

CHAPTER 2

The Sound Patterns of Fiji

2.0. Introduction

It will be necessary during the course of this work to cite many forms from various parts of Fiji. Given the diversity of phonological systems, it is not surprising that a single historical form can turn up in different areas in very different phonetic guises.¹ It was apparent from an early stage in my work, therefore, that a very useful tool would be a kind of diaphonemic system in which related, but phonetically distinct, forms could be cited, and an associated list of rules for the various areas by means of which the actual pronunciation of the form could be determined.² In this chapter, I will list phonetic realization rules for the communalects on which I have chosen to focus, and which, it is hoped, will adequately represent the whole of Fiji. The two following chapters will be an attempt to draw historical inferences from a comparison of contemporary sound-systems within Fiji.

2.1. The "Communalect"

Following Pawley and Sayaba (1971:407), I shall use the term "communalect" to signify a variety of speech with little or no apparent regional variation. A "communalect" typically covers a number of

villages in a geographically defined area, but may be confined to one village (e.g., Navatu (Bua)), or be spread over more than twenty villages (e.g., Namosi, Lau). In my judgments about where one communalect ends and another begins, I have relied heavily on the opinions of native informants. In most instances a "communalect" is *a variety spoken by people who claim they use the same speech*. I very rarely found any disagreement among informants regarding communalect boundaries; and there was frequently agreement regarding the lexical items or habits of pronunciation that characterize a particular communalect. Generally, throughout Fiji, most speakers, even children, are very much aware of minute linguistic differences, and use them in contrasting themselves with their neighbors. The words for 'heavy' and 'light' often appear in impressionistic descriptions, but their phonetic correlates are unclear.

While informants appear to be good at defining linguistic boundaries, their assessment of degrees of difference does not always accord with the linguist's. One particular instance I recall concerns the people of Nakoroboya, in Bā province. They insisted that the speech of their neighbors in Navala and Togē was closer to theirs than that of Bā and Tavua. When I came to add up the lexical and grammatical evidence, however, it became clear that Bā and Tavua were considerably closer. It turned out that the informants' criterion of linguistic closeness was not lexical or grammatical, but intonational: for them, the fact that Nakoroboya shared intonation patterns with Navala and Togē, exclusively of Bā and Tavua, overrode all other factors.

In cases where native judgments about "sameness" are at odds with the linguist's, I have usually allowed the native view to prevail. Phonological criteria, for example, appear to be important only sometimes. There is widespread awareness that some people use 'h' or fricativize *k* [x, ɣ], or use the glottal stop; but variation within a communalect is encountered fairly often. In the Dawasamu communalect of northern Tailevu, three of the five villages follow their Rā neighbors in realizing *t* as glottal stop, while for the other two it is [t]; yet they all "speak the same language." A similar situation obtains in Yadua island, Bua, where both velar fricative and glottal stop are used for *k*. I was unable to discover the determining factor, though age and locality probably can be discounted; possibly it has to do with where the speaker went to school.

Although the "communalect" will be the basic unit for comparison, the terms "dialect" and "language" also will be used interchangeably.

2.2. The Diaphoneme

In his positive answer to the question "Is a structural dialectology possible?" Uriel Weinreich (1954) discusses the concept of a "diasystem," an abstract system which relates partially similar systems, such as related dialects. For present purposes, a diasystem of the sounds of Fijian languages will be used as a convenient device for citing in one form a number of related, but phonetically (and sometimes phonemically) distinct forms. I shall use the term "diaphoneme" to mean a symbol representing a sound, or sounds, which constitute a distinct phoneme in at least some of the languages of Fiji. The deliberate vagueness in

"at least some" points to the fact that I have been obliged to draw some arbitrary lines, in much the same way that a historical linguist must decide that certain correspondence sets reflect a distinct proto-phoneme, while others show irregular developments in daughter languages. The diaphoneme, however, is not a proto-phoneme, but an abbreviatory device.

Forms cited in diaphonemic notation will be italicized. Occasionally, a form will be cited in a "phonetic" script which is closer to actual pronunciation; this form will be italicized and in single quotation marks. Such a script might well be used when nonstandard languages come to be written. Only the familiar letters of the Roman alphabet are used in the "phonetic" script, and there are some resulting inconsistencies. Palatalized *t*, for instance, is written 'j', but there is no suitable symbol available for palatalized *d*; interestingly, however, loanwords have made palatalized *t* phonemic in many dialects, whereas palatalized *d* remains a phonologically conditioned allophone.

In Table 1, the first column lists the diaphonemes; the second column shows the various possible realizations of each diaphoneme in "phonetic" script; and the third column gives a more complete list of possible phonetic realizations, using IPA symbols.

The phonetic realization rules which will be listed for each communalect are the exceptions to the general rule that a diaphoneme is realized as the first phone ascribed to it in Table 1. So *k* is to be taken as representing [k] in those dialects which have no phonetic realization rule affecting *k* (e.g., Waidina). Rules are generally of the form:

Table 1

Diaphonemes and Their Possible Realizations
in "Phonetic" Script and IPA

Diaphoneme	"Phonetic" Script	IPA
a	a	a a:
b	b p	mb p
c	c	ɔ
d	d t	nd dd ndʒ t
dr	dr tr	ndr tr
e	e	ɛ
f	f	f
g	g	ŋ
gw	gw g	ŋw ŋ
i	i (zero)	i/i _h (/a,e___) i
k	k x ' (zero)	k x/ɣ (phon) ?
kw	kw xw ' (zero)	kw xw/ɣw (phon) ?
l	l	l l o

Table 1 (continued)

Diaphoneme	"Phonetic" Script	IPA
m	m	m
n	n	n ŋ
o	o	ɔ
p	p	p
q	q k	ŋg gg k
qw	qw q k	ŋgw ŋg gg k
r	r	r
s	s h	s h
t	t ' j s	t ʔ tʃ s
u	u (zero)	u/u̯ (/a,o__) u
v	v	β
w	w	w
y (zero)	y y (zero)	j j (/#__a)
<i>diaphonemic forms are italicized</i>	<i>forms in "phonetic" script are italicized and in single quotes</i>	<i>forms will not be cited in IPA</i>

diaphoneme : "phonetic" script or IPA

so that

k:x

might be read as "k is realized as a velar fricative" (no claim made about presence or absence of voice). In the next rule, IPA is used:

d:[ndʒ]/__i

meaning that *d* is realized as a prenasalized alveopalatal affricate before *i*. Some rules are given in prose.

Through use of the phonetic realization rules, the various pronunciations of any diaphonemic form can be determined, as in these examples:

Diaphonemic	"Phonetic"	IPA
WDN <i>dina</i> 'true'	' <i>dina</i> '	[ndina]
LAU <i>dina</i> 'true'	' <i>dina</i> '	[ndʒina]
NMN <i>tiko</i> 'stay'	' <i>tiko</i> '	[tiko]
LAU <i>tiko</i> 'stay'	' <i>jiko</i> '	[tʃiko]
BRV(M) <i>tiko</i> 'stay'	' <i>i'o</i> '	[ʔiʔo]
DGT <i>tiko</i> 'stay'	' <i>ti'o</i> '	[tiʔo]
KRL <i>tiko</i> 'stay'	' <i>ixo</i> '	[ʔixo]
LBS <i>tiko</i> 'stay'	' <i>io</i> '	[ʔio]
MGD <i>kwā</i> 'thing'	' <i>kwā</i> '	[kwa:]
NDR <i>kwā</i> 'thing'	' <i>xwā</i> '	[xwa:]
SLV <i>kwā</i> 'thing'	' <i>xā</i> '	[xa:]
TNL <i>kwā</i> 'thing'	' <i>ā</i> '	[ʔa:]

Diaphonemic	"Phonetic"	IPA
TBI <i>sabata</i> 'shore'	' <i>sabata</i> '	[sa:mbata]
TBW <i>sabata</i> 'shore'	' <i>habata</i> '	[ha:mbata]
VL N-mu II 'your'	' <i>mu</i> '	[mu]
WAY N-mu II 'your'	' <i>m</i> '	[m]

Note that the rule "no labiovelars" means that *kw*, *qw*, and *gw* are realized the same way as *k*, *q*, and *g*, respectively. In practice, of course, plain velars will often be used rather than labiovelar diaphonemes, when only languages without labiovelars are being considered.

2.3. Communalects and Phonetic Realization Rules

The following is a listing of the thirty-eight communalects under study in this work, which probably approaches a quarter of the total number in Fiji. Most of the villages can be found on the Ordinance Survey 1:250,000 maps and are listed in a rough geographical order. The name for the communalect is usually one by which it is widely known--often the name of a kin group or old administrative area (*tikina*). Map 1 shows the location and extent of the communalects, with a listing of the abbreviations.

(1). Way (WAY)

villages: Nalauwaki, Wayalevu, Natawa,
Yalobi (Way Island); all three
villages on Viwa (Bā)

rules: a:ā/___(C)V(C)V##
u:ø/m [-stress]

FiJI

