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Reconciling social psychology and sociolinguistics can have some benefits: Language and identity among second generation British Asians

Rusi Jaspal
Royal Holloway, University of London

Adrian Coyle
University of Surrey

Given the pervasiveness of language in social life and the implications that language use can have for one's individual and collective identities, attempts were made to explore the theoretical and empirical advantages in connecting social psychological theories of identity and sociolinguistics in order to explore language and identity among second generation British Asians. This paper features a brief overview of the sociological background of British Asians and a detailed consideration of two social psychological theories of identity, namely, self-aspects model of identity (Simon, 2004) and identity process theory (Breakwell, 1986, 1992). It is considered that these under-utilised social psychological theories lend themselves readily to the study of language and identity among this population. Moreover, this paper considers the substantive literature on language and identity. It is argued that an interdisciplinary (social psychological and sociolinguistic) approach is particularly well-suited to the exploration of language and identity. Furthermore, 'theoretically active' phenomenological approaches may be particularly useful for research in this domain.

Keywords: social psychology; sociolinguistics; language; identity; South Asians; identity process theory; self-aspects model of identity

There is a substantial amount of empirical and theoretical work on the relationship between language and ethnic identity (Fishman, 2001; Harris, 2006; Omoniyi and White, 2006), as well as some important contributions from social psychology (Giles and Johnson, 1987; Lawson and Sachedev, 2004; Bourhis, El-Geledi and Sachdev, 2007; Chen and Bond, 2007). Nonetheless, there has been little social psychological work on language and identity specifically among British South Asians, the largest ethnic minority group in the UK, although some attention has been paid to questions of ethnic identity among this population (Modood, Berthoud, Lakey, Nazroo, Smith, Virdee & Beishon, 1997; Vadher & Barrett, in press). Sociolinguists have exhibited some interest in language and ethnic identity specifically among second generation Asians (SGAs), although this research has focused mainly upon global youth culture and upon the notion of 'new ethnicities' (Rampton, 1995; Harris, 2006) primarily in school settings with adolescent participants (Moore, 2003; Alam, 2006). Despite the considerable treatment of language and identity in both sociolinguistics and social psychology, there appears to have been little theoretical cross-fertilisation between the two disciplines. Here it is argued that research and theoretical strands from both disciplines have much to offer a study on language and identity among SGAs and that attempts should be made to synthesise them.

The focus of this paper is on language and identity among SGAs, although some of the observations made speak to broader theoretical issues related to language and identity. In section one, the historical and socio-cultural context of SGAs in Britain will be considered, followed by an evaluation of social psychological approaches to identity in section two. The substantive literature on language and identity from a variety of academic disciplines will be critically evaluated. The literature review will begin with a discussion of essentialist and social constructionist perspectives on 'nativeness' and perceived 'ownership', followed by an evaluation of literature regarding the relationship between language and ethnicity. Finally, bilingualism and its possible implications for identity will be discussed. A key aim of this paper is to elucidate the theoretical and empirical advantages of linking sociolinguistics and social psychology through an exploration of language and identity among SGAs.

British South Asians: A sociological and sociolinguistic background
Following the Second World War and British withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent in 1947, Britain witnessed a large-scale influx of South Asian immigrants, who arrived in the country predominantly in search of employment and economic prosperity. It is often noted that hardship, engendered by poverty and unemployment in the subcontinent, encouraged mass migration to the UK; Hiro (1973, p. 107) observes that for Indians and Pakistanis 'the economic consideration was the sole motive for migration' and they did not envisage settlement in the UK or integration into British society. Today South Asians of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent constitute approximately half of the ethnic minority population in the UK (Scott, Pearce, & Goldblatt, 2001).

While the aforementioned work demonstrates the first generation's fairly unambiguous motives for migration to the UK, it could be argued that SGAs' sense of identity in relation to place and environment is perhaps more complex. Accordingly, SGAs have been described as bicultural (Miles, 1996); in contrast to many first generation South Asians, SGAs are generally bilingual in English and their heritage language (HL), albeit to varying degrees. To provide an exhaustive list of South Asian languages is beyond the scope of the present review (see Singh, Dasgupta, & Lele, 1995 for an excellent review of Indian sociolinguistics), but the most common languages to be found among British Asians are Punjabi (spoken by settlers from the Punjab region of India and Pakistan), Hindi (the official language of India), Mirpuri (a variety of Punjabi spoken by settlers from the Mirpur region of Pakistan) and Urdu (the official language of Pakistan). There is evidence that South Asian languages are not in decline, but continue to be used[1] among both the first and second generations (Ballard, 1994).

Alam (2006) remarks that the establishment of 'communities' in areas of the UK has safeguarded both the HL and the heritage culture. The South Asian communities tend to have dense social networks and regular visits to their respective countries of origin are common (Hussain & Bagguley, 2003). Moreover, in the UK community events such as religious and cultural activities, as well as community-funded language classes, ensure a high level of contact with the heritage culture and HL. There is also

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[1] Use of the verb 'to use' is deliberately ambiguous. E.g. some might speak the language on a daily basis, whilst others might restrict their usage to a few words and expressions. Language use also includes passive understanding.

a thriving South Asian ethnic economy consisting mainly of the retail of traditional Asian clothing, 'halaal'[2] butchers, Asian radio stations and Asian TV broadcasting (e.g. Zee TV). Thus, Britain's South Asians seem to have maintained many of their cultural features, of which language is perhaps one of the most salient examples.

The aforementioned social, political, religious and cultural resources collectively contribute to maintenance of the HL. Both the first and second generations generally have ample opportunity to employ their HL in a wide range of social contexts, such as multicultural school settings (Rampton, 1995), or at Bollywood film screenings (Hastings & Jones, 2006), for instance. While monolingualism in the HL perhaps allows the first generation to remain within the confines of their own perceived community, thus obliterating the need to acquire proficiency in English, this is unfeasible among SGAs, most of whom acquire an education in the UK.

Consequently, Ballard's (1994) observation that exploring the SGAs condition is particularly complex in comparison to that of their parents is most salient in the domain of language use and identity. SGAs acquire both their HL and English from a relatively early age; they use these languages in various domains and are thus in a position to claim 'ownership' of both. Furthermore, there are conflicting media reports regarding the consequences of bilingualism among SGA, with claims that bilingual Asian children perform better at school (Casciani, 2003) as well as claims that widespread use of the HL at home inhibits integration (Blunkett, 2002). What is the impact of bilingualism upon the lives and identities of SGAs? How does perceived treatment at the hands of the dominant culture impact upon language choice or attitudes towards languages? To which language, if any, do SGAs perceive any sense of loyalty? Does their intricate linguistic position allow access to two cultures and, thus, two identities? Social psychological theories of identity may enable us to begin to answer some of these questions.

Identity
This section will explore two under-utilised paradigms of identity within social psychology and explore the suitability of each theoretical framework for the purposes of the present topic of interest. This will begin with a discussion of self-aspects model of identity (SAMI; Simon, 2004) followed by identity process theory (IPT; Breakwell, 1986, 1992).

Self-Aspects Model of Identity
SAMI considers two levels of identity, namely 'collective identity' which arises where self-interpretation focuses upon a socially shared self-aspect and 'individual identity', which is the consequence of self-interpretation based upon a complex configuration of self-aspects. In contrast to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982), whose primary concern is intergroup relations, this theoretical framework appears to provide a broader, more balanced conceptualisation of identity, consisting of both individual and collective forms.
The theory is *social* psychological in that it does not deny that individuals are bound together by relationships of interdependence, but SAMI's major credentials lie in its recognition of the various different levels of social inclusiveness characterising these relationships of interdependence. Thus, SAMI recognises that different relationships

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[2] Permissible in Islamic law

of interdependence, such as dyads (e.g. between a mother and a son), or different (religious or ethnic) social groups or categories, or supranational groups (e.g. the European Union nations) may have an impact upon the identity construction. SAMI's overt attention to these different relationships of interdependence indicates its usefulness for the examination of language and identity among SGAs. Although there has been little previous research dedicated specifically to this topic, studies have demonstrated the complex network of social identities manifested by SGAs (Cohen, 2000). Furthermore, sociological studies of minority youth culture have demonstrated the 'biculturalism' or 'in-between-ness' of SGAs in the West, whereby SGAs may manifest one identity in the home environment and another in their friendship circles (see Maira, 2002). SAMI conceptualises 'collective identity' as 'the identity of a person derived from membership in a collective or group and not the identity of a group as a *sui generis* entity' (Simon, 2004, p. 49).

Identity Process Theory
Use of a particular language can sometimes constitute a response to identity threat; it might enable an individual or a group to assert their distinctiveness from the dominant majority, for example. Identity process theory (IPT; Breakwell, 1986, 1992) provides great insight into identity threat and how individuals might deal with identity threat through their employment of coping strategies. The theory proposes that identity should be conceptualised in terms of its content and value/affect dimensions and that it is regulated by two universal processes, namely the assimilation-accommodation process and the evaluation process. The assimilation-accommodation process refers to the absorption of new information in the identity structure and of the adjustment which takes place in order for it to become part of this structure. The evaluation process confers meaning and value upon the contents of identity.

Breakwell (1986, 1992) identifies four identity principles which guide these universal processes, namely continuity across time and situation, uniqueness or distinctiveness from others, feeling confident and in control of one's life, and feelings of personal worth and social value. IPT refers to these, respectively, as continuity, distinctiveness, self-efficacy and self-esteem. Extending IPT, Vignoles and colleagues (Vignoles, Chryssochoou & Breakwell, 2002; Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge & Scabini, 2006) have proposed two additional identity 'motives', namely belonging, which refers to the need to maintain feelings of closeness to and acceptance by other people, and meaning, which refers to the need to find significance and purpose in one's life. More recently, Jaspal and Cinnirella (2009) have proposed the psychological coherence principle, which refers to the individual's subjective perception of compatibility and coherence between their identities. IPT suggests that when any of these identity principles is obstructed, for instance by changes in the social context, identity is threatened and the individual will engage in coping strategies to alleviate the threat. IPT constitutes a broad, inclusive theory of identity threat, which identifies multiple identity principles and which provides scope for the exploration of the intrapsychic, not just interpersonal and intergroup, processes involved in language choice.

Moreover, understanding the motivational principles which guide identity processes, such as the need for self-esteem and continuity might enhance our understanding of evaluative attitudes towards languages. It is noteworthy that IPT constitutes an adequately fluid framework in terms of the processes; 'processes could be broken

down into the sub-processes which comprise them' (Breakwell, 1986, p. 23). Given the novel application of IPT to questions of language and identity, it is important that the theory offer fluidity and scope for insightful theoretical elaboration, primarily in the form of innovative sub-processes. IPT provides a model of how individuals and groups react to threatened identity, and this may be useful when exploring the prospect of language loss (Jaspaert, Kroon & Van Hout, 1986) and of stigmatisation of the HL.

It would appear that SAMI and IPT, collectively, have much to offer a social psychological study of language and identity among SGA. Thus, these frameworks constitute the interpretive lens through which the substantive literature in this field will be reviewed, beginning with work on 'nativeness' in language.

'Nativeness'
'Nativeness' in language is a problematic concept, although taken-for-granted terms such as 'native speaker' form part of the way that we think and talk about language. Myhill (2003), in particular, argues that the problematic concept of 'native speaker' is not a brute empirical fact but rather a social construct. He and other linguists (Paikeday, 1985; Davies, 1991) have problematised this concept since it is commonly used as if it were a proven, objective 'truth', without an adequate operationalisation. It is lamentable that the essential task of explicitly defining the term has been neglected in literature on language and identity. Fishman (1991), for instance, appears to use the concept of 'native speaker' to denote the language that an individual has grown up speaking from early childhood. However, this understanding of 'native speaker' renders a study on SGAs problematic, as it is often the case that they grow up speaking (or are exposed to) two or more languages from early childhood (Rampton, 1995).

Moreover, it is generally accepted that the language in which someone acquires their education, becomes their dominant language (Fillmore, 2000). Thus, some people might deem their dominant language to be their native language. An example might illustrate this; when a job advertisement seeks native speakers of a language, it does not refer to people who feel a 'special attachment' to the language, or who claim 'ownership' of the language on the grounds of ethnicity, for instance, but rather somebody who is highly competent in the language. On the other hand, it would perhaps not be surprising for someone of Pakistani descent, for instance, to claim that their native language is Urdu (the national language of Pakistan) despite their lack of proficiency in the language, purely on the basis of ethnic identity. Indeed to lay claim to Urdu in this way could fulfil the need for belonging, which has been identified as important identity motive (Vignoles et al., 2002).

In short, the discrepancy in interpretation demonstrates the arbitrariness of such taken-for-granted terms, and thus, doubts arise regarding the acceptability of essentialist claims about the role of language in identity. Fishman (1972, p. 46), for instance, postulates that the essence of nationality 'is not only reflected and protected by the 'mother tongue', which is itself 'an aspect of the soul, a part of the soul if not the soul made manifest'. After all, some SGA do indeed identify as British (Jacobson, 1997; Vadher & Barrett, in press), although the the language which they have grown up speaking from early childhood is *not* English.

The use of terms such as 'mother tongue' or 'native speaker' seems to have warranted essentialist perspectives on language use and 'ownership'; 'no language is like the native language that one learned at one's mother's knee; no-one is ever sure in a language afterwards acquired' (Bloomfield, 1927, p. 151). Bloomfield's ideas appear to be problematic when applied to the context of SGAs, many of whom do indeed acquire their HL 'at the mother's knee' but later acquire proficiency in English (Maira, 2002), often at the expense of the HL. This view is also reflected by Tay (1982) who recognises that if a child learns a given language as a child, but does not use it as their dominant language later in life, their 'native fluency' is debatable. These points refer primarily to linguistic ease and comfort and this reflects the multi-faceted nature of the topic as well as the problematic nature of 'nativeness' – is it about identity, linguistic competence or both? In any case, to automatically categorise an individual's first acquired language as their 'native language' constitutes a simplistic approach to an immensely complex phenomenon; this suggests that the 'native language' is chronological and systematically acquired, and overlooks the context-dependency of language (see Blom & Gumperz, 1982), and also, emotional and affective factors possibly associated with language. This demonstrates the importance of employing a novel approach this topic, namely through the consideration of SGAs' meaning-making regarding the functions that language may serve for identity.

Such essentialist perspectives appear to focus more upon language competence than identity, or perhaps their implication is that identity depends on linguistic competence. This sociolinguistic research seems to emphasise *externally observed* competence, rather than upon self-reported competence and its implications for identity. Accordingly, social psychology may have an important role to play in the debate on language and identity, as it is not solely concerned with questions of linguistic proficiency, but upon the reactions of the bilingual person as an individual and also upon the social and psychological repercussions that follow from their (linguistic) behaviour (Lambert & Taylor, 1984). Thus, it is argued that empirical research into how individuals *themselves* understand, define and employ taken-for-granted terms such as 'mother tongue' and 'nativeness' is needed. An investigation of individuals' understandings of such terminology, that is, a move from external observation to a focus upon self-report, would provide novel insights.

The present paper avoids the use of such terminology, since, in the absence of empirical research specifically investigating the meanings and understandings of them directly from the perspective of participants, it appears to be laden with connotations of biological heredity. In order to avoid difficulties associated with this terminology, and in an attempt to free future research from essentialist connotations associated with them, the present paper employs the term 'heritage language' to denote the main language associated with the ethnic culture.

Language and ethnicity
In addition to 'nativeness' and 'ownership', future research needs to consider people's understandings of ethnicity. Abizadeh (2001, p. 25) describes ethnicity as 'based on mythical *beliefs* about the genealogical, not the genealogical facts themselves [..] the myths themselves can often be based on historically inaccurate *beliefs*. Ethnicity [..] exists as a socially constructed category contingent on *beliefs*. [..] ethnicity's very existence is dependent on *beliefs* about its existence.'. This conceptualisation features

a strong emphasis upon the role of ethnicity as a *presumed* identity or a *belief* in common descent. Consequently, in the context of SGAs, it is difficult to categorise the various (possible) ethnic groups which this umbrella term may encompass; for instance, do British Pakistanis claim ethnic identification with British Indians and vice versa? If the answer to this question is affirmative, then one might explore the dominant self-aspect which gives rise to this common ethnic identity (Simon, 2004). Is it a common language, for instance? Conversely, if the answer is negative, this perhaps problematises terms such as 'South Asian' or 'British Asian', which appear to imply an element of homogeneity, and compels researchers to question whether they are appropriate analytical categories. Much previous research on the ethnic and national identities of SGAs tends largely to have focused upon levels of identification with British culture (e.g. Jacobson, 1997; Vadher & Barrett, in press), but an equally relevant perspective would be that of SGAs intersubjectivity. For instance, future research might seek to explore whether British Pakistani Muslims identify more readily with British Indian Sikhs/ Hindus due to their similar linguistic identities than with other non-South Asian groups who perhaps share the same religion. This could in turn elucidate the nature of the relationship between language and ethnic identity.

This link has been addressed by literature on bilingualism (e.g. Cho, 2000; Baker, 2001), albeit with other ethnic groups. It has been argued that through the HL, ethnic identity can be 'expressed, enacted and symbolised' (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. 113). However, this is highly dependent upon factors such as the status of the language within a given group and also upon the social psychological functions that might be achieved with the HL. Nevertheless, it is generally believed that language, as well as cultural heritage and values, has a direct link with ethnic identity (Ennaji, 1999). Here, we might reconsider SAMI, which states that collective identity is constructed whenever self-interpretation is based upon a single self-aspect shared with other people in the relevant social context (Simon, 2004). Thus, it might be argued that, in light of the aforementioned sociolinguistic research, language perhaps constitutes an *important* self-aspect within the framework of several others. The construction of identity through a single self-aspect alone appears rather simplistic. In order to shed light upon the other likely self-aspects, in addition to that of language, which give rise to a sense of ethnic/ collective identity, further exploratory research is clearly required.

If one is to understand language as the 'dominant' self-aspect in ethnic identity, future research might seek to explore possible feelings of regret and isolation in ethnic minorities who do not learn their HL; it has been suggested that only proficiency in HL allows complete access to their ethnic group (Tse, 1998). IPT indicates that individuals must maintain a sense of belonging and that if this identity principle is unable to operate in accordance with identity processes, identity is threatened. It is reasonable to assume that some SGAs may experience threats to their sense of belonging in the ethnic culture, if they lack proficiency in the HL, which may in turn have negative consequences for self-esteem (Vignoles et al., 2002). However, the notion of language proficiency is problematic since there is no universal agreement regarding the required *level* of language competence in order for an individual to maintain a sense of belonging in the ethnic group. This is likely to vary according to the ethnic group in question and more specifically upon the individual in question.

One might consider language and ethnic identity among SGAs vis-à-vis other identity principles associated with IPT. For instance, the HL may indeed constitute a self-aspect, which allows feelings of uniqueness and distinctiveness in a predominantly white English context. In a nation where assimilation is implicitly favoured (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault & Senécal, 1997), a distinct HL, such as Punjabi, may be used by some SGAs as a symbol of distinctiveness from the dominant majority. Conversely, for some it may constitute a 'barrier' to Britishness which confers negatively evaluated distinctiveness (i.e. low social status). Furthermore, IPT highlights the importance of self-esteem; thus, it is important to consider whether knowledge and use of the HL give rise to an enhanced sense of self-worth. Does knowledge of the HL make individuals feel good about themselves? You (2005), for instance, states that the preservation of the HL helps Korean Americans to acquire a positive ethnic identity, but little is known of the implications for SGAs of having an imperfect knowledge of the HL if contact with the heritage country and its people is high.

On the other hand, the work of some scholars problematises the role of language as an essential component of identity (Edwards, 1985; Herberg, 1989; Myhill, 2003). Myhill (2003), for instance, argues that not all Jews use a 'Jewish language' and that, for many diaspora Jews, their 'native language' is merely a 'tool' due to the convenience of speaking the dominant language of the host country, natively. An example of this might be the following: Persian Jews and Persian Muslims both speak the same 'language', namely Persian, although Persians Jews manage to assert their distinctive identity despite their use of a common language. However, it might also be argued that an awareness (to varying degrees) of the liturgical language, Hebrew, does indeed act as a marker of distinctiveness. For instance, Labov (2006) identifies a distinct dialect of English among Jewish New Yorkers which features a distinct accent as well as differential sentence constructions and terms based upon Yiddish. Perhaps the use of such a linguistic variety (either consciously or subconsciously) constitutes a method of expressing a Jewish identity, and thereby maintaining feelings of distinctiveness from others, without necessarily laying claim to a distinct, standardised language. A Jewish individual's 'linguistic repertoire' may well feature a slightly distinct linguistic form for use with his or her ingroup. If viewed through the theoretical lens of SAMI (Simon, 2004), it could perhaps be argued that there are *two* salient self-aspects shared by the group, namely religion (whether a form of actively practised religion or a residual form of religion expressed in cultural terms) and language.

This again raises the previously posed question of the implications of SGAs having an imperfect knowledge of the HL for their sense of identity. Daller (2005), in his study on language and identity among second generation Mennonites (SGM) in Germany, finds that language may not necessarily be an intrinsic aspect of ethnic identity but that it can provisionally serve as an instrument with which a given group asserts its distinctive identity. He argues that a given language performs this function when group identity is felt to be threatened, and that shifts may well occur when the original language no longer serves this function. 'Threat' must be understood here as the loss of distinctiveness and uniqueness through assimilation with other Christian groups (Breakwell, 1986). Accordingly, IPT would posit that an intergroup 'coping strategy' to deal with a threatened identity may consist of the reinforcement of group distinctiveness through the use of a distinct language, which is positively evaluated by the ingroup. SGMs differentiate themselves from Germans on an ethnic level despite

their *linguistic* assimilation to German (Daller, 2005). Thus, as groups adapt to alternative social situations, their original language may not remain an objective marker of identity (Edward & Chisolm, 1987). The relationship between language and ethnic identity seems to vary according to the ethnic culture in question, which reiterates the need for the exploration of these issues among SGAs.

Processes of socialisation and bilingualism
It has been argued that the role of language in identity construction may be considerable, and this section of the paper will now examine further complexity in the linguistic identities of SGAs, partly engendered by bilingualism and by the processes of socialisation.

Socialisation in Britain ensures that all SGAs become fluent speakers of English, which in the cases of SGAs who also speak their HL, gives rise to bilingualism. Kannapell (1993) differentiates between 'balanced' bilinguals, who are fully competent in both languages, 'dominant' bilinguals who are more comfortable with their 'dominant' language, and 'passive' bilinguals, who understand the second language although they never use it themselves. Kannapell (1993) raises an interesting point in differentiating between different levels of language proficiency for reasons outlined earlier. However, attempts have been made to measure correlations between this and identification with a culture. Thus, the more an individual identifies with a particular culture, the more proficient they will be in the language associated with that culture (Hornby, 1977).

Causality is of course difficult to infer; does proficiency in the ingroup language facilitate identification with ethnic heritage, as You (2005) suggests? Or does identification with ethnic heritage stimulate the desire to acquire proficiency in the HL? Furthermore, although many SGAs may lose touch with their HL, in most cases their religious identity, strongly associated with their heritage culture, remains unaltered (Khan, 2000). Rather than attempting to measure levels of language proficiency, perhaps research should focus upon self-reported levels of proficiency, since an individual may construe their level of language proficiency in accordance with the identity principles associated with IPT. For instance, in order to present oneself as a distinctive individual among a group of monolinguals, an individual may claim to be a 'balanced' bilingual, which may have positive outcomes for identity. Furthermore, if an individual perceives their HL as inferior to English, for instance, they might claim to be a 'passive' bilingual, in order to avoid identification with an 'inferior' language and conversely to maintain a high sense of self-esteem.

In considering the social psychology of bilingualism it is important to note the notion of 'language crossing' (Rampton, 1995), which, in social psychological terms, could be defined as the use of given language by an outgroup member. According to Rampton (1995) language crossing reflects an anti-racist practice as well as the desire of youths to redefine their identities. This construct has been invoked to explain SGAs appropriation of 'Black English', which has been noted in the literature (Rampton, 1995; Harris, 2006). The act of using a variety that 'belongs' to another racial or ethnic group contests racial or ethnic boundaries, so in terms of SAMI, the language-crossing SGAs adopts a self-aspect (language) associated with the Black outgroup. Research on language crossing has focused almost exclusively upon adolescents in school-settings (Rampton, 1995; Harris, 2006). It would be interesting

to explore the longitudinal effects of language crossing upon identity in early adulthood. Does language crossing allow social psychological entry in other ethnic groups? If so, what are the implications for identity processes? These are just some of the questions which may begin to be answered by combining sociolinguistic and social psychological theory and research.

Overview
The vast majority of previous research in this field originates from the field of sociolinguistics, but it is argued that social psychology, in particular, has an important role to play in this debate. Social psychology has a long tradition of studying categorisation and identity processes, as well as prejudice, racism and stereotypes (Verkuyten, 2005), and sociolinguistics has naturally concerned itself with the study of language. It has been argued that SAMI can explain how language (which could be conceptualised as a self-aspect) can give rise to both individual and collective identities. Furthermore, IPT enables us to consider the role of language in identity threat and how language(s) can be invoked to cope with threats at various levels of human interdependence (intrapsychic, interpersonal and intergroup). Thus, the integration of theory from both social psychology and sociolinguistics may be particularly beneficial for subsequent research in this domain.

A study on language and identity among SGAs, whose 'linguistic repertoire' often features English and their HL, would provide an original contribution to a field of research which is increasingly important in a multicultural Britain. This is especially important in light of the present discussion which has demonstrated that theoretical generalisation across a variety of cultures can be problematic since, as Myhill (2003) demonstrates, not all cultures (or individuals, for that matter) have the same relationship to a given language. This partly constitutes this paper's rationale for calling for further research on individuals' understandings of 'nativeness' and 'mother tongue'. Social scientists should be interested in these phenomena because research participants are. Thus, rather than using these terms to reflect our own understandings of them, it is important to ensure that scholars explicate laypeople's subjective understandings of them and the possible implications for identity construction. The same may be said for sociolinguistic research on language proficiency, which may indeed be an important issue to consider in a study on identity and belonging. However, our focus should perhaps be upon individuals' self-reported language proficiency rather than 'objectively' measured proficiency, since the former may allow some insight into the *perceived* relationship between language proficiency and social identity.

Accordingly, future research might seek to elucidate SGA's meta-linguistic knowledge, that is, their ability to discuss, describe and to theorise their 'linguistic repertoire' and its relationship to their ethnic culture. This would entail an exploration of how SGAs themselves think about the ways in which they use language and the impact of this upon how they see themselves. These questions seem to lend themselves readily to qualitative analytic techniques given the qualitative paradigm's general interest in individuals' subjectivities with close attention to context and situation (see Lyons & Coyle, 2007). More specifically, one might consider the potential empirical advantages associated with the use of more phenomenological approaches to individuals' accounts of language and identity; for

instance, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) aims to capture participants' attempts to make sense of their personal and social worlds (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Specific areas of interest in future research on language and identity among SGAs might include individuals' understandings of taken-for-granted linguistic concepts, their self-reported linguistic proficiency, the perceived implications of this for identity and well-being (e.g. feelings of guilt, pride etc.), and language choice and usage. These findings might be considered through the interpretive lens of IPT and SAMI. Both theoretical frameworks may enhance our understanding of how important self-aspects such as language might function in accordance with identity processes and the principles which habitually guide them (Breakwell, 1986). The present paper discusses some of the possible ways in which language choice, and the invocation of certain languages, might enhance a sense of belonging (in the ethnic group), self-esteem and distinctiveness. It is argued that the major credentials of employing a social psychological approach to language and identity lie in the availability of these important theories of identity in the discipline. Moreover, social psychology has been further enriched by the inclusion and acceptance of phenomenological and other qualitative methods, which are likely to be useful in research on language and identity. Thus, ideally, researchers would select a 'theoretically active' (but not necessarily theoretically driven) interpretative approach to the data, which would enable the analyst to draw upon relevant theoretical constructs as a means of psychologically enriching the phenomenological interpretations (see Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006; Storey, 2007 for more on 'theoretically active' varieties of IPA).

In short, it is hoped that future social psychological research will explore the aforementioned substantive issues empirically. By addressing these social psychological and sociolinguistic questions, future research in this field would begin to engage with important issues related to the SGA experience, and in turn contribute to the developing picture of language and identity and possibly to SGA identity in general.

Correspondence
Rusi Jaspal
Department of Psychology
Royal Holloway
University of London
Egham Hill
Egham
Surrey TW20-OEX
E-mail: rusi.jaspal@gmail.com

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