

# 13 *The spice of life: borrowing and Fiji's Indian languages*

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## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The indenture system introduced by European colonialisation in the nineteenth century resulted in the displacement of over a million people from the Indian subcontinent, who were scattered to the far corners of the earth, from the Caribbean to the Indian Ocean, from Africa to the South Pacific (Siegel 1988:1). Indenture brought into contact different peoples—the labourers, the indigenous inhabitants, the European colonists—giving rise to complex phenomena of cultural, including linguistic, change.

In Fiji over 60,000 indentured labourers, or *girmitiyas*, arrived between 1879 and 1916. Various phenomena of dialect and language contact ensued, from the development of a new, unique variety of Hindi, now called *Fiji Bāt* or 'Fiji Hindi', to new patterns of bi- and multilingualism. In this paper I examine one aspect of the current sociolinguistic situation in Fiji which is a consequence of the language contact brought about by indenture—borrowing—taking as a point of departure the Indian languages spoken in Fiji today.

The major languages brought into contact in Fiji were the Indian languages spoken by the *girmitiyas*, the colonial language English, and the Austronesian language of the indigenous people, Fijian. Indian languages include not only Fiji Hindi, the language now used by nearly all Indo-Fijians (also called 'Fiji Indians'), but also three Dravidian languages—Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam—spoken by small numbers of descendants of indentured labourers from South India. Language contact led to influences which have gone in nearly all possible

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directions: Indian languages borrowing from, and being donors to, English and Fijian, as well as the Dravidian languages borrowing from Fiji Hindi.

This complex pattern of contact raises some of the issues that are perennial in the study of borrowing: the difficulty of establishing the vector of borrowing and of dating some loan words; whether some borrowings are 'unnecessary'; what borrowing—and sometimes the absence of borrowing—tells us about cultural change; and the often fraught distinction between borrowing and code switching.

## 2 The languages of Fiji

The major languages of Fiji are Fijian, Fiji Hindi, and English. Fijian and Fiji Hindi have the largest numbers of native speakers, as Fijians make up slightly over half the population and Indo-Fijians slightly under half. English is used primarily as a second language, in particular as the only official medium of instruction after the first three years of primary school, as a commonly used lingua franca between native speakers of different languages, and as the predominant language of the media. A number of other languages are spoken by small communities (e.g. Rotuman, Kiribati, Tuvaluan, Gujarati, several Chinese languages and dialects). Of those, only Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam will be considered here.

Of the 60,000 *girmitiyas* brought to Fiji between 1879 and 1916, three quarters were recruited in North India and transported from Calcutta. In 1903 labourers started being recruited also from the South, through the Madras depot, and these *girmitiyas* from South India eventually made up a quarter of all indentured labourers to Fiji (Lal 1983). The majority of those recruited in North India were speakers of varieties of Hindi, nearly all of which were dialects of Bihari or of Eastern Hindi (Siegel 1987:138–144). Many immigrants are also likely to have known the lingua franca of North India, Hindustani. Siegel argues that the language which developed on Fiji's plantations during indenture was a koiné, the result of contact between speakers of related varieties of Hindi and Hindustani.

The majority of labourers recruited in South India spoke Dravidian languages—unrelated to Hindi, a member of the Indo-European family. By the time these Dravidian speakers started arriving, twenty-five years after their North Indian fellow immigrants, the Hindustani koiné was firmly established on Fiji's plantations. From the start South Indians were a minority among the *girmitiyas* in Fiji, so that they were the ones who had to adapt and learn the plantation language, however reluctantly. In addition the use of Dravidian languages was covertly discouraged by the European overseers, who preferred to continue having a single lingua franca (Siegel 1987:161–162). It is no surprise that in these circumstances the Dravidian languages soon started being displaced. Fiji Hindi is now a language shared by all Indo-Fijians. For descendants of South Indians the shift to Fiji Hindi has been massive, as the results of a sociolinguistic survey show (Mugler 1998). The vast majority do not know the language of their India-born ancestors, a small number have a passive knowledge of it, and most of the few who can speak it are far more fluent in Fiji Hindi, which has become the dominant language of the community. Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam nonetheless are still spoken in Fiji, albeit by small and ever dwindling numbers of speakers. An analysis of recordings in the three languages suggests that, along with losing speakers, they are also

displaying signs of structural attrition (for details, see Mugler and Lal 1995, 1999 on Tamil; Mugler and Vijayasarithi 1997 on Telugu; and Mugler and Saratchandran Nair 1997 on Malayalam).

### 3 Borrowings into Indian languages

#### 3.1 Dravidian languages

The three Dravidian languages have borrowed from the languages they have come in contact with in their new environment, namely Fiji Hindi, English, and Fijian, in order of numerical importance. The numerous loan words from Fiji Hindi are an indication of the pressure that the Dravidian languages have been subject to since their speakers reached Fiji's shores.

##### 3.1.1 Borrowings from Fiji Hindi

The most common borrowing from Fiji Hindi is the ubiquitous and versatile *acchā*, which can be glossed sometimes as 'good', 'okay, all right, fine'. With a rising intonation, *acchā* can function as a confirmation request ('okay?', 'all right?') or as an expression of mild surprise ('really?'). It is present in all three of Fiji's Dravidian languages.

It is not always easy to identify borrowings from Fiji Hindi in the Fiji varieties of Dravidian languages, since Dravidian languages in India themselves have incorporated a substantial number of loan words from Hindi as well as from Sanskrit. For instance, *bāsa* 'language', found in Fiji Tamil, was once used in the Tamil of India. It has long been archaic there, however, and is more likely to have been borrowed by Fiji Tamil from Fiji Hindi. Other cases are more straightforward, involving words of Hindi origin which are found in the Dravidian languages of Fiji but are absent from the varieties used in India, such as: *band* 'closed, stopped', *kalās* 'finished', *keti* 'farm' (Fiji Tamil); *ekdam* 'absolutely', *siksa* 'education' (Fiji Malayalam); *barābar* 'sufficient', *bimāri* 'sickness', *lekin* 'but', *rāstā* 'road' (Fiji Telugu).

The pronunciation of loan words from Fiji Hindi is adapted to the phonology of the Dravidian languages, the most noticeable feature being the non-aspiration of aspirated stops (Dravidian languages do not have stop aspiration). So, for instance, Fiji Hindi *khalās* 'finished', *kheti* 'farm', *kharāb* 'bad', are realised in Fiji Tamil with [k] rather than [k<sup>h</sup>]. Similarly, in Fiji Malayalam, *ekdam* 'absolutely', is realised with the obligatory on-glide of Malayalam, as [ʔekdam].

Many nouns borrowed from Fiji Hindi are 'Dravidianised' with the noun class suffix *-am* (as are nouns borrowed from Hindi or Sanskrit into the Dravidian languages in India)—for example Fiji Telugu *dēram* 'duration' < Fiji Hindi *dher*.

Sometimes the phonological shape of a loan word or its meaning is the clue to its Fiji Hindi origin. The word *dyānam*, from Sanskrit, means 'knowledge' in this sentence in Fiji Tamil:

- (1) *Tamiḷḷe dyānam varadulla avugaḷukku*  
 ‘They do not know Tamil.’ (lit. They do not get knowledge in Tamil.)

But in Indian varieties of Tamil the form of that Sanskrit loan word is *nānam* and its meaning ‘meditation’. In the Fiji Tamil word, both the initial cluster *dy-* of Hindi and the meaning indicate that it is more likely to have been borrowed from Fiji Hindi and nativised with the normal Dravidian nominal suffix *-am* than to have been inherited from Indian Tamil and then undergone phonological adaptation and a semantic shift.

Another example is Fiji Malayalam *siksa*, another word of Sanskrit origin, also found both in the Malayalam of India and in varieties of Hindi—including Fiji Hindi. But the primary sense of *siksa* in Indian Malayalam is ‘punishment’, while in Hindi it is ‘education’. This is the meaning intended in this Fiji Malayalam sentence:

- (2) *accanamamā ṛnalla matairi siksa koṭṭuttu*  
 ‘Our parents gave us a good education.’

The argument that *siksa* came into Fiji Malayalam via Fiji Hindi may be strengthened by the fact that it is used in the same sense by second-language learners of Malayalam whose first language is Hindi (Saratchandran Nair 1994).

Other examples of the influence of Fiji Hindi semantics can be illustrated with the following idioms in Fiji Telugu, each of which is a collocation unknown in varieties of Telugu in India:

- (3) *vivaha samskaram* ‘marriage ceremony’  
 (4) *dhanyavādamulu iccunanu* ‘to give thanks’  
 (5) *kṣāma ceyyaandi* ‘to pardon, forgive’  
 (6) *bajanam pādatāru* ‘to sing bhajans’ [Hindu devotional songs]

In the Telugu of India, *samskara* means ‘funeral rites’, while in (3) it is used in the more general Hindi sense of ‘rite, ritual, ceremony’.

In (4), instead of the verb *telupū* (‘to tell’) of Indian Telugu, we have Telugu *icci* (‘to give’), so that the idiom is a calque of Fiji Hindi *dyanyavad dena*.

Another calque is (5), lit. ‘to do/make pardon’, as in Fiji Hindi *sama* (or *maf*) *karna*. Here the verbaliser *incu* of Indian Telugu (*kṣamindamḍḍ* ‘to pardon’) is replaced by the Telugu verb *cestaru*, which is semantically equivalent to the very productive *karna* ‘to do’ of Fiji Hindi.

In (6), Indian Telugu would have *cestaru* ‘to do’ rather than *pādatāru* ‘to sing’, since *bhajans* among Telugu speakers in the state of Andhra Pradesh involve dancing, while when singing is involved, *kirtana*, rather than *bajana*, is used. Similarly, the verb *sep* ‘to tell’ (a dialectal variant of Standard Telugu *ceppu*) appears in the context of reciting *mantras*, instead of Indian Telugu *tsaduvu* ‘to read’. This is probably influenced by Fiji Hindi, where both *parhe* ‘to read’ and *bole* ‘to tell’ can occur in the context of bhajans.

### 3.1.2 Borrowings from English

A fairly large number of words of English origin have found their way into the Dravidian languages of Fiji. A few examples are *class, meeting, high school, English*, in Malayalam; *fast, mistake, fees*, in Tamil; *doorstep, town area, medical, family*, in Telugu; *doctor, government, master, hospital, committee*, in all three. All words of English origin which occur in the Dravidian languages of Fiji are also found in Fiji Hindi and are likely to have been borrowed from Fiji Hindi rather than directly from English, further evidence of the dominance of Fiji Hindi among descendants of South Indians.<sup>2</sup>

As with loan words from Fiji Hindi, in some cases phonological adaptation supports the view that words of English origin have been borrowed by the Dravidian languages from Fiji Hindi, rather than having come directly from English or been inherited from the Indian varieties.

Let us take as an example *school*, which occurs both in the Tamil of Fiji and that of India. In Indian Tamil it is realised as [skul], but in Fiji Tamil as [iskul], with the prothetic vowel which obligatorily precedes [s] + stop clusters in Fiji Hindi.

The Dravidianising ending *-am* which, as we have seen, is often suffixed to nouns borrowed from Fiji Hindi, is sometimes extended to words of English origin, such as in Fiji Telugu *dizainam* 'design'. This appears to be rare, however. Perhaps this particular word is perceived by speakers as a bona fide Fiji Hindi word, so to speak, with its English origin not recognised.

Another clearly indirect borrowing via Fiji Hindi is *girmiṭ* 'indenture', from English 'agreement', a word unknown in either the Dravidian languages or the Hindi of India. (But see more on *girmiṭ* below.)

### 3.1.3 Borrowings from Fijian

Few Fijian borrowings appear in the data, reflecting perhaps some skewing of the topics discussed. Nonetheless, in the Fiji Telugu recordings, for instance, we find *koro* 'village', *kāibītī* 'Fijian', *nangonā* 'kava'. As in the case of words of English origin, these Fijian words are all also present in Fiji Hindi, which again is likely to be the proximate source of borrowing.

Each of these words illustrates a different kind of adaptation—semantic, grammatical, and phonological—adaptations which support the argument about indirect borrowing. While in Fijian *koro* is the general term for '(traditional) village', in Fiji Hindi it means specifically 'Fijian village' and is not extended to any rural agglomeration of dwellings inhabited by other communities.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, *kāibītī*, from the Fijian noun *kaiviti* 'Fijian person/people' (lit.

<sup>2</sup> Many of these words are also found nowadays in the speech of educated speakers of Tamil, Telugu, or Malayalam in India. But this is a fairly recent development, and in Fiji these borrowings occur in everyone's speech, regardless of their level of education.

<sup>3</sup> In Fiji an Indo-Fijian rural community is called *gāō* in Fiji Hindi and in English a 'settlement'. A 'settlement' can also be a Fijian rural community which is not a traditional village. This is called *rikotiko* in Fijian.

'native inhabitant of Fiji') is also used as an adjective, in the context of the Fijian language, for instance. These adaptations are identical to those undergone by these Fijian words as they were borrowed into Fiji Hindi. As for *nangonā*, the word for kava (*Piper methysticum*, a mildly narcotic plant), it has been borrowed in its Fiji Hindi form, with the definite article of Fijian incorporated (< Fijian *na yaqona*).

### 3.2 Fiji Hindi

Borrowings in Fiji Hindi have been described by Pillai (1975), Moag (1979), and in particular Siegel (1987, 1992a), whose lists of English and Fijian loan words are the most comprehensive. Here I want to review the evidence and revisit the issue of the vector of borrowing and dating of some English loan words, and the motivation for borrowings from Fijian.

#### 3.2.1 Borrowings from English

In his discussion of the numerous English loan words present in Fiji Hindi, Siegel (1992a:103–107) traces the history of borrowing and identifies several major periods, each associated with different semantic domains. During the indenture period there was an influx of words associated with previously unknown aspects of plantation life (e.g. *astabal* 'stable', *kantāp* 'sugarcane flower' < *cane top*), some of which—such as *astabal*—have since been lost (see Siegel 1987:278–279 for a comprehensive list). Loan words for new objects also were borrowed by Fiji Hindi 'early in its development' (Siegel 1992a:104), such as *plet* 'plate', or *lorī* 'truck' (< *lorry*). Nearly all vocabulary related to post-indenture technology comes from English—from automobiles, radio, and television, to the more recent computers and videos. Finally, the spread of education after World War II, through the medium of English, has coincided with a new influx of loan words. These are most common in urban varieties of Fiji Hindi, probably because English is increasingly used in urban areas, particularly as a lingua franca among different ethnic groups. These recent borrowings have not however replaced their Hindi equivalents, which also continue to be used (e.g. *rāit* 'correct' < *right*, and *ṭhik*, *lak* 'luck' and *takdīr*).

Siegel also illustrates the various processes at work in these borrowings, such as semantic shift (e.g. *moṭar* 'car' < *motor*-[*car*]), restriction (e.g. *maṣṭa* 'male teacher' < *master*), and expansion (e.g. *buk* 'book, magazine, pamphlet' < *book*). He lists the many phrasal verbs which the very productive verb *kar-* 'to do', combined with English verb roots, has contributed to Fiji Hindi, both early on (e.g. *boil kar-* 'boil', *cek kar-* 'check') and more recently (*help kar-* 'help', *mis kar-* 'mix'). Siegel identifies two domains where English loan words have gradually replaced their Hindi equivalents, numbers and colour terms: numbers over twelve are now nearly always English loans, while words of Hindi and English origin are both used for basic colour terms (e.g. *reḍ* and *lāl*, *blū* and *nīlā*). He also comments on words which have two forms, an older one, probably from the indenture period, and a newer one, closer in pronunciation to English (e.g. *burūs* and *bras*, 'brush', *sakis* (< *circus*) and *filam*,

both meaning 'film, cinema'<sup>4</sup>). Siegel mentions a number of words which were borrowed from English for what must have been familiar items, in spite of the availability of Hindi equivalents (e.g. *āpul* 'apple', for *seb*, *rūm* 'room', for *kamrā*). He speculates that the items found in Fiji were perhaps perceived as different from those in India, which is plausible for material objects. Why the Hindi words for the four points of the compass should also have been replaced is intriguing, though. These may well turn out to be 'unnecessary' loan words, or perhaps the motivation behind their borrowing has not yet been discovered. I will return to some of these words.

Now that we have had this brief overview of English loan words in Fiji Hindi, I want to examine the oldest layer identified by Siegel, those 'from the indenture period'.

Elsewhere, Siegel (1992b:119) suggests that some Fiji Hindi words of English origin 'may have been coined in other plantation countries and may have been part of a more international Plantation Hindustani'. He mentions *kulambar* 'overseer' (< *call number*), *sukhlāi* 'replacing dead plants with new', (< *supply*), and *dīpū* 'depot', the first two also being found in Trinidad Bhojpuri—the second as *suplāi*—, while *dīpū* is also found in Suriname (Siegel 1992b:119). In fact, *depot*—there is no indication of its pronunciation—also appears in Trinidad Bhojpuri (Mohan & Zador 1986:307). Siegel (1988) goes slightly further in his introduction to a volume on overseas Hindi, in which he notes that varieties of transplanted Hindi share a number of unique features—including some of the loan words just cited, along with *girmiṭ* itself—and speculates (1988:15) that this 'may suggest a common origin in India rather than parallel development', although he cautions (1988:16) that other factors may explain these shared characteristics, such as spread from one colony to another by labourers and/or overseers, or the influence of Bazaar Hindustani.

In the same volume Mesthrie (1988:159), in his study of lexical change in South African Bhojpuri, cites items related to 'the business of indenture', such as *Kalkatīā* 'one who had embarked ship at Calcutta', *kūlī* in the new sense of 'a field worker' rather than the old sense of 'porter', *jahājī bhāū/bahin* 'a co-passenger to one's new colony' (lit. 'a ship's brother/sister'), and the English loan words *girmiṭ* and *girmiṭyā*. He concludes: 'That these must have already been in use prior to their departure from Calcutta is suggested by the fact that they were in use in most of the colonies at some stage or other'.

Earlier in the discussion, Mesthrie (1988:159) goes further:

Of course, borrowed items of vocabulary were not new to incoming indentured migrants. Indic languages have a long history of playing host to words from various sources — Dravidian languages, Persian, Arabic and European languages, chiefly English. The North Indian villagers setting out for the colonies already had in their linguistic repertoire some words from English: *bakas* 'box', *gilās* 'drinking glass', *ṭesan*, 'station', *rel* 'rail', *dipī* 'deputy', *kalekṭar* 'tax-collector', *tamākū* 'tobacco', etc.

Later Mesthrie (1988:162) also lists *rel* 'rail', *rel-gāri* 'train', *moṭar* 'motor vehicle' as having been in use in Indian Bhojpuri prior to migration. Of these, *gilās*, *moṭar*, and *tamākū* appear in Siegel's (1987:278–279) list of loan words 'from the indenture period'. And

<sup>4</sup> Older speakers of Fiji Hindi (roughly, those over 60) tend to use *sakis*. In the past few years, young people, probably under the influence of the plethora of American programs on television, have started also using *movie*, which in turn may eventually displace *filam*.

*bākas*—now used with a pronunciation closer to English—is included in Hobbs' (1985:127) dictionary. Except for *kalekṭar*, the other terms are also used in Fiji Hindi. The pronunciation *ṭesan*, rather than the newer *iṣṭesan*, is used by older speakers. Elsewhere, Mesthrie mentions *anṭi* 'older female relative or friend' and *kazin brada/kazin sista* 'male/female first cousin' (Mesthrie 1990:349), both also used in Fiji Hindi.

Although Mesthrie does not cite any source for these loan words from English in the speech of North Indians, his hypothesis that they had been borrowed before indenture is certainly plausible. English has had a presence on the subcontinent since at least 1600, with the establishment of the East India Company. The use of English was spread initially through the Company's trading factories in the seventeenth century (Surat in 1612, Madras in 1639–40, Bombay in 1674, and Calcutta in 1690), and the establishment by missionaries of schools at the beginning of the eighteenth century provided an additional path of diffusion (McArthur 1992:504–505). This is also when Indian languages, and in particular Hindi and Hindustani, started contributing loan words to English: *dungaree* (first recorded instance in the *OED*, 1613), *loot* (1669), *bungalow* (1676), *shampoo* (1762), *dinghy* (1794), *thug* (1810), *gymkhana* (1861). Conversely, loan words have been common in Indian English since the sixteenth century (McArthur 1992:506). It is likely that the parallel process of borrowing English words into Hindi or Hindustani would also have started early in the history of English in India. Indeed Singh (1995:87) notes that most Indic loan words in English 'pre-date the emergence of Khari Boli as a literary dialect [i.e. Standard Hindi] or are learned borrowings from Sanskrit.'

In his discussion of the development of Fiji Hindi, Siegel (1987:155–159, 193–196, 1988:12) argues that, alongside the various regional dialects and subdialects of Hindi, two other North Indian speech varieties went into the making of the koiné which developed on Fiji's plantations: Hindustani, the lingua franca of North India and urban centers in India, and in particular its basilectal end, Bazaar Hindustani. India has a long tradition of internal migration, and in the North there is evidence of people moving from place to place searching for work, confirmed by the fact that many immigrants to Fiji were recruited outside their home districts (Lal 1983:65–67). Internal migrants in North India would have acquired a knowledge of the Hindustani lingua franca—famously called by Tinker (1974:52) 'the language of the emigration traffic'—and since most of the girmityas were uneducated, the variety they were most likely to know was Bazaar Hindustani, according to Siegel. He attributes to the probable influence of Bazaar Hindustani a number of features of Fiji Hindi, including the following, which are shared by other varieties of overseas Hindi: the present-tense copula *hai/he*, the noun and pronoun pluraliser *log*, and distinctive lexical items such as *māāg-* 'want' and *khalās* 'finished'. I would like to argue that a number of loan words from English also may have come into Fiji Hindi via Hindustani, and some in particular from Bazaar Hindustani.

The most detailed description of Bazaar Hindustani—and Siegel's major source of evidence—is Chatterji (1972 [1931]). Although Chatterji does not discuss loan words as such, he mentions a few borrowings from English in his description of phonology: *haspatāl* 'hospital', *ardāli* 'orderly', *ṭikaṭ* 'ticket', *dagdār* 'doctor' (1972:225). Elsewhere in his grammatical sketch we find *māstar* 'teacher' and *iskul* 'school' (1972:233). Other borrowings from English appear in some of the texts he appends to his article (1972:244–256). An 1867



Bengali newspaper notice contains *dibizan* 'division', *nambar* 'number', *holding nambar* 'holding number', and *kelem* 'claim'. Other texts, from 1916, include *hoṭel* 'hotel', *kaṭlēt* 'cutlet', *hāf-sūl* 'half-soles', *kālij* 'college', *Jisū* 'Jesus', *kāptēn* 'captain', *lāt* 'lord', *jel* 'jail', *bāskil* 'bicycle', *bakas* 'box', *iskul* 'school', and the intriguing *koken* 'cocaine' (1972:251–256). Nearly all these words occur or used to occur in Fiji Hindi (only *ardāli*, *holding nambar*, *kaṭlēt*, *hāf-sūl*, *lāt*, and *koken* seem absent). More generally, Chatterji's data is evidence that there were English loan words in Bazaar Hindustani.

Another interesting work is *The Mālim Sāhib's Hindustāni* (Willson 1939), a handbook for young naval officers 'who wish to acquire the low Hindustani spoken by native crews, coolies, servants and longshoremen generally round the coast of India' (1939:front cover). This variety of Hindustani, which is 'in common use both ashore and afloat', is referred to by its author as 'Bazaar Bat' (1939:preface, no page number) and the description fits Bazaar Hindustani. The first edition of that book was published in 1920 (Michael Shapiro, pers. comm.), so the language described must have been used, at the latest, towards the end of Fiji's indenture period, although some features may be much older. The handbook contains an impressive lexicon, which abounds in English loan words. Besides a fairly large number of technical nautical terms (e.g. *compass*, *winch*, *guy*, *derrick*, *tweendeck*, *captain*, *bridge*), there are a number of general lexical items, such as *doctor* 'doctor', *hospital* 'hospital', *boot* 'boat', *number* 'number', *minnit* 'minute', *apple* 'apple', *boil* 'boil', *botli* 'bottle', *brūs* 'brush', *iskrū* 'screw', *kelli* 'kettle', *police wallah* 'policeman', *sōp* in *sāft sōp* 'soft soap', *try kerner* (i.e. *karna*) 'try'.<sup>5</sup> All of these also exist in Fiji Hindi and are listed in Hobbs (1985), and *kampani* 'company' is also listed by Siegel. Besides *try kerner*, there are three other phrasal verbs with *kar-*: *scrāp kerner* 'to scrape', *tāt kerner* 'to tighten', and *wipe kerner* 'to wipe'. It seems that *kar-* was productive in absorbing English loan words into phrasal words already in Bazaar Hindustani—another feature also found in other varieties of overseas Hindi, such as Trinidad Bhojpuri (Bhatia 1988:191) and South African Bhojpuri (Mesthrie 1988:164).<sup>6</sup> And while the lexicon does not contain the *iṣīma* of early Plantation Hindustani in Fiji, it does list *istīm* 'steam'. The word *tanki*, glossed as 'tank, cistern', also appears, as it does in Fiji Hindi (as both *ṭānkī* and *ṭenk* in Hobbs (1985), again a case of an older form and a newer one). The word is included in Siegel's list of English loan words from indenture, but according to the *OED* English *tank* is more likely to be a loan word from an Indian vernacular than the other way around (first recorded instance 1616; see also Yule & Burnell 1996 [1886, 1902]).

As for English loan words in general Hindustani and Hindi, Bhatia (1967) notes that English first spread in India through Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madras, Bombay, then into the interior of Hindi-speaking areas, and that the first effect was on Bengali, then Hindi, through Bengali. The spread of English in India accelerated sharply after the first war of independence in 1857, when the northern kingdoms came under British power. The

<sup>5</sup> Willson's transliterations are idiosyncratic, with many words spelled as in English, while in others he has attempted to give a more 'phonetic' spelling. Consonants realised as retroflexes are not indicated.

<sup>6</sup> Singh (1995:90) claims that Hindustani has borrowed 'virtually no verbs' from English, this being in part explained by the productivity of the verbalising particles *kaarnaa* and *honaa* (Singh 1995:104, fn. 2).

development of transport and communication helped, with the first railways appearing in 1853–54 and the first main roads in 1843–53. It is reasonable to assume that, besides spreading English and English loan words in general, these developments promoted the borrowing of words like *moṭar* and *rel* related to transport itself. Words like *captain*, *company*, *council*, *gazette*, *acting*, *lord*, *India*, *notice*, *governor*, *license*, *government*, among others, are found in the first two newspapers in both Bengali and Hindi (1818 and 1826). Bhatia also cites two theses on the influence of English on Hindi at the end of the nineteenth century, one, dated 1893–98, is on ‘Hindi before Bharatendu’,<sup>7</sup> the other is a 1950 study of the influence of English on Hindi language and literature from 1870 to 1920. Finally, among Bhatia’s list of over a hundred English loan words in the novels of Prem Chand (1904–38) are the following, also found in Fiji Hindi: *doctor*, *police*, *motor*, *jail*, *minute*, *station*, *deputy*, *school*, *government*, *college*, *governor*, *hospital*, *ticket*, *rail*, *company*, *master*, *number*, *bottle*, *captain*, *glass*, *box*, *bicycle*. Of the ten novels included as sources of data, seven were published prior to 1930.

There must have been a good deal of overlap between English loan words in dialects of Hindi, in the lingua franca Hindustani, and in the basilectal Bazaar Hindustani. If Bhatia is right and many English words were first borrowed into Bengali, would they have been borrowed in turn into Hindustani first, perhaps through Bazaar Hindustani, and some perhaps then into regional dialects of Hindi? Might some loan words into Fiji Hindi have come directly from the regional dialects and subdialects of Hindi that went into the making of the Plantation Hindustani koiné, while others perhaps came through Hindustani and/or Bazaar Hindustani? With greater access to studies of Bazaar Hindustani and of English loan words in pre-indenture Hindi/Hindustani, it might be possible to date loan words more precisely and to tease out the vector of borrowing.

### 3.2.2 *Borrowings from Fijian*

Fijian’s contribution to the lexicon of Fiji Hindi, as shown by Siegel (1992a: 103) has been primarily in the domains of local flora and fauna (e.g. *ūbī* ‘yam’, < *uvi*, *dākuā*, ‘kauri tree’, *wālū* ‘Spanish mackerel’, *kuītā* ‘octopus, squid’), other tropical items unfamiliar to the early girmitiyas, who were mostly from temperate areas of India (*bīlimbīlī* ‘bamboo raft’, *ānuānū* < *yanuyanu* ‘island’, *bode* < *voce* ‘oar’, *dakāu* < *cakau* ‘reef’), and objects or concepts relating to Fijian culture (*meke* ‘Fijian dance’, *moto* ‘spear’, *tāmbūā* < *tabua* ‘whale’s tooth’, *lālī* ‘slit gong’). According to Siegel, these words were borrowed into Fiji Hindi on small plantations where Indian labourers worked side by side with Fijian and other Pacific Island labourers and where the lingua franca was Fijian or Pidgin Fijian. Here again then, the path of borrowing may have been indirect, from Fijian to Pidgin Fijian to Fiji Hindi. Siegel also notes that Hindi *kar-* is just as productive with Fijian as with English borrowings (e.g. *kerekere kar-* ‘to request, ask a favour’,<sup>8</sup> *lobo kar-* ‘to bake in a pit oven’ < *lovo*, *sevusevū kar-* ‘to make a

<sup>7</sup> The writer and poet Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850–85).

<sup>8</sup> *Kerekere karo* is often translated as ‘begging’, as in Siegel (1987:273). This gloss seems to have been inherited from early translations of the Fijian term by Europeans who did not fully understand

customary presentation of kava', *talānoā kar-* 'to sit around telling stories'). The major features of phonological adaptation are the realisation of the Fijian approximate [β] as [b] (*uvi* > *ūbī* 'yam'), of [ð] as [d] (*cakau* > *dakāu* 'reef'), and of the prenasalised voiced velar stop [ᵑg] as a voiced nasal consonant [ŋ] (*māmāngī* < *māmāqī* 'miserly', *mātāngālī* < *mataqali* 'extended family'). A number of nouns have been borrowed with the definite article of Fijian fused (*naibī* < *na ivi* 'Fiji chestnut', *nangonā~nengonā* < *na yaqona* 'kava', *nakāi* < *na kai* 'freshwater clam', *nangio* < *na qio* 'shark').

One particularly significant domain is that of kava drinking, which is of great spiritual, ceremonial, and social importance in Fijian culture and has been adopted enthusiastically by Indo-Fijians as a social custom, to the extent that kava (or 'grog') drinking has become a central part of Indo-Fijian culture. Reproduced below are the loan words associated with kava listed by Siegel (1992a:103), some with my slightly modified glosses:

<i>nangonā, nengonā</i>	< <i>nayaqona</i>	kava
<i>bīlo</i>	< <i>bilo</i>	half coconut bowl for drinking <i>yaqona</i>
<i>kānikānī</i>	< <i>kanikani</i>	dry, scaly skin caused by excessive <i>yaqona</i> drinking
<i>kasou</i>	< <i>kasou</i>	very drunk
<i>kosā</i>	< <i>kosa</i>	dregs
<i>lewenā</i> <sup>9</sup>	< <i>lewena</i>	stem of the kava plant
<i>wākā</i>	< <i>waka</i>	root of the kava plant
<i>tākī</i>	< <i>taki</i>	serve <i>yaqona</i> (used as a command)

There is also *sevusevu karo*, already mentioned.<sup>10</sup> The words *tānoa* 'yaqona bowl' < *tānoa*, *mādā* < *maca*, an exclamation by fellow drinkers when a person has finished drinking a *bilo* of *yaqona*, and *dībīdībī* 'yaqona stem slices' < *civicivi*, have also been borrowed (Paul Geraghty, pers. comm.).

I am tempted to add to this list *talānoā(karo)*, since 'sitting around telling stories' typically happens when people are sitting around the 'grog bowl', and *talanoa* is indeed a central element of kava drinking.

It is interesting that two kinship terms, *tabāle* < *tavale* 'brother-in-law: wife's brother' and *kārūā* < *karua* 'wife's sister's husband' have been borrowed. They are used most often (the second, only) as terms of address. Both words seem to be used primarily as part of a joking register (Roshila Singh, pers. comm.), as they can be indeed in Fijian, since joking is

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the system of rights and obligations of exchange among the Fijians. Fijian *kerekere* is glossed as 'to request' in Geraghty (1994), and Siegel (1992:103) elsewhere gives the meaning of the Fiji Hindi phrasal verb as 'ask for the possession of another'. This is closer to the mark, though unnecessarily awkward, I think. In *ham ek choṭaa kerekere kare māāṅta*, for instance, a close translation would be 'I want to make a small request' or 'I want you to do me a small favour'.

<sup>9</sup> Also realised as *lāwenā*.

<sup>10</sup> Although kava drinking among Indo-Fijians is social and does not involve a formal ceremony (other than some ritual hand-clapping), a *sevusevu* can of course be mentioned by Indo-Fijians in the context of a Fijian ceremony, in which they can on occasion be participants. Indeed Indo-Fijians have been known to present a *sevusevu* in fluent Fijian.

traditionally part of these kinship relationships, the basis of the joke being that if I call you my *tavale*, I am indirectly claiming your sister as my wife (Pio Manoa, pers. comm.).

Other terms referring to persons include *mārāmā* 'woman, wife', *turāngā* 'man, usually an important man', *kāilomā* 'part-European' (i.e. person of mixed descent, usually European and Fijian), *kāibālāngī* 'European' (i.e. Caucasian, or 'White') *kāibīti* 'Fijian'. One such item, not listed by Siegel, is *kāimandarāsī* '(descendant of) South Indian' < *kāi* 'person, native inhabitant', and *Madrasī* 'Madras' (in the pre-independence sense of the Madras Presidency, which covered most of South India).

Another small but significant semantic field includes exclamations, such as the greeting *būlā*, the polite form *tulou* (also as *cilou* < *tilou*) 'pardon me', and the interjection *sā*, expressing surprise. One could add other interjections, such as *oilei*, which can express surprise or sympathy, *so* and *sombo*, exclamations of disapproval, and *isa*, which can convey longing, nostalgia, and general sentimentality.<sup>11</sup>

Of the 125 or so Fijian loan words listed by Siegel (1987:272–277), all but about fifteen fit into the semantic fields listed above—including a separate list of over forty terms relating to marine life. Many of the fifteen remaining words have negative denotations: *bādū karo* < *vacu* 'to punch, with fist', *bimbā karo* < *veiba* 'to quarrel', *budesā* < *vucesā* 'lazy', *dālā* < *cala* 'error', *kailā maro* 'shouting, making noise', *kātakāta* 'angry' (lit. 'hot'), *lāmusonā* < *lamu sona* 'very frightened', *lengā* < *leqa* 'problem, esp. financial', *māmāngī* < *māmāqī* 'miserly'. Perhaps using a loan word softens the negative meaning conveyed. Similarly, the borrowing *bukete* 'pregnant' may function as a euphemism. Another possible explanation is that some of these loan words may be used because what they denote is seen as typical of Fijians. While quarrelling and being lazy indeed fit the stereotype, being miserly is a far more common stereotype Fijians have about Indo-Fijians. Maybe it is such a common accusation indeed that the word, through sheer frequency of use towards Indo-Fijians, has made its way into their language (as it has in Fiji English).

### 3.2.3 Borrowings from Dravidian languages

From our discussion about the sociolinguistic history of Dravidian languages in Fiji, it should not be surprising that they appear to have contributed exceedingly few loan words to Fiji Hindi. The most common of these may be the formal greeting and leave-taking *namaskāram*—while its synonym *dāsnam* is rarely used now. The only domain in which there has been any significant—if very limited—borrowing is kinship terms. In her Fiji Hindi–English dictionary, Hobbs (1985) flags words 'used primarily by South Indians' and all the words that carry this tag (except for the two greetings mentioned above) are kinship terms: *attā* (< Telugu) or *atte* (< Tamil and Malayalam) 'aunt: father's sister', *chūtī* (< Tamil) 'aunt:

<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the meaning of *isa* is best explained through examples of its use: one can say *isa* when a relative or friend is leaving—especially if it is for a long time—and one is sad to see him or her go. One can also say *isa* when the friend returns and one is happy to have been reunited. If you want to exclaim on the incredible cuteness of a baby, I recommend *isa*, which has the perfect connotation of sentimentality verging on maudlinness.

mother's sister', *pāṭi* (< Tamil) 'grandmother', *tātā* (< Tamil) 'grandfather'. To this short list we can add *akka* (< Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam) 'older sister'. Hobbs also identifies as South Indian *bhābhī* (sister-in-law: brother's wife or husband's sister) and *māmā* (uncle: mother's brother or sister's husband) and *māmī* (aunt: mother's brother's wife), but these are in fact used by all Indo-Fijians.

These few Dravidian kinship terms have not replaced (other) Fiji Hindi equivalents however, but are used alongside them. They are used primarily among descendants of South Indians, and as such function as identity markers, but other Indo-Fijians seem to have at least a passive knowledge of them, and some use them when conversing with people of South Indian origin.<sup>12</sup> It is well known that kinship terms are a domain in which lexical variation reflects different facets of the identity of Indians and overseas descendants of Indians. In Fiji, Muslims, just like descendants of South Indians, have distinct words for some kinship relationships, while most kinship terms are common to all speakers of Fiji Hindi.

The only other loan word I am aware of is the negative *ille* (< Tamil), which apparently is sometimes used jokingly, as in the phrase *paisa ille* 'no money' (Veena Khan, pers. comm.). Although *ille* seems to be fairly rare, the use of borrowings for humorous purposes (as with the two Fijian kinship loans mentioned above) is common to many communities in Fiji—and elsewhere—and we will come back to it.

While the Dravidian languages have borrowed substantially from Fiji Hindi, borrowing in the other direction has been negligible. This essentially one-way traffic is a reflection of the sociolinguistic history of Indian languages in Fiji, and in particular of the late arrival of speakers of Dravidian languages, a quarter of a century after their North Indian fellow *girmityas*, and of their minority position ever since.

Subsequent to the koineisation which led to Plantation Hindustani, Siegel (1987:163–183) argues that in the development of Fiji Hindi there was also pidginisation, which took place when speakers of languages unrelated to Hindi had to use the plantation lingua franca: Fijians, other Pacific Islanders, but in particular the indentured labourers who were speakers of Dravidian languages. Siegel (1987:183) himself wonders why, if Dravidian languages had an input in the Pidgin Hindustani on plantations, they seem to have contributed no lexical items. Fear of ridicule may have been a reason, he speculates. There is evidence for that and certainly, many descendants of South Indians are still teased today about their 'accent' in Fiji Hindi—essentially a result of the non-aspiration of aspirated stops, which is a stereotypical feature of 'South Indian' Fiji Hindi. It would have been far easier during indenture, to avoid ridicule, to drop lexical items than to add a series of phonemes to one's repertoire. The absence of aspirated stops in the speech of South Indian *girmityas* was also, in comparison with the general Plantation Hindustani of Fiji, a loss of distinction—a simplification typical of the pidginisation process which led to the formation of Pidgin Hindustani. The near absence of loan words from Dravidian languages also is a reflection of their unequal relationship with

<sup>12</sup> According to Paul Geraghty (pers. comm.), this is similar to the situation among Fiji descendants of labourers from the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (then the New Hebrides) who know longer speak their ancestors' language but have retained some kinship terms, such as *apu* 'grandfather' < Filafou (Vanuatu), and *nenā* 'grandmother' among the descendants of Solomon Islanders now living in Wailoku (Suva).

Fiji Hindi from the start. The fact that those few kinship terms which have survived are restricted to use by, and to some extent, with and about, descendants of South Indians, supports Siegel's suggestion that Dravidian speakers during indenture, to avoid ridicule, may have consciously avoided distinctive vocabulary 'in talking to outgroup members'.

## 4 Borrowings from Indian languages

### 4.1 Fiji Hindi into English

Fiji Hindi has contributed a fair number of loan words to Fiji English, which Tent describes (this volume). As Tent observes, the vast majority refer to objects or concepts typical of Indian culture, in particular religious terms and food. Here I will mention only a few examples, including a small number not listed by Tent, and comment on some of these loan words. One of the most common is the exclamation *acchā* 'good, okay, fine', as a confirmation request (okay?) and—perhaps less frequently—in its other sense of 'really?' (marking surprise).

Some loan words are religious terms, such as *pūjā* 'prayer', *bhajan* 'devotional song', *ḍīwalī* 'Hindu festival of lights', and *tulsi* 'sweet basil'.<sup>13</sup> While these words relate to Hinduism, other loans relate to Islam, such as *Ramzan* 'Ramadan, the Muslim fast', *maulvī* '(priest)'.<sup>14</sup>

Another important semantic field is food, both raw and cooked, and here spices and sweets figure prominently (*sarso* 'mustard seeds', *hardi* 'turmeric', and the sweets *barfi* and *gulāb jāmun*). Also featured are savoury snacks (*sāmosā*, *bhujā*) and different kinds of bread (*roti*, *puri*). Among the spices and herbs, *dhaniā* 'coriander', *jīrā* 'cumin', are known only by their Fiji Hindi names, and speakers of Fiji English are not normally aware of the English equivalents, which attests to the complete assimilation of these loan words. The same is true of the vegetables *bhindi* 'okra' and, perhaps to a slightly lesser extent, *baigan*, whose English equivalents *aubergine* and *eggplant* seem to be known to very few.

Other terms relating to Indian culture include items of clothing like *sāri* and *choli* 'blouse worn with a sari', *dhoti* (now obsolescent and used only in reference to the past, since the garment is no longer worn) and *dhobī* 'washerman or -woman', originally a caste name.<sup>14</sup>

The word *sangam* is not from Fiji Hindi but from Tamil. It is perhaps the only Dravidian loan word into English, via Fiji Hindi. Although its original meaning is 'association', in Fiji it refers only to the Then Ikya Sanmarga Sangam, a South Indian cultural organisation, and as such should perhaps not even be counted as a genuine loan word, but simply a proper noun.

The Fiji Hindi loan words most directly linked to the 'business of indenture' are *sardār* now used as 'foreman' or '(sugarcane cutting) gang leader', and possibly *bhai*, *bhaiya* and

<sup>13</sup> Sweet basil is a sacred plant among Hindus, hence its classification under 'religious terms'. Its culinary use is not known in Fiji.

<sup>14</sup> The Indian caste system traditionally did not travel well, since Hindus believed that one lost caste crossing the ocean's 'black water' or *kālā pānī*. There are only marginal remnants of the caste system in today's Fiji (see Jayawardena 1971; on the loss of caste terms, see Siegel 1992a:95–96).

*bahini* 'friend' (lit. 'brother' and 'sister'), through their use in the expression *jahājī bhāī/bahin* noted above, along with *girmīṭ* and its derivative *girmīṭiya* (both unrecognisable to nearly all speakers of Fiji Hindi as loan words from English). These and other Hindi loan words in Fiji English, as Tent notes, are used in the English of other former plantation colonies which had Indian indentured labourers, and indeed some are common to general English. As has been mentioned, some of these words indeed were borrowed into English as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, long before indenture in Fiji. The most likely scenario is that the words which were borrowed by Fiji English were introduced through the Indian presence since indenture. Would anyone have had cause to talk about *bhajans* or *puri* in Fiji before the Indian labourers arrived? Yet I am intrigued by the possibility that some of these loan words (for example *ghazal*, *curry*, *paisa*, *kedgerie*) may have been used by Europeans, perhaps especially those familiar with India.<sup>15</sup>

## 4.2 Fiji Hindi into Fijian

As is the case for Fiji Hindi loan words in English, most words that Fijian has borrowed from Fiji Hindi relate to Indo-Fijian culture. Indeed, many of the loan words borrowed into English and Fijian are the same. Out of a list of over 160 Fiji Hindi loan words which I culled from the Fijian monolingual dictionary (*iVolavosa* 1999), the most frequent semantic field represented, with over thirty items, is food: *baigani* < *baigan* 'eggplant', *aluā* < *halwā* 'a kind of sweet', *bidi* < *bindhi* 'okra'. Among these, spices again figure prominently: *meti* < *methī* 'fenugreek', *sarasō* < *sarso* 'mustard seed', *aradī* < *hardi* 'turmeric', *zira* < *jēra* 'cumin'. There are also a number of religious terms: *dīwali* 'the Hindu festival of lights', *diā* < *dīya* '(Diwali) candle', *aqarabati* < *agarbatti* 'incense', *molovī* < *maulvi* '(Muslim) priest'; and words for other cultural objects or concepts: *sari* 'sari', *dolaki* < *ḍholak* 'a kind of (musical) drum', *kulidādā* 'a game (played with two sticks)', *piala* 'enamel bowl', *pala* < *pāl* 'mat (made of sacks sewn together)', and *Fizibat* < *Fiji bāt* 'Fiji Hindi'. The interjection *are*, which can express surprise or anger, has also been borrowed, adding to the already rich repertoire of Fijian exclamations.

Some of the Fiji Hindi words related to indenture have made their way into Fijian, such as *saratari* < *sardār* 'overseer', and *qirimiti* (< *girmīṭ* < *agreement*) itself. The issue of the vector of borrowing arises again with respect to Hindi loan words which have also been present in English for a long time, such as *guru* 'guru, religious teacher', or *kari* 'curry'. For this last, Fijian has also borrowed *tarakari* < *tarkāri*, more likely to have been borrowed directly from Fiji Hindi, while *karivouta* is more likely to have been borrowed directly from English 'curry powder' than to be a loan-blend. Interestingly, *muluki* < *muluk* 'place of origin', one of the words which may have come into Fiji Hindi from Bazaar Hindustani (e.g. Chatterji 1972:244, 256), is glossed in the Fijian Dictionary as '*nakoro*', 'home

<sup>15</sup> Another intriguing issue is the possible contribution of loan words from Indian languages through the presence of 'Fiji's first Indian settlers' (Clunie 1984), Bengali-speaking lascars from the Malabar coast (in the modern Indian state of Kerala) at the beginning of the nineteenth century. (Thanks to Paul Geraghty for this reference.)

village/ancestral village'. According to Siegel (1987:195), in Fiji Hindi *muluk* refers to India, and it does have that specific meaning among the few remaining India-born girmityas—similarly *muluki/mulukin* is used in Natal for men/women who originated from the same district in India (Mesthrie 1990:348). The Fiji Hindi word is far less common nowadays, but when it is used by Fiji-born Indo-Fijians, it refers to their home place in Fiji, so the general meaning 'place of origin' remains alongside the specific one. In Fijian, *muluki* does not have the restricted meaning of 'India' or even of 'place of origin of Indo-Fijians', but is used as an equivalent of *nakoro*, with this same general meaning, and can just as well refer to the home village of a Fijian (Paul Geraghty, pers. comm.). The word *muluki* is also used in the same teasing, slightly derogatory sense of Fijian '*nako*' (<*nakoro*), 'country bumpkin, yokel', both when used about Indo-Fijians, where it can refer specifically to people 'from the old country' (India), and about rural Fijians (Pio Manoa, pers. comm.).

Over a third of the loan words from Fiji Hindi listed in the Fijian Dictionary are flagged as belonging to a joking register (*veiwali*). These are mostly high frequency words (in Fiji Hindi) including verb forms in which the imperative *-o* suffix has been fused, as in Pidgin Hindustani (Siegel 1987:173–180). Examples of verbs are *ao* 'come', *baito* < *baitho* 'sit', *banao* 'make', *bolo* 'speak, talk', *dinimaro* > *dīnmāro* 'to waste time', *pio* 'to drink'. Other loans include *paidar* 'to walk around' (< *paidar* 'on foot'), *paisā* 'money', *nāsā* 'drunk', *muruqā* < *murgā* 'chicken'. We have already seen the jocular use of borrowings—a common linguistic phenomenon—with the use of Fijian *tavale* and *karua* in Fiji Hindi, and Dravidian (Tamil) *ille* in Fiji Hindi *paisa ille*. Siegel (1995) shows how these words, used by Fijians among Fijians, signal joking on the part of the speaker, thus marking the informality of the situation and solidarity with the listener. Joking in Fijian culture is characteristic of certain kinship relationships, such as between *tavale* (see above) or people belonging to communities which are related through connections in the remote past and have the same ancestral gods (*tauvū*). Fiji Hindi words can be used in these joking contexts, where they function as teasing insults—perhaps implying that the addressee has 'Indian' characteristics. The appropriation of Fiji Hindi words thus serves to extend in a particularly creative way the joking register of Fijian, a register with which Fijians fulfil kinship obligations.

The theoretical implications of this use of Fiji Hindi words in the joking register of Fijian are spelled out in detail by Siegel and I will merely touch upon them here, though they are far-reaching. If we compare these words with the other, 'normal', borrowings from Fiji Hindi, it is difficult to distinguish between the two categories on linguistic grounds, since the same kinds of phonological and morphological assimilation appear to take place. Yet while 'normal' borrowings from Fiji Hindi are felt by Fijian speakers to be fully part of Fijian, who are unaware of their Fiji Hindi origin—as is customary in the historical process of borrowing—the 'joking words' are clearly perceived as being Fiji Hindi—indeed they have to be in order for the 'joke' to work. Hence Siegel refers to the phenomenon as code-switching, yet many Fijians who 'code-switch' in this way do not actually know the 'code', i.e. Fiji Hindi. It is likely that some linguists would reject the notion that a speaker can switch into a language he/she does not know, yet Siegel argues that his data demonstrates that monolingual speakers can indeed switch, and therefore that bilingualism is not a prerequisite to code-switching.



The twists and turns of arguments about the distinction between borrowings (in the diachronic sense of assimilated loans or the synchronic sense of unintegrated forms used by bilinguals), code-mixing, and code-switching seem to have run into a theoretical dead-end, and the data on the Fijian joking register exposes especially clearly some of the limitations of current models. It seems to me that some of these weaknesses are inherent to what Singh (e.g. 1997:16) has called 'the monolingual view of multilingualism', which essentially still tends to view monolingualism as the norm and bi- and multilingualism as the exception in need of explanation, while debates on the measurement of bilingualism and classifications of speakers into 'full bilinguals', 'semi-speakers', and similar categories continue to throw more heat than light. That such views are flagrantly inadequate in the context of the South Pacific or India should not tempt us to any claim of exceptionalism for these parts of the world—on the periphery of current paradigms. It is far more likely that it should be read as an indication of their general inadequacy. Perhaps Khubchandani's (1997) notion of 'grassroots' multilingualism will prove more fruitful, and we await investigations of the dynamics of multilingual situations which do not ignore the creativity of speakers in using the language resources in their environment, or the 'joy of languaging' (Singh, ed. 1997:16).

## 5 Conclusion

Any movement of people is a movement of culture, and borrowing has been one of the linguistic consequences of indenture in Fiji. The presence of the *girmityas* has had an impact on all the languages brought into contact in their new environment. The criss-crossing of borrowings, particularly between Fijian and Fiji Hindi, and the domains affected—hitherto unknown flora, fauna, and features of the landscape, the cultures of the immigrants and of the indigenous people—are evidence of the mutual impact of the two communities. That *nangonā* drinking should have become such a central part of Indo-Fijian culture, and that Fijians can talk about *qirimiti*, the founding event of the Indo-Fijian community, are significant aspects not only of linguistic but of cultural change.

The unequal strength of borrowing between Dravidian languages and Fiji Hindi, with a fairly large number of loan words from Fiji Hindi into the Dravidian languages but an almost complete lack of borrowings from Dravidian languages into Fiji Hindi (or English or Fijian, for that matter), reflects the power relationship which has marginalised Dravidian languages since the beginning of their history in Fiji and has led, among most present-day descendants of South Indians, to the loss of the languages of their ancestors. The indirect route taken by both Fijian and English loan words—via Fiji Hindi—also attests to the dominance of Fiji Hindi among the few remaining speakers of Dravidian languages.

As for English words in Fiji Hindi, it seems that both the dating of loan words and the vector of borrowing can be refined. It is likely that a fairly large number of English loan words pre-dated indenture, and that there were different layers of pre-indenture borrowings. Some loan words are likely to have been borrowed in and around recruiting centres themselves and on ships—this is after all where the process of koineisation started—particularly those which deal with 'the business of indenture' itself and are common to varieties of overseas Hindi in the indenture colonies (*kulubar*, *dīpu*, *girmit*), at the same

time as Hindustani words like *Kalkatiā* and *jahājī bhāī/bahin* would have been coined. More general words found in ex-colonies, such as *suklāi ~suplāi*, may have been borrowed earlier. When a specific word was borrowed and from which source remains to be determined. It is difficult at this point to say which loan words may have come directly from the various dialects and subdialects of Hindi spoken by the immigrants, which from the lingua franca Hindustani which was undoubtedly known to many, or more specifically from the basilectal Bazaar Hindustani. But it is clear that Bazaar Hindustani, which Siegel has argued had a role in the making of the koiné, did contain a substantial number of English loan words, and that it is likely to have contributed some to the koiné which led to the formation of Plantation Hindustani and eventually of Fiji Hindi. Although this does not solve the puzzle of vector and date, it may at least throw a different light on the borrowing of words such as *āpul* 'apple'. Whether this really was an 'unnecessary' borrowing may remain open to debate, but it is likely that the reason why it is present in Fiji Hindi instead of the perfectly adequate Hindi *seb* is that, like many other 'English' loan words, it was actually borrowed not in Fiji, during or after indenture, and not from English, but in India, before indenture, from some variety of Hindi/Hindustani. If this is the case, the term 'English loan words', for a number of words of English origin in Fiji Hindi, is a bit of a misnomer which obscures the rich and tangled history of the vector of borrowing.

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