Precourse Needs Analysis for a Female Rotuman Learning a Domestic Register of Fiji Hindi

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Introduction

This Precourse Needs Analysis attempts to describe what a female non-Fiji Hindi speaker marrying into the Muslim Indo-Fijian community needs to learn of Fiji Hindi in three months in order to communicate in a domestic register.

Needs Analysis in language education is a systematic attempt to gather information about the target language needs of a group of learners and to state those needs concisely for the purpose of syllabus and course design. (Clark, cited in Griffiths 2000).

For this Precourse Needs Analysis, the learner is a female native speaker of Rotuman, in her early to mid-twenties, who has always lived in Fiji and does not have much knowledge about the target language other than a few basic words. The learner is likely to be competent in English and possibly Fijian.

Tudor (1993:24) quotes Oskarsson: "…the intentions…of the learner should be the controlling factor for reaching proper decisions as to what he should learn and how he should learn it". Tudor says that this involves the development of "students' motivation to learn the language, the amount of effort they are willing to put in, and their attitudes both to the target language (TL) and to the process of learning itself". Tudor goes on to say, "Students need to develop an understanding of why they are studying the TL, of their communicative goals and of their current abilities in the language — together with the ability to analyse and discuss their goals".

For this Precourse Needs Analysis, the aim of the learner is to be able to understand and carry out some essential communicative functions in Fiji Hindi, within a domestic register. The learner is

strongly motivated to acquire knowledge of Fiji Hindi because it is the language of her husband and there is the likelihood that the learner will live with her in-laws. In such a situation it is important that she is able to participate in family discussions in Fiji Hindi.

Brief linguistic background of Fiji Hindi

Because this Needs Analysis has learning Fiji Hindi as its target, a brief linguistic background of the language is worth mentioning.

Fiji Hindi developed during the indenture period (1879-1920) "in cargo holds on ships, in coolie lines and on the plantations" (Shameem, 1995:17). The language is a reflection of the wide range of languages spoken by the Indian labourers. The South Indian Dravidian languages are likely to have been unintelligible to the majority of the North Indian labourers. According to Siegel (1987), because of this and also because of the mutual unintelligibility between labourers and the overseer, what he calls a Plantation Hindi developed. This led to, on the one hand, a koinized form of Hindi due to the fusion of various Hindi languages used amongst the labourers and, on the other hand, a pidginised form of Hindi used between the labourers and the overseer. Both the koinized and pidginised forms of Hindi have combined to produce what Gillion (1977) calls Fiji Bāt, more commonly known as Fiji Hindi.

After the indenture period, contact with other ethnic communities in Fiji, particularly Fijians, resulted in a Fiji Hindi that has a distinct identity. Today, Fiji Hindi exists alongside Shudh (standard) Hindi. Fiji Hindi is regarded by some as broken Hindi or a basilectal variety of Shudh Hindi. A reason for this is its lack of historicity in comparison to languages from India that arrived in Fiji during the indenture period. Also, the practice of reserving Shudh Hindi for formal functions, such as the media and religion, and Fiji Hindi for informal, affective functions does nothing to enhance its prestige.

No matter what Indo-Fijians may think of their mother tongue, they continue to use it and not Shudh Hindi within the Indo-Fijian community. This is the reason why this Precourse Needs Analysis attempts to describe what a learner needs to acquire in Fiji Hindi, rather than in Shudh Hindi, in order to communicate within a domestic register.

Register

According to Hartmann and Stork (1972:194), a register is "a variety in language used for a specific purpose. Registers may be more narrowly defined by reference to subject matter, to medium or to level of formality".

There is only so much a learner will be able to acquire of a second language in three months. Because the learner will be using Fiji Hindi in the home environment after marriage, she needs first of all to develop a domestic register of Fiji Hindi that will enable her to communicate and to understand conversations at home i.e. develop both receptive and productive skills in Fiji Hindi. Therefore, there is no specific subject matter. The medium of discourse is oral, spontaneous conversation and the level of formality, or manner of discourse, is casual to intimate, depending on the addressee(s). For example, the learner will sometimes be using an intimate manner of discourse with her husband and probably a casual manner of discourse with her in-laws.

Living in Fiji, a melting pot of various cultures, the learner may already have an understanding of a few basic expressions such as:

Kaise	How are you?
Hã	Yes
Naī	No
dāl	lentils
roti	roti
bāhjī	leafy vegetables
larkā	boy

larkī	girl
khalas	finish
accha	good

This is obviously an extremely limited vocabulary and the learner will need to acquire a lot more words and phrases and to learn their meaning and sociolinguistic appropriateness for use in different situations in order to be able to participate in speech acts, such as family discussions.

Speech acts and Functions

The function of language is defined by Hartmann and Stork (1972:91) as "the use of language for a particular purpose". The learner needs to participate in various speech acts such as opening a conversation, making requests and taking leave.

a) Phatic Functions

Coupland, cited in Boyle (2000:29) says that phatic communion is "talk that is aimless, prefatory, obvious, uninteresting…and even irrelevant, but part of the process of fulfilling our intrinsically human needs for social cohesiveness and mutual recognition".

Some examples of phatic functions are greetings, leave-takings, and compliments.

<u>Greetings</u>

Greetings are quite straightforward. There are no special greetings for different times of the day or according to the length of time between meetings or age difference (except for the pronoun usage which we shall look at under Structures).

Muslims greet each other by saying *as-salaam-u alaykum* 'peace be upon you' to which the reply is *wa-alaykum salaam* 'peace be upon you too'. This is followed by a rhetorical question and answer normally

begun by the person who initiated the greeting:

(*A*p/Tum)   kaise   (hai)?
2ⁿᵈ P SING   how   be?
How are you?

The reply is:

(Ham)   thik hai
1ˢᵗ P SING   well be
I am well.

If the learner is addressing a non-Muslim Indo-Fijian, *as-salaam-u alaykum* and *wa-alaykum salaam* are omitted and the learner begins with *Kaise hai?*

Normally, it is the younger person who greets the older person at social gatherings, and visitors greet the host and/or hostess. Visitors are normally greeted at the door, followed by:

Chali   bhitar
Go   in
Let's go in.

There is no need to tell people to take a seat in the Indo-Fijian community for it is generally understood that if they are invited into the house, they are invited to sit down.

If a child is displayed whom the learner has not seen for quite a while (a year at least), she could continue the conversation after the greeting by an explicit compliment:

Ketna bara   hoi ge
How   big   be PERF
How much the child has grown!

Leave-taking

Leave-taking is a little more elaborate and is conducted in a series of

steps. The visitor says something like:

Accha, ab   hamlog   chali
OK   now   1st P.PL.OBL   go
OK, we shall be leaving now.

This is normally ignored by the host and hostess who continue the conversation or else ask the visitors to stay for lunch or dinner to which, normally, a polite refusal is given, such as:

Nai,   bout   deri   hoi   ge,   fir   kabhi.
No   quite   late   be   PERF again   other time.
No, it is quite late, maybe some other time.
Accha humlog   chali.
OK   1st.P.PL.OBL   go
OK, we are leaving.

Everyone gets up to see the visitors to the door. Before leaving, the visitors say *as-salaam-u alaykum*, the reply *wa-alaykum salaam* is given by the host and hostess, followed by:

Fir   ãna
Again come
Come again.

To which the visitors reply with an invitation of their own:

Accha, ãp/tum logan bhi   koi   din   ãna
Ok   2nd P.SING INCL   too   some   day   come
Ok, you must come as well some day.

This is followed by *as-salaam-u alaykum* by the visitors and *wa-alaykum salaam* by the host and hostess, after which the visitors depart.

<u>Compliments</u>

Nearly two decades ago, according to Boyle (2000:27), Manes and Wolfson

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claimed that compliments are formulaic. These formulaic compliments "serve the function of creating and re-enforcing social solidarity among people who may not be well-known to one another and … they therefore need to be quite unambiguous".

There are two types of compliments: explicit and implicit. Boyle (2000:28) cites Holmes' (1988) definition of explicit compliments as those utterances that "attribute credit to someone other than the speaker for some good which is positively valued by the speaker" and that contain a semantically positive adjective, verb or adverb.

An example of an explicit compliment:

Tumar/Apke   sari   sundar   hai.
2nd P.Sing. POSS   sari   beautiful   be
Your sari is beautiful.

Boyle (2000:28) says, "Implicit compliments are those in which the value judgment is presupposed and/or implicated". An example of an implicit compliment is:

Tum   jeise   Kajol   lag-ta.
2nd P.Sing   like   Kajol   look-IMPERF
You look like Kajol.

Kajol is an Indian film star. Telling someone she looks like Kajol is an implicit compliment for it indirectly means that that person is beautiful.

Boyle (2000:30) says, "We make small talk in order to placate others and to try to create amicable relationships. We admire the houses and the children of people with whom we might develop a relationship". Both forms of compliments are common in the Indo-Fijian community.

b)   Referential Function

Speech acts in which there is a definite reference relation between a word and the object or idea which it signifies, are said to have referential functions (Hartmann and Stork (1972:38). That is, there is information provided through speech. One example of referential function would be introductions.

<u>Introductions</u>

In introductions, the introducer normally states how the person who is being introduced is related to him or her.

Iske   amma aur   hamar saas   bhaini hai
3rd P.. mother and   1st P.   mother-in-law sisters be
SING.POSS   SING.POSS
His/her mother and my mother-in-law are sisters.

c)   Expressive Functions

Speech acts that express the speakers' feelings have an expressive function. Examples are thanking and apologizing. In Rotuman there are Rotuman words for 'thank you', *faiäksia* and 'sorry', *se fek*. In Fiji Hindi, 'thank you' and 'sorry' have been borrowed from English.

d)   Assertive Function

According to Hartmann and Stork (1972:80), a clause or sentence containing a strongly emphasized opinion, different from the declarative form either in intonation or in structure, has an assertive function. Examples of assertives are giving advice, voicing intentions and expressing opinions.

<u>Giving Advice: Preliminary steps</u>

Advice is given all the time, regardless of whether anyone heeds it. There are two ways of indicating that one is about to give some advice: informally and a little more formally.

In an informal context, such as a family discussion where everyone is speaking at once, one could begin with:

Janta   ham   kaunci   sotch-ta…
Know   1st.P.SING   what   think-IMPERF
You know what I think…

or with:

Ham   sotch-ta   hai   ki…
1st P.SING.   think-IMPERF. be   that
I'm thinking that… or I think that…

If one is in conversation with a single addressee and wants to give advice but is not sure how this advice will be taken (for example, when talking to an acquaintance whom one doesn't know too well), it is appropriate to begin with:

Agar (āp/tum)   mind nai kar-ega,   ham   sakta kuch bole?
If   (2nd.P.SING) mind no do-IMPERF   1st.P.SING can   some say?
If you don't mind, I'd like to say something.

Only after the addressee replies something like:
Nai   mind   kar-ega,   kaunci ?
No   mind   do-IMPERF.   what?
No I don't mind, what is it?

should the learner proceed with her advice.

Intentions

There are a number of ways to voice intentions. One way is to come right out with it, such as:

Ham   mang-ta   filam   dekhe
1st.P.SING   want-IMPERF movie watch
I want to watch a movie.

If the learner is not sure whether or not she should voice her intentions, she could begin tentatively with:

Ham   ek cɪ z   mãg-ta…
1st.P.SING   one thing   want-IMPERF.
I want something.

After the addressee says:

Kauncɪ
What?

the learner can proceed.

Expressing Opinions

This takes the same form as giving advice. For example:

Ham   sotch-ta   hai   ki u ɑcchɑ larkɑ   nai hai
1st   think-IMPERF be   that 3rd good   boy   no be
P. SING   P.SING
I think that he is not a good person.

e)   Directive Functions

Speech acts that attempt to get a person to do something, for example, through orders, requests or commands are classified here.

Requests

There are different forms that can be used for requests. If the learner requests permission she could use the following structure:

Mohammed, ham   sak-ta   town   jae?
Mohammed, 1st. P.SING   can-IMPERF   town   go?
Mohammed, may I go to town?

Requests can also take the form of command + *please* tag:

Ham-e   churi pass karo, please
1st P.SING.POSS knife pass do
Pass me the knife, please.

This form is not often used for it sounds slightly formal.

Orders and Commands

Orders and commands are given in the imperative form (see Structure). They are used with people of lower or equal status and amongst people who are solidary.

Invitations

Generally, in the Indo-Fijian community, visitors come without invitation. Invitations, like greetings, have a rhetorical function where, upon meeting an acquaintance or relative, an invitation is given:

Ghare ana   koi   taim
Home come   some time
Come home sometime.

To which a reply such as the one below is given.

Accha
OK

or

*H*a, *koi roj ai ga, abhi thora busy hai, m*õ*k*a   *mili*
Yes, some day come FUT now little busy be, as soon as time get
Yes, I'll come some day. I'm a little busy right now, but as soon as I find time I'll come.

This does not mean that you must make a point of visiting the speaker; rather, this invitation expresses solidarity between the speaker and the addressee. The visitors also give invitations to the host and hostess, as we have seen above.

Asking people to repeat themselves

This is another speech act with a directive function. Here a simple: *Ji?* Say that again/What was that? or: K*aunci bhe?* What   happened? will suffice. *'Ji?'* is the politer of the two. It is a politeness marker which is used when speaking to a person of higher status, or who is older or is a person with whom you are not intimate.

Changing the topic

In an informal context, participants do not stick to a single topic of conversation. In Fiji Hindi, to change the topic the most common form used is:

*A*cc*h*a*, hame*   *ek   b*a*t   b*a*ta*õ…
OK 1st. P.SING.POSS   one   talk   tell
OK, tell me something…

This is followed by whatever it is the speaker wants to know. Or if the speaker wants to say something confidential she would begin with:

*Eh,   jan-ta,   koi   se   boln*ã *nai …*
Hey   know-IMPERF anyone to   say   no
Hey, you know what, don't tell anyone…

Holmes (1992:297) says, "Making decisions about what is or is not considered polite in any community…involves assessing social relationships along the dimensions of social distance or solidarity, and relative power or status. We need to understand the social values of a society in order to speak politely". There are two different types of politeness: positive and negative. Holmes defines positive politeness as solidarity oriented, emphasizing shared attitudes and values. This is where the use of the familiar pronoun *tum* can be used. Negative politeness according to Holmes (op cit.) "pays people respect and avoids intruding on them…[by] expressing oneself appropriately in terms of social distance and respecting status differences". This is expressed through the formal pronoun, a*p.*

According to Holmes (1992:294), "getting what you want from someone else requires knowledge of the rules for expressing yourself appropriately in the relevant socio-cultural context. A successful outcome can reflect a real sociolinguistic accomplishment". Being polite involves speaking to people appropriately with regard to their relationship to you.

Structure

Some of the sentence structures of Fiji Hindi are given below.

Commands/Requests

There are several ways of getting someone to do something. Orders and commands are given using the imperative form:

*J*a*o*
Go
The suffix *–o* attached to a verb forms the imperative. The verb can occur on its own or it can be preceded by a pronoun:

A*p/Tum*   j*a*o
2nd P.SING   go
You go.

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Another way is the use of a declarative, a polite attempt to get someone to do something:

Ham   *mãg-ta*   a*p /tum*   *j*a*o*
1st. P.SING   want -IMPERF 2nd P.SING   go
I want/like you to go.

A third way is to use the interrogative with the negative modal. This indicates that some kind of response is required.

Ap/Tum   *kahe*   *nahi*   *j*a*-ta?*
2nd P.SING   why   no   go-IMPERF
Why don't you go?

Interrogatives appear to be the most polite form, although a lot depends on the intonation, tone of voice, context and the addressee. For example, a gentle a*p j*a*o* may be more polite than an angry *tum kahe nahi jata* addressed to one's husband or mother-in-law.

What form is used depends on the social distance between speaker and addressee, their relative status and the formality of the context (Holmes 1992:12). The domestic register for use in the home environment is usually informal. Relative status and social distance between speaker and addressee are the major defining factors for choice of appropriate form. For example, an older person may use an imperative to a younger addressee or to an intimate friend or relative.

The gender of the speaker and addressee are also significant factors. Women tend to use a less direct form of directive and in most cases are addressed with imperatives by older males, particularly by the husband.

Address forms:

According to Fasold (1990:1) address forms are "the words speakers use to designate the person they are talking to while they are talking

to them". There are a number of address forms that are essential for learners to acquire. (Examples of how these are used are mentioned under Kinship terms.)

Table 1: Pronouns in Fiji Hindi
(After Siegel in Barz and Siegel 1988:136-9)

Pronouns	Nominative	Oblique	Possessive
First person singular	*Ham*	*ham*	*hamar*
First person plural	*Hamlog*	*hamlog*	*hamlogke*
Second person singular Familiar:	*Tum*	*tum*	*tumar*
Formal:	*Ap*	a*p*	a*pke*
Second person plural Familiar:	*Tumlog*	*tumlog*	*tumlogke*
Formal:	*Aplog*	a*plog*	a*plogke*
Third person singular Proximate:	*I*	*is*	*iske*
Remote:	*U*	*us*	*uske*
Third person plural Proximate:	*Ilog*	*ilog*	*ilogke*
Remote:	*Ulog*	*ulog*	*ulogke*

Suffixes

A group of people (generally three or more) is indicated by the suffix *log* or *logan*:

ilog/ilogan
3rd P.Pl.PROX
these people

In addition, there are a number of verb suffixes that are important. Suffixes do not distinguish gender i.e. the same suffix is used for males as well as females.

Table 2: Verb suffixes

	Imperfective	**Perfective**	**Future**
First person	*-t*a, *-at*	-a	*-eg*a
Second person	*-t*a, *-at*	-a	*-eg*a
Third person	*-e, -at*	-a	*-l*

According to Lynch (1998:130), in many Oceanic languages, the verb consists simply of the verb root with no affixes. For example, in Rotuman:

Gou   la   hoa'   'eap   ta
I   FUT   take   mat   the
I will take the mat

However, in Fiji Hindi, there are three different categories of suffixes, the form of the suffix depending on the subject pronoun. The singular and plural forms are the same and the first and second person are the same, while the third person is different. (See Table 2.) The perfective suffix of the third person singular, in addition to *–a,* can also be *–is*, while the plural form can also be *–in*. Lynch (1998:133) says that Rotuman has only one tense-marker *la* (sometimes *täe la*), which marks the future. The non-future is unmarked.

Vocabulary

Hartmann and Stork (1972:250) define vocabulary as "the stock of words which are at the disposal of a speaker or writer". Learners need to acquire a number of words, phrases and sentences.

<u>Kinship terms</u>

In the Indo-Fijian community the extended family is important and everyone is an aunt or uncle, grandfather or grandmother, or cousin

from either the maternal or paternal side of the family so the learner needs to acquire a number of kinship terms in Fiji Hindi. Those given in Table 3 can be used as address forms or reference forms.

Table 3: Kinship terms in Fiji Hindi

Paternal relationships		Maternal Relationships	
dada	grandfather	*nana*	grandfather
dadi	grandmother	*nani*	grandmother
barka-abba*	father's elder brother	*mama*	mother's brother
barki-amma*	father's elder brother's wife	*mami*	mother's brother's wife
Chacha*	father's younger brother	*khala**	mother's sister
Chachi*	father's younger brother's wife	*khalu**	mother's sister's husband
Fua	father's sister		
Fufa	father's sister's husband		

NB Words marked with an asterisk are specific to Muslims.

Table 4: Relations formed through marriage for females

Relationship	Address form	English gloss
saas	*mummy/amma* or a*p*	mother-in-law
sasur	*daddy/abba* or a*p*	father-in-law
nanad	name or a*p*	husband's sister(s)
nandoi	*bhaia* or a*p*	husband's brother(s)-in-law
barku	*bhaia* or a*p*	elder brother(s)-in-law
barki	name or a*p*	elder sister(s)-in-law
chotku	*bhaia* or a*p*	younger brother(s)-in-law
chotki	name or *tum*	younger sister(s)-in-law

As seen above, the relationships can be quite complicated and rather confusing, because everyone in the extended family must be accounted for. If the learner meets someone who looks much older but whom she does not know, she can use the address term *nana/ nani*, depending on the addressee's gender. Someone a little older than the learner can be called *aunty/uncle*.

The learner automatically adopts the address form used by her husband towards his relative. For example, her husband's *mama* is also her *mama*. This is also the reason why her mother-in-law is called *mummy/amma* and her father-in-law is called *daddy/abba*.

Cooking terms, religious terms and other useful expressions

Tables 5, 6 and 7 list vocabulary which the learner will need.

Table 5: Ingredients used in Indo-Fijian cooking
(Adapted from Siegel 1977:40-1)

masala	spices	*lesun*	garlic
sõp	anise	*adrak*	ginger
gol mirch	black pepper	*tel*	oil
ilaichi	cardamom	*gos*	meat (cooked or uncooked)
dalchini	cinnamon	*ata*	flour
lawang	cloves	*bhaat*	rice (cooked)
dhania	coriander	*chaur*	rice (uncooked)
jeera	cumin	*dhal*	lentils, pulses (cooked or uncooked)
sarso	mustard	*dudh*	milk
nimak	salt	*cha*	tea
chini	sugar	*pani*	water

Table 6: Some Muslim religious terms

Fiji Hindi	Definition
Bi-smi-llah	In the name of Allah
In sha'a-llah	If it please Allah
adhan	Call to prayer
wudzu	Ablution
namaz	Ritual of prayer
dua	Prayer

Zakat	giving of one-fortieth of income for the needy
Fitrana	giving alms, food, etc to the needy
Masjid	mosque
Maulana	Priest
Eid-ul-fitr	celebration marking end of fasting
Eid-ul-adha	festival of sacrifice
Mhendi	henna
Nika	wedding ceremony
Halal	ritual slaughtering of animals for consumption
Akika	celebration of a child's birth
Janaza	funeral prayer
Roza	fasting
Haj	pilgrimage to Mecca

Table 7: Some useful expressions

Khana bohut accha hai	The food is delicious
Bas	enough
Thora	little
Khalas	finish
Pet bharge	I'm full
Ka?	Where?
Konchi?	What?
Keisan hai?	What kind is it?
Kaun?	Who?
Kiske hai?	Whose is it?
Kab?	*When?*
Ketna hai?	How much/many?
Apke/tumar nam konchi hai?	What is your name?
Ketna baja?	What is the time?
Hum nai sumjha	I don't/didn't understand
Pata nai	I don't know

This is not a comprehensive list but one must account for the fact that the learner is not going to learn just a list of vocabulary in three months but rather how to apply this newly acquired vocabulary in the appropriate situations.

Conclusion:

In this Precourse Needs Analysis I have attempted to select some common utterances and responses that occur in informal interactions in Fiji Hindi. Of course, these are not the only utterances that the learner will come across. However, she may be able to work out the meanings of new ones with her newly found understanding of the language. Because Fiji Hindi has assimilated quite a lot of English words, such as the days of the week, the months of the year, certain fruits and vegetables etc, this may make it easier for the learner.

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