

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF RELATED SOCIOLINGUISTICS STUDIES AND THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review and the theoretical framework of the study. It is divided into three main sections. The first section provides the definition of the term language choice which is central to this study and related sociolinguistic studies for the purpose of underlining the reasons for language choice made by minority groups in bi and multilingual communities. For the purpose of this study the term language choice is used to refer to choices made between languages and dialects. The purpose of underlining the various reasons affecting language choice in other communities is to compare them with those made by the Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates.

The second section provides the theoretical constructs which are used in this study. The theoretical framework that develops from the various concepts used aims to provide both macro and micro perspectives of the study. Joshua Fishman's Domain Construct (1972) formed the main framework by analysing language choice in the home and university domains. Since the data collected shows evidence of language accommodation rather than language shift, Howard Giles and St. Clair's (1979); Howard Giles, N. Coupland and Coupland's, (1991) Speech Accommodation Theory is used when analysing the

transcriptions. Since the data contains a lot of code-switching patterns, reference is made to John Gumperz's (1982), functions of code-switching to explain the reasons for code choices made by the Bidayuh undergraduates.

The third section summarises the reasons for language choice in bi and multilingual societies. A review of related literature categorised the reasons for language choice among minority ethnic groups. The aim is to form the framework when explaining reasons for language choice by the Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates at home and in intra and across dialect groups in the university.

3.2 What is language choice?

According to *A Dictionary of Sociolinguistics* (2004) language choice refers to speaker's selection between languages, or varieties in particular CONTEXTS or DOMAINS of use. It is also associated with particular SETTINGS and ACTIVITIES.

Language choice is one of the concerns in sociolinguistics. It has been of interest to many researchers especially in bi or multilingual speech communities where there exist not only choices between varieties of a language but also choices between different languages and dialects involving different settings serving different reasons. Researchers such as Ferguson (1959), Fishman (1971, 1972a, 1972b), Wallwork (1978), Gumperz (1971, 1982) and Heller (1988) have studied language use by focusing on language choice.

3.2.1 Signals for language choice

According to Wallwork (1978:54):

‘When we meet people whom we know well during social intercourse, we will also know their language preferences and adapt accordingly. If we do not know them well, we have to decide what language to try and will base our choice on various signals—how we are greeted, the age, status and sex of the other person.’

Language choice takes hints from such signals which are referred by Gumperz (1982: 131) as *contextualization cues*. It may be a signal to choose a particular language or dialect. For example, the speaker signals and the listener interprets what code should be used. However, when a listener does not react to the cue, interpretation may differ and misunderstanding may occur as shown below:

‘A graduate student has been sent to interview a black housewife in a low income, inner city neighbourhoods. The contact has been made over the phone by someone in the office. The student arrives, rings the bell, and is met by the husband, who opens the door, smiles, and steps towards him:

Husband: So y’re gonna check out ma ol lady, hah?

Interviewer: Oh, no. I only came to get some information. They called from the office.

(Husband, dropping his smile, disappears without a word and calls his wife.)’

(Gumperz, 1982:133)

There is a miscommunication in the language contact above because, the interviewer being Black himself fails to recognise the cue which is to adapt to the language choice of the speaker who uses Black English.

3.2.2 Code-switching, code-mixing and code-alternations

According to Fasold (1984), language choice involves code-shifting, code-mixing and choosing variations of the same code. David (2001:101), defines **code-mix** as the use of single lexical items from another code; **code-switch** as the use of two languages or codes and **code shift/code alternation** as the use of different codes in different turns.

Language choice happens when a speaker who speaks two languages which have their own grammar systems, changes code during communication (Sankoff, 1972). Language choice involves code-mixing when it takes or borrows another language but it happens only at the lexical level. Such code-mixing may however occur at both intra and inter sentential levels (Gumperz, 1977; Parasher, 1980; Hill and Hill, 1980). Among monolingual speakers language choice can also occur by choosing the variations of a particular language (Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Thelander, 1976; Coupland, 1980).

For the sake of convenience, McLellan (2007:2), avoids the debate over what a 'code is or is not' and the preferred term to replace code-switching for him is **Language Alternation** which includes code-mix, code-switch and code alternation. This study adopts David's (2001) definition above when referring to code-switching among Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates because not only languages are used but also dialects.

3.3 Related theoretical constructs

Joshua Fishman's (1968; 1972) domain concept formed the main framework of this descriptive study. The Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates accommodate to family members at home and peers in intra and across dialect group interactions in the university. Speech Accommodation theories that are currently used in literature (Giles and St. Clair, 1979; Giles and Coupland, 1991) are used to investigate the codes choice among the Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates during such interactions. The following sections will explain these and other concepts used and their limitations.

3.3.1 Domain concept

The 'domain model' of Fishman (1968; 1972) which views linguistic choices as predictable on the basis of the domain in which they occur formed the main framework of this study. Joshua Fishman has popularised the concept of domain introduced by Schmidt Rohr (cited in Fishman 1966:428). It describes the use of languages in various institutional contexts in a bi-multilingual society and is defined as:

'...as a sociocultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication, in accord with the institutions of a society and the spheres of activity of a speech community.'

(Fishman, 1972a:82)

In other words domain refers to a sphere of activity representing a combination of specific times, setting and role relationships, and resulting in a specific

choice of language or style. The concept of domain has proved to be very useful in the study of language choice.

Domains are defined in terms of institutional contexts. They attempt to designate the major clusters of interaction situations that occur in particular multilingual settings. Domains enable us to understand that 'language choice and topic are related to widespread socio-cultural norms and expectations' (Fishman 1972:19)

3.3.1.1 Factors which determine language choice in a domain

Fishman's language choice in a domain is determined by:

1. Interlocutors.
2. The role relationships of these interlocutors.
3. The topics of discussion.
4. The setting.

According to Fishman (1964, 1968, 1972), bilingual proficiency is shaped in part by the functions each language serves and the domains or context determined by time, place, and role in which each language is used. The gender of the interlocutors can also determine language choice in a domain. Cheshire and Gardner-Chloros (1998) findings on the differences between men and women's speech were reported in bilingual contexts. They found that men overall used non-standard form of speech more than women. On the other hand,

studies in Muslim societies (Bakir, 1986; Khan 1991) reported that men used more of the standard variants than women of the same social class.

According to Winter and Pauwels (2000), in the Vietnamese's community in Australia, the 'neighbourhood' domain was more associated with the use of Vietnamese for men and boys than for women and girls. In the 'transaction' domain (i.e. market places), Vietnamese language was used more by women than men. Likewise, Milroy (1980) in her Belfast study found the use of vernacular forms was more common among young men in Ballymacarrett who were far more subject to territorial constraints compared to the women. All the young women in Ballymacarrett travelled outside the area to work and were connected by dense multiplex networks which did not restrict them to using the vernacular forms only. It should be noted at this point that it is not the aim of this study to investigate language choice between male and female Bidayuh undergraduates because initial investigation done by the researcher prior to this study indicated that there were no major differences.

Gal's (1979) studied the Hungarian-German bilingual community of Oberwart, Austria by asking sixty-eight Oberwart Hungarian-German bilinguals in which language they most often chose to speak to God, grandparents; parents; friends/neighbours; brothers and sisters; salespeople; spouse; children, and young strangers. She established that the speaker's age and social status are very important when determining language choice. She further established that in the urban context Hungarian-German bilinguals tended to use German

because German is linked to modern lifestyle reflecting economic success. In the rural context, more Hungarian is used instead. Gal's study also found that women spoke more German, the national language and the language of economic and social advancement compared to men who spoke more Hungarian, the traditional language with peasant connotations.

Language choice is also determined by the topic of the discussion. Freed & Greenwood (1996) studied conversations between 4 male and 4 female pairs of American students in the education domain in 3 different conversational contexts: spontaneous speech, considered talk (whereby the speakers were asked to discuss a particular topic), and collaborative talk (whereby the speakers were engaged in conversation whilst filling in questionnaires). Their findings indicated that the type of talk, and not the sex of the speaker, motivates and thus explains the language forms that occurred.

According to Sanskoff (1972: 32), one can predict the participants' choices among alternative speech varieties, based on their individual characteristics (extent of personal repertoires and proficiency in the various codes and speech varieties in question, class and ethnicity) and the relationships between them. Each speaker has to use his intelligence and imagination in deciding which language to use as the choice of language in a bi-multilingual community varies from domain to domain.

3.3.1.2 Studies using home domain

Fishman (1972) defines domains as cases of situations, in which individuals interact in appropriate role relationships. Role-relations between family members may affect verbal behaviours no less than language proficiency or language preferences (Fishman, 1972; Winter and Pauwels, 2000). The family domain, for example, includes interacting with one's mother, father, grandparents and siblings.

In the home domain the younger generation belonging to minority groups use less hereditary codes compared to the older generation. Li Wei's (1994) study indicated the language choice in a bilingual setting among the younger generation of Chinese in Tyneside was an indicator of non-cooperativeness by showing their code preference. The younger generation which was more English speaking was found to reply in English to a question asked in Chinese by the older generation.

Numerous studies done using the domain construct among minority groups especially Malaysians of Indian descent also indicated different generations in the various minority groups have different language choice patterns at home. The younger generation in all the minority Indian communities have not only shifted from using their hereditary languages but also preferred codeswitching using less of the heritage language. Among the studies done were the Sindhis (David 2001); Punjabis Sikhs (David, Naji and Kaur 2003); Telugus of

Kuching (David and Dealwis, 2006); Malayalees of Malaysia (Govindasamy and Nambiar, 2002; David and Nambiar, 2003; Nambiar,2007) Tamil Iyers (Sanker, 2004).

3.3.1.3 Other relevant domains

Evidence from Swigart's (1991) study in Dhakar found that a prominent group of young, fashion-conscious urban girls distinguished themselves by conspicuous monolingual use of French in public, to the exclusion of Wolof which is common among older urban women.

In the religious domain, participants need to recognise the sociocultural norms and expectations at any particular time. Nor Hisham's (1991) study of language used in religious domain found that Muslims in Seberang, Perak recited their prayers in Arabic, the *khutbah* or religious talk was in Standard Malay while the local congregation spoke informally in the Kuala Kangsar dialect.

3.3.1.4 Set of domains applicable

According to Fishman, there is no invariant set of domains applicable to all multilingual settings, as language behaviour reflects the socio-cultural patterning. Domains can thus be defined intuitively, theoretically or empirically. They, too, can differ in terms of socio-psychological and societal–institutional level. Socio-psychological analysis distinguishes intimate,

informal, formal and intergroup domains. These domains can then be identified with domains at the societal-institutional level (such as home, school, etc.).

Common domains of language use include family, friendship, religion, employment and education. Bilinguals' language proficiency is rarely the same across all domains of language use. The bilingual typically 'develops patterns of dominance or strength, usually in relation to the domains in which the languages are used' (Seliger and Vargo 1991:4). As a result each language is differentiated functionally and is used in specific domains, and the use of each language is in complementary distribution according to the domain.

There is no fix set of domain used in research studies. In a research of the Puerto Rican community in New York in 1971, Fishman, Cooper and Ma used five domains: family, friendship, religion, employment and education (Romaine 1995:30). In the Malaysian minority Sindhi community, David (2001) used home and religious domains. In this study of language choice among the Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates, the home and university domains were used.

3.3.1.5 Limitations of the domain concept

The domain construct cannot satisfactorily account for language choice in multilingual settings because of several reasons. Fasold (1984: 187), cited in Cullip (2000: 13) mentioned that the domain model could not satisfactorily account for language choice in multilingual settings where social psychologists

emphasised the psychological situations speakers occupied, where personal needs, such as proficiencies, and social group needs, such as identity projections or rejection, jostled for salience.

Fishman also suggests that one language is more likely to be appropriate in some specific contexts than another is not applicable in multilingual settings whereby code-switching is a common phenomenon (Holmes, 1992; David, 2001 and Rokhsana Abdullah, 2002). Sankar's (2004), study of language maintenance and shift among the Tamil Iyer community in Malaysia showed that in specific contexts different generations have different language proficiency. Thus, code-switching and code mixing were significant in both inter and intra generation interactions. No one language was specifically used all the time especially when the interlocutors have a linguistic repertoire of various codes and used them for different reasons.

Saxena (2002) argued that the findings from quantitative approach as used in domain analysis could not be truly relevant as it may be manipulated by the researcher. Therefore, qualitative approach was used in this study to support the quantitative findings.

3.3.2 Speech Accommodation Theory

Speech Accommodation Theory developed from the work of Giles and Clair (1979). It refers to the phenomenon whereby speakers change the way they are

speaking depending on who they are speaking to. The Theory of Accommodation contends that rapport and solidarity are more easily established if a speaker shifts to the preferred language of the recipient or subject. The adherence to norms valued in human relationships and its social importance influence accommodation directly. Speech Accommodation Theory is phrased as the inner group (us) versus the outer group (them).

Renamed Communication Accommodation Theory or CAT, a reformulated and elaborated Speech Accommodation Theory has been proposed (Giles et al, 1987) which 'can now view as a generalized model of communicative interaction' (Coupland and Giles 1988:176). CAT is presented 'less as a theoretical edifice and more as a basis for sociolinguistic explanation' (Giles, Coupland and Coupland 1991:3).

Giles and Coupland and Coupland (1991) have used Speech Accommodation theory to explain the social motivations of using different codes and code-switching in the home domain. In this study, the concept is extended to explain reasons for accommodation at home and in the university. Speech Accommodation Theory (1991) explains why people shift their speech in different interactions with others. It centres round three main speech strategies of convergence, divergence and maintenance. It is a fact that in multilingual settings, such as in the city of Kuching and in UiTM, when a Dayak Bidayuh undergraduate consciously or unconsciously makes a code selection during

speech it stands to reason that the speaker seeks to accommodate or distance him/herself from the listener/s through language.

Giles, Coupland and Coupland (1991) suggest that, in many social interactions, speakers desire their listeners' social approval, and use modification of their speech towards the listeners' code as a tactic to get this approval. This is called *convergence* and they are seeking approval and possible rewards. When two Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates from different dialect groups in the university converge towards one another verbally by speaking the same code, it is a signal that they wish to maintain good relationships. But in other situations, speakers may wish to disassociate themselves from listeners; they do this by accentuating their linguistic differences. This is called speech *divergence*. When performing certain language functions which do not favour them, other codes are used by the Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates to show this divergence. *Maintenance*, on the other hand, refers to the absence of delectable speech modifications. When speaking to monodialectal family members, the Bidayuh undergraduates have to maintain the pattern used without modifications.

Studies done in Malaysia mostly used the Theory of Accommodation in the home domain. Generally, the speakers at home converged by using the same language in order to express solidarity. However, there are also older speakers at home who diverged from using the younger recipients' code of choice in order to show loyalty to their ancestral language.

Noriah Muhamad (1991), in a study of language choice among the Ibans in Betong, Sarawak showed that the older generation of Iban speakers did not accommodate to the younger generation of Ibans. Infact, the older generation imposed their Iban language on everyone they came into encounter with both, Iban and non-Iban. Their strong ethnic identity made them felt that they could establish closer rapport and friendship by speaking Iban and expected others to reciprocate using Iban.

In contrast, David's (2001) study of Malaysian Sindhis showed linguistic accommodation by older members to younger members at home and varied in degree from code alteration which was a complete shift away from the ethnic language in the entire talk between the speech participants, to code switching which worked with the alternate use of more than one code between turns in a discourse or a mix of the two languages within a turn or utterance and to code mixing which entailed the use of only one or two non-ethnic linguistic items in a turn.

David and Noor's (1999) study of the Portuguese community in the Portuguese in Malacca also indicated that among the members of the minority community very often the younger generation was not able to speak their ancestral dialect which was Kristang, even though they were living in a close-knit community. When addressing the adults, the younger generation spoke a mixture of English and Kristang.

S Govindasamy and Nambiar's (2003) and Nambiar (2007) study of the Malayalees showed that the use of Malayalam was declining with age. The younger Malayalees communicated in English and Malay among themselves and the older generation who have better knowledge of Malayalam often have to accommodate to the younger generation by speaking Malay and English.

Roxana Bibi Abdullah (2002) investigating the language choice among Singaporean Malays described that many members of younger generation Malays were not fluent in Malay and so were not able to reciprocate to the older generation. So, the older generation has to accommodate to the younger generation by speaking broken (pidgin) English.

In this study, the notion of accommodation not only refers to the Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates accommodating depending on who they are talking to. The term *accommodation* is borrowed from Giles and Smith (1979), which means the adoption of the language preference of the speech partner. While Giles and Smith (1979) used the Theory of Accommodation which focused on language accommodation among people of different ethnicities, this study will extend the concept to include the extent of Bidayuh i.e. the hereditary dialect, Bahasa Melayu i.e. the national language (a language used as the medium of instruction), English and vis a vis the use of Sarawak Malay (a local Malay dialect) used in the home and university domains.

At home, accommodation refers to the extent the Dayak Bidayuhs are adopting Bidayuh when speaking to family members. In the university, accommodation refers to the Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates adopting Bahasa Melayu which was their medium of instruction in school and also adopting Sarawak Malay, the code used in the larger linguistic setting. The language choice of the Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates changes depending on variables such as the person they are interacting with, the purpose of the interaction, setting and topic of discourse.

3.3.3 Code-switching

Code-switching is defined by Gumperz (1982: 59) 'as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passage of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems'. Code-switching refers to instances when speakers switch between language and dialects in the course of a conversation. It happens because of different reasons.

An important reason for changing codes is when a speaker wants to address a specific hearer/s during a conversation. When a speaker changes his gear while speaking just to address a particular person, he may use a different code. Such switching is termed change in 'footing' during conversation (Goffman, 1981) and in a multilingual situation it involves not just change in languages but also dialects.

Blom and Gumperz (1972) have classified code-switching into two types namely *situational* and *metaphorical* code-switching. *Situational* code-switching is determined by the participants, settings and topics whereas *metaphorical* code-switching is determined by the speaker's motivations (Myers-Scotton, 1993). These motivations were made clear by Gumperz (1982) when he introduced the term 'conversational code-switching'.

'Rather than claiming that speakers use language in response to a fixed , predetermined set of prescriptions, it seems more reasonable to assume that they build their own and their audience's abstract understanding of situational norms, to communicate metaphoric information about how they intend their words to be understood.'

Gumperz (1982: 61)

When studying language contact in a multilingual setting such as Malaysia, code-switching means that it involves different languages and dialects used by the interlocutors in communication. Code-switching is often motivated by the need for more expressive language (Gal 1979:95). It is a common phenomenon in daily discourse among Malaysians especially among minority ethnic groups as seen in more recent studies such as by Mohd Subakir Mohd Yasin (1998), David and Noor (1999), Ramachandran (2001), David (2001), Kow (2003), Sankar (2004), David and Dealwis (2006) and Nambiar (2007).

Sanker (2004), in her study of language shift of the Iyer community in Malaysia summarised the four main reasons why people code-switched and these have been discussed by researchers such as Gumperz (1982) and Fishman (1972). Firstly, due to lack of knowledge of one's language or lack of facility in that language on a particular subject. Secondly, code-switching is useful in

excluding certain persons present from a portion of the conversation, if it is known that these persons have no knowledge of the language used for switching. Thirdly, code-switching is sometimes used as a stylistic device to indicate change in the 'tone' of the conversation at a certain point. Lastly, a person could be code-switching in order to impress another person with his ability to speak in many languages or in a language of 'prestige'.

Gumperz (1982) has made a list of the functions of codes used during code-switching which have social meanings. In everyday conversation, we often change our code when speaking to the same person or different persons because shifts have certain functions. Therefore, different codes may be used by speakers for the following functions as given by Gumperz (1982:75-80) (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: The Conversational functions of Code-switching

<p><i>Quotations:</i> This would be either as direct quotations or as reported speech</p> <p><i>Addressee specification:</i> Where the switch in code serve to direct the message to one of several possible addressees.</p> <p><i>Interjections:</i> The code switch here is use to mark an interjection or as sentence filler</p> <p><i>Reiteration:</i> This happens when a message in one code is repeated in the other code, either literally or in somewhat modified form. The reason for such repetitions is to clarify what is mentioned earlier, to emphasise a message.</p> <p><i>Message qualification:</i> This happens when the various codes consist of qualifying constructions such as sentence and verb complements or predicates following a copula. The main message may be in one code and another code is used to qualify the message.</p> <p><i>Personalization versus objectivisation:</i> The functions of different codes used here relate to such things as-the distinction between talk about action and talk as action, the degree of the speaker involvement in, or distance from, a message, where a statement reflects personal opinion or knowledge from, a message, whether a statement reflects personal opinion or knowledge, whether it refers to specific instances or the authority of generally known.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Gumperz ,1982: 75-80)</i></p>
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Gumperz (1982) talks of a discourse function of code-switching, that is, the *personalization* function which is most relevant in this study. Under this function the speaker plays upon the connotation of a 'we' code to create conversational effect. In other words, the speaker is seen to create a desired meaning through code-switching. In this study, the desired meaning was seen through a range of reasons whereby the speaker was using not only languages but also dialects. The language functions were also identified to explain the reasons why speakers use a certain language to accomplish intended actions

The Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates also draw upon different codes to express their identity. The term *acts of identity* are used by Robert Le Page and Andree Tabouret-Keller (1985) to explain individual speakers' variable language uses. At home and in the university, the Dayak Bidayuh undergraduates use codes that resemble themselves with the same dialect and across dialect groups. In other words, they can identify themselves either as rural or urban Bidayuh undergraduates from the dominant code they are using.

Other works which have also looked at code-switching in language contact studies include Grosjean (1982), Romaine (1995) and Milroy and Musyken (1995). Platt (1977) on contact in Singapore and Malaysia between Chinese dialects, English and Malay also indicated that code-switching happened because of social motivations.

3.4 Literature review of reasons for language choice

In bi and multilingual societies the language choice made by the interlocutors during social interaction is a natural phenomenon and it happens because of many reasons. Not everyone in the multilingual community will know how to speak all the languages and dialects spoken by all its members even though they live in the same community. Since they have several codes in their linguistic repertoire, it is common to see the use of different stand-alone codes and code-switching using different codes.

3.4.1 Reasons for language choice

The reasons for language choices, either using stand-alone codes or code-switching depend on functions, motivations and the proficiency in codes available in the repertoire of the speaker. The speakers also switch for socially determined reasons. Gumperz (1982:64) explained that code-switching is perhaps most frequently found in the informal speech of those members of cohesive minority groups in modern urbanizing regions who speak the native tongue at home, while using the majority language when dealing with members of other ethnic groups.

Myers-Scotton (1993a) also examines language choice and states that the speakers make their choices not just because 'stable factors' such as age, education, sex, topic, and setting but also because of 'dynamic factors' for

example, whether a long-term or short-term relationship is involved or whether power or solidarity is salient. She explains the speakers' socio-psychological motivations using her Markedness Model of Code-switching. Under the model, all code-switchings can be explained as having one of four related motivations. It involves unmarked (expected) choice and marked (unexpected) choice made by the speaker.

Giles and Coupland (1991) have used the Speech Accommodation Theory to explain the social motivations of code-switching. In multilingual settings when an individual consciously or unconsciously makes a code selection during speech it stands to reason whether the speaker seeks to accommodate or distance himself from the listener/s through language.

Similar factors influencing language choice are put forth by researchers such as Hymes (1972:41), Fishman (1972a:82), Holmes (1992:12), Ervin Trip (1972) and Wallwork (1978:51). Generally, the researchers noted that speaker's selection of code is influenced by the addressee, the goals of the speaker, the topic, the relationship between the interlocutors and the 'domain', a cover term incorporating topic, situation and the speakers' communicative goals.

However, Fasold (1984:127) goes further by noting that the psychological factors which influence language choice are also important. In this instance choices are made where personal needs such as proficiencies and social groups' needs such as identity are important.

All the above researchers noted that physical setting, participants and topic could exercise a powerful influence over language choice. They have also noted the factors influencing language choice include reasons such as to express solidarity, to show prestige or status, to express one's social contacts, values, aspirations and to express loyalty to local values.

Wallwork (1978:51-70) further explained other reasons for choosing a particular code based on the functions of the language used- what the speaker wants to do with the language. These reasons include to pay or deny respect, to claim or disclaim friendship, to declare allegiance, to inform, to entertain, to question, to indicate group identity, etc.

3.4.2 Reasons for language choice in multilingual Malaysia

According to David (2003: 49), in multilingual societies like Malaysia, the language choice is influenced by both macro and micro variables. The macro variables represent macro pressures on language choice patterns among the ethnic minorities:

1. Migration and economic change.
2. Urbanisation and improved transportation and communication.
3. School language and government policies.
4. Small population size.
5. Existence of many dialects within each ethnic community.

At the micro level the factors affecting language choice are:

1. Exogamous marriages.
2. Attitude towards their languages.
3. Religious conversion.

Code selection in Malaysia can also happen where there are no similar equivalents in English for Tamil jargons of religious practices (Sankar, 2004) or Malay equivalents for English (Nor Azlina bte Abdullah, 1977). These also include the Kinship terms, greetings and form of addresses. Therefore, it is difficult to tie Malaysian with one language. Just because they mix, it does not mean that they do not want to be identified as either, Malays, Chinese or Indians.

3.4.3 Reasons for language choice in Sarawak.

In a review of theoretical and regional issues with special reference to Borneo (which include Sarawak), Sercombe (2002: 134); Cullip (2000:2), McLellan (1992: 195), Martin and Yen (1992: 147) have identified similar factors which can influence language choice among ethnic minorities in Sarawak. These include the language proficiencies of the participants; the formality of the situation (setting, participants, and topic); the need to project or reject identities and loyalties; the age; sex and level of education of the participants; the presence or absence of 'background' groups in the setting who may indirectly influence participants.

More specifically to the Bidayuh, is the fact that accommodating to the setting is seen to have exercised a powerful influence over language choice. McLellan (1992: 200) reported a Bidayuh informant who stated that Bau-Jagoi Bidayuh speakers on a radio programme used more Malay (approximately 60%) than Bau-Jagoi dialect. The radio station was seen as a formal setting and a prestigious code was deemed appropriate.

Other similar factors stated by McLellan (1992:205), Martin and Yen (1992: 147) that can influence language choice among the minority groups in Sarawak are intermarriage, rural-urban migration, education and micro level factors such as how individual members of the minority communities handled the everyday pressures of social interaction which determined code selection.

A review of the limited studies done in Sarawak provide useful insights into the reasons for code selection among various ethnic groups of this East Malaysian State. The documented reasons for language choice are summarised in 3.4.3.1.

3.4.3.1 Practical convenience because of different language proficiency among family members

According to Fishman, (1991) generally, the first generation prefers to speak the hereditary language (L1), the second generation is bilingual, and the third usually adopts the new language (L2) as its first language. A study of the Telegu community in Kuching by David and Dealwis (2006) focussed on the different generations and the issue of comprehensibility. The study disclosed

that the code selected among the different generations of Telegus in their daily family interactions was due to practical convenience. The First generation was proficient in Telegu and Bazaar Malay and used these codes among themselves. The Second generation was less proficient in Telegu and communicated well among themselves in English, Sarawak Malay and Chinese. The Third generation was proficient in Malay and English and used these languages with the First and Second generations. The First generation who could not speak Bahasa Melayu had to accommodate to the Second and Third generations by speaking Bazaar or pidgin Malay.

David and Norazuna (2006) in a study of the Malayalees in Kuching likewise showed that competency in Malayalam deteriorated in succeeding generations whereby the Third generation has become comfortable with English. The First and Third generations communicated using English.

3.4.3.2 Practical convenience due to dialectal variations

Like the Bidayuhs, the Sarawak Chinese also have many dialects. Ting (2006), in her study on the language used among the Foochows noted that Foochows who did not understand other Chinese dialects would speak to non-Foochow Chinese in Mandarin. As for Foochows who attended English or Malay medium schools and were not proficient in Mandarin, either Malay or English was used.

Madzhi Johari's (1989:3) investigation of Sarawak Malay indicated that there were many variations of Sarawak Malay according to geographical locations such as Kuching, Kabong, Nyabur, Sesang, Meludam, Saribas Limbang, Lawas and Sundar Malay dialects. However, the Kuching Malay dialect could be understood by all Malays in Sarawak and was recognised as the common code among the local Malays.

Among the Ibans, a neutral code has to be chosen due to variations in the language. According to Cullip (2000: 10), the Remun Ibans of Sarawak spoke a dialect of Iban which was said to be unintelligible to other Ibans. As a relatively small and linguistically isolated group the multilingual Remun Ibans were facing strong macro pressure which could be expected to lead to them choosing *Bahasa Iban* (standard Iban as taught in school) when communicating with other Ibans in Sarawak.

3.4.3.3 Issue of comprehensibility due to exogamous marriages

Exogamous marriages unite couples from different ethnic backgrounds and besides their hereditary languages they also share some common codes. This issue of comprehensibility is important in marriages which cross language boundaries, and such marriages are a common phenomenon in Sarawak.

Ting and Campbell (2005), examined language used in an extended Bidayuh family in the First division of Sarawak. Interviews with 31 family members

revealed that Sarawak Malay was the main language used in the family domain because the matriarch and patriarch were unable to understand each other's Bidayuh dialects. Martin & Yen (1992), examined the pattern of language usage among urban Kelabits who married other races. Among the educated Kelabits who married out of the community, English has become their dominant choice in the home domain. The other Kelabits who were less educated and who married other races spoke Malay.

According to DBNA (2005:6), the children of Bidayuh men, who married Chinese women spoke neither Bidayuh nor Chinese dialect, but a neutral language which was either English or Bahasa Malaysia. Minos (2000:162) stated that due to exogamous marriages (which was common among the generation of Bidayuh who migrated since 1980's who not only married Bidayuh of other dialectal groups but also other races such as Chinese, Ibans and others), other languages such as Sarawak Malay, Bahasa Melayu, Iban, Chinese and English were slowly replacing the Bidayuh dialects at home. This has affected the extent of Bidayuh used by the younger generation from such mixed -marriages.

Burkhardt's (2006) investigation of the Berawan-Lower Baram languages showed that codes that belonged to the Berawan subgroups were spoken in four Berawan communities namely, Long Terawan, Batu Belah, Long Teru and Long Jegan. However, they were only spoken by the elders in the community. Many of the younger generation were not speaking Berawan but rather Kayan,

Kenyah, Kelabit and Iban because their parents had contracted exogamous marriages with these ethnic groups.

From the studies above, it is clear that the issue of comprehensibility in exogamous marriages makes it practical for the dominant code or common code in the communities rather than their own ancestral languages to be used at home.

3.4.3.4 To show identity

Language is one of the best denominators to show ethnic identity apart from other markers of identity such as the socio-cultural aspects of the community.

Ting's (2006) study of language used among the Foochows in Kuching showed that the children were encouraged to communicate in Mandarin and sent to Chinese schools for identity maintenance. Their conscious parents' encouraged them to watch more Chinese television programmes, as well as using more Mandarin in the family.

According to Chang (2002: 278), about 300 families out of 10,750 Bidayuh families in Kuching Division have converted to Islam or "*masuk Melayu*" (become Malay) in his study. Hence, the figure shows that about 3% of the Bidayuh population have embraced the Islamic faith in Kuching Division. The Dayak Bidayuhs, who converted to Islam, have adopted a Malay identity and the dominant language in the home domain was Sarawak Malay.

Cullip's (2000) study of the Remun Ibans who chose to speak Iban in critical domains in Kampong Remun showed their loyalty towards their variety of Remun Iban and Remun Iban identity, despite the pressures from other Ibans and ethnic group in their multilingual environment. The Remuns were surrounded by the demographically more powerful Bukar-Sadong Bidayus, Malays and have to speak *Bahasa Iban* (Standard Iban) to other Ibans outside Remun village. However, at home in Remun village, they maintained their variety of Remun Iban which 'was consciously recognised as an important marker of communal identity' (p. 38).

3.4.3.5 Habitual and easy expressions

Language choice among educated Bidayus is controlled initially by the question of which codes are easily available to the interlocutors to draw upon when having a conversation among them. Since their repertoire consist of Bidayuh, English, Bahasa Melayu and Sarawak Malay, the amount of Bidayuh or other codes use depend on how easily they can be retrieved from their memory at that point of communication.

McLellan's (1992) study of the electronic-mail users among Bau-Jagoi youngsters, revealed that when sending messages the Bau-Jagoi dialect was dominantly used. The switches to English occurred at noun phrases levels when there were no similar equivalent in the Bau-Jagoi dialect in intra group communication.

However, McLellan's (2000) paper on 'Minyu Sarawak Talk' which was an open online discussion forum stated that language used in this modern 'techno' domain involved Bahasa Melayu code-switches in dominant English. The site could be seen as a microsm of current patterns of multilingual oral communication among the educated Sarawakians .

Ang and Abey (1991) discussed the politeness conventions used by Bidayuh speakers when realising the speech act of request. However, the issue of mutual intelligibility due to the variations in the Bidayuh dialects was discussed and the need to use English and Bahasa Melayu by educated Bidayuhs in intergroup communication was stated.

3.4.3.6 Language usefulness

Today, many urban Bidayuhs who belong to the younger generation consider Sarawak Malay, Bahasa Melayu and English as more useful codes during social interaction. Dundon (1989: 412) stated that in the city of Kuching even though both parents were Bidayuhs, many of them were not speaking the Bidayuh dialects because they believed that other languages such as Sarawak Malay, Bahasa Melayu and English served more purposes in daily interaction with others.

'It is shameful and sad that more and more of our youths today, particularly those families live and work in town, do not know how to speak Bidayuh. These people would gradually lose their culture. Parents should see that they speak their dialect at home.'

(Dundon, 1989:412)

According to Rensch et. al. (2006: 21), the young generation of Bidayuhs preferred to use Bahasa Melayu and English at work and at home because they felt that their dialects were less useful as they lacked the industrial and scientific concepts necessary to express complex thoughts and life needs in the scientific and industrial society in their present time.

3.4.3.7 To gain acceptance

Rural-urban migration often encourages the use of urban language by the rural dwellers who move to the urban areas in order to get acceptance from the urban people. According to Minos (2000: 154), rural-urban migration was a common phenomenon among the younger generation Bidayuhs from the 1980s onwards. They did so in search for jobs, incomes and a better life, in the absence of those things in the villages. They came to bigger towns like Kuching, Sibul, Miri in Sarawak and other parts of Malaysia. Their children born in these places became more comfortable with the dominant languages used such as Sarawak Malay and English rather than their mother tongue. The use of the hereditary language was left to the older generation who remained in the villages.

Pressures from dominant languages in the linguistic environment can also influence language choice of minority groups in the urban areas. When a minority group is surrounded by a more powerful group, pressures from the dominant group may restrict the use of the minority group's language to the home domain only. Tengku Zainah (1978) informed that the younger

generation of *Orang Miriek* (Jati Miriek) chose to speak Sarawak Malay dialect and be identified as Sarawak Malays because they wanted to gain acceptance by other urban Sarawak Malays whom they considered as more superior. She also reported that some of the *Miriek* speakers she met described their language as: “useless” and “silly.”

‘...some of the young people do not want to speak Miriek because they are ashamed to speak in *bahasa kuno* (‘primitive language’). The Malay language is more modern so they want to learn and use that only.’

(Informant Haji Ramli Mok cited in Tunku Zainah (1978:31)

In another study of the same community, Bibi Aminah and Abang Ahmad Ridzuan (1992) discovered that the younger generation has a negative attitude because *Bahasa Miriek* was associated to being rural. They did not mind using *Bahasa Miriek* with their elders at home but were embarrassed to do so in public. The younger generation of *Orang Miriek* used Sarawak Malay dialect to gain prestige. Sarawak Malay dialect is not a school language but due to its association with Sarawak Malay culture, it is perceived to have a high status by the *Orang Miriek*.

“Today the Miriek language is mainly used within the family domain in a number of villages. Mostly it is the adults who use the language for communication in their everyday lives. The younger generation has classified themselves as Orang Melayu rather than Orang Miriek.”

(Bibi Aminah; Abang Ahmad Ridzuan 1992)

3.4.3.8 English as a language of prestige

Cullip (2000: 8) stated that among the educated Dayaks, English was often the choice in various formal and informal domains. It was considered as a marker of 'educatedness' among the more educated and/or proficient Dayaks. The informants exaggerated their use of English just to show status, proficiency or convergence to the researcher who was an Australian. Dealwis and David (2007) disclosed that educated urban Bidayuhs used only English while the less educated chose Sarawak Malay dialect with outsiders.

DBNA anonymous writer (2005: 6) stated that Bidayuh children whose parents were educated in English used English at home. If the parents were the by-product of the Malay medium of instruction, then their children used Bahasa Malaysia. Therefore, the home language was not necessarily the hereditary language. Among the Bidayuhs intellectuals, it was considered modern and educated to speak English at home.

A study by Martin and Yen (1992) examined the patterns of language used by the educated Kelabit working in the towns along the coast in Sarawak. The higher prestige of the English language made it a language choice in the homes of the educated Kelabit minority. Mahanita Mahadhir's (2006) preliminary study of language used among urban Malay families in Kuching, showed that better education and financial stability, influenced the language choice of the

urban Sarawak Malays. English and Standard Malay were used in formal domains and Sarawak Malay was the language choice in informal domains.

3.4.3.9 To accommodate

One linguistic reason which influences the language choice among the ethnic minorities in Sarawak is because of variations which exist in their ethnic language and so they have to accommodate by using a neutral code.

Minos (2000) stated that the Bidayuhs faced a problem whether they should use Bidayuh with other Bidayuhs from other dialect groups and risked not being understood or being branded as rude. Therefore, it was common to hear Bidayuhs speaking Bahasa Melayu, English or Sarawak Malay in inter dialect group interactions. Dealwis (2006) study of language choice when changing footing during interactions among the rural Bidayuhs showed that Bahasa Melayu was used in order to accommodate to Bidayuhs who belonged to other dialect groups.

3.4.3.10 Summary of reasons for language choice in Sarawak

In a summary, there are similar factors affecting language choice in Sarawak and Malaysia with other multi-bilingual societies. The factors which influence language choice are therefore complex and varied. There are a lot of similarities to explain reasons for language choice.. Although socio-psychological reasons

are important, *participants*, *setting* and *topic* are equally powerful when making language choice.

The language choice made by the speakers is to give as many rewards as possible from their social interaction. Macro-level factors such as urbanisation, increased mobility and education as being of significance in influencing language choice. At the micro level, some individuals from minority groups often succumbed to the social pressures of the majority groups during social interaction and hence shifted their code selection according to the available *lingua franca*.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter started by explaining the meaning of language choice as it is used in this study. The factors, motivations and functions of language use also provide a list to explain reasons for language choice. Related sociolinguistic studies in Malaysia, further helps to identify existing reasons for code selection among the various ethnic groups in the various domains. Finally, this chapter has discussed the theoretical constructs which were used to establish the theoretical framework for this study. While the domain construct formed the main theoretical framework to this study, the Speech Accommodation Theory was used to provide the micro perspective to explain individuals language used at home and in the university.