previous chapter we have seen multiple layers of indexical values added to specific Manglish features which correspond to ethnicity, intimacy, and locality. In this chapter, we saw the most frequently used Manglish feature, *lah*, lose its Manglish dimension and functioning more as intimacy marker reflecting shared background between speakers. While speakers use Manglish features for various reasons in their interaction, my next chapter aims to investigate the speakers' perceptions of these Manglish features in terms of their awareness levels, or specific association to the features, which eventually contribute to their 'enregisterment' (Agha, 2003) as a Manglish variety.

Chapter 7

Indexicality and Enregisterment of Manglish

7.1   Introduction

The first section of this chapter analyses Manglish features that are commonly listed by the speakers in the questionnaire. Following that, there is analysis of the multiple-choice questionnaire following Cooper's (2013) scale of association in reference to the Yorkshire dialect. The analysis focuses on the speakers' perceptions of Manglish features, attributable to each level of association with Manglish. The following section rationalises the frequency of the listed features in comparison to ethnic groups. Finally, comparative analysis between the listed features and multiple-choice results indicate the similarities and differences of awareness that ethnic group (Malay, Chinese and Indian) has in relation to Manglish. By mapping out the results, I show the speakers' perceptions of Manglish features and values attributed to the variety. The findings reveal that Manglish features are socially recognised (and therefore enregistered) forms of speech, indexical not only to place but also to ethnic groups.

7.2 'Provide Manglish Features' Results for all Speakers

Table 7.1 shows a set of Manglish features listed in the online questionnaire by the fifty-two participants. The first column of the table presents a range of thirty-four Manglish features provided by the speakers. The second column displays the Manglish features listed in the questionnaire, ranging from tail words, exclamation marks, innovated/localised spelling, and Manglish phrases. The third column of the table demonstrates a definition of their features, as shown in the Manglish Dictionary (Lee, 1998). The last two columns present the number of speakers who listed the Manglish features specified in the second column, with their percentage count per total number of overall speakers.

No.	Manglish Features	Definition/Function	Total Participant	%
1	La/lah	Emphasis and softening message	33	63
2	Lor/lo	Express sympathy/understanding	15	29
3	Liao	Already	12	23
4	Mah	To soften order/advice	9	17
5	Meh	A mild form of questinong	9	17
6	Walao	To express amazement	9	17
7	Leh	To contradict in harsh manner	6	12
8	Gostan	To reverse	8	15
9	Ah	To emphasis/asking question	7	13
10	Ar/Har	Asking question/uncertainty	5	10
11	Fuyoh	To express amazement	5	10
12	Potong stim	Buzzkill	4	8
13	Abuden	Stating the obvious	4	8
14	Pokai	Broke	4	8
15	Yam cha	Drink tea	4	8
16	Aiyo	To express dismay/mock horror	3	6
17	Cincai	Casually, simply	3	6
18	Bah	To indicate uncertainty/friendly challenge	2	4

19	Rempit	Ramp it	2	4
20	Terrer (terror)	Great, excellent	2	4
21	Action	Show off	2	4
22	Matcha	Brother-in-law	2	4
23	Where got	I don't do that/ like that	2	4
24	Also Can	Sure, Can do	2	4
25	Is it	Is it	2	4
26	Kot	Uncertainty/hesitation	1	2
27	De	To emphasize	1	2
28	Liddat	Like that	1	2
29	Dowan	Don't want	1	2
30	Oni	Only	1	2
31	Dy	Already	1	2
32	Outstation	Outside of town	1	2
33	Dey	Dude, sister	1	2
34	Adding –ing (makan-ing)	Eat-ing	1	2

Table 7.1 Listed Manglish Features in Online Questionnaire

The speakers primarily listed tail words, followed by the exclamations, local spellings, and expressions they considered as Manglish. Most of the features listed in Table 7.1 were also identified in the WhatsApp dataset. As expected, over 50% of the participants identified *lah* as a Manglish feature, since it appeared frequently in the participants' conversations. Between 20-30% of the participants associated *liao*, *lor, walao,* and *gostan* with Manglish, whereas only 10-20% recognised *mah, meh, ah*, *leh* and *fuyoh* as Manglish features. However, a number of listed features were not found in the WhatsApp dataset, despite being listed in the questionnaire by 15% of the participants, i.e. *Gostan*. The same was true for *rempit* and *potong stim*. The questionnaire also included a considerable number of mentions of *cincai* and *pokai*, despite these not being prominent in the WhatsApp conversations. The listing and usage of *terror*, *action,* and *outstation* in both the questionnaire data and the WhatsApp corpora, indicate the lexical

meanings of these words in a local context. For example, Lee (2015: 23) described the word *terror* as meaning 'feeling awesome', whereas Benson (1990: 23) defined *outstation* as meaning 'out of town'. These words are thus not constrained by their Standard English meaning, but differ depending on the meaning ascribed by the Manglish speakers.

When it came to the use of nonstandard spelling, the WhatsApp data included a considerable number of the expressions *dowan*, and *oni*, despite the low number of speakers listing them in the questionnaire. It is common for young Malaysians to modify spellings, with Stapa and Shaari (2013) identifying a set of modified spellings in their Facebook corpus, including the aforementioned features. Finally, although very few participants listed *dey, also can,* or *is it* as examples of Manglish, frequent use was made of these expressions in the WhatsApp data.

A number of other Manglish features listed by the speakers included words borrowed from local dialect and expressions not apparent in the WhatsApp data, and therefore excluded from Table 7.1, i.e. *tackle* ('to woo a woman') (Lee, 1998: 54)*, chun* ('nice') (Schneider, 2003a: 59) and *syok* ('great' and 'fabulous') (Lee, 1998: 41). Following the discussion of the overall features listed by the speakers, it should be noted that a number of similarities and differences of the listed features were identified according to ethnic group, as I will address in the next section.

7.3   Overlap between 'Provide Manglish Features'[21] across the Three Ethnic Groups

This section undertakes a comparison between ethnic groups in relation to the overall features listed in Table 7.1, to identify the correlation between the listed features and the ethnic groups of the current study. Table 7.2 presents the overlapping features listed in my questionnaire, identifying a number of similarities in the number of features provided, however, in relation to only two

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[21] 'Provide Manglish features' is the first section in the online questionnaire

ethnic groups. This is seen for the features with 14% of occurrences in the questionnaire: *liao, lor, rempit, action, got* and *mixing between English and Malay.* Overall, of thirty-four features listed in the questionnaire, twenty illustrated a correlation between the ethnic groups. In particular, five features appeared to overlap across the three ethnic groups, while fifteen overlaps appeared in two of the ethnic groups.

No.	Manglish Features	Malay %	Chinese %	Indian %
1	La/lah	43	62	71
2	Aiyoo	14	6	0
3	Can Also	14	3	0
4	Liao	14	29	14
5	Lor	14	35	14
6	Meh	29	11	0
7	Mah	14	18	0
8	Macha	14	3	0
9	Ah	29	9	0
10	Leh	0	12	14
11	Fuyoh	14	0	57
12	Gostan	14	9	43
13	Rempit	14	0	14
14	Potong Stim	0	3	29
15	Action	14	0	14
16	Pokai	0	6	43
17	Cincai	14	6	0
18	Got	14	14	0
19	Mix of English and Malay	14	9	14
20	Dy (Already)	0	6	14

Table 7.2 Overlaps in the 'Provide Manglish Feature' Among the Three Ethnic Groups (Section 1 – Online Questionnaire)

The first pattern that can be observed consists of features commonly listed across the three ethnic groups. The Malay, Chinese, and Indian speakers agreed that tail

words such as *lah, liao*, and *lor* are examples of Manglish. Although *liao* and *lor* originate from the Chinese dialect, the features appear to have spread widely across other ethnic groups in Malaysia. They were also commonly employed in the WhatsApp conversations across the three ethnic groups as shown in Chapter 5.

The second pattern emerging from Table 7.2 reveals the existence of consistency among the features listed between the Malay and Chinese speakers, in comparison to the Indians. The Malay and Chinese speakers tended to list similar features in the questionnaire section, suggesting that Malay and Chinese share similar perceptions of Manglish, whereas the Indians differ in their perception of Manglish. For instance, the Malay and Chinese speakers mutually listed *aiyoo, can also, meh, mah, macha, ah, cincai* and *got* as Manglish while the Indians seem to have a uniform perception of Manglish features. Among these features, *aiyoo* and *macha* originates from the Tamil dialect (Albury, 2017; Hassan & Hashim, 2009; Lee, 2015), however not listed as Manglish features by the Indian speakers. Looking at Figure 7.6 above, both *aiyoo* and *macha* belong to level 1 group. Although *macha* is widely used in spoken and written form, only small number of speakers agree that it is a Manglish feature. The weak association of *macha* to Manglish explains the result in Table 7.2.

Another observation that can be made, based on Table 7.2, concerns the characterization of Manglish as a language shifting between English and Malay. I would suggest this perception is triggered principally by the status of the Malay language in Malaysia, as discussed in Chapter 2. The incorporation of English and the Malay Language in various sectors and official domains, such as the government, media (newspaper) and higher education institutions has contributed to this perception. Lowenberg (1991: 367) highlights the example of Malay and English in the media domain. As shown in the example, lexical transfer from Malay appears in the newspaper report 'The residents will repair the roofs on a gotong royong basis' (The Malay Mail, 1 December 1988; cited in Lowenberg 1991). The borrowed term gotong-royong is a unique cooperative blend traditional to Southeast Asians (ibid). Therefore, the speakers' association of

Manglish with the English and Malay language is pertinent to the previous occurrence.

7.4   Multiple-Choice Results for All Ethnic Groups

The following step in the analysis examined the speakers' perceptions of Manglish. This section analyses the multiple-choice results from the questionnaire and identifies whether Malays, Chinese and Indians consistently associate these features with Manglish. The results are presented and analysed for each ethnic group.

Cooper (2013: 193) suggests that combining some of the criteria listed aids in identification of patterns in the data. I followed his multiple-choice analysis for the Yorkshire dialect in order to identify correlations between categories in the current study, with the average number for both categories combined under one heading: (1) 'I have heard of this' and (2) 'I have heard this (or know people who use this) but would not use it myself'. These categories were employed due to an expectation that Malay, Chinese or Indian speakers (while not necessarily using them themselves) would have heard some of these Manglish features being used by other ethnicities. These could thus be considered as ethnic-specific features. Other categories analysed together are: 'This is a Manglish feature', and 'This is a common Manglish feature'. Again, there is no clear difference apparent between these individual categories, as participants tended to tick them both and they are therefore also combined under one heading. This resulted in the categories being simplified into seven choices (i.e. rather than the initial nine listed in the questionnaire), as follows: (1) 'I use this word (written/spoken); (2) 'I have heard of this'; (3) 'this is Manglish'; (4) 'this is a modern Manglish feature'; (5) 'I have never heard of this'; (6) 'I would never say this'; and (7) 'This is old-fashioned Manglish. Nobody uses it anymore'. Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 present the overall results based on these criteria.
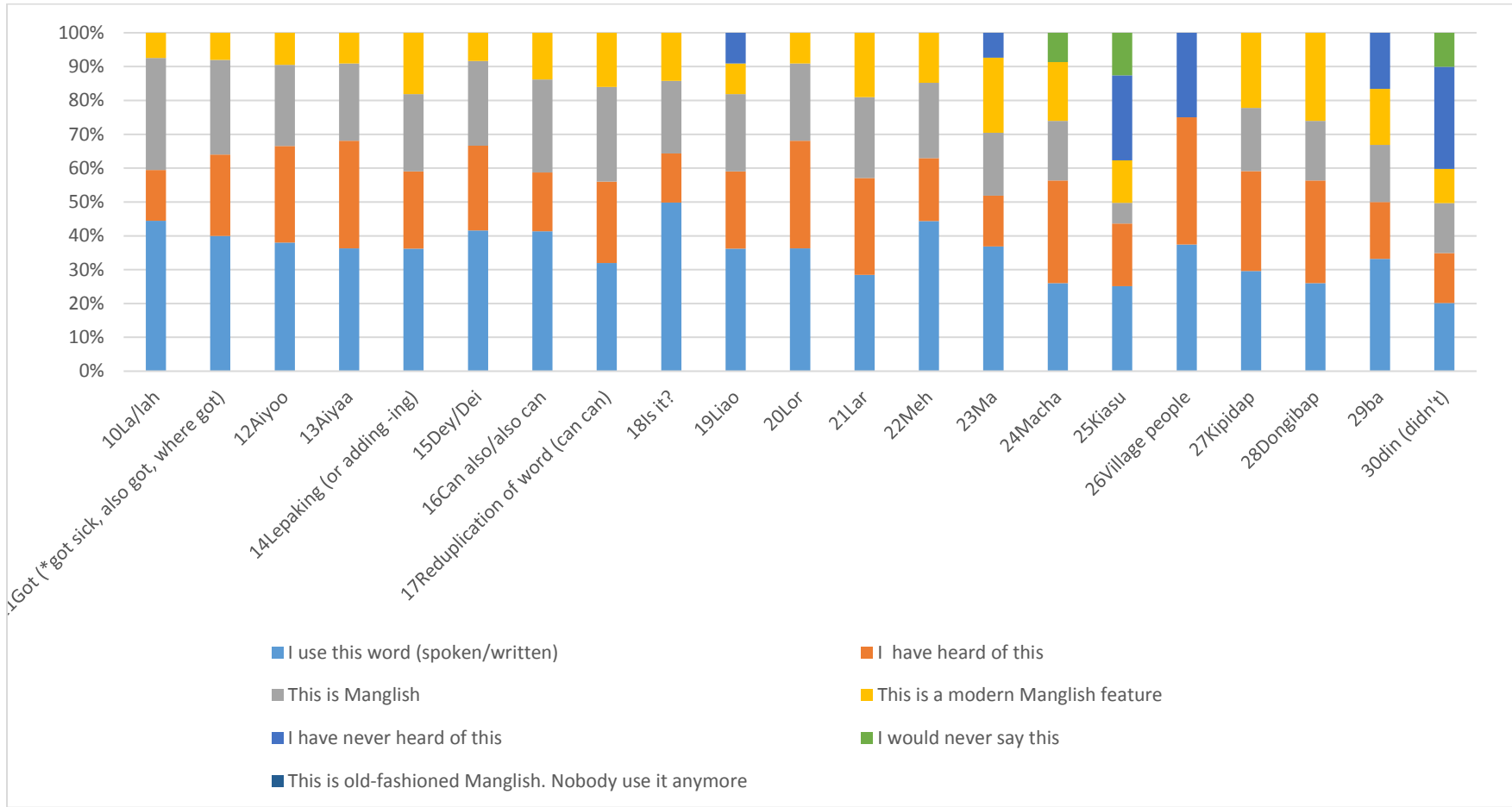
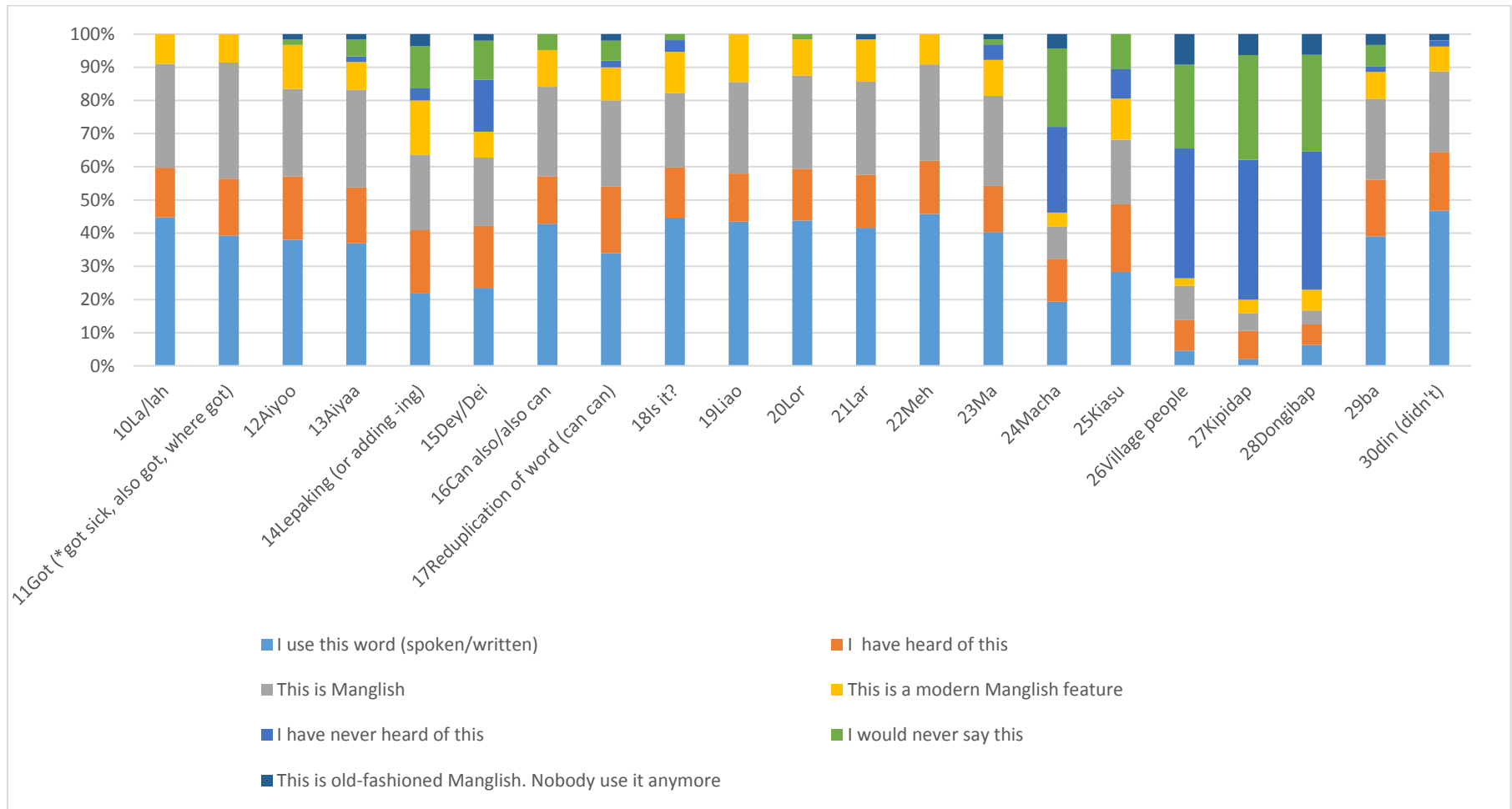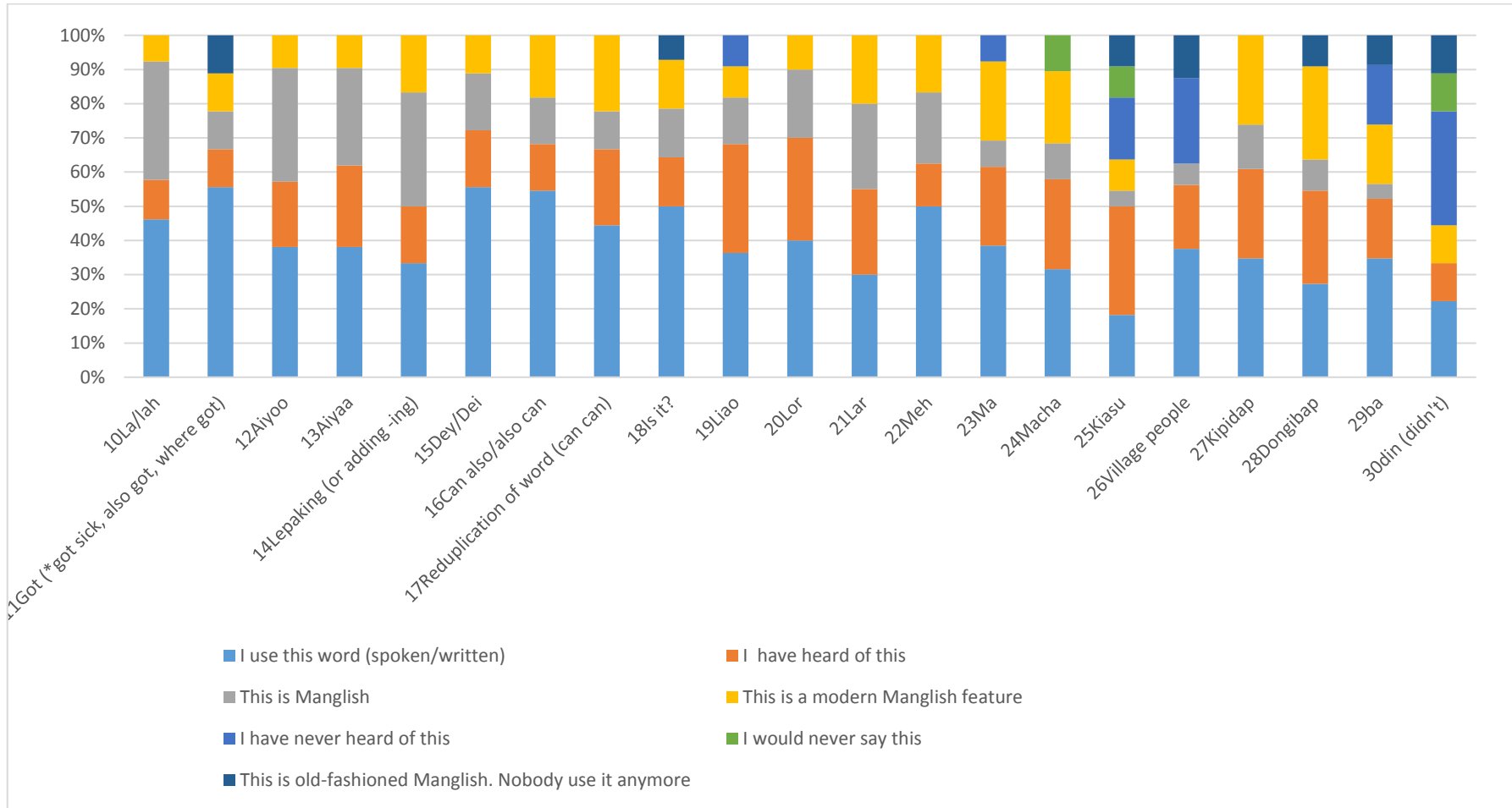**Figure 7.1 Online Questionnaire Multiple-choice Results for Malay speakers**

Figure 7.2 Online Questionnaire Multiple-choice Results for Chinese speakers

Figure 7.3 Online Questionnaire Multiple-choice Results for Indian speakers

Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 above show the multiple-choice results for Malay, Chinese and Indian, respectively. Each figure reveals consistencies in terms of the options selected for some of the features. The similarities of the selected options enable further categorization of the features, while the comparison of the multiple-choice results between the three ethnic groups offer a further understanding of the different perceptions of Manglish held by Malay, Chinese and Indian speakers. This helps to answer whether the options are consistent with features that they have listed in the earlier, and whether the participants were aware of using these features in their conversations.

Overall observations in Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 show that most of the speakers are familiar with almost all twenty-one features in the questionnaire. However, their familiarity with the words or features does not determine whether these are enregistered Manglish features. These speakers contribute to the identification of Manglish as distinct from SBE through the answer choice 'This is Manglish/This is a modern Manglish feature' (grey and yellow graphs). Results from the multiple-choice questions will show the familiarity of speakers from each ethnic group with the listed features, and whether they were strongly associated with Manglish. The level of association of the features with Manglish is an initial step that will show whether some of these Manglish features might have undergone the process of enregisterment and that the features have been successfully established as stable cultural objects – associated with an ethnic or national level.

By adopting Cooper's (2013) scale of strength of association, I was able to place the features from each ethnic group into three levels of association with Manglish; level 1, level 2 and level 3. The first level refers to features that are strongly associated to Manglish through the options 'I use this word (spoken and written)'; 'I have heard of this'; 'This is a modern Manglish feature'; and 'This is Manglish'. In Cooper's term (2013: 234), features in this level are known as 'active' features since they are currently used by the speakers. The second level refers to features that are strongly associated to Manglish. Cooper labelled features in Level 2 as 'post-active features', stating that features within this level are 'strongly associated with place, widely recognised, but not as widely used as

those in the 'active' level' (ibid: 235). I characterised features in this level according to the response patterns of the options 'I have heard of this', along with low instances of 'I say this'. In level three, the features are weakly associated to Manglish. Cooper noted that features in this level refer to 'inactive' features, where in my study, very few identified these as Manglish features. This is determined through the response choice: 'This is old-fashioned. Nobody talks like this anymore'; 'I have never heard of this'; and 'I would never say this'. This corresponds with the multiple-choice selection for the Malay, Chinese and Indian speakers in the present study.

7.4.1 Level 1: Active Features

The scale reveals that the features strongly associated with Manglish. Figures 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6 present features based on the options chosen.
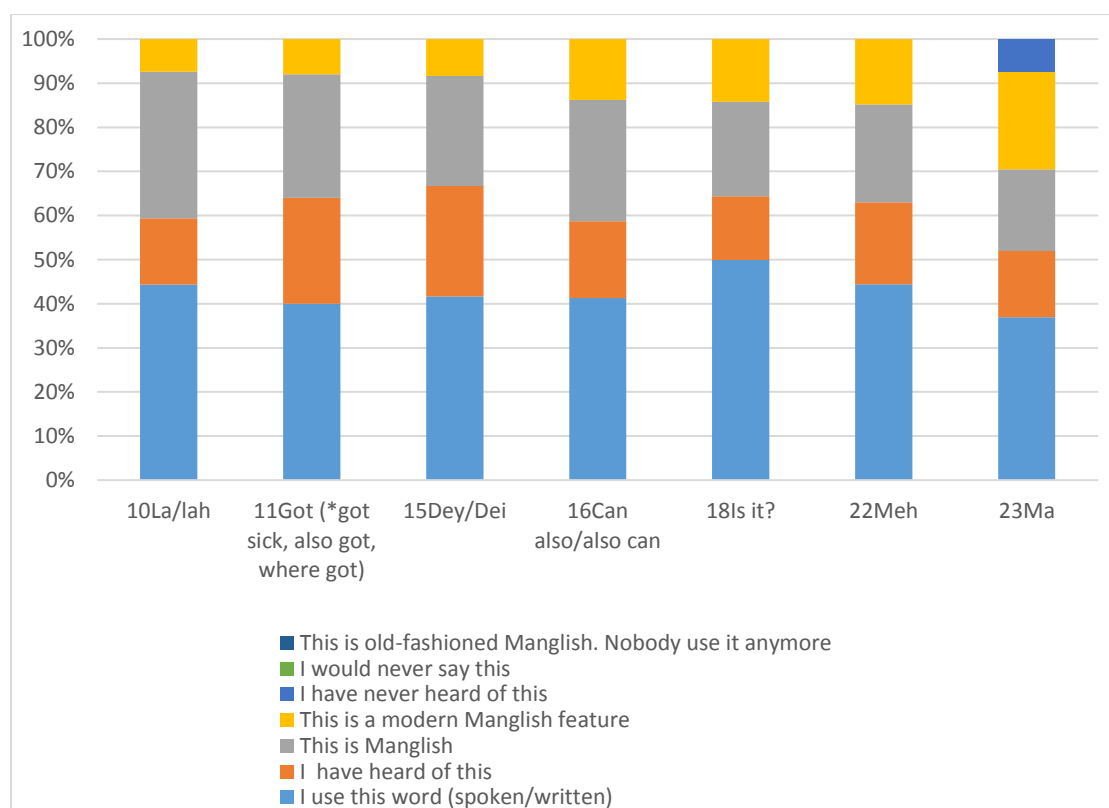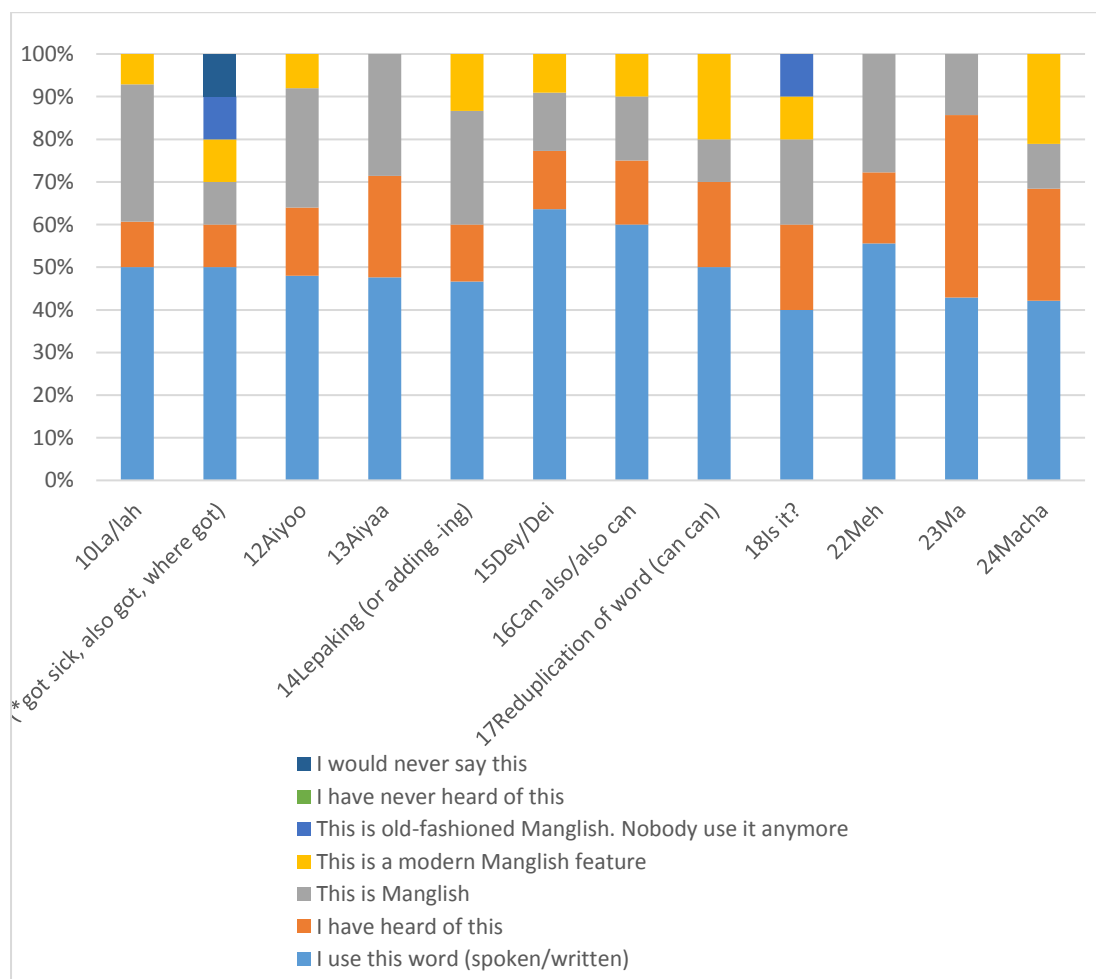

Figure 7.4 Average Percentages of Multiple-choice results for the Malay Speakers

Figure 7.4 includes seven features that the Malay speakers strongly associated with Manglish; *lah; got; dei; can also; is it; meh;* and *ma*. The results reveal that over 70% of the Malay speakers employed these in their spoken and written form. Over 30% of the Malay speakers agreed that these features are Manglish by selecting the option 'This is Manglish', while they also agreed that they are modern Manglish. This indicates that Malay speakers are currently continuing to use *lah; got; dei; can also; is it; meh;* and *ma* in their conversations. None of the speakers chose the option 'I would never say this' and 'This is old-fashioned Manglish. Nobody uses it anymore', thus indicating active features of Manglish variety.
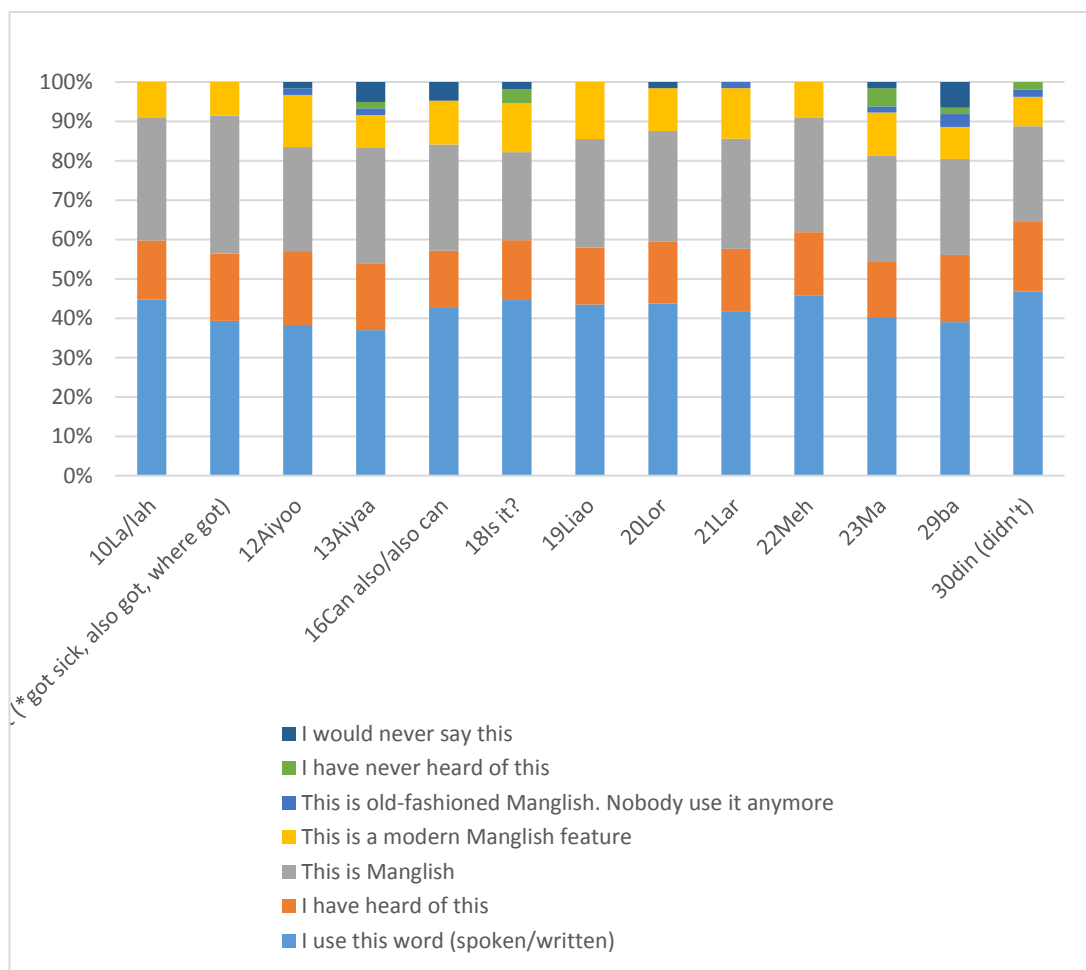
Figure 7.5: Average Percentages of Multiple-choice Results for the Chinese Speakers

In Figure 7.5, the Chinese speakers appear to associate additional features with Manglish. The result revealed twelve features as being strongly associated with Manglish: *lah; got; aiyoo; aiyaa; also can; is it; liao; lor, lar meh; ma; ba;* and *din*. A similar pattern emerged for the Chinese speakers, with over 50% claiming to use this set of features in their spoken and written language. Furthermore, over 30% of the speakers agreed that these features are Manglish, with more than 10% referring to them as modern Manglish. Despite the number selecting 'I have never heard of this' and 'I would never say this' for some of the features, a large proportion demonstrated familiarity with these features in terms of current usage, and thus the above features are actively employed by the Chinese speakers.
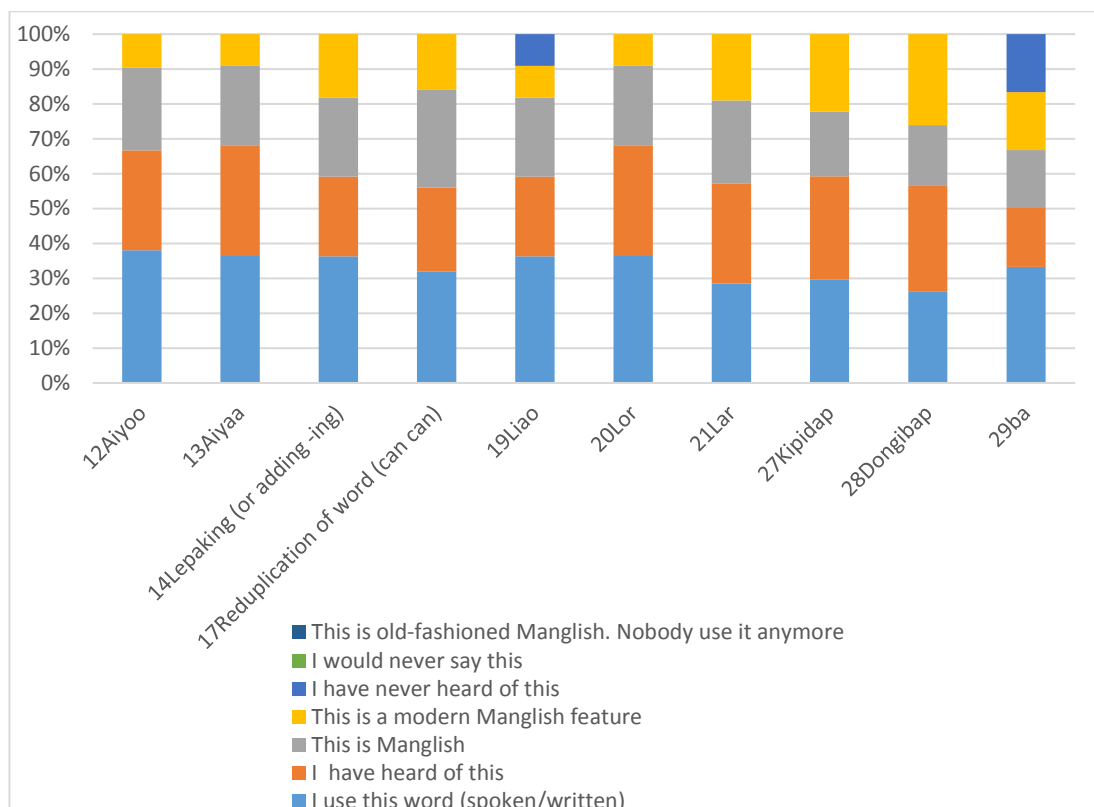

Figure 7.6: Average Percentages of Multiple-choice Results for the Indian Speakers

Figure 7.6 reveals that the percentages of the multiple-choice result confirm that the Indian speakers strongly associated thirteen features with Manglish. Over 40% of the Indian speakers stated that they used these features in both spoken and written language, while over 10% reported currently using them in a consistent manner. Although a percentage of these selected 'I would never say this' and 'This is old-fashioned Manglish. Nobody uses it anymore' for the expressions *got* and *is it*, it appears that majority of Indians speakers agreed these features were Manglish.

7.4.2   Level 2: Post-Active Features

The pattern emerging from the multiple-choice criteria in Level 2 demonstrates that, even when speakers are highly familiar with features, they may not necessarily use them. Figures 7.7, 7.8 and 7.9 present the average percentages of features with a strong association with Manglish.
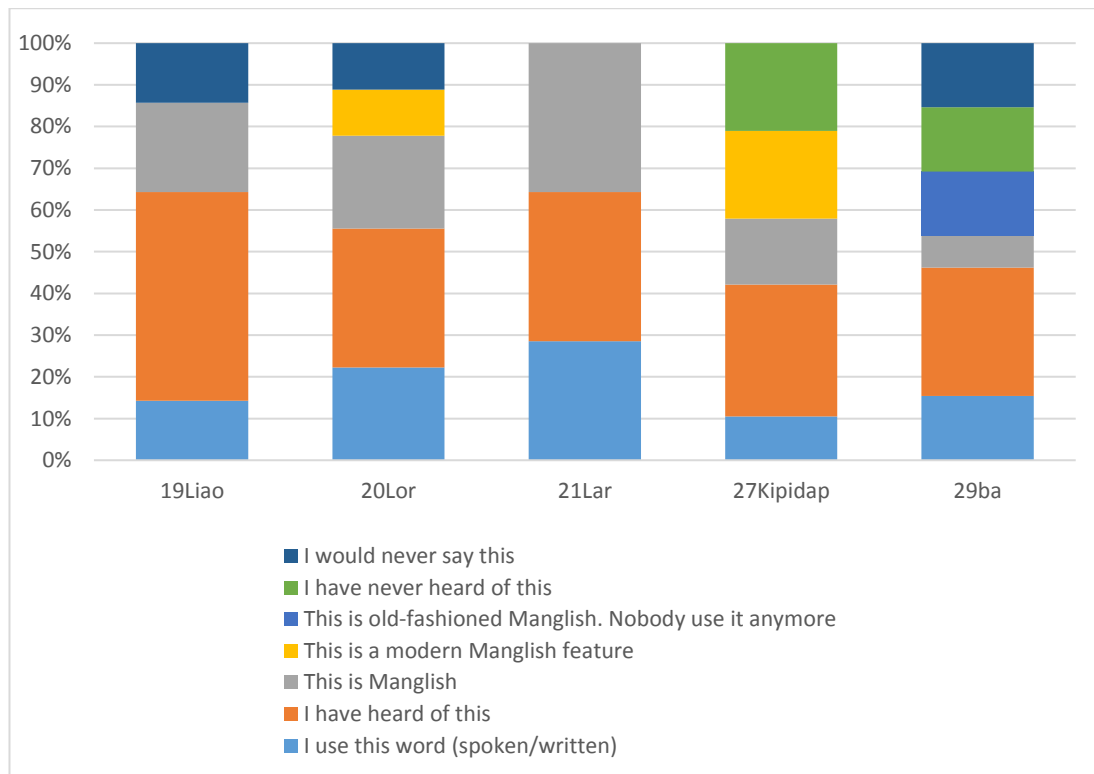

Figure 7.7 Average Percentages of Multiple-choice results for the Malay speakers

Figure 7.7 shows the average percentage of multiple-choice results among the Malay speakers. The analysis reveals a slightly lower percentage of speakers employing these features in the spoken and written form than in Level 1. In particular, fewer than 60% of the Malay speakers used the following in their spoken and written form: *aiyoo; aiyaa*; added *–ing*; reduplication; *liao; lor*; *lar*; *kipidap; dongibap;* and *ba*. The findings for *ba* and *liao* stand out, as more than 10% of the Malay speakers had never heard of these terms, while none of the speakers selected the options 'I would never say this' or 'This is old-fashioned Manglish. Nobody uses it anymore'. However, over 20% of the speakers identified these as Manglish features and over 10% agreed that these are modern Manglish, thus demonstrating that these features are in current use. Therefore, the features highlighted in Figure 7.7 indicate a strong association with Manglish, despite not being as widely used by Malays as features in Level 1 (Figure 7.4).
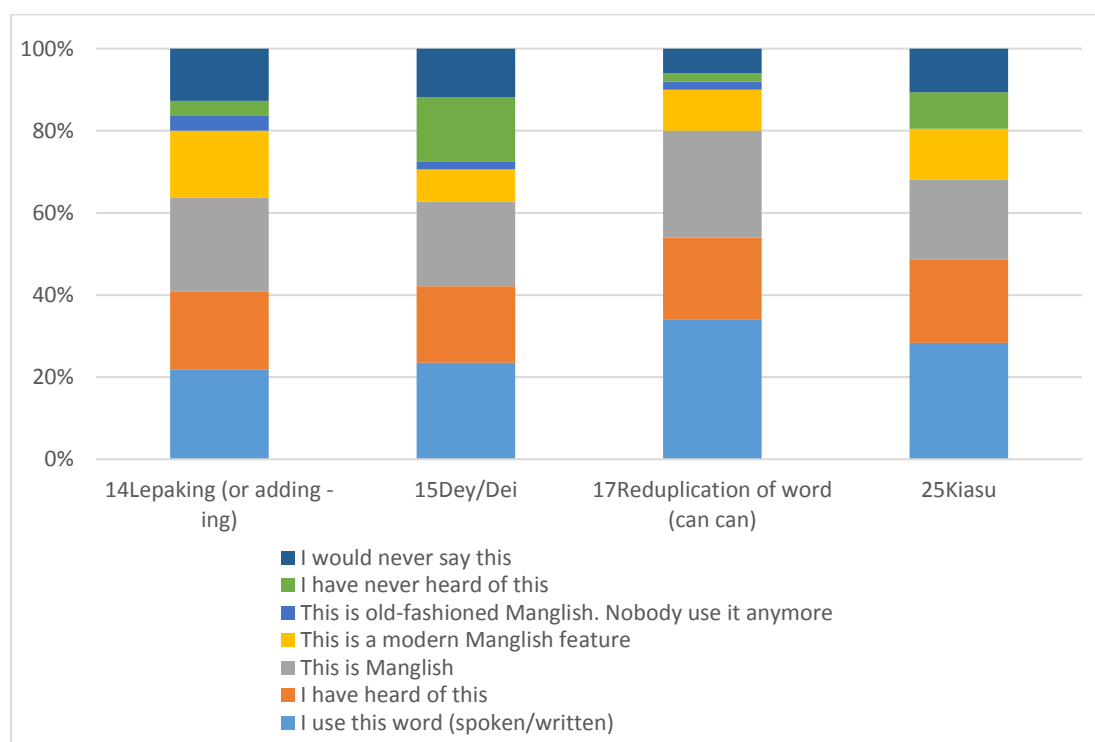
Figure 7.8 Average Percentages of Multiple-choice results for the Chinese speakers

Figure 7.8 shows four features the Chinese associated with Manglish: *adding –ing; dei; reduplication of word;* and *kiasu*. The result reveals a decrease in the percentage of speakers selecting the option 'I use this word (spoken and written)'. However, over 20% agreed that they had heard of features with *adding –ing, dei, reduplication of word,* and *kiasu, with* more than 30% identifying these as Manglish. In addition, between 10% and 30% of the Chinese speakers agreed that these are modern Manglish. This group of features therefore revealed a strong overall strong correlation with Manglish, as the Chinese speakers acknowledged them as being modern Manglish, i.e. that they were in continuous use, even though the participants themselves might not necessarily use these features in their daily life.
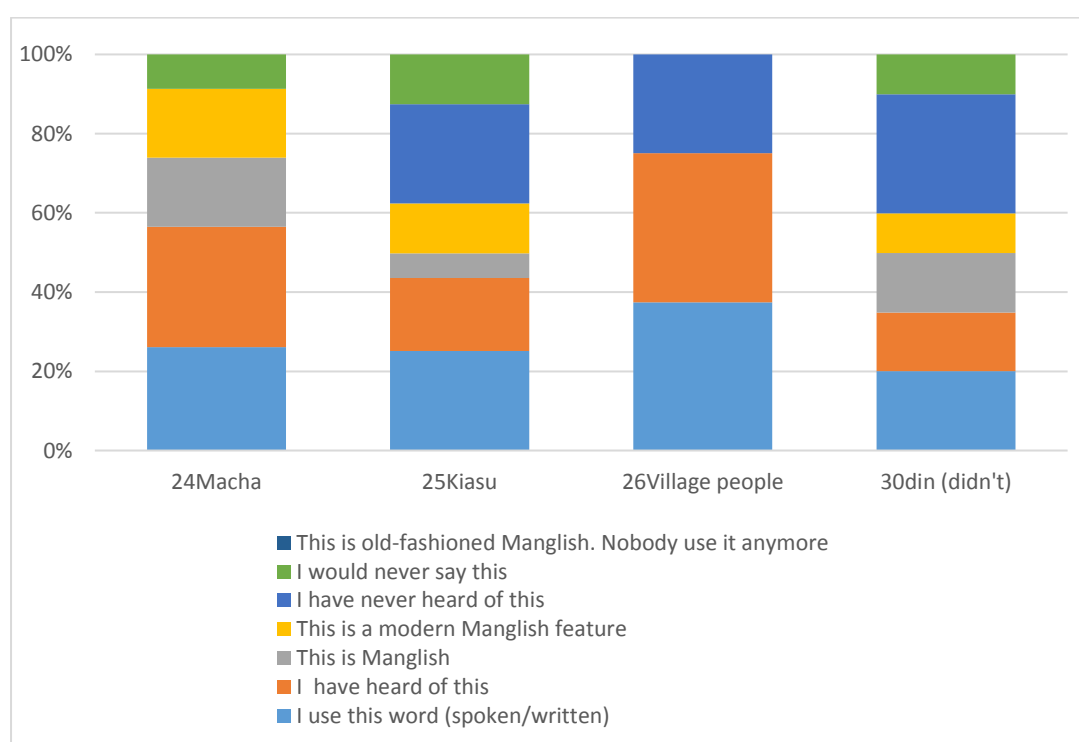

Figure 7.9 Average Percentages of Multiple-choice Results for the Indian speakers

Figure 7.9 shows unexpected patterns emerging from the response pattern of the Indian speakers, i.e. 14% claimed that they would never use *liao, lor* and *ba* in their conversations, while over 10% had never heard of *kipidap* and *ba.* However, a fairly high percentage of speakers selected the options 'This is Manglish' and 'I

have heard of this'. This supports the correlation between these features and their strong orientation as being Manglish. The Indians demonstrated a strong correlation of *liao, lor, lar, ba* and *kipidap* with Manglish, despite the low number of speakers who use these in their spoken and written form.

7.4.3   Level 3: Inactive/Newly emerging Features

Figures 7.10, 7.11 and 7.12 outline the features with the weakest correlation to Manglish according to the Malay, Chinese and Indian ethnic groups, respectively.
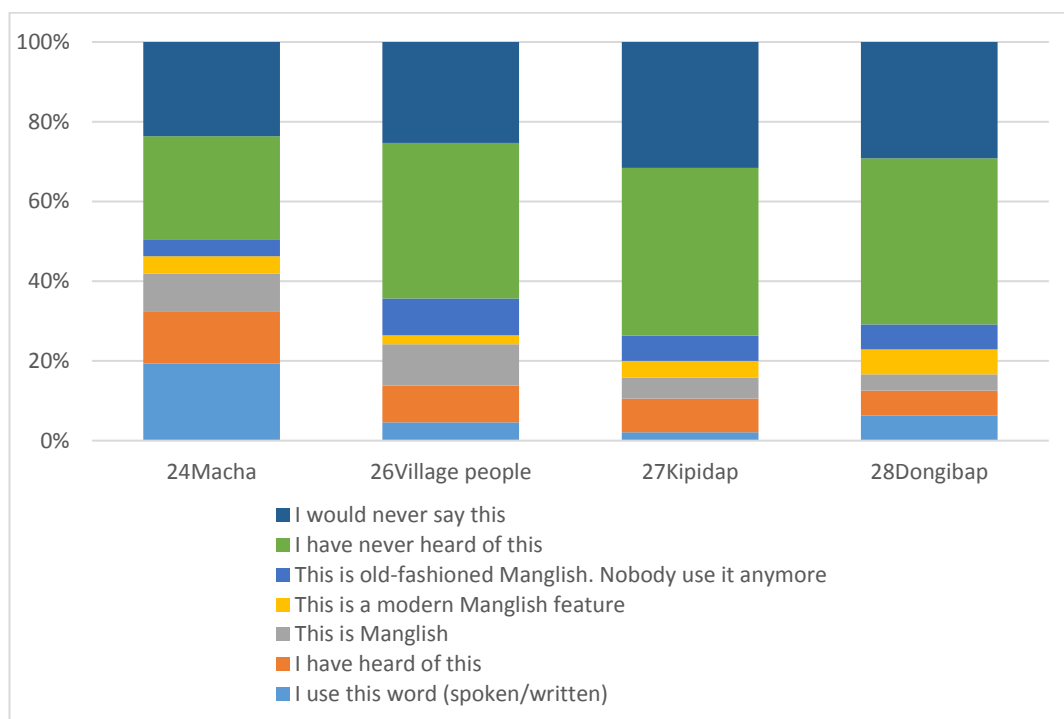

Figure 7.10: Average Percentages of Multiple-choice Results for the Malay Speakers

Figure 7.10 presents the average percentages of the multiple-choice results for the Malay speakers. Four features demonstrate similar response patterns, i.e. *macha, kiasu, village people* and *din*. The result reveals that more than 20% of the Malay speakers had never heard of *kiasu, village people* and *din*, while 14% preferred not to use *macha, kiasu* and *din* in their conversations. One of the features worth highlighting is the expression *village people*. Although a percentage of speakers claimed they use *village people* in their spoken and

written form, over 20% claimed that they had never heard this expression, while none of the Malay speakers selected the option 'This is Manglish' and 'This is a modern Manglish feature'. This demonstrates that the expression *village people* is rarely viewed as Manglish and its current usage is therefore in doubt, thus explaining the inclusion of *village people* in this subset of features. Overall, there has been a rapid decrease in the options 'This is Manglish' and 'This is a modern Manglish feature' in comparison to the features in the first and second levels, thus indicating that Malay speakers least associate *macha, kiasu, village people* and *din* with Manglish.

Figure 7.11: Average Percentages of Multiple-choice Results for the Chinese Speakers

Figure 7.11 shows that, among Chinese speakers, the lowest correlation of Manglish is for the features *macha, village people, kipidap* and *dongibap*, as a result of a significantly high percentage of speakers who would never use, or have even heard of, these features. In particular, over 30% of the Chinese speakers chose the options 'I have never heard of this' and 'I would never say this', while a relatively small number of speakers chose the option 'I use this (spoken/written)'. It is therefore, evident that the Chinese speakers are

unfamiliar with the expressions *macha, village people, kipidap* and *dongibap*, and rarely use them in their verbal or written conversations.
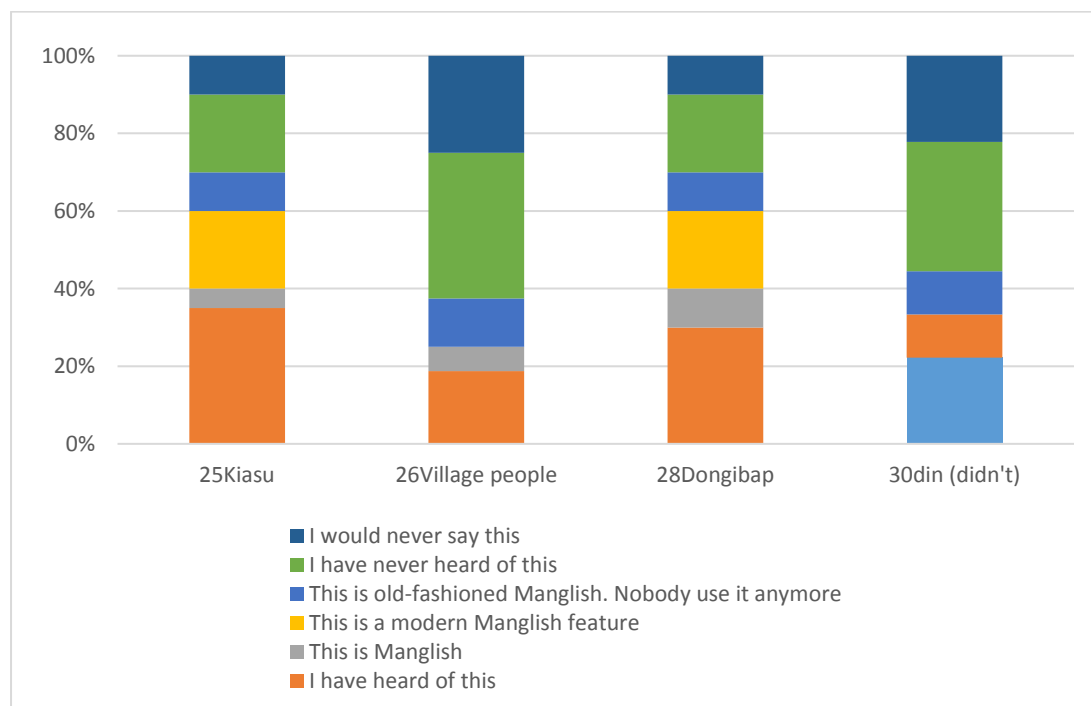
Figure 7.12: Average Percentages of Multiple-choice Results for the Indian Speakers

A similar pattern emerged in relation to the Indian speakers' multiple-choice results. Figure 7.12 reveals that none of the Indian speakers used the features *kiasu, village people, dongibap* and *din* in either the spoken or written form. In addition, fewer speakers agreed that these are modern Manglish, thus demonstrating the Indian speakers' lack of familiarity with these features. Furthermore, there were higher percentages of speakers who had never heard of these features in comparison to those who had. This indicates that *macha, kiasu, village people,* and *din* barely existed within the Indian speakers' vocabulary and were therefore weakly associated with Manglish.

7.5 Overlapping Features between three Ethnic groups in Multiple-Choice Results

The responses discussed in levels 1, 2 and 3 above revealed the presence of a consistency in the multiple-choice results between the ethnic groups, i.e. the Malay, Chinese and Indian speakers strongly associated *lah* with Manglish, whereas they least associated *village people* with Manglish. Table 7.3 presents the features according to their level of association with Manglish by each ethnic group.

LEVEL	MALAY	CHINESE	INDIAN	Overlapping Feature
LEVEL 1	Lah	Lah	Lah	Lah
	Got	Got	Got	Got
		Aiyoo	Aiyoo	
		Aiyaa	Aiyaa	
			-ing	
	Dey		Dey	
	Can Also	Can also	Can also	Can Also
			Reduplication	
	Is it	Is it	Is it	Is it
	Meh	Meh	Meh	Meh
	Ma	Ma	Ma	Ma
			Macha	
		Liao		
		Lor		
		Lar		
		Ba		
		Din		
LEVEL 2	Aiyoo			
	Aiya			
	-ing	-ing		
		dey		
	Reduplication	Reduplication		
	Liao		Liao	

	Lor		Lor	
	Lar		Lar	
	Kipidap		Kipidap	
	dongibap			
	ba		Ba	
		Kiasu		
			Din	
LEVEL 3	Macha	Macha		
	Kiasu		Kiasu	
	Village people	Village people	Village people	Village People
		Kipidap		
		Dongibap	Dongibap	
	Din			

Table 7.3: Overlap between Manglish features in Multiple-Choice Questionnaires

Table 7.3 shows the overlap between features at each level among the ethnic groups. This reveals that the Malay, Chinese and Indians speakers strongly associate the following features in level 1 with Manglish, i.e. *lah, can also, got, is it, meh,* and *ma*. In his enregisterment study of the Yorkshire dialect, Cooper (2013: 234) claimed that speakers constantly relate these features with a location. For example, the Yorkshire, non-Yorkshire and International respondents in his study associated the following features with a widely recognised Yorkshire identity: *nowt; owt; summat; definite article reduction; aye; ah;* and *g-dropping*. This current study argues that similar implications can be found among its own participants, as speakers from the three ethnic groups consistently recognised the usage of *lah, can also, got, is it, meh* and *ma* with widely recognised Manglish. It can thus be deduced that the speakers in the current study are aware of Manglish as a variety and its associated features. The three ethnic groups consistently selected similar options for the features *lah, can also, got, is it, meh* and *ma,* which are perceived to be uniquely 'Manglish'. Remlinger (2009: 119) noted this correlation between features in her study of

enregisterment in the Michigan Keweenaw Peninsula, noting that when speakers recognized terms such as *you betcha, pank, chook* and *yous* as distinctively local, they enregistered the dialect by associating certain features with dialect, people and place.

According to Cooper, features in level two are 'strongly associated with place, widely recognised, but not as widely used as those in the 'active' level' 2013: 235). Cooper referred this to *<ah>* in *abaht*, *<ooa>* in *rooad*, *thee, ower* and *neet,* as they are strongly associated with Yorkshire, although fewer speakers used them in comparison to the Level 1 features. However, the current study's findings for Level 2 features are more varied, in that none of the features overlap between all three groups of speakers, i.e. the Malay, Chinese, and Indian ethnic groups. I argue that such inconsistencies might have been due to the influence of heritage language/dialect. As discussed in Chapter 2, Malaysian English as a subset of World Englishes, has undergone the process of adjustment, borrowing and transfer from various ethnic languages. This is proven in the quantitative data shown in Chapter 5 where I discuss the ethnic-specific features *lor, leh* and *de*. I have also shown that the tendency of Chinese speakers to use features such as *lor, leh* and *de* with their Chinese friends rather than non-Chinese friends indicates a multiple layer of indexical values attached to the features. This explains the discrepancy in terms of awareness levels between the three ethnic groups.

At Level 3, speakers from the three ethnic groups consistently demonstrated a lack of familiarity with the feature *village people*, including failing to associate it with Manglish. Cooper (2013: 235) noted that very few identified features in this level as modern Yorkshire features. He further argued that these are 'deregistered' features, due to having lower levels of usage among modern speakers, in comparison to a much wider usage during the nineteenth century (ibid). On the contrary, I argue that features in Level 3 are not only limited to pre-existing words widely used by speakers, but also include new features created by Malaysians with the social media domain, of which the majority of Chinese and Indian speakers have never heard, and prefer not to use including the term *village people.* Thus, an anomalous pattern of responses emerged from the Malay

speakers. As discussed earlier, some Malay speakers had never heard of, or used, the term *village people*, and none related this term to modern Manglish features. However, *village people* is more visible in its use in social media platforms in Malaysia, and therefore the section below discusses how the term can be used to visualize the portrayal of a stereotypical Malaysian identity.

7.5.1 *Village people:* Characterological Figure of a Typical Malaysian

This section discusses the indexical value of the term *village people*. Although it seldom occurred in the WhatsApp data, it is a prominent stereotype that increasingly appears in digital discourses. Moreover, the feature is often employed in certain situations, and is associated with specific characters. This association prompted this study to investigate the question of whether the concept of *village people* represents similar ideologies as the Yappin' Yinzers doll, or the comedy sketches in a radio programme investigated by Johnstone (2011). In her study, Johnstone (ibid.) addressed the comedy present in the radio programme in the form of characters who spoke with a local dialect, which can index a new set of social meanings and identities as understood by the listeners. Specifically, the features in the sketches could be enregistered to the Pittsburghese, and framed as humorous performance. Similarly, the present study sought to investigate whether the characters illustrated through *village people* could be enregistered as typical Malaysians, or represented other identities that are "culturally literate" (ibid.: 657) to online audiences.

In this present study, I argue that the 'characterological figure' (Agha, 2006: 177) of *village people* was created by the Malaysians. Agha states that a characterological figure is an 'image of personhood that is performable through a semiotic display or enactment' (ibid: 177). Here I argue that the *village people* persona represents the enactment of a stereotypical Malaysian lifestyle, which is not only reflected through linguistic performance, but represented by appearance, i.e. clothes, characters, activities and associated lifestyle.

The example set out below represents a social media influencer with 620,000 followers, who has developed fictional individuals to represent a parody

of a stereotypical Malaysian lifestyle. These videos and comics were created for social media, and in particular Instagram. The stereotypical Malaysian Malay identity is depicted through the character of 'Mak Leha'. I will now discuss several aspects concerning the relationship between Mak Leha's character and *village people*, i.e. a stereotypical Malaysian Malay.

Figure 7.13 'Village people' Character

(Source: Faizdickievp Instagram)

Firstly, the name 'Mak Leha' (*mak*: mother, *Leha*: her name) represents a typical Malaysian mother. In the Dialect Dictionary, Lee (1998: 15) describes typical labels or names that form an aspect of the Malaysian identity. For example, the honorific *mak nenek* refers to a fussy motherly character who loves to nag (ibid: 23). *Mak* is a Malay word for 'mother' while *nenek* is a Malay word for 'grandmother', with a combination of these characters creating an implication of additional extra fussiness (ibid: 23). Similarly, the term 'Mak Leha' is used in Faizdickie's Instagram parody to reflect the typical character of a Malaysian mother, i.e. one who is fussy and loves to gossip. This stereotypical character is also found in a commercial radio in Malaysia, known as radio ERA, in the slot named 'Gossip Mossip Mak Jemah' (#GMMJ). This highlights the name and stereotypical character of a Malaysian. Other than that, the 'Mak Leha' style of wearing a blouse and headscarf supports the visualisation of a typical Malay mother. The appearance is also supported by Lat, a well-known Malaysian

cartoonist, who represents the character of typical 'motherhood' for different ethnic groups. Lat's illustration of a Malay mother bears close similarities to the character in the *village people* parody.

Figure 7.14 'Malay mother' character

(Taken from Lat's Comic Strips)

(Source: http://www.etawau.com/HTML/AirAsia/Lat.htm)

Lat's illustration presents the character of a typical Malay mother with headscarf and traditional Malay clothing style, known as a *baju kurung* (a long blouse). This illustration enables the audience to identify the ethnicity of the mother, as the clothing style is related to the Malay culture and religion. His observations and experiences have, over a considerable period of time, become the main source for such illustrations (Chin *et al.*, 2017: 169). This stereotypical signifier is also observed in Johnstone's (2017) work on the characterological figure of the Yappin' Yinzers' dolls. According to Johnstone (2017: 289), the unsophisticated appearance of the dolls in terms of clothing and hairstyle link them to the personas of Pittsburghers. Similarly, this study argues that the imitation of the 'Mak Leha' character is associated with a Malaysian Malay.

Secondly, in terms of phonological aspect, the character sounds casual with Malaysian local pronunciation especially for the word *mother*. Malay speakers tend to replace /θ/ with /t/ due to their first language being the Malay

language (Yong Enxhi, Bee Hoon and Mei Fung, 2012: 30). This describes the typical accent among Malay speakers, which is consistently observed in Mak Leha's video. Moreover, a number of spelling pronunciations are also found in the comic version, i.e. *konpem* for *confirm*. The substitution of the consonant /f/ with /p/ also frequently occurs among Malay speakers as indicating a low level of education and social status (Baskaran, 2008: 287). These sounds are ethnically linked to some of the audience, due to being related to the Malay pronunciation, however, the most significant attribute of the *village people* style of speech is the use of Manglish by 'Mak Leha', along with other characters in the parody. For example, the frequent use of *lah* is included in the comic strips, such as 'very expensive *la* here' (Figure 7.15). Other features frequently associated with Manglish include the local use of *got*, *also can*, and *already.*

Figure 7.15 Taken from #Villagepeople Comic Strips

(Source: Faizdickievp Instagram)

Furthermore, it is not only their appearance and speech that identifies these characters as Manglish speakers, but also their behaviour and actions. Faizdickie's Instagram account contains several hundred comics and videos produced to describe the lifestyle and mentality of a Malaysian. For example, Faizdickie describes the character of 'Mak Leha' as a 'stingy' Malaysian through his Instagram post, and this character is illustrated in the following Figure.

Figure 7.16 Screenshots of 'Mak Leha'

(Source: Faizdickievp Instagram)

This figure shows Mak Leha's excitement to watch a street performance, but rapidly departing following the end of the show, once requests are made for donations. The portrayal of this typical Malaysian behaviour is currently gaining a huge number of viewers, along with likes, comments and tagging, thus implying that the audience respond to this portrayal and acknowledge this as a stereotypical behaviour. Through this video, Faizdickie advises his followers through his *village people* hashtag not to behave this way, including encouraging his followers to give donations as a form of appreciation for performers. In addition to this 'stinginess', Malaysian behaviour is also portrayed on a number of different platforms, such as comics and Facebook videos (e.g Stingy Uncle Siu Mai – video in link).

From the figure above, Mak Leha's behaviour, and dialogue lines 'I just walk-walk' (I'm just passing by), 'very expensive *la* here' (This restaurant is very expensive) clearly indexes a typical Malaysian. Such cultural schemata or local

character is also reflected in Johnstone's (2011) work on the radio skit. For instance, the imitation of the 'mother' character in the radio skit illustrates a Pittsburgh persona and working-class mother which align these as a form of identity (ibid: 675). Johnstone illustrated how the typical Pittsburghese 'mother' character in a radio skit is recognized through her linguistic performance, i.e. the use of kinship terms such as 'your uncle'. She is also verbally portrayed as stereotypical mother, who loves to nag, but who is at the same time soft-hearted. The 'Mak Leha' and 'mother' characters share a number of projected similarities, intended to encourage the audience/listener to embrace the characters. The parody invites *village people* audiences to recognize this representation as showing a typical Malaysian attitude. In this case, the parody captures the 'stinginess' character of Manglish speakers in specific events, as above.

The examples discussed above demonstrate how mediated performances can forge a link between 'linguistic resources with various characterological figures' (Bell and Gibson, 2011: 561). Other than the 'mother' character in the radio skit above, Johnstone (2017) illustrates a characterological type of Pittsbugh dialect, namely a Yappin' Yinzers doll, which is strongly associated to the place, dialect and people.

Figure 7.17 Yappin' Yinzers doll

(Source: Johnstone, 2017: 288)

The terms Yinzer is derived from the pronunciation of *yinz* (ibid: 286). The dolls represent Pittsburghese lifestyle, with similar traits such as hairstyles (brown

hair with bangs for the female doll), clothes, facial features and voices which seems old-fashioned, thereby characterised them according to specific social class; working class.

In Michigan's Upper Peninsula, the iconic figure is the *Yooper*. Like the Yappin' Yinzers dolls in Pittsburgh (Johnstone, 2017), *Yooper* is derived from the initials UP which is pronounced as you-pee (Remlinger, 2009: 119). The term is also linked to dialect and place (ibid).

Figure 7.18 Characterological Stereotypes of *Yooper*

(Source: Remlinger, 2009: 131; Remlinger et al., 2009: 178)

Figure 7.18 illustrates characterological type of *Yooper* dialect. These pictoral representations appearing with the language features such as *eh, yah,* and *da* frequently and consistently signal identity and place. Moreover, there are a number of specific features (i.e. *ya)* and social practices in the Upper Peninsula associated with the characterological *Yooper* figure such as the image of a male character with specific style of clothing (kromer and hunting jacket) associated to the annual hunting event in the region (Remlinger, 2009).

By the same token, I have illustrated that there is a similar characterological type for Manglish; *village people* as a stereotypical Malaysian behaviour, although it is much less developed than *Yooper* or Yappin' Yinzers. My discussion on 'Mak Leha' character has shown that 'linking locally-occurring

forms to multiple models of speech, behaviour, and action, performances'
(Johnstone, 2011: 658) promote understanding of the local persona relating to
place. In a similar vein, I argue that *village people* is, like *Yooper,* a new label
reinforcing 'authentic local identity' (Remlinger *et.* al, 2009: 183) as being a
stereotypical Malaysian.

From the questionnaire result, although *village people* belongs to the third
level of the enregisterment process, which is weakly associated with Manglish
and most of the speakers have never heard of it, I would argue that the term is a
newly emerging word derived from social media. Although the speakers in my
study did not have an immediate picture or 'mental image' (Agha, 2003: 234) of
a Manglish-speaking individual as a particular type of figure (unlike the image of
Yappin' Yinzer's doll representing the Pittsburghers), I suggest that *village people*
(i.e., Mak Leha) would later become a recognisable character that represents a
social type or characterological figure in Malaysia. As suggested by Agha (2003:
243), this occurs through circulation of messages, an important process for
constructing 'metadiscursive semiotic events' (2003: 243) of enregisterment.
The social media platform makes it evident that the *village people* personae is
being circulated through the platform (Instagram) as it is frequently used by
Faizdickie's Instagram followers. I argue that social values are shared in the
portrayal of *village people*, similar to that of speakers of Manglish; that it is
associated with low prestige, informality, or negative characteristics, such as
stinginess. Moreover, I suggest that the qualities embodied in the *village people*
character (i.e., Mak Leha) index Malay-ness, or at this phase, are associated with
ethnic Malay attributes, since 43% of the Malay speakers admit that they have
heard of the *village people* term, as well as having incorporated it into their
spoken and written discourse. Therefore, the *village people* character was first
circulated among Malay followers of the Instagram account, and gained its social
meaning among the Malay speakers.

7.5.2   Enregisterment of Ethnic-specific Features

Following the discussion of overlapping features at each level, a number of features are also only strongly associated with Manglish within a specific ethnic group. This suggests that such features can be enregistered only among Malay, Chinese or Indians. Johnstone states that 'the same feature can be enregistered in multiple ways,' noting that the alveolar (*ing*) can be related to a different social class, regional identity, or in the form of localness (ibid: 160). This present study observed identical features enregistered in multiple ways as a result of the multilingual language practices in Malaysia. For example, the Chinese speakers in comparison to the Malay and Indian strongly associated features such as *liao, lor, lar* and *ba* with Manglish. These features or tail words, as discussed in the previous chapter originate from several Chinese dialects found in Malaysia i.e., Mandarin, Cantonese, and Hokkien. The results also revealed that the Chinese speakers in this study tended to relate Chinese dialects with Manglish, i.e. when asked to provide Manglish features, 29% listed *liao,* while 35% listed *lor.* In addition, as observed in the commentary section of the questionnaire, some speakers related Manglish to a mixture of English and the Chinese dialects.

1	Shalbanah :	English mix with Malay, Chinese
2	Ken :	some Chinese words lo, liao, meh to replace English
3	Xora :	manglish sometimes will add on the Chinese proverb translate to English such as 'people mountain people sea'- meaning of many people in the place
4	Hoon :	Basically those la, meh, liao are used by Chinese people because **we** have a lot of dialect
5	Siuling :	Some of the words are from dialects such as Hokkien (Kiasu), not from the proper Mandarin/Chinese. Also some words such as -ing are mixture of different language but not Manglish

These extracts highlight how speakers consciously list ethnic features or phrases, such as *la, meh, liao, kiasu*. Others described Manglish as mixing English with Chinese or Malay. Furthermore, my participant, Hoon, refers to speakers of his own (Chinese) dialect as 'we' indicating group solidarity. Cooper (2019: 75) pointed out a similar occurrence in Yorkshire, as illustrated in his interview session about vowels in Barnsley; whereby, his Sheffield interviewee commented

how Sheffield speakers use 'we' to group themselves as 'Sheffieldish', thereby indicating group solidarity. Since there are similar comments and descriptions of Manglish provided by Chinese speakers, we can deduce that Manglish features, such as *lor, liao* and *meh* carry the indexical values of intimacy, solidarity and ethnic identity, as is the case with the Barnsley dialect. While the Barnsley vowel differentiates Barnsley from other areas in Yorkshire (ibid), features such as *lor, leh* and *meh*, as discussed in Chapter 5, distinguish the speakers from other ethnic groups in the study. Such awareness when grouping themselves according to other ethnic groups suggests a third-order of indexicality (Johnstone *et al.*, 2006); i.e. that *lor, leh* and *meh* are enregistered among individuals of Chinese ethnicity.

In this present study, I also observe enregisterment within the other two ethnic groups. Table 7.5 shows that the Indian speakers strongly associated *dey* with Manglish, and that this was consistent with its use in the Indian speakers' WhatsApp conversations. However, despite this, the Indian speakers did not list *dey* as Manglish when asked to name familiar Manglish features. During this study's earlier analysis, it was expected that *dey* would be listed by the Indian speakers, due to the consistent use of the feature in the WhatsApp corpus, and the Tamil origin of the word, i.e. a language spoken by the Indian speakers. There remained a low level of awareness concerning *dey* among the Indian speakers, despite its frequent usage, thus grouping *dey* in the second-order of indexicality (Johnstone *et al.*, 2006), i.e. a socially meaningful feature currently undergoing the process of enregisterment.

Through discussing enregisterment within ethnic specific group(s), I have illustrated that the social meanings of Manglish are not only indexical of place (i.e. Malaysia), but also of ethnicity. Within the speech community, there is also a high level of awareness surrounding Manglish. In his study of Pittsburghese among local African Americans, Eberhardt (2012: 365) notes the racial boundaries underlined by the speakers. Although Pittsburghese is used by the African-American community, there were distinctive ways of speaking observed within local African American communities, which are not present among Whites. African-American speakers were able to differentiate dialect by associating the monophthong /aw/ with White speakers (ibid). Similarly, the

metacommentary talk by the speakers in my study reveals ethnicity is crucial in the characterization of Manglish. Although they are Manglish speakers, there is a clear semiotic link between the features of ethnicity, ingroup-ness and Manglish-ness. This has been shown in Chapter 6, where an ethnic specific connotation of the feature *lah* is compromised as a marker of intimacy and solidarity.

7.5.3   Enregisterment of New Manglish Features

A further significant finding found in Table 7.3 above consists of features such as *kipidap* and *dongibap*. As previously argued, some of these words do not form 'inactive' features (Cooper, 2013) as they are no longer used by contemporary speakers, but are rather newly emerging words that have arisen from the revolution in technology and social media. Rusli *et al.*, (2018: 118-121) supported this through their study of Manglish in social media, claiming that new Manglish terms are actively emerging on a daily basis, being introduced with different new spellings. The participants in the study of Rusli *et al.* (2018) were asked to list Manglish features that they had heard or read. The findings are listed in Table 7.4, below.

Kipidap	Miscol	Wadehek	Mischu
Keep it up	*Missed call*	*What the heck*	*Miss you*
Omaigod	Gais	Demn	Mekdi
Oh my god	*guys*	*damn*	*McDonalds*
Shuben	Cekidout	Ukendoit	Kepci
husband	*Check it out*	*You can do it*	*KFC*
Uols	Okie	Dongibap	Stabak
You all	*okay*	*Don't give up*	*Starbucks*
Iols	Fwen	Lebiu	Fesbuk
I all	*Friend*	*Love you*	*Facebook*

Table 7.4: Manglish Features in Social Media

(Taken from Rusli *et al.*, 2018: 121)

Rusli *et al.* (2018: 119) found that Manglish features, including those listed in Table 7.4, are frequently spelt according to Malaysian pronunciation, i.e. by combining Malay and English. For example, Malaysian Malay speakers tend to

substitute the sound 'vitamin' /v/ with [b] 'bitamin' (Baskaran, 2008: 287). This form of spelling pronunciation can be observed in *don't give up* (*dongibap*) where /v/ is pronounced as the letter [b]. The phonological differences of the Malay language therefore encourage its speakers, in particular, to use the Malay pronunciation of English words (Kho, 2011: 53), as listed in the table above.

This study argues that *kipidap* and *dongibap* are new developing Manglish words used in social media. Although the multiple-choice response pattern showed that the Malay speakers strongly correlated these words with modern Manglish features, only a small proportion claimed to use them as part of their spoken and written language. There was also evidence of the use of these words in the WhatsApp conversations between the Malay speakers. However, in the questionnaire, none of the Malay, Indian or Chinese speakers listed *kipidap* and *dongibap*, thus clarifying that these are newly created words resulting from social media platforms.

7.6   Social Values Indexed by Manglish

This final section examines the overall comparison between features from the WhatsApp data and the results of the online questionnaire (multiple-choice, 'Provide Manglish section'). The first column in the far left in Table 7.5 (below) demonstrates the 'overlapping' features in the multiple-choice results. As discussed in Section 7.4, *lah, got, can also, is it, meh* and *ma* are strongly associated with Manglish by three ethnic groups. The second, third, and fourth columns in Table 7.5 below ('Provide Manglish Features') indicate the features listed by each ethnic group in the questionnaire, with *lah* being the only feature consistently listed by the Malay, Chinese and Indians. The feature *lah* which is linked to the speakers and by persisting in its use, Manglish speakers are enregistering themselves as being from Malaysia through the very use of this linguistic construction. The semiotic links between *lah*, Manglish and Malaysianness suggests a third-order of indexicality, in which *lah* is a recognised linguistic form linked to (or enregistered) as Manglish. Agha (2003: 231) stated that enregisterment refers to how 'a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognised register of forms.' Thus, *lah* is

recognised as a meaningful symbol that is socially or culturally significant to Manglish speakers, i.e. the relationship between *lah* and being Malaysian is observed in the commentary response (online questionnaire).

Sunita : They are definitely Malaysian. They usually end their conversations with the

word 'lah'

Table 7.5 below also reveals that features such as *meh* and *ma* are the enregistered features among the Malay and Chinese ethnic groups, since they were listed in the questionnaire, and have a relatively high frequency of use in the WhatsApp data.

Multiple-Choice Overlap	Malay 'Provide Manglish Feature'	Chinese 'Provide Manglish Feature'	Indian 'Provide Manglish Feature'	Occurs in 3 Ethnic Groups (WhatsApp data)	Occurs in 2 Ethnic Groups (WhatsApp data)	Occurs in 1 Ethnic Group (WhatsApp data)
Level 1						
lah	lah	lah	Lah	lah		
Got	-	Got	-	Got		
Can also	Can Also	Can Also	-	Can Also		
Is it?	-	Is it	-	Is it		
Meh	Meh	Meh	-		Meh (Malay, Chinese)	
Ma	Ma	Ma	-	Ma		
Level 2						
-						
Level 3						
Village people	-	-	-	-	-	-
Listed in 'Provide Manglish Feature' but no/infrequent occurrence in WhatsApp data						
Gostan	Gostan	Gostan	Gostan	-	-	-
Cincai	Cincai	Cincai	-			Cincai (Chinese)
Pokai	-	Pokai	Pokai	Pokai		
Potong stim	-	Potong Stim	Potong Stim	-	-	-
rempit	Rempit	-	Rempit	-	-	-
fuyoh	Fuyoh	-	Fuyoh		Fuyoh (Chinese, Indian)	
Action	Action	-	Action	-	-	-

Table 7.5: Comparison between Multiple-choice Results for 'Provide Manglish Features' and the WhatsApp Data

From Table 7.5, there is a relatively similar consistency in the listed features between the Malay and Chinese speakers, but a significant contrast in the Indian speakers' perceptions of Manglish features (Blue Columns 2, 3, 4). This is due to the fact that Indian speakers only listed *lah* when they were asked to provide Manglish features that they knew, and thus were unaware that others might consider *got, can also, meh* and *ma* as part of the Manglish dialect, despite these frequently occurring in their WhatsApp data. This difference highlights the significant finding of this current study of a language shift among Indian speakers, who tend to have English as their first language. In their study of ethnic identity in the Tamil community, Naji and David (2003: 93) reveal a shift from the use of Tamil to an increased use of English, particularly among the younger generations. Naji and David (2003) further observe that this shift was most noticeable amongst the middle and younger age groups, who also revealed a preference for using English as their primary language. A study by Phng (2017: 79) further supports this shift, arguing that Indians in Malaysia are currently undergoing a language shift, and now prefer to use English to communicate, as opposed to Malay or Tamil. In this context, the use of English might refer to a more Standard variety; Standard Malaysian English. This explains their perceptions of Manglish, including their least usage of tail words, and limited form of non-standard spelling. Moreover, their responses in the commentary section demonstrated that the Indian speakers associated Manglish as 'less appropriate'.

Jessie: I think it's good that one speaks standard Malaysian English and not Manglish. Once you start speaking standard Malaysia English, you'll get used to it and you'll wouldn't have problems with grammar and essays for English.

It has pros and cons. Of course it's advisable to speak using the SME to teach ourselves and be better in English but in my opinion, I think most of us Malaysians prefer speaking Manglish is because it somehow connects us well with people around us. Sometimes we do so because the person we're talking to can't really speak perfect English or Malay so we'll talk Manglish for them to understand.

Preeya: They feel comfortable using Manglish but it's better to change the habit

They choose to speak appropriate English despite less appropriate usage of Manglish

The responses in the extracts show the Indian speakers are well aware of the social stigma attached to Manglish. Preeya, for instance, considered that speaking Standard English is 'appropriate', and therefore, speaking Manglish could be interpreted as inappropriate. Moreover, if we consider Jessie's comments from the viewpoint of students, (since they are currently students), Standard Malaysian English, which has equal attributes to Standard British English, is undeniably the 'correct' language, as seen in the response 'would not have problems with grammar and essays'. Similar attitudes regarding linguistic 'correctness' are also discussed in Dong's (2009: 14) study of Putonghua dialect, wherein a Chinese language teacher is devoted to 'correcting' a migrant student's pronunciation. In the interview, the teacher labels the student's deficits in Putonghua with the terms 'difficulty' and 'problem' (ibid). She further associates the student's incompetency in Putonghua with their being a 'slow' learner, since the language problem hinders their understanding in school. The teacher's perception of language and performance in education, therefore, created a contrasting form of social identities; 'being normal' vs. 'being slow' (ibid). In the extracts above, similar perceptions are identified in Jessie's response as she associates incompetency in Standard Malaysian English with problems in grammar and essay writing. Therefore, we can see a contrasting form of social identities associated with those who are using Manglish and those using Standard Malaysian English. The questionnaires show that other Indian speakers seldom use Manglish and emphasise the importance of Standard English as the International language. From their responses, I argue that the Indian speakers held Standard Malaysian English in high regard in relation to prestige, appropriateness, and correctness. However, Manglish was also given positive attributes in matters of solidarity, identity and natural expression. Jessie, for example, states that '...most of us Malaysians prefer speaking Manglish... because it somehow connects us well with people around us', suggesting that Manglish functioned as an ingroup solidarity marker, or as a means to communicate with other Manglish speakers.

The reason for discussing the questionnaire responses from the Indian speakers in this section is to show that there are different sets of values and

preferences for using Standard Malaysian English and Manglish. As previously discussed, language shifting in the Indian speakers' first language contributes to their style or form of interaction in the WhatsApp data. That is, they become prone to using Standard English in their interactions and, therefore, fewer Manglish features or less localised spelling are used in WhatsApp conversations. The Indian speakers also uphold the positive attributes or advantages in speaking a standard variety over Manglish. However, the Indian speakers in this study associated Manglish (specifically *lah*) with a sense of belonging or of being Malaysian, associating the language with their 'country', thus indicating their 'Malaysian' identity. On the other hand, all the Chinese and Malay speakers in my study agreed that they use Manglish in interactions. Unlike the Indians, the Manglish features in the conversations of the Chinese and Malays are more varied. While the Indian speakers' conversations are influenced by language shift, the conversational styles of non-Indian speakers in this study are shaped by intimacy and informality between the speakers.

In summary, I aimed to show that Manglish, which has been extensively documented in the previous literature and widely used among Malaysians (demonstrated through the data in this study) is socially valued by the speakers. I argue that, just like other varieties, such as Pittsburghese, Yooper, Putonghua and Yorkshire, Manglish has become enregistered (Agha, 2003) and that the variety is linked to cultural values due to the high levels of awareness among the speakers. Using Cooper's enregisterment framework, I have identified the speakers' perceptions and awareness of various features, such as *lah, lor, leh, de* and others. Unlike the aforementioned dialects, the analysis in my study has shown that Manglish is not only indexical of place or Malaysian-ness, but is also indexical of ethnic identity; thus expanding the notion of enregisterment.

7.7   Conclusion

This chapter addressed 'enregisterment' (Agha, 2003) and discussed its complexity in a multi-ethnic environment, through the provision of information of the different understanding of local features held by the Malay, Chinese and Indian speakers. A significant inconsistency of features was found among the Indians when asked to list the Manglish features with which they were familiar. The comparison between the WhatsApp and questionnaire data revealed that several features are recognised by all ethnic groups, namely Malay, Chinese and Indian speakers, with links between dialect, people and place, thus suggesting the third-order of indexicality. This refers to the feature *lah,* which has been associated with the speech style of Malaysians. This chapter has also discussed a number of ethnic specific features that are only enregistered within a specific ethnic group, namely *lor, leh* and *de*. Ethnicity in my dataset proves to be a significant parameter that directly relates to the processes of enregisterment. For instance, the Chinese speakers associate features such as *liao, lor* and *meh* with their own ethnic identity, and demonstrate it in the sample conversations in Chapter 5. This chapter has also revealed the emergence of new Manglish words (such as *village people*) arising as a result of digital communication. Specifically, the representation of *village people* has been created by Malaysians, socially stigmatising the representation of a local dialect and shaping local understandings of certain aspects of being Manglish. As it is a newly arising feature used among the Malays, I argue that *village people* is still at the early process of enregisterment.

Chapter 8

Summary and Conclusion

8.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of this thesis and their implications for the study of social meaning, indexicalities and enregisterment of Manglish. It is divided into sections, the first of which is subdivided into two parts, detailing the theoretical framework and the findings. The first part of the section relates to chapters 1 to 4, and outlines the frameworks and methodologies adopted in the study. The second part of the first section relates to Chapters 5 to 7, and discusses key issues, namely ethnicity, indexicality, and enregisterment. The review of key issues answers all the research questions posed in this thesis. The following section then discusses the strengths and limitations of my thesis. The strengths relate to the key contributions of this study, especially to the study of Manglish, while notable limitations are discussed. Finally, I suggest areas that can be explored in future studies.

8.2 Chapters Overview

This thesis set out to explore the use of Manglish, and the social values and associated social meanings that it holds among a population of young students mostly residing in Malaysia. To achieve this, it focused on a number of interconnected topics relating to ethnic youth varieties and styles of speech. In order to address these issues, the concepts of style, identity, indexicality and enregisterment were employed, and Manglish use was examined drawing on factors such as ethnicity and intimacy/ social distance between speakers, the origins of the identified features, and the actual content of their WhatsApp talk. I will first present the research approaches I endorsed, and then my findings as they unfolded throughout the chapters.

Chapter 1 highlights my personal experiences and encounters that arose as a result of the data collection for my master's thesis. Notable diversity was apparent, even in the small quantity of data collected, in terms of how local language was integrated into the English language. With the emerging debate surrounding Manglish at that time, it intrigued me to delve further into the uniqueness of English, as spoken by the Malaysians. Gaps addressed in the notion of World Englishes informed the formulation of the research questions, to allow WE varieties to be studied in a manner that transcends demographic differentiation, to be investigated within more local contexts.

Chapters 2 and 3 present the context and theoretical background that frames my discussion about the approaches that I have undertaken when studying Manglish. Firstly, the sociohistorical context introduces the aspect of multilingualism and multiculturalism in Malaysia, where there is a co-existence of diverse cultures and ethnic groups that occurred as a result of immigration during the period of British colonialism. This brings to light the variation and nuances in multicultural speech communities as represented by the group of speakers in this study. Secondly, I endorsed studies that view the use of ethnic languages alongside English as an important feature of ethnic identity (section 2.4.1). This perspective strengthens the fact that ethnicity influences language choice. I argue that a speaker may use language that carries a particular ideological meaning, in this case, one which can be defined and perceived as

associated with ethnic membership. Thirdly, with regard to Manglish, different local languages are embedded within the context of the variety, which strongly impacts its structures and vocabularies, including phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax and discourse. I have given some examples of Manglish features, in particular regarding how these operate differently from other types of ME. The use of Manglish features has a strong impact on speaker's intentions, and alters the tone of interactions, also creating different nuances of meaning. At the same time, I argue that speakers internalize norms when using certain features or the meanings attributed to those features, as established in their own in-group language. This study of Manglish is therefore situated within a third-wave sociolinguistic approach (Eckert, 2005; 2012). To this end, I conduct a close examination of the several social meanings attached to Manglish features in the local contexts of interactions.

In chapter 3, I address the notion of speech style in relation to Manglish. The concept of style is particularly instructive here, as it shows how an individual's speech affords a socially significant cue that directs others to make inferences about a speaker's ethnicity, social class, or persona (Bourhis, Giles, & Lambert, 1975). Speaker's information is conceptualised through the notion of indexicality (Silverstein, 2003; Ochs, 1992) where there are links between linguistic variables and macro-, or micro level social frames. Within the micro interactional context, speakers make use of Manglish features that often reframe their underlying intentions. From this perspective, I argue that Manglish features can be treated as cues that contextualize various style shifts in interaction. I then address various components, signalling a stylistic shift that shapes the flow of interaction. Indexicality also contributes to the processes of enregisterment as it links linguistic variables to the region, or in the case of the present study, to ethnic groups. Using Johnstone's *et. al* (2006) interpretation of Silverstein's (2003) indexical approach, I present the enregisterment framework (Agha, 2003), which relates to the identification or differentiation of specific features or dialect from speakers' linguistic repertoires. I suggest there is a raised awareness with regard to Manglish corroborated by studies that investigate language attitude and perceptions towards the English language in Malaysia (see section

2.4.2). I argue that the awareness of Manglish should be further clarified from the participants' meta-commentary response, or 'talk about talk' as illustrated in other enregisterment work, addressed in chapter 7 (see Johnstone *et al.*, 2006; Remlinger, 2009; Cooper, 2013).

In Chapter 4, I present my dataset and the methods of data collection. I first provide demographic information for each of the speakers characterizing their ethnic group and age. I then introduce the data collection methods and instruments, namely WhatsApp chats, online ethnography, online interviews and online questionnaire to serve the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. I address ethical considerations including the relationship between researcher and researched. Drawing upon online ethnography, I explain steps that I have taken through WhatsApp chats that established intimacy between me and the speakers to eventually elicit personal information from them. After justifying my methodological tools, I set out to analyse the use and functions of Manglish features from various extracts taken from the dataset.

Chapters 5 to 7 present the analysis and findings for the current study. Specifically, chapters 5 and 6 include quantitative and qualitative analysis of the WhatsApp conversations whereas chapter 7 is based on questionnaire results and meta-commentary. Within these chapters, I address the following issues: I investigate the extent to which, and the contexts in which, speakers use Manglish; I also examine the correlation between Manglish and ethnic variables; I focus on strategic uses of Manglish, indexing certain aspects of the interactional context as relevant for interpretation and local meaning-making; I demonstrate how Manglish features are being enregistered. Specific findings are reported below chapter by chapter.

Chapter 5 focuses on the frequency of use and distribution of common Manglish features on my WhatsApp dataset. The findings demonstrate that the occurrence of these features across ethnic groups varied. Several factors contribute to this variation. I argue that the heritage language of the features, as well as the ethnicity of speaker and addressee influences speaker's use of the features. For example, *lor, leh* and *de* originate from Chinese languages, and are most widely used by Chinese speakers, predominantly when interacting with the

Chinese addressees. This is typical in a minority language community (see also Gumperz, 1982). Speakers tend to use minority language/dialect features when interacting with other ethnic members, but employ a standard variety when speaking with outsiders. With only 23% of the ethnic population in Malaysia, Chinese people are part of an ethnic minority group that seemingly prefer to incorporate an ethnic language element when using Manglish with their peers. With regard to identity, I have shown that the relationship between social identities and linguistic features are dynamic throughout my WhatsApp interactions (see amongs others Sebba and Wootton, 1998).

In the extracts presented in Chapter 5, I show the micro aspects of social meanings which are reflected through interactive topics. For instance, the inclusion of *leh* signals ethnic identity, or distancing from other ethnic groups. Specifically, the use of *leh* between speaker and addressee represents a strong affiliation between them, as shared beliefs, values and judgements juxtaposed against the Malay ethnic groups. Whereas *lor, leh* and *de* are strictly associated with ethnicity, they also embed further indexical values such as intimacy. Therefore, speakers draw on their repertoire and their intrinsic knowledge of the indexing possibilities carried by various linguistic markers. In the three extracts presented in Chapter 5, the Chinese speaker does not include *lor, leh* and *de* in her interactions with the Malay speaker. Meanings attributed to these features are also based on patterns involving variations. The findings demonstrate what Coupland (2007: 93) labels as, 'indirect account linguistic practise', where features that occur more frequently in one group than the other represent a shared belief that the feature has a salient or situationally salient meaning. This common practice is further explored in Chapter 6, examining *lah* the most recurrent of the Manglish features. The explanation above demonstrates the correlation between Manglish features with ethnic variables, and the context in which Manglish is employed.

In Chapter 6, I looked at the most frequently occurring Manglish feature on WhatsApp Messenger which is *lah*. The versatility of the marker *lah* is illustrated through the micro-social aspect of the analysis. The indexical value of *lah* seems to shift from indexing ethnicity to intimacy and in-groupness. I

discover that the use of *lah* increases as the participants' relationships develop. *Lah* marks shifts from a formal conversational style between two speakers to a more casual style, thus, serves as a marker of intimacy between speakers. There is also repetitive use of *lah* alongside other features that occur when speakers tend to express orientations toward the addressee, or subject matter. In this case, the occurrence of *lah* alongside swear words indexically construct stances such as misalignment, or realignment. These stances were expressed through stylistic tools such as style-shifting; the shift coincides with the use of swearwords and *lah* in utterances. The exploration of Manglish within the interactional context also gives a more extensive sense of how self-identities are constructed and shaped within on-going interactions. Coupland argues that 'the value of linguistic features is also dependent on which discursive frame is in place' (Coupland, 2007: 112). I found that the speaker uses swearwords alongside *lah* to represent himself/herself as a serious person, as well as develop the relationship to make it more intimate. To sum up my findings in Chapter 6, by drawing attention to context and contextualization (Coupland, 2007: 111), I revealed how stylistic practices within the online sphere might become indexical of intimacy, stances and in-groupness, and, at the same time, be perceived as indexical for a local identity.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I show that a Manglish feature can have multiple indexical meanings. The extracts presented in both chapters illustrated a dynamic shift between the macro-social category (ethnic) and the micro-social category (intimacy, in-groupness), where meaning of Manglish features varies locally. Moreover, I examined how speakers use ethnic-attributed features within Manglish to vocalise their ethnic identity, as well as categorizing them from other ethnic groups. This is achieved through the act of affiliation by the addressee, which reflects shared judgement and perspectives towards the out-group speaker (from another ethnic group).

In Chapter 7, I addressed the indexical values of other Manglish features, and speakers' perceptions and awareness of Manglish as a local variety. I found that speakers strongly associate Manglish with intimacy, non-standardness, and Malaysianness. Speakers also defined Manglish as 'inappropriate' while Standard

English as 'appropriate'. This example corresponds to third-order indexicality. This 'talk about talk' metadiscursively functions to show the links between local identity, place, and language use. In the same vein, awareness of Manglish is also shown in ethnic groups. For instance, speakers in the meta-commentary response, associate features such as *lor, leh* and *de* to Chineseness; implying second-order of indexicality. It follows that Manglish features are not only linked to the aforementioned criteria, but also to ethnic group. This finding contributes to the notion of enregisterment as dialect features are not only enregistered to place, but also to ethnicity.

8.3   Significance of the Study

Having provided an overview of the chapters, this section summarizes the significance of the study, and its particular contribution to the fields of sociolinguistics, New Englishes, digital discourse, and online ethnographies. Firstly, the main contribution is that it attempts to fill in the gap in knowledge pertaining to Malaysian sociolinguistics and local language practices. Although available studies on Manglish have listed the features, their forms and functions, they do not explain how sociocultural context affects the use or meaning of those features. Thus, this thesis explores the social, cultural and personal meanings imbued within the practice of a Manglish variety. Although previous scholars highlighted the use of Manglish features as a marker of intimacy (refer Tay *et al.*, 2016), this thesis shows that Manglish is representative of multiple indexicalities. It represents ethnic identity, in-groupness and localness highlighting the use of language for specific social purposes and to create greater social meaning. A further contribution of this thesis, and of greater significance, is the awareness that speakers of Manglish possess when using this variety. Specifically, Manglish speakers are able to select commonly occurring features from their linguistic repertoire, and to illustrate or perform their respective ethnic, group, and national identity. Hence, Manglish is New English variety that appears to cultivate, among other features, a sense of pride for Malaysians, in a similar way to other dialect speakers, such as those in Pittsburgh and Yorkshire.

Secondly, this thesis has brought forth the concept of enregisterment within the Malaysian context. This is a preliminary step that adds to the growing body of work in the sub-fields of Manglish studies. The overarching point addressed herein is that Manglish has its own values and meanings among its speakers. In terms of the theoretical framework, the approaches undertaken for this study also represent the specific observations of speakers, and therefore, are not prone to generalizations. Drawing on the concept of social meaning, indexicality and enregisterment, the Manglish features explored in this thesis represent an in-depth analysis of Manglish use within different layers of social meaning, tapping into the dynamic nature of identity and, thus, contributing to the existing body of research within third-wave sociolinguistics.

Thirdly, the present study also underscores the relevance of the digital discourse by expanding upon previous work concerning computer-mediated communication conducted in different media forms of digital platform, such as Facebook and Twitter. Importantly, when employing an online ethnography, the discussion and analysis of WhatsApp chats is not restricted to textual information, but also addresses other multimodal aspects, such as symbols and emoticons. By employing semi-structured interviews, this study was able to obtain an intimate view of the matter, and how the participants felt in specific contexts. This facilitated further understanding of the use of the Manglish features and factors that trigger its use in a conversation. This study therefore expands on Androutsopoulos's (2008) approach to online ethnographies, in which a systematic observation can be conducted in an offline context, namely after the conversation has occurred.

8.4   Limitations of the Study

There are also some limitations to this thesis. Firstly, it proved a challenge to recruit participants, and it took me a year to do so. Unlike the social media platforms on which people disclose personal information and thoughts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), Instant messaging such as WhatsApp Messenger serves different social and personal purposes. Therefore, the participants were rather

sceptical about their personal privacy and data protection. This led to a limited amount of dataset. However, considering the nature and scope of the thesis that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches, the provided data serves the outlined research purposes and scope. Other than that, a few of the Malay participants were unable to commit to providing at least 5000 words of Manglish chats, and therefore, were excluded from this study. This is because most of their conversations occur in the Malay language with minimal use of English words, thus, does not meet the criteria for chats selection for this study.

There were also limitations in the findings. There were Manglish features listed in the questionnaire which did not appear in the WhatsApp data. Features such as *potong stim (*buzzkill*), rempit* ('illegal motorbike') and *action* ('show off') did not appear in the WhatsApp data. This highlighted limitations within the context of WhatsApp interactions that did not trigger the use of such words. On the other hand, these features could be implicated as 'inactive' features, and therefore, require further attention in the future such as interviews to understand its status within Manglish. Another limitation in this thesis relates to the common Manglish features found in the WhatsApp data. In the findings, the majority of the words listed are tail words, which gives less attention or space to other forms of localized words. Therefore, certain types of Manglish words or expressions need to be taken into consideration in future research when studying Manglish.

The following section discusses additional suggestions and recommendations to explore Manglish varieties.

8.5   Direction for future research

It is anticipated that the approaches taken here when studying Manglish will offer a new perspective when approaching Manglish and new varities of English more broadly. As mentioned earlier, analysing Manglish in terms of style and enregisterment has been taken a step further than in other studies on Manglish. Therefore, several suggestions and recommendations can be taken in relation to the framework above, in order to explore Manglish.

Firstly, the analysis shown in the current thesis placed importance on the relationship between speakers and addressees. That is, the relationship between speakers, might affect their linguistic choice. This is another variable that could be considered in future research. Based on this variable, I suggest future work should model social network composition (Milroy & Milroy, 1992) as a way to understand Manglish use and the relationship between speakers. For example, Paolillo (2001) demonstrated language variations in internet relay chat, by undertaking a social network approach. He measures tie strength through frequency of contact and reveals its relationship with linguistic variants. Therefore, a similar approach can be taken in future research, when focusing on a specific context, such as group WhatsApp.

Secondly, the current study emphasized the importance of ethnic groups as a contributor to variations in Manglish features. Therefore, further research on the use of Manglish might employ proportional number of participants from each ethnic group to obtain a wider range of statistically significant results. Since this study focuses on Chinese-specific features such as *lor, leh* and *de*, explorations of other ethnic-specific features might also be considered to see whether similar patterns emerge across ethnic groups.

Thirdly, in terms of enregisterment of Manglish, it is essential to investigate the features identified in level 3; in particular, those that are weakly associated with Manglish. As I argued, features at this level refer to newly emerging features from online sites. Therefore, this phenomenon can be observed in a more focused way. For example, there might be an awareness of features such as *dongibap* and *kipidap* noted more widely by participants, since these features are extensively used in the form of a hashtag on Instagram. Or perhaps, this might refer to seasonal features that are temporarily derived from a specific event. Therefore, future research could usefully direct attention to newly emerging features to discover how they operate on other social media platforms.

Further, investigation into the notion of 'deregisterment' (Cooper, 2013) would also be useful. In his enregisterment framework, Cooper (2013) identified features at level 3 as 'inactive' features; these were weakly associated with

Yorkshire and widely unrecognized by the modern speaker. This steadily decreasing pattern of usage was explained by applying the notion of 'deregisterment'. This notion could be applied in future work, as there are features in my study (Table 7.5) listed on the questionnaire, but not found in the WhatsApp data. Although there could be some use of these in context, the majority of the participants did not list them on their questionnaire. Therefore, the status and factors contributing to potentially deregistered features could be examined.

8.6   Conclusion

This chapter presented the main findings and conclusive points of this thesis. Firstly, there are layers of social meanings embedded in ways of using Manglish features. Speakers associate it with ethnicity, intimacy, in-groupness, localness and stance (speaker's orientation). This illustrates the dynamic shift in the meaning of features (or how speakers use it) that adds to the growing body of work within third-wave studies of language variation.   Secondly, ethnicity appears to be an important variable to the field of enregisterment; speakers associate specific Manglish features with their own ethnic group. This finding therefore delves deeper into the notion of enregisterment and constitutes one of the main contributions of this thesis. Finally, this thesis contributes to the existing understanding of how varieties within the notion of new Englishes should be treated, namely from a dynamic, local interactional perspective. Other issues that were addressed are the limitations and shortcomings of the current study. The chapter ended the discussion by exploring many new possibilities that could be addressed in future research, mainly concerning the process of enregisterment.

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APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Committee on Research Ethics

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: Identity Construction of Malaysian Youngsters in Computer-Mediated Communication.

Researcher(s):

Please Initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated [] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

3. I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.

4. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications.

5. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in relevant future research.

6. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____   _____   _____

Participant Name   Date   Signature

Name of Person taking consent   Date   Signature

Researcher   Date   Signature

Principal Investigator:

Name

Work Address

Work Telephone

Work Email

Student Researcher:

Name: Nur Husna Bt Serip Mohamad

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APPENDIX 2

UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Committee on Research Ethics

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask us if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. Please also feel free to discuss this with your friends, relatives and GP if you wish. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading this.

1. **Title of Study**

   Identity Construction of Malaysian Youngsters in Computer-Mediated Communication

2. **What is the purpose of the study?**

   The purpose of this study is to explore the standard features and patterns of Malaysian English used in WhatsApp messenger since it is believed that there have been some modification of the English language, a phenomenon triggered by globalization and technological development.

3. **Why have I been chosen to take part?**

   You have been chosen as one of the participants for this research since you met the specific requirement needed such as belong to the age range of 18-25 years old and practices the English language in your daily conversation. There are a total of 50 participants who will involve in this study.

4. Do I have to take part?

This is a **voluntary** research and you are free to withdraw at any time, without explanation and without incurring a disadvantage.

5. What will happen if I take part?

This research involves a process of data collection via WhatsApp Messenger, as you are required to send your WhatsApp conversations with a friend via emails or screenshots. The duration of data collection may involve up to 6 months or more than 5000 words of conversation, until a range of features are identified by the researcher. However, you can send those conversations anytime that you are available without specific limit of conversations or screenshots. You must allow yourself to be interviewed via any means of social media sites regarding the conversations. The researcher is the student who will be conducting this study to fulfil the requirement needed in obtaining a Ph.D degree from the University of Liverpool under the supervision of Dr Sofia Lampropoulou and Dr Paul Cooper.

6. Are there any risks in taking part?

There are nothing as such perceived disadvantages or risks involved. However, if you should experience any discomfort or disadvantage as part of the research that this should be made known to the researcher immediately.

7. Are there any benefits in taking part?

There is no intended benefit for all participants who are involved in this study.

8. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting the Principal Investigator, Dr Sofia Lampropoulou (+44 151794 2701) and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Governance Officer at ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

9. Will my participation be kept confidential?

The data is to be collected via screenshots or emails, and it will be anonymised in terms of names, images and any audio-visual information. It will be used for this research and for any research in future, if there is a need. Individuals who will have access to the data includes the researcher and the Principal Investigator. The data will appear in soft copy and hard copy for analysis purpose. It will be stored for four years, which is the duration needed in conducting this study.

10. What will happen to the results of the study?

The results will appear in a form written work which is in the thesis, and you will not be identifiable from the results unless you have consented to being so.

11. What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

You are allowed **to** withdraw at anytime, without explanation. Results up to the period of withdrawal may be used, if you are happy for this to be done. Otherwise you may request that they are destroyed and no further use is made of them. Results are anonymised and may only be withdrawn prior to anonymisation.

12. Who can I contact if I have further questions?

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact the **Principal Investigator or Student Researcher** at following details:

Dr Sofia Lampropoulou

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+44 151 794 2701

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APPENDIX 3: Sample Questions for Semi-structured Interview

1. Based on conversations between Won Bin and Haliza in Extract 3

    i.   Which club that organised the run? And what is your role as an organiser?
    ii.   What do you mean by *cagaran money* (deposit money) in your conversation with Haliza?

2. Based on Laura's conversations in section 5.3

    i.   What is your relationship with Xora and Jezmine?
    ii.   How would you label your relationship with them? As your coursemates, casual friends, or close friends?

3. Based on Hoon's conversation

    i.   May I know what you first language is?
    ii.   Can you help translate the Chinese character?
    iii. What is the meaning of *si mi dai ji*?
    iv.   What is the meaning of *GG*?
    v.   Can you translate the word *luan luan* in the sentence?

APPENDIX 4: Online Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

TITLE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE USE IN WHATSAPP

NAME   **:**

AGE   **:**

RACE   **:**

GENDER   **:**

UNIVERSITY   **:**

COURSE   **:**

MUET/IETLS   **:**

RESULT

This questionnaire consists of 5 questions. It is important that you answer them on your own, because I am interested in your language use.

1. Do you speak Manglish?

    …………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………………………………………………………….

    i.   If yes, when do you prefer using Manglish over Standard Malaysian English?

            …………………………………………………………………………
            ………………………………………………………………..

    ii.   If yes, with whom?

            …………………………………………………………………………
            ………………………………………………………………..

2. Can you list features of Manglish? (*Manglish words that you know)

No	Manglish Features
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

3. What do you think of people who speak:

    i.   Standard Malaysian English

…………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………..

    ii.   Manglish

…………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………..

4. Select the appropriate option for each feature.

    i.   La/Lah
    ii.   Got (*got sick)
    iii.   Aiyoo
    iv.   Aiyaa
    v.   lepaking
    vi.   Dey/Dei
    vii.   Can also/also can
    viii. Reduplication of word (*can can, together-gether)
    ix.   Is it?
    x.   Liao
    xi.   Lor
    xii.   Lar
    xiii. Meh
    xiv. Ma
    xv.   Macha
    xvi. Kiasu
    xvii. Village people
    xviii. Kipidap
    xix. Dongibap
    xx.   Man (*come on man)

| Option	Yes	No
I use this word (spoken/written)		
I have heard of this		
This is Manglish		
This is a modern Manglish feature		
This is a common Manglish feature		
This is old-fashioned Manglish. Nobody use it anymore		

I have heard this (or know people who say this) but do not use it		
I have never heard of this		
I would never say this		

5. You have come to the end of this questionnaire. Is there anything you would like to add? This can be anything from your language use to this questionnaire.

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………

Thank you

APPENDIX 5: WhatsApp Emoticons

Emoji	Interpretation (Percentage)	Emoji	Interpretation (Percentage)
Smiling face with a halo	**Blessed (60.0)** Others (40.0) Being nice (10.0) Dizzy (8.6)	Zipper-mouth face	**Keeping secret (34.3)** Keeping mouth close (25.7) Not talking (22.9) Shut up (17.1)
Winking face	**Winking (85.7)** Funny (4.3) Feeling sexy (10.0)	Grinning face	**Grinning (78.6)** Happy (21.4)
Smiling face	**Joyful (64.3)** Happy (28.6) Shy (7.1)	Hushed face	**Hushed face (45.7)** Shocked (35.7) Surprised (10.0) Blur face (8.6)
Face with head bandage	**Headache (52.9)** Injured (21.4) Beaten up (8.6) Feeling bad (7.1) Sick (10.0)	Loudly crying face	**Loudly crying (80.0)** Crying (20.0)
In love	**Love (100)**	Sleepy face	**Sleepy (74.3)** Helpless (14.3) Feeling dumb (11.4)
Blowing a kiss with love	**Kiss (100)**	Smiling face with open mouth	**Laugh (88.6)** Happy (11.4)
Grinning face with smiling eyes	**Grinning (57.1)** Smiling (25.7) Happy (17.2)	Laughing with cold sweat	**Guilty conscious (47.1)** Stressed (34.3) Tired (14.3) Sweating (4.3)
Relieved face	**Relieved (61.4)** Relaxed (38.6)	Unamused face	**Unhappy (38.6)** Unamused (35.7) Annoyed (14.3) Bored (11.4)
Flushed face	**Surprised (40.0)** Flushed (32.9) Shocked (27.1)	Crying face	**Crying (100)**
Disappointed face	**Disappointed (94.2)** Sad (2.9) Sick (2.9)	Worried face	**Moody (32.9)** Worried (30.0) Boring (12.9) Upset (24.2)
Dizzy face	**Died/ dead (68.5)** Sleepy (11.4) Dizzy (2.9) Drunk (11.4) Boring (2.9) Shocked (2.9)	Smiling face with smiling eyes	**Shy (22.9)** Smiling (12.9) Blushing (17.1) Pleased (14.3) Happy (21.4) Pleased (11.4)

Emoji	Meaning	Emoji	Meaning
Face with tongue stuck-out and winking eyes	**Feeling naughty (50.0)** Trolling someone (27.1) Feeling crazy (22.9)	Kissing face with smiling eyes/ Friendly kiss	**Kissing (62.9)** Whistling (17.1) Pouting (20.0)
Face with tears of joys	**Tears of joy (87.1)** Funny (12.9)	Face with look of triumph	**Triumph (52.9)** Feeling bad (17.1) Annoyed (15.7) Irritated (14.3)
Slightly smiling face	**Smile (51.4)** Happy (17.1) Being polite (31.2)	Angry face	**Angry (40.0)** Grumpy (34.3) Hatred (25.7)
Disappointed, but relieved face	**Feeling guilty (32.9)** Disappointed (27.1) Scared (12.9) Exhausted (15.7) Restless (11.4)	Face savouring delicious food	**Yummy/ Delicious/ Tasty (100)**
Pouting face	**Angry (72.9)** Bad mood (8.6) Hatred (4.3) Annoyed (15.7)	Pensive face	**Pensive (47.1)** Sad (44.3) Disappointed (8.6)
Smiling face with horns/ Cheeky	**Devilish (41.4)** Revengeful (34.3) Naughty (11.4) Evil (10.0) Cheeky (2.9)	Smiling face with sunglasses	**Cool (40.0)** Happy (25.7) Enjoying (11.4) Relaxed (12.9) Stylish (15.7) Holiday mood (8.6)
Sleeping face	**Sleepy (100)**	Drooling face	**Drooling (100)**
Fearful face	**Surprised (25.7)** Shocked (21.4) Worried (18.6) Nervous (17.1) Scared (17.1)	Smiling heartily	**Laugh (62.9)** Happy (28.6) Feeling awesome (5.7) Feeling good (2.9)
Face with medical mask	**Sick (41.4)** Fever (20.0) Having flu (38.6)	Face with open mouth	**Shocked (55.7)** Calm (2.9) Surprised (41.4)

Worried face with cold sweat	**Confused (30.0)** Nervous (21.4) Scared (17.1) Frustrated (18.6) Disappointed (12.9)	Confounded face	**Worried (40.0)** Confounded face (27.1) Annoyed (17.1) Stressed (15.7)
Face without mouth/ Speechless	**Speechless (64.3)** Blank (27.1) Quiet (22.9)	Upside down face/ Feeling silly	**Feeling silly (47.1)** Fake smile (24.3) Smiling (15.7) Uncomfortable (12.9)
Hugging face	**Hug (28.6)** Feeling content (27.1) Waving (8.6) Blessing someone (21.4) Greeting someone (14.3)	Lying face	**Lying (95.7)** Pinocchio (4.3)
Smirking face	**Smirking (48.6)** Teasing (25.7) Tricky (12.9) Feeling naughty (8.6) Curious (4.3)	Kissing face	**Sulking (25.7)** Whistling (20.0) Kissing (18.6) Flirting (14.3) Tempted (8.6)
Sticking out tough/ Teasing	**Feeling silly (35.0)** Joking (24.3) Joyful (8.6) Funny (17.1)	Widely frowning face	**Unamused (37.1)** Sulking (32.9) Feeling gloomy (24.3) Very sad (5.7)
Face with cold sweat	**Feeling sorry (54.3)** Awkward (17.1) Sweating (11.4) Awry (2.9) Disappointed (14.3)	Frowning face with open mouth	**Worried (37.1)** Shocked (24.3) Feeling blur (20.0) Frowning (18.6)
Thinking face	**Thinking (91.4)** Focus (5.7) Curious (2.9)	Sneezing face	**Having flu (60.0)** Sneezing (34.3) Smelly (5.7)
Expressionless face	**Annoyed (22.9)** Speechless (20.0) Poker face (10.0) Expressionless (31.4) Awkward (15.7)	Rolling on the floor laughing	**Laughing loud (51.4)** Too funny (49.6)
Face with rolling eyes	**Annoyed (25.7)** Confused (21.4) Feeling bored (24.3) Gossiping (12.9) Disgusted (15.7)	Face with thermometer	**Feverish (71.4)** Sick (28.6)

Nerd face	Nerd (21.4)	Tired face	Tired (28.6)
	Happy (15.7)		Lazy (28.6)
	Smiley with teeth (20.0)		Regret (21.4)
	Smiley with glasses (8.6)		Irritated (7.1)
	Chill (20.0)		Weary (2.9)
	Smart (14.3)		Annoyed (11.4)
Kissing with closed eyes/ Passionate kiss	Kiss (74.3)	Money-mouth face/ Money minded	
	Happy (11.4)		Money face (92.8)
	Shy (14.3)		Greedy (7.2)

APPENDIX 6: SPSS Results-Mean, and Graphs

Wilcoxon rank sum/ Mann-Whitney U Test

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
lor per 1000	181	2.8939	3.75904	.00	25.60	.0000	1.8000	4.3000
leh per 1000	181	4.7061	5.25108	.00	29.70	.0000	3.2000	6.9000
de per 1000	181	4.8384	6.10888	.00	30.00	.0000	2.9000	7.3500
Eth	181	1.1050	.30737	1.00	2.00	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000

Mann-Whitney Test

Ranks

	Eth	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
lor per 1000	chinese	162	95.06	15399.00
	others	19	56.42	1072.00
	Total	181		
leh per 1000	chinese	162	93.97	15223.50
	others	19	65.66	1247.50
	Total	181		
de per 1000	chinese	162	95.31	15440.50
	others	19	54.24	1030.50
	Total	181		

Mean rank for Chinese is higher than others ethnic

Test Statistics[a]

	lor per 1000	leh per 1000	de per 1000
Mann-Whitney U	882.000	1057.500	840.500
Wilcoxon W	1072.000	1247.500	1030.500
Z	-3.107	-2.254	-3.287
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	**.002**	**.024**	**.001**

a. Grouping Variable: Eth

From this data, it can be concluded that usage of manglish among Chinese was statistically significantly higher than other ethnics

All three manglish are significant less than 0.05

Lor per 1000 word ($U = 882$, $p = .002$)

Leh per 1000 word ($U = 1058$, $p = .024$)

De per 1000 word ($U = 841$, $p = .001$)

Graph for non-parametric (BOX PLOT GRAPH)

lor **per 1000**
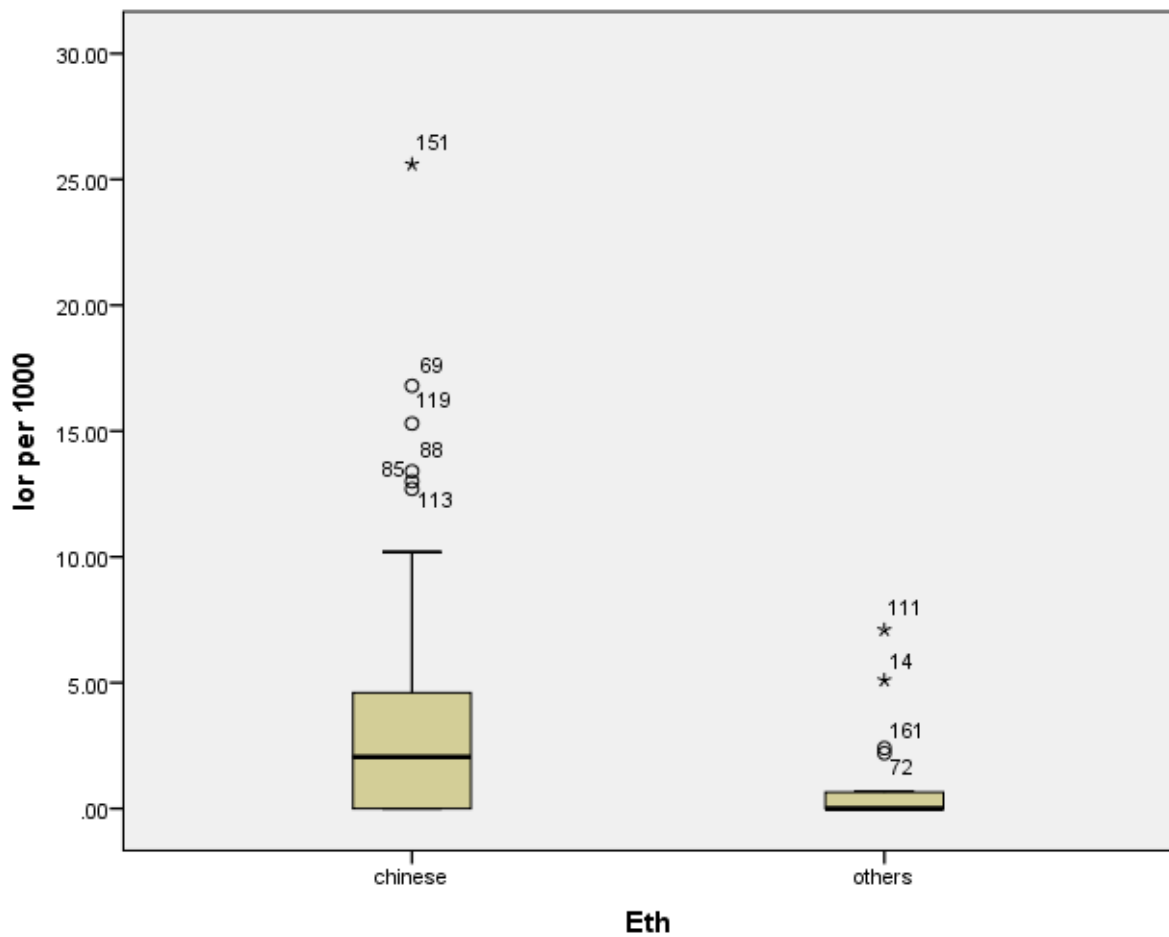
***Ieh* per 1000**
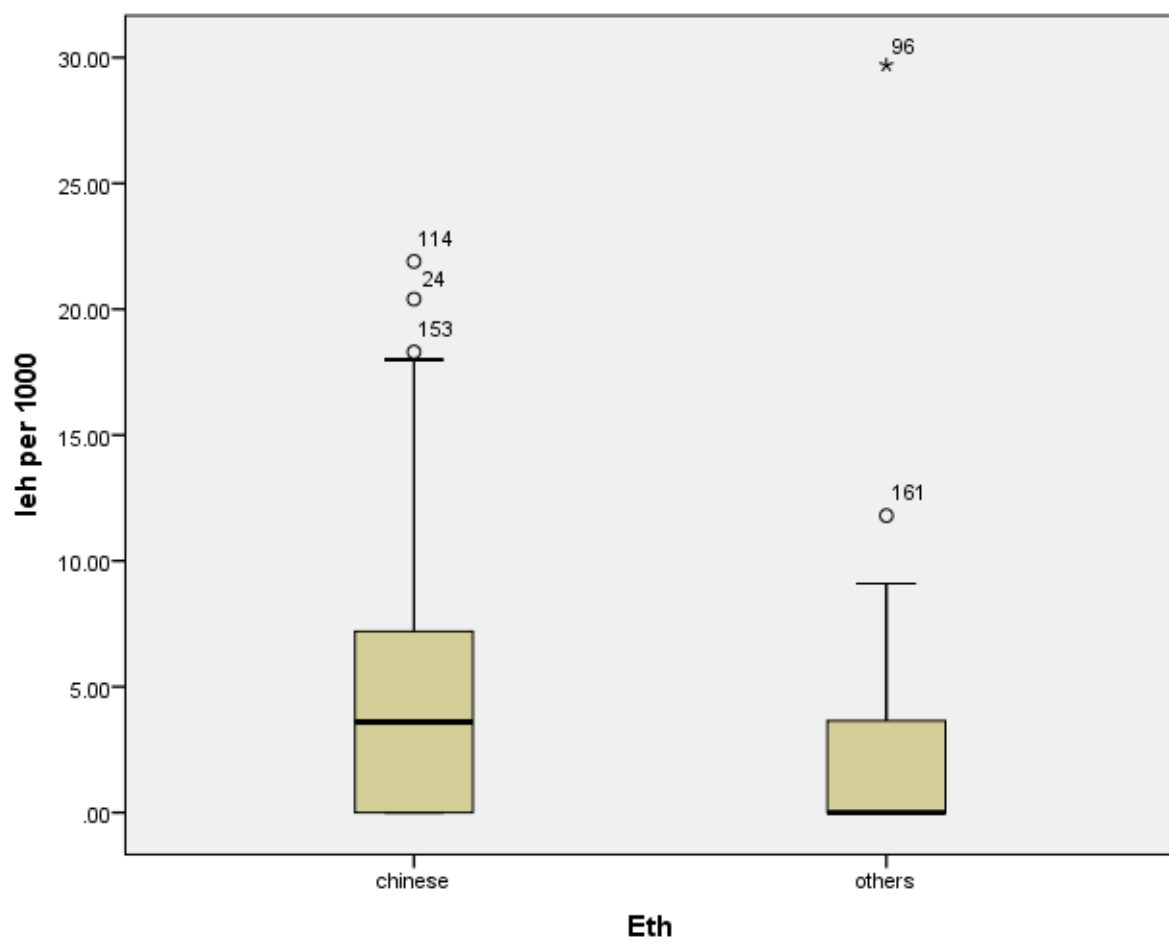
de **per 1000**
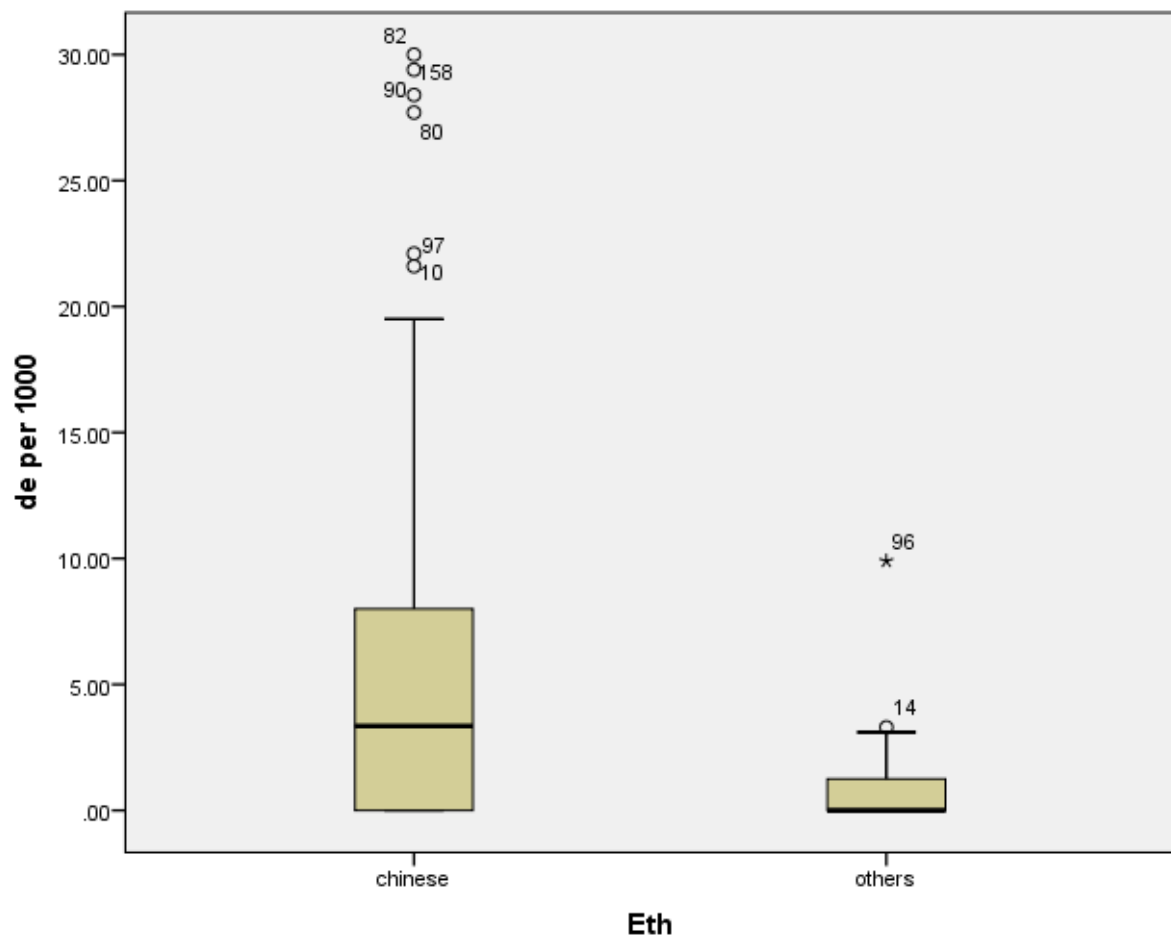
Note to interpret the graph

OUTLIER More than 3/2 times of upper quartile

MAXIMUM Greatest value, excluding outliers

UPPER QUARTILE 25% of data greater than this value

MEDIAN 50% of data is greater than this value; middle of dataset

LOWER QUARTILE 25% of data less than this value

MINIMUM Least value, excluding outliers

OUTLIER Less than 3/2 times of lower quartile

APPENDIX 7: Distribution of *lor, leh* and *de* among Chinese speakers and addressees

	Ethnicity	Addressee	lor		leh		de		Total
			total	Per 1000 word	total	Per 1000 word	total	Per 1000 word	Number of Words
P6	Chinese-Chinese	Kai See	10	1.7	8	1.4	2	0.4	5788
	Chinese-Chinese	Lily	7	4.2	6	3.6	1	0.60	1653
P7	Chinese-Chinese	Caron	1	6.5	0	0	0	0	155
	Chinese-Malay	Aisya	0	0	0	0	0	0	656
	Chinese-chinese	Didi	1	0.3	20	5.8	0	0	3435
	Chinese-chinese	Kar Wei	4	2.1	12	6.2	0	0	1927
	Chinese-chinese	Pong	0	0	2	3.5	0	0	574
P8	Chinese-Chinese	Ji Yie	1	1.4	1	1.4	5	7.2	693
	Chinese-Chinese	KG	19	6.3	6	2.0	57	18.8	3026
	Chinese-Chinese	Rui Ee	19	2.7	106	14.9	157	22.10	7104

	Chinese-Malay	Leman	2	0.60	1	0.30	1	0.30	3353
P9	Chinese-Chinese	Xora	3	5.4	2	3.6	5	8.9	560
	Chinese-Malay	Aisya	0	0	0	0	0	0	179
	Chinese-Indian	Jezmine	22	5.1	39	9.1	14	3.3	4303
P10	Chinese-chinese	QinYing	3	2.3	5	3.8	18	13.70	1314
	Chinese-chinese	Jay	8	2.3	11	3.10	49	13.8	3546
	Chinese-chinese	Li Yin	22	6.0	28	7.7	52	14.2	3658
	Chinese-chinese	Lily	28	4.6	15	2.5	71	11.7	6092
	Chinese-chinese	Wei Qin	35	4.7	63	8.4	76	10.2	7487
	Chinese-chinese	Wennie	3	3.8	5	6.4	5	6.4	781
	Chinese-chinese	John	20	9.4	14	6.6	0	0	2124
	Chinese-chinese	Yunnie	9	4.1	15	6.8	21	9.6	2197
P13	Chinese-chinese	Wincci	43	9.8	62	14.1	73	16.6	4407
	Chinese-chinese	xue xue	23	8.2	57	20.4	31	11.1	2793

P14	Chinese-Chinese	Dieta	3	1.8	6	3.6	1	0.6	1650
	Chinese-Chinese	Chiyee	3	0.7	23	5.5	10	2.4	4168
	Chinese-Chinese	Fen	4	5.5	0	0.00	0	0.00	732
	Chinese-Chinese	Lydia	12	1.9	33	5.2	12	1.9	6328
P16	Chinese-chinese	Adele	1	0.5	2	1.1	0	0	1868
	Chinese-chinese	Chloe	9	2	9	2	2	0.4	4602
	Chinese-chinese	Siuling	13	3.8	17	5	9	2.6	3407
P17	Chinese-chinese	Star	8	1.2	5	0.7	0	0	6921
P18	Chinese-chinese	Conran	0	0	0	0	0	0	1183
	Chinese-chinese	Greta	14	2.6	0	0	5	0.9	5294
	Chinese-chinese	Jessie	6	1.7	0	0	1	0.3	3520
	Chinese-chinese	Jing	2	1.3	0	0	1	0.6	1596
	Chinese-chinese	Jun Fei	27	2.1	2	0.2	1	0.1	12, 709
	Chinese-chinese	Kyle	2	2.3	0	0	2	2.3	876

	Chinese-chinese	Lin Tong	1	0.6	1	0.6	4	2.2	1782
	Chinese-Malay	Meena	0	0	0	0	0	0	579
	Chinese-Malay	Nie	0	0	0	0	0	0	1547
	Chinese-chinese	Qing	8	1.8	0	0	0	0	4351
	Chinese-chinese	Reisa	1	0.7	0	0	0	0	1457
	Chinese-chinese	Zen	8	3.4	0	0	5	2.1	2358
P19	Chinese-chinese	Cora	0	0	0	0	0	0	926
	Chinese-chinese	Kong Hi	1	1.7	1	1.7	1	1.7	592
	Chinese-chinese	Mili	15	10.2	6	4.1	1	0.7	1466
	Chinese-chinese	Poh lai	1	2.8	2	5.5	0	0	361
	Chinese-chinese	Winnie	36	3.4	77	7.2	0	0	10, 710
P22	Chinese-chinese	Meiying	3	5.6	1	1.9	1	1.9	539
	Chinese-chinese	Qing Li	0	0	1	4.4	1	4.4	229
	Chinese-chinese	Sabby	5	1.3	24	6.4	13	3.5	3766

	Chinese-chinese	Sie	1	2.8	4	11.1	7	19.5	359
	Chinese-chinese	Su Min	4	2.6	14	8.9	17	10.8	1567
	Chinese-chinese	Siuling	0	0	3	2.5	4	3.3	1207
P23	Chinese-chinese	Boon Siew	26	2.2	13	1.1	79	6.8	11, 615
	Chinese-chinese	Chea Li	7	2.2	7	2.2	19	5.9	3243
	Chinese-chinese	Chia	5	0.6	24	2.6	57	6.3	9087
	Chinese-chinese	Gabby	2	2.8	2	2.8	2	2.8	723
	Chinese-chinese	Jie Nie	0	0	0	0	0	0	237
	Chinese-chinese	Jo Lee	7	5.7	0	0	7	5.7	1227
	Chinese-chinese	Qi Jane	6	1.3	2	0.4	19	4.2	4488
	Chinese-chinese	Yau Qi	0	0	1	5.2	0	0	194
P25	Chinese-chinese	HaiLi	21	2.3	39	4.2	61	6.5	9317
P26	Chinese-chinese	Sarang	0	0	0	0	0	0	510
	Chinese-chinese	Enwen	0	0	0	0	0	0	78

	Chinese-Malay	Dian	0	0	1	1.1	0	0	924
	Chinese-chinese	Dereck	0	0	0	0	0	0	1151
	Chinese-chinese	Kien	7	16.8	0	0	1	2.4	417
	Chinese-Malay	Umaira	0	0	0	0	0	0	582
	Chinese-chinese	Mai Han	0	0	1	1.1	0	0	897
P27	Chinese-Malay	Lydia	15	2.4	43	7	19	3.1	6160
P28	Chinese-chinese	Joy	15	4.4	50	14.6	11	3.2	3419
	Chinese-chinese	Jie Wei	210	8	154	5.9	127	4.9	26, 107
P29	Chinese-chinese	Sin Ray	16	1.8	7	0.8	15	1.7	8668
P30	Chinese-Indian	Sarin	0	0	19	2.3	1	0.1	8397
P34	Chinese-chinese	EE Jane	11	4.1	37	13.8	17	6.3	2683
	Chinese-chinese	Chiang	0	0	0	0	0	0	92
	Chinese-chinese	Jane	3	1.3	35	14.8	8	3.4	2367
	Chinese-chinese	Zhai Ci	0	0	13	17.1	21	27.7	759

	Chinese-chinese	Zi Ming	0	0	2	5.6	4	11.3	355
P35	Chinese-chinese	Poo Ling	3	3.7	8	9.9	24	30	809
	Chinese-chinese	Shin Ying	0	0	15	18	12	14.4	835
	Chinese-chinese	Tina	16	3.8	42	10	71	16.8	4219
P37	Chinese-chinese	Aileen	2	12.7	2	12.7	1	6.4	157
	Chinese-chinese	Jamie	0	0	0	0	0	0	144
	Chinese-Malay	Afifah	0	0	0	0	0	0	318
	Chinese-chinese	Chong	5	13.4	3	8.1	4	10.8	372
	Chinese-Malay	Fikri	1	0.7	0	0	2	1.4	1453
	Chinese-chinese	Hui Wen	1	4.2	3	12.6	7	29.4	238
	Chinese-chinese	Joon	16	6.3	19	7.5	20	7.9	2527
	Chinese-chinese	Jun	0	0	0	0	0	0	178
	Chinese-chinese	Karen	0	0	1	4,1	0	0	242
	Chinese-chinese	Lie	7	3.8	26	14	17	9.2	1855

	Ethnicity	Name							
	Chinese-chinese	Park	0	0	0	0	1	2.2	461
	Chinese-Indian	Saana	0	0	3	29.7	1	9.9	101
	Chinese-chinese	Zoe	1	7.2	2	14.4	3	21.6	139
P39	Chinese-chinese	Catherine	16	9.2	9	5.2	11	6.4	1730
	Chinese-Malay	Darja	0	0	0	0	0	0	311
	Chinese-chinese	Edward	2	3.9	0	0	0	0	513
	Chinese-chinese	JiaLie	1	6.2	2	12.3	1	6.2	162
	Chinese-chinese	Rinie	0	0	0	0	0	0	531
	Chinese-chinese	Wan	0	0	0	0	0	0	1988
	Chinese-chinese	Yik Sie	1	6	1	6	0	0	167
P40	Chinese-chinese	Xora	3	9.7	2	6.5	2	6.5	310
	Chinese-chinese	Luna	16		17		8		1650
	Chinese-chinese	Kellie	0	0	0	0	0	0	88
	Chinese-chinese	Edmund	2		0		0		414

	Chinese-chinese	Cin Ting	0	0	0	365
	Chinese-chinese	Jamie	3	4	2	355
	Chinese-Indian	Vino	20	14	3	2812
P41	Chinese-chinese	Alexander	166	30	3	61 444
P43	Chinese-chinese	Huiru	30	24	27	2301
	Chinese-chinese	Ken	0	8	6	366
	Chinese-chinese	Jacey	3	2	15	1632
	Chinese-chinese	Tiem	7	5	7	820
	Chinese-chinese	Jen	3	1	5	1055
	Chinese-chinese	JK	3	6	4	613
	Chinese-chinese	JN	6	3	2	391
	Chinese-chinese	Mei Li	1	2	5	461
	Chinese-chinese	Jane	1	1	3	376
	Chinese-chinese	Zie Yi	2	2	9	975

P44	Chinese-chinese	Yee Lin	2	2	5	676
	Chinese-chinese	Dottie	0	3	2	460
	Chinese-chinese	Jane	0	3	5	458
	Chinese-chinese	Jue Lin	0	6	5	509
	Chinese-chinese	Molly	1	7	13	968
	Chinese-chinese	May	1	0	4	547
	Chinese-chinese	Pok Huan	5	3	13	1421
	Chinese-chinese	Qiao Lin	0	1	2	359
	Chinese-chinese	Sek Han	0	1	1	168
	Chinese-chinese	Vince	2	6	11	1289
	Chinese-chinese	Yan Hin	1	0	3	276
	Chinese-chinese	Ying yan	0	0	0	244
P45	Chinese-chinese	Chia Wei	13	25	10	3871
	Chinese-chinese	Hai Li	0	4	0	815

	Chinese-chinese	Shen Wan	0	2	0	351
	Chinese-chinese	Siuling	3	9	1	1535
P46	Chinese-chinese	Andrew	0	6	7	1129
	Chinese-Malay	Haliza	0	1	0	2579
	Chinese-chinese	Jie Ling	4	7	9	1767
	Chinese-chinese	Kai Xing	1	2	2	672
	Chinese-chinese	Molly	0	2	4	986
	Chinese-Indians	Pavita	0	0	0	499
	Chinese-chinese	Vince	0	2	1	445
	Chinese-chinese	Xin Ai	2	4	6	677
	Chinese-chinese	Ying Ying	1	1	1	687
P48	Chinese-chinese	Ah Lai	0	3	5	803
	Chinese-chinese	Chiang	0	1	2	391
	Chinese-chinese	Chin Lom	0	0	1	299

	Chinese-chinese	Cincin	8	1	1	312
	Chinese-chinese	Hong	0	3	2	396
	Chinese-chinese	Jia Lee	0	7	0	383
	Chinese-chinese	Wen Liew	0	0	3	380
	Chinese-chinese	Jane	1	3	4	680
	Chinese-chinese	Qiu	21	105	78	9102
	Chinese-chinese	Sin Ray	4	4	2	448
	Chinese-chinese	Sim Pei	2	0	6	211
	Chinese-chinese	Winnie	140	32	53	20 015
	Chinese-chinese	Yuk Ken	2	1	0	393
P49	Chinese-other	James	10	54	14	4567
	Chinese-chinese	Joan	6	9	4	952
P50	Chinese-chinese	Melrose	260	94	161	28, 477
P51	Chinese-chinese	Chong Wei	0	2	0	162

Chinese-chinese	Ann	0	0	1	288
Chinese-chinese	Apple	2	5	0	402
Chinese-chinese	DL	0	0	0	172
Chinese-chinese	Ho Yee	0	0	0	417
Chinese-chinese	Hooi Ting	3	10	0	569
Chinese-chinese	Jason	0	0	1	339
Chinese-chinese	Ji Bin	1	4	0	732
Chinese-chinese	Meng Ren	1	7	0	1100
Chinese-Malay	Rostam	0	0	0	204
Chinese-chinese	Sai Long	0	0	0	334
Chinese-chinese	Shawei	0	0	0	224
Chinese-chinese	Vivy	2	5	1	436
Chinese-chinese	Wen Tan	0	0	0	376
Chinese-chinese	Yong	0	3	0	341

P52	Chinese-chinese	Andrew	1	11	38	3645
	Chinese-chinese	Patricia	18	28	26	3225
	Chinese-chinese	Shun Jun	35	58	70	5362

Chinese and non-Chinese

	Ethnicity	Speakers	lor		leh		de		Total
			total	Per 1000 word	total	Per 1000 word	total	Per 1000 word	Number of Words
P1	malay-chinese and chinese	Alex	4	6	0	0	1	1.5	672
	Both malay-chinese	Mila	8	1.8	7	1.6	1	0.2	4395
P2	Both malay-chinese	Atilia	9	1.8	11	2.2	1	0.2	4997
P11	Indian and Chinese	Kim	0		0		0		495
P20	Malay and chinese	Jia Nee	0		0		0		3208
	Malay and chinese	Rui EE	0		0		0		267
	Malay and Chinese	Sherley	0		0		0		297
	Malay and chinese	Ai Lin	0		0		0		400

APPENDIX 8: Distribution of *lah* for All Speakers

	Number	Speaker	Words	Total no of lah	%
	1	Atilia	5067	71	1.40
	2	Mila	5001	61	1.22
	3	Zara	9662	120	1.24
	4	Suri	11,891	66	0.56
	5	Mary	7347	12	0.16
	6	Adele	7441	72	0.97
Female	7	Lydia	6747	40	0.59
speakers	8	Paula	7104	85	1.20
	9	Laura	5042	32	0.63
	10	Siuling	27,199	304	1.12
	11	Jessie	42,320	1131	2.67
	12	Nur	20,673	0	0.00
	13	Tina	7200	118	1.64
	14	Suki	12,878	160	1.24
	15	Chloe	8477	154	1.82
	16	Lily	6470	45	0.70
	17	Niki	6921	45	0.65
	18	Cherry	36,622	135	0.37
	19	Cincin	14,055	203	1.44
	20	Aina	9631	58	0.60
	21	Amalina	50,070	451	0.90
	22	Winnie	7667	61	0.80
	23	Xora	30,814	136	0.44
	24	Shalbanah	6058	151	2.49
	25	Sherry	9317	102	1.09
	26	Sally	5000	18	0.36
	27	Fiona	6160	44	0.71
	28	Jane	29, 526	203	0.69
	29	Ivana	8668	56	0.65
	30	Chompoo	8397	24	0.29

	31	Ameesha	15,218	56	0.37
	32	Preeya	11,298	76	0.67
	33	Sunita	6252	40	0.64
	34	Jojie	6256	23	0.37
	35	Wincci	5863	73	1.25
	36	Farjana	18,595	110	0.59
	37	Joalyn	8185	55	0.67
	38	Jerrica	5345	76	1.42
Male	39	Billy	5402	31	0.57
speakers	40	Ben	5994	163	2.72
	41	Stuart	61,444	380	0.62
	42	Mahesh	9035	161	1.78
	43	Yaozu	8990	77	0.86
	44	Kaizo	7375	43	0.58
	45	Ken	9738	47	0.48
	46	Won Bin	9441	101	1.07
	47	James	15,076	91	0.60
	48	Oui	33,813	193	0.57
	49	Kang	5519	8	0.14
	50	Hoon	28,477	926	3.25
	51	Kim	6096	81	1.32
	52	Enlai	12,232	114	0.93
Total	52		714,999	7428	