The issue of linguistically different populations coming in contact has attracted the attention of scholars from various disciplines. The Negotiation of Identities in pluri-lingual conversation: A theory of code choice, is related on the one hand to a balancing of the equation of language maintenance and language shift in a growing Bi and multilingual tribal state of Jharkhand, providing a choice of code to the speakers and on the other to a variety of social, psychological and historical factors, giving a changed look to the aspect of Tribal identity. Bloomfield (1933) had noticed it in language:

Some people entirely give up the use of their native language in favour of a foreign one. This happens frequently among immigrants in the United States. If the immigrant does not stay in a settlement of others from his own country, he may have no occasion at all to use his native language. Especially it would seem, is case of less educated persons, this may result, after a time, in wholesale forgetting, people of this kind understand their native language when they chance to hear it spoken, but can no longer speak it freely or even intelligibly. They have made a shift of language, their only medium of communication is now English and it is for
them not a native but an adopted language. Sometimes these persons have nevertheless acquired English very imperfectly and therefore are in the position of speaking no language well. (Bloomfield 1933:55)

A minority group may shift completely to the language of the host society in some domains, maintain its own language in a few others while using a mixed code showing varying degrees of mixtures of the two languages in contact in the rest. Even when social and cultural assimilation is almost complete, the native language may still continue to be used in extremely formal situations e.g. rituals and ceremonies as well as in extremely informal situations e.g. family, while mixed varieties may be used in several informal and semi-formal situations, e.g. peer-groups. Depending on their historical and cultural background and the response of the host society, two communities may behave very differently in the case of language maintenance and language shift. On the one extreme is the case of the American Jews whose complete assimilation to the majority community has been called the most striking event of current history; on the other are the German Mennonite farmers who have struggled to maintain their religion and language against heavy odds. Language thus often acts as a shield against complete loss of identity. To quote Lieberson,
Although it is true that group may retain their identity without a unique tongue, it is difficult to visualise complete assimilation in other areas if their native languages are maintained. (Lieberson, 1970:6)

In Israel and Surinam, a search for collective identity has resulted in a mass shift to the use of Hebrew and Sranan. Hoffman and Fisherman (1971) showed that the acquisition of Hebrew and the maintenance of previous another mother tongues were not necessarily competitive process. Hebrew had acquired the status of a symbol of an emerging integrated identity of a religious group now consolidated as a nation. Eersel (1971) showed how in Surinam, Sranan, previously the lingua-Frana between the Dutch masters and the native population had become the symbol of a growing consciousness and that claiming Dutch as one's mother tongue had become a betrayal of national integrity.

Often a community may retain the use of its native language in the domains of home and neighbourhood and switch completely to the language of the host society in the domains of education and work. In a complex multi-lingual setting a speaker may use several languages in his daily routine. Keeping them distinctly separate in same situations and inextricably mixing them in others. Generally, however, the conditions for language maintenance and language
shift effecting the identity process is obtained when two communities speaking two different languages come in contact and in studying this we are concerned with:

The relationship between degree of change (or degree of stability) in language usage patterns, on the one hand, and ongoing psychological, cultural or social processes, on the other......... (Fisherman 1971: 301).

Haugen (1978) points out that Fishman’s language “loyalty in the United States” (1996) is a monumental study of self-maintenance efforts, rationales and accomplishments of non-English immigrants on American shores (p. 15).

Fishman followed up Weinreich (1953) theme of language loyalty and collected into one volume on integrated review of the situation in which non-English immigrants had found themselves and their efforts to prevent or retard the extinction of their languages.

The number of historical, cultural, social, political, psychological and linguistic factors involved in the processes of Negotiation is so large and complex that the formulation of any comprehensive model to investigate the phenomenon in all its complexity seems fraught with unprecedented dangers. Sociologists e.g. Hoffman (1964), Miller (1924) have generally concentrated on
the language used in different settings and role-relations. Anthropologists e.g. Barker (1947), Dozier (1951) Barber (1952), Hohenthal (1955) have studied the significance of cultural, religious and political forces.

Lowen (1966) explained contradictory tendencies observed among the Maca Indians on the one hand and the Chamacoco Tribe on the other, in terms of cultural vitality. The former, in spite of being involved in frequent interaction with Spanish and Guarani in Paraguay in which they depend for their livelihood, retain their native language. They have scrupulously avoided even Spanish and Guarani loan words. Thus such urban names as ‘the street car’, ‘buses’, ‘neon-lights’ etc have been given descriptive Maca names. On the other hand Chamacocó tribe, though not as dependent, has either lost its language or borrowed extensively from Spanish and Guarani. Loewen suggested that cultural vitality and in-group solidarity of Maca Indians help functional distribution of languages and lead to Identity assertion. Brass (1974) explained language shift in terms of political and religious reasons. He showed how in linguistic conflicts of Punjab, Punjabi was the primary loser as Punjabi speaking Hindus opted for Hindi and Punjabi speaking Muslims for Urdu. After the partition of India in 1947, the Urdu issue lost its vitality and as the Sikhs consolidated themselves as a
religious group and asserted Punjabi as an expression of their identity, more and more Punjabi Hindus have opted for Hindi. To quote Pandit:

The Punjabi Hindu of Delhi is prepared to give up Punjabi in order not to be identified with the Sikh (the opposition is Hindu-Sikh) and the Punjabi Muslim of Pakistan is prepared to revive Punjabi in order not to be identified with other Muslims (the opposition is Punjabi Muslim and non-Punjabi Muslim) (Pandit 1974; 20-31).

In most parts of Western Africa, language shift is considered to be a disgrace in spite of rapid urbanisation and the shifting of population (Ansre, 1961). In the United States, in spite of the freedom to use one's language, the pressures to assimilate to the language and culture of the host society are very powerful. Fisherman (1964) noted the feelings of several language loyalists who felt that their languages shrivelled in the air of freedom while they hard apparently flourished under adversity in Europe. Yet the processes of assimilation invariably carried with them seeds of revival. To quote Fisherman:

In general, ethnicity and culture maintenance appeared to be much more stable phenomenon than language maintenance.

On the other hand, most immigrants became bilingual much
before they embarked on de-ethnisation or seriously contemplate the possibility of biculturalism. On the other hand, marginal but yet functional ethnicity lingers on (and is transmitted via English) longer after the mother tongue becomes specially dormant or is completely lost. Curiously enough the lingering of marginal ethnicity prompts and supports respect, interest, and nostalgia for the ethnic mother tongue, causing language loyalists to entertain renewed hopes for revitalisation even though displacement is far advanced. Thus the very resultants of deep reaching socio-cultural change carry with them seeds of further change and of reversal (Fishman, 1964: 339).

The linguistic minorities in America have often maintained their group identity while merging more or less completely linguistically. In the case of the minority groups in Europe, language has often been the sole of group identity. As Van Der Plank (1978) points out, in spite of the incongruence between language and other ethnic markers in Europe, language has proved to be an astonishingly dominant symbol of group identity for more than one-and-a-half centuries. To quote:

*In Europe, much older common national identities have split up precisely alongside linguistic boundaries. Language and group identity are closely connected in Europe; even when*
largely unilingual nations fell apart the Irish from the English: the Norwegians from the Danes—they looked for a language of their own as a national symbol. Thus, while assimilation in Europe is not only 'linguistic', linguistic assimilation is indeed an indication of the choice of another (national) identity (Van Der Plank, 1978: 423-24).

Many social groups can be readily categorised by their indistinct language varieties and for many ethnic and national groups, these can be among the most salient dimensions of their social identities) (Taylor, Bassili, and Abond, 1973; Giles, Taylor and Bourhis, 1977; Giles, Taylor, Lambert and Albert, 1976, Ryan and Carranza, 1977).

Indeed, for many ethnic group, group members, language spoken is often the major embodiment of their ethnicity given its distinctly human character and the fact that it can be used to attain and maintain cultural distinctiveness (Fishman, 1973, 1977). For instance a number of ethnic minorities (e.g. the Welsh, Catalans and Quebecois) are redefining their status in a more favourable direction and expressing this via language. Although many authors have discussed the linkage between language and ethnicity, few as yet have linked these to the dynamics of inter-ethnic group relations in any coherent fashion. Moreover when one examines social
psychological accounts of inter-group relations, little attention is afforded to language behaviour.

In an attempt to account of these theoretical deficiencies, Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) proposed a framework for understanding the role of language in ethnic group relations. Firstly the model describes the socio-structural factors which can influence whether an ethnolinguistic minority will or will not seek to establish its own in-group language as viable mode of communication. Secondly, it attempts to outline some of the socio-psychological processes operating between ethnolinguistic groups in contact which allow us an explanation of the linguistic strategies they adopt. This later psychological approach, can be regarded as a theoretical integration of two independent conceptual system: Tajfel’s (1977;1978) theory of inter-group relations and social change and Giles’ theory of interpersonal accommodation through speech (Giles, 1973; Giles and Powesland, 1975).

Tajfel has suggested there-when members of a group interact with members of another, they compare themselves on a number of value dimensions with this other group, he claims that-these inter-group social comparisons will lead group members to search for characteristics of their own group which will lead them to differentiate themselves favourably from the out-group. Such
positive ingroup distinctiveness will not only allow individuals satisfaction in their own group membership but will afford them a positive social identity.

Giles has been concerned with understanding why people shift their speech in different social contexts, and especially in interaction with others. He has suggested that in many social interactions, speakers desire their listener’s social approval. One tactic consciously or unconsciously conceived is for the former to modify his speech in the direction of the latter, a process termed speech convergence. On the other hand there might arise situations where the speaker might wish to dissociate himself from the other perhaps because of his undesirable habits, appearance etc. and hence accentuate their linguistic differences; a process termed speech divergence.

Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) were concerned with showing how the speech strategies of convergence and divergence (among others) could be understood in an inter-ethnic group contact by means of Tajfel’s theory for instance, it was suggested that when members of a subordinate group considered their inferior status to be just and fair, they would attempt to ‘pass’ into the dominant group socially and psychologically. They might also do this linguistically and hence in interaction with a member of the dominant
group, would converge towards him. However, if group members considered their inferior status to be illegitimate and the inter-group situation to be unstable they would redefine their group attributes, socially and psychologically, in a more positive direction. They might also do this linguistically, and hence in interaction with a member of the out-group might accentuate their own in-group characteristics by means of speech divergence. In such an interaction, one might expect the dominant group members to adopt reciprocal strategies of divergence in an attempt to retain his own positively – valued distinctiveness. Therefore, it was proposed that in certain inter-group situations, members of an ethnic group might search for a positively – valued distinctiveness from the out-group on linguistic dimensions they valued highly, a process Giles, Bourhis and Taylor termed ‘Psycholinguistic distinctiveness’. By diverging (or emphasising) their own ethnic accent, dialect or language, in-group members would accentuate the differences between themselves and the out-group on a salient and valued dimension of their group identity.