

# SOME ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE USE AND ATTITUDES IN FIJI

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

A survey of language use and attitudes in Fiji was conducted by the authors in mid-1993.<sup>1</sup> Its aim was to identify the use and functions of, and attitudes towards, several of the languages of Fiji; and to ascertain in particular the extent of language shift and/or maintenance. The survey involved administering almost 1,000 questionnaires to a stratified sample of people in two major geographical regions. Firstly, in the capital, Suva, Fijians and Indo-Fijians were surveyed with respect to their use of and attitudes towards Fijian (Standard Fijian and other communalects), Hindustani (both Standard—or *Shudh*—Hindi and Fiji Hindi)<sup>2</sup> and English. Secondly, on the western side of the main island of Viti Levu and in the north of the second largest island, Vanua Levu, descendants of South Indians were surveyed

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<sup>2</sup> Fijian is characterised by a great deal of regional diversity, with about 300 communalects. We use 'communalect' here as "a variety spoken by people who claim they use the same speech" (Geraghty 1983:18), and 'Fijian' as a cover term for both Standard Fijian and these communalects. Fiji Hindi is a local variety of Hindi, which evolved from a koiné of various dialects of the Hindustani lingua franca of North India (Siegel 1987:187–203).

with respect to their use of, and attitudes towards, the Dravidian language of their ancestors (Tamil, Telugu or Malayalam), Hindi (both varieties) and English.

With this survey we attempt to study two distinct situations. One involves the two major languages of Fiji, Fijian and Hindi, their different varieties, and the interplay between these and the dominant official language and lingua franca, English, including the possibility of language shift. The other involves the relationships between minority languages which are known to have been undergoing shift in their community (the Dravidian languages), the dominant language of that community, Hindi, and, again, English. While these two situations are clearly different, there is also much overlap between them, and it was deemed that a single survey, using essentially the same instrument and the same methodology, would yield useful data, while each component of the survey could be further analysed separately.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN FIJI

The two major languages in Fiji, in terms of numbers of native speakers, are Fijian and Fiji Hindi. While the term 'Standard Fijian' commonly designates the particular variety of Fijian<sup>3</sup> used as the lingua franca amongst Fijians, most Fijians speak a communalect as their first language. Among Indo-Fijians, who at the time of the survey made up about 47% of the population (Bureau of Statistics estimate), nearly everyone's first language is Fiji Hindi, while Shudh Hindi is used for some official functions.

Most Indo-Fijians are descendants of labourers who came to Fiji during the indenture period (1879–1916). Three quarters of indentured labourers came from the north of India and most spoke varieties of Hindi, while most of those who came from the south were speakers of Tamil, Telugu or Malayalam, all Dravidian languages (Lal 1983; Siegel 1987).

### 2.2 PREVIOUS SURVEYS

Four previous surveys dealing with language use and attitudes have been conducted in Fiji, each with at least some implications for language shift, each also with limitations in terms of methodology, geographical region(s) surveyed or issues investigated. They are Adam (1958), White (1971), Siegel (1973) and May (1990).

Adam (1958) reports on a large-scale survey (close to 5,000 responses) conducted in 1950 by the Education Department, with a focus on the attitudes of parents of school children towards the main language to be used in school. Results showed that a majority of parents advocated English, and that preference for English was related to place of residence, age, level of education and occupation.

The other three studies were on a much smaller scale and each limited to a single geographical region: White and May studied Suva, while Siegel surveyed the urban and rural population in and around Nadi. These surveys were more comprehensive in scope than Adam's, as they investigated not only attitudes towards language but also patterns of language use.

<sup>3</sup> 'Standard Fijian' evolved in towns and possibly in church institutions or boarding schools where Fijians from different regions came together for the first time. It is based on the communalects of south-eastern Vitu Levu (Paul Geraghty, pers. comm.).

White (1971) conducted a survey of language use as part of a larger survey of low income households in the Raiwai area of Suva. The language survey of 404 Indo-Fijians and Fijians dealt mainly with the use of English, and was conducted in English. Among results with implications for language shift, White found that English was the home language of a surprisingly high number of households, and that it was the main language used for communication between the two major ethnic groups, although bilingualism in Fijian and Fiji Hindi was also present and, he claimed, a typical urban phenomenon.

Siegel (1973) conducted a survey in the Nadi area of 145 Indo-Fijians who were interviewed in Fiji Hindi. He found that Shudh Hindi was being displaced by English for most formal language functions, such as reading, writing and public speaking. Concurrently, a comparison of the 1956 and 1966 censuses revealed that Fiji Hindi was displacing the Dravidian languages still used in Fiji. Contrary to White, Siegel also found that most Indo-Fijians communicated with Fijians in Fijian, rather than in English, and that bilingualism in Fijian and Fiji Hindi was therefore not exclusively an urban phenomenon. Thus, the pattern of language use was often quite complex, while language shift was not limited to a simple 'gain' by English.

May (1990) surveyed 834 people in the Suva area about their perception of their language skills. He reports that the answers to the few preliminary questions on language use indicate that young people were shifting towards greater use of English in the home.

Each of the four surveys briefly reviewed here suffers from limitations. Adam addresses himself only to the issue of language attitudes, and that in the specific context of education. White limits himself to the Suva City area and administered the questionnaire in English. Siegel's study deals only with Indo-Fijians in the Nadi area and he acknowledges that his sample was skewed in terms of sex and that some of his questions were too general. May's survey has very few questions dealing with language use and they also are extremely general. Three of the studies are also dated now.

### 3. THE 1993 SURVEY

#### 3.1 HYPOTHESES

Our survey covered a fairly wide geographical region, a larger sample than most of these previous surveys, and a more detailed and wider array of issues related to both language use and attitudes. A stratified sample of the population was surveyed so as to establish which sections of the population are most closely involved in any shift.

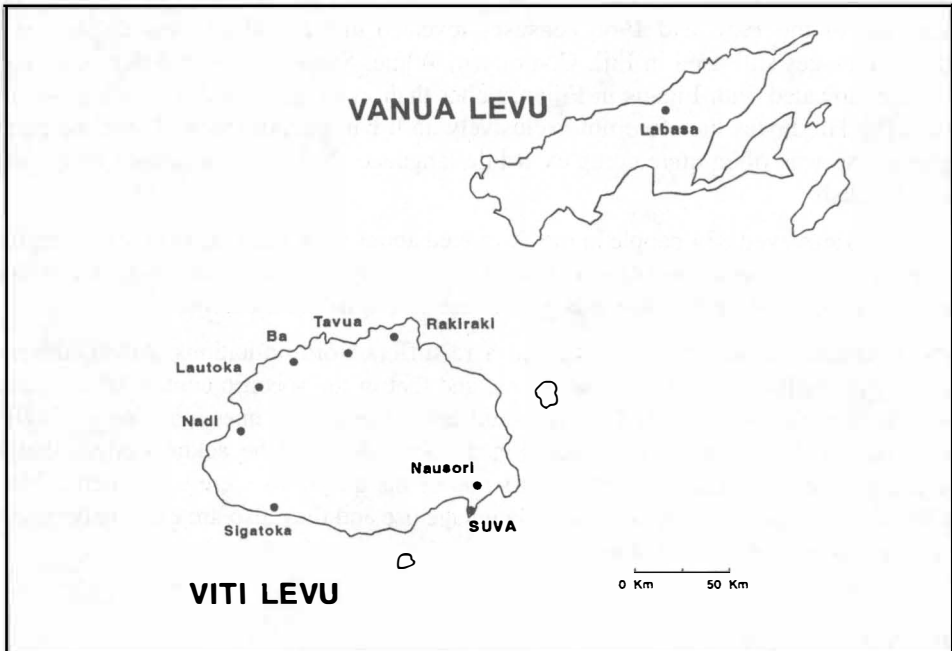
The major hypotheses tested are as follows:

- language shift is taking place;
- two different language shifts are occurring: an overall shift towards greater use of English, and a shift for speakers of Dravidian languages towards Fiji Hindi;
- the shift towards English implies, in most cases, an increase in bilingualism rather than a loss of the first language, which is being displaced in some domains, rather than replaced overall;
- the shift of speakers of Dravidian languages towards Fiji Hindi, on the contrary, implies a loss of the first language over time.

### 3.2 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.2.1 REGIONS SELECTED AND PARTICIPANTS

The two regions surveyed were chosen for different reasons. The Suva-Nausori area was selected because, as the largest urban area in Fiji, it is the most likely to exhibit trends towards language shift. The west of Viti Levu and north of Vanua Levu, known as the 'sugarcane belt', are the areas most heavily populated by Indo-Fijians in general, and descendants of South Indians in particular.<sup>4</sup> The specific regions surveyed were urban and rural areas in and around Sigatoka, Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki on Viti Levu, and Labasa and the Macuata rural area around Labasa on Vanua Levu.



MAP: REGIONS COVERED IN THE SURVEY

About 1,000 informants participated in the survey. Two samples of 504 informants each were designed for each region surveyed.<sup>5</sup> Both samples were stratified in terms of sex and age, with equal numbers of male and female respondents, reflecting closely proportions in the general population, and equal numbers in three age-groups (15–25, 30–45, 50+), since the behaviour of different age-groups is often related to the presence or absence of language shift. Information on education was also gathered, in particular the highest level of education attained, another variable thought to be related to language use and attitudes.

<sup>4</sup> The Fiji censuses do not distinguish among Indo-Fijians on the basis of their Indian ancestors' origin, so that the geographical location of descendants of South Indians is not documented. Nonetheless, some regions of Fiji are well known as being home to a relatively high proportion of descendants of South Indians (Rakiraki, for instance), while the rest are scattered among the general Indo-Fijian population.

<sup>5</sup> Each half of the survey was designed to be administered by a team of 12 interviewers, but only 11 were available in July for the SI survey. One interviewer administered a number of additional questionnaires in November, yielding a total of 481 respondents rather than the 504 planned.

The Suva sample was also stratified in terms of ethnicity and income, with equal numbers of Fijians and Indo-Fijians, the two major ethnic groups in Fiji, and equal numbers of respondents in the low and mid to high income groups (Table 1). The cut-off point between low and mid-high groups was set at an annual income of F\$10,000 per household, the figure normally used for Fiji by sociologists (Vijay Naidu, pers. comm.).

TABLE 1: DESIGN OF THE SUVA SURVEY

Income group	Fijians		Indo-Fijians	
	<i>males</i>	<i>females</i>	<i>males</i>	<i>females</i>
<i>Mid-high income group</i>	15-25	15-25	15-25	15-25
	30-45	30-45	30-45	30-45
	50+	50+	50+	50+
<i>Low income group</i>	15-25	15-25	15-25	15-25
	30-45	30-45	30-45	30-45
	50+	50+	50+	50+

(Note: The sample was designed to have 21 respondents per cell.)

The sample for the 'South Indian' survey<sup>6</sup> was stratified in terms of geographical region and area of residence, with equal numbers of respondents from the west of Viti Levu and the north of Vanua Levu, and two-thirds urban residents versus one-third urban dwellers, a proportion which reflects figures for the whole country (Table 2). Stratification by area of residence was selected rather than income—although information about income was also gathered—as it was deemed a more important variable, particularly in relation to the possible presence of language shift, urban dwellers being thought more likely to be shifting away from the South Indian language of their ancestors.

TABLE 2: DESIGN OF THE SOUTH INDIAN SURVEY

Residency	Viti Levu		Vanua Levu	
	<i>males</i>	<i>females</i>	<i>males</i>	<i>females</i>
<i>Urban residents</i>	15-25	15-25	15-25	15-25
	30-45	30-45	30-45	30-45
	50+	50+	50+	50+
<i>Rural residents</i>	15-25	15-25	15-25	15-25
	30-45	30-45	30-45	30-45
	50+	50+	50+	50+

(Note: The sample was designed to have 28 respondents per rural cell and 14 per urban cell.)

<sup>6</sup> The term 'South Indian' survey ('SI survey', for short) is used in this paper, reluctantly, as shorthand. The accurate term, unfortunately rather unwieldy, would be 'survey of Indo-Fijians of South Indian descent'.

### 3.2.2 INSTRUMENTS

Two slightly different questionnaires were designed: one for the Suva survey, one for the South Indian (SI) survey. The Suva questionnaire was printed in three versions—English, Standard Fijian, and Fiji Hindi—and the SI questionnaire in two—English and Fiji Hindi. Both questionnaires, in all language versions, were piloted, then slightly modified.

Each version of the questionnaire contains approximately 220 questions. Besides the requisite demographic data, the questionnaires included questions on:

- **Language background**, e.g. languages spoken by family members, as well as when and where English or (for the SI survey) Fiji Hindi was learned.
- **Language use** in different domains, for different purposes or topics, with different interlocutors, e.g. writing a letter to a relative, friend or for business; discussing work, religion, or politics with a boss, subordinate, co-worker, a customer or a teacher; and the language(s) used in the home with various family members.
- **Language attitudes**, e.g. whether a particular language should be taught in school, or used more extensively on the radio or television; whether a particular language is considered beautiful or pleasing to the ear; which language is regarded as the most useful; whether code-switching is acceptable; and attitudes towards the respondents' own competency in the various languages they know.

### 3.2.3 PROCEDURE

Questionnaires were administered over two weeks in July 1993 by a team of assistants consisting of 22 University of the South Pacific linguistics students and one lecturer. Twelve assistants worked on the Suva survey and eleven on the SI survey, each being assigned to administer 42 questionnaires. The assistants were matched with the people they interviewed in terms of ethnicity and, whenever possible, sex.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Fijians interviewed Fijians and Indo-Fijians interviewed Indo-Fijians in the Suva area, whilst interviewers for the SI survey either were themselves descendants of South Indians or had close relatives who were. All interviewers worked in an area where they had close kinship ties. Interviewers and respondents, therefore, belonged to some of the same social networks, so that initial contact was natural, agreement to take part in the survey was probably more forthcoming, and the authenticity of responses more likely.

Initial contact was made in the community language shared by interviewer and respondent (Fijian or Fiji Hindi). Once the person contacted agreed to participate in the survey, the questionnaire was administered verbally in the language chosen by the respondent (Fijian or English, Fiji Hindi or English) and the interviewer recorded answers on the appropriate printed version. Interviewers were monitored during the two weeks of the survey.

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<sup>7</sup> As there were more female than male interviewers, males interviewers interviewed *only* male respondents, while some female interviewers interviewed both female and male respondents

#### 4. RESULTS

Not all 220 or so questions were applicable to every respondent. The detailed section on language use outside the home was subdivided into workplace, high school and tertiary institution, and normally only one category was applicable to a given respondent. Some respondents were unemployed and did not answer any question in that section. Others were illiterate in English, their vernacular or both, and questions on reading and writing did not apply to them. Thus the average number of responses obtained for each respondent was about 150.

The data set consists of three files, one for SI respondents, and two for Suva respondents—one for Fijians and one for Indo-Fijians. Separate data files were necessary because some of the questions asked each group were slightly different or dealt with different languages. Nonetheless there is a great deal of overlap, and most answers are comparable.

A full analysis of the data has yet to be completed, and in this paper we concentrate on a few salient results. The dependent (linguistic) variables we consider here are:

##### **language use:**

- language of questionnaire
- language use in the home
- incidence of code-switching

##### **attitudes towards language:**

- the most pleasing language
- the most useful language
- preferred language for answering questions about oneself
- is code-switching *good* or *bad*?

The independent (social) variables are:

- sex
- age
- income
- highest level of education reached
- ethnicity (for the Suva survey)
- area of residence—urban/rural (for the SI survey)

Chi-square tests were administered to determine the level of statistical significance for all variables analysed. Preliminary analysis of responses obtained indicates no statistical significance for sex in relation to language use or attitudes. In the survey as a whole, income and education level are closely linked, but education level is the more significant of the two. Similarly, in the SI part of the survey, urban versus rural residence and income are closely linked but, as predicted, area of residence is the more significant of the two.

## 4.1 LANGUAGE USE

## 4.1.1 LANGUAGE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Since respondents could answer questions in their vernacular or in English, their choice became our first data point. Overall, a slight majority of respondents, 56.5%, answered in their vernacular (Fijians in Fijian, Indo-Fijians in Fiji Hindi). There are, however, interesting differences between the different sections of the population surveyed. In the Suva survey, the relationship between ethnic group and language of questionnaire is highly significant, with Fijians answering in the vernacular and Indo-Fijians in English in roughly the same proportions, so that results for both groups are almost a mirror image of each other (Table 3).<sup>8</sup>

TABLE 3: LANGUAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRE BY ETHNIC GROUP  
(Suva Survey)

Ethnicity	Vernacular	English
Fijians	58	44
Indo-Fijians	44	56

(Chi-square = 8.65, df = 1, p = .0033)

In the SI survey a slightly higher percentage of respondents chose the vernacular, 62%. However, there is a highly significant difference between rural and urban dwellers, resulting again in a near mirror image, with over three quarters of rural dwellers answering in Fiji Hindi while 69% of urbanites answered in English (Table 4).

TABLE 4: LANGUAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRE BY AREA OF RESIDENCE  
(SI survey)

Residence	Vernacular	English
Urban	31	69
Rural	77	23

(Chi-square = 95.10, df = 1, p = .0001)

The relationship between choice of language and age is also highly significant, so that the younger the respondents are, the more likely they are to answer the questionnaire in English (Table 5).

TABLE 5: LANGUAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRE BY AGE-GROUP

Age	Vernacular	English
15–25	41.6	68.4
30–45	51.5	48.5
50+	77.2	22.8

(Chi-square = 92.41, df = 2, p = .0001)

<sup>8</sup> For ease of readability, all figures in the tables, starting with Table 3, represent percentages of responses. Chi-squares are calculated, however, on the basis of frequency counts

The relationship between choice of language and educational level is even more dramatic. The more highly educated respondents are, the more likely they are to answer the questionnaire in English. Nearly 90% of primary-educated respondents answered in the vernacular, compared to less than half of those with a secondary education, and only a quarter of those with a tertiary education (Table 6).

TABLE 6: LANGUAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRE BY EDUCATION LEVEL

Education	Vernacular	English
Primary	89	11
Secondary	42.5	57.5
Tertiary	24.4	75.6

(Chi-square = 144.07, df = 2, p = .0001)

These results may reflect both ability in, and attitude towards, English. Exposure to English takes place primarily in the classroom, where it is the official medium of instruction, and therefore ability in English is normally lower the less educated one is. English is also considered prestigious, particularly for anything regarded as having some official aura, which answering a questionnaire may well have for the respondents.

#### 4.1.2 LANGUAGE USE AT HOME

The questionnaire section on language use covers two broad domains, home and work (or school, for younger respondents). The home section has a series of questions about the respondent's choice of language when addressing various interlocutors: 'What language did you mostly use at home when you last talked with your [parents, husband/wife, children, brothers and/or sisters, other relatives, friends and visitors]?' Although responses from each community vary in some respects, common trends emerge. The most important is that in all cases the predominance of vernaculars is overwhelming, with an overall average of over 96% (Table 7).

TABLE 7: LANGUAGE USE AT HOME: VERNACULAR VERSUS ENGLISH

Survey	Vernacular	English
Suva Survey	93.8	6.2
SI Survey	98.7	1.3

(Chi-square = 3.33, df = 1, p = .0682)

The difference between the Suva and the SI parts of the survey is not highly significant. In the Suva survey, figures for both ethnic groups are very high, over 90% (Table 8). The slightly greater percentage of use of the vernacular among Indo-Fijians than among Fijians is not highly significant.

TABLE 8: LANGUAGE USE AT HOME: VERNACULAR VERSUS ENGLISH  
(Suva Survey)

Ethnicity	Vernacular	English
Fijians	91.9	8.1
Indo-Fijians	95.6	4.4

(Chi-square = 1.17, df = 1, p = .2798)

As for differences in language use according to interlocutor, in both communities the vernacular is most likely to be used with relatives, and English with friends (Tables 9 and 10). Percentages for these categories of interlocutors in the two groups are very close, with figures for English marginally higher among Fijians than among Indo-Fijians. On the other hand, percentages of use of English with children, and especially with spouses, are significantly higher among Fijians ( $p = .00749$  and  $p = .0013$ , respectively).

TABLE 9: LANGUAGE USE AT HOME: FIJI HINDI VERSUS ENGLISH  
(Suva Indo-Fijians)

Language	with relatives	with spouse	with parents	with children	with siblings	with friends
Fiji Hindi	98.4	98.2	97.9	97.1	94.3	87.6
English	1.6	1.8	2.1	2.9	5.7	12.4

(Note: Columns are ranked in order of percentage of Fiji Hindi usage.)

TABLE 10: LANGUAGE USE AT HOME: FIJIAN VERSUS ENGLISH  
(Suva Fijians)

Language	with relatives	with parents	with siblings	with children	with spouse	with friends
Fijian	98	96.6	91.6	90	89.7	85.3
English	2	3.4	8.4	10	10.3	14.7

(Note: Columns are ranked in order of percentage of Fijian usage.)

Paul Geraghty (pers. comm.) considers the relatively high figures for English among Fijians unreliable. He argues that in fact few Fijians speak English at home (especially with their spouses, for instance), but that speaking English at home is commonly viewed as a sign of sophistication and education. The relatively high incidence of reported English use would be more likely then to be a reflection of this attitude than an accurate picture of behaviour. However, this purported high status of English by Fijians is not shown to the same extent in the responses to our questions on language attitudes (see §4.2). The discrepancies between the two communities in language choice with some interlocutors, particularly children and spouses, remain unexplained.

The figures for Fijian in Table 10 are in fact an aggregate of different responses ('Standard Fijian' and 'communalect'). Separate figures appear in Table 11, showing the great vitality of Fijian communalects, which have for most interlocutors a range of percentage of use only slightly lower than that of Standard Fijian (30%–50%). The communalects are spoken the

most to parents, siblings and relatives, less to spouses and children, and very little to friends. It is to be expected that the communalects should be most commonly spoken with kinfolk. In the city, on the other hand, friends are not necessarily from one's communalectal region, which explains the relatively high figures for both Standard Fijian and English. The figures for spouses may be explained by marriage between speakers of different communalects, and their consequent use of Standard Fijian as a lingua franca at home. The similar figures for children may indicate that, for those families, Standard Fijian may be, to some extent, displacing the communalects.

TABLE 11: LANGUAGE USE AT HOME: STANDARD FIJIAN, COMMUNALECT AND ENGLISH  
(Suva Fijians)

Language	with friends	with children	with spouse	with relatives	with parents	with siblings
Standard Fijian	72.2	58.6	57.6	46.8	38.8	38.3
Communalect	13.1	31.4	32.1	51.2	57.8	53.4
English	14.7	10	10.3	2	3.4	8.4

(Note: Columns are ranked in order of percentage of Standard Fijian usage.)

In the SI survey, the figures for the vernacular are even higher and the use of English negligible, probably because the people surveyed include both rural and urban dwellers while the Suva survey, by definition, has only city residents. Differences in language use between different interlocutors are much smaller, at 2% versus around 11% for the Suva survey (Table 12).

TABLE 12: LANGUAGE USE AT HOME: VERNACULAR VERSUS ENGLISH  
(SI Survey)

Language	with relatives	with spouse	with parents	with siblings	with friends	with children
Vernacular	99.4	99.2	99.1	98.7	95.5	97.4
English	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.3	1.5	2.6

(Note: Columns are ranked in order of percentage of vernacular usage.)

Among descendants of South Indians the overwhelming bulk of communication is reportedly conducted in Fiji Hindi, while the use of Dravidian languages is quite low, and that of English even lower (Table 13). The relationship between age and language use is obvious, as respondents tend to use a Dravidian language more often with their spouses and parents than with their children. The use of Dravidian languages with friends and visitors is naturally low as many of these are not necessarily descendants of South Indians themselves and have no knowledge of these languages. In fact the rankings by interlocutors for Fiji Hindi and Dravidian languages are a mirror image of each other.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Note that there is not a single instance of reported use of Shudh Hindi.

TABLE 13: LANGUAGE USE AT HOME: FIJI HINDI, DRAVIDIAN LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH (SI Survey)

Language	with friends	with children	with relatives	with siblings	with spouse	with parents
Fiji Hindi	95.8	94.5	93.8	90.8	88.3	83.9
Dravidian language	2.7	2.9	5.6	7.9	10.9	15.2
English	1.5	2.6	0.6	1.3	0.8	0.9

(Note: Columns are ranked in order of percentage of Fiji Hindi usage.)

#### 4.1.3 CODE-SWITCHING

Respondents were asked whether they switched languages during their last conversation with someone from their speech community. This kind of self-report may of course be as indicative of attitudes as of behaviour, if not more. (A later question probed attitudes towards code-switching directly, and results will be discussed in §4.2.4).

There were four possible answers: (1) 'all the time', (2) 'quite a lot', (3) 'not a lot' and (4) 'not at all'. The overall majority of respondents report some code-switching, but here again, there are interesting differences between sections of the community. In the Suva sample, nearly 79% report switching between English and their vernacular. But Table 14, in which answers have been combined into two categories (some switching, 'yes', versus no switching, 'no'), shows a very significant difference between the two ethnic groups, with Indo-Fijians reporting considerably more code-switching.

TABLE 14: CODE-SWITCHING (Suva Survey)

Ethnicity	Yes	No
Fijians	69.2	30.8
Indo-Fijians	88.5	11.5

(Chi-square = 25.68, df = 1, p = .00005)

Two factors may account for this higher figure among Indo-Fijians. One is that it indicates a more tolerant view of code-switching, a conclusion supported by the results of our direct question on attitude (see §4.2). The other is that 'code-switching' is often interpreted as occurring simply when a number of English borrowings are present in speech. Although this interpretation is common to both communities, the higher percentage of borrowings from English in Fiji Hindi may account for the higher reported incidence of code-switching among Indo-Fijians.

For the SI survey the question related to the incidence of switching between Fiji Hindi and a Dravidian language. This question of course does not apply to over half the respondents, who do not know the Dravidian language of their ancestors. Among those who do, 51.1% reported code-switching in their last conversation with a fellow 'South Indian'. More than a greater dislike for code-switching, this probably reflects the marginal competence of many in their Dravidian language. This explanation is supported by other results in the survey, which show for most respondents both a low self-evaluation of

competence and a drastically reduced use of Dravidian languages in most domains (see, for example, Table 13).

Another important finding about code-switching is the highly significant relationship between reported incidence and age, but the significance is different in the two halves of the survey. In Suva, the younger the respondents are, the more likely they are to report code-switching during a conversation with a member of the same speech community, although the difference between the over 50 and the under 45 is much greater than that between the young and the middle-aged (Table 15).

TABLE 15: CODE-SWITCHING BY AGE-GROUP  
(Suva Survey)

Age	Yes	No
15-25	87	13
30-45	82.4	17.6
50+	64.9	35.1

(Chi-square = 25.3, df = 2, p = .00005 )

Age is also significant in the SI survey, but here the relationship is more complex, with the middle group much more likely to code-switch than expected, and the older group relatively less (Table 16).

TABLE 16: CODE-SWITCHING BY AGE-GROUP  
(SI Survey)

Age	Yes	No
15-25	48	52
30-45	69	31
50+	42	58

(Chi-square = 12.1, df = 2, p = .0023)

There is also a highly significant relationship between reported code-switching and education level in the Suva survey, so that the higher the level of education respondents have attained, the more likely they are to report switching (Table 17). This is not surprising, since English is the official medium of instruction and a higher level of education means more exposure to English and, normally, greater competence in it (see §4.1.1 and §4.1.2). Respondents who are more competent and more comfortable with English are more in a position to switch than respondents with less competence.

TABLE 17: CODE-SWITCHING BY EDUCATION LEVEL  
(Suva Survey)

Education	Yes	No
Primary	52.7	47.3
Secondary	82.3	17.7
Tertiary	89.7	10.3

(Chi-square = 46.99, df = 2, p = .00005)

The same is not true for the SI survey, where the question was about switching between Fiji Hindi and a Dravidian language. The lack of relationship between reported code-switching and education level is explained by the fact that switching is between two languages which can both be considered 'vernacular', rather than between a vernacular and English, the official medium of education and a language widely perceived as prestigious in most official spheres.

## 4.2 ATTITUDES

### 4.2.1 MOST PLEASING LANGUAGE

Responses to the question 'Which language do you think is the most pleasing to the ear?' reveal that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (overall, 80%) have a much greater attachment to their own language(s) than to English. If the aesthetic evaluation of English is similar across groups, however, the evaluation of the other language varieties known to the respondents varies considerably between Suva's Fijians and Indo-Fijians, and between Suva's Indo-Fijians and the west's Indo-Fijians of South Indian descent.

In the Suva survey, the striking difference between Fijians and Indo-Fijians is in their evaluation of the standard variety and the vernacular. While Fijians rate their regional communalect higher than Standard Fijian, Indo-Fijians rate Shudh Hindi higher than Fiji Hindi (Table 18).

TABLE 18: MOST PLEASING LANGUAGE BY ETHNIC GROUP  
(Suva Survey)

Ethnicity	Vernacular	Standard language	English
Fijians	60.3	23.4	16.3
Indo-Fijians	29.1	45.8	25.1

(Chi-square = 51.37, df = 2, p = .0001)

The vitality of the Fijian communalects has already been demonstrated in the section on language use (see Table 11), and the strength of speakers' attachment to them is obvious here. The importance of Standard Fijian both as a standard and as a lingua franca among Fijians from different regions does not lessen the status of those communalects, which is very high at the local level, since they are used for everyday informal communication and as an expression of regional solidarity, and also often for ceremonial purposes.

The high rating of Shudh Hindi among Indo-Fijians, on the other hand, can be explained by the extremely low status of Fiji Hindi. In spite of the very restricted domains of Shudh

Hindi in Fiji and the admitted low competence in it of most Indo-Fijians, the contempt Fiji Hindi is held in is nearly universal and its denigration the subject of many letters to the editor in the local press. Some deny Fiji Hindi's very existence, others consider it a bastardised form of standard Hindi, and any attempt at recognition is received with a storm of outraged protest.<sup>10</sup>

A comparison of results for Suva's Indo-Fijian respondents and the Indo-Fijians of South Indian descent reveals very different attitudes towards Shudh Hindi and Fiji Hindi. While Suva Indo-Fijian respondents rate Shudh Hindi highest, it is rated lowest by descendants of South Indians, who rate Fiji Hindi highest, and Dravidian languages in second place (Table 19).<sup>11</sup>

TABLE 19: MOST PLEASING LANGUAGE  
(Suva Survey)

Fiji Hindi	Dravidian language	English	Shudh Hindi
45.6	20.8	17.3	16

Since most respondents in the SI survey either do not speak a Dravidian language at all or have marginal competence in it, this second place rating is quite high and indicates a strong attachment to languages which, in spite of their very restricted use, are still considered by many as a badge of group identity. The completely different evaluation of Shudh Hindi and Fiji Hindi by the two groups can also be explained. Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam belong to the Dravidian language family and are not related to Hindi, a member of the Indo-European family, and descendants of South Indians have not inherited other Indo-Fijians' prejudices against Fiji Hindi or their awe for Shudh Hindi. Descendants of South Indians, then, clearly have, as a group, different language attitudes, and this confirms that they have a distinct identity within the Indo-Fijian community.

In the survey overall, there is a strong correlation between language rating and two social variables, age and education level. Generally, the younger the respondent, the more likely he or she is to rate English highest. The rating of English also increases with the highest education level attained by respondents.

The relationship between age and the rating of English is very clear among Suva's Indo-Fijians, for example (Table 20). There is an even stronger correlation between age and the rating of Fiji Hindi: the older the respondent is, the more likely he or she is to rate Fiji Hindi highest. The rating of Shudh Hindi is more constant across age-groups.

<sup>10</sup> One such case was when a Peace Corps volunteer compiled a dictionary of Fiji Hindi, using the Roman orthography, primarily to provide a resource for fellow volunteers needing to learn the language for their work (Hobbs 1985).

<sup>11</sup> Urdu was named by one respondent.

TABLE 20: MOST PLEASING LANGUAGE BY AGE-GROUP  
(Suva Indo-Fijians)

Age	Shudh Hindi	Fiji Hindi	English
15–25	43.5	21.2	35.3
30–45	49.4	29.4	21.2
50+	45.7	37	17.3

(Chi-square = 10.01, df = 4, p = .04)

While age is also correlated to language rating among Suva Fijians, the pattern is different. Although all age-groups rate their communalect highest, the older group rates English significantly lower than the other two groups (Table 21).

TABLE 21: MOST PLEASING LANGUAGE BY AGE-GROUP  
(Suva Fijians)

Age	Standard Fijian	Communalect	English
15–25	23.8	57.1	19
30–45	20.2	57.1	22.6
50+	26.2	66.7	7.1

(Chi-square = 8.27, df = 4, p = .082)

Among descendants of South Indians, the significance of age is even stronger than among other Indo-Fijians, particularly with respect to their evaluation of Dravidian languages and of English. Dravidian languages are rated most highly by older respondents, while English is rated most highly by the young (Table 22). This is no doubt related to the fact that more of the older respondents know any Dravidian language, while very few of the young do.

TABLE 22: MOST PLEASING LANGUAGE BY AGE-GROUP  
(SI survey)

Age	Shudh Hindi	Fiji Hindi	Dravidian language	English
15–25	14.2	44.4	4.9	36.4
30–45	20.7	56.8	13.6	9
50+	13.5	36.2	43.6	6.1

(Chi-square = 126.70, df = 6, p = .0001)<sup>12</sup>

The correlation between responses and educational level is also strong, particularly with respect to the rating of English. The overall tendency is that the rating of English increases with the educational level of respondents, not a surprising fact in a country where English is the official medium of instruction after the first three years. This tendency is very clear among Suva Fijians, for example (Table 23). As for the other language varieties, primary-educated respondents tend to rate their communalect significantly more highly than those with more education, which probably corresponds to their greater use of communalect. Standard Fijian, on the other hand, is rated highest by secondary-educated respondents, and lowest by

<sup>12</sup> One respondent in the 50+ group (0.61%) named Urdu.

those educated up to tertiary level. The two groups give their communalect similar ratings, so the difference in their rating of Standard Fijian mirrors their different rating of English. Now, while exposure to English increases with the level of education because of its status as medium of instruction, there is also some de facto use of Fijian as a medium in many primary and secondary schools. In higher education, however, English is not just the official language of instruction, it is, de facto, the only medium.

TABLE 23: MOST PLEASING LANGUAGE BY EDUCATION LEVEL  
(Suva Fijians)

Education	Standard Fijian	Communalect	English
Primary	22.9	75	2.1
Secondary	27.5	56.3	16.2
Tertiary	14.5	58.1	27.4

(Chi-square = 15.91, df = 4, p = .003)

The correlation between education level and attitude towards language is also very strong among Suva's Indo-Fijians (Table 24). If the pattern is not very clear when it comes to attitudes towards English, there are two obvious differences in the respondents' evaluation of the other two language varieties: primary-educated respondents are significantly less likely to name Fiji Hindi as the most pleasing language, while Shudh Hindi is named least by tertiary-educated respondents.

TABLE 24: MOST PLEASING LANGUAGE BY EDUCATION LEVEL  
(Suva Indo-Fijians)

Education	Shudh Hindi	Fiji Hindi	English
Primary	34.1	11.4	54.5
Secondary	33.6	27.6	38.8
Tertiary	12.7	27.3	60

(Chi-square = 15.05, df = 4, p = .0046)

In the SI survey a number of respondents, particularly in rural areas, reported having had no formal education, hence the extra category, 'none' (Table 25). English is named 'most pleasing language' in increasing proportion to the education level of the respondent—although the difference between the secondary- and the tertiary-educated is not significant—while the reverse is true for Dravidian languages. The figures for Fiji Hindi, however, are very similar across education levels. So are those for Shudh Hindi, except that this language is named by significantly fewer respondents with no education, perhaps understandably since the major locus of exposure to Shudh Hindi is precisely the school.

TABLE 25: MOST PLEASING LANGUAGE BY EDUCATION LEVEL  
(SI survey)

Education	Shudh Hindi	Fiji Hindi	Dravidian language	English
None	5.3	45.7	46.8	2.1
Primary	15.7	48.8	25.3	9.6
Secondary	21.2	43	5.7	30
Tertiary	18.5	44.4	11.1	25.9

(Chi-square = 102.54, df = 9, p = .0001)<sup>13</sup>

## 4.2.2 MOST USEFUL LANGUAGE

Responses to the question 'Which language do you think is the most useful?' yield a strong rating for English, a rating which is nearly identical among the three groups surveyed, averaging around 64% (Tables 26 and 27).

TABLE 26: MOST USEFUL LANGUAGE  
(Suva Survey)

Ethnicity	Vernacular	Standard language	English
Fijians	63.9	18.1	18.1
Indo-Fijians	65.1	24.2	10.7

(Chi-square = 7.03, df = 2, p = .0297)

TABLE 27: MOST USEFUL LANGUAGE  
(SI Survey)

English	Fiji Hindi	Dravidian language	Shudh Hindi
63.7	27.3	5.8	2.9

While Suva Fijians and Indo-Fijians rate English almost identically highly, Fijians are evenly divided as to the usefulness of Standard Fijian and the local communalects. Although Indo-Fijians acknowledge the usefulness of Fiji Hindi, Shudh Hindi's rating as most useful language by 11% of the respondents is relatively high and almost certainly more a reflection of its high status than of any objective usefulness. This is confirmed by the much lower—and probably more realistic—percentage of descendants of South Indians rating Shudh Hindi as most useful (2.9%). The low percentage of respondents rating a Dravidian language as most useful (5.8%) is also likely to be realistic, but contrasts markedly with the relatively high rating on the question on the most pleasing language (20.8%, see Table 19). In other words, descendants of South Indians recognise that the usefulness of the Dravidian language of their ancestors is now very circumscribed, but their attachment to that language nonetheless remains high.

<sup>13</sup> Urdu was named by one primary-educated respondent (0.61%)

As in the case of responses to the question on the most pleasing language, there is a strong correlation between responses to the question on the most useful language and age and level of education. The correlation between responses and age is very clear overall, with the rating of English decreasing as the age of the respondent increases—and percentage ratings for English among the three age-groups are quite close across the three communities surveyed—while that of the other languages or language varieties, on the contrary, increases (Tables 28–30). Thus, among Suva Fijians English is rated as most useful by the young, while Standard Fijian and communalects are rated most useful by the old (Table 28). Similarly, Fiji Hindi is rated increasingly highly by Suva Indo-Fijians as they get older, while the correlation between age and the rating of Shudh Hindi is much weaker (Table 29). A similar pattern obtains in the SI survey, with Fiji Hindi and Dravidian languages rated increasingly more highly the older respondents are (Table 30).

TABLE 28: MOST USEFUL LANGUAGE BY AGE-GROUP  
(Suva Fijians)

Age	Standard Fijian	Communalect	English
15-25	9.5	14.3	76.2
30-45	17.9	17.9	64.3
50+	27.2	22.2	50.6

(Chi-square = 12.77, df = 4, p = .0125)

TABLE 29: MOST USEFUL LANGUAGE BY AGE-GROUP  
(Suva Indo-Fijians)

Age	Shudh Hindi	Fiji Hindi	English
15-25	9.1	11.8	78.8
30-45	9.4	20	70.6
50+	13.4	41.5	45.1

(Chi-square = 24.85, df = 4, p = .00005)

TABLE 30: MOST USEFUL LANGUAGE BY AGE-GROUP  
(SI Survey)

Age	Shudh Hindi	Fiji Hindi	Dravidian language	English
15-25	3.1	19.6	1.2	76.1
30-45	3.9	23.4	3.9	68.8
50+	1.9	38.9	12.4	46.3

(Chi-square = 44.47, df = 6, p = .0001)

As was the case for the question on the most pleasing language, the correlation between responses to the question on the most useful language and education level is even stronger than that with age. At the same time the effect of education level is stronger for responses to this question on usefulness than to the one on most pleasing language. The correlation is in

the same direction, with the rating of English increasing with the highest level of education attained by the respondent (Tables 31–33). The rating of the respondent's vernacular is a mirror image of that of English, and decreases as the level of education rises. Among Suva Fijians, this is the case for both Standard Fijian and the communalects, both extensively used in this urban environment (Table 31), while among Indo-Fijians, it is the case for Fiji Hindi (Tables 32 and 33).

TABLE 31: MOST USEFUL LANGUAGE BY EDUCATION LEVEL  
(Suva Fijians)

Education	Standard Fijian	Communalect	English
Primary	38.3	34	27.7
Secondary	15.7	15.7	68.6
Tertiary	8.1	11.3	80.6

(Chi-square = 36.01, df = 4, p = .00005)

TABLE 32: MOST USEFUL LANGUAGE BY EDUCATION LEVEL  
(Suva Indo-Fijians)

Education	Shudh Hindi	Fiji Hindi	English
Primary	11.1	48.9	40
Secondary	12.5	21.7	65.8
Tertiary	5.5	10.9	83.6

(Chi-square = 24.88, df = 4, p = .00005)

TABLE 33: MOST USEFUL LANGUAGE BY EDUCATION LEVEL  
(SI survey)

Education	Shudh Hindi	Fiji Hindi	Dravidian language	English
None	2.2	50.5	10.8	36.6
Primary	1.2	32.1	18.5	57.6
Secondary	4.7	15.5	2.1	77.7
Tertiary	3.6	3.6	0	92.9

(Chi-square = 72.61, df = 9, p = .0001)

It is interesting that among Suva Indo-Fijians, Shudh Hindi has quite a low rating among tertiary-educated respondents (Table 32). One would expect this highly educated group to have the most use for the prestigious, standard variety of their community language. But this is clearly not the case, and the fact that these are also the people who give English its highest rating indicates that there is no real competition between English and Shudh Hindi, and that the domains of use of Shudh Hindi must be very restricted. We interpret this result as confirming Siegel's observation (1973) that English has encroached on many formal domains in which Shudh Hindi was previously used.

At this point we would not expect the same ratings of Shudh Hindi among descendants of South Indians. As for their rating of Dravidian languages, there is quite a difference between respondents with at most a primary education, who tend to see some usefulness in them, and those better educated, who do not (Table 33).

4.2.3 PREFERRED LANGUAGE FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Respondents were asked: ‘What language would you prefer to use when answering questions about yourself?’. This was intended as a reliability check so that results could be compared with the language in which the respondent chose to answer the questionnaire. However, if we compare figures for English for these two items, it is clear that far fewer respondents said they prefer to answer questions about themselves in English than actually answered the questionnaire in that language (Table 34; see also §4.1.1).

TABLE 34: PREFERRED LANGUAGE FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS  
VERSUS LANGUAGE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Respondents	Preferred language = English	Language of questionnaire = English
Suva Fijians	26.3	42
Suva Indo-Fijians	38.2	56
SI respondents	22.5	38

(Chi-square = .66, df = 2, p = .72)

What accounts for this discrepancy, which occurs in all three parts of the survey? First of all, the options were different. To answer the questionnaire, respondents had to choose between two languages: Standard Fijian or English for Fijians, Fiji Hindi or English for Indo-Fijians (for both the Suva and the SI survey). But the choice was wider when respondents were asked about their preferred language for answering questions: Suva respondents could name English, their community’s standard or the vernacular, and those in the SI survey could also select a Dravidian language (Tables 35 and 36).

TABLE 35: PREFERRED LANGUAGE FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS BY ETHNIC GROUP  
(Suva Survey)

Ethnicity	Vernacular	Standard language	English
Fijians	33.9	39.8	26.3
Indo-Fijians	51	10.8	38.2

(Chi-square = 58.97, df = 2, p = .00001)

TABLE 36: PREFERRED LANGUAGE FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS  
(SI Survey)

Fiji Hindi	English	Dravidian language	Shudh Hindi
64.9	22.5	10	2.5

Figures show, then, that most respondents prefer to answer questions about themselves in the language of their community. Among Fijians, the figures for Standard Fijian are slightly higher than those for the communalects, and English comes in third place, while Indo-Fijians overwhelmingly prefer Fiji Hindi over Shudh Hindi and English is in second place. A more detailed analysis of results to this question would recapitulate much of the information yielded by previous ones and is therefore not included here: the correlation between stated preference for a particular language and both age and education level, the correlation between language preference and area of residence in the SI survey, or the discrepancy between the evaluation of Shudh Hindi by Indo-Fijians of South Indian descent and other Indo-Fijians, for instance.

Besides the difference in options, there is another reason why answers to this question cannot be expected to tally with the respondents' choice of the language of the questionnaire. The phrasing 'questions about yourself' is in fact extraordinarily vague and respondents would have been entitled to request clarification: 'Do you mean questions about myself that have to do with my work, or my family, or with my interests, dislikes, beliefs?'. And while the question has a vaguely intimate connotation, it is likely that a questionnaire administered on behalf of two university lecturers has for most respondents, on the contrary, quite an official aura. Thus, while the answers are interesting in themselves, the question was ill-conceived as a reliability check.

#### 4.2.4 CODE SWITCHING

We saw earlier that most respondents reported code-switching in their own speech (§4.1.3). Respondents were also asked: 'What do you feel about people who switch back and forth between languages or communalects during a conversation?'. Possible answers were (1) 'It's good', (2) 'It's bad' and (3) 'It doesn't matter'. In the tables below, neutral and positive responses have been combined and are labelled 'OK', while negative responses appear under 'bad'.

Results for the Suva survey show that more Fijians than Indo-Fijians have a negative attitude towards code-switching. Fijians are split almost right down the middle, while only 15% of Indo-Fijians consider code-switching bad, a highly significant difference between the two groups (Table 37). Results for the SI survey are very similar to those for Suva Indo-Fijians (Table 38).

TABLE 37: ATTITUDE TO CODE-SWITCHING BY ETHNIC GROUP  
(Suva Survey)

Ethnicity	OK	Bad
Fijians	49.8	50.2
Indo-Fijians	84.9	15.1

(Chi-square = 68.99, df = 1, p = .00005)

TABLE 38: ATTITUDE TO CODE-SWITCHING  
(SI Survey)

OK	Bad
80	20

Generally, these results go in the same direction as those on reported code-switching: more Indo-Fijians than Fijians report code-switching and find it acceptable. For both Suva groups the figures for reported code-switching are higher than those for a positive attitude towards it, but the difference is much greater among Fijians (Table 39).<sup>14</sup> In other words quite a number of Fijians (nearly 20%, or 1 in 5) 'admit' to code-switching, even though they consider it 'bad'.

TABLE 39: REPORTED CODE-SWITCHING AND ATTITUDE TO CODE-SWITCHING  
BY ETHNIC GROUP  
(Suva Survey)

Ethnicity	Preported switching	Switching is OK
Fijians	87	13
Indo-Fijians	82.4	17.6

(Chi-square = 5.38, df = 1, p = .0203)

Since the data on the practice of code-switching are reported, rather than observed, and since code-switching is sometimes unconscious anyway, these figures are inherently less reliable as an indicator of actual use than of attitudes. To that extent the discrepancy between reported switching and positive attitude among Fijians is in itself indicative of a certain amount of unease about code-switching. As for Indo-Fijians, very few of them consider switching 'bad', and a negligible number of those 'admit' doing it anyway. Why this much greater acceptance of code-switching among Indo-Fijians?

We argue above (§4.1.3) that the common interpretation of code-switching in Fiji as including simply 'using a lot of borrowings', coupled with the higher percentage of borrowings from English in Fiji Hindi, may well account for the greater reported incidence of code-switching among Indo-Fijians. Another factor which may promote the tolerance to this 'code-switching' is the exposure, through films and videos, to varieties of Hindi from India which also feature borrowings from English, while they retain a much higher status than Fiji Hindi.<sup>15</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSION

The analysis presented here is preliminary, since only some of the results are reported. Moreover, since all data from the questionnaires are self-reported, a degree of caution is in order. Nonetheless, some basic facts emerge. First and foremost is the robust health of the vernaculars, in spite of the obvious impact of English.

<sup>14</sup> This is not the case for the SI survey, where the much lower incidence of reported switching between Fiji Hindi and a Dravidian language (51.1%) is attributable to the respondents' marginal competence in and use of that Dravidian language.

<sup>15</sup> Thanks to Veena Khan for this observation.

While many patterns of use and attitudes are broadly common to Fijians and Indo-Fijians, there are important differences. Both groups report very high use of their vernacular in the home, as well as a positive attitude towards them, while both consider English very useful. But figures for English are higher among Indo-Fijians on all questions but one: the questions on attitudes ('most pleasing', 'most useful', 'preferred' language) and the choice of language in which to answer the questionnaire. Figures are also higher among Indo-Fijians on code-switching (greater incidence and more positive attitude). The only question where figures for English are lower among Indo-Fijians is use in the home, but the difference with the Fijian group is not significant.

English is widely considered in Fiji to be indispensable to higher education and a good job. This is understandable because of the use of English as the main official language of government, business and the media, and also since perhaps the most prominent domain of English is precisely education. English is the official medium of instruction beyond the first three years of primary school and, in spite of the presence of code-switching in many classrooms, the main *de facto* medium up to the secondary level, and the sole medium at tertiary level.

While this is true for Fijians and Indo-Fijians alike, for the majority of Indo-Fijians education—and therefore English—is considered the *only* avenue towards advancement. This is a consequence of their precarious situation in Fiji, with uncertainties about the future including the viability of the sugar industry and in particular the security of land tenure, as well as constitutional issues and in particular equitable representation in Parliament. These uncertainties, aggravated by a sluggish economy and the threat of recurring calls for 'repatriation' to India by a small but vocal number of Fijian extremists, mean that migrating from Fiji is never very far from the minds of Indo-Fijians—even if it is beyond the ability of many. Most migration from Fiji is to neighbouring developed countries with which Fiji has a historical link, such as Australia and New Zealand, as well as two major countries in the Northern Hemisphere where English is also the main language, Canada and the USA. These countries are attractive, among other things, because their main language is English, and high skills in English in turn mean an enhanced ability to emigrate to these countries and better chances at successful adaptation. For those who cannot afford to migrate, education—and therefore English—is for the children the only passport away from the insecure piece of land whose lease to the family may or may not be renewed.

Does this particular importance of English to Indo-Fijians mean that they are shifting away from their first language? In spite of the strong effect of age on many responses, the very high figures for use of Fiji Hindi at home indicate that any shift is minimal. The impact of English, while very strong, seems limited to certain domains—a hypothesis which appears to be confirmed by a cursory look at results from additional sections of the survey. As for Shudh Hindi, in spite of its very high prestige and the equally low prestige of Fiji Hindi, its use is very restricted.

This is in sharp contrast with the Fijian speech community, in which both Standard Fijian and the *communalects* enjoy widespread use and positive attitudes. One might expect that, in the biggest urban area in Fiji, which continues to attract people from many different regions and where marriage between speakers of different varieties of Fijian is more common, Standard Fijian may be displacing the other *communalects*. There are some indications in our data on language use at home that this may be the case, but this will have to be confirmed by further analysis.

As for Dravidian languages, the generally low figures for use, particularly at home, and the fact that these figures get increasingly lower with each generation, show overall a precipitous decline, positive attitudes notwithstanding. These apparently contradictory trends are a reminder of the common but often overlooked difference between stated attitude and behaviour, which can be very striking.

A series of semi-structured interviews conducted among the older generation of respondents after the survey confirms that descendants of South Indians still value the Dravidian language of their ancestors as a symbol of a separate cultural identity within the Indo-Fijian community, think that it is very important to maintain that language, and want their children to know it. Unfortunately many of these same people report not speaking the language to their children or not speaking it at home at all (Mugler, this volume). Some parents go as far as blaming the demise of Dravidian languages on the TISI Sangam, a South Indian organisation and the only body engaged in language maintenance efforts, through the teaching of Tamil and Telugu in some of the schools they run. In turn, the Sangam's increasingly desperate pleas to parents indicate a dawning realisation of the limited impact of these efforts and of the crucial role of what Fishman (1989, 1991) calls "intergenerational transmission".

The loss of Dravidian languages has been a gain for Fiji Hindi, a trend which started as soon as the first indentured labourers recruited in South India arrived in Fiji. Fiji Hindi, already established on the plantations and the majority language of the Indo-Fijian community ever since, has fulfilled the same vernacular functions of informal communication at work and, increasingly, in the home, now the last—and crumbling—bastion of Dravidian languages. The now near-total replacement of Dravidian languages by Fiji Hindi, a language with very low prestige, is another sign of the health of Fiji Hindi. Shudh Hindi, which has very high prestige among other Indo-Fijians in spite of its limited domains, is even less used and much less prized by descendants of South Indians who historically have no cultural link with it. This distinct attitude towards Shudh Hindi, along with the lesser stigma they attach to Fiji Hindi, can be interpreted as a marker of a distinct cultural identity. As for English, potentially another prestigious competitor, descendants of South Indians do not use it to any greater degree than do other Indo-Fijians, in spite of the much greater linguistic dislocation of the history of their arrival in Fiji and the consequent greater vulnerability of Dravidian languages to language shift.

If the future of Dravidian languages in Fiji looks grim, that of the other vernaculars seems bright. Although people consider English very important, that does not mean they are giving up their first language. And if urbanisation brings greater use of English among a mixed population, English is not the only lingua franca. Preliminary results on a series of questions on the language used at work with a member of the other major ethnic group indicate a sizeable number of people communicating in the vernaculars: thus an Indo-Fijian and a Fijian may use Fiji Hindi or Fijian with each other, rather than English. On some questions, figures for vernacular use are as high as 20% of the sample. These figures are quite high, but they would very likely be much higher in rural areas such as the sugarcane belt, where many Fijians and Indo-Fijians work side by side, or in small islands where the few Indo-Fijians have learned the majority language, Fijian.

Finally, it is ironic—if perhaps inevitable—that the more 'educated' one is, the less one thinks of one's first language. This situation is not likely to change in the near future, given the current education system and the increasing perceived importance of English worldwide,

regardless of whether knowing English is really important to everyone in the country. One might hope that such initiatives as the development of programs in Fijian Studies and Hindi Studies at the University of the South Pacific may counteract this trend.

There has recently been concern worldwide about language endangerment and the often lethal impact of the spread of English and other 'world languages' on languages spoken by small numbers of speakers (see, for example, Hale et al. 1992). At the same time, there is a renewed and growing interest in the use of vernaculars, particularly in education, and many consider the maintenance of these languages a priority for a group's cultural identity and a matter of cultural rights. Any decision or even discussion about language planning and policy issues needs to be based on as clear a picture as possible of the actual use of these languages, the beliefs that their speakers hold about them, the trends in language shift and maintenance, and even the possibility of language death (Gal 1979; Dorian 1981). We hope that this preliminary study is a step in that direction.

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