Language Choice in Multilingual Communities: The Case of Larteh, Ghana[1]

Mercy Akrofi Ansah
Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies,
University of Ghana, Legon

Abstract

In a multilingual community, the multilingual speaker needs to make the right language choice which principally depends on the domain of usage and the linguistic repertoire of speech participants. This paper investigates factors that govern language choices that multilingual speakers make in Larteh, a multilingual community. The study is informed by insights from the Markedness Model, developed by Myers-Scotton (1993, 1998). Larteh is a non-reciprocal bilingual community, where the people speak Leteh[2] and Akuapem Twi (Johnson, 1973, p. i). English is the third language for those who have had formal education. In this paper, three domains of language use are examined: education, tradition, and religion. Data from an interview survey on language use and participant observations are employed. The paper notes that due to changes in various spheres of life in Larteh, current language use patterns in the community differ from what pertained about three decades ago (Johnson, 1973, 1975). Subsequently, factors that determine language choice are gradually undergoing some modification.

Keywords: language choice, multilingualism, education, tradition, Christianity

This paper explores factors that inform language choices that are made by multilingual speakers in Larteh. People who speak more than two languages are often confronted with making the right language choice within a particular domain. Language choice is informed by the kind of participants in a communication situation, the topic, social distance, and also location. Studies on language use in multilingual communities in Africa abound (see Yakubu et al 2012; Kamwangamalu, 2000; Ncoko et al 2000;

---

[2] In this paper, Leteh is the spelling adopted for the language of the people of Larteh. Elsewhere in the literature, the language is also known as Larteh or Lɛtɛ.

Bodomo et al 2009 among others). Brokensha (1966) and Johnson (1973, 1975) constitute significant research on language use in Larteh. Whereas Brokensha (1966), an ethnographic study, briefly discussed the subject of language use in Larteh in his introductory chapter, those by Johnson are thorough studies of the subject matter. In his introductory chapter, Brokensha presented an overview of the linguistic situation of Larteh, and also the functional distribution of the three major languages: Leteh, Twi, and English. Leteh was described as a domestic language, which was learnt by children as their first language. English was learnt at school and school lessons were taught in Twi. To some extent, Twi was considered to be a prestigious language, and associated with education and Christianity. In church, English was used out of necessity, especially when there were non-Africans in the congregation. Brokensha further commented that the language used in church was Twi even when the congregation was made up of only Leteh speakers. In this regard, he cited the example of the Pentecostal Church at Larteh where all the worshipers were Leteh speakers and yet, Twi was used. Besides the use of English in school, it was spoken by educated adults in conversation. School children who wished to practise their oral skills or impress non-literates also used English outside the classroom setting. The present study will verify if the functional distribution of the three languages as described by Brokensha still persists in Larteh.

Johnson (1973) was an in-depth study of the patterns of language use in Larteh, as an example of a bilingual community. The work described all aspects of language use in the Larteh community, and his findings corroborated those by Brokensha (1966). Johnson further stressed the domestic function of Leteh by commenting that although school children spoke Twi and English for practice at home, it was often considered rude and disloyal, especially when spoken in the presence of adults. The author commented that the home was essentially a monolingual environment at Larteh. With regard to language choice at church, the author further noted that Twi was the language of the Bible, hymnals, and prayer books. English was used only when visitors were present, as was the case when the author and his wife visited the Larteh Presbyterian Church as part of his field trip.

With regard to education, the Basel Missionaries supported the use of Twi, and made it the foundation of their educational system. Twi was the medium of instruction, and Larteh children only learnt it at school. Some attempts were therefore made by the Gold Coast educational authorities to post teachers who could speak Leteh or Kyerepong (Guan language) to Larteh to teach the lower primary classes. In school, the use of Leteh was permitted, but not encouraged. Codeswitching between Leteh-Twi was also not encouraged as it was believed to have the potential of impeding the learning progress of school children.

During traditional ceremonies, Leteh was the primary choice. However, in some instances of libation pouring, orations, and speeches, some Twi phrases were heard. In

these instances, English was not used except among the audience. Finally, Johnson (1975) discussed the triglossic relationship among Leteh, Twi, and English. He described the language situation as one characterized by a division of communicative functions among the three languages, a situation which is the result of a gradual change over a long period. The author asserted that the functional distribution of languages in Larteh was not random, and proposed a set of rules which could be used to predict language choice in a multilingual community such as Larteh. These were repertoire rules, situational rules, and metaphorical rules.

Changes in the various spheres of life in a community are very likely to affect language use. Broad areas which are susceptible to change include education, technology and social interaction. Undoubtedly, conditions which prevailed during the period of previous research (Brokensha (1966); Johnson (1973, 1975)) have changed; hence transformations in the patterns of language use in Larteh are to be expected. It is in light of these changes that this study is undertaken. This paper will therefore investigate factors that impact language selection in Larteh with respect to these changes. The paper is organized as follows: after the introductory section, sources of data and collection methods are discussed in section two. Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (1993, 1998) and its application to the study are dealt with in section three. In section four, a sociolinguistic background of Larteh is given. In the three sections that follow, patterns of language choice in the three domains of language usage are discussed. The discussion is summarized, and conclusions are drawn in section eight.

Data and Methods

An interdisciplinary method of data collection was used for the study; linguistic and anthropological. A linguistic survey of Larteh (LISL) was conducted to collect information on individual and societal linguistic repertoires. The survey was conducted from September 5 - September 9, 2011 with 12 Research Assistants: 6 locals, paired with 6 National Service personnel from the University of Ghana. One Research Assistant helped with data analyses.

 Results of the survey also gave indication of patterns of language use in Larteh. In all, 418 interviews were conducted to specifically determine language types that are used in the community. This number represented about 5% of the total population of Larteh - 8,310 (Ghana Housing and Population Census, 2000). The interviewees who were randomly selected were aged 10 years and above. Furthermore, Primary 1 classroom teaching sessions in three public schools in Larteh were observed. The schools were the Anglican Primary School on September 12, 2011; the Presbyterian Primary School on September 14, 2011; and the Methodist Primary School on September 15, 2011. Funeral activities and church services were also observed. Two funeral sessions were observed on October 29, 2011 and November 26, 2011. With regard to language choice in the

church, notes taken at the Presbyterian Church and Lighthouse Chapel on January 22, 2012 and February 5, 2012 respectively are used for illustration. These exercises enabled the researcher to investigate the choices that teachers, family spokesman, and church leaders make in multilingual contexts such as the classroom, funeral gatherings, and church services.

Theoretical Framework

This study is done within the framework of Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (1993, 1998). Markedness, according to Myers-Scotton (1998, p. 4), relates to the choice of one linguistic variety over other possible varieties. Myers-Scotton (1993, p. 84) further posits that each language in a multilingual community is associated with particular social roles, which she calls rights-and-obligations (RO) sets. The speaker-hearer signals her understanding of the current situation by deciding to speak a particular language. The choice of a particular language is also an indication of her relevant role within the context.

The Markedness Model is stated in the form of a principle, the negotiation principle, and three maxims. The negotiation principle presents the theory's central idea. Hence Myers-Scotton's assertion: "Choose the form of your conversational contribution such that it indexes the set of rights and obligations which you wish to be in force between the speaker and addressee for the current exchange" (1993, p. 113).

Three maxims emerge from this principle: the unmarked choice maxim; the marked choice maxim; and the exploratory choice maxim. The unmarked choice maxim states, "Make your code choice the unmarked index of the unmarked RO set in talk exchanges when you wish to establish or affirm that RO set" (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 114). The marked choice maxim directs, "Make a marked code choice…when you wish to establish a new RO set as unmarked for the current exchange" (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 131). Finally, the exploratory choice maxim states, "When an unmarked choice is not clear, use CS (codeswitching) to make alternate exploratory choices as candidates for an unmarked choice and thereby as an index of an RO set which you favor" (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 142). In this sense, social meanings of language choice, as well as the causes of alternation, are defined completely in terms of participant rights and obligations.

The Markedness Model uses the marked versus unmarked distinction to explain the social and psychological motivations for making one language choice over another. What community norms would predict is unmarked; what the community norms would not predict is marked (Myers-Scotton, 1998, p.5). As Kieswetter (1995, p. 15) explains, the unmarked choice is considered as the expected choice within that particular context, whereas making a marked choice often carries extra social meaning. The Markedness Model (1993, 1998) is appropriate for the present study as it relates to the choice of one linguistic variety over other possible varieties in a speech context. In this paper, marked and unmarked choices that speech participants make in the educational, traditional, and

religious domains in Larteh will be matched against the rights-and-obligations (RO) sets. In the present study, the rights-and-obligations sets may be likened to the known functions of the three major languages which co-exist in a triglossic relationship in Larteh. In this sense, the choice of a particular language is viewed with reference to the extent its use matches community expectations for the domain or type of activity.

Sociolinguistic Background of the Larteh Community

Larteh is a town in the south-east of Ghana, located on the Akono Hills, the range of hills which cross Akuapem from south-east to the north-west. It is bordered in the north by the Mamfe-Akropong road; in the south by the Shai Hills, in the east by the towns of Abonse and Aseseeso, and in the west by the Apopoano Hill near Dodowa. The closest neighbours are Mamfe and Akropong where Akuapem Twi is spoken, and Dodowa and Ayikuma, where Dangme is spoken. The Population and Housing Census of Ghana (2000) put the population of Larteh at 8,310. This clearly does not represent the exact number of speakers because of the presence of immigrants in the town. Yet another difficulty in arriving at a specific number stems from the fact that there are many Leteh speakers who reside outside Larteh.

Larteh is a neighbour of language communities like the Akan and Dangme. Her closest Guan community is Abiriw, about 10 kilometers away, where Kyerepong is spoken. Interactions among these language groups are through inter-marriages, celebrations of traditional festivals, trade, and education. Consequently, on a typical market day in the town, the multilingual skills of the traders within Larteh and those from neighbouring towns are utilized. During the celebration of traditional festivals, it is common to find people from neighboring communities in attendance to lend support. Short distances between Larteh and neighboring towns allow school children to enrol in schools outside Larteh. This has further exposed young school children to other languages besides Leteh, their first language. Additionally, the use of Twi as the language of instruction at the lower primary level makes it mandatory for school children in Larteh to pay attention to Twi. Contact with English and Twi has resulted in remarkable phenomena such as borrowing, codeswitching, and diglossia within the Larteh community.

The Basel Mission established the first school in 1858 with 12 children. Presently, the town boasts of 6 pre-schools, 7 primary schools, 7 junior high schools and 3 senior high schools. In addition are 2 privately-owned commercial schools. Many children have therefore had the opportunity to go to school, at least to the junior high level, thus enhancing their competence in Akuapem Twi which is the medium of instruction at the basic level of education and also, a school subject in Larteh and the surrounding Akuapem towns. The number of schools presently, is in sharp contrast to Johnson's report of 1973 when there were 6 primary and 5 middle schools at Larteh. According to his report, Larteh had 1 private commercial school and 1 government-

assisted secondary school. The increase in the number of schools has therefore led to a corresponding increase in the use of English as a greater number of Larterians (my own coinage for the inhabitants of Larteh) have now been exposed to English through the school system. The Basel Mission was the first missionary body to gain roots in Larteh, establishing the Presbyterian Church in 1853. This was followed by the Wesleyans (Methodist) in 1879 and the Anglican Church in 1913. After the establishment of these churches, other churches usually referred to as Pentecostal churches also sprung up. Churches in Larteh may therefore be broadly categorized into two: Orthodox Churches and Charismatic Churches. The major orthodox churches are the Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic, and Anglican churches. The Church of Pentecost, the Apostolic Church of Ghana, Jesus Generation Church, and Lighthouse Chapel International fall under the umbrella of Pentecostal churches in this study.

Funeral ceremonies in Larteh are communal where family members are expected to make donations in cash and in kind to finance the funeral. A typical funeral ceremony in Larteh covers three days, and regardless of the society being male-dominated, women play significant roles in funeral activities.

Previous studies have recorded that in Larteh, Leteh is the first language of almost everyone, and Akuapem Twi is spoken by almost everyone as the second language, a phenomenon which is corroborated by the present study. A study by Stewart (1972, p. 83) reports that the use of a second language in Larteh is a common mark of Guan speakers, and that "Except in the case of Gonja, it seems that most speakers of Guan languages speak a second language as a lingua franca." The use of Akan as a second language by Leteh speakers may be explained by geographical factors, first and foremost, and secondly by the effects of national educational policies which stipulate that Akuapem Twi be used as the medium of instruction at the basic level of education in Larteh and surrounding towns. Educated Larteh people speak English in addition to Leteh and Twi since English is the language of education, administration, and trade in Ghana.

Leteh is unwritten and does not possess an official orthography. The language is mostly used in the homes, among the speakers, and also as a means of communication at traditional gatherings, such as funerals, festivals, marriages, and naming ceremonies. Brokensha (1966, p. xvi) sums up the linguistic situation in Larteh in the following words Three languages are in common use in Larteh-Guan, Twi and English. Guan is generally the domestic language, children learning it as their first language and using it in their early years. At school, children learn English and they also have lessons in what is called 'Vernacular', which is in fact Twi, for Guan is not taught at any school. Twi to some extent occupies the position of a prestige language, as does English on other occasions, being for example used in church.

It is common knowledge that multilingualism is the norm in Africa, and in many communities in Africa, it is significant to find out what criteria multilingual speakers

employ when they need to choose between various languages. It is reported, for instance, that in Kenya, there are more than forty languages which are spoken besides English and Kiswahili, the official languages and the main lingua francas (Kamwangamalu, 2000). An urban dweller therefore needs to master the use of more than one language in order to communicate effectively in the various speech domains (Kamwangamalu, 2000). It is, however, noted that community multilingualism does not always imply individual multilingualism, but in the case of Larteh, available data indicate that monolinguals are almost non-existent (Table 2). In Table 1, languages that are reported as being used in the community are recorded. A sample size of 418 inhabitants which represented about 5% of the total population of 8, 310 (Ghana Population and Housing Census, 2000) was used.

Table 1
Larteh Community Linguistic Repertoire

LANGUAGES	CLAIM	USE
Leteh	322	269
Twi (Akuapem)	362	354
English	227	102
Ga	81	8
Dangme	29	3
Hausa	11	3
Ewe	19	1
French	10	7
Bono	1	1
Dagaare	2	2
Frafra	1	1
Kyerepong	6	4
Wala	1	1
Krakye	1	1
Gonja	1	1
Gwa/ Anum	1	1
Nzema	1	1
Yoruba	1	1
Wassa	1	1
Sehwi	1	1

Data in Table 1 distinguish between people who claim knowledge of Leteh from those who actually use the language in their day-to-day activities. According to the data, there are about 20 languages spoken in Larteh. Of this number, three languages are dominant:

Leteh, Twi, and English. 322 of the sample claim that Leteh is their first language, but 269 of this number use Leteh whereas 53 of them prefer to use Twi and other languages. Out of the 418 respondents, 362 claim they can speak Akan whilst 354 of the number actually use Twi effectively. In the case of English, 227 claim that they are able to communicate in English whereas 102 of the number use English in some of their interactions. The scenario confirms the multilingual nature of the community.

Individual multilingualism in Larteh is also attested by data in Table 2. In order to investigate individual linguistic repertoire, the 269 respondents who indicated that Leteh was their first language were considered. In this study, this number represents Larterians, i.e., the people of Larteh; people who consider Larteh to be their hometown.

Table 2
Individual Linguistic Repertoire

LANGUAGE	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS	PERCENTAGE REPRESENTATION
Leteh only	1	0.3%
Twi only	3	1.12%
Leteh and Twi only	265	98.51%
Leteh, Twi, English	252	93.68%
Leteh, Twi, English & other	113	42.01%

Out of the population sample, only one person is a Leteh monolingual. This is a75-year-old woman who has had no formal education. Similarly for Twi, three people claim that it is the only language they speak. These people had Leteh as their first language; they previously spoke Leteh when they were children, but lost their proficiency when they migrated to live in Northern Ghana for a greater part of their lives. As many as 265 people are bilingual in Leteh-Twi. A little over 90% of the population sample is multilingual in the three major languages spoken in the community. Furthermore, 113 of the population sample spoke other languages apart from the three major languages, representing about 42% of Leteh speakers. The data therefore substantiate a community where almost everyone is multilingual.

Language Choice in a Multilingual Classroom

The current Educational Language Policy of Ghana supports the use of mother tongue in teaching at the lower primary level. The policy stipulates that the majority of instructional time is spent on L1 (90% in kindergarten and 80% in Grade 1) while time for English gradually increases to 50% by Grade 3. The use of English as a medium of instruction is expected to take effect from Grade 4 (National Literacy Acceleration

Programme (NALAP[3] Baseline Assessment 2009). Teaching sessions in Primary 1 of three public schools were observed to explore how teachers manipulate the three major languages used in the community. It was ascertained that all the pupils were bilingual in English and Twi. Secondly, the teachers who taught in these schools were also multilingual in three or all of these languages: English, Akan, Leteh, and Anum. Table 3 illustrates the multilingual background of the pupils.

Table 3
Linguistic Repertoire of Pupils

School	Presbyterian Primary	Anglican Primary	Methodist Primary
Number on Roll	40	38	17
English	40	38	17
English, Akan	40	38	17
English, Akan, Leteh	38	35	14

Three teaching sessions were observed. The first lesson was in Environmental Science at the Anglican Primary School, and the topic was 'Dental Care'. The topic was mentioned in English and then translated into Akan. The following is an excerpt of the teaching session.

Figure 1
Language choice in an Environmental Science lesson

> **Teacher:** Everybody, let me see your teeth. What are the uses of your teeth?
> *Dɛn na wode wo se yɛ?*
> **1ˢᵗ Pupil:** Chewing
> **2ⁿᵈ pupil:** *Mede we nam*
> I use it for chewing meat
> **Teacher:** Are our teeth useful then?
> **Class (chorus):** Yes!
> **Teacher:** Today, we want to learn how we can take good care of our teeth.
> *Yebesua sɛnea yebetumi ahwɛ yɛn se so yiye.*
> **Teacher:** What is the first thing you do in the morning?
> **3ʳᵈ Pupil:** We wash our face, we brush our teeth.
> **Teacher:** What do we use for brushing our teeth?

---

[3]NALAP was formed to address the literacy crisis in Primary Education in Ghana.

4ᵗʰ Pupil: *Duawa*
         Chewing stick
5ᵗʰ Pupil: Brush *ne* pepsodent
         and
Teacher: How many times do we have to brush our teeth in a day?
         Mpɛn ahe na ɛsɛ sɛ yetwiw yɛn se dabiara?
6ᵗʰ Pupil: Two times
Teacher: Good, well done!

The teacher introduced the topic in English, and translated it into Twi. After the lesson had been introduced in both English and Twi, the pupils answered questions using either Twi or English, whichever they were proficient in. When the questions required one-word answers, the pupils spoke English otherwise Twi was used. The teacher did English-Akan codeswitching throughout the teaching session.

       The second session which was observed was a Mathematics lesson. Language choice of pupils was quite different, with English language dominating in the answers that pupils gave. The use of English dominated in the answers, because the questions did not demand complete statements. When the teacher had introduced the topic "Simple Division", she went ahead to explain the concept in Akan using objects.

Figure 2

Language choice in a Mathematics lesson

        Teacher: *Nnipa baanu kyɛ akutu anan a, obiara benya ahe?*
           When two people share four oranges, how many will each have?
        1ˢᵗ Pupil: Two
        Teacher: *Nnipa baanu kyɛ kwaadu asia nso ɛ?*
           And when two people share six fingers of bananas?
        2ⁿᵈ Pupil: Three, three
        Teacher: And when three people share nine pencils?
           Na nnipa baasa kyɛ pencil akron nso ɛ?
        3ʳᵈ pupil: Three

The third lesson that the researcher observed was in Religious and Moral Education where the teacher taught the "Creation Story" from the Holy Bible. The Bible was read in English, after which the teacher narrated the account in Twi. All the questions were asked in Twi, and the responses from pupils were mostly in Twi. After the lesson, there was a memory verse taught in English. Below is an excerpt of the class session.

Figure 3
Language choice in a Religious and Moral Education lesson

     Teacher: *Dɛn na Onyankopon bɔ dii kan?*
       "What did God create first?"
    Pupil 1: Star, *nsoroma*
     Teacher: *Nna ahe na ɔde bɔɔ biribiara?*
       "How many days did He use in creating everything?"
    Pupils 2: *Nnansa*
      "Three days"
     Teacher: *Dabi*
      "No."
    Pupil 3: 6 days
    Teacher: Good!

The teacher narrated the story in Twi after reading from the English Holy Bible, because she intimated that biblical English was sometimes difficult to understand. She could not read the Twi bible so she read passages in English and then explained them in Twi. Pupils gave some one-word answers in English, especially where it was a loan word or lexical items which were better known in English. In most of the instances, the answers were in Twi. The memory verse was taught in English, because it gave the pupils a sense of pride to recite Bible verses in English. During school Open Days and Children's Day in the Presbyterian Church, for example, school children were made to recite English Bible verses to the admiration of unlettered parents. For the parents of these school children, the ability to recite Bible verses in English was evidence of literacy.

The three preceding teaching scenarios present language choices in the Primary 1 classroom. In each case, the teacher's language choice may be described as unmarked. The bilingual strategy adopted by the teacher is what is expected from a Primary 1 teacher as per the Government of Ghana's educational policy on language. The teacher's speech was therefore characterized by codeswitching. The type of lesson also determined the teacher's language choice. In this case, the appropriate language had to be selected in order to achieve teaching and learning objectives as seen in the Religious and Moral Education lesson. On the other hand, the pupils' choices stemmed from their competency levels in the two prescribed languages of instruction. The institutional factor may be likened to Johnson's situational rule (1975) which stipulates that it is a situation type that determines the choice of language. In the classroom situation therefore, the language (s) is/are prescribed, and the teacher does not have much control over the language of instruction.

Applying the Markedness Model, we can assert that the teacher's unmarked choice of language was dictated by the Educational Language Policy of Ghana. The

choice was therefore normal and matched community expectations. For the pupils who may have had very little knowledge or none at all about language policy, their English-Twi bilingualism was exploited. The language choices that pupils made in answering questions indicated their proficiency levels in the two languages: English and Twi. Again, one would describe their language choices as unmarked since they were expected.

It must be noted that Leteh, the first language of the majority of the pupils was not used in any of the teachings sessions. If any of the speech participants had spoken Leteh, that would have been a marked choice, and would have carried "extra social meaning" (Kieswetter, 1995, p. 25). This pattern of language use in education is similar to what pertains in some multilingual communities in Africa. For instance, Ncoko et al (2000, p. 239, p.231) reporting on the benefits of codeswitching for teacher education, recommended that in the multilingual schools in South Africa, codeswitching could be used as a teaching strategy since it had communicative functions such as translation, checking comprehension, giving instruction, and clarification. Similar to observations made in the present research, the study by Ncoko et al also established that learners utilize their linguistic ability and resources to control their conversations according to content and circumstances.

Table 4 summarizes the three scenarios of teaching sessions. In each session, the language which predominates is listed first.

Table 4

Patterns of Language Choice in Primary 1 Classroom

Domain	Setting	Speaker	Addressee	Subject	Topic	Language
Education	School	Teacher	Pupils	Integrated Science	Dental Care	English/ Akan
				Mathematic -s	Simple Division	English/ Akan
				Religious and Moral Education	Creation	Twi/ English

Language Choice at Funerals

Funerals at Larteh are public, and are characterized by the attendance of many mourners and sympathizers. As sympathizers may be of diverse language backgrounds, language choice is made with care so that communication goals are realized. To a large extent, language choice is dependent on the acceptable social roles of each language, the rights-and-obligations (RO) sets (Myers-Scotton, 1993, p. 84). For each sub-activity of the funeral therefore, participants expected a particular language choice. In Larteh, funeral activities normally span three days, Friday-Sunday. The dead body is laid in state

from Friday late afternoon to the morning of the Saturday. In the evening of the Friday, close relatives of the deceased gather in the family house to keep wake. The tradition is that any sympathizer who comes around to greet the family is given an update or a briefing on the cause of death, which is usually done in Leteh first, and then summarized in Twi.

On the following day, the family head performs a rite to select a successor for the dead person. The gathering is usually made up of close family members who are mostly Larterians. It is a short ceremony during which Leteh is largely spoken. The following is an extract of a funeral session for a deceased relative who had lived and worked in Kumasi, a town in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. On this occasion, Leteh (L) is spoken and then interpreted into Twi (T).

Figure 4
Language choice at a funeral (i)
(Sympathizers enter the funeral grounds to greet the bereaved family; the family spokesman introduces them).

> **Family Spokesman:** *Agoo!*
> Attention!
>
> *Ɛsɛ ne debiakɛ a twu Kumase pɛɛ. Amo gyi Papa… esumitese. Amo debɛboaokunafo a, ne ahurɛ mo kuru.*(L)
>
> *Adɔfonom, nnipa yi a wogu so rekyia yi fi Kumase pɛɛ. Wɔyɛ Agya…adwumayɛfo. Wɔaba rebɛboa okunafo no asie ne kunu.*(T)
>
> "The people who are greeting used to be the co-workers of Mr…. They have come all the way from Kumasi to help the widow bury her late husband." (E)

During the funeral, various announcements are made. These announcements are meant to direct visitors to venues of funeral activities, and also to inform the gathering of donors. Announcements are made in all the three major languages: Leteh, Twi, and English due to the diverse language backgrounds of mourners and sympathizers. A scenario is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5
Language choice at a funeral (ii)

> **Family Spokesman:** *Ɛne debɛna asɔretsa nte. Ene ntwu asiei mbɛ a, ɛne bebunkyi bɛ mfe ara (*L)

Yɛrebɛkɔ asɔredan mu. Se yefi amusiei a, yɛbɛsan abehyia wɔ ha bio. (T)

We shall go to the church from here. From the cemetery, we shall come back here. (E)

In the first instance (Figure 4), the family spokesman used Leteh and Twi. He interpreted his statements into Twi for the benefit of the sympathizers who had arrived from Kumasi. This scenario differs from the one during which only Leteh was spoken, the selection/election of a successor. In Figure 5, all the three languages are used in order to reach a larger audience. The family spokesman assumes the role of host and ensures that his "guests" do not lose their way whilst they are in town. It is also important to mention the names of donors so that they are well appreciated. The spokesman therefore uses Leteh, Twi, and English. An interaction of marked and unmarked language choices was observed. Although it was expected that during a traditional ceremony, Leteh would be the unmarked choice, this was not always the case due to the diverse language backgrounds of speech participants. The use of English in the traditional domain does not match community expectations, and as a result the choice may be described as marked so far as domain type was concerned. Nevertheless, Leteh, the unmarked choice was used in performing some exclusive traditional rites. The mourners and sympathizers used various languages among themselves, according to their linguistic repertoire. In selecting a language to address the mourners and sympathizers, the speaker always considered their linguistic repertoire; he therefore used all the three major languages. The alternate use of unmarked and marked languages confirms the assertion that within the markedness model, code choices are intentional in that they are made to achieve specific social ends. In this sense, the speaker will choose one language variety over another, because it has more benefits than costs (Myers-Scotton, 1998, p. 19). The repertoire rule as proposed by Johnson (1975) dictated marked language choices to a large extent in the traditional domain.

Table 5 is a summary of patterns of language choice during the various sub-activities of a funeral in Larteh. For each of the activities, the predominant language is listed first.

Table 5
Patterns of Language Choice at Funerals

Domain	Speaker	Addressee	Setting	Activity/ Topic	Language
Tradition	Family Spokesman	Mourners and Sympathizers	Funeral	Introduction of sympathizers	Leteh, Twi
				Reporting cause of death	Leteh, Twi
				Electing a successor	Leteh
				Announcements	Leteh, Twi, English

Language Choice in the Church

For the purposes of the present study, churches at Larteh were categorized into two: Orthodox and Pentecostal churches. The classification is necessary because the mode of worship in these two types of churches differs significantly, a disparity which has the potential of influencing language choice. In the case of Orthodox churches, the Presbyterian church service and the Catholic mass were observed. Language choice as observed in the two churches did not differ significantly. During a normal Sunday morning service at the Presbyterian Church, the language of worship was predominantly Twi. Biblical references were, however, read in English. There were a few cases of Akan-English codeswitching in sermons. Leteh was not used in the course of the church service. This differed from special occasions, for example, a funeral service where the congregants had various language backgrounds. During such funeral services, the sermon was delivered in Twi and then a summary given in English.

The following field notes which were taken on January 22, 2012 illustrate language choice in a normal Sunday worship service in the Presbyterian Church. Call to worship was done in Twi by the Senior Minister. A prayer was said in Twi, and hymns were also sung in Twi. When a hymn was introduced, the reference was first mentioned in Twi, then in English. Bible readings were done in Twi, and similarly the references were said in both Twi and English. The choir and the singing band sang in Twi. The congregants used Twi hymn books. The Session Clerk (church secretary) read the announcements in Twi. The Senior Minister said the closing prayer and pronounced the

benediction in Twi. After the church service, interactions among the congregants were in both Leteh and Twi.

Language choice in the orthodox churches may be accounted for by their history. In the case of the Presbyterian Church for instance, the Basel Mission which introduced Christianity in Larteh had as its basic policy concerning missionary work, the utilization of Ghanaian languages. Missionary work started at Akropong-Akuapem; Akuapem Twi was therefore adopted as the literary standard for use in the churches where Twi is spoken. Other factors accounting for the predominant use of Twi over Leteh in the church are that many Christian ministers who are posted to Larteh to head the orthodox churches are non-Larterians. In addition, all Christian materials are printed in Twi and English, and none in Leteh. It was, however, gathered that whenever the chief of the town attended church service, and he was given an opportunity to address the congregation, he spoke Leteh.

Language choice in the orthodox churches, typified by the Presbyterian and Catholic churches, is governed by factors like domain-type and occasionally by the linguistic repertoire of speech participants. In the first place, the unmarked choice was Twi, because it is the language of the Christian religion in Larteh and the surrounding Akuapem towns in Ghana. Secondly, the varied repertoire represented during special services, such as a funeral service, required the use of English in addition to Twi. The recourse to English, an unmarked choice, is therefore said to carry additional meaning. Finally, the choice of Leteh over Twi by traditional leaders who visited the church occasionally may be described as figurative. By using Leteh, a marked choice, the chief built solidarity with his subjects. Johnson's rules on situation, linguistic repertoire and metaphoric are applicable to language choice in the orthodox churches in Larteh.

Language choice in the Pentecostal churches was quite different. The following are field notes taken at the Lighthouse Chapel International Church branch at Larteh on February 5, 2012. The church service began with a prayer led by the Assistant Pastor. The Assistant Pastor whose first language is Ewe used English. During the prayer time, members prayed mostly in English. This was followed by a period of singing. The songs were in Twi. The song leader did English-Twi codeswitching to urge the congregants to sing and praise God. Congregants were heard praying in both English and Twi. When it was time for church members to share testimonies of God's intervention in their lives, they used Twi with a few English phrases such as "Praise the Lord"; "My sister encouraged us; everybody encouraged us." Although the two speakers were Larterians, they spoke Twi mainly. The sermon was characterized by Twi-English codeswitching (Figure 6). Both the Twi and English bibles were read. The Senior Pastor welcomed visitors using Twi and English. At the close of the church service, members recited a prayer (grace- a scriptural verse which has been memorized by members) to one another in English whilst they shook hands.

Figure 6
Codeswitching in a sermon

> **Pastor:** I told you that *sɛ wofa* bible *a, baabi a ɛyɛ kɔkɔɔ no, Yesu na ɔkaeɛ…*
>
> "I told you that when you pick a bible, the red parts are the direct sayings of Jesus…"
>
> *Enti* this year, we have all decided that this year we want to make it. *Okristoni, nneɛma bebree wɔ hɔ a ɛsɛ sɛ yɛyɛ.*
>
> "So this year, we have all decided that this year, we want to make it. Christian, there are many things which we ought to do."

Unlike the Presbyterian Church, the Lighthouse Church had a membership which was younger, generally between ages 10-40. The members were mostly pupils and students, a fact which accounts for the comparatively widespread use of English. The predominant use of English also stems from its foundation; the founders of the church encouraged the use of English right from the onset.

In the Pentecostal Church, there was a combinatory use of unmarked and marked choices. From the perspective of the visitor who has no knowledge of the RO sets of the church, the expected language choice was Akuapem Twi. However, the church members who shared the RO sets of the church would consider Akuapem Twi to be a marked choice as opposed to the expectations in the Orthodox Church. Although the majority of the worshippers were Larterians, Leteh was not used. Tables 6a and 6b summarize language choices that are made in the church.

Table 6a
Patterns of Language Choice in the Presbyterian Church, Larteh

Domain	Speaker	Addressee	Setting	Activity	Language
Christian Religion	Pastor	Worshippers	Presbyterian Church	Call to Worship	Twi
	Church Leader, Church members			Prayer	Twi
	Congregation, Singing groups			Singing	Twi
	Church members			Bible Reading	Twi

	Pastor			Sermon	Twi
	Church Secretary			Announcements	Twi
	Pastor			Benediction	Twi

Table 6b

Language Choice at the Lighthouse Chapel, Larteh

Domain	Speaker	Addressee	Setting	Activity	Language
Christian Religion	Assistant Pastor	Worshippers	Lighthouse Chapel	Preparatory Prayer	English
				Singing	Twi
	Senior Pastor			Sermon	Twi /English
	Church members			Bible Reading	Twi/ English
	Church members			Testimonies	Twi/ English
	Senior Pastor			Announcements	Twi/ English
	Worshippers			Sharing of grace	English

Summary and Conclusion

The paper set out to explore factors that dictate language choices made by multilingual speakers in Larteh, a multilingual community. The study was conducted within the framework of Markedness Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993, 1998). Three domains that were investigated are education, tradition, and Christian worship. The results of this study are founded on data gathered from a linguistic survey, interviews, and participant observation.

Research done on language choice in multilingual communities has established that among many considerations that multilingual speakers make in selecting a language for communication are the domains of language use, topic/activity, and the language background of speech participants (Kamwangamalu, 2000). Within the framework of markedness, the social and psychological associations that speakers attach to languages inform choices that are made. A language choice may therefore be perceived as unmarked or marked, depending on the extent to which it matches community expectations. In this study, community expectations are aligned with the set functions of the three major languages, typical of a triglossic community. In this paper, these expectations which are

shared by members of the Leteh community represent Myers-Scotton's rights-and-obligations sets. Johnson's set of rules (1975) for predicting language choice were also applied to the data where relevant. This study has shown that in addition to factors of language choice documented in the literature, national language policies play significant roles in determining language spoken in some speech domains.

In the educational domain, it was found out that the teachers' choice of both English and Twi in teaching Primary 1 is largely dictated by the Ministry of Education's policy on language. On the part of pupils, their proficiency level in either of the two languages governed their language choice during classroom interactions. The RO set in the educational domain, therefore, accounts for language choices. Language choice in the domain of tradition, for example at funerals, was based on the linguistic repertoire of addressees. A combination of marked and unmarked choices was observed. Accordingly, it came out that all the three major languages: Leteh, Akuapem Twi, and English were employed during funeral activities.

Finally, in the religious domain, whereas Akuapem Twi was the unmarked choice in the orthodox churches, it was regarded as the marked choice in the Pentecostal Churches. In the Pentecostal Church, the history of its establishment was such that English was accepted as the unmarked language choice. Church services were also characterized by English/Akuapem Twi codeswitching. Language choice in the Orthodox churches was largely governed by the type of domain, whereas in the Pentecostal Church, it was a combination of factors.

The functional distribution of the three languages: Leteh, Twi, and English as reported by earlier researches, Brokensha (1966); Johnson (1973, 1975), has changed with regard to the use of English. In the educational domain for instance, English is combined with Twi as languages of instruction as directed by the language policy on education at the basic level. Again, the use of English at traditional ceremonies, such as funerals, is also noteworthy. This is contrary to Johnson's report (1973, p. 122) that Leteh is the principal language at traditional ceremonies. Similarly, with the founding of Pentecostal churches, English has been introduced as a key language in the Christian religious domain. The introduction of English in some domains, as well as the comparative increase of its use may be accounted for by a corresponding growth in education in the Larteh community.

In conclusion, I make the following assertions:
  i.   Social change in Larteh over the past three decades has influenced factors that dictate language choice.
  ii. Domains where English is used have increased to the detriment of Leteh, thus posing threats of endangerment.

iii.   In the face of the multifaceted changes that have taken place in Larteh, which have also affected language use in the community, Johnson's (1975) assertion of "stable triglossia" is contestable.

iv.   In view of the above, it is recommended that conclusions that are drawn from studies on language use in multilingual communities need to be reviewed periodically in line with global and local changes.

References

Bodomo, A., Anderson, J., & Dzahene-Quashie, J. (2009). A kente of many colours: Multilingualism as a complex ecology of language shift in Ghana. *Sociological Studies, 3* (3), 357-379.

Brokensha, D. (1966). *Social change at Larteh, Ghana.* Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.

Ghana Statistical Service. (2002). 2000 Population and housing census: Summary report of final results. Accra, Ghana: Ghana Statistical Service.

Johnson, B. C. (1973). *Language use at Larteh, Ghana: A sociolinguistic study of a bilingual community.* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Northwestern University, Chicago, USA.

Johnson, B. C. (1975). Stable triglossia at Larteh. *Patterns in language, culture and society*: Sub-Saharan Africa. *OSU WPL, 19*, 93-102.

Kamwangamalu, N. M. (2000). Languages in contact. In V. Webb & Kembo-Sure (Eds.). *African voices. An introduction to the languages and linguistics of Africa*. Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press.

Kieswetter, A. (1997). Code-switching amongst African high school pupils. *University of Witwatersrand Occasional Papers in African Linguistics, 1,* 3-96.

Leherr, K. (2009). *National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP) baseline assessment document.* Accra, Ghana: Ministry of Education.

Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Social motivations for codeswitching: Evidence from Africa.* Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.

Myers-Scotton, C. (1998). A theoretical introduction to the markedness model. In C. Myers-Scotton (Ed.), *Codes and consequences: Choosing linguistic varieties* (pp. 18-40). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Ncoko, S. O., Osman, S. R., & Cockroft, K. (2000). Codeswitching among multilingual learners in primary schools in South Africa: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 3* (4), 225-241.

Stewart, J. M. (1972). The languages. In D. Brokensha (Ed.), *Akwapim handbook* (pp. 80-90). Accra, Ghana: Ghana Publishing Press.

Yakubu, A., Matu, M. P., & Ongarora, D. (2012). Language use and choice: A case study of Kinubi in Kibera, Kenya. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science 2* (4), 99-104.