



Language and power in India's "new services"



Julien Cayla^{a,c,*}, Kushagra Bhatnagar^b

^a Div. of Marketing & International Business, College of Business (Nanyang Business School), Nanyang Technological University, S3-B2B-46, 50 Nanyang Avenue, Singapore 639798

^b Department of Marketing, Aalto University (School of Business), Runeberginkatu 14-16, 00100 Helsinki, Finland

^c Kedge Business School, France

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 August 2015

Received in revised form 1 June 2016

Accepted 1 July 2016

Available online 25 October 2016

Keywords:

Indians

Interaction

Invisible boundary

Language

Symbolic capital

ABSTRACT

Language is at the heart of service interactions and a crucial element influencing the relationship between service provider and customer. As a specific form of symbolic capital, language can also be used to exclude and dominate. Our research looks at the role of language in shaping the power dynamic between service providers and customers in the Indian context. This study builds from extensive fieldwork conducted in the area of "new services", following Indian gym trainers and coffee shop baristas as they interact with elite English-speaking clients. The findings detail how English operates as an invisible boundary in service settings, by excluding Indians who do not speak it with fluency. However, when used to develop expert knowledge, language also becomes an opportunity for lower middle class Indians to resist and invert the domination of the elite.

© 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

In debates about globalization, the Indian call center stands for multiple ills, including job outsourcing and colonial-style power dynamics (Boussebaa, Sinha, & Gabriel, 2014; Mirchandani, 2012; Ritzer & Lair, 2009; Shome, 2006; Taylor & Bain, 2005). Imitating the American accent turns Indian call center workers into "clones" who help diffuse the linguistic imperialism of the West (Mirchandani, 2012: 5). In popular culture and academic scholarship, the Indian call center worker personifies Western domination enacted through language.

However, call centers represent a distinctive organizational setting. Call center workers have to follow strict organizational guidelines circumscribing their autonomy (Shome, 2006; Taylor & Bain, 2005). Therefore, before we come to more definite conclusions about the effects of globalization on language, we must consider a variety of service settings.

The study here examines language dynamics in what we call India's "new services." We concentrate on two relatively new professions in the Indian context: gym trainers (e.g. floor instructors, personal trainers) and coffee baristas (frontline service workers employed by large coffee chains such as Starbucks or Indian-owned Café Coffee Day, to prepare and serve caffeinated drinks). As in other parts of the world (Rofel, 2007; Üstüner & Thompson, 2012) the rising wealth of the transnationally-oriented elite has resulted in a growing number of malls (Varman & Belk, 2012), cafés (Platz, 2012), beauty parlors and gyms, which serve both as playing

grounds for the Indian elite, as well as professional opportunities for Indians from the lower classes.

A defining feature of these servicescapes is the deep cultural and linguistic divide that exists between customers and service workers (Varman & Belk, 2012). While a minority of Indians speak English fluently, English remains critical to progressing in these "new services." English is a critical difference structuring the Indian market (Cayla & Elson, 2012). Service interactions represent an especially fertile context to study how these disparities come into play.

As our findings confirm, language reproduces power in service interactions but in ways that are more nuanced than previous scholarship may suggest. English operates as a violent boundary for service workers who cannot develop enough communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). These dynamics, however, work differently across the two organizational contexts we study. By highlighting these differences, our study demonstrates that understanding the effects of globalization requires attending to the organizational context in which service interactions take place.

The definition of "new services" needs clarifying though, since both gyms and coffee shops have historical antecedents in India through the related concepts of akharas (Alter, 1992) and tea stalls (Burton, 1993). In addition, the job of gym trainer or coffee barista may not be particularly new in the Western world (George, 2008). Nevertheless, we define these professions as "new services" because modern gyms and coffee shops involve radically distinctive interactions when compared to akharas and the tea stalls; both servicescapes are organized around distinctive service tangibles; both professions confuse many people in India about what these jobs entail, in a way that evokes the difficulty of categorizing really new products (Moreau, Markman, & Lehman, 2001).

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: jcayla@ntu.edu.sg (J. Cayla), kushagra.bhatnagar@aalto.fi (K. Bhatnagar).

First, the scripted interactions of coffee shop chains have little to do with the easy informality of tea stalls. While a majority of coffee shop customers have experienced routinized fast food interactions before, the service workers we met face a steep learning curve, especially since they have to conduct their interactions with customers in English, a language they rarely master when starting to work in coffee shop chains. As for gym trainers, they have to adapt to a completely new situation where they give orders to elite clients.

Second, in terms of service tangibles, coffee shops and modern gyms have very little to do with tea stalls and akharas. In terms of products, the espresso-based caffeinated drinks served in coffee shop chains contrast with the sweet masala-infused tea served in tea stalls, and many Indian baristas initially struggle to appreciate the products they are meant to serve. In addition, the interior design of coffee shop chains and modern gyms are drastically different from tea stalls and akharas. The akhara's mud pits and rudimentary weights contrast with the mechanized model of modern gym training. The tea stall, often a temporary shelter on the side of the road, consists of wooden benches with the owner preparing and serving tea. In contrast, modern coffee shops are typically enclosed spaces with seats arranged along window fronts looking out onto the street. Phadke (2007, 1514) argues that coffee shops are "privatized spaces that masquerade as public spaces, where entry is ostensibly open but in reality regulated through various subtle and overt acts of (intentional and unintentional) intimidation and exclusion."

Third, at an emic level, both coffee shop chains and modern gyms represent a radically new service offering that Indians often find difficult to understand and categorize. Most of the coffee shop workers we interacted with have never experienced this type of servicescape as a consumer, in part due to high prices that limit access, but also because of the cultural incommensurability between the world they grew up in and the world these servicescapes represent.

The novel dimension of these Indian servicescapes makes them especially relevant sites to study the issue of language in service interactions. Indeed, language is critical to the process of adaptation and accommodation that takes place between service workers and customers when they are from different cultural backgrounds (Callahan, 2006; Miller, Craighead, & Karwan, 2000; Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999). A distinctive feature of the Indian context though, is the way English is not merely "a skill that the new middle class can use for instrumental socio-economic ends; rather it is constitutive of the identity of this group" (Fernandes, 2006: 69). In other words, English, in the Indian context, is a distinguishing feature of middle-class identity that isolates the English-speaking elite from the rest of the population.

We use this context to study language dynamics in service interactions. More specifically our research questions are: 1) What role does language play in these new servicescapes; 2) How do Indian service workers view having to interact with customers in English?; What role does English play in their lives? 3) How do language dynamics vary across organizational contexts? Does language play a different role in coffee shops versus modern gyms?

1. Theoretical foundations

In framing our theoretical foundations, we want to highlight the gap that exists in the services literature, on the power dynamic between service provider and customer, especially the role of language in shaping such dynamics. Our research attempts to bridge that gap.

1.1. Language as service communication

Service scholarship emphasizes the importance of keeping customers informed in a language they can understand (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990; Gummesson, 1991; Mattson & den Haring, 1998; Rafaei, Ziklik, & Doucet, 2008; Stiles, 1985). Clear communication improves consumer understanding (Mattson & den Haring, 1998; Rafaei

et al., 2008), leads to better customer evaluations (Bitner, 1990), an increase in referrals via word of mouth (Van Vaerenbergh & Holmqvist, 2014), and enhanced consumer satisfaction (Holmqvist & Grönroos, 2012).

Despite these advances, Holmqvist (2011: 188) notes, "The literature on service management has, by and large, blithely assumes that the consumer and the service personnel speak the same language." Holmqvist argues that language has an emotional dimension that goes beyond the transfer of information, and that language use strongly correlates to the assertion of historical, national, or regional identity by consumers. For instance, consumers expect service providers to make an effort to converse in customers' first language.

We see these inter-cultural service encounters as attempts from customers and service providers to uphold and reinforce their self-definitions. Socio-linguistic work demonstrates that linguistic exchanges are mobilized to construct specific identities (Hall & Bucholtz, 2012). Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 21) argue that individuals will use "linguistic resources which allow them to resist identities that position them in undesirable ways." The resistance of customers to use their second language in French Canada can be interpreted as one instance of such resistance (see Holmqvist, 2011). These insights are also consistent with our perspective on service as a power struggle, a perspective on interactions that has been especially prevalent in sociolinguistics (Blommaert, 2005; Fairclough, 1989) and sociological studies of service work (Gooptu, 2013; Hanser, 2008).

1.2. Language and the power dynamics of service interactions

Language reflects and at times amplifies broader power dynamics. For instance, young working-class American men struggle to use the compliant language expected in many service jobs because such servility conflicts with the bravado involved in working class masculine identity projects (McDowell, 2011). Indian security guards in India mention the insults and other forms of humiliation that middle-class Indians subject them to (Gooptu, 2013).

However, while past scholarship emphasizes the way language amplifies the service workers' inferior social position (Gooptu, 2013; Leidner, 1993), research also highlights the way service workers use language to resist the servility that the notion of "service" evokes (Hollander, 1985; Jeantet, 2003; Paules, 1991; Sherman, 2007). The application of customer power inevitably leads to various forms of resistance (Foucault, 1980). For instance, French post-office workers can become excessively polite with rude customers, as a way to confront customers to their own impoliteness (Jeantet, 2003).

In highlighting the way service workers use language to resist subordination, past research also identifies the role of language registers in fashioning expert identities. Expert language helps service workers such as doctors (Fisher & Todd, 1983), funeral directors (Unruh, 1979), bridal workers (Corrado, 2002), lawyers (Blumberg, 1967), and hair stylists (Gimlin, 1996; Jacobs-Huey, 2007; Üstüner & Thompson, 2012) assert their authority. Service workers can mobilize linguistic resources to either resist unfavorable identity positions or to create favorable expert identities in their interactions with customers.

1.3. The postcolonial context: English as an instrument of domination and a resource for mobility

English has long been an instrument of domination in India. As part of colonization, the British created a class of English-speaking local intermediaries—"Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and intellect" (Macaulay, 2005: 121)—who served as instruments of British control. In addition to making English the language of colonial administration, the British made every effort to position English as a marker of cultural distinction and sophistication while devaluing Indian literature and culture as un-modern (Ambedkar, 2005; Chatterjee, 1993).

While noting the growing scholarship that critically examines the power dynamics undergirding service work, we also note that past research on service interactions generally focuses on Western contexts without considering the relationship between language and power in postcolonial contexts. Boussebaa and his colleagues' study (2014) is a notable exception in applying the insights of postcolonial theory to research linguistic practices in a service setting. Using the call-center division of a multinational corporation as their research site, Boussebaa and his colleagues (2014: 1152) show that training organizational members to speak "pure" English with customers eventually leads to a "transnational intra-linguistic relationship of power," dependent on a service worker's ability to mimic British accent and usage. They further argue that in rewarding mimicry, such policies re-produce colonial dynamics.

Despite Western hegemony, service workers develop various forms of agency, that is the capacity to act independently, in ways that escape the constraints imposed by social structure, including organizational norms (Giddens, 1984). Noting the creative appropriation of language in postcolonial contexts, Blommaert (2005: 212–213) contends that "[w]e are not really witnessing an invasion of an imperialist or killer-language here. What we are witnessing is a highly complex, intricate pattern of appropriation and deployment of linguistic resources whose values have been relocated from a transnational to a national set of indexicalities."

Rather than just an instrument of organizational domination (Boussebaa et al., 2014), English also operates as a resource for social and spatial mobility. Young Indians associate English with the "power to leverage them out of the disadvantaged class into elite professional and social classes" (Vaish, 2008: 214). Non-elite Indians perceive English as "an international language" that can "provide spatial, and hence economic mobility" (Chand, 2011: 9). More than ever, English now separates the "global haves" with English competence, from the non-English speaker "have-nots" (Phillipson, 2000: 104). Indian servicescapes provide an especially appropriate context to study how "global haves" and "have nots" interact in a service setting, especially the role of language in framing their interactions. Beyond equating the adoption of English in service settings with "linguistic imperialism" (Boussebaa et al., 2014: 1156), we must especially try to understand the role that English plays in service workers' lives.

2. Research methods

2.1. Research design

We study two service settings: fitness gyms and coffee shops. We started with an interest in gym trainers as a new service profession, especially the role of gym training in the globalization of bodily practices and understandings, and their application to a service context. After several interviews with gym trainers conducted in Mumbai in 2014, it became apparent that a trainer's success depends heavily on his ability to develop relationships with clients, a majority of whom belong to the English-speaking mass elite. Our research thus evolved into a research project about the experience of service workers in India's "new services," especially the way they interact with and adapt to customers from the English-speaking middle-class.

After the first author finished fieldwork with gym trainers, we sought to compare the interactional dynamics of the gym, and how these would transfer into another setting, where service workers would still interact with English-speaking clients, but in a more episodic, fleeting fashion, and without the expertise associated with gym training. After gaining access to a national coffee shop chain we identify as Coffee Co, the first author conducted interviews and observations in a Coffee Co. outlet in Mumbai in 2014. In 2015, we continued our study with the two authors conducting fieldwork in Jamshedpur in eastern India.

In the end, we collected four different kinds of empirical material: 1) unstructured long interviews conducted with coffee shop workers

and gym trainers; 2) fieldnotes from observations; and 3) secondary data, including promotional material developed by various service organizations, and representations of service interactions in popular culture. Combining primary data and secondary data allows us to describe the socio-cultural patterning of service interactions. We explain how interactions between service providers and customers are framed by the broader context of organizational guidelines and social hierarchies (Desjeux, 1996).

2.2. Interviews

Our first wave of interviews took place over a period of two months in 2014 in Mumbai. We conducted preliminary 30-minute interviews with ten gym trainers with the help of a research assistant. The objective of these preliminary interviews was to identify gym trainers who would let us observe their work with clients and let us inside their home environments to study their interactions with family and friends. Eventually we narrowed our sample of gym trainers to six gym trainers, whom we interviewed at the research assistant's home in Mumbai. Interviews lasted one to 2 h. In late 2014, we went through the same process with coffee shop workers, after gaining permission from a national coffee chain to interview their personnel. We initially approached and interviewed eight coffee shop workers before narrowing down to four informants whom we found to be especially receptive and relevant to our study goals, providing variety in terms of backgrounds (rural vs. urban background; male and female)—with our final sample including 1 manager and 3 front-line operatives, each of whom had a different kind of job at Coffee Co—from order taking, and food and coffee preparation to management.

Our long interviews focused on the learning and adaptation process service workers had to go through in their jobs, including the training they received but also the way they learned to adapt to clients. The interview protocol also included several questions about the way their family and friends had responded to their career choice. We wanted to examine how the recognition (Honneth, 1996) gym trainers derive from their work would transfer to other relationships, including relationships with their family and friends.

In mid-2015, the second author conducted additional fieldwork in Jamshedpur, seeking to contrast our research in Mumbai with a mid-sized town. The second author conducted observations in 2 gyms, one that was part of a global chain of premium gyms and another one that was on a university campus. We identified 3 trainers that were receptive to the research process and selected one each from the international gym chain and the university gym for interviewing and observations. The interviews were carried out in the university's student canteen, outside the work environments of both trainers. The second author also identified two coffee shop workers as research informants and visited the coffee shop regularly for about a month to establish rapport. Jamshedpur provided a useful contrast because although the typical coffee shop customers in Jamshedpur were still as trans-nationally elite as in Delhi or Mumbai, the workers were either local residents or rural migrants which presented us with an opportunity to research a different power dynamic. The lesser-educated locals spoke a local language called Bhojpuri amongst themselves while the customers were predominantly an English-speaking cohort.

2.3. Observations

We closely observed and filmed two gym trainers (Kaleem and Sanjay) in Mumbai in 2014, with whom we had developed a close relationship, following them for two days each as they went about their day, from their work in the gym in the morning, their home visits to personal clients, to their meeting with friends and family in the evenings at their homes.

We especially wanted to examine how the recognition (Honneth, 1996) that gym trainers derive from their work would transfer to

other relationships, including relationships with their family and friends. We wanted to see whether the logic of the service setting—the gym—would translate to other contexts, including their home. In addition, the second author conducted several weeks of observations in gyms and coffee shops in Jamshedpur, attending to the interactions between trainers and clients, as well as baristas and clients. The second author befriended a coffee shop worker, Ranjit, accompanying him outside of work, at home and with friends, to get a more holistic understanding of his life.

2.4. Secondary data

We collected several types of secondary data, including news clippings, promotional materials, movies, and novels. We looked for secondary sources that featured service encounters, paying attention to the issues of language, social class, and power in these interactions. In line with Desjeux's (1996) approach to building theoretical explanations from various scales of observation, our secondary data helped us develop a macro perspective on service relationships. In particular, we wanted to overcome the limitations of grounded theory, which overlooks the larger social and historical context in which phenomena occur. Burawoy (2000) pinpoints the limitations of research work that ignores context by focusing too narrowly on the phenomenon under study. Burawoy specifically encourages researchers to extend ethnography "from the space-time rhythms of the site to the geographical and historical context of the field" (Burawoy, 2000: 27). Building from this call, we analyze the history of English as a marker of social class distinction in the Indian context, and we look at the way this dynamic operates in various areas of popular culture, including films and novels (see, for instance, a recent novel about an Indian gym trainer by Taseer (2011); or the movie Mumbai Meri Jaan, which features a service encounter that we analyze).

2.5. Analysis

We analyzed our data from the very first round of data collection in an inductive manner (Locke, 2001), creating descriptive codes around initial themes such as "training," "certification," and "new knowledge." Our data analysis was ongoing and iterative (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994). We did not necessarily distinguish between the collection and analysis phases; instead, the analysis was a continuous process throughout the research, a method that is consistent with emergent designs (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As we grew to understand the data better, our coding became more interpretive and we used explanatory codes to identify recurrent themes, patterns, and connections. In so doing, a number of deeper themes became increasingly salient.

3. Findings

Our findings demonstrate that language plays a critical role in service interactions: 1) as a violent boundary excluding service workers without adequate linguistic competence; 2) as a way to achieve personal transformation; 3) as a resource that service workers can mobilize to reverse their subordinate position in relation to their elite clients.

3.1. Language as a violent boundary

Language amplifies the demarcation of coffee shops and modern gyms as Westernized enclaves. The menus at Coffee Co. are in English and the images on the walls reference Western leisure pursuits such as backpacking or going to the beach with friends. In gyms, signs and instructions are in English, and exercise machines have names, descriptions, and controls in English. These elements make coffee shops and modern gyms fundamentally Westernized spaces.

As a result, customers and service workers often struggle to navigate these spaces. In the coffee shops we observed, a simple cup of coffee for

customers could become a confusing toss-up between cappuccino, espresso, Americano or latte – names and kinds of drinks that are foreign to most Indians. We saw customers ordering an espresso at the counter, probably expecting a milky sweet coffee with chocolate powder which is what gets served at Indian weddings or parties and called espresso, and then looking extremely flustered when the waiter delivered a shot of pure black coffee without a drop of milk or sugar.

For service workers, being able to speak English becomes a critical requirement to access and progress in these jobs. Coffee-shop chains and modern gyms often require a minimum level of English fluency for their new recruits. At Coffee Co, potential hires found wanting in requisite language skills can be summarily rejected. As for gym trainers, they need to understand enough English to pass professional exams such as the American College of Sports Medicine's personal trainer certificate. As a result, trainers who did not grow up in English-speaking families endure significant language-related challenges. Sujaan shares these difficulties with us:

By the time I completed my 12th standard, I hardly used to speak in English. I used to feel a bit difficulty in speaking in English [...] I was not understanding much of – in my class there. And I didn't pass that exam at first. I did it after a long gap because I was – I came from very back – difficult background, not so educated so that I was not understanding much in class.

[(Sujaan, gym trainer, Mumbai)]

Sujaan grew up in an Urdu-speaking family in Mumbai. Today his poor English skills prevent him from exploiting the opportunities offered by the gym job.

Service workers' limited English also exposes them to stigmatization (Goffman 1963). During our interview with him, Taskin admitted that he was initially hesitant to talk to customers, saying, "First I used to get scared to talk". Radha invokes similar emotions of fear and shame, recollecting episodes when she was not able to understand and hence service English-speaking customers:

I get scared at times when I don't understand what they are saying so I just go to my manager and ask him to handle it.

[(Radha, coffee shop worker, Mumbai)]

Radha believes that her lack of English skills may expose her as an interloper, that is as someone who does not belong to the Indian middle-class, and open her up to stigmatization. Goffman (1963) theorizes that the fear of stigmatization often leads an individual to manage "the information about his failing" (p. 42). We see such managing at play when Radha asks her manager to step in rather than asking consumers to switch to Hindi or Marathi, languages that she speaks fluently. Other coffee shop workers, with varying levels of English language competence, feel the pressure to learn English stock-phrases as fast as possible to pass as fluent English speakers, even when they are not. When service workers struggle with English, interactions with elite customers become stressful events that potentially expose their differences in ways that further reveal the symbolic violence of English in the Indian context.

Once they become more fluent, service workers become gatekeepers of this symbolic boundary. For instance, experienced service workers may try to exclude pretenders who are deemed to have inadequate linguistic competence. Saleem, a manager at Coffee Co, speaks disparagingly about the low linguistic competence of his current staff:

Before they used to hire only English-speaking people. English must be clear, you must be good looking. Now what happens is we are short of team. We are short of manpower. So even if a guy is SSC clear, means tenth, then company is hiring them. Before, minimum qualification was HSC - twelfth. Now we are hiring from SSC also. So we are not getting that quality of staff that we used to get three to four years back.

[(Saleem, manager, Coffee Co, Mumbai)]

speakwell.co.in/speakwell-company-profile.html]

Even though Saleem was uncomfortable with English when he first began work at Coffee Co, he does not hesitate in calling out service workers with low linguistic competence now that he has become more fluent.

The boundary that service workers police also extends to the private sphere. Sujaan, a gym trainer, endured significant challenges in his profession because he could not communicate well in English. But when he comes home, he tries to talk to his daughter in English.

Yes I have admitted my girl in the best school of my locality. And yeah, I try to speak to her in English [...] My wife, she doesn't know to talk in English. She is from Hindi-medium.

[(Sujaan, gym trainer, Mumbai)]

Once Sujaan achieves some degree of fluency in English, he starts communicating with his daughter in English, even though this practice excludes his wife from participating in their conversations. The boundary separating the vernacular from the elite, which we surfaced in servicescapes, is also reproduced at home, between members of the family who speak English and others, like Sujaan's wife, who is from "Hindi-medium."

Service workers also bring the full force of their gatekeeping skills to bear on customers. One such gatekeeping encounter is depicted in a recent Bollywood film, *Mumbai Meri Jaan*. The movie features Thomas, a flower vendor who does not speak English. In one of the movie's pivotal scenes, we see Thomas, accompanied by his wife and daughter, trying out perfumes at an upscale shop in a mall. A salesman initiates a conversation, addressing him in English: "Excuse me, do you want this perfume?" and continues to converse with Thomas in English, even when it becomes apparent that Thomas does not understand the language. The perfume salesman and his manager do their best to stigmatize Thomas and his family, eventually excluding them from the English-infused servicescape of the perfume shop.

Overall, while service workers are subjected to the English language's symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991), they are also active participants in policing the language frontier. Once workers cross over to the English-speaking side, they mete out the same symbolic violence that they face while crossing over. Questions remain, though, about the ways in which service workers become willing participants in reinforcing linguistic hegemony. In the next section, we find that their participation is tied to a broader discourse framing English as an enabler of personal transformation.

3.2. English as the site of personal transformation

A powerful discourse associates English with personal transformation in India (Mankekar, 2015). In movies and advertisements (Cayla & Elson, 2012; Mankekar, 2015), images of successful, English speaking, cosmopolitan Indians have amplified the connection between English and professional success.

In turn, most of the service workers we met believe that mastering English will fast-track their careers. Many of them recounted anecdotes of colleagues learning English and succeeding as a result. For instance, Ranjit could easily summon his first manager's fairytale rise, once a frontline employee who worked his way up in a pizza chain, because of his ability to become fluent in English. Our respondents place their faith in the transformative power of English.

As a consequence, English-learning schools for adults have mushroomed in India. These schools equate English mastery with professional and social success, as their advertising below illustrates:

"We seek to liberate the person from his inability to communicate in the corporate language of India, which is English".

[(Extract from website of Speakwell academy, <http://www.speakwell.co.in/speakwell-company-profile.html>)]

"BAFEL is now well on its way to prepare the Generation Y with skills which would enhance their personality, to ensure that they are equipped to better their job prospects in the industry workforce [...] Alka Gupta's vision is to develop and create 'LEADERS NOT LABOURERS'".

[(Extract from website of British Academy for English Language, <http://bafel.co.in/AbouttheDirector.htm>)]

English learning schools represent the stage at which the language learner converts from a "laborer" to a "leader." Mankekar (2015) describes the discourse of "Aspirational India" as contrasting with the "Other India" of villages and poor infrastructure, and in this case "laborers." Language use, in this context, becomes more than the ability to clearly communicate with customers. English learning becomes iconic of various qualities including assertiveness and an ability to lead. Language indexes a distinctive kind of personhood.

A Dalit community from North India even created Angreji Devi or "The English Goddess" to symbolize the power of English:

She holds a pen in her right hand which shows she is literate. She is dressed well and sports a huge hat - it's a symbol of defiance that she is rejecting the old traditional dress code. She stands on top of a computer which means we will use English to rise up the ladder and become free for ever.

[(Pandey 2012)]

The English goddess is designed to resemble the Statue of Liberty but she holds a pen in her hand, instead of a torch. She also appears mounted on a computer, further tightening the association between English and knowledge work.

The mythology of transformation infuses the life projects of the young men and women we interviewed. Coffee shop worker Taskin talks about his brother, as a "naukar" (servant) because of the limited potential for social mobility and the absence of recognition his brother faces in his job. Taskin contrasts his brother's condition as naukar with his own job in "service" and the potential for career progress afforded to him. The discourse of "Aspirational India" foregrounds the importance of potentiality, speed, and transformation, qualities that help contrast "Aspirational India" with the "Other India" of "naukars." In this context, service work becomes a critical means of accelerating mobility, rather than the reproduction of subjugation and alienation.

The desire for personal transformation was especially acute for the migrant workers we met. Consider the case of Ranjit, an 18-year-old boy from a small farming village in Jharkhand, Eastern India. After dropping out of school at 15, Ranjit migrated to Ahmedabad where he started working at the Indian-owned restaurant chain US Pizza as a vegetable cutter. Ranjit eventually realized the importance of English in a Westernized retail context like US pizza and signed up for an English-speaking course for Rs. 5000 (a hefty expense, given his salary of Rs. 8000 a month).

Ranjit talked with pride about returning to his village, having learned new words from the US Pizza English menu.

Now, everyone says that look at him, what all he knows. I have lots of new information and knowledge. I know how to deal with people also [...] Now when I go back, people would say look he works in the city. They would come to me and seek my advice. I feel good that because of me someone else is also looking to become educated. I have become the role model for many children.

[(Ranjit, coffee shop worker, Jamshedpur)]

English is the language of access, but now also the language of recognition (Honneth, 1996) for Ranjit who is now a respected member of his village. Respect and recognition are critical to the way service workers approach their work (Jeantet, 2003).

Overall, in the context of India's "new services," English is much more than a way to clearly communicate with elite customers. Instead, English suffuses individual projects of self-transformation, reminding us that a main engine of capitalism is the narrative of individuals being able to invent their own selves (Rose, 1999).

3.3. Language, service interactions and the importance of organizational context

While service workers in coffee shops and modern gyms share similar aspirations for transformation, their relationship with consumers is remarkably different. On the one hand, gym trainers often have long-term, repeated interactions with customers and receive minimal managerial oversight. On the other hand, coffee shop workers usually have short-term, ephemeral interactions with customers, and are subject to much greater managerial and organizational control of these interactions.

As a result, language operates very differently across these two organizational contexts. In coffee shops, as in other contexts of fast standardized service (Leidner, 1993), language functions as an instrument of organizational control. In contrast, in modern gyms, personal trainers develop a specialized language register their clients struggle to master. Expert language helps reverse the domination of service workers by elite customers.

3.3.1. English as standardization and transformation

As a way to create a uniform service experience across branches, Coffee Co.'s management has standardized the decor, furniture, and menu across the company's different outlets. In addition, Coffee Co. conducts regular training courses that socialize workers into particular ways of speaking. The organization also rewards and promotes workers based on their ability to interact with customers in particular ways. With these three strategies working in tandem, customers get the same Coffee Co. experience at every branch.

Language is a critical dimension of this standardization process. Coffee Co. tutors new workers on how to follow an existing script of greetings, questions, and salutations. In turn, service workers willingly conform to this script because they believe their own linguistic and communicative abilities to be deficient. For example, Saleem looks back critically at the language he used when he started working at Coffee Co.

When placing their order I used to say to them "Please have your order", the real phrase is "Enjoy your coffee" or "Enjoy your sandwich". When I got the order I used to say "Please have your coffee" or "Please have your sandwich".

[(Saleem, manager, Coffee Co., Mumbai)]

In the passage above, Saleem calls attention to the phrase "Enjoy your coffee," and calls it the "real phrase," demonstrating that he has internalized Coffee Co.'s script to interact with customers.

Apart from standardizing service encounters, Coffee Co.'s service scripts also coax workers into adopting a position of deference. Taskin recounts how he trained to interact with customers in particular ways:

First I say 'Hi sir', then I take their order by saying 'Sir please place your order'. I tell them the different things that we have, their qualities. Then when the customer is going after paying the bill I say 'Bye sir, thank you sir'.

[(Taskin, waiter, Coffee Co., Mumbai)]

Language conventions, such as the obligation to address customers as "Sir" (Paules, 1991, 137), create "asymmetrical relations" of power within service interactions, that is relations involving an asymmetrical "distribution of rights" (Goffman, 1956: 481). Importantly though, Taskin credits Coffee Co.'s training for learning the right way to interact

with customers, and does not pay much attention to the subordinate position he is thrown into.

Coffee Co. offsets the position of subordination that service workers are given through this asymmetry of obligations (Goffman, 1956), with another language strategy designed to appeal to the service provider's sense of self. Coffee Co. gives workers white-collar designations such as Brew Master or Merchandiser, that connote the achievement of an expert identity. Saleem speaks of how the logic of expertise was implicated in these designations by linking them to certification courses.

Brew Master, then Customer Service certification, Merchandise certification I completed all my certifications. Then there is one training programme, OT training –Operation Training. We have test and all like for customer service and merchandising of three month. Then after three month if we clear that then after four month we have Brew Master test.

[(Saleem, manager, Coffee Co, Mumbai)]

Through the creation of certifications such as "Brew Master," Coffee Co. is able to balance the subservient position of its service workers in relation to customers, by giving employees white-collar designations that connote expertise and skill.

Coffee Co. succeeds in making workers internalize asymmetric obligations (Goffman, 1956), at least partly because service scripting is couched in the idiom of learning, training, and transformation we detailed in the section above. The coffee shop functions through the exercise of productive power, that is, power that works through consent rather than coercion (Foucault, 1980).

3.3.2. Expert language and the power of gym trainers

In contrast to the position of subordination that coffee shop workers are subjected to, gym trainers possess much greater autonomy in the way they interact with customers. Compared with coffee shop workers, trainers are subjected to minimal organizational control and are given a great deal of latitude in organizing their sessions with clients. Building from such autonomy, gym trainers are able to progressively take control of their interaction with clients, a progression we describe below.

Starting with the very first training session, gym trainers make sure their clients understand that the language of the gym is different from everyday language. A clear distinction between the gym and the world outside starts as soon as prospective clients step inside the gym, as our fieldnotes indicate:

There is a sign on the wall that says 'On the floor you pay in sweat and hard work'. This sign is part of the narrative which challenges the customers' relatively higher positions, both economic as well as cultural. It seems to be telling the clients that their higher economic or political or cultural power has no particular value inside the gym.

[(field notes, second author)]

In their interactions with clients as well, gym trainers replace everyday language with a scientific-anatomical register that references medicalized language without being too technical. For instance, trainer Kaleem provides his clients with a very specific understanding of fitness that is couched in a scientific-anatomical register:

Fitness, you have to improve the five components of fitness. Cardiovascular, muscular endurance, skeletal strength, flexibility and ideal body. This is the five components of fitness, you have to improve. Only a muscled body is not fitness.

[(gym trainer, Mumbai)]

In the quote above, Kaleem evokes the way his client had come in seeking a "muscled body," i.e., a bulked-up look made fashionable by Bollywood (Cayla, 2008). However, Kaleem is also quick to denounce his client's understanding of "fitness" as inadequate. Despite his lower

educational status—Kaleem never went to University—but drawing from his expertise as a trainer, Kaleem proceeds to school his client through a quick tutorial about the meaning of “fitness.”

Similarly, trainer Saurabh wants to make sure his clients do not think of coming to the gym merely to get a “muscled body” but also to develop more precise objectives:

You need to know what your aim is, what are your objectives in life. What are you trying to achieve, build up your muscle, or lose weight, or trying to get fit? Each of this requires a different calorie count.

[(Saurabh, gym trainer, Mumbai)]

When Saurabh and other trainers interact with clients, the language they use often resembles a medical examination, with the trainer taking control of the situation by mobilizing concepts and language (e.g. “calorie count”) that gym clients are not necessarily familiar with.

Clients and their personal trainers often spend hours together, at the gym or at the client’s home. In these long interactions, the client has to closely follow the trainer’s instructions:

Rajvir: [admonishing] No support, no support, fix your balance, fix your balance.

Rajvir: [reassuring] Don’t worry I am here.

Rajvir: [encouraging] Come on, man. You’ll give me two more (fieldnotes, second author, Jamshedpur).

In Rajvir’s interaction with his client, he alternates between anatomical advice, technical advice, and emotional support. By articulating various forms of know-how, Rajvir positions himself as a fitness expert. When Rajvir uses the language of support, to reassure and encourage his client, he also manages to transform the training relationship into a more intimate one. Gym training evolves into a more intimate relationship of close coaching.

The relationship Rajvir and other gym trainers build with their clients contrasts with the hierarchical, servile nature of much service work in India (see Gooptu, 2013; Ray & Qayum, 2009). Trainer Sanjay even speaks about one of his elite clients progressing to a position of consenting subservience.

And after few days he will say “Sir, I’ll do whatever you want me to”. They just follow blindfold with me, they don’t ask me questions.

[(Sanjay, gym trainer, Mumbai)]

In a remarkable inversion of the service script we noted at Coffee Co., Sanjay’s elite client is now calling him “Sir.” One of Sanjay’s clients confirmed the way he had come to address his trainer as “Sir”: “He is my sir ... I call him Sir ...”. Elite clients calling their gym trainers “Sir” is especially surprising in the Indian context, given the position of servitude many lower class Indians find themselves subjected to in other settings (Gooptu, 2013; Ray & Qayum, 2009).

The respect gym trainers get from clients is one of the main reasons many young Indians find the job profile appealing.

It’s a very respectful job. So you teach something and people call you sir. That is the great part of that job.

[(Sujaan, gym trainer, Mumbai)]

Gym trainers like Sujaan repeatedly expressed pride at being called “Sir” by their clients. In the Indian context, where the opportunities for lower middle-class Indians to obtain recognition are limited, service professions offering visibility and respect from the elite are especially appealing.

Overall, while service workers employed in India’s “new services” are often in a position of subordination, the case of gym trainers helps nuance this account. Our research demonstrates that the ability for

trainers to rely upon a pseudo-scientific expert language register greatly influences their interactions with clients. Expert language helps service workers take control of the situation, and, more importantly, develop the recognition they yearn for (Honneth, 1992, 1996).

4. Discussion

Our analysis demonstrates that service is a power struggle and that language is an especially critical dimension of that dynamic in a postcolonial context like India. More specifically, we show that: 1) language operates as a violent symbolic boundary in Indian servicescapes, in excluding and stigmatizing subjects who lack linguistic and communicative competence; 2) the power of English is hegemonic rather than coercive, subtle rather than explicit and is tied to the logic of aspiration and transformation; 3) language operates very differently across the two organizational contexts we studied, with the development of knowledge registers mitigating the symbolic violence of language.

4.1. Language as a violent boundary in Indian servicescapes

The findings demonstrate that language reproduces and amplifies the power of the Indian elite in its new theaters of consumption through the exclusionary effects of English. We already know that social class mediates the process of globalization in India (Derné, 2008). Our findings build upon these insights to show that the power of the English-speaking elite is reflected, legitimized and amplified in service settings such as modern gyms and coffee shops.

At work in both servicescapes is a dispositive of power (Foucault, 1980) that excludes those who do not have enough communicative competence to navigate these spaces. Indian coffee shops, modern gyms and malls (see Varman & Belk, 2012) are organized through a system of segregation isolating English-speaking middle class consumers from other social groups (Phadke, 2007).

Our research demonstrates that language operates as a violent symbolic boundary in this system of segregation. In terms of accessing these jobs, both baristas and gym trainers have to develop the sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980) that consists in knowing how to apply the sociocultural rules of language. We have shown the fright of baristas who cannot master enough English to interact with customers, or their fears of phrasing sentences in a way that exposes their identity as not belonging to these spaces, further demonstrating the critical importance of sociolinguistic competency in these service contexts.

What is distinctive in the Indian context though, is the way English is a critical, non-negotiable building block to construct one’s belonging to the middle-class, and locates social groups on each side of the symbolic boundary. As Fernandes (2006: 69) notes, English in the Indian context is “not merely a skill that the new middle class can use for instrumental socioeconomic ends; rather it is constitutive of the identity of this group.” While other researchers note the development of a Westernized sensibility as a distinctive form of cultural capital (Üstüner & Holt, 2007, Üstüner & Thompson, 2012), our research demonstrates that English works differently in India, as a marker of identity and belonging, and as a way to exclude members of the lower classes.

4.2. Language and the logic of transformation

Given this symbolic violence, how do we explain that service jobs like coffee shop barista or gym trainer would be so aspirational for the young Indians we met? We have to consider the way power works through the dispositive of power. According to Wacquant, “no power can be exercised in its brutality in an arbitrary manner ... it must dissimulate itself, cloak itself, justify itself for being what it is – it must make itself be recognized as legitimate” (1993: 25).

Past research on service work often treats power as an exogenous force bearing upon service employees. For instance, Boussebaa and his colleagues (2014) describe linguistic practices in an Indian call center

as a form of neocolonialism. However, we find that mastering English is much more than an organizational mandate dictated by multinational clients. Our research emphasizes the role of productive power in India's "new services" that is power that works through consent rather than coercion (Foucault, 1980). The appeal of "new services" like call centers and coffee shops, comes from their enfolded into the broader "political-economic and historical context refracted by neoliberal discourses of progress, growth, and mobility" in contemporary India (Mankekar, 2015: 219). English becomes part of individual projects, which are tightly connected to the larger ideological framework of neoliberalism and the production of aspiration within that context (Mankekar, 2015).

Rather than "clones" (Mirchandani, 2012: 3) without the capacity to make individual choices outside of organizational constraints, our research describes how service workers are involved in their own project of self-transformation, of which language use is a critical part. English language schools in India have understood this dynamic in couching their marketing appeals by evoking this transformation ("leaders not laborers"). In this discourse, service workers apply the logic of neoliberalism and entrepreneurship to their own selves.

4.3. Language, service interactions and the importance of organizational contexts

While language works in both the coffee shop and modern gym context to exclude service providers who cannot master enough English, the relationship between language and power operates very differently across these two organizational contexts. Goffman (1956) already captures the context-dependence of power dynamics in service settings when he talks about status relationships as partial, that is, peculiar to specific types of encounters. Our findings extend these insights to show that organizational context provides a platform for lower middle class service workers to reverse the position of subordination they are generally subjected to in other spheres of Indian public life, including other types of labor (see Gooptu, 2013).

The contrast between the agency of the gym trainer and that of the coffee shop worker is especially striking. Although our informants, across these two contexts come from relatively similar socio-educational backgrounds, gym trainers were able to take control of their interactions. We see their ability to reverse the subordinate position afforded to them gym trainers exemplify how social agents use language as a means of "restructuring", i.e. they creatively appropriate the very means of socialization used upon them in the past (Fairclough, 1989: 196). For instance trainers were able to orient the activities of their clients at the gym, employing discursive devices such as diagnostic charts or exercise schedules. The power of trainers is partially embedded in the existing routines of gym training in which they are supposed to give clients directions, in contrast to the context of the coffee shop in which the waiter is placed in the obligation to show the deference typically associated with serving (Goffman, 1956).

In addition, the intense scripting of coffee shop interactions leaves workers with much less autonomy. This is consistent with Leidner's (1993) insights on the difference between fast food workers and insurance agents, and the way routinized work offers frontline service workers limited scope to control their interaction with customers.

What is especially striking though is the prestige and recognition that gym trainers are able to build out of expert knowledge and language use. By mastering a family of anatomical and gym-related terms, gym trainers are able to develop a specific register their client do not possess, which allows trainers to control the situation through the performance of expertise.

Here our work also foregrounds the importance of registers in mitigating the inequality that exists between gym trainers and their clients outside of the gym. As Blommaert (2010) writes "the crux of the matter is that we need not think of issues such as linguistic inequality as being

organized around concrete resources, not around languages in general but specific registers, varieties and genres" (p. 47).

What emerges then, if we compare the way language operates across various organizational contexts, is a more complex picture in which organizational context is at least as important as the broader socio-cultural context of class hierarchies and socio-linguistic resources in framing power dynamics. Gooptu (2013), in her study of security guards in India, highlights the increasingly unheard and unseen nature of such service work. However, our work also points to the role of language use in helping make service workers visible and recognized again.

The development of expert language gives gym workers the kind of recognition (Honneth, 1996) that they crave. Through their work with clients, trainers gain respect from peers, family and clients. What happens when clients address trainers as "sir" is a process of intersubjective recognition that helps trainers gain confidence. When Ranjit talks about the respect he gets from his peers in the village, after having mastered new words related to cooking (e.g. capsicum), we see that language use is important to that process of recognition.

We must note, however, that if trainers, and to a lesser extent baristas, develop recognition through language, the effects of such recognition do not seem to hold much beyond the confines of servicescapes. Trainers talk about some clients continuing to address them as "sir" in the street but also acknowledge that they would be in positions of inferiority if they were to go to their clients' workplace. They would become invisible again.

For companies operating in India, our insights on the dynamics of recognition. The problem of staff turnover is one of the most problematic aspects of doing business in India (EY 2015). In this domain, service companies need to offer "status shields" (Hochschild, 1983: 163) that is ways to protect service workers from disrespect (Gooptu, 2013). In the context of cafés for instance, more could be done to develop the role of coffee shop workers as "coffee experts" through the development of a specific repertoire that coffee shop workers could use to perform a new augmented role. If the liberalization of the Indian economy continues to promote the "cult(ure) of the consumer" (du Gay & Salaman, 1992) companies will need to provide ways for service workers to balance the demands of customer orientation with their workers' needs for dignity.

5. Conclusion

Overall, our research shows that language frames the power dynamics of service contexts in India in ways that are complex and varied. If English is symbolically violent in a postcolonial context like India, this violence reproduces the social dynamic of domination by the English-speaking middle class, but it also varies greatly across service contexts. Rachel Sherman (2007: 294) recently argued that past scholarship on services "has generally not theorized the classed nature of interactions or the links between structural inequality and interactive work." We would add that analyzing such dynamics needs to consider the specific dynamics of organizational contexts in framing the relationship between language use and power.

In addition, we must try to connect our analysis of service interactions to the larger socio-cultural and ideological context that frames these interactions. We have shown that the hegemony of English in Indian servicescapes is connected to individual aspirations for mobility and desires to fashion new identities. If we are to consider the relationship between language use and power in service contexts, we must consider that this dynamic is enfolded in broader tropes about temporality and modernity. In other words, in studying service interactions, and the role of language in these contexts, we must do more to examine the socio-cultural and ideological patterning of these interactions.

Future research should especially attend to the issue of gender in framing the relationship between language and power. Service interactions are fundamentally gendered, in the way that certain forms of service work are devalued when categorized as "female" (Cameron, 2000).

In the context of the gym, the power of the gym trainer operates at least partly through the trainer's identity as a male guide. Despite a few exceptions, the gym training profession remains overwhelmingly dominated by male trainers in India. In addition, through intensive training, gym trainers are able to develop the bodily capital (Winlow, 2001) that allows them to command authority over their clients. If our study highlights the power of language, this power, at least in the gym, is also intimately connected to bodily capital as well as gendered constructions of authority. In further studying the culture of service interactions, we must try to further understand the gendered nature of such interactions.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the financial support of Nanyang Technological University (M4081183) in funding data collection for this research.

Appendix A

Table 1
Informant profiles.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Occupation	Education	Language of instruction	Language of interview
Colin	Male	28	Gym trainer	Bachelor degree	English	English
Kaleem	Male	23	Gym trainer	12th grade	Marathi	Mixed
Karan	Male	30	Gym trainer	8th grade	Hindi	English
Lavanya	Female	23	Coffee shop worker	12th grade	English	English
Saleem	Male	25	Coffee shop worker	12th grade	Hindi	Mixed
Ranjit	Male	21	Coffee shop worker	10th grade	Hindi	Hindi
Rajvir	Male	25	Gym trainer	10th grade	Hindi	Hindi
Radha	Female	23	Coffee shop worker	Bachelors degree	Marathi	Mixed
Saurabh	Male	45	Gym trainer	Bachelors degree	English	English
Sanjay	Male	43	Gym trainer	Bachelors degree	English	English
Sujaan	Male	31	Gym trainer	Bachelors degree	Marathi	English
Subhash	Male	32	Coffee shop worker	8th grade	Hindi	Hindi
Taskin	Male	24	Coffee shop worker	12th grade	Urdu	Hindi

References

- Alter, J. S. (1992). *The wrestler's body: Identity and ideology in North India*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ambekar, B. R. (2005). *Dalits and imperialism. Anti-imperialism & annihilation of castes*. Mumbai, India: Ramai Prakashan.
- Arnould, E. J., & Wallendorf, M. (1994). Market-oriented ethnography: Interpretation building and marketing strategy formulation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31(4), 484–504.
- Bitner, M. J. (1990). Evaluating service encounters: The effects of physical surroundings and employee responses. *The Journal of Marketing*, 54(2), 69–82.
- Bitner, M. J., Booms, B. H., & Tetreault, M. S. (1990). The service encounter: Diagnosing favorable and unfavorable incidents. *The Journal of Marketing*, 54(1), 71–84.
- Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse: A critical introduction*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Blommaert, J. (2010). *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Blumberg, A. S. (1967). The practice of law as confidence game: Organizational cooptation of a profession. *Law and Society Review*, 15(1), 15–39.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Boussebaa, M., Sinha, S., & Gabriel, Y. (2014). Englishization in offshore call centers: A postcolonial perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45(9), 1152–1169.
- Burawoy, M. (2000). *Uncertain transition: Ethnographies of change in the postsocialist world*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Burton, D. (1993). *The Raj at table. A culinary history of the British in India*. London, UK: Faber.
- Callahan, L. (2006). English or Spanish?! Language accommodation in New York City service encounters. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 3(1), 29–53.
- Cameron, D. (2000). Styling the worker: Gender and the commodification of language in the globalized service economy. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 4(3), 323–347.
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1–47.
- Cayla, J. (2008). Following the Endorser's shadow: Shah Rukh Khan and the creation of the cosmopolitan Indian male. *Advertising and Society Review*, 9(2) (n.p. Available at: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/advertising_and_society_review/v009/9.2_cayla01.html (accessed 13 June 2016)).
- Cayla, J., & Elson, M. (2012). Indian consumer kaun hai? The class-based grammar of Indian advertising. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 32(3), 295–308.
- Chand, V. (2011). Elite positionings towards Hindi: Language policies, political stances and language competence in India. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 15(1), 6–35.
- Chatterjee, P. (1993). *The nation and its fragments: Colonial and postcolonial histories*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Corrado, M. (2002). Teaching wedding rules: How bridal workers negotiate control over their customers. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 31(1), 33–67.
- Derné, S. (2008). *Globalization on the ground: New media and the transformation of culture, class, and gender in India*. New York: Sage.
- Desjeux, D. (1996). Scales of observation: A micro-sociological epistemology of social science practice. *Visual Studies*, 11(2), 45–55.
- du Gay, P., & Salaman, G. (1992). The cult[ure] of the consumer. *Journal of Management Studies*, 29, 615–633.
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. New York: Longman.
- Fernandes, L. (2006). *India's new middle class: Democratic politics in an era of economic reform*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fisher, S., & Todd, A. D. (Eds.). (1983). *The social organization of doctor-patient communication*. Washington, DC: Centre for Applied Linguistics.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge. Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- George, M. (2008). Interactions in expert service work demonstrating professionalism in personal training. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 1(37), 108–131.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of saturation*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gimlin, D. (1996). Pamela's place: Power and negotiation in the hair salon. *Gender and Society*, 10(5), 505–526.
- Goffman, E. (1956). The nature of deference and demeanor. *American Anthropologist*, 58(3), 473–502.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma*. New Jersey: Spectrum.
- Goopu, N. (2013). Servile sentinels of the city: Private security guards, organized informality, and labour in interactive services in globalized India. *International Review of Social History*, 58(1), 9–38.
- Gummesson, E. (1991). Service quality: A holistic view. *Service quality: Multidisciplinary and multinational perspectives* (pp. 3–22). New York: Lexington.
- Hall, K., & Bucholtz, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Gender articulated: Language and the socially constructed self*. London: Routledge.
- Hanser, A. (2008). *Service encounters: Class, gender, and the market for social distinction in urban China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Hollander, S. (1985). A historical perspective on the service encounter. *The service encounter: Managing employee/customer interaction in service businesses* (pp. 49–64). New York: Lexington.
- Holmqvist, J. (2011). Consumer language preferences in service encounters: A cross-cultural perspective. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, 21(2), 178–191.
- Holmqvist, J., & Grönroos, C. (2012). How does language matter for services? Challenges and propositions for service research. *Journal of Service Research*, 15(4), 430–442.
- Honneth, A. (1992). Integrity and disrespect: Principles of a conception of morality based on the theory of recognition. *Political Theory*, 20(2), 187–201.
- Honneth, A. (1996). *The struggle for recognition: The moral grammar of social conflicts*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hymes, D. H. (1972). On communicative competence. *Sociolinguistics* (pp. 269–293). Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.
- Jacobs-Huey, L. (2007). Learning through the breach: Language socialization among African American cosmetologists. *Ethnography*, 8(2), 171–203.
- Jeantet, A. (2003). À votre service! La relation de service comme rapport social. *Sociologie du travail*, 45(2), 191–209.
- Leidner, R. (1993). *Fast food, fast talk: Service work and the routinization of everyday life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Locke, K. (2001). *Grounded theory in management research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Macaulay, T. B. (2005). Minute on Indian education. *Postcolonialisms: An anthology of cultural theory and criticism* (pp. 121–131). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

- Mankekar, P. (2015). *Unsettling India: Affect, temporality, transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Mattson, J., & den Haring, M. J. (1998). Communication dynamics in the service encounter: A linguistic study in a hotel conference department. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 9(5), 416–435.
- McDowell, L. (2011). *Working bodies: Interactive service employment and workplace identities*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Miller, J. L., Craighead, C. W., & Karwan, K. R. (2000). Service recovery: A framework and empirical investigation. *Journal of Operations Management*, 18(4), 387–400.
- Mirchandani, K. (2012). *Phone clones: Authenticity work in the transnational service economy*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Moreau, P. C., Markman, A. B., & Lehman, D. R. (2001). "What is it?" Categorization flexibility and customers' responses to really new products. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(March), 489–498.
- Paules, G. F. (1991). *Dishing it out: Power and resistance among waitresses in a New Jersey restaurant*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Pavlenko, A., & Blackledge, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Peñaloza, L., & Gilly, M. C. (1999). Marketer acculturation: The changer and the changed. *Journal of Marketing*, 63(3), 84–104.
- Phadke, S. (2007). Dangerous liaisons: Women and men: Risk and reputation in Mumbai. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42(17), 1510–1518.
- Phillipson, R. (2000). English in the new world order: Variations on a theme of linguistic imperialism and 'world' English. *Ideology, politics and language policies* (pp. 87–106). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Platz, T. (2012). *Café culture: Socio-historical transformations of space, personhood and middle class in Pune, India*. (Doctoral dissertation) Durham University.
- Rafaeli, A., Ziklik, L., & Doucet, L. (2008). The impact of call center employees' customer orientation behaviors on service quality. *Journal of Service Research*, 10(3), 239–255.
- Ray, R., & Qayum, S. (2009). *Cultures of servitude: Modernity, domesticity, and class in India*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Ritzer, G., & Lair, C. D. (2009). The globalization of nothing and the outsourcing of service work. *Service work: Critical perspectives* (pp. 31–52). New York: Routledge.
- Rofel, L. (2007). *Desiring China: Experiments in neoliberalism, sexuality, and public culture*. North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of freedom: Reframing political thought*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Sherman, R. (2007). *Class acts: Service and inequality in luxury hotels*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Shome, R. (2006). Thinking through the diaspora call centers, India, and a new politics of hybridity. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9(1), 105–124.
- Stiles, W. B. (1985). Measuring roles in service encounters: The verbal exchange structure. *The service encounter: Managing employee/customer interaction in service businesses* (pp. 213–223). New York: Lexington.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research*. Vol. 15. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Taseer, A. (2011). *The temple-goers*. London: Penguin.
- Taylor, P., & Bain, P. (2005). 'India calling to the far away towns' the call centre labour process and globalization. *Work, Employment and Society*, 19(2), 261–282.
- Unruh, D. R. (1979). Characteristics and types of participation in social worlds. *Symbolic Interaction*, 2(2), 115–130.
- Üstüner, T., & Holt, D. B. (2007). Dominated consumer acculturation: The social construction of poor migrant women's consumer identity projects in a Turkish squatter. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34(1), 41–56.
- Üstüner, T., & Thompson, C. J. (2012). How marketplace performances produce interdependent status games and contested forms of symbolic capital. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38(5), 796–814.
- Vaish, V. (2008). Language attitudes of urban disadvantaged female students in India: An ethnographic approach. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 29(3), 198–215.
- Van Vaerenbergh, Y., & Holmqvist, J. (2014). Examining the relationship between language divergence and word-of-mouth intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(8), 1601–1608.
- Varman, R., & Belk, R. W. (2012). Consuming postcolonial shopping malls. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 28(1–2), 62–84.
- Wacquant, L. J. D. (1993). From ruling class to field of power: An interview with Pierre Bourdieu on 'La noblesse d'Etat'. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 10(1), 19–44.