# The Global-Local Interface and Hybridity

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# The Global-Local Interface and Hybridity

## Exploring Language and Identity

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**Rani Rubdy and Lubna Alsagoff**

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# 1 The Cultural Dynamics of Globalization: Problematizing Hybridity

Rani Rubdy and Lubna Alsagoff

## Introduction

Globalization is not just one of the most hotly debated concepts this century; it has become a social reality of contemporary importance – 'both as a social mode that we need to keep probing and as a focus for some new ways of understanding language in society' (Coupland, 2010: 2). Much has been written by globalization theorists (Castells, 1996; Featherstone, 1995; Giddens, 1990; Hall, 1991; Huntington, 1996; Inda & Rosaldo, 2008; Kraidy, 2002, 2005; Pieterse, 2004; Robertson, 1992; Tomlinson, 1999) on the nature and meaning of globalization, its causes and consequences, and its many contradictions and paradoxes. Indeed, globalization is best thought of as a multi-dimensional process that cuts across various spheres of activity in the realms of economy, politics, culture, technology and so forth that is transforming the world into a complex place – in the way it is imagined, represented and acted on by its inhabitants (Blommaert, 2010: 63). Furthermore, these transformations are so messy and unpredictable that we can only understand globalization as a complex of processes evolving and developing at different levels of scale, scope, speed and intensity, changing the world landscape in a number of ways.

Drawing on our insights from the voluminous literature on globalization, we suggest that the following characteristic elements of globalization