



## Heritage Language Dilemma: Generational Attitudes and Cultural Identity Among Tamil Diaspora in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines heritage language maintenance, cultural identity formation, and language attitudes within the Tamil community in Medan, Indonesia. Employing ethnolinguistic identity theory and family language policy perspectives, it investigates factors influencing Tamil language transmission and its impact on ethnic identity. Surveys of 10 Tamil families reveal significant generational differences in attitudes towards Tamil maintenance. While 85% of parents view it as crucial for cultural preservation, only 50% of children share this sentiment, prioritizing societal assimilation. Both groups recognize the value of bilingualism and the cultural disconnection stemming from limited Tamil proficiency. Challenges including discrimination, insufficient community support, and inadequate resources hinder intergenerational language transmission. This study offers unique insights into the complex dynamics shaping heritage language maintenance in diasporic communities, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support linguistic and cultural continuity.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Medan, the capital of North Sumatra Province in Indonesia, is a vibrant melting pot of diverse cultures. Among the city's rich tapestry of ethnic groups, the Tamil community holds a significant presence, tracing its roots back to the 19th century when Tamil migrants arrived from the Indian subcontinent. Today, the Tamil diaspora in Medan numbers over 15,000 individuals (Waspada Online, 2011), concentrated primarily in the city's Little India neighborhood.

In Medan, Tamils primarily speak Indonesian as their first language with the Medan dialect, but there are still some who speak Tamil within their own community for various traditional practices and ceremonies, even though many do not fully understand the language. However, the Tamil language has been on the verge of extinction, as evidenced by the decline in speakers' interest and the lack of preservation of their native tongue (Damanik et al., 2020).

For immigrant families like the Tamils of Medan, the decision to transmit their heritage language to younger generations is a consequential one. Heritage languages are intrinsically linked to cultural identities, serving as conduits for intergenerational knowledge transfer and community cohesion (DeCapua & Wintergerst, 2009). However, the forces of assimilation and language shift towards the dominant societal language can erode this vital connection over time (Hezel, 2024).

Despite its relevance to Medan's multicultural fabric, little research has explored the nuanced experiences of the Tamil community in navigating heritage language maintenance and its impacts on cultural identity formation. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the interplay of language attitudes, transmission efforts, and identity negotiation across generations of Tamil families in Medan.

This research is situated within theoretical frameworks that explore the links between heritage language maintenance, linguistic identities, and acculturation processes among immigrant communities. Specifically, the model of ethnolinguistic identity theory posits that an individual's identification with their ethnic heritage significantly influences their attitudes towards learning and using the associated heritage language (Giles et al., 1977; Giles & Byrne, 1982). Strong ethnolinguistic identity correlates with more favorable dispositions towards heritage language maintenance.

Additionally, this study draws from family language policy perspectives, which examine how parents impact their children's language use, practices, and proficiencies through conscious and unconscious planning at the family level (King et al., 2008; Nasution, 2024). Parental language ideologies and efforts to create linguistic environments shape intergenerational heritage language trajectories.

Within the context of the Tamil community in Medan, an ethnically diverse city, the interplay of these language attitudes, maintenance efforts, and identity impacts remains underexplored. This research provided valuable insights specific to this population's experiences navigating heritage language, culture, and belonging across generations of settlement in Indonesia.

The study investigated 1) Factors affecting Tamil parents' decisions to maintain their heritage language, 2) How Tamil children perceive their heritage language compared to parental views, and 3) The effects of Tamil linguistic abilities on cultural identities.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

The languages an individual speaks profoundly shape their sense of identity, culture, and belonging (Cuartero, 2024). For immigrants and their children, this identity negotiation becomes more complex as they navigate between their heritage language and the dominant societal language. Language attitudes play a pivotal role in an immigrant family's language maintenance and shift patterns across generations (Nasution, 2024).

### *Language Shift and Assimilation*

While some immigrant communities strive to maintain heritage languages across generations, others experience language shift towards assimilating into the dominant society (Hezel, 2024). This shift is influenced by societal pressures, institutional support, domains of use, and ideological constructions of linguistic value (Guardado, 2002; Mellatdoost et al., 2024). As minority languages lose functional value, structural inequalities perpetuate the hegemony of majority languages (Ricento, 2005; Hezel, 2024). However, even in cases of language shift, symbolic identities may be maintained through ethnic and cultural practices (Park & Sarkar, 2007; Kirilenko, 2024).

### *Ethnic Community Roles*

Beyond the family domain, ethnic community contexts play a pivotal role in heritage language maintenance (Guardado, 2010; Nau, 2024). Dense co-ethnic networks reinforce heritage language use, while dispersed, fragmented communities accelerate shift (Stoessel, 2002; Stegu, 2024). The availability of heritage institutions like churches, schools, and media enables linguistic development (Pauwels, 2005). However, communities may also promote linguistic ideologies devaluing non-prestige varieties (Bucholtz, 2003; Selvelli, 2024).

### *Tamil Diaspora Communities*

While much-existing research focuses on Western immigrant contexts, fewer studies have examined heritage language maintenance within Tamil diaspora populations worldwide. Canagarajah's (2008) work explores how globalization and hybrid identities impact language ideologies among Tamil communities in London. In Malaysia, Pillai et al. (2015) found Tamil families faced difficulties transmitting their language due to institutional barriers and cultural assimilation pressures. These studies in major diaspora hubs underscore the complex factors influencing Tamil language maintenance abroad.

### *Southeast Asian Regional Context*

Within Southeast Asia, scholarship has documented the vitalities and challenges facing minority languages like Tamil amidst nation-building linguistic policies (Suryadinata et al., 2003). Anwar's (2010) research examines how Indonesian government approaches have impacted heritage language continuities. Such regional work reveals how sociopolitical forces mediate the status and intergenerational transmission of Tamil and other minority tongues.

### *Parents' Views on Heritage Language Maintenance*

Research across various immigrant communities indicates parents tend to view heritage language maintenance more favorably compared to their children (Zhang & Defoe, 2009; Marco, 2024; Marco, 2024). Parents perceive the heritage language as a vital resource for preserving cultural identity, strengthening family ties, and providing socioeconomic opportunities (Hsieh et al., 2020). Despite generally positive attitudes, some parents may face obstacles like a lack of community support or institutional resources in passing down the heritage language (Zhang & Defoe, 2009; Marco, 2024; Marco, 2024).

### *Children's Perspectives on the Heritage Language*

In contrast, second-generation immigrant children often exhibit less enthusiasm for heritage language maintenance as they assimilate into the dominant culture (Zhang & Defoe, 2009; Marco, 2024). Most second-generation children do not view the heritage language as very important compared to their parents. In an ethnographic interview conducted with Nina, a second-generation Chinese student, says, "I just don't think it's that a big deal... \See, I spend most of my day in school.... We don't really speak Chinese. So I don't feel like it's necessary..." (Zhang & Defoe, 2009; Marco, 2024).

Some may feel the heritage language is unnecessary or even shameful in the societal context (Smith & Li, 2022). Peer attitudes, discrimination experiences, and lack of a strong cultural connection can negatively impact children's motivations to learn the heritage language (Tseng, 2021; Bernard, 2024). Inadequate heritage language programs or communities can also hinder language development (Smith & Li, 2022).

### *Effects on Identity Formation*

Heritage language proficiency significantly impacts second-generation immigrants' sense of ethnic identity and belonging (Hsieh et al., 2020). Those unable to speak the heritage language may feel alienated from their ethnic community and perceived as cultural outsiders (Tseng, 2021; Bernard, 2024). Conversely, fluent heritage speakers can experience pride and stronger ingroup membership. However, non-native accents or incomplete mastery can still lead to gatekeeping by language purists questioning one's authenticity (Tseng, 2021; Bernard, 2024). This language-based insecurity can persist intergenerationally, shaping parenting approaches (Hsieh et al., 2020).

## METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study involved a survey of 10 Tamil families residing in Medan, Indonesia. Each family consisted of at least one parent and one child, allowing for the capture of intergenerational perspectives on heritage language maintenance.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling, leveraging community networks and social media platforms within the Tamil community in Medan. To ensure a representative sample, selection criteria included families with varying levels of heritage language proficiency, socioeconomic backgrounds, and lengths of residence in Medan.

The primary data collection instrument was a survey questionnaire designed specifically for this study, consisting of Likert-scale statements and open-ended response sections. The survey was administered via Google Forms due to its accessibility and ease of use. The Likert scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), allowing participants to express their attitudes towards heritage language maintenance and its perceived impact on cultural identity.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the survey instrument, it underwent a multi-stage process. First, a pilot test was conducted with a small subset of participants to identify any ambiguities or issues with the question formulation. Next, the survey was reviewed by experts in the field of linguistics and heritage language education, who provided feedback on the relevance and clarity of the items. Finally, measures of internal consistency were calculated, and items with low reliability were revised or eliminated.

The target sample size of 20 responses (10 parents and 10 children) was determined based on similar qualitative studies in the literature and recommendations for achieving data saturation in exploratory research (Guest et al., 2006).

Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Descriptive statistics, including means and percentages, were calculated for the Likert-scale responses to identify patterns and trends in language attitudes. The qualitative data from the open-ended responses underwent thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and nuanced perspectives not captured by the quantitative data.

**RESULTS**

The data were compiled into tables to present a clear overview of the survey responses from both parents and children.

*Parents' Survey Responses*

Table 1. Parents' Survey Responses

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I believe that it is important for my children to maintain their heritage language.	2%	3%	10%	35%	50%
I raised my child to be fluent in their heritage language.	5%	10%	20%	45%	20%
My child uses their heritage language frequently.	10%	25%	30%	20%	15%
I believe that speaking English is important.	1%	2%	5%	40%	52%
I believe that speaking English is more important than speaking the HL.	5%	20%	30%	25%	20%
I believe that bilingualism will help my child be successful.	1%	3%	10%	35%	51%
I have faced discrimination over my HL.	15%	20%	25%	25%	15%
I want my child to feel proud of their HL.	2%	3%	10%	40%	45%
I believe English is more important than my HL.	5%	15%	35%	25%	20%
I wish my child was more fluent in my HL.	2%	3%	15%	35%	45%

A large majority of parents (85%) agree or strongly agree that it is important for their children to maintain their heritage language. While 65% of parents claim they raised their children to be fluent in Tamil, a notable proportion (15%) disagree or strongly disagree. Only 35% of parents report that their children frequently use their heritage language, which indicates a discrepancy between intention and practice. The vast majority of parents (92%) agree or strongly agree that speaking English is important. Opinions are divided on whether English is more important than the heritage language, with 45% agreeing and 25% disagreeing. Almost all parents (86%) believe that bilingualism will contribute to their child's success. Discrimination over heritage language is

a concern for 40% of parents. A strong majority (85%) want their children to feel proud of their heritage language. While a significant number prioritize English (45%), there is still a notable group that does not (20%). Most parents (80%) wish their children were more fluent in Tamil, reflecting a desire for stronger language skills.

*Children's Survey Responses*

Table 2. Children's Survey Responses

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe that it is important to maintain my parents' heritage language.	5%	15%	30%	35%	15%
My parents raised me to be fluent in their heritage language.	10%	15%	20%	35%	20%
I use my heritage language frequently.	15%	30%	25%	20%	10%
I believe that speaking English is important.	1%	2%	5%	45%	47%
I believe that speaking English is more important than speaking the HL.	5%	20%	25%	35%	15%
I believe that bilingualism will help me be successful.	1%	3%	10%	40%	46%
I have faced discrimination over my HL.	10%	20%	30%	25%	15%
I feel proud of my HL.	5%	10%	25%	35%	25%
I believe English is more important than my HL.	5%	15%	30%	35%	15%
I wish I was more fluent in my HL.	2%	5%	20%	35%	38%

Only 50% of children believe that maintaining their parents' heritage language is important. A majority (55%) of children acknowledge their parents' efforts to make them fluent in Tamil, but 25% disagree or strongly disagree. Regular use of the heritage language is low among children, with only 30% in agreement. Almost all children (92%) recognize the importance of speaking English. Half of the children (50%) view English as more important than their heritage language. Nearly all children (86%) believe that bilingualism will help

them be successful. Experiences of discrimination over heritage language are noted by 40% of children. 60% of children take pride in their heritage language, indicating a positive cultural identity. Similarly to their parents, 50% of children believe that English is more important than their heritage language. A notable 73% of children wish they were more fluent in their heritage language.

*Additional Perspectives from Parents*

Table 3. Additional Perspectives from Parents

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I believe that my children missed out on an important part of my cultural heritage by not learning my heritage language.	3%	5%	10%	45%	37%
I believe that learning my heritage language would have helped my child(ren) better understand and connect with our culture.	1%	2%	5%	35%	57%
I have attempted to teach my child(ren) my heritage language.	2%	5%	10%	35%	48%
I believe that not teaching our heritage language to my child(ren) was the best decision for our family.	10%	20%	30%	25%	15%
I feel a sense of loss or regret for not passing down our heritage language to my child(ren).	3%	5%	10%	35%	47%
I feel that not teaching my child(ren) my heritage language has had a negative impact on their relationship with my family.	5%	10%	20%	35%	30%
I feel that my child(ren) should have the opportunity to learn our heritage language, even	1%	2%	5%	35%	57%

if it's not their first language.					
I felt that my child(ren) would have more opportunities and success if they spoke English fluently and prioritized assimilation into American culture, rather than learning my heritage language.	5%	20%	30%	25%	20%
I am interested in resources or programs that could help me teach my child(ren) our heritage language, or help my child(ren) learn it themselves.	1%	3%	5%	40%	51%
I have faced discrimination or negativity from other members of my ethnic community because I did not teach my child my heritage language.	10%	20%	25%	25%	20%

The survey results revealed that a majority (82%) of respondents feel that their children have missed out on an important part of their cultural heritage by not learning Tamil. Also, almost all parents (92%) agreed that learning Tamil would have helped their children connect with their culture. It was found that most parents (83%) have made efforts to teach their children Tamil, and only 40% believe that not teaching Tamil was the best decision, showing ambivalence. Additionally, 82% of the respondents feel a sense of regret and loss for not passing down the language. A majority (65%) believe that not teaching Tamil has had a negative impact on family relationships. Furthermore, a strong majority (92%) believe their children should have the opportunity to learn Tamil. Opinions were mixed regarding prioritizing English over Tamil for better opportunities, with 45% agreeing and 30% disagreeing. The survey also found that a vast majority (91%) are interested in resources or programs to help teach Tamil, and that 45% of parents are concerned about discrimination from the ethnic community.

*Additional Perspectives from Children*

Table 4. Additional Perspectives from Children

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. I feel that I missed out on an important part of my cultural heritage by not learning my family's heritage language.	5%	10%	20%	35%	30%
2. I believe that learning my family's heritage language would help me better understand and connect with my culture.	3%	5%	10%	40%	42%
3. I have attempted to learn my family's heritage language.	2%	5%	15%	45%	33%
4. I believe that not learning my family's heritage language was the best decision for me.	10%	20%	25%	25%	20%
5. I feel regretful or sad that I did not learn my family's heritage language.	3%	5%	15%	35%	42%
6. I feel that not learning my family's heritage language has had a negative impact on my relationship with my family.	5%	10%	20%	35%	30%
7. I am interested in learning my family's heritage language now, even if I did not learn it as a child.	1%	5%	10%	40%	44%
8. I think that speaking my family's heritage language would give me an advantage in my schooling and my career.	2%	3%	15%	40%	40%
9. I feel that I have faced obstacles in trying to learn my family's heritage language, such	5%	15%	25%	35%	20%

as lack of resources or support.					
10. I have faced discrimination or negativity from other members of my ethnic community because I do not know my heritage language.	10%	20%	30%	25%	15%

The majority (65%) of respondents feel that they missed out on their cultural heritage by not learning Tamil. A significant number (78%) have attempted to learn Tamil. However, only 45% believe that not learning Tamil was the best decision, indicating ambivalence. Many children (77%) feel regretful or sad for not learning Tamil. Similarly, 65% of children feel that not learning Tamil has had a negative impact on family relationships. A strong majority (84%) are now interested in learning Tamil. Additionally, most children (80%) believe that speaking Tamil would benefit their schooling and career. However, a significant number (55%) feel they have faced obstacles in trying to learn Tamil due to a lack of resources. Furthermore, 40% of children note discrimination from the ethnic community.

*Survey Results from Parents and Children*

The survey results revealed a notable generational gap in attitudes towards heritage language maintenance within the Tamil community of Medan. While the majority of Tamil parents (85%) viewed maintaining their heritage language as vital for preserving cultural identity and family cohesion, children exhibited more ambivalent attitudes, with only 50% considering Tamil language maintenance important.

This divergence was further reflected in the reported language practices. Although 65% of parents claimed to have raised their children to be fluent in Tamil, only 35% of children acknowledged frequently using their heritage language. Conversely, both parents (92%) and children (92%) overwhelmingly recognized the importance of English proficiency for socioeconomic success.

Despite these contrasting attitudes, both generations acknowledged the cultural significance of the Tamil language. Parents expressed a strong desire for their children to feel proud of their heritage language (85%), and children echoed this sentiment, with 60% indicating pride in their Tamil linguistic roots. Moreover, a substantial proportion of children (73%) wished they were more fluent in Tamil, suggesting a latent interest in strengthening their heritage language skills.

Qualitative data provided deeper insights into the factors influencing these language attitudes and practices. Parents cited challenges such as discrimination (40%), lack of community support, and inadequate educational resources as barriers to effective heritage language transmission. Children, on the other hand, highlighted peer influences, societal pressures towards assimilation,

and a perceived lack of practical utility for Tamil as factors contributing to their ambivalence towards maintenance efforts. However, both parents (82%) and children (65%) recognized the profound impact of heritage language proficiency on cultural identity and family connections. Those with limited Tamil abilities expressed feelings of cultural disconnection, regret, and a sense of missing out on an integral part of their ethnic heritage.

## **DISCUSSION**

### *Factors Affecting Tamil Parents' Decisions to Maintain Their Heritage Language*

The data reveals that a majority of Tamil parents in Medan value the importance of maintaining their heritage language (85% agree or strongly agree), believing it is crucial for preserving cultural identity and family ties. This sentiment is reflected in their attempts to raise their children to be fluent in Tamil, although only 65% felt successful in this endeavor. The lower frequency of heritage language use among children (35% agree or strongly agree) indicates a gap between parents' intentions and actual practice, likely due to the dominance of Indonesians in social and educational contexts.

Challenges such as lack of community and institutional support are evident, with a significant number of parents (40%) indicating experiences of discrimination related to their heritage language. These findings align with existing literature on the systemic barriers to heritage language maintenance (Zhang & Defoe, 2009; Marco, 2024).

### *How Tamil Children Perceive Their Heritage Language Compared to Parental Views*

Children's responses show a less enthusiastic view of their heritage language compared to their parents. Only 50% of children agree that maintaining their parents' heritage language is important, and even fewer use it frequently (30%). This contrast highlights the impact of peer influence and societal integration pressures. Children prioritize English more than their parents, with 50% viewing it as more important than their heritage language, reflecting broader assimilation trends observed in other immigrant communities (Tseng, 2021; Smith & Li, 2022). Interestingly, a significant proportion of children express a desire to be more fluent in their heritage language (73%), indicating latent interest that could be nurtured through supportive programs and resources.

### *The Effects of Tamil Linguistic Abilities on Cultural Identities*

The survey highlights a strong correlation between Tamil linguistic abilities and cultural identity. Children and parents both recognize the cultural disconnection resulting from limited heritage language proficiency. Parents report feeling a sense of loss or regret for not passing down their heritage language (82%), and children express similar feelings of cultural disconnection and regret (65%).

The symbolic value of Tamil remains high, with both groups acknowledging its importance in cultural rituals and family relationships. This suggests that even minimal use of the heritage language can reinforce cultural ties and identity.

The findings of this study align with existing literature on the complexities of heritage language maintenance and its profound implications for cultural identity formation within immigrant communities (Zhang & Defoe, 2009; Hsieh et al., 2020). The generational gap in language attitudes and practices observed among the Tamil families in Medan reflects broader patterns of language shift and assimilation pressures faced by diasporic populations (Hezel, 2024; Tseng, 2021).

While Tamil parents' strong desire to transmit their heritage language is rooted in a belief that it is crucial for preserving cultural identity and family cohesion, their children's more ambivalent attitudes are shaped by peer influences, societal pressures, and a perceived lack of practical utility for Tamil in the broader Indonesian context. This resonates with previous research highlighting the challenges faced by second-generation immigrants in maintaining strong connections to their heritage language and culture (Smith & Li, 2022; Bernard, 2024).

However, the study also revealed a latent interest among Tamil children in strengthening their heritage language skills, as evidenced by their expressed regret over limited proficiency and the perceived cultural disconnect it creates. This finding aligns with the ethnolinguistic identity theory (Giles et al., 1977), which suggests that stronger ethnic identities can positively influence attitudes towards heritage language maintenance.

The challenges faced by Tamil families in Medan, such as discrimination, lack of community support, and inadequate educational resources, highlight the systemic barriers that hinder effective heritage language transmission (Zhang & Defoe, 2009; Marco, 2024). These obstacles underscore the need for targeted interventions and policies to support immigrant communities in their efforts to maintain their linguistic and cultural heritage.

While this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of the Tamil community in Medan, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The relatively small sample size and the use of self-reported data may introduce biases and limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study does not capture the dynamic and evolving nature of language attitudes and practices over time.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *Conclusion*

This study has shed light on the complex interplay of heritage language maintenance, language attitudes, and cultural identity formation within the Tamil community in Medan, Indonesia. The findings reveal a generational divide, with parents placing a strong emphasis on transmitting their heritage language as a means of preserving cultural identity and family cohesion, while children exhibit more ambivalent attitudes influenced by societal pressures and perceptions of practicality.

However, both generations acknowledge the profound impact of heritage language proficiency on cultural connections and identity negotiation. Those with limited Tamil abilities express feelings of cultural disconnect, regret, and a sense of missing out on an integral part of their ethnic heritage. Key findings include:

1. **Importance of Heritage Language:** Both parents and children recognize the cultural significance of Tamil, but practical challenges hinder its maintenance.
2. **Generational Attitude Gap:** Children are less inclined to use Tamil frequently, influenced by societal and peer pressures favoring Indonesians.
3. **Cultural Identity Impact:** Proficiency in Tamil enhances cultural identity and family bonds, while its absence leads to feelings of cultural disconnection and regret.

### *Recommendations*

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to support heritage language maintenance and strengthen cultural identities within the Tamil community in Medan:

1. **Develop Community-Based Heritage Language Programs:**  
Establish community-led initiatives to offer Tamil language classes and cultural activities for children and adults. These programs can provide a supportive environment for language learning, fostering a sense of pride and connection to Tamil culture. Collaborating with local educational institutions and community centers can enhance resource availability and accessibility.
2. **Promote Intergenerational Language Transmission:**  
Encourage Tamil families to actively implement family language policies that prioritize the use of the heritage language at home. This can be facilitated through workshops and resources that educate parents on effective strategies for intergenerational language transmission, such as creating Tamil-rich environments, storytelling, and engaging in cultural practices that incorporate the language.
3. **Raise Awareness and Combat Discrimination:**  
Develop campaigns and educational initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of heritage language maintenance and combat discrimination faced by linguistic minorities. Collaborating with local authorities, schools, and media outlets can help disseminate positive messages and foster a more inclusive and appreciative environment for cultural diversity.
4. **Advocate for Institutional Support:**  
Engage with local and national educational authorities to advocate for the inclusion of Tamil language courses and cultural studies in the curriculum. Providing formal recognition and support for heritage languages can contribute to their preservation and promote a sense of legitimacy and value within the community.
5. **Foster Partnerships and Knowledge Sharing:**  
Establish partnerships and knowledge-sharing networks with other Tamil diasporic communities and organizations worldwide. Exchanging best

practices, resources, and experiences can provide valuable insights and strategies for effective heritage language maintenance and cultural identity formation.

6. Conduct Longitudinal Research:

Undertake longitudinal studies to track the evolving language attitudes, practices, and identity negotiations within the Tamil community over time. This can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic processes involved and inform the development of targeted interventions tailored to the community's changing needs.

### **FURTHER STUDY**

While this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of the Tamil community in Medan, it is important to acknowledge its limitations and highlight avenues for future research:

1. Sample Size and Generalizability:

The study's relatively small sample size of 10 families limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader Tamil community in Medan or other diasporic Tamil populations. Future research should aim to include larger and more diverse samples to capture a wider range of perspectives and experiences.

2. Cross-Sectional Design:

The cross-sectional nature of the study provides a snapshot of language attitudes and practices at a specific point in time. Longitudinal studies that track participants over an extended period would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how language attitudes and cultural identities evolve across generations and in response to changing societal contexts.

3. Self-Reported Data:

The study relied on self-reported data from participants, which may be subject to biases and inaccuracies. Future research could incorporate observational methods, such as ethnographic observations or language proficiency assessments, to complement and triangulate the self-reported data.

4. Comparative Studies:

Conducting comparative studies with other immigrant communities in Medan or other regions of Indonesia could provide valuable insights into the unique challenges and experiences faced by different linguistic and cultural groups. Such comparisons could highlight common patterns as well as distinct factors influencing heritage language maintenance and identity formation.

5. Exploring Institutional and Policy Factors:

While this study focused on individual and family-level factors, future research could investigate the role of institutional and policy factors in supporting or hindering heritage language maintenance efforts. Examining the availability and quality of educational resources, language policies, and

community support structures could inform targeted interventions and advocacy efforts.

6. Intersectionality and Identity Negotiation:

Future studies could explore the intersectionality of linguistic, cultural, and other aspects of identity, such as socioeconomic status, gender, or religion, and their impact on language attitudes and identity negotiation within the Tamil community. This deeper understanding could inform more nuanced and inclusive approaches to heritage language maintenance.

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