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Managing Bilingual Interaction in a Gujarati Complementary School in Leicester

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This paper focuses on teacher–student interaction in two Gujarati complementary school classrooms in one school in the East Midlands city of Leicester, UK. To date, little work has been published on interaction in complementary schools, and little is therefore known about the cultures of learning and teaching in such contexts. Our study of complementary schools in Leicester has shown how the classroom participants manage bilingualism and bilingual learning and teaching. One of the most noticeable features of the discourses of the two classrooms is the way two languages are juxtaposed to create learning opportunities. This uncontested use of two languages through the pedagogic strategy of code-switching goes against the perceived notion of bilingual learning/teaching as being a deficient strategy. Classrooms in complementary schools offer a highly significant, though under-researched, context in which to study language choice, and specifically the multilingual experiences of classroom participants. By exploring the educational pedagogies and classroom discourses, it is the aim of the paper to extend theoretical insights into the way complementary schools might help to transform, negotiate and manage the linguistic, social and learning identities of the participants in the classroom.

Keywords: bilingual learning, code-switching, Leicester, Gujarati

Introduction

This paper focuses on the management of bilingualism in a particular complementary school context. We have chosen to use the term 'complementary' to describe these schools rather than the term more commonly used, 'supplementary'. The reason for this is that we wish to emphasise 'complementarity' in these schools, and move away from the notion that the main function of such schools is to 'supplement' something, as a type of 'add on', that already exists. In focusing specifically on Gujarati, and how it is taught and learnt in these schools, there is another justification for using the term 'complementary'. It is our view that the bilingual interaction found in these schools, particularly the way that the participants spontaneously and purposely juxtapose Gujarati and English in order to create learning/teaching opportunities offers a useful example of 'bilin-

gual complementarity' at work. By this we mean the way that the two languages are used together in the classrooms, and how this plays an important part in the negotiation and management of the linguistic, social and learning identities of the classroom participants. Complementary school classrooms provide a highly significant, though under-researched, context in which to explore language behaviour, including the multilingual experiences of classroom participants, as well as identity performance (Creese *et al.*, this volume). Complementary schools provide a unique opportunity for the exploration of minority ethnic identity formations where ethnicity may not be the most salient or visible attribute.

The first part of the paper reviews the literature on complementary schools with particular emphasis on how such schools 'manage' language learning. A major issue here is the learning of the 'mother tongue', which is, paradoxically, in many cases, a second language for the students (Arthur, 2003; Pak, 2003). Following the review of the literature, some background information about what we have called Mount Hill Complementary School is provided. The third part of the study, following on from the discussion in the second part, investigates the interactional cultures of learning and teaching in two classrooms in Mount Hill Complementary School, focusing particularly on the bilingual interactional strategies in two classrooms. In the final part of the paper, discussion is brought together to explore how the participants in these classrooms manage bilingualism and bilingual learning and teaching, with reference to the views of the administrator, teachers, parents and students involved in the school. These views provide an important element to the discussion as they consider significant issues such as migration histories, use of Gujarati in the community, reasons for learning Gujarati, and ways of teaching Gujarati.

Managing Learning in Complementary Schools

The literature on complementary schools is relatively scarce, especially compared to the available literature on mainstream education. Several early studies in Britain (McLean, 1985; Tomlinson, 1984) outline the origins and history of 'supplementary' schooling, making particular reference to the 'challenges' they provide to state education. Later studies in Britain, such as Baumann (1996) and Gregory (1996), and in North America (Heller, 1999; Norton, 2000; Zentella, 1997), have demonstrated crucial connections between minority communities and their languages, cultures, religions, literacy practices and identities. Recent work by Kenner (2000, 2004) and Sneddon (2000) has shown how children from minority ethnic communities benefit from their bilingualism. Abdelrazak (2001) Kempadoo and Abdelrazak (1999) provide quantitative information and guidelines on improving 'supplementary schools'. However, there are only a very small number of studies that provide an inside view of complementary schools, and particularly on their educational agendas and on qualitative, ethnographic and discourse analytic aspects of these schools, and specifically the learning and teaching in them. In particular, complementary schools remain relatively unexamined for the interaction and learning processes which are probably at the heart of sustaining community languages and developing identities through socialisation practices.

Exceptions to this dearth of research are the studies by Li Wei (1993) on mother tongue maintenance in a Chinese community school in Newcastle upon Tyne; Khan and Kabir's (1999) study on mother tongue education among Bangladeshi children in Swansea; Arthur's (2003) case study of Somali literacy teaching in Liverpool; and Wu's (2001) doctoral research on learning Chinese as a community language in Chinese schools in the UK (see also Wu, this volume).

The major focus in Li Wei's (1993) study is the issue of Chinese language maintenance among young ethnic Chinese in Newcastle, and the way in which ability to use Chinese among this generation is closely linked to the language ability of parents, and the parents' and children's social networks. Li Wei makes reference to the goal of the community schools where Chinese is taught, that is, 'to maintain their mother tongue and to contain and even reverse the language shift taking place in the community' (Li Wei, 1993: 211). He makes reference to the 'generation gap' (including 'language behaviour' and 'social attitude') which has caused 'serious anxiety amongst the Chinese'. It is the very insistence of some parents that their children use their mother tongue all the time that is causing children to turn their backs on the language. Emerging from Li Wei's study is the need to ensure that both the English language skills of the older generation, and Chinese language skills of the younger generation are taken into account, and the main conduit for the latter are the Chinese schools. He cites Fishman's (1991: 4) notion that in order to reverse language shift, it needs to be 'accomplished at the intimate family and local community levels'.

In another study of learning in Chinese community schools, Wu (2001) claims that such schools focus on more than simply learning the heritage language and culture, in order to maintain the language and cultural knowledge of second generation Chinese in Britain. Her study explores what she refers to as the 'distinctive cultures of teaching and learning' in such schools (Wu, 2001: i), with particular reference to Cortazzi and Jin's (1996) notion of 'cultures of learning' in schools in China. The study, which provides a holistic view of the cultures of teaching and learning, includes a discussion of the learning strategies employed by the students in the schools. The particular elements which are influential in developing the particular classroom cultures include 'classroom activities, the highly varied, mixed-age/ability nature of classroom members, the students' language learning strategies, the texts and textbooks used in the classrooms, [and] the teacher-student relationship and the school settings' (Wu, 2001: 311). In the conclusion to her study, Wu notes how 'British and Chinese cultures contribute to the construction of the [community school] classroom culture', for example, in the more active participation than in traditional Chinese classrooms, and attributes this to the students' British educational environment. A major factor in the study is the 'powerful influence of the written language' (the discussion in Li Wei, 1993; Wu, this volume).

Arthur's (2003) ethnographic study of the Somali community focuses on language and literacy among Somali speakers, a minority group in Liverpool. The study was based around a 10-week *Baro Afkaaga Hooyo* ('learn your language/mother tongue') course in a disused primary school. Arthur explores the bilingual language practices in the group, which consisted of ten 11–12 year old girls, demonstrating what these practices reveal about bilingualism among

the group. The paper discusses the role of Somali literacy and its potential significance for developing cultural and linguistic identity. Arthur's study provides extracts from the spoken discourse during the course. This discourse illustrates a form of asymmetrical language use, with the teachers mainly using Somali, and the students using English. Making reference to the work of Nussbaum (1990), Arthur notes how switches from Somali to English are 'self-facilitative' in that they allow for the speakers' continued participation in the discourse. There are commonalities here with the discourse observed in the Gujarati classes in this study.

Khan and Kabir (1999) report on a study based on their personal experience of teaching Bengali to Bangladeshi children in Swansea in what they refer to as 'extra-curricular' classes. Like some of the other studies referred to above, it provides an inside account of the classroom and, at the same time, provides insights into the 'perspectives and attitudes of the students, teachers and parents towards mother-tongue education' (Khan & Kabir, 1999: 20). As well as pointing to issues such as problems with funding, Khan and Kabir highlight issues to do with the syllabus, textbooks, as well as the 'values and perceptions' of the students, parents and teachers (Khan & Kabir, 1999: 25). Khan and Kabir found that the reasons for parents wanting their children to learn Bengali was linked to their desire to return to their motherland.

While not focusing solely on complementary schools, the work of Kenner is significant to this study in that it considers children's bilingual script learning. In a case study of a four-year-old child learning both Gujarati and English, Kenner demonstrates the active combination of the two languages by the child in order to enhance her literacy learning (Kenner, 2000). She goes on to discuss how this child's biliteracy development is constrained by the fact that the monolingual school system gives little, if any, status to literacies other than English. In a separate study of six-year-olds in London who were learning to write Chinese, Arabic or Spanish (in complementary schools, referred to in the study as Saturday schools), Kenner (2004: 44) refers to the way children 'experience their worlds not as separate linguistic and cultural entities but as "simultaneous" [and how they] consequently tend to integrate and synthesise their linguistic resources'. Kenner notes how the English education system and, indeed, wider society, tends to keep children's worlds separate, with different codes for each separate context. As we discuss in the final section of this paper, complementary schools are an important site where the 'different worlds' of the children can be brought together, and different languages can be juxtaposed, not only to create learning opportunities, but to signal and construct identities.

The theme of juxtaposition of languages in the classroom in order to accomplish teaching and learning is a major issue in this study. This will be clear from the discussion of the interactional discourse in the two classrooms in the study. There is an increasing amount of literature on 'bilingual encounters' (Martin, 2003) in classrooms, particularly in post-colonial contexts. Space does not allow an in-depth study of this literature, but brief reviews can be found in Martin (1999) and Ferguson (2003). Of potential great interest are the commonalities and differences between the discourses in complementary classroom contexts and those in other classroom contexts around the world.

Mount Hill Complementary School, Leicester

Mount Hill School is in a ward of Leicester city in which 82.5% of the residents belong to an ethnic minority group (Leicestershire County Council, 1991: 9–10). Languages spoken in this ward include Panjabi, Urdu, Gujarati and English. The school, which teaches Gujarati, convenes on one weekday evening a week, from 18:00 to 20:00 in the large, old Mount Hill Primary School and Community Centre building. The number of registered students at the complementary school is 90. A considerable number of students who attend the weekly evening lessons are also students in the mainstream school in the same building. The space provided for these evening classes consists of a large hall (where the assembly is held), and several classrooms, which radiate off from the hall. The principal administrator/ head teacher is provided with a table at one end of the hall, and some lockable cupboards in which to store school materials. She is also provided with a walkie-talkie to help her and her assistant to keep in touch with the school porters.

It is important to emphasise that the complementary school does not have premises of its own. Rather, it relies on space provided by the mainstream school for two hours every week. The notion of 'borrowed space' is one that emerges in discussions with key players in the school, and is discussed in greater detail in a separate study (Martin *et al.*, in prep). One feature of this mainstream school which loans accommodation to the complementary school is the multilingual nature of the signage on the premises. As one enters the playground there are hopscotch markings laid out in Urdu, Panjabi and Gujarati, and in Roman numerals. Many of the notices on the doors are also in these languages and there are posters such as 'We all smile in the same language' around the school premises. Around the hall there are posters and displays promoting multiculturalism. This expression of multilingualism and multiculturalism, however, was not as apparent in the displays inside the classrooms of the (mainstream) school, which on the whole, projects literacy only in English. The teachers in the complementary school do have their own resources but, as one of the teachers in the school noted when interviewed, 'we can't display our resources anywhere . . . we can do it [but then] we take it off again'. The issue, then, of 'borrowed space', is very real in this school.

Visits were made to the school over a period of five months in early 2003. The research team consisted of four members, two of whom were literate in Gujarati. All four members of the team engaged in semi-participant observation of assemblies and classrooms, as well as a staff meeting, a Prize Giving Evening, and other school events (such as a sponsored walk and a literary event in the city). Fieldnotes were made following the visits, and documents pertaining to school life were collected (lesson plan 'notes and thoughts', exam papers, letters about extramural visits, minutes of AGM and PTA). As part of these observations some lessons were audio-recorded. Permission was obtained from the head teacher to approach teachers to seek their consent. Letters were also sent out to parents seeking their permission. The teacher and participants in the classroom were thus fully aware of which lessons were being recorded. Additionally, a short questionnaire was given to parents of students in the school, and interviews were held with the school administrator, parents, teachers and students.

In Mount Hill School there were seven mixed-age classes, as well as a computer class. Several visits were made to all these classrooms to observe teaching and learning in progress. This paper, however, only focuses on two classrooms, one at second year level, designated Class A in this study, and one at GSCE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) level, designated Class B.

Class A consisted of 22 students (10 female and 12 male) aged from 7 to 11. On two visits to this classroom, a mother of one of the boys was also present in order to learn Gujarati. On another visit to the classroom there were a number of student helpers. However, during the lesson that is discussed in this paper, there were only 22 students, aged from 7 to 11, in the classroom. The teacher in Class A was Mrs Solanki (all names provided are pseudonyms). Mrs Solanki has been teaching Gujarati in England for the best part of 16 years. As well as teaching in Mount Hill Complementary School, she also teaches in other complementary schools and is head teacher in one of them.

The second class discussed in this paper is Class B, a GCSE class consisting of eight students (three female and five male) of ages 11–14, that is, well below the usual GCSE age in England. The teacher was Mr Patel. He taught Gujarati in government schools in Kenya from 1974 to 1982, and has been teaching Gujarati in England since 1989, in several schools, including as head teacher / administrator in a complementary school with 400 students.

Both the teachers in Classes A and B were interviewed, as were a mixed group of students. In addition, one lesson in each classroom was audio-recorded, and detailed fieldnotes were taken. The analysis of the two lessons was based on the audio-recordings and the fieldnotes. These lessons offer a useful contrast as they are at different levels and, as will be noted from the extracts provided in the next section, the classroom participants in both contexts use different linguistic, discursive and pedagogic strategies in order to accomplish the lessons. In Mrs Solanki's class, in the early part of the lesson, emphasis was placed on writing and heavy reliance was placed on English. In Mr Patel's GCSE class more Gujarati was used.

Cultures of learning and teaching in two classrooms in Mount Hill Complementary School

A number of points can be made immediately about the discourse, and the cultures of learning and teaching in the two classrooms. Firstly, both classrooms largely follow the traditional 'default' pattern of classroom discourse in which the teacher initiates, the students respond and the teacher evaluates or provides feedback (Cazden, 1988; Van Lier, 1996). Within this exchange framework, in both classrooms there is an asymmetrical, non-reciprocal type of language use (as noted above, observed by Arthur [2003] in her study of Somali learning in Liverpool). That is, the teacher often initiates in Gujarati and the students respond in English. This was actually noted throughout the different classrooms in the school. A switch from a teacher's initiation in Gujarati to a student's response in English is perhaps one of the most common features in the classrooms. This is not surprising, of course, given that in most cases, English is the students' first language. Again, it is not surprising to note that in Classroom A (in which the students are in the second year of learning Gujarati), English is used to

a greater extent (apart from in drilling exercises) than in the classroom in which the students are studying for GCSE (Classroom B).

The first three extracts below illustrate how the discourse of the two classrooms revolves around the Initiation-Response-Evaluation/Feedback exchange structure. What is of particular interest here is that language switches occur, not just within participant turns but across participant turns.

Extract 1: (Classroom A)

T: OK everybody concentrate on the next line . . . **shu laikhu chhe**? < *what is written*? >
S: **malam** . **malam** < *ointment* >
T: what does it mean **malam ghus**? < *rub ointment* >
S: ointment . rub ointment
T: copy that on your handwriting sheet . that's fine . copy in your book

Extract 2: (Classroom A)

T: right . read this word . **sh** . **r** . **d** . altogether . **Sharad** [boy's name]
S: [reading] . **p** . **g**
T: right . Rupesh
S: [Tries to read] **Sharad pug pur ghus** < *Sharad rub on foot [leg]* >
T: say **Sharad pug pur ghus** . you all know what the words mean . don't you? you know Sharad is a boy's name . **pug** < *foot* > is what? **pug** means . and **ghus** < *rub* > means?
S: rub
T: yes . so how would you put it?

In the first two extracts taken from the Classroom A lesson in which the teacher is focusing on some chalkboard work, with emphasis on writing and pronunciation, the teacher provides a Gujarati term and students provide an English gloss for the term, which has been singled out by the teacher. In Extract 1, a student provides the gloss 'rub ointment' for the term **malam ghus**, whereas in Extract 2, a translation for the single term **ghus** is provided.

In the next extract, from Classroom B, the teacher and students are going through a letter, written in Gujarati, and the teacher is annotating the letter content with the help of the students. It is noted that, in comparison with the lesson in Classroom A, more Gujarati is used in this lesson. However, as in the extracts above, the use of language is asymmetrical and mainly non-reciprocal. In this lesson, as in the others, the classroom participants negotiate the interaction bilingually, through a 'bilingual label quest' type of discourse, where the teacher requests students to provide a label in English. The notion of 'label quests' where the teacher elicits 'labels' from students comes from Heath (1986). In these classrooms, though, and in a range of other classrooms in different multilingual contexts, such label quests are often accomplished bilingually, a feature of bilingual classrooms discussed further in Martin (2003) and Arthur and Martin (in prep.).

<u>Extract 3</u>: (Classroom B)

T: very good . OK . **kem chhe** .. < *how are you* > **etle kyare pun apne** letter writ-
         ing **kariye to** formal . < *it means when we do* letter writing *we have to write*
         formal > **kem chho . ahi badhani tabiyat barabar chhe . etle shun**? < *how
         are you . everybody is well here . what does that mean?* >
S: [attempts to answer]
T: **badha .. ena pachhi je wakya chhe te . natakma bhag lidho hato tena
         wishe wanchine anand thayo .. etle shu?** < *all .. now the next sentence . was
         happy to read about (you) taking part in a play .. what does that mean?* >
S: took part in a play
T: play . **natak etle?** < *what does play mean?* >
S: play
T: play . **bijo kayo shabda hashey** < *what is another word for play?* >
S: drama
T: drama . **dramama bhag lidho hato** . < *took part in a drama* > **Yusufne kagal
         lakhey chhe . kon kagal lakhey chhe aa? Yusufne kon kagal lakhey chhe .
         Aakash?** < *writing a letter to Yusuf . who's writing it? Who is writing to Yusuf?* >
         . **Aakash**?
S: . . . Kamal
T: Kamal . **saras** < *good* > . good . excellent . **Kamal Yusufne kagal lakhey chhe**
         < *Kamal is writing to Yusuf* > . OK . Tushar **bijo** < *second* > paragraph

Extract 3 illustrates how the teacher, with the help of the students, unpacks the meaning of the written word, in this case a letter written in Gujarati. The extract clearly shows how the negotiation of meaning is managed both jointly and bilingually. The teacher questions in Gujarati and the students respond in English. In this extract all the student responses are in English, and there appears to be no real obligation on the part of the students to use Gujarati.

A further example from Classroom A illustrates the important role of English in the lesson. In Extract 4 below, the teacher (line 7) is trying to get the students to provide the meaning for the Gujarati term **tarat**. The one word gloss 'quick', however, is not accepted and the teacher gives some advice about not translating word for word. But the importance of using English for translation is nevertheless reiterated by the teacher towards the end of the extract where she says 'now translate in English . explain in English . everybody say in their minds what you think it would be in English'. In this, and other lessons, English is used to monitor, check and assess understanding of Gujarati.

<u>Extract 4</u>: (Classroom A)

T: right . **laikhu badhaye?** . board **oopur? Usha** board **ooper shu laikhu chhe** .
         wanchto < *Has everybody written it? On the board? Usha, what's written on the
         board, please read?* >
S: **me tarat** < *immediately* >
T: sorry?
S: Miss . do I write it in my book? Miss . how many more lines have we got left?
T: what does it mean . the word **tarat** . < *immediately* > what does it mean?
S: quick

T: remember I told you not to translate word by word like **tarat** meaning quickly . all right? . **tarat kar** . quickly **kar** < *do* > . rub quickly . . . look at that . **jaldi kar** . < *do quickly* > you missed something out here?

S: Miss I've done it . Miss . how many more lines have we got left?

T: **jaldi karyu** < *did quickly* > Kishen .come on . **jaldi** . < *quickly* > come on write in your book . quickly .OK good . Rupesh . come on . **shu thyu?** < *what happened*? > can you carry on with your work? You've done that . right . **badhaye lakhi lidhu**? < *has everyone written that*? > .. good . it can never be under the line . all right? . good . OK [S reads]. OK . explain to me . what does it mean? Kishen . OK . OK just see if it makes sense . alright? . give me your book . you write in your book as well . now translate it in English .explain in English . everybody say in their minds what you think it would be in English.

A major feature in the classrooms is the importance of literacy. Much of the discourse in the lesson in Classroom A is around 'writing' and the formation of Gujarati characters. Mrs Solanki, in an interview, stressed that 'writing to me is very important' and 'I am very strict about writing'. She goes on to say that 'writing has to be appropriate and I've actually designed my own lined paper and I give it to kids saying "right I want the letters to be like this, from the top to the bottom"'. 'I do concentrate more on explaining in English and then I go back and say it in Gujarati because the kids, only 2% will understand the whole Gujarati way of speaking whereas if you explain things they understand . . . '

The emphasis that Mrs Solanki gives to writing is evident in Extract 5. This includes the specific instructions about how Gujarati handwriting should be managed. The paper being used by the students is the paper designed by Mrs Solanki referred to in the interview. She provides careful guidelines such as 'Gujarati writing is hung' (line 11).[1]

Extract 5: (Classroom A)

T: right . first of all . **sambhlo** < *listen* > . first of all . **tamne me** paper **aapyu chhe** < *I've given you paper* > . I have given you all paper . yeah? All of you got paper . so . first of all, I want you to write on . paper . I shall come round and check it to see if your writing is good or not . if the writing is good . I'll tell you to copy that one in your book . alright . part **char** < *four* > part **char** . fourth part.

S: Miss we have to write that down?

T: Yes you have to write

S: Miss we have to write in the book?

T: No, first of all, write on that piece of paper. Remember the handwriting, how it should be . Gujarati writing is hung . you want it . top line . the dotted line that I have done it on that piece of paper .

Further emphasis on writing is evident in other parts of the lesson. In Extract 6, for example, students are given advice about making sure their writing 'is nice and curved', and the explanation about word formation and the fact that spaces should not be left between the letters.

Extract 6: (Classroom A)

T: I am coming to see your writing now . that's the title . [indistinct] .. doesn't matter .. try again . at the end of the book . . . [a lot of chatter] remember . yeah . I am coming . in the paper **tamne je** paper **apyu chhe ay aawi ritey** line **doro** < *the paper I gave you, draw the line like this* > . alright? **sambhlo badha** < *listen all* > . you must pay attention everybody . as well . everybody . this is how it is on the paper . yeah . your writing starts from there and it finishes here on this dotted line . so you are writing from top to bottom . in the middle . ssh .. make sure this is nice and curved . that's how it should be .. alright . if you have not done properly [chatter] . when you write the word you must not leave a space between the letters . you must never have something like . you would not write **ghus** < *rub* > like this . the **gh** and **s** are two separate letters . alright? You must not . because it is a word, the letters should be all together . no no no . it's like this Rajesh, that's a line, start there .. try that .. you can .. fine .copy that nicely . you get a separate piece of paper in the book . you've got a clean page . . . have you finished? .. OK . **te laikhu**? < *have you written*? >

S: Miss shall I write it here?

T: Your **p** . Sagar . looks like **y** . it must be straight . look . straight . OK . that's fine

A little later in the same lesson the participants in Classroom A are going through what they have written (copied from the chalkboard) in their books. It will be noted from Extract 7 below that the students are able to read back what they have written relatively successfully. On two occasions the students switch but in this particular part of the lesson, the teacher asks them to speak in Gujarati.

Extract 7: (Classroom A)

T: right one person . this chapter . right? One person is going to read the whole lot from your own book . your own handwriting . see if you can read it or not . right . Daxa is going to read it . see if you have all copied the same thing . just a minute . OK. Rajesh . pay attention . because what I'll do . I'll say to anybody . right . stop there and then you have to carry on wherever I've said stop . see if your line follows on . everybody has copied exactly the same thing . you should be on the same line . right **mathalu to chhe** < *the heading is there* > Daxa.

S: **malam kar** < *do the ointment* >

T: OK . and above that?

S: **patth** < *lesson* > four

T: **Gujarati a . pehlethi wanch** < *in Gujarati . read from the beginning* >

S: **patth** < *lesson* >

T: Yeah . **patth**

S: **patth char** < *lesson four* >

T: And now . **malam kar** . < *do the ointment* > right . **bey** line **wanch** < *read two lines* >

S: **kar malam kar** < *do the ointment do* >

T: Jaina . **ek** line **wanch** < *read one line* >

S: [indistinct]
T: **Gujaratima** < *in Gujarati* > . **Sharad**
S: **malam kar** < *do the ointment* >
T: Deepa . next line
S: **Sharad pug pur ghus** < *Sharad rub it on the foot* >
T: Biju . next line
S: **Sharad pug pur malam ghus** < *Sharad rub the ointment on the foot* >
T: Neil
S: [indistinct]
T: Pooja
S: **Sharad pug pur malam kar** < *Sharad do the ointment on the foot* >
T: Deepa
S: **Sharad**
T: Very good. Everybody got it in the book? Good. Excellent.

In the extracts discussed above, teaching and learning takes place bilingually. The classroom talk is mainly very structured around an exchange framework in which the teacher controls both what is said and the language in which it is said. There is little scope for exploratory talk (Barnes, 1976) and students are not usually able to contribute more to the classroom discussion unless the language is English.

In Extract 8 from Classroom B below, there is much more spontaneous discussion from the students. The teacher is talking about wedding ceremonies, and it will be noted that after an initial exchange in Gujarati, English begins to take over. Students are keen to give their views about why wedding ceremonies can be boring. What is of interest here is that although the teacher is involving the students in the unpacking of the text (the letter) written in Gujarati, there is no pressure on the students to use Gujarati. What is important here is the discussion, imbued with cultural content as it is. This notion of teaching the culture comes over strongly in the interview with Mr Patel. He states 'you can't separate language and culture . . . how the different festivals are celebrated are all part of the culture'.

Extract 8: (Classroom B)

T: **biju ek wastu . tya lagna widhi thati hoi** . OK . **tame** bore **thata hoi to** wedding ceremony **jowanama** bore **thatu hoi tamne?** < *one more thing . the wedding ceremony there . OK . do you get bored looking at the ceremony?*
S: **ha** < *yes* >
T: **kem**? < *why?* >
S: [indistinct]
T: that's the main objective . **lagna prsang etle** < *marriage* > . wedding ceremony
S: I've seen it twice
T: **bey wakhat joyu chhe? Te pun joyu chhe?** < *you've seen it twice*? *You as well*? > . OK . **to have ema bijo** point **ave ke e widhi** ceremony **tamne lambi lage chhe?** < OK . *the second point is do you feel that the ceremony is long* > long ceremony or .

S: [Many Ss speak at once]
T: cut it to one hour from three hours . supposing you getting married . you
      want to get married in three hour long ceremony?
S: no . an hour
T: [indistinct English] **bau widhi lambi hoi . trun char kalakni** < *very long
      ceremony . three or four hours* > . takes four hours and you get bored . so what
      thing . how can things change?
S: cut down the photographs
T: cut down the photographs? Yeah . you are right there . [laughter] . because
      all you see are the photographers . videos and people . all surrounding the
      bride and groom
S: you can hardly see anything
T: so you can't see anything
S: [indistinct English]
T: so . yes . that's a good reason . yes . **ghana lagnama** photographer **ane** video
      ootarta hoi . e loko akho mandap cover up **kari le . barabar . ne**
      ceremony**ma shu thai chhe** < *during many weddings there are* photographers
      and videos *are taken . these people* cover *all the wedding stage right*? *You don't
      know what is happening in the* ceremony > . good reason . OK . that's OK . so
      do you like to go or not?
S: [respond in English, indistinct]
T: at least you got some positive answer . OK . **have tane jawu gamey ke nai**?
      < *you like going*? > good . < **saras** > OK
S: [responds in English, indistinct]
T: how old were you then? **Ketla warasno hato?** < *how old were you*? >
S: I am . like . five
T: you went there when you were only five . you can hardly remember what
      was happening . no?

The final extract from Classroom A comes from near the end of the lesson. The
teacher and students have been discussing what they should do as an end of class
activity. At the beginning of Extract 9, one student is giving a suggestion for some
translation games and there is clearly a lot of support for this, an activity they
have clearly enjoyed in the past. Due to lack of time, the teacher dispenses with
her original idea of a story and she plumps for a game in which she performs a
simple action following which the students are required to 'reply in Gujarati in
full sentences'. What ensues is actually a drilling game. She puts her hand on her
forehead and asks, in Gujarati, 'where is my hand?' One student provides the
structure, **tamaro hath . ooper chhe** ('your hand is on'), and then after some posi-
tive encouragement, another student provides the Gujarati term for 'forehead'.
The teacher provides the correct model for a 'full sentence' **tamaro hath Tamara
kapal oopper chhe** ('your hand is on your forehead'). The teacher then repeats
the activity, with the question, in Gujarati, 'what colour are your eyes'? In the
teacher turn which starts 'Just a minute', the way the teacher constructs the full
sentence response word by word, in both English and Gujarati, is clear. The
remainder of the lesson continues in this vein, and it is the part of the lesson in
which the most Gujarati is spoken. The teacher is looking for grammatically
correct full sentences.

<u>Extract 9</u>: (Classroom A)

S: you give us the English word and we give you the Gujarati word . please Miss . please

T: I was going to do a story but we haven't the time for it

S: you give us the English . we give you the Gujarati

T: right . listen . we do the story next week . [chatter] . right . **sambhlo badha** < *listen everyone* > . stop making a fuss . you have to see what I am doing and I will tell you what to do as well and reply in Gujarati in full sentence

S: then you can see the English meaning in Gujarati

T: **maro . sambhal** < *my . listen* > . I will choose anybody . **maro hath kya chhe**? < *where is my hand*? > . don't forget . yeah? **Maro hath kya chhe**?

S: **tamaro hath . ooper chhe** < *your hand is on* >

T: right . good

S: **tamaro hath . kapal** < *your hand . forehead* >

T: **tamaro hath tamara kapal ooper chhe** < *your hand is on your forehead* > sorry? . **ooper chhe** < *is on* > . right . how can it be a proper sentence . Neil?

S: **tamaro hath tamara kapal ooper chhe** < *your hand is on your forehead* >

T: good . OK . tt should be **tamaro hath tamara kapal ooper chhe . tamari ankhno rung kewo chhe? Tamari ankhno rung kewo chhe?** < *what colour are your eyes*? >

S: **tamari** < *your* >

T: just a minute . **tamari ankhno rung kewo chhe**? < *what colour are your eyes*? Dixita . **tamari ankhno rung kewo chhe**? . < *what colour are your eyes*? > don't want the answer in English . yeah you can say . come on . you can say it . how to say it? Do you understand the question? **Tamari ankhno rung kewo chhe**? < *what colour are your eyes*? > First of all . you gotta say 'my' . so how would you say that? . **mari** < *my* > OK? And then the next bit is . **mari ankhno** < *of my eyes* > and then? . **rung** < *colour* > . and the word for black? . **kalo . chhe** . < *is black* > right . the whole sentence together now

S: **mari ankhno rung kalo chhe** < *the colour of my eye is black* >

T: well done . **mari ankhno rung kalo chhe** < *the colour of my eyes is black* > . **bey ankh wachey** < *between the two eyes* > Jaina . concentrate . **shu aawelu chhe**? (*what is between*?) don't forget . I want the answer in full sentence . right? **Shu aawelu chhe**? < *what is*? >

S: **bey ankhni wachey naak chhe** < *the nose is between the eyes* >

T: OK . very good

The statements from the students at the beginning of this extract are very telling in that they illustrate the importance of both languages in the learning process (Bhatt *et al.*, 2004). Translation, often an 'unmentionable' word in the language classroom, is part of the usual discourse of this classroom and, indeed, the other classroom. The participants in these classrooms do not appear to compartmentalise their languages, rather the languages are brought together in an unproblematic way, in order to create learning opportunities. We pick up this point in the next section.

The final extract from Classroom B provides an example of setting homework. In Extract 10 below, there is some very interesting mixed discourse. Mr Patel is

giving the students their homework topic for the following week, on the different wedding ceremonies in the different religions. He switches between English and Gujarati to get his ideas across, and the short extract below demonstrates how he does this.

Extract 10: Classroom B

T: OK . that's good . that's good news from everybody . **have** < *now* > your next homework would be . speaking . different religions have different ways of . wedding ceremonies . Islam **lokoni** different **widhi hoi** . < *Islam has different ways* > Christian **lokoni judi hoi** < *Christians have different ways* > . pachhi Buddhism **e lokoni judi hoi** < *then Buddhism has different ways* > . **Hinduismni judi hoi** < *Hinduism has different ways* > . **to tamare** next week **jyare tame aawo . aawta weekthi** < *so you . when you come* next week . *in the coming* week > . I would like to get some information on wedding ceremonies . it is very important because we must learn all the cultures . that's very important . **badhi Sanskrit hoi badha dharamni** < *you must be aware of all the cultures* > . we must . it's very important . that we learn to be good citizen . that's how it should be . **to** < *so the* > homework **aawta atthwadia mate** < *for next week is* > wedding ceremonies **ma** < *in* > different religions . **teo kewi ritey** < *how do they* > . **bolwaan chhe** < *only have to speak* > . **tame lakhi shako chho** < *you can write* > . you can write it **pun bolwa mate** < *but for speaking* > . speaking . for speaking purpose . OK? **Tame mandire jau** < *you can go to the temple* > . temple . church **ma jau** < *to a* church > . **masjidma jau** < *to a mosque* > . mosque . **tamara** friends . < *you may have* friends > **hoi . koi Muslim mitra hoi to ene poochhwanu** . < *if you have a Muslim friend you ask them* > . try to get information on the different religions . how the wedding ceremony . OK

In this extract, like much of the discourse in Classroom B, there is a substantial cultural content. Mr Patel is providing information on the students' homework topics in both English and Gujarati. His speech is a mixture of Gujarati and English and the key points are given in both languages. The spontaneous juxtaposition of two languages again illustrates how the 'different worlds' (Kenner, 2004: 44) of the participants can be brought together. There is a merging and synthesising of linguistic resources in order to promote bilingual and bicultural learning.

Discussion

The major feature of the two lessons observed and discussed in the section above is the way the classroom participants use two languages to accomplish the lessons, that is, how bilingualism and bilingual teaching/learning is managed in the classroom context. The languages in these classrooms are not usually compartmentalised in any formal way. Rather, they are juxtaposed spontaneously in what appears to be an unproblematic and uncontested way (Martin *et al.*, 2004). In Classroom A, the language used is mainly English, though in engagement with text, and in drill-like activities towards the end of the lesson much more Gujarati is used. In Classroom B, the GSCE class, as might be expected, more Gujarati is used, though English is used as well. Common to both class-

rooms is the way that students use mainly English, unless they are responding with specific Gujarati lexical items that have been elicited by the teacher.

Of course, the use of two languages in particular classroom contexts is not unusual. An increasing amount of literature is available, particularly in post-colonial contexts, on how teaching/learning is accomplished bilingually. In such contexts, students are learning through a 'major' language, such as English or French, even though they very often have little understanding of the language of instruction (Arthur & Martin, in prep; Martin, 2003). Although space does not permit a detailed discussion here, there are several commonalities in the discourses of the classrooms in both contexts. Perhaps the most significant is the way teachers and students draw on their linguistic resources in order to accomplish teaching and learning.

Not unexpectedly, the use of two languages was a recurrent theme in interviews with a range of people in the school. The teacher, Mr Patel, for example, stated that 'we try and explain in English because at the end we ask them what a Gujarati word means in English, so sometimes you have to use English to make them understand'. Mrs Solanki makes the comment 'I . . . concentrate more on explaining in English and then I go back and say it in Gujarati because the kids, only two percent will understand the whole Gujarati way of speaking'. In a discussion about the Gujarati alphabet, Mrs Mistry, the administrator and de facto head of Mount Hill Complementary School states that the policy is based around the Gujarati Sahitya Academy (Gujarati Literary Academy) Syllabus, specifically aimed at students brought up in England. She goes on to refer to the need to use 'English as well as Gujarati and . . . encourage staff in the younger years, because the child's first language, believe it or not, is English'. She further relates that although in the classroom the students are 'conversing in English but you will find that they are learning Gujarati . . . they must be because they are passing their GCSE . . . they are getting somewhere so it must be working'.

The fact that two languages can be used in meaningful discourse perhaps comes across most strongly in the succinct comment from Mrs Mistry. When asked which language she would like to be interviewed in she stated 'I prefer both languages *because I am happy in both languages* . . . *ask me in English*, then I can choose which language to answer in' (Gujarati in italics).

Many of the comments from the teachers and parents reflected the fact that the parents sending their children to the complementary school had missed out on learning Gujarati. The teacher, Mr Patel, for example, stated that 'some parents, young parents they don't even know Gujarati . . . Sometimes they don't speak it very well so those students they may find it a bit difficult but the majority of students, they have Gujarati around'. A parent of one of the children at the school related how, to his embarrassment, he could not read Gujarati, although his spoken Gujarati was 'perfect'. The reason for his lack of Gujarati literacy skills was due to his particular migration history. His grandfather had moved from India to Africa in the 1930s, and he himself was born in Africa. In the early 1970s, when he was five years old, the family moved to Britain. As he relates, 'when we came here you know, there's no facilities basically . . . there was nothing at all'. He goes on to relate that one of the reasons for sending his children to Gujarati school is that 'I don't want my children to miss out . . . it's their language and they must

know it, it's very embarrassing for someone to ask them a question and they can't answer it in Gujarati'.

The use of both Gujarati and English does not appear to be problematic for the Gujarati community studied. This comes across very strongly in the classrooms. A different viewpoint, however, has been expressed. The former British Home Secretary, for example, recently made reference to the 'schizophrenia which bedevils generational relationships' in Asian British households (Blunkett, 2002: 76). Although he called for the need for English and the 'historic mother tongue', his statement represents a viewpoint in which languages should be compart-mentalised into separate pigeon-holes. Such a perspective sees switching/mixing/crossing between languages as 'schizophrenic' or sub-standard. However, from a more realistically bilingual/multilingual point of view, such switching between languages is a perfectly normal facet of interaction and is, indeed, an important way of expressing different or hybrid identities.

Conclusion

Although the aims of the schools are to teach Gujarati language and literacy, as well as culture and the Hindu religion, the discourses and cultures of the schools show how they promote bilingualism and biliteracy, and bilingual learning in which both English and Gujarati literacy are valued. A recent report (*The Independent*, Education Section, 9 October 2003) suggests just how important this might be in that the skills they use for their language acquisition transfers to other subjects. Practices in the two lessons show how matters related to examinations and homework, and respect and citizenship help to form the specific cultures of the classrooms and schools, as well as reinforcing such routines across other learning contexts (Martin *et al.*, 2004).

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. Gujarati script, derived from the Devnagari script, is 'hung' from the line in contrast to the Roman script which 'sits' on the line. Gujarati is written from left to right but is non-linear.

Transcription conventions

T:	Teacher
S:	Student
Bold font	**Gujarati**
Italics	*< English gloss >*

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