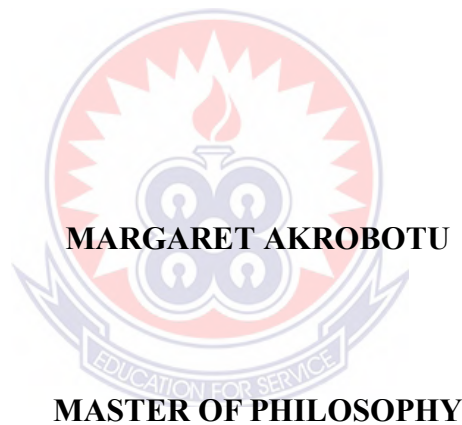


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**LANGUAGE SHIFT AND MAINTENANCE: A STUDY OF SEFWI (ESAHIE)  
LANGUAGE IN THE BIA EAST AND WEST DISTRICTS IN THE WESTERN  
NORTH REGION**



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LANGUAGE IN THE BIA EAST AND WEST DISTRICTS IN THE WESTERN  
NORTH REGION**



**A thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics,  
Faculty of Foreign Languages Education, submitted to the  
School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Teaching English as a Second Language - TESL)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**JUNE, 2025**

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

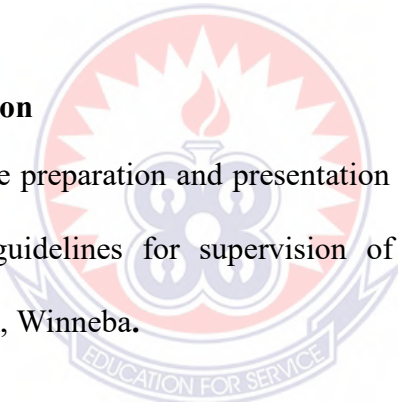
I, Margaret Akrobotu, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.



Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date.....

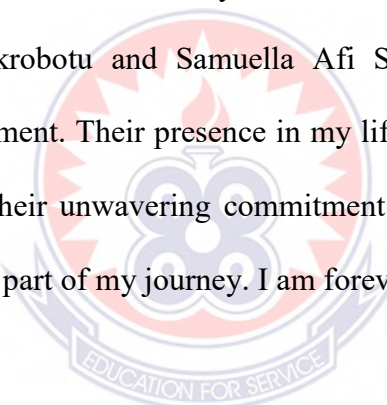
## **DEDICATION**

This work is solely dedicated to all my siblings, nephews and nieces.



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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the individuals who have supported me throughout my Master's journey. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Kwaku Ofori, for his guidance, expertise, and unwavering support. His constructive feedback and encouragement were invaluable in shaping my research and helping me to achieve my goals. I would also like to acknowledge the memory of Mohammed Muntari Kwadwo Akrobotu my late father and my mother Adjoa Yeboah, whose kindness, wisdom, and generosity inspired me in countless ways. Though my father is no longer with us, his legacy lives on, and I am grateful for the time I had to learn from him. Additionally, I would like to thank Ing. Saifudeen Illiasu Sulleyman, Abigail Akrobotu and Samuella Afi Sodzi Akrobotu for their love, support, and encouragement. Their presence in my life has been a source of strength, and I am grateful for their unwavering commitment to my well-being and success. Thank you all for being part of my journey. I am forever grateful.



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## ABSTRACT

This study examined language shift and maintenance of Sefwi (Esahie) language in the Bia East and West Districts in the Western North Region. It is one of the minority languages in Ghana experiencing pressure from Asanti Twi. A qualitative research approach with a case study design was employed. A sample of 24 respondents was selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques for this study. A semi-structured interview and non-participant observation were used to gather data, which were analyzed through thematic analysis. Fishman's domains of use and Batibo's (Triglossic Models were the theories used to underpin this work. The research questions were answered using descriptive thematic analysis. The findings indicate that cultural pride attached to their festival is partially maintaining the language but the language is eroding due to the pervasive dominance of Twi in daily communication, education and media. Intergenerational transmission is weakening as families are increasingly adopting Twi at home, reducing children's exposure to their native language. Factors driving language shift include the perception that speaking of Twi leads employment opportunities, government policies supporting the dominant language over native language and feeling pressured to speak the dominant language in social settings. The lack of institutional support for Sefwi has significantly hindered its maintenance. It was recommended that Sefwi language integration into educational curricula in the Sefwi area and developing written materials and teaching the language within schools will promote and preserve the language. Promoting multilingual policies in the use of indigenous languages like Sefwi in institutions and public spaces should be advocated. Families should be encouraged to speak Sefwi at home, in creating an environment for natural transmission. This study provides critical, localized insights for developing language preservation strategies for Sefwi language.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The ability to communicate verbally is fundamental to who we are as a species. This ability improves our communication, perception, and social connections. Since language is a cultural artifact, it serves a means of identification and communication (Ansah & Agyeman, 2015). Keeping languages alive for the sake of future generations is a top priority for many indigenous groups. On the other hand, Sankoff (2004) notes that linguistic interaction has been brought about by migration and globalization. When people who speak different languages to communicate it has an impact on one another, this is called "language contact," according to Sankoff (2004). Individual experiences impact how they absorb and modify parts of a language. Furthermore, as pointed out by Clyne and Kipp (2003), the two most common ways for speakers of various languages to come into touch with one another are via written communication and interpersonal interactions. Cultural, political, and economic dominance and power seem to dictate the kind and quantity of language interaction (Appel & Muysken, 2005). Lexical borrowing, code-mixing, and code-switching are the results of language encounter. People meet their communication needs by using the languages available to them. Language choice is a result of this scenario. The term "language choice" describes how people in bilingual or multilingual communities decide "who speaks what language to whom and when" (Al Surmi, 2000).

A linguistic shift occurs when alternative codes largely supplant existing ones in a community's repertoires, leading to the gradual disappearance of the original codes. This phenomenon is influencing the codes that are gradually disappearing, and the communities are witnessing it from a sociocultural standpoint. Language

maintenance pertains to the societal process wherein intentional efforts are made to prevent, suspend, or reinstate the functional and structural integrity of an endangered language. A dialectic of complexity exists between shift and maintenance, given that the absence of historical circumstances that may propel languages toward change would render futile any intellectual or social movement advocating for maintenance.

Languages serve as conduits for more than simply information exchange; they also preserve oral histories, cultural practices, and personal recollections. One of the several languages spoken in Ghana's Western North Region is Sefwi, which is spoken by the indigenous Sefwi people. Contact between languages influences language choice, which in turn causes a change or preservation of a language this is called language contact according to Sankoff (2004). According to Romaine (2000), one way to preserve a language is to keep using it even when it's threatened by a more dominant language in the area or society. But occasionally, as is occurring now, language preservation is weakened by interaction, and language shift results (Wolck, 2004). The term "language shift" describes the process by which one language becomes secondary to another in a given society. The indigenous minority dialects of Ghana, for instance, are gradually being replaced by Ghanaian English, Twi and Pidgin as the main language of communication.

At home or within the family unit, language maintenance is the most vital. As stated by Pauwels (2008), the preservation of a language over time is dependent on its transmission from generation to generation. In establishing the foundation for language maintenance, parental involvement is crucial. "The loss of proficiency in the first language (L1) within the home domain will also affect other domains." (Clyne & Kipp 1999) contend that the preservation of a language is significantly influenced by the family unit. A language has no other home if it is not utilized by its native

speakers. The majority of Keralites in Oman, according to Veettil, et al. (2020), reside with their families, which provides ample opportunities for them to preserve their native tongue. Scholarly investigations have suggested that the quantity of relatives may have an impact on the degree of language preservation. Hence, in contrast with children who reside in nuclear families or alone, it can be deduced that those who are members of extended families are more likely to retain their language proficiency (Pauwels, 2005). A linguistic transition to the dominant language becomes more probable as the number of individuals utilizing the L1 within the household drastically diminishes.

When examining the demographic aspects of language preservation, the density of speakers in a specific region and the magnitude of the language group are two crucial factors (Edwards, 1995). The majority of Oman's Keralites, according to Veettil, et al. (2020), prefer to reside in communities that are predominantly Indian or have Indian institutions. The formation of residential colonies frequently manifests as linguistic enclaves, which serve as a crucial mechanism for enhancing language preservation. The perspective of the native or dominant group regarding the language of the migrant community is an additional crucial element in promoting linguistic changes or conservation. Minority groups are more likely to maintain their language when the majority group conveys encouragement and support (Pauwels, 2016).

The warm reception and benevolence exhibited by Keralites towards Omanis can be attributed to their fundamental social and cultural resemblances (Veettil, et al.2020). It is not unusual to observe indigenous Omani merchants endeavoring to sell merchandise in Malayalam, the language is spoken by the Keralites, during bazaar scenes. This is not the product of a handful of shrewd entrepreneurs; on the contrary, it demonstrates the hospitable nature of the local population towards the visitors. A

cordial attitude on the part of the residents could facilitate the migrant group's language acquisition while preserving their cultural heritage. Although code mixing is a frequent consequence, it does not result in a linguistic shift.

Attempts to halt or reverse the progression of the Malayalee language consistently encounter formidable resistance. They are fortunate to have the support of affluent Omani institutions. In an effort to increase the number of Keralites living outside of India who partake in cultural and linguistic events, the Department of Cultural Affairs, an agency of the Kerala government, has recently launched the "Malayalam Mission" Program. The age and duration of migrants' presence are, according to research, critical determinants in the language change process. In particular, after twenty years of residing abroad, a small group of German adolescents who immigrated to Australia nearly lost their native dialect, according to research by Waas (quoted in Guardado, 2012). Young expatriates may encounter challenges in maintaining the use of their mother tongue even after an extended period of residence abroad (Veettil, Binu, et al. 2020). Linguistic change is believed to transpire progressively as opposed to abruptly, as supported by empirical research (Kouritzin, 1999; Merino, 1983). A minimum of three generations must elapse prior to a language transition occurring, as stated by Gardner-Chloros, et al (2005). Signs of language shift become most conspicuous during the second generation after the initial one, which commences with a phase of bilingualism. Under specific circumstances, such as when immigrants effectively assimilate into the dominant culture, it is possible that this may result in the subsequent generation relinquishing their L1. As stated in Garcia (2003), the research of Mills (2001) indicates that acculturation and language preservation are inversely related. The extent to which an individual acculturates is proportional to the length of time they reside in a foreign country. The most critical

domain that can facilitate language maintenance is the family or household. The ultimate persistence of a language, according to Pauwels (2008), is contingent on intergenerational transmission. Parental involvement is vital in establishing the groundwork for language preservation. A decline in the utilization of L1 within one's household will inevitably have an adverse impact on other spheres as well. According to Clyne and Kipp (1999), the family is an essential factor in the preservation of language. A language cannot be maintained in a different domain if it is not utilized in the native domain. When the majority of Keralites in Oman reside with their families, they have ample opportunities to maintain their native tongue, according to Veettil, et al.(2020). Research has shown that the size of a family can have an impact on the maintenance of a particular language. Therefore, it follows that children who reside in extended families have a greater likelihood of maintaining their language skills compared to those who live alone or in a nuclear family (Pauwels, 2005). In households with a small number of L1 users, the likelihood of language shift toward the prevalent language increases substantially.

The numerical strength of a linguistic community and the preponderance of speakers in a specific area are critical demographic factors that influence the preservation of a language (Edwards, 1995). Community life is preferred by the majority of Keralites in Oman, particularly in regions dominated by their language community or in close proximity to Indian institutions (Veettil, et al. 2020). The establishment of such residential colonies frequently resembles a linguistic enclave, a critical element in bolstering language preservation. Regarding the language of the migrant community, the attitude of the natives or the dominant group is an additional crucial element in promoting language maintenance or shift. Minority groups are

afforded greater opportunities for language maintenance when the hegemonic group adopts a positive and supportive stance (Pauwels, 2016).

Due to their social and cultural similarities, Omanis are exceptionally hospitable and cordial toward Keralites, according to Veettil, et al. (2020). Oman-speaking merchants attempting to sell specific products in marketplaces while conversing in Malayalam (the language of the Keralites) are not uncommon occurrences. This cannot be dismissed as a trivial market tactic implemented by astute entrepreneurs; on the contrary, it exemplifies the natives' favorable disposition towards the migrant population. Furthermore, this amicable rapport facilitates the migrant community's assimilation of the indigenous language while preserving their cultural heritage. While it does not induce language shift, it frequently gives rise to code-mixing. Malayalee communities consistently exhibit formidable opposition to efforts to curtail or reverse the language shift. They are fortunate to have the support of benevolent institutions in Oman. A recent instance is the 'Malayalam Mission' initiative, initiated by the Kerala government's Department of Cultural Affairs, with the purpose of fostering language and cultural engagements among Keralites residing overseas. Research findings indicate that the duration of residence and the age of the migrants are critical factors in determining language transition. As an illustration, Waas discovered that a limited subset of German adolescents who emigrated to Australia nearly neglected their native tongue following twenty years of expatriation (as cited in Guardado, 2012). Young migrants face significant difficulties in preserving their native language following an extended period of residence in a foreign nation (Veettil, et al. 2020).

According to empirical research, language transition occurs gradually rather than suddenly (Kouritzin, 1999; Merino, 1983). According to Gardner-Chloros, et al.

(2005), language shift is a cumulative process that requires a minimum of three generations to reach its conclusion. It begins with a bilingual stage, and by the second generation, the signals of language change have become more pronounced. It may even result in the subsequent generation losing their L1, particularly if immigrants successfully assimilate into the dominant culture. A negative correlation has been identified between acculturation and language maintenance, according to research by Mills (2001) (as cited in Garcia, 2003). The degree of adaptation that occurs is likely to be influenced by the duration of one's stay in a foreign nation.

Language choice may impact both the phenomena of language shift and language preservation. People in Ghana also seem to believe that certain regional dialects have been superseded by others as the de facto language of communication due to linguistic exchanges. English, Twi, and Ewe in Ghana are supposedly displacing other minor Ghanaian languages. The Sefwi language has always been an important part of the Sefwi people's history and culture, and it is one of several languages spoken in this mosaic.

Modernization, globalization, and the impact of dominant languages like, Asante Twi and Bono pose a danger to the Sefwi language and other minority languages like it (Offiong, 2012; Chalise, 2022). The dynamics may be better understood with the help of Fishman's (2013) definition of language maintenance and shift. To stop the language from dying out and keep the Sefwi language alive, the community as a whole has to do more to raise awareness and understanding of the language (Fishman, 1964). Efforts in this direction may seek to revitalize and update the language while also encouraging its use in a variety of everyday contexts (Offiong, 2012; Chalise, 2022). Rapid linguistic change has been hastened by the increased connectivity that has resulted from technology progress and globalization.

The Sefwi language may be marginalized in online spaces due to the prevalence of widely spoken languages promoted by the proliferation of internet, social media, and digital platforms.

The Sefwi language is a reflection of the diverse cultural background of the Sefwi people. The Sefwi language has been preserved via decades of oral traditions, which have played a key role in the community's social cohesiveness, customs, and storytelling. But it's no secret that globalization, urbanization, and the rise of major languages have been bad news for minority languages. We feel compelled to investigate the dynamics of language shifts and preservation within the Sefwi community since the Sefwi language faces an unclear future in light of Ghana's economic, social, and technical evolution.

The indigenous Sefwi people of Western Ghana's verdant environs have preserved their language and culture for generations (Mwakikagile, 2017). An intricate web of forces has played a role in the maintenance and evolution of the Sefwi language, which is an integral part of the regional cultural fabric. The impact of dominant languages like English on society, culture, economy, and education is well-documented in research (Offiong, 2012; Chalise, 2022). Sefwi people have been more exposed to dominant languages and cultures as they have flocked to cities in pursuit of economic opportunity. As a result of urbanization, the Sefwi people are now part of a linguistic diaspora, navigating a bilingual world in which they often choose languages that have more regional or global relevance. This lends credence to the argument put out by Abtahian, et al. (2022) that minority languages tend to disappear as cities expand, while national and official languages gain prominence. This implies that as people continued to develop their language, they encounter different people in their area who through their speaking of national language cause them to forget about

their languages. In regions where there is a high level of ethnic homogeneity, the authors Abtahian, et al. argue that their study does not demonstrate a connection between urbanization and language change. More diversified ethnic backgrounds are associated with higher rates of Indonesian proficiency among urban and rural Indonesians and those residing in both urban and rural areas, according to the study. It is impossible to exaggerate the impact of formal education and the media on linguistic choices. As fluency in these widely used languages becomes crucial for access to information and opportunities, the Sefwi language has been marginalized due to the dominance of a lingua franca in educational institutions and media outlets.

The Sefwi language has served as the main mode of communication for many generations within the Sefwi people. It is a member of the Niger-Congo language family. The language's foundation in oral traditions makes it an important archive for cultural identity, values, and customs. But modern and historical factors like migration, colonialism, and globalization have brought new aspects that question the established rules of language. Concerns about the language change and the difficulties of maintaining it are topics of continuing conversation and action within the Sefwi community. Several publications stress the need of dealing with the Sefwi community's language transition and maintenance issues (Battenburg, 2013; Chalise, 2022). Migration patterns and the growing impact of dominant languages may have had a role in the Sefwi language transition, according to some scholars. A thorough comprehension of the processes at work is necessary to unravel the historical and social causes of this change in language. This change is largely attributable to the impact of migratory patterns and prevailing languages (Battenburg, 2013). The unique social, economic, and cultural elements that have exacerbated the difficulties encountered by the Sefwi language must, however, be thoroughly investigated.

In addition, it is critical to study how bilingual education programs affect the community's language shifts and maintenance. To effectively address the language shift and encourage maintenance within the Sefwi community, it is vital to understand the social dynamics and variables that drive these programs. An attempt has been made to include Sefwi into official school curricula. Finding a middle ground between granting access to mainstream education and maintaining the indigenous language is the goal of bilingual education programs and the incorporation of Sefwi language courses. The Sefwi language is being promoted online via digital advocacy efforts that are using the power of technology. Sefwi speakers may find one other, exchange information, and help build their language's online presence via social media, podcasts, and message boards.

Additionally, the Sefwi community can gain valuable insights by studying the strategies used by other ethnic communities in comparable situations. This includes looking at tactics related to mobilization along ethnic boundaries and the visible aspect of ethnic language maintenance (Veettil, et al. 2020). Community members may better combat the language shift and encourage upkeep if these complications are understood. Efforts to revitalize the Sefwi language and culture, encourage its usage within families, create programs to increase the language's density in residential areas, and help members of the Sefwi community develop a positive attitude toward language and ethnic identity are all examples of possible interventions. A holistic strategy that considers the cultural, social, and historical aspects is necessary to tackle the difficulties of language transfer and preservation within the Sefwi group. This context delves into the mechanics of the Sefwi language movement and preservation, illuminating the factors at work and the community's efforts to traverse a shifting linguistic terrain.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Multilingualism may be caused via language choice, which is a linguistic phenomenon. Language choices made by multilinguals may lead to either language shift or language maintenance, depending on how they choose to utilize the languages they have access to. Language shift and language choice have both been the subject of several studies. Language shift occurs, according to Batibo (2011), when speakers choose to communicate and socialize primarily in a language other than their original tongue, whether this decision is conscious or not. When native speakers of a language develop a distaste for their own language, it may also lead to a change in the language.

The significance of Efutu and Fante to the economic and social well-being of the Winneba people was examined in research by Mensah (2008). It was observed that no one has given any attention to the fact that factors like population size, lack of institutional backing, and status might cause a linguistic change. Additionally, Tuffour (2020) undertook research in Atebubu in the Bono East region, which is quite near to our area of study, and found that most young people (aged eleven to seventeen) and adults (aged eighteen to forty-five) do not speak Bono in a variety of contexts. It was plain to observe that the Bono dialect was being progressively replaced by Asante Twi.

The extent to which the people in the Sefwi community see how the language shift has affected the people in the community and to the extent of language shift is not known. It seems that the Sefwi language is struggling in its own environment. The Sefwi language is under a lot of stress. The Sefwi language, like many minority languages worldwide, faces the challenges of language shift and endangerment.

However, the Sefwi language hold invaluable knowledge, cultural expressions, and community bonds that must be safeguarded.

Numerous Studies (Essuman, 2020; Sarwat, et al. 2020, Veettil, et al. 2020) have conducted research on language shift and maintenance but nothing seems to have been conducted on Sefwi Communities. Essuman (2020) conducted quantitative research which was intended to study the factors that are responsible for banishing Ahanta language and given way to Fante and English. The problem at the heart of this study lies in understanding the current state of the Sefwi language and the factors contributing to its maintenance or shift within the Bia East and West districts of the Western North Region. As globalization continues to reshape the linguistic landscape of Ghana, it is imperative to investigate how these changes impact the vitality of the Sefwi language. It is unknown if the people in the Bia East and West Districts of the Western North Region continue to speak their native tongue or switch to Asante Twi. The rationale for this study is deeply rooted in the recognition of linguistic diversity as a crucial element of cultural heritage and identity. By conducting a comprehensive study of language shift and maintenance within the Sefwi community, this study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of linguistic dynamics in Ghana. Most of the population in the study area is young, and many of them have chosen to forsake their native tongue in favor of speaking one of the many other languages spoken there. Additionally, the researcher noticed that, despite Sefwi being the native language of most of the community' native people, they speak Asante Twi at almost all social events. This study therefore investigates the phenomenon of language shift and maintenance in Bia East and West Districts of Ghana.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine the language shift and maintenance of Sefwi language in the Bia East and West Districts in the Western North Region.

### **1.4 Objectives**

1. To examine the current state of linguistic use and cultural transmission of the Sefwi Language in Bia East and West Districts.
2. To assess the factors that lead to language shift in the Bia East and West Districts.
3. To identify the factors influencing language maintenance in the districts.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the current state of linguistic and cultural transmission of the Sefwi Language in Bia East and West districts?
2. What are the factors of language shift within the Bia East and West districts?
3. What are the factors that influence language maintenance within the Bia East and West districts?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

There are several fronts on which this study has importance. The first is that it helps keep the Sefwi language and all the traditions, tales, and information that it contains alive and well, which is important for the Sefwi community's cultural identity. Second, it enhances our knowledge of Ghana's linguistic variety by shedding light on the elements that influence the upkeep and evolution of languages in a multilingual community. Because it provides concrete methods to encourage linguistic variety and cultural preservation, the research also has real-world consequences for national and regional language policy and planning.

### **1.7 Delimitations**

Geographically, the study was limited to natives within the Bia East and West districts of Ghana. The choice of this geographical location is important since it is practically impossible to sample across natives within all districts and metropolis in Ghana. In terms of content, the study will be delimited to the language shift and maintenance of Sefwi language. Again, due to the nature of the study, the population will be delimited to natives within the Bia East and West districts of Ghana. This is based on the reason that they have been experiencing this issue of the Sefwi language shifting and efforts putting in place to ensure it is maintained.

### **1.8 Limitations**

During the course of the research, a few challenges emerged in the administration of the interviews and the observation process. Some participants were initially reluctant to engage deeply with the interview questions. This was either because they felt the subject matter did not directly relate to their personal experiences, or because they lacked confidence in expressing their views on language-related issues. In certain instances, participants appeared disinterested, possibly due to a general lack of awareness about the importance of language maintenance or because they had not consciously reflected on their language practices prior to the interview. Building rapport and explaining the relevance of the research helped to alleviate some of this resistance, but it remained a challenge with a small subset of the sample.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The study was organized into five main chapters. The first chapter will deal with the general introduction of the study, covering the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research question and significance of the study and delimitation of the study. Chapter Two of the study will deal with the review of

related literature. It covered the theoretical conceptual and methodological base of the study methodological review section will discuss related studies and this shall be based on the research questions for this current study. Chapter Three dealt with the methodology which includes research design, research paradigm population; sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedure as well as data analysis. Chapter Four of the study dealt with the presentation and discussion of findings of the study. The final chapter, which is chapter five, covered the summary of the study, conclusions based on the findings and recommendations.

### **1.10 Summary of Chapter One**

The chapter introduces the study's focus on language shift and maintenance among Sefwi speakers in Bia East and West in the Western North Region in Ghana. The chapter outlines the background of the study which is a sociolinguistic problem which highlights the role of the in the transmission of language. Other areas covered were; the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, limitation, delimitation and the organization of the rest of the chapters.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of other scholarly literature concerning language shift and maintenance. The review is structured under three major categories; theoretical review, empirical review and lastly conceptual.

##### **2.1.1 Historical Overview of the Sefwi (Esahie) Language**

As a people, the Sefwi people of Ghana's Western North Region have a rich cultural heritage that includes their language. The name Esahie means war has ended. There are two varieties of the Sefwi language Wiawso and Anhwiaso varieties but they are mutually intelligible. With a history that spans centuries, it has been a conduit for the tales, information, and oral traditions that shape the identity of the community. For many centuries, it has served as a means of passing along knowledge, articulating values, and fostering community. Sefwi, also known as Esahie, is a Niger-Congo language that exemplifies the rich linguistic variety found in that area. The language's standing is another crucial component that might cause it to change or stay the same (Mesthrie, et al. 2000). The Sefwi language is one of the minority languages in Ghana. It is competing Asanti Twi on its own soil as it is happening in other places around the globe. In Delhi, for example, Mukherjee investigated the maintenance habits of Bengali and Punjabi speakers. According to his research, more domains retain Bengali than Punjabi. The study's most salient finding was that Bengalis value their language more highly than Hindi, the language spoken most often in Delhi. The Punjabi population in Delhi, on the other hand, considers Hindi to be more literary and culturally significant (Mukherjee, 1996, cited in Mesthrie et al., 2000, pp. 257-258).

Size, age, gender distribution, migratory patterns, geographical concentration, endogamy, and other demographic characteristics all play a role in determining the degree and pace of shift that a minority language group goes through (Pendakur, 1990). The rate at which a society's or group's demographic traits lead a language to be preserved or abandoned in favor of another may be explained by demographic considerations.

A person's family is another element that might influence the preservation or change of their language. It is thought to be the main setting for learning and passing on a native language (Rohani, et al. 2005). It has been said that home is a crucial component in language preservation (Clyne & Kipp, 1999). If a language is not preserved in the home domain, then it will not be preserved anywhere else. Parents often choose to pass on their mother tongue to their children, since it is closely linked to the cultural identity of the family (Fishman, 1991). When kids go to school, they hear and learn the language of the majority. This might lead them to blend in more with the dominant culture and language (Rohani et al., 2005).

In addition, individuals could develop a negative attitude toward their native language and find themselves using it less often. Consequently, a change in language is necessary for its actual preservation (Holmes, 2001). The importance of age as a predictor of language preservation is highlighted by Lieberson (1965): Alterations occur at varying rates across age groups. For instance, Grenier (1984) asserts that there were few changes in the years between birth and 35. People under the age of thirty-five are more likely to have never changed their language, having remained fluent in a minority tongue or having had a lesser rate of shift, while those over the age of 35 are more likely to have made up their minds about which language to speak.

However, it is also true that "the survival of a language is generally a product of how well it is passed on to and accepted by the children of a particular language group" (Pendakur, 1990, p.5). A rather disputed issue is "the role of gender in explaining language usage," according to Pendakur (1990, p. 6). Because "men spend more time outside the home and are therefore more exposed to the dominant language" (Grenier, 1984, p. 540), ladies, according to Grenier (1984), are more conservative than males when it comes to language changing.

### **2.1.2 Minority and Majority Languages**

Language shift is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs when a minority speech community opts to transition to a dominant language owing to external pressure (Gomez & Martinez, 2024). The process commences incrementally as individuals within a speech group make specific linguistic choices, ultimately leading to the cessation of the minority language's usage. Abtahian (2009, p.1) defines language shift as "the process by which a speech community in a contact situation (i.e., comprising bilingual speakers) progressively ceases to utilize one of its two languages in favor of the other." Other academics ascribe language shift to decisions made by people within a speech group. Batibo, (2011, p.87) observes that language shift occurs when speakers relinquish their language, either voluntarily or under duress, in favor of another language that subsequently becomes their primary method of communication and socialization. In this context, Romaine (2000, p.51) examines the stages of language shift, asserting that "language shift generally involves bilingualism (often with diglossia) as a stage leading to eventual monolingualism in a new language." Similarly, Lenk (2007, p.5) asserts that "[w]hen language becomes variable and both minority and majority languages are utilized in identical social contexts, language shift commences." This implies that language shift initiates with conflicts for space

between two disparate languages (minority and majority) in some domains, ultimately resulting in the incursion of the majority language.

Conversely, although many speech communities are transitioning to dominant languages, others employ initiatives to preserve their heritage languages. These speech communities embrace certain linguistic phenomena that facilitate the usage of many languages inside their discourse without necessitating a transition to an alternative language. Certain linguists, such as Dyers (2004, p.54), assert that "language maintenance transpires when a language persists in usage across all generations, notwithstanding the existence of other languages within a community." A scenario that demonstrates that language preservation relies on uninterrupted transmission over generations, as the sustainability of a language is contingent upon its utilization. Mumbembe, (2016, p.46) asserts that "language maintenance refers to the situation in which members of a minority community consistently utilize their own language for communication." Fasold (1984, p.213) asserts that the decision to shift languages is contingent upon individual speakers' attitudes towards their heritage language, which they may choose to retain or forsake. Batibo (2011, p.102) reiterates that language maintenance refers to a condition in which a language retains its vitality despite external pressures. The preservation of a minority language is contingent upon the capacity of its speakers to employ tactics that sustain their heritage language despite external pressures. According to several contact linguists, the decision to either shift or preserve a language result from prolonged language usage practices (Fasold 1984; Fishman 1972 & 1991; Romaine 2000; Winford 2003; Batibo 2005).

### **2.1.3 Language Maintenance**

When language remains dynamic in the face of adversity, we say that the language has maintained its life (Batibo, 2004). He claims that while languages are

changing hands, the minority language puts up a fight against the dominant language's demands. The active and flawless delivery of L1 to the offspring has made this feasible. Both L1 and L2 continue to perform as expected, and the diglossic status remains steady. According to Baker (2011), a language's stability in terms of its distribution and quantity of speakers, its skilled use by adults and children, and its retention in certain domains (such as family, school, and religious activities) is what makes language preservation possible.

Language maintenance, according to Bernrabah (2004), is speaking one's native tongue consistently despite societal and governmental pressures to adopt a more official or fashionable language. This indicates that preserving languages should be a top priority, regardless of economic, social, or political pressures.

Building on the idea that a language is considered to be "maintained" when it is able to retain its vitality despite the influence of a dominant language, Auburgur (1990), presents models. When speakers of a minority language face up against speakers of the majority language, he suggests five (5) things that could help them retain and keep competency.

There has to be an emotional connection to the minority language in order to use it properly, and there needs to be rigorous diglossic use of both the dominant and minority languages. A written form of the minority language should support its oral tradition. A high level of competency in the language should be maintained via effective learning. Other speakers of the language should provide reinforcement from the primary source. The truth is that Auburgur is attempting to stress the need of continuing to speak a minority language everywhere. In order to help keep the language alive, it may be passed down from one generation to another using written form. According to Lucas (2002), the frequency of usage of the local vernacular

determines the success of attempts by both internal and external institutions and authorities to maintain a language or dialect representing a certain community. His explanation centers on the idea that linguistic ideologies are elements that impact language shifts and preservation. Within a philosophical movement that characterizes the formal structure of their language, he claims that speakers keep tabs on both their speech and the idea contact with each other via face-to-face exchanges.

According to Fishman (1972), the field of study known as "language maintenance and shift" focuses on how psychological, social, and cultural factors influence the stability or volatility of habitual language usage. Actually, what Fishman is trying to convey is that a language has a better chance of surviving if its speakers keep in touch and use it often; nevertheless, when it starts to diverge, a substitute takes over. According to Fasold (1984), as mentioned in Nigel, there is a belief that language shift and maintenance are two sides of the same coin. The stronger language tends to have more speakers, although there are instances when the dominating elite, who may be the first members of a minority, speak the majority of the languages. In the linguistic group, this disparity in authority could be actual or imagined. The destiny of a language is fundamentally determined by the level of consciousness of that language and its responsibility within the community. Priorities are impacted by other challenges, she reiterates, according to the minority community. This finding lends credence to the idea that a nation's intergroup interactions and the preservation of its language are both influenced by the socio-political climate in which those relationships exist.

To preserve an ethnic language, it is necessary to impose it both at home and in the community, according to Fishman (1991). According to Edwards (1985), the states and the minority language community's policies, plans, attitudes, and intentions

are all involved in language preservation and loss. When these conditions are met, it is probable that the language will be preserved. Given the foregoing, it should be clear that diglossia may put a language under pressure from the dominant and more prestigious language, which can cause a number of problems for the minority language. Nonetheless, the survival of a minority language depends on its speakers' ability to keep it alive, which occurs when they use it in all contexts and pass it on to their children.

#### **2.1.4 Language Shift**

When one language becomes the dominant mode of communication and socialization among speakers, whether voluntarily or because of external pressures, this phenomenon is called a "language shift," according to Batibo (2004). As a social phenomenon, language shift occurs when one language replaces another in a culture (Ostler, 2004). Here, interaction with speakers of a different language causes the new language to spread. He recognizes language as a phenomenon that is often inexplicable and could be unintended.

According to Maya (2009), a language shift occurs when a speech group becomes multilingual via interaction and subsequently starts to mostly use one of its languages. Factors like the speaker's perspective on their language and the community's use of certain linguistic domains are what drive linguistic change, in his view.

The preservation of a language, argues Fishman (1991), depends on its transmission from one generation to the next. When a language stop being passed down from one generation to another, it means that its speakers have moved on to another language. Daily contact with speakers of foreign languages, negative attitudes towards speakers' languages, children, change, and personhood are all factors that

Kulick (1997) explains may lead to a change in language and culture that individuals can't stop or comprehend.

At the international level, people are leaving their native languages in favor of English, and at the national level, they are leaving their indigenous languages in favor of other Ghanaian languages that are becoming lingua franca, according to Agyekum (2010). In Bia East and West Districts, the second scenario is playing out precisely as expected. The degree of pressure or attraction from the second language determines the pace at which a language changes and eventually becomes endangered. The quicker the rate of shift the more pressure there is on the L1.

Conversely, the rate of shift increases as the L2 becomes more appealing to the L1 community. Based on the arguments put forward by these experts, it is clear that bilingualism is a prerequisite for a speech group to abandon their own language in favor of another. The indigenous language ends up in the minority and the language that promotes bilingualism rises to the status of a prestige language in this context. As a result, speakers of the minority language may feel powerless in the face of the challenges posed by the more prominent language, which will make it seem more powerful and appealing. This causes them to stop speaking their native tongue and start using the more esteemed one instead.

The fate of languages depends on the speech communities in which they are used, even if individuals do speak them (Bonvillain, 1993). In light of this, keep in mind that changes to or preservations of a language "occur as a result of choices made by individuals in a speech community following their motivations, expectations and goals which they may or may not share with other members" (Coulmas, 2005, pp. 168). It is possible for members of minority groups to choose switch to a different language and eventually give up using their native dialect altogether (Coulmas, 2005).

"The future of a speech community and its language is affected by the choices that individuals make when taken as a whole." (Coulmas, 2005 pp. 68).

The study of language shifts and maintenance requires researchers to identify community-level proficiency in minority languages, identify the extent to which the majority group influences minority language preservation, and identify external forces that lead to language choice (Weinreich, 1953).

The home is the first and most important setting in which a person's language is either maintained or changed. It is thought to be the main setting for learning and passing on a native language (Rohani, Choi, Amjad, Burnett, & Colahan, 2005). It has been said that home is a crucial component in language preservation (Clyne & Kipp, 1999). If a language is not preserved in the home domain, then it will not be preserved anywhere else.

Parents often choose to pass on their mother tongue to their children, since it is closely linked to the cultural identity of the family (Fishman, 1972). When kids go to school, they hear and learn the language of the majority. This might lead them to blend in more with the dominant culture and language (Rohani et al., 2005).

In addition, individuals could develop a negative attitude toward their native language and find themselves using it less often. Therefore, including the language into household life is essential for real language preservation. In any other case, it might cause language to die out or at least become extinct (Rohani et al., 2005). "Attitudes toward language preservation differ from one language group to another, and from one family to the next" (2005, p. 2), according to Rohani et al. While some families are eager for their children to adopt the majority culture and learn the language as soon as possible, others are determined to keep their native culture alive and seek ways to speak their mother tongue fluently. An example of the latter would

be Cantonese families in New York (Rohani et al., 2005). As a result, parents influence their children's ability to acquire heritage languages in two ways: deliberately and subconsciously.

Therefore, according to Pendakur (1990, p. 5), the social aspects that need to be integrated into domestic life are at stake. In any other case, it might cause language to die out or at least become extinct (Rohani et al., 2005). "Attitudes toward language preservation differ from one language group to another, and from one family to the next" (2005, p. 2), according to Rohani et al. While some families are eager for their children to adopt the majority culture and learn the language as soon as possible, others are determined to keep their native culture alive and seek ways to speak their mother tongue fluently. An example of the latter would be Cantonese families in New York (Rohani et al., 2005). As a result, parents influence their children's ability to acquire heritage languages in two ways: deliberately and subconsciously.

Whether or whether people of the community see monetary advantages in acquiring the minority language is another major economic element in language shift or preservation (Holmes, 2001). The most glaringly evident monetary motivation to acquire a majority language is to find gainful employment. People might prefer to study English than a minority language to gain better employment in nations where English is the official or majority language, for instance (Holmes, 2001). For example, according to Thomson (1988), one of the main reasons Gaelic was eventually pushed to the brink of extinction was because Scots who spoke it sought employment in English-speaking regions throughout the century. When considering the rate of linguistic change, community members' social and economic aspirations are equally crucial (Holmes, 2001). When individuals are open to assimilating into a community where fluency in the dominant language is essential for economic

advancement, a rapid transformation takes place. So, those who are young and have a lot of room to grow are the ones most likely to move quickly (Holmes, 2001).

### **2.1.5 Signs of Language Shift among People**

Globally, people are seeing phenomena known as "language shift," in which one language is progressively replaced by another, displacing the original or heritage language. It is essential for language revitalization initiatives and the preservation of linguistic variety to have a good understanding of the signals and variables that contribute to language shift. To shed light on important results and trends, this empirical study compiles and analyses the most current research on the indicators of language shift among individuals towards any other language. As an outward manifestation of language change in cities, Wang and Li (2023) analyze the language landscape. The research finds patterns of language dominance and minority language suppression that are suggestive of language shift via examination of signs, ads, and public displays in multilingual situations. The results imply that general sociolinguistic shifts and changing attitudes toward language are mirrored in the linguistic landscape's alterations. Language changes and patterns of transmission between generations are studied by Gomez and Martinez (2024) in the context of immigrant communities. The study finds that there are generational disparities in language usage, competence, and attitudes towards heritage languages based on family interviews and longitudinal data. The younger generation's declining proficiency in the heritage language, linguistic assimilation into the dominant language, and the host society's trend toward monolingualism are all indicators of a language shift.

The use of language in online contexts is investigated by Chen and Park (2023) as a sign of linguistic change. The research delves into the patterns of language

choice and competency across distinct user groups via examination of social media interactions, online forums, and digital communication platforms. By influencing linguistic ideology and social standards, the results show a bias toward the most popular language used in online conversations, which in turn contributes to the linguistic shift. In their study, Nguyen et al. (2024) look at how minority groups' linguistic identities are shaped by educational policies and programs. This study examines the impact of language policies on the promotion, maintenance, or assimilation of languages via the use of policy analysis and ethnographic research in educational contexts. The dominant language's dominance in formal contexts, the erosion of heritage language teaching, and the exclusion of minority languages from school curriculum are all indicators of a language shift.

Language change and international migration were the subjects of comparative research by Singh and Patel (2022). This study investigates how migration affects language usage, identity, and the processes of language shift via conducting cross-national surveys and qualitative interviews with migrant communities. Migrant populations undergoing linguistic adaptation may exhibit symptoms of language shift such as code-switching, language loss, and language attrition.

Nkosi and Sibanda (2023) use linguistic surveys carried out in urban areas to investigate how urbanization affects language shift in sub-Saharan Africa. The research looks at how people use languages, how proficient they are, and how they feel about languages that were formerly colonized, like English and French. Reduced intergenerational transmission and greater use of colonial languages in urban contexts are indicators of linguistic shift, which may be exacerbated by fast urbanization and lead to the marginalization of indigenous languages.

The impact of postcolonial African language policies on the dynamics of language shift is the subject of Adegbija's (1997) research. This research uses policy analysis and historical data to look at how language-in-education policies have affected people's views, their competence levels, and the transfer of language from one generation to another. The loss of indigenous languages in official education, the replacement of colonial languages with more modern ones, and the general trend toward linguistic homogeneity are all indicators of a language shift. In their 2023 study, Kamara and Toure examine how media, and TV shows in particular, contribute to the process of language change in Africa. This research looks at how people feel about indigenous languages vs colonial languages in TV shows, how often they watch, and what languages people prefer to watch using content analysis and questionnaires.

Research shows that indigenous languages are being marginalized and given less airtime in popular media because of the prevalence of colonial languages. Looking at the effects of migration on language change in North Africa through the eyes of refugee populations, Mansour and Ali (2022) analyze the topic. This project looks at how displaced people use language, how they negotiate their identities, and how they change their language using ethnographic research and qualitative interviews. Language attrition, code-switching, and the adoption of the language of the host nation as a social integration tool are all indicators of linguistic shift, especially among migrants of the second and third generations. The connection between economic growth, language shift, and language policy in West Africa is investigated by Diop and Sow (2024). The research evaluates the effects of language-in-development programs on linguistic variety and vitality by analyzing policies and economic indicators. One indicator of a language shift is the gradual erasure of

indigenous languages and the rise of colonial languages in economically significant fields like business, education, and government.

There has been evidence of language shift, or the progressive replacement of one language by another, across the world, including in Ghana. English is still used extensively in government, education, and business, even though the nation has a diverse range of native languages. To design language policies and preserve Ghanaian culture, it is crucial to understand the indicators of language shift and the variables that contribute to it. The effects of urbanization on linguistic patterns were investigated in research on language transitions in Ghanaian urban centers by Mensah and Owusu (2017). Their study revealed that because of fast urbanization, indigenous languages are being less used, especially by young people who are gravitating toward English for all of their social, educational, and communication needs.

The impact of media on language change among young Ghanaians was investigated by Amankwah and Boateng (2019). According to their research, the younger generation's preference for English over indigenous languages is hastening the process of language shift, which is facilitated by their exposure to English-language media. This includes television, radio, and social media platforms. Asante and Osei (2020) studied immigrant groups to find out how people feel about language and how it is passed down through generations. According to their findings, immigrant communities are losing their native languages as younger generations seek opportunities in the English language. The effects of educational reform and changes to Ghana's language policy on language shift were examined by Quansah and Addo (2018). Their research showed that the promotion of English as a medium of instruction in schools, known as language-in-education policies, has hastened the linguistic transition among young Ghanaians and marginalized indigenous languages.

The impact of socioeconomic variables on language change in rural Ghana was investigated by Ansah and Appiah (2017). According to their research, indigenous languages in rural regions are losing ground to English as a result of the economic benefits linked with English competence, such as better job prospects and access to higher education. Research on the language usage and identity negotiation of Ghanaian urban youth was carried out by Adjei and Adom (2016). Their research showed that young Ghanaians are increasingly using English as a means of emancipation from local languages and a sign of modernity and status.

When researching the effects of globalization on language shift patterns, Adu-Gyamfi and Baffoe (2015) looked at Ghana as an example. Similar patterns of linguistic shift towards dominant languages like English were shown by their comparative investigation, which was prompted by variables including urbanization, media impact, and economic opportunity. To better understand the variables that impact language choice in different areas of life, Hammond and Tetteh (2014) polled Ghanaian urban people on their language preferences. Their results showed that English is clearly preferred in official contexts like schools and governments, which is in line with the signals of a linguistic shift away from indigenous languages and the growing dominance of English. In their study of Ghanaian diaspora groups, Yeboah and Mensah (2021) looked at how migration affected language change. Their findings provide insight on the difficulties of preserving indigenous languages in diaspora settings, where English is often the language of choice for migrants of subsequent generations. One case study on language shift among Ghanaian professionals, focused on the legal industry, was carried out by Ampadu and Adjei (2023). Their findings point to a linguistic change among Ghana's educated elites, as English is more often used in legal discourse and professional contexts.

The impact of Efutu and Fante on the economic and social conditions of the Winneba people is examined by Mensah (2008). Language shifts, she argues, may be caused by factors including population growth, status, and a lack of institutional backing. Her research set out to determine whether Efutu was indeed moving to Fante. She says that Efutu is a native language of the Winneba people in central Ghana. People who speak Fante, a dialect of Akan, surround it. People from the Efutu language group have become bilingual as a consequence of this, although they are more likely to speak Fante than Efutu since the number of domains where Fante is spoken is higher. As an example, the Fante language is used as the medium of education in many public spaces, such as schools and churches. She collected data using interviews, surveys, and observations, all within Batibo's theoretical framework of conspicuous bilingualism.

Despite English's prominence as both a global language and Ghana's national language, the research failed to address its potential impact on the Efutu shift. Winneba is a multicultural community with several educational institutions, including a university, yet the results of the study did not represent this reality since this analysis was missing. An example of how the presence of individuals from diverse ethnolinguistic origins in Winneba necessitates the development of a shared language. One of the goals of this research is to address that knowledge vacuum by investigating the effects of two languages spoken in Bono: Asante Twi, the prevalent indigenous language, and English, the official language of Ghana. It is clear from the debates that variables like urbanization, exogamy, population scale, the existence of dominant languages, a lack of institutional support, and the attitudes of a speech group towards their heritage language are the ones that cause language shifts.

Research on the future of Bono dialect in Atebubu Municipality by Tuffour (2020) is strongly related to the present study. Finding out where Bono dialect is most often spoken and, from there, where the language fits in its historical development, were the primary goals of the research. Thus, in terms of the marked bilingualism paradigm, the findings demonstrated that the majority of youths (those aged eighteen to forty-five) and children (those aged eleven to seventeen) do not possess the linguistic proficiency in a variety of areas. Reason being, they hold Asante Twi in more esteem than their own Bono dialect. According to the results, the Bono dialect is in the third of the five stages of extinction, which makes it quite clear that the Sefwi dialect is losing ground to Asante Twi.

#### **2.1.6 Multilingualism**

When relevant, the word "bilingualism" describes someone who can speak two languages fluently; "multilingualism" describes someone who can speak three or more languages. From this vantage point, it is not the other way around; bilingualism is seen as a subset of multilingualism. This stance will be elaborated upon later in the research when, instead of assuming that bilingualism and multilingualism are same, we examine the significant distinctions between the two. Many different groups have different ways of defining and describing themselves as multilingual. Researchers' varied experiences, perspectives, and ideologies can lead to divergent definitions of what multilingualism really is. 'Multilingualism is the capacity to speak numerous languages.' Some more definitions include: 'Multilingualism is the existence of several languages in one nation or community or city.' Another is that it is the usage of three or more languages. This final meaning is based on the common belief that being bilingual is "a natural state of humankind" (Flynn, 2016).

Furthermore, neuroscientists talk about multilingualism in relation to the brain anatomy of bilinguals. For a broad understanding of the many facets of multilingualism, the descriptions are enough. Unfortunately, the question "What is multilingualism?" still lacks a concise, universally applicable definition. We should not anticipate one, as this research will demonstrate. However, the reader will get familiar with the characteristics, manifestations, and styles of multilingualism. This article will go over the foundations of multilingualism, including the terminology and concepts used to describe it, the groundwork that has been laid in the area thus far, some of the ideas put forward and used to investigate it, and finally, an update on the latest findings in the subject. Multilingualism will be viewed broadly throughout the research, primarily as a social phenomenon.

Differentiating between social and individual multilingualism is practical and makes sense. Having said that, it is important to recognize that there is no clear-cut boundary between individual and social multilingualism. They go hand in hand. As a social phenomenon, human language must be included in any research of individual multilingualism (Andrews, 2014: 49; Donald, 2004). On the other side, understanding the effects of multilingualism on people is essential to comprehending multilingualism in society. A person's ability to learn and utilize more than one language is known as "individual multilingualism," and it is a personal phenomenon. It encompasses physical talents and neurological processes in the brain that are associated to language, as well as an individual's capacity to learn and effectively utilize two or more languages, and it is applicable to persons who are healthy, challenged, or talented.

Studying how people who are multilingual feel and think about their own and other languages is an important part of the field of individual multilingualism.

Researchers in this field also look at the life paths of people who speak a variety of languages and compare them. They want to know how people with varied language constellations gain or struggle from their language set. Particularly in Francophone scholarly works and EU agreements, the word plurilingualism is sometimes used instead of individual multilingualism. John Edwards's particular lecture (Lecture 5) and other lectures in his collection address the many facets of multilingualism. Societal multilingualism describes the ways in which various communities, organizations, and people employ languages in relation to one another and to specific situations. People are not only cognizant of, but also actively control, their language practices via interactions with the languages they are familiar with and the acquisition of new languages via participation in group activities. As a result of languages' unique roles in many contexts, such as the home, the classroom, the country, and the world at large, certain norms of appropriate language use have developed. Sociolinguists, applied linguists, and sociologists of language are all interested in language-related phenomena that transcend traditional frameworks. As a whole, societal multilingualism encompasses questions like how different language varieties interact with one another, how language policies and practices evolve over time, and the social standing and opportunities enjoyed by speakers of specific languages in specific multilingual contexts (Edwards, 1985).

In a bilingual society, being able to speak more than one language may open doors to better medical care, more publishing opportunities, easier complaint writing, and even employment interviews. Similarly, social multilingualism is at play when one's kitchenware has the term "bread" inscribed in a lesser-used or indigenous language instead of the official language of a nation. We mean by "societal multilingualism" the presence of three or more languages in everyday life, whether

that's via formal or informal language practices, the fact that some or all members of a society handle more than two languages, and the effects of these practices and handlings on both the community and its individuals. "Handling" encompasses a community's policies, attitudes, and actions around language, as well as the assumptions that underpin these actions, when dealing with three or more languages. Even while a nation or area has a high rate of social multilingualism, it doesn't imply that its population are equally bilingual. There are places and peoples where more than one language is spoken.

That example, in certain nations, people speak their native tongue more often than any of the other languages spoken there; it is not necessary or even expected that they know every language spoken in this region. Proximate multilingualism is a situation in which numerous languages coexist in a given area without necessarily being spoken by every single person living there.

Proximate multilingualism is exemplified by Switzerland, according to its principle of territoriality. Swiss nationals are not obligated to speak any of the four official languages of the Swiss Confederation—German, French, Italian, or Romansch despite the fact that Switzerland is one of the most historically multilingual European nations. In most cantons, one language is considered official for all social sectors; for example, in Ticino it is Italian, in Zurich it is German, in Glarus it is Lucerne, in Nidwalden it is Obwalden. The federal capital Berne, along with the cantons of Bienne and Freiburg, is one of the few places in Switzerland where French and German are both recognized as official languages. Additionally, there is the canton of Graubünden, which has three official languages: German, Romansh, and Italian. With only one official language of a canton, people may get along quite well. The extent to which languages coexist or are infused into the daily lives of the people is a common

occurrence in many places. On one end of the spectrum is complete apathy toward languages different than one's own, and on the other end is intense engagement and close linguistic proximity.

The proximal form of societal multilingualism occurs when speakers of minority languages either remain immersed in their own language and culture or use solely immigrant languages without becoming fluent in the official language of the majority. In societies where proximal multilingualism is common, there will always be native speakers who are fluent in many languages and mediate conflicts between different groups of speakers. Integrative multilingualism is the second kind of social multilingualism that has emerged in recent decades and is rapidly expanding into areas where the proximal type was previously prevalent. The integrated form indicates a scenario where individuals not only come across but also actively use various context languages. The rise of migration and technology advancements as global processes has led to an increase in the prevalence of integrative multilingualism. On one end of a continuum are proximal and integrative types of multilingualism, while on the other end is a spectrum of intermediate forms, ranging from less integrative to more integrative.

## **2.2 Gaps in the Literature**

Despite the growing body of scholarship on language shift and maintenance, there remains a significant gap in studies that explore these phenomena within the specific context of the Sefwi language in Ghana's Bia East and West districts. While existing literature has extensively documented language endangerment in various global and African communities, including the decline of indigenous languages due to globalization, urbanization, and formal education (Batibo, 2005; Agyekum, 2010; Abtahian, 2009), few studies have narrowed their focus to the micro-level dynamics

of language usage in smaller, linguistically diverse Ghanaian communities. Most research tends to generalize language behavior across broad ethnic or regional groups without recognizing the unique sociolinguistic patterns in lesser-known minority languages like Sefwi. Consequently, the linguistic realities of communities such as those in Bia East and West remain understudied, limiting the development of localized strategies for language preservation.

Furthermore, while studies on language shift often emphasize intergenerational transmission and the influence of dominant languages such as English or Twi (Essuman, 2020; Sarwat et al., 2020), few have examined how internal factors within speech communities—such as speaker attitudes, language ideologies, or intra-community prestige dynamics—affect language maintenance efforts. This lack of focus on internal sociocultural motivations has resulted in a skewed understanding that privileges external threats over community-driven change. For example, while the dominance of Twi is often cited as a primary driver of language shift, the willingness or reluctance of Sefwi speakers themselves to maintain or abandon their language is rarely investigated in depth. Again, while existing research has examined language shift or maintenance in various contexts, the situation facing Sefwi presents a distinctive case. In many documented instances of shift, the displacing language shares a direct geographical border with the endangered language. In contrast, the pressure on Sefwi stems largely from Asante Twi, a dominant regional language that does not share a contiguous border with the Sefwi-speaking area in Bia East and West Districts yet exerts substantial influence through media, education, and socioeconomic channels. This gap hinders the ability of scholars and policymakers to develop interventions that are culturally sensitive and aligned with the community's own perceptions and values.

Another overlooked area is the intersection of language shift with identity formation and ethnic pride in multilingual settings. Although there is growing recognition that language is central to cultural identity (Fishman, 1991; Pauwels, 2005), limited empirical attention has been given to how speakers of minority languages like Sefwi negotiate their linguistic choices in the context of shifting identity constructs. Particularly absent are ethnographic studies that explore how language use is shaped by daily interactions, local power relations, and generational conflicts. The impact of modernization, digital media, and religious institutions on the erosion or revitalization of minority languages also remains underexplored, especially in rural Ghanaian contexts where informal domains play a critical role in language sustainability. A

Another overlooked area is the methodological scope of previous studies often excludes qualitative approach that would offer a more holistic understanding of language behavior in multilingual societies. Many investigations rely heavily on quantitative survey rarely. The absence of community-based research on the Sefwi language leaves a knowledge gap in understanding not just what is happening to the language, but why it is happening and how it might be effectively addressed.

Lastly, what distinguishes this study is its integrated approach rather than focusing exclusively on shift or on maintenance, it examines both phenomena concurrently, while also analyzing the broader linguistic and cultural landscape within the Bia East and West Districts. This study seeks to fill these gaps by applying a sociolinguistic grounded and context-specific lens to the examination of language shift and maintenance in Bia East and West, thereby contributing fresh empirical insights to an underrepresented area of linguistic research.

## **2.3 Theoretical Review**

This section of the study outlines the frameworks used to analyze the study's data. These are Fishman's (1972) Theory of Language Shift, Batibo's (1992) "triglossic structure model," and Labov's (1966 and 72) Sociolinguistic Variationist Approach. The section elaborates on the application of these theories in the context of this investigation.

### **2.3.1 Theory of Language Shift**

Language shift is characterized by Fishman (1964) as a sociolinguistic phenomenon that emerges from language encounter. Fishman continued to indicate that a phenomenon whereby a community shifts from using one language to another is called language shift, language transfer, or language assimilation. When members of a speech community have difficulties communicating with one another, it is usually because they have been uprooted from their original group. Essentially, a language shift happens when a community starts to use a different language instead of its original one. Fishman laid the foundation for understanding why and how minority languages either survive or disappear in multilingual societies at the heart of Fishman's theory is the idea that language vitality depends on intergenerational transmission- whether children continue to learn and to use the language of their parents. If a language is not transmitted within the home, it gradually loses speakers, leading to eventual extinction. Fishman introduced the concept of domains of language use, which refers to the social context in which languages are employed. These include family and home life, religion and cultural practices, education, work and commerce government and administration media and technology. According to Fishman, language shift usually begins when a community reduces the use of its mother tongue in one or more domains, especially the home. The most critical domain

is the family because this is where first language acquisitions take place. When parents switch to a dominant language with their children, intergenerational transmission is broken, leading to rapid language loss. He also introduced the strategies of maintenance which include both community initiative and institutional support. Families should consciously choose to speak the minority language at home, while governments and organization can support maintenance by incorporating the language into local schools as a medium of instructions or a subject of study. Promotion of the language in the local media, religious service, and public ceremonies, and developing orthographies, dictionaries and literature to standardize and preserve the language. As pointed out by Holmes (2013, p 72), who uses migrant families as examples, this transition may be prompted by contacts with migrant networks and community-wide political, economic, and social shifts. To put it more broadly, when one language in a community gets supplanted by another, we say that there has been a language shift (Holmes, 2013: 72). Thus, linguistic changes occur when some societies come to rely more on a certain language for everyday communication. A language shift occurs when there is less transmission of the legacy language from one generation to the next, which in turn leads to fewer speakers, readers, and writers of that language across generations (Fishman, 1999: 1). Taking into account the above reasons, it is possible for speakers of two or more languages to switch between them. Language shifts may also be caused by immigration, when people move from a nation where a given language is spoken well to one where it is not. When people move to a new area, they may find that they need to acquire a new language in order to communicate with their neighbors. As a result, people need to adjust their original language to fit in with their new environment.

**Table 1: Summary of Fishman's Six Domains of Language Use**

Domain	Role in Language Maintenance	Effect if Lost
Family & Home	Primary site of intergenerational transmission. Children acquire first language naturally here.	Breakdown of transmission; rapid shift to dominant language.
Neighborhood & Community	Supports informal interaction, peer socialization, and everyday communication.	Children may feel discouraged from using the language in public; loss of local identity.
Education	Reinforces language literacy and prestige when used as medium of instruction.	Accelerated shift if dominant language is the only one taught.
Religion	Links language to spiritual life and community values; builds prestige.	Loss of cultural significance; reduced motivation to maintain language.
Workplace & Employment	Provides practical value and economic relevance for using the language.	Speakers abandon language for one offering better job opportunities.
Government, Media & Administration	Institutionalizes language use, raising its status and normalizing public use.	Language becomes marginalized, limited to private/ceremonial contexts.

### 2.3.2 The Triglossic Structure Model

Batibo's (2005) "triglossic structure model" summarizes linguistic tendencies in multilingual speech communities. He explains that in multilingual environments such as Africa, due to the continent's heterogeneity and colonization, there exist some unusual patterns of language use. He observes that these patterns of language use show how multilinguals assign languages to areas depending on their prestige, position, and functions in society. Based on these variables, languages used by

multilinguals are allocated codes such as High (H) and Low (L) to represent the domains to which they belong. Batibo goes on to say that these patterns of language use in multilingual communities follow a binary relationship, with some languages labelled High (H) in some circumstances and Low (L) in others.

According to Batibo (2005:16), the "triglossic structure model" is a structure that can be viewed as a doubly overlapping diglossic structure containing a two-language interaction. This is demonstrated in

**Table 2: A typical triglossic structure of language use in Ghana**

Ex – Colonial Language
Dominant indigenous Language
Minority Language

### **2.3.3 Official and Technical Medium (Ex-Colonial Language)**

The ex-colonial languages include English, Portuguese, French, German, Spanish, and Italian. These are the languages of Africa's colonial masters, which Africans have accepted as official languages in their respective countries. He focused his study on three languages: English, Portuguese, and French. According to the paradigm, these languages are the most prestigious among Africans' linguistic repertoires. According to Batibo (2011:17), these ex-colonial languages are employed in all high-level official interactions such as foreign relations, diplomacy, "and official government business." They are also linked to increased employment and social status in several African countries. The prestige given to them places them among the most prominent languages in African linguistic repertoires.

They occupy the top model and are assigned to subsidiary domains. According to their status, they are assigned the High (H) code.

In the context of Ghana, English, the official language, takes the top spot. It is a language of high prestige and status worldwide; in his discussions on the prestige and status of ex-colonial languages, Batibo (2011:20) states that "[t]he prestige of the ex-colonial languages, particularly English, has increased in recent years due to their association with modernity and technological advancement, information flow, and internationally." English is the primary language used for government, administration, and official communication in Ghana. English in Ghana has been expanding against the backdrop of an intensely multilingual environment." This confirms the idea. This emphasizes the prevalence of ex-colonial languages in Africa. The study will look at the existence and implications of dominant languages like Asante Twi and English on Sefwi in the Bia East and West speech group.

#### **2.3.4 Lingua Francas (Indigenous Dominant Languages)**

Batibo (2011:21) describes indigenous dominant languages as not only demographically superior but also socio-economically prestigious. He claims that the widespread use of these domain languages makes them the favored option for inter-ethnic communication. Batibo (2011:21) argues that the prestige and importance enjoyed by these dominating languages have augmented them to be awarded "a really" "naturally" and "regionally" responsibilities in their countries. He notes, however, that these jobs are assigned in accordance with their respective countries' language policies. He refers to them as nationally dominant languages when they are assigned national duties and regionally dominant languages when they function across a region. Similarly, when restricted to specific regions of a country, they serve as really dominant languages.

He claims that because of the expansion of these dominating languages, they are assigned a High [H] value compared to minority languages and a Low [L] code

compared to ex-colonial languages. Batibo emphasizes that these regionally dominating languages are responsible for "language shift and death among minority languages." Adika (2012:15) validates Batibo's assertion by describing the dominance of indigenous dominating languages in this way. "[t] these indigenous dominant languages are mostly learnt by speakers of other languages as a second language due to its economic importance." The indigenous dominant language mentioned in this work is Asante Twi, which belongs to the Kwa family of languages. According to Obeng (2000: 64), "of all the Ghanaian languages Asante Twi has the largest amounts of written texts including creative literature, and it's therefore studied and documented." Similarly, Batibo (2011:23) describes Asanti Twi as a "really dominant language" in Ghana. This demonstrates the extent to which Sefwi speakers are pressured to learn Asante Twi as a second language.

### **2.3.5 The Sociolinguistic Variationist Approach**

The Sociolinguistic Variationist Approach, pioneered by William Labov in his seminal works of 1966 and 1972, represents a foundational perspective in the study of language change and variation. Labov's central premise is that linguistic variation is not random but socially conditioned, reflecting structured differences based on variables such as age, gender, socioeconomic class, and ethnicity. This approach marked a departure from earlier linguistic models that emphasized uniform grammar and idealized speech communities, introducing instead the concept that real-life language usage varies systematically. It treats language not as a static system but as a dynamic social practice where different forms coexist and serve as indicators of group identity and social alignment. By analyzing linguistic variables such as the dropping of final consonants or the pronunciation of particular vowels within specific social contexts, the Variationist Approach provides a powerful tool to correlate language

forms with demographic characteristics and social patterns. It thus bridges the gap between sociological insights and linguistic data, making it possible to uncover deeper meanings in everyday speech.

Bauer (2011) reinforces this view by defining sociolinguistics as the study of multiple ways through which speakers convey the same idea, emphasizing the inherent variability in language use. Within this theoretical framework, variation is not viewed as linguistic noise or error but as an integral feature of language that reflects complex social meanings. The significance of the Sociolinguistic Variationist Approach lies in its quantitative rigor; it allows researchers to measure linguistic differences statistically and relate them to broader social structures. This methodology has made it possible to map language change in progress, identify social motivations for linguistic choices, and trace how dialects and registers evolve over time. For instance, studies inspired by this approach have demonstrated how urban youth adopt certain speech patterns to express group solidarity or resistance, while older generations may retain more traditional forms. As a result, this approach remains a vital lens for analyzing language in multilingual and shifting linguistic environments such as those found in Ghana, where social identity and language practices are deeply intertwined.

### **2.3.6 Theoretical Triangulation**

To provide a robust analytical lens for understanding language shift and maintenance in the Sefwi-speaking communities of Bia East and Bia West, this study draws on a triangulation of three interrelated theoretical perspectives: Fishman's Theory of Language Shift, the Triglössic Structure Model, and the Sociolinguistic Variationist Approach. While each theory provides unique insights into language dynamics, their integration allows for a more comprehensive and multidimensional

understanding of how sociocultural, structural, and individual factors intersect in shaping linguistic practices. Fishman's Theory of Language Shift offers a macro-level perspective by emphasizing the role of intergenerational transmission, societal institutions, and language domains in either preserving or eroding minority languages. This theory explains the broader social and historical pressures that contribute to language displacement, particularly the lack of language use in key domains such as the home, education, and religion. Complementing this, the Trilingual Structure Model introduces a domain-specific hierarchy of language functions linking official (ex-colonial), regional (dominant indigenous), and minority languages to specific sociolinguistic roles. This model contextualizes the dominance of Twi and English in public and institutional settings, while illustrating how minority languages like Sefwi are often relegated to intimate or informal domains. Together, these two frameworks establish both the institutional context and the structural pressures that drive language shift.

The Sociolinguistic Variationist Approach brings a micro-level focus by examining how individuals within speech communities use language variably across different social groups and contexts. It provides the methodological foundation for analyzing how variables such as age, gender, occupation, and identity correlate with shifts in language use. By focusing on actual language practices and speaker attitudes, it allows the study to capture nuanced linguistic behaviors that may not be evident through macro-structural analysis alone. In triangulation, these three perspectives support one another: Fishman explains the process, Trilingualism situates it within a domain hierarchy, and Variationism reveals its empirical manifestation in everyday speech. This theoretical synergy enables a fuller understanding of how language shift and maintenance are experienced and negotiated in the Sefwi-speaking communities

of the Western North Region. It also provides a strong framework for aligning research findings with social, institutional, and personal dimensions of language behavior.

## **2.4 Empirical Review**

The empirical review provides an examination of previous studies that have explored the phenomena of language shift and maintenance across various sociolinguistic contexts. By focusing on data-driven investigations, this section highlights how researchers have approached the subject through different methodological lenses, including qualitative interviews, surveys, ethnographic observations, and statistical analyses. It offers a synthesis of findings that reveal patterns of language use, speaker attitudes, intergenerational transmission, and the influence of dominant languages on minority speech communities. These studies not only contextualize the current research within existing literature but also offer insights into the sociocultural and demographic variables that drive linguistic change. The review serves to identify commonalities, divergences, and gaps in knowledge, thereby laying the groundwork for the current study on language shift and maintenance in the Sefwi communities of Ghana.

### **2.4.1 Language Maintenance in Some Selected Communities**

A vital component of preserving cultural identity and legacy is language maintenance, which is the endeavor to keep a specific language alive and well in a community or among people. In order to revitalize languages and ensure their transfer from one generation to the next, it is crucial to understand the elements that impact maintenance levels. The transfer of language from one generation to another in immigrant households was the subject of a longitudinal research by Chen et al. (2018). They studied language usage and competency levels over generations to

determine what elements, such as parental language reinforcement, community support, and heritage language education programs, contribute to the effective preservation of a language. Language policies and preservation initiatives across nations were compared in a study by Lee and Park (2019). In order to promote language maintenance and preservation among various linguistic groups, their study evaluated the efficacy of language policies such as bilingual education programs, legislative support for minority languages, and language revitalization projects. The function of digital tools in language preservation initiatives was studied by Nguyen and Kim (2021). As part of their case study, they looked at how social media, online platforms, and other digital tools help minority languages survive in the modern day by fostering language learning, communication, and community building among speakers. Rodriguez and Garcia (2017) looked at how immigrant groups feel about language and how they keep their languages alive. Positive attitudes and community support are crucial in preserving heritage languages, according to their study that examined the effects of social attitudes, linguistic ideologies, and identity negotiation on language preservation initiatives. A meta-analysis of research on heritage language education and its effects on language preservation was carried out by Smith and Brown (2022). In order to promote language preservation and intergenerational transmission, their study compiled empirical information on heritage language programs, bilingual education models, and language revitalization projects. The dynamics of language transition and maintenance were investigated in multilingual environments in Africa by Adebayo and Okeke (2016). Their study shed insight on how to encourage language preservation in an environment where languages are different by investigating the sociolinguistic variables that impact language vitality, language choice, and attitudes among various linguistic groups.

To address this knowledge deficit, Li, Vosters and Xu (2022) conducted a study examining the linguistic repertoires, proficiency levels, and routines of members of the Chinese community. By utilizing interviews data and drawing upon research on language maintenance and shift and findings from the field of language ecology, they investigated the influence of participants' altering sociodemographic profiles on the evolution and preservation of Chinese languages nationwide. Our findings indicate a trend toward more intricate multilingual repertoires at the community level, where English and Mandarin are assuming a progressively greater significance. This is consistent with the progressively global and multilingual environment in Brussels, as opposed to the conventional trend of language dominance shifts toward the majority languages. A case study on community-based language revitalization projects was carried out by Garcia and Martinez (2015). They found that bottom-up techniques are crucial to saving endangered languages, therefore they looked at how people were trying to encourage language preservation via cultural events, immersion programs, and community outreach.

Khan and Rahman (2020) looked at how diaspora groups deal with migration and how it affects language preservation. Their study shed insight on the difficulties and potential solutions associated with preserving heritage languages in transnational situations by investigating migrant communities' language usage patterns, attitudes, and shift processes. Wang and Li (2018) offered a worldwide view of indigenous peoples' linguistic vitality and preservation efforts. Their study looked at community-based approaches to linguistic preservation, factors impacting language extinction, and revitalization attempts for indigenous languages across the globe. Educational policies and their effects on language maintenance were the subject of a cross-national study by Park and Kim (2023). In order to determine which strategies were most

successful in encouraging language maintenance and multilingualism, their study analyzed language-in-education policies, bilingual education models, and curricular frameworks from various nations. In 2018, Mensah and Agyemang compared the ways in which Ghanaian diaspora populations in various nations kept their languages alive. Their study examined the degree of linguistic transmission between generations, patterns of language usage, and attitudes towards heritage languages among Ghanaian migrants and their descendants. It brought attention to the fact that different diaspora environments have different ways of maintaining languages. In their 2020 study, Amoako and Owusu looked at how language regulations affected the preservation of the Ghanaian language in classrooms. Their study aimed to determine how successful language-in-education policies were in encouraging young multilingualism and maintaining linguistic variety in Ghana, as well as how bilingual education programs were put into place and the function of indigenous languages in the school curriculum.

The survival of minority languages in Ghana is greatly affected by the country's language policy. The Constitution of 1992 acknowledges several languages, which reflects the linguistic variety of the nation. Nonetheless, Akan and English have really taken over the administrative and educational spheres (Amoako, 2018). Languages like Sefwi have challenges in coexisting alongside dominant languages due to the current policy environment. According to Michieka, (2012), the attitudes of speakers are a significant contributor to the extinction of languages. Her reference to this assumption is substantiated by research that examines language utilization trends among a representative sample of Kenyan adolescents. She desires to ascertain whether the prevalence of bilingualism is thriving or whether regional languages face imminent extinction. Two hundred and forty Kenyan children were selected using a convenience sampling technique and came from various backgrounds.

A comprehensive survey instrument was employed to gather data pertaining to the patterns of language usage among young individuals. The author utilized the ethnolinguistic vitality theory in her research, which posits that "the trajectory of language loss typically adheres to a specific predetermined pattern, typically commencing with an involuntary or coerced transition to a different language, succeeded by a gradual or abrupt loss of that language" (Allard & Landry 1992; Gal 1992; Huffines 1980; Pandharipande 1992, as cited in Michieka 2012). Her research indicates that English and indigenous majority languages such as Sheng and Kiswahili are the most widely used languages among youthful individuals in Kenya. Young people today converse with friends and family in Kiswahili, Sheng, or a combination of the two languages, as a result. English will replace indigenous minority languages, while Kiswahili and Sheng, two indigenous majority languages in Kenya, will assume principal domains that were previously designated for indigenous minority languages. English, being the designated official language of the nation, is widely utilized in the majority of situations, particularly those that are formal in nature. This is due to the country's immense diversity, which facilitates the use of English in daily life. Furthermore, comprehension is an essential component of communication; therefore, English is the most suitable language to employ when attempting to express intricate concepts. As a consequence, English is highly esteemed and fulfilled numerous functions in the nation.

Likewise, urbanization has led to a situation where the predominant language spoken within households is Kiswahili, or a code blend of English and Kiswahili. Children acquire a greater level of proficiency in Kiswahili while their proficiency in their native languages diminishes. She continues by stating that while children of today are proficient in two or more languages, they are ignorant of any indigenous

minority languages, which poses a threat to their survival and is a problem in and of itself. As one of the principal objectives of this study, Michieka, (2012, p.12) presents a conceptual framework that elucidates the manner in which code selection might induce a shift in language. Batibo (2011, p.45) examines the effectiveness of the concept of ethnic identity loss in Western Botswana, South Africa, with the intention of investigating ethnic identity loss. The principal objective of the researcher was to examine whether ethnic identity erosion in Western Botswana adhered to a particular trend. According to this theoretical framework, the transition of a language from a minority to a dominant status is accompanied by four distinct attributes: linguistic, cultural, automimic, and ethnonymic identities. Batibo asserts that the influence of both Bantu and Khoesan tribes has resulted in a culturally and linguistically complex linguistic environment. In order to collect information, interviews, examinations, and direct observation were utilized. Each ethnic group represented one-half of the participants, while every informant possessed native language proficiency in the minority languages.

Instead of the ethnic identity loss hypothesis, he discovered that Maslow's (1943) theory of human needs may have provided the most plausible explanation for the displacement of the minority Khoesan languages by the majority Bantu languages. Consequently, he holds the view that the paradigm of ethnic identity loss is prone to distortion. Although Batibo's research centers around a model of ethnic identity loss that contradicts the current inquiry, the article does allude to a related subject the classification decision between majority and minority languages. The study conducted by Ampomaa et al. (2018) investigated the factors contributing to the high prevalence of English as the primary language in Ghana households. The researchers were intrigued as to why an increasing number of individuals, especially in urban regions,

are substituting English for native tongues in informal contexts. Even if it is occurring informally, the researchers concluded that everyone should pay close attention to the issue of language transition in Ghana. It will be difficult for a paradigm of institutionalized language maintenance to maintain control over this. It is implied that addressing this issue on a national scale could potentially have repercussions on language usage within domestic spheres. Based on their research findings, it is evident that special protection is necessary for native languages in Ghana and throughout Africa to enable their harmonious coexistence with English and other international languages.

According to research by Taylor and Bosiwah, (2021), the proficiency level of language users, particularly young people, dictates the language's survival or extinction. In order to determine why Efutu speakers have started using Fante instead of their native language in most of their professional interactions, they conducted a quantitative study and came up with some recommendations on how to keep the Efutu language alive and well. Fifty individuals from each of two Winneba villages participated in the research. The studies provide light on the many aspects of language maintenance and the intricate relationship between social, political, and educational issues that impact the life and preservation of languages. They also show how varied language maintenance initiatives are. Dyers (2008) argue that factors such as space poverty, and social class can favor the maintenance of a language rather than a shift. He deduced this from his study on the state of Afrikaans in Westbank, South Africa.

Some of his objectives were to investigate how high school learners in Westbank township, South Africa report on their use of, and attitudes towards, their first language, Afrikaans and to use the findings to show how, given their particular situation, the language continues to be strongly maintained in this community, and

remains an important index of both their group and individual identity. Instruments employed for data collection were interviews and informal observations. A total of one hundred and sixteen subjects, mainly students of Westbank High School, were used. The main findings attributed the maintenance of Afrikaans to the following: The dominant role of Afrikaans, the LI of the majority, in key domains of language use in the township. Dyers, (2008, p.55) explicates that in the Westbank community, speakers of Afrikaans are in the majority. Moreover, Afrikaans is “taught as LI and one of the official media of instruction” at school.

Furthermore, Dyers, (2008, p.43) cited in Dyers (2008:55) notes that Afrikaans language is “perhaps the main marker of a “Cape Colored” identity, particularly in the absence of a clear group culture and identity, given the huge diversity of the origin of this group.” Against this background, there is a powerful sentimental attachment to the language as a badge of individual and group identity. Dyers, (2008 p.53) attributes the maintenance of the Afrikaans language in the Westbank to the “socio -partial marginalization of the community.” He alludes to the type of buildings, number of schools, supermarkets, lack of recreational centers and employment to substantiate his argument that the community is marginalized (Dyers 2008:54).

Another factor which is not so crucial is the powerful role of Afrikaans in particular sectors of the economy of Western Cape, especially the agricultural sector, which is a major employer of less skilled workers. His paper also proves that, contrary to the belief that pressure from marginalization and stigmatization can lead to a shift to the powerful official language for social integration: a group in the Westbank of Cape town South Africa somewhat prefers using Afrikaans the mother tongue of ‘Cape Colored’ as a form of ‘self and group identity’ (Dyers 2008). Finally, Dyers (2008:67)

establishes that, the maintenance of a language depends solely on the attitudes of the speakers towards their language. Dyes (2008) work makes it clear that some minority language speech groups are able to withstand all the pressures from dominant languages to maintain their languages. In line with the current study the implications of the presence of dominant languages such as English and Twi to Sefwi will be investigated, to establish whether the Sefwi in the Bia East and West speech community will be able to maintain their language or shift to Asante Twi.

The data collection methods employed included surveys, interviews, participant observations, and peer interactions. A total of fifty-two participants, aged five to eighty-one, were utilized. She states that her research utilized "a variety of methods derived from variationist sociolinguistics and language socialization research" (Abtahian 2009: 10). Her findings suggest that an apparent temporal analysis reveals an externally motivated change in the variable [ch], visible with the shift to English as the main language in the community. The youth speak this variable as an affricate [tʃ], indicating an influence from English, the national language, whereas the older generation articulates it as a fricative [ʃ], a sound absent in Garifuna, reflecting historical contact between Spanish and Garifuna. She elucidates that there exists a divergence in the behavior of individuals aged 30 to 40, termed the "transitional generation," regarding the two variables [ʃ] and [tʃ], attributable to the language ideologies prevalent in the village that appear to promote the preservation of the legacy language, Garifuna.

Furthermore, the second sound shift currently underway, which she examines, is both externally motivated (due to contact with Garifuna and English) and internally motivated, representing what she describes as "an apparent change in progress" (Abtahian 2009:75). She elucidates that the externally motivated alteration is an

impact from American English on the manifestation of the variable /t/ in Garifuna as a retroflex approximant /ɬ/, rather than a tap /s/ or a flap /ɾ/. The internally-driven alteration is the elimination of the intervocalic [r], which she asserts is an ongoing development and a linguistic indicator. Furthermore, women across all generations dominate in the elimination of vocalic [r]. Furthermore, there is evidence of style-shifting in the creation of the variable [r]. Ultimately, she suggests that these serve as proof of growth rather than a shift, as they have augmented the vocabulary of the speech community.

Simultaneously, there appears to be a burgeoning local pride in culture, particularly among members of the Garifuna speech group, who regard Hopkins as the authentic bastion of Garifuna culture in Belize. The preservation of Garifuna in Hopkins is highly favorable. This study draws on specific elements of Abtahian's (2009) research, namely the impact of the dominant English language on Garifuna and the application of a sociolinguistic variationist methodology in data analysis. The sociolinguistic variationist method will serve as one of the theoretical frameworks for analyzing the data in the current study. Some works done relating to language maintenance include Essizewa (2006) who examines the sociolinguistic aspects of contact between two Niger-Congo languages in Togo, Kabiye and Ewe, in everyday communication in the Kabiye speech community.

The objectives of this study are mainly:

To investigate the patterns and domains of language utilization of Kabiye and Ewe in three Kabiye speech communities in Togo: Pude, Kara and Lomé. A sociolinguistic analysis of contact between Kabiye and Ewe to determine the social and linguistic factors (e.g., prestige pressure, wider communication) that constrain

language usage in the Kabiye community. He contends that the utilization of Ewe by speakers in daily interactions mirrors both the historical and contemporary socio-economic standing of Ewe in the "marketplace" (Calvet 1992 cited in Essizewa 2006). He characterizes Ewe as a principal language in Togo, owing to the substantial number of its speakers and the associated status. Essizewa (2006: 37) states that "[t]hree million individuals (over 65% of Togo's population) utilize Ewe as a secondary language." Additionally, due to the geographical position of the Ewe ethnic group in southern Togo, they encountered Europeans at an early stage. According to Essizewa (2009), this has led to the perception of Ewe as a language associated with "modernity" and elitism in Togo.

This advancement positions Ewe as the favored medium for inter-ethnic communication among all ethnic groups in Togo. This is attributable to the socio-economic situation of the Ewe in Togo. Conversely, the Kabiye is an ethnic group situated in northern Togo; its demographic number is smaller than that of the Ewe. The duration of interaction between Kabiye speakers and Europeans was shorter than that between Ewe speakers and Europeans. Additionally, Kabiye speakers were deprived of Western education due to a mandate that restricted missionary activities only to the southern region (see to Lange 1984 as referenced in Essizewa 2006:38). A total of thirty participants were selected from Pude, Kara, and Agoè, a suburb of Lomé. These three towns were chosen for the subsequent reasons: Pude is a tiny village located in the Canton of Pya; Kara is the second-largest city in Togo, predominantly inhabited by the Kabiye community. Finally, Agoè is a suburb of the city of Lomé, characterized by a concentration of Kabiye speakers. These hypotheses were formed:

Use and proficiency of speakers in Kabiye and Ewe depend on the extent of exposure to each language sex and age, and their attitudes towards both languages. Ewe is spreading in the Kabiye community particularly in urban areas, and this will cause the level of Kabiye bilingualism to increase throughout the country. He focused on interviews, observations, and recordings for data collecting. Nevertheless, he refrained from disclosing the framework employed. The results indicate that the utilization of Ewe exclusively, Kabiye exclusively, and the code-switching between Kabiye and Ewe is contingent upon the degree of speakers' exposure to each language, their gender, age group, and attitudes towards both languages.

The exclusive usage of Ewe, as well as Kabiye and Ewe code-switching, was more prevalent in Lomé, the capital city, which is mostly an Ewe community. This is succeeded by Kara, an urban center where the Kabiye population is concentrated. The least utilized of the three is Ewe, with Kabiye and Ewe code-switching occurring in Pude, a Kabiye community located in northern Togo. These revelations validate the hypothesis provided by the author. Likewise, akin to Kabiye speakers in Togo, the Bia East and West speech community has adopted the Asante Twi. This investigation will determine the extent to which this borrowing has altered Sefwi. This work substantiates the association between language use in many domains and the linguistic phenomena of language shift and maintenance, which is pertinent to the current investigation. This study is grounded in Batibo's (2011) "triglossic structure model," which focuses on language usage across various domains to ascertain whether the Sefwi speech community in Bia East and West is transitioning to dominant language like Asante Twi or preserving their heritage language.

Mcduling (1995) presents an analysis of the current status of Portuguese within the Portuguese community in Johannesburg. He also outlines factors impacting

the maintenance of, and transition from, Portuguese by the Portuguese population in Johannesburg. He claims that English is the predominant language in South Africa. Afrikaans thereafter predominates in many fields, constraining the utilization of Portuguese. This has resulted in a decline in the proficiency of Portuguese youngsters in the Portuguese language, while their fluency in English has risen. Nevertheless, he asserts that specific factors appear to promote the retention of the Portuguese language within the Portuguese population in Johannesburg. The methodologies for data collecting included personal observations, and interviews. His subjects comprised a heterogeneous assembly of fifty-two individuals, encompassing school pupils, university students, attendees from two high schools, and randomly picked adults.

His findings indicate a rise in bilingualism in English and Portuguese among the daily speech activities of the Portuguese populace. It was also determined that, with the exception of one high school in South Johannesburg, Portuguese is neither studied nor employed as a medium of instruction in South African schools. Despite these indicators, there exist private institutions where Portuguese is taught, as well as Portuguese social and cultural groups that assist the Portuguese population in Johannesburg, South Africa, in preserving their culture and customs. Moreover, he indicates that the majority of Portuguese immigrants in Johannesburg maintain connections with friends and family in their homeland. This development indicates that the Portuguese community in Johannesburg continues to utilize its own language on social networks.

The group maintains a good attitude towards their language and cultural heritage. Bamgbose, as referenced in Mcduling (1995:171), asserts that the Portuguese community's attitude towards their language may positively influence the

preservation of their language, culture, and traditions. Consequently, his data validate his theory that, despite a progression within the Portuguese population in Johannesburg particularly among the younger, third generation certain variables appear to inhibit this change. This study examines individual case studies to analyze the distribution of languages within respondents' linguistic repertoires. The review establishes that the distribution of languages accessible to an individual within their social networks correlates with the status of the language. Hudyma (2012), inspired by prior research on Ukrainians in Canada, undertakes a study on the preservation of the Ukrainian minority language in Saskatchewan, Canada, with the following objectives:

1. Presenting several socio-cultural aspects influencing the success of Ukrainian language retention.
2. Examining the influence of educational, community, and familial environments on the Ukrainian language or its change; the condition of the Ukrainian language in Saskatchewan.
3. Analyzing the language attitudes of Ukrainian speakers and their associations with demographic variables.

Three hypotheses were generated based on these aims. She employed the framework established by previous minority studies, including those by Clyne & Kipp (1997, 1999), Fishman (1966, 1980, 1991), Timm (1980), and Weinreich (1964), with particular emphasis on speakers' views towards their heritage language. A total of eighty-two individuals, predominantly students, were selected from various educational and occupational backgrounds in the province of Saskatchewan. She utilized an online survey as her primary strategy for data collecting. Moreover, she asserts that although most participants believed Ukrainian lacked socio-economic

significance in their life, they see it as essential in cultural and familial contexts as a means of identity. Despite this, the linguistic patterns seen within families across various immigrant generations align with the framework proposed by Fishman (1989) as a determinant of language shift in the majority of speech groups. All her hypotheses were validated by the findings. She observes that, while concentrating on age-based diversity within the speech group, distinct patterns emerge in the utilization of the Ukrainian language in Canada. He advocates for more efforts to promote the usage of Ukrainian in Canada. Hudyma (2009) focuses on language use domains to substantiate his conclusions, which pertain to the data analysis for the current study. An analysis of Dyers' works (2008). Essizewa (2006), Abtahian (2009), Hudyma (2012), and Meduling (1995) have illuminated that, despite the predominantly adverse effects of contact between two unequal languages on the minority language, certain minority language groups successfully resist the encroachments of a dominant language by employing strategies to preserve their linguistic vitality. This study will assess the condition of Sefwi in relation to the proliferation of education and Christianity, which have resulted in the youth's exposure to predominant languages like Twi and English.

#### **2.4.2 Language and Identity**

Identity is most important to people since they are the ones who are most directly impacted by the socio-cultural factors (including but not limited to the ones mentioned above) and who can't help but feel a connection to, or "identify" with, these factors. Of course, the most important thing is the people who live in a community; after all, no group can exist apart from its members. Here, we zero down on one-on-one interactions, namely how a single speaker of a language (or languages)

could respond to another speaker (or speakers) depending on the speaker's native tongue and any other unique linguistic context.

When one hears or speaks a language that is not one's own (a "foreign" language), what thoughts and impressions enter one's mind? There is an infinite number of potential triggers for the range of emotions experienced, including but not limited to bias, assumptions, and positive and negative responses. It doesn't take much thought to realize how often people say things like, "I hate the French," "I don't like the English," "German/Germans sound harsh," "I love Italian... it's so romantic... the language of love" (the same goes for French!), "Americans are so uneducated," "I just love the British accent" (regardless of the fact that there are as many 'British' accents as there are regions and sub-regions), and various similar statements. Naturally, seeing someone say "I hate the French" might cause others to view them in a poor light just because they speak the language.

Similarly, although with a little more complexity, how does one respond when they hear what they perceive to be a "foreign" accent in spoken English? Both examples entail linguistic "otherness," but the element of deduction adds a layer of distance: which language is the native tongue of the other person (I.e., their country of origin)? The individual's sentiments towards their partner may be influenced by their response to this question, and it's possible that they will be mistaken! The degree to which a person exhibits xenophobia determines the nature and severity of their reactions, which may range from mild to severe and even violent.

And while there may be many historical, political, and cultural factors at play in shaping an individual's thoughts, it is typically the direct "meeting point" between people—whether that be face-to-face or voice-to-voice interaction—those triggers reactions—basic communication, spoken language, etc. According to Fishman (1989),

the minority language serves as a means of articulating one's ethnic and cultural background. Language, according to Cavallaro (2005), is the most important indicator of ethnic identity in multicultural and multilingual societies.

When a language dies out, Fishman (1991) shows that there is a direct correlation between the loss of that language and a loss of identity. Also lost is the foundation of every ethnic group's identity. What this means is that the disappearance of a language also means the end of the people who spoke it. Reason being, a person's language or code is always able to identify them. An individual's linguistic identity is greatly influenced by their environment. Despite the potential for good, this influence is often accompanied by negative consequences, particularly in educational systems that do not encourage it. Due to the fact that "suppressing a student's desire to speak their native language marginalizes them and makes them feel unwelcome" (Irizarry, 2011, p. 4), it is essential that students see that their heritage is being honored in the classroom. "The overcorrection of dialectic patterns of culturally and linguistically diverse students in an attempt to have them use Standard English" (Robinson & Clardy, 2011, p. 104), as pointed out by Irizarry, might be characterized as "linguistic bullying".

Students' emotional filters are activated when the concept of linguistic bullying is brought up, which has a greater impact on them than one may first assume. A speaker's anxiety levels rise, impairing their ability to communicate verbally and academically, as stated by Robinson and Clardy (2012). Students' grades are taking a nosedive as a result of their fear of public speaking in class. Some teachers overlook the fact that a student's linguistic and cultural identity must be respected for a dual language learner to achieve academic success. Irizarry (2011) asserts that Latino students often face pressure to abandon their native language and cultural heritage in

pursuit of academic excellence, leading to a loss of identity for these individuals (p. 2). So, teachers should think about how to best educate these pupils in light of the fact that identity and academic achievement are inseparable. The significance of culture and language to the identities of people learning two languages is well summarized in the following quote.

### **2.4.3 Gender**

Contrarily, as pointed out by Williamson and Van Eerde (1980), males tend to lean more toward the minority language as they tend to stick to their home area. On the other hand, women often find themselves compelled to acquire the language of their husbands, which is typically the dominant one. Because of their intimate relationship with their children and the need of communicating with them in the dominant language, which children learn via the educational system, women would also transition to the majority language more quickly (Williamson & Van Eerde, 1980).

Women, according to newer research, adopt the language of the majority more quickly than men do. For example, according to Smith-Hefner (2003), among educated young Javanese women, the use of Indonesian is on the rise, while males favor maintaining the old Javanese language. On the one hand, there is evidence that more women are working outside the house than in earlier decades. On the other hand, there is no indication that linguistic loyalty and choice of living region are necessarily associated. Neither of these points, however, is well-supported by experimental data (Pendakur, 1990, p. 6). One of the key components of language change is inter-linguistic marriages (Pendakur, 1990; Grenier, 1984). Some claim it as the driving force for the bilingualism that has developed along the border between Ontario and Quebec (Pendakur, 1990).

The rate of language change among immigrant groups in Australia is much greater among those whose ancestors were married into different ethnolinguistic groups than among those whose ancestors were married into the same group (Clyne & Kipp 2003). The usage of minority languages is influenced by migration as well (Pendakur, 1990). Minority languages can keep communities afloat when newcomers arrive who speak the same language (Pendakur, 1990).

#### **2.4.4 Language Shift in Some Communities**

Conversely, certain groups cannot endure the pressures on their languages and consequently, transition to the dominant language. The subsequent section examines groups that have transitioned from their minority languages to the mainstream language or are currently undergoing this transformation. Efutu, Ghana Mensah (2008) examines the significance of Efutu and Fante in the socio-economic existence of the Winneba populace. She argues that factors such as demographic growth, insufficient institutional support, and reputation can contribute to language shift. The aim of her research was to evaluate whether Efutu was genuinely transitioning to Fante.

She characterizes Efutu as an indigenous language utilized in Winneba, located in the central part of Ghana. It is encircled by Fantes who communicate in Fante, a dialect of Akan. This circumstance has led to members of the Efutu speech group becoming multilingual, with a preference for Fante due to its prevalence in more domains than Efutu. The Fante language serves as the medium of instruction in educational institutions, religious settings, and various public venues. She employed Batibo's conceptual framework of marked bilingualism, utilizing observations, and interviews as data collection techniques. Nevertheless, the study did not address the significance of English as a dominant global language and the official language of

Ghana in the context of the shift situation at Winneba. The lack of this analysis rendered the work's outcome unrepresentative of the cosmopolitan context of Winneba, which hosts various educational institutions, including a university. The presence of individuals from diverse ethno-linguistic origins in Winneba necessitates the employment of a common language for conveying the objectives of this study, specifically the Akan, an indigenous dominating language in Winneba.

The discussion indicate that language shift can be ascribed to variables including the prevalence of dominant languages, insufficient institutional support, urbanization, exogamy, population size, and the attitudes of a speech group towards their heritage language.

Tawalbeh et al. (2013) argue that social pressure, attitudes, institutional backing, demographic considerations, and religion all influence individual language choices, resulting in language shift. These findings were based on a study of contact between minority Hausa and majority Arabic in Mecca. The study distinguishes two sorts of ethno-linguistic Hausa communities in Mecca: poor illiterate Hausa and literate Hausa, known as Saudi- Hausa due to their residency in Mecca. According to them, the study's population is made up of skilled professionals and students who are employed and have been granted residential status in Mecca. The study utilized a social network model to analyze immigrant groups in the Middle East (Al-Khatib, Al-Ali 2010, and Al-Khatib 2001). A total of 100 subjects with diverse occupational and educational backgrounds living in the city of Mecca were employed with the following goals:

1. Investigate linguistic transition or preservation among Saudi-Hausa communities in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

2. Determine the level of linguistic shift or maintenance among Saudi-Hausa, including the impact of gender.

Data gathering methods included interviews, elicitation, and personal observations. According to the data, Hausa speakers are definitely transitioning from the usage of Hausa to the use of Arabic for the following reasons:

To begin, members of the Saudi-Hausa linguistic community in Mecca have a negative attitude toward their heritage language Hausa, which has influenced the pace of Arabic adoption.

Furthermore, the majority of the members have forgotten their roots, rituals, and traditions as a result of a breakdown in communication with their relatives back home in Nigeria, indicating a loss of identity. Furthermore, there is a decrease in the usage of Hausa by the Saudi-Hausa in all circumstances, as demonstrated by the answers from respondents. In light of this, the next Saudi-Hausa generation's Hausa competency will be quite restricted."

This confirms the fact that the legacy language will become extinct in the near future. This was demonstrated by the respondents' usage of Arabic in all circumstances, albeit in variable degrees. The findings suggest that Arabic is widely used in the community. Tawalbeh et al. (2013) relate this phenomenon to a decline in Hausa use by Hausa speakers.

Furthermore, Tawalbeh (2013:139) observes that many Saudi-Hausa obtained nationality status between the reigns of King Faisal Bin Abdul-Aziz (1964-1975) and King Khalid Bin Abdul-Ariz (1975-1982)." is also important for the transfer to Arabic since, with legal permission to live in the nation as a citizen, understanding of the language will facilitate their absorption into social life.

Furthermore, the studies show that knowing Arabic ensures "improved employment" in Mecca (Tawalbeh 2013:139). This scenario forces the Saudi-Hausa to adopt Arabic as the prevailing language.

Furthermore, external pressures such as institutional support for Arabic in many aspects of life has increased the need to acquire Arabic in order to easily integrate into the dominant Saudi-Arabia group.

The findings support Tawalbeh et al.'s (2013) premise that social pressure, attitudes, and religion can impact a change to a dominant language. I feel that the findings of this study give context for the current study, which will not only identify the social elements that have influenced language shift in Bia East and West speech community.

Michieka (2012) suggests that languages die as a result of people' attitudes. She supports her allusion to this assumption with studies on language use patterns among Kenyan teenagers. Her goal is to determine whether multilingualism is thriving or if local languages are at risk from a prospective transition.

To attain her aims. She chose two hundred and forty Kenyan children from various origins using a convenience sample strategy; the primary data collection tool was a thorough interview designed to investigate language use patterns among youth.

She used the ethnolinguistic vitality theory, which states that "the trend of language loss tends to follow a particular fixed pattern, normally beginning with a forced or voluntary language shift followed by a gradual or sudden language loss" (Allard & Landry 1992; Gal1992; Huffines 1980; Pandharipande 1992, cited in Michieka 2012).

According to her research, the most popular languages among Kenyan youth are English and indigenous majority languages like as Kiswahili and Sheng. In

awareness of this, the youth use Kiswahili at home and in interpersonal talks, as well as Sheng or code-mixing between English and Kiswahili. This suggests that indigenous minority languages, such as Kiswahili and Sheng, will be replaced by English in primary domains, which are domains reserved for indigenous minority languages in Kenya.

Furthermore, English, the country's official language, is the preferred language choice in most domains, particularly formal domains, due to the country's heterogeneous nature, which has made it more convenient to use English in the immediate environment because one of the basic essences of communication is the ability to comprehend, making English the most appropriate language on such occasions, thereby increasing the functions and status of English in the country.

Similarly, as a result of urbanization, most families speak Kiswahili exclusively or use a code mix of English and Kiswahili at home, enhancing children's proficiency in Kiswahili at the expense of their indigenous languages.

She also observes that, while the youth are bilingual or multilingual, allowing them to transition from one language to another, their linguistic repertoire excludes indigenous minority languages, which she believes is detrimental to the survival of indigenous minority languages. Michieka (2012) is extremely significant to this study since it demonstrates how language choice can lead to language shift, which is one of the study's primary aims.

Batibo (2011) explores the potential of the ethnic identity loss hypothesis to investigate ethnic identity loss in Western Botswana, South Africa. His main goal was to study patterns of ethnic identity loss in Western Botswana, and if such patterns followed the ethnic identity loss model.

Batibo considers the language situation in this context to be both linguistically and culturally difficult due to the cohabitation of Bantu and Khoisan communities.

Data were collected via surveys, interviews, tests, and observations. The informants were chosen from minority languages, with fifty individuals from each ethnic group.

His findings show that the change from minority Khoisan languages to majority Bantu languages can be attributed to Maslow's (1943) theory of human needs rather than the ethnic identity loss paradigm. He concludes that the ethnic identity loss paradigm can be skewed. Despite the fact that Batibo's paper focuses on the ethnic identity loss model, which is not related to the current study, his paper analyses contact between minority and majority languages, which is relevant to the current study.

Kedrebéogo (1998) investigates the speech community of Koronfe. He concentrates on the Koronfe speech community in northern Burkina Faso, which includes the provinces of Yatenga, Zondoma, Lorum, and Soum.

The study aimed to analyze the community's sociolinguistic condition and evaluate the change from Koronfe to Moore, the prevalent language. Identify factors causing linguistic shift. The author collected data for the study through interviews, surveys, and observations. The study involved seventeen Koromba villages. Selections were made based on their geographical locations, with a total of 537 individuals aged twelve years or older.

In his findings, he attributes the move from Koronfe to Moore to two macroeconomic variables (external and internal). He continues that the external aspect is mostly historical, arising from the contact between Koronfe and Moore, which may best be defined as a master-servant relationship-Moore the "Lords" and Koronfe the

"Servants. "This development had a significant impact on the "Moore," a group that already had a bigger population size and a well-organized military group than the Koronfe in all areas, including language.

Moore gained a lot of prestige and authority over economic activities in the area, making it a language required for social integration at the expense of Koronfe. The outcome of this situation had a negative impact on the Koronfe speech community, resulting in the following: members of the ethnic group developed a low regard for their ethnic group and their language, their attitudes toward their language were negative, and the desire for exogamy rose to a high level, demonstrating how much they wanted to identify with the Moore ethnic group.

Furthermore, aside from the taboos that existed in Koronfe, there was little that could be utilized to identify Koronfe. Even the effectiveness of the taboos was called into question by the younger generation's failure to rigorously adhere to them.

The findings revealed that the majority of the parents spoke different first languages as a result of a traditional norm that permitted Moore men to marry Koronfe" young females with no restrictions. In contrast, marriages between Koronfe men and Moore females were determined by the Koronfe men's Moore proficiency.

As a result of this cultural practice, both parents of these exogamous marriages were fluent in Moore, increasing the likelihood that their offspring would speak Moore rather than Koronfe. In this sense, most moms speak Moore as their first language because one of their parents is a Moore or has already migrated to Moore.

The effect had a negative impact on the transmission of Koronfe to the younger generation, as evidenced by the ratio of parents who identified Koronfe as their first language to children. According to the data, up to 525 parents speak

Koronfe as their first language, but only 133 of their children do, while 384 speak Moose as their first language.

Nonetheless, he observes that Koronfe and Moose are increasingly being used for ritual purposes in the speech community. Furthermore, the Ayo'a spiritual head' is barred from using any language other than Koronfe when he assumes office.

Finally, the Koronfe speech community and others' current desire to create a "National sub commission for Koronfe" are endeavors to save. The study also analyses two languages with opposing statuses, one as conqueror (Akan) and the other as conquest (Sefwi), making this paper's review more important. Nawaz et al. (2012:73) conduct a study on the Punjabi language in Pakistan to determine the variables responsible for its extinction and the subsequent acceptance of English by a populace that is opposed to it. Based on this goal, he developed the concept that language shift is fueled, motivated, and expedited by an implicit interaction of historical, cultural, social, economic, and psychological elements.

To investigate the validity of this theory, a questionnaire with ten questions was created and distributed to 100 people of various ages, educational levels, and social backgrounds. These subjects mostly included students and teachers from the University of Sargodha, as well as regular citizens from Sargodha, Faisalabad, and Lahore. Their findings support the concept. It demonstrates that contact between British and Punjabi speakers through colonialism rendered Punjabi speakers inferior to English speakers in Pakistan. They demonstrate that the British purposely portrayed Punjabi culture as inferior and uncivilized, whereas British culture was portrayed as civilized (Nawaz 2012: 73).

Another aspect that drew people to the English language was the economic value of learning English as opposed to learning Punjabi. A circumstance that gave English speakers a higher social status than monolingual Punjabi speakers.

According to Nawaz et al. (2013), this led to a demand for "white collar jobs" that required proficiency in English, Pakistan's official language. In this study, English, the official language of Pakistan, has encouraged the demotion of Punjabi to the background and is one of the prominent languages being addressed. However, this study examines not only the influence of English, Ghana's official language, but also the prevalence of an indigenous dominant language in.

Finally, the rejection of their culture in favor of a foreign culture is the driving force behind their transition from Punjabi to English. In comparison to this study, authors such as Mensah (2008), Tawalbeh et al. (2013), Michieka (2012), Batibo (2005), Kedrebéog (1998), and Nawaz et al. (2012) have proven that the various speech communities shifted to dominant languages due to socioeconomic factors, negative attitudes toward their language conquests, and the use of dominant languages at home. The stage has now been set for the outcome of the encounter between, Twi, and Sefwi.

#### **2.4.5 Factors Influencing Language Shift**

Language shifts and maintenance in multilingual communities are influenced by many factors: The need to become fluent in the prevailing language is a driving factor in language shift, which occurs when people migrate to cities in search of better economic possibilities (Haugen, 1953). An important factor in maintaining a language is the belief that it serves as a symbol of one's cultural identity (Giles & Johnson, 1987). An individual's outlook on a language may have a significant impact on

whether or not it remains in use (Fishman, 1991). School curricula have the power to either reinforce language use or promote change (Hornberger, 2008).

One potent tool for bringing about linguistic shifts is the educational system. Students in Ghana may not get the opportunity to learn their native language due to the prevalence of English as a medium of teaching (Adu-Amankwah & Abaka, 2017). The primary goal of this research is to determine if and how formal education influences the persistence of the Sefwi language.

Language maintenance (LM) and language shift (LS) are presently observed among the Keralites, who are also referred to as 'Malayalees,' who are situated in Oman (Veettil, Binu, and Karthikeyan, 2020). This study specifically investigates the factors that significantly influence language shift and maintenance: the attitudes of Keralite parents and children towards their first language (L1); the initiatives undertaken by educational institutions, religious and cultural organizations, and parents to encourage L1 maintenance; and finally, it delineates the various domains in which L1 maintenance is supported. Participant observation and semi-structured interviews with Keralites residing in Oman for more than a decade provided the data for this study. Analysis of the data indicates that second-generation children are not particularly devoted to their L1, despite the fact that their parents strive to preserve their maternal tongue as L1. They are losing proficiency in writing in their L1, and code-switching and code-shifting characterize their first-language speech. In contrast to previous findings, this study demonstrates that language shift is not irreversible and does not lead to the deprivation of first language (L1). Contrarily, their legacy language has endured for a variety of reasons. Migrant Keralais residing abroad may also acquire an additional two to three languages, contingent upon their academic pursuits and professional trajectories. This results in their community being

multilingual. The progressive extinction of a native language and the culture and values it represents can result in significant and wide-ranging ramifications.

Socioeconomic variables impacting language preservation among rural populations in Ghana was studied by Ansah and Appiah (2017). Their study shed light on the importance of community support, linguistic pride, and cultural identity in rural regions for the survival of indigenous languages by investigating the link between economic growth, educational opportunities, and language vitality.

In their 2020 study, Sarwat, Kabir, Qayyum, and Akram looked at how family members living in the US change and maintain their language in everyday speech. The data came from a total of seven people, spanning three generations: four adults and three youngsters. There was an observer-participant form of observation. Throughout a five-day span, the family was monitored via video call for ten hours each day while they were outside. In addition, the interview lasted for twenty minutes and included four family members: two from the first generation and two from the second. According to the statistics, second-generation speakers mostly used L2-English but would also use LI-Punjabi/Urdu when necessary. Older members of the first generation speak LI Punjabi or Urdu. They attempted to preserve their LI via code-switching while talking with each other, even with their young family members, and seldom shifted to L2 to accommodate their younger generation. A qualitative investigation was conducted. According to the results, the choice for L2 was to pass the torch to the next generation in terms of social and intellectual success.

Adjei and Addo (2016) looked at how young people in Ghana's cities negotiate their identities and how they utilize language. Their research demonstrated the intricate relationship between urban youth culture, indigenous languages, and English in determining the dynamics of language preservation by examining the linguistic

practices, cultural connections, and language preferences of young Ghanaians living in urban areas. In their 2022 study, Asante and Osei looked at how legacy language education helped Ghanaian immigrant communities keep their languages alive. In order to preserve linguistic legacy and promote intergenerational language transmission among Ghanaian migrants and their children, their study examined the efficacy of heritage language programs, community-based initiatives, and transnational networks.

The impact of media on the preservation of the Ghanaian language among young people was studied by Boateng and Amankwah (2019). In order to demonstrate how media globalization affects attempts to preserve languages, their research examined how various forms of electronic media, such as television, radio, and the internet, influence the attitudes, usage patterns, and vitality of the Ghanaian language among young people. The attitudes and tactics for maintaining languages among indigenous groups in Ghana were investigated by Tetteh and Doku (2015). Community empowerment and grassroots actions are crucial in conserving endangered languages, according to their study, which analyzed the variables affecting language vitality, language choice, and language shift processes within indigenous communities. The effect of migration on the preservation of the Ghanaian language in metropolitan areas was studied by Danso and Darko (2018). The research shed insight on the difficulties and potential solutions for preserving language variety in fast urbanizing areas by investigating migrant communities' language usage patterns, attitudes, and processes of language shift.

Language policy and preservation in Ghana were examined from a historical viewpoint by Osei and Nkrumah (2023). Language vitality, language rights, and variety in modern Ghanaian society were examined through the lens of their study,

which followed the development of language legislation, colonial legacies, and post-independence language planning activities. Community empowerment and language revitalization initiatives in Ghana were studied by Adu-Gyamfi and Baffoe (2021). They found that indigenous communities have successfully organized cultural festivals, language revitalization projects, and grassroots initiatives, proving that bottom-up approaches and community involvement are key to preserving languages and cultures.

When it comes to language change in Ghana, the sociolinguistic environment is very important. Research in the Ghanaian context consistently identifies the dominance of Twi and English as a primary driver of shift. For instance, Mensah and Owusu (2017) state that as cities become centers for English-language communication and economic possibilities, indigenous languages are marginalized due to fast urbanization and migration to urban centers. Language shift dynamics are worsened by the urban-rural linguistic divide, as more and more urban youth are choosing English as their main language of communication similarly Tuffour's study in Atebubu found that the youth are shifting from Bono to Asanti Twi. This suggest a regional pattern where other varieties of the Akan language are succumbing to the pressure of Asanti Twi.

Changes in the Ghanaian languages are heavily influenced by the country's educational programs. Policymakers' decisions to make English the medium of teaching in schools are a major factor, as pointed out by Amoako and Owusu (2020). Indigenous languages are being marginalized in formal schooling due to these policies, which is causing younger generations to become less proficient and use these languages less often and is hastening the linguistic shift towards English. Language change in Ghana is being pushed forward in large part by the impact of media,

especially online and popular culture. According to Boateng and Amankwah (2019), young people in Ghana have their linguistic preferences and attitudes shaped by media outlets that use English as their primary language. Media material that is mostly in English helps promote the adoption of English and contributes to the loss of indigenous languages by making English seem like a status symbol.

The dynamics of language change in Ghana are significantly impacted by economic reasons. The connection between economic growth, migratory trends, and linguistic vitality is brought to light by Ansah and Appiah (2017). Language shift processes are driven by economic possibilities linked to English competence, such as higher-paying professions and access to global markets. As a result, people are incentivized to favor English over indigenous languages for socioeconomic growth.

There is a complicated interplay between linguistic attitudes and identity and the processes of language transition in Ghana. According to Adjei and Addo (2016), young people in metropolitan areas who want to fit in with contemporary society and urban culture commonly learn English because of its associations with status, education, and social mobility. The linguistic transition toward English may be accelerated when indigenous languages are stigmatized or seen as symbols of rural or ethnic identity.

By shedding light on the complex interaction of social, economic, and regulatory variables impacting the life and preservation of languages, these studies provide useful insights into the degree of language maintenance in Ghana.

#### **2.4.6 Attitude of people towards their heritage language**

To grasp the concepts of language preservation, cultural identification, and transmission from one generation to the next in immigrant communities, it is essential to understand how people feel about their native language. To shed light on important

discoveries and trends, this empirical review compiles and synthesizes the most current research on the subject.

Meta-analysis synthesizing research on linguistic attitudes and maintenance across diverse immigrant populations was carried up by Smith et al. (2022). A rise in language preservation initiatives is positively correlated with good views towards heritage languages, according to the study. The research also finds that social standing, perceived value of the legacy language, and linguistic vitality are some of the things that affect opinions.

The purpose of the research by Farisiyah and Zamzani (2018) was to look into the language habits of Indonesians and whether they prefer to utilize Indonesian or a local language in everyday situations. The goal is to find out whether local languages are moving toward Indonesian or if they are staying put. The sample size was 201 people, and they came from all around Indonesia (almost every province was represented). This research made use of descriptive quantitative methods. The survey questionnaire was used to get the data. The findings of this survey show that most Indonesians support the preservation and dissemination of their native languages. The majority of respondents, according to the statistics, would rather use the local language than Indonesian in their homes and neighborhoods, where they spend the vast bulk of their time. Nevertheless, because to the desire and the efficacy of communication, Indonesian is often used in educational and general settings. The results of this research show that local languages have not changed just yet as they are still spoken in everyday life and near one another.

Longitudinal research by Chen and Wang (2023) looked at how heritage language education affected second-generation immigrants' views on the heritage language. According to the results, taking part in heritage language programs has a

good effect on attitudes, which in turn increases desire to preserve languages and a sense of pride in one's cultural background.

Generational changes in Latino immigrants' views toward language are the focus of Rodriguez and Garcia's (2024) research. Linguistic assimilation and social pressures to promote English competency are two reasons why the study shows that second and third generations had less favorable views of Spanish. While certain subgroups may show some resistance, the survey also finds some who are fighting to keep Spanish culture alive.

The impact of digital media on the attitudes of immigrant adolescents on their heritage languages is investigated by Nguyen and Kim (2023). The research shows that seeing digital information in the native language helps people feel more connected to their ancestry and develop more favorable perspectives. The use of internet platforms also allows speakers of heritage languages to meet one another, exchange materials, and commemorate their language's history. Refugees from Syria who have been relocated in Europe are the subjects of an investigation on linguistic attitudes and identity negotiation by Abbas and Al-Masri, (2022). The research sheds light on the intricate relationship between views of Arabic as a legacy language and the desire to integrate socially via the adoption of the language of the host nation. The findings highlight the significance of embracing the legacy language with positivity when one adapts to a new setting, both linguistically and culturally.

Wong et al. (2023) investigate how Chinese American teenagers' views on heritage languages are shaped by their parents. Adolescents' views of their heritage language are greatly influenced by parental attitudes and linguistic practices, according to the study. The development of positive attitudes and greater attempts to

maintain the heritage language are facilitated by positive reinforcement from parents and active promotion of the language.

A study comparing the effects of language regulations on attitudes toward heritage languages in nations that have received immigrants was carried out by Lee and Park (2024). Positive views towards heritage languages may be fostered via institutional support and acknowledgment, according to the research. Higher rates of language preservation and better cultural pride among immigrant populations are seen in countries with strong language policies that promote bilingualism and diversity.

Asante Twi is one of the indigenous languages spoken most extensively in Ghana, and Boateng's (2023) research looks at how people feel about it. The study sheds light on changes in sentiments towards Akan across various demographic groups via surveys and interviews done in urban and rural settings. Even if English is becoming more prevalent, the results show that younger generations are becoming more appreciative of their Akan ancestral language and cultural identity. The preservation of ancestral languages is the subject of research by Appiah-Kubi et al. (2024) in relation to diaspora groups of Ghanaians in the Americas and Europe. The study delves into how attitudes impact diaspora youths' linguistic habits and identity development via ethnographic research and participant observation. According to the results, Ghanaians living abroad are very concerned about protecting their native tongue as a symbol of their identity and history. Research conducted by Mensah and Osei (2023) focuses on the attitudes and identity formation of young people in the Ghanaian capital city of Accra as it pertains to language. The research examines how socio-economic issues, globalization, and media impact attitudes towards indigenous languages via the use of qualitative methodologies including participant observation

and focus groups. The results show how modernization, language pride, and the struggle for urban identity all interact with one another.

Researchers Tetteh and Doku (2022) looked at how young Ga-Adangbe people in Ghana's Greater Accra Region felt about the Ga language. The research investigates how the Ga-Adangbe community considers the prestige of their language, how they use it, and how crucial it is using surveys and in-depth interviews. Urbanization and educational possibilities impact changing dynamics, and the results show that there is a complex attitude landscape with different levels of language preservation. The research by Amoako (2024) examines the effects of Ghana's language policy on students' perceptions of indigenous languages in the classroom. The study evaluates the efficacy of language policies in fostering the use and appreciation of heritage languages by using policy papers, classroom observations, and teacher interviews. The results highlight the need of all-encompassing language policies that promote positive attitudes and language revitalization by including indigenous languages into formal schooling.

The viewpoints of students about the acquisition of the English language were also investigated by Gajalakshmi (2013). A normative survey consisting of a standardized questionnaire was sent to 600 students at random from different high schools and further education institutions in the Puducherry area of India. Significant differences were found according to gender, school location, school type, and management style in the research.

Similarly, Elkilic (2016) studied the perspectives of EFL students at Kafkas University on public speaking, gender inequalities, and academic status in relation to their views about speaking lessons and speaking abilities. There was a total of 80 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students from Kafkas University's English

Language and Literature Department who participated in the research. Of them, 63 were female and 17 were male. The students' ages ranged from preparatory to first year. The results showed that EFL students generally felt well about their speaking abilities and their lessons. Regardless of participants' gender, grade, or age, the research found no significant variations in beliefs about the importance of speaking abilities.

Finally, Eshghinejad (2016) looked at the emotional, behavioral, and cognitive elements of EFL students' views about studying English at Kashan University. Thirty students were chosen at random to participate in the survey, and the results showed that the students had a favorable outlook on studying English in all three areas. Specifically, while comparing the views of male and female students, it is worth noting that the former showed higher mean scores in behavioral attitudes and the latter in cognitive and emotional dimensions.

This research examined the views and opinions of students on the topic of second language learning and use, considering factors including gender, country, and degree of education. Nevertheless, this research departs from conventional techniques by directing its attention to university students' perspectives on the study of native Ghanaian languages, as opposed to secondary school pupils. The purpose of this research is to better understand how college students feel about studying local languages and what inspires them to do so.

As a result of urbanization, globalization, and the expansion of dominant languages, minority languages often struggle to remain vibrant, according to research (Crystal, 1997). Anamalai (2004) cites research that looked at comparable situations, such as Akan-speaking villages in Ghana, to determine what causes a language to change. This literature review sets the stage for investigating the elements impacting

the preservation and evolution of the Sefwi language within the community of speakers. It lays the groundwork for the empirical study by illuminating the nuances of language dynamics in multilingual communities such as Ghana.

Language shifts may occur for a variety of reasons, including societal pressure, attitudes, demographics, institutional backing, religion, and individual language choices (Tawalbeh et al., 2013). Research on interactions between the city of Mecca's majority Arabic population and its minority Hausa population led to these conclusions. The research distinguishes between two ethno-linguistic groups of Hausa in Mecca: the impoverished, illiterate Hausa and the educated, literate Saudi Hausa. The Saudi-Hausa speakers who have been awarded residence status in Mecca are supposedly educated professionals and students who work full-time. Research on Middle Eastern immigrant groups using a social network model formed the basis of this research (Al-Khatib, Al-Ali 2010; Al-Khatib, 2001). The following goals were pursued with a sample of one hundred Mecca residents with diverse career and educational backgrounds:

1. To learn more about the Saudi-Hausa people of Mecca and their linguistic shifts or maintenances.
2. Find out how many Saudi-Hausa have shifted or maintained their language and how gender plays a role in this process. The data was gathered via the use of questionnaires, interviews, elicitation, and first-hand observations.

The results show that the following causes are causing Hausa speakers to abandon the language in favor of Arabic: One factor that has accelerated the transition to Arabic is the widespread hostility for the Hausa language among Mecca's Saudi-Hausa speakers. Furthermore, due to a lapse in communication with their relatives in

Nigeria, most of the members have lost touch with their heritage and have forgotten their traditional practices, which is a sign of disorientation.

In addition, the responses show that the Saudi-Hausa are not using Hausa as much in any situation. As a result, the level of Hausa competency among the future Saudi-Hausa generation will be severely lacking. The legacy language will soon go extinct, as this proves. The fact that the respondents used Arabic, although to different degrees, in every situation proved this. Concerning the community at large, the results support the idea that Arabic is widely used. Tawalbeh et al. (2013) suggests that speakers of Hausa may be regressing in their use of the language, which might explain this phenomenon.

Not to mention that many Saudi-Hausa gained nationality during the reigns of "King Faisal Bin Abdul-Aziz (1964–1975) and King Khalid Bin Abdul-Aziz (1975–1982)" (Tawalbeh, 2013). is also important for the transition to Arabic since having the legal right to reside in the nation as a citizen makes it much easier to integrate into social life when one knows the language. More importantly, the results show that being able to speak Arabic guarantees you "improved employment" in Mecca (Tawalbeh 2013:139).

The Saudi Hausa people are left with no choice but to adopt Arabic as their official language due to this scenario. To make assimilation into the dominant Saudi-Arabia group as simple as possible, learning Arabic became an urgent need due to external factors including the widespread institutional support for the language. The results provide credence to the theory put out by Tawalbeh et.al. (2013), which states that factors such as religious beliefs, societal pressure, and attitudes might impact the adoption of a dominant language. In my opinion, this study's results set the stage for the present investigation, which will examine the effects of Sefwi language choices

made by individuals while also determining the social variables that have prompted code choosing inside the Sefwi communities (Bia East and West).

The significance of Ghanaians' views towards their heritage language in influencing language preservation efforts, cultural identity, and social inclusion is underscored by these recent empirical studies, which provide unique insights into these attitudes. Several recent empirical studies have shed light on the many aspects impacting the preservation of language, cultural identity, and transfer from one generation to the next among immigrant groups, offering important insights into how people feel about their heritage language.

According to Essuman (2020), the Ahanta language was displaced by Fante and English, and the reasons for this displacement were to be investigated. It appears to also address the topic of language shift from the viewpoint of Ahanta villages in Ghana's Western Region. This study aims to investigate the Ahanta language in order to determine if the researcher's hypothesis about a language shift is correct, to determine what causes the language shift in the Ahanta speech communities under investigation, and to provide solutions for the future of the Ahanta language so that future generations can still speak it.

#### **2.4.7 Summary of Empirical Review**

It is clear from the debates that variables like urbanization, exogamy, population scale, the existence of dominant languages, a lack of institutional support, and the attitudes of a speech group towards their heritage language are the ones that cause language shifts. It was evident from the research, nevertheless, that a positive outlook on a language's origin may help it survive in the face of a dominant language. This research will supplement previous efforts on language shift and language maintenance in terms of the literature it reviews. In the end, the study's goal is to determine how

often Sefwi people hear dominant languages like English Bono and Asante Twi, and what effects this has on Sefwi. Second, it will determine the societal elements that have caused the Bia speaking community's language to change in their surroundings. It also suggests practical strategies for language maintenance encompass a range of community-driven, educational, technological, and policy-based approaches. By implementing a combination of these strategies, communities like Sefwi in Ghana can effectively preserve and promote their linguistic heritage for future generations.

It is clear from the discussion that several reasons, such the existence of dominant languages, a lack of institutional support, urbanization, the size of the exogamy generation, and the attitudes of a speech group toward their heritage language, can be blamed for language change.

Nonetheless, despite the existence of a dominant language, a speech community's positive attitudes toward its heritage language might result in language maintenance.

This study will add up to studies done on language shift and language maintenance in three dimensions with respect to the evaluated literature. The study's ultimate goal is to determine how much Sefwi speakers are exposed to Asante Twi the major language, and what effects this has on Sefwi language.

Second, it will pinpoint the societal elements that have influenced the Sefwi speech community's linguistic preferences. These two will assist in identifying the differences in language preferences among the three communities.

## 2.5 Conceptual Review

The conceptual review outlines and explains the key concepts that form the foundation of this study on language shift and maintenance. This section clarifies the meanings and interrelationships of core terms such as language shift, language maintenance, minority and majority languages, multilingualism, and sociolinguistic identity. By defining these concepts within both historical and contemporary linguistic discourse, the review provides a theoretical lens through which the study's findings can be interpreted. Understanding these constructs is essential for situating the research within broader sociolinguistic debates and for establishing a clear analytical framework. The conceptual review thus serves as a bridge between theoretical assumptions and empirical investigation, offering the necessary vocabulary and contextual grounding for examining language dynamics in the Sefwi speech communities. This study analyzes sociolinguistic status of Sefwi through five core conceptual lenses.

### Language shift and Maintenance

Language shift is the collective, intergenerational process of a speech community abandoning its heritage language (Sefwi) for a dominant one (Twi/English). It is measured by a reduction in the domains where the language is used. Fishman (1972) identified five domains of use. The domains are family, education, religion, media & technology, and traditional ceremonies. Labov (1966 & 1972) argues that languages function hierarchically. The hierarchical relationship between languages in Ghana creates inherent pressure for shift. High (H): (official language; government, elite education), Middle (M): Asanti Twi (lingua franca; media, commerce, inter-ethnic communication), Low (L): Sefwi (minority language;

home, local rituals). Language maintenance is the active use of a language to keep it alive. The conscious effort of passing a language from one generation to another.

The above frameworks; the triglossic hierarchy shapes language attitudes, which influence choices in key domains. These either supports or disrupts intergenerational transmission, ultimately determining whether language shift or maintenance occur for Sefwi language in Bia East and West districts.

## **2.6 Summary of Chapter Two**

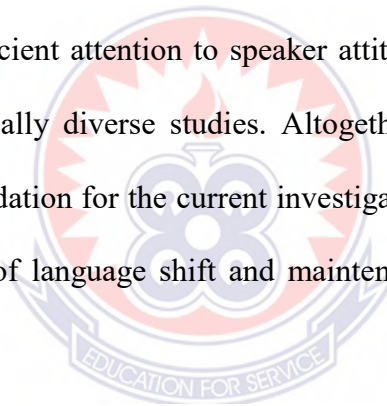
This chapter provided a comprehensive review of literature relevant to the study of language shift and maintenance, with a particular focus on the Sefwi language in Ghana's Bia East and West districts.

The theoretical framework examined key perspectives such as the Theory of Language Shift, the Triglossic Structure Model, and the Sociolinguistic Variationist Approach. These theories offered insights into the structured relationship between language use and social variables, as well as the impact of dominant linguistic forces on minority languages. The theoretical underpinnings provided a foundation for understanding the mechanisms and motivations behind language change and preservation in multilingual societies.

The conceptual review clarified essential terms and constructs, including language shift, language maintenance, multilingualism, and linguistic genocide. It provided definitions and theoretical grounding for the key ideas used throughout the study, helping to situate the Sefwi linguistic experience within broader academic discourse. This section also included a historical overview of the Sefwi language and examined its status within the larger Ghanaian linguistic ecosystem.

The empirical review explored a wide range of scholarly studies from both local and global contexts, revealing the complex sociocultural and demographic factors that influence language shift and maintenance. Particular attention was given to themes such as identity, gender, intergenerational transmission, community attitudes, and institutional support. These empirical findings underscored the dynamic interaction between language and society, demonstrating that language maintenance is often driven not only by external pressures but also by internal community dynamics.

The chapter presented current related studies that contextualized the research within contemporary scholarly discussions and revealed significant knowledge gaps. The final section identified these gaps, particularly the lack of localized research on the Sefwi language, insufficient attention to speaker attitudes and identity, and the need for more methodologically diverse studies. Altogether, Chapter Two established a strong intellectual foundation for the current investigation and justified the need for a context-specific study of language shift and maintenance in the Bia East and West districts.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Overview

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology to explore the phenomenon of language shift and maintenance of the Sefwi language within the Bia East and West Districts. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of community members toward their heritage language. The focus of the study was on capturing participants' narratives and subjective interpretations of how and why language use patterns are changing, as well as the strategies that are being employed to maintain the language. Qualitative research is particularly suited for studies that seek to examine social and cultural processes within their natural contexts and to generate rich, descriptive data rather than numerical generalizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study aimed to uncover the socio-cultural and historical factors that influence language practices in the community. The design allowed the researcher to gather detailed accounts from participants through interviews and observations, facilitating an understanding of the meanings attached to language use in various domains of life. Qualitative methods also provided the flexibility to explore emerging themes that may not have been anticipated prior to data collection, thus ensuring that the findings reflect the realities and voices of the community members (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach aligns with sociolinguistic studies that emphasize the importance of context, identity, and social interaction in understanding language use and change (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

### 3.2 Research Paradigm

The study was situated within the interpretivist research paradigm, which emphasizes the understanding of social phenomena through the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to them. The interpretivist paradigm is based on the ontological assumption that reality is socially constructed and subjective, and the epistemological stance that knowledge is co-created by researchers and participants through interaction and interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This paradigm was appropriate for the study because language shift and maintenance are deeply embedded in cultural, historical, and social contexts. The interpretivist perspective facilitated the exploration of how members of the Sefwi community perceive the current state of their language, the factors that influence its maintenance or decline, and the cultural meanings they attach to language use in different domains of life.

Adopting an interpretivist paradigm allowed the researcher to focus on participants' experiences and worldviews rather than imposing predetermined variables or hypotheses. It provided the flexibility to examine the phenomenon of language shift as a dynamic and context-dependent process. The paradigm guided the use of qualitative methods such as interviews and observations, which are essential for capturing participants' subjective realities and uncovering the social processes that shape language practices (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interpretivism acknowledges that knowledge is not value-free, and the researcher's role is to interpret participants' accounts in a way that remains faithful to their perspectives while being informed by existing theories and literature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

This paradigm also aligns with sociolinguistic research that seeks to understand language as a social practice influenced by power relations, identity, and cultural norms (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). By adopting an interpretivist stance, the study

recognized that the meanings attached to language use in the Sefwi community cannot be separated from the historical, political, and social forces that shape linguistic choices. Furthermore, the paradigm allowed the researcher to embrace reflexivity, acknowledging that their background, values, and assumptions may influence data interpretation. Such reflexivity is essential in qualitative inquiry as it enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Tracy, 2020).

### **3.3 Research Approach**

This study employed a qualitative research approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the processes of language shift and maintenance of the Sefwi language in the Bia East and West Districts. A qualitative approach was selected because it is particularly suited to exploring social and cultural phenomena in their natural contexts. It enables researchers to gather rich, detailed data that reflect participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward their heritage language (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Rather than relying on predetermined variables or hypotheses, qualitative research seeks to understand how individuals make meaning of their experiences and how these meanings influence their behaviors and interactions. This makes it an appropriate approach for investigating the sociolinguistic realities of communities experiencing language change.

Qualitative research is grounded in the notion that reality is socially constructed and that knowledge is generated through interaction and interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In the context of this study, this meant that participants' perspectives on language use, cultural identity, and intergenerational transmission were explored in-depth to uncover the factors influencing the decline or maintenance of the Sefwi language. Through interviews and observations, the research captured the voices of community members, providing insights into how language choices are

shaped by social, cultural, and historical factors. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) assert, qualitative research is valuable when researchers seek to describe processes, understand patterns, and explore meanings in real-life contexts.

Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on testing hypotheses using measurable variables, qualitative research allows for a flexible design that can adapt to emerging themes during the study. While quantitative studies may use numerical data to establish correlations, qualitative research emphasizes narrative descriptions and interpretations of experiences (Morgan, 2022). However, as Keeves (2017) and Fleming and Zegwaard (2018) note, there can be an overlap between qualitative and quantitative research, as qualitative studies may still incorporate some numerical elements such as frequencies to describe phenomena. In this study, the focus remained on the participants' narratives rather than on statistical generalizations, ensuring that the findings reflect the lived realities of the Sefwi community.

Qualitative research provides a deeper exploration of behaviors, attitudes, and lived experiences, which is essential in examining language shift as a complex socio-cultural process. Khan (2014) emphasizes that qualitative approaches allow for a holistic understanding of social phenomena, helping researchers uncover the contextual factors that shape human actions. Similarly, Bartlett (2017) explains that qualitative research is systematic yet subjective, aiming to describe and make sense of real-life situations in their natural settings. This approach enabled the researcher to investigate how historical, social, and political factors intersect with individual choices to influence language practices.

By adopting a qualitative approach, the study sought to document and interpret the narratives of Sefwi speakers regarding the state of their language and the

strategies used to maintain it. This approach facilitated the identification of themes related to intergenerational transmission, community attitudes, and the influence of dominant languages. The findings were intended to contribute to sociolinguistic knowledge by highlighting the significance of cultural identity and community agency in language preservation (Tracy, 2020).

### **3.4 Research Design**

This study adopted a case study design to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of language shift and maintenance of the Sefwi language in the Bia East and West Districts. A case study design was considered appropriate because it emphasizes the exploration of participants' experiences, perspectives, and interpretations of reality rather than relying on numerical measurements or statistical analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design facilitated the generation of rich, descriptive data that reflected the socio-cultural contexts within which language practices occur. By focusing on meaning-making processes, the research design enabled the investigation of how cultural identity, social interactions, and historical factors contribute to the preservation or decline of the Sefwi language.

The case study design allowed the researcher to gather data using multiple methods, primarily semi-structured interviews and participant observations, to capture the lived experiences and attitudes of community members toward their language. Interviews provided an opportunity for participants to express their personal narratives, beliefs, and values regarding language use in different domains of life, while observations helped in understanding how language is employed in natural settings. This use of multiple data sources aligns with the principles of qualitative inquiry and enhances the credibility of case study research by allowing for data triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The case study also allowed for flexibility during data collection and analysis, enabling the researcher to follow emerging themes and insights that could not have been predicted in advance. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note, this approach is well suited for studies where the aim is to describe and interpret processes, patterns, and behaviors rather than to test hypotheses.

Through this design, the study sought to uncover the factors influencing language shift, the strategies for language maintenance, and the cultural meanings attached to language use within the Sefwi community. This design was also selected because of its suitability for sociolinguistic research, which often explores how social factors such as identity, power, and cultural norms shape language practices (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). The design provided a holistic framework for interpreting participants' narratives and experiences, ensuring that the findings reflect the complexity of language shift as a socio-cultural process.

### **3.5 Study Area**

The study was conducted in the Bia East and Bia West Districts, which are both located within the Western North Region of Ghana. These districts are among the nine Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) that make up the region. The Bia East District was officially inaugurated on June 28, 2012, following its creation from the former Bia District by Legislative Instrument (LI) 2014. The district covers an estimated land area of 795 square kilometers and is situated in the northeastern part of the region. Adabokrom serves as the district capital and is located approximately 420 kilometers northwest of Sekondi-Takoradi, the regional capital. The nearest major commercial hub to the district is Kumasi, which lies about 585 kilometers away. Geographically, the Bia East District shares boundaries with Dormaa West District to the north and Asunafo South District to the

east, while the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire lies to the south and the Bia West District to the west. According to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, the Bia East District has a total population of 53,073, comprising 28,154 males and 24,919 females.

The Bia West District, also carved out of the former Bia District in 2012 by the same Legislative Instrument, occupies a land area of approximately 1,344 square kilometers. Essam serves as the administrative capital of the district and is situated around 250 kilometers northwest of Kumasi and 420 kilometers northwest of Sekondi-Takoradi. The district is bordered to the north and east by Bia East District, to the west by the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and to the south by the Juaboso District. The 2021 Population and Housing Census indicates that Bia West District has a population of 115,881, consisting of 59,955 males and 55,926 females.

These two districts were chosen for the study because they represent the cultural and linguistic heartland of the Sefwi people, who constitute the primary speakers of the language under investigation. The districts are rural in nature, with agriculture serving as the main economic activity. This socio-economic context has implications for language use and transmission, as communities in these areas maintain strong cultural ties but are increasingly exposed to dominant languages through education, migration, and trade. Understanding the dynamics of language shift and maintenance in these districts is essential, as they provide a unique setting where traditional practices interact with modern socio-economic influences, thereby shaping the patterns of language use among the Sefwi-speaking population.

### **3.6 Population**

The target population for this study comprised all residents 10 and above residing in the Bia East and Bia West Districts of the Western North Region. In research, a

population refers to the entire group of individuals, events, or objects that possess the characteristics under investigation and from which a sample is drawn (Sidhu, 2014). For this study, the population included community members who actively use or have knowledge of the Sefwi language and could provide meaningful insights into issues of language shift and maintenance. These individuals represent a diverse group in terms of age, gender, education, and occupation, making them valuable sources of information on intergenerational language transmission and sociolinguistic practices.

According to data from the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2021), the combined population of the Bia East and Bia West Districts is estimated at approximately 110,000, with adults (aged 18 and above) constituting around 60,000 of these totals. This adult population provided a rich context for understanding language use within a community increasingly influenced by dominant languages such as Twi and English. Community members are key stakeholders in language preservation, as their attitudes, practices, and decisions determine the extent to which the Sefwi language is transmitted to younger generations. By focusing on adult residents, the study ensured that participants were capable of reflecting on their language practices as well as those of their families and communities. These adults were also better positioned to provide historical perspectives on how language use has evolved over time in both districts. This population was therefore deemed appropriate for investigating the social, cultural, and demographic factors that influence the maintenance or shift of the Sefwi language.

### **3.7 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample for this study consisted of twenty-four residents from the Bia East and Bia West Districts who were native speakers of the Sefwi language or individuals with extensive experiential knowledge of its use in social, familial, or cultural

contexts. In qualitative research, sample size is guided not by statistical power calculations but by the principle of data saturation, which refers to the point at which no new themes or insights emerge from the data (Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2020). The decision to use a 24-participants sample was grounded in the need to capture a broad yet manageable range of perspectives, allowing the researcher to delve deeply into participants' linguistic experiences while ensuring thematic saturation. Participants were purposefully selected to reflect a range of demographic characteristics, including age, gender, occupation, and the extent of their involvement in preserving or using the Sefwi language. This demographic diversity ensured that the sample provided a rich and nuanced account of intergenerational language transmission, attitudes toward language use, and perceptions of cultural identity.

To achieve this, the study employed a purposive sampling strategy as its principal technique. Purposive sampling allows researchers to intentionally select individuals who possess particular characteristics or insights that are most relevant to the research objectives (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Participants were identified based on their consistent use of the Sefwi language in key domains such as family interaction, community engagement, traditional leadership, or educational advocacy. Community elders, language activists, and cultural custodians were specifically targeted due to their historical knowledge and their role in local language preservation efforts. Alongside this, convenience sampling was also employed to facilitate access to individuals who were readily available and willing to participate in the research process. This pragmatic approach was instrumental in navigating logistical challenges related to participant availability, especially in rural communities with limited connectivity. The final sample included a balance of male and female respondents and covered a range of age groups, from young adults to elderly members

of the community. Elders and Traditional Leaders; custodians of the language and culture, parents and youth, to explore intergenerational transmission educators and school officials to understand institutional influences and community members to get a broad sense of daily language use. This inclusive sampling framework enabled the researcher to explore generational shifts in language usage and attitudes, while also ensuring that participants offered contextually grounded insights into the factors influencing the maintenance or erosion of the Sefwi language. Together, purposive and convenience sampling ensured that the selected participants could meaningfully contribute to the study's goal of understanding the dynamics of language shift and maintenance within the Sefwi-speaking communities of the Western North Region.

### **3.8 Participants Demographics**

A total of 24 participants were interviewed from six towns across the Bia East and West districts. Participants were identified by codes. Four respondents were selected from each of the six towns, using a clear abbreviation system for easy reference in chapter 4. The coding system was done by using the first three letters of the town names and respondent number (Example ESS-01, ADA-02).

ESS = Essam

ADA = Adabokrom

DEB = Debiso

KWA = Kwasare

KAA = Kaase

KBK = Kwame Bi Krom

**Table 3: Some demographic profile of Respondents (N=24)**

<b>RESPONDENT ID</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>OCCUPATION</b>	<b>LANGUAGE (S) SPOKEN</b>	<b>DISTRICTS</b>
ESS-01	72	M	Farmer	Sefwi ,Twi	BIA WEST
ESS-02	45	F	Trader	Sefwi /Twi	BIA WEST
ESS-03	22	F	Student	Sefwi/Twi& English	BIA WEST
ESS-04	58	F	Mason	Sefwi/Twi	BIA WEST
ADA-01	35	M	Teacher	Twi& English & Sehwi	BIA EAST
ADA-02	28	F	Seamstress	Sefwi/Twi	BIA EAST
ADA-03	50	M	Businessman	Sefwi/Twi	BIA EAST
ADA-04	62	M	Farmer	Sefwi/Twi	BIA EAST
DEB-01	40	F	Forest Guard	Twi, English &Sehwi	BIA WEST
DEB-02	33	M	Mason	Sefwi & Twi	BIA WEST
DEB-03	30	F	Police	Twi, English &Sefwi	BIA WEST
DEB-04	55	M	Banker	Twi & English	BIA WEST
KWA-01	58	M	Farmer	Sefwi & Twi	BIA EAST
KWA-02	38	M	Nurse	Twi & English	BIA EAST
KWA-03	19	M	Student	Twi, English & Sefwi	BIA EAST
KWA-04	10	F	Student	Sefwi/Twi	BIA EAST
KAA-01	25	F	Teacher	English &Twi	BIA EAST
KAA-02	42	F	Banker	English & Twi	BIA EAST
KAA-03	65	M	Farmer	Sefwi/Twi	BIA EAST
KAA-04	29	M	Radio presenter	Sefwi/Twi& English	BIA EAST
KBK-01	48	M	Tiler	Sefwi/Twi	BIA WEST
KBK-02	32	F	Nurse	Sefwi/Twi &English	BIA WEST
KBK-03	47	M	Teacher	Sefwi/Twi & English	BIA WEST
KBK-04	21	F	Student	English Sefwi/Twi &English	BIA WEST

### 3.9 Data Collection Instruments

Data for this study were gathered using two main instruments, namely a semi-structured interview and non-participant observation. In qualitative research, data collection instruments are not limited to the tools themselves but also include the systematic processes involved in their selection, development, and application (Seteran & Bougie, 2016). The choice of instruments was informed by the study's objective of exploring the experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of community members regarding the shift and maintenance of the Sefwi language in the Bia East and Bia West Districts. These instruments were selected because they are suitable for generating detailed, descriptive information that can reveal the complex social and cultural factors influencing language use. Unlike quantitative methods that rely on standardized measurements, qualitative tools allow for flexibility and adaptability during the data collection process, ensuring that the voices and experiences of participants are meaningfully captured (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The design of the instruments was guided by the need to collect primary data that would allow the researcher to interpret the processes underlying language shift and maintenance. According to Abawi (2016), the selection of data collection tools should be aligned with the type of information needed to address the research questions and achieve the study objectives. For this reason, the semi-structured interview guide was chosen because it facilitates in-depth discussions, while non-participant observation was used to capture naturally occurring language behaviors in real-life settings. These complementary methods ensured that the data gathered were comprehensive, credible, and reflective of the lived realities of the participants. Pseudonyms of the participant for ethical reasons.

The semi-structured interview guide served as the primary instrument for data collection. The guide was developed to elicit rich, descriptive responses about participants' language use, perceptions of language change, and views on preserving the Sefwi language. The questions were organized around key themes aligned with the research objectives, including intergenerational transmission of language, community attitudes toward the Sefwi language, and the perceived influence of dominant languages such as Twi and English. Open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate freely on their experiences and opinions, while the flexibility of the guide enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions based on participants' responses. This approach is consistent with Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) assertion that semi-structured interviews are effective for obtaining participants' perspectives in their own words while maintaining a degree of consistency across interviews.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face with participants at locations convenient for them, such as homes, community centers, and other familiar environments. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, depending on the participant's willingness to elaborate on the topics discussed. The questions were phrased in simple, clear language to ensure understanding and to encourage participants to share their experiences without fear of judgment. The researcher also employed probing techniques to gain deeper insights where necessary. With participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and later transcribed for analysis.

### **3.9.1 Non-Participant Observation**

Non-participant observation was employed as a supplementary tool to capture real-life instances of language use within the community. Observation enabled the researcher to gather contextual data on how the Sefwi language is spoken in everyday

interactions, such as in households, marketplaces, social gatherings, and community meetings. This method provided valuable insights into the domains of language use, the prevalence of code-switching with dominant languages, and generational differences in language practices. As Denzin and Lincoln (2018) note, observation is a critical tool in qualitative research as it provides first-hand evidence of social phenomena as they occur naturally, offering a more comprehensive understanding of participants' behaviors.

During the observation sessions, detailed field notes were taken to record participants' language choices, conversational patterns, and non-verbal cues. These notes included contextual information about the setting, the nature of interactions, and the participants involved. Observations were conducted unobtrusively to avoid influencing participants' behaviors and to ensure that natural language practices were documented. This method complemented the interviews by providing additional data for triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study findings.

### **3.10 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection process followed a systematic and ethical approach to ensure that participants were fully informed and comfortable with their involvement in the study. The researcher first established contact with potential participants through community leaders and key informants, who assisted in identifying individuals knowledgeable about the Sefwi language. After initial contact, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, its significance, and what participation would involve. Informed consent was then obtained from all participants before any data collection activities began, in line with ethical research standards (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The semi-structured interview guide served as the primary instrument for

data collection. The guide was developed to elicit rich, descriptive responses about participants' language use, perceptions of language use and views on preserving the Sefwi language. The questions were organized around key themes aligned with the research objectives. Open-ended questions allowed participants to elaborate freely on their experiences and opinions, while the flexibility of the guide enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions based on participant's responses. This approach is consistent with Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) assertion that semi-structured interviews are effective for obtaining participants' perspectives in their own words while maintaining a degree of consistency across interviews.

Following the consent process, interviews were scheduled at times and locations convenient for participants. At the beginning of each session, the researcher built a rapport with participants by briefly discussing the purpose of the study and reassuring them of confidentiality. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in settings familiar to participants, including their homes, community centres, and local gathering spots. Each interview lasted between 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the participant's willingness to elaborate on the topic discussed. The semi-structured interviews were then conducted using the prepared interview guide, which allowed for both consistency and flexibility in questioning. During the interviews, the researcher encouraged participants to speak freely about their experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of language use. Probing questions were asked where necessary to gain deeper insights. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder to ensure accuracy and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

In addition to interviews, non-participant observations were conducted to capture naturally occurring language practices within the community. These observations took place in common social spaces such as homes, markets, and

community gatherings. Observations were conducted unobtrusively to avoid influencing participants' behaviours and to ensure that natural language practices were documented. The researcher visited multiple community settings over the study period, maintaining a discreet presence while noting language choices, conversational patterns, and contextual factors. Field notes were taken systematically to document language choice, conversational interactions, and generational patterns in language use non-verbal cues, and the social dynamics of each setting. Data collection took place over a period of six weeks, allowing sufficient time to conduct interviews and observation across selected towns in both Bia East and West Districts. This extended period also enabled the researcher to build rapport with the community and observe language use across different contexts and times. Throughout the process, participation remained voluntary, and participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

### **3.11 Data Analysis Methods**

The data collected from a purposive sample of 24 participants through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2013), is widely recognized for its capacity to systematically identify, analyze, and interpret recurring patterns or themes within qualitative data. Thematic analysis was deemed appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to engage deeply with participants' narratives, uncovering underlying meanings and connections that addressed the specific research objectives related to language shift and maintenance in the Bia East and West districts. The analysis process began with the transcription of all audio-recorded interviews, ensuring an accurate and detailed capture of verbal responses. Observation notes taken during fieldwork were also transcribed and organized to complement the

interview data. To enhance the reliability of the analysis, an inter-rater reliability approach was adopted during the coding and theme development stages. A second researcher with expertise in sociolinguistics independently reviewed a subset the transcript (approximately 30%) and the initial codes generated by the primary researcher. Both researchers then discussed and compared their coding outcomes, resolving discrepancies through consensus. This process helped to minimize researcher's bias and strengthen the credibility of the emerging themes (Nowell et al., 2017).

The researcher first familiarized herself with the data through repeated readings of the transcripts and notes, noting initial impressions and reflective comments. This immersion process enabled a richer understanding of the linguistic and cultural contexts shared by participants. Following familiarization, the data were manually coded by identifying meaningful segments and labeling them according to their relevance to the research questions. These codes were then clustered into themes and sub-themes using an inductive approach, meaning they emerged directly from the participants' accounts rather than being predetermined. Themes such as language attitudes, generational language use, institutional neglect, and community identity surfaced during analysis. To ensure reliability and depth, the themes were reviewed and refined through a process of constant comparison, where each theme was checked against the entire dataset for consistency and uniqueness.

The findings were presented in narrative form, enriched with verbatim quotations from participants to preserve the authenticity of their voices and lived experiences. Thematic patterns were drawn from both interview data and field observations, allowing for methodological triangulation that enhanced the credibility

of the analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). The integration of data from multiple sources provided a more holistic understanding of the sociolinguistic realities in the study area. In the final stage of analysis, the themes were interpreted in light of relevant literature and the study's research questions. Through this process, the researcher was able to identify key factors influencing language shift as well as grassroots strategies for maintaining the Sefwi language within its native speech communities.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are central to the design and implementation of qualitative research because they ensure the protection of participants' rights, privacy, and dignity while maintaining the integrity of the study (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). Before the commencement of data collection, the researcher sought ethical clearance from the appropriate institutional review board. Permission was also obtained from local authorities and community leaders in the Bia East and Bia West Districts to ensure that the study respected community structures and cultural norms. These steps were crucial in gaining the trust and cooperation of the participants and in demonstrating that the research adhered to established ethical standards.

Participants were provided with detailed information about the purpose, procedures, and expected outcomes of the study. They were informed that participation was entirely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. Written informed consent was obtained prior to participation, with the consent forms outlining the nature of the study, the role of participants, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher ensured that the language used in explaining the study was clear and understandable to all participants.

To protect the privacy and identity of participants, pseudonyms were assigned during transcription, and all identifying information was removed from the data. Interview recordings, transcripts, and observation notes were stored securely and accessible only to the researcher. Any reporting of the findings used anonymized data to ensure that individual participants could not be identified. Cultural sensitivity was prioritized throughout the research process. The researcher took into account the customs, values, and traditions of the Sefwi community, ensuring that interactions with participants were respectful and non-intrusive. Community leaders and elders were consulted to obtain their cooperation and guidance, as their involvement was key to fostering trust and facilitating participation.

### **3.13 Summary of Chapter Three**

The chapter discussed the methodology employed to address the research questions raised in the study. It detailed the research design, the approach to the study, which is qualitative, the research site for the data collection, instrument for data collection, data collection procedure, data analysis, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, and the demographic data of respondents.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This part of the study shows the results of analyzed data and discussion of the results related to the research questions that directed the study. Findings in this chapter are presented thematically and discussed descriptively and analytically, with direct quotations from participants included to illustrate key patterns and perspectives. The analytical approach made it possible to identify recurring themes related to language use in family, religious, educational, and public domains. The presentation approach aligned closely with the research questions and ensured that the results reflected the lived experiences of the Sefwi-speaking population in the selected districts.

#### 4.1 Research Question 1: What is the current state of the linguistic and cultural of Sefwi Language in Bia East and West districts?

This question sought to find out the current state of the linguistic and cultural transmission of the Sefwi Language in the Bia East and West districts. The analysis revealed four key themes. According to Ogechi (2016), linguistic and cultural situations refer to the complex interplay between language and culture in specific social, historical, or geographical contexts. Language and culture are inseparably linked. Language expresses culture, while culture shapes language use. Themes from this question are analyzed below.

##### 4.1.1 Family as the Primary Domain for Language Transmission

The family is the most important domain for language transmission (Fishman, 1989). The family, which traditionally is the primary domain for language transmission is now the agent of language shift in the Bia East and West districts. Data indicates families increasingly use Twi at home. In many households, Sefwi is

rarely spoken as families prioritize Twi or English to align with educational and societal expectations. This shift reduces the language's presence in daily life, weakening its intergenerational transmission. Respondents KWA 2, ESS1, KAA 2, ESS 4 said the following to *the question what language do you speak at home with your children or grandchildren?*

*I do not speak Sefwi with our children because they do not learn it at school, I want my children to be fluent speakers of Twi since it is examinable aside that it is not studied at schools you hardly hear Sefwi being spoken when you travel out of Sefwi land but Twi is spoken everywhere in Ghana.” (KWA2).*

This respondent, sees language shift as not merely a passive process of assimilation but an active, strategic choice made by parents seeking the best possible opportunities for children. He succinctly stated, the exclusion of Sefwi language from the educational curriculum and its limited geographical utility directly informed his decision to prioritize Twi at home. He attaches prestige to Twi ignoring Sefwi his native language which reflect his true identity. This aligns with what Rohani et al. (2005), argument that language shift begins when parents prioritize L2 at home as one respondent noted,

*Our grandparents always speak Sefwi to us. They don't like mixing with Twi. They tell us to always speak Sefwi which is our native language so we should feel proud to speak. (ESS1).*

This response shows the respondent sees the Sefwi language as his heritage language and attaches prestige to it. The older generation are still attached to their root and have not been pressured to speak the dominant language whilst the youth are neglecting the use of the Sefwi language the elderly people still hold fast to it.

*My grandchildren cannot speak Sefwi well, they only know some few words because their parents speak Twi and English with them. (ESS4).*

*Most parents do not speak or teach their children how to speak Sefwi they prefer speaking Twi and English at home so that their children can be fluent in those languages. (KAA2)*

Responses from respondents ESS4 and KAA2 show many parents actively choose not to speak Sefwi with their children, meanwhile the family is the primary domain for transmission but they choose Twi and English over the Sefwi language believing proficiency in Twi and English is more beneficial for education and future opportunities. These findings align with Batibo's triglossic structure of language use that place ex-colonial languages as high (H) which is linked to educational and other formal settings and a dominant language as a lingua franca (M) and a minority language as low(L). Twi is a lingua franca in Ghana. It is used in daily activities whilst Sefwi a minority language is relegated for ritual use. The findings also align with one of the domains of use by Fishman which is education. According to Fishman a high-status language is used in formal settings because it is usually an official language. One respondent remarked,

*I seldom speak the language at home and in public because my children don't understand the language. I didn't teach them because my husband speaks Ewe, and I don't understand Ewe, so we speak Twi at home. (DEB3).*

Respondent DEB3 indicates that marriages between speakers of different languages often lead to the adoption of lingua franca (Twi) at home, excluding Sefwi in Bia East and West Districts. Many parents choose not to teach their children Sefwi, fearing that

it might disadvantage them in school or work instead, they prioritize Twi or English at home. This is in line with the findings of Sarwat et al. (2000), who said Pakistani families abroad abandon L1 for a perceived socioeconomic gain. According to Mensah and Owusu (2021), Ghanaian urban families favor English for upward mobility. Again, inter-ethnic marriages and the need for a lingua franca at home lead to the exclusion of Sefwi from domestic language use. This trend limits children's exposure to the language, further accelerating its decline. With the exception of the response from respondent ESS1 which aligns with Fishman's (1989) theoretical framework which states that the family as the primary domains that transmit language to the younger generations. However, the responses from KWA2, DEB3 and ESS1 demonstrate a clear deviation from this theory, reflecting the pressure from Batibo's triglossic model where Twi (M) and English dominate domestic life.

My observations also shows that most parents who do not have formal education speak Twi with their children whilst those who have formal education speak Twi and English with their children at home. When parents who are the primary agents of transmission refuse to speak the language with their children, they will not be able to transmit it to their future offspring. The erosion of Sefwi in the home undermines its transmission, validating Fishman's theory.

#### **4.1.2 Cultural and Traditional Events Promoting Sefwi**

Religion is one of the domains of language transmission by Fishman. Culture is embedded in religion, festivals, staple food, songs and traditions are parts of culture. In stark contrast to the domestic sphere, the Sefwi language remains vibrant and essential within cultural and ceremonial contexts, acting as a primary marker of cultural identity. The celebration of the annual traditional festival, Eluo serves as a critical platform for the mandatory use of the Sefwi language for rituals, libations, and

music. These events, deeply rooted in cultural heritage, mandate the use of Sefwi during specific rituals, ensuring that the language retains a ceremonial and symbolic role within the community. This is evidenced by responses from ESS1, KAA 3, ADA 4, KWA 4 as indicated as a response to the question *how often do you speak Sefwi and in which situations do you mostly use it?*

*Sefwi is spoken throughout when a fetish priest is performing libation during the celebration of the Eluo festival and it has become a norm. (ESS1).*

*During the celebration of the Eluo festival, it is compulsory to use Sefwi, as it is a long-standing tradition passed down by our ancestors (KAA3).*

*If a ritual is being performed in the palace, Sefwi is spoken throughout and then it is translated into Twi for those who don't understand. Music is also sung in Sefwi. Staple food like kangabeso and ngasuro are served (ADA4).*

*Sefwi is spoken throughout when a fetish priest is pouring libation during Eluo festival. If a ritual is performed in the palace, Sefwi is spoken first and translated to Twi for those who do not understand Sefwi to understand. (KWA1)*

*During our traditional festivals, we hear Sefwi songs, stories, and proverbs. At weddings and outdoor ceremonies, elders always speak Sefwi to bless the couple or child. (KAA1)*

*During funerals and festivals, we hear songs, stories, proverbs and drama in Sefwi. It reminds people to value the language. It keeps the language alive (DEB2)*

The responses from the respondents above aligns with the findings of Danso and Darko (2018), who indicated that cultural events reinforce linguistic pride. This sustained use of Sefwi in cultural rituals reinforces Garcia and Martinez (2015), who

said ritual domains act as sanctuaries for endangered languages. Owusu and Mensah (2021), also said symbolic use sustains cultural relevance but not functional vitality. This affirms Fishman's concept of the religion domain as a stronghold for minority languages. It acts as a vital mechanism for language maintenance by providing a high-prestige, exclusive space for the language, directly countering the shift observed in the home domain. My observations in the community showed that the role of the Sefwi language in traditional and cultural events is important to their cultural identity. The preservation of the Sefwi language is deeply intertwined with cultural and traditional practices in the Bia East and West districts. It was discovered that rituals and festivals like the Eluo celebration provide a vital platform for maintaining the language's relevance. These events emphasize the connection between language and cultural identity, serving as a stronghold for preserving Sefwi as an integral part of the community's heritage. The pride and emotional attachment associated with speaking Sefwi reflect its role as a marker of identity, reinforcing its importance beyond mere communication.

The use of Sefwi in rituals (Eluo Festival) reinforces its symbolic role into cultural heritage. The Sefwi language remains integral to specific traditional rituals and events, such as the Eluo festival. This indicates its deep cultural roots and symbolic significance in maintaining traditional customs. The inclusivity of Sefwi in these ceremonies highlights the community's effort to preserve its language, although its use is limited to these specific contexts.

#### **4.1.3 Positive Attitudes towards Sefwi Identity**

The Sefwi language is a powerful symbol of identity and pride for its speakers. Sefwi is viewed as a cultural treasure by its speakers. Its use, particularly when meeting fellow speakers outside the community, reinforces a sense of belonging and

strengthens the collective resolve to preserve the language as a key part of cultural heritage. The joy derived from encountering fellow speakers outside the community indicates a strong sense of identity and pride tied to the language. This underscores the role of language as a unifier for those who are geographically or socially dispersed. Responses from respondents ADA1, ESS4, KWA3 and KBK3 stated the following to the question *in your opinion what does the Sefwi language hold to you and your community?*

*When respected people in the community use Sefwi it motivates us to speak it too. Chiefs and elders encourage us to use Sefwi during meetings and ceremonies (KBK3).*

*We feel proud when we speak Sefwi because it shows we are from here.*

*We enjoy speaking our Sefwi dialect; it is our mother tongue (ADA1).*

*I am proud to be a native of Sefwi and it makes me happy to speak it, especially when I travel and find someone who speaks it.*

*When I meet someone who speaks Sefwi in Kumasi, it makes me happy to speak it (ESS4).*

*I am proud to be native of Sefwi, speaking it makes me happy, especially when travelling.*

*My friends and I speak Sefwi when we are together. It makes us feel united.*

*We enjoy speaking Sefwi, it is our mother tongue (KWA3).*

The four respondents strongly associated the language to cultural heritage as it is part of who they are as a people. They see Sefwi language as a tool for in-group solidarity and bonding. Sefwi serves as a strong symbol of identity, reinforcing social bonds

among speakers. The use of the language, especially when meeting fellow Sefwi speakers outside the community, strengthens cultural ties and fosters a sense of pride.

The response from the above respondents aligns with Fishman's (1989) theoretical framework which emphasizes language, as a marker of cultural identity.

#### **4.1.4 Intergenerational Language Dynamics**

This theme focuses on the attitudes and behaviors of different age groups toward the Sefwi language. There is a clear generational divide in language proficiency, use, and attitude, indicating a break in transmission. Language maintenance in the Bia East and West districts is strongly influenced by intergenerational interactions. Elders often maintain pride in speaking Sefwi, viewing it as a core aspect of their cultural identity they continue to uphold the use of Sefwi, viewing it as a cornerstone of their cultural identity. Their steadfast commitment to the language provides a model for its preservation, however, some of the younger generations tend to shy away from using it due to societal pressures and perceptions of sophistication tied to dominant languages like Twi and English even as younger generations drift toward dominant languages the elders maintain pride in its usage. These dynamic highlights the tension between preserving linguistic heritage and adapting to modern societal norms. The following are responses from three of the respondents to the *what do you think young and old people feel about speaking Sefwi compared to Twi or English?*

*Youth feel shy speaking Sefwi; elders do not. Migrants abandon Sefwi in cities they prefer speaking Asante Twi, when they travel to Kumasi and Accra (ADA2).*

*Elders maintain pride in Sefwi as part of their identity. For me, I am in my town, so I don't feel shy speaking my own dialect. The youth feel shy speaking the Sefwi dialect, but the elderly ones don't (KBK1).*

*The elderly feels proud of the language because they see it as part of their identity. Our grandparents spoke only Sefwi, we the grandchildren prefer Twi or English.*

*(ESS3).*

Fishman (1989) explains how urbanization on intergenerational attributes to the accelerated decline of marginalized languages. Younger generations often shy away from speaking Sefwi due to societal pressures and the fear of being perceived as unsophisticated. This reluctance highlights the generational gap in attitudes toward the language and poses a significant challenge to its maintenance. Younger generations associate speaking Sefwi with negative social perceptions, such as being unsophisticated. This reluctance to use the language reflects a generational shift in attitudes, influenced by exposure to modernity and dominant languages like Twi and English.

While elders tend to uphold the language as a cultural cornerstone, migration and exposure to urban environments erode this pride among younger generations. This dichotomy illustrates the vulnerability of Sefwi as a minority language within broader sociolinguistic trends.

The findings provide nuanced insights into the cultural and sociolinguistic dimensions of Sefwi. The language thrives in traditional ceremonies, such as the Eluo festival, where it is exclusively spoken during libations and rituals. These practices underscore the language's symbolic importance as a marker of identity and cultural heritage. These activities ensure that the language remains a vibrant part of cultural

expressions despite its declining use in other domains. However, societal pressures favoring Twi and English, perceived as languages of prestige and upward mobility, have marginalized Sefwi particularly among younger generations.

Intergenerational dynamics also shape the language's trajectory. While elders maintain pride in speaking Sefwi and view it as integral to their identity, younger generations often shy away from using it due to societal perceptions of sophistication tied to dominant languages.

Despite the decline some of participants expressed a strong cultural connection when speaking Sefwi preferred using it in daily interactions. This aligns with findings by Fishman (1989), who highlights the critical role of language in fostering cultural identity and cohesion. Cultural events, such as the Eluo festival highlight this connection by providing a platform where Sefwi thrives through exclusive use in rituals and libations. As Danso and Darko (2018) found that festivals and communalities can effectively reinforce linguistic pride and identity.

The respondents acknowledged efforts to raise children to speak Sefwi intergenerational transmission remains fragile. Rohani et al. (2005) emphasize that the home is a critical domain for language preservation. However, the increasing adoption of Twi and English at home undermines the natural transmission of Sefwi.

The attitudes of younger generations further complicate this dynamic. Many youths shy away from using Sefwi due to societal pressures associating it with rural identities. This reflects a broader trend where younger individuals favor dominant languages perceived as symbols of sophistication and modernity. The dominant use of Twi and English in school limits opportunities for children to learn and use Sefwi, perpetuating its marginalization.

Families prioritize Twi and English for perceived economic and educational advantages, aligning with global trends where dominant languages displace minority ones. Crystal (2000) emphasizes that globalization often leads to the marginalization of indigenous languages, as communities adopt languages linked to upward mobility.

This study's finding corroborates with Fishman (1989) who stated sociolinguistic phenomenon emerges from language encounter. It is a phenomenon whereby a community shifts from using one language to another or languages. When members of a speech community have difficulties communicating with one another, it is usually because they have been uprooted from their original group. The linguistic situation of Sefwi is one of a diglossic conflict where its "Low" (L) status in high-prestige domains like education and home life clashes with its "High" (H) status in cultural and identity domains. The restriction of Sefwi to cultural and traditional domains supports Fishman's proposition that when a language loses ground in public and institutional domains, it becomes vulnerable to shift. Although Sefwi remains symbolically strong during festivals and rituals, its limited use in education, religion, and the media signals reduced functional vitality.

General variation in language use further confirms this trend. Younger speaker's preference for Asante Twi aligns with Batibo's (2005) Triglissic Model, where minority languages occupy low-status domains while dominant indigenous and ex-colonial languages control high-prestigious functions. Sefwi is the minority language, Twi is the dominant indigenous language, and English as the ex-colonial language. Similar generational patterns have been reported in studies on Efutu, Ahanta, and Bono, suggesting that Sefwi follows a broader Ghanaian pattern of minority language shift. Nevertheless, the continued cultural relevance of Sefwi demonstrates that the language maintenance is not entirely eroded. Cultural pride,

traditional institutions, and ritual usage act as stabilizing forces, echoing findings from previous African studies that identify culture as a key resource for minority language survival. The language is maintained symbolically through cultural pride and traditional practices. The triglossic structure of language showcases the ex-colonial languages including English, Portuguese, French, German, Spanish, and Italian are widely spoken.

The ex-colonial languages are the languages of Africa's colonial masters, which Africans have accepted as official languages in their respective countries. According to the paradigm, these languages are the most prestigious among Africans' linguistic repertoires. Batibo (2005:17) opines that ex-colonial languages are employed in all high-level official interactions such as foreign relations, diplomacy, and official government business. Based on the theories, it can be said that the Sefwi language is gradually shifting down towards the Twi and English language.

#### **4.2.0 Research Question 2: What are the factors of language shift in the Bia East and West districts?**

This question is to find out the factors of language shift within the Bia East and West districts. Language shift occurs when a community gradually abandons its native language in favor of another, often due to socio-political, economic, or cultural pressures (Obligar, 2023). Five themes were derived from this question.

##### **4.2.1 Twi and English Prestige**

This theme addresses the external factors contributing to the diminishing use of Sefwi, particularly the dominance of other languages. The shift away from the Sefwi language in favor of Twi and English is driven by perceptions of prestige and utility. Twi and English dominate educational, economic, and social spheres, creating an environment where Sefwi is marginalized. Additionally, the pervasive influence of

media, which predominantly uses Twi and English, exacerbates the decline of Sefwi. These factors contribute to a gradual erosion of the language, prioritizing broader linguistic trends over localized traditions.

Twi and English are perceived as languages of upward mobility and sophistication, overshadowing Sefwi. Their dominance in education, commerce, and media marginalizes Sefwi and discourages its use among younger generations. These are the responses from some of the respondents to the question *in your opinion does speaking of Twi or English provide more opportunities in terms of education, jobs or social acceptance?*

*English and Twi are seen as prestigious languages because they are written and taught in schools, unlike Sefwi, which is not taught in schools (KAA 2).*

*We attach prestige to Twi and English, thinking if one becomes fluent in those languages, it will open wider doors of opportunities to them more than Sefwi (ESS2).*

*Everywhere one visits in Ghana, you hear people speaking Twi. Twi and English are seen as prestigious for education and jobs and they are widely spoken (ADA3).*

*Everywhere in Ghana, people speak Twi. Youth feel reluctant to speak Sefwi in public. Migrants switch to Twi or English in cities (KWA 2)*

*I love our language, but I use Twi and English because they are needed for school and work (KBK 4)*

The perception of Twi and English as languages of prestige and advancement has diminished the relevance of Sefwi. The dominance of these languages in

education, commerce, and social interactions has created a preference for their use, relegating Sefwi to a secondary status.

*English and Twi are seen as prestigious languages because they are written and taught in schools, unlike Sefwi, which is not a written language (ESS 1)*

Twi and English have become dominant in Ghana, pushing Sefwi to a lower status. Twi, being widely spoken across the country, and English, being the language of education and business, have made Sefwi seem less important.

*We attach prestige to Twi and English, thinking if one becomes fluent in those languages, it will open wider doors of opportunities (DEB 4).*

*Youth of Sefwi prefer speaking other languages, especially Twi, when they travel to Kumasi and Accra (KBK 2).*

*We attach prestige to Twi and English for opportunities Sefwi natives prefer Twi in urban areas especially when in public (KAA 4)*

*People respect you more if you speak Twi or English. That is why Sefwi is losing value (KWA 4).*

*Parents think teaching children Twi or English will help them in life, so they no longer speak Sefwi to them (DEB 3).*

Batibo (2005) highlights ex colonial languages (English) as dominant in formal domains marginalizing indigenous languages like Sefwi. The perception of Twi and English as languages of upward mobility in education and socioeconomic status undermines the status of Sefwi. Their widespread use in formal settings further alienates Sefwi speakers and incentivizes a shift towards these "prestigious" languages for better integration and opportunities.

#### 4.2.2 Media and Technology Impact on Sefwi

This theme highlights that media and technology are powerful forces in shaping language use and perceptions. The dominance of Twi and English on platforms like radio, television, and social media reduces the visibility of Sefwi, limiting its appeal and usage. These are responses from some of the respondents *do you think there is enough support from the media and technology and authorities in promoting Sefwi? Why or why not?*

*Media platforms like Radio or Tv use Twi or English not Sefwi.*

*Local news is tapped from Accra Twi stations. (DEB 1).*

*The radio stations here tap their news from radio stations from Accra, and the news and other programs are run in Twi. (DEB 4).*

*When you're using TikTok, no one understands Sefwi. You can only speak English or Twi (ADA 4)*

*Radio and television stations use English and Twi, contributing to the decline of the Sefwi dialect (KWA 4).*

The data indicate that media advancement and technology have contributed to the shift of the Sefwi language to the dominate English and Twi language.

This confirms Boateng and Amankwah (2020), who highlights media's role in promoting dominant languages. The pervasive use of Twi and English in media marginalizes Sefwi, further diminishing its relevance in public and private spheres.

The dominance of Twi and English in media creates a linguistic landscape where Sefwi is virtually invisible. This lack of representation diminishes its appeal and usage among speakers. Radio and television stations prioritize Twi and English, leading to the decline of Sefwi. This lack of media representation makes it difficult for the language to thrive. Media platforms, such as radio and television,

overwhelmingly favor Twi and English, contributing to the decline of Sefwi. This lack of representation not only reduces Sefwi's visibility but also influences societal attitudes, leading to the further marginalization of the language. Media platforms play a significant role in language preference. This suggests that the media perpetuates linguistic inequality and reinforces the societal preference for dominant languages. Nguyen & Kim (2021), posits that minority languages need intentional digital presence to survive. Media exclusion reduces Sefwi's visibility and relevance, weakening its ecological support.

#### 4.2.3 Institutional and Structural Challenges

This theme highlights systemic barriers that limit the use of the Sefwi language in formal and public settings. The lack of institutional support for Sefwi poses significant challenge to its maintenance. The absence of formal documentation and resources limits its use in schools and other formal settings, depriving younger generations of opportunities to engage with the language academically. Additionally, restrictive educational policies that prioritize English and Twi create barriers to Sefwi's growth, further marginalizing it within the community. Addressing these systemic issues is essential for ensuring the language's survival. Some respondents said the following to the *question how do schools, workplaces, and government policies influence the choice of language in your communities?*

*Sefwi is not taught in schools due to lack of documentation so teachers punish students for speaking Sefwi in class (KAA 4)*

*No written material exists for use in schools are in Sefwi that makes Sefwi language unexaminable, so schools prioritize English or Twi (ADAI).*

*Government and schools do not support our language. Without support, it will die slowly. We don't see Sefwi being taught in schools. Everything is done in English or Twi (DEB1)*

The lack of institutional support and unfavorable policies have significantly hindered the maintenance of Sefwi. Without formal documentation or inclusion in educational curricula, Sefwi remains excluded from formal settings, which further limits its growth and prestige.

This is affirmed by Amoako and Owusu (2020), who stated in their work that Ghanaian educational policies marginalize indigenous languages. According to them Ghana's language -in- education policy marginalizes non-Akan languages. Adegbija (2000), agrees that institutional neglect is a primary cause of language endangerment in Africa. Quansah & Addo (2018), also claim English dominance in Ghanaian schools accelerates language shift. Without institutional support, Sefwi cannot gain prestige or legitimacy, reinforcing Batibo's theory.

#### **4.2.4 Limited Sefwi Documentation**

The limited written materials and formal documentation for Sefwi significantly limits its integration into educational curricula and institutional use. This gap underscores the systemic neglect that contributes to the language's marginalization. These are what some of the respondents said to the question *do you think there is enough support from authorities to promote the Sefwi language?*

*We don't speak Sefwi in schools because it has not been documented to be used (KBK 4). Sefwi is not on the time table so its usage in schools is minimal. Teachers do not allow students to speak Sefwi during contact hours because it is not examinable. (ADA 3).*

Sefwi lack formal written materials, making it difficult to integrate into educational curricula or institutional settings. The limited written materials in Sefwi restricts its use in education and formal institutions. This lack of institutional support perpetuates its marginalization and discourages intergenerational transmission in both formal and informal settings. The absence of written resources and institutional recognition for Sefwi prevents its integration into schools and other formal domains, curbing its development. One of the participants during the interview indicated:

*We do not learn Sefwi in schools because it has not been documented to be used so its usage in schools is minimal because it is not taught (KBK 2).*

*Majority of religious bodies are also guilty of the shift as most of them also use Twi and English for sermons side lining the use of Sefwi. However, some churches read the Sefwi version of the New Testament... the Old Testament has not been translated yet (ADA 2).*

Unlike Twi and English, Sefwi is not widely documented or used as a written language. This affects its presence in schools, government offices, and the media, making it difficult for younger generations to learn and use it formally.

The limited written materials and official recognition for Sefwi hinders its inclusion in schools and limits its potential for growth and preservation in educational contexts. The lack of widespread written materials in Sefwi hampers its development and integration into formal domains, such as education and government. According to the respondent *below*:

*Even if people want to learn Sefwi, there are no books to help them (ESS I)*

The lack of educational materials and official documentation in Sefwi limits its inclusion in schools and restricts its development as a written language. Addressing

this gap is critical for formalizing its status. Sefwi lacks sufficient written materials, making it difficult to teach and preserve the language. Unlike Twi and English, Sefwi is not widely documented, limiting its use in education and formal communication. The absence of textbooks and learning materials further contributes to its decline.

#### 4.2.5 Educational Policies and Sefwi Speaking Barriers in Schools

Educational policies that discourage the use of Sefwi in classrooms further undermine its status. Restricting its use during school hours deprives students of the opportunity to develop proficiency, reinforcing the dominance of English and Twi. The following are some respondents answer to the question *do you think educational policies support the promotion of the language?*

*The Sefwi dialect is not allowed during school contact hours, but some speak it during break times (ESS2).*

*We can't speak Sefwi in school, so we use Twi and English instead. Teachers punish students for speaking Sefwi instead of English in class (KAA 1).*

*In school and even at church, almost everything is done in Twi, we are on Sefwi land but our children study Twi which is an examinable subject in the curriculum so the children grow up speaking it (DEB 3).*

Schools often discourage the use of Sefwi in favor of English and Twi because it is not on the time table. This exclusion reinforces the perception that Sefwi is not recognized in formal education. Educational policies favoring English and Twi create an unfavorable environment for Sefwi. Prohibiting its use in classrooms undermines its legitimacy and diminishes students' proficiency and confidence in speaking it.

These restrictions reduce opportunities for younger generations to engage with the language, contributing to its decline. A respondent during the interview remarked:

*The Sefwi dialect is not allowed during school contact hours, but some speak it during break times. (ESS 3)*

*Stakeholders should ensure Sefwi becomes one of the examinable languages in Ghana because efforts have been made to translate the New Testament so such effort should be made to develop a Sefwi textbook to teach the language (ADA 4).*

*Teachers are part of the problem because they do not allow students to speak Sefwi. Students are allowed to speak or Twi during contact hours (KBK 4).*

Policies that prioritize English and discourage the use of Sefwi in classrooms reduce its relevance among younger generations, perpetuating its decline.

#### **4.2.6 Modernization and Globalization Effects**

This theme examines how societal changes, and global influences contribute to the decline of the Sefwi language. Modernization and globalization have significantly impacted the use of Sefwi within the Bia East and West districts. The language is rarely spoken at home as families prioritize Twi or English for perceived practical benefits, such as academic and professional success. The adoption of urban lifestyles and exposure to global influences have further accelerated the decline of Sefwi, creating a pressing need to balance modernization with cultural preservation. Modernization has accelerated the decline of Sefwi. Younger generations, influenced by global trends and the perceived utility of dominant languages, are moving away from Sefwi, creating an urgent need for preservation strategies. These are the

responses from some of the respondents to the question *what makes people prefer speaking Twi or English to Sefwi?*

*Some youth struggle to translate certain words into Sefwi, and they feel embarrassed when corrected (ADA 2).*

*Some persons feel reluctant to speak Sefwi especially when they travel to bigger towns, they prefer speaking English or other languages instead of using our native dialect (ESS4).*

Modernization has led to the erosion of traditional practices, including the use of indigenous languages like Sefwi. Young people associate modernization with speaking global and widely spoken languages like English and Twi. The influence of modern education and urban lifestyles diminishes the value of Sefwi among the youth. Limited opportunities to use the language led to declining proficiency and a growing gap between older and younger generations.

The data shows that there is issue of shift of the language. A significant majority said the use of Sefwi language is decreasing in their district. Despite the decline, few of the participant expressed a strong connection to their culture when speaking the language, some also preferred to use it in daily interactions. Cultural events were recognized as a vital platform for promoting the language, some agreed that these events foster its use. Furthermore, some of the participants acknowledged that children in their district are being raised to speak the language, underscoring ongoing intergenerational efforts to sustain its relevance.

The decline of the Sefwi language is influenced by multiple factors, including societal attitudes, modernization, education policies, and media representation. While elders maintain pride in the language, younger generations are shifting towards Twi

and English due to perceived prestige and economic opportunities. Without conscious efforts to document and integrate Sefwi into schools and media, its decline may continue. For Sefwi to thrive, leaders and community members must work together to promote its usage, create learning materials, and encourage its use in both formal and informal settings

#### **4.2.7 Sociocultural Perceptions of Language**

The sociocultural perceptions of language play a significant role in shaping the use and maintenance of Sefwi. In the Bia East and West districts, the preference for Twi and English reflects a broader societal trend associating these languages with prestige, education, and opportunity. While Sefwi holds cultural significance, its lower social status poses a challenge for its sustained use and development. Batibo (2005) links language prestige to socioeconomic mobility. Twi and English have become dominant languages in Ghana, particularly in schools, workplaces, and media. Twi's widespread use and English's global status contribute to the decline of Sefwi. Many parents prefer their children to be fluent in English and Twi, believing these languages offer better opportunities in education and employment. The preference for Twi and English reflects their perceived higher status as languages of education, commerce, and social mobility. This perception undermines Sefwi, relegating it to a position of lesser importance. Younger speakers often feel hesitant or embarrassed to speak Sefwi, associating it with rural or unsophisticated identities. This confirms Cavallaro (2005) who confirms language loss leads to identity fragmentation. This reluctance highlights societal pressures that prioritize dominant languages. These are responses to the question *have you noticed any changes in how often people use the Sefwi language in your communities?*

*The youth feel reluctant speaking the Sefwi dialect, but the elderly ones do not. The youth feel reluctant to speak the dialect though they are natives of Sefwi but they Twi to English (KAA 4).*

*When some of us travel to bigger towns, we prefer speaking English or other languages to fellow Sefwi dialect speakers instead of using our native dialect even when we return to our communities (KBK 2).*

The researcher observed that younger speakers often feel reluctant to use Sefwi, associating it with rural or unsophisticated identities this aligns with Rodriguez & Garcia (2024), confirms that youth often reject heritage languages due to stigma. This attitude is a significant barrier to language maintenance and reflects broader societal pressures favoring dominant languages. Many young people feel shy or even embarrassed to speak Sefwi. This is often due to social pressure, the belief that Sefwi is not as prestigious as Twi or English, or fear of being mocked. Some youth see Sefwi as a rural language and prefer to use Twi or English in public settings.

#### **4.2.8 Intergenerational Transmission and Family Dynamics**

Intergenerational interactions are pivotal to language maintenance. Elders often serve as custodians of Sefwi, are maintaining its use and emphasizing its cultural importance. However, younger generations face societal pressures to adopt dominant languages, creating a gap in language transmission. The declining use of Sefwi in many households limits its transmission to younger generations, posing a threat to its survival as some of the respondents said the following in response to the question *what language is mostly spoken at home, and why do you think such language is chosen?*

*We mix Sefwi and Twi when we talk. Sometimes we even add English words at home we don't use Sefwi often. Children answer in Twi even if you start in Sefwi (KWA 3)*

*Some parents do not teach their children Sefwi at home to help them succeed in using Twi or English later (DEB 2).*

*Parents should speak Sefwi at home to maintain the language, but most prefer using Twi (KAA 3).*

*If the younger generation does not learn Sefwi, the language will be lost in some years to come (KBK 1)*

Some parents avoid teaching their children Sefwi, often viewing proficiency in dominant languages as more critical for future opportunities. This breaks the cycle of natural language transmission across generations. Younger generations are not learning Sefwi as most parents focus on Twi and the educated ones English to enhance their children's future success. This has resulted in a weakening of Sefwi across generations. In many households, Sefwi is rarely spoken, as families prioritize Twi or English to enhance communication to align with societal expectations. This shift diminishes opportunities for children to learn Sefwi, weakening its presence in daily life. A one respondent during the interview said,

*I seldom speak the language at home and in public because my children don't understand the language (ADA 2).*

*Most of the educated ones speak Twi and English because they are examinable and for their children to gain proficiency in those languages, they prefer speaking them to Sefwi ((KBK 2).*

*Even natives of the Sefwi dialect are not using it at home, which is why we're seeing these changes. (ADA 2).*

Many Sefwi parents no longer speak the language at home, opting for Twi or English instead. This shift reduces the exposure of children to Sefwi, making it difficult for them to learn and use the language fluently. The decision not to speak Sefwi at home reflects a conscious or unconscious prioritization of Twi and English. This limits children's exposure to their heritage language, accelerating its decline.

#### **4.2.9 Urbanization and Migration Influence**

Urban migration and exposure to cosmopolitan lifestyles have significantly influenced language use in the Bia East and West districts. Migrants often adopt dominant languages like Twi and English, reducing their reliance on Sefwi even upon returning home, this shift impacts community language practices and intergenerational transmission. The movement of individuals to urban centers fosters a shift away from Sefwi as migrants adopt languages that dominate in metropolitan areas, such as Twi and English. Below are some of the responses from the respondents to the question *what make people prefer speaking Twi or English instead of Sefwi?*

*Young natives of Sefwi prefer speaking other languages, especially Twi, when they travel to Kumasi and Accra (KWA 4).*

*People in urban areas are more likely to abandon their native languages to fit into society (DEB 3).*

*If you travel outside Sefwi, you realize that even Sefwi natives do not speak the language. Sefwi natives prefer Twi in Kumasi and Accra.*

*Urban migrants abandon Sefwi to fit in Returning migrants continue using Twi or English. Exposure to cities erodes Sefwi use (KBK 3)*

*Some elderly individuals who return from bigger towns stop speaking Sefwi, especially when they're exposed to new languages (ESS 1)*

Migration to urban centers introduces speakers to environments where Twi and English dominate. Returning migrants often adopt these languages over Sefwi, which further marginalizes it in their home communities. Many Sefwi speakers migrate to cities such as Kumasi and Accra, where they switch to Twi or English. This shift weakens Sefwi as fewer people speak it in urban areas. Mensah and Owusu (2017) link migration to language shift their findings show that most of the youth switch to other languages on other to fit and also for opportunities. Their claims align with the findings of Singh and Patel (2022), who posit that migrants adopt dominant languages for integration. Migration disrupts linguistic continuity and reinforces dominant language ideologies.

The complex interplay of sociocultural perceptions, institutional barriers, generational dynamics, media influence, and urban migration from the data for the study underscores the pervasive dominance of Twi and English in daily life. An overwhelming majority of participants reported that younger people in the district speak Twi more frequently than Sefwi. This linguistic shift is particularly evident in public spaces, where participants indicated hearing Twi or English instead of Sefwi. I observed that local businesses prefer using Twi to call customers because it is understood by most people. Again, Twi is used in institutions such as schools and churches. The erosion of Sefwi's presence within families is also significant. Most of the participants confirmed that families are increasingly adopting Twi or English at home, reducing children's exposure to their native language. However, there remains a glimmer of hope, as few of the participants actively encourage their children to speak Sefwi. Cultural pride is also evident, with some expressing joy when they hear Sefwi spoken in public. Yet, these efforts are overshadowed by the broader trends of

language shift, as some of the participants expressed concern that Sefwi is being replaced by Twi and English in daily communication.

The sociocultural landscape of the Bia East and West districts places Twi in a position of prestige. These languages are associated with education, economic mobility, and modernity, making them more desirable for communication in both public and private spheres. Younger generations often shy away from speaking Sefwi, perceiving it as less sophisticated. This societal pressure marginalizes Sefwi, limiting its use to cultural and ceremonial contexts. Again, the lack of institutional support for Sefwi further exacerbates its decline. The language is not formally documented or included in school curricula, preventing its integration into formal educational and governmental domains. Policies that prioritize English and Twi in schools create significant barriers, reducing opportunities for younger generations to engage with Sefwi in meaningful ways therefore some Parents do not teach their children Sefwi that makes the educated families to prioritize English or Twi at home. If the family which is the crucial agent of transmission fails to do so the children will learn it will be will be relegated to cultural functions.

Fishman's (1981) theory stresses the home as intergenerational transmission. Intergenerational dynamics reveal a widening gap in language use and transmission. Elders in the community maintain pride in speaking Sefwi, viewing it as a cornerstone of their cultural identity. However, the youth increasingly prioritize Twi or English at home, believing these languages will provide their children with better opportunities. This shift weakens the natural transmission of Sefwi, leaving younger generations with limited proficiency. The dominance of Twi and English in media has created a linguistic landscape where Sefwi is virtually invisible. Radio, television, and social media platforms overwhelmingly favor these dominant languages, further diminishing

Sefwi's relevance and appeal among younger audiences. Media's role in shaping language perceptions underscores its contribution to the decline of minority languages like Sefwi. Additionally, migration to urban centers, where Twi and English dominate, has significantly influenced language practices in the Bia East and West districts. Migrants often adopt these languages to integrate into metropolitan life. Upon returning to their communities, they continue to use Twi and English, further marginalizing Sefwi and eroding its presence in everyday interactions.

The study's data reveals that younger people predominantly speak Twi and English, with most people hearing these languages more frequently than Sefwi in public spaces. This linguistic dominance is rooted in societal perceptions that associate Twi and English with economic mobility, education, and modernity. Batibo's (2004), theory found that language shifts occur when one language gains prestige over another in multilingual settings. In Ghana, English occupies a dominant position in governance, education, and business, while Twi serves as the lingua franca in many regions, further marginalizing indigenous languages like Sefwi. This dynamic aligns with findings by Mensah and Owusu (2020), who note that urbanization and migration exacerbate language shifts by promoting dominant languages. Economic opportunities tied to the dominant language are a key driver of language shift. The study found that majority of the respondents believe that speaking Twi or English enhances employment prospects, reflecting broader trends where economic imperatives dictate linguistic choices. Holmes (2001), underscores that languages associated with better job opportunities often replace minority languages as individuals prioritize economic advancement.

Additionally, institutional policies favoring English and Twi in education contribute significantly to Sefwi's decline. The respondents noted a decrease in the

use of Sefwi in schools and churches. This aligns with Amoako and Owusu's (2020) findings, which highlight that Ghanaian educational policies marginalize indigenous languages, accelerating shifts toward dominant languages. The societal association of Twi and English with sophistication has led younger generations to shy away from Sefwi, perceiving it as less prestigious. This mirrors findings by Fishman (1991), who asserts that negative attitudes toward minority languages perpetuate their marginalization and erode their vitality. Despite this, cultural pride persists among some community members. Few of the participants actively encourage their children to speak Sefwi, demonstrating the potential for community-driven efforts to counteract language decline. Ansah and Appiah (2017), emphasize that fostering positive attitudes toward a heritage language is critical for its maintenance.

The dominance of Twi and English in media is another factor marginalizing Sefwi. Boateng and Amankwah (2019), argue that media platforms perpetuate linguistic shifts by promoting dominant languages and portraying them as symbols of progress. However, the integration of Sefwi into media and digital platforms could serve as a revitalization tool. Nguyen and Kim (2021), highlight the role of technology in preserving minority languages through apps, online courses, and social media. The study highlights the erosion of intergenerational transmission, with most of the participants noting that families increasingly adopt Twi or English at home. Fishman (1991), stresses that the survival of minority languages relies on their consistent transmission within families. Migration to urban centers further exacerbates this trend. Migrants often adopt dominant languages like Twi and English for integration and continue their use upon returning home, thereby marginalizing Sefwi.

This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Mensah and Owusu (2017), who document similar dynamics in Ghana's urban areas. Fishman (2015), defines language

shift, as a sociolinguistic phenomenon that emerges from language encounter. Fishman continued to indicate that a phenomenon whereby a community shifts from using one language to another is called language shift, language transfer, or language assimilation. When members of a speech community have difficulties communicating with one another, it is usually because they have been uprooted from their original group.

The triglossic structure of language showcases the ex-colonial languages including English, Portuguese, French, German, Spanish, and Italian are widely spoken. These are the languages of Africa's colonial masters, which Africans have accepted as official languages in their respective countries. According to the paradigm, these languages are the most prestigious among Africans' linguistic repertoires. According to Batibo (2005:17), these ex-colonial languages are employed in all high-level official interactions such as foreign relations, diplomacy, "and official government business. They are also linked to increased employment and social status in several African countries.

#### **4.3.0 Research Question Three: What are the factors that influence language maintenance within the Bia East and West districts?**

This question seeks to find out the factors that influence language maintenance within the Bia East and West districts. Several factors influence the likelihood of maintaining a language is often a core element of cultural and ethnic identity. Data was collected from 24 respondents on the factors that influence language maintenance within the Bia East and West districts in their respective communities.

##### **4.3.1 Cultural and Traditional Practices**

Cultural and traditional practices provide a vital foundation for maintaining Sefwi. Festivals, ceremonies, and rituals are key contexts in which the language thrives,

linking it to the community's heritage and identity. The use of Sefwi in traditional rituals, such as the Eluo festival, highlights its role in preserving cultural heritage and sustaining its relevance in ceremonial contexts. Two of the respondents have said the following to the question *what language is usually spoken during cultural festivities and other social gatherings?*

*Sefwi is spoken throughout when a fetish priest is performing libation during the celebration of the Eluo festival it is norm (KWA 1)*

*If they are doing the program in the palace, most times they speak Sefwi and then translate it to Twi. Twi is rarely used but Sefwi is used on such occasions (ADA 1).*

Sefwi is an integral part of traditional ceremonies, such as libations during the Eluo festival.

This consistent use in cultural rituals ensures its relevance and ties the language to the community's identity and heritage. This affirms what Garcia & Martinez (2015), who agreed that cultural events, festivals, and rituals provide high prestige for the language which strongly maintain it. Again, Danso & Darko (2008), confirmed that festivals and communal ceremonies are powerful tools for reinforcing linguistic pride and identity therefore the usage of Sefwi language during those celebrations will help maintain the language.

#### **4.3.2 Sefwi as a Marker of Identity**

The Sefwi language serves as a strong marker of cultural identity, fostering pride among speakers and strengthening the community's collective heritage. Speakers feel strong sense of belongingness especially when they meet in other non Sefwi speaking towns. Respondents DEB 1 and KBK 2 said the following to the question *how*

*important is the Sefwi language is to you personally, and why do you think it should be preserved for the future generations?*

*I am proud to be a native of Sefwi, and it makes me happy to speak it.*

*It makes me happy to speak Sefwi, especially when I meet someone who speaks it too (DEB1).*

*The elderly feels proud of the language because they see it as part of their identity. (KBK4).*

The emotional connection and pride associated with speaking Sefwi, especially outside the community, reflect its role in reinforcing individual and collective identity. This motivates speakers to maintain the language as a marker of their cultural roots. This aligns with Fishman's (1999), agrees that the most fundamental factor in language maintenance is its link to cultural identity.

#### **4.3.3 Intergenerational Influence**

The youth especially those returning from cities usually stick to the dominant language in the cities they lived in. Urbanization disrupts language transmission as returning migrants often continue using dominant languages instead of switching to Sefwi their communities they introduce their children too to the dominant language. Pauwels (2005), emphasizes that the family is the most crucial domain for language transmission. Active involvement by grandparents and elders helped maintain the language because they act as a conduit for the transmission of traditional linguistic and cultural knowledge therefore a break in the transmission can gradually reduce its use. Elders view Sefwi as integral to their cultural identity and actively promote its use. Their commitment to the language provides a foundation for its preservation. Some respondents gave the following answers to the *how do you think families can help children learn and use Sefwi language more?*

*We can only maintain it by speaking Sefwi to our children, to fellow natives and even to those who don't understand it (KAA 4).*

*The elderlies feel proud of the language because they see it as part of their identity (KWAI)*

*Youth who try to speak struggle to translate certain words into Sefwi.*

*When they make mistakes, the elderly correct them (ADA 2).*

Elders view Sefwi as a cultural cornerstone and actively use it, setting an example for younger generations. Their pride reinforces the language's importance in maintaining traditions and history. Unlike the youth, older generations take pride in speaking Sefwi. They continue to use the language despite the dominance of Twi and English. However, they struggle to pass it down to younger generations who prefer other languages.

Parents play a critical role in language maintenance. By consciously encouraging children to speak Sefwi, they help bridge the intergenerational gap and promote its continued use. Parental decisions regarding language use, often influenced by perceived societal and educational benefits, significantly impact children's engagement with Sefwi.

Parents play a critical role in language maintenance by actively correcting and encouraging their children to use Sefwi at home. This intentional effort can bridge the intergenerational gap and support language transmission.

#### **4.3.4 Community Efforts and Traditional Leaders Support**

Community initiatives and leadership play an essential role in promoting Sefwi. Local radio programs, leadership policies, and grassroots efforts can help preserve the language by making it more visible and valuable within the community.

In 2023, Right Reverend Kwame Kyem Ampomah, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese

in Western North Region of Ghana publicly advocated that the Ghanaian government should include Sefwi as a subject in schools across the region.

Radio programs in Sefwi can offer a platform for normalizing and celebrating the language, increasing its use and visibility within the community. Some of the measures to maintain the Sefwi language include use of the Sefwi language in radio and information centers. The following are what some of the respondents said to the question *are there any initiatives in the communities, such as programs, events, or campaigns that encourage the use of the language?*

*Some community centers and Winners FM sometimes use Sefwi language for announcements, and this makes people hear the language more often Some radio stations use Sefwi for announcements. (KWA 3).*

*Programs in Sefwi should be done on the local FM stations; doing that will promote the speaking of the language (ESS3).*

*The media should highlight the beauty of the Sefwi language and culture to raise awareness (KWA 2).*

*Radio stations here tap their news from radio stations in Accra, and the news and other programs are run in Twi (DEB 2)*

Local FM stations serve as a platform to normalize and promote Sefwi. Broadcasting programs in the language can significantly enhance its visibility and use within the community.

Leaders who prioritize the use of Sefwi, such as through employment requirements or advocacy efforts, provide tangible support for its maintenance.

*There is a chief in one of our towns who will not employ anyone who cannot speak Sefwi. Our chiefs must insist on the use of Sefwi at community gatherings (KBK 3)*

*At traditional council meetings, the elders make sure to speak Sefwi to remind everyone of its importance (KBK 3)*

Traditional leaders play a crucial role in preserving and promoting the Sefwi language. Chiefs can enforce the use of Sefwi in local governance, employment, and community activities. By using their influence, these leaders can help sustain the language and encourage younger generations to speak it. Leaders who prioritize Sefwi, such as requiring it for employment, demonstrate the potential of institutional and community-level support to incentivize and sustain language use.

#### **4.3.5 Language Documentation and Literacy**

The documentation of Sefwi and its inclusion in literacy initiatives are critical for its survival. Developing written resources and integrating Sefwi into educational systems can enhance its status and usage. The translation of the Sefwi New Testament into written form represents a significant milestone in the language's documentation, though more comprehensive resources are needed. During my observation at some churches I visited, they read the Sefwi translated version of the New Testament alongside the Twi version but the sermon was in Twi. Respondents *DEB 3, ADA 4 (KBK2)* said the following to the question *has any effort been made to document the language?*

*The Bible Society of Ghana (BSG) together with the Swedish Mission (SMC) have translated the New Testament in 2004- 2006 and the full Bible in 2018-2019. It is called Ahyerekrongron (ADA 4).*

*Some churches read the Sefwi version of the New Testament. The New Testament in Sefwi has helped some of us learn to read and write in our language, but we still need more resources (DEB 3)*

*The orthography of the language has been standardized by the help of Ghana Institute of Linguistics and Literacy and Bible Translation (KBK2)*

The availability of a Sefwi Bible signifies an essential step toward language preservation. The complete translation of the Old Testament in 2018-2019 and the standardization of the orthography by the help of Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GLLBT) indicate the progress documentation and resources made to support literacy in Sefwi. Religious institutions play a significant role in preserving language. The translation of the New Testament into Sefwi has provided a way for speakers to read and engage with their language in a spiritual context. However, the lack of a full Bible in Sefwi limits its broader use in religious and educational settings. Hornberger (2008), posits that a single fundamental text like the Bible can be an effort in maintaining a language. The Bible can be a standardized reference material as its use is a key domain in Fishman's Language Theory.

#### **4.3.6 Positive portrayal of Sefwi**

Promoting the beauty and cultural significance of Sefwi through media campaigns can challenge stereotypes and inspire pride among speakers. It was revealed during the interview by the respondents below:

*The media can highlight the beauty of the Sefwi language and culture to raise awareness (ADA 3)*

*Programs in Sefwi should be done on the local FM stations; doing that will promote the speaking of the language (KAA 2)*

*If people see that Sefwi is valued and celebrated, they will be more willing to speak it (ESS 4)*

The media plays a crucial role in shaping people's perception of languages. When the Sefwi language and culture are positively represented on TV programs, radio shows, and social media, it will increase pride and encourage more people to speak it. Promoting Sefwi's rich cultural heritage can also help combat negative attitudes toward the language. Highlighting the cultural and linguistic value of Sefwi through media campaigns can challenge stereotypes and foster a renewed sense of pride and usage within the community. The media plays a crucial role in shaping people's perception of languages.

From the analysis, the participants revealed the factors influencing language maintenance and, in these districts, providing critical insights into the decline of Sefwi and potential pathways for its revitalization. The interviews revealed the factors that influence language shift include to speaking the Twi gives more opportunities for employment. Government policies support the use of Asante Twi over Sefwi language, most of the participants said they feel pressured to speak Asante Twi and English language in social settings to fit in, the local media broadcasts more in Asante Twi than in the Sefwi language. Again, economic factors have made it necessary to speak Asante and religious services are conducted in the dominant language rather than the Sefwi language. Over half of the participants agreed that the use of English and Twi languages in schools have influenced the decline of the Sefwi language.

The research highlights five major factors contributing to the decline of the Sefwi language: sociocultural perceptions, institutional and policy challenges, intergenerational dynamics, media and technology influences, and urban migration.

Firstly, the sociocultural landscape in the Bia East and West districts strongly favors Twi and English, languages perceived as symbols of prestige and upward mobility. The study revealed that the dominance of these languages in education and commerce undermines Sefwi, relegating it to a lower social status. Younger generations, influenced by these perceptions, associate Sefwi with rural or unsophisticated identities, which discourages its use. This reluctance among the youth reflects a broader societal trend that prioritizes dominant languages over indigenous ones.

Secondly, the lack of institutional support for Sefwi has significantly hindered its maintenance. Unlike Twi and English, Sefwi lacks written documentation and official recognition, which prevents its inclusion in educational curricula. Schools, guided by policies that prioritize dominant languages, discourage the use of Sefwi, further limiting opportunities for younger generations to learn and use the language.

Third intergenerational interactions, a key driver of language transmission, have weakened in the context of Sefwi. Many households prioritize Twi or English to align with societal expectations, resulting in fewer opportunities for children to learn Sefwi. Parents often perceive proficiency in dominant languages as crucial for their children's future success, leading to a decline in the natural transmission of Sefwi across generations.

Fourthly, media and technology, powerful tools in shaping language use, have contributed to the marginalization of Sefwi. The dominance of Twi and English on platforms such as radio, television, and social media reduces the visibility and appeal of Sefwi. This lack of representation diminishes the relevance of the language in both public and private spheres.

Finally, urban migration has significantly altered language use in the Bia East and West districts. Migrants often adopt dominant languages such as Twi and English, which are more prevalent in metropolitan areas. Upon returning to their communities, these individuals continue to prioritize these languages, further marginalizing Sefwi in their home environments.

The decline of the Sefwi language in the Bia East and West districts reflects broader sociolinguistic trends of language shift observed globally. This discussion synthesizes key factors influencing language maintenance, including sociocultural perceptions, institutional and policy challenges, economic pressures, intergenerational dynamics, and the impact of media and technology. The analysis contextualizes the findings and highlights strategies for addressing these challenges. Sociocultural attitudes play a crucial role in determining the vitality of a language. In the Bia East and West districts, Twi and English are perceived as prestigious languages that provide greater access to education, employment, and social mobility. Majority of the participants indicated that speaking Twi and English language offers better employment opportunities, aligning with Holmes' (2001), confirming that economic benefits drive the adoption of dominant languages.

The marginalization of Sefwi is exacerbated by societal attitudes that associate the language with rural or unsophisticated identities. Similar findings were reported by Mensah and Owusu (2017), who noted that urban youth in Ghana increasingly prefer English for its perceived modernity and utility. This perception weakens the social status of Sefwi, relegating it to ceremonial contexts and diminishing its appeal among younger generations.

Institutional neglect significantly impacts language maintenance. In the Bia East and West districts, vast number of the participants noted that government

policies prioritize the use of Twi and English over Sefwi. This aligns with findings by Adegbija (2024), who highlighted the exclusion of indigenous languages from educational curricula as a major barrier to their survival. The lack of formal documentation for Sefwi further limits its institutional recognition. As Owusu and Mensah (2021) argue, integrating indigenous languages into literacy and education programs is critical for enhancing their value and status within society. Without such efforts, the transmission of Sefwi to future generations remains at risk.

Economic factors are a driving force behind the shift toward dominant languages. Some of the participants identified economic pressures as a key reason for prioritizing Twi and English. This finding aligns with studies by Chen et al. (2019), which demonstrate that individuals often adopt economically advantageous languages to improve job prospects and incomes. The dominance of Twi and English in commerce and employment reinforces the perception that these languages are chosen over Sefwi.

In the triglossic structure of language, the ex-colonial languages include English, Portuguese, French, German, Spanish, and Italian are widely spoken. These are the languages of Africa's colonial masters, which Africans have accepted as official languages in their respective countries. According to the paradigm, these languages are the most prestigious among Africans' linguistic repertoires. According to Batibo, (2011, p.17), these ex-colonial languages are employed in all high-level official interactions such as foreign relations, diplomacy, "and official government business. They are also linked to increased employment and social status in several African countries. This theory shows how the factors (cultural and traditional practices, intergenerational influence, community efforts and support, language

documentation and literacy and media and technology) push the desire for people to embrace other languages and leave the Sefwi.

#### **4.4 Summary**

The study's data highlights several critical trends of shift in Bia East and West districts. A significant majority of respondents reported that the use of the Sefwi language is decreasing in the districts. Despite this decline, some participants expressed a strong connection to their culture when speaking the language and preferred to use it in daily interactions. Cultural events were recognized as a vital platform for promoting the language, these events foster its use. Furthermore, few of the participants acknowledged that children in their district are being raised to speak the language, highlighting ongoing intergenerational efforts to sustain its relevance. The findings further provided nuanced insights into the cultural and sociolinguistic dimensions of Sefwi. The language thrives in traditional ceremonies, such as the Eluo festival, where it is exclusively spoken during libations and rituals. These practices underscore the language's symbolic importance as a marker of identity and cultural heritage. However, societal pressures favoring Twi and English, perceived as languages of prestige and upward mobility have marginalized Sefwi, particularly among younger generations. Media and educational policies further reinforce this shift, with radio, television, and schools predominantly in favor of Twi and English over Sefwi. Intergenerational dynamics also shape the language's trajectory. While elders maintain pride in speaking Sefwi and view it as integral to their identity, younger generations often shy away from using it due to societal perceptions of sophistication tied to dominant languages. The lack of institutional support exacerbates this trend, as the absence of written materials and restrictive educational policies limit the language's use in formal settings. Modernization and globalization

further accelerate the decline, as families increasingly prioritize Twi and English for their perceived practical benefits in academic and professional contexts.

The data further underscores the pervasive dominance of Twi in daily life. An overwhelming majority of the participants reported that younger people in the district speak Twi more frequently than Sefwi in public spaces instead of Sefwi. Again, local businesses prefer using Twi with their customers, this result in the decline in Sefwi's use. Institutions such as schools and churches also contribute to the decline in the usage of Sefwi sermons are either given in Twi or in English and in schools the examinable Ghanaian language taught is Twi instead of Sefwi. The erosion of Sefwi's presence within families is also significant. Most of the participants confirmed that families are increasingly adopting Twi or English at home depending on the academic status of the family. The educated ones speak English with their children reducing children's exposure to the Sefwi language. However, there remains a glimmer of hope, as some of the participants actively encourage their children to speak Sefwi. Cultural pride is also evident, with some the participants expressing joy when they hear Sefwi spoken in public. Yet, these efforts are overshadowed by the broader trends of language shift, as some expressed concern that Sefwi is being replaced by Twi in daily communication and in institutions.

The sociocultural landscape of the Bia East and West districts places Twi and English in positions of prestige. These languages are associated with education, economic mobility, and modernity, making them more desirable for communication in both public and private spheres. Younger generations often shy away from speaking Sefwi, perceiving it as less sophisticated. This societal pressure marginalizes Sefwi, limiting its use to cultural and ceremonial contexts. The lack of institutional support for Sefwi further exacerbates its decline. The language is not formally

documented or included in school curricula, preventing its integration into formal educational and governmental domains. Policies that prioritize English and Twi in schools create significant barriers, reducing opportunities for younger generations to engage with Sefwi in meaningful ways. Intergenerational dynamics reveal a widening gap in language use and transmission. Elders in the community maintain pride in speaking Sefwi, viewing it as a cornerstone of their cultural identity. However, families increasingly prioritize Twi at home, believing Twi language will provide their children with better opportunities. This shift weakens the natural transmission of Sefwi, leaving younger generations with limited proficiency.

The dominance of Twi and English in media has created a linguistic landscape where Sefwi is virtually invisible. Radio, television, and social media platforms overwhelmingly favor these dominant languages, further diminishing Sefwi's relevance and appeal among younger audiences. Media's role in shaping language perceptions underscores its contribution to the decline of minority languages like Sefwi. Migration to urban centers, where Twi and English dominate, has significantly influenced language practices in the Bia East and West districts. Migrants often adopt these languages to integrate into metropolitan life. Upon returning to their communities, they continue to use Twi, further marginalizing Sefwi and eroding its presence in everyday interactions.

The respondents agreed that speaking the dominant language gives more opportunities for employment. A vast majority agreed that government policies support the use of the dominant language over their native language. Others reported feeling pressure to speak the dominant language in social settings to fit in. Some noted that the local media broadcasts more in Twi than in the Sefwi language. Again, economic factors have made it necessary to speak Twi, religious activities conducted

in Twi rather than the Sefwi language and the teaching of Sefwi in schools have influenced the decline of the Sefwi language. A majority believed that efforts to maintain their native language should be increased.

The research highlights five major factors for the decline of the Sefwi language: sociocultural perceptions, institutional and policy challenges, intergenerational dynamics, media and technology influences, and urban migration. The study revealed that the dominance of these languages in education and commerce undermines Sefwi, relegating it to a lower social status. Younger generations, influenced by these perceptions, associate Sefwi with rural or unsophisticated identities, which discourages its use. This reluctance among the youth reflects a broader societal trend that prioritizes dominant languages over indigenous ones. The lack of institutional support for Sefwi has significantly hindered its maintenance.

Unlike Twi and English, Sefwi lacks written documentation and official recognition, which prevents its inclusion in educational curricula. Schools, guided by policies that prioritize dominant languages, discourage the use of Sefwi, further limiting opportunities for younger generations to learn and use the language. Intergenerational interactions, a key driver of language transmission, have weakened in the context of Sefwi. Many households prioritize Twi to align with societal expectations, resulting in fewer opportunities for children to learn Sefwi. Parents often perceive proficiency in Twi and English by the educated ones as crucial languages for their children's future success, leading to a decline in the natural transmission of Sefwi across generations.

Moreover, media and technology, powerful tools in shaping language use, have contributed to the marginalization of Sefwi. The dominance of Twi and English on platforms such as radio, television, and social media reduces the visibility and

appeal of Sefwi. This lack of representation diminishes the relevance of the language in both public and private spheres. Lastly, urban migration has significantly altered language use in the Bia East and West districts. Migrants often adopt dominant languages such as Twi and English, which are more prevalent in metropolitan areas. Upon returning to their communities, these individuals continue to prioritize these languages, further marginalizing Sefwi in their home environments.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter emphasizes the summary of the research findings. It highlights the sociolinguistic dynamics affecting Sefwi language in the Bia East and West districts and proposes actionable strategies for preservation. It further indicates areas that need to be studied further to aid decision and policy making in the field of language.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Research Findings

Based on the data collected through interviews and observations the findings of are summarized as follows:

##### 5.1.1 Research Question One

The study found that the use of the Sefwi language is decreasing in Bia East and West districts. Despite this decline, most of the participants expressed a strong connection to their culture when speaking the language, but preferred to use Twi in daily interactions. Cultural events were recognized as a vital platform for promoting the language, with few agreeing that these events foster its use. Furthermore, they acknowledged that children in their districts are not being raised to speak the language, underscoring ongoing intergenerational efforts to sustain its relevance. The findings provide nuanced insights into the cultural and sociolinguistic dimensions of Sefwi. The language thrives in traditional ceremonies, such as the Eluo festival, where it is exclusively spoken during libations and rituals. These practices underscore the language's symbolic importance as a marker of identity and cultural heritage.

### 5.1.2 Research Question Two

The study found out that Twi and English are perceived to be languages of prestige and upward mobility. This has marginalized Sefwi, particularly among younger generations. Media and educational policies further reinforce this shift, with radio, television, and schools predominantly favoring Twi and English over Sefwi. Intergenerational dynamics also shape the language's trajectory. While elders maintain pride in speaking Sefwi and view it as integral to their identity, younger generations often shy away from using it due to societal perceptions of sophistication tied to dominant languages.

The lack of institutional support exacerbates this trend, as the absence of written materials and restrictive educational policies limit the language's use in formal settings. Modernization and globalization were found to further accelerate the decline, as families increasingly prioritize Twi and English for their perceived practical benefits in academic and professional contexts.

It was discovered that the study underscores the pervasive dominance of Twi and English in daily life. An overwhelming majority of the participants revealed that younger people in the district speak Twi more frequently than Sefwi. This linguistic shift is particularly evident in public spaces, where greater number of the participants indicated hearing Twi instead of Sefwi. Similarly, some of the participants noted that local businesses prefer using Twi to attract customers.

There is erosion of Sefwi's presence within families as families are increasingly adopting Twi or English at home, by uneducated and educated respectively reducing children's exposure to their native language.

Again, the lack of institutional support for Sefwi further exacerbates its decline. The language is not formally documented or included in school curricula,

preventing its integration into formal educational and governmental domains. Policies that prioritize English and Twi in schools create significant barriers, reducing opportunities for younger generations to engage with Sefwi in meaningful ways.

The dominance of Twi and English in media has created a linguistic landscape where Sefwi is virtually invisible. Radio, television, and social media platforms overwhelmingly favor these dominant languages, further diminishing Sefwi's relevance and appeal among younger audiences. Migration to urban centers, where Twi and English dominate has significantly influenced language practices in the Bia East and West districts. Government policies support Asante Twi over Sefwi because Asante Twi is taught and learned in schools instead of Sefwi. Making the Sefwi feeling pressure to speak the dominant language in social settings, local media broadcasts with dominant language than the native's, economic factors have made it necessary to speak the dominant language. Also, religious services in the districts are conducted in the dominant language rather than the native language. These factors lead to the decline of the Sefwi language,

### **5.1.3 Research Question Three**

The study found out that cultural pride and emotional attachments among elders is maintaining the language. The use of Sefwi language in rituals, libations, during the celebration of Eluo festival are among the factors maintaining the language. Efforts in the translation of the Bible is great potential for maintaining the language.

### **5.2 Conclusions**

The findings lead to the following conclusions. It can be concluded that the Sefwi language faces challenges from cultural shifts, institutional neglect, and

modernization. While it retains significance in specific cultural and traditional contexts, its decline in daily use highlights the need for targeted interventions. Efforts such as documentation, inclusion in educational curricula, and leveraging media for promotion are essential to revitalize and sustain the Sefwi language as a vital component of cultural heritage.

It can also be confirmed that the phenomena of language maintenance and shift in the Bia East and West districts are shaped by sociocultural preferences, institutional neglect, intergenerational gaps, media influence, and urban migration. Revitalizing the Sefwi language requires targeted actions, such as its inclusion in educational curricula, and the promotion of its use in media and public domains. These measures are essential to counteract the forces driving the shift toward Twi and English.

It can finally be deduced that these factors; promoting Sefwi in media, and encouraging its use in homes and institutions are lacking in the societies hence, making it difficult for the language to be maintained. Hence it can be established that language maintenance in the Bia East and West districts hinges on a combination of cultural practices, intergenerational dynamics, community support, documentation, and the strategic use of media and technology. While traditional practices and elder pride sustain Sefwi, systemic challenges like limited documentation and the dominance of other languages threaten its survival.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

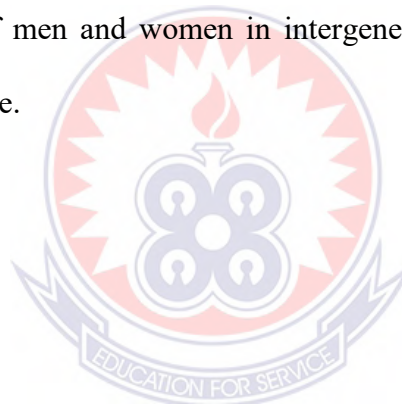
The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusions.

1. It is recommended that Sefwi language integration into educational curricula in the Sefwi area is essential. Developing more written materials and teaching the language in schools in the area will elevate its status and ensure younger generations gain proficiency. Policy advocacy is also crucial to secure institutional recognition and support for the language's inclusion in formal settings.
2. Community-based initiatives can further bolster these efforts. Organizing workshops, cultural festivals, and language immersion programs will foster intergenerational engagement and enhance the language's visibility.
3. Local media should be leveraged to promote Sefwi, ensuring broader reach and representation. Technology offers another avenue for preservation. Developing digital resources, such as apps and games in Sefwi, can engage younger audiences and make language learning accessible.
4. Documentation efforts, including translating religious texts and recording oral traditions will preserve the language for future generations. Parental and community involvement is paramount. Educating families on the importance of speaking Sefwi at home and involving traditional leaders in advocacy efforts can reinforce its use in everyday life.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Future Research**

Since the study could not deal with all aspects of language shift and maintenance of Sefwi language in the Bia East and Bia West Districts of Ghana's Western North Region due to the study's limitation the following suggestions are made for future research.

1. Future research could consider developing of written materials of the language for the preservation of the language for posterity.
2. Subsequent studies should explore the perceptions of the Sefwi people regarding the value and employability of their language in formal and informal settings.
3. Future research should focus on exploration of intersection of language, identity, and economics among Sefwi youth, focusing on how perceptions of economic opportunity influence language choices and cultural identity.
4. Future research should focus on gendered dimensions of Sefwi language shift and maintenance, exploring the differing roles, attitudes, and practices of men and women in intergenerational transmission and daily language use.



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## APPENDIX

### Semi-Structured Interviews for Respondents

#### SECTION A: Biodata

1. Gender: Male  Female
2. Age .....
3. Religious background: Christian  Muslim  African Traditionalist
4. Level: JHS  SHS  Training College  University
5. Occupation: .....

#### Section B: Language Use and Cultural Identity

1. What languages do you speak at home, school, workplace, or in social gatherings?

1. Jujule benii ye eka wɔ awouloo, sukuu nu, adwumanu, anaa kyee wɔ y'asetena nu yealen?

2. How often do you use Sefwi in daily conversations, and in which situations do you mostly use it?

2. Mmeme ahorow nye efa Sahwie edi nkɔmmɔw, na wɔ tebea beni nu ye efa di kumaa paw?

3. In your opinion, what cultural importance does Sefwi hold for your community?

3. Wɔ w'adwenekyele nu, amammele nu mfasow bɔ Sahwie trila nu wɔ wɔ mandanu?

4. What is language is spoken during cultural and other social gatherings?

4. Jujule beni ye beka able bo ye amammele ne asetena yeale fofore hole so?

### Section C: Experiences of Language Shift

1. Have you noticed any changes in how often people use Sefwi in your community compared to the past? Can you describe these changes?

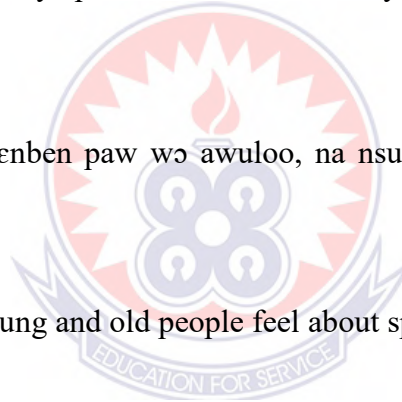
1. Enwui nzaae wo kye bo amanfoe fa so fa Sahwie di dwuma wo wo mandanu nu a fa bo wapen nu towtow nea? Ekohola khyilehyile so nzaae ye mu?

2. What language is mostly spoken at home, and why do you think they choose such language (s)?

2. Jujule boye beka penben paw wo awuloo, na nsuee ntiee esuw kye woyele so dwidwi le hew?

3. How do you think young and old people feel about speaking Sefwi compared to Twi or English?

3. Atenka bo esuw kye mmabunu ne mmambanyi be nya befa Sahwie hanew yefa ye towtow nzandle anaa nglisii?



### Section D: Factors Encouraging or Discouraging Sefwi Use

1. What makes people prefer speaking Twi or English instead of Sefwi?

1. Nzu ye oma amanfoe kulo kyee beko ha nzandle anaa nglisii emmo nu trala kyee beko Sahwie yow?

2. How do schools, workplaces, and government policies influence the choice of language in your community?

2. Ateen benin asow ye sukuu nu, nwumanu, ɔne awaye nhyehye le wɔhye ye jujule bɔ ye yɛka wɔ yemandanu so kennden?

3. In your opinion, does speaking Twi or English provide more opportunities in terms of education, jobs, or social acceptance?

3. Wɔ w'adwenekyele nu, kye yɛka nzandle anaa nglishii a ɔma ye ateen pee ɔba kye wommasua le nu a, nnwuman anaakye bɔ balee bato nu asetena yiw.

4. Do you think educational policies support the promotion of the language?

4. Esuisui nkye wommasua le nu nhyehyele kolaa boka ɔpagyaa dwidwile?

5. Do you think there is enough support from authorities or institutions to promote Sefwi? Why or why not?

5. Esuisui kyee mmokalee pee wɔble a ɔfi atitileifoee mɔ anaakye ahyehyele aholee nu bɔ ɔboka Sahwie? Nsuiɛ tiyɔɔ anaakye nsuiɛ tiyɔɔ ɔtee sɔɔ?

### **Section E: Language Maintenance Efforts**

1. Are there any initiatives in the community, such as events, programs, or campaigns, that encourage the use of Sefwi?

1. Asow nhyehyele bei wɔ mandannu, te kye nkyeii ye le nu, ngehyeele awolee nu anaakye esatu le nu, bɔɔ yee ɔhye ngunnan maa yefa Sahwie dii jumaa?

2. How do you think families can help children learn and use Sefwi more?

2. Esuisuii kye mmusunyaa kɔholaa boka ma nglodaa sunya Sahwie fa dii jumaa pee?

3. How important is the Sefwi language to you personally, and why do you think it should be preserved for the future generations?

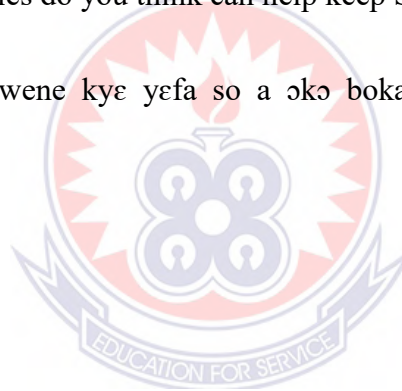
3. Mfazoee bɔ yee ɔwɔ Sahwie jujule ma ɔbɔbɔ, na nsuie ntiee edwene kye yekɔbɔ nnwo wae kɔ ma kyea bie ngelimma?

4. Do you think the media is doing enough in promoting the language?

4. Esuisuii nkye nzengelefoee bedi jumaa nnwola befa boka juijuile?

5. What specific strategies do you think can help keep Sefwi alive in the community?

5. Atee pɔtee bɔye edwene kye yefa so a ɔkɔ boka ma Sahwie kɔ tena ase wɔɔ mandannu?



## Section F: Final Thoughts

1. How important is it to you personally that Sefwi is preserved for future generations?

1. Mfazoeɛ bɔ ɛkɔ nya wɔ able bɔyɛ yeabɔ Sahwie nnwo wae kɔ kyea bie ngelimma nɔ?

2. Is there anything else you would like to share about the challenges or opportunities for maintaining Sefwi?

2. Aso nkyɛi fofowere bie wɔ blɛ bɔ ɔkuluo nkyɛ ɛka fa nzɔ yɔɛ anaa akwaanya bɔyɛ ɔkɔ ma Sahwei kɔtena?

