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A Pilot Study on the Regional and Ethnic Variations in Fiji Sign Language : Comparing Eastern and Western Viti Levu

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4. A Pilot Study on the Regional and Ethnic Variations in Fiji Sign Language: Comparing Eastern and Western Viti Levu

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Abstract

The purpose of this chapter is to give an outline of current Fiji Sign Language (FJSL), focusing on the regional and ethnic variations based on data from my anthropological fieldwork and the *Fiji Sign Language Dictionary*, which is edited by the Fiji Association of the Deaf. Fiji is a multicultural and multilingual country, and languages that are used in Fiji include not only spoken languages such as the Fijian language and Fiji Hindi, but also its own unique sign language, FJSL. FJSL is a sign language that is used among deaf people in Fiji regardless of ethnicity. However, there are some regional and ethnic variations in FJSL. This pilot study shows some examples of the regional and ethnic lexical variations in FJSL comparing eastern and western Viti Levu island of Fiji.

4.1. Introduction

“Sign language” is a general term of the visual languages expressed by hands and facial expression, which is used among persons with hearing impairment around the world. The persons with hearing impairment who use sign language are called “Deaf”. [...] It’s important to note that sign language is not a gesture without grammar but a natural language with its own grammar. Furthermore, sign language is not universal but differs from place to place.

(Kamei 2009: 502)

As mentioned in the quotation above, sign language is not a gesture without grammar but a natural language with its own grammar. According to Kamei (2006), there are 119 sign languages around the world. Since American linguist William C. Stokoe revealed that sign language has its own grammar equivalent to that of spoken language (1960), many studies have been conducted on sign language and the deaf community.¹⁾ Although most studies focus on the sign languages and the deaf communities in Europe (e.g. Sutton-Spence et al. 1990; Quinn 2010) or North America (e.g. Lucas et al. 2001), some scholars recently started studying the sign languages and the deaf communities in non-Western regions (e.g. Kamei 2006; Green 2014; Sagara 2017).

However, there are few previous studies on the sign languages and the deaf communities

in the Pacific island countries (cf. Sano 2016, 2019).²⁾ For example, there are many previous studies on the Fijian language as mentioned in other chapters (especially see Geraghty's chapter), but very little is known about sign language and the deaf community in the Republic of Fiji (hereinafter called Fiji). Considering the lack of academic studies, I have been conducting anthropological fieldwork on the deaf community and sign language in Fiji since 2013. In this chapter, I give an outline of the current situation of Fiji Sign Language (hereinafter called as FJSL),³⁾ based on data from my anthropological fieldwork and the *Fiji Sign Language Dictionary*, which was edited by the Fiji Association of the Deaf in 2007.

I especially focus on lexical variation in FJSL. There are many studies on lexical variation in sign language (e.g. Sutton-Spence et al. 1990; Lucas et al. 2001). Although the factors that drive lexical variation in sign language include various things as mentioned in previous studies (cf. Schembri and Johnston 2012), I provide some examples of the lexical variations associated with region and/or ethnicity between eastern and western Viti Levu, which is the largest island of Fiji.

First, I briefly explain FJSL and the deaf community in Fiji. Second, I show some examples of the regional and ethnic lexical variations in FJSL between eastern and western Viti Levu. Finally, I preliminarily consider the characteristics of the regional and ethnic lexical variations in FJSL.

4.2. Sign Language and the Deaf Community in Fiji

4.2.1. Fiji Sign Language

Ethnic groups in Fiji can be roughly divided into two groups: indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian. According to the 2007 national census, about 57% of the total population is indigenous Fijian, and on the other hand, 38% of the total population is Indo-Fijian (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2007). Apart from indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian, there are a variety of ethnic groups in Fiji such as Banabans, Rotumans, Tuvaluans, Melanesians, Europeans, and Chinese. In the case of hearing people, although they use English as a lingua franca between different ethnic groups, they basically use different spoken languages as a first language depending on each ethnic background; for example, indigenous Fijians use Fijian language with many dialects (or communalects, as mentioned in other chapters), while Indo-Fijians use Fiji Hindi, which is a *koine* language formed by contact between different dialects of Hindi at sugarcane plantations in colonial days. Ethnic minority groups in Fiji also basically use their own language as a first language, although some have shifted over to the Fijian language or English (Mangubhai and Mugler 2003).

On the other hand, FJSL is basically used among deaf people in Fiji regardless of ethnicity, although there are some exceptions as I explain below. The origin of FJSL is Australasian Signed English (hereinafter called ASE) which was brought over to the special schools in Fiji from Australia in the early 1980s (Nelson et al. 2009). ASE is not a natural sign language used among deaf people in Australia, but a signing system used in deaf education in Australia and New Zealand (Power et al. 2008). ASE mainly consists of signs from Australian Sign Language, which is commonly known as Auslan, a natural sign language used in the Australian deaf community. Auslan has its own grammar, which differs

from spoken language such as Australian English; however, ASE basically follows English grammar. It is well known in sign language linguistics that Auslan, New Zealand Sign Language, and British Sign Language belong to the same language group: BANZSL (British, Australian, and New Zealand Sign Language) (cf. Johnston 2003). Thus, at least with respect to the lexicon, it can be said that FJSL is a branch of BANZSL.

Although FJSL is originally from ASE, current FJSL has a lot of new signs that are not found in ASE, and its grammar has differed from English in its use in Fiji over the last 30 years. In addition, according to Nelson *et al.* (2009), some other sign languages such as New Zealand Sign Language and Nigerian Sign Language influenced current FJSL due to the history of the deaf community in Fiji.

4.2.2. Deaf Community in Fiji

Special school and deaf school play an important role in forming the deaf community. The first special education class for deaf children in Fiji was set up in 1968 at the Suva Crippled Children's School (now known as the Hilton Special School), which was the first special school in Fiji (Frank Hilton Organisation Website). However, oralism, which is an educational method of deaf education through spoken (oral) language, was the instructional method for deaf children at that time. Although it seems that deaf children used to use some self-made signs, there was no standardized signing system at that time (Nelson *et al.* 2009). Thus, no signing community existed in Fiji before the introduction of ASE in the early 1980s. After the introduction of ASE, the signing system started to be used in deaf education at the special schools around Fiji. The origin of the signing deaf community in Fiji can be traced back to this period.

However, the current environment surrounding deaf people differs from place to place. For example, the environment surrounding deaf people varies between Suva, which is located on eastern Viti Levu, and Lautoka, which is located on western Viti Levu (cf. Sano 2016, 2019) (Figure 4-1).

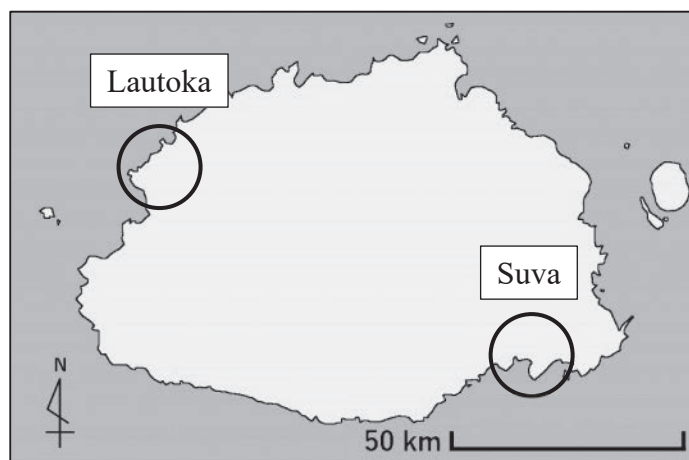


Figure 4-1 Map of Viti Levu island. Circled in black are Lautoka (left) and Suva (right).

The differences include various things. First, the ethnic composition differs between the regions. According to the 2007 national census, the ethnic majority of Rewa province including Suva is indigenous Fijian; the population of indigenous Fijian is 61,973 (about 61% of the province's total population), the population of Indo-Fijian is 24,081 (about 24% of the province's total population), and the population of other ethnic groups is 14,733 (about 15% of the province's total population) (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2007). On the other hand, the ethnic majority of Ba province including Lautoka is Indo-Fijian; the population of indigenous Fijian is 96,852 (about 42% of the province's total population), the population of Indo-Fijian is 126,142 (about 54% of the province's total population), and the population of other ethnic groups are 8,766 (4% of the province's total population) (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2007). The ethnic differences between the deaf communities in eastern and western Viti Levu reflect the general ethnic differences between the regions; the ethnic majority of the deaf community in eastern Viti Levu, especially in Suva, is indigenous Fijian, while on the other hand, there are relatively a lot of deaf Indo-Fijian in western Viti Levu, especially in Lautoka and Nadi, which is the neighboring town of Lautoka.

The educational environment also differs between eastern and western Viti Levu. In Suva, there are some special schools including a lot of deaf students. For example, the Gospel School for the Deaf in Suva, where I conducted participant observation, had between 45 and 56 students from 2012 to 2016 according to the annual reports of the Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts of Fiji (hereinafter called MOE). Students come to the school from various places in Fiji. Some students come from different countries in the Oceania region, such as Kiribati and Solomon Islands. Most of the students stay at the school hostel during school terms. The school employs not only hearing teachers but also deaf teachers. Most of the teachers at the school, including hearing teachers, can use FJSL fluently. Moreover, some high schools and universities employ FJSL interpreters. Thus, deaf children living around Suva can get a higher education through FJSL. On the other hand, special schools in western Viti Levu have a relatively small number of deaf students. For example, the L Special School in Lautoka, which is the school where I conducted participant observation, has students with a variety of disabilities: physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, visual impairments, and hearing impairments. It is known in Fiji that the school includes a relatively large number of deaf students in western Viti Levu; however, according to MOE annual reports from 2012 to 2016, the total number of students at the school is between 58 and 94, and out of all the students, the number of deaf students is between 12 and 19. Contrary to the Gospel School for the Deaf, most of the teachers at the L Special School cannot use FJSL fluently. Moreover, since FJSL interpreters weren't working at high schools in western Viti Levu until 2017, deaf students couldn't receive a higher education through FJSL in western Viti Levu until 2017.

In addition, the social situation of deaf people varies between eastern and western Viti Levu. In Suva, there are some organizations for deaf people and FJSL, such as the Fiji Association of the Deaf, which is the national organization of the deaf in Fiji, the Fiji Sign Language Interpreters' Committee, which is the national committee of FJSL interpreters belonging to the Fiji Association of the Deaf, and the Christian Fellowship for the Deaf, which is the Christian organization of deaf people in Fiji. These organizations hold events

and activities for deaf people living around Suva to meet and interact with other deaf people. On the other hand, there is no large organization for deaf people in western Viti Levu apart from a small deaf Christian group. Therefore, for deaf people living in western Viti Levu, the opportunity to meet other deaf people is relatively limited.

As described so far, the environment surrounding deaf people differs between eastern and western Viti Levu. Those environmental differences influence FJSL used among deaf people in the two regions. In the next section, I show some examples of the regional and ethnic lexical variations in FJSL between eastern and western Viti Levu.

4.3. Regional and Ethnic Variations in FJSL

4.3.1. Regional Variations in FJSL

FJSL is a sign language used among deaf people throughout Fiji regardless of ethnicity as mentioned above; however, some regional and ethnic variations are found in FJSL. This section shows some examples of the regional and ethnic variations in FJSL by comparing cases from eastern and western Viti Levu.

First, I focus on the regional variations in FJSL between eastern and western Viti Levu.⁴⁾ Unlike spoken language, sign language is basically transferred through deaf peers at special school or deaf school because most deaf children are born to hearing parents who are not able to use sign language (cf. Mitchell and Karchmer 2004). Thus, the educational setting of deaf children has a big impact on sign language. Actually, many previous studies point out that the educational setting of deaf children influences lexical variation in sign language (e.g. Quinn 2010). The regional lexical variations in FJSL between eastern and western Viti Levu also reflect the differences of educational settings between the regions. As mentioned in Section 4.2, deaf students living around Suva can get a higher education through FJSL because there are relatively many schools employing deaf teachers and/or FJSL interpreters in Suva. Thus, a lot of new signs for educational terminology have been invented in Suva. On the other hand, higher education for deaf students has not been fully established yet in western Viti Levu. Thus, the signs for educational terminology used in Suva are little known in the west.

In addition, some signs that are used in everyday life also differ between eastern and western Viti Levu. For example, deaf students in the two regions use varying signs for FAT.⁵⁾ Figure 4-2 shows two different signs for FAT, which are expressed by the same deaf student of the L Special School.

The deaf student has been attending the L Special School since his childhood. However, he also attended the Gospel School for the Deaf in 2015. Thus, he can use both signing dialects from Lautoka and Suva. The figure on the left of Figure 4-2 is the sign FAT that is used in Suva.⁶⁾ This sign is the same as the sign FAT in ASE (Figure 4-3).

On the other hand, the figure on the right of Figure 4-2 is the sign FAT that is used in the L Special School. This sign is the same as the gesture commonly used by hearing people for “the stout person.” Not only the sign FAT, but also other signs that are derived from conventional gestures are used in the L Special School. As mentioned earlier, the L Special School has students with a variety of disabilities. Although most teachers cannot



Figure 4-2 Two different signs for FAT (left: Suva ver. / right: west ver.)

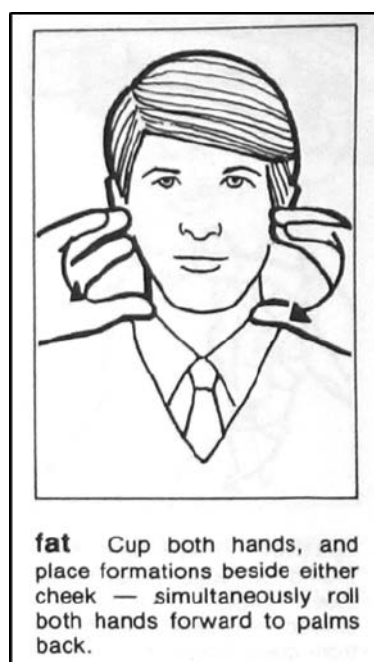


Figure 4-3 FAT in ASE (Jeanes et al. 1989: 105)

use FJSL fluently, some students, not only deaf students but also some hearing students can use FJSL at the school (Sano 2016). This is assumed to be the reason why some signs used in the school are derived from conventional gestures.

Some signs used by deaf adults also differ between eastern and western Viti Levu. Examples of the regional variations in FJSL used by deaf adults include the sign HUSBAND. Figure 4-4 is the sign HUSBAND that is used in the deaf community in eastern Viti Levu.



Figure 4-4 HUSBAND (Suva ver.)

This sign is similar (but not the same) to the sign HUSBAND in ASE (Figure 4-5).

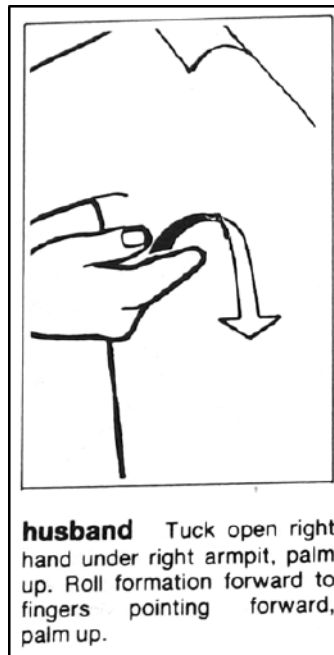


Figure 4-5 HUSBAND in ASE (Jeanes et al. 1989: 140)

On the other hand, Figure 4-6 is the sign HUSBAND that is used by deaf people living in western Viti Levu, especially Lautoka and Nadi.

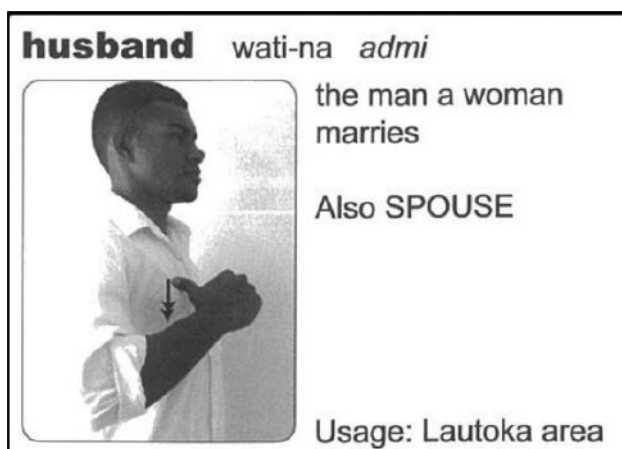


Figure 4-6 HUSBAND (west ver.) (Fiji Association of the Deaf 2007: 112)

Although the origin of this sign is not clear, according to deaf people in Fiji, this sign is one of the original signs in FJSL.

4.3.2. Ethnic Variations in FJSL

In addition to the regional variations, there are some lexical variations in FJSL associated with ethnicity. For example, FJSL has an original sign KAVA. This sign is expressed by clapping hands two times with cupped hands (Figure 4-7).

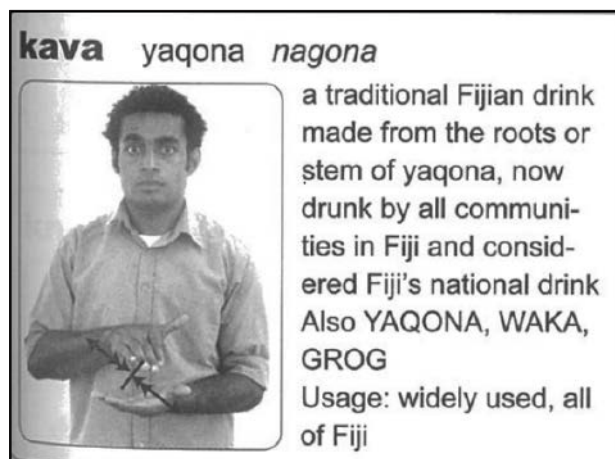


Figure 4-7 KAVA (standard ver.) (Fiji Association of the Deaf 2007: 123)

This sign reflects the traditional way indigenous Fijians drink *kava*. *Kava* (*yaqona* in spoken standard Fijian) is a crop found in Pacific island countries. The root of the crop is used to

produce a Fijian traditional drink.⁷⁾ This drink is also called *kava*. Indigenous Fijians drink *kava* in social gatherings like weddings, funerals, and welcome (farewell as well) ceremonies for visitors. There are many manners for drinking *kava* in indigenous Fijian culture. One of the manners is clapping hands with cupped hands. In a *kava* ceremony, indigenous Fijians often clap their hands in a certain manner. This way of clapping hands is called *cobo* in spoken standard Fijian. The sign KAVA reflects the way of *cobo*.

This sign is widely used as a standard sign in the deaf community throughout Fiji. On the other hand, there is another sign KAVA in FJSL. The sign is below (Figure 4-8).



Figure 4-8 KAVA (Indo-Fijian ver.) (Fiji Association of the Deaf 2007: 123)

This sign is expressed by moving a hand back and forth as shown in Figure 4-8. Sometimes, a cupped hand is put under the moving hand. This sign is basically used only by Indo-Fijians because this sign reflects the way they make *kava*. As mentioned above, *kava* is a Fijian traditional drink. However, nowadays all ethnic groups in Fiji, including Indo-Fijians, drink *kava*. Although there isn't a certain manner to drink *kava* in Indo-Fijian community, Indo-Fijians make *kava* in a different way than indigenous Fijians do. Indigenous Fijians make the *kava* alone as shown on the left of Figure 4-9. The person puts a *kava* in a bag-shaped cloth, and then knead it in a *tanoa*, which is a traditional wooden *kava* bowl, or in a substitute, like a basin full of water. On the other hand, Indo-Fijians basically make *kava* in pairs as shown on the right of Figure 4-9. First, the pair sits face to face across a basin, holding two opposite sides of a cloth above the basin. Second, one person puts the powder of the *kava* root on the cloth, and then another person pours water over the *kava*. At the same time, one person mixes the *kava* by moving a hand back and forth while holding the cloth by the other hand. The sign KAVA used by deaf Indo-Fijians reflects the way they make *kava*.⁸⁾



Figure 4-9 Different ways of making *kava* by an indigenous Fijian (left) and Indo-Fijians (right)

Besides the sign KAVA, there are some ethnic variations in FJSL. As mentioned earlier, there is a relatively large population of Indo-Fijians in western Viti Levu. Reflecting the ethnic situation, deaf Indo-Fijians in western Viti Levu relatively have a lot of signs for ideas and objects from Indian culture, in comparison with those in eastern Viti Levu. For example, there is a sign DAL that is used among deaf Indo-Fijians living in western Viti Levu (Figure 4-10).

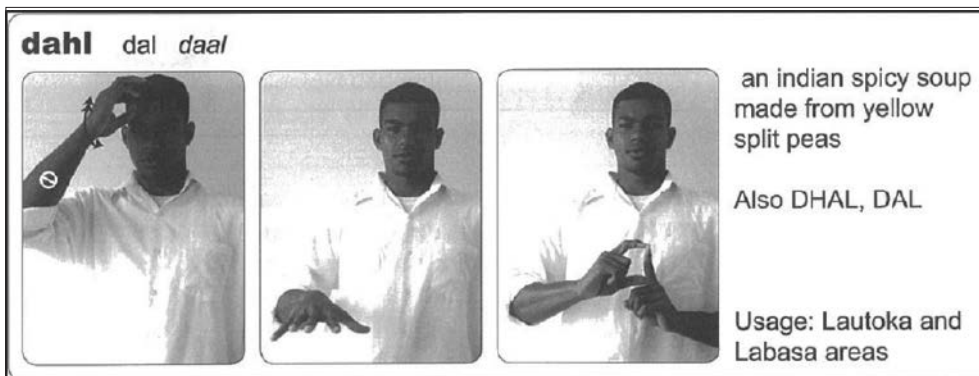


Figure 4-10 DAL (Indo-Fijian ver.) (Fiji Association of the Deaf 2007: 60)

Dal (or *Dahl*) is an Indian traditional soup made by yellow split peas. The split peas are also called *dal* in spoken Hindi. The sign DAL that is used by deaf Indo-Fijian in western Viti Levu includes the sign YELLOW (on the leftmost of Figure 4-10) because yellow peas and spices are used for making *dal*.

On the other hand, a different sign is used in eastern Viti Levu as shown in Figure 4-11.



Figure 4-11 DAL (Suva ver.) (Fiji Association of the Deaf 2007: 60)

This sign is conventionally accompanied by mouthing “*dal*” since the sign is the same as the fingerspelling sign for D.⁹ In short, there is no original sign DAL in the deaf community in eastern Viti Levu.

As seen above, these signs are obviously derived from conventional gestures, objects, and ideas associated with indigenous Fijian culture or Indo-Fijian culture. In addition, those signs are basically used among deaf people who have the same ethnic background. Thus, it can be said that these lexical variations are more ethnic than regional; however, it is important to note that most of the ethnic variations in FJSL overlap with its regional variations as well. At least as far as I know, the sign KAVA (Figure 4-8) is basically used by only deaf Indo-Fijians living in western Viti Levu, such as Lautoka and Nadi, while deaf Indo-Fijians living in Suva basically use the standard sign KAVA (Figure 4-7) because they usually communicate with deaf indigenous Fijians. Likewise, the sign DAL (Figure 4-10) is also basically used by only deaf Indo-Fijians living in western Viti Levu, while deaf Indo-Fijians in eastern Viti Levu basically use the sign DAL (Figure 4-11).

4.4. Preliminary Considerations on the Regional and Ethnic Variations in FJSL

As described so far, there are some regional and ethnic variations in FJSL. In Section 4.3.1, I showed regional lexical variations in FJSL between eastern and western Viti Levu. In the case of the sign FAT (Figure 4-2), the deaf student at the L Special School used two different signs; one is the sign FAT (the figure on the left of Figure 4-2) that is used among deaf people in Suva, and another is the sign FAT (the figure on the right of Figure 4-2) that is used among students, not only the deaf students but also some hearing students, at the L Special School. The former is the same as the sign FAT in ASE (Figure 4-3). On the other

hand, the latter is derived from the conventional gesture for “a stout person,” which is widely used in Fiji. Additionally, the deaf students at the L Special School use some other signs derived from conventional gestures. At the L Special School, most teachers cannot use FJSL fluently, while some hearing students can use FJSL. Students sometimes make up new signs if they don’t know the sign for things or concepts, which may be the reason why some students at the school use some signs that are derived from conventional gestures. In the case of the sign HUSBAND, the sign HUSBAND (Figure 4-4) that is used by deaf people in eastern Viti Levu is similar to the sign HUSBAND in ASE (Figure 4-5), while the sign HUSBAND (Figure 4-6) that is used by deaf people in western Viti Levu is not derived from ASE. Considering these facts, it seems that deaf people in eastern Viti Levu tend to use signs derived from ASE, while deaf people in western Viti Levu tend to use the signs not derived from ASE. I assume it is due to the different educational and social environments surrounding deaf people between eastern and western Viti Levu as described in Section 4.2.

In Section 4.3.2, I showed two examples of ethnic lexical variations in FJSL: the signs KAVA and DAL. Previous studies on ethnic variation in sign language point out that the emergence of ethnic variation reflects the historical context of the educational setting of deaf children. African-American lexical variations in American Sign Language, for example, reflect the segregation of deaf schools in the south of the United States (cf. Stokoe et al. 1965; Schembri and Johnston 2012). On the other hand, special schools and the deaf school in Fiji have never been segregated by ethnicity. Thus, the ethnic lexical variations in FJSL do not reflect the historical context of the educational setting of deaf children but reflect the difference of cultural practices depending on ethnicity. For example, the sign KAVA (Figure 4-7) that is widely used as a standard sign reflects the traditional manner of clapping their hands in an indigenous Fijian community, namely *cobo* in spoken standard Fijian. On the other hand, the sign KAVA (Figure 4-8) that is used by deaf Indo-Fijians reflects the conventional way Indo-Fijians make *kava* as shown in the picture on the right of Figure 4-9. In the case of the sign DAL, deaf Indo-Fijians in western Viti Levu use the original sign DAL (Figure 4-10), while on the other hand, there isn’t such a sign DAL in the deaf community in eastern Viti Levu; deaf people in eastern Viti Levu use the fingerspelling sign “D” for expressing DAL, accompanied by mouthing “*dal*” (Figure 4-11). These variations are more ethnic than regional; however, it is important to note that most of the ethnic variations in FJSL overlap with its regional variations as well. As far as I know, the sign KAVA and DAL (Figure 4-8 and 4-10) are basically used only by deaf Indo-Fijians in western Viti Levu. Deaf Indo-Fijians in eastern Viti Levu also sometimes use the signs; however, they basically use the sign KAVA and DAL (Figures 4-7 and 4-11) because they usually communicate with deaf indigenous Fijians. In short, the ethnic variations in FJSL are not associated with ethnicity itself, but associated with broader sociocultural contexts, including ethnicity, surrounding deaf people in the regions.

Some limitations, however, exist in this pilot study due to a limited number of examples. There are some exceptions that are not applied to the preliminary consideration above. For example, deaf people in western Viti Levu sometimes use “old ASE signs,” which are no longer used in eastern Viti Levu. Even more interesting is most deaf people in western Viti

Levu believe that the signs of ASE are “authentic” signs of Fiji and they use “authentic” signs (i.e. the signs of ASE) despite the facts that I have described so far. Such a language ideology (cf. Schieffelin et al. 1998) influences their everyday language practice. Since space did not allow me to discuss those issues, I would like to discuss the matter further in other papers.

4.5. Conclusion

Fiji is a multicultural and multilingual country, and languages that are used in Fiji include not only spoken languages such as the Fijian language and Fiji Hindi, but also its own unique sign language, FJSL. It is necessary to investigate FJSL in more detail in order to describe the overall view of the language situation in Fiji.

In this chapter, I showed some examples of the regional and ethnic lexical variations in FJSL based on data from my fieldwork and the *Fiji Sign Language Dictionary*. As pointed out in previous studies, it is important to consider the educational setting surrounding deaf people to discuss regional variations in sign language, because sign language is basically transferred through deaf peers at special schools or deaf schools unlike spoken language. In addition, it is also important to consider the broader ethnic and social environments surrounding deaf people in the regions as discussed in previous sections.

Since this is a pilot study on the regional and ethnic variations in FJSL, many questions remain to be considered. For example, although this pilot study revealed that some conventional gestures that are widely used in Fiji influence FJSL, I couldn't discuss whether spoken languages such as the Fijian language and Fiji Hindi influence FJSL. Previous studies revealed that spoken language often influences sign language. It is necessary to consider if this is the case with FJSL in future studies.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1) In Deaf studies, the English word “Deaf” is used for “the person who is culturally deaf,” and “deaf” is used for “the person who is medically (not culturally) deaf.” However, as some anthropological researchers have mentioned, the distinction between “Deaf” and “deaf” is a historically and culturally specific one based on a Western (North American and European) way of thinking (cf. Green 2014). Since this distinction is not necessarily suitable to discuss the deaf

- communities in non-Western regions such as Fiji, I use the word “deaf” as a non-marked term.
- 2) In contrast to the Pacific island countries such as Fiji, there are a lot of studies on Australian Sign Language (Auslan) and New Zealand Sign Language (e.g. Schembri and Johnston 2012).
 - 3) I call the sign language that is used in the deaf community in Fiji “Fiji Sign Language” based on other publications, such as the *Fiji Sign Language Dictionary*, and signing expression by deaf people in Fiji. However, Fiji Sign Language is often called “Fijian Sign Language” as well.
 - 4) According to the examples which I show in this chapter, it seems more accurate to say “the regional variations in FJSL between Suva and Lautoka”; however, at least in this chapter, I selected some examples of regional variations in FJSL that are used in the wide area of eastern Viti Levu (including Suva and Nausori, although the center of the deaf community in eastern Viti Levu is Suva) and in the wide area of western Viti Levu (including Lautoka, Nadi, and Ba). Thus, in this pilot study, I discuss “the regional variations in FJSL between eastern and western Viti Levu.”
 - 5) In this chapter, the sign words are written in CAPITAL LETTERS, and the words from local spoken languages such as the Fijian language or Fiji Hindi are written in *italics*.
 - 6) He expresses the sign with one hand in this figure because he was holding an ice pop in his left hand; however, the cited form of the sign is expressed with both hands.
 - 7) *Kava* is drunk not only in Fiji but also in a wide range of regions of Oceania.
 - 8) The latter way of making *kava* is called *lose vakaindia* (Indian way of mixing) in standard Fijian. However, indigenous Fijians also sometimes make *kava* in this way in an informal setting (this was pointed out by an anonymous reviewer).
 - 9) Fingerspelling is the manually coded system that represents written letters, such as the alphabet. In FJSL, fingerspelling is expressed by both hands like British Sign Language. On the other hand, fingerspelling in American Sign Language is expressed by one hand. Deaf people in Fiji mostly use the former as shown in Figure 4-11, however, they sometimes use the latter, especially in an informal setting or for cheating on an exam (cf. Sano 2016).

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