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Community language schools in Australia:

Investigating the role of textbooks in shaping the construction

of cultural identities of Sri Lankan and Indian Tamil students

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Statement of authentication

With this statement, I hereby declare that the thesis submitted for the degree PhD (School of Education) at the Western Sydney University is my own independent work. I further declare that I have not submitted this thesis for any other qualification, nor at any other institution of higher education. All the sources that have been cited in this thesis are provided in a comprehensive reference list.

Kulam Shanmugam

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Abbreviations

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CHL – Chinese as a Heritage Language

CL – Community Language

CLSP - Community Languages Schools Program

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

ELT – English Language Teaching

ESL – English as a Second Language

HL – Heritage Language

HSC – Higher School Certificate

LTTE – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

NESA – New South Wales Education Standards Authority

NSW – New South Wales

NSWFTS – New South Wales Federation of Tamil Schools

SHL – Spanish as a Heritage Language

SSCL - Saturday School of Community Languages

TA – Thematic Analysis

TCL – Tamil as a Community Language

TEDC – Tamil Education Development Council

TESOL – Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

UK – United Kingdom

US – United States (of America)

VCE – Victorian Certificate of Education

Abstract

Children of immigrants can be taught to accept diversity and multiculturalism by clearly understanding who they are and what adjustments they need to make in their socialisation process. Teaching programs at community language schools in Australia are part of the maintenance of languages and cultures of children with an immigrant background. As a community organisation, one of the roles of a community language school is preparing the younger generations of migrants to clearly understand their own identity and thereby make them ready to accept and respect the diversity in Australian society. Tamils are seen as one of the new waves of mass migration in Australia. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), there were 95,404 Tamil-speaking people in Australia. This was 30.4% higher than in 2016. More than 1,000 students and around 100 teachers are actively involved in the Tamil community language schools in New South Wales. As the aims and objectives of the Tamil community language schools indicate, students are expected to learn more about their own identity and heritage at the Tamil schools so that they prepare themselves to effectively live as Australian Tamils within the diverse Australian society. Nevertheless, and even though Tamils are one of the major emerging communities in New South Wales (NSW), there has not been any study about the Tamil-speaking communities in terms of language education practices.

Therefore, this research has investigated how textbooks, shape the identity formation of students attending NSW Tamil schools. This study has focused on the textbooks (Years 4 to 8) used in Tamil community language schools in NSW. The research design has involved analysing the selected textbooks and conducting interviews with the principal and teachers at a NSW Tamil community language school, using the textbooks, regarding their experiences in relation to these teaching tools. Drawing on critical discourse analysis the data have been analysed as to how or whether the content of the textbooks could influence the identity

formation process of the learners. The findings revealed that the content of the textbooks had been purposely chosen to represent elements of Tamil language, culture and identity, despite some overlapping between these elements. The results also indicated that grading of the contents and organisation of topics could have been made to better match with the learners' cognitive levels. Inclusion of tasks for conversations would have enhanced opportunities for the learners to put language skills into practice and develop their abilities in spoken Tamil. The study recommends that the voices of learners and parents systematically be used to redesign the contents of the textbooks to make them more relevant and attractive, and better meet the learning needs of new generations of Tamils in appropriate ways.

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Immigrant minorities – heritage languages

In Australia, community language education has always been a way to transmit linguistic and cultural knowledge across generations, to maintain communication among family members and other contacts in the adopted country and ancestral homeland, and to preserve the culture and identity of immigrants (Community Languages Australia, 2021). More than 30% of families in New South Wales (NSW) – 60% in inner city Sydney – have home languages in addition to English (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2021). Cruickshank et al. (2020) report that parents and communities face challenges in imparting cultural skills and knowledge to children, and their languages are either unavailable or not taught widely in mainstream schools, leaving communities for after-hours school option and they choose to establish a community language (CL) school. Community language schools are the sole providers of more than 30 languages in NSW. They are also the first to respond to emerging language needs.

Some scholars use the terms community language and heritage language interchangeably. However, in the literature, they are used with a different emphasis, that I have followed in the thesis. Regarding the term heritage language, the best-known definition belongs to Valdes (2000) who describes heritage learners as "individuals raised in homes where a language other than English is spoken and who are to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language.". However, Fishman (2001: 81) identifies a heritage language by its "particular family relevance to the learners", and Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) refers to learners who "have been raised with a strong cultural connection to a particular language through family interaction" as learners "with a heritage motivation" (p 222). The term 'heritage language' may mean that the language is not actively used by the members of a family, although it has a historical connection to the family. Use of the label 'heritage' itself has been challenged by

many and has been criticised as extremely negative—even offensive—by some and counterproductive by others. For example, Baker and Jones (1998) say:

> The danger of the term 'heritage language' is that, relative to powerful majority languages, it points more to the past and less to the future, to traditions rather than to the contemporary. The danger is that the heritage language becomes associated with ancient cultures, past traditions and more 'primitive times'. This is also true of the terms 'ethnic' (used in the U.S.) and 'ancestral'. These terms may fail to give the impression of a modern, international language that is of value in a technological society (p 509).

UNESCO provides a definition for home language as "A language learned in childhood in the home environment, also referred to as mother tongue, first language, or native language" (UNESCO, 2023). Therefore, in terms of current use of the language in the family, home language and heritage language may be the same or different.

The term 'community languages' was coined in the mid-1970s to denote languages other than English used in the Australian community (Clyne and Fernandez, 2008). This term has been well justified by Clyne (1991), it is a preferred term in Australia and scholars in other countries are widely using it. The term community language really captures the idea that these languages of immigrants are actively used by the communities, not foreign languages. The term heritage language, in contrast, may seem to refer to what is left behind in a distant country or the language of the past. The term Heritage language also could mean something that one vaguely clings to in his or her memory, certainly not used in the present tense or as a projection into the future. It may also signal a losing of ground for language minorities and a call for endangered languages to be preserved (Garcia, 2005). The term community language does not usually include indigenous languages, as their communities wish to emphasise their uniqueness and special historical status. Community language schools for immigrant and ethnic minorities are also known as Complementary Schools or Supplementary Schools in the United Kingdom

(UK) and they have been an important educational resource looking after the language and culture needs of the children of immigrants due to the absence of this service in mainstream education, for over a half a century (Creese, 2009). The term complementary school is preferred in the UK as it highlights the positive complementary function for those who teach or learn in them. The term also recognises the importance of these schools to their local communities, and their potential contribution to the political, social, and economic life in the wider community (Creese, 2009). The context of this language teaching in Australia and the Unites States (US) is compared in detail by Hornberger (2005). In the North American context, these schools are referred to as Heritage Language schools (Brinton et al., 2008; Kondo-Brown, 2006).

The ethnolinguistic vitality of community language (CL) education, its role in history and society, the benefits of CL education and maintenance, and the factors that helped a CL survive have led to its current prominence (Fernandez and Gearon, 2017). Other historical, educational, sociopolitical and sociolinguistic factors that have shaped community language education in Australia are also yet to be fully examined and understood in Australia (Vaidyanathan, 2016; Nordstrom, 2015; Ndhlovu, 2010; Yagmur and Ehala ,2011; Rubino, 2010). Karidakis and Arunachalam (2016) report the variety of trends in different community languages in relation to maintenance and shift. Their analysis reveals that the language shift to English among first-generation migrants has not been uniform, with some migrant groups adopting English as a home language at a much faster rate than others, due to various factors. Kumaravadivelu (2008) clearly elaborates the dynamics of globalisation and language education in detail providing a big picture.

1.1.1 Statement of the problem and research gap

In Australia, community language education has become an important field of research in language education in recent years (Perera, 2015; Eisenchlas et al., 2013; Bradshaw, 2013;

Yagmur et al., 2012; Hatoss and Sheely, 2009; Cardona et al., 2008; Tsolidis and Kostogriz, 2008). However, past studies have not addressed community language schools' learning resources and made the findings public, which is a common practice in such schools in the US and Canada (Sun and Kwon, 2020; Curdt-Christiansen, 2008; Chiu, 2011). There has not been any formal observation about learning resources at CL schools around the country, other than remarks such as "lack of rigour because there is no mandated curriculum or assessment"; "lack of formal qualifications among some teachers"; and "undue focus on culture and/or religion" regarding community language schools, in a reference paper of the Board of Studies, New South Wales (2013). This can also be said, in particular, about the learning materials such as textbooks employed by these schools in their teaching activities. Moreover, textbooks used at Australian community language schools have not been researched yet to examine, for example, how and if the textbooks influence the learners regarding their Tamil identity construction. The important role of textbooks in language teaching programs has been emphasised by scholars (Pingel, 2010; Richards, 2001). Richards (2001), for example, states that despite the impact of new technologies, textbooks will doubtless continue to play an important role in language teaching and provide a useful resource for both teachers and learners. Textbooks, more significantly provide structure and a syllabus for a program. They also help standardise instructions. Teachers and students heavily rely on the textbooks as road map and learning guide respectively. In the Tamil language teaching and learning context in Australia where the parents want to transfer the knowledge of the language, culture and identity consciousness to the youngsters, 3 key questions need to be considered. Why teach Tamil language? (aims and objectives – learning outcomes); What should be taught? (curriculum and content – learning resources) and How should it be taught? (pedagogy). In an ideal situation, textbooks should be developed purely based on the analysis of learner needs and they should be tried out in various versions. However, this is not the practice adopted in the case of Tamil textbooks although the

textbook writers consult with Department of Education professionals. Weninger and Kiss (2015) suggest that textbook analysis is intended to imply a more theoretical and principled approach to the examination of language teaching materials. Textbook analysis is more than just judging the appropriateness of a particular book in a given educational context for use with specific students in mind. The textbook analysis is also concerned with identifying general trends using different theories as frameworks of investigation (Weninger and Kiss, 2015).

Sociolinguistic aspects that influence the production of learning materials and pedagogical methods have to be critically examined. Identifying the exact needs of each of the groups of learners, Australian born and overseas born, will help in designing and developing pedagogically suitable language resources for each of them. Tamil identity is characterised by choice of identity label, Tamil language usage, affiliation with a Tamil-speaking community, political engagement, and ethnicity (Somalingam, 2015).

Even though Tamils are one of the major emerging communities in New South Wales, there has not been any study about the Tamil-speaking communities in terms of language education practices or an analysis of the textbooks used and their relationship to identity formation. The research gap is not unique to Tamil schools; there is a dearth of research in the field of community language education in Australia in general.

> Community language schools, which aim to pass on heritage languages and 'cultures' to children, have only recently become the focus of research despite providing education to more than 100,000 students each week in Australia alone (Nordstrom, 2015: iii).

For the reasons provided above, the textbooks being used need to be examined comprehensively. Moreover, textbooks as important learning resources, play a vital role in Tamil language education as a community language, despite the increasing availability of digital material. Thus, this thesis looks at particular CL schools – the Tamil community

language schools in the state of New South Wales – aiming to analyse learning resources, and especially selected textbooks being used at these schools.

This study reveals useful information regarding the ways in which the textbooks being used at Tamil community language schools shape the identity construction processes of the learners attending these schools. The study also provides meaningful insights into the roles of community language schools that are part of language education in NSW. The findings and recommendations from the study offer useful inputs for educators and policy makers dealing with the education of other linguistic minorities in Australia.

Therefore, my study will help to fill the research gap in the area of Tamil community language education and lead to studies in many other languages schools.

1.1.2   Research aim

The aim of this study was to investigate the contents of the five selected textbooks employed by the teachers at Tamil community language schools in NSW. I intended to critically analyse these textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8), published by the NSW Federation of Tamil Schools, to understand whether they meet the aims as stated in the books. This has been carried out by employing a qualitative approach. Information was gathered from the selected textbooks and teachers who were using the textbooks interviewed. It should be noted that evaluating or reviewing the textbooks was not the primary or intended purpose of the study. However, this textbook analysis could lead to a more comprehensive evaluation in the future.

1.1.3   Theoretical framework

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) has been chosen for this study as it is suitable for the study of language and society in relation to the specific issues of power, dominance, representation and inequality. Critical discourse analysis is a problem-oriented and transdisciplinary set of

theories and methods that has been widely used in educational research. CDA methods have also been applied in analysis of areas that include a diverse range of educational discourses such as in educational policies, classroom interactions, textbooks and curriculums to name a few. Rogers (2011) highly recommends CDA for this kind of study as it has many aspects suitable for use in educational research. Weninger (2018) identifies CDA as a major theoretical influence in textbook analysis as it has arisen from critical discourse studies involving the theorisation of text and meaning.

Discourse analysis mainly explores the meaning of language in use. It also subscribes to the idea that language cannot be studied in isolation from the communicative intentions of language users and the actual context within which they use the language. As Tamil language is taught as a community language in Australia, especially for the children of Tamil immigrants, the specific context where the learning takes place needs to be investigated applying discourse analysis. Language here is seen as a social practice, not just a phenomenon functioning in a vacuum (Van Dijk, 1993, 2009). Discourse analysis can provide avenues for examining the interplay of various complex factors in community language teaching and the learning resources that are used.

Another point to be made is that CDA has now firmly established itself as a field within the humanities and social sciences (Rogers et al., 2005). CDA is also known by scholars to denote a recognisable approach to language study across a range of different groups (Breeze, 2011). Indeed, some scholars have even suggested that critical discourse analysis is close to becoming "an intellectual orthodoxy" (Billig 2002: 44), an institutionalised discipline with its own paradigm, its own canon and conventionalised assumptions, and even its own power structures. A comprehensive justification of CDA as a theoretical framework for this study is provided in detail in Chapter 2.

As CDA investigates language usage in their contexts, and Tamil in Australia is predominantly used by a large immigrant community, the next section briefly unpacks the meanings of diasporic communities within a multicultural country.

1.1.3.1 Diaspora and multiculturalism in Australia

The concept of diaspora has been widely discussed by several scholars. Phillips and Olliff (2022) comment that societies dependent on migration create diaspora communities. This can be an undesirable consequence of temporary and permanent migration to large-scale immigration countries. This is arguably the most obvious impact of decades of immigration to a country like Australia, where the descendants of migrants settle locally while in many cases maintaining ties to their country of origin and their ancestry. Overall, this can lead to powerful and affluent diaspora communities with deep contextual knowledge of their countries of origin, well-maintained transnational connections and unique perspectives. When it comes to countries of origin, the Tamil community is a prime example. Overseas members and the diaspora must face this vivid reality of shuttling between two different worlds. From a broader social perspective, appreciating the many dimensions of diaspora development is essential for understanding of issues of integration, multiculturalism, international relations and foreign policy, and social cohesion Phillips and Olliff (2022).

Multiculturalism in Australia arose in response to large scale migration. "Multiculturalism as a principle of social policy was based on social research on the situation of migrants, which concentrated on their actual situation in Australian society" (Castles, 1987: 3). As Castles focused mainly on socio-economic class issues in relation to people from a non-English speaking background, he felt that multiculturalism at that time "did not look at migrants in general terms of ethnicity and culture, but rather tried to identify particular areas of socio-economic disadvantage" (Castles, p 3). This view did not follow a cultural pluralist ideology of multiculturalism being based on culture and ethnicity, which in some ways can alienate

individuals just by mentioning their culture. By attempting to change the socio-economic position of ethnic minorities, actual benefits of multiculturalism could be celebrated.

However, as Koleth (2010) notes, multiculturalism has been a controversial policy and concept since it was introduced in Australia in the 1970s. While maintaining some basic principles, in over the three decades since its introduction, multiculturalism has evolved in response to changes in government priorities and reactions to the challenges facing Australian society. While Australian multicultural policy was rooted in the government's response to post-settlement issues for migrants, during the 1980s and 1990s this policy was more widely presented as an element of Australia's nation building process. Today, all Australian states and territories have policies and programs supporting multiculturalism.

Mu (2023) provides critical views of multiculturalism in Australia. Multicultural societies, including Australia, continue to support and promote this principle. However, diversity within the force remains more of a nuisance to deal with than a valuable resource to preserve and cultivate. For example, students in multicultural schools often have to negotiate different cultural values and language patterns while participating in standardized curricula that do not take them into account. Another example is that some white middle-class families transfer their children from culturally and linguistically diverse public schools to private schools, suggesting that multiculturalism is not necessarily a positive concept. Moreover, strategies to implement multiculturalism are confounded by tensions, politics, and positioning in social spaces. Mu (2023) also suggests citing Putnam (2007) that there could be caution against the danger of cultural diversity and count on the social benefits of assimilation or multiculturalism.

Similar to the multicultural achievements in Canada, Ng and Metz (2015) praise Australia's multiculturalism for its values in three ways. First, this political philosophy is radically different from assimilation. Instead of expecting immigrants to give up their language and culture,

integration allows them to maintain their language and culture while learning the ways of living in the adopted country. The integration approach, moreover, allows immigrants to freely preserve their own cultures while also adopting elements of the host-country culture. This approach may require host-country nationals to be open and tolerant. In other words, mutual accommodation is required by both the dominant (host-country nationals) and minority (immigrant) groups for multiculturalism to be successful. As a result, this approach is seen as the most inclusive as it promotes social and economic mobility for everyone (Ng and Metz, 2015). In practice, for example, the Tamil students are provided opportunities to learn Tamil as a community language for their heritage maintenance while Tamil language is accredited as an HSC subject so that the students can continue their studies in mainstream universities in Australia. Second, it actively promotes social and cultural inclusion. Third, and globally, it shifts the 'brain drain/gain' from source/destination countries by allowing the 'flow/brain' circulation model and creating a win-win situation for the countries of origin and destination.

Although multiculturalism is seen as a response to the demands by immigrant communities for equal social participation and cultural recognition, in educational contexts, cultural and linguistic diversity may pose some challenges for schools and teachers in particular. However, in the long run, diversity should be viewed as a resource that can bolster prospective individual and social developments (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2020). Australia claims to be a multicultural country (Ang, 2014; Knijnik, 2018). As a political philosophy or government policy, multiculturalism is generally based on the peaceful and equal coexistence of many ethnic groups, "united in diversity" (Parekh 2002; Taylor 1994). In practice, however, communicating the ideal of peaceful and equal coexistence has proven difficult, if not impossible. Tensions persist between national unity and ethnic diversity in countries where multiculturalism is an established policy. As Ang (2014) explains, tensions between ethnic minorities and national communities are seen as conflicts between two ontologically distinct entities. Tensions could

escalate if the people of the country and the immigrants are defined in mutually incompatible ways although multiculturalism as a policy is in place.

Australia is a nation-state with a very elaborate migration and settlement program and a country committed to multiculturalism. With the formal lifting of the White Australian policy in the 1970s, multiculturalism officially entered the historical arena as a national policy for managing cultural diversity and national identity. In its early days, equality-oriented multiculturalism aimed to support the civic engagement of immigrants through educational and social services (Pardy and Lee, 2011). The late 1970s saw the birth of skilled immigration, demonstrating a progressive economic orientation towards human capital to develop markets and a shift from population growth to addressing shortages of labour. The 1980s saw a further step towards a form of liberal multiculturalism that emphasised the political pluralism of cultural diversity (Pardy and Lee, 2011). There have been several shifts of multiculturalism in Australia in recent decades. The emergence of multiculturalism in Australia is not a proactive strategy but a defensive strategy adopted by the government reluctantly in response to the growing cultural diversity caused by immigration. post-war growth (Boese and Phillips, 2011).

Although over 3 decades of multiculturalism have seen an improvement in the living conditions of immigrants, the past 2 decades have seen a return of assimilationism aimed at erasing differences under what is nominally called national cohesion, with multiculturalism giving way to more favourable things such as globalisation, internationalism, hybridism and diaspora (Pardy and Lee, 2011). There have been changes that show the diminishing importance of multiculturalism and the escalation of nationalism on the government agenda. These changes are not just the result of competition on ideology and practice among ethnic minorities and the Anglo-Australian core; they also represent state intervention and a changing political agenda.

1.1.4   Research Methodology

My research has attempted to fill a gap by investigating the influence or impact of the Tamil textbooks on the students' identity construction processes. My research questions have aimed at gathering information regarding the issue. Adopting a qualitative research methodology and informed by a critical discourse analysis theoretical framework, this study has explored the role of the textbooks of Tamil Schools in connection with students' experiences that shape their identity construction processes. Yin (2003) offers a categorisation of case studies, by describing them according to purpose: exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. An exploratory case study is used when little is known about the case being examined (Hood, 2009). As Tamil schools in Australia have not been researched, a case study method would be appropriate for my study. It can be used to lay the groundwork for subsequent studies. Data collection has involved examining the content of the selected textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8) and interviewing the principal and teachers who use the textbooks for teaching Tamil at community language schools.

Data have been analysed employing thematic analysis guidelines to find out major themes and patterns through coding and categorising processes. Through a systematic analysis, common elements and recurring themes have been identified from data within textbooks and interviews with key actors in Tamil schools. Data from interviews have been coded and interpreted relating them to relevant theories and concepts. By looking at inclusion and exclusion of material, textbook analysis has made it possible to spot what language ideology the textbooks present, as well as the stance of the creators in relation to that ideology.

1.2   Tamil background/ history

In this and in the following sections, I present a brief history of Sri Lanka and the political and cultural issues that affected Tamil migration across the world and to Australia. Some historical

developments that took place in Tamil Nadu, India are also provided in relation to the attachment of the Tamils of Indian origin to the Tamil language. This brief historical account is relevant to contextualise this research and highlight the importance of the Tamil CL schools in the diaspora and in NSW.

In 1505, Sri Lanka was a Portuguese colony, including the area of Jaffna in the north where the majority of the Tamil people resided; thereafter it was occupied by the Netherlands (1658 to 1795) and finally by Britain (1796 to 1948) (Radtke, 2009; Rösel, 2007, cited in Somalingam, 2012). As a result of colonial rule, Sri Lanka's educational structure was constantly changing. The 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of Sinhala and Tamil medium education, however, English has continued to dominate higher education, business and public administration since the end of British rule.

A strong Tamil educational tradition in Sri Lanka, particularly in the Jaffna region, is based on Portuguese missionary work, Christian influence, English language education, and established colonial administration – "an Anglophone, classical and westernized. education tradition in Jaffna that has lasted to this day" (Rösel, 2007: 341). The British colonial administrators sent the American Baptists mission to Jaffna. They established an education system with English as the language of instruction in which Tamils were able to study various professions such as commerce, law, engineering and medicine.

Because of the dominance of English education at government and professional levels, at the time of independence of Sri Lanka in 1948, the number of Tamil academics, public servants and professionals, outnumbered those of the Sinhalese, the majority ethnic group of the country (Manogaran, 1987). This disproportionate situation created tension in the country and Sinhalese politicians began exploring opportunities for changing the status of the English language and making the Sinhala language dominant in education and administration (Manogaran, 1987).

After 1948, the Tamils were displaced from their positions by the country's declaration of Sinhala as the official language, through denial of access to administrative and political systems, and by under-funding of Tamil educational institutions. The result was "a virulent political and cultural Tamil nationalism" (Rösel, 2007: 342, cited in Somalingam, 2012). In 1972, Tamil students founded organisations aiming for autonomy for the northern and eastern areas of Sri Lanka. The aim of these associations was to establish a sovereign state, which was to act independently from the Sri Lankan Government which was led by the Sinhalese majority. However, the Tamil liberation movement 'Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam' (LTTE), founded in May 1976 and operating militarily, declared a separate state: Tamil Eelam. Since then, there have been violent conflicts between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan army. The events of the 24 July 1983, when thirteen Sinhalese soldiers were killed by the LTTE near Jaffna, led to a pogrom against the Tamils by the Sinhalese, and eventually to civil war. The fights and indiscriminate arrests and killings of the Tamils, which started enormous refugee flows, took place mostly in the northern and eastern areas of Sri Lanka, where the majority of Tamils live. Because of this violent persecution, Tamils began to flee the island (Valentine and Thangarajah, 1995). The root causes of the problems and associated historical and sociopolitical aspects related to the civil war are described in a World Bank Report by Perera (2001). The details regarding the origins of the Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism issues have been comprehensively analysed by Gunasingam (1999).

A similar language-oriented movement and agitation against dominant languages (English and Hindi) could also be seen in the state of Tamil Nadu after India's independence in 1947. Because the states in India were created along linguistic lines, Tamil language became the official language of the Tamil Nadu state. Tamil ethnic nationalism actually began in the 1930s in the Tamil region in India. Rasaratnam (2007) briefly compares the Tamil nationalism trends in India and Sri Lanka by stating that Sri Lankan Tamil and Indian Tamil political movements

and ideologies have unfolded along remarkably different, almost diametrically opposed trajectories over fifty years. For example, Tamil nationalist movements in India were changing direction from an early antagonism to the Indian National Congress and its ideals towards a peaceable accommodation within the Indian Union. However, during this period Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism was escalating from a strategy of peacefully coexisting with Sinhalese people within a unitary state to the demand for an extreme form of autonomy – an autonomous region or a separate state for the Tamil people. Despite this contradiction, from the mid- to late-nineteenth century there were clear connections between Tamil politics and cultural life in Sri Lanka and India. Sri Lankan Tamil politicians and activists were deeply influenced by these shared ideological currents, and early political leaders of Sri Lankan Tamils promoted South Indian classical dance and music in Sri Lanka, and regularly visited South India.

> The idea that Tamils are descended from an ancient Dravidian race was also influential, and Sri Lankan Tamil politicians referred to this alleged heritage in debates and campaign speeches in the 1930s and 1940s (Russell 1982: 149, cited in Rasaratnam, 2007).

The anti-Hindi resurgent Tamil discourse continues to be a dominant cultural characteristic of politics and literature in Tamil Nadu even into the 1990s, almost fifty years since India became independent (Ramaswamy, 1998). The *Tani Tamizh Iyakkam* (Pure Tamil Movement):

> reflects the deep-seated anxiety of the Tamils to re-assert their identity in their life and in literature in the wake of onslaughts on their culture both from English colonialism and from Hindi domination from within (Ramaswamy, 1998: 80).

The *Tani Tamizh Iyakkam* represented not only the major strand in the transitional years in Madras (name changed as Chennai in Tamil Nadu) politics but emerged as the most important post-colonial discourse in Tamil Nadu. This background of the Tamil people of Tamil Nadu origin makes their linguistic attachment strong and their love of language continued when they migrated to Australia (Kandiah, 2008). Tamil is also a pluri-centric language. The term pluri-centric was employed, by Kloss (1978: 66–67), cited in Clyne, 2008 to define languages with

several interacting centres, each providing a national variety with at least some of its own specific norms. For example, Tamil language is spoken in Sri Lanka and India where the language has been historically in use. It is also spoken in Malaysia, Singapore and Mauritius in addition to several diasporic settings (Kandiah, 2008).

1.3   International and Australian Tamil diaspora

Tamil migration is not a new phenomenon. What is new is the attitudes and language behaviours of the Tamils who have migrated in the last 3 decades, compared with Tamils who migrated to Fiji, South Africa, Malaysia and Singapore 200 years ago. Canagarajah (2008) points out that:

> Sri Lankan Tamils are among the newest wave of migrants in North American and European metropolises. They started migrating in large numbers after 1983 when the ethnic conflict in the island took a military turn (146).

There are now well organised and coordinated efforts to maintain the language in the diaspora as Tamil is a pluri-centric language in terms of its use. Although Tamil is predominantly spoken in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu and in Sri Lanka, it is also used in Singapore and Malaysia for communication and as one of the national/official languages. It is also used in immigrant communities such as in the UK, US, Canada, Australia and around 20 European countries. Currently, the population of Tamil-speaking people is estimated to be around eighty million worldwide, including the Tamil diaspora, and hence, "it's perhaps the only case of a very ancient language that still survives as a vibrant mother-tongue for tens of millions of speakers" (Shulman, 2016: 2).

Kandasamy et al. (2020) provide details of migration of Sri Lankan Tamils to Australia. Sri Lankan Tamils began arriving in significant numbers in Australia from the 1970s as a result of intensifying political upheaval in Sri Lanka. This group of Tamil migrants were mainly professionals and university students searching for better economic and educational opportunities. A large number of Tamils fled Sri Lanka in the early 1980s due to civil unrest

and resultant armed conflict. Since then, Tamils continue to seek asylum in Australia due to a fear of persecution and violence in their homeland. Figure 1.1 shows the numbers of Tamil-speaking people living in Australia from 1991 to 2021. Table 1.1 breaks this information down into the numbers in the different states and territories of Australia for the years 2011, 2016 and 2021. Compared with 2016, the number of Tamil-speaking people in Australia has increased by over 30% in 2021.

Figure 1.1 Numbers of Tamil-speaking people in Australia, 1991 to 2021
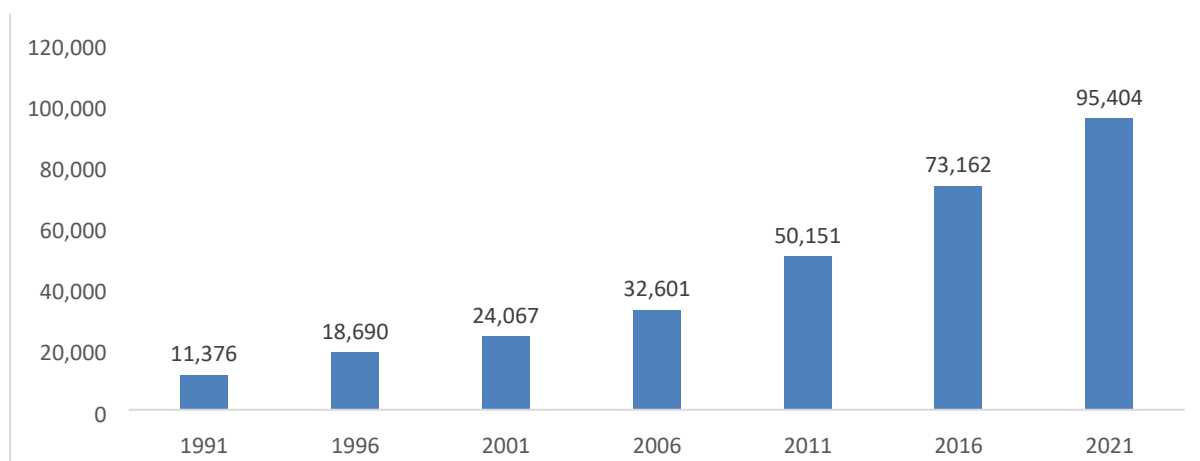
Table 1.1 Numbers of Tamil-speaking people by state and territory, Australia, 2011, 2016 and 2021

State/territory	Numbers of Tamil-speaking people			
	2011	**2016**	**2021**	**% Change 2016 to 2021**
Victoria	17,452	25,664	34,123	33.0%
New South Wales	21,528	29,676	38,446	29.6%
Queensland	3,476	5,518	7,336	32.9%
Western Australia	4,079	6,890	8,738	26.8%
South Australia	1,703	2,699	3,342	23.8%
Tasmania	217	308	461	49.7%
Australian Capital Territory	1,416	1,885	2,417	28.2%
Northern Territory	278	514	544	5.8%
Australia	50,015	73,162	95,404	30.4%

Although there are differences in the attitudes towards Tamil language maintenance and attachment to the Tamil culture between skilled migrants and refugees, most of the parents use Tamil language at home (Kandiah, 2008). Kandiah (2008: 14) has also found that "Tamils believe strongly that knowledge of their mother tongue is the constant and vital ingredient in

the preservation of their identity and culture". For this reason, language learning, its retention and continued practice are rated highly. It could be assumed that the skilled migrants of the Tamil community would be less motivated to make their children learn the Tamil language in Australia due to their higher educational qualifications obtained in the medium of English in their home country or elsewhere. Their children also could have started receiving education in the English medium before migration to Australia (Kandiah, 2008).

However, this may not be true in every family context. There are various complex factors that determine the degree of connection to the language and its maintenance. Some families that are traditionally monolingual could feel after migration that their lack of English proficiency is a weakness. "Therefore, they drive their children to learn English at the neglect of Tamil, orientating to their children's education in utilitarian terms" (Canagarajah, 2008: 164). This difference is yet to be formally investigated in Australia as Canagarajah's views only relate to Tamils living in Canada, the US and UK. The ways in which they migrated to those countries and their socio-economic and educational backgrounds may be different to that of the Tamils living in Australia. In Australia, it is observed that there are many Tamils who are well educated and place considerable emphasis on their children learning the Tamil language, while some Tamils who are less educated do not worry much about teaching Tamil to their children (Kandiah, 2008). The reasons for this and the trend have yet to be researched in Australia. In the US, UK and Canada, Canagarajah (2008) also found a complex interplay of various factors for the rapid loss of Tamil in the Sri Lankan Tamil communities in the diaspora. In these settings, factors such as "the pressure for migrants to join the social mainstream, and the need to resolve intergenerational tensions influence the family to forego language maintenance goals" (Canagarajah, 2008:143).

Although Tamils of Indian and Sri Lankan origin are generally seen in NSW by outsiders as one homogeneous ethnolinguistic minority group, there are differences in terms of language

awareness and language ideology that could have impacts on the language maintenance efforts in general and the operation of the Tamil community language schools in particular. The number of Tamil people in Sri Lanka is small (3.4 million) compared to those in India (almost 68 million). Paradoxically, Sri Lankan Tamils greatly outnumber Indian Tamils in the diaspora, other than in the US. This is because while most Tamils in the diaspora arrived as refugees in large numbers due to long-term civil unrest, in the US only a limited number arrived, and as skilled migrants (Kandiah, 2008). Table 1.2, displaying the country of birth of Tamil-speaking people in Australia, shows the share of Tamil-speaking people born in India, increased from 38.3 % in 2016 to 42.5% in 2021.

Table 1.2   Numbers of Tamil-speaking people in Australia by country of birth, 2011, 2016 and 2021

Country of Birth	Numbers of Tamil Speaking People				
	2011	**2016**	**2021**	**Share (2016)**	**Share (2021)**
India	17,500	28,055	40,518	38.3%	42.5%
Sri Lanka	19,855	27,352	28,222	37.4%	29.6%
Australia	6,547	9,979	16,853	13.6%	17.7%
Malaysia	2,782	3,514	4,813	4.8%	5.0%
Singapore	1,687	2,010	2,337	2.7%	2.4%
New Zealand	260	341	426	0.5%	0.4%
England	199	244	370	0.3%	0.4%
UAE	104	153	225	0.2%	0.2%
Other countries	1,217	1,514	1,640	2.1%	1.7%
Total	50,151	73,162	95,404	100.0%	100.0%

Source – Adapted from a release compiled by Thalayasingham, R. accessing ABS Census data 2021.

While all skilled migrants are obviously educated, not all refugees are less educated. When it comes to ethnonational identities and ideological differences, they prefer to be identified as Sri Lankans or Indians, but as Tamils in terms of broader ethnolinguistic groups (Challam, 2001).

According to Challam (2001), South Indian Tamils in Sydney mostly belong to the professional or skilled category.

Currently, as an educated estimate, approximately 600,000 to 800,000 Tamils have found refuge in western countries, such as Canada, the US, Europe, and Australia (Somalingam, 2012). The civil war (1983 to 2009) has created a new international diaspora in addition to the colonial diaspora (Baumann, 2000; Radtke, 2009; Rösel, 2007, cited in Somalingam, 2012). For outsiders, The Tamil community may appear as one single linguistic group. However, broadly, a three-tier model can be seen in terms of the Tamil-speaking world based on the history of movements of Tamil people during the colonial period, the post-colonial period and the 21st century (Jones, 2020):

- Tier 1 – migration to Sri Lanka from India [now the region of Tamil Nadu], the historical homeland of Tamil people

- Tier 2 – recruitment by British colonial rulers in Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius, Fiji and South Africa, as indentured labour

- Tier 3 – the current Tamil diaspora, which emerged after the start of the civil war in 1983.

The first tier consists of Tamil people whom scholars state had been the inhabitants of these areas for thousands of years. The second tier is the Tamil people who migrated to Fiji, South Africa, Malaysia and Singapore 200 years ago during the British colonial period (Sri Lanka and India were part of a British colony) This was followed by the migration of a Tamil elite to these British colonies thus creating several colonial Tamil diasporas in Singapore, Malaysia, Fiji, South Africa and Mauritius (Jones, 2020; Jain, 2021). The evolution of Sri Lankan Tamil ethnic identity is historically described by Indrapala (2005).

The third tier of the Tamil-speaking community and is mainly referred to as the 'Tamil diaspora' in recent times. The third tier is the Tamil people who fled Sri Lanka due to civil war

and began settling in many other countries (McDowell, 1996; Sriskandarajah, 2005). My study focuses on the Tamil language education of children who belong to this group. The desire for a separate homeland, Tamil Eelam within Sri Lanka, has led to a transnationally active international diaspora, with members who feel compelled to preserve their native heritage.

Migration has given rise to the formation of diasporas, ethnonational communities outside their nation of birth who uphold symbolic and tangible connections to their motherland. According to Wayland (2003) until recently, most of the immigration research in the advanced industrialised democracies focused on circumstances of migration and settlement and either ignored completely the existence of transnational connections or underestimated their ongoing significance. It is relevant to note here that Canada's Tamil population is among the largest in the Western world, with Toronto being home to one of the largest Tamil-speaking populations outside of Asia. This has also been the case in Canada where studies have, for the most part, neglected to consider factors that position ethnic groups in global processes. Instead, research has primarily concentrated on the internal workings of ethnic communities and relations between different groups. Rather than seeing ethnonationalist sentiments and expressions as contradictory to the process of immigrant adaptation, Wayland (2003) suggests that transnationalism should be recognised as playing a central and continuous role in the formation of immigrant identity.

While the term 'immigrant' categorises someone in relation to their interactions with the receiving state and society, the terms 'diaspora' and 'transnational' acknowledge that communities settled outside their native territories maintain some degree of connections with their place of origin. The homeland has a certain claim on their loyalty, emotions, and identity. To better understand the nature of transnational political ties between diaspora and homeland (Wayland, 2003) examines Tamil people in Canada. Wayland (2004) in her findings on controversial political and social movements, highlights the links between domestic and

transnational politics by showing how actors are formed, build ethnic networks and use cross-border opportunities to pursue different political, social and cultural goals. Specifically, she argues that the formation of ethnic networks played a role in the Tamil diaspora. A transnational dimension offers new insights into how ethnic conflicts can persist and strengthen the network. A combination of greater political freedom, community organisations and access to advanced information communications and financial resources of the host country made it possible for Tamil immigrants to maintain a "cross-border ethnic network," in the diaspora. By presenting different conceptions of the term 'transnationalism', Wayland (2004) also introduces a case study of Sri Lankan Tamils living abroad elaborating on their involvement in the politics of the homeland and concluding that the concepts of cross-border networks and opportunity structures should be expanded to include the role of freely acting transnational actors.

Figure 1.2 shows the religious affiliation of Tamil-speaking people in Australia in 2021. Hinduism was the predominant religion of Tamil-speaking people in Australia (73.2%), followed by Christianity (16.8%) and Islam (4.5%). Religious backgrounds are important and relevant for the understanding of Tamil culture and language in Australia. Hinduism is followed by many different language speakers (such as Tamil, Hindi, Telugu or Malayalam for example) and Tamil language speaking communities consist of people of various religions such as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. The sermons and prayers are conducted in Tamil language in churches in Australia. For this reason, whether language or religion (among others) is the key marker of Tamil people's identity becomes a question. A strong language–religion connection such as Hebrew–Judaism or Arabic–Islam is difficult to find in the case of Tamil language and Hinduism. Religion could be seen as seriously affecting social cohesion in a religiously diverse setting. The perspective that Tamil language and Saivism (also spelled Śhaivism) refers to a cluster of religious schools and traditions in Hinduism devoted primarily to the worship of the god Shiva) have coexisted and co-functioned for centuries is so powerful

that Tamil people "believe from generation to generation that Tamil means Saivism and Saivism means Tamil" (Suseendirarajah ,1980: 347, cited in Perera, 2022). Since Australia is a nation where whiteness and Anglo-centricity dominate, the task of maintaining the linguistic and cultural identity of immigrants could face many challenges. Perera (2022) demonstrates how a Hindu temple as a migrant religious institution representing a religion that has been imported from the Global South to an Anglo-Celtic Christian dominant host society is handling these challenges.

The strong and close connection between Saivism and the Tamil language has been well established in the literature (Schiffman, 2002; Cutler, 2003). How these 2 as social practices have enhanced each other has also been historically investigated. The survival and development of the language and religion have been critically analysed in terms of Tamil-speaking communities in their homelands (Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka). Peterson (1989) for example, has delved into details of the connection between Tamil and Saivism particularly in terms of *tevaram*, the devotional hymns of the fourth to sixth centuries, analysing how they transformed the language, literature and culture of the Tamils. In the modern setting of globalisation, Hornabrook (2016) examines the role of devotional hymns at temples in London, UK in the diaspora in bringing Tamils together through South Indian Carnatic music performances. Carnatic music is a melodic and traditional form of music that originated in South India. The proliferation of South Indian religions in western countries, particularly in the US, because of increased migration has also been documented (Leonard, 2006). However, Perera (2022) investigates the complex dynamics of Tamil language maintenance and practicing of Saivism in the diasporic context of Australia. While the focus is on Sri Lankan Tamils and Saivism in Australia, how the younger generation of Sri Lankan Tamil origin deals with their identity as Hindu, Sri Lankan, Tamil and Australian is also explored.

Perera (2022) presents the Tamil temple with the pseudonym 'Saiva Temple' in a case study format and demonstrates the ways in which practices at an immigrant religious institution is undergoing linguistic and religious changes and transformation. This is a study of how this temple community deals with addressing challenges related to religious super-diversity. Recent migration to urban centres of Australia has added complexity to religious cultures and practices making the setting a super-diverse. Canagarajah has commented about Perera's 2022 research:

> "Languages and religions have ensured continuity with each other for generations. Perera reveals a new paradox of this dynamic in recent forms of migration. Traditional identities and beliefs are still entrenched for Sri Lankan Tamils in the Australian Diaspora as Saivism and Tamil language morph into the new social ecology".

Teachers and administrators need to be aware of the religious backgrounds of students in providing Tamil language education.

Figure 1.2   Tamil Speaking People by Religious Affiliation*, Australia, 2021
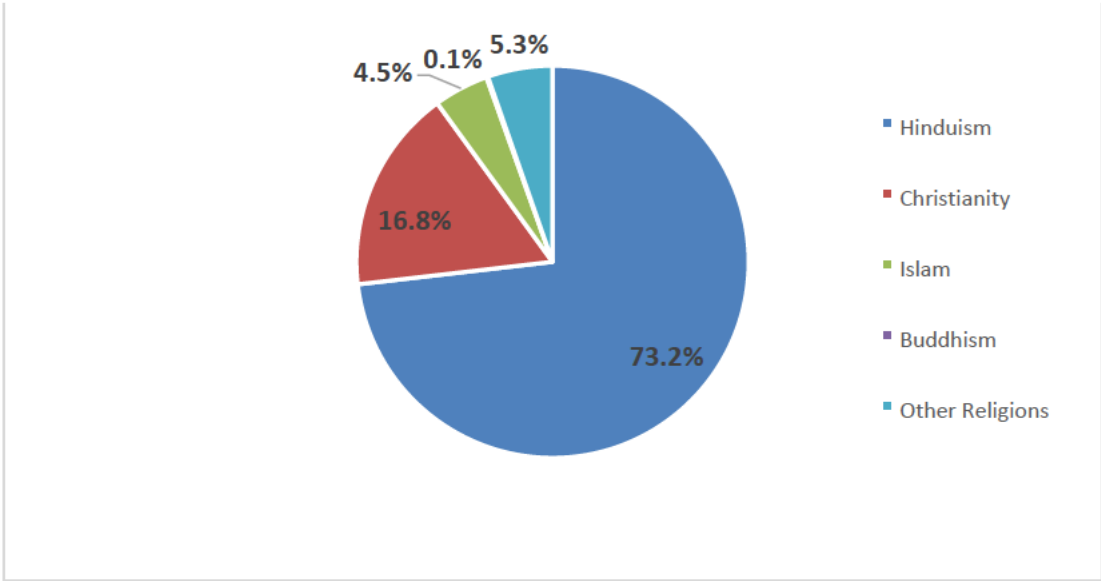
* Other category includes secular beliefs and inadequately stated responses.
Source – Adapted from a release compiled by Thalayasingham, R. accessing ABS Census data 2021.

Kandasamy et al. (2020) cast doubt about the actual number of Tamil people living in Australia. In the last national census, the number of people born in Sri Lanka who elected Tamil as the language spoken at home (ABS 2021) was 95,404. This was 30.4% higher than in 2016. Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania recorded faster than average growth in the Tamil-speaking population between 2016 and 2021. In 2021, 42.5% of the Tamil-speaking population in Australia were born in India with 29.6% born in Sri Lanka. The ABS definition of Tamil as those speaking Tamil at home may not give an accurate representation of the Sri Lankan Tamil population as it does not account for generations who were born outside of Sri Lanka, or people who identify as Sri Lankan Tamil yet do not speak Tamil at home. Also, if Tamil people put their country of origin as Sri Lanka not mentioning language spoken at home in the census form, they may be considered as Sinhala speakers.

The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Australia is relatively small when compared to numbers in other Western countries such as Canada (300,000) (Baumann, 2009), London (180,000) (Ratnapalan 2011) and France (100,000) (Goreau 2014).

1.3.1 Tamil language education in the diaspora

In his preface for a Tamil textbook series (*Thamilvalli*, translated in English as Tamil way), published by the International Tamil Educational Cultural Scientific Development Federation, Sivathamby (2001) classifies the teaching of Tamil language into 4 different categories:

- Tamil as the dominant language (L1) for Tamils in their homeland

- Tamil as a Second language (SL) for speakers of other languages in their homeland

- Tamil as a SL to speakers of other languages overseas

- Tamil as Home Language (HL) to the Tamil diaspora in immigrant contexts.

In order to understand the context of Tamils in Australia, it is important to know about the wider world of Tamil-speaking communities and the status of Tamil language globally. Fernandez and Clyne (2007) provide details regarding Tamil language citing Britto (1986) who says that that Tamils can claim one of the longest unbroken literary traditions of any of the world's living languages. Tamil has official status in the state of Tamil Nadu in India and the Union Territory of Pondicherry (total of 45 million speakers), Sri Lanka (3.4 million) and Singapore (.15 million) and is also spoken by about a million people in Malaysia, where it is one of three languages of education.

The Tamil diaspora has been a topic for research by many scholars in the last two decades due to the large-scale migration of Tamils, and its significant sociopolitical aspects. Sriskandarajah (2005) describes the Tamil migration that has been taking place globally. He states that the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora consists of some 700,000 people settled in North America, Europe, India, and Australasia. Most members of the diaspora have migrated since the mid-1980s, primarily as a direct or indirect result of an ongoing civil war in Sri Lanka. The settlement issues, the activities in relation to Tamil transnationalism, the contributions of the Tamil diaspora to their country of origin, and the political aspects of Tamil migration have been widely

researched (McDowell, 1996; Fuglerud, 1999; Fuglerud, 2001; Cheran, 2003; Van Hear et al., 2004; Sriskandarajah, 2005; Wayland, 2004; Gunasingam, 2014). Kandasamy et al. (2020) highlight Tamil people's experiences and analyse how they construct a home that is part of Australia's social, cultural, political and historical makeup.

In terms of Tamil language use, there is a general opinion that Tamil is dying in the diaspora as children increasingly adopt English for everyday communication in their English-speaking host countries. In the next 50 years there will be no Sri Lankan Tamil communities in migrant locations, as ethnic identity will die with the heritage language (Canagarajah, 2008) although this prediction may be contested by others and open to debate.

1.4   My journey: why this study is relevant to me.

Prior to my migration experience in 1999. I had exposure to strategies for Tamil language maintenance back in my home country (Sri Lanka), in a politically tense context, where Tamil is a minority language and Sinhala is the dominant language. In Sri Lanka, the English language was still dominant in business, law, higher education, and administration. This has shaped my interest in the role of language in education and society. I come from the Eastern Province that has a predominantly Tamil-speaking population. The 'Eastern Tamils' and 'Northern Tamils' are two distinct groups within the Sri Lankan Tamil people.

After visiting Australia in 1999, I sought political asylum here with my wife and three children due to the tense political situation prevailing in Sri Lanka at that time. The lives of the Tamil minority group to which we belong was in danger in the country. We, as newcomers to Australia, started our new life in the suburb of Homebush in Sydney, New South Wales, mainly because this area had a large concentration of Tamil people of Sri Lankan and Indian origin. Our children, a daughter aged 12 years and two sons aged 8 and 7 years, on arrival in Australia, who had received their education in the Tamil medium in their home country, began attending

school in the medium of English. Our attachment to the Tamil language was relatively strong compared to the Tamils who had lived in Sri Lankan cities and received their education in English, before coming to Australia either as asylum seekers or skilled migrants. We saw differences in every aspect of our life on a daily basis. For example, choosing food items to pack for lunch at school (a sandwich or Tamil food) for our children required conversations with them. Whether to speak with children in Tamil or English also was a difficult decision to be made as we wanted the children to learn English quickly and they needed help with their mainstream schoolwork.

I belong to one ethnic group (Tamil), and my mentality was shaped by a strong link between the place where I lived and my Tamil identity. I was born in Sri Lanka where I obtained my Bachelor of Arts degree with Tamil language as one of the main subjects in 1982 from the University of Jaffna (located in the cultural centre of Sri Lankan Tamils). Then I was an English as a Second Language (ESL) lecturer at the Eastern University, Sri Lanka. On a British Council Scholarship, I went to study to the United Kingdom where I completed a Master of Arts degree in Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in 1992. In addition, I worked as a Lecturer in Language and Business Communication at a business college in Papua New Guinea from 1996 to 1999 where students were receiving education in a language that was not their home language. Language in education became my passion, I started observing linguistic and cultural behaviours of my own children and the children of other Tamil immigrants growing up in Australia.

1.4.1   Personal and professional involvement in community language education

In Sri Lanka, I was an English language Instructor at a university where courses in science and business were conducted in the medium of English. Here in Australia, my role began to reverse. After taking my children to Tamil classes on the advice of friends and relatives, I started teaching Tamil to the children (at secondary level) who were attending Homebush Tamil Study

Centre on Saturdays, in 2000. Gradually, I became a teacher preparing the students who opted to take Tamil language for their Higher School Certificate (HSC) examination. I have worked as a marker for the HSC Tamil examination. I have also been involved in the preparation of local Tamil textbooks for the NSW Federation of Tamil Schools.

My daughter was able to continue her Tamil studies at Homebush Tamil Study Centre and take Tamil for her HSC examination. However, my sons stopped attending Tamil schools after 4 to 5 years. As a volunteer teacher at Tamil schools over 5 years in NSW, I have observed that gender has a role in the maintenance of language and culture in the Tamil community, although there has not been any study to examine the reasons for this gender disparity. It was a difficult journey for the children to concentrate on their mainstream education in the English medium, while making attempts to learn Tamil on Saturdays and maintain the language and culture.

In Australia, a number of scholars have explored the language maintenance and teaching of well-established languages such as German (Harres, 1989), Greek (Bradshaw and Truckenbrodt, 2002), Turkish (Yagmur et al., 1999) Italian (Finochhiaro, 1995; 2004), Dutch (Bennett, 1990; de Bot and Clyne, 1994). Languages of relatively recent arrivals such as Vietnamese, Chinese, and Arabic have also been researched (Bradshaw, 2013; Tannenbaum and Howie, 2002; Zheng, 2009). Various factors closely related to individual languages have played out differently in terms of maintenance and shuttling between home language and culture, and those of the adopted country. Each language community demonstrates a particular set of issues and factors in relation to language use and maintenance and some of them may be similar to those of other language communities. "Language maintenance and shift processes are the product of pre- and post-immigration experiences and the sociolinguistic history of the language" (Fernandez and Clyne, 2007: 169).

I carefully observed the learning styles of our own children and children of other Tamil parents due to the pressures involved in this process. In the past two decades, I have had discussions on the benefits of learning and teaching Tamil with teachers, parents and students. Students have different views regarding their identities and their community participation.

As the father of three children, I am personally interested in the educational, cultural, and linguistic experiences of immigrant children and families living in the Western Sydney region, in NSW, one of the most culturally diverse regions of the country. My recent reflections about my role as a teacher and commentator (at Tamil community and cultural events, and the conferences arranged by the NSW Federation of Community Languages) have sharpened my perspectives and raised my consciousness about issues for Tamil-speaking people within the Australian diverse society. I have presented papers at conferences on topics such as 'intergenerational issues' and 'identity consciousness in the diaspora' organised by Tamil literary organisations in Australia. This has made me investigate what is happening in the case of other linguistic minorities regarding these issues. In addition, parents and teachers have informally expressed their views to me regarding the challenges they face in providing Tamil language education to the youngsters. The Tamil community schools publicly state that maintaining language, culture and identity is their main objective. However, no research has been conducted to see if the Tamil language textbooks contain the necessary elements to achieve this objective.

Considering both my personal experiences, professional training and intellectual understandings of the everyday language challenges faced by migrants, I then pursued a doctoral journey to produce an in-depth examination of the textbooks used in the Tamil School programs in New South Wales. I wanted to see whether they play any role in shaping the identity construction processes of students, and, how and in what ways is this manifested in the context being studied.

1.5   Community language schools

Community language schools in Australia are generally run independently by the ethnolinguistic minority communities, and with financial support from the respective state governments as per their language policy guidelines. In their study on community languages in Australia, Clyne and Fernandez (2008) state that there are 3 types of institutions which provide instruction in community languages to school-aged children:

1. primary and secondary schools

2. schools of languages which are part of the state education department in some states and offer instruction on Saturdays in languages not available to students at their regular school

3. after-hours ethnic or community languages schools.

After-hours ethnic community schools are a model that has existed in Australia since 1857 (Clyne and Fernandez,2008) and they have been adopted by immigrant communities ever since. For a long time, these schools remained peripheral in nature, as they did not receive funding from Australian governments and many of the teachers were untrained, used outdated methods and lacked understanding of the Australian school system, to which the pupils were becoming or had become acculturated. (Clyne and Fernandez, 2008). However, the schools are now recognised by the departments of education of the respective states and territories. They also receive funding, syllabus guidelines and necessary support from the NSW State Government (Clyne and Fernandez, 2008).

Because community language schools are conducted on the weekend, there is confusion as to whether these schools are the same as Saturday School of Community Languages (SSCL) schools. They are not the same. SSCLs operate in 15 locations across NSW and offer students in Years 7 to 12 from government and non-government schools the opportunity to study 26 languages up to and including Stage 6. Tamil also has recently been added to the languages being taught. The SSCL is for students who wish to study a community language not offered

by their home school and who have a background in the language. All teachers are government accredited and use the HSC Board's syllabuses.

With a slightly different governance, community language schools in NSW are operating under the Community Languages Schools Program (CLSP). These schools are out-of-hours language schools for K–12 students in government and non-government schools. Tamil community language schools are part of the CLSP. The CLSP is administered on a grants-basis by the NSW Department of Education and Communities. To receive a grant, CLSP schools must be incorporated organisations and have education as an objective. The NSW and Commonwealth Governments co-fund each CLSP student at $120 per year. In addition, there is a one-off establishment grant. CLSP schools have the following characteristics:

- CLSP schools enhance cultural maintenance, tolerance and diversity.

- CLSP schools are feeder schools for the SSCL.

- The majority of CLSP schools operate in government schools on a gratis-rent arrangement, but may not have access to schools' ICT equipment.

- Many CLSP teachers work on a voluntary basis.

- CLSP teachers may undertake professional development in teaching.

- CLSP teachers are required to complete the Certificate in Language Teaching (a 60-hour course) provided by the University of Sydney.

- CLSP schools would welcome a voluntary common reporting framework.

- Historically, some criticism has been levelled at CLSP schools as general remarks.

The teaching programs at community language schools are part of the maintenance of language and culture for children from migrant backgrounds in Australia. Within education, community languages have often been subsumed under the term 'languages' which is one of 8 learning

areas of the Australian Curriculum (Clyne and Fernandez 2008: 169). The term 'community language (CL)' will be used in this thesis as it is a well-established term in the field.

1.6   Tamil community language schools

Sri Lankan Tamils have been pursuing Tamil culture education outside Sri Lanka since the mid-1980s when large numbers of Tamils began arriving in many countries as refugees (Valentine and Thangarajah, 1995). Over the years, a transnational education space has formed to the extent that attempts could be made to conserve the Tamil language and cultural heritage, even to bring the cultural and linguistic capital of the Tamil diaspora back to Sri Lanka in the future and to preserve the language and cultural achievements of the diaspora. However, Somalingam (2012: 33) states that "these developments can only be understood within the context of the colonial and postcolonial history of Tamils in Sri Lanka".

The NSW Community Languages Schools Program, in delivering Tamil language as a community language (CL) or a heritage language (HL) to the Tamil children in immigrant settings, plays an important role in developing cultural identities, especially through the maintenance and extension of the home language. The program has a strong justification in terms of educational and linguistic benefits for individuals and broader social and economic advantages for other Australians. In other words, by knowing who they are, the Tamil children of immigrants could develop the ability to recognise, accept, respect and celebrate cultural diversity in Australia. While they can live their lives with freedom and maintain their cultural traditions, they will feel themselves as active and equal participants in Australian society. This could enhance the success of Australia as a culturally diverse, accepting and open society, its people united through a shared future, and a commitment to the country, its democratic institutions and values, and the rule of law.

The aims and objectives of community language schools in Australia focus on the maintenance of language and culture in the host country, shaping identity, understanding diversity, and boosting a sense of belonging of the children attending these schools. (Community Languages Australia, 2021). A primary reason for learning community languages has been identified as having people understand themselves through their cultural and linguistic heritage (Carreira and Kagan, 2009). According to the aims and objectives of the Tamil community language schools (School website), students are expected to learn more about their own identity and heritage at the Tamil schools so that they would prepare themselves to effectively live as Australian Tamils within the diverse Australian society. Within Tamil CL schools, Tamil language textbooks (Years 4 to 8) published by the NSW Federation of Tamil Schools (NSWFTS) are used to provide learning resources in line with NSW Department of Education guidelines.

Ken Cruickshank (2015) in his keynote address at the Australian Tamil Teachers' Conference in 2015 stated that:

> The Tamil community in Australia is one of the best organised of communities: the value for education and school results of the young people are quite remarkable; the community has been very successful in its organisation of schools and in the acceptance of Tamil as a language for the HSC in NSW

In New South Wales, the Tamil children born in Australia are developing skills in Tamil language to the extent that they could take Tamil language as a subject for their HSC examination, with the support of their parents and Tamil community language schools. The availability of Tamil language formal examination at Year 12 level (The final year of the secondary cycle) has been a remarkable development. The students' results can be used in the calculation of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank that determines students' access to university education. This confers legitimacy and recognition to Tamil as a community language and the symbolic value is appreciated by the community (Scarino, 2014). It shows

their commitment as a key factor in the language maintenance efforts. The Tamil School is considered a venue where language ideologies, which are apparent in the school's discourses, shape and create identities. The NSWFTS website, 2022 states that one of the aims of Tamil schools is "providing Tamil language education to the students in order for them to maintain the Tamil culture and identity". The NSWFTS, was formed 19 years ago by 6 Tamil community language schools which now are operating, with a total of 1,250 students, at 14 locations in NSW (see Table 1.3). Its aim is to coordinate the common activities of its member schools by providing a syllabus based on the NSW curriculum and teaching materials for Tamil language, as well as promoting culture and values to children of the Tamil migrants. The NSWFTS also conducts a Tamil Proficiency examination annually for the students of its member schools.

Table 1.3   New South Wales Tamil community language schools

School name	Year established
1. Auburn Tamil Aalayam	1999
2. Balar Malar Tamil School with nine branches	
-Ashfield	1977
-Cherrybrook	2021
-Denistone	2000
-Holsworthy	1995
-Hornsby	2013
-Minto	2017
-Newcastle	2015
-Quakers Hills	2009
-Seven Hills	1993
3.Mount Druitt Tamil Study Centre	1991
4.Eastwood Tamil Study Centre	1983
5. Tamil Study Centre Homebush	1987
6. Wentworthville Tamil Study centre	1988

It is interesting to note that Balamalar Tamil schools have exclusively students of Indian origin while students at the Tamil Study Centres are primarily of Sri Lankan origin. Some schools conduct classes from preschool to Year 12 (students can choose Tamil language as one of their subjects for NSW HSC examination) and other schools have classes only up to Year 6. There are around 100 volunteer teachers and approximately 75 other committed volunteers who run these schools at the ten locations. The NSWFTS has published texts, workbooks and teacher guides based on the NSW curriculum. These resources are used as major teaching materials for the Tamil language all over Australia. The NSWFTS also conducts regular workshops in Tamil and English for the continuing professional development of our member schools' teachers. The schools have common cultural and sports days, as well, to promote friendship among the language school communities.

The aims and objectives described by Tamil community schools are different to the aim stated by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA)

> The study of Tamil in K–10 enables students to communicate with others in Tamil, and to reflect on and understand the nature and role of language and culture in their own lives and the lives of others (NSW Education Standards Authority, 2019: 12).

The Authority goes on to state that:

> The learners of Tamil include students:
>
> - learning Tamil as a second or additional language
>
> - with prior learning and/or experience who may have: − undertaken a significant school-based learning program in Australia − had exposure to Tamil language and culture and may engage in some active but predominantly receptive use of Tamil (including dialects and variants of Tamil)
>
> - with a background in the language who have had their primary socialisation as well as initial literacy development and primary schooling in Tamil
>
> - undertaking a course based on Life Skills outcomes and content. (2019: 5).

NESA as an NSW authority for education could provide only broader guidelines to community language educators. A generic template could be devised for individual community language educators to use. It may not be possible for the authority to design syllabuses for the individual languages concerned. On a broader note, it should be mentioned that Tamil language is not learnt in the way people in Australia learn French or German as prestigious languages or Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian languages for Asian business and diplomacy-related purposes. These languages may be a second or additional for the learners with a monolingual English background. However, Tamil is not a second or additional language for the children of Tamil origin, even for the Australian born. Almost all (99.9 %) of Tamil language learners at Tamil community language schools are of Tamil origin/with a background in the language. Therefore, the statement of NESA that "The learners of Tamil include students learning Tamil

as a second or additional language" does not represent the 99.9% of the Tamil learners at Tamil community language schools. There may be a very few learners from other language backgrounds. For example, a child of Hindi origin can learn Tamil as a second or additional language at Tamil community language schools. These education providers are NSW Government funded, so anyone who wants to learn Tamil at a Tamil community language school can do so if they meet the requirements. Peyton et al. (2001) emphasise the importance of treating second language speakers and heritage language speakers in terms of their family connection to the language. This could influence what learning materials to use (learning resources) and how the language should be taught (pedagogy). Tamil language is a community language or heritage language for the learners at Tamil community language schools. A suitable curriculum based on a specific approach will serve the purpose.

1.7   Research questions

The main research question this study aims to answer is :

1. In what ways, do the textbooks of Tamil community language schools provide relevant cultural contexts for language learning that promotes belonging and cultural-identity construction of the students?

The following ancillary research questions were framed to support the investigation about Tamil language textbooks and students' cultural identities:

2. How do curriculum, pedagogy, policy and practice in Tamil community language schools respond to and reflect the cultural, language and social interests and needs of the Tamil-speaking communities?

3. How are the choices of resources and curriculum made in delivering language education at Tamil community language schools in NSW, to reflect the diversity of the Tamil-speaking communities?

In my study, the research questions focus on the potential impact of the selected Tamil language textbooks on the identity construction process of the students. Key words in the research questions have been crucial for the literature review. Moreover, my literature review has selected recent studies on the topic to provide empirical evidence that is currently relevant to issues present in Tamil community language schools. Although there has no research on Tamil language textbooks in diasporic settings, the studies about other language textbooks have provided some useful insights to frame my research questions in relation to heritage language education and identity construction (Jones, 2020; Sankaran, 2022; Thurairajah, 2017; 2021). This has been helpful to determine the knowledge gaps in the field, for example in textbook analysis and community language, to which my research contributes.

My primary research question has an identifiable relationship between textbooks and identity construction processes. As its name implies, a literature review is an inventory and summary of previous scholarly research pertaining to the research topic broadly. Community language schools in Australia claim that one of the important purposes of the schools is to help the students understand their identity. For this reason, the content of the learning resources is likely to focus on belonging and the cultural-identity construction of the students. The literature review explores the topics of community language schools, language maintenance, ideologies and social identities. The notion of identity has been widely incorporated in language-learning research. Identity and identity-construction processes such as static and hybrid identity have been discussed in the literature. Other relevant themes, for example, self- esteem, textbooks and their impact on learners, heritage language schools, ideological nature of language textbooks,

Tamil textbooks and CDA as a theoretical framework have been discussed in detail in the literature review to establish connections with the research questions

1.8 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis broadly deals with Tamil language learning and teaching at NSW Tamil community language schools for the children of Tamil immigrants in Australia, and the impact of selected Tamil textbooks (Year 4–8) on this program. This thesis has 6 main chapters including an introduction and a conclusion. In Chapter 1, I have introduced the background and context relevant to the language teaching program of Tamil community language schools in NSW. I have briefly provided details of the purpose of a community language school, as well as their efforts in preparing the younger generations of migrants to clearly understand their own identity and thereby make them ready to accept and respect the diversity in Australian society. I have provided some details about the Tamil language, and the historical and sociopolitical conditions for Tamils in Sri Lanka, Tamilnadu, Australia, and the broader Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora. The research aim, theoretical framework and research methodology have also been briefly described.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review regarding the major concepts, including language maintenance, heritage language education and community language schools, as well as identity and textbook analysis that are relevant to the context of the study as well as the components of data collection. Key literature about the social contexts that influence community language schools is also reviewed. In examining the literature on community language education, the challenges for community language policy and Tamil language teaching and learning internationally are also considered in this chapter to provide a larger picture of the study setting. Justification for the choice of critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework is also made by demonstrating evidence from a wide range of literature.

Chapter 3 describes the methods and principles employed to respond to the research questions established in the introduction of this thesis. Details of the overall qualitative research methodology are provided by explaining the research methods and their justification. The criteria for the selection of research sites and participants are also given. Methods of data collection, such as in-depth interviews and textbook analysis are described and justified. Details of the ways in which data analysis was structured using a thematic analysis and relevant procedures have also been provided. The theoretical basis for the methodology is discussed and the particulars of research design are outlined and justified. The methodological framework of critical discourse analysis is described and justified in the context of qualitative research. The issues regarding credibility, authenticity and limitations are also described and the ways in which they were addressed are provided.

In Chapter 4, I present my findings in relation to the analysis of the content of the selected textbooks, using the research questions to guide and arrange my data analysis. The first phase of the analysis involves a general reading of all the selected textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8), followed by a thorough examination, as described in the data analysis, using titles when provided and content to identify topics and key ideas of the main text in each lesson. It should be noted that the purpose of the study has not been to evaluate the textbooks being used but to analyse them in relation to their capacity to influence students' cultural identities.

Chapter 5 provides the analysis of the naturalistic data taken from 5 audio interview recordings of teachers using the textbooks (Year 5 to Year 8) and a general interview of the principal of their community language school. An exploration into the perspectives of teachers and principal regarding the selected textbooks and their encounters in using the textbooks is carried out and the findings presented. Efforts have been made in this chapter to interpret and describe the findings in light of the teachers' voices heard through the interviews, which have effectively highlighted useful information regarding the real experiences with teaching the topics in the

classrooms. The ideas expressed by the research participants are also thematically organised and discussed in parallel with the literature.

In Chapter 6, the key findings are presented from both textbook analysis and research participants' interviews. I integrate both data sources, seeking similarities and tensions between the findings of both sets of data to form conclusions. The interview and the textbook data reveal strong connections that stress, on the one hand, key aspects of Tamil language education in NSW, and on the other hand, the critical issues that demand changes if Tamil language community schools want to further engage Tamil youth in their culture and traditions, and thus influence the identity construction processes of their learners.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review the literature regarding relevant topics on community language education, with a particular focus on Tamil language teaching and learning, internationally and in Australia. Key literature about the social contexts that influence community language schools is also reviewed. In examining the literature on community language education, the challenges for community language policy and Tamil language teaching and learning internationally are also considered in this chapter to provide a larger picture of the study setting. Tamil language education in Australia should not be viewed in isolation.

Community language schools as part of the language education providers in Australia are becoming more than an agent of language maintenance (Lo Bianco, 2002, 2003). The retention of language and cultural practices is sometimes criticised as this may lead to segregation and thereby could hinder the integration process (Putnam, 2007). However, these concerns are vigorously contested based on the premise that the children of immigrants could grow up accepting diversity and multiculturalism by clearly understanding who they are and what adjustments they need to make in their socialisation process in the new setting (Cardona et al., 2008).

Cultural enrichment, social harmony, equity and economic advancement are also stated goals of language education; learning a language is being promoted to the status of one of the key learning areas in the curriculum in the National Statement for Languages Education in Australian Schools. This 2005 to 2008 national plan for languages education emphasises this aspect (MCEETYA, 2005). Several scholars have called for rethinking and refocusing on community language education by not simply looking at it as language maintenance

(Cruickshank, 20015, 2018; Cruickshank et al., 2020; Cruickshank et al., 2022; Chik et al., 2018; Chik et al., 2019; Nordstrom, 2015, 2022; Scrimgeour et al., 2018). They stress that community language education needs to be viewed considering various important factors such as wellbeing, equity, social justice, belonging, capital for the future, a site for negotiation of identities and community building. Moreover, the relevance of the Tamil language and Hindu religion in the lives of second-generation devotees in Australia has become a topic for research. Perera (2017) explored the interaction between language and religion within the goal of heritage-language maintenance and how this plays out for the Sri Lankan Tamil Hindus who attend a Tamil Hindu temple in Australia. Tamil language and Hindu religion are closely linked in the Tamil Hindu culture in the ancestral homelands and this strong language-religion ideology is reflected in the language practices of the temple. Amarasingam (2008) also explores the connection between Tamil language and Hindu religion as markers of identity of the Tamil people in the Canadian setting. However, there are members of the Hindu, Christian and Islam religions among Tamil-speaking people. Tamil community language schools are different to places of worship and need to take a very diplomatic and careful approach to dealing with language-religion ideology or related concepts.

A systematic analysis into how migrant youth skilfully use their heritage language and English to achieve communication and index their hybrid identifications as they grow up in Anglo-dominant, multicultural Australia brings about useful information. Adoniou (2018) describes the challenges in facing monolingual mindset of multicultural Australia and suggests as to how teaching languages could overcome these challenges.

I also provide some historical and theoretical information regarding the processes and interrelationship between language maintenance and community language schools as part of overall language education in immigrant settings, so that Tamil schools can be clearly understood holistically. There is a view among the Tamil people that the community language

is critical to the learning and representation of the community's values, and that it is impossible to maintain ethnic identity without the language (Canagarajah,2012). This study aimed to highlight the need for current Australian research on Tamil community language schools and provide some useful inputs.

A clear and comprehensive understanding of the setting where the education is taking place and of the various complex factors that interplay in the process is necessary. For this reason, in addition to these topics, this literature review also looks at key concepts of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a way to frame the theoretical background that is later employed in my data analysis. CDA is a general framework that supports analysis of different components of language. CDA has also the capacity to deal with texts which are being used in new contexts. Moreover, it is useful for gaining understandings about the theoretical aspects of education. CDA is relevant to my study as it gives me the conceptual tools to analyse the ways in which the texts 'talk', and how other interactions of 'language in use' are constructed across time and contexts. The fact that CDA always involves the study of contexts – sets of relations located and circumscribed in time and space and defined by questions – makes the theoretical framework a suitable choice. As the formation of identity of the students at the Tamil community language schools is the focus of my study, CDA is an important theoretical framework for this study. Another reason to choose CDA as a theoretical framework is that it allows researchers to investigate 'difference' and 'sameness' in contexts.

2.2   Immigrants, language and sense of belonging

A sense of belonging is defined from a variety of perspectives, and it has various elements. A sense of belonging is a deep-rooted feature of one's identity that requires substantial psychological investment to develop and change (Berry and Sabatier 2011). Hou et al. (2018) in their study of Canadian immigrants' sense of belonging, investigate various dimensions. For

example, the dimension of 'retaining heritage group culture' is considered as a 'sense of belonging to country of origin,' and the 'contact and participation' dimension is seen as a 'sense of belonging to Canada'. A significant aspect is that a sense of belonging to the receiving country, as well as the source country, is directly relevant to a common concern about multiculturalism. Perera (2015) compares the language maintenance experiences of Sri Lankan origin Sinhalese and Tamils in terms of their linguistic attachment and behaviour patterns based on the differing influence of the contexts. The question arises as to whether the development of a strong sense of belonging or commitment to the receiving society can be accomplished, when maintaining one's heritage culture is being actively encouraged and facilitated. Perera (2020) has explored how adolescent Tamil students perceive the transmission efforts of the first generation, and what it means for their sense of belonging and their sense of Tamilness in the homeland of Sri Lanka and the new home of Australia. Perera (2022) has highlighted the ways in which first- and second-generation ideologies regarding Tamil identity and belonging are changing with time, largely due to new interpretations of "being Tamil" that vary between and within generations.

Anant (1966) states that belongingness implies recognition and acceptance of a member by other members in a group. Based on this concept, sense of belonging could be defined as the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment. A system can be a relationship or organisation, and an environment can be natural or cultural. For the scope of this study, only relevant elements such as linguistic attachment, language behaviours and cultural identity are chosen for examining the impact of community language schools on the construction processes of belonging. The maintenance of a community's first language is a significant issue for many people who belong to diverse ethnic communities whose members, or their ancestors, have migrated to Australia. The maintenance of the community language could help these groups of

people clearly understand who they are. Moloney and Oguro (2012) confirm this link in the case of Japanese children growing up in Sydney. This understanding is vital for recognising diversity in the society in which they live.

A larger study in the UK also shows the importance in the children's lives of their languages and the ways that languages link them to the core values of their heritage, family and community. In particular, the study has an emphasis on the significance of interpersonal uses of language and how these contribute to the children's sense of themselves (Mills, 2001). The norm that language is heritage is contested in the linguistic practices and behaviour of the young learners. Blackledge et al. (2008) have found after investigating multilingualism in Complementary Schools in four communities in the UK that the relationships between 'language' and 'heritage', far from being straightforward, are also complex in the way they play out in classroom interactions. There was no strong evidence to suggest that the learners from a particular language background necessarily expressed attachment to their heritage. Although some families are not living in isolation, they may not be part of large, well-established, local communities. The families' attitudes towards heritage language development, and their efforts to maintain, support or develop the heritage language in their families may be positive. However, difference in the perceptions of the heritage language seems to be different. For these reasons, their link to identity or the notion of heritage is not straightforward. This is also more complex than simply a 'passing on' of language or cultural values, and is instead linked to complex notions of identity as well as language.

Scholars suggest that questions of identity, belonging and the symbolic value of language have intersected in influencing the attitudes of migrants towards their ethnic languages (Koven, 2007; Blackledge, 2005). The driving forces that influence identity construction in the case of ethnic communities in the immigration contexts are internal and external. One is who they

(ethnic group members) themselves think they are; the other is how the mainstream society of the host nation wants to see who they (ethnic group members) are.

> Ethnic self-identities can be understood as 'definitions of the situation of the self.' For children of immigrants, they emerge from the interplay of racial and ethnic labels and categories imposed by the external society and the original identifications and ancestral attachments asserted by the newcomers (Rumbaut, 2005: 113).

Ethnic identities vary across different social situations and across different developmental stages throughout the life course. A group membership component and a developmental component are theoretically based elements of an ethnic identity. The group membership is termed as 'ethnic affirmation and belonging' based on Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner 1986, cited in Phinney et al., 2001). Ethnic identity is an aspect of one's social identity. Ethnic identity also can be thought of as a subjective sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the feelings and attitudes that accompany this sense of group membership. According to Social Identity Theory, Phinney et al. (2001) suggest that this sense of belonging could impact the psychological well-being of ethnic group members. Ethnic validation plays an important role in self-image because it places value on the group to which people belong and derives self-esteem from a sense of belonging. Whether belonging is a cause, or a consequence, of linguistic preservation is a complex question. However, the importance of migrant languages as markers of ethnic identities and sense of belonging has been reported (Nhdlovu, 2010).

The question of whether migration has impacted on a sense of belonging of immigrants in the receiving countries is complex. One reason for this is that sense of belonging is an elusive concept, and it is defined in different ways. Children of immigrants face the issue of 'sense of belonging' on a daily basis.

> …more complex, and often entails the juggling of competing allegiances and attachments. Situated within two cultural worlds, they must define themselves in relation to multiple reference groups (sometimes in two countries and in two

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languages) and to the classifications into which they are placed by their native peers,

the schools, the ethnic community, and the larger society (Rumbaut, 2005: 304).

The use of community languages is important both for individual and group identity and for communication across generations. However, Vasta (2013) argues that there are multifaceted modes of belonging. Migrants and ethnic minorities may not have a sense of belonging to the nation or have a sense of belonging to more than one symbolic or material locality.

The occasionally strident attacks on multicultural policies have consequences for the perception of community languages. Demands for English language tests and teaching for migrants, for example, have mistakenly assumed that the maintenance of the home language poses problems for social cohesion and national values (Daily Telegraph 2006a, 2006b, cited in Cardona et al., 2008). This kind of assumption is not only found in Australia, but also in other major countries that receive immigrants. For example, Vasta (2013) points out that the immigration countries have a concern that many immigrants and ethnic minorities are not integrating well into the destination or receiving societies with reference to the communities in London. This creates fears about whether newcomers are genuinely developing a shared sense of belonging to the national identity.

2.2.1 Multiculturalism and its impact on sense of belonging of immigrants

In terms of sense of belonging, multiculturalism differs markedly from 'mono-culturalism' that directly or indirectly forces the cultural others to happily leave their heritage behind and integrate into the white-dominant society (Mu, 2023). In Canada, multiculturalism has been a contested policy, with advocates arguing that it promotes the integration of immigrants, and a sense of belonging and national pride, and opponents arguing that it promotes Balkanisation and overly emphasises differences between groups (Koleth, 2010). It shows that there is a paradox in terms of sense of belonging when it comes to immigrants. Too much freedom for immigrants to enjoy their sense of belonging towards their ethnic or linguistic background may

be counterproductive to achieving social cohesion in the wider society. There is a view that any mandatory policies can further compound the marginalisation of immigrant communities and have a detrimental impact on their sense of belonging as far as national pride is concerned. Mandatory civic integration and cohesion approaches of the host nations could bring about pressure for the immigrants to choose which sense of belonging they would want (Koleth, 2010).

2. 3   Community language schools as agents of language maintenance: social identities and ideologies

Community language schools play important roles in the language maintenance efforts of the linguistic minority groups (Cardona et al., 2008; Pauwels, 2005; Rubino, 2011). They are also seen as significant language ideological sites. Martínez-Roldán and Malavé (2004: 161) define language ideology as "… a set of core beliefs and attitudes shared by individuals, as members of groups, regarding the use of a particular language in both oral and written forms". Language ideology is a bridge connecting linguistic practices (on a micro level) to broader sociopolitical structures (on a macro level) (Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2001; García, 2009; Kroskrity, 2000). This constant interplay creates social identities (Reyes, 2007) and it develops in groups of people certain beliefs and attitudes toward languages.

However, parents and students can have different perspectives on the construction processes of the identities. For example, Octu (2010) finds contradictory positions for parents and children about language and identity in a Turkish community language school in America.

> The adults, as first-generation immigrants holding on to their essential values and ideas, see the US as a foreign country and refer to English as a foreign language. Their overall beliefs converge in the desire that their children know and be attached to their Turkish background. The children, on the other hand, display fluid and hybrid identities (Octu, 2010:132–133).

The community-based community language schools provide a haven in which the learners can connect with their home language, its speakers and culture. Community language schools have been found to offer safe places for students of minority backgrounds that are free from racism and marginalisation. These schools have also been described as places that can provide learners who come from minority communities a 'safe haven' (Creese et al., 2006, cited in Nordstrom, 2022: 390). Moreover, parents and educators often embed their reasons for community language schooling in notions of 'belonging' and 'identity' where they strive to encourage students' sense of ethnic belonging and identity linked to a heritage nation. Nordstrom (2022) points out that in Europe, the community language schools often have an explicit aim and agenda to foster a sense of 'belonging' to a heritage nation alongside language teaching. This practice goes well with monoglossic language ideologies within the schools where languages are perceived as distinct and separate entities measured against monolingual norms, usually favouring exclusive use of a target language for teaching and learning. Community language schools provide a different context to those in the mainstream K–12 school system setting out to have students see themselves as belonging to a certain heritage (for example, a US heritage) (Wang and Green, 2001).

In the UK, according to Creese (2009), Complementary schools are considered as a social, linguistic and cultural resource for their respective communities. They also help counter the expected monolingual mindset of the mainstream. Their multilingualism serves as an institutional space connecting the languages of the home and community. The 'minority language as a problem' orientation apparent in much of current UK political discourse is contested and challenged. Li (2006) reviews the socio-political history of complementary schools in the UK and addresses the main issues arising from these schools. A discussion on the necessary research to influence both policy and practice related to complementary schools, and the public debate on multilingual and multicultural education in the UK also has been

provided. However, the issue is that many aspects of the work Complementary and heritage language schools do, are not readily disseminated to staff in mainstream schools. To address this issue, Creese (2009) suggests that mainstream schools should seek improved contact and provide ways in which a meaningful relationship could be established between mainstream schools and community language schools to formally promote institutional support.

Looking to the Australian context, Markose and Hellsten (2009), in case studies of Lebanese and Chinese children, found that discontinuities between mainstream and migrants' home literacies have an impact on the mainstream literacy acquisition of migrant children. The findings of their studies also suggest a need to recognise and embed home literacy practices in mainstream schools in order to ensure the acquisition of school literacies. While the advantages of learning literacy in the home language have been widely documented, the Australian education system has not been very proactive in providing institutional support for its development (Eisenchlas et al., 2013). Coordinated government and community support for community language schools has been strongly recommended by Baldauf (2005), as well, based on the benefits of community language education. In terms of the Tamil schools, there is a regular interaction with the NSW Board of Studies and the NSW Department of Education regarding syllabuses (K–10 and HSC) and their implementation. For example, valuable student feedback has been documented, as part of the K–10 Tamil syllabus review consultation process. (NSW Education Standards Authority, 2019). Tamil schools also operate in close association with the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools. This organisation now represents 250 member schools in 460 locations with approximately 30,000 students who can choose to learn one or more of the 57 different languages available. There is a feeling among Tamils of being recognised because of the regular professional interaction between the departmental staff and Tamil language educators.

2.3.1 Identity and identity construction: the role of community language education

The notion of identity should be incorporated in language-learning research and identity also should be examined in relation to the context, which is constructed by inequitable power relations in terms of ethnicity, gender and class (Norton, 2000). Renshaw (2019: v) emphasises the importance of the feeling of identity: "Having a positive sense of identity and culture is central to the wellbeing of young people". Theories on language learning and teaching address the identity of language learners as the ways language learners understand their relationship to the social world. Learners also get to know as to how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the learners understand the possibilities for the future. Norton (2000) also asserts that a person uses language to negotiate their sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time. Most contemporary theories of identity describe it as a multi-layered phenomenon, constructed within various cultural and historical processes. Thus, essentialist definitions that see identity as monolithic or fixed in nature are commonly contested and identity is now seen to be characterised by hybridity. Seeing this trend in terms of a multitude of identities and/or movements between different positions has become the norm (Hall, 1996).

There is a substantial amount of empirical and theoretical work on the relationship between language and ethnic identity (Fishman, 2001: Harris, 2006; Omoniyi and White, 2006 cited in Jaspal and Coyle, 2010). The study of language and ethnic identity among second-generation Asians is particularly interesting, as their linguistic repertoire often features English (the 'dominant' language), the language associated with their ethnic culture, which is termed the heritage language (HL) and, in many cases, a liturgical language associated with religious identity (Jaspal and Coyle 2010). "… more recent work on language learner identities adopts poststructural understandings of identities as fluid, context-dependent, and context-producing, in particular historical and cultural circumstances" (Norton and Toohey, 2011: 419). Although

Kramch (1993) stresses the close connection between language and culture, there is another view that "not all cultures have the same relationship to language" (Myhill 2003). The point that Myhill (2003) makes is that native language and identity as an ideology may be adopted by some specific groups and individuals in defining their own identities. However, positing that this ideology is something that is, should be, or can ever be universal is unrealistic and dangerous because there are groups that reject it and who will always reject it.

Some scholars view the connection between language, heritage and identity very strongly.

> Language is at the centre of human life. We use it to express our love or our hatred, to achieve our goals and further our careers, to gain artistic satisfaction or simple pleasure, to pray or to blaspheme. Through language we plan our lives and remember our past; we exchange ideas and experiences; we form our social and individual identities (Cook, 2008: 1).

Forming individual and social identities is one of the key functions of language. In a monolingual context, this is natural and less complex. However, the process becomes more complex when a person is living in a multilingual setting. For example, research confirms that heritage language development is an important part of identity formation (Cho, 2000). He (2006) also considers identity formation as the primary motivation for heritage language maintenance. In my research, I could ask research participants, for example, about students' feelings as to where they belong and any role of the Tamil schools that impacts on their choice. If they identify themselves as members of a group (Australian Tamil/Tamil immigrant) in their response, this could be valuable information. Sankaran (2022) explored the changing patterns of identity of Tamil people in the UK as a result of resettlement, displacement and readjustment. Self-esteem, confidence and positive attitude are indicators of the mental state that could function as part of the identity construction process. Behaviours of the students can also be indicative of their identity construction process. Behaviours are developed in a learning context. Teamwork, social competence and volunteer activities are examples of such behaviours.

Questions on values can also assist me in understanding the students' identity construction processes.

Hatoss (2003) investigated the link between language maintenance and identity formation of Hungarians in Queensland. The empirical evidence based on a sociolinguistic survey suggests that Hungarians attach great value to their language. Dual identity can be an additive rather than a subtractive force in the development of Hungarian–English bilinguality in the Australian context. Hatoss (2003) concludes that as much as identity influences language activation, and ultimately language maintenance and shift, a causal relationship between identity and language maintenance remains problematic. Keeping a strong Hungarian identity is found to be a strong factor in intergenerational language maintenance, and the development of dual identities does not necessarily lead to language shift. Language shift is one possible consequence of language contact in a multilingual environment. It is the abandonment of the use of an ancestral language by speakers of one or more languages in favour of another, often the language of a larger majority community. Grenoble (2021) explains that language shift can and does occur at the level of individual speakers, but it is at the level of whole communities associated with widespread language exchange and loss. It is related to leaving their native languages behind and adopting the languages of the majority of the new territories.

As Fishman (1989: 6, cited in Hatoss, 2003) put it, "at every stage, ethnicity is linked to language, whether indexically, implementationally or symbolically". Language is the primary index or symbol or register of identity (Crystal 2000: 39). This symbolic value attached to language is a powerful source of motivation for the retention of minority languages. A number of studies in the field of social psychology have shown that immigrants can feel emotionally attached to the new country without losing their attachment to their homeland (Harris, 1980). It seems that those Hungarians who developed a dual identity had equally positive attitudes

towards their ethnolinguistic heritage, including their language and culture, as those who identified only as Hungarians.

'Construction of identity' is rarely a deliberate, self-conscious process. Language fluency is an essential element of ethnic identity. Lee (2002) investigated the role of cultural identity and heritage-language maintenance of Korean–American university students in the US. The analysis showed that cultural identity and heritage language proficiency were strongly interrelated, the higher the heritage language proficiency, the stronger one identified with both the Korean culture and the American culture. In other words, those who were more proficient in the heritage language tended to be more bicultural. Identity is constructed in young students through the mediating processes of adolescent self-esteem or adolescent ethnic identity. For example, the factors influencing the ethnic identity of children of immigrants are parents' racial/ethnic socialisation or parents' messages about race/ethnicity-related issues, and how both are related to the development of ethnic minority children. In the Australian context, for ethnic groups of recent immigrants like Tamils, heritage-language fluency is an essential element of ethnic identity. If Tamil schools develop the fluency of the Tamil children attending the Tamil community language schools, the Tamil schools would be playing an important role in shaping the identity construction process of the students. Their heritage-language fluency may contribute to their sense of ethnic identity (Canagarajah, 2014). However, it is yet to be examined if the heritage-language fluency has any role to play in relation to the ethnic identity of the Tamil students. Students do not set about to create a sense of self as a Tamil refugee or an Australian Tamil. Rather they simply find themselves over time thinking and feeling about themselves in certain ways.

In Australia, the children of Tamil background like many other immigrant children need to adjust quickly to different academic expectations, learn a new language, English, and forge a social identity that incorporates both their ethnolinguistic background and their adopted country

– Australia. They make adjustments, on a daily basis, under conflicting pressures from family and peers in terms of language and identity issues. They may have the experience of living their first years as young children, in a very different culture, They start experiencing cultural diversity and they are expected to take the best parts of both cultures and use them while in school. That will continue to help them transition into adulthood.

Mature students are moving beyond peer pressure or group norms and come to think about the sort of person they want to be, based on their most deeply held values. Immigrant parents often use the heritage language to teach their children about the social norms and attitudes of their heritage cultures (Bayley, 2004). Tamil children acquire their sense of self and self-esteem slowly as they mature into adolescents. Furthermore, children do not always feel good about themselves or their behaviours in every situation. Identities are developed over time and may change from time to time and place to place. For example, a student may feel self-confident and accepted at the Tamil school but not around the neighbourhood or in a mainstream school class (in other cases it may be the opposite). However, my study is not a correlational or longitudinal research study that involves repeated observations of the same variables over long periods of time. This is beyond the scope of my study.

Myhill (2003) explains the ideology of identity relating the concept to Jewish people and considers four ways in which people can define their own identity. They are citizenship/state/native land, native language, religion/tradition and ethnicity/people/ancestry/race/nation (biological). When it comes to the identity of the Tamil people, they could claim a range of identities. For example, Tamils as Indian, Sri Lankan, Singaporean, Malaysian or Mauritian. Those who are in the contemporary diaspora can state 'Australian, British or German Tamil'. Another identity option is that of Tamil as mother tongue, home language or heritage language, or ancestral language, even if Tamil is not currently spoken by the person. In terms of religious identity, they could identify with

Hinduism, Christianity or Islam as these are the main religious groups among Tamil-speaking communities.

Myhill (2003) is of the view that there is no right or wrong way to define identity. "Language-and-identity is only one possible ideology of identity which people may hold" (96). Myhill warns that:

> Individual groups and individual people may want to adopt the native-language and-identity ideology in defining their own identity, but it is unrealistic and dangerous to posit this ideology as something which is, should be, or can ever be universal, because there are groups who reject it and who will always reject it (Myhill, 2003: 95).

2.3.2   Static and hybrid identity

Traditional definitions of identity have viewed it as the relatively static and inherent characteristics of individuals. In this view, people are presented as shaping their behaviour based on certain features that they have inherited from their culture (Verkuyten, 2005). Culture is considered as the determining factor in people's understanding and behaviour. However, a more progressive perspective views identity as a social construct that is fluid and is in constant change. This is the condition that Bhabha (2004b: 73) states "For identification, identity is never an a priori, nor a finished product: it is only ever problematic process of access to an image of totality". While identity is viewed as an unfinished product, the hybrid nature of it makes the process of identity construction more complex. For example, 'homeland Tamils' and 'diaspora Tamils' are in the process of hybridisation – "forcing a single entity into two or more parts" and "making difference into sameness and sameness into difference" (Young, 1995: 24-25). Within the Tamil diaspora, there are Tamils of Sri Lankan, Indian, Malaysian, Singaporean and South African origins. Diasporic identities are being associated with the process of globalisation on a continuous basis. They are also defined by their heterogeneity and diversity simultaneously (Naidoo, 2007). This view is more relevant when identity is discussed in an immigrant context

where children are often growing up bilingually and in the process of negotiating their identity (Jones Diaz, 2003, 2005; Tsolidis and Kostogriz, 2008). In terms of identity, in relation to the concepts of diaspora and hybridity, Bhabha (1994: 247) clearly points out that:

> The transnational dimension of cultural transformation – migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation – makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. The natural(ized), unifying discourse of nation, peoples, or authentic folk tradition, those embedded myths of cultures particularity, cannot be readily referenced. The great, though unsettling, advantage of this position is that it makes you increasingly aware of the construction of culture and the invention of tradition.

These concepts clearly articulate the contemporary cultural reality of blended or mixed cultural and racial identities in multicultural societies that are produced through migration, forced displacement and globalisation (Carrington, 2000 cited in Jones Diaz, 2007). It is interesting that in Australia, in recent times, interracial marriages have become common in the Tamil community. For example, a Tamil woman marries a man of Italian origin. This trend could affect the ways in which their children form an attachment to Tamil language and develop Tamil identity. The children of mixed races can face the 'hybridity' as a more complex process in their everyday life. As Bhabha (2004b: 64) points out:

> ..the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy – it is always the production of an image and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image.

However, the complex nature of the concept of 'hybridity' is contested based on the fact that the concept "acknowledges that identity is constructed through a negotiation of difference, and that the presence of fissures, gaps and contradictions is not necessarily a failure" (Papastergiadis, 1997: 258). For these reasons, creating a 'third space', a healthy process suggested by Bhabha (1994), is a desirable strategy that could be seen as an opening for finding solutions amicably. This could be a new space to negotiate evolving aspects of identity.

Martin et al. (2004) in a London study found students had a more settled sense of their own identity at community language schools. Children who study the language and culture of their immigrant parents may achieve more and become more involved citizens, according to this study. The children prefer a flexible identity and they do not want to be pinned down as either Asian or British. Even though there is a negative view expressed by mainstream society about children of immigrants learning their community language in the UK, for example, Mills (2005: 255) describes this view as follows: "Linking the 'historic mother tongue' with lack of participation in 'wider modern culture' associates these languages with backwardness.". In the case of the Urdu language, Mills (2005) in her investigation, stresses the fact that the language of the Urdu speaking community in the UK plays a significant role in developing a collective identity.

There are different views about identity construction processes for immigrant children in the US, in relation to social cohesion. The identity constructed by the children based on linguistic and cultural attachment could bring about negative consequences for the society at large. For example, Huntington (2004) argues that immigrants who maintain a cultural and immigrant identity may pose a threat to the coherence of American civil society. In his view, immigrants who have multicultural affiliations will see their loyalties and time divided. They will put less effort and energy into civic associations, public life and politics in the United States. However, Jensen (2008) finds the group identity of a linguistic minority does not always go against the collective identity of the host nation.

> …. the immigrants drew upon a large set of conceptions that were not tied to their
> cultural or immigrant sense of self. But even when they did invoke cultural motives,
> these motives were more often sources of civic engagement than disengagement
> (Jensen, 2008: 82).

Jensen (2008) points out that Huntington's (2004) broad view that affiliation with another culture subtracts from American civic commitment does not find support in her study with

Hindu Indian and Catholic Salvadorean immigrants. Upholding some of one's traditions and cultural values does not necessarily make one that much less a part of American civil society. For the present immigrants, many civic activities were grounded in their cultural or immigrant sense of self. Immigrants, in general, are motivated, for example, by traditions of service, a desire to improve their own communities and establish bridges to others, and appreciation of American democratic rights and responsibilities. They are acting on their motives, if not stretched too thin for time or excluded by stereotypes. "In Huntington's view, more of one culture equals less of another. In contrast, the present research indicates that cultural identity is not a zero-sum game" (Jensen, 2008: 82).

Canagarajah and Silberstein (2012) argue that one should not think of a diaspora as having a static and stable identity tied to the homeland or the past. As Hall (1990) has pointed out, diasporas are changing communities, always creolising the languages and values they encounter in diverse lands. When one considers the encounters of a diaspora community in the diverse lands it inhabits, the differences proliferate. However, others point out that a diaspora connects communities, and being a one-language-speaking community in the diaspora, can remove differences (country of origin, dialects and other exclusive sociocultural aspects such as religion, class etc.) and can increase solidarity as one group. How the diaspora enjoys a community identity amid such changes in time and space is still being explored. There are questions as to how the members of a particular ethnolinguistic minority group are considered as a community when it differs in many ways from the identity it possessed before dispersal. Although Tamil-speaking Australians, as a population group, can be treated as relatively homogeneous in terms of language, there are many factors that could determine their identity. Lytra (2016) discusses the close relation between language and speaker identity and provides an analysis of various factors such as culture, religion, politics and language learning. Lytra (2016) also demonstrates how language practices such as language choice or the use of ethnic

labels, for example Greek and Turk, are used to define and perceive ethnic membership. In addition, Lytra shows how people construct, maintain and monitor their ethnic group boundaries and exclude those who are not seen as belonging to the group. However, ethnic boundaries may not be fixed once and for all but may be negotiated, resisted and challenged due to differing attachments to religion or political views. There are circumstances where languages may not only be markers of identities when religion or political views influence them. The relationship between language and ethnic identity shows how language use is closely linked to societal and individual beliefs about identity. Therefore, language is generally understood as a marker of an inherited ethnic identity.

Canagarajah (2012), in his study focusing on the ways youth in the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Canada, Britain and the United States express their identity, found that the Tamil youth construct their Tamil ethnic identity although their proficiency in their heritage language is limited. These young people claim only rudimentary knowledge of Tamil and claim English as their primary language; however, they are able to assert their ethnic identity through strategic language practices. This study illustrates the complexity of the homeland identity of Sri Lankan Tamil youth. The development of second-generation multilingualism and multiculturalism does not necessarily preclude solidarity between communities and unique diaspora groups. Canagarajah and Silberstein (2012: 83) point out "Their multilingualism enables them to shuttle between diverse communities, without ignoring their commitment to their ethnic community." In this sense, multilingualism and multiculturalism shouldn't be treated as a third state between home and host communities, without commitment to either. As Bhabha (1999 cited in Canagarajah and Silberstein, 2012) and others have noted, hybridity should be treated as a strategy and not a steady state or end-product.

"Through the use of linguistic resources, Sri Lankan Tamil youth can strategically

perform affinity to different communities, while maintaining the layered

simultaneity that marks them as different in each respective community, indicating

their difference even in solidarity" (Canagarajah and Silberstein, 2012: 83).

When we stop treating the diaspora as restricted, territorialised, static and homogeneous, we can recognise the role of language and discourse in its construction. Members continually employ language to negotiate the intra- and inter-group relationships they face. Part of these negotiations may include multilingualism, which may complicate diaspora identities by excluding communities from their native language. It can also simultaneously become a strategic resource as it helps members negotiate their layered identities and group relationships (Canagarajah and Silberstein, 2012).

The above discussion clearly shows that immigrants and their children and grandchildren can develop bilingual or multilingual abilities and effectively move between cultures in many ways. Their identities are hybrids of what they choose to remember or embrace from their ancestral homelands, and the cultural influences of the receiving country.

2.3.3 Self-esteem at community language schools

Developing self-esteem is considered one of the key benefits of studying community languages in Australia. For example, a brochure for the NSW Saturday School of Community Languages (SSCL) program giver a range of benefits of learning a community language (NSW Saturday School of Community Languages, 2014). In addition to improving language skills, studying a community language promotes a sense of cultural identity and brings about heightened self-confidence and self-esteem. In concrete terms, the knowledge of a community language places students in a better position to take advantage of employment opportunities.

In an education setting, when the children of immigrants see that their languages are taught, their self-esteem is enhanced. They increasingly feel that they are part of the Australian society. Self-esteem of the linguistic minorities could prevent segregation and thereby, could pave the

way for social integration. In the UK context, Creese et al. (2006) argue that Complementary schools that teach community languages reinforce social, linguistic and cultural experiences that are not available in mainstream schools and thus allow fluid and hybrid ethnicities to be formed and performed. Fluid and hybrid ethnicities can help the youngsters avoid marginalisation or separation. Instead, this can encourage them to accept and respect diversity while enjoying their self-esteem as members of their own ethnic community. While Complementary schools focus on transferring language and culture to the younger generation, the young students living in the diasporic setting could contest the idea as a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country. However, by understanding who they are, they could develop self-esteem and strategies to negotiate their position and affirm their ethnicities. Cummins (2005) expresses similar views regarding the usefulness of community language competence for success in the mainstream education.

2.4. Community language education textbooks: language maintenance and identity construction

Despite the vital significance of community language textbooks and their increasing use by teachers and students, with their important effects on saving time of producing or reproducing material, only a few studies have been conducted on these textbooks to analyse them from a critical discourse analysis perspective. Scholars have used Gee's notion of Discourse Analysis and Qualitative content analysis (Curdt-Christiansen, 2008; Thomas, 2008). There has been previous research demonstrating that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks are embedded with covert or overt aspects such as "cultural and linguistic imperialism" (Khodadady and Shayesteh 2016). Various aspects such as sexism, cultural bias, political views, imperialism, "the representation of multicultural values" (Setyono and Widodo, 2019), and selected ideological values or pedagogical aspects have been the focus of research (Sidek, 2012) and especially in the field of English language teaching (Teaching English to Speakers

of Other Languages (TESOL) or EFL). For example, Amerian and Tajabadi (2020) in their analysis of the role of culture in foreign language teaching, investigated the cultural content of Oxford's *New Headway*, which is EFL material. Their findings suggest that textbooks in this series have inadequacies and biases when it comes to the presentation and development of intercultural knowledge, attitude and awareness. Examining language teaching materials have demonstrated that textbooks are laden with covert and overt cultural, moral, and ideological values (Curdt-Christiansen, 2008). However, heritage language textbooks, in terms of these aspects, have not been yet widely analysed.

Richards (2001) points out that textbooks are key components in most language programs. In some situations, he believes, textbooks serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. In the last 2 decades, researchers have begun focusing on textbook analysis. Textbooks are one of the main components of the formation and transmission of official knowledge (Pingel, 2010) For this reason, they provide a vehicle through which researchers can uncover ideologies by systematically analysing the contexts of their production, the ways in which texts represent elements of identities, cultures and languages, and the everyday linguistic and social practices that mediate official knowledge (Luke, 2015). Analysis of textbooks provides a lens through which we can examine what might be called, a community's deeper or hidden social, political, and cultural curriculum (Williams, 2014).

There have been several studies on language maintenance and the processes of identity construction of different linguistic minority groups. (Borland, 2005; Beykont, 2010; Hatoss, 2006). For example, Borland (2005) in her study of language education for Maltese-background people in Melbourne, found that community leaders in Australia considered community language and culture education important for strengthening ethnic and cultural identity while enhancing a positive sense of self for the second and subsequent generations of young people

of Maltese background. The study concluded that "there are clearly benefits for members of the community in strengthening their awareness and knowledge of their heritage culture and language" (Borland, 2005: 120). The point to be emphasised is that textbooks are key learning resources in these contexts and the textbooks play an important role in educating the learners about their heritage and cultural practices, thereby, supporting identity awareness. However, the languages of the Indian subcontinent in Australia have been less researched. "Almost absent among the community languages whose language maintenance patterns have been studied in the Australian context are those from the Indian sub-continent" (Fernandez and Clyne, 2007: 2). While there are various factors involved in overall language maintenance in the diaspora in general, community language schools are playing significant and specific roles. Institutional support for community language speakers is a strong form of protection from the loss of the language. A language may be vital to the maintenance of some community's identity depending on whether the language is a significant element of core values of that language-speaking community (Smolicz and Secombe (2003). Fernandez and Clyne (2007) in their study about Tamils in Melbourne, describe considerable variation in patterns of language use and attitudes to the maintenance of Tamil amongst 16 Sri Lankan and Indian Tamil families. The study also highlights the diversity and complexity of individual responses to various combinations of factors. For example, Hindu families hold on to Tamil more staunchly than Christians in the Tamil community in Melbourne – a point also confirmed by Smolicz et al. (1990) in Adelaide. However, the finding is more complex among Tamils in the diaspora in other locations. While Christians, who traditionally had access to English didn't have to pressure their children to acquire that language in the West, some Hindu families pressured their children to make up for the past lack.

Challam (2001) has analysed the ways in which Sri Lankan Tamils are constructing their identity and the individual and cross-cultural dynamics of the ways the socio-cultural

institutions including Tamil community language schools are used by Sri Lankan Tamils in Sydney to maintain and negotiate their cultural identity in Australia. Kandiah (2008) examines the factors that hinder or facilitate the use of Tamil language at home based on ABS census data from 2006 and states:

> Tamils believe strongly that knowledge of their mother tongue is the constant and vital ingredient in the preservation of their identity and culture. Language learning, its retention and continual practice are rated highly (140).

The role of interaction in identity construction and language learning has been explored previously primarily in ESL/EFL teaching contexts. In recent times, scholars have begun to examine the connections between identity and heritage language education. Research suggests that one of the key purposes why students study heritage language is to know and understand who they are, in other words, their identity. Identity construction is intricately linked with heritage language learning. It is a well-established fact that textbooks play a significant role in language teaching and learning. Scholars draw on work from Language Socialisation, which, as a branch of linguistic anthropology grounded in ethnography, focuses on the process of becoming a culturally competent member through language use in social activities. Language Socialisation provides a systematic account of how language relates to identity. Critical educators have long recognised the status of textbooks as cultural artifacts or narratives that both embody particular ideologies of knowledge and at the same time reify specific types of knowledge (Apple, 1985; Apple and Christian-Smith, 1991; De Castell, Luke, and Luke, 1989), Jo (2001) has investigated how second-generation Korean-American students form and transform their senses of ethnicity through their participation in Korean language classes. The classroom is certainly a place in which language knowledge is imparted, much classroom activity uses textbooks with words and grammatical points as semantic mediators of culture, history, and even politics (Jo, 2001). Becoming an English speaker does not necessarily mean the loss of ethnic identity, and that learning Korean (a 'heritage' language) does not necessarily

lead to homogeneous ethnic identity formation. Interactions take up identity formation and transformation. Participants' personal language repertoire and use reflect diverse social worlds and locations (including time of immigration, place of residence, and relationship to the homeland) through.

2.4.1   Heritage or community language school: textbook analysis

In the area of heritage language/community language schools, the focus of research has been primarily on language maintenance efforts, motivation and linguistic attachment. It is only recently that heritage language textbook analysis has begun as a scholarly exploration. This study builds on the notions of heritage language, identity and culture in the Tamil context. Using discourse analysis, as well as content analysis, Chiu (2011) has looked at the construction of the 'ideal Chinese child' in textbooks and how this might impact students' identity (re)construction. Her critical analysis of Chinese as a heritage language (CHL) textbooks (produced mainly in China and Taiwan), which are commonly used in Chinese language schools in North America, has found that the world constructed by the CHL textbooks is very different from the world where CHL learners live. She expresses the view that CHL textbooks need to create meaningful intersections between those worlds. If it is not done, many students may feel ambivalent about or even alienated from the textually constructed heritage and about their own identities. The fact that the heritage language textbooks were published in the ancestral homelands of the learners is obviously a reason why there is a mismatch between the content of the textbooks and the needs of the learners living in the adopted country.

Textbooks in CL/HL schools have added an additional layer of complexity compared to other types of language textbooks such as EFL or ELT, previously discussed. Leeman and Martínez (2007) presented a critical analysis of language ideologies of Spanish in HL textbooks in the US setting and discovered a trend of decreasing emphasis regarding identity construction for minority groups of Spanish-speaking students. Instead, there was an increasing emphasis on

issues about economic competitiveness. Beaudrie et al. (2009) also discuss specific curriculum perspectives in relation to heritage language education and suggest that student voices need to be considered in accommodating their culture and identity needs. Using Gee's notion of discourse analysis, Curdt-Christiansen (2008) examined how, at the Zhonguo Heritage Language School in Montreal, Canada, Chinese language arts textbooks methodically introduce the child reader to cultural knowledge considered legitimate and valued in China as well as in Chinese communities in the diaspora. The findings suggest that the content of the textbooks used in Montreal shows that becoming literate in Chinese language is not an ideologically neutral process (Curdt-Christiansen, 2008). Words, stories and texts in these textbooks contain cultural and moral values. While good principles and ideals embedded in some of these texts may convey values that are adequate for the general community, other texts teach values that could conflict with the moral and ethical standards of the mainstream society.

Another significant finding is the monocultural/monolingual emphasis in such textbooks (Sun and Kwon, 2020). The authors examined heritage language school textbooks issued by the Chinese and Korean governments that are widely used for overseas heritage language learners at the preschool and elementary school levels. Using the lens of critical discourse analysis (CDA), they explored how cultural diversity is represented in the materials as well as the ideologies that underlie such representations. Their findings revealed that the analysed textbooks embody a monolingual, monocultural, and static view of culture, language, and identity. This shows the ideological position of the authors or sponsors. Sun and Kwon (2020) also argue that heritage language textbooks should focus on promoting diversity within a culture. This is not reflected in these textbooks as the textbooks take a single language view. Also, their static view assumes wrongly that culture remains the same. They should have dynamic forms of ethnic identification, and critical consciousness, so that the textbooks can better support immigrant students as they navigate the ever-changing and increasingly

heterogeneous world. The need to develop heritage language textbooks that are relevant to the learners' dynamic and complex identities in a transnational and multicultural/multilingual context is strongly emphasised.

Li (2016) has also investigated Chinese textbooks regarding cultural representation. By conducting discourse analysis and content analysis of the most popular Chinese foreign language textbooks, this study identified the representations of culture presented to heritage, non-heritage, and multilingual Chinese learners in K–16 education in the United States. The cultural representations have been presented under 4 major categories: material culture, institutional culture, behaviour culture, and social ideology. Based on this model of cultural representation in textbooks, Li (2016) characterises contents of the textbooks, from material culture to social ideology, in various Chinese-speaking societies. In the text 'Holiday', for example, one of the important topics is 'Chinese New Year'. Learners can identify material cultural representations such as the firecrackers or the lion dance, the things that could be physically seen. In terms of behaviour culture, they could identify for example, such things as worshipping the elderly or sending red envelopes during the Chinese New Year. According to Li (2016), institutional culture may be aligned in different ways for Chinese New Year in different Chinese speaking societies (for example, through the holiday or transportation systems). Social ideology is what learners need to understand about how the ideology of all of the above 3 aspects of culture is reflected in different Chinese cultural contexts. Any topic in the textbooks could be seen from these perspectives.

Another aspect of language ideology is which particular variety(ies) of a language are addressed in the textbooks. Burns and Waugh (2018) explored the implications of prevailing attitudes about language variety found in a case study of a large, university, Spanish as Heritage Language (SHL) program. The CDA findings show evidence of intended reinforcement of the ideology of a monolithic 'standard' Spanish in the SHL textbooks and curriculum. Padilla and

Vana (2019) through a CDA of selected textbooks, found a systematic globalisation of language varieties (i.e., language variation is not made evident), stereotypes and the discussion of immigration issues from the point of view of dominant groups in society.

Ducar (2006) used CDA to explore how intermediate level university SHL textbooks present US Spanish-speaking people's culture and their language varieties. The findings suggest that all the texts continue to promote a pseudo-Castilian variety of Spanish, while denigrating student varieties of the language appropriate to home contexts.

Thomas (2008) discusses the ways in which Spanish textbooks for heritage learners address culture and identity issues through a qualitative content analysis. The analysis reveals that the main cultural goals in the texts are identity development, exposure to arts and humanities, and development of a full bilingual, bicultural communicative range. Latino identity is characterised by choice of identity label, Spanish usage, affiliation with a Latino/Spanish-speaking community, political engagement, ethnicity, and, to some extent, race. Importantly analysing textbooks for heritage Spanish speakers offers scholars in Latino studies new insights into the socialisation of Latino youth and provides educators with guidance in designing appropriate curriculum and pedagogy. These studies illustrate that content selection for the textbooks is made based on the assumptions of the powerful groups of authors and educators (Thomas, 2008).

The above views regarding the HL textbooks suggest that changing social and cultural values should form the content so that the students living in diasporic contexts could learn about the reality of multiculturalism and multilingualism. However, there could be a valid argument that the students can learn these aspects in their mainstream schools where the medium of instruction is English in the Australian context. The community language school is the only place where the students can learn about their heritage, language and cultural values. Cultural transmission

is one of the major aims of the community language schools (Community Languages Australia). For this reason, community language educators may recommend incorporating the aspects of language and culture specific to that community in the syllabus, and thereby, in the textbooks. While some values are universal, others are somehow exclusive to their community providing a foundation for their identity formation based on interactions with the social world.

Learning a language is always accompanied by learning its culture and its speakers' cultural values (Kramsch, 2001). In a study based on a survey of college heritage language learners in the US, Carreira and Kagan (2009) also identify that "to understand themselves through their cultural and linguistic heritage" is one of the major reasons why these learners study their heritage language. For Tamil children living in Australia, there is a continuous interaction of the culture of Australia and the Tamil ancestral culture in their daily life. In the production of textbooks, there is a strong underlying ideology about constructing an authentic Tamil cultural identity, which may conflict with the new reality of a considerable number of learners, especially those who are born in Australia.

2.4.1.1 Foucault and discourse studies

At this stage it is relevant to discuss the theories of Michel Foucault related to language, power and production of textbooks as sources of knowledge. Foucault was a highly influential philosopher, sociologist, and historian, who had a keen interest in the construction of knowledge and power through discourse (Diaz-Bone et al, 2008). As Sawyer (2002) points out, Foucault is one of the most cited people related to discourse analysis, even to an extent beyond where Foucault would place himself. Discourse analysis, originally influenced by Foucault, has gained significance in various academic disciplines, as a qualitative research method. Today the theoretical work of Foucault is widely regarded as being part of the theoretical body of social sciences like sociology, social history, political sciences and social psychology. Foucault's definition of discourse is a technical one which limits the meaning of the term. It is about text

and the analysis of text. In his chapter about the statement (a central concept of his definition of discourse) he emphasises his ambivalent use of the term discourse in the first chapters of his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and defines the meaning of his usage of the term as follows:

> Discourse is constituted by a group of sequences of signs, in so far as they are statements, that is, in so far as they can be assigned particular modalities of existence (Foucault 1972:107).

Hence, discourse is an activity, a practice that can be initiated by a single author or person. Foucault gives the following definition of discourse: "We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation" (Foucault 1972:117). When discussing Foucault's discourse theory, the term 'discourse' refers to the use of communication (written or oral) to construct knowledge and truth. One of the reasons for this spread beyond the purely linguistic could be that Foucault clearly conceived discourse as the social structure and discursive practice that are seen as social practice (Diaz-Bone et al, 2008). As language has been described as a social practice in CDA and my research is dealing with Tamil community language school textbooks, the concept of discourse is very relevant.

Foucault's concept of discourse is conceived of as a superindividual reality; as a kind of practice that belongs to collectives rather than individuals; and more significantly as located and recognised in various social areas or fields (Diaz-Bone et al, 2008). Foucault believed that language is used to construct knowledge and truths that benefit the most powerful in society. He maintained that power structures are created and preserved through the use of discourse. He also believed people with power have more influence over what others deemed to be 'true' (Diaz-Bone et al, 2008).

In the Tamil language text production, for example, there have been powerful people such as authors, members of the Book Committee and NSW Department. of Education professionals

who have determined what would be included and what would be left out. The Book Committee is formed from teachers, Tamil scholars and Tamil writers in order to review the contents and provide suggestions to improve the quality, The committee could conduct a series of meetings and discussions before a final decision is made to print the materials.

Foucauldian discourse analysis is a form of discourse analysis with a particular focus on the relationship between power and language (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2008). Moreover, this discourse theory's main objectives are to expose and weaken the accepted dominant discourses that exclude, oppress, and marginalise members of society. Discourse refers to the use of communication (written or oral language) to construct knowledge and truths. Foucault also believed that because constructed discourse benefits the most powerful in society, it can be used as a form of social control.

Moreover, Foucault's believed it was critical to lay out the formal prerequisites of producing knowledge – the rules of producing and control of discourses, or the relationship between knowledge and power (Keller et al. 2001). Foucault's (Foucault, 1972) book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* provided a basis to explain one possible theoretical background of discourse analysis. Foucault uses the term discourse according to the standard usage of the term in the 1930s in which "discourse refers to a unit of language larger than a sentence, and discourse analysis is the study of these sequences of sentences" (Sawyer 2002: 434) On discursive formation Foucault writes:

> Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a discursive formation (Foucault 1972: 38).

Discursive formation, according to Foucault, has 4 indispensable characteristics; these are that statements refer to the same object, are enunciated in the same way, share a common system of

conceptualisations, and have similar subjects or theories. A central concept in Foucault´s framework is the statement, which he defines as an enunciative function that involved various units.

Ahl (2007) provides details of Foucault's views of discourse analysis as to how a researcher could see the practical aspects of the analysis. For example, in choosing topics for a textbook, authors and administrators could use their power and authority and justify or legitimise their decisions. From several of Foucault's definitions and descriptions of discourse, one could understand that discourses have some kind of effect, and they have power implications in that they form what is held as knowledge or truth. Discourse analysis builds on the idea of language as constitutive as opposed to the idea of language as representational (Saussure 1970, cited in Ahl, 2007). Analysing language as enabling or restricting a discourse thus becomes a focus for discourse analysts. Foucault, however, made it clear that he referred not only to linguistic practices (or statements), but also to the material and other practices that bring about certain type of statements (Foucault 1972). According to Foucault (1972), the production of discourses in any society is systematically controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by certain procedures. Although discourse refers to any written or spoken text in usual settings, for Foucault, it means more than that. Foucault also suggests that the truths or knowledge that shape our lives don't simply exist, but they are created through discourse. Hence the relevance of analysing the discourses produced via school textbooks in any educational setting such as the Tamil language schools.

2.4.2   Textbooks and language teaching and learning

The content of the textbooks reflects the existing cultural or social norms of the speech community of the target language. The content also acts to exercise power of the dominant groups. The authors, writers and curriculum decision-makers belong to these groups. The focus of my study is to examine the selected textbooks (Years 4 to 8) to find out if they could influence

the identity construction process of the students. For analysing the data from the textbooks, several steps were taken.

The heavy reliance on textbooks as a key learning resource of knowledge has been well acknowledged (Richards, 2001). Mikk (2000) has also documented this trend in a survey. According to Mikk (2000), teachers relied on textbooks when structuring about 90% of each lesson. Awasthi (2006) is of the view that the textbook, as the knowledge carrier, is a teaching and learning material for both teacher and learner to rely on in the process of teaching and learning.

Tomlison (2011) defines the textbook as one of the materials used to help teachers teach the learner. Weninger (2018) points out that textbooks are one of the most widely used type of learning material in language teaching. "Due to the central role they play in language teaching and learning, textbooks have also become the explicit focus of applied linguistic research over the last three decades" (Weninger, 2018).

The intimate association between language and culture poses a significant question for the applied linguists and materials developers in general language teaching contexts: What is the culture that students should acquire along with the language? Response to this question is very important, as it determines the content of the textbooks used in language classrooms in general. The teachers' desired learning outcomes for their students are key indicators as to what aspects should form the basis for the content selection. Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) indicate that language textbooks, in general, are not a neutral repository of lexico-grammatical items per se; instead, they constitute a significant genre, serving to familiarise the readers with a particular ideology and worldview. Community language textbooks are not an exception. Questions lie in what this worldview or knowledge of language and culture could or should be and how it should be presented to the learners for the intended socialisation to take place.

Despite technological advancements in using digital resources, the textbooks are still a widely used form of educational media in community language education. In community language schools, the teachers may not be able to use modern technologies to the extent they are used in the mainstream education for various reasons. One such reason is that only classrooms are allowed by mainstream schools for the use of community language teachers. Teachers are not permitted to use all the technologies, which may be located in other areas of the school.

The interests of critical discourse analysts lie in scrutinising language use for the exercise of power by the dominant groups and for ways of resistance (Simpson and Mayr, 2010). Textbooks are obviously important classroom educational tools that heavily influence the social, mental and cultural growth of students (Kemp, 1977) Being an integral part of the education policy of any country (Weninger and Kiss, 2013) the content of textbooks reflects and maintains its existing cultural, religious or social norms, and values of the powerful groups (Su, 2007).

Along with imparting information (Gee, 2014), culture also predetermines our world view and vision to perceive reality (Sapir in Lyons, 2011). This suggests that language and culture are tied together. Discourse usually means language in use, that is, how people act, interact, feel, and think in a context (Gee, 2000). Gee agrees with Michel Foucault's (1977) position in viewing discourse that considers language as embodiment of knowledge and power (Rogers et al., 2005).

The education system is governed by official discourses reflective of educational policies, such as in curriculum development, school management and assessment systems. (Ball and Goodson, 2007). For this reason, curriculum in general becomes an ideological instrument through which the educational system practices its hegemony upon the students by portraying its intended beliefs and norms, as reflected in textbook content and objectives. Far from being a neutral medium, curriculum acts as a place for reflection of prevalent ideologies (Ping, 2011).

Therefore, analysis of school textbooks and curriculum can reveal hidden patterns through which certain themes are being included or excluded (Beiki and Gharaguzlu, 2017; Su, 2007).

Based on their reflection of a worldview of a cultural system and a social construction, textbooks could be considered to be an ideology (Aliakbari 2004). They influence the way students and teachers perceive a culture. This is in line with what Littlejohn and Windeatt (1989) argue that English teaching and learning materials, textbooks in this case, cover a hidden curriculum that comprises certain values and ideology built into the materials purposely.

2.4.3   Ideological nature of language textbooks

In this section, a review of literature regarding the ideological nature of language textbook in general is provided. This review adds to the prior discussion and demonstrates that textbooks directly or indirectly tend to represent the ideological position of the writers or publishers. Then, the relevance of textbook analysis for heritage language textbook is discussed.

Canale (2016) citing Apple's (1982) concept that textbooks are curriculum artefacts that embody particular ideologies and legitimise specific types of knowledge, expands the idea stating that textbooks can contribute to the circulation of particular representations and stereotypes. It is evident that there has been an increasing interest in analysing the ways in which textbooks (re)produce representations of history, ethnic groups, minorities and gender differences. Curdt-Christiansen (2017) critically points out that textbooks for literacy education, in general, have always tended to contain sociocultural knowledge and ideological beliefs to shape the learners' worldview and socialise them into "socially acceptable" individuals (196–197).

The role of textbooks in making learners acquire knowledge of the world, cultural knowledge that forms the basis or common ground of all social practices and discourses, has been widely acknowledged. Hermawan and Noerkhasanah (2012) in their analysis, found that textbooks

cover hidden patterns that contain certain values and ideology built into materials by design, such as attitudes towards such things as: knowledge, teaching and learning, role of the teacher and students and the relationship between them, and values and attitudes related to things like gender and society. It shows that certain ideologies are legitimised without giving thought to local customs or expected learning outcomes or the actual language learners. Al Masaeed (2014) uses a focus group investigation to demonstrate how the ideological positions of instructors in Spanish language education could influence the teaching.

Research in different countries has shown how specific ideologies are embedded in school textbooks. In the Taiwanese context, Su (2007) investigated the ideological representation in primary level textbooks of ethnic and political connections, nationalism, state achievements and legitimisation of women's experiences. The competing ideologies reflected in textbooks of the Republic of China have been observed to be the epitome of established discursive systems such as the traditional character of a good Chinese citizen (You, 2005). The competing ideologies reflected in the textbooks have been observed to be microcosms of established discourse systems for making intended impact on the learners. The element of target culture in Iranian context was dominated by local culture and ethnic values in EFL textbooks, in other words, more topics contained local culture and Iranian ethnic values (Dehbozorgi et al., 2017).

2.4.4 The Tamil textbooks

In deciding on the descriptions of contents to be presented in language textbooks, the main guiding factor is undoubtedly the main objectives underlying language instruction courses. They will form the basis of the very goals learners are expected to pursue in acquiring the language. In the case of Tamil language textbooks, these objectives are generally determined according to the NSW Department of Education's generic syllabus guidelines for community language teaching, that prescribe the expected knowledge of a Tamil student using Tamil language. When Tamil language is used as a tool for communication with native speakers of

the target language – family members and Tamil-speaking community members – their associated cultural values are also likely to be involved in the communication. The question is: What cultural values will the Tamil language textbooks present?

Until 2 decades ago, textbooks for Tamil community language schools in Australia were imported from the homeland of the language. Then the community language schools started using learning material, locally produced by the New South Wales Federation of Tamil Schools (NSWFTS) despite differences between their members (ancestral homeland, dialect variety and sociopolitical aspects). Tamil Schools (Tamil Study Centres for the children of Sri Lankan origin and Balamalar Schools for the children of Indian origin) in NSW operate under the umbrella body, the NSWFTS. It has Australian government funding and operates according to the syllabus guidelines of the NSW Department of Education. However, the authors who contribute content for the textbooks or the producers of the textbooks have played an important role in the selection of topics or themes.

In the case of Tamil language, the textbooks prepared by the Tamil Education Development Council (TEDC) are not readily accepted by Tamil educators for teaching Tamil in Australia, for various ideological reasons. Some anecdotal evidence that I collected during my years as a teacher or while speaking with Tamil teachers during field work for this research, indicates that TEDC's books contain high level literary contents and unfamiliar words and sentences in the name of 'pure Tamil' and therefore, the Tamil students in Australia may find it difficult to use them. The other hidden fact could be that the TEDC's political and ideological orientation has been highly influenced by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a Tamil separatist movement that was fighting against the Sri Lankan government until the end of the civil war in May 2019.

In Australia, such an orientation has not been seen in the administration of Tamil community schools. One reason for this could be that Australia has Tamil people originally from both Sri Lanka and India (Tamil Nadu state). However, the TEDC catered exclusively for a large number of Tamil people of Sri Lankan origin who fled to European countries as refugees (McDowell, 1996). The TEDC is an umbrella organisation, based in France. Now, its network extends over Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, and Germany.

> The speciality of the Tamil education organizations that are part of the TEDC is that they are not simply language schools, but rather places where "pure" Tamil language is being taught (Somalingam, 2015: 181).

However, these textbooks have never been formally evaluated nor analysed by external reviewers to investigate their suitability and efficacy. Another point to be made about TEDC, is that almost all its actors in the education space have a Sri Lankan Tamil migrant background, except for those professors (consultants) who live in different countries. Therefore, they form a relatively homogeneous 'ethnic-national' group. The schools are intended primarily for Tamil immigrant children from Sri Lanka, because only language and cultural elements of the Sri Lankan Tamils are taught.

2. 4.4.1 The Tamil textbooks: ideology and language education

Different national and linguistic ideologies also play a central role in defining the educational resources and textbooks for Tamil children in the diaspora. The beliefs, customs and socially-shared attitudes of the Tamil-speaking world are given prominence in the topics of the textbooks. Moreover, Tamil people's ideologies (determined by such people as the authors of textbooks, administrators and educators), as well as fundamental norms and values are significant. In terms of language varieties used in the major Tamil ancestral homelands, Das (2008a) states that the structuralist attitude that ranking formal Tamil as high and informal Tamil as low (in terms of varieties) has been institutionally sanctioned by the regional

governments and leaders of Tamil Nadu (Southern state of India and homeland for 65 million Tamil people) and Jaffna (region in Sri Lanka where Tamil people predominantly live). Britto's (1986, cited in Das, 2008a) analysis of Tamil diglossia suggests that *ceˉn tamil* (pure) and *kotuntamil* (crooked or corrupt) oppositions are mapped onto different genres of *elutu tamil* (written Tamil), *metaitamil* (staged Tamil), and *peˉccu tamil* (vernacular Tamil). In other words, the ways in which Tamil language is used are categorised into different periodised styles of classical Tamil (circa 500 BCE to 500 CE), literary Tamil (circa 600 CE to 1700 CE), and modern Tamil (circa 1800 CE to present). Nationalist movements in both Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka have exploited these linguistic distinctions to construct moral narratives of nationhood. The ideological orientation of the Tamil people in the diaspora who control the administration of Tamil schools can influence the production of Tamil language textbooks in the selection of the topics.

Das (2008a) gives details of the differences in socio-economic status of the two groups, Sri Lankan Tamils and Tamil Nadu Tamils. Sri Lankan Tamils are shown mainly as refugees or asylum seekers whereas Tamil Nadu Tamils as well-educated professionals. Despite the ideological differences of these two groups, the common linguistic attachment links them as Tamil-speaking communities in the diaspora.

> "In a city where language is not political, (for example, Toronto), the public recognition of Tamil linguistic commonalities is less meaningful for marking social identity. However, in a city where language is political, (for example, Montreal), the public recognition of Tamil linguistic commonalities is overly meaningful for marking social identity" (Das, 2008a: 10).

Indian Tamils speak a vernacular, modern style of Tamil, and Sri Lankan Tamils speak a classical, literary style of Tamil. At times the multilingual expertise of Sri Lankan-Tamil-Quebecois youth has led them to contest the linguistic expertise of first-generation Sri Lankan

Tamil community leaders, the moral authority of Quebecois de souche interlocutors, and the elite status of English-educated Indian Tamils.

> "This diglossic compartmentalization of second-generation linguistic repertoires, such that Sri Lankan Tamil youth acquire literary Tamil competence, and Indian Tamil youth acquire only vernacular Tamil competence, seeks to preserve the purity of literary Tamil while maintaining ethnolinguistic status distinctions between Tamil subgroups in the diaspora." (Das, 2008a: 11)

In the late 20th to the early 21st century Sri Lanka, Tamil Eelam separatists and their supporters continued to promote an ideology of linguistic purism which emphasises the cultural prestige of Jaffna's (presumably) unchanging literary language. This discourse spatiotemporally frames the people, territory, and language of Jaffna as iconic signifiers of a primordial and purist Tamil culture. The contemporary migration of Tamils to Montreal and other Euro-American countries has resulted in the purposeful strategic segregation of upper-class and higher-caste Brahmin Indian Tamil immigrants from lower-caste and lower-class Sri Lankan Tamil refugees. Das (2008a) also analyses how this segregation has fostered tacit competitions between community leaders of Indian Tamil and Sri Lankan Tamil social sub-groups in the area of Tamil as heritage language education. Both groups are attempting to standardise their notion of linguistic purity from their perspectives and prestige through the Tamil language education of second-generation youth. The diverse nature of the Tamil-speaking communities of Indian origin is described in detail by Devadoss (2018).

Somalingam (2012) describes the activities of the Tamil Education Development Council (TEDC), an umbrella body administering Tamil Schools in Europe. Although not providing many details of the textbooks being used or their ideological orientation, she states that the TEDC has a book committee that publishes schoolbooks. To achieve this, the TEDC is working with professors who are located in India and Singapore, who research the Tamil language and the history and religion of Sri Lankan Tamils, especially in relation to Hinduism. Hinduism-

related concepts and practices could determine the ideological positions of the authors or consultants in choosing topics for the textbooks. For example, they could avoid any topic suggesting that Tamil people eat beef. The research results are published in schoolbooks for the Tamil pupils in the European diaspora (Germany, France, Denmark for example), keeping in mind age appropriateness and making sure the material is suitable for children. There is an expert panel designing curriculums for the European diaspora schools. Moreover, training courses, mostly in France but also in different European countries, are offered to Tamil teachers in the diaspora.

2.5 Theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis

2.5.1 Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is often used as an umbrella term to describe different theoretical approaches to the study of language and society, in relation to specific issues of power, dominance, representation and inequality. Critical discourse analysis is a problem-oriented and interdisciplinary compilation of theories and methods widely used in educational research. The CDA method has also been applied to the analysis of cross-issue domains of educational discourse, such as educational policies, classroom interactions, textbooks, curricula, etc. "Perhaps this is so because of the many areas of commensurability that exist between educational research and critical discourse analysis (Rogers, 2011: 1)."

Fairclough is a prominent scholar who has widely published in the area of discourse analysis in the direction of more detailed linguistic analysis of texts (Fairclough, 1992, 1995, 2000, 2001). His work on discourse has had a huge influence across the social sciences. As Fairclough (2023) describes, CDA brings the critical tradition of social analysis into language studies. In addition, it contributes to critical social analysis, as well as a particular focus on discourse and on relations between discourse and other social elements such as power relations, ideologies,

institutions and social identities. The way people see and represent, and interpret and conceptualise language as social events or practices is critical. His approach to discourse analysis that is a version of CDA is mainly based upon the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life. There are many approaches to critical discourse analysis. Some scholars refer to their approach as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with initial capital letters. This is the variety that tends to be associated with Norman Fairclough and the people who work in that tradition (Rogers, 2011). He stresses that CDA as a form of critical social research (Fairclough, 2023) and critical examination of social events or practices is a key aspect. Fairclough (2023) illustrates by stating that it is one thing to critique people's language and practices on the grounds that they are racist or abusive. However, explaining why and how racism or abuse emerges amongst certain people in certain circumstances is another thing altogether. A significant focus is on language. As changes are transforming many aspects of social life, then they are necessarily transforming language as one element of social life, which is dialectically interconnected with others. A key point is that the language element becomes more salient, more important than it used to be, and in fact a crucial aspect of the social transformations. These transformations are going on to the extent that one cannot make sense of them without thinking about language. Greater salience is given to language and discourse because "this is the form in which `knowledge' is produced, distributed, and consumed" (p. 204). Thus, social analysis and research always have to take language into account. In other words, one productive way of doing social research is through a focus on language, using some form of discourse analysis. Fairclough (2003) strongly advocates that text analysis is an essential part of discourse analysis. He has developed CDA as a resource for social analysis. CDA is mainly concerned with continuity and change at more abstract, more structural, level, as well as with what happens in particular texts. The link is made through the way in which texts are analysed in CDA. According to Fairclough (2003), discourse signals the view of

language in use as an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements. CDA can in fact draw upon a wide range of approaches to analysing text. Fairclough's (2003) view that texts as elements of social events have causal effects, for example, bringing about changes in our knowledge, our beliefs, our attitudes, values and so forth is relevant to my study. CDA seems to be an appropriate tool for studying how elements of culture, language and identity are portrayed in Tamil community language materials and can be used as an effective framework for assessing ideologies as well in the textbooks (Fairclough 2015).

One of the key causal effects of texts which has been of major concern for CDA is ideological effects and more importantly, the effects of texts in inculcating and sustaining or changing ideologies. Ideologies representing the aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining, and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation are transmitted through the production and reproduction of texts. With CDA, ideological representations can be identified in texts as authors' positions, attitudes, beliefs and perspectives. The author is the one whose position is represented in the text and is the one who is responsible for the wording, in consultation with the administrators and relevant stakeholders who authorise the production.

Analysis of texts is part of social science. However, in Fairclough's (2003) view, there is no such thing as a complete and definitive analysis of a text. No analysis of a text can tell us all there is to be said about the text. Textual analysis is also inevitably selective, and, in any analysis, researchers choose to ask certain questions about social events and texts, and not other possible questions. There may be concerns about the objectivity of an approach to text analysis based upon specific research questions. Fairclough (2003) does not view this as a problem as there is no such thing as an objective analysis of a text. Researchers' ability to know what is `there' in the text is inevitability limited and partial. The research questions they use necessarily arise from particular aims which may go beyond what is there in texts. It is impossible to have

an analysis which simply describes what is there in the text without it being biased by the subjectivity of the analyst. Fairclough (2003: 16) concludes: "Textual analysis is a valuable supplement to social research, not a replacement for other forms of social research and analysis".

According to Fairclough (2003) discourse analysis subscribes to the idea that language is inseparable from social life, and it is also closely connected with many elements of social life. For this reason, research in social analysis needs to take account of language. van Dijk, (2001) also comments that despite its name, CDA is not a singular method of analysis. Instead, it is a perspective on critical scholarship, aimed at analysing the ways that individuals and social groups use language, especially the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination.

Fairclough (2001) identifies two main purposes in designing the CDA framework of discourse and language. One is more theoretical in rectifying a widespread underestimation of the significance of language in the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power. The second purpose, which is more practical, is about enhancing the consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step toward emancipation.

According to Lin (2013), it may be possible to see CDA as a particular approach to discourse analysis rather than a separate discipline. However, CDA's disciplinary status, has certainly been well established through its research journals and the prominent work of key researchers associated with CDA such as Norman Fairclough (1992, 1995), Gunther Kress (1990, 1993), Ruth wodak (1999), Teun van Dijk (1993, 2009), and Theo van Leeuwen (2008). In addition to being CDA researchers, these scholars, Theo van Leeuwen in particular, are social semioticians dealing with themes such as: linguistic studies, multilingualism and evolution of language; text,

discourse and classroom studies; digital texts, computer communication and science teaching; multimodal text and discourse analysis; education and literacy; media work; and, visual and audio modes. Instead of investigating language as a static linguistic entity, CDA focuses on studying social and discursive processes and their consequences. Moreover, one fundamental feature of CDA research is its critical analysis of the discursive construction of racial, gender, and other social and cultural categories, identities and stereotypes that legitimate and perpetuate discrimination against particular groups of people (van Dijk, 1993).

Rogers (2011) describes CDA as a broad framework that brings critical social theories into dialogue with theories of languages to answer particular research questions. The relationship of discourse is in the construction and representation of the social world. CDA is a methodology that allows researchers to describe, interpret, and explain such relationships. Rogers, (2011) also clarifies the critical stand of CDA, by stating that critical analysis of discourse is not only an investigation of what is said, but also mainly of what is left out. This is critical in the case of textbook analysis in inferring the reasons as to why some themes are chosen while others are omitted. Gee (2011) is also of the view that CDA subscribes to the idea that language-in-use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices, and that social practices always produce social goods, and are associated with power differences.

CDA has been established as a field within the humanities and social sciences, to the extent that the acronym 'CDA' could broadly be used to denote a recognisable approach to language study across a range of different fields of study. For example, some scholars have even commented that CDA is close to becoming "an intellectual orthodoxy" (Billig, 2002: 44), a recognised discipline with its own paradigm, its own methods and conventionalised assumptions, and even its own power structures. CDA as an entity, a recognisable approach to language study or 'program' focuses on the concepts of language as a social practice and context of language use (Wodak 2011: 50). Rogers (2005) suggests that CDA tries "to answer questions about the

relationships between language and society" (Rogers 2005: 365). In terms of the way in which CDA functions, Breeze (2011:502) describes:

> The general structure of CDA used is the familiar three-level framework: Language operates on an ideational level (construction and representation of experience in the world), a relational level (enactment of social relations) and a textual level (production of texts)

One of the key applications of CDA that has very much attracted the interest of several researchers in education, is textbooks analysis. The CDA approach makes it practical for analysing textbooks from a range of dimensions such as ethnicity, gender representation and cultural factors. (Amerian and Esmaili, 2015, cited in Ahmad and Shah, 2019). These scholars express the point that the principal theoretical and analytic centre of interest of CDA remains the relationships between text and context.

Furthermore, CDA is an interdisciplinary field of research that investigates the ways in which culture creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations and power. One of the key aspects of CDA is describing discourse as a form of social practice where language use is construed as a socially influenced and influential factor that can use, produce, construct and shape social realities. CDA is committed to reveal connections between language use, power, and ideology within any social practice (Fairclough, 1989)

Weninger (2018) identifies CDA as a major theoretical influence in textbook analysis as it has come from critical discourse studies through its theorisation of text and meaning. Another reason for its relevance to textbook analysis is that discourse scholars conceptualise language as a form of social practice i.e., as a social and socially conditioned process (Fairclough, 2001). Texts are considered as key elements of social practices and textual analysis, and therefore could be used to reveal the processes of social and ideological conditioning that have shaped

the production, reproduction and interpretation of texts (Weninger, 2018). A significant aspect is that the texts encode ideological meanings not simply through their explicit semantic or propositional content but also through their intended organisation and structure.

Lin (2014) states that CDA maintains many assumptions about language: It sees that language as social practice, language and discourse both shape and constitute and are shaped and constituted by social structures such as gender, sexuality, class and ethnic identities. Moreover, language is intrinsically ideological and plays an important role in "naturalizing, normalizing, and thus masking, producing, and reproducing inequalities in society" (Lin, 2014: 215). Another aspect of CDA is that it is carried out in three important steps. First, the detailed linguistic description of the language text is provided. Second, a clear interpretation of the relationship between the elements of productive and interpretative discursive processes and the text is given. Thirdly an explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes is described. (Fairclough,1995, cited in Lin, 2014).

Textbook authors and publishers are conforming to ideology reflecting the aims and objectives of learning and teaching Tamil language as with other community languages and the Australian Government position and attitudes towards community languages (Community Languages Australia). Content analyses of textbooks need to be supplemented by close scrutiny of the style of language in which they are written (Barnard, 2003). Barnard also points out that the linguistic tenets of CDA could be used to reveal the influence of the context in how textbook producers use language, ultimately also playing their part in the socialisation process.

Despite the popularity of CDA as an effective framework for analysing textbooks, it has been criticised. Breeze (2011) reviews a range of criticisms which target the underlying premises, the analytical methodology and the disputed areas of reader response and integration of contextual factors. Controversial issues such as the predominantly negative focus of much CDA

scholarship, and the status of CDA as an emergent "intellectual orthodoxy" (Billig 2002: 44) are questioned. The main problems identified with CDA are the negative nature of the body of work produced within the field of CDA. The internal inconsistencies among researchers who are associated with CDA, the instrumentalisation of theory, and the failure to establish an objective standpoint for research. Widdowson (1998, 2004), for example, criticises critical analysts for its apparently random selection from a wide range of linguistic theories, those that are relevant to their own interpretations instead of those relevant to text readers and to the intentions of text producers. As a result, the discourse of CDA itself is an example of the power of language to position an audience to accept certain ideological views. Another criticism of CDA is that the analyst not only must assume the intentions of the producer and the reactions of the receiver, but also must sound convincing in the conclusions of the analysis. However, steps have been suggested to strike a balance. For example, Blommaert (2001) suggests that CDA researchers could focus on interpreting society through text instead of simply interpreting text.

2.6   CDA and its relevance to Tamil textbooks

In this section the use of CDA is discussed to construct an analytical framework to critically reflect on community language textbooks in general, and in particular the Tamil language textbooks that are the object of my study. As discussed in detail in Chapter 2, CDA has been used to analyse heritage language textbooks by scholars (Chiu, 2011 – Chinese; Sun and Kwon, 2020 – Korean; Ducar, 2006 – Spanish). These scholars have suggested that CDA views language as a social practice and focuses on discourse – language in use (Van Dijk, 1993, 2009). Therefore, CDA as an analytical tool allows researchers to examine the social context in which a heritage language is used. The power dynamics also could be investigated, for example, where the language users are ethnic minorities or children of immigrants and the language is to be used in a setting where another language, English, is dominant.

CDA has been primarily and widely used as an analytical tool for investigating EFL textbooks. Scholars have looked at various biases such as gender, dominant and subordinate culture and ideological impact in these textbooks. However, CDA in recent times has become popular in analysing heritage language textbooks exploring how the textbooks represent or misrepresent culture and language of the ethnic minority linguistic groups. Although previous research has clearly demonstrated that language textbooks being used at heritage language schools, in general are laden with explicit and implicit cultural, moral, and ideological values, Chiu (2011) found that only a few studies have critically examined heritage language textbooks, for such messages. Even though the texts present factual information, it is the selective presentation of this information in an overall positive or negative representation of immigrant and minority cultures that makes the need for analysis critical. A critical textbook analysis should attempt to demonstrate the ideological nature of meaning-making by examining the interplay of complex representations (Weninger, 2020). Foucault (1980) also confirms that language is used to construct knowledge and truths that benefited the most powerful in society and power structures highly influence the whole process. As Foucault (1980) argues, these power relationships are not set in concrete, but are being continually renegotiated.

CDA stresses the need to perform an analysis of these texts under study, focusing on the textual presentation of both culture and language. Moreover, a CDA of texts in a specific context can be used to provide community language program administrators, instructors and both textbook authors and publishers with insights into the underlying ideologies present in the texts used in classes. The analysis may not intend to suggest that either the authors or publishers intentionally chose to misrepresent; rather such an analysis is intended to highlight the fact that despite the best intentions, some underlying, unintended discursive stereotyping often still exists in many texts used in the context, in terms of the treatment of both culture and language (Ducar, 2006).

Three broad tiers of Tamil speaking people have been discussed above in section 2.1. The sameness and differences (Young, 1995) could be explored for the Tamil language textbooks published in the different tiers. There may be differences in ideologies and parental attitudes as to why children should or should not learn Tamil in settings where cultural practices are different. The Tamil parents insisting their children undertake studies in English prior to migrating to Australia could completely ignore Tamil language learning for their children in Australia. Moreover, the content in terms of the selection of the topics for a year 4 Tamil language textbook being used in Tamilnadu, Tier 1, could be very different to that for Singapore, Tier 2. This could also be totally different for Australia, Tier 3. Another significant fact is that the authors of the Tamil language textbooks need to be aware of the religious backgrounds of the children. Dieronitou (2014) argues that CDA when applied to textbook analysis does not only involve an interlocutory role in the dialogues between texts and broader social processes. It also provides an appropriate research framework for analysing textbooks regarding the identification of cultural depictions. CDA, therefore, is an ideal analytical tool to analyse Tamil language textbooks being used in Australia, considering all the complex factors described above. The production of Tamil textbooks in Australia needs to be looked at from the perspectives of global Tamil-speaking people.

Chapter 3   Methodology

3.1   Introduction and overview

This chapter describes the methods and principles employed to respond to the research questions established in the introduction of this thesis. The focus of the research has been to examine if the content of the textbooks used at Tamil community language school could influence the identity construction process of the students attending the classes. This chapter provides details of the overall research methodology by explaining the research methods and their justification. The criteria for the selection of research sites and participants are also provided. Procedures of data collection, as well as its methods such as in-depth interviews and textbook analysis are described and justified. Details of the ways in which data analysis was structured using a thematic analysis and relevant procedures have also been provided. The theoretical basis for the methodology is discussed and the particulars of research design are outlined and justified. The methodological framework of critical discourse analysis is described and justified in the context of qualitative research. CDA is a method that analyses language as discourse, which means that "language is conceived as one element of the social process dialectically interconnected with others" (Fairclough and Graham, 2002: 188). This is an important concept to see language as part of the social process. In my study, textbook analysis needs to be carried out giving consideration to this vital aspect. Because what the textbooks contain is the consequences of the social process. Why parents send their children to Tamil community language schools, what the authors of the textbooks thought could be suitable for teaching Tamil and how the teachers use the textbooks are part of the social process of Tamil speaking community in NSW. The interconnection between the aims and objectives of the Tamil schools as explained by the administrators, the design of the learning resources, primarily textbooks and the experiences and encounters of the teachers using the textbooks should be

comprehensively viewed in order to analyse the textbooks. Textbooks cannot be analysed in isolation. The issues regarding credibility, authenticity and limitations are also described and the ways in which they were addressed are provided.

3.2   Research design

According to Hartley (2004) research design is "the argument for the logical steps which will be taken to link the research question(s) and issues to data collection, analysis and interpretation in a coherent way" (326); cf. with Yin, 2003: 19–21).

The qualitative research design was planned to use two modes:

1. in-depth interviews with teachers using the textbooks

2. document analysis (contents of textbooks, Years 4–8 that the schools use).

Textbooks are the direct and important source of data collection; however, teachers and principals might have observed students' expression of ideas (writing/conversation in classes) or behaviour patterns that could imply aspects of identity construction processes. Both sources of data, textbooks and interviews were considered valuable in analysing the selected textbooks comprehensively. Therefore, the principal of one Tamil school and five teachers who use the selected textbooks were research participants. They responded to interview questions (given to them in advance) regarding the nature of the contents and encounters with students they have had while using the selected textbooks.

3.3   Qualitative research approach

Conducting a research study should start by considering how the researcher views the observed social phenomena, which leads to the dominant research paradigm to be applied. The choice of a research paradigm leads to a relevant research methodology. The research design then needs to be developed to link research methodology and a set of research methods to enable the drawing of logical and valid conclusions (Wahyuni, 2012). It is worth noting that the research

purpose and research questions are the fundamental basis on which to craft a research design. Interpretivist research, which has been recorded as the more dominant research genre in social science, facilitates a better understanding of the functioning of social practices.

In terms of research paradigms, my research could be considered as based on interpretivism. In previous sections I have referred to it as using a qualitative research approach. The reason is that methodologies are closer to research practice than the philosophical concepts found in paradigms; many researchers commonly describe what they are doing as 'qualitative' instead of 'interpretivist' research (Sarantakos 2005). Table 3.1 shows fundamental beliefs of a range of research paradigms, including interpretivism or what is called constructivism. The researchers following interpretivism believe that reality is constructed by social actors and people's perceptions of it. They also recognise that individuals with their own diverse backgrounds, assumptions, and experiences contribute to the continuous construction of the reality that exists within their broader social context by being actively involving in social interaction. Because these human perceptions and experiences are subjective, social reality may change and can have multiple perspectives (Hennink et al., 2011)

Table 3.1   Fundamental beliefs of research paradigms in social sciences

Fundamental beliefs	Research paradigms			
	Positivism (Naïve realism)	Postpositivism (Critical realism)	Interpretivism (Constructivism)	Pragmatism
Ontology: the position on the nature of reality	External, objective and independent of social actors	Objective. Exist independently of human thoughts and beliefs or knowledge of their existence, but is interpreted through social conditioning	Socially constructed, subjective, may change, multiple	External, multiple, view chosen to best achieve an answer to the research question
Epistemology: the view on what constitutes acceptable knowledge	Only observable phenomena can provide credible data, facts. Focus on causality and law-like generalisations, reducing phenomena to simplest elements	Only observable phenomena can provide credible data, facts. Focus on explaining within a context or contexts	Subjective meanings and social phenomena. Focus upon the details of situation, the reality behind these details, subjective meanings and motivating actions	Either or both observable phenomena and subjective meanings can provide acceptable knowledge dependent upon the research question. Focus on practical applied research, integrating different perspectives to help interpret the data
Axiology: the role of values in research and the researcher's stance	Value-free and etic Research is undertaken in a value-free way, the researcher is independent of the data and maintains an objective stance	Value-laden and etic Research is value laden; the researcher is biased by world views, cultural experiences and upbringing	Value-bond and emic Research is value bound; the researcher is part of what is being researched, cannot be separated and so will be subjective	Value-bond and etic-emic Values play a large role in interpreting the results, the researcher adopting both objective and subjective points of view

Fundamental beliefs	Research paradigms			
	Positivism (Naïve realism)	Postpositivism (Critical realism)	Interpretivism (Constructivism)	Pragmatism
Research Methodology: the model behind the research process	Quantitative	Quantitative or qualitative	Qualitative	Quantitative and qualitative (mixed or multimethod design)
Based on Saunders et al. (2009: 119), Guba and Lincoln (2005) and Hallebone and Priest (2009, cited in Wahyuni, 2012: 70)				

To understand the social world from the experiences and subjective meanings people ascribe to it, researchers prefer to interact and dialogue with research participants. They also enjoy working with qualitative data that provide rich descriptions of social structure. Unlike the generalisation or nominalist approach of positivist scholars, interpretivists use a form of narrative analysis to describe specific and highly detailed narratives about a particular subject, the specific social reality being studied, known as the idiomatic approach (Neuman, 2011). Thus, the contexts for testing knowledge in the positivist camp and interpreting the paradigm are distinct. Positivist researchers believe in the power of replication research. Interpretive researchers choose a study that reveals the inner views or true meaning of social phenomena by studying participants as good sources of social knowledge. In terms of axioms, interpretive researchers stand from the point of view of ethnic people or insiders, that is, study social reality from the point of view of the people themselves (Holmes, 2020). Here, the experiences and values of study participants and researchers greatly influence data collection and analysis.

It is better to note at this point that research methodology and research method are separate concepts. A methodology is a domain or a map, while a method refers to a set of steps for moving between two locations on the map (Jonker and Pennink, 2010). A methodology also

refers to a model for conducting research within the context of a particular paradigm. It consists of a basic sets of beliefs that guide a researcher to choose one set of research methods over another. Since methodologies are closer to research practice than to the philosophical concepts found in paradigms, many researchers often claim that they conduct 'qualitative' rather than 'interpret' research. (Sarantakos 2005).

On the other hand, a research method consists of a set of specific procedures, tools and techniques to gather and analyse data. A research method is not always related to a theory (Sarantakos 2005), that is, it is independent from methodologies and paradigms. Therefore, a research method, for example, an interview, can be used in different research methodologies. In other words, a method is a practical application of doing research whereas a methodology is the theoretical and ideological foundation of a method. A research design then becomes important to connect a methodology and an appropriate set of research methods to address research questions that are established to examine social phenomena. This process from research questions to data collection and analysis has been elaborated with reference to a qualitative approach in my thesis.

"Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2010: 457). Moreover, qualitative researchers undertake a qualitative study because there is a lack of theory, or an existing theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon.

This research attempts to fill a gap by investigating the impact of the Tamil textbooks on the students' identity construction processes. The study aims at gathering and analysing information regarding cultural contexts for language learning that promote social belonging. Experience is the ground on which researcher and researched come together in some way across the rifts and gulfs between their life histories. For example, Berg (2009) states that "Qualitative

research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings" (8). Thus, qualitative researchers are interested in 'human understanding" (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002: 19).

A qualitative method best suits this study because qualitative research allows the researcher to understand how people interpret phenomena in their social world (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). However, according to Stake (2010), some methodologists argue that it is difficult to claim generalisation, that qualitative inquiry is too local and too case-specific for a researcher to assert any transferability. One reason may be that qualitative methodology is not completely precise, because human beings do not always act logically or predictably (Dooly and Moore, 2017).

Due to the specificities of the context that permeates my study, it can be qualified as a qualitative case study. Yin (2003: 21–28) identifies the following 5 components of research design as especially important for case studies:

- a study's questions

- its propositions, if any

- its unit(s) of analysis

- the logic linking the data to the propositions

- the criteria for interpreting the findings.

Although, the sample size in my case study is relatively small, the in-depth treatment in interpreting the data collected from them makes the findings authentic and reliable. Therefore, in my study I planned to provide details comprehensively about the local settings so that the readers could make a judgement if the methods and conclusions are transferable to other settings.

In order to describe the case and answer the study's research questions, rich and detailed data are crucial. For these reasons, a qualitative case study was suitable for my research. Such a case study was an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. According to Merriam (2010), the unit of analysis is the key determining factor that can make a research project a case study. A unit of analysis means a bounded system, a single entity, a unit that is selected for study around which there are boundaries. The case then, could be a single person, a program, a group, an institution, a community, or a specific policy. My research is looking at the Tamil community language school as an institution and research participants as members of the Australian Tamil-speaking community.

To ensure that the goal of the research was met, a qualitative exploratory case study was used investigating all aspects of the roles of the selected textbooks at Tamil community language schools in NSW through content analysis and in-depth interviews with the teachers using the textbooks. As qualitative researchers generally assume that social reality is a human creation, they interpret and contextualise meanings from people's beliefs and practices (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Another significant aspect is that qualitative methods aim to understand the human experience in particular sites (Rahman, 2017) and are suitable for understanding the points of views of local voices of alternative groups and/or whose voices have been disregarded and are challenging to access via traditional survey methods (Pang, 2018). Qualitative research also usually focuses on understanding the nature of the research problem rather than the quantity of observed characteristics (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Although qualitative research methods are not statistical, they can incorporate multiple realities (Whitehead, 2005; Berg, 2009). Qualitative methods provoke greater awareness of the planning, management and derivation of assessments and tests and allow the study of participant behaviour, observations, moods and understanding. Some drawbacks of these methods are: the possibility for reducing sample size and they can be time consuming (Whitehead, 2005; Rahman, 2017)

There has been little research on Tamil schools in Australia. Broader issues about language and cultural maintenance of the Tamils have been examined in a small sample population in Melbourne (Fernandez and Clyne, 2007). Therefore, my study was the first to investigate the dynamics of the textbooks of Tamil community language schools in connection with their potential roles in shaping the students' identity construction processes.

The main aim of the research was to explore if there is any impact of the textbooks being used at the Tamil schools in NSW on the identity development of students. As part of qualitative research, case study research involves intensive analysis of an individual unit such as a person, a community or an organisation. Case study, as a "distinctive form of empirical inquiry," (Yin, 2014, p 19) is a popular and prevalent form of social science research that is widely used in many disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, social work, nursing and education. The concept of qualitative case study research appears to be suitable for empirical inquiries. Scholars have used a qualitative case study as the preferred approach for conducting research for this purpose. The essential steps in connection with designing qualitative case study research, including the role of literature and theory, approaches for collecting data, analysing the data, writing up and presenting case study findings are practical and effective. Ellinger and McWhorter (2016) have articulated how to avoid common pitfalls when engaging in qualitative case study research and described the strengths and limitations associated with this form of empirical inquiry. Moreover, case studies provide an opportunity for the researcher to gain a deep holistic view of the research problem, and may facilitate describing, understanding and explaining social issues (Baxter and Jack, 2008). A detailed discussion is provided in the section 3.3.1 Regarding case study.

The research has taken a qualitative approach as this can look for indicators of impact through experiences and stories of participants, and in particular of the teachers using the textbooks. Indeed, this was the best approach to gain in-depth knowledge surrounding the influence of the

textbooks on students' identity construction processes and to "reveal how the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which he or she finds himself" (Cohen and Manion, 1998: 8).

Figure 3.1 An interactive model of research design
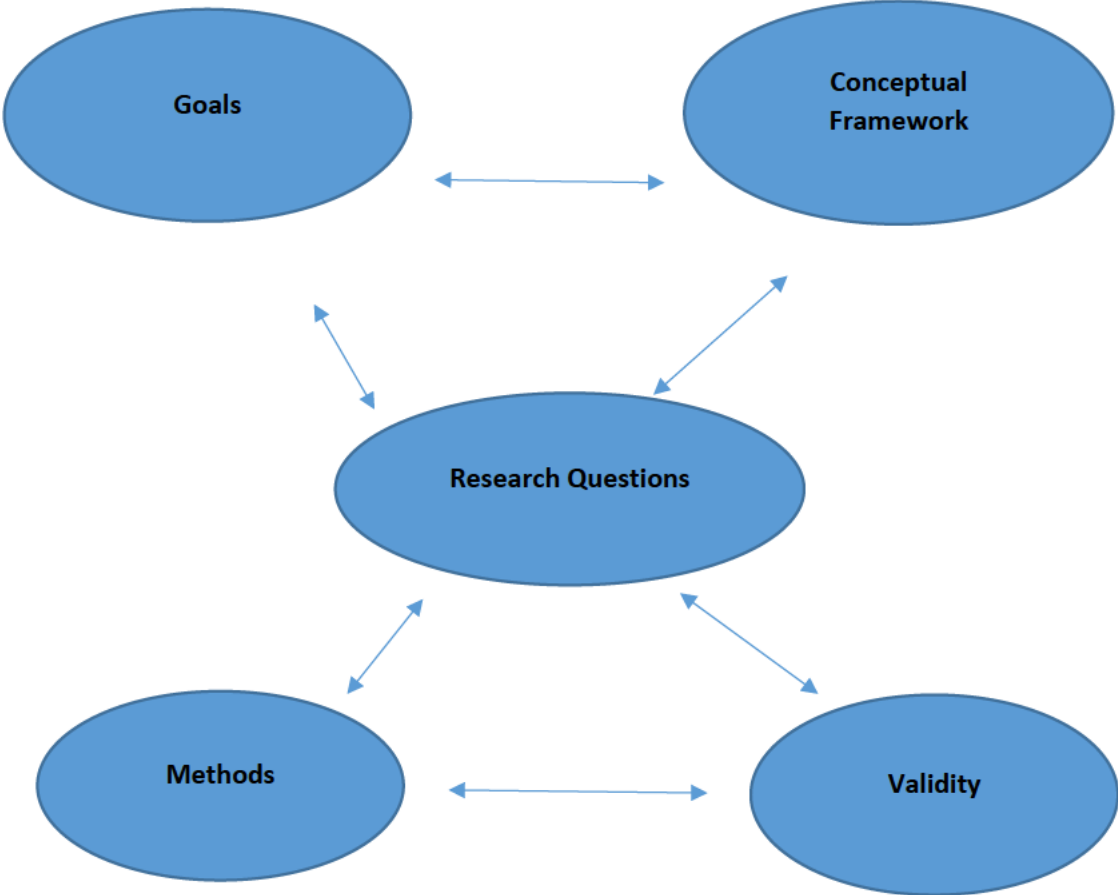
The interactive aspect of qualitative research design shown in Figure 3.1 illustrates the connectedness of the steps taken in the research process. Ravitch and Mittenfelner (2015) suggest that qualitative research design is not a "linear process" (68). For example, research questions are not considered as a fixed starting point that determines the subsequent steps of site and participant selection, data collection, and analysis. The research questions themselves need to be refined to appropriately respond to the feasibility and validity issues raised by the other components of the research. "Qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live" (Holloway, 2013: 3). Qualitative research looks at the participants in natural settings and asks these individuals to participate in the data collection. Data in relation to the perceptions,

attitudes, views and opinions of parents, students, teachers and administrators regarding the roles of the schools in the students' identity construction processes will be collected with a view to answering the research questions. Stake (1995) suggests that qualitative research is preferred when the focus of a study is exploration. For the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of what is going on with regard to the topic, qualitative research questions usually begin with how or what (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 1998).

In addition, qualitative studies start with the assumption that the research topic must be understood "holistically" (McKay, 2006: 6). Qualitative research is an umbrella term consisting of various data collection and analytical approaches with the aim of providing cultural and contextual description and interpretation of social phenomenon in detail (Vaismoradi and Snelgrove, 2019). This is carried out by considering a variety of factors that might affect the participants. In my study, for example, while focusing on the selected textbooks, the contexts in which Tamil language is taught and various factors associated with its teaching and learning as a community language, need to be looked at. For this reason, qualitative study is very relevant.

Qualitative research has been chosen mainly because the nature of the functioning of Tamil schools in NSW, which would be more suited to a qualitative study. The Tamil school setting is a place where parents, teachers and students get together as members of the Tamil-speaking community, creating an authentic part of the diaspora. Qualitative research focuses on people behaving in natural settings and describing their world in their own words. Researchers emphasise collecting in-depth information on a relatively few individuals or within a limited setting. Tamil schools are an example of a limited setting.

Many researchers have chosen qualitative research as a better way for understanding the language-related issues of immigrants (Guardado, 2002; Schupbach, 2008; Tannenbaum, 2005;

Lambert, 2008). For example, Tannenbaum (2005) looked at various aspects of language use in relation to intimate family experiences. This qualitative study focused on the parents' perspective on various issues related to their mother tongue and the influence of early experiences on their current language behaviour with their children. Interviews were conducted with seven immigrant families living in Sydney, Australia. In terms of language related aspects, Rahman (2017) in a literature review regarding the suitability of qualitative research for language testing and assessment research, summarises the advantages of a qualitative approach (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2   Advantages of a qualitative approach with literature sources

Advantage of qualitative approach	Literature source
It produces the thick (detailed) description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences, and interprets the meanings of their actions.	Denzin (1989)
Qualitative research results provide the relationship of information processing with performance, specifically and deeply.	Bachman (1998)
It achieves deeper insights into issues related to designing, administering, and interpreting language assessment	Chalhoub-Deville and Deville (2008)
It is an interdisciplinary field which encompasses a wider range of epistemological viewpoints, research methods, and interpretive techniques of understanding human experiences.	Denzin and Lincoln (2002),
From the perspective of an epistemological position, any language assessment cannot be set apart from the context, culture and values of where it was used.	McNamara (2001)
The language assessment researchers began to employ qualitative research methodology for focusing the issues that need an analysis of content-related variables such as the influences of test-takers' characteristics on test performance, the strategies used to respond to assessment tasks, and so on.	Tsushima (2015)

Advantage of qualitative approach	Literature source
An interpretivism-research approach is regarded as ideographic research, the study of individual cases or events.	Kelin andMyers (1999)
The source of knowledge in this approach is the meaning of different events; it has abilities to understand different people's voices, meanings and events.	Richardson (2012)
The qualitative research admits the researchers to discover the participants' inner experience, and to figure out how meanings are shaped through and in culture.	Corbin and Strauss (2008)
The researchers interact with the participants directly as this happens while data collection through interviews. Consequently, data collection is subjective and detailed.	Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011)
Qualitative research design (interactive approach) has a flexible structure as the design can be constructed and reconstructed to a greater extent.	Maxwell (2012)
The qualitative research can contribute to the understanding of the complex features of language assessment.	Mohan (2012)

Documentary material (such as textbooks, constitutions, or school magazines) is qualitative evidence which, together with in-depth interviews, can reveal relevant information to help researchers clearly understand how the schools operate and these can be used as primary source material. In a special field such as 'Tamil as a community language' teaching, the micro-context of a Tamil school also needs to be researched to explore the issues about the many aspects involved with the use of textbooks by the school. Micro-context may include the background of the textbook authors, the process of textbook production and the profile of the teachers who use the textbooks for example. Qualitative research can be an effective approach to meet these needs.

3.3.1 Qualitative exploratory case study

A case-study design was chosen for this research, which seeks to provide deep understanding of contemporary community language teaching and learning practices in its natural context. A qualitative exploratory case study research method, in particular, has been chosen as the most appropriate way to answer the research questions. The design and methods used are described in the following section.

Stake (1995) describes case study methodology as a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. Grandy et al., (2010) suggest that a case study explorative in nature is often applied as a preliminary step before an overall causal or explanatory research design exploring a relatively new field of investigation. Boton and Forgues (2018) justify their research by stating that the exploratory case study aims at extending the understanding of social phenomena that are considered as complex. As Tamil schools have not yet been studied, an explorative case study will be more suitable for my study.

Textbook analysis of community language education in Australia is a new area of research. This means that extensive empirical research has not yet been dedicated to the topic of interest. Yin (2014) recommends that the validated semi-structured interview method could be useful for exploratory case studies within real-life contexts as preludes for further research studies. Exploratory case study research is also often regarded as little more than a preliminary step toward specific and focused causal research to generate required research questions.

A qualitative case study then, is an in-depth study of a bounded system in which meaning and understanding of the phenomenon of interest are sought. The case study researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; findings are inductively derived from the data, and the end product is richly descriptive (Merriam and Grenier, 2019).

Mogashoa (2014) explores critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a theory in qualitative research and points out that CDA includes analysis of texts, interactions and social practices at the local, institutional and societal levels. There is a close relationship between aspects of CDA and qualitative research methods. Discourse analysis is a qualitative method that has been adopted and developed by constructionists (Fulcher 2010). Moreover, CDA is a qualitative analytical approach for critically describing, interpreting, and explaining the ways in which discourses construct, maintain and legitimise social inequalities (Mullet, 2018). Wodak and Mayer (2009) argue that critical discourse analysis emphasises the need for interdisciplinary work in order to gain a proper understanding of how language functions in constituting and transmitting knowledge in organising social institutions. This makes CDA, the chosen theoretical framework, a suitable tool for undertaking this particular case-study within Tamil schools in NSW.

Mullet (2018) also points out that CDA is a useful approach for educational researchers who explore connections between educational practices and social contexts; for example, CDA has been used to examine relationships between teaching, learning and curricula, students' identities across time and context (Tamatea et al., 2008), and cultural representations in textbooks (de los Heros, 2009). CDA also relies on a collection of techniques for the study of language use as a social and cultural practice (Fairclough, 2001).

Dieronitou (2014) argues that CDA provides an appropriate research framework for analysing textbooks with regard to the identification of cultural depictions. As my study focuses on investigating if the selected Tamil language textbooks could influence the identity construction processes of the students, identifying the representation of language, culture and identity related content in the textbooks is vital. Several studies have been carried out on immigration from the discourse analytical point of view. More importantly, extensive textual analyses of the selected texts at the micro level have led to accounts for similarities and differences in discursive

strategies pursued in different in language textbooks. CDA provides an appropriate research framework for analysing textbooks with regard to the identification of cultural depictions. CDA as an interdisciplinary approach' provides researchers with systematic and critical techniques for analysing and describing both spoken and written texts. by taking into consideration both the larger ongoing social processes as well as the history at the micro-level of specific individual or institutional interactions, at the mesolevel of group interactions, or at the macro-level of the history of discursive changes (Fairclough and Kress,1993). This is relevant to the analysis of the Tamil language textbooks being used in Australia. The larger ongoing social processes related to Tamil speaking people around the world influence the production of learning resources for Tamil education in Australia. In terms of methods and standpoints of CDA, they are generally advocated by its key proponents. This is a principled and transparent back and forth shunting between the microanalysis of texts using varied tools of linguistic, semiotic, and literary analysis and the macro analysis of social formations, institutions, and power relations that these texts index and construct (Fairclough,1989; Dijk,1997; Wodak,1996; Gee,1999). When it comes to textbook analysis, CDA seriously takes the form of deconstruction by means of contesting and questioning the already taken for granted meaning of the words. In other words, CDA goes beyond the mere study of discursive internal structures of the text, to include the broader sociocultural structures and processes. Dijk (1997) stresses the importance of the critical scholar's political and social position as well as his active participation which seeks to 'uncover, demystify or otherwise challenge dominance with their discourse analyses' (p.22). In the case of studies of ethnicity, racial inequality, and cultural representation, the role of CDA is liberating in that it intervenes on the side of the dominant and oppressed groups against the dominant group. As a result, the discourse becomes politically and ideologically heavy. However, CDA remains as academic as any other social research in that it adheres to the standards of careful, rigorous, and systematic analysis. CDA allows an exploration of

discourses on/about immigration, refugees and asylum seekers which in effect heightens the public sensitivities of 'the issue' of immigration. Context sensitivity is to reiterate the connection between language and its context of use as a core principle in critical discourse analysis. Tamils as refugees and asylum seekers in Australia has been a concern for many years. Taking on a critical discourse analysis approach these issues could be related to some studies on discourses of immigration. Among some of the influential studies is van Dijk's early study in 1984 which investigates the immigrants' and refugees' representation in the context of the Netherlands and focuses on Tamil refugees as a group about whom there had been no prior knowledge among the Dutch. Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) (Reisigl and Wodak 2009) to CDA has made large impacts on a range of studies in the fields of immigration and identity representations. It is reported that while texts of different British newspapers may employ different linguistic strategies in representing immigrants due to their differences in ideological viewpoints and types, in some important ways they all seem to contribute to discursive construction of these groups of people as either an actively negative or passively neutral group. Discourse is both carrier of ideologies and linguistic practice – as a type of social action – which contributes to construction of collective mentalities, for example, ideologies. CDA is 'socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned' (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 258). A critical analysis of discourse hence is a critical engagement with opaque ways in which power is legitimated in discourse, inter alia, and attempts to account for socio-political contexts affecting the processes of production and interpretation of discourses (Wodak and Meyer 2009). A bulk of research in critical discourse analysis has been interested in representations of immigration and minorities. These studies can be categorised in terms of their scale, regions, comparative aspects, types of data sources or based on their theoretical approaches in addressing the interface of discourse and society. "A sense of viidu" has

investigated the efforts of Tamil immigrants to make Australia home and language maintenance initiatives.

Data Collection

Data is collected in form of primary and secondary data. The primary data is usually collected using semi-structured interviews with the experts in the observed topic from the case organisations. In my study, the textbook data and interviews of teachers using the selected Tamil language textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8) are of two types. As suggested by Parker (2003), qualitative researchers should get involved in a communication with the practitioners in the organisation in order to better understand the current state of real-world practices.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The main feature of an interview is to facilitate the interviewees to share their perspectives, stories and experience regarding a particular social phenomena being observed by the interviewer. The teachers using the selected Tamil language textbooks (Year 4-Year 8) and the principal who have been research participants in my study. As they have been the practitioners in the field, have passed on their knowledge to the researcher through the conversations held during the interview process (Boeije 2010). The interview method is most often selected as the main method for collecting empirical data of the relevant practices. The interview procedures, encompassing all procedures from 1) designing the interview questions and developing the interview guides, to 2) the process of interviewing itself, have been discussed in the Chapter 3. Design and development of interview questions: A semi-structured interview, also known as the non-standardised or qualitative interview (Saunders et al., 2009), is a hybrid type of interview which lies in between a structured interviews and an in -depth interviews. Therefore, it offers the merit of using a list of predetermined themes and questions as in a structured interview, while keeping enough flexibility to enable the interviewee to talk freely about any

topic raised during the interview. It is anticipated that the researcher would need to ask for examples or specific instances on the answer given in order to gain a deep understanding of the issues.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) provide a guidance to develop the interview questions and procedures. They have created a model of an in-depth qualitative interviewing, termed 'responsive interviewing' (Rubin and Rubin 2005, p.20), which is heavily underpinned by the interpretive research philosophy. This approach emphasises the importance of keeping the research design and questioning flexible and adaptive in order to facilitate new information to emerge or to adapt to an unexpected direction. Responsive interviewing concentrates on obtaining a deep understanding, rather than breadth, about the investigated topic (Rubin and Rubin 2005). The interview questions are structured to include open-ended main questions, follow-up questions and probes. The main questions should be carefully developed based on the research problem and the research questions in such a way that there are separate interview questions for each part. Relevant articles, webpage publications, and industrial research should be explored to gather ideas about relevant practices to be included in the interview questions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves the drawing of inferences from raw data. Data analysis can involve multi-methods that are applied sequentially. Multi-method application in conducting research is called methodological triangulation (Patton 2002). CDA is not a data analysis method; however, data could be analysed based on the CDA theoretical framework or informed by it. Analytical strategies and techniques are used to understand how discourse – defined here expansively as language in context – produces social configurations and contributes to the (re)production of social and political orders (Fairclough, 2003). CDA approaches discourses as social practices constitutive of identities, norms, and perceptions, which comprise both explicit

and implicit dimensions. Based on a CDA framework for preliminary data analysis, I first scanned the tables of contents and indixes for the keywords. Then I selected and organised the findings around broad patterns across the texts. Details of data analysis using the method of thematic analysis have been provided in section 3.8.1 of this chapter.

 Qualitative data analysis is normally used in the first phase of the study as the aim is mainly to record the current state of play in the case organisation. Performing data analysis on qualitative data basically involves dismantling, segmenting and reassembling data to form meaningful findings in order to draw inferences (Boeije 2010). The research questions and research aim should be used to guide the process of cutting the collected texts into pieces and logically recombining them. This translation process from raw Qualitative content analysis which is done through identifying patterns and themes within data is termed thematic analysis (Given 2008). The constant comparative method follows similar principles to thematic analysis in extracting themes from within texts. However, the constant comparative method focuses more on describing variation in different circumstances of social phenomena (Boeije 2010). It provides a more systematic way to identify any difference that emerges in empirical data (see Boeije 2002). Therefore, the constant comparative method is preferred if the objective is to reveal important concepts, processes, and the overarching professional experiences between the case organisations. In practice, qualitative content analysis uses a coding method. Coding simply means labelling. It refers to the assignment of a code representing the core topic of each category of data. As applied in the grounded research approach, coding in usually undertaken on three levels: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Boeije 2010). Open coding is conducted by dismantling texts and distinguishing different themes and concepts found in the data. These pieces of data are then further analysed for commongrounds.The degree to which the results can be generalised to a larger population, which is called generalisability (which is the main content of external validity), has been the major point of criticism of qualitative

research. However, these traditional concepts of reliability and validity do not fit perfectly into the qualitative research landscape. Following Parker (2012)'s stance, qualitative research operates in a completely different domain with different missions and agendas. Qualitative research seeks to produce credible knowledge of interpretations on organisation and management accounting processes and understandings, with an emphasise more on uniqueness and contexts.

Transferability refers to the level of applicability into other settings or situations. As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), a rich and thick explanation of research sites and characteristics of case organisations should be provided to enhance transferability. While it is certain that the data from a qualitative study is not reproducible, it is not impossible to apply a qualitative study in a different setting. With some careful adjustments in the setting, such research findings that are drawn from rich descriptions on the current state of play of observed practices have the possibility of being transferred into a different study of other industries within or across jurisdictions. Dependability corresponds to the notion of reliability which promotes replicability or repeatability. Dependability concerns taking into account all the changes that occur in a setting and how these affect the way research is being conducted. Dependability can be achieved by a detailed explanation of the research design and process to enable future researchers to follow a similar research framework. It should be noted that the application of the research model by a future researcher is not necessarily targeted at getting a similar result. Enhancing dependability can be achieved by presenting detailed and step by-step explanation of the research processes undertaken, as well as providing the main instruments used to gather empirical data, for example, the list of interview questions. Confirmability refers to the extent to which others can confirm the findings to ensure that the results reflect the understandings and experiences from observed participants, rather than the researcher's own preferences.

3.3.2 Research sites – Tamil schools

Tamil Study Centres and Balamalar Tamil Schools in NSW were established according to the guidelines of the NSW department of Education, Community Languages Schools Program. Tamil schools were established by community members who were concerned with providing Tamil language education for their children growing up in Australia. The schools are coming under an umbrella organisation, the NSW Federation of Tamil Schools (NSWFTS), that was set up in 2003. The textbooks published by NSWFTS are widely used by all Tamil schools in NSW, so they can represent comprehensively the experiences of all children attending Tamil schools and there could be consistency in the syllabus.

Currently there are six Tamil community language schools operating at ten locations that are currently members of the NSFTS with approximately 1,250 students and 100 Teachers (NSWFTS, 2022). There are classes from Kindergarten to Higher School Certificate (HSC) level. The schools that have HSC students run two sessions on Saturdays, one for primary students in the morning and the other for secondary students in the afternoon.

Teachers are mainly of Sri Lankan and Indian origin. They have previously worked as teachers in their home countries. The Tamil schools have made it compulsory for the new teachers to undertake a 20-week program in community language teaching conducted by a branch of the Community Languages Education section of the NSW Department. of Education. Some teachers have been working in these schools for more than 10 years. By the early 1990s the enrolments were increasing. Some people with specialised skills are nominated to a board of book committee members to help in the continuous development of syllabuses, curriculum and textbooks. There are around 100 volunteer teachers and approximately 75 committed volunteers who run these schools at ten locations although a small amount of payment is made to teachers just to cover travel expenses.

Approval was granted by the Victorian Department of Education and Employment to conduct classes for preparing students for the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) leading to university entrance and the first batch of students undertook the VCE Tamil examination in 1997. This paved the way for Tamil Community language schools in NSW, as private tutors, to start its first batch of 21 students taking Tamil language as a subject for the NSW HSC examination in 2001. A HSC Co-ordinator to assist the students opting to take Tamil at the school approved for the HSC was appointed.

3.4   Research data

Data for this research has been collected from two sources:

1.   selected 5 textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8) that are used at Tamil schools in NSW

2. five in-depth interviews conducted with the teachers who use these textbooks to teach Tamil for Year 4 to Year 8 students and an interview with the principal of a Tamil school.

3.4.1   Data Collection Procedure

First, the relevant sections of the texts that related to the research questions and theoretical framework were selected and translated into English by me. The translated content was used for coding, categorising, and developing themes. Saldana (2021) points out that with experience a researcher can feel more secure in understanding what is relevant in the data record and what is not. He also suggests that "relevant text" (28, citing Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003), should only be coded as it 'rises to the surface'. Based on this view, only relevant sections of the textbooks were chosen. The ways in which analysis was carried out have been described in the textbook analysis section. Saldana's (2021: 28) recommendation, about what matters and what does not in the data corpus, is:

> Code only the data that relate to your research questions of interest. (Of course, there will always be brief passages of minor or trivial consequences scattered throughout interviews and field notes. Code these N/A – not applicable).

In deciding on the descriptions of contents to be presented in language textbooks, the main guiding factor is undoubtedly the objective underlying the language instruction courses, which presumably is the very goal learners are pursuing in acquiring the language. When Tamil language is used as a tool for communication with native speakers of the target language, their cultural values will be reflected in the content of language textbooks.

The Tamil schools previously used the textbooks produced in Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu and Singapore as primary sources and selected relevant material from these textbooks for teaching. Currently the schools follow the K–10 and Years 11–12 Language Syllabuses of the NSW Department of Education to teach Tamil using the textbooks that have been published by the NSW Federation of Tamil Schools. Textbooks have been published for Kindergarten to Year Year 8. For the students of Year 9-12, the teachers choose material based on the themes/topics prescribed in the Years 11–12 Language Syllabus and use them to teach Tamil. Currently there are no textbooks for Year 9-12 Some schools previously used the textbooks produced by the Tamil Education Development Council, Europe to provide students with a variety of resources for learning. However, all the schools are now using the textbooks published by the NSW Federation of Tamil Schools.

3.5   Textbook analysis

This study investigates the contents of 5 textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8) selected to assess their potential to influence identity construction processes of the students attending Tamil community language schools. The NSW Federation of Tamil Schools has published textbooks only up to Year 8. These textbooks are used by all the Tamil schools in NSW. The textbooks used for students in Year 1 to Year 3 primarily consist of alphabet writing and word-related practicing tasks, thus were excluded from this data corpus. Moreover, the students from this group may not matured enough to talk about identity construction issues with teachers or

wouldn't have reacted to the textbooks. There are no textbooks for Year 9 to Year 12. The teachers select topics according to the syllabus of Tamil Continuers and use additional learning resources as students in this group would likely take Tamil for their HSC examination as one of the subjects. Moreover, analysing all the textbooks from Year 1- Year 8 for my research would not be practical if not impossible within the scope. For these reasons, only the textbooks from Year 4 to Year 8 were selected. The concepts regarding language, culture and identity might have been added to the textbooks of these years (Years 4 to 8). This was the rationale for choosing these textbooks. The intimate association between language and culture poses a significant question for the applied linguists and materials developers to solve. The culture that students are expected to acquire along with the language is a key question. How the textbook writers have responded to this question is clearly important as it determines the content of the textbooks used in language classrooms. After all, as Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) indicate, language textbooks are not a neutral repository of lexico-grammatical items per se; rather they constitute a significant genre, serving to socialise the readers into a particular ideology and worldview. Questions lie in what this worldview should be and how it should be presented to the learners in the textbooks for the intended socialisation to take place.

Case study, as a "distinctive form of empirical inquiry," (Yin, 2014: 19) could be used for exploring the selected textbooks to answer my research questions. Moreover, case study is a prominent and prevalent form of social science research that is widely used in many disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, social work, nursing and education (Ellinger and McWhorter, 2016). The concept of qualitative case study research appears to be suitable for empirical inquiries. Scholars have used a qualitative case study as the preferred approach for conducting research for this purpose. The essential steps in connection with designing qualitative case study research, including the role of literature and theory, approaches for collecting data, analysing the data, writing up and presenting case study findings are practical

and effective. Ellinger and McWhorter (2016) have articulated how to avoid common pitfalls when engaging in qualitative case study research and described the strengths and limitations associated with this form of empirical inquiry.

Njie and Asimiran (2014) also provide details as to why case study approach for empirical inquiry. Case study research involves intensive analysis of an individual unit (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)—for example, a person, a community or an organisation. Because of this intensive analysis, case studies provide an opportunity for the researcher to gain a deep holistic view of the research problem. Case studies also facilitate describing, understanding and explaining a research problem or situation (Baskarada, 2013). The case study, for these reasons, is generally a very illustrious category used by researchers. Its focus is to dig out the characteristics of a particular entity and its key distinguishable attributes include focus on a single unit, in depth description of a phenomenon, anchored on real live scenarios and uses multiple data collection methods. According to Yin (2003), clearly defining the research problem is probably the most important step in the entire research project. In my study, the research problem has been clearly defined. As every case study should begin with a comprehensive literature review and a careful consideration of the research questions and study objectives, I have provided a comprehensive literature review covering key aspects of the research and reasons why the textbooks need to be analysed. Research questions and the study objectives have been well defined. Care also has been taken in the planning stage is to ensure that no mismatch exists between the research questions and the case study method.

The case study method has been widely used in qualitative research. A case study is a common framework for conducting qualitative research (Stake, 2000). A case study is depicted as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context (Miles and Huberman 1994). Furthermore, Yin (2003) offers a more detailed and technical definition of case studies as an

empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

Hartley (2004: 328) states that case study research "consists of a detailed investigation, often with data collected over a period of time, of phenomena, within their context," with the aim being "to provide an analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues being studied". For this reason, the details of context and all necessary theoretical concepts have been logically provided so that the textbook analysis could be clearly carried out to appropriately answer my research questions.

3.5.1   Tamil language textbooks in New South Wales

The authors (some teachers and prominent Tamil writers in association with the Chair of the NSWFTS Book Committee) who contributed contents for the textbooks, or the producers of the textbooks, have played an important role in the selection of topics or themes in consultation with the textbook committee members. Tamil schools have developed their material based on schools' mission statements, the syllabus guidelines of NSW Department of Education and the general aims and objectives of teaching Tamil language in Australia. For example, the topics/themes to reflect Tamil language and culture have been selected in line with the generic K–10 and HSC language Syllabus. The NSW Federation of Tamil Schools conducts workshops and seminar for the teachers every year. The Federation has published textbooks for Year 1 to Year 8; it is working towards publishing texts for Years 9 to 10. The Department of Education in New South Wales has a generic curriculum for community languages (K–10). There is a separate Syllabus for Tamil for the Higher School Certificate examination. (Year 11 to 12). This syllabus does not prescribe any texts. Some specific themes are provided with teaching and testing strategies to test reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

3.5.2　Textbook data analysis

Due to the central role textbooks play in language teaching and learning, Weninger (2018) points out that they have become the explicit focus of applied linguistic research over the last three decades. Materials evaluation, which is one of the lines of inquiries within the domain of materials development, is mainly concerned with the systematic assessment of textbooks and other language-learning materials in relation to their stated objectives or those of the intended learners (Tomlinson, 2011, cited in Weninger, 2018). Researchers evaluating materials view textbooks primarily as pedagogic tools. They have the perspective that materials, through their design, aim to facilitate the teaching and learning of languages. For this reason, evaluation has typically been limited to the methodological aspects of textbooks and their linguistic content, often for a particular course or program. My purpose is not to evaluate the selected textbooks but to analyse the contents in relation to the research questions.

Another line of inquiry in applied linguistics connected to textbooks investigates the multitude of meanings textbooks communicate through their content and design (Weninger, 2018). The focus of these studies is not on the appropriateness of the linguistic and language pedagogic make-up of textbooks or their suitability for particular groups of learners. Instead, they view textbooks mainly as cultural artefacts as repositories of meaning about languages, people, places and the world (Weninger and Williams, 2005, cited in Weninger, 2018). Moreover, textbooks are considered as something that learners encounter as part of the process of language learning and socialisation (Curdt-Christiansen, 2017). Mapping the meanings encoded in the textual and visual choices made in the textbook is the aim of textbook analysis to uncover what kind of worldview is presented to students through them and to reveal the practices, values and beliefs held in language teaching. A broader inquiry into actual meanings represented in textbooks is closely associated with the term textbook analysis (Weninger, 2018).

Critical discourse studies have influenced textbook analysis through its theorisation of text and meaning. Discourse scholars conceptualise language as a form of social practice i.e., as a social and socially conditioned process (Fairclough, 2001, cited in Weninger, 2018). Texts are considered as elements of social practices. Therefore, textual analysis entails uncovering the processes of social and ideological conditioning that have shaped the production and reception/interpretation of texts.

In analysing textbooks, researchers, for example, focus on finding out how gender roles are represented in textbooks and how these representations might impact learners' worldviews and identities (for example, Lee and Collins, 2010). Another researcher may want to analyse a set of textbooks in relation to the aspects of culture(s) that they include, again with a view to how this selective process reflects dominant ideologies which also shape the learning process (for example, Or and Shohamy, 2015).

Textbook analysis may make it possible to spot what language ideology the textbooks present by looking at inclusion and exclusion of material. All language textbooks are produced with certain underlying objectives, whether they be social, cultural or political. Pennycook (2001) argues that by analysing textbook content, one can make "ideological systems and representations transparent" (81). Curdt-Christiansen and Weninger (2015) suggest that since textbooks are usually authorised, 'official' texts, the study of them promotes the understanding of both overt and covert ideologies (4).

Gee's (2011) version of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is relevant as the theoretical framework chosen for this study is CDA. Gee argues that all discourse analysis needs to be *critical* because:

> Their [critical discourse analysts'] goal is not just to describe how language works
> or even to offer deep explanations, though they do want to do this. They also want
> to speak to and, perhaps, intervene in, social or political issues, problems and

controversies in the world. They want to apply their work to the world in some fashion. (p 9).

3.6   Interviews

Teachers who use Years 4 to 8 textbooks and a principal have been interviewed for the purpose of collecting data/information about aspects of students' identity construction processes. In-depth interviewing is one of the most used methods to collect data in qualitative research (Guest et al., 2013) where a skilled interviewer engages in a probing conversation with a suitably knowledgeable interviewee. Indeed, all qualitative researchers make use of this technique to some extent, and in-depth interviews are the primary or sole source of data for many researchers. The reason for the pervasiveness of this method is that it is versatile across a range of study topics, adaptable to challenging field conditions, and excellent for not only providing information but also for generating understanding as well. As the common concern of qualitative researchers is to understand the meaning people make of their lives from their own perspective, in-depth interviews effectively serve this purpose. The in-depth interview also takes seriously the notion that people are experts on their own experience and so are best able to report how they experienced a particular event or phenomenon. Also, a range of perspectives could be gathered about the same event or phenomenon.

Strengths

In-depth interviews share the general advantages of face-to-face interviews; both parties can explore the meaning of the questions and answers involved, and any misunderstanding (in questions or answers) can be checked on the spot; when the phenomena under investigation cannot be observed directly, in-depth interviews are very useful (past and future issues cannot be observed but people can be interviewed about them).

Weaknesses

Interviews allow access to what people say but not to what they do; however, through observation we can find out what actually happened in a given situation.

Seidman (1991) points out:

> Interviewing, then, is a basic mode of inquiry. Recounting narratives of experience has been the major way throughout recorded history that humans have made sense of their experience (1991: 2).

Interviewing also provides access to the context of people's behaviour and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behaviour. The primary way a researcher can investigate an educational organisation, institution, or process is through the experience of the individual people, the 'others' who make up the organisation or carry out the process. Seidman (1991) stresses the importance, in an educational setting, of examining the perspectives of the students, teachers, administrators, school committee members and parents whose individual and collective experience constitute schooling. While an examination of institutional documents, observation, exploration of history, experimentation, questionnaires and surveys, or a review of existing literature, could be used by a researcher to investigate the experience of people in the organisation, Seidman (1991), however, argues that if the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary avenue of inquiry.

The researcher knows that they are the one asking questions and the questions need to elicit valid responses from respondents. Hoyle et al. (2002) stress that the interview questions have "...dual goals of motivating the respondent to give full and precise replies while avoiding biases stemming from social desirability, conformity, or other constructs of disinterest" (2002: 144)

However, Gray (2004) warns that the researcher's role is to collect data and not to change the responses or the respondents' opinions.

I chose semi-structured interviews as they are non-standardised and mainly used in qualitative studies. According to Freebody (2003), "Semi-structured interviews begin with a predetermined set of questions, but allow some latitude in the breadth of relevance" (p. 133). The researcher could make decisions as to what should be analysed in depth, depending on the patterns and themes that emerge. For this reason, the interviews aimed to have something of the best of both worlds by establishing more important issues to be covered, but at the same time leaving the sequence and the relevance of the interviewee free to vary, around and out from that core. In semi-structured interviews, Flick (2006) points out that the expectation is that the interviewed subjects' viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation than in a standardised interview or a questionnaire. In addition, in a semi-structured interview, the order of the questions could be changed depending on the direction of the interview.

Lambert (2008) provides the reasons and the benefits of a qualitative case study approach that she used to analyse the experiences of 20 families in Australia with German as the language to be transmitted to the next generation. The relationship between researcher and participants in the context of the research interview as a speech event is also discussed positively.

The interviews were designed to build up a general picture of teachers' attitudes, experiences, and expectations in terms of Tamil language learning and teaching resources, textbooks in particular. In allowing the interviewees to express their perceptions regarding the topic of the research, the qualitative method of semi-structured interview has many advantages (Ribbins, 2007). For example, interviews could provide the participants with the much-needed flexibility of explaining issues based on how well they know them; interviews, mainly semi-structured and unstructured give the flexibility to the researcher for interjecting where necessary and ensuring that the subject understands the topic or question under scrutiny; interviewers could

use their interpersonal skills to further explore significant issues raised by the participant/ s (Opdenakker, R. (2006).

An attempt has been made to clearly understand participants' priorities. The responses have informed the researcher and helped to make sense and understand the views of the participants. The interviews have enabled the researcher to further explore the experiences and expectations of the participants in follow-up interaction. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed using thematic analysis. The coding process allowed categories to emerge from the data. These categories then were refined and rearranged according to the research questions and relevant literature. The coding procedure was guided by a combination of predetermined categories and emerging themes (Creswell, 2009).

It also should be noted that Yin (2003) posits that in a case study a "how" or "why" question is being asked regarding a contemporary set of events which the investigator has little or no control at all. The purpose of using the case study is to get in-depth details as much as possible about an event, person or process. My interviews with research participants allowed this to happen. A thick description (Merriam, 1998 and Geertz, 1973) when systematically analysed yields a valuable understanding and explanation of a process. Inquiries that require the understanding of the meaning of certain phenomenon and events, especially when processes are involved benefit more from using the qualitative research methods in general and the case study in particular to arrive at results that are exhaustive, rich in depth and in information, allowing the researcher to dig deep into an event, issue, person or process. As Stake (2005) writes "if case study research is more humane or in some ways transcendent it is because the researchers are so not because of the methods". The Case study concentrates on the experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political and other context which can only be dug out by experience and tact by the researcher of a level satisfactory to convince respondents or interviewees to respond appropriately. Stake (1994)

powerfully argues that a "case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of [the] object to be studied". Thus, the case study is necessitated by the specificity of the case under investigated which is informed by its boundedness. A Case study is a type of qualitative research in which in-depth data are gathered relative to a single individual, program, or event for the purpose of learning more about an unknown or poorly understood situation (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

The Merriam Webster's dictionary (2009 Online) more aptly defines the case study as "an intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment". The case study therefore does a holistic inquiry by looking at the process or practice, the interaction within such a process and the meaning of such interaction for a more generic understanding of the case under study. According to Yin (2003) "the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" since "the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events,".

3.7 Interview procedure, research participants and recruitment

I describe below the ways in which research participants were selected and what rationale was applied for selecting the participants. The profiles of the participants and the details of arrangements for the interviewees are also provided.

Teachers' views about the topics /content of the textbooks and their experience of using the textbooks to teach provided vital information in connection with the students' reactions and responses. In addition to the textbook data, the perspectives of teachers regarding the textbooks provided valuable insights.

Initially I approached the principal of the school that I had chosen for this study, explaining the details of my research and providing information sheets (see Appendix 2) in both Tamil and

English and requesting the information be passed on to teachers of Years 4 to 8. Five teachers from Year 4 to Year 8 accepted the invitation to participate in the interviews. The principal of this Tamil school (chosen research site) also accepted to participate in the interview to discuss broader perspectives on the textbooks. Based on the positive responses from teachers a meeting was arranged to give information in person at the school. The consent form (see Appendix 2) was given to research participants for signing prior to the interview.

To be included in the present study, participants had to be a teacher using the selected textbooks for over two years. The interviews were conducted in Tamil language between January and February 2021 and recorded. Each interview was of around 30 minutes in length. The information sheet for participants helped them prepare to respond to the questions. For example,

On material/tasks

What is your opinion about the material currently used?

What do you think about the topics/content of the textbook series (Tamil Year 1 to Year 7) that you are using?

Do you think any more topics should be included; if so, what and why?

Do you think the topics can help students to know who they are? If so, in what ways?

Do you have any preference over the material used: Sri Lanka, Indian or locally produced material; why?

Any comments on the contents of the texts used?

3.7.1   Criteria for selection of participating schools

There are 6 Tamil Study Centres (predominantly with children of Sri Lankan Tamil origin) and 9 Balamalar Tamil Schools (predominantly children of Indian origins) operating under the NSW Federation of Tamil Schools (NSWFTS) in New South Wales. As all Tamil community

language schools use the same textbooks published by NSWFTS, one school was selected as a research site for logistical reasons and ensuring consistency. Data collection was undertaken during the COVID 19 pandemic, so travel to other schools was restricted. The location in which I conducted interviews was convenient and practical at that time. The school setting was familiar to the researcher. More importantly some schools have a large number of students, and the selected Tamil Study Centre is one of them. Interviews were conducted at the location of the participants' choice. This allowed the researcher to explore the participants' views and lived experiences in a good deal of detail.

Participant profile

A total of 6 participants, all women,1 principal and 5 teachers (Years 4 to 8) completed and signed the informed consent form. All participants were Tamils with a Sri Lankan background, The participant age range was 40 to 65 years. Four teachers had been teaching at Tamil schools for over 20 years. A long period of service of the teachers was a key determinant of selection for the interview. They all have used the selected Tamil language textbooks over 5 years in their teaching. They had a clear understanding of the ways in which the topics were presented and the reactions of the students in the classroom. Their work at the school is volunteer-based and they expressed a willingness to share their views and experiences about the textbooks. Two participants were working as teachers at mainstream schools in NSW, while teaching Tamil language at the community language school on the weekend. Others had teaching experience at their home county before migration. The sample was highly educated, with all possessing at least an undergraduate degree.

As I was investigating the role of the textbooks of the Tamil community language schools in shaping the identity construction processes of students, I have chosen teachers using the textbooks at the Tamil school for more than two years to make sure they had sufficient exposure to the textbooks and content for responding to the interview questions.

3.7.2   Interview schedule

Interviews were conducted at a Tamil community language school from 13 February to 27 February 2021 with the permission of the principal. Appointments were made with individual research participants.

3.8   Data analysis procedure

Data analysis was followed by the guidelines of Clarke and Braun (2014) as per recursive six-phase process for thematic analysis:

1. familiarising oneself with the data (text may be transcriptions) and identifying items of potential interest

2. generating initial codes that identify important features of the data relevant to answering the research question(s); applying codes to the dataset (segmenting and "tagging") consistently; collating codes across segments of the dataset

3. searching for themes; examining the codes and collated data to identify broader patterns of meaning

4. reviewing themes; applying the potential themes to the dataset to determine if they tell a convincing story that answers the research question(s); themes may be refined, split, combined, or discarded

5. defining and naming themes; developing a detailed analysis of each theme

6. producing a report; weaving together the analytic narrative and data segments, relating the analysis to extant literature.

The six-phase process has widely been followed by researchers and the process seems logical for understanding the data and analysing it comprehensively. Wu and Zammit (2020) point out that although thematic analysis (TA) is a commonly-used qualitative data analysis method,

there have been issues related to establishing as to how exactly qualitative information is systematically coded and how themes emerge from the data.

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that a theme refers to a specific pattern found that captures some crucial information about the data in relation to the search questions and features patterned meanings across the data set. A theme is a "patterned response or meaning" (Braun and Clarke 2006: 82) derived from the data that informs the research questions.

3.8.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) provides accessible and systematic procedures for generating codes and themes from qualitative data (Clarke et al., 2015). As the smallest unit of analysis, codes capture interesting features of the data relevant to the research question(s). Codes are also the building blocks for themes, (larger) patterns of meaning, underpinned by a central organising concept – a shared key idea. Themes, as a condensed form of codes, provide a framework for organising and reporting the researcher's analytic observations. The aim of TA is not only to summarise the data content, but also to identify essential and relevant features of the data guided by the research question(s). TA is recognised as a "distinctive method with a clearly outlined set of procedures in social science" (Braun and Clarke, 2013: 178). Based on their views TA is a data analysis method that helps a researcher to identify themes and patterns of meanings across a dataset in relation to a particular research question(s).

Joffe (2012) confirms that verbal interview (or focus group) data or textual newspaper data tend to be at the root of thematic research. Textbooks and interview data have widely been analysed using thematic analysis as a research tool in investigating cultural representations in EFL textbooks (Derekhshan, 2021). Therefore, the selected textbooks as documents have been carefully examined using thematic analysis as part of the study and relevant details about

students' identity construction processes at the schools under study were collected. The contents of the interviews have also been analysed using a qualitative thematic analysis.

It is important to become immersed in the data; for this reason, the textbooks were read through several times. First, I critically explored the contents, topics and themes included in the textbooks because, according to Leeman and Martines (2007: 38), the topics and themes reflect "what the author or publisher wants to foreground, or what she thinks will make the book attractive to instructors and students". This was to give an understanding of what values and ideologies, apart from the importance of language skills, the authors or publishers consider important for Tamil as a community language (TCL) student, and whether these values and ideologies reflect those valued in the real worlds of TCL learners growing up in diaspora contexts.

After making sense of the data, analysis was conducted using an inductive approach (from the specific to general). For example, the key dimensions of 'Big Culture' (Brody, 2003) such as geography, history, traditional food, and festivals –prior identified as categories to look for in this research for guiding an inductive process. However, for the discussion, findings and conclusion, I have looked at the overall data and then used a deductive approach (general to specific) to proceed with the coding of the textbooks. Scholars have explained how interview and documentary data are analysed using deductive and inductive methods based on the experience of their research processes. The inductive approach involves working exclusively from the participant experiences that drive the analysis entirely.

According to Thomas (2006: 238), the inductive analysis refers to "approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts and themes". The deductive approach, on the other hand, uses an organising framework comprising of themes for the coding process (Bradley et al., 2007; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Burnard et al., 2008; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The framework, often referred to as a start list (Miles and Huberman, 1994), is applied

in the analysis in anticipation that certain core concepts are in the data (Bradley et al., 2007; Thomas, 2006). Wen and Zammit (2020) provided a practical example of a practitioner inquiry to illustrate how thematic analysis (TA) can be applied, using a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development in the field of education. They also suggested that TA could use both deductive coding and inductive coding. Such an approach may assist those who engage in practitioner research to make active decisions and use TA as a particular form of analysis. In my data analysis the details as to how categories or themes had been reached through inductive and deductive approaches have been provided. Informed by grounded theory, codes can come from the data itself (inductive coding) as well as particular theoretical or epistemological positions (deductive coding; DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011, cited in Wen and Zammit, 2020). Codes summarising the surface meaning of the data can be identified as semantic codes, and those dig deeper into the data and prioritise the analytical framework can be termed as latent codes (Clarke and Braun, 2014). In addition, inductive codes extracted from the raw data also could contribute to the formation of a thematic map. he inductive coding process enabled a thicker and more comprehensive elaboration on the bulk of the data (Joffe, 2012).

Azungah (2018) discusses using both deductive and inductive approaches in analysing the data. The deductive approach uses a system consisting of themes for the coding process. The inductive approach, on the other hand, involves working exclusively from the participant experiences that drive the analysis. According to Thomas (2006: 238), the inductive analysis refers to "approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts and themes". It entails going through data line by line thoroughly, and assigning codes to paragraphs or segments of texts as concepts unfold relevant to the research questions (Thomas, 2006). It is a recursive process that involves moving back and forth between data analysis and the literature to make sense out of emerging concepts and is used to capture the most empirically grounded

and theoretically interesting factors. In the inductive analysis, "although the findings are influenced by the evaluation objectives or questions outlined by the researcher, the findings arise directly from the analysis of the raw data, not from a priori expectations or models" (Thomas, 2006: 239)

According to Saldana (2016):

> A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (4).

Data coding shows the number of times a topic appears and the pattern of its use in the different sections of the textbook. Coding here is about highlighting the topics, which can give rise to a theme. The many words of the text have then been classified into much smaller content categories.

I also critically examined the actual content of these textbooks, paying particular attention to reading sections for their cultural, moral, and ideology-related values or meaning. I highlighted any relevant Tamil cultural and moral ideologies in terms of identity construction embedded in the textbooks. Selecting representative excerpts for demonstrating obvious points from each textbook has been one of my analysis strategies. The ideas closely related to language, culture and identity were identified as important ones because of their association with the research questions. I also examined repetitive characters (roles) in the stories or other forms of texts to see how these cultural carriers reflect Tamil cultural and moral values that can have any impact on identity formation. My work on data is based on the fact that coding is part of an analytical process which enables researchers to interpret their data to make meaning. "Coding is the process of analysing qualitative text data by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way" (Creswell, 2015: 156). Furthermore, Elliott (2018) states that coding is carried out for essentially indexing or mapping data and for

providing an overview of disparate data that allows the researcher to make sense of it in relation to their research questions.

Saldaña comments that a "theme can be an *outcome* of coding, categorization or analytic reflection, but it is not something that is, in itself, coded" (2016: 15). There are codes at a primary level and categories or themes at a secondary level. Both primary and secondary level processes are formed from analysis of codes rather than of data. "*Codes* are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study" (Miles et al., 2014: 71). In this sense a category is also a code, but of a higher order. For example, when I read my data for the first time, I identified first level meaning as codes. When the data was read again and again, the common and repetitive nature of the codes created led me to label categories merging the common codes. Also called themes in the literature, categories "are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (Creswell, 2013: 186).

Scholars have different views regarding the quantity of codes that could be handled. Creswell (2015) has a more modest figure in mind:

> I try to code all of my text data (whether a small database of a few pages or a large one of thousands of pages) into about 30 to 50 codes. I then look for overlap and redundant codes and start to reduce the number to, say, 20 codes. These 20 codes then collapse further into about five to seven themes that become the major headings in my findings section of my qualitative report. (155–156)

As such it can take a long time to code textual data due to the amount of data being analysed (Creswell, 2015: 152). For example, textual data in the current study consists of selected extracts from five Tamil language textbooks (Year 1 to Year 5) and audio interviews (each approximately 30 minutes in length) with five teachers who use the textbooks and the principal. According to Elliott (2018) the selection of relevant segments of the data for analysis can be justified and it is usual to collect more data than can be used. Saldaña (2016) highlights that

there are some that "feel every recorded fieldwork detail is worthy of consideration" while others suggest "only the most salient portions of the corpus related to the research questions merit examination" and that much else can be deleted (17).

I chose the second option by focusing on relevant sections of the data. Setting aside some of the data requires careful application of specific criteria so the appropriate parts are selected for the given project; this is usually guided by specific reference to the research questions.

While the entire audio interviews have been transcribed in Tamil and translated into English by myself, the whole content of all the selected Tamil language textbooks has not been translated into English for data analysis. Only relevant segments of the textbooks have been chosen for translating into English. The criterion for selection was that any particulars or details in relation to the research questions were selected. For example, there are two units in the Year 5 textbook about the 'Ramayanam' story, an Indian epic. Only the summary of the story has been translated instead of the entire story, which helped me to optimise my time and the data collection process without missing any key parts of this story, as I am proficient in both languages.

List of Codes: Semantic codes (data-driven) and Latent codes (researcher driven).

Through the coding process, I was able to create the coding as in Table 3.3. Semantic codes are data-driven and they address more explicit or surface meanings. Latent codes are researcher-driven and they reflect deeper, more underlying meanings and assumptions or ideologies (Kiger and Varpio, 2020).

Table 3.3 List of Codes

Semantic codes	Latent codes
1. Easter show/Bush fire in Australia	2. Less on Tamil culture and more on domestic affairs
3. Flood disaster in Australia	4. Contradictions in celebrating Tamil festivals locally

Semantic codes	Latent codes
	5. Unclear imagining of the geography of Tamil-speaking communities
	6. Lack of stories to teach morals
	7. Tamil learners learn Tamil way of life
	8. Tamil culture and values should be key topics
	9. More focus should be on Tamil literature
	10. Tamil scholars' stories motivate learners
	11. Travel to ancestral homeland as positive aspect

After producing these codes, similar codes were given the same colour. This means that these codes could be brought together as a category based on the similar ideas and topics that the codes indicate. For example, codes 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 could be put together in a category (Table 3.4) as they all are related to Tamil language education or were considered to be incorporated in teaching Tamil by the teachers from their experiences in using the textbooks.

Table 3.4 Example of generation of a category from several related codes (Textbooks)

Codes	Category
Tamil education	Glorifying Tamil language and fine arts
Importance of education as part of Tamil values and collecting information for studies	
Learning of fine arts	

I have explored and understood the discourse of these textbooks, and how these D/discourses serve as sites of reproduction of Sri Lankan or Indian Tamil identities for TCL students and how they may impact TCL students. Research participants were asked from their observations, as to how the learners reacted or responded when topics related to identity issues were taught.

Learners' remarks challenging or contesting any ideas contained in the textbooks were also investigated.

3.9   Interview data analysis

All the interviews were transcribed in Tamil and then the transcript was translated into English in the form of a text by the researcher. Translation and transliteration are different processes that are used in qualitative research. The meaning of translation is the process of changing something that is written or spoken in one language into another language, whereas transliteration is to write or describe words or letters using letters of a different alphabet or language (Wehmeier et al., 2005: 1632). Crystal (1991) defined translation as a process where "the meaning and expression in one language (source) is tuned with the meaning of another (target) whether the medium is spoken, written or signed" (p 346). According to Regmi et al. (2010), the term transliteration refers to a process of replacing or complementing the words or meanings of one language with meanings of another, as sometimes the exact equivalent or exact meaning might not exist in the other language. In the interpretation and explanation of the original data in this study, translation from Tamil to English has been used. In the case of transliteration when required, an interpretation process has been indicated by using italics, giving the closest meaning, either in brackets or by using notes with some explanations. I am a native speaker of Tamil and I have studied Tamil language as one of the subjects for my BA degree. I have been in the field of Tamil language teaching in Australia for around 10 years from 2000. I have also completed an MA – TESOL in the UK submitting a dissertation on 'Syllabus design integrating skills for ESP (English for Specific Purposes)' at a University in Sri Lanka. I have attended seminars and conferences conducted by NSW Department of Education staff regarding community language teaching. I have used my skills to understand clearly what my research participants shared with me at the interviews (in Tamil) and had interviews translated into English. It was necessary to translate relevant sections of interview

transcripts into English for analysis as I was writing my thesis in English. I had interviews (conducted in Tamil) converted into English transcripts by a professional Tamil transcriber to ensure that loss in translation did not happen. I contacted interviewees over the phone to confirm or verify what they said at the interviews. This is an important practice for researchers involved in interviews to make sure the data are collected correctly. This check can be called a member validation, which is described as a research phase during which "the provisional report (case) is taken back to the site and subjected to the scrutiny of the persons who provided information" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 236, cited in Koelsch, 2013). During this process, the "persons who provided information" can determine if the researcher has accurately reported their stories and if not, the researcher is able to amend them accordingly.

The same process used in the textbook data analysis was applied to the interview data analysis as well. This ensured that no meaning was lost in translation.

Table 3.5   Examples of generation of codes from raw data from interviews:

Statements in the interview transcript	Codes
"Textbook includes all necessary information about Tamil language and culture; however, if it starts talking about 'Tamil Nadu' all of a sudden, this may be totally new topic to the students born in Australia and never been to Tamil Nadu."	Ancestral v adopted country idea is contested.
"Sometimes the topic about Tamil homeland seems to be just an information sheet, students can only imagine as to how and what the place would be."	

3.10   Research governance

Research governance is about using accepted practices in research. Western Sydney University has a commitment to the responsible conduct of research with appropriate codes and the policies that should be followed to ensure the integrity of the research. I describe below the steps that I have taken in line with the codes and regulations pertaining to research governance.

3.10.1   Research ethics and ethical considerations

Prior to beginning the data-gathering phase of this research, I applied with the necessary documents prepared according to the guidelines for approval and obtained ethical approval (Approval No H10485)1 from the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee in November 2020. The Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee is an accredited HREC under the terms of the NHMRC. This ensures that Western Sydney University fostering responsible research, protecting the welfare, dignity and safety of research participants while maintaining the reputation of the University and its researchers, and minimising claims for negligence against individual researchers or the University. The specific ethical considerations that I addressed within my application for ethical approval are in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans and

in compliance with the Information Protection Principles contained in the New South Wales *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

3.10.2 Validity and authenticity

The validity and authenticity of qualitative case studies for contributing to the knowledge base of a field and to improving practice has been questioned and challenged over the years. However, as a qualitative case study includes paradoxes and acknowledges that there are no simple answers, this can be accepted as a meaningful enquiry (Shields, 2007 cited in Merriam, 2010)

3.10.3 Confidentiality, and access to information

The notion of confidentiality is underpinned by the principle of respect for autonomy and is taken to mean that identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research will not be disclosed without permission (British Sociological Association, 2004). Anonymity is an important aspect of ethical procedure, and every researcher is expected to ensure that their research participants are protected. For this reason, the principal and teacher interviewees) have been identified as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 and P6 in the interview data analysis. The procedures recommended by the Ethics Committee were used for protecting my research participants' identity. Their names were not mentioned in thesis.

As a previous teacher at Tamil schools, I was obliged to represent my participants (teachers) to the point that they deserved acknowledgement of their points of view while ensuring their confidentiality. Ethical guidelines are written to inform and guide researchers; however, use of these guidelines and interpretation by novice researchers can pose some challenges to those carrying out research in diverse cultural contexts (Moosa, 2013). Confidentiality includes not disclosing any information gained from an interviewee deliberately or accidentally in ways that might identify an individual participant in a research project. In a research context, confidentiality measures include not discussing information provided by an individual with

others, and presenting findings in ways that ensure individuals cannot be identified, mainly through processes to protect privacy. Research participants in my study came from a closely knit, small community. I provided details of the ways in which privacy would be protected and convinced them that no personal details would be revealed in any publication of the research.

3.10.4 Sensitivity and minimisation of risk or harm

All persons involved in some way with the study (principal and teachers) were treated with sensitivity and with due regard to their personal and private lives and their cultural, religious and other beliefs. If participants became distressed during their participation, the researcher was prepared to make the participant aware of available counselling support.

Chapter 4 Analysis and discussion of textbooks

4.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I present my findings on the selected textbooks, using the research questions to guide and arrange my data analysis. It should be mentioned that data analysis has been carried out based on a CDA framework and its grounding steps to ensure that data are analysed thoroughly. CDA helps researchers in a variety of fields understand the ways in which the production of texts carries cultural meaning (Fairclough, 2023). As with any other theoretical field, there are many ways to perform critical discourse analyses. However, the models all examine ways in which texts at the smallest (word-based) and the largest (social and cultural) levels have an impact on how communities are formed and what readers believe about the world. As CDA involves taking a deeper, qualitative look at different types of texts, analysts try to understand ways in which language connects to social, cultural, and political power structures. According to CDA all forms of language and types of writing or imagery can convey and shape cultural norms and social traditions. The meaning of a text can be implicit or explicit, which is very important in sociocultural analysis, because what a text says often leads to an ideological analysis of the text (Fairclough, 1995).

Tamil language today is not taught exclusively in the ancestral homeland of the native speakers but among the Tamil-speaking communities in the diaspora too. Teaching materials in the diaspora settings can function as a tool to help learners to develop their identity, influencing its construction. In Australia, as with other community language schools, the aims and objectives of the Tamil community language schools are to pass on language, culture and identity to the younger generation and make sure language use continues as a cultural practice (Community Languages Australia, 2022). Community language schools also facilitate their students' cultural

and language learning in a setting of 'safe spaces' (Conteh and Brock, 2010; Creese et al.. 2006 cited in Chatzidaki, 2019:158). These purposes are clearly explained by the schools in their policy documents. However, little is known about the content of the Tamil language textbooks and their alignment with the broader purposes of the schools.

Two decades ago, the Tamil schools primarily used the textbooks imported from the ancestral homelands, such as Tamil Nadu or Sri Lanka or Singapore (NSWFTS, 2022). The Tamil community was newly emerging in Australia at the time, and the school administrators decided to revamp the schools' image to reflect the changing circumstances, which would lead to long-term settlement in Australia. Therefore, in 2000 they introduced locally produced textbooks for the primary level, as a push to ensure the learning resources more accurately reflected the context in which Tamil language learning was taking place. The NSW Federation of Tamil Schools (NSWFTS) four years later, took several steps for producing textbooks. Arranging workshops for the potential authors, liaising with the NSW Department of Education for syllabus guidelines and organising draft writing for textbooks were steps taken by the NSWFTS.

Incorporating elements of Tamil culture in the Tamil language textbooks in the diaspora is a complex process. Various stakeholders play roles in the selection of topics for the content. For example, the Book Committee of the NSW Federation of Tamil Schools was responsible for publication of the textbooks in consultation with NSW Department of Education. Tamil language remains the glue that for so long has bound together the people despite the diversity among them, Hart (2012) states in his message for a Tamil teachers conference held in California, USA. Hart (2012), as the Chair of Tamil Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, US commented:

> The Tamil community outside India and Sri Lanka is willing to do everything
> necessary to enable their children to learn their own language. Tamil is an

overarching umbrella, shading all who love it and providing a place where all may interact as brothers and sisters.

This endeavour is broadly reflecting in the Tamil language textbooks under the study as well.

4.2   Overview of textbooks analysis

The first phase of the analysis involved a general reading of all the selected textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8), followed by a thorough examination, as described in the data analysis, using titles when provided and content to identify topics and key ideas of the main text in each lesson. It should be noted that the purpose of the study was not to evaluate the textbooks being used but to analyse them in relation to their capacity to influence students' cultural identities.

In Australia, in Tamil language learning contexts, where learners may not have frequent contact with authentic language speakers in public domains, learners are exposed to Tamil-speaking communities and their cultures primarily through textbooks. For these reasons, the representation of the Tamil language communities and their cultures in textbooks greatly influences language learners' understanding of these communities (Uzum et al., 2021). Although various technological advances offer new tools for language learning, textbooks are still the primary means through which language learners are introduced to a language and culture. Community language learners are no exception. Often viewed as the all-knowing and all-encompassing reference for language teachers and learners, textbooks function as a socialising process in the learners' journey of language development (Curdt-Christiansen, 2008). This is especially true for many community language schools in which learners may not have regular contact with the target language speakers in their daily life, other than their parents and relatives who could use the language and their exposure is limited to their teachers and rare encounters in public spaces. How language textbooks represent the target language communities and cultures (perspectives, persons, practices, and products) influences the image that language learners construct of these communities and how learners develop their cultural

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understanding (Risager, 2018). One of the key aspects of culture transmission that Tamil schools could be observed carrying out is mobilising Tamil identity to tell a seemingly proud story of Tamil people and hard work, whilst avoiding areas of problematic realities such as proposed marriages, divorces, and the caste system in Tamil communities.

In doing so, the schools can evoke the notions of 'lived experience' whilst presenting a positive image, but at the same time dismissing historically negative events or failures and demands for progress. This appeals to Tamil school administrators as while they may support greater diversity and be against overtly biased teaching and learning, it relieves them of having to do anything about those negative aspects of culture that are hardwired into society (Raneethran, 2018).

Below, I translate an invocation to Tamil language which appears near the beginning of textbooks: Year 4 (p. 7), Year 5 (p. 9), Year 6 (p. 7), and Year 8 (p. 1), and it is sung as an anthem at the beginning of Tamil classes in the assembly.

Long live Tamil language! (Invocation to Tamil language)
வாழ்க நிரந்தரம் வாழ்க தமிழ் மொழி
வாழிய வாழியவே

வானம் அளந்ததனைத்தும் அளந்திடு
வண்மொழி வாழியவே

ஏழ்கடல் வைப்பினும் தன் மணம் வீசி
இசை கொண்டு வாழியவே

எங்கள் தமிழ் மொழி எங்கள் தமிழ் மொழி
என்றென்றும் வாழியவே

சூழ்கலி நீங்க தமிழ் மொழி ஓங்க

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துலங்குக வையகமே

தொல்லை வினைதரு தொல்லை அகன்று
சுடர்க தமிழ்நாடே

வாழ்க தமிழ் மொழி வாழ்க தமிழ் மொழி
வாழ்க தமிழ் மொழியே

வானம் அறிந்ததனைத்தும் அறிந்து
வளர்மொழி வாழியவே.

English translation

Long live the Tamil language! Long live the rich Tamil language that knows everything surrounded by the sky! Long live the famous Tamil language spreading its literary fragrance throughout the land surrounded by seven seas. Long live our native Tamil language world. Let the darkness of ignorance that surrounds you everywhere disappear. So, the excellence of the Tamil language will shine and the whole world will be distinguished. Let Tamil Nadu shine by removing the sufferings caused by old deeds. Long live the Tamil language. Long live the Tamil language. Long live Tamil language. Live the Tamil language that grows softer knowing all the things that are included up to the sky.

Through this invocation, Barathy, Subramania Bharati (1882-1921), a prominent Tamil poet demonstrates the strong attachment that Tamil people have towards their language. As well as at school assemblies, this is sung at general meetings where Tamil people get together. Various scholars such as Schiffman (1998) have analysed this deep-rooted love of the language as part of the linguistic culture. Ramaswamy (1997), a cultural historian of South Asia and the British Empire discusses visualising the Tamil language as goddess, queen and mother in her book *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India*. Her analytical approach to this –

and hence a different take on the language question – is through a Tamil word, *paṟṟu*, which speakers of Tamil routinely use in their talk about the language. Typically, the term appears with the word Tamiḻ in the compound *tamiḻpparṟu,* the hinge on which hangs the structure of affect and sentiment that develops around Tamil. So, its speakers are told to cultivate *tamiḻparṟu*, to demonstrate *tamiḻpparṟu*, and to not give up *tamiḻpparṟu* for worldly gains. Those who practise *tamiḻpparṟu* are *tamiḻar*, (or 'Tamilians'); anybody who does not show *tamiḻpparṟu* is not a Tamilian. The lexical meanings of *paṟṟu* include adherence, attachment, affection, support, love and devotion. Out of these, she has chosen 'devotion' to gloss *paṟṟu,* and the term 'Tamil devotion' to denote *tamiḻpparṟu*, as well as other similar sentiments that Tamil speakers express for the language: *aṉpu,* 'affection' *pācam*, 'attachment' *kātal,* 'love' *ārvam,* 'passion' and the like. The invocation expresses the love in a nutshell.

After reading the passages of each textbook, it was possible to find out the major points or ideas contained in each lesson. This helped to allocate relevant codes and look for commonalities among them to arrange them appropriately. The identified categories are discussed in detail giving references to the textbook data and relevant literature in the following section. Before discussing the categories, a brief description of the textbook content is provided to give broad view of the nature of the headings of the lessons.

The table below illustrates the percentages of Tamil language and culture related topics in each textbook selected for this study.

Table 4.1   Number of topics and percentage culture in Years 4 to 8 Tamil textbooks

Textbook			Culture-related topics	
	Total no of topics	Total no of pages	No of topics	Percentage (%) of total topics
Year 4	12	32	5	42
Year 5	10	34	8	80
Year 6	10	36	7	70
Year 7	10	37	5	50
Year 8	10	40	5	50

4.3   Analysis of textbook data

The list of codes (as described in Chapter 3) used in this study are given in Table 4.2. Identified codes both latent and semantic were included in the list of codes. Codes can be tied to more semantic – data driven or latent – researcher driven, meanings (Braun and Clarke 2012), and the coding framework can be used inductively, reflecting pertinent issues raised by the data alone. In this study, data are analysed taking the context and other relevant factors such as inclusion or exclusion of certain topics into account in finding answers to the research questions. These are important and relevant factors for analysing the textbook data to find out what the textbooks contain and to see why the topics have been chosen or excluded.

Table 4.2   Textbook data: semantic and latent coding

SEMANTIC CODES	1. Bush fire in Australia 2. Flood disaster in Australia
LATENT CODES	
1. Importance of Tamil language education in diaspora	2. Maintaining family connections
3. Conforming and contesting traditional food	4. Learning of fine arts (music, dance etc.)
5. Tamil festivals celebrated in diaspora	6. Tamils as new immigrants in Australia and part of world Tamil
7. Maintaining Tamil language and culture	8. Proud history of Tamil architecture
9. Tamil ancestral homeland	10. Literature for teaching values

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11. Tamil family relations	12. Relatives in Tamil family system
13. Education and its important role in Tamil culture	14. Tamil festivals and sports
15. Influence of Tamil scholars	16. Historic recognition of Tamil scientists
17. Key aspects of Tamil values	18. Tamil food and continuity in diaspora
19. Glory of Tamil heroes/heroism	20. Tamil in the age of technology

Closely related codes for text, which illustrates similar meanings, have been incorporated into categories, similar categories or subcategories and then into a theme. A particular colour has been assigned to codes to indicate they have broadly similar meaning. For example, the codes in green colour (1, 4, 7, 13) broadly express the importance of learning Tamil language and culture in the diasporic settings. This broader meaning has been used to categorise them into a common theme. In the same way, other sets of similar codes have been assigned a specific colours to indicate a theme.

Table 4.3 shows how closely related codes could be formed into categories.

For example, some of the categories in Table 4.3 of: 'Learning Tamil language and maintaining cultural practices', 'Family connections in Tamil society in diaspora', and 'Tamil values and literature' indicate a common theme in the way that Tamil language is taught to educate children about Tamil values, cultural practices and literature so that the children could become aware of the Tamil way of life. Therefore, the common categories were formed into a theme 'Instilling Tamil way of life' (section 4.4).

Similarly, four other categories: 'Geography of Tamil-speaking communities', 'Proud history of Tamil people and arts', Tamil festivals and sports in diaspora', and 'Traditional food as part of cultural continuity' could be seen as a theme 'Representation of big Culture and little culture of Tamil people in textbooks'(section 4.5).

The category 'Domestic matters in Tamil textbooks' is discussed separately as it is an obvious aspect (section 4.6).

Table 4.3   Codes into categories

Codes	Category	Theme
Importance of Tamil language education in diaspora>>>>>>	Learning Tamil language and maintaining cultural practices	Instilling Tamil way of life
Learning of fine arts (music, dance etc.)>>>		
Education and its important role in Tamil culture>>>>>>		
Maintaining Tamil language and culture>>>		
Maintaining family connections>>>>	Family connections in Tamil society in diaspora	Instilling Tamil way of life
Tamil family relations>>>>>		
Relatives in Tamil family system>>>>>		
Tamil ancestral homeland >>>>	Geography of Tamil-speaking communities	Representation of big Culture and little culture of Tamil people in textbooks'
Tamils as new immigrants in Australia and part of world Tamil >>>>		
Influence of Tamil scholars >>>>	Proud history of Tamil people and arts	Representation of big Culture and little culture of Tamil people in textbooks
Historic recognition of Tamil scientists >>>		
Glory of Tamil heroes/ eroism >>>>		
Key aspects of Tamil values >>>>	Tamil values and literature	Instilling Tamil way of life
Literature for teaching values >>>>		
Tamil festivals celebrated in diaspora >>>	Tamil festivals and sports in diaspora	Representation of big Culture and little culture of Tamil people in textbooks
Tamil festivals and sports >>>		

Codes	Category	Theme
Conforming and contesting traditional food >>>	Traditional food as part of cultural continuity	Representation of big Culture and little culture of Tamil people in textbooks
Tamil food and continuity in diaspora >>>		
Bush fire >>>>	Domestic matters in Tamil textbooks	Domestic matters in Tamil textbooks
Flood disaster >>>>		

4.4   Instilling the Tamil way of life

The following diagram (Figure 4.1) shows that categories are put together as one theme 'Instilling Tamil way of life' in the data analysis process due to the interconnectedness of the codes. Based on the codes, textbook topics have been chosen primarily to create a strong attachment with Tamil language. For example, in the following conversation, the emphasis can be seen:

> Kala likes Tamil language and arts. She highly regards them and talk about these
> with enthusiasm. She spoke appreciating *baratha natyam* and Tamil arts. Our
> language and arts are like our eyes (Year 4, Unit 9, p 24).

Figure 4.1   Instilling the Tamil way of life
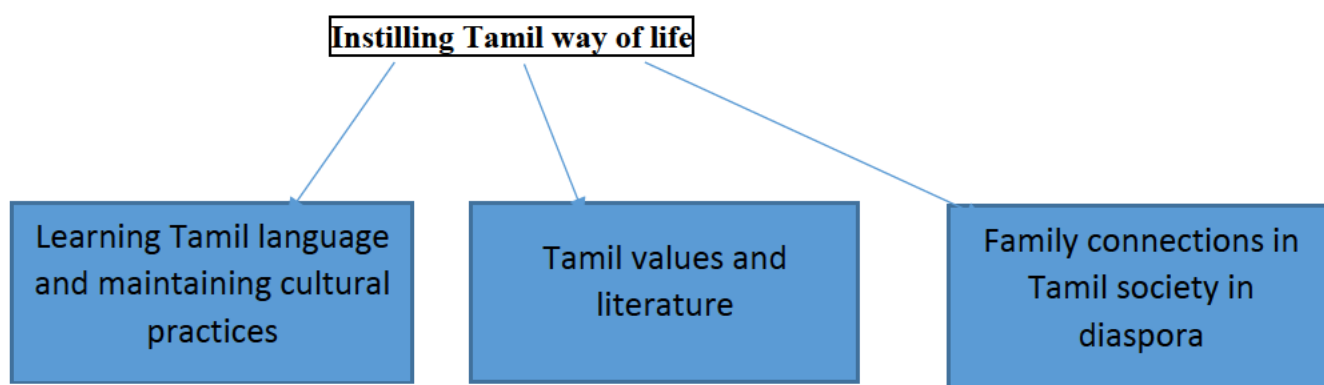
In all the topics of the textbooks, the authors directly or indirectly discuss culture through conveying values or related aspects, and they tend to illustrate the culture of Tamil people in an explicit manner. The overlapping portrayals of Tamil culture include topics such as clothes, cultural values, literature, food, festivals, music, dance, places of worship, and sports appear with the label of 'cultural' throughout the selected five textbooks. A format of conversation in class in a textbook contains details of a Tamil wedding:

Amuthan: *Amma* told us that we would be attending a wedding ceremony tomorrow on Sunday. Are the words *kalyaannam* and *thirumannam* similar?

Teacher: Yes, there are many words for the meaning of wedding(*thirumannam*) such as *kalyannamm, vivaakam, mangala, naan, poonnal, and vathuvai. Thirumannam* is an event in which a man and woman of suitable age are publicly connecting together in a family life.

Kabilan: We have not heard of all of these.

Teacher: Some rituals and rites are conducted by elders according to Tamil culture. There have been few changes due to the context in which we are living and regulations of life in the host countries.

Mathavi: A day before my *maama*'s wedding, on an auspicious day and time, there was '*pon urukkuthal for thaali*' ***a necklace that the groom ties around the bride's neck in the Indian subcontinent*** (*Melting gold for making thaali*) event at home. (Year 7, Unit 8. p 28)

The description of a Tamil wedding ceremony is provided to compare the way in which it was carried out in the past and how it is performed in the modern days:

> Thevi: My grandmom told me that during the old days, a wedding would be going for four or five days.
>
> Teacher: During those days, a wedding was a big ceremony. The process would start many days beforehand. Wedding talks would start to check suitability/matching and the proposal would be made. This is called exchanging '*thaamboolathattu*'. Before the wedding, some rituals such as '*pon urukkuthal'*, *panthal kaal naduthal'*, setting up wedding stage' would take place (Year 7, Unit 8. p 28)

The major cultural aspects described as 'Tamil way of life' are, indeed integrated into Tamil people's everyday lives such as holiday travel and family visits. As textbooks establish in general "the basis for the syllabus, the springboard for other activities and discussions, guidance for new teachers, and socialization into the practice of language teaching and learning for students" (Chapelle, 2016: 2), they primarily influence classroom instruction and play an important role as a road map for the teaching and learning tasks.

Below I discuss in more detail each category under the 'Instilling Tamil way of life' overarching theme.

4.4.1   Learning Tamil language and maintaining cultural practices

In the selected Tamil language textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8) being used at Tamil community language schools, Tamil culture as the target culture is represented in a high percentage of the topics (details provided in Appendix 1), thus reflecting the aim of teaching language and culture to the younger generation growing up in Australia. Research participants commented on the reasons for including such content in the textbooks:

The cultures of the Tamil-speaking countries, especially those of Tamil Nadu (Southern State of India) and Sri Lanka (Northern and Eastern provinces), have traditionally been the ones

chosen to be represented in Tamil language textbooks. In recent years, due to the growing number of Tamil people in the diaspora, this tendency has moved towards the inclusion of elements related to other countries where Tamil is spoken as well. This generally means Singapore and Malaysia and Mauritius to some extent. Canagarajah (2019) raises questions regarding the traditional orientation to heritage language (HL) in general. This emerging debate challenges many assumptions informing HL, for example that each language is owned by a community. Thus, Indonesian language is mainly spoken in Indonesia, Japanese language in Japan and Korean language in both South and North Korea and so on. These languages are directly associated with specific countries which can claim that the languages are theirs. Tamil language does not have a particular country to claim such ownership. Tamil language is primarily spoken in Tamil Nadu (only one of the states of India) and in Sri Lanka (predominantly in the Northern and Eastern provinces). Although Tamil Nadu has over 75 million people, it is not an independent country or nation. There are many smaller independent countries in the world that have less people than the Tamil-speaking population of Tamil Nadu, but they have a language to claim that is their own (For example Tuvalu as a country had a population of 11,204 people, almost all speaking Tuvaluan language, 2021 according to Wikipedia). Canagarajah (2019: 10) also contests the notion that:

> …each language is owned by a community; languages are autonomous and pure; that there is an inflexible relationship between a language and the members of a community; that there is a single language that indexes people's identity and heritage; and that the connection between the language, identity, and heritage are permanent.

In the case of Tamil language, that is now called a 'Pluri-centric' language (Fernandez and Clyne, 2007: 169), designing a syllabus or choosing cohesive topics for teaching may be more problematic.

Textbooks also bring to the classroom contemporary and everyday discussions about Tamil identity. There is a strong informal debate among Tamils in the diaspora. They question who is more Tamil? Is the one who speaks the language more Tamil than someone who doesn't (Ragularajan, 2014) Bilingual Tamils point out that knowing and speaking Tamil is fundamental to their identity. They are of the view that they are Australians and that they are Tamils. They believe that deep inside their hearts they are both Australians and Tamils (Challam, 2001). Many agree that it is a wonderful thing to be an Australian and a Tamil simultaneously. Therefore, it is important to speak Tamil to keep their heart conscious of themselves. Otherwise, they are denying their identity to themselves. A conversation between grandpa and grandchildren (Year 4 textbook, Unit 12) focuses on this aspect:

> We, Tamils have a distinct culture. We speak Tamil language; it is our identity. The food we eat, the clothes we wear, the festivals we celebrate, our actions, customs, lifestyle are distinct identities of Tamil people (Year 4, Unit 12, p 31–32).

Kramsch (1993) is of the view that language is a social practice, for this reason, culture is fundamental to language education. Cultural awareness is indeed an enabler of language learning at the same time as being an outcome reflecting language proficiency.

> Kala says to Vani "You have written very well, good Tamil style, good handwriting, you have thought well and written" (Year 4, Unit 5, p 17).

Language teaching is provided in a way that learners could be initiated into its social and cultural meanings explicitly or implicitly. The topics chosen for the Tamil language textbooks could serve this purpose. Textbooks, given their role as an important source of the language input and cultural knowledge in the language education, need to be a key medium representing cultural values and beliefs (Canale, 2016).

> Distinct lifestyle, food, clothes, language and festivals are collectively called 'culture'. All these elements make up the cultural identity of the people .In the traditional homelands of Tamils, the language is spoken and Tamil arts are alive.

You all need to visit your homeland. Only then, you will clearly understand what our heritage is and what our culture is (Year 4, Unit 12, p 31–32).

The concepts of identity and culture may be difficult for Year 4 students to clearly understand. However, the inclusion of these concepts shows that the authors would like the students attending Tamil schools to become aware of their background and heritage to understand who they are. In addition, the texts in the majority of the units reinforce the idea that Tamils lose their identity when they lose their language. Knowledge of the language also opens one to a vast amount of work such as literature, music and drama in which the Tamil language is rich and abundant. Historical works are almost entirely written in the Tamil language. A major idea running through the topics of the textbooks is that to understand how these (the arts and history) have come to define Tamils as a people and to understand in-depth who they are, requires a knowledge of Tamil. Therefore, learning Tamil language and maintaining cultural practices are being encouraged.

Tamil is more a culture than a language, but Tamil language is the foundation of the Tamil culture (Thurairajah, 2017). Therefore, Tamil language and culture go hand and hand in all walks of life. The aim of most parents is for Tamil children to live with a Tamil identity, to feel themselves to be Tamils, and to acquire knowledge and skills in the Tamil language, culture and arts. The main purpose of Tamil schools is to teach Tamil language and Tamil culture to the students as stated in the websites of the schools. It was the intention of those who established Tamil schools that culture alone could not be given to the youth, it must be provided through the language (Thurairajah, 2017).

Perera (2020) explores how adolescent students perceive the transmission efforts of the first generation, and what it means for their sense of belonging and their sense of Tamilness in the homeland of Sri Lanka and the new home of Australia. She highlights how ideologies regarding Tamil identity and belonging held by first and second-generation Tamils are changing with

time, largely due to new interpretations of 'being Tamil' that vary between and within generations. Because of the threat to Tamil culture in Sri Lanka, there is an enduring sense of duty to maintain the language, religion and culture outside of the homeland.

This makes the textbook writers in the diaspora focus on Tamil literature as a guiding principle. Authenticity relates to culture, and the ability to behave or think like a target language group to be recognised and validated by them (Kramsch 1993). Tamil culture, according to Thaninayagam (1955) a Sri Lankan Tamil Catholic priest and a prominent Tamil scholar in an address declared that Tamil is nothing else but the Tamil way of life, a pattern of gracious living that has been formed during the centuries of Tamil history. It has been conditioned by the land, the climate, the language, the literature, the religions, the customs, the laws, the food, the games and toys of the Tamil people, as well as by the palmyra palm, the gingelly oil, and the vegetables associated with them. Culture is a most elusive and at the same time an all-embracing term.

4.4.2   Family connections in Tamil society in the diaspora

Family connection remains strongest over time among the immigrant families as they continuously face stress in a new setting. Families are a particularly important support for immigrants struggling in the new culture. In this struggle, immigrants may be protected by identity and family ties. The degree to which family members are supportive of one another emotionally is referred to as family cohesion (Rumbaut, 1997). Accounts of family visits and related conversations between family members have been included in many lessons in the textbooks (Year 4, Units 1, 2, 3, 8 and 12; Year 5, Unit 9; Year 6, Unit 1; Year 7, Unit 1). The importance of family connections and the bonds between relatives have been presented to young Tamil learners through different concepts.

> Kala: 'How many years since we have seen our grandad?' Grandad says: 'My grandchildren, I can see Vani and Kannan often; Kala! I can't see you very often as you are living in Melbourne; what to do? (Year 4, Unit 11, p 28).

Families and relatives are given importance in many lessons in the textbooks. One of the defining characteristics of diasporic communities is the inability and unwillingness of these exiled ethnic groups to fully assimilate into their host societies, as this would make them feel isolated from their host culture. Therefore, the relatives here in the adopted country and in the homeland are key players in maintaining connections.

> Balan: Kannan, I haven't seen you for a long time; where have you been?
>
> Kannan: I went to my 'heritage' for a holiday.
>
> Balan: What Is your heritage? Where is it?
>
> Kannan: Heritage is not the name of a place; heritage is our ancestry, the place where our ancestral people lived.
>
> Balan: Oh was it; please tell us your experience.
>
> Kannan: Knowing that we had arrived, our next-door relatives and friends came to see us. They were asking questions regarding our wellbeing and exchanging news as the time went on… They were talking about the fun, the games we played during our young age and the places we visited in those days… We were recollecting the days… (Year 7, Unit 1).

Migrants and their relatives' express feelings of not belonging by withdrawing into memories. Diaspora communities are defined by physical places, histories, myths, and cultures, which they can relate to personally and develop a sense of ethno-community among themselves (Wong, 2010). Moreover, they generally believe that their ancestral homeland is their true and only ideal home, the place to which they and their descendants will eventually return. This connection to the homeland could be seen in the following extracts from a textbook:

> This thought brought about happiness in her mind. It is over one year since Kala met her cousin sister. So, she was thinking of what to talk about to her sister, where to go together and what things to know…many thoughts were coming to mind.

Prominent Tamil poet, Barathi's 2 lines: 'be happy watching beautiful birds".

வண்ணப் பறவைகளைக் கண்டு – நீ மகிழ்ச்சி கொள்ளு பாப்பா' (Year 4, Unit 1, p 9).

Family connection remain strong over time among the immigrant families as they continuously face stress in settling (Ibanez et al., 2015). The structure of immigrant families, which is more likely to include married couples and to include extended family, reflects an emphasis on family ties. Hardway and Fuligni (2006) point out that the ways in which adolescents and their families maintain connectedness can vary across ethnic and immigrant groups that have different cultural traditions regarding individual autonomy and the importance of family. This is reflected in the textbook extract below:

> Family is an important part of a society. Let's think about the families in which we live. Who and who in our family? In one family, there are generally mother, father and children. In some families, uncle, auntie or grandma or grandpa of the children may be there (Year 5, Unit 9, p 28).

Even though patterns of a family life and the ways in which relatives get together in Tamil community have been changing in the adopted country, the importance of the connections remains high, as emphasised in the Year 6 book:

> Although there have been many changes in the Tamil family lifestyle because of the influence of different cultures, when it comes to a wedding proposal, a relationship between an uncle's (father's sister's husband or mother's brother) daughter and an uncle's son plays a key role. This can ensure the continuity of their family relations and keep the property and assets within the family network (Year 6, Unit 1, p 9).

Homeland visits by immigrants' children is mentioned as one of the motivating factors for learning their language in the diaspora and developing identity (Murray, 2018). When they visit their ancestral homeland, the children will be naturally required to use the language with their relatives and grandparents.

When my parents planned a visit to Sri Lanka, I expressed my dislike. I thought that Sri Lanka would be an under-developed place without basic facilities. In addition, pressure to speak in Tamil also was a problem. However, my parents managed to convince me. and I went with them.

After around 24 hours of traveling, when I arrived in my parents' village I was physically and mentally so exhausted. But once I landed in our grandmom's home and with the kind welcome by my relatives who surrounded me, I was feeling better. Although I did not know who they were and how they are related to me, I liked their love and friendship very much (Year 8, Unit 6, p 24–25).

By describing the experiences and better feeling of a homeland visit, the unit in the textbook could encourage the learners to maintain relationships with their relatives living in their homeland and thereby sustain family connections.

4.4.3 Tamil Values and Literature

Values are generally taught through language and literature textbooks in education. Can (2014: 189) puts it:

Literature in all forms and languages serves as a gateway for people to get introduced to culture, history, writers, and background of the period the literature piece was written in.

Classical and contemporary Tamil literature portrays the culture, lifestyle and social values of Tamil people. Literature can also be used effectively and interestingly to teach learners key values and disciplines. The thoughts and concepts of the Tamil people are conveyed implicitly and explicitly in the literature, which has contributed greatly to the passing on of education in Tamil language from generation to generation. Feelings of love for literature can also stimulate language learning. Anita and Subalalitha (2019) state that Tamil literary works have much valuable information hidden in them. These literary works prove to be a treasure that retains historical values and may be a useful guide in current modern society providing solutions to problems arising in almost any aspect of life, for example traditions, love, war, governance and

trade. For these reasons, the authors have included Tamil literature in the textbooks being used at Tamil community language schools.

> Respecting scholars is Tamil tradition … Hindu, Christian, and Islamic people living together in Tamil Nadu. Hindu temples, Christian churches and Islamic mosques are here … Hindu, Christian and Islamic people cohesively living in peace. This shows the broad-mindedness of the Tamil people. A Tamil poet said '*Yathum ure yavarum kelir' To us all towns are one, all men our kin. Yaadhum oore* means all places in the universe are our place. *Yaavarum kelir* means All citizens in the universe are our relations/friends (Year 5, Unit 2, p 12).

Ramayanam, an epic written by Kamban, has been included in the textbook. The Tamil culture is associated with promoting a mutual trust and building cordial ties on faithful and sincere grounds between a bride and bridegroom as a prelude to marriage. It portrays the greatness of the divine characters but also the importance of Tamil and the significance of Tamil culture and civilisation. However, different ideological perspectives of the authors may dictate if *Ramayanam* could be included in the Tamil language textbook.

> Ramayanam, a key example of Tamil literature of the 12th century. The moral of the story is that man can win over all his obstacles if he leads a virtuous life, projecting Tamil culture and the lifestyle prevailing on the Tamil land. It is a Tamil epic that was written by the Tamil poet Kambar during the 12th century. Based on Valmiki's Ramayana (which is in Sanskrit), the story describes the life of King Rama of Ayodhya. It depicts relationships, dharma (or duty), honour, loyalty, motherhood, good and evil, combat, the human and the divine, and other aspects through many characters (Year 5, Unit 4, p 17)

The proponents of Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu oppose the Ramayana, the ancient story of the divine prince Rama who must rescue his wife Sita from the clutches of the demon Ravana (Buchholz, 2015). For this reason, *Ramayanam* is not included in the content of Tamil textbooks used in Tamil schools in European countries such as Germany and France. In these countries Tamil schools are managed by people advocating Tamil nationalism. However, the story has been included in the textbook being used in NSW Tamil community language

schools because the ideological position of the authors is not against *Ramayanam*. According to Buchholz (2015), the Dravidian movement of Tamil Nadu has a history of criticism of the Ramayana. In the first half of the 20th century, members of this movement reinterpreted the Ramayana based on Dravidian ideology into a text describing the conflict between the Aryans, led by Rama, as a conflict involving the Dravidians, led by Ravana and demons. As a result, they tried to portray Rama as the villain and Ravana as the true hero of the Ramayana, effectively turning the story upside down. The Dravidian movement is an umbrella term for many individuals and organisations that promote an alternate identity of the Tamils as 'Dravidian' as opposed to the 'Aryans' of North India. Its roots lie in the 19th century, when Western scholars discovered that Tamil and other South Indian languages were unrelated to Sanskrit and modern North Indian languages, forming a separate language family and identity.

> Respecting other cultures, tolerance, accepting differences and treating all equally are important. We call these values. These values are not new to Tamil people. A Tamil poet has said before 2000 years ago "*Yathum ure yavarum kelir*" *To us all towns are one, all men our kin. Yaadhum oore* means all places in the universe are our place. *Vaavarum kelir* means all citizens in the universe are our relations/friends (Year 5, Unit 8, p 27).

> The value of treating all people equally has been part of Tamil culture. *Thirukkural*, written by a prominent Tamil scholar Thiruvalluvar portrays a great way of life. It says, we need to tolerate even the people who have done bad things to us. Of what value is perfect goodness if it cannot do pleasing things even to those who have pained (it)? Australian values are mostly in keeping with Tamil values; we are proud of this (Year 5, Unit 8, p 27).

While the textbooks describe how Tamil values have been historically embedded in the literature, aiming to convince the learners to appreciate them and continue to live by them, they also show the changes taking place within current Tamil communities:

Many families together make a community. The growth and culture depend on the families of a community. The arts and culture in Tamil families have been well established since ancient times.

Children in the Tamil families during olden days called their mother and father '*aachi*' and '*appu*'. Currently they call father '*appa*'. But due to the influence of English language in the diaspora, they call father 'daddy' and mother 'mummy'. This is one of the cultural losses for Tamil society (Year 6, Unit 1, p 8).

Students are made aware of the cultural losses of the Tamil society because of migration, the influence of western culture and more importantly the neglect of learning Tamil values.

Education brings about recognition and respect to the people in a society. In addition, education helps to get wealth that is necessary for a happy life. For this reason, Tamil people give importance to education saying: 'education is eye' எண் means numeral … எழுத்து means letter … they say … numerals and letters are as important as eyes. *Thirukkural*, a classic Tamil language text, says of the importance of education: 'The mother who hears her son called "a wise man" will rejoice more than she did at his birth (Year 6, Unit 2, p 10).

The importance of education as part of Tamil cultural heritage and as a resource is stressed in the above extract. Instilling the value of education and reading in young minds is the real purpose of these extracts. The connection between Tamil values and literature is well established in the textbooks, as can be seen in the above extracts. Moreover, a number of key literature titles are described, together with their special features, and emphasising the valuable lessons that they could teach:

The ancient Tamil literature '*Purananooru*' excellently talks about cultural values of the Tamil people. Moreover, *Aathisoodi* (The *Āathichoodi* is an ancient moral text – collection of single-line quotations written by *Avvaiyar* and organized in alphabetical order. There are 109 of these sacred lines which include insightful quotes expressed in simple words. It aims to inculcate good habits, discipline and doing good deeds.), *Konraiventhan*, *Thirukurral* and proverbs portray the values of the Tamil society (Year 5, Unit 6, p 22).

Habits and traditions, life-style, hospitality, rituals, celebrations, welcoming others and letting them live, respecting teachers and charity are some of the cultural values of the Tamil people. Tamilians as an ethnic group who appreciate literary works refer to literary excerpts in their daily lives. For example, *Thirukkural*, one of the popular literary works, also called the *Ulaga Pothu Marai* (Universal book of principles) includes short literary phrases emphasising principles for a prosperous life. Schools teach *Thirukkural* to their students as early as kindergarten. *Thirukkural* excerpts are often found in public transportation and government buildings in Tamil Nadu, India. Political leaders, orators and even common people quote *Thirukkural* excerpts in their daily lives. In the Tamil language textbooks, *Thirukkural* has been incorporated in many units. For example, in Year 7, Unit 6, Dr Abdul Kalam quotes Thirukkural at his address to the UNO assembly, and Unit 8 quotes *Thirukkkural* about married life.

Thirukkural is a comprehensive manual on ethics, polity, and love, containing 1,330 distiches or *kural* divided into 133 chapters of ten distiches each, the first 38 on ethics, the next 70 on polity and the last 25 on love. (Kalaiselvi and Saravanakumar, 2019: 13). *Thirukkural* or *Kural* is one of the most revered classical Tamil works; it is referred to as the 'Common Creed' because it demonstrates human morality and advancement in life. After the Bible, Quran, and Gita, the Kural has probably been translated into the most languages. Constanzo Beschi's 1730 Latin translation of *Thirukkural* went a long way toward introducing Tamil literature's depth and beauty to European intellectuals (Kalaiselvi and Saravanakumar, 2019).

The following table shows the places where Tamil literature has been mentioned in the textbooks.

Table 4.4   Units in which literature has been mentioned

Textbook	Page no.	Reference to Tamil literature
Year 4	7	Invocation to Tamil Language (Bharathiyar, 1882–1921, a prominent Tamil poet)
	9	"வண்ணப் பறவைகளைக் கண்டு - நீ மகிழ்ச்சி கொள்ளு பாப்பா" Seeing colorful birds, be happy ! Be happy papa (Bharathiyar (1882–1921).
Year 5	9	Invocation to Tamil Language (Bharathiyar, 1882–1921).
	10	Literature of the *Sangam* period (600 to 500 BCE–150 CE).
	13	"யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர்" All the places on earth are our town and all the people are our relatives (all are evolved from common ancestors). (Kaniyan Poongunranar, an influential Tamil philosopher from the Sangam period around the sixth century BCE).
	17–22	Ramayanam story (Kambar, 1120–1200 CE).
	27	*Thirukkura and, Purananuru* (600 to 500 BCE–150 CE).
	30–34	5 poems for children. Two were written by Subramania Bharathiyar (1882–1921); He was an Indian Tamil writer, poet, journalist, Indian independence activist, social reformer and polyglot. Popularly known as 'Mahakavi Bharathi', he was a pioneer of modern Tamil poetry and is considered one of the greatest Tamil literary figures of all time.
Year 6	10	*Aathisudi, Thirukkural*
	11	*Thirukkural*
	22	*Aathisudi, Thirukkural, Purananuru and Konraiventhan*
	23	"அன்னையும் பிதாவும் முன்னறி தெய்வம்" The great saint and Tamil poet Avvaiyar said "*Annaiyum Pithavum Munnari Deivam*," which means mother and father are the first Gods known to children.

Such mentions of various Tamil literature classical works across the lessons in the textbooks show the significance the authors give to the literature in Tamil education.

4.4.3.1 *Tamil Movies and songs as part of literature*

Although watching Tamil movies is part of life among the Tamil people, accepting Tamil movie songs as a form of Tamil literature is still being debated for various reasons (Vamanan 2016; Jegatrakshagan, 2019; Andamantamilnenjan, 2012). There are many instances where Tamil movie song writers have found inspiration from early Tamil literature. However, the use of the spoken Tamil variety or colloquial Tamil in movie songs could prevent them from being recognised as part of Tamil literature. Another fact is that lyricists write songs for the movies according to requests from the director and the music being used; thus, the literary value could be compromised. Vamanan (2016) cites Poet Abdul Rahman who famously put down film lyricists with the jibe, "*Ammi Kutha Sirpi Yedharkku"* (No need for a sculptor to roughen the surface of a grinding stone). Abdul Rahman later changed his opinion and affirmed that film lyrics also are a kind of poetry. Poets writing lyrics for Tamil movie songs have received awards and been appreciated for their literary greatness. For example, Kannadasan (1927–1981), a prominent Tamil poet and lyricist, was conferred the title of '*kaviarasu*'-King of poets (Dinesh, 2018).

> The Year 7 Textbook contains a Tamil movie song in Unit 7 (24-25):
>
> 'ஒவ்வொரு பூக்களுமே சொல்கிறதே வாழ்வென்றால் போராடும் போர்க்களமே………
>
> Each flower tells that
>
> life is a battle which has to be combated
>
> Every time the sun rises it tells that
>
> if there is night (dark) there comes day (light) following it.

The song has been designed as a lesson with comprehension questions for making the leaners understand the meaning of the song well. At the end of the Unit, on p. 37, a set of instructions about how this lesson needs to be taught has been provided. (The song lyrics won the National

award in India for their literary value and the lyricist Pa.Vijay was conferred the award in 2004. The place of the song in the movie, the lyrics and the picturisation seek to inspire the viewers to achieve something in life. The song is placed in the movie at a point where an alcohol-addicted youth feels hopeless about his life and the song makes some changes in him. As it has a lot of inspirational quotes for youths, the lyrics of the song has been added to the Madurai Kamarajar University's language syllabus. The above notes were provided in the textbook as background information. This song is in a Tamil movie titled 'Autograph'; it may seem awkward that the name of a Tamil movie is an English word, but using English words for the name of Tamil movies is an increasing trend; in Tamil Nadu, it is considered a sign of modernity or of being educated if English language is mixed with Tamil. Hughes (2010) argues that the 'Tamilness' of Tamil cinema is not based on any fixed linguistic identity. Although his discussion focuses on the early history of the Tamil film industry, the need for Tamil cinema to be more Tamil and for the linguistic and stylistic purity of Tamil film songs to be used as vehicles for highlighting the greatness of Tamil, are still ongoing issues. However, the inclusion of a movie song in a Tamil language textbook could be considered as a revolutionary step by the authors and as an indication of transition in accepting Tamil movie songs, at least selected ones, as part of Tamil literature.

Chinnappa and Dhandapani (2021) analysed Tamil lyrics of movie songs that poets wrote over 65 years since 1954 and they point out that the earliest identified Tamil literature known as the Sangam literature, used in movies, dates to 600 BCE (Abraham, 2003 cited in Chinnappa and Dhandapani, 2021). Tamil movies have become an inseparable part of most Tamilians' lives in the ancestral homeland and diaspora. In addition to other literary works such as poems and novels, the song lyrics of Tamil movies consistently act as an important medium in showcasing rich Tamil literary works. From the very beginning, Movies did this through both movie dialogues and song lyrics (Chinnappa and Dhandapani, 2021). While Tamil literary works as

old as Sangam literature have been depicted in early movies, recent movies depict a mix of old and contemporary literary works.

4.5 Representation of 'Big Culture' dimensions of Tamil people in textbooks

Figure 4.2 shows that key dimensions of 'Big Culture' (Brody, 2003) such as geography, history, traditional food, and festivals – identified as categories in this research – put together under the theme 'Representation of Big Culture dimensions of Tamil people in the textbooks'.

Figure 4.2   Representation of Big Culture dimensions of Tamil people in textbooks

Representation of Big culture dimensions of Tamil people in the textbooks

Geography of Tamil speaking communities

Proud history of Tamil people and arts

Traditional food as part of cultural continuity

Tamil festivals and sports in diaspora
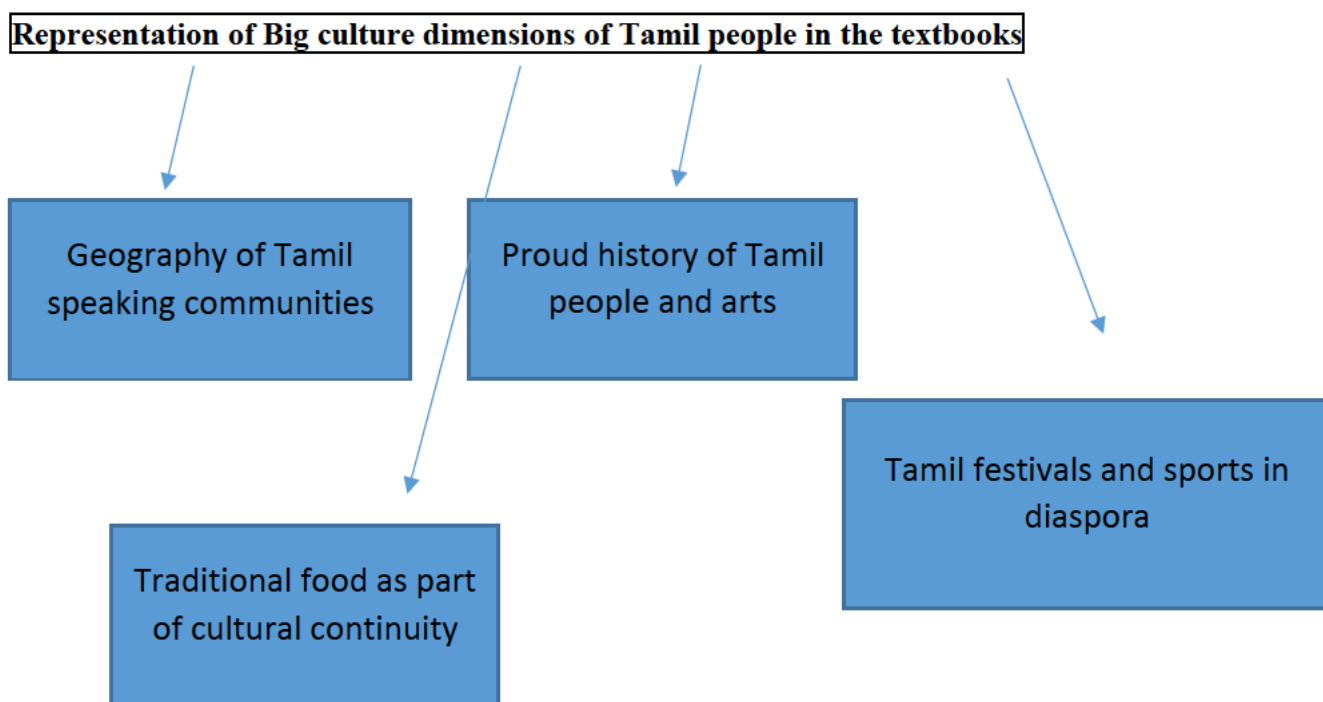
Language and culture are inseparable and the connections between them have been well researched by several scholars (Kramsch, 2001; Risager, 2007). This topic has been analysed in terms of first language and widely used second language textbooks (for example in EFL/ESL courses) regarding representation of culture/s. Researchers have begun looking at this aspect in the case of CL/HL textbooks (Curdt-Christiansen,2008; Sun and Kwon, 2020). To analyse textbooks in this regard, researchers have used various broader aspects of culture such as dimensions. However, their terms and explanations vary a lot and a detailed description and discussion about them is beyond the scope of my study. Instead, I am using Brody's (2003) views on textbook analysis for this study. Brody (2003) divided culture into 2 concepts 'Big C' and 'little c': culture as 'Big C' represents formal cultural facts that are relating to the arts, history, geography. business, education, festivals and customs of a speech society, while 'little c' culture refers to the routine aspects of life and encompasses everything that is part of a total way of life. In the case of Tamil culture, immediate Big C ideas or concepts are obvious – oldest language, great literature, proud history, Tamil scholars, Tamil diaspora – and these are the key

Big C topics that dominate content of the selected Tamil language textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8). These Big C topics are the areas of broad common ground connecting transnational Tamils. In Tamil language, culture remains the anchor. However, when the topics incorporated in the content are carefully analysed, culture is such an integral part of language, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to teach a language without teaching at least some aspects of its culture. There is a tendency to present a superficial and overly positive view of the target culture by including a wide range of topics.

The Big C categories under the theme 'Representation of Big Culture dimensions of Tamil people' are described in the sections below.

4.5.1   Geography of Tamil-speaking Communities

In the textbooks the authors have made attempts to teach the learners about the geography of the Tamil-speaking communities as part of the Tamil culture education. The location of the Tamil-speaking communities is an essential component of identity. A friendly question; "Where are you from?" or an antagonistic shout: "Go to the country where you came from" could trigger an identity crisis. Tamil children in Australia should know that they are part of a global Tamil population so that they can see the bigger picture of the Tamil-speaking communities. For this reason, the geography of Tamil-speaking communities is a key topic in the textbooks. For example, the textbooks have topics such as Tamil Nadu (Year 5), Eelanadu, newspaper of Sri Lanka (Year 5), My heritage (Year 7), Tamils in diaspora (Year 7) Tamils in Reunion Island (Year 8), Travel letter (Year 8) and World Tamils(Year 5) in order to introduce the places where Tamil people historically live and the new places to which they have in recent times migrated.

> Tamil Nadu is traditional homeland of Tamil people. Tamil language, Tamil culture, traditions and the arts are there growing in the past and present. These are the treasures provided by the ancient Tamils. In the daily life of the Tamil people, their distinctive aspects can be seen. Food, clothes and the arts are some of them.

> More than these, values, lifestyles, festivals, and the customs of weddings, funerals are also distinctive (Year 5, Unit 2, 12).

However, little, or no geographical references were found to 2 marginalised groups of Tamils living in Sri Lanka. One is Islamic Tamils and the other is Up-country Tamils. One reason could be that there are no Tamil students belonging to these groups attending Tamil schools. Another reason could be the non-existence of members of these group among the authors of the textbooks. It is likely that when the authors of the textbooks wanted the students to know about the Tamils living in the Reunion Island, they ignored the marginalised groups of Tamils in Sri Lanka or considered them as less significant.

More details are provided in relation to key locations where Sri Lankan Tamil people live so that the Tamil learners in Australia can understand more about the Tamil homelands:

> Another place where Tamil people have historically been living is Sri Lanka (known as 'ilangai' in Tamil) or in short as 'Eelam'. This has nine provinces. Tamil people live in all provinces; however, Northern and Eastern provinces are claimed to be the traditional homeland of the Tamil people. Tamil kings have ruled the Tamil regions for over 2,000 years. Tamil language, Tamil arts and Tamil culture were flourishing and spreading there. There is a close connection historically between Eelam and Tamil Nadu. The language and culture connection has resulted in a close relationship (Year 5, Unit 3, 14).

The sameness and difference within Sri Lankan Tamils in Montreal setting are explored by Bradley (2018). Migrants from India, civil war refugees from Sri Lanka, or re-settlers from Malaysia and Africa tell different migration stories and profess different faiths. The relationship between Tamil Hindus of Sri Lanka origin and other Tamils living in Montreal, namely Tamil Catholics and Pentecostal Christians, and Tamil Hindus of Indian descent was investigated. The results show that the development of Hindu religious solidarity and interaction in the diaspora depends not only on the socio-cultural makeup and cohesion of Hindu groups, but also on their migration history and the social and political conditions of the host country. It also shows that

it depends on Sri Lankan Hindus feel closer to Sri Lankan Catholics than to Indian Tamil Hindus. This seems to mean that sharing the same country of origin, language and migration patterns is far more important than belonging to Hinduism in demonstrating unity and solidarity.

Weninger and Kiss (2015) point out that textbooks are time capsules in that they use texts as representational samples of the language and culture they focus on. Textbooks together with the use of visual materials, provide insight into the values and ideologies—the 'hidden curriculum' (McGrath, 2002; Snyder, 1970 cited in Weninger and Kiss, 2015) that they are promoting. A close link is established, by providing important details, between Tamil Nadu (Southern state of India) and Eelam (North and East provinces where Sri Lankan Tamil people predominantly live):

> Tamil Nadu is a mother country and Eelam is a child country. Tamil language, Tamil culture and Tamil arts make the people of the two places one ethnic group. They live in different places, but in terms of language, culture and arts, they are of one ethnic group – Tamils. Food, clothes, lifestyles and values are common for the people of these two places. Tamils from Sri Lanka are culturally and linguistically distinct, but they are closely related to the Indian Tamils from South India (Tamil Nadu) (Year 5, Unit 3, 14).

In contemporary Sri Lanka, only two provinces have a Tamil majority. According to Sri Lankan statistics and Census for 2012, the Northern Province has a Tamil population of 93.8% and the Eastern Province, a Tamil population of 39.2%. Nationally, 51.5% of all Tamils in the country live in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, while 48.5% live outside these two provinces. (Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka)

> Globally there are around 70 million Tamil people. The majority of people living in Tamil Nadu (India) are Tamil. Moreover, Tamil people live in cities such as Puthucheri, Andaman, Bengalur, Misoor, Trivandram, Mumbai and Delhi. Next to Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka is the place where Tamil people live, mainly in the Northern and Eastern provinces. In Australia, based on the answer to the question: 'What

language do you speak at home?' in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) form, there were 24,067 Tamil people in 2001 (Year 5, Unit 7, 26).

Students are made to clearly understand that Tamil immigrants are part of the people movements resulting from globalisation, that there are immigrant people from many linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This understanding could help them to accept and respect differences. The textbooks stress the way Tamils have moved around the world in the past decades, as well as how they have been living in the Diaspora:

> Tamil people have set up Tamil schools and Tamil associations for preserving Tamil language in the countries where they migrated. They have also established religious spaces such as temples, churches and mosques (Year 8, Unit 5, 22).

> In the diaspora, cultural changes are becoming unavoidable. Mixed or interracial marriages are on the increase. Due to this type of mixed marriages, we can see a situation where cultures of various countries are mixing together (Year 8, Unit 5, 23).

The Tamil population demographics are very complex. It is a diverse population even within a country like Sri Lanka. Students need to understand whether the textbook topic is referring to all Tamils living in the country or whether it is referring to a specific group of Tamils. There are Northern Province Tamils, Eastern Province Tamils, Plantation or 'up country' Tamils. Tamils are living in areas outside the above areas and there are Tamil-speaking non-Tamils (*Islamiyath Thamilar* – Islamic Tamils or Tamil Muslims). Sri Lankan Tamils, who live or have roots in the north-east provinces believe the north and east is historically their homeland. This clarification is important as one needs to know the wants, needs and common objectives of the group of Tamils referred to as Sri Lankan Tamils.

> Tamil people have migrated to many countries. One third of the population (8.5 m) of Reunion Island are Tamil people. Around 1970, they realised that there is a language and culture which belongs to them. So, they started searching for their heritage. They began to act with awareness and feeling that they should live with a

Tamil identity. Now there are Tamil schools and cultural associations. They celebrate *Pongal, thaipoosam*, Tamil new year and *Divali* (Year 8, Unit 4, 19).

By providing details of various parts of the world where Tamil people are living and the historical facts in the textbooks, the authors expect the learners to become aware of the geography of the Tamil-speaking communities. This could provide them with a sense of belonging related to a larger picture of Tamil people.

However, two marginalised Tamil-speaking communities have been excluded from the textbooks – Up-country Tamils and Islamic Tamils. One of the key features of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in terms of textbook analysis is its examination of what has been neglected in addition to seeing what has been included.

Moore (2016) discusses textbooks' status as consensus documents and records of dominant narratives in her analysis of Australian history books. The role of textbooks in providing a unique window into a society's authoritative and legitimate knowledge is critical. Textbooks also define, shape, construct and elevate one version of reality as legitimate instead of representing objective and impartial knowledge. These concepts are relevant in the case of the exclusion of the two marginalised groups of Tamil-speaking people from the Tamil language textbooks. Textbook depictions of the geography of the Tamil people need to be reconsidered.

Furthermore, Davis (2012) points out that since the colonial period, the Tamils of Northern Province in Sri Lanka have maintained a position of dominance over other Tamil-speaking groups (Up-country and Muslim Tamils) in education, with the Tamils of Northern Province legitimised in the national curriculum. The Northern Province Tamils dominated the curriculum planning and syllabus designing processes affecting Tamil language textbook production. However, because of demographic and institutional shifts related to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1983, this dominant position is shifting. The shift is being reflected in the content

choices and publication of Tamil language textbooks in Sri Lanka. Textbooks reflect these broad social changes.

In the production of NSW Tamil language textbooks too, the Tamils of Northern Province (Sri Lanka) and the Tamils of Indian origin play a dominant role. This could be a reason for the exclusion of the two marginalised groups, Up-country Tamils and Islamic Tamils (discussed below), from the Tamil language textbooks, showing how dominant discourses produce and maintain categories of belonging and exclusion.

Up- country Tamils

A distinction is made between Indian (plantation or Up-country) Tamils and Sri Lankan Tamils and that this distinction is important for two reasons (Bass, 2013). Up-country Tamil culture rooted in Indian traditions has been transferred into Sri Lankan spaces. Tamils, long residents in the north and east of the island are officially called Sri Lankan Tamils and they are culturally and socially distinct from Up-country Tamils. First, there are historical differences between the two groups. Sri Lankan Tamils have a very long history in the country. They are native to Sri Lanka. Hence, they are often called 'indigenous Tamils' although some nationalist Sinhalese argue that Sri Lankan Tamils were of recent origin, and hence not native to the country. Nevertheless, Indian Tamils were mostly, but not exclusively, brought to work in Sri Lankan plantations during the colonial era. There is an official designation of 'Indian Tamils' for this group, although they had been in Sri Lanka for decades. Bass (2013) reports the opinion of a member of this group: "Indian Tamils have no identity, but Up-country Tamils have an identity".

Second, the issues and concerns of the Indian Tamils or Up-country Tamils are different from the Sri Lankan Tamils. Both spatial and symbolical factors link Up-country Tamils to Sri Lanka, though they have faced numerous obstacles in their efforts to assert their attachment to the island (Bass, 2013). It is a paradox, that in Australia a person of this background could be called

as 'Indian Tamil' by a Sri Lankan Tamil, but a Tamil person of Indian origin will call the same person a "Sri Lankan Tamil" because he or she comes originally from Sri Lanka.

Islamic Tamils

In Sri Lanka, the idea that Muslims (Islamic people living in the Northern and Eastern provinces and using Tamil as their mother tongue) are Tamils or not is debated (Imtiyaz and Hoole, 2011). They are an independent social group defined by religion not by language. Every social group has the right to define its identity as it deems fit. The Muslims have the right to define who they are. Non-Muslim Tamils trying to define the Muslims' identity may operate from a hegemonic position and as a result, not recognise the Muslims as Tamils. The recognition that Muslims are an independent group has the potential to promote Muslim–Tamil reconciliation. Within Sri Lanka, the findings of Herath's (2021) critical discourse analysis of textbooks also highlight the exclusion and marginal representation of minorities, their voices, histories and cultures. The overwhelming presence of the majority northern and eastern Tamils and Tamils in Tamil Nadu allows them to assert and confirm their dominance over Islamic and Up-country Tamil-speaking communities in the Sri Lankan setting. Textbook content and the educational discourses that are conveyed through them are powerful in shaping learners' ideologies.

The above instances of omission confirm what Ducar (2006) found out in a study that CDA research aims not only to show what is happening in the text, but also to identify what the text is missing. Why this choice or reduction, why here, why now? The overriding goal of a CDA is to make visible how institutions and their discourses shape us.

4.5.2 Proud history of Tamil people and arts

The history of people is categorised as an aspect of Big Culture. The authors of the selected textbooks under study have purposely chosen topics of history of the Tamil people to convince the learners that Tamil people have a proud history, and that they are owners of that history. The following piece of text is an example of details of Tamil history:

During the ancient period, the population was small. Tamil people were living in villages here and there. Many villages got together and formed governing bodies. Then various bodies were put together to form kingdoms. Scholars say 'Yesterday's happenings are history today'. We become surprised when we learn many things about the history of kings. Their heroic acts make us proud. These acts have made them Tamil heroes in the history. From ancient days to the arrival of Europeans (Portuguese, Netherland, French and English) Tamil kings were ruling many regions of South India and North and East areas of Sri Lanka. We can study about remarkable Tamil heroes in our history, *Veerapandiya kattabomman* who ruled Panchalamkurichi of Tamilnadu and *Pandaravanniyan* who governed Vanni region for Northern Sri Lanka (Year 7, Unit 5, p 17).

In citing Au and Oh (2005) Polinsky and Kagan (2007) discuss the connection between heritage language and the motivation to learn it by instilling ethnic pride and discussing ethnic history and identity. Parents can encourage children to learn and practice their heritage language, cultural tradition and values by teaching them about a history they are proud of.

India is a big country, and it is divided into many states. Tamil Nadu is one of them. Tamil Nadu is the traditional homeland of the Tamil people, and it has a history over thousands of years. Tamil architecture is excellent. Sculpture art is also of high quality. This is found in all areas of Tamil Nadu and is beautiful. The excellence of this could be seen in temples even today. *Meenadshi amman* in Madurai is a good example. The ancient Tamil peoples' sculpture art is found there. There are thousands of sculptures and statues made from granite. There are hundreds of pillars made from granite. Tapping the pillars will create music. This wealth of the arts could tell the stories of ancient Tamil people (Year 5, Unit 1, 10).

The bravery of Tamil kings is part of the key messages in many lessons for teaching students about the proud history of Tamil people.

Another example is significant in relating the proud history to the modern world and enhancing people's attitudes:

Tamil language is old, sweet and a reputed language. In 2012, a question was asked in the London Times: "Which classical language is still spoken by a group of

people"? The answer given by respondents was Tamil. Tamil language was protected by many Tamil kings fighting against invasion. Let us study about two such prominent kings, First: Sadaiyavarman Suntharapandiyan and Sekarasasekaran known as Sankiliyan who ruled the Jaffna kingdom (Year 8, Unit 8, 31).

As the importance of education is one of the significant aspects of Tamil culture and tradition, Tamil scholars and scientists have been added as topics in the textbooks:

> Several Tamil scholars in Eelam and India have contributed to maintaining Tamil language and spreading the reputation of it. One such scholar was Thaninayagam Adikalar (Rev. Father Xavier S.). His sole aim was to spread Tamil language, its reputation and cultural treasure – the great cultural heritage of Tamil people – among the scholars of other languages. He founded the International Association for Tamil Research (Year 8, Unit 7, 28).

The proud history of Tamil persons and their community is reiterated so that they could be shown as good examples for the youngsters to follow.

> Several people have contributed to the growth of Tamil language since ancient period. Tamil poets, writers, publishers and scholars are included in this category. Hundreds of Tamil scholars in Tamilnadu and eelam have greatly contributed to the development of Tamil language. Nallur Arumuga Navalar, C.Y. Thamotharampillai, Swamy Vipulananthar, Nawaliyoor Somasuntharam pulavar, Rev, Thaninayakam adikall, Sithi lebbe and Vithvan Venthanar were in eelam. U.ve.Saminathaiyer, Annathurai, V.Kalyanasuntharam, Ra.P.Sethupillai, Maraimalai adikall, Ki.a.pe.Visuvanatham. Ki. Va. Jeganathan and Kunrakudy adikallar were from Tamilnadu. We will study Arumuga Navalar and U.ve.Saminathaiyer. These two prominent Tamil scholars have contributed greatly to the development of Tamil language. They and other Tamil scholars still have a permanent place in the minds of the Tamil people (Year 6, Unit 4, p 16).

Through natural conversations of young members of the family, learning Tamil language and arts is also appreciated and regarded highly. This could motivate the younger generation to learn the language and arts. For example,

Kala –'Vani, you are learning *Baratha natyam* (traditional dance) and I told you the other day to learn Tamil language well; you are speaking Tamil very fluently'. In response, Vani says 'I participated in the Tamil speech competition held at our Tamil school and I won first prize. Kannan says, 'I also got first prize for my speech on "*Barathy*, a prominent Tamil poet"' Year 4, Unit 3, p 13).

The Year 7 textbook contains valuable historical information regarding the Tamil people so that the learners could understand the bigger picture of the Tamil speaking communities and their proud history:

Tamil people have been living in many parts of India, especially in South India and in the north and east of Sri Lanka. Some Tamil people from Tamil Nadu were brought by the British during the colonial period to work in the tea, rubber, and sugar cane farms of other countries, including Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Burma and Fiji (Year 7, Unit 2).

The textbooks discuss the challenges to the learners in living in the diaspora and how these challenges could be overcome.

Tamils have great characteristics such as believing in God, respecting parents and elderly people, offering hospitality, and living closely with relatives and family members. They have been following these practices for generations. Currently our younger generation finds it difficult to continue this tradition and they are confused. However, they make attempts to respect their culture and speak and maintain Tamil language.

There are possibilities for Tamil people, due to the influence of western culture, to forget traditional food, clothes, arts and culture. However, Tamil cultural events, Tamil schools, Tamil shops and places of worship prove that they will not forget their identity (Year 7, Unit 2).

This may provide learners with opportunities for critical thinking while learning their proud history. Guo et al. (2021) point out that maintaining one's traditional culture, in the form of endorsing a sense of filial obligation, was a significant protective factor against all types of

conflict. Understanding sources of intergenerational conflict in immigrant families could shed important light on how migrant families adapt to new social and cultural conditions.

4.5.3   Tamil festivals and traditional sports in the diaspora

In the textbooks, many festivals such as *Thaipongal* and *Theepavalli* and other cultural events have been highlighted. The purpose for choosing these topics could be make sure that the learners understand that these events are part of their life. Ayón et al. (2018) explain how cultural events and storytelling could promote the cultural understanding of immigrant children. In the form of cultural socialisation, it includes parents' efforts to promote ethnic/racial pride, including teaching and engaging children in learning about their cultural heritage, and stimulating children's curiosity for their culture, ethnicity, and traditions (Hughes et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor and Guimond, 2010, cited in Ayón et al. (2018). The Year 4 textbook has a lesson in the form of a conversation between Grandad and his grandchildren. Grandad explains what *Thaipongal* is and how it is celebrated:

> Grandad: 'We are Tamils, we have an agricultural festival – *Thaipongal*. Vani! we celebrate this festival here in Australia in different ways it is conducted in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu (India). This is a very important festival, and we have a holiday over there.
>
> We can celebrate *Thai Pongal* only in our homeland in the right traditional way.
>
> The *Pongal* festival is an important event in countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and some other countries where Tamil people live. Tamils living in these countries also celebrate this event (Year 4, Unit 11, 28).

The above extracts from the Year 4 textbook emphasise the significance of *Thaipongal* as a Tamil festival that is celebrated by Tamil-speaking communities across the world. In addition, the fact that the event is celebrated differently in the homeland and the adopted country, Australia is explained. A message below from the Prime Minister of Australia demonstrates the recognition of *Thaipongal* as a cultural practice of the Tamil people.

Figure 4.3 *Thaipongal* **message from the Prime Minister of Australia**

I'm delighted to send my warm greetings to the Tamil community as you celebrate Thai Pongal and Tamil Heritage Month.

The beginning of a new year is a time of gratitude, renewal and refreshment, and at the heart of Thai Pongal is this sense of a fresh beginning.

Across many generations, Tamil people have made new beginnings in Australia, and brought a rich heritage of faith, language and heritage to our story.

May you all enjoy the bounty and beauty of Thai Pongal this year, and find inspiration and blessing for the year ahead.

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister of Australia

January 2023

Similarly, traditional sports can motivate the learners in connecting them with practical aspects of their heritage culture. In the Year 8 textbook, a conversation is taking place about traditional sports:

> Grandfather: Kabilan, you normally return from Tamil school and leave the books on the table for playing; today what happened? You are sitting with your pen and thinking.

> Kabilan: TheTamil school teacher gave me homework to write about the traditional sports of Tamil people; that's what I am thinking about.

Granpa: Kabilan! I have played these traditional sports from a young age!

Kabilan: We can describe the sports that Tamil people have been playing for centuries as 'traditional sports'. There are 126 traditional sports, according to the literature. *Killithattu, sadukudu, kabaddi, kittipul, silukodu, pallankulli, thaayam, kannamoochi* are key sports. The first five could be played outside, the last three inside home (Year 8, Unit 2, 9).

Through traditional sports, Tamil immigrants could create a sense of themselves as one people because of the Tamil homeland environment that they create in Australia, which encourages them to perform these sports at specific events (for example, on Australia Day). The reproduction of Tamil culture, community, and consciousness could be some intended outcomes of promoting Tamil sports. For example, a matrix of real and imagined cross-border cultural, kinship, and social relationships makes it useful for understanding community (re)generation in sport settings in relation to the Caribbean diaspora (Joseph, 2014). As a particular form of cultural production, traditional sports could help to generate and maintain diasporic communities.

4.5.4 Traditional food as part of cultural continuity

Immigrants are likely to make attempts to maintain their original food culture after they arrive in an adopted country. Reddy et al. (2020) state that food choices can be influenced by individual identity in many societies. However, food choices have mostly been evaluated in terms of preserving the cultural identity of immigrant populations. Their research focused on understanding the impact of identity on individual diets in multicultural societies in the setting of Singapore. The study confirms that cultural eating practices are essential to maintaining and sustaining the identity. At times, eating habits have blurred the lines between cuisines of different cultures. Dietary practices in multicultural societies such as Singapore, therefore, reflect attitudes toward everyday multiculturalism, multicultural social policies, and traditional healthy eating habits.

Food practices are also highlighted in the Tamil textbooks. For example, in a Year 4 unit we can see how Tamil food is contrasted with Western food habits:

> Kannan is sarcastically asking if cultural food items such as *sampal*, *sothy*, *chudney*, *idly,* etc are for breakfast today. In the way that he speaks, he clearly means the opposite of what he said in order to humorously criticise cultural food. Kannan doesn't like Tamil cultural food very much; he criticises Tamil food and prefers to eat McDonald's items, but his sister likes traditional food. As a visitor is coming to their house, mother has prepared traditional food. Father says: 'Kannan is not happy as there is no way for him to get McDonald's items today' (Year 4, Unit 2, 10).

It is interesting to note that the authors of the textbook want to emphasise the importance of continuing the use of Tamil traditional food. However, the youngsters may not necessarily like the traditional food items and the contesting attitudes may create tension at home. Cross-cultural eating practices and increased consumption of western dishes may influence local cultures. This may cause fear of losing ethnic and racial identities (Reddy et al., 2020).

> Vani says. 'I like *kollukattai*, *vadai* and *lattu* very much' … Kala says: 'Snacks are of two types, one is *sittundy*: *panniyaram* and *murrukku*. The second is *Palakaaram*: *pittu*, *appam*, *thosai* … this is my father's explanation. Ramanan says: 'I like *idly*, *saampar*, *chudney* very much'. Vani smiles at Kannan, because he doesn't like Tamil cultural food (Year 4, Unit 8, 23).

Culture, race, and ethnicity are closely related and important parts of social identities in the study of food and nutritional practices. This allows researchers to understand the complex ways individuals make decisions about food choices. Cooking and eating habits are often not only symbolic, but also concrete and tangible ways in which the ethnic identity of migrants is maintained in multicultural societies (D'Sylva and Beagan, 2011). They also suggest that food could function as a communicative action that fosters ethnic identity and thus sharing food practices becomes an essential part of one's identity and daily life. The Year 6 Tamil language textbook has a unit on 'Making Tamil food' introducing the preparation of '*Mothakam*'.

Mohan: 'Mom, mom, when we went shopping yesterday you told us that we could make *mothakam* [*Mothakam* is an Indian sweet-dumpling dish popular in many Indian states and cultures and is a Tamil food as well] on Saturday. Please come; let's make it…Mother, son and daughter are together looking at the recipe for making *Mothakam*, a Tamil food, a sweet (Year 6, Unit 7, p 24).

As Tamil children born in Australia are influenced by 'fast food', inclusion of Tamil food in the textbook could be interpreted as an effort to make young children growing up in Australia become familiar with Tamil food for the continuity of Tamil traditions.

In order to make traditional food-making interesting, The Year 7 textbook also has a unit 'Making traditional food: *thosai*'. The text type chosen for this unit is a television program in which making *thosai* is demonstrated:

Mohan and Selvi sit in front of Tamil Television at 7.00 pm to watch a program on how to make *thosai*'.

Mrs Poornima's 'Let's learn traditional cooking' show begins…

'*Thosai* [thin crepe made with fermented rice and lentil batter] is a favourite food of Tamil people. It used to be a breakfast, but now we are eating it for dinner. *Thosai* is a nutritious food' (Year 7, Unit 4).

By choosing traditional food as topics for the textbooks clearly shows that the authors regard food as central to Tamil identity and culture.

4.6   Domestic matters in Tamil textbooks

The authors have included general topics such as bushfires and flood disasters in the Tamil language textbooks to teach students about the Australian context.

We know that the natural disasters such as bushfires, floods and drought happen often in the world. We come to know about these disasters quickly via television. Our country also faces these disasters. Experts say that the south-eastern part of Australia mostly has bush fire disasters (Year 5, Unit 6, 23).

There is a debate over whether heritage language textbooks should focus only on the elements of the heritage language and culture of the learners. Scholars (Curdt-Christiansen, 2008; Sun and Kwon, 2020) argue that the textbooks should also include various other aspects so that the learners become aware of multicultural views. Curdt-Christiansen (2008) discusses the construction of cultural knowledge in Chinese language textbooks, purely in relation to the mainstream ideology to which immigrant children are exposed in and out of mainstream school classrooms. The Year 4 textbook has passages for reading comprehension under such headings as: The Australian Indigenous people (Unit 5), Australian animals and birds (Unit 6) and Australian climate and environment (Unit 8). The Year 5 textbook has Bushfire (Unit 6); Year 6 has Flood disaster (Unit 10) and Year 7 has Climate change (Unit 9).

The authors might have included these areas of subject matter for the purpose of making the textbook inclusive of local issues. When the students are required to talk about these topics for their Tamil speech competitions, they would feel confident in using Tamil words and sentences if they studied these topics in Tamil at a community language school. Even though the topics may not be related to Tamil language and culture, the idea behind the inclusion could be to localise the language content of the textbooks.

Helmer (2014) analysed the reasons why some learners resisted studying Spanish as a heritage language and found a key fact for resistance was the lack of meaningful activity and authentic materials that connected the curriculum to students' linguistic strengths, target-culture knowledge, and the communities from which they came. As the primary motivation of the learners in this type of program is to stay connected to the home culture, the materials that integrate culture into language instruction could be valid (Gambhir, 2001). "There is a good reason to believe that an effectively designed, culturally oriented curriculum for a less commonly taught language is likely to add significantly to the appeal of a program" (Morahg, 1998: 6 cited in Gambhir, 2001: 218). Sun and Kwon (2020) explored how cultural diversity is

represented in the materials as well as the ideologies that underlie such representations. Their findings reveal that the analysed textbooks in Chinese and Korean languages embody a monolingual, monocultural, and static view of culture, language, and identity. Their argument is that heritage language textbooks should focus on promoting multiculturalism, dynamic forms of ethnic identification, and critical consciousness, to better support immigrant students as they navigate the ever-changing and increasingly heterogeneous world. They also emphasise the need to develop heritage language textbooks that are relevant to the learners' dynamic and complex identities in a transnational and multicultural/multilingual context.

In the Year 5 Tamil textbook, the topic of multiculturalism is described in detail for the purpose of teaching about diversity in Australia so that the learners could become prepared to accept and respect other communities of different language and culture backgrounds. This is an extract from a conversation:

> In Australia, people from hundreds of ethnic groups are living together in unity. People from various countries have contributed to the development of Australia. Australia began to follow a multicultural policy strongly in 1972 … In addition to Australia, New Zealand, Canada, England, and European countries such as France, Germany, Switzerland and Denmark are also following a multicultural policy (Year 5, Unit 8).

Although students might have learnt about the multicultural policy of Australia in their mainstream schools, Tamil schools make attempts to reinforce the understanding of diversity while focusing on teaching Tamil language and culture. More importantly, the ideas of diversity and acceptance of different languages and cultures are linked to Tamil values.

> For people from different cultures, speaking different languages and having different ways of life to live peacefully together, some basic characteristics are essential. Respecting other cultures, tolerance, accepting differences and treating all equally are important. We call these values. These values are not new to Tamil people. A Tamil poet has said before 2000 years ago: '*Yathum ure yavarum kelir*'

> To us all towns are one, all men our kin *... yaadhum oore* means all places in the universe are our place (Year 5, Unit 8, p 17).

This view contests the notion of some monolingualist ideologies of language, which imagine monolingualism as a universal norm and link multilingualism to cognitive confusion, intergroup conflict, and a lack of national cohesiveness. This contributes to the portrayal of bilingual speakers as intellectually compromised (Leeman, 2012). By relating characteristics of Tamil culture to universal values such as tolerance, respect and treating people equally, the authors of the textbook have provided opportunities for the learners to think critically. The textbooks also give examples from Tamil literature:

> The value of treating all people equally has been part of Tamil culture. *Thirukkural*, written by a prominent Tamil scholar *Thiruvalluvar* portrays a great way of life. It says, 'we need to tolerate even the people who have done bad things to us' (Year 5, Unit 8, p17).

Multiculturalism is officially a recognised policy in Australia. The policy was introduced to Australia in the 1970s, replacing earlier assimilationist approaches to addressing diversity. At that time, a new wave of immigrants was beginning to increase ethnic and cultural diversity (Elias et al., 2021). Tamil children attending mainstream schools usually learn the details of multiculturalism in various subjects. However, the authors of the Tamil language textbooks have included this topic so that the Tamil leaners could get their cultural perspectives of multiculturalism and develop awareness of their own language and culture in this process. Although this topic belongs to the NSW curriculum area of Human Society and its Environment, it has been included in Tamil language textbooks due to the significance of multiculturalism for the Tamil language learners. Instead of focusing explicitly only on the development of the community language, intercultural competence and knowledge of the host country, Australia, have been included.

Another significant aspect outside the above-described themes, 'Changing status of Tamil women' is found in a unit in the Year 8 textbook. This could be seen as a sign that through teaching Tamil language to the younger generation, Tamil people in Australia are actually influencing and controlling the continuities while challenging transition and transformation of their customs and traditions in the new settings. With the purpose of showing the benefits of living in the host country, the lesson describes the progress Tamil women are making as a result of the changing status of women:

> Tamil women lived in Tamilnadu in the long past, missing opportunities to study. Cooking, looking after the household chores, and then after marriage taking care of the husband, having children and looking after them were their routine tasks. It was stressed that women should not go outside their home on their own. They had to depend on their parents and brothers for their protection and then on their husband.

> *Barathi*, a prominent Indian Tamil poet wrote actively on the education of women and encouraged women to join men in the freedom struggle during the colonial period … Women in the diaspora began getting more and more opportunities. They drive vehicles and they are moving freely everywhere. Now, Tamil women enjoy freedom in pursuing education, jobs and their movement. So, they are able to marry any as per their choice. Women must make attempts to progress overcoming hurdles (Year 8, Unit 10, p 40).

In Chapter 4, the textbook data have been discussed based on the key themes that emerged from the analysis. Major categories such as 'Learning Tamil language and maintaining cultural practices', Family connections in Tamil society in diaspora', and 'Tamil values and literature' have been presented under a broader theme 'Instilling Tamil way of Life'. The content of the textbooks revolves around these areas, directing the learners towards a Tamil way of life while living in Australia. Other identified categories such as 'Geography of Tamil-speaking communities', 'Proud history of Tamil People and arts', 'Tamil festivals and sports in diaspora', and 'Traditional food as part of cultural continuity' have been discussed under another theme 'Representation of Big Culture of Tamil people'. Domestic matters in Tamil textbooks have

been discussed under a separate category and a possible rationale behind their inclusion in the textbooks has been explained.

In the following chapter, the interview data is discussed in relation to the selected Tamil language textbooks. Research participants' views and opinions regarding their encounters in connection with the use of the textbooks in classrooms are presented and analysed.

Chapter 5   Analysis and discussion of interview data

5.1   Introduction

In this chapter, the interviews conducted with the teacher research participants using the Year 4 to Year 8 textbooks and the principal are analysed. As previously explained, the interview data is used in addition to the textbook data for investigating the research questions.

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret and describe the findings in light of the teachers' voices heard through the interviews, which have effectively highlighted useful information regarding the real experiences with teaching the topics in the classrooms. The ideas expressed by the research participants are thematically organised and discussed in parallel with the literature.

5.2   Tamil textbooks used in the diaspora

Ideas expressed by the research participants during the interviews regarding their experiences in using the textbooks and encountering the reactions of the students formed the basis for labelling thematic categories and subcategories. As stated in the thesis introduction, the study was about textbook analysis, not evaluation. The questions for participants were asked to find out if the content of the books would impact the identity formation process of the students attending the Tamil language classes (See Appendix 4: Sample Questions for Research Participants – a guide). The research participants also were asked to recollect and explain any special reactions/responses of the students in terms of their identity when they taught topics in the classroom. They were also asked to comment on whether any more topics/themes should have been incorporated into the contents to meet the objectives of Tamil schools in preserving language, culture and identity.

Teacher voices identified the practical aspects of dealing with the content of the textbooks during teaching. The teachers' perspectives were that in the textbooks there should have been more literature and stories to teach morals to the students and to contest Tamil cultural practices in the adopted country. These were adopted as subcategories (See Figure 5.1, which maps the interview data analysis). Further information from participants was classified under two different subcategories, issues, which they thought should be key topics: 'Tamil learners learn Tamil way of life' and 'Tamil culture and values should be key topics'.

Figure 5.1   Mapping of the interview data analysis
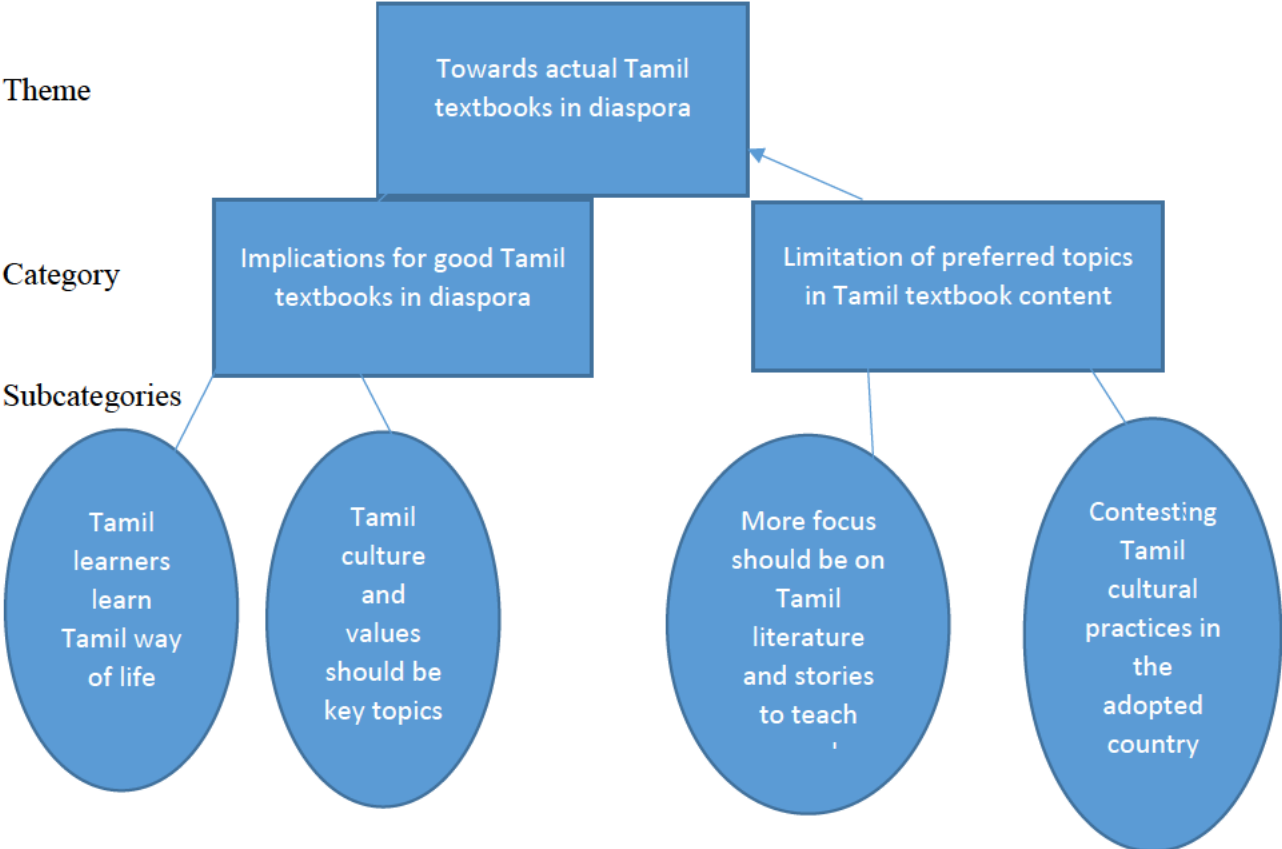
A category 'Implications for good Tamil textbooks in diaspora' was created based on the latter 2 subcategories. Based on similar ideas indicating some limitation in terms of the selection of the topics, the former 2 subcategories were put together under a category 'Limitation of topics in Tamil textbook content'. Then these two categories, due to similarity in meaning, formed a

broader theme covering key aspects filtered during the coding process (Saldana, 2016): 'Towards actual Tamil textbooks in diaspora'.

This broader key theme was identified from the research participants' interview data indicating what they thought should be the major concepts for actual Tamil language textbooks and should form the fundamentals for deciding what to include in the content. Although the purpose of the interviews was not to evaluate the textbooks for their choice of contents, there is no doubt that teachers' attitudes to a language textbook are key factors that could determine the effectiveness of the textbooks and their usefulness in a long term. For example, Alhamami and Ahamad (2018) state that teachers' positive attitudes towards textbooks is a guarantee of effective achievement of practical teaching and learning goals. Negative attitudes can ruin the whole process. While teachers, students and administrators are all consumers of textbooks, teachers may have conflicting views, based on their personal perspectives about what a good textbook should contain in the context of community language schools.

Renganathan (2015) states, in the case of Tamil language, that the diasporic population itself is highly diverse with many different characteristics including timing of migration, context of language life and retention rate. Renganathan (2015) also points out that identifying each of these learner groups on the one hand and trying to develop a pedagogically-sound language curriculum on the other hand poses two difficult challenges that must be mastered in all contexts of mother tongue learning and teaching. Although what is meant by pedagogically-sound language curriculum is not clear, the difficulties in designing a suitable syllabus for all learners in the diasporic setting are made clear.

Choosing relevant topics for the textbooks is one aspect in terms of the preparation of textbooks. Making the topics simple for the students to understand by using fewer complex words and

sentence patterns is another. A research participant explained the challenge in relation to the selected textbooks:

> Sometimes, it would be difficult for the students to think of some concepts in the textbooks. if small words and short sentences, students would be able to use small words to connect into short sentences. We separate words, then students would make mistakes. Because of the longer sentences in sequence, students find it difficult (P 1).

Observing the students' reaction and patterns of behaviour in the use of textbooks could provide useful insights into their effectiveness. The research participant revealed:

> The poems in Year 4 textbook were understood by students very well, they were also interesting for them…however the topics 'Wildfire' or 'Flood disaster' had difficult words for them to understand; they simply tried to use English words instead of searching the right Tamil words. My opinion is that lessons should be easy for students to understand (P 1).

While the topics in the textbooks are likely to help the students understand who they are based on the selection of necessary elements in the textbooks and respondents' remarks, understanding of the lessons was found wanting; simplifying words or sentence levels in term of language use was needed. As active interaction and participation of learners are also affected by these aspects of lessons, this may be a concern for administrators to investigate.

In response to a question regarding any potential influence of the content of the textbooks on the students, a research participant replied:

> In Unit 3, there is only word *Silapathikaram*, a[n example of classic Tamil] literature. We use the word and tell the story. We have regular cultural events, we also celebrate *pongal* and *Deevali* festivals. Then our students through these events, understand Tamil values (P 2).

Learning Tamil literature at Tamil schools could be enhanced by actively participating at the cultural events where the stories learnt in the classroom are played out in drama or dances.

5.2.1   Implications for good Tamil textbooks in the diaspora

There are no commonalities in the selection of topics or contents for Tamil language textbooks in the Tamil ancestral home countries such as Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka or in Tamil-speaking countries such as Malaysia and Singapore. Davis (2012) comments on the ways in which topics are selected for Tamil language textbooks in Sri Lanka based on the power and ideology of the people involved in the production of textbooks. This shows the factors that interplay in the decision-making processes of choosing subject matter for Tamil language textbooks. In Australia, the process may be more complicated because of the diversity of the Tamil-speaking community. Fernandez and Clyne (2007) describe the complex interplay of factors including country of origin, religious affiliation, level of education, medium of instruction, previous experience with English, attitudinal and sociohistorical factors, all of which interact to influence language maintenance and use patterns in the Tamil-speaking community in Australia. There is also a considerable variation in patterns of language use and attitudes to the maintenance of Tamil amongst Tamil families especially young learners.

However, some of the themes of the selected textbooks such as 'geography', 'culture' and 'history' seem to reflect the exact contents that parents, in general, expect community language schools to teach their children as reported by Gindidis et al. (2020) in the Community Languages Australia Parent Project. Although this project did not include interviews of parents from the Tamil-speaking community in particular, it was the first of its kind in exploring the views of parents with regard to learning resources being used at community language schools.

The image of a Tamil language textbook held by newly arrived Tamil immigrants as well as established Australian Tamils, is an ideal image. It corresponds to descriptions about the textbooks provided by other Tamil schools on their websites. While there are various perspectives as to what main aspects should be incorporated in the content of textbooks in the diaspora, this ideal stereotypical image is based on the expectations that the learners using the

textbooks should learn all the necessary elements of Tamil language, culture and identity. When asked if the students really enjoy reading lessons, P 1 responded:

> They don't seem to be reading the lessons for getting knowledge, but just for doing examinations.

The emphasis on examinations seems to be high. The possibility for students to continue their studies up to HSC level could be a reason for students learning examination strategies in the classroom.

5.2.1.1 Tamil learners learn Tamil way of life

As described in the literature review, the key purpose of establishing Tamil schools was to ensure that children of Tamil origin could learn Tamil language to preserve the language and culture in Australia. For example, the Australian Tamil Academy in Melbourne indicates its aim by stating: "learning our mother tongue offers insights into our culture, our identity, and our history. It also offers perspectives on our ways of thinking and relating to the world" (Australian Tamil Academy, 2020). Schiffman (2002), a scholar who has widely researched Tamil teaching and learning issues, confirms that Tamil linguistic culture is acutely concerned with language as the defining quality of Tamilness. For these reasons, the textbooks that are used at Tamil community language schools contain necessary elements of Tamil language and culture. The teachers using the textbooks revealed that they had positive attitudes towards teaching Tamil language, for example P 4 stated:

> My interest was to teach Tamil language to our children living here in the adopted country as much as possible. I taught Tamil well to my three own children. They took Tamil for their HSC examination as one of the subjects. Their ability to write, speak and read Tamil very well-earned recognition from the society and I am also proud of them.

What is interesting in P 4's response is that she uses a personal account as a way of specifying the preferred nature of the Tamil teaching and learning context. A good family could be an example for other members of the Tamil families to follow.

> Family is expanding into society, country. When the students learn about Tamil values such as love, forgiveness and understanding, family will form a strong foundation for them to become good citizens (P 4).

When asked if the textbooks could influence the identity formation of the learners, P 1 said:

> Yes, they do; I am not saying no. If the hard topics are made easy, students would understand easily; yes, there are some easy topics as well. Several authors together prepared the lessons for the textbooks. More similar lessons could have been included. It would be better if more lessons helping to actively interact with students had been included.

For the question on which areas of Tamil language, culture, history and heritage should be given priority in teaching Tamil, P 4 responded:

> If we want to prioritise, our tradition, family system and the fact as to how understanding, love and adjustment need to be in a family should be taught primarily. There is break down in many Tamil families after settling here in Australia. For this reason, we should teach much about Tamil culture to our students.

In terms of the strong connection between Tamilness and Tamil schools, Thurairajah (2021) comments on the identity formation process of Tamil youth living in Europe, stating that a way of preserving Tamilness was by enrolling children in supplementary Tamil language schools, as undertaken by a large network, the Tamil Education Service Switzerland. For example, the aim of a Tamil school operating under the network declares:

> The Tamil Education Service strives to teach Tamil to every Tamil child born in Switzerland, as well as to recognise and preserve their language's heritage, distinctive characteristics, and cultural values. Parents and educators who are

passionate about teaching Tamil continue to perform this sacred activity with a spirit of sacrifice (Thurairajah, 2021).

Tamil schools in Australia, as with all Tamil schools in the diaspora, also seem to be functioning in line with a similar agenda regarding the selection of culture specific topics for inclusion in the textbooks.

> Unit 1 of Year 6 textbook is on Family and relatives. Tamil children here in Australia mingle with the children of other different cultural backgrounds. Their cultures may not be compatible with ours. We need to strictly teach our children what our Tamil culture is. We need to tell them very often that we should be proud of the fact that we are Tamils. Our Tamil is one of oldest languages. As the owners of it, we should be proud of … we need to tell them again and again (P 4).

Protecting children from negative influences is a common expectation of parents when they are living in a new country. P6 could view Tamil school as a wall of protection. In the Canadian setting, although many migrant youth navigate the range of cultural experiences very well and adopt aspects of their parental culture and of the receiving society (Tyyskä, 2014), many Tamil youth do not feel they fit in either Sri Lankan or Canadian culture, and so they create hybrid cultures, mixtures of the two. In a multicultural society like Australia, this may become even more complex. Udah and Singh (2019) report from their study that although Australia is a multicultural society and many immigrants have contributed to ensuring high levels of cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic diversity, otherness remains a major problem in 21st century Australia.

Tyyskä (2015) comments on some of the trends in the Sri Lankan Tamil families in the Canadian setting. Parents' worry about ill influence of western materialistic and consumerist values on traditional values of respect for elders and family loyalty. Parents' see high value in education. Parental pressure on Tamil children to excel in school could lead to disagreements,

especially when parents compare their children with the children of others, a common practice in Tamil families.

Burgio (2016) also observed in the Sri Lankan Tamil communities in Italy "a noticeable sense of closure of the Tamil community, a suspicious of the culture of the countries where they have settled" (112). They seem to have chosen selective acculturation: they seek to acquire skills such as linguistic fluency and academic achievement, but refuse Western aspects considered unacceptable, safeguarding the cultural codes of their country of origin and maintaining community cohesion (Ambrosini, 2008: 35, cited in Burgio, 2016). This observation is of course not only paradoxical but highly controversial; while migration to western countries is seen as a move forward in terms of education and life opportunities, on the one hand, fear and suspicion of the western culture arise on the other.

The factors of fear and suspicion could have led the authors to choose concepts for the textbook content. P 4 justifies the topics and lessons in the Year 6 textbook in making sure that Tamil learners acquire knowledge and skills and thereby prepare themselves for a Tamil way of life in Australia:

> There are topics on Tamil culture and Tamil traditions. There is also a lesson on cultural values, illustrating Tamil cultural aspects. Then, there are our cultural values, our lifestyles, festivals, hospitality, relationships, respecting parents, elderly and teachers. This type of good characters should be taught (P 4).

There is a community expectation as expressed in the articles and messages in the magazines produced by Tamil schools for their annual cultural events that Tamil community language schools could provide a proper direction for the children attending Tamil schools to lead them toward a Tamil way of life.

> As Tamil school, textbooks and teachers are showing a way for the Tamil children to live with high disciplines, the children are growing up well (P 4).

Contrary to these comments, P 1 appears to have seen room for improvement in the text types. To make lessons more interesting, a combination of text types would be necessary according to P1's observation. There have been attempts to include a variety of text types such as travel letters and recipes, however reading comprehension has dominated as an aim of the lessons.

> In addition to reading comprehension, there should be items in the form of conversations so that students could practise their spoken Tamil. If they spoke, they will become confident in speaking; it would be easy afterwards to improve (P 1).

The structure of the contents in the textbooks is likely to limit the opportunity for teaching conversations or interaction activities. The reason could have been that Sri Lankan Tamils give priority to formal Tamil or written Tamil as opposed to spoken Tamil or colloquial speech. In a discussion of the principles of diglossia in the case of Tamil, Das (2008a) noted that in Montreal, Indian Tamils speak a vernacular, modern style of Tamil, and Sri Lankan Tamils speak a classical, literary style of Tamil.

> This diglossic compartmentalization of second-generation linguistic repertoires, such that Sri Lankan Tamil youth acquire literary Tamil competence, and Indian Tamil youth acquire only vernacular Tamil competence, seeks to preserve the purity of literary Tamil while maintaining ethnolinguistic status distinctions between Tamil subgroups in the diaspora. (Das, 2008a: 11).

However, this kind of sharp difference has not been researched in Australia. Difficulty in teaching spoken Tamil could have been a factor for not choosing the form of conversations in the selected textbooks. Lakshmi (2012) discusses the ways in which the challenges could be overcome by providing real examples of classroom interactions. Which variety or dialect of Tamil language to select for conversations could have been a question. Younger Tamil teachers in Singapore are making efforts to close the gap between formal written Tamil and standard spoken Tamil in their classrooms (Lakshmi and Saravanan, 2009; Saravanan et al., 2009). This issue might have forced the authors of the textbooks here in Australia to use written literary Tamil for the reading comprehensions.

Learners become aware of the Tamil people by studying the related topics. They get to know how Tamil language should be used; they also become interested as they study Tamil (P 1).

The purpose of teaching Tamil-related topics and lessons was to make the Tamil children become fully aware of their heritage and thereby, helping them to know who they are so that their identity could be clearly understood. P1 asserts that even the learners unwilling to study Tamil at the beginning could change their mind once they have seen some relevance in the topics being taught and they may show interest in learning.

To motivate students, more practical aspects could be added to the lessons.

Matters in relation to day-to-day life need to be in the lessons; then we could teach clearly, relating these to the festivals or cultural events. Students will understand practical aspects. I am not suggesting that students should forget our history, they should know. But spending too much time in teaching old history may not bring about any outcome (P 1).

An important point was made about adding audio visual resources for making learning more interesting.

When just information is given as to where Chennai is and where Madurai is in textbooks, students may not clearly understand. If through map and video more information could be provided, then they would see how globally Tamil people have been living and how proudly Tamil heritage has been existing for centuries (P 3).

The above comments show that teaching Tamil language and geography should incorporate audio visual aspects to make learning attractive and more practical. Instead of using reading passages just as information, the use of video, maps and relevant technologies could enhance the clear understanding of the topics. The learners could internalise the concepts and physical descriptions by seeing with their own eyes.

The places where Tamil-speaking people live have been included as topics in several units. They consist of historical homelands such as Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka and the diaspora countries as well. The geography of Tamil people might have been included to give the learners information about the extent of settlement to complement the proud heritage and history of the people.

> When we provide basic information and relevant details of the locations where Tamil speaking people are living, students get a sense that Tamil people who have a long heritage are proudly scattered around the world. This is good (P 3).

Below I explore the next subcategory that was produced during the data coding process: 'Tamil culture and values should be key topics'.

5.2.1.2   *Tamil culture and values should be key topics*

Another significant subcategory that emerged from teacher interviews was that Tamil language textbooks should contain Tamil culture and values as part of the content. P 2 expressed a view that in terms of cultural elements of the content of the textbook, there is less on Tamil culture and more on domestic matters. For example, Easter is not part of Tamil culture, but it is a topic in the textbooks.

> Easter is not related to Tamil culture, but when we teach about this, we relate it to agriculture of Tamil people (P 2).

P 2 also indicated this trend by providing examples such as the Australian parliament, Australian climate and zoos noting they are not part of Tamil culture. Students could learn these topics at their mainstream schools. Students primarily come to Tamil school for learning about Tamil culture, but there are not many topics in the Year 4 textbook for them to learn about Tamil culture as many subject areas that are not related to Tamil culture have been included in the textbooks.

My opinion is that there are less topics in Year 4 textbook related to identity of Tamils. I may be wrong, not sure, but in comparison, Tamil identity related topics are less in the textbook (P 2).

This shows the general view that migrant diasporas struggle to keep distinctive elements of the community identity alive, as migrants try to relate their cultural practices to the ones of the adopted country. Expecting all the cultural elements to be practised here in Australia, in the same way they were/are carried out back in the homeland, is a sign of the community's obsession with orientation to the homeland. In the diaspora studies (Brubaker, 2005) concludes that the most salient features of diaspora are dispersal or immigration.

For example, a research participant commented:

When we teach Tamil language using the topics such as Tamil traditions, Tamil heroes and homeland travel letters, students will respect Tamil culture highly (p 6).

There are also other features such as location outside a homeland, community, orientation to a homeland, transnationalism, and group identity (Grossman, 2019). Teachers' expectations that suitable topics, from their perspectives, should be included in the textbooks demonstrate their orientation to the homeland culture and tradition. Research participants recollected the experiences of the situations where learners expressed their interest to know the ways to connect to their Tamil identity through various symbols other than Tamil proficiency:

By teaching Tamil rituals, wedding procedures and food habits, students understand our practices. For example, a unit has a picture of using banana leaf to serve food. Children living in Australia my not know that it to be an act of respect to serve the guests in banana leaf. This unit in the textbook is useful for them to understand Tamil cultural practices (P 4).

There are many reasons for adapting practices and habits that are culturally rooted in the lifestyle of the country of origin in the host country. There is also a need for a lot of adjustments and changes in performing these practices. These are part of the homemaking processes of diaspora communities in their countries of settlement (Tharmalingam, 2016). In a study

regarding the role of homeland-based cultural practices in homemaking of Tamils and Somalis in Norway, immigrants' reasons for the adoption of homeland-based cultural practices have been identified as:

1. They are part of their tradition.

2. They provide happiness or comfort,

3. Relatives in the homeland expect them to maintain such practices.

4. Practices reduce nostalgia.

5. They provide a sense of belonging.

6. They function as identity markers (Tharmalingam, 2016: 88).

The authors of Tamil language textbooks in NSW could have acted with similar purposes.

A generic template of a K–10 Syllabus (reviewed and revised from time to time) designed for all community languages from the NSW Department of Education has been the guide. When asked the research participants about the selected Tamil language textbooks published by the NSWFTS, a response was:

> Compared with the years when locally produced Tamil language textbooks were not available, since the introduction of NSWFTS-produced textbooks became available, teachers found it easy to teach (P 1).

The above comment shows that positive attitudes of teachers about the textbooks could be a key factor in their successful use. Negative attitudes by teachers towards textbooks may have an opposite effect. The full cooperation and support of teachers will help lead to the intended outcomes; in the case of Tamil schools, the desired outcomes are to make the learners understand who they are and to develop a strong sense of belonging. Teachers' attitudes towards textbooks are shaped by many factors such as educational background, age, level of education and educational experience. Despite positive or negative attitudes towards the textbooks coming out in responses, interview questions did not explicitly seek them, as the focus was on

textbook analysis not on evaluation. Research participants were primarily led to discuss the potential impact of the content of the textbooks on the identity formation of the students.

Research participants also mentioned that by the time students reach Year 6 or 7 they may not really want to continue learning Tamil. At this stage they need good advice because by Years 10/11, it may be in their own interest in continuing Tamil studies. Speaking in English may not be seen as an achievement as English is the dominant language in Australia; however, if children growing up here can speak Tamil, this would be seen as something special, and family can be proud of it.

A few tensions and contradictions arose when discussing whether current affairs or Tamil culture should be integrated into the textbooks. For example, P 2 during the interview made it clear that she considers that mostly Tamil related topics are in the textbooks, but Australian affairs such as Bushfires have been included, and that this is good in a way. P 2 agreed that:

> Students could see that current affairs also can be discussed or learnt in Tamil instead of thinking that only stories about kings or literature could be learnt in Tamil (P 2).

Traditional sports was an attractive topic for many students according to the research participants as this topic provided opportunity for the mostly Australian-born Tamil children to think of the Tamil history in which these traditional sports were played and the continuation of these sports as part of Tamil cultural practices over the centuries. P 6 remarked:

> I teach one topic 'traditional sports' for example. The students at the school are mostly (3/4) born in Australia. They don't know much about Tamil traditional sports. Few students who came from Tamil homelands are also studying here. When I taught traditional sports such as *jallikattu, kittipul* and *killithattu*, comparing with Australian sports, the students studied with interest and eagerness to be involved in. They asked questions and came to know about Tamil traditional sports with enthusiasm (P 6).

The interviews allowed the teachers to express their opinion about using other topics of interest to the students when using the selected textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8).

> When we teach Tamil language using the topics such as Tamil traditions, Tamil heroes and homeland travel letters, students will respect Tamil culture highly (P 6).

By systematically identifying attractive and relevant topics for inclusion in the textbook may make the textbooks interesting for the students. For example, a research participant recounted her experience in teaching a topic on 'Caring for the elders' (Year 8, Unit 9):

> When I was teaching Unit 9 on 'Caring for the elders', after teaching the topic, I asked the students to write their experience with the elderly people staying with them at home. For this question, one student described his experience with his grandad very well. He wrote, explaining with his personal encounters, as to how an elderly person should be taken care and how to respect him or her. So, this lesson was very useful as it was relevant, and it related real experiences. The student searched for more information and developed interest in the topic. When there is a relationship between what they study here at the school and the experience they face, their learning is enhanced. (P 6).

P 4 is of the view that Tamil family values and family relationships should be taught more important. The first lesson in the Year 6 textbook is on family and relatives; this is good in terms of content:

> We need to emphasise on Tamil culture by telling the students mostly about our culture, family structure, and the ways in which love and understanding should be maintained (P 4).

The reason for more focus on Tamil cultural elements in the textbook, according to the participants is that when Tamil children are growing up in Australia there is a need for teaching them Tamil values. Nevertheless, tensions between existing and emerging ideologies are usually found within the same communities. From this perspective, it is important to recognise that an ideology of primitivism within the heritage language still exists in many contexts within the Tamil diaspora of Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, 2019). The pattern is that the youth of the

community adopt predominantly pragmatic ideologies, while the elders adopt relatively conservative positions. Not only are there ideologies of different generations, but there is also a difference between the ideology the young people profess and the ideology that emerges in everyday practice (Canagarajah, 2019). This could be an issue of generational gap in terms of the language use.

Next, I explore the subcategory 'More focus should be on Tamil literature and stories to teach morals'.

5.2.2 Limitation of preferred topics in Tamil textbook content

In the production of Tamil language textbooks by the NSWFTS, although there might have been some discussions with teachers, it appears that no systematic consultation process has been carried out. The authors chose the topics and wrote lessons for the textbooks in line with the guidelines of the Department of Education regarding community language education. When asked about the topics of history and relevance, P6 pointed out that while history is important,

> Topics of more current affairs and practical aspects of present life would be better to engage students (p 6).

Although it was a positive response by the research participants in general, it indicated that the locally prepared textbooks reduced the issues of using imported Tamil language textbooks for the learning community regardless of their relevance and suitability.

> In unit 9, there are sentences on *baratha natyam* (Tamil classical dance),; that is good, mentioning Tamil arts only, there is a song as well (P 2).

Some of the topics were handled by teachers facing challenges in teaching due to the subject matter and unfamiliar vocabulary. P 1 discussed an important point:

> However loudly teaching about bushfire, students wouldn't focus on it. For this reason, I avoid teaching this topic. I need to tell about this in Tamil and then in English. What is the use of it? So I don't take this topic (P 1).

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This comment raises questions (in addition to the content selection) regarding the use of language/s whether Tamil or English by teachers in the classroom to explain the lesson topic. The general expectation is that teachers need to use primarily Tamil language in their interactions with the students although this could be interpreted as "monolingual, purist or separatist" type of language teaching pedagogy (Creese and Blackledge, 2022). The target language is currently heavily emphasised in the heritage language teaching arenas; in the case of Tamil classes, teachers are not expected to use English language for explanation. However, translanguaging as a pedagogical heuristic helps create a space to unlock the voices of these minority language students (Wu and Leung, 2022). Many scholars have recently researched the use of translanguaging (Creese and Blackledge, 2022). Translanguaging is an umbrella concept that refers to the theory of bilingualism, communicative practices, and educational attitudes, all of which have the potential to transform our understanding and approach to multilingualism and multilingual education (Mazak 2017). Creese and Blackledge (2015) describe translanguaging as the enactment of language practices that use different features that had previously been independently constrained by different histories, but that now are experienced against each other in speakers' interactions as one new whole. Moreover, translanguaging goes beyond code-switching, but incorporates it. Teachers who embrace translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy usually encourage students to draw on their full range of communicative resources to engage with academic materials (García and Sylvan 2011).

Opinions regarding the linguistic patterns in the lessons were also expressed by the research participants, not necessarily as criticism, but as their ideas for improvement. Through the experience in teaching some lessons in the textbooks, P 1 recollected the challenges regarding language structures contained in the lessons:

> In the lesson, we should not give hard words; when see the textbooks, there are such words; they should not be hard for learners. If you look at the sentences, they are

too long. It would be better if the sentences are not too long. I hope this will be reviewed (P 1).

Although instructions and advice were provided in the prefaces of the textbooks that teachers could modify the delivery of lessons in a way that would suit the knowledge level of the students, some of the difficulties embedded in the lessons such as those above might have caused challenges.

I explore below the broad theme that emerged from the data 'Towards actual Tamil language textbooks in diaspora'.

5.2.2.1   More focus on Tamil literature and stories to teach morals

The comments made by respondents also indicated that they wished there had been more literature and stories in the textbooks to teach morals to students effectively. For example, P 5 expressed concerns regarding the lack of stories, poems, or other forms of literature in the textbooks that could influence students' life and moral sense.

From the perspectives of teachers using the textbooks, they tend to justify the teaching of culture, religion and relevant practices. In practical terms, this is likely to help the Tamil language learners develop their characters and discipline according to the research participants' comments.

> Through relevant topics such as religious practices and learning of Tamil arts back at home in the Tamil homeland, we teach Tamil culture to the students. For this reason, compared to the children who are not attending Tamil schools, those who are learning Tamil language at community language schools are likely to become highly disciplined (P 3).

Moral values could be taught through literature to improve attitudes to handling social situations. Moreover, Shinde (2021) reiterates that literature can be an effective tool in nurturing ethics and values such as humanism, kindness, honesty, justice, and truthfulness. P 5 was

concerned about the absence of useful stories in the textbooks which could teach good habits to Tamil language learners:

> Having desire to do good things is important in life. There are not enough poems or other forms of literature in the textbook to teach this aspect to the students. This is a great asset for our children. Our aim is not just to teach Tamil for passing in the examination. We need to teach Tamil for using it for a better life. Language as a way of life (P 5).

By linking language with a way of life, the research participants make a connection with Tamil language with social practice in a specific context. CDA uses a range of techniques to study language use as a social and cultural practice (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough explains the close relationship between text, interactions and context:

> So, in seeing language as discourse and as social practice, one is committing oneself not just to analysing texts, nor just to analysing processes of production and interpretation, but to analysing the relationship between texts, processes, and their social conditions, both the immediate conditions of the situational context and the more remote conditions of institutional and social structures (Fairclough, 1989: 26).

As emphasised by the research participant, the effective use of Tamil language is considered as a desired outcome. Simply passing examination by artificially memorising the language may not be useful. The active use of Tamil language could be encouraged by incorporating tasks in the textbooks according to the suggestions by the research participant. What matters is the linguistic context that treats language as a social practice. Language is a social and cultural tool, and our reality is socially and culturally constructed (Fulcher, 2010). Language is central to critical discourse analysis.

In addition, P 5 commented that more literature in Tamil language textbooks could be used for values education, for developing appropriate habits and behaviour involving inculcation of certain moral values. The teacher compared her previous Tamil teaching experience with the textbooks used in Singapore.

If we just say this is discipline or good character, students will not understand; however, if we tell them through as story in which one person lived and something happened to him and how his life ended as a result, they will understand. Ghandi became a great man by reading the story of *Harichandran** (P 5).'

* Mahatma Gandhi lived his life by observing the truth after he came to know about *Harichandran.*

Patrick (2017) points out that many ancient models of *Purana* have been used to teach morality in Tamil literature. The example of Harichandran is the most prominent of them. Not to mention the level of standard that this character achieved in the general Indian spirit of honesty. Experts in education suggest that literature can be a good way to teach character because "literature lends itself to the teaching of specific moral dilemmas and the examining of specific character traits" (Prestwich, 2004: 143). Students are more likely to internalise and remember the lessons that they learn from these stories or literature. Students can also learn to monitor their behaviours by reading stories and fables having a moral behind them. "Every fable or any reading material with a moral leave a deep impression in their young minds and they are in a position to imbibe such values in their day-to-day living" (Shinde, 2021: 186). More importantly, literature powerfully allows students to appreciate their own culture and cultural heritage while learning morals incorporated in the literature.

Although P 5 expressed her view that sections from wisdom literature or more moral stories should have been incorporated in the early part of the interview, she was weighing up the dilemmas of the authors of the textbooks and later wanted to appreciate their efforts in general. P 5 summed up by saying that:

The authors of the textbooks should be appreciated for incorporating all necessary aspects in the content.

More stories should have been added in the textbook, P 5 remarked, and the reasons being that students may not seriously think about bushfire or *Ramayanam* topics due to the complexity of

the concepts involved. For students to learn Tamil interestingly, more moral stories should be added. But, she commented, these should be simplified to help student understanding.

Other participants corroborated P5's views. If these stories are taught in a manner that students could easily understand, the students will be motivated, and morals will be learnt.

> In the way stories are taught, the students start liking to read them and understand the concepts and try to follow. When old stories about Rama are told, students are motivated to read them. After listening to the story in the classroom, the students began to look further for the story (P 3).

The research participants believe that through stories very useful morals and good characters could be instilled in students.

> Students attending Tamil schools are more likely to be interested in understanding disciplines, Tamil values and good behaviours, compared to the ones not attending (P 3).

P 7 also expressed concerns that key Tamil literature that could teach good character and discipline to the students were not found in the textbook. *Aathisoody*, *Konraiventhan*, *Moothurai Thirukkural*, proverbs and idioms could be effectively used to teach good discipline to students. However, they are missing from the textbooks:

> I am looking for a section in all textbooks *Aram, '*Acting selfless' or 'Helping others' … there are not literary songs or poems to teach children good disciplines (P 5).

An important teaching strategy specified by one participant was that instead of using the name 'literature' in a lesson, students could be told 'stories':

> We used to tell stories; students like them very much, without telling them it is literature; when we tell stories, they would be interested (P 1).

This view is related to pedagogy, not about the textbook. It is up to the teachers as to how they handle teaching literature. It should be noted that some scholars are of the view that teaching morals using literature may not simply be reflected in the characters of the learners or taken up

in their behaviours. For instance, Rest (1982) and his colleagues argue that there are various natural or biological factors involved in shaping the character and behaviours of learners. Rest (1982) views that morality should be seen as an ensemble of processes, the actual psychological processes of morality rather than a single process. Moral development entails gaining proficiency in key component processes such as interpreting a situation morally, formulating the morally ideal course of action, deciding what one intends to do, as well as executing and implementing what one intends to do. Moral education is believed to be the result of life-long influences, both in and out of school. Simply teaching ethics and moral elements explicitly or through literature in education may not necessarily translate into good characters or behaviours of the learners.

Schlaefli et al (1985) expressed views that educational programs fostering development in moral judgment may or may not affect the other processes that determine moral behaviour in concert with moral judgment. Questions remain as to whether moral judgments that shape people's behaviour in real life can result from moral education programs.

They also pointed out that no studies have demonstrated explicitly that these moral education programs have definitely brought about changes in behaviour. However, the educational institutions such as schools and universities still have the strong belief that teaching morals through relevant programs could positively impact the character development processes of the learners at various levels (Catalano et al. 2008). The assumption that the characters of children could be developed through moral education is fundamental to the design and development of courses at schools and other educational institutions.

Next, I explore the subcategory 'Contesting Tamil cultural practices in the adopted county'. This discussion, further to the previous analysis, brings new examples of how the research participants believe the textbooks could better serve the Tamil language students.

5.2.2.2 *Contesting Tamil cultural practices in adopted countries*

Pongal, the harvest festival for the Tamil in South India and Sri Lanka, is celebrated in January following the solar calendar. It should be stated that the words '*pongal*' and *thaipongal*' are used interchangeably meaning the same. *Pongal* means the 'boiling over' of milk and rice during the month of *Thai*. The festival marks the commencement of the Sun's northern course when it enters the sign of Capricorn. It is a 4-day fun-filled festival, with family, social and religious activities. It usually falls on the 14th day of the month of January every year. Apart from its astronomical significance (as the Sun begins its northward movement for the next six months from this day), the day is also celebrated as *Uzhavar Thirunal* or the 'Farmers' Festival'. That is because it provides the farmers the occasion to celebrate by cooking the new rice with jaggery, from their harvests (NCERT, 2018: 142). However, In Australia, cooking takes place inside houses because setting up fire outside is against law. The original celebration should be done outside as praying to the sun is part of it. Verkuyten et al. (2019) discuss the sociocultural adaptation processes of immigrants and point out that making adjustments in maintaining culture in the adopted country is a necessary aspect of a migrant's life. One could debate as to why a farmers' festival such as *Thaipongal* should be celebrated in a city in a developed country like Australia. In an agriculture-based civilisation the harvest plays an important part in the cultural practices. The farmer cultivating their land depends on cattle, timely rain and the Sun. Once a year, they express their gratitude to these during the harvest festival.

However, the research participants observed some contradictions in celebrating *Thaipongal* in Australia. The problem of celebrating this in the original way in Australia is described by a teacher as:

> *Thaipongal* is originally celebrated back in the homeland with cooking milk rice in front of the house. But this could not be done here in Australia as using fire outside is against law (P 2).

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This shows the practical considerations faced by immigrants in following the traditional practices here in the adopted nation. *Pongal* is one of the most important festivals celebrated, as with other cultural practices, by Tamil people in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Puducherry in India. It is also a major Tamil festival in Sri Lanka. It is observed by the Tamil diaspora worldwide, including those in Malaysia, Mauritius, South Africa, Singapore, Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. This shows that the Tamil people want to celebrate it even though the new locations may not provide authentic settings. Bennett et al. (2014) examine the close connections between diverse local and global cultures, communities, identities, and lifestyle stories constructed and experienced in the context of festivals. Based on various case studies in Australia and Europe, festivals are explored as venues for performance and for the critique of lifestyles, identities and cultural politics. They are a means to mobilise and strengthen local and global communities and are events that inspire and define meaning in people's lives. Bennett et al. (2014) explore how festivals are more than just regular, cultural, religious or historical events within communities; they are a popular way for citizens to consume, produce and experience culture. The authors also highlight the growing diversity of contemporary society and the role that festivals play as venues for cohesion, cultural criticism and social mobility. Therefore, the event is an important aspect in teaching Tamil language. Other festivals mentioned by research participants were *Deepavali* and Tamil new year.

The above-mentioned issues could be understood as part of the process of reconstructing a sense of home in Australia. Various scholars have also identified the methodical attempts of the Tamil community to preserve their ways of life in exile (Bruland, 2012; Perera, 2016, 2017; Paramsothy, 2018 cited in Kandasamy et al., 2020). Embuldeniya (2011) describes in detail the efforts of Sri Lankan Tamil people in reproducing home in Toronto, Canada. In Australia, according to Kandasamy et al. (2020), some of these social and cultural developments could

take place through Tamil language schools, Hindu temples and Tamil church services, ethno-specific organisations, youth organisations and charity initiatives. The intergenerational transmission of homeland values and cultures clearly exemplifies what Edward Said described as the unique pleasure of the exile condition in which "there is a sense of achievement in acting as if one were at home wherever one happens to be" (2001: 186).

Chapter 6   Conclusion

6.1   Findings

Whilst in the previous chapters I have tried to present and analyse the textbook data and the interview data separately, in this chapter I try to integrate both data, seeking similarities and tensions between the findings of both sets of data to form a conclusion. In fact, the interviews and the textbook data reveal strong connections that stress, on the one hand, the key aspects of Tamil language education in NSW, and on the other hand, the critical issues that demand change if Tamil language community schools want to further engage the Tamil youth in their culture and traditions, thus influencing the identity construction processes of their learners.

Analysis of the two sets of data provides a lens that examines what is called the deeper or hidden social, political and cultural curricula of communities (Williams, 2014). The findings of this study in terms of the selected textbooks are also in line with Risager's (1991) view that it is extremely difficult for teaching materials to be socio-culturally neutral because they must express a social order and value system, implicitly or explicitly. One of the significant findings which emerged from this study is that the contents of the five textbooks seem to portray the social order and value system of the Tamil-speaking communities. However, it is interesting to note that while the Tamil people's social order and value systems were being portrayed positively, contents related to Australian domestic affairs were not presented in any negative manner. P 2's view that "Easter is not part of Tamil culture, it has been included in a unit; we teach this comparing with a Tamil festival" may be out of the assumption that Tamil culture is closely connected with Hindu practices, but not necessarily against Australian domestic events.

Another important finding is that Tamil students in Australia may experience conflicts with cultural values and beliefs owing to the strong emphasis on family obligations, cultural practices as they are carried out in the homelands, ethnicity, and the legacy in Tamil values. Teachers

may be put in a challenging situation if students strongly contest certain ideas when these textbooks are used in the classroom.

The findings of this research support that students' motivation may be positively affected if the contents in the textbooks that they are learning are portrayed as evidence of a proud history and this could shape their personal worldview. Evidence from research participants described in Chapter 4 shows that students were motivated to learn more about their history. However, there is likelihood of over glorifying the history and hiding the reality.

Grandparents purposely talk to their grandchildren to have a positive impact on their perspectives. For example, in the Year 4 textbook, Grandpa teaches his grandchildren about the value of several cultural items, such as food, clothes, festivals, and particularly language, to build the Tamil culture that will contribute to their Tamil identity in the diaspora.

It is also significant that the content of selected textbooks relates several Tamil cultural values to universal values like honesty, desire to help others, as well as respect for the elderly, parents and teachers. The authors have not made attempts to compare Tamil cultural values with local Australian (Western) cultural values or provide any judgements about them in the textbooks. However, a research participant commented on teaching Tamil as safety steps from unfamiliar cultures. In the multicultural settings it is unavoidable for the members of the Tamil community to mingle with the members of other cultures on a regular basis. Therefore, it is essential that the members of the Tamil community should have a clear understanding of the norms and standard behaviours expected of them.

Based on the cultural knowledge embedded in the content of the textbooks it is expected that the textbooks would introduce the learners at Tamil community language schools to the Tamil culture recognised and valued in Tamil Nadu, India, Sri Lanka and Tamil-speaking communities in the diaspora.

In general, the findings of this study suggest that the analysed textbooks and the interviews of the research participants have highlighted the following:

- **Contesting Tamil cultural practices in adopted countries** – Tamil learners are made aware of the tension in following several cultural practices such as festivals and traditional food in Australia according to the research participants' comments. Data from interviews suggest that students seem to question as to why these practices are carried out in Australia. Adjustments are shown as necessary in finding a balance. Global and local tensions and their intersections play an important role in the complex identity building and internal localisation within the diaspora group.

- **More focus on Tamil literature and stories to teach morals** – The key role of Tamil literature and stories in teaching morals in Tamil classrooms to the learners is emphasised by the research participants. Inclusion of more literature and stories for guiding their lifestyle are suggested based on the small number of stories found through the textbook analysis.

- **Tamil culture and values as key topics** – Textbooks for Tamil as a community language need to contain more topics on Tamil culture and key values so that the learners acquire knowledge and skills to become conversant with them, as suggested by the research participants.

- **Learning Tamil way of life** – Major components of the content in the selected Tamil language textbooks appear to guide learners for choosing a Tamil way of life while growing up in Australia. Through historical facts and acclaimed literature appropriate direction is shown to the learners, as per the research participants' views.

- **Learning Tamil language and maintaining cultural practices** – By incorporating cultural events such as wedding and festivals in the textbooks, the authors conform to the notion that learning a community language in the diasporic setting could help the learners

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to maintain cultural practices while understanding the rationale behind them. Research participants also confirmed that this could make the learners become aware of Tamil cultural practices while living in Australia.

- **Family connections in Tamil society in the diaspora** – Family visits within Australia and visiting ancestral homelands to see relatives are topics in the selected textbooks. These stress the significance of family connections in the diaspora and practical aspects of using Tamil language in enhancing the family relationships. Both textbook and interview data provide evidence for the significance of family connections.

- **Geography of Tamil-speaking communities** – For the identity construction process of the Tamil language learners, the topic of locations where Tamil-speaking people live could be an important enabler. Textbook analysis found several topics about locations where Tamil speaking people live. This could make the learners understand they belong to a Tamil-speaking community and are part of an ancient linguistic culture, as commented on by the research participants.

- **Proud history of Tamil people and the arts** – Topics such as brave Tamil kings, Tamil scholars and prominent Tamil people in the textbooks could provide high self-esteem and thereby, provide motivation to learn the Tamil language. A strong attachment to Tamil ethnic identity and a healthy sense of belonging are expected desired learning outcomes.

- **Tamil values and literature** – The inclusion of literature throughout the textbooks indicates a strong belief of the Tamil educators that selected Tamil Literature such as *Thirukkural* and *Aathisoodi* could expound values, ethics and moralities. Tamil education aims not only at developing the language knowledge, but also moral values and understandings required in different the 'walks of life', as commented on by the research participants. However, the respondents expressed the view that instead of using literature

itself as providing information and direct instruction, there could be an emphasis on stories or narratives to suit the age level of the learners.

- **Tamil festivals and sports in the diaspora** – Ancient Tamil sports and common festivals such as *thaipongal* and *deevapali* have been included as part of Tamil cultural practices in the selected textbooks. As the purpose of teaching Tamil language is to transmit Tamil culture to the younger generation, these events are also taught. According to the research participants, while Tamil festivals are celebrated in Australia, the Tamil sports described in the textbooks just give information as to how they were played in the past.

- **Traditional food as part of cultural continuity** – Preparing a Tamil traditional food *mothakam* is a topic in the textbook. Eating the traditional food is a way of continuing a cultural practice in the adopted country for the immigrants. Each native has a responsibility to exhibit their individuality as an essential part of culture and heritage, particularly in the special foods they have to offer. According to Stringer (2009), food – and its preparation and consumption – can be seen as a key aspect of cultural identity that belongs to the particular society or ethnic group Thus, traditional food is viewed as a symbol of heritage, trademark, and culture.

- **Domestic matters in Tamil textbooks** – A question arises as to why some domestic affairs such as bushfires and flood disasters have been included in the textbooks. The research respondents were of the view that these topics could be learnt by the Tamil students in English at their mainstream schools. Instead, more Tamil language and culture related topics could have been included in the textbooks.

Although the 2 data segments, textbooks data and interview data were different in format, the overall data have revealed important features in the ways in which the textbooks could influence identity construction processes of the learners. By making the learners become consciously aware of the Tamil culture and its proud history with the help of such learning resources,

identity consciousness could be activated. A comprehensive list of topics has been incorporated in the content of the textbooks for the purpose of teaching the students about Tamil language, culture and identity related matters. A more systematic selection and grading of the topics for the textbooks could have assisted in the logical arrangement of lessons. The inclusion of activities or tasks using Tamil language would have provided opportunities for the students to put Tamil language knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom into practice. Written rather than oral use of Tamil has been given prominence in the selected textbooks that were analysed.

Further comments on the findings

This research has been guided by textbook analysis as an emerging distinct subfield of applied linguistic research aimed at examining textbooks as curricular-cultural artefacts. The notion that textbooks also communicate important meanings through their content and design (Weninger and Williams, 2005) has been critical. This study examined how the textual material in textbooks represents people, geography, cultural elements and language in the context of learners at Tamil community language schools in NSW as well as how it positions and shapes learners' understanding towards their identity construction.

Although the content of the selected Tamil language textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8) appears that it had not systematically been graded for the cognitive level of the learners, the subject matters contained in the textbooks were consistent with the stated common objectives of the Tamil community language schools. The major ideas found in the textbooks include: the proud history of the Tamil people, festivals and key events as cultural practice, the geography of Tamil-speaking communities, Tamil literature as a source of values, traditional food as a means of cultural continuity, the importance of education, and an emphasis on family connections.

Community language schools in Australia are established so that children of immigrants could have opportunities for them to maintain their languages, cultures, and identities represented,

valued, and celebrated in the adopted country (Community Languages Australia, 2021). Tamil community language schools allow Tamil immigrant families to preserve their ancestral language and ensure that the elements of language and culture are transmitted to the younger generation. The findings of this study demonstrate how the selected textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8) used in Tamil community language classrooms represent Tamil language, culture and identity-related aspects and in ways they could potentially influence the identity construction processes of the learners. By knowing more about these matters, students became aware of their heritage to which they belong, as a first step to identity construction.

As the policy documents such as the Tamil Schools' Constitution declares, the aims and objectives of the schools are to preserve Tamil language in Australia and transmit language and culture to the younger generation growing up in Australia. The focus of the study was analysing the content of the selected textbooks (Years 4 to 8) as to how it could influence the identity construction processes of the learners.

The study focused on analysing selected Tamil language textbooks (Year 4 to Year 8). In addition, the principal and teachers using the textbooks were interviewed regarding the textbooks as described in the Chapter 3. The data were analysed using thematic analysis informed by a CDA framework, investigating if the textbooks could influence the identity construction process of the learners attending Tamil community language schools. On the one hand, the content of textbooks focusing on the elements of Tamil language and culture create direction for a Tamil way of life. On the other hand, the content choice for textbooks seemed to have been made as a balancing act to also include domestic affairs, not necessarily related to Tamil culture. As far as the research participants were concerned, the textbooks contain necessary elements for teaching Tamil language and culture. However, whilst they recognised this, participants also mentioned that more items focusing on Tamil cultural values and

literature to teach morals should have been included in the textbooks, so to warrant a more holistic Tamil cultural experience for the students.

The administrators of the Tamil schools want to ensure that young Tamil children growing up in Australia could have opportunities for learning Tamil language and thereby later could pass on the traditions to the next generation as well. The parents are teachers and teachers are parents too, in many cases. They were the authors of locally produced Tamil language textbooks that were gradually introduced a decade ago after giving up the use of imported homeland textbooks. There was no needs analysis for choosing the appropriate topics. Tamil scholars such as writers and teachers met together and discussed matters in association with the NSW Federation of Tamil Schools. They simply assumed that the selected topics would be the ones that students were expected to study. They changed the topics several times and edited their writing before publishing and consulted the NSW Department of Education for making sure their departmental guidelines in terms of community language education were followed.

While examining the contents of the textbooks as to how or whether this could impact on the learners' identity formation, it should be emphasised that the real process of identity construction of the learners is within the minds of the learners. Therefore, if this process is to be understood clearly, conversations with the learners would have been a meaningful way to exactly know what is going on in their minds. A survey or discussion with the parents of the learners also could have been another effective way to find how or whether using the Tamil language textbooks for learning Tamil influence, in any way, the identity formation of the learners. However, this type of combined exploration was not part of the study.

A monocultural view of Tamilness could marginalise Tamil as Community Language (TCL) learners in both the home and the host societies if the Tamil way of life is taught as the best and superior to others. This study suggests that TCL education should avoid an essentialised view

of the learners' language, culture, and experiences. Instead of too much ancient history of the Tamil people, issues of the not-too-distant past also should be taught to the learners for them to see Tamil as a living language. Such curriculum and materials should focus on students' own transnational experiences, celebrate their use of full cultural and linguistic repertoires, and day-to-day practices, foster their development of critical consciousness, and encourage them to (re)define their own identities and aspirations. By cultivating multiculturalism, dynamic forms of ethnic identification, and critical consciousness, the TCL curriculum can better support immigrant students as they navigate the ever-changing and increasingly diverse world. This study contributes to the field of TCL curriculum by analysing the representation of culture in the NSW Federation of Tamil Schools produced Tamil language textbooks that are widely used in Tamil community languages schools in NSW. Further research is needed to investigate whether textbooks for other CLs reveal a similar pattern of monocultural representation. It is especially important for future studies to investigate to what extent CL teachers and learners engage or disengage in developing analytical skills to resist reproducing the monolingual and monocultural discourses legitimated in the textbooks.

Thematic analysis of the selected textbooks indicated what type of key aspects had been chosen by the authors to include. A similar analysis of the interviews of the research participants assisted in verifying the issues about using the textbooks in classrooms and the ways in which the learners reacted to the contents of the textbooks. However, the opinions expressed by the research participants could have been influenced by their own perspectives as to how Tamil language textbooks should be.

6.2   Limitations

The students attending the Tamil Schools under study are predominantly of Sri Lankan Tamil origin. The findings of the study therefore can reflect only one segment of the Tamil-speaking

community in New South Wales. Another limiting factor is that my previous association with the Tamil Schools being studied, may have meant that the research participants thought that I already knew the answers to the many interview questions asked. For example, they could have skipped explanation of factors in detail on the assumption that I already knew them. However, one of the aspects of a qualitative research is making the familiar strange especially when the researchers own experience mirrors that of their participants. (Mannay, 2010). Moreover, qualitative research is by its nature a subjective enterprise even though the questions in the semi-structured interview were framed according to the intended objectives of the study. The responses in the interviews may not completely reflect the reality. They had to be subjectively analysed. As a Researcher I did not strive to achieve objectivity because this would strip away the setting from the topic of research. With an awareness of these issues, I made genuine steps to overcome them. A significant limitation of this study was that Tamil language learners and their parents were not interviewed to know any impact the textbooks would have on the identity construction of the learners. The learners and their parents are important stakeholders in the teaching program. Their views could have provided very useful inputs.

A point worth noting is that attempts to interpret these findings exactly revealed some of the difficulties of the qualitative method used in this study. A suggestion for future research could be that at least a basic level of statistical/quantitative analysis of the textbook contents be combined with the qualitative/thematic analysis results to assist with their interpretation. Although the results/findings drawn from the data, both textbooks and interviews, are guided by a thematic analysis, the conclusions expressed have been of a single researcher, not a collective perspective.

The study did not cover the teachers of Year 9 and above where Identity issues might have been particularly observed by teachers. There are no textbooks for Year 9 and above and specific themes are selected to teach the students of this level using various learning resources.

Additionally, ethnographic qualitative inquiries such as classroom observation and focus groups or surveys are necessary to understand how classroom practices can mediate HL learners' meaning-making process beyond the textbooks.

6.3   Implications for future research

In the absence of research on Tamil education in Australia, this study has highlighted some issues at least at Tamil community language schools in terms of the textbooks and their content. The findings could lead to research on other areas in relation to Tamil language education in Australia. Two important changes that are taking place could require an appropriate response from Tamil language educators. One is the increasing number of children attending Tamil schools who are born in Australia. The other is that the Tamils of Indian origin in Australia have started outnumbering the Tamils of Sri Lankan origin (ABS 2016). These two developments could require redesigning of Tamil language curriculum and pedagogy. It is almost three decades since Tamil language education in Australia began; no research has been carried out to find out facts or evaluate the teaching programs. Antony (2012) in his studies, concentrated on the lifestyles and experiences of British-born young Tamils, and explored various components of their identities that demonstrated difference to the Tamils born overseas. This type of scholarly enquiry is necessary to explore the context of Tamil education in Australia.

The highest level of learning Tamil is currently Year 12, through the HSC in New South Wales and VCE in Victoria, although there are digital education opportunities available for undertaking studies beyond these levels. Over the 2 decades since 2001, many Tamil students have continued their studies up to Year 12 and taken Tamil language as a subject for their university entrance examination. However, no research has been carried out to know if learning of the Tamil language to this level while living in Australia has shaped their lives and world

views differently. In terms of the fact that Tamil language textbooks are directing a Tamil way of life, it could be useful if the impact on the students who continued studying Tamil up to Year 12 and took Tamil language for their HSC examination could be investigated. Research on this topic in the future could reveal very useful facts regarding Tamil learning and real-life issues and the ways in which Tamil education has had real impact on the learners in their lives.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Details of contents of textbooks Years 4 to 8

Lesson topics

Based on the textbook data analysis, it has been observed that the content of the selected textbooks (Year 4 to 8) contains primarily elements of Tamil language, culture and identity-related topics. Direct and indirect messages and references could be seen on the importance of learning Tamil language and continuity of traditional and cultural practices in Australia. The following table (Table 1) shows the percentage of Tamil language and culture related topics of each textbook.

Year 4

Table A1   Tamil Year 4 textbook content

Unit	Tamil	English translation of key point/s
1	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **travel**
2	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **cultural food**
3	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **learning of Tamil language and fine arts**
4	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **importance of education**
5	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **Australian indigenous people**
6	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **Australian birds and animals**
7	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **travel with relatives and Australia**
8	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **climate, environment and traditional Tamil food**
9	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **Tamil language and fine arts**
10	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations –**Easter holiday**
11	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **communication with grandparents**
12	No topic name or heading	Story, narratives and conversations – **communication with grandparents & Tamil homeland and Tamil diaspora**

Through stories, narratives and conversations, the authors have incorporated key ideas or concepts in each lesson of the Year 4 textbook for the learners to know Tamil language and culture. Textbooks, given their role as an important source of Tamil language input and cultural knowledge in communication language education, have been used a key medium for representing cultural values and beliefs. More importantly, the conversations between

grandfather and grandchildren have been purposefully included with examples of day-to-day activities of family settings. Topics were interconnected, as were concepts within them. Although some topics reflecting the diasporic setting were chosen, the main ideas included relate to Tamil cultural values and lifestyle; necessary pictures have also been included. Major subjects of the content include learning Tamil, arts and culture, the importance of education, traditional food, family relationship and communication with elders. However, topics not related to Tamil language or culture have also been covered. For example, in some lessons, there are references to Australian birds and animals, Australian Indigenous people and Australian climate and environment. Vocabulary or words used in different regions of Tamil-speaking communities are incorporated.

Year 5

Table A2   Tamil Year 5 textbook content

Unit	Tamil	English translation
1	தமிழரின் சிற்பக்கலை	Sculpture arts of Tamil people
2	தமிழ் நாடு	Tamil Nadu
3	ஈழநாடு	Ealanadu
4	இராம கதை 1	Rama story 1 (Ramayanam)
5	இராம கதை 2	Rama story 2 (Ramayanam)
6	காட்டுத் தீ	Bush fire
7	உலகத் தமிழர்	World Tamils
8	பல்லினக் கலாசாரம்	Multiculture
9	தமிழ்க் குடும்பம்	Tamil family
10	பாப்பாய் பாட்டு பூக்கள் விந்தை அறிந்திடு மரங்கள் நல்ல மரங்களாம்	Children song Flowers Know the tricks Trees good trees

Unit	Tamil	English translation
	வாழ விடு	Let live

The content of the Year 5 textbook is mainly the geography of Tamil-speaking communities with details of settings and lifestyles of various places where Tamil people live including a topic titled 'World Tamils'. However, this does not provide necessary and comprehensive information about the Tamil people of all locations. Tamil people's sculpture has been included as part of proud history. The important item of Tamil literature 'Ramayana' has been included in simplified story form in two lessons. Because of the young age of the children in Year 5, poems are in unit 10 of the textbook. Wildlife was a general topic not related to Tamil culture but provided information on the Australian context.

Year 6

Table A3 Tamil Year 6 textbook content

Unit	Tamil	English translation
1	குடும்பமும் உறவினர்களும்	Family and relatives
2	கல்வி	Education
3	தமிழரின் விழாக்களும் விளையாட்டுகளும்	Festivals and sports of Tamil people
4	தமிழ் அறிஞர்கள்	Tamil scholars
5	தமிழ் விஞ்ஞானிகள்	Tamil scientists
6	தமிழ்க் கலாசார விழுமியங்கள்	Tamil cultural values
7	மோதகம் அவித்தல்	Making '*mothakam*' (Tamil food item)
8	தமிழர் வீரம்	Tamil bravery
9	தமிழ் மொழியும் தொழில்நுட்பமும்	Tamil language and technology
10	வெள்ளப் பெருக்கு	Flood disaster

In the Year 6 textbook all the topics other than 'Flood disaster' were about Tamil people, Tamil language and Tamil culture and values. The topic 'Making *mothakam,* a Tamil food item' was in a conversation format with the participants asking questions and responding. Selected sports and festivals were described with necessary details.

Year 7

Table A4   Year 7 textbook content

Unit	Tamil	English translation
1	எனது பூர்வீகம்	My heritage
2	புலம்பெயர்ந்த நாடுகளில் தமிழர்	Tamils in diaspora
3	தமிழ் ஊடகங்கள்	Tamil media
4	பாரம்பரிய உணவு	Traditional food
5	தமிழ் வரலாற்று நாயகர்கள்	Tamil historic heroes
6	சாதனை படைத்த தமிழர்கள்	Tamil achievers
7	ஒவ்வொரு பூக்களுமே சொல்கிறதே	'Every flower tells' (Tamil movie song)
8	திருமண விழா	Wedding ceremony
9	காலநிலை மாற்றம்	Climate change
10	உயிர்களிடத்தில் அன்பு	Love animals

In the Year 7 textbook, other than a general topic 9 on climate change, all other topics were on Tamil cultural aspects. The first topic on 'My heritage', was in the form of conversations where a group of students attending Tamil classes share the experiences of their homeland visits and discuss matters regarding their origin or heritage. Topics 3 and 4 contained passages giving introductions to the geography of Tamil-speaking communities both historical and in recent diasporic settings and to Tamil media organisations such as radio, newspapers and television services and their operations in the Tamil diaspora. As part of the proud history of the Tamil

people, Topics 5 and 6 consist of stories about selected Tamil historic heroes and Tamil achievers. Topic 4, 'Traditional food' was also in a different format (a recipe and set of instructions telling how to make *Dosai* in the form of a script for a Television program: 'Lets learn traditional cooking'). A Tamil wedding ceremony was the subject of topic 8 in which a description of a marriage event with details is provided. A story of a Tamil king was the topic of Unit 10 of the Year 7 textbook. Sibi was a righteous king. A hawk chased a dove and the dove sought protection from Sibi.

According to the preface of Year 7 textbook by Coordinator of the Book Committee, NSW Federation of Tamil Schools, there were 2 workshops for teachers based on the learning outcomes described in stages 4 and 5 of the Tamil syllabus that was designed as per the Languages K–10 curriculum of the NSW. The Year 7 textbook was written to contain the topics chosen, as a team by the Year 7 teachers and the teachers of higher-level classes who had participated in the workshops. Lessons were prepared for the students to know about their heritage, Tamil cultural aspects, the Tamil diaspora, Tamil kings, Tamil high achievers, acts of kindness as per Tamil's ancient tradition, and their global existence based on the objectives of community language education. There are lessons on Tamil media and Tamil food and climate. Moreover, a Tamil movie song titled 'Ovoru flower' that won the Indian National Award has been included for inculcating students with high ambitions and self-confidence.

Year 8

Table A5   Year 8 textbook content

Unit	Tamil	English translation
1	ஓய்வு நேரம்	Hobby
2	தமிழர்களின் பாரம்பரிய விளையாட்டுகள்	Traditional sports of Tamils
3	உடற்பயிற்சியும் நலவாழ்வும்	Exercise and healthy life
4	ரீயூனியன் தீவில் தமிழர்கள்	Tamils in Reunion Island

Unit	Tamil	English translation
5	பல்கலாசாரம்	Multiculturalism
6	பயணக் கடிதம்	Travel letter (homeland visit)
7	தனிநாயகம் அடிகளார்	Thaninayagam (Tamil scholar)
8	தமிழ் வீரத்தின் சிகரங்கள்	Tamil bravery
9	முதியோர் பராமரிப்பு	Care of elderly people
10	மாறிவரும் தமிழ்ப் பெண்களின் நிலை	Changing status of Tamil women

Units 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 in the Year 8 textbook are about Tamil people, their proud history and homeland connections through travel, and again the geography of Tamil-speaking communities. General topics such as 'Hobby', 'Care of elderly people', 'Multiculturalism' and Exercise and healthy life" have been included. The majority of the topics are connected with the Tamil-speaking world. Unit 6 has provided a travel letter as text describing the experiences of a Tamil Australian's homeland visit after a very long time away from it.

Appendix 2:   Participant information sheet – Research participants

Project Title: Community Languages Schools in Australia: investigating the roles of textbooks in shaping the students' identity construction processes, in particular, of Sri-Lankan/Indian Tamil Schools in New South Wales "

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Kulam Shanmugam, School of Education at the Western Sydney University under the supervision of Dr.Jorge Knijnik and Dr. Katina Zammit, School of Education.

Project Summary: The Census 2016 shows an increase of 50% in Tamil population who speak Tamil at home. Latest data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS-2016) shows that the number of speakers of Indian languages in general have grown in Australia in recent times, one that witnessed a significant increase in the number of speakers in Australia during this period is Tamil (73,161).
Despite the fact that Tamils are one of the major emerging communities in New South Wales, there has not been any study about the Tamil speaking communities in terms of language education practices at Community Language Schools.

My study examines how textbooks, in terms of teaching Tamil as heritage language, shape the identity formation of students attending Tamil schools. Primary focus will be on the textbooks used in Tamil community language schools in NSW. The research design will involve conducting interviews - case studies with regard to Year 4- Year 8 textbooks being used at Tamil community language schools comparing their curricular resources and issues, and exploring how the schools operate in the current language education policy context and if the programs have any influence in shaping the identity formation processes of students. In the Australian setting, a study of this emerging linguistic group, therefore, will provide useful information to the language policy makers and educators.

How is the study being paid for? [Australian Government Assistance]
Australian Government provides assistance to Higher Degree Research students to encourage research. The course is fee free. HELP is also available for deferring any payment of student services & amenities fees (SSAF) linking with Australian Taxation Office.

What will I be asked to do?
You will be asked to answer questions and give your opinions regarding any connection between identity construction processes of students and Tamil teaching/learning programs. These interviews can be either in a face-to-face mode or using online means. (ADD THIS TO THE PRINCIPAL'S INFO SHEET TOO).

How much of my time will I need to give?
30-45 minutes, a follow up interview could be conducted for 15 to20 minutes for confirming or verifying your responses.

What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?
This study is expected to reveal useful information regarding the ways in which Tamil Community Language Schools shape the identity construction processes of the students attending the schools. My study could provide meaningful insights into the roles of Community Language Schools that are part of NSW Languages Education. The study could aim at examining the profiles of the learners in order to create materials that are appropriate to their ages and levels of proficiency. This study will also aim at identifying possibilities for improving quality curriculum practices in community language schools. The findings and recommendations coming out of my study could have useful inputs for educators and policy makers dealing with the education of other linguistic minorities in Australia as well.

Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?
NO, you will be asked ahead of time about any questions that you may not like to answer if they cause discomfort for you.

How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?
It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published in my doctoral thesis, etc (see the other info sheet) and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified, except with your permission.

Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?
Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide and that your data will not be used in any other projects. Please note that minimum retention period for data collection is five years post publication. The data and information you have provided will be securely disposed of.

Can I withdraw from the study?
Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate you can withdraw at any time without giving reason.
If you do choose to withdraw, any information that you have supplied will be securely disposed of.

Can I tell other people about the study?
Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the Chief Investigator's contact details. They can contact the Chief Investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain a copy of the information sheet if they want to know more about the research.

What if I require further information?
Please contact Kulam Shanmugam should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate. If necessary you can also contact my supervisors Dr.Jorge Knijnik (61 2 9772 6552) or Dr.Katina Zammit (61 2 9772 6291).

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.
Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher/s.

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [H14085].

Appendix 3:   Consent form

Consent Form – General (Extended) – Research Participants

Project Title: "Community Languages Schools in Australia: Investigating the roles of textbooks in shaping the Sri-Lankan/Indian Tamil students' identity construction"

I hereby consent to participate in the above named research project.

I acknowledge that:

•   I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s

•   The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to:

[Insert tick box option for each specific activity e.g.]

☐ *Participating in an interview*

☐ *Having my information audio recorded*

I consent for my data and information provided to be used in this project and other related projects for an extended period of time.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published and stored for other research use but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University. The ethics reference number is: H*[14085]*

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix 4: Sample interview questions for research participants – A guide

General

Could you please tell me briefly about you. How did you get interest in teaching Tamil,

born here or overseas?

How many years have you been teaching Tamil for?

Trained as a language teacher or not – local or overseas?

Any inspiration or passion?

Which group of students do you teach? Primary- intermediate- higher

Any training in teaching Tamil is necessary in your view?

Do you have chances to develop your teaching skills if you need?

Do you see any difference between teaching Tamil here and teaching in the homeland, if so what and how?

Could you describe any teaching methods that you use are similar or different in teaching language in the mainstream schools in Australia.

Selected textbooks and identity construction

THE ROLE OF TEXTBOOKS IN SHAPING THE IDENTITY FORMATION PROCESSES OF STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

OPINION OF TEXTBOOK CONTENT IN GENERAL

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU THINK THE CONTENT CAN SHAPE IDENTITY, SENSE OF BELONGING OF STUDENTS

WHAT ARE THE KEY AREAS – HISTORY, CULTURE, MORALS, BEHAVIOUR, STORIES FOR EXAMPLE

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE REGARDING ANY TOPICS OR STUDENT REACTION/RESPONSE

ANY CHALLENGES ISSUES IN TEACHING THE TOPICS RELATED TO CULTURE OR TAMIL COMMUNITY

DO YOU WANT TO ADD ANY IDEAS OR VIEWS REGARDING THE TEXTBOOKS (ADDITIONAL TOPICS)

On material/tasks

*What is your opinion about the material currently used?

What do you think about the topics/content of the textbooks series in general (selected Tamil textbooks, Year 4-Year 8) that you are using?

Do you think any more topics to be included, if so what and why?

Do you think if the topics can help students to know who they are? If so in what ways?

*Do you have any preference over the material used, Sri Lanka, Indian or locally produced material; why?

Any comments on the contents of the texts used?

Do you have any preference with regard to material/text? Why?

What types of material do you use at school?

*What is your opinion about the material currently used?

What do you think about the topics/content of the textbooks?

Do you think any more topics to be included, if so what and why?

Do you think if the topics can help students to know who they are? If so in what ways?

*Do you have any preference over the material used, Sri Lanka, Indian or locally produced material

How do you get them?

Are there any problem in using the material? if yes, specify.

மாணவர்களின் தமிழ்க் கலாச்சாரம் பற்றிய உணர்வையும் அடையாளத்தையும் வடிவமைப்பதில் புத்தகங்களின் பங்கு

ஆசிரியர்களுக்கான நேர்காணல் கேள்விகள் - ஒரு வழிகாட்டி

Interview questions for participants – a guide

- அறிமுகம்- கற்பித்தல் பின்னணி - உங்கள் ஆர்வம்

Introduction: teaching background; your interest

- நூல் பொருளடக்கம் தொடர்பான(தமிழ்க் கலாச்சாரம் உணர்வு, அடையாளம் பற்றிய தலைப்புகள்) பொதுவான கருத்து

Contents of textbooks (topics related to Tamil culture, identity) general perspectives

- எந்த வழிகளில் நீங்கள் பொருளடக்கம் , மாணவர்களுக்கு தமிழ் கலாச்சார உணர்வு, அடையாளம் பற்றி கற்பிக்க முடியும் என்று நினைக்கிறீர்கள்? ஏன் ? எப்படி?

In which ways do you think the contents of textbooks will teach about a sense of Tamil culture and identity? Why? How?

- முக்கிய பகுதிகள் என்ன? - வரலாறு, கலாச்சாரம், ஒழுக்கங்கள், நடத்தை, எடுத்துக்காட்டுகளுக்கான கதைகள்

What areas are important? History? Culture? Morals? Behaviour? Stories for example?

- எந்தவொரு தலைப்புகள் அல்லது மாணவர் / பதிலளிப்பு தொடர்பான தனிப்பட்ட அனுபவம்? சொல்ல விரும்புகிறீர்களா

Do you want to tell your experience about any topics or students reaction/feedback?

- கலாச்சாரம் அல்லது தமிழ் சமூகத்துடன் தொடர்புடைய தலைப்புகளை கற்பிப்பதில் சவால்கள் / இல்லை

Any challenges in teaching culture or themes regarding Tamil culture? Or no challenges?

- புத்தகங்கள் (கூடுதல் தலைப்புகள் சேர்க்க விரும்புகிறீர்களா? Do you want to add any additional topics to the contents?

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- புத்தகங்கள் குறித்து மேலும் எந்த கருத்துக்களையும் பார்வைகளையும் சொல்ல விரும்புகிறீர்களா?

  Do you want to tell any more ideas/opinion about textbooks?

  நன்றி- Thank You