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Journal of the College of Education / University of Hawai'i at Mānoa



Hawai'i Creole (Pidgin), Local Identity, and Schooling

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Journal of the College of Education/University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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- 2 Contributors**
- 3 Hawai'i Creole (Pidgin), Local Identity, and Schooling**
Eileen H. Tamura
- 6 What School You Went? Local Culture, Local Identity, and Local Language: Stories of Schooling in Hawai'i**
Darrell H. Y. Lum
- 17 Learning Da Kine: A Filmmaker Tackles Local Culture and Pidgin**
Marlene Booth
- 22 The "Pidgin Problem": Attitudes about Hawai'i Creole**
Thomas Yokota
- 30 Pidgin and Education: A Position Paper**
Da Pidgin Coup
- 40 Kent Sakoda Discusses Pidgin Grammar**
Kent Sakoda and Eileen H. Tamura
- 44 Culturally Responsive Talk Between a Second Grade Teacher and Native Hawaiian Children During "Writing Workshop"**
J. Timothy Rynkofs
- 55 Pidgin in the Classroom**
Jeff Siegel
- 66 If Can, Can: Hawai'i Creole and Reading Achievement**
Kathryn H. Au
-

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Hawai'i Creole (Pidgin), Local Identity, and Schooling

Eileen H. Tamura

Guest Editor

For a century Hawai'i Creole, better known in the islands as Pidgin, has been a subject of concern among educators and the public. Attitudes toward this language have ranged from disdain to pride. It was once thought that eventually, with decreolization, Pidgin would disappear. Yet a hundred years since it was first recognized as a distinct form of speech, it remains a primary language among many in the state. To be sure, like all languages, it has changed over time. Nonetheless, its grammatical and phonetic characteristics make it distinctive and recognizable.

During the past few decades, many have recognized the crucial impact that Hawai'i Creole has had on people's identity. As Rojas and Reagan (2003) note, language is "at the heart of social life" (12) and central to self-identity, "to our sense of who we are" (6). For many in Hawai'i, Pidgin has played that role.

In this issue's first essay, "What School You Went? Local Culture, Local Identity, and Local Language: Stories of Schooling in Hawai'i," Darrell Lum begins with an introductory discussion of themes that emerge in the two short stories, narrated in Pidgin, that he includes in his essay. His stories are fitting examples of the ways in which literature can illuminate the complexities of identity formation in the context of family, friends, classmates, and teachers. In this environment, friendships and support exist alongside and intermix with conflicts, inequities, power, and resistance.

Filmmaker Marlene Booth's essay, "Learning Da Kine: A Filmmaker Tackles Local Culture and Pidgin," discusses her experiences in creating her film about Hawai'i Creole. She discusses how she came to understand the power of

Pidgin, its centrality in people's lives, and its place in defining the uniqueness of Hawai'i. As Booth discovered, understanding the "thinking behind the language" is crucial to an understanding of a people.

Hawai'i Creole is not alone as a form of nonstandard English in the United States. Others include Gullah (spoken in the Sea Islands off the coasts of South Carolina, Georgia, and North Florida), Louisiana Creole English, Appalachian English, and African American Vernacular English (Sato, 1989, p. 260). Linguists have used the terms dialects, creoles, and languages interchangeably when referring to these forms of speech (Sato, 1989; Linguistic Society of America, 1998).

The most well-known of the nonstandard languages in the United States is African American Vernacular English, also called Black English, Black English Vernacular, Ebonics, and African American English. Like Hawai'i Creole, African American Vernacular English has been the subject of much discussion and criticism, and both have been at the center of controversial school board actions (Tamura, 2002). In 1987 the Hawai'i State Board of Education attempted to ban Hawai'i Creole from the classroom. A decade later the Oakland, California school board issued a resolution in support of African American Vernacular English. Each school board action caused a firestorm of controversy. Although the two school boards, each in its own way, attempted to help its students achieve fluency in Standard English, they approached their goals differently. While the Hawai'i school board attempted to ban the nonstandard language, the Oakland school board embraced the existence of African American Vernacular English at the same time that it

sought to provide systematic efforts to help its students learn Standard English. Media commentary and public reactions expressed during the two incidents showed a general lack of understanding among many in the public about nonstandard languages—despite the substantial number of studies on them since the 1960s (e.g., Labov, 1969; Hymes, 1972; Sato, 1989; Taylor, 1998; Wright 1998; Smitherman, 2000).

As the two school board controversies show, discussion on nonstandard languages has involved two aspects—political and educational, and the political aspect has dominated public discourse. When the Oakland school board attempted, in December 1996, to help students become fluent speakers of Standard English, it created negative reactions that were whipped up by the media, who ridiculed particular statements of the school board and spread the misinformation that the board had advocated the teaching of Black English instead of Standard English (Jackson 1997; Perry 1998). The huge public outcry in this incident reflected a fear of losing cultural and social dominance to those at the lower economic levels, who were, in this case, those who spoke the stigmatized language. The central role that language plays in people's identity formation helps to explain the potency of the politics in questions of language.

On the educational side, which is the focus of this journal, many of those concerned with students' academic achievement point to marginal languages as the cause of school failure, in particular the lack of fluency in reading and writing Standard English. An essay in this issue, "Pidgin and Education," by Da Pidgin Coup, disputes this linear connection between speaking, on the one hand, and reading and writing, on the other. Written by scholars in the fields of language and language learning, the essay exposes the errors in this and other myths about Hawai'i Creole.

Aware that people may perpetuate myths about Pidgin because they are unaware of its distinct grammatical rules, Kent Sakoda and Jeff Siegel wrote *Pidgin Grammar: An Introduction to the Creole Language of Hawai'i* (2003). This book provides detailed structural analyses of Hawai'i Creole. In this issue, the interview "Kent Sakoda Discusses Pidgin Grammar" provides a useful introduction to some of the basic grammatical features of Hawai'i Creole with the idea that anyone interested in more detailed explanations will turn to the Sakoda and Siegel book. In the interview, Sakoda also describes the research efforts on Hawai'i Creole at the University of Hawai'i from the 1970s through

the 1990s, the important roles of Derek Bickerton and Charlene Sato, and Sakoda's introduction to the study of this language.

Despite the scholarship on Pidgin, negative attitudes remain. Thomas Yokota, intrigued by these attitudes, conducted a study that sought to understand not only what people think about Pidgin, but also why they think the way they do. He learned that, among the people he interviewed, most spoke Hawai'i Creole and, unaware of its grammar, many held misconceptions about the language. His findings point to the need to bridge the gap between scholarship and popular knowledge.

The final three essays examine Hawai'i Creole in the context of the classroom. Pedagogical issues concerning nonstandard languages have been of interest to scholars since the 1970s (e.g., Burling 1974; Fasold 1971; Shores 1972). More recent studies have demonstrated effective ways to teach students Standard English and improve their academic achievement without denigrating their nonstandard language.

In "Culturally Responsive Talk between a Second Grade Teacher and Native Hawaiian Children during "Writing Workshop," Timothy Rynkofs discusses his observations in a classroom where the teacher asked students to author stories about their experiences. To encourage students in their writing, the teacher responded with sensitivity to her students' cultural backgrounds, used a "talk-story" approach in group discussions, and allowed students to speak freely in Hawai'i Creole. Although she did not point to differences between Hawai'i Creole and Standard English, the students demonstrated that they were aware of differences, and when they wrote, it was primarily in Standard English. As a result of the teacher's attitude toward Hawai'i Creole and her approach to teaching, her students responded with enthusiasm and interest in writing.

In "Pidgin in the Classroom," Jeff Siegel advocates two types of instructional programs that have found success: accommodation programs, which use Standard English as the medium of instruction while allowing students to use their nonstandard variety in speaking and writing; and awareness programs that teach students the structure of their nonstandard variety so that they can compare it with the structure of Standard English. Siegel also discusses educators' concerns about Pidgin, and provides evidence to show that these concerns are without merit. Moreover, he shows the benefits of using Hawai'i Creole in the classroom.

Kathryn Au's essay, "If Can, Can: Hawai'i Creole and Reading Achievement," discusses the relationship between Hawai'i Creole and learning to read. She shows that speaking Hawai'i Creole is no barrier to excelling as readers and writers of Standard English. She discusses students' resistance to literacy learning, and emphasizes the role of teacher expectations in influencing students' perceptions of themselves and their abilities, and as a result, their academic achievements. She discusses the sustained school change efforts that she and her colleagues have been undertaking, which involve well-coordinated and rigorous instruction over many years, and which have resulted in impressive gains.

In closing this introduction, I would like to offer some brief comments on usage in this issue of the journal. The question is whether to capitalize the "s" in "Standard English" or not. Some authors use the capital, which suggests that Standard English is a language. Jeff Seigel, on the other hand, prefers to use the lower case so as not to "privilege this style of English." A similar range of opinion exists with respect to the creole spoken in Hawai'i: some linguists prefer to use "Hawai'i Creole" (HC), others use "Hawai'i Creole English" (HCE), while others refer to "Pidgin." The editors recognize that a range of attitudes and opinions exist on this matter among linguists and that this is reflected in the choices made by the authors. Therefore, we have treated such usage as a matter of substance rather than style and have respected the authors' choices.

I would like to thank the authors who have written the essays included this issue of *Educational Perspectives*. They have contributed importantly to the further understanding of Hawai'i Creole, or Pidgin, and its place in the education of the youth of the islands.

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What School You Went? Local Culture, Local Identity, and Local Language: Stories of Schooling in Hawai‘i

Darrell H. Y. Lum

This work explores local culture and local cultural practices in an attempt to understand the forces and influences that have affected the development of a local identity as well as the persistence of Pidgin¹ (Hawai‘i Creole) as its language. The discussion ends with two short stories, “What School You Went?” and “No Pass Back,” told in Pidgin by a young narrator describing his school experiences during the 50s and 60s. Together they paint a picture of local Hawai‘i culture and of the narrator’s growing understanding of his place in the world. Although they can be taken as tales of a simpler and more idyllic time, underlying the informal, “talk story” narratives is a troubled and conflicted voice representing the challenges and struggles of a search for identity from within a minority culture. The contradictions and inequities that the child faces within the school community mirror the struggles that all Islanders face: racism, stereotypes, and economic and social stratification. These conflicts are not simply that of the oppressor versus the oppressed, but an intricate web that includes the exercise of power by members within the community.

Local narratives and literature reflect a strong sense of place grounded in themes of local culture, identity, and family relationships within the context of linguistic and cultural domination by forces of Westernization and assimilation. Taken from an ecological/communitarian perspective, contemporary local culture can be understood as a dynamic culture that is constantly negotiating and mediating between other forces. Yet, at its core, it acknowledges particular values and principles, which may explain not only its persistence but the embracing of local as a truly multicultural identity.

Local Culture: Weaving Histories Together

[I]n the native Hawaiian way, personal introductions include these questions: What are you called (i.e., your given name)? Who is your family (i.e., your surname and genealogy)? Where are you from (i.e., your neighborhood or district)? And who is your teacher (i.e., your school or the way of thought to which you are loyal)? It occurs to me that, without their knowing its Hawaiian origins, locals expect this genealogical exchange, this fine ritual of personal introductions, not for judging the superiority of one person over another, but for learning facts that relate somehow to inner values of the individual, on the one hand, and to already existing social and cultural connections on the other. This local ritual is expressively a way for two people to begin discovering their relationships with each other, however distant, in order to talk stories that sprout on common ground. It is a way to begin weaving their histories together—and this defines friendship, or an aspect of it, local style. (Sumida, 1991, p. xvii)

The typical local party in Hawai‘i consists of a buffet table set out in the carport with family and friends sitting on folding chairs or atop coolers of beer and soda talking story. If you are a visitor, sometime soon after the introductions you’ll likely be asked, “What school you went?” Locals know that the question refers to what high school you attended. And invariably, after a few more questions, a connection is made through a relative who attended that school or a mutual acquaintance who lives in the neighborhood or, sometimes, the discovery of a distant family relationship (“Eh, my sister-in-law’s niece stay married to your cousin!”).

At the party, both kids and adults are likely to address an older female as “Auntie,” whether they are related or not. Local kids have innumerable “aunties,” not all by blood, but all who act as family. In fact, a high school teacher once confessed that the most effective warning for misbehaving study hall students was, “I know your father.”² Presumably this relationship allowed her to act *as* a family member and not simply as someone who would report *to* a parent. The “What school you went?” question is derived from the native Hawaiian way of identifying oneself by geography and genealogy: “I am Keone from Nu‘uanu Valley. My parents are Nalani from the Kamelamela ohana on Maui and Joseph from the Heu clan in Nu‘uanu. My grandparents are . . .” (Sing, 1993).

In Polynesian cultures, the universe is considered “a giant kin; a genealogy” (Whitney, 1987, p. 8). The question when meeting someone is not “What do you do?” but “How are we related?” And Hawaiians, Whitney notes, use a much broader, more inclusive definition of family that goes beyond blood or genealogy to one that is based on role and relationship: “If someone fulfills the behavioral expectations of a relative, a relationship may be assumed” (p. 9).

This impulse to establish how we are related is critical to understanding local culture and local literature. Thus the question “What school you went?” is fundamentally an effort to understand the context of one another: your name, your family, your district, and your teacher. And common phrases such as, “Howzit Auntie!” or “Wassup, Cuz?” express a desire to act and be treated as a member of your family.

Similar perspectives are held by other native and minority cultures. The Lakota, during a purification ritual, call upon “all my relatives” when they need help: “their ancestors, their tribe, the rocks, trees, birds, animals, the world, the universe” (TuSmith, 1994, p. vii). While Bellah (1985) concluded that most white, middle-class Americans have a “first language” of individualism, ethnic Americans have retained the language of community in their literature (Tu-Smith 1994).

This language of community also seems to characterize local culture, which at various times has been described as troubled, contentious, racist, or fissured. It is easy to forget how communities, like families, are based on a sense of belonging together and not on an affiliation based on geography, politics, or economics. Like all families, such communities can be marked by conflict, disagreement, and discord, and yet retain a fundamental bond to each other.

Local Identity: I Is

“So what if I wake up tomorrow and no mo haoles (Caucasians), I don’t have an identity?”

—graduate student in Political Science.³

“I IS.”

—from “Name Me Is,” *Saturday Night at the Pahala Theater* (Yamanaka, 1993)

Local culture has been characterized as a culture of resistance against a dominant white culture and is rooted in the struggles of the working class of Hawai‘i’s sugar plantations. Immigrant laborers entered a native Hawaiian culture that valued relationships—*aloha kanaka* (love for the people)—and environmental concern—*aloha aina* (love for the land) (Okamura, 1980). The values of family loyalty, obligation, and reciprocity that arrived with the Asian immigrant workers coincided with the native Hawaiian orientation that valued harmony between people, minimized personal gain or achievement, and shared natural resources (Okamura, 1980). According to Okamura, this process of cultural accommodation on the part of native Hawaiians and immigrant labor occurred primarily because they shared subservient positions on the plantations and differs from the more romantic notions of blended cultures, melting pot, or a democratic sharing of cultures.

Locals have always been well aware of class and ethnic differences and their hierarchical relationship to the plantation bosses. From this perspective, local culture developed out of necessity: immigrant laborers and native Hawaiians found themselves on the lowest rung of the ladder and subject to deliberate efforts by the plantations to pit ethnic groups against one another through pay differences and housing in ethnically segregated camps.

In the words of Kiyo in *All I Asking for Is My Body*

Shit too was organized according to the plantation pyramid. Mr. Nelson was top shit on the highest slope, then there were the Portuguese, Spanish and nisei lunas with their indoor toilets which flushed into the same ditches, then Japanese camp, and Filipino camp. (Murayama, 1988, p. 96)

More recently, this resistance has turned to issues of over-development (particularly with regard to tourism), loss of local control (opposition to foreign investors, often Japanese), and resistance to “outsiders” (including more recent

immigrants, the military, and tourists). Thus local culture has been defined largely by what it was *against* and by who *didn't* belong rather than by those who did (Okamura, 1994).

If one's identity is based solely on being "anti-haole," as the first quotation of this section suggests, does one's identity vanish if the object of the resistance disappears? Such a definition obscures the equally important communitarian aspects of local culture. "A communitarian perspective views culture as a verb, not a noun. The community is constantly engaged in the processes of actively negotiating those visible and invisible bonds of meaning that tie it together" (Tehrani, 1990, p. 10).

Although Okamura warns that there is a danger of locals "polarizing the Hawai'i community" which may "exacerbate ethnic tensions and hostility and expand the social distance between groups," he notes that "local also represents a coalescence of ethnic groups, that it can transcend ethnic differences, and that it has the potential to change its meaning over time" (Okamura, 1980, p. 136). Thus, one can interpret the "What school you went?" question as one that attempts to differentiate by social class or ethnicity, e.g., public versus private school, or neighborhoods (Kalihi versus Kāhala). Similarly, the notion that locals are preoccupied with ethnicity appears at the outset to be racist ("What are you? Filipino? Japanese? Okinawan?"). If we consider that the question might have risen originally from the plantation practice of segregating workers into ethnic "camps," it can be viewed as the vestige of a question about locale, "What camp are you from?" i.e., "Where do you live?" as well as an interest in one's ethnicity.

While ethnicity and class play important roles in defining local culture's resistance to the dominant Western society, the "bonds of meaning that tie it together" are the common values, common history, and common language (a Hawaiian-based Pidgin) as well as the recognition and adoption of many native Hawaiian cultural practices and beliefs. While this makes Hawaiians (or at least Hawaiians living in Hawai'i) the "quintessential locals" (Sumida, 1991, p. xv), this perspective is not always realized by locals. Linda Colburn, Office of Hawaiian Affairs administrator, reminded local audiences that the issues facing native Hawaiians are not solely a "Hawaiian thing" but are concerns of an "island people" who must face the health, environmental, and economic problems that currently face Hawaiians, problems that an "island people" cannot run away from (Colburn, 1995).

And in light of the native Hawaiian renaissance, the local and native Hawaiian communities are not necessarily in conflict or mutually exclusive. TuSmith notes, "The pluralistic idea of the 'local' suggests that ethnic cultures are affirming communal values without giving up their identities" (TuSmith, 1994, p. 190). Thus one can both have an affinity to local culture *and* retain one's ethnic identity.

This mediated understanding differs from the commonly held perception that ethnic Americans have dual personalities (which asserts that ethnic Americans switch back and forth between their ethnic part and their American part).⁴ Rather, a new, distinct identity located along a continuum exists between the polar opposites. If we consider that we have argued that local identity includes factors such as ethnicity, class, language, family, geography, and one's school or teacher, then we might consider locating local within a multidimensional space which allows for considerable variation between members of the culture yet succeeds in creating communities based on bonds of mutuality and emotion.

Local Language: Like Home

But I can't talk the way he wants me to. I cannot make it sound his way, unless I'm playing pretend-talk-haole. I can make my words straight, that's pretty easy if I concentrate real hard. But the sound, the sound from my mouth, if I let it rip right out the lips, my words will always come out like home. (Yamanaka, 1996, p. 13)

—*Lovey, Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers*

Is Pidgin really a language exclusive to the stupid of Hawai'i? . . . Is it a matter of prejudice, skill or inadequacy of vision that the Hawaiian writers championing the virtues of Hawaiian Pidgin cannot make the language work complexities, communicate intelligence, perform magic?

—*Frank Chin*⁵

This story has no literary merit.

—*High school speech tournament judge regarding the performance of a Pidgin story*⁶

Pidgin is not capable of conveying the width and breadth of human emotion.

—*Graduate student in drama*⁷

The emotional underpinning of local culture and the affirmation of community might well be the sense of

“home” of which Lovey so eloquently speaks. And while an immigrant people can never know the deep connection to the land that only native Hawaiians can fully appreciate (Trask, 1993), all local people can surely know and speak of a local cultural home.

The use of language and story (and the practice of “talk story”) to convey the sense of home is reflected in Hawai'i's local culture and literature. The persistence of Pidgin in the islands despite widespread assimilation of American culture suggests that Pidgin speakers are resisting the process of decreolization and are seeking to retain Pidgin as a marker of local identity (Sato, 1989a). Ironically, the separation of standard English (SE) speakers from Pidgin speakers through the English Standard schools, starting in the 1920s and lasting until the 1950s, may have contributed to bonding the Pidgin speaking community, slowing decreolization, and providing yet another target of local resistance (Sato, 1985).⁸

The shift in the public's perception of Pidgin from something to be eradicated to something to be valued became apparent at the Board of Education (BOE) hearings in 1987 on a proposal to ban Pidgin in the schools. For the first time, according to Sato, locals and others spoke up to support Pidgin as a symbol of Hawai'i's unique cultural and linguistic milieu (Sato, 1989a). This was by no means a majority view. The impetus for the proposal in the first place was the board's view that Pidgin speakers were “severely limited” in their competitiveness and unable to “move up the ladder of success” (Hawai'i State BOE, 1987), a view from the 1880s which linked “ignorance, deficiency of character, and low sensuous life” to Pidgin (Stueber, 1964, p. 149). The Board of Education hearings marked over a century of denial of the legitimacy of Pidgin as the language of a significant number of people in the islands.

Not only does the use of Pidgin promote a sense of community, it challenges our assumptions about language and culture particularly with regard to the privileging of standard English and mainstream American culture. Pidgin serves to unify local culture and to critique the dominant one. When Lovey speaks of letting Pidgin “rip right out the lips,” she speaks to the attitude of language imperialism which elevates standard English and internalizes the view that her language is “a hideous mongrel jargon,” a “barbarous perversion of English,” a “bastardized language,” and a “savage dialect” (Stueber, 1964, p. 149).

Thus, the common notion that ethnic literatures “break silence” or “give voice to people who do not ordinarily speak” is problematic: if Pidgin is a creole, a native language, then its speakers could never have been silent and have always had a voice and a literature. The perspective of Pidgin as a literary language only recently “discovered” or of local literature as an “emerging” literature suggests a developmental narrative (i.e., Pidgin literature will eventually develop into “real” literature)⁹ and allows teachers and scholars to avoid admitting that Pidgin is a legitimate language with a legitimate literature.¹⁰ The “silencing” of these voices is more accurately a suppression of an entire language, literature, and culture by a dominant Western culture that refuses to acknowledge that a local culture ever exists and culminates in the terrible silencing of Lovey of her own accord.

Cultural Suicide: Ma-ke, Die, Dead¹¹

In the islands, a common Pidgin phrase is “Bumbye pau.” When a child falls and runs crying to you for comfort, you say, “Bumbye pau. Bumbye pau sore.” The question facing Hawai'i's local culture is whether its existence is “ma-ke, die, dead,” because of the challenges of native Hawaiian sovereignty, the inability to include new immigrant groups, the retreat to ethnic enclaves, or heightened class distinctions due to a foundering economy. Or whether it will be “bumbye pau,” soothing words of comfort, inclusive and accommodating, conveying the sense that trouble and pain will soon pass.

The measure of who we are as locals is, in fact, conflicted, fragmented, and sometimes confused. It is an identity that is constantly being negotiated and mediated by forces within the community and outside of it. As a local Chinese-American how could I possibly be Chinese when as child, I had resisted all things Chinese? My clear preference was to be all-American, to have lunch at Kress' soda fountain rather than Tai Sam Yuen Chop Suey. I wanted to be like Homer Price, certainly not like The Five Chinese Brothers or Tikki Tikki Tembo.

What I got as a child was a local experience, neither Chinese nor American, not a blending, not an egalitarian “multi-cultural” experience where all ethnic groups contributed equally, but a complex experience of actively negotiated “bonds of meaning” amidst a multiplicity of conflicting forces.

Are our stories tales of nostalgia, of a culture stuck in a time long dead, or are they stories that will continue to comfort us and sustain us? I believe that we are richer because of our stories, that we have an understanding of each other through them, and that they provide bonds of kinship that make us a community. I believe that we will continue to ask one another “What school you went?” and find the points where we can begin to weave our histories together.



The two stories that follow are fictional narratives based on school experiences of a Pidgin narrator growing up in the 50s. The vignettes in the first story demonstrate the clear distinctions between the mainstream adult culture and that of the students. The second story “No Pass Back” is an exploration of power and resistance and of how change can occur from within a community.

What School You Went?

1. Kinnigarden

Mrs. Wagnah was our kinnigarden teacha. She was one old haole lady wit gray hair and her glasses was tied to one string so dat she no lose um. I donno how she could lose um cause she had big chi-chis and her glasses always stay dere j’like on top one shelf. And she had one nudda stuff, like one necklace dat clamp to her sweater, so da ting no fall off. She wear her sweater j’like one Supahman cape, she no put her arms inside da sleeves. And when she put on her art apron wit her glasses stuff and her sweater stuff, she get all tangled up and den somebody gotta help her figgah out how fo take um all off!

Mrs. Wagnah one pretty nice teacha. Only ting, she made you sleep during nap time. She was strick about dat. You had to put on your eyeshades and lie down on your sleeping mat and no talk and no move around. Even if you wasn’t tired, you couldn’t move around and you had to shut your eyes cause she said she going check. But how she going check unless she get x-ray vision? Most times she jes sit at her desk and close her eyes too, das when you can lift up your eyeshade and make funny faces at Fat Frances until she cry. Or you can play try-make-me-laugh wit John or Andrew. Mostly everybody was peeking and wearing their eyeshade on their forehead by da time napttime was pau.

Alfred was da only one who really went sleep. Even when was pau nap time, he no get up. Yeah. Everybody put away their mats and he stay snoring in da middle of da floor and Mrs. Wagnah gotta drag him still yet on his mat, to da corner so dat had room fo storytime.

One time, almost to summer vacation, when was real hot, Mrs. Wagnah said we had to quiet down and take a nap even though nobody could, was so hot.

Alfred, he sweat da most of anybody and he use his gullah-gullah hankachief fo wipe his face cause every time he foget bring one clean one. Every morning Mrs. Wagnah tell us line up and she check if we went wash our hands and no mo dirt undahneat our fingahnails and you gotta show her dat you get one hankahchief and da juice money monitah and da lunch money monitah collect your money. Good when you one of da money monitahs cause den you can count da money and put um inside da Band-aid can and take um to da office.

Alfred, he always get da same old hankachief. I no tink he wash um. He use um for anykine: fo tie around his mout like one bandit, fo tie around his head like Zatoichi, fo tie around one eye like Zorro. Fo catch bugs in da dirt. Fo make parachute. And when he pau, he jes shove um back in his pocket. So every time, Mrs. Wagnah gotta tell him, “Time to bring a clean handkerchief, Alfred. We don’t want to spread our germs around, do we?” And he use his hankachief fo his coin purse too. Mrs. Wagnah, she use only two fingahs fo pick out Alfred’s nickel and quartah from da middle of his hankachief so she no catch his gullahs or his hanabuttahs.

Sometimes Mrs. Wagnah get two pencils and make uku check. Everybody gotta line up and she poke around your hair wit da eraser end of da pencils looking fo ukus. If you one girl and get long hair, she look long time. If you live Mayor Wright housing, she look long time. If you Alfred, she look extra long time. I always get nervous cause you donno when you going get ukus and if you get um, you gotta go to da health room and everybody call you “uku-boy.” Alfred was “uku-boy” plenny times, but I wasn’t, yet. Even if Bungy said I was. I wasn’t, he lie.

So we was suppose to be taking our nap and I was watching Alfred wipe his face with his gullah-gullah hankachief and den go sleep and I heard Mrs. Wagnah tell Shirley to be da room monitah cause she had to go to da office. I donno howcome she always pick Shirley.

She so sassy when she da monitah cause she no report da girls. But if any of da boys move around or talk, she report *every little ting*. Mrs. Wagnah nevah come back fo long time and everybody stay moving around and lifting up their eyeshades, peeking. Bungy went get up and look around da room and jes when Shirley was going say, “Ahunna-ko-ko-le-le, I going tell Mrs. Wagnah,” Bungy went look out da door and tell, “Mrs. Wagnah went fall down! She stay lying on da ground!” We all went jump up and run to da door and Shirley was yelling at us, “You supposed to stay on your sleeping mat,” and Fat Frances stay crying awready, “Mrs. Wagnah going ma-ke die dead!”

Bungy went open da uddah door cause couldn't see too good and Shirley still was trying to be da boss, “Not suppose to go outside,” and he went tell her, “Aw shaddup, stupidhead” and she started fo cry real soft, “I going tell Mrs. Wagnah you went call me stupid. Not suppose to say ‘stupid.’” I couldn't see anything cause everybody was by da doors so I jes went stand on top da table awready fo see what was happening. Mrs. Ching from next door and Miss Greenwood, da principio, and da janitah, Mr. Rodrigues, all stay crowded around Mrs. Wagnah lying down. Mrs. Ching was holding one umbrella fo shade Mrs. Wagnah, and Mr. Rodrigues was fanning her wit one folder, and Miss Greenwood was holding and rubbing her hand. Shirley was going back and fort from one door to da uddah saying, “You guys bettah get back on your sleeping mat . . . Daniel, you bettah get off da table . . . I going count to tree. One. Two. Tree.” Nobody went move, even her best goody-goody friends nevah move. So she went climb up on top da tables fo look outside, too. Miss Greenwood went look at us hanging out da doors and Mrs. Ching's class too and she went send Mrs. Ching back to take care of us. By da time she went shoo her class back inside her room, we went back to our sleeping mats but we nevah even pretend we was sleeping cause we wanted to know what was happening. Mrs. Ching came into da room and told us Mrs. Wagnah had one accident, she went faint. She tink was heat exhaustion cause was so hot. Bungy went tell, “Das cause she always get da sweater on.” And Shirley went raise her hand and tell her dat Bungy went get up from his sleeping bag and went outside da room. And Mrs. Ching went tell, “Okay, thank you, young lady.” Bungy went smile big at her. Mrs. Ching wasn't going do nutting, ha-ha!

Shirley went try again, “But Mrs. Wagnah said not suppose to do dat!” Mrs. Ching said she would discuss it

later with Mrs. Wagner. Shirley went look back at Bungy and stick tongue. Mrs. Ching said we could play quietly and she was going back and fort between da two rooms so we bettah behave or else she going get Miss Greenwood come watch us. Everybody said, “Whoa,” and came quiet. Shirley went raise her hand again and say, “I can be da room monitah?”

And Bungy said, “No make her monitah!” and Fat Frances said, “Da ambulance went come!” and she started crying again. Everybody went rush to da doors again fo watch dem put Mrs. Wagnah on da stretcher and slide her inside da ambulance. Da lights was flashing but nevah have siren. Bennett said, “How come dey no put on da siren?”

Fat Frances said, “Maybe she ma-ke awready!” and started fo cry mo loud, “I no like Mrs. Wagnah ma-ke!” Some more girls started crying soft-kine and Mrs. Ching said, “No, no, Mrs. Wagner not ma-ke but she has to go to the doctor to see what's wrong so she might be absent for a little while.”

We went watch until da ambulance went drive off da playground and jes when we heard da siren go, “Awwrrrrr,” Alfred went wake up.

2. Firs Grade

Firs grade, we had Mrs. Perry. I was kinda scared of her cause she make you eat everyting on your lunch tray. When you in firs grade, you gotta go to da cafeteria fo get your lunch tray but you no can stay dere eat. You gotta carry um back to da classroom fo eat so Mrs. Perry can watch us, make sure we eat all our vegetables and we no can see da six graders wasting food. Me and Bennett always try walk waay behind Mrs. Perry so dat we can ditch da vegetables in da bushes before we reach da room. Couple times we went hide um in da milk carton but Mrs. Perry went check and she made us pour out all da peas and eat um. I almost went chrow up when I had to eat peas mix up wit milk. Once, we seen her make Shirley eat every lima bean even if she was crying “I no like, I no like” and she was crying so hard and eating lima beans dat she went chrow up all ovah da table. Yeah, you know. Ho, aftah dat, she nevah have to eat anything she no like!

One time when had beets, Bennett went put um in his pants pocket and take um home. Only ting his mahdah went call up Mrs. Perry and ask her how come Bennett went come home wit beets in his pocket. He fogot to ditch um, da stupidhead. One time Mrs. Perry went call my house fo talk

to my fahdah. Da only time da teacha call up your house is if you went do someting bad, so I was scared, man.

My fahdah said dat Mrs. Perry said dat I had to practice skipping so I no jam up da May Pole Dance.

“Hard you know,” I told him. “She try teach us da dance only one way and I no can skip da way she teach us.”

“But you gotta try.”

I no like do da stupid dance. She tink I stupid like Alfred cause we both write left hand. She like me write like everybody else. Everytime she say raise your right hand, me and Alfred we raise our hand and she laugh and tell us, “Your uddah right.” So quick we gotta change cause one time, she went tell everybody dat your right hand was your writing hand. Wasn’t. She lie.

Daddy, he could write good wit his right hand. I wanted to write scrip like him. When he sign his name on papers la dat, he gotta get all ready: unscrew da fountain pen, wipe da tip wit Kleenex, and get out da blotter. Den he make his hand go in little circles. Circle, circle, circle. Den he sign real quick and blow and blot and come out perfeck. Sharp, his writing. I wish I could write scrip like him. He told me his teacha used to whack his hand wit da ruler if you use your left hand, das how he learned how fo write right hand but he still dribble da basketball and shoot left hand. He told me, “Lucky Mrs. Perry no whack your hand.” I nevah feel lucky. Hard, you know. You try skip right hand way if you left hand.

But bumbye Mrs. Perry wanted to be my friend cause one time had one painting contest. Dey went bring one lamb, you know, one real one, like Mary-had-a-little-lamb-little-lamb-little-lamb, and da whole firs grade had to go in da yard wit their easels and paint da lamb. And one nice lady from da Art Academy went pick mine as da best of da whole firs grade. Yeah. Den Mrs. Perry wanted to be my friend cause j’like was because of her dat my painting was da best. But wasn’t. Most times she no like da way I paint. She said everyting had to be correck: yellow sun, green tree wit red apples, white clouds, blue sky, green grass and flying birds dat look like one V.

I jes went paint da stupid lamb. Must be cause I went make da clouds and da lamb and da grass all look da same, all curly and fuzzy and funnykine colors, cause Bungy went take da good colors and all I had left was purple, black, brown, and orange. Mines was mostly circles, cause I was tinkin about da fluffy wool and clouds and Daddy

writing scrip. So I went write scrip wit my brush. Circle, circle, circle. Even Alfred told me at recess time, “Nice, your painting.”

Alfred no like do art. Everyting he paint or he draw look da same, like one stick man. And aftah he pau, he no like um so he paint anykine colors all ovah his pickcha so end up all brown and ugly and when he do schoolwork he use so much eraser he always make puka in da paper. No good lend him your eraser cause going come back all used up. Anyway, aftah da lady went pick my painting and put um up by da office fo little while, plenny guys was my friend. Even Throw Up Shirley nevah call me “Uku Boy” or “Alfred’s Bruddah” too much.

Naptime, Shirley and Alfred and Kyle could sleep on top da desks cause dey had asthma and everybody else had to sleep on da floor. No fair. Was cold, da floor. And everytime, aftah naptime pau, Alfred still stay snoring on top da desks except Mrs. Perry, she wake um up. Alfred he even sleep when we jes gotta put our heads down on da desks cause we too noisy or we gotta settle down aftah recess. I hate when Alfred do dat cause sometimes he come ovah to my side of da desk and he drool on top my work. Even if you draw one line on da desk wit your eraser and tell, “No can cross da line,” he always stay on my side. Uji. And jes because I sit next to him, Throw Up Shirley say I going catch Alfred’s uji germs. Not. Not going, yeah?

3. Fort Grade

Fat Frances Obata such a crybaby. When we get P.E. and gotta choose up fo kickball, her and Alfred always da last to get picked, so she cry. When Bungy tease her, she cry. When Throw Up Shirley fold one origami fortune teller out of one piece of paper and tell her fortune, “You going get married to Alfred,” she cry. Even if she only get one wrong in math, she cry. Sometimes I little bit sorry fo her cause she always stay by herself recess time cause if you like go on da jungle gym, da bull of da jungle gym, usually Bungy, make up one password like, “Fat Frances eat buta kaukau.” And if you no say dat Frances eat pig slop, she still yet cry cause she feel sorry dat dey nevah let you on da jungle gym.

I hate it though when she bring one orchid fo Miss Von, our fort grade teacha. One cattedeya wit foil wrapped around da stem, big and purple purple, almost black. No spots, no bugs. Perfeck. One real big one dat da teacha put in her hair or pin um on her dress or put um in her vase on her desk.

And Fat Frances everytime massage Miss Von's back cause she da biggest girl in da class and probably mo strong den even Bungy, so Miss Von go ask her fo lomi-lomi her back. Wasn't fair man, cause Miss Von only like you if you bring her flowahs. We no mo nutting in our yard dat I could bring fo da teacha. Not unless you count da Christmas berries dat hang ovah da fence from da Witch Lady's tree next door. Dat I can get easy. But da teacha only like dat at Christmas time and den you gotta pick real plenny and dry um up and spray paint um gold or silvah. Supposed to look like holly but I donno what holly supposed to look like. Look fake when you spray paint um though. Anyways das not like bringing one giant orchid everytime.

Even Bungy always bring someting from his aquarium fo show and tell. One time, he went bring fighting fish in one long skinny aquarium divided up into sections wit pieces of plastic in between so dat da fish stay in their own part until he lift up one section and da two fish fight. Dey chase each uddah and bite each uddah's tail until you get da net and scoop one out or until one die. Bungy went put one mirror up to da glass, and da fish tink das one nuddah fish so he fight wit himself, da stupidhead. Da fish jes charge um. Fat Frances started fo cry fo da fish and Miss Von told Bungy he couldn't bring fighting fish anymore. So he started bringing crayfish. One time I went wit him to da river fo catch crayfishes so dat I could bring someting fo show at show and tell but he only made me do stuff like move da rocks and splash da water and chase um to him. Suckah. He nevah gimme any. I had to bring home my mayonnaise bottle empty. The only ting I could catch was grasshoppers, but anybody can catch grasshoppers, so das nutting dat. Sheesh, I couldn't even bring grasshoppers if I wanted to cause grasshoppers no last too long and dey only shet in da bottle. Even Bennett could tell about how his fahdah went talk on da ham radio to somebody in Australia and da teacha went show us where dat was on da map.

What I going tell? Dat my fahdah went sell six refrigerators in one day? Dat my mahdah and me went pinch da tail off one whole bag of bean sprouts?

One time Alfred went bring one small peanut butter bottle to school and leave um in his desk and everytime he open um up and smell um and close um back real quick, secret kine. I went look at um but only had couple dead leaves inside. Nevah have insects or one cocoon so everybody tawt stupid Alfred went bring one bottle wit dead leaves inside.

When was his turn he told us he went wit his uncle up St. Louis Heights and went smell da eucalyptus trees and he brought some leaves fo us fo smell. And he went write "eucalyptus" on da board and told us dat koala bears, he went write "marsupials," eat eucalyptus leaves in Australia. We knew where dat was. Everybody went tell, "Whoa, Alfred," when he was pau.

Andrew went tell, "Eh Alfred, I nevah know you was smart."

Den Bungy went tell real loud, "Whoa, Alfred, we tawt you went save yo futs inside dere," and everybody went laugh and started calling Alfred "Fut-boy" until Miss Von had to shush da class wit da yardstick, wha-pak! She went bus um on her desk.

Aftah dat, I nevah see Alfred open up his bottle anymore.

4. Fit Grade

Da worse was Miss Greenwood, da principio. Nobody like get reported to da office cause fo sure Miss Greenwood going whack your okole wit da rubbah hose. She had um hanging up behind her desk. One time I had to deliver one note fo da teacha, Mrs. Tenn, Andrew call her Mrs. Ten, Eleven, Twelve. Funny guy. I had to wait inside Miss Greenwood's office and all I could look at was da black rubbah hose, looking mean and stiff, j'like Miss Greenwood. She was tall and skinny and always wear one white blouse and black skirt tight around her okole. I wondah if her okole evah got da rubbah hose. Doubt it. Sometimes right aftah recess when we all stay lined up by da classroom door, ready fo go back into da room, we can hear somebody crying in her office. Big six grade kids stay crying and screaming, "Huh, huh, huh, ow-wee!" Some start crying even befo dey get to da office, dey know dey going get it. Dey got nabbed fo fighting or talking sassy or fo trying to scoop somebody's balls recess time. I nevah had da rubbah hose but Bungy went get um plenny times and Andrew almost as much as Bungy. Dey said you gotta sit on da chair while Miss Greenwood scold you and den she write someting down and when she stand up and close da door, dat means you gonna get it. You gotta bend ovah and hold da stool, and she make sure you no nutting in your back pockets and she swing da hose down first, den she whack you. Whoosh, pack! Whoosh, pack! Whoosh, pack! When Bungy go, he no cry anymore, he so used-to to it, I tink. He told me dat nowadays he fake

cry cause if you no cry, Miss Greenwood whack you mo hard. So even if sound like he crying, he told me he only faking.

One time he went tell Alfred dat Louise like him and wanted to show him what color her panties was. Louise, if she like you, she count off her crinolines fo you and den she show you her panties last. But no ways she was going count her crinolines fo Alfred. Da girls all hated Louise cause she had bra awready in da fit grade so dey went dare Alfred fo lift up her dress and count her crinolines and see what color her panties was cause Louise like him. And all da boys went tell him, “Yeah, Alfred. She like you.”

Dat time he got sent to da office right before recess and got real plenty whacks and we could hear him all da way down by da basketball court crying, “No tell my mah-huh-daaah! Huh, huh, huh. No tell my mah-huh-daaah!”

When Alfred came back to da class, nobody wanted to look at him cause j’like he took da lickings fo us, cause we went dare him. He jes went put his head down and nevah look at nobody, especially Louise.

From Lum, D. (1997). Local Genealogy: “What School You Went?” Stories from a Pidgin Culture. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Hawai’i at Mānoa.

No Pass Back

I hate Alfred. He so stupid. Everytime he catch it from everybody and jes because him and me get da same last name, da guys all tell dat he my bruddah. But he not. He get da same last name as me but he stupid and he kinda fat and when he breathe he make noise wit his nose and his mout. J’like one horse. J’like he always stay huffing and puffing. J’like he no mo nuff air.

Nobody like be Alfred’s friend. Nobody like be his partnah. Nobody like even talk to him, except me. I gotta, cause I sit next to him. I gotta sit next to him because da teacha make us sit alphabetacal.

I everytime gotta give Alfred one false crack because somebody go play Pass On, No Pass Back. Dey punch you in da arm and den tell, “Pass on, no pass back.” So you cannot crack um back, you gotta pass um on. I tink Benjamen Funasaki da one dat always start um. Den it go down da line: to da G’s, and den da H’s, and da I’s, no mo J’s, and den to da K’s. Get plenny K’s: Kim, Kimura, Kodama, Kodani, and den come da L’s. Get plenny of dem too: Lau, Lee, Loo, Look, and den Lum. I can tell get one false crack coming when I

hear somebody tell, “Ow!” and den you hear, “Pass on, no pass back.” And when get to me, everybody stay waiting. So I gotta punch Alfred and tell, “Pass on, no pass back.”

Da ting is dat Alfred no pass um on. He jes look at me and den he put his head down and den he cry. He no punch back or nutting. He no pass um on.

One time I went try tell him dat he gotta pass um on. Ass how you play da game. But he no like. He say he no like punch nobody.

Alfred like hang around by me even though I no like hang around him. But sometimes I gotta. When Benjamen and John play basketball and dey choose up sides, always get me and Alfred left over. We da substatutes. We gotta jes watch from da side wit da small kinnigahden kids. Or when Benjamen and John choose up, one side gotta take us two guys fo one good guy. Us two fo one. Den me and Alfred, we gotta watch da behind part . . . waay behind.

One time at recess, Benjamen and John went make like dey had ugi germs and dey went wipe um on Alfred and den push him inside da girls bathroom.

“Ugi germs,” dey went yell. “Pass on, no pass back!” And all da girls went tink dat Alfred was going try get dem so dey went run outside screaming, “Ugi Alfred going touch you!” But he only wanted to get back outside. Da Campus Patrol went nab him and den report him fo going inside da girls bathroom. Alfred nevah say was Benjamen and John dat wen push him inside. He had to pull weeds recess time for one whole week fo breaking da rules. But was j’like he no care. He jes went by where da janatah told him fo go and he went pull weeds and catch beetle bugs in da dirt.

Pretty soon, all da kinnigahden kids went come by him fo watch his beetle bugs. He went make one house fo da bugs in da dirt. Had one yard wit one rock fence and one old milk carton wit water fo da swimming pool.

When da janatah wasn’t looking, Alfred went give da kids horsey back rides, too. Da small kids grab anykine fo hold on: his hair, his ear, his nose, his eyeglasses. But Alfred no mind. He jes laugh and go until da tetherball pole and come back.

Pretty soon da kids was lining up fo ride Alfred every recess dat week. Dey nevah like watch basketball no mo. Dey jes went wait their turn in line and watch da beetle bugs. Benjamen went come by Alfred’s bug place fo look what was happening. One beetle bug was coming by him and he went try step on um but da small kids all went push

him away, even though dey was scared of da beetle bug too. Benjamen went tell one small kid, “Try come, try come.” And da kid went come and Benjamen went punch um and tell, “Pass on, no pass back,” and den run away.

All da kids started fo do dat, Pass On, No Pass Back, and everytime got stuck at Throw-up Shirley. Throw-up Shirley, she always throwing up. And she wasn't too good at playing Pass On, No Pass Back so dat everybody knew already dat when she came by you, she had to pass one punch. So pretty soon everybody jes run away from her she little mo cry until Alfred went tell, “No do dat,” and he gave her one ride two times around da tetherball pole.

Next time, Alfred was absent so one kinnigahden kid started fo boddah me fo give him one horsey back ride. “Nah, nah,” I went tell um, “I stay substitute fo basketball.” Den Benjamen went come by me and ask me if I like play basketball fo his side. Da small kids was scared of him. Dey thought he was going give dem one mo punch.

“Nah, I no like play,” I told Benjamen, “I gotta give this kid one ride.” Funny, I nevah feel like playing basketball dat time. I dunno why. Den I went hapai da kid, carry um, you know, and we went around da tetherball pole and den came back. J'like how Alfred do um. By da time I came back, had one line.

Da next day, was all bus up, Alfred's bug place. Da kinnigahden kids went cry but Alfred went make one grave and had j'like one funeral and all da small kids went put flowers and leaves on top and Alfred went make one cross out of sticks. Maybe I should have told him I seen Benjamen by his bug place las time. Maybe Alfred already went know. I dunno.

Alfred no need pull weeds anymore but he still go by his bug place every recess time. Da small kids tell, “Yea!” when he come. I wish he wouldn't do dat. Now I da junkest guy. I da only substature and cause dey no can choose up with him and me for one good guy – two fo one – Benjamen and John no like me play wit dem. Well den, I no like play Pass On, No Pass Back either. Nowadays I no hit Alfred when da ting come around da G's, da H's, da I's, da K's and L's. And Susan, she sit right before me, most times she no pass da punch on to me either. Even when Bennett punch her hard. Bennett punch everybody da same, boy or girl, he blass um. But once, I seen him and he nevah punch Susan when was Pass On, No Pass Back.

Hey, j'like we passing um back, yeah?

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ I am using the common term “Pidgin” to mean Hawai'i Creole in this paper. It is capitalized to emphasize its distinction as a language (M. Forman, personal communication, 1996). I have also chosen to italicize only foreign words in this paper. Pidgin and Hawaiian words, being the native languages of the islands, are not italicized.
- ² L. Farias, (personal communication, February 8, 1997).
- ³ L. Kubo in reference to Okamura's (1994) definition of local which suggests that local identity is primarily defined by what it opposes, e.g., outsiders (personal communication, January 1997).
- ⁴ The dual personality “implies that the individual is split between two polar opposites: he or she is conflicted between East and West and has no center” (TuSmith,1994, p.41).

- ⁵ Critique by Frank Chin of my work according to note 2 in Morales (1998). Morales attributes the quote to Fujikane (1994) but I could find no reference in Fujikane to the Chin quote. Nonetheless, Sumida's account of Chin's remarks is essentially the same (1991, p. 101-102).
- ⁶ M. Forman (personal communication, February 7, 1997).
- ⁷ Remarks by drama graduate student who served as a teaching assistant in a University of Hawai'i Pidgin playwriting course during the Fall 1976 semester.
- ⁸ The dichotomies between Pidgin speakers and standard English speakers, however, cannot be simply characterized as non-haole versus haole or non-English Standard versus English Standard schools. A haole graduate of the class of 1951 at Roosevelt High School, an English Standard school, reportedly felt more at home with the local kids from Papakolea (a Hawaiian home-stead community) than with his standard English speaking classmates. Perhaps because of this relationship, he reportedly never got into any fights with locals, and more often got into fights with other haoles (primarily military dependents and recent arrivals). Neither did he experience or know of the legendary “kill haole” days where apparently local toughs would seek out haoles at English Standard schools and beat them for no apparent reason. He did report getting reprimanded by his father when he asked at the dinner table, “Try pass da rice” (Rogers, 1996). Clearly in this case, within the English Standard school community, Pidgin and local culture had made inroads. One cannot easily generalize that haole English Standard school students felt superior to local students or did not have an affiliation to local culture. Nor did all local students necessarily have racist attitudes toward English Standard school students.
- ⁹ See Romaine (1993) who sees written Pidgin as a literary dialect rather than a literary language but one that is “coming of age.” While she attributes this primarily to the lack of a standard orthography for the language, her views reflect an elevation of the novel form and third person narrative voice as a measure of literary development.
- ¹⁰ See Sumida (1991) on A. Grove Day's Books about Hawai'i: fifty basic authors (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1977) and A Hawai'i Reader (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing Co., 1984), also Lum (1990) regarding what appeared to be a deliberate denial of a large body of local literature by compilers of anthologies.
- ¹¹ Pidgin term combining Hawaiian “ma-ke” and English “die, dead” suggesting that something is really dead.



Learning Da Kine: A Filmmaker Tackles Local Culture and Pidgin

Marlene Booth

When Professor Kanalu Young and I first met, we were serving together as panelists for a media competition, judging among several grant proposals as to which would make the best films about the experiences of Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Though the two of us come from very different backgrounds—I was born and raised Jewish in Des Moines, Iowa and lived for over thirty years on the East Coast of the United States; Kanalu grew up Hawaiian/Chinese/Caucasian in Hawai'i, where he has lived all his life—we found that we had complementary responses to the proposals we read. After serving on the panel, we discussed the possibility of Kanalu—a tenured professor of Hawaiian Studies with a PhD in history—and me—a documentary filmmaker of films about American culture and history—creating together a film about Hawai'i. We did not know what its focus would be, but we knew that examination of culture in Hawai'i would be a part of it.

Though we proposed and rejected various ideas, we eventually began discussing language. Our early research led us to examine Hawaiian language and its rebirth. In fact, though I had returned to living in Boston after a year's sabbatical in Hawai'i, I returned to Hawai'i to spend a few weeks immersing myself in the subject.

On my final day in town, I met with Kanalu to discuss my research. After he listened to me patiently, occasionally interjecting comments and critiques, he sat back in his chair, took a breath, and said, “You know I think we should consider Pidgin. Hawaiian language is very interesting, but really, without Pidgin, I would cease to be whole.”

Kanalu speaks the King's English and is also fluent in Hawaiian. I had heard him speak Pidgin perhaps once or twice, and I had no idea he felt that Pidgin was central to his identity. I am not certain that he, himself, had verbalized this thought before. But once the words were out of his mouth, he felt, and I experienced, that there was something powerful in his statement. Inspired by that single sentence alone, I flew back to Boston, determined to find a film about this subject that I'd barely noticed before.

I left Boston to live in Hawai'i in the fall of 2003. Kanalu and I received production funding from Pacific Islanders in Communications and began in earnest the research and discussion for our film about Pidgin and local culture. Through the halls of the university, in working-class neighborhoods of Honolulu, and at beaches, parks, weddings, and funerals, we have found Pidgin everywhere. We find that it unites—the simplest raise of the eyebrows becomes a way to assert identity and establish camaraderie—and also divides—rapid-fire Pidgin spoken under the breath can be a sure way to exclude others. It also measures authenticity—“da bugga ok”—and angers educators, and it makes some people laugh and cry while others are repelled by it. Through it all, Pidgin and the local culture that springs from it define something unique about Hawai'i.

It is that uniqueness—the intangible spirit, the combination of tough core and gentle soul—that largely makes Hawai'i Hawai'i and that guarantees that the islands will never become just another state in the United States.

Through Pidgin, we are chronicling the essence of local life in our film.

Why make a film about Pidgin? That is a question asked by my friend Marv, a transplant from New Jersey, who has been living on O‘ahu for at least fifteen years. To paraphrase Marv, Pidgin is “not a real language. It’s broken English. The people who use it sound stupid and uneducated. It’ll get them nowhere. Plain and simple. Nothing to discuss. How can you do a film about it? There’s nothing there.”

There’s nothing there.

In one way or another, the question: “Why make a film about Pidgin?” has been the guiding force for Kanalu and me from the beginning. For me as the outsider, the question was how to understand what was in front of me. In Hawai‘i, I often felt as if I had left the United States and landed in a foreign country, albeit a country where English was the mother tongue—more or less. As a Midwesterner, I felt at home with Hawai‘i’s sense of time, with a culture founded on people-to-people contact, and with a way of living that valued listening above orating. And yet, I found Hawai‘i novel and, in many ways, puzzling. In other places I have lived—Boston, for example—I’ve been able to latch onto something familiar and to use that as my base for understanding. In Hawai‘i, I did not know where to begin. I sat in on courses at the university and thought about studying a language—as I’d done when I lived in Israel—as a way to begin to unlock local culture. But with only James Michener’s *Hawaii* and Lili‘uokalani’s *Hawai‘i’s Story by Hawai‘i’s Queen* as background, I didn’t know which language would open Hawai‘i to me. Hawaiian? Chinese? Japanese? (I hadn’t begun to consider Tagalog, and in my early days here, I’d never even heard of Ilocano.) Who were the people I saw in front of me? What were their backgrounds? What were their stories?

The professor in one of my classes was Chinese, a friend in my art class was Filipina, and my law school hula hālau contained a mix—Hawaiian, Portuguese, Chomoran, Korean. In my hālau, I was classed, accurately, as a “special needs” hula dancer and assigned a more experienced dancer as a tutor. Sherry, my wonderful and very patient tutor who took time out of a busy schedule as a first year law student to work with me, was from Saipan, a place so unfamiliar to me that I heard it as “Japan” when she first told me. In being able to distinguish among people of Asian or Pacific Island ancestry, I was a babe in the woods. Everyone, it seemed

to me, had shared stories and frames of reference that were completely new to me. Hawai‘i seemed a cultural maze, and I had little clue about how to sort it out. Where did one begin with such a dazzling array of people, languages, cultures, and food?

As a young college student, I had traveled from the Midwest to visit my then-boyfriend (now husband of thirty-eight years) in New York City. I well remember being eighteen years old, walking hand-in-hand down New York’s streets, looking up at the huge skyscrapers and down at the mix of hurried, make-no-eye-contact people, and being astonished. I could only look and listen and respond to the surface of things. I had no idea how I could ever begin to penetrate such a city, overwhelming to me on a grand scale.

My response to Hawai‘i mimicked my New York experience. Hawai‘i did not intimidate in the same way physically—the sizes, shapes, and colors of plants were dazzling and inviting—but the social landscape was just as powerfully jaw-dropping as the buildings of New York. There seemed to be no one key to unlock Hawai‘i, as the French I learned in college, for example, worked somewhat to unlock France’s people and culture. Not knowing where to begin, I grabbed what came my way. I joined the halau at the law school. I took part in an informal, drop-in Hawaiian language class at Barnes and Noble, where grammar and sentence structure continued to elude me, but legends, place names, and ways of knowing the world embedded in Hawaiian began to make sense. I gravitated to events that began to fill in the picture such as performances by the group Olomana, the Talkstory Conference, reenactments of the Queen’s life by Nalani Olds, staged before a grateful and strongly moved audience at the Waikiki Public Library, non-stop watching of the Merrie Monarch Festival, ethnic festivals at Kapiolani Park, and anything else that caught my eye. Cultural immersion often ordered my day.

The lilt of Hawai‘i English, which my then ninth grade daughter began to acquire and the kindnesses of strangers, to adapt a line from Tennessee Williams, who would offer me fifty cents for parking rather than exchange my dollar for their four quarters. They were new experiences to me—new ways of interacting with people. In Boston (and even more so in New York, which I frequently visited and learned not to fear overly), you learn not to make conversation with strangers. In Hawai‘i, strangers waited for me to change lanes! The fact that in conversations people would ask where I was from

and, occasionally, my ethnicity, but never inquired about my line of work or the name of my college, astounded me. I’d just lived through the process of my son’s applying to college from Cambridge, Massachusetts. Every conversation I’d had for a year with parents of his peers seemed to be filled with references to elite colleges as a not-so-coded way of gauging our children’s grades and SAT scores. In my encounters in Hawai‘i’s “local culture” open classroom, however, that topic hardly seemed to matter.

Reading the morning paper also gave me a window into Hawai‘i. Within my first week here, I’d acquired the words “yohana,” “keiki,” “kupuna,” “pono,” “kuleana.” I used a Hawaiian language dictionary to read the paper. But just by reading the usual fare of daily life, a whole new world—of Hawaiian culture, the primacy of family life, and the importance of being humble and living with sensitivity—replaced the world I’d known of status, credentials, public recognition, and being self-made. New ideas and ways of thinking, such as Hawaiian culture and Buddhism, did not fit with anything I was accustomed to, and they began to offer new, alternative ways of understanding.

I remember once in Boston helping a Japanese journalist friend write a grant application in English. She and I would discuss ideas for her proposal, which she would jot down in English to translate later into Japanese, and later still to translate back into English. I asked her why she didn’t just write in Japanese in the first place to make the process speedier. She replied that our conversations represented an American way of thinking. To write a proposal that reflected her ideas, she needed to translate her thoughts into a Japanese way of thinking. She needed my help not to understand the language but to understand the thinking behind the language.

I don’t remember when I first heard Pidgin or became aware of it. It seeped in without my being aware of it—a bit like bird song in Hawai‘i, or the sound of ukuleles—and soon it seemed to be everywhere.

Like my own family’s home language of Yiddish, Pidgin is a fusion language, made up of words and phrases that invoke a shared past. When people speak Pidgin, the language brings them home.

But Pidgin is not spoken in every home, and the message about Pidgin that speakers hear and internalize is that Pidgin is bad English. “Don’t speak bad English,” many of my friends remember being told. My friend, Kent Sakoda, co-author of a book called *Pidgin Grammar*, teaches a course

at the University of Hawai‘i called “Pidgin and Creole English in Hawai‘i.” He asks his students to interview a university friend who speaks Pidgin. Those proud Pidgin speakers always seem to report that Pidgin is not a proper language and that people who speak Pidgin sound “stupid.”

Kanalu and I have found the same self-censorship to be true. Time and again, we pre-interview someone for the film who speaks Pidgin. We hear their stories and learn of their profound fondness for Pidgin, of their sense that Pidgin connects multiple generations and works as a language of the heart. But when we ask if we can film them talking story in Pidgin, the answer is no. “Shame, brah.” It’s one thing to speak Pidgin with friends or even with researchers. It is something else to commit yourself to a conversation in Pidgin captured for all time on film.

“Shame, brah.”

So how do you make a film about Pidgin if no one will appear on screen speaking the language? Furthermore, how do you frame the debate about Pidgin if critics of the language—those people who refuse to even call it a language—also refuse to appear on screen? What we have discovered in the making of our film is that, if we want the chance to capture spoken Pidgin, we can say that we are making a film about local culture. Then, sometimes, people relax and let us film. Interestingly because nearly every school child in Hawai‘i is taught to use his and her best English in public, even people proud of speaking Pidgin will switch to English as soon as they see a camera and microphone. Those scenes we have been able to capture in Pidgin have come about either because someone is so engaged in an activity that he or she doesn’t notice being filmed or people are so certain that they speak English properly that they don’t mind “kicking back and busting out the Pidgin.”

Kanalu arranged the first scene we filmed, a reunion of friends from his Pākī Park neighborhood. Though he had run into some of these friends from time to time, he had not seen others since childhood. He wanted to reassemble his fifty-something buddies in the place where they had become a cohesive group.

But there was a second, more urgent reason for assembling this group and filming this scene. At age fifteen (more than thirty-five years ago), while swimming with some of these friends at Cromwell’s Beach, Kanalu had a diving accident that left him quadriplegic. His friends, then merely

fourteen or fifteen years of age, initially mistook his failure to emerge from the water as the game *ma-ke* (Hawaiian for “dead”) man. Not knowing what to do, they had acted on instinct and out of great fear. Miraculously, they saved his life.

Kanalu felt that he had never adequately thanked those friends. His accident, and the anger and pain that followed, separated him from his friends and their shared past. The Pākī Park boys were just beginning to play basketball. Kanalu, confined to a wheelchair, could not bear to watch his pals doing what he longed to do. They, in turn, no longer knew how to talk to him. So he stayed away, finished high school, graduated from college, and eventually earned a PhD in history. His life took a direction far away from Pākī Park. He got a job teaching Hawaiian Studies at the university.

Now in his fifties, Kanalu wanted to thank those friends from his past. As he saw it, the best way to do that was to take them back to Pākī Park and to speak Pidgin.

Though the scene unfolded more slowly than we had both imagined—turning back the clock more than thirty-five years takes time—Kanalu learned things he had not known. He learned how painful it was for his friends to revisit his accident when, just fifteen years old themselves, they barely had the wherewithal to understand what was happening and to know what to do. Speaking Pidgin gave Kanalu and his friends the context they needed to carry out a long-overdue conversation.

One of the people who played a key role in Kanalu’s rehabilitation the first year after his accident was his Kamehameha School classmate, Debbie. As part of her community service work in high school, Debbie volunteered as a “candy striper” at the rehabilitation facility where Kanalu resided for a year after being discharged from the acute care hospital. Debbie and Kanalu had stayed in touch through the years, and once, when both Debbie and I were visiting Kanalu, she told us the story of her mother’s dogged push to learn to speak Standard English. We interviewed Debbie’s mother, Teresa, and learned how, while a scholarship student at Mid-Pacific Institute, she had worked with a speech professor from the University of Hawai‘i to change the way she spoke. In the interview, Teresa told us

“You see, I could not distinguish the “i,” so for ship, I would say, “sheep,” and for the “th’s,” I would say “de.” All my sounds were wrong.” Teresa spent hours on the hill above Mid-Pac Institute, chanting exercises with strings of “th” words to learn to pronounce Standard English. “It

grew on me the longer I remained in school that I needed to improve—but you cannot transform a person’s language overnight.”

Teresa succeeded, winning speech contests, gaining entrance to and graduating from the University of Hawai‘i, and becoming a teacher. As a teacher, she vividly recalled the frustration of having her speech corrected when she could not hear the difference between the sounds of Hawai‘i Creole and Standard English. When her students spoke Pidgin—as many of them did over many years—she chose never to correct them outright but instead to model Standard English.

Sue McCabe, a native Pidgin speaker from the Big Island who learned to speak Standard English while living and working in Oregon, took a different approach when she worked as a professor in the speech department at the University of Hawai‘i. The university required that every undergraduate pass an oral English test in order to graduate. Speech 101, 102, and 103, three semester-long classes, were designed to “de-Pidginize” (my word) the speech of Hawai‘i’s university students.

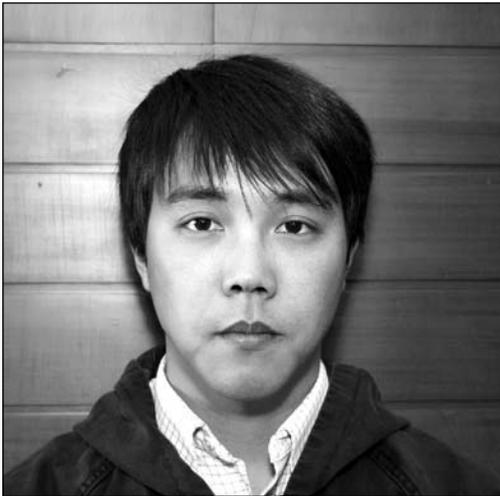
But Sue ran into a problem teaching her students. They would tell her that they did not want to sound like haoles. “Succeeding” by taking on the speech and mannerisms of Caucasians became too high a price to pay for many students. “Talking like a haole” implied turning your back on family, friends, ethnic group, and neighborhood, moving away from group identity and becoming instead a self-defined individual. As Kanalu says of Hawai‘i, “If the United States is defined by rugged individualism, Hawai‘i is the land of rugged group-ism.”

Pidgin and the behaviors that accompany it—hanging back, enjoying people, not feeling rushed—pull and keep local people together. A willingness to speak Pidgin, even if fluent in English, acknowledges a willingness to belong in Hawai‘i, an acceptance of the people and customs that make Hawai‘i unique. To stand apart from Pidgin—to condemn it for its sound, its pace, and the “attitude” it engenders—suggests a wish to erase Hawai‘i’s multi-ethnic past and to encourage Hawai‘i to develop as quickly as possible like any other American state. Stories told in Pidgin become post-plantation tales of belonging.

Far from a sign of shame, Pidgin speakers and non-Pidgin speakers alike should revel in the accessibility of a history whose accents, rhythms, and turns-of-phrase still excite us. The product of a multitude of cultures that prize ancestry

and honor older generations, Pidgin keeps alive the spirit of an earlier era Hawai'i, one before the time of freeways and cell phones. At its best, Pidgin reminds local people of who they were and warns them against what they might become. At its worst, it can become an excuse for resisting skills that might make a difference for the individual and the group alike. If Kanalu would cease to be whole without Pidgin, it is in large part because the language retains the touch and taste of all who have come before and made him who he is.

Not bad, brah, e?



The “Pidgin Problem”: Attitudes about Hawai‘i Creole

Thomas Yokota

A few summers ago a relative of mine struck his six-year-old child because the child could not pronounce “three” and said “tree” instead. His mispronunciation angered the father, who wanted his son to speak “proper English.” Ironically, the father also spoke Hawai‘i Creole (HC). That same summer, when I was shopping at a convenience store, I overheard a mother scold her child for speaking Hawai‘i Creole. Again, the mother spoke Hawai‘i Creole; but this didn’t stop her from warning her daughter against speaking the language. These incidents motivated me to learn more about the attitudes that people in Hawai‘i have about the local language we hear so often in our everyday lives. Were they proud of this language? Were they ashamed of it? Was there a difference in attitude toward HC among residents of different ages? Did males and females have similar views? Did residents of Hawai‘i identify HC as part of their local culture? If not; why not? If so, how did they explain this connection?

Background

Hawai‘i Creole’s predecessor originated on Hawai‘i’s plantations where a lingua franca was formed in which a primarily English-lexified pidgin known as Hawai‘i Pidgin English (HPE) was developed to facilitate communication between plantation employees and employers (Sakoda & Siegal, 2003, p.6; Reinecke, 1969, p.105). Because plantation employees were recruited from various parts of the world, many came to Hawai‘i speaking little, if any English. As time passed, plantation employees adopted English as well as Portuguese and Hawaiian. Although they did not

become proficient speakers of English, they were able to form a pidgin composed mainly of English, Portuguese, and Hawaiian. Reinecke (1969) argues that this blend of pidgin may have been readily accepted because at the time there were no economic incentives for plantation workers to acquire a strong command of English (p. 101). Thus, HPE continued to be spoken on the plantation as the most efficient means of passing on and receiving duties. As its practice continued, recognizable patterns of the makeshift language were formed and HPE became the common medium of communication. This use of HPE within the plantation community was so common that it began to replace the child’s mother tongue for many families living on the plantations, a phenomenon that linguists mark as the time when HPE became Hawai‘i Creole (Sakoda & Siegal, 2003, p. 6). Thus, as these families increased in numbers, so did the numbers of Hawai‘i Creole speakers. Educators viewed this trend as a societal problem that was worsening as years passed. They failed to understand that Hawai‘i Creole was and is a distinct language with its own grammatical structure and pronunciation (Sakoda & Siegal, 2003).

Educators’ Views from the 1920s to the 1940s

Since the time HC was first viewed as the “pidgin problem,” Hawai‘i’s teachers and educational leaders have sought ways to stop the “broken-English” language that predominates in the community from being spoken. Just how successful have teachers and educational leaders been in solving the Hawai‘i Creole problem? Shortly after the 1920s when the HC problem was acknowledged, teachers and

educational leaders aggressively attempted to curb the use of HC in the classroom (Tamura, 1996). By the 1940s, many educators had published articles in the *Hawaii Educational Review* addressing HC as a problem in schools. Some wrote of the reasons why the HC problem persisted, and others wrote suggestions as to what should be done to solve the HC problem. Although these articles were written decades ago, the arguments can still be heard today. That is why I believe that the *Hawaii Educational Review* articles can give us a glimpse as to why the controversy over HC in Hawai'i has not been resolved.

Speech behavior became an important issue in Hawai'i during the early 20th century when the children from Hawai'i's plantations entering schools brought with them a language that sounded odd or broken when compared to the English familiar to Western educators. By the 1920s, many were concerned about this "language deficiency" and initially believed that solving this problem meant helping teachers become aware of the common grammatical and syntactical "errors" made by the children. An article published in the *Hawaii Educational Review* entitled "The New Course of Study" (1921) outlined a course of study implemented in 1920 for the early primary levels across Hawai'i to combat against the language—mistakenly identified as a pidgin, but by this time, a Creole—of Hawai'i's children. The article pointed to Hawai'i's plantation society as the main source of children's language deficiencies because it was a breeding ground for this so-called "broken" English. What the teachers heard in schools at this time, they called bastardized English tainted by Chinese, Hawaiian, and Portuguese influences. The anonymous author(s) argued that either because children were reared in isolated environments where English was used sparingly, or because of the mingling of children of different nationalities, Hawai'i's children were able neither to hear nor speak "proper English;" and that the first time many of these children heard Standard English was in school. Teachers, therefore, became the "guardians of the language," combating the so-called "broken English" of their students, and creating a hostile environment for HC (Sato, 1989; p. 264).

Educators felt that they needed to fix the speech problems that were rooted in the community. Some tried to create a community within the school—a Standard English-speaking community—to counter the HC speaking community of Hawai'i. An early example of the schools'

attempts to mandate the speaking of Standard English in all forms of school activities occurred in 1939. Two teachers at Kalākaua Intermediate School published an article outlining how the school achieved modest success towards speech improvement through an "all-school speech program." Acknowledging language as a social activity, the school attempted to rectify students' speech problems by introducing extracurricular activities that encouraged students to speak Standard English throughout the semester. The all-school speech program included activities like daily speech drills, song contests, and weekly speech slogans (Enos & Van Buskirk, 1940, p. 12). English classes were no longer the only time a student was to hear or practice Standard English.

Promoters of the all-school speech program must have recognized the inability of Hawai'i's community to provide the student with these opportunities to speak Standard English. Therefore, when the all-school speech program began, Enos and Van Buskirk explained, the first step in their program was to create a desire for "speech improvement" (p. 12). The authors, however, did not state exactly what was said to motivate the students to change their speech habits.

Despite allocating many of its resources to the all-school speech program, Kalākaua Intermediate School, according to the authors, reported no significant speech improvements. However, immediate speech improvement was not expected. Instead, the authors credit the all-school speech program for encouraging students to adopt the teacher's perspective, and that was to praise Standard English. The all-school speech program aimed to encourage a social value that aligned with the mainland rather than Hawai'i's plantation communities. Thus, the authors praised the program for uniting students and teachers and combating the problem of "bad English" in Hawai'i (p. 12). For example, the authors recognized a change of attitude in the students. Enos and Van Buskirk (1940) reported that the students no longer insulted children for speaking Standard English, but instead the "taunts [went] to users of the worst pidgin" (p. 12).

Educators believed that in a community where Standard English was rarely spoken, schools served as a first opportunity for most children to learn Standard English. However, they also believed that Hawai'i's schools could only provide so much to a child whose environment constantly bombarded them with "bastardized" English. Thus, Enos and Buskirk believed that because improving speech was an internal process, by teaching children to value Standard English

and to devalue Pidgin, or more correctly, Hawai‘i Creole, children would be able to reject the latter and become willing to change their speech behavior. Furthermore, this attitude would become a societal value as many would begin to see how Standard English affected one’s life chances, such as attending college and finding career opportunities on the mainland.

Thus, the “Pidgin problem” was viewed by educators as being rooted in society and that meant that solutions needed to target societal values if the schools were to correct students’ speech behavior. Educators redefined the Pidgin problem to be more than just a problem of mixed up grammar and syntax; educators redefined HC as a social element that needed to be replaced by Standard English, which was needed to fully participate in Western society.

In February 1946 an article titled “The Language Arts,” published in the *Hawaii Educational Review*, attempted to distinguish between English and language arts, following the popular practice of adopting the latter term for speech improvement programs. English, according to the article, was an archaic term, irrelevant to the current needs of improving speech habits. “Language arts,” on the other hand, was an effective term because it shared many positive connotations. Language arts allowed speech studies to occupy the same realm as the other arts, specifically fine arts, liberal arts, and practical arts. What this new term implied was that speech improvement pedagogy should extend beyond concern for just grammar and syntax improvement; speech improvement also meant improving society in terms of creating civilized citizens. The anonymous author(s) were calling for curriculum that they felt would help unite educators under one purpose: employing the language arts curriculum to improve speech and create better citizens. This meant that combating speech behavioral problems in Hawai‘i required programs that helped teachers and students identify and correct Hawai‘i Creole, established essential speech habits that allowed for one to achieve a level of mastery in Standard English, and further promoted literature on Standard English that connected language to life. What educators were pushing for in Hawai‘i was an idealism valued by Western educators; language arts provided these educators with a foundation to correct Hawai‘i’s speech behavioral problems.

By 1946, educators were encouraging teachers to connect Standard English to future endeavors. Standard English was becoming an important skill to have, as it

provided access to certain opportunities in Hawai‘i. For example, if a student wished to pursue higher education at the University of Hawai‘i, the student would have to pass a speech review demonstrating his/her command of English; failure to pass this speech exam would ultimately lead to failure to graduate. Educators in Hawai‘i believed that the command of Standard English was necessary for a person to be successful in life, as it was the root of all fields of study (Buzzard, 1946, p. 168).

Since the annexation of Hawai‘i in 1898 that made the islands a territory of the United States, many Westerners had foreseen the likelihood that Hawai‘i would become a state. It was only a question of when. Therefore, the movement to promote Standard English in the schools and in the community was viewed as a preparation for statehood. Educators like Elizabeth B. Carr, an instructor of speech at the University of Hawai‘i, compared poor speech habits to poor appearances. Those who spoke HC, she argued, should be treated like children who do not comb their hair or take a bath. Carr believed that HC was filled with errors of speech, and that it was the obligation of those who knew better to help clean up the mess (Carr, 1946, p. 167). Thus it was the aim of many educators to Americanize Hawai‘i—to prepare the children of Hawai‘i, just as parents prepared their children before sending them out of the house. Educators had transformed the HC problem from a grammatical and syntactical problem to a social problem as a means of combating HC at its roots.

An article titled “The Farrington High School Speech Program” reveals an instance where an educator connected the “Pidgin problem” to cultural differences. Myrtle King Kaapu (1946), the head of Farrington High School’s speech department, argued that in order for educators to correct a student’s speech problem, they needed to know how to identify which children needed assistance. Kaapu had experience in teaching English to non-English speakers in many countries, and offered her experience at Farrington High School. Kaapu attributed the success of Farrington High School’s speech program to a system that “objectively” evaluated each child’s command of the English language. She believed that the Farrington model could serve as a standard for other schools.

Below are two indicators that Kaapu provided to help a teacher detect “poor” speech habits (p. 181):

He can be heard with difficulty. His enunciation is so

poor that one can't tell whether his English is correct or not, or whether he pronounces correctly or not. He talks to the air, or the floor—just “recites.”

He uses either the Hawaiian Islands melody (raising and lowering the pitch in a different pattern from the mainland ones) or speaks in a monotone.

The objectivity of these indicators is questionable. For example, Kaapu wrote of students who “talk to the air, or the floor.” What Kaapu identified was not so much an indicator of a student with poor speech behavior, but an indicator of a student who carried values and beliefs that were different from Kaapu's. The second indicator clearly showed that the Farrington High School model relied on identifying cultural differences as a means of identifying poor speech habits. Why did Kaapu consider the “Hawaiian Islands melody” to be poor? Interestingly, the author later admitted that there could be variations of Standard English. The author argued that “since regional pronunciations vary on the mainland, it was not worthwhile to insist upon the sounding of final r in the western or general American way” (p. 182).

Kaapu did not consider Hawai'i Creole and Standard English to be two separate languages. Instead, she saw HC as a variation of Standard English and wished to eliminate this so-called variation. It is ironic that an educator with cross-cultural experience promoted non-cross cultural values. In the final analysis, the system that Kaapu and Farrington High School used relied largely on cultural differences as a means of distinguishing poor and good speech habits.

Although educators in the 1940s believed that schools served as one of the few places for children to correct speech habits, they were at a loss as to how to combat the HC problem effectively. Articles published in the *Hawaii Educational Review* revealed that educators in Hawai'i were confused. Their solutions blurred between language and social-cultural contexts.

While teachers noticed that students were speaking Hawai'i Creole, they could not understand what it was about the students' language that made it different from Standard English. Some educators felt that they were unqualified to be in a position to correct students when they barely knew what to address. Some educators who recognized this problem voiced their frustration with the Territory of Hawai'i Department of Public Instruction, and demanded that it offer a curriculum that could help teachers in the classroom. In 1941, Myrtle H. Thompson, who once sat on

the speech committee organized by the Department of Public Instruction, argued that for speech improvement in Hawai'i to occur the curriculum needed to employ strategies that helped inform teachers. She argued that the books assigned to classes were “too general, and too highly technical” (p. 298). Thompson believed that teachers were capable of teaching students “proper” speech behavior, but that they needed training on how to use the textbooks as well as how to apply speech correction strategies in the classroom. Other educators also voiced similar opinions on the matter. Carr (1946), however, believed that the speech problem would persist as long as educators failed to see it as a set of problems (167). What is clear is that educators in the 1940s discovered that the Pidgin problem was a complex problem and that a single solution was insufficient.

The “Pidgin problem” in Hawai'i continued to confound educators. Although they held different reasons for believing that education could not solve it, they could only agree on one thing: the “Pidgin problem” was deeply connected to the nature of Hawai'i's society. What teachers were facing was, therefore, more than just a “misspelling” of words or “mispronunciation” in the classroom. They were facing a cultural difference that they did not understand, nor one they wanted to understand.

The frustrations expressed by those educators might help to reveal why people believe that the “Pidgin problem” is still with us today. Speakers and non-speakers of HC express similarly negative attitudes towards HC and help to perpetuate misconceptions of the language as if it were slang. Underlying this misconception is the recognition that HC is connected to Hawai'i's local community. In the remainder of this essay I focus, not on the linguistic or grammatical differences between HC and Standard English, but on the connections people have made with HC and their own identity.

Interviews on the subject of Hawai'i Creole

Many studies on Hawai'i Creole have helped to distinguish it as a language (e.g., Sato, 1989; Sakoda & Siegel, 2003). However, despite these scholarly publications, Hawai'i Creole still faces criticism by both speakers and non-speakers of the language. In order to understand why the HC issue continues today I decided to interview residents of Hawai'i. I sought to understand the different values people hold towards this language.

The interviews conducted for this research involved eight adults. The aim of the research was to get an idea of people's lives and their thoughts and attitudes towards Hawai'i Creole. I was able to find people who had attended both private and public schools, who attended college and/or lived on the mainland, and who hold or held jobs in Hawai'i. I conducted the interviews on Oahu in spring 2007. Pseudonyms are used for all interviewees.

Ages Twenty to Thirty-Five

- ❖ Charlotte Aoki is twenty-one. She was born and raised in Kapolei, Hawai'i. She attended both public and private schools from kindergarten to twelfth grade, and she is currently attending the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where she is studying communications.
- ❖ Betty Fujitani is twenty-two. She was born and raised in Waipahu, Hawai'i. She is attending the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where she is studying English.
- ❖ Ethel Kirimatsu is twenty-four. She was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawai'i. She attended private schools from seventh grade to twelfth grade, and she is currently attending the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa studying chemistry. Earlier, she attended the University of Washington.
- ❖ Clayton Moritomo is twenty-five. He was born and raised in 'Ewa Beach, Hawai'i. He resides in Kailua and is employed as a nurse. He attended public schools from kindergarten to twelfth grade and Vermont Technical College for his undergraduate studies where he received a bachelor's degree in nursing. His father speaks HC, while his mother, who was born in Japan, speaks some HC and English.

Ages Thirty-six to Sixty

- ❖ Sheryl Takitani is fifty-one. She was born and raised in Wahiawā, Hawai'i. She lives in Waipahu, and works as a paralegal. She is a graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where she majored in human resources. She attended public schools from kindergarten to twelfth grade.
- ❖ Paul Yoneda is fifty-nine. He was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawai'i. He attended public schools from kindergarten to twelfth grade. He earned an Associates degree from Honolulu Community College. He is cur-

rently employed by the navy and works at Pearl Harbor Shipyard.

Ages Sixty-one to Eighty

- ❖ Amy Kohatsu is seventy-two. She was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawai'i. She lives in Hawai'i Kai and is a retired paralegal. She attended public schools from kindergarten to twelfth grade and later studied at the Hawai'i Business College.
- ❖ Russell Sasaki is seventy-eight. He was born and raised in Makawao, Hawai'i. He lives in Hawai'i Kai on Oahu and is a retired lawyer. He attended private school from the seventh grade to the twelfth grade, and he attended the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa where he studied political science. He also obtained a law degree from Creighton University.

Interviewees, regardless of gender or age, shared beliefs with the educators who wrote in the *Hawaii Education Review*: they considered HC a "broken English," not a language separate from Standard English with its own grammatical and pronunciation rules. Limited exposure to the scholarly literature about HC was evident throughout the interviews. Seven of eight interviewees were unaware that studies on HC are available. Instead, most of the interviewees based their understanding of HC on their own biases and personal experiences.

Although scholars argue that HC is a language, because their research rarely reaches the public, most people have created their own opinions of HC. The language is spoken by over 600,000 people; however, many of these speakers have never taken any formal classes on HC. Currently, the only classes the researcher is aware of that cover HC can be found in higher education institutions like the University of Hawai'i and Hawai'i Pacific University. Furthermore, materials on HC are scarce, with only one dictionary on HC available (Tonouchi, 2005).

The interviewees also revealed that they were not familiar with the term "Hawai'i Creole," except one interviewee, Betty Fujitani who had been aware of the term since her freshman year in college. Those who were not familiar with HC preferred that the more common name, Pidgin, be used throughout the interview. For example, Clayton Moritomo asked if "we were still talking about Pidgin?" after referring to the language as HC. Midway through the interview,

Moritomo switched back to “Pidgin,” feeling that it was “more comfortable because [he] grew up using the word.” Mistaking a language for a pidgin leads to complications such as disregarding the language’s credibility by mistaking it for slang. One could also say that the term “creole” can also create misunderstanding. Russell Sasaki, upon hearing the introduction of my study, immediately corrected my usage of HC as a language and explained that if HC was in fact a language, then the term “creole” was used improperly. Also, when interviewees were asked to state their first spoken language, all interviewees replied “English” or “Standard English”; none of the interviewees mentioned HC as a first language.

Most interviewees, nevertheless, admitted to speaking HC before learning the term “Pidgin” and before being aware that they were speaking a language unique from Standard English. Other speakers of HC denied that they spoke it. What this suggests is that HC speakers are either unsure or unaware of the linguistic differences between HC and English. Therefore they may be hesitant to acknowledge HC as their first language.

Although the interviewees had a limited background knowledge of HC, they shared common understanding of the language’s history. Betty Fujitani was raised primarily by her grandmother, who was born on a plantation and spoke HC. Fujitani, therefore, felt that HC was a product of the plantation culture. All interviewees believed that HC was rooted in plantation life and was “part of Hawai‘i’s culture.” As Sheryl Takitani stated, “Locals speak Pidgin, that’s all there is to it.”

Interviewees, like educators in the 1920s to 1940s, associated HC with Hawai‘i’s culture, suggesting that they believed that linguistic differences were responsible for only part of the “Pidgin problem.” Both interviewees and educators compared HC and Standard English. Similarly, interviewees’ attitude towards HC was influenced by their exposure to “mainland culture” and how much they valued that “mainland culture.” For example, Ethel Kirimatsu concluded that HC was “broken English.” Her observations of HC speakers attending the University of Washington in Seattle reinforced her prior belief that HC was an incorrect way of speaking. She observed that HC speakers had difficulty adjusting at the university. She attributed this difficulty to poor English comprehension and speaking skills. Her mother was a reading teacher and Kirimatsu had also attended private school since the 7th grade. She also believed that private schools were

superior to public schools in terms of academics and later success because private schools reflected the values taught on the mainland. Kirimatsu’s opinion of public schools reflects the belief that limited exposure to Standard English is due to Hawai‘i’s relative isolation and that this contributes to the speech problem in the islands. Like Kirimatsu, Betty Fujitani’s experiences influenced her perspective on HC. She remembered that her high school classmates spoke HC to “fit in,” as the language was deemed “cool.” She believed that this was the case because the “cool kids” were speaking HC. She had attempted to speak HC; however, after enrolling in honors courses, Fujitani stopped using it because she felt that HC would not help her in class. Rather, she felt that HC would hinder her success in her honors classes. Part of her reasoning came from her other honors classmates not speaking HC. Also, her first honors teacher said “you write how you speak, so if you don’t speak well, you don’t write well.” Today, Fujitani continues to exclude HC from her speech behavior. She says that she does not view HC as an inferior language, but that she feels awkward when she tries to speak it. She believes that “local is a state of mind.” In other words, one does not need to speak HC in order to be a “local.”

Comparisons between the two languages have only helped to perpetuate the prejudice against HC. In “Power, Status, and Hawai‘i Creole English,” Tamura (1996) notes that the term “Standard Hawai‘i English” was used by Charlene Sato, a linguistics professor at the University of Hawai‘i, when she testified at a trial involving James Kahakua and George Kitazaki and their use of HC. Sato said that the two men spoke Standard Hawai‘i English. Kahakua and Kitazaki had accused the National Weather Service of discrimination, but the court ruled against them, reasoning that because they “mispronounced words,” they were not discriminated against (p. 451). Sato claimed that “Standard Hawai‘i English” was a version of Standard English spoken by most educated professionals born and raised in Hawai‘i (p. 453). The trial judge apparently did not recognize Standard Hawai‘i English as legitimate. Sato (1989) concluded that “there appears to be a consensus, then, that SE is not tied to a particular accent” (p. 263). The trial is a reminder of Kaapu’s (1946) article in which cultural and social issues are mistakenly identified as language behavior problems.

Unfortunately, comparisons between HC and Standard English continue to perpetuate negative opinions and biases against HC speakers. In 1999, the chairman of the Board of

Education, Mitsugi Nakashima, blamed HC usage for poor scores on national standardized writing test scores among public school students. This sparked a debate in Hawai‘i where many of its citizens took sides and defended the use or the abolishment of HC. Governor Benjamin Cayetano once spoke of HC as if it should be exterminated, saying that it should only be studied as if it were an artifact—a vestige of something long extinct. Ironically, in making his argument the governor employed HC.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, linguists, students, and teachers continue to argue for the use of HC because of its potential in helping students in the classroom (Kua, 1999). Some educators have reasoned that low scores on tests are a direct result of the low esteem in which Pidgin is held and the consequent demeaning of the students’ culture.

The belief that language serves as an important factor in one’s economic success influenced educators in the 1940s to create culture-altering programs. These educators felt that it was necessary to make HC speakers aware of the connection between social success and speech habit. Similarly, HC speakers today believe that economic success is tied to language capabilities.

Clayton Moritomo reported his experiences when colleagues and superiors on the mainland had difficulty in comprehending him. He concluded that speaking SE instead of HC would help him to appear more professional. However, Moritomo always speaks HC when he is at home. Paul Yoneda also expressed a similar conviction, becoming more aware of his speech when in the presence of non-HC speakers. Working for the navy at Pearl Harbor shipyard, Yoneda was aware that he had to “speak pretty good” to non-HC speakers in order to carry out jobs. At the same time, Yoneda stated that he did not like speaking SE because “this is Hawaii and you should speak HC. If I was living on the mainland, I would speak good English.” Yoneda felt insulted at times when people asked him to switch from HC to SE. Other interviewees showed insecurities about their ability to speak SE. Charlotte Aoki’s experience in college had amplified her insecurities because of her inability to “code-switch” to Standard English. She “gave up trying” after feeling that her HC behavior was inevitable. As a communications major, Aoki attributes her interest in non-verbal communication studies to this experience. These experiences reveal that HC speakers deliberate on the value of HC usage in their everyday lives, especially

when confronted with situations that challenge their communication skills.

In their youth, however, interviewees recalled the value they placed on speaking HC. Charlotte Aoki stated that she was first aware of HC while in seventh grade when a teacher corrected a classmate for speaking HC. She and her classmates had found the situation to be humorous, and they used HC among themselves when “joking around” or “acting stupid.” Russell Sasaki recalled arguing with his fifth-grade teacher about his preference in speaking HC. He believed that speaking HC was part of his identity.

In adulthood, these views often took a one-hundred-and-eighty-degree turn. Without regret, several interviewees stated that HC was a dying language that is “hardly spoken today.” Other interviewees expressed disdain for HC despite speaking in the language. Sheryl Takitani said that she felt like “slapping” those who spoke HC. Ethel Kirimatsu stated that a person’s potential for success was reflected by his or her speech habits, noting that those who spoke HC were “retarded sounding.” Like educators in the 1940s, the people I interviewed connected language with economic success. This opinion influenced the low esteem that people held for HC because of its apparently “weak” market value. Reinecke (1969) had argued that HC’s predecessor was popular among plantation workers because it was the market-language of that era. But now, people are able to find more career and educational opportunities outside of the plantation. Most of these opportunities require a different set of skills, such as the ability to speak SE, which reflects the demands of an economic environment different from the plantations era.

Conclusions

The people I interviewed considered themselves to be middle class, and that had a strong influence on their attitudes toward Hawai‘i Creole. The persistence of this language issue reveals an interesting conflict that lies beneath the surface of Hawai‘i’s local culture. It reveals that people in Hawai‘i are still divided on issues of material success and local identity.

The interviews reveal that many HC speakers are affected unconsciously by numerous factors that challenge their identities. Ironically, HC serves as a means of identifying local culture that translates variously into a source of pride and shame. HC is more than a language; it is an expression of cultural identity that can be used to establish a sense of

belonging to Hawai'i and, at the same time, can bring a sense of distance or separation from mainland values. Age and gender had no significant influence on the perspectives of the interviewees on Hawaii Creole and Standard English, all of them betrayed feelings of uncertainty in expressing their thoughts about language and identity.

The "Pidgin problem" reveals a shift in cultural power that is occurring in Hawai'i. Language is cultural capital. Educators in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, and my interviewees, viewed Standard English as a key to success. The cultural power of Standard English has influenced many to become guardians of language. Terms like "slang" and "broken English" are examples of the words that people use to devalue Hawai'i Creole and protect Standard English's market value. But such devaluation has a price. It is imposed at the expense of the identities of those who speak HC and value its inheritance.

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Photo from <http://www.hawaii.edu/satocenter/dapidgincoup.html>

Pidgin and Education: A Position Paper

Da Pidgin Coup

What follows is an adaptation of a position paper written by Da Pidgin Coup, a group of concerned faculty and students in the Department of Second Language Studies (SLS).¹ In fall 1999, the group became concerned about a statement made by the chairman of the Board of Education implicating Pidgin in the poor results of the students of Hawai‘i on national standardized writing tests. The group’s discussions led to the writing of this position paper. Their aim was to provide well-researched advice about the complex relationship between Pidgin and English, and the issues involved in discussing the role of Pidgin in education.

Pidgin is the name speakers use for the language variety which is technically called Hawai‘i Creole or Hawai‘i Creole English by linguists. Throughout this document we use the popular name Pidgin to refer to this variety. Pidgin examples in this paper are generally written in the writing system designed for linguists to represent the sounds of Pidgin. The use of this writing system (known as the “Odo orthography”) enables the language to be accurately represented, and is likely to reduce the reader’s feeling that Pidgin is bad English. However, members of Da Pidgin Coup are aware that this orthography is not widely used by Pidgin speakers. For this reason, where this essay quotes Pidgin speakers interviewed by Laiana Wong, it uses the modified English writing system, such as is widely used by well-known Pidgin writers, including Darrell Lum, Eric Chock and Lois-Ann Yamanaka.

Standard English is used in this document, in a way similar to the definition provided by Webster’s Dictionary, to refer to English that has these characteristics:

- ❖ it is substantially uniform in spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary; although
- ❖ there are regional differences, especially in pronunciation;
- ❖ it is widely used in formal and informal speech and writing, generally of educated people; and
- ❖ it is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood.

The Issue

In fall 1999, the Hawai‘i State Board of Education Chairman, Mitsugi Nakashima, implicated Pidgin in the poor performance by Hawai‘i students on standardized writing tests. “I see writing as an encoding process and coding what one thinks, and if your thinking is not in Standard English, it’s hard for you to write in Standard English,” he said. This statement was the catalyst for the group of language and writing experts listed above to prepare this position paper on the recurring issue of Pidgin and education. The group strongly questions Nakashima’s assumptions and conclusions, and a number of related statements being made about Pidgin. There is no dispute as to the importance of students learning standard written English, but there is no evidence that Pidgin speakers are less capable of learning to write, or that Pidgin cannot be used to facilitate learning. The notions that spoken or written Pidgin is inferior “Broken English” and that children who use it are deficient, are not only unjustified and biased, but also wrong.

Pidgin is a language, just as English is a language. Language is the carrier of culture, and Pidgin is the carrier of “local” culture. It is part of what makes Hawai‘i different from the rest of the United States. Denigration of Pidgin is denigration of its speakers, a majority of the population of Hawai‘i. Pidgin is inclusive, a reflection of our historical attitudes and the value placed on getting along and trying to find common ground. It is non-hierarchical, and puts people on an even footing.

Given the unique value that Pidgin holds for its speakers and for the community as a whole, we should go beyond seeking mere tolerance in regard to its use and protection from discrimination for its speakers. We should in fact seek to provide a fostering environment that nurtures and appreciates the communicative skills that Hawaii’s children bring with them to school. By recognizing and celebrating excellence in the use of Pidgin, we encourage the child to develop those skills further. There is much room for Pidgin and English to coexist peacefully and form a symbiotic relationship in which the two are mutually enriching. Should we begin to move in this direction, school would certainly become a more positive experience for all concerned.

Over the past twenty years, written Pidgin has become a means, both popular and accepted, of composing poems, stories, and essays. In Hawai‘i and on the mainland, literature in Pidgin is increasingly seen on approved reading lists inside schools. Educators now see Pidgin in the context of multi-cultural education, or education which recognizes children’s cultural identities.

Identity, for many, is intimately linked to language. The Pidgin speakers quoted below talk about the importance of their language to their identity:

I Hawaiian eh, but I no can speak Hawaiian. I speak Pidgin. That’s my language. That’s how I perform, brah!

It’s like a way of life. It’s like eating poi or going swimming. You hear it everyday. You can’t get rid of it. . . . It’s like the air you breathe. It’s around you constantly.

What is Pidgin?

Myth: Pidgin is a pidgin.

Reality: What is popularly called Pidgin (with a capital P) was historically a pidgin (technically called Hawai‘i Pidgin

English). But the vast majority of Pidgin speakers today are actually speakers of a creole (technically known as Hawai‘i Creole or Hawai‘i Creole English, HC or HCE).

Explanation: A pidgin is a new language which develops in situations where speakers of different languages need to communicate but don’t share a common language. The vocabulary of a pidgin comes mainly from one particular language (called the “lexifier”). A pidgin is quite restricted in use and variable in structure.

Once a pidgin has emerged, it is generally learned as a second language and used for communication among people who speak different languages. Examples are Nigerian Pidgin (Nigeria has a variety of tribal languages) and Bislama (spoken in Vanuatu, a Pacific island nation having over 100 languages).

When children start learning a pidgin as their first language and it becomes the mother tongue of a community, it is called a creole. Like a pidgin, a creole is a distinct language that has taken most of its vocabulary from another language, the lexifier, but has its own unique grammatical rules. Unlike a pidgin, however, a creole is not restricted in use, and is like any other language in its full range of functions. Examples are Gullah, Jamaican Creole, and Hawai‘i Creole.

Note that the words “pidgin” and “creole” are technical terms used by linguists, and not necessarily by speakers of the language. For example, speakers of Jamaican Creole call their language “Patwa” (from “patois”) and speakers of Hawai‘i Creole call theirs “Pidgin.”

Background: Hawai‘i was first visited by Europeans in 1778, and it quickly became an important stopover for ships involved in whaling and trading with Asia. At this time, some of the expressions from the Pidgin English of China and the Pacific were introduced to Hawai‘i.

The first sugarcane plantation was established in 1835, and the industry expanded rapidly in the last quarter of the century. Thousands of laborers were brought from China, Portugal, Japan, Korea, Puerto Rico, Russia, Spain, the Philippines, and other countries. With so many nationalities, a common language was needed on the plantations. At first, this was Hawaiian and Pidgin Hawaiian, but later in the century a new variety of pidgin began to develop.

In the 1870s immigrant families began to arrive and more children were born on the plantations. Children learned their parents’ languages and picked up English at school.

But the kind of English they spoke on the playground was influenced by the Pidgin English earlier brought to Hawai‘i, by the Hawaiian spoken by their parents, and by their own first languages, especially Portuguese. By the turn of the century a new Hawai‘i Pidgin English began to emerge with features from all of these sources. This pidgin became the primary language of many of those who grew up in Hawai‘i, and children began to acquire it as their first language. This was the beginning of Hawai‘i Creole. By the 1920s it was the language of the majority of Hawai‘i’s population.

History of Attitudes toward Pidgin

Myth: The terms—bad English, improper English, broken English—originated with our parents, or our teachers in elementary school.

Reality: These negative terms for Pidgin have a history in powerful island institutions, going back much further than our own parents or teachers. The terms have shaped island attitudes toward the language and its speakers.

Not everything passed down to us by history is a gift. The notion of Improper English should be sent back to its place in history and made to stay there.

Explanation: These names for Pidgin in Hawai‘i go back three or four generations. In the 1920s, these explicit phrases attained sanction and approval when they were printed in curriculum materials written for territory teachers in public schools, and then published at the directive of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the journal, *Hawai‘i Educational Review*. “Hawaii is the land of broken English,” claims one of the anonymous authors of these materials in 1921. “Tell [children] that the Pidgin English which they speak is not good English; that it is not spoken by good Americans. . . .” Show the children, the author continues, that “Pidgin English implies a sense of inferiority” (The New Course of Study, 1921, pp. 9–10).

Not all educational authorities or experts were so absolutist in their views. Anthropologists and sociologists generally viewed Pidgin as a matter of culture. But in the 1930s and 40s, University of Hawai‘i professors of speech and English, who were charged with teaching Standard English, generally adopted the negative terms. With ears trained to hear Standard English, they heard Pidgin not as a different language variety but as English that came up short. They used the term lazy language and

the adjectives ungrammatical, faulty, sloppy, and slothful. One elementary teacher writing for the *Hawaii Educational Review* claimed that children should be taught contrasting images to associate with Pidgin and good speech. “Words spoken correctly and pleasingly pronounced,” she wrote, “are jewels, but grammatical errors and Pidgin are ugly.” She urged teachers to tell children that Pidgin was like the “frogs, toads, and snakes” in the fairy tales they were reading. Good speech was like the roses, pearls, and diamonds that dropped from the lips of the good sister who helped people and was beautiful (The New Course of Study, 1921, pp. 9–10).

As speech sounds came into fashion as a topic of scientific study in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s in American universities, there was a trend in Hawai‘i toward identifying Pidgin as incorrect sounds and as evidence of speech defects. In 1939–40, newly trained speech specialists tested for speech defects in twenty-one schools. They found them in six-hundred and seventy-five of the eight hundred children they tested. The new terminology focused on Pidgin dialectalisms, a defect listed alongside “language handicaps, reading handicaps, mental deficiency, and cleft palate speech” (Wood, 1941, p. 148). Elizabeth Carr (1946, p. 167), one of the mainland speech experts who described Pidgin sympathetically with an understanding of its usefulness in island culture, nevertheless saw it as faulty English, full of “phonetic errors.” In sum, the new, more scientific terms for Pidgin, less loaded with character assassination, still portrayed the language as trying to be English and failing.

Some of the same negative phrases have historically had a prominent place in Honolulu newspapers as well. Though framing their coverage as “news reports,” the *Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* have typically cast Pidgin in the role of problem: How bad is it? What to do about it? (Coffman, 1966). Their coverage of Pidgin as a facet of island culture has generally been relegated to the Features or Letters to the Editor section. Editorials have been largely negative. In 1962, a *Star-Bulletin* editorial entitled “Why Not Just Grunt?” compared Pidgin to the language of animals.

Throughout Hawai‘i’s English-speaking history, the negative terms have exacerbated the confusion surrounding Pidgin and literacy (skills in reading and writing). For example, many people believe that Pidgin is related to

poor spelling. That belief has been nurtured through the decades by educational authorities who have had their views spotlighted in highly visible publications.

As for test scores in reading and writing, the negative terms have left islanders with an ingrained attitude. If they call Pidgin bad English, isn't it logical to link Pidgin with bad English scores? The reality is that students are tested for literacy skills, not speech skills, and that the terms bad English and improper English are misleading terms. Yet many island residents continue to use these terms as synonyms for Pidgin. The words linger, passed down from history with all their attendant attitudes.

Pidgin speakers are aware that negative, insulting, and racist attitudes to Pidgin are still common today. In the words of one speaker, "Non-English speakers are [seen as] backwards, barbarian, unintelligible and they [speakers of haole English] are advanced, and to solve the problem, WE gotta catch up to THEM. . . . Any attempt to turn around and face us is seen as regression on their part."

Is Standard English the Best Language?

Myth: Standard English is the best language.

Reality: While many people are convinced that Standard English is better than Pidgin, it's quite clear to scholars of language that no language variety is inherently better than any other. That is, there is nothing that makes Standard English linguistically better than Pidgin (or than any other language, whether it's French, or Latin, or Australian English or African American English). All of these languages and dialects—which we can refer to as language varieties—are fully grammatical systems that their speakers can use for effective communication on any topic and in any situation.

But while Standard English has no linguistic advantage over any other variety, it does have a prestige advantage in many countries, and specifically here in Hawai'i. This is a result of centuries of social and political processes, as well as on-going prejudices and misconceptions.

Myth: There is only one Standard English.

Reality: In fact there is no single Standard English. There is a great deal of variation in spoken English, even the most formal spoken English. Just listen to Former President Bill Clinton and Former Governor Ben Cayetano delivering a speech, and you can hear differences in formal spoken

American English. Then add formal spoken English from Sydney, London, and Edinburgh, and you hear differences, not just in pronunciation, but also in grammar. Thus when people talk about spoken Standard English, it is important to remember that there are many regional standards.

There is so much variation in spoken English, that many scholars now agree that the term Standard English can really only refer to the written standardized variety of language, such as that widely used in newspapers and textbooks. It is a widespread misconception that we should speak the way we write, but in fact no one does. Spoken and written language varieties are different: they have different purposes, different patterns, different conventions, and different constructions.

Explanation: Linguistic research on African American English (aka Black English Vernacular, Black English, African American Vernacular English or Ebonics) has established since the late 1960s that related language varieties are not linguistically inferior in any way (see for example Labov, 1972). While many people hold fast to the idea of the linguistic superiority of Standard English, there is no good reason for this. Many studies have shown that beliefs in the superiority of Standard English are just that: beliefs. But they are uninformed beliefs born out of a single perspective, which does not take account of other perspectives. These beliefs are supported by matters of prestige, status, and power, but they find no support in the analysis of language varieties, and the comparison of their communicative effectiveness.

For example, one of the arguments for the superiority of Standard English is that it is more explicit than other varieties. Thus, it can be argued that English is more effective than Pidgin because it distinguishes gender in the third person singular object pronoun (using either "him" or "her"), where Pidgin uses just one form (om).

But this is a dangerous comparison game to play. For example, we can see that Pidgin is more explicit in its second person pronoun system. In English the ambiguous form "you" can refer to one person or more than one person. Pidgin does not have this ambiguity, as *yu* refers to one person and *yu foks* or *yu gaiz* refers to more than one person.

The reality is that all languages have some areas which are more explicit than others. Speakers work with language in context to disambiguate.

Complaints about variation in English are not new.

Milroy and Milroy (1985) document a long tradition—about 300 years—of complaints about people who do not speak “proper” English. The work of these scholars and others led Lippi-Green (1997) to an analysis of what she calls “standard language ideology,” that is, a bias toward an abstract idealized spoken language, which is modeled on written language and the spoken language of the upper middle class. The dominant institutions in society, particularly education, play a major role in imposing and maintaining this bias. Lippi-Green documents the ways in which this bias toward the abstract and idealized spoken language, often called “good English” or “Standard English,” discriminates against speakers of other language varieties. These other varieties are trivialized or denigrated in many ways, through what she calls “the language subordination process.”

Lippi-Green’s model of the language subordination process is relevant to the current debate about Pidgin. Lippi-Green (1997, p. 68) details a number of steps in the language subordination process, including those below, to which we have added examples of how this process is being applied to Pidgin in Hawai‘i.

- ❖ Authority is claimed. People claim that Standard English is better. They make pronouncements about Pidgin speakers’ intelligence and future prospects.
- ❖ Misinformation is generated. It is claimed that Pidgin is not a language, it’s just lazy talk, bad English or slang.
- ❖ Non-mainstream language is trivialized. Pidgin is said to be OK for joking around and having fun, but it’s not OK for school.
- ❖ Conformers are held up as positive examples. People who were forbidden to speak Pidgin at school claim that this is a major factor in their success, e.g., Governor Ben Cayetano, quoted in an October 24, 1996 article in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*.
- ❖ Explicit promises are made. People are told that if you speak Standard English you’ll get good jobs.
- ❖ Threats are made. People are told that if you speak Pidgin, you’ll never have a good job or own a house.
- ❖ Non-conformers are vilified or marginalized. Pidgin speakers are regarded as dumb and less able to succeed in school.

The work of scholars such as Malcolm et. al (1999), Eades (1993), and others in Australia; Harris-Wright (1999)

in Georgia; and Wolfram and his colleagues (1999) in North Carolina shows how teachers can be educated about language varieties, and can develop students’ competence in standard forms of English, without engaging in the language subordination process and denigrating the home language of the students.

Pidgin at School

Myth: The best way to help Pidgin-speaking students is to make it clear that Pidgin is an unacceptable, sloppy way of speaking and that Standard English is the only acceptable mode of communication.

Reality: Children do best at school when they are able to make use of their home language and culture. A basic and well-established educational principle is to build on the strengths that children come to school with. Local children tend to have linguistic strengths which include exposure to and knowledge of a variety of languages and abilities to move between language varieties for various purposes. Building on these strengths would entail discussing language and language variation as part of the school curriculum.

On the other hand, telling children that the way they speak is bad, incorrect or inappropriate often leads to one of the following consequences:

- ❖ children withdraw and choose not to speak and participate in class rather than risk saying something “wrong;”
- ❖ children develop negative academic self-concepts labeling themselves as “bad students” and behave accordingly;
- ❖ language becomes an issue and a site of struggle between students and teachers creating a counter-productive educational atmosphere.

Since language is such a central part of identity, to attack someone’s language is to attack them (Fordham, 1999).

Myth: Denigrating Pidgin at school will make it go away.

Reality: There has been an unsuccessful movement to eradicate Pidgin for decades. One might conclude that Pidgin has significant value to local people to have resisted death for so many years of abuse. It is a language that has brought people together in spite of their differences in ancestral culture and language, and has created a “local” culture that blends ideas and flavors (Sato, 1991).

Explanation: Most people agree that all children should

learn the standard variety in order to have access to wider opportunities. However, children's home language or dialect does not need to be left out of the classroom. In fact, failing to respect the children's first language or dialect and failing to use it in school may actually make learning the standard variety less likely and more difficult.

Two programs in Hawai'i in the 1980s and early 1990s (Project Holo pono and Project Akamai) included some activities to help Pidgin speaking students recognize differences between their language and Standard English. This recognition of the children's home language was further supported with the use of some local literature using Pidgin. Both projects reported success in helping the students develop Standard English proficiency.

Many non-standardized varieties (such as Pidgin) have been successfully included in classrooms in the United States as well as Australia. They use the home language in a variety of ways including literature, discussion, music, writing, and lessons focused on understanding how language varies and what this variation means in society. They also avoid harmful practices such as confusing children by correcting pronunciation while they are in the beginning stages of learning to read and correcting or criticizing students' language to the point where the students refrain from speaking.

The following speakers testify to the way in which many Pidgin speakers feel most comfortable when speaking Pidgin. When asked what it would be like if he couldn't speak Pidgin, one Oahu man said "Would take me long time fo' say stuff." Another Oahu man compared speaking Standard English and Pidgin in this way: "When I speak Standard English I gotta tink what I going say. . . . Pidgin, I jus' open my mout' and da ting come out."

When the home language is acknowledged and made use of rather than denigrated at school, it has been found to have these positive consequences.

- ♦ It helps students make the transition into primary school with greater ease.
- ♦ It increases appreciation for the students' own culture and identity and improves self-esteem.
- ♦ It creates positive attitudes towards school.
- ♦ It promotes academic achievement.
- ♦ It helps to clarify differences between the languages of home and school.

It is important to understand that Pidgin in Hawai'i has "covert prestige," meaning that many wear it as a badge of honor, which gives a sense of identity and sets locals apart from people from the mainland and elsewhere. There is evidence that indicates that in situations of conflict (such as Pidgin being denigrated at school) language use (particularly that of school age adolescents) will move away from that of the dominant group.

Children speak as those around them speak (the language of their peers rather than that of parents, teachers, or people on television). This reflects the social nature of language as an important marker of the group one belongs to. People can learn to speak in new ways as they encounter new groups of people and/or new situations. They will be more likely to do so if they have positive feelings toward the speakers of the new variety and if doing so is not a threat to their central ways of speaking and being.

The time has come to move away from superficial celebrations of diversity to true respect for students' home languages and cultures demonstrated through concrete actions. Evidence suggests that this is a key part of helping students to succeed and meet the high standards that we set for them (August & Hakuta, 1997; Crawford, 1989; Lucas & Katz, 1994; Osborne, 1996).

Pidgin speakers whose language has been denigrated at school feel that educators work against them, not for them. In the words of one Pidgin-speaking woman, "Education is Western based so da guys who teaching it, they come to Hawai'i, they have hard time understanding our people, so instead of working with us, they going work against us and make us look bad."

Speaking Is Different from Writing

Myth: If you speak Pidgin, you think Pidgin, you write Pidgin.

Reality: The pathway from speaking to writing is not nearly so direct as the myth implies. The logic of the statement above, made by Mitsugi Nakashima, State Board of Education Chairman, seems natural: you write what you speak. The natural conclusion, following this logic, is that errors or faults in writing stem from errors or faults in speech. But this statement overlooks the substantial differences between speech and writing. What the statement does is oversimplify the process of learning to write by

making it appear strictly linear. The facts are these: Speech does not lead naturally into writing. Every learner, no matter their variety of spoken English, makes errors in writing because writing is different from speech (Jacobs, 1995; Kroll, 1981).

Explanation: Speech is the child's first entry into writing. This is true especially when beginning writers are first encouraged to spell words and form sentences that they can already produce without effort in speech. But, as they are led into a differentiation phase, they are taught (or sometimes discover on their own) that writing takes on different forms (such as casual or formal), serves different purposes (such as informative or persuasive), and can be published. In some classrooms, students find how varied writing can be as they make their own books and engage in a cottage industry of publication. At this point, they learn how to put their spoken language back into this very different written medium in order to make it interesting, but they realize that writing is something like an art project you work on and construct, quite unlike speech (Rynkofs, 1993).

Teachers, too, see a difference between speech and writing. As they know from helping students with stories, poems, and essays, writing requires an array of skills that speakers never have to think about. To write even a short essay requires planning ahead, keeping the absent reader in mind, and maintaining a coherent line of thought from sentence to sentence. Speakers, except when making presentations to large audiences, rarely plan so consciously. Under ordinary speaking conditions, thoughts are composed much more spontaneously because the listener's presence, and sometimes the listener's questions or comments, show speakers what to say next. In the case of speech, transitions, topic markers, and complete sentences are often not needed to make speech comprehensible. Neither are illustrations or explicit terms. But in writing, these devices of coherence and explanation are necessary. "Writing begins," says analyst Mina Shaughnessy, "where speech leaves off—with organizing, expanding, and making more explicit the stuff of dialogue so that the thought that is generated in speech can be given full and independent form" (1977, p. 32).

The difference between speech and writing proved interesting to Shaughnessy, who studied the process of learning to write. Young writers, she found, have problems where they wish to show a relationship between ideas.

Speech has its ways of doing this. Speakers use their voices to slow down or speed up or to change the pitch in order to show that THIS and th...a..t go together. But what causes writers difficulty is having to use relational and connective language as well as complicated sentence structures to convey these connections. All this new language and unfamiliar syntax amounts to what James Sledd, a linguist, has called a foreign language. "Writing," he said, "is a foreign language for everybody" (Sledd, 1983, p. 667). The point he was making was that speakers of stigmatized varieties of English (he was referring to rural speech or African-American speech in Texas) are no more prone to error than those who speak prestige varieties.

There is still some debate on the question of who has a harder time learning to write (Davis, 1991; Siegel, 1999). Shaughnessy says that the difficulties may be exaggerated for non-standard speakers. Sociolinguists generally assume that differences of speech will show up in writing, and that these differences will be seen as errors by readers who expect mainstream American idiom. But a few studies (including Jacobs, 1995 and Rynkofs, 1993 in Hawai'i) suggest that speakers of non-standard varieties write a standard written language in school, and that whatever errors they make, the errors are not recognizable as a stigmatized variety of speech. This says nothing about the degree of difficulty they have, but shows how wrong it may be to implicate their Pidgin speech as the cause of error. Students who talk about the issue say that they do not make Pidgin errors, and that, in any case, they do not know how to write Pidgin and would find it hard to do so.

The ability to write well in forms such as story or essay is related primarily to two factors: writing experience and reading experience. In other words, young writers are not retarded by their knowledge of Pidgin. But they are helped by their familiarity with the look and the flow of written prose and poetry. They become better writers with good instruction and—on their own part—a confidence in their own voices and their sense that they have something to say that other people find worthwhile. Pidgin doesn't hurt. What hurts is the lack of exposure to written language (Scott, 1993).

Pidgin and Testing

Myth: If we could do away with Pidgin, our children's writing scores would go up.

Reality: The relationship between Pidgin and English is too

complex to suggest that simply by eradicating Pidgin we will raise scores. Very little research has been conducted to understand the relationship between Pidgin and English. To implicate Pidgin as the cause of children's poor Standard English writing skills is academically unjust and scholastically irresponsible.

One of the reasons Pidgin has endured for more than a century is because it is a language of identity and history. It is a language that has brought people together, in spite of their differences in ancestral culture and language. It has created a "local" culture that blends ideas and flavors, such as manapua or shave ice, giving of money for weddings and funerals, taking off shoes before entering the house. It has taught us to be not just tolerant but accepting. It has allowed immigrants to begin new shoots without losing old roots.

Although there have been significant studies done in the past, there has been very little research focused on understanding the relationship between Pidgin and English in the classroom. The research done by the KEEP Project (Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate Early Education Program) focused primarily on understanding how children learned (which led to "talk story" as an instructional method) and how children acquired English. Part of the reason for little attention is that there is a prevailing idea that Pidgin will become an English with proper remediation. However, there is sufficient evidence to state that Pidgin is a language with its own rules and patterns, and that people can acquire Standard English without losing Pidgin.

The studies that have been done do not show that using Pidgin in the classroom has any detrimental effect on the acquisition of Standard English (Actouka & Lai, 1989; Afaga & Lai, 1994; Day, 1989; Rynkofs, 1993). Studies need to be done to better understand how the two languages (Pidgin and English) interact and the impact of that interaction on classroom discourse and academic success. Because of the long history of suppression of Pidgin in schools, there may be several generations of children who have developed a mixture of languages. Writing test scores may reflect this linguistic complexity, as well as attitudes, the hegemony of a "standard," and the use of language in school. It is anticipated that teachers need to be much more knowledgeable about Pidgin in order to better instruct our children.

Testing the writing of teenagers adds to the complexity. As children mature into adolescence, they struggle with personal identity and question beliefs and values. This criti-

cal examination of "who am I" and "where do I belong" is strongest during adolescence. If "standard" English is related to being Anglo-American, and Pidgin is related to being "local," then how I speak reflects my identity. These kinds of beliefs may impact on motivation to do well on national tests.

Myth: A test such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the best or the most important way to assess how our children are doing at writing.

Reality: While the NAEP can give us certain kinds of information about students' writing abilities, the constraints of constructing a test for national use that is reasonably easy to score and that can be administered without taking away too much class time limit the test in ways that are important to recognize. We must be cautious in our interpretations of tests, aware of their limitations, and be clear about the kinds of information they can and cannot give us.

Explanation: Assessment should be matched to good instruction and knowledge about language systems. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment should be aligned with the standards, being sensitive to and respectful of the language(s) children have acquired.

Tests should not be the exclusive index of success. High stakes testing seems to dampen good pedagogy. While large scale testing seems to benefit some schools, it does not benefit all schools.

Alternative, authentic assessments provide a fuller picture of a student's ability. Students are multi-faceted: the more we know about an individual, the better able we are to recognize the "diamond in the rough."

Some assessment should be in accord with local language culture. We live and work in Hawai'i; our schools ought to reflect our unique place among the states.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Pidgin is a language just as English is a language. Children whose first language is Pidgin come to school with a language. That language should be respected and never denigrated. No one should be prevented from using Pidgin where it works in the learning process. While teachers should teach standard forms of English at school, in no way should English replace Pidgin.

Informed understandings of the type described in this paper lead teachers to build on students' strengths at school.

We therefore recommend language awareness seminars, classes or in-services for teachers, which include strategies for building on the home language, and for understanding language systems. We would also like to see language awareness programs made available to students so that rather than relying on the common myths, they can understand the history and social functions of both Pidgin and English. Language awareness classes for students could help to achieve many of the standards set out by the Department of Education, including the following language arts goals:

- ♦ Students will understand diversity in language, perspective, and/or culture and use speaking and listening to foster understanding.
- ♦ Students will communicate orally using various forms—inter-personal, group, and public—for a variety of purposes and situations.
- ♦ Students will demonstrate confidence as communicators, and find value and satisfaction in communicating with others.

Language awareness classes for students would also help in the achievement of foreign language learning goals:

- ♦ Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

By comparing their own language and the new language, learners develop a greater understanding of their own language and the nature of language itself. Knowledge of the conventions of a language, its linguistic system, grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and other features allows learners to communicate precisely and strengthens students' ability to develop hypotheses about the structure and use of language.

This standard focuses on 1) knowledge of the ways different language systems express meaning; and 2) knowledge of how vocabulary, expressions, structures, and language functions within a system are used to communicate ideas in a variety of ways.

We should recognize that Pidgin is the first language of many students, and that the process of comparing Pidgin to English and other languages will be an extremely effective means of developing understanding of variation in world languages and preparing students for the acquisition of additional languages. The goals regarding comparison

described above in combination with understanding of sociocultural processes and language would be at the heart of any language awareness program.

Finally, we would recommend that more research be carried out on relationships between Pidgin and school success, and on how best to build on the language that students come to school with in the achievement of school success.

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ENDNOTES

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Kent Sakoda Discusses Pidgin Grammar

Kent Sakoda and
Eileen H. Tamura

For a number of years, Kent Sakoda has been teaching at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the Department of Second Language Studies. His course, “Pidgin and Creole English in Hawai‘i,” is popular among students on campus. He has also taught at Hawai‘i Pacific University. Because of his expertise on the grammar of Pidgin (Hawai‘i Creole), Sakoda is a frequently-invited guest speaker.

Sakoda was born in Hanapēpē, Kaua‘i, and grew up there in the 1950s and 60s. His parents owned a garage repair shop, where they spent most of their waking hours. Sakoda recalls his youth as an idyllic time. Everyone in this small rural community knew each other and helped each other out. He and his friends spent many hours playing in the town’s park, swimming in the nearby stream, and frequenting one or the other of the town’s two movie theaters. They attended ‘Ele‘ele School, situated on a hillside overlooking Hanapēpē. Sakoda’s family lived right below the hill. Sakoda remembers the school having a courtyard and large wooden buildings with lots of greenery surrounding it. His classmates were Japanese American, Filipino American, and Native Hawaiian. Like many Japanese American children of his time, he also attended Japanese language school. And like the other youth growing up in Hanapēpē, his first language was Pidgin or Hawai‘i Creole. After graduating from the eighth grade at ‘Ele‘ele, he attended Waimea High. In this interview, Sakoda talks about his introduction to Pidgin as a subject of study and then discusses some of the basic features of Pidgin grammar.

Tamura: Did your teachers make you aware of the way you spoke?

Sakoda: They didn’t make a big thing of it, but they did “correct” us when we spoke Pidgin. For example, if we asked, “I can borrow the telephone?” using the Pidgin intonation and inflection, they would say, “Yes, you *may use* it.” Some of the kids got corrected a lot. I think I had more control over the way I spoke. I mean, I could code-switch from Pidgin to Standard English. So the teachers didn’t get after me the way they got after some of the other students.

Tamura: When did you first get interested in Pidgin as a subject of study?

Sakoda: This is a long story. After graduating from Waimea High School, I went to Drake University in Iowa. Fortunately for me, when I was there I was able to switch from Pidgin to Standard English, and so I was able to adjust rather easily to life there. At Drake I had to fulfill a requirement that I take one of three courses—language, speech, or linguistics. The speech and language courses were four-credit courses so I decided to take linguistics. Drake had no linguistics department at that time. There were just two faculty teaching linguistics, and I had no idea what the course would be like. But I ended up really enjoying the course, so I decided to major in linguistics.

I returned to Hawai‘i and enrolled as a graduate student in the Linguistics Department at the University of Hawai‘i. This was 1974, and this was when Derek Bickerton had a huge National Science Foundation grant. He and his team were collecting data from speakers of both Hawai‘i Pidgin and Hawai‘i Creole. In the 1970s there were some older

people still living who spoke Hawai‘i Pidgin, which is the predecessor of Hawai‘i Creole. Maybe I should explain that what we refer to as Pidgin today is technically Hawai‘i Creole. “Pidgin” actually refers to a contact language. There was a Hawai‘i Pidgin during the Islands’ early plantation days, when speakers of different languages tried to communicate with each other. Hawai‘i Pidgin has largely disappeared, although some form of it emerges whenever there are new immigrants. A creole derives from a pidgin, and what people in Hawai‘i speak today is a creole that dates back to the 1910s, when the children of plantation workers developed the language from the pidgin of their parents. In the Second Language Studies Department we often use the word “Pidgin” with a capital “P” to refer to Hawai‘i Creole because Pidgin is what most people call this language. So there is Hawai‘i Pidgin, which is a pidgin, and there is Pidgin, which is a creole.

Anyway, going back to Bickerton’s project, this is when I first became aware of scholarly interest in Hawai‘i Creole. I didn’t work on his project, but I became aware of Pidgin (Hawai‘i Creole) as a subject of study. My own research for my master’s degree was on children’s language acquisition.

Tamura: How did you begin to focus on Pidgin?

Sakoda: Well, in the 1970s Charlene Sato was working on a master’s degree in the Linguistics Department, and she was one of Bickerton’s students. Let me just digress here a minute to explain that Charlene, whom we called “Charlie,” later became one of the foremost scholars of Hawai‘i Creole and an advocate in spreading knowledge about it to students, other faculty, the public, teachers, and administrators in the Hawai‘i State Department of Education. Unfortunately, she became ill with cancer and passed away in 1996, in her prime. After her death, the Department of Second Language Studies established the Charlene Sato Center for Pidgin, Creole and Dialect Studies, which does research on pidgins, creoles, and nonstandard dialects.

Now, where was I? Oh, yes. Charlie was on Bickerton’s research team. Her master’s thesis was on the use of the word “go” in Hawai‘i Creole. That’s when I got to know her. Then she went to UCLA and received her PhD there. Her dissertation was on second language acquisition; it was not on Pidgin. Then she came back to Hawai‘i and was hired in the Department of English as a Second Language

(ESL)—now called the Department of Second Language Studies—where she taught sociolinguistics. One of the areas she was interested in was Pidgin.

Bickerton planned to publish three volumes from his study, and he completed two of them. The first one was on Hawai‘i Pidgin; the second one was on Hawai‘i Creole. And the third was going to look at decreolization. He never got to the third one. So what Charlie wanted to do when she returned to Hawai‘i was to work on the third volume. She wanted to look at the data that had been gathered and find the people who had been interviewed in the original study, to see whether decreolization had taken place.

At that time there were few local students who knew how to speak Pidgin and who could help in the research. Most of the graduate students in linguistics and ESL were from the mainland. So she asked me if I wanted to work on her project, and that is how I got into it.

We looked at Bickerton’s project to see who were the most basilectal speakers in the study—the ones who were the strongest speakers of Hawai‘i Creole. Charlene wanted to do a longitudinal study, so she wanted to find the creole speakers in Bickerton’s study and re-interview them. This was about fifteen years after they had been interviewed by Bickerton’s researchers, so it was very difficult to find them. Eventually we found seven speakers. I did all the interviewing. So that is how I got into studying the grammatical structure of Hawai‘i Creole.

Tamura: A lot of people think that Pidgin is a bad form of English. They call it sloppy English.

Sakoda: Because Pidgin uses a lot of English words, people think that it should be grammatically the same as English. But while English is the lexifier, providing most of the vocabulary of Pidgin, it does not provide the grammar of Pidgin. Pidgin has its own grammatical structure and its own sound system.

Tamura: What languages have influenced the development of Pidgin?

Sakoda: Hawaiian, Cantonese, and Portuguese. The Chinese and Portuguese were the first two groups who came to Hawai‘i to work on the sugar plantations, so they and the Native Hawaiians had the most influence on the development of the structure of Pidgin.

I'll give you an example of the influence of Hawaiian: word order. In Hawaiian we say, "Nui ka hale," which is, "Big the house." In Pidgin we say, "Big, da house," and "Cute, da baby." Another example is Hawaiian expressions such as "Auwē, ka nani!" which is, "Oh, the pretty!" In Pidgin we say, "Oh, da cute!"

Cantonese also influenced the structure of Pidgin sentences. In Cantonese the word "yáuh" means both "has/have" and "there is/there are." It is used to indicate both singular and plural. Similarly, in Pidgin, the word "get" means both "has/have" and "there is/there are." In English we say, "They *have* three sons." In Pidgin we say, "They **get** three sons." In English we say, "There is a student who's bright." In Pidgin we say, "**Get** one student he bright."

Portuguese influenced Pidgin grammar, too. In Portuguese the word "para" means "for" and is used in some places where English uses "to." So in English we say, "Charles is the man to do it." In Pidgin we say, "Charles is da man **fo** do um."

Even if the Japanese were the largest of the immigrant groups, they did not influence the grammar of Pidgin, probably because they arrived in Hawai'i after the grammar had been pretty well fixed. But they did influence some of the vocabulary and expressions. For example, we say "chicken skin" here but on the mainland they say "goose bumps." And in Pidgin we say "yeah" at the end of sentences, like, "You Joe's son, **yeah?**" And, "Funny, **yeah?**"

So, as you can see, Pidgin—Hawai'i Creole—has grammatical rules. If you don't follow its rules, you are not speaking Pidgin!

Tamura: You co-authored a book with Jeff Siegel, *Pidgin Grammar: An Introduction to the Creole Language of Hawai'i*.¹ I think that this book does a great job in presenting the basic grammar of pidgin.

Sakoda: It has a lot of what I teach in SLS 430, "Pidgin and Creole English in Hawai'i."

Tamura: Would you talk some more about the features of Hawai'i Creole?

Sakoda: A unique feature is phonological—sounds. Even if most words in Pidgin come from English, many are pronounced differently. For example, basilectal Pidgin, or heavy Pidgin, does not include the "th" sound. Pidgin speakers use the "t" or "d" sound instead: **tink** instead of

"think," **dis** instead of "this." We say **fada** instead of "father."

Another important phonological example is intonation—the change of pitch in a sentence. A striking difference between Pidgin and English is in the intonation of yes-no questions, questions that can be answered by "yes" or "no." In American English we start with an intermediate pitch and finish with a high pitch. In Pidgin, we start with a high pitch and drop to a low pitch at the end of the sentence. For example, in English we say, "Are you a lifeguard?" We begin at an intermediate pitch and go up to a higher pitch. In Pidgin we say, "'E, yu wan laif gad?" We start high and end low.

Tamura: What about past tense?

Sakoda: Oftentimes, "wen" is used before a verb to indicate past tense. For example, in English we say, "I saw him." In Pidgin we say, "Ai **wen** si om." In English we say, "They painted his skin." In Pidgin we say, "De **wen** peint hiz skin."

Tamura: Anything else you want to point out?

Sakoda: One last thing. Let's look at negation. How do you say, in Pidgin, "I don't play cards"?

Tamura: I no play cards.

Sakoda: Yes. It is ungrammatical to say, "I not play cards." Any speaker of Pidgin knows this. In using negation, Pidgin is more complex than English, which uses only "not" or the contracted form, "n't." In Pidgin there are four negative markers—nat (not), no, neva, and nomo—and each is used in specific instances.

The guy isn't brown.	Da baga nat braun.
He's not going to break it.	Hi nat goin brok om.
I won't tell anybody.	Ai no goin tel nobadi.
I don't want to flunk.	Ai no laik flangk.
I didn't do it (past tense).	Ai neva du om.
They weren't listening.	De neva ste lisin.
There isn't any food in the house.	Nomo fud in da haus.
Now we don't have a car.	Nau wi nomo ka.

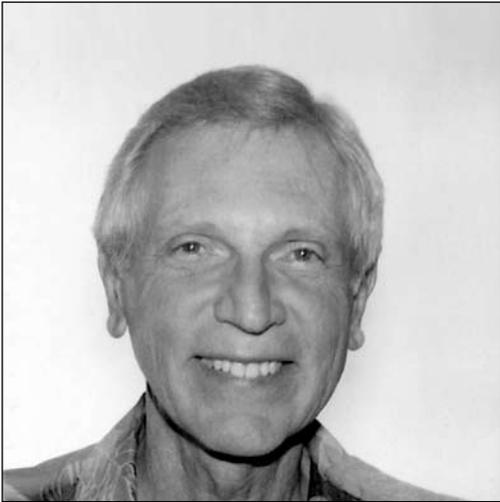
Tamura: Any final comments before we end our interview?

Sakoda: I want to repeat that there are grammatical rules in Pidgin, which are different from the rules in English. Hawai'i Creole is not a form of English. It is a language that is structurally different from English.

Tamura: Thanks, Kent, for your time and for sharing your expertise.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Kent Sakoda and Jeff Siegel, *Pidgin Grammar: An Introduction to the Creole Language of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: Bess Press, 2003).



Culturally Responsive Talk between a Second Grade Teacher and Native Hawaiian Children during “Writing Workshop”

J. Timothy Rynkofs

In an old wooden classroom in Leeward O‘ahu, Lincoln, a second grade student, explains to his teacher, Ellen Hino, why he needs to wear gloves to remove the hook from the balloon fish.

Lincoln: Da balloon fish hard for take off.

Ellen: Oh, to take the hook off. Why?

Lincoln: Cause get da stuff on da body.

Ellen: Oh, all that pokey thing, right?

Lincoln: You gotta grab by da head for take off da hook.

Ellen: So what—do you wear gloves?

Lincoln: Yeah!

Ellen: And then you take the hook out?

Lincoln: Only da balloon fish I wear gloves.

Ellen: Oh, I see. OK. So who taught you everything you know?

Lincoln: My dad. He always go fishing wit’ my uncle.

Ellen: And what do you use for bait?

Lincoln: Squid, any kine—squid and octopus and shrimp.

Ellen: That would be an interesting project, you know, to write about fishing and publish a fishing book. So for somebody who doesn’t know how to fish, they can read your book and they’ll know what they need to take and how to fish and then how to take off the—

Lincoln: Hook.

Ellen: Hook, yeah, like that!

Since Lincoln has already written several pieces about fishing over the last several months, Ellen suggests he use some of these pieces to publish a book focusing on his fishing adventures. For the next three weeks Lincoln spends part of each school day working on his “fishing stories.” Ellen returns to him several times to help him expand, revise, edit, and publish his book.

The above conversation is one of hundreds from a three-month study I conducted in Ellen Hino’s classroom during writing workshop (Rynkofs, 1993). The major purpose of the study was to look at the ways this native-born teacher responds orally to students who share her own bidialectal background. Most of these students are Native Hawaiian and speak a nonprestigious dialect called Hawai‘i Creole (HC) as their primary language and Standard English (SE) as their secondary language. Not only do these students speak a dialect particular to the Hawaiian Islands, but their classroom interactions can be strikingly different from those of mainstream American culture. This study addresses issues of linguistic and cultural differences in the context of what is called “writing workshop.”

The Context: Writing Workshop, the Researcher, and the Classroom Teacher

After graduating from college in San Diego, I became a Peace Corps Volunteer. I spent three months training on the Big Island of Hawai‘i before I left for my two-year stay as a Teacher of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in a small rural village in northern Thailand. After I finished the Peace Corps, I returned to Hawai‘i and got a teaching credential

and a master's degree from the University of Hawai'i. My coursework during those two years emphasized the "language deficit" model that was prevalent in the 60s and 70s, in which the students' native language was something to be devalued and corrected (Bereiter & Englemann, 1966).

I taught a variety of grades at an elementary school on the Wai'anae coast of O'ahu and initially attributed many of the academic failures of my HC-speaking students to their inability to speak "good English." As the years progressed, however, I came to realize that my students were competent language learners; their home language was just different from that of my middle-class mainstream upbringing.

Many years later when I became the writing resource teacher at the same school, I tried to implement writing workshop, a writing process approach (Graves, 1983), in the different classrooms I serviced, but quickly learned that without the teachers' understanding of their students' linguistic competence, any writing program was doomed to fail. Writing workshop was more successful in those HC classrooms where the teacher built on the students' oral language instead of attributing the students' writing problems to their inability to speak Standard English.

In writing workshop, teachers teach writing in a workshop-like atmosphere where students select topics they care about, share their texts with others, and see themselves as authors. Educators such as Graves (1983), Hansen (1987), Murray (1982), Calkins (1986), and Atwell (1987) have made tremendous inroads into promoting the effective teaching of writing. Instead of denying students' experiences, writing process teachers encourage their students to write about their experiences and interests, thus clarifying what it is they know and what it is they need to find out.

Henry Giroux calls this "legitimizing student experiences" (1987, p.178), which empowers both students and teachers. Coupled with the change towards a child-centered curriculum is the way talk is perceived by the teacher, from teacher dominated to teacher supportive, such as the collaborative talk among students and teachers in writing workshop. The heart of writing workshop is the writing conference, where students discuss their writing with their teacher and peers. Both Graves (1983) and his research assistant Sowers (1985) write extensively about this. As children develop their pieces of writing, they get support through responses that are helpful to them as writers. These responses can come in many forms, from just listening to the child read

the piece, or making concrete suggestions to improve the writing.

Farr and Daniels (1986) write about the teaching of writing to speakers of nonstandard English dialects. Among the key factors on their list for effective writing instruction is teacher awareness and understanding of the linguistic competence that students come to school with, and "positive expectations for student achievement" (p. 45). Farr and Daniels state that even the best teaching methods will fail unless teachers appreciate the language knowledge that their students already possess. Teachers must not make their students feel that their native language is somehow inferior by overcorrecting their students' errors, as well intentioned as these corrections might be.

Wanting to learn more about the teaching of writing, I took a one-year sabbatical on the mainland, which led me to stay there for two more years in pursuit of my doctorate. After completing my coursework, I returned to my position as the "writing teacher." As I tried to decide on a research topic, I naturally turned to what I knew best: writing workshop. On the surface, the most noticeable characteristic that made our writing workshop in Hawai'i different from other writing workshop classrooms in the nation was the children's oral language, the fact that they spoke Hawai'i Creole. I believed that by looking more closely at the children's oral language I would come to understand some of the connections between their oral and written languages. I was also interested in the teacher's role in supporting the children's writing development, so I approached Ellen Hino to gain access to her room for the research.

Ellen also believed that oral language was important and was willing to audiotape herself while talking with her students during writing workshop. I asked Ellen to try to get her second-grade students to talk as much as possible during writing workshop. We taped Ellen in whole-group discussions and in small-group and individual conferences. When I listened to the tapes, I noticed that Ellen's fine-tuned listening skills enabled her to respond in a variety of ways to what the students said and wrote. Also, some students needed more support than others and Ellen seemed to sense which students needed the most.

Ellen believed that her students needed to be the authorities when it came to selecting writing topics. Thus she encouraged them to write from their own experiences and had class discussions about topics they might be interested

in. Often the children would suggest topics during class discussions and Ellen would follow up with them, but she also brought up topics that they might be interested in, such as their experiences at the beach, fishing, going to the swap meet (flea market), riding bikes, playing football, and the like. She believed that what the students knew about and talked about, they could also write about.

Hawai‘i Creole and Culturally Responsive Talk

Ellen Hino structured the interactions with her Native Hawaiian students in culturally responsive ways during writing workshop. This in turn helped the students to communicate in ways that were congruent with their culture, which fostered oral communication in the classroom and helped the students’ development as writers. There are several ways Ellen used talk to accomplish this throughout the writing period: (1) she promoted the use of “talk-story” (Au, 1980) in whole class discussions; (2) she supported individual students in whole class settings; (3) she answered questions about her writing processes; and (4) she asked direct questions of individual students.

Talk-Story in Class Discussions

Ellen Hino first used the talk-story participation structure in her small group reading discussions when she joined the KEEP (Kamehameha Early Education Program) at the school in 1981. In that talk story approach, the teacher encourages spontaneous discussion among students. Hino found her reading discussions were more lively and produced a higher level of participation by the children than her more traditional way of directing the discussion had allowed. She told me,

KEEP gave us (teachers) a good background. They shared their anthropological and sociological studies that they did and they made sure that in our training we did the talk-story. . . . We had to be sure that we gave the kids time to interact and talk. They made me realize that you had to be more accepting of what the kids brought with them (Personal Communication).

“Giving the kids time to interact and talk” or “talk-story” meant that the Native Hawaiian children “engaged in joint performance, or the cooperative production of responses” (Au & Mason, 1983, p.149). Thus the children often co-narrated a story line with overlapping speech where one idea was started by one child, continued or reinforced by

another, and possibly embellished or finished by a third.

Since talk-story had proven successful in her small-group reading lessons and was part of the children’s home culture, Ellen eventually encouraged it in her lessons, discussions, and conversations with the children throughout the school day, including writing workshop. Ellen permitted and encouraged the use of the talk-story participation structure in whole class mini-lessons, and small group discussions when other students added their own comments and experiences to the conversation, and in her conferences with individual students.

In her teaching, Ellen sought out topics for whole class discussions, knowing that some students would use them in their writing while other students wouldn’t. In the following discussion Ellen is leading a whole-class discussion about skateboarding. The preceding day during a lunch conversation with her students, Carlton brought up this topic and here Ellen capitalizes on it by using it for her writing mini-lesson. The children are all seated on the floor and Ellen is sitting in front of them with a large piece of chart paper taped to the chalkboard so she can make a web for the children’s reference.

Ellen: Lincoln, I heard you say a word.

Lincoln: *Ollie.*

Tuafili: *Ollie*, that’s what I said.

Ellen: Can you guys explain that?

Tuafili: Get ollie.

Ellen: What’s that?

Tuafili: Ollie, you gotta lift da back—get da back going up like dat (Tuafili demonstrates with his hands) and you gotta press da back and da ting gonna go up.

Ellen: So your skateboard has to be a certain shape?

Tuafili: D back—

Lincoln: Da back goes up.

Ellen: The back has to be kinda like a wave.

Tuafili: Yeah.

Ellen: OK.

Tuafili: So you gotta press ‘om down, den da ting gonna go up.

Raoul: And den gonna stop.

Ellen: So if you lean your weight on that back thing—

Tuafili: Your leg gotta go.

Ellen: Put your leg on that back part and then what, Tuafili?

Tuafili: *Fly up.*

Lincoln: *Da ting gonna fly up but.*

Ellen: The front will lift up—

Lincoln: Even da back.

Raoul: And den you gonna stop.

Ellen: And that's what you call an ollie.

Lincoln: Not only da front gonna lift up, da *back too*—

Tuafili: *Da back too.*

Raoul: Da back gonna lift up straight.

This episode shows how Ellen and the children use some talk-story participation structures as they jointly define the term *ollie*. Tuafili and Raoul, both hesitant to speak earlier when called upon, now have much to volunteer and are quite dominant in the discussion, as is Lincoln. The children co-narrate their responses as they “piggyback” each other to explain how to ollie. To an outsider these rapid exchanges might appear to be somewhat chaotic and unfocused, but in fact they are highly orchestrated and the children seem to be quite aware when they should or should not contribute to the discussion. The children seldom raised their hands and Ellen only once called directly on a student, Lincoln, so he could elaborate his response.

This skateboard discussion continued as the children told Ellen about their experiences jumping ramps, and doing a 360 maneuver, and how they sometimes got hurt riding skateboards. This discussion lasted for thirteen minutes. Although the boys, especially Tuafili, Lincoln, and Raoul, dominated much of the discussion, there was a high level of involvement from the class as they were anxious to tell what they knew about skateboarding and some of their own experiences. Even those children who did not say much were interested in the topic and enjoyed hearing about their classmates' experiences.

Ellen is quite adept at leading this kind of talk-story discussion and commented to me afterwards how much she enjoyed it and how much she learned about skateboarding.

By placing the children in the situation where they were teaching their teacher what they knew, Ellen helps the children discover the implicit knowledge that is a part of their experience and their language. Ellen's use of talk-story demonstrates that the children could be active participants in a discussion, given the right set of circumstances, including relinquishing some control of the turn taking and letting the children co-narrate their responses. Following this lengthy discussion, Tuafili and Lincoln went off together to write about their skateboarding experiences. Dwayne began some illustrations of making a skateboarding ramp, which Ellen later helped him make into a book. LaShawn started a skateboarding piece the following day.

Supporting Individual Students in Class Discussions

Studies by Boggs (1972, 1985) have argued that Native Hawaiian students do not like to be asked direct questions; however, they do talk willingly and capably when they are able to initiate the conversation or can have the support of their peers, as just shown in the talk-story skateboarding example. But the talk-story participation structure could not always be used in the classroom, especially when one child was the focus of attention. When children shared their pieces of writing from their notebooks in an all-class meeting, some of them were reluctant to answer questions other children asked them even though they had volunteered to share. In these instances Ellen had to support the individual student being spotlighted or that student could “shut down” speaking or “feel shame” (embarrassment), as the children expressed it.

Tuafili is one of the students Ellen had to support in the whole class meetings when the spotlight was on him. In the skateboarding discussion Tuafili is the most dominant speaker in the class as he initiated many of the ideas about skateboarding and shared the “floor” throughout the discussion with his classmates. But Tuafili was often hesitant to speak when he was the focus of attention. For example, on a particular day Tuafili volunteered to share a piece of writing about his trip to the mainland during Christmas vacation. After Tuafili finishes reading, the children raise their hands and respond.

Ginger: You said you went to your grandma's to visit.

Shanelle: I heard you was playing with your cousins.

Cherish [adding]: Football.

Napua: I heard that you was playing with your cousins.

Shanelle: I already said that already.

Keoni: Football.

Carlton: With his cousins.

At this point Ellen steps in as the children begin to argue about what has and has not been said, what Boggs (1985) refers to as the “contradictory routine.” This was quite prevalent in the classroom as verbal disputes were an important part of the classroom culture. By having the students “tell Tuafili what we heard,” Ellen places the emphasis on listening to the writer and responding in a positive way. Ellen believed it was threatening enough for some of the children just to share their writing without the extra burden of having their classmates being too critical of the written text.

Next Ellen takes the spotlight off of Tuafili, who is feeling uncomfortable, and controls the sharing by asking the class a series of direct questions based on Tuafili’s trip to the mainland. Notice how Ellen uses a sentence completion technique so many students can respond all at the same time.

Ellen: So what’s Tuafili trying to tell us in this story?

Keoni [responding quickly]: Football.

Ellen: He went for a visit to the—

Class: Mainland!

Ellen: What was the big change for him up there?

Joshua: It was cold.

Ellen: It was—

Class: Cold!

Ellen: And he had to use—

Several students: Jackets! Blankets!

Ellen: Blankets to keep him warm, yeah. So on the last day he went to buy pants and other clothes, right, to bring back with him.

Cherish: And shoes!

Shanelle: Not shoes!

Although Ellen’s primary emphasis in all-class sharing was to give the children an opportunity to read their writing and have the class respond to what they heard, she also felt it was a time for the children to ask each other questions about

their drafts. Ellen next asks the class, “Is there anything more you’d like to know about Tuafili’s trip to the mainland?”

Raoul: Who did you play football with?

Several children [impatiently]: His cousins!

Raoul: You only said you played with his cousins football, but he didn’t say who he played with. I wanted to know the names.

Ellen [intervening]: Oh, you want to know the names. [To Tuafili] So these cousins were from the mainland or they went up with you?

Tuafili: From the mainland.

Here Ellen buffers Raoul’s inquiry of the names of the cousins by asking Tuafili where his cousins were from and then closes the sharing session. Raoul would often criticize his classmates’ drafts, but Ellen controls this, again feeling that she wanted the children to feel safe to share. The children’s interactions with each other, such as the “contradictory routine,” could get out of hand in a sensitive situation where the child was sharing with the class, and Ellen would intervene. Ellen also has to be sensitive to the child’s feelings and be careful when asking questions or determining how many questions the other students can ask of the writer.

The Children Question Ellen About Her Writing Processes

On occasion Ellen would model her own writing processes—retelling the experience she was drawing from, writing a first draft, and asking feedback from the children. These occasions gave the children opportunities to make comments and ask questions about their teacher’s processes. It also placed Ellen as the focus of attention, thus alleviating the “shame” that some of the children felt when they answered their classmates’ questions and modeled for the children how to respond to comments and questions.

In the following discussion Ellen has just finished sharing with the children a long account of her family’s fishing experience the previous summer at a trout farm in Lake Tahoe, California. In her account, Ellen uses a six-inch metal pipe to kill the trout her son caught.

Keoni: Wow! That’s a long story.

Roylynn: Was funny one.

Ellen: Was funny? What do you mean was funny? What part was funny?

Roylynn: When you wen whack 'om, da ting still moving and den you whack 'om again and da ting go still moving. Eve'ytime you wen whack 'om, da ting go * *. [**Two words, unclear on tape.]

Ellen: Yeah cuz we don't do that in Hawaii, right?

Children [loudly]: No!

Ellen: When you catch, you just unhook it and you throw 'om in the bucket.

Joshua: Da ting still moving but.

Ellen: It still kinda moves but we just throw it in the bucket, right? Isn't that how you guys fish?

Children: Uh-huh!

Ellen: Just unhook it and throw it in a bucket and it'll die.

Roylynn: Oh, we no *. [*One word, unclear on tape.]

Raoul: Gonna be dead.

Ellen chose to tell the students and write about her “trout fishing” experience with her family at Lake Tahoe because of her students’ interests in fishing, just as she chose to bring up skateboarding in the talk story example. She draws on their knowledge of fishing so they can better understand what it might be like to go fishing at a trout farm, and then lets the children respond to and question her about it. When Roylynn responds “Was funny one,” Ellen receives her words “Was funny,” and then asks Roylynn, “What do you mean was funny? What part was funny?” asking Roylynn to elaborate. Ellen also asks for the children’s verification of how they fish—“We don’t do that in Hawaii” and “Isn’t that how you guys fish?”—which again keeps them involved. Later in the discussion Lincoln asks Ellen “Big pond?” and Ellen compares it to the size of the classroom and then compares her trout fishing experiences with the children’s experiences with fishponds at carnivals.

This episode shows that the children felt comfortable questioning their teacher in a formal classroom situation, and that Ellen responded to them in an informal or almost conversational way, respecting their comments and questions, drawing them into the conversation and making connections to their own experiences. Because the children’s own culture

expected some distance between persons of authority and themselves, the ease with which Ellen and the children talk with each other in this classroom exchange is all the more striking. Ellen helps the children move beyond their ways of talking, specifically in questioning her, and the children respond capably and enthusiastically.

Direct Questions to Individual Students Can Work (Most of the Time)

The children responded better in whole-class discussions when they had the choice of joining or not joining the discussion. When Ellen called on them directly, when they did not volunteer, they would often not respond or respond minimally. Even when some children asked to be called on in an all-class discussion and Ellen asked them to elaborate, they had very little to say. In the following discussion, Ellen is with the entire class on a Monday morning asking the children to share what they did over the weekend to help them find new writing topics. Ashley shares that she went to the Swap Meet (flea market) and Ellen asks the class if any of them go to the Swap Meet to sell things. Napua, who is usually quite verbal, is hesitant to talk once Ellen spotlights her.

Ellen: Who goes there to sell things?

Several children: I do. Me.

Napua [very loudly]: My grandma do.

Ellen: Grandma goes to sell. Do you go with her? You help her? What?

Napua: I just watch.

Ellen: You just sit and watch grandma and what happens? Do people come? [Napua nods her head yes.] And?

Napua: Buy.

Ellen: They buy and you help your grandma set everything up? Make it all nice. [Napua nods her head yes.] Oh, how interesting.

Napua: She just sell flowers, dat's it.

Ellen: Oh, your grandma sells flowers and where does she get the flowers from?

Napua: From her garden.

Ellen: OK, she cuts all the flowers from her garden and she

takes it to the Swap Meet and sells it there and you help her set it all up and people come and buy.

Napua: Yeah!

Even though Napua spoke louder than the other children in order to be recognized, once Ellen asks Napua to elaborate (“Do you go with her? You help her? What?”) Napua responds minimally (“I just watch”). Again, Ellen asks Napua to expand (“And what happens? Do people come?”), but Napua only replies “buy” leaving out any specific details of the event. In episodes like this, when the children asked to be recognized and then had very little to say, Ellen tended to supply the details and asked for verification from the children, as she does with Napua. Even though Napua had very little to share about the Swap Meet, she still began a piece of writing that day about her experiences there, which was eventually published into a book.

Ellen also held individual writing conferences with her students where they were expected to speak and answer Ellen’s questions, which could be difficult for some children in the classroom. Boggs (1972) writes, “It is my hypothesis that it is basically unpleasant for a Hawaiian child to have a question directed to him by an adult, even if it is an attempt at friendly conversation” (p. 307). Boggs collected his data in classrooms similar to Ellen’s, but he reported on the children’s interactions with the adult observer in the classroom rather than the classroom teacher.

Most of the time the children responded to Ellen’s inquiries because they were usually talking about topics they initiated and cared about, which facilitated their use of language in the conference. Here Ellen is conferring with Dwayne about a piece of his writing. Notice what a willing conversationalist Dwayne is.

Dwayne: I don’t know what else I can write.

Ellen: What have you done so far, Dwayne?

Dwayne: I finish wit’ dis one.

Ellen: What is this one about?

Dwayne: My dad—me and my dad playing.

Ellen: Playing what?

Dwayne: Ball and all kine games.

Ellen: Today?

Dwayne: Da 29.

Ellen: Oh, this happened already. [Ellen then reads his piece.] You were happy because your dad was going to stay home. He didn’t have to work and he was going to play Nintendo.

Dwayne: He play Nintendo wit’ me.

Ellen: OK, so what—tell us.

Dwayne: And den after we was pau [finished] playing Nintendo and den we went in da parlor play games, all kine games, like you know, da sticky ball.

Ellen [referring to Dwayne’s illustration]: Oh, this thing in your hand, the big glove and then you throw it and the velcro’s on it or something.

Dwayne: And den my dad take me outside and den we play t’row t’row (catch).

Like Dwayne, most of the children in the classroom were very willing to discuss in individual conferences with Ellen the topics they wrote about, and Ellen’s conference style made the children feel comfortable so they could answer her direct questions.

Culturally Responsive Talk

In summary, Ellen was culturally responsive to the participation structures of her Native Hawaiian students in whole-class and small-group discussions and in individual conferences with her students. First, Ellen supported their use of talk-story, which gave them occasion to use oral language in a culturally familiar way. Second, she curbed their cultural tendency to contradict each other. Their natural talk patterns were not appropriate for situations when a child shared a piece of writing with the class so Ellen had to redirect their talk in order for the child in the spotlight to feel safe. She was also aware that some children “felt shame” when they were in front of the class so she acted as a buffer between the class and the child. Third, she set up situations for them to question her, an authority figure. This is not customarily done in Native Hawaiian culture. Fourth, she asked direct questions to individual students with awareness that direct questions are not common in her students’ culture.

The children’s use of Hawai’i Creole in no way deterred them from participating in class discussions or conferences. However, Ellen worked hard to help the children “make meaning” (Wells 1986) in their native dialect, encouraging

them to tell her more, interpreting what they said, and providing new vocabulary words when appropriate. Ellen's main emphasis during writing workshop was on the writer and not so much on the writing, although that was important too. Ellen believed that the key to improving her students' writing was through oral language so she strove to give her students opportunities to talk about their interests and experiences. By placing her emphasis on oral language and not the text, Ellen's talk in the classroom was more of a conversation with a writer than a scripted writing conference; it also was in tune with the children's culture. The payoff for Ellen was that the children had ample opportunities to discuss with her their various interests and experiences, some of which the children wrote about and some of which they did not. Even though much of the teacher-student talk did not end up in the students' writing, it still gave these students an avenue to talk about their own experiences. This was no small matter for these bidialectical students, who spoke in one dialect and wrote in another.

Shifting Between Two Codes: Talking in HC and Writing in SE

Like most children of lower- or middle-class ethnic minorities in Hawai'i, the second grade students in Ellen's classroom all spoke with some features of Hawai'i Creole. The degree to which they spoke HC varied considerably, but it was the most dominant language for most of the students, especially when they talked among themselves. Since HC was the language of their upbringing and the community, it was only natural that it would also be their language in the classroom.

Ellen never discussed with her students the fact that they spoke HC as she did not want to make them feel self-conscious or inferior about their language. Ellen's main focus in the classroom was to enable her students to communicate in any way possible, as demonstrated by the talk-story discussions, by the children's use of HC, and by Ellen's own occasional use of HC as a culturally appropriate response. Furthermore, Ellen never told her students that she expected them to write in Standard English. Codeshifting between the oral language of Hawai'i Creole and the more formal written language of Standard English was primarily done by the children themselves. The students developed this expectation for written language in SE by hearing stories read aloud to them, reading stories themselves, encountering varieties of print in SE, and watching teachers demonstrate writing.

Even though the students' primary spoken language was HC, there was very little evidence of Hawai'i Creole in the students' writing. Even those students who spoke extensive HC with Ellen in the classroom still wrote primarily in Standard English.

For purposes of comparison, I will first present the oral language of Lincoln, one of Ellen's students, and then present the written text that Lincoln wrote after his conversation with her. In the oral interchange Ellen sits down next to Keoni and Lincoln for her first writing conference of the day. Keoni is telling Ellen about playing with his friend's battery-driven, four-wheeler racing car and Lincoln joins in the conversation.

Keoni: She get four wheeler—you know da kine * * *.
[***Three words, unclear on tape.]

Lincoln [interjecting]: Oh! I wen ride da four-wheeler before.

Ellen [to Keoni]: It has a battery in it?

Keoni: Yeah, one big battery.

Ellen [to Keoni]: Right, and the back tires are real huge, kinda big. You can ride on the sand.

Lincoln [excitedly]: I wen ride 'om, one blue one. Me and my cousin jump da hill, get one track go like dat [demonstrating with his hands], one big one. Den my oder cousin came on and had us t'ree on top. My cousin wen try jump 'om. We got stuck and den we had to give up and push 'om and den we had to go.

Ellen [laughing]: In the sand. What do you mean you made a track?

Lincoln: No, da oder people did for ride four-wheeler.

Ellen: OK, what do you mean?

Lincoln: Dey made 'om out of da sand.

Ellen: Oh, so you pile up the sand and make a couple of hills.

Lincoln: Yeah and den just go around, good fun.

Ellen: So you guys were on the track too?

Lincoln: Yeah! It was my mom's birthday and we was camping.

[Here Keoni briefly tells about his own birthday party].

Ellen [to Lincoln and Keoni]: So what are you gonna get started on?

Lincoln: Oh, I gonna write about da sand one, da four wheeler.

Ellen: The four-wheeler getting stuck—yeah, that’s funny.

This conference between Ellen and Keoni and Lincoln was typical of most in this classroom, where Ellen engages her students in open talk. Both boys had just finished a piece of writing the day before so Ellen sat down next to them at the beginning of writing workshop. As Keoni and Ellen are conversing about Keoni’s four-wheeler toy, Lincoln recalls his experience at the beach riding a four-wheeler and tells about it. In a conversational manner, Ellen gives Keoni and Lincoln an opportunity to talk about their experiences with the knowledge that this might trigger a writing topic and her belief in the importance of oral language, whether any specific writing emerges from it or not. Both Lincoln and Keoni use many features of Hawai’i Creole in their conversation with Ellen, who makes no effort to correct their speech patterns. Instead, by allowing the boys to talk, Ellen helps to make them aware of all the knowledge embedded in these experiences, and how much they have to write about.

Before I present Lincoln’s writing, I will first take a closer look at Lincoln’s oral discourse and the features of HC in it. After Lincoln first interjects his topic (“I wen ride da four-wheeler before”), he gets the floor four turns later and lunges into an extended discourse about his experience at the beach. Here is Lincoln’s complete monologue separated into sentence fragments for purposes of closer analysis.

I wen ride ‘om, one blue one	1
Me and my cousin jump da hill	2
Get one track go like dat, one big one	3
Den my oder cousin came on	4
And had us t’ree on top	5
My cousin wen try jump ‘om	6
We got stuck	7
And den we had to give up and push ‘om	8
And den we had to go	9

Lincoln’s speech patterns are representative of many HC speakers. He uses *wen* plus the simple form of the verb to indicate past tense in lines 1 (*wen ride*) and 6 (*wen try jump*). The use of *wen* as a past tense marker is probably the

most common indicator of HC speech. Lincoln uses *‘om* as an unmarked pronoun in lines 1 (*wen ride ‘om*, referring to the four wheeler), 6 (*wen try jump ‘om*, referring to the track) and 8 (*push ‘om*, referring to the four wheeler). Lincoln also uses *one* as the indefinite article in lines 1 (*get one track, one blue one*) and 3 (*one big one*). Lincoln uses the HC feature of *have* or *get* as compared to “there be” in Standard English in lines 3 (*get one track go like dat*) and 5 (*had us t’ree on top*). These are just some of the features of HC that Lincoln uses in this short passage. Notice that Lincoln does not speak exclusively in HC; he also uses some SE, as in the sentence *we got stuck*; in HC Lincoln would have said *we wen get stuck*. Thus his speech is a combination of both HC and SE, as it is with most HC speakers. Lincoln also speaks in the rapid manner associated with HC and his pronunciation of certain sounds is representative of HC speakers (*den* for then; *dat* for that; *oder* for other; and *t’ree* for three).

Following this brief conversation with Ellen, Lincoln began a detailed drawing of his camping experience at the beach, focusing his drawing on riding the four-wheeler. The next day Lincoln finished his drawing and began to write his draft in his notebook, a project that took two more writing periods.

Below is Lincoln’s complete draft; following it is the transcription.

On the weekend we went to the beach. It was my mom’s bitherday. and my uncle ask hes frined to ride has fourwheeler at the beach. My cousine pack me he tokek me to the tsrk the frsc time we jump the heoho but when my ohrhr cousin was on we criedt to clime the hooho igan but we diat maek it so we had to pohoh it back dawn then we went to the tant. Then my uilolu pack my gramam. When my uilolucame back he pack my mom to. Then I went to somme when I gat out my cilsn pack me igan but tess time went irod the trak we went irod ti tioes.

On the weekend we went to the beach. It was my mom’s birthday. And my uncle ask his friend to ride his four-wheeler at the beach. My cousin pack me. He took me to the tracks. The first time we jump the hill but when my other cousin was on we tried to climb the hill again but we didn’t make it so we had to push it back down. Then we went to the tent. Then my cousin pack my gramma. When my uncle came back he pack my mom too. Then I went to swim. When I got out, my cousin pack me again but this time we went around the track. We went around it twice.

Even though Lincoln's speech has many features of Hawai'i Creole, his written text is almost exclusively Standard English. The only grammatical difficulty Lincoln has with Standard English in his text is that he does not include the *-ed* ending on the simple form of the verb to indicate past tense (*ask* instead of "asked," *pack* instead of "packed," and *jump* instead of "jumped"). This is not surprising when you consider HC speakers form the past tense by using *wen* plus the simple form of the verb (*wen ask, wen pack, and wen jump*). Nevertheless, Lincoln is still able to use the correct form of the irregular verbs *go* (*we went to the beach*); *take* (*he took me to the tracks*); *come* (*when my uncle came back*); and *get* (*when I got out*).

When you compare how Lincoln talked about the heart of the experience—riding the four-wheeler—and the manner in which he wrote the incident, you can see how well Lincoln codeshifts between talking in HC and writing in SE. Here again is part of Lincoln's oral text telling Ellen and Keoni about his experience at the beach.

Me and my cousin jump da hill/
Get one track go like dat, one big one/
Den my oder cousin came on/
And had us t'ree on top/
My cousin wen try jump 'om/
We got stuck/
And den we had to give up and push 'om/

Yet, when Lincoln writes about his experience he is able to codeshift to the formal written English with little difficulty. Here is part of Lincoln's written text presented in the same kind of sentence fragments as his oral text.

My cousin pack me (carried as a passenger).
He took me to the tracks.
The first time we jump the hill.
But when my other cousin was on,
we tried to climb the hill again
but we didn't make it
so we had to push it back down.

Lincoln is able to write about his four-wheeler experience with his cousins in some detail as he codeshifts into written Standard English, no mean feat when you consider

this second grader was not expected to do this nor had he been taught how to do it. Nevertheless, he accomplishes it with relative ease mastering most of the complexities of written English. The text itself has an opening statement (On the weekend we went to the beach. It was my mom's birthday); a central theme (riding a four-wheeler); and supporting details (who rode and what happened). It is quite a complete piece of writing.

The students in Ellen's classroom also worked out for themselves how their written text might better conform to Standard English norms. This was accomplished without any direct prodding from Ellen but more as a matter of what is acceptable written English by the individual student. Here is an example from LaShawn, an emergent writer who is writing about her dog. Ellen has written for LaShawn on the second page of her story (SHE [the dog] RAN AWAY. SHE RAN OUT OF THE GATE.) On the third page in her booklet LaShawn has written AND MY BROTHER WAS HAPPY, getting help with the spelling from the other children seated at the table. In the writing conference, Ellen asks LaShawn why her brother is happy that the dog ran away and LaShawn shares that her brother is scared of dogs. Ellen suggests to LaShawn that she add to her draft why her brother is happy and leaves LaShawn on her own to do the writing. After the conference, LaShawn wrote the following—*because he is sad of ouy hang dog* (because he is scared of any kind dog). "Any kind" is an HCE idiom referring to "all kinds" or "every kind," such as "Get any kind candy in dat box" (Carr, 1972). But when LaShawn read over her sentence "because he is scared of any kind dog," she added *of so* that the text now read "any kind of dog." The following day when LaShawn read this sentence to Ellen she read it as "because he is scared of all kinds of dogs." Again, the progression LaShawn made is as follows:

MY BROTHER WAS HAPPY BECAUSE HE IS SCARED OF—

1. first reading—*ANY KIND DOG*
2. rereading out loud to herself—*ANY KIND OF DOG*
3. rereading to Ellen the following day—*ALL KINDS OF DOGS*

In this example LaShawn is able to codeshift from the HC expression *any kind dog* to closer approximation of Standard English *any kind of dog* and, upon still another

reading the following day, comes up with the Standard English expression *all kinds of dogs*, even adding the plural “s” to “kind” and “dog.” Although this is a very complex task, LaShawn’s careful rereadings and her own sense that something is amiss enables her to codeshift from Hawai‘i Creole to written Standard English.

Conclusion

The transcripts show that Ellen talked to her bidialectal students in ways that were uniquely responsive to the Native Hawaiian culture; she encouraged the use of “talk-story” in group discussions, and in no situation did she curtail their use of Hawai‘i Creole. Ellen’s writing conference style was conversational in nature, which was compatible with Native Hawaiian culture. The relaxed social interactions in the classroom allowed the children to converse about their writing in a lively manner, especially in the student-teacher conferences. Although the children spoke with many features of Hawai‘i Creole, they wrote primarily in Standard English. Their use of HC helped them articulate their knowledge about their personal interests, which in turn facilitated their interest in their writing. In other words, the children’s use of Hawai‘i Creole positively influenced their writing, which was in Standard English.

As a nation of great ethnic and cultural diversity, it would seem that we need to support a pluralist position where students are allowed to retain their native dialect, yet also become literate in Standard English. This position allows students to maintain their ethnic identity without having to make them feel that their speech is somehow inadequate, but also acknowledges that students should be able to read and write in Standard English. Now, more than ever, teachers need to be responsive to the social, economic, and linguistic differences of all students, especially minorities.

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Pidgin in the Classroom¹

Jeff Siegel

Introduction

Like plate lunches, aloha shirts, and lei, Pidgin is an important part of local identity in Hawai'i. While some people still think of Pidgin as “broken English,” many now realize that it is a distinct creole language, similar to others that have developed in multilingual environments, and call it Hawai'i Creole or HCE (Hawai'i Creole English). Whatever you call it, Pidgin is integral to the development of modern Hawai'i and therefore it is surprising that there is nothing about it in the school curriculum. Even more surprising, however, is that in many schools, Pidgin is frowned upon and the language is kept out of the classroom.

In some cases, Pidgin is even denigrated, and its speakers constantly corrected (see Romaine 1999; Hargrove and Sakoda 1999). But even when there is no overt negative treatment, teaching is often done completely in standard English² as if Pidgin did not exist. In either case, Pidgin-speaking students are not allowed to express themselves in the language they feel most comfortable with. Again, this is surprising, since teachers and educational administrators normally have the interests of their students at heart, and want to do what's best for them. They generally try to follow the well-known educational principle of moving from the known to the unknown, and they encourage their students to express themselves so they can develop intellectually. Most teachers would never think of putting their students down because of their ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Yet, when it comes to language, many teachers and administrators seem to abandon these principles—especially with regard to Pidgin—and these practices are supported by

parents and the general community. Why is this?

Part of the answer is that the acquisition of standard English is considered to be one of the most important goals of formal education. Most people in Hawai'i see a knowledge of standard English as the key to academic and economic success, and Pidgin as the greatest obstacle to the acquisition of this knowledge. Therefore it seems logical to avoid Pidgin at all costs, especially in the schools. But is this really logical? Instead, why not start with Pidgin (the known) and gradually move to standard English (the unknown), letting students use Pidgin in the classroom until they feel comfortable with standard English? Why not treat Pidgin as a bridge to the standard, instead of an obstacle? Couldn't this be a better way to teach our children?

In this article, I attempt to answer these complex questions by examining some of the reasons behind current practices and looking at whether they are justified according to research into language varieties and alternative educational programs that do make use of vernaculars such as Pidgin. These reasons fall into three categories: (1) beliefs about the nature of Pidgin, (2) confusion about the nature of educational programs that would use Pidgin, and (3) concerns that the use of Pidgin in schools would be detrimental to students' acquisition of standard English. I then discuss some of the potential benefits of alternative programs.

Beliefs about the Nature of Pidgin

In publications starting from the 1920s, Pidgin was labelled with negative terms such as “lazy,” “faulty,”

“sloppy,” “slothful,” and “ugly” (Da Pidgin Coup, 1999, pp. 6–8). Even today, although there are more positive attitudes towards Pidgin, many people, including teachers and administrators, still think of it as a deviant form of English. Terms such as “broken English,” “incorrect English,” and “bad English” are common, and in the classroom, Pidgin-speaking children are often considered not as learners of a new variety of language, but as careless or lazy speakers of standard English.

What is the reason for these attitudes? For one thing, since Pidgin and standard English share much of the same vocabulary, they are considered to be the same language. The average person does not learn about language diversity in school, but instead believes that there is one English language, and the form known as “standard English” is the correct or “proper” way of speaking and writing it. So when different words are used or the words are put together in patterns that differ from those of the standard, these are considered not as mere differences, but as inaccuracies or “bad English.”

It is interesting, however, that such negative attitudes towards difference seem to be reserved for vernaculars such as Pidgin. The standard dialect of British English, for example, also has features that are “incorrect” in standard American English. It uses words such as *rubber* instead of *eraser*, and it has unacceptable expressions such as *I haven’t a book* instead of *I don’t have a book*. Just as those “broken” vernaculars “leave out” sounds in words and words in sentences—like saying *tol* instead of *told* and *He sick* instead of *He is sick*—British English leaves out the ‘r’ sound in words like *park* and leaves out words as well, as in *My father is in hospital* (instead of *in the hospital*). But in contrast to what many people say about Pidgin, they would not say that British people speak “bad” or “incorrect” English—just that they speak a different kind of English.

One reason for the negative attitudes toward Pidgin as opposed to other varieties is the misconception that it is haphazard – that there are no grammatical rules, and no correct or incorrect ways of speaking. However, since the 1960s, sociolinguists have been showing that creoles such as Pidgin are legitimate, rule-governed languages that differ in systematic ways from the language from which most of their vocabulary is derived. To illustrate that Pidgin has its own grammatical rules, different from those of English, we will look at the formation of negatives, based on materials from

workshops run by Kent Sakoda. The first column in table 1 contains sentences in Pidgin with English translations. The Pidgin sentences are written in the Odo orthography, a writing system developed specially for Pidgin. (Following in parentheses, the sentences are written in an English-based orthography.) In the second column are the same sentences put in the negative. Also included are some sentences beginning with an asterisk. The asterisk indicates that the sentence sounds strange, or that it is not the usual way of saying something. In other words, the sentence is ungrammatical in Pidgin, just like saying “*I are eating” is ungrammatical in English.

These examples demonstrate that Pidgin has at least four different negative markers, each occurring before an auxiliary, modal, or verb, and each having its own function and rules for usage:

Nat is used (1) before the predicate in sentences without a verb, (2) before the *-ing* form of the verb when it’s not preceded by *ste*, and (3) before the modal *sapostu*;

No is used (1) before the plain, unmarked verb, (2) before the modals *kaen*, *gata*, and *haeftu*, and (3) before the progressive marker *ste*;

Neva is used before the verb to indicate both negative and past tense simultaneously; and

Nomo is used as a negative existential to mean ‘there isn’t’ or as a negative possessive to mean ‘don’t/doesn’t have.’

In contrast, standard English has only one negative marker, *not*, or its contraction *n’t*, which always occurs after a modal or auxiliary such as *can*, *is* or *do*.

Thus, Pidgin is not haphazard; it has its own grammatical rules, different from those of English. And with regard to the formation of negatives, the grammatical rules of Pidgin are more complex than those of English.

Another reason for negative attitudes towards Pidgin in comparison to a variety such as British English is that British English is standardized. It has a standard writing system used in published texts, in some cases differing from American English (e.g. *colour* versus *color*). It also has a long historical tradition and a body of literature, and is the language of education in Britain. In contrast, while Pidgin is now commonly used in literature, it is written in a variety of

Table 1: Negatives in Hawai‘i Creole

<i>Da kæt it fish. (Da cat eat fish.)</i>	<i>Da kæt no it fish.</i>
<i>Da gaiz wrking. (Da guys working.)</i> 'The guys are working.'	<i>*Da gaiz no wrking.</i> <i>Da gaiz nat wrking.</i>
<i>Dei ste lisining. (Dey stay listening.)</i> 'They're listening.'	<i>*Dei nat ste lisining.</i> <i>Dei no ste lisining.</i>
<i>Mai sista wan bas jraiva.</i> (<i>My sister one bus driver.</i>)	<i>Mai sista nat wan bas jraiva.</i> 'My sister isn't a bus driver.'
<i>I kæn du twenti pushap.</i> (<i>I can do twenty pushup.</i>)	<i>I no kæn du twenti pushap.</i> 'I can't do twenty pushups.'
<i>Da бага braun. (Da buggah brown.)</i>	<i>Da бага nat braun.</i>
<i>Kærol hæftu wok. (Carol have to work.)</i>	<i>Kærol no hæftu wok.</i>
<i>Yu sapostu du dæt.</i> (<i>You suppose to do dat.</i>)	<i>Yu nat sapostu du dæt.</i> 'You're not supposed to do that.'
<i>Ai wen si om. (I wen see 'em.)</i> 'I saw it.'	<i>*Ai no wen si om.</i> <i>Ai neva si om.</i>
<i>Gat kaukau in da haus.</i> (<i>Got kaukau in da house.</i>) 'There's food in the house.'	<i>*No gat kaukau in da haus.</i> <i>Nomo kaukau in da haus.</i> 'There isn't food in the house.'
<i>Nau wi gat ka. (Now we got car.)</i> 'Now we have a car.'	<i>*Nau wi no gat ka.</i> <i>Nau wi nomo ka.</i>

ways, using English orthography (e.g. *like that* versus *li'dat* versus *ladat*). Most people in Hawai‘i are not familiar with the Odo orthography, even though it is used in some publications (e.g., Tonouchi, 2001 and Sakoda & Siegel, 2003). But there is no large body of literature in Pidgin and, of course, it is not used in education. Therefore, even if positive attitudes exist towards it as an important badge of social identity, or as language perfect for creating solidarity among family and friends, there is still the belief that it is fine for informal communication but that it has no place in the school, where standard English should be the norm. It should be noted, however, that five hundred years ago English itself was an unstandardized language, and considered inappropriate for use in learning. (At that time, Latin was the standard language of education.) Many other formerly unstandardized languages have become important vehicles of education,

government, and literature—for example, Bahasa Indonesia.

So, there is nothing intrinsically inferior about Pidgin or other vernaculars. Like any other variety of language, they have their own grammatical rules and the potential to be standardized and used in education or any other domain.

Confusion about the Nature of Educational Programs

There is also some confusion in the community about how Pidgin would be used in the education system. Would it actually be taught? Would it displace standard English? The answer to both questions is “no”. Here I describe three types of educational programs (instrumental, accommodation, and awareness) that make use of vernacular varieties such as Pidgin, and clarify which types are being advocated for Hawai‘i.

Instrumental programs use a vernacular as a medium of instruction to teach initial literacy and sometimes content subjects such as mathematics, science, and health. Such programs are useful mainly when the vernacular is markedly different from the standard language used in education—so different, in fact, that the two varieties are not always mutually intelligible. Thus, instrumental programs are similar to bilingual programs in that the children’s home language (the vernacular) is used at first while they are learning a second language (e.g., standard English). Such programs exist for speakers of creole languages in Australia, Papua New Guinea, the Seychelles, Haiti, and the Netherlands Antilles, and in the USA with immigrants speaking Haitian Creole and Cape Verdean (see Siegel, 1999a, 2007). However, this type of program has not been advocated for Hawai‘i.

In accommodation programs, students’ vernacular varieties are not used for instruction, but are accepted in the classroom. The standard educational language remains the medium of instruction and the only subject of study. However, in the early years of school, students are allowed to use their home varieties of language for speaking and sometimes writing, and teachers may utilize their students’ own interactional patterns and stories for teaching the standard. For example, Christie (2003, p. 46) reports that according to the recent Reform of Secondary Education Project in Jamaica, “students should be allowed to express themselves freely, employing whatever variety makes them comfortable in the classroom and outside.” Large scale and individual accommodation programs have existed in Hawai‘i (see Boggs, 1985; Rynkof, 1993; Eades, Jacobs, Hargrove & Menacker, 2006). At the higher levels, literature and creative writing in a vernacular may be accommodated into the curriculum, as has been done in Trinidad and Tobago (Winer, 1990). This has also been occurring with Pidgin in many schools in Hawai‘i (see Tonouchi, 2002).

In awareness programs, the standard language still remains the medium of instruction, but students’ vernacular varieties are seen as a resource to be used for learning the standard—and for learning in general—rather than as an impediment. This approach has three components. First, students’ vernacular varieties are accepted at times in the classroom, as just described (the accommodation component). Second, students learn about the many different varieties of language, such as dialects and creoles, and about the socio-historical processes that lead to a particular variety becoming

accepted as the standard (the sociolinguistic component). Third, students examine the linguistic characteristics of their own varieties and see how they differ from those of other students and from the standard (the contrastive component).

Awareness programs, or programs with awareness components, are found in the USA, Australia, and the Caribbean. For example, the Academic English Mastery Program in Los Angeles (LeMoine, 2001) trains teachers to build knowledge and understanding of various vernaculars and the students who use them, and then integrate this knowledge into instruction in standard English and other subjects. The handbook for this program, *English for Your Success* (Los Angeles Unified School District & LeMoine, 1999) outlines activities for contrasting African American English and standard English. Other current awareness programs include the Caribbean Academic Program in Evanston, Illinois (Fischer, 1992a) and Fostering English Language in Kimberley Schools (FELIKS) in Australia (Catholic Education Office, 1994; Berry and Hudson, 1997). In Jamaican High Schools, the communication studies syllabus includes a “Language and Society” module that focuses on the linguistic situations in Caribbean countries and their historical background, as well as on aspects of the grammar of the students’ creole language as compared to English (Kouwenberg 2002). (For details about these programs, see Siegel, 1999a, 2007.)

Programs with awareness components have also existed in Hawai‘i. The first was the Hawai‘i English Program (HEP), which ran from 1968 to 1983 (Rogers, 1996). This included lessons dealing with language varieties and language choice, as well as some exercises designed to contrast features of Pidgin and English. However, these components of the program were not widely covered by teachers (Eades et al., 2006, p. 158). Two experimental programs with contrastive activities were also carried out in Hawai‘i. The first was Project Holopono, which took place from 1984 to 1988 (Actouka & Lai, 1989). It involved approximately three hundred students of limited English proficiency in grades four to six in eight schools, half of which were Pidgin speakers. The program consisted of one hundred and fifty hours per week of instruction, including some awareness activities such as contrasting features of Pidgin and standard English. The second program was Project Akamai which ran from 1989 to 1993 (Afaga & Lai, 1994). This program was aimed at more than six hundred Pidgin speakers in grades nine and ten in eleven schools. It also involved some contrastive awareness

activities as well as the use of local literature containing Pidgin.

The programs that I advocate for Hawai‘i are accommodation and awareness programs that would bring Pidgin into the classroom. They would not involve teaching in Pidgin, but rather using and learning about Pidgin, and they would be part of a language arts curriculum that has the goal of teaching standard English. The objectives of these programs would be to give students some opportunity to express themselves and read literature in a language they feel comfortable with, to make them aware of language diversity and the origins of both Pidgin and standard languages, and to help them acquire standard English by focusing on how it differs from Pidgin in both structure and use.

Concerns that the Use of Pidgin Will Be Detrimental to Students

Even though many teachers and administrators recognize Pidgin as a rule-governed language in its own right and realize the nature of educational programs that are being proposed, they still have concerns about the possible effects that using Pidgin in the classroom would have on their students—concerns that on the surface may seem quite legitimate. The major concern is that Pidgin will interfere with students’ acquisition of the standard (the “interference” concern). Another concern is that using Pidgin will further disadvantage already disadvantaged Pidgin-speaking students by not giving them an education equal to that of other students (the “ghettoization” concern). Let us look at each of these concerns in more detail.

Interference

Interference, or “negative transfer,” can be defined as the inappropriate use of features of the first language (L1)—here Pidgin—when speaking or writing the second language (L2)—here standard English. There are many reports showing that fear of interference has kept other creole vernaculars out of the classroom. For example, with regard to the Caribbean, Elsasser and Irvine (1987, p. 137) say that one of the reasons for the lack of teaching literacy in the local creole vernacular is the assumption that “students’ limited writing ability is due to linguistic interference.” Similarly, Winer (1990, p. 241) notes that “both educators and the public are concerned over the extent to which acceptance of the vernacular might negatively affect students’ competence in

standard English.” The same is true in Hawai‘i, as indicated by these quotations:

If your thinking is not in standard English, it’s hard for you to write in standard English. If you speak pidgin, you think pidgin, you write pidgin. . . . We ought to have classrooms where standard English is the norm. (Mitsugi Nakashima, Chairman of the Hawai‘i State Board of Education, Honolulu Advertiser, September 29, 1999)

Hawaiian Creole is a kind of shadow language, without a fully developed grammar and vocabulary, that seductively undermines and corrupts the study of Standard English. (letter to the editor, Honolulu Advertiser, April 25, 2001, quoted in Eades et al., 2006, p. 144)

But let us look at the evidence, and see whether using Pidgin in the classroom would really interfere with the acquisition of standard English.

Although not as significant as once thought, transfer clearly does occur in second language acquisition. Research over the last twenty-five years has concentrated on the factors that promote or inhibit transfer. (For a summary, see Ellis, 1994). One of these is “language distance,” or the degree of typological similarity or difference between the L1 and the L2. It seems that the more similar the varieties are, the more likely it is that transfer (and thus interference) will occur. Such is the case with creoles that are similar to the standard variety, at least superficially, in their vocabulary and many grammatical rules. As Hargrove and Sakoda (1999) point out for Pidgin and standard English in Hawai‘i, students are often confused about the boundaries between the two languages.

But the evidence that such interference occurs in the classroom is not so clear. For example, in the Caribbean, a study of the writing of first year and final year secondary school students in Trinidad (Winer, 1989) revealed that interference from the local creole accounted wholly or partially for 65 percent of errors in standard English. In contrast, a study of the writing of children aged nine to eleven in St Lucia (Winch & Gingell, 1994) found no significant indication of interference from the local creole. However, these and other studies have been done in classrooms where the standard is the only language used. So even if there were hard evidence of interference, there is absolutely no evidence that using a creole in the classroom would exacerbate the

interference and be detrimental to students' acquisition of the standard language of education. In fact, an examination of programs where creoles are used in the classroom actually demonstrates the opposite.

Formal evaluations have been carried out on three instrumental programs using different creoles: Kriol (a creole language spoken in northern Australia) (Murtagh, 1982), Seselwa (the French Creole of the Seychelle Islands) (Ravel & Thomas, 1985), and Tok Pisin (the expanded pidgin/creole of Papua New Guinea) (Siegel, 1997). In each case, the prediction of educators opposed to the programs was that acquisition of standard English would suffer due to both interference and time wasted on studying the creole. However, in each case the results showed that students who were educated in both the creole and standard English achieved higher test scores in English and other subjects than students who were educated only in standard English.

Similar findings exist for accommodation and awareness programs using creoles. In the Caribbean, Elsasser and Irvine (1987) describe an experimental program in the US Virgin Islands integrating the study of the local creole and English in a college writing program. They report that the program did not interfere with the learning of standard English. Rather, it led to increased interest in language in general, and to a greater "understanding of the role of grammatical conventions, standardized spelling, and the rhetorical possibilities of both languages" (p. 143). In another example, Decker (2000) reports on a study carried out over thirteen weeks in a grade three classroom in Belize. Four grammatical areas were identified which differ in Belize Kriol and standard English: plural marking on nouns, past time reference, present time reference, and subject-verb agreement. The teacher discussed with the students, in Kriol, how these features function in Kriol, and students were asked to write in Kriol using these features. The teacher then moved on to describe, again in Kriol, how the corresponding features function in standard English, and then gradually switched to discussing this with the students in English. Students were then engaged in various story-telling, writing, and translation activities using these features in both languages. The results, on the basis of a pre-test and post-test, were that the students involved showed statistically significant improvement in performance in these areas of standard English.

The Caribbean Academic Program (CAP) at Evanston Township High School near Chicago, mentioned above,

is an awareness program for creole-speaking high school students who have migrated to the area from the Caribbean. Both standard English and various Caribbean English creoles are used in the classroom for speaking, reading, and writing (Fischer, 1992a; Menacker, 1998). A study was done on the progress of the students involved in the program. In the 1991–92 school year, 73 percent of the fifty-one CAP students were placed in the lowest of the four levels (or tracks) in the school based on academic ability; none of them were in the two highest levels. But after one year in the program, only 7 percent remained in the lowest level; 81 percent had moved up at least one level; 24 percent had moved up two or more levels; and 26 percent were in the two highest levels (Fischer, 1992b).

Back in Hawai'i, Day (1989) describes an accommodation program involving Pidgin-speaking children in kindergarten through grade four. In this program, teachers were first made aware of the history of creole languages such as Pidgin and their rule-governed nature. The teachers appeared to accept Pidgin as a language, and did not react negatively to students' using it in class (pp. 301–2). The study showed a significant increase over time in the scores of the students involved in the program on standardized tests of abilities in both Pidgin and standard English. Rynkof's (1993) presents an ethnographic study of one teacher's accommodation program involving writing workshops for Pidgin-speaking second graders. The children were allowed to write in any variety, and early versions of their work included many Pidgin features. But through a process of modeling and recasting in the workshops, rather than correction, the students became more proficient in written standard English.

Evaluations were also done of the two Hawai'i programs with awareness components mentioned above. The evaluation of the final year of Project Holopono showed an increase in oral proficiency in standard English among 84 percent of the students (Actouka & Lai, 1989). And the final year evaluation of Project Akamai reported increases of between 35 percent and 40 percent in tests of standard English use and oral language skills (Afaga & Lai, 1994).

These studies demonstrate that despite the occurrence of interference with closely related varieties of language, there is no evidence that using a creole vernacular in education will exacerbate the problem. None of these evaluations or experimental studies show any negative effects resulting from the use of a creole in the classroom, clearly illustrating

that the concern about interference is not justified. In fact, these studies show positive effects in increased ability in standard English and general academic performance, indicating that there are important benefits to using a creole in the classroom. These are discussed below.

Ghettoization

The term “ghettoization” in this context is related to the belief that the use of language varieties other than standard English is a part of the disadvantage of marginalized groups, and a major factor that keeps them in urban ghettos. While there are no ghettos, as such, in Hawai'i, there is still the belief that people who speak Pidgin will be disadvantaged, as indicated by this quotation:

Any child today who grows up speaking pidgin English will never get a good job and never be able to afford a house. (letter to the editor, Honolulu Advertiser, October 6, 1999)

Of course, the thousands of local people in Hawai'i who are successful in business, various professions, and politics demonstrate that this is not true. People who have grown up speaking Pidgin can become bilingual in standard English, and continue to use both languages in different contexts.

The real concern, however, is that devoting valuable class time to a creole deprives children of the instruction they need to learn standard English and in turn to get the economic benefits that speakers of standard varieties have, thus ensuring that they remain disadvantaged (Snow, 1990). For example, in the early 1990s Shnukal (1992, p. 4) noted that in the Torres Strait (Australia) people were “reluctant to accept the use of creole as a formal medium of instruction in their schools, seeing it as a method of depriving them of instruction in the kind of English that white people use, and thus condemning them to permanent under-class status.” But as we have just seen, the evidence shows that accommodation and awareness programs for creole-speaking students help rather than hinder acquisition of the standard language of education. Such programs clearly do not result in students from disadvantaged groups being left behind. On the contrary, these programs give students the opportunity to catch up to and even go ahead of students who already speak varieties closer to the standard.

A related concern is that Pidgin-speaking students in special programs would be isolated in the schools, and that

they would not receive the same kind of instruction as other students or get the chance to interact with students who speak varieties closer to the standard. But in the kinds of programs being advocated for Hawai'i, all students would be in the same classroom and treated the same. In accommodation programs, all students could initially use the variety of language they are most comfortable with, and all students would have the opportunity to study Hawai'i literature that uses Pidgin. In awareness programs, all students could learn about varieties of language, the origins of Pidgin and other creoles and the development of standard varieties. They could also examine the features of their ways of talking in comparison to the ways of others. The same curriculum would be used for all, with no one group singled out. Consequently all students would benefit from learning about the diversity of language in Hawai'i's history and how their current home language compares to those of other students and to the standard.

Benefits of Bringing Pidgin into the Classroom

So far in this article, I have shown that the various reasons for keeping Pidgin out of the classroom are not really justified if we look closely at the facts:

1. creoles such as Pidgin are legitimate, rule-governed languages;
2. when a creole is used in the educational process, it is not actually taught, but is used to help students in their educational development;
3. the use of creoles in education does not interfere with the acquisition of the standard by exacerbating interference, and therefore it does not disadvantage students.

At the same time, the research on accommodation and awareness programs described above has demonstrated some positive advantages from using creole vernaculars in the classroom: higher scores in tests measuring reading and writing skills in standard English and increases in overall academic achievement. The particular benefits of using creoles that account for these results appear to be related to three possible factors affecting students: greater cognitive development, increased motivation and self-esteem, and ability to separate codes and notice differences.

Greater cognitive development

It is well known that children's self-expression is facilitated in a familiar language, especially when there is no

fear of correction (see, for example, UNESCO, 1968, p. 690), and that children are clearly disadvantaged when they are not allowed to express themselves in their own variety of language (Thomas & Collier, 1997). This is because self-expression may be a prerequisite for cognitive development (Feldman, Stone, Wertsch & Strizich, 1977). For example, in a study of cognitive development and school achievement in a Pidgin-speaking community in Hawai‘i, Feldman, Stone, and Renderer (1990) found that students who do not perform well in high school have not developed “transfer ability.” This refers to the discovery or recognition by a learner that abstract reasoning processes learned with regard to materials in one context can be applied to different materials in a new context. For this to occur, new materials must be talked about, described, and encoded propositionally. According to the authors, a problem exists in Hawai‘i because the vernacular variety of many students (i.e., Pidgin), is conventionally not used in school and these students do not feel comfortable expressing themselves in the language of formal education, standard English. Thus, one possible benefit of accommodation and awareness programs is that students would be able to express themselves in their own varieties, thus better facilitating cognitive development.

Increased motivation and self-esteem

Most theories of second language acquisition agree that the affective variables of learner motivation, attitudes, self-confidence, and anxiety have some effect on L2 attainment. These factors are especially important with regard to speakers of creoles, who often have a negative self-image because of the frequent correction of their language in the schools and, sometimes, the denigration of their speech and culture as well. It may be that the use of the creole in formal education results in positive values to these variables with regard to learning the standard. Certainly, many of the studies referred to above describe increased participation and enthusiasm in the educational process. As Skutnabb-Kangas (1988, p. 29) points out, when the child’s mother tongue is valued in the educational setting, it leads to low anxiety, high motivation, and high self-confidence, three factors which are closely related to successful educational programs. In Hawai‘i, Reynolds (1999, p. 310) observes

My own experience has revealed that when I am not trying to snatch away the language of my students, they do not feel that they have to hang onto it so

tightly. Instead, the more we talk and plan and practice with both HCE [Hawai‘i Creole English] and ASE [American Standard English], the more interested we all become in both languages.

Another related factor, although seemingly contradictory, is the creole vernacular’s covert prestige as a marker of the socio-cultural group and a part of members’ social identity. As Delpit (1990, p. 251) observes, children often have the ability to speak standard English, but choose “to identify with their community rather than with the school.” As Tamura (1996, pp. 439–40) points out for Hawai‘i

Moreover, using nonstandard English [i.e. Pidgin] symbolizes their solidarity within a social group. Such peer-group loyalty is especially strong among youths. As an intermediate school girl noted, “If we speak good English, our friends usually say, ‘Oh you’re trying to be hybolic (acting superior by using big words) yeah?!’”

This is backed up by the report of a recent survey on language attitudes in Hawai‘i (Leong, 2000, p. 20):

Seventeen out of twenty-three participants acknowledge HCE as being a special language unique to Hawai‘i, belonging to the locals; they also found that an advantage of speaking HCE is that it lets one bond with other locals. Maka [one of the participants] said “Pidgin is an integral part of the local culture. We all need to belong and in Hawai‘i, Pidgin is the glue that binds us together.”

The report continues (p. 25), “Several people said they find that at times using Pidgin is necessary so they won’t be seen as someone who is *high makamaka* [trying to act high and mighty].”

Because of the ideology of correctness attached to the standard, students may fear that learning it means abandoning their own language and, thus, risking being ostracized from their social group. The use of the creole vernacular in the classroom would reduce some of this anxiety. Also, according to Clément’s (1980) Social Context Model, such use of the L1 would be expected to reduce fear of assimilation and, thus, increase motivation to learn the L2 (standard English).

Ability to separate codes and notice differences

We have seen that the similarities between a creole vernacular and the standard may make it difficult for learners to separate the two varieties. However, in the study of the Kriol/English bilingual program in Australia described above, Murtagh (1982, p. 30) attributes the higher language proficiency of students in the bilingual program to their “progressively greater success at separating the two languages” as a consequence of “the two languages being taught as separate entities in the classroom.” (For a psycholinguistic discussion of the notion of separation, see Siegel, 1999b, pp. 711–716).

A closely related possible benefit is that using a creole such as Pidgin in educational programs may make learners aware of differences between it and the standard that they may not otherwise notice. For example, Craig (1966, p. 58) notes that often when speakers of Jamaican Creole are being taught standard English, “the learner fails to perceive the new target element in the teaching situation.” Cheshire (1982, p. 55) also observes that nonstandard dialect-speaking children in British schools are unaware of specific differences between their speech and standard English: “They may simply recognise that school teachers and newsreaders, for example, do not speak in quite the same way as their family and friends.”

Again we turn to second language acquisition theory. According to Schmidt’s “noticing hypothesis” (1990, 1993), attention to target language forms is necessary for acquisition; these forms will not be acquired unless they are noticed. It may be that in the contrastive component of awareness programs, looking at features of their own varieties compared to the standard helps students to notice features of the standard that are different, which is the first step of acquisition.

Conclusion

We have seen that current educational practices generally do not allow Pidgin in the classroom. These practices may be well-intentioned and have the support of parents and the community. But a detailed examination of the reasons behind these practices shows that they are not justified, and that because of them, students are missing out on several potential benefits that would be gained from using their own vernacular in the educational process.

The benefits of the alternative programs described in this article have been mainly in terms of test scores measuring the acquisition of the standard variety and academic achievement. But there are many other, more fundamental benefits as well, for example, the inclusion, rather than exclusion, of Pidgin-speaking students and local culture into the education system.

We can only hope that more teachers and educational administrators will look more closely at research in both linguistics and education, and base their classroom policies not on preconceptions, previous practices, or current ideologies, but rather on the facts, no matter how radical or counter-intuitive they may seem. These educators can then take the lead and inform parents and community members about how alternative teaching programs that make use of Pidgin can benefit their children and their communities.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ This article is based on Siegel (2006). Thanks go to Diana Eades for valuable comments on an earlier draft.
- ² The author specifically avoids capitalizing “standard” so as not to privilege this style of English as a distinct variety.
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If Can, Can: Hawai'i Creole and Reading Achievement

Kathryn H. Au

I remember the day I learned that Hawai'i Creole (HC) was a language and not merely a form of broken English. This revelation came during a lecture given by one of my favorite professors, Betty Uehara. As Uehara discussed the *wen* past tense marker and other features of HC, I sat there in her language arts methods class wondering why I had never known of this perspective before. Having been born and raised in Hawai'i, I was astonished to think that I had grown up speaking a language so stigmatized that I had never believed it to be a language at all.

Twenty-five years later I would return as a professor to the University of Hawai'i, College of Education, to teach language arts courses myself. Because I found that most of my students were no better informed about HC than I had been, I often devoted a whole class to tackling the folk beliefs and misconceptions surrounding what most people in Hawai'i call "pidgin English." I would review the history of how HC had emerged as a lingua franca in Hawai'i during the 1890's, explain how HC had evolved by combining the syntax of the Hawaiian language with a lexicon drawn primarily from English, and draw comparisons to educational controversies surrounding African American Vernacular English (AAVE) (Labov, 1982).

It was fascinating to watch students' faces as they digested this information and to hear the questions they raised. The reaction of most local students paralleled my own reaction so many years earlier: "Why didn't anyone tell me this before?" One student, a retired military officer who had returned to the university to become a teacher, asked several pointed questions, frowned, and was obviously struggling

with the issues. After class he came up to me and extended his hand. "Thank you for the information you shared today," he said. "I had no idea, I just had no idea."

I do not believe that HC needs to be taught in the classroom as the basis for promoting reading achievement. Parents in Native Hawaiian communities have always indicated to me that they send their children to school to learn what they cannot easily teach them at home, including the kind of proficiency in Standard English that enables success in the larger society. Many of these parents would adamantly oppose attempts to teach students to read through HC texts, just as parents in African American communities opposed the use of "dialect readers," or texts for the teaching of reading written in AAVE (Rickford & Rickford, 1995). In African American communities, parents' opposition centered on concerns that their children would receive an inferior curriculum, with fewer learning opportunities than students in other schools to reach high levels of achievement in the reading of Standard English. I think these are legitimate concerns.

On one hand, I believe that Standard English, the language of power in the United States and in Hawai'i, is the language that must be emphasized if students are to learn to read well in school, in ways recognized by the larger society. On the other hand, I believe that rejecting students' home language is tantamount to rejecting the students themselves, as suggested by both research (Au, 2006) and personal experience. Therefore, even as Standard English must be the focus of instruction, students' home languages, including HC, must be acknowledged and treated with dignity and respect.

In this essay I review what I have come to understand about HC and its relationship to learning to read. My essay is organized around four topics: (1) language, literacy, and power in Hawai'i, (2) HC and literacy learning, (3) resistance to learning literacy in school, and (4) sustained school change to improve the literacy learning of students who speak HC as their primary language.

Language, Literacy, and Power in Hawai'i

Every multicultural society has a language of power—the language spoken by members of the dominant group or groups—as well as languages that lack power because they are spoken by members of the subordinate group or groups. The ascension of one language over another has long been a source of controversy in Hawai'i, as it has in many parts of the world. If we follow the changing landscape of language use in Hawai'i, beginning with the arrival of the British explorer James Cook in 1778 and the first party of Congregational missionaries from New England in 1820, we can trace how the Hawaiian language was deliberately replaced by English as the language of power (Au & Kaomea, in press; Au, 2007). The use of English literacy was central to colonization efforts, in which Native Hawaiians were positioned as inferior to European Americans through letters, government reports, newspaper articles, and the like.

Because teachers of English were few and far between, the missionaries determined that it would be impractical to begin the schooling of Native Hawaiians in that language (e.g., Armstrong, 1858). Therefore, efforts to teach Native Hawaiians to read and write proceeded in two stages. First, beginning in the 1840s, thousands of Hawaiians gained literacy in the Hawaiian language through the common, or government, schools, staffed entirely by Native Hawaiian teachers. In 1880, as more English-speaking teachers were becoming available, the Board of Education began a determined effort to replace the common schools with government English schools. Through the systematic closing of the common schools, sometimes upon the retirement of elderly Native Hawaiian teachers, English replaced Hawaiian as the language of instruction. In 1895 Henry S. Townsend, inspector-general of schools, wrote, “As predicted in the last report, the schools taught in the Hawaiian language are dead” with only three remaining, enrolling just fifty-nine students (Townsend, 1895, p. 21). The infamous law of 1896 passed by the provisional government, banning the use of Hawaiian

in schools, appears to have been largely a symbolic gesture, as the linguistic battle had already been won.

History reminds us that efforts to educate students and provide them with literacy in the language of power are not necessarily beneficial or even benign (Willis, 2002). Schooling in the language of power, including literacy learning, may be tied to dominant group efforts to reinforce control over the society. Because of the present dominance of Standard English in Hawai'i, it is easy to forget that through the nineteenth century Hawaiian, not English, remained the most widely spoken language in these islands. By the 1860s, Native Hawaiian writers were fighting to preserve the culture and political and social standing of their people, for example, through newspaper articles and petitions in the Hawaiian language (Au & Kaomea, in press). Native Hawaiians were able to take ownership of literacy and resist colonization by appropriating literacy for their own purposes.

In the nineteenth century the Hawaiian language had its place even in many non-Hawaiian families. My great-grandfather, Chun Lin Hung, ran a rice mill in Hulē'ia, Kaua'i, and grew rice on land leased from George N. Wilcox. Because my great-grandfather could not speak English, and Wilcox could not speak Cantonese, they conversed in the one language they had in common—Hawaiian. In the Chinese fashion, Chun Lin Hung was called Ah Hung, and he was known to Native Hawaiian acquaintances as Ahana. As a result, the family surname was changed to Chun Ahana and then simply to Ahana. The very names of many of our local families reflect the widespread influence of the Hawaiian language in the nineteenth century.

Despite the banning of Hawaiian in schools, English did not replace Hawaiian as the lingua franca in plantation communities in the 1890s. Instead, the Hawai'i-born children of plantation workers grew up speaking HC to communicate with one another (Sato, 1985). As mentioned, while HC uses a largely English lexicon, its syntax is that of the Hawaiian language. For example, a speaker of HC might compliment a friend by saying “nice, your shoes” rather than “your shoes are nice.” Because of its divergence from the Standard English spoken by members of the dominant groups in Hawai'i, HC was seen as a form of “broken English” in the popular press and in folk beliefs, rather than as a valid language in its own right. Through the twentieth century, HC and its speakers were stigmatized, reinforcing their position as members of subordinate groups, just as the Hawaiian

language and its native speakers had been stigmatized in earlier generations. A further irony in the twentieth century was that the stigmatization of HC was at times carried out by Hawai‘i-born legislators and educators who had themselves grown up as speakers of HC (Kua, 1999).

HC is one of the heritage languages of the people of these islands, along with Hawaiian, Ilokano, Japanese, Portuguese, and other languages. HC differs from other heritage languages in Hawai‘i in that, as a lingua franca, it did not originate with any single ethnic group. HC is first and foremost a spoken language and does not have a standard orthography, although there is a steadily growing literature in HC, with writers such as Darrell Lum (1990), Lee Tonouchi (2001), and Lois-Ann Yamanaka (1996). In common with other heritage languages, HC connects its speakers to the history of their families and others who share a common cultural bond, in this case the Hawai‘i plantation experience.

HC and Learning to Read

Speaking HC as a primary language does not prevent students from becoming excellent readers and writers of Standard English. The evidence for this assertion is seen in the many Hawai‘i-born individuals who have grown up as speakers of HC and gone on to successful careers in a wide variety of fields, including academics and the law, that require extensive use of Standard English and essayist literacy. All of these individuals, at some time in their lives, likely had the opportunity to learn essayist literacy, and to learn it well, perhaps at school or on the job. Essayist literacy, also known as autonomous literacy (Au, 2006; Street, 1995) is the kind of literacy valued in Western academic circles and evaluated on large-scale tests, the kind that gets students good grades in their high school English classes and that allows them to write convincing essays when applying to college. In other words it is the kind of literacy that gives an individual the appearance of being an intelligent and educated person, according to the cultural norms of the society’s dominant groups.

As implied earlier, what gives a language prestige and power is neither its linguistic code nor its expressive potential but the socioeconomic status of its speakers. Gee (1990) reminds us that it is not the linguistic code alone we must master when we seek to learn a language well, but an entire discourse. His oft quoted definition of a discourse is as follows: “A discourse is a socially accepted association among

ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network,’ or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful ‘role’” (p. 143, italics in the original).

From the perspective of critical theory, one of the reasons it is important for the dominant groups in the society to elevate the prestige of their own language, and to denigrate the language of the subordinate groups, is to maintain their position of power. A command of the language of power—mastery of the discourse, in Gee’s terms, and not just the linguistic code—is often a prerequisite for entry into the elite circles that control the society’s major institutions, such as business, government, and education. In other words, to advance in society, individuals must usually speak, write, and otherwise present themselves in ways that signal their identity as dominant group members and their familiarity with the culture of power. A discourse allows those within its purview to distinguish between “us” and “them.” In keeping with a critical analysis, it follows that access to the language of power must necessarily be carefully controlled, readily available to children of the dominant groups yet difficult to obtain for children of the subordinate groups. Schooling in the language of power is treated as a precious resource, to be carefully distributed for the benefit of the few.

In the history of Hawai‘i, a well known example of the rationing of schooling in the language of power and essayist literacy is seen in the English standard schools, which had their beginnings in 1920. These schools were opened at the behest of European American parents who wanted their children educated in a Standard English environment, apart from the HC-speaking children of working class families. These schools provided an attractive option for parents unable or unwilling to pay for a private school education. Ostensibly, public schools with this designation were to provide the opportunity for any qualified student to receive a rigorous education. In practice, students were admitted on the basis of their proficiency in Standard English, at a time in Hawai‘i’s history when most students grew up speaking HC as their first language. Thus, especially in the early years, students from European American families could pass the test of English proficiency required for admission, while others could not.

Today, inequality in reading achievement serves as just one sign of how effectively the channeling of access to the

language of power and essayist literacy continues to work in the United States. Elsewhere, I have described in detail the layering of reading test scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which show that the mean scale scores for African American and Latino students at grade twelve are almost exactly the same as the mean scale scores of White and Asian Pacific American students at grade eight (Au, 2006). In other words, students in the former groups have fallen about four years behind students in the latter groups by the time they finish high school.

I have not seen a comparable analysis of results on the Hawai'i state reading tests, introduced in 2001–02, but past standardized reading test results reported in the Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment Program (NHEAP) (Kamehameha Schools Office of Program Evaluation and Planning, 1993) showed a layering of scores on standardized reading tests, with European American and Japanese American students scoring above the national average and students of Native Hawaiian and Filipino ancestry scoring below the national average. These results suggest that access to essayist literacy is selectively distributed in our state, just as it is in the rest of the nation. My view is that it is the lack of opportunity to learn essayist literacy well, rather than the fact that they speak HC as a primary language, that accounts for some Hawai'i-born students' poor showing on tests of reading achievement.

While I was drafting this essay, an article appeared in the *Honolulu Advertiser* with the following lead: “Fifty years after graduating from Maui’s only English-standard school, half of the members of Kaunoa School’s class of 1957 returned to the site of their former campus this month to install a commemorative plaque” (Wilson, 2007). This class, the last to complete grade eight at Kaunoa, included Maui Mayor Charmaine Tavares; Shirley Kodani Cavanaugh, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel; Gaylord Kubota, director of the Alexander and Baldwin Sugar Museum; and Warren Shibuya, a former instructor in aerospace management at the University of Hawai'i. In their comments, the graduates expressed their appreciation for the education they had received at Kaunoa. Cavanaugh noted that, while they learned at school to communicate well in Standard English, the students still spoke “pidgin” (HC) when they went home and had the ability to switch between the two codes.

One of the lessons to be learned from these graduates' experience at Kaunoa is that it was perfectly possible for

public schools in Hawai'i to teach students who grow up speaking HC to master essayist literacy and speak Standard English well. One of the features distinguishing the English standard schools appears to be that teachers held high expectations for their students and, as a result, may have been following a more academically rigorous curriculum than in other public schools. Research continues to verify the hypothesis of the self-fulfilling prophecy, demonstrating the role of teachers' perceptions of students. These perceptions predict changes in student achievement beyond differences accounted for by students' prior achievement and motivation (Jussim & Eccles, 1992).

In common with all members of a society, educators are subject to the influence of dominant group discourse, and this discourse can be used to keep those who do not speak the language of power in a position of inferiority (e.g., Au & Kaomea, in press). Such is the case, for example, when an Associated Press article refers to “pidgin English” as “an amalgamation of Hawaiian and foreign words spoken with a cadence that is almost impenetrable to the malihini” (Dunford, 1999). It is not surprising, then, that listeners judge a speaker of Standard English as superior to a speaker of HC, even when the two are presenting the same ideas (Ohama, Gotay, Pagano, Boles, & Craven, 1999). Consciously or subconsciously, many still seem to assume that sound reasoning can only be expressed in the language of power, a myth debunked by sociolinguistic research dating back over thirty years. Labov's (1973) classic research on the logic of nonstandard English, specifically, AAVE, included a striking transcript of skillfully constructed, spontaneous arguments about the existence and nature of God proposed by Larry, a young African American from the inner city. Labov observed that Larry's arguments, stated entirely in AAVE, were entirely understandable and convincing, leaving no doubt that he could use the English language effectively for a wide range of purposes.

In analyzing the black-white test score gap, Ferguson (2003) argued that teachers' perceptions, expectations, and behaviors interact with students' beliefs, behaviors, and work habits to perpetuate educational inequities. A parallel set of circumstances may well be affecting many HC-speaking students, particularly those attending schools in low-income communities. While I do not believe that teacher perceptions are the only reason for below-average reading achievement results, many Hawai'i educators will have witnessed the phe-

nomenon of low teacher expectations at work. Low teacher expectations for students' performance have been identified as a key issue in accreditation and other external evaluation reports for more than one high school in our state. I saw the phenomenon of low expectations several years ago, when I was working with a team of teacher-leaders from a rural high school in which the vast majority of students spoke HC as their primary language. The task I had presented to the team was to draft a vision statement of the excellent writer who graduated from their school, a task that has not posed a problem to any group of teachers before or since. This particular team of teachers insisted that they could not develop a vision statement describing the excellent writer who graduated from their school. The reason, they asserted, was that their school did not have any students who could become excellent writers.

A vicious cycle may be at work in some schools with high numbers of students who speak HC as their primary language. Some teachers may hold low expectations for students' academic performance, believing that students are poor language users because they speak a form of "broken English." Low expectations may contribute to what has bluntly been termed a "dumbing down" of the curriculum, in which students may not have the opportunity to learn essayist literacy well. Under these circumstances, it would not be surprising to see students, as a group, performing below state targets or national norms on large-scale tests of reading achievement.

Schools where teachers hold low expectations for students tend to move toward packaged programs that emphasize lower level, basic reading skills, thus depriving students of lessons focusing on reading comprehension, reasoning with text, and the literary content (classic and contemporary literature) that contribute to proficiency in essayist literacy. Taylor and her colleagues have verified in study after study that an emphasis on phonics is positively related to reading achievement in first grade, but negatively related to achievement in second and third grade (Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2000; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2003, 2004). At all grades studied, teachers' use of higher level questioning contributes significantly to stronger reaching achievement. These findings resonate with those of research conducted at the Kamehameha Elementary Education Program (Tharp, 1982). Students' difficulties may be compounded when educators think the solution to poor

reading test scores is to extend lower-level skill instruction to higher and higher grades. Amazingly, I have even heard intensive phonics instruction proposed as a solution for the reading difficulties of high school students in Hawai'i. While I am a proponent of phonics instruction (Au, 1998, 2006), I am convinced by the research of Taylor and others that phonics instruction should be systematically taught and completed in the early primary grades, leaving time for teachers to address the much more challenging task of promoting reading comprehension.

Resistance to Literacy Learning in School

I turn now to issues of students' resistance to literacy learning in school, another important way that HC is related to reading achievement. Proponents of resistance theory (e.g., Erickson, 1993) contend that subordinate group students (which would include many students who speak HC as their primary language) consciously and subconsciously oppose school actions that threaten their cultural identities. For example, students may show resistance by ignoring the teacher, refusing to participate, turning in incomplete assignments, or acting out in class, and fail to make strong academic progress as a result. Student resistance can develop quickly if teachers signal their low regard for students' culture (Larson & Irvine, 1999) or cast aspersions upon their primary language (Erickson, 1993; Piestrup, 1973).

D'Amato (1993) points out that all children resist school to some extent. However, resistance does not persist in the case of dominant group students, who understand the importance of cooperating with teachers and doing well in school and know the relationship between schooling and life opportunities: complete high school, graduate from college, and qualify for a high-paying job. For many students from affluent families, these connections are reinforced by family history. The situation is different for subordinate group students, with the connections typically being much weaker. For example, in African American communities, discrimination may prevent even a well educated, highly qualified individual from obtaining a desirable job (Ogbu, 1981).

D'Amato's (1988) research shows that resistance can be shown even in early elementary grades classrooms. He suggests that teachers do not hold the cards in classrooms where their students are unfamiliar with the long-term rewards of schooling. This situation arises because students are not concerned about the consequences of offending teachers or do-

ing poorly in school. D'Amato argues that teachers must win students over by making school a rewarding and enjoyable experience in an immediate sense. One means of capturing students' interest is through culturally responsive instruction, instruction that builds on the strengths that students bring from the home, including their cultural and linguistic knowledge (Au, 2007). My research at KEEP showed that interactive discussions of literature using talk-story-like participation structures kept students highly engaged in learning to read (Au & Mason, 1981). Students paid closer attention, discussed more text ideas, and made more logical inferences when lessons used culturally familiar talk-story-like participation structures than when lessons followed the traditional format for classroom recitation, a pattern that involves teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation (Cazden, 1988). We found at KEEP that Native Hawaiian students achieved at higher levels in learning to read when their teachers took the approach of making lessons personally meaningful to them. Teachers could accomplish this by making connections between students background experiences and the theme of the story (Au, 1992) and by emphasizing reading comprehension or meaning making with text and not just word identification skills (Tharp, 1982).

A newer option, not available in the 1980s, is to increase students' motivation to read through the use of local literature reflecting experiences of growing up in Hawai'i. These works range all the way from concept books for preschool and kindergarten, such as *Whose Slippers Are These?* (Kahalewai, 2005) to teen novels such as *The Tattoo* (McKinney, 2007). Works written in HC might be included in the curriculum, along with the canonical works of literature typically taught in middle and high schools, as long as teachers and the community feel comfortable with this decision.

Students' ownership of literacy may be defined as their valuing of reading and writing as part of their lives and using literacy for purposes they set for themselves (Au, 1997). Ownership of literacy must be foundational to attempts to improve reading achievement in schools serving high numbers of students who speak HC as their primary language, and ownership may be improved if students read works of literature they find meaningful.

Teachers can and should take steps to make ownership of literacy the overarching goal of classroom reading instruction. However, while ownership plays an important role,

it is a necessary but not sufficient condition for improving reading achievement in classrooms with students who are growing up outside the culture of power, such as those who grow up speaking HC as their primary language. If young students have the motivation to read, this is an important first step that will boost their learning of word identification skills. However, it will not automatically improve their performance in reading comprehension (Au, 1994). To improve students' comprehension, instruction specifically targeting strategies of reading comprehension must be provided. Just because students know all the words in a text does not mean that they will automatically comprehend it. Rather, research shows that instruction in comprehension is required if improvements in students' ability to derive meaning from text is to improve (Anderson, Mason, & Shirey, 1984). In addition, research indicates which comprehension strategies are most valuable to teach students (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Raphael, Highfield, & Au, 2006).

Instruction focused on higher level thinking with text can be highly motivating to students and thus serve an important function in overcoming students' resistance to schooling. My colleague Alice Kawakami, a former KEEP teacher who is now a professor in the College of Education, once described how she attempted, during reading comprehension discussions, to make her third-grade students "feel smart." Indeed, observers who have studied reading comprehension lessons taught by KEEP teachers agree that these discussions cause elementary students to engage with text ideas as deeply and actively as graduate students in a seminar. Students who come away from a lesson feeling smart are likely to think of school as a worthwhile place to be, because they have engaged with interesting ideas, argued and justified their points of view, and had their teacher confirm their potential as good thinkers.

Sustained School Change

All students can benefit from rigorous instruction in reading comprehension to prepare them to use essayist literacy in the ways demanded by the higher academic standards now in place in Hawai'i and across the United States. However, such rigorous instruction is particularly important to the academic futures of students who speak HC as their primary language and grow up outside the culture of power. These students will be largely dependent on school for access to dominant group discourse and essayist literacy.

Furthermore, research suggests that it will take six years or more for students who speak HC as a primary language to gain the proficiency in Standard English foundational for essayist literacy. This is why school change efforts that focus only on grades K–3 or only on beginning reading frequently do not show significant effects on students' long-term achievement. While certain early interventions do have a positive effect on children's reading in the primary grades, these interventions show diminishing effects and do not provide a sufficient basis for success with the more demanding reading tasks at the third and fourth grades and above (Hiebert & Taylor, 2000).

It is important to understand why a period of six years or more of well coordinated, rigorous instruction may well be required to make a difference in the overall reading achievement of many HC speaking students. Let us begin by referring to Cummins' (2003) distinction between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Teachers are often amazed that children who enter the classroom speaking Spanish or another language are, within months, communicating with other children in English. Part of the reason for this rapid learning is undoubtedly the need and desire to join peer groups and participate in activities on the playground and in other settings and to meet the needs of everyday life, for example, shopping for groceries. The rapid learning of BICS is supported by the fact that interactions are embedded in meaningful contexts, with referents right at hand.

Due to television as well as home and community experiences, some students who speak HC as a primary language may come to school with BICS in Standard English. We had a favorite videotape at KEEP that captured the language proficiency of one of our first-grade students from Kalihi. (Pseudonyms have been used for the student and teacher in this anecdote.) The tape showed Branden working on a seatwork assignment while at the same time speaking HC to threaten another boy at his table, waving his fist in front of his peer's face and declaring that they would be fighting at recess. As the teacher, newly arrived from the mainland, approached his table, Branden looked up and asked sweetly, in clearly enunciated Standard English, "Miss Moran, may I sharpen my pencil?" When the teacher nodded, Branden left the table, returning after a moment to resume his threatening in HC.

As this anecdote suggests, many HC speaking students can easily switch between HC and Standard English, suggesting that they have BICS in Standard English and could advance to CALP and attain proficiency in essayist literacy. However, two caveats must be considered. The first, discussed earlier, is the prediction of resistance theory that subordinate group students may decide that they do not want to attain essayist literacy. Any teacher who has taught in a Title I school in Hawai'i has struggled to reach any number of students with such an attitude. Ogbu (1993) described how subordinate group students might well show resistance because of the need to maintain their cultural identities in the face of what they perceive to be an unfamiliar and threatening school environment, one that does not seem to value their talents, language, or culture. Students might choose to express themselves only in HC and not in Standard English as a means of maintaining their cultural identity and expressing solidarity with peers.

Second, it should be noted that CALP and essayist literacy are not easy targets, making six years a conservative estimate of the amount of instructional time required (Collier, 1989). For example, consider the cognitive demands of a typical fourth grade science lesson about the origin of the Hawaiian Islands. (I have observed several effective lessons along exactly these lines and know that the teachers considered their expectations to be perfectly reasonable for Hawai'i fourth graders.) During such a lesson the teacher will teach abstract concepts (plate tectonics) and use specialized vocabulary unlikely to be heard in everyday life (terms such as *magma* and *caldera*). Students will usually be unfamiliar with these concepts and terms, unless they have already visited an area such as Volcanoes National Park, and the teacher will need to refer to models, diagrams, and photographs to get these points across. At the end of the lesson, the teacher will ask students to read a short newspaper article on the island of Lo'ihi, growing underwater near the Big Island, and to write a summary of the article, making connections to ideas covered in the lesson. Obviously, to perform well in the classroom, even in elementary school, students need CALP and essayist literacy; BICS are insufficient for the learning of the academic content routinely being taught in elementary schools, as well as middle and high schools.

Fortunately, there is a tremendous amount of research on how students who grow up speaking HC or other non-mainstream varieties of English can be taught to become

excellent readers and writers, as judged by the standards of essayist literacy (Au, 1993, 2006; Guthrie et al., 1996; Morrow, 1992; Raphael & Au, 2005). Unfortunately, my research and experience in schools point to the distinct possibility that many HC speaking students, particularly in schools in low-income communities, do not receive enough high quality, coordinated instruction over the period of time—six years or more—required for them to gain a solid grasp of CALP in Standard English and of essayist literacy. Unlike students from affluent families, HC speaking students from low-income families may have little contact with the discourse of the culture of power, at home or in community settings. Thus, these students are highly dependent on school to gain familiarity with this discourse and to develop CALP.

Up to now I have discussed steps that teachers can take in classrooms. However, it is obviously important to consider the school, and not just the actions of individual teachers, if the goal is to provide students with six years or more of effective, coordinated instruction to build proficiency in essayist literacy. To achieve this goal, teachers in a school must collaborate to build a staircase or coherent curriculum across the grades (Au, 2005).

The approach my colleagues and I use to guide teachers through the process of creating a staircase curriculum is called the Standards Based Change (SBC) Process (Au, Hirata, & Raphael, 2005). The SBC Process has been successfully used in some Title I schools with high proportions of students who speak HC as a primary language, including Kīpapa, Makakilo, and Helemano elementary schools. These three schools received awards from the Castle Foundation for increasing the number of students meeting and exceeding proficiency on the grade three state reading test by 20 percent or more between 2003 and 2006. The SBC Process has also been effective in improving reading achievement in Chicago schools enrolling high proportions of students who speak either AAVE or Spanish as their primary language (Au, Raphael, & Mooney, in press).

Over time, this approach has come to center on a Seven Level Developmental Model that describes the stages of growth of schools successful in improving student achievement through the SBC Process (Au et al., in press). When a school reaches Level 6, scores on state reading tests rise and teachers have taken ownership of the change process. In short, the developmental model has given us a roadmap

for school change that improves students' reading achievement. Teachers at schools working with the SBC Process are guided through a nine-step to do list (Au et al., 2005; Au & Raphael, 2007); these nine components must be in place for a school to have a complete system for improving student achievement through standards. Teachers at public schools in Hawai'i and the rest of the country have been working with standards for about two decades. Thus, every school is likely to have strengths as well as weaknesses in terms of the components on the to do list. We ask teachers to keep in place all the components they think are working well to foster student learning, and to use their time with the to do list to address any weaknesses.

Unlike most approaches to school improvement, the SBC Process is based on the premise that teachers at each school can and should create the school's own staircase curriculum in reading. The staircase curriculum is contrasted with the fragmented curriculum, which is the situation we have observed at all schools new to the SBC Process. The fragmented curriculum results because, although teachers at the various grade levels have good ideas for curriculum and instruction, they have not had sufficient time and guidance to coordinate their ideas across the grade levels.

One of the most common and insidious misconceptions we see in schools is the belief that purchasing a packaged reading program will automatically provide the school with a staircase or coherent curriculum. Research conducted in schools in Chicago showed that purchasing a packaged program did not lead to curriculum coherence because teachers could interpret and teach a program in many different ways (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001). Our research suggests that a staircase curriculum cannot be bought off the shelf; it must be created through close collaboration within and across grade levels and departments. We guide teachers at each school in the SBC Process through the equivalent of four professional development courses to help them build the staircase curriculum (Au et al., in press). In elementary schools, a staircase curriculum must be built for every major content area: reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. It often takes a school two to three years to learn the SBC Process and complete work in the first content area. My colleagues and I describe the SBC Process as the "slow and steady fix." As research shows, there is no such thing as a "quick fix" (Allington & Walmsley, 1995), despite the claims of promoters of some packaged programs.

We can empathize with the difficulties faced by complex area superintendents, principals, and other administrators responsible for leading schools with a history of low reading test scores. These leaders are under tremendous pressure to show marked improvement in results. It is all too tempting under these circumstances to look for ready-made external solutions for improving test results. Our experience has been that external solutions, such as packaged programs, often do not yield the kinds of lasting improvement necessary to provide HC speaking students in low-income communities with excellent opportunities to gain essayist literacy. One of the reasons is variability in teachers' interpretations and ways of implementing the external program. Another reason is gaps in the external program in relationship to state standards. Still another reason is that the external program does not cover all the curriculum areas students need. For example, teachers using basal reading programs typically see weaknesses in provisions for reading comprehension strategy instruction.

Nevertheless, the fatal flaw in the implementation of external programs may lie less in their design than in the fact that teachers do not feel ownership over them. When their schools rely on external programs, teachers may tend to attribute students' progress (or lack of progress) to the program rather than to their own efforts. Yet, as the saying goes, programs don't teach—teachers teach. In SBC Process schools successful in improving student achievement, teachers take ownership of change efforts and feel a sense of efficacy and personal responsibility for their students' achievement. At successful schools administrators trust teachers to make good decisions within the framework of the SBC Process, and the whole school pulls together as a professional learning community to create and implement a staircase curriculum, covering all grades, to promote student achievement. Teachers believe that their students can and will become excellent readers, and teachers provide instruction focused on higher level thinking as well as basic skills. Students sense that their language and culture are respected by teachers and find lessons engaging and challenging. Rather than showing resistance, students willingly cooperate with teachers to learn essayist literacy.

As students move through the grades and up the staircase curriculum, they receive instruction that builds on what they learned the year before. Due to the well coordinated instruction fostered by the staircase curriculum, cohorts of

students begin to enter each successive grade at higher levels of achievement than did earlier cohorts. In schools with a low rate of student transiency, this effect is particularly noticeable in grades four and above. When teachers notice students' higher entering achievement levels, they know that they can move students farther ahead as readers, and they create more ambitious end-of-year grade level benchmarks. The staircase curriculum exerts its positive effect through teachers' steadily rising expectations for students' learning, which lead to improved results on large-scale achievement tests (Au et al., in press).

Conclusion

In common with most local people of my generation, I did not grow up valuing HC. I spoke it, I heard others speak it, and I knew that the use of "pidgin" was considered inappropriate in certain settings, but I did not give these matters much thought. Today I can appreciate my good fortune in having grown up speaking HC and having the continued opportunity to use the language. Being a speaker of HC is a treasured marker of local identity, a connection to my family's plantation roots.

As recently as 1999, local politicians—notably, former governor Ben Cayetano—were sometimes criticized in the newspapers for "lapsing" into HC. Rest assured that when skillful local politicians such as Cayetano incorporate HC in their public pronouncements, they are doing so intentionally, for rhetorical effect. Prosodic and phonological shifts in particular, toward HC and back again toward Standard English, can be observed in the speech of many successful Hawai'i-born individuals. Those with an ear for the cadences of local speech enjoy the banter and linguistic feats of radio personalities such as Sam Kapu, who mix HC and Standard English with wit and skill. We do not need to teach HC in the classroom, but we do need to respect and appreciate it as one of the heritage languages of our islands, and this respect needs to be conveyed to students who speak HC as their primary language.

I have shown in this essay that, since Western contact, Hawai'i has been a multilingual environment, with language serving to separate the dominant groups from the subordinate groups, as is typical in ethnically and culturally diverse societies. English became the language of power and was effectively used to place the Hawaiian language and its speakers, and then HC and its speakers, in subordinate posi-

tions. Historically, HC speaking students in low-income communities have had limited access to CALP in Standard English and essayist literacy, as required to perform well on large-scale tests of reading achievement. The problem of increasing students' access is not a simple one, with students' resistance to school literacy learning posing a potential problem. Resistance by students may develop when their home language and culture are not respected in school, when they sense that teachers have low expectations for their academic learning, when instruction overemphasizes basic skills to the exclusion of higher level thinking, and when lessons cease to be engaging and meaningful. I proposed use of the SBC Process to guide schools' development of staircase curricula as an effective approach for improving the reading achievement of students who speak HC as a primary language. A staircase curriculum is necessary to provide students with the coordinated, high quality instruction they need across a period of six years or more to gain proficiency in essayist literacy. This approach to schoolwide change is a sure and steady fix, not a quick one, that has worked to raise reading achievement in schools in Hawai'i and Chicago.

A student in one of my undergraduate courses came to class one day wearing a t-shirt with the following words:

If can, can. If no can, no can.

Translation: If I can possibly do it, I will. If I find that it can't be done, don't expect anything. We must believe, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that our students who speak HC as their primary language can and will become excellent readers. To be successful, we must rely on sound professional development to prepare teachers with the knowledge and confidence they need to hold high expectations, build their school's staircase curriculum, and teach essayist literacy well. If can, can.

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