

## Challenging Language in the Diaspora

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Diaspora groups inevitably learn new languages and are often bilingual to varying degrees. Bangladeshis in Britain speak variants of Bangla, the most common being Sylheti. Many, mainly older people or those brought up in Bangladesh speak and understand standard or 'shuddho' Bangla. Most speak English, and those brought up and educated in Britain speak it as their first language. Many Bangladeshi children in Britain also learn Arabic, as part of a Qur'anic education, usually after school or at the weekends.

Here I wish to discuss the use of Bangla among British Bangladeshi families living in London and particularly its role and meaning compared to the Bangla dialect Sylheti, English and Arabic. My research into transnational Bangladeshi childhoods in London is part of an AHRC funded project at the University of Sussex. The research took place in Islington, a borough of London not usually associated with Bangladeshis, where a relatively small number of Bangladeshis live. Nearby Tower Hamlets where many more Bangladeshis<sup>1</sup> live, is more commonly associated with Bangladeshis in Britain.

By comparing the language practices and attitudes to languages of my respondents with evidence from Bangladesh and Tower Hamlets it is possible to see that Sylheti speakers in London have different practices and attitudes to those in Bangladesh, that people in Islington may use Bangla differently than those in Tower Hamlets, and that these differences may become greater among young second and third generation Bangladeshis in Britain.

### Sylheti vs. Bangla?

Language can be one of the most important factors in creating and maintaining group identity and for drawing boundaries between social categories.<sup>2</sup> In Bangladesh this is certainly true, as the campaign for Bangla became a central part of protest and resistance against the Pakistani oppression of Bangladesh. The language campaign eventually led to the war and independence for Bangladesh in 1971.

While it became a factor that unified people of different classes and religions, Bangla, like all languages is not homogenous. Within Bangladesh and West Bengal in India there are many varieties and dialects of Bengali. Sylhet is a region in the North East of Bangladesh, which is particularly associated with migration to London. The region has its own dialect or regional language known as Sylheti. Roughly seven million people speak Sylheti in Bangladesh and it is also spoken by about 200,000 people in Britain, where 95% of the Bangladeshis are 'Sylheti'.<sup>3</sup>

Whether Sylheti is a language in its own right or a dialect of Bangla is much debated. Rod Chalmers<sup>4</sup> points out that the distinction comes down to a semantic definition, made in western terms, which does not see multilingual societies as natural. In Bangladesh Sylheti is one of several different but related speech varieties and is thus considered a dialect of Bangla. In the UK by contrast, Sylheti is the ordinary means of communication for a large group of people relatively uninfluenced by 'standard' or '*shuddho*' Bangla and could thus be seen as a distinct language.<sup>5</sup> One test Chalmers refers to of assessing the relationship of two languages is whether they are mutually intelligible; Sylheti and standard Bangla, according to academics that Chalmers cites, are nearly mutually unintelligible.

The reality is more complicated, most Sylheti speakers can understand a great deal of Bangla and vice versa. They are very closely related and speakers of Sylheti and Bangla in Bangladesh are exposed to each other and learn to communicate. No one in Bangladesh speaks standard Bangla exactly as it is written and taught. Standard Bangla is the language of the majority of literature, education, film, media and official communication in Bangladesh. Almost everyone in Bangladesh can get by in standard Bangla even if they speak a very different dialect or language at home.<sup>6</sup> Lawson and Sachdev point out that these issues are rarely decided based on linguistic grounds alone, there are significant political and status based issues which further cloud the picture.

In Bangladesh Sylheti is a 'diglossic' 'low' variety and standard Bangla is the 'high' variety.<sup>7</sup> Standard Bangla is regarded as the language of a tradition of literature and culture which Bengalis are justifiably proud of, while Sylheti is seen as a dialect or language with a relatively limited vocabulary and literary history. Sylheti is seen by many Bangladeshis as a conservative rural backwater compared to the more sophisticated, liberal and dynamic centres of Dhaka and Kolkata. The 'standard' Bangla is closely associated with Tagore's writing and the Calcutta dialect of Bangla.<sup>8</sup>

This power balance is reflected in the international attitude towards Bangla and its dialects or regional languages. In Britain services and language lessons are offered in Bangla but rarely in Sylheti. Lawson and Sachdev's research was carried out with pupils studying for a GCSE in Bangla. Needless to say there is no GCSE in Sylheti and their respondents valued Bangla over Sylheti.

At Sylheti lessons in Tower Hamlets, (possibly the only course in Sylheti in the world?) it became apparent that there were no course materials and the course relied on Rod Chalmers' book 'Learning Sylheti'. The teacher of the Sylheti course said that Sylheti 'did not have grammar' and that it had a very limited vocabulary; we constantly mixed, and were encouraged to mix, English into our sentences. The course was poor and limited by a lack of resources and expertise

for Sylheti learning. It was also designed for use in the UK and made no reference to Bangla. No text was used, only a rough transliteration.

The SOAS<sup>9</sup> Bangla course was markedly different. Setting aside the huge differences in the resources, expertise of the teachers and cost, two interesting factors were revealed. One is the importance to Bangladeshis of how Bangla is portrayed and perceived in the outside world. People I met and discussed the course with in Bangladesh and Bangladeshis in Britain were very impressed that I was being taught by *the* William Radice. I was surprised that they had heard of him, but their association with the language and knowledge and admiration for SOAS's Bangla scholar were revealing. Once on the course, the hierarchy within Bangla was also made clear. Sylheti is near the bottom of the pile of dialects and versions of Bangla, with other Bangladeshi types just above it and the Kolkata influenced standard Bangla firmly at the top. Rural Bangladeshi dialects were sometimes compared to archaic forms of Bangla now only found in poetry, but generally dismissed as rather coarse, rustic and undesirable.

The respect with which Bangla was treated at SOAS contrasts with the generally dismissive attitude towards Sylheti, which was also reflected by the teacher in Tower Hamlets. He didn't have much reverence for Sylheti, it had no grammar, no beauty, no literature or poetry and it was often combined with English when required – it was only used for practical communication.

It is interesting to consider whether the relationship between Sylhetis and other Bangladeshis reflects or influences this. There seems to be a complex, ambivalent relationship between the two, many people say that animosity between Sylhetis and non Sylhetis really only exists in the UK. In Bangladesh most of the Interim government and the founder and board of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and many other prominent national figures are Sylhetis. Others, mainly in the UK have given very unflattering and prejudiced accounts of Sylhetis. British Bangladeshis find that upon visiting Bangladesh they are surprised that animosity towards them from other Bangladeshis does not materialise as they had expected.

This relationship is also dynamic and is changing. Sylhet's links to London have brought in money. Londonis have become wealthy powerful people in Bangladesh, their power challenges the hierarchies.<sup>10</sup> Sylhet is also changing as education, international travel and communication become more common. Meanwhile in London new generations are growing up, not exposed to standard Bangla or the hierarchies of language use in Bangladesh. Children in Islington ranked Sylheti very low in a ranking exercise for languages, but did not see much difference between Bangla and Sylheti. In discussion they did not believe that they were different languages, or were more or less important than the other. They did not recognise any antagonism or difference between Sylhetis and non Sylhetis. They were also confused about whether Sylheti or Bangla was what is known as 'shuddho *basha*' or the standard language.

Two things are at work here. The distinctions academics and commentators make between Bangla and Sylheti do not appear to be recognised by many people in Bangladesh or in London. Perhaps they are artificial or overblown, or, perhaps like many issues, more of interest to academics than to normal people. Still they may be indicative of important social change. Bangladeshi children in Britain see the Sylheti dialect spoken by their parents as the authentic Bangla, and do not realise that it is a variety or dialect of Bangla. They are not taught Bangla at school and for them English and Arabic are the languages of culture and literature, not standard Bangla. The hierarchy of languages in Bangladesh has been interrupted.

### **Language practices and attitudes among children in Islington**

Most of the children from my study communicate almost entirely in English. They use Sylheti with specific people in specific locations. When I have attempted to speak Bangla to them in class they have sometimes been embarrassed and told me not to. Linda Pagett's study of children from different ethnic backgrounds at a primary school found similar findings. Children preferred to speak English at school and hardly spoke any of the language their parents spoke, were reluctant to talk it or found it hard to at school.<sup>11</sup> Pagett explains this in terms of cultural capital, citing Bourdieu (1986) and Carrington and Luke (1997). Their use of English allows children to 'narrow the social field' between themselves and their peers at school, giving them "*access to cultural and subcultural institutions, social relations and practices.*"<sup>12</sup> This in turn gives them more chance of success socially, at school and later in life.

Sylheti is spoken mainly at home and in a few predictable phrases usually around issues of food and domestic activities. Some of the children hardly speak any Bangla or are unwilling to, but understand everything their mother says to them in Sylheti. They will understand their mother's Sylheti dialect, but respond in English. Similarly, many of the mothers I have met understand nearly everything I say to them in English but find it difficult to speak English fluently. With each other mothers and children may code switch or mix their languages for maximum communication.

Sebastian Rasinger's<sup>13</sup> study of Sylheti and English usage in Tower Hamlets found that adults were most likely to use Sylheti in the home and when addressing children. He also found that there was an increasing use of English at home especially in conversations with children, speculating that this might be due to the desire to teach children English or due to children's refusal or inability to talk Sylheti<sup>14</sup>. This has certainly been the case among children in Islington. They find communicating in Sylheti hard and limiting, responding to their parents in English or switching to English after a short conversation in Sylheti. Rasinger also interestingly speculates that English is increasingly introduced to the home by children and that families with children use English more both at home and in

interactions outside the home. This is a pattern that applies in Islington too, children are more fluent in English than their parents, speak it at home and help their parents understand, read and write in English when they struggle.

Islington council provide an after school Bangla class for the Bangladeshi pupils at the school. This has been encouraged by parents and is provided free to pupils who want it. The teacher of the class is Sylheti, but as a well educated Bangladeshi, he prefers to speak and teach the children Bangla and corrects their 'incorrect' Sylheti. In the class the standard is low and there is very little Bangla spoken. Most of the children struggle to write even the most basic letters. It is very difficult to teach a group whose abilities and enthusiasm vary so widely. Some of the children clearly do not want to learn Bangla and do not afford it much importance. They find the class boring and unimportant.

When we watch Bangla television channels at the children's homes they tell me that they cannot understand it. They also claim not to understand some of the 'standard Bangla' that I am learning and the children and mothers say things like 'oh we don't understand that *dhakaiah*'. Of course, this may be because my Bangla is poor and difficult to understand for anyone, but in Sylhet I found that people understood my 'standard Bangla'. People in Sylhet spoke Bangla and Sylheti or a mixture of the two and probably weren't aware of the distinction.

Most of the children in my study are 'third generation' with one parent who was born in Bangladesh. They usually speak Sylheti with that parent, who often understands most of what is being said in English anyway. At home there are some words that children do not know in English, usually words for South Asian specific family and food vocabulary. Very young children often learn Bangla first or equal amounts of Bangla and English in a total mixture as they learn at home with their parents and siblings, then they immerse themselves totally in English when they start school and often totally ignore Bangla, which it seems many come back to when they are older. I have seen groups of teenagers interchanging between English and Sylheti, but this is unusual among the primary school children in my study. In fact there may be differences between the attitudes towards language among older and younger children aged between eight and twelve (see below). Very young children just learning to talk also mix their languages almost unconsciously to communicate as effectively as they can.

Many of the children learn Arabic and can often speak or write more Arabic than Bengali. Many British Bangladeshis increasingly identify more with Islam than they do with Bangladesh. The corruption of Bangladeshi politics, the association of Bangladesh with poverty and disaster and their experiences during visits (see below) turns young people away from identifying with Bangladesh and Bengali traditions.<sup>15</sup> The increasing 'Islamification' of British Bangladeshis has created what Delwar Hussain calls the 'Islam vs. Bangla division' where Bangladeshi (and Bengali) cultural practices are constructed as being in opposition to Islamic ideals.<sup>16</sup>

One boy in the Bangla class who has never been to Bangladesh and speaks almost no Bangla told me that he could write his name in Arabic. Many of the children attend regular Arabic classes, paid for privately by their parents. Arabic is considered a special and useful language because of its associations with Islam and because it is a transnational language. In the Arabic class, organised by parents, behaviour is generally good, and the level of Arabic reading and writing is much higher than the level of Bangla in the Bangla classes. However, the children have almost no ability to speak and converse in Arabic, as they are being taught Arabic to read and recite the Qur'an. The Sylheti they have picked up at home in contrast is never read or written by the children.

Parents felt that they had missed out, not having been given the opportunity to properly understand the Qur'an. Some even turned to their children for information about the Qur'an and Islamic rules, due to their greater knowledge of these details. With the pressure of the national curriculum, constant exams, Arabic and other activities, there is not much time left for extra Bangla tuition.

In a ranking exercise, older children (9-11) rated Arabic as the most important and useful language from a choice of English, Bangla, Sylheti, Arabic and any other of their own choice. They selected Arabic because of its associations to Islam, the wisdom and enlightenment they might receive through study and understanding of the Qur'an and the punishment they believed they would receive if they did not learn it. Younger children (8-9) ranked English as the most important and useful and weren't so preoccupied with Arabic. They ranked Bengali as the second most important language.

### **The differences between Tower Hamlets and Islington**

Raisinger's<sup>17</sup> research in Tower Hamlets found that, despite some socio-economic indicators which would indicate the contrary, the language vitality of Sylheti in Tower Hamlets was quite strong. He also found that there was relatively little inter-ethnic contact among many Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets and that many of his informants complained about not having many British friends. In his study as I have mentioned before, the home and family was the principal place where Sylheti was spoken.

There may be significant differences in Bangla or Sylheti use in Islington in interactions outside the home. In Islington there are just fewer Bangladeshi people around to speak Bangla or Sylheti to. There are fewer Bangladeshi shops or businesses to visit, fewer Bangladeshi staff in official positions or Bangladeshi children at school to be friends with, and there are no Bangladeshi teachers at the school. The effect in Islington is likely to be reversed and there is a lot of enforced inter-ethnic contact and Bangladeshis have relatively few fellow Bangladeshis to speak to. The vitality of Bangla or Sylheti is likely to be considerably less in Islington.

In Islington Bangladeshis are a minority among other minorities. The research is based in a school which is ethnically very diverse. Turkish and Somali children are more numerous than Bangladeshis. Other children in the school from Somalia and Yemen also attend the same Arabic classes as the Bangladeshis. In this way, language use in the ethnically diverse neighbourhoods outside the home is limited to transnational languages such as English – for education, employment and practical use and Arabic, for spiritual or religious education use. Bangla or Sylheti are even more confined to the home and family than they are in Tower Hamlets.

Raisingers' speculation that English was increasingly being spoken in homes with children, is true in Islington. Children may also have a greater effect on language use in the home in Islington than in Tower Hamlets. Children encounter fewer Bangladeshis in their daily lives and speak less Bangla or Sylheti as a result. Their use of Bangla or Sylheti is limited to family encounters about specific issues. For almost all practical, official and social events they use English.

### **Language practices of '*Londonis*' in Sylhet**

An important part of the maintenance of community and kinship links across international borders is visits 'home'. Mason's subjects, in her study of British Pakistanis, attached enormous importance to these visits, which helped to '*sustain family narratives of kinship networks*'. Their symbolic and experiential life extended far beyond the actual time of the visit, to be planned, imagined, remembered and then reminisced about.<sup>18</sup> These visits can be about attending specific events, such as weddings, funerals or religious festivals, about introducing relatives or potential marriage partners and maintaining family relations.

Also important is simply 'being there', 'being seen there', getting to know and spending time with relatives. For the young, this was especially relevant, as they might meet aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents who they rarely if ever saw. Young people often struggled with language in Mason's study in Pakistan and the same can be said about many British Bangladeshis visiting Bangladesh.

On a flight from Dhaka to Sylhet I was sitting next to a young Sylheti man who lived in Manchester. He tried talking in Sylheti to the air stewardess. She told him in English that she couldn't understand what he was saying and that she could speak English. He was quite irritated by this and replied to her in his Manchester accented English that he couldn't understand her English (her Bengali accent was quite strong). This interaction, apart from the simple mutual incomprehension, reveals many of the power relations and attitudes that are characteristic of the relations between *Londonis* and Bangladeshis.

The air stewardess, a well educated young Bangladeshi woman, would have been required by her job to speak English. She acted out of professional helpfulness to the young man who tried to speak to her, telling him that she could not understand him, but that he could talk to her in English if required. He had been speaking the kind of Sylheti he presumably normally used in conversation with his relatives and friends in Manchester. Was the way he spoke as different from standard Bangla as to be incomprehensible, or was he just bad at Bangla? Either way, the air stewardess' incomprehension irritated him; he responded by casting aspersions upon her grasp of English. Her English wasn't perfect, but it wasn't bad, although it sounded very different to his Manchester English.

Perhaps the air stewardess found that visiting *Londonis* always expected Bangladeshis to speak Sylheti. Like other rich visiting foreigners they expect locals to speak and act in a way that suits them. Perhaps the man from Manchester felt that Bangladeshis were always derogatory about his Sylheti when he spoke it in Bangladesh. Both presumed that they were speaking the local language and both presumed that they were being expected to talk a language considered superior by the other. Their mutual incomprehension was not really about language but reflected the social changes of Bangladeshis both in Bangladesh and in London.

Bangladesh is developing and is increasingly connected to global media and trends. English and education is more and more widespread. In Sylhet more people speak English and standard Bangla than ever before. Many urban well-educated Sylhetis are quite shocked by the 'rough' rural old fashioned Sylheti that some *Londonis* speak. The perception is that *Londonis* still spoke Sylheti as if they lived in a remote village in 1970. The Sylheti or Bangla that middle class people in Sylhet speak will be influenced by education and developments in Bangla. The Sylheti spoken by young *Londonis* is 'fossilised', as their contact with Bangladeshi society is limited; they learn and speak Sylheti mainly within their families and speak English with friends and siblings. They appear to locals to be rough uneducated people from the country rather than residents of a cosmopolitan 'world city'. The teacher at a school in Sylhet where some *Londonis* had sent their children said that some of the children from London spoke Sylheti – 'like farm labourers'. In London, Bangladeshis told me how they were ridiculed upon their return to Sylhet for their old fashioned ways of talking.

Staying in rural Sylhet with a family from London I was able to observe their visit first hand. The train journey to the family's farm was beautiful as the morning sun gradually cleared the mist from the paddies, clumps of bamboo and tea gardens all cool and lush. Once I had arrived, we went on a series of visits, social calls and inspections. To fields, shops, houses, uncles', cousins' and colleagues' houses, past more farmland and busy workers, a relative's farm and finally to their town house for a sumptuous lunch. At every stop we were offered tea and snacks until I was quite overwhelmed.

The parents of the family seemed to enjoy the visit, speaking Sylheti with their relatives, visitors and employees. The father was born in London, but his wife grew up in Bangladesh. Many London-born Bangladeshis improve their Bangla through their marriages to Bangladeshis. The couple spent their time in different ways, the husband rushing around on his social and business visits, and his wife getting some time off from cooking, cleaning and childcare for which she is solely responsible in London. Both spoke Sylheti easily and the father seemed to enjoy the banter and company of the men on the farm.

The little boy of the family enjoyed the visit less. He didn't enjoy the dirt, the hardness of the beds, the animals, the other children of the *bari*, the prying hands and the attentions of the many relatives we had to see. We wandered around the farm together and the young boy had no idea what most of the activities were and no inclination to find out or participate. He was followed everywhere by a minder with whom he played and ordered about. He refused to let the other kids play, preferring only to play with the adults. The other kids of the *bari*, excluded by him and unable to communicate with him, resorted to making fun of him and me, and engaging in what James Wilce,<sup>19</sup> (1998) called "hangtang foreigner talk". This took the form of mimicking and deriding the sound and flow of our English in a mock conversation resembling what sounded to me like Chinese.

The boy and his family's wealth and power relative to the locals was obvious. They called the shots, owned the farm, paid for everything and dished out presents and meat at Eid.<sup>20</sup> They were well looked after and respected in their *bari*. While his father enjoyed these relationships, the young boy stuck rigidly to English. He shrunk shyly to what he knew best and felt clumsy and awkward in this unfamiliar environment and language. His association only with adults and English, willingness to speak directly to elders and occasional hostility towards Bangladesh and some Bangladeshis created a sense among the local kids that he considered himself somehow superior. While the father confidently honed and updated his Sylheti through conversation and reconnected with friends and relatives; the shy boy, feeling out of place, missed an opportunity.

The flashy *Londonis* who show little regard for the unwritten rules and hierarchies of Bangladesh, having been brought up in London, play into many Bangladeshi peoples' ambivalent ideas about the west. Yes, they were materially wealthy, healthy, educated and powerful, but there was also something decadent, amoral about them and the nature of their wealth.<sup>21</sup> Their ways are becoming less in tune with Bangladeshi ones; they are more 'foreign'. In the case of the young boy I observed, this was not entirely deliberate, having more to do with shyness and culture shock. There is something hard to put one's finger on, which marks out the *Londoni* from his local kin, a combination of many small things which everyone can see and yet is hard to describe.

The young boy's mixed feelings towards Bangladesh were shared by almost all the children and young people from London who I met during my stay. They

missed 'Eastenders'<sup>22</sup> and the food in London. Bangladesh also smelt bad they said. The smells and tastes of what you are used to are a powerful reassurance and the new flavours and especially odours of Bangladesh were something that many children found off-putting. The open drains and smelly toilets were mentioned to me over and over again.

### **Conclusions: Language hierarchy in London and Bangladesh**

Bangla occupies a special place in Bangladesh; Arabic and English vie for importance after Bangla and opinion on those languages probably depends on people's religious and political views. While widely spoken, regional dialects and languages occupy a relatively low position and vitality in Bangladesh. More educated and upwardly mobile people in Bangladesh are increasingly likely to study and speak standard Bangla and/or English. Sylheti is spoken, but combined with Bangla to such an extent that it is more of a regional accent than a separate language.

In London English reigns supreme as the language necessary for life, communication, education and employment. Bangla is hardly spoken at all, as the majority of Bangladeshis in London are Sylhetis and speak the Sylheti dialect among their families. Children in Islington speak basic Sylheti but have little or no exposure to standard Bangla. Having grown up in London and attended British schools, they speak English like any other local child. Islington's ethnically diverse population ensures that English retains its position as a *lingua franca*. Arabic's status challenges Bangla, the high esteem in which it is held and the polarity created in recent years between Bangla and Islam leads second and third generation Bangladeshis to consider it more important and useful than Bangla. In fact neither are much used for practical or business purposes, so both become languages attached to ideologies. In recent years Islam has taken precedence over the language movement and Bangladeshi nationalism.

In 'Banglatown' in Tower Hamlets, Bangla and Sylheti have more everyday use and more vitality due to the concentration of a large number of Sylheti speakers there. For the majority of British Bangladeshis who do not live in Tower Hamlets, the same cannot be said and the relative vitality of Bangla and/or Sylheti is weaker. English and other languages such as Arabic become more attractive and practical. The entry of English into the home is accelerated by children's poor Bangla and Sylheti and the low importance they afford it.

When second or third generation British Bangladeshis visit Bangladesh, these phenomena collide with local ideas about language and hierarchy. They use archaic forms of a rural regional dialect as if it were the local language. While they may talk like peasants they look and pay more like pop stars.

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- <sup>1</sup> Around a quarter of Bangladeshis in Britain live in Tower Hamlets, cited in 'From Brick Lane to the Fast Lane', The Economist, October 2007, accessed online in July 2008 ([http://www.economist.com/research/backgrounders/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=10024877](http://www.economist.com/research/backgrounders/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10024877))
- <sup>2</sup> Lawson, S., and Sachdev, I., 2004, 'Identity Language Use and Attitudes, Some Sylheti-Bangladeshi Data from London, UK', Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 2004, 23: 49-69: pg 56
- <sup>3</sup> Chalmers, R., 1996, **Learning Sylheti**, Centre for Bangladeshi Studies, London: pg 6
- <sup>4</sup> Chalmers, R., 1996, **Learning Sylheti**, Centre for Bangladeshi Studies, London: pg 6
- <sup>5</sup> Chalmers, R., 1996, **Learning Sylheti**, Centre for Bangladeshi Studies, London: pg 6
- <sup>6</sup> Chalmers, R., 1996 **Learning Sylheti**, Centre for Bangladeshi Studies, London: pg 7, Lawson, S., and Sachdev, I., 2004, 'Identity Language Use and Attitudes, Some Sylheti-Bangladeshi Data from London, UK', Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 2004, 23: 49-69: pg 50
- <sup>7</sup> Lawson, S., and Sachdev, I., 2004, 'Identity Language Use and Attitudes, Some Sylheti-Bangladeshi Data from London, UK', Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 2004, 23: 49-69: pg 50
- <sup>8</sup> Chalmers, R., 1996, **Learning Sylheti**, Centre for Bangladeshi Studies, London: pg 6
- <sup>9</sup> School of Oriental and African Studies, part of the University of London
- <sup>10</sup> 'Londonis' means British Bangladeshis
- <sup>11</sup> Pagett, L., 2006, 'Mum and Dad Prefer me to Speak Bengali at Home: Code Switching and Parallel Speech in a Primary School Setting', Literacy, Vol. 4, No. 3, November 2006: pg 137
- <sup>12</sup> Carrington V., and Luke A., 1997, 'Literacy and Bourdieu's Sociological Theory: A Reframing', Language in Education 11(2): 96-112: pg 102, cited in Pagett, L., 2006, 'Mum and Dad Prefer me to Speak Bengali at Home: Code Switching and Parallel Speech in a Primary School Setting', Literacy, Vol. 4, No. 3, November 2006: pg 143
- <sup>13</sup> Rasinger, S., 2005, 'Language shift in Banglatown? Evaluating Ethnolinguistic Vitality in East London', Working Paper 18/05, Department of Linguistics and English Language, University of Sussex: pg 6
- <sup>14</sup> Rasinger, S., 2005, 'Language shift in Banglatown? Evaluating Ethnolinguistic Vitality in East London', Working Paper 18/05, Department of Linguistics and English Language, University of Sussex: pg 6
- <sup>15</sup> see Gardner, K., and Shukur, C., 1994, 'I'm Bengali, I'm Asian and I'm Living Here: The Changing Identities of British Bengalis', in Ballard R., (ed.) 1994, *Desh Pardesh*, Hurst, London: pg 163
- <sup>16</sup> see Hussain, D. 2007, 'Globalisation, God and Galloway, 'The Islamization of Bangladeshi Communities in London', Journal of Creative Communications, 2, 1&2: pg 202
- <sup>17</sup> Rasinger, S., 2005, 'Language shift in Banglatown? Evaluating Ethnolinguistic Vitality in East London', Working Paper 18/05, Department of Linguistics and English Language, University of Sussex: pg 6
- <sup>18</sup> Mason, J., 2004, 'Managing Kinship over Long Distances: The Significance of 'the Visit'', Social Policy and Society, vol. 3, No. 4: pg 423
- <sup>19</sup> Wilce, J., 1998, 'Eloquence in Trouble, The Poetics and Politics of Complaint in Rural Bangladesh', Oxford University Press, Oxford: pg 12
- <sup>20</sup> see Gardner, K., 1995, 'Global Migrants Local Lives, Travel and Transformation in Rural Bangladesh', Oxford University Press, Oxford: pg 134
- <sup>21</sup> see Gardner, K., 1993, 'Desh Bidesh, Sylheti Images of Home and Away', Man, March 1993: pg 9
- <sup>22</sup> 'Eastenders' is a popular, long running British soap opera set in the East End of London.