



Research Article

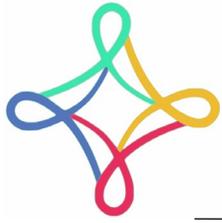
Student Identity in the Indian University: Language and Educational Stereotypes in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT. This article explores how language ideologies and the use of different languages in colleges and universities in Pune, a city in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, create ways to categorize and stereotype student identities based on language proficiency, caste, rurality, and religious background. Through ethnographic and sociolinguistic methods of participant observations and interviews at two prestigious Pune higher education institutions, I describe multilingual classroom discourse along with perceptions and reflections on language use. The analysis is as much about identity formation in higher education as it is about the education system's orientation towards Anglo-centric scholarship in India. In Pune's higher education, formal recognition of ways Marathi and Hindi assist students in English medium education are largely overlooked and unstandardized. In conclusion, this article demonstrates how multilingual education addresses diversity and inclusion in theory, but in practice, many students confront additional obstacles through language policies that impede their educational aspirations.

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article explore la manière dont les idéologies linguistiques et l'utilisation de différentes langues dans les collèges et universités de Pune, une ville de l'État du Maharashtra, dans l'ouest de l'Inde, conduisent à la catégorisation et à la stéréotypisation des identités des étudiants en fonction de leurs compétences linguistiques, de leur caste, de leur origine rurale et de leur appartenance religieuse. En m'appuyant sur des méthodes ethnographiques et sociolinguistiques d'observation et d'interview d'étudiants et d'enseignants de deux prestigieuses institutions d'enseignement supérieur de Pune, je décris l'ensemble des discours tels qu'ils se manifestent dans des salles de classe plurilingues ainsi que les perceptions et les réflexions de ces mêmes étudiants et enseignants sur l'usage linguistique. L'analyse porte autant sur la formation identitaire dans les milieux d'enseignement supérieur que sur une orientation du système éducatif en Inde qui privilégie une approche centrée sur l'anglais. Actuellement, dans les milieux d'enseignement supérieur à Pune, la reconnaissance formelle des façons dont le recours au marathi et à l'hindi par certains étudiants dans des institutions de langue anglaise est largement négligée et non standardisée. En conclusion, cet article montre bien que, même si elle aborde en théorie la diversité et l'inclusion, l'éducation plurilingue continue de faire en sorte que de nombreux étudiants sont confrontés à davantage d'obstacles découlant des politiques linguistiques mises en place.

Keywords: *identity, language ideology, multilingualism, higher education.*



INTRODUCTION

This article explores how language ideologies and the use of different languages in higher education classrooms in Pune, the second-largest city in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, creates ways to categorize and stereotype student identities based on language proficiency, caste, and socioeconomic backgrounds. I use theories of language ideologies (Gal, 2005; Woolard, 1992; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994) and identity formation (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Gal & Irvine, 2019; Kroskrity, 2000) to contextualize language use in Indian higher education as critical for the production of linguistic identities. My goal is to illuminate the ways these languages are currently used and associated with student identities. In doing so, this article is as much about identity formation at work, through classroom discourse in higher education, as it is about the higher education systems' orientation towards Anglo-centric scholarship.

LANGUAGE IN THE INDIAN UNIVERSITY

In the current education system in Pune, formal recognition of ways that Marathi and Hindi assist students in English medium higher education, or classroom settings where English is the language of instruction, are largely overlooked and unstandardized. As demonstrated in this article, there is a disconnect in the ways that multilingual education addresses diversity and inclusion in theory but not in practice. Many students confront additional obstacles through language policies that have negative impacts on their ability to succeed academically. The evidence thus suggests a need for formalizing the productive roles of students' multilingual language practices in college and university classrooms and a recognition of ways the current educational structures categorize and produce stereotypes of student identities.

Historical Context of Language in Education in India

The British colonial period provided fertile ground for English language educational pedagogies due to opportunities for Indians to work and study, providing they could confirm to British ideals in education and occupation. However, during the late colonial period, Mohandas K. Gandhi addressed audiences from 1916-1928 over English linguistic colonization in education. He called for education in vernacular languages stating, "The question of vernaculars as media of instruction is of national importance," by criticizing how "English educated Indians are the sole custodians of public and patriotic work [and the] neglect of the vernaculars means national suicide" (1922, p. 307). Nevertheless, English remains an important language in the subcontinent and current policies about language. Higher education in India has adapted to contemporary situations and conditions but are no less extensions of a deeply ingrained British colonial educational ethos where the English language remains key (Bhattacharya, 2017; Kachru, 1983; LaDousa, 2010; 2014).



While current trends in English medium education stem from a colonial precedent, liberalization of India's economy in the 1990s made way for education in English to be part of India's stake in a competitive global market (Lukose, 2009; Pennycook, 2006; Proctor, 2014). As the state-run university education system grew and more subsets of Indian society had access to higher education, issues around the instructional languages in these institutions grew as well. It is common to hear opinions that an English language higher education provides a linguistic common ground for students across the country and a window to globally positioned scholarship and occupations. Today, English in India is a language of globalization, a lingua franca connecting the country, and an Indian language among other regional languages (Chandras, 2020; Kachru et al., 2009; Pattanayak, 1981). Despite the long history of the English language in India, a great divide in opinion and policy remains over how different languages are used or sanctioned in higher education. The exploration of language in higher education outlined here shows that student identities are pigeonholed along a singular language, while almost all students are multilingual with multifaceted identities and various definitions of academic success. Moreover, this stereotyping along linguistic identities occurs within a hierarchy of languages in higher education and through ideologies held about language and educational success.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Socializing Language Ideologies

In multilingual settings, language indexes various aspects of identities (Schieffelin et al., 1998; Woolard, 1998) and language ideologies play a role in the indexical process (Blommaert, 1999; Lee & Su, 2019). Speakers attribute meaning to languages and individuals, to connect identities to speakers through "language ideologies" which reveal motivations and behavioral organization as a "mediating link between social forms and forms of talk" (Woolard, 1998, p. 3). Additionally, language ideologies reflect politically charged, purposeful, and directed ways of using language as well as representing shared beliefs about language (Blommaert, 1999). Therefore, viewing identity as a social construction and as part of belonging to social groups indicates that individual's awareness of themselves and their authorship of social contexts and conditions are "contextually situated and ideologically informed" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 605). Identity as located in the social aspects of community belonging indicates that one's identity is less "a matter of innate characteristics and more [...] a process involving socialization in early childhood into socially-constructed ways of being, or learned 'roles'" (Preece, 2009, p. 28). People hold and act upon these attitudes about languages, or language ideologies, which produce and perpetuate inequalities in society constructed around how language use relates and maps onto other categories of identities (Vivanco, 2018).



Multilingual Classroom Discourse Defining Linguistic Identities

Studies of multilingual classrooms and discourse management explore how language ideologies and language use affects an overall view of students and a construction of student identities (De Costa, 2016; Paris, 2013). A “linguistic identity” then contributes to student identity in how well a student meets the expectations of education as set by the academic institution and, in this case, language is a major factor in academic success (Bartlett, 2007; Bartlett & Garcia, 2011; De Costa, 2016). A structure of success is defined by the institution rather than by students or individual teachers and is a process of standardization of education and educational institutions. The institutional model at these colleges and universities in Pune favors students with high English fluency. Therefore, academic identities of successful students are ones that also claim high English fluency as part of their linguistic identities.

A linguistic identity defines the ways teachers interact and treat students based on their linguistic backgrounds in the higher educational setting (De Costa, 2016; De Kock et al, 2018; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). While De Kock et al (2018) define linguistic identities as creating cohesive social groups, I extend this notion to explore dissonances of social cohesion in pedagogy that stereotypes student identities. Language ideologies that emerge through discourse in multilingual classrooms define not only the linguistic identities of students but also shape avenues for academic success. Therefore, the following questions guide this analysis: How are classroom interactions in higher education organized around student linguistic identities and what defines student linguistic identities in these interactional spaces?

METHODOLOGY

Research Sites

Data for this article comes from ethnographic research through participant interviews and observations in 90-minute, multilingual lectures (Hindi, Marathi, and English) at one state university and one college in Pune, Maharashtra (see Table 1 below). Savitribai Phule Pune University, referred to from here on as Pune University, was established in 1949 and is the city’s largest and most prestigious university. The university has forty-six departments and roughly 14,500 students spread across Bachelors, Masters, and PhD degree programs. Affiliated with Pune University, Fergusson College was founded in 1885. Both a junior and a senior college where students earn Bachelor degrees, Fergusson College has about 4,500 students across 29 disciplines. Like Pune University, Fergusson College is ranked highly for the arts and science education it offers. These two higher education institutions have policies that exams and assignments can be completed in either Marathi or English.



	Pune University	Fergusson College
Hours Observed	Three hours/week for 2016-2017 academic year and two months in 2018	Three hours/week for six months in 2016-2017
Locations Observed	90-minute lectures in Anthropology, English, Sociology, Physics departments	90-minute lectures in Sociology and Political Science departments, Sociology student club, 60-minute club meetings
Interview Sample	25 hours of interviews, six professors and ten students, recruited through snowball sampling with written and verbal informed consent	15 hours of interviews, three professors and five students, recruited through snowball sampling with written and verbal informed consent

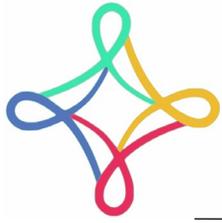
Table 1: Data Collected

Data Collected

Participant observations and interviews are the primary data sources for this study. Interviews I conducted and lectures in which I collected observational data required a high level of comprehension, attention, and active participation and took place in both English and Marathi. The native Marathi-speaking students in classes at Pune University who come from rural Maharashtra have low English proficiency as well as some of the students at the university from European and Middle Eastern countries. Indian students from urban centers in Maharashtra and those from outside the state at Fergusson College and Pune University have high levels of English fluency and most have also attended English-medium schools. All the Indian students speak and understand at least a colloquial level of Hindi. Upon arriving at these institutions, students expect their classes to be in English, especially since almost all written material at the university is in English.

Data Analysis Procedures

In terms of data analysis, I searched my observational notes and interview transcripts for topics relating to language ideology and identity, and coded instances in the collection of data where teachers and students classified behavior by belonging to a linguistic community and practices where translation was used and explicitly noted. Then, I organized these results according to teacher interventions and student experiences to define language connected to socioeconomic class and identity assumptions as stereotypes. These categories include instances of language negotiation interactions in classrooms that defined students by their language proficiency levels in English and Marathi and statements about student identities in relation to their linguistic upbringings and educational backgrounds. Based on the coding of my observation notes, I read the interview transcripts for common themes. These included attitudes about students that



grouped them according to their linguistic strengths in English or Marathi, and in terms of the linguistic ideologies driving pedagogy and teachers' interactions with students. Key themes that emerged were teacher interventions, perceptions, and student reflections of the impacts of classroom interactions on language ideologies to define linguistic identities and identity stereotypes by language.

RESULTS

Teachers

Professors across departments at both Fergusson College and Pune University are astutely aware of students' linguistic and educational backgrounds and use different languages when addressing students with different language backgrounds. Of the nine professors I spoke with across the two schools, all could give me detailed accounts of where each of their students were from, the language medium of their educational backgrounds, and what languages they were most comfortable using. Elaborated below, teachers' attitudes towards the Marathi-speaking student populations, framed in part to the professor's language ideologies about Marathi, politicize rural student identities.

Perceptions

Professor Pandhe (all names are pseudonyms), the head of the sociology department at Pune University, explained the classroom as a political space where, "Students who speak Marathi sometimes insist upon using it rather than using it out of necessity." In her experience, "The village students are very militant about their use of Marathi and how they demand an education in Marathi. They demand to pass just for showing up in Marathi, like they should be treated specially for representing a Marathi-speaking population." Similarly, another professor in the sociology department, Professor Chanda-Apte, noted that, "Marathi is an identity issue and some students feel targeted because they are rural Maharashtrian," and went on to explain that in her experience, students may feel that they have been given a bad grade or are asked to work with another student because of their mother tongue.

Interventions

As my interviews with professors revealed instances of changing classroom practices allowing for more inclusive multilingual interaction in classrooms, each professor made allowances for Marathi in different ways. Professor Chanda-Apte explains how she incorporates multilingual educational policies in her teaching:

Depending on their language strengths, some students will ask questions in Marathi and some do so in English. I am often at a loss for how to grade exams and assignments when they are submitted in Marathi and in different levels of English. Students' low



English levels can obscure the fact that they may be uncertain of exam material where the quality of work differs greatly among students who have a strong command of English, the students who do not, and the students who write in Marathi even though most of their materials and sources are in English. As a result, most students attempt exams in English. This offers students a chance to gauge their level of English and some students with poor English also feel that professors will be lenient with their grades and favor their attempt at using English over the quality of their English. Also, due to the differences between Roman and Devanagari scripts used for English and Marathi, it is a challenge to standardize page or word limits on assignments because the scripts drastically change the amount of information that can be provided.

Professor Chanda-Apte detailed to me how she implements multilingual pedagogy in her lectures to motivate and evaluate students' academic attitudes and performance. Professors feel they must teach in ways that build rapport with groups of students based on their linguistic backgrounds, which signal and index other aspects of their identities such as rurality, caste, and socioeconomic class. Linguistic practices therefore layer and indicate differences between identity categories as connected to politics, histories, and social positions (Gal & Irvine, 2019). Classroom cohesion, therefore, is divided along differentiations among linguistic identities, as also explored by De Kock et al (2018). While rules that allow students to complete exams and assignments in Marathi are intended to make evaluation processes easier for students with limited English skills, it often adds an extra challenge for students to mediate the language of material and the classroom to the language of exams. The efforts to provide access to information in different languages bring into question the purpose of translating materials and lectures into Marathi in the first place as the burden is then put on students to re-translate material into English for their evaluations and for teachers to develop two systems of evaluation.

Another mode of intervention used by professors was to adapt language norms to foster inclusivity. In an interview with sociology students, Mayank, Naina, and their teacher, Professor Majumdar at Fergusson College, explained how their language proficiencies and extracurricular activities are a bridge for the academic success of students who share their Marathi medium educational backgrounds without their added high proficiency in English. The two students organize sociology club events and are both Brahmins from semi-urban Marathi medium schools.

Naina: A year earlier we used to only use English at these events as students thought of them as extensions of lectures.

Professor Majumdar: Soon after, some Marathi-speaking students complained to me saying that they felt excluded and while they could not feel fully comfortable participating in classes due to a language barrier, they did not want to remain excluded from these extracurricular events as well. They felt their classmates who spoke English were also getting extra help and there was no extra help for the Marathi speakers, and they had a



good point we had not considered. So I officially relaxed the English-only rule outside of class so that there was a conscious effort to use Marathi and Hindi at these meetings.

Mayank: More students began to come to meetings and participate.

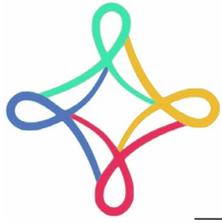
While the purpose of the sociology club meetings at Fergusson College are to elaborate on and debate topics from lectures, participation falls along linguistic lines. These meetings are meant for linguistic inclusivity, the social rules that guide participation reproduce student identities within linguistic categories. Students take it upon themselves to organize extracurricular events outside the classroom such as discussions and film viewings that focus on classroom material.

Since the club is student-led and meetings take place outside classroom hours, students are explicitly encouraged to speak in any language they feel most comfortable using. Some students are extremely comfortable in English and due to learning class material in English or a desire to help improve other students' English, these students continue a discussion of class topics outside of class in English. However, the club is intended for conversational involvement unlike a classroom lecture so most students use conversational Hindi. Hindi becomes the inclusive language at these events used to bring together the Maharashtrian and non-Maharashtrian Indian students in a more colloquial atmosphere. It is also important to note that all students (excluding foreign exchange students) are expected to know Hindi fluently, so teachers who make accommodations for Marathi to be used in their classrooms do not make similar allowances for Hindi. In these ways, Marathi use along with English is not smoothly integrated into the educational models and classroom discourse at the two prestigious institutions. The process Professor Chanda-Apte and Professor Majumdar describe above, divides students within single classrooms based on language and brings to the surface linguistic identity as the main identifying category for students.

Inadvertent consequences and new expectations

Professor Chanda-Apte's attention to the linguistic abilities of her students created a norm for translation in her classes from English to Marathi. With the intention of all her students comprehending classroom material equally, she once spent an entire class organizing students into groups for presentations based on language proficiencies, to create groups with mixed linguistic abilities. The resulting presentations all started with students using English, followed by the second students who translated the English material into Marathi. The students joked with each other before presentations to, "Get ready to understand nothing but nod your head to pretend like you do!" The constant mixing and changing of languages takes a significant amount of class time and often requires great attention for students not proficient in all three languages to follow the lectures, often resulting in resigned frustration.

Despite Professor Chanda-Apte's planning, students paid attention to the language that they understood best. The expectation for translation was demonstrated on various occasions. In one example, a student, who previously stated that she never pays attention when the teacher or her classmates speak in Marathi, mimed to me during one of the presentations by nudging the



classmate sitting next her and saying, "Translation! Translation!" while snapping her fingers. These attitudes towards the multilingual policies in classrooms map onto an intersection of student identities who speak, or are known by their professors and peers by their linguistic identities, which contribute to language ideologies that index interactions categorizing identities (Blommaert, 1999; Lee & Su, 2019).

Student Reflections

Marathi in higher education is defined in discussions with professors as associated with students from non-Brahmin, low socioeconomic statuses and disadvantaged educational backgrounds, often from rural areas who generally struggle when adjusting to the urban academic culture in Pune. Associating Marathi proficiency with non-Brahmin students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds becomes a powerfully motivating ideology placed upon students who speak better Marathi than English.

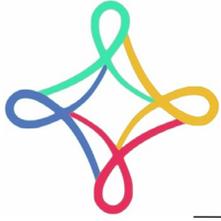
Rakhee's caste and urban social class

In an interview soon after my interview with Professor Majumdar and her students, I met with Rakhee, an alumna from Fergusson College. Rakhee is Brahmin and she attended a prestigious Marathi school in Pune, so while she has a Marathi medium education, she has a socially privileged urban Brahmin caste background, and a prestigious and comprehensive education similar to the pedagogical rigor she found at Fergusson. When I asked about her participation in college clubs before her graduation she described to me her thoughts on language use:

I remember feeling that those moments are important for me and other students from Marathi medium schools. When explicitly offered by other students and the teachers, I think a space to respond in Marathi makes us feel like we can participate as equals with the content of the discussions in our most comfortable language rather than preoccupying ourselves with what language to use and trying to use a language we are not as comfortable using.

These events reinscribe linguistic identities upon students based on the conscious effort to encourage the use of languages other than English. These extracurricular opportunities become spaces that extend the classroom whereby students fall into linguistically labeled categories, though with more freedom to converse. Rakhee continued in our conversation, detailing her thoughts on transitioning from a Marathi medium school to an English medium college:

I had a difficult transition to the school when I first started my studies at Fergusson. I felt like I did not have a lot of English vocabulary, even though I knew I had strong study skills and could understand concepts in class. But people seemed to give so much importance to English and not to understanding the concepts. When I could use Marathi I made sure to try and show I understood the ideas really well. Even when there is a



small Marathi-speaking group, I feel it is necessary that the professor slips into Marathi now and then. Given the class-caste-rural/urban disparity reflected through the linguistic component, I feel that Marathi-speaking students should be treated as a group that needs special attention. So, using Marathi is double-edged.

Such moments create specific spaces for students to speak based on the language they feel most comfortable, while so doing clearly marks them with a Marathi linguistic identity and the assumptions or stereotypes that come along with being non-Brahmin, poor, and educationally disadvantaged. Her urban and caste privilege allowed her to adapt from a Marathi medium education more easily than some of her classmates to the English medium educational norms and structures, such as the use of translations explained earlier.

Balu's rural, non-Brahmin educational challenges

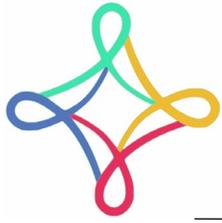
Balu, a non-Brahmin sociology student at Fergusson College, is new to English-medium education and comes from an agricultural village east of Pune. He had stopped by the classroom to ask Professor Majumdar a question and joined our interview. The professor had just explained how students who previously study in Marathi choose the English medium stream at Fergusson because they want to learn English and this is the first opportunity for them to do so. Balu, being one of these students, explained the pressure he felt to learn English:

Balu: I study at least six hours a day to keep up because I am from a rural and Marathi-speaking background but I wanted to study in English. My whole first year [the level of] my English was so low. I was going to pay for a spoken English class. Instead, my friends helped me improve my English.

Professor Majumdar: These classes are exorbitantly priced and offered through many private institutions around the college here. They are intended for students like Balu who struggle with their English curricula.

Naina: Just a week before, I edited and made Balu re-write a Sociology paper about twelve times! I did it to help improve his English writing.

In this conversation about revisions, the focus was entirely on producing an essay in English, regardless of how well Balu grasped the content or could communicate it in Marathi. It was more an evaluation on English proficiency than about an understanding of sociological concepts. While Balu was getting help through the kindness of his classmates and professors, his language abilities were an insurmountable hindrance that was compounded with financial challenges, family obligations, and employment insecurity in his hometown. Balu left this program of study before completing his degree at the end of the 2017 academic year.



Vinay resists a rural, non-Brahmin, linguistic identity

Vinay is a recent graduate of the Environmental Science MS degree program at Pune University. He was a strong student and top of his classes throughout his schooling in his rural hometown in central Maharashtra, until he began higher education. Like Balu, Vinay's caste is non-Brahmin, he is also from a rural Maharashtrian background, and dropped out of his course of study and went home after his first year largely due to language pressures. Vinay recalled his emotional distress while making the decision to drop out of his classes:

I cried on the phone with my father after my first semester. In my classes students spoke Hindi and Marathi with each other but in my degree, the professor and materials were too challenging (in English). The only future I could see for myself was to return home to begin a career as a farmer like my father when I saw I failed three out of my four classes in my first semester, something I had never done before! It was too difficult to keep up in classes that were already conceptually challenging with the added pressure to use only English. In my hometown, Marathi is so prevalent that I also had to learn Hindi as an adult. The mix of English, Marathi, and Hindi in my classes at Pune University, and moving away from home with other social pressures were overwhelming!

Unlike Balu, Vinay eventually returned and completed his degree but not without securing support for learning English through friends and classmates. These efforts are ones Vinay decided to take on his own to ensure he improved his English. He, like many students, undertakes actions that go above and beyond the assistance provided institutionally, to not only learn English, but also to succeed educationally. Vinay's improvement in English ultimately facilitated his educational success and completion of his degree. Vinay and Balu represent only two of the many students who are marginalized by their rural and non-Brahmin identities, which becomes a synonym for Marathi-speaking in higher education. This is due in part to the reserved admission spots for students from rural schools that make rural students' identities more visible and politicized. This mix of rural and urban student backgrounds is unique to higher education in Pune as the city is a large hub for higher education in Maharashtra.

Mina's social class background

Mina is a Sociology Masters student at Pune University who said she has never felt marginalized at the university in Pune due to her Marathi medium background nor her non-Brahmin caste. She made friends easily with the foreign students and spoke English exclusively in class. Unlike Balu and Vinay, she attended schools in the urban center of Mumbai, about 300 kilometers west of Pune. She explained her transition to English medium education:

I think it was that my urban, middle-class upbringing prepared me to move to Pune for university. It is not too different from Mumbai. In terms of language, mixing languages in education is familiar to the style of speaking in many public spaces in Mumbai that I visited as a student anyways. I can speak with everyone, even the foreign students due



to the English classes we had in my Marathi schooling. I also watch a lot of English television and films.

Her socialization and upbringing in middle-class urban settings, though non-Brahmin, are key factors that contribute to her comfort level at Pune University. Mina and her teachers do not tie her identity as closely to Marathi, because she grew up in Mumbai and quickly learned to speak English fluently. Although she attended Marathi-medium schools through her educational career until her MA at Pune University, Mina found that she easily adapted to using English for conversing and academics with the non-Marathi speakers in her classes. She is therefore able to position her identity among the English-medium educated students from urban backgrounds, rather than the students who typically identify by their Marathi-medium education from rural areas or non-Brahmin castes. Mina's position as an English-speaking student allowed her more access to resources and cultural capital in her education and the more she used English over Marathi, the more she became identified based on her English-speaking ability and association to other students with English-speaking linguistic identities.

Unintended Consequences of Multilingual Practices

It becomes clear that students engage with material differently in different languages. In one example from a sociology club meeting with about fifteen students in attendance, students had taken turns presenting their views on a debate topic in English. Finally, the student leader during that meeting paused and said, in Marathi, "Now let's hear from the Marathi students" who were all sitting to one side as a group, granting them space to speak based on language proficiency. The group of four Marathi students sat quietly, listening to the other students speak some Hindi and English, with no intention of contributing to the discussion prior to the student leader calling upon them to participate. When explicitly told to contribute to the discussion based on their language background, which had become their linguistic identities in class, two students provided their opinions on the topic in Marathi. Linguistic identities are therefore internalized by students as well. Statements from students and alumni who participated in this study show an acknowledgement that their student identities solidify around language use in educational interactions such as this one, which in turn affects the course of their studies.

DISCUSSION

Language ideologies reflect politically charged, purposeful, and directed ways of using language, as well, as representing shared beliefs about language. In the examples provided above, language ideologies about Marathi shape professors' views of students and their students' identities.



Impact on Language Practices on Linguistic Identity

Key statements from interviews with teachers reveal how teachers structure class activities to balance the language strengths of students in addition to their overall thoughts and attitudes towards students with stronger Marathi language proficiency than English. In classrooms, teachers unofficially divide students into two categories based on their educational linguistic backgrounds: Marathi or English speakers. Analyzing language ideologies provides a key method of linking these micro-level observations of practices to macro-level systems and doing this allows for stronger consideration of political economic structures, power, social inequality, and constraints on language behavior (Woolard, 1998). Marathi speakers are assumed to be from rural, educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, which in turn reinforces Marathi use in classrooms to be conflated with educationally disadvantaged student identities. English, therefore, is associated with educational advancement (De Costa, 2016; Paris, 2013).

The examples here show how language ideologies are created and perpetuated around the use of Marathi, English, and Hindi in higher education classrooms. In addition, this study shows how these ideologies play into identity construction on behalf of professors ascribing identities onto students (De Costa, 2016). Some non-Marathi speaking students showed a resigned frustration, as evidenced by student comments indicating an attitude of derision for the need to accommodate multiple languages in the classroom.

The structure of the multilingual educational policy alienates students and socializes translation rather than normalizing multilingual comprehension (Bartlett, 2007; Bartlett & Garcia, 2011). The non-Marathi speakers interpret the regular and expected translations from English into Marathi as an accommodation for Marathi-speaking students which squanders valuable class time. However, this can be juxtaposed with Marathi-speakers who disengage from the English portion of lectures and presentations as well. Studies have shown students attend to ways different languages signal different functions in classroom discourse (Probyn, 2009; Proctor, 2014). Therefore not all of the Marathi-speaking students remain attentive throughout English instruction, which is always the first language used in formal lectures and presentations. Only some of the students with limited English and strong Marathi attend to the English used in class due to socialization to English instruction or personal interest. However, the students without Marathi fluency do not approach the Marathi portions of lecture or presentations in the same way as a means to learn Marathi. The effect is that there appears to be two classes held simultaneously based on language— one in English and one in Marathi.

Linguistic Identities and Learner Experiences

Students coming to universities in Pune from rural backgrounds are often assumed to have an education that inadequately prepares them for the rigor of urban higher education. This persists as a stereotype of rural education and a pressure of liberalization and globalization in India (Kachru et al., 2009; Lukose, 2009; Proctor, 2014). A linguistically inclusive approach presents comprehension challenges to all students, requiring professors to identify students' needs based



on their language proficiencies, so they can teach towards students' strengths for greater equality of information dissemination. Students' attitudes and interactions show that during Marathi instruction, students comfortably fluent in English disengage. The result is often a stereotype conflating students from Marathi medium educational backgrounds with socioeconomic, non-Brahmin caste forms, and educational disadvantage (Pattanayak, 1981; Proctor, 2014). In multilingual settings where values are attributed to speakers' different linguistic strengths, languages index inequalities between identity categories (Schieffelin et al., 1998; Woolard, 1998).

This study showed that teachers negotiate language strengths in the classroom, and how student identities become categorized based on dichotomies of urban versus rural, Brahmin versus non-Brahmin caste, and Marathi-speaking backgrounds. The three non-Brahmin students included in this study present a dynamic sample set of Marathi speaking student identities in higher education. Where Balu and Vinay are both from non-Brahmin rural backgrounds, they faced challenges in their abilities to adapt to the medium of English in higher education in an urban setting. The attitude about access, exposure, and socioeconomic status related to English relates to LaDousa's (2010) and Lukose's (2009) studies where rural backgrounds are often conflated with regional languages and relative rural poverty. The intersection of rurality and socioeconomic class contextually situated in urban higher education institutions produces and perpetuates the language ideology attached to Marathi-speaking students in these settings (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). These connotations display an ideology of Marathi as a sort of deficiency or disability where speakers need special attention from a professor who can use the language when they feel a need to do so (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011).

Student attitudes of respecting allowances made for Marathi and students who prefer to speak Marathi in classrooms, demonstrates that higher education is not only for higher degrees and specialization, but for students like Balu and Vinay, it was the first time in their educational careers where they branched out of familiar settings— socially and linguistically. Mina found that it was a time to shape her identity along English medium educational forms, and she did this through aligning herself with the English-speaking foreign students and by using only English in her classes and assignments to excel in her studies (Bartlett, 2007). Coming from Mumbai, the large, urban state capital, Mina never faced the difficulties that Vinay and Balu faced as students from rural backgrounds. Her socioeconomic class from an urban setting intersected differently with her Marathi educational background. She effectively distanced herself from her Marathi medium background and differentiated herself from her classmates from rural backgrounds who speak primarily Marathi in class. Semi-urban and urban, Brahmin, Marathi-speaking students like Naina and Rakhee at Fergusson College, express that for higher education to be more inclusive and egalitarian, it should be necessary and accepted to appreciate and use Marathi in higher education. Although teachers and students in various departments in the two higher educational institutions know that they are to only use English, they "smuggle the vernacular into the classroom," as there are institutional and ideological barriers to allowing for complete English medium classrooms (Probyn, 2009).



IMPLICATIONS

This study explores language ideologies based on language use in relation to pedagogy, identities, and power-structures in education. Ideologies surrounding Marathi in higher education organize students into hierarchical categories based on who the education works best for— those who can speak English as an academic and global language, and those who speak Marathi who need linguistic concessions to be made for their inclusion and participation in higher education. On top of the social adjustment students make from secondary school to colleges and universities, English is seen to be an academic language necessary for success in higher education. Students who can conform to expected and accepted academic speech styles are then viewed as good and successful students. The structure of education set up by Maharashtra's higher education system, and the informal roles Hindi, Marathi, and English play within the system, assign meanings to the languages and the assumptions tied to those languages, labeling students based on their language proficiencies. Since university students pay attention to moments when the professor speaks different languages or translates parts of the lectures, as a sign that the professor is speaking either to them or to another linguistic group, students and teachers have internalized which language applies to them, which shapes or pigeonholes student identities.

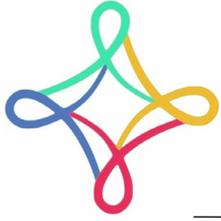
Having multilingual structures and well-intention teachers as educational policy is not enough. Inclusive language strategies benefit some students who are able to conform their identities in ways that intersect through class, caste, and language to the institutionalized spaces for Marathi in an English medium higher education system. Impacts of social class and caste as mediators of multilingualism in higher education categorizes student linguistic identities monolingually where a "Marathi" identity is stereotyped as a Hindu, rural, non-Brahmin, and educationally disenfranchised. This takes into consideration that the socially stratified caste systems in India place Brahmins at a position of privilege within education and other social spheres. Therefore, implementing multilingual policies for diversity and inclusion of educationally and linguistically marginalized students are more complicated when viewed in practice. Language becomes a contentious divider marking students based on caste and opportunities, facilitated through urban, middle-class backgrounds when teachers identify and categorize students by linguistic abilities and teach towards those abilities. Teachers need to be aware of how their perceptions of student linguistic identities affect pedagogy that impacts various groups of students differently, and be more critical of the power-structures aligned with intersections of identity categories that shape the backgrounds of their students.

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