

Sociolinguistic theories: some implications from Malawian data *

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Introduction

To enhance our conceptual understanding of patterns of language use, sociolinguists have developed and used different abstract notions of social identity and relations, and explanatory models that relate to ecological, institutional and individual psychological aspects of language acquisition and use. However, no constant theoretical foundation or framework has been developed that can provide knowledge base from which one can explain the general behaviour of how different societies structure and use languages. Some useful theoretical notions employed in discussing language use patterns in multilingual countries include: diglossia, bilingualism, domain of language use, conflict or dominance, linguistic capital and markets, accommodation, network, role relations, language shift (LS) and language maintenance (LM). This paper first examines the relevance and limitations of these frameworks in explaining language use patterns in Malawi. Various findings in the literature on the subject and the Malawi 1992 data are used to argue that no one framework can adequately and appropriately explain patterns of language use in Malawi. Despite different generalised methodologies and concepts, it is argued that these frameworks can be used in an integrated or synthesised way to analyse the Malawi data. The second part of the paper, therefore, offers an integrated model that emphasises the ecological, institutional and individual strategies that have created the urban differential patterns observed in Malawi.

Language contact phenomenon

Language choice and language use studies have been regarded as products of the language contact phenomenon (Weinrich 1953) which result from the meeting of different linguistic groups (Mackey 1979; Heller 1988). Processes contributing to this phenomenon are multiple and include emigration, colonialism and rapid industrialisation. The general perspective is that language contact has manifested itself in many forms. Notions or concepts such as diglossia, bilingualism, codeswitching, language maintenance and language shift are useful in studying the language contact phenomenon in Malawi. For example, in Malawi English (the official language), Chichewa (the nation-

al language) and other indigenous languages have become a part of the speech community's linguistic repertoire, and these languages have formed special relationships with each other resulting from the way communities use them.

Diglossia

As originally formulated by Ferguson (1959:328), the notion of diglossia refers to the functional differentiation of two language varieties by one community or two language varieties co-existing in one community. Apart from the functional aspect, Ferguson's definition emphasises the stability of the language situation and the hierarchical order of the varieties: one variety being H(igh) and another L(ow). The H is the standard, prestigious, acquired formally at school and has a literary heritage; the L is the non-standard, less prestigious, acquired informally and has no literary heritage (Ferguson 1959:336). Evidence of classical diglossia includes the following countries:

- a. Greece where the H is called Katharevusa (puristic) versus the L dhimotiki (demotic) or everyday language
- b. Switzerland where the H is German and the L is Swiss-German
- c. Haiti the difference between French (H) and the Creole which is French-based
- d. Arabic: the difference between Classical Arabic (Al-fosaha) and colloquial Arabic (Al-amiaya)

Although the notion of functional specialisation that explains the functional allocation of languages in many multilingual countries or language use in a community has been widely accepted by sociolinguists as an important component of diglossia (Fishman 1967; Platt 1977; Abdulaziz-Mkilifi 1972; Fasold 1984 to mention a few), classical diglossia has not been fully accepted as a conceptual framework. Its lack of universal application to complex and diverse multilingual countries where many languages are used and cannot be classified or abstracted using this hierarchy has been one of its fundamental weaknesses (Berger 1990:286). Also, the historical processes that lead to this binary hierarchical order of languages which are important in discussing the unequal balance between the languages as to who has access to what language and why, is not addressed in this formulation rendering it superficial and inadequate to capture the oppositional and ideological realities of languages and the unequal opportunities accorded to individuals in individual countries (Rubagumya 1992). Other questionable elements include the stability of the situation and complementarity of the languages. These weaknesses have subjected the notion of diglossia to revision by adding additional parameters that influence the notion.

Fishman's concept of diglossia and bilingualism

In an attempt to reinterpret and expand on the notion of diglossia, Fishman (1967) makes two important points. First, he affirms the functional allocation of languages or varieties by placing less emphasis on the importance of the situation with only two languages and allows for the presence of "several separate codes" or polyglossic countries. For Fishman, diglossia refers to the functional distribution of H and L. Second, by detailing a number of conflicting situations (unlike Ferguson), he clearly differentiates between the sociological situation, where the two languages co-exist in one and the same community (diglossia), and the psychological situation where the two languages co-exist within one and the same individual (bilingualism) Berger (1990).

As Berger (1990:288) argues, though focussing on the sociological aspects of the use of the two language varieties, empirical studies of contact situations cannot completely ignore the co-existence of two varieties on the individual level nor the extent of bilingualism. Fishman's contrasting terms of compound and co-ordinate bilinguals take into account the differences resulting from a different temporal sequence of language acquisition by the individual whilst terms such as stable and unstable bilinguals (Fishman 1972) account for the stability of language acquisition by individuals, that is whether one will in his/her later life continue to use both languages in different domains in which they were acquired (stable bilingual) or lose his/her indigenous language and adopt the dominant culture's language, ultimately becoming monolingual (unstable bilingual). Other terms make an age distinction between childhood and adult bilingualism (Haugen 1950:280): on the one hand, the situation of the child acquiring two languages at the same time, and the other, the situation of the adult who has already mastered one language when acquiring another. Apart from the temporal aspect of the individual's mastery of two or more languages, qualitative differentiations are made within a relative concept of bilingualism by distinguishing between symmetric and asymmetric bilingualism. The former depicts a situation where an individual masters both languages to the same degree, whilst the latter describes a different level of mastery. The important question for this study is how the type of acquisition contributes to language choice, shift and maintenance.

In his analysis of the relationship between bilingualism and diglossia, Fishman (1967:551) considers four situations. Fishman's schema in Table 1 presupposes that there are four types of bilingual communities.

Figure 1: The relationship between bilingualism and diglossia

	+	-
Bilingualism		Diglossia
	+ 1 Both diglossia and bilingualism	2. Bilingualism without diglossia
	- 3. Diglossia without bilingualism	4 Neither diglossia nor bilingualism

Source: Fishman (1972:75)

In (1) Fishman envisages a community where everyone knows both the L and H and there are strict separations in the use of H and L. In (2) two separate groups co-exist with the powerful speaking the H and the less powerful or the governed speaking the L. In (3) are communities that do not compartmentalise the use of H and L. Either language is used for any purpose characterised by 'leakage' of H into L or vice versa. The language of change associated with predominant social dynamics such as power and privilege displaced others. Language shift was therefore unidirectional towards the powerful language. (4) is rare and is the result of uncompartimentalised bilingualism without diglossia.

Whilst acknowledging Fishman's contributions as already outlined, there are a number of reasons for refuting Fishman's line of argument. Empirical evidence from Africa (Polomé 1971 in Tanzania; Scotton 1976 in Kenya; Parkin 1977 in Kenya; Koenig 1983 in Cameroon) has yielded different results from Fishman's classification and showed a variety of stable triglossic situations rather than displacement. These studies effectively undermine his theory by showing that both colonial and local lingua francas are regarded as neutral languages without ethnic connotations by the members of the speech community alongside other vernaculars. Fishman's proposition is unidirectional in that it does not accommodate the resurgence of minority languages nor language maintenance within the modernised or industrialised society (William 1992) as will be shown in this paper. Among others, two major critics of Fishman's propositions are Abdulaziz-Mkilifi and Parkin.

Double overlapping diglossia/triglossia

Abdulaziz-Mkilifi's (1972:202) research among 15 Kiswahili-English speaking bilinguals in Dar-es-Salaam describes triglossia as an intersection between two developing diglossic situations, one involving Swahili and some indigenous languages or vernaculars, and the other involving English and Swahili. According to Abdulaziz-Mkilifi (1972:198), a typical triglossic situation would be found where there exists side by side

(a) a regional or vernacular language(s) whose basic role is oral intra-group communication; (b) a local standardised lingua franca which is used extensively in the education system, mass media and government administration but which is not developed enough to cover all settings of modern urban technological culture; and (c) a world language. Fasold (1984) in agreement with Abdulaziz-Mkilifi's description states that Kiswahili is expanding both higher and lower in use, from its middle position. In other words, there is a "leakage" of Swahili into the English and vernacular functions. Secondly, he sees this leakage eventually leading to a single diglossia between English and Kiswahili like Fishman's idea of unstable diglossia where he envisages the loss of vernaculars.

Bilingualism emergent and stable

Unlike Fishman (1967), Parkin (1977:186) who studied adolescent gangs in urban Kenya, found what he termed emergent multilingualism in a situation that included the use of a colonial lingua franca together with an indigenous one along with different mother tongues in ethnically heterogeneous speech communities. For Parkin (1977:186) "the use of these lingua francas already carry (sic) social connotations as either high, low or middle diatypes." Therefore Parkin sees the African situation as emergent and stable. That is, the languages will stay in three levels of diatypes. Unlike Fishman and Fasold's concept of unstable or transitory bilingualism, Parkin's evidence from Africa showed a contrary trend, that of a stabilised situation despite a decrease in the use of vernaculars by the elite. Both Parkin (1974a) and Gorman (1974) report a similar situation: a decrease in the frequency of Swahili use in Kenya when there is a rise in education, and an increase in the use of English. Similarly Siachitema (1984) found a decrease in the use of Nyanja and an increase in the use of English among the educated in Zambia. At the same time, the colonial language is associated with prestige and power symbolically, and the local based lingua francas of the urban proletariat and the other indigenous languages as low varieties. None of these studies found a displacement.

The Malawi data however showed both characteristics: stability among the Tumbuka and displacement among the Lomwe and Yao (Kayambazinthu 1989; 1995). Language shift was unidirectional, towards Chichewa the majority language. The pattern of bilingualism or multilingualism showed that most of those who were monolingual (3 per cent) were mainly Chewa, a few Tumbuka and Yao. The general trend showed that for most Chewa and Tumbuka, their ethnic language (EL) was their first language (L1) and the educated and mobile added English as a second language and other languages. Most non-Chewa were trilinguals while most Chewa were bilingual in Chichewa and

English. For example, most Tumbuka learnt their EL as L1 to which they added English as a second language and then Chichewa as third. The second language added depended on one's education or mobility or not. The uneducated and non-mobile remained monolingual. For most Yao and Lomwe regardless of education or mobility they learnt Chichewa as either their first or second language within the environment so that for most educated Yao or Lomwe, English was their third language. Data also showed that most Lomwe and Yao were unstable bilinguals who ultimately shifted to Chichewa and most Tumbuka maintained their three languages.

The Malawi situation would fit under bilingualism without diglossia yet a close look at the patterns revealed a fuzzy situation. That is, the data showed a fluid situation where the languages are no longer strictly separated between the home and work domain but at the same time languages are compartmentalised. Data showed that English was used in the home by the elite and vernaculars were also employed in the work domain where we expect English to be the dominant language. There was no evidence that the elites spoke English only versus the uneducated who spoke vernaculars or the language of the masses only. Contrary to Fishman's formulation, the elites also used their vernaculars alongside English depending on the interlocutor, setting and topic. In other words, within this fluid situation there are functional allocations of languages between traditional status quo and elitism.

The Malawi data also showed the same trend found by Parkin (1974a) and Gorman (1974), that is, a decrease in the use of vernaculars and an increase in the use of English by the elite, without one language necessarily displacing the other. Therefore the Malawi data does not support Fishman's conception of the language situation where both bilingualism and diglossia exist to some extent. Whilst some trilingual or bilingual Malawians are stable in both Chichewa and English and their mother tongues, there was evidence that Chichewa, which is higher in status than other vernaculars, has displaced and is displacing Yao and Lomwe, especially among those who learnt Chichewa as children (the childhood bilinguals) in areas where the Yao and Lomwe mixed with the Chewa. Therefore there was evidence of both a stable and an unstable situation depending on ethnicity, self worth and social pressure as will be discussed later.

Regarding language acquisition and competence, the Malawi data showed that most Malawians claimed to speak their languages very well. There were cases of both symmetric trilinguals and bilinguals. At the same time, there were those who were asymmetric trilinguals and bilinguals with relatively better mastery of one language. In most such cases these have either shifted from their languages or learnt them as adults (adult bilingualism). Also evident were cases of both co-ordinate and compound bilinguals

especially among the Yao and Lomwe who learnt both Chichewa and their mother tongue at the same time ultimately losing their MT and maintaining Chichewa or both. Most Tumbuka learners of Chichewa are co-ordinate bilinguals since most of them learnt it at school after acquiring their MT and maintain their languages. Similarly in terms of temporal acquisition of English, almost all Malawians can fall in the category of co-ordinate trilinguals or bilinguals. Thus the situation is not clear cut since respondents could be both compound when learning indigenous languages and co-ordinate when learning English (or Chichewa for the Tumbuka). Malawi is far from unique since research done by Johnson (1975:95) in Ghana and Kashoki (1978:41) in Zambia showed that English is acquired mainly at school. It is this competence that is crucial in deciding which languages are used exclusively or with codeswitching as will be seen later in this paper. The patterns of language use also tentatively vindicate our data that has showed that the Malawian language situation resists classification into either stable or unstable situation since we have evidence of both. There is no uniform move towards the prestige variety as some ethnic groups still maintain their languages.

The implications of diglossia with or without bilingualism to this study are clear. The concepts describe the state of affairs or classify the individual but do not pay attention to how they use the languages. Apart from functional allocation and individual bilingualism, diglossia with or without bilingualism does not accommodate conflicts nor does it allow for analysis of strategies adopted by individuals in language choice. Therefore it is a limited framework of analysis.

The conflict perspective of diglossia.

In reaction to classical diglossia, the conflict perspective or "sociolinguistics of the periphery" (Eckert 1980, Woolard 1985) has explained diglossia within the centre-periphery model of economic relations where the centre dominates the periphery (Rubagumya 1992:51). The fundamental assumption is that linguistic division within diglossia is linked to the social theory of the dominant versus the dominated classes. Therefore diglossia is a historical phenomenon characterised by conflicts over linguistic divisions and functions rather than by complementarity.

In most colonial type situations such as Malawi where an external standard is superimposed, Martin-Jones (1988:342) argues that the conflicts are derived from attempts to reinforce the power of the dominant class through the exercise of political power. Eckert (1980:1056) argues that "diglossia does not arise, it is imposed from above in the form of administrative, ritual or standard language. Because of its political and social economic status, this language becomes requisite for access to power and mobility within the society." Thus, the existence of H and L implies conflict rather than complementarity. Eckert (1980:1056) states:

The functions of the standard language are in opposition to those of the vernacular, and this opposition can operate as a powerful force of assimilation, by integrating with and reinforcing the evaluation of the domains in which the two languages are used.

Eckert like Fishman (1967) further argues against the stability element in Ferguson's formulation by maintaining that diglossia can not only be the very means of eliminating vernacular languages, but also a serious threat to the self image and solidarity of the community (Eckert 1980:1054-5). The general thrust of her argument is that diglossia is a historical phenomenon and that any theory of diglossia that does not take history into account is deficient since languages are not inherently High or Low but the structures point to the historical and social psychological processes that have made them so. Eckert cites the relationship between Occitan varieties that became Low because of the standardisation of French and its imposition on those who speak Occitan.

Research studies done on Celtic languages in Britain based on this conflict perspective (William and Roberts 1982; Mackinnon 1984 and Roberts 1987) have showed that it is not enough to show the functional and hierarchical structure of languages without focussing on the historical processes causing the structure of functions. Roberts (1987:312) uses his discussion on the symbolic opposition between English and Welsh to show how the diglossia theory developed by Ferguson and expanded by Fishman is inadequate in accounting for language behaviour in societies where two or more unequal languages co-exist.

Asserting the total functional separation of H and L language varieties allows Ferguson to be explicitly dismissive of the possibility of conflict between H and L varieties and their constituent speakers. In the same vein, Fishman's extension of diglossia to include languages functionally separated in bilingual societies and his integration of diglossia with the concept of language domains is accomplished by reference to the stability of the language situations rather than the conflict which, on merely common sense reading, clearly forms a pervasive characteristic of language situations.

Evidence from Africa (including the Malawi data) suggests that differences in education contribute to social stratification and that more than one lingua franca is used, one primarily the vehicle of the educated elite and professionals and the other that of the less educated (Scotton 1982; Siachitema 1984). The informal learning of locally based lingua francas was also observed in Kenya by Gorman (1974:360), in Zambia (Musonda 1978:233) and Tanzania (Abdulaziz-Mkilifi 1972). Though some locally based lingua francas are also studied in schools (e.g. Chichewa as a national language in

Malawi) compared to the international language, English, which is always the language of higher education, Chichewa cannot be regarded as a symbol of educational attainment! Standardising a language or having a body of literature does not necessarily make the language H when it enters a relationship with another historically important language, which points to attitudinal rather than inherent attributes. As observed by Greenberg (1972:201), once a lingua franca is established as advantageous to know, it rapidly overshadows other languages existing in the same market.

The value of the conflict perspective to the Malawian data is that it explains (i) that languages such as English and Chichewa are not inherently High or Low but that such a relationship is dependent on the historical processes influenced by people's or governmental attitudes. (ii) The language situation is not always stable since the powerful language groups can subsume the dominated groups leading to language shift. Labov (1986:283), attacking the stability element in Ferguson's formulation acknowledges that "a thorough going structural-functional approach to language could be applied only if linguistic systems did not undergo internal change and development"². It accounts for differential changes in the social organisation of language use and behaviour or variation along socio-economic parameters which as the Malawi data showed is crucial in explaining who has access to what language and why. Milroy and Milroy (1992:3) argue that a conflict model is essential if we are to account for the phenomena of linguistic change associated with some kind of social conflict. "A social class model based on conflict, division and inequality best accounts for many of the patterns of language variation uncovered by the detailed work of sociolinguistics, generally on phonological or morphological variables" (Milroy and Milroy 1992:3).

In summary, patterns of language use can be understood by studying the dynamics of historical processes that have led to the functional allocation of languages. However, the fundamental weakness of using diglossia with or without bilingualism, or conflict as a conceptual framework is that it ignores the potential dynamics that link language use at the macro-level to how individuals manipulate the languages in their verbal repertoire. At a macro-level the conflict perspective of diglossia portrays the socio-economic and political forces driving the conflict without necessarily describing the agents through which governments do that. At a micro-level, it does not show how individuals resolve the conflict as the Malawi data showed. The lack of attention to individual language use in the classical model of diglossia, will result in ignoring the dynamics of language use, the strategies and tactics used in adapting or accommodating one another in a speech event. Another obvious weakness of this perspective is that it portrays languages such as English and Chichewa or vernaculars as in (relatively) constant opposition rather than in conjunction with each other as the Malawi data demonstrated

to a greater extent and does not account at all for codeswitching. Thus the conflict perspective would not account for how languages can be used in conjunction with each other (codeswitching) nor does it account for how individuals adapt to or accommodate one another and strategies used for resolving the conflict.

As Scotton (1982:73) argues neither of these taxonomies (domain analysis and diglossia) seem satisfactory in explaining the Malawian language situation because each tends to force binary decisions about varieties. The Malawi data showed that what is valued as H in one context is not necessarily H in all contexts nor is one variety used exclusively in certain high situations or domains. Rather competence in the language is crucial in determining which language is used and can be codeswitched plus the mutual awareness or knowledge of the language with the participant. A construct that recognises the possibility of relating linguistic varieties to diverse situations might be more useful than constructs that attempt to find a common denominator in the situations. The more satisfactory construct may be a set of abstract attribute values for each linguistic variety (Scotton 1982:73). Taking Malawi as a case study, diglossia with or without bilingualism will be too constrained to permit the recognition of how the individuals function in Malawi where I found widespread bilingualism (98 per cent) or trilingualism (68 per cent) and the use of both the H and the L in many domains.

Bourdieu's theory of linguistic capital and markets

Bourdieu (1977, 1983) offers a Marxist framework for analysing language use data by using economic notions of capital and markets as regulators of language use. According to Bourdieu, capital is accumulated labour in either material or incorporated (internalised) form (Bourdieu 1983:185 cited in Dittmar 1988:21) and the markets are the fields of application. Capital can be manifested in three layers: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. The value of the cultural capital is determined in part through linguistic capital, that is, linguistic capital is a form of cultural and social capital and is in principle convertible into economic capital, with legitimate language dictating the prices and functions as the "leading currency." To that extent, linguistic competence is a factor of cultural competence (Hymes, 1974). Bourdieu's general contention is that language represents a form of social and cultural capital that is convertible into economic capital or socio-economic status. He argues for a single dominant or integrated linguistic market where the rule of the legitimate language is temporarily absent when the vernacular is used. Like Hymes he argues that what is important is not whether language is grammatical but whether it is acceptable or legitimate in a particular market. However, unlike Hymes broad concept of appropriateness, Bourdieu takes "legitimate" language to mean the socially monopolised standard variety of

language imparted by institutionalised powers” (schools) whilst the “illegitimate” language or variety is the deviant in relationship to the standard.

The linguistic capital is accumulated through time or a period of time through level of education attained and invested in by the learner to acquire the necessary linguistic background needed for specific markets. This linguistic capital can be directly converted into economic capital. That is, the person who has acquired linguistic competence, a “polished mode of expression” amid individuals who use a dialect or colloquial speech gains a scarcity value because of his position in the distributional structure of cultural capital, a value that makes it possible to gain many extra profits” (Bourdieu, 1983:187). Linguistic capital is reflected in the typical way a group or class speaks. The importance of Bourdieu’s framework lies in the specification of agents of linguistic change or norming. The school is seen as the “ideological apparatus.”

The educational system is a crucial object of struggle because it has a monopoly over the production of the mass of producers and consumers, and hence over the reproduction of the market on which the value of the linguistic competence depends, in other words its capacity to function as linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1977:652).

Bourdieu defines social capital as “the entirety and potential resources linked to the possession of an enduring network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual knowledge or recognition” (Bourdieu 1983:190). That is, relationships based on social capital or socio-economic status transcends geographical and ethnic ties and are based on economic and cultural capital that individuals possess and through which their network is mobilised. Linguistic capital translates into social capital since individual’s verbal repertoire or manner of speech is indicative of how and where it was acquired which lead to group solidarity or social status. “The profits accruing from affiliation with a group are simultaneously the foundation for the solidarity that makes these profits possible” (Bourdieu 1983:192). As Dittmar (1984:6) notes differences in language use are an expression of a behaviour that marks dissimilarities, a behaviour that produces and reproduces social differences.

Another important aspect of Bourdieu’s framework is the recognition of the symbolic power or the social significance of speech or language use. Bourdieu (1977:646) argues that language is not only an instrument of communication and knowledge, but also an instrument of power:

In place of relations of communication it puts relations of symbolic power and so replaces the question of meaning of speech with the question of value and power of speech. Lastly, in place of specifically linguistic competence, it puts symbolic capital, which is inseparable from the speakers position in the social structure.

According to Bourdieu (1977:648), "A person speaks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished. Hence the idea that of a legitimate language or authorised language which is also the language of authority." Bourdieu (1977:651) also views language as a symbolic asset that can receive different values depending on the market. Some languages have a good market (that is, they are in high demand and are highly valued). Others have no market and are devalued.

Bourdieu's idea of language having symbolic power can be linked to Bernstein's (1972; 1981) theory of restricted and elaborated codes which deals with the question of speech being a vehicle of social information and recognises that language choice is not just a matter of individual choice but is rule governed. The basic assumption underlying Bernstein's empirical research is that the network of social relationships in which the individual interacts, and the communicative tasks that these relationships entail, ultimately shape his linguistic potential. Bernstein makes a distinction between closed or positional systems and open or person-oriented systems. The former emphasises communal values at the expense of freedom of individual expression and initiative.

The value of Bernstein's theory and that of Bourdieu for sociolinguistics is that it posits a direct relationship between socialisation practices through agents such as schools and the media (Bourdieu) and the individual's ability to express social relationships through speech. As noted by Dittmar, Schlobinski and Wach (1988:19) language is an expression of the social world and the social, cultural, and linguistic practice in it. Language is inseparable from the people who use it and as a common tie between those individuals, is a basic vehicle for their socialisation within which varieties have a range of functions. The crucial role of socialisation in determining vernacular language choice for funerals, to the elderly or uneducated and festivals was observed from the Malawi data. The fact that people are able to differentiate between languages (normally vernaculars against English in the core traditional areas and vice versa) pointed to a process of socialisation that has ingrained in them the social significance or value of each language in speech. As such, society has some control on what one says and to whom, leaving the individual with limited choice over what language to use in these areas.

Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital with all its implications has been found to be suitable as a foundation upon which to approach the sociolinguistic patterns of variation. Empirical support for Bourdieu's theory of linguistic capital has come from the study done by Dittmar et al. (1988) on the linguistic differences between East (low socio-economic area) and Western Berlin (high socio-economic status area). They found that the variety of the western part of the city can be explained using the "status

based model" (Labov 1966) and the east using the "solidarity based model" (Milroy 1980, 1987). Labov's main thesis is that people tend to shift (in formal situations) towards the speech characteristic of the prestigious dialect of the higher socio-economic class. Milroy, on the other hand, argues that the density of the social network or solidarity and loyalty to the vernacular act as a restraint against the prestige variety of language. Dittmar et al. (1988:34) have argued that Labov's model does not (i) account for why this tendency is nonexistent in the working class, (ii) upon which linguistic markets added social value can be gained with dialectical variants, and (iii) the role of socialisation and actual language use in everyday life. Thus Labov does not take into account cultural reproduction, the meaning of the legitimate language and the acquisition of the linguistic capital. Milroy, on the other hand, also ignores the role of linguistic markets and agents of change. Apart from this, Dittmar et al. found the idea of agents of language norming and ideological change (school and the media) at the macro-level crucial in determining who acquired the "legitimate" language or not. By specifying the agents of change and norming, this framework goes beyond the micro-level solidarity claims of Milroy and status based models of Labov (Dittmar et al. 1988). Rubagumya's (1992) discussion on the language situation in Tanzania has also demonstrated the opposition between the use of Swahili and English and the role of the institutions that promote English and devalue Swahili.

However, the underlying assumption and logic of a "legitimate" language having a single integrated market have been found to be unrealistic and shortsighted when applied to many countries as evidenced by some empirical studies whose findings showed the importance of producing the correct vernacular forms in the private, local arenas of the working class neighbourhoods as it is to produce the official form in formal domains (Milroy 1980 for Belfast; Siachitema 1984 for Zambia; Woolard 1985 for Catalan; Gal 1985 for Hungarian in Eastern Austria). All these studies have showed that there are significant social pressures towards the vernacular through actual language use behaviour, community censorship and subjective reactions. Woolard (1985:744) continues to argue that productive use of these forms increases with the degree of membership in core community peer groups with the density and multiplexity of social networks, and with the importance of dependency and reciprocity.

Woolard's (1985:733) study of Catalan has cast doubt on the validity of the assumption of a single market and advances the idea of alternative markets for the official languages on the one hand and the vernaculars on the other. Milroy and Milroy (1992:4) argue that "just as there is a strong institutional pressure to use varieties approximating to the standard in formal situations, effective sanctions are in force in non-standard domains also." Bourdieu's theory fails to capture the sociolinguistic reality of compet-

ing non-standard vernacular communities discovered by researchers (Gumperz 1972; Labov 1972; Gal 1979; Milroy 1980) which exert their own pressure on speakers rather than the mere absence of official pressure. For example, Gal (1979:106) reports on a woman ridiculed by fellow villagers for using standard rather than local Hungarian forms in speaking to the researcher, and Milroy (1980:60-61) reports on a boy who was ridiculed by friends for shifting his speech style towards the standard in a recorded interview. Similarly there was evidence from the Malawi data that using English rather than using a vernacular language in the core traditional areas (such as wailing at a funeral) would attract punishment or ridicule. Similarly, in core formal areas, especially in official correspondence, speaking to a boss, or writing an application letter in English rather than the vernacular language is expected. As Woolard (1985:744) notes,

just as there is strong pressure to use only the right language or to keep silent in informal situations, so effective negative sanctions are in force in these nonstandard domains. In these dominated markets, it is equally important to use only the right language; there is nothing relaxed about them.

The implications of Bourdieu's theory to the Malawian data are many although limited to some extent. The analysis of the Malawian patterns of language use clearly showed schools and the media functioning as ideological vehicles of the legitimate language, English, as an official language which as already noted, is a symbol of transforming one's social position and as such it is directly convertible into cultural and economic capital. The elite who have invested their time and money into education profit from their time investment by holding high paying jobs, unlike the uneducated. The desire for upward socio-economic mobility is the catalyst for wanting to acquire English. This theory also clearly explains the value attributes of each language and the relationship between Chichewa and English in Malawi, and why English is highly valued because of its market of application which ultimately devalues the Malawian vernaculars. As argued by Phillipson (1992:28)

most African languages tend to be marginalised and lose out in the competition with European languages. Proficiency in English is essential for upward social mobility and privileged positions in society. Just as schools were the principal instrument for traditional cultures, it is such schools in Africa which are stifling local languages and imposing alien tongues and values.

Even though both Chichewa and English are disseminated through the schools and the media, both social change and the orientation of English as a prestigious language for socio-economic status have marginalised Chichewa and other vernaculars which thrive in different markets. As argued by Woolard (1982:743-744), it is the economic basis

that gives English its authority which is inculcated mostly not only through schools and other formal institutions but also occupation and type of neighbourhood one lives in. There was enough evidence from the Malawi quantitative data that differences in language use were associated with dissimilarities in educational qualifications, occupations, place of birth, ethnicity and residency which in turn were influenced by institutional practices and the role of the school as an agent of change.

However, the Malawi data also showed the divergent social customs governing language use and how they relate to each other on divergent linguistic value systems. That is, although the schools or medija act as agents of change, for most Malawians, daily life is associated with the vernacular languages which are associated with traditional social customs different from those of English. As for the elite, daily life is associated with both English and the vernacular. As already noted on the symbolic power of the languages, the vernaculars have been associated with the traditional status quo or solidarity leading to language loyalty and preservation of vernaculars, especially in core traditional areas that are in contrast with the official use of English in the core formal areas. From the foregoing analysis of Malawian patterns one cannot deny the important role of the school as a norming agent or ideological apparatus for linguistic norming and an institution that determines who learns English and who does not but one also cannot ignore the existence of the powerful family and societal pressure towards the use of vernaculars in traditional core areas regardless of education. That these languages have different connotations means that they have to be expressed in different markets or domains based on traditional, political and socio-economic dominance. Chichewa becomes a language for transethnic or national solidarity through political coercion, vernaculars express core traditional solidarity, and English is a socio-economic status marker.

Microlevel theories

The foregoing theories and models have addressed the patterns of language use at the macrolével to a greater extent, but to realise a sociolinguistic model that takes into account individual variation and strategies used at the microlevel, we will now focus on theories, notions and models that provide information on microlevel language use. The fundamental premise of these models is that the socio-psychological values, attitudes and beliefs of individual members of the society are factors that create consensus, predetermine behaviour and hold society together. The crucial theme is that of adaptation with individual's ability to make their own initiatives, adjustments and decisions free from governmental or societal restraints.

Giles' accommodation theory

According to this theory, which explains language choice patterns as adaptive interpersonal psychological responses to intergroup relations, individuals or speakers are viewed as rational actors and define their social roles with other members in the community either by identifying with them or emphasising the social distance between them. Speech accommodation theory (Giles 1973, Giles et al. 1977, Giles and Coupland 1991) is based on Simian Herman's overlapping situations and what causes one of the situations to gain *salience* at the expense of others (Fasold 1984) and "was devised to explain some of the motivations underlying certain shifts in people's speech styles during social encounters" (Jitendra et al. 1982:207). Giles' theory of accommodation takes the binary form of either *convergence* or *divergence*. According to Jitendra, in situations of divergence or social distance the individual tries to emphasise his/her status or authority through speech to maintain a distinctive identity. This behaviour is not restricted to individuals, sometimes a whole ethnic group can use it as a "symbolic tactic for maintaining their identity and cultural distinctiveness" (Jitendra, 1982:213). Convergence, the reverse of the above occurs when individuals narrow the social distance between themselves and their interlocutors by minimising the differences in speech. Alternatively, an individual might want to shift towards the level of different status interlocutors temporarily, perhaps for a transactional reason or out of genuine admiration for some value that the participants stand for by changing to a different language or using words or large units from one another's language. Therefore convergence can take place upwards or downwards depending on the individual's needs and it can also involve whole groups. The crucial factor in the negotiation of these roles is choice of code.

Similarly, if a dominant group expects to remain dominant, then its members will expect that the subordinate group members will make the necessary linguistic adjustments and will use their language without attempting to converge. Also, if social change for improvement in the society is seen through linguistic competence of the dominant language then subordinate group members can be expected to converge when dealing with the dominant group if social change seems unlikely.

Accommodation theory handles very well switching motivated by a desire to narrow the social distance between the addressee, such as those choices encoding deference. It also accounts for language maintenance and shift in Malawi. The upward accommodation explains the shift from low status languages such as Lomwe and Yao towards a higher status language, Chichewa, for both social identity and economic integration. This upward accommodation showed these groups' lack of loyalty to their traditional languages and cultures that do not serve them for socio-economic benefit. This type of

accommodation also explains the behaviour of the Chewa speakers sampled in Mzuzu who because they are a dominant group in Malawi did not make an effort to learn Tumbuka, expecting the Tumbuka to know the national language and speak to them (the Chewa) in Chichewa rather than vice versa. That is, the Chewa take advantage of their higher social status and tend not to bend towards minority languages expecting the minority groups to bend towards them.

Downward accommodation accounts for the behaviour and code choice of the Malawian elite who for deferential purposes and better communication will speak to the uneducated and the masses in general (messengers, cleaners and house servants) using the vernacular or local lingua franca rather than English. It was also noted that educated Malawians exploit the situation by using vernaculars (mainly the local lingua franca) for downward accommodation with market vendors for economic benefit, that of low or equitable prices. Cooper and Carpenter (1976) found that sellers tried to imitate or speak the buyers' language in Ethiopian markets and so did Parkin (1974a) and Duran (1975) who also report that sellers used their knowledge of various vernaculars to address customers. My market observations in Malawi showed the same tendency. That is, even though the lingua franca (Chichewa and Tumbuka) were common languages in the markets (depending on the region) it was not unusual to hear a seller calling or addressing customers of European origin in broken English or any other vernacular a buyer knows or speaks. This was extended to Africans they deemed educated that is, by their looks. Normally, the buyer will stick to the local lingua franca or language that will give him/her the real bargain.

However, accommodation theory's limitation lies in seeking to explain all choices in binary terms of either convergence or divergence to the addressee. Scotton (1988:180) argues that choices have a broader range of motivations. Most importantly many are much more speaker-centred (those that encode authority or education). Scotton argues that these choices and their consequences are better handled by the markedness theory which claims that choice is not so much a reflection of situation as a negotiation of position, given the situation. People make the choices they do because of personal motivations. She further proposes characterising these motivations and all switching through the framework of unmarked, marked and exploratory choices. Speakers are restrained only by the possibility and attractiveness of alternative outcomes (Scotton 1988:180).

Network theory

According to Milroy and Milroy (1992:5) "a social network may be seen as a boundless web of ties. . . linking people to one another, however remotely." Network theory,

therefore, addresses issues such as linkage in the network, the nature of the linkage and how it affects linguistic behaviour. Networks or connections among individuals in society have been a concern in linguistic research since Bloomfield (1933:46) who held the view that linguistic diversity was a direct result of varying degrees of speaker interaction. Milroy and others relate their work in social networks and language to LePage's concept of the individual's creation of a verbal repertoire that permits him/her to imitate the linguistic characteristics of a group (or groups) with which he or she wishes to be identified. In turn, this concept is closely related to Giles' idea of speech accommodation as already discussed, which situates the notion of verbal repertoire creation in the general set of seeking social approval from others. Social networks rather than domains have been used by sociolinguists Labov (1972) and Milroy (1980) among others as predictors of language behaviour. In these research works networks refer to a quantifiable set of interactional relations individuals have to one another by reference to frequency or intensity of interaction, transactional (one-way) versus exchange (two-way) interactions, and so on (Preston 1987:693). Structurally, networks refer to the density of the network (dense or close-knit versus open networks) whilst in terms of interaction they can be multiplex. "In dense and multiplex networks everyone would know everyone else (density) and the actors would know one another in a range of capacities (multiplex) e.g. co-worker, kinsman and friend" (Milroy 1987:21; Milroy and Milroy 1992:5-6).

Network and language choice

Empirical studies (Labov 1972; Gumperz 1982; Milroy 1987) suggest that dense, close-knit networks account for adherence to a vernacular or non-legitimised language norm (a non-standard) whilst open or weak networks least approximate to vernacular norms. Labov (1972) studied the network characteristics and their relationship to linguistic output of Black gang groups in New York City, particularly the contrast between the organised gang members (T-Birds) and the non-members (the Lames), and found among other things that the language performance of the lames reflected their non-membership in street gangs. In other words, the lames' realisation of various variables separated them from the gang members' network. For example, the use of the post-vocalic (r), which is also a variable in the non-Black New York City community, showed a 4% realisation by the T-Bird gang members and a 21% realisation by the lames. Milroy's (1980) analysis of the relationship between linguistic variation and network structure in three inner city communities in Belfast (Ballymacarrett, Clonard

and Hammer) "attempted to demonstrate that a close-knit, territorially based network functions as a conservative force, resisting pressures for change originating from outside pressure." (Milroy and Milroy 1992:4). Milroy's (1980:190) main thesis is that dense and closed networks explain the preservation of illegitimatised or non-standard forms. Gumperz's work (1982) suggests that network relations are the most powerful indicators of language choice, since he sets out to "explore alternatives to established sociolinguistic approaches to the analysis of language shift that can account for the intuitively obvious fact that language shift reflects basic changes in the structure of interpersonal relations rather than mere macro-alterations in the extralinguistic environment" (Gumperz 1982:57).

The value of network analysis lies in offering a theoretical base for understanding community level solidarity (in close-knit networks) that underlie processes of language maintenance and the persistence of vernacular's vis-a-vis imposed institutional standard varieties or official languages. Milroy and Milroy (1992:6) argue that for economically marginal or powerless groups in homogeneous and well-defined neighbourhoods "a strong sense of ethnicity or of local identity often creates and maintains localised cultural and linguistic norms and value systems that are presented and perceived as sharply opposed to the mainstream values of outsiders." As such, network analysis complements domain analysis by focusing systematically on interlinkages and social relation organisations in networks. Networks in Malawi are structurally dense and interactionally multiplex and the role relations and educational qualifications determined the language used, rather than what is imposed by the government. Factors such as age and sex were not useful indicators of language use in Malawi unlike education, occupation, geographical and social mobility. For example, most educated Malawians who go drinking in elitist clubs reported using English as their medium of communication for socialising as what was expected of them. This was indicative of an elite network pressure whilst the same people's use of vernaculars in core traditional areas was also indicative of a larger community pressure to conform to tradition. These observations provide further evidence to support the contention that interlocutors within networks can act as a strong force in language choice.

However, methodologically this theory cannot handle open or less multiplex networks (Milroy and Milroy 1992) nor can it explain the long term social processes that underlie migration (Boissevain 1987:169). Contrary to linking an individual's linguistic behaviour to relations in a network, other studies have showed that societies do exist in which the individual's place in the network carries little identifying information con-

cerning the low level grammatical and phonological performance of the speaker (Preston 1987).

The problem of linking network theory to the Malawian situation is compounded by the fact that it is rooted in homogeneous communities or networks speaking the same language or dialect. Structurally the Malawian urban networks or neighbourhoods are ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous. The structure, interaction and consequently the language used in each network depends on kinship, knowledge of the language, occupation, power and education, geographical and social mobility. In some networks (interethnic) the common language used is the national language or a regional language that can hardly act as a network marker other than a transethnic marker. The quantitative data showed that the use of the vernacular is common in the dense networks of low income areas (Zingwangwa, Kawale and Chibavi) as opposed to the high income areas or open networks (Area 43, Namiwawa and Kaning'ina). This may be related to educational differences. Though educated Malawians use more English than the vernaculars, certain traditional aspects of their lives demand the use vernaculars in their neighbourhoods or network. From the Malawian data it would be presumptuous to categorise a speaker to a group or network simply by language use. Respondents in the high density areas because of low or no education used vernacular languages more than those in the low density areas who used more English or mixed English and the vernacular depending on the interlocutor regardless of his/her network. Arguably, what is crucial is the type of interlocutor one interacts with in each network rather than the network itself as an object of study.

The Malawi data also showed Chichewa as a dynamic language that permeated across the networks (whether close-knit or open or multiplex), unlike English that was confined to the elite. The use of English marks people as better educated but vernaculars do not, since whether educated or not individuals will still use their vernaculars in daily life and the educated will tend to use both. Thus network may be an empirically determined concept that may have important contributions in some areas but is less suitable in this case study. The most useful variable is education that stratifies people into socio-economic networks leading to the use of English on a status basis whilst with solidarity one's cultural and linguistic background ties him to the use of vernacular depending on the setting, interlocutor and topic. As such the employed explanatory components of domain (setting, identity, topic, etc.) (Preston 1987) have been useful in this study. Milroy's work is important in accounting for the preservation of vernaculars in Malawi as resulting from a reflex of dense, closed networks (core traditional areas versus formal and informal use of English by the elite).

Language maintenance (LM) and language shift (LS)

Fasold (1984:213) describes both LM and LS as long term, collective results of language choice. LS means that a community gives up (consciously or unconsciously) its language completely in favour of another one whereas LM means the community collectively continues using the language(s) it has traditionally used.

This discussion subscribes to the view that it is difficult to single out any one cause for the general retention or loss of an ethnic tongue and that causes are generally multiple and interrelated (Mackey 1980:39; Brenzinger 1992:291). Societal bilingualism has been cited as a crucial stage in the processes leading to LS and as noted by Lieberson (1972:1981) almost all cases of societal language shift came about through intergenerational switching. Since the intergenerational switching requires the earlier generation to be bilingual, the proportion of a population that is bilingual constitutes an "exposure to risk" that one of the languages might eventually be lost (Lieberson 1972:242).

Apart from bilingualism, LS has been attributed to a multiplicity of factors (Giles et al. 1977; Mackey 1980; Fasold 1984, Pauwels 1985; Brenzinger 1992) ranging from extra-linguistic: migration and social setting, economic change and demographic factors to sociolinguistic factors which include: the speakers' attitude towards their languages and the one being shifted to, institutional pressures that is, languages used in the media and schools, language status and loyalty (Brenzinger 1992). Literature illustrates that in most cases migrant communities co-existing or intermarrying with higher status language groups and socio-economic changes have brought more speakers of the minority groups to identify themselves with the majority social cultural groups, ultimately losing their language. Thus demographic factors such as migration of either members of a small group migrating into an area where the language no longer serves them or by large groups who "swamp" the local population with a new language has been well documented (Tabouret-Keller 1968, 1972; Gal 1979; Dorian 1980; Tim 1980).

Others have focussed on the effect of exogamy or intermarriages as a cause for language shift (Pauwels 1985). Other extra-linguistic factors such as changes from subsistence and rural dwelling to industrialisation and other urban economic changes or modernisation (Tabouret-Keller 1968; Huffines 1980; Dorian 1981) have had a major impact on which languages are retained or shifted to. Institutional and government pressures in terms of government recognised and enforced school languages affecting other languages have been addressed by Dressler and Wodak-Leodotter (1977); Gal (1979); Kahane and Kahane (1979); Tim (1980) who document the demise of minority languages that are not taught in schools or are suppressed by governments.

However, most of these studies also acknowledge that attitudes and loyalty to one's language by those who shift are important factors to look at, without which it is difficult to understand the decision to shift. Clyne (1982) argues that some migrant Australians such as the Greeks and the Italians have maintained their languages and ethnic identity under the same economic and social pressures that have led to the decline of Dutch. He relates this to the suggestion that some groups may have a less positive attitude to their language. Other studies (Denison 1977; Gal 1979; Kahane and Kahane 1979; Dorian 1981) have shown that people shift towards higher prestige languages when their own language has relatively low status. Thus the decision to shift can be attributed to both external and internal factors even though the same pressures may produce different results.

The Malawian data showed the Lomwe and to some extent the Yao were shifting to Chichewa due to migration, demographic distribution, small numbers and rapid socio-economic change and institutional pressures during settlement³. Their languages no longer served them for professional, educational and economic needs. At the same time one has to take into account that similar factors did not affect them alone as small groups but other groups as well⁴. In other words their shift can be related to their lack of loyalty or negative attitude to their language and culture that could not serve them in their new environment, especially those who settled in less cohesive urban areas of Zomba, Blantyre, Chiradzulu and Machinga, rather than those who settled in cohesive rural area of Mulanje and Thyolo (*Lomwe*) and Mangochi (*Yao*) where these languages are still preserved. That those who settled in heterogeneous or less cohesive groups as opposed to cohesive groups did not shift to Chichewa would lead one to contend that the shift was instigated by the external pressures (both government and social). The pressures made these groups to look at their languages as worthless considering a more powerful and socio-economic mobiliser such as Chichewa. The young Yao and Lomwe for existential purposes value the positive economic and social benefits that Chichewa might bring vis-a-vis the bleak future offered by their stigmatised languages. The weight of evidence, therefore, supports the view that language is a political, social and economic phenomenon. Tumbuka was a language which was maintained. The maintenance of Tumbuka may be related to the tenacity of the people and can be viewed as a political move to challenge the institutional or government pressures that banned its use in schools or the radio since 1968. As such the Tumbuka use their language to foster their identity and showed a strong desire to preserve and promote it as their heritage that embodies their culture to which they are loyal and happy to identify with, unlike the Lomwe. This positive attitude (to Tumbuka maintenance) is enhanced by the past association of their language with educated people, a status it no longer enjoys.

Codeswitching (CS) and codemixing (CM)

The distinction between codeswitching (CS) and codemixing (CM) and their definitions have occupied many sociolinguists and are contentious largely because the distinction and definitions are subtle and difficult to characterise. I am using the terms CM and CS according to Fasold (1984) and Salmons (1990) who view CS, CM and borrowing as points on a continuum (Fasold 1984:180) or a scale (Salmon 1990:446) and not discrete. Fasold regards a person who speaks two or more languages and has to choose which one to use as CS (see also Herman 1968; Sankoff 1980; Clyne 1987:740) and CM as a more subtle occurrence, where pieces of one language are used while a speaker is basically using another language. The language "pieces" taken from another language are often words, but they can also be phrases or larger units (see also Gumperz 1977; Parasher 1980). "When they are words the phenomenon is called borrowing" (Fasold 1984:181). CS has been defined as the use of more than one language during one conversation to signal social, discourse and referential meaning. As Fasold (1984:181) argues in order to resolve the issue "it is the case that these three kinds of choice cannot be clearly separated from each other. The three kinds of choices are best viewed as points on a continuum from relatively large scale to relatively small scale choices. The middle category, CM is very difficult to distinguish from the other two (see also Salmons 1990:466).

CS has been studied from both functional and structural constraints point of view. The latter view has been preoccupied with the possibility of using grammatical patterning or constraints to establish the predicability of the occurrence of the switch in a given verbal interaction (Poplack 1979; Bokamba 1988; Scotton 1992a & 1992b). Most of these studies apart from pointing out which grammatical categories or word classes are likely or unlikely to be involved in switching or how CS does not violate the syntactic rules of either grammar (Salmons 1990:464), have not all been particularly successful in predicting where a switch is likely to be at any time. This paper however adopts the former view, a functionalist approach that will help us to understand CS's social significance and occurrence as a boundary-levelling or boundary maintaining strategy and its link to interlocutors' multiple role relationships (Heller 1988:1; Scotton 1986, 1992b).

Social significance of codeswitching and codemixing.

In trying to understand the relationship between linguistic forms and social processes in the interpretation of experience and the construction of social reality issues, the discussion of CS and CM has been couched in the notion of multiple role-relations that recognises that individuals assume different roles concerning other members within the

social network. However, these roles also take into account that members of such speech communities or networks are aware of the social connotations associated with each language and the appropriateness of using one language or the other according to the social context through the process of socialisation, ultimately leading to Hymes' (1974) cultural or communicative competence (Scotton 1976, 1986, 1992c; Heller 1988:1). For example, the Malawi data showed that English is the language of high education, power and occupational status whilst Chichewa is the interethnic language and other vernaculars signal ethnic consciousness and traditional values. Through this shared knowledge of the value system of each language members are aware of the appropriate language to use.

Reasons for CS and CM

CS has been systematically investigated in Africa and elsewhere and some reasons for CS have been well documented (Abdulaziz-Mkilifi 1972; Parkin 1974b; Gumperz 1982; Heller 1988, Scotton 1988 & 1992c; Siachitema 1991; Moser 1992). Abdulaziz Mkilifi (1972:207) reports that the CS and CM phenomena among the subjects he observed were difficult to characterise and in most cases were frequent and unpredictable even when discussing highly technical subjects such as zoology, medicine or engineering. It was not a simple case of lexical borrowing to fill lexical gaps in given English or Swahili sentences. He noted that there were "sociolinguistic constraints in CS and CM as between the local vernacular, Swahili and English" and that the order in which these three languages appeared seems to suggest the "existence of a hierarchy of social distance: everything being equal, the vernacular expresses least social distance, English the most and Swahili in between" (Abdulaziz Mkilifi 1972:209-210).

Parkin (1974b) ascribes CS to people's desire to impress others with their mastery of several languages. Trudgill (1974) adds the idea of status, that is, individuals wanting to maintain identity with a prestigious group in the society. Scotton (1976) states that people codeswitch when they lack knowledge of one language and use another language to facilitate communication on certain subjects or to exclude certain persons present from a portion of the conversation. Thus some languages are associated with family, ethnic group identity, solidarity, intimacy etc, others with power status and social distance (Parkin 1974b:212-213; Bujra 1974:239). From his Kenyan data, Parkin states that "in particular conversations English is seen to express. . . social exclusiveness as against Swahili which may express social inclusiveness".

The markedness model

This model premises that speakers have a "tacit knowledge" of internalised rules (Hymes 1972) or a "natural theory of markedness" according to which each language

is unmarked or marked in certain contexts for the linguistic varieties spoken in their community (Scotton, 1992c). Basing her model on pragmatics, socio-pragmatics, socio-psychology and conversation analysis, Scotton (1992c:169), argues that reasons for CS can be subsumed into four main categories using the Markedness model which argues that "all linguistic choices can be seen as indexical of projected rights and obligations balances in interpersonal relations. When a speaker engages in CS it is a negotiation of some kind regarding the rights and obligations' balance (RO balance) between speaker and addressee. Speakers work out, based on the norms of their community, what RO balance is expected or unmarked for specific participants in a given speech community" (Scotton 1992c:167). Using examples from Africa (Kenya and Zimbabwe) Scotton (1992c:177) argues that CS is a socially motivated strategy employed for four purposes: (i) to produce a sequence of unmarked choices by using a neutral lingua franca or same ethnic language, (ii) to establish CS itself as the unmarked choice as used by educated Africans who use both English and their local languages to signal their educational status and national or ethnic identity, (iii) to move away from the unmarked choice by making a marked choice to signal social distance, superiority or authority and (iv) as an exploratory choice in uncertain situations especially in situations where interlocutors do not have sufficient information about each other's linguistic abilities. That is, this strategy allows interlocutors to discover to what degree they share understandings about the situation and their roles in it, from the alternative framework.

In short, unmarked choices (conventional) are those codes that index a balance which follows community norms in presenting the relationship of the participants. Making such an unmarked choice is a speaker's way of affirming community norms. Marked choices are deviations from the norm and, as such, are attempts to represent a marked RO balance, an unexpected one, for the exchange (Scotton 1992c:178). Marked and unmarked choices are made through CS to indicate, either a desire to dis-identify, or to negotiate expected rights and obligations. Thus, marked choices may enhance the speaker's self image, create social distance, or indicate anger. In Kenya, a sister uses her unmarked mother tongue with her brother in a store when she expects special treatment, but the brother, who wants to treat her as a customer, uses Swahili (Scotton 1986:403-404).

The Malawian data also showed that codeswitching or codemixing are common but multifaceted phenomena for reasons which can be accounted for in the markedness model. The unmarked choices included those switches that have become a characteristic way of speaking for the educated Malawians who, as observed from the data (Kayambazinthu 1994), frequently codeswitched or codemixed languages as a result of high competence in English and other ethnic languages as a mark of equal status and

linguistic experience. However, most of the switches were marked for reasons of secrecy, confidentiality, exclusion of others or social distance, maintaining ethnic identity and acceptance, rebuke, desire to influence or impress, politeness, economy of expression, and self deception or euphemism. Lastly, the exploratory reason was clearly demonstrated by language used with strangers in Malawi and how interlocutors by starting with a local lingua franca (unmarked) finally worked out or negotiated the right code. From the discussion there is no doubt that the degree of interaction or role relationships in the linguistic market, interlocutor's status, knowledge of and competence in the language(s), setting and the significance of the code serve as indicators to the right code choice(s). The use of a particular language(s) may either be interpreted as a status symbol or emphasises intimacy, social distance or a means of communication with or without instrumental values.

However, the Markedness model presupposes a psychologically conscious or manipulative strategy mapping of what one is going to speak whilst evidence from Africans and Asians who CM show no motive behind CM unlike CS. In other words not all choices are socially motivated. I view motivation as a conscious attribute and yet CM is not. Self report on why respondents codemixed revealed that respondents' motives for CS are complex and included issues such as ethnic identity to unconscious use of two or more languages. My personal experience and my discussion with fellow Africans who indulge in CM and CS confirm that CS is a more conscious or deliberate effort to use a particular language for specific purposes (for exclusion purposes or the right to speak one's language) than CM which is an unconscious outcome which one sometimes realises during the conversation that s/he is using a different language with interlocutors who do not understand it. For example, when interacting with fellow Africans who do not speak my language, I have tended to unconsciously speak to them in my language and only discovered when I do not get any response or am told to speak in another language that I realise the communication breakdown. In these situations rights and obligations are overridden by psychological language processing which is the result of high competence in both languages involved in CM. Most of my respondents could not give a reason why they codemix.

Towards an integrated model of language use in Malawi.

The foregoing discussion has raised a number of complex issues in analysing sociolinguistic data on patterns of language choice and use. The discussion has shown that abstract social categories have contributed substantially to sociolinguistic research. Also that over the past years there has been a shift in importance and focus from the external social predictors of language performance at the macrolevel to the interrelat-

edness of such factors and the internal relationships among speakers and even individual speaker positions in society. Given this complex and multifaceted study of human behaviour, it seems more realistic to employ more than one explanatory and interpretive model in the analysis of language patterns in Malawi focussing on both the macro and micro level.

The model presented in **Figure 2** below takes into account the functional allocation of languages based on the government language policy in Malawi and how the languages are actually used by Malawians at the micro-level. The model also shows the intervening variables that contribute to language use at the micro-level. The functional classification is based on Ferguson's (1959) concept of diglossia as expanded by Fishman (1967), Abdulaziz-Mkilifi (1972) and Parkin (1977) to allow for many languages. The Malawian data showed that specific functions tended to recur with both H (English) and L (Malawian languages). English, the colonial language of "high culture" and the language of the elite, was and is still regarded as the most prestigious language used in parliament, legislature, education, government, science and technology and most academic writings and official correspondences. The colonial language is regarded highly because of the historical processes that put it there and still uphold it. Chichewa, the national language, though standardised, and with a literary heritage, is nevertheless a language for lower education and consequently of the less educated. It has been devalued and relegated to a lower status as less prestigious. As the most dynamic language in Malawi, Chichewa's status is not clear cut since it is both a national language or lingua franca and at the same time an everyday language for the ethnic group it represents. Because of its status, it has higher status than the other vernacular languages in Malawi but is lower in status than English. Unlike neutral lingua francas such as Swahili in Tanzania or Sango in the Central African Republic, Chichewa cannot be said not to have ethnic connotations since it represents an ethnic group's aspirations within the country. The Malawi data would lead one to reject Ferguson's narrow description of diglossia and embrace Abdulaziz-Mkilifi's description of double diglossia or overlapping diglossia between English (H) and Chichewa (L) and then Chichewa (H) and other vernaculars (L). In the real sense Parkin's description of stable diatypes fits the situation, unlike Fishman's idea of an unstable situation that would lead one language taking over the other languages. It is doubtful that Chichewa would replace English or vice versa since their functions are polarised and stratified. Unless there is universal education, English will continue to be an elite language, Chichewa occupies the Middle strata and the other vernaculars the Lower strata. However, the Malawi data also showed that there is substantial "leakage" of H into L and L into H which questions the binary and stability issue in Ferguson's formulation.

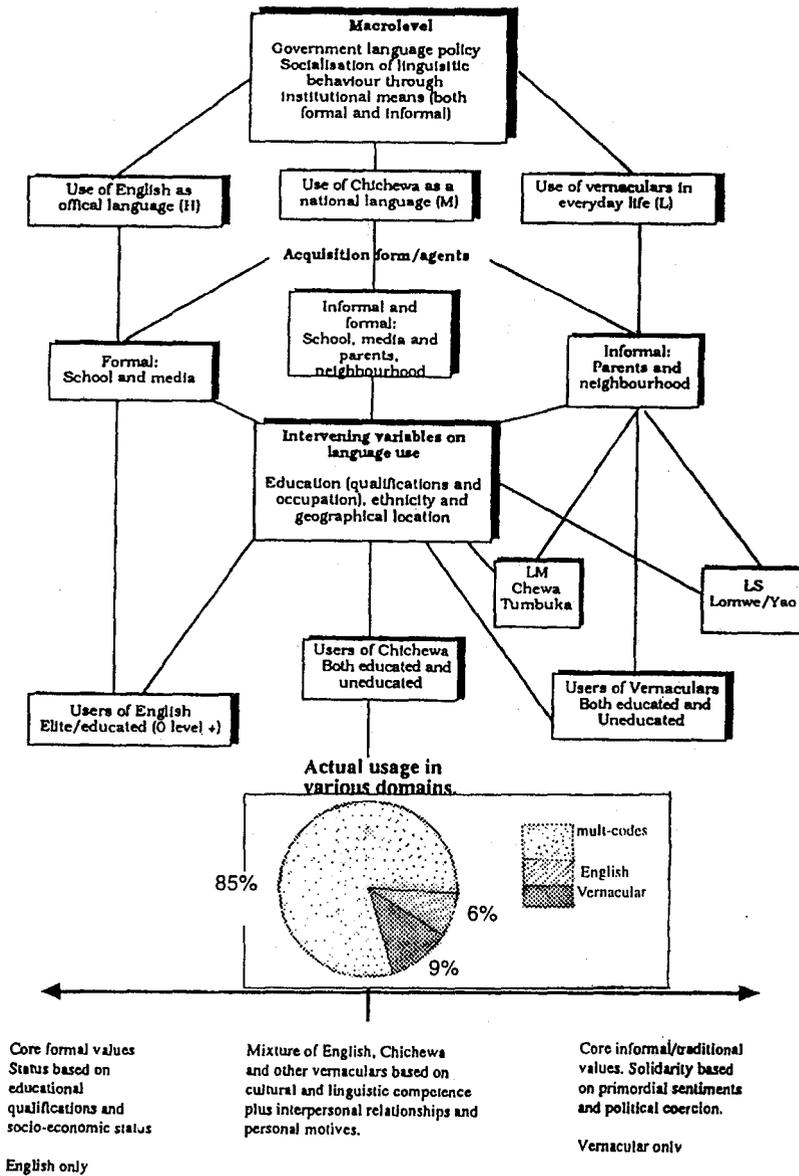


Figure 2

Similarly, the changes in language status planning in Malawi- the internal changes of English versus Chichewa and Chichewa versus Tumbuka after the colonial period and Chichewa versus other vernaculars point to less stability and more conflict than complementarity. However, the status of English (H) has been stable. Even though there is evidence from our data that Chichewa is gaining speakers from Lomwe and Yao, it would be presumptuous at this stage to assume that Chichewa will replace other languages in Malawi. As long as the majority of the population remains rural and sentiments for other languages are upheld the situation will remain stable with much CM or CS as a resolution of the two conflicts. Also the non-education of the majority of Malawians plays a major role in the maintenance of the vernaculars.

Apart from the functional allocation at the macrolevel, the construct also recognises the crucial role played by the agents through which linguistic and cultural socialisation is instilled and its effects on the individual's verbal repertoire. The socialisation process, as already noted, is central in determining the mutual or tacit knowledge of the relevance or irrelevance of each code in particular contexts or markets. In this regard, Bourdieu's theory of linguistic markets and the role of the school as agents of change and Woolard's addition of alternative markets (family) are realised. Bourdieu's analysis and the conflict perspective delineate the various economic, political and social pressures causing the intervening factors that are the source of conflict and social inequality or stratification and reproduction in society leading to language choice and use from the macrolevel to the microlevel. Such an analysis attributes the behaviour of the individual with network structures that emerge from conditions associated with one's traditional core values or traditional sentiments (solidarity) versus core formal areas associated with education and related attributes leading to socio-economic status and use of English in core formal areas.

The conflict perspective of diglossia is relevant as a framework for describing our data to some extent. First, it may partly account for the opposing values between Chichewa and English in Malawi at the macro-level. The historical processes of colonialism and neo-colonialism help us to understand why English is the High language in opposition to the locally based lingua francas or vernaculars. Second, focusing at the domain level, it was evident from the Malawi data that some domains clearly render themselves to the differential use of English (core formal areas) exclusively whilst on the opposite end some are exclusively vernacular (core traditional and cultural values). The importance of Labov's quantitative paradigm which accounts for intervening variables for linguistic variation along sex, age, ethnic and socio-economic networks can only be accounted for if one considers the root of the cause of stratification which in the Malawian sense stems from the policy which recognises the three diatypes (cultural or

ethnic affinity languages, national unity language and socio-economic languages) with different connotations. As to who used what language to whom, the intervening variables discovered from the quantitative analysis convincingly showed that the level of education (and its related variables of qualifications and occupation), competence in the language(s), ethnicity and geographical location determined language used.

However, since the weight of evidence in our data points to languages (both H and L) being used in conjunction with each other more than in isolation (see figure 2)⁵, theories rooted in binarity or compartmentalisation or conflict between H and L in formal or informal domains cannot account for this behaviour. That languages can be so structured does not mean that individuals cannot adjust or accommodate certain means of communicating with each other where needs arise depending on the interlocutor. To treat languages as always in conflict or opposition is to obscure the fact that society and individuals recognise the unequal distribution of linguistic resources due to limited economic advantages in the Malawian society. The rigid opposition is less than the fluid and more accommodating way in which individuals choose and use their languages to resolve the conflict. Therefore what accounts for CS or CM in the model is the individual's competence in the languages used, role relations between individuals and the social networks they interact in. At the microlevel, the type of interlocutor, setting, topic and knowledge of the language(s) will ultimately determine the type of accommodation. Accommodation or role relations without communicative and linguistic competence are inconceivable. Similarly, the deep culturally meaningful practices and the objective forces leading to this large corpus of data showing conjunction rather than isolation, showed relations that give priority to that which is culturally meaningful and acceptable rather than what is officially sanctioned. This, coupled with individuals' motives in terms of what they seek to gain in a particular context, may facilitate and constrain interlocutors' social and linguistic behaviour more than what is prescribed from above. Thus, the detection of cultural dilemmas faced by many educated Malawians is only captured adequately if we integrate the strategies adopted and used by individuals in their interactions at the microlevel.

Domain analysis complemented by the concepts of role relations, accommodation theory and markedness theory may describe the strategies and motives used by individuals in their interaction in a social network. As such, the model shows that, contrary to what is prescribed at the macrolevel, the actual usage of languages at the microlevel is different. That is, even in formal areas or domains (e.g. work place) we also find the use of vernaculars in conjunction with English; and the same is true in the homes of educated Malawians. The actual usage on a continuum, therefore, showed that core formal areas demand the use of English only on the one end just as core traditional areas

demand the use of a vernacular only on the opposite end. What happens in between (the codeswitching between vernaculars and English)⁶ is well analysed through the interrelated factors of each individual's verbal repertoire, role relations, motives and perception of the situation and what they seek to gain both materially and socially. Thus individuals' psychological realities and cultural or community demands are worked out based on many factors which language choice is ultimately negotiated on the basis of what is important at that moment. So Herman's idea of salience is crucial in this model.

Conclusion.

This paper has raised a number of issues pertaining to language use patterns in Malawi. The discussion based on the theoretical background to the study of language use and choice has so far emphasised the institutional and structural changes that create urban language differentials in Malawi. The patterns have been described as related to dynamic socio-economic processes that have contributed and continue to contribute to language allocation due to both external (political and institutional agents) and internal forces at work (individual or group motives and strategies used for negotiation in social networks or speech communities) that have led to language maintenance or shift. Through this discussion we have noted that no one conventional theory or framework can be used to analyse Malawian language use patterns without paying attention to both external and internal factors influencing the choices. The language use patterns can therefore only be understood by studying the processes within the context of a dynamic and integrated model. During early years of acquisition, some structural and institutional changes take place that determine who acquires what language and with what competence. The verbal repertoire acquired in this way leads to both horizontal and vertical solidarity networks based on kinship or ethnicity; and socio-economic status which is transethnic. The stratification leads to the formation of a large group of marginal or skilled and unskilled workers who use the vernacular as a result of lack of education. The creation of this class and affinity with one's tradition accounts for the high use of vernaculars or a mixture of English and the vernacular(s).

Notes

- * This paper is based on a study carried out in 1992 in Malawi on four major languages: Chichewa, Lomwe, Yao and Tumbuka in that order and English, the official language. The languages are named after their ethnic groups by either adding a prefix Chi- or not. The study was submitted as a PhD thesis at La Trobe University. I am grateful to David Bradley, Edith Bavin and Pascal Kishindo for their comments on this paper.
1. In the Malawian context an educated person (*ophunzira or ngwakusambira*) is a person who has at least attained O level or higher and speaks English very well.
 2. In Malawi, during the colonial and post colonial periods, English has been viewed as a language of "higher culture" and status unlike the indigenous languages.
 3. Both the Yao and the Lomwe are regarded as intruders in Malawi who migrated from Mozambique and settled in Malawi in the early 19th Century. The Lomwe however unlike the Yao (who were traders and militant) settled under a Thangata system of providing ready labour to their landlords.
 4. Some small linguistic groups in the northern part of Malawi (Lambya, Nyiha, Ndali etc) and in the southern region (Sena) have co-existed with other groups for years and have still maintained their languages despite their small numbers. However, most immigrant groups, that is, the Lomwe, Yao and Ngoni, shifted to the languages of local established groups regardless of the nature of migration or settlement.
 5. The chart is based on domain analysis and that only 4 subdomains out of 66 (6%) were English only, 6 out of 66 (9%) were vernacular only whilst 56 out of 66 had alternatives (85%).
 6. Data supported the view that in domains where languages were used in conjunction with each other they were not used in equal proportions since, as we moved towards the formal domains (eg. at work) people used more English than vernaculars and the opposite as true, that is, if we moved towards informal domains (eg. neighbourhoods and homes) we found more use of vernacular than English. The only exception was in the radio domain where the differences were minor.

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