Investigating Heritage Language and Culture Links: An Indo-Canadian Hindu Perspective

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Although it is commonly believed that language and culture are inexorably linked, the precise nature of this relationship remains elusive. This study investigated the hypothesis that a loss in language signals a loss in culture if language is considered a central value. This hypothesis was investigated by rating the Hindi and English proficiency of 30 first and second generation Indo-Canadian Hindi speakers (15 parent–child pairs) and relating these to their reactions in a matched-guise task, featuring culturally charged English and Hindi scenarios recorded by the same speaker. The scenarios targeted one aspect of North Indian culture – the value of filial duty – in two contexts (marriage, career). It was hypothesised that, if language loss triggered culture loss, then speakers losing their Hindi (second generation), but not those maintaining it (first generation), would differ in their reactions to scenarios as a function of language. Findings revealed a language shift and the beginnings of a culture shift between the two generations. However, the shift in culture appeared not to be mediated by language. Implications of these findings for heritage language and culture maintenance, the language–culture relationship and group identity construction are discussed.

Introduction

This study's central focus is the complex relationship between language and culture. Defined broadly, culture includes both a group's concept of identity and its value system (Edwards & Chisholm, 1987). Despite the common belief that language and culture are inexorably linked (Edwards, 1997; Fishman, 1989a), the nature of this relationship remains elusive. Although to some groups, such as the Australian Greeks (Smolicz, 1985), language is essential for survival as a cultural entity, to some, such as the Northern Ireland Irish (Northover & Donnelly, 1996), language plays a minimal role if at all (Bayer, 1990). The main question of this study is whether language maintenance or loss affects the survival of one cultural group: the Indo-Canadians in Montreal. Put differently, does language shift result in culture loss for this group? We begin by defining language shift and its possible link to culture loss.

Language shift

Linguistic assimilation occurs when the dominant group's majority language (ML) replaces a minority group's heritage language (HL) in all domains previously reserved for the HL (Edwards, 1997; Fishman, 1989b). In language shift, one generation's transmission of the HL to the next fails, resulting in its complete loss or its imperfect learning by this generation (Hulsen *et al.*, 2002; Shameem, 1994). Although exceptions occur (e.g. Yagmur *et al.*, 1999), minority groups normally tend towards language shift rather than maintenance (Clyne & Kipp, 1997; Landry & Allard, 1996). The impetus for change is usually the overriding need for 'mobility and modernisation' (Edwards, 1997: 35).

How does HL loss affect heritage culture? The loss of HL does not automatically adversely affect parent–child communication nor impair children's access to parental and socioeconomic benefits as long as they maintain emotional ties and intimacy (Rodriguez, 1982) and have some common language or language mix to speak (Mouw & Xie, 1999). However, HL loss may have some negative consequences on family communication, leading to parent–child alienation (Wong Fillmore, 1991) or children's diminished access to their ancestral and emotional heritage (Gupta & Siew, 1995). With parents unable to communicate their values in the ML, and children unable to understand them in the HL, value and culture transmission may be jeopardised (Moag, 1999), resulting in subtractive, monocultural rather than in integrated bicultural identities (Hamers & Blanc, 2000).

Language–culture relationship

With HL loss possibly negatively affecting heritage culture and cultural identity (Wong Fillmore, 1991), it is crucial to understand the precise nature of the language–culture relationship. Although taken for granted (Myhill, 1999), this relationship is not identical in every ethnolinguistic situation. For example, Spanish may be central to Puerto Rican identity (Morris, 1996), but the Irish language is not to Irish identity because English has replaced it in its communicative and cultural function (Northover & Donnelly, 1996).

The role of language in defining group identity can best be understood within Smolicz's (1981) core value framework. In this framework, core values govern ingroup membership, such that rejection of core values is tantamount to rejection of membership in that group (Smolicz *et al.*, 2001). If a group considers language a core value, it will hold language central to its identity and will be likely to view language shift as a shift in culture. The goal of this study was to investigate, within the core value framework, the relationship between language and culture shift for one ethnolinguistic group: the North Indian Hindu community of Montreal. This goal was attained by (1) documenting HL shift for this group, (2) measuring changes (if any) in this group's heritage culture maintenance, and (3) empirically testing this group's language–culture link.

Target ethnolinguistic group

Drawing on the 1991 census, Coward and Botting (1999) estimate that the total Hindu population in Canada is over 150,000. The majority are Hindi speakers who immigrated in the 1960s from different North Indian states. For a variety of religious, political, socioeconomic and educational reasons, most of them speak Hindi, which is not always their mother tongue (Fasold, 1984). Similar to the Hindus who immigrated to the USA (Moag, 1999), Hindu immigrants to Canada in the 1960s came in response to the government's efforts to fill vacant scientific and professional positions in Canadian institutions (Wakil *et al.*, 1981). Thus, the majority of them were upper middle class professionals.

Compared to other groups (e.g. Italians, Greeks), the North Indian Hindu community in Montreal is still in its early stages of adjustment to Canadian life (Coward & Botting, 1999). However, the community is not isolated. It is part of both the Indo-Canadian diaspora as well as the larger South Asian diaspora in North America consisting of representatives from seven nations: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan. Although this study's focus is on one South Asian group, its linguistic and cultural practices are viewed against the backdrop of this larger diaspora.

Language shift in the South Asian diaspora

Because the South Asian diaspora in North America is relatively young, little research has been done on its language and cultural shift patterns (Coward & Botting, 1999). Studies that have investigated such patterns have focused on other Indian groups around the world. One study examined generational language shift in Indo-Fijian immigrants in New Zealand (Shameem, 1994). Another (albeit incidentally) investigated a similar shift in the Indian Tamil-speaking group in Singapore (Gupta & Siew, 1995). Gupta and Siew report parental English fluency as a predictor of language shift in the Singapore Indians. Already fluent in English at immigration (Wakil *et al.*, 1981), these immigrant parents introduced English into their homes as the language of upward mobility much earlier than did other immigrants, who had to wait until they became proficient in English. Similar to the Singapore Indians in immigration profiles, socioeconomic status and prior knowledge of English, North Indian Hindu parents in Montreal may have also introduced English into their homes soon after immigration, as did their American counterparts in Moag (1999). What needs examination is whether their children have, as a result, shifted from Hindi to English.

Culture shift in the South Asian diaspora

Only one study known to us has investigated culture shift among South Asians. Ghuman (1991a) used acculturation scales, constructed to reflect the individualism−collectivism dimension generally distinguishing South Asian groups from British society, to survey 465 Hindu, Sikh and Muslim adolescents in England. Overall, the Hindus and Sikhs tended to acculturate (shift from their culture to the mainstream) more than the Muslims. Nevertheless, all exhibited a positive, bicultural outlook, supporting some heritage culture

practices while rejecting others. In fact, many (88%) also reported speaking both the ML (English) and their HL at home. This finding suggests a possible link between bilingualism in the home and a bicultural outlook. What remains to be seen, then, is whether a similar culture shift has occurred among the North Indians in Montreal and whether their having learned the ML can be linked to this shift.

Role of language in culture in the South Asian diaspora

Although second generation South Asians seem more at ease speaking their ML (often English) than their HL (Ghuman, 1991b), it is unknown whether South Asian Cultures, in fact depend on language for their sustainability (Beynon *et al.*, 2003). Investigating this issue, Punetha *et al.* (1987) administered a version of the Rokeach Value Survey to Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and British participants in Britain, allowing them a choice of the survey language (HL or English). The Sikhs' and Muslims' choices of the survey language were associated with their preferred values. Those who completed the HL questionnaire preferred South Asian values; those who completed the English questionnaire preferred more British-oriented ones. However, this was not the case with the Hindu group whose language choice was only weakly associated with their preferred values. Those who chose their HL only moderately preferred the values chosen by the other South Asians; those who chose English only moderately preferred the values ranked highly by the British group. That is, the Hindus resembled neither the other South Asians nor the British in either their HL or English. This study leaves unresolved the role of language in Hindu culture.

The current study

The foregoing discussion suggests the need for further research in order to understand better the Hindu language–culture relationship. Ideally, such research should not simply ask individuals to state or rank their beliefs but should subject these beliefs to tests that measure their 'behavioural' consequences, if any. To our knowledge, no such study has been conducted; hence this study investigated two generations of a Montreal North Indian Hindu community to determine whether any language shift observed could be associated with a similar culture shift. This language–culture link was explored using an adapted matched-guise technique (Lambert *et al.*, 1960), in which the content of the guises targeted a specific North Indian Hindu cultural value – filial duty (discussed later).

Method

Participants

The participants were 15 parent–child pairs of North Indian Hindu individuals (*N*=30). The parent generation participants (10 women, 5 men; mean age: 56; range: 54–69) were all born in North India, save one (born in Kenya). All reported speaking Hindi but cited Hindi (8), Punjabi (3), both Multani and Punjabi (1), and both Hindi and Punjabi (3) as mother tongues.

Twelve had learned Hindi by age 5, two between 10 and 11 (one failed to respond). Twelve reported learning English by age 10, three learned it thereafter. Thirteen participants knew some French, learned in adulthood (two failed to respond). Except for one participant who had lived in Canada for 15 years, all had resided there for over 30 years, having immigrated from India between 1965 and 1975. All were university-educated, upper middle class professionals.

The second generation participants (10 women, 5 men; mean age: 28; range: 21–37) were unmarried (except for three) children of the first generation participants above. Eleven were born and raised in Montreal, one in Toronto. Two (one failed to respond) were born in Saudi Arabia and India but immigrated to Canada at the age of 6 and 5 where they lived for 15 and 18 years, respectively. These participants reported learning English by age 3. Thirteen identified English as their mother tongue, one cited Hindi and one Punjabi. Nine reported learning Hindi by age 6, five by age 15 (one failed to respond). Most had been exposed to school French by age 8. At the time of testing, all had completed a university degree; nine held professional jobs.

Materials

The materials included three sets of questionnaires (biographical, cultural profile, language background), rating scales used in the oral proficiency task, and audio recordings and response booklets used in the matched-guise task.

Questionnaires

The biographical data questionnaire sought demographic information about the participants and their reactions to various ethnic labels (e.g. Canadian) using 10-point scales (1=does not describe me at all, 10 = describes me perfectly). The cultural profile questionnaire assessed the participants' cultural value system by asking them to rate, using 10-point scales, the importance of filial duty in raising children (1= not at all important, 10= most important), their commitment to passing Hindi to their children (1 = not at all committed, 10= completely committed) and the centrality of Hindi to the North Indian culture (1= not at all central, 10 = completely central). The language background questionnaire surveyed the participants' language learning histories and asked them to self-rate their Hindi and English proficiency (1=I have no proficiency in Hindi/English, 10=I have native proficiency in Hindi/English) and use (0= none of the time, 10= all the time) at three time points: before schooling, during schooling and at the 'present time'.

Oral proficiency task

To ascertain the participants' Hindi and English oral fluency, they were recorded speaking extemporaneously for one minute in Hindi (describe a trip to India) and in English (talk about summer plans). The recordings were then rated by two native speakers of each language, using an 10-point scale (0= not at all fluent, 10= extremely fluent).

Matched-guise task

The stimulus tape used in the matched-guise task (Lambert *et al.*, 1960) contained two target scenarios, one control scenario and several fillers. The two target scenarios dealt with a cultural value of filial duty. The control scenario dealt with shoplifting, a topic unrelated to filial duty (see Appendix). In the Hindu culture and religion, filial duty ranks as one of the top obligations (Pearson, 1999), second only to duty towards the Brahman, or World Spirit (Klostermaier, 1994). Its importance is attested in Bollywood movies, soap operas and popular televised versions of sacred texts such as Ramayana and Mahabharata. Filial duty is also viewed anecdotally as one of the cultural values distinguishing Eastern from Western cultures (at least in the minds of the South Asian diaspora at large). Filial duty was focused upon here for its importance to the Indian culture.

The two target scenarios were situated in the context of marriage and career, both representing potentially explosive topics in South Asian families (Peetush, 1999). The marriage scenario presented a 30-year-old woman conflicted between her desire to marry for love and her wish to fulfil her filial duty by marrying sooner rather than later. Still unmarried at 30, she is aware of placing a huge emotional obligation on her parents to keep looking after her until she marries. The career scenario presented a woman agonising between quitting her successful but disliked engineering job in favour of pursuing her dream of being a musician. Choosing a more financially precarious job, she is aware of burdening her parents financially and emotionally.

The two target and the control scenarios (each 150 words long) were written in English, translated into Hindi and then recorded in English and Hindi by a fluent female Hindi–English bilingual (age: 28), yielding six target 'voices'. Four other scenarios dealing with topics unrelated to filial duty were added as fillers. Two dealt with an emotionally charged topic (e.g. choosing sides in the India–Pakistan conflict), two others with a neutral topic (e.g. choosing between eating out or cooking at home). The fillers were all written in English, translated to Hindi, and recorded in two languages by four female English and four female Hindi speakers, yielding eight filler voices. These 14 voices were randomly sequenced for presentation.

Response booklets were prepared to record the participants' reactions, using several questions per scenario. The first question (*What do you think she should do?*) elicited responses on a 10-point scale (1= strongly disagree, 10= strongly agree) to a biased statement about how the woman resolves her conflict in marriage (*She should get married soon so that she does not become a burden to her parents*) or career (*She should keep her job so that she does not become a burden to her parents*). Other questions elicited responses to the same biased statements from three additional perspectives: the perspective of a parent (*If she were your daughter/son, what do you think she/he should do?*), of an unknown man (*If it were a man speaking, what do you think he should do?*) and finally as themselves (*What would you do?*). These specific perspective questions were designed to elicit not only the participants' desirable, but also their desired, values. Hofstede (1991) defines desirable values as absolute or ideological,

useful for ascertaining the general direction of a value. Expressed in language that is more personal to the individual, desired values, by contrast, reflect what is actually practised in everyday life. The final question (*Did you understand what this person is saying?*), rated on a 10-point scale (1 = not at all, 10 = perfectly), ascertained whether all participants understood each scenario.

Procedure

The testing session lasted about one hour. A male native Hindi speaker, recently arrived from India and thus unknown to the participants, served as the researcher. He met the participants either in parent–child pairs or individually, asking them to complete the questionnaires, listen to the matched guises and record their reactions to the scenarios.

Data analysis

There were three measures of language shift: (1) the participants' self-rated Hindi and English proficiency, (2) their self-rated Hindi and English use (from the language background questionnaire) and (3) native-speaker ratings of their oral Hindi and English fluency (from the oral proficiency task). If there was a language shift between the two generations, then the first generation should be dominant in Hindi while the second should be dominant in English. There were two measures of culture shift: (1) the participants' views of filial duty in the marriage and career scenarios (from the matched-guise task) and (2) their views of the importance of filial duty in raising boys and girls (from the cultural profile questionnaire). If there was a culture shift between the two generations, then they should differ in their views of filial duty, with the first generation holding the more traditional view.

There were two measures of the relationship between language and the cultural value of filial duty. The first was the participants' views of filial duty as a function of the language of the matched guise recording. If language mediated their views of filial duty, then English should trigger a weaker sense of filial duty than Hindi. The second was their ratings of the centrality of Hindi to their culture as inferred from the culture profile questionnaire. If language was central to culture, then both generations should rate Hindi as important.

Results

For all analyses, the alpha level for significance was set at 0.05. Significant effects and interactions were explored, where appropriate, using planned pairwise comparisons.

Language shift

The participants' self-rated proficiency and use, and listener-rated oral fluency in English and Hindi (summarised in Table 1) were compared using two-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) with generation (1st, 2nd) as between- and language (English, Hindi) as within-subjects factors. These analyses yielded significant main effects of language, $Fs(1, 28) > 12.63$, $ps < 0.001$, a significant main effect of generation, $F(1, 28) = 6.69$, $p = 0.02$ (in

the analysis of listener-rated fluency only), and significant generation $\times$ language interactions, Fs(1, 28) > 25.44, ps < 0.001. Follow-up tests revealed that the first generation self-rated their proficiency and use as being similar in English and Hindi, but were judged by listeners as more fluent in Hindi than in English, $t(14) = 3.55$, $p = 0.003$. By contrast, the second generation self-rated their proficiency higher in English than in Hindi, $t(14) = 8.55$, $p = 0.001$, self-rated their English use more frequent than Hindi use, $t(14) = 15.25$, $p = 0.001$, and were judged by listeners as more fluent in English than in Hindi, $t(14) = 7.14$, $p = 0.001$. These results suggest that a language shift towards English has taken place in the second generation.

The next analysis sought further evidence of language shift within the second generation. One-way repeated-measures ANOVAs were used to compare the second generation's self-rated Hindi and English proficiency and use before schooling, during schooling, and at the 'present time' (summarised in Table 2). Analyses of Hindi ratings yielded no significant effect of time, suggesting that the second generation's Hindi proficiency and use did not change over time (remaining fairly low). By contrast, analyses of English ratings yielded significant effects of time, Fs(2, 28) > 4.65, ps < 0.018. Follow-up tests revealed a significant gain in self-rated English proficiency, $t(14) = 4.42$, $p = 0.001$, and self-rated English use, $t(14) = 2.57$, $p = 0.02$, between the before schooling period and the 'present time'. This result indicates that the second generation's shift from Hindi to English likely occurred with the onset of schooling.

Table 1 Mean language proficiency measures (standard deviations)

Measure	1st generation		2nd generation	
	English	*Hindi*	*English*	*Hindi*
Self-rated proficiency (1–10 scale)	8.2 (2.1)	8.5 (2.0)	9.9 (0.4)	5.5 (2.1)
Self-rated percent use (0–100%)	60.7 (24.3)	52.7 (25.2)	92.0 (10.1)	24.7 (13.6)
Listener-rated fluency (1–10 scale)	7.1 (1.3)	8.8 (1.0)	9.2 (0.5)	4.8 (2.3)

Table 2 Mean self-rated proficiency and use measures (standard deviations) for the second generation participants

Time period	Self-rated proficiency (1–10 scale)		Self-rated percent use (0–100%)	
	English	*Hindi*	*English*	*Hindi*
Before schooling	7.1 (2.5)	4.1 (2.7)	72.7 (30.8)	30.7 (31.0)
During schooling	9.2 (1.5)	4.2 (1.9)	85.3 (15.1)	28.0 (17.0)
Present time	9.9 (0.4)	5.5 (2.1)	92.0 (10.1)	24.7 (13.6)

Culture shift

Culture shift was examined by comparing how strongly the two generations agreed with the biased statements in the matched-guise task, separately for each perspective, using two-way ANOVAs with generation (1st, 2nd) as between- and language (English, Hindi) as within-subjects factors. In the marriage context, these analyses yielded no significant main effects of generation and no significant generation × language interactions, revealing no intergenerational differences. Both generations reported low agreement ratings (2.1–3.7 on a 10-point scale), suggesting that neither expressed a strong sense of filial duty. In the career context, these analyses yielded significant effects of generation in the unknown woman perspective, $F(1, 28) = 4.36$, $p = 0.046$, and in the 'self' perspective, $F(1, 28) = 5.51$, $p = 0.026$, but no significant interactions. Follow-up tests revealed that, in both cases, ts(14) > 2.23, ps < 0.04, the first generation agreed (5.5–7.1), while the second generation disagreed (3.6–4.8) that the woman, or they themselves, should keep the job. The second generation thus expressed a weaker sense of filial duty than the first, revealing a possible culture shift in the career context. The agreement ratings in the marriage and career contexts appear in Tables 3 and 4, respectively.

In the cultural profile questionnaire, the participants rated the value of filial duty and the importance of marriage and career in raising girls and boys. Two-way ANOVAs with generation (1st, 2nd) as between- and gender (girls, boys)

Table 3 Mean agreement ratings (standard deviations) in the marriage context

Perspective	1st generation		2nd generation	
	English	Hindi	English	Hindi
Woman	2.7 (2.4)	2.5 (2.3)	3.1 (2.5)	2.7 (2.0)
Daughter	2.9 (2.3)	2.5 (2.4)	3.3 (2.1)	2.5 (1.8)
Man	2.6 (1.9)	2.1 (1.7)	3.0 (2.5)	2.7 (2.2)
Son	2.5 (1.8)	2.3 (1.8)	3.2 (2.2)	2.7 (2.3)
Self	3.7 (3.1)	3.7 (3.0)	2.9 (2.3)	2.5 (2.0)

Table 4 Mean agreement ratings (standard deviations) in the career context

Perspective	1st generation		2nd generation	
	English	Hindi	English	Hindi
Woman	5.5 (2.9)	5.9 (2.9)	3.6 (2.1)	4.1 (2.3)
Daughter	5.2 (2.8)	5.8 (2.8)	4.0 (2.1)	4.2 (2.4)
Man	5.4 (3.0)	6.1 (3.0)	4.3 (2.5)	4.7 (2.7)
Son	5.4 (2.7)	6.0 (2.9)	4.4 (2.6)	4.6 (2.7)
Self	6.7 (3.1)	7.1 (3.0)	4.4 (2.3)	4.8 (2.4)

as within-subjects factors compared these ratings, separately for each question. Analyses of overall ratings yielded no significant effects or interactions: both generations rated filial duty as equally important (8.6 and 8.8). Analyses of marriage ratings yielded only a significant effect of generation, $F(1, 28) = 5.41$, $p = 0.028$. Overall, the first generation valued marriage higher than the second generation (9.2 vs. 8.4, respectively), $t(14) = 2.10$, $p = 0.05$. Finally, analyses of career ratings yielded only a significant effect of gender, $F(1, 28) = 5.61$, $p = 0.025$, with the first generation rating the value of career higher for boys (9.7) than for girls (8.8), $t(14) = 2.10$, $p = 0.05$. Taken together, these results provide further evidence of a culture shift between the two generations.

Role of language in culture

The relationship between language and the cultural value of filial duty was analysed by determining, first, whether the participants (especially the second generation whose Hindi proficiency was intermediate) understood the Hindi and English scenarios equally well and, second, whether the language manipulation of the task functioned as expected. Analyses of the participants' responses to the comprehension question (*Did you understand what this person is saying?*) revealed no between-generation differences, ts $(14) < 1.92$, ps > 0.08, suggesting that all participants understood the scenarios equally well (9.1–9.9). Analyses of the participants' reactions to the control (shoplifting) scenario revealed no between-generation differences as a function of language, ts$(14) < 1.87$, ps > 0.07. Both generations agreed in response to English and Hindi that the woman should confront her friend about shoplifting (7.7–9.9). Thus, the task functioned as intended in that language made no difference in a neutral context.

The next analyses compared the participants' reactions in the filial duty contexts (marriage, career), again using two-way repeated measures ANOVAs separately for each perspective. In the marriage context (see Table 3), these analyses yielded significant effects of language in the unknown woman perspective, $F(1, 28) = 7.69$, $p = 0.01$, and in the daughter perspective, $F(1, 28) = 6.00$, $p = 0.02$, with no significant interactions. Follow-up tests revealed that, in both cases, ts$(14) > 2.26$, ps < 0.04, the second generation agreed with the decision to marry soon when they heard the scenario in English (3.1–3.3), but disagreed when they heard it in Hindi (2.5–2.7). The second generation thus demonstrated a *stronger* sense of filial duty in English than in Hindi. In the career context (see Table 4), these analyses yielded no significant effects of language or interactions, suggesting that language did not affect the participants' reactions in this context.

The results of paired-samples *t*-tests conducted on the cultural profile questionnaire data affirmed the participants' views of the centrality of Hindi to the North Indian culture and their commitment to passing Hindi to the next generation. The centrality ratings revealed that the second generation rated Hindi as significantly more central to the Indian culture than did the first generation (8.1 vs. 6.6, respectively), $t(14) = 2.1$, $p = 0.05$. The commitment ratings showed both groups to be highly committed to Hindi, with the second generation expressing a stronger commitment (8.2 and 7.3, respectively).

General Discussion

This study's goal was to document the patterns of language use, maintenance and shift for two generations of the North Indian Hindu community of Montreal, and to examine the language–culture relationship, one often assumed or simply unexplored. The findings suggested that a language shift has taken place in the second generation, and that a cultural shift was beginning to be seen, at least in terms of the value of filial duty in a career context. Compared with the second generation, the first generation placed greater emphasis on marriage, and considered career more important in raising boys than girls. These beginnings of the intergenerational culture shift, however, may or may not be related to language shift, as the matched-guise task yielded no clear indication that the participants' views of filial duty depended on the language in which they heard the culturally charged scenarios. However, the questionnaire data suggested a role for language in the Hindu culture, as both generations expressed a high commitment to Hindi and reported a strong belief in its centrality to their culture.

Language shift

Previous research has suggested that second generations of certain immigrant communities might be susceptible to language shift (Gupta & Siew, 1995). Although the second generation of North Indians studied here has indeed shifted from Hindi to English, the shift pattern appears different from more typical language shifts in which ML replaces the HL in all domains including the home (Fishman, 1989b; Landry & Allard, 1996). In such cases, immigrant children use their HL regularly until they encounter the ML outside the home, usually at school, and then gradually stop using it from then on. Here, the second generation seemed not to have had sufficient HL command to begin with. While the second generation's self-rated receptive Hindi proficiency (8.1 on a 10-point scale) may have been sufficient for them to understand the experimental task scenarios, they rated their oral Hindi proficiency prior to the onset of schooling as low (at 4.1) and their active Hindi use as rare (at only 31% daily), suggesting that English had already entered their homes then. The first generation, it seems, failed to transmit their HL to their children, even before their schooling began.

Well educated and highly proficient in English, the first generation may have introduced English to their children early on, taking the pragmatic view on language learning, salient in Indian multilingualism (Pandharipande, 1992), that allowed them to regard HL loss with relatively little emotion or attachment (de Klerk, 2000; Yagmur *et al.*, 1999). Willing to pass on their HL yet aware of English's key role in educational and career success, the first generation may have explicitly or implicitly encouraged the use of English at home, particularly in Quebec whose official language is French. Socialised in this environment, children may have developed a receptive rather than productive competence in their HL, growing up as what Moag (1999: 279) termed 'semi-native speakers' – individuals born into a South Asian upper middle class family and raised as 'skewed bilinguals whose [HL] learning atrophied during pre-school years'. As skewed bilinguals, semi-native speakers see themselves neither as competent

HL speakers nor as capable of transmitting their HL culture. If the second generation participants in this study fit in with Moag's linguistic description, then could they also fit his description as incompetent carriers of their heritage culture?

Culture shift

The matched-guise task findings revealed the beginnings of a culture shift in the second generation. Consistent with previously documented accultura-tion patterns (Ghuman, 1991a), this shift away from traditional sense of filial duty was seen only in the career context. Socialised in an individualist mentality, the second generation asserted their freedom to choose a career path, even at the expense of a secure livelihood. Socialised in a collectivist upbringing in India (Brah, 1978), the first generation affirmed the value of a stable career, especially for men, thus confirming their traditional view of men being providers and women caregivers. The second generation has clearly shifted away from this gender-based cultural view (Wakil *et al.*, 1981).

Somewhat more interesting, from the perspective of culture shift, is the marriage context, where only the second generation behaved as expected. They disagreed with the statement that the woman should marry soon, asserting their own, rather than their parents', views on marriage. Surpris-ingly, however, the first generation disagreed, too, disavowing the view that children should marry for both their own and their parents' welfare (Wakil *et al.*, 1981). It appears, in fact, that the first generation has made the shift in this case, culturally resembling the second, not the other way around. This finding, which must remain speculative until investigated further (e.g. by comparing the first generation parents with their peers in India), might reflect the first generation's gradual acculturation to the mainstream culture, most likely in the interest of preserving family unity (Moag, 1999). Whether the first generation's acculturation proceeded alongside, or in fact preceded, the second generation's culture shift, both generations seem to have drifted away from their heritage culture norms.

Role of language in culture

If language determines the strength of cultural values, then the participants' views of filial duty, especially those of the second generation, would have depended on language. Ostensibly, English would have triggered a weaker sense of filial duty than Hindi. However, it was Hindi, not English, that evoked a weaker sense of filial duty. In other words, the second generation expressed a stronger, more traditional sense of filial duty in English than in their HL, Hindi. One may conclude from this that language does not mediate culture for this group and that Hindi is, therefore, not central to the North Indian Hindu culture. However, this conclusion may be hasty, based only on the experimental data presented here. It is possible that the Hindu culture may not have been justly represented by one value and that the marriage and career scenarios targeting this value may have failed to capture its true essence. Both these possibilities call for future research to understand the Hindi langua-ge–Hindu culture link better.

Unlike the matched-guise task, which yielded inconclusive evidence of the language–culture relationship, the questionnaire data were more revealing. Although both generations rated Hindi as central to their culture, the first generation seemed surprisingly less warm towards the idea of its maintenance than the second. Perhaps perceiving Hindi as only moderately central to their culture, they felt that familial solidarity could still be maintained with even an imperfect command of the HL, so long as there is a common language (Mouw & Xie, 1999). In contrast, the second generation may have felt the importance of the language–culture link more because in North America they have been socialised to equate language with ethnicity and culture (Myhill, 1999). As a result, they saw a greater need to preserve their HL than their parents did.

In terms of the language–culture link, the participants' ambivalence towards this issue suggests possibly that they see their language as central to their culture solely in symbolic terms (Edwards & Chisholm, 1987). Thus, although they claim to be highly committed to passing Hindi to their children, especially the second generation, it is not clear whether (and how) they will do so, given their limited knowledge of this language, the low number of Hindi courses available, and the daily demands of their careers, in which Hindi is rarely valued. With respect to culture, they may have to find means other than language, such as religion, for example, to preserve and transmit their culture (Pandharipande, 1992).

Implications and conclusions

Given this study's findings, what is the future of the Montreal North Indian Hindu community? The possibility exists that this group will remain distinct only in symbolic terms, with their symbolic sense of 'Indianness' reflecting only a limited form of expression of their genuine desire to retain Indian heritage (Moag, 1999) or merely representing a lip service to language and culture maintenance (Edwards & Chisholm, 1987). In a multicultural society such as Canada, where identity construction at the individual level may be more pertinent than assimilation and multilingualism at the group level (Taylor, 1991), this symbolic distinction may be inevitable. At the individual level, Taylor argues, the symbolic function of the heritage culture is important because, together with the majority culture, it defines the integrated bilingual's unique identity (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). In this poststructuralist view of identity construction (Harris, 2006; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004), language and even ethnicity are among many dimensions that individuals can manipulate as they negotiate their identities on a moment-to-moment basis to maximise their social or personal rewards (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1990).

Evidence of this hybrid identity among the participants of this study is their choice of the term 'Indo-Canadian' over 'Indian' and 'Canadian' as the label that describes them best. For the first generation, this term reflects their dual identity of an Indian who has lived in Canada for over 30 years. For the second generation, this term may denote much more than just a personal preference for a label. At the group level, it defines an entire new culture, some aspects of

which can be traced back to the original homeland culture while others can be linked to the new home.

According to Williams' (1977) framework of emergent culture, a culture that is in the process of change can be dissected into its dominant elements (core elements), residual elements (elements that are grounded in the past but are still active) and emergent elements (newly adopted elements or new interpretations of original values). Within this framework, the Montreal North Indian Hindu community can be seen as being in the process of creating a new Indo-Canadian culture, where the value of filial duty may be one aspect in which both residual and emergent elements of North Indian and Indo-Canadian cultures operate concurrently. In choosing to identify themselves as Indo-Canadian, members of this hybrid culture demonstrate that identities can and do traverse boundaries and geopolitical frontiers (Harris, 2006), wherein the same individual can belong to several 'homes' and not to any particular 'home' at all.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix: Stimulus scenarios

Marriage

I am a 30-year-old Indo-Canadian woman. I am still single and unmarried, which is beginning to worry my parents quite a bit. They want nothing more than to see me happily settled and secure in my own life, and marriage is the surest way to achieve that. But I don't want to marry just for the sake of marrying – I want to marry for love. But if I don't meet someone and get married soon, I will become an emotional burden to my parents – I'll be holding them back from their primary purpose in life as parents, which is to marry off their children and move onto the next phase of their life. I love them so much and want to make them happy, but I also want to make myself happy. I just don't know what to do.

Career

I am a 30-year-old Indo-Canadian woman. I am a successful computer engineer and have a reasonably secure career but I am not happy and want to quit my job, but that will really worry my parents. They want nothing more than to see me financially secure, and what better profession than engineering to achieve that security? But I don't want to work just for the sake of making money – I want to do something fulfilling, I want to be a musician. But if quit, I'll stop being financially secure and I'll become a burden to my parents again. I'll hold them back from their major purpose in life as parents, which is to help their children become financially independent and then move onto the next phase of their life. I love them so much and want to make them happy, but I also want to make myself happy. I just don't know what to do.

Control

I am a 30-year-old Indo-Canadian woman. I went shopping the other day with a good friend and actually saw her steal something from the store, and it's really stressing me out now. I want nothing more than to protect my friend's dignity as well as the integrity of our friendship, but what she's done poses a threat to that integrity. I realize she's tight for money these days, but in my eyes nothing justifies stealing. If I confront her, I risk humiliating her and potentially ruining our friendship. But if I don't confront her, I'll be compromising my own principles, and it's not like I can just forget that it ever happened. I love her so much and I want our friendship to endure, but I also need to be true to myself and my principles. I just don't know what to do.