

# **Multilingual Communication and Social Identification**

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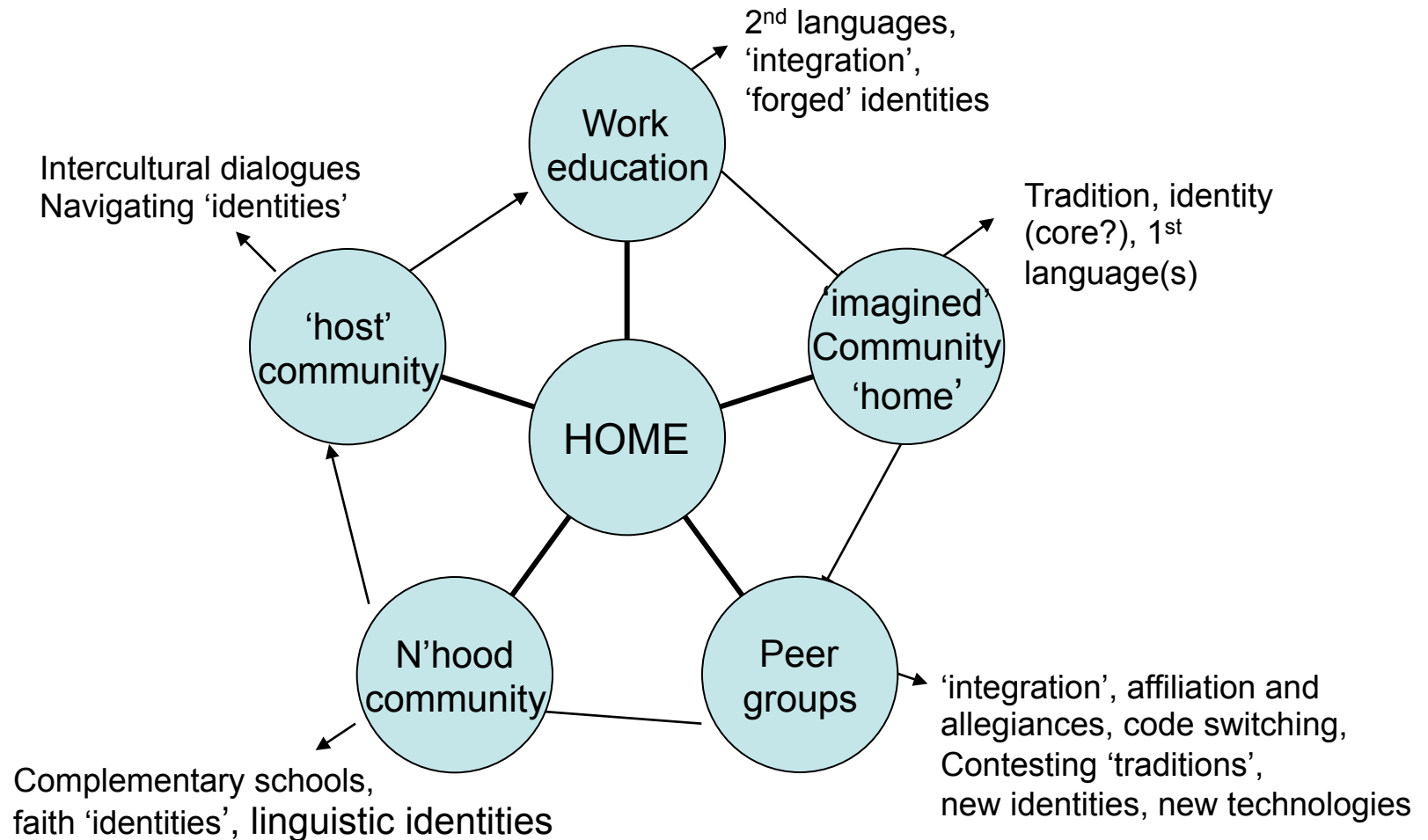
## It is a Truth Universally Acknowledged that ...

A successful multilingualism policy can strengthen the life chances of citizens: it may increase their employability, facilitate access to services and rights and contribute to the *solidarity through enhanced intercultural dialogue and social cohesion*. (European Commission, 2008)

# A (personal) Migrational Journey...

Stage	Dialogue/ Language	Identity	Comment
India, early childhood	Kathiawadi Gujarati	Gujarati migrant in Calcutta	
Uganda, childhood, adolescence	'Standard' Gujarati, 'English', 'Kiswahili' Hindi, Sanskrit	Colonial settler, Student, Indian, British, Gujarati, Hindu	'restricted' and 'elaborated' codes, literacies, Code switching
U.K. and Europe	'English' English, Gujarati, Hindi, German, Italian	Student, migrant, Settler, British, Bristolian, Indian, Stake holder	Social class, political activity, Secular, global, East-West

# The web of life





MULTILINGUALISM

बहुभाषी

多语

çokdillilik

બહુભાષા

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East London

## Multilingualism in complementary schools in four linguistic communities

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## Research aims

- To explore the social, cultural and linguistic significance of complementary schools both within their communities and in wider society
- To investigate the range of linguistic practices used in the different contexts in the complementary schools
- To investigate how the linguistic practices of students and teachers in complementary schools are used to negotiate young people's multilingual and multicultural identities.

# Discussion of data

## nationalism, patriotism, citizenship and identities

- *He then calls on the premises officer (who has given his services for free) to say a few words. The PO, who is English speaker, literally says a few words, beginning with namaste (and is enthusiastically applauded by everybody). SB then asks Shriya to recite a shloka, Sanskrit couplets. She does so with confidence. SB then closes the assembly and invites all to partake the food (pizza, jalebi, fruits, nuts, vegetables in mayonnaise and fruit juices....)*

*I mused on how the whole event – the clothes, the food, the languages, the entertainment and the conduct – reflects the pluralism of Gujaratis in Leicester. (Fieldnotes ABH 8/7/06)*

- *We prepare our children for GCSE, we like to think that as we teach Gujarati, culture comes within that. We talk about environment, about religious celebrations – so it all comes together. (Interview with SB)*

# Discussion of data

## nationalism, patriotism, citizenship and identities

- ***(AB) who speaks in English about the lap-top presentation on India : ‘ looking at it makes my hair stand on their ends’ he says with emotion. He asks the Ss to start their texts or emails with JJR or JSK (jai jalaram, jai shree Krishna) to show how proud they are of their heritage. The presentation is compiled by the Indian Society of Kansas University and consists images of India, of famous Indians (from sports, politics, science and arts), the various languages and religions and the contribution the Indians are making to the life in USA, all accompanied by music and song in Hindi. GB follows up by making a rousing speech in Gujarati and saying how proud we should be in being Indians and British.***  
(Fieldnotes ABH 8/7/06)
- The dancers are going to perform two dances...The girls rehearse their first dance to Hindi Bollywood song (*desh rangila, rangila..*) about India. It is a patriotic song and the girls mime the words as they dance. They lay two Indian flags on the floor and pick them up as the finale... I notice that the girls are wearing tops and long skirts of colours matching the Indian flag – orange, white and green... the girls are energetic and give their best, encouraged by their carers (in English) and us (in Gujarati). They take a break to change their costumes for the second dance. This time the song is about Krishna (a Hindu deity). (fieldnotes MATV)

# Discussion of data

## nationalism, patriotism, citizenship and identities

- I : Why do you send SLK to Gujarati school?  
PR: We speak it and it will be useful in the future, (he) can read letters from the elders and can understand what is happening in the community.  
BH: And he learns cultural skills, what is Diwali and other festivals. Also he can make friends with other children and that is good for him.  
I: Earlier you were talking about learning other languages if he learns Gujarati. Can you say a little more?  
BH: Gujarati education here is good, so if he learns Gujarati as a foundation, he can go on to Hindi and Marathi – it would be easier for him. So even if he doesn't do his GCSE, if he knows how to read and write and if by chance he doesn't want to live in this country, he can use his education anywhere. English is almost everywhere but if he wants to go to India, he must know the language. So if he learns it here , it will be good for him in the future.

(interview with SLK's parents)

# Discussion of data

nationalism, patriotism, citizenship and identities

- [Ss have fun with FCUK...]

**PB:** e shanu business chhe?

**Ss:** e kapda banawwanu chhe, fashion nu chhe

**PB:** badhi jatna?

**Ss:** ha, badha ladies na [interruption]...ek make chhe, FCUKna [laughter]...and  
**New Look** (Class room recording)

- (Vn) and (Vs) are chatting in English while the teacher is talking...

**Vn:** ...shit man...21 seconds...stop, stop...[a lot of whispering]...that's a big one, bro...yellow t-shirt...[sounds of rap lyrics]...is yours turned red? It's recording... [chatting in English]...[more rap]...we'll find out, one way or another, I bet you... have you had no more lyrics?...busy... my new house, Init? ...it's fucking wrong, man...they start rapping and then singing...that's what I want to do – the singing bit...what you doing tomorrow? Oh, ya, tomorrow is new school...take a day off... just give me a ring, I'll let you know...this Friday-Saturday it'll be jam packed... [more rap lyrics]...I'll do more rapping but I want to do more singing...[sings an English song – 'April Showers'?] ... [more songs]  
.... (collar mike recording)

# Conclusions

- Complementary schools provide safe sites for students, teachers and parents to practise their bilingualism and multiculturalism freely and unproblematically
- Gujarati *shalas* encourage bilingualism and are at ease with being Asians, Indians and British
- The *shalas* make a conscious effort to provide a Hindu identity, but also encourage compatibility with other religions
- The *shalas* encourage Indian nationalism but also British patriotism
- Parents are keen for their children to learn Gujarati and acquire cultural knowledge (that mainstream do not provide)
- Students are proud to be Gujaratis and wish to learn Gujarati and become successful citizens of UK
- Students do resist essentialist or absolute 'identity'; they skilfully juxtapose their own 'British Asian' identities (use of English and peer group culture)
- For the *shalas*, language is both an instrument and identity marker (in contrast to the mainstream MFL approach)

# Bilingualism and Identity in complementary schools

- CS provide a safe space for performing bilingual identity
  - Defined as places where participants are able to
    - Use their languages for teaching and learning
    - Perform the full range of their linguistic repertoire.
    - Develop their multilingual and multicultural identities
- Positive, skilful, flexible and spontaneous juxtaposition of English and Gujarati, incl. pedagogic strategy of code-switching.
- The languages come together rather than existing in separate compartments.
- Positive learner identity endorsed throughout the school.
- Children's self descriptions are not essentialised into fixed and static ethnic categories.

And finally...

- From 'The Observer' 12<sup>th</sup> June 2011:

'Bilingual brains are more healthy...

Looking at Alzheimer's patients, Canadian neuroscientist, Elen Bialystok, found that people who spoke two languages coped significantly better with the disease'

Thank you

Further Reading on next slide...

## For further reading...

- Miller, J., Kostogriz, A., Gearon M. (eds) (2009)  
***Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Classrooms***  
Multilingual matters
- Adrian Blackledge and Angela Creese (2010)  
***Multilingualism*** Continuum International