

What Does Pidgin Sound Like Today?

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the features of Hawai'i Creole English (HCE, or "Pidgin" as commonly known in Hawai'i) through an interview with a local Pidgin speaker. The paper describes and discusses the phonological, lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic features of the speaker's HCE, exemplified by transcribed excerpts and audio samples from the interview. In addition, the paper analyzes the speaker's attitudes toward HCE and discusses them in the social context of Hawai'i. The paper concludes with implications for language teaching.

Introduction

A pidgin is a makeshift language created between speakers who do not share a common language but need to engage in brief transactional dialogues with each other. Over time, descendants of pidgin speakers develop a creole, a fully developed language. Hawai'i Creole English (HCE) is a creole developed from the pidgin of the plantation era in Hawai'i. It is referred to by its speakers as "Pidgin." In this paper, I will refer to HCE as both HCE and Pidgin. The elements of HCE include distinct lexical, syntactic, and phonetic features that are derived from the various languages introduced to Hawai'i.

In a field project aiming at identifying features of HCE and discerning its speakers' linguistic attitudes, I conducted an interview with a Hawai'i local.¹ The Pidgin speaker is a man in his late 50's, born and raised on the island of O'ahu. Choosing to remain anonymous for this study, he will be referred to as Kimo. Being of Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, and Norwegian descent, Kimo's Pidgin displays many features that are derived from each of these ethnic backgrounds. I have known the interviewee for a long time, and the interview was conducted as "talk story" time – casual chatting – between him and me in a familiar setting. The interview was audio recorded.

During the interview, in order to elicit a natural sample of Pidgin, I asked Kimo to describe a scary experience which he faced in his life. He decided to tell me a story about a time he went surfing. I decided to use this part of the interview because Kimo is an avid surfer; when talking about surfing, his speech is relaxed (as if he is talking to his friends), providing an authentic form of speech.



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My goal in this project is to answer two questions: (1) What Pidgin features are present in Kimo's speech?; (2) what is Kimo's attitude toward Pidgin? I will answer the first question by describing the phonological, lexical, and syntactic features that mark Kimo's speech as Pidgin. I will address the second question by analyzing how he positioned himself toward Pidgin, explicitly or implicitly.

The Linguistic Features of Kimo's Pidgin

Phonological Features

Excerpt 1 is a transcript of Kimo's scary surfing experience, which can be found in the first audio clip.

Excerpt 1: Kimo's Surfing Story [Click on link to hear [Audio clip #1](#)]

1 So one time, I was dakine. I was gon surf wit ma. Wit ma friends. And uh, so
2 was on da North Shore. But I neva surf fo long time and I figa, ah, I
3 get um. I mean I surf uh yu know befoa, you know when I was small kid.
4 But uh, and I figa ah, da surf on da North Shore not dat big. So
5 anyway. da night before I wen surf I was out all night pahtying. And I
6 hardly got any sleep. And I had one brand new surfboard dat my friend
7 just gave me so I neva use dat board in my life befoa. So, next moning
8 we went e--arly. We went early in da moning. Still dahk. Hard for see
9 da wave. You can only see da white wash. Dis on da North Shore now. So
10 I figgah, ah not dat big. So I wen paddle out. And, da numbah one rule
11 about surfing is: neva go fo da first wave. Or if you do, you betta
12 catch dat wave. If you don't catch dat wave den yu in trouble. So, I
13 figa, keh here comes a wave so I gon start paddling and I was paddling
14 fo da firs' wave. And I was paddling but I neva surf long time so, yu
15 know, my paddling abilities wasn't dat strong. And so I missed da wave
16 and while I was paddling fo da wave, all I could hear was my friends
17 was yelling, "Paddo! "Paddo! Paddo!" but I couldn't. My ahmz couldn't
18 go anymoa and I missed da wave. And den I turn around and hea comes
19 anodda wave. And now I'm in da impak zone. So now, 'uh oh,' I'm in
20 trouble. Here comes dis wave. And da waves wasn't dat small. Da waves
21 was about I would say good five feet. Hawaiian five feet. Hawaiian das
22 kinda, das kinda big. Especially fo da North Shore is very strong out
23 dea. So I had to bail and I was unda da water and da leash was, da
24 leash was tangling around my neck I thought I was gon drown. I started
25 praying. I started, ho, man, unbelievable. So den I finally got up. I
26 surface. And den I grab my board. I turn around. Here comes anodda
27 wave. Dat hold me down, I started to panic. I tot I was gon drown. I
28 was, you know, it was...It was a very scary moment fo me. And den I
29 figure yu know wat, I gon paddle in. But on da North Shore da current

30 stay sucking out. It's hard to paddle in if you no catch one wave
 31 in. So I started tryna I paddo I paddo I cannot get in. Now da
 32 current stay taking me down. Just drifting I'm way down da odda side of
 33 da beach. But finally wen paddle in, one wave wen finally wen push me
 34 in and I washed up on the beach and I was dead tired. And so I ended up
 35 on da beach and because I neva have sleep da night befoa I slep on
 36 da beach right dea. I just wen lie down on da sand wit my surfboard and
 37 I wen knock out. And den how I woke up da waves was getting bigger so
 38 da wave wen wash up and um, wake me up. And so I was up and now I had
 39 to walk all da way down da odda end fo to wea da car was park. And so I
 40 pick up my surfboard, I stay walking down da beach. And I see two
 41 surfas standing on da beach wit dea surfboard looking out at da waves and they see
 42 me coming like I just pau surf. So of course, dey gon ask me, "Eh brah,
 43 how was da surf?" and I told um, "Hu, braddah, da surf was good, man.
 44 HUUU! You guys should go out." And den I wen paddle to da cah and I was
 45 laughing to myself.

The first feature that marks Kimo's speech as Pidgin can be found in line 4 in Excerpt 1 (Audio Clip #1 at 0:25-30), when he says, "da surf on da North Shore not dat big." In Pidgin, the [ð] sounds of words such as *the*, *this* and *that* as well as the [θ] of *think* do not exist (Sakoda, 2003). Instead, Pidgin speakers will replace [ð] and [θ] with [d] and [t], respectively. In this example, Kimo also pronounces *the* as *da* and *that* as *dat* when he says, "Never go for *da* first wave. But if you do, you better catch *dat* wave. If you don't, then you're in trouble" (line 12, Excerpt 1). Later in the same excerpt, one can hear *this* pronounced as *dis* as well: "Neva go fo *da* firs' wave. But if yu do, yu betta catch *dat* wave. If yu don't, *den* yu in trouble."

The second feature which marks Kimo's speech as Pidgin is his omission of the sound [r] in "arms," as [amz]. The full [r] sound does not usually occur after vowels in Pidgin, and if an [r] is located at the end of a word, it is replaced with a separate syllable [a] (Sakoda & Siegel, 2003). In Excerpt 1, instead of "I couldn't paddle any *more*", he utters "any *moa*". Pidgin speakers also tend to delete consonants located at the end of words and not enunciate [r] or [θ] sounds located at the end of words. Kimo consistently does this every time he pronounces 'North Shore' as [nɔ:t ʃɔə].

Further, unlike stress-timed Standard American English (SAE), HCE is a syllable-timed language, meaning that all syllables have equal length. This may have resulted from the influence of immigrants who came to Hawai'i from Asia, as many Asian languages are syllable-timed. An example of this appears in lines 17-18 in Excerpt 1, where Kimo says, "My ahmz couldn't go anymoa and I missed da wave. And den I turn around and hea comes anodda wave" (Audio Clip #1 at 1:55-2:03). Each syllable in the sentence is produced with the same length.

With respect to intonation, the most prominent difference between HCE and SAE is found in yes-no questions. In SAE, the intonation continually rises and ends in high pitch. In HCE, the pattern is falling, starting with high pitch and ending in low pitch. As Sakoda and Siegel (2003) claimed, this is most likely influenced by the intonation patterns of the Hawaiian

language. Examples of this kind of intonation in Kimo's speech can be heard in the second audio clip, where he utters common question phrases and switches back and forth between HCE and SAE. The first example of this intonation pattern can be found in Table 2 (Audio Clip #2 at 0:7-0:11). When Kimo said, "So wat, yu like go surf or wat?" the intonation rises at "surf," then falls sharply at "or wat." Similarly, in the same table (Audio Clip #2 at 0:00-0:6], he said, "Eh howzit bra, wea da batrum steh?" The intonation of this utterance rises and falls, while in SAE the intonation would form a rising contour.

Lexical Features

As seen in both transcripts, there are many words used in Kimo's story that are not present in SAE. Below is a list of Kimo's HCE words and their SAE equivalents (Table 1). All definitions were gathered from Pidgin-English dictionary (n. d.).

Table 1
Pidgin Words Used by Kimo

HCE Word	SAE Meaning
1. <i>dakine</i>	A "whatcha-ma-callit," or sometimes used as a filler word
2. <i>Hawaiian 5 feet</i>	Rather than measuring the face of the wave, "Hawaiian measure" normally refers to the back of the wave, which is about half the height of the face. Thus, a Hawaiian 5-foot wave would measure 10 feet from the face of the wave.
3. <i>brah/braddah</i>	Brother, guy
4. <i>ho/hu</i>	Wow; expresses excitement in speech
5. <i>ni'ele</i>	Nosy
6. <i>shoots</i>	"Ok;" Used as a confirmation/a way to mark the end of a conversation
7. <i>pau</i>	Finished
8. <i>haole</i>	A term modernly used to described as a foreigner or someone who is white (of European decent)
9. <i>chop suey</i>	Used to describe one's mixed ethnicities
10. <i>spock</i>	Look
11. <i>bumbai</i>	Otherwise, or else, later
12. <i>l'dat</i>	"Like that" used at the end of a sentence

As can be seen in Table 1, Kimo's Pidgin words have roots in Hawaiian (Examples 4, 5, 8), Chinese (Example 9), and English (Examples 1, 3, 6, 11, 12).² The English and Chinese words, however, have shifted their meanings from the original languages and gained meanings unique to Pidgin.

Syntactic Features

Later in the interview, I asked Kimo to explain and give examples of some common phrases in Pidgin. Working in the tourism industry, Kimo is able to switch back and forth from HCE to SAE when interacting with speakers unfamiliar with HCE. His phrases show how the syntax and lexicon of Pidgin differs from that of SAE.

The syntactic difference between Pidgin and SAE regarding question formation can be seen in Examples 1-4 in Table 2. In Example 2 for instance (Audio Clip #2 at 0:07-0:15), to ask a friend if he wants to go surfing together, a Pidgin speaker would say, “so what bra, yu like go surf or wat?” rather than “So, do you want to go surfing?” Instead of the SAE’s phrase “want to go,” a Pidgin speaker would simply say “like go” and add “or wat” as a marker for a question instead of using the auxiliary “do” as in SAE. This omission of the auxiliary “do” or “be” in question format is seen in examples 1, 3, and 4 as well. Another feature of Pidgin syntax in Kimo’s speech is the use of “ah” as a universal tag question (Examples 5, 6) rather than the use of inflection (e.g., “isn’t it,” “isn’t she”). Finally, Kimo also shows the use of pronouns that differs from SAE. In Example 2, he uses the phrase, “wi go” instead of “let’s go” (let us go). These features of Pidgin are similar to what is described by Sakoda and Siegel (2003).

Table 2
Pidgin Syntax in Kimo’s Pidgin

Hawaiian Pidgin English (HCE)	Standard American English (SAE)
1. “Eh howzit brah, wea da bartum steh?”	Hi, brother. Where is the bathroom.
2. “So wat, u like com, yu like go surf, or wat? Come pick me up. Shoots, brah! Wi go!”	Hi, brother. Would you like to go surfing? Yes! That sounds great. Let’s go.
3. “So wat, where dakine? Where we gon’ meet?”	Where should we meet?
4. “So watchu like eat and where you like go?”	Where do you wanna eat today?
5. “Ho brah, steh cold, ah?”	It’s cold today, isn’t it?
6. “Ho, dat girl, she dakine, real ni‘ele, ah?”	That girl, she’s so nosy, yeah?

Pragmatic Features

Next, I studied the pragmatic features that marked Kimo’s speech as Pidgin. Pragmatics refers to the way speakers and listeners communicate and interpret intentions (Meyerhoff, 2006, p. 96).

A pragmatic feature in Pidgin is fluid code-switching. For instance, in Example 5 (Table 2, Audio Clip #2 at 0:44-0:47), Kimo describes a nosy person by saying, “Ho dat girl, shi dakine, real ni‘ele ah?” In this sentence, *ni‘ele* is the Hawai‘ian word for “nosy.” Perhaps Kimo uses *ni‘ele* rather than *nosy* to sound less harsh. Another example of Kimo’s code-switching can be seen in another sentence in Kimo’s story: “...and they see me coming like I just pau surf” (Excerpt 1, line 42, Audio Clip #1 at 4:37-4:40) to explain that other surfers saw Kimo approaching as if he had just finished surfing.

Another common feature of Pidgin can be seen in Kimo's use of particles. The utterance-initial particle *ho*, is usually used to get the recipient's attention and to express surprise or disbelief as the speaker begins a turn to talk (Examples 5, 6). One often hear the particles *hu* and *ho* in Pidgin, which have slightly different discourse meanings. *Hu* often carries a positive connotation in an expression of excitement, while *ho* usually expresses excitement or disbelief. This nuanced distinction can be seen in Kimo's use of *hu* in reference to the good waves (Excerpt 1, line 32, Audio Clip #1 at 4:47-4:52) and *ho* in "Ho brah, steh cold ah?" and "Ho, dat girl, she dakine, real ni'ele ah?" (Table 1, Audio Clip #2 at 0:44-0:47). The utterance-final *ah* functions as a tag (e.g. "isn't she?" or "right?") to seek agreement with the interlocutor.

Finally, a common pragmatic feature of HCE is the use of sound elongation for emphasis and emotional expression. This is found in Kimo's description of his scary surfing experience (Excerpt 1, lines 43-44, Audio Clip #1 at 4:47-4:52): "Hu bradda, da surf was gu:::d man." The pitch is higher and the [u] vowel in *gud* is elongated to emphasize his excitement about surfing.

Kimo's Attitude Toward Pidgin

When Kimo and I were done talking, I asked what his views on Pidgin were. Because he is a speaker of HCE, I first assumed that he would speak only positively about the language. However, I received some surprising results (Excerpts 2-4).

Excerpt 2: Kimo's Attitudes [Click on link to hear Audio clip #1]

- 1 *How do people from the mainland talk different than over here?*
- 2 Wat? They get better English.
- 3 *How did you grow up speaking Pidgin?*
- 4 I spoke Pidgin because that's how we grew up and that's how.. that's
- 5 part of our culture
- 6 *Do you think it's like, getting weaker and weaker?*
- 7 *With every generation?*
- 8 No. It's getting..
- 9 *No?*
- 10 Well now uh you know the schooling is better. Had one time public
- 11 school was bad because the teachers couldn't speak English either

Note. The interviewer's turns are in italics.

At first it seems that Kimo holds a negative view of HCE. In line 2 of Excerpt 2, Kimo referred to SAE as "better English," thus implying that HCE is inferior. Similarly, in lines 10-11, he considered the teachers in his time to have been inferior to present-day teachers because they "couldn't speak English," further implying that HCE is inferior to SAE. Finally, after asking about his general feelings towards HCE, Kimo responded, "I'd rather speak English than Pidgin English" (line 71-72, Audio Clip #2 at 1:04-1:09). I did not expect this answer, especially since I assumed that most Pidgin speakers in Hawai'i would be proud of a language associated with their culture.

However, Kimo's attitude to HCE is not a simple black-and-white matter. Rather, it is a mixture of both overt negative attitudes and covert positive attitudes, as seen in Excerpts 3 and 4.

Excerpt 3: Reasoning for the Mix in Hawai'i culture [Click on link to hear [Audio Clip #1](#)]

12 Back in the 1800s the immigrants came to Hawaii. The Chinese was the
13 first. And then the Japanese. And then the Potagees (Portuguese) and
14 then the Filipinos then the Mexicans then the Koreans. That's why today
15 we're all chop suey. But the English was a broken English. And that's
16 the only way they could understand each other. With their broken
17 English. And you know in the.. as years passed, it's now.. it became a
18 part of our.. a part of our culture. And uh, today there's people dat can switch it on,
19 switch it off and if you cant switch off da Pidgin English and if you
20 speak. If you cant switch off da Pidgin English, then its gonna be hard
21 fo get jobs in the service industry because uhh in the service
22 industry, especially uh tourism. Tourism is our major industry. And you
23 need to uh, speak English because tourists can't understand our Pidgin
24 English. But its amazing how you could go to the university and get a
25 degree in Pidgin English or in some of the top private schools it's
26 mandatory for them to learn speak pidgin English and I don't get that
27 part.

28 *So you said you have to learn like Pidgin in school?*

29 No, I neva learn Pidgin in school.

30 *No no no like right now? In private schools? They teach it?*

31 In some private schools I tink like Maryknoll you gotta.. It's
32 mandatory.

33 *And do you agree or disagree?*

34 I disagree.

35 *Why?*

36 Because why would you wanna teach your kid how to speak broken English?

37 *What if it's like for cultural significance and stuff?*

38 To me, um, there's better things you can learn for cultural
39 significance than the broken English. Unless, you know. Unless you can
40 switch it on then switch it off. I mean it'll be okay.

41 *So in like, 20 years if all the new generations, like*

42 *nobody spoke Pidgin it's all like, just normal English like Standard*

43 *English you know, it's ok? It's whatever's?*

44 No, that wouldn't be Hawaii. That wouldn't be Hawaii. But in my opinion

45 I just tink you know, as long as you can. English should be the proper.

46 Get grammar first and then you can switch it off then switch on the

47 Pidgin that'll be okay among local people and you know, local culture and keep da

48 culture alive I guess with Pidgin English. I guess that's what they

49 trying to do. You know. To keep all da tradition alive and perpetuate our culture.

50 *Do you think it should be mandatory to learn Hawaiian*
51 *language in school?*
52 Um, no. I no tink so. No need.
53 *Do you speak Hawaiian?*
54 Uh I speak. I get Hawaiian words. Oh ok! So I'll speak "English" now.
55 *Okay.*
56 Alright. And I had a chance to learn Hawaiian because my grandparents
57 could speak the Hawaiian language fluently and so because my
58 generation, we were losing our culture because we didn't have Hawaiian
59 language in our schools. We were learning more um... international
60 languages like you know, Japanese and you know, you could learn Chinese and German
61 and Spanish but not Hawaiian. And so, my attitude. But you had to go learn Hawaiian if
62 you know someone at home, you could learn Hawaiian but my generation was
63 "Why should we learn Hawaiian?" you know because where are we gonna use
64 this language? And what we were more interested in was going to the
65 beach. And so I so I didn't take advantage of learning Hawaiian but at
66 home my parents and my grandparents would use Hawaiian words so I do
67 know Hawaiian words. But not... I cant speak it fluently.
68 *Okay. Good!*

Note. The interviewer's turns are in italics.

Excerpt 4: On sounding too "haole" [Click on link to hear [Audio clip #2](#)]

69 When I'm with my friends I speak Pidgin English I would say. More I
70 would say more I, I think Creole. And I think there's times where I
71 sound "too haole" where my friends will tease me. But I think uh, I
72 rather speak English than Pidgin English. But then again, when I'm with
73 my friends its just comes out natural and when I'm working I'm more
74 aware of how I talk. L'dat. Thanks, everybody for having me. Maybe one
75 day we go uh.. barbecue. We go surf. Go down da beach. Spock you
76 guys latah. See you bumbai. Aloha. Yee haw!

I believe Kimo's attitudes toward Pidgin comes from his field of work. Kimo has worked as a tour guide for over thirty years and has to constantly deal with individuals who do not speak HCE. He even claims that "You need to speak English because tourists can't understand our Pidgin English" (Excerpt 3, line 22-24, Audio Clip #1 at 6:43-6:52). Therefore, he has learned to switch between HCE and SAE (or Hawai'i Local English (HLE) as described by Cook (2011)) and feels that speaking "proper English" is vital to being successful and accepted by non-pidgin speakers. If he could not speak SAE, it would be difficult to get a job, as he explains in lines 20-21 of Excerpt 3 (Audio Clip #1 at 6:28-6:37).

Kimo does, however, recognize HCE's covert prestige, saying that he speaks Pidgin when he is with his friends because he will occasionally get teased for sounding "too haole," which means "too white" (Excerpt 4, line 71, Audio Clip #2 at 0:50-1:03). The friends who tease him

for sounding “too haole” were also identified as Hawai'i locals who grew up speaking HCE in their everyday lives.

As can be noted throughout our discussion, Kimo seems to have mixed feelings about HCE, as do many locals. Kimo feels strongly about preserving Hawai'i's culture through HCE, as Hawai'i without Pidgin “wouldn't be Hawai'i” (Excerpt 3, line 44, Audio Clip #1 at 8:08-8:12). However, when asked if HCE should be taught in school, Kimo demurred. Kimo stated that he learned how to speak SAE in school and that HCE was used at home or casually outside of academic or professional settings. After being asked if he disagreed with this approach and if students should learn Pidgin in school for cultural purposes, Kimo responded with a blunt remark: “why would you wanna teach your kid how to speak broken English?” (Excerpt 3, line 36, Audio Clip #1 at 7:29-7:34); “better things you can learn for the cultural significance than the broken English” (Excerpt 3, lines 38-39, Audio Clip #1 at 7:38-7:57).

This shows that many locals in Hawai'i face the following dilemma: sound educated and face rejection from their own local community or conform to the local community's norms and sound uneducated to non-speakers of HCE. Their solution is to do what Kimo does, namely, develop competencies in both codes (SAE and HCE) and code-switch fluidly between the two depending on the context.

Discussion

Having been raised as a speaker of HCE, I feel that it plays a very important role in local culture. Being able to speak Pidgin naturally provides a kind of prestige among locals. If a speaker chooses to use Pidgin and continues to use it throughout their lifetime, even when in professional settings, it shows that he or she is proud to come from Hawai'i; HCE supports his or her cultural identity. The role of Pidgin in education is quite different. Kimo expresses this when discussing that he did not learn Pidgin in school (line 29, Excerpt 2). Instruction in school would be conducted in SAE. With the controversy surrounding HCE today, a question came to mind: how long has the view that SAE is the correct medium and target of instruction been enforced? Instruction conducted in SAE dates all the way back to the year 1893, when the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown. After the overthrow,

the English-mainly campaign transformed into an English-only one, as advocates stepped up their efforts to accelerate the extermination of Hawaiian. Advocates targeted the field of education, where the next generation of native speakers would receive their instruction. In 1896, three years after the overthrow of the monarchy, the newly created Republic of Hawai'i enacted a law requiring that English be the medium of instruction in all public and private schools. (Lucas, 2000, p. 8).

Early on, the push for “English only” in the classroom was strong and antagonistic to the Hawaiian language. The notions underlying the English only movement were ingrained in the minds of locals, resulting in the belief that the Hawaiian language is inferior. In response to this,

locals use HCE as a way to preserve their cultures and what was left of the Hawaiian language. Moreover, use of HCE preserves the words and structures of various mother languages which played a role in the development of Hawai'i's modern linguistic landscape. However, to do so locals were forced to practice HCE outside of the classroom. After considering all of this, can we as locals truly believe that Pidgin English is "bad English"? The myth that speaking HCE amounts to speaking improper English is broken by the members of Da Pidgin Coup, a group of faculty and students from the Department of Language Studies at the University of Hawai'i. On a mission to disprove this myth and the additional myth that HCE is associated with Hawai'i students' low test scores, Da Pidgin Coup (1999) concluded that the term "improper English" is misleading. Literacy skills and perceived speech skills have been conflated, resulting in the creation and perpetuation of these myths through history.

On a personal level, I have had mixed feelings about HCE. Before leaving Hawai'i, I viewed speaking HCE as normal. Except for HCE's unique lexicon, I did not realize just how different my English was from that of many other speakers of English. I also received backlash against the way I speak. People would often say things such as, "Why do you talk that way?" or derisively comment on my frequent use of "yeah" for tag questions. Confusion would arise when I used lexical items of the Hawaiian or Japanese language. Similarly, Kimo explained that he would face backlash if he speaks with a Pidgin accent to his tourist clients. Although having the ability to speak HCE adds authenticity to one's localness, it has caused too many people (like Kimo) to have difficulty getting their meaning across to others. Hawai'i locals who face these issues would rather convert to HLE or SAE in order to be understood by outsiders. Thus, HCE is slowly being de-creolized.

Regarding ESL learners studying English in Hawai'i (whether it be short term or long term), I think it is very important for them to come to know aspects of HCE. The features that make up HCE do not have to be intensively taught in the classroom, but they should at least be introduced. If ESL students are not exposed to HCE's pragmatic, syntactic, or lexical features, they may not be able to communicate effectively with locals. In addition, the best way to learn a new language is through exposure. If ESL learners in Hawai'i come to understand the ways in which many Hawai'i locals switch from HCE to SAE or HLE, learners will get a better sense of how to exercise ownership of English and adapt the target language to fit their own needs and linguistic habits. Exercising ownership of the target language will open many gateways to language learning for ESL learners.

Notes

¹The term "Hawai'i local" is usually used to refer to a long-term resident in Hawai'i. This is to contrast with the term "Hawaiian," which refers to people of Hawaiian ethnic heritage.

² The origin of the word "spock" in Pidgin is unknown.

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Cheyenne Low was born and raised on the island of O'ahu. As a speaker of Pidgin herself, she is interested in sharing the linguistic and cultural aspects of Pidgin to readers unfamiliar with the language.