
ATTITUDES TO GENDER AND CREOLES: A CASE STUDY ON MOKES AND TITAS¹

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Abstract

Attitudes to use of creole languages are explored, particularly with regard to how these attitudes intersect with attitudes about gender. The focus is principally on attitudes to Pidgin in Hawai'i but parallels are drawn with another Pacific creole, Bislama. Attitudes to Pidgin use are viewed through respondents' evaluations of the terms *moke* and *tita* — social categories that prototypically denote Pidgin-speaking, Locals of Polynesian descent (*moke* for males; *tita* for females). Evaluations of *tita* provide indirect and covert evidence that, as in many speech communities, female speakers of the (creole) vernacular are evaluated more negatively than male speakers are and often in normative sexual terms. The notion of 'non-standardness' is discussed in relation to the process of constructing normative ideologies about gender and language in a creole speech community.

Key words: Creoles, gender, language attitudes, Hawai'i, non-standard language.

1. Introduction

In a short 1996 paper, John McWhorter suggested that 'there exists no literature to speak of on the subject [of creole studies and gender]. This is particularly striking given the intimate relationship between creole studies and socio-linguistics, but is nevertheless true' (1996: 501). It is debatable whether this

was in fact true at the time he suggested it, and it is certainly not true of the field today, even if we restrict ourselves to looking at variationist sociolinguistics studies (as McWhorter did). In addition, there is a respectable body of work conducted by linguistic anthropologists that looks at gendered dynamics of language use in creole-speaking communities. Perhaps one area which remains understudied is the link between attitudes to language in creole speech communities and feminist linguistics. The goal of this paper is to examine the attitudes held about the use of a creole language and to explore these critically in such a way that we might arrive at a better understanding of the role played by ideologies about gender and gendered behaviours within a creole speech community. These are often implicit and deeply embedded in other more overt realisations of attitudes that speakers might express about a language or about language use.

The data is mainly taken from research conducted in Hawai'i investigating attitudes to the English-lexified creole, known locally as Pidgin. Attitudes to Pidgin are viewed indirectly through the medium of respondents' attitudes to two words denoting specific categories of Locals: *moke* (a [+male] category) and *tita* (a [+female] category). These attitudes can usefully be compared to attitudes to another Pacific creole, Bislama, spoken in Vanuatu. Although there are some historical similarities between the attitudes to both creoles, we will see that attitudes now differ in some significant ways. It is suggested that the gendered ideologies associated with both differ at least in part because of the different senses in which Pidgin and Bislama are 'non-standard' in their wider speech communities.

2. Some terminological groundwork

Roberts (2000: 296) has pointed out that researchers of pidgin and creole languages are sometimes vague about key terms that they are using in their research. Following her lead, I provide glosses for the following terms:

Pidgin will be used to refer to a contact language that is the L1 of no-one, and is the principal language variety of no speech community.

Creole will be used to refer to a contact language that is the L1 of some sub-set of a speech community, i.e. a language variety that has historically undergone some stabilisation and which synchronically continues to be stabilising.

Stabilise refers to the levelling and/or systematisation of differences between speakers. I take it that this is driven by cognitive, linguistic and interpersonal principles, e.g. (respectively), information packaging, the structure of the languages in contact, and accommodative drives to convergence and divergence (note that ‘systematisation’ allows for maintenance and highlighting of differences).

3. Good girls don’t: Pidgins/creoles ‘belong’ to men

I will begin by directly addressing the question of whether creoles are in any sense ‘men’s’ languages. It is often stated that pidgins are languages created by men for men (McWhorter 1996, Sebba 1997: 27), with the implication being that women (and children) are later learners and acquirers of the code, perhaps even as late as the point at which it stabilises as a creole. The argument goes that in the beginning these languages arise in ‘male’ domains—that is, commerce, plantation labour, military/police service—and to the extent that these activities were and are male activities, men have been the principal innovators and agents of language change. There is an element of truth to this, and Pidgin and Bislama both have their roots in plantation societies. However, in both places women were, to a greater or lesser extent, players in the game from the beginning. In the case of the pidgin which has subsequently developed into Bislama, the numbers of women involved at the outset were probably smaller, however even here Jolly (1991) found that as much as 10% of the plantation workforce recruited in Vanuatu were women, and Wawn records one recruiting trip to Vanuatu where 101 men and 32 women were engaged, i.e. 24% women (Wawn 1973 [1893]: 263).

As far as we know, the women who were recruited (or, sometimes, ‘black-birded’, i.e. abducted) to work on the plantations in the South Pacific in the mid to late 19th century were there for a wide range of reasons, much like the male cohort. Wawn claims that five of the women he took on board his 1882 trip in the *Jabberwock* signed on in order to join husbands who had already made the trip to Queensland (1973[1893]: 262). Presumably some also made the trip for a bit of adventure and because they were attracted by the material rewards offered. But Jolly (1991) reports evidence that women on board ship generally observed the same requirements for gender separation in public spaces that they would have observed at home. In other words, the women who signed on were observing culturally appropriate standards of modesty.

Yet, despite this, a common European representation of these women was that they were little more than prostitutes or camp followers (e.g. Scarr 1976: 243).

This negative representation of the women engaged in the labour trade provides a link to what proved to be a more lasting perception about Melanesian pidgin, namely that no ‘proper’ or ‘good’ woman would be in a position to learn and speak these languages. Up to the 1970s, Jolly (1994) reports that in the relatively isolated and custom-oriented village where she lived in south Pentecost, men in the village actively policed women’s access to Bislama, preferring to keep it as an in-group code. This is reminiscent of Mühlhäusler’s (1991) observation that Tok Pisin (or specific registers thereof) might be used by young men in Papua New Guinea as an in-group code allowing them to comment about women passing by without the women understanding.

In Pentecost, there were a number of ways in which men enacted their control of the language. One way, of course, was for men to simply not use Bislama in conversation with women. Another way was to characterise women who could speak Bislama as being defective wives or mothers, as immoral agents, or simply as prostitutes—much the same kinds of images that Europeans propagated of the women who signed on during the labour trade.

Such associations about character seem to be wide-spread in creole-speaking communities. In Hawai‘i, the creole known as Pidgin is the medium of communication between most people born in Hawai‘i who would call themselves ‘Locals’. Yet Sato (1991) points out that Pidgin has wide-spread associations with speakers who come from low status ethnic groups (mainly Polynesian), speakers of low socioeconomic status, and speakers with low education (see also Rohrer 1997). In addition, the research that will be presented here suggests there are strong stereotypes that specifically tend to associate female speakers of Pidgin with negatively evaluated traits. These include traits of manner and social carriage, such as being loud and opinionated or possibly violent, and traits contravening normative heterosexual values, such as being a lesbian or a promiscuous heterosexual.

Outside of the Pacific, Sidnell (2002) has noted that in the Guyanese village he worked in, there are clear costs associated with use of urban variants of Guyanese creole for women (especially younger ones). Girls appear to avoid using *doz* (the boys’ preferred variant) as a habitual marker, and although Sidnell says the reasons for this are ‘quite complicated’ (2002: 384), he notes that if girls do use urban variants like this, they risk ‘jeopardiz[ing] their good standing’ (2002: 385) by among other things inviting inferences about their prior sexual history.

We are well-aware that non-standard and vernacular varieties are often positively evaluated by men (e.g. Trudgill 1983) and that the same varieties trigger negative evaluations when used by women (Gordon 1997). Sangster (2002) discusses the way some young gay men in Britain consciously target variants that are stereotypes of a regional vernacular (in this case, Scouse, the variety of English spoken in Liverpool). The young men she interviewed reported that they do this in order to take advantage of a wide-spread association between positively evaluated masculine traits such as toughness, and key sounds of the Scouse vernacular. Her interviewees said that moving into a performance that uses some stereotypically Scouse variants could be useful as a way of defusing or deflecting possible sanctions in situations where it might be dangerous to be identified as gay.

In other words, the general trend with respect to attitudes to gender and attitudes to speakers of creoles conform nicely with more general findings about attitudes to vernaculars and attitudes to gender. However, the attitudes towards Pidgin can be pushed a little further and I will do so by looking at some data gathered in Honolulu on how two prototypical exemplars of Pidgin-speakers, *mokes* and *titas*, are defined.

4. Asymmetric attitudes to Pidgin use and definitions of *mokes* and *titas*

The following data is taken from surveys done by three linguistics classes in Honolulu in the spring of 1998 and the fall of 1999. The students, whose contribution I gratefully acknowledge (they are listed in the Appendix), were investigating the semantic features of *moke* (/mouk/) and *tita* (generally pronounced /tira/). Respondents were asked to finish the sentences 'A moke is...' and 'A tita is ...'. One of the factors we decided to explore was whether the terms are positive or negative, since this emerged quickly as a variable amongst the student fieldworkers themselves. We decided that a good follow-up question on attitudes was 'How would you feel if someone called your brother/sister a moke/tita?' but unfortunately, not all interviewers systematically did this, so results for this cannot be quantified.

One of the hardest things for the classes to agree on was what would be the right kind of social information to elicit from the respondents. In 1998 the class agreed to elicit respondents' self-descriptions of ethnicity. In 1999 the class felt that this was less likely to be important, and the class decided to

modify the question that was specifically about ethnicity in the first year to the more general question ‘How would you describe the group you hang out with?’ (interestingly, this still generally elicited groupings based more or less loosely on ethnicity). Age and sex of the respondents were also recorded in order to determine whether there was any evidence that the variation noted was the result of a change in progress, and to see whether terms indexed for gender might have different semantics for males and females. Because the specific question regarding ethnicity changed between the two years, I will draw on the results here only as indicative trends.

5. Results

There are two things everyone agrees on. The first is that *mokes* are male and *titas* are female. The second is that they denote specific classes of Local males and Local females (‘Local’, or ‘Loco’ to use a Pidgin spelling, is very often capitalised in Hawai‘i when used as a group identification). While there is some variability in how ‘Local’ is understood, it generally requires at least birth on the Islands, and for some people the term has ethnic exclusions, but these factors are not directly relevant to the discussion that follows.

Local-ness is crucial to the following analysis since it generally presupposes speaking Pidgin.² In many ways, *titas* and *mokes* are emblematic Pidgin speakers. The word *tita* itself, for instance, is said to derive from the Pidgin pronunciation of *sister* (I have been unable to find an etymology for *moke*³) and definitions of both *moke* and *tita* frequently mentioned use of Pidgin as a definitional feature. The following examples illustrate this (I reproduce the fieldworkers’ notes), ‘a guy who talks pidgin and is fat and drinks beer’, ‘a butchie girl that talks pidgin and fights a lot’, ‘Girl with dark skin and long hair who speaks pidgin. Knows Hawaiian culture’. Other times, Pidgin use was implied through use of Pidgin⁴ as a gloss in the definition, e.g., ‘A big Hawaiian male tita. “No take shit from nobody except from da tita”’, ‘one guy who like beef [fight] everytime, think he tough’, ‘one tita is one girl who don’t care what people think and talk full pidgin’. (The on-line dictionary of Pidgin at <http://www.e-hawaii.com/fun/pidgin/> also defines *moke* and *tita* as being speakers of Pidgin.) On other occasions, the connection with Pidgin was established more indirectly with other tropes of Local-ness, e.g. ‘a big Hawaiian girl that acts sassy’, ‘big (local) guy who could kick my ass’, ‘male,

no job, no slippers, extremely local’, ‘A big Sole that thinks they are all that’, ‘Real local style girl who wears surf gear and hangs out with Hawaiian[s]’.

There are many things to say about the definitions of *moke* and *tita*, but for this paper I will focus on their emblematicity as speakers of the local creole. There are very often negative stereotypes associated with **both** *titas* and *mokes*, but what is particularly interesting are the asymmetries between respondents’ attitudes to them that emerged.

Table 1 gives a sample of typical definitions elicited by the students as noted in the questionnaires they filled out. (Responses in a given row may not be from the same person; examples have been chosen to give a broad cross-section from the corpus.)

Table 1: Sample definitions of *moke* and *tita* elicited in survey of 427 Honolulu residents, 10-74 years.

'A MOKE IS ...'	'A TITA IS ...'
a big Hawaiian dude	a big Hawaiian girl that acts sassy
male, no job, no slippers, extremely local	same as 'moke' but a girl
a big Hawaiian male tita 'No take da shit from nobody except da tita'	a loud female who no scared for shcrap
tall, big, fat belly guy	local, tom-boy, very intimidating
real local style, speaks Pidgin	same [OK to be called this]
local style dress and behaviour, associated with water sports	Same
guy w. dark skin who speaks Pidgin, knows Hawaiian culture and act proudly Hawaiian	girl w. dark skin and long hair who speaks Pidgin, knows Hawaiian culture
guy with a cocky attitude	girl with a bitchy attitude
a lazy local guy who is big and tough. When people act tough they 'moke' out	a girl version of a moke and just as manly and scary (a dyke)
local boy, large persuasion, big belly (not necessarily fat), tanned black and talks Pidgin and looks like he can kick Godzilla's ass	moke with tits only tougher.

The definitions were then classified as *positive*, *negative* and *neutral*. Student fieldworkers often glossed the definitions as positive or negative (where answers were given to the question ‘How would you feel if your brother/sister was called a *moke/tita*?’ these were drawn on). In cases where the classification might be unsure it was resolved through discussion with the students. The following examples illustrate what kinds of responses were categorised as positive, neutral or negative. Again, I reproduce the fieldworkers’ notes with their spelling.

Positive definitions of *moke*: ‘More to himself; Believes in natural things,’ ‘An easy-going laid back local whose into Local culture. I am a moke,’ ‘Real local style for Hawaiian guy who speaks pidgin English’ (last one noted as positive for this respondent by the fieldworker).

Positive definitions for *tita*: ‘Any girl who has attitude and has No Fear. She gotta be Hawaiian,’ ‘Very close friends, like sister’.

Negative definitions of *moke*: ‘Islander w/ broken Eng., Dress hobo clothes, no edu.,’ ‘stupid, ignorant guy’

Negative definitions of *tita*: ‘A Tom-boy, big non-grooming girl, no-shave arm-pits’ and ‘Tough lady w/ no shame act like one boy’.

Neutral definitions of *moke*: ‘big Hawaiian, Polynesian,’ ‘A local guy with a big build and an island attitude,’ ‘braddah with attitude’ (the coding of these last two was discussed with students in class).

Neutral definitions for *tita*: ‘Sister in the “Hawaiian” language,’ ‘a girl who intimidates people but not necessarily on purpose.’

Table 2 shows the raw numbers of positive, neutral and negative attitudes revealed in respondents’ definitions of *moke* and *tita*.

The first thing we notice is that people are more likely to have positive attitudes towards *mokes* than towards *titas*. Two chi-square tests were conducted, one of all the data in Table 2. This returned a chi-square value of 331.5 with 9 d.f., i.e. $p < 0.0001$. But since this might be a function of the very small numbers in the Don’t Know categories, a second chi-square was calculated only on positive, negative and neutral responses. This shows that the difference between these responses alone is also significant (chi-square = 16.81 with 2 d.f., $p < 0.001$).

Table 2: Classification of attitudes expressed in definitions given for *moke* and *tita* by Honolulu residents 1998-9. (Percentage of total in parentheses.)

ATTITUDE EXPRESSED IN DEFINITION	MOKE	TITA
Don't know the word	36 (8%)	18 (4%)
Negative	128 (30)	168 (39)
Neutral	159 (37)	179 (42)
Positive	104 (24)	62 (15)
Total	427	427

It seems reasonable to assume that people more generally have positive attitudes towards *mokes* than *titas* because some of the qualities associated with both—being eager to fight and good at it, being physically large, dressing unfashionably—are qualities that the community at large considers positive or neutral if they are possessed by men, but considers negative when possessed by women. But their emblematic status as speakers of Pidgin is not something that is a priori gendered and yet it is an integral component of definitions, something that is referred to directly or indirectly by most respondents.

Note, too, in Table 2 that more people report not being familiar with *moke* than not being familiar with *tita*. That a person can be familiar with the word *tita* without being familiar with the word *moke* is interesting in itself. This may reflect the socially marked nature of combining femaleness, the prototypical practices of a *tita*, including speaking Pidgin, and having an assertive attitude. It may also indicate that respondents felt less comfortable about defining *moke* than they did about defining *tita* and opted out by claiming lack of familiarity. However, it also may reflect the fact that there are other words in use in the community for describing men who might be considered candidates as *mokes*, e.g. *bla(h)lah*, *sole* (pronounced /bla:la:/ and /sɔlə/). In future work it would be good to clarify this, e.g. by finding out whether people who don't know *moke* use one of the other terms, or whether the terms have significant referential differences (for instance, a number of the student researchers reported that *sole* for them preferentially denotes a Samoan male and the term is used for self-reference by Samoans in New Zealand, cf. Letoa & Letoa 2002, and possibly elsewhere that I am not aware of).

The results of the survey were analysed using the statistical package Datadesk 6.1 (Velleman 1997). Fieldworkers elicited definitions from 200 women and 227 men ranging in age from 10-74 years (mean age = 25 years, s.d. = 10) in the greater Honolulu area. Overall, the most significant finding is that there is a direct and positive correlation between how a person defines *moke* and how they define *tita*, that is, a positive definition for one generally goes with a positive definition of the other and a negative definition of one goes with a negative definition of the other. That is, if we make respondents' definitions of *tita* the dependent variable and plot them against their responses for *moke*, then a simple regression analysis shows a positive slope with a coefficient of 0.64. This is highly significant ($p < 0.0001$) and returns a value of r^2 (adjusted) = 46.4%. The r^2 figure tells us that knowing how a person defines *moke* accounts for nearly half of the variation in the kinds of definitions people give for *tita*. This correlation is strongest among women respondents. If the same calculation is done solely on the female respondents, r^2 (adjusted) = 50.3%; for male respondents alone r^2 (adjusted) = 42.9%. A

Table 3: Cross-tabulation showing how individual respondents' definition of *moke* matched up with their definition of *tita*. (Percentage for each row in top right of each cell; percentage for each column in bottom left of each cell.)

		ATTITUDES EXPRESSED IN DEFINITIONS OF <i>TITA</i>				
		DON'T KNOW	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE	TOTAL
ATTITUDES EXPRESSED IN DEFINITIONS OF <i>MOKE</i>	DON'T KNOW	10 (28) (56)	23 (64) (14)	2 (5) (1)	1 (3) (2)	36
	NEGATIVE	5 (4) (28)	106 (83) (63)	16 (13) (9)	1 (1) (2)	128
	NEUTRAL	2 (1) (11)	31 (20) (19)	114 (72) (64)	12 (8) (19)	159
	POSITIVE	1 (1) (6)	8 (8) (5)	47 (45) (26)	48 (46) (77)	104
	TOTAL	18	168	179	62	427

cross-tabulation showing how the definitions of *moke* and *tita* paired up is given as Table 3.

Reading across the second row of Table 3 (negative definitions of *moke*) we see that the majority of respondents who gave negative definitions of *moke* also had a negative definition of *tita* (N=106). Only 17 of the people (13%) who expressed a negative attitude in their definition of *moke* had a neutral or positive definition of *tita*. Similarly, reading down the fourth column (positive definition of *tita*) we find that the 77% of all respondents who gave a positive definition of *tita* also gave a positive definition of *moke* (N=48). Only 13 of the people (21%) expressed a positive attitude towards *tita* in their definitions and a neutral or negative attitude towards *moke*.

Table 4 summarises the detail in Table 3. It provides a total for how many respondents gave definitions of *moke* that were more positive than the definitions they gave for *tita*; those for whom the definitions were ranked equivalently (i.e. positive:positive, neutral:neutral, negative:negative); and those for whom the definition of *tita* was more positive than the one given for *moke*.

Table 4 helps draw our attention to another interesting finding that emerges from close examination of Table 3. This concerns the relative frequency with which positive and negative attitudes to the two words are combined. It was noted that 13% of the respondents expressed negative attitudes to *moke* but positive or neutral attitudes to *tita*. On the other hand, there is a far better chance that someone expressing negative attitudes in their definition of *tita* will have positive or neutral attitudes to *mokes*. This is shown in column 2 of Table 3, where 31 people (19%) gave neutral definitions of *moke* and 8 (5%) gave clearly positive definitions.

Furthermore, it was much more likely that someone would have a positive attitude towards *moke* and a negative attitude towards *tita* (row four in Table

Table 4: Relative positiveness or negativeness of definitions of *moke* and *tita*. (Percentage of total responses in parentheses. Excludes 'Don't know' responses.)

<i>moke</i> more positive than <i>tita</i>	<i>moke</i> = <i>tita</i>	<i>moke</i> less positive than <i>tita</i>
86 (23)	258 (69)	29 (8)

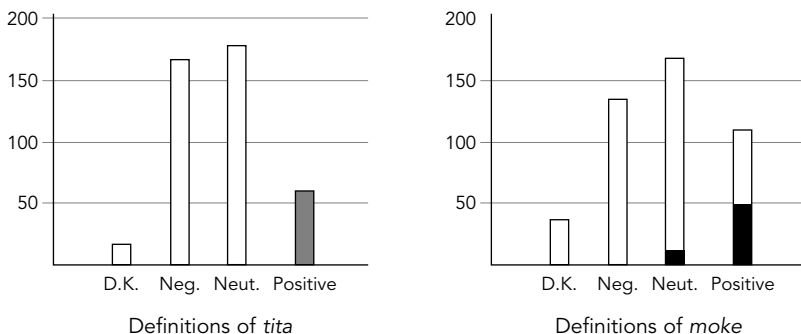
3) than they were to have a positive attitude towards *tita* and a negative attitude to *moke* (column four). Eight people gave positive definitions for *moke* and negative ones for *tita* (8% of all positive *moke* respondents); only 1 person expressed a positive attitude in their definition of *tita* and a negative attitude to *moke* (2% all positive *tita* responses).

Another way of showing this is to compare the graphs in Figure 1. The left graph highlights individuals who gave positive definitions of *tita*; in the right one, the definitions that those same individuals gave for *moke* are highlighted.

Figure 1 shows graphically what column four in Table 3 showed numerically. Seventy-seven percent of the people with positive definitions of *tita* have positive definitions of *moke* as well. Only 1 of them (2%) has a negative definition of *moke*.

However, if a respondent has positive attitudes towards *mokes*, they may not be so generous towards *titas*. Figure 2 provides a graphic representation of the data in row four of Table 3. Here, the top graph highlights the responses in which *moke* was defined positively. Below, I have highlighted the definitions that those same people gave for *tita*: 8 negative definitions (8% all positive *moke* responses) and 47 neutral definitions (45%). This shows that a positive definition of *moke* may be offered by someone with less than positive attitudes to *titas*.

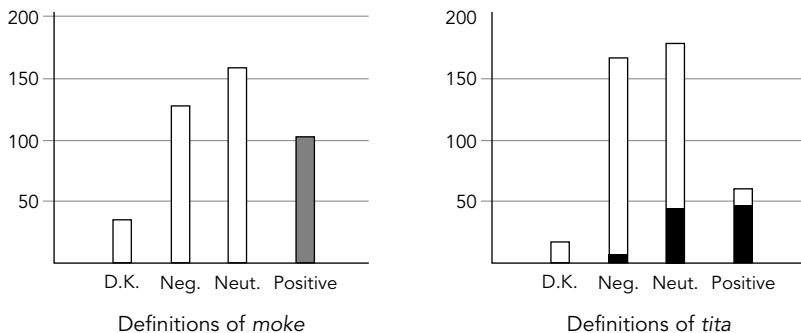
Figure 1: Respondents giving positive definition of *tita* (highlighted at left), with the same individuals' responses for *moke* (right). D.K. = Don't know the word (N = 1); Neg. = negative definition (N = 1); Neut. = neutral definition (N = 12); Positive = positive definition (N = 48).



Furthermore, it is interesting to note how the negative attitudes were often expressed. As with *moke* negative definitions of *tita* might make reference to a predilection for *shcrap* or *beef* (fighting). But unlike *mokes*, *titas* were often negatively defined in ways that focused on their sexuality or lack of femininity.

So, for example, the term *tomboy* appears frequently in (neutral) definitions and decidedly more negative evaluations such as ‘really, really unfeminine’, ‘a girl that’s too manly’, ‘masculine woman’, ‘easy — hores’, ‘a dyke’. Variations on the terms *butch* come up often. There are no such sexualised definitions for *moke* and there are no positive definitions for *tita* that mention aspects of their sexuality (e.g. no ‘cute’ or ‘hot’ in definitions). In other words, by looking more closely at these definitions we get a better sense of how gender is socially constructed in relation to other social identities in Hawai‘i, such as sexual identity, ethnic identity, Local-ness and language use. Thus, even an identification like ‘Local’, which has overwhelmingly positive ingroup connotations, is bound in covert ways to less positive attributes. Women are faced with an even more varied set of such linkages because they are readily viewed and categorised in terms of their sexuality. And the fact that for women, their sexuality is commented on only in negative terms, highlights the fact that such attitudes serve to impose sanctions on

Figure 2: Respondents giving positive definition of *moke* (highlighted at left), with the same individuals’ responses for *tita* (right). D.K. = Don’t know the word (N = 1); Neg. = negative definition (N = 8); Neut. = neutral definition (N = 47); Positive = positive definition (N = 48).

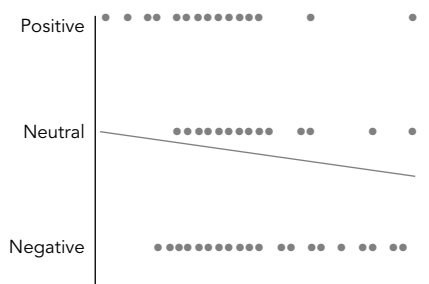


women's behaviour. This creates the kind of double-bind women are frequently placed in. In this case, it may be problematic for a woman to identify with and claim the benefits of being Local through use of the Local vernacular, Pidgin, since for some people a prototypical female user of Pidgin is also defined as unfeminine, slutty or homosexual (cf. Gordon 1997).

In general, age is not a significant predictor of positive or negative attitudes towards the word *tita* or *moke*. A regression analysis of the effect of age on attitudes to *tita* fails to reach significance across the corpus as a whole ($p = 0.14$, r^2 (adjusted) = 0.3%) and a similar analysis on attitudes to *moke* shows an effect for age that approaches significance but accounts for very little of the variation observed ($p = 0.043$, r^2 (adjusted) = 0.7%). Hence we can conclude that the variation observed is not a direct consequence of a community-wide change in progress in the way *moke* and *tita* are defined.

Closer inspection shows that age is a poor predictor of attitudes expressed in definitions by men (men's age x *moke* $p = 0.33$; men's age x *tita* $p = 0.64$). On the other hand, there is some evidence that there's a trend towards more positive evaluations of both *moke* and *tita* among younger women. This can be seen in Figures 3 and 4. In these graphs, (female) respondents giving positive definitions of *moke* or *tita* are at the top of the y-axis, and those giving neutral and negative ones below. A regression line tracks the direction of the correlation. (Note that because age is plotted on the x-axis, and many respondents had the same age, what appears as a single point in Figure 3 or 4 may in fact represent the responses of multiple individuals plotted on top of each other.)

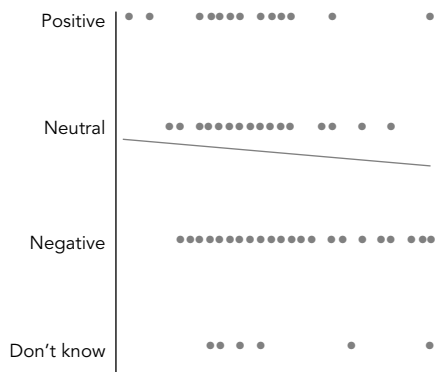
Figure 3: Plot of women's definitions of *moke* showing (significant) trend towards more positive definitions with decreasing age.



The probability of the distribution of positive, neutral and negative responses shown in both figures falls just on, or outside of, the level of statistical significance, $p = 0.049$ for *moke*, $p = 0.081$ for *tita*. This slight increase in positive definitions of *moke* and *tita* among young women may, for example, be indicative of differences that are developing in how the terms are used by younger men and women in Hawai'i and what suite of social attributes they consider them to be emblematic of. Given the complex web of positive and negative attributes associated with the word *tita*, further research in this area might shed light on larger issues such as how young women in Hawai'i negotiate their own sense of Local-ness, sexuality and femininity, and how this intermeshes with ethnic or even more narrowly defined ingroup identities.

The sample definitions given in Table 1 also showed that there is an ethnic dimension to definitions of *moke* and *tita*. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the kinds of definitions people offered when they were separated out according to the particular social or ethnic group(s) respondents chose to identify with. That is, there were no clear trends differentiating the definitions given by people who identified as, for example, surfers or beach types, or by people who identified as Japanese or Filipino (though the sample of respondents included comparatively few people who self-identified as Polynesians—Hawaiians, Samoans, Tongans etc.— and it would be worth investigating more thoroughly whether these groups have generally more positive evaluations of *tita* and *moke*).

Figure 4: Plot of women's definitions of *tita* showing (non-significant) trend to more positive definitions with decreasing age.



All of this draws a fairly clear picture of a bias in the moral and aesthetic evaluations of prototypical speakers of Hawai'i Pidgin. If there is a difference in whether a respondent sees this class of prototypical speakers of Pidgin in a positive or negative light, the female speakers are more likely to be defined negatively than male speakers are.

6. The non-standard, ideologies and gender.

We have seen that attitudes to Pidgin in Hawai'i have a gendered dimension, and this emerges through indirect investigation of attitudes to the terms *moke* and *tita*. This is because there is a very strong association between *mokes* and *titas* and use of Pidgin, so much so that definitions of the terms elicited from residents of Honolulu very often define them specifically as speakers of Pidgin. Furthermore, an interesting asymmetry emerged in definitions of the terms. Where definitions of *moke* and *tita* differ evaluatively, definitions of *tita* were more likely to be worse than those of *moke*, than vice versa.

We have also seen that historically, there were similarly gendered attitudes towards female speakers of other Pacific creoles, where the proper speakers of the language were constructed discursively, and through practices of linguistic exclusion, as being male not female. We saw that women who used Bislama were open to the same kinds of imprecations of sexual deviancy that female speakers of Pidgin may still be subject to today. However, the link between Bislama and masculinity is a weak one today in Vanuatu. What implications can be drawn from the fact that attitudes towards the prototypical speaker of Pidgin maintain a strongly gendered dimension?

We might be tempted to try and construct an account in terms of the non-standard status of Pidgin, since, as we noted earlier, there is a fairly robust (though by no means deterministic) association cross-linguistically and cross-culturally between use of non-standard varieties and masculine or tough social identities. However, if this is the case, a very specific type of non-standardness seems to be at issue here, that is, whether or not language plays a role in defining some kind of supra-local identity. Again, a contrast with Bislama in Vanuatu might be helpful.

Pidgin is a resolutely local marker of identity, perceived as unsystematic, structurally impoverished and deviating from a Standard General American English norm (or however one chooses to characterise the variety that is the target of official education in the State of Hawai'i and the language of many

middle and upper middle class Locals). It struggles for recognition and status in the shadow of what is perceived to be an invariant, regular and standardised alternative target.

Often, studies of ‘non-standard’ dialects use the term interchangeably with ‘vernacular’ dialects, but the situation here suggests how important it may sometimes be to divorce the two notions. At the start of this article, I provided sociohistorical information about attitudes to gender and creoles elsewhere in the Pacific. There, it was noted that Bislama may in the past have been associated with the same kinds of ideologies and language use and gender that Pidgin is today. However, nowadays Bislama has very largely lost its gendered character. And yet Bislama, like Pidgin, could not exactly be said to be ‘standard’. Factors compromising its standardness includes the lack of a standard orthography, and the fact that it is officially discouraged in schools. Nevertheless, it is equally true that it cannot exactly be called ‘non-standard’. It is an important marker of national identity for people from Vanuatu and they use it when they meet in towns in Vanuatu or overseas. It would be very difficult, given this broader significance and status of the language, to maintain an ideology that women speaking the language are improper or deviant. Although it is an English-lexified creole, it does not stand in opposition to any Standard varieties of English in the same way that Pidgin stands in opposition to General American. Access to English for speakers of Bislama is much more limited. And crucially, it would be virtually impossible to claim a local or supra-local Ni-Vanuatu⁵ identity of any kind if you only spoke English. Again, this is different from Hawai‘i, where the linguistic marker of a supra-local, national identity is General American, and not Pidgin.

Although the survey conducted in Honolulu was designed simply to elicit definitions of *moke* and *tita*, it also uncovered some covert attitudes about language as a by-product, and we saw that there was a gendered dimension to these attitudes. Being a speaker of Pidgin evokes a wider range of negative attributes for women than it does for men. As predicted by Gordon (1997), these are highly sexualised, and this results in a double-bind for female speakers of Pidgin that male speakers are not faced with. Whereas men must weigh up the costs associated with being seen as big and rough with the benefits of being seen as a real Local, women have to weigh up all that and the possibility that they will be seen as sexually deviant.

Language ideologies ultimately function as means of controlling (or attempting to control) who is licenced to speak, how they are licenced to speak, and where (cf Woolard 1998: 7). In this case, the ideologies about

language and gender that emerged covertly in the examination of two terms for Hawai'i Locals show that, at least for those women whose ethnicity also makes them candidates as *titas*, the choice of whether or not they will talk Local is not a simple one.⁶ The non-standard variety in this case embraces more than just those attributes canonically associated with working class behaviour, e.g. being street-wise or tough. Women also have to contend with a hidden index of non-normative sexuality.

Although this index emerged in relation to an examination of attitudes to the specific lexical items, *moke* and *tita*, I have tried to show that it is consistent with facts that have been documented for other Pacific pidgins and creoles, and with more general findings about the gendered nature of non-standard varieties of speech. In bringing these threads together, this paper has attempted to make an empirical and theoretical contribution to both the study of language and gender in creole speech communities, and also to core sociolinguistic concepts such as 'non-standardness'. In addition, the source of the data reminds us that quite rich sociolinguistic information may be embedded in even apparently simple meta-linguistic tasks such as providing the definition of a word.

Appendix: Researchers in Honolulu.

Jackilu Agduyeng; Orlando Balala; Kevin Cañada; Min Hee Choi; Erin Chun; Arnold Colville; Lee Ann Comstock; Keith Demain; James Dumas; Kristian Egdamin; Gavin Garrick; Allen Gervacio; Eamon Gray; Janna Gum; Mary Alice Hamnett; Craig Hanaumi; Lauren Igawa; Kara Iwasaki; Jesse Jackman; Lianne Kamei; Sandra Kaneshige; Nancy Kishi; Ryan Lee; Gary Li; Sara Lipka; Marissa Martinez; Janelle McDougall; Makia Minerbi; Melissa Murakami; Hsa Naw; Darwin Nazarino; Hanson Nguyen; Gwenn Nordahl; Vanessa Oshiro; Nicki Ou; Alan Pak; Ryan Ped; Aaron Pribble; Dymian Racema; Ian Robertson; Kristi-Ann Sasaki; Tiffany Sugiyama; Kent Takamoto; Michelle Tamashiro; Kingsada Thepsourinthone; Carly Ushiroda; Amy Wan; Julie Yamamoto; Sandi Yamasaka.

Mahalo nui loa.

Notes

- 1 My thanks go to two anonymous *Te Reo* reviewers for their careful and constructive comments. I owe a debt to Lissant Bolton and Aaliya Rajah for discussions on the intersections between attitudes to gender and creoles, and to Jack Sidnell for his detailed comments on an earlier version. I am especially grateful to the students in Introduction to Linguistics in Spring 1998 and Fall 1999 at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa who enthusiastically and earnestly taught me a great deal about local language ideologies and Hawai'i Pidgin. Their names appear in the Appendix. Naturally, none of the above are responsible for what follows.
- 2 Being Local is (generally) a necessary but not sufficient condition for being a Pidgin speaker. An exhaustive and uniformly agreed upon definition of what 'Local' means is well beyond the scope of this paper, and the subject is discussed in depth and with sensitivity in a lot of research and non-academic writing in Hawai'i, see for example, Fujikane (1997) and Rohrer (1997), and much recent literature written by authors from Hawai'i, e.g. Darrell Lum, Lois-Ann Yamanaka, R. Zamora Linmark.
- 3 Pukui and Elbert (1986) gives *mokomoko* meaning (among other things) 'rough' and 'a fighter', however no-one volunteered this source to me.
- 4 The Pidgin used in the glosses varied in terms of how basilectal or removed from standard American English it was.
- 5 *Ni-Vanuatu* is the adjective formed from Vanuatu.
- 6 Other questions which would reward further investigation include: How are the terms *moke* and *tita* actually used in Hawai'i? Which language varieties are the terms used in—are they equally frequent in Pidgin as in Standard Hawai'i English? Do they index different attributes when used in different varieties? How do different ethnic groups use the terms, if at all?

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