Rethinking Generation 1.5: Implications for Teaching and Research

Timothy Mossman
tmossman@sfu.ca
Simon Fraser University
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Generation 1.5
• population who have completed some years of formative schooling in their home countries prior to immigration to another country

Representations
• Stuck or lost between binaries of newly arrived immigrants and second generation immigrants born in North America (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988)

Research Question
• How do the discourses of immigration, language, and difference play a role in the construction of immigrant EAL post-secondary students’ identities?

Data Generation
• Open-ended interview theorized from the “active interview” approach (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004)
• Data treated as accounts rather than reports

Analytic Framework: Discourse Analysis
• Conversation Analysis (CA) and Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA)
• MCA studies of how members of a particular society use social categories as part of their routine, ordinary common-sense knowledge to account for, explain, justify and make sense of their social lives

Data Analysis

Interview
• speaks to the close relationship between language and identity
• Samantha constructs, one the one hand, a fluid, dynamic, linguistically complex “3 not 1.5 type” identity, and on the other, an identity that is rooted to a sense of nationhood
• Highlights the theoretical tension between identity as fixed vs identity as dynamic

E-Mail
• Créole gets used to create intimacy, share meaning, establish a sense of self and nationhood, and engage in pre-established Mauritian interactional norms

Implications
• Labels as shared shorthand by which we can talk about learners
• Multilingualism doesn’t fit well with traditional teaching approaches/labels
• ‘strategic essentialism’ needed to help make others aware of the particular needs of EAL students

Selected References

