CHAPTER 8

LANGUAGE SHIFT PHENOMENON

8.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the progression of an incipient shift (early stage of shift) to Malay and English among educated Bidayuh speakers in urban centres. It discusses major factors contributing to the shift and assesses the vitality of the Bidayuh language. Vitality of the language is assessed by considering macro- and micro-forces at work in language contact situation (Edward 1992). Fishman's (1991) *Graded Intergenerational Discruption Scale* (GIDS) and the *Ethnolinguistic vitality* model of Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) are also considered for this purpose.

Unlike "intergenerational shift" first discussed by Fishman (2000/1967) which has shown age as the main variable in language shift, in this study it is shown that shift is taking its course in the direction of speakers most affected by the social cultural transformation within the community. Shift correlates with the following speaker variables: mixed parentage, educated parents, and urban upbringing. School experience, socialisation process and language experience in formative years of the educated Bidayuh speakers are contributing factors that have influenced acquisition of various languages and degree of bilingualism among the speakers, which in turn have also dictated their patterns of choice in various domains of language use. The speakers' ambivalent attitudes as to whether the home domain is crucial for inter-generational transmission of the community language have lead to a change in norms of language use which is threatening the position of the Bidayuh language within the community.

The incipient shift to major languages described in this chapter depicts the kind of language shifts most commonly found in minority communities across the world today. Minority communities are facing a dilemma. On the one hand, there is the need to secure socio-economic survival by adopting major languages; on the other hand, there is the community's desire to place the mother tongue in its rightful position as a symbol of ethnic identity. Typically, minority communities have no choice in the matter but to surrender to the demands of the globalised world in order to secure a better future for their children.

8.2. The Bidayuh language as a threatened language

On the basis of "ethnolinguistic vitality" variables, it is suggested that the relative vitality of the Bidayuh language (in relation to the languages of other ethnic groups in Sarawak) may be situated at the "medium" position on the vitality continuum based on three variables: demography, status and institutional support (c.f. Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977:317; also see section 1.2). In terms of demographic and status variables, the Bidayuh language is categorised as having "medium vitality" by virtue of having a large number of speakers concentrated in a geographical area, and the status of the group has been elevated to a greater level with advancement in education. Status encompasses economic status i.e. the degree of control a language group has gained over the economic life of the Sarawak community, ascribed status, socio-historical status and language status. The institutional support for the community language to be used in formal and informal situation is still lacking. Although multilingual education projects are currently undertaken in Bidayuh villages, the use of the community language in education, mass media or in the local government is still minimal. Nor is it used in any particular industries or much in culture apart as a means of manifestation of

culture during festive seasons. In short, the Bidayuh language still remains largely a community language. The domain of religion is a promising domain where the use of Bidayuh language could be expanded. In interaction, the Bidayuh are observed to be very accommodative. They normally keep to the interlocutor's choice of language. Apart from ensuring that the message is well received by the interlocutor, cultural values (i.e. politeness) explain this accommodative behaviour in language choice. This norm applies to inter-ethnic as well as intra-ethnic interactions.

In terms of number and concentration of speakers, the Bidayuh language is "safe" on the vitality scale. Based on its total population of approximately 170,000 (no data is available on exact numbers of speakers speaking as first language), the Bidayuh language is not exactly a "small minority". As long as the Bidayuh speech community (i.e. Bidayuh belt) remains intact, this ensures continued use of the language, although there is no guarantee that greater concentration correlates with lower rate of shift (c.f. Clyne, 2003). Studies on minority languages (e.g. Wurm, 1998, as cited in Tsunoda 2006:192) have highlighted that "sheer number of speakers itself is not a decisive factor to ensure the survival of communities' languages". The Mayan language of America is another indigenous community experiencing shift in its early stage despite having large number of speakers. It is spoken by 6 million people in Guatemala alone, with significantly large numbers of speakers in southern and central Mexico (England, 1998).

In recent times, rapid urbanisation is taking place in peripheral areas of the capital city, Kuching. The effects of this development are encroaching upon Bidayuh communities in villages. Bidayuh leaders are apprehensive of the adverse effects of this development on community values and the community language. The major concern is

that Bidayuh children in villages may begin to emulate the language choice pattern of urban Bidayuh children in interaction (Ik Pahon Joyik, President of Dayak Bidayuh National Association, personal communication, 2008). In addition, the widespread occurrence of mixed marriage is causing inter-generational failure in transmission of the community language. Increases in the proportion of inter-dialectal and inter-ethnic marriages can also affect the group's vitality.

Fishman (1991) has identified eight different stages to describe the state of health of a community language which he calls the *Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale* (*GIDS*). This graded scale is concerned with inter-generational discontinuity of language and each stage is a step towards reversing language shift by creating special functions for community language.

Fishman's (1991:87-109) *GIDS* is reiterated as follows:

Stage 8:	Most vestigial users of *Xish* (minority language) are socially isolated old folks and *Xish* needs to be reassembled from their mouths and memories and taught to demographically unconcentrated adults.
Stage 7:	Most users of *Xish* are a socially integrated and ethnolinguistically active population but they are beyond child bearing age
Stage 6:	The attainment of intergenerational informal oralcy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement
Stage 5:	*Xish* literacy in home, school and community, but without taking on extra-communal reinforcement of such literacy
Stage 4:	*Xish* in lower education that meets the requirements of compulsory education laws
Stage 3:	Use of *Xish* in the lower work sphere (outside of the *Xish* neighbourhood and community) involving interaction between *Xmen* (minority language speakers) and *Ymen* (majority language speakers)
Stage 2:	*Xish* in lower governmental services and mass media but not in the higher spheres of either (Stable diglossic situation, my insertion)
Stage 1:	Some use of *Xis*h in higher level educational, occupational, governmental and media efforts (but without the additional safety provided by political independence)

In this model, "the higher the *GIDS* rating, the lower the inter-generational continuity and maintenance prospects of a language network or community". (Fishman

1991:87). In other words, language in Stage 1 is in the highest position in terms of its retention in the community; contrariwise, language in Stage 8 is on its way to extinction. In relation to the Bidayuh, community leaders are aware of the impending threats to the survival of the mother tongue and they are making the necessary efforts to prevent further shift. Literacy in the Bidayuh language has been and still is limited to occasional use in the domain of religion. The community's concerted efforts at the present time are focused at Stage 5 of *GIDS* that is, on the development of the language and conducting literacy programmes in the Bidayuh language. However, the real threats to the survival of the community language can be identified at Stage 6 of *GIDS*. Outside influences are encroaching upon the family domain causing failure in mother tongue transmission. According to Fishman (1991:95), Stage 6 is the most critical stage of *GIDS* and "one cannot jump across or dispense with Stage 6". It relates to the informal daily life of a speech community. The core component of this stage is the family, which provides the interactive situations and social norms that facilitate acquisition of the mother tongue. The family may also be a bulwark against outside influences and pressures. The family domain provides the natural environment for inter-generational language transmission and ensures reversal of language shift.

The Bidayuh language is facing competition from major languages (i.e. Malay and English) at different levels and to different degrees. The apparent supremacy of English has motivated Bidayuh parents to advocate the use of the language at home with children. English is required in the work domain, and for educational advancement. The promotion of Malay as the national language has resulted in the expansion of its functions into the main domains of language use and widespread use in formal and informal interactions in multilingual Malaysia. The Malay language (or

rather the Sarawak dialect) is also threatening the position of the mother tongue at the local level - as a language of solidarity between various ethnic groups in Sarawak.

In the city (Kuching), for the most part, interactions are inter-ethnic and inter-dialectal in nature. In these types of interactions, a common language is required. Thus, for most speakers in this study, the community language is occasionally spoken in encounters with Bidayuh interlocutors in villages, typically spoken when interacting with parents and grandparents' generations. In some Bidayuh families of "fusion background" it has ceased to be the main medium of communication in the family domain. Only those who reside in Bidayuh areas or are still attached to the community (e.g. speakers who are committed to community services or/and speakers who return regularly to Bidayuh villages during weekends) are maintaining the use of Bidayuh within the family, and with regular circles of Bidayuh friends from the same dialect group. Lack of competency and non-acquisition in the Bidayuh language are not isolated cases among the younger population. Failure in transmission of the mother tongue is commonly observed among younger speakers of mixed parentage and educated parents.

Smolicz (1992: 280) also suggests that whether minority language is recognised as a core value of ethnic cultures (membership) or otherwise is a major factor determining the survival of minority tongue and its persistence. He states that cultural groups differ in the extent to which they emphasise their native tongues as core values. Loss of language does not invariably mean loss of ethnic identity for some communities. He notes for instance, the Mandarin language is a unifying factor for all Chinese, but it has proved more fragile in Australia than the family structure or group cohesion based on "heritage of blood". Similarly, Indian-Australians decent accorded

positively the role of family cohesion as marker of Indian ethnic distinctiveness, but tended to view negatively ethnic identity upon racial differences, "which were perceived as a chief identity marker, as well as barrier to full participation in society of terms of equality with the dominant group" (Smolicz, 1992:302).

In relation to the Bidayuh, community members have displayed rather ambivalent attitudes towards mother tongue as a symbol of ethnic identity. In the olden days, the core values of the Bidayuh culture is centred around life in the *kupuo* (village) where the *adat* (customs and traditions) are intricately intertwined with paddy cultivation and subsistence economy, the labour exchange system (*pengirih*), the land tenure system and past beliefs. And these values are gradually diminishing since the last four decades in tandem with widespread urbanisation in Bidayuh areas and occupational shift. Similar to many studies in the region (c.f. Bibi Aminah, 1992; Florey, 1990), the widespread acceptance to modern religions and in the case of the Bidayuh, it is Christianity, has proven to be particularly fatal to the retention of past practices in this community. Hence, "in the absence of other ethno-specific core values, the language is all the more vulnerable for the lack of significant reinforcements that could anchor it more firmly to the social structure of the group" (Smolicz, 1992: 288).

The Bidayuh predicament described in this study is a situation that has also affected minority communities in the region. Malay and English have become dominant languages through public schooling and their widespread use in the media. In his review of studies of LSLM in the Asia-pacific region, Secombe (2002:9) writes,

> The consequences of modernisation in Southeast Asia, in particular, have included an increasing incidence of culture and language transformation, often converging towards a more homogenised national ideal. There has been, in Southeast Asia, not so much a trend towards monolingualism...but more a tendency towards the ascendancy of one language or language variety, a superordinate, as opposed to previously more equitable forms of multilingualism (cf. Mulhausler, 1996:209).

Likewise, Martin (2002; 1991) has shown the effects of the policy of "One language, one race, one nation" on the changing language ecology of Brunei Darusalam. Indigenous minorities i.e. Belait, Kedayan, Tutong have undergone a process of cultural and linguistic assimilation towards dominant group, the Brunei Malays. It was reported that indigenous communities have languages of their own in 1929, whereas in 1953 they became Malay-speaking. The cultural and linguistic redefinitions of the indigenous population have taken place (and continues to take place) within the framework of the country's desire to define the nation in terms of Malay Islamic monarchy. Akin to the other ex-colonial countries of the world (e.g. Brunei, see Martin, 2002; Singapore, see Li Wei, 2002) Malaysia has succumb to the idea of an international language to increase its competitiveness in the global market, while a national language is necessary for the purpose of unity in this multiethnic nation. These policies have been identified as contributing factors for the decrease in language diversity in multiethnic nations. Minority communities at the disadvantage position have come to view these languages as a means to elevate their social-economic status and perceive it as critical for social mobility.

The hegemony of a global language for socio-economic survival has also occurred among the socially and economically powerful groups. Li Wei (2002:120) reports of a massive language shift from ethnic to national and international language among the Chinese communities in Singapore. Li Wei (2002:120) attributes these changes largely to the deliberate and often forcefully implemented government policies towards language and language varieties. English and Mandarin serve the needs for social and political stability in the multi-racial society and for rapid economic growth that Singapore desires.

8.3 The process of language shift among Bidayuh speakers

Societal language shift, first observed by Fishman in 1964 is a case where a "community collectively adopts another language at the expense of the mother tongue" (Fasold, 1984:213). The movement away from the mother tongue is observed to take place in three successive generations within a community. This idea of "intergenerational shift" was conceived by Fishman who regarded language shift as a consequence of "higher-level power-related social processes" (as cited in Li Wei, 2002:124).

This study, on the other hand, examines the occurrence of language shift among educated Bidayuh, members of a social category within the community. Clyne (2003: 20-21) writes language shift can be described on a continuum, and may refer to the following:

> (1) The language behavior of a whole community, a sub-group within it, or individual.
>
> (2) It can mean a gradual process, a 'shifting', (c.f. Gal, 1979). It can mean that a language previously employed by an individual or group is no longer used at all by them.
>
> (3) It can designate a change in:
> (a) The main language
> (b) The dominant language of an individual or a group;
> (c) The language of one or more domains;
> (d) The exclusive language for between one and three of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)
> (e) It can designate the completion of a process
>
> Clyne (2003: 20-21)

The rate of language shift can be rapid in some communities or it can be a slow process in other communities. Bilingualism is a necessary condition for shift to take place, but it does not always lead to language shift.

The shift to major languages among the Bidayuh can be observed during two periods of time: (a) the period immediately after the formation of Malaysia (1963), and (b) the period from the late 20th century to the present time. The period immediately after independence is the beginning of the transformation of the Bidayuh community from its "remote" existence to a modern entity. This period witnessed socio-economic development taking place in Bidayuh areas. During this time, basic infrastructures had reached Bidayuh villages. The Bidayuh community no longer lived in isolation with limited contacts from other ethnic communities. The impact of the introduction to school in the community began to materialise during this period; access to higher education has brought further changes to the mindset of its community members. Industralisation and creation of job opportunities have brought about continuous rural-urban migration of Bidayuhs to the capital city, Kuching, and other urban centres in Malaysia. There was a massive recruitment of Bidayuh (and other indigenous groups) into the police and military workforce from the 1960's-1970. Some Bidayuh families were uprooted to work in other parts of Malaysia. This event is detrimental to the retention of the mother tongue in affected families.

Cases of shift to major languages observed among the Bidayuh at that time can be described as a "socially motivated linguistic change", Gal (1979) where speakers adopt a language perceived to be prestigious to assume social identity in the larger community at the expense of the mother tongue. The language-identity relationship has also been identified as the main cause of shift typical in socially and economically

disadvantaged communities in the region (e.g. Florey, 1990; Mohammad Subakir, 1998). For instance, in Mohammad Subakir's study, the shift in language allegiance from Javanese to Malay in Sungai Lang, Malaysia is seen as an attempt to shift identity from being affiliated with the "inferior" identity of the Javanese at the time, that of "rural peasant, uneducated lifestyles and community values" to the "prestige identity" associated with the use of the Malay language, which symbolises "pan-Malaysian values and urban lifestyles" (Mohammad Subakir, 1998:24). In Mohammad Subakir's study, as in Florey's study, negative attitudes toward the mother tongue correlate with the age-group which is initiating the shift, i.e. the younger generation. The use of Javanese, a lower prestige language is perceived as a hindrance to socio-economic advancement of the users, and adoption of Malay and Malay identity is seen as a stepping stone to gain social mobility. The shift is linked to the community's evaluations of the status of the ethnic groups with which the available languages are associated.

Likewise, shift to the Malay language among the Bidayuh during this earlier period of time is motivated by the need to assume social identity associated with the language. It occurs during the initial stage of the socio-cultural transformation of the Bidayuh community, typically in families of police and army personnel who were recruited to work in other parts of Malaysia in the 1960's and 1970's. Some older speakers in the study with such profiles are the living evidence of this shift. Malay or/and Iban (instead of the Bidayuh language) became the main language(s) spoken within the family for speakers with this profile. Bidayuh couples would speak the Bidayuh language with each other, but Malay or/and Iban with their children. Bidayuh children would speak Malay or/and Iban with parents and siblings. This pattern could be

temporary, but in most cases, it persisted even when the speakers had returned to their villages.

The socialisation process during formative has a more lasting effect on the current language choice patterns of these speakers. Being uprooted at an early age has detrimental effects on competency in the Bidayuh language. Typically, Bidayuh speakers in such environment are unable to acquire the Bidayuh language fully or have passive competency in community language. They can handle casual conversation in Bidayuh but will normally face difficulty when communicating with village residents. In addition, their pronunciation and intonation may have deviated from that of the native speaker due to the lack of practice in speaking. Because of fear of being ridiculed for speaking with a "funny" accent, they may resort to use of other languages with group members. Some of these speakers have improved their competency in the Bidayuh language and eventually mastered the language at a later age. Competency in the Bidayuh language for these speakers depends largely on the age level when these speakers eventually returned to the community, and other interrelated variables influencing acquisition – e.g. the amount of exposure to the language, opportunity to "relearn" the Bidayuh language, social circle, and personal motivation for learning the language.

This experience is unique to offspring of police and army personnel who lived in restricted environment. The environment forces rapid and greater assimilation of minority communities with major groups. The experience has a social psychological effect on these speakers. Even to this day, Malay (and Iban) is preferred with family members particularly between siblings. Many of these speakers also intermarried with Malays. The link between ethnicity and mother tongue may be viewed loosely by these

speakers. In extreme cases, the speakers may experience “fragmented ethnicity” (Fishman, 1966, as cited in Florey, 1990:178), a situation where speakers feel detached from their own culture as well as the host culture, or culture of the group that they have shifted to. Indeed some respondents have expressed a rather indifferent attitude towards own ethnicity.

At that time, the perceptions towards own group and perceptions of other major groups towards the Bidayuh were less favourable. The Malay language and also English were perceived as prestigious languages, and adoption of these languages symbolises attainment of “progress” and “modernity”. Marriage to a more socially and economically superior groups (e.g. Europeans and Chinese) was regarded as a symbol of social success. Some community members even reacted to the extreme as to adopt Chinese names for their children. A male Bidayuh speaker (age 47) recalls how “inferior” they (i.e. the village children) perceived themselves at the time in comparison to their peers in urban centres (e.g. offspring of police or army personnel). Another informant is quoted as saying, “we have little chance of competing with those in uniforms (army and police personnel) for the ladies’ hands in marriage”. Adoption of English and Malay by Bidayuh speakers depicted the need to be associated with the social status attached to the use of language and its speakers. This behaviour is comprehensible, given the socio-cultural distance between the Bidayuh and other ethnic communities in those days. Prior to the entry of Sarawak into Malaysia in 1963, the Bidayuh was very much left by themselves to tend to their community. The British Administration practiced the policy of non-interference in affairs of the Bidayuh (and some minority communities in Sarawak). There was little support from the British Administration to bring about socio-economic development to the community. The Bidayuh were still lacking behind in all aspects of development compared to other

major ethnic communities. Hitherto, perceptions of these major communities were still particularly inspiring.

Cases of non-acquisition among younger speakers in this study on the other hand, are primarily a consequence of the change in norms of language use in the family domain initiated by educated Bidayuh parents. Presumably the trend towards the use of English in the family domain begins in the late 20th century in tandem with increased social mobility among the Bidayuh. Educated Bidayuh parents instill the use of English with their children at home. Some of these speakers have also intermarried. As a consequence, it forces the use of a common language for communication within the core family. This is a contributing factor for the failure of transmission of the mother tongue or inadequate competency in the mother tongue among Bidayuh children in urban centres. Because of inaccessibility to Bidayuh villages, Bidayuh children in those days were deprived from contact with speakers from the same dialect group.

The younger speakers in this study are subjected to greater threats from Malay and English albeit in different ways. Cases of shift appear to be largely motivated by pragmatic reasons. Malay is pivotal for inter-ethnic and inter-dialectal interaction in the city, and English is adopted for socio-economic survival. The intensity of use of the Malay language among younger speakers in the main domains of language use is greater. For one thing, they were educated in Malay. The younger speakers were also raised in urban settings unlike their predecessors, and learn to socialise at an early age in multicultural environment. Hence, they have absorbed faster and with greater intensity to urban values. This factor i.e. the process of socialisation in early formative years is a major factor that has dictated language choice patterns of older and younger Bidayuh speakers in this study.

The emphasis on mastery of English for socio-economic reasons is greater in the globalised age. This view is endorsed further by the community's aim to achieve its educational objectives. One such objective is to have a graduate in each Bidayuh family (Ik Pahon Joyik, Dahim Nandot, personal communication, 2007). The leaders are hopeful that the community's mission to improve the welfare of its members will be achieved through advancement in education. So, acquisition of English at an early age is propagated, inspiring concerned parents to adopt the language for use in the homes. Some consequences of this trend can already be seen among younger educated Bidayuh speakers in this study.

8.4 Cases of non-acquisition of the mother tongue

Incidences of Bidayuh children not learning the community language as first language are not isolated cases. Cases of non-acquisition or passive competency in the Bidayuh language are most commonly found among respondents of mixed parentage and those uprooted from the homeland in early formative years. (Also see subsection 5.16.5). Contrary to studies (e.g. Gal, 1979; Mohammad Subakir, 1998) which have found that women play a major role in initiating shift within the family, this is not the case in the Bidayuh community. It appears that Bidayuh speakers of mixed parentage will most likely acquire the mother's language, whichever it is - Bidayuh, Chinese or Iban. The main reason being speakers spent more time with the mother than the father in childhood.

However, successful transmission of the Bidayuh language is less likely to occur among speakers of Bidayuh-Malay mixed parentage because inter-marriages with Malays would mean total assimilation for the Bidayuh with Malay, culturally and

linguistically. The Bidayuh would have to take the Muslim faith and normally settle in Malay residential areas. This factor alone has accounted for the dominant use of the Malay language with family members. Few children in this type of family would have acquired the Bidayuh language. If they have acquired the community language, normally they would have passive knowledge of the language. Unless conscious efforts are made on the part of Bidayuh parents to provide the environment for acquisition of the Bidayuh language, it will not be transmitted to the younger generation.

Table 8.1 summarises the overall language choice patterns of respondents of mixed parentage and competency in the mother and father's tongues.

Table 8.1: Overall language choice patterns of respondents of mixed parentage and competency in the mother's and father's tongues

Bidayuh-Chinese mixed parentage							
No.	Age	Scale/FT	Scale/MT	Home	Work	Social	Religion
29	22	1 (Bidayuh)	4 (Chinese)	CE	E	E	E
31	34	1 (Bidayuh)	5 Chinese)	MEC	E*M	E	E
7	32	3 (Bidayuh)	3 (Chinese	MBCE	ME	ME	E
36	23	5 (Chinese)	1 (Bidayuh)	MBE	M	M	E
Bidayuh-Iban mixed parentage							
37	31	2 (Bidayuh	4 (Iban)	MEI	E	IM	ME
53	28	5 (Iban)	5 (Bidayuh)	IB	M	M	BE
Bidayuh-Malay mixed parentage							
54	29	1 (Bidayuh)	5 (Malay)	M	M	M	M
52	30	3 (Bidayuh)	5 (Malay)	M	E	E	M

Note: FT – Father's tongue MT = Mother's tongue

Investigation into the social background and language experiences of these speakers has given further insights into the factors for the failure in the transmission of the Bidayuh language in mixed marriages, and also the factors for successful acquisition of the community language. In mixed marriages, a common language is necessary for effective communication within the family. As a result, the transmission of the Bidayuh language is often neglected by the Bidayuh partner, particularly by male Bidayuh

speaker. Without doubt, mothers play a major role as agent of successful transmission of the community language. Acquisition of the Bidayuh language can also be successful due to the following contributing factors: (a) When they are older relatives who do not tolerated the use of other languages in the home domain and (b) Frequent visits to relatives in Bidayuh villages may facilitate acquisition of the mother tongue.

For example, Speaker No.7 of Bidayuh-Chinese mixed parentage has acquired both her parents' tongues (with average competency in both languages). The reason being, that these languages were spoken in the family. Her father spoke to her and siblings in Bidayuh, and her mother used Chinese. Likewise, Speaker No.53 of mixed parentage Bidayuh-Iban is a very competent speaker of both her parents' tongues. She informs that in her childhood days, her mother spoke Bidayuh with her children, and they responded in Iban. Regular interaction with relatives and community members also helped to increase competency in Iban. Speaker No. 52 of Bidayuh-Malay mixed parentage claims to have an average competency in the father's language while her younger sister's knowledge of the language (Speaker No. 54) is limited to a few phrases and words for social greetings. Speaker No.52 informs that she acquires the ability to speak Bidayuh from friends and relatives. Unlike her younger sister, this speaker has a wider circle of friends (including Bidayuh) and displays positive attitudes towards acquisition of other languages.

8.5 Bilingualism and language shift

The link between transitional bilingualism and language shift was first mooted by Fishman (1967). Fishman observes that bilingualism pattern of a community may remain stable as in diglossic communities or it may change over several generations

leading to language shift. It was also emphasised that bilingualism is essentially a characterisation of individual linguistic behaviour whereas diglossia is characterisation of linguistic organisation at the socio-cultural level (Fishman, 2000/1967:85). Speech communities may be characterised by widespread bilingualism, but the roles repertoires of these speech communities may not be "diglossic" i.e. compartmentalised or kept separate but with complementary distribution. This circumstance, which Fishman describes as a case of "bilingualism without diglossia" may characterise communities that are experiencing rapid social change and possibly a reflection of an-on-going language shift.

A movement away from the mother tongue is said to begin (although it is not always this simplistic) from the second generation of speakers. An increased in the use of the host language sets the bilingualism pattern in succeeding generations, and eventually a pattern of language use emerges where the older generation speaks one dominant language and the younger generation another. The shift is completed by the third generation.

It should also be noted that a community can be experiencing an on-going language shift despite bilingualism being stable for several generations. Therefore, bilingualism should not be seen as a prerequisite to eventual language shift but should be treated as a communicative strategy employed by multilingual speakers in interaction (Gal, 1979). Gal's contention points to the different facets of bilingualism; hence, Fishman's description of societal language shift should be interpreted in relation to this view of bilingualism.

In this study, bilingualism can be described as a stable condition for the majority of the older respondents, but the condition is gradually breaking down among the younger speakers. The older speakers are competent speakers of Bidayuh as well as the Malay language and English. They have specific functions for each language, and use these languages in a diglossia-like way. They display strict separation of functions of languages in interaction; that is English and/or Malay for out-group situation (inter-ethnic or inter-dialectal) and Bidayuh for in-group (intra-dialectal) interaction. They may vary in their preference for Malay and English, and the degree of use in the work and social domains, but the Bidayuh language is preferred in interaction with interlocutors from the same dialect group and in the family domain. On the whole, the majority of the older speakers in this study report the "exclusive" or "dominant" use of the mother tongue for interaction with immediate and extended family members. With the exceptions of language choice patterns with "spouse", "children" and "in-laws", mother tongue is retained in the family domain (See sub-section 5.14- 5.16).

The diglossia-like pattern in bilingual use of languages previously employed by the older speakers (as discussed above) is breaking down among the younger speakers in this study. Malay and English have encroached upon the family domain, where the mother tongue was exclusively spoken. Some younger speakers have not acquired the Bidayuh language or lack competency in the language. Hence, they resort to the use of other languages when interacting with in-group members. The speech of the younger speakers are also characterised by frequent occurrences of code-switching and code-mixing particularly in interaction with peers. Conversely, it is observed that the occurrence of code-switching is generally few in speeches of the older speakers in this study. (Also see the degree of bilingualism among Bidayuh speakers in subsection 5.13).

8.6 Category of speakers and various forms of bilingualism practice

Certain forms of bilingual practice can be detrimental to the maintenance of the community language. Table 8.2 below gives the categories of speakers based on types of bilingualism. The categories of speakers are drawn from analysis of the overall language choice patterns of each respondent in the major domains of language use (Refer to Appendix F and G). The speakers indicated by asterisk (*) use major languages in the main domains of language use. They do not speak or use little Bidayuh in daily interaction due to lack of competency in the language. These speakers are of mixed parentage.

Table 8.2: Types of bilingualism among Bidayuh speakers

Category of Bilingualism	Younger speakers 39 and below	Older speakers 40 and above	Total
Category 1: Additive Bilingualism	15 (24.5%)	11 (18%)	26(42.6%)
Category 2: Diglossic Bilingualism	6 (11.4%)	9 (14.7%)	15(24.5%)
Category 3: Recessive Bilingualism	8 (13.1%)	7 (11.4%)	15(24.5%)
	* 5 (8.2%)	-	*5 (8.2%)
Total	34 (55.5%)	27 (44.1%)	61 (100%)

Note: (*) These speakers have not acquired the mother tongue.

Twenty-six people (42.6%) can be described as depicting a form of “additive” bilingualism (Category 1). Fifteen people (24.5%) in Category 2 display “diglossia-like” pattern of bilingualism. Respondents in Category 3 (15 people or 24.5%), seemingly to display a type of “recessive” bilingualism, and mirrors Lambert (1974) ‘subtractive’ bilingualism. The remaining five respondents indicated in asterisk (*) are cases of non-acquisition in the mother tongue.

The following describes the different types of bilingualism the Bidayuh graduates fall into:

Category 1 (Additive bilingualism)

Lambert (1974, as cited in Baetens Beardsmore 1982:19) defines 'additive bilingualism as a situation where "the second language brings to the speaker a set of cognitive and social abilities which do not negatively affect those that have been acquired in the first language but where the two linguistic and cultural entities involved in being bilingual combined in a complementary and enriching fashion". This is a positive form of bilingualism where acquisition of second languages (i.e. Malay and English) by Bidayuh speakers is not at the expense of the mother tongue. The dominance of major languages in daily interaction of the Bidayuh does not lead to decline in the use of the Bidayuh language. Speakers in this category maintain the use of the community language in other domains besides home (i.e. domain of religion and social domain). It is predicted that the mother tongue will survive among these speakers.

Category 2 (Diglossia-like bilingualism)

Speakers in this category display "diglossia-like" pattern in language use in the sense that they maintain strict separation of functions of languages in the high and low domains of language use. They have retained Bidayuh as main language in the home domain, while major languages are spoken in out-group situations (inter-dialectal or intra-dialectal) and in domains other than the home. The Bidayuh language functions as a Low language and is exclusively spoken in informal interaction within the community

whereas English and Malay as High languages and are utilised in the work and religious domains.

Category 3 (Recessive bilingualism)

Speakers in this category speak predominantly major languages in daily interaction while Bidayuh is only spoken in restricted sense in the family domain. The tendency to shift is seen among these speakers. Inter-generational transmission of the Bidayuh language may be unsuccessful in succeeding generations. The ability to function in major languages increases with use i.e. seems to be "ascending" while the use of the Bidayuh language appears to be "recessive", or has been greatly reduced due to several inter-related factors: mixed parentage, being uprooted from homeland in early formative years and mixed marriage to dominant group (Malay or Chinese). Speakers with "urban upbringing" (i.e. went to mission school in the city, speaks English at home) have also shown a kind of recessive bilingualism.

The bilingual practice displayed by speakers in this category also depicts "subtractive" bilingualism described by Lambert (1974, as cited in Baetens Beardsmore 1982: 19-20), which is a psychological condition brought about because of negative values speakers assign to languages in a community. This type of bilingualism prevails in societies where "the socio-cultural attributes of the languages are denigrated at the expense of those of the other which has a more prestigious socio-economically determined status". Subtractive bilingual practice is therefore detrimental to the survival of the mother tongue. Lambert notes that the type of situation can be found in minority communities (although majority groups may also display 'subtractive bilingualism', my insertion), and is most easily brought about due to the influence of school coupled with

upward social mobility where the language used for these functions is different from that spoken in the home environment. (Baetens Beardsmore 1982:20).

To sum up, the analysis of types of bilingualism among educated Bidayuh in this study has shown that approximately 43% of the respondents are maintaining the use of the Bidayuh language in other domains of language use besides home. Whether it will be retained in families of speakers in other categories is uncertain. The trend towards the use of English with children and the factor of mixed marriages are threatening its position within the community. The type of "recessive bilingualism" where the use of the community is confined to older generations in the home domain has also become a common feature among younger educated Bidayuh. Where it occurs among older speakers, it only describes speakers who were uprooted from the community in childhood.

8.7 Determinants of language shift and factors in support of maintenance of the Bidayuh language

Thus far, it has been shown that an on-going language shift is taking place because of interrelated factors: urbanisation which improves accessibility to capital city and increased contacts with major groups, changes in social network, increased social mobility due to the effects of education, prevalent occurrences of inter-dialectal and inter-ethnic marriages, and access to dominant languages through various forms of social institution (e.g. school, workplace, evangelism, and mass media). The macro-factors have led to changes in speakers' social circles and reassessment of the value of the community language in relation to Malay and English by educated Bidayuh in this setting.

Nevertheless, it is too early to conclude for certain that the shift among educated Bidayuh speakers will eventually lead to societal language shift. For one thing, increase in ethnic pride may reverse the shift. Ethnic pride may sustain the Bidayuh language, but it varies between groups. This factor acts as a push factor for community members to organise themselves for the betterment of the community. Take for instance, the Singgai community. As a group, they appear to possess strong ethnic pride, and are more assertive in promoting cultural distinctiveness and are at the forefront in many aspects of the community's development. Strong ethnic pride is partly derived from success stories and historical saga (e.g. the Singgai mountain and its history) and the fact that they are among the first Bidayuh to receive education. The strong ethnic pride would counter the effects of the transformation that the community is experiencing. Realising the threats of globalisation on their fast disappearing cultural heritage, the Singgai people are promoting it for the benefit of the younger generation.

Paulston (1994) in her comparative study of communities however, contends that social forces along the line of "ethnicity" are insufficient for sustaining the survival of the mother tongue. According to her (1994:31), "ethnicity tends to stress roots and a shared biological past and common ancestor (factual or fictional). The basis of personal identity is cultural (including religion), and ethnicity is a matter of self-ascription".

In relation to the Bidayuh, the struggle for cultural and language preservation will only meet with failure if argument for its preservation is made on the basis of "ethnicity" alone. Younger generation Bidayuh may not be able to relate to the struggle on the basis of "ethnicity" alone. They may be divorced from the notion of "ethnicity". Unlike their predecessors, they are raised in urban settings, and have assumed as identity as belonging to the larger urban community. The link between mother tongue

and ethnicity may be viewed loosely by these speakers. Therefore, to motivate a move towards cultural maintenance, a broader form of ethnic consciousness as a group and language being a part of ethnic identity must be promoted among younger generation Bidayuh. Bidayuh community leaders are progressing in this direction. Now that they have Bidayuh ministers and political leaders representing the community in the government, this is supportive of the development of the Bidayuh language. In recent times, road shows promoting the use of Bidayuh and cultural awareness have also been organised.

Nevertheless, ethnic consciousness and unity as a group has not materialised to its fullest for it to be effective in support of the maintenance of the Bidayuh language. For instance, the various dialect groups have not agreed on the choice of a dialect to be developed for use in pre-school. This is partly due to group perseverance. The various sub-dialects of Bidayuh symbolise group identity; historical past that relates to its roots is entrenched in the notion of group identity. Even within a dialect group, sub-group behaviour is governed by these cultural norms relating to their roots. If the desire is to have one language to symbolise ethnic identity, sacrifices clearly have to be made by its community members.

A less visible factor determining survival of the community language is speakers' attitudes toward the language. This factor is an intervening variable in LSLM situation. It may be that Bidayuh speakers who retain the Bidayuh language as main medium of communication within the family have greater attachment and allegiance to the group, and that those who don't are presumably less loyal to the mother tongue. There may be some truth in this argument; nonetheless it is not always the case.

Language attitude and language use do not always correlate. The conflicting views on whether to use the Bidayuh language or otherwise in the home domain merely reflect speakers' priorities of languages to be learned for socio-economic survival. The Bidayuh speakers who opt for English with core family members may or may not be necessarily less loyal to the community language, but they genuinely believe children will eventually acquire the Bidayuh language at a later age through interactions with community members. (c.f. England, 1988). This apathy or indifferent attitude towards the community language does not support language maintenance. On the other hand, speakers who advocate that the Bidayuh language should be spoken within the family perceive the learning of the mother tongue as crucial for its continuous survival. These respondents contend that English and Malay can be learned in schools and through various mediums, whereas opportunity for the formal learning of the Bidayuh language is almost non-existent. In comparison to the Iban community, historically and culturally, the Bidayuh has been pictured as a less assertive group (c.f. Morrison, 1957; Low, 1999). Perhaps, their nature to some extent explains the "modest" attitude towards the mother tongue.

Efforts at maintaining the language is still in its initial stage. This move will alleviate the status of the mother tongue, provides the opportunity for learning the language formally, and increases ethnic pride. The local government is supportive of this move. Literacy in the mother tongue would support its maintenance. For that reason, the Bidayuh community is working on a multilingual project, and development of materials for the introduction of the Bidayuh language in pre-schools. Nonetheless, literacy programs may doom if the selected dialect is one which the majority of speakers reject for linguistic or social reasons. The choice of orthography is also

relevant as to whether literacy in the native language serves to facilitate literacy in another language (Grenoble & Whaley, 1988:34-35).

To sum up, there are two social forces currently competing in relation to the survival of the Bidayuh language. On the one hand, the combined forces of socio-economic priorities over language loyalty, coupled with widespread occurrences of mixed marriages are shown to have detrimental effects on transmission of the community language to the younger generation. On the other hand, social forces that uphold maintenance of the mother tongue include ethnic pride and consciousness as a group. The forces in support of language shift are very practical and real, and are threatening the survival of the mother tongue. The forces supporting maintenance is gradually progressing but has yet to be proven effective. Efforts at building ethnic consciousness within the community will ascertain the direction of "incipient shift" observed to occur among educated Bidayuh. Further shift can be prevented with identification of variables that will work towards language maintenance (c.f. Fishman, 1991).

8.8 Concluding remarks

The chapter has shown that the ecological landscape of the Bidayuh language has undergone and continues to undergo modification as a result of the socio-cultural transformation of the Bidayuh community. The transformation has lead to changes in perceptions towards languages and the reassessment of the roles and functions of various languages within the community's language repertoire. Urban Bidayuh speakers have acquired major languages (Malay and English) and languages of other communities (Iban and Chinese) to fulfill various communicative needs in their new

sociolinguistic environment. As a results, many Bidayuh have become multilingual. However, the recessive form of bilingual practice by the speakers has lead to language shift.

Language ecology is dynamic and changing. Contact between languages within a community may cause conflict; that is minor and major groups competing for the survival of their languages. Nonetheless, smaller ethnolinguistic groups are shown to have survived in a less hostile environment consisting of many larger surrounding languages (e.g. languages of the coastal communities in Papua New Guinea, or Wik languages in Northern Australia as cited in Mulhausler, 1977).

In the Bidayuh situation, the multifunction of Malay and English in this community has placed the community language in a disadvantaged position. Malay is assigned the status as the "national language" and English enjoys the status as a "prestigious" language in socio-economic sense. In addition, they are used as "linking languages" (Mulhausler, 1977:10) in inter-ethnic as well as inter-dialectal interactions. The multifunction of these languages enhances their power and thereby reduces the power of the other languages (including the Bidayuh language) that come into contact with them (c.f. Mulhausler, 1977). This "imbalance" in the language ecology of the region is partly a consequence of the national policies adopted in the typically ex-colonial countries which require a national language for unification purpose and a language of international standing for rapid economic growth. The Bidayuh predicament is also a consequence of contact situation (i.e. widespread occurrence of mixed marriages), and unintelligibility between various isolects within the Bidayuh speech system which prevent community members from communicating in the community language. In view of these constraints in the use of the community

language, it is proposed that perhaps the idea of having a single dialect for intra-ethnic interaction could be worked on. This move may reduce the community's dependency on Malay and English in inter-dialectal communication although linguistic diversity of the Bidayuh speech system can be adversely affected.