

AGRICULTURAL SUB-LANGUAGE USED BY FARMING COMMUNITY: SPECIAL FOCUS ON ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT

J.A.Premasiri¹, C.B.H.M. Premarathne² and A.M.K.R. Bandara¹

¹Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Puliyankulama, Sri Lanka

²University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

Agriculture is a lifelong activity of Sri Lankan Farmers. Few decades earlier agriculture was confined only to *chenacultivation* and irrigated rice cultivation started with the beginning of hydraulic civilization. Farmers believe that paddy cultivation is a god's gift and they treated most reverently and a sacred sub-language is developed. This sub-language has been existing since past; but it is being subject to change or diminish from our society with the introduction of the latest technology to the farming field. This sacred sub-language is connected with our religion, Buddhism. On the other hand, the younger generation's reluctance in engaging in agricultural activities also badly affects for the diminution of the sub language of agriculture, which had been secured by our fore farmers for long.

A Questionnaire survey was undertaken in the North Central Province, selecting two villages each from two D.S. divisions involving 42 randomly selected farmers. Medawachchiya D.S. Division comprises 37 GramaNiladari Divisions. Of them, Muwaetagama, Karambankulama in the Kirigalwewa GramaNiladhari Division are inhabited by farmer families by descent. The number of farmer families living in these two areas is 25 and 85 respectively and they totally depend on both paddy and *chena* cultivations right through out the year, except for a few who are employed in the public and private sector. However, they are also engaged in cultivations as part timers. Nearly 180 families live in Athakada G.N. division. Similarly, a few people are employed in the public and private sectors, in addition; they are also partly occupied in cultivations. Mahavilachchiya D.S. division comprises 17 G.N. divisions of which Dunumadalawa G.N. division and Halambawewa G.N. division were selected for this survey. In both G.N. divisions, the people are descendents of the earlier generation and still they practice the traditional customs and the threat is that these would fade away from them due to mechanization in the paddy cultivation.

Survey data was analyzed statistically and found to be significant among age groups. Majority of farmers irrespective of their age group accepted that there was a sub-language existed (Figure 1) and surmised that it is in a diminutive state today. There were several explanations given by the farmers and the most accepted explanation given was the introduction of mechanization for paddy cultivation (Figure 2). For example most farmers, especially the old farmers, (>60 years old) believed that it is due to the introduction of "Tsunami" (combine thresher) and "Boothaya" (combine harvester) and the reluctance of the new generation better educated farmers to use this language, which was also cropped up in the interviews even with VIPs.

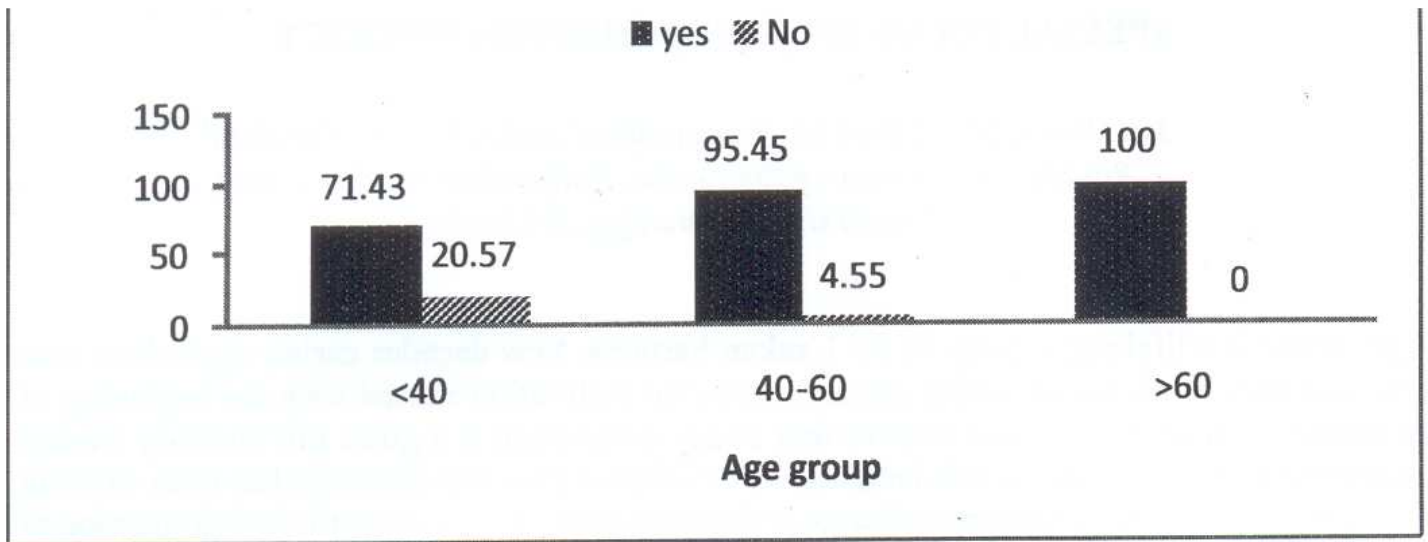


Figure 01: Existence of sub-languages in agriculture.

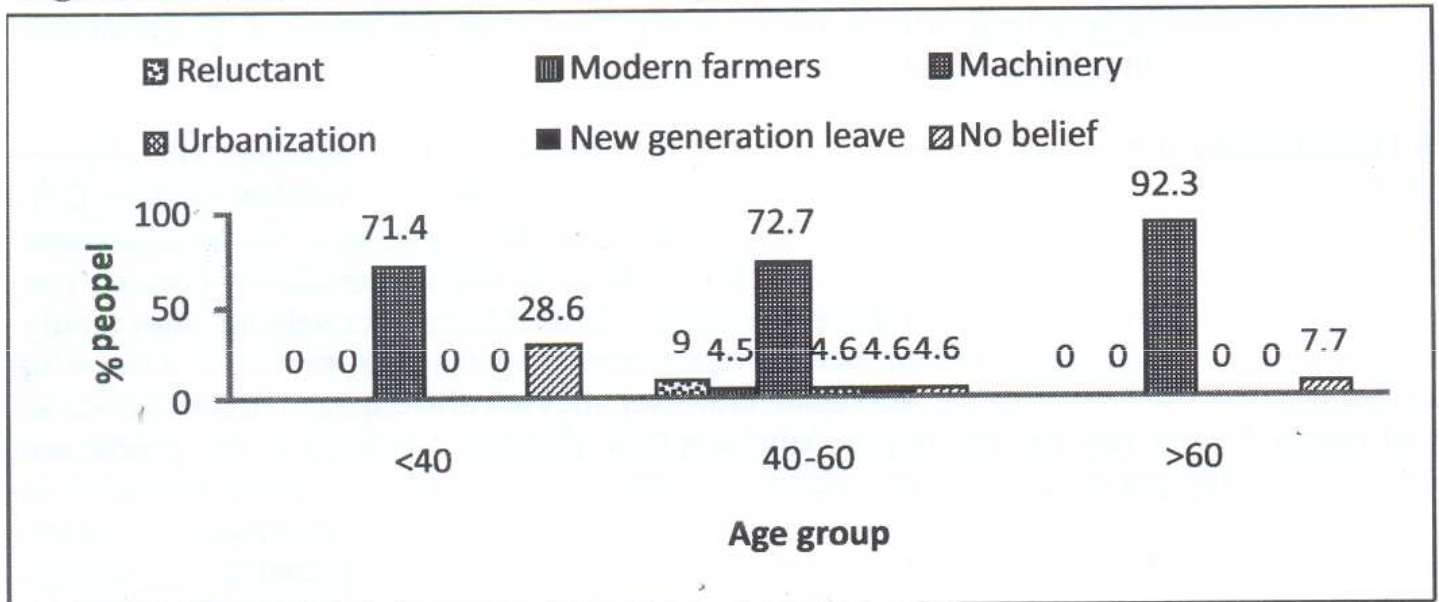


Figure 02: Reasons for change in sub-languages

The study concludes that the most of the farmers believed that there was a sub language existed in the field of agriculture which is now diminutive due to several reasons among which most of them believed that mechanization of paddy cultivation due to lack of manual labour is the most important. Sample used in this study was comparatively small and therefore an in depth study involving several provinces and a larger sample may reveal some other reasons for the diminution and also differences in sub-language among provinces. It is suggested that these surveys to be preserved as permanent records for future reference and to increase knowledge of future posterity

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