

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT IN ETHIOPIA: THE CASE OF MAALE

by

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submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS WITH SPECIALISATION IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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JUNE 2008

## Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge my supervisor, Professor L. A. Barnes, for his insightful suggestions, and his patience and encouragement, which made this research possible.

I am also indebted to my wife, Janet, and my four sons, Jonathan, Ruben, Darius and Matthew, for their patience with the many hours spent in my study, as well as The Word for the World Bible Translators and the *Kale Heywet* Church of Ethiopia, for their assistance on the Maale Bible translation and mother-tongue literacy projects, which inspired this study. I also wish to acknowledge the support of family, friends and churches, which has enabled me to work among the Maale people.

## Abstract

The focus of this study is on language maintenance and shift in Maale, a minority language spoken in Ethiopia. The main aims of the study are to give an account of the underlying social factors that have contributed to language maintenance in the Maale speech community, and to investigate whether the mother-tongue literacy programme in the Maale region is going to facilitate language maintenance or contribute to language shift. The findings suggest that regional nationalism, which corresponds to ethnic nationalism in Paulston's theory of social mobilisation, is the reason why the Maale language has been maintained as a viable language in spite of centuries of political repression. The findings also indicate that the mother-tongue literacy programme currently contributes to language maintenance but it is a stepping stone to further education, which favours the learning of a second language, which could lead to possible attrition of the mother tongue.

**Key words:** Amharic, Amhararization, bilingualism, Ethiopia, language maintenance, language shift, Maale, Maale nationalism, mother-tongue literacy, Omotic, theory of social mobilisation

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# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.0 Introduction

In this chapter two questions are introduced, namely: what are the social factors that have contributed thus far to language maintenance in the Maale speech community; and will mother-tongue literacy in Maale lead to language shift? A further purpose of this chapter is to provide a context for the subject under investigation, that is, language maintenance and shift in the Maale community in Ethiopia. One cannot hope to fully understand language maintenance and shift in Maale without understanding the socio-cultural, historical and linguistic context of wider Ethiopia, of which the Maale people and their language are a part. This socio-cultural, historical and linguistic background information forms the context within which the questions can be legitimately analysed and interpreted.

### 1.1 Background

#### 1.1.1 The Maale people

The Maale region of Ethiopia consists of lowlands and highlands. The highland areas are used for cultivation and herds of cattle are kept in the lowlands. The Maale are internally divided into over 30 clans and each clan branches into different lineages (Amha 2000). The size of the group is approximately 63 000.<sup>1</sup>

Traditionally the Maale were ruled by a ‘divine’ king and 13 *godas* or lords. Each lord presided over his own chiefdom and below each lord were sub-lords or *gatta*. A very important aspect of the Maale economy was the belief that the king, lords, lineage elders, husbands and older brothers had the power to bless and curse. It was therefore very important for the Maale to pay tribute to rulers, such as the king, and lords to ensure fruitfulness and prosperity and also to defeat the power of their enemies (Donham 1990:135).

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<sup>1</sup> This figure is taken from the unpublished census by the regional government in Jinka 2005.



According to the Maale people, the kingship in Maale came into being when people learned how to control fire and cook food. A king lived to the east around Dawro and he had five sons, and when he died, all five wanted to be king and fought each other. The elders could not understand the fighting between them and asked them why they were fighting each other. They answered, “We all want to be king, how can only one of us be king?” The elders then decided that all five should take part in the inauguration ceremony for the new king. However, only the eldest brother decided to remain and he became the king of Dawro. The other four brothers left and discovered Maale. This was before the Maale knew what fire was. The eldest of the four attempted to make fire, but *taro*<sup>2</sup> instead of fire sprang up. He then went to the highlands and became the king of Bako (Aari) to the West of Maale. This is where the Aari people are living today. Then the next brother tried to make fire, but *ensete*<sup>3</sup> came up. He left and became the king of Shangame to the North-West. When the next brother tried to produce fire, a cow sprang forth and he became the king of Banna<sup>4</sup>, south of Maale. Finally, the youngest brother, Maaleka (the name is a combination of Maale and *kati*, which means king) produced fire. From then on, Maaleka was seen by the other three kings as the wisest of them and whenever they encountered difficulties and problems they could not solve, they would turn to Maaleka for advice. After Maaleka produced fire, he gave coals to the people, but after they had cooked their food and slept, they hid the coals in the thatch of their houses and went out to work in the fields and then all the houses were set on fire and the whole of the Maale territory was burned. This burned territory became Maaleka’s field, and from then on Maale’s prosperity (the productivity of the land, the ripening of the crops, the fertility of men and women and the breeding of cattle and goats) would depend on the presence of the ‘divine’ live-giving force of Maaleka that is passed on to his descendants (usually from oldest son to oldest son) through the inauguration rituals of the new king (Donham 1986:71-72).

Firing is one of the first steps in preparing a field for planting crops in Maale, and it establishes the boundaries of one’s land. Firing one’s field was only allowed after the king has fired his field first. He would then give his blessing to the 13 lords to fire their fields, to be followed by the sub-lords and common people. This order was also adhered to at the

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<sup>2</sup> A tropical plant with edible starchy underground corms

<sup>3</sup> Ensete, also called false banana, is a plant that looks similar to a banana plant. Many dishes are made from the root of this plant and for many people in the south ensete is their staple diet.

<sup>4</sup> The Banna are known for their cattle herding

time of planting. First the king planted and prayed for rain, then the lords, then the sub-chiefs and finally the common people could plant their fields (Donham 1986:72). Although at present the king is only a figurehead as far as the government is concerned, there are still many in Maale who believe that the king is divine, and many still adhere to these traditions and customs.

A typical Maale household lives in a compound with several huts. Husbands and wives live in separate huts. Small children live with their mothers. When daughters reach a marriageable age, they move into their own hut, but still live in the same compound. After marriage, they move out with their husbands to establish their own households. Younger sons stay with their parents until their first son is born, after which they start their own compounds. Eldest sons continue to live and work with his parents after marriage. Younger brothers are not allowed to use any of their first crops, first honey of their beehives or the first calf of their cows. These things belong to the older brother. In the compound there is also a burial place for grandmothers and grandfathers. There are two entrances to a compound, a gate to the east where people enter. Just inside this gate are the cooking place and the place where the women sleep. On the opposite side (west) is the gate where the animals enter. At this entrance is a special place for receiving gifts and drinking milk together with those who brought gifts.

The Maale are an agro-pastoralist group; their main agricultural products are maize, sorghum and teff<sup>5</sup>. Coffee trees, papaya, mango and banana plants are common. They sell the coffee beans and make coffee from the leaves, mixed with salt and butter. Crops are stored in granaries, small thatched-roof houses set on stilts. Donkeys are used to take their home-grown products to market. Markets are well organised and are held in different regions on different days of the week. Markets in Maale also attract people from neighbouring tribes and visa versa. Honey is another important commodity in Maale, and many of the Maale people keep beehives, made from the bark of trees, around or attached to their huts or placed high up in trees. Flying ants are caught in the rainy season and stored as a protein supplement during the leaner times.

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<sup>5</sup> A grass commonly used for horse fodder, the seed of which is used to bake the pancake-like (*injera*) staple food in Ethiopia.

The wealth of the Maale is first of all in their children and then in their livestock, mainly goats, sheep and cattle. For a male adult to die without children is regarded as the misfortune of all misfortunes. The dead person's name becomes tabooed and anyone in the vicinity who may happen to have the same name changes it (Donham1990:111).

The Maale are keen hunters although wild animals have become scarce. Some Maale still carry and still use their traditional weapons: bows, arrows and spears. However, many have exchanged their bows and arrows for rifles, which were bought from northern traders to protect their cattle from raids by their neighbours, the Banna.

Blacksmiths, potters and tanners are the outcastes in Maale. Blacksmiths belong to an outcast group called *gito*. They work with iron and make axes, hoes, knives, spears and arrow heads etc. Potters and tanners belong to the outcast group called *mani*. The women make pots and large clay plates, called *metads* for baking *injera*<sup>6</sup> and the men tan large cowhides that the Maale use for sleeping mats. No Maale person would do any of an outcast's tasks. To do so, would mean they have also become outcasts (Donham 1990:101). Maale people will also not marry a person who is an outcast. Doing so would mean that it will not rain and life-threatening illnesses and diseases will plague the Maale people.

A significant aspect of Maale social life is the way they work together. The women's tasks consist of fetching water and firewood, grinding grain, cooking meals, preparing beer, entertaining her husband's guests and raising the children. The men's tasks include hunting, taking care of goats and cattle, beekeeping, building granaries and huts and the tougher work like clearing and ploughing fields. However the work that households can perform is limited and workgroups between households are formed to accomplish certain tasks much more efficiently. Working together is also one of the most important ways for Maale households to establish their social identities. Who you work with says who you are and where you belong. Depending on the size and purpose, there are five types of activities in which Maale people come together to work together, such as *helma*, *molo*, *dobo*, *mado* and *ale* (see Section 4.1.3 for a description of these).

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<sup>6</sup> *Injera* is made from teff and baked like a pancake on a large plate. *Injera* is the staple diet for many Ethiopians.

Many of the Maale people adhere to traditional Maale beliefs which emphasise ancestor worship, ceremonial rituals and sacred customs, for example, the Maale ceremony for naming a child, the blessing of the first crops and the inauguration of a new king. However, in the 1960s, Christianity was introduced to the Maale through Wolaitta evangelists who were members of the fast growing Word of Life protestant<sup>7</sup> denomination. Many Maale were converted and Christianity had a great impact on the Maale society. Ancestor worship was regarded by the Christians (Christian(s), hereafter, refers to evangelical Christians, also known as protestant Christians) as demonic and participation in rituals forbidden. Furthermore, and sad to say, Christianity eroded oral literary expressions (parables, poetry, folk tales etc.) and traditional music. Christianity also made inroads into the social organisation of the Maale people, for instance, younger brothers were no longer subject to older brothers and the Christian converts stopped participating in their former social work groups and established their own work group. However, whether Christian or traditionalist, all Maale agree on one thing and that is that they are first and foremost Maale.

### **1.1.2 The Maale language**

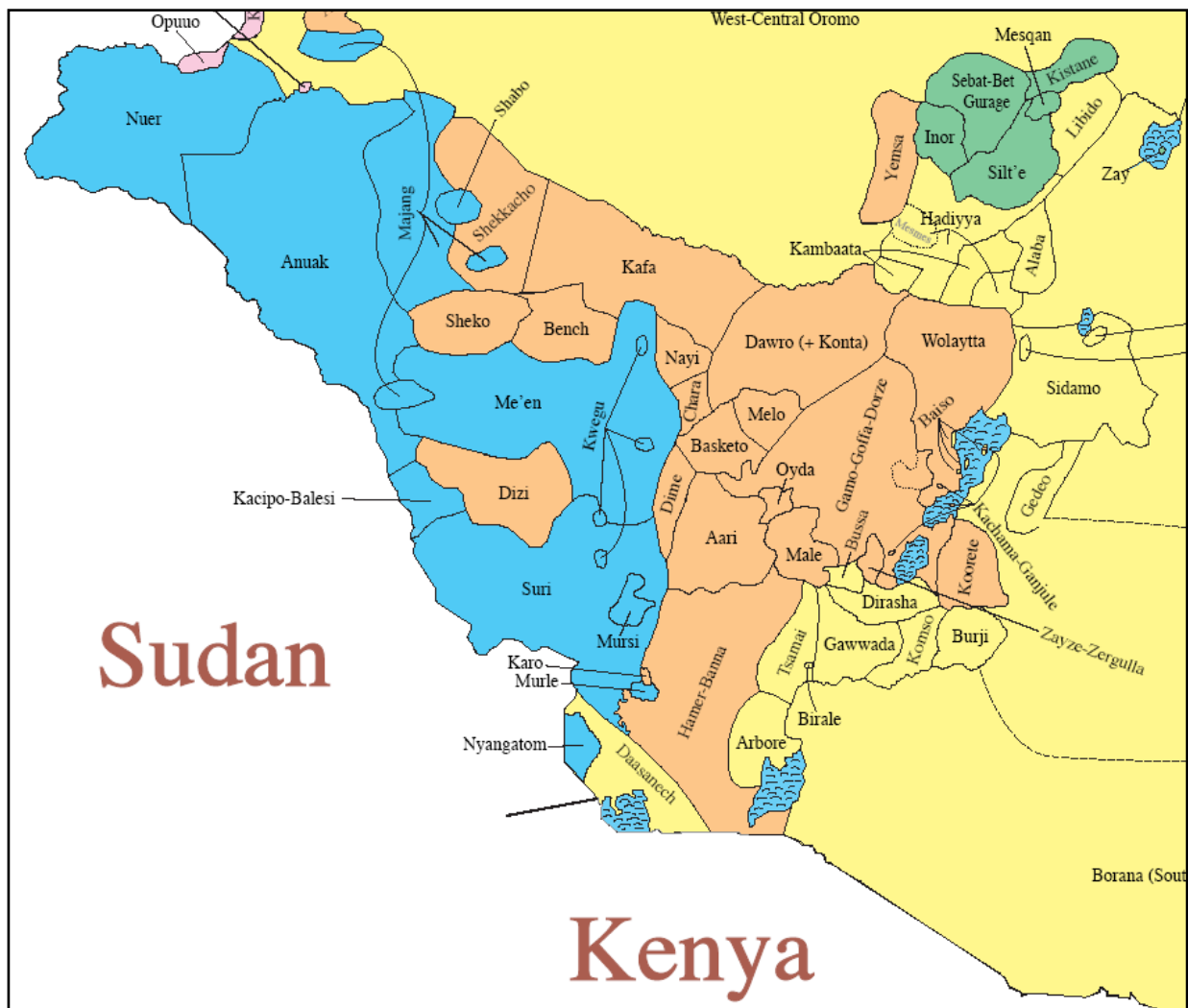
The Maale language is spoken in the South Western part of Ethiopia. The Maale language belongs to the Omotic language family (Unseth 1990). The Omotic language cluster is found in the vicinity of the great Omo River. In this cluster there are about 28 distinct languages with approximately four million speakers. The Omotic language family was formerly classified as West-Cushitic of the Afro-Asiatic super family (Greenberg in Amha 2000:3). The Maale language borders the Aari (Omotic) in the West, the Hamer/Banna (Omotic) and Tsamay (Cushitic) in the South, Gofa (Omotic) in the North and East and Oyda (Omotic) also in the North. While most of the Maale are monolingual, people living in border areas also speak the cross-border language. The Maale people are aware of the influence that these border languages have on their language and know where the most prestigious variety of the Maale language is spoken and they look down upon those they think do not speak 'proper' Maale. Within Maale there are a number of mutually intelligible, but distinct dialects. The Maale dialects include the northern dialect spoken in

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<sup>7</sup> In Ethiopia the classification of protestant refers to all the evangelical denominations, such as Sudan Interior Mission, the Lutheran Church, the Full Gospel Church etc., and also depicts a branch of Christianity that is not Orthodox.

Lemo and Asheker; then there is the south-west dialect spoken in and around Banata and Gero; there is the central variety spoken in the heart land of Maale (viz., Bala, Mak'ana and Koibe) and the *daulle* dialect, spoken in the low lands in the south. The differences in these dialects are explained in terms of 'purity' and 'influences' from adjacent languages groups (Amha 2000:7). For example, the northern dialect, the south-west dialect and the southern dialect are 'mixed' with languages on their borders and are seen as having less status and prestige. The central dialect, spoken in Bala and Koibe, is understood by all the other varieties and regarded as the most important or 'purest' variety in Maale because it is believed to be the least affected by other languages (Amha 2000:7). Historically, Bala is the seat of power and influence in Maale, the place from which the very powerful Maale king (*kati*) exercised his religious and political power throughout Maale land.

Figure 1.1 Language map of Maale and its neighbouring languages (Source: SIL, Ethiopia)



### **1.1.3 Previous studies on the Maale language and society**

The Maale people became well-known through books and articles on their political, economic and social history, written by the American anthropologist Donham (1985, 1986, 1990, 1999). The most comprehensive work done to date on the Maale language was a Doctoral thesis by Amha (2000) describing the grammar of Maale. Other studies include an unpublished BA thesis in linguistics at Addis Ababa University by Mengiste (1988), describing the phonology of Maale. The linguists, Flemming, Bender, Zaborski and Hayward in Amha (2000:3) did comparative studies between Omotic and Cushitic languages and made use of unpublished Maale word-lists compiled by Donham. In 1994 the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) conducted a two day survey in which they collected sociolinguistic information on Maale with the purpose of determining whether a Maale translation of the Bible is warranted. The results of the survey were published in Siebert (1995). The published report contained a word-list of 320 entries and information on language use, linguistic and cultural changes, and intermarriage. It also contained a discussion of the feasibility of a Bible translation project for the Maale. Although this material was useful in deciding whether or not to start a Maale translation project, it is far from a full report on language maintenance in Maale and does not attempt to explain why the Maale language has survived thus far. The aim of the present study is to fill this gap.

### **1.2 The problem**

If we consider the historical context of Maale, with its prolonged contact with dominant groups and languages in Ethiopia, especially Amharic, one might assume that language shift has taken place or even that the language has died out. However, exactly the opposite is true. Currently, the Maale language is still alive and doing very well. According to Amha (2000:3), the Maale language is not threatened by language shift or language death. None of the languages bordering the Maale language is used as a lingua franca among all of these groups and very few Maale speakers are fluent in Amharic, the national language. In fact, most of the Maale people are still monolingual. Maale is used in all social and religious activities and for local administrative purposes (Amha 2000:3). In view of this situation in which the language appears to have been maintained the question arises:

- What social factors have contributed thus far to the maintenance of the Maale language? Or, in a more general sense: why is it that certain languages in

prolonged contact with a dominant language endure over time while others shift to the dominant language?

Another question to be investigated in this dissertation relates to the mother-tongue literacy programme in Maale<sup>8</sup>. Maale speakers who have gone through the literacy programme are using the programme as a springboard for attending the local schools in the Maale area (see section 4.1.4.5). Without exception, these schools teach in Amharic. It is not unreasonable to think that mother-tongue literacy in Maale could be a factor in language maintenance. In this case, however, it seems that it could possibly be a factor eventually leading to language shift, since mother-tongue literacy appears to be the door to the higher education band for many Maale children. Considering this, the question then arises:

- Will mother-tongue literacy in Maale contribute to language shift?<sup>9</sup>

### **1.3 The Aim**

The focus of this study is on language maintenance and shift in Maale, a minority language that has been, for centuries, in contact with Amharic, a dominant language and currently the national language of Ethiopia (see section 1.5.2.2). Hence, the aims of the study are as follows:

- a) To give an account of the underlying social factors that have contributed to language maintenance in the Maale speech community.
- b) To investigate whether the current mother-tongue literacy programme in the Maale region is either facilitating language maintenance or possibly going to contribute to language shift in the Maale speech community.

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<sup>8</sup> The researcher and his wife have been working on a Bible translation project in Maale for the last twelve years. In order to enable the Maale people to read the Bible in their own language, they also developed a writing system and literacy programme. The Maale orthography was based on the Amharic alphabet.

<sup>9</sup> The Maale literacy programme was initiated in 2001, and the six years up to date is not sufficient time for making a conclusive statement as to the linguistic outcome of mother-tongue literacy in Maale. Further research into this question is needed to provide a more reliable answer.

## **1.4 Hypothesis**

According to Paulston (1994a:58), minority languages which are in contact with dominant languages within a ‘modern nation-state’ will maintain their linguistic stability if they encompass the set of behaviours, attitudes and perceptions that are associated with nationalism. The Maale language has been maintained for centuries in spite of colonisation (see section 1.5.1.3 on the colonisation of the Maale people). In the words of Amha (2000:3), “The Maale language is alive and well. It is presently not threatened by language shift or language death.” In light of Paulston’s assertions and the language maintenance phenomena in the Maale speech community, the following hypothesis is tested in this dissertation:

- A strong sense of nationalism is the main factor in the maintenance of the Maale language.

## **1.5 Context of the research problem**

### **1.5.1 Historical context**

#### 1.5.1.1 Introduction

During the scramble for Africa (by European powers), Ethiopia was one of only two African countries that were not colonized. Ethiopians today find great pride in this even though economically they remained one of the poorest nations in the world.

However, Ethiopia had its heyday as a world power. According to Persian prophet Mani, who lived in the third century A.D:

There are four great kingdoms on earth: The first is the kingdom of Babylon and Persia; the second is the kingdom of Rome; the third is the kingdom of the Aksumites: the fourth is the kingdom of the Chinese (Kobishchanov 1979 in Henze 2000:22).

The Aksumite Empire was centred in Ethiopia. It was well known all over the world. It was known to the Greek and Roman world, the Byzantines, the Arabs and the Persians. Knowledge of the Empire extended as far as ancient China (Henze 2000:22). The



Empire's imperial reach most likely included the entire region south of Egypt, that is, Sudan and Abyssinia, parts of South Arabia and control of trade routes of the entire Red Sea region by the late third century A.D. (Henze 2000:30). Christianity became the state religion in as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Empire continued to expand during the next two centuries, particularly southward and westward (Pankhurst & Gerard 1996:9). The seventh century saw the beginning of the decline of the Empire with the expansion of Islam and the loss of control over the Red Sea trade. The slow continual decline of the Empire was also marked by the continual expansion of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church<sup>10</sup> (Henze 2000:47). In the words of Gibbon (in Pakenham 1998:12): "Ethiopia slept near a thousand years, forgetful of the world, by whom they were forgotten". Aksum, although it lost its position as administrative capital of the kingdom more than a thousand years ago, still exists today. For Ethiopians, Aksum is a reminder of political power and influence they once had and it remains a religious symbol for Orthodox Christianity.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> century power shifted to the *Zagwe* (Agaw) dynasty. They were situated more to the west and thus further away from the Red Sea, with the result that there was less contact with the outside world. In 1270 the *Zagwe* dynasty was overthrown and replaced by the Solomonic dynasty based in Shawa, the province in which Addis Ababa was to be found. The ruling family claimed descent from the Biblical King Solomon, who according to Ethiopian folklore had a son by the Ethiopian Queen of Sheba (Pankhurst & Gerard 1996:10). Menelik, the son that was born as a result of this union, was the founder of the Ethiopian royal dynasty. Subsequent Christian rulers up to Emperor Haile Selassie all claimed descent from Solomon. The early Solomonic period witnessed an increase of Christian literature. Several major works of Ge'ez literature were written during this time, such as the *Fetha Nagast* or Law of the Kings and *Kebra Nagast* or Glory of the Kings (Pankhurst & Gerard 1996:10).

During the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries contact between Ethiopia and western Europe gradually increased and at the end of the so-called Ethiopians' 1000 year sleep, in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Emperor Lebna Dengel (a Christian himself) asked Christian Europe to save Ethiopia from the Moslem advance. The king of Portugal sent Christopher Da Gama,

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<sup>10</sup> The Ethiopian Orthodox Church had close ties with the Coptic Church of Egypt until the mid-twentieth century and traces its roots back to the fourth century with the conversion of Emperor Ezana (Henze 2000:30)

the son of the famous mariner, Vasco Da Gama. He won a decisive victory against the Muslims and from then on, for nearly a century, successive Ethiopian emperors showed their gratefulness to Europe by encouraging Catholic missionaries from Portugal and Spain (Pakenham 1998:13). Portugal and Spain viewed their good relations with Ethiopia as their opportunity to convert Ethiopia to Catholicism in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Pope gave the task of converting Ethiopia to the Jesuits. They had little success and the conversion of the Ethiopian Emperor Susneyos to Catholicism led to civil war, after he tried to convert the country by force. The Orthodox faith was restored and the Jesuits were eventually banished from Ethiopia. This marked a new era in Ethiopia's foreign relations. Fasiladas, the new Emperor, cut all relationships with the West (this policy of isolation continued for many decades before it was relaxed) and expanded relationships with the East, with Persia, the Mogul empire, and the Dutch Indies (Pankhurst & Gerard 1996:14-15).

The 18<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was marked by power struggles within Ethiopia. Disunity, civil war and lack of strong government during this time placed Ethiopia at a disadvantage at the time of the industrial revolution and this delayed modernisation in Ethiopia (Pankhurst & Gerard 1996:16).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the emergence of famous monarchs such as Tewodros II (1855-68), Yohannes IV (1871-89) and Menilek II (1889-1913). Each of these monarchs attempted to unify and modernise Ethiopia and to create a better image of Ethiopia for the outside world. Their efforts were frustrated by immense local difficulties and by interference of foreign powers, mainly Britain, Egypt, Sudan and Italy (Pankhurst & Gerard 1996:17). Menelik II was the most successful in unifying Ethiopia and he founded Ethiopia's modern capital, Addis Ababa. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Menilek II had managed to bring the whole of Northern Abyssinian under his control. This was to his advantage when he faced major difficulties with the Italians who claimed a protectorate over Ethiopia. Menelik rejected their claims and defeated Italy's first attempt at colonisation in 1886 at the Battle of Adwa. Menelik further expanded the Ethiopian state by conquering ethnic groups living in the south (Donham 1986:3). Menelik was succeeded by his grandson, Lej Iyasu, in 1913 but was deposed three years later. He was succeeded by Menelik's daughter, Zawditu, who became Empress. Ras Tafari Makonnen (later Emperor Haile Selassie), was to be the next heir to the throne. Although he only had

a slight connection to the line of succession, he was appointed regent and de facto ruler during Empress Zawditu's reign. Tafari was passionate about Ethiopia's image and obtained Ethiopia's entry to the League of Nations in 1923. He became Emperor Haile Selassie in 1930, after the death of the Empress. He was the logical choice since he was already the de facto ruler of Ethiopia. After this the pace of modernisation in Ethiopia gathered momentum for a short time. In 1935, Italy, seeking revenge for the Battle of Adwa, invaded Ethiopia and succeeded in capturing Addis Ababa in 1936. Mussolini's entry into the European war in 1940 brought Britain to the aid of Ethiopia with the result that Italy's occupation of Addis Ababa was short-lived.

#### 1.5.1.2 Amharization

Semitic political power expanded to the south, to increase their sphere of influence and gain access to and control of trade goods found in the South and Omotic South-West. This continual expansion of Abyssinia went hand-in-hand with the spread of the *rist*<sup>11</sup> system of land ownership, the adoption of Amharic and the expansion of the Orthodox Church. The spread of Amharic, *lisane nigus* (the king's language), was an integral part of this process of cultural transformation. For people in the peripheral regions, the political motivation for learning Amharic was great, for they could not claim rights that peasants traditionally enjoyed in central areas without speaking the language of those who sought to take those rights away. The expansion of the Orthodox Church was another important factor in the process of Abyssinianization. The Orthodox Church provide the spiritual blessing and guiding ideology for Abyssinian expansion. Currently 45% of the population belongs to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church condemned the enslavement of Christians. For those on the peripheries Christian identity promised an escape from the worst aspects of Abyssinian domination, and at times people on the southern peripheries begged northern emperors to make them Christian. Because it was mainly Amharic speaking people that directed and accomplished Abyssinian expansion from the thirteenth century, the category of Amhara naturally took on high prestige: *Amhara yazzal inji aytazzezim* (The Amhara is to rule, not to be ruled). Even the poorest Amhara see themselves as superior to people from the south. However, Amhara is not an ethnic identity that depends primarily on descent. People on the periphery could be

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<sup>11</sup> *Rist* were rights of production held by ordinary people and passed on to their children through both fathers and mothers (Donham 1985:5).

accepted as Amhara over generations through converting to Orthodox Christianity, adopting the Amharic language and transmitting this language to their children. It was to their advantage to become Amhara. Amhara were, first of all, Orthodox Christians. Secondly, they spoke Amharic (Donham 1986:13 and Gudina 2003:1-2).

#### 1.5.1.3 Incorporation of Maale into the Ethiopian Empire

From about 2,500 years ago, until the 15<sup>th</sup> century, there was a southward expansion of Semitic political power and languages from the North of Ethiopia. The northern powers wanted to increase their sphere of influence and gain access and control of the important trade goods found in the south and Omotic southwest (gold, animal hides, ivory, and slaves), for use in the Red Sea trade (Donham 1985). According to Donham (1986:70), Maale was probably conquered by the North in the fifteenth century and Maale was an economic component of the vast and complex trading network that covered all of Ethiopia for centuries before that.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century the Cushitic Oromo's started to spread out and conquer ethnic groups in central and Southern Ethiopia. The result was a severance of ties between the Christian North and the Omotic South-West. Trade routes to the south-west were cut off and the northern Semitic power started to disintegrate. Islamic revivalist Ahmed bin Ibrahim took advantage of the weakened northern Ethiopian state during this time and launched a full scale *jihad* (Islamic holy war) which was aimed at destroying Christianity in the North and ending the Solomonic monarchy (Abbink 1998:114). However, unlike Ahmed's Islamic forces, the Oromos did not seek control of internal and external trade routes and they also did not try to convert those they had conquered to their religion (Donham 1985:35). This brought freedom from the northern powers for the Omotic South-West but this only lasted until Emperor Menelik II managed to reunite the Semitic-speaking North towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Menelik II defeated the Italians in the Battle of Adwa in 1896 and expanded into the South and West in order to ward off encroaching colonial powers and to gain access and control of important trade goods in the South and South-West. During this expansion Maale and the Omotic South-West were once again incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire. The South and south-western part of

Ethiopia was conquered by the army of *Ras*<sup>12</sup> Welde Giyorgis. The Maale submitted without a fight and in fact welcomed the intervention of the northern powers. Before this event, when they had been invaded by the Bako, their neighbours, the large army of Welde Giyorgis had assisted the Maale to drive the Bako out of the Maale territory.

This meant, as Donham (1985:38) also pointed out, that the Maale and the Omotic South-West were twice colonised by Northern Ethiopia and were part of a world economy for nearly 2000 years.

#### 1.5.1.4 The weakening of the authority of the Maale king and lords

After the Maale's incorporation in Northern Ethiopia a garrison was set up and a governor appointed in Bako, which became the provincial capital of the region. A smaller garrison was established at Godda in Maale. Here the governor of the sub-province of Maale was stationed along with his soldiers. In 1900 Menelik appointed his trusted relatives to governor positions in the region. These governors established orthodox churches and established market towns in Bako, Uba, Gofa and Maale (Donham 1986:81). Many of these markets continue to be major market centres up to today. These governors also brought Amharic speaking soldier-settlers from their home bases in the north. These immigrants and their children became dominant in local Maale affairs. Up until the revolution in 1974 they were the wealthiest and most influential people from the north living in Maale (Donham 1986:81).

In 1910 Emperor Menelik made three personal *gult*<sup>13</sup> grants of the entire western chiefdoms in Maale (Bio, Lemo and Gente) to northern soldiers he wanted to reward. Each of these three officers settled in the areas with his entourage of ten to twenty soldiers under him to help to keep law and order and in this way the fief holders replaced the Maale lords as mediators in local disputes (Donham 1999:67). In 1911 the governor in Bako established a second settlement of soldiers at Bunka, in the heart of Maale, south of Godda (the sub-provincial governor's residence). These actions were indicative of the

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<sup>12</sup> *Ras* is a title and it means duke, literally head in Amharic.

<sup>13</sup> A *gult* grant was permission to rule and dominate. This meant the right to collect money and services from peasant who lived on the land. This also included the right of production and, *rist*. It also meant juridical rights to the fief holder, i.e. the right to settle all disputes and only the Emperor could overturn a decision. In return the fief holder was expected to keep up a personal armed force and to provide military support for the state whenever he was called upon (Donham 1986:9).

increased penetration of northern control. Instead of receiving money for their services, all the officials, from the provincial governor to the sub-provincial governor to the holders of *gult* grants with their entourage of ordinary soldiers, received the right to demand goods and services of Maale families, called *gebbar*<sup>14</sup>. The Maale king was now called *balabbat*<sup>15</sup> and the Maale lords also received *gult* grants and were allowed to be supported by taking goods and receiving services from Maale *gebbar* (Donham 1986:84). The king and lords were granted *gults* because of their new role in the Ethiopian state as local administrators and had no longer anything to do with the rituals that they performed to ensure the fertility and prosperity of Maale. These rights, however, did not match the boundaries of their respective chiefdoms. During the 1910s and 1920s the imperial presence continued to increase in Maale, which meant that the Maale lords and king were as a result restricted to increasing smaller tribute areas (Donham 1999:67). Power struggles developed between the governor and the northern soldiers that were given *gult* grants and this created an ever increasing demand for Maale families to serve as *gebbar*. Since Bio, Lemo and Gente were allocated to officers by the Emperor, it meant expansion into chiefdoms farther to the east and by the 1930s this created conflict between imposing northerners and the Maale king and lords (Donham 1999:68).

#### 1.5.1.5 The Italian occupation (1935-41)

Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in 1935. However, the invasion did not last long as Italy was defeated for the second time in Ethiopian history in the Battle of Adwa in 1941. During the brief Italian occupation of Ethiopia, changes were also taking place in Maale. By late 1937, the Italians had established a military station at Bako and they were able to appease the disgruntled Maale people. Artuma, the Lord of Bunka, and Galshila, lord of Irbo who had left Maale earlier to live in Tsamay (south of Maale where the *gebbar* system had not been extended), because most of their subjects were made *gebbar* by the northerners who had returned to their homes and offices. The Italian administration also encouraged the Maale to inaugurate a new king in the place of the one who had died (Donham 1999:72).

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<sup>14</sup> *Gebbar* meant 'tribute-giver'. They were peasants who owned *rist* lands but were forced to pay tribute to *gult* holders (Donham 1986:39).

<sup>15</sup> *Balabbat* means owner or big men, literally 'one who has a father'. They were informal local leaders through whom local governors exercised control (Donham 1986:39).

Donham (1986:85) explains Maale's positive attitude towards the Italian occupation in 1936 as a result of the effect of the progressive undermining of the Maale elite along with the exploitation of ordinary Maale people as *gebbar*. The Maale remembered the forced labour by the Italians to build roads and taxes they extract in the form of cattle, grain, and honey but many felt that when the Italians came they got their lives back, that they were people again.

A hallmark of the short-lived Italian occupation was the expansion of Protestantism, even though foreign missionaries were expelled. In many parts of southern Ethiopia, for example, in Wolaitta, an Omotic language group, north from Maale many new churches (unless otherwise stated, Church refers hereafter to the evangelical Church, also known as the protestant Church) were established.

#### 1.5.1.6 Post-Italian and Pre-revolution period (1941-1974)

##### (i) Land reforms and the end of the *gebbar* system

Many of the northern soldiers that lived in Maale died in the battle front against the Italians. Haile Sellasie, the emperor that succeeded Menelik, took advantage of the losses and confusion caused by the war to implement much needed reforms (Donham 1986:85). The *gult* grants made by Menelik expired when their owners died and in 1951 tax collection was regulated by dividing the ownership of these lands into plots which were then assigned to individual Maale who would pay tax directly to the government. However, the assignment of land was not equally done, as the wealthiest in Maale, i.e. the king and lords got the most land (Donham 1986:88). Haile Sellasie also abolished the *gebbar* system. Administrative officials were supported by salaries from Addis Ababa and the role of soldier-settlers was given to a new semi-professionalized police force. Governors and policemen now circulated from post to post, staying in one place not more than a few years. Indirect rule through the Maale king and lords once again became government policy. These reforms however did not end the northern settler's economic and political superiority over the Maale peasants. Many northern soldiers had bought land in Maale, which they retained after the Italian occupation. The entire lowland region in Maale had been declared government land and been sold to northern settlers from around 1911 onwards. The Maale depended on this area for their cattle grazing, for caring for

their goats and production of products like honey, and therefore had to pay rent to northerners who claimed that the land belonged to them (Donham 1986:87). Many northern landowners build second houses in Bako and would only go to Maale to collect their rent. Bako became the regional capital and centre for education and medical services as well as a major marketing centre for the southwest. It also had a court in which northerners defended their land claims (Donham 1986).

By the 1970s the power and role of the Maale king and Lords had changed significantly. During Maale's independence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the material power of kings had rested on their ability to gather tribute (in labour and in kind) from all Maale. This tribute was justified by the belief that the king was responsible for the fertility and well being of fields, people, and animals. But now, the king, most of the lords, and northern soldiers who settled in Maale have become rich landlords, employed by the state to collect taxes, to oversee law and order and to settle local disputes (Donham 1990:164). The king's power no longer rested upon his ability to control fertility but on his ability to influence and manipulate local politics and upon his ability to protect and expand his and the lords' and lineage elders' land claims and proceeds from taxes (Donham 1990: 167).

#### (ii) The spread of Christianity in Maale

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century most of the missionary work in Ethiopia was carried out on the non-Amhara south by evangelical churches from Scandinavian countries and North America. Foreign mission organisations, such as the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM)<sup>16</sup>, were generally not allowed to work in the Orthodox north, but were directed to the 'so-called primitive' south where they established strong churches in several places such as Wolaitta and Durame from which the protestant religion spread to surrounding regions like the Maale and Aari. Non-Orthodox religion became one of the major differences between northerners and southerners.

SIM opened a missionary station in Bako in January 1954 and during the 1960s the SIM mission station in Bako worked with native evangelists in Wolaitta (a neighbouring ethnic

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<sup>16</sup> Today SIM is no longer known as Sudan Interior Mission, but stands for Serving in Mission. The name change was necessary because of the expansion of SIM into other parts of Africa such as Ethiopia and Nigeria.



group which already had a strong church by then) to convert the Maale. Wolaitta evangelists taught that it was wrong to smoke and drink. They taught that traditional beliefs and customs were contrary to the truth and should be rejected in order to become a believer. They helped the Maale to understand the value of hard work and the importance of getting ahead. They offered access to modern medicines at the mission station in Bako, not far from Maale at a time, when the government provided nothing. They made schooling available in Amharic, when there were no government schools in Maale. Christianity grew rapidly in Maale; and as a group, Maale Christians were generally speaking more educated and entrepreneurial than others. They came into conflict with the Maale king and lords over religion and land ownership (Donham 1986:48). The Christians were economically better off than ordinary traditionalists and viewed traditional beliefs as backward and therefore they were inclined to support forward looking social changes in 1975.

The preaching of the Wolaitta evangelists and the periodic visits of SIM missionaries to Maale produced a network of Churches all over Maale. These churches became part of the Kale Heywet Church (Word of Life). This denomination with its roots in SIM became the largest evangelical denomination in Ethiopia with a current membership of about 6 million. These churches in Maale were the beginning of the creation of modern organisational structures and procedures. On the eve of the revolution churches were divided into districts. Each church sent representatives to a monthly district meeting. Each district sent representatives to a monthly area council in Bako. Once a year all Christians attend a conference with baptism, preaching and business meetings. Women's associations were formed and conferences were also arranged for them in Bako. At Koibe there was a two year academic school run by the church and a one year Bible school. All of these activities involved new social patterns; modern patterns of how to elect a chairperson to lead, wait at the clinic, to be on time for school etc. It was these new modern social patterns and structures (such as youth and woman associations) that provided the groundwork for the revolutionary state to influence and penetrate Maale society (Donham 1986:48).

### 1.5.1.7 Revolution 1974

#### (i) The overthrow of Haile Sellasie

In September of 1974 Emperor Haile Selassie's government was overthrown. In the context of the time a rejection of Haile Sellasie also meant a rejection of the USA and capitalism which was seen as having close relations with the Emperor's rule. The Soviet Union replaced America as Ethiopia's most important foreign backer (Donham 1999:122). During the 1950s Haile Sellasie and his government was seen as modernistic and progressive but by the 1970s they were viewed as the reason behind Ethiopia's backwardness (Donham 1999:123). The country was now ruled by the *Derg* and the new head of state was Mengistu Haile Mariam. On 20 December 1974, the *Derg* published a ten point programme in which they first explained their philosophy for Ethiopia first. This credo highlights themes of equality, self-reliance, the indivisibility of the nation, state control of the economy, and the abolition of landlords (Donham 1999:27).

#### (ii) Land reforms

The *Derg* nationalized all rural land and previous owners received no compensation. Every peasant family was given access to no more than 10 acres of land which they themselves had to farm (Donham 1999:27). The responsibility for carrying out the redistribution of land was given to the new peasant associations that the *Derg* formed throughout the country (Donham 1999:28). These land reforms won over the intellectual left of the *Derg* and pacified troublesome students. The *Derg* used students to organise the peasant associations. About 50 000 students were sent to nearly 400 stations in the countryside. The student's task was to teach reading and writing, hygiene, and basic agriculture; instil the principles of self-reliance; rid Ethiopians of the spirit of individualism and teach them to strive for the common good; conduct research and gather data (Ottaway in Donham 1999:29).

The events in Addis Ababa were immediately felt in Maale. By November opposing forces in Maale, that is, Christians and traditionalists came together and accused the King's son (the crown prince), the richest Maale lord, and northern landlords living in Maale, in the sub-provincial court, of exploitation and oppression (Donham 1986:69).

(iii) The students in Maale

The students arrived in Maale in July 1975. This event provided the incentive for a revolution in Maale. The following account of the students' address to the Maale people came from Donham's field notes of 8 July 1975 (Donham 1999:45):

....The students principle mission he said was to organise farmer's cooperatives.....The lackeys of the kati (king) and the godas (lords) would not be admitted to the associations he said...He also made the point that low castes such as potters and blacksmiths should not be discriminated against...And then he came to the climax: "Your real enemies are the kati and the goda. If they try to take money from you, you catch them and bring them to the police. If they resist then kill them!"

Immediately after the students' first speech in Maale, the students were inundated with grievances of exploitations by the landlords and Maale elite (Donham 1999:50). The initial actions of the new Maale peasant association, created by the students, were radical and revolutionary and profoundly impacted Maale society. The students with the help of Christians, that now filled key positions in the newly created peasant associations, committed sacrilege by entering the sacred grove which held the body of the Maale king who had died just before they arrived, and re-buried his bones on a footpath facing downwards instead of on top of the highest mountain<sup>17</sup>. They also burned, in public, body parts of past kings that were sacredly guarded (Donham 1999:53). The message to the Maale people was clear, namely, the time of the kings and lords has come to an end.

Students had their own ideas which were contrary to those of the government for rural reforms. The *Derg* wanted a process of land reform that was controlled from the top and students initiated reforms from the bottom up (Donham 1999:32).

By the middle of 1975 many students had been arrested by the *Derg*. The plan for dissolving the student opposition by spreading it around the country had failed. The *Derg* felt that they were losing control to the out of control students and quickly reasserted their own control by re-empowering the local police (Donham 1999:58). Furthermore,

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<sup>17</sup> According to Maale custom the king's bones should have been buried on the highest mountain in Maale, beside the graves of all the past kings on the day one of his sons was installed as the new king.

many students became disillusioned with the *Derg*, deserted and returned illegally to Addis Ababa. By the end of the year only about 18 000 of the original 50 000 remained in the field (Donham 1999:34). In Maale the students were under arrest by August. Their involvement in Maale was only for a very short period but it brought about far-reaching changes in Maale. The power of the Maale elite, entrenched in traditional beliefs, in land ownership and in local administration, was ended (Donham 1999:58).

(iv) The *Derg*'s influence in Maale

The *Derg* started to attack religions, that were not Orthodox, especially evangelical Christians in the south in 1975, and at the same time they began to adopt Orthodox Christian culture. By 1979 the Orthodox Church, after the state appointed 13 new Bishops, became just another voice for the revolutionary state (Donham1999:142). The *Derg* and the Orthodox Church collaborated on the campaign against 'foreign' religions. As the above indicated, the Orthodox Church had for centuries played a central role in the Ethiopian state and it played a predominant role in defining who and what Ethiopians were. Therefore, to convert to another religion was tantamount to rejecting Ethiopian nationality (Donham1999:143).

The government campaign to stamp out evangelical Christians reached Maale in the late 1970s. A number of Church buildings were confiscated and turned into government schools. Some Christians and church leaders were thrown into jail and this caused the Christians to repent from participation in the revolution and they also started to oppose it (Donham1999:152). Maale traditional elders soon realised that the new government would not allow Maale to reinstate a new king. The efficiency and volume of tax collection increased. More and more young Maale men were forced into the military to fight in wars that most of Maale had no understanding of, for example, the war with Somalia in 1977 and 1978. Drought in the early 1980s brought home to Maale the inevitable consequences of not having a king (kings were supposed to bring the rain). The result of this was that non-Christian Maale started to oppose the new government and began to revive traditional practises and customs (Donham1999:152).

However, this opposition from traditionalists and Christians did not weaken the revolutionary state's influence in Maale; in fact, it grew stronger. Peasant associations,

each with their own jail, school and clinic, became efficient implementers of state policy. Donham (1999:152-159) establishes two key factors for the revolutionary state's increased influence in Maale: one of the reasons was the formation of a small group of about 10 young Maale men that really believed in the revolution. When the Ethiopian Workers Party was formed in the early 1980s they became members and comprised the local communist cell. This group was very well organised and backed by the authorities. Their purpose was to make clear the ideals of the revolutionary state to the rest of Maale, to report on local conditions to superiors. They acted as leaders of the peasant associations and drew up lists of household heads for tax purposes, something that was never done before; they enlisted young men for military service and jailed those they suspected of anti-revolutionary tendencies. The other reason for the revolutionary state's increased penetration was that, even though the Maale came to hate the new order, many Maale participated in the institutions that strengthened the revolutionary state's influence in Maale. For example in local conflicts between Christians and non-Christians one side or the other would appeal to the state to deal with the situation.

#### 1.5.1.8 Post-*Derg* Period

##### (i) The fall of the *Derg*

Because of the *Derg*'s disastrous economic policies exaggerated by droughts and famine in the 1980's, they came under increasing pressure from factions within the country and in 1991 the *Derg* was overthrown with assistance from the USA. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front (EPRDF) was the new ruler. Meles Zenawi became the new head of state. The new government promised democracy, human rights and economic development.

##### (ii) Resurgence of Evangelical Christians and traditional practices and customs

Peasant associations continued to operate into the mid 1990s, maintaining law and order settling court cases and presiding over local communities. Evangelical churches took the place of the workers party in conveying modernity to the Maale (Donham1999:182). The Church was strengthened by the persecution and young and old joined the church in increasing numbers. Suppressed customs and beliefs also once again came to the fore. The

Maale were able to reinstall a king. The previous king's bones were re-buried according to Maale custom and ritual on top of the highest mountain in Maale, alongside the past kings of Maale. In the same ritual his son, Dulbo, was inaugurated as the new king in Maale. Dulbo, had lived outside of Maale since 1975. He married a Maale girl who would become the mother of the next king. However Dulbo did not return to live in Maale, instead he became a sort of part-time king with no official role in the government or in the peasant associations. He did visit Maale from time to time to carry out essential rituals. According to the Maale these rituals were ineffective and insincerely carried out and the proof is in the many calamities such as drought, famine and many deaths caused by diseases that occurred during his reign. Dulbo became very ill and visited Maale as a last resort to find a cure from traditional healers. Before his death in March 2005 the two most important lords in Maale broke his necklace<sup>18</sup> and sent him to the hospital in Jinka where he died. Soon after his death the Maale began the preparations and initiated the many rituals for the inauguration of the new king.

## **1.5.2 Linguistic background**

### **1.5.2.1 Languages in Ethiopia**

There are about 88 languages in Ethiopia with more than 200 dialects. The number of speakers of these languages varies considerably. Some languages only have a few thousand speakers like Balesi (Kaffa region), Dime (North Omo region), Seze (East of Addis) and Kachama (on an island in Lake Abaye). Others like Amharic, Oromo and Tigrinya, have millions of speakers.

The languages in Ethiopia can be divided into four families:

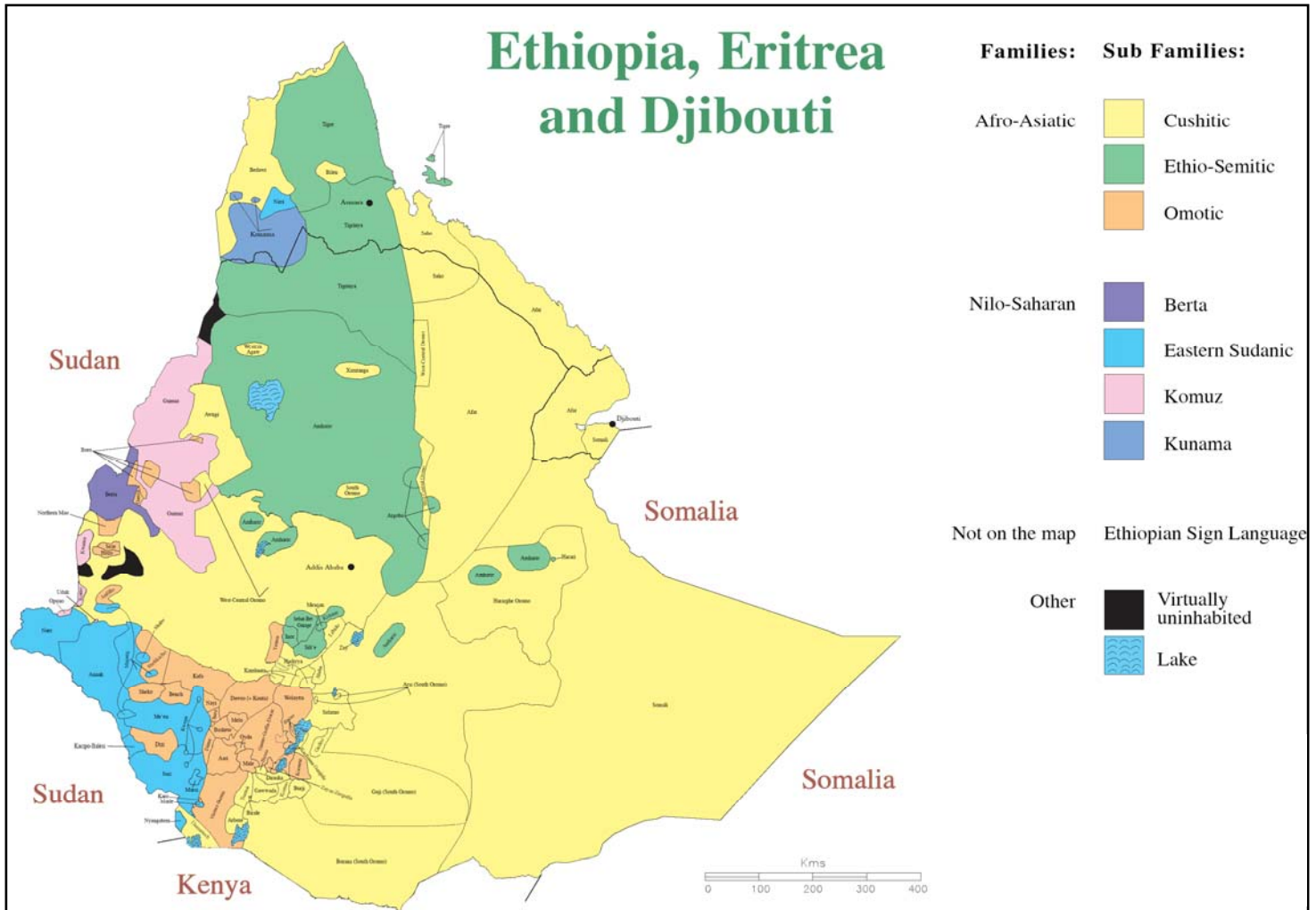
- a) Semitic, spoken by about 45% of the population, for example, Amharic and Tigrinya
- b) Cushitic, spoken by about 44% of the population, for example, Hadiya and Kambatta
- c) Omotic, spoken by about 7% of the population, for example, Wolaitta and Aari

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<sup>18</sup> Taking of the kings necklace before he died, indicated total rejection of his kingship.

d) Nilo-Saharan, spoken by about 4% of the population, for example, the Mursi and Me'en

Figure 1.2 Language map of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti (source: SIL, Ethiopia)



### 1.5.2.2 Language policy of Ethiopia

Amharic has been the dominant language of historic Abyssinia from the early middle ages, following the demise of the Axumite Empire. Two different varieties of the same language, Amharic and Ge'ez, coexisted throughout the centuries up to modern times; Amharic being the spoken language and Ge'ez the written language. This situation was changed in the nineteenth century under King Theodore and, later, in the twentieth century under Menelik II, the founder of modern Ethiopia and her capital Addis Ababa. Amharic became the spoken and written language, while Ge'ez became the language of the Orthodox Church. Under Emperor Haile Selassie all government administration,

national communication (press, radio, TV), and schooling was in Amharic and English. Fluency in Amharic was necessary for social and economic advancement. To symbolise the unique status of Amharic, article 125 of Ethiopia's 1955 constitution declares it to be the official language of the empire, and in 1972 the Imperial Academy of the Amharic language was established to consolidate its position (Fellman 1992:173). Before 1994 Amharic was the only language used as medium of instruction in primary schools in every part of Ethiopia (Amha 2000:7).

The revolution in 1974 changed this language policy and the wealth of the linguistic diversity of Ethiopia was officially recognised:

All the necessary effort will be made to free the diversified cultures of Ethiopia from the Imperialist cultural domination....Opportunities will be provided to allow them to develop, advance and grow with the aid of modern means and resources....No nationality will dominate another one since the history, culture, language and religion of each nationality will have equal recognition in accordance with the spirit of socialism....Within its environs each nationality has the right to determine the content of its political, economic and social life, use its own language (Programme of the Revolutionary Ethiopian government 1976 in Language programmes and language planning 1997).

Mother-tongue literacy programmes were implemented in 15 languages, but unfortunately their use was never extended to the formal educational system. Daily radio broadcasts were also created in the large language groups, like Oromo, Tigrinya and Somali, in addition to the regular programmes in Amharic, French and English. In addition to Amharic and English, Ethiopia's TV channel started to broadcast programmes in Oromo and Tigrinya. Weekly newspapers began in Oromo, Tigrinya and Arabic, in addition to the two weeklies in Amharic, the daily in Amharic, and the daily in English. The language academy was disbanded and reinstated as the Academy of Ethiopian Languages in 1976. It then started, along with the Addis Ababa Institute of Language Studies, to prepare materials in dozens of major Ethiopian languages (Fellman 1992:174). However, in spite of the *Derg's* policy of linguistic pluralism, Amharic remained the national language and the language of wider communication. Amharic remained the only language in the educational system, along with English, for secondary and higher education. During Mengistu's regime the standards of English and Education fell drastically. English was



blamed for student's poor performances in certain subjects. Amharic became, for all intents and purposes, the language of instruction and the government said that Amharic would officially replace English as the medium of instruction at all levels. Steps were taken to develop Amharic further in the areas of technology, science and modern life.

The *Derg* was overthrown in 1991, and since then the role of English as medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary level was reinforced, and English is now being taught as a subject from Grade 3. Amharic is also no longer the sole medium of instruction at elementary level. In many areas of Ethiopia, depending on the linguistic makeup of a region, other ethnic languages are used as the medium of instruction at elementary level. Furthermore, it has become evident that English has outstripped its rivals, French and Italian, as the language of international communication in Ethiopia.

The new government announced a new educational and cultural policy and, relating to the recognition of equal rights of languages, a clause was included in the new constitution drawn up in 1995. Article 39.2 of this constitution states:

Every Nation, Nationality and people in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history.

Between 1994 and 1996, the promotion of languages for mother-tongue education (MTE) was considered to be very important for the development of the new regional states. The structure of the regional states' Ministry of education includes a department to facilitate the promotion of local languages i.e. Department of the study of Nations and Nationalities languages. However, developing curriculum and materials with limited resources for Ethiopia's many languages is a big stumbling block to the implementation of this policy (see Bloor and Tamrat 1996, Booth and Walker 1997 and Gfeller 1999). To illustrate the difficulties: In the South Omo Zone there are about 12 languages; some of these belong to the Cushitic, some to the Omotic and some to the Nilo-Saharan language family<sup>19</sup>. None of these languages are used as a common language among all these groups. One may suggest choosing only one of these languages for educational and administrative purposes but this would empower the speakers of the chosen language and have a disempowering

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<sup>19</sup> See Bender and Hinnant (1976) on the non-Semitic languages of Ethiopia.

effect on all the others. With limited resources and other pressing needs in the region, it is understandable that the development of these 12 languages is currently receiving very little attention and at present Amharic is used as a medium of instruction at primary schools and as the working language of the South Omo Zone (Amha 2000:9).

None the less, the new educational and cultural policy opened the way for all languages to be used in education and provided language groups such as the Maale with and opportunity for implementing mother-tongue literacy in their region. As literature becomes available in their mother tongue, not only will they be able to read and express themselves in writing in their own language, but the skills could be transferred to read and write a second language, like Amharic. Studies have shown that people who first learn to read and write in their mother tongue have an advantage over those who learn to read and write in a language that is not their own (see Machet 2002, Smyth 2002, Schroeder 2004, Land & Buthelezi 2004). This, in turn, would open doors for people to complete the general education as well as further education bands, and hopefully the higher education band. In addition, the new policy highlights and recognises the rich linguistic diversity of Ethiopia, and this in turn ensures the continued interest and involvement of government, NGO's and the speakers of the languages themselves. Because the numerous languages of Ethiopia are seen as a national asset, instead of problem to be overcome, language maintenance in the minority languages of Ethiopia is now being facilitated. The task of translating the Bible into these languages is made easier, since translating the Bible goes hand in hand with language planning activities, such as orthography and mother-tongue literacy development, as well as with compiling grammars and dictionaries.

## **1.6 Structure of the dissertation**

In Chapter 2, theories, models and methods in the study of language maintenance and shift are discussed. This chapter looks at: the ethnolinguistic vitality concept, which proposes that the more vitality a group has, the more likely it is to survive as a group; the social identity theory, which suggests that individuals are motivated to seek a positive social identity if they are dissatisfied with their present identity; the speech accommodation theory, which is concerned with the motivation and social implications which underlie people's speech styles; subjective or perceived vitality, which is an extension of the ethnolinguistic vitality model and as such represents a particular

psychological approach; the language ecology approach, which focuses on factors that describe the interactions among languages and their environments; a model of additive and subtractive bilingual development, which identifies factors that contribute to additive and subtractive bilingualism; the social mobilization theory, which presents generalisations about social conditions that support language maintenance and shift; the social network theory, which postulates that language use is largely contingent on the social environment and the individual's attitudes; and the social reproduction theory, which is an extension of the social networks theory and asserts that each generation adopt strategies to transmit to the following generation the advantages it holds. This chapter also demonstrates the integration of different theories, how theories relate and overlap and finally the theoretical underpinnings of the study are highlighted.

Chapter 3 looks at the research methodology that was applied to this thesis. The research was mainly based on Paulston's theory of social mobilisation, although other theories of language maintenance and shift also featured. The observations are empirical and research descriptive. The primary research method applied was that of classic-ethnographic research, using participant-observation, field-notes and interviews with key informants. Another less important aspect of the research method was statistical data on the Maale mother-tongue literacy programme, gathered since 2001.

In Chapter 4, the results of the research are analysed and discussed. This chapter examines, and is a deliberation on, the factors underlying language maintenance in Maale. The factors discussed are the broader social factors, attitudes, networks and mother-tongue literacy.

Chapter 5 is the culmination of the thesis. It postulates social factors that have contributed to language maintenance in Maale. The question of whether mother-tongue literacy in Maale will lead to language shift is explored. This chapter also looks at the contributions that this dissertation has made to the field of study, the limitations of the research and suggestions for further research are made.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORIES OF LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT

#### 2.0 Introduction

Joshua Fishman was the first to use the terms *language maintenance* and *language shift* in the academic year of 1963/64 (Fase, Jaspaert & Kroon 1992:385). Now, about 40 years later, there is a whole host of courses, dissertations, books and articles on this topic.

For the purpose of this study, language shift is defined as a situation in which one language in contact with a more dominant language, within a nation, over a period of time, is partially or completely replaced by the dominant language, namely some or all of the former domains in which the language was used are replaced by the dominant language (De Fries 1992; Paulston 1985; Stoessel 2002). This process includes several phases of various degrees of bilingualism, without at the same time necessarily implying a loss of mother-tongue skills (Fishman 1985, in Stoessel 2002:94).

Batibo's (2005:102) definition of language maintenance serves as a good model for the purpose of this study:

Language maintenance is a situation in which a language maintains its vitality, even under pressure. It implies, therefore, that the degree of resistance is strong enough to contain any pressure that may be coming from a dominant language. In a situation of language maintenance, the domains of language L1 remain largely the same and transmission of the language to the children is active and as perfect as possible. Moreover, the number of speakers remains relatively stable and they maintain a strong allegiance to their language. Language maintenance usually applies to a relatively monolingual situation. However, it may take place in a stable diglossic situation, in which the functions of L1 and L2 are well defined and remain unchanged.

The phenomena of language maintenance and shift do not have clearly defined borders, but should be thought of as a movement across a continuum ranging from language maintenance to language death (Stoessel 2002; Veltman 1991).

Terminology in this field can be confusing. There are a lot of expressions that refer to the same or related topics. Language shift, language loss, language attrition, language death, language obsolescence, language loyalty, language revival, language revitalisation, language restoration are all used to explain events which are at times referred to in terms of language maintenance and shift. Also, research fields such as code-switching, code-mixing and inter-language variation often overlap with research in language maintenance and loss (Fase et al. 1992:3). The point is that the phenomena of language maintenance and shift do not have clearly defined borders. However, books and articles on the topic of language maintenance and shift usually deal with why some languages survive when in contact with a dominant language over time, and why others do not. Therefore, a central feature of the study of language maintenance and shift is that studies either deal with the gradual replacement of one language with another in a contact situation, or with the resistance that some languages show to being replaced by another. This often entails predicting language behaviour of groups who have access to, or are exposed to, more than one language.

Fishman (in Fase et al. 1992:397) argued that on the language maintenance/shift continuum, the negative side of the continuum was represented in detail, that is in studies of attrition, shift, endangerment, loss and death; while the other side of the continuum was much less closely studied, that is reversal, revival, restoration, revitalisation and re-stabilisation.

There do not appear to be any significant studies done in the past in Ethiopia that relate to the topic under investigation. Mainz University (1998) conducted a research project in cultural and linguistic contacts in Ethiopia which focuses on the phenomena of bilingualism and multilingualism, as well as language change in urban multiethnic centres of Ethiopia. The aim of the study is to describe the factors that contribute to the spread of languages as interethnic, regional or national means of communication, but the study does not indicate why some languages survive, while others die out, which is the aim of the present study. At present there are various ongoing studies in this field of language

maintenance and shift being conducted by SIL. They are doing research on minority languages all over Ethiopia to determine the feasibility of starting Bible translation projects for those languages. These studies are conducted by members of a research group, known as *Survey of Little-known Languages of Ethiopia* (SLLE). These surveys usually take two to three days to conduct and contain information on language usage and language vitality, with a word list of approximately 320 entries for comparison of related languages. These studies are not at all intended to be full reports on language maintenance and shift, but only serve as guidelines to help Bible translators decide whether to translate the Bible into them. Low vitality would indicate that the language or group might cease to exist in a few generations from now, and high vitality would indicate the likelihood that the group will survive as a distinct unit. These studies also do not indicate why some groups are maintaining their language while others seem to be shifting to another language.

Paulston (1992a:70) states that for shift to take place you need access to the dominant language, opportunities to learn it, and motivation to learn it, such as socio-economic upward mobility. Only languages with a possibility of being maintained or replaced by another language with which they are in contact are eligible for the study of language maintenance and shift. The language in danger of being replaced is always the language of the dominated group (Fase et al. 1992:3).

Many theories, methods and models have been developed to answer the very important question of why some languages are replaced by others in contact situations and why others are being maintained. Below is a short review of the theories central to this field of inquiry.

## **2.1 Theories, models and methods in the study of language maintenance and shift**

### **2.1.1 Ethnolinguistic vitality**

Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) were the first to introduce the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality. In their typological approach to the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality Giles et al. (1977) propose three variables, which may combine to permit an ethnolinguistic minority to survive as a distinctive group. These three variables are status, demographic and

institutional support. Each of these variables consists of a sub-set of variables. For example, demographic variables reflect numbers of group members and population distribution; status factors are the factors that relate to the speech community's prestige, this includes economic status, social status, sociohistorical status and prestige of its language and culture within its territory and outside its territory; and institutional support factors refer to the formal and informal representations of the group in the various institutions of a nation, region and community. Giles et al. (1977) contends that these three types of structural variables interact to provide the context for understanding the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups. It is argued that the more vitality a group has the more likely it is to survive as a group, and conversely, the less vitality a group has the more likely it is to cease to exist as a separate group (Giles et al 1977:308). Giles et al. (1977) admitted that the relative weights of these three factors need further research and that other factors may become more salient from time to time.

In order to study the socio-psychological processes that can act upon the three variables of ethnolinguistic vitality, Giles et al. (1977) proposed an integration of theories. The theories that they integrate with the structural variables affecting ethnolinguistic vitality are Tajfel's (1974 in Giles et al. 1977) theory of intergroup relations and Giles's (1973 in Giles et al. 1977) theory of speech accommodation. This is an attempt on their side to provide a theoretical framework for better understanding the interrelationships between language, ethnicity and intergroup relations. The concepts central to the understanding of this integration of theories include social categorisation, social identity, social comparison, psychological distinctiveness, cognitive alternatives and group strategies (Giles et al. 1977:321-343). Giles et al. (1977) emphasize that language behaviour plays an important role in all of these concepts.

### **2.1.2 Theory of intergroup relations**

Tajfel's theory of intergroup relations is a general theory, and as such is not limited to ethnic group contexts (Tajfel 1974 in Giles et al. 1977:318). This theory entails a description of a chain which is expressed as social categorization, social identity, social comparison and psychological distinctiveness. Tajfel's theory suggests that individuals are motivated to seek a positive social identity if they are dissatisfied with their present identity. However, although dissatisfaction with their present identity is a necessary

condition, it is not a sufficient condition for advocating and provoking change. Members must also be aware or become aware that cognitive alternatives to the existing status relationship between them and the dominant group exists (Giles et al. 1977:319-320).

### **2.1.3 Speech accommodation**

Giles's theory of speech accommodation is concerned with the motivation and social implications, which underlie changes in people's speech styles. Accommodation theory postulates that people are constantly adjusting their speech with others to reduce or emphasize the linguistic (and therefore social) differences between them. The extent to which individuals shift their speech style toward, or away from, the speech style of those with whom they are communicating, is a means by which social approval or disapproval is communicated. A shift towards that of another is called convergence and a shift away from that of another is called divergence (Giles et al. 1977:321-324). Ethnic groups can therefore use language as a tactic, for example, in the search for a positive social identity or cultural distinctiveness. Giles et al. (1977) showed how speech phenomena exemplify the strategies (assimilation, redefinition of previous negative characteristics, the creation of new dimensions for comparison and group competition) that group members might adopt in search of a positive social identity in terms of convergence, non-convergence and divergence.

### **2.1.4 Subjective or perceived vitality**

The above model of ethnolinguistic vitality was later extended to include subjective or perceived vitality and as such represents a particularly psychological approach (Bourhis et al. 1981 in Edwards 1992:45). Bourhis et al. (1981) present a subjective vitality questionnaire which consists of 22 questions that are linked to the three variables. Subjects are required to weigh up status, demographic and institutional factors, both for their own group and the dominant out-group; the result is claimed to be a subjective estimate of vitality. Giles et al. (1985 in El Aissati 1993:90) explain that ethnolinguistic communities could be meaningfully assessed according to the three-factored scheme of objective ethnolinguistic vitality on the basis of readily available statistical data; and add that perceived vitality or subjective vitality compliments objective vitality since it takes into account individuals perceptions and understanding of the societal conditions which



act upon them. They therefore propose that it is through the analysis of both subjective and objective group vitalities that one arrives at a better understanding of intergroup relations and attitudes; for example, motivation to learn a second language, attitudes towards the use of a language and options available for them in code-switching strategies (Giles and Byrne 1982 in Allard and Landry 1992:72).

Edwards (1992) points out that the advantage of Giles et al.'s (1977) typological approach, in which they introduce the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality, is that it gives us insight into psychological features of ethnolinguistic situations. However, Edwards (1992:47) believes that the area considered under each factor is too general. The main criticism is that it is a clear but too simplistic analysis of group situations. Husband and Saifullah Khan (1982 in Edwards 1992:47) also point out that the three variables are not independent of one another and call for different weighting of variables, which one can understand, since it is obvious that not every item is going to have the same importance in measuring ethnolinguistic vitality in every context; also other important variables might be identified. Furthermore, it is not clear how Giles et al. decided what the variables are. Borman and Appelgryn (1987) in their study which measured ethnolinguistic vitality of Afrikaans-speaking whites, English-speaking whites, and blacks in South Africa identified not three but five variables: institutional support, status and power, maintenance of identity, maintenance of symbols and threat to identity. Prujiner et al. (1984 in Allard and Landry 1992:172) propose four variables, namely demographic, economic, political and cultural capitals. Comparative studies in other societies are needed to find out whether the variables identified in these studies are universal variables of ethnolinguistic vitality or whether they were only products of the circumstances at the time of the study.

### **2.1.5 Language ecology approach**

This approach brings an ecological perspective to language maintenance and shift, namely factors that describe the interactions between languages and their environments. This approach was first advocated by Haugen (1974 in Mühlhäusler 1992:163) who stated:

The struggle between dominated and dominant groups for the right to survive includes what I have called, 'the ecology of language'. By this I mean that the preservation of language is a part of human ecology, which in turn is a brand of the larger disciplines of sociology and political science.

The question, therefore, is what constitutes an adequate environment in which languages are able to survive? Haugen (1972 in Edwards 1992:43) poses ten ecological questions that needs to be asked for a given language situation. Each of the ten questions are paired with a disciplinary subdivision:

1. How is the language classified vis-à-vis another language? (a matter of historical and descriptive linguistics)
2. Who uses the language? (linguistic demography)
3. What are the domains of the language? (sociolinguistics)
4. What other languages are used by its speakers? (dialinguistics)
5. What are the language's internal varieties? (dialectology)
6. What are its written traditions? (philosophy)
7. What is the language's degree of standardisation? (prescriptive linguistics)
8. What institutional support does the language have? (glottopolitics)
9. What attitudes toward the language are held by its speakers? (ethnolinguistics)
10. Where do all these factors place the language in relation to other languages? (ecological classification)

The strength of this approach is that it provides a framework within which language contexts can be studied and it demands that important ecological questions be answered. Edwards (1992:43) identifies the various weaknesses in this approach. The main ones are: (i) The questions are very general and imply a host of sub-questions (which he did not lay out, (ii) the disciplinary subdivisions paired with each question are not necessarily accurate, (iii) other subdivisions may not be relevant and (iv) some important ecological variables such as the historical and geographical variables are not covered.

Haarman (1986 in Edwards 1992:44) enlarges on the language ecology approach. He offers seven basic ecological variables to be researched and gives useful examples of variables in each category:

1. Ethnodemographic variables (including size and concentration of language group, urban-rural distinctions, etc.).
2. Ethnosociological variables (sex, age, social stratification, degree of endogamy-exogamy, etc.).
3. Ethnopolitical variables (group-state relations, institutional status of language, etc.)

4. Ethnocultural variables (descent criteria, organisational promotion of group interests, characteristics of the written language, etc.).
5. Ethnopsychological variables (attitudes towards other ethnic groups, the language-identity relationships, etc.).
6. Interactional variables (communicational mobility, language variety use by topic and situation, etc.).
7. Ethnolinguistic variables (linguistic distance between contact languages, etc.).

Haarman (1986 in Edwards 1992:44) also presents a theoretical profile of a speech community with a leaning to language shift in which a description of each of his variables is given. Haarman's ecological variables model offers more detail than that of Haugen's model. However, Edwards (1992:45) points out that it is still too general, not explicit enough and emphasises that geographical and historical components are again lacking.

Edwards (1992:37-52) explores the socio-political aspects of minority language maintenance and loss in search of a typology for minority languages. In doing so, he proposes that attempts be made to produce a framework of variables which could serve to highlight contexts of language maintenance and shift. Edwards combines three categories of variables, *speaker*, *language* and *setting*, that in his opinion emphasise the interactions between language and environment with another category of variables that takes into account different perspectives; namely demography, sociology, linguistics, psychology, history, politics/law/government, geography, education, religion, economics and the media, to produce a framework for minority language situation variables. On the basis of this framework, he compiled thirty-three sample questions, which act upon the two sets of variables. He acknowledges that these questions are not specific enough to comprise an all-inclusive typology. However, he contends that they provide a framework for one. He emphasises the fact that the problem with many research questionnaires is that they only draw on the beliefs of respondents and not necessarily their attitudes and feelings. Edwards (1992) concludes by stating that he believes that a comprehensive typology would be a useful tool for description and comparison of minority language situations. This, he stated, would lead to a more complete understanding of minority language situations, and also possibly permit predictions to be made concerning language maintenance and shift outcomes (Edwards 1992:51).

### **2.1.6 Model of additive and subtractive bilingual development**

Allard and Landry develop the concept of subjective and objective ethnolinguistic vitality proposed by Giles et al. (1977) further and incorporate a social networks theory in their model of additive and subtractive bilingual development. Allard and Landry (1992:173) define additive bilingualism as a condition which favours the development of the mother tongue, while at the same time permitting the learning and use of a second language. They define subtractive bilingualism as a condition which favours the development of a second language to the detriment of the mother tongue. This model of additive and subtractive bilingual development provides insight into the status of language maintenance and shift in bilingual situations. Bilingualism is the precursor to language shift (Paulston 1992a) in a prolonged contact situation, but the distinction that this definition makes between two different types of bilingualism, means that bilingualism is not necessarily an indicator of language shift. Additive bilingualism would, therefore, favour language maintenance and subtractive bilingualism would be symptomatic of language shift.

Allard and Landry's (1992:174) model identifies factors that contribute to additive and subtractive bilingualism on three levels: the sociological level, the socio-psychological level and the psychological level. The model is set in the context of two linguistic communities (one a minority group and the other a majority group) sharing a common social environment. The sociological level reflects the relative power (ethnolinguistic vitality) of the majority and minority ethnolinguistic groups. The ethnolinguistic vitality variables identified on this level are: demographic capital, political capital, economic capital and cultural capital. The comparative ethnolinguistic vitality of the different groups points towards the likelihood of maintenance of group identity (group survival) and potential for further development. The comparative ethnolinguistic vitality of each group also determines the extent to which the individual will be exposed to the process of bilingualism. This in turn depicts the socio-psychological level, that is, the individual networks of linguistic contacts (interpersonal contacts, contacts through the media and educational support) or social context within which all the individual's linguistic contacts (mother tongue and second language) take place. The individual network of linguistic contacts allows for the increase in proficiency in the first and second language and the development of beliefs, attitudes and values about language. This represents the psychological level. At this level the model identifies two factors which determine the

individual's language behaviour in a bilingual environment, that is, language aptitude/competence and cognitive-affective disposition (ethnolinguistic vitality beliefs). These two factors play a significant part in whether the individual will maintain, reduce or widen his/her network in each language and will have an effect on language learning and behaviour, and in due course on language maintenance and shift.

### **2.1.7 Social mobilisation (Paulston)**

Paulston (1985, 1987, 1992a and 1994c), in search of answers to the important question of how we can predict success or failure of language policies in multilingual states, presents generalisations about social conditions, which support language maintenance and shift. She contends that language policies that go against sociocultural forces will not be successful and that the major challenge in predicting linguistic outcomes in a contact situation lies in understanding and identifying the relevant social determinants of language maintenance and shift. The general question Paulston tries to answer concerns the reasons the speakers of some languages cling to their ancestral language, while others slowly or rapidly abandon them.

#### 2.1.7.1 The origin of the contact situation

Paulston (1994e:10) argues that an important factor in language maintenance and shift phenomena is the origin of the contact situation. Lieberman et al. (1975 in Paulston 1994e:11) also supports this claims:

The course of race and ethnic relations will be different in settings where the subordinate group is indigenous as opposed to those where the migrant populations are subordinate.

Paulston (1994e:11) argues that voluntary migration, especially of individuals and families, will result in faster rates of language and ethnic shift, for example in the case of immigrant groups to Sweden, than in the case of annexation, or colonisation, where entire groups are brought into a nation with their social institutions and value systems still in place, for example, among the Indian groups of Peru.

### 2.1.7.2 Social factors in language shift

Paulston (1994e:3) argues that the main linguistic outcomes of a prolonged contact of ethnic groups within a 'modern nation-state' are language maintenance, bilingualism or language shift. The general rule for groups in prolonged contact within a nation-state is for the minority group to shift to the language of the dominant group, whether over a short period of time or over many generations. Therefore, Paulston (1994f:9) argues that if shift does not take place, there will always be two main reasons for it: a lack of incentive (usually economic) and a lack of access to the dominant language. Paulston (1994f:17) considers certain social conditions which may facilitate or constrain opportunities of access to the dominant language, namely participation in social institutions, such as schooling, exogamy, military service, religious institutions; access to mass-media; access to roads and transportation; travel, including trade, commerce, war, evangelism; occupations; demographic factors, such as in-migration, back migration and urbanization.

Paulston (1994f:13) states that the agency of language shift is bilingualism, which often goes hand in hand with exogamy, where parents speak the mother tongue with the grandparents and the dominant language with the children. Paulston (1994f:13) also claims that language shift often begins with women (if access and opportunities to the dominant language are present). This is observable in their choice of code (Schlieben-Lange 1977 in Paulston 1994f:13), in their choice of marriage partner (Gal 1979; Brudner 1972 in Paulston 1994f:13) and consequently in their choice of language to raise their children in (Eckert 1983 in Paulston 1994f:13).

Paulston (1992a:70 and 1994f:16) mentions that ongoing access to a standardized, written L1 with cultural prestige as opposed to a non-standard, unwritten language of no prestige also affect the rate of shift and support language maintenance.

### 2.1.7.3 Social factors in language maintenance

Paulson (1994f:21) states that language maintenance can be seen as a social resource by ethnic groups in competition for access to goods and services of a nation, and that language loyalty is not a natural phenomenon but a deliberate chosen strategy for group survival. Ethnic groups that see learning a dominant language in the best interest of their

children (and where there are opportunities available to learn the dominant language) become bilingual or shift to the dominant language. However, when these same groups see stigmatisation, economic exploitation and systematic unemployment, they are likely to use the mother tongue as a strategy for social mobilisation, and language maintenance becomes the expected outcome (Paulston 1994f:23).

#### 2.1.7.4 Types of social mobilisation

Paulston (1994c:25) contends that groups can find another focus of social mobilisation other than ethnicity, and argues that there are four types of social mobilisation, which under certain specified social conditions result in different linguistic outcomes: The four types of social mobilization are: (i) ethnicity, (ii) ethnic movements, (iii) ethnic nationalism and (iv) geographic nationalism. Paulston (1994c:29) states that these four types of social mobilisation represent a continuum, rather than four distinct types and groups can fit into a different type of mobilisation at different stages of their history and also move back and forth on the continuum. The four types of social mobilisation are discussed below:

##### (i) Ethnicity

An “ethnic group” is a reference group invoked by people who share a common historical style (which may be only assumed), based on overt features and values, and who through the process of interaction with others, identify themselves as sharing that style. “Ethnic identity” is the sum total of feelings on the part of group members about those values, symbols, and common histories that identify them as a distinct group. “Ethnicity” is simply ethnic based action (Royce 1982 in Paulston 1994c:30)

Paulston (1994c:31) identifies the defining characteristics of ethnicity as an emphasis on a common biological past, common roots and common ancestors (factual or fictional); personal identity is based on culture (and religion) and ethnicity is a matter of being born into a particular society; the commonly held cultural values, ideas and beliefs are unconsciously learned behaviour and ethnicity is taken for granted; there is no opposition and no violence involved and members feel good about their past and the future seems secure; with ethnicity there is little power struggle and not much purpose, resulting in assimilation and language shift. Ethnicity will not withstand language shift in a

multilingual setting if the dominant group allows assimilation, provided that there is incentive to assimilate and access to the dominant language.

(ii) Ethnic movement

Paulston (1994c:32) claims that ethnic movement as a type of social mobilisation develops when ethnicity as an unconscious identity turns into a conscious, deliberate strategy, usually in competition of limited resources. Paulston (1994c:32) suggests that the defining characteristics of ethnic movements are: ethnicity turned violent, consisting of ethnic discontents in a power struggle with a dominant group for social and economic advantages; ethnic movements tend to base their claims on equality and fairness; resistance is drawn along ethnic boundaries; ethnicity emphasises the content of the culture, whereas ethnic movements emphasise ethnic boundary maintenance; ethnic movements usually have a charismatic leader (most likely born as a member of the group); ethnic movements emphasise a glorious past that is part of their consciousness; ethnic movements use language as rallying points, the mother tongue if available can be a very powerful unification symbol, but language as a symbol does not need to be the ethnic group's mother tongue, for example, Stephen Biko used English and not Afrikaans as a symbol against Apartheid in South Africa. Ethnic movements like ethnicity will also not withstand language shift in a multilingual setting but language shift will be much slower and can extend over several generations.

(iii) Ethnic nationalism

Paulston (1994c:33) states that when ethnic discontents turn separatist, we get ethnic nationalism. She draws on Cottam's (1964 in Paulston 1994c:34) definition of nationalism in her model, which asserts that nationalism is best interpreted as the manifestation of nationalistic behaviour, nationalist is seen as, "an individual who sees himself as a member of a political community, a nation that is entitled to independent statehood, and is willing to grant that community a primary and terminal loyalty". Paulston (1994c:34-37) summarizes the main characteristics of both ethnic and geographical national movements as group loyalty and group cohesion<sup>20</sup>, which are

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<sup>20</sup> "As a political unit it will presumably be more effective if it is also a social unit. Like any unit, it minimizes internal differences and maximizes external ones. On the individual's personal and local identity it superimposes a national one by identifying his ego with that of all others within the nation and separating it from all others outside the nation. In a society that is essentially familial or tribal or regional it stimulates



consciously taught behaviours through social institutions; external distinction; a goal of self determination, legitimized by or based on historical past events; protest against oppression, against a common enemy, whether it be against a dominant group within the same state or against another state; intellectual leaders; access to, or aspiration for, territory and a well-developed middle class. The latter characteristic is the primary difference between ethnic movements and ethnic nationalism. The stimulus for ethnic nationalism often comes from the middle classes whose economic interests and power depends on the economic well being of the nation-state. Paulston (1994c:37) contends that another important difference between ethnic movement and ethnic nationalism is access to territory. She argues that without land, nationalism movements can not succeed and that the feasibility of separatist movements depends on access to territory.

Paulston (1994c:35) argues that language in ethnic nationalism is a very important symbol of the nation. The goal of national movements is to secure their own political status and social institutions on their own territory. An independent nation-state is usually what ethnic nationalism movements strive for, however the nation-state can be content to remain part of a larger state as long as they can guarantee their own social and cultural institutions, in which case language (and language maintenance) becomes a very important symbol of the nation. To acknowledge and to allow language shift is to be disloyal and the accepted wisdom is that the inner thoughts of the people can only be adequately expressed in the mother tongue.

Paulston (1994c:35) makes the assertion that a likely common goal of national movements is to improve one's circumstances or that of one's children. The motivation for this, as in ethnic movements, is perceived self-interest.

#### (iv) Geographical nationalism

Paulston's concept of ethnic and geographical nationalism shares features with Hans Kohn's *open* and *closed* nationalism (Kohn 1968 in Paulston 1994c:37). She contends that the difference between ethnic, or closed, nationalism and geographic, or open, nationalism is that in ethnic or closed nationalism the ethnic group is isomorphic with the nation-state.

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a loyalty beyond the primary groups, but discourages any conflicting loyalty to other nations. The ideal is: internal cohesion-external distinction" (Haugen 1972 in Paulston 94:112).

The emphasis is on the nation's indigenous character, on its common past and common culture in contrast with open or geographical nationalism that rejects these notions and affirms emancipation, assimilation, and individualism. Geographical nationalism is territorial-based and made up of a political group of people, comprising a nation that does not depend on ethnic descent (Paulston 1994c:37). Another important difference between ethnic nationalism and geographical nationalism is that in the case of geographical nationalism, language is not necessarily the most important symbol of the nation (Paulston 1994c:38).

This theoretical framework of Paulston (1985, 1987, 1992a, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, and 1994f) is an attempt to explain and predict the language behaviour of groups that have access to or are exposed to more than one language. In essence, her argument is that ethnicity and ethnic movements are not sufficient types of social mobilisation to halt language shift, but that the set of behaviour, attitudes and perceptions that we associate with nationalism provides the sufficient condition for minority language maintenance. Paulston (1992a:60) also states that economic incentives are probably a necessary but not sufficient condition for language maintenance, but again that the set of behaviour, attitudes and perceptions which we associate with nationalism provides the sufficient condition.

Paulston (1994c) acknowledges that there are other types of social mobilisations (e.g. associations, labour unions, religious groups etc.). But she argues that although linguistic groups may choose such identities as the primary strategies for competition of scarce resources, they do so as pre-existing ethnic or national groups. She therefore claims that for the purposes of explaining language behaviour within contemporary nation-states the four types of social mobilisation are sufficient. Paulston claims that her theory applies to 'modern' nation-states. An issue that needs careful consideration is whether, or to what extent, her model can be applied to minority groups living in contemporary nation-states that cannot be regarded as 'modern'. There are still many minority groups (communities of people) in Africa, and elsewhere, like the Maale people of Ethiopia, that do not fit into Paulston's concept of 'modern'. Typically, these communities are unaffected by popular trends of modernity. They still adhere to traditional religions, ideas and methods (of hunting, cooking, house-building, food-gathering etc.). Generally speaking, research into language maintenance and shift amongst such groups has been neglected.

### **2.1.8 Social network theory**

The social network theory defines the social environment that may have an effect on individual's language attitudes and behaviours. Stoessel (2002:96) makes the point that the social networks theory is an important theory in language maintenance and shift because of the strong influence that social networks have on language usage and culture. Stoessel (2002:95) emphasises that language shift or maintenance should not be seen as black and white alternatives. These two phenomena should be seen as part of a continuum, placing the individual closer to one end of the continuum rather than the other and since language use is largely contingent on the social environment and also closely linked to the individual's attitudes, one should keep in mind that it can change depending on changes in individuals' lives, their social environment, and their attitudes.

Milroy (1980 in Stoessel 2002:95) defines social network as, "informal social relationships contracted by an individual". Therefore, a network is a group of people who know each other in some way or the other, with different levels of relationships. This group typically consists of an anchor person at the centre who has different ties to different people from various domains in his/her life. These domains are the subgroups of the social network. The smallest unit of the social network is then the connection between the anchor of the network and one other person. In dense networks, people within the same domain may also know each other and in other denser domains, people from one domain may also know people from another domain (Stoessel 2002:96).

The basic assumption of this theory is that the interaction of individuals with their social and cultural environment happens largely through the medium of language, that is, language serves as a means to socialise. It is then through socialization that individuals, with language as a tool, are able to depict social roles ranging from gender, religious, professional, and institutional roles and receive in turn confirmation of these roles by other members who share sociocultural knowledge with them. This is what makes the individual part of a group to which he or she will show loyalty (Stoessel 2002:96).

According to this theory, the individual is influenced by various factors when it comes to language use. For example, language (the use of different languages, dialects, or accent) can mark people as members of a particular social network. By choosing a particular

language or language variety or accent, individuals can indicate specific needs and desires like the desire to belong to a certain class of people or the need to be part of a specific group or the desire to distance oneself from a previous social network (Stoessel 2002:97).

A salient feature in networks is the degree to which a network is closed or open to new members. Milroy (1980) and Blom & Gumperz (1972 in O Riagain 1994:180) suggest that a close-knit network structure is an important factor with regard to contributing to language maintenance because speakers are able to unify and resist linguistic and social pressure that comes from outside the group. Closed and open networks are commonly measured by counting the number of speakers of one language in the networks compared to speakers of other languages.

Critics of the social network theory point out that this approach does not take into account how individual choices of network interaction are made (O Riagain 1994:181). Cole (1977 in O Riagain 1994:181) also points out that the social organisation of communities can only be adequately understood by taking into account a variety of forces, some of which originate locally, but others which originate in the processes of national integration and the context of the local community in these processes.

### **2.1.9 Social reproduction theory**

The social reproduction theory is an extension of the social network theory. The social reproduction theory asserts that each generation adopts strategies to transmit to the following generation the advantages it holds. For example, strategies of social mobility that involve education, changes of occupation, changes of residence or migration, are probably all going to have linguistic consequences. The anticipation of such strategies may hold implications for language maintenance and shift ahead of the implementation of the actual strategy itself (O Riagain 1994). Therefore, as Bordieu (1991 in O Riagain 1994:179) asserts, strategies of language ‘assimilation’ and ‘dissimilation’ are connected to the more general strategies of social reproduction adopted by groups and individuals.

Giddens (1984 in O Riagain 1994:179) points out that in order to investigate the linguistic consequences of strategies of social reproduction, one has to study the territorial organisation of the local community and the relationship of this to the wider national and

international economy. The territorial organisation of communities includes the daily patterns of social interaction, (e.g. home, workplace, school, shop, church etc.) and movements of people and capital which would include all forms of migration and tourism. These patterns of interaction are subject to change as the community responds to opportunities and pressures of its external environment.

## **2.2 Overview and evaluation of theories**

There seem to be four main strands of language maintenance and shift theories, namely the ethnolinguistic vitality concept, the ecology approach, the social network method and the social mobilisation theory. These four main strands of language maintenance and shift theories overlap and relate to one another. New theories are often developed when researchers try to apply existing language maintenance and shift theories and discover their shortcomings. In order to improve our understanding of language maintenance and shift phenomena they may then propose an integration of theories or an extension of existing theories. Paulston's theory of social mobilisation stands apart from the others in that her theory seems to be more dynamic, as her model accounts for ever changing social conditions.

### **2.2.1 Theories overlap and relate to one another**

An example of how theories overlap and relate to one another is the social network theory that relates to Giles' et al. (1977) concept of ethnolinguistic vitality and Allan and Landry's (1992) model of additive and subtractive bilingual development. The ethnolinguistic vitality of each group determines whether a group is likely to survive as a group or cease to exist as a group. This, in turn, depicts the extent to which the individual will be exposed to a dominant group, and therefore also indicates the degree to which an individual will be exposed to the process of additive or subtractive bilingual development. This subsequently portrays the individual networks of linguistic contacts (interpersonal contacts, contacts through the media and educational support) or social context within which all the individual's linguistic contacts (mother tongue and second language) take place (Allard and Landry 1992:174). This theory also relates to Paulston's (1994c) theory in that social networks are the result of underlying social conditions that act upon her four types of social mobilisation.

### **2.2.2 An integration or extension of theories**

In order to improve our understanding of language maintenance and shift phenomena, an integration of theories was proposed by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977). In order to study the socio-psychological processes that can act upon the three structural variables of ethnolinguistic vitality, they proposed an integration of Tajfel's (1974 in Giles et al. 1977) theory of intergroup relations and Giles's (1973 in Giles et al. 1977) theory of speech accommodation. This is their attempt to provide a theoretical framework to improve our understanding of the interrelationships between language, ethnicity and intergroup relations.

Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal (1981 in Edwards 1992:45) et al. propose an extension of the model of ethnolinguistic vitality to include subjective or perceived vitality, in order to take into account individuals' perceptions and understanding of the social conditions which act upon the three structural variables of ethnolinguistic vitality. This psychological approach is intended to further improve our understanding of intergroup relations and attitudes (Giles and Byrne 1982 in Allard and Landry 1992:72).

Allard and Landry (1992) also propose an integration of theories. They developed the concept of subjective and objective ethnolinguistic vitality further by integrating a social networks theory in order to set up a model of additive and subtractive bilingual development.

Others, like Haarman (1986 in Edwards 1992:44) and Edwards (1992) also build on existing theories. For example, Haarman enlarges on Haugen's (1972) language ecology approach (the interaction among languages and their environments) in order to account for the socio-political aspects of minority language maintenance and loss. Edwards (1992) then builds on these two approaches, as well as on that of Giles' et al. (1977) ethnolinguistic vitality approach, in order to produce a more comprehensive typology for describing and comparing minority language situations and to make predictions about language maintenance and shift outcomes.

### **2.2.3 Static vs. dynamic**

Paulston's (1994c) theory of social mobilization is quite unique within the field of language maintenance and shift. Her theory is not dependant on other theories in this field and she relies on qualitative research methods instead of quantitative methods, which most other approaches propound, such as the ethnolinguistic vitality approaches and social network approaches. Paulston came up with a framework of underlying social conditions which can be used for predicting language maintenance and shift outcomes, as well as for stating why some languages survive in a contact situation while others die out. Theories and models are in danger of being stagnant descriptions of the current situation, which imply permanency, and out of this stationary state of affairs, statements and predictions are made about language maintenance and shift. The historical setting may be disregarded or undervalued, as well as the constantly changing conditions. Paulston's theory appears to offer greater flexibility, both the historical and the dynamic elements are important to language outcomes in a contact situation. Changing social conditions and their historical relationships to underlying social determinants are an integral part of her theory. This dynamic element and flexibility in Paulson's approach enables her to make the important claim that language policies which go against the sociocultural forces will not be successful (Paulston 1994e:4).

### **2.2.4 Concluding remarks**

None of these theories discussed above claim to be fully comprehensive or exclusive. Giles et al. (1977) El Aissati (1993) Borman et al. (1997) and Allard and Landry (1992) all, for example, proposed an integration of theories. All of these theories contribute to a better understanding of the processes underlying issues of language maintenance and shift, and can be useful in predicting linguistic outcomes of ethnic groups in contact. However, there is still a lot to learn about language maintenance and shift; for example, Paulston (1994d:84) mentions that we don't yet fully understand the degree to which ethnic groups in contact keep their communicative competence rules and apply their own cultural rules of appropriate language use to the new language. This view is supported by Pandharipande (1992:268) who points out that the impact of the shifting language (minority language) on the target language (dominant language) still needs further research. Another gap in language maintenance and shift research is among tribal groups

in Africa and elsewhere, where on the whole, research into language maintenance and shift in these languages has been neglected.

**2.3 Theoretical underpinnings of the study**

The research is modelled around Paulston’s theory of social mobilisation (see section 2.1.7) and her framework below was used as a guideline for the kind of questions asked and for the type of information sought.

Figure 2.1 Linguistic consequences of social mobilisation in multilingual settings (Paulston 1994b:110)

	Ethnicity	Ethnic Movement	Ethnic Nationalism	Geographic Nationalism
<b>(1) Defining characteristics</b>	As identity	As strategy in competition for scarce resources	Territory	
	Unconscious learned behaviour	Goal: socio-economic advantage	Closed Nationalism	Open Nationalism
	Shared ancestors; roots	Cognitive	Intellectual leaders	
	Taken for granted	Self-chosen	Middle class	
	Not goal orientated	Militant	Loyalty (important)	
	No violence	Violent	Common enemy	
	Common values and beliefs	Charismatic leader	Taught behaviours	
	Survives language shift	Language as rallying point	Goal: independence, political self-determination	



		Boundary maintenance	External distinction Internal cohesion	
		Glorious past	Glorious past	
			Cultural self-determination	
		etc.	As identity	
	Less ←-----Legislation Involved----- ---→More			
<b>(2) Facilitating or constraining factors (intervening or contextual variables)</b>	Under what social conditions? E.g. Participation in social institutions, schooling, exogamy, military service, religious institutions; mass-media; roads and transportation; travel, trade, commerce, war, evangelism; occupations; in-migration, back-migration, urbanization, etc			
<b>(3) Linguistic consequences (dependant variables)</b>  <b>Also:</b> <b>Language spread</b> <b>Language death</b> <b>Language reformation</b>	Language shift	Language shift but slower rate	Maintenance national language as powerful symbol	Maintenance national language
			Language planning academies	
			Strong language attitudes	

			Standardisation Modernisation Literacy-teacher training
			Language problems: Choice of national language

In this model of Paulston, the headings are the four different types of social mobilisation. These four types are the social determinants, that is, the independent variables or causal factors of language maintenance and shift. Below their headings are listed the social features which serve as the defining characteristics of each movement (see Section 2.1.7.4). Next are the intervening<sup>21</sup>, or contextual, variables that can have an effect on language maintenance or shift. For example, ethnicity should result in shift but it does not always happen, as in cases where there are no incentives or access to jobs in the dominant language. Lastly, in the model are the dependant variables, which are the linguistic consequences of the four types of social mobilisations (Paulston 1994b:108).

Although the study is centred on Paulston’s theory, relevant questions, based on other theories were asked. For example, the social network theory, Giles’ and his colleagues’ concept of objective and subjective ethnolinguistic vitality, Tajfel’s theory of social identity, Giles’s theory of speech accommodation, and Allard and Landry’s model of the determinants of additive and subtractive bilingualism. Haugen’s, Haarman’s, and Edwards’ theories also contributed to this study. (It seems that most studies on language maintenance and shift have their origin in a combination of theories, for example, De Klerk (2000), O Riagain (1994), Demos (1988), Borman & Appelgryn (1997), El Aissati (1993), etc.).

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<sup>21</sup> Intervening or contextual variables “modify the effect of independent variables” (Schermerhorn 1970 in Paulston 1994:112) and according to Paulston assist us to account for the conditions of integration and the modes of integration (or lack of) of ethnic groups. Paulston (1994:44,108) recognizes that intervening or contextual variables can influence linguistic outcomes in a contact situation in a significant way. However, she also admits that intervening or contextual variables are very much ignored and that we need to improve our knowledge and explanations of it.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The focus of this chapter is on theories, models and methods in the study of language maintenance and shift. The aims of this chapter are: to give a short description of the different theories in the study of language maintenance and shift; to provide an overview and evaluation of the theories discussed; and to present the theoretical underpinnings of the study. The following assertions are made: theories overlap and relate to each other; more recent theories are the result of an integration of theories or the extension of existing theories; Paulston's (1994c) theory of social mobilisation stands apart from the others in that her theory appears to offer greater flexibility, since changing social conditions and their historical relationships to underlying social determinants are accounted for in her theory.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

The research method applied to this study was essentially qualitative. In the research, Paulston's theory of social mobilisation was applied to the Maale language. This theory is concerned with context, that is, where, how and under what social conditions does language maintenance and shift take place. The hypothesis tested in this study is that because of a strong sense of nationalism, the Maale language has been maintained as a viable language. Although not the main focus of the research, this study is also concerned with answering the questions; why do some language survive language shift when in prolonged contact with a dominant language while others die out? The main aims of the research are to give an account of the underlying social factors that have contributed to language maintenance in the Maale speech community, and to investigate whether the current mother-tongue literacy programme in the Maale region is either facilitating language maintenance or possibly going to contribute to language shift in the Maale speech community. The observations are empirical and the research descriptive. The basic research method, therefore, is that of classic ethnographic research, using participant-observation, field-notes, as well as intense interviews with key informants. Interviews were conducted following interview protocols. A minor quantitative component of the research is statistical information gathered from available data on the Maale literacy centres since 2001.

#### 3.1 Background of the research

##### 3.1.1 Working with the Word of Life Church (*Kale Heywet Church*)

The researcher and his wife lived in Ethiopia for 10 years as missionary Bible translators, working for The Word for the World Bible Translators. In Maale, their work was in partnership with the indigenous *Kale Heywet Church* (Word of Life). Their main reasons for working with the *Kale Heywet Church* in Maale were that they are, by far, the largest

organisation working in Maale, with networks of Churches that reach to almost every region of Maale land. Also, they are familiar with modern structures and procedures and were able to provide the infrastructure that was needed to launch a literacy programme that could penetrate all of Maale society.

### **3.1.2 Participant and observer**

The first four years of the time the researcher's time in Ethiopia, was spent in Maale building his house, doing research and working on orthography and mother-tongue literacy development. After four years the researcher moved to Awassa, a town approximately 500 km north of Maale. For the last two years of the researcher's stay in Ethiopia, he lived in Addis Ababa, the capital city. During this time, numerous visits of between one and six weeks were made to Maale, to assist with the work there. Also, on several occasions, teams from Maale (e.g. literacy, lexicography, translation and church leaders) came to Awassa and Addis Ababa to consult with the researcher and his wife, and for training purposes. Close contact with the teams was maintained, and even while in South Africa during 2007, the researcher kept his ears to the ground and received regular reports and updates from them. The last time they visited the work in Maale was in July of 2007. The work there created a bond between them and the Maale people. Even the traditional king, Dolbo,<sup>22</sup> came to accept their work. When his advisors cautioned him that the literacy programme may take over the whole of Maale (that is make everyone Christian), he told them not to hinder the work, and in this way he gave his blessing. Many of the traditional lineage elders and lords also encourage the people to send their children to the literacy programme. The researcher also has a close relationship with the very influential Maale church, who views him as one of them.<sup>23</sup> The researcher and his wife were the first missionaries to live in Maale. A church leader told the researcher once, when he visited the region for the first time, "We have prayed for 17 years for missionaries to come and translate the Bible for us." Ever since their arrival the researcher and his wife have been seen as an answer to their prayers.

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<sup>22</sup> Dolbo died in 2004

<sup>23</sup> For the impact of the Church in the Maale society see Donham 1999

### **3.2 Reasons for qualitative research**

The reasons for the predominantly qualitative approach to the research are as follows:

- a) The quantitative model of research was ideal for the context: the researcher lived amongst the Maale people and became part of their daily lives; the Maale society is still predominantly an oral society, which could complicate a quantitative approach to the research; most Maale people have never encountered modern technology, such as electricity, have never driven in a vehicle, and for many, the researcher and his wife were the first white people that they had seen. Trying to explain to a large number of people, that could be called representative of the Maale speech community, quantitative procedures in order to elicit, for example, subjective feelings and attitudes, would have been virtually impossible. A quantitative approach, where a broad sample of the society is selected to answer questions could have created other difficulties, for example suspicion and mistrust.
  
- b) Since the research has its theoretical underpinnings in Paulston's theory of social mobilization, and in view of the fact that her approach was essentially qualitative (Paulston 1992b:133-134), it is only natural that a qualitative approach to the research was adopted.

### **3.3 Informants**

In the research, 8 key informants were used. Most of the informants were also co-workers and were very carefully selected by the researchers and the church he worked with. The researcher also had a long standing relationship with the informants. He knows them well and knows what they are capable of, that is, the kind of knowledge they possess, the potential biases of each of them and what information could be relied upon. Five of the informants were Maale mother-tongue speakers and the other two were Aari speakers with a good knowledge of the Maale people, the Maale language and Maale culture. One of the Maale informants, Oesha Tusklo, worked with Anthropologist Donald Donham (to whom frequent reference has been made in this dissertation) for five years. Reference to Donham is often made in this thesis. Apart from his vast cultural knowledge, Oesha is

also in high standing in the community. He is often asked by local government leaders to give his opinion on important matters.

Another informant, Assefa Gebeo, was a Church leader for all of Maale for many years and also represented the Maale church for many years in Jinka the regional capital. In this role it was part of his job to be in touch with the people, their feelings, attitudes, aspirations etc. Assefa was imprisoned during the *Derg* for his faith and because of his leadership role in the church. He currently serves on the Maale Bible translation team. Gelebo was a school teacher in Maale for many years and served as principal of a school in Balla, the area in which the Maale kings lived and carried out their rule. He is currently the coordinator for the Maale literacy and dictionary programme.

Other informants were obvious choices, like the principal of the school in Koibe, the heartland of Maale, who also is a Maale mother-tongue speaker, Tamene Lale, the coordinator for the Maale Bible translation project and assistant in the literacy project, Belete Wolde, a senior nurse who has been working in Maale for the past 6 years and Melka, a teacher in the high school in Jinka, who has taught many Maale students over the years and is well aware of the issues facing the Maale children that enrol in school. (The Jinka high school is the only high school in the South-Omo region. This high school serves all the different ethnic groups in the region). For some of the informants, English is their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> language, and in order to facilitate communication for interviewing purposes, the researcher made use of an Aari mother-tongue speaker, Leyon Abaye, who speaks good English to act as interpreter (the Aari borders the Maale to the West). Leyon was chosen, first of all for his ability in English, but also because of his frequent contact with the Maale and his knowledge of the Maale people and language. In this capacity, he could also serve as an informer with an outsider's perspective.

Is the information gathered from the small number of informants dependable and reliable, that is, is it representative of the combined knowledge in Maale? In the case of Maale one could argue along similar lines to Johnson (1990), that because informants shared cultural, social and linguistic knowledge, intense interviews with only a few carefully selected members with specialized knowledge of the topic under investigation could be sufficient, and possibly even more reliable than a large group of informants chosen on an ad hoc basis or based on a statistical sampling. In this study, the researcher knew the

informants; what they were capable of, their limitations, strengths, weaknesses, the social, cultural and linguistic knowledge of the informants and the ability of the informants to grasp the socio, economic, political and other issues in Maale that were relevant to the study. None of the informants could possibly benefit by the outcome of the research and even if they could it would be very unlikely, on the whole, that they would know how to respond to questions so that it would lead to a specific desired outcome.

Most informants were aware that this research was conducted as part of the researcher's further studies and everyone knew that it may benefit future language planning strategies and related work among the Maale and the rest of Ethiopia. As far as the researcher is aware, no informants had a problem with this research being done for further studies. The reason for this is that the researcher invested nearly a decade in language planning, literacy development and Bible translation in Maale. He has earned the right to do so.

### **3.4 Materials**

Statistical data, recorded since the inauguration of the literacy programme in 2001, is available on each literacy centre in Maale. The following information can be extracted from this data: the number of literacy centres in Maale; new literacy centres that are opened each year; the location (name of the village) in which each centre is found; the number of students that attended the literacy centres each year; the number of traditionalists, as opposed to Christians, that attended the programme; the names of each student which are also recorded (names<sup>24</sup> of people in Ethiopia also indicate who the person's father and grandfather is); the number of students that completed the literacy classes successfully each year, that is, they passed a simple test at the end of the programme each year; the number of students that managed to pass or fail the test at the end of the programme and from which literacy centre in Maale they came; the number of students who dropped out of the classes and which literacy centre they attended; the number of traditionalists who converted to Christianity during the programme; the number of students that attended classes after the initial programme to reinforce their reading and writing skills. For each of the above categories, it is indicated whether the persons are male or female, child or adult.

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<sup>24</sup> Ethiopians do not have surnames, a person's second name is his/her father's first name and a person's third name is his/her grandfather's first name.



Another valuable source of information on the Maale literacy programme is the quarterly reports and other reports by the literacy coordinators, sent to the regional government offices in Jinka, the church in Jinka and to The Word for the World's office in Addis Ababa. These reports typically contain information on new centres that were opened; problems and difficulties faced in the area where the literacy classes were held, or that are planned to be held, and what they did or plan to do to solve the problems; new reading and other materials that were developed for use in the literacy programme; amounts paid in remuneration of teachers and committee members; graduation ceremonies for those that successfully completed the programme, as well as statistical data described above.

Answers to the following questions were also elicited in order to seek answers as to whether mother-tongue literacy will lead to language shift:

- a) The attitudes of the Maale community towards education and health-care before the implementation of the literacy programme.
- b) The changes in attitudes that can be observed towards education and health-care (i.e. learning patterns, before and after, of those that have gone through the literacy programme) and changes in traditional behavioural patterns.
- c) Those that do and do not attend the literacy programme and the reasons for this. For example, church members/non-church members, adults/children/young people, women/men etc.
- d) Changes in attitudes of the Maale people towards their own language and culture that can be observed since the implementation of the literacy programme in 2001. For example, rejection of traditional beliefs, attitudes towards female education, changes in the way in which they would normally acquire a second language, etc.

(Stan Anonby of SIL is interested in the same type of questions)

Books and articles written by the American Anthropologist, Donham (1985, 1986, 1990, 1999) on the political and social history of Maale, as well as a lecture given by him on "Conversion in Maale" at Addis Ababa University in 1997, were very useful in providing a historical context to the research questions being investigated. At the outset of the research, Paulson also provided helpful suggestions through e-mail correspondence.

### 3.5 Procedures

The researcher has been an observer and participant of the daily lives of the Maale people over the past eleven years. He has spent a considerable amount of time in the Maale community and with certain individuals in Maale. He has interacted directly and indirectly with many individuals living in Maale and continues to play a role in what is happening in Maale with regards to literacy, lexicography and translation. In addition to recording his own experience and observations in print, he has carried out in-depth formal and informal interviews. The questions were formulated based on the theories of language maintenance and shift, with an emphasis on Paulston's theory as described in chapter 2. Open-ended formal and informal interviews were taped with the permission of all informants. The procedures for the  $\pm$  17 hours of taped recorded interviews (17 taped cassettes of 60 minutes each) were as follows: the researcher would explain the question to the interpreter and make sure he understands the question. The interpreter would explain the question to the informants, when both the researcher and the interpreter were satisfied that they understand the question, the tape recorder would be switched on and the question asked again in English. The interpreter would then translate the question into Amharic, and the informants would answer the question in Amharic. The interpreter would then translate for their answer back into English, for the researcher's sake. Their answers would often lead to another impromptu question by the researcher, which may or may not be translated into Amharic, depending on whether the informants understood the question that was being asked in English. During most interviews, more than one informant was present to encourage informal discussion. The informants present for an interview would depend on the type of questions the researcher was going to ask and the informants' expertise and knowledge of the subject under discussion. All discussions were recorded and translated into English. The tape recordings were then transcribed by Sesaye Debele, an Amhara who holds an M.A. in Mathematics from Addis Ababa University. Sesaye did not know anything about the Maale people before he started this work of transcribing the tape recordings. The transcriptions were done in English and the entire interview was transcribed, including questions and answers in both English and in Amharic. That enabled the researcher to cross check whether questions that he had asked in English, were correctly interpreted into Amharic, and whether the answers that were given to him in English were a correct translation from Amharic.

### **3.6 Data analysis**

Data analysis took place throughout the research and not only at the end of it. This enabled the researcher to determine what questions still needed to be asked, the direction the research needed to take and better enabled him to establish the salient social factors that are playing a role in the maintenance of the Maale language. While sorting out the data at the end of the taped interviews, the researcher would write down any additional questions that arose, as well as answers that needed to be clarified. He also made notes of any gaps in information and assumptions that he would like to verify. He would then gather the information needed at the next best opportunity. The final sessions of clarification were held in Addis Ababa using 4 of the key informants (Oesha, Assefa, Tamene and Gelebo) in July 2007. During these sessions an interpreter was always present. These sessions were not taped. So, data collection and data analysis were done, more or less, simultaneously. Paulston's four types of social mobilisation (ethnicity, ethnic movement, ethnic nationalism and geographic nationalism) served as a framework for interpreting the data and for describing what is happening.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The basic research method applied to this study is that of classic ethnographic research, using participant-observation, field-notes, as well as intense interviews with key informants. The researcher also made use of statistical data on the Maale literacy centres that were available since 2001.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Introduction

The information in this chapter is the result of applying qualitative research methods, using participant-observation, field-notes and interviews with key informants (see Chapter 3). In addition, available statistical data on the literacy programme is given with the purpose of providing additional support for claims made. The aim of this chapter is to organise research results in such a way as to identify the factors that underlie language maintenance in Maale.

#### 4.1 Factors underlying language maintenance in Maale

The underlying factors that have been identified as having an influence on language maintenance in Maale are categorised into four main groups, namely, the broader social factors, attitudes, networks and mother-tongue literacy:

- The broader social factors that play a role in language maintenance and shift in the Maale language are Maale nationalism, political organisation in the Maale region, the Maale people's resistance to Amharization, patterns of immigration, emigration and migration, economic and developmental issues in the Maale region as well as the Maale people's religious system.
- Attitudes of the Maale people that influence language usage in the Maale speech area are the Maale people's cultural superiority and their linguistic pride.
- The Maale people's social networks play a very important role in language usage. Important networks are the way in which the Maale people work together, the way they play together and their relationships with other ethnic groups.
- The mother-tongue literacy programme in the Maale speech area is impacting basic health-care issues, religion, attitudes towards education and mother-tongue literacy. These domains of impact, in turn, have great potential to influence linguistic outcomes in the Maale speech community.

These four main underlying factors are all linked to Maale nationalism and must be understood in the socio-cultural, historical and linguistic context of wider Ethiopia, of which the Maale people and their language are a part (see Section 1.5).

#### **4.1.1 Broader social factors**

##### 4.1.1.1 Maale nationalism

The average Maale person has no interest in Ethiopian politics and does not understand why he is expected to pay taxes to the central government. Many do not even know where the central government is situated and whether the taxes are being appropriated correctly, or if there is any budget for their own development. The Maale people talk about their ‘country’ as *ado achi* ‘the father land’. When, during the *Derg* Regime, they were called upon to fight and die for their ‘mother land<sup>25</sup>’, the people did not respond. Their argument was that they could die for their ‘father land’ (Maale country), but could not understand why someone would expect them to die for a ‘mother land’ – a land towards which they felt no sense of belonging or any obligations to serve. For most people, Maale is their wealth, their land, their country, their world. Visiting government officials are often given a goat or honey just to get rid of them quickly. The honey is intended to make them thirsty so they will leave to find water. Many Maale are still of the opinion that they are self-sufficient and self-reliant, and do not need others to interfere in their affairs. The Maale people mistrust the Amharas, and one of the reasons for this is that they believed that they were tricked during the war with Somalia in 1977 and during the recent war with Eritrea. They claim that they were led to believe that their children, who had been recruited as soldiers, would soon return to them with guns and ammunition. Their training was only supposed to be for a short while in Boshkoro (a village in Maale) and Jinka. They never expected that many of them would never see their children again. Two days after they left for training, about 150 of them were secretly taken to Addis Ababa. Many of the recruits

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<sup>25</sup> The Maale society is paternalistic; only men can be the head of a family, a lineage or clan. Fathers, lineage elders and heads of clans have the power to bless and curse, and the right to inherit property belongs exclusively to men. This is most likely where the idea of their land or country as ‘the father land’ originated. The idea of ‘mother land’ for the Amhara culture existed for centuries. The reason why it is called ‘the mother land’ is because it is the mother who bears and raises the children that will occupy the land. In Amhara culture, the country is like a mother in which people are born and raised. This concept of ‘mother land’ was exploited during the *Derg*, when the military government called all the people of Ethiopia to stand as guards to protect ‘the mother land’.

were Christians, because it was the Christians who were pro-government and anti-traditionalist beliefs and customs. They certainly did not expect that they would have to fight the Somalis and that many of them would die there. Soon thereafter, the government came back to Maale to force more of the Maale people to become soldiers, but many fled and hid in the mountains. The Maale people opposed joining the military because it is shameful for a Maale person to die in another country. Either his body should be repatriated, or soil from his grave should be brought back to Maale. The people argued that if the fighting escalated to include Maale, then they would fight for their 'father land', but they would not die for a 'mother land'. Many Maale people do not want to be part of, and still do not consider themselves as part of, a much larger country, nor do they believe that they have a duty and responsibility to protect and defend that country. Recently, a few Maale men have been recruited and trained as soldiers in Jinka for the Ethiopian Armed Forces. My informants believe that, going against the grain of cultural expectations, money has lured these men to join the national army.

The first so-called democratic election in Ethiopia was held on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1995. The next one was held in 1999. Very few Maale people voted on these occasions and those who did vote were told where to make their crosses. The ostensible democracy was a new idea for many Ethiopians and most Maale people did not know what it was about and neither could they care. The Maale people had inaugurated a new king (see Section 1.5.1.8 (ii)) and as far as they were concerned the elections had nothing to do with them. However, the 2005 elections were different and saw many more Maale people involved. The advertising campaign was much improved, and people were encouraged to vote. The Maale people had had to bear the consequences of not voting in the previous two elections, as leaders were appointed over them that they did not trust and that, in the end, did not fulfil the promises they had made to the Maale people. Some remember being surprised at the queues of people waiting to vote in Banata, a village in Maale. Some of the people waited all day to vote, such as a mother with her baby who arrived at the voting station early in the morning and waited until 7pm to cast her vote. The people did not want to leave without voting, but even though the voting station stayed open until midnight, about 1,000 people were turned away, unable to cast their vote. The turnout in the election of 2005 was marked, not as a vote for any particular political party, but as a vote against the

current government. The Maale people used their right to vote, to voice their discontent<sup>26</sup>. There is a change in thinking as the Maale people are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of participating in the elections. They are starting to understand that they have the power to elect their leaders and those they want in positions of leadership. This will be to their advantage if they hope to achieve their goals in the areas of agriculture and education. They have learned from the results of their not participating in the vote in the past, and have come to understand more about politics and administration. They see that their destiny is in their hands and they are responsible for electing the leaders they want, people who will treat them fairly and negotiate with others on their behalf.

The Maale people's attitude to the Ethiopian government is, in general, negative because of the taxes imposed by the government, enforced military call-ups and participation in war, unsatisfactory replies to pleas made for aid, unfulfilled promises made to the people, and unfair treatment (whether perceived or real) in comparison to others.

Maale nationalism is also reflected in sections below, namely, political organisation (Section 4.1.1.2), resisting Amharization (Section 4.1.1.3), immigration, emigration and migration (Section 4.1.1.4), and attitudes (Section 4.1.2).

#### 4.1.1.2 Political organisation

Currently, the administrative area of Maale consists of 18 large units, called *kebeles*. A varying number of villages fall under each *kebele* (e.g. three, four, five or six villages may fall under one *kebele* and each village is a sub-*kebele*). During the *Derg*, the Maale speech area was divided into three. One of the administrative centres was in Jinka, which is the capital of the South-Omo Zone. The other two were in Gofa and Kamba. All three centres were outside the Maale speech area. Jinka town is the administrative centre for the western parts of Maale as well as other ethnic groups, namely the Aari and Banna. The western part of Maale and the Aari and Banna people make up one *woreda* (district), called the Bako Gazer *Woreda*. The northern and western parts of Maale and Gofa fall under the Batu *Woreda*. The administrative town for this *woreda* is Sawla, a town in the

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<sup>26</sup> This trend was widespread and observable, especially among ethnic groups other than those who would typically represent the ruling party. One of the symbols of the EPRDF is a bee and in some cases communities even got together and lit cloth to make smoke in a symbolic action of chasing away the bee.

Gofa speech area. The southern and eastern parts of Maale fall under the Kamba *Woreda*. These two *woredas* are under the North-Omo Zone<sup>27</sup>. This has created a lot of conflict and upheaval amongst the Maale as continual fighting breaks out, especially with their enemies the Banna. After the *Derg*, the present government sent peacemakers and appointed local leaders to each ethnic group. Two Maale persons were appointed to represent the Maale at *woreda* level in Jinka, where they share authority with the representatives of other tribes. However, the divisions have remained the same. The government did not allow small ethnic groups, like the Maale, to have their own *woreda*.

Up until 2005, the inhabitants of the different villages in a particular *kebele* would come together in one place to vote for seven or eight *kebele* leaders. These leaders would be responsible for performing the following roles: a *kebele leader*, responsible for collecting the taxes, which he would take to the *woreda*; a *chair person*, who would lead the meetings and act as secretary; an *information department head*, responsible for announcing decisions, information and writing up reports; a *capacity-building head* (usually the school principal); a *development head*, usually in charge of agricultural matters; a *peace-department head*, in charge of policing and soldiering; a *cashier*; a *judge* to preside over cases and refer difficult cases to the *woreda* and a *registrar*, responsible for keeping a record of the cases that were judged and for gathering information, and writing up reports, on cases still to be judged. The *kebele* leader, the peace-department head and the information-department head are paid salaries by the government. The government only started paying salaries in 2006. Previously, these leaders served the community on a voluntary basis. Most of the elected *kebele* leaders are Maale people, or people who have lived in Maale for a long time and can speak the language. Sub-*kebele* leaders were also chosen by the people. This all changed in 2005, and *kebele* and sub-*kebele* leaders are now chosen by the government. Only people belonging to the ruling party are chosen for these positions.

The present government recognizes the authority of the king and *godas* (lords), because they know they still have considerable support and many people's allegiance is to them, rather than to the appointed *kebele* leaders. Twelve *godas* each rule over a different region

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<sup>27</sup> Ethiopia is divided according to sub-*kebeles*, *kebeles*, *woredas*, zones, and regional states. Two or more sub-*kebeles* can form a *kebele*, ten or twenty *kebeles* can form a *woreda*, several *woredas* form a zone and several zones form a regional state (similar to provinces in South Africa).



in Maale. If a person commits an offence in the territory of a *goda*, the *goda* can chase him off his land (land which is supposed to belong to the government). A new-comer wanting to live in the area must first bring a gift to the *goda* on whose land he wants to settle, and thereafter he may receive permission from the *goda* to live there and farm the land. However, nowadays the people just go and settle in different places without asking permission, especially in strong Christian areas, since Christians do not recognise the authority of the *godas* (see Section 4.1.1.6). When there is conflict between sub-clans, the people look to the *godas* to bring peace. The Maale traditionalists, especially those living in the lowland areas, still look to the *Mekana goda*<sup>28</sup> for direction. He gives the people rules and laws, is responsible for solving internal conflict, eradicating diseases and can take whatever action is required to solve problems. He has authority given to him by the king to pardon anyone who sins against the king or who has committed a crime. Even a person who has been punished by the government and has completed a prison sentence can only be accepted back into Maale if the *Mekana goda* pardons him. Unless the person has fulfilled all these requirements, even though he was released by the government he will not be allowed to eat together with the people of that area or even drink from the same river. If he committed murder, the injured family still holds the right to take revenge if he was not pardoned by the *Mekana goda*. This is different for the Christians (evangelical), who look to the church elders and also to the *kebele*, *woreda* and zonal leaders for leadership and direction, since they have ‘demonized and rejected traditional practices’.

The Maale people, both Christian and traditionalist, were never content with the division of the Maale region into three parts. From the time the *Derg* divided the Maale region into three, the Maale people became committed to a struggle to see the amalgamation of all of the traditional regions back into Maale land. In 2002, serious clashes broke out between the Maale and the government in the Gofa *woreda*. This section of Maale had been campaigning to be part of the Maale in the South-Omo Zone, since most of their people are living there. They argued that they do not belong to the Gofa people and do not want to be part of their administration. However, all of their requests to the *woreda*, zonal office and regional state to become part of the Maale in South-Omo failed. They finally appealed to the federal government. The request was granted initially, but the regional

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<sup>28</sup> The *Mekana goda* is the lord that comes from the Mekana region of Maale. He is the right hand of the king and traditional spiritual leader of all Maale and is called ‘The Father’ of the Maale people.

state succeeded in overturning the appeal. After that the *woreda* accused them of rebellion against the policy of the government. The Maale elders that represented their case started to call on the people to oppose and resist any participation in the Batu *woreda*. The Batu *woreda* sent representatives to them, but the Maale people said, “You do not represent us, you are not the people to hear our case,” and refused to cooperate with them. The Batu *woreda* wrote to the zone in Arba Minch, saying that they refused to cooperate with them. The *woreda* sent other representatives, but this time the Maale people beat them. The government representatives fled and reported this to the *woreda* and also phoned the zone, asking them to send soldiers to bring the situation under control. The Maale prepared for a scrap with the Gofa, and laid an ambush. They expected the Gofa people to come out fighting, but instead it was government soldiers from the zone who came. The Maale people killed 6 of the soldiers, with the result that the situation went from bad to worse. One of the respected Maale elders tried to convince his people to stop fighting and negotiate peace. While the Maale were discussing the issue, the soldiers burnt their houses and fields and raped their wives. Then the Maale people surrendered and the leaders of the uprising were imprisoned.

An explanation of why the Batu *woreda* is doing its best to retain the Maale *kebeles* under them is that this area is highly productive and very profitable and they would lose the income derived from the crops and trade if they shifted to the Jinka Zone. The Maale leaders in Jinka went to these Maale in Gofa one night to encourage them, pledge their support and to ask them not to give up in their efforts to become part of the administrative system of the people in the south. Twenty-four of those involved in the uprising were caught and imprisoned. The person who led this movement escaped and is currently living with another ethnic group. Two of the 24 died in prison in September 2005. The government in the Batu *woreda* appointed people in the Maale *kebeles* who are in favour of these regions of Maale remaining part of the Gofa region, but the tension still exists and the struggle continues. They are currently attempting, once again, to become part of the Maale region in the south, this time via peaceful negotiations. In order to make a statement of discontent, the Maale people in this area who can afford to, send their children to schools in the Maale *woreda* that is part of Jinka, and build houses in Jinka and not in Gofa. In May 2007, some of the Maale leaders in Batu had a conference with the Maale leaders from the other *woredas*. The Maale leaders from the Jinka *woreda* once

again encouraged them not to give up, and promised to support them financially in their struggle.

During the *Derg*, the Maale people could not openly seek more autonomy in governing themselves. They dared not even express these feelings openly throughout this reign of terror. The only way open to the Maale for securing greater autonomy was for them to become a separate *woreda* in the state. Since the fall of the *Derg*, the *kebele* leaders have brought this issue before the *Bako Gazer Woreda*. The *woreda* leaders asked them to state their motivation for wanting this, and the Maale people mentioned the following reasons:

- a) They said that they were not getting justice – some issues could not be resolved at *kebele* level and they would have had to spend a considerable amount of time and money travelling to Jinka to present their cases (for e.g., they had to walk for two days to get to court and another two days back and then the court may even tell them to return in a week or a month and they would have to go through it all again). This often caused them to get discouraged and abandon the case, or even take justice into their own hands. Also, they did not want people from other ethnic groups, like the Aari, judging Maale cases.
- b) They found it difficult to develop their own language and culture. Since four language groups fall under the one *woreda*, not sufficient attention is given to the Maale language (see Section 1.5.2.2 on the new educational and cultural policy). They cited a case where an Aari person, who was the head of the Department of Culture and Information, described the Maale funeral ceremony on the radio, but in reality he was describing the funeral ceremony of his own ethnic group, the Aari.
- c) They referred to the policy of the government to focus their assistance on the areas in each *woreda* that generate the most income. In Aari, this would be the farmers, because it is a predominantly highland area. The lowland Maale people, who fall under the Aari *Woreda*, sustain themselves through breeding livestock, and would be overlooked and disadvantaged. Those who live and work in *woredas*, where the focus is on assisting lowland areas, are getting extra money and training and are also given the opportunity of obtaining advice about the problems they are facing, etc. The Maale people do not want to miss out on these opportunities.
- d) They also argued that there would be less job opportunities for the Maale because they fell under *woredas* where other ethnic groups were in the majority. The

people from those groups would be more likely to secure jobs even though there might be people from Maale who were qualified and capable enough. For example, each year the government appoints 100 people in the zone to positions, so only a few positions would be filled by Maale people. If the Maale people had their own *woreda*, they would be assured of many more jobs and greater influence.

Those in the *Bako Gazer Woreda* did not take the matter further, however. The Maale High School students in Jinka (Grades 7 – 12) heard about this and decided to bring the request before the government themselves. They elected leaders to represent them and obtained legal advice from a Maale person who had studied law. He told them they would need the support of the people. So, each student approached the communities in the villages in Maale from which they came, requesting them to ask for their own *woreda*. Although the *woreda* leaders tried to keep the students quiet, they failed in their attempts and finally agreed to work with the students and support their request. The Maale people elected representatives from each *kebele* to approach the *woreda*, but the *woreda* leader, an Aari person, procrastinated and tried to dissuade them from their mission. Finally, they took their request to the zone, with a copy of their request to Awassa, the regional state town for Southern Nationalities. The regional state was in the process of granting *woreda* status to other nationalities, and finally, in 2007, also granted *woreda* status to the sections of Maale that were part of the *Bako Gazer Woreda*. This was a victory for Maale nationalism, however, the struggle for autonomy among the Maale living in the Kamba and Batu *Woredas* still continues.

#### 4.1.1.3 Resisting Amhararization

The Maale people have a long history of resisting their northern conquerors. Sometimes resistance was not active, as they waited for the right opportunity to present itself, and at other times resistance turned violent. The Maale people do not have the numbers to form a liberation front like the Oromos in Ethiopia; but their feelings are just as intense, and they have often displayed an extraordinary ability to adapt to circumstances and employ new strategies to resist those that they think are intending to take away their identity. The Maale people have a saying, *gaali nuuko saa atem tooko gammatao helandya koysuwase* “the Amharas should not touch our hair or our land”. An example of how the Maale people protect their freedom is a story that is often told in Maale: Hirbana was crowned

king of Maale during a time when Menelik II's soldiers were invading the region. The northern conquerors ruled over many areas and enslaved the people. They managed to turn some of the Maale people into slaves, but the king and the *Mekana goda*, who is the king's right hand and spiritual leader, decided that this should not happen to their people. So the king walked all the way to Addis Ababa, to see the Emperor at the time, Menelik II. He told him that because Maale is a small group, if the enslaving continues, he would soon have no kingdom to rule and would therefore be unable to pay taxes to the Emperor. He requested permission to rule his own people, presenting the Emperor with honey, ivory, butter, oxen and more, in place of the slaves. The Emperor made an agreement with the Maale king and wrote a letter to the governing unit at Bulgi, the main ruling unit of the central government, instructing them not to touch the Maale people. However, while the king was away in Addis Ababa, Gilarishko, who had been appointed leader in Maale by the Amhara conquerors, sold about one hundred-twenty Maale people into slavery. Upon his return to Maale, the king discovered what had happened so he ordered the *Mekana goda*, Shinke, to track down those who had been taken. The king then returned to Addis Ababa and explained to the Emperor what had happened in his absence from Maale land. He asked the Emperor for advice on how to get his people back. The Emperor asked the Maale king what kind of person he was and he replied that he is the king of Maale and is crowned by the shedding of blood<sup>29</sup>. So Menelik II gave the Maale king permission to kill the disloyal people and be crowned king by the shedding of their blood. In the meantime, Shinke found the lost one hundred-twenty people at a place called Tocha in a region of Kucha, where they had been hidden. He captured Gilarishko and brought him and the lost people back to Maale. When the Maale king arrived in Maale, Gilarishko was executed and his body left for the birds. The king also commanded that no one was to have any relationships with his family. The authority of the king and lords continued to be weakened, however, as Menelik II rewarded some of his soldiers with *gult* grants in Maale. Northern control continued to increase until the Italian occupation, when the Maale people felt that they had regained control over their lives (see Sections 1.5.1.4. and 1.5.1.5.). Haile Sellasie brought about much needed reforms in that he abolished the *gebbar* system and assigned previous *gult* grants to individual Maale people. However, this did not end the northern settlers' economic and political superiority over ordinary

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<sup>29</sup> Traditionally before the Maale king is crowned he confirmed his right to rule by throwing his spear into a crowd of people at his inauguration. This act of killing someone at random authenticates him as the Maale king.

Maale people (see Section 1.5.1.6 (i)). The *Derg* ended all this, but as their political aspirations started to clash with that of the Maale people, the resistance to outside dominance continued. The Maale would use strategies available to them, and at different times in their history they implemented various strategies to preserve their identity, their freedom and their land. An example of this is the rejection of Orthodox Christianity during the time of Menelik II and Emperor Haile Sellasie; their taking sides with the Italians during their occupation; not allowing intermarriage with Amharas (see Section 4.1.3.3.) and the recent student movement resulting in one of the regions in Maale becoming a *woreda* (see Section 1.5.1.2 for the expansion of Semitic political power that went hand-in-hand with the process of Amhararization, Section 1.5.1.3 for the incorporation of Maale into the Ethiopian empire and Section 1.5.1.5 for the Italian occupation).

In recent times, the Maale were forced to play the political game, but not having the military might and numbers to resist, they had to look for other avenues available to them to survive. Currently, there is relative peace in Maale. Power struggles are more political now, as the Maale people seek representation at local, regional and state levels.

#### 4.1.1.4 Immigration, emigration and migration

Traditionally, it was the Maale king who had the authority to say who may come and live in Maale and who not. This started to change after the integration of the Maale region into the Ethiopian Empire in the early 1900s. After the incorporation of the Maale region into northern Ethiopia, a governor was appointed over Maale and he brought with him Amharic-speaking soldiers from their home bases in the north, who settled in Maale. Emperor Menelik II also made personal *gult* grants of the western part of Maale to three northern soldiers he wanted to reward. Each of them settled in Maale and brought with him his personal entourage of ten to twenty soldiers to maintain law and order. These immigrants and their children became prominent in Maale affairs and up until the Revolution in 1974, they were the wealthiest and most influential people from the north living in Maale. Many of these soldiers died in battle during the Italian occupation, and many of those who survived, built houses in Bako and only went to Maale to collect rent from land they owned. This changed during the revolution, when the *Derg* nationalized all land and redistributed it to Maale families (see Sections 1.5.1.6 and 1.5.1.7).

The traditional Maale people would like to preserve things as they are: their culture and way of life. They do not want outsiders to live in Maale, nor do they want to send their children away. If they could, they would prefer to be independent of outside help and influence. According to the Maale people, during the *Derg* regime, some Amharas tried to send their children to live in Maale, but the people would secretly kill them, and not admit to it.

Currently, more people immigrate to Maale than emigrate from Maale. The king still tries to exercise influence over who lives in Maale and who does not, but his authority is weakened by government policy that allows Ethiopian citizens to live where they choose. Women have started immigrating to small villages in Maale (Koibe, Banata, Lemo Gento, Boshkoro) for prostitution and to sell beer and other alcoholic drinks. Others, like the Tsemay, Banna and Kamba people, immigrate to Maale in order to raise their cattle. Some people immigrate to Maale because of strong ties with a Maale person, called *bella* (see section 4.1.3.1). The Maale person sells his live stock and farming produce at good prices to the one with whom he has a *bella* relationship. This is incentive for the recipient to make his living in Maale, since he has a friend who is committed to taking care of him. Sometimes traders settle in Maale. The first Muslim traders came to Maale from Gurage, and nowadays single Muslim traders are also settling in Maale. They may start by bringing salt for trade and then other items, until they have enough money to build a mill-house for grinding grain. Those who stay for a long time marry Maale girls and become ‘citizens’ of Maale. They learn the language and raise their children as Muslims. Mosques have been built using grass in Samorno, Boshkoro, Biyo, Banata, Asheker and Tsamo. The Moslem traders are usually well-off in comparison to Maale peasants and the message they proclaim is, “If you want to be wealthy like us, you must become a Muslims.” Up to now, though, they have had very little success in converting the Maale to Islam. The Muslims chew *chat*, a mild drug which is offensive to the Maale. Another reason for immigration is to fill government-appointed positions, for example school teachers, nurses to staff the clinics and agricultural workers. These immigrants usually learn to speak Maale. Approximately fifty to sixty people immigrate to Maale each year.

Very few people emigrate from Maale each year. Some of those who emigrate do so to work in government offices. Sometimes, because of drought or famine, a daughter leaves an area to get married in Banna, and her parents may join her. Recently the people have

started going to Jinka, where they buy land. There are also some, about fifty to one hundred people, who went as far as Gofa Bettu because of famine. The people there speak Gofa, but understand Maale. Those who emigrated there built houses, started farming and did not return to Maale. When the Maale emigrate like this, they stick together, moving in groups of at least two. They may learn the language that is spoken where they settle, but they continue to stick together. Other areas of emigration are along the Betsmal way, where Banna and Aari are spoken. Five families moved there. Most of the time, emigration is temporary, to solve an immediate problem. While they are away, they ask people to take care of their farms. Many of those who live in Jinka have a farm which is looked after by relatives or friends.

Migration is more common, where Maale people move to a different region within Maale. The most common reason for this is fighting between families. When someone is killed, the guilty party may leave the area and settle elsewhere out of fear of revenge. Some people, called *Shele*, have migrated to the lower border areas to hide from others. The king or landlord may ask a person to leave the area for one or other reason. When someone shows disrespect for the Maale rules and customs, he will be killed if he does not flee the area. Examples of such offences are: marrying a relative, which is considered a curse on Maale land, taking someone else's wife, and setting fire to a field before the king has done so to his, etcetera. Younger brothers may leave the area to escape the expectations of duty by their older brothers. The older brother may have become wealthy due to their younger brother's efforts, and to get away from his grip on him, the younger brother may leave the area. Although these customary laws still apply, the observation of these laws has become lax and fewer people migrate because of offences they have committed. There are still some areas in Maale (like Gongode) where people will only settle if they have the king or lord's permission to do so. Also, with the national identity cards, people are free to travel and settle wherever they want to. An exception to this is in certain areas where the Maale king still needs to give permission for others to settle. The Maale people commonly migrate to three regions within Maale when there are shortages of grass and water for their cattle or farm lands. The first area is between Bala and Koibe, the second is Gongode and the third is the Lemmo region. When there is a shortage of water in Gongode, the people go to nearby *kebeles* or Koibe, where they can get water. If there is a problem during the dry-season of insufficient grass for grazing in Koibe, a shortage of farm lands or overcrowding of the cattle (being a more densely populated



area), the people will go to the Lemo region, where there is a river and grass for their cattle. People living in Banata go to the Cha'li area to live when they face difficulties. Usually during times of shortage, the people do not go much further than nearby *kebeles*. The patterns of migration among the Maale people are interesting, because it shows that the people would rather migrate to areas within Maale than emigrate to regions outside of Maale territory.

#### 4.1.1.5 Economic and developmental factors

Donham (1985:38) asserts that the Maale and the Omotic south-west were part of a world economy for nearly 2000 years. The Semitic north conquered the south and Omotic south-west in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and again at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to increase their influence and gain access to, and control over, important trade goods (gold, animal hides, ivory, and slaves), for use in the Red Sea trade (see Section 1.5.1.3). Menelik II, after conquering the Maale people and the Omotic south-west, rewarded some of his northern soldiers with *gult* grants. This resulted in the progressive undermining of the Maale elite along with the exploitation of ordinary Maale people as *gebbar* (see Sections 1.5.1.4 and 1.5.1.5). Haile Sellasie, the next Emperor, brought about much-needed land reforms. Nevertheless, these reforms did not end the northern settler's economic and political superiority over the Maale peasants (see Section 1.5.1.6 (i)). By the 1970s, the authority and role of the Maale king and lords no longer rested on their ability to collect tribute (in labour and in kind) from ordinary Maale people. Tribute to the king and lords was justified by the belief that the king was responsible for the fertility and well-being of fields, people and animals. But now, the king, most of the lords, and the northern soldiers who settled in Maale had become rich landlords, employed by the state to collect taxes, to oversee law and order and to settle local disputes (Donham 1990:164). The king's power now rested on his capability to influence and manipulate local politics and upon his ability to protect and expand his, and the lords' and lineage elders', land claims and proceeds from taxes (Donham 1990:167). The *Derg*, however, ended the northern settlers', the Maale king's and the rich lords' economic stronghold by nationalizing all rural land (see Section 1.5.1.7 (ii)). Previous land owners received no compensation. Every peasant family was given access to about 10 acres of land, which they themselves had to farm (Donham 1999:27). Because of the *Derg*'s disastrous economic policies, exaggerated by droughts and famine in the 1980s, they were overthrown in 1991 by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary

Front (EPRDF) with assistance from the United States of America. The new government promised democracy, human rights and economic development. This history of exploitation and bad economic policies weakened local economies, such as that of the Maale, and resulted in the Maale, and much of the Omotic south-west, territory remaining economically underdeveloped in comparison to northern Ethiopia.

It would seem that since the incorporation of Maale territory into the Ethiopian Empire towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the majority of ordinary Maale people, who were essentially pastoralists and agriculturalists, used to produce just enough for their own consumption. But this state of affairs has been changing in the last decade or so. Most people now own cattle, and some people have more than one piece of land on which to grow crops for sale at the market. The people are also better organised and have become more productive as the agricultural work develops. Some people are erecting mills for grinding grain and learning how to trade with others. It used to be considered shameful to sell cooked food, but now shops and restaurants are being opened in the villages. Many people have beehives. Honey from the hives is sold in the markets. There are no factories in Maale. Some of the people are becoming builders, some call themselves carpenters, and others have become teachers, nurses and government officials. People have started selling their cattle in areas outside of Maale for cash. The use of currency was introduced to Maale during the *Derg* regime, but it only came into frequent use about ten years ago. Prior to this, they made use of a barter-system, through which supplies and commodities were exchanged for needed merchandise.

There are seven markets held in different regions of Maale. In the north, there are three markets, namely: Lemo, Boshkoro and Asheker; there are three in the south and one Market is in central Maale. The Maale people supply the produce for the markets, except in border areas, such as the borders between Maale and the Banna, and Maale and the Aari, where produce is also supplied by these ethnic groups. The Maale people are well-known for cotton clothing, teff, butter, honey and coffee.

Merchants and traders come to the Maale markets from Jinka, Wollo and Kamba (near Arba Minch, 200km by road from Maale), to purchase cattle, goats, teff and other items. Some of the Muslim traders who have lived in Maale for a long time are able to speak the language, but others make use of translators when communicating with the people. The

Maale people also sell their produce on market days in the villages of other tribes, like the Aari and Banna. They also go to Jinka, the regional capital, twice a week to trade in the market there. Here they come into contact with other ethnic groups, including Amharas. There is no lingua franca between these groups (Amha 2000:8), so communication takes place either in the very basics that they have picked up of each others' languages or through an interpreter. The Maale people also travel to other markets in the south of Ethiopia, including Saula, Key Afer, Uka, Garda, and even as far as Arba Minch and Shashamene (500km by road north of Maale), in order to sell their produce.

The Maale peasants have various ways of improving their situation and prospects. For example, a person who does not own any cattle will take care of someone else's cattle, sharing in the milk and butter that is produced. On permission from the owner, he will sell the produce to purchase some goats. If a cow in his care gives birth to a bull, he may use the ox to farm his own land. He also increases his options for income-generation by producing honey, planting coffee trees etc. The owners of oxen also rent them out to others who want to plough their fields. Women dry and sell coffee leaves or collect wood for sale in the market. They use the money they earn to send their children to school, feed their families, buy clothes and help their husbands. They settle in areas that are good for cattle-rearing and farming. They also try to get more land because their lives are agriculture-based, and with more land a bigger harvest can be yielded and the surplus sold in the markets. The wealthiest people in Maale are the traders, the educated, those who own large herds of cattle and those who have access to large portions of land. Traders and the educated typically live in tin-roofed houses, as this is a symbol of wealth and prosperity.

The Maale people are concerned about cattle diseases. For many, their wealth and pride is in their livestock. During the last five or six years, their cattle have been attacked by diseases killing many and causing people to sell many of them. The Maale people are also afraid of drought, famine and diseases, like malaria, meningitis and typhoid, which wreak havoc on them almost every other year. During times of famine, they depend heavily on Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and the government to supply them with food like maize and teff.

For further economic development the Maale people need basic services, like roads and clean, accessible water. There is also no electricity in Maale. The people need better educational facilities as well as a higher quality of education. They need kindergartens, more schools and education in income-generating and industry-related domains, such as woodwork, metalwork etcetera. Education is also needed in areas of agriculture, irrigation and health-care. They need to be educated about birth-control, hygiene and other health-related areas. More health-care centres and clinics are needed, including more medical professionals and better quality of medical care. Currently, there is not even one medical doctor in Maale. There is no running water in the health centres, no electricity and the centres are poorly equipped. The people also need representatives at higher levels of government who can communicate with NGOs and others, to discuss developmental issues in Maale.

The Maale people themselves need to be educated to the levels that are required if they are to have a greater influence in their development. Maale professionals will have a voice that can demand equal access to basic services, such as roads, schools and clinics. The Maale people should be educated as engineers, doctors, nurses and so on. Then they could be the ones managing the transport and construction sectors in Maale and have an influence in the well-being and development of Maale. Government representatives that come to Maale to initiate or work on development projects usually get discouraged quickly when they face difficulties and challenges in their endeavours, and because they are not from Maale, they give up instead of pushing through for the sake of the people. An example of this was the attempt to build a road from Koibe to Bella, which failed. Those who contributed financially towards this do not know what has happened to their money. Some people try to make roads themselves, by digging with inadequate tools, but these roads are washed away during heavy rains. Another big problem affecting the roads is erosion, something the people are very concerned about and are trying to eliminate.

The Maale people discuss these matters with one another. Appeals for help to higher authorities fall on deaf ears, or instructions are given to “just dig it.” The Maale people make use of the *kebeles* to discuss issues and present complaints. The *kebeles* are structured, with different departments, such as: school development, health development, water development etc. This development work is facilitated through the *kebele* leaders, the departments and the people. They meet regularly and invite the people to be involved

and help with the development work. The local *kebele* association voluntarily builds roads and houses for the teachers and health professionals. When they requested that schools go up to Grade Eight, the government told them to build the classrooms. The people contributed money and once they were completed, more teachers were sent. Therefore, it is believed that those who are educated should encourage the people to work for the development of Maale, co-ordinating, educating and encouraging them to use what skills and resources are available to them now. The vision for this is growing as they see the possibilities it opens up and the difference it makes.

#### 4.1.1.6 Religion

The first evangelists came to Maale from Wolaitta. They converted the first Maale person to Evangelical Christianity in 1952, and soon afterwards the first *Kale Heywet* Church was established. Evangelists and SIM missionaries worked together to convert Maale, and churches were established all over Maale. New believers were encouraged to attend Bible classes at the mission station in Bako, outside of Maale. This further contributed to the growth of the Church as those who had attended classes for two years became evangelists in Maale. Soon, Bible schools were opened in Maale, the number of local churches continued to increase and the Church was organised into *kifle mahibers*<sup>30</sup> (districts) which were administrated, at first, by SIM missionaries in Bako. The Church encouraged education and Maale people began to be employed in different government offices. Modern organisational structures and procedures were implemented, for example: how to elect people to office in the Church. Youth and Women's Associations were founded and leaders were elected to serve at the *kifle mahiber hibret* level in Bako and Jinka.

The Church continued to grow throughout the reign of the *Derg* and also expanded rapidly after the fall of the *Derg*. There are currently more than 4 000 members in about 45 congregations in Maale. Twelve full-time evangelists are serving in Maale and two evangelists were sent from Maale to evangelise ethnic groups outside of Maale. The

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<sup>30</sup> The administrative structure of the Kale Heywet Church is as follows: Two or more local congregations can form a *kifle mahiber* or district. Two or more *kifle mahibers* can become a *kifle mahiber hibret* (the union of districts). Two or more *kifle mahiber hibrets* can become a *ketena* or Synod. The next level is the highest level *hager akif* (The entire country). This is the head office in Addis Ababa.

literacy programme has also contributed to winning new converts as translated scriptures are used to teach reading and writing. The Church is no longer administered by missionaries, but is now self-governed and self-supported. Other denominations, like the *Mulu Wongel* (Full Gospel) and *Mekane Yesus* (Lutheran) are trying to make inroads into Maale and have established churches in some areas. Their success is limited, however, as most of their members come from the *Kale Heywet* Church.

Opposition to the church (evangelical) started as the church expanded and made inroads into abolishing traditional customs, practices and beliefs. When there was a shortage of rain, the king would collect money from the people to use in spiritual rituals to pray for rain. The Church refused to contribute to this and were criticised by the Maale traditional spiritual leaders. One of the Christians went to Arba Minch to get permission to start a school. He returned, started a school and planted an Ethiopian flag at the site. This was seen as treason, as education was associated with the Amharas and all that the Maale people had come to hate about them. The situation between the traditionalists and the Christians further deteriorated as children started to attend school; so much so that it became an 'us against you' situation, where criticism of Christians had developed into hatred of them. They started beating Christians and also destroying their farm lands. One of the reasons for destroying the farms of Christians was that the Christians cultivate the *dib* area of a farm. This is the area between two farms, which was left uncultivated, to create a border. Farming the *dib* area was believed to bring a curse on the land. When the elders asked the Christians to join them in cursing a disease that was plaguing the area, the Christians refused to join the ceremony. Opposition continued to increase because of these disparities. They eventually said that the Christians were not part of Maale and started burning their houses, robbing the people, raping their women and destroying the equipment in the churches. However, as the church grew stronger, opposition started to dissipate. Many of the king's descendents and land lords, including the descendents of Artemo, the main culprit in the burning down of the Christians' houses, came to accept evangelical Christianity. Because many of the relatives of the king and the *Mekana goda* are now believers, those who want to harm the Christians can no longer seek protection from the king and lords. In the past, at the funeral of a king, it was customary for everyone to crawl and no one would be standing, but at the funeral of the recently deceased king, everyone was standing, because most of the people there were Christians.

The Maale Church supported the *Derg* in the beginning, but later, as the *Derg* started to persecute evangelical Christians, they realised their mistake and began to oppose them. When the students came from Addis Ababa to organise work groups, the believers also supported them, but later the government started saying, “What is God? You had better leave these beliefs as they will not help you.” The students started to oppose the Christians. They closed the churches, telling people to work on Sundays, instead of worshipping, and prohibited them from travelling from one *kebele* to another. Christians were imprisoned and others were forbidden to visit them or even bring them food and drink. However, during this time of persecution, the church members drew closer together and flourished. Church services were held at night, after everyone was asleep and the number of Christians continued to increase.

There is an obvious economic difference between the Christians and traditionalists in Maale. Christians tend to have better trade relations with those outside of Maale. They are better educated and their children are better educated. In the past, only the king’s family was respected, but nowadays visiting government officials approach Christians first and prefer to stay in their homes. When the government wants to implement a new rule or law, they first approach the church people, then the *kebele* officials as they know that the Christians have a better understanding of these things, will implement them and advise others to do so as well, for example, the paying of taxes. The main reason for this is because the Christians are more content to be part of a larger state; and because they travel outside of Maale to attend Christian conferences and other meetings; they are more exposed to economic opportunities. Most of the traders are Christians and so are those who own grain mills and tin-roofed houses. People used to think that when they had cattle, goats and sheep they had no money, but now, they have learned that their livestock and produce can be exchanged for money, and that their money should work for them, helping them to grow economically. The value and use of money is better known to the Christians; it is something that the evangelists have taught them and they have also observed this for themselves when travelling to other areas.

Christianity brought major changes to the Maale people. The Christians were the first to create modern social structures and procedures, for example, Youth and Women Associations. Education is seen in a different light because of Christians who took the first step in deciding to educate their children. Greater opportunities for trade and

investment have been realized as Christians started to travel to areas outside of Maale. In Maale region, the Christian faith has become the new value system for many to follow, and a new set of values and rules have replaced the old ones. As Christianity grew in Maale, many traditional values and customs started to be discarded and, as the people adopted new customs, a totally different culture developed. Nevertheless, old customs and traditions are still taught and practiced, but have lost their influence over many of the people (see Section 1.5.1.6 (ii)).

#### **4.1.2 Attitudes**

##### 4.1.2.1 Cultural superiority

The Maale people remember how powerful they once were. In the past, Maale kings used to fight to earn the respect of their neighbours, instilling fear in them. They would not rule over those they had conquered, but would return after war victorious, having established their ability to make war, protect themselves and defend their territory. The Maale believed that they were the only ones in the region that mattered, and that in the whole of the south-Omo region, the Maale region was the richest. They assumed that everyone wanted to become part of the Maale people. However, other ethnic groups were not allowed easy access to the Maale region, because the Maale people did not want to ‘contaminate’ themselves with other tribes. Intermarriage was not allowed because they did not want to lose their culture and identity. Anyone who came to the Maale region first had to ask permission from the king to be there. The Maale people also distanced themselves from Amharas and did not allow them to marry their women. One of the proverbs about the Amharas says, *barbare shibida deypo neeni deate barbabe digicha neeko geli peerandane* “Do not sit in the shade of a pepper tree, if you stay there for long it will burn your buttocks,” meaning you can not trust an Amhara.

The Maale people are a proud people, proud of their traditions and culture and believe that they are an example to the other tribes in the region. People from outside always come to them for something, not the other way round. They do not want to pay taxes because they have their own king. They are unique in the Omo-Zone, being the only ones who hunt with bow and arrows. Something else which is unique to Maale is their knife, which they wear tied to their waist. They have clothes made out of cotton, *bulluko*, and their teff,



coffee, butter and honey are in demand. According to the Maale people, they do not steal or tell lies. Even in courts, the word of a Maale person is regarded as the truth. Their truthfulness is also well-known by officials and traders. If a Maale person picks up someone else's belongings, he would hang them on a tree for the owner to find. Some would argue that this is changing.

From the Maale people's viewpoint, the difference between the Maale people and their neighbours, the Aari people, is that in Aari the culture and religion of their conquerors was imposed upon the people. The Aari people were forced to follow the Orthodox Christian faith and many of the Aari people adapted their culture to the Amharas' culture. The Maale continued to resist outside influence, and today there are only three struggling Orthodox Churches in the whole of Maale.

Outsiders also view the Maale as strong and unified, and closed to outsiders. The Maale are very different to the Aari, who enjoy building relationships with people of other ethnic groups, like the Amhara, Wolaitta and other groups. Unlike the Aari people, the Maale people prefer to keep to themselves, live by themselves, sit together in schools, and speak their own language. There is a saying about them, "Do not interfere with the Maale people, or say anything to them, as they might chase and bite you," meaning they do not make friends with outsiders.

#### 4.1.2.2 Linguistic pride

Many Maale people are not aware of the linguistic diversity in their country. However, those who travel have the saying, *Maale muuchi worzi pinkuwase* "the Maale language cannot cross a river" – meaning that their language is of no use outside of Maale. The people used to believe that Maale was the most important language, but now they are starting to realise that Amharic is needed for economic development. Although the school teachers are fluent in Amharic, they usually come from ethnic groups other than Amhara. This is one reason why they do not look down on children who cannot speak Amharic, and why cultural and linguistic shame<sup>31</sup> is not practiced in schools today. Another reason

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<sup>31</sup> The term, 'culture and linguistic shame' is used here to denote a situation where an ethnic group's culture and language is devalued and degraded by a dominant group in order to bring about cultural assimilation and linguistic change.

is the current government's policy on culture and education (see Section 1.5.2.2). However, during the time of Haile Sellasie, the Amharas, who only valued the Amharic language, degraded the Maale language, saying it was not a language, and they did not allow school children to speak in their native tongue. They also treated ethnic groups in the south, such as the Maale, like slaves (see Section 1.5.1.4). Because of their history with the Amharas, the Maale people despise them, although they are now starting to realise that in order to improve their lot and that of their children, they need to be able to communicate in Amharic. This has caused them to soften in their attitude towards the Amharas, although they still mistrust them and strongly disagree with some of their customs, for example, the Amhara custom of circumcising their sons.

The Maale people use their language to transmit their cultural values to their children. Fathers teach their sons, and mothers teach their daughters about themselves, their history, the kings and lords, their relatives and family roots. They also teach them about marriage and which families are not appropriate for marriage, about funeral ceremonies and which farm land is suitable for the family to use etc. The Maale people teach their children through songs which tell of their ancestors, their fathers, how rich and powerful they were, how they communicated with others and how they were respected; also how they are to respect authority and what their duties in Maale tradition, custom, culture and land are. A father will tell his sons the names of the animals he has killed, what kind of bees he uses to make honey and the number of cattle he has raised. The children love these songs and listen attentively to the lessons they hold, often asking for the stories to be repeated. They sing their songs while grinding grain and the children remember and learn the stories. Parents fully expect their children to transmit the cultural values they taught them, to their children. A case in point is the example of Maderiya Kelebo, who became a government school teacher, went to Gofa where he lived and married a Gofa woman, and his children could not speak Maale. During the recent elections, he returned to Maale to stand as a candidate in the elections. No one wanted to talk to him, nor would anyone vote for him. In fact, the people opposed him, saying that he had lost his identity and rejected his culture. His own family even opposed him, telling him, "You are not a part of Maale." Parents also take care to teach their children the 'right' way of speaking the Maale language, with the 'correct' accent. If they do not use the 'correct' words or pronunciation, they ask them, "Why are you speaking like the blacksmiths?" Parents are aware of where 'good' Maale is spoken and where not. It would be totally unacceptable

for parents to speak to their children in the home in a language other than Maale (others would ask, “What is wrong with this man? Is he trying to make his family Amhara?”).

The Maale people communicate with one another in the Maale language when in a cross-cultural setting, even in towns like Jinka and in Addis Ababa. They also seek out fellow-Maale people for fellowship and for any other support that they might need as a result of being away from home. Maale children who go to Jinka for further education communicate with one another in Maale and also stick together socially. English is sometimes preferred above Amharic between ethnic groups in Jinka, because this gives them more prestige and no one speaks good English anyway. This is especially true of teenagers, who have also adapted their style of dress to be more like that of people living in cities. However, they only communicate in the Maale language amongst themselves. Maale children do not mix easily with Amharic children or children from other ethnic groups and prefer to keep to themselves. Friendships between Maale children and children from other ethnic groups are rare. The language of the church is Maale. When the Amharic Bible is read, it is translated into the Maale language, and when preaching is in Amharic, it is also translated into the Maale language. Discussion on political issues occurs in the Maale language, and when the people need advice or council they always go to another Maale person, usually a friend, a church member or one of the village elders. Communication within families is exclusively in Maale. The Maale people feel that Maale is the only language in which they can adequately express themselves. It is their identity, what makes them Maale (see Section 1.1.2).

#### **4.1.3 Networks**

Social networks have a very strong influence on language usage and culture in Maale. Milroy (1980 in Stoessel 2002:95) defined social network as, “informal social relationships contracted by an individual.” Therefore, a network is a group of people who know each other in some way or another, with different levels of relationships. Some of the important relationships that a Maale person usually develops are described in the following sections.

#### 4.1.3.1 Working together

Because the Maale people are predominantly an agro-pastoralist group, the most significant networks that the Maale people have are the various ways in which they come together to work on one another's fields, or to help each other carry out tasks that are too difficult for one person, or one family, to perform on their own. The following seven ways are all ways in which the Maale people form networks to accomplish various tasks, like clearing a field of bushes and weeds, planting, harvesting, building huts etcetera:

- a) The family unit: The husband, wife or wives and children work together in their fields and homes to get their daily chores done, for example, fetching water and fire-wood, weeding a small field, etcetera.
- b) *Helma*: Groups of four or five people from the surrounding area take turns to work together in each others' fields. The owner of the field provides the *tella* (beer). It is usually only for short periods of time, but can also be for extended periods. Any combination of three to five people can get together and decide to help each other. If one member does not want to help, he can get out of it by slaughtering a goat for the other members.
- c) *Mollo*: A larger group, consisting of up to twenty-five or thirty people may be called together from different areas in Maale to participate in this group. The group is well-organised and has a group leader. They have a *kati* (king), and under him is the *goda* (lord). Under the lord is a *gato* (sub-lord) and then there is the *menzi*. The *menzi* is responsible for seeing that the work gets done. He blows the trumpet to call the people together and submits reports to the ones above him on the progress of the work. He has his own 'police', who identify the lazy or unproductive workers and punish them. The guilty person may be hit with a stick, be placed under guard until he has paid a fine or be expected to make *tella*. Beer is prepared by the owner of the field where they are working and is drunk twice a day, at midday and again at around 6:00pm. When the work is completed, the workers carry the owner of the field on their shoulders and will not set him down again until he agrees to give them something, for example money or food. When people hear that a *mollo* has been started, they can be registered as a member of the group. When the work is finished, the *mollo* is disbanded. People join the group because of the small amount of money that they can make. Also, some of

the money is deposited with the 'king' and after six months or a year he will call the people together that participated in the *mollo* for a celebration, where an ox is usually slaughtered, a lot of *tella* is drunk and plenty of food is consumed.

- d) *Debbo*: The family that needs help in their fields prepares something to drink, like *tella* or other alcoholic drinks, and then calls for help. This work is voluntary and for one day. The number of people constituting the group can be anything from three to sixty, depending on the amount of work that needs to be done. People can join and stop work as they wish. There is no punishment and no payment. If they are unable to complete the work in a day, the owner may ask them to work the following day as well, in which case he may kill another goat or cow for them to eat.
- e) *Alle*: It is customary in Maale for daughters to run off and marry in secret. In order to reconcile with her parents, the daughter will invite others to come and help her father in his fields. She prepares food and *tella* for those who are working. This is the customary way for a girl to reconcile with her parents after marriage. A typical case: a girl marries someone without informing her parents. Then the father of the man she married sends some elders to negotiate reconciliation according to their custom. The girl's father then demands that they send some people to come and work in his field as 'punishment'. If the girl got married in the church, with the consent of her father, he might call on her in his old age to send someone over to help him. She then goes to the church and asks some of the people there to assist her father.
- f) *Maddo*: *Maddo* means helping. This is when Christians work together. Christians often do not participate in work groups organised by non-Christians and would organise their own work groups among themselves. The Maale king and lords do not want the traditional Maale speakers to mix with the Christians because the Christians socialize with potters and blacksmiths, which is totally unacceptable in Maale tradition. It is also a taboo for Christians to drink alcohol or prepare alcohol drinks for others.
- g) Farmers association: This group is organised by the government through the *kebeles*. They repair roads, build schools, clinics and houses (huts) for the government employees. If the association calls people in a particular *kebele* in Maale to work, they have to go or pay a fine of about fifteen Birr (about one and a half day's wage of a daily worker). This group does not work on farms.

#### 4.1.3.2 Sport / playing together

- a) Sport is not formally organized, except in schools. There are no ‘sports days’ as such. When the Maale men dance at night, they might also wrestle with one another or see who can jump the highest. Sport and dancing is only practiced with people of their own culture. This kind of sport and dancing usually takes place after a work group has finished their work, after harvest time and after rains.

#### 4.1.3.3 Relationships with other ethnic groups

The main point of establishing relationships with other ethnic groups is to ensure good will between neighbours. The relationships that a Maale person can or can not develop are described below:

- a) *Jalla*: One way of building relationships across borders is what the Maale call, *jalla*. This is the giving of a cow to ensure goodwill between neighbours. Also more common in border areas, this custom is similar to the custom of intermarriage described below. The land in Maale is ideally suited to cattle rearing, so the neighbouring tribes, namely the Banna, Aari and Kamba, often give their cattle to the Maale for optimum rearing and breeding of their stocks.
- b) *Bella*: This is a type of insurance policy based on a relationship. The relationship is formed by giving, or selling at a reduced rate, cattle, honey or goats to the person with whom this kind of relationship is desired. The relationship can be made with a Maale person or a wealthy outsider. The person, in turn, will give them something that has been purchased in town, like shoes. When the Maale person is in need of any kind of help or support, for example, a cow died, his hut burned down or he is in a difficult situation, he will go to the person with whom he has a *bella* relationship and together they will work something out to solve the problem. One person can have many such relationships.
- c) Borrowing and lending money: The Maale people have a straight-forward way of asking for money. They approach those they know, including merchants nowadays, who are either living in Maale or in Jinka and trade in Maale.

Christians go to the church for help. It is forbidden for a Maale person to borrow money while his father is still alive. For example, if a child is sick, it is the grandfather's responsibility to pay for the medication, regardless of whether he has the money or not. If he does not have the money, he will borrow it from someone else.

- d) **Intermarriage:** Marriage between Maale people and their neighbours was traditionally a taboo. Most Maale people still feel this way, especially those living in central areas of Maale, although intermarriage with other ethnic groups has become more common in border areas. In some border areas, as in between Maale and Kamba, the division between the two tribes is becoming blurred because of intermarriage. Intermarriage has brought benefits to the Maale people, for example intermarriage with the Banna, their traditional arch enemies, has brought more peace to the Maale region, because both tribes are more hesitant to raid each others' cattle and kill each other. Better information exchange alerts the people to planned raids or attacks by a neighbouring tribe, and this helps the people solve issues and address problems before an attack can take place. Also, the ethnic groups of this region are often plagued by famine and droughts. Intermarriage makes sharing of scarce resources possible because one tribe may have food while another tribe is starving. This results in an increase of intermarriage during times of drought and famine, especially between the Maale and the Banna people. When there is a drought in the Maale region, the Maale people give their daughters in marriage to Banna men. The Banna people send their daughters to the Maale people in exchange for cattle. The custom of exchanging their daughters for cattle was not practiced by the Maale people until recent years, and then only amongst people living in border areas. More commonly in recent years, money is given in payment for a Maale woman. The woman who has been given in marriage to another tribe is expected to learn the language of her husband, and until she is able to speak the language, she communicates with her husband through an interpreter.
- e) **Relations with Amharas:** Relationships with Amharas or Amharic mother-tongue speakers are discouraged and looked upon with suspicion. Intermarriage with Amharas is very rare. The people used to believe that those who marry Amharas will contract venereal diseases. Venereal diseases are associated with Amharas

and the Maale people taught their children not to marry Amharas. The Maale people do not want to befriend Amharas in general, because they believe that they will make them their servants and take their cattle and other valuables. They believe the Amharas will make them collect grass for their mules and their wives will have to grind grain for them. Also, those who have a relationship with an Amhara, called *bella*, are often cheated by them. When a Maale person keeps a goat or a cow for an Amhara and their young die, the Amhara wants the Maale person to make good the loss. They believe that having a relationship with Amharas will ultimately hurt them. The Maale people have a saying if one Maale feels that a fellow Maale has done him in, “Are you an Amhara to me? How could you be an Amhara to me?” The meaning is: do not be cruel to me. A few Maale people have married Amharas. Maale people who marry Amharas are despised. When other Maale people meet them, they do not show them any respect because they are thinking, “How can you marry such a woman who controls your salary?”

#### **4.1.4 Mother-tongue literacy**

The mother-tongue literacy programme in Maale is significant to the theme of language maintenance in shift in that it could either contribute to language maintenance in Maale or it could lead to language shift. Another possibility is that a diglossic relationship could arise, where the two languages (Maale and Amharic) co-occur throughout the Maale speech community, each with a separate range of social functions.

##### **4.1.4.1 Infrastructure of the mother-tongue literacy programme**

The Maale literacy programme teaches Maale people to read and write in their own language. The Maale *Kale Heywet* Church, which is running the programme, is the only organisation in Maale with the necessary infrastructure to do so. Currently, there are 93 literacy centres in Maale, catering for about 3 500 students. Grass shelters<sup>32</sup> are used most commonly as literacy centres, although some church buildings are also used. In order for a new centre to be opened, a request must come from the people or from the church in the area. This is then discussed with the *kifle mahber* leaders. A church leader and one of the

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<sup>32</sup> Made of split logs, tree branches and grass with no walls.



literacy coordinators then visit the area. They consider the distance of the proposed centre from other centres and the number of students who will participate in the programme, and report back to the *kifle mahber* leaders. If they decide that it is feasible to open a new centre, they ask the local church in the area to send someone to be trained as a teacher. One literacy committee member is assigned to take responsibility for the centre. The committee member makes sure the teacher does his job and works with the local church to ensure the smooth running of the centre. The local church is also responsible for evaluating the teachers and ensuring that students are attending classes regularly. If it is necessary, the church may assign an additional person to serve on the literacy committee and this person will receive the same training as the literacy teacher. The committee members report to the coordinating office. If there are serious difficulties or problems that the coordinating office cannot solve, they discuss them with the *kifle mahber* leaders. The *kifle mahber* leaders then go to the area and endeavour to solve the problem. There are three main, strategically-located centres (tin-roofed buildings) from which materials, like blackboards, primers, books etcetera, are collected for use in all the centres. The coordinating office is located in Koibe, a central village in Maale. The coordinating office is responsible for organizing and managing the literacy programme, which includes the development of materials, like booklets on health-care, numeracy, agriculture etc. They are responsible for training teachers and committee members, educating church leaders on the importance of the programme, liaising with *kebele* leaders and relevant government offices and promoting the programme. They work closely with the *kifle mahber* leaders and together they ensure that the literacy programme is administered as best as it can be (see Addendum for more details on the set-up and running of the literacy programme).

#### 4.1.4.2 Statistical data

Statistical data highlights the fact that the Maale people are now more optimistic about education than 6 years ago, and that they are becoming convinced of the value of formal education. In 2002 there were 33 literacy centres, and by the end of 2007 there were 93 centres. More than 13 000 students have attended the programme during the last 6 years. Over 6 000 students have successfully completed the programme during this time. Other interesting facts that the statistics reveal are: the increase in adults attending the programme, as well as the increase in women attending classes. Statistical data brings to light the fact that many more Christians attend the programme than traditionalists. It also

shows the striking increase in traditionalists attending the programme after the first two years, and reveals the conversion rate of those attending the programme, from traditionalist to Christianity. The statistical data is available at the literacy offices in Koibe. A summary of this data and other information on the literacy programme is also available from regular reports written in Amharic that are sent to the *Kale Heywet* Church's office in Jinka, to the Jinka *woreda's* Culture and Information Department as well as to The Word for the World's offices in Addis Ababa.

Figure 4.1 Statistical data on literacy centres (2001-2007)

Year	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
<b>TOTAL CENTRES</b>	33	43	52	66	77	93
<b>Adult male attendance</b>	-	-	-	473	541	661
<b>Adult female attendance</b>	-	-	-	385	428	379
<b>TOTAL ADULT ATTENDANCE</b>	-	-	-	<b>858</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>1040</b>
<b>Child male attendance</b>	-	-	-	939	1336	1407
<b>Child female attendance</b>	-	-	-	634	885	1048
<b>TOTAL CHILD ATTENDANCE</b>				<b>1573</b>	<b>2221</b>	<b>2455</b>
<b>TOTAL MALE ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>797</b>	<b>1412</b>	<b>1877</b>	<b>2068</b>
<b>TOTAL FEMALE ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>1019</b>	<b>1313</b>	<b>1427</b>
<b>TOTAL ATTENDANCE</b> <sup>33</sup>	<b>1565</b>	<b>1206</b>	<b>1486</b>	<b>2431</b>	<b>3190</b>	<b>3495</b>
<b>Follow-up student attendance (male)</b>	-	138	56	382	319	484
<b>Follow-up student attendance (female)</b>	-	106	50	242	206	283
<b>TOTAL FOLLOW-UP STUDENT ATTENDANCE</b> <sup>34</sup>	-	<b>244</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>768</b>
<b>Adult males</b>	-	-	-	187	196	276

<sup>33</sup> For years 2001-2003/4, no record was kept of adult/child attendance. The 'total attendance' for these years includes both adults and children. Small discrepancies in totals are due to errors in methods of calculations and have no bearing on the overall picture.

<sup>34</sup> Refers to students who attend follow-up literacy classes after they attended all of the initial classes, in order to develop reading fluency. These figures are not included in 'total attendance'.

<b>graduating</b>						
<b>Adult females Graduating</b>	-	-	-	164	107	204
<b>TOTAL ADULTS GRADUATING</b>	-	-	-	<b>351</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>480</b>
<b>Child males graduating</b>	-	-	-	333	569	745
<b>Child females graduating</b>	-	-	-	239	401	551
<b>TOTAL CHILDREN GRADUATING</b>	-	-	-	<b>572</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>1296</b>
<b>TOTAL MALES GRADUATING</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>1021</b>
<b>TOTAL FEMALES GRADUATING</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>755</b>
<b>TOTAL GRADUATING <sup>35</sup></b>	<b>191</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>1273</b>	<b>1776</b>
<b>Christian attendance (male)</b>	-	-	-	-	1380	1523
<b>Christian attendance (female)</b>	-	-	-	-	1166	1244
<b>TOTAL CHRISTIAN ATTENDANCE <sup>36</sup></b>	<b>1389</b>	<b>1321</b>	<b>1252</b>	<b>2102</b>	<b>2546</b>	<b>2767</b>
<b>Traditionalist attendance (male)</b>	-	-	-	-	858	1029
<b>Traditionalist attendance (female)</b>	-	-	-	-	394	466
<b>TOTAL TRADITIONALIST ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>1252</b>	<b>1495</b>
<b>New believers (male)</b>	21	60	70	122	128	333
<b>New believers (female)</b>	30	27	45	97	84	202
<b>TOTAL NEW BELIEVERS <sup>37</sup></b>	<b>51</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>535</b>

<sup>35</sup> For years 2001-2003/4, no record was kept of adult/child graduation. The 'total graduating' for these years includes both adults and children.

<sup>36</sup> From years 2001-2004/5, data on 'total Christian attendance' was not separated by male and female – only totals were kept. These totals include follow-up students.

<sup>37</sup> Refers to Maale people who used to adhere to traditional religions, and have converted to Christianity as a result of attending the literacy classes.

#### 4.1.4.3 Educational background in Maale

Before the last king, Dulbo, was crowned, the lords and elders gathered together with the Maale people and prayed that education would not be brought to Maale, “Let the eyes of the Amhara be blinded, let there not be a road through Maale, let our children stay with us.” However, the new king believed that education was important, because he claimed that if he had not been educated, the government would have ignored him during the time when the *Derg* took power. Education gave him power and he could be free of oppression because he was educated. He asked for the education of their children and for schools to be opened up, saying, “Let there be education up to our houses, let the road be built up to our houses!” He blessed the corpse of his deceased father because he had educated him. Now the people are starting to realise the importance of education and pray, *nuuko naato aapa bulintongo* “Let our children’s eyes be opened.” The King commanded them to pray this, and encouraged the people to attend the mother-tongue literacy programme. He also asked Oesha (the literacy coordinator) to open a literacy centre in his area for the illiterate people there.

The language of education in Maale is Amharic and English. Textbooks in the lower grades (1-5) are all in Amharic. Most of the teachers speak only Amharic, but some of the Maale teachers help the scholars by interpreting for them, which is against the school rules. According to general practice in the Maale region, children should be taught to read in Amharic from Grade One. However, the teachers have found it very difficult to teach the Maale children the alphabet of a foreign language where there is little or no comprehension of that language. Often, the teachers do not know the scholars’ language and the scholars struggle to understand the teachers. One teacher commented that it is very difficult to teach anyone who has not first attended the mother-tongue Maale literacy programme. According to the cultural and educational policy, Maale school children could be taught in the Maale language, but because of a lack of funding, expertise and other so-called more pressing needs in the region, ethnic groups in the South-Omo Zone are taught in Amharic (see Section 1.5.2.2.).

Most schools in Maale only go as far as grade 6, and after that students have to go to Jinka to further their education (grades 7-12). There they face many difficulties in that they have no place to stay; their parents do not have the finances to support their children

in Jinka; they have difficulties in communicating their needs and there are no Maale teachers in the High School in Jinka. Because of these challenges, about 5 to 10% of them drop out of school. However, this percentage is not higher than that of other ethnic groups whose children attend school in Jinka. Their way of overcoming these difficulties is to stick together; and two to four Maale students usually share a house. Teachers comment that the difference between the Maale students and others is that the Maale children are more disciplined and stick to themselves.

The attitude of the Maale people towards education is busy changing. The educated among the Maale people are involved in their children's education. The Maale people have started noticing that those who have been educated are able to earn money and support their families in times of drought and famine. In the past, they viewed educated people with suspicion and saw them as thieves ready to exploit them. There are also many more girls attending school, where in the past they were not involved in education because their parents did not understand the value of education. It was also believed that their daughters may not find husbands if they were educated, because educated women tend to want only a few children.

Distance from schools is also one of the reasons why parents do not send their children to school. The government plans to open schools in areas where there are none, so that each *kebele* has at least one school. They have also started Amharic literacy programmes in each *Kebele*. This literacy programme is not nearly as extensive or as effective as the Maale mother-tongue literacy programme and does not include adults. The Maale mother-tongue literacy co-ordinator and others involved in mother -tongue literacy are busy with efforts to persuade the government to use the Maale mother-tongue literacy materials in their programme instead of the Amharic materials. One of the strategies of the government is to send the educated people back into their communities so that the benefits of education can be observed by everyone. The government encourages parents to put their children in schools through pressure from *kebele* and district leaders. They encourage each family to send at least one child to school. Families of educated people usually send all their children to school. Because the percentage of males attending school is much higher than that of females, the government has also set as a goal the increased attendance of girls in school, so that by 2008, at least 50% of the scholars would be female. Many fathers still refuse to send their children to school because they expect their

sons to help with farming and tending live stock; and girls need to help their mothers with household chores, like grinding grain and care of younger siblings. They are also concerned about the influences that their children are exposed to in schools. Mothers are not involved in making decisions regarding their children's education.

The government fines families fifty Birr per child of school-going age that does not attend school. The government treats the educated and uneducated parents differently, by punishing those who do not send their children to school, but ought to know better; while trying to persuade the uneducated about the value of education. Some parents send their children to school simply to avoid having to pay this costly penalty, and not because they believe it will benefit them. The penalty system has not proven successful, and in fact no one can be identified who has successfully come through the school system when forced to do so. The church is also playing a key role in changing attitudes towards education. They implemented the mother-tongue literacy programme and it is compulsory for the children of church members to attend the programme. They also demonstrate the benefits of education through dramas and continually highlight the advantages and progress that education has brought to the Maale people.

#### 4.1.4.4 The impact of the literacy programme on health-care and evangelization

##### (i) Health-care

It is customary in Maale when a child gets sick, for the parents to take him/her to the grandfather, who kills a goat or sheep and gives the blood to the child to drink. If the child does not recover, they take him to a traditional healer. Christians first take the child to the grandfather and then to the church elders, who pray for the child. The Maale view sickness as the result of *gome* (sin or a forbidden deed) that has been committed. If the *gome* is discovered and rectified, they believe that the person will become healthy, but if the *gome* is not discovered, they might, as a last resort, go to the clinic for help. The fatality rate in Maale is highest in children under the age of six. Diarrhoea and Malaria are the main causes of death. Pneumonia is also a leading cause of death in children. Tuberculosis is another problem in Maale. Many people do not have their children immunised and, generally speaking, they are not aware of the importance of vaccination, as well as the benefits of family planning. One of the secondary goals of the literacy

programme is to bring about changes in behaviour that will result in better health-care for the Maale people.

The Maale people believe that old customs, such as killing a child if the upper tooth comes out before the bottom tooth, the killing of a child who was conceived before its mother's first menstruation, and the killing of twins are now being forsaken as levels of education are on the increase<sup>38</sup>. Since the introduction of sections of 'Where there is no doctor', and other health-related booklets in the Maale literacy programme, the mother-tongue literacy staff and clinic staff have noticed better levels of hygiene and general health-care amongst the Maale people. Because of increased levels of literacy, the Maale people are cleaning their dishes and houses; they practice basic first-aid procedures, like reducing fever, oral re-hydration or taking care of wounds etcetera. Women go to the health centre for birth control more readily, and more people are trying to get hold of a copy of the book so that they can protect themselves from diseases. When a Maale person dies, it is customary for his/her relatives not to wash their bodies for two months, and rub their bodies with ash and charcoal. If a relative does not adhere to this tradition, the community will regard this person as if he/she was not a relative. But nowadays it has become acceptable for people to wash soon after someone had died. There is a greater willingness amongst the Maale people to take a sick person to the clinic or to the hospital. To have an operation was a taboo for a Maale person, but nowadays people needing an operation are more inclined to go to the hospital in Jinka to be operated on.

Since observing the results of teaching health-care through the literacy programme, the medical personnel at the clinics in Maale have started asking the literacy coordinators to assist them when they travel from village to village to teach the Maale people about matters relating to health. The *kebele* workers assigned to health-care, as well as the clinic staff, are making use of the translated health-care booklets in their campaign to educate the Maale people about health-related issues.

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<sup>38</sup> Evidence for this is in stories that the people tell of educated Maale people who refuse to adhere to these practices.

## (ii) Evangelization

Many new converts (to evangelical Christianity) have been added to the church since the initiation of the literacy programme. The church has used the literacy programme as a platform for evangelism, especially in areas where there were no churches. About 12 Maale Evangelists were trained as literacy teachers and wherever they went and taught, new churches were established. Also, all of the 95 plus literacy teachers are members of the church and they have contributed to the growth of the church by using translated materials for evangelistic purposes. The first materials that were produced in the Maale language were: a book on *Maale folklore* and *The Gospel according to Mark*. Teachers are encouraged to use scripture portions like the Gospel of Mark as a tool to share their faith with the literacy class, and this often leads to new converts being won.

### 4.1.4.5 Changing attitudes

#### (i) Changing Attitudes towards Education

When the literacy programme was first launched, classes were given in 33 centres across Maale. However, at first a lot of people were sceptical about the programme, and some said that they would rather send their children to the river to play than sending them to attend the literacy classes. Now, six years later, the people are begging for more literacy centres to be opened up in their areas and the literacy coordinators are struggling to cope with the increasing demands for new centres and people wanting to join. At the start of the programme, there were many who simply did not believe that education could be in their mother tongue. The Maale language had never been written before and many had never dreamed of seeing their language in writing. The language of education was Amharic and for those wanting to be educated, Amharic was the language in which to pursue it. *Kebele* leaders and others were invited to attend the graduation ceremony of the first batch of students who successfully completed the programme in 2002; 191 students graduated, and the best students were asked to read and write in the Maale language in front of everyone. Church elders and *kebele* leaders also witnessed a woman, with her infant child, who was able to read and write. This made a big impression. *Kebele* leaders and others asked the Church not to restrict the classes to those in the church only, but to also promote literacy amongst all the people in the community.



Before long, the government school teachers, *kebele* leaders, church elders and parents started to notice that children who had attended literacy classes prior to enrolling in school were ahead of those who enrolled in school without first attending literacy classes. Teachers, *kebele* leaders and the church started to advise parents to send their children to the literacy classes before enrolling them in school. People have also started to become aware of the benefits of being literate in their mother tongue and the importance of education. The literacy programme provides a taste of the practical benefits to be gained through literacy and education.

With an ever-increasing number of adults attending the programme, it is clear that there is a great shift in their attitude towards education. People have started observing for themselves the effect that literacy has had on those who are now able to read and write. One person in Kemba Bobo was elected to the position of Secretary in one of the *kebeles* after completing the literacy programme. Later, a dispute arose between the *kebele* and him, and he was able to write a letter of complaint to the *woreda* administration. The literate are becoming traders, church leaders, *kebele* leaders and police officers. They have been empowered to become involved in various activities, like writing their applications to the court and *kebeles*, reading to others and writing letters to each other. Government school teachers, literacy workers, *kebele* leaders, elders and parents have seen that those who get the opportunity to attend government schools easily make the transition from literacy in Maale to Amharic, and are able to be promoted from one grade to another with good grades. When illiterate people go to the *kebele* office or police station to present something in writing, they need to pay someone to write it for them; and when they receive a letter, a bill to pay their taxes or a notice from the courts, they have to take it to someone who can read it to them. Nowadays, with so many people who have gone through the literacy programme, the illiterate no longer have far to travel to find someone who can help them.

Literacy in Maale has given people status. In the past, the oldest people in the community were the most respected, but now even the old people want to hear from those who are literate and get advice from them. Those who are able to read and write feel good about themselves and even think that they are as educated as people that have completed their high school education. Traditionally, there was no class distinction in Maale between the educated and the uneducated, the literate and the illiterate. The social class distinctions

that existed were between the royal family, lords, sub-lords, the Maale peasants, potters and blacksmiths. However, there are indications that this is changing and that class distinctions are developing along the educated line. There is a growing respect for the educated person, who comes back to his family well-dressed and helps them in times of need. Because the educated have the opportunity to become police officers, church, *kebele* and *woreda* leaders and more, it leads to a superior attitude amongst some of the educated people, who look down on the uneducated. These changes are a concern to some, especially to the illiterate and uneducated people, who feel that their cultural values are being undermined by the educated.

In many places where new literacy centres were opened, what followed was the establishment of new evangelical churches in the area, as well as a new *kebele* and sometimes even schools by the government; 12 new *kebeles* were established in this way. The church people would make roads for the literacy vehicle to enter the area in order to drop off supplies. The government would then use these roads and improve them, by sending a bulldozer in, for example. This in itself has had an impact on trade and education. Literacy centres were opened for the Maale people living in the Kamba *Woreda*, when the people saw that their children were able to read and write after going through the classes, they asked the government to open schools (grades 1-6) in the area in which the literacy classes were being given. In this way, 5 government schools were built. The government provided the teachers, and the people themselves built the schools.

Outsiders are taking note of the changing attitude towards education in Maale. One of the Maale *Woreda* leaders recently said that the literacy programme is changing and advancing their people. At the zone level, government officials are asking the question, “Why are there more Maale children than other ethnic groups attending the secondary schools?” The educated Amharic speakers who are living in Jinka town are asking, “What have the Maale been told, why are so many coming to school?” The Maale students are renting most of the available accommodation in Jinka. Maale people are even selling their cattle to buy houses in Jinka to accommodate the Maale students who attend the secondary school there.

The impact of the literacy classes in Maale should not be underestimated as the importance of education is being highlighted. The literacy programme has opened the

door for many to further their formal education, as they use literacy in their mother tongue as a stepping stone to primary education. Those who did not see the value of education are changing their minds about sending their children to school. In the beginning, it was mainly children, a few adult men and a small contingent of adult women who attended the programme. Adult women, especially, were not expected to attend. However, this is changing fast as people are able to observe the contribution literacy is making to the lives of children and adults, men and women.

#### (ii) Changing Attitudes towards mother-tongue literacy

At first people, were sceptical about whether the literacy programme would last, because they did not think that the Maale language could be used for educational purposes. Those who were educated in Amharic could not see how it would benefit the Maale people to read and write in Maale. They wanted the programme to be in Amharic. They argued that the people know Maale and can speak Maale, but in order to be educated they need Amharic. They also said that the Maale language ‘cannot cross a river’, meaning that if they go outside the borders of Maale, they cannot communicate with anyone. Although many registered for the first year, quite a number withdrew because of these comments by the educated people in Maale. Even church leaders and literacy workers, who were supposed to support and promote the programme, were sceptical about the wisdom of teaching in the mother tongue (Woldemariam (2007) came into contact with similar challenges for mother-tongue literacy in the North Omo Zone).

Church leaders became convinced of the validity of the programme when they saw people reading scriptures in their own language. On one occasion, Assefa, one of the Bible translators, went to a church meeting, taking his Maale scripture portions with him. While he was telling people of the importance of the literacy programme, an educated person asked him what the use of the programme was since it is not in Amharic. Without saying a word, Assefa started to read a verse of scripture from an Amharic Bible and then the same one from the Maale translation. When he asked the person which version he understood best, he replied Maale. Assefa explained that they want the people to be able to understand these things in their own language by helping them to become literate in the Maale language. The man who had challenged him replied that he had spoken out of ignorance and requested that they (the educated) be taught to read and write in Maale.

Once the literacy programme got underway and it produced readers and writers in Maale, people took note how easy it seemed to be to learn to read and write in Maale. Their language was not as difficult to read and write as they had originally thought. Since the Maale orthography makes use of the Amharic alphabet, students that enrol in school are easily able to make the transition from reading and writing in Maale, to reading and writing in Amharic. Teachers in government schools have suggested that children who have progressed through the literacy programme should join the formal school system at Grade 2 level, because they are ahead of the Grade 1 students and having them in that group creates problems for those who have not attended literacy classes.

The Maale people are starting to understand the value of their language in education. They are showing more appreciation for the translators and literacy workers. There is a renewed interest in the Maale language, as old words, long forgotten by the younger generation, are being resurrected and new words, which have been introduced in the literacy materials and translation, are being used in everyday language. Maale people living in border areas, whose language is mixed with the languages they are bordering, want to learn the written form of the language as it is believed to be the 'pure' form. New writers are writing stories, poetry and songs. They read the stories and poems to others and teach their songs to each other.

The benefits that mother-tongue literacy has brought to the Maale people, has greatly contributed to their change in thinking about mother-tongue literacy. Teachers and many others are now asking for the literacy programme to be extended to primary education in the mother tongue.

## **4.2 Conclusion**

A recurring theme among the factors underlying language maintenance in Maale is the strong sense of pride and identity found in the Maale people. Maale territory, or 'the father land', is where their primary loyalties lie. The Maale people have a history of resisting Ethiopian nationalism, and at different times in their history they implemented various strategies to preserve their identity, their freedom and their land. The Maale people are a proud people, proud of their traditions and culture, and consider themselves as an example to the other tribes in the region. Outsiders view the Maale people as

unified, disciplined and honest. For the Maale people, the Maale language is the language that speaks to their hearts, the language they understand best and the language in which they can adequately express themselves; it is their identity, what makes them Maale. Networks have a very strong stabilising affect on language usage and culture in Maale. The most noteworthy networks that the Maale people have are the various ways in which they work together. Interestingly, Evangelical Christianity, and not Orthodox Christianity, has brought far-reaching changes to the Maale people and society. Many traditionalists feel that the Christians undermine their values, customs and belief system. The Christians' contribution to Maale society was the creation of modern social structures and procedures, improved infrastructure and a focussing of attention on the importance and value of education.

The Maale people have witnessed and experienced significant changes since the inauguration of the mother-tongue literacy programme. Many of the educated people, who were sceptical at first, have realised the importance of literacy in their mother tongue. There has been a change in attitude towards education as the Maale people have come to a better understanding of the value of formal education. There has also been a change in attitude towards education for girls and adult education. The people have seen how the mother-tongue literacy programme has impacted their daily lives through improved health-care and empowerment through their newly acquired literacy skills. It has also brought prospects of a future through further education, and all of the benefits associated with that.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the underlying social factors that have contributed to language maintenance in the Maale speech community are discussed in light of Paulston's (1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 1994e and 1994f) theory of social mobilisation. This chapter also explores the impact of mother-tongue literacy in Maale on language shift and maintenance. The contribution, limitations and implications of the study, as well as suggestions for further research, are also discussed.

#### 5.1 Summary of the theoretical framework

In spite of being 'colonised twice' (see Section 1.5.1.3), the Maale language has been maintained for centuries. Amha (2000:3) confirms that the Maale language is alive and well and not currently threatened by language shift. In view of Paulston's theoretical framework (see Section 2.1.7) and the language maintenance phenomena in the Maale speech community, the following hypothesis is tested in this dissertation (see Section 1.4):

- A strong sense of nationalism is the main factor in the maintenance of the Maale language.

According to Paulston (1994a:58), minority languages which are in contact with dominant languages within a 'modern nation-state' will maintain their language if they embrace the set of behaviours, attitudes and perceptions that are associated with nationalism.

Paulston (1994c), in an attempt to explain and predict the language behaviour of groups that have access to, or are exposed to, more than one language, and in search of answers on how we can predict success or failure of language policies in multilingual states, argues that there are four types of social mobilisation, which under certain specified social conditions result in different linguistic outcomes, namely, ethnicity, ethnic movements,

ethnic nationalism and geographic nationalism. It is important to realize that these are not four separate types with exactly defined borders, but rather that they form a continuum (see Sections 2.1.7 and 2.3).

- Paulston (1994c:31) identifies the defining characteristics of ethnicity as shared ancestors and roots; identity based on ethnicity; common values and beliefs (which are unconsciously learned behaviour); values and beliefs are unconsciously learned behaviour; ethnicity is taken for granted; there is no goal orientation and no violence. Ethnicity will not withstand language shift in a multilingual setting if the dominant group allows assimilation, provided that there is incentive to assimilate and access to the dominant language.
- Paulston (1994c:32) suggests defining characteristics for ethnic movements as a deliberate strategy in competition of scarce resources; a goal of socioeconomic advantages; violent resistance; charismatic leader(s); language as rallying point; emphasis on boundary maintenance and a glorious past that is part of their consciousness. Ethnic movements, like ethnicity, will also not maintain a language in a multilingual setting, but language shift will be slower and can extend over several generations.
- Paulston (1994c:34-37) proposes the main characteristics of both ethnic and geographical national movements as group loyalty; consciously taught behaviours; external distinction; internal cohesion; a goal of independence; political self-determination; a common enemy; intellectual leaders; well-developed middle class; access to, or aspiration for, territory. Ethnic nationalism corresponds to Kohn's (Kohn 1968 in Paulston 1994c:37) *closed* nationalism, which emphasises ethnic exclusiveness, the nation's indigenous character, their common origin and ancestral roots. In ethnic, or closed, nationalism, language becomes an important identity of the nation-state. Paulston (1994c:35) suspects that a probable common goal of national movements is to improve one's circumstances or that of one's children. The motivation for this, she states, as in ethnic movements, is perceived self-interest. The main differences between ethnic movement and ethnic

nationalism are that in ethnic nationalism there is access to territory, a well-developed middle class and separatist movements.

- Paulston's (1994c:37) view of geographical nationalism shares features with Hans Kohn's *open* nationalism (Kohn 1968 in Paulston 1994c:37). She contends that open, or geographical, nationalism affirms notions such as emancipation, assimilation, and individualism. Geographical nationalism is territorial-based and made up of a political group of people, comprising a nation that does not depend on ethnic descent. Another difference between ethnic nationalism and geographical nationalism is that in the case of geographical nationalism, language is not necessarily the most important symbol of the nation (Paulston 1994c:38). In essence, Paulston (1994c) argues, that ethnicity and ethnic movements are not sufficient types of social mobilisation to halt language shift, but that the set of behaviour, attitudes and perceptions that we associate with nationalism provides that sufficient condition for minority language maintenance. Paulston (1994a:58) also contends that economic incentives are probably a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for language maintenance, but again, that the set of behaviour, attitudes and perceptions which we associate with nationalism provides that sufficient condition.

## **5.2 Analysis and discussion of findings**

### **5.2.1 Introduction**

The two questions posed in this dissertation are (see Section 1.2):

- What social factors have contributed thus far to the maintenance of the Maale Language? Or, in a more general sense, why is it that certain languages in prolonged contact with a dominant language endure over time while others shift to the dominant language?
- Will mother-tongue literacy in Maale contribute to language shift?

In order to answer the first question, it is firstly necessary to address the issue of whether the Maale people had sufficient access and motivation to learn Amharic. Paulston (1994f:9) states that for shift to take place in ethnic minority groups, motivation



(primarily economic) and access to the dominant language (see Section 2.1.7.2) are needed. Against the grain of political and cultural domination since Maale's incorporation into the Ethiopian Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and most likely long before that, in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, the Maale people did not give up their identity or their language; neither did they become a bilingual society (Amha 2000:3,6). Since the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, Abyssinian expansion went hand-in-hand with the spread of Amharic. This was an important part of the process of transforming cultures such as the Maale. For people such as the Maale, the political and economic motivation for learning Amharic was great, because they could not claim rights that peasants in the north had without speaking Amharic, the language of those who wanted to take those rights away. Another vital factor in the process of Amharization was the expansion of the Orthodox Church. The language of the Orthodox Church is Geez<sup>39</sup> and Amharic. The Orthodox Church was against the enslavement of Christians, and for the ethnic groups living in the south, identifying with the Orthodox Church promised escape from the worst evils of Abyssinian domination. Some ethnic groups in the south begged their northern conquerors, at times, to make them Orthodox Christians. Becoming Orthodox would naturally entail learning to speak Amharic. Another important factor in the process of expanding the Abyssinian ideals was the fact that the category, 'Amhara' meant status and power. Because Amhara was not an ethnic identity that depended on descent, ethnic groups such as the Maale could become Amhara, which would mean political and economic compensation for the loss of their language and culture (see Section 1.5.1.2). So, regarding motivation for, and access to Amharic, the Maale people have been in contact with Amharic for centuries. They have been 'colonized twice', as Donham (1985:38) puts it, and have been directly or indirectly part of a world economy for nearly two thousand years, as they were involved in the long-distance trade networks extending from the south towards Northern-Ethiopia and the Red Sea coast (see Section 1.5.1.3). Therefore, one could argue that there was sufficient access to and incentive for the Maale to shift to Amharic.

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<sup>39</sup> An Ancient language from which Amharic, Tigrinya and Gurage developed. It is used exclusively for liturgical purposes in the Orthodox Church.

## 5.2.2 Social factors underlying language maintenance

In order to determine why language shift did not take place in the Maale language in light of Paulston's (1994a, 1994b and 1994c) theory, the broader social factors, attitudes, networks and mother-tongue literacy were examined.

These four factors are linked to Maale nationalism and must be understood in the socio-cultural, historical (see Section 1.5.1) and linguistic context (see Section 1.5.2) of wider Ethiopia, of which the Maale people and their language are a part.

### 5.2.2.1 Maale nationalism

The Maale people have been resisting their northern conquerors for centuries. The Maale would use strategies available to them, and at different times in their history they employed diverse strategies in an attempt to safeguard their identity, their freedom and their land. For example: (i) the rejection of Orthodox Christianity during the time of Menelik II and Emperor Haile Sellasie (see Section 1.5.1.2); (ii) not allowing intermarriage with Amharas (see Section 4.1.3.3); (iii) their taking sides with the Italians during their occupation (see Section 1.5.1.5); (iv) not responding to military call-ups during the *Derg* and the rejection of the *Derg's* concept of 'mother land' (see Section 4.1.1.1); (v) the rejection of the *Derg's* division of Maale territory into three parts and the continual commitment to a struggle to see the amalgamation of all the traditional regions back into Maale land (see Section 4.1.1.2); (vi) not taking part in the Ethiopian elections of 1995 and 1999, and then taking part in the 2005 elections (see Section 4.1.1.1); (vii) boundary maintenance strategies, such as not allowing intermarriage with other ethnic groups because they do not want to lose their culture and identity (see Section 4.1.2.1), and the way the Maale people stick together; (viii) language loyalty and group loyalty is another strategy to safeguard their identity. For example, the rejection of anyone who does not transmit the Maale language and cultural values to his children (see Section 4.1.2.2) and (ix) an emphasis on a different cultural identity (see Section 4.1.2.1).

### (i) Rejection of Orthodox Christianity

The rejection of Orthodox Christianity during the time of Menelik II and Haile Sellasie, was necessary to maintain Maale nationalism. The Orthodox Church had, for centuries, played a central role in the Ethiopian state and it played a predominant role in defining who and what Ethiopians were (see Section 1.5.1.2). Therefore, the thinking of the Ethiopian rulers was that if someone converted to another religion, he was, in effect, rejecting Ethiopian nationalism (Donham1999:143). The *Derg* adopted Orthodox Christian culture and joined forces with the Orthodox Church in an attempt to stamp out evangelical Christianity in the south (Donham1999:142). However, the persecution of the evangelical Church in Maale by the *Derg* led to the Maale Christians stopping their support of the Derg and starting to oppose them, the evangelical Church grew stronger (see Sections 1.5.1.7 (iv) and 4.1.1.6.) and became a force for the maintenance of Maale nationalism.

### (ii) Inter-marriage with Amharas

As it was important for Maale nationalism to reject Orthodox Christianity, so it was important that inter-marriage with Amharas should be ‘outlawed’ in order to prevent Amhararization of the Maale people. Inter-marriage with Amharas would have meant acceptance of the Orthodox religion and cultural assimilation (see Sections 1.5.1.2. and 4.1.3.3).

### (iii) Taking sides with the Italians

Taking sides with the Italians (1935-41) created the opportunity for the Maale people to be free from Amhara oppression (see Section 1.5.1.5.). Before the Italian invasion, the Maale elite, the king, lords’, sub-lords’ and lineage elders’ authority had been progressively undermined, and ordinary Maale people were exploited as *gebbar* (Donham 1986:85). The Maale felt that the Italians gave their lives back to them.

(iv) Rejection of the ‘mother land’ notion

The Maale people perceive of themselves as a nation. There is a strong sense of being linked to the land. Maale country is their land, their *ado achi*, ‘father land’. This is where their primary loyalty lies, the land of their ancestral roots (see Section 1.1.1). Many Maale people do not want to be part of Ethiopia, and still do not consider themselves Ethiopian, nor do they believe that they should have a duty and responsibility to protect and defend Ethiopia, the so-called ‘mother land’. For most people, the Maale region is their wealth, their land, their country, their world. When the *Derg* regime called upon the Maale people to fight and die<sup>40</sup> for their ‘mother land’ in 1977 and 1978, the people refused to be part of a war that was not theirs. Their argument was that they could die for their ‘father land’ (Maale country), but could not understand why someone would expect them to die for a ‘mother land’ – a land towards which they felt no sense of belonging or any obligations to serve. It is also a shameful thing for a Maale person to die in another country (that is anywhere outside of Maale territory). If a Maale person dies outside of Maale territory, either his body should be repatriated, or soil from his grave should be brought back to Maale. The Maale people informed those who tried to force them to fight in these wars, that if the fighting escalated to include Maale, only then would they fight and die for their ‘father land’ (see Section 4.1.1.1).

(v) The rejection of the division of Maale

The *Derg* divided the Maale region into three regions, each region under a different *woreda* which included other ethnic groups from the region. Since the enforcement of a division, the Maale people became committed to a struggle to see the incorporation of all of the traditional regions back into Maale land. Although resistance to the division of Maale is based on justice and fairness with other ethnic groups in the region, and on the new Ethiopian constitution of 1995, which stipulates: “Every Nation, Nationality and people in Ethiopia has the right to speak, to write and develop its own language; to express, to develop and to promote its culture; and to preserve its history”; the ultimate goal is greater autonomy on their own territorial base. The Maale people do not have a choice to remain part of a larger state, their ultimate goal could not be that of a separate

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<sup>40</sup> In the war with Somalia

independent nation-state<sup>41</sup>. Therefore, although the original goal at the time of its incorporation into the Ethiopian state might have been political self-determination, and whereas today many Maale people may still wish for independence, more pragmatic goals that will give them greater autonomy and preserve their identity and their language are being pursued (see Section 4.1.1.3).

Because all three regions that were once part of a united Maale strongly support being part of one *woreda* for all of Maale, there is hope that they could succeed. The recent student movement partially succeeded when one of the divisions of Maale became a *woreda* on its own. However, the Maale people want all Maale regions to be part of this *woreda* and are determined to keep up the struggle (see Section 4.1.1.2. for the division of Maale and the resistance to it and 4.1.1.3 for current goals).

#### (vi) Participation in elections

The Maale people's turnout for the general elections of 1995 and 1999 in Ethiopia was extremely low. The professed new democracy was a new concept for many Ethiopians and most Maale people were just not interested. The Maale people had inaugurated a new king and they were experiencing a resurgence of traditional practices and customs (see Section 1.5.1.8 (ii)). Voting at this stage would have been tantamount to accepting Ethiopian nationalism and a rejection of Maale traditional practises and customs. Having suffered the consequences of not voting previously, however, through having leaders appointed over them that they did not trust and who did not fulfil the promises they made to the Maale people, the 2005 elections saw many people involved in voting. There was also a much improved advertising campaign and the people were encouraged to vote. In addition, the Maale king's time in power was seen as ineffective and insincere. He had died two months before the election, being rejected as king before his death (see Section 1.5.1.8 (ii)). The turnout in the election of 2005 was an opportunity to do something about their situation and the Maale people used their vote to voice their discontent. This is evidence that Maale people are starting to accept the fact that they will always be part of wider Ethiopia. In recent times, the Maale people were required to play the political game

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<sup>41</sup> Paulston (1994:35) states that, "The most common ideal is the nation-state, but there are others. Catalunya, Quebec, and Flemish Belgium are content to remain part of a larger state as long as they can safeguard their institutions of which language (and language maintenance) becomes a very prominent symbol".

in order to survive. Not having the economic and military power, or the numbers for viable resistance movements, they had to look for other possibilities accessible to them to survive. Currently, there is relative peace in Maale. Power struggles tend to be more political, as the Maale people look for representation at local, regional and state levels (see Section 4.1.1.1).

(vii) Boundary maintenance

Boundary maintenance is very important if the Maale want to survive as an ethnic group. In Maale, boundary maintenance strategies are characterised by the following: the initial rejection of formal education because the people were scared that education might take their children from them (see Section 4.1.4.3); not allowing intermarriage with other ethnic groups, and especially with Amharas (see Section 4.1.3.3), because they do not want to lose their culture and identity; other ethnic groups are not welcome and were not allowed easy access to live in the Maale region, because the Maale people believed that they would ‘contaminate’ them (see Sections 4.1.1.4 and 4.1.2.1); the way the Maale people stick together, for example, migration patterns within Maale territory rather than to regions outside of Maale (see Section 4.1.1.4), the Maale people do not easily make friends with outsiders, they prefer to keep to themselves, live by themselves, sit together in schools and only speak to one another in the Maale language (see Section 4.1.2.1). Boundary maintenance in Maale reinforces Maale ethnic identity and the boundaries between the Maale people and the dominant Amharas. It is one of the factors that enable the Maale people to resist assimilation.

(viii) Language and group loyalty

Group and language loyalty is very important and anyone that is assimilated into another group is despised and not trusted. The Maale people feel that Maale is the only language in which they can adequately express themselves. It is their identity that makes them Maale (see Section 1.1.2). In spite of political repression for centuries (see Section 1.5.1.3) and the degrading of the Maale language during the time of Emperor Haile Sellasie, the Maale people refused to give up their language. When Maale people are far away from the Maale region, or even just outside the region in Jinka town, they seek out fellow-Maale people for fellowship and any other assistance that might be needed as a

result of being away from home. Parents are aware of the linguistic influences of neighbouring languages on the Maale language and take great care to teach their children the ‘correct’ words, pronunciation and accents. The main difference between the Maale people and other ethnic groups in the region is that the Maale people have a distinct language, which separates them from other ethnic groups. This linguistic distinction is what enables them to use language as a resource to unite against perceived enemies, apparent injustices and outside domination (see Section 4.1.2.2). Maale language maintenance is an important aspect of resisting assimilation and integration into the dominant Amhara language and culture.

#### (ix) External distinction and internal cohesion

The Maale people place great emphasis on a different cultural identity, different to that of other surrounding ethnic groups, and especially to that of the Amharas, who are seen as cruel, untrustworthy, liars and the ones who introduced venereal diseases and other evils into Maale (see Section 4.1.3.3). The Maale people are a proud people, proud of their traditions and culture and believe that they are an example to the other tribes in the region. The Maale people claim that they do not steal or tell lies and, according to them, evidence for this is that even in courts, the word of a Maale person is regarded as the truth. Their truthfulness is also well-known by government officials and traders. They are characterized by both insiders and outsiders as a strong, close-knit community and as being honest, reliable people (see Section 4.1.2.1).

Very much a part of Maale consciousness is the notion of a ‘glorious past’. Their ‘glorious past’ is an important part of their belief in themselves as a people. Still today, the Maale people teach their children through songs, about their ancestors, their fathers, and how rich and powerful they were, which is in line with Paulston’s (1994a:54) view of ethnic nationalism, that an important characteristic of nationalists is that “their glorious past is an important part of their present.”

#### 5.2.2.2 Social factors that do not fit into Paulston’s theoretical framework

First of all, Paulson’s (1994a and 1994c) theory applies to modern ‘nation-states’ and the Maale is not a ‘modern’ nation-state. Generally speaking, the Maale community have

been, and are, still very much unaffected by so-called progressive trends of modernity. For example, the wide-spread use of hard currency and modern structures and procedures like association and voting have only recently been introduced into Maale. Modern conveniences, like electricity and running water in homes, are unknown in Maale. Modern industry, like production and engineering, are unheard of ‘phenomena’ in Maale etc. (see Sections 1.1.1 and 4.1.1.5). In addition, for Paulston (1994a and 1994c), separatist movements, a well-developed middle class and intellectual elite are part of her defining characteristics for ethnic nationalism (see Sections 2.1.7.4 and 5.1). The Maale people display none of these in the typical sense of these three features.

(i) Separatist movements

Paulston (1994c:33) states that one of the differences between ethnic movement and ethnic nationalism is separatist movements. When ethnic discontent (characteristic of ethnic movements) turns separatist we get ethnic nationalism (see Sections 2.1.7.4 and 5.1). The Maale people do not have separatist movements and are not likely to ever have them, since they consist of only approximately 60 000 people and lack the military resources, might and finances required to form a liberation front. The results of such an uprising would spell economic, political and social demise. It would seem that the intense feelings and attitudes of dissatisfaction towards those that they perceive as trying to rob them of their identity, are the same feelings and attitudes that lead to separatist movements (see Section 4.1.1.1 on Maale loyalty to the ‘father land’, Section 4.1.1.2 on the struggle for the amalgamation of all of Maale territory and Section 4.1.1.3 on resisting Amhararization).

(ii) Well-developed middle class

Paulston (1994c:36) states that national movements must have a well-developed middle class. The driving force for ethnic nationalism will come from the middle class, whose privileges and power depend on the economic well-being of the nation (see Sections 2.1.7.4 and 5.1). One can not think in terms of ‘middle class’ in the modern sense (with vehicles, houses etc., as in an affluent suburb) for a non-modern people group like the



Maale, but one can talk about the traditional Maale elite<sup>42</sup>, which would correspond to the middle class in the modern sense. The elite, in the past, and also to a certain extent today, are the king, lords, sub-lords, clan leaders, heads of families and owners of large portions of land. Donham (1990:164-167) explains that during the Maale people's independence, the material power of kings, lords, sub-lords and lineage elders was entrenched in traditional customs and beliefs, whereby ordinary Maale people would pay tribute (in labour and in kind) to the elite. This tribute was justified by the belief that the king was responsible for the prosperity of all Maale territory, fields, people, and animals and also for defeating the power of their enemies (see Section 1.1.1). In order to preserve their wealth, power and influence, embedded in traditional beliefs and customs, it was important for the Maale elite to maintain and promote a sense of Maale nationalism. In turn, for ordinary Maale people, nationalism was a way to safeguard their prosperity. This convergence of interest of the Maale elite and ordinary Maale people resulted in a formidable force to maintain Maale nationalism. However, after the incorporation of the Maale people into the Ethiopian state towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the king, lords and lineage elders slowly started to become rich landlords, employed by the state to collect taxes, oversee law and order and settle local disputes. The material power of the king and lords, which rested upon the king's ability to control fertility, was weakened. Their material power now depended on the king's ability to influence and manipulate local politics, to protect and expand his and the lords' and lineage elders' land claims and to exact proceeds from taxes (see Sections 1.5.1.4 and 1.5.1.6 (i)). Once again, Maale nationalism was to their advantage, since it was a way to secure their wealth, power and influence. However, this brought about a divergence of interests between Maale elite and ordinary Maale people (see Sections 1.5.1.6 (i) and 1.5.1.7 (ii) for Land reforms and the end of the *gebbar* system) as ordinary Maale people were exploited by the elite. This resulted in Maale nationalism, propagated by the elite, no longer being the primary focus of ordinary Maale people, as they accused the king's son and richest landlords of exploitation (see Section 1.5.1.7 (iii)). The Maale people hated the *Derg* but because of their participation in state institutions they actually increased the *Derg's* influence in Maale (see Section 1.5.1.7 (iv) for the *Derg's* influence in Maale). However, the end of the *Derg* also marked a resurgence of traditional beliefs and customs and renewed interest in Maale nationalism (see Section 1.5.1.8 (ii) on resurgence of Evangelical Christians and

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<sup>42</sup> The idea of the elite being the catalyst for Ethiopian national movements is supported by Gudina (2003:34).

traditional practices and customs and Section 4.1.1.2 on the propagation of Maale nationalism after the fall of the *Derg*).

Paulston (1994c:36) claims that, “without a stake in property, nationalism is not perceived to further one’s self-interest.” However, an important additional factor exists in the case of the Maale elite and that is that the self-interest of the Maale elite did not only depend on access to land, but also on maintaining a system of traditional beliefs and customs.

### (iii) Intellectual leaders

Paulston (1994a:56) asserts that nationalism movements have intellectual leaders. Although Maale recently saw the emergence of intellectual leaders amongst the educated, intellectual leaders were not historically part of Maale society. Instead of intellectual leaders, the Maale people had spiritual leaders<sup>43</sup>, like the *Mekana goda* and others that performed sacrifices and rituals on behalf of the Maale people. They were responsible for giving direction and inspiration to the Maale people. However the influence of such people is on the decline and might, in the future, be replaced by the educated.

### (iv) Regional nationalism and ethnic nationalism

Paulston’s (1994a and 1994c) theory applies only to modern nation-states. The term ‘modern nation-states’ could be applicable to Ethiopia as a sovereign state, but one cannot really conceive of ethnic groups such as the Maale and many other ethnic groups living in remote, southern parts of Ethiopia as belonging to ‘modern nation-states.’ The Maale are definitely not modern, and on the surface it might seem as if ethnic groups such as the Maale who live in the remote, southern parts of Ethiopia, are cases of what Paulston would call ‘ethnicity’. However, Paulston states that ethnicity will not maintain a language in a multilingual setting if the dominant group allows assimilation, and if opportunity to access and incentive for learning the second language are present. It was already noted that the dominant Amharas allowed assimilation and that incentives and

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<sup>43</sup> These spiritual leaders perform a similar function to the Levitical Tribe of Israel in the Old Testament. They inaugurate the new king, decide what action should be taken in different circumstances, for example in times of ethnic trouble whether the Maale should go into battle etc. They are responsible for reconciliation between Maale clans and families, blessing of the first crops, for the ceremonial evocation of rain and for generally providing guidance to the Maale people.

opportunities to learn Amharic were great (see Sections 5.2.1 and 1.5.1.2). Consequently, the argument put forward in this dissertation is that Paulston's theory may also apply to non-modern ethnic groups, like the Maale, and that the Maale is a case, not of ethnicity, but of ethnic nationalism. The ideals of Ethiopian Nationalism (one nation - one state) never appealed to many ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Nationalism, a European concept, has never fitted sub-Saharan Africa (personal correspondence with Paulston). Therefore, the proposition put forward is that the regional nationalism in Ethiopia, which is isomorphic with ethnic groups like the Maale, corresponds with the 'ethnic nationalism' of Paulston's model.

### 5.2.2.3 Other factors that influence language maintenance and shift in Maale

In this section, other factors (economic factors, evangelical Christianity and social networks) that influence, or could possibly have an influence on, language maintenance and shift in Maale are considered.

#### (i) Economic factors

Donham (1985:38) asserts that the Maale and the Omotic south-west were "colonised" twice and were part of a world economy for nearly 2000 years (see Section 1.5.1.3). However, the economic history of Maale and the Omotic south-west, after their incorporation into the Ethiopian empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, is often a record of the exploitation of ordinary Maale people and the enforcement of bad economic policies by their northern conquerors (see Sections 1.5.1.3, 1.5.1.4, 1.5.1.5, 1.5.1.6 (i) and 1.5.1.7 (ii)). It seems that up to recently, the majority of the ordinary Maale people, who were essentially pastoralists and agriculturalists, used to produce just enough for their own consumption. But this has been changing in the last decade or so as many ordinary Maale people are planting and harvesting enough crops to sell at the numerous markets in the region (see Section 4.1.1.5). On the other hand, the economic incentives for the educated people in Maale are good. They find jobs as teachers, nurses, police officers and government officials and the Maale people are noticing that jobs provide a secure income that is not affected by calamities, like drought and famine. Job selection in Ethiopia requires Amharic and this will have an affect on language learning strategies in the future.

## (ii) Evangelical Christianity

Christianity brought far-reaching changes to the Maale people. The Christians (evangelical) were the first to create modern social structures and procedures. Education is seen in a different light because of Christians who took the first step in deciding to educate their children. Where Christians open literacy centres, the government often opens a *kebele*, improves the road and opens a school (see Section 4.1.4.5 (i)). Christians became aware of better trade and investment opportunities, as they started to travel to areas outside of Maale for church meetings and conferences. Christians are also more content to be part of a larger state and are more willing and prepared to work with government-appointed officials. As Christianity in the Maale region grew, many traditional values and customs started to be discarded and, as the people adopted new customs, a different culture developed with different beliefs and values. Nonetheless, old customs and traditions are still taught and practiced, but have lost their influence over many of the people (see Sections 1.5.1.6 (ii) and 4.1.1.6).

The spread of evangelical Christianity is going hand-in-hand with modernisation trends in Maale, such as participating in voting, education, administration (see Section 4.1.1.2 on *kebeles*) and infrastructure development. This, in turn, could lead to more and more people learning the language of the socio-economic dominant group.

## (iii) Social networks

The most significant networks that the Maale people have are the various ways in which they come together to work on one another's fields, or to help each other carry out tasks that are too difficult for one person, or one family, to perform on their own. Relationships with individuals of other ethnic groups are not very common and are usually fostered as a kind of insurance policy to ensure goodwill between neighbours (see Section 4.1.3). Social networks in Maale facilitate language maintenance and could possibly be regarded as an intervening variable that further supports the independent variable of ethnic nationalism and the dependant outcome of language maintenance in the Maale speech community (see Section 2.3).

#### 5.2.2.4 Concluding remarks

Ethnic nationalism in Maale is demonstrated in: the rejection of Orthodox Christianity; marriage patterns of endogamy; taking sides with the Italians during their occupation of Ethiopia; rejection the *Derg's* 'mother-land' concept; rejection of the division of Maale; not participating in the Ethiopian general elections in 1995 and 1999; voicing discontent by voting against the current government to voice their discontent; boundary maintenance strategies; language and group loyalty and internal cohesion and external distinction (see Section 5.2.2.1).

A case is made that there has been sufficient access and incentive for the Maale people to shift to Amharic, the dominant language and language of their conquerors (see Section 5.2.1). The above also indicates where Maale nationalism does not fit into Paulston's theoretical framework, where it was an extension of it (see Section 5.2.2.2) and finally other factors, such as economic factors, evangelical Christianity and social networks that have an influence on language maintenance and shift are discussed (see Section 5.2.2.3).

### **5.2.3 Mother-tongue literacy and language shift**

This section of the dissertation investigates the role of Maale mother-tongue literacy in language maintenance and shift phenomena, and as such is an attempt to answer the second question posed, which is: will mother-tongue literacy in Maale contribute to language shift?

Paulston (1994f:13) states that the mechanism of language shift is bilingualism, often but not necessarily with exogamy, where parents speak the original language with the grandparents and the new language with the children.

#### 5.2.3.1 The Maale evangelical Church and the mother-tongue literacy programme

In chapter 4 (see Section 4.1.1.6), it was noted that Christianity brought major changes to the Maale people. They were the first to create modern social structures and procedures (see Donham 1999), for example, attending conferences to discuss issues and plan ahead, voting for elders, reporting back to different levels of the church organisation, financial

accountability etc. Because there was a system in place that worked well, the Maale Church was well-equipped to implement a literacy programme that could extend to virtually every corner of Maale. The literacy programme could never have functioned as well as it has been if it was not that the church had already gained vital experience in organising itself.

#### 5.2.3.2 Growth of mother-tongue literacy amongst the Maale people

The growth in the Maale mother-tongue literacy programme is remarkable (see Section 4.1.4.2), especially if it is taken into consideration that the Maale is a very small ethnic group. This growth is indicative of changing attitudes towards (i) education (see Section 4.1.4.5 (i)) and (ii) mother-tongue literacy (see Section 4.1.4.5 (ii)).

##### (i) Changing attitudes towards education

The impact that the literacy classes have had in the Maale region can not be underestimated, as the people have come to recognise the importance of education. The literacy programme has created the opportunity for many to further their formal education, as literacy in their mother tongue has formed a springboard for access to primary education. Many people who did not value education have started sending their children to school. Initially only children, a few adult men and a small contingent of adult women attended literacy classes. Although it was not originally expected that adult women would attend the programme, this is changing, as the people experience the contribution that literacy makes to the lives of all people in Maale land (see Section 4.1.4.5 (i)).

##### (ii) Changing attitudes towards mother-tongue literacy

Initially the people, particularly the educated in Maale, were doubtful that the literacy programme would succeed, because they did not think it was possible to use the Maale language for educational purposes. However, once the literacy programme was underway and had produced readers and writers in Maale, people noticed how easy it was to learn to read and write in the Maale language. The people have started to understand the value of their language in education and are showing more appreciation for the translators and

literacy workers. The people have a renewed interest in their language. The benefits that the Maale people have experienced as a result of mother-tongue literacy has greatly contributed to their change in attitude towards mother-tongue literacy. Teachers and many others are requesting that the literacy programme be extended to include primary education in the mother tongue (see Section 4.1.4.5 (i)).

A factor that has contributed to learning to read in L2 is that both the Maale orthography and the Amharic orthography make use of the *fidel* script, which is the Amharic alphabet (see Addendum).

### 5.2.3.3 Mother-tongue literacy and learning L2

Although the success of the mother-tongue literacy programme may look impressive (see Section 4.1.4.2) for language maintenance in Maale, it is estimated that about 60%<sup>44</sup> of students who attend the literacy programme go on to attend government schools. School teachers, the *kebele* leaders, church elders and parents have noticed that the children who attended literacy classes prior to enrolling in school are ahead of those who enrol in school without first attending literacy classes. Parents are now being advised to send their children to the literacy classes prior to sending them to school. The drop-out rate in the government schools was very high prior to the introduction of the mother-tongue literacy programme in Maale, and parents, encouraged by the success of others, have started sending their children to the literacy classes with a view to enrolling them in school afterwards. Mother-tongue literacy has become a springboard to further education in Maale (see Section 4.1.4.5 (ii)). All government schools in Maale currently teach in Amharic. In order for a Maale person to further his education, he has to learn to read and write in Amharic (see Section 4.1.4.3).

One of the reasons for the increased attendance of literacy classes is that there is a growing respect for the educated people in Maale. The educated hold salaried jobs. When there is a shortage of food during times of famine and drought, the average household in Maale has to depend on the government, NGOs (non-government organisations) and others to keep them from starving. The Maale people have noticed that these calamities do

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<sup>44</sup> This is only an estimate as statistical data is not available to verify the correctness.

not affect the educated and that, on the contrary, they are able to provide for their families and relatives in times of need. This has led to a growing respect for the educated person. In the past, the educated people were associated with Amharas, but this is changing. Parents have started sending their children to the literacy classes, with a view to them eventually learning Amharic as a strategy to ensure that they are able to deal with, and survive during, times of drought and famine, which are not uncommon in Maale (see Section 4.1.4.5 (i)).

Literacy in Maale has brought progress. Following the establishment of literacy centres, new churches and government *kebeles* were often opened in the area, roads were made and new schools were often built (see Section 4.1.4.5 (i)). This, in itself, has also had an impact on trade and further education, which will eventually impact language-learning strategies.

Attitudes towards formal education are changing and even outsiders are observing the changes (see Section 4.1.4.5 (i)). Students from Maale, who attend the secondary school in Jinka (a town that is one full day's walk from central Maale), are already renting most of the available accommodation in the town and Maale people are even selling their cattle to purchase houses in Jinka for the Maale students to live in. Selling cattle in order for their children to attend secondary schools is significant, because the wealth and pride of the Maale people is in their livestock. In 1995, when the researcher first came to live in the Maale region, it was difficult to convince anyone to sell even a single cow in order to purchase medicine or pay to go to the hospital in Jinka to save a sick family member who needed urgent medical attention. Nothing was more important than their cattle. These kinds of shifts in thinking towards education have been encouraged through the success of the literacy programme, and a shift in thinking towards education means that one ultimately accepts (willingly or unwillingly) education in Amharic.

The literacy programme is not only for men but also women. This may sound strange, but education was seen by the Maale people as something that men do. A woman's task was to stay at home and look after domestic affairs. Men feared that if women were educated, they would not be able to take care of their duties around the home, and it was whispered that educated women do not want to bear many children. Christianity has brought changes in the way the Maale people are thinking about the role and place of women in society.



The church has had a big influence in elevating the position of women in Maale society and also in convincing parents to send their girls to the literacy classes. Paulston (1994f:13) claims that language shift often begins with women. This, she states, is observable in their choice of code (Schlieben-Lange 1977 in Paulston 1994f:13), in their choice of marriage partner (Gal 1979; Brudner 1972 in Paulston 1994f:13) and consequently, in their choice of language to raise their children in (Eckert 1983 in Paulston 1994f:13). The question is then: What influence will educated women have in the future, on language maintenance or language shift in Maale?

In Maale, mother-tongue literacy is contributing to church growth, which in turn contributes to education in Maale (see Section 4.1.4.4 (ii)). Church growth has a direct affect on Maale traditional practices, customs and beliefs, for example, the belief that women should not go to school, the association of education with people that can not be trusted (i.e. the Amharas), the conviction of parents that they will lose their children once they are educated etc. Most of the illiterate and uneducated people in Maale are traditionalists, who feel that their cultural values are being undermined by the educated. Education is seen in a different light by Christians, who were the first to educate their children. Therefore, as Christianity spreads in Maale, it is more likely that there will be an increased interest in mother-tongue literacy and education. This, once again, suggests that an increasing number of people will be learning the language of the educated, which is Amharic.

The main point of the above is to demonstrate that mother-tongue literacy in Maale will lead to literacy in Amharic, which could lead to bilingualism and eventually to language shift.

#### 5.2.3.4 Mother-tongue literacy and language revival

The other side of the coin is that the literacy programme has brought about changes in how the Maale people view their language. Maale was, and still is, a predominately oral society. People find it difficult to imagine that their language can be used for purposes of reading and writing. When the literacy programme got underway and readers and writers in the Maale language were produced, people took note. This was no longer the language of the uneducated. The result is that there has been a renewed interest in the Maale

language. Old words, long forgotten by the younger generation, are being resurrected and new words, which have been introduced through the literacy materials and translation, are now being incorporated into everyday language. Differences amongst speech varieties in Maale are explained in terms of “purity and influences from the neighbouring languages” (Amha 2000:7). The central dialect is said to be the most ‘pure’, that is, the least affected by other languages, and is viewed as the most prestigious variety in Maale (see Section 1.1.2). The Maale translators and those that assist with the development of reading materials in Maale use the ‘pure’ form of the language. Maale people living in border areas, whose language is ‘mixed’ with adjacent languages, want to learn the written form of the language, as it is believed to be the right way to speak Maale. New writers are writing stories, poetry and songs (see Section 4.1.4.5(ii)). The Maale people have also witnessed how easy it is to understand the Bible in their own language in comparison to Amharic, and they are experiencing the benefits of understanding important health-related issues that affect their daily lives (see Section 4.1.4.4 (i)). The people express it like this, “We are able to understand because it is explained in own language”.

#### 5.2.3.5 Concluding remarks

On the one hand, we have the process of standardization that contributes to language maintenance, and on the other hand we have mother-tongue literacy as a stepping stone to further education that will lead to bilingualism. The distinction that Allard and Landry (1992:173) make between additive and subtractive bilingualism is helpful here. They define additive bilingualism as a condition which favours the development of the mother tongue, while at the same time permitting the learning and use of a second language. They define subtractive bilingualism as a condition which favours the development of a second language to the detriment of the mother tongue. The suggestion was made that, within Paulston’s model, the social conditions in Maale support the argument that Maale is a case of ethnic nationalism. It is plausible that these social conditions, while favouring the development of the mother tongue, at the same time permit the learning of a second language. The educated in Maale, and those that live outside of Maale, are speaking to their children in Maale, the Maale students in Jinka stick together and communicate with one another in Maale and Maale government officials only speak in Maale when communicating with one another. There is no evidence that would suggest that intermarriage between Maale people and Amharas is on the increase. The Maale language

is still spoken in all the former domains in which it was used (also by the educated), and Amharic is used in new domains, for example, in work situations outside of Maale, in the classroom, etc. This may not change while the underlying social conditions support ethnic nationalism.

The development of an orthography, literacy in the mother tongue, lexical standardization through translating the Bible and other materials as well as the development of Maale dictionaries, will possibly further contribute to language maintenance, as will the current government's policy relating to the equal rights of languages, which promotes and encourages corpus planning for every nation, nationality and people in Ethiopia (see section 1.5.2.2).

#### **5.2.4 Conclusion**

In this dissertation evidence was presented that supports the hypothesis that a strong sense of nationalism is the main factor in the maintenance of the Maale language (see Section 5.2.2.1). From the evidence that was presented, it could be argued that Paulston's (1994a and 1994c) theory of social mobilisation can be applied to non-modern nation-states such as the Maale, by extending her theoretical framework. The argument proposed in this dissertation is that the regional nationalism, which is isomorphic with ethnic groups in Ethiopia like the Maale, corresponds to the 'ethnic nationalism' of Paulston's model and is the reason why Maale has been maintained as a viable language in spite of centuries of political repression.

It appears that there are strong indications that the Maale people exhibits the basic defining characteristics of nationalism, that is, access to territory, an emphasis on group loyalty, a common enemy, cultural external distinction and internal group cohesion, group loyalty and group cohesion, a goal of self-determination or greater autonomy in the case of Maale (see Section 5.2.2.1 (v)), and a perception of themselves as a nation (see Section 2.1.7.4 on the defining characteristics of nationalism and Section 5.2.2.1 (i-ix) and 5.2.2.3 on Maale nationalism). Maale ethnic nationalism is an extension of Paulston's model in that Maale is not a modern nation-state; instead of separatist movements, the Maale people display the same attitudes and intense feelings that lead to separatist movements; instead of a strong middle-class, the Maale people have the powerful elite, whose

privileges, power and influence depends on the welfare of Maale and instead of intellectual leaders, the Maale have spiritual leaders to guide and direct them (see Section 5.2.2.2).

In this dissertation, the claim is made that mother-tongue literacy will not always necessarily be a factor in language maintenance (but could be employed as a strategy for L2 learning). The findings suggest that, on the one hand, the mother-tongue literacy programme in the Maale region contributes to language maintenance and, on the other hand, that the mother-tongue literacy programme is a stepping stone to further education, which favours the learning of a second language. This may lead one to posit that there is the likelihood that a situation of additive bilingualism will develop, where the mother tongue is used in all its former domains and where the second language is learned and used in new domains.

The linguistic outcome of societies that implement a mother-tongue literacy programme will, in such instances, be dependant on the underlying social conditions. If the social conditions favour language maintenance in a language contact situation, the linguistic outcome of minority groups will be that of language maintenance that goes hand-in-hand with additive bilingualism. If the social conditions do not favour language maintenance, mother-tongue literacy may hasten the process of bilingualism to the detriment of the mother tongue.

It remains to be seen what affect modernisation will have on the Maale people and language. Paulston (1994c:29) states that her four types of social mobilisation represent a continuum, and not four distinct types. Groups can fit into a different type of mobilisation at different stages of their history and also move back and forth on the continuum. Modernisation in the Maale region may result in Maale nationalism and, in effect, Maale language maintenance becoming less important, as the Maale people learn Amharic for socio-economic and educational rewards. But at present, the Maale language appears to be functioning in all of its former domains, and not threatened by language shift.

Other factors contributing to language maintenance in Maale are its inspiring history, consciously taught to new generations (see Section 4.1.2.2), strong close-knit networks, marriage patterns of endogamy (see Section 4.1.3), patterns of immigration, emigration

and migration (see Section 4.1.1.4), positive attitudes towards their language and culture, their self-reliance and cultural stubbornness (see Section 4.1.2.1 and 4.1.2.2).

### **5.3 Contribution of dissertation**

This study contributes to language maintenance and shift research by exploring the application of Paulston's theory to non-modern nation-states. Very few studies in this field in Ethiopia have been conducted among non-modern groups like the Maale. Although Paulston's theoretical model typically applies to modern 'nation-states', this study suggests that an extended version of Paulston's theoretical framework could also apply to ethnic groups like the Maale people. This dissertation shows where Maale nationalism fits into Paulston's model and where it can be viewed as an extension of her theoretical framework. The dissertation demonstrates that although minority societies like the Maale do not have a middle class, intellectual leaders, and separatist movements, they nevertheless have their elite, spiritual leaders and attitudes similar to that of groups which lead to separatist movements.

This study also examined the role of the mother-tongue literacy programme in maintenance and shift outcomes. It demonstrates how such programmes can play an ambivalent role in maintenance and shift outcomes. On the one hand, they can support language maintenance and, on the other hand, they could be a stepping stone for learning L2.

This study also provides additional evidence of the value of mother-tongue education, which is that there is a positive transfer of reading skills from L1 to L2.

### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

One of the major limitations of the study is that time constraints and limited resources prevented the researcher from conducting similar studies amongst other ethnic groups in order to compare linguistic outcomes. There was not enough time to provide a conclusive answer the question, "Will mother-tongue literacy in Maale lead to language shift?" In a decade from now, one probably could make more accurate predictions. The fact that it is a dissertation of limited scope also imposed a limitation on the research. The researcher also

has limited knowledge of the Maale language, and had to work through an interpreter. Therefore, he could not obtain as in-depth an understanding of the Maale people and their language as he would have liked.

### **5.5 Suggestions for further research**

More studies in non-modern societies need to be conducted to ascertain whether regional nationalism in the rest of Ethiopia and sub-Saharan Africa corresponds to Paulston's ethnic nationalism. These studies could also be extended to non-modern ethnic groups living in other parts of the world, such as South America, China, India etc. The question needs to be asked: would an extension of Paulston's model be applicable to minority groups living in these regions and are there perhaps additional defining characteristics for the four types of social mobilisation. For example, is adherence to traditional religions an intervening or defining characteristic?

Ongoing research on the mother-tongue literacy project and its effects will help to answer the question, "Will mother-tongue literacy contribute to language shift?" with greater certainty. For example, changes in social conditions should be carefully documented, such as patterns of exogamy, influence of evangelism and church growth on Maale society, resurgence of traditional Maale religion (Donham 1999), migration patterns, changes in socio-economic conditions, changing goals and the language behaviour of educated women.

The Maale mother-tongue literacy project could also provide valuable data to scholars who wish to explore the value of initial literacy in the L1 and the positive transfer of reading skills to L2

### **5.6 Implications of the study**

Paulston's (1985) goal was to develop a framework for explaining and predicting the language behaviour of social groups as such behaviour relates to educational policies for minority groups. She claims that if educational policies are to be successful, they must consider the social context of language problems, and especially the forces which contribute to language maintenance and shift (Paulston 1985:50). The promotion of

languages for mother-tongue education in Ethiopia is important for the development of the regional states. However, developing curriculum and materials with limited resources for Ethiopia's many languages is a big stumbling block to the implementation of their educational policy. Therefore, this study may be beneficial to the Ethiopian government and other government and non-governmental organisations working on developing orthographies, literacy, dictionaries, grammars and other educational materials for minority languages, with the aim of providing education in these languages. In other words, it will help them to make informed decisions regarding which minority languages, if standardised, would benefit the people most. This may also lead to long term socio-economic benefits for mother-tongue speakers of minority languages.

## **5.7 Final conclusion**

The findings seem to indicate that regional nationalism, which is isomorphic with ethnic groups in Ethiopia, such as the Maale, corresponds to Paulston's model of ethnic nationalism, and could explain why the Maale language has been maintained as a viable language in spite of political repression. The findings also indicate that there could be two divergent outcomes of the mother-tongue literacy programme in the Maale region, namely, that the mother-tongue literacy programme will support language maintenance; and that the mother-tongue literacy programme may lead to bilingualism, which could lead to subsequent language shift.

This study opens up possibilities for further research in language maintenance and shift phenomena in other non-modern societies in Ethiopia and elsewhere, as well as research into the significance of initial literacy in the L1.

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## ADDENDUM

### 1.0 Background to the literacy project

#### 1.1 Developing an Orthography

When the researcher and his wife started their work in Maale land in 1996, the Maale language had not yet been committed to writing and Maale was still predominantly an oral society. A previous attempt was made by a missionary nearly two decades earlier, to develop and implement an orthography for the Maale people that was based on the Amharic alphabet, but no one, except the Missionary's language helpers, learned to read in Maale. The main reasons for the failed attempt at implementing an orthography were due to a lack of community involvement, very little promotion, lack of primers<sup>45</sup> and reading materials, and there were also complications with the orthography, for example, vowel length was only indicated for some of the vowels. Another difficulty was that the Maale speakers who had gone through the educational system had learned to read and write in Amharic, and they criticised the Maale writing system. Their criticism was that some of the characters in the Amharic alphabet were assigned a totally different phonetic equivalent in the Maale orthography. This, in turn, made it difficult for them to make the transition from reading Amharic to reading Maale. This criticism by the 'educated' also created negative perceptions amongst some of the Maale people regarding their own writing system.

When a writing system for the Maale language was being developed, the researcher tried to avoid the problems of the first attempt at reducing the language to writing, as well as problems of other orthographies in the Omo region. For example, vowel length is contrastive in all of the Omotic languages. Some writing systems in the Omo region became awkward in their attempt to make this distinction. One example of this is the Aari, another Omotic language, which borders the Maale. Reports are continually heard, of people struggling to learn to read in Aari in spite of reasonably well organised mother-tongue literacy campaigns in the Aari language. One of the big problems is the way they have indicated vowel length. The reason for the awkwardness is that Amharic has seven

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<sup>45</sup> Primers are materials used to teach in a literacy campaign

vowels and vowel length is not contrastive, whereas Maale and other Omotic languages, have five vowels and length is contrastive (i, e, u, o, a, ii, ee, uu, oo, aa). Latin script would be a better choice for committing Omotic languages to writing because it would be easy to indicate vowel length. However, until recently most writing systems in the region were based on the Amharic fidels (alphabet). This is because of the high standing of Amharic in education; because the Amharic alphabet is unique to Ethiopia and serves, in some cases as a unifying symbol, like a flag; Amharic is the lingua franca of Ethiopia, and also, when people learn to read and write in their mother tongue using the Amharic alphabet, the transition to learning to read and write in Amharic is easier, and visa versa.

The writing system that was developed for the Maale people is also based on the Amharic alphabet, with its more than 200 characters. The researcher found a way of indicating vowel length that is acceptable and easy to learn. As far as was possible, it was also attempted assign the same sound meanings to the alphabet characters in the Maale orthography as in Amharic. For some sounds in Maale that do not occur in Amharic, the researcher used slightly adapted characters to those found in the Amharic alphabet. Interviews with church leaders and others at the time, about the choice of writing system for Maale (i.e. Amharic or Latin script), indicated that a considerable majority of the people would prefer to use a writing system based on the Amharic orthography. At the time, the government was recommending writing systems based on Latin script for Omotic and Cushitic languages. However, because of reasons mentioned above, many ethnic groups still preferred to read their language in Amharic script.

The researcher also made enquiries to help him to decide which of the varieties/dialects of Maale should be chosen as a basis for a written form of the language, and to select a team of people that would run the literacy programme. The result of these inquiries indicated that the most prestigious or most important dialect of the Maale language is the dialect spoken in the Koibe and Balla areas. This was confirmed in a study by Azeb Amha (2000:7). A committee was formed to help make decisions on orthography issues. The writing system was tested and revised several times and the local and regional government supported its implementation in Maale.



## **1.2 Developing and implementing a literacy programme**

Primary Education in Maale is in Amharic and the majority of the teachers cannot speak Maale. Most of Maale's 60 000 plus speakers are monolingual and children are at a disadvantage when they start school, that is, communication between teacher and pupil is a huge problem for most, and then they have to learn to read and write in a language that they do not understand a word of.

The South-Omo Zone, of which Maale is a part, is one of the least developed areas in an underdeveloped Ethiopia. National Census Report figures (of 1994) show that the South-Omo Zone has a very low percentage of the population completing grade 12. This compares unfavourably with the rest of the country. It is, therefore, understandable that Maale has a very low literacy rate, estimated to be below 15 %. Most of those claiming to be literate are in fact only semi-literate. They know the alphabet reasonably well but, due to a lack of practice, struggle to read words and sentences. Very few of those who have attended school have ever progressed beyond grade 4.

After the development of the writing system, a literacy programme was developed to teach the people to read and write in Maale. Up to date, about 100 adults coming from various districts in Maale have been trained to teach the literacy classes. Currently, the literacy programme is being taught in about 90 different locations in Maale with a total regular attendance of approximately 3 000 people. As the demand grows, literacy classes are opened in new locations. Each year, certificates are awarded to those people who have successfully completed the literacy classes. It is considered a great honour to have the certificate. Those who complete the literacy course are able to read the books that have been published fluently. This has encouraged others to join. Many of those learning to read and write, even the adults, have since enrolled in school. It is reported by schoolteachers, that those students who come through our programme are far ahead of the rest of the students.

The preparation, testing and production of the various resources for people to read and write took almost 4 years, after which the literacy campaign was implemented. The literacy programme consists of two programmes, namely, one for those who can read and write in Amharic (language 2). For them a transition reader was developed to reinforce

what they already know and to show them the differences in reading Amharic and reading Maale. The other programme is for those who have had very little or no experience in reading and writing. The majority of the people fell into this category (there were no Maale people literate in their mother tongue at this point, since the orthography was new). This programme consists of a pre-reader and basic readers. The pre-reader was developed to introduce basic skills, like hand co-ordination (fine motor skills) through turning pages, holding a pencil and learning to make simple strokes; eye co-ordination (visual discrimination skill) is developed through activities where objects need to be matched, looking from left to right and top to bottom; and sequence is taught by learners 'reading' a picture story to find out the correct order of events. Part of this lesson is a discussion on the use of different forms of writing already in use in Maale, for example, decorations on their homes, marks on their weapons like bows and spears, marks and paintings on their faces and bodies etc. This book starts with what they are familiar with to create a foundation upon which further skills and knowledge can be built. It serves to fill the gap in the process of learning to read and write. The Maale have been an oral society, and the use of books is new to many people. When the literacy campaign was first started, many of them had never held a book or even witnessed someone reading before. Three basic readers were prepared to be followed on after the pre-reader. The Multi-Strategy Economy Model,<sup>46</sup> in combination with the Gudschinsky Method,<sup>47</sup> were used as a basis for the programme, with added material relevant to teaching the fidels (alphabet) for the Maale context.

Teachers are encouraged to create a learner-centred environment where learners can interact with the materials, subjects/topics and fellow-learners. Teachers are trained in the Maale sound system; how to teach the programme, in general good teaching skills, how teaching adults is different to teaching children, respectful environment and responsibility of learners to each other, individual progress and cooperation as opposed to competition; use of charts, pictures or posters; involving learners through activities, discussion and problem-solving; group work, learning through informal cooperative groups, critical reflection and observation by teacher; basic lesson planning and clear instructions from the teacher on tasks and lesson outcomes; record-keeping and assessment of learners

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<sup>46</sup> By Robin Rempel (1998). The method has 2 separate tracks, using primers (first track) and readers (second track). Teaches the alphabet, and also that symbols have meaning.

<sup>47</sup> Uses picturable words (usually nouns), key word broken down and built up, with story-reading and writing practice.

(formative, informal and summative) as well as assessment of teacher's own teaching. A training manual was prepared, translated into Amharic and produced for training and distribution to teachers.

The literacy classes are cross-curricular and relevant to the lives of the people. The reading materials used in the readers, as well as books that follow on after the readers, are helpful in strengthening the fluency of the learners. Once the teaching materials had been prepared, work immediately started in preparation of other books for use in the programme. They contain culturally relevant stories, cross-curricular topics, as well as Bible-based sentences and stories intended to encourage scripture use in the mother tongue. The first was a book on Maale folk tales, written and illustrated by the project coordinator, Oesha Tusklo. Subsequent materials include: a book on the story of Ruth from the Old Testament; a book on Basic first aid, health-care and hygiene; a book on *numERIC* and various other booklets on relevant topics, for example, Typhoid, Malaria, Breast-feeding, Care and Feeding of your Baby, AIDS, How to care for goats and Nutrition. These books are incorporated into the lessons – providing an opportunity for meaning-based learning; and the cross-curricular lesson plans help to maintain the interest of the learners as well as empowering them with information in areas they feel are necessary. This is also a motivational factor for others to join the classes. Other materials also currently available in Maale include the Gospel of Mark, Acts and Genesis. The New Testament translation has been completed and is in the process of being published.

Work on a Maale-Amharic dictionary was started in 2003. This is part of the process of standardising the written form of Maale. Standardisation implies choosing a standard dialect in Maale to serve as the written form, for differentiating between 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' words and structures and for setting orthography rules. The need for a dictionary became increasingly recognised as the literacy programme gained ground and influence in Maale.

### **1.3 Staffing and Set-up**

The Literacy team consists of four paid Maale mother-tongue speakers. One is the coordinator for the literacy programme and one coordinates the lexicography programme. All four spend a lot of their time on training of teachers, giving refresher courses to

teachers, on the development and checking of literacy materials for errors, making improvements on developed materials, visiting literacy centres, encouraging people to join the programme, etc. All four have done training courses on literacy development and implementation, as well as courses on compiling dictionaries and other courses in applied linguistics conducted by The Word for the World. The researcher and his wife are the Word for the World advisors for the project. The Church provided teachers to teach and evaluate the literacy programme on a voluntary basis. Although most of the teachers belong to the Church, careful note is taken not to give the impression that the literacy programme is only for those who attend a church. The teachers in Maale vary in education levels, but most of them have completed Grades 3-6 in the formal education system. Teachers are not employed by The Word for the World or the project, and so do not receive salaries. They are voluntary workers that the churches recommend for this work. To encourage them to do a good job, the people in the community help them to plough their lands and to plant and harvest their fields. Sometimes small gifts of clothing and other precious commodities, such as salt and soap, are made to teachers that are, according to us, putting in a lot of effort and time; and sometimes a small financial gift is given to show appreciation. Some of the teachers are also church evangelists. They take the literacy classes to un-reached<sup>48</sup> areas to use the classes as an evangelistic tool. Many of the literacy classes cannot be accessed by vehicle and it can take months to visit all the classes. This necessitated the setting up of a literacy committee, consisting of about twelve mother-tongue Maale speakers. Their task is to visit the various classes and report on how the teachers are doing, what the needs are and what difficulties, if any, they are facing. They are respected members of the community and also work on a voluntary basis. They also report to the churches in the area in which the literacy programme is held, and the leaders of the churches in turn verify the correctness of their report.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the project**

The researcher and his wife came to Ethiopia to translate the Bible into languages of Ethiopia that do not have a Bible and, with this in mind, they wanted the recipients of the translated scriptures to be able to read their Bibles. Mother-tongue literacy was therefore a high priority from the beginning. This was the initial motivation and driving force behind

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<sup>48</sup> Un-reached refers to areas where the Gospel of Christ has not yet been preached or where there is no Church.

the efforts to initiate a literacy programme under very challenging conditions. The objectives, although initially to enable the people to read the translated scriptures, grew as did their work and experience. It was found that the people had aspirations; for example, the desire to make education a possibility for their children and thus secure a surer future for the next generations, as well as knowing how to take better care of their families, through knowledge about health and hygiene. The objectives developed to include:

- a) Empowering the people to take control of their lives, by providing them with education and skills-development in the areas where the people perceive and identify the need to be, that is, making them aware of alternatives that are open to those who are educated, and that the benefits of implementing behavioural change far outweigh the cost. This includes improved physical and psychological health, minimizing health risks, decreasing the mortality rate, improved self-esteem, personal satisfaction, self-empowerment and a contribution by individuals to the common good.
- b) Equipping them to be good communicators in writing and fluent readers, for themselves and for their people, leading to functional literacy.
- c) Alleviation of poverty and the related developmental issues caused due to the underdeveloped situation in Maale.
- d) Providing a solid educational foundation, and surer start in education through implementing the use of the mother tongue in education programmes, with the end goal in mind of helping to prevent marginalisation of the Maale people by bringing them on board with the rest of Ethiopia.
- e) To see a change in attitude to education and an improvement in the daily lives of the people as they adopt proposed changes in behaviour promoted by the literacy lessons.