

Speak Proper English!: Language and Power in Hawai'i

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In Hawai'i being 'local' is often seen as a source of pride, particularly for the younger generation. Kau Inoa shirts, tans, knowledge of the best surf spots and most of all, Pidgin English and a plantation heritage are worn as badges of locality. A trip to any public school reveals a bilingual population, the majority of which switch between Pidgin English and Standard English with ease. It is well known in Hawai'i that "fo' find one good job you gotta know how fo' talk like one haole!"¹ Historically, language in Hawai'i has dictated a powerful social hierarchy with those capable of speaking Standard English at the top and those who spoke Hawaiian, Asiatic languages or Pidgin English on the bottom. Therefore, although many Hawai'i youth grow up speaking Pidgin English, the stigma attached to it as well as a desire for higher paying jobs, necessitates the acquisition of Standard English. Pidgin English, an amalgamation of: Hawaiian, English, Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese and Filipino, formed on the sugar plantations during the last decades of the 19th century. Pidgin English replaced not only Hawaiian but Hawaiian Pidgin and the national languages of plantation workers as well. Pidgin served as a means of cross-national communication and became the language of the immigrant

¹ Doug Simonson et al., Pidgin to da Max (Honolulu: Peppovision, 1981), np. Translation: In order to get a good job you have to know how to talk like a Haole person.

working class and their descendants. In any community "languages performed a fundamental act of identity for their speakers: you are what you speak,"² Therefore, on the plantations and throughout Hawai`i, language dynamics reflected the multi-ethnic communities' changes and tensions. Plantations were an arena of continuous community development, loss and change.

Within the plantation and throughout Hawai`i, language dictated a powerful social hierarchy. Although Haole policymakers and plantations owners undoubtedly held vast monetary and political power, language policies reflected an English language and American culture under continual threat from a majority non-Haole³ population.

Wonderful Hawai'i, Or So I Heard⁴: Preconceptions and Realizations of Hawai`i

In 1778 Captain James Cook docked at Waimea on the island of Kaua`i and he and his crew exchanged words, goods and diseases with the Native Hawaiian population.<sup>5</sup> The first Hawaiian word Captain Cook recorded hearing upon contact was *hamaite*. *Hamaite* was actually *he maita`i* or "its good!"⁶ The Hawaiians were referring to the iron nails, which they recognized from shipwreck debris that washed up onshore. Captain Cook and his crew quickly discovered that the Hawaiians were willing to barter a substantial amount of goods for the iron nails. Trade for the iron nails marked the beginning of trade between the Western world and Hawai`i.

² Vanishing Voices, 22

³ Haole which is Hawaiian for foreigner has been used throughout history to refer to those of White descent.

⁴ "Hole Hole Bushi" cited in Roland Kotani, The Japanese in Hawaii: A Century of Struggle (Honolulu: The Hawaii Huchi, 1985), 14.

⁵ A. Grove Day, Hawai`i and Its People (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1993), 4-7.

⁶ Albert Schutz, The Voices of Eden: A History of Hawaiian Language Studies (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 2.

However, just as Captain Cook was unable to understand what *he maita`i* meant, Hawaiians were unable to understand the crews' ideas of private property. In fact it was a misunderstanding over a boat and the mistaken identity of Captain Cooke (they believed he was a God), that resulted in Cook's untimely death.

Captain Cook not only introduced the Native Hawaiians to the Western world through his journals but also introduced Hawai`i to potential Haole traders and settlers through the documentation of his travels. Captain Cook's arrival on the islands signaled the beginning of extreme changes, a little more than a century later the Hawaiian population would be decimated by disease, the monarchy would be overthrown and the Hawaiian people would find themselves a minority in their own land. However, Captain Cook was not the only man to drastically change the landscape of Hawai`i. In 1835, William Hooper traveled to Koloa on the island of Kaua`i with the intent of building Hawaii's first sugar plantation. Sent on behalf of Ladd and Company of Honolulu, Hooper intended to plant not only sugar but also the beginnings of a market-oriented society.⁷

Within one year, Koloa Plantation encompassed: "twenty five acres of cane under cultivation, twenty houses for the natives, a house for the superintendent, a carpenter's shop, a blacksmith's shop, a mill dam, a sugar house, boiling house, and a sugar mill."⁸ The plantation removed Native workers from their traditional communities and provided them with on-site amenities such as a medical care and a plantation store. Hooper paid his workers in coupons,

⁷ Ronald Takaki, Pau Hana (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1983),3.

⁸ Takaki, 5.

which were redeemable only at Koloa plantation stores, which created "a wage earning labor force and a consumer class dependent on a plantation-owned market."⁹ Hooper's newly created plantation community was ruled by a rigidly strict two level hierarchy with Haole overseers lording over Native workers.¹⁰ However, despite usage of physical force, Hooper found it difficult to create docile, Americanized laborers out of the Native Hawaiians.¹¹ The inability to easily control Native Hawaiian labor as well as a lack of a large Native population to draw from, led Hooper to import labor from Asia. His decision to import Chinese laborers, served as a blueprint for the blossoming sugar industry which would, over time, import laborers from around the world and create a new multi-ethnic society in Hawai`i.

Tan Heung Shan (the Fragrant Sandalwood Hills), Terra Nova, Norwegian Summer, Hawai`i Netsu (Hawai`i Fever), Kaeguk Chinch Wi (the country is open, go forth), Kasla glorya ti Hawaii (Hawai`i is like the land of glory)<sup>12</sup>, these were some of the many names and descriptions immigrants gave to Hawai`i. The many names given to Hawai`i by immigrant laborers reflected not only the diversity of the laborers' nationalities but also their various hopes and expectations.<sup>13</sup> For many of the laborers, Hawai`i offered a new beginning, a chance of earn enough money to return to their homeland. Their hopes to return home resulted in the tendency to cling fiercely to national pride, language and culture.

⁹ Takaki, 7.

¹⁰ Takaki, 12.

¹¹ Takaki, 11.

¹² Takaki, 29-55.

¹³ Takaki, 55.

While language served as a naturally divisive factor within the multi-ethnic plantation community, the organizational structure of the plantation itself perpetuated racial segregation and competition. Workers were housed by national origin, which allowed them to "practice the customs and traditions of their respective homelands and speak their native languages."¹⁴ The various races were also encouraged to compete with one another and national pride was often used as a motivational tool.¹⁵ United States policies such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Gentlemen's Agreement, resulted in the broadening of the immigrant labor pool. However, the planters had another reason for maintaining a multi-ethnic plantation community that was unable to communicate across national lines. It was believed that by maintaining a racial hierarchy and favoring certain races over others, the possibility of strikes would be greatly lessened.¹⁶

The desire for a docile labor force and a diminishing native population drove the sugar planter's desire for steady importation of immigrant labor. However, a 1888 Planters' Monthly article reveals that the planters were also "anxious to see the land fully populated with thriving and contented families, having as little desire to leave the country as the native Hawaiian [had.]"

¹⁷ Through the immigration of laborers, planters sought to not only reap sugar profits but also hoped to build a new, non- Hawaiian, plantation based community that would supply labor for years to come. The 1888 Planters' Monthly article treats immigration as a social experiment

¹⁴ Takaki, 93.

¹⁵ Takaki, 93.

¹⁶ "Contract Laborers in Hawaii," The Planters Monthly, April 1896, 158.

¹⁷ Hoolu Lahui, "A Planter's View of Labor and Population," The Planters Monthly, June 1888, 250.

running through the virtues and vices of: Gilbert Islanders, Germans and Norwegians, Portuguese, Japanese and Chinese immigrants. Of these, all but the Portuguese, Japanese and Chinese had largely failed as successful laborers. Of the three remaining racial groups, the Portuguese were favored as they "live[d] and [ate] like Christians, even though the likeness and its merit [were slight]."¹⁸ The efforts of the Sugar industry to populate Hawai'i with a large, self-regenerating labor community were successful and in 1890 the non- Hawaiian population outnumbered the full Hawaiian population, 35,945 to 34,436. The part Asian, part Hawaiian population numbered 15,609 persons.¹⁹ By 1910 the population disparity between Hawaiian and non- Hawaiians was even greater with 153,362 non-Hawaiian persons and 38,547 pure and mixed Hawaiians. Within 75 years after the formation of Koloa plantation, the institution of plantations completely altered Hawaii's society.

Today the sugar industry has declined and tourism has replaced it as the mainstay of Hawaii's economy. Despite the passing of the first generation of immigrants and the turning over of sugar fields to hotel resorts and suburban housing, the legacy of the plantations remains constant in the minds, literature and scholarly work of today's generations.

The Legacy of Language

¹⁸ Lahui, 251.

¹⁹ Dr. James H. Okahata, ed., A History of Japanese in Hawaii. (Honolulu, The United Japanese Society of Hawaii, 1971), 277.

The tremendous impact that the plantations and diverse immigrant workers had on Hawaii's population demographics and culture is unquestioned. However the most significant cultural change wrought by the plantations was the role they played in both undermining the Hawaiian language and threatening the dominance of Standard English. On the plantations, language was used by plantation managers to racially segregate their camps and maintain a Haole dominated social hierarchy. However, the tendencies of the Haole elite to manipulate language to their benefit began long before William Hooper.

In Hawai'i one of the traditional proverbs is, "I ka 'olelo no ke ola; I ka 'olelo no ka make," or "in language rest life; in language rests death."²⁰ This sentiment is echoed in Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine's work on the world's vanishing languages. Nettle and Romaine found that language usage reflects the identity and community orientation of the speaker.²¹ Therefore, changes in language use reflect cultural changes and swings in social power within any given community.²² Applied to Hawai'i, where there are less than a thousand speakers of Native Hawaiian, one would assume that the Native Hawaiian culture and language has long since been overpowered by foreign interests. However, many scholars today, such as Albert Shutz, have conducted research that indicates that the Hawaiian language and culture was not easily defeated.

Captain Cook brought commerce and trade with the Western world; William Hooper brought the plantation and reformed Hawaii's economic system; The missionaries brought English and a western style education. Education in the English language accompanied neither

²⁰ Nettle, 179.

²¹ Nettle, 22.

²² Nettle, 18.

Captain Cooke nor William Hooper, rather it arrived in 1820 on board the ship, Thaddeus, in the form of the first missionary party in Hawai'i.²³ Although the missionaries would play a crucial role in the education of Native Hawaiians in English, their initial intent was not to replace Hawaiian with English.²⁴ In fact their instructions from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions were to "give [the Hawaiians] the Bible in their own tongue, with the ability to read it for themselves."²⁵ The missionaries' main purpose was to deploy Christianity and its morals against Hawaiian polytheism and the fastest way to combat the threat of Hawaiian idolatry and culture was to educate in the Hawaiian language, once the missionaries themselves were able to learn it.

The Native Hawaiians desire to learn about Christianity and gain a Western style education can be traced to their amazement with the written word believing at first that it was a type of "enchantment or sorcery."²⁶ Literacy and an education in both Hawaiian and English were tightly tied to Christianity. Lahainaluna scholar, Samuel Kamakau remembered "the subjects taught were spelling in unison; reciting syllables of two letters; reciting a refusal to keep wooden gods [...] portions of the books of Matthew, Psalms, Acts of the Apostles, and Luke."²⁷ At this time the only way to become literate and gain an education was through the missionaries. This empowered Christianity and aided in its triumph over traditional religion. In 1824, high

²³ Day, 71.

²⁴ Albert Schutz, The Voices of Eden: A History of Hawaiian Language Studies (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 339.

²⁵ Hiram Bingham, A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands, (Hartford, Hezekiah Huntington, 1848), 60

²⁶ Sheldon Dibble, History of the Sandwich Islands (Honolulu: Thrum, 1909), 156-157 cited in Albert Schutz, 154.

²⁷ Samuel Kamakau, The Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii by Thomas G. Thrum et al., (Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press), 270 cited in Albert Schutz, 161.

chiefess, Kapiolani, challenged the powerful volcano goddess Pele, with her newly found Christian religion. Kapiolani traveled to Kilauea, Pele's home, determined to support the Christian mission by proving its superiority over the old Hawaiian gods. During her travel a priestess attempted to stop her with the power of the written word, offering up a *palapala* (piece of writing) from Pele. Kapiolani met her challenge with her own *palapala*, a Hawaiian hymnbook and missionary spelling book. At the crater Kapiolani flaunted her faith by eating ohele berries instead of offering them to Pele. She then prayed and sung a hymn, miraculously untouched by Pele's feared wrath.²⁸ The old and new ways had met head on, each represented through the new system of writing.

Although Kapiolani's defiance indicates a triumph of Christianity over traditional Hawaiian religion, the dominance of Christianity and desire to learn English cannot be misconstrued as a rejection of Hawaiian culture and language by the Native people. Schutz found that "it [was] far more likely that many Hawaiians took their own language for granted and wished to be able to speak and understand English as well, for [Hawaiian] was not an immediate stepping-stone to success and power in [their] rapidly changing world."²⁹ As Hawai`i became more and more enmeshed within a Western oriented capitalist economic system through whaling and the sandalwood trade, the advantages of English and literacy were obvious. The material wealth of foreign traders, led Hawaiians to become motivated to learn to read and write in not only Hawaiian but English as well.³⁰ The fact that the ruling chiefs created a school specifically

²⁸ Day, 83. [Entire account of Kapiolani's challenge to Pele is derived from this source]

²⁹ Schutz, 342

³⁰ Schutz, 340.

for the English education of their children further promoted the idea that English was to become a sign of status and rank.

English was at first taught mainly to Hawaiians of chiefly status. As the common people began to clamor for an English education, a fear that the "introduction of English might tend to remove the natives from the close influence of the missionaries," began to arise.³¹ As was noted earlier in this section, the missionaries initial intent was to teach Christianity and literacy through the Hawaiian language. However, their own lack of fluency required them to preach and teach their first students in English. Residents also feared commoners becoming fluent in English,³² possibly because this would lead to a loss of dependency and influence. It was not until the late 1830s that materials for teaching English to Hawaiians was printed.³³ The availability of English literature and the types of reading material provided were strictly controlled by the missionary run printing press. Between the years of 1822 and 1832, of sixteen produced books, only two were not of religious orientation.³⁴ By controlling access to the English language the missionaries were able to manipulate Hawaiian religion and culture.

In 1840 education was centralized as a government function and access to an education simultaneously became both mandatory for the entire Hawaiian community and restricted to the elite class. The first school laws required that every child above the age of eight attend school; parents and the community would fund the schools in their area. These public or common

³¹ Benjamin Wist, A Century of Public Education in Hawaii. (Honolulu: Hawaii Educational review), 70 cited in Schutz, 344.

³² Schutz, 340.

³³ Schutz, 293.

³⁴ Schutz, 165.

schools "provided only what the community could afford, which was in most cases minimal."³⁵ These schools were often taught by Native teachers and were conducted in Hawaiian. This was highly problematic due to the fact that teacher training was conducted only in English and most available school texts were written in English.³⁶ In comparison, private or select schools were often taught by the missionaries in the English language. The Chief's Children's School was an example of a select school and in an 1843 report to the A.B.C.F.M., Amos Cooke reported that "all [the students] studies have been and still are in the English language. [...] They now use very little native even among themselves in common conversation."³⁷ Select school education was aimed at providing the elite Hawaiian class with the ability to participate in international trade and diplomacy. The August 1st, 1846 edition of Hawai'i newspaper, *The Friend*, reported that during 1846 the cost of educating each child at the Chiefs' Children's school was \$200.³⁸ The Hawaiian commoner's inability to afford a select school education resulted in the creation of a two tiered Hawaiian hierarchy based on acquisition of English and a Western style education. Scholars, Maenette K.P. Benham and Ronald Heck found that one of the major effects of select schools was the reinforcement of the idea that the Hawaiian culture and language was inferior to American culture and English language.³⁹

The institution of select and common schools stratified Hawaii's society through language, delineating class by English language ability. This empowered Haole residents who

³⁵ Maenette K.P. Benham and Ronald H. Heck, Culture and Educational Policy in Hawaii (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998),69

³⁶ Benham & Heck, 93.

³⁷ "Official Report to Mr. Anderson of the A.B.C.F.M." cited in Mary Atherton Richards, The Hawaiian Chiefs' Children's School (Vermont, Rutlandm 1969),26.

³⁸ "Excerpts from the report for the minister of Public Instruction read before His Majesty to the Hawaiian Legislature Aug, 1, 1846" cited in Mary Atherton Richards, 267-68.

³⁹ Benham & heck, 60.

made up a minority of the nation's population. Centralizing school also served a far more important purpose, the creation of a democratic society. The centralization of the school system occurred simultaneously with the creation of a constitutional monarchy in Hawai`i. Prior to 1840 Hawai`i had been ruled by an absolute monarchy. According to Benham and Heck, "Hawaii's movement toward a constitutional government and private land ownership required that the people become knowledgeable citizens."⁴⁰ The creation of a constitutional monarchy resulted in the appointment of various Haoles to influential positions in the King's cabinet.⁴¹ Policy making power was now to be held not only by Hawaiian royals but also by Haoles. Thus the term "knowledgeable citizens" can be defined as; accepting a new American oriented social hierarchy that emphasized democratic ideals such as private property, government taxation and of course, possession of the English language. In this light, the creation of a school system that classified English as superior, can be seen as an action meant to defend the newly created constitutional monarchy.

Languages of Power and the Plantation

In 1880s Hawai`i, status was determined by one's assimilation to American mannerisms and English ability. Access to these attributes were found mainly within the select schools. In 1880, of 210 total schools, only sixty were conducted in or offered classes in English.⁴² 7164 students attended Hawaiian instructed schools as opposed to 3086 students in English schools.⁴³

⁴⁰ Benahm & Heck, 62.

⁴¹ Maenette K.P. Benham, "The Voice "less" Hawaiian: An Analysis of Educational Policymaking, 1820-1960. The Hawaiian Journal of History 32 (1998), 123.

⁴² John E. Reincecke, Language and Dialect In Hawai`i: A Sociolinguistic History to 1935. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1969), 70.

⁴³ Reincecke, 70.

With over half of all school aged children enrolled in the common schools, the Hawaiian language continued to be the language of the majority of the population. Excluded from high paying jobs and with limited social mobility, Hawaiian speakers belong mainly to the working class. As a result the Hawaiian language spread to immigrant plantation workers through contact with Native speakers. Julian M. Roberts found that during this time period Pidgin Hawaiian was the main means of communication within the immigrant community.⁴⁴ Roberts traces the formation of Pidgin Hawaiian and its emergence as the dominant form of communication between Hawaiians and foreigners to the period between 1790 and 1820.⁴⁵ The usage of Pidgin Hawaiian as opposed to standard Hawaiian by foreigners was due to the tendency of Native Hawaiians to "let anything pass which they themselves understand, however awkward it may be when compared with the real purity of their language."⁴⁶ Prior to the creation of formal schools there were few opportunities to learn standard Hawaiian. An account of Captain George Dixon's voyage in the late 18th century recounted "when conversing with us, [the Hawaiians] make use of those words which are most expressive and significant, purposely omitting [...] many articles and conjunctions."⁴⁷

On the plantation immigrants found little opportunity to converse in and learn the English language. Contact with English speakers was often limited to plantation management. Even then, the English used was far from standard. One example of a plantation command is given in

⁴⁴ Julian Roberts, "Pidgin Hawaiian-- The Dominant Contact Language in Nineteenth -Century Hawaii?" 9

⁴⁵ Roberts, 39.

⁴⁶ "Sandwich Island Gazette and Journal of Commerce," cited in Roberts, 41.

⁴⁷ "A Voyage Round the World; But More Particularly to the North-West Coast of America; performed in 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788, in the King George and Queen Charlotte, Captains Portlock and Dixon." Cited in Roberts, 14

Ronald Takaki's book, *Pau Hana*. "Luna, big boss speak, all men below cutch; suppose too much mauka cutch, too mucha sugar poho-keiki no use. Savvy?"⁴⁸ As a result of limited English language influence, many plantation workers instead adopted Hawaiian or Pidgin Hawaiian as their main mode of cross-national communication. In an interview, Jessie Pilmauna recalled that as a child growing up on the plantation he was surrounded by Japanese, Chinese, Puerto Rican and Portuguese immigrants and children that "spoke very fluent Hawaiian."⁴⁹ However, Reincecke notes that it was difficult for non-Hawaiian speakers to differentiate between standard and Pidgin Hawaiian, therefore, it is likely Pidgin Hawaiian was used.⁵⁰

The continued dominance of Hawaiian as the language of the laboring class indicates that the language and Hawaiian culture had retained some power and influence. While Pidgin Hawaiian may not have provided the user with prestige, it still served as an identifier. Nettle and Romaine found that languages used only for in-group communication, provide set boundaries within communities.⁵¹ Pidgin Hawaiian not only provided plantation workers with a method of communicating across national lines but also allowed them to create a sense of community built around the usage of Pidgin Hawaiian. Pidgin Hawaiian allowed workers to challenge the plantation owners' policies of racial segregation.

The formation of a large, united non-Haole population was problematic and alarming to the minority Haole elite population. An April 1888 edition of the *Planter's Monthly* voices concern that the 20,000 strong Chinese population would gain political and economic prominence. The Haoles would be left with no choice but " 'unconditional surrender' to them in

⁴⁸ Takaki, 119. [cited in?]

⁴⁹ "Jessie Pilmauna: interview by NHRC 1987" cited in Roberts, 9.

⁵⁰ Roberts, 10.

⁵¹ Nettle & Romaine, 12.

business of every kind, and ultimately political ascendancy"⁵² Beginning in the 1860s as labor contracts expired, floods of Japanese and Chinese immigrants moved to Honolulu. The ex-laborers sought not only cash jobs but became entrepreneurs as well. In an interview found in *Us, Hawai'i-Born Japanese: Storied Identities of Japanese American Elderly from a Sugar Plantation Community*, an elderly man recounted "Pahoa had Hara store, Momita, Shiigi, and Yamaguchi, Miura General Merchandise, Bar and Liquor. Tsubota had restaurant and theater and the bar. Momita grocery store. Iwata bakery, [...] Toma restaurant, Sueishi store, Kawamura restaurant."⁵³ Throughout the 1880s and 1890s Caucasians found themselves more and more outnumbered by non- Haole residents who were moving off the cane fields and into the business world. In 1890 they numbered a mere 2,448 compared to the 12360 Japanese and 34436 Hawaiians. The Haole elite were not secure in their position at the top of the economic and political hierarchy. Scrambling to find ways to re-assert their dominance, one proposed solution in the *Planter's Monthly* was to enact a law that "requir[ed] all person to have a knowledge of the English language before being allowed to take out a license for any kind of business. [...] And also the books and accounts of every licensee shall be kept in the same language."⁵⁴ English was viewed as a tool in combatting the large Pidgin Hawaiian speaking laboring community. Having both English speaking and literacy as pre-requisites to owning a business would bar the majority of the immigrant workers from entrepreneurship.

The 1880s and 1890s were a period of tumult and uncertain power for the Haole elite. Not only were they facing a growing and increasingly unified non-Haole labor population, but

⁵² "The Chinese Problem," *The Planter's Monthly*, April 1888, 150-51.

⁵³ Gary Kinoshita, *Us, Hawaii-born Japanese: Storied Identities of Japanese American Elderly from a Sugar Plantation Community*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 167.

⁵⁴ "The Chinese Problem," *The Planter's Monthly*, April 1888, 150-51.

were also contending with a resurgence in Hawaiian culture, religion and language. King Kalakaua ascended the throne on February 12, 1874.⁵⁵ Today he is remembered as the Merry Monarch and is credited with reviving the hula and revitalizing the Hawaiian culture. The hula, an ancient form of dance that portrayed myths and genealogies, served as a expression of the Hawaiian identity and the relationship between themselves and nature.⁵⁶ The missionaries viewed hula as a promiscuous, heathen practice and actively worked to suppress it. Due to the missionary influence, hula went underground for six decades until the coronation of King Kalakaua.⁵⁷

King Kalakaua's motto for his reign was "Ho'oulu Lahui," or increase the race.⁵⁸ He sought to reinvigorate Hawaiian pride and scholarship. Along with promoting the hula, he also re-established the Hale Naua which was an ancient society dedicated to collecting and studying ancient Hawaiian traditions, myths and genealogies.⁵⁹ King Kalakaua also sought to preserve traditional Hawaiian medicine and ritual, forming a Hawaiian Board of Health.⁶⁰ The Kings efforts to promote Hawaiian culture as worthy and legitimate, raised outrage and suspicion from the Haole community. In 1889, *The Friend* condemned the impure lifestyles of the Hawaiian people and blamed the failure of Christian teaching on "the direct fostering of sorcery and hulas by authority during that time, and latterly to the promotion of hardly concealed worship of the

⁵⁵ Day, 307.

⁵⁶ Momi Kanahele, "Hula as Resistance," *Forward Motion*, 2:3 (1992), 40-41.

⁵⁷ Kanahele, 41.

⁵⁸ Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, "A Synopsis of Traditional Hawaiian Culture, the Events Leading to the 1887 Bayonet Constitution and The Overthrow of the Hawaiian Government: 1AD-1898." Originally prepared for the Department of Education, Hawaiian Immersion Program, State of Hawai'i in 1992, np.

⁵⁹ Kame'eleihiwa, np.

⁶⁰ Day, 206.

Gods."⁶¹ This appears to be a direct condemnation of King Kalakaua's support of kahunas and the hula. In his 1889 article, "Why the Hawaiians are Dying Out," Reverend Bishop Sereno cited the hula as one of the causes of Hawaiian death, other causes were: "unchastity, drunkenness, oppression, the chiefs, infectious and epidemic diseases, kahunas and sorcery, idolatry, and wifeless Chinese."⁶²

The kahuna were of particular concern to the Haole elite as their rise to influence signified that Christian dominance was tenuous. The kahuna was viewed as a "deadly enemy of Christian civilization [who does] his utmost to create aversion and jealousy toward the haole and particularly the 'missionary'."⁶³ As a spiritual leader and expert in various fields of Hawaiian medicine, science and traditional, the influential potential of the kahuna was immense. In *Voices of Eden*, Albert Schutz argues that the Haole backlash against the kahuna was due to their "almost pathological fear of the kahuna's ability to incite their audience of backsliding, sin, and even worse, insurrection."⁶⁴ The solution to the kahuna problem was the forced Americanization of the Hawaiian population. Americanization through the teaching of the English language and American culture would not only remove the Hawaiian from the domain of kahuna influence but would also serve to disband the Hawaiian Pidgin speaking immigrant community

In 1893 Queen Liliuokalani was illegally overthrown by the Annexation Club and the Republic of Hawai'i was formed. Three years after the overthrow, the use of Hawaiian in schools was outlawed. English was the only language allowed on school grounds.⁶⁵ Curriculum plans for

⁶¹ "Why Are the Hawaiians Dying Out?" cited in Schutz, 347.

⁶² Schutz, 347.

⁶³ "The Friend, July 1892" cited in Schutz 349.

⁶⁴ Schutz, 350.

⁶⁵ Kalena Silva, "Hawaiian Chant: Dynamic Cultural Link or Atrophied Relic" cited in Schutz, 353.

first year students instructed "teach children to express in English what they perceive and what they do in the schoolroom, on the playground, on the way to school, and at home."⁶⁶ A report from Reverend Dr. McArthur reveals the motives behind an English only education, "here is an element of vast power in many ways. With this knowledge of English will go into the young American republican and Christian ideas; and as this knowledge does in, kahunaism, fetishism and heathenism generally will largely go out."⁶⁷ The vitality of any language lies with the young generations, it is the youth of any nation that will determine the strength and longevity of language.⁶⁸ Therefore Hawaiian children educated in the English language, American values and Christian ideals, would ideally carry their education home to their parents and families. Through the mandatory English schooling of Hawaiian and Asian youths, the Haole elite sought to influence the entire non-English speaking population. At the very least, the education would break the child away from the influence of a Hawaiian speaking, traditionally oriented family.

Outlawing the usage of Hawaiian in schools sent a powerful message to immigrant families and all speakers of Pidgin Hawaiian. Hawaiian was a worthless and dangerous language, a language that would stigmatize its user. Emphasizing the power of the English language and the Haole population also provided the new Republic of Hawai'i with legitimacy, lessening the likelihood of rebellion. Immigrant plantation workers who spoke Pidgin Hawaiian found themselves part of a large community that no longer had a legal language. The American values and Christian ideals taught in the schoolhouse were meant to benefit not only Hawaiians but immigrant children as well. Through education the Haole elite intended on Americanizing

⁶⁶ Schutz, 355.

⁶⁷ Reverend Dr. McArthur, "The Friend, December 1895" cited in Schutz, 354.

⁶⁸ Nettle & Romaine, 8.

the Republic of Hawai'i.

Dey Say if You Tok Pidgin, You No Can⁶⁹

In his study on Pidgin English, Julian Reincecke detailed a four-phase history of Pidgin in Hawai'i. During the years between 1876 and 1900 Pidgin Hawaiian enjoyed continued dominance among the laboring class. However, over time immigrants altered the Pidgin Hawaiian and developed a Pidgin English also known as Hawaiian Creole English.⁷⁰ Reincecke found that despite a move towards an English-lexified Pidgin, examples of Pidgin Hawaiian in the 1890s still existed. The 1890s swing towards an English-lexified Pidgin can also be attributed to an increase in Portuguese immigration. In 1890 there were 12,719 Portuguese in Hawai'i, a tremendous jump up from the 424 Portuguese counted in 1872. The Portuguese were the only group of workers that consistently immigrated with their family. They preferred an English education over a Hawaiian one and this choice "turned the tide toward English."⁷¹ Despite this preference, Reincecke found that working on the plantation amongst other laborers necessitated the usage of Pidgin Hawaiian.⁷² Even when the immigrant desired to learn and speak primarily English, the utility and popularity of Pidgin Hawaiian made the replacement of Pidgin Hawaiian with Pidgin English a slow process. Prior to 1900, few examples of Pidgin English can be found,

⁶⁹ Lee Tonouchi, Living Pidgin: Contemplations on Pidgin Culture, (honolulu, Tin Fish Press, 2002), 13.

⁷⁰ Roberts, 39.

⁷¹ Benjamin Wist, A Century of Public Education in Hawaii, (Honolulu: Hawaii Educational review), 73 cited in Schutz, 346.

⁷² Roberts, 34.

⁷³ disproving the commonly held belief that Pidgin English was a product of the first immigrants in Hawai'i.

The Haole elites hopes that English and Americanism would flourish due to the school system were unrealistic. Derek Bickerton cites the small population of native English speakers, 5 to 6 percent, as the reason Pidgin English gained dominance as opposed to standard English.⁷⁴ Originally intended as arenas of American socialization, schools instead provided opportunities for children of various immigrant nationalities to bond, undermining management attempts to segregate the plantations by race. Despite teaching primarily in English, schoolteachers were faced with students who spoke only Pidgin English. A male interviewee remembered "those days, English school, we couldn't speak English, we spoke only Pidgin English [...]. Only in the classroom we spoke English, whatever English means."⁷⁵ In his study, Romanzo Adams, found that only 2-3 percent of children are able to speak English when they enter school. Only 2400 children were native English speakers and of these 1500 attended private school. Adams determined that Pidgin English was the main obstacle in developing proper English skills in the islands youth.⁷⁶

Pidgin English posed an unanticipated problem for mandatory schooling and haole parents. Haole children, the minority in public schools, might be influenced by Pidgin English and a non-haole, local culture. Within any society the process of acculturation usually involves the minority group conforming to the majority, dominant group. Hawai'i was an interesting

⁷³ Roberts, 49.

⁷⁴ Derek Bickerton, "Language and Language Contact," in Multicultural Hawaii, ed. Michael Haas (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), 63.

⁷⁵ Kinoshita, 161.

⁷⁶ William Carlson Smith, Americans in Progress: A Study of our Citizens of Oriental History (Ann Arbor: Edward Brothers, 1937), 179.

case, the haole was the population minority but held political and economic dominance. Just as haole educators and policymakers had originally hoped that native English speaking children would influence Pidgin speakers, they grew to fear that the English speaking children would conform to Pidgin English. Children who used standard English outside of the classroom were sometimes subject to ridicule, peer pressure demanded adherence to Pidgin.⁷⁷

The problem of Pidgin English heightened during the first two decades of the 20th century as the haole middle class expanded. This group was unable to pay the expensive tuition required to send their child to one of the few English language private schools in Hawai'i.⁷⁸ In 1920 the parents of 400 English speaking students took action and requested the creation of a public school restricted to those capable of speaking standard English.⁷⁹ In response, Superintendent MacCaughney proposed that the children of American parents have "a right to such an education under conditions which will insure them and their parents that it can be had without endangering those standards and character quality which are distinctively American and which much be preserved and kept inviolate."⁸⁰

Public schools were dangerous to the haole parent. Danger lurked in the "dis, wot, da kins" in other students speech, in the bento box of the Japanese student, in names such as Chang and Macadangdang. Equal to the fear that English speaking children would learn Pidgin was a fear that they would abandon their American culture for a localized one. In 1924 a separate

⁷⁷ Smith, 181.

⁷⁸ Julian Hughes, "The Demise of the English Standard Schools," The Hawaiian Journal of History, 27 (1998), 68.

⁷⁹ Ralph Kant Steuber, "Hawaii: A Case Study in Development Education 1778-1960" (ph.D. diss, University of Wisconsin, 242.

⁸⁰ Steuber, 243.

English language school system was set up under the name of English standard schools.⁸¹ Dr. Frank Bunker, director of the federal survey, was a strong supporter of the English standard schools stating that although other nationalities had their own morals and standards they were "different and because they are not American those parents who have known no other allegiance than American hesitate [...], when it comes to educating their own children."⁸² Bunker intensely emphasized the importance of an *American* education, lamenting "we have not advanced undiluted American education vigorously enough."⁸³ His focus on the preservation of American values in Hawai'i can be linked to early pushes by Governor McCarthy and Hawaii's legislature for statehood.⁸⁴ Despite paying all state taxes imposed, as a territory, Hawaii was excluded from monetary support for education, child welfare and other improvements.⁸⁵

Promoting Hawai'i as an all-American outpost in the Pacific would prove crucial in gaining statehood. Twenty seven bills for statehood failed to pass in Congress, it wasn't until 1959 that Hawai'i was bestowed with the honor of becoming the fiftieth state.⁸⁶ By the 1950s it was clear that Hawaii's mixed race population played a substantial role in statehood debates. In 1951 Joseph Farrington, Hawaiian delegate to the House of Representatives, extolled the unity of the many races living under the American flag in Hawai'i.⁸⁷ He argued on behalf of Hawai'i, "the people who live around the Pacific are watching to see what the United States does about Hawaii before they come to their conclusions as to whether we are sincere in our belief in the principles

⁸¹ Hughes, 71.

⁸² Kant, 246.

⁸³ Kant, 246.

⁸⁴ Day, 266.

⁸⁵ Day, 266.

⁸⁶ Day 268-9.

⁸⁷ Giles Scott Smith, "From Symbol of Division to Cold War Asset: Lyndon Johnson and the Achievement of Hawaiian Statehood," *History*, 89 no. 294 (April 2004), 260.

of democracy."⁸⁸ However, many politicians would not view Hawai'i in a positive light, as a new multi-racial American society. Rather one senator remarked, "how would you like to be sitting next to a fellow named Yamamoto?"⁸⁹ Hawaii's mixed race, mixed culture society was a liability in achieving statehood. Hawaii's government and educators couldn't alter population demographics to create an image of Hawaii that would be palatable to the United States. However, Standard Schools were an attempt at Americanizing Hawaii's population.

On the surface it was apparent that the Standard Schools were meant to preserve the English language abilities of native speakers and to provide them with an accelerated program of study. Less obvious were the social ramifications of segregating school by language ability. Standard schools were originally called "select schools," the name was changed as the term "select" implied that the school was superior to others.⁹⁰ In reality, English was the language of the elite, necessary for gaining political office and social mobility. Entry into select schools was determined by tests in written and oral English, tests that few non native English speaking children were able to pass. This limited the upward mobility of the majority of Hawaii's youth. Even those who passed found it difficult to gain admission as the schools were reluctant to admit them.⁹¹ Over time, more and more Asian children were able to pass the standard school exams. However, Kant found that Hawaii's government was unwilling to expand the standard schools as the population of qualified children rose. Drawing the conclusion that the education department

⁸⁸ Western Regional Conference, Republican National committee, 12 May 1951, cited in Smith, 260.

⁸⁹ Daniel K. Inouye, Oral Histories of the Johnson Administration 1963-1969 , cited in Smith, 260.

⁹⁰ Kant, 246.

⁹¹ Kant, 251.

was concerned with preserving the English of haole children, not with improving the English of non-haole ones.⁹²

The standard school system supported the continued existence of a two class society defined by language. During the latter part of the 19th century, Pidgin Hawaiian had been the language of the working class, it defined them. In the 20th century, Pidgin English replaced Pidgin Hawaiian as the language of the working class, defining the community. While Pidgin English provided an easy method of identifying who belonged to the community, it also became stigmatized as low class and backwards. A 1944 newspaper article remarked "poor English is a mark of slovenliness, not only in speech, but in thinking, and perhaps in other things as well. Use of good English is one of the marks of a good American."⁹³ By asserting that standard English was superior through the standard school system, educators and policymakers were able to defend the mentality that the Pidgin speaking non-haole community was inferior to the standard English speaking haole minority.

All Pau: Concluding Remarks

Language use and changes in language use often indicate larger changes and trends within society.⁹⁴ Therefore, the transformation of Hawaiian to Pidgin Hawaiian, the creation of Pidgin English and the push for Standard English can be seen as a linguistic map of Hawaii's socio-cultural past. Upon first arrival the missionaries viewed idolatry and the Hawaiian culture and religion as the enemy. Heathen tradition was to be combated with Christianity in either Hawaiian or English. Many Native Hawaiians desired becoming literate and in the process were

⁹² Kant, 254.

⁹³ "The Enemy, Pidgin English...." Star Bulletin, 20 March 1944, 4.

⁹⁴ Nettle & Romaine, 79.

inundated with not only literacy skills but Christianity as well. Education and Christianity were intertwined, It was impossible to have one without the other. Over time Native Hawaiians began to focus on gaining an English language education, viewing English as a tool necessary for involvement in trade with the Western world. The missionaries were reluctant to teach English to the Hawaiian commoners, worrying that it would remove the people from their influence and Christian teachings.

The centralization of the schools as a government function resulted in the creation of select and common schools. The select schools were taught in English by missionaries, the common schools were taught in Hawaiian by Native teachers. This system, which restricted an English education to wealthy Hawaiians, enforced the idea that the American culture and English language were superior to the Hawaiian culture and language. This empowered Haole residents who made up a minority of the population in Hawai'i. The centralization of schools also served as protector of the newly established constitutional monarchy. Mandatory schools that emphasized American culture and the supremacy of English, was meant to create a democratic Hawaiian society that would accept Haoles holding office alongside Hawaiian monarchs.

The creation of Pidgin Hawaiian indicates growing contact between Hawaiians and foreigners throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. With little opportunity to learn English on the plantation, plantation workers adopted Pidgin Hawaiian as a means of cross-national communication. That Pidgin Hawaiian was able to dominate within the working class indicates that the Hawaiian language still held a measure of power and influence. Although it did hold provide the user with prestige, it served as a powerful identifier for the working class community. The dominance of Pidgin Hawaiian also indicates that the Hawaiian population was

under stress. Faced with depopulation, maintaining standard Hawaiian was difficult. Hawaiian language purists were not the only ones alarmed by the spread of Pidgin Hawaiian. The Haole elite found themselves faced with a large population capable of united under the tongue of Pidgin Hawaiian, combined with a rise in Hawaiian pride and scholarship under the reign of King Kalakaua. Haole businessmen and government officials reacted to conceived threats to their power with the overthrow of the monarchy and with a policy of forced Americanization within the public schools. Three years after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, the use of Hawaiian in schools was outlawed. This disempowered not only Hawaiians but the entire Pidgin Hawaiian speaking community as well.

The enforcement of the English language only policy was intended to not only spread English but American culture and ideals as well. An unintended result of mandatory English schooling was the creation and dominance of Pidgin English instead of Standard English. The dominance of Pidgin English resulted in widespread Haole fears that their children would be negatively influenced by Pidgin English and a non-Haole culture. Driven by parents and pressure to gain statehood, educators created a system of English Standard Schools. These schools served to temporarily re-enforce an increasingly shaky social hierarchy that posited Haoles at the top and all non-haoles at the bottom.

Throughout Hawaii's post-contact history, language has been used as an group identifier within the community. It has also been used to stigmatize certain languages and elevate others. Despite being attacked as low class and sloppy throughout the majority of the 20th century, Pidgin English today, is celebrated by locals, scholars and authors as an integral part of the local identity. Today local authors such as Lee Tonouchi work to preserve Pidgin English and break

the stereotype that "if you talk Pidgin you no can...get good grades, get one good education, get good job."⁹⁵ Pidgin English can be found everywhere, from the back of a T&C shirt to bumper stickers on the cars of Hawai'i raised mainland college students. It serves the important function of defining who is a local and who is not and is increasingly celebrated as an important part of Hawaii's history and culture.

⁹⁵ Lee Tonouchi, Living Pidgin: Contemplations on Pidgin Culture, (honolulu, Tin Fish Press, 2002), 13.