

U.S. Mainland Speakers' Use of Hawaiian Creole English and Standard American English Across Social Situations

In Hawaii much of the population speaks Hawaiian Creole English (HCE) and Standard American English (SAE), and speakers often code-switch between the two varieties (Young, 2002, Reynolds, 1999). However, fluency in HCE and SAE differs among speakers--a fact that has implications for the communication in a preferred language variety in a particular social situation (Young, 2004). Individuals who move away from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland may find that their needs and preferences for using HCE and SAE may be different from what they experienced in Hawaii; and individuals may consequently develop different uses of these language varieties in different contexts.

Little research, however, has examined HCE and SAE use among Hawaii-to-U.S. mainland immigrants. Addressing this gap, this thesis will focus on HCE/SAE speakers who grew up in Hawaii and relocated to the mainland as adults, and on how their use of HCE and SAE varies across different social situations. This investigation considers factors that may shape their language variety use, including their attitudes, identity, and investment regarding SAE and HCE. I hope that the findings of this study will illuminate issues that lead speakers to maintain, develop, or experience attrition in their use of standard and non-standard language varieties.

In exploring this topic it is important to clarify the relevant terminology for this study. While HCE and SAE are both considered varieties of English, there is a debate

over whether HCE qualifies as a dialect of English. Romaine (1988) describes pidgins, creoles, and dialects all as types of languages, whereas Meyerhoff (2006) uses the neutral term *variety* to refer to both languages and dialects. HCE and SAE are both considered varieties of English, and while HCE qualifies as a non-standard language variety, not all scholars categorize it as a dialect. Therefore, instead of recognizing speakers of HCE and SAE as bidialectal (Baugh, 1986), this thesis will use “bivarietal” to describe those speaking two different language varieties.

The first chapter of the thesis will provide a sociohistorical context of both the indigenous Hawaiian language (Hawaiian) and HCE; and HCE’s evolution from a pidgin to a creole. A pidgin is defined as a simplified language created between people who do not share a common language, and thus is not native to any of its speakers (Romaine, 1988). The “creolization” of a pidgin can happen when the pidgin becomes the first language of a group of speakers, often the locally born second and third generation. The expanded pidgin is used for "the entire range of social functions that a language can be used for," thereby developing into a creole (Meyerhoff, p.247).

The first chapter will also review the social struggle between Hawaiian, HCE and SAE. Historically the education system in Hawaii has devalued HCE (Young, 2002), often resulting in anxiety and a devaluing of SAE by bivarietal students. Currently there is an effort to revive Hawaiian and encourage its use in schools; however, the use of HCE in schools remains a taboo (Young, 2002). These types of social conflicts impact bivarietal speakers’ uses of these different varieties in certain contexts.

The second chapter will review previous research done on the acquisition of SAE by HCE speakers, and how the concepts of *attitude*, *identity*, and *investment* affect

learners and shape their language variety use and language development. These concepts are relevant here because for many HCE speakers SAE is not only their second variety, but also the language variety that they will be expected to use in their education, employment, and business experiences.

Attitude is a main contributor to language learning. It can involve factors such as learners' views about the learning situation and/or their desires to socialize with members of the target language community (Macintyre & Charos, 1996). For HCE speakers on the mainland who have learned SAE as a second variety, their attitudes towards SAE may impact not only the frequency with which they use SAE, but also the situations they choose to use it in.

Identity and investment also play a vital role in language learning and the choices bivarietal speakers make in different social situations. Peirce (1995) suggests that a learner's social identity, or their "sense of self" (p. 13), contributes to language use, and that through language the learner negotiates their self-identity across different sites. Peirce implies that self-identity contributes to a language learner's investment in the target language, suggesting that when learner's invest in another language they do so expecting or hoping for a good return. As such, it is possible that HCE/SAE speakers' investment in one or both varieties will have an effect on their use of these varieties in multiple contexts.

In chapter three I will discuss my research methodology. Data for this study will be drawn from three sources. The first source will be three videotaped sessions of small group discussions in which participants will be asked to identify characteristics of several samples of HCE and SAE speech. I will analyze their comments for what they reveal

about perceptions and attitudes towards different language varieties. The second will be a questionnaire, disseminated to 75-80 adult members of several different native Hawaiian organizations throughout Southern California. This questionnaire will ask about participants' language use in regards to HCE and SAE respectively, and factors influencing their use in different situations. The last source will be a follow-up interview with three to four of the participants, again focused on their language history and use. While this thesis recognizes the limitations of self-report data, the participants' perceptions of their language use can still provide important insights about language use patterns and language attitudes in this specific population. I will obtain necessary approval from the IRB committee before commencing my research.

The fourth chapter will present the results and discuss their implications, attending to what factors most affect how the participants perceive and value each variety, and how those factors might impact whether those varieties are maintained, developed, or fall into attrition when the speakers are removed from Hawaii.

## Annotated Bibliography

- Baugh, J. (1986). Bilingualism and bidialectalism among American minorities. *Series: Studies in Descriptive Linguistics* (pp. 84-94) Heidelberg: J. Groos Verlag. This article examines the social and cultural contexts of three minority dialects, including Hawaiian Pidgin English (HPE). In addition to providing a distinction between bilingualism and bidialectalism, Baugh discusses the problems these speakers face in regards to educational, social and economic equality in situations where Standard English is required.
- DeCamp, D. (1971). Introduction: the study of pidgin and creole languages. D. Hymes (Ed.), *Pidginization and creolization of languages* (pp. 13-39). London: Cambridge UP. DeCamp presents an introduction to pidgin and creole languages and provides definitions for foundational concepts in the field. DeCamp's chapter also discusses the creation and evolution of pidgins and creoles, and identifies important concepts in pidgin/creole studies.
- Johnstone, B. (2000). *Qualitative methods in sociolinguistics*. New York: Oxford UP. Chapter 2 discusses methodology and field work in relation to researching American dialect. Besides describing the task of identifying dialect boundaries, chapter 2 clarifies the difference between a descriptive linguistics approach and a historical / comparative linguistic approach to research.
- MacIntyre, P. & Charos, C. (1996). Personality, attitudes, and affect as predictors of second language communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 16 (1), 3-22. In their article, MacIntyre and Charos take Gardner's socioeducational model of second language acquisition which depicts attitudes,

integrativeness and motivation as factors bearing directly on language learning outcomes; and try to combine this model with MacIntyre's model of willingness to communicate. This model includes introversion, self-esteem and anxiety as factors that affect willingness to communicate which bears on language learning outcomes.

Meyerhoff, M. (2006). *Introducing sociolinguistics*. New York: Routledge.

Meyerhoff's book introduces the themes of language, variation, and style in accordance with sociolinguistic theory, and she provides current concise definitions for terminology of the field. Meyerhoff also examines language choice, attitudes towards language, communities of practice, and language contact. Her book also sheds light on how these features influence sociolinguistic methodology.

Peirce, B.N. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29 (1), 9-31. This article examines concepts in SLA including motivation, identity and investment. It is Peirce's recommendation that investment is a more appropriate and integral concept when it comes to language learning. Investment takes into account the individual's identity, and how identity is constructed through language across different situations.

Reynolds, S.B. (1999). Mutual intelligibility? Comprehension problems between American Standard English and Hawaii Creole English in Hawaii's public schools. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 19 (3), 357-377. This is a study of public school students who speak Hawaiian Creole English (HCE) as their first language (L1), and of their acquisition of Standard American English

(SAE). Students, especially those from rural areas, demonstrate a range of competence in SAE which consequently affects their ability to code-switch between HCE and SAE.

Roberts, S.J. (1999). Nativization and the genesis of Hawaiian creole. *Language Change and Language Contact in Pidgins and Creoles*, 7, 257-300. This article provides a sociohistorical look at Hawaiian Creole English (HCE), including the linguistic relationships between the indigenous Hawaiian language, Hawaiian Pidgin English (HPE), and HCE.

Romaine, S. (1988). *Pidgin and creole languages*. New York: Longman. Romaine's book provides a detailed look at the life-cycle (chapters 4 & 5) of pidgins and creoles, and the creolization of a pidgin language. Chapter 2 also puts forth current definitions for characteristics and features of pidgin and creole languages.

Young, M. (2002). Standard English and student bodies: institutionalizing race and literacy in Hawaii. *College English*, 64 (4), 405-431. Young's article reviews the history and function of Hawaiian, Hawaiian Pidgin English (HPE), Hawaiian Creole English (HCE), and Standard American English (SAE) in Hawaii's schools. Historically SAE has been the only language acceptable in Hawaii's schools, but in the last few decades there has been an effort to recognize non-standard varieties such as HCE and Hawaiian as languages of literacy in Hawaii.

Young, M. (2004). Native claims: cultural citizenship, ethnic expressions, and the rhetorics of "Hawaiianness". *College English*, 76 (1), 83-101. This article examines the functions of Hawaii's language varieties in terms of identity and language choices local speakers make. Mainly the article attends to the use of

Hawaiian, Hawaiian Creole English (HCE), and Standard American English (SAE) among the indigenous Hawaiian population of Hawaii, and how the use of these varieties demonstrate speaker identity.