CHAPTER 5: THE SURVEY

LANGUAGE CHOICE PATTERNS IN THE FAMILY DOMAIN

5.1   Introduction

This chapter and the subsequent chapters (6 and 7), report on the results of the survey that examines language choice of the Bidayuh graduates in Kuching-Samarahan Division. Data on language choice was collected through in-depth interview with the help of a questionnaire.

5.2   Objective of the survey

Primarily, the survey investigates the language choice of Bidayuh graduates with various types of interlocutors in four main settings: home, workplace, the social domain and the domain of religion. The results give the preferred patterns of choice(s) in each setting, and principal factors dictating patterns of choice. Analysis of the questionnaire data   on language choice attempts to elucidate speaker variation in language choice (Gal, 1979; Li Wei, 1994) that is, the choices made by a single speaker in various settings and social situations, as well as differences between speakers or category of speakers within the same setting.

5.3   The questionnaire

The following sub-sections discuss the rationale for the design of the questionnaire, and include a description of each part to the questionnaire.

5.3.1   The design of the questionnaire

The choice of language of the respondents with various types of interlocutors in various settings is investigated. Presumably, the intensity of communication is greatest in these settings. In complex multilingual settings, the interlocutor factor may take precedence over other factors (e.g. topic of conversation, formality-informality of the situation) as determinants in language choice. In view of that, the social background of the interlocutor – e.g. level of education, ethnicity, and whether they are rural or urban residents are taken into account in drafting survey questions.

5.3.2   Parts of the questionnaire

There are five parts to the Questionnaire (Refer to *Appendix D*). Part 1 investigates the demographic background of the respondents and variables that may influence current language choice patterns of the respondents. Part II measures the respondents' ability in languages and Bidayuh dialects. Part III investigates respondents' language choice patterns with various types of interlocutors and in *intra-* and *inter-group* interactions, including language preferences for formal church services and for praying. In Part IV of the questionnaire, the respondents are required to state their language choice with a set of "predetermined" interlocutors, and are given a set of possible answers to choose from. Items asked include language choice of the graduates with Bidayuh interlocutors from various social backgrounds - different sub-group, age-group, level of education and whether they are village or urban dwellers. In addition, questions attempting to gauge respondents' general attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue in intra-group interaction are also included. Part V examines the choice

of language of other family members of the respondent who intermarried with Bidayuh from different sub-groups and with members of other ethnic groups.

In LSLM, language attitude is a major factor determining patterns of choice. However, language attitude does not always correlate with language choice. Rather than asking speakers to response to direct questions on whether they view a particular language positively or otherwise, in this study speakers' attitudes can be inferred from the respondents' patterns of choice with various types of interlocutors and observation of language behaviour in various social situations.

5.4   Administration of the questionnaire

The survey took about seven weeks to be completed. The respondents were contacted via telephone or by an introduction from personal contacts. The whereabouts of the respondents were taken from a list of Bidayuh graduates obtained from *The Bidayuh Graduates Association* whose office is situated in Kuching and a list obtained from the Chief Minister's Department.

Because of the intricate nature of the Bidayuh language choice situation, the only means of getting the data required is through in-depth interviews with the help of a questionnaire, and participant observation. It was not desirable to employ self-administered questionnaire as done typically in quantitative data collection because the accuracy of data can be at stake. Moreover, the reason(s) for each language choice preferences of the Bidayuh speakers can then be asked during interview. This technique also enables the researcher to probe further by asking questions which are relevant to

certain categories of Bidayuh graduates (e.g. individuals in mixed marriages and mixed parentage).

The interviews were tape-recorded to ensure each session runs smoothly. In this way, the respondents may talk freely, and not be distracted by the interviewer's attempt to take down notes on paper. As the interview sessions progressed from one respondent to the other, the researcher formed new hypothesis, which led to further probing in succeeding interviews. The interview lasted for approximately two hours on an average for each respondent. The respondents' frame of mind may seriously affect their responses during prolonged interviews, and partly for that reason, the interviews with some respondents were conducted in two sessions. The total number of interview hours for <u>61</u> respondents was approximately <u>122</u> hours. Despite the prolonged interview sessions, the Bidayuh respondents have demonstrated remarkable commitment in participating in this study.

5.5   Validity and reliability of survey data

A pilot study was conducted from 12th – 30th June, 2007 to check on the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Generally, "validity" may refer to the accuracy of the data collected. The term "reliability" refers to the instrument employed and that it produces the correct measurement to gather data required to answer research objectives. So, validating findings in qualitative research would require the researcher to determine the accuracy or credibility of the findings through strategies such as member checking or triangulation (Creswell, 2005). Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different sources: individuals, types of data, and methods of data collection.

Member checking involves checking findings with participants and other sources such as community leaders.

In this study, conducting survey through interviews rather than merely asking respondents to complete survey forms is itself a technique to ensure accuracy of data. Missing or incomplete information is resolved during interview sessions. Responses to the questionnaire could also be reaffirmed. Checking "reliability" of the instrument includes revising survey questions which were vague or/and redundant, and omitting and adding questions where necessary. For example, Items 20-21 of Part II of the questionnaire which measure competency in languages spoken by the respondents were revised thoroughly during the pilot study. A clear description of what each scale represents is provided to avoid ambiguity. To reaffirm the accuracy of data, respondents' responses were checked against this scale.

Validity of survey data collected was consistently checked. For instance, *Item 23* of the questionnaire requires the respondents to indicate the language(s) they speak *most of the time* with immediate family members. Not only were the respondents' choices of language "most of the time" recorded, so were the responses which indicate significant use of other languages. For instance, if the respondent indicated Bidayuh as the choice of language spoken most of the time with "siblings", but Malay was also regularly spoken (e.g. about 30%-40%), this was noted down. This technique gives a more accurate account of language choice of the graduates.

Participant observations of language behaviour of the graduates in actual interactions were conducted throughout the study – prior to the design of the questionnaire, during data collection, and even more frequently after the results of the

questionnaire data was revealed. As the study progressed into its data collection stage, constant checking with speakers of the language and community leaders was done to ensure validity and reliability of the data.

Respondent's frame of mind (motivation or interest), and other physical condition may seriously affect their responses during interviews, and this was also taken into account to obtain high accuracy and reliability of data. Initially, some graduates showed their reluctance to participate in the study. Realising that "validity" may be at stake these individuals were never approached again.

5.6   Survey respondents

In this study, as in most qualitative researches, a "purposive sampling" method is used; sampling is done in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus in mind (Punch, 2001). For instance, respondents were chosen from various organisations and roughly represent four different settings: an academic institution, a government body, a government-linked company and a private agency.

A total of 61 respondents were involved in the survey, which is approximately 10% of the total population of Bidayuh graduates in Kuching-Samarahan Division. Nonetheless, in a qualitative study such as this study which uses ethnographic methods in data collection, it is not so much the number of respondents that matters; it is crucial that the number of respondents representing each variable investigated is sufficient (Refer to section 5.8 below). Increase in the number of respondents does not necessarily change the findings of the study. In this study, the major concern is to learn the 'processes' of language shift, rather than the extent of the shift.

The respondents in this study are Bidayuh graduates with academic degree from various organisations. Among the participating organisations were AZAM (Angkatan Zaman Mansang), Sarawak Development Institute (SDI), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), State Planning Unit, Chief Minister's Department, Sarawak Biodiversity Centre, Sarawak Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (SALCRA), SESCO, State Library, Department of Agriculture, Pending Secondary School, Dragon School and Bako Secondary School.

Apart from facilitating participant observation of language behaviour of respondents in actual interaction, the rationale for such sampling technique was that language choice patterns between organisations and within a single organisation can be compared. By limiting the samples to a few organisations rather than taking haphazardly any Bidayuh graduate that one encountered, the language choice patterns at the workplace may also be interpreted by reference to settings and context of interaction (Bloom & Gumperz, 1972; Gardner-Chorus, 1979).

Initially, respondents from few organisations representing different age-groups were interviewed to obtain a general understanding of language choice patterns of Bidayuh graduates in various settings, and to form preliminary hypotheses of factors that have bearings on patterns of choice. Later, the samples expanded to include individuals selected specifically to confirm the hypotheses, and to deal with certain issues, e.g. Bidayuh graduates who were in mixed marriages and/or from mixed parentage. In relation to this, contrastive samples from each category were taken to gain deeper insights into the issues. By contrastive samples is meant samples which give

different perspectives to the issues at hand. For instance, to investigate the relationship between the factor of inter-marriage and language shift, in-depth interviews were conducted with respondents of mixed parentage who did not acquired the Bidayuh language as well as those who have successfully acquired it. This enables the researcher to identify factors which are likely to cause language shift, and factors supporting maintenance of the Bidayuh language in "mixed" families. Likewise, there are respondents whose father is a Bidayuh and respondents with Bidayuh mothers. The factor of gender in language shift that is the role played by female and male Bidayuh partners in mixed marriages in relation to inter-generational transmission of the community language can also be examined by employing such sampling technique.

5.7   Method of analysis of questionnaire data

The questionnaire data was organised by using *Miscrosoft Excell*. Some general patterns on frequency of choice of language(s) in various settings and domains of language use could be concluded from employing frequency counts. However, the aim of the "quantitative analysis" in frequency counts and percentages is only to support general observation of language choice patterns of the graduates, and is not an attempt to generalise the larger population as would be in a quantitative study. Rather, the analysis attempts to elucidate variations in patterns of language choice on a group and individual level, and to account for these variations. For this purpose, the speakers were grouped according to "patterns of choice". This method is adapted from the Guttman's "implicational scaling" technique, first utilised by Gal (1979). Basically, the technique groups "speakers" and "interlocutors" with the same patterns of language choice in search for underlying social variables. The assumption is that speakers with the same language choice patterns may share certain similarities in background. This type of

analysis has moved away from the traditional macro-analysis of language choice patterns (e.g. domain analysis) to an analysis that highlights speaker variation at an individual and group level. This technique has been found particularly useful in the understanding of the process of language shift in communities. (Also see section 4.7).

In this study, the first step in the analysis of the questionnaire data is to examine the language choice patterns of speakers by "correlating" them with social variables e.g. age, type of marriage, medium of instruction in school and institution, etc. Every possible variable influencing language choice patterns of the respondents is examined in this way until the analysis becomes exhaustive. The second step in the analysis is to regroup people with the same "pattern of choice" in search of its other social correlates - e.g. the respondents' attitudes towards attainment of social achievements or attitudes toward "progress". Patterns of choice may refer to monolingual or bilingual pattern. For instance, some respondents may choose a bilingual Bidayuh-Malay pattern of choice with parent, and some may choose a monolingual Bidayuh most of the time with this interlocutor. The social profiles of the respondents under each category of choice are examined in search of factors for influencing choice. The degree of engagement and adaptation to social demands can have a direct impact on speakers' perception towards languages. The attitudes towards languages may be influenced by the intensity for wanting social achievements they have set for themselves and their families, and by the degree to which they value language loyalty. Ultimately, the aim of the analysis is to relate variations in language choice patterns with the social and cultural transformation that the Bidayuh community is experiencing.

5.8   Distribution of respondents according to demographic background

In a qualitative study, although the distribution of respondents may not be of an equal number, a sufficient number of respondents representing a social variable are required for analysis. So, for instance, in order to compare the language choice pattern of younger and older speakers in this study, there should be sufficient samples representing the two age-groups. The respondents were randomly selected for the study. The demographic background of the 61 respondents involved in the survey is summarised below:

Table 5.1: Distribution of respondents based on age-group

Age-group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 39 (younger speakers)	33	54.1
39 and above (older speakers)	28	45.9
Total	61	100.0

Table 5.2: Distribution of respondents based on gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	29	47.5
Female	32	52.5
Total	61	100.0

Table 5.3: Distribution of respondents based on marital status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	17	27.9
Married	44	72.1
Total	61	100.0

Table 5.4: Distribution of respondents based on type of marriage

Type of Marriage	Frequency	Percentage
Inter-ethnic	27	61.4
Intra-ethnic	17	38.6
Total no. of married respondents	44	100.0

5.9   Exposure to Malay and English as medium of instruction

The respondents in this study are categorised into two main age-groups: (a) younger respondents (below 39), and (b) older respondents (39 and above). The rationale for grouping the respondents as such is because 39 as the cut-off point also corresponds to the type of medium of instruction attended in school. Respondents within the age-group "below 39" attended Malay medium of instruction; those within the age group "39 and above" attended English-medium schools.

In 1963 when Sarawak became part of the Federation of Malaysia, Standard Malay i.e. Bahasa Malaysia (BM) began to replace English as the medium of instruction in schools and higher institutions in accordance with the national language policy. However, the phasing-out stages took place slower in Sarawak, and the schools were still operating in English until 1985. For that reason, some Bidayuh graduates between the age-group of 35-38 years old were educated both in English and Malay. This pattern is also found among younger graduates who went to mission schools and/or those who seek tertiary education overseas. In mission schools (e.g. St. Joseph and St.Teresa in Kuching), although Malay is the main medium of instruction after 1985, that is textbooks and teachings are provided in Malay, the use of English in interaction is cultivated among students. The field of study undertaken and the type of institution (private or government managed) may also determine the amount of exposure to the English language in tertiary education in Malaysia. Presumably, this factor would have a profound effect on patterns of language choice between the two age-groups in this study.

5.10 Measurement of language ability

In this study, language ability refers to ability to comprehend fully or partially what is heard, including the ability to communicate effectively in interaction. It is unnecessary to evaluate speakers' overall language ability in the four language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing); the reason being, language choice should be viewed as a communicative activity. Therefore, it is argued that speaking ability and ability to comprehend utterances are sufficient components of language for interaction to take place. In fact, speakers may use a language regularly in interaction despite not being able to read and write in the language (David & Norazuna, 2006; Also see section 5.13 on degree of bilingualism among Bidayuh speakers). In addition, some languages and dialects of the indigenous groups in Sarawak are only known to the speakers in their spoken form.

The measurement employed in this study to determine language ability of the respondents is adapted from Li Wei (1994:106). Informants self-rated their ability in languages or dialects on a scale of 1-5 as indicated below:

1 = is able to understand some words and isolated phrases (e.g. greetings)

2 = is able to understand light conversation and produce simple sentences (e.g. prices of goods in shops) but have difficulty in speaking

3 = is able to partake in casual conversation with ease (usually about domestic topics among friends), and understand light radio programmes (e.g. talk shows, song requests, etc.)

4 = is able to discuss subjects of general public concern (e.g. politics, religion etc.) and can understand quite well what is heard on the news, (where applicable) films and videos.

5 = is able to communicate effectively and with general ease in a range of social contexts, and can understand most of what is delivered on a wide range of topics.

Scale 1 indicates a speaker who hardly understands the language concerned. Scale 2 refers to a below average speaker who has some knowledge of the language, but is unable to communicate with ease in the dialect; such speaker is said to have passive competency in the language. Scale 3 describes a modest speaker who can comprehend and use the language for basic communicative tasks. Scale 4 indicates an above average competency in a language or dialect, and Scale 5 indicates a near-native competency. However, it should be noted that in the case of competency in English, the scale represents ability to communicate in a non-native environment.

5.11   Language repertoire

Roughly, an educated Bidayuh speaker uses at least three languages, namely Malay, English and another language - Bidayuh, Chinese or Iban. They may have a repertoire of four or five languages at their disposal to be utilised in interaction. This occurs when respondents of mixed parentage acquire both their parents' mother tongues. It can also be circumstances where respondents speak Iban and/or other languages in addition to Malay, English and Bidayuh. Besides the standard form of Malay utilised in formal situations, the Bidayuh are also speakers of the Sarawak Malay dialect. In addition to the dialect of his or her group, a Bidayuh may also speak dialects of other sub-groups in interaction.

5.11.1 Competency in Bidayuh language

Table 5.5 describes the respondents' competency in the Bidayuh language. In the case of a Bidayuh who is a member of two different sub-groups, competency in a Bidayuh isolect, whichever the speaker is most competent in, is recorded here.

Table 5.5: Competency in Bidayuh among younger and older speakers

Age-groups	Level of competency (Scale 1 -5)					
	Scale 1	Scale 2	Scale 3	Scale 4	Scale 5	Total
39 & above	-	1	3	1	23	28
Under 39	3	1	4	6	19	33
Total no. of respondents	3	2	7	7	42	61

The majority of the respondents (49 people or 80%) in this study have a competency of the Scale 4 and 5 in a Bidayuh language. Five respondents have little or no knowledge of the Bidayuh language (Scale1-2). Another seven people indicate an average proficiency (Scale 3) in the community language and would have difficulty communicating fully in the language with group members. The respondents who indicate proficiency of Scale 1-3 are children of (a) police/military personnel who were uprooted from the community in childhood, and were raised in other parts of Sarawak, or of (b) parents belonging to different linguistic groups. One respondent who was raised in the city (i.e. Kuching) also claimed to face a similar difficulty. It was also observed that some younger urban Bidayuh speakers could only use this language in casual conversation. Nonetheless, it is not within the scope of this study to determine whether competency in the mother tongue has deteriorated among younger generation Bidayuh. A related topic i.e. the phenomenon of language shift is discussed in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

5.11.2 Competency in Malay and English

Table 5.6 and Table 5.7 describe the respondents' competency in Malay and English. Presumably, the amount of exposure to Malay or English as medium of instruction in schools and tertiary education have influenced competency in these

languages to a greater degree. For the purpose of analysis, the respondents are categorised into two main groups – age-group 39 and above, and age-group under 39. Respondents in the first group are generally English educated while those in the second group are generally Malay-educated.

Table 5.6: Respondents' competency in the Malay language

Age-groups	Level of competency (Scale 1 -5)					
	Scale 1	Scale 2	Scale 3	Scale 4	Scale 5	Total
39 & above	-	-	-	4	24	28
Under 39	-	-	-	1	32	33
Total no. Respondents	-	-	-	5	56	61

Table 5.7: Respondents' competency in the English language

Age-groups	Level of competency (Scale 1 -5)					
	Scale 1	Scale 2	Scale 3	Scale 4	Scale 5	Total
39 & above	-	-	-	-	28	28
Under 39	-	-	3	11	19	33
Total no. Respondents	-	-	3	11	47	61

All Bidayuh graduates are proficient speakers of the Malay language; the speakers indicate proficiency level of Scale 4 and Scale 5 in the language. This is to be expected in this setting. The use of Malay as the main medium of instruction in education, and the widespread use of Malay as a lingua franca in inter-dialectal and inter-ethnic communication are major influences on the respondents' competency in this language. While there is no significant difference in competency in the Malay language between the two age-groups, competency in English nevertheless, shows some variations. All the older speakers who underwent English-medium education indicate a Scale 5 ability in English. Although a substantial number of younger speakers (19 respondents) also indicate a competency of Scale 5 in the language, 14 people are

apparently less proficient in the language (Scale 3-4). On the whole, Bidayuh graduates are competent speakers of both languages - English and Malay.

5.11.3 Competency in the Iban language

Unlike correlations between competency in Malay, English and Bidayuh with age-groups discussed above which attempt to examine the age factor in language choice, here it is not necessary to correlate competency in the Iban (and remaining languages) with age-groups. Table 5.8 below summarises respondents' ability in the Iban language. About 31% or 29 respondents are able to communicate well in Iban language (Scale 4 and 5). This is a substantial percentage. Eighteen percent or 11 people are with Scale 3 that is able to converse in Iban in casual conversation.

Table 5.8: Respondents' competency in the Iban language

Level of competency (Scale 1 -5)					
Scale 1	Scale 2	Scale 3	Scale 4	Scale 5	Total
11	20	11	10	9	61
18%	32.8%	18%	16.4%	14.8%	100%

Five people have acquired Iban either through intermarriage i.e. theirs or their parents. The rest of the respondents have learned the language mainly through interaction with Iban friends in schools, and from experiences living in Iban dominated areas (e.g. Miri, Sibu, Sri Aman, Limbang, Sarikei, Sebuyau and Bintangor). Some of these respondents are research assistants and district officers, where their work in Iban villages   has prompted the learning of the language for ease of communication in an Iban community. Being able to speak Iban would ensure support from members of this community. Others have also reported that they have acquired the language through interaction with Iban neighbours and friends in their childhood days. Some respondents

also reiterated that they had to learn the language because their Iban friends and room-mates at universities refused to speak other languages.

5.11.4 Competency in languages of other ethnic groups

Table 5.9 describes competency in languages spoken of other ethnic groups. Other than the three people of mixed parentage, three other respondents claim to possess an ability of Scale 3 to communicate in either Teo Chew, Hokien or Hakka. Hokien and its varieties are dominantly spoken by the Chinese community in the capital city Kuching. Some Bidayuh has learned this language through regular interactions with Chinese friends and neighbours. One person learned Mandarin in school. A handful of people also indicate they have some knowledge of languages spoken by other ethnic groups e.g. Melanau, Javanese, Kayan or Kenyah.

Table 5.9: Competency in the other languages

Languages	Scale 1	Scale 2	Scale 3	Scale 4	Scale 5	Total
Teochew/Hakka/Hokien	1	4	4	1	1	11
Mandarin	-	-	1	-	-	1
Kayan/Kenyah	2	-	1	-	-	3
Melanau	-	1	-	-	-	1
Javanese	-	1	-	-	-	1
Total no. of Respondents	3	6	6	1	1	17

5.12   Degree of bilingualism among Bidayuh speakers

Taking Mackey's (1962/2000:26) notion of bilingualism as "the property of the individual", and "a characteristic of use" this section attempts to provide a more defined representation of the degree of bilingualism among Bidayuh respondents in this study.

The various descriptions on the nature of bilingualism (e.g. dormant bilinguals, receptive bilinguals etc.) show the different facets and complexity of the term. Bilingualism is a relative term, and there are degrees to bilingualism (c.f. Mackey, 1962/2000; Grosjean, 1982; Romaine,1995). Degree of bilingualism may refer to the bilingual's competency in the languages he or she uses. This in turn depends on "its functions, on the uses to which the bilingual puts the language and the conditions under which he has used it" (Mackey, 1962/2000:28). In other words, competency in language depends on the areas of contact with the language e.g. home, the community, school, and mass media. The amount of influence of each of these on the habitual use of language depends on the duration, frequency, and pressure of contact. Besides these external factors, degree of bilingualism is also connected with internal functions of languages e.g. counting, praying etc.

Primarily, competency in Malay is a consequence of the national policy which recognises the use of this language as official language of the country. Although Malay has replaced English as the national and official language upon the formation of Malaysia, English is designated as the "second most important language". In fact, Malaysia practises a rather flexible language policy which allows the use of English in the private sectors and for international transactions. A consequence of this flexibility in policy is the apparent role of English as a language of economic importance and international prestige. In recent times, the media has also become a major influence on the greater promotion of the use of English and Malay in this community.

Two further points should be highlighted in relation to the degree of bilingualism in Malay and English between the two age-groups in this study. Firstly, the older Bidayuh speakers have generally shown greater competency in English than

younger speakers, at least in comprehension and speaking skills by virtue of the fact that they spent a greater number of years exposed to English in education and in various domains of language use. By comparison, the younger Bidayuh speakers use Malay as the medium of instruction in school, whereas English is learned only as a compulsory subject. For that reason, some younger speakers (Scale 3-4) are seen to be less competent and less comfortable in speaking English, and only utilise the language for work purposes. The younger speakers with Scale 5 are involved in the technical fields and received tertiary education in English. These speakers were also educated in mission schools and their educated parents have inculcated the use of English at home. Like the older speakers, they also demonstrate greater use of English in daily interaction.

Secondly, the nature of acquisition of languages clearly has some bearing on degree of individual bilingualism in this community. Although Bidayuh speakers may be equally competent in standard Malay on the four language skills, the degree of competency in the Sarawak Malay dialect differs between the two age-groups. The younger speakers are seen more competent in this dialect. The acquisition of this informal variety to fulfill various communicative needs in early formative years is critical for these speakers who were raised in urban centres. Generally, older speakers are seen less comfortable conversing in the informal variety unless they also speak it in the social and work domains. The older speakers were only exposed to the Malay language upon entrance to secondary education in the English schools, where it was taught as a subject. Furthermore, they were also raised in Bidayuh villages; hence, the need to acquire the language for socialisation at a younger age was less urgent then.

Competency in the community language refers to the ability to speak and understand in one of the isolects of Bidayuh. Writing and reading skills in the language have not developed for many Bidayuh speakers. Orthography in various "regional dialects" has only been standardised in recent times, and reading materials in the Bidayuh language were not developed until recently. Some Bidayuh speakers have the ability to comprehend several "regional dialects". They may also understand each other's "dialects" but do not possess speaking ability in the dialect(s). The speakers who indicate a competency of Scale 5 in the community language also speak it regularly in other domains of language use. The speakers are active in the social life of their ethnic group, and in community services, and may also reside in Bidayuh areas. On the other hand, speakers who reside in the city have little opportunity to speak the language, and it can be limited to encounters with family members and relatives during weekend visits to Bidayuh villages. The lack of opportunity to enhance comprehension and speaking skills in the language explains why some Bidayuh respondents in the study (with Scale 3 and below), can only handle casual conversation in the Bidayuh language, and would have difficulty handling conversation at a deeper level with village folks.

5.13   Analysis of language choice in the family domain with age as a variable

In language shift and language maintenance (LSLM) studies, to examine changes in language choice patterns, the variable age is correlated with patterns of choice. This exercise is also attempted in this study. However, no discernible pattern has emerged that is characteristic of a particular age-group. The remaining sub-sections in this chapter highlight some major factors that appear to have dictated patterns of choice of the speakers in this study.

5.14 Frequency of occurrence of languages with immediate and extended family members

There are five types of interlocutors in the category "Immediate Family Members" and six types in "Extended Family Members". Immediate family members comprise: Spouse, Children, Parents, Grandparents 1 (immediate), and Siblings. Extended family members are Grandparent 2 (Extended), Uncles and aunts (father's side), Uncles and aunts (mother's side), Cousins (father's side), Cousins (mother's side), Mother and father in-laws, and Other in-laws (spouse's siblings). (Refer to Appendix E for overall language choice patterns of each respondent with various types of interlocutors in the family domain).

Table 5.10 below summarises main languages spoken with "immediate family members". It should be mentioned here that respondents may indicate more than one language as language(s) spoken most of the time with an interlocutor. Therefore, the total number of frequency counts indicates the number of times a particular language is mentioned as the preferred language with an interlocutor. At a glance, the dominance of English is very apparent in the choice of language with spouse and children. Contrastively, the Bidayuh language is clearly the preferred language with parents, grandparents and siblings. Out of the total number of frequency counts (327), English and Bidayuh are the main languages spoken by Bidayuh graduates with immediate family members. Other languages spoken are Malay, Iban and Chinese.

Table 5.10: Main languages spoken with immediate family members

Languages	With Spouse	With Children	With Parents	With G-parents	With Siblings	Total Frequency counts
English	27	26	9	2	21	85
Bidayuh	11	15	52	49	49	176
Malay	15	9	9	8	12	53
Chinese	1	-	2	1	2	6
Iban	3	-	1	1	2	7
Total Frequency counts	57	50	73	61	86	327

Note: Total no. of respondents – 61

Table 5.11: Main languages spoken with extended family members

Languages	With Grand-parent's siblings	With Uncles & aunts (father's side)	With Uncles & aunts (mother's side)	With Cousins (mother's side)	With Cousins (fathers's side)	With mother & father in-laws	With other in-laws	Total Freq. counts
English	2	9	-	15	18	7	28	79
Bidayuh	33	49	51	48	52	13	29	275
Malay	4	11	10	15	13	30	24	107
Chinese	-	-	3	3		2	1	9
Iban	1	1	2	2	1	4	5	16
Melanau	-	-	-	-	-	1		1
Sign Lang.	-	-	-	-	-	1		1
Total frequency counts	40	70	66	83	84	58	87	488

Note: Total no. of respondents – 61

With "extended family members", the dominance of the Bidayuh language is very apparent. Looking down each column and across columns in Table 5.11 above, the frequency counts for the Bidayuh language is exceptionally high compared to English and Malay in this category. Bidayuh of all age-groups in this study generally prefer to communicate in the Bidayuh language with older members in the extended family (Interlocutor 6-10) particularly with relatives in Bidayuh villages. Despite the lack of competency in the community language, Bidayuh speakers will make an attempt to speak in the community language in encounters with Bidayuh speakers of parents' and grandparents' generations. To cope with the inadequacy in the mother tongue, speakers engage in code-switching or/and code-mixing.

Occurrence of inter-ethnic marriages between Bidayuh and other ethnic groups is widespread. For that reason, a common language, Malay or English or a mixture of both, is also spoken with in-laws (Interlocutor 11 and 12). The increasing use of English and Malay in the family domain is also attributed to the regular use of these languages in daily interaction. The factor of comfortability in speaking partly explains why speakers spontaneously code-switch between Bidayuh, Malay and English even in intra-group interactions. The amount of switching or mixing between languages varies between speakers, which primarily dependent on speakers' ability in languages.

On the whole, the Bidayuh language is the most dominant language spoken in the family domain. Nevertheless, the patterns of choice with certain interlocutors have shown an inclination towards greater use of English and Malay. A closer examination of the patterns of choice of the respondents with immediate family members will ascertain the actual state of affairs in relation to the position of the Bidayuh language in this domain.

5.15   Patterns of choice in the family domain

Table 5.12 below summarises the overall "patterns of choice" of the respondents in the family domain. About 61% or 37 people display "exclusive" or "dominant" use of the mother tongue with family members. The remaining number of respondents use a bilingual pattern of choice i.e. Bidayuh with other languages. Alternatively, they may not use Bidayuh at all.

Table 5.12: Summary of overall patterns of language choice in the family domain

Pattern of Language Choice		Younger Speakers (Under 39)	Older Speakers (39 and above)	Total/ percentages
Monolingual Pattern	Exclusively Bidayuh	9	2	11 (18%)
	Dominant Bidayuh	19	7	26 (42.6%)
Bilingual Pattern	Bidayuh-English	2	-	2 (3.27%)
	Malay-Bidayuh	3	2	5 (8.19%)
	Iban-Bidayuh	1	-	1 (1.63%)
	Mly-Bid- Eng	2	3	5 (8.19%)
	Mly-Bid-Eng-Iban	1	-	1 (1.63%)
Limited use of Bidayuh	Some Bidayuh or not at all	7	3	10 (16.39)
	Total/percentages	33 (100%)	28 (100%)	61(100%)

Roughly, eight categories of speakers can be identified from distinct patterns of language choice with interlocutors in the home domain. The categories are given below:

a.   Exclusively Bidayuh – Speak Bidayuh language exclusively with interlocutors in the home domain
b.   Dominantly Bidayuh with other languages - Speak Bidayuh most of the time but also use other languages with certain interlocutors
c.   Bidayuh-English - Speak Bidayuh and English most of time
d.   Malay-Bidayuh - Speak Bidayuh and Malay most of time
e.   Iban-Bidayuh - Speak Iban and Bidayuh most of time
f.   Malay-Bidayuh-English - Speak a mixture of theses three languages
g.   Malay-Bidayuh-English -Iban - Speak a mixture of these four languages
h.   Limited use of Bidayuh - Speak some Bidayuh or not at all

Respondents in Category (a) are generally younger speakers who have always lived in Kuching-Samarahan Division and/or have never gone to other places even to pursue their studies. They may also reside in Bidayuh areas and commute to the city on a daily basis to the workplace. Married respondents in this category have spouses from the same dialect group.

Speakers in Category (b) maintain Bidayuh as the language spoken most of the time with family members, but for one reason or other, they also speak other languages with immediate family members. Eighteen of the 27 older respondents use this pattern of choice. They employ monolingual English or bilingual Bidayuh-English (BE) pattern with spouse, children and siblings, but maintain Bidayuh with parent and grandparent generations. Likewise, some younger generation Bidayuh graduates with a "privileged" background (i.e. respondents from middle-class family or have educated parents) also use this pattern. The existence of inter-ethnic marriages may also result in a similar pattern being employed in the family domain.

Speakers in Category (c), (d) and (e) use Bidayuh with other languages most of the time with family members. The two individuals with Bidayuh-English (BE) pattern are in single ethnic marriages. Despite that, a considerable usage of English is reported with   family members. Respondents with Malay-Bidayuh (MB) pattern have intermarried with Malays and/or are children of police or military personnel. Respondents with Iban-Bidayuh (IB) pattern is of mixed parentage.

Category (f) and (g) are speakers who speak regularly three languages with family members including Bidayuh. This pattern is found in families with a "fusion" background where quite a number of family members are in inter-ethnic marriages and/or in families where siblings and relatives are generally well educated individuals. Respondents of mixed parentage may also display this pattern of choice with family members. These circumstances necessitate the use of other languages for communication within the family.

The speakers in the last category do not speak much Bidayuh or at all with family members primarily due to the lack of competency in the Bidayuh language. (Also see discussion on language shift in Chapter 8 of this thesis).

5.15.1 Patterns of choice with grandparents

On the whole, the Bidayuh language appears as the single most preferred language with grandparents (Table 5.13). Exceptional cases are speakers (e.g. Speaker No. 29, 37 and 40) who lack competency in the language or exemplars of non-acquisition of Bidayuh dialects.

5.13: Summary of patterns of choice of the respondents with grandparents

Pattern of Language Choice		Frequency	Percentages %
Monolingual Pattern	Bidayuh	1	1.9
	Malay	3	5.6
	Bidayuh	45	84.9
Bilingual Pattern	Malay-Bidayuh-English	1	1.9
	Malay-Chinese	1	1.9
	Malay-Iban	1	1.9
	Malay-Bidayuh	1	1.9
	Total	53	100

Note: Total no. of respondent – 59; No response (Grandparent deceased) – 6 persons

While some flexibility and tolerance is allowed in the choice of language with parents, patterns of choice with grandparents appears to be fixated. It is a norm in the Bidayuh community that the mother tongue is spoken with older speakers out of respect for the elders (although speakers may be less competent in the Bidayuh language). Language behaviour that does not adhere to this tradition would receive much disapproval from the community particularly

when one is in Bidayuh villages. Moreover, grandparents who settle in Bidayuh villages may have little knowledge of other languages.

5.15.2 Patterns of language choice with siblings

Table 5.14 indicates that while Bidayuh is still the preferred language with siblings for 39 respondents (49%) nevertheless, the rest of the respondents prefer bilingual pattern Bidayuh with other languages, or other languages with this interlocutor.

Table 5.14: Summary of patterns of choice of respondents with siblings

Pattern of Language Choice		Frequency	Percentages %
Monolingual Pattern	English only	1	1.6
	Malay only	7	11.5
	Bidayuh	30	49.2
	Iban	1	1.6
Bilingual Pattern	Bidayuh-English	16	26.2
	Malay-Bidayuh	3	5
	Malay-English-Chinese	1	1.6
	Malay-English-Iban	1	1.6
	Chinese-English	1	1.6
	Total no. of Respondents	61	100

After considering speaker variables that could possibly relate to these results, it is not possible to associate one pattern with one group of speakers and another pattern with another group. On the whole, the level of education may dictate the respondents' patterns of choice with siblings. Presumably, the respondents' siblings are also competent speakers of English, having gone beyond the boundaries of Bidayuh villages to seek employment in towns and cities. The tendency is that English (in addition to Bidayuh) would be spoken with more educated siblings (those who have received at least college education), and Malay with less educated ones (younger Bidayuh speakers who only had Form 5 education and below).

5.15.3 Patterns of language choice with parents and children

An apparent threat to the survival of the mother tongue can be seen from language choice patterns of the younger and older respondents with "parent" and "children". Table 5.15 gives the patterns of language choice spoken with parent.

Table 5.15: Patterns of choice of younger and older speakers with parent

Pattern of Language Choice		Younger Speakers (Under 39)	Older Speakers (39 and above)	Total
Monolingual Pattern	Bidayuh only	18 (54.5%)	24 (85.7%)	42 (68.9%)
	Malay only	3 (9.1%)	2 (7.1%)	5 (8.2%)
Bilingual Pattern	Malay-Bidayuh	3 (9.1%)	1 (3.6%)	4 (6.6%)
	Bidayuh-English	5 (15.2%)	1 (3.6%)	6 (9.8%)
	Iban-Bidayuh	1(3%)	-	1 (1.6%)
	English-Iban	1(3%)	-	1(1.6%)
	Chinese-English	2 (6.1%)	-	2 (3.3%)
	Total	33	28	61

The results show overall the Bidayuh language is still the preferred language spoken with parents by the majority of older speakers (24 people or 85.7%) in this study. Contrastively, only 54.5% (18 younger speakers) indicate that they prefer "Bidayuh only" with parents. The rest of the younger speakers use a bilingual pattern i.e. Bidayuh with other languages (9 people), or use other languages with parents (6 people).

Respondents with bilingual Bidayuh-English (BE) pattern speak English to one parent, or use these two languages most of the time with both parents. Although not of mixed parentage (with the exception of one respondent), these younger educated Bidayuh were raised in the city, and having one or both parent who are educated (with at least a graduate degree). Their parents instill positive attitudes toward the use of English at home. Respondents with Malay (M) or bilingual Malay-Bidayuh (MB) patterns share some similarities in background. They are off-springs of police or

military personnel who migrated to other parts of Malaysia. These respondents were uprooted from the community at an early age, and had lived in police or military camps during their childhood days. Typically, the Bidayuh speakers with such profiles speak the majority language (Malay or/and Iban), with immediate family members. One respondent informs that speaking in Malay within the family had started with her grandparents, who because of dialect differences had resorted to the use of Malay with each other. The remaining respondents with bilingual pattern English-Chinese (EC) or English-Iban (EI) are of mixed parentage.

Table 5.16: Patterns of language choice of younger and older speakers with children

Pattern of Language choice		Younger Speakers (Below 39)	Older Speakers (39 and Above)	Total
Monolingual Pattern	Bidayuh	4 (23.5%)	1 (4%)	5 (11.9%)
	Malay	-	3 (12%)	3 (7.1%)
	English	7 (41.2%)	13 (52%)	20 (47.6%)
Bilingual Pattern	Iban*Bid-Eng	-	1(4%)	1 (2.4)
	Malay-Bidayuh	4 (23.5%)	1(4%)	5 (11.9%)
	Malay-English	-	2 (8%)	2 (4.8%)
	Bidayuh/English	2 (11.8%)	2 (8%)	4 (9.5%)
	Mly/Bid/Eng	-	1(4%)	1(2.4)
	Eng*Iban-Bid	-	1(4%)	1(2.4)
	Total	17	25	42

Note: Total no. of married respondents with children – 42

Table 5.16 above shows the apparent preference for English with "children". The patterns of choice with children reflect the social forces motivating a trend towards the use of English with children at home. Twenty people (48%) indicate that they use monolingual English pattern with their children. Presumably, the need to speak a common language in mixed marriages explains this trend. However, preference for English with children does not only occur in inter-ethnic marriages but in intra-ethnic marriages as well. Here, it can be inferred that socio-economic considerations have greater bearing on language choice patterns of the respondents with children. A closer

look at the patterns of choice by type of marriage reveals other factors influencing language choice patterns of the educated Bidayuh with immediate family members.

5.15.4   Patterns of language choice in intra-ethnic marriages

Table 5.17 below illustrates the language choice patterns of the respondents with "spouse" and "children" in intra-ethnic marriages. *Type A* refers to single ethnic marriages where couples are from the same dialect group; *Type* B refers to single ethnic marriages where couples are from different dialect groups. The data has been re-arranged according to patterns of choice.

Table 5.17: Language choice patterns of respondents with spouse and children in intra-ethnic marriages

Speaker's Background					Language choice	
Speaker No.	Age	Speaker's Subgroup	Spouse's Subgroup	Type of Marriage	With Spouse	With Children
33	27	Jagoi	Biatah	Type B	B	-
48	32	Jagoi	Jagoi	Type A	B	B
24	35	Jagoi	Jagoi	Type A	B	B
43	30	Jagoi	Jagoi	Type A	B	B
4	32	Singgai	Singgai	Type A	B	BE
17	49	Jagoi	Jagoi	Type A	B	B
30	28	Singgai	Bukar	Type B	BE	-
19	49	Singgai	Singgai	Type A	BE	BE
10	50	Bukar	Biatah	Type B	BE	BE
44	50	Jagoi	Jagoi	Type A	BE	MBE
46	37	Biatah	Biatah	Type A	E	E
46	37	Biatah	Biatah	Type A	E	E
5	50	Jagoi	Bukar	Type B	E	E
14	49	Bukar	Bukar	Type A	E	E
40	49	Singgai	Biatah	Type B	E*MB	E
52	50	Biatah	Jagoi	Type B	ME	ME
20	28	Bukar	Jagoi	Type B	M	BE
60	37	Bukar	Jagoi	Type B	M	MB

Note: Total number of respondents in mixed marriages – 17

In single ethnic marriages *Type A* where partners are from the same dialect group, the Bidayuh dialect is maintained as the language of communication in the

family. But in single ethnic marriages *Type B*, unless couples understand each other's dialects, they may resort to the use of a common language, namely Malay, or/and English with spouse and children. After some time, these couples may eventually learn to speak (or at least understand) their spouses' dialects.

It may also be suggested that attitudes of speakers and past language experiences also dictate the patterns of choice with core family members. For instance, Speaker No.33 from the Jagoi sub-group who is able to speak his spouse's dialect (i.e. Biatah) prefers the Biatah dialect with spouse. On the other hand, despite being competent in the spouse's dialect, Speaker No. 52 opts for Malay and English within the family. The main reason for choosing a different pattern is that the individual and his spouse are both off-spring of police personnel. In these Bidayuh families, Malay is spoken as the main language of communication.

A clear pattern can also be seen among older speakers in this study. English (E) or Bidayuh-English (BE) is preferred with spouse and children. The use of English is cultivated at home and this occurs in both types of single ethnic families. Despite from the same dialect group, some couples use English as main language of communication with spouse and children (i.e. Speaker No. 14, 19, 44 and 46). Two younger speakers with similar orientation have also chosen this pattern (i.e. Speaker No. 4 and 46). Only one older speaker (Speaker No.17) opts for Bidayuh with spouse and children. This respondent reiterates that the community language symbolises ethnic identity. The difficulty of learning to speak in the Bidayuh language at a later age has motivated him to make a conscious effort to teach his children Bidayuh.

Dialect differences seem to be a reason for preference for English with spouse and children in intra-ethnic marriages. However, this reason is not a satisfactory one as the same pattern also occurs among individuals whose spouses are from the same dialect group (Speaker No. 19, 44, 46 and 14). Considering the factors that can be a hindrance to communicating in Bidayuh have been taken into account i.e. dialect differences and competency in the Bidayuh dialect, yet the fact that some speakers in single ethnic marriages prefer English in interaction with core family members points to the apparent importance of English for socio-economic survival. In the era of globalisation, indisputably English is of prime importance for any community for social mobility and advancement in education, and this also applies to the Bidayuh. This factor has motivated a change in patterns of language choice in this domain.

5.15.5 Patterns of language choice in inter-ethnic marriages

Table 5.18 below describes patterns of language choice of the respondents with spouse and children in three main types of inter-ethnic marriages: Bidayuh-Iban, Bidayuh-Malay and Bidayuh-Chinese.

Two points can be concluded from the analysis of language choice patterns in inter-ethnic marriages. First, on the whole, Malay or/and English is a popular choice for ease of communication within the family in inter-ethnic marriages; more often than not, the role of the Bidayuh language becomes peripheral. The patterns also show variations in the choice of a "common language" in mixed families. English is preferred by Bidayuh-Chinese couples as well as Bidayuh who have spouses from other minority communities and nationalities. Malay is preferred by Bidayuh-Malay couples; whereas in intermarriages with Iban, Bidayuh speakers may choose Malay, English or Iban with

their spouses. In some cases, Bidayuh partners may accommodate to their spouses'
mother tongue. For example, Speakers No. 41 and 61 speak Iban and Speaker No.31
speaks Chinese to spouse.

Table 5.18: Language choice patterns of respondents with spouse and
children in inter-ethnic marriages

BIDAYUH-MALAY			
Speaker No.	Age	With Spouse	With Children
18	33	ME	E
45	30	M	MB
9	38	M	M
21	44	M	M
25	41	MB	MB
57	36	M	MB
2	44	M	E
BIDAYUH-CHINESE			
Speaker No.	Age	With Spouse	With Children
31	34	C	E
42	31	E	E
39	55	E	E
26	49	E	E
51	52	ME	E
16	48	E	E
7	31	E	-
59	48	ME	E
BIDAYUH-IBAN			
Speaker No.	Age	With Spouse	With Children
32	31	ME	E
41	47	I* ME	I*BE
38	48	E*IB	E*IB
55	53	E	E
61	32	IM	B
59	35	MB	M
OTHERS			
Speaker No.	Age	With Spouse	With Children
12	51	E	E
13	47	E	E
23	42	E	E
11	35	ME	E
3	52	E	ME
47	54	E	E

Note: Total no of respondents in mixed marriages with children - 27
I*BE (Iban spoken most of the time with occasional switches to Bidayuh and English)
E*IB (English spoken most of the time with occasional switches to Iban and Bidayuh)

The second point to be highlighted is that only four people (i.e. Speaker No. 45,
25, 57 and 61) indicate Bidayuh as the main language spoken with their children in
mixed families. In general, it is quite common to find Bidayuh parents not speaking

Bidayuh to their children, unlike their Chinese or Iban spouses, who would transmit their cultural and linguistic identity to their offspring. This factor is crucial in ensuring that ethnic languages are transmitted to the younger generation. The speakers who retain Bidayuh with children perceive the use of community language as crucial to ensure its survival. For example, Speaker No.25 informs that she and her husband have agreed to speak Bidayuh within the family to retain cultural heritage, and knowledge of several languages would also be an asset to their children. Speaker No.57 informs that Bidayuh is also spoken with her children because it is the norm imposed by her father that Bidayuh be spoken within the family.

In Bidayuh-Chinese families, English rather than Malay is preferred. It is suggested that the economic value of English may have dictated the choice. In Bidayuh-Iban mixed marriages, where Iban spouses assert their cultural identity, Iban will be retained as the main or one of the main languages spoken within the families (e.g. Speakers No. 41, 38 and 58). Generally, Iban speakers are more "aggressive" in asserting their cultural identity; hence, their Bidayuh spouses may also ended up speaking the language. However, a neutral language may be chosen for communication within the family (e.g. Speakers No. 32, 38 and 55). In both circumstances, the Bidayuh language assumes a peripheral position. The link between the factor of mixed marriage and language shift is further discussed in section 8.4.

5.16   Summary

In the family domain, the language choice patterns of the respondents with two main types of interlocutors were examined: immediate family members, and extended family members. The frequency counts on choice of language(s) spoken most of the

time with family members show that overall, the Bidayuh language is the most dominant language spoken in the family domain. It is still the preferred language for communication within the family. Nevertheless, an emerging pattern is that a mixture of languages is increasingly spoken with family members. Malay and English have encroached upon this domain.

The factor of inter-ethnic marriages and socio-economic priorities over language loyalty appear to have dictated immensely a change in norms of language use in the domain traditionally reserved for the mother tongue. Family orientation has also been shown to have a similar effect on language choice patterns of the respondents in this domain. Patterns of choice with parents, and with spouse and children have shown that linguistic behaviour of some of the younger speakers is largely influenced by their parents' plans for their future undertakings. These factors have its roots in the changing mindset of the Bidayuh community which is taking its form at the present time. In relation to mother tongue maintenance, suffice it to say at this point that positive attitude towards the Bidayuh language will ensure that its position in the Bidayuh community is upheld in this domain.