

Multilingualism and identity

Monika S. Schmid

Centre for Research in Language Development throughout the
Lifespan, University of Essex

<http://languageattrition.org>



languageattrition



@MonikaSSchmid



University of Essex

If integration the same lang

To build one natio
speaking of one la



Blunkett: Speak English in your homes

by DAVID HUGHES, Daily Mail

David Blunkett is urging ethnic communities to speak English in their homes.

The Home Secretary says that using English can prevent the 'schizophrenia' which 'bedevils' relationships between the generations, particularly in Asian families.

UKIP leader Nigel Farage says he feels awkward when he doesn't hear English on the train

ed to only speak English
ed working environment'
s 'silly'

Money

Discounts

gn
ir

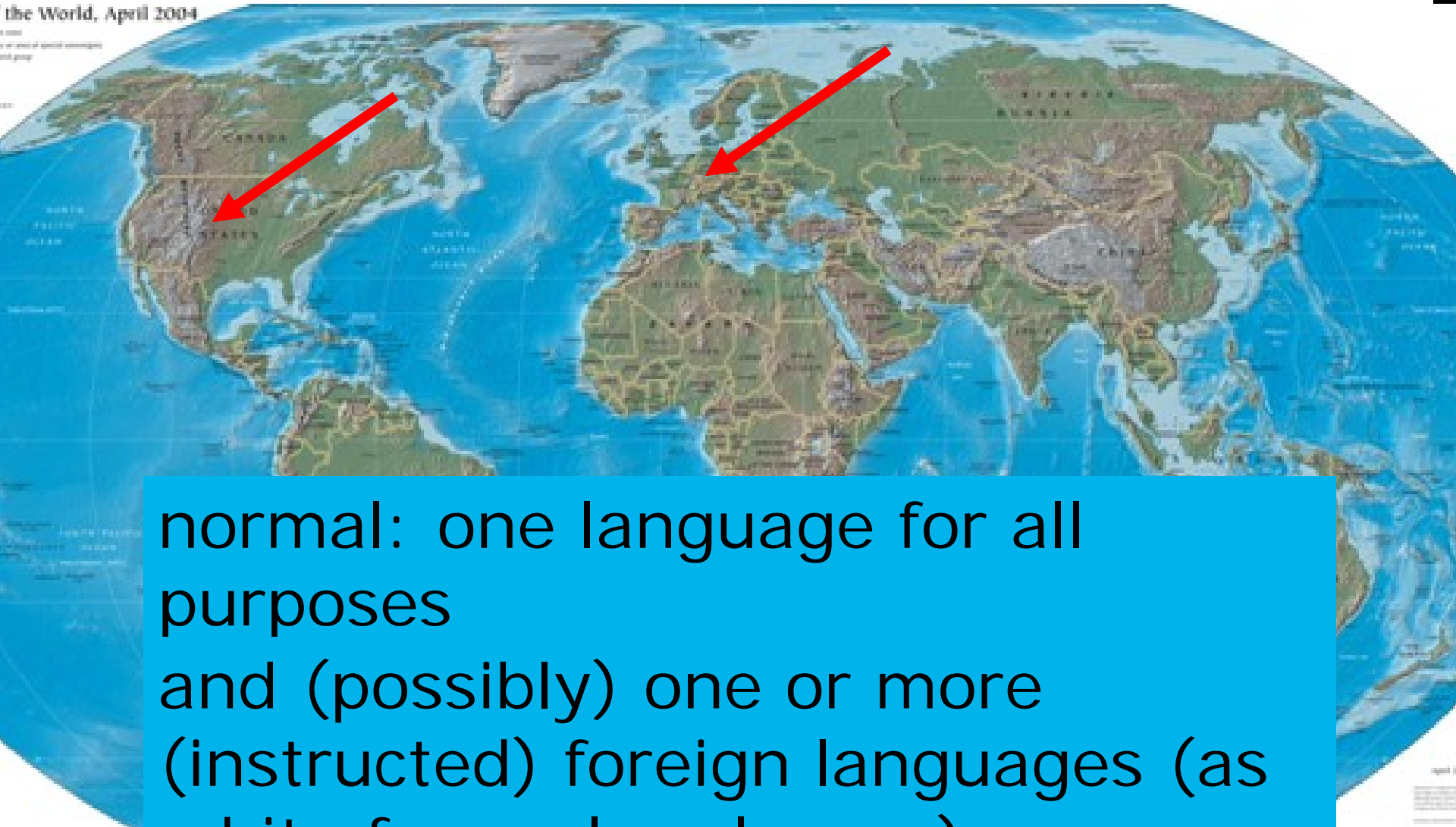
SPLIT LOYALTIES?

- many newsstories seem to confuse “being able to speak English” with “using only English”
- there seems to be the perception that one can only identify with one language community
- this is echoed in the debate about dual citizenship



PERCEPTIONS OF BILINGUALISM

the World, April 2004



normal: one language for all purposes and (possibly) one or more (instructed) foreign languages (as a bit of a useless luxury)

PERCEPTIONS OF BILINGUALISM

normal: one language with parents (or: one with mother, one with father), one for education/as a lingua franca, one for religion, ...



LAYERED IDENTITIES

- we all have multifaceted identities
- each of them is associated with different languages, dialects or speaking styles
- this is entirely normal
- none of these personae means the other are less real or committed



SPLIT LOYALTIES?

- our previous research suggests that
 - wanting to distance yourself from your country of origin may impact negatively on the maintenance of the native language
 - embracing the culture and values of a new society plays less of a role in helping to learn the new language than one might think
 - it is not necessary to give up one language in order to learn another!