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Raising critical language awareness in Hawai‘i at Da Pidgin Coup

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This chapter describes the efforts of Da Pidgin Coup, an advocacy group in Hawai‘i that strives to raise critical language awareness about Hawai‘i Creole. Several examples of advocacy for elevating the status of Pidgin in Hawai‘i are described, including the development of an undergraduate certificate in pidgin, creole, and dialect studies at the university level and a resolution submitted to the Hawai‘i State Legislature that requests funding for research on the use of Pidgin as a resource in education. Examples of activities that challenge negative views towards Pidgin are discussed in detail, such as a Pidgin grammar quiz that is used with educators and a task which provides Pidgin speakers with the opportunity to correct inaccurate Pidgin in popular literature.

Keywords: Hawai‘i Creole; language awareness; advocacy; community outreach

1. Introduction

Da Pidgin Coup is a group of scholars, students, and community members located primarily on the island of O‘ahu who meet to find ways to advocate for fuller recognition of Hawai‘i Creole (HC), a creole language known more commonly on the islands as Pidgin (and the term henceforth used in this chapter). The group strives to raise awareness about Pidgin in society, including greater recognition of Pidgin in educational contexts. To achieve this goal, the group has engaged in many efforts to increase knowledge about Pidgin at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, in public schools, and in local communities. While most language awareness work focuses explicitly on what educators working in schools and universities can do to raise students’ awareness of language (e.g., Candelier 2003; Fairclough 1992; Hawkins 1984; Hélot & Young 2005; Wallace 1999), Da Pidgin Coup aims to raise awareness in a wider set of contexts. Rather than asking educators alone to take on the burden of challenging hegemonic ideologies toward non-standardized languages, we take the view that increased knowledge about Pidgin is necessary in society at large in order to effect change. In this chapter, I discuss the details of several of Da Pidgin Coup’s recent and ongoing projects that

have sought to raise critical language awareness in educational contexts and beyond. Rather than focusing on a single project, I describe the action plans we have implemented and the activities we carry out to meet our goals.

2. A brief socio-historical overview of pidgin

Pidgin is a creole language that emerged on sugar plantations in Hawai'i during the middle to late 19th and early 20th centuries. Indentured laborers from China, Portugal, Japan, the Philippines, Korea, and many other nations worked alongside Hawaiians on plantations that were owned and operated by Caucasian North Americans. The pidgin that developed on the first plantation in 1835 was Pidgin Hawaiian since the Hawaiian people were still in control of their islands and their language through the middle of the nineteenth century. Hawaiian was the main language of interethnic communication in schools and society until 1875, when the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States was signed. The resulting free trade conditions allowed for a great number of Americans to do business on the islands, and during this time, the number of Hawaiians also declined to fewer than 50,000 because of sicknesses and diseases contracted from the foreigners. From 1878–1888, many English-medium schools were built, and as more laborers' children attended these schools year after year, the language of plantations became relexified as the pidgin known as Pidgin English (Sakoda & Siegel 2003: 7; Siegel 2000: 202). During this time, the vast majority of the population was at least bilingual, for they used Pidgin English on plantations and in interethnic interactions, and they spoke ethnic languages such as Hawaiian, Cantonese, Japanese, Okinawan, Tagalog, Ilokano, and Portuguese in their homes and in ethnically-homogeneous communities (Roberts 1995, Roberts S.J. 1997).

The role of Pidgin English changed, however, in the beginning of the 20th century, when the second generation of locally born speakers emerged and became equal in number to the foreign-born population. Use of Pidgin English also increased as a result of the high numbers of locally born Japanese who began to attend public schools in the early 1900s (Sakoda & Siegel 2003: 10). It was likely easier for Hawaiian, Chinese, and Portuguese speakers in schools to communicate in Pidgin English with Japanese than to acquire another language (Roberts S.J. 1997: 7). For this second generation, then, Pidgin English was the dominant language of the school, home and community, and as these children grew older, the language developed into the creole that linguists have labeled Hawai'i Creole, the language that was and still is referred to commonly as "Pidgin". Modern Pidgin carries all the traces of its past. While English forms much of the vocabulary basis of Pidgin, Hawaiian has had a significant impact on its grammatical structures. Cantonese and Portuguese also shape the grammar, while English, Hawaiian, Portuguese, and Japanese influence the vocabulary the most.

Even though English became an increasingly dominant language in the Kingdom of Hawai'i from the latter half of the nineteenth century onward, English was a relatively foreign language for most Pidgin speakers until World War II, when education became less segregated. Beginning in the nineteenth century, wealthy Caucasians and aristocratic Hawaiians sent their children to expensive private schools while plantation workers' children attended missionary schools. This segregated system continued under the auspices of the English Standard schools, established in 1924 to serve the increasing number of Caucasian Americans who moved to the islands after the Territory of Hawai'i was established. Since most of these recently arrived Caucasians were not wealthy landowners, they could not afford the expensive private schools. Rather than sending their children to the public schools along with the children of plantation laborers, they demanded education specifically for their children (Aspinwall 1960; Benham & Heck 1998). To meet their demands, the English Standard schools were established, and admission to these schools was contingent on an oral language test. Unsurprisingly, children who spoke Pidgin or Pidgin-influenced English did not pass the test and were enrolled in regular public schools instead. As Romaine (1999: 289) writes, "By institutionalizing what was essentially racial discrimination along linguistic lines, the schools managed to keep creole speakers in their 'place."

These schools created a stratification system that had two clear effects. First, because the educational system isolated Pidgin-speaking children and newly arrived immigrant children from the English speaking population, Pidgin was maintained as the primary mode of communication for children who were not educated at the English Standard schools. Even though the medium of instruction at all schools was English, Pidgin-speaking children who attended public schools retained Pidgin as their dominant language since it was the most important language in their homes, among their friends, and in their communities. In effect, the segregated school system prevented intensive contact between Pidgin and English and contact-induced change of the former under the influence of the latter. Secondly, even though Pidgin was the norm in this community, negative attitudes toward Pidgin became pervasive during the 1930s since Pidgin speakers were compared to those educated at the English Standard schools. While Pidgin maintained its covert prestige as a source of solidarity and local identity among Pidgin speakers, overt prestige was attached to English due to its association with exclusion and privilege in the English Standard schools (Romaine 1999: 289). These schools were dismantled after World War II, but negative attitudes toward Pidgin had already become institutionalized along race and class boundaries.

Pidgin is currently spoken by approximately 600,000 speakers in the State of Hawai'i and about 100,000 in the mainland of the United States (*Ethnologue*: n.p.; Sakoda & Siegel 2003: 1). It is difficult to provide a comprehensive description of the use of contemporary Pidgin or bilingualism in Hawai'i due to the paucity of research

that investigates language in use. Most sociolinguistic research on Pidgin has investigated language attitudes and ideologies, drawing on interview data and surveys (e.g., Reynolds 1999; Romaine 1999; Sato 1991), and it is clear from other research contexts that reports of language use tend to differ from actual language use, particularly when stigmatized languages are involved (e.g., Bamgbose 1992; Farrell & Kun 2008; Labov 1966; Milroy & Gordon 2003). A recent small-scale study by Marlow and Giles (2008) demonstrates that Pidgin speakers on the island of Hawai‘i believe that English should be spoken in educational settings and with superiors at work, and that they reserve Pidgin for interactions with family, friends, and co-workers. However, the same study provides evidence that the participants also switch from English to Pidgin at work when it serves their communicative goals, such as establishing rapport with customers. One participant summarized her ability to code-switch in the following excerpt:

(1) Code-switching in Hawai‘i

612 C: It definitely helps now, well now with my job. The oddest thing is
613 that I can turn it off and on. I can be with a client that is very local
614 and I can flip it in a second and just start talking broken English.
615 M: So that's what you do then?
616 C: Yes. It really helps me to connect with my clients.

(Marlow & Giles 2008: 64)

Based on observational data, Grimes (1999) reports that local men who work in white-collar positions have a diglossic use of language, as they speak Pidgin in recreational settings and English at work. However, as the participants in Marlow & Giles (2008) indicate, it is often the case that many residents of Hawai‘i make use of English alongside Pidgin within single conversational episodes, and that they frequently codeswitch due to contextual constraints and/or for pragmatic effect. Furukawa (2007) provides examples of linguistic hybridity involving English, Pidgin, and other local languages including mock Filipino in stand-up comedy shows performed on O‘ahu. In casual conversation, people may make use of occasional Pidgin features in English conversational episodes, drawing on lexical and grammatical features from both basilectal and acrolectal forms (Siegel 2008: 266). In terms of who uses Pidgin in Hawai‘i, no comprehensive studies have been undertaken which would provide a clear description of the entire state. Romaine (1999: 288–89) surmises that it is “the first language of probably the majority of children in Hawai‘i” and Sakoda and Siegel (2003: 18) describe Pidgin as “the informal language of families and friends... the language of people born and bred in Hawai‘i, especially ethnic Hawaiians and the descendants of plantation laborers”.

Hawai‘i is a very linguistically and culturally heterogeneous context, and variation in Pidgin and English is quite prevalent. The most recent study of variation in Hawai‘i is Inoue’s (2008) doctoral dissertation on copula variation in Pidgin, based on interviews

with 80 speakers across the islands of O'ahu, Hawai'i and Kaua'i. Inoue found that urban O'ahu speakers exhibit the fewest number of Pidgin features in their talk, a circumstance which is likely the result of Honolulu's status as an international city with a high degree of interaction with populations from the mainland United States and other nations. While such findings indicate a possible shift towards English among urban O'ahu residents, Inoue's data shows that copula absence is increasing among younger speakers in other regions, particularly rural O'ahu and Hawai'i (Inoue 2008: 77–82), which indicates that multiple linguistic changes are taking place simultaneously in different regions.

3. Pidgin in educational contexts

Pidgin became the target of official educational policy in 1987, when the Hawai'i Board of Education (BOE) attempted to implement a policy that would allow only English in schools. The policy may have been the product of several converging influences, including the make-up of the BOE at the time, the English-only movement which began to garner support in the mainland United States in the early 1980s (Crawford 2000; Dicker 2000), and the effects of changes in the State of Hawai'i's Constitution which made Hawaiian an official language. Greater support for Hawaiian eventually led to funding for the state's first immersion schools in the mid 1980s,¹ and it is possible that greater recognition for Hawaiian created an atmosphere of *rough take*, or the idea that there are not enough resources for everyone, and hence, some people (or languages, in this case) would have to be excluded (Laiana Wong, personal communication). The BOE's actions provoked a strong negative reaction from various people, including educators, and the policy was widely seen as an unfair and discriminatory attack on Pidgin (Hargrove & Sakoda 1999; Sato 1991; Watson-Gegeo 1990). A flurry of media coverage followed the BOE policy, and many residents voiced their opinions in the newspapers. Some took anti-Pidgin stances, asserting that "Pidgin English fosters illiteracy" while others countered with arguments that "banning pidgin would violate our freedom of speech" (Verploegen 1988 cited in Sato 1991: 654). Because of public support for Pidgin, the BOE revised its policy to allow Pidgin in the classroom while giving high priority to English, but the role of Pidgin in education has remained a very sensitive issue ever since. While no studies have proven any correlations between Pidgin and educational underachievement, the perspective that Pidgin

1. Hawaiian is an officially-approved medium of instruction in Hawai'i's immersion schools. Hawai'i is the only state in the USA to recognize two languages as official, Hawaiian and English.

leads to low test scores is a pervasive belief that was made public in 1987 and which persists to the present day. In contrast to what many detractors of Pidgin believe, studies which have examined Pidgin in educational settings provide evidence of a positive effect on the acquisition of English when Pidgin is used as a learning resource in the classroom (Actouka & Lai 1989; Afaga & Lai 1994; Day 1989; Reynolds 1999; Rynkofs 1993).

The BOE's policy to ban Pidgin in schools received greater scrutiny by the public because it happened to coincide with a lawsuit that also raised awareness about language discrimination in Hawai'i. The lawsuit (Kahakua et al. v. Hallgren 1987) was filed by two local men who worked for the National Weather Service who had sought higher positions but who were not offered the positions in spite of their high qualifications. Instead, Caucasians with mainland accents were hired for the positions. The men were asked to submit an audiotaped weather forecast as part of the application process, and they were told that Caucasians were selected for the positions because they "sounded better" (Sato 1991: 655). At the end of a three-day trial, the judge, who had been brought in from California, ruled in favor of the National Weather Service, and he advised the plaintiffs "to put more effort into improving their speech" (Sato 1993: 135). The case was eventually abandoned by the plaintiffs who had grown very frustrated with the legal process.

While local support for Pidgin was apparent after the BOE attempted its mandate and after the Kahakua et al. case drew attention to linguistic discrimination, it remains stigmatized among many people who live in Hawai'i. Marlow and Giles (2008) show how some Pidgin speakers choose to speak English in order to avoid being labeled inferior, especially in educational and professional settings. At the same time, however, Pidgin remains a strong marker of social identity and belonging. As is the case with speakers of most non-standardized varieties, many speakers of Pidgin experience 'linguistic schizophrenia' (Kachru 1992: 60) because they recognize the covert prestige that Pidgin can provide while simultaneously deferring to exonormative standards that prescribe English as the only 'good' or 'worthwhile' language.

4. The formation of Da Pidgin Coup

Da Pidgin Coup formed in 1998 in order to provide a venue for scholars and community members to share interests in creole linguistics and educational policy. The following year, the group began to tackle issues directly related to the treatment of Pidgin in relation to education in the public arena. In the fall of 1999, the chairperson of Hawai'i's Board of Education, Mitsugi Nakashima, publicly implicated Pidgin in students' low scores on standardized tests. Nakashima stated, "I see writing as an encoding process and coding what one thinks, and if your thinking is not in Standard English, it's hard

for you to write in Standard English." He also asserted that English should be the norm for every classroom based on the logic that "If you speak Pidgin, then you think Pidgin, and you write Pidgin" (*Honolulu Advertiser*, 29 September 1999).

In response, Da Pidgin Coup's members drafted a position paper on Pidgin and forwarded it to the State of Hawai'i's school superintendent. The main goal of the paper was to raise sociolinguistic awareness by offering an overview of the history of Pidgin, in addition to countering the claims made by Nakashima. The paper is written in non-academic language and provides a comprehensive yet highly readable overview of the major issues surrounding Pidgin and its relevance to educational contexts. The paper establishes the sociolinguistic history of Pidgin, outlines its grammatical features, and then focuses on issues regarding attitudes towards Pidgin in education. The paper's main points are summarized on the first page of the paper, and are quoted below (Da Pidgin Coup 1999: n.p.):

- Pidgin is a language just as English is a language.
- All children come to school with a language, and that language should be accepted and never denigrated.
- Some children come to school with Pidgin. The language of these children deserves as much respect as any other language.
- No one should be prevented from using Pidgin where it works in the learning process.
- While teachers should teach standard forms of English, in no way should learning English replace Pidgin.
- There is a fundamental difference between speaking and writing: most children learn to read and write when they come to school; all children learn to speak before they come to school.
- There are social advantages to being able to speak Pidgin, just as there are social advantages to being able to speak English.
- There is plenty of room for Pidgin and English to co-exist peacefully and be mutually enriching.

The paper also makes several recommendations for educational contexts, including language awareness seminars and workshops for in-service teachers, including strategies for building on home languages in the classroom; language awareness programs for students to learn about the history and linguistic aspects of Pidgin and English; and, more research on Pidgin and English in schools that would work toward understanding how both Pidgin and English could be utilized for academic achievement. The paper also discusses the differences between Pidgin and English at length in order to debunk widely held misconceptions that Pidgin is simply a 'broken' form of English, drawing on Lippi-Green's (1997: 63–73) language subordination model (discussed in greater detail below). The position paper was covered by Hawai'i's major daily

newspapers several times, thereby reaching a large number of readers and helping Da Pidgin Coup to disseminate our messages about sociolinguistic awareness. This paper has also been posted to the World Wide Web where it is easily and freely accessible to all (www.hawaii.edu/sls/pidgin.html).

In January 2000, the state Superintendent of Education accepted an invitation to meet with Da Pidgin Coup to discuss the issue of Pidgin in education. While he emphasized that oral expression in Standard English was to remain the goal of schooling, he clearly stated that Pidgin could be used as a tool for learning as well. At that time, Da Pidgin Coup agreed to run voluntary professional development workshops on Pidgin for teachers and administrators. The details of these workshops will be discussed below in the section on “Projects in schools”.

To continue to advocate for research and critical language awareness programs, Da Pidgin Coup lobbied for the establishment of the Charlene Sato Center for Pidgin, Creole and Dialect Studies, instituted by the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in 2002. This center is the meeting place for Da Pidgin Coup and serves as a resource center for Pidgin and other pidgin and creole languages. The current director, Kent Sakoda, is a native speaker of Pidgin and, with Jeff Siegel, is the co-author of *Pidgin Grammar: An Introduction to the Creole Language of Hawai‘i* (2003), which remains the most comprehensive grammatical description of the language.

5. Critical language awareness

Following other critical scholars and educators who engage with the politics of language and society (e.g., Gee 1990; Fairclough 1992; Janks 1997; Wallace 1999), Da Pidgin Coup seeks to explicitly address discourses that circulate in schools and society which denigrate Pidgin and extol Standard English as an unfettered pathway to success in life. Our approach is similar to many language awareness approaches that seek to challenge linguistic prejudice, open discussion of linguistic difference and multilingualism, and encourage greater reflection on the relationship between pluralism in language and tolerance for diversity in schools and society. However, while most approaches that are labeled “Language Awareness” (e.g., Candelier 2003; Hawkins 1984) or “Dialect Awareness” (e.g., Wolfram, Adger & Christian 1999) focus on introducing students to sociolinguistic concepts and activities that are designed to demystify language structures, our approach is driven by a critical perspective that explicitly focuses on raising awareness about the connections between language and power (cf. Siegel 2006b).

Following Pennycook’s (2001) post-structuralist framework for critical applied linguistics, we take the view that power does not reside in certain languages or in particular people, but rather, we see power as an effect of discourses operating among

people in social networks. This conceptualization of power challenges the notion of language as a commodity which treats powerful forms of language as entities that can be added to speakers' repertoires. Taking a more critical and post-structuralist perspective, we do not view particular languages as imbued with more and less power, but rather, we see language as an aspect of social relations and identities which are changeable, negotiable, and fluid. From this view, critical language awareness can lead to empowerment through "changing the terms of relationships and the modes of operation of power between (and within) people from limiting to more productive forms" (Tew 2002: 169). This view of power allows for language awareness approaches to work towards altering social relations by opening up a space to negotiate identities based on language, and to transform limiting social and institutional relations. In more practical terms, this view of language and power enables people to deconstruct processes of stigmatization and standardization, to recognize the potential value in marginalized languages, and to examine the hidden contradictions in their own communities about the use of languages like Pidgin.

We recognize that attitudes toward language are often formulated in schools, where "standard language ideology" dominates, what Lippi-Green (1997: 64) defines as "a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class". Challenging this standard language ideology is an important aspect of language awareness, but we also feel that linguists and educationists cannot focus solely on educational institutions if change is to be realized. Moreover, given the current lack of support for bilingual educational policy in the United States and the difficult working conditions of teachers due to No Child Left Behind legislation, we feel that focusing our attention on a broad range of contexts and communities, including educational contexts, is the best way forward.

Drawing on research by several of Da Pidgin Coup's members on creole and other non-standardized languages in education and society (Eades 1995, 2003; Siegel 1993, 1997b, 1999b, 2006b, 2007), Da Pidgin Coup has focused on three aspects of awareness raising in educational contexts and beyond. First, the group targets *sociolinguistic awareness* by striving to deepen people's knowledge of language variation and to give them access to discourses about standardized and non-standardized language varieties. In workshops for community members and educators, we provide historical overviews of Pidgin as a means of explaining its sociolinguistic development and its linguistic structure. Similar to language awareness and dialect awareness approaches, much of the work we do that aims to achieve greater degrees of sociolinguistic awareness takes place through raising *contrastive awareness* by asking people to inductively discover the rule-governed grammar of Pidgin through comparing it to other languages such as

English and Hawaiian. Finally, we strive to raise *accommodative language awareness* by offering people the opportunity to examine the ways that non-standardized varieties are used in speech and in writing, to identify as speakers of Pidgin, and to use their language in empowering ways. These methods have been endorsed by many other researchers who research strategies for empowering speakers of non-standardized and marginalized languages, including Aboriginal English (Eades 1995; Malcolm et al. 1999) and African American English (Delphit 1988; Rickford 2002; Wolfram 1999).

In the realm of schooling, greater sociolinguistic awareness has the potential to lead to more respectful treatment of children (by teachers and students alike) who speak non-standardized languages such as Pidgin. When children's ways of speaking and being are criticized, their sense of identity is weakened, and their motivation for performing well in school may be diminished as a result. Researchers have found many times over that high levels of pride in one's ethnic and linguistic heritage often correlate with high levels of academic achievement (e.g., Delphit 1998, 2002; Heath 1983; Michaels 1981; Smith, Atkins, & Connell 2003). Even linguists who point out that the differences between Standard English and non-standardized varieties are slight (and hence should not cause educational difficulties) admit that the treatment of children who speak non-standardized varieties is likely to be the culprit of despondency towards classroom learning (McWhorter 1998; Mufwene 2001). As one Pidgin speaker expressed in Da Pidgin Coup's position paper (1999: n.p.),

Education is Western-based so da guys who teaching it, they come to Hawai'i, they have hard time understanding our people, so instead of working with us, they going work against us and make us look bad.

Da Pidgin Coup agrees that when Pidgin speakers see their language denigrated at school, they do not see themselves as belonging in the school context. Conversely, if students' knowledge of Pidgin is treated as a resource in schools and society, these children may well feel a greater sense of belonging in schools.

6. Achievements at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

In addition to establishing the Charlene Sato Center for Pidgin, Creole, and Dialect Studies, the most recent significant achievement the group has made at the university level is the recent passing of an undergraduate certificate in Pidgin and Creole studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. This certificate was accepted by the university's faculty senate and was finally signed into officialdom by the vice chancellor in 2007. This 15-credit certificate is one way the University can acknowledge the relevance of Pidgin in Hawai'i. While linguists from Hawai'i and other parts of the world have taken

a keen interest in doing research on the language, the vast majority of the students at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa have not had any opportunity to learn about it in any comprehensive way. This certificate provides that opportunity.

The passage of this certificate took several years and was stalled many times due to the bureaucratic nature of university committees, changes in the organization of Da Pidgin Coup, and the ever-changing administrative staff of the university. The aim of the certificate is to legitimate Pidgin at the university level by treating it as a subject worthy of academic scholarship across a number of interrelated disciplines. In our efforts to get the certificate passed, Da Pidgin Coup highlighted the certificate's ability to meet many aspects of the university's objectives for multiculturalism, including improving entry, retention, and success rates of diverse student populations, and supporting the study of diverse cultures and languages. The certificate was also presented as a way to help support a key element in the Social Justice Imperative of the University's Strategic Plan (www.hawaii.edu/ovppp/stratplansys.html), which is to "Instill respect for human (linguistic) diversity across the campus and curriculum and to support a key element in the University's Place Initiative, which is to "build on our unparalleled cultural diversity" while supporting a Strategic Imperative, "to encourage research that benefits and involves the local community". While most universities have such rhetoric in their mission statements and strategic plans, Da Pidgin Coup felt that the undergraduate certificate in Pidgin and Creole studies would help the university to live up to its rhetoric and pointed this out in the proposal. Moreover, the certificate proposal emphasized connections with knowledge about pidgins and creoles with educational contexts, stating "Education students who plan to teach in the public schools could also benefit from this certificate since a high number of students in public schools are bilingual English and Pidgin speakers."

Courses included in this certificate provide a systematic and comprehensive program of study for students interested in Pidgin and other pidgin and creole languages through coursework in Second Language Studies, Linguistics, English, Hawaiian Studies, History, Sociology, and Ethnic Studies. Da Pidgin Coup chose courses from these disciplines in order to give certificate students greater understanding of the linguistic, socio-cultural, political and educational issues concerning both the historical development of Pidgin and its important role in contemporary society. There are two required three-credit courses for the certificate, including a course in the Department of Second Language Studies titled "Pidgin and Creole English in Hawai'i", (taught every semester, including summer sessions); it provides a general understanding of the socio-historical background and linguistic structure of Pidgin Hawai'i English and Pidgin (HC) in Hawai'i. The course also addresses questions of language attitudes, language education and literary heritage by engaging with concerns about present day attitudes in the school system and community. The other required course is a choice of either

“Pidgin and Creole Languages” offered in the Department of Linguistics² or “English in Hawai‘i”, offered in the Department of English. The Linguistics course examines the social contexts and linguistic structures of various pidgin and creole languages, including Pidgin (HC), Tok Pisin, Fiji Hindi, and Melanesian Pidgin; the course in the Department of English explores the English-speaking cultures of Hawai‘i from the viewpoint of the state’s multilingual history and culture.

The electives for the certificate capitalize on the resources already available at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa that examine the cultures, history, and economic contexts which originally produced the Hawai‘i Pidgin and Creole. Each of these three-credit courses is listed below.

English courses

Ethnic Literature of Hawai‘i

Ethnic Studies courses

Japanese in Hawai‘i

Chinese in Hawai‘i

Filipinos in Hawai‘i

Immigration to Hawai‘i

Hawaiian Labor History

Hawaiian Studies courses

Political Myths and Hawaiian History

History courses

The Hawaiian Kingdom 1819–1893

History of 20th Century Hawai‘i

Sociology courses

Race and Ethnicity in Hawai‘i

2. Since creole specialist Dr. Jeff Siegel left the Department of Linguistics at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in 2005, courses on pidgin and creole languages have not been taught. There are plans to hire a sociolinguist who may be able to teach these courses beginning in 2009. Another course currently taught in Linguistics that is pertinent to pidgin and creole languages is an introductory course titled “Language in Hawai‘i and the Pacific”, but a requirement for undergraduate certificates is that all qualifying credits must come from advanced-level classes.

Once students have had the opportunity to complete this certificate program, we will be able to evaluate the effect that this certificate has had on undergraduate students' critical language awareness about Pidgin and other creole languages. Since certificates are optional qualifications for undergraduates, our present task is to disseminate information about the certificate and to encourage faculty advisors in relevant fields to recommend the certificate courses for their students.

Da Pidgin Coup believes that an undergraduate certificate is one step toward additional moves to further legitimate Pidgin in the University of Hawai'i system. Using the certificate as a stepping stone, the group plans to advocate that Pidgin should qualify as another language for students who are required to demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English. The current challenges that the group is still trying to address are that no proficiency exams are yet available for Pidgin, and that there is no infrastructure to provide the resources for developing standards for rating speakers' knowledge of Pidgin.

7. Projects in schools

Following the visit of the state Superintendent of Education in 2000, members of Da Pidgin Coup have led workshops for educators across the state, both in schools supervised by the State of Hawai'i's Department of Education and at sites sponsored by interest groups comprised of educators and policymakers. These workshops were not part of an official curriculum on language awareness, but rather, occasional opportunities Da Pidgin Coup forged in order to reach out to educators who were willing to come together and listen. Given the time constraints on teachers' schedules, the workshops are limited in their scope and focus largely on myths and misconceptions educators may have about Pidgin and activities that demonstrate the grammatical differences between Pidgin and English. We have not developed modules that focus on the didactics of multilingualism or the use of Pidgin in education, but we do offer teachers and other interested people handouts which list resources such as the use of local literature in language arts classes (see discussion under "Community Outreach" section, below) and we have also shown a segment from the DVD *Do You Speak American?* (2005) in which an elementary school teacher in Los Angeles uses a Jeopardy-style game to teach children to code-switch between African American English and Academic English. Some of these workshops have been the result of invitations, while others came to fruition as the result of professional networks that members of Da Pidgin Coup had established. The group has presented workshops and professional development sessions for organizations such as GEAR UP Hawai'i, the Aloha State Council of the International Reading Association, the Hawai'i Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and Hawai'i TESOL.

These workshops inform teachers about the nature of Pidgin and other similar language varieties and provide them with a model for awareness activities in their own classrooms. The sessions focus on the following areas:

- Origins and development of pidgin and creole languages, and Pidgin in particular
- Pidgin phonology in comparison to English phonology
- Lexical and morphological aspects of Pidgin
- A demonstration of Pidgin's grammar, based on inductive methods such as acceptability judgments tasks
- A discussion of the language subordination model which devalues Pidgin in schools and society

During these sessions, some of the most valuable activities include tasks that encourage the educators to recognize the rule-governed nature of Pidgin. Our group members have noted time and time again how most educators are unaware that Pidgin has a grammar and can have ungrammatical utterances. Moreover, experience shows us that most educators think of Pidgin as some version of English. Consequently, activities that reveal Pidgin's grammatical structures to teachers are very important for raising sociolinguistic, contrastive, and accommodative language awareness. These tasks typically involve one or more informal acceptability judgment tasks in which local teachers must rely on their own linguistic intuitions as Pidgin speakers in order to determine the grammatical rules of Pidgin. One of the activities the group frequently uses is Kent Sakoda's "Pidgin Grammar Quiz", an activity that asks teachers to determine which statements are acceptable or unacceptable, and to correct any problematic Pidgin grammar. The quiz only contains five sentences due to the time constraints of most workshops (see Table 1). Purposefully ungrammatical sentences are starred with an asterisk for the sake of this chapter only. On the quiz, it is up to the teachers to decide whether a sentence is acceptable or unacceptable and to suggest revisions for any unacceptable sentences.

Other activities have been developed in order to raise contrastive awareness about Pidgin as it relates to English. Examples here include asking educators to think about the popular American National Milk Processor Board's advertising slogan "Got milk" and to translate it into Pidgin. All native speakers of Pidgin come up with *Get milk*, which reveals a major difference between Pidgin and English in the use of *get*. In Pidgin, *get* is used as a present tense form of possession, and it can also be understood as an existential (as in 'there is'). In the case of the advertising slogan for milk, the Pidgin *Get Milk* is the equivalent of 'I have milk'. The fact that Pidgin *had* ('there was') translates as the past tense form of Pidgin *get* can arise in this discussion, revealing yet another aspect of Pidgin that is not simply a variety of English.

At the level of pronunciation, educators are asked to think about what Pidgin *chri* [tʃri] translates to in English. Most people are able to name two forms, 'three' and

Table 1. Pidgin Grammar Quiz

Sentence provided	Correction (if relevant) and grammar point
1. *We wen seen dat movie already.	Changes: We wen see dat movie already.
	Pidgin <i>wen</i> acts as a past tense marker, making the past tense marking on <i>seen</i> ungrammatical
2. Da car red.	Changes: none
	Pidgin does not always require a copula verb. Alternatives are possible, however, such as <i>Da car stay red</i> (which makes use of <i>stay</i> as a copula that indicates a change of state or comment about the speaker's expectations) as well as <i>Red da car</i> (which follows Hawaiian syntax and may be considered a more basilectal form of HC)
3. *Joe not stay playing football.	Changes: Joe no stay playing football.
	<i>Not</i> cannot be used before the predicate when it is preceded by <i>stay</i> ; <i>no</i> is used before <i>stay</i>
4. She stay eat da cake.	Changes: none
	Like all languages, Pidgin has variation. This sentence is acceptable, though some Pidgin speakers may debate what it means. For some, it can mean 'She has eaten the cake,' while others feel it means that 'She is eating the cake.' Some people may feel that <i>She stay eating da cake</i> is also acceptable. This would create the unambiguous meaning of 'She is eating the cake.' <i>She stay eating da cake</i> is a more acrolectal variety of Pidgin and it is closer to English in form
5. *Mary wen pau cooking da rice.	Changes: Mary wen pau cook da rice.
	<i>Wen</i> and <i>-ing</i> forms of verbs are not compatible since <i>wen</i> indicates a completed action and <i>-ing</i> marks ongoing action

'tree'. Another example is the word pronounced as [papi], which can mean 'puppy' or 'poppy' to Pidgin speakers, thus marking contextual interpretation as potentially more significant than in English. Pidgin has seven vowels while most forms of American English have more than 15 vowels (including both monothongs & diphthongs). Examples such as these help to make the point that Pidgin has a different inventory of sounds than does English and suggests that Pidgin requires more context sensitivity for interaction as well.

In addition to these examples, Siegel (2007) provides the detailed example of negation that the group has also used to great success. The group presents examples of sentences with Pidgin negatives *no*, *nat*, *neva*, and *nomo* and compares them to their English counterparts. As Siegel (2007: 79) explains, "The teachers are usually quite thrilled to discover these rules, especially when comparisons are made with the much

simpler rules in English, where the only sentential negative marker is ‘not’ (or its contracted form ‘n’t’).¹

Beyond promoting contrastive awareness, Da Pidgin Coup members often discuss with educators the difficult issues surrounding power and language use in Hawai‘i. Ermile Hargrove, an educational consultant and founding member of the group, often asks teachers to list the pros and cons of speaking English by asking, “Do you believe speaking English gives you power?” Invariably, educators note that speaking Pidgin can also be a language of power, in certain situations of use, though not typically in educational contexts. This discussion can set the stage for a more in-depth treatment of Lippi-Green’s (1997: 68) language subordination process, which is presented to the teachers in a summarized fashion, drawing on local examples involving Pidgin and English.

1. *Authority is claimed.* People claim that Standard English is simply better. They make pronouncements about Pidgin speakers’ intelligence and future education and employment prospects.
2. *Misinformation is generated.* Pidgin is delegitimized as “lazy talk”, “slang, or worse, “broken English”. Linguistic knowledge of Pidgin and expertise from linguists is excluded from discussions.
3. *Non-mainstream language is trivialized.* Pidgin is presented as a language suitable for jokes, for surfing, and other “non-serious” activities, but not for work or school. Pidgin speakers are depicted as uncouth individuals in various media and Pidgin is used to market very local products in a humorous and yet denigrating manner.
4. *Conformers are held as positive examples.* People who were forbidden to speak Pidgin at school, such as Hawai‘i’s former governor, Ben Cayetano, claim this as a major factor in their success. No distinction is made between acquiring Standard English while maintaining Pidgin and eliminating Pidgin from one’s linguistic repertoire.
5. *Explicit promises are made.* People are told that Standard English (alone) is the pathway to success in school and a good job.
6. *Threats are made.* People are told that if you speak Pidgin, you will never do well in school, obtain a good job, or be treated with respect.
7. *Non-conformers are vilified or marginalized.* Pidgin speakers are regarded as less intelligent and less able to succeed in school and in life.

In going through each of these stages, audience members are typically able to point out counter examples for each point by drawing on their own experience as successful bilinguals who speak Pidgin and English. The importance of power is not lost on these audiences who can often relate these points about language subordination to the need

to advocate for increased multiculturalism and respect for students' linguistic and ethnic cultural backgrounds in the classroom as well.

Other members of our group have successfully engaged with educators on the topic of power and "common sense" choices regarding the choice of English by comparing language to other aspects of social life. Richard Nettell, a member of the group originally from the United Kingdom, sometimes uses the example of table manners very effectively to discuss notions of linguistic imperialism and linguicism. Holding a fork (pointed downwards) and knife in his hands, he delivers a variation of the following message, which effectively points out the arbitrary nature of language and the very non-arbitrary nature of language politics:

As your educator, I really have to insist that all of you, for your own good, need to learn to eat properly (like I do) because of the unfortunate but inevitable discrimination you will otherwise face in places like the UK, where people not only know how to eat properly but judge others like you who don't VERY negatively.

As a progressive educator, on the other hand, I must also admit that these British rules dictating how to eat are not only arbitrary but, in the case of my upturned fork, contrary to basic good sense. In fact, I am even prepared to admit that these rules have been made by, and are primarily policed by, people who just want to have yet another way to demonstrate their presumed superiority over the rest of the population on this planet.

So if there's nothing actually better or worse about American Table Manners, as opposed to British Table Manners, then, as with Pidgin and English, we are obviously dealing with two different systems, neither of which is inherently better than the other. But simply comparing and contrasting these two systems, although helpful and potentially somewhat empowering, is, in my opinion, not really doing enough. What I want to teach is a level of critical awareness which will empower people not just to understand but to challenge the rules, willfully to stick with their American Table Manners, even in the UK (and despite the critical looks), and, hopefully, shock the Brits into reevaluating their out-dated classed-based nonsense called Standard English etiquette (Nettell, 2007).

Nettell's words highlight the hypocrisy involved in promoting multiculturalism in schools while rejecting linguistic diversity in the form of Pidgin in favor of English. His cutlery metaphor is especially effective for discussing the preference for monolingualism in schools and the rejection of Pidgin in education as acts of linguicism. Moreover, he asserts that educators need to do more than simply recognize Pidgin as a language their students speak – they need to do more to encourage its *use* in the classroom. His point here about the use of Pidgin resonates well with our awareness approach in that we believe that awareness should lead to actions like the inclusion of Pidgin (and sometimes preference for it over English) in the classroom.

8. Community outreach

Beyond participating in workshops that exclusively target educators, Da Pidgin Coup has set up an information table at various community events in order to stimulate greater sociolinguistic awareness about Pidgin in the community. The group does this because we feel that educators alone cannot be responsible for changing attitudes and challenging the stigma of Pidgin as a non-standardized language. At these events, an information table is staffed with several members of the group who offer interested parties different kinds of information on Pidgin, including a summary of the group's position paper, easy-to-follow lessons on Pidgin orthography (following the Odo system), and pointers for educators on how to approach Pidgin in the classroom. These tips for teachers are distilled from research by Charlene Sato (1989, 1991 & 1993) on Pidgin and English in educational contexts (see Table 2). Oftentimes, parents of school-aged children are interested in this information, or college students considering a career in education, public policy, or linguistics. We have found that offering the information to a wide range of parties is the best way to disseminate the information across a range of people, rather than targeting educators only.

Table 2. Teaching Standard English as a second dialect

1. Recognize the integrity and value of minority varieties of English, such as HC.
 2. Recognize that differences between varieties are not trivial and occur in every linguistic domain.
 3. Reinforce and/or nurture a sense of positive cultural identity and self-worth among speakers of minority varieties.
 4. Adopt a pluralist position and teach Standard English as a second dialect. In other words, pursue additive bialectalism, not remediation.
 5. Be clear about what is meant by Standard English in setting educational goals (for example, in relation to specific linguistic domains such as accent and in relation to subject matter and academic tasks)
 6. Recognize and accommodate mismatches between interactional patterns in and out of the classroom.
 - a. Modify teacher talk and classroom participation patterns
 - b. Use Pidgin in the classroom to ensure learner comprehension
 - c. Modify literacy activities
 7. Improve teacher education by focusing on issues of language variation, cultural pluralism, and how they influence learning.
-

At the information tables, we also get the word out about a web site for teachers and local writers who are interested in local literature. This resource has been developed by one of the group's members, Aiko Yamashiro. This Local Literature Resource Page (www2.hawaii.edu/~aikoy/home.html) provides links to syllabi for high school and college level courses that have been taught, including a syllabus by

Lee Tonouchi (a.k.a., Da Pidgin Guerilla) for an anthropology course taught at Hawai'i Pacific University titled "Hip-Hop Hawai'i: Hawai'i Youth Culture", described entirely in Pidgin. Another link takes educators to teaching materials available as downloadable handouts. On the site, Yamashiro has provided a lesson plan for the study of Pidgin in literature, which is presented in full in Figure 1. The lesson is based on Alani Apio's *Kāmau*, a play that explores what it means to be Hawaiian in the 21st century. The play examines the experiences of a present-day Hawaiian family, and two cousins, Kawaipono and Alika, whose experiences reveal a dilemma between tradition and development. Apio's writing style blends English, Hawaiian, and Pidgin, which provides much of the local color and richness of the play. The play has been performed several times at the Kumu Kahua Theater in Honolulu, a venue which promotes local playwrights who often produce dialogue in Pidgin. Importantly, Yamashiro points out how this lesson meets the Department of Education's language arts standards while incorporating attention to Pidgin in the classroom.

Goals:

- Explore and question the stereotypes and identities connected to Pidgin
- Engender critical thinking about what it means (socially, economically, politically, etc.) to use Pidgin as a language
- Analyze language switching as a literary device, adding to the complexity of plot and characterization

Department of Education Language Arts Standard 3: Reading
"Respond to literary texts from a range of stances: personal, interpretive, critical"

Materials: This session will center around scenes 5–8 from the play *Kāmau* by Alani Apio (1994). In this play (based in contemporary O'ahu), characters switch between English, Pidgin, and Hawaiian to get different reactions and to display different relationships towards other characters.

text: Apio, Alani. (1994).

General discussion questions (adapt and specify to text):

- Based on the text, what cultures/beliefs/identities do the different languages represent? Do these ideas conflict with or complicate each other?
- When do characters switch languages and for what purposes?
- How do variables like audience and topic affect language choice?
- How do these literary examples connect with our own language experiences? Is this literature believable? Can we relate?

Figure 1. Lesson plan (High School): Pidgin-English codeswitching in Alani Apio's *Kāmau*

Yamashiro continues to solicit teaching materials from current and pre-service teachers so that she can post them on the web site in order to make the resource as practical as possible.

At our information tables, we also offer interested passers-by the opportunity to “test” their Pidgin ability level by participating in a survey on Pidgin variation. Part of the survey makes use of excerpts of Pidgin from literary sources, including James Michener’s *Hawai‘i* (1959) and Paul Theroux’s *Hotel Honolulu* (2001). While some of the Pidgin in these books is accepted as accurate by Pidgin speakers, much of it has been shown to be rather contrived. Hence, excerpts of dialogue in these books provide an excellent resource for raising accommodative awareness in that speakers of Pidgin have the opportunity to correct “bad” Pidgin and to act as language experts by offering revised versions of the dialogues. The survey is not meant to develop a singular standard of Pidgin, but rather, to show to Pidgin speakers that in spite of some variation in different registers and regional varieties of Pidgin, the language is rule-governed and does not allow for an “anything goes” representation.

In (2) below, an excerpt of dialogue is presented from *Hotel Honolulu*, followed by one Pidgin speaker’s response in detail. In the text, two co-workers are talking about why one of them was not available to answer his phone on the previous day. The dialogue makes use of some very well known Pidgin expressions, such as the last line, *Assa madda you, brah* (‘What’s the matter with you, brother/pal?’), which seems to give it a highly local quality. Participants who took on the task noticed some problems with the constructed dialogue, however:

(2) *Hotel Honolulu*

(Theroux 2001: 13)

Eh, where were you yesterday?
Eh, I was working.
I call you up talfone.
I never hear.”
Eh, you never dere already.
Assa madda you, brah?

A 33 year-old female circled the first line as problematic, and wrote the following revision next to the line.

original: *Eh, where were you yesterday?*
revision: *Eh, where you was/stay yesterday?*

This Pidgin speaker focused on the use of *were* in Theroux’s original as problematic, and she replaced it with the choice of *was*, also offering the word *stay* as an option. Her answer highlights the difference in verbs between English and Pidgin. While subject-verb agreement for the past tense form of the copula in English is *were*, this participant’s response shows that Pidgin has a different system. In Pidgin, *was* agrees with *you* for past tense. Others who did the survey noted the same problem, indicating some degree of standardization for this particular item.

This same Pidgin speaker found the third line of the dialogue to be problematic due to its tense and aspect marking. In the dialogue, the character says *I call you up tafone*, meaning ‘I called you on the telephone.’ The survey participant circled the entire line as problematic and rewrote it.

original: *I call you up tafone.*

revision: *I wen telephone you.*

Here, the Pidgin speaker reveals her knowledge of past tense marking on sentences, particularly those that do not contain words that explicitly mark past time (such as *yesterday* or *already*), and which therefore require the overt past tense marker *wen*.

Finally, the same participant circled the fifth line as containing some errors and offered her correction next to the line.

original: *Eh, you never dere already.*

revision: *Eh, you no stay.*

Here, the participant is showing her knowledge of tense and aspect again in relation to negation. In Pidgin, *never* must come along with a verb in order for an utterance to be acceptable. In this case, the sentence means something like ‘You weren’t there yesterday’ but Theroux’s use of *you never dere* lacks the verb ‘to be’. The survey participant noted this in her correction, providing the word *stay* (‘to be’). She changed the tense of the sentence to present tense as well (*you no stay* translates to ‘you aren’t here’ whereas *you never stay* translates to ‘you weren’t there’), which seems to be an oversight on her part.

Another excerpt from James Michener’s *Hawai'i* provides additional examples of the kinds of Pidgin that are often misrepresented. In (3), Pupali, a ‘beach boy’ is explaining his philosophy of living to his friend Kelly.

(3) *Hawai'i*

(Michener 1959: 822)

A man got energy for do four t'ings. Eat, work, surf, and make love. But at one time got stuff for only two. For me, surfin' and makin' love.

You ever get tired? Kelly asked.

Surfin'? No. I gonna die on an incomin' wave. Wahines? Tell you da trufe, Kelly, sometime for about ten minutes after Moana Loa sail, I don' nevah wanna see da kine wahine no mo', but nex' day wen anudder ship blow anudder whistle, I'm strip for action.

A 60-year old female’s response to this item serves to illustrate the differences between Michener’s version of Pidgin and a Pidgin user’s perspective. Since Michener’s book was published when this speaker was an adolescent, comparing Michener’s dialogue

with this speaker's intuition may provide a fairer comparison than asking a 33-year old to address this example.

This speaker took issue with many aspects of the dialogue. First, she changed *A man* to *Da man*, noting the different use of articles in Pidgin compared to English. Then, she marked through "got" in the first line (*A man got energy for do four t'ings*) and replaced it with *get*, thus showing her knowledge of the use of *get* in Pidgin that was discussed above with the "Got Milk" example. She replaced *But at one time got stuff for only two* with *But only get time for do two*, recognizing the difference between English "got" and Pidgin *get* once more and also acknowledging the grammatical difference between the two languages in regard to infinitives.

In addition, the Pidgin speaker changed *I gonna die on an incomin' wave* in the fourth line of Michener's text to *I gon die on wan incomin' wave*, demonstrating a native command of the pronunciation of the future tense marker *gon*. Her revision also provides an accurate use of Pidgin's article system by replacing the ungrammatical Pidgin *an* (which is English) with Pidgin *wan* (also spelled as *one* by some survey takers).

The surveys that participants have completed indicate that they have high degrees of confidence and a fair amount of consistency regarding inaccurate Pidgin. They are less consistent in their recommendations for how to fix inaccurate Pidgin, which is an area of research that Da Pidgin Coup intends to explore in the future. As expressed earlier in this paper, the group is not interested in advocating a singular standard of Pidgin, as we believe this would lead to the same problems that a singular version of English has brought about; however, at the same time, we wish to promote awareness about Pidgin's grammar and to debunk the myth that Pidgin has no structure. This is sometimes a tricky balance to achieve since people who speak Kaua'i Pidgin, for example, may have different perspectives than speakers of O'ahu Pidgin on what qualifies as acceptable Pidgin. Similarly, differences among regions on each island, ethnic groups, men and women, and adolescents and adults all contribute to differences of opinion. Our goal as an awareness-raising group is to promote awareness of language variation in general, which includes awareness of these varieties of Pidgin as well. To achieve this goal, several members of Da Pidgin Coup are carrying out research on topics such as variation in past tense marking (Inoue 2007), perceptions regarding the ethnicity, age, and gender of speakers in relation to certain vocabulary items (Higgins 2007), and ethnic varieties such as "mock Filipino" (Furukawa 2007).

These accommodative tasks empower Pidgin speakers by giving them the chance to apply their own expertise as Pidgin language users, which we think can go a long way toward instilling a sense of legitimacy of Pidgin. We recognize that these tasks may not have an immediate effect on the continued production of faulty Pidgin by non-local authors or those who wish to exploit Pidgin for marketing purposes, however. This leads to Da Pidgin Coup's plans for future advocacy work in the area of marketing and media campaigns, discussed next.

9. Future advocacy

Several members of Da Pidgin Coup have noticed that Pidgin continues to be stigmatized in part due to its representation in the media and in marketing campaigns that profit from Pidgin which apparently strive to present “local” images to local consumers. While the inclusion of Pidgin in advertising is welcome, we are concerned that the ways Pidgin and Pidgin speakers are depicted stigmatize the language as one that is only good for joking around, starting fights, and talking about surfing. In many ads, Pidgin speakers are depicted as deeply lacking in sophistication and common sense. For example, a 2008 television ad for Mobi, a wireless telecommunications company operating in Hawai'i, presents images of “clueless” people engaged in never-ending and gossipy streams of chatter in Pidgin as a means of promoting the company's cell phone plan with unlimited calling. Apparently, the commercials are supposed to be humorous by depicting familiar scenes to Hawai'i's consumers.

To provide a counter-discourse, we will catalogue how Pidgin is used in the media as a first step. We will then need to consider what media we can make use of to provide counter-messages. In particular, we would like to highlight the socio-economic diversity of Pidgin users in these counter-messages in order to challenge the (very inaccurate) notion that Pidgin is only spoken among the uneducated underclass. Since our financial resources are quite limited, we will probably target avenues for media campaigns sponsored by non-profit organizations or local television stations.

For future projects that focus on educational institutions, Da Pidgin Coup is in the early stages of political activism that may eventually lead to state-mandated and state-sponsored research on the use of Pidgin in public school classrooms. In March of 2008, we submitted a resolution to the State of Hawai'i's Legislature titled “Requesting a bialectical teaching strategy for speakers of Hawai'i Pidgin in Hawai'i public schools”. This resolution was submitted to call attention to the various positive functions that Pidgin serves for its users in Hawai'i, and to argue for further research on the possibilities for teaching strategies that would make more use of Pidgin in classrooms. Since Da Pidgin Coup has not had the resources to carry out research on bilingual education in Hawai'i's public schools, we requested financial support from the state to fund such research. The choice of “*bialectical*” in the language for the resolution was carefully chosen in order to operate in alignment with the current federal policies that disallow forms of bilingual education, particularly programs that promote maintenance of the home language.

The resolution highlighted the apparent success of several dialect awareness programs that were carried out in the 1980s and early 1990s (Project Akamai, Project Holopono) that had a positive impact on standardized achievement test scores as a means of establishing a rationale for more programs that will attend to language issues in schools. At the same time, the resolution problematized the “transitional”

approach taken in these projects that led to subtractive bilingualism by emphasizing the acquisition and use of English over the maintenance of Pidgin. As Ruiz (1984) notes, transitional programs are characterized by the “language-as-problem” approach and often treat children’s first languages as obstacles to be overcome, and which present assimilation and acculturation to English as the only outcome. In contrast, Da Pidgin Coup supports maintenance forms of dual language programs for Pidgin-speaking children since these have been shown to be the most effective (Lindholm-Leary 2001; Ramirez et al. 1991; Thomas & Collier 2002) and because they continue to value children’s home languages while adding English to their linguistic repertoires. While most forms of dual language programs in the United States that take a maintenance approach expect students to develop and maintain academic literacies in both languages (Freeman 2006), the lack of materials for Pidgin pose a daunting problem. This points to additional areas that Da Pidgin Coup members can direct our energies. Rather than supporting programs that focus on transitioning Pidgin speakers slowly away from Pidgin and toward English, we believe that dual language programs would be more effective. The resolution called for the State of Hawai‘i’s Department of Education,

[...] in consultation with the Department of Linguistics, the Department of Second Language Studies, and the Charlene Sato Center for Pidgin, Creole and Dialect Studies of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa [...] to identify schools where significant populations of Hawai‘i Pidgin speakers may be found [...] and develop plans for conducting a controlled study on the effectiveness of bialectical teaching strategies for Hawai‘i public schools with strong Hawai‘i Pidgin populations [...] and report findings and plans to the Legislature no later than twenty days before the convening of the Regular Session of 2009”.

The resolution was passed by the State Senate in March of 2008, but it was tabled in the House of Representatives, thereby effectively ending any further discussion of it. After conferring with members of the House of Representatives so that we can better understand why it was tabled, we plan to revise and resubmit the resolution to be heard during a future legislative session.