M.Ed. In TESL Program
Language Group Specific Informational Reports

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Language Group: Gujarati
Author: Christopher Saunders

Program Contact Person: Nancy Cloud (ncloud@ric.edu)
GUJARATI
ગુજરાતી
THE BASICS

• Indo-Aryan
• 46.5 million speakers in the world, primarily in India.
• In India, spoken in the state of Gujarat.
• Writing system: Gujarati script. Written left to write, includes both consonants and vowels. (Swan and Smith, 2001)
• First language of Mohandas Gandhi.
DEVELOPMENT OF GUJARATI

300 BCE
(Masica, 1991)

1100-1500 CE
(Dalby, 1998)

1800 CE-
Present
(Mistry, 1997)

Hierarchy
developed by
REGIONAL VARIETIES

- 4 Major Dialects
  - Patani
  - Standard Gujarati
  - Kathiawari
  - Surati


Travel Made Easy, 2011.
ENGLISH FOR GUJARATI SPEAKERS

• “...problems encountered by learners [of English] are likely to be mainly determined by their educational rather than by their particular language background.”

  (Smith and Swan, 2001, p. 228)
## Vowels and Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vowel Sounds</th>
<th>Consonants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential problems with vowels:
- /e/ and /æ/ are often confused. Ex: “said” for “sad” and vice versa.
- The pronunciation progression from /a/ to /o/ can be difficult. For example, the words lorry, law, and laugh may all be pronounced identically.
- Diphthong /ei/ is confused for monophthong /ei/. For example, /meid/ might be said for “made.”

Smith and Swan, 2001, p. 228-229.
• Voiceless consonants /p/, /t/, and /k/ never have aspirations in Gujarati. Conversely, in English, they sometimes do and sometimes do not. Therefore, a Gujarati speaker may pronounce the /p/ in *pit* the same as she would pronounce the /p/ in *spit*.
• Fricative consonant θ is replaced by /d/. For example, /dem/ for *them*.

Smith and Swan, 2001, p. 230
ENGLISH AND GUJARATI GRAMMARS

English
- Non-gendered nouns.
- Syntactic role of nouns determined by word order of sentence.
- Questions formed by use of auxiliary verbs and reversal of declarative form (ex: “Will you come?” and “You will come.”)

Gujarati
- 3 genders for nouns.
- Nouns followed by postpositions to show syntactic role.
- Questions marked by intonation and interrogative particle (ex: “You will come, no?”)

Plural denoted by suffix (-s in English, -o in Gujarati)

One major difficulty for Gujarati speakers is the overgeneralization of the English singular possessive, ‘s. In complex forms, English will reverse the word order and use the preposition “of,” a distinction often overlooked by the Gujarati speaker.

Smith and Swan, 2001, p. 238-239.
COMMUNICATION STYLE

- Arms length between speakers.
- Direct eye contact. One exception may be a conservative woman who may speak from behind the veil of her sari.
- Physical contact should be avoided unless you are very close with the other person.
- Social gatherings:
  - Large: men and women tend not to mix together.
  - Small/family: men and women freely mix.
- Finger pointing is rude. To get someone’s attention, direct eye contact is better, or a non-pointing gesture, such as extending the right arm with the palm facing downward, moving your fingers toward yourself.

HALL’S HIGH CONTEXT (HC) AND LOW CONTEXT (LC) CULTURES

Edward T. Hall developed a theory that categorizes cultures “into high context versus low context cultures in order to understand their basic differences in communication style and cultural issues.” (Nishimura, 2007)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>HC</th>
<th>LC</th>
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<tr>
<td>Style determined by closeness of human relationships, social hierarchy, and behavioral norms.</td>
<td>Meaning explicitly stated through language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal meaning embedded deep in information.</td>
<td>When something remains unclear, explanation expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listener must “read between the lines.”</td>
<td>Direct and linear communication.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Constant use of words.</td>
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</tbody>
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• Gujarat and India in general, are traditionally considered a high context society, but certain changes are indicating that they may be becoming a low context society.
  • Such a transition may be attributed to recent changes in technology, trade, travel, and television (Chella, 2007).
  • A study comparing Caucasian students studying in the US and Indian students studying in India found that the Indian students used more dramatic communication than would be expected if they were a true HC culture. However, the Indian sample still demonstrated more indirect communication and “positive perception of conversational silence” than the American sample did (Nishimura, 2007). These characteristics are more typical of an HC society.

Nishimura, 2007
VIDEO OF GUJARATI

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQliWpic8o0
REFERENCES


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Images


M.Ed. in TESL Program
Nancy Cloud, Director
Educational Studies Department
Rhode Island College, HBS 206 #5
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
Phone (401) 456-8789
Fax (401) 456-8284
ncloud@ric.edu

The M.Ed. in TESL Program at Rhode Island College
is Nationally Recognized by TESOL and NCATE