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SOCIOLINGUISTIC DIVERSITY: BEING, BECOMING AND BEHAVING

Indira Y. JUNGHARE [1]

Abstract: *Almost all societies are becoming multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic due to globalization or multinational migration. More people live in diaspora. Hence, the challenge is to deal with marginalization, and identities—both old and new. Language identifies the speaker, and human identity is embedded in the recognition of language, which is part of the biological self. Thus, the diversity of languages produces diverse individuals of unique abilities. The dialogical character of language, which implies mutual interdependence, helps in developing individuality. In today's world of globalization, we see astonishing diversity of seeing, being, behaving and communicating. The purpose of this paper is to develop awareness and understanding of socio-linguistic diversity, recognition of other cultures' validity, and respect and admiration for all-inclusivity in order to manage intercultural interactions for peaceful living.*

Key words: *diversity, globalization, interdependence, marginalization, identity.*

1. Language Diversity

The diversity of languages is a fact of life. There are about 6,500 different, mutually unintelligible languages, which belong to 250 large families (Daniel Nettle, 1999). There is immense diversity in terms of contrastive sounds (phonemes) from a dozen to 100; in word order - Subject-Predicate, or Topic-Comment; some use inflections while others use particles.

Linguistic diversity is related to the diversity of life—humans, animals, plants, and microbes. Every being communicates through some medium, whether sounds, gestures, or vibrations. No being exists without tools of communication. So there are as many languages/idiolects as there are beings.

The first section of this paper is on the linguistic diversity and the origin of diversity. The second section discusses language and culture; the third section is about language and individual self, and the final section explains language and identity's relation to interaction.

Language diversity is related to time. Languages die, while some develop new forms. That is why we categorize languages into ancient, medieval, and modern languages, for example, Sanskrit developed into middle Indic languages such as Pali and Prakrit. From Prakrit developed modern Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, and Bengali. All of these languages have different variants in different parts of India. Hindi has many variants depending

[1] University of Minnesota, USA.

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upon where it is spoken, whether in Trinidad or in Malaysia. In essence, language diversity is related to space. The main causes for language diversity are then language evolution related to time and space. Language diversity is grammatical, temporal, and social.

2. Diverse Perceptions of Language Diversity

Diversity of life can be immense as to be incomprehensible. Therefore, scholars focused on linguistic similarities rather than differences. According to the structuralism of the 1930's, language diversity appeared similar to the diversity of religions, the customs, and the arts and literatures. According to Sapir (quoted in Nettle 1999: 2; Sapir 1921/1970: 4), "…speech is a non-instinctive, acquired, 'cultural' function." However, most linguists of today do not believe language is a cultural function. The production, perception, and acquisition of language are perceived to be controlled by neurology common to all normal members of the species and part of the genes (Pinker 1994: 18).

However, if biological mechanisms are common to children in all places, then there should not be huge differences in linguistic structures of languages; for example, the speakers of Hindi should be able to understand Tamil, but they do not. It seems that powerful mechanisms are at work. At the same time, there are forces which destroy diversity. In these times of globalization, contemporary emphasis in synchronic linguistics is on the universal nature of language. Hence, diversity needs further study.

3. Some explanations for Linguistic Diversity

Some language diversity has been explained by historical development with the use of the Family-Tree model. This model explained how languages diverged without much explanation of why divergence occurred. Darwin gives a similar account of the evolution of animal species by descent with modification. Darwin comments: 'The formation of different languages and of distinct species, and the proof that both have been developed through a gradual process, are curiously parallel…'(Nettle 1999: 4). The main problem with this model is that the model does not explain all kinds of changes. Also, some diversity can be explained by the process of diffusion. Some language splits are caused by natural barriers, and thereafter there is no contact between the languages. Any modifications arising in the one are not transmitted to the other.

Daniel Nettle (1999: 5) introduced the notion of the human linguistic pool, analogous to the human gene pool. The Nettle model contains all the different bits of linguistic structure that are found in human languages. The atomic elements in the pool, then, are not languages but linguistic items. A linguistic item is any piece of structure that can be independently learned and therefore transmitted from one speaker to another, or from one language to another. Words, sounds, phonological processes, grammatical patterns and constructions are all linguistic items (Nettle, 1999: 5). In the linguistic pool there is evolution by descent with modification, but the evolving entities are not languages but individual items. This model explains linguistic areal diversity, such as diversity in South Asia, with diffused traits linking Indo-European, Munda, Tibeto-Burman and Dravidian, with different language families and isolates linked by diffused traits (Nettle 1999: 7; and Campbell *et al.* 1986).

Daniel Nettle summarizes linguistic diversity in three types. The first type of diversity is simply the number of different

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languages in a given geographical area. The second type of diversity is of the language families; for example, India has 340 languages but only 4 language families. On the other hand, Tropical South America, though not high in language diversity, contains dozens of language families. The third and final type of diversity is *structural diversity* (Nettle 1999: 10).

3.1. Causes of Structural Diversity

The causes for structural diversity are as follows: First, speech variation is due to performance factors and imperfect learning. Second, there are amplifiers which fix that variation and turn it into grammatical diversification. The amplifiers are geographical isolation, social selection and functional selection. Hence Hindi spoken in Trinidad would be a different variant from that of Hindi in India. Social selection includes unpredictable small changes, such as borrowings from another language which happen to arise in influential high status speakers. Indo-Iranian languages, influenced by the Dravidian SOV word order, tend to place relative clauses and genitives before the noun and use postpositions rather than prepositions. Thus the presence of one item alters the probability of presence of the other items in the suite. The way in which one item may make the presence of another form more likely is through what Croft (1990: 197; cited in Nettle 1999:133) calls a 'conspiracy'. The purpose of the functional selections is to create uniformity of structural patterns since the brains capacity for remembering is limited.

3.2. Functional Linguistic Diversity and Language Communities

Language is inseparable from community. The very nature of a human being is dialogical. He/she needs to talk to somebody. The very nature of language is such that it includes and it excludes. This simultaneous inclusion/exclusion function is reflected in the Marathi pronoun 'āpaṇ' meaning 'us' or simply 'you.' Indian boys in the U.S., though English monolinguals, occasionally interject a Hindi word into their speech (kyā be? kyo re?). In this case, language, even when minimally shared, points to a common basis/for identification. There is a particular quality in the nature of language: those who share the language (i.e., those who understand) are included in the relationship which is called "community," and those who do not are excluded. The U.S.A consists of various linguistic communities and has been making efforts to preserve languages immigrants brought. Immigrants feel the need to maintain cultural heritage for and through their children. These diverse linguistic communities want to maintain cultural identity, and languages are the means of communicating cultures. Diasporic children become somewhat confused between two cultural heritages—American and the other of their parents. So, American children of two cultures constantly make efforts to define themselves. Of course, self-definitions are matters which go far beyond linguistic considerations.

3.3. Social Factors related to Language Diversity

The key force driving the relentless diversification of languages is active selection by speakers of particular linguistic norms for social reasons. Sociolinguists recognize the importance of social factors in adaptive evolutionary diversity. Of many factors, ecological risks, and socio-economic conditions help form and retain social networks. Wherever there is the greater ecological risk, fewer languages will be in a given population (Nettle 1999: 87).

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4. Languages and Culture: Relationship

Culture refers to the sum total of ways of living built up over generations by a group of human beings (The Macquarie Encyclopedic Dictionary). According to Kerry O'Sullivan (2004: 2), Culture is *'the ways people agree to be'*. Culture includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other habits acquired by members of a society (E.B. Taylor, from Kerry O'Sullivan, 2004: 2). Hofstede (1991, quoted in O'Sullivan 2004: 2) refers to culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another." Also, in any so-called national cultures, there are important subcultures which influence patterns of language use, especially those based on gender, ethnic group, social class, region, and religion. Because we come from different cultures, either cultural differences or different understandings of what something means in our language can result in anything from minor misunderstandings to serious problems. These serious problems can cause tensions, conflicts and even wars.

5. The Need for an Interdisciplinary Approach

Linguistic diversity, as Nettle (1999: 12) pointed out, is an under-theorized topic. Anthropologists and geographers tend to be mainly interested in language as a marker of social affiliation or historical origin, and so they are not much concerned with phoneme mergers or morphological organization, which are undeniably included in linguistics. Historical linguistics deals with such linguistic processes, but makes no attempt to explain social and geographical origins of diversity. Nichols relegates causes of diversity to 'external' factors that 'cannot figure in a linguistic model, except as unknown' (Nichols 1992: 209; from Nettle 1990: 12). It follows that any attempt at studying diversity has to be interdisciplinary. Attitudes in humanities promote compartmentalization. Language structures are byproducts of biological evolution, cultural evolution, or some combination of the two and must ultimately be seen as emergent consequences of an individual people's adaptive behavior in different circumstances (Herrmann-Pillath 1994; from Nettle 1999: 13).

We must be aware of the distinction between description and explanation. Linguistic structure must be *described* in its own terms and cannot be reduced ontologically to system-external factors such as economics or general psychology. It does not follow that linguistic structure is to be *explained* without reference to external factors. Languages may be autonomous objects, but are not natural objects. Languages are not deliberate human productions either (Nettle 1999: 13). People do not deliberately create languages. Even if it is true that, as Saussure (1916) contended, the object of linguistics is language studies 'in and for itself, it does not follow that the explanation should only be in terms of language. Nor should the explanation of social phenomena be limited to cultural rules. Faced with a phenomenon, our first step must always be to describe it on its own terms. We then explain it by showing how it emerged from forces which are more basic and better understood. Linguists such as Nettle (1999: 14) linked the distribution and evolution of languages to facts about social organization and facts about social organization to the economic necessity of procuring subsistence in different environments. Nettle (1999: 14) believes that the history of a language should be treated as a function of the

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history of its speakers. The strategy does not deny the valid distinction between the structure and the use of language. Use can influence the evolution of structure, just as the ever-present pressures of climate and economy influence sociocultural systems. Linguistic diversity is at once a structural, social, and economic phenomenon. So, following William Labov, only a set of propositions that relate general findings about linguistic diversity to general properties of human beings or of human societies will deserve to be called a theory of linguistic diversity (Labov 1994:5; Nettle 1999: 14). It is clear that the linguistic diversity has to be studied in relation to individual and societal cultures.

6. Differing Cultures: Understanding Ways

We find differing attitudes about cultures. According to some people, we are fundamentally similar, whereas, according to others, we are fundamentally different. These answers are determined by individual and socio-cultural perspectives themselves. Just as attitudes differ, people's behaviors differ. We find huge diversity in behavior. Culture influences the way people act, see, feel, do, interact, and judge. In a way, societies shape individual behaviors. Hence the peoples of the world can be profoundly different. Not only the world but the entire cosmos is marked by diversity. The philosophy of diversity does not exclude fundamental similarities. Our view promotes "all-inclusivity."

Some cultures favor collectivism while others are individualistic. Indian culture and Asian cultures in general are more collective compared to Western culture. This cultural phenomenon is reflected in the use of pronouns. Marathi has a set of three pronouns for second person: tū 'you' (singular, intimate), tumhī 'you' (plural), and āpan, 'you' (both singular/plural polite). Additionally, āpaṇ is used in the inclusive sense: You + I (or We), which includes both the speaker and the addressee. The distinction in the use of these pronouns is marked in the verbal endings; for example, āpaṇ karā, "(you, please do it), but āpaṇ karū (we, you and I, will do it).

Marathi speaker uses an inclusive āpaṇ when he/she desires/wants the addressee(s), whether an individual or a group, to be part of his/her group.

7. Language-Culture Affinity

Languages and representative cultures change over time. The concept of 'generation gap' is an expression of cultural change. The culture of the globe is so changed that we have to use politically correct words. This century has created a huge diversity in the languages of computers and in the behavior of people. Cultures have become diverse internally. This diversity is due to many factors, including differences in age and differences in education. Diversity within a culture is one of the engines that drives cultural change. Diversity must be recognized within cultures. Cultures include 'subcultures'— smaller groupings based on a range of factors such as women, religion, profession, marital or parental status, region of origin, and way of speaking (dialect). These factors influence our self-identity as speakers of Marathi, speakers of Hindi, etc. Yet, at some level, subcultures share similarities; for example, a computer engineer in India has more in common with his grandmother than a computer scientist in the U.S. We can say that language-culture is always a potential influence on every aspect of behavior and communication. It is important to recognize diversity, because there is a widespread tendency to ignore or reduce this diversity when we look at other cultures.

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7.1. Non-recognition of Diversity: Problems

To fail to acknowledge diversity is to 'stereotype', which most damages successful intercultural understanding. The problems of stereotyping include reduction of diversity and complexity. We all stereotype as a quick and efficient way of storing information. Though it will be hard to eradicate stereotype we need to be aware of what we do when we stereotype. We also generalize. The behavior of the individual becomes the behavior of the group.

7.2. Attitudes towards Diversity

When we speak with others, we deal with powerful external forces. People tend to have a more positive image of their own language and culture. We find three types of attitudes: one of self superiority, one of equality, or one of genuine exploration. People seek to see other cultures from an egocentric perspective.

7.3. Interdependency of Cultures

In today's world, all nations and societies are interdependent. No culture is an island. Cultures are connected by economy, trade, religion, scientific and medical research. Many individual practices have become a part of the world's cultural heritage; for example, we observe many diverse philosophies and practices of the Yoga system. American yoga shares with Indian yoga, but its meaning and significance are not the same; for example, American yoga is meant for relaxation or stress reduction, whereas, Indian yoga is for realizing the nature of one's self and its connection to the Ultimate Reality—Pure Consciousness, Pure Existence, and Pure Bliss.

To summarize diversity of cultures, we have to understand that culture is pervasive, influencing our attitudes and conduct. We have to accept language-culture differences as a reality. Underneath, the people of the world can be profoundly different. Goodwill and tolerance provide a reasonable start, but are not enough. We need to obtain knowledge about the uniqueness of others and show appreciation for that uniqueness. Most importantly, we must not assume that a person's negative behavior is typical of their culture.

8. Diversity of Individual Selves: Body and Mind

Every individual has body, mind, and feelings. We have data on 300 cultures. There are 79 categories, including socialization, property, law, sex, marriage, education, entertainment, and sickness, with sub-categories (O'Sullivan 2004: 23). Since individuals are part of society, they are shaped physically, psychologically and morally by culture. Cultures have profoundly different rules; for example, in Indian culture, people are not allowed to become left handed as the left hand is perceived to be unclean. On the other hand, men can walk freely holding each other's hands. People stare at strangers. Even body categorization is different for different cultures. In Indian thought 'mind' refers to changing consciousness. People do not have much control over consciousness. It is different from *buddhi* 'intelligence.' Both *manas* 'mind' and *buddhi* 'intelligence' together relate to logical reasoning or conceptualizing concepts. Different minds/brains produce different concepts; for example, the concept of time is circular in Indian thought. However, time is linear in Western culture. Time is connected to the concept of reincarnation. After fall comes

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winter, and after winter, spring. Similarly, life – death - life.

According to the Western thought, time is a commodity to be used or spent; for example, 'Time is money,' 'You are wasting my time,' 'I don't have the time to give you,' etc. Life philosophies are reflected in use of the linguistic structures; for example, Indian culture is orthoprax, i.e. "action oriented," rather than dogma oriented. Hence aspects of the verb are more important than tense. Most linguistic constructions in Indian languages are aspectual. This is not to say that Indian languages do not make distinctions between past and present. It is the aspect of the action that is more important to Indians.

(1) Mar: mi kām kela "I did work."

The focus of the sentence is on finishing the task without a reference to the time element.

8.1. Monochronic vs. Polychronic Time

In monochronic time concept, greater emphasis is placed on the management of sequencing and the value of events, as in Western thought. In polychronic time concept, people are involved in several things at once, with greater emphasis on fluidity. Greater value is placed on people rather than upon events, so that scheduling may be sacrificed to maintaining good relations.

9. Discourse Oriented Linguistic Structures

Indian languages are discourse-oriented languages. Therefore, Indian languages are structured differently than Western Indo-European languages. Discourse strategies have influenced such basic structures. Discourse strategies are related to socio-cultural values and philosophies. The following illustrations of linguistic structures will suffice:

9.1. Word Order

Though North Indian languages, such as Hindi and Marathi, are considered to be Indo-European, they have SOV sequence pattern, as opposed to the English SVO pattern:

Children toys like vs. *Children like toys*.

This word order is due to emphasis on nouns. Indian languages use more nominalized constructions, such as "to do the work," "to do the cooking."

9.2. Indirect or direct messages?

Marathi seems to use more indirect messages, which are reflected in the

(i) Topic Prominent Construction,
(ii) (Agential/Passive construction,
(iii) (use of indirect pronouns, and
(iv) written discourse.

(i) **Topic Prominence**: Western Indo-European Languages use sentence structures of the type of Subject-Predicate, while Marathi uses structures of the type Topic-Comment.

English: *Flowers* are in the garden. (Subject-Predicate)
Marathi: bāget phula āhet (Topic-Comment)
'*in the garden* flowers are.'

(ii) **Passive/Agential Construction:**
Marathi: rāmne te kām kela
'by Ram that work done.'
Ram did that work/ the work is done by Ram.

(iii) **The Use of Indirect Pronouns (or Dative case)**
Marathi: malā te pustak āvadla
to me that book liked
'I liked that book.'

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(iv) **Written Discourse**

Indirectness of message also occurs in writing, especially, when a speaker sends a message to the addressee. For example, in a letter, a request is made not at the beginning or at the end but in the middle of the letter, surrounded by various messages before and after.

The diversity of structures is related to the diversity of socio-cultural and philosophical ideologies. Linguistic structures, such as pronouns, word order, status, gender, and intimacy/distance, are related to cultural concepts.

9.3. Hierarchical or Egalitarian?

India is known for caste and class systems, both of which are hierarchical. Marathi culture is no exception. Although class-classification is not so explicit in linguistic forms, caste is. Caste does not change; it is a given constant in the social order. Someone is born into a caste and there is no caste mobility. However, socio-economic positions can change, including, for example, profession, financial status, and political appointment.

9.4. Linguistic suffixes as reflective of social status

In addition to titles and specific terms of address, there exist some socio-linguistic suffixes in Indo-Aryan languages. The addressor attaches these suffixes to an addressee's name in certain situations to indicate attitude towards the addressee or the social relationship between speakers (Junghare, 2008). For example, in Marathi, *rāv* and *panta* are honorific suffixes attached to men's names. The suffix *rāv*, derived from the Sanskrit word *rājā* "king," is generally attached to names of men belonging to the Kshatriya (ruler's) caste; *panta* is attached to names of Brahmins.

Caste does play a role in determining the honorific form chosen by the speaker. The laboring (Shudra) caste, which is stereotyped to be menial workers, has lower honorific forms associated with their members, while the highest Brahmin caste has the highest honorific forms associated with their members. The laboring (Shudra) caste contains the only addressees with the informal *tū* form, the fewest *tumhi* forms, and no *āpan* forms. Please see the following table (from Junghare: 2007).

Caste Table 1

Caste	Intimate/Informal *tū*	Familiar *tumhi*	Formal/Polite *āpaṇ*
Brahmin	0	6	4
Ksatriya	0	5	6
Vaisya	0	7	5
Shudra	3	6	3

9.5. Gender Marking in Marathi

Sex has been considered to be one of many sources of linguistic variation. Sociolinguists (Labov 1972; Hymes 1964; Ervin-Tripp 1972) have shown that communication systems are heterogeneous and multi-layered. Social class, region, ethnicity, age, occupation, and sex all affect speech; speakers may also shift speech styles depending on situation, topic, and roles.

Women's language has been studied using two approaches: the dominance approach and the difference approach. Researchers using the dominance approach

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want to show how male dominance is enacted through linguistic practice (West and Zimmerman 1983). The difference approach emphasizes different-gendered subcultures. The difference in men's and women's language is interpreted as reflecting and maintaining gender-specific cultures (Humm 1989).

Marking of gender or sex is prominent in Marathi. Sex-exclusive differences are found at the morphological level. A few sex-preferential differences occur at the phonetic, phonological and syntactic level, but most occur at the communicative level or in conversations (Junghare, 2003).

Marathi: kitī veḷ jhālā uṭhā **baghū** (Marathi woman speaking)

Marathi: **jarā** bhājī pāhūn yā **baghū** (Marathi woman speaking)

Urban Marathi women's speech is distinctive from men's speech in that women use more particles, formal standard language or changed forms. Trudgill's (1972:179-195) explanation for this distinction is that women are more status-conscious and want to compensate for subordination by signaling status linguistically, and this linguistic signaling will be particularly true of women who are not working and lack social status. Women who have little status in society seek to acquire status through use of language.

10. Language and Message

The above section focused on the individuality of speaker in relation to the addressee. This section deals with the message or the text of conversation.

10.1. High- or Low- Context culture?

How do bilinguals carry on conversations? Edward Hall (1959/1976) differentiates cultures according to the type of messages sent. A high-context message is one in which most of the information being conveyed rests in the context of the interaction. The setting, topic and other situational factors are interpreted as carrying a large part of the message. According to Hall (1976: 70), "Very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message." The listener has to rely heavily on working out what the speaker's intentions are.

In contrast, in a low-context message, words and phrases produced constitute the main message. If the listener can understand these words and phrases in combination, he or she can arrive at the main part of what the speaker intends to communicate. Almost always part of understanding an utterance requires the listener's power of interpretation in order to arrive at the speaker's intentions. Mutual assumptions provided by the context always matter to some extent.

Misunderstandings occur when high- and low- context individuals interact. Listeners from high-context cultures tend to interpret what others say as an expression of context; that is they find meaning in factors external to the speaker. Listeners from low-context cultures not only pay attention to the literal message but also base any interpretations of the speaker's "real" meaning of his/her personality.

There is a relationship between high- and low-context communication and individualistic and collective cultures. High-context cultures make a greater distinction between insiders and outsiders and perceive people as group members rather than individuals. No culture exists at either end of the high- and low-context continuum. Most individualistic cultures prefer low-context messages, and most collectivist cultures prefer high-context messages.

Marathi culture, being collective (i.e. group identity is relatively more important

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than individual identity), stands at the high-context end of the continuum and pays more attention to the speaker's gender, class, caste and ethnicity rather than to the literal words of the message.

10.2. Deconstruction of low- and high-context cultures

How do we understand or interpret the message? Interpretations of messages are based on three sets of constructs (Samovar and Porter, 1991): (1) belief/value/attitude systems, (2) world view, and (3) social organization.

10.3. Beliefs, Worldview, and Social Organization: Markers of Ethnicity.

Beliefs are what is accepted as sources of knowledge (Bible, the Qu'ran, etc). People have certain beliefs about God, life on earth, after-life, ethics, and morality. Marathi culture is marked by beliefs that are embedded in Hindu tradition. Core Hindu tradition has been maintained in the form of different and modern metaphors. Though new texts and pamphlets are created and though new poetry has emerged, the essence of the Hindu tradition has been maintained.

Marathi has adopted normative values for making choices and reducing or eliminating conflicts. The concepts of *karma*, *dharma,* "duties and obligations," and moral laws, though part of the history of Hindu tradition, still continue to be the core of Marathi culture. Marathi is still reflective of polytheism, monotheism, and syncretic monism. Marathi speakers hold the view that the world is constituted of humans, animals, plants and microbes, and is part of 'one' divine principle. In other words, creation is sacred and every existence must be honored.

11. The Nature and Function of Language

In sociolinguistics, two facts are noted. First, language varies. People have more than one way to say more or less the same thing, including dialectical and regional variation (Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974). Second, language serves a critical purpose for its users. The user transmits information and thoughts to his addressee and at the same time makes statements about identity, group loyalties, and relationships to the audience. In sum, the speaker carries out two tasks, communicating information and defining the social situation. These tasks can be carried out simultaneously because language varies. Selection among these alternatives defines the social situation.

Though linguists consider all languages to be equal, it is known that political and popular group often comes to regard official languages and standard varieties as essentially superior to unofficial and non-standard varieties. Heller (1995, cited in Myers-Scotton 2009: 139) developed a theoretical framework in which language practices and negotiations of identities are bound in power relations. On the one hand language is seen as part of process of social action and interaction in particular as a way in which people influence others. On the other, it is a symbolic resource which may be tied to the ability to gain access to, and exercise power. Methodologically, this implies that code-switching needs to be examined not as a unique phenomenon but as a part of range of linguistic practices which people employ to achieve their goals and challenge symbolic domination.

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12. Language Diversity and the Problem of Identity Construction

In the poststructuralist perspective (Bourdieu 1991, Anderson 1991 cited in Edwards 2009: 24)) identity is viewed as a dynamic and shifting nexus of multiple subject positions, or identity options, such as mother, accountant, heterosexual, or Indian. At various points in history, different societies make somewhat distinct identity options available to their members (for instance, the inter-caste marriage option has become available at the present time). Anderson's (1991) notion of nation-states as imagined communities is particularly apt for discussion of the encounter between new immigrants and the country they had imagined. Earlier US immigrants do not want the newer immigrants, such as Indians, especially Hindus and Muslims. Similarly, Indians who had imagined America to be "rich" and "liberal" find that it is not so.

In the context of the French philosopher Bourdieu's (1991, cited in Myers-Scotton 2009: 139) concept of 'speaking right,' the question arises "Which immigrants have 'the right to speak' and the right 'to impose reception' in the process of identity negotiation. It seems young diaspora members of Asian origin are prohibited from speaking. The difference seems to be generational. Relatively speaking, the Indian diaspora, due to rhetorical skills in English, are permitted to have some rights to speak. Yet, the Indian diaspora, compared to other people, do not have the right to speak of discrimination, which indicates that history has a profound impact on identity construction, not only in terms of material, social, and political circumstances under which constructions occur but also in terms of ideologies of language and identity dominant in a particular place, time and identity options considered negotiable, legitimate, or particularly desirable.

Identities are shaped by local contexts, as well as by social, historical, cultural and linguistic influences. (1) Which identities are negotiated/created? (2) What is the role of language and linguistic identities in these reflective data? New immigrants, including Indians, are perceived as distinct from mainstream Anglo-European population ethnically, culturally, and linguistically, with differences often described in terms of racial, intellectual, and moral inferiority. At the micro-social level of everyday life and linguistic interactions, one is able to resist, modify or negotiate larger social structures. Language is especially suited for modifying larger structures because heterogeneity, hybridity, and polyvalence provide resources for subjects to resist impositions of any kind.

In sociolinguistic literature, we find three views on identities:

(1) Relative stability and independence of language –socio-psychological theory.
(2) Interactional accomplishment produced and negotiated in discourses (Edwards, 1997)—discourse theory.
(3) Social constructionist agenda as an under-emphasis on the role of power in the process of categorization and illustration of ways in which particular identities are legitimized or devalued in the context of global and political economies (Bourdieu, 1991) — poststructuralist theory.

12.1. Languages and identities are embedded within the relations of power

English dominates other languages, is more legitimate, and provides greater access to symbolic resources. Similarly, Hindi, compared to other regional languages of India, provides access to

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power. Hence, speakers of minority languages are subject to unequal power relations and often unable to achieve the 'right to speak' and 'impose reception' (Bourdieu, 1991).

12.2. Identity: multiplicity, fragmentation, and hybridity

Earlier studies dealt with a single aspect of identity—most commonly ethnicity or gender. Poststructuralist inquiry emphasizes that identities are constructed in a matrix of multiple identities, such as age, race, class, ethnicity, gender, generation, sexual orientation, geopolitical locale, institutional affiliation, and social status, whereby each aspect of identity redefines and modifies all others. Since individuals often shift and adjust ways in which they identify and position themselves in distinct contexts, identities are best understood when approached on individual levels, leading to individual identity formation. The shifting of identity depends upon the level of inclusion, acceptance, and equality felt among the variety of communities.

New discourses of gender, sexuality, class or ethnicity may bring new identity options, just as other options may be fading. Identities are susceptible to fashion and individuals and institutions reform themselves according to identity options that dominate at certain times and places. Since individuals often shift and adjust ways in which they identify and position themselves in distinct contexts, identities are best understood when approached in entirety, rather than through consideration of single aspects or subject positions. The recognition of the emerging nature of identity, and of identity fragmentation, de-centering, multiplicity, and shifts, often exacerbated by transnational migration, led poststructuralist philosophers to the position of hybridity as the 'third space' that enables the appearance of new and alternative options (Bhabha, 1990).

The use of a sociolect located outside of the prescriptive norms of standard English allows diasporic youth to construct an alternative 'universe of discourse,' in which identities are negotiated distinct from hegemonic and assimilationist impositions of identity. An example of the third place in the Indian context would be Indian-American diasporic experience, in which Indian-American youths create hybrid identities negotiated both locally within the spaces of the Indian-American worlds, and transnationally, in an Indian world.

12.3. Dynamic View of Identity

Identities are no longer just discursive options –they are also 'the names we give to different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past as well as in narratives of the present and future (Hall, 1990:225). This perspective privileges a dynamic view of identities, with individuals continuously involved in production of selves, positioning of others, revision of identity narratives, and creation of new ones which valorize new modes of being and belonging.

In sum, identities can be viewed as social, discursive, and narrative options offered by a particular society in a specific time and place to which individuals and groups of individuals appeal in an attempt to self-name, self-characterize, and claim social spaces and social prerogatives.

12.4. Types of Identities

Following the framework of Pavlenko (2006), I propose three types of identities:

1. Imposed identities (which are not negotiable in a particular time and place)

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2. Assumed identities (which are accepted and not negotiated)—Many are comfortable with and not interested in contesting. Often these identities are the ones most valued and legitimized by dominant discourses of identity
3. Negotiable identities (which are contested by groups and individuals)—Negotiable identities refer to all identity options which can be -- and are –contested and resisted by particular individuals and groups. These options are negotiated in the area of ethnicity, nationality, gender, race, class and social status, sexuality, religious affiliation, and, last but not least, linguistic competence and ability to claim a 'voice' in a second language.

These identities are negotiated in a variety of sites, which include family, peer group, educational contexts, such as schools and universities, and public discourses on educational language, and immigration policies. The notion of 'negotiation of identities' needs to be approached from a socio-historical perspective: identities considered to be negotiable at present may have been assumed or non-negotiable a century ago.

12.5. Linguistic means of negotiation of identities:

1. Code-switching Marathi to Hindi or Marathi to English
2. Code-alternation—Marathized Hindi
3. Code mixing – part English and part Marathi
4. Language Choice
5. English language competence: Linguistic innovation is not the only way in which identities can be negotiated. Efforts towards English language competence are just as much an 'investment' in social identity.
6. More powerful identities can be constructed through the use of particular rhetorical strategies.

12.6. Audibility and Visibility

What it means to be heard – This requires collaboration between the speaker and listener. Scholars acknowledge that visibility, namely race and ethnicity, play a major role in this co-construction, whereby some speakers are more easily imaginable than others as authoritative, competent, and legitimate. Both race and ethnicity are at the foreground in the creation of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983) of the contemporary nation-state. One can point to the exclusion of immigrants, whose dress, customs, and skin color signal their Asian heritage, from being categorized as truly American.

Scholars have explored the relationship between visibility and audibility in educational contexts. Identity options are often contested and resisted by the most marginalized and discriminated against segments of the population, which, in multilingual societies, often consist of linguistic minorities.

13. Benefits of Diversity

Speaking two or more languages has more practical benefits in the modern globalized world. Scholars have begun to show that the advantages of multilingualism are more important than being able to converse with a wider range of people. Being bilingual can have profound effect on our brain, improving cognitive skills not related to language and even shielding against dementia in old age. In the previous century, scholars considered a second language to be interference, cognitively speaking. Hence, immigrants in America focused on teaching their children English and assumed that speaking the language of the parents hindered children's

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academic and intellectual development. However, since both languages are active, this interference, according to Yudhijit Bhattacharjee (informative article), "forces the brain to resolve internal conflict, giving the mind a workout that strengthens its cognitive muscles."

In a recent study by Tamar of the University of California, San Diego (cited in Bhattacharjee), individuals with a higher degree of bilingualism were more resistant than others to the onset of dementia and other symptoms of Alzheimer's disease: the higher the degree of bilingualism, the later the age of onset. Hence no matter which two or three languages are spoken, language diversity is a powerful tool for maintaining health.

14. Concluding Generalizations

14.1. Diversity Related:

1. The universe is marked by diversity. There are no two beings exactly alike. Similarly, there is
2. Linguistic diversity—grammatical, temporal, and social.
3. Linguistic diversity is related to time, space and environment. Languages and representative cultures evolve over time.
4. Life's interdependency is reflected in languages.
5. No language or culture is superior to others. Cultures and languages are simply different and serve different functions.
6. It is necessary to become aware of cultural diversity, and develop understanding and respect for other languages and cultures.
7. Recognition of and respect for diversity is a universal principle of ethics that will lead to peaceful communication and friendly relations.
8. It is necessary to protect and preserve diversity for the health of humanity and the universe.

14.2. Identity Related:

1. Linguistic and identity options are limited to particular sociolinguistic contexts, even though these options are continuously contested and reinvented.
2. Diverse identity options and their links to different language varieties are valued differently, and that sometimes it is these links, rather than the options per se, that are contested and subverted.
3. Some identity options may be negotiable, while others are either imposed (and, thus non-negotiable) or assumed (and, thus negotiated).
4. Individuals are agents who constantly search for new social and linguistic resources which allow resisting of undesirable identities.

15. Recommendations

I wish to recommend that educational institutions become more active in recognizing, challenging, and reversing social inequality, shifting the process form 'coercive' to 'collaborative' relations of power.

There has been increased public acceptance of ethnic diversity in America and recognition by business and government for the importance of developing national linguistic resources of the United States in the interests of international relations and foreign trade.

If applied linguistics are interested in the study of societal multilingualism, language maintenance, and the relation between languages and cultures, then there should be much more research on the role of community language programs. If we are

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interested in better language teaching and the development of bilingual individuals, we can work with schools to improve language learning, through official scholastic recognition of language proficiency in ethnic mother tongues.

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