CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The changing language ecology in Sarawak

Over the last four decades, the state of Sarawak has undergone rapid socio-economic and socio-cultural transformation. Infrastructure development and agricultural projects have reached the once remote villages. With tremendous improvement in accessibility, there is hardly a community that is completely isolated from outside influences. In the most extreme cases, some small ethnolinguistic communities in remote settlements have been relocated in more accessible locations under various resettlement schemes. The transformation has shown to threaten the survival of smaller ethno-linguistic groups in the region. It may lead to the total loss of cultural heritage, which is closely linked to traditional occupation and way of life of the indigenous communities in previous environments. This in turn has serious repercussions on the survival of minority languages (e.g. Punan Ba, Tatau, Lugat in Bintulu Area, c.f. Asmah & Kamila, 2008a).

Macro-sociological changes in the region such as urbanisation and industralisation have also brought about continuous migration of rural residents to urban centres to take up job opportunities in industries, and in private and public sectors. Urban centres have become the 'melting pot' for various ethno-linguistic groups, and majority and minority communities. In such language contact situations, minority communities have been shown to become linguistically and/or culturally assimilated into the larger community, to one degree or the other. In recent years, urbanisation has

also taken place at the peripheries of cities. As a result, villages have been transformed into small towns. This development may totally diminish what is left of the cultural practices of communities in these areas.

The occurrence of inter-ethnic marriages has also become widespread among communities in Sarawak. Cultural and religious hindrance associated with mixed marriages is gradually disappearing, making it more "acceptable" to its community members. There is also greater assimilation among various ethnic communities principally on the basis of having the same religion and affiliation with the larger community. The term "Sarawakian" distinguishes the ethnic groups from communities in Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah.

In the past, conversion to Islam was synonymous with "masuk Melayu" (to become Malay), and a convert is legally pronounced as Malay, although his or her first language is not Malay (Asmah, 1992; c.f. Martin, 2002). This cultural denomination or association with conversion to the Muslim faith has gradually disappeared over the years in tandem with changes in the mindset of communities, in particular among urban residents. Intermarriage may cause language shift as the speakers in such a marriage may end up speaking a common language in the home domain. Unless multilingualism is normal in that particular community, one language tends to predominate in the home (Holmes, 1992).

The language choice patterns of communities in Sarawak have been altered to a greater or lesser extent by the impact of these changes in the linguistic ecology of the area. Researchers working on language shift and language maintenance (LSLM) in the Borneo region (e.g. Sercombe, 2002; Martin, 1991; 2002) have expressed their concern

for the emerging threats of these changes on the linguistic heterogeneity in the region. Principally, it is stressed that the practice of language policy of "one language for one nation" which is necessary for the purpose of unifying various ethnic groups may not be favourable towards the maintenance of minority languages. It is also noted that the increasing role and dominance of majority languages (i.e. Malay and English) may lead to the demise of smaller minority languages. The increasing number of LSLM studies on minority communities in this region has shown that the concern is real. The threat to the survival of languages is not only felt by smaller communities in geographically less accessible areas, but also the larger communities in urban centres (e.g. the Bidayuh and the Melanau). Published works on minority communities in Sarawak have also demonstrated the detrimental effects of these macro-sociological changes on the retention of the mother tongue. A movement away from the mother tongue towards Malay is reported to have occurred among the Miriek speakers (Bibi Aminah & Abang Ahmad Ridzuan, 1992) and the Kelabit community in urban areas (Martin & Yen, 1992).

Presumably, communities in urban and sub-urban areas are more susceptible to language shift because the social pressures of having to be assimilated into the larger community and to adopt urban values would be greater. This shift may be temporary or occasional in nature, and it may be permanent. Thus, it is timely that a study be conducted to examine the impact of these macro-sociological changes on the language use patterns of minority groups in this region.

1.2 An overview of progression of LSLM and related studies

Since its initial introduction as a field of inquiry in the 1960's, LMLS has progressed from being purely descriptive to an understanding of the process of language

shift. This also necessitates a change in methodological approach, from an over-reliance on the use of survey and census data to ascertain "intergenerational shift", to ethnographic approaches in data collection and analysis. Principally, earlier studies on LSLM aim to provide a description of societal bilingualism and social structures that govern language use in communities. The concept of *domain* (Fishman, 1965/2000) was one such social structure. This conception leads to description of language use patterns in communities in terms of their functions in the "high" and "low" domains of language use. The different conditions of societal bilingualism e.g. diglossic bilingual communities, bilingualism without diglossia (Fishman, 1967/2000) are identified from language choice patterns in various domains of language use. The unstable state of societal bilingualism is said to lead to language shift. The progression of language shift in a community is described as intergenerational, where language choice patterns of three generations are examined to ascertain the existence of language shift in the community. The language choice patterns of communities are correlated with social variables (e.g. age, gender, and socio-economic level) to identify the sources of language shift. However, such analysis does not actually explain what motivates speakers to shift, and for that reason, later studies on LSLM attempt to address this gap in research. Languages are also described as having unequal distribution and status in communities. Therefore, language shift is also seen as a consequence of "by-product of higher-level power-related social processes" (Fishman, 1964, as cited in Li Wei, 2002:124).

Later studies on LSLM have attempted to give an ethnographic account of the process of language shift. Gal (1979) and Dorian (1981, as cited in Fasold, 1984:222-227) are examples of such studies which use the anthropological method of "participant observation" to arrive at the causes and processes of language shift in

communities. In participant observation, the aim is to search for underlying socio-cultural values governing language choice patterns of community members. Social and cultural values associated with the use of language are revealed from observation of code-switching practice among community members. The anthropological approach also analyses transcriptions of tape-recorded conversation of community members as they conduct daily affairs.

Gal (1979) studies German-Hungarian peasant community in Oberwart, Austria, where bilingualism has probably existed since 1500. Dorian (1981, as cited in Fasold, 1984:222-227) studies shift to English among Gaelic speakers (who were traditionally fishermen) in East Sutherland, northern Scotland. In both cases, the small-community language had co-existed with a higher-status language for decades without a substantial shift away from it. Social and economic changes in the area have brought about in-migration of speakers of the dominant language, and have increased the opportunity and desirability of community members to be associated with the majority socio-cultural group. In both studies, community members perceive their traditional identity "inferior" to the dominant language and culture, and shift is motivated by the community's desire to be affiliated with the social status of a socially and economically dominant group.

Gal's framework indicates a clear break from previous traditions in approaching the subject of language shift. At the point of embarking on her study, Gal (1979) highlights that previous researches on language shift have not been able to explain the process of language shift. Indeed, despite extensive literature on the subject at the time, it was not possible to arrive at the actual causes of language shift. Other than the listing of contributing factors and identifying conditions that accelerate language shift,

very little has been achieved towards understanding the process of language shift i.e. when and why a community gives up its traditional patterns of choice in favour of a dominant language. The factors identified for shift in communities can be ambivalent. Correlation between language choice patterns and social factors merely points to the group motivating shift, usually the younger generation, but not why shift occurs. In Gal's study, the motivating factors for shift relates closely to the social status speakers wish to claim as part of their social identity. This concerns language attitudes of major and minority groups towards each other's language and "prestige" attached to the use of certain languages. In other words, the shift is taken to be socially and psychologically driven.

In recent times, the social network theory has gained interest from LSLM researchers as an alternative model to describe the process of language shift in communities. The theory was initially proposed by Milroy and Milroy (1997a, 1997b, 1992) to account for social variation in language (c.f. Labov, 1965/1986) and linguistic change in monolingual communities. The strength of this theory is that it appeals to the notions of social identity and solidarity (c.f. Bloom & Gumperz, 1972) which build on the interactional aspects of individual's language choice. The network theory basically investigates how speakers develop their social identities through interaction. Social networks are "the networks of informal social interaction in which speakers are enmeshed and through which, by pressure and inducements (incentives), participants impose linguistic norms on each other" (Gal, 1979:5). Speakers' language behaviour is said to be influenced and shaped by the nature of their social circles, and this in turn contributes to the social relations (interpersonal relation) which speakers maintain. In this approach, speakers' social identity and the identities of their regular

interlocutors are measured to account for speaker variation in patterns of choice (c.f. Gal, 1979; Li Wei, 1994; Roksana, 2002; Saravanan, 2002). (Also see section 4.8).

Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) have also stressed that the viability of a language depends on its "ethnolinguistic vitality". They have taken a social psychological dimension in their critical evaluation as to why in language-contact situations, some communities maintain their language while others do not. Within this model, community language is evaluated on a vitality continuum in a number of components: Status, Demography and Institutional Support. Status encompasses economic, social, socio-historical and language status within and without the boundaries of the linguistic community network. Demographic variables refer to the size of the community, and geographical distribution and concentration of the ethnolinguistic group. Institutional support refers to the extent to which the language receives formal and informal representations in various institutions of the nations, region and community. The model explains language shift in terms of the relative value of accommodating to the mainstream group as opposed to preserving the integrity of one's own group. The future of a group's existence depends on its vitality and ability to 'behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in inter-group situations' (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977: 308). Ethnolinguistic vitality has proved to be a useful framework to be incorporated in LSLM particularly for understanding language behaviour in inter-group relations (c.f. Zuraidah, 2003).

Researchers (Haugen, 1972/2001; Mackey, 1980) have proposed a framework which examines the interaction between a language and its "environment" i.e. the social, cultural, political, and economic as well as the larger linguistic contexts in which the community is positioned. Haugen's (1972/2001) ecology of language

includes the classification of language in relation to other languages, its internal varieties, linguistic demography, the state of bilingualism/multilingualism, domains of use, the nature of its written traditions and standardisation, institutional supports for the language, and language attitudes of speakers. Mackey (1980: 68) has also adopted the idea and proposes the "ecology of language shift" which is defined as "interrelated sequences of causes and effects producing changes in the traditional language behaviour of one group under the influence of another, resulting in the switch in the language of one of the groups" (Mackey, 1980:68). In the ecology of language shift, researchers cannot operate outside the framework of time. The rate of change, its nature and direction is determined by the languages in the area, the peoples and the environment of the contact (Mackey (1980: 69). Edward's (1992) typology of minority situation offers a more comprehensive framework which also considers "ecology of language" (Haugen 1972) and "ethnolinguistic vitality" model (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977).

In recent decades, socio-economic pressures, and the hegemony of the so-called "global languages" (e.g. English, French, Spanish, Mandarin) have encroached upon lesser languages and is threatening the world's linguistic diversity. The increase in competitiveness in the global market has increased pressures to possess mastery of these languages. This phenomenon is not only happening to socially and economically disadvantaged communities, but to major groups as well. Perhaps this is the reason why LSLM still holds the interest of researchers till the present time.

Research on LSLM also demonstrates that the rate of shift varies within a community and between communities in a region. Within a community, shift varies between speakers in different geographical locations (e.g. rural or urban), age-groups,

gender, and social groups. Comparative studies such as the one conducted by Clyne (2003) on migrant communities in Australia has demonstrated that the rate of shift varies depending on several variables: occurrence of mixed marriages, the time of immigration, the attitudes of the host country towards bilingualism at the time of immigration (i.e. assimilationist or multicultural), contacts with the homeland, and English proficiency of parent generation. Although migrant communities have been subjected to the same ecological pressures to assimilate, yet some communities have maintained the use of the mother tongue.

Likewise, Asmah's (2008b) study on Malay immigrant communities in various parts of Australia shows that shift or maintenance of the Malay language is dependent on several interrelated factors specific to the communities in various locations. The Malay language is maintained in communities (e.g. Cocos or Keeling Islands, and Christmas Island) that still value the language for intra-community communication and as the medium of expression of their cultural identities, where the Islamic faith is an integral component of identity. The factors of continuous migration (although on a small-scale) from Malaysia and Singapore, and maintaining contact with these parent countries have contributed towards the maintenance of the primordial language. However, migration of younger speakers to other greener pastures in mainland Australia may threaten the position of the mother tongue in these communities. The Malay language may cease to be the main language in family communication among Malay communities in mainland Australia, particularly among Malaysian and Singaporean in Western Australia. The third and fourth generations in these communities have passive knowledge of the language. Nonetheless, its role as a commercial language (e.g. in Perth) and constant contact with Malay communities in the two islands and parent countries may support maintenance of the language.

There is a general agreement in the literature on LSLM that while some communities have survived whereas others have not, would depend on micro-variables influencing patterns of choice i.e. the features of individual speech community. This also means that a more comprehensive framework is required to assess viability of a particular language. One such framework is Edward's (1992) typology of minority situation.

Despite the abundant literature on LSLM, the communities that were studied vary in different parts of the world. The field of LSLM has provided quite extensively descriptions of language shift in immigrant communities. The intensity of the social economic pressures to assimilate to the host country and degree of social acceptance of multilingualism in a region are some of the major factors identified that may assert a greater influence on communities' decision to shift or otherwise. LSLM phenomena in newly independent nations, typically ex-colonial countries in Africa and Asia, have also been well studied. Language policies of these countries have been identified as a major contributing factor for the decline in language diversity in the region. Typically, these communities require a national or official language for unification purpose (which may affect linguistic diversity), and a language of an international standing for various reasons.

Because of the diverse sociolinguistic conditions that speakers are subjected to, LSLM continues to be an area of interest to sociolinguists. In the Malaysian context, studies on LSLM have been conducted in indigenous and non-indigenous communities. Studies on indigenous communities include a study on the Miriek (Bibi Aminah & Abang, 1992) and urban Kelabit (Martin & Yen, 1992). Studies on non-

indigenous communities include a study on the Javanese community (Mohd Subakir, 1998), and a group of studies on the Indian communities in Malaysia e.g. the Sindhi community (David, 2001); Roman Catholic Malayalees (David & Nambia,r 2002); Punjabi Sikhs (David, Naji & Kaur, 2003); Pakistani community in Machang, Kelantan (David, 2003); Malaysian Tamil community (Naji & David, 2003) and Malayalees community in Kuching (David & Norazuna, 2006).

Several studies conducted on communities in the Southeast Asian region that should also be mentioned because of the difference in approach employed and theoretical contribution to the field of LSLM in the region. Roksana (2002) employs the social network theory to study LSLM among the Malay community in Singapore. Florey's (1990) ethnographic account of the changing patterns of language allegiance in Western Seram, Maluku, Indonesia have shown that the choice of different geographical and cultural setting can provide further insights into the process of LSLM. Florey describes the process of language shift of an indigenous community as a consequence of forced migration to the coastal areas of Maluku, brought about by the R.M.S. (Republick Maluku Selatan) conflict from 1950's-1960. In this study, language shift begins with second generation Alune speakers in Lohiatala who were marginalised from "full integration into either the traditional (Alune) or modern (Malay) aspects of village life" (Florey, 1990:180). At the same time, they have increased participation in the larger community which leads to increase use of Malay and affiliation with urban identity. There are also other studies that have attempted to give a critical account of LSLM. Martin's (1991; 2002) study on the changing language ecology of Brunei Darussalam has provided greater insights into the LSLM situation in the region. In his article, Li Wei (2002) suggests LSLM research "should not be merely a descriptive discipline but a more evaluative, even critical, area of

social sciences" and offers a theory of "markets, hierarchies and networks" to account for the LSLM situation of the Indian and Chinese communities in Singapore.

LSLM has also made advances in methodology. When Fishman (as cited in Fasold, 1984:215) first mooted the phenomenon of LSLM, he also suggested that investigation of LSLM should ideally involve a longitudinal study, which repeatedly studies a population over a number of years. Shift is taken to be in progress if data from the same population for more than one time show a significant decline in a number of respondents reporting the use of the mother tongue. However, longitudinal studies have its limitation for it makes use of census data, which may not always be available. Fishman has also advocated that in the absence of census data, intergenerational shift may be studied by taking the language choice patterns of community members within a single period of time. However, one of the major problems in interpreting one-time survey results is connected with age-grading. Age-correlated data on bilingualism can be misleading. If there is a genuine shift taking place, age-correlated data will show a larger number of older speakers using the declining language than younger speakers. Nevertheless, age-related differences do not necessarily reflect an on-going language shift. They may reflect age-grading patterns or life-cycle differences i.e. differences in language behaviour expected of people in a society at different ages (Fasold, 1984: 215; c.f. Gal 1979; Li Wei, 1994). In language choice patterns that reflect "life-cycle changes", the pattern of language choice would characterise a particular age-group; for instance, a speaker may use bilingual pattern when he is still in employment, but will use monolingual pattern in retirement age.

Researchers have used various means to ensure that age-correlated data does not indicate life-cycle differences in patterns of choice. For instance, Lieberson (as cited in Fasold, 1984:229) conducts an 'age-cohort' analysis of census data in his attempt to determine longitudinal changes in patterns of choice of bilingual French Canadians. The bilingualism data for each age-cohort is compared with the data for the cohort ten years older in the next decennial census to see changes in the patterns of reported bilingualism. In the absence of census records, alternatively researchers could ask 'retrospective questions' which provide a means for determining longitudinal change when data could only be gathered through a one-shot survey within a single period of time. Retrospective questions have been posed on the respondents' past language choice patterns. Saxena (2002) has conducted age-cohorts analysis and supported age-correlated data with ethnographic observations, interviews and historical evidence in his case study of the Punjabi Hindus in Southall, Britain.

In recent times, Gal (1979) in particular, has employed an inventive way to counteract the problem of age-correlated analysis to ascertain language shift. She proposes depicting speaker variations in patterns of choice and uses the "implicational scaling" technique to describe the processes of language shift in communities. Unlike age-correlated analysis, which uses age as the main variable, the implicational scaling technique basically groups speakers and interlocutors according to their "patterns of choice" (Also see section 4.7).

1.3. Statement of the study

Florey (1990: 186) writes that "insights into the process of LSLM can be gained through research which is undertaken in a very different geographical and cultural

setting". Unlike previous LSLM studies which have focused on small communities in the region, this study examines changes in language choice patterns of a minority community with a population of approximately 170,000 speakers (*Buku Tahunan Perangkaan Sarawak,* 2003). The Bidayuh speech community i.e. the "Bidayuh Belt" which constitutes four major areas is still intact, but its proximity to the capital city makes it more susceptible to outside influences and greater social pressure to assimilate with major groups. Already, the community members in the capital city, Kuching are seen to have shifted to major languages. However, the impact of social and cultural transformation on language choice patterns of other communities within the "Bidayuh Belt" remains to be seen. At the time of this research, no Bidayuh community is completely isolated from contacts with other ethnic groups. In the past, while other major groups (e.g. Malay, Chinese, Iban) had had a head start in various aspects of socio-economic development, the Bidayuh community was lacking far behind in all aspects of community life; it was a socially, economically and politically marginalised group. At the present time, its position has improved tremendously and it is striving towards becoming a progressive community.

Sarawak as a sociolinguistic setting is a multilingual society. Multilingualism is the norm in this region. The existence of bilingualism does not necessarily lead to language shift. Nonetheless, the Bidayuh community depicts one that is experiencing an on-going language shift. The signs of active shift commonly described in LSLM studies (c.f. England, 1988 on the Mayan community) have emerged in this community. For instance, some Bidayuh children especially in urban centres are not learning the Bidayuh language as first language. Non-acquisition of the mother tongue and passive competency in the mother tongue are not isolated cases. It can no longer be assumed that the Bidayuh people are able to speak the Bidayuh language. Community leaders

have also expressed their concern of the declining proficiency among Bidayuh children in urban centres. The earliest sign of shift occurs when one language encroaches into the domains that used to be reserved for the mother tongue (Fasold 1984). This is also observed in *intra-group* communication in Bidayuh families. It is also common among Bidayuh to speak other major languages in *in-group* interactions, a language behaviour typical of the language shift phenomenon. The explanation often reiterated by the speakers is that the Bidayuh speech systems are not mutually intelligible, and that some Bidayuh are not competent in the mother tongue, a factor which also affects comfortability in speaking. However, after taking into account these factors, there are instances where the mother tongue is not spoken with group members although the situation calls for the use of the Bidayuh language. This is seen particularly when Bidayuh speakers communicate with each other in the public places. With this in view, the question arises as to the value of the mother tongue among the Bidayuh, and the explanation for this behavior.

1.4 Research objectives

This study investigates the variability of language choice patterns among educated Bidayuh speakers in Kuching-Samarahan Division, and attempts to explain certain factors for the variations and the phenomenon of language shift. Since the study also aims to relate changes in language choice patterns with the changing "environment", the choice of the graduates is justified. Any change in language choice patterns within the community is most likely to be initiated by the educated Bidayuh as they are the group that would be most susceptible to socio-cultural changes, and with increased social mobility. By studying a section of the community, one can zoom into the heart of these macro-sociological changes, and still be able to look at various

dimensions of language use of the Bidayuh community and their general language behaviour. Furthermore, because of its population, it is not feasible to conduct a language shift study *per se* of the Bidayuh community. This would involve several demographic dimensions.

The main thrusts of the study consist the following:

a. To ascertain whether there is a an emerging pattern towards greater use of Malay and English among educated Bidayuh, and if there is, who are leading the "trend", its sources, and what are the motivations for the "trend".

b. To examine the implication of the "trend", posing the question: Does the pattern of language preferences of the graduates indicate a possibility of an on-going language shift among members within this social category?

c. To examine factors that dictate changes in language choice patterns of the graduates. The study posits that the educated Bidayuh vary in their language preferences. It is hypothesised that the source of this language variation is the changing socio-cultural values and aspiration of the speakers as a result of macro-sociological factors such as urbanisation, exogamous marriages, rural-urban migration, and language policy.

d. To describe the nature of societal and individual bilingualism in this community. The choice of a language speaker makes in interaction is also dictated by the practice of societal bilingualism in the community. Hence, the study attempts to find whether this is also the case with the Bidayuh community.

1.5 Research questions

Specifically, the study deals with the following research questions:

a. What is (or are) the dominant "patterns of choice" of the educated Bidayuh in each of the following settings: home, workplace, recreational places (the social domain) and worshipping places (domain of the religion)

b. What are the dominant factors influencing "patterns of choice" in each setting?

c. How did language shift occur for some speakers, and why?

d. What is the attitude of the speakers towards the Bidayuh language?

e. What is the choice of language of the Bidayuh graduate in intra-ethnic interaction (with group members), and what are the social parameters determining choice?

f. What is the language choice of the Bidayuh graduate in inter-ethnic interaction (with other ethnic groups), and what are the social parameters determining choice?

g. What are the social-cultural-economic-political changes that the educated Bidayuh are subjected to, and how have these changes interacted and influenced their language choice patterns in daily interaction?

1.6 Research framework

In this section, the various stages of the research are detailed out, that include a description on data collection and analysis and its methodological framework, prior observation, and methods devised by the researcher to approach the community.

1.6.1 Stages in data collection and analysis

The study is conducted in two tiers. The first part involves a survey on language choice of the educated Bidayuh with various types of interlocutors in four main settings: home, workplace, recreational places, and community activities and worshipping places. It is posited that speakers may share the same language repertoire, but vary in patterns of language choice in daily interaction. It is anticipated that some speakers would have the tendency to use a particular language in most situations or in two out of the three main settings investigated; some would use major languages at the expense of the mother tongue, and some would employ a "diglossia-like" pattern of choice. The survey gives a general picture of language choice patterns of the Bidayuh graduates, and ascertains the existence of a trend towards major languages. Ultimately, the survey attempts to capture variations in "patterns of choice", and to account for the variations.

In analysis of survey data, primarily speakers are grouped according to "patterns of choice" (c.f. Gal, 1979; Li Wei, 1994) to determine the factors that influence choice. It is assumed that speakers with the same pattern may also share similar characteristics. The contention is that variations in patterns of language choice would reflect the speakers' responses to socio-cultural transformation that the Bidayuh community is undergoing as a result of macro-sociological changes. It is posited that variations in patterns of language choice would correlate with the following speaker variables:

a. Language experience in formative years (e.g. main languages spoken with family members and friends in childhood and adolescent years)
b. Place where respondents were raised - in Bidayuh villages or urban centres

c. The age at the time of migration from Bidayuh villages to the capital city and other urban centres

d. Duration away from Kuching-Samarahan Division, and places settled

e. Current place of residence (Bidayuh area or Kuching city)

f. School experience – the type of schools speakers were educated in (English-medium school or Malay-medium school) and the location of the school (Bidayuh area or in the city)

g. Attachment to village community – frequency of visit to kampong and whether speaker belongs to any social groups in the village.

h. Type of marriage i.e. whether spouse is from different ethnic group or sub-group of Bidayuh

i. Mixed parentage

j. Religious belief

k. Competency in languages

l. Social circle

Variations in patterns of choice in interaction have ascertained the direction and motivation of shift observed to occur among educated Bidayuh. Although the study only examines LSLM within a social category, the results of the study have indicated the existence of incipient shift or early stage of shift in this community. Language choice is usually accompanied by language attitudes. An on-going language shift has occurred as a result of the older generation orientating the younger ones towards a change in patterns of language choice. As total language shift in a community does not normally occur during one's lifetime, the language attitudes of the older generation are

shown to have immensely affected the language choice patterns of Bidayuh speakers in subsequent generations.

The second part of the study involves participant observation of language choice behaviour of the educated Bidayuh speakers in actual interaction. The purpose is to observe patterns of choice *in intra-* and *inter-ethnic* interactions and to arrive at the social parameters in which actual language choice decisions are operating at the micro-level. Observation of code-switching practice has revealed social values and norms associated with language use. Bloom and Gumperz (1972) method of observation was utilised for this purpose. The concepts of "setting", "social situation" and "social events" were employed in analysis of the language choice patterns of the educated Bidayuh in various settings and domains of language use. (See section 4.4)

Observation of the language choice patterns in inter-ethnic interaction encompasses social situations involving other ethnic groups such as a community function or birthday party with other ethnic groups as guests. Whereas, observation in intra-ethnic interaction involves two main types of social situations: (a) Intra-dialectal interaction between Bidayuh speakers from the same dialect group, and (b) Inter-dialectal interaction between Bidayuh speakers from different dialect groups.

Observation of the language behavior of the graduates in *intra-ethnic* interactions, among other things does or does not reveal the mother tongue as the norm interaction with group members. While shift to other languages in inter-ethnic interaction is inevitable for ease of communication in major-minority contact situation, shift in norms of language use in intra-ethnic interaction (in this case, intra-dialectal) is an indication of language shift in progress (Fase, Jaspaert & Kroon, 1992). At the

micro-level, language choice in this community can be influenced by the "interlocutor" factor, language attitudes and the degree of mutual intelligibility between sub-dialects; hence, these factors were also examined in the study. The observation was followed by series of interviews with the respondents to search for factors that have dictated patterns of language use in the past and at the present time.

In-depth interviews with community leaders (12 people) were conducted extensively throughout the study largely to obtain greater insights into the social, cultural, political and historical background of various sub-groups of the Bidayuh community, and to ascertain the hypothesis that have emerged during data collection and data analysis. The cultural differences (e.g. ethnic pride) between sub-groups of Bidayuh that exist in this community, albeit in a subtle way, were identified in these interviews. Presumably, these factors to some extent would assert a greater influence on the viability of the Bidayuh language in the near future. The research framework is summarised below (Fig.1.1)

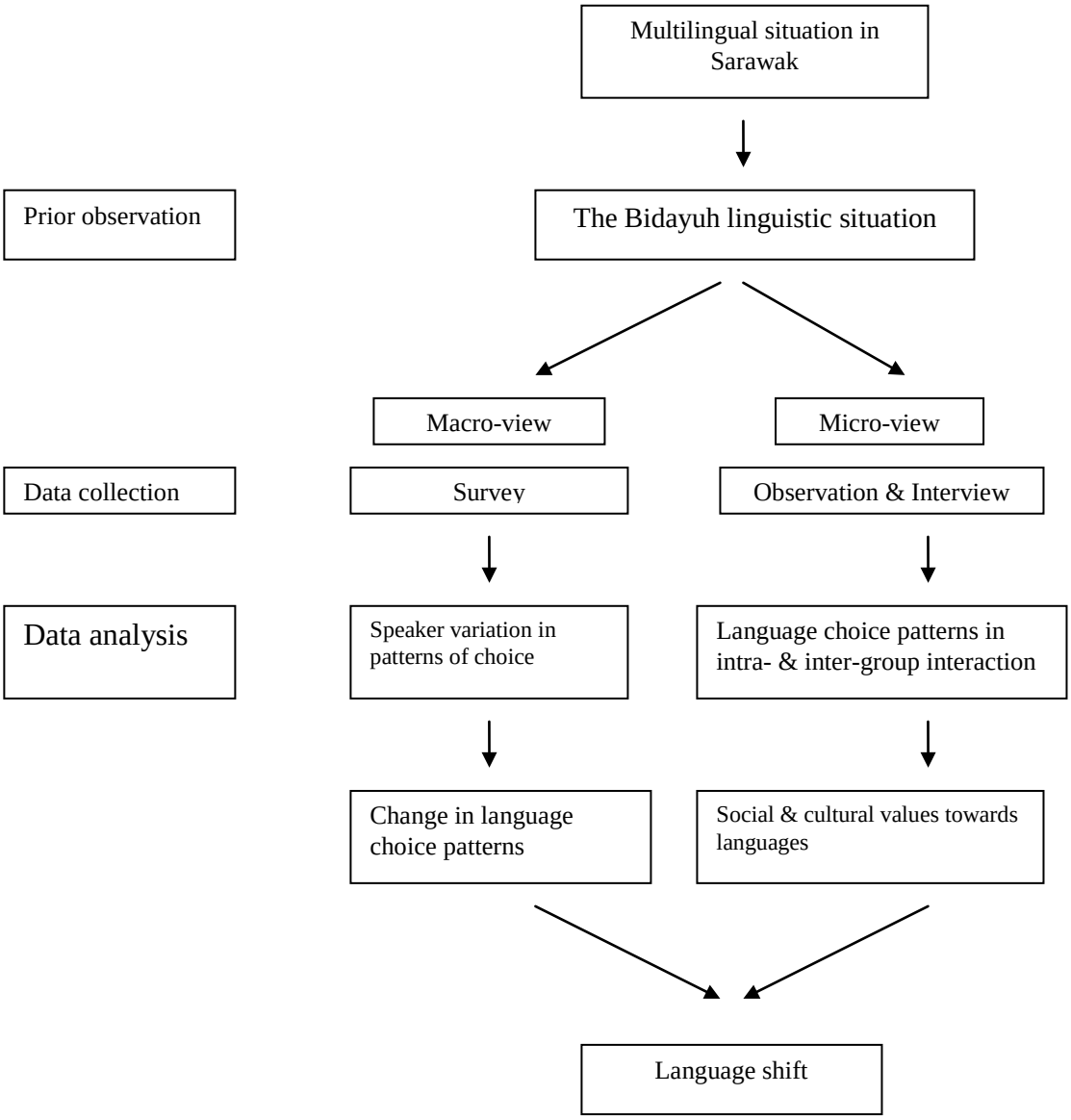

Fig. 1.1. Research framework of the study

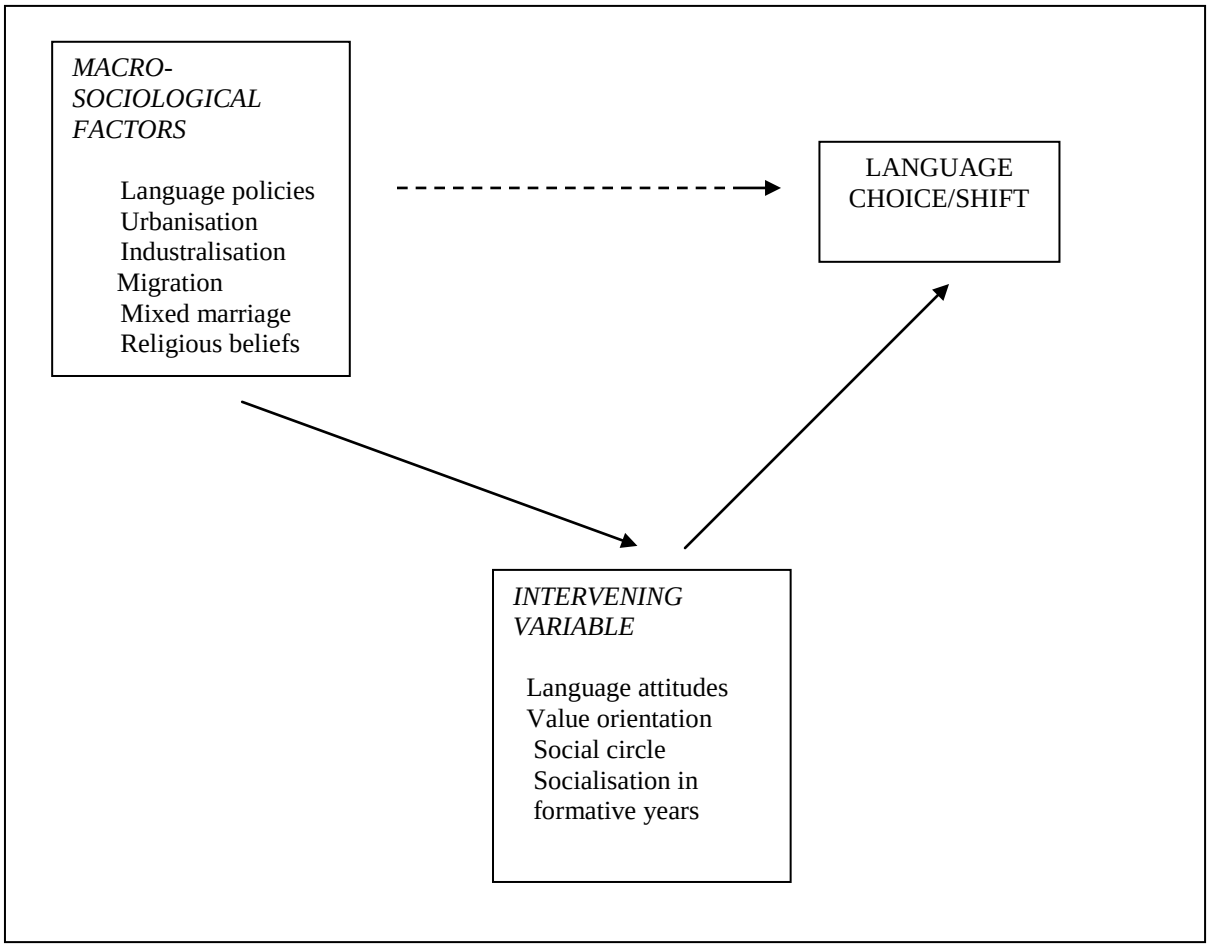

Fig 1.2. Relationship between factors in language choice and shift

Figure 1.2 above illustrates the relationship between factors in language choice and shift. Macro-sociological factors have some bearing on changes in language use patterns of a community. Nonetheless, this relationship is not a causal one. The effect of these factors on language choice patterns can be examined "through their effects (macro-sociological factors) on the shape of social networks, on the statuses speakers want to claim, and on the cultural association between linguistic varieties and social groups" (Gal 1979: 17). In relation to the Bidayuh, it is posited that variation in language choice patterns would be influenced by intervening variables such as speakers' value orientation which in turn would influence attitudes towards languages

and their speakers. These factors would motivate speakers to prefer certain languages over others. Socio-cultural values such as the acceptance or non-acceptance of mixed marriages and the attitudes towards "progress" or the attainment of a 'modern' Bidayuh would be translated into language behaviour.

As the intention of the study is also to explicate the "process" of language shift, and attempts to relate changes in patterns of language choice with changes in the "environment" (Haugen, 1972/2001), the study has considered Edward's (1992) comprehensive typology of minority situation. Edward's typology lists 33 variables which are used to assess the viability of the Bidayuh language. Edward's framework is given below:

Table 1.1: Edward's (1992) framework for the typology of minority languages

Categorisation A	Categorisation B		
	Speaker	Language	Setting
Demography	1	2	3
Sociology	4	5	6
Linguistics	7	8	9
Psychology	10	11	12
History	13	14	15
Politics/law/government	16	17	18
Geography	19	20	21
Education	22	23	24
Religion	25	26	27
Economics	28	29	30
The Media	31	32	33
*Literacy	34	35	36

Note: * Literacy is added to the list of variables by Grenoble and Whaley (1998)

The numbers in the column indicate three aspects subsumed under a variable heading. For instance, the variable heading "demography" can be further examined in terms of (1) numbers and concentration of speakers, (2) Extent of the language and (3)

Rural-urban nature of the setting. Grenoble and Whaley (1988) deliberate that the variables in the "speaker" and "language" column are "micro-variables"; they refer to features of an individual speech community. While the variables in the "setting" column are "macro-variables" i.e. features of the broader context where the community is located. Grenoble and Whaley (1988) have also stressed the importance of distinguishing between macro- and micro-variables in assessment of viability of a minority language. They deliberate that the macro-variables are "indicative of features which are shared across large numbers of endangerment situations" and micro-variables are "characteristics which are unique to specific speech communities". (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998:27). They contend that micro-variables will account for the differences in the rate, outcome, and reversibility of language shift between communities, and that the existence of actual threats to the survival of a language depends on the circumstances of individual communities i.e. it is a function of the micro-variables. (Also see Tsunoda, 2006 for a more detailed description of components subsumed under each variable heading). The components subsumed under each variable heading are given below:

a. Demography (Variable 1-3)

This concerns numbers and concentration of speakers, homogeneity or heterogeneity of speakers, age and sex of speakers, the extent of the language, marriage patterns, and migration patterns.

b. Sociology (Variable 4-6)

This aspect concerns social stratification in the ethnic group, and degree of interaction with other ethnic groups, social status of speakers, way of life, and cultural similarity and dissimilarity between groups.

c. Linguistics (Variables 7-9)

Linguistic variables encompass linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of language. The variables include language repertoire and linguistic capabilities of speakers, genetic classification and internal varieties of the language, type of speech community, functions of languages in community, domains and patterns of language use, transmission of the language to children, contact with major languages, autonomy, development of the language (e.g. standardisation) and nature of previous and current maintenance and revival efforts.

d. Psychology (variable 10-12)

Basically, socio-psychological aspects of language use need to be addressed e.g. the group attitude towards other groups, other group's attitudes towards the group, attitudes of the majority group towards minority, and aspects of the language-identity relationship**.**

e. History (Variable 13-15)

This encompasses history and background of the group, and history of the language. In other words, it provides the sociolinguistic settings of the group.

f. Politics (Variable 16-18)

This concerns rights and recognition of speakers, degree and extent of official recognition of the language and degree of autonomy or "special status" of the area.

g. Geography (Variable 19-21)

This refers to geographical extent of the language, national territory (i.e. traditional homeland, or elsewhere), rural-urban nature of the residence and geographical isolation of the community or proximity to town.

h. Education (Variable 22-24)

This concerns speaker's attitude and involvement regarding education, type of school support for language, state of education in the area and literacy and writing system.

i. Religion (Variable 25-27)

This refers to religion of speakers, type and strength of association between language and religion, and importance of religion in the area.

j. Economics (Variable 28-30)

This concerns the economic health of the speaker group, the association between language(s) and economic success and mobility, and the economic health of the region.

k. Technology (Variable 31-33)

This refers to the existence or absence of modern mass media, language representation in the media, and group representation in the media.

l. Literacy (Variable 34-36)

This concerns matters relating to the success of literacy programmes in language revitalisation. It includes attitudes of speakers of the language and speakers of majority groups towards multilingualism, multiliteracy, and multiculturalism in the region, and

the selection of the specific dialect which will serve as the basis of literary language (Grenoble and Whaley 1988:34-35).

1.6.2 Prior observation

Initial observation was conducted prior to the actual fieldwork of the study. At this stage of the research, knowledge of cultural background of the community is necessary for approaching the community under study. Conducting general observation of the community, and talking to members of the community (normally friends of the researcher) gives insider's view of the community. The main concern at this initial stage was to decide on the types of data to be collected, and the instruments that will be employed in data collection and analysis. In qualitative study, the phenomenon observed is the motivation of the study. Before embarking on the study, inter-speaker variation was observed, and this became the specific objective of the study. The decision to conduct in-depth interview with the help of a questionnaire instead of conducting self-administered questionnaire to gather data on language choice was ascertained after considering the intricate language choice situation of the Bidayuh. In qualitative study, the researcher should let "the data speaks for itself". In view of that, this study takes "speaker variables" as major variables to be examined rather than taking predetermined social variables (e.g. factors of age and gender) from the literature. This was decided upon at the initial stage of the study.

1.6.3 Approaching the community

Having enthusiast members of the community to assist during field work is a valuable tool. In this study, the researcher approached members of the main Bidayuh

associations, Bidayuh Graduate Association (BGA) and Dayak Bidayuh National Association (DBNA) to assist in identifying respondents of the study. The respondents were introduced to the researcher by means of "snow bowling" method. In this way, one is certain of the respondents' willingness to participate in the study. Snow bowling method is useful particularly when the sample is not easily accessible to the researcher, an outsider. For instance, in this study samples for Malay-Bidayuh mixed parentage were difficult to identify partly because the respondents have "muslim names". The researcher had to rely on the network of Bidayuh contacts for this purpose.

Care is also taken to ensure that the respondents' privacy is not intruded. For instance, the choice of the venue of interview was decided upon by the respondents. During interview sessions, the researcher avoided asking sensitive questions in a direct way. For instance, some respondents were sensitive about their age. Hence, in this study the researcher devised other means of estimating his or her age-group, e.g. looking at the educational background of the respondents.

1.6.4 Field work: An outsider's perspective

Initially, when the researcher first approached the community, members of the community have some reservations with regard to the presence of the researcher, an outsider within the community. However, when the credibility of the researcher and legitimacy of her intentions is ascertained, community members began to show their enthusiasm in participating in the study. In fact, some respondents are of the opinion that they would prefer an outsider to study the community. For one thing, an outsider would take a neutral stand, and thus his or her perspectives of the community would likely be more objective. Moreover, being a local the researcher is not exactly an

outsider. This is an advantage as the researcher is familiar with the sociolinguistic setting.

Before embarking on actual fieldwork, the researcher was aware of the subtle "cultural differences" between groups in this community. This is known to the researcher prior to interview sessions. It is advisable that the researcher be acquainted with the cultural nuances of the community early in the stage of field work particularly if one is an outsider. This deeper understanding of cultural differences between groups (ways of thinking that is entwined with socio-historical past of contact between groups) is critical in approaching the community. Nonetheless, in qualitative study the researcher to a certain extent is the main "instrument". In view of that, the community's support and cooperation during field work depends on the researcher's ability to conduct a research project.

1.7 Significance of the study

The findings of the study has ascertained the emergence of incipient shift to English and Malay which is observed to occur among educated Bidayuh, and has provided the background for accessing the viability of the Bidayuh language. Of the utmost importance, the study has attempted to give a description of an instance of the "language ecology" of Sarawak. Language ecology is a term coined by Haugen (2001:57) to mean "the interactions between any given language and its environment". The environment refers to the "geographical, socio-economic and cultural conditions in which speakers of a given language exist, as well as the wider linguistic environment" (Martin, 2002:175)

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the study. It has delineated the progression of LSLM in aspects of approach and method of analysis. The overview provides the necessary background for succeeding sections that state the rationale for embarking on the study, the scope and aims, and its methodological framework. The theories on language choice and methods of analysis are further elaborated in their respective chapters.