Language attitudes as stance-taking: An interview-based study on intergenerational transmission among Native Hawaiians

Christina Higgins
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

1. Introduction

This paper takes a qualitative, discourse-based approach to the study of language attitudes by analyzing seven interviews conducted with Native Hawaiians about their linguistic family trees. The data come from a larger research project on the many different languages spoken in Hawai‘i, including Japanese, Cantonese, Portuguese, and Filipino. In the interview, the participants are asked to recount and reflect on their families’ language maintenance, acquisition, and shift over three generations. My analysis examines how they express their language attitudes in the form of stance-taking (DuBois, 2007; Jaffe, 2009), which provides a nuanced means for analyzing the various ways that they value their (ethno)linguistic heritages. My analysis also includes attitudinal expressions towards Pidgin (also known as Hawai‘i Creole), a language that developed on sugar plantations at the turn of the century and which continues to be spoken by most of Hawai‘i’s residents.

Since this paper focuses on participants who identify as Native Hawaiian, a brief comment on the Hawaiian language is needed. Hawaiian is currently undergoing a revitalization process in the state of Hawai‘i. The language has an estimated 6,000-9,000 speakers (Marlow & Giles, 2006), though exact numbers are challenging to establish due to the problematic nature of the census. The numbers are increasing, however, given the expansion of Hawaiian immersion programs and other forms of Hawaiian language learning. As the participants in this study illustrate, people who speak Hawaiian are typically trilinguals who also speak English and Pidgin. The story of Hawaiian language shift and loss is similar to many other contexts where the land and political systems of indigenous peoples were taken over by outsiders who imposed their own systems of education, trade, and government. Since the time of first contact with Europeans in 1778, disease and changes in the overall social and economic structure of Hawai‘i led to the increasing influence of English (Day 1985, p. 166). The growth of plantations led to a small circle of haole (‘white, foreign’) plantation owners who rose in financial and political power within the kingdom. This haole oligarchy overthrew the Kingdom of Hawai‘i in 1893, and in 1896, English became the official language of instruction, effectively banning Hawaiian from schools (Pukui, 1972). Hawaiian continued to diminish until the beginning of the cultural and political Hawaiian Renaissance in the early 1970s, which led to the establishment of Hawaiian as an official language of the state in 1978. This paved the way for the current revitalization process, in part through the establishment of Hawaiian language immersion preschools and Hawaiian immersion charter schools.

On a very practical level, it is important to examine stance-taking among people who have Hawaiian in their linguistic family trees as a way to take the pulse of current language

1 Like most residents of Hawai‘i, Native Hawaiians are often of multiethnic heritage. Due to the plantation history of the islands beginning in the mid 19th century, many families have Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, and Filipino heritage, in addition to being Native Hawaiian.
revitalization efforts. Stances allow us to identify whether and for what reasons the current
generation of speakers finds it important to maintain this language. On a more ideological level,
stance-taking allows us to identify the multiple discourses surrounding language vitality and the
ways that individuals respond to those ideologies. This is significant not only for Hawaiian, a
language whose speakers faced explicit policies that devalued their language, but also for Pidgin,
a language whose speakers often find themselves in the precarious position between language
subordination and local pride (Eades et al., 2006; Marlow & Giles, 2008, 2010). Pidgin has
traditionally been seen as a marker of both working-class and non-white identity in Hawai‘i.
Based on many accounts, this has led to an overall stigmatization and perception that it limits its
speakers’ socio-economic mobility, views which persist to this day despite evidence that the
language is widely used across many domains, and that its speakers show pride in the language
(Higgins et al., 2012).

2. Conceptual framework: Attitudes as stancetaking

My analysis respecifies language attitudes as stance-taking. Through looking at how speakers
talk about their family histories and family languages, I examine the ways they position
themselves verbally. In doing so, I aim to understand how stances are associated with the
maintenance of family languages across generations. I argue that stances are integral to better
understanding the processes by which languages become differently valued by individuals and
societies.

This leads to the need to define stance. In brief, stance is the taking up of a position with respect
to the form or content of one’s utterance. As DuBois (2007, p. 163) explains, “in taking a stance,
the stance-taker 1) evaluates and object; 2) positions a subject (self and others); and 3) aligns
with other subjects.” Speakers take positions largely through evaluating another person’s stance
and other objects, including language. In the interviews, the participants often express
evaluations of their own linguistic behavior and that of others, and they do so through taking
stances on languages, on speakers of languages, and on stances expressed by others about
language.

The different values accorded to language are most commonly expressed in the form of
evaluation, or, the discursive positioning of self and other. Evaluation in discourse has been
studied in a myriad of ways, from conversation analytic approaches that examine assessment in
turntaking (e.g., Sacks, 1972) to macrolevel analyses of ‘big D’ Discourses about social
identities such as race and class (e.g., Jaworski & Thurlow, 2009). In this paper, I use evaluation
to refer to ways of aligning with propositional content, which includes expressions of epistemic
and affective stance. While epistemic stance serves to establish the relative authority of
interactants and to make claims on self and other degrees of authority, affective stance
establishes emotional and moral indexicalities and allows speakers to make claims about what
comprises normative and culturally shared perspectives. Epistemic stance in languages such as
English are not grammaticalized in the traditional sense, but include elements such as the use of
adverbs and particles (e.g. supposedly), extensions of other grammatical categories like mood
and modality (e.g. should, if-then constructions), reported speech, and complement clauses that
express perception and cognition (Aikhenvald, 2004). Evaluation is produced through the
appraisal system, an approach to evaluation based on systemic-functional linguistics (Martin &
White, 2005). For the purposes of this paper, I focus on the appraisal sub-system of *ATTITUDE*, which helps us to see how speakers attach an intersubjective value or assessment to participants and processes. Following Martin and White, attitude is expressed through *AFFECT*, *JUDGEMENT*, and *APPRECIATION* (see Table 1).

Table 1. The sub-system of Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-system</th>
<th>definition</th>
<th>linguistic components</th>
<th>examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFFECT</td>
<td>the characterization of phenomena by reference to emotion</td>
<td>attributive relationals, ideational metaphors, mental processes of reaction</td>
<td>I admire her greatly.²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>He just stormed out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUDGEMENT</td>
<td>the evaluation of human behavior with respect to social norms</td>
<td>adverbials, attributes, epithets, nominals, verbs, negatives</td>
<td>The two guys are jerks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To believe that Sámi will be put before Norwegian on signs is completely naïve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPRECIATION</td>
<td>the evaluation of objects and products by reference to aesthetic principles and social value</td>
<td>adjectives, adverbs nominals</td>
<td>Pidgin is a broken English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The colors gave me a headache.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Examples are mostly adapted from Hiss (2013) and grammatics.com (Martin, 2012).

Since the interviews about people’s linguistic family trees often took an autobiographic mode, Bamberg’s (1997, 2003) framework for analyzing positioning in narrative modes is also relevant. I pay particular attention to the interaction between his Positioning Levels 1 (the storied world) and 2 (the storytelling world). In Positioning Level 1, I examine how the interviewees evaluate actors in the world of characters and plots that are told in the interviews. This level of positioning sometimes takes place in the form of canonical stories that have an abstract, orientation, complicating action, and coda, but are more often generalized explanations about their family lives. Here, I examine stances expressed by the interviewees as well as stance attributions that position others with respect to language attitudes. I then look at stancetaking in Positioning Level 2, or the storytelling world, which is a space where the interviewees step outside the frame of explaining their history and offer metalevel commentary on the ideas that they are sharing. Here, I focus particularly on *stance follows* (DuBois, 2007) in order to see whether or not speakers take up actions made by prior talk and align or disalign with it. Stance follows have the capacity to also creatively transform previous stance claims, as we will see in the data to be examined.

² Martin & White (2005) explain the fine line between affect and appreciation as related to the agency behind the experiencer. If aesthetic appraisals using words such as *admire* are directly linked to a human agent, they are expressions of emotion and sentiment. If they are separated from the verb (as in *He inspires a lot of admiration*), then we would label it an instance of appreciation. Judgement is similar in that praise and blame are direct at humans, rather than at objects (appreciation).
2.1 Stance as a foundation for language maintenance and language shift

There are good reasons for placing stance at the center of research on language attitudes. Most broadly, language ideologies and language attitudes are embedded in how people use language, and more specifically, in their stances. In addition to asking people about language through matched-guise approaches and questionnaires, we can also explore language itself as a site for language ideological articulations. In this vein, Hiss’s (2013) study explores language attitudes towards Sámi through analyzing letters to the editor about a proposal to make the language co-official with Norwegian in the town of Tromsø. In focusing on the discursive mechanisms of evaluation and stance-taking in these letters, Hiss makes use of the appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) to demonstrate how letter writers invoked and referred to shared values towards the issue and how they expressed they expressed affect, judgement and appreciation differently in their efforts to express authority about the proposed changes.

Stance allows us to reconceptualize what a language attitude is and how it becomes instantiated over time, not only by individual speakers but also across speakers. As individuals express and enact stances toward languages and their speakers, they discursively create own subject positions (‘identities’), whereby their interpersonal and social relations are constructed in connection to language. As an individual repeatedly expresses stances toward languages, (or challenges others’ stances), then, we can argue these social roles and relations help re-entextualize ideologies of language and articulate attitudes towards languages and speakers. The data that I examine in this paper comes from interviews about the participants’ linguistic family trees, and as such is somewhat limited in terms of being able to see how stances enact language attitudes and ideologies more widely. It is helpful to consider, however, that people express their stances towards certain languages and speakers on a regular basis in various domains, including everyday conversation and in realms such as social media and the internet. The posting below offers us one opportunity to look at stance more carefully and to consider how stance is a matter of relational design through evaluation, positioning and alignment (DuBois 2007, p.168). The example came from a thread of responses to an article posted in the Honolulu Star Advertiser in 2008 on the topic of Pidgin in educational institutions in Hawai‘i, a topic which has created controversy at regular intervals in the history of the territory and state of Hawai‘i.

Many want to speak pidgin just to be “local.” That is fine. There is nothing wrong with that what so ever. Every part of the world has its own dialect. However, when it comes to the education of our youth, there is but one standard and there are none other; the right and proper way. As much as many in Hawaii would like to fight it, we live in a world that unlike the 1800s is now inter-connected and to survive we must be able to compete in a global economy. In the professional world, pidgin just like cajun, and what the hell ever these rap and gangster queers speak is not proper and professional. Try to imagine one of our youth growing up and giving a lecture at MIT, giving a seminar on cancer research or the like in pidgin. It just does not fit [. . .]

(posted by aerogeek33 4/13/08)

At first, aerogeek33 expresses a stance of tolerance toward Pidgin through the evaluative language “there is nothing wrong with that what so ever.” This includes an evaluative intensifier “what so ever” which underscores the stance of tolerance establishes a stance of open-
mindedness and fairness as the writer generalizes the point, stating that “Every part of the world has its own dialect.” Next, however, aerogeek33 establishes an authoritative perspective through epistemic stancemaking. In asserting that “there is but one standard and there are noneother,” the writer limits the field of positively-valued languages to one, and then evaluates English as “standard,” right and proper. Through other stance attribution, Aerogeek33 then evaluates ‘pro-Pidgin’ people in Hawai‘i as illogically fighting against a truth (that globalization requires English as the only language relevant in education). The writer then moves on to evaluate Pidgin rather negatively, in alignment with a non-language (“what the hell ever these rap and gangster queers speak”) and as not proper or professional. At the interactional level of stancetaking, Aerogeek33 positions her/himself as someone who shares a responsibility with fellow readers and online posters toward “our youth” several times, and at the end, even inviting us to imagine together a scenario where one of our Hawai‘i youth is giving a lecture at MIT on cancer research – a domain that carries strong indexicalities of formality, specialized education and expertise – and links that with Pidgin, which Aerogeek33 has just positioned as nonstandard, wrong, improper, and even associated with criminals. Rhetorically, as Aerogeek explains, “it just does not fit” – a stance that positively evaluates Pidgin cannot co-exist in this epistemic and affective realm.

Of course, other stances are possible regarding Pidgin, many of which have been examined in the literature, albeit not using a stance framework (Higgins et al., 2012; Marlow & Giles 2008; 2010). The point is that such articulations of stance, when voiced repeatedly by the same person, can be seen as that person’s language attitudes. Moreover, when another online poster responds to such posts and expresses positive affective and epistemic stances towards Pidgin, that language attitude is then put into question. An overall measure of language attitudes might be, then, a measure of repeated and similar kinds of stances towards languages and their speakers. While no single act of stance-taking is equivalent to ‘language attitude,’ the layered effects of speakers adopting a consistent speaker stance (such as “Hawaiian is for days gone by”) produces what Jaffe (2009, p. 19) refers to as a metastance, which might be a more useful way to think about speakers’ attitudes towards language as expressed in situ and through trajectories of time and space. An example of metastance can be seen in Jaworski and Thurlow’s (2009) discussion of elite and cosmopolitan stances taken towards tourism in travel sections of newspapers, where the evaluation of ways of dressing, photographing, and eating are all under scrutiny. In the travel columns written by travel writers, mass, non-elite, tourism is evaluated quite explicitly as problematic (p. 201):

(Sunday Times Travel July 16, 2006, p. 26)

Mass tourism is horrible. I hate arriving somewhere to find a horde of barbarians who’ve had that operation to weld a camera to their eyelids: they don’t really see things, they just photograph them and get back on the coach…

The author is positioned in a superior manner through negative other-evaluation. Mass tourists are presented as lemmings who do not know how to really take photos or how to really appreciate a destination on their own. This is achieved through evaluative lexical forms (horrible, horde, barbarian, weld) and through the implication that the writer, and by implication the reader, is someone who does know the ‘right’ way to be a tourist.
In looking at language in Hawai‘i, I am interested in both the evaluative and interactional aspects of stance whereby attitudinal expressions can be found towards language(s). In terms of evaluation, I explore how speakers align, rekey, and critically position themselves towards languages and speakers as expressions of stance. Speakers position themselves along affective and epistemic dimensions. In regard to language, they may express sentiments about language such as Hawaiian directly, or about its speakers in a more indirect way. Speakers also position themselves with regard to what they know and the source of their knowledge in the form of epistemic stances.

3. The present study

3.1 Research questions

The research questions attend to both aspects of stance and are as follows:

- What forms of evaluation are present in the stances taken toward Hawaiian and Pidgin by the interviewees?
- What forms of evaluation are present in the stances taken toward Hawaiian and Pidgin by others (in the form of stance attributions)?
- How does interactional stancetaking demonstrate alignments and disalignments with prevailing ideologies or metastances towards Hawaiian and Pidgin (in the form of stance follows)?

To answer these questions, I examine evaluation when speakers 1) take their own stances on languages; 2) attribute stances to others; and 3) take stances on stances expressed by others.

3.2 Data Collection

The data analyzed here is based on seven interviews from the Hawai‘i Linguistic Family Tree Project, an ongoing research project that aims to document processes of language maintenance and shift across generations of speakers in Hawai‘i. Through sketching a family tree (see appendix for sample) with attention to the languages spoken by participants, their parents, and their grandparents, the project documents intergenerational language use and also generates data that sheds light on participants’ emotional and attitudinal responses to changes in their own families’ linguistic repertoires. The project is also interested in whether and to what degree language ideologies related to the mainland United States influence people’s choices to maintain or lose languages in Hawai‘i, including Pidgin.

Prior to the interview, participants were contacted and asked to prepare for the interview by researching the linguistic histories of their families. They were given a data sheet which encouraged them to find out about their siblings, their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents’ linguistic repertoires. They were strongly encouraged to ask their family members about the languages that they spoke across their life spans.

A team of 5 researchers comprised of graduate students and faculty in linguistics and second language studies were the interviewers. One of the interviewers is part-Hawaiian and speaks English, Pidgin, and Japanese. The interviews were designed around the concept of active
interviewing (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004), an approach that acknowledges the co-constructed nature of research interviews by considering both how participants respond in addition to what they say. Interviews lasted from 30-60 minutes and were recorded by high quality audio recorders. Interviews were transcribed and expressions of stance-taking that targeted language (or speakers of a language) as the stance objects were coded in each transcript. The examples were then sorted by type of stance-taking (taking one’s own stance; attributing a stance to another; taking a stance on another’s stance), recognizing that the interactional aspect of stance-taking can combine these positionings.

3.3 Participants

The participants in the project are UH-Manoa undergraduates who are enrolled in a linguistics or second language studies course who choose to participate in an extra-credit opportunity. The requirement for participation is to be born and raised in Hawai‘i. Over 50 participants have been interviewed who represent the wide linguistic diversity found across the islands. From among these interviews, I chose participants who identified having Hawaiian as a language in their family linguistic trees, and I selected seven for the present analysis. See Table 1 for background information on these participants. Future work will examine non-Hawaiian participants whose family trees contain Japanese, Cantonese, and languages of the Philippines for comparative purposes.

It is interesting to note that all of the participants in this study attended or have close relatives who are enrolled in ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, the Hawaiian immersion preschool system that began in the 1980s. Five out of seven attended Kamehameha Schools, a private school that provides education to students of Hawaiian descent.

Table 1. Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Hawaiian language background</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Languages of prior 3 generations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Pūnana Leo (2 year)</td>
<td>English, Hawaiian, Pidgin, Samoan, Spanish</td>
<td>Cantonese, English, Hawaiian, Japanese, Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High school (2 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>6 years middle-high school</td>
<td>English, Hawaiian, Japanese, Korean, Pidgin</td>
<td>Cantonese, English, Hawaiian, Portuguese, Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2 years university</td>
<td>English, Hawaiian, Pidgin</td>
<td>Cantonese, English, Filipino, Hawaiian, Pidgin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 There are more participants who identify as Native Hawaiian. However, due to time constraints, not all interviews have been transcribed.
### Participant Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Education Details</th>
<th>Language Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kawika</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Pūnana Leo (parental participation) 2 years university (Hawaiian language major)</td>
<td>English, Hawaiian, Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>6 years middle-high school 2 years university</td>
<td>English, Hawaiian, Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krystal</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4 years high school 2 years university (Hawaiian studies major)</td>
<td>English, Hawaiian, Ilokano, Pidgin, Moke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pualani</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5 years middle-high school 1 year university (Hawaiian studies major)</td>
<td>English, Hawaiian, Pidgin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4 Data analysis

An overall finding about the data is that when the participants expressed stances about their own language use, they articulated the lowest degrees of affect, judgement, and appreciation. In addition, most expressed a relatively passive role in having learned Hawaiian or Pidgin. However, when producing stance attributions for others, more evaluative language emerged. Evaluations were the strongest in stance follows, when the speakers responded to stances produced by others.

The data are presented with occasional uses of Hawaiian and Pidgin in italics, with the translations of these languages in parentheses when necessary. Though some discourse analytic approaches to research interviews call for detailed attention to the production of talk, including marking of pauses, elongated syllables, and prosody, I have kept these aspects to a minimum since I am limiting my analysis of stance mostly to the lexical and phrasal levels. Future analysis may address additional linguistic encodings of stance.

1. **Evaluation of Hawaiian and Pidgin in the stances of the interviewees**

The interviews began at the ‘bottom’ of the linguistic family trees by asking the participants to...
explain what languages they spoke. In answering, the stances taken demonstrated a general lack of affect, judgement, and appreciation, as in lines 1-2 in Kathy’s response in (1). After explaining that she spoke English as her main language, she moved on to explain about her knowledge of Pidgin and Hawaiian. She attributes her Pidgin abilities to being “like a lot of Local people are” and she attributes learning Hawaiian to her schooling, rather than to an agentive set of actions or culture-specific inspirations. Kamehameha Schools are a private institution for people of Hawaiian ancestry, and are known for offering an elite education that includes a focus on Hawaiian culture and which offers the Hawaiian language as an elective.4

(1)

1 Kathy: Um but also like I guess I’m familiar with a lot of like Pidgin, like- like a lot of people Local people in Hawai’i are.
2 I: Mm hm.
3 Kathy: Um and then I’ve also took, like I went to Kamehameha, so I um took Hawaiian throughout high school and intermediate and in college too
4 I: Oh wow.
5 Kathy: But I’m not like fluent by any means ((laughs)).

Jackie, a woman of Japanese-Hawaiian descent, expresses a similar, depersonalized stance that positions her as a passive recipient of the languages that she speaks. In (2), she expresses a hedged epistemic stance about how she learned Pidgin with “I guess” and passive voice, and her epistemic stance ("wouldn’t say") mitigates her fluency in the language.

(2)

1 Jackie: So I’m from the big island I’m from Hilo. And I grew up speaking English. I guess around me Pidgin was also spoken so I know it a little bit but I wouldn’t say I speak it fluently.

In (3), Jackie explains her lack of Pidgin from her private school experience and the circle of friends she made there. When asked more about that, she expressed a generic stance about speaking “proper English” with reference to “the whole thing” and mentioned her teachers, people who ostensibly acted in a position of power. In Hawai’i, Pidgin is often contrasted with what is called “proper English,” with the result being that Pidgin is misinterpreted as a form of English, and as a broken form. In looking at how Jackie responds to her this generic anti-Pidgin stance, we see that very little self positioning is expressed in terms of affect, judgement, or appreciation.

(3)

1 Jackie: I didn’t have friends from there cause I started Kamehameha and by then they all

4 Hawaiian cultural practices such as hula were banned at Kamehameha Schools until 1965. Similarly, Hawaiian was only introduced as a subject in the 1960s. Enrollment was low in the first few generations. In 1985, only 10.7% of all language students were enrolled in Hawaiian, while 46% were choosing Japanese and the rest Spanish and French (Eyre, 2004). Though there are campaigns to encourage making Hawaiian required, the language remains an elective for students.
started speaking more English.

I: Why do you think that was?

Jackie: Just because everyone, the whole thing about that you should speak proper English. And also our teachers spoke that way.

I: Was, did anybody say at school like explicitly anything about Pidgin.

Jackie: No it just kinda happened.

Others presented their language in matter of fact epistemic stances. Pualani, who attended the same school as Jackie, expressed clear certainty about Pidgin as a natural, or perhaps inevitable language. Her use of “normal” is a positive form of appreciation, though she doesn’t ascribe it to herself in an agentive manner.

(4)

I: Okay and then any other languages besides Hawaiian and English? Pidgin?

Pualani: Yeah Pidgin's going to come.

I: ((laughs))

Pualani: That's just normal ((laughs))

Jim, who did not attend Kamehameha School, also expressed an unmitigated and matter-of-fact stance towards being a speaker of English and Pidgin. On line 4, he emphasized the dual nature of these languages as equally relevant in his life across domains. By describing them as “my first two languages,” he establishes a stance that is at minimum neutral or potentially positive with regard to appreciation.

(5)

Jim: It’s the same for me. Those are my first two languages. ((referring to a sample tree from another participant who listed English and Pidgin as first languages))

I: Okay.

Jim: So I really grew up um in the home and outside the home learning both.

In expressing their epistemic stance, the interviewees did not frequently personalize their sources of knowledge. However, many of them invoked the Hawaiian Renaissance as an explanation for their reasons to take Hawaiian. Starting in the 1970s, this was a civil rights movement that brought attention to revitalizing Hawaiian cultural practices such as hula, canoe voyaging, and taro farming. Significantly, it also led to making Hawaiian an official language of the state in 1978, and paved the way for Hawaiian immersion programs to develop. When asked about the reasons she and her sister studied Hawaiian, Kathy answered with a lack of certainty in her epistemic stance (line 4), framing her answer with several “I guess” statements. In explaining about the Hawaiian Renaissance’s impact on her, her answer is very depersonalized, lacking any stances marking her own affect, judgement, or appreciation.

(6)

I: Yeah yeah so why do you think maybe you and your sister [decided to
I: 

Kathy: [took Hawaiian?]

I: Yeah.

Kathy: Um I don't know I guess its just like um I guess like around I would say like this time

I: Mhm

Kathy: I guess you could consider like the years like- Like recently like Hawaiian Renaissance you know, so it's like it was offered more in like school and stuff. Like, um, more people wanted to take it as opposed to like when my mom and dad were in school. Like they said Hawaiian wasn't really like a big language.

Interestingly, Jackie refers to the same phenomenon to explain her lack of interest in studying Hawaiian. The importance of maintaining Hawaiian is presented as a stance of the school she attended before college, rather than her own, and she explicitly rejects the maintenance of the language in personal terms. Her epistemic and affective stance-taking towards Hawaiian aligns with her choices to pursue studying Korean and Japanese as a university student, and to express greater interest in those languages, rather than Hawaiian, for future generations. It also expresses a stance of indeterminacy, which defers the speaker’s commitment to the topic and allows them to mediate the extent to which they can be held accountable for their stance (Jaffe 2009, p. 18).

(7)

Jackie: Kamehameha schools has always told us about perpetuating the culture and stuff. And it’s not that I was against it it’s just it wasn’t my interest.

2. Stance attributions to others

In their reports of stance attributed to others, the interviewees provided richer forms of evaluative language. For example, though Pualani described her use of Pidgin in a largely depersonalized form in (4), she used much more evaluative language to describe her parents, unveiling more certain articulations of epistemic stance and a stronger level of positive appreciation for the language. In line 2, she explains that Pidgin is “used all the time,” positioning her parents’ usage as part of a social norm, rather than an aspect of marginalized language use. She expresses strong epistemic certainty in line 5 about her parents’ languages, emphasizing this stance with two occasions of constructed dialogue in Pidgin in line 7, as if to offer evidence for this claim.

(8)

I: Do your parents speak Pidgin?

Pualani: Yeah, I think like I don't know if I can even like recognize it as Pidgin cause it's so, you know, like used all the time.

I: Uh huh.

Pualani: But yeah I definitely think they're Pidgin people ((laughs))

I: They're Pidgin speakers.
In discussing her parents, Gina, who learned Hawaiian at both Pūnana Leo and Kamehameha School, positions her mother’s background in Hawaiian studies as the main reason for her attending an immersion schooling as a young child. Her explanation is framed with evaluative language marking appreciation – “she understood the importance of it.” This stance is not strongly articulated though since it is followed with another option – that it might have merely been an alternative to conventional preschool.

When asked about Pidgin, Gina expressed that her parents sanctioned her and her sister against using the language. In attributing stances to others, markers of affect (“didn’t like”) and negative forms of appreciation (“it wasn’t too proper”) characterize her stance toward Pidgin.

More complex stances come when Gina talks about her sister, who she describes as more of a Pidgin speaker. Though Gina attended Kamehameha School, her sister went to a public high school. In the state of Hawai‘i, there is a long history of race-based segregation that divides public and private schooling (Tamura, 1996) that endures to the present. Hawai‘i has the largest percentage of private school enrollment in the United States at about 20% (US Census), and people who speak Pidgin are often associated with public schooling, whereas private school graduates are often accorded the judgement of being “proper English speakers.” This metastance is found in Gina’s interview as well. In line 5 of (11), she moves from positioning level 1 of the storied world to positioning level 2, where she comments on her own recounting with a stance of negative judgement. The reported speech of stances attributed to others in her narrative reifies the metastance that ‘proper’ language is English, and not Pidgin. Next, however, Gina attributes her sister’s use of Pidgin to “the kind of person she was” (line 8), and to her sister’s valuing of Hawaiian language and culture. Thus, the initial stances attributed to Pidgin position the language as ‘improper’ vis-à-vis English, but then are presented as a natural consequence of Hawaiian consciousness.
I: Do you think that your sister had the same messages?
Gina: Yeah
I: And did she react the same way?
Gina: Yeah. My sister spoke um I guess like when she want to high school, she went-
this is going to sound so bad- so she started speaking, you could tell she started
speaking Pidgin and that’s when like everyone was like, “speak proper please.”
I: Do you think she gets more Pidgin exposure than you did?
Gina: Yeah she does. I think it’s just the kind of person that she was. Like, she started in
like high school when she went to public school and hanging with like this, a
group of friends and she realized the importance of Hawaiian and like when she
came here for school she was all into like the lāʻau lapaʻau (‘Hawaiian
medicine’), did like the Hawaiian studies route and now that’s what she is. Like
she hangs out with people that are like that.

Similar to the stance that Gina attributed to her sister, Kawika also narrated an epistemology that
linked the Hawaiian language with a specific Hawaiian worldview. Of all the participants,
Kawika’s interview contained the most canonical narratives involving plotlines, characters, and
reported speech, which provided for a more detailed analysis of positioning. He was a highly
engaging storyteller. In (12), we see how Kawika attributes a stance to his past self, labeling the
his epistemological stance of not desiring to learn Hawaiian as “talking money.” This part of his
story refers to the time in his life when his first daughter was in Pūnana Leo, approximately 10
years ago, and when he was working full time in construction. He took this “talking money”
stance toward the people in his life who criticized his lack of Hawaiian language knowledge, as
reported in lines 7-8 as “Look, oh you don’t know how to talk Hawaiian ae (‘right’)?”

Kawika: In the beginning it was like two birds with one stone, “Oh okay it’s free edu- free
preschool and learn Hawaiian ae (‘right’), cool.” But I wasn’t really enthusiastic it
was just, just for go school. But then my oldest daughter really picked up on it and
she wanted to continue at a Hawaiian immersion school so we kept her going and
that kind of you know, that kind of that- slowly the Hawaiian started coming to
me then. And I remember like I was thinking ‘Wow this is’ you know everybody
“Look, oh you don’t know how to talk Hawaiian ae?” “You guys gotta talk
money nowadays, talk money” that’s how I was. “We don’t talk Hawaiian, we
talk money” so “Oh okay no problem.”
I: What does talk money mean?
Kawika: Yeah just nonsense, go work always making money instead of learning about
something.
took on the role of raising his children while his wife took on the role of breadwinner. As he became more engaged with his daughter’s education at Pūnana Leo, he had an epiphany about the importance of Hawaiian not only as a language but as a way of life.

13 Kawika: I started hanging out at the school, like going on field trips, working on their garden. That was the main thing, they had this Hawaiian garden and being unemployed I started I had to see like “Aw man what I gon do?” I started fishing starting farming just trying to provide. And then just everything just kind of, Hawaiian everything hit me one time just like. My dad put it the best he like “the reason why you broke your leg and all of this, Hawaiian stay come yet (is still there)” So I just I said “Yep, I tried the American way I’ll just try the Hawaiian way.” For me it’s been more enjoyable it’s - I can like, forty two years old, come back to school.

In line 14, Kawika uses appreciation to evaluate the Hawaiian garden as the “main thing” that began a shift in his worldview. Through living in a way that that had traditional Hawaiian elements of fishing and farming, he identified with the Hawaiian language. He offers a positive judgement of his father’s reported speech in line 17 (“My dad put it the best”) which portrays the Hawaiian language and way of life as “stay come yet” (‘is still there’) in Pidgin. He then uses reported speech to express alignment with his father. Here, he positions a capitalist lifestyle - and a personal disengagement with Hawaiian – as the “American way,” and he expresses his own stance of appreciation on line 20 for “the Hawaiian way,” which for him, means learning Hawaiian and living what he a Hawaiian lifestyle.

In the interview, Kawika acknowledged the dominance of a money-driven lifestyle in Hawai‘i, but took a personalized stance in favor of what he described as the Hawaiian way. He explained that his grandfather, who did speak Hawaiian growing up, went the “American way,” learning English and having a career in the U.S. military. He then asserted a strongly positive affective stance towards Hawaiian, explaining “I could die right now and I feel like I’m at peace.” Learning Hawaiian has shifted his understanding of the world.

22 Kawika: It works for some people you know. It worked for my grandfather. Just American. And it kinda I guess it kind of worked for my dad. But for me it didn’t. I needed the Hawaiian to, to I don’t know. Like now I could die right now and I feel like I’m at peace I did it I’ve seen it all and now the world makes sense now.

This epistemology connecting Hawaiian, the land, and a strong sense of belonging in the Hawaiian culture was echoed in Krystal’s interview as well, when she explained her reasons for studying Hawaiian. She explains her Hawaiian culture and values as rooted to the land, which relates strongly to discourses about the ‘āina (‘land’) in Hawaiian culture, and to associations with the kua‘āina, Native Hawaiians who, in the late 20th century, remained in rural communities in Hawai‘i, spoke Hawaiian, and maintained a lifestyle of cultivating taro, fishing, and hunting (McGregor, 2007). Krystal was from the island of Moloka‘i, which has one of the largest
concentrations of *kuaʻāina*. She evaluates her home island as “just like, country” with positive appreciation (“really nice”) and asserts that the same practices from the past are everyday practices in the present.

(15)

1 I: Can you tell me about why you chose to study Hawaiian in high school and college?
2 Krystal: Because like - I am really in touch with my Hawaiian culture, like I mean living on Molokaʻi all we like it’s totally different yeah. It’s just like, country. It’s really nice, and all we do is fish, we hunt, like catch our own food and that’s like the Hawaiian values you know. We take our resources from the land. And that’s how we like survived back in the ancient Hawaiian days. So, my Hawaiian culture is really important to me. That’s why I think it would be great to like learn Hawaiian.

This epistemology works well with her choice to study Hawaiian and to major in Hawaiian studies in the 21st century. Other more “talk money” epistemologies are frequently construed through metastances that encourage young people to study languages that will be seen as marketable skills and that will be useful in a globalizing economy, as we will see in (16) below.

3. Stance follows

Finally, I turn to several examples of *stance follows* (DuBois, 2007) to examine how the interviewees responded to stances about Hawaiian and Pidgin. Stance follows offer rich sites for the study of language attitudes since they allow us to see how speakers may index their affective and epistemic authority relative to others. Stance follows provide speakers with the opportunity to ‘say what they really think’ – despite the prevalence of ideologies that privilege languages like English in Hawaiʻi.

In (16), Krystal describes a discussion in her linguistics class about the value of different languages. She explains that the class decided Hawaiian was “not that important” since it is not spoken outside of the state, and that languages of wider communication were listed as more desirable. Nonetheless, she follows this stance with an affective stance of persistence (line 6).

(16)

1 Krystal: and I like remember in (Linguistics) class we talk about how like, monolingual and multilingual, and Hawaiian. Like, we at the end, our conclusion is just like it’s Hawaiian’s not that important because only people in Hawaiʻi speaks Hawaiian. You can’t really use Hawaiian in like the mainland. You would probably want to learn like Spanish or like Japanese or Chinese. But I told them that I’m still going to learn Hawaiian anyway.

As her recounting of the story continued, there were more opportunities for Krystal to add on to her initial stance follow, and each opportunity seemed to allow her to assert a stronger
positionality. In (17), she summarized the perspectives from her classmates, including herself as among the “we” who concluded that Hawaiian “wouldn’t be very beneficial.” This is followed, however, with her strongly appreciative stance toward Hawaiian, and her assertion that it’s “my native language” positions Hawaiian as inviolate. She then takes an indeterminate stance, acknowledging that people have different points of view.

(17)

1 Krystal: I think we were talking about the benefits and drawbacks of learning a second
2 language and if learning Hawaiian would be beneficial to us if we were to like
3 leave Hawai‘i and we just saw that it wouldn’t be very beneficial for us. But I
4 think it’s really nice to learn Hawaiian. It’s like my native language so it’s, like-
5 But different people have different opinions so.

The interaction with the interviewer then provided Krystal with another opportunity to embolden her stance toward Hawaiian. In lines 7-9, she explains that the different opinions that she took an indeterminate stance toward previously were actually problematic because the people voicing those opinions were either from the mainland U.S. or were not Native Hawaiian. Here, then, she asserts an epistemic authority over whose perspectives have value regarding the Hawaiian language. In other words, she asserts that only Hawaiians really have a say in the matter.

(18)

6 I: Were there others who took your position?
7 Krystal: There was just there was only me and this other local girl. Everybody else was
8 from the mainland. And some people from Hawai‘i said that they don’t care for
9 the Hawaiian language. Problem was they weren’t Hawaiian so, I don’t
10 know.

In conveying how his mother’s opinions about Pidgin, Jim also found an opportunity to articulate a more positive judgement of Pidgin. Though many people living in Hawai‘i describe codeswitching as an optimal solution for how to maintain both Pidgin and English, Jim expresses some critique of this idea. After explaining that his mother has told him to speak “proper English” at a job interview, he follows this stance by considering the potential context of the job interview. His stance follow on line 8 addresses the affective role of Pidgin as a language of solidarity and shared local identity, rather than submitting to the epistemic authority that he has attributed to his mother just moments before.

(19)

1 Jim: She always says that she can go back and forth you know to Pidgin really easily
2 and, I mean without really thinking about it.
3 I: Yeah.
4 Jim: Just go back and forth.
5 I: So she talks about kind of how she manages to switch around?
6 Jim: Yeah it just depends on who she is talking to and she also tells me like advantages
7 and disadvantages of going to a job interview. You want to speak proper English.
The interviewees also had opportunities to provide critical stance follows in stories about their parents that presented Hawaiian as a low-prestige language. In explaining why his father did not learn Hawaiian from the Hawaiian-speaking grandparents who raised him, Kawika pointed to the stigmatization of Hawaiian that was part of the larger context of Hawaiian language loss. Since Hawaiian was banned in school and cultural practices like hula and surfing were painted as sacrilegious by Christian missionaries, many Native Hawaiians attached a sense of shame to their language and chose not to pass it down to the next generation. His father turned his own lack of proficiency in pronouncing Hawaiian words into humor, and Kawika expresses empathy for this stance. In revoicing his father’s humor, including his gruff laughter (line 6), Kawika challenges his father’s stance. Moreover, in lines 7-9, he expresses a decentered understanding of his father’s behavior; instead of judging him negatively, he acknowledges his father’s positionality and makes sense of it.

(20)

When asked about the future generations in their families, the interviewees expressed more assertive epistemic stances, which would presumably be linked to stronger expressions of language attitudes. In (21), Jim expressed an epistemic stance of certainty toward the vitality of Pidgin (lines 3, 7), and reaffirmed this stance when the interviewer presented him with an alternative stance in line 8. He expressed less certainty about Hawaiian in line 11, though it is important to acknowledge the positive evaluation of the future of this language in his family.
I: Mhm, okay.
Jim: And hopefully the Hawaiian will be there too.

Discussion

This study has shown that people are more willing to provide overt evaluations of language when they attribute stances to others, and when they respond to those stances. Positive stances were expressed toward Hawaiian, in conjunction with a Hawaiian epistemology that built off of associations with a traditional Hawaiian lifestyle. Positive stances were also expressed toward Pidgin with regard to affect but negative forms of appreciation were often attributed to the language. In stance follows, however, these negative qualities were often questioned or mitigated.

In their study on language criticism in Hawai‘i, Marlow & Giles (2010) found that people reported cases of language criticism when they spoke Hawaiian and Pidgin across domains of life, including in the families. People reported a range of responses to the criticism, from accommodation to aggression. Unfortunately, and perhaps due to the nature of their questionnaire design, the participants often left sections on the questionnaire blank that asked about their responses to language criticism. Through its more dialogical approach, the present study’s analysis of interview adds to Marlow and Giles (2010) by uncovering the discursive construction of stance, both within episodes of language criticism and reactions it. In addition, it has explored stance-taking of a more positive nature, which is equally a part of language attitudes. All of this was done in the domain of families, which is often considered to be the most significant domain for successful intergenerational transmission (Fishman, 1991). It is important to know what stances towards language are expressed in families, and what stances are possible responses in this domain of life, in order to consider implications for language maintenance.

The analysis shows that when people are asked about the languages they and others speak, their stances can become more unveiled as they position themselves with reference to others. How they express their stances also sheds light on larger patterns across speakers. As Jaffe (2009) explains, “uptake with alignment may also be one of the ways in which stance is implicated in the production of more enduring ideologies or ‘stands,’ and in turn play a role in the ‘fixing’ of indexical relationships between talk and social identities and categories. (p. 8-9).

This paper has argued that stance-taking towards languages and their speakers is an effective way of examining language attitudes since it allows us to see individuals articulate their ideological convergences and divergences with respect to others. Because stance-taking involves presupposed systems of socio-cultural values, such as ideologies, and because stance contributes to the maintenance, reproduction, and validation of these values (Du Bois, 2007), it can also be treated as a site for the maintenance, reproduction, and even devaluation of languages and their speakers. The findings also suggest that asking people about their own experiences with language may not get at their attitudes, as marked through stance. More attitude marking was present in presenting others’ stances and in stance follows. This has implications for designing future studies that examine language attitudes and ideologies in Hawai‘i and beyond.
Appendix: Sample Family Tree

Andrew Choy

Both Loretta and Young Wo were born on Oahu. Loretta attended and graduated from St. Andrew’s Priory, and Young Wo graduated from McKinley High. Cantonese was the language spoken in both homes, and while Loretta and Young Wo spoke Cantonese to their parents and grandparents, they spoke Pidgin and English to their siblings and friends. Their son, Garret, grew up speaking Cantonese to his grandparents and attended Chinese school on the weekends. Garret also claims that because his parents were born on Oahu, they were
equally accustomed to speaking English and, therefore, made little to no attempt to speak Cantonese to their children sensing, also, that their children had enough exposure to Cantonese in speaking with their grandparents. Garret also explained that he and his siblings were sent to Chinese school simply as a way to get them out of the house so their parents would have more personal time. He spoke a mix of Cantonese, English, and Pidgin to his parents and siblings, and Pidgin to his friends. He attended and graduated from Roosevelt high school. Filomeno immigrated to Hawai‘i when he was sixteen to work on plantations on the Big Island and Maui. When World War II began, Filomeno enlisted in the US Navy touring in Guam and Saipan before finally setting on Oahu after the war. After the war, Filomeno worked to save enough money to pay for his wife (Segundina) and children to immigrate to Hawai‘i. Rose DeGracia was two years old when she immigrated to Hawai‘i. Rose says that although she spoke Ilokano to her parents when she was younger, as soon as she began school in Hawai‘i, her parents began to speak to her and her siblings in their best English to facilitate their children’s education. In addition, Segundina attended adult school at Farrington and, wanting to perfect her English, spoke to her children in English. Currently, she understands phrases in Ilokano but does not have conversational ability. Although Rose was exposed to Pidgin around family networks and at school she is hesitant to say that she is a Pidgin speaker. When they were younger, both sets of grandparents would alternate taking care of Chris and Andrew, and, subsequently, they were exposed to phrases in Ilokano and Cantonese. As they grew older, their grandparents made fewer attempts to speak to them in Cantonese and Ilokano. Rose explains that because Filomeno and Segundina were in Hawai‘i, they realized the need to learn and speak English, and recognizing that Chris and Andrew were “English”, they made little to no attempt to speak Ilokano to them as they got older. Chris and Andrew spoke predominantly English in the home and at school with a slight mix of Pidgin. They attended and graduated from Hawaii Baptist Academy on Oahu. They occasionally speak Pidgin with their friends. Chris lives and works in Beijing, China and speaks Mandarin, and as an undergraduate, Andrew majored in Spanish.

References


