

# 16 *Lexical borrowing in Fiji English*

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

The linguistic situation in Fiji is unique and complex. Of the three major languages spoken in Fiji (Fijian, Fiji Hindi and English),<sup>2</sup> English is the first language of only a tiny section of the population ( $\pm 1 - 2\%$ ). Yet its influence on the lives of Fiji's people is very significant. Over the last 200 years, its role has evolved from being merely a source language for foreign loan words to a de facto official language, the major language of government, administration, the judicial system, and commerce; the major, and sometimes the only, medium of instruction in the education system; and an important lingua franca among people with different first languages.

English is also the main language of the media. Of the eight national radio stations, two broadcast exclusively in English, whilst three broadcast in Fijian and three in standard Hindi. There are four local privately operated radio stations—three broadcast exclusively in English whilst the other is mixed Fijian–English. Commercial television was introduced in 1991, and almost all programmes, including the local news and locally produced programmes, are in English. Advertisements are also in English, with an occasional one in Hindi or Fijian. Advertisements in Hindi, though not all that common, are more frequent than those in Fijian,

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<sup>1</sup> This is an abridged version of the paper 'A profile of the Fiji English lexis', *English world-wide*, vol. 22, No.2, 2001. I should like to thank Paul Geraghty and France Mugler for supplying me with examples and citations of Fiji English usage, and for commenting on an earlier version of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Fijian is characterised by a great deal of regional diversity, with about 300 communalects, a communalect being 'a variety spoken by people who claim they use the same speech' (Geraghty 1983:18). I use 'Fijian' here as a cover term for these communalects.

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since some are imported from India, while Fijian advertisements have to be produced locally. The linguistic situation with regard to television is constantly evolving, however. For instance, interviews in Fijian or Fiji Hindi are becoming more common in the local news telecasts, whether of political figures or ordinary citizens in the street. Initially, such interviews were either voiced over or subtitled in English, but in recent years more and more stretches of interviews have been left in without any translation. There are now also two half-hour weekly chat programmes in Fijian and Hindi, and a non-commercial television station broadcasting in the Nadi area which has a high proportion of programmes in Fijian and Hindi. Finally, there are three daily tabloid newspapers (all of which are in English) and three weeklies (two in Fijian and one in standard Hindi).

While English is a *de facto* official language in most of the Pacific, nowhere is it used as a lingua franca to a greater extent than in Fiji. This is partly due to the country's unique mix of languages and peoples. Its population consists mainly of two groups—indigenous Fijians and Fiji Indians. The Fiji Indian population is currently estimated at 44%, and Fijians at 51% (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 1998). English is often used as a lingua franca between these two groups and with the smaller groups of Chinese, Europeans, part-Europeans,<sup>3</sup> and other Pacific islanders. However, many part-Europeans know Fijian, as do many Fiji Indians, especially in the rural areas. Conversely, many Fijians know some Fiji Hindi, particularly in the sugarcane belt, on the western side of the main island of Vitilevu and in the north of the second largest island of Vanualevu, where these two communities often work side by side.

English, however, tends to be used as a lingua franca to a greater degree in urban areas, where it is used to varying extents in the workplace. Thus, while it is only *one* of the languages people with different mother tongues use to communicate, English serves as a lingua franca in Fiji to a far greater extent than anywhere else in the Pacific.

Apart from this greater extent of usage, the English of Fiji distinguishes itself from other varieties of Pacific English by the significant contribution Hindi has made on its lexis. In this respect Fiji English shares many of the characteristics of the Englishes spoken in many former British colonies to which Indian indentured labourers were sent, e.g. South Africa, Mauritius, British Guiana, and Trinidad. However, what sets it apart from these varieties is its extensive Fijian lexis. Fiji English is, therefore, a unique and distinctive regional variety of English.

## 2 The vocabulary of Fiji English: a background

During the British colonial era, English was transplanted to all of Britain's settlements and colonies. Lexical borrowings, mainly from indigenous languages in response to local needs and conditions, naturally varied from colony to colony and were usually not absorbed into the English spoken back in the mother country. Furthermore, internal changes in the vocabularies of the English spoken in the colonies were made in response to differing influences, conditions and needs arising from the unique circumstances in each location. The degree of isolation of each colony also played a role in the rate of change and the growth of difference

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<sup>3</sup> People of mixed Fijian and European descent.

between the various colonial Englishes. The vocabulary of the English spoken in Fiji is a direct result of all these forces.

As the following excerpts from two of Fiji's national daily English language tabloid newspapers (the *Fiji Times* and *Daily Post*) illustrate, the vocabulary of Fiji English is as distinctive as that of any other regional variety of English.

Entertaining the crowd were Masimasi Musical club from Sabeto with *bhajans*, Gupta and party from Saru providing music on *dhol* [sic] and *tasa* and a 125 [sic] year old *girmitya*, Janki, from Navau, Ba sang a traditional song. (*Fiji Times*, 19/5/1992)

Farmers who have been astrayed must consider once again to unite with the National Farmers Union as to stand against all unfair practices on them. (Letters to the Editor, *The Fiji Times*, 3/5/1994 p.6)

Diwali is a time to celebrate, to wear fine clothes, jewellery, look beautiful and display the most expensive or most colourful firecrackers. It's also a time when Hindus countrywide share their traditional sweets like halwa, gulgula, bhajia, gulab jamun and many others. (*Fiji Times*, 20/9/1997 p.30)

"When I make *kokoda* I like adding a lot of salads [sic]. I use *dhania*, hot chillies, two coconuts for the *lolo*, some celery, capsicum and spring onions." (Shamima Ali in *Sunday Times*, 9/11/1997 p.34)

In plain English this country is broke *sa sivia na dinau*. (Mirza Nimrud Buksh, *Sunday Post*, 30/11/1997 p.4)

There would be a huge onboard magiti cooking in the middle of the cargo-hold, with customers sitting on mats, swiping grog in between jumping up to join a tuiboto round the cabin, accompanied by a string band in the cockpit. (Robert Keith-Reid, *Daily Post*, 14/6/1997 p.17)

Reserve Bank: "You gang been open the safe and leave it like that and everybody take the money or what? How come the money gone?" [...]

NBF [National Bank of Fiji]: "Yeah man. Trues God, *malik kasam, bulului*, cross my heart and hope to die, we been open it. That's the open door policy the Government been want." (Netani Rika in, 'Weekend' supplement in *Fiji Times*, 23/3/1996 p.5)

The kind of code-switching seen in these specific examples is commonplace.<sup>4</sup> It occurs daily in articles and reports in Fiji's tabloids, and may be observed in most conversations in all domains of English usage. The kind of code-switching we see in Fiji English consists of instances of what D'Souza (1992:221) calls 'culture-related code-[switching]'. This kind of code-switching is a result of English having to function in 'un-English' contexts and 'does not have the [lexical] means to do so unless it depends on local linguistic resources'. In other

<sup>4</sup> I shall not enter into a discussion on the differences between code-switching and code-mixing. Much has been written since the 1970s on the subject, and the matter remains contentious. Some researchers maintain that the distinction between the two is crucial (e.g. Kachru 1983; Sridhar & Sridhar 1980), whilst others (e.g. Tay 1989) assert that the distinction cannot be made. For the sake of simplicity, I shall follow Holmes (1992:50) and confine myself to the term 'code-switching' as '[c]ode-mixing suggests the speaker is mixing up codes indiscriminately or perhaps because of incompetence, whereas [...] switches are very well-motivated in relation to the symbolic or social meanings of the two codes'.

words, English is 'borrowing' from Fijian and Hindi in order to deal with uniquely local matters and events.

As well as adding a local flavour to their writings, the frequent switching between English and Hindi/Fijian by the satirists Buksh, Rika and Reid is also used to add humour. The recurrent switching of codes triggers particular associations in the minds of readers, and follows the common practice among Fijians of delivering humorous, sarcastic or ironic comments by code-switching from Fijian to Hindi (Siegel 1995). This practice has led to the development of a special joking register in Fijian, which has become so much part of a Fijian's repertoire that of the 175 odd Hindi entries in the monolingual Fijian dictionary,<sup>5</sup> 41% have the usage label *veiwali* 'joking' attached to them. Most of these pertain to words describing actions and concepts that have Fijian equivalents, and thus may be considered what Clark (this volume) terms 'unnecessary' borrowings.

Little has been written about the vocabulary of Fiji English, and what has been written comprises little more than catalogues of distinct lexical items or expressions. No systematic study of the structure and sources of the Fiji English lexis has ever been carried out. The following discussion and analysis of the Fiji English lexis is based on a corpus of words and expressions I collected between January 1991 and late 1999.

## 2.1 Previous studies of Fiji English vocabulary

Only a handful of publications catalogue or mention distinct Fiji English lexical items. The most comprehensive of these is Siegel's list (an appendix to his study of plantation pidgins in Fiji) of Fijian words used (without an English gloss) in the *Fiji Times* and the Fiji Colonial Secretary's Office correspondence during the plantation period between 1865 and 1916 (Siegel 1987:264–267).<sup>6</sup> Many of the entries in my corpus correspond to ones found in Siegel's list. Siegel's book also contains another appendix listing Fiji Hindi loan words in Fijian, and Fijian loan words used in Fiji Hindi. Once again, many of these are used in Fiji English today and are included in my corpus. Finally, Siegel has a catalogue of 65 lexical items (6 English, 36 Fijian, 23 Fiji Hindi) in his 1989 paper outlining the development and characteristics of English in Fiji.

In 1984, the University of the South Pacific sociologist, Mike Monsell-Davis, compiled a small corpus of 37 slang expressions (Monsell-Davis 1984) as part of a study of unemployed street boys in Suva. Most of the expressions are English neologisms or English items that have undergone semantic shift. Although many of the items in his inventory are still currently used in what might loosely be termed the 'general slang' known to many speakers of Fiji English, some are now obsolete, whilst others are restricted to the vernacular of street youths.

Other studies, discussions and commentaries that briefly mention or allude to the lexical characteristics of Fiji English are: Arms (1975), Kelly (1975), Moag and Moag (1977), Geraghty (1977), and Thomson (1999), each of which cite only a handful of lexical items judged to be idiosyncratic to Fiji English.

<sup>5</sup> Compiled by Paul Geraghty and his team at the Institute of Fijian Language and Culture, Suva.

<sup>6</sup> Fijian loan words in Fiji English are almost always from standard Fijian.

## 2.2 The compilation of the corpus

A corpus of Fiji English lexical items was compiled between January 1991 and late 1999. Lexical items cited by the studies just mentioned formed the basis of the corpus. To these many more examples from contemporary acrolectal to basilectal Fiji English from both written and oral sources were added.

The written sources comprised:

- stories and articles from the local print media<sup>7</sup>
- club and school newsletters
- personal letters and letters to the editors in the local print media
- university students' essays, assignments and examination scripts
- hand-written and printed notices and signs
- advertisements in the local print media
- locally published plays and novels that attempt to incorporate features of Fiji English

The oral sources comprised:

- samples from conversations I either overheard or personally participated in with a wide range of speakers of Fiji English
- 70 one-hour long (on average) recorded interviews with monolingual English-speaking part-Europeans
- English-language television and radio news broadcasts, commentaries, advertisements, and community announcements

The corpus contains 686 distinct pieces of lexical information arranged under 521 headwords, 89 secondary headwords and run-ons, as well as 74 initialisms and acronyms. The secondary headwords generally consist of simple compounds or collocations.

## 3 The vocabulary of Fiji English

The following discussion is a brief profile of attested lexical borrowings in Fiji English. It presents an overview of the various loan categories of items in the corpus and their sources. For reasons of space, not all borrowings in the corpus are cited.

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<sup>7</sup> These include the tabloid newspapers: the *Fiji Times*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Daily Post*, the *Sunday Post*; *Wansolwara* (the laboratory newspaper published by journalism students at USP); the *USP Bulletin*; and monthly magazines and journals published for the local market: *The Enquirer*, *Fiji Magic*, and *The Review*.

### 3.1 Fijian loans

It is not surprising that Fiji English should contain a large number of Fijian loans. Apart from the borrowings from Hindi, Fijian loans are perhaps the most conspicuous and nationally specific group of words in the Fiji English lexis.

Only minimal linguistic contact is needed for lexical cross-fertilisation to occur between languages. For instance, Tent and Geraghty (this volume) have shown that a number of Dutch loan words spread through Polynesia after contact between the early Dutch explorers LeMaire (1616), Tasman (1642) and Roggeveen (1722), and the inhabitants of Samoa, Tonga and the Tuamotus amounting to between a few days to just under 14 days.

Apart from personal and place names, and glossaries of words and sentences that appear in a number of eighteenth-century mariners' journals and logbooks (e.g. Cook-Anderson in 1777, d'Entrecasteaux in 1793), the first Fijian words embedded in English prose are found in the narratives of Samuel Patterson (in 1808) and William Lockerby (in 1809). There are eighteen Fijian words, proper names and phrases scattered throughout Patterson's narrative, and some 93 throughout Lockerby's (Schütz 1985:567–571), many of which form part of the lexis of Fiji English today.

After David Cargill and William Cross established the first Wesleyan mission in Fiji in 1835, it did not take long for their diaries and correspondence to include Fijian words. This is where the nativisation of Fijian words into English really begins. Cargill's writings include such common loans as *tanoa*, *vesi*, *koro*, *masi*, *tabu*, *vasu*, *Tui*, *dalo*, *Ratu*, *waka*, *yaqona*, *bure*, and *tamata lialia* (Schütz 1977), all of which are part of current Fiji English. Since then, of course, many more Fijian words have entered the English of Fiji.

It is perhaps worth pointing out here also that the *Oxford English Dictionary* contains five Fijian words: *bure* 'hut, house' (also in the *Macquarie Dictionary*),<sup>8</sup> *ivi* 'Tahitian chestnut, *Inocarpus fagiferus*, Leguminosae', *Ratu* 'honorific title for males of high rank', *sulu* 'a sarong, wrap-around', and *yaqona* 'kava'.<sup>9</sup> *Yaqona* (more widely known as kava) has enjoyed quite a bit of international attention in recent years by international pharmaceutical companies. Its perceived calming and relaxing effects upon those who drink it have promoted some intensive research into its medicinal properties and chemical composition. As the following citation from the *Fiji Times* (27/5/1999, p.17) illustrates, *yaqona* has not only become part of international pharmacological nomenclature, but has obtained an anglicised spelling as well:

#### KAVA: FIJI'S VIAGRA?

Dr Ali, a member of the team working on the Kava Project, said at least six lactones have been identified in local kava.

"We have discovered and isolated six major kava-pyrone namely Kavain, Methysticin, Dihydrokavain, Dihydromethysticin, Yanganonin and Desmethodyyanganonin," he said.

"In addition to the six major kavapyrones, we have also identified 12 other components."

<sup>8</sup> The *OED* even boasts a highly anglicised pronunciation of *bure*—[bju: rei].

<sup>9</sup> The *OED* also contains Tongan word *tabu* 'taboo', but acknowledges the Fijian cognate.

On August 7, 1999, *The Sydney Morning Herald* ran in its weekly travel supplement a feature on holidaying in the South Pacific. The following Fijian words were used: *sevusevu* (glossed and in italics), *bula* (glossed and in italics), *meke* (glossed and in italics), and *bure* (unglossed and in roman font, also used are: 'bures', and 'bure-style').

Approximately 38% of my Fiji English corpus are loan words from Fijian. Most of these are 'necessary' loans (Clark, this volume), because of the need to name uniquely Fijian objects, concepts, or customs. Such borrowing may best be described as 'cultural borrowing' (Bloomfield 1933). However, there are also a number of Fijian loans that refer to items which already have existing English names, and may perhaps be seen as 'unnecessary' borrowings. These include: *kana* 'food; to eat', *kasou* 'drunk', *koro* 'village', *leqa* 'a problem', *loloma* 'love', *oilei!* an exclamation of surprise, *sa!* an exclamation of surprise or disapproval, and *yaya* 'stuff, things, belongings'. Interestingly, even English-speaking expatriates who have been in Fiji for only a short time soon use many of these Fijian words in preference to their English equivalents, especially *koro*, *loloma*, *oilei*, and *yaya*. Although such items have English equivalents, their unique Fijian connotations act as a powerful force in encouraging their use. The desire not to be recognised as a neophyte may be another contributing factor in their rapid adoption into the English of expatriates.

Fijian names for flora and fauna are also generally preferred to their widely known English counterparts. This is especially so for edible flora and fauna. Examples include: *baka* 'banyan tree, *Ficus obliqua*, Moraceæ'; *dri* or *loli* 'sea-cucumber, bêche-de-mer, *Holothuridae*'; *kanace* 'mullet, *Mugil* spp.>'; *kumala* 'sweet potato'; *salala* 'mackerel, *Rastrelliger kanagurta*'; *saqa* 'trevally, *Caranx* sp.>'; *walu* 'kingfish, *Scomberomorus commersoni*'.

As most of the examples listed thus far show, lexical items most prone to borrowing are commonly those that belong to the so-called 'open' class words (i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives). Items belonging to the 'closed' classes (pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions etc.) are less likely to be adopted into another language. As my lexicon shows, nouns are, undoubtedly, the most frequently borrowed class, comprising 52% of all Fijian and Hindi loans (see also Haugen 1950), as they denote novel objects, materials, and concepts and therefore fill lexical and cultural gaps. Of course, the skewed distribution of borrowings from the various lexical classes is also a reflexion of the overall sizes of the classes concerned—nouns being the class with the largest number of members, whilst the class of prepositions or conjunctions presents considerably fewer members. However, it also seems reasonable to expect that the grammatical class of borrowed words will also depend on the nature of the sociolinguistic context in which the borrowing takes place. Accordingly, the borrowing of adverbs, pronouns, articles, intensifiers, particles, exclamations, interjections, and affixes is well attested in bilingual communities (Bynon 1977:231). The borrowing of such items is possible only in situations of intense linguistic exchange since it presupposes the cross-linguistic equation of syntactic patterns, whereas mere borrowing of open class items requires only a minimal degree of bilingualism. Since there is a high degree of English–Fijian, English–Hindi and Fijian–Hindi bilingualism in Fiji, there has been cross-borrowing and calquing of closed class items into all three languages.

Fijian loans in Fiji English may be broken down into a number of general categories. The first consists of names for inedible flora (generally the names of trees and herbs): *baka*,

*buabua* 'k.o. tree', *cibi* 'k.o. seed', *dakua* 'k.o. tree', *damanu* 'k.o. tree', *dogo* 'k.o. tree', *kavika* 'k.o. tree', *tiri* 'k.o. tree', *uci* 'k.o. tree', *vesi* 'k.o. tree', *via* 'swamp taro', *voivoi* 'pandanus leaves', *yaka* 'k.o. tree'. These comprise about 10% of Fijian loans. About another 10% of Fijian loans are taken up by names of edible flora (generally vegetables and fruits). Among them are: *bele* 'k.o. vegetable', *bu* 'green coconut', *dalo* 'taro', *duruka* 'k.o. vegetable', *ivi* 'Tahitian chestnut', *lumi* 'k.o. seaweed', *ota* 'k.o. edible fern', *rourou* 'taro leaves', *uto* 'breadfruit', *uvi* 'yam', *vudi* 'plantain'.

The next group of loan words derives from Fiji's fauna. The majority of these (7%) name edible fauna, specifically seafood. The most common are: *balolo* 'k.o. annelid', *dri* (*loli*), *kai* 'k.o. shell fish', *kaikoso* 'k.o. shell fish', *mana* 'mangrove lobster', *nuqa* 'k.o. fish', and *qari* 'mangrove crab'. Only two borrowings refer to non-edible fauna, both of which are names of indigenous parrots: *koki* 'red-breasted musk parrot, *Prosopiea tabuensis*', and *kula* 'collared lory, *Phigys solitarius*'.<sup>10</sup>

Prepared foods or dishes and beverages comprise a small group of items (3%). They include: *kokoda* 'k.o. raw fish dish', *lolo* 'coconut cream', *vakalolo* 'k.o. sweet pudding', and *yaqona*.

General (or miscellaneous) nouns, adjectives, and verbs form the largest group of borrowings (27%). These include: *bilo* 'coconut shell cup', *bilibili* 'bamboo raft', *bure* 'thatched hut or house',<sup>11</sup> *drua* 'twin-hulled canoe', *kanikani* 'k.o. skin disease', *kerekere* 'to cadge', *kuro* 'cooking pot', *kutu*<sup>12</sup> 'louse', *lali* 'k.o. drum', *lialia* 'fool; foolish', *lovo* 'pit/earth oven', *maqimaqi* 'sinnet', *masi* 'tapa cloth', *rara* 'village green', *salusalu* 'garland', *sasa* 'k.o. broom', *solu* 'k.o. fundraising event', *sulu* 'sarong', *tabua* 'whale's tooth', *talanoa* 'chat session', *tanoa* 'kava bowl', *teitei* '(vegetable) garden', *vude* 'k.o. popular music', and *vulagi* 'guest, stranger'.

<sup>10</sup> No doubt there would be many more among Fiji's small birdwatching community.

<sup>11</sup> This word was probably one of the first Fijian borrowings into English; its first recorded use in English (though glossed simply as 'house') was probably in Cargill's Rewa diary of 15 July 1839 to 27 July 1840 (Schütz 1977:173). Over time *bure* narrowed its meaning in English from simply 'house' to 'a traditional Fijian house, a house made of traditional materials'. It is also variously used to refer to 'a hut, small house', and now with the mushrooming of tourist resorts all over Fiji 'a small self-standing guest house at Fiji resorts'. In Fijian, however *bure* never meant 'a house made of traditional materials'. In Fijian, a *bure* means a men's house or dormitory, and can be constructed of traditional materials, corrugated iron, timber, concrete blocks, anything. Today, many Fijians are not aware of the difference between the Fijian and English meanings of *bure*. The word has been borrowed from Fijian into English (where it obtained its new meaning), and then back into Fijian again, with the new meaning. (Paul Geraghty, *Daily Post*, 29/3/1997 p.16)

<sup>12</sup> *Cootie* 'a body louse' is a very common slang term used in American English with and by children. The *OED*, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* and the *American Heritage Dictionary* suggest it was derived from Malay *kutu* 'a biting parasitic insect; louse'. The *OED*'s and *Webster's* earliest citations are dated 1917. However, the word was used around 1835 by an American bêche-de-mer trader in Fiji, John H Eagleston (n.d.). Its origin may, therefore, be Fijian. I thank Paul Geraghty for alerting me to this early use of *cootie*.

The next largest category of loans (20%) involves items that name Fijian customs, cultural concepts, events and practices. These include: *lakalaka* 'k.o. dance', *loloma* 'gift, token of love', *magiti* 'feast', *meke* 'k.o. dance', *polotu* 'k.o. hymn', *qoliqoli* 'traditional fishing grounds', *reguregu* 'condolence gathering', *sevusevu* 'presentation of gifts', *tevororo* 'devil', *vakacirisalusalu* 'k.o. ceremony', *vakamalolo* 'k.o. dance', *vasu* 'sister's son; a part-European', and *vu* 'ancestor god'.

There is a very distinctive class of loans that encompasses Fijian sociopolitical terms and titles (12%), among these being: *bose* 'meeting council', *matanitu* 'political federation of vanua', *mataqali* 'kin group', *Taukei* 'land owners', *tikina* 'district', *tokatoka* 'enlarged family unit', *turaga* 'chief', *vanua* 'region', *Vola ni Kawa Bula* 'Fijian Register', *yavusa* 'kinship group', *Adi* 'title', *Ratu* 'title', *Ro* 'title', *Roko* 'title', and *Tui* 'title'.

A small, but important and quite emblematic, category of borrowings are what might best be described as discourse particles (or formulae). These include: *bula* 'hello', *moce* 'good-bye, good night', *talo mada* 'serve the yaqona', *vinaka* 'thank you', *io* 'yes', *tilou~jilou* 'excuse me', and *yadra* 'good morning'. These comprise approximately 4% of borrowings from Fijian.

Finally, perhaps the most colloquial of all the Fijian loans are the ubiquitous exclamations and interjections (6%). The speakers of Fiji English are ardent users of such formulae, especially the exclamatory approbations used to call out to a good-looking male or female (equivalent to a wolf whistle or 'hubba-hubba!'). These exclamations clearly belong to Fiji English slang and are ephemeral. Over the past forty years, a series of these exclamatory approbations have enjoyed widespread popularity. Each expression has a limited life span lasting between five to ten years; they are listed here in approximate chronological order of their currency:

- *kashine!* (1950s–1960s) [< Fijian *ka* 'thing' + *shine*]
- *nice bola!* (1960s–1970s) [Most likely < Fijian *bola* 'coconut-leaf basket', 'bag']<sup>13</sup>
- *barewa!* (1970s–1980s) [< Fijian *bā rewa* 'might it be possible?']
- *au la'o!* (1980s–1990s) [< Fijian 'I go']
- *uro!* (1990s) [< Fijian 'fat'. Especially the fat of pork, which is considered by Fijians to be the most delicious part of the meat]

SEXUAL harassment is no joke. Many may not realise it but making a pass with words such as *uro* is a form of sexual harassment. (*Daily Post*, 28/8/1999)

Common interjections borrowed from Fijian include the following:

- *oilei!* An exclamation expressing surprise, pain, sympathy etc.
- *sa!* An exclamation of surprise or disapproval.

<sup>13</sup> Thomson (1999:151), however, gives the etymology of *bola* as 'a Fijian invention with an enjoyable proximity to "balls"'. Thomson's explanation is highly unlikely and must be considered a folk etymology.

- *se!* An exclamation expressing disbelief—‘Surely you’re pulling my leg!’, ‘Come off it!’ (usually said with a wry smile).
- *so!* An exclamation expressing disapproval or hurt.
- *sobo!* An exclamation expressing disapproval or sympathy.

Given that Fijian and Hindi have co-existed with each other for some 120 years, it is not surprising Fijian words have also been borrowed into Fiji Hindi. Siegel (1987:272–277) lists 125, most of which are names for natural species or Fijian customs for which no equivalent Hindi name exists. Notwithstanding this, there are still quite a few (approximately 33%) voluntary or ‘unnecessary’ borrowings. A detailed and systematic study of Fijian loans in contemporary Fiji Hindi has a yet to be conducted—no doubt such a study would unearth many more Fijian loans. Forty-six percent (58/125) of the Fijian loans listed by Siegel are also to be found in my Fiji English lexicon.

### 3.2 Hindi loans

The introduction of Indian indentured labourers into Fiji between 1879 and 1916 to work on sugarcane plantations was accompanied by the introduction of various languages from the subcontinent, including dialects of Hindi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Telegu, Kanada, Punjabi, and Malayalam. The Indian labourers not only changed the cultural character of Fiji, but also added to the richness and complexity of the country’s linguistic make-up. The majority of indentured labourers, or ‘giritiyas’ as they called themselves, were, however, Hindus from northern India who spoke a number of dialects of Hindi (Siegel 1987). The mixing or amalgamation of these dialects resulted in a koiné, now known as Fiji Hindi, which served as the lingua franca among giritiyas from differing linguistic backgrounds. This koiné developed rapidly and probably originated among the first generation of Fiji-born Indian children (Siegel 1987:203). The following comment by W.J. Hands (1929:18) demonstrates that by 1929 Fiji Hindi was firmly established and had all but displaced the other languages of the Indian subcontinent: ‘A form of Hindustani, hardly recognised by the newcomer from India, is becoming the common language of Hindu and Tamil alike’. It is from this koiné that 16% of my Fiji English corpus is derived.

Given the sources for my corpus, it must be understood that it has a distinct urban bias, and this may be one of the reasons for the relatively small number of Hindi loans. Anecdotal evidence suggests more Hindi loans are found in rural Fiji English (and rural Fijian), especially in the sugarcane growing areas where Indo-Fijians predominate. Many of these loans have to do with the sugar industry.

Most Hindi loans in Fiji English are, like the Fijian borrowings, cultural loans—terms referring to food and Indian culture and religion. There are also a number of ‘unnecessary’ loans, the most well-known of which are *paidar* ‘to walk’ and *paisa* ‘money’ [*< paisā* ‘1/100 of a Rupee’]. *Paisa* is especially a popular term for money among Fijians. All varieties of Pacific Englishes have a rich assortment of indigenous borrowings, but what marks Fiji English off more than anything else from these other varieties are its Hindi borrowings.

The largest group of Hindi borrowings deal with food, the most common of which are the names of vegetables and spices: *baigan* 'eggplant', *bhaji* 'k.o. vegetable', *bhindi* 'okra', *dhania* 'coriander', *haldi* 'tumeric', *jeera* 'cumin seed', *saijan* 'horseradish', *sarso* 'mustard seeds', and *tulsi* 'basil'. These items make up approximately 12% of all Hindi loans in the corpus. Names of prepared foods and dishes (including sweets), and ingredients are equally well-known, and comprise 31% of Hindi loans—considerably more the comparable group of Fijian loan words. These include: *achar* 'k.o. relish', *ata* 'k.o. flour, sharps', *barfi* 'k.o. sweet', *bara* 'k.o. savoury', *bhuja*, 'k.o. snack', *gulab jamun* 'k.o. sweet', *gulgula* 'k.o. sweet', *halwa* 'k.o. sweet', *jalebi* 'k.o. sweet', *kedgeriee* 'k.o. rice dish', *lakri* 'k.o. sweet', *puri* 'k.o. deep-fried bread', *roti* 'k.o. unleavened bread', *samosa*, *sawai* 'k.o. desert', *seo* 'k.o. savoury', and *suji* 'semolina'.<sup>14</sup>

Religious and cultural loans also form a significant group within the corpus of Hindi loans (21%): *agarbatti* 'incense stick', *bhajan* 'Hindu devotional song', *dhiya* 'small clay lamp', *Diwali* 'Hindu festival of lights', *ghazal* 'k.o. song', *katha* 'prayer ceremony', *Khalsa* 'Sikh community', *mala* 'garland', *panchayat* 'village-based advisory body', *puja* 'Hindu religious rite', *Sanatan* 'orthodox Hindu movement', *Sangam* 'South Indian association', and *sangh* 'association, assembly'.

General (or miscellaneous) nouns, adjectives, and verbs make up the largest group of Hindi loans (32%), and include: *babu* 'mate', *bhaiya* 'brother; friend', *choli* 'sari blouse', *chor* 'thief', *chuma* 'to kiss', *dhoobi* 'washerman/woman', *ganja* 'marijuana', *kisan* 'farmer', *no ghar* 'destitute', *pagala* 'fool', *paidar* 'to go on foot', *paisa* 'money', *pak-pak* 'too much talk', *pan-pan* 'sniff methylated spirits', (*tin*) *pani* 'k.o. game', *piala* 'small bowl', *sirdar* 'foreman', *tawa* 'iron plate for cooking', and *turup* 'k.o. card game'.

Hindi exclamations, interjections and discourse particles are not used as much as Fijian ones in Fiji English. They comprise 4% of Hindi borrowings: *acha* 'okay' and *nai sake* 'wow, unreal!'

Given India's pre-eminence among Britain's former colonies, it is not surprising that there are a considerable number of words of Hindi origin listed in the *OED*. Twenty-seven of the Hindi loans in my corpus (33%) are listed in the *OED*, they are: *achar*, *atta*, *babu*, *bhajan*, *chamar*, *dhoobi*, *dhoti*, *ganga*, *ghazal*, *ghee*, *halwa*, *kedgeriee*, *Khalsa*, *kisan*, *paisa*, *pakora*, *panchayat*, *puja*, *punkah*, *puri*, *sahib*, *samaj*, *samosa*, *sirdar*, *tawa* and *tulsi*.

### 3.3 Other foreign loans

Apart from Fijian and Hindi loan words, Fiji English has a small number of borrowings from general Polynesian, Tongan, and one possibly from Cantonese. The general Polynesian loans include: *kava*, *mahimahi* 'golden trevally, dolphin fish', *Coryphaena hippurus*, *mana*

<sup>14</sup> Some of these (as well as items from other lexical groups) are quite well known in the core Englishes, e.g. *ghee*, *kedgeriee*, *roti*, *samosa*, *sahib*, *sangh*, *Diwali* etc., some of which have found their way into monolingual English dictionaries. However, these items enjoy much more currency in English-speaking societies where a significant Indian population is found, than in ones where ethnic Indians comprise a numerically insignificant section of the population.

'supernatural power', (*pa*)*palagi* 'white person, European', *tapa* 'mulberry-bark cloth', and *tamure* 'k.o. dance'.<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to note that *kava* and *tapa* are often more commonly used in Fiji English (even by Fijians) than their Fijian equivalents *yaqona* and *masi*.<sup>16</sup> This is exemplified by the use of *kava* in the *Fiji Times* article cited above, and in the following extracts from the *Daily Post*:

Ratu Sir Kamisese said that the excessive consumption of kava affected the people mentally and physically. The Lau paramount chief said he did not see the reason why people drink so much kava because they knew themselves the after effects to their body and mind. (*Daily Post*, 13/8/1999)

Ratu Nawalowalo said the kava industry contributes about \$93 million to the Fiji economy every year from export and local sales. "There is no other agro-based commodity, apart from sugar, to be at the same level as kava," Mr Nawalowalo said. (*Daily Post*, 8/9/1999)

Currently, Jack's [Handicrafts] specialises in creating wooden handicrafts, wood tanning, picture frames and clocks made from *tapa* and other items which are 100 percent local products. (*Daily Post*, 15/9/1999)

A verification of the use of *tapa* over *masi* is found in an article on holidaying in Fiji that appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald's* (7/8/1999) travel supplement article mentioned above. Here *tapa* (glossed but in roman) is used instead of *masi*. Since the author of the article took pains to use Fijian words where appropriate, he most likely would have used *masi* (with an appropriate gloss) if this were indeed the word that he was generally exposed to. Either the author used *tapa* believing it to be a genuine Fijian word, or thought his readers would be more familiar with it.

Many Tongan words have found their way into Fijian, especially the Fijian communalects spoken in Fiji's eastern islands. Some of these have found their way into Fiji English: *polotu* 'a Tongan style hymn sung in Fijian', *tanoa* 'carved wooden kava bowl', *talanoa* 'chat session', *lakalaka* 'k.o. dance'.

In the late 1990s the approbatory exclamation *cheche* or *che che* found some popularity among the Fijian and part-European speakers of Fiji English. Whether or not its use will become more popular and ultimately replace the currently ubiquitous *uro*, only time will reveal. It most likely originates from the Cantonese dish *Che Che Chicken*. In mainstream Cantonese, *che che* is an onomatopoeic expression mimicking a sizzling sound. The dish

<sup>15</sup> With the exception of perhaps *tamure*, these loans are via New Zealand English (Paul Geraghty, pers. comm.).

<sup>16</sup> Another foreign loan word favoured over its Fijian equivalent is *cassava* [< Haitian via English]:

At six o'clock, the village men march off to their dalo, cassava and yaqona plantations while the women prepare breakfast. (*Fiji Times*, 28/7/99 p.18).

Soko and fellow villager Jone Rarawa have been planting cassava, bele, dalo and yams at the vacant crown land for over six years. (*Daily Post*, 13/10/1999)

includes chicken pieces, liver, ginger and spring onion served in a small pot just taken off the fire. When served, the chicken should still be sizzling in the pot.<sup>17</sup>

### 3.4 Calques

Calques (or loan translations) have proven to be quite a rich and colourful source of additions to the Fiji English lexis. Most of these derive from Fijian lexemes or phrases. They include the following:

- *always* An adverbial that marks the simple (habitual) pres. tense [*< Fijian dau*]<sup>18</sup>
- *bye* A greeting used in passing, equivalent to ‘Hello’ [*< Fijian moce* ‘good-bye’, which is used in this way]
- *just* A restrictive and moderative subjunct meaning ‘only, just; nevertheless, all the same, yet, but, however, but only, except...’ used as suffix with nouns, pronouns or verbs [*< Fijian gā*]
- *pointer* ‘index finger’ [*< Fijian idusidusi* ‘index finger’ *< dusi* ‘to point’]
- *pull (up)* ‘to harvest (in reference to root crops)’ [*< Fijian cavuta* ‘pull up, harvest (*tavioka, dalo, yaqona*), i.e. root crops that are harvested by pulling them out of the ground’]
- *they-two* 3DUAL pronoun [*< Fijian rau*]
- *us-two* IDUAL EXCLUSIVE and INCLUSIVE pronoun ‘us two’; our two’ [*< Fijian keirau, kedaru*]
- *vacant* Used to refer to a house or premises, of which the occupants are out [*< Fijian lala* ‘empty, vacant; no-one at home’]
- *where you going?~where to?* A greeting made in passing, equivalent to ‘Hello’, ‘Hi’, or ‘How are you?’ [*< Fijian o (nī) lai vei*]
- *you-people / you-gang* 2PL pronoun [*< Fijian kemudou, kemunī*]
- *you-two* 2DUAL pronoun [*< Fijian kemudrau*]

The colloquial Fiji English adverbial *go-go-ga* [go-go-ŋa] is best described as a hybrid calque—combining both English and Fijian lexical components. It is an adverbial with a

<sup>17</sup> The two exclamatory approbations *uro* and *cheche* mirror the old and commonly used metaphor in Fijian of sex as food. For instance, the primary meaning of *kusima* in Fijian is ‘crave for fish or seafood’, but it often also means ‘to lust after’.

<sup>18</sup> The analogous adverbial groups *all the time* and *every time* ‘always’ may be extensions of this calque.

meaning roughly equivalent to 'and then ...' or 'finally ...', and derives from the Fijian *lako-lako-ga* 'after a while'.<sup>19</sup>

There are a number of very common calques in Fiji English that have ambiguous etyma. The first is *big father/small father* 'father's elder brother/father's younger brother'. Are these calques from the Fijian *tama-na levu* lit. 'father-big' and *tama-na lailai* lit. 'small father' or from Hindi's *baRaa bappaa* lit. 'big father', or Bhojpuri's *barka-baba*? Whilst the term *big father* is also recorded occurring in South African Indian English (Mesthrie 1992a:145, 1992b), *small father* is also recorded as occurring in the form *smolpapa* 'father's brother' in Bislama (Crowley 1995). It is not unreasonable to assume the terms are calqued from both Fijian and Hindi, given such kinship terms are fairly common in many languages.

A similar problem is encountered with the ubiquitous use of *one* as an indefinite article. Many languages use the primary numeral as an indefinite article. Among these languages are Fijian and Hindi (Fijian *dua*, Hindi *ek*).<sup>20</sup> Its use in Fiji English most likely has its origins in both Fijian and Hindi.

Finally, the common past tense marker *been* could well be a calque from the Fijian preposed past tense marker *ā*. However, the use of *been* as a past tense marker is also attested in Hawaiian English (Carr 1972:122; Tsuzaki 1969), South African Indian English (Mesthrie 1992b), and Melanesian Pidgin English.<sup>21</sup>

### 3.5 Reborrowings

A phenomenon not often reviewed, let alone recognised, in the literature is one that may be best described as 'reborrowing'. As the term suggests, this occurs when a word from language *x* is borrowed into language *y*, where it becomes nativised (and often undergoes a semantic shift). In due course, and with continued intimate contact between the two languages, the word may be re-introduced into the donor language *x*. An excellent example of this phenomenon is *bure* (see fn. 11).

In Fiji English there are quite a number of English–Fijian reborrowings, i.e. English words that were borrowed by Fijian, became phonologically and morphologically nativised, and were subsequently introduced back into the local English. Most of these words also underwent some shift in meaning after they became nativised in Fijian. The resulting semantic shift is a natural and powerful motivation for them to be reintroduced into English. English–Fijian reborrowings include:

<sup>19</sup> Compare Bislama's *gogo*, an iterative postverbal modifier with the meaning 'on and on', which is used in a similar fashion (Crowley 1995:86).

<sup>20</sup> Its use as an indefinite article is also attested in Melanesian Pidgin English, Hawaiian English and pidgin English (Carr 1972:142), and Bahamian English (Holm & Shilling 1982).

<sup>21</sup> Melanesian Pidgin English (MPE) was introduced into Fiji by returned Fijian labourers or imported labourers during the plantation period (1864–1916). Although it was not widely or extensively used, it was nevertheless known to some extent (Siegel 1987). Fiji English shares several grammatical features as well as lexical items with MPE. It is, therefore, possible MPE is the source of these features.

- *boso* A vocative used to address males whom the speaker considers to be socially superior; or a term of address used to ingratiate oneself to a male in the hope of securing a favour [ < Fijian < English *boss* ]
- *ciriveni* 'miserly' [ < Fijian < English *threepence* ]
- *gallon~galen* 'a container for liquids' [ < Fijian *qaloni* 'a container for liquids' < English *gallon* ]. This term is also current in Fiji Hindi
- *karasi* 'marijuana' [ < Fijian < English *grass* ]
- *koki* 'red-breasted musk parrot, *Prosopiea tabuensis*' [ < Fijian < Australian English *cocky* ]
- *panikeke* 'lesbian adj., n.' [ < Fijian < English *pancake* i.e. stacked on top of one another like pancakes ] Monsell-Davis (1984:4) records its meaning as a *ménage à trois*. In Fijian, however, *panikeke* refers only to sexual intercourse ]
- *sapo* 'briefs' [ < Fijian *sapo* 'briefs' < English *supporter* ]
- *topasi* 'a rubbish collector, a night-soil collector, a scavenger' [ < Fijian < Indian English *topas* < Portuguese *topaz* ]

The etymology of *topasi* is interesting and is well worth a brief explication. The word *topas* was used in India to refer to a person of mixed Black and Portuguese descent, and was often applied to a soldier, or a ship's scavenger or bath attendant, who was of this class (*OED*). Yule and Burnell ([1903] 1994) maintain the *topas* on board a ship was the sweeper, who was frequently a dark-skinned or half-caste claimant of Portuguese descent. The term is now archaic in Indian English. In his history of the Fiji indenture period, Naidu (1980:9–10) describes the organisation and conditions of the Indian indentured labourers' sea-passage from India to Fiji. This description indicates the origin of the term in Fiji English:

A female nurse was employed [on the emigrant ships] to take care of the women. There were others as well working under the Surgeon-Superintendent whose duties ranged from cooking (bhandaries) and managing the emigrants (the sardars) to tailoring, hair-dressing and sweeping (topazes). The division of labour helped to meet the day to day needs of the microcosmic world of the emigrant ship.

An account by girmitiya Totaram Sanadhya (1973, cited in Naidu 1980:27) gives a very clear portrayal of the word's use on board the ships that carried the girmitiyas to Fiji:

[...] As soon as morning broke one of the officers chose some of us to work, some to watch and some to do 'topas' job. The officer said to the topas workers, 'you do your work now'. The volunteers asked, 'What work?' Then they were told to clean the faeces of those on board. So many pleaded. But they were beaten and then forced to clear faeces. Throughout the ship you could hear the voices yelling, 'Trahi, trahi — save me, protect me!' [...]

The term found currency in Fiji, was adopted into Fijian, underwent phonological nativisation as well as a semantic shift, was reborrowed by Fiji English, and as the following citation from the *Fiji Times* illustrates, is still very much in vogue:

It means putting the peanut shells from the packet you brought [sic] from old Ram Sami at the bus stand into the bin, so that it doesn't have to be picked up by Setareki, the *topasi* from SCC [Suva City Council]. (*Fiji Times*, 28/6/1997 p.23)

The expression *mokusiga* 'to hang about, do nothing' (lit. *moku* 'kill' + *siga* 'day') may be best classified as a reborrowed calque. It was originally a Fijian calque of the English expression *to kill time*, but has since become a very popular expression in contemporary colloquial Fiji English.

Finally, there are two English–Hindi reborrowings: *girmit*<sup>22</sup> 'the indenture period' from *agreement (of indenture)*, and *trup* or *turup* 'k.o. card game' from *trump*.

### 3.6 Borrowings from Indian English and/or 'Colonial' English

A number of Fiji English vocabulary items have their origins in either Indian English or what I have termed 'Colonial English' (the English that was common among British colonial administrators and bureaucrats). All of these borrowings observed in Fiji English are also attested either in varieties of Indian English, or in the Englishes spoken in other former British colonies, e.g. Singapore, Malaysia, South Africa.

Apart from the expression *cousin-brother/sister* 'first cousin'<sup>23</sup> (which is used almost exclusively by Indo-Fijians) all other Indian English loans listed below are used by all speakers of Fiji English.

- *bluff* 'to lie, to insist that something is true, knowing it to be false; a lie; untrue'. Also attested in Indian English (Nihalani et al. 1989), Singapore English (Lugg 1984:8; Tongue 1974:66), Malaysian English (Tongue 1974:66), and South African Indian English (Mesthrie 1992b).
- *compound* 'the fenced or enclosed area of land around a house or group of buildings'. Also in PNG English, Malaysian English, and Singapore English.
- *grass cutter* 'man who mows lawns for a living'. Also in Indian English (Yule & Burnell [1903] 1994; Lewis 1991).
- *pak-pak, (too much)* '(too much) talk' [ < Indian English *bak* 'to talk too much; to chatter' < Hindi *baknā*. (Yule & Burnell [1903] 1994)]. Also in South African Indian English (Mesthrie 1992b), where its attested form is *bak-bak*.
- *schooling* 'go to/attend school'. The *OED* marks this usage as 'rare'. Also in Indian English (Nihalani et al. 1989), Singapore English (Lugg 1984:13; Tongue 1974:76),

<sup>22</sup> The term also occurs in South African Indian English and Mauritian English. The derivative *girmitiya* (an Indian indentured labourer) can have a pejorative meaning in South African Indian English (Mesthrie 1992b:19). In Fiji, however, the *girmitias* are highly revered.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Trudgill and Hannah (1982:11), Kachru (1983:118), and Nihalani et al. (1989) as an Indian English expression, and Mesthrie (1988:10, 1992a:145, 1992b) as an expression in South African Indian English.

Malaysian English (Tongue 1974:76), South African Indian English (Mesthrie 1992b), and Bahamian English (Holm & Shilling 1982).

- *stay* 'to live, reside' Also in Indian English (Nihalani et al. 1989), Singapore English (Lugg 1984:19; Tongue 1974:73), Malaysian English (Choo 1984:44; Tongue 1974:73), Nigerian English (Awonusi 1990:34), and Bahamian English (Holm & Shilling 1982). This usage is also attested in Scottish English (Trudgill & Hannah 1982:86–86; *OED*), Irish English (*OED*), and American English (*OED*). Although *stay* forms part of the lexis of these varieties of English, it is almost certainly an Indian English 'immigrant' as far as Fiji English is concerned.
- *auntie/uncle* A term of address for any adult female/male older than the speaker. Also in Indian English (Nihalani et al. 1989; *OED*), Singapore English (Eng 1984:22–23; Tongue 1974:65), Malaysian English (Tongue 1974:65), and South African Indian English (Mesthrie 1992b).

Apart from Indian English, *alphabet* 'a letter of the alphabet' (Trudgill & Hannah 1982:106; Nihalani et al. 1989) also belongs to the lexis of Malaysian and Singapore English (Tongue 1974:62; Platt 1982:396), and South African Indian English (Mesthrie 1992b, 1993:13), Hawaiian English (Carr 1972:121), and Bislama (Crowley 1995). Indeed I have heard this use by university students from all over the South Pacific. It is difficult to know whether this expression found its way into Fiji English via Indian English, via Melanesian Pidgin English, or is an inherent feature of L2 English and/or New Englishes.

The origin of the final item, *wash* (*film*) 'to develop film, photographs', is also unclear.<sup>24</sup> However, its attested use in Bislama (Crowley 1995), Malaysian English (Choo 1984:47; Imm 1984:63) Singapore English (Platt, Weber & Ho 1984:102), and Nigerian English (Platt, Weber & Ho 1984:102), suggests it may have its origins in Colonial English.

### 3.7 Borrowings from other Englishes

The following group of Fiji English expressions are English words which are most likely borrowed from Australian and American English.

It is interesting that Fiji's proximity to Australia and New Zealand, not to mention its historic, economic and social ties to these two nations, has not led to more lexical borrowing from these two significant varieties of English. Indeed, I have not been able to identify any distinctively New Zealand English borrowings in Fiji English (apart from those Polynesian words introduced via New Zealand English), whilst among the numerous transparently Australian English loans to be noted are:

- *bowser* 'petrol pump' [also in New Zealand English]
- *lolly* 'a sweet'
- *stubby* 'a small squat beer bottle; the contents of such a bottle'

<sup>24</sup> Perhaps it is a calque on Fijian *sava* 'wash; develop'.

- *koki* 'red-breasted musk parrot, *Prosopiea tabuensis*' [< Fijian < Australian English *cocky*]
- *roll* 'a single cigarette' [most likely < *rollie* < *roll your own*]

"This [the banning of selling cigarettes to minors] will put an end to the culture of parents sending their children to the local shop to get a few rolls," he [Leo Smith, Minister for Health] said. (*Fiji Times*, 16/8/1997 p.34)

Although *truck* is often, if not usually, used to refer to heavy vehicles for carrying goods, the British English *lorry* is also regularly used. Occasionally it is used in Fiji English to refer to a bus. This is a reborrowing from Fijian *lori* 'truck; bus', and in some places it is the usual word for bus in Fijian. Originally buses were just lorries with benches in the back (Paul Geraghty, pers. comm.).

Association President Umesh Chand said 50 per cent of the 500 lorries were not operating because the owners could not afford the charges. [...] A mill employee said a few lorries were in the mill yard. [...] Although harvesting was in full swing in many sections in the mill area, which includes Seaqaqa, many gangs were without lorries. (*Fiji Times*, 28/5/1999, p.5)

Since the introduction of television in 1991, American English appears to be enjoying a boost in its influence on the Fiji English lexis. American serials are extremely popular among Fiji's younger generation, a fact that is exemplified by the increase of American English colloquialisms and slang in their speech. Some that are in current use include: *bro*, *check it out*, *dude*, and *home boys*.

There are also a number of expressions that appear to have entered Fiji English via American English well before the introduction of television, some as far back as World War II or earlier. During World War II large numbers of US troops were stationed in Fiji. Their legacy is quite a rich array of Americanisms that are still very much current in Fiji English. I have provisionally attributed the following group of items to American English, partly on the grounds that most do not appear to be prevalent in most other varieties of English; I recognise of course that some may well be derived from other sources.

- *fix* 'to fuck; to arrange a sexual partner for someone' [? < *fix* [someone] up 'to secure a date for someone; to secure a prostitute for someone' (Wentworth & Flexner 1960)] Also attested in Bahamian English (Holm & Shilling 1982).
- *fix up* 'to assault, to give someone a hiding or belting' [? < *fix* 'to beat up' (Wentworth & Flexner 1960)]
- *flip-flops* 'rubber or plastic sandals held loosely on the feet by a V-shaped straps passing between the first and second toes and over either side of the feet'. (Otherwise known as *thongs* in Australian English and *jandals* in New Zealand English). Since *flip-flops* is also the term used in Britain, it may well have entered Fiji English via British English.
- *gone* 'drunk' [< *gone* 'drunk' (Wentworth & Flexner 1960)] Also attested in Australian English—*far gone* 'extremely drunk' (*Macquarie Dictionary of Australian Colloquial Language*), so this may well be its source.

- *jacked, (to get)* ‘to get into trouble’ [? < nineteenth century American English *jack up* ‘to reprimand a person’ *arch.* 1895 (Wentworth & Flexner 1960)]
- *jack water / raisin jack* ‘a home-made alcoholic brew of sugar, yeast, water and flavouring’ [? < *jack* ‘simple luxuries, such as sweets and tobacco’ (Wentworth & Flexner 1960); cf. *apple jack*]
- *kill* ‘an instruction / imperative to finish a cigarette / drink / food etc. quickly; an offer to do so—I’ll *kill it for you* meaning *I’ll finish it for you*’ [? < *kill* ‘to drink or eat of any specified amount of liquor or food (1833); to drink or eat the last portion’ (Wentworth & Flexner 1960)]
- *push (poo-poo)* ‘to sodomise’ [? < *push* ‘to have sexual intercourse’ (Wentworth & Flexner 1960)] Bislama’s analogous *puspus* ‘to copulate, have sexual intercourse [rare]’ (Crowley 1995) may also have its origins in American English.
- *sure shot* ‘assured’ [? < *sure-fire* ‘unfailing; certain of winning applause’ (Wentworth & Flexner 1960)]
- *toke* [tok] ‘marijuana’ [< *toke* ‘a drag of a cigarette or a joint’ (Wentworth & Flexner 1960)]
- *wind pie* ‘nothing, nothing to eat’ [? < *wind pudding* ‘nothing to eat’ (Wentworth & Flexner 1960)]

### 3.8 Hybrids

Hybridisation is a term used by Kachru (1975:62) for lexical collocations or compounds that comprise items from more than one language. Given Fiji’s multilingual nature, it is not at all surprising to find such constructions in Fiji English. They are typically composed of two free morphemes, but may also comprise a bound morpheme or particle affixed to a free morpheme. Examples of the latter in Fiji English include:

- *bilibili-a-thon* ‘an annual *bilibili* race on the Sigatoka River’ [< Fijian *bilibili* ‘bamboo raft’]
- *maloser* [maluza] ‘a hopeless person with no future prospects’ [< Fijian *ma* (particle compounded with some words forming nouns and adjectives of state or condition) + *loser*]

The majority of Fiji English hybrids, however, are composed of English and Fijian free morphemes. Compounding of Hindi and English elements also occurs, though much less often. I have encountered only one Fijian–Hindi hybrid used in Fiji English—*taukey puja* ‘pouring the first cup of *yaqona* onto the soil to appropriate the *taukey ni vanua* (local god), done by Fiji Indians in imitation of the Fijian custom’ [< Fijian *taukey* ‘land owner’ + Hindi *puja* ‘a religious rite, prayer’].

The head of a hybrid is typically a noun accompanied by a modifying noun, adjective, or adverb. As the following examples illustrate, the head and modifier may be derived from any of the three languages involved:

- *bula shirt* 'an open-necked short-sleeved shirt with tropical design'  
*bula man* 'a tout'  
*bula smile* 'a welcoming smile'
- *full kasou* 'totally/completely drunk'. [*<* Fijian *kasou* 'drunk']
- *lovo food* 'food cooked in a *lovo*' [*<* Fijian *lovo* 'pit or earth oven']
- *know-ga, school-ga, choke-ga, things-ga, we-ga, you-ga* etc. [*<* Fijian *gā*, a limitative and moderative adverbial particle meaning 'only, just; nevertheless, all the same, yet, but, however, but only, except ...']
- *malua fever* 'The habit or proclivity to put things off'. Compare *mañana*. [*<* Fijian *mālua* 'later']
- *nice bola!* An exclamatory approbation called out to a good-looking / well dressed person / thing' [*<* Fijian *bola* 'bag, case, box']
- *off-taka* 'to switch off a light, appliance, device etc.' [*<* Fijian *taka* transitive verb marker]
- *talanoa session* 'a chat, informal talk; a story telling session' [*<* Fijian *talanoa* 'to chat']
- *talasiga area-country* 'grassland' [*<* Fijian *talāsiga* 'grassland']
- *chota peg* 'a small nip/serve of liquor' [*<* Hindi *chhotā* 'small' + *peg* 'a dram, drink']
- *gang sirdar* 'a cane-gang boss/foreman' [*<* Hindi *sirdar* 'a foreman, overseer'] As the following citation shows, the gang sirdar is not necessarily an Indo-Fijian:  
A harvesting gang sirdar was given a suspended jail sentence for fraudulently converting more than \$2000 in canecutters' pay to his personal use. Akariva Tiniciwaciwa, 60, sirdar of the Waimaro Gang Number 43 of Seaqaqa pleaded guilty to a charge of fraudulent conversion before magistrate Maika Nakora in Labasa Court. (*Fiji Times*, 30/6/99 p.10)
- *no ghar* 'destitute, homeless' [*<* Hindi *ghar* 'house']
- *piala cut* 'a pudding-bowl haircut' [*<* Hindi *piala* 'a small enamel bowl used for drinking *yaqona* or tea']
- *pura cut* 'completely / totally drunk' [*<* H *pūrā* 'complete, total']

There are also three hybrid reduplications in the corpus, i.e. hybrid compounds whose two elements have the same or very similar meaning. These are:

- *bure house* 'a Fijian-style house made from traditional materials'

- *sasa broom* ‘a short hand-held broom made from the dried ribs of coconut palm fronds’ [< Fijian *sāsā* with the same meaning]
- *tanoa bowl* ‘a large carved wooden bowl with four or more legs used for infusing *yaqona*’ [< Fijian *tānoa* with the same meaning]

These items seem to have the pragmatic function not only of characterising things unique to Fiji, but also of emphasising this uniqueness. Hence, a *bure house* is not just any house, but a Fijian-style house made from traditional materials, a *sasa broom* is just not any broom, but a Fijian-style broom, and a *tanoa bowl* is not just any bowl, but a carved wooden bowl with a specific Fijian design made for a specific purpose, and has specific significance in Fijian and Fiji culture.

#### 4 Conclusion

The structure, development and nativisation of the lexis of Fiji English is much the same as that of any other variety of English. What sets it apart from other varieties are, of course, the individual lexical items and expressions. And like any other variety of Pacific English, it has nativised a substantial number of indigenous words. What sets Fiji English apart from other Pacific Englishes is its Hindi word stock. As my corpus shows, Fijian has had more than twice the numerical impact on the vocabulary of Fiji English Hindi. This is not surprising because Hindi has been an ingredient in this amalgam only since 1879. Moreover, it is only natural that Fijian words predominate in the local sociocultural, biological, botanical and geophysical nomenclature because it belongs to the host country. These loans were well established in the English of Fiji before the introduction of Hindi. As the table below shows, Hindi’s contribution to the Fiji English lexis has mainly been in the areas of food, culture, and religion.

**Table 1:** Fijian and Hindi loans in FVE

Category of loan	% Fijian	% Hindi
A. Inedible flora (trees and medicinal herbs)	10	—
B. Edible flora (vegetables, fruits, herbs and spices)	10	12
C. Inedible fauna (birds)	1	—
D. Edible fauna (mainly seafood)	7	1
E. Prepared foods and beverages	3	30
F. General/miscellaneous nouns, adjectives and verbs	27	32
G. Culture and religion (customs, concepts, events and practices)	20	21
H. Sociopolitical terms	12	—
I. Discourse particles and formulae (greetings etc.)	4	1
J. Exclamations and interjections	6	3

Hindi's contribution to the Fijian lexis follows this pattern and is considerably less than that of English. *Na ivolavosa vakaviti* (the Fijian Dictionary Project), which has been compiling a monolingual Fijian Dictionary since 1974, has to date about 175 Hindi loan words among its almost 30,000 entries (0.58%). Most of these refer to food, and the names for general items and concepts associated with Indian culture and religion. However, as I mentioned above, 41% of these Hindi loans have the usage label *veiwali* 'joking' attached to them—most of which pertain to words describing actions and concepts that have Fijian equivalents.

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