



Global Challenges, Local Voices

Sara Ratner¹, Bharti Sharma², Seamus White³, Zelda Yanovich⁴

¹*University of Oxford*

^{2,3,4}*FAM Studios*

Abstract

In English life lessons are handed down through the ages in the form of proverbs. In Gujarat, India the same is true. In Gujarati they are called *kehvat*. Many cultures around the world have the same, little learnings that are passed down through funny expressions. They are important not only for language learning but also as a means for the intergenerational transfer of local knowledge. One of the pertinent *kehvat* for this project is “*Bole tena Bor vechaay*” which teaches that “the one who speaks will be heard”. This life lesson is synergistic with our paper which asserts that to address the global challenges regarding the preservation of learning in home languages emerging as a result of the rapid evolution of new technologies we must engage with local communities and afford them voice. A voice that must be heard. We explore the importance of home language as the primary vehicle through which culture, tradition and knowledge is transferred intergenerationally. Working to address this in digital storybooks, we afforded children and their families a voice regarding the AI translations being presented to them in digital texts. Through the inclusion of choice tokens in a digital storybook, families from Gujarat with children aged 3-6 years were invited to negotiate the most authentic translation or offer their own. This paper shares the insights from our work with these families in Gujarat as we aim to design AI tools that protect and preserve culture specific storybook language during shared reading sessions.

Keywords: agency; translation; home language; AI; digital texts.