CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion on the issue of language maintenance and shift. Among other things, it provides definitions of language maintenance, language shift, language loss and language death. It also introduces concepts such as diglossia and bilingualism that are present in multiethnic and multilingual communities. Following this, there is an elaboration of the various factors that may affect language maintenance and shift in minority communities. The final part of this chapter looks at Giles' speech accommodation theory and how it contribute towards language maintenance or shift.

2.1 Language Maintenance And Language Shift

The issue of language maintenance and language shift (a branch of the sociology of language) has attracted the interest of many researchers be they students of sociolinguistics, social science or even anthropology. Generally, the preoccupation of language maintenance and shift studies
has been concerned with “whether the use of the second or third language in a speech community has affected the use of the mother tongue” (Shameem, 1994: 403). Such movement away from the mother tongue or a particular language can lead to language loss and sometimes even language death.

Various definitions have been given for language maintenance (a term first adopted by Fishman (1964). Shameem (1994: 403 - 404) defines language maintenance as “the survival, the regular use and maintained proficiency of a language in a contact situation”. Chong (1977) on the other hand, views language maintenance as the “retention of one’s mother tongue” or “loyalty to one’s own language”. According to Fasold (1984: 213), language maintenance happens when a “community collectively decides to continue using the language or languages it has traditionally used”.

As with language maintenance, language shift, too, has been defined by various researchers. One of the earliest of researchers, Weinreich (1952) defined language shift as “the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another...” (Weinreich, 1952:68). Language shift can also mean a community giving up “a language in favour of another one” (Fasold, 1984: 213).
According to Shameem (1994),

In language shift, the members of a community may gradually show a preference for the use of the second language to perform the functions normally reserved for the first. (Shameem, 1994 : 404)

Similarly, Pandharipande (1992 : 253) states that, “language shift is a process by which a language A is replaced (partially or completely) by language B to the extent that the former becomes dysfunctional in one or more domains of its use”.

What, therefore, is involved in the study of language maintenance and shift? According to Fishman,

The study of language maintenance and language shift is concerned with the relationship between change or stability in habitual language use, on the one hand, and ongoing psychological, social or cultural processes on the other hand, when populations differing in language are in contact with each other. (Fishman, 1966 : 424)

In other words, language maintenance can be taken to mean the maintained or continued use of a particular language whereas language shift may mean the declining use of a particular language in favour of another. In fact, this preference of using another language may well lead
to the "gradual disappearance of the first language" Shameem (1994: 404). Studies on language shift have shown connections to language loss.

Language loss occurs as a result of a reduced use of a language whereby an individual is no longer able to "do the things with the minority language he used to be able to do" (Fase et al., 1992 : 8). Lambert and Freed (1982) define language loss as "language attrition" referring to it as "the loss of any language or any portion of a language by an individual or a speech community" (Lambert and Freed, 1982 : 1). When an individual loses the ability to express himself in his own language he will automatically shift, using another language to express his thoughts or ideas (Fase et al. 1992 : 9).

Language shift has sometimes dramatically been referred to as language death which according to Fasold (1984 : 215) "occurs when a community shifts to a new language totally so that the old language is no longer used". In her study of the death of the Scottish Gaelic Dialect, Dorian (1981) proposed the idea that where both language shift and language loss happen in the country of origin, there is always the possibility of language death occurring.

This idea is similarly supported by Paulston (1988 : 3) who says that when language shift takes place "within groups that do not possess a
territorial base, we have a case of language death. Languages do become extinct”. Fase et al. (1992 : 6) too mentions that when dealing with a group, “language death only occurs when intraethnic communication disappears”. The language of the Maori in New Zealand (Benton, 1981), Chamorro in the Marianas and also in Guam (Day, 1985) and the Scottish Gaelic Dialect (Dorian, 1981) are examples of languages that are dying or in the process of dying.

In a multilingual community, language death is intimately connected with language shift and language choice (Dressler and Wodak-Leodolter, 1977) on the one hand, and language maintenance (Fasold, 1984) on the other. A multilingual community is also known as a “multiethnic community” which from the point of view of Chong (1977), consists of “people with different languages and cultures” coming “into contact with one another” (Chong, 1977 : 43). It is in such communities that the dynamics of language maintenance and shift can operate. For example, an individual may continue to use his mother tongue in his intraethnic communication and shift to the dominant language when dealing with speakers from the dominant group or when discussing formal issues. In other words, the ethnic language may be used in the home setting and the dominant language in the more formal setting such as the
work setting. Such a situation of two languages complementing each other in a society has come to be known as diglossia.

The term "diglossia" was first used by Charles Ferguson in 1959. He described "diglossia" as

... a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal and spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation. (Ferguson, 1959: 336)

Over the years, however, many researchers have adapted the term "diglossia" to not only refer to "two varieties of the same language" (Ferguson, 1959) but also to two separate languages functioning in a speech community (Fishman, 1970). This idea is shared by Pauwels (1986) who defined diglossia as

a language situation in which a speech community recognise the existence of, and makes use of, two language codes (varieties). These codes - the low and the high varieties - have each their own role to play in the speech community. One of the codes, the High variety - is usually learned later in life, normally through instruction at school by the
majority of the speech community. (Pauwels, 1986: 15)

According to Ferguson (1959), in a multiethnic and multilingual society where two or more languages exist side by side, the use of the languages will vary according to their popularity. The more dominant language may be used more often in formal settings for example, for administration, law and education whereas the less dominant varieties may be used for informal everyday interaction. The practice of using two or more languages is described as bilingualism. An individual who uses two or more languages is considered bilingual.

Beardsmore (1982: 2), describes bilingualism as having the ability to "account for the presence of at least two languages within one and the same speaker, remembering the ability in these two languages may or may not be equal ... " Paulston (1988) views that language shift and bilingualism are connected and can therefore lead to intraethnic shift. She says "the mechanism of language shift is bilingualism, ... where parents speak the original language with the grandparents and the new language with the children." (1988: 4).

This phenomenon of language shift among bilinguals have also been attested to by Dorian (1981) in her study of the Gaelic group. She
found that the use of the two languages, Gaelic and English, within the family was strongly influenced by the age of the family members whereby the oldest speakers (grandparents) were more comfortable with Gaelic and the younger speakers (children) more towards English. A contributing factor to this situation was because on the one hand, the parents of the children had maintained using Gaelic with the older generation but on the other hand, they preferred using English with their children. Similarly, she found that the bilinguals who had shifted their language towards English, the language of wider currency, did so mainly as a means of improving social mobility. In his study of immigrants, Fishman (1964) points out that the pattern that leads to language shift will see the minority community becoming monolinguals by the fourth generation.

However, not all bilingual communities end up being monolingual as a result of total language shift. Language maintenance of the ethnic language in some bilingual communities such as the French speaking population of Montreal and the Tiwa Indians, a pueblo-dwelling group in New Mexico (Fasold, 1984:227), are two examples of minority communities maintaining more than one language. If a community is able to only use the dominant language in interethnic communication and
maintain their ethnic language use within their group, a form of stable bilingualism may result (Fase et al., 1992; Fishman, 1968).

In short, there are many factors involved in the maintenance and shift of a language in a particular community. Fasold (1984) states that though bilingualism is an important condition for language shift, it is not the only one. There are other factors that need to be considered. Similarly, he says that there have been many bilingual communities that have “remained bilingual for decades or centuries” giving rise to the fact that language maintenance is also possible among such communities (1984:216).

Why is it that some bilingual communities are able to achieve stable bilingualism whereas others experience language shift? There are many causes or contributing factors for the maintenance and shift of minority languages, some of which according to Kloss (cited in Clyne, 1990) are ambivalent in that they can promote either language maintenance or shift in a particular minority community.
2.2 **Factors that Influence Language Maintenance and Shift**


2.2.1 **Migration**

One of the most important factors to consider in language maintenance and shift studies is the issue of migration. Ethnic minority communities immigrating into foreign lands and (in the process) are
required to learn the language of the dominant group most certainly (in all cases) will experience some level of language shift (Grin, 1993). It only depends on how much such factors as mentioned (in 2.2) above may affect the language maintenance and shift of these migrant/minority communities.

2.2.2 Ethnolinguistic Vitality

According to Allard and Landry (1992:172), Giles, Bourhis and Taylor defined ethnolinguistic vitality as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations". They feel that based on a group's ethnolinguistic vitality, it is possible to predict its language maintenance in inter-ethnic communication. It is this ethnolinguistic vitality that allows the group to exhibit its distinctiveness in social contact among other groups.

In short, if the ethnolinguistic vitality of a group is high, the maintenance of their ethnic language will be higher compared to another group whose ethnolinguistic vitality is low. The Iban community studied by Noriah (1991) is one such community who has managed to preserve their language as a result of their high ethnolinguistic vitality. On the
other hand, the Japanese Brazilian community which came to Brazil after the second World War is an example of a community which is now experiencing severe language shift due to its low ethnolinguistic vitality (Kanazawa and Loveday, 1988).

2.2.3 **The Presence of Grandparents in the Home**

Having elder generation members of a family such as grandparents living together with their children and grandchildren may have a positive effect on language maintenance. Janik (1996) acknowledges the importance of having the grandparents living together with their grandchildren as it is an influential factor in allowing the younger generation to maintain their Polish language use. Similarly, Martin’s study (1991:361) revealed that for the “three generational household” in the rural areas, the grandparents played an important role for the maintenance of their language.

Two other minority groups, the Tongan community (Aipolo and Holmes, 1990) and the Greek community (Holmes et al., 1993), both in New Zealand reported that the language used by all informants in the home with the grandparents was Tongan and Greek, respectively. Clyne
(1990) in a study of the community language use in Australia found that among immigrant groups, grandparents, especially those born in their homeland are catalysts for their community language use.

However, in another study of a Singaporean Chinese family, Gupta and Siew (1995: 304) found that "when shift is initiated and ended in only one generation" both the grandparents and their grandchildren may have no language in common. Still, other studies conducted have shown that even though older members of a minority community maintain using their ethnic language, there is no assurance the younger members will reciprocate. Putz (1991) in studying the language use of German Australians in Canberra discovered that almost all the children replied in English to their parents who had initially conversed with them in German.

David (1996) feels that in order to determine language maintenance and shift in a community, it is imperative to study the younger generation's peer interaction apart from their interaction with their elders.
2.2.4 Urbanisation and Industrialisation

Two interrelated factors that can promote language shift in a minority community are urbanisation and industrialisation. As a result of leaving one’s traditional way of living, a community may experience shift in their language use (Edwards, 1985). This phenomenon may happen when such a community advances through urbanisation and industrialisation (Kanazawa and Loveday, 1988). They (minority group) strive to learn the language of the dominant group in order to enjoy the life of a developed society.

In India, for example, a country with “fourteen Indian languages”, and another “300 tribal and other minority languages” the languages that are important at state and interstate level are Hindi and English (Pandharipande, 1992:255). Pandharipande (1992) states that “modernization of the society has further enhanced the need for the use of English, which is viewed as a tool for becoming a member of the modern elite group” (1992:255). In other words, it is in the name of modernisation that the community members have shifted towards English in order to rub shoulders with the elite group.
There is also another way of looking at the shift of language among the linguistic minorities. The development of “national ideologies” as a result of industrialisation has “favoured the emergence and expansion of standardised national languages” and disfavoured “the use and even the very existence of minority languages (Dressler and Wodak-Leodolter, 1977:7). Therefore, it can be seen that modernisation (urbanisation and industrialisation) contributes to language shift among minority groups. As they increase their social contact with the dominant group (either voluntarily or otherwise) they will increase their use of the dominant language.

However, in cases where minority ethnic groups are isolated, living in secluded areas away from development and the dominant language, ethnic language maintenance is stronger. Examples of such cases are the rural Oberwart community in Austria (Gal, 1979), the Japanese rural community in Brazil (Kanazawa and Loveday, 1988) and the Belait community living in the rural areas of Brunei (Martin, 1991).
2.2.5 Socio-economic Changes

Edwards (1985) suggests that in efforts to establish socioeconomic changes such as material possessions and a better quality of life, shifting away from the ethnic language might occur. In such cases, the dominant language is considered of high value and in its bid to master it, the minority community neglects its ethnic language resulting in language shift. In Singapore, for instance, Chong (1977) discovered that English education is synonymous with material success. Saravanan (1994) in her study of the Tamils in Singapore revealed that their low socioeconomic status was linked to their poor command of the English language.

Similarly, Kanazawa and Loveday (1988) and Martin (1991) found that ethnic minorities in Brazil and Brunei concentrated more on Portuguese and Brunei Malay, respectively, simply to achieve better socioeconomic status.

2.2.6 Impact of Education

As parents become more aware of the importance of education as a passport to a better life, they eventually ensure that their children are
exposed to the dominant language in school. This development (in most cases for all minority groups) means a further shift away from the ethnic language. Studies conducted by Chong (1977), Saravanan (1994) and Gupta and Siew (1995) in Singapore, Putz (1991) in Canberra, Australia and Martin (1991) in Brunei revealed that parents of respective minority groups played an important role to ensure that their children received their medium of instruction in the dominant language.

Other studies conducted on the subject of education showed less instrumental reasons for learning the dominant language. A predominantly (public) monolingual education system indirectly forced language shift in linguistic minorities such as the Arabic community in the United States (Sawaie, 1986), the minority Chinese communities in Taiwan (Young, 1988), the Japanese Brazilian community in Brazil (Kanazawa and Loveday, 1988), the German migrants in North Queensland, Australia (Harres, 1989) and the Wellington Tongan community in New Zealand (Shameem, 1994).

On the other hand, a minority group, specifically the children of Lebanese immigrants in Melbourne, Australia was able to maintain some level of their ethnic language by resisting the assimilating pressures of having the entire medium of instruction in English (Taft and Cahill,
1989). However, there is little doubt that English is fast becoming their most proficient language mainly because of its position in school.

Even with support from minority community language schools of the Poles in Melbourne (Janik, 1996), the German Australians in Canberra (Putz, 1991) and the Dutch in Australia (Bennett, 1992), Holmes et al. (1993) say it is not sufficient to prevent language shift on its own. Fishman et al. (1985) supports this view. They say,

... all in all, the role of the EMT (Ethnic Mother Tongue) schools as a guarantor or safeguard of intergenerational language maintenance does not seem to be very great ... [ it makes] only the most modest contribution to overt language maintenance. (Fishman et al., 1985:250)

2.2.7 Exogamy

Interrmarriages between members of the minority community with other ethnic groups is also one obvious factor for the shift in minority language. Putz (1991: 482) states that exogamy among the German migrant group in Canberra plays a "decisive role" in the shift of their language to English.
In the Japanese context in Brazil, exogamy encouraged the former to opt using Portuguese in the home with the non-Japanese spouse (Kanazawa and Loveday, 1988). Similarly, among the ethnic minorities studied by Gupta and Siew (1995), Aipolo and Holmes (1990) and Martin (1991), intermarriages represented an important negative factor in the maintenance of their respective ethnic languages.

2.2.8 Psychological and Attitudinal Factors

Factors such as prestige or status, identity and attitude towards the language are important in determining language maintenance and shift. They represent intrinsic values of minority community members towards the languages they are exposed to.

If a language is seen as prestigious and its acquisition is considered desirable, there will be motivation on the part of minority community members to learn it. Saravanan (1994) and Gupta and Siew (1995) uncovered through their studies that the Tamils and Chinese respectively (in Singapore) viewed English as prestigious. Their actions of acquiring the language saw them shift from their respective ethnic languages.
Language shift can also happen in minority groups who see their language as inferior, possessing low social recognition and prestige. An example would be the Italian Australians in Smolicz’s study (1983).

However, one group that has shown the opposite of this trend (of moving away from their low status language) are the speakers of Black English in America who continue to use the language as their identifying symbol (Milroy, 1982). It appears that this group’s concern is not status oriented but rather identity oriented.

A sense of identity can evoke a desire to maintain or shift from a language depending on which language a person is trying to identify with. If it is important to identify with your ethnicity through your language, then language maintenance will be considered important (Milroy, 1982; Young, 1988; Bennett, 1992). However, if ethnic identity is not important but instead there is a desire to assimilate into one national identity, minority groups may consciously abandon their language through language shift (Kanazawa and Loveday, 1988; Harres, 1989; Martin, 1991; Putz, 1991; Saravanan, 1994).

However, according to Pandharipande (1992), language maintenance is not necessarily important to maintain one’s identity as
discovered in India. Even though the groups are shifting away from their ethnic languages, they are still able to maintain their cultural identity.

Maintaining or establishing a new identity among minority groups can be closely connected to the attitudes they have towards their ethnic languages. This connection can somehow influence language maintenance and shift. If a minority group possesses a positive attitude to language maintenance and a strong desire to retain their minority language (Aipolo and Holmes, 1990), there is every hope of avoiding rapid language shift (Milroy, 1982; Taft and Cahill, 1989; Bennett, 1992; Holmes et al., 1993). On the other hand, a negative attitude towards their ethnic language (Smolicz, 1983; Bentahila and Davies, 1992) and a positive attitude to their national language values and cultural assimilation (Kanazawa and Loveday, 1988; Putz, 1991) will inevitably promote language shift.

2.2.9 Speech Accommodation Theory

The speech accommodation theory developed by Giles and Smith (1979) is another theory that can help explain the phenomenon of language maintenance and shift. According to this theory, if an
interlocutor wants to create a rapport with another interlocutor, the former will use or switch to the preferred language of the latter. If, on the other hand, the interlocutor prefers to maintain the use of his or her language choice, this can be seen as distancing himself or herself from the other party or an instance of manifesting a high ethnolinguistic vitality.

Generally, it is the older generation who practice using speech accommodation with their younger relatives. In other words, they switch to the preferred language of the younger members of the community (David, 1996). This in turn may contribute towards language shift away from the community’s ethnic language. In what is referred to as the virtuosity maxim (using the language of the less fluent speakers), Myers-Scotton (1983) discovered that the (bilingual) older generation members communicated with their younger members using the latter’s preferred language choice. For minority communities that practice this phenomenon, language shift is inevitable.

When children or younger generation members are allowed to reply in the non ethnic language to their elders who use the ethnic language, language shift is encouraged (Putz, 1991; Gal, 1979). David (1996) warns that in such situations, accommodating the non ethnic language of the younger members will reinforce language shift.
In contrast to the above, possessing a high ethnolinguistic vitality, thus not accommodating the non ethnic language can promote language maintenance as Noriah (1991) discovered when studying the Iban community in Sarawak. The older members of the Iban community maintained their ethnic language use regardless of who their interlocutors were.

The speech accommodation theory can be a useful strategy used by linguistic minorities and observing their use in such communities can provide a better picture of language maintenance and shift.

2.2.9 Conclusion

As explained above, there are many possible factors as to why a community may experience language shift or work towards maintaining its ethnic language. In conclusion, the real motivation for language shift to the dominant language can be due to “pragmatic reasons” such as economic and social advancement on the one hand and “social psychological factors such as attitudes and identity” on the other (Martin, 1991:362).
Most cases of language shift in the past can be traced to the lure of better social access and material advancement (Edwards, 1985). Edwards (1985) says that these acts of language shift do not necessarily imply an integrative intention on the part of the minority group but is merely seen as possessing "greater value" (Dorian, 1982). In addition, Trudgill (1991), too, supports this idea of minority groups acquiring the language for instrumental reasons and losing their ethnic language in the process. He says this happens based on the attitudes of the minority group who are ashamed of their low status language.

Whatever circumstances the Portuguese Eurasians in the Portuguese Settlement may find themselves in, if their desire to acquire a better standard of living outweighs their passion for their language, the need to embrace the dominant languages, Malay and English, will certainly divert their attention away from Kristang. This, in turn, may contribute towards language shift among the Portuguese Eurasians.