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Pidgin and Hawai‘i English: An overview

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Abstract

Today, most people from Hawai‘i speak Pidgin, Hawai‘i English, or both. This paper presents a brief discussion of the history of both the creole (called Pidgin or Hawai‘i Creole) and the variety of English spoken in Hawai‘i referred to as Hawai‘i English. The creation of Pidgin and the prevalence of English in Hawai‘i have a complex history closely tied with various sociohistorical events in the islands, and the social hegemony established during the plantation days still persists today. While Pidgin is stigmatized and is deemed inappropriate for use in formal domains, it has important social functions, and the influence from different languages is viewed as representative of the ethnic diversity found in the islands. This paper treats Pidgin and Hawai‘i English as independent from one another while commenting on some of the linguistic forms that are found in both. Lexical items, phonological forms, and syntactic structures of Pidgin and Hawai‘i English are presented alongside a discussion of language attitudes and ideologies. Recent work that attempts to address the negative attitudes toward Pidgin is also discussed.

Keywords: Pidgin, Hawai‘i English, creole languages, stereotypes

1. Introduction

Since 1778, there has been a considerable amount of language contact in the islands. From this contact arose Pidgin, a creole language known by linguists as Hawai‘i Creole (HC), Hawai‘i Creole English (HCE), or Hawai‘i English Creole (HEC). While the main lexifier for Pidgin is English, it contains features from a variety of languages, including Hawaiian, Japanese, Cantonese, and Portuguese.

Pidgin remains a frequently spoken language among people born in the islands; from a population of 1.3 million residents, roughly 600,000 people are believed to speak the creole (Sakoda & Siegel 2003: 1). In addition to speaking Pidgin, many people from Hawai‘i also speak a local variety of English. Some researchers have referred to this variety of English as Hawaiian English (e.g., Tsuzaki 1971) or Hawai‘i Standard English (Reynolds 1999: 304) but, in line with Sato (1993), it is referred to here as Hawai‘i English.

Many people in Hawai‘i can speak both Pidgin and Hawai‘i English, and they freely mix or code-switch between them. The linguistic situation has been described by some linguists as a continuum between English and the most basilectal forms of the creole (e.g., Odo 1970; Reynolds 1999). Because many speakers readily shift between the two languages and English is the main lexifier for Pidgin, certain words and phrases can be difficult to identify as one or the other language. While utterances with Pidgin syntax are normally produced with Pidgin lexemes and phonology,

speech that would syntactically be identified as English is frequently produced with lexical items and phonetic realizations found in Pidgin and not in Englishes outside of Hawai'i. This, however, should not be taken to imply that Pidgin and Hawai'i English are necessarily mutually intelligible for all people in Hawai'i; in a study conducted with fifth graders on the island of Hawai'i, Reynolds (1999) found that many students had less than 70% comprehension when listening to their non-dominant language.

Hawai'i English and Pidgin are treated here as separate languages. However, it is important to recognize that in actual use the distinction between them is not always so cut and dry as this might imply. Neither Hawai'i English nor Pidgin are homogenous; as would be expected with natural languages, there is a great deal of variation. Because so many people speak and/or understand both languages, "speakers of HC are able to enlarge the stylistic resources of the creole by switching to a co-existent English system" (Labov 1971[1990]: 36). In understanding the linguistic situation in Hawai'i, it may be helpful to draw on Mufwene's (2001:4-6) conception of a 'feature pool'. Through a feature pool where forms from both are available, Pidgin and Hawai'i English provide speakers with a variety of features and combinations of features from which they can draw, many years after the initial formation of the creole.

Noting that they do not form a strict dichotomy, this paper provides a brief overview of Pidgin and Hawai'i English, describing their history and development in the islands and giving examples of syntactic, lexical, and phonological forms found in each.

2. Background

Ancient Polynesians were highly-skilled sea voyagers and there is evidence that, as a result of their seafaring abilities, there was contact between speakers of different Polynesian languages (Egan & Burley 2009). Additionally, Polynesians are believed to have had contact with people in the Americas given not only the presence throughout Polynesia of the sweet potato, a tuber from the Americas (Jones et al. 2011), but the similarities of the words used to refer to it: e.g., *kumara* in Aotearoa, '*uala* in Hawai'i, and *comal* in the coastal Cañari territory of Ecuador (Scaglion 2005). While this provides evidence that Hawaiian had contact with at least some other Polynesian languages before the 18th century, the amount of contact was limited. In 1778, the first Europeans arrived in Hawai'i, which triggered a century-long influx of people from all over the world, especially Europe, Asia, and North America. This mass immigration led to massive social change, which greatly impacted the linguistic landscape of Hawai'i.

The increase in visitors to Hawai'i began when the islands became a center for trade in sandalwood and whaling and a stopover point for trade in furs (Reinecke 1969: 24), and the number of non-Hawaiians increased even more with the arrival of missionaries (Kawamoto 1993). Soon thereafter, the sugar cane industry established plantations in the islands and, after the Reciprocity Treaty was signed with the United States in 1875, the number of people arriving from North America - and the number of English-only schools - increased dramatically.

2.1 The Introduction of English

The different groups arriving in Hawai'i brought with them different languages and language ideologies. Sailors arriving for trade brought a kind of Pacific pidgin that was spoken in ports throughout the Pacific and which was referred to in Hawai'i as 'Hapa Haole' English.[1] European sailors who jumped ship in Hawai'i usually learned Hawaiian, and Hawaiians who joined the ships usually learned English, serving as interpreters upon returning home.

Missionaries, whose presence in Hawai'i followed the sailors', began by creating a writing system for Hawaiian and translating the Bible into Hawaiian. Once Christianity was fairly established in the islands, they spread the use of English through religion. According to Kawamoto, "the missionaries deliberately initiated a radical program of social transformation in which English language literacy would be necessary and significant" (Kawamoto 1993: 196). After Queen Ka'ahumanu converted to Christianity in the 1820s, missionary-led schools were set up throughout Hawai'i. Hawaiian was the language of instruction in schools for 'commoners', but the language of instruction at other, more prestigious schools was English. In time, English was viewed as an avenue toward economic advancement. With an eye toward annexation to the United States, the wealthy English-speaking minority in Hawai'i sought to prepare Hawai'i's youth "for membership and participation in an American-type community" (Stueber 1964:144), setting up government policy through which Hawaiian language schools gradually switched to using English. In 1888, public English schools became tuition-free and by 1896, only three years after the Kingdom of Hawai'i was overthrown, Hawaiian language schools had all but disappeared[2] (Stueber 1964: 147).

Hawaiian was, of course, not the only language under threat; there was also pressure for the children of immigrants to learn English. After World War I, this pressure increased, particularly for Japanese speakers (Tamura 1993: 43). Policy makers aimed to close down Japanese language schools, encouraging the complete adoption of English for what they viewed as a process of Americanization. The pressure to learn and speak English was strong, and this pressure was not entirely unrelated to the evolution of the creole language that people in Hawai'i refer to as Pidgin.

2.2 Pidgin Formation

In 1835, the first sugarcane plantation was established. Laborers came from all over the world to work on the plantations, and with them came a wide variety of languages. The languages with the largest populations of speakers on the plantations were Cantonese, Portuguese, and (slightly later in time) Japanese and Philippine languages. Other laborers came from Korea, Puerto Rico, Germany, Russia, and Spain, as well as from throughout the Pacific. When the plantations were first established, Hawaiian was still the most widely spoken language in the islands. Because of the wide array of plantation workers' nationalities and languages, Pidgin Hawaiian was spoken on the plantations. Pidgin Hawaiian used Hawaiian words but not Hawaiian syntax or phonology. As the use of English increased outside of the plantations, so did its use within the plantations. As a result, workers on the plantations shifted from speaking Pidgin Hawaiian to speaking Pidgin English, an

English-based pidgin that was not yet a creole. The creole language that eventually evolved from this contact situation came to be called Pidgin and is still spoken (though modified in form) today.

Pidgin most likely developed as a language distinct from Pidgin English between the 1900s and 1930s (Roberts 2004: 331). While the parents' native languages (e.g., Cantonese and Japanese) were commonly used with playmates at the beginning of the twentieth century, Pidgin was the dominant language of the plantation workers' children by the 1920s (Tamura 1993: 51). Roberts (2004) argues that the second generation (i.e., the children of the laborers who came to Hawai'i to work on plantations) learned the creole at school, from friends, and from older siblings. These speakers were likely bilingual in Pidgin and their parents' native language (Kawamoto 1993). When the second generation had children, the families spoke Pidgin at home, thereby passing on the language through intergenerational transmission (Roberts 2004: 335).

Pidgin was created alongside the formation of a Local identity: an identity closely tied with people born in Hawai'i and an identity that encompasses different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. "By being 'local', one could maintain a sense of ethnic identity while at the same time identifying with a larger, more encompassing culture" (Kawamoto 1993: 201). For many people in Hawai'i today, Pidgin and Localness are still linked ideologically. English, however, is linked with Haole identity. The association between English and Haole identity - and the stigma of using English among Local peers - was evident by the 1910s (Roberts 2004: 342). This association between language and culture was strengthened further by policy makers who transformed select public schools, where students spoke Pidgin, into English standard schools, where the only children admitted were those who were identified as speaking "standard English" and who were most frequently of European descent (Tamura 1993: 54-55).

Today, Pidgin is largely viewed as a language to use at home and with close friends. In contrast, English is viewed as the language to use in education and for upward economic mobility. There are several noteworthy advocates for Pidgin, such as Lee Tonouchi, who is known as 'Da Pidgin Guerilla', and Da Pidgin Coup, a Pidgin advocacy group at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. In an effort to shift public perceptions of Pidgin in a positive direction, Christina Higgins and colleagues initiated a film documentary project at a high school on O'ahu, where students created a documentary on Pidgin, ultimately challenging their own preconceptions about Pidgin (Higgins, Nettel, Furukawa, & Sakoda 2012). More work along these lines is needed because the use of Pidgin in formal domains remains stigmatized (Marlow & Giles 2010). The view that speakers use - and should use - the language deemed appropriate for a particular domain remains strong, despite the fact that Pidgin is used in a wide variety of domains, including politics and the workplace.

The next four sections step through the linguistic properties of Pidgin and Hawai'i English, beginning with the phonology and phonetic realizations of sounds, followed by lexical items, discourse particles, and syntactic forms found especially in the creole.

3. Phonetic and Phonological Features

The phonological system of Pidgin is different from that of English. According to Sakoda and Siegel (2003), the most basilectal form of the creole has seven distinct monophthongs. The phonological systems for basilectal and mesolectal forms of Pidgin reported in Sakoda and Siegel (2004) are shown in Table 1. The IPA shown is merely intended as an approximate realization of each phoneme; there is, of course, a great deal of variation in the phonetic realizations of the sounds.

In contrast with the most basilectal form of Pidgin, Hawai'i English has 15 distinct vowels, or 16 vowels for older speakers who may maintain a distinction between /ɑ/ and /ɔ/. Phonetic realizations of some vowels in Hawai'i English differ from those found in the continental United States, though there are also similarities especially for some speakers. One difference is that some speakers of Hawai'i English use full vowels where speakers from the continental United States would produce schwa. For example, many speakers of Hawai'i English pronounce the first vowel in the word 'today' as [u] rather than [ə] (Sato 1993: 135). Another difference is the realization of the vowel /o/ as found in the word *goat*, which is often monophthongal in Pidgin and Hawai'i English (Sato 1993: 135). Monophthongal forms of this vowel are found especially at the end of words and preceding [m] (Sakoda & Siegel 2004: 223), though some English speakers from Hawai'i produce diphthongal variants of /o/ regardless of context. Ongoing work by Hannah Rosenberg-Jones suggests that the monophthongal variant is associated with people who are laidback and have a public school education. In other words, the varying phonetic realizations of vowels like /o/ appear to be socially motivated.

Table 1: The phonological system of Pidgin reported by Sakoda and Siegel (2004: 222-225). For variation they describe as context-free and unconditioned, the variants are given. Variation that is conditioned by context or phonological environment is marked with an asterisk (*) next to the variants.

Vowel	Basilectal	Mesolectal		Vowel	Basilectal	Mesolectal
FLEECE	lax [i]	[i] ; [ij]		GOOSE	lax [u]	[u]
KIT	lax [i]	[ɪ]		FOOT	lax [u]	[ʊ]
FACE	[eɪ], [e] *	[eɪ], [e]		GOAT	[oʊ], [o] *	[oʊ], [o]
DRESS	[e̞], [ɛ]	[ɛ], [e̞]		CHOICE	[oɪ], [ɔɪ]	[oɪ], [ɔɪ]
TRAP/BATH	[e̞]	[e̞], [æ]		MOUTH	[ɑʊ]	[ɑʊ]
NURSE	[ɜ˜] *	[ɜ˜]		FORCE	[ɔ], [o] *	[ɔ], [o˜]
PRICE	[ɑɪ]	[ɑɪ]		THOUGHT	[ɔ]	[ɔ], [ɒ]
NEAR	[iɑ]	[iɑ], [i˜]		LOT	[ɔ]	[ɔ], [ɑ], [ɒ]
SQUARE	[eɑ]	[eɑ], [i˜]		STRUT	[ɑ], [ʌ]	[ɑ], [ʌ]
happY	[i]	[i]		PALM	[ɑ]	[ɑ]
horsES	[e]	[e], [ə], [ɨ]		START	[ɑ]	[ɑ], [ɑ˜]
lettER	[ɑ]	[ɑ], [ə˜]		CURE	[ʊɑ]	[ʊɑ], [u˜]
commA	[ɑ]	[ɑ], [ə]				

For many speakers of Pidgin, the vowels in the words *kit* and *fleece* are a single phoneme and are realized as a slightly lax production of [i]. In contrast, /ɪ/ and /i/ are distinct phonemes in Hawai'i English. In Pidgin, the vowels in the words *trap* and *dress* are not distinct for many speakers, whereas they are distinct phonemes in Hawai'i English. In contrast with the higher, fronter variant found in Pidgin, the vowel /æ/ is backed and lowered in Hawai'i English before both oral and nasal consonants. The vowel in the word *face* is realized as a monophthong word-finally and when preceding a voiceless consonant in word-internal position.

The vowels /ɑ/ and /ɔ/, as in *lot* and *thought*, which are variably distinct in English spoken in the continental United States, are merged for many speakers of Hawai'i English. Earlier work reports a large amount of variation in the realization of these vowels (Odo 1977) and ongoing work provides evidence that the vowel merger is complete for young speakers of Hawai'i English (Drager et al., 2011). In contrast, some Pidgin speakers instead merge /ɑ/ and /ʌ/, so that the vowels in cut and *cot* are homonyms and distinct from *caught* (Sakoda & Siegel 2008:225).

In Hawai'i English, [r]-colored vowels vary with non-rhotic realizations of the same phoneme (Sato 1993: 135). In Pidgin, however, there are no non-prevocalic [r]-colored vowels except for /ɝ/ as in *nurse*, which in the basilect is found in monosyllabic words or stressed positions (Sakoda & Siegel 2004: 222-223). The vowel in words like *north* and *force* are realized without [r] coloring, and the vowel quality depends on stress; it is realized as [ɔ] in monosyllabic words and stressed syllables and as [o] in unstressed syllables. Likewise, unstressed vowels are not realized as [ə] as in *comma* or [ɨ] as in *horses* but as a full vowel [ɑ] or [e], respectively.

The consonant system of Pidgin is similar to that of English with the addition of the glottal stop or 'okina, which is a consonant in Hawaiian and is written as an inverted apostrophe.[3] The 'okina is found in some Pidgin words that have a Hawaiian language origin. Another feature of consonants in Pidgin is that there are no interdental fricatives, /ð/ and /θ/, in basilectal forms of Pidgin so that *with* is pronounced [wit] and that is pronounced [dæʔ]. While the stops are phonetic variants of the fricatives in Hawai'i English, the distribution is categorical in Pidgin. Intervocalically, the voiced interdental fricative is usually realized as a flap, so that *other* is realized as [ʌɾɑ] and the discourse marker *like that* is realized as [laɪræt].

Consonant clusters differ in Pidgin as well; alveolar stops are palatized before /r/, so that *three, tree,* and *dry* are pronounced [tʃɹi], [tʃɹi], and [dʒɹɑɪ]. When /t/ is preceded by /s/, the palatalization occurs on the /s/ for some speakers (e.g., [ʃtɹit]) and on the /t/ for other speakers (e.g., [stʃɹit]). Palatization such as this is also variably found in Hawai'i English.

4. The Lexicon

When discussing differences between Hawai'i English and other varieties of English, most people from Hawai'i comment on lexical items. These oft-commented on lexical items are also used in Pidgin.[4] Some originate from languages such as Hawaiian and Japanese, sometimes evolving in form so that

they are no longer intelligible to speakers of those languages. Other lexical items have expanded or shifted their meanings. Table 2 lists words that are commonly associated with Pidgin and Hawai'i English.

While English is the main lexifier for Pidgin, not all words mean the same thing in the two languages. For example, the word *plenny* means 'lots' in Pidgin. For example, the sentence "Chee, get plenny peoples heah!" (Simonson, Sakata, & Sasaki 1981) means "there are lots of people here" not the English interpretation that "there are plenty of people here (to do X)".

Table 2: Words used in Pidgin and Hawai'i English

Word	Origin	English Translation
makai	Hawaiian	toward or facing the ocean
manapua	Hawaiian (*mea 'ono pua'a,* meaning 'pork pastry' or literally 'delicious pork thing'	Chinese filled steamed bun (not necessarily filled with pork)
shi-shi	Japanese	urine, urinate

Other words used in Hawai'i rely on cultural knowledge that is shared by people who were born and raised in the island chain. For example, words such as *moke* and *tita* can be defined as "a Local guy" or "a Local girl", but this misses a large part of what it means to be, or be identified as, a moke or tita. Both mokes and titas are associated speaking Pidgin (Meyerhoff 2004), but speaking Pidgin does not necessarily make one a moke or tita. Depending on who says these words and how they are said, they could be interpreted in different ways; native speakers of Pidgin and Hawai'i English have the cultural knowledge of when it is appropriate to use these words. Using words like these without possessing this insider knowledge could unintentionally result in undesirable consequences.

For many people in Hawai'i, the use of certain words or short phrases can indicate a code-shift between Pidgin and English. Words that are associated with Pidgin include *brah* (a term of address) and *da kine*. *Da kine* (sometimes written *dakain*) is a term that is used in place of nouns or verbs. This adds vagueness to the interaction, which may be intended if discussing a taboo topic, talking about someone behind their back, or establishing and maintaining ties between interlocutors. An example from Simonson et al. (1981) is shown in (1).

(1) Chahlene: …So den Jimmy wen da kine me, you know, wit' his da kine!

Chahlene's fren': Hoo, Chahlene! You get one pilau mout'!

Charlene's friend responds to Charlene's comment, exclaiming that she has 'one pilau mout', a dirty mouth. While this example was created for comic effect, it is evident that her friend interprets Charlene's use of *da kine* as referring to something sexual. Of course, *da kine* is not limited to lewd language; it can be used in a number of different situations. Through using *da kine* the speaker constructs a situation in which the speaker and interlocutor must rely on their shared knowledge. This, in turn, serves to strengthen solidarity between those involved in the interaction.

False reference can also be used in Pidgin for this purpose (Wong 1999). False reference is when a speaker refers to a third person using a term that does not refer literally to that person. Wong (1999: 213) gives the following exchange as an example:

A: Get plenny people using da computahs?
B: Well, your braddah waz dea.
A: Which braddah?
B: You know, Doodoo Boy.

The referent Doodoo Boy in this exchange is not actually A's brother but a coworker who is known to both A and B. Through using the false reference *your braddah*, speaker A teases speaker B to build solidarity and align herself with speaker B. Wong explains that "it is our shared understanding of language use norms that enables me to interpret this otherwise derogatory remark as a sign of friendship and an effort to reinforce and solidify the relationship" (Wong 1999: 214). Here, language is used to reinforce the cultural norms that are required to correctly interpret the speaker's intent.

5. Discourse particles

For many visitors to Hawai'i from the continental United States, one of the first features of Hawai'i English that they notice is the use of the discourse particle *yeah* at the end of sentences. The use of *yeah* as a discourse particle is found in both Hawai'i English and Pidgin. In the creole, a number of other particles can also be found, including *eh, huh*, and *no*. Sakoda and Siegel (2003: 14) explain that the use of *yeah* and *no* as discourse particles in Pidgin likely stems from the use of discourse particles in Japanese. Likewise, the use of the particles in Hawai'i English likely comes from their use in Pidgin.

6. Syntactic features

While the use of discourse particles is similar, one difference between Pidgin and Hawai'i English is the word order. The syntactic forms found in Hawai'i English cohere more or less to the forms found in many varieties of American English. In contrast, Pidgin syntax is markedly different due to the language contact situation in which it evolved. Although English served as a lexifier language for Pidgin, many features of Pidgin syntax come from other languages spoken in Hawai'i during the creole's formation. For example, adjectives or stative verbs can occur before the subject in both Hawaiian (2a) and Pidgin (2b).

(2) a.) 'Ono ka i'a. (Hawaiian)
delicious DET fish
'The fish is delicious.'
b.) Cute da baby. (Pidgin)

However, this is not the only word order available to Pidgin speakers; descriptive words can also occur following the subject as in (3a). The word *stei* in

Pidgin has several functions, including copula, auxiliary, and marker, that are also found with *estar* in Portuguese. As shown in (3b), copula *stei* can be realized before the adjective, denoting a sense that the adjective was (at some stage) unexpected. For example, the sentence in (3a) implies that the stew is nice and the niceness is unsurprising, whereas the sentence in (3b) implies that the stew wasn't expected to be nice, but (contrary to expectations) it is.

(3) a.) Da stew nice.
'The stew is nice.'
b.) Da stew stei nice.
'The stew is nice.'

Past tense is commonly marked by *wen* as in (4a), though for some speakers (such as people from Kaua'i) it is marked instead by *ben*. The past tense marker is not obligatory if past tense can be inferred from the context. It is possible that *wen go* can have a deliberative meaning, as in (4b), when *go* is not the main verb.

(4) a.) I wen go.
'I went.'
b.) Dey wen go chop down one mango chri.
'They went to chop down a mango tree.'

Go can be used to mark future and other irrealis functions such as the conditional (Bickerton 1977), shown in (5a) and the habitual (Sato 1978), shown in (5b). The examples in (5a-b) are from Sato (1978: 51) and use the Odo orthography (Bickerton & Odo 1976) used in the original.

a.) bat if no mo sik, only go gib yu da medisin, æn yu go hom.
'But if you aren't sick, he only gives you medicine and you go home.'
b.) so ere nau æn den de go fid om wid da kandens milk.
'So every now and then they used to feed him condensed milk.'

Another syntactic feature found in Pidgin but not English is the use of *fo* to introduce complements, as in (6). In Pidgin, *fo* can be used before unrealized complements (as in 6a) as well as realized complements (as in 6b). These uses of *fo* are paralleled by the different functions of *para* in Portuguese (Sakoda & Siegel 2008: 214).

(6) a.) I gon wait fo my fada to come home.
'I'm going to wait for my father to come home.'
b.) I wen go downtown yestaday fo eat lunch, an' I wen en' up eating dinna, too.
'I went downtown yesterday to eat lunch, and I ended up eating dinner, too.'

Negation can be expressed with *no* or *neva* depending on tense; *neva* is obligatory for past tense sentences. The examples given in (7b-c) are from Labov (1971:24). These same forms are found in Pidgin today.

(7) a.) We no eat dea.
'We don't eat there.'
b.) We never eat there.
'We didn't eat there.'
c.) They never do em.
'They haven't done it.'

The grammatical structures found in Hawai'i English are said to be the same as those found in "standard" American English. While there is syntactic variation in Hawaii English, very little work has examined it thus far.

7. Attitudes toward Pidgin and Hawai‘i English

Creole languages are often stigmatized because of the socio-historical situations in which they arose, and Pidgin is no exception. People in Hawai‘i, even those who speak Pidgin, often refer to the language as ‘broken English’, insinuating that it is somehow inferior to English. As discussed earlier, the negative ideologies toward Pidgin no doubt stem from the hegemonic distribution of wealth and power in Hawai‘i. As Kawamoto explains “Historically, Pidgin English was basically only used by the working class – whom the upper-class Caucasians felt spoke an inferior form of English spoken by the ignorant and uneducated. This stereotype continues to be present, and the current friction between Pidgin English proponents and opponents has its roots in Hawai‘i’s social inequalities” (Kawamoto 1993: 201).

The negative ideologies surrounding Pidgin have far-reaching consequences. For example, in 1987 the Board of Education tried to pass legislation that effectively banned the use of Pidgin in the classroom. Public outrage kept the legislation from going through. Instead a weaker (though still telling) version was passed in which teachers were encouraged to use only English in the classroom. Such stigmatization of language use in Hawai‘i is not limited to Pidgin but has been evident with Hawai‘i English as well. During the same week that the Board of Education hearings were taking place, two meteorologists from Hawai‘i sued the National Weather Service because of discrimination from linguistic profiling; rather than hire the two meteorologists from Hawai‘i, the National Weather Service hired two people who were less experienced and required more training but who they argued “sounded better” (Sato 1991: 655). The recordings submitted with the job applications – those on which the National Weather Service had made their judgments – are recordings of the individuals speaking Hawai‘i English, not Pidgin. The judge found in favor of the National Weather Service, demonstrating that Hawai‘i English is not only perceived as different than other varieties but as worse.

These negative attitudes toward Pidgin and Hawai‘i English do not have a linguistic base; they are socially constructed. Moves to eradicate Pidgin undervalue the subtleties of false reference and vague language, how language can be used to create and maintain solidarity, and how it can be used to construct Local identity. Though stigmatized in formal domains, Pidgin has covert prestige. One skill that is highly valued among Pidgin speakers is the ability to talk story. “Talking story artistically and entertainingly in HCE is an important social skill in the community, especially in peer groups, where under-statement, indirection, and detachment are part of a ‘local’ hybrid identity emphasizing humor and slow pacing in non-serious contexts” (Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo 1999: 110). Here again we see the close relationship Pidgin has with Local identity; knowing how to talk story is a skill developed locally, with patterns that can be viewed as vague or unorganized by the outsider.

8. Conclusion

Pidgin and Hawai'i English each have an inventory of sounds, words, and grammatical structures that, when taken together, are unique to the islands. The association between linguistic forms and Hawai'i is especially strong with certain lexical items (e.g., *da kine*); while Hawai'i English also differs from other varieties of English in terms of the phonology, people are less aware of these differences. The use of Pidgin as well as the unique combination of linguistic factors found in the Local variety of English allow people from Hawai'i to construct a Local identity and allow listeners to identify other Local people as being from Hawai'i. Certain linguistic acts associated with Pidgin, such as how to talk story and how to use false reference and vague language to create solidarity, are especially valued in Local culture.

Despite the close relationship between Pidgin and Local identity, Pidgin remains stigmatized both inside and outside of Hawai'i. While efforts have been underway to raise awareness about the linguistic validity and social value of Pidgin, there is still a great deal of work to be done. There is also still a great deal of descriptive work to be done on both Pidgin and Hawai'i English, and I welcome inquiries from researchers and, especially, Local students who are interested in working on these languages.

Notes

1. *Hapa* and *haole* are Hawaiian words. *Hapa* means 'half', and *haole* originally meant 'foreign', though it is commonly used today to mean 'white person/ culture'.
2. In 1893, the Kingdom of Hawai'i was overthrown by American businessmen with the backing of United States Marines.
3. The glottal stop is also found phonetically in English before phrase-initial vowels and phonemically in *uh-oh*.
4. The lexical items are sometimes identified as features of Pidgin (rather than English).

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