
THE GUJARATI LANGUAGE IN FIJI¹

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Abstract

This paper presents a sociolinguistic sketch of Gujarati, a minority language in Fiji. Unlike the majority of Indo-Fijians, who are descendants of indentured labourers brought by the British colonial government to work on plantations at the turn of the last century, the Gujaratis came to Fiji as free migrants and have kept kinship and business ties with the Indian state of Gujarat and, increasingly, a worldwide diaspora. The paper reports the results of an exploratory survey of language use and attitudes among Gujaratis in the capital, Suva. It compares the fate of Gujarati to that of other minority Indian languages in Fiji with respect to language shift and maintenance.

1. Introduction

Fiji is an island nation in the Southwest Pacific, with a small but diverse population (775,077 at the last census, in 1996). The two major groups are indigenous Fijians (51%) and Indo-Fijians, also known as “Fiji Indians” (44%), most of whom are descendants of indentured labourers brought from India by the British colonial government from 1879 to 1916 to work on plantations. The rest of the population consists of Rotumans, ‘Part-Europeans’ (descendants of ‘European’ fathers and Fijian mothers), ‘Europeans’ (Caucasians or ‘Whites’), Chinese, and other Pacific Islanders.

The native language of indigenous Fijians is Fijian, a member of the Central Pacific subgroup of the Austronesian family. Most Indo-Fijians speak a variety of Hindi, now called *Fiji Baat* or ‘Fiji Hindi’, derived from a koiné that developed during indenture on the plantations, out of related dialects of Hindi, the major language of North India, and Hindustani, the lingua franca based on Khariboli (a regional dialect of Hindi spoken to the northeast of Delhi), which originated and spread throughout North India and all large cities under the Moghul Empire (Siegel 1987: 139). Fijian, Hindustani and English, the former colonial language, have official status, and English, which dominates the education system, business and the media, is widely spoken, often in its local form, ‘Fiji English’.

Languages spoken among the small minority groups include Rotuman, several Chinese languages and dialects, Kiribati among Rabe² islanders, and Tuvaluan among Kioans (see Mangubhai and Mugler 2003). Among Indo-Fijians, there are small – and dwindling – numbers of speakers of Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam, descendants of labourers recruited in South India during the last phase of indenture, from 1903 to 1916. Two other groups of people of Indian origin are the Gujaratis and the Panjabis, nearly all of whom came to Fiji as free migrants. Both communities are small, with the Gujaratis, whose language is the subject of this study, estimated at no more than 3% of the population of Indian origin.

The aim of this paper is to present a sociolinguistic sketch of the Gujarati language in Fiji. We begin with the historical background of the Gujarati presence in Fiji, then report on an exploratory survey of language use and attitudes among members of the Gujarati community in the capital, Suva. To our knowledge, there has been no study of the Gujarati language in Fiji, and this paper is an attempt to draw together scattered elements of information in the literature, particularly the social and historical literature on Indians in Fiji, and to present a coherent, if inevitably incomplete, description of patterns of use of the language and its speakers. This description will in turn contribute towards a more comprehensive picture of language in Fiji, particularly of minority Indian languages, which have, until recently, been little studied. The results of the survey will inform a wider sociolinguistic survey of Fiji which is planned for 2005.

2. Background: The Gujaratis in Fiji

2.1. *The indentured labourers*

The ancestors of the indigenous Fijians are thought to have come from Southeast Asia and to have started settling in Fiji about 3000 years ago. European contact was initiated by explorers from the Old World, who were followed by stranded sailors, beachcombers, sandalwood and sea-slug traders, then missionaries.

In the 1860s there was an influx of European settlers and a scramble for land, which resulted in the development of a plantation economy. Labour was initially provided by Fijians, who were joined in the 1870s by other Pacific Islanders ‘recruited’ through blackbirding, i.e. kidnapped for slave labour (Siegel 1987: 39-67). After Fiji was ceded to Britain in 1874, the new colony had to pay for itself and as blackbirding became less acceptable, Polynesian labour was replaced by Indian labour recruited under the system of indenture.

Between 1879 and 1916, the colonial government brought 60,965 Indian indentured labourers to Fiji to work on plantations, mainly of sugarcane (Gillion 1962: 59, Lal 1983: 13). A little over three-quarters of these labourers (or *girmityas*³) were recruited through the port of Calcutta in North India, and the rest through Madras in South India, starting in 1903 (Lal 1983: 44).

The majority of the indentured labourers transported from Calcutta came from the North Indian provinces of Bihar, and Oudh and the Northwest Province (which now make up the state of Uttar Pradesh or ‘U.P.’). In his study of the origins of these North Indian *girmityas*, Lal (1983: 45) notes that Western India (including Gujarat, Sindh and Bombay) was only a minor supplier of labour. A few labourers were recruited in 1883-84 from Ahmedabad, in the Bombay Presidency, but generally the government of Bombay objected to recruiting because loss of population translated into a loss of revenue (Gillion 1962: 49). In addition, since the middle of the 19th century, employment had become increasingly available in Bombay, especially in textile mills, road construction and irrigation works, so there was little incentive to migrate for work (Lal 1983: 45).

Of the 45,439 indentured labourers transported from Calcutta, only 120, or 0.3%, came from Western India (Lal 1983: 50). Based on the detailed information on the North Indian migrants’ districts of origin in Lal’s thesis (1980), Siegel estimates that 81 — less than 0.2% — may have been speakers of Gujarati (1987: 141).

There might also have been some Gujarati speakers among the *girmityas*

who came to Fiji from other overseas colonies (640 or 1.4 %) or those whose origin was not specified on their emigration passes (502 or 1.1%) (Lal 1983: 50, Siegel 1987: 132). Overall, the number of Gujarati speakers who may have come to Fiji as indentured labourers must have been extremely small.

2.2. *The free migrants*

During indenture, there were also ‘passenger’ migrants who came to Fiji on their own rather than under any immigration scheme. Free immigration started during the decade before World War I, and among the free migrants were Gujaratis. According to Gillion (1962: 133), the first were two jewellers (or ‘Sonars’, from the Soni caste) originally from the town of Porbandar on the Kathiawar Peninsula, who came from Natal, in South Africa, in 1906. But Prasad claims that the first were a group of 20 Parsi artisans, originally from Surat or Navsari, who were recruited in the Bombay Presidency by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) in 1901 (Prasad 1978: 25, 122). They were followed by the two Sonis from Porbandar in 1904, more Sonis from Porbandar in 1905 and 1908, and Khatri tailors from Navsari, in Baroda State, in 1908-09 (Prasad 1978: 123).

Figure 1: Gujarat before independence.

(Note: Princely states in dark shade.)



Source: <http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/prepartitionmap.htm>

Emigration then increased quickly, with other Soni gold and silversmiths from Porbandar and neighbouring Jamnagar and Jetalsar, and tailors (mostly Khatri) from Navsari and Surat, while the Patels, who had been farmers in Baroda State, Nadiad in the Bombay Presidency and nearby areas, became grocers, drapers and laundrymen (Gillion 1962: 133-134). Members of other occupational castes included Navs (barbers), Mochis (shoemakers), Darjis (tailors), Dhobis (laundrymen), Kolis and Kanbis (agricultural labourers), Sutaras (carpenters) and Lohars (blacksmiths). Most Gujarati village castes, except for Brahmins and Bhanghis (scavengers), were represented (Prasad 1978: 131), although some would change occupations in Fiji. While most migrants were Hindus, there were also a few Muslims (Gillion 1962: 134). The newcomers came from a variety of places, including Saurashtra and Kaira districts in central Gujarat, but after the initial immigration from Porbandar, the majority came from Surat District and adjoining Baroda State, especially the town of Navsari (Gillion 1977: 115; see Figure 1). This is confirmed by Prasad's analysis of passport applications to Fiji from Gujarati speaking areas of India (Table 1).

The Gujarati migrants established a network of contacts in the South Pacific region (Prasad 1978: 36), in particular Australia and New Zealand, and some used Fiji as a staging post to go there or vice versa, since Fiji maintained an open door policy for free migration during and after World War I. However, some were refused entry to New Zealand because they could not pass the (English) literacy test (Prasad 1978: 124).

Emigration continued during the war, with the reopening of shipping in 1915 (Prasad 1978: 128), and after the end of indenture, which was abolished in 1916, with the last *girmitiyas* finishing their contracts in 1920. After 1922 many Patidars arrived from Central Gujarat, mostly from Charotar, which included parts of Baroda State and of British Gujarat, as well as many land-owners and agricultural castes, such as Patel, Desai, Amin (Prasad 1978: 153). The largest increase was between 1930 and 1935, from 1,200 to 2,500, or 3% of the Indian population (Prasad 1978: 105).

In Fiji, the Gujarati migrants settled primarily in urban areas, not only the capital Suva, but all towns with a large Indian population. These were the 'sugar towns' which had grown in the late 1870s and 1880s as a result of the development of the sugar industry and the establishment of mills: Nausori, Navua, Lautoka, Ba, Rakiraki, and Labasa (Prasad 1978: 174-178). While it is difficult to pinpoint the date of Gujarati settlement in the sugar towns, the shift seems to have occurred after 1935 and increased during World War II, with Nadi, then a military base, also attracting settlers (Prasad 1978: 211).

Table 1: Passport applications to Fiji by region, 1916-20 and 1928-38.

REGION	1916-1920	%	1928-1938	%
Cutch	1			
Bhavnagar	1		1	
Junagadh	8		2	
Navanagar	20		1	
Porbandar	71		3	
Kathiawar	100	13	7	0.5
Baroda Division	7		42	
Navsari Division	296		348	
Baroda State	303	40	390	33
Ahmedabad	0		22	
Broach	5		57	
Kaira	7		10	
Surat	336		655	
British Gujarat	348	46	744	64
Misc. areas			29	2.5
Total	752		1,170	

Based on Prasad 1978:132, 163.

2.3. *The Gujarati language in Fiji*

Gujarati, a member of the Indo-European language family, belongs to the Central/Western subgroup of the Indo-Aryan branch and is closely related to Hindi, Punjabi and Rajasthani. It is spoken in India primarily in the state of Gujarat and the city of Bombay in Maharashtra (see Figure 2). The standard variety is based on the educated speech of Ahmedabad, the largest city and commercial capital (Bright 1992: 96-99, Asher 1993: 1513). There are several regional dialects: Peninsular Gujarati or Kathiawari (Kathiawadi), is spoken on the Kathiawar Peninsula (also called Saurashtra), while on the mainland, there are three main dialects: Pattani, north of the Sabarmati river; Charotari, between the Sabarmati and Narmada; and Surti (Surati), south of the Narmada

Figure 2: The contemporary state of Gujarat.



Source: <http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/gujarat/gujarat-district.htm>

(Bright 1992: 97). The Kacchi community, from the Rann of Kachchh (also 'Cutch', 'Kutch'), originally used a variety of Sindhi highly influenced by Gujarati (Asher 1993: 1513). Various groups have distinct forms of speech and vocabulary, depending on religion (Muslims, Parsis), caste, and social and occupational background.

The number of Gujarati speakers in Fiji can be estimated only roughly. Censuses of the population, conducted every ten years (from 1881 to 1921 and again from 1936), classify the population into various ethnic groups (Fijians, Rotumans, Chinese, Europeans, Part-Europeans), but all Fiji Islanders⁴ of Indian descent are grouped together under the label 'Indian', hence the numbers of people who identify themselves as Gujarati are not available. Nor have censuses normally contained any information on language use, with the exception of the 1956 and 1966 censuses, in which members of Indian households were asked what language they used amongst themselves. In 1956, 830

households reported using Gujarati, and 930 in 1966, an increase of 12%, Gujarati being the only language other than Hindustani/Hindi to show a gain (Siegel 1987: 205). This is less than 3% of Indian households, a percentage which seems to have remained stable since the 1930s.

The 1966 census report (Zwart 1968: 204) also provides a breakdown of Gujarati speaking households by province (Table 2).⁵

Table 2: Number of reported Gujarati-speaking households by province, 1966 census

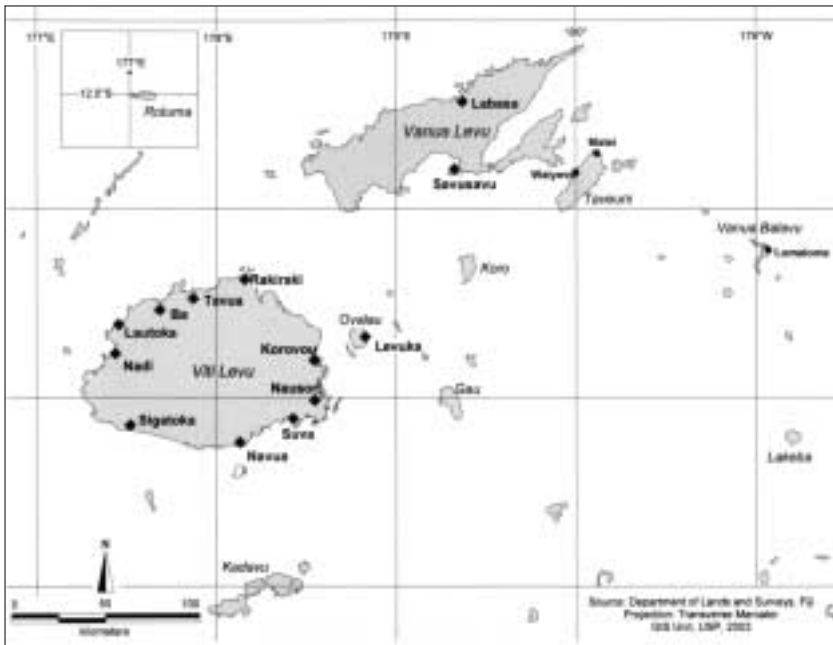
Suva City	407	Lomaiviti	13
Ba	360	Serua	7
Tailevu	44	Namosi	2
Nadroga/Navosa	30	Rewa (excl. Suva City)	2
Macuata	26	Naitasiri	1
Ra	25	Rotuma	1
Cakaudrove	14	Total	932

While two locations account for about 82.5% of households (Suva, with nearly 44%, and the large province of Ba, with almost 39%), Gujarati families are present in all provinces except Bua, Kadavu and Lau.

An analysis of the 1994 Fiji telephone directory — the last one to be organised by locality — reveals the presence of Gujarati names in all the cities and towns of the two largest islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, and on Taveuni, Ovalau, and Lomaloma in the Lomaiviti group. The same names, checked against the 2003 directory, continue to appear in the same locations: Suva, Nausori, Navua, Korovou, Sigatoka, Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua, Rakiraki (on Viti Levu), Labasa and Savusavu (on Vanua Levu), Levuka (on Ovalau), Taveuni, and Lomaloma (see Figure 3).

The Gujaratis in Fiji, then, are a small community of free migrants and their descendants. They are overwhelmingly urban and still primarily involved in business. Among Fiji Islanders of Indian descent, they have a distinct identity, shaped in part by a different history from that of the descendants of indentured labourers.

Figure 3: The Fifi Islands.



We now turn to a description of a small exploratory survey of language use and attitudes among Gujaratis in Suva.

3. The survey

3.1. Design: instruments and sample

In late 2001 and early 2002, written questionnaires were administered verbally to 57 Gujaratis in Suva. The questions dealt with the respondents' evaluation of their own proficiency in Gujarati and any other language they knew, language use in different domains, and attitudes towards Gujarati and the other languages in their repertoire. The questionnaire was based on one used for a survey of nearly 1000 Fiji Islanders conducted in 1993 (Tent and Mugler

1998, Tent 2000, Mugler 2001). The questionnaire took between 15 and 20 mn to administer and each yielded over 200 data points, recorded in writing by the interviewers. Tape-recorded interviews, lasting anywhere from 10 to about 25 mn, were conducted with seven informants, selected by the interviewers. The semi-structured format of the interviews allowed participants to elaborate on their answers, not only on language use or attitudes but also on their background and that of their ancestors in Gujarat.

The questionnaires were administered by three native speakers of Gujarati, two of whom are members of the local community and one, the second author, a long-term Fiji resident. They also conducted the interviews except for two, which were conducted by the first author, and another by a Gujarat-born Fiji Islander.

The sample was designed with the aim of including between 50 and 60 participants, half males and half females, three quarters of participants born in Fiji and one quarter in Gujarat, equal numbers of participants in 5 age groups (15-25, 26-40, 41-55, 56-70, and 71 and over), and at least a few participants married to non-Gujaratis. The size of the sample was restricted by the limitations on the availability of the interviewers. On the other hand, all persons contacted, who were assured their answers would be confidential, readily agreed to participate. The sample is one of convenience, based on the interviewers' social networks and the results can be considered indicative. While we do not claim that it is representative of the Gujarati population in Fiji, the sample shares some important characteristics with the Gujarati population at large — all participants are urban dwellers, like nearly all Gujaratis in Fiji, and most are involved in business. The main hypothesis was that Gujarati was being maintained as a spoken language within the community.

3.2. Results

3.2.1. PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The sample of 57 comprises 28 females and 29 males. The age range is from 15 to over 70 (Table 3). Over three-quarters of the informants (45) were born in Fiji and the rest in Gujarat (12). Four are married to non-Gujaratis.

Although our initial intention was to survey Gujaratis only in the Suva area, the sample ended up including a few respondents who normally reside elsewhere and happened to be visiting relatives in Suva. In all, 50 informants are from the greater Suva area (including 2 from the nearby town of Nausori), 1 from Sigatoka, 3 from Lautoka, and 3 former Fiji residents now living overseas (1 in Auckland, New Zealand, and 2 in Melbourne, Australia). Former

Table 3: Age profile

AGE GROUP	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
15-25	14	24
26-40	9	16
41-55	21	37
56-70	9	16
71+	4	7
Total	57	100

residents were asked to answer the questions on language use with reference to when they were living in Fiji.

Slightly less than half the informants (26) were in paid employment. The remaining 31 include housewives (10), retirees (7), and students (14, with 7 each in high school and at university). Nearly all those in paid employment were engaged in business or other white collar jobs: 14 were in business, identifying themselves as importers (5), managing directors (2), general manager (1), businessman (1), financial administrator (1), shop owner (1), shop manager (2) and a landlady. The other 12 described themselves as accounts officer (2), a bank officer, a chartered accountant, a lawyer, a law clerk, an elections officer, an insurance agent, a data/communications engineer, a webmaster, a curriculum resources officer, and a university lecturer.

Nearly a third of the participants (17) have a post-secondary education (including one PhD), while another 17 completed Form 6 or 7. Another 15 have some secondary education, and 6 only went to primary school (Table 4). Those with only a primary education are all women (4 housewives, 2 retired).

Eight of the respondents were educated in India, among whom four specify Navsari and one Surat. Of those educated in Fiji, about a third went to traditionally Gujarati schools run by the Gujarat Education Society, 17 naming a Gujarati primary school (12 Nehru Memorial, 5 Mahatma Gandhi Memorial) and 19 Mahatma Gandhi Memorial secondary school.

We now turn to the results of the survey, which include self-reported knowledge of Gujarati and the other languages in the participants' repertoires; language use at home, school and work; and language attitudes. Statistical

Table 4: Educational profile

LEVEL	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Post-secondary	17	29.8
Form 7	9	29.8
Form 6	8	
Form 5	4	
Form 4	6	
Form 3	2	26.3
Form 2/ Class 8	3	
Class 7	1	
Primary	6	10.5
Total	56	100.0

Note: Data is missing for one informant.

tests were conducted, when numbers allowed, to establish whether there were correlations between answers on language use or attitudes and social variables such as sex, age, birthplace, or education. When there is a correlation, this is pointed out. Generally, raw results are reported.

3.2.2. KNOWLEDGE OF GUJARATI

In the first section of the questionnaire respondents were asked if they could speak Gujarati. They were then asked whether members of their immediate family also could: parents, grandparents, spouse, children, and grandchildren. The results are displayed in Table 5. One informant reports not knowing Gujarati at all, and another claims only ‘some’ knowledge of the language. All 55 others report being able to speak Gujarati. Of the 41 married informants, all but 4 report that their spouse can speak Gujarati (3 of the 4 speak ‘some’, one speaks none). Results are similar for children and grandchildren, nearly all of whom are reported to speak Gujarati.

Informants were then asked to evaluate their own proficiency, by rating their answer to the question ‘How good is your Gujarati?’ on a scale from 0 (‘none’) to 4 (‘very good’) in each of four skills (speaking, understanding the

Table 5: Reported knowledge of Gujarati by respondents and their immediate family (number of informants)

	SELF	PARENTS	GRANDPARENTS	SPOUSE	CHILDREN	GRANDCHILDREN
yes	55	54	52	37	33	10
some	1			3	1	1
unsure			4			
no	1	1	1	1	2	1
NA				16	21	45
other		2*			1**	
Total	57	57	57	57	57	57

*One informant's mother does not speak Gujarati, another's speaks it only 'a little'. Both informants' fathers do speak Gujarati.

**Data is missing for one informant.

Table 6: Self-evaluation of proficiency in Gujarati (number of informants)

	SPEAKING	LISTENING	READING	WRITING
very good	42	45	17	14
good	9	10	5	7
fair	4	1	10	9
poor	1	1	3	2
none	1	0	22	25
Total	57	57	57	57

spoken language (abbreviated as 'listening' in Tables 6 and 7), reading, and writing).

Table 6 shows that every informant claims at least some knowledge of the language. For one informant, this is merely a 'poor' ability to understand

spoken Gujarati. But the vast majority of the 57 informants claim at least a ‘good’ knowledge (51 for speaking, 55 for ‘listening’), and about three quarters, a ‘very good’ knowledge (42 for speaking, 45 for ‘listening’). Most informants acquired Gujarati as their first language at home, including those who have only one Gujarati parent. One of these, Ravi⁶, a university student who was interviewed as a follow-up to the questionnaire, described growing up speaking mostly Fiji Hindi at home, and Gujarati with his father and relatives on his father’s side. But he considers that he became really fluent in Gujarati only in high school, where he had a lot of Gujarati friends.

Proficiency in reading and writing is a different matter. Although a majority report at least a ‘fair’ level of competence (32 for reading and 30 for writing), far fewer respondents rate themselves as ‘very good’ in the written mode than do in the spoken (17 for reading, 14 for writing). There are 22 informants who report that they cannot read Gujarati and 25 that they cannot write it. There is a significant correlation between participants’ age and their self-rating in reading and writing (unlike for speaking and listening), with older participants rating themselves higher (for reading $N=48$, Rho corrected for ties .627, tied P-value $<.0001$; for writing $N=48$, Rho corrected for ties .606, tied P-value $<.0001$). Those born in Gujarat (12) rate their competence in reading as at least ‘fair’, including 8 as ‘very good’, while in writing all but one rate their competence as at least ‘fair’, including 6 as ‘very good’. While those born in Fiji also include informants who rate themselves as ‘very good’ in reading and writing, all those who report no ability to either read or write Gujarati are Fiji-born. Only one Gujarat-born informant reports not being able to write Gujarati at all. In Table 7 the most frequent self-ratings of Fiji- and Gujarat-born informants in the four skills are compared.

The differences between the two groups’ ratings for writing and reading are highly significant (for writing, Mann-Whitney U 126, tied Z-value -2.979 ,

Table 7: Self-evaluation of proficiency in Gujarati of the Fiji- and Gujarat-born (modes)

	SPEAKING	LISTENING	READING	WRITING
Fiji-born	4	4	0	0
Gujarat-born	4	4	4	4

tied P-value .0029; for reading Mann-Whitney U 96.5, tied Z-value -3.560 , tied P-value .0004).

As a group, the women have slightly higher ratings than the men in all skills, and of the 6 women who had only a primary education, all rate themselves as ‘very good’ in speaking and ‘listening’, and all but one in reading and writing.

3.2.3. LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRE

Informants were asked the same series of questions about Fiji Hindi, English and Fijian. Table 8 shows the informants’ responses about their own knowledge. All but two (55) report knowing Fiji Hindi, one of which claims only ‘some’ knowledge, the other none. English is claimed by 51 informants, with 3 others reporting only ‘some’ knowledge and 3 none. Those who claim no knowledge of Fiji Hindi or English or only some are all primary-educated women, and all but one were born in Gujarat. Slightly over a quarter (15) claim at least some knowledge of Fijian but only three of these give an outright positive answer.

While nearly all those who speak English started learning it in school (most in primary school, a few in pre-school), Fiji Hindi was acquired in a variety of settings, with one third each of the sample naming home, the neighbourhood, and the school playground. Over three quarters of the informants started learning Fiji Hindi before the age of 8. Half of the rest learned it as teenagers. An example of that last group is one of our young interviewees, Harsha. Her father’s first language is Gujarati and her mother’s Fiji Hindi. Harsha grew up speaking mostly English at home, and Gujarati with her father and paternal grandmother. She went to a primary school where

Table 8: Reported knowledge of other languages by respondents (number of informants)

	FIJI HINDI	ENGLISH	FIJIAN
yes	55	51	3
some	1	3	12
no	1	3	42
Total	57	57	57

she was the only Indo-Fijian, then to an all Indo-Fijian high school, where she picked up Fiji Hindi.

Given the overwhelmingly multilingual nature of this group of informants, in which nearly everyone is at least trilingual, it is interesting to compare their self-ratings in Gujarati and in the other two languages that nearly all have in their repertoire: Fiji Hindi and English. Table 9 shows the modes in each of the four skills for these three languages.

Table 9: Self-evaluation of proficiency in Gujarati, Hindi and English (modes)

	SPEAKING	LISTENING	READING	WRITING
Gujarati	4	4	0	0
Hindi*	4	4	0	0
English	4	4	4	4

*Fiji Hindi for speaking and listening, Standard Hindi for reading and writing.

As we saw in Tables 6 and 7, self-evaluation of speaking and ‘listening’ in Gujarati is high. The most frequent rating is 4, or ‘very good’, both for speaking (42 informants) and for listening (45 informants). But the modes are also 4 for these two skills in Fiji Hindi and English. Thus, as a group, the informants consider themselves highly, and equally, competent in these three languages in the oral mode.

Self-ratings in reading and writing Gujarati, as is shown above, are lower. The most frequent rating is 0 for both reading (22 informants) and writing (25 informants). But the next most frequent rating is 4 (17 informants for reading, 14 for writing), and the majority rate their competence as at least ‘fair’ (35 for reading, 32 for writing). The mode (0) is the same as for Hindi (Standard Hindi this time, since Fiji Hindi is not written). This is perhaps not surprising since, although the scripts for the two languages are different, they are both derived from Devanagari and differences are small. The modes for English, however, are 4 for both reading and writing (42 informants for each). These results are interesting for two reasons: first, they point to a specialisation of functions, with English being the primary medium for reading and writing; second, the modes for English are equal, and equally high, in all four skills.

Thus, for the group as a whole, English can be considered as the informants' 'best' language, by virtue of being the only language in which they claim a high level of competence in the written mode.

As for Fijian, of the 14 informants who report some knowledge of it, 11 are men. All 14 claim to understand spoken Fijian, and all but one to speak it (1 rated himself as 'very good', 2 as 'good', 5 as 'fair' and 5 as 'poor'). Only 4, all men, report that they can read Fijian and 3 that they can write it.

3.2.4. LANGUAGE USE

The questions on language use dealt with several domains: home, at work or school, with different interlocutors, about different topics, and for a range of functions (e.g. social, religious, for reading and writing, in the media). We will concentrate mostly on language use at home.

To an initial general question about whether Gujarati was spoken in their home, 50 of the 57 respondents said 'yes', 3 'a little' or 'sometimes', and 4 'no'. English and Fiji Hindi were also reported by over half the sample: 36 informants named English and 32 Fiji Hindi. Another 9 informants said English was spoken in their home 'occasionally' or 'rarely', while 6 gave similar answers about Fiji Hindi. Only 12 reported no use of English and 19 no use of Fiji Hindi.

More specific questions about language use at home focussed on various interlocutors. Gujarati is by far the most commonly used language with all except visitors, that is, with family members and relatives, while Fiji Hindi is reportedly used by a handful of informants, and another handful say that they code-switch between Gujarati, and Fiji Hindi and/or English (Table 10)⁷.

The use of language with children was further investigated by asking informants what they used to praise, reprimand, chat, teach, help, speak lovingly to, children. Of the 47 who answered this set of questions, 32 said they spoke Gujarati when chatting with children, for instance (Table 11). The majority of the others (8) responded with a combination of languages: 3 Gujarati and Fiji Hindi, 2 Gujarati and English, 1 Fiji Hindi and English, and 3 all three languages. Five said they spoke Fiji Hindi, 1 English. Responses to the other questions (praise, etc) were very similar. Overall, well over three quarters (85%) reported speaking at least some Gujarati to children, and slightly less than three quarters (70%) reported speaking only Gujarati.

In the section on language use at work, respondents were asked to indicate which language(s) they used the last time they spoke to a customer or a fellow worker when discussing different topics.

Table 10: Language use at home with different interlocutors (number of informants)

	GUJARATI	GUJARATI & FIJI HINDI	GUJARATI & ENGLISH	GUJARATI, FIJI HINDI & ENGLISH	FIJI HINDI	FIJI HINDI & ENGLISH	ENGLISH	NA	TOTAL
parents	50				6			1	57
spouse	30	1	2	2	5		1	16	57
siblings	43	3	2	2	7				57
kids	24	1	3	3	5		1	20	57
relatives	40	11	1		5				57
visitors	9	4	4	30	7	2	1		57

Table 11: Reported language(s) used with children

	GUJARATI	GUJARATI & FIJI HINDI	GUJARATI & ENGLISH	GUJARATI, FIJI HINDI & ENGLISH	FIJI HINDI	FIJI HINDI & ENGLISH	ENGLISH	TOTAL
chat	32	3	2	3	5	1	1	47
speak lovingly	33	3	2	2	5	1	1	47
help	31	2	2	4	4	1	3	47
teach	32	1	3	4	4	1	2	47
praise	34	1	2	3	3	2	2	47
reprimand	33	1	2	3	4	1	3	47

The major determinant of language is the interlocutor's linguistic background. With Gujarati interlocutors, at least two thirds of the 30 respondents who answered these questions report using Gujarati, and most of the others claim to use Gujarati along with English or Fiji Hindi.⁸ Topic makes little difference, except for 'technical matters', for which more respondents report using both Gujarati and English than Gujarati alone (Table 12).

Table 12: Language use at work with a Gujarati customer

	GUJARATI	GUJARATI & ENGLISH	GUJARATI & FIJI HINDI	ENGLISH	OTHER	TOTAL
private matters	26	1	2	1		30
religion	24	1	2	1	1 Std. Hindi	30
politics	23	2	2	2	1 NA	30
casual things	22	4	2	2		30
business	21	6	2	1		30
sports	20	5	2	2	1 NA	30
technical matters	10	15	2	3		30

Language choice with Gujarati fellow workers is broadly similar, with the use of Fiji Hindi alone and of code-switching between Gujarati and Fiji Hindi slightly more common (Table 13).

With Indo-Fijian customers or fellow-workers, over two thirds of the respondents report using Fiji Hindi (21 to 24, depending on the topic) and 2 or 3 English. The rest report code-switching between Fiji Hindi and English. Results are very similar no matter what the topic, with the exception of ‘technical matters’, for which more respondents report using both Fiji Hindi and English (15) than do Fiji Hindi alone (10). Again, this may in fact reflect the fairly heavy borrowing of English technical terms into Fiji Hindi rather than genuine code-switching.

The language of interaction with Fijian interlocutors is reported to be English for all respondents except the four who claim some knowledge of Fijian. These four say that they use both Fijian and English — rather than Fijian only — with Fijian customers or fellow workers, regardless of topic.

Language use in high school and at university can be summarised as follows: with other Gujaratis, most students say that they speak English with teachers but Gujarati with fellow students; Fiji Hindi and English are also used, and there is some code-switching. Fiji Hindi is used with Indo-Fijian students and English with Fijians.

Gujarati is the language of choice for community social gatherings (it is named by 49 informants), although code-switching is also reported between

Table 13: Language use at work with a Gujarati fellow worker

	GUJARATI	GUJARATI & ENGLISH	GUJARATI & FIJI HINDI	ENGLISH	FIJI HINDI	OTHER	TOTAL
private matters	22	2	2	1	1	2 NA	30
religion	22	0	2	2	2	2 NA	30
politics	16	4	4	2		2 NA, 1 E & FH, 1 all 3	30
casual things	20	2	2	2		1 NA, 1 E & FH, 2 all 3	30
business	20	3	2	4	1		30
sports	14	6	1	2	1	2 NA, 1 E & FH, 3 all 3	30
technical matters	7	11	0	5		2 NA, 1 E & FH, 4 all 3	30

Gujarati and either English (2) or Fiji Hindi (3). Three informants report using Fiji Hindi on such occasions. A large majority of informants say that they pray in Gujarati (44), while the others use either Fiji Hindi (4) or a combination of languages, including Gujarati, Fiji Hindi, Standard Hindi, Sanskrit, and English. When speaking to a temple priest, 31 report using Gujarati and 16 Fiji Hindi, while a few state that they code-switch between Gujarati and English or Fiji Hindi — or both — and a couple say they use Standard Hindi. Since Hindu temples are open to all — although some tend to be especially patronised by Gujaratis — the choice of language depends on the language background of individual priests.

As for the written mode, English is reported as the language most commonly used to write, whether a business letter, a letter to a friend or to a relative. Gujarati is more often used with relatives or friends than for business.

English is also the main language for reading. A large majority of respondents read English language newspapers (53 claim to read the *Fiji Times*, 36 the *Fiji Sun*, and 34 the *Daily Post*), but only 16 report reading the Gujarati language *Kshatriya*, including two who say they read only the sections in English.⁹ Other Gujarati language publications, such as *Chitrlekha*, do not

Table 14: Language used to write a letter

	BUSINESS	TO A FRIEND	TO A RELATIVE
English	48	46	43
Gujarati	1	8	11
Gujarati & English		3	2
NA	8		1 (phone only)
Total	57	57	57

seem widely known and are read by only a handful of informants. Similarly, only 16 informants state that they read religious literature in Gujarati, against twice as many who say they read such material in English. Only 11 claim to read novels in Gujarati. As for other languages, the Standard Hindi weekly *Shanti Dutt* is read by as many informants (16) as those who read the Gujarati paper. One informant claims to have read a Fijian weekly (*Nai Lalakai*) in the past, but no longer does so.

Only two informants have access to the Zee Gujarati satellite channel and the vast majority (43) say that they never watch Gujarati films. A few older informants mention that Gujarati films and videos used to be more widely available about twenty years ago. Most of the informants share their film viewing time between Hindi and English language movies: 49 say that they watch Hindi films at least once a week, and 46 ‘English’ films; 35 say that they watch Hindi films more than once a week and 36, ‘English’ films.

3.2.5. LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

The attitudes of the informants towards Gujarati and the three major languages of Fiji were elicited through a variety of questions. They were asked which language they considered the most beautiful, the friendliest, and the most useful; to rate the importance of being good in each language; and whether there should be more Gujarati in the media and in schools. There were also two questions about code-switching, one about how they felt when people ‘switch back and forth between languages’, the other about whether they themselves had switched between Gujarati and another language the last time they had a conversation with a Gujarati friend or relative.

Gujarati is named by a majority as both the most beautiful language (40

informants) and the friendliest (32), and English as the most useful (43). For each question, the second most named language trails the first by quite a big margin: English is chosen by 9 informants as the most beautiful language, Fiji Hindi by 10 (and English by 9) as the friendliest, and Gujarati by 3 as the most useful. The rest of the informants name various combinations of languages (Fijian is named by a few), including one enthusiast who answers each question by ‘all’. Gujarati then is associated for most speakers, as their mother-tongue, with affective values and solidarity, and English with power and status, as many studies since the 1970s have shown often to be the case in multilingual societies (Bourhis and Lambert 1975, Carranza and Ryan 1975).

Informants could rate the importance of competence in these languages as ‘very important’, ‘important’ or ‘not important’ (Table 12). Nearly all informants consider that it is important — at least — to be good in Gujarati, English and Fiji Hindi. Indeed, English and Gujarati are considered ‘very important’ by large majorities (53 and 43 respectively), while Fiji Hindi is rated by a majority as ‘important’ (33) and a large minority (20) as ‘very important’. Fijian does not fare as well, but a little over a quarter of the informants do consider it at least ‘important’. One informant takes the position that ‘it depends on the environment you are in’, and gives his answer as ‘important or not important’ to every question except the one on English.

Table 15: How important is it to be good in...?

	GUJARATI	ENGLISH	FIJI HINDI	FIJIAN
very important	43	53	20	7
important	11	4	33	8
not important	2		3	39
other	1		1	1
Total	57	57	57	57

Nearly everyone (51) would welcome more Gujarati in the media (4 say ‘no’ and 2 are undecided). Almost as many think that the language should be promoted more in schools (48, while the other 9 do not). One informant adds

that Gujarati should not be mandatory, however, and another that Fijian and Hindi should also be promoted.

As for code-switching, the informants seem largely tolerant of it. Most think that it is 'ok' (39) or even 'good' (5), and only 10 think it is 'bad'. Most informants also report code-switching during their last conversation with a fellow Gujarati (21 responded 'not a lot', 15 'quite a lot', and 9 'all the time'). Only 9 said they did not (and data are missing on 3 informants for both questions on code-switching).

Two questions were aimed at the issue of identity. All informants declared that they considered themselves Gujarati. But answers to the question 'do you have to speak Gujarati to be Gujarati?' were split almost down the middle (27 'yes', 30 'no'). There is no significant correlation between the answers to this question and any major social variable (sex, age, birthplace, education or occupation). However, those who answered 'no' include the only informant who claims no knowledge at all of the language, and all four informants who have one non-Gujarati parent. In a follow-up interview, one of these informants added that his sisters do also consider themselves Gujarati, even though they speak far less Gujarati than he does. As for the non-Gujarati speaker, he answered the previous question, on whether he considered himself a Gujarati, with an emphatic 'very much so'. Another informant took the view that 'anybody can speak any language'.

4. Discussion

The findings of this small, exploratory, survey must be interpreted with caution. We have stressed that the sample is one of convenience and the results merely indicative. At the same time, we have shown that the sample shares some important characteristics with the Gujarati population in Fiji. If the informants' self-reporting is reliable and the sample turns out to be reasonably representative, the results of the survey indicate that the Gujarati language seems to be in a fairly healthy state. Nearly everyone in the sample can and does speak it and it is transmitted to children, even in households where one parent is not a Gujarati speaker (but we know of such households where Gujarati is not transmitted). Although literacy in Gujarati is not as widespread, most informants claim at least a fair level of competence. Within the community — it seems that only a few young non-Gujarati pick up some of the language from their Gujarati friends¹⁰ — the language seems to enjoy a

high degree of vitality, and this in the absence of any substantial organised effort at maintenance, with one exception.

The only domain where a conscious attempt is made at supporting Gujarati is in education. The Gujarat Education Society runs a few schools, which are open to everyone but attended by a large proportion of Gujarati children. At present Nehru Memorial Primary School, in Suva, is the only school where Gujarati is taught as a subject. Classes are held after normal hours and are not compulsory. The language, including writing, is taught at a basic level, in two separate grades, but is not examined and there is not even a prescribed syllabus. In 2003, according to the Society, 112 Gujarati students, and a handful of other Indo-Fijians, were enrolled in these language classes. The Society is currently planning to open pre-schools.¹¹

The relative strength of Gujarati in Fiji is in sharp contrast with the decline of other minority Indian languages, in particular the Dravidian languages brought to Fiji by the South Indian indentured labourers. While the number of Gujarati speaking households in 1966 increased over the previous census (see 2.3), the South Indian languages all suffered losses: 33.3% for Tamil, 62.2% for Telugu, and 64.9% for Malayalam (Siegel 1987: 205, Mugler 2001: 24). A survey conducted in 1993 among nearly 500 descendants of South Indians documented a continuing loss of speakers for all three languages, with only 34% of the sample reporting some knowledge of Tamil, 11% of Telugu, and less than 5% of Malayalam (Mugler 2001: 27). Knowledge of a Dravidian language is strongly correlated with age, with few young speakers able to speak the language of their ancestors. Although in many cases the home is the only domain where the Dravidian languages survive at all, a number of informants who can speak one of them, particularly among the old, do not use it even in their own home because they are the only ones left in the household with a knowledge of their ancestral language. The community has largely shifted over to Fiji Hindi, which has become the native language of most, and among those who still have a Dravidian language as their mother tongue, nearly all report more frequent use of and greater proficiency in Fiji Hindi (Mugler 2001: 29, 35). The Dravidian languages also show signs of structural attrition typical of languages under threat. This is in spite of overwhelmingly positive stated attitudes and of efforts at maintenance through the teaching of Tamil and Telugu by the major South Indian social and cultural organisation, the Then India Sanmarga Ikya (or T.I.S.I.) Sangam (Mugler 2001: 35-37).

The difference between the fate of Gujarati and that of the South Indian languages in Fiji can be attributed to the communities' very different histories.

The South Indians who came to Fiji were almost all indentured labourers. They started arriving nearly a quarter of a century after the *girmitiyas* from North India, and from the start they were a minority, with the total number of South Indians accounting for slightly less than a quarter of all *girmitiyas* over the indenture period. By the time they arrived, the koiné which had started to develop out of the Northerners' various dialects of Hindi and Hindustani had become well established as the lingua franca on plantations and although some arrangements were made to have Tamil and Telugu interpreters, there was a tacit policy of encouraging the use of Hindi (Siegel 1987: 204), and the new arrivals scattered on the various work sites had to learn the lingua franca. Thus conditions were set for a drastic reduction of domains, to the point where the South Indian languages were quickly reduced to what Pillai calls 'domestic languages' (1971: 3).

For the *girmitiyas*, whether from the North or South, the bonds with India were broken by the experience of indenture. By contrast, the Gujaratis, as free migrants, kept strong ties with their homeland. Once the first migrants succeeded in establishing themselves in Fiji, others followed through a process of chain migration based on kin and caste. Married men soon brought their families, and those who were single went back to Gujarat to find brides (Gillion 1962: 134, Prasad 1978: 242-244), as some still do. Later on families would also take their daughters to India to be married (Amratlal 1975: 25). Since the migrants were mostly traders, trading links were also maintained with frequent visits to India (Prasad 1987: 232).

The Gujarati community in Fiji has always been tight-knit, and in the early decades of settlement, the Gujaratis were even physically isolated from the indentured labourers, especially in Suva (Prasad 1978: 287). Gillion (1962: 146) agrees that they 'kept to themselves' (see also Prasad 1978: 178, 229). Indeed, Gujaratis consider themselves a separate cultural group (Mayer 1973: 46) and 'perceive themselves as distinct from other Indians' (Ali 1979: 83). While outsiders generally classify everyone whose roots are in the sub-continent as an 'Indian' (as do the Fiji censuses, for instance), in Fiji the Gujaratis normally identify themselves as 'Gujarati', not as 'Indians' (or 'Indo-Fijians') and are identified as such by 'Indians'. This labelling appears in some of the literature. For instance, Amratlal (1975: 25), writing about a Gujarati girl who refused to go to India to be married, recounts that as a result she 'eloped with an Indian boy', and adds: 'She said she was happy and did not mind giving up Gujarati ways and taking up the Indian way of life.' Similarly, the introduction to the book states: 'Education is perhaps the biggest

contributing factor to the relatively greater freedom of choice for Indian and Gujarati women' (Amratlal 1975: iii).

The Gujaratis' involvement and success in business in Fiji, which caused both admiration and resentment, also set them apart, and they continue to tend to opt for occupations which do not involve selling their labour (Kelly 1992). But one of most important sources of cohesion in the community has been caste. Indeed, Chauhan (1988: 8) argues that the Gujarati Hindus, all conservative *Sanatanis*, are the only Hindus in Fiji to have retained caste practices. For the *girmitiyas*, the mixing of people in the depots in India and on the ships, and the crossing of the ocean itself (the *kala pani* or 'black water') involved the breaking of commensality and other restrictions on contact across caste boundaries, which led to the disintegration of caste (Jayawardena 1971). Prasad (1978: 232) observes that Gujarat has always been considered 'pre-eminently a land of castes', which explains why 'Gujaratis have persistently shown a high level of caste consciousness'. As among Gujarati migrants elsewhere (e.g. East and Southern Africa), 'it was more important for them to be regarded as members of a particular *jati* than to be 'either a Hindu or a Muslim or even a member of the Indian community' (Prasad 1978: 238).

The retention (rather than 'reformation', see Grieco 1998) of caste expresses itself through a strong attachment to and pride in *desh*, the homeland, and strict observance of ritual (Prasad 1978: 280). It continues to manifest itself in Fiji through some of the ritual occasions on which members of the community meet, particularly weddings or funerals. Indeed, whereas Gujarati-wide associations in Fiji are few — besides the Gujarati Education Society, there is a Fiji Gujarati Sports Association — Gujarati caste-based associations are common. One is the *Shree Fiji Kshatriya Mochi Gnati Samaj*, or Mochi community association. Membership is open to anyone over 21 whose father or any 'earlier male progenitors in the male line is or was of the Mochi community known in the Southern part of the Gujarat State of India' (Mochi Community Directory 2002: 13). Non-Mochi women over 21 who are lawfully married to a Mochi man and normally residing with him can also join.¹² The *Samaj* organises cultural activities, and has a 'women's wing' (the Mahila Mandal) and a youth group.

According to the Directory, most of the first migrants came from Surat and Bardoli districts in Gujarat. The most common places of origin identified among the 137 households of current members listed are Buhari (named by 17 families) and Bansda (16), followed by Maroli (12) and Chhapra (11), then

Vyara and Moldhara (8 each).¹³ In Fiji, Mochi can be found in nearly all the cities and towns: Suva, Lautoka, Nausori, Nadi, Ba, Labasa, Tavua, Rakiraki, Sigatoka, Navua, and Levuka.

The first Mochi immigrants to Fiji were poor cobblers of rural background who went door to door to repair shoes, but the community has diversified since. While many families are still in the footwear business, others are in other types of commerce or finance, or in the professions. Pride in educational achievement is reflected in a list of over 30 'academic achievers', most of whom have recently graduated from tertiary institutions in Fiji or abroad.¹⁴ Interestingly, the directory is in English, with only the name of the organisation and a traditional saying about education in Gujarati, both in the Roman script.¹⁵

If the Gujaratis, primary social networks in Fiji are based on caste then, caste in turn transcends geography and reaches far beyond the links between Fiji and Gujarat, out to a worldwide diaspora. The Mochi directory, for instance, includes a list of Mochi organisations abroad — not only in India, but also in New Zealand, Canada, USA, UK, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. An even more intriguing — to an outsider — document is a locally published worldwide telephone directory for another Gujarati caste, the Kaachia (*Kaachia worldwide telephone directory*, 1996). The Gujarati diaspora is incarnated in many families in Fiji, such as that of one of our interviewees, Neelam, who has relatives in South Africa, Great Britain, the USA, Canada, India, and Switzerland.

Migration, for the Gujarati, is nothing new. Thanks to its location, Western India has always been oriented towards the outside world and it has a long history of contact with distant lands. Traders from Gujarat are recorded as having been in East Africa since the end of the first century AD (Gregory 1971: 9) and the 19th century provided the conditions for another thrust of the migration movement, particularly to the British colonies with plantation economies dependent on Indian indentured labour (e.g. South Africa, Mauritius, Trinidad). Migration continues and the ties that bind the Gujarati diaspora are probably stronger than ever, with the greater ease of travel and communication — as is the case indeed for other, perhaps more recent, diasporas.¹⁶

5. Conclusion

Gujarati in Fiji is a minority language with a history of successful maintenance. In spite of a very small number of speakers, it has great vitality. Language shift seems nearly entirely limited to the descendants of 'mixed' marriages with non-Gujarati speakers, although even in those cases, the children often acquire the language from the Gujarati side of the family and it is only the next generation that is in danger of losing it. This small loss has in any case been compensated so far by a steady trickle of new arrivals. The common history of Gujarati speakers as free migrants, the retention of strong links with the ancestral homeland and diasporic communities, the maintenance of tight-knit business and kinship networks have all contributed to the continued vitality of the language. Literacy in Gujarati is less widespread than oral-aural skills and literacy levels may be falling off among the young Fiji-born. But we have little information about the levels of literacy in Gujarati among the original settlers and it may be that historically levels have fluctuated rather than suffered a steady decline.

What is clear is that, as the community has become multilingual, English has become for many the specialised language of literacy. This is not surprising given the dominance of English in the print media and the increasingly higher levels of education, which in Fiji essentially means education through English. At the same time, formal education is not the source of most of the multilingual skills of Gujaratis, who typically have acquired a knowledge of at least one, sometimes both, of the mother-tongues of the two major population groups, Fiji Hindi and Fijian, through interaction on the school playground, in the neighbourhood or in the shop. Thus Fiji's Gujaratis have made the most of both 'élite' and 'grassroots' multilingualism, in the terminology used by Khubchandani (1983, 1997) in the Indian context — a conceptual framework also well suited to the linguistic diversity in Fiji.

The successful maintenance of Gujarati among migrants is not exclusive to Fiji (see, e.g. Shridhar 1992, about the USA, Roberts 1999, about New Zealand), yet the context is distinctive. The contrast between the survival of Gujarati and the demise of Dravidian languages — both cases involving not only minority languages but what could be considered minorities within a minority (i.e. 'Indians') — helps bring into relief the importance of the integrity of communities. Many questions remain and this small exploratory study is only a start. A much larger survey of language use and attitudes in Fiji is planned for 2005, which will aim to replicate the 1993 study and will

provide some longitudinal data. On the other hand, a micro study of the kind advocated by Holmes (1997) would be useful for a finer sociolinguistic description. In addition, a study of the language itself — perceived by many of its speakers as being a ‘Fiji Gujarati’ different from the language of their ancestral homeland — would be of great interest, particularly in the context of the study of transplanted languages and languages in contact. Internal variation within this ‘Fiji Gujarati’ is also intriguing, particularly as it seems to be perceived as corresponding to ‘community’ or ‘caste’ distinctions, and the existence of dense and multiplex networks such as the Mochi community makes this quite plausible. Given that the very existence of Indian ‘caste dialects’ has always been extremely controversial, the study of Gujarati in Fiji is full of promise.

Notes

- 1 We thank the respondents who kindly agreed to participate in the survey and the research assistants who helped administer the questionnaires and conduct the interviews: Rajiv Gandhi, Sandhya Rai and Smita Singh. We are also grateful to Jawarlal Bhai, of the Gujarat Education Society and Mahatma Gandhi Memorial primary school, and Mr Naidu and Mrs Nandani Solanki, of Nehru Memorial primary school. Thanks also to Conway Pene, Frances Pene, Robin Taylor, and the two anonymous reviewers.
- 2 *Rabe* is often misspelt *Rabi*.
- 3 The term *girmitya*, ‘indentured labourer’, is derived from Hindustani *girmit*, itself from English ‘agreement’. *Girmit* initially denoted the labourer’s contract, but has come to refer to both the historical period and the experience of indenture.
- 4 In Fiji, ‘Fijian’ always denotes an indigenous person and ‘Fiji-Indian’ or ‘Indo-Fijian’ a person of Indian ancestry. The general term for any citizen of the country is ‘Fiji Islander’, introduced in the 1997 Constitution and replacing the previous ‘Fiji citizen’.
- 5 The total which appears in Zwart’s table is 930, but it should be 932, as shown in our Table 2.
- 6 All informants’ names mentioned in the paper are pseudonyms.
- 7 Answers which indicate the use of more than one language and seem to point to code-switching (or –mixing) must be interpreted with caution, as informants tend to talk about ‘mixing’ languages when referring also to the use of borrowings.
- 8 Besides the 26 informants in paid employment, 4 retirees chose to answer the questions on language at work, describing their behaviour when they were working.
- 9 One informant had never heard of *Kshatriya*.
- 10 One example is a non-Gujarati Indo-Fijian colleague at the University of the South Pacific, Sanjita, who speaks fluent Gujarati. She started learning it when

she was about 8 years old, from a family who had recently migrated from Gujarat and settled next door. The family only spoke Gujarati and Sanjita picked up the language from the children and their mother. She recounts how the mother used to ask all the kids to prepare *rotis*, (flat unleavened bread) before they were allowed to go out and play. Her playmates used to prepare the dough and Sanjita would cook the *rotis*, so she ended up spending quite a bit of time with the mother. Although the Gujarati children soon started picking up Fiji Hindi, their mother did not, as she tended to stay home. Sanjita, now in her early fifties, has continued to be very close to her Gujarati neighbours, whom she considers her adopted family. An almost identical case is related by one of our young Gujarati interviewees, Harsha, a university student whose best friend, a non-Gujarati Indo-Fijian and native speaker of Fiji Hindi, learned Gujarati from her next-door neighbours and has remained close to them even now that she is married and has moved away. Harsha knows only of these two cases of non-Gujarati learning Gujarati, however.

- 11 Classes in Gujarati are also offered at one of the Hindu temples frequented by many Gujaratis, the Laxmi Narayan temple in Suva.
- 12 Patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence result in an asymmetry in the status and identity of males and females. Although women who marry out of their caste are still considered members of that caste, their children are not, unlike the children of men who marry out of their caste. This asymmetry is reflected in the organisation of the Mochi directory, where non-Mochi women and their children are included in the main listing, under the name of the male (Mochi) head of the household, while the Mochi women who have married non-Mochi (whether Gujarati or non-Gujarati) men are relegated to a separate list ('Other Females from the Community'). One of our interviewees, Rekha, has a Gujarati father and a non-Gujarati mother. Her father keeps reminding her that she has to marry a Mochi, otherwise she will 'lose it'. She gets angry and accuses her father of hypocrisy since, after all, he married a non-Mochi, so why can't she? But he argues that 'it's not the same', and that while her brother can marry anyone he wants because he will bring his wife into the community, the only way she can continue to be a Mochi is by marrying a Mochi.
- 13 The total number of Gujarat locations listed is 25. Two families identify their origin outside of Gujarat, both in Africa (Zambia and Zimbabwe). One family's place of origin is not mentioned. Places of origin in Gujarat named for 3 households or more include Gandavi, Kadod, Sadadvel, Bilimora, Supakurel, Khojparadi, Ethan, Navsari, Mandvi, Jamania, Surat, and Karkachha.
- 14 Over half the graduates listed studied at a local institution, the majority of them at the University of the South Pacific, a few at the Fiji School of Medicine, and one at the Fiji Institute of Technology. Most of the others obtained their qualifications from institutions in New Zealand or Australia, two from India, and one from Canada. Many of these qualifications are in management, finance, computing science and information technology, but others reflect a range of

- interests: engineering, chemistry, pharmacy, architecture, tourism, a pilot licence, and an honours degree in 'Art, Design and Creativity'.
- 15 The only public context in which the Gujarati script seems to appear is the occasional prayer or ritual formula in some of the death announcements of members of the community in the English language newspapers.
- 16 There are now secondary migrations of Gujaratis from Fiji to other island nations of the Pacific, for example Tonga (Pale 1981: 76, 81-83).

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