

A STUDY OF LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT IN THE SYLHETI COMMUNITY IN LEEDS

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Abstract

This study of language maintenance and shift (LMS) is the first sociolinguistic investigation of a cross generational survey of language behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of the rural Sylheti ethnocultural migrant group in diaspora. The two native languages in the speech repertoire of the Sylheti Bangladeshis are characterised diglossically as the low status variety (Sylheti) and the high status standard variety (Bangla). To predict features of LMS the survey had to establish the mother-tongue of the group before examining their language use patterns in formal and informal contexts. Only then it was possible to verify if both Sylheti and Bangla co-existed in their language of interpersonal discourse or if there was evidence to suggest the use of Sylheti for communication and Bangla as having symbolic significance. The distinctiveness of Sylheti and Bangla is contrasted and an overview of Bangla nationalism acquaints the reader with the complexity of the Bangla language situation including its role as the mother-tongue of the speakers of regional language varieties. The inter-relationship between language ethnicity and nationalism is asserted throughout the analysis as having an influential impact on language perceptions.

The degree and nature of linguistic assimilation or rejection are based on objective (Giles et al., 1977) and subjective language (Allard and Landry 1994) perceptions, habitual language use (Fishman 1964) and language as an ethnic core value (Smolicz 1992). The framework is supported by questionnaire and interview surveys and a multi-faceted methodology which include the linguistic background of the fieldworker, entry strategies and participation observation as the principal methods of data elicitation.

Analysis of data reveals that the identification of Bangla as mother-tongue is linked to reasons other than use. The presence of Bangla in the Sylheti environment appears consistently to be a powerful factor in ideological rather than practical terms. Analysis of data unequivocally indicates that Sylheti is strongest among immediate and extended family and friends. Therefore there can be but one lingua franca for the majority on the basis that no other is necessary for this encapsulated community. The maintenance of Sylheti is established and the evidence of Sylheti-English bilingualism substantiates the additive role of minority language in a bilingual context.

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Declaration

Part of the present research has been previously presented:

- *Mother-tongue and Identity of the Sylhetis in diaspora* SALA XXI, University of Konstanz 2001.

This thesis has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree other than Doctor of Philosophy of the University of York. This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references.

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be made available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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Date: June 2005

1 Introduction

1.1 *The Study*

The present research analyses the phenomenon of language maintenance and/or shift (LMS) by providing a comprehensive analysis of language use of unskilled rural Muslim migrants from Sylhet. This work departs from other studies of LMS in South Asian communities by identifying the people of Sylhet (Sylhetis) as a distinct ethnocultural group within the Bangladeshi cultural majority. However, the criteria used in the selection of rural unskilled Muslim migrants do not deny the existence of skilled and semi-skilled Sylheti Muslim and Hindu professionals. This introduction establishes the importance of the research as the first cross-generational detailed study of language behaviour of the Sylhetis in diaspora. There is no comprehensive community level empirical, ethnographic sociolinguistic study of the Sylhetis in the UK. Sociological surveys of the Sylhetis are largely a post 1981 phenomenon. This is primarily because the UK census does not include questions on ethnic language use and the Sylheti-Bangladeshis identified themselves as Pakistanis in the 1971 census. It was not until December 1971 that Bangladesh became an independent sovereign state (see section 1.5.1.1).

This research relies on sociological studies (e.g. Ghuman and Gallop 1981; Carey and Shukur 1986; Sian and Shukur 1986; Adams 1987; Eade 1989,1990a, 1990b; Chowdhury 1993; Ballard 1994; Gardner 1992,1993,1995; Gardner and Shukur 1994; Eade, Vamplew and Peach; 1996; Gazioglu 1996, Peach 1997, Blackledge 1998), in particular. Much of Gardner's work relates to the Sylhetis in Sylhet. Gardner's (1995) description of the effects of overseas migration provides a balanced view of the migratory processes of the Sylhetis in Bangladesh and of those in the UK. However, Gardner does not discuss the impact of migration on language. Verma, Mukherjee, Khanna and Agnihotri's (2001) sociolinguistic study describes the community they investigate as 'Sylheti-Bengali-speaking Bangladeshis' but no emphasis is made on the use of Sylheti nor is there any evidence to

suggest the distinctiveness of Sylheti from Bangla. Hamid's (1998) code-switching data of Sylheti children illustrate the use of Sylheti and English but do not identify the linguistic differences between Sylheti and Bangla. Khanna, Verma, Agnihotri and Sinha's (1998) study reveals that the Bangladeshis compared to the Indians and the Pakistanis were the most integratively oriented group because of positive social and linguistic stereotypes towards English. However, their claims cannot be justified given the sample size of only eight Bangladeshis compared to 47 Indians and 29 Pakistanis. Lawson and Sachdev's (2004) study which examines language behaviour, attitudes and perceptions of Sylheti-Bangladeshi teenagers does not provide substantial evidence to suggest why Bangla was associated with ethnolinguistic and cultural origins rather than Sylheti.

Studies on multilingualism in British migrant communities from South Asia have investigated the Panjabi Hindus (Saxena 1995), the Sikhs (Agnihotri 1979) and the Gujarati communities (Northover 1988). The most diverse study of multilingualism is the questionnaire based Linguistic Minorities Project survey (LMP 1985), which studied the use and status of eleven non-indigenous languages in the UK. The questionnaires and procedures developed for the survey have since been used in many local language surveys by the Local Education Authorities (LEA). The LMP has made significant contributions in the area of ethnic minority language research by putting non-indigenous languages of England on the map and contributing to the debate on integration of different ethnic minorities into British society. However, some methodological problems and generalised assumptions put constraints on the interpretation of findings (see section 3.2.1).

Lack of information about the Sylheti group's linguistic situation, language practices in their country of origin and the socio-historic and socio-political influence on languages in their repertoire reveal the necessity to define the 'language-centred' ethnocultural group (Smolicz 1992). Smolicz (1992) defines a language-centred culture as one in which the group's survival depends on the preservation of their mother-tongue (see section 1.5). To put features of LMS into context in a community which is 'language centred' this chapter establishes the historic, political and socio-psychological significance of Bangla, the standard official language of the Bangladeshis. The structuring of other chapters are

described in section 1.2. Since factors influencing LMS are sociological, political, economic and linguistic, the first step in the investigation includes a brief physical and political geography of Bangladesh with reference to Sylhet described in sections 1.3 and 1.4. The demographic description of Sylhet examines why migration was overwhelmingly from Sylhet and the process and type of migration and the community's patterns of settlement as important mechanisms in reinforcing the cultural and linguistic behaviour of migrants. Bangla as a potent symbol of ethnic and national identity is analysed in section 1.5 through a chronology of major historical and political events in Bengal as the basis for nascent Bengali nationalism. Events reveal a shift from a religious to a secular identity in Bengal and from secular to a religious shift in the changing perceptions of identity in the UK. A brief description of the linguistic situation in the migrant's country of origin is discussed in section 1.6. A description of Bangla and Sylheti, the two native language varieties which have an impact on language behaviour, are examined in sections 1.7 and 1.8.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters which include an introduction and a conclusion. The introduction explores the socio-historic and socio-psychological perceptions towards Bangla, patterns of migration and settlement in the UK, the changing concepts of identity and the linguistic description of Sylheti and Bangla. Chapter 2 outlines the essential background literature on language contact (e.g. Bloomfield 1933, Weinreich 1953, 1954, 1957, Haugen 1953, Fishman 1966). The relationship between bilingualism, diglossia and LMS are described from Fishman's (1972) point of view. Giles, Bourhis and Taylor's (1977) concept of objective and Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal's (1981) subjective ethnolinguistic vitality, leading to additive or subtractive bilingualism (Landry and Allard 1994) identify different types of bilingualism. Networks of linguistic contacts examine cultural influences by providing the link between the objective vitality of the ethnolinguistic group and the perceptions and behavioural developments responsible for developing relations between members of the group. The theory of language as an ethnic

core value (Smolicz 1992, 1993, 1995) reveals the significance of language to ethnic and national identity in attempting to understand the processes of language maintenance. The conclusion from the review is that such a study of ethnolinguistic minorities requires a multi-faceted approach. The approach adopted for this study involves the inter-relationship between objective ethnolinguistic vitality, subjective ethnolinguistic vitality and habitual language use.

In Chapter 3 a critical review of fieldwork methods employed in the survey of LMS is described with reference to general and specific examples. The LMP (1985) survey approach and findings are discussed with reference to fieldwork techniques, generalisations and assumptions about minority language, and their effects on the structure of questions and in the interpretation of responses. The Verma et al. (2001) survey, Lawson and Sachdev's (2004) study, Khanna et al. (1998) survey, Gazioglu (1996) and Ghuman and Gallop's (1981) survey are evaluated primarily from the point of view of methods and tools. An evaluation of general fieldwork procedures include the background of the researcher, interviews and participant observation methods, entry strategies and self-presentation of the researcher. The evaluation pinpoints representativeness of the sample in terms of generation, age and sex. The strengths and weaknesses of questionnaire-based surveys are discussed which include the rationale for using the LMP's (1985) ALUS questionnaire for the pilot project in York.

In Chapter 4, the socio-cultural information and linguistic data from the pilot survey and a follow-up questionnaire survey subsequently designed to resolve essential language-related issues not addressed in the ALUS questionnaire are analysed. Findings from the two pilot surveys, methods used, background information described in the introduction to the thesis were used as the basis for designing the questionnaire and developing appropriate fieldwork procedure for the main survey in Leeds.

As the analysis focuses on the social and cultural parameters of language behaviour, different dimensions of data elicitation techniques are discussed in Chapter 5 in both qualitative and quantitative terms as prerequisites for the main investigation in Leeds.

Leeds survey data analysed in Chapter 6 examine the use and function of Sylheti, Bangla and English in formal and informal domains (Fishman 1966) by investigating each individual's network of linguistic contact (INLC) and language perceptions. Patterns of language use across generations in different domains help to identify the progression of language maintenance or language shift in the community. Socio-cultural dimensions explore respondents' views on cultural and linguistic maintenance; their tastes in food, dress and music, their views on marriage and relationships with other ethnolinguistic groups. Overall findings are discussed and concluded in chapter 7.

1.3 Physical Geography of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is the largest wetland in the world formed by the interaction of innumerable rivers and streams, its configuration being determined and continuously changed by them (Elahi 1997). The literal translation of the word Bangladesh is 'country or land of the Bangla-speaking people'. Bangladesh covers an area of 147,570 square kms with a population of 123.1 million (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2000). The climate is characterised by high temperatures, heavy rainfall, excessive humidity and six seasonal variations. Silting-up of the rivers and destruction of natural vegetation result in damaging floods. Tornadoes are frequent between March and May, bringing devastation to central and coastal parts of Bangladesh (Rashid 1991). The six physical divisions of Bangladesh are Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet (see Figure 1.1).

1.3.1 Ethnic composition

Bangladeshis are a heterogeneous group of people. On the basis of their geographical habitat, the ethnic minorities of Bangladesh are divided into the Hill group and the Plains group. Chakmas, Marmas, Tripuras and other tribes are inhabitants of the Hill group while the ethnic group of the plains include the Garos, Santals, Khasias, Rajbansi and others (Mohsin 1997). The 1991 census reports twenty nine ethnic communities in Bangladesh. These communities are differentiated on the basis of race, language, patterns of settlement,

societal structure such as hereditary chiefs or village headmen, religion, beliefs and religious rituals. Most are agriculturists. 86.6 percent of the population are Muslims. Hindus are the largest minority followed by Buddhists, Christians and a few other sects (Rashid 1991).

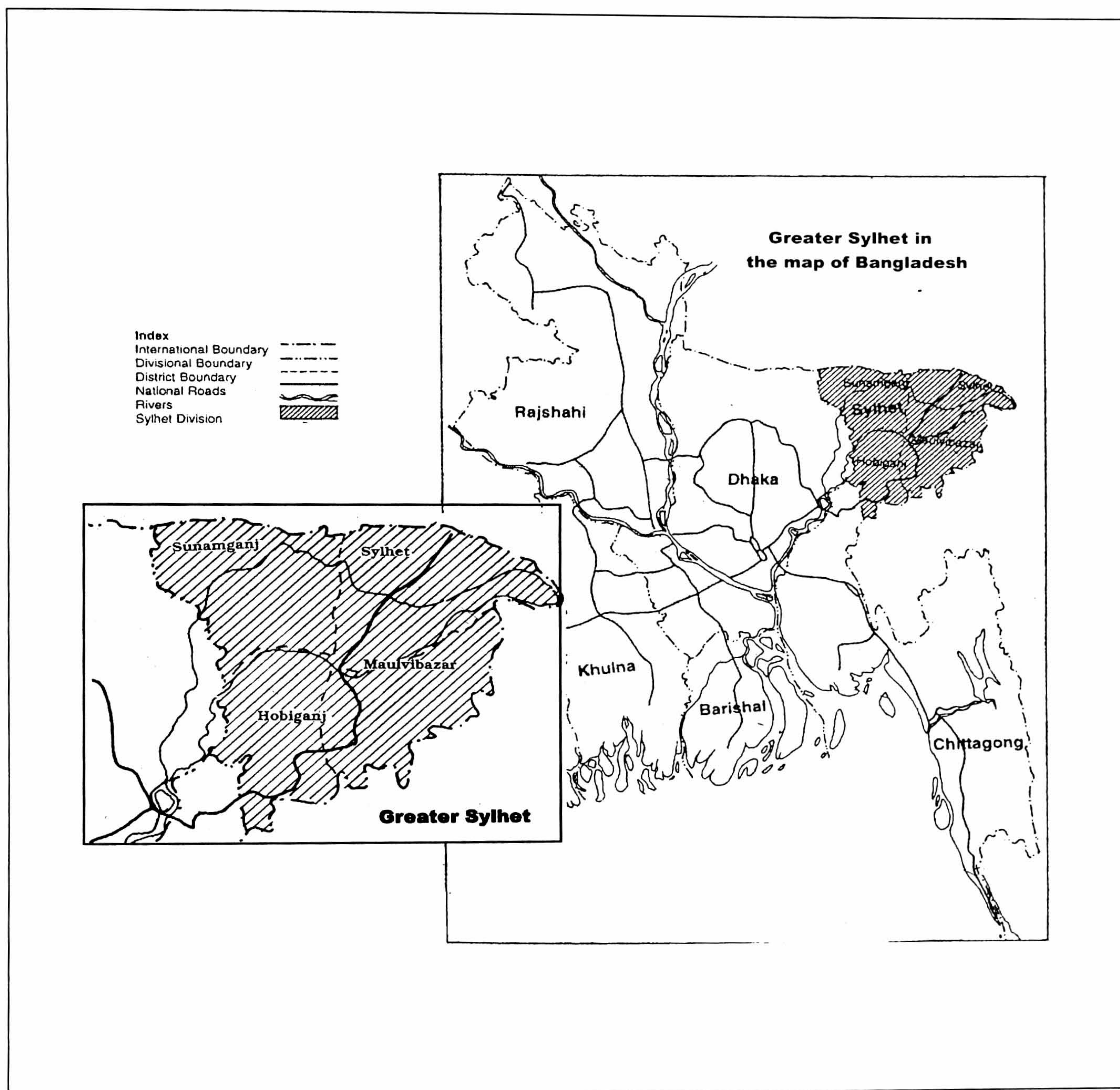


Figure 1.1 Map of Bangladesh and Sylhet.

(Source: Bangladesh History Association 1999: x)

1.3.2 Language and literacy

Bangladesh is a multilingual country. The state language of the republic is Bangla (Bureau of Statistics 2000). Bangla is the reported mother-tongue of over 98% of the population

(Rashid 1991). It is the language of education and literacy. Bangla and a wide variety of its dialects is the first language of the population. Some of the other thirty eight living languages are Chatgaiya, Noakhalia, Chakma, Mogh, Bomang, Garo, Manipuri and Sadri and the Haijong dialect (http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp/name=Bangladesh). The Haijong dialect was the name given to the language spoken in the region of Sylhet. There are also the Urdu speaking non-Bengali Muslim refugees of Indian origin known as the Biharis. They seek resettlement in Pakistan after the 1971 War of Liberation (an issue that has remained unresolved since the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971).

The education system comprises primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities and *madrasahs* (religious seminaries). Three parallel education systems are in place simultaneously: the Bangla medium, the English medium and the *madrasah* system of education. Primary education is free and compulsory. Education is free for girls until grade eight in rural areas (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2000). However, Education Watch, a survey carried out by the Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) in 2003-04 revealed that in Bangladesh one out of five children is unable to enroll in government primary schools. One in every three enrolled dropped out before completing primary schooling and one in every three remained semi-literate or non-literate after completing five years of primary schooling. Two major aspects of the problems were access to primary education and asymmetry in the quality of teaching. The reasons cited for limited accessibility and poor quality were mismanagement, inadequate infra-structure, lack of quality teachers and poverty (The Daily Star, Editorial, March 14, 2005).

1.4 Sylhet: area of origin of the migrants

Tucked away in the north-east of Bangladesh, bordering the hills of Assam, lies Sylhet with a total area of 12,569 square kms (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2000). The Sylhet division is divided into four sub-divisions, one of which is also called Sylhet (e.g. Sunamganj, Sylhet, Maulvibazar and Hobiganj). Sylhet District Gazetteer (1975) records Bangla as the language spoken by 96.63% of the population. However, it also describes the

‘dialect’ spoken by the Sylhetis as a modification of standard Bangla which is not intelligible to the people of other districts. The regional language variety spoken by the people of Sylhet (Sylhetis) is called Sylheti. Mohanto’s (1997) study separates the indigenous people of Sylhet into two main groups, the *Adivasis* and the tribal people. The *Adivasis*, including their sub-groups, constitute twelve ethnic groups, while the tribal people consist of seven ethnic groups. Therefore, many different languages other than Bangla and Sylheti are spoken by the ethnic groups of Sylhet. The census of 1961 records 3.36% of the population of Sylhet speaking a language other than Bangla as mother-tongue (Bangladesh District Gazetteer 1975). However, none of the languages other than Bangla and Sylheti had a writing system.

A historical account of Sylhet’s link with the British described in the next section examines how rural Sylhetis were drawn into the UK labour market, the recruitment of Sylheti men on British sea-going vessels and the reasons why in the course of international migration a regional pattern developed in such high proportion from Sylhet.

1.4.1 Sylhet’s link with the British

The region of Sylhet was a part of the British District Administration System governed by the East India Company till 1765 (Mohsin and Haroun 1999). Throughout its administrative history under the British rule Sylhet was a part of Bengal or Assam provinces. In 1905, Lord Curzon, the Governor General of India, partitioned the Bengal Presidency into the provinces of East Bengal which was joined with Assam and West Bengal. Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong divisions and Assam constituted the province of East Bengal while Bihar Orissa and the districts of West Bengal constituted the province of West Bengal. In 1911, the British Government annulled the partition of Bengal and the district of Sylhet was reverted to Assam (Islam 1999). This arrangement continued till the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 when the people of Sylhet opted to join East Bengal based on the language, culture, religion and ethnicity they shared with the Bengalis of East Bengal.

The political and economic structure laid down by the British in Sylhet was significantly different from other districts under the East India Company. Much of the Sylheti rural population tended land which, despite the revenues paid to the British, were their own. The farmers were owner cultivators rather than tenants and were thus not under the control of the *zamindars* (land revenue collectors). The 1960 Agricultural Census records 71% estates as owner occupied (Gardner 1992: 582). The Sylhet Gazetteer records the district of Sylhet as ‘the land of peasant proprietors’ (Bangladesh District Gazetteer 1975:163). Gardner claims that economic independence may have influenced their propensity to migrate. Since competition between families over land, and thus social status, were key features of *talukdars*’ (landholders’) areas, migration may have been the means to earn foreign wages to improve their economic position. Migration was an opportunity that only middle-income rural families could afford. Families who had sufficient surplus to pay for the necessary documents and fares ventured into the risk attached to migration in the early days (Gardner 1995).

1.4.2 Migration and the Sylheti Bangladeshis

Bengal has been involved with overseas migration for hundreds of years (Visram 1986). Although there is a specific history of migration for each migrant group, the common factor to all is an early connection with the British who realised their importance as a valuable resource of cheap labour (Gardner 1995). From the earliest days of the East India Company's operations *lascars* (seamen) were employed by British ships that docked in Calcutta (Robinson 1986). These men usually performed unpleasant tasks on the ships with wages far lower than their British counterparts (Adams 1987). The sailors came from Noakhali, Chittagong and Sylhet. They were the first South Asians to be drawn into the global market (Gardner 1995). However, it was Sylhet that formed close ties with Britain as they began to monopolise employment on sea-going vessels. Many of the major migrant areas in Sylhet are near the river Kushiara and the Surma, which once carried goods on the Calcutta bound boats. The density of population along the Surma and the Kushiara is to a large extent responsible for moulding the history and economy of the region (Rahman

1999). Exchange of information between the boat people and the locals tempted many young men to try their luck at the Calcutta docks. The river traffic brought the cargo ships in the rainy season and these boats stopped at Markhuli, Enatganj, Sherpur, Maulvibazar, Baliganj and Fenchuganj in Sylhet and except Markhuli, all other areas are key migrant areas (Gardner 1995).

Chowdhury's (1993) account of the Bangladeshi settlers in the UK reveals that it was customary for farmers to send their sons or kin to work on mercantile boats carrying goods between Assam and Bengal (Calcutta) through Sylhet. The boat traders' interest was unharmed until mid 19th century when the British introduced steamers. Steamer stations built along the banks of the Surma and the Kushiara affected the boatmen's trade and to compensate for the loss the boatmen incurred, the British recruited them as crew on board British steamer-ships. The steamer service from Calcutta to Assam expanded rapidly. The local men's experiences on steamer-ships and with the waterway system were reasons more and more people were employed from Sylhet to work in engine rooms. Once in Calcutta, many engine room crews looked for employment on sea-going vessels (Chowdhury 1993: 34). This is how the link with British sea-going vessels began.

The number of Bengali men employed as ship workers was relatively small over the 18th and 19th centuries but by the beginning of the 20th century the demand for labour began to grow. By early 20th century, a small number of Sylheti men were leaving their villages for the docks in Calcutta. They stayed in or around the dock area till they found work. Many had contacts with brokers who were kinsmen or men from their own or nearby villages in Sylhet. These brokers provided the going-to-be recruits with lodgings and helped to arrange contacts with the Navy or British owned Shipping Companies (Gardner 1997). *Sarengs* (foremen) who were powerful and had substantial influence over who was chosen as a ship's crew usually recommended their own kinsmen or co-villagers. The jobs which were mostly in the ship's engine rooms suited the recruits who had previous experience of working in the steamer-ship engine rooms. The British believed that having come from the sub-tropical climates the men would be able to withstand heat. The working conditions were appalling but the wages made a substantial difference to a rural family's income and

for the British the *lascars* provided cheap labour. Once the ship docked in any of the ports in Britain many Sylhetis ‘jumped ship’ (Gardner 1995: 582) and looked for friends and kinsmen to find them work and accommodation. A small but steadily increasing population of Sylhetis was established in Britain by the 1950s but it was not until the 1960s that widespread migration developed (Adams 1987; Gardner 1992, 1995).

The Commonwealth migrants who were a source of cheap labour for British industries contributed towards building the economy. However, the increasing presence of ‘non-white’ people caused public concern and by 1960s became an issue for a government debate (Solomos 1989: 45). The Commonwealth migrants were portrayed in negative terms by the media and within the parliamentary debate (Gardner 1995: 44). Their negative portrayal and the anti-black riots in London and in Nottingham in 1958 were reasons to curb further black labour from entering and settling in Britain (Fryer 1984: 384). In response to the disturbances, the 1948 Nationality Act, which granted citizenship to anyone from a former British colony, was amended. The New Commonwealth Immigrants Bill was introduced in 1962, which stated that only Commonwealth citizens who had Ministry of Labour Employment Vouchers could enter Britain as primary immigrants. This act was intended to limit immigration but had the opposite effect. The Sylhetis realised that entry into Britain would become increasingly difficult. As a consequence many Sylheti men already living in Britain obtained vouchers for their kinsmen or close friends. To obtain further cheap labour some industries provided fares in advance along with employment vouchers to potential migrants (Gardner 1995: 44). Many single men brought their wives and children from Sylhet and perpetuated a chain effect (Gardner 1992: 583).

1.4.3 Chain Migration

During the 1960s thousands of Sylhetis settled in London while others ventured to industrial cities such as Manchester, Leeds, Bradford and Newcastle to work in factories (Gardner 1993:148). The role of the *sarengs* was now passed onto Sylheti brokers who became key figures in promoting migration. They provided their kinsmen and co-villagers

with lodgings in boarding houses. The men worked in Britain sending back as much money as possible. The *lascars* of the early days had accumulated sufficient money to send back home to purchase land. Some returned to Sylhet to marry and some to be reunited with their families. Their children were brought up in Sylhet, while the men stayed in the UK in cheap boarding houses usually owned by the Sylhetis. Financially the trouble was well worth it as back in Sylhet their remittance went far and their economic position improved. Initially only a few rural migrants had envisaged becoming permanent settlers in Britain. The sole purpose of their entry into Britain was to earn and save as much money as possible before returning home (Gardner 1993). Ballard (1994) describes these migrants as sojourners: had their initial objectives remained unchanged, the South Asian presence in Britain would have developed very differently.

Soon the labour vouchers came to an end and subsequent Immigration Laws made entry into Britain more difficult. In 1965 the government issued a white paper on immigration where from 30,130 vouchers in 1963 only 8,500 were to be issued every year. In 1968, a second Commonwealth Immigration Act was introduced to control the entry of East African Asians into Britain and for the first time 'race' was an explicit part of the legislation. By 1972, the number of vouchers had dropped to 2,290 (Solomos 1989: 53). The police were given the power to arrest suspected illegal immigrants. This and other acts brought 'primary migration' to a halt (Gardner 1995: 47). Migrants coming to Britain now had to be dependants of those already resident in Britain. This was one of the primary reasons many Sylheti men brought their wives and children to Britain, applied for naturalisation and with their dependants became British. As in the case of many migrant groups, the longer they stayed the more rooted they felt with the host environment especially as they were now joined by members of their immediate and extended family. Chain migration became a starting point for kinship networks and each city into which the migrants had been drawn by the demands of the labour intensive market was gradually becoming an area of 'ethnic colonisation' (Ballard 1994). Over the 1980s entry conditions became more complex and since 1986 visa controls have been enforced. This legislation means that British-Bengali men who did not bring their immediate families to the UK in the 1970s are involved in legal cases regarding the entry of their family members into the

UK (Gardner 1995). However, there are other sources by which chain migration from Sylhet continues and is socially channelled. Among them arranged marriages through kin or patrilineally linked members help each other to migrate (Gardner and Shukur 1994:147).

Patterns of settlement from the port city into inner-city areas of the UK described in section 1.4.4 reveal that despite the change in the occupational pattern from being *lascars* (seamen) on ships to factory employment in the 1950s and 1960s to the catering trade and the 'Indian' restaurant business, they continue to live in concentrations of large groups. Their numerical strength, chain migration and patterns of settlement strengthen each individual's network of linguistic contact (see section 2.6) and become catalysts in the dominance and maintenance of ethnocultural and linguistic norms.

1.4.4 The Settlement in East London

The main port of entry for most Sylhetis was the East End of London. Nearly half (43%) of the Sylhetis in London live in Tower Hamlets (Eade et al., 1996). The main economic activity of Tower Hamlets until recently was connected with the docks of the Port of London. The import export trade and the industries which processed raw materials demanded a large workforce of unskilled manual labour. The proximity of the docks and the need for labour has attracted immigrants to this area since medieval times. The dockland area has also been the 'jumping off place' for seamen who became links for their compatriots in the process of chain migration (LMP 1985: 94). The decline in labour intensive industry made many South Asian workers lose their jobs during the 1970s and 1980s. Decline in sectors such as handling and distribution of cargo, the timber industries along the river Lea, the furniture making industry in Shoreditch and Bethnal Green and the clothing and leather industry in Spitalfields forced the Sylhetis, like other migrant groups, to look for employment elsewhere (Sian and Shukur 1986). Many found employment opportunities in Luton, Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford and Leeds in businesses such as garment and textile factories and corner shops. Others went to Cardiff, South Shields and Sunderland, the cities and towns that had shipping connections with India and the Far

East. With the decline in jobs in the industrial sector more and more Sylhetis went to the catering trade and the 'Indian' restaurant business in the UK is dominated by the Sylhetis. The process of settlement was slow because initially the men came first followed many years on by their wives and children. Other reasons for their slow settlement pattern were high costs of travel, finding suitable housing, strict and harsh application procedures for applicants from the sub-continent, growing racial harassment and the concern of men exposing their women to western values and influences (Sian and Shukur 1986).

Culturally and socio-economically the Sylheti ethnic group tends to be homogenous compared to other South Asians. Peach (1996) refers to the Bangladeshis in Britain as a 'concealed' community significantly different from the Pakistani and other South Asian populations. The fear of racial harassment confined the Sylhetis within the Borough boundaries of Tower Hamlets and only a few ventured beyond to find safe areas (LMP 1985). In high density settlement areas there is an infra structure of groceries, *halal* butchers, *sari* shops, travel agents and minicabs (Sian and Shukur 1986). In recent years *madrasahs* have been established in dense settlements. The most significant profile of the Sylheti community in any geographical area in the UK is the concentration of large groups from the same area in their country of origin. Developments such as the establishment of mosques and *madrasahs*, rituals associated with marriage and birth as arenas of social interaction confirm their dense kinship network and commitment to 'ethnic colonisation' (Ballard 1994).

1.4.5 Migration and cultural continuity

Migration affects cultural continuity by influencing cultural and language behaviour in dense kinship networks (Mukherjee 1996). Evidence from pre-independence Africa reveals that migration may be an external force leading to the breakdown of culture and associate labour migration with agricultural decay and detribalization (Richards 1939; Shapera 1947). Bailey (1958) and Epstein (1962) link migration with the breakdown of the extended family. However, Ballard's (1994) account of the South Asian presence in Britain

reveals how chain migration reinforces cultural continuity by reconstituting larger kinship networks. Eade, Vamplew and Peach (1996) describe the Bangladeshi community in the UK as showing strong signs of traditional values and encapsulation. The demographic patterns of migration link the type of network each individual develops. Chain migration and density of the group make each industrial city into which the migrants come as work force, a less alien place by reinforcing linguistic and cultural norms.

Gardner (1995) observes that traditionalism or the reproduction of local culture and social institutions depends largely on the type of migration. However, she argues that there is the danger of pre-defining the South Asian culture by set boundaries: we need to recognise the diversity and resilience of different cultural groups and acknowledge that they are continually changing and are composed of different voices which are not always in agreement. These global migrants can be described as belonging to a 'creole world' where lives are not bounded by space (Hannerz 1992: 261). In her study of the Sylhetis in Sylhet, Gardner (1993) reveals how key migrant areas in Sylhet are changing in heterogeneous ways. While migration brought economic prosperity and transformed the lives of the families in Sylhet, missionary movements of *Tabligh Jamaat*¹ and political parties such as *Jamaat-e-Islam* which have grown rapidly over the past decades have had an influential impact on the lives of many. Gardner (1993) comments that these movements have in many ways replaced the ideals of secular Bengali nationalism. In the UK, the younger generation of Sylhetis also experienced shifts in their identity perceptions. The influence of Bengali cultural identity manifested in the young generation had generated a positive awareness of Bengali culture amongst British-born Bangladeshis (Eade 1990). However, with the commitment to Islam, the Sylhetis, with other Muslim groups, were drawn into a community based on the international fraternity of Islam. Migrants arriving from Sylhet had also moved from the concept of Islam based on localised cults and those moulded to

¹A religious movement which dates from the 1920s. Its aim is to spread correct religious practice amongst Muslims. In Bangladesh, a three-day annual congregation of Muslims from different parts of the world is held in December. The number of people attending Bisho Ijtema, as the congregation is known, continues to increase each year.

the culture of their homeland to an international Islam of Muslims from different countries and cultures (Gardner 1992). Gardner and Shukur's (1994:142-64) study of the changing identity of British Bengalis reveal that many young Bangladeshis identify themselves first as Muslim rather than Bengali or Bangladeshi. Therefore, it would be misleading to discuss cultural continuity and group boundaries of people falling strictly 'between two cultures' (Watson 1977). Gardner (1995) says such concepts imply that the culture in the migrant's country of origin is set and bounded whereas people imagine places depending on who they are and where they are.

Research interests into the profile of the Sylhetis as a distinct ethnocultural group has raised awareness and concerns on issues such as mother-tongue education, health and local government information in the mother-tongue, under-achievement in education. However, these issues need to address the discrepancies in labelling native languages used by the Sylhetis in the UK. The ideological and political passions associated with the term mother-tongue in the context of the Bangladeshi Bengalis can be understood only by examining the metaphorical nature of the term against the political backdrop of Bangla language. The socio-historic and socio-political background examined in section 1.5 reveals why Bangla was riddled with political constraints. The analysis also highlights the reasons why, despite recognising language varieties other than Bangla, there is no consensus among scholars and linguists in Bangladesh about officially labelling regional language varieties as the mother-tongue of their speakers. A noted Bangla linguist comments on Sylheti as 'one of the distant and distinctive variations of the concept of Bangla language' (Musa 1999: 585). Musa treads on safe grounds by referring to Sylheti 'as an additive *item* not an exclusive *item*' (emphasis added) rather than language. He compares the status of Sylheti to the status of Chittagong or Rangpur varieties as distant dialects of Bangla and adds that the status of Sylheti is not exclusive to Standard Colloquial Bangla (SCB); rather, it is '*complementary, inclusive and additive to SCB*' (Musa 1999: 594, see section 1.6).

In recent years, interest in local Bangladeshi history has documented the economic, cultural, social, political and administrative history of Sylhet (for details see Sylhet History and Heritage 1999). However, language-related accounts remain contradictory. For

example, historical accounts of ancient Sylhet reveal that ancient Sylhetis, like their modern counterparts, consider themselves different from the ‘Bangalees’ (Imam 1999: 186). This distinction must be based on identity symbols other than language because other accounts reveal that language identity crisis in undivided India was a compelling force for the Sylhetis to establish a ‘sole Bangalee identity’ which was achieved by participating in the language movement (Islam 1999: 284). Mohsin and Haroun (1999) say that, throughout Sylhet’s administrative history under the British, the Sylhetis resisted joining Assam because they did not identify with the Assamese language and felt strongly that by joining Assam the Bangla language would be neglected. A cursory glance at such statements presents the reader with a situation that is confusing and misleading. However, analysis of the political and cultural repression of Bangla discussed in section 1.5 reveals why mother-tongue and a Bangla-speaking Bengali identity became synonymous. It furthermore explains the common assumption that the mother-tongue of all Bangladeshis, without any reservation, is Bangla.

1.5 Analysis of the socio-historic and socio-political background of Bangla

The analysis of the socio-historic and socio-political background of Bangla examines the relationship between ethnicity, ethnic identity and nationalism. This inter-relationship is a crucial line of enquiry in the context of this study. It outlines why Bangla came to be regarded as the most significant marker of ethnic and national identity. Brass (1991: 74) argues that leaders of ethnic movements invariably select only those aspects of traditional cultures that they think will unite the group and be useful in promoting the interests of the group. In doing so, some symbols of identity become more salient than others. In communities where language is regarded as a ‘core cultural value’ (Smolicz 1992), nationalist movements often choose language as the rallying point for the cultural and political rights that they wish to promote (May 2001: 132). A case in point is Bangla. May (2001: 134) observes that ‘the social and political circumstances of those who speak a particular language will have a significant impact on the subsequent symbolic and communicative status attached to that language’.

Bengali ethnic identity was perceived as distinctly different from other ethnocultural groups in undivided Bengal (Rashid 1992). The historical, political and cultural distinctiveness of the Bengalis is examined in sections 1.5.1.1- 1.5.1.5 from the perspective of the 'ethnicist' approach in which ethnocultural communities are seen as sharing a common history and ways of life such as traditions, myths, language and other identity symbols (Hutchinson 1994). These symbols recreate a distinctive collective identity and autonomy and provide members of the group with identity and purpose. The ethnicist approach explains the crucial relationship of ethnicity with nationalism and national identity by addressing the 'historical continuity' of the Bangladeshi Bengalis. The formation of a nation is examined within and through a longer and cyclical account of history by untangling the historical-cultural and legal-political dimensions and the 'separation of political nationalisms over cultural nationalisms' (May 2001: 71-73).

Cultural nationalism concerns itself mainly with national identity by reconstructing the historical, cultural or the linguistic tradition of the ethnocultural group. On the other hand, political nationalism identifies with the question of state formation or secession (Hutchinson 1987, 1994; May 2001). However, that does not necessarily imply that cultural nationalism cannot incorporate political aims and develop into political nationalism (Hutchinson 1994). Fishman (1989) argues that the emphasis on the political definitions of nationalism has had the tendency of precluding the wider contexts of cultural nationalisms. May (2001) and Fishman (1989) agree that while attaining statehood is often the main aim of nationalist movements, that may not always be the case and nationalist movements may be content to pursue limited political aims. For example, Catalan remains the language of the autonomous region of Catalonia, although '*Covergencia i Unió* (CiU), the nationalist coalition, defines language as the sole symbol of Catalan identity (Castells 1997). On the other hand, the example of Welsh nationalism reveals that the Welsh nationalist movement was influenced by the cultural distinctiveness of Welsh with particular importance placed on the Welsh language (Williams 1994). Welsh is recognised as the language of a constituent nation of the British state. Similarly, the example of Bangla also reveals how cultural distinctiveness of Bangla was manifested alongside political grievances as the basis for an ethnonationalist movement.

However, unlike Catalan and Welsh, which survived because they were the languages of religion and were used in the home, Bangla survived solely on the strength of being the language of home and not the language of religion. The changing perception of Bengali Muslims is revealed in the shift from the religious image of the Bengali Muslims to one based on language and culture (Ahmad 1981, Kabir 1987). Moreover, Bangla identity stood as a challenge to Islamic identity because Pakistani Muslim identity ignored or underplayed sectarian, ethnic and linguistic differences.

In section 1.5.1 a brief account of the historical-cultural and legal-political history of Bengal during the British rule in the first half of the twentieth century is discussed. The events described as milestones in Bengal's history of major political movements were the principles underlying Bengali nationalism. The discussion reveals how in the course of events major changes evolved, the most prominent being Muslim Bengalis' disenchantment with the All-India Muslim League, a political organisation founded to protect the interests of Muslims from anti-partition agitations (McLane 1992). The analysis in sections 1.5.1.1-1.5.1.5 examines the developments that challenged the 'one state-one official language' policy on which Pakistan was divided from India in 1947 (Musa 1996: 68). Discussions include the role of Bangla in national and ethnic identity and in the formation of Bangladesh. Events described also reveal how religion and language varied in salience across different historical periods in Bengal and how the religious identity of the Bengali Muslims was challenged by a secular identity. However, in the analysis of why Bengali nationalism acquired a secular and cultural perspective it is important to realise that the rhetoric of nationalism in the context of this study is based on the pre and post partition concerns of the Bengali Muslims of East Pakistan. It does not focus on issues relating to different ethnic groups of Bangladesh principally because there is no documentary evidence to suggest that any of the ethnic groups in East Pakistan had raised objections regarding the status of Bangla as opposed to any of the regional varieties as mother-tongue. Issues concerning the regional languages of East or West Pakistan had not surfaced at the time of the partition of India, as the conflict was between Urdu and Bangla.

Also, surveys on Bangladeshi ethnic groups are a recent phenomenon and are under-researched. Mohsin's (1997: xiv) research on the alienation of the Hill people of Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh pinpoints the hegemony of the Bengalis as largely responsible for marginalising the Hill people. However, she also observes:

The Hill people are not a homogenous community, they constitute of [sic] thirteen different ethnic groups; as such nationalism with its homogenising and collectivising thrust will invariably once again reproduce hegemony and alienation.

More importantly, it should be pointed out that the aim of this study is not to examine nationalism within the hegemony of the Bengali political elite. Any such attempt is much beyond the scope of this study. However, it is acknowledged that despite ethnic and linguistic diversity, the people of Sylhet played a prominent role in the linguistic autonomy of Bangla. The demand for Bangla as the state language was first raised in the journals and periodicals published from Sylhet. The first meeting resisting the adoption of Urdu as state language was held in Sylhet on 9th November 1947 (Hossain 1999). Therefore, ethnocultural nationalism focusses on Bangla nationalism, which had a major impact on the lives of all Bangladeshis.

1.5.1 Major political events in Bengal from 1905 -1947

The proposed partition of Bengal in 1905 was critical in the developments leading to the partition of India in 1947 (McLane 1992:162). The framework for partition was based on communal conflicts and communalism² between the Indian Muslims and the Hindus (Broomfield 1992). The All-India Muslim League which was founded in 1906 in Dhaka

²The term is used to mean people's tendency to perceive their interests as identical with those of their religious group and to regard the values and activities of other religious groups as alien or antagonistic. Religion determines political affiliation which results in conflicts between members of different religious groups (McLane 1992).

became the platform for the Muslim nationalist movement in India. In 1907, Hindu-Muslim riots led to the demarcation of a communal boundary in Bengal (McLane 1992). McLane's account on the partition of Bengal reveals that information about the Hindu-Muslim relationship prior to partition was sketchy. This, he says, was primarily because the relation between the Hindus and the Muslims was not conflicting enough to attract attention. He adds that it is often assumed that communalism in Bengal was due to agrarian tensions between Hindu landlords and their Muslim tenants. However, there is reason to believe that competition between elite groups was a more important factor than agrarian tensions (McLane 1992). In his analysis of the social and institutional bases of politics in Bengal, Broomfield's (1992: 229-230) account reveals that politics in Bengal had changed in the 20th century from 'polite' protests to active and fierce movements. The mobilisation of the Congress volunteer brigades, a campaign of economic boycott and serious communal riots, marked a turning point in Bengal's political history. The changed circumstances in which privileges and powers were in the hands of high-caste Hindus led the Muslims to think that their enemies were not the British, with whom they were also not co-operating, but the Hindu elite. The British were also concerned about the institutional developments in Bengal in 1906 and subsequent years. Economic self-reliance, education of the British-dominated Calcutta University and state systems, the establishment of gymnasiums and sports club, were perceived as organised efforts towards the preparation of a disciplined struggle against the imperialists (Broomfield 1992: 234).

Broomfield (1992) divides politics in Bengal into chronological phases. His account reveals that the next period, which marked another turning point in Bengal's political history, witnessed the moderates losing control of the Bengal Congress in 1918. The period between 1918-1925 saw the peak of Muslim involvement in Indian national politics. The Hindu-Muslim pact negotiated by C. R. Das was repudiated by his successors after his death in 1925. The repudiation of the pact and communal riots convinced the Bengali Muslims to end all alliances with Hindu nationalists. The years 1926 -1937 witnessed violence with extremist organisations such as *Samiti* active in rural and urban Bengal. They used their tactics against their Muslim and Hindu opponents as well as the British (Broomfield 1992). 1937-1947 was a period of significant political activities. The issue of

major political significance was the 1940 Lahore Resolution. This resolution defined a single state of Pakistan comprising two independent and sovereign states named eastern and west Pakistan in the two Muslim majority zones of India (Rashid 1992:393).

The ideal of eastern Pakistan rested on the belief that (i) Bengali Muslims were different not only from the Hindus but also from Muslims of other provinces; (ii) there would be no domination by the central government; and (iii) it would be an independent state. However, some Bengali Muslim League leaders raised concerns as there was no mention of Bangla as the language of the Bengalis of eastern Pakistan. Left-wing Bengali politicians felt strongly that Bangla should be the medium of education, arguing that it was the mother-tongue of the people of Bengal. They proposed that conscious attempts should be made to allow the language to flourish and be accorded a state language status (Rashid 1992: 393).

Despite concerns and discontent these Bengali leaders stayed with mainstream Muslim League for two reasons. First, they had not conceived of an alternative plan for establishing a nation state and the leadership towards that state. The second reason was any premature disunity in the ranks and files of the Muslim League would have ruined the concept of partition (Rashid 1992). Rashid argues that the All-India Muslim League leaders exploited the weaknesses of the Bengal Muslim League leaders in favour of a single state of Pakistan. However, it is noteworthy that the Muslim League concentrated its activities on building a separate national identity for the Muslims of India but lacked clarity on how the state of Pakistan should be organised. Some party activists wanted to recreate the 'glories of classical Islamic power' (Kamal 1992: 417). By projecting the interest of a small social group in terms of the community these activists played up the concept of Islamic solidarity and glorified the imperial past of Islam to a phenomenal degree (Ahmed 1981). Finally, on the 14th of August 1947 India was partitioned into India and Pakistan. The eastern part of the former province of Bengal came to be known as East Bengal but was rechristened constitutionally as East Pakistan in 1962. Anderson (1979) describes the territorial arrangement of the two parts as the most unusual description of the formation of a state. He says that the structural complexity of the nation of Pakistan defies every criterion of nationhood. The two parts were separated by about one thousand miles of Indian territory.

The smaller part was about 54,000 square miles in area but more densely populated than the western part, which was six times larger. The only common bond between the majority of the people of East and West Pakistan was their religion, Islam. Otherwise, East Pakistan had a different language, culture and ethnic composition.

1.5.1.1 Partition of India and politicisation of the official language question in East Pakistan

Between 1947 and 1971, Bangladesh was the former East Pakistan. Political instability had marked Pakistan's history since its independence as the Muslim League failed to address issues on the pre-partition agenda. Disenchantment with the Muslim League began over the unequal distribution of resources, economic disparity, cultural subjugation intensified by the language issue and the denial of Bengali participation in the decision-making process. Other grievances against the Muslim League were alleged corruption and inefficiency of the provincial Muslim League. All these factors contributed to the rise of the 'politics of regionalism' in East Pakistan (Ahmed 1992: 474). The question of official language status gained political prominence and a controversial debate ensued on the political agenda of Pakistan in its infancy. Referring to the political importance of language with official status, Nash (1989: 6) observes:

Language seems straightforwardly a piece of culture. But on reflection it is clear that language is often a political fact, at least as much as it is a cultural one. It has been said that 'language is a dialect with an army and a navy'. And what official languages are in any given instance is often the result of politics and power interplays.

May (2001) agrees that the official status accorded to language involves political and social power-relations. The ensuing account reveals how cultural and political functions became manifested in Bangla language. Disagreements and conflicts over the political infrastructure and economic reconstruction in East Bengal led the opponents of Muslim League to form a

powerful alliance known as *Jukto Front* (The United Front). In a pre-electoral strategy to draw maximum support from the people and find strength in unity, the United Front aimed to end the Muslim League hegemony in the region. In addition to regional autonomy, their 21-point election manifesto included the recognition of Bangla as the state language of East Bengal (Ahmed 1992: 478). The United Front won the election of 1954 by an overwhelming majority (Rahim 1992). The *Azad*, a pro-Muslim League newspaper analysed the Muslim League's defeat as a consequence of mishandling the language issue, repressive politics, opposition to provincial autonomy, economic distress and lack of contact with the people (The *Azad*, Editorial, March 22, 1954).

In the 1955 meeting of the first elected Assembly, the informal agreement drafted allowed the two parts of Pakistan to have complete regional autonomy and both Urdu and Bangla to be the state languages. The second Assembly drafted a constitution which came into force from March 26, 1956. The constitution declared Pakistan an Islamic Republic, Bangla was recognised as one of the state languages and some provincial autonomy was given to East Bengal (Rahim 1992: 58). However, in 1958, the parliamentary system of government came to an end. The two-year old constitution was abrogated and Martial Law was imposed. It was during Martial Law that East Pakistan encountered the worst onslaught on its cultural distinctiveness. Attempts to impose Urdu as the language of East and West Pakistan resulted in protests and demonstrations. Also, the 1965 war with India made the people of East Pakistan realise the physical vulnerability that they were exposed to and their right to internal defence capability. One thousand miles of territory between the two parts led to breakdown in communication and supply logistics. The war brought economic depression because the central government prioritised military rebuilding in West Pakistan over socio-cultural requirements. The banning of the Hindu Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore's songs and Bengali publications from West Bengal by the central government immediately following the war was perceived as an affront on Bengali cultural identity. In 1966, another political party, the East Pakistan Awami League, proposed a six-point formula based on the 21-point election manifesto of the United Front. The six-point programme did not simply list the grievances of the Bengalis; it reflected their

determination to take charge of their own affairs. Awami League's popularity unnerved the central government. In response they launched a campaign demeaning Bangla language and literature and its cultural heritage as derivatives from Hinduism (Rahim 1992: 576).

Thus post-partition politics became dominated by the language question rather than pre-partition issues such as Hindu-Muslim tensions, intra-party factionalism, setting up political infrastructures and economic reconstruction (Umar 1997: 436). The question of official language became one of the major contributors of political instability. The attempt to impose Urdu as the sole official language of Pakistan brought immense dissatisfaction among the Bangla-speaking people of East Pakistan who were the majority (54.6% according to the census of 1951). A nationwide movement known as *Bhasha Andolon* (Language Movement) was initiated by the students of Dhaka University. *Tamaddun Majlish*, a cultural organisation, formed the National Language Action Committee in the initial phase of the movement (Umar 1997). The main objective of the committee was to launch a campaign to introduce Bangla as the medium of education, the language of the courts, the language of administration and the language of mass communication in East Pakistan (Rahman 2000: 84). *Tamaddun Majlish* were apprehensive because making Urdu the state language would disqualify the Bangla-speaking people from government service (Helal 1985). However, the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League ignored their demands and decided that Urdu should be the state language of East Pakistan (Umar 1997). The decision was met with strong protests and agitations continued demanding Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan (Musa 1996).

1.5.1.2 Islam and Urdu as symbols of integration

The Muslim League leaders of Pakistan used Islam and Urdu as symbols of integration (Islamic and Pakistani identity). Urdu as a symbol of religious identity of the Muslims was expected to consolidate Pakistani national identity by integrating the diverse nationalities of East and West Pakistan. This would reduce the threat of other ethnic identities focussed around their indigenous languages (Rahman 2000). Based on this argument the Muslim

League leaders stated that the unifying link between the two parts of Pakistan would be lost if Bangla was made the state language of East Pakistan instead of Urdu. Any attempt to do so would result in weakening Pakistani nationalism (Umar 1997).

Urdu therefore became strongly associated with Islamic identity in political circles and this perception influenced small sections of the Bengali population. Among them, a small group from the north-east region of Sylhet presented a memorandum in favour of Urdu to Khawja Nazimuddin, the Chief Minister of East Pakistan. The memorandum stated that Bangla was not suitable as a state language of the Islamic state of Pakistan and the demand to reject Urdu was a challenge to Islamic brotherhood (Umar 1997). They argued that accepting Bangla would mean denying one's national identity, as Pakistan had emerged as a cultural, historical and religious identity of the Muslims of India, and Urdu was the national language of the Muslims of India. Nationalists favouring Urdu based their argument on Urdu being closer to Arabic, the language of religion of the Muslims. Because Urdu was written in Perso-Arabic script it was deemed to be influenced by the Holy Quran and Islamic literature. Bangla, on the other hand, was not identified with Islam since both Hindus and the Muslims of Bengal claimed its ownership. Bangla script was closer to the script of the Hindu religious texts and was claimed to be influenced by the religious books of the Hindus (Umar 1992). However, unlike the Hindi-Urdu rivalry along religion and writing systems, Bengali Muslims and Hindus maintain the unity of the language by the choice of the same script.

Sections 1.5.1.3 - 1.5.1.5 reveal how, in spite of protests, the Language Movement became a platform for expressing national consciousness. It established the linguistic identity of the Bengalis and in later years the formation of a new state.

1.5.1.3 Islamisation of the Bangla script

In order to establish a link between Bangla and nationalism, strategies were developed to 'Islamise' Bangla. One of the strategies devised was to introduce an Arabic script for

Bangla. The Central Government proposed a common script for the languages of Pakistan to maintain integrity and establish a meaningful relationship between the people of East and West Pakistan. This, they argued, could be achieved only by introducing an Arabic script for Bangla (Umar 1997). In 1950, twenty centres were established by the Central Education Office in many districts of East Pakistan to teach primary level Bangla through the Arabic script (Rahman 1997). Lists of Bangla reference books were prepared to be printed in the Arabic script (Umar 1992). The issue led some sections of the community to demand Arabic as the state language of Pakistan (The Daily Azad, May 24, 1950).

However, unlike the Urdu-speaking Indian Muslims, Bengali Muslims did not want to dissociate the traditional Bangla script from the language under any circumstance. In their opinion Bangla script did not in any way pose a threat to their Bengali Muslim identity. Even attempts to simplify the Bangla script by purging indigenous Sanskrit words and replacing them with Perso-Arabic ones and typographical reforms suggested by the East Bengal Language Committee were interpreted as a conspiracy against Bangla (Umar 1997). Messages of protests inscribed on the banners and graffiti read ‘One letter of the Bengali alphabet is equal to the life of a Bengali’ (Musa 1996: 76).

1.5.1.4 Bangla Language Movement and the formation of Bangladesh

The Language Movement led the people to seek a new identity through language rather than religion. It was the first successful movement which challenged Allama Iqbal³ and Jinnah’s⁴ two-nation theory of the partition of India and Pakistan based on religion and sectarianism (Umar 1997: 436). The ideology on which Pakistan separated from India was Muslim nationalism but in the twentieth century Bengali nationalism emerged in Pakistani polity (Islam 1997). On the 21st of February 1952, angry demonstrators marched the streets of the capital city Dhaka demanding Bangla as the state language of East Pakistan and one of the state languages of Pakistan. The police opened fire at the picketers, some students

³ Allama Iqbal was a poet and philosopher. He was also known as one of the founders of Pakistan.

⁴ Mohammad Ali Jinnah was the first Governor-General of Pakistan. He was also the President of Muslim League and President of the 1st Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.

were killed and many others injured (Musa 1996: 74).

Violence and agitation continued as the aftermath of the 21st February incident. Meanwhile, past events such as economic and cultural subjugation were shaping the political future of the region in concrete terms. Among them was the abrogation of the constitution of 1956 which gave Bangla the status of one of the state languages of Pakistan. The constitution of 1962 declared Pakistan as the Republic of Pakistan rather than the Islamic Republic and renamed East Bengal as East Pakistan. The Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 became a catalyst in the political prospectus of East Pakistan. The restrictions on the import of Bengali cultural media from West Bengal were perceived not only as an insult to Bengali cultural identity, they revived the bitter memories of the 1952 Language Movement (Rahim 1992). Against this political backdrop, East Pakistan Awami League's overwhelming victory in the 1970 elections became equated with the expression of Bengali nationalism and a resolute Bengali national identity. However, power was not transferred to Awami League. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of Awami League was arrested and the party was declared unlawful by the central government (Rahim 1992). On the 26th of March 1971 Bengali nationalists declared an independent people's Republic of Bangladesh. The nine-month long struggle ended in the formation of the secular nation of Bangladesh on the 16th of December 1971. It was not until the secession from Pakistan in 1971 and the formation of Bangladesh as a separate nation that Bangla was accorded the status of state language (Musa 1996). The event of 21st February 1952 known as *Ekushey February* was ritualised and re-enacted in all the towns and villages of the then East Pakistan. The ritualisation of events continues to this day as a reminder of the significance of Bangla language to ethnic and national identity. Each year on the 21st of February the public gather around the monument built in memory of the language martyrs of that day. Hundreds of booklets are printed and circulated on the *Ekushey February* event and the message is charged with emotional views relating to the suppression of Bangla. In recognition of the linguistic struggle and political repression of language, 21st of February has been declared the national mother-language day of Bangladesh by UNESCO.

1.5.1.5 Bangla language as national and ethnic identity

Identity and ethnicity of the Bengalis were projected through the slogan *Aamaar bhaashaa tomaar bhaashaa, Bangla bhaashaa, Bangla bhaashaa* (My language, your language, is the Bengali language, the Bengali language). Rabindranath Tagore's poetry, which was banned for being 'non-Muslim' (Rashiduzzaman 1982:123), was revived as a symbol of Bengali culture. Tagore's Bangla poem *Aamaar shonaar Bangla, aami tomae bhaalo baashi* (My golden Bengal, I love thee) was adopted as the National Anthem of Bangladesh (Mohsin 1997). Another important dimension of the nationalist movement was that in the creation of the new state the Bangladeshi Bengalis had divorced language from religion.

However, it would be naive to imagine that linguistic nationalism, which led to the secession of Bangladesh, continues to be a salient feature among the second and third generation British Sylhetis. If socio-psychological factors linking Bengali nationalism to mother tongue-Bangla continue to play a role in the maintenance of Bangla among the Sylheti-speaking British Bangladeshis, then they will perceive Bangla as having strong associations with ethnic and national identity. On the other hand, if nationalism influences strong emotional attachment to the Sylheti group's regional ethnocultural identity, the situation may give rise to Sylheti nationalism instead of Bangladeshi nationalism, in which case Bangladeshi nationalism will become a manifestation of Sylheti patriotism. However, Sylheti patriotism need not constrain members of the Sylheti group to deny their identity as Bangladeshis.

On the political and cultural significance of language as a marker of identity May (2001: 130) observes that when a national language becomes culturally and/or politically important in maintaining a particular ethnic identity then the language in question gains importance and socio-political currency. In the British-Sylheti context of the present study the importance of Bangla as the national language is with reference to its importance in the historical context. Therefore, analysis of data on language choice and use will reveal whether Sylheti is gaining currency as the lingua franca of the British Sylhetis or if the

importance of Bangla influences heritage language choices in different domains of language use. May (2001:135) points out that ‘ethnic migrant groups may retain their original language as an associated language - one that group members no longer use, or perhaps even know, but which continues to be a part of their heritage’.

Identity perceptions associated with regional (Sylheti) and national (Bangla) mother-tongues reveal the importance of examining the language situation in the community’s country of origin prior to the analysis of their language contact situation in diaspora. The socio-historic past of Bangla lends itself to a politicised consciousness and Bangla as a diglossic high prestige language places enormous pressure on all other languages within that society. The study of LMS in diglossic speech communities cannot ignore some degree of power differential associated with languages in contact. Therefore, the following section describes the linguistic varieties of Bangla to understand the competing ideologies of the language varieties of Bangladeshi Bengalis.

1.6 Typology of diglossia in Bangla

The Bangla speech community in Bangladesh is characterised by diglossia (see section 2.4). Ferguson (1972) defines diglossia as a stable language situation in which in addition to the dialects of the language, there is a divergent, highly codified, superposed variety. He adds that this is learned in formal education and used in most written and formal spoken purposes, but not used by any section of the community in ordinary situations. In a very broad sense, diglossia is the relationship between language form and its function and use in various domains.

The two standard varieties of Bangla were the literary language or *sadhu bhasha* (SB) and Standard Colloquial Bangla or *cholit bhasha* (SCB). *Sadhu bhasha* was favoured in place of *cholit* in the early 20th century (Ray, Hai and Ray 1966). However, in recent years one can observe the decline of SB in speech, creative writing and informal written texts (Singh 1986). The dichotomy between SB and SCB is well defined in the written and spoken

forms of Bangla used in West Bengal. SB is highly Sanskritised and differs from SCB in terms of verbal conjugation and pronominal declension (Singh 1986). However, as SCB does not have a predominance of Sanskrit words it is preferred as an alternative to SB for reading and writing purposes in Bangladesh. It has become more formalised over the years and is now used for literary purposes also. In addition, there are also the regional varieties such as Sylheti, Noakhalia and Chatgaiya commonly referred to as dialects. In Bangladesh the typology of diglossia included three distinct varieties of Bangla shown in Figure 1.2.

Sadhu bhasha (SB)	High variety
Cholit bhasha (SCB)	Low variety
Regional dialects	Low variety

Figure 1.2 General structure of the diglossic situation of Bangla

Literary Bangla (SB) is the norm for all literary and literacy purposes. In Ferguson and Fishman's terms it is associated with the High variety (H). However, SCB may be used on formal occasions as an elegant form of speech (Chowdhury 1960). In relation to SB, SCB is the Low variety (L). All Bangladeshis learn the SB and the SCB variety through formal education. SCB is gaining popularity and because it has replaced SB in some contexts (e.g. education) its status can be labelled as High. The regional varieties of Bangla such as Sylheti and Chatgaiya continue to have a low status. On the basis of the linguistic varieties of Bangla it could be said that the trilingual/multilingual repertoire of the Bangladeshis lends itself to a triglossic or a 'double diglossia' situation (Abdulaziz Mkilifi 1978). In this situation there is a point of intersection between two developing diglossia situations (one between SB and SCB and the other between SCB and the regional varieties), and one language acquires a dual status, as illustrated in Figure 1.3. The SB, the SCB and the dialects of Bangla contribute to the triglossic nature of the Bangladeshi speech community. However, a change has been observed in the present-day diglossic varieties of Bangla. Figure 1.3 shows the present-day language situation in Bangladesh including the double diglossia situation.

SB – H variety retained in educational texts and official documents
SCB - H variety replacing some contexts (e.g. newspaper, medium of instruction in education) which were historically reserved for SB.
Regional Colloquial Bangla (RCB) will replace SCB, has low status when compared to SCB but high status when compared with the regional dialects. Gaining popularity in the 20 th and 21 st century.
Regional dialects - L variety

Figure 1.3 The present-day situation of diglossia in Bangladesh.

Cholit bhasha (SCB) is the superposed code with a high status replacing *sadhu bhasha* (SB) in many contexts. A new variety of Regional Colloquial Bangla (RCB) based on dialectal variations in regional forms, vocabulary and pronunciation occupies the former position of SCB. Thus RCB is the Low variety when compared to the high status of SCB but High when compared with the Low status of regional dialects.

Dimock's (1960) comparative study of *sadhu bhasha* (H variety) and *cholit bhasha* (L variety) offers interesting insights into the changing patterns of the language repertoire of the educated Bangladeshis in the last few decades of the twentieth century. His findings also reveal that *cholit bhasha* is gradually replacing *sadhu bhasha* in many formal domains. Singh's (1986) study of diglossia in Bangladesh also agrees with Dimock's observations. He states that in another hundred years the *cholit* of the present will assume the status of the H-variety and the vacant L-slot will be filled by the Regional Colloquial Bangla based on one of the dialects of Bangladesh. Discussing the changing language situation in East Pakistan from 1947 to 1971, Chowdhury (1960) explains that there was no standardised spoken form which everyone was using and a new standard colloquial form of Bangla was emerging. Chowdhury's (1960: 65) observations reveal that the East Bengalis in the pre-partition days found it difficult to learn both SB and SCB and had to suffer the consequence of not being able to wield SCB satisfactorily in everyday interaction. After the partition of Bengal in 1947, there seemed to be a release from the superposed Calcutta standard. The Bengali Muslims of East Pakistan felt that they would now have a legitimate right to use their own dialect (Afia Dil 1986). Educated speakers used their regional dialects in the

domains in which SCB was formerly used but modified it in the shops or the market place or in academia. In each region, the colloquial variety spoken included regional features of pronunciation, lexis and vocabulary. Educated Bengalis also began to use their dialects in *puthi* literature (didactic writings), folk lyrics and rural plays. Efforts to understand and unify the dialects of the people with different dialectal background led to the publication of *Purbo Pakistaner Aancholik Bhaashaar Obhidhaan* (A dictionary of East Pakistani dialects), a three volume dictionary of regional dialects published by the Bangla Academy in 1965 (Afia Dil 1986). However, as the political dictates of the time did not allow the Bengalis to have a national language of their own, the changing patterns in the language repertoire of the Bengalis became a suppressed issue in the light of the status of Bangla in the national context.

1.6.1 The traditional role of SB and SCB and the evolving role of RCB

The functional distribution of SB and SCB is undergoing transition in Bangladesh. Since 1965, many Bangla newspapers have adopted SCB in place of SB. The *Ittefaq*, a popular Bangla daily, began using SCB in 2001 (Morshed and Radice 1994). However, it is important to mention that in Bangladesh, SCB has not replaced SB in all contexts. Bangladesh government continue to use SB in official drafts and documents (Singh 1986). In Government and non-Government schools, colleges and other educational institutions, *cholit* is the popular medium of instruction. Although RCB is gaining more popularity than SB there is no official guideline regarding its recognition as a variety of Bangla. Guidelines in The Education Policy of Bangladesh (2000) state that students have the option of using the *sadhu* or the *cholit* exclusively in the different genres of writing but the two varieties cannot be mixed within the same text. There is no option, however, of using regional varieties such as Sylheti in the medium of writing because the writing script does not exist. However, it must be clarified that even when the writing script existed it was not offered in education.

To interpret language use as a potential determinant of LMS, a brief account of the

differences between Sylheti (which has more vitality in the UK by virtue of the numerical strength of its speakers) and Bangla is described. The differences serve to indicate that the two varieties deserve to be treated as two languages.

1.7 Linguistic description of Bangla

Bangla script is derived from the ancient Indian Brahmi but its more recent ancestor is an eastern variety of the Kutila script which appeared in the 7th century A. D. (Shaw 1985). Its formation has also been influenced by the Dev Nagri script. The script is read from left to right. It is not strictly speaking an alphabet but a syllabary modified towards becoming an alphabet. It uses diacritics in all directions to indicate non-initial vowels and some consonants (Ray, Hai and Ray 1966). The vocabulary of Bangla consists of *tadbhava* words inherited from Prakrit (regional or vernacular dialects spoken during the Middle Indo-Aryan period) which has undergone changes through the centuries and *tatsama* words borrowed directly from Sanskrit without any change in form. There are also borrowings from Persian, Portuguese and English (Mojumdar 1972: 32-35).

1.7.1 Morphology and syntax

The basic word order of Bangla is S-O-V. Bangla does not distinguish between masculine and feminine genders. Adjectives are placed on the left of nouns and adverbs precede the verbs. Bangla verbs follow a very regular pattern, falling into five main classes according to the stem vowels which mutate between the short and long vowels. *-ke* is used for accusative and dative (object), *-r* and *-er* for genitive (possessive) and *-e* / *-te* for instrumental and locative case. In the plural the same case endings are used for personal nouns and personal pronouns. There are postpositions rather than prepositions. Participles are frequently used to make idiomatic compound verbs. For example, *neoya* (to take) combined with *asha* (to come) makes *niye asha* (to fetch or bring) (The Encyclopaedia of language and linguistics 1994).

1.7.2 Phonology

Bangla consonants are described in Figure 1.4 based on their place and manner of articulation (Chatterjee 1970). Bangla palatal stops are also represented as affricates [tʃ, dʒ, tʃʰ, dʒʰ] in some sources (see, for example, <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/bengali.htm>). /h/ is voiced between vowels. [s] is a possible variant of /ʃ/ but in specific words signals low social status, e.g. /naʃta/ ‘breakfast’. /r/ may also be pronounced as an approximant [ɹ] or a weak tap [ɾ]. There are geminate consonants also (http://banglapedia.search.com.bd/HT/B_0137.HTM).

	bilabial	dental	post-alveolar	retroflex	palatal	velar	glottal
unaspirated plosive	p b	t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k g	
aspirated plosive	pʰ bʱ	tʰ dʱ		ʈʰ ɖʱ	cʰ ɟʱ	kʰ gʱ	
nasal	m	n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	
Trill			r				
fricative			ʃ				h
approximant			ɹ				
lateral		l					

Figure 1.4 Place and manner of articulation of Bangla consonants.

Source: Chatterjee 1970

1.7.3 Vowels

The vowel phonemes in Bangla are: /o/, /ɔ/, /ɑ/, /i/, /e/, /u/, /æ/, /oj/ and /ow/. All monophthongs may be short or long except for the diphthongs /oj/ and /ow/ and each vowel has a nasalised counterpart. It is claimed that Bangla has lost the distinction between short

and long /i/ in pronunciation but retains the difference in spelling ([http://banglapedia.search.com.bd/ HT/B_0137.HTM](http://banglapedia.search.com.bd/HT/B_0137.HTM)). In Bangla orthography, vowels may be written independently or by using diacritical marks above, below, before or after the consonant to which they belong. An exception is /ɔ/, which is pronounced after a consonant whenever no other vowel is specified; it is therefore sometimes called the ‘inherent vowel’ e.g. /gɔrom/. In pronunciation it ranges between [ɔ] and [o], but when /ɔ/ occurs in two consecutive syllables, the first is pronounced [ɔ] and the second [o]; never the other way around (<http://people.w3.org/rishida/scripts/bengali/bengali-script/>).

1.8 Linguistic description of Sylheti

Sylheti script (*Sylheti Nagri Lipi*) was influenced by Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Bangla languages (Chisti 1999). Musa (1999) claims that the Dev Nagri script was brought by the north Indians who migrated to Sylhet. It was later modified and consonants and vowels were adapted for the speech of the locals. Chalmers (1996: 9-10) claims that the Nagri script came to Sylhet either with the patron saint Shah Jalal or with the Hindu priests who were brought by the Hindu kings from Bihar, Bengal or Gujrat. The script has more similarities with the Hindi script than it has with Bangla (Chalmers 1996). Lahiri’s (1962) study of Sylheti dialects (*Sylheti Bhashattattyer Bhumika*) reveals the dialectal variations of North Sylhet, South Karimganj, Sunamganj and Hobiganj. Grierson’s (1968) account reveals the use of Dev Nagri alphabet amongst low class Mohammadans to the east of the district (Sylhet) who used it to sign their names because they found it much easier than Bangla. Sylhet District Gazetteer (1975) also records the use of the script in the eastern part of Sylhet. Printing presses in Calcutta produced books on the life of the Prophet, Sylheti Muslim life, folk tales and poems in Sylheti Nagri. However, the reasons behind Sylheti Nagri’s decline since the early part of the 20th century remains unclear. The last Sylheti Nagri printing press in East Pakistan was destroyed in the 1971 War of Liberation (Chalmers 1996).

1.8.1 Morphology and syntax

The word order of a sentence in Sylheti is the same as Bangla. Differences in word formation affect nouns and verbs. Table 1.1 illustrates the case endings of Sylheti and Bangla. Sylheti case-endings such as *-re* (object), *-or / -er* (possessive) *-o / -t* (locative) and *-e* (instrumental) correspond to *-ke*, *-er*, *-te / -e* (used for both locative and instrumental) in Bangla.

Case-	Sylheti		Bangla	
Object	-re	ama re (to) me	-ke	ama ke
Possessive	-or / -er	mizan or (mizan's)	-er / -te	mizan er
Locative	-o / -t	amar gor o (in)my house	-e	amar ghor e
		tumar garit (in) your car		tomar garit e
Instrumental	-e	tor xafor fani e bora (your clothes are soaked)	-e	tomar kapor panit e bfiora

Table 1.1: Sylheti and Bangla case-endings. Source: Chalmers 1996.

The present tenses of Sylheti and Bangla verbs are identical but the present continuous is different. Sylheti *xorsi* and *xorsilam* correspond to *korchilam* and *korchilam* in Bangla. However, the Sylheti forms are the perfect and past perfect tenses while the Bangla verb forms correspond to the present continuous and the past continuous forms (Chalmers 1996). The present participle and the inflected infinitive found in Sylheti are not present in Bangla. The verb 'to do' is *xor-* in Sylheti rather than *xora* according to the conventions of Bangla. Thus *xor-* has the following forms in the first person.

	Sylheti		Bangla
Present	খ৛৛৛	(I) do	ক৛৛৛
Present continuous	খ৛৛৛৛৛	(I)am doing	ক৛৛৛৛
Future	খ৛৛৛৛	(I) shall do	ক৛৛৛৛
Conditional	খ৛৛৛৛৛	(I) would do	ক৛৛৛৛৛
Present participle	খ৛৛৛৛	doing	absent in Bangla
Conditional participle	খ৛৛৛৛	(If one) does	ক৛৛৛৛
Conjunctive participle	খ৛৛৛৛৛	(Having) done	ক৛৛৛৛৛
Simple past	খ৛৛৛৛৛৛	(I) did	ক৛৛৛৛৛
Perfect	খ৛৛৛৛৛	(I) have done	ক৛৛৛৛৛
Past perfect	খ৛৛৛৛৛৛৛	(I) did	ক৛৛৛৛৛৛৛

Table 1.2: Sylheti and Bangla verb forms.

The Past Perfect in Sylheti is often used as the Simple Past. The conditional tense also functions as a past habitual tense. The present participle is formed by placing the verbal noun in the locative case. For consonant stems /-at/ is added to the verb stem e.g. /খ৛৛৛৛/. For vowel stems /-oat/ and /-nit/ is added to the verb stem /খ৛৛/ to form e.g. /খ৛৛৛-*oat*/ (eating) or /খ৛৛৛-*nit*/ (eating) (Chalmers 1996).

1.8.2 Phonology

The place and manner of articulation Sylheti consonants is described in Figure 1.5.

	bilabial	dental	postalveolar	retroflex	palatal	velar	glottal
plosive	p b	t d		ʈ ɖ	c	k g	
nasal	m	n				ŋ	
trill			r				
tap or flap			ɾ				
fricative		s	ʃ				h
approximant					j		
lateral		l					

Figure 1.5 Place and manner of articulation of Sylheti consonants.

Source: Hai 1964, Chalmers 1996.

Sylheti does not have a standard spoken form. There are many variations within Sylheti in terms of phonology and phonetics. There is also no contrast in the plosive series between aspirated and unaspirated consonants. Unlike Bangla, Sylheti only has aspirated consonants. For example /ghono/ ‘thick’ is /gono/ in Sylheti (Hai 1964: 122). Unlike Bangla, [k] and [kʰ] in Sylheti is the uvular fricative [χ] and [tʃ] is represented by [s] and [tʃʰ] by [dz] and [dzʰ]. The [ʃ] of Bangla is often [h] in Sylheti (e.g. /shaap/ becomes /haap/). [k] and [χ], [s] and [dz], [p] and [f] seem to form pairs to represent a single phoneme with two allophones (Chalmers 1996). There is no palatal nasal. There is a contrast between /s/ and /ʃ/; although both may be realised as [h] (e.g. /saacha/ becomes /haacha/). /h/ may be elided in some localities (Hai 1964: 124). Bangla palatal stops may be /s/ in Sylheti, e.g. ‘wheel’ is /cakka/ in Bangla and /sakka/ in Sylheti; ‘ugly’ is /bicri/ in Bangla and /bisri/ in Sylheti. /p/ may be [ɸ] (Hai 1964:123) see also Chalmers (1996: 8 - 13).

1.8.3 Vowels

Chalmers (1996) says Sylheti vowels are like Italian in number and quality. The vowels /a/

/i/, /e/, /o/ and /u/ may be long or short. /i/ and /e/ are short in polysyllabic words but long in other words. There is also variation in quality: /i/ may be [i] or [ɪ], /u/ may be [u] or [ʊ], /e/ [e] or [ɛ], /o/ [o] or [ɔ], /a/ [a] or [ɑ]. There are no contrastive nasalized vowels in Sylheti, except perhaps in /homa/ ‘cucumber’ and /hemani/ ‘gasping’. Diphthongs are found in some regional variations within Sylheti: /ai/ in /bɪʔam/ ‘morning’ (Hai 1964), (see also section 1.8.4, the example from Hobiganj). Variation in Sylheti is discussed in the next section.

1.8.4 Variations in Sylheti

Grierson (1968), Hai (1964) and Sylhet District Gazetteer (1975) describe Sylheti as being distinctive in the different parts of Sylhet. It is often wrongly said that the language of the entire district is uniform and the term *Sylhettia* is incorrectly applied to the dialect of the west and the south of the district. Grierson says that the language spoken by the inhabitants of eastern Sylhet is not intelligible to the natives of central or northern Bangladesh because of peculiarities in pronunciation. Examples of variations recorded in the Sylhet District Gazetteer (1975) reveal the differences in the pronunciation, intonation and vocabulary of Sylheti in different parts of Sylhet. The Sylheti equivalent of the word morning is transcribed in IPA as an example of the variations in different parts of Sylhet.

Standard Colloquial

Bangla (SCB)

Morning it is and all the birds are calling

/bɪɔr/ hoye gechhe arr shab pakhi dakchhe.

Sadar Sylhet

/bɪn/ oi gesey arr hokol pakintey dakira.

Sylhet town

/bɪan/ oi gesey arr sokol pakintey dakira.

South Sylhet	<i>/bian/ oi gesey ar hokol pakisinty dakira.</i>
Hobiganj	<i>/biʔam/ kaloi gesey ga ar oggol paikkaintey daktasey.</i>
Sunamganj	<i>/ʃɔχal/ oi gesey ar sab paikkey daker.</i>

Source: Sylhet District Gazetteer (1975: 305).

1.8.5 Vocabulary

About eighty percent of the basic vocabulary of Sylheti is shared with Bangla (Chalmers 1996). There are variations in the pronunciation of some words but most words share the same roots. Examples of some words which are different from Bangla include /mat/ (to speak), /mala/ (to make) and /uba/ (to stand up). Their Bangla equivalents are /kotha/, /banano/ and /darano/. Examples of a few Sylheti kinship terms which differ from their Bangla counterparts are /furi/ (girl) and /huruta/ (child) which correspond to /me/ and /baca/ in Bangla. When enumerating objects and people in Sylheti, the classifier /-tʌ/ is used for both objects and people while /-gu/ generally refers to people. /-itʌ/ (this one) and /-otʌ/ (that one) differ from their Bangla counterpart by /-etʌ/ and /-otʌ/ or /-ʃetʌ/ while /-igu/ (this person) and /ogʊ/ (that person) differ from their Bangla counterpart by using the classifier /-e/ or /-ʃe/.

Discussions in sections 1.7 and 1.8 reveal the similarities but also the differences between Bangla and Sylheti. Chalmers (1996: 6-7) observes that standard Bangla and Sylheti are ‘near enough mutually unintelligible’. He adds that Sylheti speakers brought up in the UK out of contact with Bangla may find it difficult to communicate with Bangla speakers from

other parts of Bangladesh as much as a Bangla speaker would be baffled when placed in the midst of a Sylheti conversation. Although Chalmers' analysis does not clarify the relationship between Sylheti and Bangla, he does acknowledge that Sylheti and Bangla are very closely related and speakers of one language or dialect are often exposed to the other, even though they may not speak them. Thus he adds that for most people the level of comprehension is somewhere between 'total' and 'zero'. Chatterjee's (1962) study of the relationship between literary and colloquial Bangla also reveals that some dialectal variations in regional forms of Bangla are so divergent that they are mutually unintelligible.

In ethnically plural societies such as Bangladesh, different ethnic groups contribute towards a pool of similar cultural values often creating dual system of linguistic values through bilingualism and maintenance of both native languages. However, the axes of differentiation for this dual system vary in the context of the country of origin as opposed to the country of settlement for example, in the UK where migrants are exposed to languages which cannot be placed on a continuum of similar language families. Thus the language contact situation in the context of the present study is examined in the country of settlement with reference to the linguistic situation in the migrant's country of origin. Information regarding the similarities and differences between Bangla and Sylheti discussed in sections 1.7 and 1.8 justifies the use of the label 'language' rather than 'dialect' when referring to Sylheti. Based on the information of the community described in the introduction, previous questionnaire survey (LMP 1985) and the literature on language contact the present survey is guided by the following research questions.

1.9 Research questions

1. Is Sylheti or Bangla the mother-tongue and the dominant language of the community under investigation?
2. Does identifying with Sylheti and Bangla depend on ethnic, regional and national

identities rather than the status attached to languages and dialects?

3. Do the socio-historic and socio-cultural background of the interlocutors influence language use?
4. Is a Sylheti person's choice of language constrained by his relationship with and the age of the interlocutor?
5. Is age at arrival of migrants crucial in shaping language attitudes and determining levels of language proficiency?
6. Does language use in the family domain depend on a strong sense of regional identity?
7. Are the reasons for learning Bangla integrative and the reasons for learning English instrumental?
8. Does the diglossic pattern prevalent in Bangladesh sustain itself in diaspora or does the interplay between languages indicate language shift from:
 - (a) Sylheti to English
 - (b) to the emergence of Sylheti-English bilingualism among the majority and
 - (c) Sylheti-Bangla-English trilingualism among educated speakers.

Major dimensions of the study focus on:

1. The degree and nature of linguistic assimilation or rejection of the community in diaspora based on objective (Giles et al., 1977) and subjective language (Allard and Landry 1994) perceptions and habitual language use (Fishman 1964; 1966; 1967; 1971; 1972).
2. The interplay of socio-historic background of Bangla, the socio-psychological and

socio-cultural perceptions and their influential impact on language behaviour.

3. The socio-linguistic and socio-cultural stereotypes maintaining native language and culture in the domains of language use.

2 Approaches to the study of language maintenance and shift: literature overview

2.1 Introduction

In order to explain the framework and the methodology used in the present study of language maintenance and shift (LMS) in the Sylheti-speaking Bangladeshi community in Leeds, it is necessary to outline several important issues in sociolinguistics and their implications for language contact. Section 2.2 describes the early literature on language contact including an overview of the seminal work of Bloomfield (1933), Weinreich (1953, 1954, 1957), Haugen (1953) and particularly Fishman (1966). Section 2.3 discusses the concept of DOMAIN as propounded by Fishman (1965, 1972) and used as a tool in describing language use in language contact situations. In section 2.4, Fishman's (1972) ideas about the relationship between concepts such as BILINGUALISM, DIGLOSSIA and LMS are discussed. Giles, Bourhis and Taylor's (1977) concept of ethnolinguistic vitality is introduced in section 2.5. The three types of vitality factors are distinguished with specific examples and explanation emphasising that the factors are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive.

More recent theories on the outcomes of language contact situations are presented in section 2.6. They include subjective ethnolinguistic vitality (Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal 1981), in terms of beliefs (Allard and Landry 1986), within the model of additive and subtractive bilingualism (Landry and Allard 1994). In section 2.7, the relationship between diglossia and ethnolinguistic vitality is discussed with reference to language maintenance. Other issues about the outcomes of language contact include the SOCIAL NETWORK APPROACH (Milroy, 1980; Li Wei 1994) discussed in section 2.8 to understand the meanings associated with 'density' and 'multiplexity' as factors in exerting cultural influence in the Sylheti community under investigation. Density and the multiplex nature of

everyday contacts provide the link between the objective vitality of the ethnolinguistic group and the perceptions and behavioural developments responsible for developing relations between members of the group. Density is also used to develop personal network contacts as a strategy in facilitating fieldwork procedures (Li Wei 1994). In section 2.9, the theory of language as an ethnic core value (Smolicz 1992, 1993, 1995) reveals the significance of language to ethnic and national identity in attempting to understand the processes of language maintenance. In the concluding section (2.10) the framework is discussed with reference to the literature on language contact.

2.2 The study of language maintenance and shift (LMS)

The processes of LMS have, since the 1970s, been among the central foci for sociolinguists. Fasold identifies the processes as the ‘collective results of language choice’ (1984: 213). He elaborates:

...language shift simply means that a community gives up a language completely in favour of another one..... In language maintenance, the community collectively decides to continue using the language or languages it has traditionally used. When a speech community begins to choose a new language in domains formerly reserved for the old one, it may be a sign that language shift is in progress.

The phenomenon of language shift can thus be defined as the shift from the use of one language to the use of another, while language maintenance is the retention of one’s mother-tongue or first language. Language shift does not always occur when two languages are in contact nor does it necessarily occur only between two distinct languages. For example, a shift within the same community may also be from one dialect to another. De Bot and Weltens (1995) define shift as the loss of linguistic skills between generations and distinguish shift from language attrition/loss as the loss of linguistic skills in individuals over time. They argue that research on language attrition and language loss can be

distinguished by whether the language studied is a native language (L1) or a second language (L2) and whether or not the language studied is the dominant variety in the speech community (i.e. is the language under investigation functioning as L1 or L2 in the environment being studied (De Bot and Weltens 1995:152). In the context of the present study of LMS, claimed language use is investigated across generations of Sylheti migrants rather than examining the loss of linguistic skills over time. In migrant communities, shift to the host community's language can take place in some domains such as friendship or school, while the community may maintain its language in other domains such as home, social and religious events or could use a mixed code showing varying degrees of mixtures of the two languages in contact (Agnihotri 1979, Saxena 1995). Even in situations where the social and cultural assimilation is complete the mother-tongue may still continue to be used in rituals, ceremonies or within the family (Mukherjee 1996).

A description of the study of LMS is discussed starting from the influential work of Bloomfield (1933). On language contact, Bloomfield (1933: 55) comments:

Some people entirely give up the use of their language in favour of a foreign one. This happens frequently among immigrants in the United States. If the immigrant does not stay in the settlement of others from his own country, he may have no occasion at all to use his native language. Especially, it would seem, in case of less educated persons this may result after a time in wholesale forgetting: people of this kind understand their native language when they chance to hear it spoken but can no longer speak it freely or even intelligibly. They have made a *shift of language*, their only medium of communication is now English and it is for them not a native but an *adopted* language. Some-times [sic] these persons have nevertheless acquired English very imperfectly and therefore are in the position of speaking no language well.

Bloomfield also points out that when two speech communities come into contact bilingualism may result. For him bilingualism meant native-like control of the two

languages in contact. However, Bloomfield did not focus on the other aspect of a contact situation where a minority group of speakers may be involved in conscious language maintenance activities. This conscious effort may result not in a native-like control of the two languages but means to evolve strategies for the functional separation of the two languages in different domains and in the development of mixed varieties. The present investigation examines the extent to which the community performs language maintenance efforts by the functional separation of the languages that they have in their repertoire in different domains and if the development of a mixed code is an indicator of language maintenance or language shift. Saxena's (1995) study of LMS revealed that the Panjabi Hindus in Southall were undergoing language change in terms of developing a Panjabi-Hindi and a Panjabi-Hindi-English mixed code.

On the study of languages in contact, Weinreich (1953) offered a theoretical framework for the study of bilingualism. His definition of bilingualism was 'the alternate use of two languages'. Weinreich (1953: 1) saw the bilingual individual as 'the locus of language contact'. He was concerned with the study of the functional differentiation of languages in contact situations. He defined language maintenance in terms of language loyalty as a state of mind in which language is an intact entity and in contrast to other languages acquires a high position in the need of being defended and shift as the change from habitual language use of one language to another. He argued that this shift can be analysed by referring to either descriptive linguistics or the subjective experiences of the speaker. Weinreich's examination of linguistic change established the importance of not limiting the focus of attention to structural considerations. He (1964:4) states that

the linguist is entitled to abstract language from considerations of a psychological or sociological nature... But the extent, direction and nature of interference of one language with another can be explained even more thoroughly in terms of the speech behaviour [sic] of bilingual individuals, which in turn is conditioned by social relations in the community in which they live.

The principles that he formulated have guided most subsequent research on the subject. Some fundamental questions about the relationship of language change and language shift in contact situations that Weinreich raised were:

- Do the processes of language shift and language interference take place in the same direction? Are their respective tempos correlated?
- Does a standstill in language shift imply a standstill in interference or, on the contrary, the crystallisation of a new language?
- Can interference ever go so far as to result in a language shift, i.e. can a bilingual's speech in Language A become by degrees so strongly influenced by Language B such that it becomes indistinguishable from B?
- Does habitual switching within a single sentence or phrase represent a transitional stage in the shift from the regular use of one language to another?
- When bilinguals fail to use the language they use at a given moment, can we say that this is an indication towards regular shift?

The three dimensions suggested by Weinreich (1953: 109) along which language shift can be studied are:

1. Functions of the languages in contact: a group may switch to a new language in certain functions but not in others, i.e. a partial rather than a total shift. It is also important to consider the order in which the shift takes place.
2. The nature of the shift should be studied in a contact situation where the mother-tongue division is congruent with other non-linguistic divisions to allow for a differentiated response to the new language among various groups.

3. Shift, like interference, should be studied across generations.

Weinreich was of the opinion that the role of mother-tongue is central to any investigation of language function. He (1964: 89) stressed on the division of a bilingual community by arguing:

The characteristic use of languages in various functions should preferably be described separately for each mother-tongue group, more merely for the bilingual community as a whole. This additional breakdown might show, for example, that the burden of bilingualism is borne entirely by one of the mother-tongue groups, while the other group expects to be addressed in its own language in all cases of intergroup communication.

However, Weinreich did not incorporate the suggestions he discusses into his own fieldwork. He barely touched on the problems of LMS as he was dealing with all aspects of a contact situation. Despite having isolated extra-structural factors that were important in the study of language change, Weinreich's work does not provide any details of individual factors or the interrelationship of the factors towards a comprehensive model of LMS. Weinreich's approach to language contact differs from other researchers such as Haugen in stating to what extent structural and non-structural factors are significant. Haugen (1978) argues that Weinreich's definition of bilingualism as 'the alternate use of two languages' does not explain the frequency of alternation, proficiency of use, distance between the languages and the number of languages used by the same individual. Moreover, Haugen observes that for linguists, the primary interest of bilingualism is the relationship that develops between the two languages in contact.

Haugen (1953) attempted to study the role of socio-cultural settings of the language contact situation by examining the language experiences of a Norwegian migrant ethnic group. He studied the role of socio-cultural factors of the Norwegian-English language contact

situation in the rural-speaking Norwegian communities of Wisconsin and neighbouring states in America but the primary focus of his survey was concerned with the analysis of borrowing and structural changes of the languages in question rather than change or stability in language use.

Fishman (1966a) provided a more comprehensive model in the enquiry of LMS as a societal phenomenon and as processes that are determined by the language attitudes and practices of the individual. His book, considered a 'monumental study' (Haugen 1978: 71) discusses the 'self-maintenance efforts, rationales and accomplishments of non-English immigrants on American shores' (p.15). Fishman followed Weinreich's (1953) theme of language loyalty and collected one volume of a review of the situation of the non-English migrants' languages (French, Spanish, German and Ukrainian) in the United States and the efforts the users of these languages made to prevent or retard the extinction of their languages. He adopted the term 'language maintenance' as the opposite of 'language shift' (Fishman 1964b) emphasizing the active self-conscious aspects of the process and problems of language maintenance.

Fishman (1971: 301) makes it clear, like Weinreich that interference phenomena are not of primary concern in the study of LMS, rather, one must be concerned with:

...the relationship between degree of change (or degree of stability) in language usage patterns on the one hand and ongoing psychological, cultural and social processes on the other.

The three topical sub-divisions in the systematic enquiry of LMS that Fishman (1964, 1971a) proposes are:

1. The psychological, social and cultural factors and their relationship with stability or change in habitual language use.
2. Behaviour toward language in a contact setting, including maintenance or shift

efforts.

3. Habitual language use with more than one generation of language users and in various domains.

Fishman says that any study of LMS should involve the interactions of these dimensions. In sections 2.2.1-2.2.3 these three dimensions are discussed in turn.

2.2.1 Psychological, social and cultural factors

The psychological, social and cultural variables influencing LMS vary in significance according to the specific nature of the study. Other researchers have identified further variables. For example, Weinreich (1953) lists geographic factors (hindering or facilitating language use), indigenusness, cultural or ethnic group membership, religion, race, age, social status, occupation, rural versus urban residence as important variables. Haugen (1956) adds family, neighbourhood, political affiliation and education as influential variables for LMS. Mackey (1962) mentions duration of contact, frequency of contact, pressures of contact derived from economic, administrative, cultural, political, military, historical, religious or demographic sources. Mackey (1973) proposes that his variables 'fuel linguistic forces' which provide 'language power' to the language. He defines language power as:

.... the sum total investment in time, money and energy that is made for the purpose of learning or preserving a particular language.

Mackey (1973: 5)

The six factors that Kloss (1966) isolates in favour of language maintenance of German immigrants in the US include religio-societal insulation factors, time of migration, the

existence of language islands, parochial schools, and the pre-immigration experience⁵. Kloss claims that the religio-societal insulation factor is extremely powerful. It exists when members of a religious group build a self-sufficient society of their own by withdrawing from the world around them to the extent that they reject the laws of the outside world. The religio-societal insulation factor occurs in small groups and has the capacity to resist linguistic assimilation on its own. Religion rather than nationality or language becomes the most important factor. The group's insulation helps the native language to survive as any form of change is considered sinful e.g. the German language maintenance in Pennsylvania.

Language islands refer to limited territories where the minority language is used in everyday conversation among four-fifth of the inhabitants. The larger the islands, the greater will be its members' ability to resist assimilation. Kloss (1966) also stresses the importance of parochial schools for the maintenance of minority language, for example, the Sunday school for the teaching of literacy in Welsh in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Edwards 1991). Time of migration including the pre-immigration experience discussed in sections 1.4.1-1.4.5 reveal how migration affects cultural continuity. Patterns of settlement provide evidence of language islands and parochial schools as important variables to assess the attitudes of the Sylheti community towards the language(s) in their repertoire and hence their efforts for language maintenance.

There are other 'ambivalent factors' mentioned by Kloss which are described to work for and against language maintenance. Of the ones he mentions, those of particular importance in determining patterns of LMS include low educational levels of immigrants, suppression of minority languages, numerical strength, cultural and or linguistic dissimilarity between minority and majority and the socio-cultural characteristics of the minority group under investigation. These and other societal factors such as population composition, residential segregation and isolation, occupational pressures and age differences (Lieberson 1972) are

⁵Historical experience which implies that language maintenance cannot be accomplished without 'quality maintenance' (Kloss 1966: 209).

equally significant in influencing LMS. The 1991 census records the Bangladeshi community in the UK as the youngest and the fastest growing of all ethnic groups (Eade, Vamplew and Peach 1996). They are also identified as the most concentrated of all the major ethnic groups (Labour Force Survey, 1985), and are in some ways a concealed community (Peach 1990) with low levels of education.

Explaining language maintenance in Kerala (South India), the eight variables suggested by Subramoniam (1977) include lack of job contacts, education through the mother-tongue, endogamous marriages, group living, non-migration, lack of competitiveness, preserving business secrets and caste identity. Mukherjee's (1996) study stresses the importance of the demographic patterns of migration and settlement and the influence of cultural, religious and historical factors on the migrant community. She concludes that the chances of mother-tongue survival are remote if members of a community migrate individually or in small groups. However, she adds that chain migration acts as a reinforcement to the cultural and linguistic patterns of the migrant community. In the context of functional distribution of languages in contact, Mukherjee discusses the importance of patterns of inter-marriage, the policy of the government and the frequency and density of contact particularly if the community comes from a bilingual background. She explains that the impact of any of these factors on LMS is not unidirectional and constant: they overlap and interact with each other in a very complex manner.

Repeated pointers to the effect of variables such as education through the mother-tongue, demographic patterns of migration, the linguistic situation in the migrants' country of origin and their patterns of migration were examined in section 1.4. The effects of migration are investigated from the perspective of the social and economic impact that migration has had on the community in Sylhet including any changes in the political and ideological development in Bangladesh and in the UK. As the values associated with the country of origin and country of settlement are separated by a different social, cultural, religious and historical background, the effects of the political and ideological developments which reflect their 'myth of return' (Anwar 1979) and/or processes of assimilation were described in section 1.4.5.

From the list of variables presented above it must be understood that the factors that are treated as determinants of maintenance or indicators of bilingualism may also be motivations for shift. It is the interaction of many of these factors such as the community's demographic patterns of migration and settlement and their attitudes regarding their cultural identity that plays an important role in determining the degree, speed and extent of maintenance or shift. Cultural identity includes ethnic, religious, historical, geographic and linguistic markers as group identity. As much as chain migration ensures the formation of a large group and favours the retention of the cultural identity of the community in diaspora, the socio-historical background of the community can also be an inspiration for group members to retain their identity. For example, linguistic repression or suppression movements in the migrants' country of origin can promote language loyalty and therefore language maintenance. A careful investigation of the individual's psychological orientation towards the language(s) and social and cultural issues pertinent to the community's ethnic and national identity will reveal the determinants of LMS.

2.2.2 Linguistic and social stereotypes

The second subdivision of Fishman's model is concerned with 'more focussed and conscious behaviour on behalf of either maintenance or shift' (Fishman 1964: 59). This component involves the investigation of linguistic and social stereotypes and collecting data on language-related perceptions of the group. The relationship between objective and subjective language behaviour in different societies varies according to the linguistic and social perceptions that different ethnolinguistic groups have.

This component also includes the attitudes that the minority community under investigation have towards the host community's language. These attitudes depend largely on the reasons that members of the migrant community have for learning that language. The distinction between INSTRUMENTAL and INTEGRATIVE motivation, as propounded by Lambert (1972), is relevant in this context. Lambert explains that instrumental motivation is associated with pragmatic reasons for learning a language such as employment and better career prospects,

while integrative motivation deals with the individual's desire to affiliate and become an integral part of the culture of the host community. Motivations for learning the native languages and the host community's language will reveal the community's perceptions towards those languages and indicate maintenance or shift. In order to assess language attitudes and behaviour it is not sufficient to measure linguistic and social stereotypes objectively; subjective perceptions of these factors by the users of the language are equally important. An expansion of Fishman's basic model is provided by Bourhis' (1981) SUBJECTIVE ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY (SEV) framework (see section 2.6). This uses the actual description of language vitality perceptions (status, demographic and institutional support) in determining the vitality of that language (see section 2.5).

2.2.3 Habitual language use

Fishman's third topical sub-division is concerned with habitual language use at various points in time. This component makes linguistic analysis of the speech of bilinguals an integral part of the model (see Jha, 1994; Saxena 1995; Biltoo, 2004). The degree of bilingualism can be recognised 'in terms of automaticity, proficiency and code-intactness at the phonetic, lexical and grammatical levels' (Fishman 1964: 65). Language choice of an interlocutor at any given point in time must also be investigated with respect to media (written, read or spoken), role (inner speech, comprehension or production), interlocutor (male, female, old, young), situation (formal, semi-formal, informal), and domain (family, friends, neighbourhood, mass media, occupation etc). Interpretation and comparison of language use in formal and informal domains will determine the 'dominance configurations' by predicting the direction of bilingualism and provide insights into the nature and extent of LMS (see Tables 6.13-6.18). Fishman adds that it is important to consider interlocutors and locales within each domain discussed in section 2.4.

2.3 Domain

The study of bilingual language choice goes back to Weinreich (1953), who used the term 'domain of language use' to mean that each of the existing languages or language varieties

in a given society served a particular function and these functions gave rise to stable societal bilingualism. Extending Weinreich's work, Fishman (1965, 1972) refers to the concept of domain as situations which structure both the speakers' perception of the situation and their language choice. The speakers follow a set of behavioural norms predetermined by society. An example of a child talking to a parent at home would constitute a 'family domain' in which the language variety used would be different from a situation where the child is speaking to a friend (friendship domain) or a teacher (education domain).

Fishman (1964, 1965, 1968) defines domains as 'institutional-role contexts', in which one language variety is more likely to be appropriate than another. In its simplest form each domain should involve the use of one language only. For example, migrant communities usually use the majority language at work and the mother-tongue in the domain of family. More complex forms include the use of more than one language in any one domain, such as the use of mother-tongue with parents and grandparents and the use of the host community's language with siblings in the intimate home domain.

However, there may be a situation where the participants remain the same but the domain changes. This may initiate a different topic for conversation and perhaps a different language choice e.g. a teacher visiting a pupil at home. These situations are not explained in Fishman's concept of domain analysis. Fishman (1972: 441) does not provide a taxonomy for delimiting domains but he does argue that the same domain may not be equally significant to different communities or to all members of the same community. Whatever the effect of extralinguistic factors for language choice, the key determinant of language choice is the interlocutor. Fishman (1963, 1964, 1980) distinguished the behavioural manifestations of bilingualism from that of the societal compartmentalisation of languages to incorporate the factors responsible for change in language use.

Fishman (1971) points out that in a language contact situation societal compartmentalisation may give rise to stable bilingualism which can continue for several generations, or there may be language shift where one language is completely given up for

another. An example of shift is illustrated by Dorian's (1981) study in East Sutherland, which demonstrates that the generation of grandparents used their mother tongue, Gaelic, with their grandchildren. They expected the grandchildren to use the same. The parents, however, used Gaelic with their own generation and the older generation but English with their children and expected the children to use English with them. As a result the children grew up able to understand Gaelic but not speak it. On the future of Gaelic, Dorian (1981:105) notes:

The home is the last bastion of a subordinate language in competition with a dominant official language of wider currency...speakers have failed to transmit the language to their children so that no replacement generation is available when the parent generation dies away.

Another example of societal compartmentalisation leading to language shift is Gal's (1979) study in Oberwart, Austria, where after four hundred years of Hungarian-German bilingualism German is slowly replacing Hungarian in the domains not only of work and education but also at home and in everyday interaction. However, in most communities it is unusual to abandon the use of one language completely and substitute it with another in the community's lifetime. According to Fishman (1972: 82) domain is

.... a sociocultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators and locales of communication in accord with the institutions of a society and the spheres of activity of a culture in such a way that individual behaviour and social patterns can be distinguished from each other and yet related to each other.

His view of domain implies that language choice in particular situations reflects sociocultural norms and expectations. However, for the purpose of enquiry into LMS domains are further sub-divided into role-relations such as husband/wife, parent/child, child/child, etc. The communities that come into contact with each other and the outcome of the languages that come into contact can be seen along a continuum with a range of

possibilities. On one end of the continuum there may be a group that retains its language in all domains, while on the other end another group may shift completely to the language of the host society. There may also be communities that fall somewhere between the two ends of the continuum and assign different languages to different domains. Such a community commonly retains its native language in the domain of the family and the community but switches to the language of the host community in the domain of education and employment. The use of different languages across domains by different interlocutors can be measured by the number of occurrences of its use. If there is regularity in the order of language used with different interlocutors it is a predictor of language maintenance while a deviation would indicate instability and therefore a shift. Gal (1979) used an implicational scale to show observed language choices in a range of contexts as well as differences between speakers of different social characteristics. The implicational scale ranked both speakers and interlocutors and revealed the kind of interlocutors with whom speakers used German or Hungarian. Her study revealed that at one extreme Hungarian was favoured in the context of 'God' followed by 'grandparents and their generation'. At the other extreme, 'doctor' was the interlocutor with whom German was most frequently used, followed by 'grandchildren and their generation'. The differential use of the two languages was evidence of an evolving situation of language shift from Hungarian to German.

On the concept of bilingualism and diglossia among linguistic minorities Martin-Jones (1989) claims that Fishman's approach has overlooked a conflict perspective. She (*ibid*) argues that the study of bilingual discourse over-emphasises the freedom of choice speakers have in expressing their intentions and the degree to which bilinguals can consciously monitor and control the use of languages. She suggests a multi-dimensional approach which would allow researchers to move beyond these limitations. However, it must be pointed out that as much as language choice reflects socio-cultural norms and expectations, it can also defy them as a conscious strategy. One of the ambivalent factors working against language maintenance mentioned by Kloss (1966: 211) is the 'unfavourable effects of cultural dissimilarity'. Kloss observes that there is also the possibility that the younger generation may be reluctant to share the disadvantages experienced by their previous generations. In order to assimilate into the host community the younger generation may

strive to overcome language differences by defying cultural norms which may lead in turn towards possible language shift. It is therefore important that any investigation of LMS include language use not only in the different domains but also in the same domains with different generations of users. Different generations of language users participated in the survey for an in-depth analysis of language and socio-cultural norms.

In sum, then, the study of LMS should take into account role-relations, situation, socio-psychological and psychological processes that the individual may be experiencing at any given point in time. Language choice can be a result of assuming a particular role with a definite strategy in mind but this is subject to the external stimuli the individual receives. Whatever the strategy used for language choice, the key issue is, the more the host communities' language spreads into different domains, the more the likelihood of language shift.

2.4 Domain and diglossia

A particular type of bilingualism in which two languages have well-defined functions was termed diglossia by Ferguson (1959). In Greek, *DIGLOSSIA* means bilingualism but the use of the term has been extended to mean the social aspects of bilingualism (Landry and Allard 1994). The earlier use of the term 'diglossia' restricted its domain to genetically related dialects (e.g. Ferguson, 1959) but modern usage extends the term to two or more distinct languages or dialects as discussed by Fishman (1967, 1971, 1972, 1980, 1989) and Hamers and Blanc (1989). Fishman (1972: 92) endorses that 'diglossia exists not only in multilingual societies which officially recognise several languages, and not only in societies that utilise vernacular and classical varieties, but also in societies which employ separate dialects, registers, or functionally differentiated language varieties of whatever kind'. Linguists define diglossia as the relationship between language form and social function. A model of diglossia was first developed by Ferguson (1959) and was extended by Gumperz (1962) and Fishman (1967, 1971a, 1971b). Fishman (1972, 1980) argues that diglossia is based on social compartmentalization 'i.e. on the maintenance of strict boundaries between the societal functions of the H and L respectively' (Fishman 1980: 5).

H denotes the ‘high’ variety of a language e.g. Classical Arabic, while L is the ‘low’ variety e.g. Spoken Arabic. The binary distinction between the H and L varieties and their use is governed by community norms of appropriacy. The L variety is reserved for less formal and ‘low’ domains such as family, neighbourhood, marketplace and the H variety is more appropriate for the formal or ‘high’ domains such as education, mass media, religion etc.

In studying communities whose language is characterised by diglossia (e.g. Bangla, see section 1.6) it would be appropriate to link the concepts of domain and diglossia because diglossia, according to Fishman (1972, 1980) is a potential condition for language maintenance by minority linguistic communities. In order to understand the role of domain in LMS, it is therefore important to understand the phenomenon of diglossia. Landry and Allard (1994) observe that any major differences in language use across social domains indicate the diglossic nature of language behaviour.

Fishman (1967) distinguishes diglossia from bilingualism. Bilingualism is defined as the individual’s ability to use more than one language variety, while diglossia is the distribution of more than one language variety to perform different communicational tasks in a society. Fishman’s typology of language contact situations is shown in Figure 2.1. The four-cell matrix depicts four sociolinguistic conditions in which diglossia and bilingualism may exist.

[1] + BILINGUALISM + DIGLOSSIA	[2] + BILINGUALISM - DIGLOSSIA
[3] + DIGLOSSIA - BILINGUALISM	[4] - DIGLOSSIA - BILINGUALISM

Figure 2.1 Fishman’s (1972) four-celled matrix showing the possible relationships between diglossia and bilingualism.

A society of type [1] is one in which there are large numbers of bilingual individuals, and the two varieties are distributed with the differentiated use of the H and L varieties. Fishman refers to the example of Paraguay where Guarani is the L variety and Spanish the

H variety. Bilingualism without diglossia [2] is a society when most people are bilingual but one language variety is not restricted to a particular set of circumstances and another variety to another set. For example, educated speakers in many ex-colonial countries where English is not the dominant or the majority language use English and mother-tongue interchangeably in the home, friendship or the domain of work. Diglossia without bilingualism [3] is when a language occupies a definite territory through political arrangement e.g. the Indian states (Tamil in Tamil Nadu). A society with neither diglossia nor bilingualism [4] is very rare and any society which is linguistically homogeneous would fit this category (Fishman 1972:105). The situations in [1], [2] and [3] will potentially be prone to language shift.

According to Fishman (1972, 1980), the functional separation of the H and L language varieties is an indicator of stability, which guarantees stable societal bilingualism. An overlap in functions would indicate a gradual change towards language shift. This led Fishman (1980: 6) to conclude that ‘both diglossia and bilingualism are continuous variables, matters of degree rather than all or none phenomena, even when compartmentalization obtains’.

The typology of diglossia examined in section 1.6 provides a description of the linguistic situation in Bangladesh. Based on the description it may be assumed that the Sylhetis have two native languages (Bangla, Sylheti) in their repertoire and Bangla, the standard language is characterised by diglossia. However, having two native languages in one’s repertoire does not necessarily imply linguistic competence in both.

Fishman (1980: 3) has stressed that diglossia represents ‘an enduring societal arrangement, extending beyond a three generation period, such that two languages each have their secure, phenomenologically legitimate and widely implemented functions’. Although diglossia describes a situation with languages of different status in contact, Fishman does not explain how the functional differentiation that leads to the development of different status is achieved. Research on regional minority languages in Europe stresses the importance of why the two languages came to be functionally differentiated. Studies on

Catalan (Aracil 1965), Catalan and Occitan (Eckert 1980), Scottish Gaelic (McKinnon 1984) and Welsh (Williams 1987, 1992) conclude that the two languages involved in diglossia have unequal status. For these researchers the notion of diglossia among linguistic minorities is seen from the perspective of conflict rather than complementarity. Williams (1992) is critical of Fishman's views on linguistic changes as an inevitable evolutionary process without any conflict or power struggle involved and the negative terms with which Fishman describes the traditional societies in quadrant [3] as compared to the positive ones used about traditional societies in quadrant [1]. Williams (1992) argues that a situation involving subordination of a language must be understood in terms of differential power dimensions and some degree of conflict e.g. Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, and Irish Gaelic. On the other hand, many scholars define diglossia as non-conflictual (e.g. Ferguson 1959, Fishman 1972, 1980, and Hamers and Blanc 1989). However, Eckert (1980) views the diglossic situation from a different perspective. Eckert (1980: 1056) states:

Diglossia does not arise; it is imposed from above in the form of an administrative, ritual or standard language. By virtue of its political or economic status, this language becomes requisite for access to power and mobility within the society.

Although imposition of power cannot be seen as neutral, Eckert's perspective explains that the low variety of language is used in restricted domains by its members and the language of power is imposed in the form of government, administration and standard language. The functions of the two varieties exist in opposition. This opposition creates a force of assimilation 'by interacting with and reinforcing social evaluation of the domains in which the two languages are used' (1980: 1056). In her study of the rural community in Southwestern France, French has replaced Gascon, the local dialect. The inequality of the two varieties in diglossic terms showed that using the low variety (Gascon) had put some constraints on its use. Not only was it considered 'inappropriate', teachers' instilled 'emotionally-loaded restrictions' on its use (Eckert 1980: 1060). However, the use of the standard variety (French) was not associated with any constraints. Teachers were trained to believe that using a 'peasant' dialect makes it impossible to pursue any logical or abstract

thought. The extent to which French was associated with social and economic factors was responsible for strengthening the position of that language and contributing towards language shift.

In Fishman's concept of diglossia language varieties are socially and functionally compartmentalised while the conflict perspective stresses inequality as the reason behind the social and functional compartmentalisation between language varieties. Eckert (1980) views diglossia more as a means of language shift than language maintenance. However, both diglossia and the conflict perspective view language choices made by individuals as being determined by higher-order social structures (Li Wei 1994). Eckert stresses that the historical relationship between the dominant language and the minority language should be explored to explain the changes in the differential use of the language varieties. In view of the significance of socio-historic issues influencing language, the historical background of Bangla including the socio-political perspective is discussed in the introductory chapter (see section 1.5).

It is evident from the list of factors mentioned so far that while some factors may be common to many multilingual settings there are others which are specific to particular situations and vary from one community to another. Since there is no consensus on the significance of any one factor, a unified framework is required to unravel the complex relationship between these factors. The impact of any of the factors mentioned in this section is not unidirectional or constant. The framework which encompasses the complex relationship between most of these factors is the ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY (EV) model.

2.5 Ethnolinguistic Vitality

Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV) is a framework to study the status of minority language(s) which reflects language behaviour in majority contexts. The notion of vitality was first introduced into the ethnolinguistic arena by Giles et al. (1977). The model comprises status, demographic and institutional support factors which are considered to be essential components of the language vitality of two linguistic groups sharing a common

environment. The vitality of a language is a measure of the chances of survival that the language has in a language contact situation in which there are other languages and language users. The concept of ethnolinguistic vitality emerged as a tool for the analysis of processes like language shift, language attitudes and inter-ethnic communication. Over the years researchers have developed this framework and adopted features of the group vitality framework to analyse a broad range of issues related to language, ethnicity, bilingualism and inter-group communication. The EV model provided a conceptual tool to analyse the sociostructural variables that affect the strength of ethnolinguistic communities in intergroup settings. Giles et al. (1977: 308) explain that:

The vitality of an ethnolinguistic group is that which makes the group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations. From this, it can be argued that ethnolinguistic minorities who have little or no group vitality would eventually cease to exist as a distinctive group. Conversely, the more vitality a linguistic group has, the more likely it will survive and thrive as a collective entity in an intergroup context.

Members of the group rely on each other instead of acting as isolated individuals. The end result of behaviour thus involves all the members, and in this way the group behaves collectively. The three structural variables that are most likely to influence the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups in objective terms are the STATUS, DEMOGRAPHIC and INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FACTORS. Giles et al argue that these three types of variables are linked with one another. The structural variables which help to group linguistic minorities on the basis of status, demography and institutional support factors are illustrated in Figure 2.2 and explained in sections 2.5.1-2.5.3.

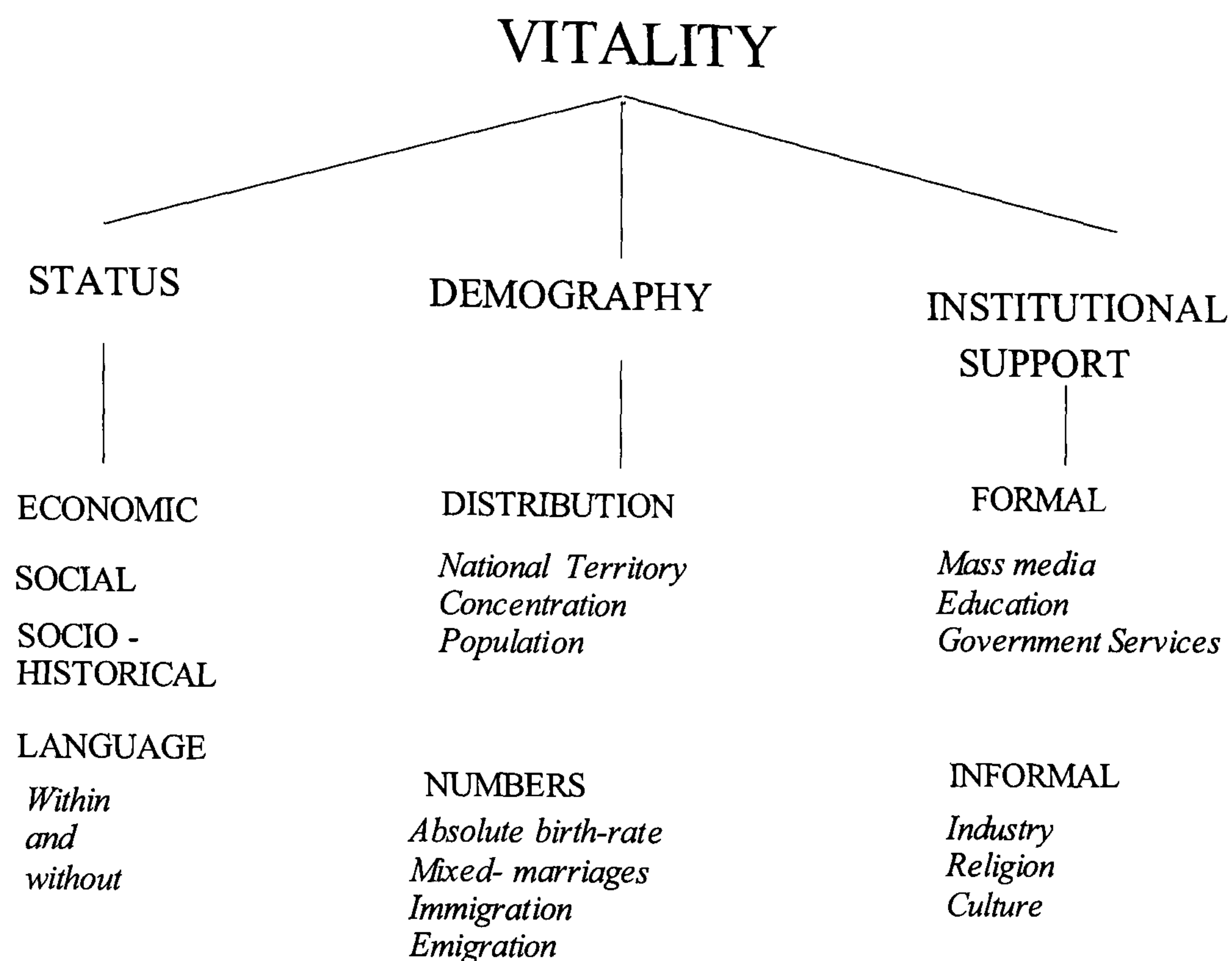


Figure 2.2 Taxonomy of the Structural Variables of Ethnolinguistic Vitality

Source: Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977)

2.5.1 Status factors

Status variables are those related to the social prestige, the sociohistorical status, and the prestige of the community's language and culture, not only within its own territory but also internationally. The more status the linguistic group has the more vitality it is said to possess as a 'collective entity' (Giles et al., 1977: 308).

Economic status refers to the control a linguistic group has over its economic destiny. The language of a community which has more control over its economic destiny will have a better chance of survival. Economic status can affect language maintenance or language shift. Examples of how economic changes contribute to language shift are evident in Eckert

(1980) while those that contribute to language maintenance are described by Paulsen (1981), Trudgill and Tzavaras (1977) and Athanasiadi (2001).

Paulsen (1981) discusses the language maintenance phenomenon of Ferring, a Germanic language spoken on the islands of Fohr and Amrun off the North Sea coast of Germany. The community changed their occupation from fishing to the craft of navigation. The young men with their new skills of navigation were recruited as sailors and officers by the Dutch overseas companies in the sixteenth century. This brought economic independence to the islanders and helped them to maintain their language.

However, when a minority language community experiences unemployment or low income the pressure is to shift towards the majority language (Baker 1993). Trudgill and Tzavaras' (1977) study investigated the extent of Arvanitika language maintenance, the degree and nature of Greek-Arvanitika language switching, and linguistic change and interference. Their investigation revealed that the economic dominance of the Greeks has been a factor in the progressive breaking down of the Albanian-Greek ethnic identity of the Arvanites. The older Arvanites want the Arvanitis' identity to be maintained while most of the younger Arvanites aspire to a middle-class way of life and high standard of living. To them this seems achievable only through ability in and identity with the Greek language. Athanasiadi's (2001) study reveals that political social and demographic and cultural factors such as diminishing numbers of speakers, occupational shifts from rural to urban areas and higher education providing social and economic mobility, identifying ethnic identity through factors other than language were responsible for the endangerment of Arvanitika. However, despite cultural and political constraints and restricted use it is still being maintained for centuries among the rural groups.

The social and socio-historic status of any linguistic group refers to some important factors to be considered in determining the vitality of the group. The social status refers to the prestige variables of the linguistic group. The sociohistoric status is the history of the periods in which the linguistic groups have struggled to defend, maintain or assert their rights for the existence as a collective entity (Giles et al., 1977: 308). Historical instances

can be symbols to inspire individuals to bind together as group members, but that need not always be the case. Groups such as the Bangladeshi Bengalis reflect on their past and draw inspiration from their struggles and movements contributing to the language maintenance of Bangla. However, groups which reflect on their past negatively are likely to hide their linguistic identity and their attitude could dilute the vitality of the group and they may be prone to language shift.

Language status refers to the language spoken by the group both within and outside the boundary of the linguistic community network. The history, prestige value and the degree to which the language has gone through standardisation may be a source of pride or shame for members of that linguistic community and may facilitate or inhibit the vitality of that group (Giles et al., 1977: 312). Language status within and without are important variables to consider. The minority group's attitude towards the languages may be a powerful indicator of language vitality. Therefore, the link between socio-historic status of Bangla and ethnic and national identity are very important variables in analysing language vitality of the group under investigation. The relationship between Bangla language and nationalism was examined in section 1.5 in the light of the socio-historic and language status of Bangla with regard to language perceptions, language use and maintenance and shift strategies.

2.5.2 Demographic factors

Demographic variables are related to the number of members of the ethnolinguistic group and their distribution throughout the urban, regional or national territory. Distribution factors refer to the numeric concentration of group members in the various parts in proportion to the members of the host community. The ethnic minority groups concentrated in certain areas develop strong networks and have a better chance of maintaining their own language. On the other hand it would be difficult to develop a sense of linguistic and cultural identity if the communities are dispersed geographically, e.g. the Sinhala community in Britain (Alladina and Edwards 1991). Number factors refer to the community's absolute group numbers, their birth rate, exogamy or endogamy, and their

patterns of emigration and immigration. However, a simple increase or decrease in number does not indicate an immediate change in the vitality of the language.

Patterns of migration and patterns of settlement can increase or decrease the vitality of a linguistic minority group. Immigration laws can be designed to keep the groups as a minority or a majority. In the case of the Bangladeshi migrants, Gardner (1995) explains how the Commonwealth Immigration Bill of 1962, which was intended to limit immigration, had the opposite effect and thousands of Sylheti Bangladeshis came to the UK with employment vouchers. Many men brought their families and became the starting point for chain migration (see sections 1.4.3- 1.4.5).

Migrants and indigenous populations can be manipulated and moved about so that no single group can be the dominant linguistic group in an area. LMP (1985) reports that racist attacks on the Bangladeshi community in Tower Hamlets forced them to go against the official policy of dispersal to estates. In view of the situation the housing authorities developed a 'de facto policy of safe estates' and did not encourage the community to take housing outside the safe estates. This resulted in ethnic segregation and encapsulation (LMP 1985: 99).

Emigration due to economic or social conditions reduces the number of ingroup speakers in the linguistic community and this will in turn affect the vitality of the group. In some cases the emigrants may need to learn another language which they would find economically vital to their survival and success in their adopted country. They may eventually lose their mother-tongue as members of the dispersed community. The numerical strength of speakers within a specific area was an important factor in language maintenance as revealed in the analysis of census data in Wales (Baker, 1985). Li's (1982) study of Chinese-Americans in the USA shows that the third generation Chinese-Americans living in Chinatown shifted less than their contemporaries living outside Chinatown. However, Williams (1992) criticizes the demographic factor of the Giles et al (1977) EV model in terms of having no reference to the fact that the numerical minority can be a majority in power terms, with the consequence that the numerical minority's language vitality is high. For example, English,

the language of the colonial rulers in South Asia and other regions continues to be important in terms of power and has a significant impact on the political economy of the region despite the diminishing number of native English-speakers in the region. Therefore, as Williams argues there is a potential danger in confusing the demographic concept (numerical strength) of the minority in terms of power and dominance.

In demographic terms, mixed or inter-ethnic marriages can influence the number of speakers maintaining minority languages. That, however, is not always the case. In Oberwart, Gal (1979: 107) points out that in the case of intermarriage between a German monolingual and a German-Hungarian bilingual, the children grew up monolingual in German, irrespective of which parent spoke German. Baker (1993) also observes that in inter-ethnic marriages, the language with the higher status normally has the best chance of survival as the home language.

Preservation of minority languages is usually easier in rural rather than urban areas. The language of work and any cultural activity is more likely to be the historical language of the rural area. In contrast, in the urban area the language of work is more likely to be the dominant majority language. Socially accepted rituals associated with birth, marriage and death tend to reinforce the retention of the minority group language and in rural areas these rituals are usually deep-rooted (Mukherjee 1996). It is therefore important for the study of LMS to establish whether the minority group in question has emigrated from a rural or an urban background. By virtue of the fact that the Sylheti community of rural origin live in ethnic colonies supported by an infra-structure of ethnic food and grocery shops, clothes stores, minicab services, there is a strong tendency for their language to be reinforced and maintained.

2.5.3 Institutional support factors

Institutional support factors refer to the extent to which any linguistic group is represented in the various institutions of a nation e.g. the mass media, parliament, government departments, the armed forces, education and other services in the region or community,

and the extent to which minority languages are supported through language planning policies in the school curriculum. Of these, the use of the minority language in education is of crucial importance (Landry and Allard 1994). Institutional support may be informal or formal. Informal support refers to the degree to which an ethnolinguistic group can behave as a pressure group to safeguard its own interest in the activities of education, media, government service, business, finance etc. Formal support, on the other hand, refers to the degree to which members of the ethnolinguistic group have control in the decision-making of the government, media, industry, and religious and cultural affairs.

Ethnolinguistic groups who have strong institutional control of the state and private institutions will be able to safeguard their vitality and survive as a 'collective entity'. The media can affect the prestige and maintenance of the linguistic group but that would depend to a great extent on the frequency of exposure that the majority and the minority languages get through the media. Baker (1985, 1992) argues that the media of television and radio act as a passive medium for language but it is very likely that their role in the maintenance of minority language can be exaggerated. Referring to his research in Wales, Baker (1993: 53-54) points out that 'it is majority language mass media that is the destroyer of a minority language and culture rather than minority language television and radio being the salvation of the language'. However, watching the same programmes does not imply that people share the same cultural interpretations or that their aspirations are the same. The meanings of these cultural reproductions lie in the eyes of the beholder because we know very little about what one actually perceives (Hannerz 1992).

2.5.4 Religion

Religion can play a very important role in the maintenance or shift of a language. If the minority language is also the language of religion then it has a greater chance of survival. The survival of the Welsh language in the twentieth century is attributed to its dominant position in Welsh chapels and in Welsh religious life in the home (Baker 1993). Gal (1979) and Dorian (1981) found religion to be one of the significant factors in language shift. The two cases however, were different in the sense that in Oberwart, church services were

usually conducted in Hungarian in the Oberwart Calvinist church and the Hungarian-speaking people preferred to pray, sing hymns and hear the sermon in Hungarian (Gal 1979). In East Sutherland Gaelic was predominant in the small-fishing community and daily family worship at home was conducted in Gaelic (Dorian 1981:90). However, in recent times the language used in the domain of religion had shifted from Gaelic to English (Dorian 1981). This shift was partly because large and small communities had the same religion in East Sutherland unlike the communities in Oberwart.

2.5.5 Evaluation of the vitality concept

By careful evaluation of the combined effects of the three structural variables (status, demography and institutional support) one can determine the relative vitality of the ethnolinguistic group. The variables can be assessed objectively and on that basis speech communities can be classified as possessing low, medium or high vitality. Giles et al. (1977) argue that factors which belong to the status, demographic and institutional support categories can be translated into research questions and used to make an inventory of language perceptions. The ethnolinguistic vitality of the language can then be calculated from this inventory. The description of the model proposed by Giles et al. (1977) appears to be straightforward. However, a drawback of the EV model is that the variables are not independent as the model assumes; they are related in a complex manner and do not provide a theory to examine the variables (Husband and Khan 1982). Williams (1992) argues that some of the objective variables such as social, economic, language and socio-historic status also have a subjective quality and can be assessed both objectively and subjectively in determining the vitality of the language. Furthermore, Williams argues that a link between the objective and the subjective dimensions of the EV model is not provided. The objective structural variables do not explain how subjective vitality is developed; whether it is through an individual's own experience or through contacts with ethnolinguistic groups. The link, however, is provided by Landry and Allard's (1994) model of additive and subtractive bilingualism discussed in section 2.6.

Despite limitations and severe criticisms the Ethnolinguistic Vitality framework has proven to be productive and viable in research. A step forward in the ethnolinguistic vitality framework is the Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality (SEV) framework proposed by Bourhis et al. (1981). In the next section, SEV is discussed in conjunction with the subsequent developments made by researchers working within the vitality concept to explain inter-ethnic behaviour.

2.6 Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality

The link between EV and SEV is used in the present study to analyse language choice and behaviour for language maintenance. The EV framework provides the actual description of the vitality factors as crucial in determining the vitality of a language while in the SEV framework, the perception of these factors by the speakers is regarded as vital. SEV has been incorporated into several theoretical models such as intergroup model (Giles and Byrne 1982), ethnolinguistic identity theory (Giles and Johnson 1987), second language proficiency (Clement 1980, 1984), bilingual development (Hamers and Blanc 1982), EV (Giles et al., 1977) and with vitality related beliefs in the model of additive and subtractive bilingual development (Landry and Allard 1987, 1990, 1994). The set of beliefs introduced by Allard and Landry (1986) are based on the theory of cognitive orientation (Kreidler and Kreidler 1976, 1982) which states that human behaviour changes either consciously or unconsciously in response to the stimuli it receives. The model of additive and subtractive bilingualism (Landry and Allard 1994) comprises three different levels of analysis (sociological, socio-psychological and psychological) to explain the objective, interactional and subjective factors influencing language behaviour. The link between the objective factors (sociological level) and the subjective perceptions (psychological level) of an individual is provided by the individual's experiences with other members of the ethnolinguistic group. Landry and Allard (1994) argue that their model attempts to develop a relationship between the individual and society and the processes involved in this relationship is 'interactive' and 'complementary' leading to different types of bilingualism. Additive bilingualism develops when conditions favour the development and maintenance of the first language (L1) while learning and using a second language (L2). Subtractive

bilingualism occurs when learning an L2 is associated with loss of one's own L1 and culture (Allard and Landry 1992).

Landry and Allard's (1994) model is used to explain language attitudes and behaviour of the ethnic minority community towards the use of their mother-tongue and their motivations to learn and maintain their mother-tongue. Landry and Allard's SEV concepts and other vitality related beliefs are examined in sections 2.6 - 2.8 in the development of the model of additive and subtractive bilingualism.

In order to measure the Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality of ethnic groups Bourhis et al. (1981) developed the subjective ethnolinguistic vitality questionnaire (SVQ). SVQ included items to investigate how members of an ethnolinguistic group perceived the EV variables in relation to other groups of users. Bourhis et al. (1981) believe that group members' subjective assessment is crucial and as important as the objectively assessed vitality variables in explaining inter-ethnic behaviour. They assert that the group's subjective perceptions can explain the attitudes, skills and motivations for learning a second language and also attitudes towards language use and code-switching strategies. In their opinion the subjective data is most effective when used with objective information about the group's actual EV.

The SVQ investigated the three main dimensions of vitality discussed by Giles et al. (1977) (see section 2.5). Although SVQ has been used in many studies to measure the subjective perceptions of ethnolinguistic groups, Allard and Landry (1986) found that the SVQ was useful on some aspects of language use, language attitudes and inter-ethnic behaviour but it may be a disadvantage in predicting language behaviour in other inter-ethnic contexts, particularly in situations where language behaviour was oriented towards assimilation. Bourhis and Sachdev (1983) found that subjective vitality perceptions could provide advance indication to suggest whether a particular ethnic group was assimilating linguistically or were in the process of an ethnic revival phase. Such indications were not possible on the basis of information gathered from the objective vitality assessments only. Allard and Landry (1986) rationalised that any advance indication of assimilation could be

further strengthened by considering ‘beliefs’ about the individual’s present situation and behaviour and ‘beliefs’ about desires and goals. With this view they developed the BELIEFS ON ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY QUESTIONNAIRE (BEVQ).

The BEVQ investigated four ‘exocentric’ beliefs and four ‘egocentric’ beliefs. Exocentric beliefs refer to perceptions of sociological factors and the behaviour of others which may affect a community’s EV and egocentric beliefs refer to the individual him/herself. SEV in terms of ‘beliefs’ reflect the degree to which language behaviour contribute to the group’s EV (Allard and Landry 1994). They also identified another set of beliefs such as general beliefs, beliefs about self, belief about norms and rules and belief about goals (Kreitler and Kreitler 1976,1982). They stated that a combination of beliefs would reflect the SEV of the ethnolinguistic group better. Allard and Landry (1992) showed that egocentric beliefs which included the ‘self beliefs’ and ‘goal beliefs’ could predict ethnolinguistic behaviour better than the factual exocentric beliefs made up of ‘general beliefs’ and ‘normative beliefs’. SEV in terms of beliefs constitutes one of the psychological variables, that of additive and subtractive bilingualism. To measure SEV, both the SVQ and BEVQ were used to gather information on the individual’s perception of vitality factors to reflect the EV of ethnolinguistic groups.

According to Allard and Landry (1994) the BEVQ differs from that of Giles et al’s (1977) EV model in three respects. First, the BEVQ included items to measure the perceptions of vitality measured by SVQ and other beliefs to tests the relationship between: (i) EV beliefs and language behaviour, (ii) choice of school for children, (iii) linguistic experiences in the concept of school or the media, and (iv) between the INDIVIDUAL’S NETWORK OF LINGUISTIC CONTACTS (INLC). Individuals attach meanings to the stimuli they receive and this results in a particular language behaviour; changes in stimuli can lead to changes in behaviour. Secondly, the BEVQ gives a broader description of SEV based on the analysis of the effects of ethnolinguistic experience of an individual. Thirdly, beliefs are important in predicting language behaviour. It is assumed that ‘it is in the INLC that the individual lives the totality of his/her ethnolinguistic experiences’ (Landry and Allard 1994). An elaboration of the SEV framework is described by Landry and Allard (1994) in their model

of additive and subtractive bilingualism. The model was developed to study bilingual behaviour and comprises the sociological, socio-psychological and psychological levels of analysis. The general structure of the model as perceived by Landry and Allard (1994) is represented in Figure 2.3 below:

Sociological level	Objective Ethnolinguistic vitality
Socio-Psychological level	Individual network of linguistic contact
Psychological level	Subjective ethnolinguistic vitality

Figure 2.3 The general structure of ethnolinguistic vitality as conceived by Landry and Allard (1994)

In the Sociological level of the model, objective ethnolinguistic vitality can be measured by analysing the demographic, economic, political and cultural resources of the communities. These resources interact and provide a social environment which creates opportunities for linguistic contacts in the individual’s L1 and L2. It is argued that these opportunities constitute the INLC.

In the socio-psychological level of analysis the demographic variables become useful in creating the social surrounding in which the frequency of linguistic contacts may be developed. INLC can be analysed by three sub-networks. The first sub-network includes an L1, an L2 and a mixed network in which both L1 and L2 can be used. The second sub-network of INLC is analysed by examining the different opportunities of linguistic contacts such as oral, written, formal, informal etc. Landry and Allard (1992) say that the opportunities of linguistic contacts may occur in a variety of contexts such as interpersonal contacts in which INLC is related to communicative proficiency. Therefore, INLC can be measured in terms of the educational support received through L1 and L2. It can involve the communities’ frequency of contacts through the media in oral (radio, television) and written (newspaper, books, advertisements) communication. The third sub-network includes the analysis of INLC in three important environments of school-aged children. These are the family, the school and the socio-institutional environment such as out-of-school mother-tongue classes or religious education classes. These networks not only act as

a bridge between the sociological and psychological levels of analysis but between objective and subjective ethnolinguistic vitality.

At the psychological level of the model linguistic competence is developed through linguistic contacts made within the INLC. Language experiences influence the beliefs about language and hence the motivation to learn the language. INLC will be directly related to the objective and subjective vitality of their group. An increase in the use of any language variety within the INLC will lead to positive appraisals of vitality while a decrease in the use of a language variety will lead to negative appraisals of vitality. The environment of the family, school and other social institutions will play different roles in influencing additive or subtractive bilingualism. The definition of additive bilingualism explained by Landry (1987) and Landry and Allard (1992) includes: (i) communicative proficiency in L1 and L2, (ii) maintenance of a strong ethnolinguistic identity and positive beliefs toward one's own language and culture while having a positive attitude toward the second language and that group's culture (iii) the use of one's first language without diglossia. The use of one's first language without the language being used for less valued social roles links the concept of vitality with that of diglossia.

2.7 Relationship between diglossia and ethnolinguistic vitality

The link between diglossia and ethnolinguistic vitality was first proposed by Bourhis (1979) as a way of integrating different research traditions within macro-sociolinguistics to analyse language behaviour (Landry and Allard 1994). To study language use within the models of social and psychological behaviour it is important to understand this link as both constructs are concerned with the social structure and processes related to LMS and have been used for the study of the social psychological aspects of language behaviour. Landry and Allard (1994) say that EV and diglossia complement each other. The vitality of the linguistic community is related to the type and strength of linguistic experiences in the domains or subnetworks. In the model of additive and subtractive bilingualism social domains are also treated as subnetworks of INLC where language behaviour is seen as the end result of one's ethnolinguistic contacts. The linguistic experiences could then be related

to beliefs about vitality, competencies and linguistic behaviour. EV and diglossia could be incorporated in the framework used by treating EV as a between group effect and diglossia as a within group effect.

The vitality concept provided the framework to explain the sociolinguistic and social-psychological processes underlying inter-ethnic behaviour within their socio-cultural contexts (Harwood, Giles and Bourhis 1994). The SEV concept and the development of the SVQ and BEVQ within the model of bilingualism is a useful construct in accounting for language behaviour. Harwood et al's (1994) study reveals that the objective and subjective vitality variables can be combined and used in the analysis of issues related to language and ethnicity and intergroup communication. They point out that the SEV and the BEVQ will not be useful if one questionnaire is used against the other. Different dimensions of each questionnaire will yield different descriptions and explanations for the linguistic behaviour of different ethnocultural groups and settings. The framework for the present study adopts the view of including different dimensions of the SVQ and the BEVQ. The variables relevant for the present study are translated into questions for the questionnaire survey and interview questions (see Chapters 3 and 5). This in combination with other linguistic cues is used in the analysis of LMS in the Sylheti community under investigation.

2.8 The social network approach

The BEVQ and the SVQ related beliefs develop through the individual's network of linguistic contacts (Allard and Landry 1986). This network is similar to the social network concept used by Milroy in her Belfast study (1980). Social networks were introduced into sociolinguistics as an alternative to social class in identifying speaker groups. The concept borrowed insights from Homans' (1958) exchange theory to explain how individuals act to maintain key social relationships. Milroy (1980) suggests that a close-knit network structure is an important mechanism of language maintenance as speakers form a cohesive group and are capable of resisting linguistic and social pressure from outside the group. Studying the maintenance of phonological variables in three communities in Belfast, Milroy (1980: 43) showed that a close-knit network has the capacity to function as 'a norm

enforcement mechanism'. In this mechanism some features of an individual's personal network has a powerful capacity to influence behaviour. The link between social status and personal network structure explained the social mechanism which enabled low status language varieties to persist over long periods of time despite counter pressures. Milroy's social network study reveals that the most important structural characteristic of the network is density (Milroy 1980: 50). A dense network situation exists in communities where all members know each other in the capacity of kin, neighbours and fellow-workers. These kind of multiplex ties exist in rural, urban or at higher levels of society. Multiplexity is a typical feature of low-status groups and can measure the strength of the ties that exist between the individual in a particular network. The dense and multiplex nature of contacts between the individual and the network establish the INLC and provide the link between the objective vitality of the group and the developments that shape relations between the members of the group (Harwood et al., 1994). The stability of network membership in the generations of its members and the degree of openness or closure to its members is considered to be of most relevance in the analysis of LMS.

A dense network (e.g. Sylheti community) can exercise strict control over its members thus ensuring that all traditional values and norms are adhered to. In one of the earliest social network studies Mayer (1961) used the concept of density to distinguish three categories of town dwellers in East London, a South African city. The first group were the urban people whose personal experiences were characteristic of other urban groups. With the two other groups Mayer found that the close-knit structure of one of the groups known as Red migrants ensured that traditional norms and values were strictly adhered to mainly because of the tight control they exercised over their members. The Xhosa migrants who had been to schools and had adopted different dress and dietary customs were not a part of a dense network anymore because different cultural influences and pressures which they experienced affected their behaviour.

Nichols (1984) points out one of the main defects of the social network approach in that it does not explain how the individual choices of network interaction are made. Similarly, Martin-Jones (1989) criticizes network studies, arguing that they should be explained in

relation to political and economic development, including ideological shifts and social inequality that the community may be experiencing. Similarly, Bourdieu (1991) argues that the network concept

treats interaction as a closed world, forgetting that what happens between two persons derives its particular form from the objective relation between the corresponding languages and usages, that is, between the groups who speak the languages.

Despite such criticisms the social network approach has been very useful in explaining patterns of LMS. Gal's (1979) study, for example, shows the association between close-knit network structure and the ability to maintain a low-status language variety. Li Wei (1994) also discusses the feasibility of the network approach in terms of facilitating fieldwork.

The concept of network is used in the present study as a way of explaining patterns of LMS by understanding social relationships and how they shape relations in the individual's network of linguistic contact (INLC). The density and multiplexity of the network is used to link the objective and subjective vitality factors. It is expected that this link will influence the relationship between the members of the Sylheti community and the close-knit social interaction will influence social identity and language behaviour. The approach is also used in approaching the community through personal network contacts to enable the fieldworker to observe the language behaviour of the community members which would otherwise be difficult (see section 5.2). The linguistic behaviour of the Sylheti community will be analysed in relation to the cultural, political and economic background of the community with reference to the ideological shifts in different generations.

2.9 Language as an ETHNIC CORE VALUE

In studying language shift in South Asian communities in diaspora, it is important to analyse language behaviour from the perspective of language as an ethnic core value (Smolicz 1992). The theory of core values states that a minority group's resilience in

maintaining its language and culture depends on the degree to which it can interact with the cultural input of the host community. From this perspective cultural values of a group can include their language, national dances, religion, food, family structure, educational system, traditional methods of health care and attachment to the land of origin but not all items are of equal importance to identify oneself as member of a particular group (Smolicz 1992). The view adopted by Smolicz is that some items may be given up without putting the stability of the group at risk while other aspects of the group's culture which is essential for the group's 'viability and integrity' become the pivots around which the entire social system of the group is organised. Removal of such pivots through external pressures 'would result in the edifice crumbling to pieces' (1992: 279). These pivots, referred to as core values, are the heart and soul of a group's culture and symbols for group membership. It is through these core values that social groups can be identified as a distinctive cultural entity. This is especially true in the case of migrant communities who need to defend their culture against external pressures and influences. In such situations cultural life becomes more important and culture and its core elements become a fundamental value around which people rally (Kundera 1982). Examples that reveal the significance of culture as a group's core value can be found in the history of Asian civilizations that have been under the colonial rule as seen in the case of Malaysia (Asmah 1983) and India (Pattanayak 1988) and among ethnic groups in societies where the dominant majority endorse the policy of cultural assimilation such as the United States and Australia (Glazer and Moynihan 1975; Vecoli, 1979; Clyne 1982; Smolicz and Secombe 1985, 1986).

2.9.1 The importance of the linguistic system in cultural values

Smolicz (1981) argues that ethno-cultural groups differ in the extent to which they emphasise their native language(s) as core values. O' Buachalla (1984) and Harris and Murtagh's (1987) study of the Irish language reveal that Irish Gaelic continues to be a significant symbol of ethnic identity despite the fact that many are unable to speak it including those who have learned it in school but do not use it in everyday interaction. Cultural groups such as the Polish, Baltic and the Greeks stress that their language is the main symbol of their culture (Smolicz 1992). Smolicz adds that in such language-centred

cultures, survival of the group depends on the maintenance of their mother-tongue. Language for these groups is not only a medium of communication and self-expression but a defining symbol of ethnic identity.

In his study of migrant communities Smolicz (1992) says that the heritage of an ethnic group may be reshaped and revalued through its contacts with the cultural values of other groups, especially the dominant ones. This may be possible in ethnically plural societies where the majority and the minority groups contribute towards a pool of cultural resources or values. As a result the language can be maintained by accepting bilingualism at the individual and the group level. Smolicz (1992) analyses the concepts of heritage, tradition and culture among ethnic minority groups in terms of 'the core values' of the group. It is therefore the aim of the present study to examine if the language variety Sylheti is a core value of Sylheti ethno-cultural identity.

2.10 Summary

This chapter has outlined the major approaches to LMS. This overview clearly demonstrates that the factors involved in any study of LMS are so complex that there is no single wholly adequate model to investigate LMS. Fishman's (1971) model discusses three major dimensions but does not take into account the inter-relations between the number of factors involved in the first dimension. The concept of domain is very useful but there are difficulties in following the domain interpretation too rigidly. Fishman's informal and formal domains imply a simple dichotomy with the informal domain of home contrasting with the formal domain of education, work or religion. At no point are the two opposites contrasted in terms of power or role-relationship. The role-relationship in a domain cannot be fixed and may vary in different circumstances because individuals make their language choices creatively and strategically depending upon the situational context.

Fishman's view of the functional differentiation of the High and the Low may be interpreted negatively by the minority language users who may see the dominant language as an 'intrusion' or 'trespassing' (Eckert 1980). Fishman's (1972) concepts of diglossia and

bilingualism do not clearly explain whether it refers to group level interaction or individual level. It has been argued that diglossia is a group level concept while bilingualism is a concept at the individual level. That being the case, if the individual perceives the vitality of its group to be low and identifies in a weak manner with the group then s/he is likely to acquire the second language in a 'subtractive' manner. These learners would then lose proficiency in their first language. Similarly, individuals who perceive the vitality of their group to be high are more likely to learn the second language in an 'additive' manner (Landry and Allard 1994). The discussion demonstrates that the most comprehensive way of analysing language behaviour is to study the phenomenon by taking account of all the concepts and theories including the selection of variables relevant to the community under investigation.

The theoretical perspectives on LMS adopted in the present study are reflected in the construction of the framework. The theoretical preliminaries on which the methodology has been designed are discussed in chapter 2. The processes of LMS have been studied within the framework of the Objective (Giles et al 1977) and Subjective Vitality model (Bourhis et al. 1981, Allard and Landry, 1986) which includes the model of additive and subtractive bilingualism. The objective, interactional and the subjective EV variables for the framework include the three levels of description and habitual language use in the different domains. The three levels of description are not treated as isolated entities. The objective evaluation of the variables proceeds via the interactional and subjective values of these variables towards actual language use and behaviour. This includes the patterns of language use in different domains, information on age at arrival, the historical and psychological perceptions about the role of the standard language, Bangla, and other languages(s) in their repertoire and the belief factors which include each individual's network of linguistic contact. A combination of all these variables would predict the objective and subjective vitality of the language(s). It is important to remember that objective vitality assessments have a significant impact in many subjective vitality assessments (Landry and Allard, 1992). Evidence suggests that individuals' subjective perceptions are fairly accurate when compared to objective assessments of vitality in cross-cultural communication (Bourhis and Sachdev 1984; Giles et al. 1985; Ytsma et al. 1994).

The most important link between the objective and the subjective factors is made through the individual's network of linguistic contacts (Landry and Allard 1992, 1994). Starting from the family as the primary unit of social organisation each respondent's network of linguistic contact is investigated in the social context of the family, school and other institutions. In this way the linguistic competence which is developed is identified as a mother tongue network, or a second language network, or a mixed network. At the subjective level, linguistic competence and the beliefs that develop become complementary and mutually reinforcing factors that influence language use. The density and the multiplexity of the network contacts are expected to influence language behaviour of the individual. In this way network contacts become an extension of the social network approach (Milroy, 1980).

Fishman's concept of domain (1964, 1965, 1968) is used in the analysis of the socio-historic and the socio-psychological factors likely to influence language maintenance or shift, the linguistic and social stereotypes of the group and the patterns of habitual language use among different generations of speakers in different contexts. The relationship between diglossia and domain is seen as crucial in terms of the historical relationship between the dominant and the minority language (Eckert 1980). Changes in the differential use of language varieties will determine the language behaviour of the group under investigation.

The Sylheti communities' language behaviour is examined by analysing the actual language use (communicative) and the psychological and ideological perceptions of language (symbolic point of view). Smolicz's (1992) concept of 'core values' is used to explain the group's resilience in maintaining their language. The psychological processes underpinning language behaviour provide the link between the individual and language use as a means of expressing the inner processes of the individual.

Different dimensions of a variety of factors mentioned in the theoretical framework are investigated as potential determinants of LMS to provide an explanation for the Sylheti ethnic group's language behaviour and determine the extent of maintenance and/or shift. In

order to get a balanced view of the socio-political, socio-historic and the socio-psychological conditions underpinning the vitality profile, the relationship between ethnic and national identity of the Bangladeshis is discussed in the introduction to thesis with reference to the rise of Bengali nationalism and the characterisation of Bangla. Sylhet's link with the British is discussed with reference to migration, chain migration and the patterns of settlement in UK.

Background information of the community reveals that the language and culture of the host society with its western values is perceived as socially unacceptable and distinctly apart from traditional values of the community. While the community values the majority language as crucial for their economic transformation, rural traditional values are consciously nurtured and strictly adhered to. However, it is possible that the mother-tongue survives in a symbolic sense while observing certain customs, during the celebration of special festivals and the preparation of special food as part of ethnicity while language may be lost in its communicative sense. Edwards (1977) stresses the importance of differentiating between the communicative and cultural aspects of language in discussing language shift. He argues that the communicative use of language refers to the use of language which we are all familiar with on a daily basis. The cultural aspect refers to the ways in which language acts as a symbol of tradition, heritage and ethnicity. Though the cultural aspect does not serve a regular communicative function, language may still be spoken in some specific domains like the church. Both communicative and symbolic aspects generally coexist, but it is possible for the symbolic to acquire more importance in the absence of the communicative. In the case of migrants' communicative language usage, increasing immersion in mainstream society and accepting new ways of life may be psychologically or socially unpalatable, but if they are rewarding then language shift from the mother-tongue to the language of the host community is inevitable. The sociological and psychological processes that influence the core values of the ethnic minority group is used to explain the linguistic behaviour of the community under investigation.

In view of the socio-political and socio-historic background of the Sylheti-Bangladeshi, the psychological perceptions influencing language and identity and the existence of two

native languages in question, it is evident that a combination of methods and survey techniques is required to collect quality data on language choice and patterns of language use of the community in diaspora. The present study examines language use at the macro level of analysis to link the individual level variation and group level variation with a community level variation.

In the next chapter, methods used to design the study of LMS based mainly on LMP (1985) and Verma et al.(2001) surveys, fieldwork strategies, interviews, participation observation methods and entry strategies are discussed. Different aspects of fieldworker-administrated surveys relevant to this study are reviewed so that effective survey techniques can be employed based on the cultural, historic and linguistic background of the group under investigation. Specific references used in a similar line of enquiry amongst other ethnic migrant groups such as the Pakistanis in Newcastle (Moffat 1990), the Bangladeshis in Cardiff (Ghuman and Gallop 1989) and the Chinese community in Tyneside (Pong 1991; Li Wei 1995) are discussed to highlight how cultural similarities and differences within South-Asian ethnocultural groups affect fieldwork strategies.

3 Questionnaire, interview surveys and a literature overview of methodologies

3.1 *Introduction*

This chapter evaluates questionnaire and interview-based language surveys of Bangladeshi migrants in the UK and a literature overview of fieldwork methods and tools with reference to the pilot project in York. Questions on language use of ethnic minorities are a valuable source of information for communities which have a long history of migration. However, census questions in the UK and in Bangladesh include questions on ethnicity but not on ethnic language use. Therefore, this study relies mainly on two questionnaire surveys (LMP 1985 and Verma et al., 2001) as the only sources of patterns of language use information of Sylheti migrants. A critical assessment of the LMP (1985) survey approach and findings is discussed in section 3.2 with reference to fieldwork techniques, generalisations and assumptions about minority language, and their effects on the structure of questions and in the interpretation of responses. Lawson and Sachdev's (2004) survey, The Verma et al. study (2001), Khanna et al. (1998) study and Ghuman and Gallop's (1981) tape-recorded interview data are evaluated primarily from the point of view of methods, tools and fieldwork strategies.

A literature overview of methods such as entry strategies, participant observation and interviews described in section 3.3 also illustrate issues encountered during fieldwork for the pilot project. Methods used to select the sample are described in section 3.4. In section 3.5, a brief evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of written questionnaires, including the rationale for using LMP's ALUS questionnaire for the pilot project are discussed.

3.2 *The LMP survey*

LMP (1985) was the first and the largest questionnaire-based survey of patterns of language use and linguistic diversity among the non-indigenous ethnic minorities carried

out in England. The three cities of Coventry, Bradford and London in which LMP carried out its fieldwork were chosen for geographical spread. The factors common to the linguistic minorities in the three cities were the economic and social setting. Yet, local differences such as a mixture of languages, housing, employment and educational resources made each city unique. The survey claimed that these cities exemplified the situation of linguistic minorities throughout England (LMP 1985:78).

The LMP research focused mainly on the educational implications of linguistic diversity by examining the impact of language learning on the educational development of school pupils from linguistic minorities. To do this, it was important for them to understand how language learning influenced the child's linguistic repertoire and how the learning of two or more languages is inter-related in different contexts such as mother-tongue classes organised outside school. The team argued that an understanding of the educational implications of bilingualism involves studies of language use beyond school and among the adult population. The survey, therefore, asked questions about patterns of language use in the context of family and the locality as influential for mother-tongue retention. They focused on areas where bilingualism was the norm for a large percentage of the population and examined the impact of language learning on bilinguals. They demonstrated that bilingualism was 'a normal feature of social life, and an individual and societal resource' and also highlighted how monolingual perspectives and policies in education reinforced the perception of bilingualism as a problem (LMP 1985: 6).

The survey investigated the communicative and symbolic significance of language varieties used by linguistic minorities including the way language use is affected by changes in political and economic relations. It was reported that ethnic relations are processes where dominant and subordinate cultures compete for resources and 'the political imbalance between the cultures in contact determines the distribution of knowledge and other cultural resources' (LMP 1985:12). The survey reported that many migrant parents had assumed that their children would automatically learn the native language 'as an inevitable part of their cultural baggage' (LMP 1985: 13). However, in the school domain the children had no choice between English and mother-tongue since

English was the sole medium of education. Pupils' preference for competence in English affected their perceptions of native language and culture and parents began to realise the importance that native language(s) played in transmitting cultural and religious values. The issues were significant because children from bilingual families were in the process of creating 'the new emergent cultures of British-born bicultural youths' and native language was valued and perceived as an important marker of in-group identity (LMP 1985: 13).

Four types of survey (ALUS, MTTD, SLS, SPS) were developed by LMP and administered in the three cities. All four surveys were administered by means of local bilingual interviewers. 2,500 migrant labour and political refugees of ex-colonial and European origins constitute the linguistic minorities included in the survey.

The Adult Language Use Survey (ALUS) was designed to provide information on the sociolinguistic context of minority languages by understanding the patterns of language skills and use among adult members. 156 questions were framed around the themes of language use and language maintenance, including factors that support minority language use. The questionnaire was divided into sections based on language skills and learning history, literacy, household language use, children and language, language and work, language outside work and attitudes about provision of language teaching. Piloting the ALUS questionnaire revealed that some respondents were sensitive about certain types of demographic information. Questions about the respondents' birthplace, birth date and migration history were perceived as threatening. For example, *Which member of your family was the first to come and live in the UK? How many times have you visited a country where Bangla is spoken (during the time that you have been living in Britain)? How long did you stay there last time?* (Questions 148-150 Appendix 1) were not well received. When LMP carried out the survey in 1980-81, race relations issues and the debate about immigration and citizenship policies were on-going (see section 1.4.2 above). Given the nature and sensitivity of the issues, questions on migration history were excluded from the interviews in the main LMP survey. However, questions on personal information, frequency of contact with the country of origin, religious beliefs, the importance of religion in the lives of the respondents and home ownership were asked, but

were placed at the end of the questionnaire. This precaution was taken because the team felt that placing sensitive questions at the beginning may prejudice the interview (LMP 1985:141).

The second survey was the Mother Tongue Teaching Directory (MTTD), a community-based approach to gather information about all mother-tongue teaching provision in languages other than English in the areas where ALUS was carried out. Information was gathered on whether a child's first language or community language should be taught including who should teach it, when and where it should be taught and the methods used for teaching it. They (LMP 1985: 268) concluded:

....to understand the likely impact of the teaching of any particular mother-tongue, it is necessary to understand the symbolic value of the activities related to the teaching, and the symbolic value of the language variety taught.

The other two surveys SLS and SPS were intended to have complementary functions. The survey wanted to examine if bilingual children were more willing to disclose what they perceived as intimate information in the form of written responses on a questionnaire (SPS) as compared with talking to the teachers (SLS). The Schools Language Survey (SLS) was designed to investigate the range of linguistic diversity throughout an education authority by examining how many students in the school used languages other than or in addition to English. The Secondary Pupils Survey (SPS) was designed for completion by secondary school students. It was envisaged that it would be easy for them to reflect on their language experiences and complete the questionnaire without the help of their teachers. To demonstrate LMP's hypothesis the front cover of the SPS questionnaire had a scroll with printed faces of children from different ethnic backgrounds and a blank space was provided to write the ethnic mother-tongue equivalent of the English word 'language'. Ironically, instead of writing *bhasha*, the Bangla equivalent of language, the word *shobdo* (sound) was written in which the Bangla conjunct consonants were the wrong way round. This kind of basic error reveals that the simple vocabulary exercise should have been

straightforward had Bangla been a part of the students' linguistic repertoire.

3.2.1 Some drawbacks of the LMP (1985) data

LMP's research findings were ground-breaking as it was the first large-scale survey which examined the cultural and linguistic diversity of ethnic minorities in England by emphasising the use and status of ethnic minority languages. However, in the context of the Bangladeshi community, questions labelling ethnic mother-tongue(s) were based on monolingual assumptions which led to misleading responses. In the early stages of fieldwork, the team became aware of the problems associated with the definition of mother-tongue among Bengali/Sylheti speakers. Some speakers accepted the language they used as a dialect of Bangla while others used the label Bangla 'rather loosely, particularly in the context of the interview' (Smith 1985: 26). Interviewers realised that communication with Sylheti-speaking families from rural backgrounds was quite different from communicating in the standard variety or the regional variety spoken by the middle-class town dwellers of Dhaka. They felt that the ALUS questions could have been rephrased in terms of Sylheti rather than Bangla. However, to do this, they would have to redesign and reprint the questionnaire with its pre-coded categories. At the same time, they also had to establish whether or not the respondents spoke Sylheti. Redesigning the questionnaire would have meant going against their strategy of using a standard questionnaire for all ethnic languages including one written version for languages which have more than one writing system such as Panjabi and Chinese (Smith 1985). Therefore, for the Bangladeshi community the questions were not rephrased in terms of Sylheti.

In light of the issues which surfaced the questionnaire was revised and several questions were either modified or discarded after piloting in the summer of 1980 (LMP 1985:151). However, even after further revision problems came to light after the questionnaire had been administered on more than 800 respondents. For example, response to the first question: *Would you please list all the languages you know?* If one language or one language plus English was mentioned all went well. However, for responses where more than two languages were mentioned there was uncertainty about how to interpret the

response in terms of mother-tongue, first language or home language. The issue was resolved by rephrasing the question to: *Which language do you know besides (the named minority language) including regional languages and dialects?* (LMP 1985). For the Bangladeshis the revised question read: *Which language do you know besides Bengali?* assuming Bangla as the major spoken home language.

Despite rephrasing some questions, the criterion of using a standard questionnaire for all ethnic communities just because they happen to speak a language other than English was an over-generalisation. Smith (1985: 24) acknowledges that some assumptions made by the LMP were 'misleading' and 'unsatisfactory'. He says, for instance, that their decision to treat Sylheti and Bangla speakers as a homogenous linguistic minority was a 'gross oversimplification'. The first question of the revised format had two misleading implications: firstly, the assumption that all Bangladeshis spoke Bangla, and secondly, 'defining from the start the language which was to be the focus of the interview' (LMP 1985: 142).

The survey team also realised that specific languages presented their own problems. For example, the Panjabi-speaking group was perceived as the most difficult of all because Urdu is the high-status national language of Pakistan for speakers of Panjabi. The team felt that translating questions from English into Urdu would have 'affected the status and role-relationship of the interviewer and the respondent' (LMP 1985: 154) and perhaps elicit less reliable responses. Also, some respondents may not have had enough proficiency in Urdu to understand the questions when read out by interviewers. The alternative in such cases was to explain the questions in Panjabi but the team were concerned that the interpretation would inevitably vary from one interviewer to another resulting in a range of variation from the standardised form of questions. The other alternative of translating questions from English into spoken Panjabi meant producing two different written versions (Perso-Arabic and Gurmukhi) of the Panjabi questionnaire, a strategy they preferred to avoid. This solution was also not practical, because the younger interviewers had limited proficiency in reading the Perso-Arabic or Gurmukhi scripts. The problem was therefore resolved by transcribing the Panjabi texts in the Roman script. A similar strategy was adopted for

speakers of Chinese languages and two special romanised versions of the questionnaire were produced for the Panjabi and Chinese speakers. However, no such strategy was adopted for the Sylheti speakers despite the fact that different varieties of Bangla are used by people of Bangladeshi and Indian-Bengali origin (see section 1.6). Little did LMP realise that the situation of the Sylhetis was similar to that of the Panjabis and Bangla is the high-status official language of Bangladesh for the speakers of Sylheti. The Bangla-speaking bilingual interviewers had no problems reading the Bengali version of the questionnaire, and thus no difficulty in understanding questions was anticipated among the Bangladeshi respondents.

This kind of generalisation about language varieties especially in language-related surveys among South-Asian or East-Asian ethnic groups very often lead to misleading assumptions about the cultural majority and are far removed from the reality of the situation. On the issue of generalised assumptions, Barker (1978: 274) observes: 'To talk about Asians as a single category can be misleading and overlooks the existence of cultural sub-groups'. Different ethnic groups from South Asia cannot be collectively grouped as homogeneous because ethnic divisions based on language, culture, tradition, religion divide the groups further into sub-groups. For example, language is differentiated into standard and non-standard varieties, culture and tradition vary in urban and rural groups, religion is divided into sects and has its own interpretation in the cultural context of the sub-group. Within a proximity of a thousand miles in the Indian sub-continent there are examples of warring factions divided on the basis of religion (e.g. Pakistan in 1947) then divided further on the basis of language (e.g. Bangladesh in 1971). Each community has its own criteria for identifying with a particular symbol as the most important ethnic marker to represent the group. Therefore, research on how languages of ethnic minorities in diaspora are inter-related in different contexts needs to examine the language-situation specific to the ethnic group under investigation. This is a prerequisite for communities such as the Bangladeshis who have more than one language and dialect in their repertoire and the standard language which is characterised by diglossia is a potent symbol of ethnic identity.

Another drawback of using Bangla as the language label for the Sylheti group's language variety is found in the interpretation of data on claimed levels of proficiency in Bangla and English. The survey compressed the data on the four language skills (speak, understand, read, write) into a smaller number of skills variables. To do this they had to investigate the relationship between the different types of skill in the minority language (Bangla) and English from the questions: *How well would you say you understand Bengali when it is spoken to you?* and *How well would you say you speak /read/ write Bengali?* Similarly for English language skills the questions were: *How well would you say that you understand spoken English?* and *How well would you say that you speak /read / write English?* (Questions 11-13, 18 and 32-35; Appendix 1). Implicational ranking was used on the two sets of questions on speaking, understanding, reading and writing skills. Results revealed that the four skills for each language correlated highly with each other although the correlation between reading and writing skills was sometimes weaker (LMP 1985:186). Results were simplified by examining the relationship between the four skills in Bangla and English. From the distribution of scores a mid point was located for each variable used and *very well* was merged with *fairly well* and *not very well* with *not at all*. There could have been some justification in simplifying the results if Bangla were the minority language actually used. However, if Sylheti was the actual language used and wrongly labelled as Bangla, the results were unreliable because there could be no reading and writing in Sylheti at the present time (see section 1.8).

Furthermore, none of the responses were verified by means of a language test or observed language use despite the observation reported that both parents spoke a 'related variety' (LMP 1985: 183) of the language to their children. Responses reported by 70% of respondents on their ability to read and write Bangla *fairly well* or *very well* (Table 5.2 LMP 1985: 188) are inconsistent with the background information which describes the Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets as 'having little experience of formal education' (LMP 1985: 98). Also, only those who reported understanding *and* speaking skills or those who reported reading *and* writing skills ability were included in the analysis (emphasis in original LMP 1985:187). Therefore, respondents who reported understanding Bangla *fairly*

well but speaking it as *not very well* would have been left out of the LMP distribution of scores.

A further drawback of the survey was that the LMP research was based entirely on self-reported questionnaire responses. Most interviewers recruited were mother-tongue teachers and organisers selected through educational networks by personal contact and recommendation. It is worth recalling that teachers in the Bangladeshi community teach only the standard language since none of the other language varieties in Bangladesh have a writing system. Regional language varieties may be used in conversation but as discussed in section 1.6.1 only SB or SCB may be used for writing purposes in education. Contacts made through teachers often led to standardised speakers (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 75). As much as the LMP interviewers suited the criteria of commitment and high level of bilingual skills in English and the minority language, recruiting mother-tongue teachers and organisers was a disadvantage in the Bangladeshi community. School teachers are usually standard speakers often with a tendency to stigmatise non-standard varieties by classifying them as the unintelligible or partially intelligible speech of the non-literate. In designing Milroy's (1980) Belfast project, for example, fieldworkers for the survey were people approached through personal contacts from everyday life rather than through educational institutions. Also, LMP interviewers were instructed to ignore the distinction between non-standard and standard varieties in questions where the contrast with English was the focus of investigation. The instruction given to interviewers and the attitude of standard speakers are reasons why the observation that the Sylheti community spoke a 'related language, or a non-standard variety as a home language' was ignored (LMP 1985: 142).

However, it is significant to recognise that the LMP survey did not by any means intend to undervalue non-standard varieties. The aim of the project was to develop a sizeable database. In order to understand the scale of language dimension and emphasise the legitimacy of languages other than English they had to compare the situation of a wide range of linguistic minorities rather than focusing on a more thorough analysis of only one or two (LMP 1985:15). Including a large number of respondents from eleven linguistic minorities

inevitably imposed some constraints on interview procedures. To handle such an extensive database they designed questions for easy data-processing. Most questions were pre-coded and interviewers did not have to write extensive responses. The wide scope of the project made it impossible to investigate the linguistic and social data in great detail. To cover the range of minority languages, priority was given to quantifying the responses on reported language use rather than to observation of language use.

On the basis of these findings it was decided that questions for the main survey would not include pre-coded categories. Also, one of the possibilities of overcoming the limitations of self-report methods as a complementary method was selecting an academically-trained researcher who is linguistically competent in the language(s) or languages varieties that the community under investigation have in their repertoire. LMP also suggests that while the team were able to work with untrained bilingual interviewers future research in bilingual populations would depend upon ‘academically trained bilingual researchers *from* the linguistic minority in question’ (emphasis added) (LMP 1985 :108). Competence in the native languages spoken, particularly non-standard varieties, helps the fieldworker to analyse minute linguistic details (Trudgill 1974) and eliminate ‘traditional elitist language ideology’ (Smith 1985: 26) which accords inferior status to non-standard varieties as compared to standard languages. My linguistic background, academic training and ethnic affiliation were valuable fieldwork resources for the survey of LMS among the Sylheti Bangladeshis (see section 3.3.1.1).

Despite the drawbacks outlined in this section, LMP was the most valuable source of information available on the Sylheti community in the UK. The recognition that a variety other than Bangla was used was significant for future research because it revealed that ethnic migrant groups may have more than one language variety in their repertoire. When LMP carried out their survey no in-depth study of the Bangladeshis as a separate ethnic group had been done and very little was known about cross-generational study of LMS in the Bangladeshi community in the UK. For example, piloting the draft version of the ALUS questionnaire in the three cities was carried out in the summer of 1980 but it was not until the 1981 census that Bangladeshis were identified as a separate ethnic minority in

the UK. LMP's findings thus confirm the significance of examining the socio-historic status of ethnic languages as a prerequisite for linguistic surveys of migrant communities in diaspora.

3.2.2 The Verma et al.(2001) study

The Verma et al. (2001) study was a preliminary survey of patterns of language use and directions of language shift carried out among the Sylheti Bangladeshis in Leeds. 21 adults (nine males and twelve females) from five Muslim families of similar socio-economic and linguistic background participated in the survey. All adult respondents were 'non-literate, unskilled and unemployed' (ibid: 43). Data were collected through fieldworker-administered questionnaires, interviews and tape-recordings. Three or four visits were made to each household. The questionnaire was filled in by the fieldworker because they realised that very few respondents were proficient in reading the Bangla or the English version of the bilingual questionnaire.

The Verma et al. (2001) study is discussed mainly to highlight how 'investigator factors' such as language, education, religion and gender affect field relationships. The two researchers involved in fieldwork were a female West Bengali Bangla speaker and a male Hindi speaker. Both were Indians. The female fieldworker claimed that she spoke the variety of Bangla spoken in Dhaka and could understand Sylheti to some extent while the male fieldworker claimed 'a reasonable understanding of Bengali' (Verma et al. 2001: 41). However, findings revealed that 'although there was never a virtual breakdown of communication' (Verma et al. 2001: 42), it was obvious to the Sylheti respondents during fieldwork that the female fieldworker was a non-native speaker of Sylheti. More importantly, the West Bengal variety of Bangla in her repertoire was significantly different from Sylheti or any of the regional varieties of Bangla spoken in Bangladesh (see section 1.6). The use of the sanskritised West Bengal variety made it difficult for respondents from rural areas of Sylhet with no education to understand the fieldworker and was a barrier 'for sustained and meaningful interaction' (Verma et al. 2001: 41). The fieldworkers, on the other hand, reported that the use of the standard language was associated with power,

thereby ‘generating distrust and distance’ (Verma et al. 2001: 42). Whether it was the unintelligible variety of Bangla or the status of the standard language that was responsible for ‘distrust’ and ‘distance’, both fieldworkers were perceived as ‘outsiders’ from the beginning.

The religion of the fieldworkers also affected field relationship. Verma et al. (2001:41) say that both the fieldworkers were identified as non-Muslims by their names and appearances, ‘neither of which could be helped’. The fieldworker’s religion also created distance and distrust and it was difficult to have the questionnaires filled in by women. The women claimed that their opinion was the same as their husbands and almost all of them refused to be interviewed in the absence of their husbands (Verma et al. 2001: 44). Despite similarities in race, colour and language, the religion of the fieldworker and the time of survey were forces which worked in opposition. Fieldwork was carried out during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and community members were likely to associate the timing of the survey with the insensitivity or ignorance of the non-Muslim fieldworkers who failed to take into cognizance the importance attached to Ramadan. This resulted in unwillingness from the respondents ‘and even when they agreed to be interviewed they were far from communicative’ (Verma et al. 2001: 43).

3.2.3 The Ghuman and Gallop (1981) study

Ghuman and Gallop’s (1981) survey which investigated the views of two ‘cultural sub-groups’ on aspects of British education in Cardiff, reveals familiarity with the community and language of the fieldworker as the most important factors for effective survey procedures. According to them, the strategy of recruiting a Bangla-speaking research assistant minimised the frequency of misunderstood questions, enhanced the confidence of the respondents and engendered a better response rate than a questionnaire design approach. The Bengali main ethnic group they were investigating was separated into two cultural sub-groups based on religion (Muslims and Hindus). 30 families included 19 semi-skilled or unskilled Bangladeshi Muslim workers and 11 semi-professional or professional Indian Hindus. Interviews were conducted in the ‘*native language* and none of the families

refused to cooperate' (emphasis added) (Ghuman and Gallop 1981:129). However, disparate religious, cultural and socio-economic differences between the Hindus and Muslims of the Indian sub-continent cannot be accounted for in such a straightforward and simplistic relationship (see section 1.5).

On the politics of field relationships Li Wei (1994: 76) observes:

it usually is not easy to establish and sustain genuine rapport with people of disparate social backgrounds and positions,[sic] under certain circumstances people find it to their advantage to underplay differences and emphasise whatever they have in common.

Ghuman and Gallop's (1981) study also offers a sketchy explanation about the role of the female fieldworker in terms of being accepted by the two sub-groups despite the rural versus urban, language versus dialect, West Bengal variety of Bangla versus Bangladeshi variety of Bangla, literate versus non-literate and Hindu versus Muslim distinction. Such straightforward distinctions reveal generalised assumptions about the two groups. For example, the native language of the Bangladeshis may not be Bangla but one of the regional or dialectal varieties of Bangla and that of the Hindu Bengalis is the West Bengal variety of Bangla. More importantly, if the fieldworker spoke a variety that was unintelligible or partially intelligible to unskilled Bangladeshis, respondents must have encountered difficulties in 'sustained and meaningful interaction' Verma et al., 2001:41).

3.2.4 The Gazioglu (1996) survey

Gazioglu's (1996) study of Turkish and Bangladeshi migrants in the European labour market revealed language skills as the most important aspect of human capital. Her comparative study of migrant 'Fathers and Sons' revealed that despite some inter-generational differences over 52% of the Turkish sample compared to 17% of the Bangladeshis enjoyed writing fluency in English. Findings revealed that each year the

migrant spent in the UK, the probability of fluency in speaking English increased by 15-34% and fluency in writing increased by 5-6%. An important aspect of this study is that she focuses upon the relationship between English language proficiency and the type of employment. Her findings revealed that the 'enclave effect' such as the concentration of ethnic groups in the workplace reduces exposure to English and limits learning.

Her investigation further revealed that only 29% of Sylheti Bangladeshis claimed to know their mother-tongue *well* or *very well*. Gazioglu (1996: 92) explains the responses in terms of low levels of education of the Bangladeshis. However, her analysis is confusing on its own terms because she does not state clearly the differences between the language labels (mother-tongue, home language, language of origin, own language) she uses for the Bangladeshi community she investigated. Her data revealed that there were no Bangladeshis who could not speak their mother-tongue and investigation on bilingual fluency revealed that '*Bangoli*', the language of origin was significant for the second generation Bangladeshis. Gazioglu also claims that 84% of Bangladeshis speak their own language fluently and 96% of second generation Bangladeshis reported using '*Bangladeshi*' as the home language. However, neither Bangla nor any of the regional varieties of languages used in Bangladesh are referred to as *Bangladeshi* or *Bangoli*. Misconception and misinformation about ethnic minority languages reveal the urgency of identifying and correctly labelling the mother-tongue and other native language varieties of migrant diglossic speech communities in diaspora before attempting language-related surveys.

3.2.5 The Khanna et al., (1998) survey

Khanna et al.'s (1998) study on immigrant identity and language proficiency examined proficiency in English of different migrant groups in the UK in relation to their social and linguistic stereotypes. Responses revealed that migrant Bangladeshis in the UK have positive stereotypes of both the target language and the target language group compared to Indian and Pakistani migrants who have negative stereotypes towards the target language and target language group. Responses also revealed that high levels of language

proficiency in the case of the Bangladeshis reconfirm the widely accepted hypothesis that positive social and linguistic stereotypes are associated with success in learning a second language. However, it is difficult to justify their analysis in terms of sample distribution. Only eight Bangladeshis were included alongside 29 Indian and 47 Pakistani migrants. Although their informants were selected from ESOL centres, no background information about ESOL levels is provided for their informants from different ethnic backgrounds. Also, it is unlikely to have positive stereotypes towards the target language group when the survey team ‘felt that there was a strong feeling of insecurity among Bangladeshis and that they faced the very potent threat of racial discrimination’ (ibid: 212).

3.2.6 The Lawson and Sachdev (2004) study

Lawson and Sachdev’s (2004) survey investigated trilingual behaviour, attitudes and perceptions about Sylheti, Bangla and English from language diaries (Study 1) and self-reported questionnaire survey (Study 2) among two groups of second generation teenagers of Sylheti-Bangladeshi origin. Language diaries of 21 students (16 females, 5 males) were examined for patterns of language use over four days. Information was recorded on setting (where they were), topic and interlocutor (age, gender, relationship). Overall patterns of language use revealed that the language most widely spoken by participants was English (52%) followed by Bangla (25%) and only 3% Sylheti was reported in interactions. Analysis of data according to interlocutor role-relationship revealed that Bangla was used the most with older members including younger and older relatives. English was dominant with younger relatives, friends and others. Code-mixing which was substantially reduced with older relatives is explained in terms of salience of Bangla identity, older respondents’ poor ability in English and their assumption that code mixing is evaluated negatively. Language use in different settings also revealed high levels of English. In the home domain the reported use of English was 41.2% compared to 38.2% Bangla and 3.4% Sylheti. Topics related to media, social affairs and school was dominated by English while household and family issues were dominated by Bangla. The high use of Bangla relative to Sylheti is explained in terms of Bangla’s association with ethnolinguistic and cultural origins.

Study 2 investigated the underlying patterns of variation by examining multilingual behaviour as a function of setting, topic and interlocutor. 45 teenagers (22 males, 23 females) from the same group as Study 1 completed an anonymous questionnaire survey in English. Questions assessed language proficiency, language use, attitudes about language use, perceived vitality, contact with language groups, group identity and value of languages to group identity. Findings revealed that language use and group identity were related reciprocally i.e. language use influenced the formation of group identity and group identity influenced language attitudes and use. Although language proficiency in English, Bangla and Sylheti was high, participants reported the dominance of English and Bangla over Sylheti. Bangla was used in the home with older relatives whereas English was dominant outside the home with younger family and friends. Subjective vitality perceptions reflected English to have higher vitality than Bangla or Sylheti. According to Lawson and Sachdev (2004), highest contacts which were revealed with English speakers support the notion that objective vitality influences network of linguistic contacts (Landry and Allard 1994). Highest levels of identification with English and Bangla are explained in the context of education which values English and Bangla but not Sylheti. Although English use was dominant, Bangla constituted an equally important part of their linguistic repertoire and identification. Identifying with the diglossic low variety Sylheti was found to be relatively high but lower than both English and Bangla. Their findings reveal that competence, identity, vitality and language contact are important for predicting trilingual behaviour, code mixing and attitudes. In addition, minority language competence, vitality, identity and contact affect minority language positively and have an additive impact on majority language.

A major drawback of their findings is that they are not supported by any kind of observations. Very high levels of Bangla use is attributed to Bangla's higher vitality in London and the increased salience of Bangla among the second generation Sylhetis. Such statements reveal gaps in background information about the Sylhetis and raise questions about the importance of establishing the language(s) used by the diglossic speech community in diaspora and their linguistic background in their country of origin. According to Lawson and Sachdev, Sylheti and Bangla use and attitudes to the use of

Sylheti and Bangla were significantly correlated with oracy and literacy. However, as discussed in section 1.8 there is not literacy in Sylheti. A previous study revealed (LMP 1985) that because they had not established if the community spoke Sylheti they were unable to rephrase questions in terms of Sylheti. Diglossic speech communities in diaspora may or may not have knowledge of their native standard depending upon the areas they have migrated from. Furthermore, having more than one native language does not necessarily imply the use of both. Findings also reveal the lack of information on methods and tools employed for the survey. Lawson and Sachdev (2004) do not throw any light on how the questionnaires were administered. Previous studies (LMP 1985, Verma et al., 2001) have also highlighted the importance of the linguistic and cultural background of the fieldworker engaged in ethnic minority group surveys.

Discussion of the surveys in sections 3.2.1-3.2.6 reveals the significance of methods employed in ethnic minority group surveys. To a very large extent the methods employed depend on the historic and linguistic background, cultural traditions and norms and their experiences in diaspora. The next section reviews different methods employed as effective fieldwork survey techniques for the pilot project and the main survey.

3.3 Methods

Findings from the surveys discussed in sections 3.2.1-3.2.6 reveal that successful fieldwork does not depend on any single factor. Fieldworker-administered surveys of ethnic minorities reveal that migrant groups have their own set of criteria which allows the fieldworker to be accepted and to optimise field relationships. However, evidence suggests that in most ethnic groups, the language of the fieldworker is perceived as the most important symbol of ethnic affiliation. On the other hand, in some other communities religion may be perceived as the most important. Communities such as those investigated by Verma et al. (2001) consider language and religion to be equally important. Other examples reveal the importance of gender as the most crucial characteristic in becoming accepted and in gaining access (Moffat 1990: 71). Moffat's (1990) study of an English-Punjabi speaking Pakistani family in Newcastle upon Tyne revealed that a young white

British female fieldworker was accepted whereas no male regardless of age or ethnicity would be allowed into the house. However, her study also revealed how cultural norms superceded gender issues and entry restrictions were placed on the Pakistani bilingual insider co-worker who was not free to enter the homes of respondents in case she met men who were not family members.

Although there is no substantial literature available on the importance of gender in the role of the fieldworker, there is evidence to suggest that gender has a clear effect on field relationships. Some studies identify the role of the female fieldworker as a practical necessity in the community investigated (e.g. Milroy 1980, Li Wei 1994, Al-Shareef 2002) while other examples reveal how gender affects cultural bias and makes entry difficult. Pong (1991) experienced difficulties in a Chinese community because Chinese cultural norms do not generally associate women with serious academic work, and as a female fieldworker she was perceived as less competent. In researching the Sylhetis in Leeds, Verma et al. (2001: 42) describes the 'unmarried Indian female in her thirties, marching around the town with a tape-recorder and a bunch of questionnaires' as 'an unfamiliar sight to the community'. This 'unfamiliarity' made it difficult for the community to accept her in the investigator's role. Therefore, research in ethnic group surveys needs to examine a range of issues such as linguistic, religious, socio-cultural to develop effective fieldwork strategies. Feagin (2002: 22) stresses the importance of the knowledge of linguistic, demographic, historical, religious and other perspectives of the community to be studied including previous research on the language variety. She says:

A survey of previous linguistic work must be carried out both on the linguistic aspect and on any previous research concerning the local language variety. Earlier work on the local variety regardless of its quality can be useful for time depth or for pinpointing interesting problems.

Although field relationships vary from one community to another, issues such as language, class, area of origin, religion and the regional and local culture in which the group is located are essential in understanding the axes of differentiation. Taking these factors into account helps the researcher to understand how different sub-groups are influenced by their background and the situation that they have been exposed to. Evidence suggests that the migrant labour workforce of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin have settled in particular areas in the UK based on their religion and area of origin (Rose et al., 1969; Beckerlegge, 1991; Eade, Vamplew and Peach 1996).

The value of my religious affiliation, understanding of the community's cultural and linguistic practices and past experience ensured that I would not encounter any major difficulty in gaining access for fieldwork. Sharing linguistic and cultural roots and common experiences were the primary non-material resources which have an impact on fieldwork procedures. However, each field setting is unique. To a large extent the onus of successful entry depends on the fieldworker's knowledge, ability, attitude, inter-personal skills, commonsense abilities and sensitivity towards the community under investigation. This includes the degree of sophistication and the appropriateness with which methods are handled.

Entry strategies, participant observation methods and interviews analysed in sections 3.3.1-3.3.3 include the linguistic background and self-presentation of the fieldworker which also have a significant impact in gaining access. Participant observation methods and interviews are discussed as complementary methods of questionnaire responses.

3.3.1 Entry strategies

An appropriate entry strategy is the key to developing rapport or intimacy with the people, the situation and the setting to be studied (Jorgensen 1989). Background information on the community's traditional and conservative lifestyle and their social practices dictated that entry strategies had to be planned in such a way that the measures adopted would not in any way affect field relationships. Selecting a particular setting is important for

communities which are under-researched (e.g. Sylhetis) because not only is the situation and setting unfamiliar to the fieldworker, developing rapport with community members involves face-to-face interaction and negotiation of meaning. As the roles of participants are defined according to role-relationship, the fieldworker often has to manoeuvre different conversational roles within the social setting to ensure that there is a smooth meaningful exchange without any breakdown in communication. Thus, social setting is the stage for the social life of a community. Goffman (1963) makes the analogy of social setting with performance on stage as a point of reference and divides social life into front and back regions to refer to settings in which different roles are performed.

The front region is also referred to as the 'frontstage'. It is a guarded region where performance conforms to norms and standards in the way the performer interacts with the audience. In contrast, the back region or 'backstage' is the safe place which is not the focus of anyone's attention. It is prohibited for outsiders. It is a secluded and private region in which impressions and illusions are constructed, adjusted and scrutinised (Goffman 1963: 114). The frontstage situation allows easy access to anyone who wants to be a participant. The backstage on the other hand, is symbolic of intimacy and trust and is accessible only to the most trusted members. It is the most accurate and dependable source of information. To be able to make backstage entry the fieldworker must assume the role of an 'insider'. My ethnicity, religion, linguistic competence and nationality met most of the requirements of an 'insider'. It was therefore assumed that gaining backstage entry would not be too demanding.

However, to gain backstage entry a suitable approach was necessary. Two entry strategies identified by Jorgensen (1989) are the 'overt' and the 'covert' entry strategies. The overt strategy is an ideal strategy for gaining entry but the researcher needs permission to participate and observe. The formalities require that the aims, purpose and the political and ethical issues of the study be explained for permission to be granted. The advantages of the overt strategy are it allows the researcher the freedom to concentrate on fieldwork procedures without making adjustments to his/her 'self-concept' and the approach raises few ethical questions (Jorgensen 1989: 57). The drawback of the approach is that if access

is denied it becomes extremely difficult, even impossible, to gain access into the community. However, in the covert strategy, the fieldworker assumes the role of a participant and makes observations without any kind of formal permission. Fieldwork begins only when some kind of informal relationship is established with community members. For example, Milroy's (1980) 'friend of a friend' status made her a familiar person in the community and the families regarded her as someone with whom they could discuss even personal problems. A covert approach has been criticised as being unethical and unacceptable as it violates the principle of 'informed consent' (Bulmer 1982) since the community under investigation is not informed of the research objectives. However, Jorgensen (1989) argues that in overt entry strategies not everyone is informed of the research aims and objectives. Conversely, in a covert approach there are some members of the community who have been given information pertinent to the research.

For the pilot project a covert strategy was adopted and fieldwork started only after an informal relationship with a couple of families was developed. Investigating ethnic minorities and the rural working class, a covert approach is the most effective method of gathering truthful information (Milroy 1987; Li Wei 1994). The historical, linguistic and demographic perspectives of the community were studied in situ before the fieldwork in York. A Sylheti family friend arranged for me to stay with a relative in York for about a month immediately after my arrival in York. Contacts with other Sylhetis were established as 'a friend of a friend'. This was not difficult because families were either related to each other or were from the same area of origin and knew each other well. Regular visits to Sylheti households before the pilot survey enabled me to observe the physical layout of the households and the kind of associations members of the community had. Observations revealed a close-knit migrant group who had established a small community life in York based on linguistic and religious affiliation, preserving their ethnic way of life. Contacts were maintained by regular visits at the weekends and sometimes in the evenings. The visits were always welcomed and helped to establish a personal relationship especially with the women who were always home in the evenings while the husbands were at work.

The visits were also an opportunity to justify my good intentions and the reasons the survey was important. I explained the design of the survey which reduced suspicions that respondents may have harboured in the initial stages of contact. There is often a tendency among minority migrant groups to be suspicious of surveys in the community. This is primarily because they do not want to volunteer information which may jeopardise their position in any way. Also, previous demographic survey experiences had not addressed the issues and concerns they raised and the general consensus was that surveys were a waste of valuable time. In view of the experiences reported I adopted an indirect approach and broached the topic of my survey by discussing the importance of the findings rather than stating the aims directly. I explained that as the community is under-researched, there continues to be misleading information about the identity of ethnic mother-tongue and minority language and concerns about teaching ethnic mother-tongues. I emphasised the importance of identifying the language variety they used so that different government and non-government departments could provide support in that variety. These lengthy discussions with families were extremely rewarding in relaying the information about the survey through the community's network. Sensitive issues such as Sylheti and Bangla identity were discussed in an engaging manner revealing how it was possible to project both instead of making a choice. By word of mouth my work became known through the community's network even before it had begun and almost everyone was keen to read the findings of the survey. At this comfortable stage of our relationship, I asked my contacts to recommend others who would be willing to participate in the survey.

3.3.1.1 The linguistic background of the fieldworker

I am a Bangladeshi Muslim female from an urban background. My native-speaker competence in Bangla and near-native speaker competence in Sylheti and English were important tools for developing rapport and gaining access. It is generally accepted that if the linguistic competence of the fieldworker is compatible with that of the community researched, fieldwork is more successful (Li Wei 1994). Knowledge of the three language varieties was essential in meeting the requirements of the present survey which included different generations of speakers. Researchers working in ethnic minority communities

usually face difficulties in having implications of racism and the emotional and political overtones aroused by language issues among ethnic minorities. However, sharing a common linguistic and ethnic background allowed a clear understanding of and sensitivity towards the racial and political issues that the community under investigation have had to confront. I was able to eliminate racial and political bias to a large extent by virtue of being an *insider* (see section 3.3.3).

3.3.1.2 Self-presentation of the fieldworker

My familiarity with the community helped in planning fieldwork procedures as meticulously as possible. The objective and subjective assessments provided information about the community's core values and cultural practices. However, the reality of working with real people cannot be accomplished without finding people to talk to and first impressions are often based on responses triggered by the way the fieldworker presents him/herself. Feagin (2002: 25) discusses the appropriacy of the fieldworker's self-presentation as an effective means of gaining access into the community. In her own fieldwork in her home town in Anniston, Alabama, she was careful about the way she dressed to interview older people and teenagers. For her, being suitably dressed meant that she was showing respect to the elders and solidarity towards the teenagers.

At the initial stage of fieldwork I realised the significance of self-presentation as an important means for acceptance and entry from an unusual experience with a Sylheti gentleman. The encounter was invaluable especially because his attitude was pre-emptive. To fill in questionnaires in the out-of-school Bangla class I accompanied the Bangla teacher in the transport provided by the organisers. Each time I was in the car of this gentleman, he repeated a tape-recorded version of a *wa'az* (preaching, religious sermon) in Sylheti. The frequency of the sermon in a high volume was more than a coincidence. I asked the Bangla teacher if she had experienced similar behaviour when she was on her own but apparently she had not. The only explanation that I could conceive of was his disapproval at the non-traditional and unconventional way I was dressed. He probably felt it was duty to remind me that as a Muslim woman (revealed by my name and familiarity in

the community) I should not be without *purdah* (female seclusion, the veil). In the rural Sylheti households that Gardner (1993) investigated, the less the women were seen by outsiders the more ‘correct’ the family values were thought to be. The behaviour of women in migrant households has become an indicator of piety and is extremely important for rural families to assert their religious and economic status. Gardner observes that economic prosperity brought by migration made it possible to maintain piety as a symbol of migrant families’ traditional values in rural Sylhet. While migration is controlled by external economic forces, it is influenced by ideologies of transformation central to local Islamic belief and religious groups in diaspora are under growing pressure to conform to the norms of their group (Gardner 1993: 218). Discussing religious practices during the yearly event of *wa’az* in rural Sylhet, Gardner (1993: 226) notes that renowned *mullahs* (those learned in the Quran and other holy texts) visited villages regularly to preach to the local men. The sermon stresses the need for ‘increased purity and rejection of incorrect practices’ and the men are urged ‘to keep their women in strict *purdah*’.

I had defied the aspects of piety by exposing myself to an outsider, wearing a western outfit without any head scarf and had short hair. The Bangla teacher’s appearance was not important because she was a Hindu and was not expected to conform to Muslim religious practices. Although background information suggested the importance of religion and religious practices as an integral part of the community’s life in Sylhet and in the UK, I had not anticipated the extent to which it influenced outward appearances. The experience was significant because I realised that successful field relationship would depend to a great extent on how I presented myself. However, I did not wish to portray myself as someone else by adopting the veil only for the benefit of the survey. I chose an in-between course of action and minimised differences between myself and the traditionally dressed Sylheti women by wearing a long baggy sweater and slightly oversize trousers, similar to the *shalwaar kameez* so that my clothes did not accentuate any part of the body and I always carried a scarf. The opening conversation in every household that I visited was related to the weather as it was an opportunity for me to explain the suitability of my western outfit in low temperatures. Community members also realised that I had to travel long distances

from the other side of town in the cold weather and a traditional *shalwaar kameez* or a *saree* would be far from appropriate.

However, for the younger group, my choice of clothes had another interpretation. They certainly did not perceive my sense of dress as ‘cool’ but a Bangladeshi woman from their parents’ generation, in western clothes and short hair made me different. My unconventional dressing was perceived as inappropriate for my generation and the differences gave me an ‘outsider’ status. However, that does not in any way imply that the children always perceived of me as an ‘outsider’. My status was in a state of constant flux. On the one hand, because of my linguistic, religious and ethnic affiliation as a Bangladeshi I was an ‘insider’ whereas, my clothes, appearance and my non-Sylheti background gave me an ‘outsider’ status.

In some respects this ‘outsider’ status proved to be useful. The flexibility allowed me to ask questions on topics appropriate for an outsider. Jorgensen (1989) points out that negative responses can also be source of useful information. In response to topics on social life or social integration the children were less self-conscious. They discussed controversial issues with me at great lengths without reservation often expressing frustrations about the difficulties they faced in the two different worlds that they were exposed to. Some were concerned about issues from their everyday life and felt that they were ‘between two cultures’ (Watson 1976), while others felt they did not belong completely to either. In expressing personal opinions with me the children had crossed the strict boundaries of ‘correct procedures’ and the code of conduct that is followed strictly between the old and the young in this ethnocultural group. I believe that they would probably not have confided in me had I resembled someone from their parents’ generation.

3.3.2 Participant observation

Participant observation is a flexible open-ended approach in which ‘the logic of enquiry through which what is studied constantly is subject to redefinition based on field experience and observation’ (Jorgensen 1989: 23). The approach requires the researcher to

become directly involved in the lives of the people they investigate from the perspective of an insider (Jorgensen 1989). The best way of comprehending the insider's world is by understanding the culture and the language as they are used in everyday situations (Hall 1959, 1966, 1976). Participant observation is used in the present survey as an effective method used for complementing self-report language use. By becoming a participant observer the researcher can restate responses made by respondents not only as a way of re-iterating what was said but also as a means to correct and interpret the response and thus clarify unexplained responses or issues (Jorgensen 1989: 87). Milroy and Gordon (2003) illustrate the importance of participant observation in gaining insight into the day-to-day dynamics of the community. Milroy (1980) claims that in close-knit, urban or rural communities, the guiding principle of participant observation is that the observer is a part of the setting that is being studied. In Milroy's Belfast study this principle was followed as closely as possible. The non-local fieldworkers were not strangers but persons recommended by a friend who was a community member. In this way the fieldworkers assumed the role of a 'friend of a friend'. The mention of the insider's name guaranteed the fieldworker's good faith and they were received with 'warmth', 'friendliness' and 'trust' (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 75). 'Reciprocal rights and obligations' (Milroy and Gordon 2003:75) were established and community members felt obliged to help the fieldworker, who had also acquired some rights and obligations by virtue of being a 'friend of a friend' and thus an 'insider'. This approach was useful especially in dense networks of the poorer inner-city areas. One family was approached as a 'friend of a friend' and through this family other families were contacted and the fieldworker moved from one family to another.

Participant observation involves a long or a short-term commitment of time. Long-term studies can be extremely rewarding because of the quality and quantity of data collected. Eckert's (2000) study in a suburban high school in Detroit illustrates the rewards of long-term participant observational studies. Eckert's casual interaction with students in her two year long study made her a familiar figure. Her familiarity helped her not only to gain access to students' speech but she was able to explain their linguistic behaviour more efficiently. However, such long-term studies are not always practical and it becomes

necessary to find alternative methods of collecting quality data in a short-term commitment of time. Cukor-Avila's (1997) study in a small town in Springville, Texas reveal that short-term participant observation studies can be just as rewarding provided appropriate methods are adopted. Her data on the linguistic activity of the every day speech of the small town residents were collected from a general store that she visited every day for two months. The general store which included a post office was the focal point of the community where almost all residents gathered each day. The regularity of her visits was useful in collecting quality data and becoming familiar with the community practices in a short time.

Collecting data by observing the actual language usage produces what Labov (1972: 61) describes as the observer's paradox: 'to observe the way people use language when they are not being observed'. An environment in which participants feel that they are not under any kind of observation is difficult to create in fieldworker-administered surveys and the problem cannot be resolved entirely. One of the ways of reducing the effects of observer's paradox suggested by Milroy and Gordon (2003) involve a long-term association with the community, but long-term involvements can be time-consuming. Therefore, based on the merits of the method, decisions about what was worth sampling in the present survey were identified from the purpose of the study, the social, cultural, linguistic and demographic characteristics of the community, ethnographic methods such as judgement sampling and the subjective assessments of the researcher. This information and my 'insider' status were suitable alternatives for verifying self-reported data in a short commitment of time.

It is worth noting though, the insider status does not necessarily guarantee positive responses in all situations and across all ethnic sub-groups. As much as the insider status helps to be accepted it also imposes duties and responsibilities conforming to social customs of ethnic culture. In the white working class community that Milroy (1980) was investigating in Belfast she found that often the insider fieldworker was responsible for the consequences of any action that may be seen as overstepping the accepted social norms. Moffat's (1990) study of the Pakistani community in Newcastle revealed how the insider status created an obstruction in fieldwork. One mother refused the Pakistani co-worker's presence during an interview session. Moffat argues that of all mothers who participated in

the survey this mother had the most ability in English but class difference (the female interpreter was from an upper middle-class background) created social distance between the interviewee and the interpreter. However, it is also possible that because of the close-knit structure of the community this mother was uncomfortable and apprehensive about discussing personal issues and losing 'face' (Goffman 1967) in presence of an insider who was familiar with the accepted norms of their ethnic culture. On the other hand, Moffat's background as a white educated female and her outsider status proved useful in not excluding her on a similar basis.

Despite disadvantages, there are far more advantages associated with the status of the insider-fieldworker. The approach of participating with an 'insider' status was the principal guideline used for the present survey. Familiarity and frequent informal visits to Sylheti families were to develop a relationship while taking on the role of a participant observer. The visits renewed and reaffirmed my understanding of their ethnic customs, kinship structure and values. It was also an opportunity to assess if attitudes and values in small dispersed migrant groups (e.g. York) were different from those experienced in densely populated migrant areas (e.g. Leeds).

3.3.3 Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to verify self-report questionnaire data and reduce the distance between myself and the respondents in order to observe the least self-conscious speech of respondents. Feagin (2002: 30) says the least self-conscious speech comes from topics in which the subjects are intimately involved. However, Milroy and Gordon (2003) argue that interviews are not spontaneous discussions. Successful interviews require the interviewer to prepare a list of suitable topics or modules from shared experience to generate and manage discussion. Labov's (1984) neighbourhood study in Philadelphia illustrates how interview modules for adolescents and young adult speakers were based on the criteria that past experiences engaged speakers in interaction. Specific topics were valuable resources on neighbourhood norms and the social and background information of speakers. Modules for conversation which included questions on peers, games and dating

were prepared in such a way that one module could be linked to another depending on the type of discussion the module generated (see Labov 1984: 35). For example, questions on games could lead to fights, race or religion and school. On the other hand, questions from the dating module could generate discussions on marriage, family or work. Modules also allowed the fieldworker to select a 'conversational network' (Labov 1984) appropriate for the speaker.

However, not all successful interviews are necessarily structured. Open-ended interviews in which the fieldworker has an insider status may be just as useful to analyse interaction and meaning from an insider's point of view. This type of interview allows the insider-fieldworker to manage, manipulate and negotiate meanings intentionally and unintentionally which may otherwise be obscured from the point of view of outsiders (Goffman 1969). That does not however, imply, that strategies used for open-ended interviews are simple and straightforward. Despite flexibility of structure, open-ended topics are not haphazardly organised. There is always a rationale in the selection of topics based on the objectives of the survey and the background of the community. Also, at every stage of discussion, the content of the interview influences the strategies of interaction and makes the interviewer re-organise his/her thoughts and make adjustments based on the responses the topic generates. In this respect, structured interviews are less demanding than open-ended interviews.

As a specialised speech event in which the roles of participants are well-defined, common-sense abilities and the personality of the fieldworker is crucial in face to face exchanges or interviews. Face to face interaction demands that the interviewer continue with the good relationship so that there is no breakdown in communication while focusing on 'the content of the interview and the dynamics of one-to-one interviewing' (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 65). Feagin (2002) observes that interview protocols are effective when the researcher knows the regions, the local conditions and customs of the community researched. Cultural similarities between the respondents and myself ensured the conversational norms of the ethnic culture including selection of topics and the type of questions. However, regardless of how comfortable the speaker may be with the interview

situation, some element of unnaturalness will remain (Feagin 2002: 26). Interview protocols planned for the pilot project were simple based on information about socio-cultural norms and traditions, the values nurtured and their hierarchical kinship structure, my *insider* status and my previous fieldwork experience in Tower Hamlets (Hamid 1998).

As the aim of the study is to examine habitual language use, respondents were engaged in natural conversation as a way of identifying the language(s) of interaction rather than the frequency of occurrences of particular morpho-syntactic and phonological variations. Interviews took place in the respondents' homes, in the Bangla class at the community centre and at social events organised by community members. I used Sylheti, Bangla and English with adult respondents but with children I used mostly English because they seemed to be more comfortable with English. There was no written list of questions and none of the participating families in the pilot survey agreed to be tape-recorded. Informal and lengthy discussions on issues such as religion, immigration, marriage systems etc carried on for many hours. While respondents were happy to discuss issues they clearly stated that they would feel threatened if these discussions were taped. This however, was not a disadvantage in terms of authenticity of data because detailed notes were taken on the information provided and those relevant to the study were used to complement questionnaire data. Data were collected through casual interaction, informal and unstructured, semi-structured or structured interviews. Some interview topics were structured around the themes of the questionnaire while others were open to cues arising during conversation. However, conversation was steered consciously so that discussions did not go off-course. Conscious efforts were made at all times to ensure that questions asked were framed with care as a way of showing respect towards the elders and solidarity towards the youngers. All questions reflected the code of conduct, behaviour and conventions of formality and *adaab* (correct procedures, Gardner 1993) that separates the old from the young members of the community. For example, it was inappropriate to ask young respondents about dates and girl/boyfriends because these topics breach the code of conduct between older and younger members and a loss of 'face' for the fieldworker from the same ethnic background (Goffman 1967). Similarly, it was inappropriate to ask older

respondents how they met their spouses because marriages in rural migrant communities are arranged.

Questions on demographics and listing houses or areas which they have lived in may be perceived as prying for a government agency or threatening instead of a way of eliciting ‘a flood of speech’ which could generate discussions on neighbourhood or social life (Feagin 2001: 30). Questions on the country of origin or personal experiences were useful and did not require the attention of the respondents to be focused on any specific topic. Sharing common cultural experiences made interview questions relevant and engaging and allowed participants to revisit a culture with which both the fieldworker and the respondent were familiar. My ‘in between’ status (Pong 1991) allowed some flexibility and occasionally I asked questions on movies and music programmes which may have been considered offensive and insensitive coming from a Sylheti adult.

3.4 Representativeness of the sample: generation, age and sex

As the focus of this investigation is on language use of migrants in diaspora, respondents were selected on pre-selected categories. In community-based surveys, selecting respondents on pre-selected criteria is referred to as quota or judgement sample (Milroy and Gordon 2003). The approach requires that the types of speakers included in the study be identified in advance. Therefore, a binary distinction was made between adults (male and female) and children for the pilot project. The indicators for adults were based on social structure (rural, working class, Muslim) and status (migrant, employed and married). The indicators for students were based on education and status (in education, not employed and not married). Only families in which both spouses were Sylhetis were included. Non-Sylheti men married to Sylheti women or vice versa were not included in the sample. A sample of ten families was considered appropriate for the pilot project. Ten families ensured 20 adults. The number was not expected to vary unless a spouse was out of the country or otherwise unavailable. Including ten families was based on background information which revealed that 54% of Bangladeshi households contain a married couple (Office for National Statistics 2001). UK census statistics also reveal that 74% of

Bangladeshis households contain at least one dependent child (Office for National Statistics 2001). Therefore, at least one child per family could be represented in the children's sample and ten children yield a reasonable number. None of the children or adolescents in the children's sample were selected with the help of a teacher or a school administrator: all were the children of participating adults.

The first step in the investigation was to identify the number of Bangladeshis who lived in York before isolating the Sylhetis. This was not easy because among the options available to identify Sylheti speakers, the first was the use of electoral register. The exercise proved to be extremely difficult because the electoral register does not record names on the basis of ethnicity. The pilot project was carried out in December 2000 and information reported in the 1991 census records 118 residents of Bangladeshi origin in York. However, subjective assessments based on discussions with community members estimated that the number was higher than recorded. Many families reported moving to York after 1991. Others reported that they avoided being registered with a government agency. Therefore, not all members of the community were registered on the electoral roll and adopting this approach was ineffective.

The next option was using 'ethnic name analysis' (LMP 1985). This method also proved to be more difficult than anticipated. Identifying people of Bangladeshi origin by their names is impossible because Bangladeshi surnames like Chowdhury, Islam or Ahmed is common to Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims. Some first names and surnames could be identified as ethnic Sylhetis from their spellings but this could not be taken as the norm. For example, common Sylheti surnames such as *Mia* or *Miah* for males and *Begum* or *Bibi* for females are identical with the surnames of Muslim rural migrants from Pakistan. The first names of many British-born Sylhetis are spelt phonetically e.g. *Rishaloth*, *Anowarun*, *Momtaj* (z) and may be distinguishable from their Pakistani (or Indian Muslim) equivalent as *Risalath*, *Anwarun* and *Mumtaz* but not all names are easily identifiable.

The last option of selecting respondents was the use of community lists of minority language speakers (LMP 1985). These lists are available in some densely populated areas

while in other areas they may be obtained from community members. However, this method was not necessary for the pilot survey because contacts were made through my network of Sylheti families in York. Also, as minority groups in the UK are socially and geographically distributed throughout the population in a non-random manner, a random selection was not necessary.

During fieldwork some difficulties emerged in the criteria of judgement sampling. The first was including respondents' on the basis of pre-selected categories such as both spouses belonging to the same background with one child or adolescent who was old enough to be meaningfully interviewed. This difficulty arose because the Bangladeshi community in York is small and includes a group of Sylheti and non-Sylheti migrants from other coastal areas of Bangladesh. A few young Sylheti couples with infants or toddlers were excluded because it would have reduced the number of children in the children's sample. Further difficulties arose when one family declined to participate in the survey because of the time involved in filling in the long questionnaire. In order to maintain the target quota I was left with no option but to include one family in which the wife was from rural Sylhet but the husband who was born in rural Sylhet was brought up in urban Sylhet.

3.4.1 Generation

The LMP's approach of including various groups of speakers was adopted as a starting point for the pilot project. Three generations of language users in the same domain, from the same geographic area were included to get an accurate picture of ethnic minority language users as a whole. It was hypothesised that the older generations' responses to language and identity issues would be different from those who were born in Sylhet but grew up in UK or were British-born. Responses reported by those who had spent many years of their life in Bangladesh reflected their socio-political and socio-historic links unlike the responses of the younger generations who had not experienced the linguistic repression of post 1947 (see section 1.5.1). Differences in the language use of different generations provide useful information on trends of changing ideology and socio-cultural norms in intergenerational language shift.

However, the decision to include three generations of language users had to be abandoned for the pilot project. It was only after fieldwork had begun did I realise that the first generation migrants that I had met before fieldwork began were on extended visits to their children and grandchildren. They lived in their original settlements in Tower Hamlets, Keighley, Bradford, Bolton, Oldham, Scunthorpe, Birmingham and Leeds. The second generation had moved to York in the last ten or fifteen years from their original settlements for better business opportunities. No details about the families' original place of settlement or information about their household structure was specifically discussed on the visits that I made before fieldwork. Despite my insider status I did not ask about personal details at the initial stage of our relationship. The families also needed time to assess me before deciding how much information should be given to me. They had to ensure that I was who I said I was and not any official in disguise. I was also careful about not probing any deeper than the information which was readily given. However, I realised that in order to include three generations of speakers either I would have to travel to areas where the first generation parents of the families in York lived or rely on their next visit. Both options were impractical in terms of the time and funds involved. It was therefore decided that the sample for the pilot survey would include only the second and third generation speakers.

3.4.2 Age

Age is an important variable because it enables us to analyse change in progress by comparing the language used by speakers of different generations. Speakers of different ages participating in this survey are grouped not in numerical years but according to some shared experience of time which can be related to a stage in their life. This approach was adopted because culture-specific life-stage of the migrants is more relevant than biological age in the survey of Sylheti migrants from rural backgrounds. Eckert's life-course perspective illustrates the description of age as a sociolinguistic variable. She (2000: 151) argues that biological age is easy to measure but 'age has significance because the individual's place in society, the community and the family changes through time'. Also, researching ethnic minorities in which language and identity are closely linked to socio-historic and socio-psychological factors, responses are best interpreted and understood by

grouping and comparing respondents to age-related effects rather than numerical age. Age is a useful construct when it reflects differences in life experiences (Milroy and Gordon 2003).

In rural communities biological age has little value when there are discrepancies in recording the actual date of birth. Obtaining a birth certificate at the time of birth in rural areas of developing countries such as Bangladesh is an exception rather than a rule. Childbirth takes place at home and families are oblivious to the formality of recording the birth or issuing a birth certificate. However, in key migrant areas, spouse and children joining the migrant spouse and father in the UK are required to show a birth certificate as a proof of identity and age. A birth certificate is issued by the local government office (often many miles from the villages) based on an approximation of the birth date rather than the exact date. If a child is under eighteen, the birth certificate endorses the correct age or an approximation of child's age. However, there are also situations in which age has to be 'adjusted' for the child to be a minor. In such cases, a birth certificate with the 'adjusted' age is obtained, otherwise British immigration law prevents the child to join the father or the family in the UK.

Biological age is to a large extent not relevant in for example, the 'arranged marriage system' between girls from rural Sylhet and British Sylheti men (or vice versa). Poverty, illiteracy and lack of education in rural areas are often responsible for coercing parents to arrange marriages of under-age girls. Economic prosperity of migrant families in key migrant areas blur the judgement of many parents and they consider themselves to be blessed if a marriage can be arranged between the daughter or the son to a migrant or even an aspiring migrant. For those under eighteen wishing to join the spouse in the UK, age has to be 'adjusted' on the birth certificate to make the under-age bride a consenting adult. These examples reveal that birth certificates are not necessarily a reliable measure of age. Discrepancy and discomfort about age was reported by LMP interviewers who felt that respondents were not always comfortable talking about age. They observed that in some cases the exact age was not known while in other cases the respondents did not want to make a statement because of 'inaccuracies in records held by other official bodies' (1985:

137). On the basis of this information, age distinction was based on the 'life stage' of the migrants.

3.4.3 Sex

Equal number of males and females were to be included in the sample if it were possible to do so. The 1991 UK census reports the age-sex ratio of the Bangladeshi population as the most irregular of all ethnic groups. The population is male-dominated with an overall ratio of 100:64 of males to females (Eade, Vamplew and Peach 1996). Despite the ratio recorded, it was not easy to make appointments with the men as they were available from mid-day till about two in the afternoon and it was often difficult to squeeze in an hour or more for questionnaire and interviews. With considerable effort I was able to interview nine adult men for the pilot sample. One male spouse was in Bangladesh on holiday. As the majority of the Sylhetis are in the catering trade, a similar situation was anticipated for the main survey.

3.5 *Tools: Written questionnaires*

This survey relies on information mainly from responses to written questions. Written questionnaires are useful in collecting data in a short time from a large number of respondents who represent social diversity in a community (Chambers 1998). The two methods of collecting data by means of written questionnaires are postal questionnaires and questionnaires administered by fieldworkers. Milroy and Gordon (2003) argue that the use of postal questionnaires often raises questions of reliability of responses. However, Chambers (1998) has demonstrated statistically that data collected through postal questionnaires are more reliable than those collected by fieldworker-administered questionnaires. He says using postal questionnaires helps to eliminate fieldworker bias and the effects of the Observer's Paradox. Milroy and Gordon (2003) argue that despite the strengths of the postal questionnaire method, one of the limitations is that it does not allow an in-depth examination of language use. They add that in some situations fieldworker-

administered surveys have advantages over other methods of collecting data, one of the main advantages being they allow direct observation of language use. Milroy and Gordon (2003) further add that most fieldworker-administered surveys collect respondents' self-report language use rather than report direct observation of language use. However, it should not be assumed that self-reported data are less accurate than those collected through observational studies of language use. In view of the advantages of written questionnaires over other methods of data collection, written questionnaires administered by me was the primary source of collecting data for the present survey. Interviews and participant observation methods are used as complementary sources of self-reported data because it may have been a risk to rely completely on my insider status. As explained in section 3.3.1.2, I was not an insider in every sense of the term.

In the UK, the only regular questionnaire survey on the home language use of students was carried out by the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) every two years until it was dissolved. The drawback of the survey was, for children of non-indigenous minority communities no information was collected on their proficiency in their home language(s) or the need for instruction in their home language. Data on the language use of the pupils were collected by means of the impressions of their teachers (LMP 1985). In the absence of census questions on language use of ethnic minorities in the UK, it is important to use a questionnaire which has enough depth in the questions to get an accurate and comprehensive picture of the language use of students.

In view of the diversity of questions included in the ALUS questionnaire and the similarity between the themes of the questions on language use and language maintenance to the present study of LMS, I felt it was appropriate and suitable to use the ALUS questionnaire for piloting in York. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was used for the adults and children. The SLS or SPS questionnaire designed for students was not used because of its limitations in the diversity of the questions. For example, the SLS questionnaire included only four questions: *Do you yourself speak any language at home apart from English?*, *What is the name of that language?*, *Can you read that language?* and *Can you write that language?* The aim of the SLS survey was to investigate if students from ethnic minority backgrounds

used a language other than or in addition to English at home, whereas the aim of the present survey is to investigate the patterns of language use in different domains.

It was also not feasible to use LMP's version of the SPS questionnaire for secondary school students because unlike densely populated areas where there are large concentrations of ethnic minorities in schools, there were only a few Bangladeshis in York secondary schools. It would have been unnecessary and expensive to duplicate the LMP version of the eleven page colour-printed document where school children had to follow a colour-coded route depending on their reflection of language experiences in the home, the school and outside school. The same information could be obtained easily from the ALUS questionnaire. As I was filling in the questionnaires for adults and children I could leave out the questions which were not relevant for children.

The aim of the ALUS questions was to examine language skills and use, language maintenance and factors that support minority language use. Therefore questions to elicit information on the community's maintenance of ethnic culture and identity symbols such as the use of traditional dress and preferences for language in the domain of media were not included in the questionnaire. This information was gathered from interviews. However, in the section on literacy, the question: *Do you ever read the newspapers, newsletters or magazines in Bengali/English?* (Q 51, Appendix 1) was asked but the aim was to discover whether there was any functional complementarity of literacies in Bangla and English and not their choice of language for television, films, newspapers and magazines. The only other media-based question: *Do you ever see films in Bengali or Urdu-Hindi?* (Q 127, Appendix 1) was to investigate if a language other than English was preferred. Questions on language preference in the media domain are important because compared to Bangla, Sylheti has low vitality in terms of status and institutional support. It is often the case that low-vitality groups differentiate language use by social domains and non-standard varieties are believed to be 'bad', or 'sloppy' or 'lazy' (Schilling-Estes 1997). Therefore, it was necessary to establish if Sylheti was used in media such as television, radio, community newsletter etc. Landry and Allard (1994: 36) emphasise that the relationship between ethnolinguistic vitality (see section 2.6) and frequency of language

use in intimacy-based and status-oriented domains are important indicators of LMS. They explain the effects by means of a hypothetical continuum in which the intimacy-based family domain represents one end of a continuum and the status-based media represents the other end. According to them, language use can infiltrate through the medium of television, films, newspapers and magazines into the family domain. They say:

It may also be largely through the media that the intimacy-based domain of family is undermined in low-vitality contexts since both types of values are confronted within the home. The lower the ethnolinguistic vitality of the community, the more the intimacy values of the family would be confronted by status values within the home.

The ALUS questions were not designed to determine if the language used in the home domain is in any way confronted by the status values of the media. In the absence of questions on the knowledge and preferences of language in media and questions on maintenance of ethnic culture and identity symbols in the ALUS questionnaire, questions on media and socio-cultural identity and ethnicity were asked in the pilot interviews but included as a section in the main survey questionnaire for Leeds. Furthermore, the ALUS questionnaire did not elicit any information on the community's social network. This information was obtained from interviews and participant observation data.

The ALUS questions on children and language were aimed at language behaviour between parents and children and did not include questions on the two contrasting cultures the children were exposed to. Children's experience in the two different networks and environments are important influences in the process of assimilation. Therefore, interviews for children included questions on personal choice and interests and preferences in food and clothes to investigate their attitude towards the two cultures. Questions about friendship domains were important in influencing the children's network of linguistic contact and the extent to which process of assimilation may be a transitional or an on-

going stage in the third generation British-born children. All questions asked in pilot interviews were included in the main survey questionnaire.

In the next chapter the pilot project in York is described. The ALUS questionnaire was administered without making any changes as a way of confirming the information gathered, establishing the roles of Bangla and English in different domains and evaluating the methods reviewed. Because there was no previous information regarding the Sylhetis for objective comparison purposes, it was necessary to investigate the role of Sylheti rather than prejudge the issue of Sylheti versus Bangla. ALUS was used as a reliable questionnaire. The ALUS questions were not expected to address all research questions. However, by virtue of the depth of the questions it was possible to relate the dominant language used as the mother-tongue of the community, language use as being constrained by the relationship with and age of the interlocutor, the importance of age at arrival and the influence of the socio-historic and socio-cultural perceptions on language use to most of the research questions. The pilot data were useful to compare whether there has been any change in the community's habitual language use or if language use has remained stable in the course of 16 years that have elapsed between the LMP (1985) and the Verma et al. 2001 surveys. The data were also used to analyse if there has been any awareness regarding Bangla and Sylheti as two separate language varieties. Linguistic and socio-cultural information and fieldwork experience from the pilot were the foundations for further enquiry. The findings were used to specify the methodology appropriate for designing ethnic migrant group survey in Leeds.

4 Socio-cultural information and analysis of the pilot survey data.

4.1 Introduction

Background and socio-cultural information of the Sylhetis in York and data from the pilot project are analysed in this chapter. The distribution of the sample described in section 4.2 includes their background and socio-cultural information on maintenance of ethnic symbols based on participant observation methods and interviews. How sessions were conducted is described in 4.3. The data is analysed in section 4.4.

The recurring themes throughout LMP's ALUS questionnaire were the language skills and language use patterns in a large range of social activities. However, pilot data revealed the necessity to resolve essential language-related issues before designing the main survey questionnaire. Therefore, a follow-up questionnaire survey (Appendix 2) was subsequently designed and fieldwork was carried out a second time with the same group of informants. The follow-up questionnaire survey data is analysed in section 4.5. Findings from the two pilot projects, the methods used, background information of the historic, cultural and linguistic situation discussed in the introduction to thesis were subsequently used as the basis for designing the main survey questionnaire and developing appropriate fieldwork procedures for the Leeds survey (Chapter 5).

4.2 Distribution of the sample

Fieldwork for the pilot project was carried out in the small and dispersed community in the Huntington area in York. It started in December 2000 and lasted for over a month. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the sample.

Gender	2 nd generation migrants (Adults)	3 rd generation migrants (Children)
Female	10	9
Male	9	2
Total N	19	11

Table 4.1 Distribution of pilot sample. N=30

30 respondents from ten families participated in the survey which included 19 adults and 11 children. Male and female adults ranged from age 24 to 48 and the children from 10 to 16.

4.2.1 Background information

Information about respondents revealed that three brothers' and two sisters' families were among the families selected for the project. Association with community members revealed a strong and dense network in which activities revolved around immediate and extended family. Discussions prior to piloting revealed that social visits to siblings and other relations living outside York were on occasions of religious festivals or traditional rituals of birth, marriage, death. They made every possible effort to abide by traditional customs to create the environment of their original settlement in Sylhet. Social get-togethers were arranged on religious or cultural events such as *Eid-ul-Fitr*, the day after the end of Ramadan or *Poila Bioshakh* (Bangla New Year). However, due to grouping based on political allegiance in the country of origin, participation in events usually depended on the group that organised the event. It is necessary to clarify that these groupings were personal and did not in any way affect language-related responses.

The men's network was exclusive to the Sylheti community. All men were restaurateurs and worked very long hours from mid afternoon when the restaurants opened till after

midnight. The unusual working hours left little scope for them to socialise outside restaurants. All employees were Sylhetis who were related or were co-villagers. Many Sylheti kin and co-villagers travelled long distances to work in Sylheti-owned restaurants in York.

Most families in York lived in middle class neighbourhoods. Their children attended good local and private schools and had a network of friends outside their community. Their exposure and life experiences were different from their parent's generation. However, the men were generally reluctant to discuss their income. Some confessed to understating their income to avoid discrepancy with other official records. Therefore an income scale to assess socio-economic status was not devised because it was an impractical means of obtaining reliable information. Assessing an individual's socio-economic status on the basis of the objects observed in the household was also an unreliable means of assessment. However, as methods of selecting respondents were based on pre-selected categories (see section 3.4), not devising a socio-economic scale helped to eliminate assumptions about class membership by grouping speakers according to linguistic and cultural similarities rather than a social stratification of the community.

On visits prior to the pilot survey I realised that women socialised mainly with women within the community. However, a small number of women reported socialising with women from other ethnic backgrounds. This information was unusual considering both groups of women (those with a community-based network only and those whose network extended to women from other communities) were from similar backgrounds, followed similar cultural norms, were housewives and lived within the confines of the home. On the basis of information reported, adult women respondents in the pilot sample were divided into two groups. One group included women who did not socialise outside the community while the other included those who did. The division aimed to investigate if there were any significant differences in language and social practices of the two groups because of exposure and experience. However, discussions in the early stage of fieldwork revealed that the views of women in both groups were almost identical. There was no conflict or disagreement on issues such as preserving traditional values and ethnic culture, marriage

arrangements, the effects of western culture and the continuity of religious practices. In view of the responses fieldwork among women was carried out without any further divide.

The children's network included cousins and friends from their own community and also their British friends. Opinions of British-born children were quite different from those expressed by adults. While they were cautious about expressing views on attending religious events, they were definitely less enthusiastic about participating in cultural and traditional events. This reaction was not unusual considering that they were not completely familiar with the world that their parents came from. Eight children in the pilot sample had never visited Sylhet. Of the three who had, one child had been there once, the other twice and the third on five occasions for short holidays. None of these children had any experience of living in rural Sylhet because facilities were especially arranged for their short or extended visit. The holiday visits included trips and tours, dinners and lunches for the *bideshis* (sojourners), different from the everyday lives of the people. The children valued all this for what it was apparently worth in Sylhet but in the UK they experienced two contrasting environments: a traditional one at home and another outside home. Each culture reflected its own set of values and the experience between cultures became a struggle especially when the home dictated the traditional culture.

4.2.1.1 Maintenance of ethnic culture and identity symbols

Socio-cultural information revealed the group's allegiance to cultural and traditional norms. Their dense network's influence on the sustenance of cultural behaviour was reflected in food habits and dress. None of the families that I visited ate out in restaurants. This was mainly because going out for meals is not a part of their rural culture. British-born Sylhetis also did not eat at restaurants because meat was not *halal*. Young Sylheti children bought take-away food but their choices were restricted to fish burgers or vegetarian pizzas, and no meat products were bought. Take-away *halal* food in cities with large Asian Muslim populations offers a wide selection such as *halal* burgers, *halal* pizzas, *halal* fried chicken etc. Recently established ethnic businesses include *halal* Indian and Chinese restaurants. However, the trends also reveal how businesses cash-in on Muslim

sentiments. For example, the Arabic word *Qibla* is used for labelling a brand of fizzy drinks. All families reported buying *Qibla Cola* instead of other brands because they believed that *Qibla Cola* contains ingredients suitable for Muslim consumption.

All adults and most children reported that traditional Bangladeshi food was their first preference. Therefore, families in York travelled long distances to specialist shops in Leeds or Bradford to buy traditional Bangladeshi food. Asian shops in large Asian settlement areas cater to the needs of different ethnic sub-groups. For Sylheti consumers these ethnic supermarkets sell fish, dry fish, vegetables, fruits, *paan* (betel leaf), betel nut, pickles, spices, pulses, bakery products, moisturisers, hair oil, soap etc imported from Bangladesh. A popular brand of instant dried milk powder which Bangladesh imports from Holland is then imported from Bangladesh by British Sylhetis. During interviews many respondents reported that they bought this brand solely on the basis that Bangla language was printed alongside English for 'Instructions to Use' which ironically most are unable to read. However, it is very likely that familiarity with the brand and pride in national language motivates respondents to buy this particular brand.

4.2.1.2 Dress and ethnicity

All married women wore the traditional *saree*. The second generation married women and young adolescent girls wore *saree* or *shalwaar kameez*. However, none of the second generation married girls wore western outfits and even where young girls wore trousers, the tops were always a traditional *kameez*. A few British-born unmarried girls wore western clothes but always used a head scarf. As women in this rural community are not supposed to be seen by outsiders, clothes and accessories are bought by the husbands or fathers. However, a door-to-door Asian salesperson sold traditional clothes among the families regularly. Such practices are typical in rural Bangladesh where there are no regular shops or markets and rural communities rely on the weekly open markets (*haats*) or the door-to-door salesperson to buy all kind of essentials including medicine. The continuity of rural practices and traditional norms thousands of miles from rural Sylhet

reveal how traditions were transported from rural Sylhet to York to make the home away from home.

4.2.1.3 Language, media and ethnicity

All families subscribed to Bangla TV, a UK based television channel. Programmes broadcast included drama serials, songs and news in Bangla. 'News from Sylhet', a special news bulletin is read in Bangla and not Sylheti. In all Sylheti households Bangla TV was always on, irrespective of whether anyone was watching. Respondents reported that listening to their national language (Bangla) made them feel closer to Bangladesh. However, Bangla TV had no impact in the lives of the children. They did not enjoy Bangla programmes because of their inability to understand the language. Most children could not read programme titles. Of the 11 children in the sample, there were three teenagers who were able to read a few basic words. On the other hand, British television programmes were very popular because they could understand and relate to English language without any difficulty. Unlike adults, the children did not have any reason to link Bangla with ethnic or national identity.

4.3 *How sessions were conducted*

If I read out the questions in Bangla and waited for a response only those who were literate would have understood the question in its entirety. Also, I was always conscious that there should not be any breakdown in communication between me and the respondent on the basis of identifying me with Bangla, the language with status, prestige and power. Evidence suggests that the use of Bangla in fieldwork put the interviewer in a disadvantageous position and created distrust and distance (e.g. Verma et al., 2001). My linguistic competence in Bangla, Sylheti and English were invaluable in making 'direct observation of language use' and adopting a suitable approach for conducting sessions (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 54). Based on background knowledge about the linguistic situation and language varieties in the community's repertoire and personal experience and

observations I decided to discuss Sylheti and Bangla as separate varieties before recording responses for questions on language use. This was a useful way of reminding respondents to think carefully before reporting responses. However, I did not want to make the reminders very frequent because repeated mention of any language variety may be perceived as an indirect hint, thereby imposing that language variety on the respondent by priming their response.

Before reading out questions on language use I discussed issues similar to the theme of the question and spoke in Bangla and Sylheti to make respondents aware of the differences between the two varieties in vocabulary and word formation (see section 1.8). The purpose was not only to allow respondents to realise that there were separate language varieties in question but, more importantly, for them to know that I was comfortable with and respected both varieties. I read out all questions in English and then translated in a code-mixed Sylheti and Bangla. For adults who were proficient in English I used English but often mixed codes with Sylheti and Bangla.

Initially each respondent reported using Bangla with family members. However, it was clear that the response was inaccurate. They reported Bangla but were actually speaking Sylheti. I stopped recording their responses because I felt that the confusion between Sylheti and Bangla had to be resolved. I then decided to read a few questions in Bangla without any code-switching or mixing as a strategy to observe the extent of their comprehension. One adult male who had good proficiency in Bangla could understand without any difficulty while two adult females were able to understand the gist of many questions. However, none of the other adults were able to understand the Bangla version of the questions effectively. They relied on me to confirm equivalent words and phrases in Sylheti and used common English words.

Finally, I switched back to the code-mixed version with adults. I translated and repeated the question in Sylheti and a code-mixed Sylheti and Bangla. I also gave occasional reminders to think carefully before responding to the question. This strategy had to be used in every household that I visited. From then onwards discussions around the theme of the

question and issues relating to Bangla and Sylheti became an integral part of my interview technique. All adult responses were reported in Sylheti or a code-mixed Sylheti Bangla and occasionally a few English words. None of the children could read the Bangla version of the ALUS questionnaire that I was using. Responses to questions on language use Table 4.3 with family members are not the initial but the second response reported by respondents. All responses were recorded by me in English. The experience revealed that it was not necessary to design a bilingual questionnaire for adults or the children for the main survey.

Children's responses were gathered mainly from mother-tongue classes organised outside school. In one of the sessions I left a questionnaire with the Bangla teacher for a twelve year old absentee explaining that I was going to fill it in during my next visit. On my return a fortnight later I found that the questionnaire had been filled in. The Bangla teacher informed me that she had translated the questions. While I was checking to ensure that all relevant questions had been answered I found the student's response to the question on language spoken at home with immediate family was reported as Bangla. I knew her parents. I had visited their house a few times and there was no doubt that they spoke Sylheti at home. I asked the student if she was sure about the language(s) she reported as the language used at home. She then explained that while the teacher translated the questions for her she also dictated the responses on language use putting emphasis on Bangla as her mother-tongue. This was not unusual because inconsistency in responses collected by teachers was reported in the surveys carried out by Rosen and Burgess (1980) and LMP (1985) on language diversity among the primary and secondary school population in London. Survey reports revealed that data on language use of pupils were collected by the teachers, often recorded on the basis of the teachers' impressions. Milroy and Gordon (2003) and Van der Avoird (2001) observe that the method of collecting data by means of impressions of teachers is a very indirect way of collecting data on actual language behaviour. The experience revealed that I had to be cautious that all responses were based on the respondent's impressions and not anyone else's.

Interesting responses were revealed when I asked children to identify the language when I spoke Bangla. Some referred to it as *Dhakaaiyya* (the language spoken by the people of Dhaka) while others called it *Boier bhaashaa* (the language of books). Both responses implied that I used a variety which was unfamiliar and different from what they used.

4.4 Analysis of data

Although the question on religion: *How important is your religion in your life?* (Q 152, Appendix 1) was placed at the end of the ALUS questionnaire, in the pilot survey it was asked in the beginning because of the importance of religion and religious piety brought about by social status of migrants. Sharing religious beliefs established a common root rather than prejudice the interview as reported by LMP (1985: 141). Responses are shown in Table 4.2.

How important is your religion in your life?		
	Adults	Children
Very important	18	9
Fairly important	1	2
Not very important		
Not important at all		
Total N	19	11

Table 4.2 On the importance of religion.

Clearly religion is important in the lives of all respondents. One adult's response that religion is fairly important is an unusual response coming from a group with strong orthodox and conservative practices. This respondent was the urban-educated male who stood out as different not only because of his atypical responses to other questions but also his unconventional behaviour. For example, he was the only respondent in the sample who was twice married and divorced from white British women.

The two children who reported that religion was fairly important were born in the UK. They were sisters, outspoken, extrovert and often expressed radical views which were different from the other children. They were not interested in the Bangla class but attended only because of parental pressure. They were usually the first ones to leave the class and refrained from attending at the first opportunity.

Discussions on religious practices revealed that provisions for teaching the Quran were arranged at the local mosque. However, not all boys and young girls attended sessions because of the location of the mosque and the difficulty in arranging transport. The tradition of learning to read the Quran and recite *suras* in Arabic is a common practice among Muslims and has an influential impact on the lives of urban and rural groups. A young wife reported that her parents and siblings moved from York to Tower Hamlets more than two decades ago because it was convenient to maintain traditional religious practices in densely populated Asian settlements. Mosques are a part of every locality and in many areas, mother-tongue classes and learning to read the Quran are held in the same premise. Although background information revealed the importance of religion and religious practices among the Sylhetis, it is important to recognise that the Sylhetis conform to their ethnocultural distinctiveness by virtue of their particular set of religious beliefs and resources such as shrines, *waaz*, *milads*, *shinni* (for details see Gardner 1993). All except one Sylheti home had the photograph of the patron saint Hazrat Shah Jalal's shrine. The saint is an intermediary between the migrant family and God and the photograph signifies religious purity and the ritual of blessing. The miracles of saints and the economic benefits of migration are perceived as having a cyclical relationship in which migration is seen as a miracle because its economic benefits have transformed the world of migrants (Gardner 1993).

In sections 4.4.1- 4.4.6, responses to questions on language repertoire, household language use, language use with friends, neighbours and others, claimed proficiency in Bangla and English and on knowledge and participation of education in minority language are analysed. Responses to questions on language used with neighbours, doctor and shopkeeper are based on open-ended interviews. Respondents were asked what language

they used with their neighbours, doctor and the shop assistants rather than directing them to the closed responses in the ALUS questions which asked if they ever visited shops, or the doctor or if their neighbours spoke Bangla.

4.4.1 On language repertoire

The first question in the section on language skills and learning history was: *Which other languages do you know besides Bengali, including regional languages and dialects?* In the list of response options, Bengali was printed on the questionnaire as the first option and respondents had to supply information about other languages and dialects. The response reported by adults and children for the language ‘*besides Bengali*’ was English. The option after English reported by 10 out of 19 adults was Hindi. Of the 11 children in the sample, nine reported French as well as English and two reported German. None of the respondents mentioned Sylheti. As this was the first question on language history in the first section of the questionnaire I recorded the actual responses reported.

However, because of my linguistic competence in Bangla and Sylheti I could identify that they actually spoke Sylheti. When adults were asked if they spoke Sylheti, the issue was glossed over by simply saying that Sylheti and Bangla were the same. The finding was interesting because all respondents spoke to each other in Sylheti but referred to their language of interaction as Bangla. I then used the strategy of translating questions in a code-mixed Sylheti, Bangla and English (see section 4.3). ALUS questions were not phrased in terms of Sylheti. However, other than the first question on language repertoire the use of three languages (Sylheti, Bangla, English) and discussions on the theme of the question was a strategy used for all language-related questions in every household.

4.4.2 On household language use

The section on household language use (Q 72-80, Appendix 1) was very detailed based on the understanding that ethnic minority communities have a large household and family

structure. This is true of the original Sylheti settlements. However, as discussed in section 3.4.1, it was not until I had started my fieldwork that I realised that household structures had changed and families living in York did not include extended members. Therefore, responses from extended family members had to be ruled out. To get a broader picture of language use with extended family members living in the UK, I asked each adult and child in the sample to reflect and report the language used with extended family members even if they did not live in the same household.

Questions 72-78 were designed to elicit information about the number of people living in the household, their relationship with the respondent, age, employment details and how well they knew Bangla and English. Q 79 and Q 80 asked what language(s) or dialect(s) they used with the respondent and vice versa (reciprocal language use). The six options for these two questions were: '*only or mostly Bengali*', '*Bengali and English*', '*only or mostly English*', '*other and English*', '*only or mostly other*' and '*other mixture*'. Respondents who selected any of the options which had the category of 'other' were asked to specify the language(s) or dialect(s) they used. It may be worth recalling that at these junctures I used the strategy of repeating the question in Bangla and Sylheti as a way of finding out if respondents were aware of the differences between the two native language varieties (see section 4.3).

Information on language use of extended family members who did not live in the same household was provided by the respondents but in those cases it was not possible to record reciprocal responses (e.g. father, mother, sibling, close and distant relations of the adult). All except the language use reported in the column of spouse in Table 4.3 are non-reciprocal responses. In the children's sample Table 4.4), responses relating to close and distant relations are non-reciprocal responses. For simplicity, all reciprocal and non-reciprocal responses have been tabulated in two tables, one for adults and another one for children. Responses from the adult respondents are shown in Table 4.3 and responses of the children are shown in Table 4.4. The answers recorded in Table 4.3 reflect not the initial but the second response of the respondents (see section 4.3).

Language(s) used by the adult respondents with:							
	Father	Mother	Spouse	Child	Siblings	Close relations	Distant relations
Sylheti	18	18	14	10	18	10	12
Bangla							
English							
Sylheti & Bangla	1	1				5	1
Sylheti & English			3	7	1	3	2
Bangla & English			1	2			1
Sylheti, Bangla & English			1			1	3
Total N	19	19	19	19	19	19	19

Table 4.3 Language used by adults (age 24-48).

Table 4.3 shows that most respondents use Sylheti with immediate and extended family. Only one respondent who was able to distinguish between Sylheti and Bangla reported using Sylheti and Bangla with both parents. None of the respondents reported using Bangla or English exclusively with anyone in the family. There are more instances (e.g. 3 with spouse, 7 with children, 1 with sibling, 3 with close relations and 2 with distant relations) of adults using Sylheti and English than there are of Sylheti and Bangla. Reciprocal responses of spouse show a large number using Sylheti (N=14) and others using Sylheti and English, Bangla and English and Sylheti, Bangla and English. Within the extended family there are a variety of language(s) and dialect(s) used.

Table 4.4 shows that the language used most frequently with immediate and extended family members is again Sylheti. However, unlike adult responses which shows that no one used either Bangla or English exclusively, many (N=5) use English while others (N=5) use Sylheti and English with siblings. Most children did not have distant relations in the UK and they were not able to fill in this category of language use. Only three children responded to the use of language with distant relations. Amongst them one reported the use of Sylheti and two reported using Sylheti and English.

Language(s) used by the children with					
	Father	Mother	Siblings	Close relations	Distant relations
Sylheti	10	10	1	4	1
Bangla					
English			5	1	
Sylheti & Bangla					
Sylheti & English	1	1	5	6	2
Bangla & English					
Sylheti, Bangla & English					
Total N	11	11	11	11	3 / 11

Table 4.4 Language used by children (age 10-16).

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 confirm the research question that Sylheti is the respondents' mother-tongue and used as the dominant language. Most adults are able to understand Bangla and only those who were educated were able to read and write it. Of the nineteen adults in the sample, 18 had spent the first sixteen years of their life in Bangladesh and had been through formal education. This information reveals that they knew Bangla even though there is little evidence of its use in interaction. It is used only in combination with Sylheti or English. The absence of its use among adults may be due to low levels of literacy in Bangla and their rural background. Therefore, 'age at arrival' is influential in shaping psychological identity perceptions towards Bangla and a means of determining respondents' level of literacy in Bangla.

One adult who claimed using Bangla and English with his/her spouse and two adults who reported using it with their children was not revealed in practice. Observations during interviews and informal social visits did not reveal any instances where the husband and wife code-switched between Bangla and English. Some responses reported by the wives may be influenced by their husbands' response. All except two husbands wanted to be interviewed first before deciding if the wives should be interviewed. Often the wives insisted that I record the husband's response to questions directed at the wives. This was

not an unusual reaction from a female in a patrilineal society (Gardner and Shukur 1994). However, such sensitive and fragile issues were dealt with care. I explained to the wives that as much as I appreciated their respect of their husbands' opinions, I had to be honest about recording each individual's response. Each individual's opinion was crucial in analysing the linguistic behaviour of the community.

Comparing adults' language use responses with their children in Table 4.3 with the reciprocal responses of children's use of language with parents in Table 4.4 we find that 10 adults reported speaking Sylheti with their children and 10 children report using Sylheti with their parents. Seven adults report using Sylheti and English and one child reports the use of the same with both parents. However, there were also two adults who reported using Bangla and English with the children but none of the children reported using Bangla and English. Despite all children learning Bangla at the community centre or at home with a tutor, none reported the use of Bangla with family members. Because Bangla was not used outside their learning environment it was difficult to assess their passive knowledge in Bangla. All adults could understand and speak English, some quite well and others only a little. However, the significant finding in the child sample was that most children used English or a combination of Sylheti and English with their siblings revealing that in the third generation Sylhetis, English has intruded the home domain previously reserved for the mother-tongue. The children also use Sylheti and English with close relations and a few children use both languages with distant relations in the UK.

Issues arising from the responses reveal that questions on language use should include all the language(s) and dialect(s) that the community have in their repertoire so that any one language does not become the focal point. In order to explore and clarify the relationship between native language and the mother-tongue and to confirm the research question which states that the age of the interlocutor will influence the choice between Sylheti and Bangla, the relationship between Sylheti and Bangla is examined with respondents. To do this it is necessary to include 'age at arrival' as an important variable for the main survey.

4.4.3 Language use with friends

The question on language used with friends and acquaintances (Q 118, Appendix 1) was divided into two parts. The first part asked how many of the respondent’s friends could speak Bangla and the second part asked which language did the respondent actually speak with friends.

Language options ‘*all both*’ and ‘*Bengali with some, English with others*’ for this question were confusing. Respondents explained that most of their friends were from their own community and they often mixed words between their native language and English. They did not compartmentalise languages and speak one variety with some and another with others. I resolved the issue by recording all responses which included Bangla and English beside the option ‘*all both*’. Any language variety other than Bangla and English was recorded under the ‘*other*’ option. This included one language variety (e.g. Sylheti) or a combination of languages (e.g. Sylheti and Bangla or Sylheti, Bangla and English). Responses of how many of the adults’ friends can speak Bangla are recorded in the left hand column and responses for ‘*Which language do you actually speak with them?*’ is shown in the right hand column in Table 4.5.

What about your other friends and acquaintances ? Can they speak Bangla?	Which language do you actually speak with them?
All N=7	1= Sylheti 2= Bangla 2= Sylheti & Bangla 2= Sylheti, Bangla & English
Most N= 3	1= Sylheti 1= Sylheti & Bangla 1= Bangla & English
A few N=7	1= Sylheti 2= Bangla 1= Bangla & English 2= Sylheti, Bangla & English 1= Sylheti, Urdu & English
None N=2	1= Sylheti 1= Bangla & English
Total N= 19	

Table 4.5 Language used by adults with friends.

Responses reported by adults reveal the use of Sylheti, Bangla and English. Many adults actually claim to speak Bangla (N=4), or Bangla and English (N= 3) or Bangla combined with Sylheti and English (N=4) with their friends. Of the two adults who report that none of their friends can speak Bangla, one reported speaking Bangla and English with the *friend*. There was one adult respondent who used Urdu with friends.

Responses of children’s language use with friends are shown in Table 4.6.

What about your other friends and acquaintances ? Can they speak Bangla ?	Which language do you actually speak with them ?
All N=1	1= Bangla & English
Most N=1	1= Bangla & English
A few N=4	1= Bangla 3= Bangla & English
None N=5	2= Sylheti 3= English
Total N=11	

Table 4.6 Language used by children with friends.

In the children’s sample, despite a few of their friends speaking Bangla, only one child claimed using Bangla and five claimed using Bangla and English with friends. Five children reported that none of their friends could speak Bangla and they spoke Sylheti (N=2) and English (N=3) with their friends.

Comparing adults and children responses in Tables 4.5 and 4.6 the picture that emerges is that the adults use more Sylheti with friends than the children do with their friends. Adult responses show the use of all three language varieties whereas Table 4.6 shows that children use more Bangla and English than Sylheti. The response reported by two adults

who speak Bangla and English with friends who cannot speak Bangla is contradictory because in an informal domain, under normal circumstances one does not speak a language with someone who does not speak it. The use of Bangla reported by adults may be associated with the high status of Bangla compared to the other regional varieties and dialects in Bangladesh (see chapter 1). Alternatively, responses reported by these two adults and the children, the term Bangla may have been used as synonymous with Sylheti. As all responses were reported by the respondents there was no way of observing and verifying them in practice.

The network structure of the Sylhetis and background information about their social life reveal that most adults' had friends from the Sylheti-speaking community. In the case of children, apart from their British friends in school there is a small network of Sylheti children within the community. Therefore, it is unlikely that the language of interaction with Sylheti friends would be Bangla. With non-Sylheti Bangladeshi friends they may use Bangla but its use would be limited as they would be unable to have sustained interaction due to many respondents' low levels of proficiency in Bangla. As the question did not distinguish between Sylheti and non-Sylheti friends it was difficult to get a true picture of language use in the friendship domain.

The use of Urdu reported by one adult respondent reveals that language use in the friendship domain is not dictated by ideological issues of the post partition years (1947-1971) or the status of languages (see section 1.5). The domain of friendship is an informal one and reflects language choice within a close group. The adult who reported the use of Urdu grew up in Keighley in the locality of the Urdu-speaking Pakistani community. This respondent's language choice is based on meaningful interaction in the most convenient medium of communication.

The only minority ethnic language mentioned in the ALUS questionnaire is Bangla. Its recurrent mention in the list of options presupposes that all respondents know Bangla. Thus there is a possibility that adults and children responses have been influenced by this presupposition. Otherwise it is unlikely that with friends from their own ethnic group

adults and children would use Bangla. However, it could be argued that there must be some truth in the presupposition of knowing Bangla based on the fact that 18 out of 19 adults had spent the first 16 years of their life in Bangladesh and had some formal schooling.

The extent of the community's proficiency in Bangla was not measured. There was no language test designed to test proficiency in language skills. This would have been a reliable measure but the aim of the survey is to investigate the language(s) and dialect(s) that the respondents use and not to measure their proficiency skills in those languages. Designing a test and administering it would have been beyond the scope of this survey. For the purpose of investigation it is more important to identify the languages in their repertoire and observe the actual use of those languages in different domains. This could be achieved by the interviewer's knowledge of the community's background and the ability to differentiate the languages in the community's repertoire.

Adults' and children's responses reveal that the structure of the question is vital in directing respondents towards a response. Misleading questions can lead to misleading responses. Knowledge of the language(s) and dialect(s) in the repertoire of the community under investigation is a pre-requisite in designing questions on language use in different domains. Interviewers investigating ethnic minority communities which have different language varieties should be proficient in the community's language(s) and dialect(s) and the current linguistic situation in examples in which the standard language is characterised by diglossia (see section 2.4).

Information on the typology of the language situation in the respondent's country of origin and language situation in the migrant's host country is useful to explain responses from a socio-historic and a socio-psychological point of view. Questions on language use with friends must distinguish clearly the different ethnic sub-groups within the cultural majority. A range of language varieties likely to be used with members of that community including an open category should be listed in the options provided.

4.4.4 Language use with neighbours and others

In the section on Language outside home and work, the question on language use with neighbours asked if the respondent's neighbours could speak Bengali and the language they actually spoke with their neighbours (Q 119, Appendix 1). Other information such as language used with the doctor, in shops and supermarkets in York and in Leeds were asked during interviews and informal conversations. As the community in York is small and dispersed, it is no surprise that 18 adults and eight children reported speaking English with neighbours. One adult reported using Sylheti with his/her neighbour and three children reported using Sylheti and English with their neighbour. All adults and children reported using English with their doctor. Two mothers who were not proficient in English were accompanied by their husbands or daughters during visits to the doctor or the nurse. Language used in supermarkets and other shops in York is also English as there are no Asian grocery or food shops in York. However, when I enquired about the language respondents used in shops with Asian settlements like Leeds or Bradford, all adult respondents reported Sylheti and English or a code-mixed Hindi/Urdu and English. The children usually did not accompany parents to Asian shops. If they did they reported using only English.

4.4.5 On claimed language proficiency in Bangla and English

The ALUS questions on claimed language proficiency in Bangla and English asked how well the respondents could understand, speak, read and write Bengali and English. Responses reported by adults for Bangla and English language skills are recorded in the same table for the convenience of comparing the two language skills side by side. To highlight the differences between Bangla and English, responses for Bangla language skills have been underlined in Tables 4.7 and 4.8 for adults and children.

	Very well		Fairly well		Not very well		Not at all		
	<u>Bangla</u>	English	<u>Bangla</u>	English	<u>Bangla</u>	English	<u>Bangla</u>	English	
Understanding	<u>18</u>	9	<u>1</u>	9		1			Total N=19
Speaking	<u>15</u>	8	<u>3</u>	5	<u>1</u>	6			
Reading	<u>14</u>	10	<u>1</u>	5	<u>3</u>	4	<u>1</u>		
Writing	<u>10</u>	6	<u>6</u>	8	<u>2</u>	5	<u>1</u>		

Table 4.7 Claimed proficiency in language skills of adults.

Responses from Table 4.7 reveal that most adults can understand, speak and read Bangla better than English. Their writing skill in Bangla is also better than their writing skill in English. There were no respondents who were not able to understand, speak, read or write English at all. However, there was one adult who reported not being able to read or write Bangla at all. On reflection some adult respondents changed their claimed proficiency in English from *fairly well* to *not very well* in order to be consistent with language ability claims made earlier in different circumstances. This revealed that for those adults claimed proficiency in English was an under-rating of their language ability skills rather than actual proficiency. However, in my capacity as a researcher/fieldworker I recorded what was reported to me especially as a language proficiency test was not designed.

Table 4.8 presents the responses for the child sample in the same way as Table 4.7.

	Very well		Fairly well		Not very well		Not at all		
	<u>Bangla</u>	English	<u>Bangla</u>	English	<u>Bangla</u>	English	<u>Bangla</u>	English	
Understanding	<u>1</u>	11	<u>9</u>		<u>1</u>				Total N=11
Speaking		10	<u>8</u>	1	<u>3</u>				
Reading		10	<u>4</u>	1	<u>4</u>		<u>3</u>		
Writing		9	<u>4</u>	2	<u>4</u>		<u>3</u>		

Table 4.8 Claimed proficiency in language skills of children.

The pattern that emerges from the children’s responses is that their English language skills are better than their Bangla language skills. Table 4.8 reveals that most children responded

very well to all four skills in English. The children who responded *very well* and *fairly well* to questions about proficiency in English are perhaps those who have made an accurate assessment of their skills in English. They can assess their ability in English as they are totally immersed in English. English is the medium of their education, of understanding the media and used in almost all environments that they are associated with in the UK. However, self-assessments made for Bangla in the same categories (*very well and fairly well*) are not as accurate as English. The two interpretations explaining the children's responses as *fairly well* for Bangla language skills are: firstly, proficiency is judged based on language experience. Minority languages like Bangla are not a part of the national curriculum in the UK, and tutors responsible for teaching standard languages outside school classes (e.g. community centres or mosques) often select elementary level textbooks for teaching Bangla. In such situations children's ability to read basic words and simple sentences in isolation and out of context becomes the benchmark for judging their ability to understand, speak, read and write Bangla. Such judgements allow them to make claims about their proficiency in Bangla at a level much higher than it actually is. Proficiency is measured differently for different languages on the basis of language experience and exposure.

Secondly, wrong labelling of languages can have an effect on language use responses. In the children's subconscious mind the label Bangla may have been confused with Sylheti. The confusion with language label emerged during interviews with children when they referred to the language of their interaction as Bangla. It was only after repeating questions in Bangla and Sylheti simultaneously respondents' realised that they spoke Sylheti and not Bangla. Labelling Sylheti as Bangla is only possible for oral language skills, it would not explain the responses for reading and writing (see section 1.8). Since a language test was not administered it was difficult to assess the claims made by adults and children concerning their linguistic abilities in Bangla. However, responses on claimed levels of proficiency can be verified by observing the language actually used and the type of motivation they have towards learning those languages. Responses on language use in intimate and informal domains and attitudes and motivation towards languages provide a fuller understanding of the respondents' language proficiency. Although many adults claim

to understand, speak, read and write Bangla *very well* and many children claim to understand, speak, read and write it *fairly well*, there is no evidence of its use in the family domain (see Tables 4.3 and 4.4).

Findings from Table 4.7 confirm the importance of including ‘age at arrival’ as a variable in understanding the responses of adults’ claimed proficiency levels and language attitudes. The adult who reported not being able to read and write Bangla at all was born in the UK. All other responses reported by adults on their proficiency in Bangla are consistent with the fact that the other 18 adults spent the first sixteen years of their life in Bangladesh and had formal schooling. Therefore it would only be natural for them to have some literacy in Bangla and understand its importance in the context of Bengali nationalism (see section 1.5).

Findings from Tables 4.7 and 4.8 also reveal that questions on claimed language proficiency do not provide an accurate measure of language skills. Including more language varieties in the list of options is a reliable way of comparing which language(s) or dialect(s) respondents could understand and use in relation to other languages. This information could be useful in the analysis of the actual language use. In view of this it was decided that in the main survey, questions on claimed language proficiency would include all language varieties in the community’s repertoire. This should include the language of religion (Arabic) and the languages used in popular media (Hindi, Urdu) and in Asian shops in the UK. Options for response were kept simple so that respondents do not get distracted by the finer points of distinction between e.g. *fairly well* and *not very well* and digress from the main issue of reflecting on their language ability.

4.4.6 On knowledge and participation of education in minority language

The question on minority language education asked: *Do you know of any classes in this city either inside or outside school, where children are taught Bengali?* Respondents who replied ‘yes’ were then asked where the classes were held and when. This was followed by

another question: *Have any of the children from this household been to any of these classes?* Responses are shown in Table 4.9.

Do you know of any classes in this city either inside or outside school, where children are taught Bengali ?			
Adults		Children	
Yes	No	Yes	No
15	4	9	2
Total N = 19		Total N =11	

Table 4.9 On knowledge of education in minority language

Table 4.9 reveals that most adults knew about classes outside school. Of the 15 who reported having knowledge, only eight responded to the next question ‘*where and when*’. Three others reported their own home as the venue while the other four knew that Bangla classes were held in the city but did not know where or when.

Of the nine children who reported having knowledge of the classes, five attended the weekly Bangla class. The other four reported knowing where and when classes were held but did not attend. They did not give any specific reason for not attending.

As the community is small and close-knit and families are either related or know each other well it seemed unlikely that some adults were unaware of Bangla classes, especially since the primary school curriculum does not offer Bangla. Not having any knowledge about the establishment also seemed unusual in terms of the formal and lengthy procedures involved in establishing a community school. The arrangement requires a representative number of children, the selection of a suitable venue and the employment of a tutor. Organising such a project requires the participation of more than a few people and the effort involves at the least the knowledge, if not active participation, of the families.

In the course of interviews on education and the importance of learning the minority language it emerged that there were political tensions between group members. As a result

the community in York was divided into groups, each with its own agenda. Some of the issues respondents raised referred to the structure of the organising committee, the high-handedness of a few individuals and recruitment procedures. Discussions with both groups (one who had knowledge about the classes and the other group who claimed they did not) revealed that the adults who reported not having knowledge were in fact aware of the class and also knew where it was held. However, they were unwilling to be involved with the committee in any way to the extent of denying any knowledge about it. Parents of the four children who did not attend Bangla classes belonged to this group and perhaps that is why they did not allow the children to attend classes. They arranged private tutoring at home.

Among other issues, the employment of a Hindu teacher was raised by a small group of people. Although she was a Sylheti, some adults expressed concerns about her religious status with respect to teaching Muslim children. The issue of the Bangla teacher's religious identity could not have stemmed entirely from religious prejudice because none of the adults raised any objection regarding the teaching of English by non-Muslim teachers e.g. British non-Muslim teachers teaching Muslim children English in schools. It could be argued that in-school and out of school classes are seen differently, but learning the language is the ultimate goal in both contexts. Sentiments regarding the Bangla teacher's religious identity could only be explained in terms of the sanctity of Bangla in which the national language was perceived as sacrosanct as the language of religion (Arabic) which most respondents cannot understand, speak or write. The finding was important because this kind of attitude dictated the need to investigate the community's contexts of acceptability towards other religious and ethnic communities as an important indicator in the process of assimilation.

4.4.7 Unresolved issues arising from the pilot project

Issues arising from the pilot survey revealed that concerns on mother-tongue and national language as symbols of identity had to be disambiguated and addressed before designing the main survey questions. As there was no question on mother-tongue in the ALUS questionnaire, responses from language use in the family were used to understand the

community's mother-tongue based on Fishman's (1965, 1972) notion that mother tongue in minority groups is frequent in informal and intimate domains e.g. family. Household language use (Tables 4.3 and 4.4) reveal that Sylheti is predominant in the parent generation and a code-mixed Sylheti and English followed by English is dominant in the younger generation. Therefore, a question on mother-tongue was necessary not only as a way of understanding what the community perceived to be their mother-tongues but also to investigate their attitude towards it. Language attitude is important in understanding how language is used as a symbol of group membership. Diglossic speech communities are often faced with the dilemma of the 'aspired mother-tongue' versus the 'real mother-tongue' (Verma p.c.). The 'aspired mother-tongue' is a situation when the status attached to the standard language and its role in literacy and education encourages the minority group to think of the standard as their mother tongue whereas the 'real mother-tongue' is the actual language used.

The community's attitude towards learning Bangla and their strong and orthodox adherence to tradition, culture and religion were important in determining the type of motivation they have for learning the native languages. Therefore questions with integrative and instrumental reasons for learning Sylheti and Bangla were a requirement before designing the main survey questions. Based on the responses an appropriate set of options could be included in the main survey questionnaire.

As responses for the main survey would be analysed within the framework of the vitality model (see section 2.5), vitality perceptions towards the languages in the community's repertoire and questions about the status of languages and dialects also had to be investigated before framing questions for the main survey. Respondents' knowledge of the existence of Sylheti Nagri and awareness of the movement in the UK with regard to its revival were pertinent issues for the investigation of language perceptions. Also, knowledge regarding the availability of Sylheti Nagri writing system in addition to the Bangla writing system would provide facilities in two writing systems. Selecting any one or both would reflect vitality perceptions towards Sylheti and/or Bangla respectively. For example, selecting Sylheti rather than Bangla by British-born Sylheti children reflects their

vitality perceptions towards Sylheti. As there was evidence which revealed the existence of books on alphabets and numbers in Sylheti Nagri, questions were framed to investigate if respondents had knowledge about these books. Information regarding the availability of Sylheti in the media such as magazines, newsletters, cassettes was contradictory. However, as these were important socio-cultural issues, questions on these topics were also included to explore the community's knowledge, attitude, perceptions and preferences towards Sylheti and Bangla.

As many vital issues remained unresolved it became necessary to administer a second pilot survey to investigate the issues raised in this section before designing questions for the main survey. The aim of the second questionnaire survey was to resolve the ambiguity about the status of the respondents' identity perception regarding the concept of mother tongue, vitality perceptions by separating Sylheti and Bangla as two varieties, knowledge on the revival of Sylheti Nagri and their attitude towards the status of Sylheti. Questions on actual language used in the home would be rephrased by labelling all language varieties. Questions on the type of motivation members of the community have towards learning Sylheti and Bangla were also included. The second survey provided a clearer understanding of the issues raised and based on that questions were framed for the main survey.

4.5 The follow-up questionnaire survey

A follow-up questionnaire survey (Appendix 2) was designed and administered in June 2001 with the same group of people who were included in the first pilot survey in York. Of the ten families in the first pilot one was not available at the time of the follow-up survey and another gentleman was away in Bangladesh. This brought the total number of respondents to 24 (16 adults and 8 children).

The follow-up questionnaire had twenty seven questions. Questions on place of birth and age at arrival were added to personal details. Question on language used at home were rephrased as two separate questions because it was evident from the first pilot data (see

Tables 4.3, 4.4) that respondents were aware of Bangla and Sylheti as two language varieties. Therefore all language-related questions in the follow-up survey included the option of Sylheti as a separate language variety. The first question was a general one: *What language(s) or language varieties do you use at home?* Options included Sylheti, Bangla, English and their combinations. The second more specific question was on the language that respondents' spoke to members of their family living in the UK or in Bangladesh. This was a repeat question with the difference that the options included Sylheti, Bangla, English and their combinations instead of the options *only or mostly Bengali, Bengali and English* etc used in the ALUS questionnaire (see questions 79 and 80 Appendix 1). The question was repeated for two reasons. Firstly, clearly labelled language options would help respondents to reflect on and make accurate reports on language use. Secondly, in the time that had elapsed between the first pilot and the second survey many discussions on the issue of Sylheti and Bangla as two separate language varieties had taken place informally in the homes of the respondents. It was expected that away from the national context, ethnicity and local and regional identity would be clearly identified.

Questions about linguistic identity were framed in terms of mother tongue, on the status of Sylheti, on the similarity of Sylheti to Bangla, on socio-cultural identity to reflect ethnicity, and the type of motivation respondents have towards learning Sylheti and Bangla. Motivation to learn a language depends on one's attitude and willingness to identify with the linguistic and non-linguistic features that characterise personal gains or benefits (Khanna et al., 1998). Gardner and Lambert (1972) identify foreign or second language learning in terms of motivations to learn the language. They observe that foreign language learning is likely to be lower if the underlying motivation is instrumental rather than integrative. Instrumental motivation is linked to utilitarian values for learning the language while integrative motivations refer to the individual's desire to affiliate with the majority culture. Questions on the type of motivation for learning Sylheti and Bangla included five integrative and five instrumental reasons. Communication and preserving identity were two identical integrative options included for both varieties. However, the other three options included were integrative for Sylheti and instrumental for Bangla. This was done to separate concepts associated with mother-tongue from those associated with language of

education and literacy. The responses from the follow-up survey are presented in sections 4.5.1- 4.5.7.

4.5.1 On language varieties used at home

The first question on language use was a general one. It was not aimed at any particular member of the household. It asked: *What language or language variety do you use at home?* This question differed from the ALUS question on language use by including Sylheti as a native language variety option. Although ALUS questions were not framed in terms of Sylheti, responses from the first pilot data revealed the reported use of Sylheti. Therefore, options for response included Sylheti, Bangla, English and their combinations. Adult and children’s responses are shown side by side in Table 4.10.

What language or language variety do you use at home?		
	Adults	Children
Sylheti	2	
Bangla		
English		
Sylheti & Bangla	1	
Sylheti & English	6	6
Bangla & English		2
Sylheti, Bangla & English	7	
Total N	N = 16	N = 8

Table 4.10 Language used at home.

Responses from Table 4.10 reveal that unlike adult responses shown in Table 4.3, Sylheti on its own is not the prominent language used at home. Many adults (N=6) use it with English and many (N=7) use it in combination with Bangla and English. Seven adults who report using Bangla along with Sylheti and English have probably reported Bangla from a

nationalistic ideological point of view. Language loyalty towards Bangla makes it difficult for them to reconcile with the fact that they use a foreign language (English) at home but not the national mother-tongue. Two adults who reported using Sylheti at home are the mothers who are not proficient in English. Response reported by most children (N=6) in the sample using Sylheti and English is consistent with the role the two languages play in the children's environment of home and school (Sylheti as the home language and English as the language of education). However, the two children who reported using Bangla and English at home have probably used the wrong label. It is unlikely that the children would use Bangla and English at home when none of the adults use the same. Children's responses in Table 4.4 also reveal that none of the children use Bangla or Bangla and English or Sylheti, Bangla and English with parents or siblings.

The more specific question on language use asked what language varieties adults and children used with particular members of their family irrespective of whether they lived in the household or not. Adult responses are shown in Table 4.11.

Language varieties used by adults with							
	Grand- parents	Parents	Spouse	Children	Sibling	Uncles & Aunts	Cousins
Sylheti	15	15	14	10	7	12	8
Bangla							
English							
Sylheti & Bangla	1	1			8	4	5
Sylheti & English			1	6	1		3
Bangla & English							
Sylheti, Bangla & English			1				
Total N=16							

Table 4.11 Language used by adults

Responses from Table 4.11 reveal variations in the patterns of language used with siblings from Table 4.3. Adults reported using Sylheti and Sylheti and Bangla with siblings rather than using Sylheti as reported in the previous response shown in Table 4.3. None of the adults report using Bangla or Bangla and English with spouse or children as reported in

Table 4.3. Responses also reveal that Sylheti continues to be dominant in the grandparent and parent generation. Two responses reporting the use of Sylheti and Bangla with grandparents and parents are those of the respondent who grew up in urban Sylhet. One adult respondent who reported the use of Sylheti and English with spouse was born in UK and the other who reported the use of the three varieties was educated in urban Sylhet. Seven adults reported using Sylheti, Bangla and English at home (see Table 4.10) but only one adult reported its use with members of the family (see Table 4.11). This kind of discrepancy confirms their confusion between native language labels.

Responses on language used by children are shown in Table 4.12.

Language varieties used by children with					
	Grandparents	Parents	Siblings	Uncles/Aunts	Cousins
Sylheti	8	7		5	1
Bangla					
English			5		2
Sylheti & Bangla					
Sylheti & English		1	3	3	5
Bangla & English					
Sylheti, Bangla & English					
Total N=8					

Table 4.12 Language used by children.

Responses from Table 4.12 confirm the responses reported in Table 4.4. The dominant language varieties among children are English and Sylheti and English. The pattern reveals that Sylheti is used with the grandparent and parent generation and English or Sylheti and English with siblings and other members of their extended family. None of the children use Bangla and English, as reported on the general question on language varieties used at home (see Table 4.10).

4.5.2 On mother-tongue

The question on mother-tongue was simple and straightforward. The aim was not to politicise the issue of language versus dialect but to understand that it would be inadequate to examine questions on ethnic minority mother tongue(s) and language identity in terms of monolingual assumptions made by society. The concept must be evaluated in its own terms away from cultural and political constraints. Responses from two generations were useful to understand the concept from a local, national and a diasporal perspective. Given the socio-historic status of Bangla it is evident that within the simple format of the question lay the complexities of the socio-psychological value that adult respondents attach to the sensitive issue of mother-tongue.

Similar to the responses reported in the first pilot using the ALUS questionnaire the initial response to this question reported by most adults was Bangla. However, many weeks of participant observation and informal visits to families revealed that other than one male respondent none used Bangla at home with their children or amongst themselves. It was also evident that the term Bangla was used very often to refer to their language of interaction when in reality they were speaking Sylheti. As discussed in section 4.3 and 4.4.2 in such situations I spoke a few sentences in Sylheti and a few in Bangla on the theme of mother-tongue issues within the socio-historic and socio-political context of Bangla. The use of Sylheti and Bangla helped to reveal differences between the two language varieties. At the same time the topic of discussions were useful to clarify that that this question was not asked within the national context of Bangladesh but was a means to understand the language actually used in intimate domains, with close members of the family, within the community etc. Responses shown in Table 4.13 reflect the second responses of adults and children.

	Adults	Children
Sylheti	13	8
Bangla	2	
English		
Sylheti & Bangla	1	
Sylheti & English		
Bangla & English		
Sylheti, Bangla & English		
Total N	N = 16	N = 8

Table 4.13 Language identified as mother-tongue.

Most adults report Sylheti as mother-tongue. Two adults who reported Bangla as mother tongue arrived in the UK at the age of 30 and 33 and the one who reported Sylheti and Bangla as mother tongue arrived at the age of 18. Analysis of these responses from a socio-historic and socio-psychological perspective reveals that having spent most of their life in Bangladesh their educational background provided the historic account of events leading to the emergence of Bangladesh. These adults must also have experienced the annual ritual of the language movement within and outside Bangladesh and against this background it is natural for them to think of mother-tongue within the national context of Bangladesh. Within this interpretation Bangla becomes a marker of mother-tongue identity. The respondent who selected Bangla and Sylheti probably attached undivided loyalty to both varieties.

However, all eight children reported Sylheti as their mother-tongue. These responses may be because the children realise that they speak a variety different from Bangla. Also, these children did not have the opportunity to share the experiences of their parents who have ideological and nationalistic loyalty and sentimental attachments to Bangla. Significantly, selecting Sylheti as mother-tongue conveys an important message that transplanted communities can project their regional (Sylheti) identity without dissociating themselves from their heritage which unites all Bangladeshis' national identity with Bangla. Fishman (1972) says that the strength of the relationship between language and nationalism is the

link with the past. If nationalism is an extension of one's ethnicity then in the global context the transplanted Sylheti community perceive of Bangla as their mother tongue but once ethnic self-awareness develops away from the national context, ethnicity and local and regional identity is associated with Sylheti as their mother-tongue.

4.5.3 On first language learned

The question: *What is the first language you learnt as a toddler?* was asked to verify the language used in each respondent's early years. The phrase 'first language' is used as a general term and not a technical one. Adult and children's responses are shown in Table 4.14.

	Adults	Children
Sylheti	14	8
Bangla	2	
English		
Sylheti & Bangla		
Sylheti & English		
Bangla & English		
Sylheti, Bangla & English		
Total N	N = 16	N = 8

Table 4.14 First language learnt as a toddler.

Responses are very similar to the response on mother tongue shown in Table 4.13. Sylheti is the dominant response. Two adults who reported learning Bangla arrived in the UK at age 18 and 19. The respondent who arrived at age 18 also reported Bangla as mother-tongue but the respondent who arrived at age 19 reported Sylheti as mother-tongue. Reporting Bangla as the first language and Sylheti as mother-tongue are in contradiction unless first language meant language of education formally learnt. Even if that were the case they would have acquired Bangla after the age of 5 (there are no nurseries for children

below age 5 in rural areas) and not in the toddler years. However, when these adults were asked when they learnt Sylheti they were vague and unable to offer any concrete explanation.

All children reported learning Sylheti as their first language. The responses reflect that the children do not have any ideological reasons to identify with Bangla. The only ethnic language in which they are proficient is Sylheti, the lingua franca in the community.

4.5.4 On the status of Sylheti

The question on the status of Sylheti asked: *Is Sylheti a language or a dialect?* The options were *language*, *dialect* and *don't know*. Responses for adults and children are shown in Table 4.15.

	Adults	Children
Language	12	2
Dialect	3	3
Don't know	1	3
Total N	N = 16	N = 8

Table 4.15 Sylheti as a language or dialect.

Despite positive ideological attitudes towards Bangla many adults think Sylheti is a fully fledged language. Sylheti has vitality in terms of its numerical strength in UK and is the lingua franca of the majority of the Bangladeshis in the UK. The speakers are familiar with its linguistic etiquette and the values and norms associated with it. It is the accepted code between the older and the younger Sylhetis and forms a distinct profile as a language (see section 1.8). As there is no imposition of a standard variety, the issue of standard language and dialect does not exist. Also, adult respondents' low levels of education in Bangla would make it difficult to distinguish the two varieties in terms of phonology, word order and vocabulary. From the point of mutual comprehensibility and geographical contiguity,

languages and dialects in South Asia are claimed to be in a continuum and languages and languages are also in a continuum (Khubchandani 1988). Although Chalmers (1996) claims that Bangla and Sylheti are mutually unintelligible, it must be remembered that mutual intelligibility depends on exposure that speakers of Bangla and Sylheti have towards the two languages. The influence of media, out-of-school Bangla classes and the provision for Bangla in school curriculum in cities with large Bangladeshi population allows some exposure to Bangla. The greater the exposure the closer the two languages will be on the hypothetical continuum and the better will be the comprehensibility. On the other hand, the lesser the exposure the greater will be the gap between understanding the two languages.

Another possible explanation referring to Sylheti as a language may be the literal translation of the word ‘dialect’ *ancholik bhaashaa* (regional language) in Bangla. Three adults who reported it was a dialect may be aware of some differences between them and the status attached to the two varieties. The adult who reported not knowing about the status of Sylheti was born in UK and could speak Sylheti but could not read or write Bangla at all.

4.5.5 On the similarity of Sylheti to Bangla

The question asked if Sylheti was similar to Bangla. Responses are shown in Table 4.16.

	Adults	Children
Similar	11	8
Not similar	4	
Don't know	1	
Total N	N = 16	N = 8

Table 4.16 On similarity of Sylheti with Bangla.

Table 4.16 reveals that most adults thought Sylheti was similar to Bangla. Of the four respondents who reported that Sylheti was not similar to Bangla, two arrived in the UK at age 19, and one at age 27. The adult who did not know if Sylheti was similar to Bangla also did not know if Sylheti was a language or a dialect. This respondent was born in the UK and was unable to read or write Bangla. All children including those who were born in the UK or had arrived before the age of ten thought Sylheti was similar to Bangla. They did not have any recollection of schooling in Sylhet. Everyone in this group attended local English schools and as mentioned earlier Bangla has no place in the school curriculum. The only exposure to Bangla was in the weekly out-of-school class or Bangla TV which most (N=6) children reported they did not watch. Their elementary knowledge of Bangla and the use of similar words may lead them to think of Bangla and Sylheti as similar. Despite discussions and labelling Sylheti and Bangla as separate varieties parents and children often referred to the language of their interaction as Bangla.

There are two possible explanations for adult responses on Sylheti being similar to Bangla. Drawing similarities between Sylheti and Bangla may be a conscious strategy the respondents use to attach the same status to the two varieties (dialect has inferior status compared to language). Alternatively, as Sylheti is perceived as a variety of Bangla, there must exist some similarities. Khubchandani (1988) says that speech communities in many regions of the Indian subcontinent are not aware that they cross language boundaries in everyday life. He refers to such crossings over as 'fluidity'. He explains that before the partition of India in 1947 language identity was not a crucial factor of social identification in the 'fluid zone' (the Hindi-Urdu-Panjabi or HUP region). However, after partition language consciousness for Muslims was linked with religious identity and language loyalty acquired a new order of fluidity. He quotes the example of 'bilingual Muslims oscillating between the *regional* and *religious* identities' (italics in original, Khubchandani 1988:149). Thus in researching language practices of ethnic groups from the Indian subcontinent it is important to examine the political and social background within which language loyalties can change. The emergence of Bangladesh was based on loyalty towards a national language identity rather than a religious one and especially first and second generation Sylhetis in diaspora may be oscillating between regional and national

language identity (see section 1.5). It can then be concluded that respondents’ perception of Sylheti and Bangla as similar is on the basis of ‘fliudity’ across two native language varieties and as separate because of their desire to maintain both regional and national identities.

4.5.6 On motivation for learning Sylheti and Bangla

Questions on the type of motivation adults and children have for learning Sylheti and Bangla were framed with a set of integrative and instrumental reasons included in the list of options. Five options were included for both varieties. The first two options (communication and identity) were identical for Sylheti and Bangla. The remaining three were framed in a manner that there were more integrative options such as preservation of Sylheti culture, language and traditional values for learning Sylheti and more instrumental options such as getting a job, doing business and to settle for learning Bangla. Responses were recorded by labelling the most important reason as 1, the next important one as 2 and so on. Responses for the most important reason adults and children have for learning Sylheti and Bangla are shown in Table 4.17.

The most important reason for learning:	Sylheti		Bangla	
	Adults	Children	Adults	Children
For communication	8	3	8	5
For the preservation of Sylheti/Bangla identity	5	1	3	
For the preservation of Sylheti /Bangla culture	2	1		
For the preservation of Sylheti/Bangla language	1			
For the preservation of traditional values and customs			4	
All options equally important		1	1	
Did not respond		2		3
Total N	16	8	16	8

Table 4.17 The most important reason for learning Sylheti and Bangla.

For adults, the most important reason for learning both Sylheti and Bangla is communication. Many adults felt that the preservation of their Sylheti identity was very important. There were also a few adults (N=3) who reported that learning Bangla was important to preserve their Bangla identity. Those who reported that learning Bangla would help them to settle in Bangladesh probably continued to believe in the ‘myth of return’ (Anwar 1979).

The child sample shows a variety of reasons as most important for learning Sylheti and Bangla. Most think that communication is the most important reason for learning the two varieties. Among other important reasons were identity and culture. However, there were two children who did not respond to the question on Sylheti and three children did not respond to the question on Bangla. They explained that they spoke Sylheti and had no particular reason to attach importance to Bangla. They attached more importance to learning English. The remark was valuable in deciding that questions on the type of motivation respondents have towards learning English should be included along with Sylheti and Bangla in the main survey as English played a prominent role in their linguistic repertoire. The relationship between Sylheti, Bangla and English should be analysed in terms of their roles and functions in formal and informal contexts.

4.5.7 On the knowledge of Sylheti in media and literacy

There were three questions based on the role of Sylheti in media and literacy, information regarding the revival of Sylheti Nagri and preferences to learn the two native language varieties. The first two questions asked: *Do you know if there are story books, magazines, audio or video cassettes available in Sylheti in the Asian shops?* and the second question asked: *Do you know if there are books on alphabets and numbers available in Sylheti Nagri?* Adult and children responses are shown in Table 4.18.

Do you know if there are any storybooks, magazines, audio and video cassettes available in Sylheti ?		
	Adults	Children
Yes	6	3
No	10	5
Total N	16	8
Do you know if there are books on alphabets and numbers available in Sylheti Nagri ?		
Yes	1	1
No	15	7
Total N	16	8

Table 4.18 On the knowledge of Sylheti in media and literacy.

Adults and children who reported knowing about the availability of Sylheti in media had knowledge of audio cassettes recorded by young Sylheti artists. No one knew of magazines and story books in Sylheti. Six adults reported watching a television play in Sylheti based on the life experiences of a Sylheti girl from London. Other than that there were no other videos available in Sylheti. On the knowledge of books on alphabets and numbers in Sylheti Nagri, one adult and one child reported knowing about them. The child’s response is unusual especially as his parents did not know about them. This child was the only one in the sample who attended a different school and perhaps learnt about the information on Sylheti Nagri from some other source.

4.5.7.1 On preferences to learn Sylheti and Bangla

The third question on preferences to learn the two varieties was asked to understand the community’s feelings towards one language in relation to and as an alternative to the other. Responses are shown in Table 4.19.

If there was a choice between learning Sylheti Nagri and Bangla what would you prefer ?		
	Adults	Children
Only Sylheti Nagri		
Only Bangla	1	
Both - Sylheti Nagri and Bangla	12	6
Neither Sylheti Nagri nor Bangla		
Did not respond	3	2
Total N	16	8

Table 4.19 On preferences to learn Sylheti Nagri and Bangla.

Responses reveal that most adults and children prefer to learn both Sylheti Nagri and Bangla if they are given the choice. However, it must be understood that most adults (N=15) and children (N=7) have no knowledge of Sylheti Nagri alphabets and numbers. Also motivation to learn Sylheti (Table 4.17) reveals only one adult reported that the most important reason for learning Sylheti was to preserve the language. Most adults and children felt that communication was the most important reason for learning Sylheti and for that purpose literacy in the language is not a requirement. Adults who did not respond to this question had never heard about Sylheti Nagri or its revival. This group did not want to politicise the issue of Sylheti Nagri. As they had discussed the importance of learning Bangla with me they reported that responding to this question was not necessary. The two children who did not respond to this question reported that neither was important for them but they did not want me to record that response. This was primarily because ethnic traditions do not allow younger members of the family to express opinions which contradict those expressed by their elders. In the case of these two children their older siblings were present when the questionnaire was administered and they did not want to be perceived as defiant in presence of their elders especially regarding the sensitive issue of native language.

4.6 Summary

Issues arising from the two pilot surveys reveal that in fieldworker-administered surveys interviewers must have detailed information of the community's socio-historic and socio-cultural background, knowledge of the linguistic situation in the community's country of origin and some degree of proficiency in the language varieties other than the standard language. Questions on language repertoire should not be based on assumptions. Questions have to be structured in such a way that they do not elicit misleading responses. Questions on language use in ethnic communities should include all languages in the community's repertoire by labelling minority languages e.g. Sylheti and Bangla as two separate language varieties. Including all language varieties helps respondents to reflect on the actual use of one variety in relation to another. It should not simply be assumed that any two varieties (e.g. Sylheti and Bangla) are the same, and only the labels are different. Such misleading assumptions can lead to misleading interpretation.

As the family is the primary and central unit of social organisation and only two generations of language users were available in all families it was difficult to get a broader picture of language use. Therefore questions on language use with family should include all members of the family irrespective of whether they lived in that particular household or somewhere else in the UK or in Bangladesh. Piloting revealed that questions based on the number of respondents living in the household were perceived as threatening. In one household there was a young relative seeking asylum and the family did not want to include him as a household member. Based on this experience it was decided that questions on the number of respondents living in the household would not be asked in the main survey.

Questions on language use with friends should have options to distinguish between Sylheti, non-Sylheti Bangladeshi friends and friends from other ethnic groups. LMP (1985: 208) claimed to have kept the importance of 'personal contacts within the linguistic minority, and the role of organised ethnic associations' in mind while framing questions on language use with friends. Although LMP acknowledged that interviewers had pointed out that there

were assumptions made about the social life of the community from a ‘majority viewpoint’, their approach was limited in background information. Their investigation of one of the main linguistic minorities in England was carried out by labelling the language of their interaction as the standard language. Also, they did not take into account other Bangladeshi ethnic groups the community may be interacting with and the different language varieties in contact and use. Background information on the community in York revealed the presence of Bangladeshi migrants largely from Sylhet but also from other areas of Bangladesh. The shortcoming in LMP’s approach shows that questions on language use with friends should include options listing different ethnic groups that the community are in contact with, including ethnic groups within the community’s country of origin.

Responses on where the respondent had spent the first sixteen years were extremely useful in explaining the psychological perceptions of respondents and thus shaping language attitudes of the migrants who had spent a good many years of their life in Bangladesh. Therefore ‘age on arrival in the UK’ was an important variable which explained different views on language attitudes (e.g. status), clarified the relationship between native language and mother-tongue and determined the respondents’ claimed level of proficiency in Bangla. Including claimed levels of proficiency in Bangla and English was a reliable way of measuring which language varieties were understood and used in relation to other languages. However, designing written tests to elicit adult respondents’ actual Bangla or English language ability skills was excluded because the aim of the survey is to investigate the language or language varieties that respondents use and not their actual proficiency in those language skills. Findings from the pilot project revealed that deliberate under-rating of language ability skills was a strategy adopted to avoid official correspondence that they did not intend to deal with. Some respondents confided that by claiming low levels of proficiency in reading and writing skills in English they were able to buy themselves extra time because translating and interpreting services had to be arranged. The process was delayed further if the interpreter was not proficient in Sylheti. Analysis of the pilot surveys revealed that subjective vitality perceptions such as pride in the respondent’s identity or identities, responses to the similarity and dissimilarity between Sylheti and Bangla, the

status attached to the languages and claimed proficiency in Bangla was accounted for by examining the individual's age at arrival in the UK.

From the theoretical constructs used for the framework, the objective, interactional and subjective levels of analysis (Giles et al. 1977, Bourhis et al. 1981, Allard and Landry 1986, Landry and Allard 1994) include variables determining patterns of language use in different domain (Fishman 1965, 1972). The individual's network of linguistic contacts (INLC) is examined in the context of the family, school, out-of-school language classes and friends to identify the type of network each individual develops. The INLC influences the objective and the subjective vitality of the group to the extent that an increase in the use of a particular language variety indicates a positive attitude towards its vitality. The language variety associated with social and economic status is responsible for strengthening its position and contributing towards shift. On the other hand, if forces of the community's core values (Smolicz 1992) become powerful then language maintenance may be inevitable. Different generations of speakers provide a larger picture of the language situation and a clearer explanation of any ideological shifts that may take place.

In the next chapter the methodology for the main survey in the densely populated Sylheti community in Leeds is discussed with reference to the pilot data described in this chapter, the socio-historic and linguistic background of Bangla, migration and patterns of settlement described in the introduction to thesis and the literature overview of fieldwork procedures discussed in chapter 3.

5 Fieldwork procedure and questionnaire design for the survey in Leeds.

5.1 *Introduction*

Background information of the community, literature review of fieldwork strategies and the analysis of the pilot data were the basis on which prerequisites for the investigation in Leeds were defined. As the macro analysis focuses on the social parameters of language behaviour, a variety of factors and different dimensions of data elicitation techniques were employed in both qualitative and quantitative terms. A combination of multi-dimensional qualitative survey procedures such as entry strategies, interviews, participation observation methods, linguistic background and self-presentation of the fieldworker were employed to investigate potential determinants of LMS. 80 adults, 45 secondary school and University students and 38 primary school students were included in the survey.

Background information about the community in Leeds is described in section 5.2. Based on this information, appropriate methods which were adopted for a fieldwork-administered survey are discussed in section 5.3. A description of how the sample was categorised is described in section 5.4. Information on adults and students' place and level of education is discussed in section 5.5. Their age at arrival is described in sections 5.6. A description of the questions based on the evaluation of the LMP (1985), Verma et al.(2001), the pilot questionnaires and the framework defined for the survey is described in section 5.8 and summarised in section 5.9.

5.2 *The community in Leeds*

The area selected for the survey met the description of an ethnic colony in which most human resources required to support such a colony was available and made Britain a less alien place to live in (Ballard 1994:13). Demands of labour industry drew Sylheti migrants into this poor inner-city neighbourhood and chain migration became the starting point for

kinship networks (see section 1.4.2). According to the 2001 census information, distribution across regions reveal that out of 6.98% of all minority ethnic groups 4.36% of Bangladeshis live in Yorkshire and Humber. The percentages of South Asian Ethnic groups in this region comprise of 2.95% Pakistanis, 1.04% Indians and 0.25% Bangladeshis (Office for National Statistics 2001). In the area where the survey was carried out 4.46% of the total population are Bangladeshis (2001 Census of Population). However, the actual percentage may be much higher because not every member of the household are included in the electoral register.

The majority of adults in the Leeds survey came as relatives of those who were already established in Leeds. Many young men and women in the adult sample came as spouses of British-born Sylhetis. The socio-economic characteristics of the communities in York and in Leeds were different. The York respondents were a small dispersed group who were not the original settlers. By contrast, Leeds comprised a densely populated migrant group in their original place of settlement. The community in Leeds lived in a poor inner city area with an infrastructure of Asian shops, travel agencies, minicab services, *halal* butcher, saree and traditional clothes shops, mosques and *madrasahs*. Within the radius of one mile there were three mosques and *madrasahs*, two community centres, one Bangladeshi centre for learning skills and other facilities exclusively for women, a day care nursery and a homework club for children.

Association with community members prior to fieldwork revealed that informal social relationships were almost exclusively within the boundary of their kin-based network. Socialising patterns were quite different from those revealed in the study of other South Asian migrants such as the Chinese community investigated by Li Wei (1994). Unlike the Tyneside Chinese community, social activities were exclusive to the family domain. There were no instances, for example, of meeting acquaintances and friends over dinner or at a coffee shop. Going out meant spending time with parents or in-laws, depending on circumstances and relationship. There were many older women who had never visited any other city since their arrival in the UK more than two decades ago. The need also did not arise as most of their relatives and co-villagers lived in the same street or a few minutes

walking distance from each other. As there were many Asian-owned food shops in the neighbourhood, it was not necessary to maintain links with other neighbourhoods for daily shopping. Because of the density of the community, even Pakistani stores sold Bangladeshi produce especially for the Sylhetis. Most men worked in restaurants. Four among them were 'Indian restaurant' owners. There were only a handful of examples of British-born Sylheti young men working in the supermarket, the post office and a mail order catalogue company. The long working hours at the restaurant left little scope for the men to socialise outside their work and the family. As most women were housewives, family for them constituted their network structure.

In the next section methods of obtaining data from a range of addresses in one geographical area are described. Successful fieldwork in York suggested that the first step towards gaining entry should be premised on building close contacts with the community prior to fieldwork. Developing a close relationship facilitated my status as an insider-participant observer. The opportunity allowed me to observe the social mechanisms and verify the group's characteristic linguistic behaviour.

5.3 Methods

The methods used for the survey were based on an extensive review of literature discussed in chapter 2, field experience from the pilot surveys and ethnographic observations. The use of ethnographic approach is primarily to understand the situational factors that influence language choice and use. Eckert (2000) and Feagin (2002) argue that the only way some aspects of language behaviour can be understood and analysed is through the use of ethnography. Eckert (2000) describes ethnographic fieldwork as being focussed on finding out what is worth sampling. She says that in order to extract key elements of social structure, social practice and social meanings it is important to develop close familiarity with the community under investigation and develop the understanding of the community's view of their social structure, of their own place in that structure and the community's place in the wider world. Ethnographic accounts provide a well-founded background for social analysis of the community under investigation. Analysing her approach used in

Belten High Eckert (2000:74) says that group 'membership is not an either-or matter' but composed of different forms of participation, alliance and comings and goings. Eckert adds that social meanings are dependent on the day-to-day practices of the community and the researcher must have access to these practices. She further adds that observations and interviews are one way of understanding these practices but they must be used in conjunction with the questions appropriate for the community. It is by combining observations and interviews with ongoing ethnography that the researcher can come close to the day-to-day practices of the community. Although ethnography requires the researcher to be swept into someone else's world by suspending one's own judgement and insecurity this is rather difficult in practice. It is also time consuming. Such an endeavour requires a willingness to take on the concerns of another community on a daily basis, often sitting around and just waiting. The end result however, is extremely rewarding and would not have been obtained by other means.

However, it must be noted that the present study is neither an anthropological nor a sociological study. In sociolinguistic literature criticism is made regarding socio-cultural investigation as being outside the competence of descriptive linguists and it is argued that linguists who do not specialise in sociology or anthropology are not in a position to make accurate judgements regarding the sociolinguistic aspects of the observations made. Milroy (1987) argues that in ethnographic approaches there is often the tendency to use taxonomies which are not based on explicit theoretical perspectives and thus makes evaluation and replication difficult. However, Milroy (1980) found that work on the Belfast urban dialect relied to a large extent on the analysis of local norms and values including the categories of stranger and neighbour and insider and outsider.

For the purpose of this study an ethnographic approach was necessary because there is no previous in depth cross generational sociological or anthropological study of language behaviour of Sylheti migrants in diaspora. I also relied on the opportunities of assuming different roles in the community and thus develop familiarity with community members (see section 5.3.1). The description of the Sylheti community's background, their social

structure, traditional and cultural values and on going observations was very useful in understanding their day-to-day language practices.

Finding different roles in the community in addition to sharing a common ethnic and religious background was especially useful for me as it provided the flexibility to visit respondents at any time (see section 5.3.1). Eckert highlights that the best way to meet people is through introductions or being present in some private situation and in time the researcher may work her way through other sections of the population. Ethnographic procedures used in the present survey include finding a role in the community, participating in community activities, being a friend of a friend. These, in addition to my linguistic competence in the native language varieties were of immense value and advantage.

From the researcher-fieldworker's point of view my linguistic competence in Bangla, Sylheti and English remained crucial in developing rapport and identifying native language varieties so that there is no misconception regarding the language varieties used by the group including the direction of inter-generational shift. The importance of my multilingual linguistic background may be further emphasised from an example prior to fieldwork in Leeds. At a community information session for women at the Bangladeshi centre, the non-Sylheti council officer realised the difficulty elderly Bangladeshi women were experiencing trying to understand the tape-recorded message which was supposedly in Sylheti. She could not understand the reasons until I pointed out that the tape was in standard Bangla and not in the regional variety. Misunderstandings of this kind are by no means an exception when the language variety of the community is under-researched and Bangla continues to be regarded as the sacrosanct language of all Bangladeshis and the speakers of Sylheti refer to their language as Bangla.

However, it is important to acknowledge that such language-related misunderstandings do not necessarily imply that only bilingual interviewers from the community can carry out fieldwork successfully in bilingual communities. If bilingualism refers to native standard and English then there is the danger of ignoring the non-standard variety or labelling the non-standard varieties as 'improper' or 'bad' language of people with little or no level of

literacy. Research on communities which have belief systems about their language and have regional languages and dialects in their repertoire (such as Bangladeshis) must ensure that the researcher has a good working knowledge of those language varieties and has accounted for the historic background of those language varieties. Referring to speech communities which have belief systems about their language, Schiffman (1997: 211) says 'these beliefs are part of the social conditions that affect the maintenance and transmission of that language'. For example, Sylheti migrants in diaspora may have brought the high and the low varieties of their native language as a part of their cultural inheritance. That does not mean that both varieties are used by the speakers.

5.3.1 Entry strategies

As this was the first time a cross-generational survey of LMS was undertaken in this community, it was not practical to rely on any single strategy as the basis for gaining entry. Despite my ethnic and linguistic affiliation and fieldwork success in York, additional measures were adopted to ensure that the close-knit and conservative group of people accepted me with as little apprehension as possible and understood what my research was about and my good intentions. Among the possible alternatives considered for reliable and easy access, finding a suitable 'role in the community' (Feagin 2002:26) proved an effective survey procedure for the survey of a densely populated ethnic group.

Several approaches to finding a role in the community were considered. In December 2000, I applied for a part-time teaching position as an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Language) tutor in a well-established Bangladeshi centre in Leeds. The centre, located in an area of dense Sylheti population, provided literacy and other skills and support to Bangladeshi women. Legal and non-legal advice, translating and interpreting services, bill payments, writing applications and making health and other appointments were some of the other services provided. Three social workers, maternity and health nurses, childcare and nursery staff were also employed at the centre. Everyone associated with the centre was highly regarded and had gained the confidence and trust of the community in the many years of their work. The centre was the focal point of the

community and was frequented by nearly all residents in the two decades since it was first established. Fieldwork for the main survey was carried out in this area.

My job also included translating and interpreting from English to Sylheti and Bangla in non-academic sessions such as drug awareness, business co-operative courses, computer and other courses conducted by monolingual English trainers and teachers. I accompanied students on trips and excursions and to social events held by other local organisations. Accompanying them to different formal and informal settings were opportunities to observe the women in different domains and role-relationships in real-life situations. It enabled me to understand their day-to-day formal and informal contexts of language use in different domains and put into perspective their social and language practices rather than those experienced from a house to house survey or simulated situations. Different perspectives provided a comprehensive picture of the setting in which fieldwork was going to be carried out.

Another opportunity of finding a role in the community came from working as an interviewer for the Asian Housing Mobility Project. The survey, carried out by the School of Geography at the University of Leeds, investigated the housing profile of Sylheti and Pakistani residents in the neighbourhood where I was based as the ESOL tutor. My background as a researcher with previous fieldwork experience and proficiency in four languages met the requirements of the interviewer's position. The experience was important both in terms of finding another role in the community and participating in formal training sessions. The training sessions focussed on mock interviews situations identifying the merits and demerits of techniques used. These sessions were important because the Sylheti and the Pakistani groups were known to be insular and previous survey experience revealed that surveys were not encouraged. Thus, training sessions allowed interviewers to examine sensitive issues and discuss methods to pursue smooth conversation and develop strategies for conversational repair and techniques for re-adjustments in case of breakdown in communication.

Interview sessions in the Sylheti households were opportunities to experience the living standards, the degree of modernisation and the home practices of the community prior to fieldwork for the present survey of LMS. Households for the Asian Housing Mobility project were pre-selected. Interviewers were given a list of contacts and had to introduce themselves by knocking on the door. In households in which families were unable to give time for interviews another appointment was made. In this way three attempts were made for each contact address provided in the list if the first two were unsuccessful. However, as I was a familiar person in the neighbourhood because of my job, the first entry was successful and permission was never refused in the Sylheti households that I visited. The experience was encouraging for me because it revealed that gaining access into Sylheti households for my own fieldwork would not be difficult. Also, the contacts added to my existing network of contacts.

Because of my linguistic competence in Urdu, my list of contacts also included a few Pakistani households in the same area. Most Pakistanis living in that area were from Mirpur. The Mirpuris, like the Sylhetis, are Muslims from rural areas with little or no education and came to the UK as labour migrants. Interview opportunities with the Mirpuris were used to compare the attitudes, household structures and the social and religious practices of another Muslim ethnic migrant group from similar socio-economic and literacy background.

In the context of the present study finding a role in the community complemented my insider status which categorised me as a part of the community. Familiarity through my job, linguistic and ethnic affiliation and the personal relationship that had developed with community members over a one year period in Leeds made it easy for community members to accept me as an insider in almost every respect. Although I am not a Sylheti, I was given a very warm welcome by almost all the people that I came into contact with either in relation to my research, the job or at a personal level. In the neighbourhood where the fieldwork was carried out I was known as the Bangladeshi teacher, the translator, *afa*⁶

⁶In standard Bangla, the equivalent term is *apa*.

(kinship term for older sister, also a term of endearment), a friend and the friend of a friend. I was free to call on the families at any time and no appointments were necessary. Discussions carried on over many cups of tea and usually a meal. The regularity of visits and the close relationship that developed helped to minimise the effects of the observer's paradox. By the time I started fieldwork in 2002 almost everyone in the area where I worked knew me or knew of me.

A place in the community allows the researcher to observe both language and culture and helps to see through what Feagin describes as a 'chain-link fence', in which, despite the researcher's ability to see through the issues, there remains a barrier (Feagin 2002: 25-26). Feagin observes that skin colour, class affiliation, speech or education may create a distance between the researcher and the community but these barriers may also act as a protection in some situations. For example, in the surveys of Muslim migrant communities, self-presentation is perceived as an important criterion for entry. However, this criterion does not necessarily have the same effect across ethnic minority groups from similar religious background. In Moffat's (1990) study, the absence of the veil (*purdah*) placed entry restrictions on the Muslim insider co-worker. However, my fieldwork experience in York revealed that despite the animosity revealed in one adult's attitude at no stage of fieldwork were any entry restrictions placed on me for not abiding by *purdah* (see section 3.3.1.2). In this situation my insider-outsider status balanced the effects of self-presentation. Understanding the structure and dynamics and the social mechanisms of Sylheti migrants in diaspora as an insider and outsider was extremely useful in making a balanced judgement of the structure, dynamics and the psychological perceptions of their language.

It is, nevertheless, difficult to generalise or pinpoint which aspects of the insider fieldworker's status can guarantee the most positive responses in ethnic sub-group surveys. Fieldwork in York revealed that the only criterion that gave me an outsider status was my non-Sylheti status. However, the honesty with which adults responded to sensitive information such as under-rating their language ability skills (c.f.p 181) and age-related discrepancies and the warmth with which I was received in almost all households reveal

that the aspects which allowed them to judge me as an insider far outweighed my non-Sylheti outsider status. My insider status, my non-Sylheti outsider status and my background as a researcher helped me to keep an open mind while analysing the respondent's language choices from a socio-historic, socio-political and a socio-psychological perspective. My in-between status allowed the flexibility to interpret linguistic and social behaviour from an insider and an outsider's perspective. This familiarity and the extensive knowledge of the community's social and cultural practices accounts for the reliability of judgements made by me.

Apart from finding a role in the community, the strategy of a 'friend of a friend' was also adopted given the dense and multiplex structure of the community's network (Boissevain 1974, Milroy 1980). Evidence from the pilot surveys and other community-based surveys (Feagin 1979, Milroy 1980, Li Wei 1994, Cukor-Avila 1997, Eckert 2000) revealed that the strategy of gaining access by mentioning the name of a person categorised as an insider was a safe and reliable method. A senior social worker who I had befriended in the course of my one year job at the Bangladeshi centre introduced me to many families in the neighbourhood. This introduction was invaluable especially as she requested the elder and respected members of the community to look after me. In Bangladeshi tradition, entrusting the responsibility of 'looking after someone' imposes a moral and social obligation to help and support the person recommended. Community members were very eager to please the social worker who was highly regarded in the community and the introduction was an asset because it guaranteed my 'good faith' (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 75). I did not encounter any hesitation or apprehension in the households that I visited.

Contacts were also made by asking my students at the Bangladeshi centre to recommend others who may be interested in participating in the survey. This kind of technique is referred to as 'snowball technique' (Milroy and Gordon 2003: 32) in which participants use their social networks to recruit new participants. The technique extends Milroy's 'friend of a friend' concept because the new participant is not approached by an outsider but by a 'friend of a friend'.

Contacts with secondary and primary schools and permission to carry out the survey in four secondary and four primary schools in Leeds was arranged with the help of a reputed Sylheti-speaking Bangla teacher who was the Head of Bangla language in Leeds secondary schools with twenty years of teaching experience. I explained the research objectives and did not encounter any problems in arranging meetings. The school authority and the Bangla teacher were co-operative and very supportive. Interviews, discussions and filling in the questionnaires were done in the Bangla class in which the Bangla teacher was only an observer.

Interviews with the elderly first generation men were arranged at the local community centre which was the focal point for the men and was visited by them on a regular basis. Appointments were made for weekly sessions. This was a good opportunity to familiarise myself with the elderly group and understand the language and identity perceptions of the original migrants before filling in the questionnaires. A Sylheti and a Bangla-speaking community worker were based at the centre to provide translation, interpreting and other services. The community workers seemed enthusiastic about a survey on LMS and volunteered to translate questions into Sylheti for those who had little proficiency in Bangla. The offer was very welcome in terms of saving time and resources. Also, as I was present at each session I could correct any unintentional misinformation or discrepancy that may arise as a result of translating questions. 'Interview protocols' were open-ended at the initial stage. It usually began by asking respondents about the availability of Bangladeshi produce in Leeds and discussing the difficulties I had in locating Asian grocery shops in York. I found this a very effective way of engaging in lengthy conversation leading to a variety of topics such as traditional food items, recipes and traditional clothes. This technique in which respondents were intimately involved resulted in the least self-conscious speech and allowed the conversation to flow naturally reducing the distance between myself and the respondent (Briggs 1986, Hazen 2000, Feagin 2002). Semi-structured interview topics were based on socio-cultural information which revealed the importance attached to ethnic culture and identity symbols and traditional values and religious practices. Issues such as teaching Bangla, marriage, religion and religious activities were a source of engaging discussions and provided crucial insights into

prevailing ethnic customs. Similar to the experience in York, the men were reluctant to discuss their income. Therefore, an income scale was not devised because of reasons similar to those explained in section 4.2.1.

Despite their close kinship ties it was surprising that almost all adults and students were reluctant to discuss the frequency or the details of their social contacts. They did not also elaborate on any aspect of their relationship with kinsmen or friends that they reported they could rely on. It was my impression that families like the community are insular and whatever their reasons were they were definitely not comfortable with these questions. Based on this information at the early stage of fieldwork I decided that questions on network which were designed as a separate questionnaire (Appendix 3a and 4a) would not be administered because a separate questionnaire on details may be perceived as threatening or prying. However, some questions were integrated as part of the language use questionnaire and asked in interviews. For example, Q10 (Appendix 3a, 4a) on socialising was discussed while responses to Q79 (Appendix 3) was recorded. Q4 (Appendix 3a, 4a) regarding asking for help with certain chores around the house was discussed while recording responses for Q65 (Appendix 3). Listing the number of contacts was also excluded, instead only the first person they reported they could rely on was noted down.

Interviews for the Asian Housing Mobility Project in Leeds prior to the fieldwork for the main survey revealed the similarity between two rural-based migrant Muslim communities and their attitudes and life experiences. Similar to the LMP (1985) findings and survey responses in York, respondents were reluctant to answer questions on housing, mortgage, income and the number of people living in the household. They were not comfortable about revealing personal information and felt that surveys were unnecessary. Although I was allowed to record only a few interview sessions, the information gathered was valuable in comparing the attitudes of two ethnic migrant groups from similar socio-economic and religious backgrounds.

Discussions with the first generation migrants revealed that most elderly men had seen me in the area while others knew about me from their wives or daughters-in-law who were my

students at the centre where I taught. When I broached the topic of Sylheti and Bangla in the pre-questionnaire sessions, they were surprised that I chose to discuss Sylheti as different from Bangla. Similar to the initial response on language use in the pilot survey, these men felt that Sylheti and Bangla were the same. Responses to questions on language use and language identity became an open-ended form of a lengthy debate (when it was not designed to be so). Questions on the status and function of Sylheti and Bangla as two separate varieties ended in long discussions of a socio-historic nature often leading to a topic which had no direct relevance to my research.

Despite the interest the two language varieties had generated I had to discontinue these sessions due to time constraints and, more importantly, more than often the community worker answered on behalf of the respondents. Some responses on language use reported by the community worker were clearly based on his impressions and not the respondent's. The community worker's presence at the local community centre was having the effect that I was conscious about avoiding under all circumstances. At this stage, interview sessions were discontinued but were later resumed in the homes of the respondents. Some people from this group were not included in the survey because of the difficulty in arranging a suitable time for interview. Despite constraints in time and in making appointments I made a conscious attempt at all times to record the respondents' responses and not anyone else's. LMP data (see section 3.2.1) and my own survey in York revealed that responses recorded by teachers or by interviewers with institutional status can be misleading especially as there exists a tendency of discriminating against speakers who use non-standard varieties.

Interviews with pupils at the secondary schools were to develop rapport and reduce the distance between the interviewee and myself. Two secondary schools were located in the neighbourhood selected for the survey and two other secondary schools were selected in a neighbourhood with a mixed population of Sylhetis, other Asians, Afro-Caribbean and White British. Schools in two localities were selected to distinguish language behaviour of pupils under the influence of a community-based network as opposed to a mixed network. By virtue of being unfamiliar in the mixed neighbourhood school and from observations made I anticipated an unfriendly hostile behaviour. Also, the introduction as 'a friend of a

friend' or finding a 'role in the community' was not possible because of the time involved in locating someone in that area. However, as a general principle, I visited the schools with mixed population several times to familiarise myself with the Bangla teachers and the students and went into each class at least twice. The teaching assistants at one of the schools knew me from the neighbourhood where I worked. She was helpful and introduced me to the other teachers. I was introduced to the class as a Bangladeshi researcher. The first visits were for discussions and interviews and the second for filling in questionnaires.

Interview experience varied in the four schools that I visited. School pupils in the area selected for the survey knew me because they had seen me in their homes, or in their relatives' homes or at the Bangladeshi centre where after school support and other activity classes were organised. Their conduct and behaviour conformed to the expected social norms of their ethnic culture. However, in one of the mixed schools some pupils' behaviour with the Bangla teacher was not becoming. Despite the teacher's attempts to speak Bangla, the students' attitude and inappropriate and awkward responses compelled him to use phrases and isolated sentences in English and a code-mixed Sylheti and English so that his message would have a meaningful impact on them. The teacher's use of languages clearly demonstrated that students were more comfortable in English and Sylheti. However, in another school only those who came from homes with a background of literacy in Bangla responded to the teacher's questions in Bangla. Although institutional support for Bangla in education reflects the importance of Bangla by including it in the school curriculum, none of the students in the densely populated Sylheti neighbourhood in Leeds where the survey was carried out used it in everyday interaction either with the teacher or amongst themselves. Differences in students' attitude towards Bangla are not influenced by socio-economic factors. For example, even in the findings of the pilot surveys which included students who lived in middle class neighbourhoods and in working class areas it was clear that none of the students used Bangla in everyday interaction with family or friends. Those who claimed to use it with friends used the wrong label for their language of interaction.

5.4 The sample

A distinction was made between adults, students (secondary and university) and primary school students. Identical to the indicators used for the pilot project, the social structure of the group was rural, working class, Muslims. Family and institutional status are taken as indicators of chronological age rather than vice versa (Eckert 1997: 156). Adults were defined on the basis of family status (migrant, married or divorced, employed or retired). Students were defined as adolescents and young adults who were in education, not employed and not married. The group of primary school children were those who attended primary school and the out-of-school Bangla class.

5.4.1 Generation

Different generations of language users in different domains from the same geographic area (rural Sylhet) and same ethnic background constituted the sample. Unlike York, where it was not possible to include three generations of language users, no such difficulty was faced in Leeds. As the original settlement area of the migrants there were three generations of language users in almost all households. As discussed in section 3.4.1, including different generations was important because loyalty to Bangla is hypothesised to be constrained by the older respondents' Bangladeshi national identity and by the respondents' relationship with and age of the interlocutor. Age-related differences in different generations are prime indicators of LMS.

5.4.2 Sex

The ratio of male to female was kept as close as possible to prevent a confounding of gender differences with other distinctions such as gender related language use differences. 46 females and 34 males participated in the adult sample and 23 females and 22 males in the student sample.

5.4.3 Distribution of adult sample

The questionnaire survey was conducted from a sample of 50 households. The adult sample included eighty people ranging from the age of 18 to 75. Since the age of the sample is based on life stage (Eckert 1997), it was not necessary to verify the actual age by locating any historical landmarks. Of the total number (N=80) of respondents, 68 were born in Sylhet and 12 in the UK.

Figure 5.1 reveals that the largest number (13) of respondents were aged 29. The prominent age group is between age 25 and 35 which includes more than half (N=44) the adults in the sample.

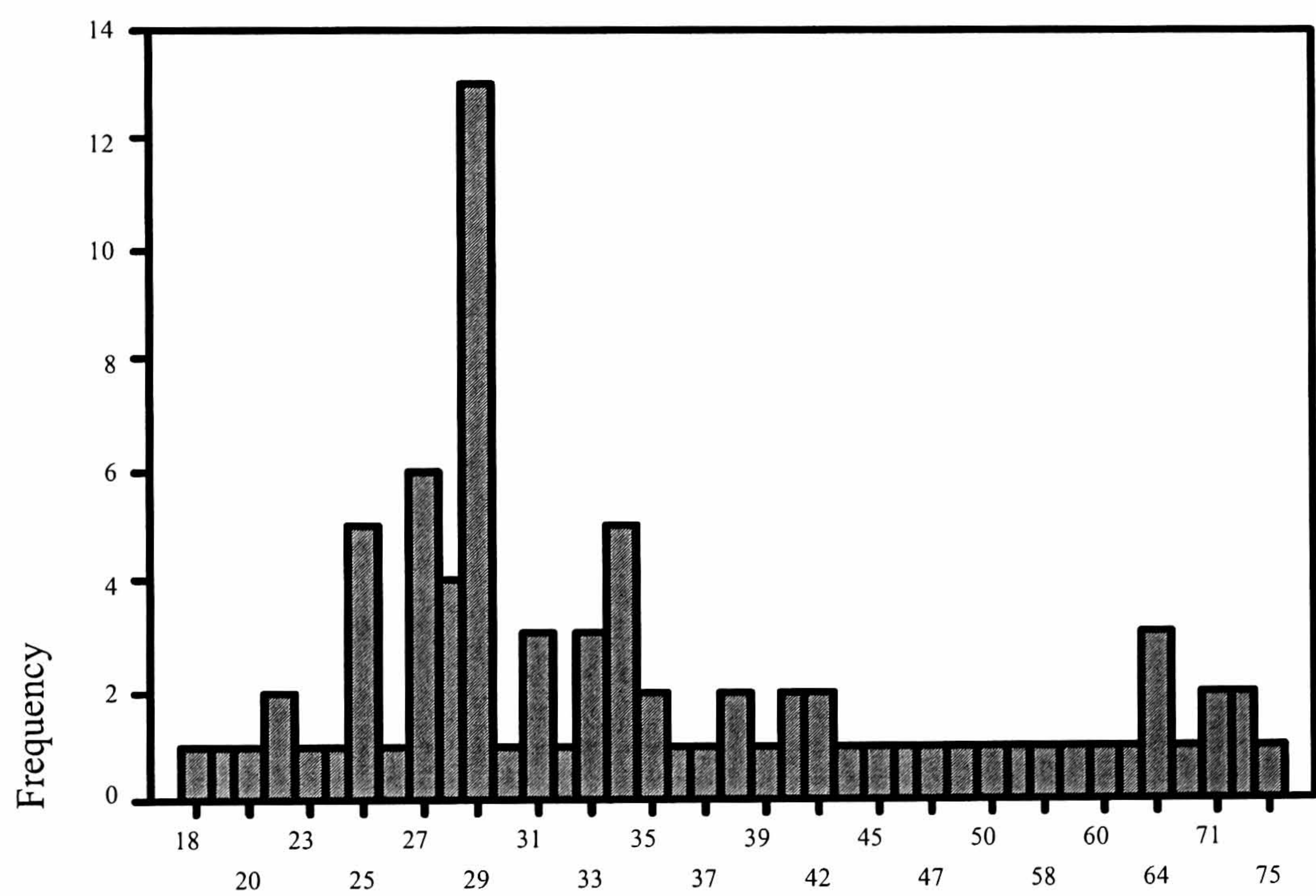


Figure 5.1 Age distribution of adult sample

5.4.4 Distribution of student sample

The student sample included 45 respondents between the ages of 13 and 23. There were 31 students between the age of 13 and 16 and 14 students between the age of 17 and 23. Of

the total number of respondents in the student sample 28 were born in the UK and 17 in Sylhet. Age at arrival of those who were born in Sylhet ranged from one to 17 years.

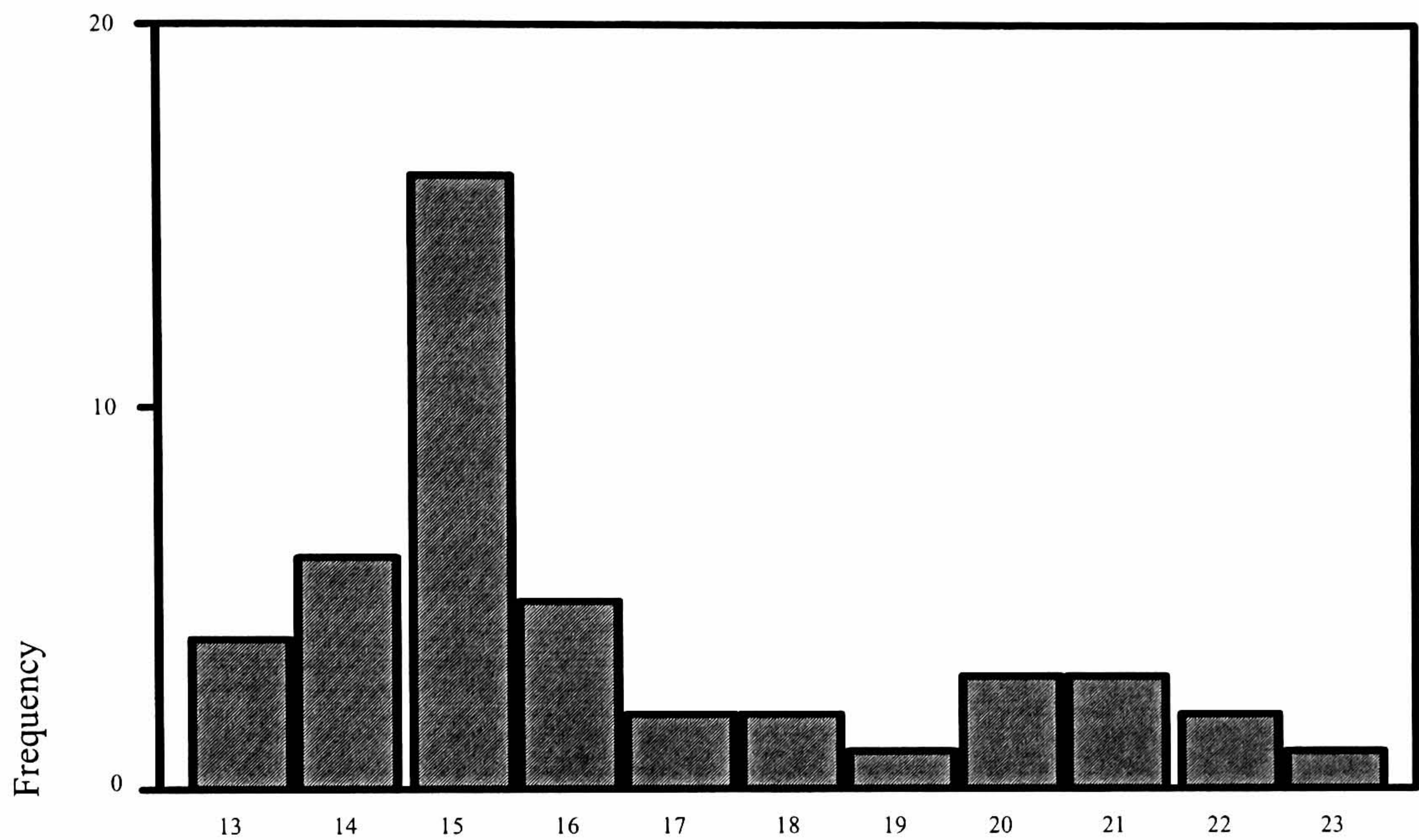


Figure 5.2 Age distribution of student sample

5.4.5 Primary school children

The primary school children sample consisted of 38 students between the ages of eight and 11. All attended out-of-school Bangla classes at the local mosque or the community centre.

5.5 Education

Information about each respondent’s level and place of education is shown in Table 5.1. Underlined numbers highlight the number of respondents who did not attend primary or secondary schools, college or university. The medium of instruction in schools in Sylhet like other parts of Bangladesh is Bangla. Since most adults (N=52) attended primary school it was only natural to expect some degree of proficiency in Bangla language skills. However, it is important to note that it was not possible to make accurate assessments of proficiency levels in Bangla even from among those who claimed to have attended primary school or madrasah in Sylhet. Information in Table 5.1 reveals that of the 28 adults in

secondary education, five attended College in Sylhet and one from among them attended University. The others dropped out of school. Of the 25 who attended secondary school in the UK, 14 continued for A-levels and five were at University. 20 dropped out of school before GCSEs.

	Primary education			Secondary education			College		University	
	Sylhet		UK	Sylhet		UK	Sylhet	UK	Chittagong	UK
Place of education	School	Madrasah		School	Madrasah					
Number of respondents	52	3	20	26	2	25	5	14	1	5
<u>Did not attend</u>	<u>5</u>			<u>27</u>			<u>61</u>		<u>74</u>	
Total N	80			80			80		80	

Table 5.1 Educational profile of the adult sample

35 out of 80 adults come from the rural parts of Sunamganj which has the lowest literacy rate in Sylhet Division (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2000). Census information in the UK reveals that Bangladeshis were more likely to be unqualified and less likely to have degrees (Department of Education and Skills, Labour Force Survey 2001/02 Office for National Statistics).It is not surprising therefore that coming from a background where literacy levels are low, the value for education was not a priority for many respondents interviewed. However, it is important to clarify that low literacy rate does not in any way attribute to social stereotyping of the group.

Information on the students is shown in Table 5.2.

	Primary education		Secondary Education	College		University	
	Sylhet	UK					
Place of education	School	Madrash		Sylhet	UK	Sylhet	UK
Number of respondents	5	1	39	1	44	1	9
Total N	45		45		N=14 (between the age of 17 and 23)		

Table 5.2 Educational profile of the student sample.

All 45 respondents attended primary and secondary school. Most students were educated in the UK. Of the ten college-going students, nine were in college in the UK and one had attended college in Sylhet. Four students were at university in the UK.

5.6 Age at arrival for adults

68 adults were born in Sylhet. Most (43) from among them arrived in the UK between the ages of 15 and 33. Missing values indicate that 12 adults were born in the UK. Age at arrival of adults is shown in

Figure 5.3.

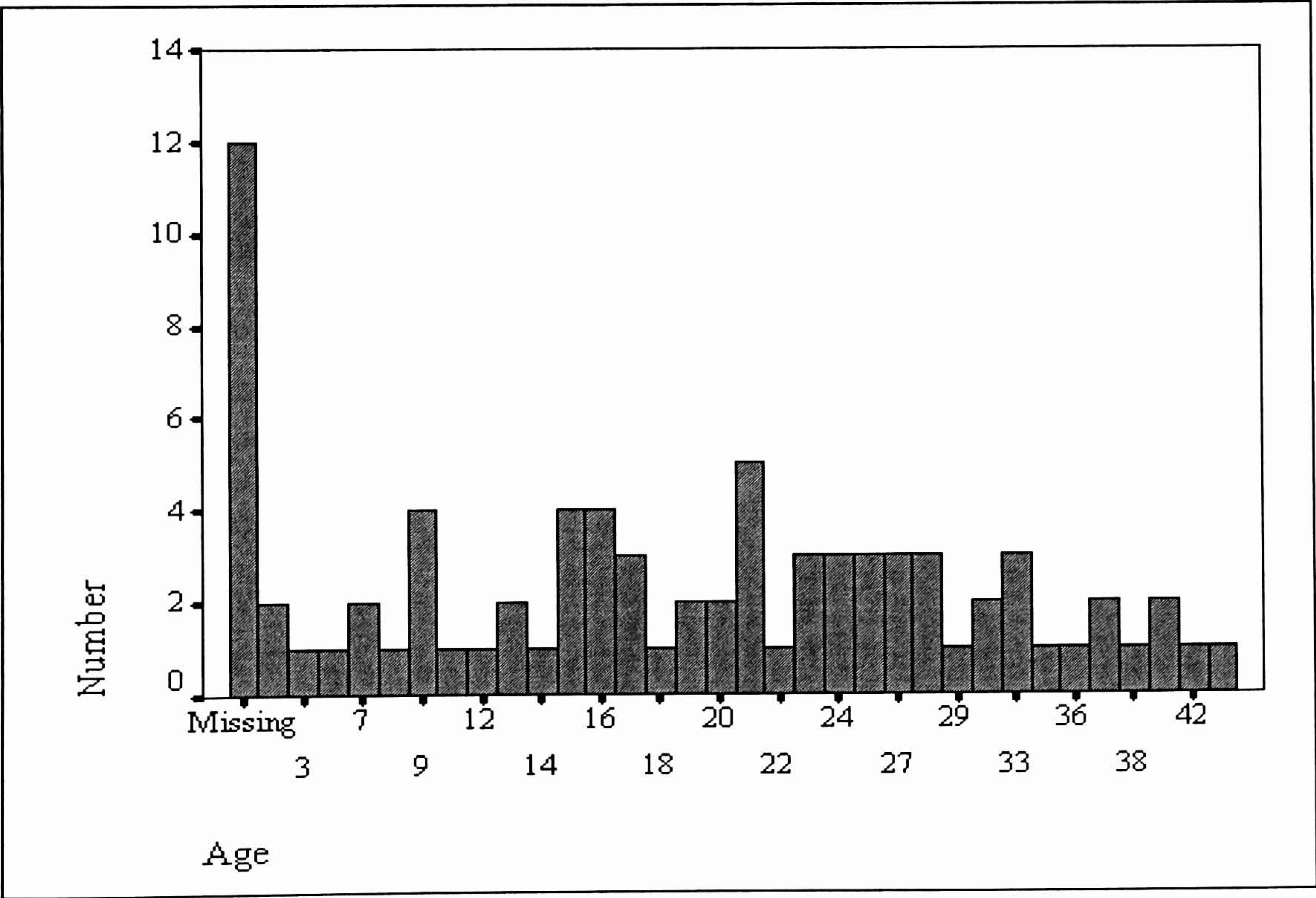


Figure 5.3 Age at arrival for adults

5.7 Age at arrival for students

17 students were born in Sylhet. Their age at arrival ranged between one and 17. Eight students arrived in the UK between the ages of one and three. Four arrived at age 10 and one at age 17. Missing values indicate the number of students who were born in the UK. The student who arrived at age 17 was affected by the 1988 Immigration Act which does not guarantee the entry of dependants into the UK. Many Sylheti wives and children are involved in complicated and expensive legalities regarding entry into the UK (Gardner 1995). Figure 5.4 shows the age at arrival of students. Similar to the adult profile in Figure 5.3, missing values indicate the number of students who were born in the UK.

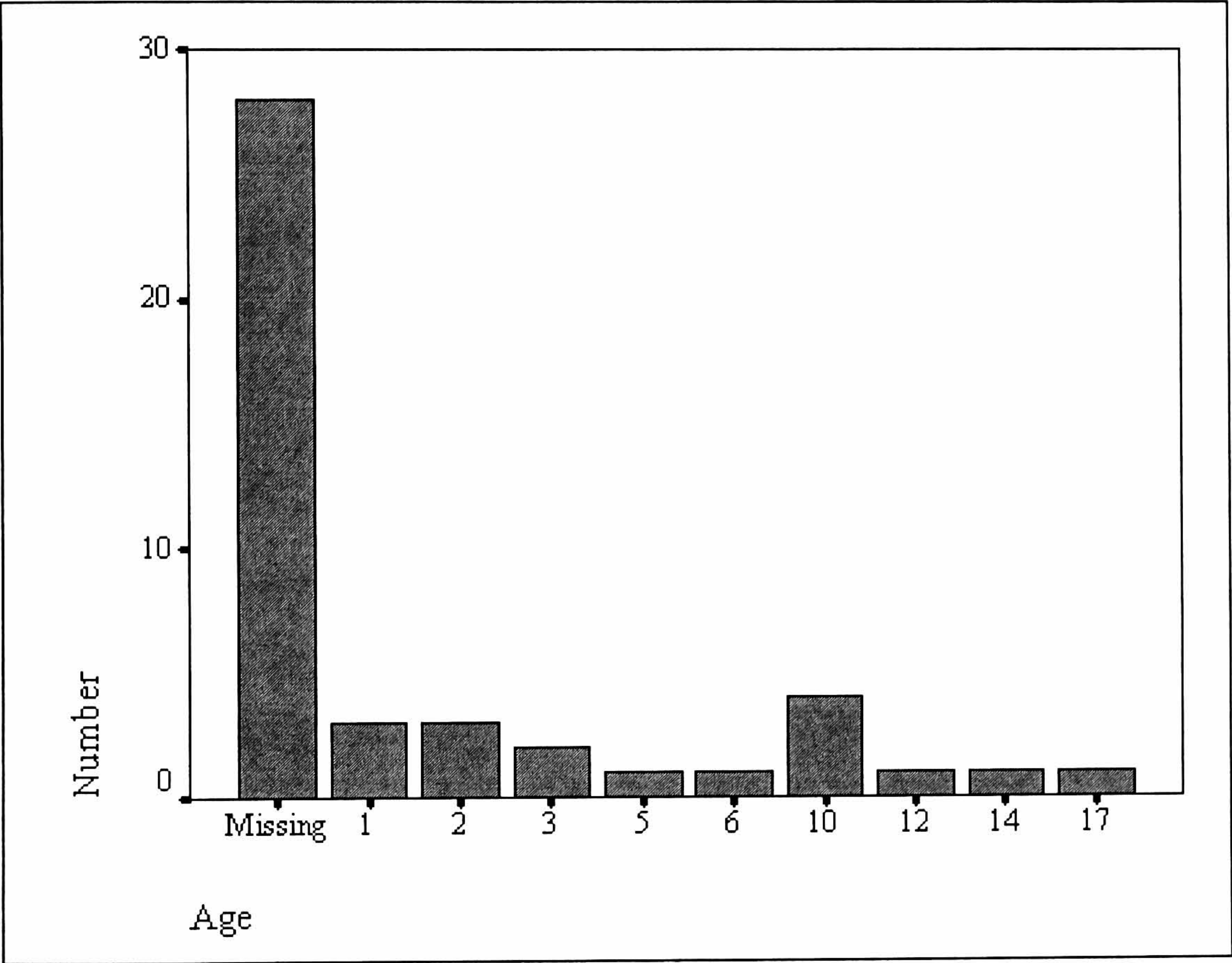


Figure 5.4 Age at arrival for students.

5.8 Tools: Written questionnaires

All questions in the adult and student language use questionnaires (Appendix 3 and 4) are based on the sociological, socio-psychological and psychological levels of descriptions

discussed in section 2.6. The objective, interactional and subjective levels are treated as interacting entities in which there is a two-way relationship between the variables at the different levels. Beginning at the objective level, actual language use and behaviour is analysed via the interactional and subjective variables. Language behaviour is expected to influence a particular type of bilingual development. If language vitality and the individual's network of linguistic contact (INLC) promote the first language or the mother tongue the individual will tend to retain the mother tongue. On the other hand, if language vitality perceptions and INLC promote the use of the second language, the individual may become dominant in the second language to the extent that s/he may be monolingual in the second language (Landry and Allard 1992). Retaining the mother-tongue would result in language maintenance while becoming monolingual in the second language would predict language shift in the community.

Questions from LMP's (1985) ALUS questionnaire were revised and a modified version based on findings of the two pilot surveys in York was framed for adults and students as two separate questionnaires (Appendix 3 and 4). Care was taken in framing questions on language use so that they did not in any way imply linguistic imperialism towards Bangla or devalue the non-standard language Sylheti. Information about where the different languages were learnt, claimed proficiency in language skills and language used in education was elicited from the section on Language Skills and Learning History. Against this background questions on language use in informal and formal domains were asked. Structuring questions on language skills and learning history in the context of language experience in the INLC acts as a bridge between the objective and subjective ethnolinguistic vitality.

Each individual's INLC was examined from the information on language use with family and friends, educational support in L1 and L2 and by analysing the number of adults and students' who watch television, listen to radio programmes, read books in the mother-tongue or the second language. Based on their reluctance to discuss close kinship ties (cf. p 195), network questions were incorporated between questions referring to family and friends. For example, Q10 (Appendix 3a and 4a) on socialising was discussed when the

response for Q79 (Appendix 3) on contexts of acceptability was recorded. Similarly Q4 (Appendix 3a and 4a) which dealt with asking for help around the home was discussed alongside responses reported for Q65 (Appendix 3) which asked for reasons why they felt Leeds was their home. They were also asked during casual discussions and interviews instead of recording responses on a separate questionnaire format. The Primary school children's questionnaire was based on children's perception of language. Responses from their language experience reflected their motivation to learn Bangla. High values associated with any one language variety imply positive appraisals of vitality while low values indicate negative appraisals.

Including questions assessing ethnolinguistic vitality 'beliefs' (section 2.5) was difficult because no information was available for objective comparison purposes. There was no previous study examining EV beliefs and language behaviour, choice of school for children, linguistic experience in school or their networks of linguistic contacts. However, within Landry and Allard's (1994) model used for the current investigation, it was possible to include some questions pertaining to beliefs towards language by including both native languages (Sylheti and Bangla), for example, *How important do you think it is for your children to learn Sylheti and Bangla?*

Questions on belief about norms and rules such as: *Who would you like your children to marry?* and those on the frequency of their visits to the country of origin were included as important expressions of belief. Belief questions analyse the values associated with different domains because beliefs are developed and shaped through the INLC. The framework for the survey was translated into questions in the questionnaire and a sum of all the responses provides the description of language use in the different levels of analysis. Details of the questionnaire designed for the main survey is discussed in sections 5.8.1-5.8.4.

5.8.1 The Adult Language Usage questionnaire (Appendix 3)

The questionnaire was divided into sections which included:

- Personal information
- Language skills and learning history
- Household and community language use
- Children and language (information on home language use, language instruction in the native language, importance of the native languages)
- Language and work
- Language outside home and work
- Personal choice and interests
- Language used in expressing different emotions
- Contexts of acceptability with other ethnic groups and social stereotype
- Network contacts

Questions 1-8 elicited personal information e.g. name, gender, place of birth, year of birth, age at arrival in UK, marital status and occupation. The question on occupation included a category for students just in case there were any married adults in education such as a part-time diploma or certificate course.

Questions 9-13 aimed to develop a language profile based on language learning history, language proficiency and language preference on the basis of language vitality. Questions on language skills and learning history asked which languages were first learned as a child and the country where these language were first spoken, claimed proficiency in Sylheti, Bangla and English language skills including the place and level of education and the medium of instruction. In addition to the two native languages and English, claimed proficiency in Arabic, the language of religion, and Urdu and Hindi to which respondents are exposed through the media of films, television and business (catering suppliers, Asian food and clothes stores) were also included. The aim was to compare the influence of language exposure to intelligibility by investigating if exposure to these languages in UK has any impact on their language behaviour. Responses included were straight forward such as *very well*, *not very well* and *not at all* instead of the options listed in LMP's ALUS questions. Questions 12 and 13 were sequenced to elicit information at different levels of analysis. At the first level, the question asked about the country in which the skills for

Sylheti, Bangla and English were first developed. At the next level it investigated the domains in which these languages were learned. Options included the intimacy-based family domain of home, and the status-based institutional domain of school and mosque. In the context of the UK, options for learning Bangla were based on the domains relevant to the community such as the community centre, private tutor in addition to home school and mosque.

Question 14 was asked to identify the respondent's mother-tongue. This question was framed immediately after the questions on language profile so that respondents were able to reflect on their language experiences and realise that there were two native languages in question. The mother-tongue issue is, of course, significant in defining the ethnolinguistic identity of the Sylhetis. Q 15 elicited language-oriented socio-psychological data by asking how other Bangladeshis identified the language of their interaction. This question was only included in the adult questionnaire because most adults had spent a few or many years in Bangladesh and their chances of interacting with non-Sylheti Bangladeshis was much higher than those of students growing up in a densely populated Sylheti neighbourhood. Question 16 gathered information on the age at which the respondent started to learn English. In migrant communities, exposure to English affects their linguistic perceptions and influences language behaviour.

Questions 17 and 18 investigated household language use. The phenomenon of LMS can be best understood by examining the consistent patterns of language choice and use in different domains among different generations of users. Piloting revealed that family was the primary unit of social organisation. Therefore, it was necessary to examine patterns of language use in the family first and then in the community. A wide range of interlocutors and domains in the family and the community were investigated from the maternal and the paternal side of the family to explore the spoken patterns of language choice in the UK and in Bangladesh. Reciprocal responses were recorded for each respondent. The frequency of language use was elicited from the responses *always*, *sometimes* and *never*.

Question 19 elicited information regarding the respondent's written language use by examining if there was any functional complementarity of literacies such as religious books and personal letters being associated with Bangla and formal or official letters with English.

Question 20 was based on vitality related beliefs (Allard and Landry 1986) which examine relationships between EV beliefs and language behaviour and therefore influence additive and/or subtractive bilingualism (see section 2.6). The relationship between each individual's network of linguistic contacts (INLC) is determined by investigating the individual's interpersonal contact in the domain of education or media. Therefore, importance attached to languages in the educational curriculum was asked by selecting the degree of importance attached to languages (*very important, not very important, don't know*) and by examining the respondent's knowledge and participation in Bangla classes (Q 21-24). Questions 25-27 examined if there were any literacy support in Bangla provided from home. Investigation examined the language used by any member of the household in informal activities such as rhymes and story-telling to transmit Bangla to the next generation of British-Sylheti children.

Question 28 investigated parents' attitudes towards literacy skills in Sylheti and Bangla and English. Language attitude is one way of understanding how language is perceived as a marker of group identity. This was followed by subjective vitality questions (29-38) relating to the community's perception of Sylheti as a language or dialect, its similarity to Bangla and pride in the two native languages. The term dialect was used because asking respondents how they perceived Sylheti and Bangla in terms of status would have yielded inconclusive responses. This is primarily because Bangla's status has never been compared to any of the regional varieties in Bangladesh and this was the first time community members were consciously separating the two native languages in terms of language use. Questions on the knowledge of Sylheti Nagri and availability of texts in Sylheti Nagri were also asked. Questions also investigated the frequency and support given to Bangla and Sylheti in schools and in out-of-school classes.

Questions 39-43 were designed to elicit information on the community's perception of their group's EV by attaching importance to Sylheti, Bangla and English and the type of motivation (integrative and instrumental) respondents have towards learning the two native languages and English. These questions were followed by a question on ethnicity (Q 44) in which different concepts of ethnicity were based on race (Bengali), more generally as an Asian, as a specific ethnocultural group (Sylheti), as a nation (Bangladeshi and/or British), and religion (Muslim) as ethnic group markers. An open option was also provided so that respondents could specify their choice if it was not included in the list of options. This last open option was the category 'Other'.

Questions on language and work (Questions 45 and 46) were asked to understand the importance of knowing Sylheti, Bangla and English and to identify the language used at the workplace with fellow-workers, manager or boss and clients or customers. Language vitality in the domain of work is significant for minority language maintenance. However, questions did not include the number of workers they interacted with because of the sensitivity of this information.

The section on Language outside Home and Work (Questions 47-53) investigated the language use in the domain of the mosque, the community centre, at the youth club, at other non-Bangladeshi organisations at religious sessions, at political sessions, in the shops and with the doctor. The question on language use in the shops was asked to verify if the choice of shops depended on the language respondents could use. Question 54 examined linguistic stereotype. Respondents were asked to rate Sylheti, Bangla and English for attributes such as *pleasant sounding*, *easy to learn*, *literary*, *prestigious* and *useful*.

Question 55 elicited information on ethnolinguistic acculturation by investigating respondents' personal choice and preferences in food, clothes and music. Other questions regarding respondents' exposure to media included (Q 56-61) knowledge of the representation of the two languages in mass media and preference for radio and television programmes in minority languages. Frequency of visits to the country of origin (Q 62), information about what each respondent missed about their country of origin (Q 63), on

attachment with area of settlement and if attachment depended on those who lived in the neighbourhood (Q 64 and 65) including a question to separate Sylhetis from other Bangladeshis were investigated (Q 67). Questions 68-71 examined language use with friends and frequency of visits to friends. Questions on language used for greetings (Q 72-77) were to identify language choice and use within the individual's network of linguistic contact with Bangladeshi elders, peers and friends. Question 78 investigated whether the 'myth of return' still prevailed especially among the first generation migrants and if it had any influence on the second and third generations.

Question 79 evaluated the contexts of acceptability the Sylhetis had towards other ethnolinguistic groups. This open-ended question on ethnic stereotype included preferences for accepting or rejecting individuals from different ethnic and religious background. Contexts of acceptability among different linguistic groups was a concept developed by Lambert (1967) where he has shown how prejudices against people are related to linguistic prejudices. Piloting revealed that the most significant attribute regarding the context of acceptability was related to the issue of marriage. For the Sylhetis, marriage is essentially an intra-group alliance and is therefore an authentic measure of the social distance it can create between the different ethnolinguistic groups. Endogamous marriages are a means to maintain the language and culture of that community and thus can contribute towards language maintenance. Question 80 examined stereotypes such as clothes or appearance in separating Sylhetis from other Bangladeshi or Asian Muslims.

5.8.2 The Student Language Usage Questionnaire (Appendix 4)

The Student Language Usage Questionnaire had eighty-five questions. It included a revised set of family structure questions appropriate for students such as excluding marital status, children and occupation. Questions sequenced in different sections were identical to the Adult Language Usage questionnaire designed to understand the nature and extent of the processes of assimilation in the second and third generation Sylhetis. As a result of excluding the section on language and work, question numbers were different for the same topic in the Adult and Student questionnaire. Additional questions such as their preferences

for television programmes, favourite actors and actresses, favourite sport, pop stars were included to understand the nature and extent of ethnocultural integration. Extra questions on friends and friendship network were to identify each student's network of linguistic contact by eliciting language used with closest friends during informal visits and phone calls.

5.8.3 Network questionnaire

The network questionnaire was a separate section of the Adult and Student Language Usage Questionnaire to examine the identity of the person with whom the speaker regularly interacts. However, as discussed in section 5.3, network questions were integrated as part of the adult and student language usage questionnaires in which only the first response was recorded.

5.8.4 Questionnaire for primary school children (Appendix 5)

The questionnaire for primary school children focused on the perceptions of the youngest group of British-born Sylhetis towards Sylheti, Bangla and English and the reasons they felt it was important for them to learn those languages. The language of the questionnaire was simple and straightforward. It was divided into two sections. Section 1 included personal information and information on the age at which the respondent started attending the Bangla class and the age at which s/he stopped going to these classes. Section 2 elicited information on language attitudes, language preferences, attitude towards code-switching and language dominance. Dimensions of language attitudes considered were: (i) motivation to use the language: (ii) importance attached to the language: (iii) aesthetic evaluation of the language and: (iv) language in which the respondent is able to express her/himself most conveniently. A three point scale (*agree*, *unsure* and *disagree*) was used to measure responses for all questions. Information gathered from the responses have been discussed in the analysis of data in chapter 6.

5.8.5 Questionnaire survey with primary and secondary school teachers in Sylhet (Appendix 6)

In order to fully understand the responses reported by adults born and educated in Sylhet it was necessary to investigate the educational policies and practices in schools in Sylhet. The aim of this questionnaire survey was to gather information on what language(s) is/are actually used in classrooms. In this way objective accounts of language(s) used in formal contexts were compared with subjective experiences. The questionnaire was administered by a Bangla-speaking interviewer among school teachers in Jaintapur, one of the key migrant areas. A Bangla-speaking interviewer was selected on the basis of my fieldwork experience which revealed that shared regional and cultural identity (as a Bangladeshi) and some criterion to label the interviewer as an outsider (e.g. non-Sylheti) is an advantage in ethnic sub-group surveys. The insider-outsider fieldworker has advantages over a complete insider because no obligations conforming to ethnic sub-group values are imposed.

Questions were framed in Bangla. It included personal details and two questions. The first question asked if there was an official guideline for mother-tongue teaching issued by the National School Curriculum and Textbook Board of Bangladesh. The second question asked what the medium of instruction was in the classroom for all subject disciplines. A third question was asked during informal discussions as a way of eliciting information spontaneously rather than a formal interview situation. This precaution was taken because surveys are not very common and the issue of mother-tongue is a sensitive one in Bangladesh. The question aimed to verify if a language variety other than Bangla was used in situations outside regular classes such as explaining concepts with which students were having difficulty. Responses lent insights into the linguistic practices used in and out of classrooms. The National Education Policy (2000) does not issue any guideline regarding the use of mother- tongue(s) in the National Curriculum for schools principally because it is assumed that the mother-tongue of all the Bangladeshis is Bangla.

5.9 Summary

To examine features of LMS, different domains of language use were included to obtain a language profile. Language attitudes, the individual's personal network of linguistic contacts (INLC), subjective ethnolinguistic vitality (SEV) perceptions and each respondent's first and second language skills were investigated as predictors of LMS. To this effect, representation of language in mass media, language used in mosques, community centres and other social organisations, motivations for learning the second language (both Bangla and English) and the pride that they have in their regional and national language identity were investigated. The relationship of language and identity in the socio-historic and socio-political context including the language education in Bangladesh, the language conventionally used as medium of instruction and the literacy tradition were also examined.

Data elicitation techniques included questionnaire-related information supplemented by observations, discussions and a few tape-recorded interviews. As discussed in section 4.6, a language test was not designed because it would not guarantee eliciting actual language ability skills. Also, the aim of the study is to examine each individual's language behaviour not their language ability skills per se. However, a question on claimed proficiency in Sylheti, Bangla and English was included in the main survey questionnaire. Its goal was to separate Sylheti and Bangla as two languages and therefore, allow respondents to compare the levels of proficiency between native languages and English. The information about each respondent's language proficiency was also obtained from the respondents' age at arrival, language use in informal domains and motivations to learn the language.

Each question was analysed using simple descriptive statistics (SPSS 11). Open-ended and semi-structured interviews were conducted with all respondents. The discussions triggered more questions and responses led to a broader perspective of the ethnolinguistic perceptions of the community. However, similar to the experience in York, most respondents were reluctant to be tape recorded. All individuals interviewed were comfortable with the long and sensitive issues discussed and more than often it was

difficult to keep to my schedule. Some respondents were guarded about how much information should be revealed while others gave vent to their feelings. For example, an elderly gentleman confided that he did not allow his sons to pursue higher education because it would make them independent with better jobs and encourage them to move out with their nuclear families. He was content with the present arrangement in which his four sons, their wives and children were cramped in the four-bedroom terraced house that he owned. As different generations lived in the same household, refusal to be tape-recorded was perhaps to avoid expressing opinions in presence of elderly family members. Despite the comfort and ease with which discussions continued with adults and students, only eight students agreed to have their interviews recorded. Taped recorded interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents using a portable tape recorder. Information gathered on language use and other socio-cultural issues are discussed in section 6.1.

All questionnaires were administered by me in person. I explained the aims of the survey and discussed the themes of the questionnaire (Appendix 3 and 4) in details. Responses to questions in Adult language Usage Questionnaire were filled in by me. Sessions were conducted in the same manner as those adopted for the pilot surveys (see section 4.3). Similar to the initial responses reported in York, most respondents reported using Bangla with family and friends. However, translating questions in Bangla revealed their inability to comprehend the questions in their entirety. Therefore, in each household a combination of words and phrases in Sylheti and Bangla and occasional words and phrases in English were used to translate questions and conduct interviews with the elders in the community. This was also a way of reiterating that Sylheti and Bangla were two separate varieties. The strategy worked well. All adult responses were recorded by me in English. All student responses were recorded by the students in my presence. Before asking secondary school students to write the responses I checked with each student to ensure that all questions were understood. I used mainly English with occasional code-mixing between Sylheti, Bangla and English. At the end of each section we took a break to go through the questions often leading to a few minutes of discussion on the topic. The Bangla teacher's presence in secondary school classrooms was merely as an observer. The Questionnaire for Primary School children were filled in by the children as they had no difficulty in reading and

understanding questions in English. I was present during the administration of each questionnaire so that in case of any query or difficulty I could explain and help towards the filling in of the questionnaire.

On the basis of the responses on language use, a language profile was compiled for each student to provide substantial information of the current language situation of the third generation British-born Sylhetis. The language profile of the Sylhetis is based on information gathered on education, language learning history and self-assessed proficiency in native languages, English, language of religion and other languages to which they are exposed through business and trade. Reports on ethnicity and identity and patterns of language use were elicited for ethnic languages and English in the contexts of formal and informal domains. The primary data were drawn from responses to an 80 item questionnaire, designed for adults and 85 item questionnaire for students and from interviews and participant observation methods. Responses to language stereotypes were also elicited from 38 primary school students enrolled in the Bangla after school class at the mosque and the community centre. Information verifying the language used in and out of classrooms in Sylhet was obtained from the questionnaire for school teachers administered in Sylhet, Bangladesh.

Each individual's network of linguistic contacts influences the responses in the social contexts of school, community organisations such as the community centre or the mosque. Language use in different domains reflects the type of linguistic network the young individual has built for him/herself. The type of network (mother-tongue, second language or a mixed network) influences the language behaviour of the child. A mother-tongue network encourages language maintenance while a second language or mixed network is an indication towards processes of language shift. However, it must not be concluded that the categories for LMS are straightforward. A combination of factors such as patterns of language use in the different domains, language attitude and choice, language vitality and 'beliefs' and socio-psychological variables linking language and nationalism, language and culture-specific 'core values' provide a comprehensive understanding of change or stability in the community's language.

This concludes the description of the design and methodology of the current investigation. The next chapter analyses patterns of language use, language attitudes and language perceptions in search for LMS and its underlying mechanisms.

6 Analysis of Leeds survey data

6.1 Introduction

The data described in this chapter is analysed with reference to research questions, questions based on the socio-historic status of Bangla, ethnographic observations, analysis of tape-recorded interview data and the theoretical preliminaries outlined in section 2.10. The analysis also highlights the significance of the methods employed in eliciting responses. The socio-cultural analysis (section 6.1.1) based on ethnographic observations and informal discussion examines the maintenance of cultural and traditional values and norms. The analysis also focuses on any shift that can be mirrored within their cultural and linguistic practices.

6.1.1 Socio-cultural analysis

Ethnographic observations and discussions with participants reveal positive attitudes towards Bangladeshi community norms imported from Sylhet. Similar perceptions of western values and influences echoed from all adults and the majority of students. Despite all children attending local mainstream schools there is little evidence to suggest influences associated with urban or western values. Traditional beliefs and styles in the way respondents' interact with older and younger members of the community, dress norms for girls and women, food habits, observing cultural and religious rituals are very much a part of their everyday life. All households visited were committed to the group's cultural distinctiveness by upholding their moral and religious identity. For example, despite the second generation's educated background and varied life experiences outside the community and in the wider society there is no interference, argument or discontent regarding the traditional and conservative lifestyle that families led. On the group's conservative way of life Sylhet District Gazetteer reports:

The Muslims of Sylhet are orthodox and they are very strict in the performance of their religious rites and festivals. The influence of persons learned in the religious laws such as *maulvis*, *maulanas*⁷, *qaris* and *hafez*⁸ is very great. Due to long established tradition which originated from [sic] the time of Hazrat Shah Jalal the *pirs* and *murshids* of Sylhet district still have a considerable following. (1975: 95, italics in original)

Thus it seems that there has been no change in their cultural beliefs and behaviour even though they have been transplanted from a rural to a highly industrialised liberal western society.

6.1.1.1 Household, family structure and traditional values

All houses share certain common features in the way each room is arranged. The focal point of every house is the kitchen which includes the dining table, chairs and a sofa. The sofa in the kitchens is usually covered with a frilly cotton floral fabric and is the favourite spot for lazing about for the elderly such as the mother or the mother-in-law. Apart from sitting together for meals the kitchen is the centre of most activity. The guests who are relations or from villages in their country of origin also sit in the kitchen for the many cups of tea served while cooking the main meal. Kitchen utensils were almost identical in all houses. A silver-plated tray for serving *paan* (fresh betel leaf) and finely chopped betel nut, tobacco powder or tobacco leaf, *chun* (edible lime paste) and *khoer* (dark brown paste which in combination with the lime paste produces the orangy-red colour) was present on every kitchen table. A plastic bin for spitting betel juice was a must have in all homes because irrespective of age and gender almost all Sylhetis eat *paan* after main meals, tea and at any other time. I also found that most of the homes did not have central heating and it is possible that the warmth of the kitchen is a comfort for the elderly and young alike. What did seem odd was the few families who had bought the council houses that they lived

⁷ Maulvis and maulanas are terms used for Muslim priests.

⁸ Qaris and Hafez are those who learn the Quran by heart.

in for many years did not install central heating even though they were able to afford it. The seating arrangement in the living room was similar in most homes with a map of Bangladesh on the wall, the word 'Allah' carved in Arabic and mounted on a wooden frame, the photograph of the patron saint Hazrat Shah Jalal's grave.

Without any exception all households in the study were large with an average of at least seven people. None of the families visited were nuclear, all were extended and often two or more married sons and their children lived under the same roof as their parents. The Office for National Statistics (2001) reveals that Asians have the largest households and among the Asian ethnic minority groups Bangladeshi households have an average of 4.5 people per household.

In the households studied marriages of second generation British Sylheti men and women were arranged and spouses were from the family's area of origin in rural Sylhet. This is the norm and only in exceptional circumstances do marriages take place outside their own group. Chalmers (1996) says that amongst the third generation Bangladeshis growing up in the UK the significance of language and culture will take a different form than it did for their parents. However, it is marriage that continues to be 'a way of reinforcing the connections between Sylheti society in Britain and Bangladesh' (1996: 5).

The Office for National Statistics (2001) reveals that only 2% of marriages in the Bangladeshi community are inter-ethnic. On rare occasions when marriages take place outside the community they elicit extreme disapproval from the family. Through my contacts I found out that a Sylheti girl who chose to marry an Afro Caribbean was subjected to severe threats and eventually asked to leave the family home if she remained adamant about continuing the relationship. The family severed all ties with her, no one in the area where the family lived ever discussed her because she had defied cultural and religious norms and family values which are an integral part of the community's ethnic distinctiveness. On one of the rare opportunities that I got to discuss the matter with her sister who was a nurse I was rather surprised to find that her educated background did not make any allowance for her sister's conduct. She agreed with the family in their attitude

that if this incident is never mentioned it would be forgotten and eliminate the chances of setting any kind of precedent.

Cohabiting was also an exception in the community. There was only one example of a young British Sylheti man living with a White British girl after his divorce from a girl from rural Sylhet. The couple had an infant daughter. However, most families living in the neighbourhood had a low opinion of this young man and his mother. I was told to be careful of my purse and not to carry any valuables on my visits to their house. This young man who had offended a few times had been in jail for petty crimes. His mother was also not a typical Sylheti woman. She was outgoing, gregarious and loud, smoked heavily and used colloquial English slang generously with almost every utterance. Ironically she was the only female who integrated with other members of the local White British community. On the days when I visited them there was always a White British neighbour having a cup of tea or talking across the street or chatting over a cigarette with the mother. There was no way of verifying if the low opinion that other Sylheti Bangladeshis expressed about this family was based on bad habits or the fact that they were non-conventional and non-traditional Sylhetis who mixed with people outside their community, drank alcohol and the son was living with a White British woman. This young man apparently seemed to have positive views of his westernised way of life. In course of our discussions he was critical of the way women were treated in Sylhet:

Bangladesh is my home and everything. I was born there but I am westernised now. And it's all changing but Sylhet ... it's old. In Sylhet, what they think is - the women stay home and clean and the men go out.

However, his expressions of the way girls such as his step sisters and nieces are treated were contradictory to what he had expressed moments earlier about the way women are treated in Sylhet. Almost immediately after expressing his views on the treatment of women he went on to say:

even the girls are not allowed out which I agree. My step sisters and nieces if they went out and It's my niece and sisters, if someone takes them and brings them back it's okay.

In the light of his background and the views he expressed I asked him how he would feel if a girl from his family was in a relationship with a White English male. His response came as a complete surprise when he very firmly repeated: 'no, then there would be murders, there would be murders'.

In response to whether he felt the same way about his son having a relationship with a White British girl he said:

My mother thinks that my son will marry a Bangali girl but I'm not bothered. If my son comes to me and says dad I like this girl (implying White British) I want to marry her I'll say fair enough son.

From the opinions expressed about girls and boys it would seem that ethnic norms and traditions vary according to gender. However, it must be remembered that this young man's views do not represent those of the community. Discussions with other families unequivocally indicate that traditional and cultural norms of appropriacy do not make any distinctions between male and female members of the community. Roles of men and women continue to be well-defined in upholding the moral and religious values of the group. The role of men as providers and that of woman as the home maker is the preferred way of life.

All the first generation wives in the Sylheti community were housewives and many of them had never ventured outside the area where they lived. Observations revealed that adult women who came as spouses of British-Sylheti men from rural areas of Sylhet were also housewives like their first generation predecessors. Their role was exclusive to the kitchen for preparing freshly cooked meals for all members of the household and as carers for the elderly relatives. Young daughters-in-law were discouraged to work or attend

English language courses. In course of conversation I was able to sense some frustration among the daughters-in-law regarding restrictions placed on them. However, there was no apparent outward expression to show their discontent. In the hierarchical family structure prevalent in the community traditional etiquette is nurtured from early childhood and it prevents expressing an opinion contrary to what is told by an elder member of the family. During discussions about provision available for learning English a young mother in a very guarded manner confided about the intimidating picture of the institute painted by her mother-in-law. This recently arrived spouse was forbidden to attend the local Bangladeshi centre for learning English because she was told that these centres had no respect for traditional values and brainwashed young women about the positive effects of western culture. In such a circumstance even if the daughter-in-law had doubts she would not question the information because traditional values do not allow contradicting elders especially mothers-in-law.

However, no such intimidating picture about the world outside their home was painted for daughters' born or brought up in the UK. Two young girls from the households that I visited were employed as a teaching assistant and a child care worker while another was a nurse. It could therefore be concluded that norms for daughters and daughters-in-law vary as do those between sons and daughters.

6.1.1.2 Views on education

One elderly woman said that often parents encouraged young boys to leave school on or before completion of GCSEs to work in restaurants for extra income. A few second generation men and women were of the opinion that in Bangladesh education is a priority but in the UK it is not. An elderly woman contrasted the school system in the UK with that in Sylhet:

In this country they love children so much that they don't inform parents if something is wrong, if children are not attending regularly. And parents are not aware that their children are hanging around with friends rather

than attending school. She went on to say: In Sylhet, teachers inform parents as soon as a child is absent.

A common perception among many people of Sylheti origin in the UK is that people from regions other than Sylhet have better qualifications than those from Sylhet. This may be because Sylheti migrants in the UK came with little or no education and at the present time the majority enter ethnic businesses for which education beyond schooling is not necessary. A young Sylheti man described his relationship that did not work out between him and a non-Sylheti girl on the basis of their different regional background:

I says to her what do you think if we get married. We went socialising, clubbing and everything but.... she says My family won't accept you because you are Sylheti ... no ... yeah That's the trouble.

Her dad were a barrister in London, her mum were a lawyer and one of her brothers were a C.I.D. ... a police force and her sister were at Uni and she.... studying. She was still studying to become a lawyer.

The young man's mother overheard the conversation and interrupted from a distance telling him that the girl was from Sylhet but the young man shouted back:

No, she was Bangali mum. Dhakkaiyya Bangali⁹.

He then continued: 'her dad ... he goes to me you are not educated. I want someone of my daughter's level'. And finally he went on to say:

In Bangladesh education is a priority but over here it isn't. What it is –is- in Dhaka everyone uses proper English language, no lazy talk. We use slang words.

⁹ The literal meaning of Dhakkaiyya Bangali is a Bengali from the capital Dhaka. In the UK the term 'Dhakkaiyya Bangali' is often used for people who speak Bangla and come from a middle class background.

It should be clarified that opinions on perceived language perceptions expressed by respondents are based on their personal experiences and exposure in the UK and in rural areas from which they originate. Stereotypes about regional language varieties reveal that they go beyond the perceptions attached to languages and dialects. This is primarily because an overwhelming majority of Bangladeshi migrant workforce from Sylhet who came to the UK in the 2nd half of the 20th century and those who continue to arrive as spouses come from rural areas with little or no education. In the next section responses reported for language attitudes and use are analysed within the context of respondents' backgrounds.

6.2 Questionnaire data analysis

Responses to most questions discussed in sections 6.2 - 6.20 are presented in the sequential order of the questionnaire, with some exceptions. For example, the importance of learning Bangla and English (Q 20) is discussed before motivations for learning English (Q 43) so that information on the importance of English is linked to the context of motivations for learning it. Despite differences in the numbering of identical questions in the adult and student questionnaire, reciprocal responses reported by adults and students are shown in the same table in this chapter for the convenience of comparing responses side by side. To avoid confusion between the student group and primary school student discussions in the context of language attitudes towards Sylheti, Bangla and English expressed by primary school student group are reported separately in the following sections in the context of subjective language perceptions. These responses are not compared to student questionnaire responses because they do not represent reciprocal language use.

Similarly, information gathered from primary and secondary school teachers questionnaire have not been included with adults because they were not asked questions on language use and language perception. Information gathered is used to understand Bangla language proficiency of those who have attended primary school. Questions with school teachers in Sylhet were asked to elicit information regarding the medium of formal and informal instruction in classrooms and about official guidelines on the use of mother-tongue.

Questions on adult and student language use with immediate family members aimed to elicit responses from the maternal and paternal side of the family. However, responses revealed that the maternal and paternal side were close relations or from the same village in rural Sylhet. Therefore modifications were made to simplify results without losing any essential information and only one response was tabulated instead of two identical responses. A discussion of self assessed proficiency in languages is described in section 6.2.1.

6.2.1 Claimed proficiency in language skills

The question on claimed proficiency in Sylheti, Bangla and English, Arabic, Urdu and Hindi language skills (Q 10) asked how well the respondents could understand, speak, read and write those languages. Responses for understanding and speaking Sylheti, Bangla and English are illustrated in Tables 6.1 for adults and 6.2 for students.

	Understanding			Speaking			
	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Total N=80
Sylheti	80			80			
Bangla	46	32	2	38	39	3	
English	33	42	5	33	42	5	

Table 6.1 Claimed proficiency of adults: understanding and speaking skills.

Responses in Table 6.1 reveal that adults' categorically claim to understand and speak Sylheti very well. However, student responses shown in Table 6.2 reveal more variation. The majority speak (37) and understand (34) Sylheti very well but there are others who do not understand (11) and speak (8) it very well. The number of adults who could understand and speak Bangla was not categorical. Responses reveal that although 46 adults reported understanding Bangla very well, a reasonably large number (N=32) did not understand it very well and two adults could not understand at all. Similar number of adults reported

speaking it very well (38) and not speaking it very well (39). However, three adults could not speak Bangla at all.

Two adults who reported not understanding and speaking Bangla at all were a 30 year old male who was born in the UK and a 40 year old female who arrived in the UK at age 28 as spouse of a British Sylheti. The third adult unable to speak Bangla at all was a 34 year old male who came to the UK at age three. Responses reported by these three adults cannot be attributed to doubts about labelling native languages because all adult respondents whether born in the UK or not were from rural Sylhet and there was no one in the sample who could not speak their home language Sylheti.

It must be remembered that many adults in this group have come to the UK as spouses of British Sylhetis from rural areas of Sylhet. Therefore it is not unlikely that some in this group have had no education and/or limited exposure to Bangla in their area of origin. Also, it is possible that participants in the survey like all other Bangladeshis have been brought up to believe that the mother-tongue of all Bangladeshis is Bangla. Thus the inclusion of Sylheti as a separate language variety in the list of option may have caused some confusion in their minds. It may be recalled that many first generation migrants were surprised when I discussed Sylheti and Bangla as two separate language varieties because they felt that both Sylheti and Bangla were the same (c.f. p195).

On the other hand, 13 students spoke Bangla very well compared to 24 students who reported speaking it not very well (see Table 6.2). It was surprising to note that despite all students attending Bangla language class eight students could not speak and three could not understand Bangla at all.

	Understanding			Speaking			
	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Total N=45
Sylheti	34	11		37	8		
Bangla	15	27	3	13	24	8	
English	42	3		42	3		

Table 6.2 Claimed proficiency of students’ understanding and speaking skills.

Student questionnaire responses which reveal their inability to understand or speak Bangla are unexpected because all students were learning Bangla in secondary schools and many attended Bangla classes at the community centre. However, the information provided may be true to a large extent because exposure to Bangla was limited to Bangla language classroom only. Bangla language exposure through the media was also limited because of their personal preferences for languages. Evidence reveals that the majority of students preferred English language television programmes and a large group of students never watched Bangla language programmes (see Table 6.30). Observations and responses reported between Bangla teacher and respondent reveal that the three dominant languages used in the Bangla class are Sylheti and English, only English and only Sylheti (see Table 6.18).

Information gathered from primary and secondary school teachers’ questionnaire in Sylhet (Appendix 6) revealed that most teachers used Sylheti alongside Bangla in school. However, they also recognised that a clear-cut distinction was never made in classroom discourse and they may have used more Sylheti than Bangla especially as there was no official instruction regarding the use of native language varieties other than Bangla.

Claimed ability to understand and speak English revealed that most adults (N=42) could neither understand nor speak English very well. This is not unexpected considering that 68 adults were born in rural Sylhet and most of the 43 adults who arrived in the UK between the ages of 15 and 33 were unskilled. As a result employment opportunities for most

unskilled migrants have been restricted to the restaurant and catering business. Most new member of the migrant community by virtue of chain migration and patterns of settlement (see section 1.4.3) enter ethnic businesses. Involvement in ethnic businesses does not necessarily require good proficiency in understanding and speaking English. As such there isn't a pressing need to learn English. However, in the course of their stay in the UK despite adults' low levels of education in English, exposure to English from the environment and the media in the UK contributes towards some understanding of English.

On the other hand, student responses which reveal their understanding and speaking proficiency in English (see Table 6.2) conform to their linguistic experiences in the domain of education and linguistic practices in the domain of friendship. Responses reveal that students are more proficient in understanding and speaking English (N=42) and Sylheti (N=34) than Bangla. Results from Tables 6.1 and 6.2 reveal that adults are most proficient in Sylheti while students are most proficient in English. Therefore the two dominant languages for everyday interaction in the speech repertoire of the Sylhetis must be Sylheti and English.

Responses for reading and writing the three language skills for adults are shown in Table 6.3.

	Reading			Writing			
	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Total N=80
Sylheti	2	1	77	1	2	77	
Bangla	36	32	12	30	36	14	
English	30	29	21	29	31	20	

Table 6.3 Claimed proficiency of adults' reading and writing skills.

It must be recalled that the written form of Sylheti (Sylheti Nagri) does not exist at the present time (see section 1.8). Therefore, the majority of adults who reported that they

cannot read or write Sylheti is consistent with this information. Students, however, were presumably confused since a large number claim to be able to read (17) and write (16) Sylheti (see Table 6.3). Those who did not respond to this question reported that they were confused because they referred to the language of their interpersonal discourse as Bangla.

The three adults who claimed to read and write Sylheti (Table 6.3) were women in their late twenties. Two were born in UK and the third, 27 year old, who arrived in the UK at age 13 was born in 1975. It is highly unlikely that any of these three women would have had any exposure to Sylheti Nagri, or could read or write it because it has been in decline since long before 1971. Therefore it remains unclear why these three women reported high levels of proficiency in reading and writing skills in Sylheti unless they were of the opinion that Sylheti and Bangla are the same. Their response also suggests confusion between Sylheti and Bangla.

In the adult group there was one elderly female who reported having vivid recollections of folk literature which was narrated to her in Sylheti by her mother and grandmother. However, she was not able to read it. The claim made by 77 adults who cannot read or write it is consistent with the fact that Sylheti Nagri has been in decline since the early part of the 20th century and has not been re-introduced as a script (Bangladesh District Gazetteers 1975, Chalmers 1996). The movement for the revival of Sylheti Nagri was initiated in the UK very recently but the possibility of literacy in it at the present time is remote. It is furthermore unlikely to read and write Sylheti and mean Bangla because of the differences between the scripts.

Responses to reading and writing Bangla reveal that adult respondents consider themselves to be less proficient in their ability to read and write Bangla than their ability to speak and understand it (see Table 6.3). This result is consistent when cross checked with their educational background which reveals low levels of literacy in Bangla. Reading ability requires the knowledge of receptive written competence which can only be acquired through formal learning while understanding relates to receptive oral competence. However, student responses to reading and writing Bangla revealed that despite all students

learning Bangla in school eight students could not read and 13 students could not write it (see Table 6.4). Confusion between Sylheti and Bangla is a recurring issue. Since there is no evidence of texts available in Sylheti for reading purposes students who reported reading and writing it very well may also have meant Bangla when referring to Sylheti.

	Reading				Writing				
	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Did not respond	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Did not respond	Total N=45
Sylheti	10	7	23	5	10	6	24	5	
Bangla	16	20	8	1	15	16	13	1	
English	42	3			42	3			

Table 6.4 Claimed proficiency of students’ reading and writing skills.

Responses for reading and writing skills in English were high as expected. Exposure to English as the medium of education, the media and the environment has an obvious influence on all students. However, responses from Table 6.3 show that compared to students there were many adults who were unable to read or write English. Similar to the explanation for Bangla, reading and writing requires formal learning which most adults do not have.

Responses reported for Arabic, Urdu and Hindi understanding and speaking skills by adults are shown in Table 6.5 and reading and writing skills in Table 6.6.

	Understanding			Speaking			Total N=80
	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	
Arabic	2	1	77	2	1	77	
Urdu	8	49	23	6	46	28	
Hindi	7	57	16	5	51	24	

Table 6.5 Adults’ claimed proficiency in Arabic, Urdu and Hindi understanding and speaking skills.

Responses in Table 6.5 reveal that as expected most adults are unable to understand or speak Arabic despite its religious significance in the lives of community members. By contrast, more than 50% of adults have some proficiency in understanding and speaking Urdu and Hindi. This is largely because all Asian food and clothes stores in the neighbourhood where the survey was carried out were owned by Pakistanis and Indians. Even though adults may not be able to distinguish between Urdu and Hindi, exposure through Bollywood films, television, CDs and audio cassettes enable them to understand common words and communicate in those languages. Also, there are many Pakistani families of similar background living in the neighbourhood where the survey was carried out. Therefore it is no surprise that a mixed Hindi-Urdu lingua franca has developed to enable ethnocultural migrants of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian origin to communicate with each other.

Responses reported for reading and writing in Table 6.6 are consistent with the information gathered that most adults can read Arabic but not Urdu or Hindi. Responses for writing Arabic are also consistent with the fact that Muslims from non-Arabic speaking countries can read the Quran in Arabic but are not able to write, speak or understand it.

Only one 38 year old male claimed reading and writing Urdu very well. Information gathered about his education and the place where language learning skills were developed revealed that he was educated in the *madrasah* system in Sylhet. However, it is unlikely that after 1971 Urdu continued to be part of the *madrasah* curriculum (see section 1.5). In 1971, this respondent was seven years of age and his early recollections of the similarity between Urdu and Arabic consonants and the use of diacritics to indicate short and long vowels in both languages may lead him to believe in his ability to read and write Urdu very well. However, the claim was not verified because it was not necessary to do so.

	Reading			Writing			
	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Total N=80
Arabic	57	11	12	2		78	
Urdu	1	1	78	1		79	
Hindi			80			80	

Table 6.6 Adults’ claimed proficiency in Arabic, Urdu and Hindi reading and writing skills.

Student responses to understanding and speaking and reading and writing Arabic, Urdu and Hindi are shown in Tables 6.7 and 6.8. Similar to adult responses, students’ responses reveal that most students cannot understand or speak Arabic, Urdu or Hindi. There was a small group who did not respond to this question. Five were born in Leeds. They were between 15 and 20 years of age and their network of linguistic contact consisted of friends outside their community. Their friendship network was different from the other students’. They did not attend the local mosque. Discussions with this group revealed that unlike the majority religion did not play a major part in their lives. However, they were reluctant to discuss the issue in detail. This was mainly because traditionally their culture nurtures values such as respect for age and authority and obedience towards elders. As I was from their parents’ generation and Muslim, they probably did not wish to elaborate their opinions. At the same time, by not expressing themselves they avoided any controversy and remained loyal to their commitments.

	Understanding				Speaking			
	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Did not respond	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Did not respond
Arabic	1	5	33	6	2	3	34	6
Urdu	3	12	23	7	3	5	31	6
Hindi	6	9	23	7	3	9	26	7

Table 6.7 Students’ claimed proficiency in understanding and speaking skills in Arabic, Urdu and Hindi.

Students’ reading and writing skills in the same languages are reported in Table 6.8 below.

	Reading				Writing				
	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Did not respond	Very well	Not very well	Not at all	Did not respond	
Arabic	24	8	7	1	1	7	31	6	Total N=45
Urdu	1	1	36	7	1		37	7	
Hindi			38	7			38	7	

Table 6.8 Students’ claimed proficiency in reading and writing skills in Arabic, Urdu and Hindi.

However, responses on reading and writing skills in these three languages reveal that the majority of students (24) are able to read Arabic very well but most are not able to write it at all. Most students are not able to read or write Urdu and Hindi either. One student who reported reading and writing Urdu very well was a 22 year old male who was in the final year of his first degree at Bradford University. He arrived in the UK as a toddler (age two) and explicitly expressed that he was not influenced by western values propagated through the media and considered watching television or listening to music un-Islamic. He also claimed to know about books in Sylheti Nagri. However, he did not feel strongly about associating with either a Bengali or a Sylheti identity and thought of himself first and foremost as a Muslim. It is unlikely that this respondent would learn to read or write Urdu for any practical purpose. However, his views probably associate Urdu with a Muslim identity or he may have confused the Perso-Arabic script with the Arabic script because of their similarity.

Variation in adult and student responses regarding their claimed proficiency in Bangla suggests that although exposure to Bangla is limited in the UK, the socio-historic status of Bangla and the socio-psychological perceptions continue to be influential intervening factors by attaching high values and positive responses towards Bangla. However, claimed proficiency in reading and writing skills in Sylheti signal the confusion between Sylheti and Bangla. Claimed proficiency in Bangla and Sylheti will be clearly understood after examining other responses such as those reported for mother-tongue and patterns of

language use in the familial domestic environment. By establishing the mother-tongue network of the respondents, each individual's network of linguistic contacts (INLC) is determined. If socio-historic status of Bangla competes with Sylheti and Bangla is maintained in the speech repertoire of the second generation British-born Sylhetis then there will be Sylheti-Bangla bilinguals and in course of time shift from Sylheti to Bangla will be inevitable.

6.3 On language learning history

A language profile was developed for each respondent because there was limited information available on the Sylhetis for objective comparison purposes. Because language proficiency in Bangla was not tested, information gathered from language learning history was used to cross check responses reported for claimed proficiency in Bangla oral skills. The question on language learning history (Q 12, Appendix 3; Q9, Appendix 4) asked about the country in which the respondent first spoke Sylheti, Bangla and English. It must be mentioned that learning and acquiring are used as general and not technical terms proposed by Krashen (1982). However, in the analysis of data learning has been used for Bangla and acquiring for Sylheti.

	Sylheti		Bangla		English	
	Adults	Students	Adults	Students	Adults	Students
Bangladesh	64	13	62	7	16	2
UK	14	31	16	35	43	42
Bangladesh and UK		1	1	3	14	1
Did not respond	2		1		7	
Total N	80	45	80	45	80	45

Table 6.9 Country where respondents first spoke Sylheti, Bangla and English.

Responses shown in Table 6.9 reveal that most adults first spoke Sylheti and Bangla in Bangladesh and English in the UK while most students spoke Sylheti, Bangla and English in the UK.

The next level of language learning history identified the domains in which Bangla oral skills were first developed (Q 13, Appendix 3; Q 10, Appendix 4). This information was elicited from students because not all students were born in the UK. Of the 17 students born in Sylhet, six arrived in the UK between the ages of 10 and 17 and were therefore expected to have developed some proficiency in Bangla spoken skills. In the question both formal and informal domains were included in the context of Bangladesh and the UK. For example, home, school, mosque/*madrasah* and other were common options for spoken language skills learnt in Bangladesh and in the UK. Community centres and private tutoring were added to the list of options available in the UK.

When responses reported in Table 6.9 are compared to those reported on where spoken Bangla skills were developed in Bangladesh (Table 6.10), a description contradicting adults' self-reported educational history and claimed proficiency in Bangla speaking skills is revealed. Adult responses reported in Table 6.10 which reveal that 38 adults had no formal education in Bangla is not consistent with the information on education provided by adults. Information in Table 5.1 reveals that only five adults reported not attending primary school and 27 reported not attending secondary school. It is therefore difficult to ascertain which information should be taken as accurate. If the information in Table 6.10 is taken as correct then it means that nearly 50% of adults have no literacy in Bangla.

Domain in which Bangla spoken skills were developed in Bangladesh	Adults	Students
Home	5	5
School	34	9
Mosque or Madrasah	3	
Had no formal education in Bangla	38	
Domain in which Bangla spoken skills were developed in the UK		
Community centre language sessions		
Private tutoring		
Home and school		15
Mosque and home		5
School and mosque		1
School and community centre		10
Total N	80	45

Table 6.10 Place where Bangla language skills were learnt.

Student responses from Table 6.10 reveal that only a few students (5) learnt Bangla at home while nine learnt it in school in Bangladesh. In the UK, home, school community centres and mosques are the domains where Bangla language skills are learnt by students. Unlike the practice in York, engaging a private tutor was not necessary in Leeds because Bangla was taught in secondary schools as part of the school curriculum and at the community centre and the mosque. There were no problems regarding transport and distance as both the mosque and the community centre were situated in the neighbourhood.

Similar to the discrepancies in adult responses, there were eight students who claimed that they could not speak Bangla at all (see Table 6.2) but student responses from Table 6.10 reveal that all students had developed spoken skills in Bangla. These contradictions emphasise the necessity of designing language tests. Piloting in York did not recommend a written language proficiency test because the aim of the survey was to investigate the

languages or language varieties used and also because designing a test was much beyond the scope of this study. However, language proficiency tests in the native languages seem to be the only alternative for eliciting actual language proficiency.

6.4 On mother tongue

The question on mother tongue (Q 14) examined each respondent's perception of mother tongue as a marker of identity. The question separated the native regional language variety from the native national language as potential mother-tongue(s). The question was placed immediately after the question on the domain in which Bangla skills were developed so that respondents were able to reflect and identify the domain where Bangla was learned and Sylheti was acquired. Adult and student responses are shown in Table 6.11.

Languages	Adults	Students
Sylheti	66	25
Bangla	11	14
English		1
Sylheti & Bangla	3	5
Did not respond		5
Total N	80	45

Table 6.11 Language identified as mother tongue

Responses reveal that most adults and more than 50% students consider Sylheti as their mother-tongue. More adults give Sylheti responses than students. By contrast Bangla is reported significantly more often by students than adults as their mother-tongue. It was not unexpected to find adults (11) claiming Bangla as mother-tongue since some adults would have knowledge about the socio-historic and socio-political significance of Bangla. Background information revealed that these responses were reported by adults between the ages of 21 and 58. Eight in this group arrived in the UK between the ages of 17 and 33 and

it is very likely that they know of Bangla's socio-historic past. However, responses reported by the other two who arrived at ages 8 and 9 and one respondent who was born in the UK is best explained in terms of elevating the status of Bangla in their adopted country rather than learning about Bangla's socio-political background.

The fact that more students than adults claimed Bangla as their mother-tongue was surprising especially when all students were learning Bangla in school and some had exposure to Bangla from watching programmes on television in the UK (see section 6.13). Watching Bangla programmes on television does not necessarily imply that these students wanted to share the cultural passions of their elders. Hannerz (1992) argues that transnational cultural flows are in the eyes of those who watch them because we know very little about what one actually perceives. However, when responses about mother-tongue were compared to language(s) preferred by students in media (television) for example, it was found that most students preferred English language television programmes because they confirmed they had no difficulty understanding the language. It seems illogical that Bangla which is claimed as mother-tongue is less preferred and understood than the language of the host community. Identifying with Bangla is one way of historically associating with the national mother-tongue. On the cultural significance of language to identity, Fishman (1991:7) acknowledges:

a preferred, historically associated mother tongue has a role in the process of individual and aggregative self-definition and self-realisation, not merely as a myth (i.e., as a verity whose objective truth is less important than its subjective truth) but also as a genuine identificational and motivational desideratum in the ethnocultural realm.

Bangla was reported as the mother-tongue by adults (11) and students (14) but its use was not attested from the responses reported in the family domain (see section 6.6). Reciprocal responses on household language use among different members of the immediate and extended family were compared to corroborate responses on mother-tongue (Qs 17 and 18). This method was adopted by the LMP (1985) survey which revealed that language use

in the family and locality influenced mother-tongue retention. Responses reported in the immediate family contradicted the claims made by adults and students about Bangla as mother-tongue. There was no evidence to suggest the use of Bangla with either the immediate or the extended family in the adult sample (see Table 6.13 and Table 6.14). The only reported use of Bangla was with the Bangla teacher (see Table 6.15).

The question on mother-tongue (Q 14) from which a straightforward response was expected turned out to be the most complex. Initial response to this question in Leeds was identical to the initial responses recorded in the pilot survey in York. While it was evident from observations that the community in York and Leeds used Sylheti as the language of interpersonal discourse they reported Bangla as mother-tongue. The inconsistency was detected because of my proficiency in Bangla and Sylheti and more importantly, because the principal strategy used for fieldwork was not to allow linguistic imperialism to overshadow judgements made towards standard and non-standard language varieties. The necessity to record actual language use made it essential to pinpoint kinship terms¹⁰ and everyday words and phrases¹¹ by using them in conversation with respondents. However, as stated earlier (see section 4.3) this strategy was only occasionally used because frequent reminders and repeated mention may have been perceived as an indirect hint imposing that language variety on the respondents by priming their responses. This strategy, however, was essential because it made respondents think about the language and/or language variety they actually used. Any misreporting would have led to misleading assumptions. Because LMP (1985) reported Bangla as the language used by the Sylhetis, all responses were interpreted in terms of Bangla which most respondents did not use. Similar to LMP findings, Lawson and Sachdev's (2004) self-reported data obtained from language diaries and questionnaire survey also revealed high use of Bangla. However, as there were no reported observations it is not possible to know with certainty what languages or language

¹⁰ For example, the Bangla equivalent of meye (daughter) in Sylheti is furi and that of t̥jele (son) is fua. I would often interchange language labels for 'daughter' or 'son'.

¹¹ Some other Bangla words such as ki (what) is χita, kemon kore (how) is χila, χemne; kokhon (when) is χun bela, jukno (dry) is hukail, noŋra (dirty) is χasra in Sylheti.

varieties were actually used. Had the language(s) used by the Sylhetis been identified and labelled accordingly, the discrepancy could have been avoided.

However, it is interesting to observe that a few adults (3) and students (5) reported both Sylheti and Bangla as mother-tongues. Reporting both Sylheti and Bangla as mother-tongues is significant as a potential indicator of Sylheti-Bangla bilingualism. This bilingual activity was investigated in a 'dominance configuration' (Fishman 1964: 35-36) by combining variances in media (written, read and spoken language), role (comprehension and production), situation (formal and informal) and domain (family, employment, education, friendship). Analysis in terms of which language(s) were used in media and their roles in formal and informal domains provided insights into the nature and extent of LMS. Although LMP (1985) findings offered an empirical base for explaining bilingualism as a social process, bilingualism in their terms meant the use of Bangla and English.

Maintenance of two native language varieties is a typical feature of bilingualism in the Indian sub-continent. It is claimed that a distinctive feature of bilingualism in India is its stability. Indian languages are maintained even when they are away from the region where it is dominant (see Pandit 1977, Srivastava 1977). Among the many explanations offered for this phenomenon 'the tolerant pluralistic outlook of the Indian society' (Pandit 1977) and 'the maintenance of the ethnic separateness of home life' (Gumperz and Wilson 1971:151) are the most important. Southworth and Apte (1974) pinpoint that 'ethnic separateness' is more persistent in South Asia than other parts of the world. Sridhar (1988) argues that groups remain separate on the basis of prestige (e.g. the Brahmins), specific occupational identification (e.g. goldsmiths, silk-weavers) or enforced caste separation (e.g. the untouchables).

In Bangladesh, however, different ethnic communities are generally separated on the basis of language. The relationship between Sylheti and Bangla is an example of stable bilingualism in a linguistic environment where Bangla is the high prestige, sacrosanct language perceived as the mother-tongue by all Bangladeshis. The socio-historic and socio-political background of Bangla examined in section 1.5 describes why the ideological and

political passion associated with the term mother-tongue is understood to mean Bangla and none of the other regional or dialectal mother-tongues. The importance of the ideological perception of Bangla in the context of Sylheti migrants lies in the fact that this perception was brought by the migrants into the UK as a part of their cultural baggage. That is perhaps one of the reasons some respondents identified Bangla as their mother-tongue. However, the linguistic description of Sylheti described in section 1.8 clearly indicates that Sylheti deserves to be treated as a language. In the case of diglossic speech communities such as the Bangladeshis, mother-tongue and first language need necessarily not be the same. Regional language varieties such as Sylheti, Noakhalia, Chatgaiyya may be the mother-tongue of their speakers while the first language may be Bangla. Alternatively, education, fluency, proficiency and use of Bangla and the regional varieties in informal and formal domains may serve to indicate both Bangla and the regional variety as the mother tongues of their speakers. This is not a straightforward distinction for the Bangladeshis because the term mother-tongue implies Bangla and no other. The impact of the language-ethnicity-identity link continues to have an influential effect even after more than three decades since Bangla was accorded a national/official language status. Any statement which may compromise the status of Bangla continues to be perceived as a threat to the sanctity of Bangla (see section 1.5). Bangla's predicament is similar to the semantic confluence between *langue maternelle* (mother-language) and *langue-mère* (parent-language) in the sense that the parent or mother language is thought to be pure and 'the offspring are all decadent, or bastards until they become politically legitimised (Tabouret-Keller and Le Page 1985: 252). However, that does not mean that Sylheti does not enjoy a prestige status in the home domain of its speakers and in the Sylheti community.

The response to mother-tongue also reveals unequivocal loyalty towards regional and national languages. Observing the Indian language multilingual situation Pattanayak (1990: ix) says 'Mother tongue is the expression of primary identity and of group solidarity'. However, in the context of the UK, language experience and exposure to Bangla is limited and it is important to stress that although mother-tongue and first language are often quoted in this context they may not be the same in all sociolinguistic situations.

Examining adult responses on mother tongue, the educational experience of schooling in Sylhet offers a good explanation. Respondents who migrated from Sylhet as adults and had formal schooling experience in Sylhet are aware of the similarities and differences between Sylheti and Bangla. They must realise that the language of their interaction is Sylheti. The students, on the other hand, whose school experience is that of the UK and exposure to Bangla is limited, often confuse Sylheti with Bangla. Questions on place of birth and age on arrival reveal that most of the seventeen students in the sample were too young to be in school in Sylhet. Also, it is not necessarily true that all children who arrive in the UK between the ages of five and 17 have been in education in the migrant areas they come from. It should be remembered that migrants from remote rural areas in Sylhet are usually deprived of school and other educational facilities. There is no exposure to Bangla through newspapers or magazines if they are unable to read or write Bangla. Exposure through television is possible for the few who can afford battery-operated television sets because most rural areas do not have electricity. In such situations limited exposure to Bangla further encourages the retention of Sylheti.

The spouse of a 35 year old female who arrived in the UK at the age of 33 reported that she did not have any difficulty communicating with her husband who was not literate in Bangla solely on the basis that both were able to speak Sylheti. A language such as Bangla which is not used in the everyday informal domain can hardly be termed as the mother-tongue of the speakers. It can be argued however, that one could consider a language as the mother tongue but use any other language for interaction in the family. Not everyone need necessarily use the mother-tongue as the language of interaction. Giles and Johnson (1981) and Fishman (1989) argue that languages may be valued aspects of group identity without being spoken by most members of the group.

In the UK mother-tongue maintenance provided by the community schools offer the native standard as there is no literacy in the regional language varieties. From the responses reported it is difficult to confirm the research question that Sylheti and not Bangla is the mother-tongue of the community investigated. However, despite identifying Bangla as mother-tongue, interviews, discussions and observations on patterns of language use (see

section 6.6) with the immediate family do not confirm the claim made by adults and students.

A common assumption is there can be no doubt about proficiency in one's mother tongue. However, in transplanted communities this is not always the case, especially if the mother-tongue is a standard language, not taught in schools, and the language of job opportunities and success, status and prestige is a language like English. Respondents reporting Bangla as mother-tongue may do so in view of the prestige and high status attached to Bangla because in the national and global context, Sylheti occupies its place only after Bangla. Analysis of responses to mother-tongue indicate that the Sylhetis are not a homogeneous speech community and mother-tongue attitudes are linked more with socio-psychological perceptions than actual language use as attested from the data on patterns of language use described in section 6.6. Given the varied responses, it is unlikely that Bangla is the mother-tongue of those who claim it.

6.5 *On how other Bangladeshis identify the language used by Sylhetis in the UK*

The question on what other Bangladeshis in Bangladesh and in the UK refer to the language that Sylhetis speak (Q 15) was asked to elicit socio-psychological data on language identity. This question was included in view of adult responses gathered in the pilot survey with reference to the language they used or spoke. Students were not included to elicit this information because most students were born in the UK while those who were born in Bangladesh had little contact with non-Sylheti Bangladeshis. Since no information regarding the ethnic diversity of the Bangladeshi population was available, the question was framed with the view that in the densely populated Bangladeshi community in Leeds there were Bangladeshis from regions other than Sylhet. However, in course of fieldwork it was found that the area where the survey was carried was a densely populated Sylheti area with no evidence of a non-Sylheti household. Therefore, to adult respondents the term 'Other Bangladeshis' mean the people of Sylhet rather than people from other regions of Bangladesh. Adult responses are shown in Table 6.12.

Other Bangladeshis refer to the language you speak as:	
Sylheti	48
Sylheti Bangla	2
Bangla	28
Did not respond	2
Total N	80

Table 6.12 Adult responses to what other Bangladeshis refer to the language used by Sylhetis.

Responses reported in Table 6.12 reveal a mixed response. Although the majority of adults reported that other Bangladeshis referred to the Sylheti people's language as Sylheti, a reasonably large number (28) also reported that their language was called Bangla and a few reported that it was referred to as Sylheti-Bangla. Responses reported by 28 adults are consistent with the assumption that the language of all Bangladeshis is Bangla. Also, the distinctiveness of Sylheti from Bangla and the loyalty, pride and ideological perceptions that Bangla speakers have towards Bangla would inhibit them to label Sylheti as Bangla. On Sylheti's distinctiveness from Bangla Chalmers states that a leading expert on Bangla dialects argues that Sylheti is hardly intelligible to speakers of other Bangla dialects. Furthermore, he quotes a senior director of the Bangla Academy in Dhaka commenting on Sylheti: 'for that [Sylheti], even we need interpreters!' (Chalmers 1996: 7).

Other explanations for the varied responses include low levels of education and limited exposure which encourages the perception that Sylheti and Bangla are the same with little or no difference between the two and the recurring issue of interchanging language labels. Despite their unequivocal loyalty towards Bangla and Sylheti this was the first time Sylheti has been identified as a separate language variety of a group of Sylheti-Bangladeshis in diaspora. Language vitality is a human construct which is constantly changing. In the context of the UK, Sylheti has more vitality than Bangla on the basis of its demography. May (2001) argues that the assumption that the number of speakers is the key variable in

predicting LMS is to some extent misplaced. Nelde, Strubell and Williams (1996) found that in the 48 minority language groups in the European Union, demographic size of a group did not guarantee its linguistic vitality. The two influential variables identified were low status of the minority groups and their social, cultural and economic marginalisation and the degree to which minority languages were recognised and supported by the host community. However, unlike the minority language groups studied by Nelde et al., (1996) Sylheti has survived as a high vitality language solely on the basis of its demographic vitality. Moreover, in the case of Sylheti migrants, their low status, the enclave effects which contributed to their social and cultural marginalisation and their representation in ethnic businesses are important variables for Sylheti language maintenance. An evaluation of responses such as those associated with mother-tongue and what others called the language the Sylhetis speak reveal high ideological values associated with Bangla. However, there is no evidence of the actual use of Bangla. Therefore it is concluded that socio-historic and the socio-cultural background of interlocutors influences language perceptions but not language use.

In order to separate Sylheti's identity from that of Bangla adults and students were asked how much support was given to Sylheti in education. Adults were asked this question in the context of schools in Sylhet and in the UK while students were asked this question in the context of UK only. Responses reveal that the majority of adults (62; 65) reported that a lot of support was given to Sylheti in Sylhet and in schools in the UK. It remains unclear why such a large group thought that Sylheti was supported in education in Sylhet and in the UK when it was clearly not so. 18 adults did not know if any support was given to Sylheti in Sylhet compared to six adults who reported that no support was given to Sylheti in education in the UK.

Student responses were more varied and confusing. Nearly 50% in the student sample (21) reported that no support was given to Sylheti in schools in the UK. A group of 12 students reported that some support was given and seven students were of the opinion that a lot of support was given to Sylheti in education. Only five students reported that they had no idea if any support was given to Sylheti. Such responses can only signal confusion between

language labels. Confusion regarding the language labels Bangla and Sylheti was a recurrent theme. The following interview with a female nurse reveals the recognition of and also the confusion regarding native language varieties.

But the thing is - I have to say certain other people don't realise the difference between Sylheti and Bangali. I'm happy to use it (Bangla) myself if I had a friend in Bangladesh. Then I have to really do a crash course in Bangali to make it up to scratch. You see with most people they (implying young Sylhetis) don't want to use it. They are going to learn it at ten then going to finish it forget it by twenty. I have I mean I come across Bangali people all the time well Sylheti. I use more Sylheti actually. With non-Sylheti people I say look I speak Sylheti and not standard. If they speak English I speak English but most people I know say yeah I speak Sylheti. If they speak English, I speak English. I come across very few people who speak Bangali.

Despite making a conscious distinction between Sylheti and Bangla, she confuses language labels by referring to Sylheti as Bangali (line 7).

6.6 *Patterns of language use*

Patterns of language use in the household and the community (Qs 17 and 18) investigated language use among members of immediate and extended family and others in the community. Reciprocal adult responses with immediate and extended family members are shown in Table 6.13 and Table 6.14. Reciprocal adult responses with community members such as the priest and Bangla teacher, who have a significant influence on the lives of the people they interact with, are recorded in Table 6.15. In each table reciprocal responses are recorded side by side. Language used by the addressor (i.e. respondent) is recorded in the left-hand column titled 'respondent' and the language used by the addressee is recorded in the column next to the addressor. All addressee responses are underlined for the convenience of comparing responses.

Languages	Respon -dent	<u>Grand- parents</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Father</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Mother</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Spouse</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Child</u>
S	74	<u>75</u>	68	<u>72</u>	67	<u>74</u>	56	<u>55</u>	36	<u>13</u>
B										
E	2		1		1	<u>2</u>	1	<u>1</u>	3	<u>3</u>
S & B	1		2	<u>1</u>	2	<u>1</u>	1			
S & E		<u>2</u>	9	<u>6</u>	9	<u>2</u>	17	<u>18</u>	28	<u>52</u>
B & E										
S, B & E							1		2	<u>1</u>
No response	3	<u>3</u>	1	<u>1</u>	1	<u>1</u>	4	<u>3</u>	11	<u>11</u>
Total N	80									

Table 6.13 Reciprocal adult responses with immediate family.

S=Sylheti, B=Bangla, E=English

Reciprocal responses in Table 6.13 reveal a close correlation between respondent and grandparents, parents and spouse. Sylheti is the dominant language in the family domain. However, it is interesting to note that with spouse the dominant language is Sylheti followed by Sylheti and English. All British-Sylheti wives (i.e. those born or brought up in the UK) who were proficient in English reported using Sylheti and English with their spouse from Sylhet as a strategy to help them learn English. All spouses in the study came as part of the arranged-marriage system from Sylhet, a prevalent practice in the community. For women who come as spouses, learning English is not a priority because most women are housewives and do not work outside the home. UK census data on employment reveals that 78% of Bangladeshi women look after their family or home or the retired or those permanently unable to work (The Office for National Statistics 2001). Male spouses on the other hand require some proficiency in English which is essential for employment and communication with those outside the community. For them English language skills are learnt at home with the support of their British-Sylheti wives.

Reciprocal responses between respondent and child are the most varied. Responses with children reveal that more adults (36) use Sylheti with their children than the children (13)

do with them. However, more children (52) use Sylheti and English with their parents than the parents (28) use with them. It is evident that the younger generation use more Sylheti and English than Sylheti exclusively. Evidence revealing the use of English with mother, spouse and child is significant because despite the very low scores for English, English rather than Bangla or a combination of Bangla and English is used by adults. This kind of language use is indicative of modified norms of behaviour within the informal home domain. Interestingly, despite claims made by adults and students about Bangla as mother-tongue, there is no evidence suggesting the use of Bangla with either the immediate or the extended family in the adult sample.

Responses from Table 6.14 reveal that with uncles and aunts, Sylheti stood out as the prominent language. However, with siblings and cousins Sylheti is the popular language followed closely by a combination of Sylheti and English. These responses reveal that English is also gradually intruding into the extended family domain. A few adults use English exclusively with siblings and cousins. Language used in the home domain reflects increased contacts with each respondent's culture. However, the use of English in the home domain suggests that English is fostered in this domain.

Languages	Respon -dent	<u>Brother</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Sister</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Uncle</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Aunt</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Cousin</u>
S	47	<u>47</u>	48	<u>48</u>	75	<u>75</u>	75	<u>74</u>	50	<u>45</u>
B										
E	6	<u>5</u>	7	<u>5</u>	1		1	<u>1</u>	4	<u>5</u>
S&B	2	<u>1</u>	1	<u>1</u>	1	<u>2</u>	1	<u>2</u>	3	<u>8</u>
S & E	22	<u>24</u>	21	<u>21</u>	1	<u>1</u>	1	<u>1</u>	22	<u>22</u>
B & E										
S, B & E	2	<u>2</u>	2	<u>2</u>	1	<u>1</u>	1	<u>1</u>		
No response	1	<u>1</u>	1	<u>3</u>	1	<u>1</u>	1	<u>1</u>	1	
Total N	80									

Table 6.14 Reciprocal adult responses with extended family members.

S=Sylheti, B=Bangla, E=English.

It must be understood that although domains such as home and family are universal, role-relationships in domains vary from one community to another depending on the sociolinguistic traditions of the community. There is no universal set applicable to all speech communities. Examining language use in particular domains does not necessarily imply that role-relationships¹² are rigidly structured. A father-son relationship can be more rigid than a friend-friend relationship. The same person as a friend may be a work colleague, a shop assistant, a teacher at the local mosque or a customer. Based on context such a person can assume different identities and adapt linguistic behaviour depending on the situation. On the other hand, it is possible that the person may flout the norms of the situation and behave differently.

In Bangladeshi tradition, the family domain nurtures values such as respect for age and authority, obedience and responsibility towards the older members. The hierarchical role-relationships between grandparents and parents and between parents and children are essential features of the community's traditional heritage. The status an individual holds in the hierarchical family structure puts certain obligations on the addressor and the addressee in selecting language for every day interaction. In this way language attitudes and choice in the family play a significant role in shaping language practices. Traditionally, with grandparents and parents the use of the home language (Sylheti) is the conventional practice.

Interviews revealed that some younger adults in the sample distinguished between the language used with their older and younger siblings. With older siblings exclusive use of Sylheti was appropriate whereas with younger siblings it was Sylheti and English and often only English. That ethnic culture has an influential impact on language agrees with the research question which states that a Sylheti person's choice of language is constrained by his/her relationship with and age of the interlocutor. Any situation which reveals change in

¹²Role-relationship is the conventional behaviour expected of a person occupying a social position or category in a particular situation. It should be seen as a set of guidelines rather than rules. However, in some situations the enactment of roles can be governed more by rules and norms than by guidelines.

the use of a particular language identified with a particular interlocutor lends itself to speculate a possible language shift. However, as much as role-relationship and social hierarchy are culture-specific, they may also be challenged through language practices especially among teenagers and adolescents. Evidence of the use of English among siblings in the home domain is similar to Saxena’s (1995) findings on language use between siblings of the Panjabi Hindus in Southall. The younger age group felt most comfortable in English and used it most frequently. The younger generation converged¹³ only towards the elder members of the family by using Panjabi.

Reciprocal responses reported with friends, neighbours and others in Table 6.15 reveal that language used with neighbours is predominantly Sylheti. This is mainly because they live in a densely populated Sylheti neighbourhood. With friends the reported use of Sylheti, Sylheti and English and Sylheti and Bangla suggests that they have friends who are non-Sylheti Bangladeshis.

Languages	Respon- dent	<u>Bdi</u> <u>friends</u>	Respon- dent	<u>Bdi</u> <u>neighbours</u>	Respon- dent	<u>Bangla</u> <u>teacher</u>	Respon- dent	<u>Priest</u>	God
S	40	<u>40</u>	68	<u>71</u>	29	<u>32</u>	75	<u>77</u>	70
B					6	<u>7</u>			
E	6	<u>7</u>	2				2	<u>2</u>	
S & B	17	<u>15</u>	2	<u>2</u>	22	<u>20</u>	1		
S & E	15	<u>15</u>	6	<u>6</u>	9	<u>7</u>			7
B & E					2	<u>2</u>			
S, B & E					7	<u>7</u>	1	<u>1</u>	1
Did not respond	2	<u>3</u>	2	<u>1</u>	5	<u>5</u>	1		2
Total N	80								

Table 6.15 Reciprocal adult responses of language used with friends, acquaintances and God.

S=Sylheti, B=Bangla, E=English. * Bdi = Bangladeshi.

¹³Convergence is defined as a strategy where individuals adapt to each other’s communicative behaviour (Giles and Coupland 1991).

Responses from Table 6.15 which reveal that with the Bangla teacher Sylheti and Sylheti and Bangla are used more than Bangla may be because one of the Bangla teachers at the secondary school was a Sylheti speaker. It is very likely that most parents contact him to discuss school-related issues. However, communication with the non-Sylheti Bangla teacher must be in Bangla because she was not proficient in Sylheti. It may be argued that respondents' limited use of Bangla was because of low levels of proficiency in Bangla. One way of overcoming low levels of proficiency could be mixing Bangla with English but reported evidence suggests that only two adults used Bangla and English while many adults (22) reported using Sylheti and Bangla with the Bangla teacher.

Interviews and discussions with adults did not reveal any use of Bangla. Observing their conversation with Bangladeshi neighbours also did not verify the use of Bangla. Furthermore, the claim made by adults regarding the use of Sylheti and Bangla (17) and Sylheti and English (15) with their Bangladeshi friends suggests that their friends must be of Sylheti origin because Sylheti is intelligible only to those who are of Sylheti origin or have had a good exposure to Sylheti. The fact that no responses were recorded for Bangla and English language with friends suggests that respondents' friends were either non-Sylheti or not proficient in Bangla or English. Therefore, no interaction was carried out using Bangla and English.

Responses also establish that Sylheti is overwhelmingly perceived as appropriate for communication with God. Communication with God is a specialised event. This group of Muslim economic migrants from rural Sylhet believe in a pre-ordained destiny. Any improvement in their status is perceived as a reward and is acknowledged by communicating with God in the mother-tongue. Therefore, the majority using Sylheti in this context was not an unexpected find. However, the use of Sylheti and English by seven adults suggests that in one to one communication in the informal intimate domain these individuals must be as comfortable in English as they are in Sylheti. However, the use of Sylheti and English also reveals that respondents use it in the most private domain because they are most comfortable with these languages especially as all sermons at religious

events and *suras*¹⁴ recited during *namaz*¹⁵ are in Arabic. If Sylheti or Bangla had been the languages of religion then the use of Sylheti and English would indicate a change.

Responses to language use in the household and community with students are recorded in Table 6.16 and Table 6.17. Similar to the tables for adults, all reciprocal responses are recorded side by side. The language(s) used by the addressee have been underlined for easy comparison.

Language	Respon- dent	<u>Grand- parents</u>	Respon- dent	<u>Father</u>	Respon- dent	<u>Mother</u>	Respon- dent	<u>Brother</u>	Respon- dent	<u>Sister</u>
S	41	<u>40</u>	21	<u>32</u>	21	<u>32</u>	2	<u>2</u>	2	<u>2</u>
B	1	<u>1</u>	1	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>				
E						<u>1</u>	27	<u>23</u>	27	<u>23</u>
S& B			1		1		1		1	
S & E			21	<u>11</u>	21	<u>10</u>	14	<u>19</u>	14	<u>19</u>
B & E							1	<u>1</u>	1	<u>1</u>
S, B & E			1	<u>1</u>	1	<u>1</u>				
Did not	3	<u>4</u>			1					
Total N	45									

Table 6.16 Language used by students with immediate and extended family.
S=Sylheti, B=Bangla, E=English.

Similar to responses on language used by adults, most students use Sylheti with grandparents because language behaviour is constrained by traditional norms and Sylheti must be the language grandparents are proficient in. However, language behaviour with parents reveal variation. Both Sylheti and Sylheti and English are used with parents. Similar to the language use pattern of adults (see Table 6.13) more parents (32) use Sylheti with their children than the children (21) use with them. By contrast, more children (21) use

¹⁴ Verses from the Quran.
¹⁵ Prayers

Sylheti and English with their parents than the parents (father =11, mother =10) use with them. With siblings students reported using more English than Sylheti.

Reciprocal language use responses with grandparents, parents and spouse revealed a close correlation, with the exception of language use with child. Instances of Sylheti-Bangla code-mixing was less than Sylheti-English mixing in the immediate family domain than there was in the extended family domain of adults. In the student sample, only one respondent reported using Bangla with grandparents, parents and the aunt and another student used Bangla and English with siblings. A few students reported using Bangla with the priest and Bangla and English with members of their extended family (see Table 6.17 and Table 6.18). However, reported increase in the use of English and Sylheti and English with siblings and among extended family members rather than grandparents or the father suggests that language behaviour varied systematically as a function of domain and relationship with interlocutor. Contrary to these findings, Lawson and Sachdev's (2004) self-reported findings according to interlocutor and role-relationship revealed that Bangla was used the most with older and younger relatives of Sylheti-Bengali origin. They suggest that the very low levels of Sylheti use coupled with the high levels of Bangla use may be due to Bangla's higher vitality in London and/or salience of Bangla relative to Sylheti identity among the second generation participants. However, analysis of data from the present study reveals Sylheti's dominance in relation to Bangla. Furthermore, the analysis also reveals whilst valuing the contribution of Bangla to a Bangla-speaking nation, most Sylhetis hold Bangla in high esteem alongside Sylheti and English. Dominance of Sylheti does not in any way imply dissociating with a Bangla identity.

The intrusion of English in the informal domain of the younger generation reveals that change in the use of a particular language is identified with a particular interlocutor. This is true of cultures which nurture values such as respect for age and authority, respect and obedience towards the older members of the community. On this basis it is reasonable to speculate a possible language shift among the younger generation of Sylhetis.

Responses reported by 26 primary school children also revealed that their parents spoke to them in Sylheti (Q 28, Appendix 5). However, there was no way of eliciting what language these children used with their parents because this questionnaire did not elicit reciprocal responses and it was also impractical in terms of the time involved to observe their linguistic practices outside the classroom. As discussed earlier (see section 5.8.4) the aim of this questionnaire was to discover if these young children were aware of a language variety called Sylheti and what their attitudes were towards Bangla and Sylheti. 10 children in this group were not sure if the language used by their parents was Sylheti because they explained that their parents labelled the language they used at home as Bangla.

Responses in Table 6.17 also reveal that most students use Sylheti with uncles, aunts and the priest.

Languages	Respon -dent	<u>Uncle</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Aunt</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Cousin</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Priest</u>	God
S	26	<u>24</u>	28	<u>25</u>	9	<u>12</u>	28	<u>30</u>	24
B			1	<u>1</u>					
E	4	<u>4</u>	4	<u>5</u>	11	<u>9</u>	3	<u>1</u>	3
S & B		<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	3	<u>1</u>	2
S & E	13	<u>14</u>	11	<u>11</u>	24	<u>22</u>	4	<u>7</u>	9
B & E	1	<u>1</u>					3	<u>2</u>	1
S,B & E	1	<u>1</u>	1	<u>1</u>	1		1	<u>1</u>	
Arabic									6
Did not respond				<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	3	<u>3</u>	
Total N	45								

Table 6.17 Language used by students with extended family and others.

S=Sylheti, B=Bangla, E=English.

However, the exclusive use of English with members of their extended family, the priest and with God suggests some degree of informality with these people and the deity. 24 students reported that the language used to communicate with God is Sylheti compared to nine who reported Sylheti and English and six who reported Arabic. Using Sylheti in

communication with God is not simply a question of reverencing the deity but also one of asserting one's cultural distinctiveness in a language appropriate for such purposes. The use of Sylheti and English reveal respondents' comfort and ease in both languages.

Evidence from the Leeds survey data revealed that Sylheti is maintained as the language with the most communicative currency with grandparents and parents by adults and students alike. Reciprocal responses reported by adults revealed that more adults reported speaking to their children in Sylheti than they reported the children did with them (see Table 6.13). A strong interrelation was revealed when these responses were compared to the reciprocal responses reported by students. More parents were reported to have spoken to their children in Sylheti (see Table 6.16). However, a group of 21 students reported speaking to their parents in Sylheti and English while only a few parents (11) used Sylheti and English with them. Adult responses with their siblings revealed that Sylheti was predominant followed by Sylheti and English. The use of Sylheti and English with the older generation was unexpected given the traditional norms of their culture. However, because the community is demographically young and most adults are between the ages of 25 and 35, influence and use of English alongside Sylheti was not unexpected.

The young age structure of the second generation adults also explains why some adult respondents used English with their (first generation) grandparents and their children (see Table 6.13) and their siblings (see Table 6.14). The gradual introduction of English in the family domain suggests that English is fostered in the informal home domain. However, the use of English with older members revealed that despite role-relationship and social hierarchy being culture-specific there is evidence to suggest that these are challenged through language practices. Despite this challenging behaviour, there is no denying that to a very large extent language use constraints depend upon the relationship with and age of the interlocutor. This kind of language use pattern is typical of language maintenance.

Students were able to discuss sensitive issues, controversial topics and personal opinions with me in English because there were no familial ties with me and that put fewer constraints on our relationship. Responses reported also reveal that despite the dominance

of Sylheti, a combination of Sylheti and English is used by a few adults and nearly 50% students. May (2001:149) argues, that maintaining a minority language does not in any way 'preclude ongoing cultural and linguistic change, adaptation and interaction'. He (ibid.:149) adds 'that those who wish to maintain their historically associated language, usually alongside that of another more dominant language, actually exhibit a greater ability to manage multiple cultural and linguistic identities'. Although Bangla language ideology is strongly maintained by the majority, Sylheti is the dominant language used in interaction in informal domains with different generations of speakers.

Responses reported by students on language used with the teacher, neighbour and Bangladeshi friends are shown in Table 6.18.

Languages	Respon -dent	<u>Bdi</u> <u>friends</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Bdi</u> <u>neighbour</u>	Respon -dent	<u>Bangla</u> <u>teacher</u>
S	13	<u>8</u>	20	<u>21</u>	7	<u>10</u>
B				<u>2</u>		<u>3</u>
E	2	<u>12</u>	4	<u>3</u>	12	<u>2</u>
S & B	1					
S & E	18	<u>25</u>	16	<u>16</u>	26	<u>18</u>
B & E	5		1			<u>4</u>
S, B & E	5		1			<u>6</u>
Did not respond	1		3	<u>3</u>		<u>2</u>
Total N	45					

Table 6.18 Language used by students with community members.

S=Sylheti, B=Bangla, E=English. Bdi = Bangladeshi.

Interesting responses were reported for interaction between students and the Bangla teacher. None of the students used Bangla exclusively with the Bangla teacher or their Bangladeshi neighbour despite the Bangla teacher using Bangla with a few students (3) and the neighbour using Bangla with two students. In the school setting, the two dominant role-relationships are the teacher-student relationship and the student-student relationship. The former relationship signifies inequality where power and control is exercised as a

natural course of discourse. However, despite the dominant role expected of the teacher fewer students (7) use Sylheti with the Bangla teacher than the teacher (10) uses with them. Reciprocal use of English only between respondent and Bangla teacher is rather imbalanced when compared to reciprocal responses reported for other language options. Responses reveal that nearly 25% (12) reported using English only with the Bangla teacher compared to two students with whom the Bangla teacher reported using English only. Evidence from Table 6.18 suggests that in the student-student relationship, responses reported reveal the dominance of Sylheti and English.

Question 29 for Primary school children (Appendix 5) included the options of Sylheti, Bangla and English as language(s) for support during Bangla lessons. Responses are reported in Table 6.19.

During Bangla lessons I want:	
Both English and Bangla to be used	28
Both Bangla and Sylheti to be used	4
Only Bangla to be used	6
Total N	38

Table 6.19 Languages children preferred during Bangla language lessons

Responses reveal that the great majority (28) prefer to use both English and Bangla. A few children (4) report their preference for both Bangla and Sylheti while others (6) report that they prefer only Bangla to be used.

Responses to the language/language variety that primary school children used outside school are reported in Table 6.20.

Outside school I speak:	
Bangla most of the time	5
Sylheti most of the time	9
English most of the time	24
Total N	38

Table 6.20 Language spoken outside school

Responses reported on the language used outside school reveal that the majority (24) speak English most of the time, some (9) speak Sylheti and a few (5) speak Bangla. Because of time constraints there was no way of observing their language use or verifying their responses about Bangla and Sylheti.

The questionnaire survey carried out with teachers in Sylhet revealed that the majority of teachers used Bangla in the classrooms while the others used both Bangla and Sylheti. However, interviews with teachers revealed a variety of responses for the languages used in extended lessons. One teacher reported using Bangla, five reported using *cholit bhasha* (see section 1.7) five reported using Sylheti while three reported using both Bangla and Sylheti.

The relationship between Bangla and Sylheti varies in the context of Sylhet and the UK. In Bangladesh, Sylheti exists in a stable relationship with Bangla, the high prestige, high status language. However, in the UK, the dominance of Sylheti in different domains among different generations of speakers reveals its vitality despite having limited institutional support and no status.

Responses to the language students used with their close friends in school and other contexts (Qs 15,16,17,18, Appendix 4) are shown in Table 6.21.

	Language used in class	Language used during break	Language used on the way home	Language used in discussion or instruction
Sylheti	8	3	2	3
Bangla				1
English	22	26	25	29
Sylheti&English	14	15	15	12
Bangla &English	1	1	3	
Total N	45			

Table 6.21 Language used by students in formal school domain and outside.

As expected in the monolingual environment of the UK school, responses reported by students in the contexts of formal and informal domain reveal that English dominates easily as single language or mixed with Sylheti. Only one student claimed using Bangla for discussion or to give instructions but it is unlikely that s/he uses Bangla especially as s/he does not report using it in any other contexts. Nearly half the student sample reported having Sylheti close friends and 14 students reported (responses are not shown) English as their closest friends, therefore the use of English was natural. Five students reported Pakistani and four students reported non-Sylheti Bangladeshis as their best friends. With this group also the lingua franca was obviously English.

Responses to language use in contexts such as greeting older Bangladeshis and Bangladeshi friends, expressing strong emotions, joking and swearing with Bangladeshi friends shown in Table 6.22 reveal that most adults use Sylheti to greet older people and their friends. Most adults also use Sylheti to express strong emotions. However, student responses varied depending upon the relationship with the interlocutor. With the older generation students used Sylheti but with friends they use English and Sylheti. A few adults and students also reported using Bangla in the different contexts shown in the table below. It is interesting that though few in numbers, more students than adults reported using Bangla.

	Greet older Bangladeshis in		Greet Bangladeshi friends in		Express strong emotions		Joke with Bangladeshi friends in		Swear at other Bangladeshis in	
	Adults	Students	Adults	Students	Adults	Students	Adults	Students	Adults	Students
S	68	31	46	5	48	5	45	4	49	3
B	1	6	1	3	1	3		1		3
E			13	23	9	21	12	23	13	19
S & B	8	2	13		5		9	1	3	1
S & E	1	5	7	11	15	13	14	10	12	12
B & E				2	1	2		3		1
S, B & E	1	1		1				3		5
No	1				1	1			3	1
Total	80	45	80	45	80	45	80	45	80	45

Table 6.22 Language used with older people and contemporaries.S=Sylheti, B=Bangla, E=English.

Comparing responses reported by adults and students it was found that adults use more Sylheti with their elders and most students do the same. Patterns of language use between respondent and child in the adult sample (see Table 6.13) are similar to the patterns of language use between respondent and their parents in the student sample (see Table 6.16). However, significant differences were revealed in the Sylheti-English mixed code used between respondent and child in the adult sample and between respondent and parents in the student sample. The use of Sylheti and English among adults is not unusual given the young demographic profile of the Sylheti community. The use of English and Sylheti and English among siblings is also characteristic among the younger generation in the language contact situation of Anglophone societies (Fishman 1989). The most significant finding, however, is that there is no evidence of the use of Bangla or Bangla and English among adults in either the immediate or the extended family domain. Although Bangla is reportedly used by one student with grandparents and parents and Bangla and English with siblings, observations did not reveal any such instance. It may be argued that outside my presence Bangla was used but even if that were the case it is not significant to indicate a change.

6.7 On language awareness

Language awareness (Q 19) information was obtained from a two-part question. The first part elicited information on the language the respondents used for writing personal and official letters, messages and shopping lists. Responses revealed that the functional complementarities of literacies were not significant because of adults' low levels of proficiency in Bangla and English. Responses have not been tabulated because more than fifty percent adults reported that they did not write personal or official letters or messages. Also, economic prosperity of migrant families has enabled them to buy mobile telephones for members of their extended family who live in rural areas and exchange of information from near and dear ones is exchanged using cell phones. Making shopping lists were also not necessary because they had never done it and shopping was done by the men who knew what was routinely bought. There was little variation in food because it was always Bangladeshi. Those who were required to carry out official correspondence in Bangla or English reported that drafting official letters, making bill payments were done at the Bangladeshi centre or the community centre with the help of social and community workers. A few adults who were restaurant owners hired solicitors for official purposes. Student responses were not tabulated because all students reported writing in English.

The second part investigated their awareness about Bangla leaflets, books and magazines. Adult responses are shown in Table 6.23 and student responses in Table 6.24.

	Notices in shops in Bangla	Names of shops in Bangla	Religious books in Bangla	Calendars in Bangla	Newspapers and magazines in Bangla	Information leaflets in Bangla
Yes	55	44	70	50	72	62
No	25	36	10	30	8	18
Total N	80					

Table 6.23 Adults' knowledge of leaflets, books and magazines in Bangla.

Most adults are aware of newspapers, books, magazines and information leaflets available in Bangla. Similar to the great majority of adults (70) who knew that there were religious books available in Bangla the majority of students (Table 6.24) also reported knowing about books and magazines available in Bangla.

	Notices in shops in Bangla	Names of shops in Bangla	Religious books in Bangla	Calendars in Bangla	Newspapers and magazines in Bangla	Information leaflets in Bangla
Yes	25	21	34	23	30	27
No	20	24	11	22	15	18
Total N	45					

Table 6.24 Students’ knowledge of leaflets, book and magazines available in Bangla.

However, what came as a surprise was the fact that despite almost all houses having a Bangla calendar there were many students who did not know if there were calendars available in Bangla.

In order to verify how much information they had about Sylheti Nagri as a once flourishing writing system, adults and students were asked if they knew about Sylheti alphabets, numerals and books available in Sylheti Nagri. Only 29 adults reported that they had heard of Sylheti Nagri while 51 adults had not. Of the 29 who knew about Sylheti Nagri only 11 reported knowledge of books available in Sylheti Nagri. The majority of students (42) looked rather dazed at the mention of Sylheti Nagri and reported that they had never heard the term. Surprisingly, three students reported that they knew about books available in Sylheti Nagri. However, it is unlikely that these students have come across the book of Sylheti Nagri alphabets and numbers. Background research reveals that books in Sylheti Nagri have not been circulated among members of the community and most were unfamiliar with the term Sylheti Nagri.

The Sylheti community's commitment towards national language ideology projected through Bangla identity was examined from responses about their knowledge and opinion about out-of-school provisions for Bangla. Responses to questions 21-24 (Appendix 3), which investigated literacy support were wide-ranging. Many (31) adults reported that one parent taught them Bangla at home. Another 11 adult responses were divided between private tutor (N=5), daughter-in-law (N=2), friend (N=1), neighbour (N=1) niece (N=1) and daughter (N=1) as those who taught Bangla at home. 17 adults reported there was no one in the household to teach Bangla while a reasonably large group of 21 adults did not respond to this question.

Information on parents' knowledge about the domains in which Bangla language classes were held outside school revealed that most adults (N=67) knew where classes were held. This was not surprising because the community centre and the mosques were in the heart of the Sylheti neighbourhood. However, it remains unclear why 12 adults reported not knowing about it and one did not respond. In response to whether children attended these classes, 50% (40) in the adult sample reported that their children did not. Reasons varied from classes being too large, no segregation for girls and rough behaviour of young boys. Despite the reasons identified, most adults (75) felt strongly about their children learning Bangla. High values for Bangla were associated with the salience of a Bengali (i.e. race) identity.

Primary school children's attitudes towards the importance they attached to Bangla revealed that their responses were similar to adult responses. 25 agreed that maintenance of Bangla was most important for Bangladeshi children. However, two children from this group of 38 disagreed and 11 were not sure. Whilst valuing the contribution of Bangla to the Bangla-speaking nation, most Sylhetis held Bangla in high esteem alongside Sylheti and English.

6.8 *Language used for telling rhymes and stories*

Responses to questions which reveal other linguistic practices such as telling stories and rhymes (Qs 26, 27) revealed interesting information. Story-telling in the Bangladeshi context mostly involves natural spontaneous speech but can also involve formulaic or semi-scripted sections as a consequence of repetitions. The oral tradition of story-telling is a popular informal language activity among children. Story-telling in Bengal is different from western traditional methods. It is not strictly a bed-time activity and does not involve artificial and/or archaic language. Unlike in the western tradition, stories are not read but narrated and are a means of capturing the child's attention at meal times or at bed time. Stories are usually told by the grandmother or some other member of the extended family. In this way, age-old systems of social understandings such as the norms, traditions and the special beliefs of the ethnocultural group are transferred to the youngest members of the community. The kind of story telling common in the Sylheti/Bangladeshi community relates usually to the chronicles of the patron saints and folklore of the region. Stories such as those of the heroic warrior and patron saints (e.g. Hazrat Shah Jalal) have been handed down through generations while others are created on the spur of the moment. Stories are complex in the sense that the narrator must think of a plan, devise motives and intentions. The narrator must also create impressions of emotions and make corrections and alterations during the sequence of events. This kind of language exercise can only be done effortlessly in the language or language variety that one is most comfortable and proficient in. Responses for the language used for telling rhymes and stories are reported in Table 6.25.

	Language used for telling rhymes and stories.		Language used for telling rhymes and stories.	
	Adults		Students	
	Rhymes	Stories	Rhymes	Stories
S	12	41	14	24
B	31	6	6	3
E	8	8		
S & E	2	2		
B & E	5			
S & B		1	7	9
S, B & E	2	1		
Did not tell rhymes/stories	6	9	1	2
Did not respond	14	12	17	7
Total N	80		45	

Table 6.25 Language used for telling rhymes and stories.
S=Sylheti, B=Bangla, E=English.

Table 6.25 reveals that stories were told mostly in Sylheti. However, a large number of adults reported that rhymes passed on from generation to generation were narrated in Bangla. This is not surprising because the formulaic nature of rhymes makes them easy to remember without understanding words or phrases. Those who did not respond to the question did not have younger siblings while others reported they could not afford to spare time for telling stories amidst their busy schedule. It is interesting to observe that adults report using English for rhymes and stories but none of the students report the same. Students, most (28) of who were born in the UK surprisingly report the use of either Sylheti or Bangla either on its own or in combination with native languages rather than English. Once again it is possible that the use of Bangla signals the confusion over language labels otherwise it is unlikely that Bangla would be preferred over English. The responses were unexpected in the light of strong evidence of the use of English by students in the household not only among siblings but also with parents.

The distinctive separation of Sylheti and Bangla in two different oral activities reveals how language is context-specific. Sylheti is used for story-telling because stories can often be discontinuous units told over successive days and therefore require re-adjustment, revision and change. Picking-up or revisiting a discontinuous piece of discourse is most effectively achieved in the language that one is most proficient in. Oral life stories are important not only for understanding the stories themselves but clarifying the wider role that the stories play as cross roads of personal and social meanings (Linde 1993). Linde adds that stories explain our sense of self and can be important means to communicate our sense of self to others and negotiate it with others. The most important conclusion that she draws is that stories claim or negotiate group membership and demonstrate that we are worthy members of these groups, following the moral standards. Thus group membership is negotiated and reiterated by verbally mediating the culture of story-telling in Sylheti because it is their mother-tongue.

6.9 Sylheti as language and as similar to Bangla

Responses reported on subjective language perceptions (Q 29-31) revealed each respondent's perception of Sylheti as a language or a dialect, as similar to Bangla and the pride they have in both native languages. Although Sylheti has been established as a language (see section 1.8), the best way of eliciting subjective language vitality perception was to differentiate Bangla and Sylheti in terms of language and dialect (Q 29). Asking respondents how they perceived the two in terms of status would have yielded inconclusive responses because speakers themselves often referred to the language they used as Bangla when they were actually speaking Sylheti. Responses reported for Sylheti as a language or a dialect is shown in Table 6.26.

Sylheti as a language or a dialect		
	Adults	Students
Language	7	15
Dialect	71	24
Don't know	2	4
Total N	80	45

Table 6.26 Sylheti as a language or dialect.

Responses on the status attached to Sylheti and Bangla revealed that majority of adults and more than 50% students thought Sylheti was a dialect (see Table 6.26). However, those who reported Sylheti as a language elevate the status of Sylheti and increase its importance. This group's perceptions towards Sylheti and Bangla are based on their language experiences in the UK rather than nationalistic aspirations towards Bangla.

Responses in Table 6.26 also reveal that unlike the responses reported in York (see section 4.5.4) most adults and students think Sylheti is a dialect. This kind of response was expected of adults who have experienced the political repression of Bangla including those who have heard about the struggle through which Bangla achieved an official/national language status as the language of the Bangladeshi Bengalis. The ideological perceptions attached to Bangla will without any doubt discourage the Sylhetis like any other Bangladeshis to associate the term language with any of the regional language varieties of Bangladesh. This argument is difficult to understand unless one realises the influential impact the term *bhasha* (language) has in the context of Bangla language as the key factor in the ethno nationalist movement (see section 1.5). The 24 students who reported that Sylheti was a dialect are not those who have experienced what their parents' generation have but literacy in Bangla and the definitions provided by standard language teachers are largely responsible for labelling their language of interaction as dialect. Chalmers (1996: 6) refers to Sylheti as a 'dialect among dialects' in Bangladesh. However, he adds that in the context of the UK:

Sylheti’s position as the ordinary means of communication of a large group of people in an environment largely uninfluenced by standard Bengali could be seen as a justification for terming it a distinct language.

Table 6.27 reveals that most adults and students think Sylheti is similar to Bangla. There is no denying of course that Sylheti and Bangla are closely related. Sylheti and Bangla share a large percentage of core vocabulary which may help towards some understanding. However, despite common root words, Sylheti’s simpler sound system and phonological variations make many words sound different from their Bangla counterparts. Differences in Sylheti polite pronouns such as *afne* and *tain*, case-endings, present participle and the inflected infinitive makes it difficult for those who have had little or no exposure to Sylheti to understand Sylheti speakers (see sections 1.7, 1.8). Chalmers (1996) argues that if speakers of Sylheti and Bangla understand each other it is not because the languages are mutually intelligible but because of the exposure the speakers of these languages have had to each other’s language.

Is Sylheti similar to Bangla		
	Adults	Students
Similar	64	20
Not similar	12	15
Don’t know	4	10
Total N	80	45

Table 6.27 Sylheti’s similarity with Bangla.

Responses reported reveal that 15 students thought Sylheti was not similar to Bangla compared to twelve adults who thought the same. Student responses are unusual and unexpected because all students were learning or had learnt Bangla in schools and standard Bangla taught in education differs substantially from Sylheti. As such they were expected

to know the differences between Sylheti and Bangla. Fishman (1991) argues that the minority language needs to be fostered in the family, the neighbourhood and the community, otherwise oracy and literacy learnt at school may wither away and die. Because Bangla is not fostered in the family and there are very few contexts in which it is used its retention becomes increasingly difficult. Varied responses by students reveal uncertainty and confusion between the two language varieties. If students had greater exposure to Bangla in terms of using it with family or growing up in a linguistic environment where Bangla is used the responses reported may have been less varied. Adults who think the two varieties are similar have probably based their opinions on the fact that Sylheti and standard Bangla are very closely related.

6.10 Attitudes towards literacy skills in languages

Q 28 examined adults’ and students’ attitudes towards the languages they would like the next generation to learn. The question was based on the supposition that if Sylheti Nagri was available what language options would respondents prefer for their children.

If Sylheti Nagri was available would you like your children to read and write in		
Languages	Adults	Students
Sylheti Nagri (SN)		
Bangla		
English	2	
Sylheti Nagri & Bangla		
Sylheti Nagri & English	3	13
Bangla & English	75	27
Did not respond		5
Total N	80	45

Table 6.28 Language choice to indicate intergenerational transmission of languages

Responses reported by adults and students in Table 6.28 reveal that the great majority of adults (75) and a large number of students (27) prefer that their children learn to read and write in both standard languages i.e. Bangla and English. Fewer adults (3) selected the

options of Sylheti Nagri and English compared to 13 students who selected the same option. There were however, two adults who selected the English only option but none of the students selected the same. From the data on language use it is evident that there is very little Bangla used by students yet they preferred it over Sylheti Nagri. However, selecting Bangla as a language for the next generation brings some pertinent questions to the surface such as whether Bangla is learned for meaning and function or for more symbolic reasons?

6.11 *Pride in Sylheti / Bangladeshi identity*

Information related to ethnolinguistic acculturation was elicited from respondents' views on cultural and linguistic maintenance. This was achieved by investigating the importance attached to regional versus national identity and preferences for national food, clothes and music (section 6.13), views on marriage and relationship with other ethnolinguistic groups (section 6.19).

Responses in Table 6.29 reveal the importance of regional and national dimensions of identity in terms of how proud they were of their Sylheti and/or Bangladeshi identity (Q 31).

	Adults		Students	
	Sylheti identity	Bangladeshi identity	Sylheti identity	Bangladeshi identity
Very proud	30	65	25	23
Doesn't matter	6	15	5	1
Not proud at all			7	8
Did not respond	44		8	13
Total N	80		45	

Table 6.29 Pride in Sylheti and Bangladeshi identity.

Adult responses reveal that only 30 adults reported being very proud of their Sylheti identity compared to 65 adults who were very proud of their Bangladeshi identity. A large number of adults did not respond to this question probably because either they perceived no difference between the two or they did not wish to identify with an identity which did not enjoy a positive image in their adopted country. In addition to this, a small group of adults did not prioritise pride in either a regional (N=6) or a national identity (N=15). Responses reported by students were more varied. It is interesting to observe that almost equal number of students take pride in their regional Sylheti (25) and their national Bangladeshi (23) identity. However, there were some students for whom regional or national identity did not matter while others were not proud of either regional or national identity.

The issue of regional versus national identity emerged as most controversial during interviews. The majority of adults felt that they were the same and expressed strong views about separating Sylheti identity from Bangladeshi. They also perceived no difference between the two language varieties often reinforcing '*eta to Banglai*' (this is Bangla). Those who did not respond to this question claimed to belong to the group who perceived no difference between the two. This reaction was understandable as the older people relate Bangla to nationalism and the Language Movement of 1952 and the linguistic struggle which led to the independence of Bangladesh.

Results from Table 6.29 were compared with the information about their age at arrival which revealed that most adults (68) were born in Sylhet and their age at arrival in the UK ranged between one and 45. A large number (43) of adults arrived between the ages of 15 and 34. It was, therefore, expected that pride in national identity was related to their experiences in their country of origin, knowledge and understanding of the linguistic struggle of Bangla and the experience of some ritual associated with the language movement e.g. *Ekushey February*.

Students who reported being proud of their regional or national identity were possibly influenced by the beliefs held by their elders and therefore, identified strongly with a regional and/or a national identity. On the other hand, Students who reported not being

proud of either a regional or a national identity including the few who did not respond to the question may not have had strong enough reasons to distinguish between regional and national identity. Not all students share the feelings of their elders because unlike their fathers and grandfathers their voices cannot be heard in the expression of Bangla nationalism or the Language Movement as the basis for the linguistic struggle for independence. Students who were born in UK have had no exposure to Bangla nationalism. Those who came at an early age were too young to recollect any special event and cultural reproduction of events in the UK may not be strong enough to warrant a regional or a Bangladeshi national identity. Seven students who arrived between the ages of 10 and 17 were expected to have some meaningful recollection of cultural events provided they were in education or had reasons to visit the town or the city at the time of the event. Alternatively, students who did not respond to the question on regional versus national identity did not intend to commit themselves to either of the two ethnic identities because in their new adopted country Bangladesh does not enjoy a positive image in the wider community. On the importance of national identity Miller (1995:165) observes:

a national identity helps to locate us in the world; it must tell us who we are, where we have come from, what we have done. It must then involve an essentially historical understanding in which the present generations are seen as heirs to a tradition which they then pass on to their successors. Of course the story is continually being rewritten, each generation revises the past as it comes to terms with the problems of the present. Nonetheless, there is a sense in which the past always constrains the present: present identities are built out of materials that are handed down, not started from scratch.

Identities are not static but are subject to change in changing circumstances. During the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, a secular Bangla identity stood as a challenge to a religious Islamic identity (see section 1.5). However, recent trends on identity perceptions in Sylhet and in the UK reveal otherwise. Gardner's (1993) study revealed the heterogenous ways in which change was observed in key migrant areas in Sylhet.

Religious missionary movements and political parties whose manifestoes were based on religion and religious doctrines became influential in Sylhet (see section 1.4.5). Similarly, in the UK, identity perception was also changing. Young British Bangladeshis began to prioritise religion in the wake of influential political and ideological development in Britain since 1986 (Eade 1990) and began to identify themselves first and foremost as Muslims rather than Bengali or Bangladeshi (Gardner and Shukur 1994). Gardner and Shukur (1994) argue that racial exclusionism was the primary reason for Sylheti youths to explore their culture and religion. In their new adopted country religion provided a positive identity in which solidarity could be found. On changing identities Bhikhu Parekh (1995: 264) argues that national identity is a process of self-creation that does not occur in a historical vacuum. Rather,

A community inherits a specific way of life..... which sets limits to how and how much it can change itself. The change is lasting and deep if it is grafted on the community's suitably reinterpreted deepest tendencies and does not go against the grain. A community's political [and cultural] identity then is neither unalterable and fixed, nor a voluntarist project to be executed as it pleases, but a matter of slow self-recreation within the limits set by its past.

Students who are influenced by the beliefs held by their grandparents and parents do not distinguish between regional and national identity. Exposure to Bangla as a symbol of national identity is maintained through cultural reproduction and identity symbols. However, in the context of diaspora these symbols may not be strong enough to warrant a Bangladeshi identity. Since the focus of LMS studies is either change in the composition of various language groups or change in the languages concerned, the concept of social change is an essential issue. Social change influences self-identification of speakers and 'each new generation, then, reinterprets the relationship between linguistic forms and social groups, and consequently re-evaluates the prestige and meaning of different linguistic varieties' (LMP 1985: 123).

For young Sylhetis in diaspora the predicament of regional and national identity is similar to that of Sylheti and Bangla. Bangladeshi identity is identified with traditional cultural activities such as *Boishaakhi mela* (Spring fair), or *Ekushey February* (21st February celebrations), or other secular public rituals. However, it is not easy to identify with rituals of national commemoration through Bangla language and culture without actually having experienced it or read historic accounts of it. Eade (1990) says that activists who claim to represent the Bangladeshi community are engaged in political projects to establish authentic national tradition. These activists construct an 'imagined community' which links the Bangladeshis in UK to their country of origin. Bangladeshis born in Britain have to imagine the cultural heritage of Bangladesh through rituals of national commemoration and Bangla language and culture which are alien to them and many of their young relatives and fellow Sylhetis.

In the context of the UK missionary work carried out by Bangladeshi groups like *Da'watul Islam* and *Tabligh* influenced the process of Islamisation which 'entailed both a greater conformity to, for example, standards of dress and religious rituals as defined by Islamic activists and a deeper sense of identification with the Islamic community (*umma*) which extended beyond national boundaries' (Eade 1990: 500). Commitment to Islam encouraged young Sylheti Muslims to express their frustrations with the mainstream British society. From a secular language-based Bangladeshi identity Sylheti Muslims in diaspora became more inclined towards a religious identity.

6.12 On ethnicity and identity

The question on ethnic identity (Q 44) allowed each respondent to reflect on different concepts of ethnicity. This measure was adopted in view of the complexities involved in analysing responses from a socio-historic, socio-psychological and a religious perspective. Although respondents were asked to list options in the order of importance during fieldwork this method proved to be extremely time consuming. Often respondents' reported the second and third option then changed their mind. Finally it was decided that the option that best describes each respondents' identity would be included. Responses

reported in Table 6.30 reveal choices from the options provided. Options recorded in the 'Other' category have been labelled beside the responses in Table 6.30. Underlined numbers indicate choices from the 'Other' option.

Ethnic identity		Frequency
Muslim		31
Bangladeshi		13
Sylheti		1
Other (35) =		
	Bangladeshi Muslim	<u>21</u>
	British Muslim	<u>7</u>
	Sylheti Muslim	<u>3</u>
	British Bangladeshi Muslim	<u>1</u>
	Bangali	<u>1</u>
	British Bangladeshi	<u>2</u>
Total Number		80

Table 6.30 Ethnic identity reported by adults.

The largest number of respondents (31) identified ethnic identity with religion. Responses on religion as a symbol of ethnic identity on its own or in combination with race and nation reveal that the majority in the adult sample project ethnicity through religion. Those who identified themselves as Muslims including Bangladeshi Muslims, British Muslims, Sylheti Muslims and British Bangladeshi Muslims comprise an overwhelming number of 63 adults.

It is interesting that while none of the respondents selected the option provided for race (Bengali) as a marker of their ethnic identity, only one respondent identified ethnicity as being a *Bangali*. Recording his response on the questionnaire I thought that he meant *Bangali* as the Bangla equivalent of the English word Bengali (race). However, interviews and discussions on the topic revealed that his choice of the word *Bangali* referred specifically to Sylheti migrants in the UK. Responses thus reveal that the formation of group identity is based upon religion and not influenced by language use.

Students were also asked the same question. All options were explained including the open option. Similar to Table 6.30, underlined numbers reveal the ‘Other’ option.

Ethnic identity		Frequency
Muslim		35
Bengali		1
British		1
Other (8) =		
	Bangladeshi Muslim	<u>7</u>
	British Muslim	<u>1</u>
Total Number		45

Table 6.31 Ethnic identity reported by students.

Response from the student sample was similar to that of the adults (Table 6.30) with the difference that students identify themselves as Muslims much more strongly than adults. More than 75% students identify with a Muslim identity while only seven identify as Bangladeshi Muslims and one as a British Muslim. However, one student associated ethnic identity with race as a Bengali and another as British.

Although responses from adult and student data reveal that religion is the most prominent symbol of ethnic identity, Bangladeshi national identity of the Sylhetis in diaspora does not lag far behind. 13 adults identify themselves as Bangladeshis and two as British Bangladeshi, 21 adults do not separate religion from their Bangladeshi identity or vice versa. The responses reveal that both religion and national identity (as a Bangladeshi) emerge as two important identity symbols for the Sylhetis in Leeds. Adult responses are influenced by loyalty towards the historic past of the Bangladeshis in achieving a Bangladeshi identity. However, students’ experiences are influenced by the changes in the current global atmosphere and their perceptions are consistent with the information that young British Sylhetis are experiencing a change in their identity perceptions in the UK (Eade 1990, Gardner and Shukur 1994). Therefore, it was no surprise that Leeds survey

data revealed that ethnic identity was predominantly associated with religion (Q 44) rather than ethnicity or language.

Responses to ethnic identity revealed that language and ethnic identity were not related. Neither Bangla nor Sylheti identity is strongly language-based. Most adults reported a Muslim identity or one in which religion and national identity was merged. The majority of students identified themselves first and foremost as Muslims (see Table 6.30 and Table 6.31). Religion, therefore was clearly the most prominent symbol of the community's ethnic identity. Religion plays an important role in the maintenance or shift of a language particularly if the minority language is also the language of religion. Unlike the example of Dorian (1981) where religion was a significant factor in language shift or the example of Welsh, where one of the factors for its survival was attributed to the dominant position of Welsh in Welsh chapels and religious life (Baker 1993), Sylheti or Bangla is not and never was the language of religion and yet ethnic identity has been strongly projected through religion. For Bangladeshi Muslims, all religious sermons and prayers are exclusively in Arabic, which is considered a sacred language and which most Bangladeshi Muslims can read but not understand. The only Bangladeshis proficient in all the four Arabic language skills are those who have been educated in religious seminaries (*madrasahs*).

Despite the shift in identity from secular to universal Islamic, allegiance to Bangla and Sylheti was attested from the Leeds data. There is no denying that socio-psychological perceptions linking Bengali nationalism to Bangla continues to have profound ideological influence among the Sylhetis in diaspora.

6.13 Preferences in food, clothes and music

The question on preferences in food, clothes and music (Q 55, Appendix 3; Q53 Appendix 4) included the options *Bangladeshi*, *British* and *Other*. Respondents were explained that they could select any one or two or a combination of any three. All possible combinations were discussed to allow respondents a wide range of choices. For example, they were told

that the category of *Other* may include Indian, Pakistani or Italian food. Adult and student responses are shown side by side in Table 6.32 for the convenience of comparison.

	Preference for food		Preference for clothes		Preference for music	
	Adult	Student	Adult	Student	Adult	Student
Bangladeshi	65	13	31	6	15	3
Bangladeshi & British		3	14	22	10	23
Bangladeshi & Other	10	22	30	14	2	3
Other	5	7	5	3	37	12
Did not respond					16	4
Total N	80	45	80	45	80	45

Table 6.32 Preference for food, clothes and music.

Responses in Table 6.32 reveal that most adults (65) and some students (13) prefer Bangladeshi food. This is only natural as traditional food habits are perpetuated through generations. 22 students selected the option of *Bangladeshi* and *Other* which eliminates British food. However, responses reveal that there has been some degree of acculturation. There were three students who preferred both Bangladeshi and British food.

Choice of clothes reveals that large numbers of adults (31) prefer Bangladeshi clothes. However, it remains unclear what respondents meant by Bangladeshi clothes. In this context it must be clarified that although the traditional *lungi* (sarong) is the national dress for men, the influence of the colonial system continues to have an impact on the dress etiquette of Bangladeshi men. Trousers and shirts are appropriate for men in work and education in urban areas, while farmers and farm labourers in rural areas wear the *lungi*. Ironically, the *lungi* is considered inappropriate in formal contexts of employment and education. In the UK wearing the *lungi* would be far from practical. It may also be considered inappropriate and unsuitable for work. 30 adults who selected the option of *Bangladeshi* and *Other* were women and *Other* refers to *shalwaar kameez* which is originally Indian Panjabi but is popular among young Bangladeshi women.

However, it was interesting to observe that many older men wore the *Awami suit*. The two-part garment is a traditional symbol of Pakistani identity. Given the socio-historic and socio-political relationship between East and West Pakistan prior to 1971, preference for *Awami suit* was unexpected. However, discussions on the significance and maintenance of ethnic clothes as a tradition revealed that respondents associated *Awami suit* with Muslim culture within the greater fraternity of a sub-continental Muslim identity rather than localised values and regional Bangladeshi identity.

Adult responses to preference in music revealed that 37 adults preferred something other than Bangladeshi or British music. The women's responses referred to Indian music while the men specifically mentioned *waaz*, chanting of religious sayings in Sylheti. All adult women were housewives who spent most of their time at home with satellite television channels and videos as sources of recreation. Watching Bollywood movies was a popular pastime. Thus, women's preference for Indian music was influenced by the lifestyle they led. A group of elderly men and women did not respond to the question on music because they considered music un-Islamic.

Most students however, preferred Bangladeshi and British music. From early childhood those born or brought-up in the UK are exposed to western music through the media and the environment. The school is also the primary breeding ground for socialisation of western influences. Therefore, influence of western music is only natural. Unexpected findings were revealed by four students who did not respond to this question. Like their adult counterparts they considered music un-Islamic.

The influence of media was also examined by investigating the degree of exposure that respondents have to Bangla by watching Bangla TV¹⁶ or other satellite channels. Three media channels were selected for adults and students based on popularity. Choice of programmes with British culture mediated through English language and Bangladeshi culture through Bangla. Adults were expected to watch more Bangla TV which relate to the culture and language of Bangla programmes than English programmes based on

¹⁶ Bangla TV is a Bangla language television channel.

English language and culture. Responses in Table 6.33 reveal that despite strong associations with Bangla less than 50 percent (N=33) adults watched Bangla TV regularly and 23 adults watched it occasionally. However, similar number of adults also watched British television channels regularly. There are more adults (18) who never watched Bangla TV compared to those (11) who did not watch British TV.

Student responses in Table 6.33 also reveal that most students (N=19) never watched Bangla TV. A considerable number of students watched British channels (N=41) suggesting that the majority of students prefer English language programmes.

	Bangla TV		British TV		Zee TV	
	Adults	Students	Adults	Students	Adults	Students
Regularly	33	10	31	41	19	14
Occasionally	23	16	25	1	21	11
Never	18	19	11	3	26	20
Did not respond	6		13		14	
Total N	80	45	80	45	80	45

Table 6.33 Preferences for television channels.

However, compared to the responses on Bangla TV and British TV, there were a large number of adults and students who never watched Zee TV¹⁷ despite their preference for Bollywood movies. More students (14) than adults (19) watched Zee TV regularly while more adults (21) than students (11) watched it occasionally. 14 adults did not respond to this question. Media is a status-based domain and can be an effective vehicle of power and prestige of languages such as Bangla. For students, the media domain is an effective vehicle for power, prestige and values associated with English. The students relate to English language better than they relate to Bangla language. However, chain migration and patterns of settlement influence cultural continuity thereby, continually allowing cultural values of home to be in opposition with cultural values of the host society.

¹⁷ Zee TV is a Hindi language television channel.

In order to elicit assimilation orientation adults and students were asked the type of motivations they had towards learning of English including the reasons they felt were important for them to learn languages like Bangla and English discussed in the next section.

6.14 On the importance of learning Bangla and English

To gather information on the importance of learning Bangla and English (Q 20) language options included other European languages such as French, German and Spanish which are offered in secondary schools. Responses are shown in Table 6.34.

The importance of learning				
	Bangla		English	
	Adults	Students	Adults	Students
Very important	72	32	77	41
Not very important	5	4	1	
Unsure	1	9		
No response	2		2	4
Total N	80	45	80	45

Table 6.34 Importance of learning Bangla and English.

Responses to EV beliefs and language behaviour verified from the importance attached to learning languages (Q 20) reveal that despite both scores being high most adults and students attached the most importance to learning Bangla and English (see Table 6.34). A few more adults valued the learning of English (77) more than they valued learning Bangla (72). However, there were a few adults and students who reported that learning Bangla was not very important compared to one adult who thought learning English was not very important. The majority of students felt that learning English was very important but there were also many who thought that learning Bangla was also very important. It was interesting that not only have adults been more positive towards Bangla, students have paralleled the opinions of their elders. However, it was also evident from responses that

students attached more importance to English than Bangla. While students are influenced by the traditional values dictated from home and acknowledge the importance of Bangla, they are also influenced by English in the educational environment and the environment outside home. Dominance of English is characteristic among second generation migrants in the UK. This finding is typical of second generation migrants to western Anglophone societies (Fishman 1989). Although English is perceived positively, most adults interviewed reported that they were content with their children knowing just enough English to get by because most were expected to be involved in ethnic businesses. Also, many elderly men link English with western influences and a liberated perspective. Opinions on western education were associated with independence and dissociating themselves from the extended family concept. Many families thus put constraints on higher education because according to them it led to the breakdown of traditional family structure. Responses thus reveal that being bilingual does not mean becoming bi-cultural as well (LMP 1985:131).

Responses reported by primary school children on their parents' attitude towards the importance attached to learning Bangla revealed that the majority of parents (35) thought that learning Bangla was very important. Responses to whether their parents were pleased that they were learning Bangla also revealed that most parents (33) were pleased and added that their parents helped and encouraged them to learn Bangla. In response to whether learning English was more important than cultivating Bangla, 10 children agreed, 10 disagreed and 18 were unsure about this statement. Response to other languages as more useful than Bangla revealed that 12 children agreed, 12 disagreed and 14 were unsure. These children have positive attitudes towards Bangla despite the fact that there is no place for Bangla in the Primary curriculum and their mother tongue is not fostered side by side with another group's language. They are also aware of the importance of English because the only education system that they have experienced is English.

Responses reported by adults, students and primary school children reveal that an overwhelming majority have consistently been most positive towards maintaining Bangla. Unexpected responses were revealed by students who have paralleled the opinions of their

elders. Responses from Table 6.34 reveal that most students also report that knowing English is very important. For younger Sylhetis English is valued more than Bangla in the context of the UK. To compare the values associated with English and reasons for learning it, respondents were asked the type of motivation they have towards learning English.

6.15 Motivations for learning English

Motivations for learning English were calculated for integrative and instrumental orientation (Gardner and Lambert 1972) for adults and students (Q 43). Respondents had the option of selecting one or a combination of responses. Instrumental options included (a) = better employment opportunities, (b) = higher education, (c) = importance of English as a language in the global context, (d) = better business opportunities, (e) = supporting children’s education. Integrative options included (f) = sound like the English, (g) = think and behave like them, (h) = understand the English culture better, (i) = be more at ease and at home with the English and lastly, (j) = be accepted whole-heartedly by the English. For convenience responses are tabulated in Table 6.35 according to the instrumental and integrative options selected by respondents.

Most important reason(s) for learning English		
	Adults	Student
Instrumental option(s) - c	21	2
abc	19	9
ac	14	
ab	2	
be	1	
bce	5	
bcd		5
Integrative option(s)- h		4
hi		1
i		2
All instrumental options equally important	18	21
All integrative options equally important		1
Total N	80	45

Table 6.35 Most important reason(s) for learning English.

a = better employment opportunities, b = higher education, c= importance of English as a language in the global context, d = better business opportunities, e = supporting children’s education. f = sound like the English, g = think and behave like them, h = understand the English culture better, i = be more at ease and at home with the English, j = be accepted whole-heartedly by the English

None of the adult respondents had any integrative reasons for learning English. The majority of adults wanted to learn English because of its importance as a global language. Others felt that is important for higher education and could provide better employment opportunities. Unlike Khanna et al.’s (1998) study which reveals that the Bangladeshis were the most integratively oriented group, the adult sample reveals that all respondents had instrumental reasons only for learning English. The integrative options that I had provided in Q 43 (f, g, h, i, j) were not well-received. During fieldwork most adults and students expressed concerns regarding these options and termed them as ‘preposterous’ because to them the options implied associating with western values. The only two options selected from the list of integrative options are ‘h’ and ‘i’. This kind of attitude confirms

the research question that the reasons for learning English are instrumental rather than integrative. Nearly 50% students thought that all instrumental options were important. Most students selected instrumental reasons for learning English but there were eight who selected the integrative options. Among them, four students (two 13 year olds and two 15 year olds) reported that learning English was a way of understanding the English culture better, two 20 year old students reported that they could be more at home and at ease with the English if they knew their language well. One 22 year old reported that all the integrative options were equally important.

6.16 Motivations for learning Sylheti and Bangla

Similar to the question on motivations to learn English, motivation for learning Bangla and Sylheti was asked (Qs 40 & 42). Five integrative options, three instrumental options and two other options which listed all options as equally important and none of the options as important were included. Responses are shown in Table 6.36. Five integrative options were associated with communication, identity, language, culture and tradition. The three instrumental options included job prospect, business prospects and as a requirement to settle in Bangladesh.

Most important reason(s) for learning the two native languages				
	Sylheti		Bangla	
	Adults	Students	Adults	Students
Communication	30	14	34	10
Identity	28	3	14	1
Language of the ethnocultural group	13	8	22	4
Rich culture and history	7	7	10	12
Traditional values		1		
For better job prospect		1		
For business prospect				
As a requirement to settle in Bangladesh		1		2
All options equally important		8		5
None of the options are important	2	2		11
Total N	80	45	80	45

Table 6.36 Most important reason for knowing Bangla and Sylheti.

Responses from Table 6.36 reveal that for most adults, communication is the most important reason for knowing Bangla (N=34) and Sylheti (N=30). 28 adults reported that they were motivated to learn Sylheti because it provides a sense of identity whereas 22 others selected Bangla because it is their language. For students (N=10) the most important reason for knowing both native languages is also communication. However, fewer students than adults linked motivation to a Sylheti or a Bangla identity. This finding is consistent with the finding on their pride in regional and national identity (see Table 6.29). Adult responses confirm the research question that reasons for learning Bangla is integrative. Although, more than 50% percent students reported integrative reasons for learning Bangla, a good number of students (11) felt that none of the options were important implying that they did not have strong enough reasons to learn Bangla. Students reported a variety of reasons for knowing Sylheti which ranged from communication, language, culture, and all options as important. Baker (1993: 90) argues that ‘Research relates such motivation not only to desire to learn a language but also to predict language retention and language loss in individuals over time’. More (8) students wanted to learn Sylheti because it was their language compared to a few (4) who wanted to learn Bangla because it was their language.

On the other hand more students (12) wanted to learn Bangla because of its rich culture and history compared to seven who felt that knowing Sylheti was important for its rich culture and history. Two students who felt that none of the options for Sylheti were important may well have positive and favourable attitudes towards English. Motivations for learning English did reveal that there were eight students who were integratively oriented towards English.

6.17 *Language used in employment domain*

The question on language required for work (Q 45) included Sylheti, Bangla and English. Adult responses are shown in Table 6.37.

Importance of knowing	Sylheti	Bangla	English
Essential	25	7	46
Helps	7	16	6
Not necessary at all	17	26	2
No response	31	31	26
Total N	80		

Table 6.37 Language used in workplace.

The workplace is the domain in which the host society exercises control over the provision and allocation of resources. However, census data revealed that two-thirds of Bangladeshi men worked in the distribution, hotel and restaurant industries and two out of five Bangladeshi men were either cooks or waiters (Office for National Statistics 2001). As the majority are employed in ethnic businesses such as restaurants and the owners are also Sylheti, it is no surprise that the language essential for work with fellow Sylhetis is Sylheti rather than English. Gazioglu's (1996) study also reveals that for the second generation Bangladeshi sons employed in ethnic businesses it is essential to know the language of origin. However, her analysis which focussed on welfare or losses associated with the migrant labour workforce in the UK was not able to differentiate between language labels

such as mother-tongue, home language, language of origin and own language to explain the language-employment link of the Sylheti Bangladeshis.

Responses in Table 6.37 reveal that 25 adults reported that Sylheti was essential whereas 46 adults reported that English was essential. Only seven reported knowing that Bangla was essential. These seven adults were employed by local government agencies and proficiency in the ethnic standard language is a mandatory job requirement. However, as the question on employment aimed to identify the language used it was not necessary to verify the skills and proficiency levels required for Bangla. Those who reported that knowing English was *Essential* were not asked to specify their levels of proficiency skills either. Essential knowledge of English skills does not necessarily imply high levels of proficiency in reading or writing skills. Skills required for work may be as elementary as matching numbers for references, signing or putting a tick mark. Adults who did not respond to the question on employment were either women who had no experience of the work domain and had little knowledge about the role or importance of languages outside the home or were seamen who had long been retired.

Responses to language used with colleagues, employer and clients are shown in Table 6.38.

Language used with	colleague	manager/employer	clients/customer
Sylheti	14	7	3
Bangla			
English	13	19	26
Sylheti & Bangla	5	2	
Sylheti & English	12	7	3
Bangla & English		1	
Sylheti, Bangla & English	10	4	4
English, Hindi & Urdu	1		
No response	25	40	44
Total N	80		

Table 6.38 Language used with colleagues, employer and clients.

Response to the question on language used with work colleagues, manager/ boss and clients/ customers revealed that Sylheti, English and Sylheti and English were used mainly at work. With clients and customers it was usually English unless the customer was a South Asian and took the initiative to speak in Hindi/Urdu/Bangla. The language spoken with the manager or employer was reported as more English than Sylheti. However, there was no way of verifying the report. Studies in migrant populations in Europe suggest that higher wages or income is associated with fluency in the language of the host country (Chiswick and Miller 1988; Chiswick 1991; Gazioglu 1996). Gazioglu’s (1996) study reveals that although English language fluency is expected to increase with duration of stay, the ‘Enclave Effect’ where migrants provide services to each other and ethnic businesses reduce exposure to English. The concentration of an ethnic group in the workplace limits learning of English and the possibility that fluency in English may lead to high income.

6.18 Language attitudes and stereotypes

The question on language attitudes and stereotypes elicited responses based on language attributes such as *pleasant sounding*, *easy to learn*, *prestigious* and *useful*. Responses are shown in Table 6.39.

	Pleasant sounding			Easy to learn			Prestigious			useful		
	S	B	E	S	B	E	S	B	E	S	B	E
yes	57	69	58	18	48	35	46	66	58	72	74	70
undecided	9	7	16	58	7	9	15	13	17	4	3	8
no	14	4	6	4	25	36	19	1	5	4	3	2
Total N	80											

Table 6.39 Language attitudes and linguistic stereotypes reported by adults.

Responses reveal that adults find Bangla to have the most highly regarded attributes. The majority find it pleasant sounding (69), prestigious (66) and useful (74) but less than 50% (48) think that it is easy to learn. The socio-historic issues and socio-psychological

perceptions towards Bangla influence a positive attitude towards it. Mukherjee’s (1996) study also revealed that Hindu Bengalis in diaspora in New Delhi had a more positive attitude towards their native language. However, despite large numbers of adults claiming proficiency in Bangla and finding it pleasant sounding, prestigious, useful and easy to learn, patterns of language use reveal that they do not use it in any domains. The language with high attributes after Bangla is English. English is regarded as more prestigious, more useful and more pleasant sounding than Sylheti. The elderly group of Sylhetis who settled in Britain realise the usefulness and the importance of knowing English. However, despite their high regard and claims that it is easy to learn 42 adults can neither understand nor speak English very well (see Table 6.1). The responses to how easy it is to learn English contrast with those analysed by Saxena’s (1995) which reveals that English is slightly more difficult to learn than Hindi.

Responses to the attributes for English derive its prestige from its usefulness in society, particularly for jobs. This is what Baker refers to as the ‘utilitarian’ value: ‘Research relates such motivation not only to desire to learn a language but also to predicting language retention and language loss in individuals over time’ (Baker 1993: 90). Language loyalty encourages adults to rate Bangla as being more useful than English and the reasons for knowing Bangla are integrative. However, student responses in Table 6.40 reveal that Sylheti and English are more highly regarded than Bangla.

	Pleasant sounding			Easy to learn			Prestigious			Useful		
	S	B	E	S	B	E	S	B	E	S	B	E
yes	33	21	32	23	16	33	15	17	21	27	22	39
undecided	6	10	6	9	13	4	16	13	7	10	12	
no	2	9	2	6	11	4	7	8	10	4	6	1
Did not respond	4	5	5	7	5	4	7	7	7	4	5	5
Total N	45											

Table 6.40 Language attitudes and linguistic stereotypes reported by students.

Unlike adults, most students find English easier to learn than Bangla or their mother tongue Sylheti. These responses which reveal that more students (33) perceive English as easier to learn than Bangla (16) suggest lesser ability in Bangla. The most plausible reason behind the responses is lack of exposure and experience in Bangla compared to widespread exposure to English in school for example.

Interviews with girls revealed their frustrations and inability to express emotions or sentiments effectively in Sylheti because often they were unable to find the Sylheti equivalent of a sentiment or emotion that they could express easily in English. A few young girls confided that they were not able to express issues and concerns meaningfully because mothers especially were not proficient in English. To avoid misunderstandings and mis-communication important personal issues were often not addressed by them.

Responses reported reveal that students have a more positive attitude towards English than adults. However, more adults (N=66) perceive Bangla to be more prestigious than English while more students (N=21) perceive English to be more prestigious than Bangla. If attitudes to English are analysed in the context of motivations that adults and students have to learn English it is evident that for most adults and students learning English is governed by pragmatic reasons such as the importance of English in terms of job prospects and its success as a world language.

Importance of Bangla in terms of its institutional status was also included in the attitudes towards languages questionnaire for primary school children. Responses reported on whether they enjoyed Bangla because it was prestigious revealed that most children (18) agreed, seven disagreed and 13 were unsure. Although efforts to transmit Bangla to the youngest generation of Sylhetis were made through the efforts of organising out-of-school Bangla classes, there are very few domains in which they actually used Bangla. Responses reported by these children also revealed that 33 children did not like people making negative comments about Bangla compared to 24 children who reported that they did not like people making negative comments about Sylheti. It was not possible to ascertain what the labels Bangla and Sylheti meant to these children and to what extent their perceptions

towards languages were manifested in the generalised assumptions made about their native languages. Literacy is an important factor in language maintenance and transmission from one generation to another (Zengel 1962). However, despite children attending Bangla language classes, observations on language use during informal classroom talk did not reveal the use of Bangla. LMP (1985) argue that for minority languages which have great differences between the spoken and the standard written variety, mother-tongue teaching or videos and films in the national language reinforce the standard form. However, this argument is open to interpretation. Discussions with primary school children revealed that similar to student responses most children preferred films and videos in English. They were rather frank and admitted that not only did they not understand the language they were not able to relate to the urban contexts in which some Bangladeshi films and videos were made. Saxena's (1995) study of migrant Panjabi Hindus in Southall reveals that variation in sociolinguistic attitudes and practices differed at the ideological level depending on where the Panjabi Hindus originated (i.e. the rural versus urban distinction). Those who originated from villages in Panjab were more retentive in the use of and had more positive attitudes towards Panjabi than those from East African, Panjab city and Delhi origin. Saxena argues that the high EV of the Panjabi Hindu community favour language maintenance because of the use of their language in religious practices and its importance for social existence.

6.19 On contexts of acceptability

The question on acceptability (Q 79) determined how respondents viewed other ethnolinguistic communities they came into contact with and the contexts of acceptability towards these communities. The ethnolinguistic communities were selected on the basis of language, ethnicity and religion such as Sylhetis, non-Sylheti Bangladeshis (NSB), Indian Muslims (IM), Pakistani Muslims (PM), Indian Hindus (IH), White British (WB) and the Afro Caribbeans (AC). In order to simplify data ethnolinguistic communities have been separated as Sylheti(S), non-Sylheti Bangladeshis (NSB) and 'Other'. The category 'Other' includes, Indian Muslims, Pakistani Muslims, Indian Hindus, White British and the Afro Caribbeans. Respondents were asked about who they would like to interact with socially

e.g social functions and family gatherings. Participation in social contexts is an important marker of group identity. Responses are shown in Table 6.41.

	Associate with			Prefer as neighbours			Allow children to play with		
	S	NSB	O	S	NSB	O	S	NSB	O
Always	63	12	11	56	11	11	54	14	10
Usually	10	11	9	6	8	9	7	10	10
Sometimes	2	15	13	1	4	5	3	3	12
Rarely	2	2	3	2	1	2		1	2
Never			7	5		4	1		6
Did not respond	3	40	37	10	56	49	15	52	40
Total N	80								

Table 6.41 Adult responses towards different ethnic communities and contexts.
S=Sylheti, NSB=Non-Sylheti Bangladeshis, O=Others.

Adults showed an overwhelming preference for fellow Sylhetis in all questions asked. Many respondents who did not respond to associating with non-Sylheti Bangladeshis were conscious of the fact that I was a non-Sylheti and did not want to offend me or show disrespect by expressing their views. However, the only topic for which strong negative opinions were expressed was the context of marriage. Most adults reported that they would never allow their children to marry *Others* even if they were Muslims from another region in the Indian sub-continent.

Most adults did not respond to marriage with NSB. Eleven adults who responded positively were between the ages of 25 and 59 and included both sexes (six women and five men). Therefore, it was not possible to find a clear pattern for their responses. It was also difficult to pin the reasons down to any factor especially as interview sessions were conducted in the homes of respondents in the presence of in-laws and other family members. Respect for age and authority were the main reasons why they were unable to express their views without reservation. I did not want to create any tension by asking why

they felt the way they did. Also, having been accepted as a close member of the community, traditional norms prevented me from asking for explanations especially in the presence of the in-laws.

	Invite to social functions			Prefer as close family friends			Marry		
	S	NSB	O	S	NSB	O	S	NSB	O
Always	56	11	6	58	8	3	68	11	1
Usually	12	7	11	6	6	7	1	4	2
Sometimes	2	9	8	1	3	2	2	1	
Rarely	1		1	1		2	1	5	
Never			5			1	2		60
Did not respond	9	53	49	14	63	65	6	59	17
Total N	80								

Table 6.42 Adults responses towards different ethnic communities and contexts.
S=Sylheti, NSB=Non-Sylheti Bangladeshis, O=Others.

The older respondents show only a very slight accomodation with regard to various social activities. For most contexts ‘ethnic enclosure’ (Schermerhorn 1970) is rigidly marked. It is interesting to observe how in some situations ethnic perspectives challenged religious ones. Despite identifying themselves with the Islamic community they rejected the idea of marriage with other South Asian Muslims. Discussions revealed that these decisions were based on cultural differences which included language at its core. Mixed marriages are uncommon in the Sylheti community. Only one example of a Sylheti girl marrying an Afro Caribbean was revealed during my two-year association with the community. However, the sensitivity of the issue made it impossible to broach the subject with anyone. The girl’s family had severed all ties with her and she virtually ceased to exist for her family and the community. Although rare there were a couple of other examples of Sylheti girls in relationships with boys from other ethnic communities. However, boys and girls in this situation face the dilemma of severe consequences such as life threats, kidnapping and

violence by the so-called custodians of culture. Inter-ethnic marriages continue to elicit great disapproval based on cultural differences and racial prejudices.

The Asian arranged-marriage system was singled out as the mechanism used by Asians to evade immigration restrictions and each Asian woman was considered a prospective sponsor of a fiancé from the sub-continent (Brah 1992: 70). Most Asian adolescents interviewed by Brah (1992) expected their marriages to be arranged but they were confident that they would not be forced into a marriage against their wishes. She says Asian parents saw the process of marriage as a joint undertaking which was open to negotiation (1992:72). However, in the analysis of social processes, Brah does not account for socio-economic status, cultural background or the urban versus rural distinctions of the community. Features of arranged marriages like other ethno-specific norms and values vary among South Asian ethnocultural groups of urban and rural backgrounds. Among the rural Sylhetis, marriages continue to be arranged by their parents with a kin or a co-villager because these arrangements are thought to be compatible in every respect.

Student responses on the contexts of acceptability are shown in Table 6.43.

	Associate with			Prefer as neighbours			Allow siblings to play with		
	S	NSB	O	S	NSB	O	S	NSB	O
Always	30	12	9	5	7	1	22	13	11
Usually	5	5	9	4	6	8	9	5	8
Sometimes	4	9	3	2	3	1	4	5	1
Rarely	2	1	4	2	2	2		1	2
Never					1	1		1	2
Did not respond	4	18	20	22	26	32	10	20	21
Total N	45								

Table 6.43 Students responses towards different ethnic communities and contexts.
S=Sylheti, NSB=Non-Sylheti Bangladeshis, O=Others.

Most students prefer to associate with Sylhetis and allow siblings to play with them. However, unlike adult responses most students they do not prefer their own kind as neighbours. There were a large group of students who did not respond to this question. This may be because many of their neighbour’s children were in the same classroom with them often sitting beside them and glancing at each other’s responses. Most of these students later confided that their Sylheti neighbours were inquisitive and interfering. They said they would be much happier if they could live away from them.

Responses to who they prefer to invite to social functions, have as close family friends and prefer to marry are shown in Table 6.44.

	Invite to social functions			Prefer as close family friends			Marry		
	S	NSB	O	S	NSB	O	S	NSB	O
Always	30	11	6	28	8	8	28	5	4
Usually	3	8	9	3	4	5	4	5	4
Sometimes	7	1	5	4	8	7	6	9	5
Rarely	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	1	6
Never		2	2	2	2	3		2	4
Did not respond	3	21	21	7	20	20	5	23	22
Total N	45								

Table 6.44 Students responses towards different ethnic communities and contexts.
S=Sylheti, NSB=Non-Sylheti Bangladeshis, O=Others.

Almost 50% of students failed to respond to the question of marrying NSB and Others. The majority preferred Sylhetis as close friends. This finding is similar to Mukherjee’s (1996) analysis of friendship patterns which revealed that compared to the Panjabis, Bengalis had insular attitudes and only two of her 30 respondents had non-Bengali friends. Responses also reveal that although most preferred to marry Sylhetis, there were a few students who preferred to marry outside the community. Mukherjee’s (1996) study of the immigrant Panjabis and Bengalis in Delhi revealed that both communities preferred

endogamous marriages. Despite exposure to Hindi, Panjabi and Bangla, Bengali respondents were apprehensive about marrying non-Bengalis primarily because of the differences in language, culture and community obligations. One respondent reported that differences in food habits could strain the relationship especially as rice is the staple food of the Bengalis but, wheat is the staple diet of the Panjabis. Her study also reveals that though Panjabis were opposed to mixed marriages in principle they were slightly more flexible than the Bengalis. For example marriage with a Hindi-speaking person from northern India was not considered an inter-community marriage because linguistic and cultural differences were marginal.

6.20 Differences between Sylhetis and other Bangladeshis

Respondents were asked if they perceived any differences between themselves and other Bangladeshis including what were the differences based on (Q 67). Underlined numbers for adults and students in Table 6.45 reveal the total number of responses. Reasons for the perceived differences are directly below the responses of those who agreed.

Are there any differences between Sylhetis and other Bangladeshis		
	Adults	Students
No	42	20
Yes, there are differences in		
language	28	20
education (i.e. other Bangladeshis are more	6	
culture	2	2
religious values (i.e. Sylhetis are more religious)	2	3
Total	<u>80</u>	<u>45</u>

Table 6.45 Differences between Sylhetis and other Bangladeshis.

More than 50% adults and almost 50% students do not perceive any differences between Sylhetis and other Bangladeshis. However, more students than adults reported that there

were differences. The most significant difference reported by both adults and students was language. Most of those who report that they think Sylhetis are different from other Bangladeshis selected language as the most salient difference. Other reasons which were few in number were, nevertheless, significant. A couple of adults and students reported that there were differences in culture and a few adults (2) and students (3) reported that Sylhetis were more religious than other Bangladeshis. These observations were pertinent given that nationalities are usually grouped together on generalised assumptions made about them. Differences reported about language attest the claim that there are two distinctly different native languages associated with the study of LMS among the Sylheti-Bangladeshis and that the language used by the Sylhetis is different from Bangla.

These responses were compared to those on Sylheti's similarity with Bangla (Q 30). Students' responses on Sylheti's similarity with Bangla are consistent with the information shown in Table 6.45. 20 students reported that it was similar, 15 students reported it was not similar and 10 did not know. Responses from Table 6.42 reveal that just over 50% adults report that Sylhetis are different from other Bangladeshis. When these responses were compared to Sylheti's similarity with Bangla it was found that the majority of adults (64) thought Sylheti was similar to Bangla (see section 6.9). Therefore the 22 adults who thought Sylheti was similar to Bangla were among those who reported that Sylhetis differed from other Bangladeshis because they speak different languages.

This concludes the analysis of the Leeds survey data. An overall evaluation of the model used, the methods employed and the findings reported are discussed and concluded in the next chapter.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter the theoretical implications of the model, the significance of the methods used and the relevance of data obtained for the aims of this study are discussed. Section 7.2 examines how the vitality model is used to identify the community's first language network in order to establish the type of linguistic network successive generations have developed. Section 7.3 emphasises those aspects of methodology which were particularly important in the context of Sylheti migrants in diaspora. Language use data analysed as potential determinants of LMS in section 7.4 investigates whether linguistic choices are congruent with historical, cultural and political divisions leading to maintenance or shift. Factors which promote language maintenance as opposed to those which promote language shift are summed up in section 7.5.

7.2 The model

Based on the model of additive and subtractive bilingualism (Landry and Allard 1994) this study focused upon the objective (Giles et al., 1977) and subjective (Bourhis et al., 1981) vitality assessment of languages in the Sylheti community's repertoire. Results from the study are compatible with those of previous studies (Bourhis and Sachdev 1984, Giles et al., 1985, Ytsma et al., 1994) in showing that the consideration of the political, socio-historic and socio-psychological factors (see section 1.5) underpinning the vitality profile of Sylheti migrants was essential to their subjective vitality perceptions. Three socio-structural vitality factors were investigated (see section 2.5) to distinguish between those which favoured language maintenance from those which favoured language shift. Demographic information was used to develop a profile of the community's relative proportion in the total population of the UK, their degree of concentration in local areas, the degree of endogamy and their immigration patterns. Institutional support for Bangla and Sylheti was investigated which

revealed that Bangla was offered in secondary education, media and in the reproduction of cultural activities.

According to Landry and Allard (1994), ethnolinguistic identities are rooted in individual networks of linguistic contact. Therefore, each individual's network of linguistic contacts (INLC) was determined from the individual's interpersonal contact with family and friends, contacts through the media such as television, educational support received in L1 and L2 and written contacts through newspapers, magazines, books etc. A drawback of the model of additive and subtractive bilingualism is that it does not explicitly mention language use across generations. However, different generations of speakers were included in this study because language use across different generations in language-centred groups allows us to observe change in beliefs and perceptions over time. Also, examining ideological perceptions which stem from ideological systems such as ethnicity and identity and investigating social systems such as marriage and family values broadened the scope of the model used. Ability to use and learn languages among different generations in the Sylheti community was determined by demographic vitality factors which in turn were determined by each individual's network of linguistic contact (INLC). In this way language(s) used in the speaker's mother-tongue network, a mixed language network and in the different oral, written, formal and informal opportunities of linguistic contacts were identified. The importance of the speakers' network was demonstrated in one of the early studies by Blom and Gumperz (1972), who argued that language use of different linguistic minorities cannot be explained simply by proving that they qualify as members of a speech community by virtue of being speakers of a particular language. It is only by examining the informal networks of speakers can we understand why and to what extent they conform to particular linguistic norms. The LMP (1985), Verma et al. (2001) and Lawson and Sachdev's (2004) findings associated Bangla as the language of the Bangladeshi speech community and despite referring to the community as Sylheti-Bangladeshi and identifying the existence of another language variety (Sylheti), Sylheti's role was not clearly illustrated. Therefore, one of the contributions of this ethnographic study was separating the identity of Bangla from that of Sylheti to allow respondents to think in terms of two different languages. In doing so, INLC identified the language(s) used in the mother-tongue network as opposed to the friendship or other networks.

Ethnolinguistic behaviour was also analysed by incorporating some belief questions with subjective vitality questions (Qs 29-43, Appendix 3) and those related to 'habitual language use' (Fishman 1964). Fishman's (1964) approach postulates that the analysis of LMS relies on habitual language use by ascertaining the degree of bilingual activity. However, it was difficult to assess beliefs pertaining to EV because at the time the survey was carried out there was no previous research on the Sylheti community using the subjective vitality questionnaire. Therefore, questions on the socio-historic status of Bangla were asked to assess vitality-related beliefs of the community (see section 5.8.1). EV in terms of beliefs is significant in the analysis of the social determinants of language use because the family and the school play an important role in the formation of beliefs which influence first language learning and maintenance.

In devising methods for the survey the behaviour of the individual and inter-personal speaker-addressee relationship was as significant as situational factors. Because individual behaviour is subject to interpretation based on specific ethnocultural norms (Fishman 1964), methods employed to obtain language use data are discussed in the next section.

7.3 Methods

Responses on objective and subjective EV of the community and habitual language use (Fishman 1964) were examined with respect to domains (home, school, work and friendship) of language behaviour. The theoretical preliminaries used for eliciting language use data in different domains relied on Fishman's (1972) argument that domains are a powerful tool for examining language use. The domains selected for each speaker's own linguistic environment (INLC) were determined by the socio-cultural organisation of the community. Based on the dimensions suggested by Weinreich (1954) that language shifts should be studied against time in the context of language loyalty and the functions of languages in contact, different generations of speakers were examined for a quantitative index of language behaviour.

The principal method for data elicitation was questionnaire-related self-reported information in conjunction with participant observation methods. Participant observation

was crucial in verifying self-reported language information in, for example, the household. As a participant observer, I could restate responses not only as a way of reiterating what was said but also as a means to interpret and clarify unexplained responses (see section 3.3.2). Observations also revealed that caution should be exercised when recording data obtained by the help of standard language teachers. Example from the pilot survey revealed how the Sylheti-speaking Bangla teacher made one of the students record Bangla as her home language even though the student did not use it in her home domain (see section 4.3). This kind of misreporting of language perception as language production can lead to misleading information. Bangla is a good example of a language that has been over-represented in use. Examples of language use data of the Bangladeshis (LMP 1985, Verma et al. 2001, Lawson and Sachdev 2004) reveal that the Sylhetis declare themselves to be habitual speakers of a language they do not use in every day conversation.

It appears that the attitude of many language teachers promoting standard language continues to be a typical issue. In one of the early studies of Italians in Australia, Rando (1982: 70) observes that Italian language teachers assume that the child taking Italian at school knows standard Italian.

If a child from a Sicilian family upon being told that ‘cat’ in Italian is ‘il gatto’ remarks that at home they use ‘u iattu’, the teacher more often than not replies that ‘u iattu’ is wrong, say ‘il gatto’.

Examples from Milroy (1980), LMP (1985), Van der Avoird (2001) and the pilot project in York reveal that language use investigation in diglossic speech communities benefits greatly by selecting an ‘academically trained bilingual researchers from the linguistic minority in question’ (LMP 1985: 108) who is essentially unbiased towards non-standard or low status language varieties (see section 4.3). It was possible to validate the language actually used by respondents primarily on the basis of my approach and linguistic competence in native language varieties. Therefore linguistic proficiency of the fieldworker is a prerequisite for research in communities which have belief systems about their language and have regional languages (e.g. Sylheti) and dialects in their repertoire (see section 1.6). Despite my linguistic competence in Sylheti and Bangla, my training as a

researcher and previous fieldwork experience with the Sylhetis in Tower Hamlets, extensive planning was done to execute the type of community study which was carried out in York and Leeds on the basis that the Sylheti community was known to be insular (see chapters 4 and 6).

Therefore an understanding of traditional norms and cultural factors is essential towards an understanding of how ethnic groups are influenced by their backgrounds and the situation they have been exposed to. Classifying linguistic methodology, Labov (1972) says that sociolinguists step beyond their research institutions into the street to gather data on language use as the people use it in everyday interaction. The perspective and scope of people's environment ranges from traditions to regional and local culture, settlement patterns, historic background, ideological perceptions, religion, area of origin and class. In view of the nature and scope of the study, the success of the methods employed lay to a large extent on my previous fieldwork experiences. Evidence from piloting in York also revealed how the way I presented myself was perceived by one male as an affront to Muslim values (see section 3.3.1.2). Although his view was not characteristic of the group, it made me conscious that my outwardly appearance may affect field relationships. I dressed modestly within the norms of Bangladeshi tradition but refrained from adopting an extreme measure such as a veil. The way I presented myself did not affect fieldwork in any way in York and Leeds. However, it may be pointed out that in some situations extreme measures are not uncommon and may even be necessary in sociolinguistic surveys (see Harvey 1992, Gardner 1995, Hazen 2000, Feagin 2002).

A covert backstage entry (Jorgensen 1989) was established as successful for the pilot project and was thus also used for entering the community in Leeds (see section 3.3.1). Several other approaches such as finding a suitable role in the community, my role as a tutor, as a friend of a friend, familiarity through my job, linguistic and ethnic affiliation and the personal relations that had developed in the course of one year proved to be extremely effective in establishing an informal relationship between myself and the participants and in ensuring that informants were relaxed and their responses were authentic. A place in the community allowed me to observe respondents' language and social behaviour in real-life situations. This first-hand experience was immensely useful to understand the structure and

dynamics and the social mechanisms of the community. Different perspectives of their social and cultural environments provided a balanced view of the psychological perceptions of their language and their characteristic linguistic behaviour. The trust that had developed also provided me with the opportunity to justify my good intentions. It was for the first time that key issues such as the possibility of a Sylheti and a Bangla identity without making a choice or challenging the sanctity of Bangla were addressed over many cups of *cha* (tea) and *paan* (betel leaf with chopped betel nuts etc). However, despite gaining the confidence and trust of the families I positioned myself on an insider/outsider boundary and was always conscious about keeping discussions general because the aim was to identify the respondents' first language network so that they realised that there were two native languages in question and that they used one or both.

Migrant communities from South Asia also differ in the extent to which they maintain or shift from their language depending on culture-specific variables. Examples discussed in chapter 3 reveal how different sets of rules apply to the same situation or vice versa. Ghuman and Gallop's (1981) study revealed that familiarity with the community and a common language ensured smooth field relationship with the Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims. However, the Verma et al., (2001) survey revealed that despite similarities in race, colour and language, religion of the fieldworkers was one of the main reasons for ineffective communication with the Muslim Bengali migrant community they were investigating (see section 3.2.2). The significance of gender has also been found to vary depending on the ethnic background of the fieldworker. Moffat's (1990) study revealed that as a female, white British fieldworker she was accepted into the Pakistani community she investigated whereas, no male regardless of age or ethnicity was allowed into their homes. On the other hand, the Pakistani Muslim bilingual co-worker was not free to enter the homes of the participants in case she met men who were not family members. In this example traditional religious norms became more important than the gender of the fieldworker. Such example reveals that fieldwork strategies are specific to individuals rather than a group phenomenon.

Variables such as migration, age at arrival and education were considered influential factors in determining language choices, attitudes and use. However, these variables are not

necessarily consistent among all ethnic migrant groups of South Asian origin. For example, Subramonian (1977) suggests non-migration as one of the variables for language maintenance in Kerala, South India. On the other hand, Mukherjee's (1996) study of migrant Hindu Bengalis and Panjabis in Delhi stress patterns of migration and settlement as crucial in maintaining their language.

In view of Bangla's socio-historic and socio-political past, age at arrival of migrants was perceived as crucial in shaping language attitudes and determining levels of language proficiency. The years spent in Sylhet were expected to influence language attitudes, clarify the relationship between Sylheti and Bangla for those in education and thus determine their levels of proficiency in Bangla. However, this investigation revealed that age at arrival's influential impact on the migrant's socio-psychological perceptions can only shape their perceptions on language issues if respondents' have observed or participated in the ritualisation of events related to the linguistic struggle of Bangla held in the areas they come from. Respondents' education history revealed that the majority of adults (52) had attended primary school and many (26) went on to secondary school. However, this information did not in itself provide an accurate measure of their proficiency in Bangla because many adults who reported enrolling in the primary school did not complete primary education. Many of those who reported going to secondary school dropped out before completing secondary education. Also, attending school did not guarantee literacy in Bangla. The survey by Education Watch in Bangladesh revealed that one in every three children dropped out of school before completing primary schooling and one in every three remained semi-literate (see section 1.3.2). In rural communities, education in Bangla is not a priority because it does not affect agriculture-based work. For migrants entering the UK, education in Bangla is also not necessary because the vast majority of adults in the sample are employed or self-employed in ethnic businesses. Therefore for Sylheti migrants education in Bangla is neither necessary in rural Sylhet nor in the UK. Also, as all marriages are arranged with a kin or a co-villager the lingua franca between spouses is Sylheti. A 35 year old illiterate male spouse from Sylhet who arrived in the UK at the age of 33 reported he had no problems communicating with his British-educated wife solely because they were both proficient in Sylheti (see section 6.4). This example is not characteristic of the group, but is, nevertheless, significant because it reveals that having spent many years in Sylhet does not

guarantee literacy in Bangla. Therefore, a recommendation for future studies is that research on diglossic speech communities should design a language proficiency test to examine levels of proficiency in the native standard because this investigation revealed that information on education and proficiency in Bangla based on age at arrival was found to be unreliable.

The criteria that the fieldworker be a Muslim female from the ethnic group under investigation worked well in the investigation of Sylheti rural migrants. However, fieldwork experience revealed that the insider status of the researcher must be approached with caution because positioning myself linguistically and culturally as a Bangladeshi woman who understood the norms and expectations of the families with whom I was negotiating imposed certain obligations. I had to be careful about maintaining the code of conduct and conventions of formality between myself and the respondents (see section 3.3.3). Any breach in the code of conduct would have made me lose ‘face’ (Goffman 1967) and my credibility. Therefore, fieldwork strategies have to be carefully and strategically planned based on an examination of the migrant group’s cultural, linguistic and traditional background. It would be naive to make generalised assumptions about South Asian language culture or ethnicity as a whole because they constitute different culture-specific ethnocultural sub-groups within the cultural, linguistic and religious majority. As much as these categories were essential in executing the survey they are not all equally significant for all ethnic sub-groups (see sections 3.2 and 3.3). What works well in one community may not be the same in another. The success of fieldwork for this survey lay in recognising that each field setting is unique and working with real people one cannot disregard the interpersonal skills, commonsense abilities and sensitivity towards participants.

7.4 The data

To identify the L1, L2 and the mixed language network the crucial step in this investigation was to disambiguate the confusion and discrepancies in labelling native language varieties such as Bangla and Sylheti as the mother-tongue of their speakers. This issue was revealed as the most complex because native language ideology had a deep-rooted impact on language perceptions. Despite separating the identity of Bangla and Sylheti as two native

language options analysis revealed that respondents often confused or overlapped Sylheti's identity with Bangla. To analyse language use as potential determinants of LMS in a diglossic speech community which perceives language as a potent symbol of group identity, two important questions were addressed: does the community maintain a language because it is their mother-tongue or does mother-tongue maintenance depend upon language as a valued aspect of group identity?

Information from a range of questions (Qs 14, 17, 18, 25) revealed that the majority of adults and students report Sylheti as mother-tongue. However, Bangla was also reported as the mother-tongue by a few adults and students but its use was not attested from the responses reported in the family domain (see section 6.6). There was no evidence of the use of Bangla with either the immediate or the extended family in the adult sample (see Table 6.13 and

Table 6.14). The only reported use of Bangla was with the Bangla teacher (see Table 6.15). Although Bangla was reported as mother-tongue more often by students than adults, use of Bangla was also not attested from the responses reported by students in the home domain. Adult and student responses therefore contradict the claims made about Bangla as mother-tongue. Clearly, the identification of Bangla as mother-tongue is linked to reasons other than use. From the responses reported in York (see Table 4.13) and in Leeds there is no doubt that Sylheti is the mother-tongue of the respondents investigated.

Cultural norms of appropriacy of language use are evident in the family domain. Analysis of language behaviour establishes that Sylheti is overwhelmingly the language perceived as appropriate with parents and grandparents and if siblings are older, and a code mixed Sylheti and English if the siblings are younger. These findings confirm that a Sylheti person's choice of language is constrained by his/her relationship with and age of interlocutor. In the wider society's norms there is the overwhelming use of English among siblings and friends in the student sample. Students' use of English in the family domain (see Table 6.16 and Table 6.17) suggests that role-relationships and social hierarchy are challenged by individuals through language practices. While English has intruded into the home domain, it has not threatened the use of Sylheti. Language use data further reveals that despite Sylheti having no prestige status or institutional support, it has more vitality

than Bangla in the context of migrants in the UK and is maintained by adults and students. The use of Sylheti and English in the home domain are indicative of language maintenance with additive stable bilingualism in the family and friendship domain. Although Fishman (1972) argues that the use of English in the family domain indicates that the functional criterion is unstable, language data from this study reveals that the intrusion of English in the home has not threatened the use of Sylheti. LMP (1985) comments that unstable bilingualism reflected in assimilation and language shift towards English language and culture is much more likely in case of the linguistic minorities in the UK. However, Fishman (1967) argues that concepts of stable and unstable bilingualism are not useful because they do not reveal how stability or instability arises. The distinction between stable and unstable bilingualism depends upon differences in the duration of the process. Languages undergoing shift may use the mother-tongue and the language of contact for several generations.

Language behaviour examined from the multidimensional facets of social, historical and psychological conditioning reveal that Sylheti and English constitute the main languages in the verbal repertoire of adults and students with immediate and extended family and friends. The role of Sylheti, Bangla and English suggests that Bangla's use is limited in the linguistic repertoire of the community. Lack of or limited literacy in Bangla makes it legitimate to suggest that Sylheti is safely fostered in the family, neighbourhood and the community. However, further research into the educational profile of the community revealing the impact of educational achievement through English will suggest the possibility of a shift from Sylheti to English as other studies have indicated. For example, young Polish Australians found that in situations where it was possible to use both Polish and English with siblings and friends their own age, it was easier to use English as their linguistic system was better developed and more often activated (Smolicz and Secombe 1985).

Language attitude is one of the ways of understanding how language is used as a symbol of group membership. Despite the fact that the adults attach the highest attributes to Bangla, most do not speak, read or write it. Adults are able to understand it because many have had exposure to Bangla in Bangladesh from the environment, education etc while those in the

UK have had exposure to Bangla mainly through the media of television and videos. An overwhelming majority of adult respondents stated that they wanted both themselves and their children to speak Bangla, yet analysis of questionnaire data revealed that the language that stood out was Sylheti. Adult members of the community subscribe to the teaching of Bangla in the out-of-school classes and throughout the analysis older respondents' subjective perceptions have consistently been more positive towards Bangla. However, despite the out-of-school Bangla classes established by the community, Bangla was not used because it was not the language of home. The example of the Welsh in Australia reveals that because of a lack of support in the teaching of Welsh and the fact that Welsh-Australians did not establish out-of-school language classes like the Poles and the Greeks, home was the only domain where Welsh was maintained (Hughes 1988). Children who were fluent in Welsh at the time of migration retained their proficiency only for a short time. Once they entered school, language loss was rapid including understanding proficiency which began to decline gradually. By contrast, despite positive attitudes towards Bangla and a strong desire for their children to learn it, Bangla learnt at community school played an insignificant role in the socio-cultural environment of community members.

Responses analysed for language attributes revealed that adults valued Bangla more than they valued Sylheti or English (see Table 6.39). English was associated with western values and influences. Despite a very close correlation between the usefulness of Sylheti, Bangla and English, interview data revealed that many parents did not encourage their children to pursue higher education in English because of the values they perceived were associated with it. This attitude is consistent with the UK census reports which reveals that Bangladeshis were the least likely to have degrees and were most likely to be unqualified. Nearly half of Bangladeshi men and 40% of Bangladeshi women had no qualifications (Department of Education and Skills, Labour Force Survey 2001/02). Students, on the other hand, valued English and Sylheti more than Bangla. They found Sylheti more pleasant sounding and more useful than Bangla. Positive attitudes towards Sylheti and its dominance in the household at this point in time suggest that Sylheti is the dominant language in the family domain of the younger and older generation of Sylhetis.

In the Bangla classroom, linguistic choices made by students reveal the use of Sylheti rather than Bangla with the Bangla teacher with a handful of exceptions in the school located outside the area of the main survey. Observations reveal that the teacher's efforts to use less Sylheti and more Bangla resulted in a code mixed Sylheti and Bangla. However, the use of Sylheti and English is marked less with challenge and conflict to the system that the teacher represented and more with the students' low levels of proficiency in Bangla. The non-reciprocal responses are largely due to their diffidence in Bangla. Patterns of language use in the domain of education suggest that Sylheti is predominant alongside English, the language of education. Language used with friends in class was mostly English, followed closely by Sylheti and English, and Sylheti alone. Analysis of data also reveal that language used in other networks of linguistic contacts such as walking home in a group, outside school and during discussions was English followed by Sylheti and English. Only one student reported using Bangla during discussions. Responses reported in other networks of contacts (e.g. greet older members and peers, express strong emotions, joke with their friends and swear at other Bangladeshis) revealed that adults use Sylheti to greet older people, friends and to express strong emotions such as swearing (see Table 6.20). Students also reported using Sylheti with the older generation but with friends the languages used were English or Sylheti and English. These languages were also used to express strong emotions, joke with friends and to swear at them. Only a few adults and students reported using Bangla or combinations of Bangla and English and Sylheti and Bangla in the same contexts.

In the employment domain most community members do not necessarily require English as the majority of men work in the catering trade or other ethnic businesses with other Sylhetis. LMP (1985) findings also revealed that Bangla was used extensively in the workplace. Their analysis concluded that the community supports the use of Bangla in a wide range of ways and most aspects of their daily life can be conducted in both settings through Bangla (i.e. Sylheti) without ever needing to resort to English (LMP 1985).

Differences between the vitality of Bangla and Sylheti are reflected in the subjective vitality perceptions which examined perceptions of regional and national identities (Q 31). It was found that adults are more proud of their Bangla identity than they are of their Sylheti

identity whereas students are equally divided on this issue. Almost equal numbers of students took pride in both regional and national identity (see Table 6.29). Responses reported on Sylheti's similarity with Bangla reveal that most adults and students in York and Leeds reported that Sylheti was similar to Bangla. However, responses reported on whether it was a language or a dialect reveal that while most respondents in York thought it is a language the majority of adults and more than 50% students in Leeds thought it is a dialect (see Table 6.26). The improved socio-economic status of the York respondents' may have influenced them to elevate the status of their language variety by referring to Sylheti as a language and increase its importance. This group's perceptions towards Sylheti and Bangla are based on their language experiences in the UK rather than nationalistic aspirations towards Bangla.

Responses reported for preferences between Sylheti Nagri and Bangla (Q 28) revealed that the majority of adults preferred reading and writing in Bangla and English. Students had more positive attitudes towards Sylheti than adults. More students (13) favoured Sylheti and English compared to adults (3) who favoured the same. Importance attached to the learning of Bangla and English (Q 41 and 43 Appendix 3) revealed that most adults and students attach the most importance to learning Bangla and English. Responses to whether Sylhetis were different from other Bangladeshis (Q 79) revealed that most adults (42) thought they were not different. Those who thought that Sylhetis were different (38) based their reasons on language differences. Only a few adults thought that the differences were based on culture, education and religious differences as separating the two groups. On the contrary the majority of students (25) agreed that the most prominent difference between Sylhetis and other Bangladeshis was language.

The Leeds data also revealed that most adults and students did indeed have integrative reasons for knowing Bangla and Sylheti and only instrumental reasons for learning English. The main difference, however, was that students selected both integrative and instrumental options for both Sylheti and Bangla but adults selected only integrative options for both native languages (see Table 6.34). Piloting revealed that the reasons for learning Sylheti were integrative and also instrumental because with a few exceptions all adults were employed or self-employed in ethnic businesses for which they required a working

knowledge of Sylheti. Also, if respondents were interested in teaching their children Sylheti (provided it was made available) then they would have instrumental reasons for learning it. For communities in diaspora, exposure to the language of the host community affects their linguistic perceptions, influences their language behaviour and their processes of assimilation. Therefore, the age at which respondents started to learn English was identified (Q 16). This information was not easily forthcoming in the case of adults. Most adults referred to a landmark situation that they could easily recall while students supplied this information without any difficulty. It is my understanding that for adults this question may have been perceived as a way of confirming their date of arrival or length of stay in the UK, information they were reluctant to supply.

Students selected a variety of options for knowing Sylheti, Bangla and English. Only one student linked Bangla with identity compared to three who linked Sylheti with identity (see Table 6.30). There were some students (11) for whom none of the integrative or instrumental options were important. When these responses were compared with motivations they had for learning English it was found that the majority (37) selected instrumental options for learning English. There were others who reported that none of the options for Bangla were important perhaps because they felt that it was not necessary for them to learn Bangla. There were also a few who thought that all integrative and instrumental options for Bangla were equally important (see Table 6.36).

Future studies on the younger generation of Sylhetis will predict if positive orientation towards the target language group influences processes of assimilation. Based on the findings, implications for language planning policy for students from ethnic minority backgrounds in schools in the UK may be reviewed. It is important to reiterate that the question of motivation addresses issues which influence language learning in a diasporal/multilingual context. For the Bangladeshis, Bangla is not a second language and an integrative friendly outlook towards the Bangla language group whose language is being learnt does not arise. However, formal language training and informal language exposures are different. Formal language learning involves literacy in Bangla whereas informal language exposure can be from watching Bangla programmes on television and listening to radio programmes which are in Bangla. Similar number of adults (31) reported watching

Bangla and English language television and therefore, their informal exposure to Bangla and English was similar. Despite similar exposure, learning Bangla and English were associated with contrasting reasons such as only integrative for Bangla and only instrumental for English. Motivations for knowing Sylheti and Bangla, language attitudes and stereotypes, preferences for learning native languages revealed mixed responses.

Because the community live in a densely populated Sylheti neighbourhood and most families are related or are co-villagers there is no doubt that their native languages or language varieties are transmitted to the next generation. Investigation into their network of friends revealed that most adults (68) had Sylhetis as close friends while others reported English and Pakistanis as their closest friends. Most students (22) also reported Sylhetis as their closest friends and the rest reported a combination of Sylheti, English and Pakistanis. Questions on contexts of acceptability reflected the criteria within which other ethnic and religious groups may be accepted. Responses revealed greatest association with Sylhetis. However, despite strong associations with a Muslim identity, most Sylhetis rejected the idea of marriage with other South Asian Muslims such as the Pakistanis or Indian Muslims. Inter-ethnic marriages continue to elicit great disapproval. Discussions on intra-ethnic marriage with spouses arranged from Sylhet revealed some dissatisfaction among younger Sylhetis but this topic was not much favoured for discussion. As a general rule such marriages continue to be arranged. It is my understanding that if nothing else, stereotypic notions of intra-ethnic marriage ensure chain migration and cultural continuity by providing legal status to the spouse.

Despite the community's strong convictions of religious identity cultural bias, racial prejudices and linguistic differences prevent rural migrants from marrying Muslims outside their own rural community (see section 6.19). This is principally because social rituals of birth, death and marriage are deep-rooted in rural areas and chain migration from rural Sylhet continues to be socially channelled through arranged marriages with kin or co-villagers (see section 1.4.3). Patterns of mixed-marriages represent a linguistically heterogeneous group. However, as long as marriages are arranged from their areas of origin, there is no ecological pressure coercing the group to form new ethnic loyalties. Thus migration and settlement patterns ensure cultural and linguistic maintenance.

In order to examine if the diglossic role of Bangla sustains itself in diaspora or if the interplay between languages is an indicator for LMS, responses to language behaviour are analysed within a double diglossia speech situation which involves Sylheti, Bangla and English. It is important to clarify that the data is examined within the context of the UK and it would be inappropriate to use the concept of diglossia as defined by Fishman and Ferguson. The situation with Sylheti and English among those who have good proficiency in English may be interpreted in terms of H-variety and L-variety. However, in the monolingual British education system the concept of H and L does not exist and in terms of Sylheti people's own perception Sylheti does not have a low status. Sylheti speakers are not required to alter their home language variety as they represent an overwhelming majority and there are no Sylhetis who cannot speak their home language. There is a strong sentimental attachment to Bangla but this does not find expression in the cultivation of Bangla either as a home language or language of activity.

Religion, ethnicity, socio-historic and socio-political status are obvious categories to establish in a community that is under-researched and the relationship between ethnicity, ethnic identity and nationalism is crucial to understand the ideological perceptions towards Bangla (see section 1.5). However, it is difficult to draw a line between any of these issues due to overlap and interplay between them in the changed circumstances of migrants' identity perceptions in diaspora. In some communities in which the language of religion is the same as the language spoken at home, languages have survived despite political and cultural repression (e.g. Welsh). The presence of Bangla in the Sylheti environment appears consistently to be a powerful factor in ideological rather than practical terms. Bangla's significance is revealed in its importance as the core value of the group from responses reported on mother-tongue (see section 6.4), the importance of learning Bangla (see section 6.14) and language attributes (see section 6.18). Smolicz (1981) argues that cultural groups differ in the extent to which they emphasise their native language as core values. For example, Irish Gaelic continues to be a potent symbol of ethnic identity despite the fact that many are unable to speak it including those who have learnt it at school but do not use it in everyday conversation (O' Buachalla 1984, Harris and Murtagh 1987). The Chinese migrants in Australia recognise Chinese as the core value of Chinese culture. These positive

attitudes were held by those who did not know Chinese and had no intentions of learning it either (Smolicz et al., 1989).

From the variety of responses selected by adults and students it is clear that no single socio-psychological or socio-historic issue relating language, culture and identity can account for the responses. Responses to ethnic identity revealed that language and ethnic identity were not related reciprocally. Neither Bangla nor Sylheti identity is strongly language-based. Language attitudes and perceptions may be influenced by the socio-historic and socio-political perceptions of Bangla but that does not necessarily mean using Bangla. Most adults reported a Muslim identity or one in which religion and national identity was merged. The majority of students identified themselves first and foremost as Muslims (see Table 6.30 and Table 6.31). Religion was therefore, clearly the most prominent symbol of the community's ethnic identity. In the wake of recent changes in the socio-political climate of the UK identity perceptions of Bangladeshi Muslims have changed from secular to Islamic and irrespective of the age at which migrants arrived in the UK, evidence from the data suggests that religion rather than language has now become the focus of their identity.

Future research into language-centred migrant groups should include questions aimed specifically at the respondents' experience and knowledge of their socio-historic past. The information could then be used to measure the extent to which language behaviour is influenced by these factors. Analysis of multilingual behaviour of the Sylhetis cannot ignore the significance of identifying the native languages in the community's repertoire especially when Bangla is characterised by diglossia. Simply by establishing empirical relationships it is not possible to account for those relationships.

It must also be pinpointed that unlike the communities in Oberwart (Gal 1979) and East Sunderland (Dorian 1981), the Sylhetis in the UK represent a distinctive ethnocultural subgroup of global migrants who have crossed over diverse ethnic, national, religious and cultural boundaries. Mukherjee's (1996) study of LMS reveals that the Bengali migrants settled in Delhi were a distinct and cohesive group who retained their exclusive identity by insisting on being labelled Bengalis. She observes that Hindu Bengalis had a more positive attitude towards their native language and their social and cultural values were clearly

defined, revealing that maintenance patterns are a function of attitudes towards the community's language. Unlike the Hindu Panjabis who did not reveal emotional attachments towards Panjab, primarily because of the Hindu-Sikh rivalry, Bengalis saw Bengal as their home and modelled their linguistic and socio-cultural behaviour after it. The use of Hindi-English mixed-code among the Bengalis was found to have less lexical and structural borrowings from English than those found in the contact situation of the Panjabis. Ethnocultural identities cannot be explained on the basis that by virtue of being speakers of a particular language they qualify as members of a speech community (Blom and Gumperz 1972).

From the responses reported it is evident that if Bangla had a major role in the everyday lives of adults and students, two developing diglossia situations would have been created, one involving Sylheti and Bangla and the other involving Bangla and English. Language use in the family and friendship domain reflect values of intimacy while those in the school, media and work domain reflect values associated with status. From the responses there was no substantial evidence to suggest Sylheti-Bangla bilingualism either in the intimate or the formal domains. Rather, the widespread intrusion of English in the domain of family suggests Sylheti-English bilingualism. The emergence of Sylheti-English bilingualism among the majority is similar to Saxena's (1995) findings which revealed that the Panjabi Hindus were experiencing language change by developing mixed codes. However, the aim of this thesis is not to define the mixed-code in terms of a relentless search for a language and its grammar or to relate the mixed-code to socio-psychological variables such as attitudes and stereotypes. The existence of the mixed-code is perceived as mixing of a shared linguistic potential as a result of languages in contact. Further research is required to analyse the phenomenon of mixed-code. The intrusion of English in intimate domains does not necessarily mean that linguistic assimilation should imply complete loss of identity. Fishman (1966: 15) points out that de-ethnicisation and assimilation on the one hand, and cultural and linguistic maintenance on the other, are 'ubiquitous processes'. He says:

They are neither necessarily opposite sides of the same coin nor conflicting processes. Frequently the same individuals and groups have been simultaneously devoted to both in different domains of behaviour.

Further micro studies are required to gather information on Sylheti discourse and analyse linguistic change that may have taken place across generations. If English completely displaces Sylheti from intimate domains then it would suggest language shift. It is difficult to determine a single factor which can negotiate to make adjustments over another in the transplanted communities' language behaviour in different domains. Clement (1980) says that members of subordinate groups can devalue their sense of belonging to their mother-tongue in favour of the dominant group's language and culture. But this may not necessarily be true as evident from the example of the Doukhobor community which migrated from Russia to Canada in the hope of beginning life in the promised land where their views on communal ownership would be respected (Vanek and Darnell 1978). The reaction from the host community became responsible for their disillusionment to the extent that the community withdrew from mainstream Canadian society while maintaining their language. The way the host society reacted to the expectations of the migrant community became a powerful factor in the processes of LMS. In the example of Sylheti migrants, change from a secular to a religious identity made them re-evaluate and compare their cultural and traditional heritage to that of the host community with the outcome that their sense of belonging was associated with an established Bangla-speaking and a Sylheti-speaking identity.

7.5 Summary

Findings from the surveys reveal that heritage languages Sylheti and Bangla have varied but symbolic and educational importance in the lives of the transplanted community in York and Leeds. In terms of language vitality, Bangla has no institutional or demographic support in York. Bangla gets community support, though, and is taught as a weekly class in the community centre. In densely populated areas such as Leeds, Bangla does receive institutional and community support. In addition, efforts made by adults to arrange Bangla

classes outside school confirm its importance, despite the minor role it plays in the linguistic experience of the community. Teaching an ethnic minority language is one way of counteracting unidirectional shift from minority language to English (LMP 1985: 227). Away from Sylheti roots the community maintain Sylheti within the nuclear and extended family; but from the point of view of maintaining their ethnicity, nationality and heritage it seems that both Bangla and Sylheti are important. However, it must also be noted that a careful examination of the role of Bangla in formal and informal domains is critical. By projecting Bangla as the dominant language of the Sylhetis, Sylheti may be coerced into becoming an endangered language and endangered languages often 'fall victim to predators, changing environments or more successful competitors' (Crawford 1994:5).

Research and theory from the sociological and the socio-psychological traditions (e.g. Fishman 1977; Giles et al.1977) acknowledge that language is one of the most important dimensions of an individual's or a group's ethnic identity. The status and prestige attached to a group's language must have an impact on the individual's behaviour as described in Giles' (1977) structural variable affecting ethnolinguistic vitality. Most respondents were aware of the prestige status of Bangla and therefore, may have decided to project the status of Sylheti as equivalent to Bangla. However, it must be pointed out that because the community in York was small and there were no first generation migrants, issues regarding the status of Sylheti and Sylheti Nagri were not debated. LMP reported that in the densely populated settlement in Tower Hamlets, debate on the nature and status of Sylheti was high on the agenda while the relatively small community in Coventry did not raise this as an important issue. Similar to the responses reported by LMP (1985), discussions on the status of Sylheti as compared to Bangla were the most controversial among the majority of respondents in Leeds. When respondents were given the choices of English and native languages (provided those languages were made available to them) an overwhelming majority of adults (75) and students (29) reported they preferred to read and write in both Bangla and English. Leeds data explicitly reveals that high regard for Bangla must be based on national language ideology since there is little or no evidence to suggest its use in formal or informal domains.

Migration and patterns of settlement in the UK demonstrate that social conditions have had profound effects on the way the Sylhetis live and work. It also reveals how as a community they have maintained their ethnolinguistic identity while acknowledging the linguistic experiences from their socio-historic past. The considerable interplay between the notions of language status, socio-historic and socio-psychological status and language use do not confirm the research question which states that the socio-historic and socio-cultural background influences language use. Evidence from language use patterns in formal and informal contexts suggests that they influence language perceptions by attaching high values and prestige to Bangla and supporting Bangla through community schools but there is little evidence of its use.

Unlike other studies based on the vitality model which revealed language shift (e.g. Gibbons and Ashcroft's 1995;; Bilton 2004; Van der Avoird 2001) or language change (Saxena 1995) from the mother-tongue; this study reveals the maintenance of Sylheti and provides evidence to suggest Sylheti-English bilingualism. Linguistic competences and relationship with the interlocutor were found to be influenced by each individual's network of linguistic contacts. Patterns of language use in the familial domain were systematically and positively related to language competence and social determinants of language use. The dominance of Sylheti among adults and the intrusion of English among students were related to their network of contacts. However, national language ideology also played a significant role in respondents' perceived attitude towards Bangla.

Since the main focus of studies of LMS is change in the composition of languages or change in the use of those languages, some form of social change is essential (Fishman 1992). The language contact situation of the Sylheti Bangladeshis emphasizes that any perceived change is slow. Allard and Landry (1992) argue that the degree of bilingualism can be increased by expanding the L2 network beyond the domain of school. They predict that for minority groups in a situation of low EV, the probability is that bilingualism will be subtractive. Additive bilingualism will depend on the maintenance of a strong L1 in the school and family domain. However, despite Sylheti's low vitality in institutional and status factors, by virtue of the group's vitality in numbers, their dense kinship networks and the arranged marriage system there is no doubt that Sylheti is being maintained as the

language of interpersonal discourse. Unlike the findings reported by LMP (1985:121), which suggests that 'stable societal bilingualism among most linguistic minorities in England is highly unlikely', evidence from language use data reveals stable additive bilingualism at the present time. However, this does not imply that stability will be permanent. The rate of language shift may vary with several generations rather than just one. The Sylheti community in the UK is demographically young and as long as ethnic links are maintained through in-migration and employment in ethnic businesses, most aspects of their lifestyle will continue to be under the influence of their perceived advantage to themselves. Lieberman and McCabe (1982) argue that bilingualism need not generate shift and sometimes shift between generations is very slight even in settings where large numbers of mother-tongue group acquires a second language.

A dominant political theme in recent years has been that all identities must be respected and understood in their own terms. In the politics of ethnicity, culture is paramount as well as untouchable. Smolicz (1992) argues that cultural groups differ in the extent to which they emphasise their native tongue as their core values. Language for groups such as the Bangladeshi Bengalis is not only a medium of communication and self-expression but a defining symbol of ethnic identity. Groups that stress the importance of language as the principal carrier of their culture believe that their survival depends on the preservation of their mother tongue. However, one cannot ignore the fact that Bangladeshis comprise ethnic groups separated on the basis of language, culture, social structure, beliefs etc. Individuals have different relationships to their language for a variety of political, social and/or religious reasons.

Therefore, to devise a single model to account for the phenomenon of LMS is impractical and impossible. In migrant communities, immigration policies affect what the variables for language surveys ought to be at that point in time and how the variables isolated should be incorporated within the framework proposed for the group under investigation. The 1962 UK Immigration Act which aimed to limit migration had the opposite affect. As a consequence of the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act, migrants entering the UK had to be dependents of those already in the UK. Instead of controlling migrants, it became the starting point for chain migration (see section 1.4.2). It remains to be seen what policies are

amended in the wake of the current debates on immigration. Change in policies has an impact on the migration profile and thus the cultural and the linguistic profile of migrants.

The political, social and demographic factors encouraging language maintenance such as large number of Sylheti speakers living closely together, continuing in-migration, stability in occupation, employment where home language is spoken, low social and economic mobility and low levels of education restricting economic and social mobility, language loyalty and ethnic group identity are dominant demographic features of the Sylheti ethnocultural group. Racial discriminations which were largely responsible for ethnic encapsulation have subsequently contributed towards language islands in which Sylheti is the obvious language of interaction among the majority of its members. This kind of demographic profile favours language maintenance. Kloss (1966) argues that the larger the ethnic enclave, the stronger is the members' ability to resist assimilation (see section 2.2.1).

Among cultural factors encouraging language maintenance, cultural and religious ceremonies are associated with Sylheti. For example, *waaz* (religious sermon) which was traditionally narrated in Arabic has been replaced by Sylheti (see section 3.3.1.2). Nationalistic aspirations are associated with the majority of older generations, although evidence also suggests a shift from a secular ethno-nationalistic identity based on language to one based on religion. Analysis reveals that the younger generations' nationalistic aspirations are not as strong as the older generations'. Other key features of identity such as food, dress, music, marriage and religion, reveal predominantly Bangladeshi preferences. The highly preferred intra-ethnic marriages favour endogamy (see Table 6.42 and Table 6.44). Emotional attachment to mother-tongue was associated to a large extent on ideological perceptions attached to the concept of mother-tongue. All family ties and community cohesion are associated with the Sylhetis as a distinctive ethnocultural group. Because language and culture intricately connect the issues of ethnicity, identity, religion tradition etc it is difficult to understand whether a single issue or a combination of issues is responsible for change. Analysis of ethnolinguistic acculturation (e.g. personal choices and interests, Qs 55-61) reveal that although most adults prefer traditional Bangladeshi food, there is evidence to suggest some degree of acculturation (see Table 6.32).

The linguistic factors which encourage language maintenance include the standardisation of mother-tongue and its existence in a written form. However, Sylheti is considered a non-standard variety because the written form has not been introduced (see 1.8). Sylheti does not enjoy an international status but in recent years has been gaining importance in the UK on the basis of the numerical strength of its speakers. Although there is evidence to suggest a widespread use of English among the younger generation, it is not at the cost of losing Sylheti. Analysis of Leeds survey data reveals that language use is indeed related to linguistic competence in English. However, dominance of English does not necessarily imply identifying positively with the group. Had that been the case respondents would have valued British identity especially when English was reported as being used in the home domain. May (2001) observes that external push factors are often responsible for internal pull and language shifts are not solely the results of coercion. Students' use of English in informal domains and in media reveals the influence of English language programmes. For students, British media is the domain which reflects power, prestige and values associated with English. Further research on cross-generational language surveys should investigate the effects of western values and pressures towards assimilation.

The presence of Bangla in the Sylheti linguistic environment appears consistently to be a powerful ideological factor rather than a practical necessity. Analysis of questionnaire data unequivocally indicates that Sylheti is strongest among immediate and extended family and friends. Especially in the context of the UK, there can be but one lingua franca, on the basis that no other is necessary for the encapsulated Sylheti community. Questionnaire data further indicates that the study of Bangla does not have an effect on the perceived value of Sylheti. Factors which favour language maintenance include large numbers of Sylheti speakers in densely populated close neighbourhoods, employment centred around ethnic businesses where home language (Sylheti) is spoken, low levels of education restricting economic and social mobility, continuing in-migration as a result of marriages arranged from Sylhet and regular travel to land of origin ensure the maintenance of Sylheti.

This research has established key issues influencing LMS such as the language that community members actually use, the networks of their interpersonal contacts, other contexts in which Sylheti is dominant and beliefs pertaining to the vitality of both Bangla

and Sylheti. Findings suggest that there is the need to replicate similar multi-faceted model grounded in strong ethnolinguistic traditions for future research. Evidence of Sylheti-English bilingualism suggests that further research is required to investigate the extent to which loan words lead to mixing and eventual language change. Only longitudinal research can illustrate language shift over time. Recent developments which have portrayed Muslim identity as having strong associations with Jihad and other non-Islamic activities may coerce Sylheti Muslims to re-evaluate their identity perceptions once again. Even if that were the case, regionally-specific and community-specific factors would contribute towards maintaining Sylheti.

**TEXT CLOSE TO THE EDGE OF THE
PAGE IN THE ORIGINAL THESIS**

Appendix 1: LMP 1985 Adult Language Usage Survey Questionnaire

Interview number: _____

Quota (sex and age of Respondent): _____

Received on: _____ by: _____

Checked by: _____ by: _____

Debriefing on: _____ by: _____

Coded by: _____

Coding checked by: _____

INTERVIEWER'S FULL NAME (Printed): _____

ADULT LANGUAGE USE SURVEY

Linguistic Minorities Project

Institute of Education

University of London

18 Woburn Square

London WC1

1. TOWN:	COVENTRY BRADFORD LONDON	1 2 3	col 1
2. a NUMBER OF LANGUAGES LISTED IN QU.4 BELOW:			col 2
b Language in which interview was begun: (interviewer to complete)			col 3
c LANGUAGE GROUP:	BENGALI	7	col 4
3. QUESTIONNAIRE NUMBER:			cols
CARD NUMBER:		1	col 8

IN THE ENGLISH VERSION BELOW, ONLY THE ACTUAL QUESTIONS ARE PRINTED IN LOWER CASE (I.e. SMALL) LETTERS, AND THESE QUESTIONS SHOULD BE READ TO RESPONDENTS WORD FOR WORD IN THE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE. EVERYTHING ELSE, WHICH IS PRINTED IN CAPITAL LETTERS, IS DIRECTED TO THE INTERVIEWERS ONLY AND SHOULD THEREFORE NOT BE READ ALOUD.

SECTION A: LANGUAGE SKILLS AND LEARNING HISTORY

১৯৯৯ ১৯৯৯ ১৯৯৯ ১৯৯৯ ১৯৯৯
১৯৯৯ ১৯৯৯ - ১৯৯৯৯ ১৯ ১৯৯৯৯ ১৯৯৯

4. Which other languages do you know besides Bengali, including regional languages and dialects?	a. BENGALI		9- please code dialects here
	b. _____	11-	
	c. _____	13-	
PLEASE WRITE IN THE LANGUAGE/DIALECT NAMES AND CHECK FOR ENGLISH	d. _____	15-	
	e. _____	17-	
	f. _____	19-	
	g. _____	21-	
	h. _____	23-	

আপনি যে ক্ষেত্র গ্রামে এসেছিলেন, সে গ্রামে-এসেই গ্রামে বসে
থাকুন।

5.

When did you last
use each of the
languages or
dialects that you
have just told me
about?

REFER BACK TO EACH
LANGUAGE OR DIALECT
LISTED IN QU. 4

	WITHIN ONE DAY	WITHIN ONE WEEK	WITHIN ONE MONTH	WITHIN ONE YEAR	OVER A YEAR AGO
a	1	2	3	4	5
b	1	2	3	4	5
c	1	2	3	4	5
d	1	2	3	4	5
e	1	2	3	4	5
f	1	2	3	4	5
g	1	2	3	4	5
h	1	2	3	4	5

আপনি বারংবার কি বাড়িতে এসে
ছিলেন?

6. Did you start speaking Bengali

at home?

YES
NO 1 2

আপনি যখন ছোট্ট ছিলাত তখন আপনাত
মা আপনাত মাঝে কোল ভাসিয়ে থাকা চলত?

7. Which language or dialect did your mother
mostly speak to you when you were a
young child?

PLEASE WRITE IN:

34-

আপনি যখন ছোট্ট ছিলাত তখন আপনাত
মা আপনাত মাঝে কোল ভাসিয়ে থাকা চলত?

8. And which language or dialect did your
father mostly speak to you when you were
a young child?

PLEASE WRITE IN:

36-

আপনি যখন প্রথম বারংবার বসে আসে
থাকছিলেন, তখন অনুমানিক আপনাত
কত ছিলো?

9. Roughly what age were you when you
started speaking Bengali?

PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER OF YEARS:

38-

আপনি যখন প্রথম বারংবার বসে আসে
থাকছিলেন তখন আপনি কোল দেখে ছিলেন?

10. Which country were you in when you first
started to speak Bengali?

PLEASE WRITE IN:

40-

আপনার মনে হবে বাংলায় কথা বললে, আপনি কতটা সুস্থিত পাবেন ?
আপনি বাংলা কতটুকু বলতে পারেন ?
আপনি বাংলা কতটুকু পড়তে পারেন ?

আপনি বাংলা পড়া কি বাড়িতে
কিচ্ছিলো ?
মহাকাব্যী ফুল ফাড়া অন্য কোন ক্ষেত্রে
বাংলা পড়া কিচ্ছিলো ?

আপনি কি মহাকাব্যী ফুলে বাংলা
পড়া কিচ্ছিলো ?
আপনি যখন বাংলা পড়া আরম্ভ
করছিলেন, তখন অনুমানিক আপনার
বয়স কত ছিলো ?
আপনি বাংলা কত জালা লিখতে পারেন ?

আপনি কোন দেশে বাংলা পড়তে
এক লিখতে কিচ্ছিলো ?

আপনি কত বছর 'ফুল-ফাড়া'
(ল্যা-পড়া) করছিলেন ?

11. How well would you say you understand Bengali when it is spoken to you?
12. How well would you say you speak Bengali?
13. How well would you say you read Bengali?

VERY WELL	FAIRLY WELL	NOT VERY WELL	NOT AT ALL
1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4

IF RESPONDENT CANNOT READ AT ALL, SKIP TO QUESTION 18

14. Did you learn to read Bengali at home?

YES 1
NO 2

15. Did you learn to read Bengali (also) at language classes outside ordinary school times?

YES 1
NO 2

16. Did you learn to read Bengali at your ordinary school?

YES 1
NO 2

17. Roughly what age were you when you began learning to read Bengali?
WRITE IN NUMBER OF YEARS:

1 4

18. How well would you say you write in Bengali?

VERY WELL 1
FAIRLY WELL 2
NOT VERY WELL 3
NOT AT ALL 4

IF RESPONDENT CANNOT READ AT ALL NOR WRITE AT ALL
SKIP TO QUESTION 24
Questions 19 to 22 have been dropped from this page

23. Which country were you in when you learned to read or write Bengali?

PLEASE WRITE IN:

51

24. How many years of full-time education have you had?

PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER OF YEARS:

52

আপনি যখন স্কুলে ছিলেন, তখন কিসের মাধ্যমে
আপনার আলাপ-আলোচনা হতো ?

Medium of Instruction	Primary or elementary school	Secondary or high school	College or university
When you went to school, which language or dialect was used as the medium of instruction at each stage of your education?	Qu.25	Qu.26	Qu.27
ONLY BENGALI	1	1	1
ONLY ENGLISH	2	2	2
ANOTHER LANGUAGE OR DIALECT MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE OR DIALECT DID NOT HAVE THIS STAGE OF FORMAL EDUCATION/NOT APPLICABLE	3 4 6	3 4 6	3 4 6
IF 3 OR 4 CIRCLED IN ANSWER TO ABOVE QUESTIONS: Please name languages or dialects	Qu.28	Qu.29	Qu.30
	58-59	60-61	62

Appendix 1

আপনি কতটুকু বুঝতে পারেন ?

32. How well would you say that you understand spoken English?

আপনি কতটুকু বলতে পারেন ?

33. How well would you say that you speak English?

আপনি কতটুকু পড়তে পারেন ?

34. How well would you say that you read English?

আপনি কতটুকু লিখতে পারেন ?

35. How well would you say that you write English

VERY WELL	FAIRLY WELL	NOT VERY WELL	NOT AT ALL
1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4

ଆପଣି ଡିଏସ୍‌ସି ଡାଆ କେଆମ୍
କିଆତେ ଆମ୍‌ସ୍‌ କର୍ଯ୍ୟାହିଲେନ ?

36. Where did you start to learn English?

AT HOME 1
AT SCHOOL 2
SOMEWHERE ELSE 3

ମୟା କର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସଲସେନ କେଆମ୍ ?

37. IF 'SOMEWHERE ELSE', please explain where

_____ 6

ଆପଣି ସାଧନ ପ୍ରଥମ ଡିଏସ୍‌ସି କିଆତେ
ଆମ୍‌ସ୍‌ କର୍ଯ୍ୟାହିଲେନ, ତାହା ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନିକ
ଆପଣାର ସାହା କତେ ହିଲେ ?

38. Roughly what age were you when you started to learn English?

PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER OF YEARS:

____ 70-7

ଡିଏସ୍‌ସି କିଆତେ ଶୁରୁ କର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ତମ୍,
ଆପଣି କେନ ଦେକ୍‌ ହିଲେନ ?

39. Which country were you in when you started to learn English?

PLEASE WRITE IN:

_____ 72-7

End of card 1
Col 1-7 as on card 1

2
cols 9-10 empty

ଆପଣି ସାଧନ ପ୍ରଥମ ଡିଏସ୍‌ସି ଡାଆ ଆମ୍‌ସ୍‌
କର୍ଯ୍ୟ - ଖୁଲ ସାମ୍‌ ଦିୟ, ତାହା ଆପଣି
କେନ ଦେକ୍‌ ହିଲେନ ?

41. Which country were you in when you first used English outside school?

PLEASE WRITE IN:

_____ 77

ଆପଣାକେ କେଡ଼ି କି କଥାନ୍ତେ ମୋଜାସି
ହିସାବେ ସାହାୟ କର୍ଯ୍ୟ ?

42. Do you ever have someone to interpret for you?

YES 1
NO 2

IF ANSWER TO QUESTION 42 IS 'NO', SKIP TO QUESTION 45

ସାଧନ ଆପଣି ମୋଜାସି ସାହାୟ କେନ -
When you have someone else to interpret for you:

ତାହା କେ ମୋଜାସି ହିସାବେ ଆକ,
କେ ଆପଣାର କି ଅର୍ ?

43. Who is that person (RELATIONSHIP NOT NAME)

PLEASE WRITE IN:

_____ 74

କେନ କାଜ ମୋଜାସି ସାହାୟ କେନ ?

44. What are the circumstances?

PLEASE WRITE IN:

_____ 76

SECTION B: LITERACY

IF THE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS 13 AND 34 WERE 'NOT AT ALL', DO NOT ASK THE QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION, BUT GO STRAIGHT ON TO SECTION C, I.E. QUESTION 71

I would like to know if you are ever in a situation here in England where you need to read some of the things I am going to ask about:-

ଏ ପରେ ଥାଏ, ଦେଖି ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ବିଷୟରେ
ଭିନ୍ନଭିନ୍ନ ଜାଗାରେ ନିଜର ସ୍ୱ- ଏ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ
ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଏକ ସମସ୍ୟା
ଏକ ସମସ୍ୟା ଜାଣି ।

ଆପଣ କି କେବଳ ଦେଖି ନିଜ ନୋଟିସ୍
ପାଠ୍ୟ ?

ଆପଣ କି ଦେଖି ନିଜ ଦେଖି ନିଜ ?

ଆପଣ କି ଦେଖି ନିଜ (ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ)
କେବଳ-ଏକ ପାଠ୍ୟ ?

ଆପଣ କି ଦେଖି ନିଜ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଦେଖି
ଦେଖି ନିଜ ଦେଖି ନିଜ ?

ଆପଣ କି ଦେଖି ନିଜ ଦେଖି ନିଜ ?

ଆପଣ କି ଦେଖି ନିଜ 'ଦେଖି' ଆପଣ ?

	Written in Bengali বাংলায় লেখা	can you understand them? (ଏକ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ পাঠ্য বিধি)	Written in English ইংরেজীতে লেখা	can you understand them? (অন্য পাঠ্য বিধি)
45. Do you ever see notices in shops	YES NO N/A	1 2 3	1 2	1 2 3
46. Do you ever see calendars	YES NO N/A	1 2 3	1 2	1 2 3
47. Do you ever see information leaflets	YES NO N/A	1 2 3	1 2	1 2 3
48. Do you ever receive personal letters	YES NO N/A	1 2 3	1 2	1 2 3
49. Do you ever receive formal letters	YES NO N/A	1 2 3	1 2	1 2 3
50. Do you ever receive bills	YES NO N/A	1 2 3	1 2	1 2 3

আপনি কখনও এ ধরনের কিছু পড়
শাছেন কিনা, (যেমন -

শব্দকোষ, ক্যালাজিন।

কমিক বই।

পত্রিকা বই।

উপন্যাস - গল্প বই।

অন্যান্য বই।

কোনো শব্দকোষ পাঠ্যপুস্তক
কোন সাহিত্য বই আছে নাকি?

আপনি কি কখনও পাঠ্যপুস্তক
পাঠ্যপুস্তক যান?

কত দিন ২য় পাঠ্যপুস্তক
বই এনাউন্সেন?

পাঠ্যপুস্তক আর কোন কোন
ভাষায় বই আছে?

কোন ভাষায়?

Do you ever read the following
types of things

in Bengali?
বাংলায়

in English?
ইংরেজিতে

51. newspapers, newsletters or magazines

YES
NO

1
2

1
2

52. religious books

YES
NO

1
2

1
2

53. textbooks

YES
NO

1
2

1
2

54. novels

YES
NO

1
2

1
2

55. other books

YES
NO

1
2

1
2

56. Are there any books in Bengali in the Public
Libraries in this city?

YES
NO
DON'T KNOW

1
2
3

57. Do you ever use the Public Library?

YES
NO

1
2

IF 'NO' SKIP TO NEXT PAGE

58. IF 'YES', when did you last borrow a book
from the Library?

WITHIN LAST WEEK
WITHIN LAST MONTH
WITHIN LAST YEAR
OVER A YEAR AGO
NEVER

1
2
3
4
5

IF 'NEVER', SKIP TO NEXT PAGE

59. In which languages have you borrowed
books?

BENGALI ONLY
MOSTLY BENGALI
BENGALI & ENGLISH
EQUALLY
MOSTLY ENGLISH
ONLY ENGLISH
OTHER & ENGLISH
OTHER ONLY
OTHER MIXTURE OF
LANGUAGES

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

IF 'OTHER' CATEGORIES, which languages?

PLEASE WRITE IN:

কখনও এই ধরনের কিছু লিখ্য
আছেন কিনা, যেমন -

তালিকা ।

ডায়েরী ।

বান্ধে কোনও অক্ষর দেখায়
অন্য অক্ষর চিহ্ন ।

, আত্মীয়-স্বজন বা বন্ধুদের কাছে চিহ্ন ।

অফিস-আদালতের কাছে চিহ্ন ।

যেও কথা বলার সময় তার
কথার বিষয় ।

বিক্রাদন প্রকৃতি পড়ার সময়
তার প্রকাশ বা বিষয় ।

চিহ্ন বা বস্তু অথবা অথবা আঙ্গ
অক্ষর খসড়া বা 'গোর্ট' ।

আপনি কি কখনও অন্য কিছু লিখ্য
আছেন - বাংলায় বা ইংরেজিতে -
কি লিখ্য আছেন ?

বাংলা ও ইংরেজি ছাড়া অন্য কোন
ভাষায় কখনও কিছু লিখেন কি ?

যদি লিখ্য আছেন, তবে কোন ভাষায়?
কি লিখেন ?

Do you ever write the following sorts of things		in Bengali? বাংলায়	in English? ইংরেজিতে
60. lists	YES NO	1 2	1 2 58-5
61. notes in a diary	YES NO	1 2	1 2 60-6
62. messages	YES NO	1 2	1 2 62-6
63. personal letters	YES NO	1 2	1 2 64-6
64. business letters	YES NO	1 2	1 2 66-6
65. notes while listening to someone talking	YES NO	1 2	1 2 68-6
66. notes while reading e.g. classified advertisements in newspapers	YES NO	1 2	1 2 70-7
67. notes before writing e.g. a letter or a talk	YES NO	1 2	1 2 72-7
68, 69. Do you ever write anything else in either of these languages? Please say what:		1 2 74-75	1 2 76-7

70. Do you ever write anything else in any other language?

YES 1
NO 2

If yes, please say which language

and what

End of card
Col 1-7 as on 2021

SECTION C: HOUSEHOLD LANGUAGE USE

ASK THE RESPONDENT QUESTIONS 72 TO 80 ABOUT EACH MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD. WORK DOWN THE COLUMNS STARTING WITH THE RESPONDENT. WRITE IN EACH MARRIED COUPLE SIDE BY SIDE AND DRAW A LINKING LINE BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE.

11-12

আপনার নিয়ে এ যাদুতে রূপান্তর
লোক থাকে? যাদুবিদ্যার সম্বন্ধে
দু'জনে কথা চিন্তা করতে পারি।

How many people live in this household including yourself? PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER _____
I would like to ask you a number of questions about each person in the household in turn:

[ভিত্তি আপনার কি হল]		72. Relationship to respondent, e.g. mother, husband, sister, friend, etc.															
[পুরুষ বা স্ত্রীলোক]		73. Sex of person		74. How old is this person?		75. Where was this person brought up (i.e. spent the first 16 years)?		76. How is this person employed?		77. How well does this person know Bengali?		78. How well does this person know English?		79. When the respondent & this person talk with each other, which language(s) or dialect(s) does the respondent speak in?		80. When talking with respondent, which language(s) or dialect(s) does the other person speak?	
		MALE	FEMALE			OVERSEAS RURAL OVERSEAS URBAN OVERSEAS MIXED U.K. & OVERSEAS U.K. ONLY		WORKS OUTSIDE HOME WORKS FOR PAY IN FAMILY BUSINESS ON PREMISES WORKS AT HOME FOR PAY FULLTIME HOUSEWIFE STUDENT/SCHOOLCHILD OTHER		VERY WELL FAIRLY WELL NOT VERY WELL NOT AT ALL		VERY WELL FAIRLY WELL NOT VERY WELL NOT AT ALL		ONLY OR MOSTLY BENGALI BENGALI AND ENGLISH ONLY OR MOSTLY ENGLISH OTHER AND ENGLISH ONLY OR MOSTLY OTHER OTHER MIXTURE		ONLY OR MOSTLY BENGALI BENGALI AND ENGLISH ONLY OR MOSTLY ENGLISH OTHER AND ENGLISH ONLY OR MOSTLY OTHER OTHER MIXTURE	
1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4
5	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	5	6	5	6
7	8	7	8	7	8	7	8	7	8	7	8	7	8	7	8	7	8
9	10	9	10	9	10	9	10	9	10	9	10	9	10	9	10	9	10
11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12
13	14	13	14	13	14	13	14	13	14	13	14	13	14	13	14	13	14
15	16	15	16	15	16	15	16	15	16	15	16	15	16	15	16	15	16
17	18	17	18	17	18	17	18	17	18	17	18	17	18	17	18	17	18
19	20	19	20	19	20	19	20	19	20	19	20	19	20	19	20	19	20
21	22	21	22	21	22	21	22	21	22	21	22	21	22	21	22	21	22
23	24	23	24	23	24	23	24	23	24	23	24	23	24	23	24	23	24
25	26	25	26	25	26	25	26	25	26	25	26	25	26	25	26	25	26
27	28	27	28	27	28	27	28	27	28	27	28	27	28	27	28	27	28
29	30	29	30	29	30	29	30	29	30	29	30	29	30	29	30	29	30
31	32	31	32	31	32	31	32	31	32	31	32	31	32	31	32	31	32
33	34	33	34	33	34	33	34	33	34	33	34	33	34	33	34	33	34
35	36	35	36	35	36	35	36	35	36	35	36	35	36	35	36	35	36
37	38	37	38	37	38	37	38	37	38	37	38	37	38	37	38	37	38
39	40	39	40	39	40	39	40	39	40	39	40	39	40	39	40	39	40
41	42	41	42	41	42	41	42	41	42	41	42	41	42	41	42	41	42
43	44	43	44	43	44	43	44	43	44	43	44	43	44	43	44	43	44
45	46	45	46	45	46	45	46	45	46	45	46	45	46	45	46	45	46
47	48	47	48	47	48	47	48	47	48	47	48	47	48	47	48	47	48
49	50	49	50	49	50	49	50	49	50	49	50	49	50	49	50	49	50
51	52	51	52	51	52	51	52	51	52	51	52	51	52	51	52	51	52
53	54	53	54	53	54	53	54	53	54	53	54	53	54	53	54	53	54
55	56	55	56	55	56	55	56	55	56	55	56	55	56	55	56	55	56
57	58	57	58	57	58	57	58	57	58	57	58	57	58	57	58	57	58
59	60	59	60	59	60	59	60	59	60	59	60	59	60	59	60	59	60
61	62	61	62	61	62	61	62	61	62	61	62	61	62	61	62	61	62
63	64	63	64	63	64	63	64	63	64	63	64	63	64	63	64	63	64
65	66	65	66	65	66	65	66	65	66	65	66	65	66	65	66	65	66
67	68	67	68	67	68	67	68	67	68	67	68	67	68	67	68	67	68
69	70	69	70	69	70	69	70	69	70	69	70	69	70	69	70	69	70
71	72	71	72	71	72	71	72	71	72	71	72	71	72	71	72	71	72
73	74	73	74	73	74	73	74	73	74	73	74	73	74	73	74	73	74
75	76	75	76	75	76	75	76	75	76	75	76	75	76	75	76	75	76
77	78	77	78	77	78	77	78	77	78	77	78	77	78	77	78	77	78
79	80	79	80	79	80	79	80	79	80	79	80	79	80	79	80	79	80
81	82	81	82	81	82	81	82	81	82	81	82	81	82	81	82	81	82
83	84	83	84	83	84	83	84	83	84	83	84	83	84	83	84	83	84
85	86	85	86	85	86	85	86	85	86	85	86	85	86	85	86	85	86
87	88	87	88	87	88	87	88	87	88	87	88	87	88	87	88	87	88
89	90	89	90	89	90	89	90	89	90	89	90	89	90	89	90	89	90
91	92	91	92	91	92	91	92	91	92	91	92	91	92	91	92	91	92
93	94	93	94	93	94	93	94	93	94	93	94	93	94	93	94	93	94
95	96	95	96	95	96	95	96	95	96	95	96	95	96	95	96	95	96
97	98	97	98	97	98	97	98	97	98	97	98	97	98	97	98	97	98
99	100	99	100	99	100	99	100	99	100	99	100	99	100	99	100	99	100

THIS PAGE IS A REPEAT OF THE PREVIOUS PAGE. USE IT ONLY IF THERE ARE MORE THAN 6 PEOPLE IN THE HOUSEHOLD

New Can! Cola 1-7 as on Can: 4

72. Relationship to respondent, e.g. mother, husband, sister, friend, etc.	RESPONDENT	7	8	9	10	11	12
73. Sex of person	MALE FEMALE	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2
74. How old is this person?							
75. Where was this person brought up (i.e. spent the first 16 years)?	OVERSEAS RURAL OVERSEAS URBAN OVERSEAS MIXED U.K. & OVERSEAS U.K. ONLY	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
76. How is this person employed?	WORKS OUTSIDE HOME WORKS FOR PAY IN FAMILY BUSINESS ON PREMISES WORKS AT HOME FOR PAY FULLTIME HOUSEWIFE STUDENT/SCHOOLCHILD OTHER	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
77. How well does this person know Bengali?	VERY WELL FAIRLY WELL NOT VERY WELL NOT AT ALL	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
78. How well does this person know English?	VERY WELL FAIRLY WELL NOT VERY WELL NOT AT ALL	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
79. When the respondent & this person talk with each other, which language(s) or dialect(s) does the respondent speak in?	ONLY OR MOSTLY BENGALI BENGALI AND ENGLISH ONLY OR MOSTLY ENGLISH OTHER AND ENGLISH ONLY OR MOSTLY OTHER OTHER MIXTURE IF 'OTHER', PLEASE WRITE IN:	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
80. When talking with respondent, which language(s) or dialect(s) does the other person speak?	ONLY OR MOSTLY BENGALI BENGALI AND ENGLISH ONLY OR MOSTLY ENGLISH OTHER AND ENGLISH ONLY OR MOSTLY OTHER OTHER MIXTURE IF 'OTHER', PLEASE WRITE IN:	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

IF THERE ARE NO CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 21 IN THIS HOUSEHOLD, SKIP TO SECTION E, QUESTION 97.

SECTION D: CHILDREN AND LANGUAGE

New card
Col 1-7 as on 5

আপনার ঘরে কোন ভাষা (বা
ভাষাবলয়) কথা বলা হয় ?

	81	82	83
In which language(s) or dialect(s) are the following conversations conducted in your household:	child to child? বাচ্চা-বাচ্চা	child and mother? আমি ও বাচ্চা	child and father? আমি ও বাচ্চা
ONLY OR MOSTLY BENGALI	1	1	1
ONLY OR MOSTLY ENGLISH	2	2	2
ONLY OR MOSTLY OTHER	3	3	3
BOTH SPEAKERS BENGALI AND ENGLISH	4	4	4
BOTH SPEAKERS BENGALI AND OTHER	5	5	5
BOTH SPEAKERS OTHER AND ENGLISH	6	6	6
ONE SPEAKER BENGALI ,ONE ENGLISH	7	7	7
ANY OTHER MIXTURE	8	8	8
IF 'OTHER', PLEASE WRITE IN:	_____	_____	_____

9 10-11 12 13-14 15 16-17

আপনার ঘরে ঘরে দুই একজন নীচ
কোন ভাষা আলাদা করে ?

84. Is there a child under 2 years in this household?
YES 1
NO 2
IF 'NO', SKIP TO QUESTION 87

দুই বছরের নীচ যে ভাষা, তাদের
ভাষা বা, বাবা কোন ভাষা কথা বলে ?

	85	86
In which language(s) or dialect(s) do the parents in this household speak to babies under 2 years old:	mother to baby ভাষা আর আবার কথা	father to baby ভাষা আর বাবার কথা
ONLY OR MOSTLY BENGALI	1	1
ONLY OR MOSTLY ENGLISH	2	2
ONLY OR MOSTLY OTHER	3	3
MIXTURE OF BENGALI AND ENGLISH	4	4
MIXTURE OF BENGALI AND OTHER	5	5
MIXTURE OF ENGLISH AND OTHER	6	6
ANY OTHER MIXTURE	7	7
IF 'OTHER' PLEASE WRITE IN:	_____	_____

ଏ ଧାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଲେଖ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଡେସିଆନ୍ ଦିନ
ଧାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଦାଖଲ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ?

87. Has anybody ever taught the children of this household to read and write Bengali here in the house?

YES	1
NO	2

କେ କହିଥିଲା ? (ଆମଣାର ବି ୧ୟ)

88. IF 'YES', please say who: RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

26

ଏ ସାହୀତା କେଉଁ ବି ଜାଣ ବା କୁହ
 ଜିଆଁପଞ୍ଜେ ବାଧାପରଞ୍ଜ ?

89. Has anybody in the family taught the children of this household any songs or rhymes?

YES	1
NO	2

എ നിമിഷാന്തം ?

90. IF 'YES', please say who: .
RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

29

ବୋନ ଭାସାରୁ ଜାଣି ଯା କହୁଁ ?

and what language did they use: PLEASE WRITE IN:

31

‘‘ಹಿಕ್ಕಾ’’ ಅನಿರ್ದಾಂಡ್ ವಾ ಅನಾಪ್ ?
: (ಏ ಅನಿರ್ದಾಂಡ್ (ವಾ ಅನಾಪ್) ?

91. Has anybody in the family ever told any stories to the children of this household?

YES	1
NO	2

ආර්ථිකයේ (ආර්ථිකය) ?

92. IF 'YES', please say who:
RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

34

କୋଣ ଶ୍ରୀମାନ୍ ?

and what language did they use: PLE

PLEASE WRITE IN:

36

2. କାହିଁ, ଆମେନାମ୍ ଜଣା ହେଉ, ସାକାମ୍ନି
 ସାମା ମଜ୍ଜାମ୍ କୋନଞ୍ଚ ଯିବିଆ ଆମ୍
 (ହୁଲେ ହୋବି ସା ଆମ୍ କୋସାମ୍ନି ହୋବି)?

93. Do you know of any classes in this city either inside or outside school, where children are taught Bengali?

YES	1
NO	2

କୋଥାଳୀ ?

94. IF 'YES', please say where:

3

କୋଣ ସାଧ୍ୟ ?

and when:

4

৩ খাবার কোনও খেলে বা তরুণ প্রকল
কোনও ক্ষাখ ঘাস নিয়ন্ত্রে ?
(এক দিন ২য় ?)

৩ মাছের খেলেখায়ের কারণে খেয়ায়
ক্ষাখ যায় না - তার কারণ কি ?

95. Have any of the children
from this household been to
any of these classes?

	PLEASE WRITE IN THE AGE OF EACH CHILD IN THE HOUSEHOLD BETWEEN 5 & 18				
	43-44	46-47	49-50	52-53	55-56
WITHIN LAST 7 DAYS					
WITHIN LAST 4 WEEKS	1	1	1	1	1
WITHIN LAST 12 MONTHS	2	2	2	2	2
YES, BUT OVER A YEAR AGO	3	3	3	3	3
NEVER	4	4	4	4	4
	5	5	5	5	5
	45	48	51	54	57

IF CHILDREN HAVE BEEN TO SUCH A CLASS WITHIN THE LAST 4 WEEKS, SKIP TO SECTION E
QUESTION 97

96. Are there any reasons why the
children from this household are not
going to classes to learn Bengali?

PLEASE WRITE IN:

SECTION E: LANGUAGE AND WORK

ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କ କି କାଜ କରୁଛ ?

97. What is your current work situation?

- 1 IN PAID EMPLOYMENT
- 2 HOUSEWIFE
- 3 STUDENT
- 4 APPRENTICE
- 5 RETIRED
- 6 UNEMPLOYED
- 7 OTHER

62

IF 'OTHER', PLEASE EXPLAIN:

ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION ONLY IF RESPONDENT IS IN PAID EMPLOYMENT OR HAS STOPPED WORKING WITHIN THE LAST 2 YEARS

ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କର କି କେଜା / କା କି କେଜା ହିଲେ ?

97a, What is/was your occupation?

WRITE IN AS PRECISELY AS POSSIBLE THE JOB TITLE & A BRIEF JOB DESCRIPTION

63-65

ଏ ସାଥୀର ଆଉ ଯାହା କାଜ କରୁ
ଜାଣନ୍ତି କେଜା କି ?

98. What is the occupation of the other people in the household who work? ATTEMPT TO GET A FULL JOB DESCRIPTION. WRITE IN RELATIONSHIP, NOT NAME.

RELATIONSHIP TO RESPONDENT	JOB DESCRIPTION
_____	_____
66-67	68-70
_____	_____
71-72	73-75
_____	_____
76-77	78-80

IF RESPONDENT IS A FULL-TIME HOUSEWIFE OR STOPPED WORK MORE THAN 2 YEARS AGO, SKIP TO QUESTION 115

IF RESPONDENT IS A FULL-TIME STUDENT, ANSWER THE NEXT 2 QUESTIONS IN ALL OTHER CASES, SKIP TO QUESTION 101

ଆମେଲାର ମହାବିଷୟ କେଉଁଟି ?

99. Which subject are you studying?

1 TECHNICAL, SCIENTIFIC, MEDICAL
2 COMMERCIAL, BUSINESS STUDIES,
3 ACCOUNTANCY
4 ARTS, LANGUAGES, SOCIAL SCIENCES
5 OTHER OR MIXED

ଆମେଲି କି ସ୍ତରର 'ସୋ' ସଂଗ୍ରହ ?

100. What is the level of your course?

1 'O' LEVEL OR CSE
2 TRADE EXAMS
3 'A' LEVEL OR HND
4 DEGREE OR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
5 OTHER

IF RESPONDENT IS A FULL-TIME STUDENT, SKIP TO QUESTION 109

ଆମେଲାର କି ନିଜର ଯା ମାସିକାସିକ
କ୍ରମା ଆଉ । ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଆମେଲି
କି ଆଉ କେମିତି କାହିଁ କରୁନ ?
ସ୍ବ କାଞ୍ଚ ମାସିକାସିକ ଓଲ ଆମେଲାର
କରୁନିକ ମୋମା ମଜା ଯା ହୁନିକ ସ୍ବ
ସଂଗ୍ରହଣ ସଂଗ୍ରହଣ ?

101. Do you work for yourself or in the family business or for someone else?

1 SELF
2 FAMILY
3 SOMEONE ELSE

102. What kind of training or qualifications did you need to get this job?

1 NONE
2 EXPERIENCE GAINED ON THE JOB
3 APPRENTICESHIP OR TRAINING
4 GAINED WHILE WORKING
5 PROFESSIONAL OR ACADEMIC
6 QUALIFICATIONS

ଆମେଲାର: ସଂଗ୍ରହ ଆମେଲି କର
କାଞ୍ଚ କାଞ୍ଚ କରୁନ ?

103. How many hours a week do you work usually?
PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER:

13

ଆମେଲି କି ସ୍ତରର ମାସିକାସିକ
କାଞ୍ଚ କରୁନ ?

104. What kind of organization or business or industry do you work in?

1 MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY
2 TRANSPORT SERVICES
3 CIVIL SERVICE OR LOCAL
4 AUTHORITY
5 BUSINESS OR COMMERCE
6 RETAILING OR CATERING
7 OTHER SERVICES (INCLUDING HEALTH)
8 OTHER

আপনার অধীনে বা আপনার আন্তর্য
কতজন মোক কাজ করে ?

105. How many people are you responsible
for supervising, managing or employing?
FILL IN NUMBER, INCLUDING ZERO WHERE APPROPRIATE:

16-

আপনার কাজ করতে কি বাংলা
কথা বলার মতো ?

106. Do you need to be able to speak
Bengali in order to do your work?

YES, IT IS ESSENTIAL 1
YES, IT HELPS 2
NO 3

IF 'YES', PLEASE EXPLAIN:

আপনার কাজ করতে কি বাংলা
কথা মতো ?

107. Do you need to read Bengali
in order to do the work that you do?

YES, IT IS ESSENTIAL 1
YES, IT HELPS 2
NO 3

IF 'YES', PLEASE EXPLAIN:

আপনার কাজ করতে কি ইংরেজি
কথা মতো ?

108. Do you need to read English in
order to do the work that you do?

YES, IT IS ESSENTIAL 1
YES, IT HELPS 2
NO 3

IF 'YES', PLEASE EXPLAIN:

আপনার মোক মাতা কাজ করে বা
মোকা-কথা করে, তাদের কতজনকে
সাথে আপনার মোকমা আলাপ হয়?

109. How many colleagues, workmates
or fellow-students are you in regular
contact with during your working day?

PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER:

2

আমি মোক কতজন বাংলা বলতে পারি?

110. How many of them can speak Bengali?

PLEASE WRITE IN NUMBER:

3

প্রদত্ত, যাঁদের সাথে আপনি
কাজ করেন (এই পৃষ্ঠায়)
তাঁদের ভাষা সম্বন্ধে বলুন
প্রশ্ন করতে চান।

Could you please answer some questions about the languages used by people you work (or study) with?

ASK THE QUESTIONS AS GIVEN IN THE GRID. WORK DOWN THE COLUMNS. THE FIRST 3 COLUMNS ARE FOR UP TO 3 WORKMATES, COLLEAGUES OR FELLOW-STUDENTS WHO ARE IN THE MOST FREQUENT CONTACT WITH THE RESPONDENT

[আপনার কর্মস্থলে] যাঁদের
কথা শুনব সম্ভব, তাঁরা কে
কোন কোন ভাষায় কথা বলছে
পান?

111. Which languages
can the follow-
ing people at
work speak?

ONLY BENGALI
BENGALI AND
ENGLISH
ONLY ENGLISH
OTHER AND ENGLISH
OTHER ONLY
MIXED
DON'T KNOW
NOT APPLICABLE

IF 'OTHER' OR 'MIXED' PLEASE EXPLAIN:

যাঁদের কথা বলছেন
তাঁদের এক এক জনের সাথে
আপনি কোন ভাষায় কথা
বলেন?

112. Which language do
you speak to this
person at work?

ONLY OR MOSTLY
BENGALI
BENGALI AND
ENGLISH
ONLY OR MOSTLY
ENGLISH
OTHER AND ENGLISH
ONLY OR MOSTLY OTHER
MIXED
DON'T SPEAK
NOT APPLICABLE

IF 'OTHER' OR 'MIXED' PLEASE EXPLAIN:

যাঁদের কথা বলছেন
আপনার সাথে তাঁরা কোন
ভাষায় কথা বলেন?

113. Which language does
each use when
speaking to you?

ONLY OR MOSTLY
BENGALI
BENGALI AND
ENGLISH
ONLY OR MOSTLY
ENGLISH
OTHER AND ENGLISH
ONLY OR MOSTLY OTHER
MIXED
DON'T SPEAK
NOT APPLICABLE

IF 'OTHER' OR 'MIXED' PLEASE EXPLAIN:

	a			b	c	d	e
	WORKMATE OR COLLEAGUE OR FELLOW-STUDENT			FOREMAN SUPERVISOR	BOSS MANAGER	MOST SUBORDINATES	MOST CLIE CUSTOMERS
	1	2	3				
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8

34-36

37-39

40-42

43-45

46-48

49-51

52-54

SECTION F: LANGUAGE OUTSIDE WORK AND HOME

বাড়ীর মোকদ্দম ছাড়া,
আপনার অসময় সময়
আপনি কাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করেন?

115. Outside your home and work, who do you spend most of your time with?

Can they speak Bengali?
কোন কিংবা কয়েক জনের সাথে

Which language do you actually speak with them?
কাদের সাথে আপনি কোন ভাষায় কথা বলেন?

LIST TWO INDIVIDUALS,
RELATIONSHIP NOT NAMES:

1. _____

YES 1
NO 2

57

ONLY BENGALI 1
ONLY ENGLISH 2
BOTH 3
OTHER 4

55-56

IF 'OTHER' SAY WHICH:

2. _____

YES 1
NO 2

61

ONLY BENGALI 1
ONLY ENGLISH 2
BOTH 3
OTHER 4

59-60

IF 'OTHER' SAY WHICH:

আপনার সাথে যারা থাকেন
আপনার সাথে নিয়ে, এখানে
আমি যারা আপনার সাথে
-সঙ্গে আছেন --

117. What about your relatives outside the household who live in the U.K.?

ALL MOST 1
A FEW 2
NONE 3
NO RELATIVES IN U.K. 4
5
63

ALL RELATIONS ONLY BENGALI 1
ALL RELATIONS ONLY ENGLISH 2
ALL BOTH 3
OTHER 4
NEVER SPEAK WITH THEM BENGALI WITH SOME, ENGLISH WITH OTHERS 5
6

IF 'OTHER' SAY WHICH:

আপনার অন্যান্য বন্ধু-স্বজন
এবং পরিচিত মোকদ্দম --

118. What about your other friends and acquaintances?

ALL MOST 1
A FEW 2
NONE 3
4
65

ALL FRIENDS ONLY BENGALI 1
ALL FRIENDS ONLY ENGLISH 2
ALL BOTH 3
OTHER 4
BENGALI WITH SOME, ENGLISH WITH OTHERS 5

IF 'OTHER' SAY WHICH

আপনার পাড়া-প্রতিবেশী--

119. What about your neighbours?

ALL MOST 1
A FEW 2
NONE 3
4

ଅର୍ଥାତ୍‌ସ୍ୱୟ ସର୍ଜନାତ୍ମକ ସାଧନା ଆଦି କ୍ଷେତ୍ର
(ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ମିତ୍ର ସାଧନା କାଳ ?
(ସମ୍ପର୍କ --

120. Do you take part in the
activities of any of the
following:

sports clubs (ସ୍ପୋର୍ଟ୍ସ କ୍ଲବ୍‌ସ୍)	YES NO	1 2
religious groups (ସମ୍ପର୍କ - ସମ୍ପର୍କ)	YES NO	1 2
hobby groups (କୋଲ୍‌ସ୍‌ ଗ୍ରୁପ୍‌ସ୍ ଯା 'ହବ୍‌' ସମ୍ପର୍କିତ ସମ୍ପର୍କ)	YES NO	1 2
music or dance groups (ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ୍‌ ଓ ଡାନ୍ସ ଗ୍ରୁପ୍‌ସ୍)	YES NO	1 2
literary or other artistic groups (ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ୍‌, ସାମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟିକ୍‌ ଓ ସାମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟିକ୍‌ ଗ୍ରୁପ୍‌ସ୍)	YES NO	1 2
courses of further study (ଅଧ୍ୟାପନା କ୍ରମେ ଶିକ୍ଷା)	YES NO	1 2
political or union activities (ସାମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟିକ୍‌ ଓ ସାମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟିକ୍‌ ଗ୍ରୁପ୍‌ସ୍)	YES NO	1 2
youth or social clubs (ଯୁଥ୍‌ ସମ୍ପର୍କିତ୍‌ ଓ ସମ୍ପର୍କିତ୍‌ ଗ୍ରୁପ୍‌ସ୍)	YES NO	1 2
welfare or charitable activities (ସାମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟିକ୍‌-କଲ୍ୟାଣ ଓ ସାମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟିକ୍‌- ସମ୍ପର୍କିତ୍‌)	YES NO	1 2
informal regular groups (ଅନାମିକ୍‌ ଗ୍ରୁପ୍‌ସ୍ ଓ ଅନାମିକ୍‌ ଗ୍ରୁପ୍‌ସ୍)	YES NO	1 2
other groups (ଅନ୍ୟ ଓ କୋଲ୍‌ ସମ୍ପର୍କ, ସମ୍ପର୍କ କିମ୍ବା ନାହିଁ)	YES NO	1 2

New card
Col 1-7 as on card
7

আপনি যে ব্যক্তিদের সন্নিবেশ বা মিলন
কথা বলছেন, তার কোন দুই দাঁড়
আপনি বেশী স্বল্প কাটান ?
সদস্যদের মধ্যে কয়জন বাংলা বলতে পারে ?

121.

Of the groups you have mentioned, what are
the names of the two where you spend most time?
WRITE IN GROUP-NAMES AT HEAD OF EACH COLUMN

১১-১২

১১-১২

How many of the
members can speak
Bengali?

ALL
MOST
A FEW
NONE

1
2
3
4
13

1
2
3
4

কোন দু' মিলন কোন সভায়
আপনি উপস্থিত ছিলেন ?

122.

When did you last
attend this group?

WITHIN LAST 7 DAYS
WITHIN LAST 4 WEEKS
WITHIN LAST 12 MONTHS
OVER A YEAR AGO

1
2
3
4
14

1
2
3
4

সরকারে আপনি কি কখনও কোন
বা সা মণ্ডিত গ্রন্থ ব্যবস্থাপনা ?

123.

Have you ever held
any office or
position of leader-
ship?

YES, STILL DO
YES, USED TO
NO

IF 'YES', WHAT OFFICE:

1
2
3
15
16

1
2
3

সর্বোত্তম: সভায় কোন ভাষায়
নিষিদ্ধ কথা-কর্ম বলে ?

124.

What language is the
written business
conducted in?

ONLY BENGALI
MOSTLY BENGALI
EQUALLY BENGALI
AND ENGLISH
MOSTLY ENGLISH
ONLY ENGLISH
OTHER
DO NOT KNOW

IF 'OTHER', SAY WHICH:

১৪-১৭

১৪-১৭

আনুষ্ঠানিক সভায় কোন ভাষায়
আলাপনা বলে ?

125.

What language is
used for the spoken
business at formal
meetings?

ONLY BENGALI
MOSTLY BENGALI
EQUALLY BENGALI
AND ENGLISH
MOSTLY ENGLISH
ONLY ENGLISH
OTHER
DO NOT KNOW

IF 'OTHER', SAY WHICH:

১৮-২২

১৮-২২

অন্য সদস্যদের সাথে আলাপ করতে
আপনি কোন ভাষায় কথা বলেন ?

126.

What language do you
use when chatting
informally to other
people in the group?

ONLY BENGALI
MOSTLY BENGALI
EQUALLY BENGALI
AND ENGLISH
MOSTLY ENGLISH

1
2
3
4

1
2
3
4

1 2

5 4 3 2 1

2 -

1 2 3 4 5 6

1-2-3

1 2 3 4 5 6

IF 'OTHER', PLEASE WRITE IN NAME OF LANGUAGE:

SECTION G: ATTITUDES ABOUT PROVISION OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

READ THE INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT TO THE RESPONDENT AND THEN READ EACH STATEMENT SLOWLY AND CLEARLY
AND ASK IF S/HE AGREES OR DISAGREES WITH THE STATEMENT AND HOW STRONGLY

ଆଲୋଚନା କରନ୍ତୁ, ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କର ଭେଦ-ଭାବପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଏବଂ ସତ୍ୟ ଜାଣି
ଏ ପରେ ଆମ୍ଭେ ଏହା ସହିତ ସତ୍ୟ ଯାହା ଜାଣୁ । ତାହା କେଉଁ
କେଉଁ ଦିନ ଯେ, ଏପରିକି ଏହା ନିଶ୍ଚିତ୍ୱ ଦେଖାଯାଏ ଏବଂ ସମ୍ଭାଷଣ
ସିଦ୍ଧି କେଉଁ କଥା ହୁଏ । (ଏହା ସମ୍ଭାଷଣ ଶୁଣିବା ଆମ୍ଭେ
ମାନୁଷ୍ୟର ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା କଥା ଯାହା; ଏହା ମାନୁଷ୍ୟ ମାନୁଷ୍ୟ ଯେ ଏବଂ
ଆମ୍ଭେ ଶାନ୍ତ' ସହ, ଏହା ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କର ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କୁ ହେତୁ କଥା ଏବଂ
ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କ କିଛି କଥା ଯାହା । ଏହା ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କର ସହାୟକ,
ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କର ଜାଣିବା ଯାହା । ଏହା ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କର କେଉଁକିଛି,
ଏହା ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କର ଜାଣିବା - ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କର ଶାନ୍ତ' ସହାୟକ ଯା ଏହା
କେଉଁକିଛି, ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କର ସହାୟକ ।

Introduction. Many people think it will be difficult for the
Bengali speaking community in England to keep up its language
the next generation. Some people think that the government should
help maintain such languages, perhaps by introducing the teaching
them in schools, perhaps by supporting the teaching programmes in
the communities have set up already in many areas. We are interested
to know your opinion on these matters, so can you please tell us
whether you agree or disagree (and how strongly) with the following
statements which I am going to read to you.

	strongly agree ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କୃତ ଅନୁମତି	agree ଅନୁମତି	not sure ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ନୁହେଁ	disagree ବିରୋଧ	strongly disagree ଅତ୍ୟଧିକ ବିରୋଧ
133. We can maintain the culture and identity of our communities even if we cease to use our languages	1	2	3	4	5
134. We can keep up the use of our languages over the next generation if there is proper teaching widely available	1	2	3	4	5
135. We should make every possible effort to maintain the fullest use of our languages in Britain	1	2	3	4	5
136. The government should provide the teaching of our languages as a right for all our children in state schools	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 1

	strongly agree ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମତ	agree ମତ	not sure ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ନାହିଁ	disagree ବିରୋଧ	strongly disagree ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବିରୋଧ
<p>137. The use of our languages in school lessons to teach other subjects would be a great help to our children</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>138. Unless we make our children work very hard at learning our languages they won't be able to keep them alive in Britain</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>139. The government should support our communities' efforts and give us money to organize classes for our children to learn our languages</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>140. The authorities should produce versions of most official letters, notices forms and leaflets in our languages as well as in English</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>141. Our communities are able to organize all the teaching of our languages that is needed by our children without any help from the government</p>	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 1

	strongly agree ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମତ	agree ମତ	not sure ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ନାହିଁ	disagree ବିରୋଧ	strongly disagree ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବିରୋଧ
<p>ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରୀୟ ଡାକ୍ତର ସଂକଳିତ ସାମାଜିକ ଜ୍ଞାନ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ନା - ସୂଚନା ଯେଉଁ ଏ ଡାକ୍ତର କୁହେ ଯାଏ ନା ।</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରୀୟ ଡାକ୍ତର ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ସାମାଜିକ ସ୍ତର ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରୀୟ ଲୋକଭାବର ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣୀୟ ବଢ଼ିବ ।</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>ସଂରକ୍ଷଣୀୟ ନିତି, ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରୀୟ, ଲିଖିତ ସୂଚନା ସଂରକ୍ଷଣର ଗୁଣ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ-ଡାକ୍ତର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରୀୟ ଲୋକ ଲେଖି ନିୟାମ କର ।</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ଡାକ୍ତର ସାମାଜିକ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରୀୟ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣୀୟ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ନିତି ।</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ଲୋକଭାବର ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରୀୟ ଡାକ୍ତର ଲିଖିତ ଲୋକଭାବର ଲିଖିତ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ।</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>ବିଶ୍ୱ ଲିଖିତ-ମାତ୍ର ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ କୁହେ ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରୀୟ ଲିଖିତ ଲୋକଭାବର ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ଡାକ୍ତର ସଂରକ୍ଷଣୀୟ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ଲିଖିତ ମାତ୍ର ।</p>	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION H: PERSONAL

IF YOU HAVE ALREADY ESTABLISHED THE ANSWERS TO ANY OF THE REMAINING QUESTIONS IN THE COURSE OF THE INTERVIEW, DO NOT ASK THE QUESTIONS AGAIN. SIMPLY FILL IN THE ANSWERS.

148. Which member of your family was the first to come and live in the U.K.?
 আপনার পরিবারের মধ্য থেকে কে প্রথম এদেশে বাস করতে এসেছিলেন?

RELATIONSHIP NOT NAME

149. How many times have you visited a country where Bengali is spoken (during the time that you have been living in Britain?)
 কতবার ভাষাভাষী দেশে গিয়েছেন? 149.

WRITE IN NUMBER OF TIMES

WRITE IN NAME OF COUNTRY

150. How long did you stay there last time?
 সত্যবার সে দেশে আপনি কতদিন ছিলেন?

1 MONTH OR LESS
 1-6 MONTHS
 7-12 MONTHS
 OVER A YEAR

151. What is your religion?
 আপনার ধর্ম কি?

BUDDHIST
 GREEK ORTHODOX
 HINDU
 JEWISH
 MUSLIM
 PROTESTANT
 ROMAN CATHOLIC
 SIKH
 OTHER
 NONE

IF 'OTHER', GIVE NAME OF RELIGION

152. How important is your religion in your life?
 আপনার জীবনে, আপনার ধর্মকে আপনি কতটুকু গুরুত্ব দেন?

VERY IMPORTANT
 FAIRLY IMPORTANT
 NOT VERY IMPORTANT
 NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT

এ বাড়ীর মালিক কে ?

154. Who is the owner of this house?

RESPONDENT AND/OR SPOUSE 1
FAMILY MEMBER 2
COUNCIL 3
HOUSING ASSOCIATION 4
BENGALI SPEAKING LANDLORD 5
OTHER MINORITY LANDLORD 6
MAJORITY (ENGLISH) LANDLORD 7
OTHER 8

IF 'OTHER', PLEASE SAY WHO

71

কিছুদিন পরে আর একবার
মাস্টারকার্ড দিতে আপনি কি
স্বীতি করেছেন ?

155. Would you be willing to give us
more of your time for a further
interview at a later date?

YES 1
NO 2

IF 'YES', PLEASE FILL IN CARD A

72

এ সমস্ত প্রশ্নের নিয়ে এতক্ষণ
আপনার সাথে আলোচ-আলোচনা হলে,
এ সমস্যা আপনাকে কি কোন কিছু
বোঝে আছে ?

156. Do you have any other comments about the questions and issues we have
been talking about?

P.D.: _____
CLUSTER: _____

INTERVIEWER TO COMPLETE

Was the interview completed?

YES 1
NO 2

IF 'NO', GIVE REASONS:

Place where interview took place
(if other than respondent's home):

List others present: ADULTS:

CHILDREN:

73
74

Did this affect respondent?

YES 1
NO 2
NOT APPLICABLE 3

IF 'YES', HOW?

Length of interview in minutes:

75

Was respondent co-operative?

YES 1
NO 2

Any observations:

Zone: 76

Interviewer's No: 77-78

Codeswitching: 1
2
3
4

Signature:

Date:

79

Appendix 2: Follow-up pilot project in York

- 1. Name:
- 2. Sex: male
female
- 3. Age:
- 4. Place of birth:
- 5. How old were you when you came to the UK?
- 6. What language or language variety do you use at home?

Sylheti	yes	no
Bangla	yes	no
English	yes	no
Sylheti & Bangla	yes	no
Sylheti & English	yes	no
Bangla & English	yes	no
Sylheti, Bangla & English	yes	no

7. How well do you understand, speak, read and write the following languages? Please write 1 for ‘very well’, 2 for ‘fairly well’, 3 for ‘not very well’, 4 for ‘not at all’.

Languages	speak	understand	read	write
Sylheti				
Bangla				
English				
Arabic				
Hindi				
Urdu				

8. What language(s) do you speak to the following people (either living in the UK or in Bangladesh)?

Grandparents	(Maternal) (Paternal)
Parents	(Maternal) (Paternal)
Uncles	(Maternal) (Paternal)
Aunts	(Maternal) (Paternal)
Cousins	(Maternal) (Paternal)
Friends	(in school) (outside school)

9. Please respond to this question if relevant. What language was used by teachers in the following educational institutions in Sylhet?

In primary school-
In secondary school-
In college-

A2.1 Language exposure and experiences

10. Do you watch Bangla TV? yes no

11. Does the Bangla TV telecast the following programmes

News in Sylheti	yes	no	don't know
News in Bangla	yes	no	don't know
Drama serials in Sylheti	yes	no	don't know
Folk programmes in Sylheti	yes	no	don't know

Any other programmes in Bangla or Sylheti

12. Are there videos available in Sylheti in the Asian or Bangladeshi shops that you visit?

yes no don't know

13. How well would you say you understand the language of Bangla programmes?

- 1 = very well
- 2 = not very well
- 3 = not at all

14. How well would you say that you understand the language of Bangla news?

- 1 = very well
- 2 = not very well
- 3 = not at all

15. Is Sylheti a language or a dialect ? Please circle one.

language dialect

16. Is Sylheti similar to Bangla ? yes no don't know

17. What is your mother-tongue?

18. Are there story books, magazines, audio cassettes available in Sylheti in the Asian shops or in libraries in York / Leeds / Bradford?

yes no don't know

If yes, where (please circle) York / Leeds / Bradford

19. Are there story books, magazines, audio cassettes available in Bangla in the Asian shops or in libraries in York / Leeds / Bradford?

yes no don't know

If yes, where (please circle) York / Leeds / Bradford

20. Are there any radio programmes from your local radio station in Sylheti or Bangla?

yes no don't know

21. Do you know that there are short-story books and books on alphabets and numbers in Sylheti Nagri?

yes no

22. If there was a choice between learning Sylheti Nagri and Bangla what would you prefer?

1 = only Sylheti Nagri

- 2 = only Bangla
- 3 = both Sylheti Nagri and Bangla
- 4 = neither Sylheti Nagri nor Bangla

23. What was the first language that you learnt as a toddler / child?

Sylheti Bangla English Other

24. Do you feel that it is important for your children to learn Sylheti?

yes no

25. If yes, is it to
preserve Sylheti culture
preserve of Sylheti language
communicate with Sylhetis in Bangladesh / UK
preserve Sylheti identity
preserve traditional values and customs
all options equally important

26. Do you think it is important for your children to learn Bangla?

yes no

27. If yes, is it to
communicate with other Bangladeshis
preserve Bengali identity
get good jobs
set up business projects in Bangladesh
settle in Bangladesh
all options are equally important

Appendix 3: Adult language usage questionnaire

Language Maintenance and/or Shift in the Sylheti Community in Leeds: Patterns of Language Use and Language Vitality

Reference no.

Town - Leeds

Language in which interview was begun -

Questionnaire number-

1.Name (Optional)

2. Sex

3.Place of birth

4.Year of birth

5.If not born in the UK, the year of arrival in UK

6.Single [] Married []

7.Children, if any

8. Occupation: Are you

Self-employed	In paid employment	Housewife/husband	Student	Retired	Unemployed	Other

A3.1 Language skills and learning history

9. What did you first learn as a child? Please write 1, 2 and 3 for chronological order.

chronologically			simultaneously			
Sylheti	Bangla	English	Syl&Bangla	Syl&Eng	Bang&Eng	Syl, Bang & Eng

10. How well do you understand, speak, read and write the following language varieties shown in the table below? Please write 1 for ‘very well’, 2 for ‘not very well’ and 3 for ‘not at all’.

Language	speak	understand	read	write
Sylheti				
Bangla				
English				
Arabic				
Urdu				
Hindi				

11. Please supply the following information about your education if relevant. If not, go to the next question.

Level	place of study	languages learnt	medium of instruction
Primary			
Secondary			
College			
University			

12. Which country were you in when you first started to speak/ Sylheti /Bangla/English? Please tick.

Countries	Bangladesh	UK	Bangladesh & UK
Sylheti			
Bangla			
English			

13. Where did you develop the skills for learning Bangla? If you have to include more than one option, please combine the options relevant in your case in the space provided for ‘other’.

	Bangladesh				UK					
Skills	Home	School	Mosque	Other	Home	School	Mosque	Community Centre	Private Tutor	Other
Understand										
Speak										
Read										
Write										

14. What is your mother tongue?

15. What do other Bangladeshis call the language that you speak?
16. What age were you when you first started to learn English?

A3.2 Household and Community Language Use

17. What do you use when you speak to the following people (in the UK and in Bangladesh) and how often? Please use the following key.

- English
1. = Sylheti 2.= Bangla 3. English 4. Sylheti & Bangla 5. Sylheti & English
6. = Bangla & English 7. Sylheti, Bangla & English

		In the UK			In Bangladesh		
Family members& others		always	sometimes	never	always	sometimes	never
Grandfather Grandmother maternal (M) paternal (P)							
	Father Mother						
	Spouse Children						
	Brothers Sisters						
Uncle	maternal paternal						
Aunts	maternal paternal						
Cousins	maternal paternal						
Bangladeshi friends -	in school						
	outside school						
Bangladeshi neighbours							
Bangla teachers							
Bangladeshi shop - assistants							
Maulana / Mia saheb							
God - praying aloud praying silently							

18.What do the following people use when they speak to you (in the UK and in Bangladesh) and how often? Please use the following key.

1. = Sylheti 2.= Bangla 3. English 4. Sylheti & Bangla 5. Sylheti & English
6. = Bangla & English 7. Sylheti, Bangla & English

		In the UK			In Bangladesh		
Family members& others		always	sometimes	never	always	sometimes	never
Grandfather Grandmother maternal (M) paternal (P)							
	Father Mother						
	Spouse Children						
	Brothers Sisters						
Uncle	maternal paternal						
Aunts	maternal paternal						
Cousins	maternal paternal						
Bangladeshi friends -	in school						
	outside school						
Bangladeshi neighbours							
Bangla teachers							
Bangladeshi shop assistants							
Maulana / Mia saheb							

19. Writing Languages

Please circle 1 = yes and 2 = no.
A= adult male, B= adult female, C= children

A3.3 Children and Language

Bangla----, English----, French----, German----, Spanish----

yes no don't know

22. If yes, where -----

23. Do the children from your household go to any of these classes?

yes

no

24. If no, is there any reason/ reasons why the children are not attending these classes?

25. Has anybody taught the children of your household to read and write Bangla? yes /
no

If yes, who -----.

26. Has anyone of you taught the children rhymes or folk songs
in Sylheti yes no

in Bangla yes no

in English yes no

27. Has anyone told the children of this household stories
in Sylheti? yes no

in Bangla? yes no

in English? yes no

28. If or when you have children, would you like your children to read and write in: (please circle the number)

1 = only Sylheti

2 = only Bangla

3 = only English

4 = both Sylheti Nagri and Bangla

5 = both Sylheti Nagri and English

6 = both Bangla and English

29. Is Sylheti a language or a dialect? Please circle one
Language Dialect

30. Is Sylheti similar to Bangla? yes no don't know

31. How proud are you to be a Sylheti = ----- Bangladeshi = -----
1= very proud, 2= doesn't matter, 3= not proud at all

32. Do you know that Sylheti has a written script called Sylheti Nagri?
yes no

33. Do you know that there are story books and books on alphabets and numbers in Sylheti Nagri?
yes no

34. In your opinion should the schools offer opportunities to Bangladeshi children to learn Bangla or Sylheti?

35. In your opinion should there be more community schools to teach Bangla?
yes no

36. In your opinion how much support is given to the following in schools in Sylhet? Please tick for each language.

	A lot	moderate	none
Sylheti			
Bangla			
English			

37. In your opinion how much support is given to the following in schools in Leeds which have Bangladeshi children? Please tick for each language.

	A lot	moderate	none
Sylheti			
Bangla			
English			

38. If Bangla classes are held in schools in Leeds, are they
daily weekly held as a taster course held as after school class

39. How important do you feel it is for your children to learn Sylheti? Please circle any one.
important not important don't know

40. If Sylheti is important, then how would you rate the following options. Please write 1 for the most important reason then 2 for the next important one, then 3, then 4, then 5, then 6, then 7 and 8 for the least important one.

- The preservation of Sylheti culture and history.....
- The preservation of Sylheti language.....
- Communication with other Sylhetis in Bangladesh / UK.....
- Preservation of Sylheti identity.....
- Keeping the traditional values e.g. singing songs on special occasions
- As a job requirement.....
- For business prospect.....

To settle in Sylhet.....

41. How important do you think it is for your children to learn Bengali? Please circle any one.

important not important don't know

42. If Bangla is important, how would you rate the following options. Please write 1 for the most important reason, then 2 for the next important one, then 3, then 4, then 5, then 6, then 7 and 8 for the least important one.

- The preservation of Bangla culture and history.....
- The preservation of Bangla language.....
- Communication with other Bangladeshis.....
- Preservation of Bangla identity.....
- Keeping the traditional values e.g. singing songs on special occasions
- As a job requirement in Bangladesh.....
- For business prospect in Bangladesh.....
- To settle in Bangladesh in future.....

43. Do you feel that you would like to learn English because: (please circle)

- (a) you can get good jobs
- (b) you can continue for higher education
- (c) it is an important language to know
- (d) you can venture into many businesses
- (e) you can help your children with their studies

or is it because

- (f) you can sound like the English do
- (g) you can think and behave like the English
- (h) you can understand the English culture better
- (i) you can feel more at ease and at home with the English
- (j) the English will accept you wholeheartedly

44. What do you identify yourself as? Please list in order of importance from options 1- 6 given below. If your choice is not included in this list specify and write your answer beside the 'Other' option.

- Bengali -----
- Bangladeshi -----
- Sylheti -----
- Muslim -----
- Asian -----
- British -----
- Other -----

A3.4 Language and work

45. At work, which of the following do you need to know? Please tick for each language.

Language	It is essential	It helps	Not necessary at all
Sylheti			
Bangla			
English			

46. What do your Bangladeshi friends or the following people at your workplace speak?

Languages	Fellow Bangladeshi workers	Bangladeshi manager/boss	Bangladeshi clients / customers
Only Sylheti			
Only Bangla			
Only English			
Sylheti & Bangla			
Sylheti & English			
Bangla & English			
Sylheti, Bangla & English			

A3.5 Language outside home and work

47. What language do you use when you go to: (Please tick)

	Sylheti	Bangla	English	Arabic	Other
The mosque					
The community centre					
Youth clubs					
Non-Bangladeshi organisations					

48. Do you take part in any of the following ? Please tick

- Religious group sessions
- Bangladeshi political group activities
- Bangladeshi youth / social clubs
- Bangladeshi welfare or charitable organisation activities

49. If you are a member of any of the groups mentioned above, what is the language you use at the meetings or get-togethers?

50. What language do you use when you go to buy groceries from:

Sylheti shops-
Bangla shops-

Asian shops-
English shops-

51. Does your preference to visit the shop depend on language?

52. What language is most important for shopping in Bangladeshi shops in Leeds?

Sylheti or Bangla

53. If you had a choice of GPs would you prefer to have a GP who can speak (please circle)

Sylheti or Bangla or English or Sylheti, English and Bangla or Other

54. What is your opinion of the following. Give an appropriate number in each box for the quality/qualities you think it has. 1 = yes, 2 = no, 3 = undecided . Please fill each box.

Language qualities	Sylheti	Bangla	English
Pleasant sounding			
Easy to learn			
Literary			
Prestigious			
Useful			

A3.6 Personal choice and interests

55. What type of food, clothes and music do you prefer? Please tick.

Preference	In food	In clothes	In music
Bangladeshi			
British			
Other			

56. Do you know if there are any broadcasts in the following languages from the local radio stations Leeds / Bradford or York?

yes no

If yes, which one

Sylheti Bangla Hindi Urdu

57. Do you watch

	regularly	occasionally	never
Bangla TV			
Sonali TV			
Ekushey TV			
Zee TV			
MTV			
Other Eng Lang TV BBC, ITV, CH-5			
Satellite TV			

58. How well would you say you understand news in Bangla? Please circle.

1 = very well

2 = not very well

3 = not at all

59. Are there videos available of dramas in Sylheti/ Bangla in the Asian or Bangladeshi shops that you visit? Please circle.

Sylheti yes

no

don't know

Bangla yes

no

don't know

60. Are there audios available of pop/ folk songs in Sylheti / Bengali in the Asian or Bangladeshi shops that you visit? Sylheti yes no don't know
Bangla yes no don't know

61. Does the Bangla TV telecast programmes like (Please circle for each item)

News in Sylheti

yes

no

don't know

News in Bangla

yes

no

don't know

Drama/ drama serials in Sylheti

yes

no

don't know

Folk programmes in Sylheti

yes

no

don't know

Any other programme

62. How often do you visit Bangladesh? Please circle.

yearly

once in 5 years

once in 10 years

never

63. Is there anything that you miss about Bangladesh? Please circle

yes

no

If yes, what

64. Do you think of Leeds as home?

yes

no

65. If the answer is yes, is it because there are many (please tick)

- Sylhetis living in this area-----☐
- Bangladeshis living in this area--☐
- Or any other reason-----☐

66. Who are your neighbours in Leeds? Please tick.

- SylhetisIndians
- BengalisWest Indians
- EnglishAfro Caribbeans
- PakistanisOther

67. Do you think Sylhetis are different from other Bangladeshis? yes no
If yes, in what way?

68. How often do you visit your friends and what language do you use with them?

	often	sometimes	never	language used
Sylheti friends				
Bangladeshi friends				
Indian friends				
Pakistani friends				
English friends				
Afro Caribbean				

69. What language do you use with your closest friends?

70. What language does your friend use when speaking to you?

71. What language do you use when you speak to your friends over the telephone or the mobile?

A3.7 Language used for greetings and other expressions

72. You greet older Bangladeshis in
73. You greet your Bangladeshi friends in
74. You joke with Bangladeshi friends in
75. You express anger or any other strong emotion in
76. You count in
77. You swear at Bangladeshis in

S	B	E

S=Sylheti, B=Bangla, E=English

78. Do you think that you may live in the U K permanently or would you return to Bangladesh sometime in future? Please tick.

live in the UK permanently

return to Bangladesh

79. Below is a list of some communities that you may come into contact with and also some options given in relation to your acceptance of these communities. Please write a number in the appropriate place to indicate your preference.

1 = always, 2 = usually, 3 = sometimes, 4 = rarely, 5 = never.

S = Sylheti

NSB = Non- Sylheti Bangladeshi

OTHER =

Indian Muslim (IM)

Indian Hindu (IH)

Pakistani Muslim (PM)

White British (WB)

Afro Caribbean (AC)

Would you:

	Sylheti	Non-Sylheti Bangladeshi	Others
associate with			
have as neighbours			
allow children to play with			
invite to social functions			
prefer as close family friends			
prefer to marry			
not prefer to marry			

80. How would you know that a person was a Sylheti when you met an Asian (appearance or clothes)?

Appendix 3a & 4a: Social Network Contacts

Reference number:

1. Do you live in a nuclear / extended family? Please circle one.
2. If you find that there is a crisis in your family and you need to get in touch with someone who would you go to?

- (i)

relationship ----- age----- sex ----- occupation -----
- (ii)
- (iii)
- (iv)
- (v)
- (vi)

3. If you had to discuss a problem that you have had at work and need to make some decisions who would you normally turn to?

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii)
- (iv)
- (v)
- (vi)

4. If you need help with tasks around the home or the shop like painting, moving furniture or doing a major or a minor repair who would you think of asking?

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii)
- (iv)
- (v)

(vi)

5. If you need someone to help you start your car who do you contact?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

(vi)

6. If you have to make an important personal or family decision and need advice, who would you turn to?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

(vi)

7. If you need to borrow money (perhaps a large sum) to buy a take-away, a shop or a house, who would you ask?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

(vi)

8. Sometimes we move from one place to another. Are there people in your life you are particularly fond of but who are now so far away that a regular contact is difficult to maintain?

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii)
- (iv)
- (v)
- (vi)

9. If you were going out on a special occasion or in the evening for a social visit who would you normally visit?

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii)
- (iv)
- (v)
- (vi)

10. Some people socialise with their work mates / colleagues during weekends or holidays, who do you visit at these times?

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii)
- (iv)
- (v)
- (vi)

Appendix 4: Student language usage questionnaire

Language Maintenance and/or Shift in the Sylheti Community in Leeds: Patterns of Language Use and Language Vitality.

Reference no.
Town - Leeds
Language in which interview was begun -

- 1. Name (Optional)
- 2. Sex
- 3. Place of birth
- 4. Year of birth
- 5. If not born in the UK, the year of arrival in UK

Language skills and learning history

6. What did you first learn as a child? Please write 1,2 and 3 for chronological order.

Chronologically			simultaneously			
Sylheti	Bangla	English	Syl&Bangla	Syl&Eng	Bangla&Eng	Syl, Bangla & Eng

7.How well do you understand, speak, read and write the following shown in the table below? Write 1 for ‘very well’, 2 for ‘not very well’, 3 for ‘not at all’ .

Languages	speak	understand	read	write
Sylheti				
Bangla				
English				
Arabic				
Urdu				
Hindi				

8. Please supply the following information about your education.

Level	place of study	languages learnt	medium of instruction
Primary			
Secondary			
College			
University			

9. Which country were you in when you first started to speak/ Sylheti /Bangla / English?
Please tick.

Countries	Bangladesh	UK	Bangladesh & UK
Sylheti			
Bangla			
English			

10. Where did you develop the skills for learning Bangla? If you have to include more than one option, please combine the options relevant in your case in the space provided for ‘Other’.

	Bangladesh				UK					
Skills	Home	School	Mosque	Other	Home	School	Mosque	Community Centre	Private Tutor	Other
Understand										
Speak										
Read										
Write										

11. What is your mother-tongue?

12. What age were you when you started to learn English?

A4.1 Household and Community Language Use

13.What language do you use with the following people when you speak to them (in the UK and in Bangladesh) and how often? Please use the following key

1. = Sylheti 2.= Bangla 3. English 4. Sylheti & Bangla 5. Sylheti & English
6. = Bangla & English 7. Sylheti, Bangla & English

	In the UK			In Bangladesh		
Family members& others	always	sometimes	never	always	sometimes	never
Grandfather						
Grandmother						
maternal (M) paternal(P)						
Father						
Mother						
Spouse						
Children						
Brothers						
Sisters						
Uncle						
maternal						
paternal						
Aunts						
maternal						
paternal						
Cousins						
maternal						
paternal						
Bangladeshi friends -	in school					
	outside school					
Bangladeshi neighbours						
Bangla teachers						
Bangladeshi shop - assistants						
Maulana / Mia saheb						
God - praying aloud						
praying silently						

14.What do the following people use when they speak to you (in the UK and in Bangladesh) and how often? Please use the following key.

1. = Sylheti 2.= Bangla 3. English 4. Sylheti & Bangla 5. Sylheti & English
6. = Bangla & English 7. Sylheti, Bangla & English

	In the UK			In Bangladesh		
Family members& others	always	sometimes	never	always	sometimes	never
Grandfather						
Grandmother						
maternal (M) paternal(P)						
Father						
Mother						
Spouse						
Children						
Brothers						
Sisters						
Uncle						
maternal						
paternal						
Aunts						
maternal						
paternal						
Cousins						
maternal						
paternal						
Bangladeshi friends -	in school					
	outside school					
Bangladeshi neighbours						
Bangla teachers						
Bangladeshi shop - assistants						
Maulana / Mia saheb						

For the following questions please circle as appropriate. S = Sylheti, B= Bangla, E =English

15. You speak to your Bangladeshi friends in class in
- S B E
16. During lunch/ games you speak to your Bangladeshi friends in
- S B E
17. On the way home from school you speak to your friends in
- S B E
18. You give instructions to friends in
- S B E

19. **Writing Languages** Please circle. 1 = yes and 2 = no.

A = adult male, B = adult female and C = children.

Do you ever write the following	In Bangla	In English
Shopping Lists	Yes 1 No 2	Yes 1 No 2
Personal letters to other Bangladeshis	1 A B C 2 A B C	1 A B C 2 A B C
Official letters to Bangladesh	1 2	1 2
Any messages for any Bangladeshis	1 2	1 2
Have you ever seen the following		
Notices in Asian shops	1 2	1 2
Names of shops	1 2	1 2
Information leaflets	1 2	1 2
Calenders	1 2	1 2
Newspapers, magazines	1 2	1 2
Religious books	1 2	1 2
What is the language used when someone writes to you from Bangladesh		
Personal letters	1 A B C 2 A B C	1 A B C 2 A B C
Formal letters	1 2	1 2

A4.2 Children and Language

20. How important do you think it is for you to learn the following languages in school?
1= very important, 2= not very important, 3= don't know.

Bangla-----, English-----, French-----, German-----, Spanish-----,

21. Do you know of classes in this city where children are taught Bangla?

yes

no

don't know

22. If yes, where -----

23. Do you go to any of these classes?

yes

no

24. If no, is there any reason/ reasons why you are not attending these classes?

25. Has anybody from your household taught you to read and write Bangla?

yes

no

If yes, who -----.

26. Has anyone taught you rhymes or folk songs

in Sylheti

yes

no

in Bangla

yes

no

in English

yes

no

27. Has anyone in your household told you stories

in Sylheti

yes

no

in Bangla

yes

no

in English

yes

no

28. If or when you have children, would you like your children to read and write in –
(please circle the number of your choice)

1= only Sylheti

2= only Bangla

3= only English

4= both Sylheti Nagri and Bangla

5= both Sylheti Nagri and English

6= both Bangla and English

29. Is Sylheti a language or a dialect? Please circle one

Language - Dialect

30. Is Sylheti similar to Bangla?

yes

no

don't know

31. How proud are you to be a Sylheti or Bangladeshi

1= very proud, 2= doesn't matter, 3= not proud at all

32. Do you know that Sylheti has a written script called Sylheti Nagri?

yes no

33. Do you know that there are story books and books on alphabets and numbers in Sylheti Nagri?

yes no

34. In your opinion should the schools offer opportunities to Bangladeshi children to learn Bangla?

yes no

35. In your opinion should there be more community schools to teach Bangla?

yes no

36. In your opinion how much support is given to the following in schools in Sylhet? Please tick for each language.

	a lot	moderate	none
Sylheti			
Bangla			
English			

37. In your opinion how much support is given to the following languages in schools in Leeds which have Bangladeshi children? Please tick for each language.

	a lot	moderate	none
Sylheti			
Bangla			
English			

38. If Bangla classes are held in schools in Leeds, are they

daily weekly held as a taster course held as after school class

39. How important do you feel it is for you to learn Sylheti?

important not important don't know

40. If Sylheti is important, then how would you rate the following options. Please write 1 for the most important reason then 2 for the next important one, then 3, then 4, then 5, then 6, then 7 and 8 for the least important one.

The preservation of Sylheti culture and history.....
 The preservation of Sylheti language.....
 Communication with other Sylhetis in Bangladesh / UK.....
 Preservation of Sylheti identity.....
 Keeping the traditional values e.g. singing songs on special occasions
 As a job requirement.....
 For business prospect.....
 To settle in Sylhet.....

41. How important do you think it is for you to learn Bangla?
 important not important don't know

42. If Bangla is important, how would you rate the following options. Please write 1 for the most important reason, then 2 for the next important one, then 3, then 4, then 5, then 6, then 7, and 8 for the least important option.

The preservation of Bengali culture and history.....
 The preservation of Bengali language.....
 Communication with other Bangladeshis.....
 Preservation of Bengali identity.....
 Keeping the traditional values e.g. singing songs on special occasions
 As a job requirement in Bangladesh.....
 For business prospect in Bangladesh.....
 To settle in Bangladesh in future.....

43. Do you feel that you would like to learn English because (please circle)

- a. you can get good jobs
- b. you can continue for higher education
- c. it is an important language to know
- d. you can venture into many businesses
- e. you can help your children with their studies

or is it because

- f. you can sound like the English
- g. you can think and behave like the English
- h. you can understand the English culture better
- i. you can feel more at home and at ease with the English
- j. The English will accept you wholeheartedly

44. What do you identify yourself as? Please list in order of importance from options 1- 6 given below. If your choice is not included in this list specify and write your answer beside the ‘Other’ option.

- Bengali -----
- Bangladeshi -----
- Sylheti -----
- Muslim -----
- Asian -----
- British -----
- Other -----

A4.3 Language outside home

45. What language do you use when you go to: (Please tick)

	Sylheti	Bangla	English	Arabic	Other (specify)
the mosque					
community centre					
youth club					
non-Bangladeshi organisation					

46.Do you take part in any of the following ? Please tick

- Religious group sessions
- Bangladeshi political group activities
- Bangladeshi youth / social clubs
- Bangladeshi welfare or charitable organisation activities

47. If you are a member of any of the groups mentioned above, what is the language you use

48. Which shops do you prefer to buy snacks = 1, clothes = 2, cassettes and cds=3, books= 4, games and toys= 5, fast food = 6?
- Sylheti shops-----

Asian shops-----

Bengali shops-----

English shops-----

49. Does your preference to visit the shop depend on language?

50. What language is most important for your shopping in Bangladeshi shops in Leeds?

51.Given a choice of GPs would you consult a GP who can speak

- Sylheti or Bangla or English or Other (please specify)

52.What is your opinion of the following languages. Give an appropriate number for the quality/qualities you think it has. 1 = yes, 2 = no, 3 = undecided. Please fill each box.

Language qualities	Sylheti	Bangla	English
pleasant sounding			
easy to learn			
literary			
prestigious			
useful			

A4.4 Personal choice and interests

53.What type of food, clothes and music do you prefer? Please tick.

Preference	in food	in clothes	in music
Bangladeshi			
British			
Other			

54. What is your favourite food?
- 55.Which is your favourite television programme?
- 56.Who is your favourite actor / actress?
- 57.What kind of music do you like?
- 58.Who is your favourite pop star?
- 59.Which is your favourite pop group?
- 60.What is your favourite sport?
61. Do you play any sport?
62. Do you support any club?

63.Do you know if there are any broadcasts in the following languages from the local radio stations Leeds / Bradford or York?

yesno

If yes, (please circle) SylhetiBanglaHindiUrdu

64.Do you watch (please tick)

TV channels	regularly	occasionally	never
Bangla TV			
Sonali TV			
Ekushey TV			
Zee TV			
M TV			
Other Eng lang TV BBC, ITV, CH5			
Satellite TV			

65.How well would you say you understand news in Bangla?

1 = very well

2 = not very well

3 = not at all

66. Are there videos available of dramas in Sylheti or Bangla in the Asian or Bangladeshi shops that you visit?

Sylhetiyesno

Banglayesno

don't know

don't know

67. Are there audios available of pop/ folk songs in Sylheti or Bangla in the Asian or Bangladeshi shops that you visit?

Sylhetiyesno

Banglayesno

don't know

don't know

68. Does the Bangla TV telecast programmes like (please circle)

News in Sylhetiyesno

News in Banglayesno

Drama/ drama serials in Sylhetiyesno

Folk programmes in Sylhetiyesno

Any other programme

don't know

don't know

don't know

don't know

69. How often do you visit Bangladesh? Please circle.

yearly once in 5 years once in 10 years never

70. Do you think Sylhetis are different from other Bangladeshis? yes no

If yes, in what way?

71. How often do you visit your friends and what language do you use with them?

	often	sometimes	never	language used
Sylheti friends				
Bangladeshi friends				
Indian friends				
Pakistani friends				
English friends				
Afro Caribbean				

72. What language do you use with your best friend?

73. What language do you use when you speak to your friends over the telephone or the mobile?

74. What language do you use with the following neighbours? Please tick.

- Sylheti
- Bengali
- English
- Pakistani
- Indian
- West Indian
- Afro Caribbean
- Other

75. Is there anything that you miss about Bangladesh? yes no

If yes, what

On greetings Please tick

76. You greet older Bangladeshis in
77. You greet your Bangladeshi friends in
78. You joke with Bangladeshi friends in
79. You express anger or any other strong emotion in
80. You count in
81. You swear at Bangladeshis in

S	B	E

S=Sylheti, B=Bangla, E=English

82. Do you think that you may like to live in the UK permanently or would you like to go back to Bangladesh? Please tick.

live permanently in the UK

return to Bangladesh

83. Do you think of Leeds as home?

yesno

84. Below is a list of some communities that you may come into contact with and also some options given in relation to your acceptance of these communities. Please tick in the appropriate places to indicate your preference. Scale 1 = always, 2= usually, 3 =sometimes, 4= rarely, 5 = never.

- S = Sylheti
- NSB = Non- Sylheti Bangladeshi
- OTHERS = IM = Indian Muslim
- IH = Indian Hindu
- PM = Pakistani Muslim
- WB = White British
- AC = Afro Caribbean

Would you:

	Sylheti	Non-Sylheti Bangladeshi	Others
associate with			
have as neighbours			
allow children to play with			
invite to social functions			
prefer as close family friends			
prefer to marry			
not prefer to marry			

85. How would you know that a person was a Sylheti when you met an Asian (e.g. look, dress, language)?

Appendix 5: Questionnaire for primary school children

I am interested to know your opinion of Bangla. There are no right or wrong answers. Please feel free to express your own ideas and impressions. All responses are confidential.

Section 1

Name :

Age :

School :

Age at which you started going to Bangla classes:

Age at which you stopped going to Bangla classes:

Section 2

	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
1. Bangla is one of my favourite lessons	[]	[]	[]
2. I think my parents are pleased that I am learning Bangla.	[]	[]	[]
3. I don't want to do any more Bangla this year.	[]	[]	[]
4. Bangla is one of the easiest lessons.	[]	[]	[]
5. Bangla will be useful to me after I leave school.	[]	[]	[]
6. I am better at Bangla than at other languages.	[]	[]	[]
7. I find Bangla more difficult than other languages.	[]	[]	[]
8. There other useful languages to learn than Bangla.	[]	[]	[]
9. I don't like Bangla because I am no good at it.	[]	[]	[]
10. My parents think that learning Bangla is very important.	[]	[]	[]
11. I don't need Bangla for what I want to do.	[]	[]	[]

	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
12. I think that there are some jobs where Bangla would be useful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I enjoy Bangla it seems easy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I like learning new words in Bangla.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I find it hard to remember the words in Bangla.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I don't like people to make any negative comments on my Bangla.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. The Bangla script is simple and I have no difficulty writing Bangla.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. My parents help and encourage me to learn Bangla.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. The maintenance of Bangla is the most important of all matters for the Bangladeshi community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. The government should employ far more doctors, teachers and social workers who speak Bangla.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Bangladeshis should abandon the use of their languages and adopt English everywhere.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Learning English is more important than cultivating Bangla.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Bangla has a rich literary tradition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Bangladeshi children are not motivated to learn their mother-tongue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Learning Bangla is important for learning about Islam.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Learning Sylheti is important for learning about Islam.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. I don't like people making negative comments about my Sylheti.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. My parents talk to me in Sylheti all the time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please answer the following questions by putting a tick beside the alternatives given.

29. During my Bangla lessons I want

- a. both English and Bangla to be used ☐
- b. both Bangla and Sylheti used as possible ☐
- c. only Bangla to be used ☐

30. Whenever I have /had the opportunity to speak Bangla outside school, I

- a. speak Bangla most of the time ☐
- b. speak Sylheti most of the time ☐
- c. speak English most of the time ☐

31. When I am/ was in my Bangla class, I

- a. answer as many questions as possible ☐
- b. answer only the easy questions ☐
- c. never answer any questions in Bangla. ☐

Appendix 6: Questionnaire survey with primary and secondary school teachers in Sylhet

সিলেট শহর ও পার্শ্ববর্তি এলাকার স্কুলগুলিতে শিক্ষাদানরত শিক্ষকদের জন্য মাতৃভাষা সংক্রান্ত প্রশ্ন:

- ১। স্কুল টেক্সটবুক বোর্ড কর্তৃক মাতৃভাষা শিক্ষা সংক্রান্ত বিশেষ কোন নির্দেশ আছে কি ?
যদি থাকে তবে সেটা কি।
নাই,
- ২। অন্যান্য বিষয় গুলি কোন মাধ্যমে শিক্ষা দেওয়া হয়? বাংলা অথবা সিলেটি?
সাধারণত শ্রেনীকক্ষে কি ভাষা ব্যবহৃত হয় ?
বাংলা ভাষায়, বাংলা, সিলেটি

শিক্ষকের নামসহ স্বাক্ষর:- মোঃ সিরাজুল ইসলাম।

স্কুলের নাম:- ডাঃ ইব্রিস আলী উচ্চ বিদ্যালয়।

ঠিকানা:- জাকলং চা বাগান, রাধানগর,

থানা:- সোয়ানহিনঘাট,

জিলা:- সিলেট ।

তারিখ:- ২৮/০৩/২০০২-ই।

সাক্ষাৎ গ্রহণকারীর নাম:-

শাহেদ আহমদ, প্রভাষক ইমরান আহমদ মহিলা কলেজ।

ঠিকানা:- কৈলাপুর্, সিলেট।

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