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Transmission of cultural codes through language: Study of Gujarati Diaspora in Lisbon, Portugal

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Abstract

"Through all its verbal and non–verbal aspects, language embodies cultural reality. (Kramsch 1998)."

Migration entails a combination of several socio-cultural and economic situations that enmesh to form a migrant's identity. In an attempt to trace and reconnect to one's roots to develop a sense of the diasporic self, the struggles of identity, location of the home and a sense of need to belong surfaces (Safran 1991). One mode of remaining connected with the homeland is through language. The aim of this research is to provide an insight into how the concept of India and 'Indian-ness' is built among the youngest generation of Gujarati Hindu diaspora in Lisbon, Portugal through the learning of the Gujarati language. The process of creating, maintaining and accepting the Indian identity involves the intertwining of nationality and identity which are layered in the transmission of cultural codes like language which in turn affect the concept of identity in diaspora. The study conducted through in-depth interviews in the Gujarati language classes held at Radha Krishna Temple, Lumiar, in Lisbon elaborates the subtlety of this transfer and embodiment of cultural codes among the members of the Gujarati diaspora. The Gujarati language classes highlight the endeavour of the Gujarati Diaspora as a whole to retain and continuously reconnect with the 'Indian' identity through language.

Keywords: Gujarati diaspora, transnationalism, cultural codes, language, identity

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Transmission of cultural codes through language: Study of Gujarati Diaspora in Lisbon, Portugal

Ratna Bharati B

"Through all its verbal and non–verbal aspects, language embodies cultural reality (Kramsch and Widdowson 1998, 3)."

Migration entails a combination of several socio-cultural and economic situations that enmesh to form a migrant's identity. In an attempt to reconnect to one's roots to develop a sense of the diasporic self, the struggles of identity, location of the home and a sense of need to belong surface (Safran 1991). One mode of staying connected with the homeland is through language. Diaspora communities are linked by language which involves the communication's vehicle in its triple function: information or messaging, network and transactional or identity negotiation (Goudenhooft 2015). The research looks into the formation of the concept of India and Indian-ness among the youngest generation (between the ages of three to fifteen) of Gujarati diaspora in Lisbon, Portugal through the learning of the Gujarati language.

The paper outlines how the diasporic self develops and sustains itself as an amalgamation of home and 'host-land' through the transmission of cultural codes through language among the youngest generation of Gujarati Diaspora in Lisbon, Portugal. Apart from the introduction, background and methods, the paper contains four sections: Transmission of cultural codes through language, language and perceived cultural reality, home and sense of belonging, and becoming 'Indian' through the Gujarati language: understanding how language creates 'citizens-in-transit' and simultaneous transnational existence.

The process of creating, maintaining and accepting the Indian identity involves the intertwining of the ideas of kinship, home, citizenship and religion which are layered in the transmission of cultural codes like language which in turn affect the impression of identity in the diaspora. Through in-depth interviews of teachers, students and their parents, the study conducted in the Gujarati language classes held at Radha Krishna Temple, Comunidade Hindu de Portugal (Hindu community of Portugal) in Lumiar, Lisbon, Portugal, elaborates the subtlety of this transfer and embodiment of cultural codes among the members of Gujarati diaspora between the ages of three to fifteen. The student respondents of the study are Gujaratis and all citizens of Portugal. Most of them have not visited India. The teachers are born in Kenya and Mozambique, whose Indian origins are Porbandar, Gujarat or Diu, Gujarat.

The aim of Gujarati classes is to recreate a social space to engage with a 'perceived homeland'. With simple rules like '*Gujarati bolo karo class ma*' (Speak Gujarati in class), the Gujarati classes help bring 'India' into the daily lives of the students, the routine of the class leads to talking and exploring about India on a regular basis. Their conversations ranged from weather to way of living, causing children to develop a sense of belonging, gradually. The Gujarati language classes highlight the attempt of the Indian Diaspora as a whole to retain, reclaim and reconnect with the 'Indian' identity while retaining the Portuguese culture. The paper outlines how the diasporic self develops and sustains itself as an amalgamation of home and 'host-land' through the transmission of cultural codes through language among the youngest generation of the Gujarati Diaspora in Lisbon, Portugal. It further implies that the transmission of cultural codes through language is not just a means of survival but a process that helps in the making of the diasporic self by the blurring of territorial boundaries through imagination.

The sections delineate in detail how the transmission of cultural codes occurs through the Gujarati language and how this helps in constructing the diasporic self and redefining citizenship, India and 'Indian-ness'.

Diaspora, Transnationalism, Home and Identity

The term diaspora finds its roots in the Greek language and is based on a translation of the Hebrew word, *Galut*. Based on *spiro* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over), in Ancient Greece, the word referred to migration and colonisation. In Hebrew, "the term initially referred to the setting of colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile and has assumed a more general connotation of people settled away from their ancestral homelands (Shuval 2000)". The members of the diaspora are known to remain connected with their homeland through several means - virtual and physical. Through the expansion of connectivity in the

world, a theoretical approach that analyzes the behaviour and networks that are maintained globally by the migrants is transnationalism.

Transnationalism can be defined as "the process of migrants remain[ing] strongly connected to their homelands even as they become incorporated into the [United States]. Migrants use a variety of transnational political, religious, and civic arenas to forge a social relationship, earn their livelihoods, and exercise their rights across borders (Levitt 2004)".

"Home, it has been said, is not where one belongs to, but where one starts from (Nasta 2002)."

Home as a construct has been understood in several different perceptions – imagined, constructed, perceptive, performative and as an 'essence', not just as a geographical entity or merely a landscape. These variations in the understanding of 'home' primarily occur due to different understandings of people, especially those who migrate from one place to the other. Although the process of migration might occur due to various reasons, the continual need to 'belong' in terms of being 'accepted' and 'feel like home' or 'feel at home' are common especially among people of Gujarati Diaspora whose land of origin, land of birth and land of the settlement are not the same. The understanding of 'home' also lies in the means of self-perception.

The perception of 'home' can be navigated through different means: physically – a land in which people live - and imaginatively. Furthermore, the image of 'home' can be created not only by observing rituals and religious festivals but also by socializing among the same ethnic group. In various instances, the theory of home can also be defined as a 'search'. The process of 'search' through cultural reproduction itself becomes 'home'. According to Brah, "The double or triple or multi-placedness of 'home' in the imagery of the people in the diaspora does not mean that such groups do not feel anchored in the place of their settlement (Brah 1996, 194)".

Vertovec (2001) thereby aptly questions if transnationalism and transnational identity serve as a mode of resistance or in contrast, a method to blend in. It can be only said that the development of transnational identity can be a means for the diaspora to locate themselves with respect to the environment they inhabit. The diaspora may not in exact terms 'belong' to more than one country in terms of citizenship, territory but the diaspora as a community attempts to create a sense of belonging that transcends various categories such as nationality, religion, citizenship while being rooted in the culture of its origin.

Language, Religion, Cultural Codes and Cultural Reality

The Gujarati classes are deeply rooted in creating 'India' through its festivals, mythology, folk tales, ancient mathematics, nationalistic songs which are intertwined with the thought of religion. Through pictures, charts and sometimes videos, the students are well acquainted with different religions and festivals in India. During the Gujarati classes, students are encouraged to identify and celebrate all festivals. The secular nature of the Gujarati classes is evident in explaining the idea of India to students as a 'multicultural' and 'plural' one. Though the language classes happen in the temple premises, the language of Gujarati and Gujarati culture is open to all. Similarly, the view of the nation is introduced to children in terms of symbols like a national flag, bird, flower, animal and so on. Students know that there is no particular national language. Though the complexities cannot be explained as children are too young, they are made to understand the notion of "unity in diversity" by learning about different kinds of clothing styles, languages, festivals and religions. Students are made to learn that they are a part of Indian culture and history.

Students are also taught the national song of India 'Vande Mataram' and are aware that all are supposed to stand if and when the Indian national anthem 'Jana Gana Mana' is sung. They are able to understand the idea of India through ancient, pre and post-independent India. The freedom struggle is explained in detail. The teachers explain that this is done to impart a sense of pride and humility about being Indians.

"Students are fascinated to hear the story about Dandi March, an act of nonviolent civil disobedience movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930. They know he was a national leader and was from Porbandar, Gujarat (teacher, female, 44)."

"All our hardships are explained, who we are, what we did, where we came from and why we still are Indians. They are not taught all this in school, you know. If we don't tell them, who will? I'm not asking them to become national heroes but how can they call themselves Indians if they don't know who we are, I am creating a memory of India for them, they will know what I know (Teacher, female,50)."

In the Gujarati classes, the teachers do not just function as instructors but as fellow Indians who are helping others to become fellow Indians. This is done to develop a 'holistic' understanding of the identity of being Indian.

Though language, nationalism and loyalties are often linked, the diaspora's interest in learning about India cannot be called nationalism but it is instrumental in building the different layers of identity (Vertovec 2004). As explained by Brah, nationalism is closely linked to "homing desires" (Brah 1996). The Gujarati diaspora is keen on establishing their sense of socio-cultural reality, of being transnational Gujaratis and Indians. This explains that transnationalism is not just about engaging with the homeland but also about engaging with people like and unlike themselves, the migrants in order to be able to create a transnational community.

Cultural codes are a means and a mechanism to both classify and signify various symbolisms which encode traditions as practices which in turn develop into sources of identification for a particular culture. This mechanism is not only limited to Gujarati classes, but they also are a part of a whole system of cultural symbolism.

As the definition of culture is largely based on 'shared meanings' (Hall, Evans and Nixon 2013), the term 'cultural codes' intends to refer to the 'cultural systems' that are upheld by the Gujarati Diaspora. However, does sharing of meanings indicate that culture is merely replicated? Cultural codes are reproduced by creating a platform that is feasible for transmission intend to integrate the diaspora through a representation of cultural practices with their homeland. However, the Gujarati diaspora in the process of transmission creates its own set of cultural codes that are an amalgamation of both, 'home' and 'host' cultures.

Background

The Gujarati community in Lisbon, Portugal is mostly inhabited by people who travelled from Diu, Gujarat, India to Mozambique, Africa and later to Portugal, following its independence in 1974 (Cachado 2017). The community networks are equally and strongly maintained despite the twice migration, which creates a significant difference in the perception of Indian identity.

Although affluent Gujarati traders had a centuries-old history of international trade, others were driven by more immediate needs. During the 1860s, rural families in Surat profited from the short-lived cotton boom resulting from southern states in America stopping cotton production during the American Civil War. When the boom ended, many families were left destitute. In several African countries, following independence, Indians were discriminated against in jobs (Kenya, Uganda and Guyana), expelled (Aden, Burma and Uganda), repatriated (Sri Lanka) or felt insecure and began emigrating (Surinam and Fiji) (Vahed 2010). The Hindu community in Portugal began to develop in 1975. The population of Indian origin living in Portugal can be divided into three distinct regional groups. The majority comes from Gujarat and includes Hindus and Muslims; Christians are mainly from Goa and Sikhs come from Punjab (Lourenco 2013).

Before migrating to Portugal, Portuguese Gujarati families (Hindus, Muslims including Ismailis) lived mostly in Mozambique, though this migration from India occurred in different waves (between the early twentieth century and after the Second World War). Some of these Gujarati families came from Diu, which were under Portuguese colonial rule along with Goa and Daman until 1961. Most of the families from Diu that migrated to East Africa chose to settle in Mozambique, another Portuguese colony that gained independence in 1975. These migration flows were preceded by another older and broader movement (Lourenco 2013). Over the centuries, regular migrations took place from South Asia to East Africa given maritime traffic in the Indian Ocean (McPherson 1988).

According to the report (*Population (Estimate/Assumed) Of Overseas Indians: Country-Wise* 2021) published by the Ministry of External Affairs, India, the total number of Indians in Portugal is 70,657. This includes the NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) and PIOs (Person of Indian Origin) residing there.

Methods

This study draws on fieldwork conducted in Gujarati classes organised at Radha Krishna temple, Lumiar in Lisbon, Portugal in 2015. Gujarati classes at the temple have been continuing. The Radha Krishna temple was founded in the year 1998 ("Gujaratis In Portugal: Vanzas, Darjis And Others From Diu And Gujarat – Diu Vanza Darji Samaj UK" 2021) and was set to be groomed as a centre for various socio-cultural, educational and religious activities. Even before the construction of the temple was completed, Gujarati classes were organised on the premises. Gujarati classes are held in a few schools in Lisbon on Saturdays. The Radha Krishna temple website ("Aulas De Gujarati – Comunidade Hindu" 2021) mentions that Gujarati classes have been functioning from 2010 till the present. However, the Gujarati classes were organised at the social centre located in the temple as part of other scheduled welfare activities (Moren-Alegret 2001) even before the temple was fully built. Therefore, people identify the Gujarati classes as a social activity and not necessarily as a religious activity. The temple itself is an extremely popular symbol of inclusivity. Most of the research conducted was done in the form of ethnography. The major focus was to interview people and understand their opinions related to India and Indian-ness, the research took the course of everyday conversation. For instance, when one respondent, a ten-year-old male, a student of Gujarati language classes, was asked what he thought about India, he said he found it 'nice'. And further explained, that though he had never been there, India might be similar to how it was explained in the Gujarati class. Since most students in the class were minors, they were interviewed in the presence of their teachers and the parents were interviewed in detail while dropping or picking up their children from the Gujarati class.

Apart from the semi-structured interviews, participant observation during student-teacher interaction and group discussions between parents and teachers were used to understand how language learning helped the students. The process of participant observation helps in capturing the tone and setting of the class, and it was noted that though the manner of teaching is semi-formal, the environment was conducive to building social networks. For instance, all students are taken out for a mini picnic once a week where

they are asked to bring different kinds of Indian snacks from home to share with each other. Sometimes, all students visit the canteen located inside the temple ("Quem Somos – Comunidade Hindu" 2021) establishment after a test or class to have a good time. These efforts are meant to forge better bonds with each other and not limit interaction only to class.

Twenty-six people were interviewed including parents of twelve students, twelve students and two teachers present at the Gujarati class. One of all the research participants was a Portuguese lady (40) married to a Gujarati Indian man whose son attends the Gujarati classes. There are a total of seventeen students in the class, however, students aged between three to eight (primary classes) were allowed to be a part of participant observation and not the interview process. Specifically, interviews with seven people were conducted as follows: Families, mainly the parents of the students who attended the Gujarati class (women 40-50 years old and men 40- 55 years old) who were second-generation immigrants to Portugal. All the families are twice migrants who first migrated from Diu to Mozambique and then to Portugal. Interviews with representatives, two teachers from Gujarati school were taken that offer valuable insight into how engagement in socializing, building networks contributed to the transmission of cultural codes.

Transmission of cultural codes through language

The learning of the Gujarati language is not constrained to mere reading and writing. The aim of the Gujarati classes is to be able to shape the thinking and understanding of students to 'imagine' India. The mythological short stories, moral fables serve as a platform to explain and introduce children to 'Indian values' and also to initiate them into the transnational Gujarati community. Therefore, from Panchatantra to Arabian nights, all kinds of stories are taught. The Gujarati classes are conducted at the temple premises every Saturday from 3-6 pm. The academic sessions are held from September to June every year, Students are divided into two groups - primary and secondary - one group learns Gujarati alphabets (usually children aged three to eight years) and the other group is taught a combination of complex activities (children aged from seven to fifteen years). Major activities taught are colouring, learning names of days, months in the form of songs, daily prayer in Gujarati. It must be mentioned that daily prayer is optional for every student. Students above the age of fifteen are not accepted. Subjects taught include mathematics, riddles, stories, festivals. Language has a sense of symbolic purpose as learning a language inculcates a 'sense of belonging' to its origins and community.

Two teachers: Teacher One (50, female, BA Hindi) and Teacher Two (44, female, BA Hindi). Teachers are paid for their commute and they choose to take no salary because the teaching is seen to be more of a social endeavour to bring about a feeling of community. The students, however, pay 20 euros that go to the temple account. While the classes are open to all, the majority of the students belong to the Hindu community with ancestral roots in Daman and Diu in Gujarat. Most of the students' parents hailed from Mozambique in Africa. There is no direct relation of children to India. The Gujarati students are not a homogenous category. Some students are half-Gujarati and half-Portuguese. Students converse in Portuguese. Gujarati words and meanings are explained in Portuguese. Oral and written exams are conducted to promote students to the next level. Students often attend the 'aarti', a Hindu religious ritual of worship, in which light from wicks soaked in ghee or camphor is offered to one or more deities ("Aarti" 2021) in the temple after the exams are over. This practice is not mandatory, and the permission of parents is sought before. There is also the non-verbal aspect of language (Kramsch and Widdowson 1998), which refers to the context and social dimension of language. The Gujarati classes taught in Lisbon mostly contain pictorial charts, maps of India, photos of festivals in order to explain the symbolic importance of language with identity. This information is not limited to any one particular religion but includes all faiths. Such an environment in class is created to associate the pictures with language so that students are able to 'imagine' a homeland. By making it mandatory for students to speak in Gujarati during the class, its usage is 'normalized' in surroundings where it is not common to speak in an Indian language.

Teaching and pedagogy are not simply about the social construction of knowledge, values, and experiences; it is also a performative practice embodied in the lived interactions among educators, audiences, texts, and institutional formations. Pedagogy, at its best, implies that learning takes place across a spectrum of social practices and settings (Giroux 2010). In this case, where the students are already familiar with Portuguese, the idea of teaching the Gujarati language in Portuguese for better understanding, is a space where the construction of the diasporic self begins.

A respondent's mother (female, 45) says, "I make them (children 9 and 10 years old) speak Gujarati at home but making them write requires a lot of discipline so I send them to Gujarati classes. See, we are Gujaratis, they already know Portuguese, it is taught in school, but they need to know Gujarati, it is our identity."

Language can be used as a tool in two ways: 1. Construction of an 'Indian' identity 2. Maintenance of an 'Indian' identity. The construction of an Indian identity lies in the fact that children are 'introduced' to the writing of the language. A respondent (female, 40) says, "We always spoke Gujarati at home but writing is more difficult, but if I learn how to write it then I know the whole of it." The term 'whole' implies the causality of understanding language as speech and a more concrete understanding of language in the form of writing. The respondents distinguish the 'importance of language' by situating it in terms of surroundings. In the Gujarati Diaspora, all those interviewed were fluent in the Portuguese language, both in terms of reading and writing. Most of them

knew Hindi and some of them were familiar with English as well. But, knowing each language represented a different set of identities. For instance, a respondent, male, 40, describes, 'I have to make him learn English because it is a universal language, everybody speaks English, big companies hire people who speak English so I go to the English classes too'.

The process of learning itself is a multidimensional one when the context, meaning and text are all well required to be understood. Hence, there are two codes that come into play – one is the conceptual code and the other is the language code (Giroux 2010).

Language and Perceived Cultural Reality

Another extremely important aspect of learning and teaching Gujarati to younger generation members of the Gujarati diaspora in Lisbon, Portugal is to be able to maintain the intergenerational connection. A respondent, mother (40) of an eleven-year-old boy (half- Gujarati and a half – Portuguese) who takes the Gujarati classes adds, "His grandfather wants to tell him so many stories". This creates a distance as the relation is entirely dependent on communication.

"Gujarati is difficult. I've been coming to the class for a few years now. If they didn't explain it in Portuguese, I would not understand anything at all but now when my dadaji [grandfather] speaks in Gujarati, I understand."(respondent, male, 11)

The Gujarati language serves as a major catalyst in ensuring the continuation of familial relations. As known, the familial network (Lourenço and Cachado 2012) is the basis for transnational activities and communication is a major factor in building the ties. Though the children born in Lisbon are naturalized citizens of Portugal and are able to converse in Portuguese fluently, the older members in the community and family are not able to do so. This fact is in direct contradiction with the immediate reality of children's surroundings where Portuguese is the language of everyday communication. The moment students realize that certain family members are not familiar with Portuguese but with Gujarati, it establishes a thought that Gujarati is not just an Indian language but their own language.

The students present in the Gujarati classes have not seen India but maintain a sense of connectedness. In this case, it can be said that the learning of the Gujarati language also acts as a bridge between the present and the past.

"We cannot completely adjust there. We got used to Europeans, Indians today really are very different from us even in Gujarat but it is a relief that they all speak Gujarati as we know (Respondent, male, 54)."

Due to the double migration involved in the case of the Gujarati diaspora, the immediate connection to India is not too strong, however, the 'idea' of contemporary India is being 'relearned' through temporary visits and media remains a strong possibility. The work which several respondents stressed was 'roots'. The term 'root' means the source or origin of a thing ("Root" 2021). Interestingly, most respondents were born and raised in Portugal. Yet, the term root signified the root of the community, not their own self. This belief arises out of both, a sense of belonging as well as a willingness to belong.

The learning of language near the temple premises serves as a socio-cultural capital where people can connect with others belonging to the same community. However, the various occasions of learning the Gujarati language binds the people to the language as well as provide them with an identity of being 'Indian' not as people who belong to a particular religion, herein lies the assertion of culture and identity.

It is essential to understand the link between language and imagination. One of the main aspects of the paper is also to understand that the diasporic self seeks to create a transnational space that is inclusive and dynamic rather than static. The idea of discourse (language use in speech and writing) as "social practice" implying a dialectical relationship between the discursive event and situations, institutions, social structure, where there is a two-way influence on every element of the relationship shaping and being shaped by others (Goudenhooft 2015). This process gives a platform for the making of the diasporic self, as an amalgamation of home and 'host-land', where the third space is created.

Bhabha defines hybridity as a form of in-between space, which he terms the "third space", a space inherently critical of essentialism and formulations of the original or original culture. He writes, "For me, the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge (Bhabha 1991, 211)". The other positions that essentially emerge at the dimensions of the "third space" must be studied concerning the different parameters involved, for instance, place of origin, place of birth and place of settlement. This enables us to understand that each kind of space has its significance for an individual and the sense of community that develops from the third space is unique because, in this case, the roots are chosen and cultivated. Also, the chosen roots are continuously recultivated and learnt by transmitting cultural codes through the Gujarati language. Though the "homeland" is recreated through the maintenance of various traditions and rituals, to be able to 'imagine' the place physically and to identify the relation of the self with the place is also the process of reconstruction of identity which the Gujarati classes enable its students to do.

The emphasis on the cultural spaces of the nation –spaces that can be marked and then crossed –leads to the critical question: what are the actual physical spaces in which

these boundaries are crossed and erased? (Mitchell 1997). Physical presence is not always a necessary factor to build a sense of belonging.

Hall notes that "the very process of identification through which we project ourselves into cultural identities has become more open-ended, variable and problematic (Hall and Gay 2006)". The function of identity can be understood to provide an interface between the self and the surroundings. The supposition of transnationalism accurately encompasses both the notion of self and surroundings by dealing with them as not necessarily physical and geographical. This, in turn, favours the possibility of simultaneous existence. In this case, identity becomes a "moveable feast" formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways that we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems that surround us (Hall and Gay 2006).

Anderson addressed the state as imagined, limited, and sovereign because it has finite boundaries, pluralism of religions and horizontal comradeship (Anderson 2006). Delving further, transnationalism addresses precisely the fact that boundaries are not finite and that comradeship is not just horizontal but multidimensional - though the term multi-dimensional in this case will be referred to as three-dimensional to provide focus on the selectively of engagement based on parameters of birth, origin and settlement. Therefore, even if the borders are not finite, yet the transnational actions are bounded in two levels: first by the understanding of grounded reality, socially constructed by the networks that people form and move through, and second by the policies and practices of territorially- based sending and receiving local and national communities (Smith and Guarnizo 1998).

Home and Sense of Belonging

The context of displacement provides a point of encounter between an authority and an alien. Self-fashioning is at once the mental adjustment to combat the pangs of physical dislocation and at the same time is the physical adjustment to allay the sense of alienation and rootlessness (Shankar Saha 2012).

In Gujarati language classes, the respondents themselves ricocheted between the position of Self and Other. This primarily happened as the location of 'self' seemed to be problematic, the love for surroundings juxtaposed with the love for origins. The second-generation respondents were well aware that their parents hailed from Mozambique, Africa. The identity location also very heavily depends on the public and private spaces which the diaspora inhabits.

The transmission of cultural codes is also a mechanism of how the diaspora engages with the outer world – the immediate surroundings. As a result, the identity cannot be merely divided into self and other - there are deeper layers formed where the both consequently intertwine – sometimes only for an instance, sometimes for longer and sometimes periodically. Ethnic identity is a complex phenomenon and can only be understood if it is viewed as a multifaceted, selective process rather than as a 'unidimensional and static characteristic' (Harris and Education Research and Development Committee 1980, 9).

The Gujarati language classes 'cultivate' a spirit of being Indian, systematically. By explaining the diversity present in India, the Gujarati classes explain to students the essence of 'Indian values' lies in acceptance and embracing of differences. This cultivation occurs through the transmission of cultural codes.

Becoming 'Indian' through the Gujarati language: Understanding how language creates 'Citizens-in-transit' and simultaneous transnational existence

Transnationalism is a process by which migrants, through their daily life activities and social, economic, and political relations, create social fields that cross national boundaries (Basch, Schiller and Blanc 1993).

In the lives of migrants, transnational and national social spaces overlap and are influenced by political, economic and cultural factors. The outlook of transnationalism has been used to sketch, lineate and understand the various forms of transactions – social, economic and political - that happen across borders.

"Home is not a destination, it is a journey and we travel through our language". (Respondent, female, 43)

Deleuze and Guattari are specifically interested in deterritorialization and reterritorialization as they relate to people who "live in a language that is not their own" (Brown 2005). The process of transnationalism implies navigating between a sphere of different dichotomies: territorialization and deterritorialization (since the likeness of a territory is intricately linked to the formation and existence of a nation-state), global and local, national and international, assimilation and distinctiveness (culture shock), macro and micro. Another proposition for people in the diaspora is often under (self) definition and negotiation: citizenship. Since the students in Gujarati classes are too young to understand the formal concept of citizenship, they are taught about 'plural identities' where the teachers explain that they can be Indian and Portuguese simultaneously and that it is not mandatory to live or visit India to identify as an Indian.

In the last decades, social sciences have dealt in a comprehensive way with the knowledge of citizenship, and more recently they have focused on the relationship between migration and citizens. In her agenda-setting book *The Limits of Citizens*hip, Yasemin Soysal (2007) claims that territorial embeddedness on the one hand and universal human rights on the other have brought in an era of post-national citizenship that transcends the nation-state. These theories

assume that political and institutional re-territorialization is creating multi-dimensional, differentiated citizenship where factors such as gender, class and spatial belonging intermingle, creating cosmopolitan citizenship that denies fixed ethnic identities and coherent forms of national belonging (van Houtum 2002). The learning of the Gujarati language enables the process of being cosmopolitan while retaining the roots and creating a sense of belonging.

I will select Ong's notion of 'flexible citizenship', which is mostly adequate for research within the field of transnational migration, a process that "takes place within fluid social spaces that are constantly reworked through migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society" (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). The learning of the Gujarati language helps the Gujarati diaspora negotiate their positionality while learning about surroundings and origins simultaneously. This positionality, in turn, affects the postulation of citizenship as we know it. For Aihwa Ong, "Flexible citizenship refers to the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions" (Ong 1999, 6). As such, passports become "less and fewer attestations of citizenship, let alone of loyalty to a protective nation-state, than of claims to participate in labour markets" (Anderson 1994, 323).

Authors of transnational migration have argued that the use of citizenship as an organizing concept in social science research is often embedded in nationalist assumptions and as such fails to capture the complexities of transnational processes (Levitt and Schiller 2004). Thus, looking at citizenship through a transnational lens I hope to avoid the pitfalls of "methodological nationalism". Thereby implying that the Gujarati diaspora's desire to maintain a connection with India is more of an attempt to reconfigure a sense of self with respect to surroundings. As Ong explains: "Trans denotes both moving through space or across lines, as well as changing the nature of something" (Ong 1999, 4). As such the global movement of people, ideas, products and capital do not negate the significance of the nation-states and the citizenship they confer but they do change them.

The experience of learning a language and creating a cultural reality shows that physical presence may not be the only criteria to establish a sense of belonging to a particular place. Ong's (1999) book *Flexible Citizenship, The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* is an example of what anthropologists call "studying up"; while a great deal of migration research deals with poor migrants, Ong focused on the wealthy and powerful Chinese migrants. Her exploration of the lives of these hyper-mobile migrants with a knack for thriving in conditions of political insecurity as well as in the turbulence of global trade gave a basis for a move beyond the understanding of citizenship as an important step on the path to integration into a migrant's "host" country. For these "people always in transit" (Ong 1999, 2) citizenship is something to be strategically accumulated because it facilitates global business and heightens opportunities. As such citizenship is more than just a passport but it also includes cultural capital such as language (English), education, and dress that will facilitate their positions, economic negotiations and cultural acceptance in different geographic sites (Ong 1999).

Conclusion

The main aim of the paper is to depict how diasporic self, sense of belonging, citizenship and simultaneous transnational existence develop among the youngest generation of Gujarati Diaspora in Lisbon, Portugal through the transmission of cultural codes in the Gujarati language. The understanding of language and its transmission is integral to understanding how the teaching and learning of Gujarati language shape imagination and creates a transnational space for the members of the Gujarati Diaspora to have a 'simultaneous' existence between home and 'host-land'. The research also intends to convey that language recreates the meaning of remaining connected to 'home' without physical presence. Further, by enabling students to understand the 'multicultural' composition of India in terms of different religions, languages, festivals and cultures, the objective of the Gujarati classes is to shape an 'Indian' identity that transcends such categories. The ethnolinguistic vitality theory by Giles and Johnson suggests that migrants who see themselves as belonging to numerous different overlapping groups should possess a more diffuse social identity than persons who view themselves as members of only one or two groups (Giles and Johnson 1987, 72). However, the study indicates that the learning and transmission of cultural codes through language are not just a means of survival but also enable the members of the diaspora to formulate a self that is a summation of home and 'host-land'.

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