

Los Angeles Unified School District
Language Acquisition Branch
Office of Standard English Learner Programs/ AEMP



TEACHERS GUIDE TO SUPPORTING HAWAIIAN AMERICAN STANDARD ENGLISH LEARNERS

**Understanding the Characteristic Linguistic
Features of Hawaiian American Language as
Contrasted with Standard English Structure**

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Adapted from the work of Kent Sakoda and Jeff Siegel



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PREFACE

Hawaiian American Language speakers consist of Native Hawaiians, people born on the island, as well as long-term residents (kama‘aina) of Hawai‘i. Commonly referred to as Pidgin by Hawaiian residents, it is also known officially as Hawai‘i Creole English. There are an estimated 600,000 Hawaiian American Language speakers on the islands and an unknown number in the continental U.S. (Sakoda, 2003). They are US born Americans primarily of Hawaiian, Japanese, Filipino, Portuguese, and Chinese descent, whose home language is predominantly Pidgin. Speakers of Hawaiian American language are English Only (EO) speakers, as identified per the LAUSD Home Language Survey, of Pacific Islander, Asian, or Filipino descent, and have a history of underachievement throughout their schooling experience.

This teachers guide uses the terms Pidgin and Hawaiian American Language (HAL) interchangeably in acknowledgement of its linguistic characterization (Hawai‘i Creole English) in the research and it’s correlation with the population in which this linguistic variation resides—the residents of Hawai‘i. The primary writing system utilized in this teachers guide is the Odo orthography, developed by Carol Odo to more accurately represent the pronunciation of Pidgin. A variety of alternative spellings from culturally relevant Pidgin literature are included as well.

The general purpose of this guide is to serve as a reference manual and introduction to the linguistic features of Hawaiian American Language (HAL). The specific aim of this guide is to facilitate linguistic contrastive analysis and culturally responsive pedagogy for Hawaiian American Standard English Learners.

The History of Pidgin (Hawaiian American Language)

By most scholarly accounts, the first Polynesians to settle the Hawaiian Islands are estimated to have arrived around 200-400 C.E. from the Southern Marquesas Islands. Several central theories have been hotly debated over the years to explain the ensuing settlement and origin of the Native Hawaiian people. One theory argues for a continued period of settlement over time by different groups of Polynesian people. Another theory points to a large-scale Tahitian invasion that conquered the existing population around 1200 C.E. According to Native Hawaiian accounts, the kahuna nui (high priest) Pa'ao sailed with men and women from Hawaiki and brought the purified kapu (sacred) system of forbidden objects and actions to the people of the Hawaiian Islands. Pa'ao initiated the high-priest line and the ruling families for each island with Pili Kaaiea (the pure chief) to establish a new royal lineage and purified kapu practice. Henceforth, all Hawaiian rulers would trace their lineage back to Pili. Often Pa'ao is described as Tahitian or Samoan in origin.

While the early settlement history of Hawaii remains a matter of perspective, one thing is clear; the people of the Hawaiian Islands had developed their unique and highly advanced seafaring culture to great heights by the time of European contact in 1778. At the time of European contact it is estimated that between a quarter to one million Native Hawaiians inhabited the Islands. After a mere 70 years of contact with Europeans and other foreigners, the Native population had been virtually decimated by the introduction of diseases. By 1848, there were only 88,000 Hawaiians left in the Kingdom of Hawai'i under Kamehameha III (Sakoda & Siegel, 2003).

As trade expanded between the Kingdom of Hawai'i and other nations, the establishment of the sugarcane plantation economy took hold of the island during the mid-19th century. This new economy required a large pool of workers, which led to the immigration of Chinese, Pacific Islander, Portuguese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, and Puerto Ricans to the islands. Sakoda & Siegel (2003) describe how the first pidgin emerged:

When the plantation era began, the Hawaiians were still in control of their islands, and their language was dominant. It was the language of government and of education for all non-European children, and it also became the language used to run the plantations. But many white plantation overseers did not learn Hawaiian fully, and the same was true of the imported

Chinese laborers. A new form of language began to be used for communication among whites, Chinese, and Hawaiians—with words mostly from Hawaiian but with pronunciation, meanings, and structure different from Hawaiian. When laborers started coming from Portugal and other countries in the 1870's, this new language consolidated on the plantations. So the first real pidgin in Hawai'i was Pidgin Hawaiian, not Pidgin English.

From 1874 to 1887, a series of political events and a declining Hawaiian population combined to further weaken Hawaiian sovereignty and cultural dominance. Beginning with the signing of the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States in 1875, the political and economic institutions of the island began to fall into the American sphere of influence. The Reciprocity treaty gave free-trade access to the US market for sugar in exchange for the lands upon which the Pearl Harbor Naval Base would be built. Another significant development at this time was the influx of entire immigrant families to the island coupled with the increase in the number of English-medium schools. During this period, English also began to gradually replace Hawaiian as the language of the plantations, and as a result an English-lexified pidgin (or Pidgin English) began to develop (Sakoda & Siegel 2003).

It is important to remember that Pidgin Hawaiian and English mixed together on the plantation in myriad ways before it became systematic. When it became systematic and regularized as a primary language of the population, it became known as Hawai'i Pidgin English (HPE). The emergence of this new language occurred during the first decade after Hawaiian annexation to the United States. As generation upon generation of different ethnic groups learned HPE as their primary language, it became further solidified as a language that began to incorporate influences from other languages such as Cantonese, Portuguese, and Japanese. For these reasons, linguists refer to Hawai'i Pidgin English as Hawaiian Creole English because it incorporates many different influences from different languages.

Javier A. San Román

Hawaiian American Language

Features of Phonology

**RULES FOR COMBINING FEATURES OF SOUNDS
INTO SIGNIFICANT SPEECH SOUNDS**

1.1 Introduction to Pidgin Phonology

Pidgin phonology represents the sound system of the Pidgin speaking Hawaiian American community. Characteristic of its particular sound system is a distinct vowel pronunciation as well as distinct syllable stress and intonation. Pidgin phonology has been strongly influenced by Native Hawaiian and the various languages that were brought to the Hawaiian Islands during the days of the sugar plantations. Pidgin is more characteristically “syllable-timed” rather than “stress-timed”.

1.2 Word Final Consonants in Hawaiian American Language (HAL)

Final Consonant clusters in Pidgin are not produced because the rules of the language do not permit the production of certain word final consonant clusters. Consonant cluster variation occurs when you have a final consonant cluster in a word produced as a single sound. The final product results in a word that is pronounced differently from Standard English. For example: kept \Rightarrow pt \Rightarrow p = kep.

 consonant cluster variation

Pidgin example: He kep da buk

SAE translation: He kept the book

Pidgin phonological rules do not permit the production of the following clusters at the end of words: *pt, ct, ft, st, ld, and nd*.

SAE Examples:

kept

act

soft

last

cold

spend

Pidgin (HAL) Examples:

kep

aek

sawf

laes

kol

spen

The following are additional examples of sound clusters which HAL phonological rules do not allow to exist.

<u>Sound Cluster</u>	<u>MAE</u>	<u>Pidgin (HAL) Contrasts</u>
-ts	what's	- was
-ks	folks	- fos
-ds	kids	- kiz

1.2a Consonant cluster variation and other sounds

In Pidgin the English 'r' sound does not exist when there is an 'r' at the beginning of the next syllable.

Program	realized as	pograem
---------	-------------	---------

Frustrated	realized as	fashchraited
------------	-------------	--------------

Library	realized as	laibaeri
---------	-------------	----------

1.3 The 't', 'd', and 's' before r pronunciation

In Pidgin the 't' sound is pronounced as ch before r, the 'd' sound as jr before r, and the 's' sound as sh before r.

ex: /t/ →	SAE tree try	→ /ch/	HAL chri chry
-----------	--------------------	--------	---------------------

ex: /d/ →	drive drink	→ /jr/	jraiv jrink
-----------	----------------	--------	----------------

ex: /s/ →	grocery	→ /sh/	groshri
-----------	---------	--------	---------

1.4 The th digraph sound

In Pidgin the 'th' digraph sound is pronounced as 't' or 'd'.

/th/-/t/ sound

ex:	SAE	HAL
	thick	tick
	think	tink
	both	bot

MAE: I think that both of you should go.

HAL: I tink dat bot of yu go.

/th/-/d/ sound

SAE	HAL
father	fada
other	odda
this	dis
that	dat

MAE: This is my father.

HAL: Dis my fada.

1.5 Vowel Sounds

In Pidgin, vowel pronunciation varies widely from the eleven main vowel sounds of Standard English pronunciation.

Ex:	SAE	HAL
	feet	fit
	hit	heat
	look	luke
	bed	bad
	pan	pen
	pup	pop

1.6 Syllabic 'l' and 'l' before another consonant

In Pidgin the final syllable that ends with the l sound is pronounced as an o.

Ex:	SAE	HAL
	people	pipo
	apple	aepo
	terrible	taerabo

When 'l' precedes another consonant it is pronounced as 'o' or 'u'.

Ex:	SAE	HAL
	milk	meok
	help	haeup

1.7 Stress Patterns

In Pidgin many words have primary stress on a different syllable from that in Standard English, especially with Standard English words that have the first syllable stressed.

Examples:

SAE	HAL
D ictionary	dikshana a eri
I nventory	invent a wri
C eremony	saram o ni
H urricane	harake i n
A lcohol	aelkah a wl
S trawberry	shchraw a eri
h ospital	hosp i to

1.8 Intonation Patterns

In Pidgin, the intonation pattern falls at the end of a yes-no question. In Standard English the pitch rises at the end of a yes-no question.

SAE: Are you a lifeguard?

HAL: E, yu wan laif **gad**?

In Pidgin many questions end with tags like yeah, eh, and no. This characteristic is shared with Mexican American Language, which ends many questions with tags. In Pidgin these tags make the question end on a high pitch.

SAE: Do you want to go to Maui or what?

HAL: Yu laik go Maui, **o wat?**

Hawaiian American Language

Features of Morphology

RULES FOR COMBINING SOUNDS INTO BASIC UNITS OF MEANING (WORDS).

Features of Syntax

RULES FOR COMBINING WORDS INTO ACCEPTABLE PHRASES, CLAUSES, AND SENTENCES.

2.1 Introduction to HAL Morphology and Syntax

The syntactic and morphological features of Hawaiian American Language are as distinctive and unique as the phonological features of the language. In fact, Portuguese and Cantonese have influenced the structure of the language just as they have shaped the vowel system. The confluence of the English, Portuguese, Cantonese, and Japanese languages are governed by the Hawaiian substratum which gives the language its form.

2.2 Articles

In Pidgin, the indefinite article ‘the’ which refers to definite nouns, and the article ‘a’ which refers to indefinite nouns, are represented by the articles ‘**da**’ and ‘**wan**’, respectively.

Example: Definite article preceding a definite noun

SAE: I want to buy the dog.

HAL: Ai laik buy **da** dog.

Example: Indefinite article preceding an indefinite noun

SAE: I want to buy a dog.

HAL: Ai laik buy **wan** dawg.

In Pidgin generic expressions commonly use no article, both with the singular and plural form of the noun.

SAE: Dogs are loyal, not like cats.

HAL: Dawg loyal, not laik kaet.

2.3 Differences in Pronoun Usage

In Pidgin the word 'it' is rarely used except in set expressions like (stop it!) stapit! Instead, 'da kine' or 'da ting' is used.

Example: SAE: He went over it.
HAL: Hi wen ova da kine.

Also characteristic of Pidgin is the use of object pronouns at the beginning of a sentence or where MAE uses subject pronouns

Example: SAE: She's sick, let's go! SAE: Who is he?
 HAL: Hr sik, us go! HAL: Hu him?

In the Pidgin language, inanimate objects are made feminine or masculine.

SAE: The store opens at nine o'clock. SAE: The class isn't that easy.
HAL: Da sto hi open nain oklak. HAL: Da klaes shi nat daet izi.

2.4 Quantifiers

Quantifiers are words that indicate quantity or degree. In Pidgin quantifiers differ somewhat from the quantifiers used in MAE. Pidgin has several quantifiers that have no MAE equivalent.

Examples:	SAE	HAL
	Many	maeni
	Some	sam
	Little bit	litobit
	Plenty	pleni
	Too many	tumach
	“	” Chok
	“	” Uku
	“	” Uku pleni
	“	” Uku milyan

Example:

SAE: Wow, there are too many people!

HAL: Ho, tumach pipo!

2.5 Tense Markers

In Pidgin specific markers are used to indicate the past and future tenses. These words are referred to as tense markers and feature prominently in the speech of Hawaiian Americans. Additionally, once the past time frame is established by marking one verb, it isn't necessary to mark the verbs that follow.

Past Marker:

The past tense is infrequently marked in Pidgin, however when it is it is marked, the word *wen*, *bin*, and *pau* is used before the verb. The past tense marker *bin* is used much like it is in African American Language.

Ex: SAE: Who did that? Jesus finished teaching. I cleaned up my place.

HAL: Who **wen** do dat? Jesus **pau** teach. Ai **bin** klin ap mai ples.

Past Habitual Marker:

The word *yustu* (use to) is placed before the verb to indicate habitual states in the past.

Ex: SAE: I used to play football. I used to think so. You used to play there.

HAL: Ai **yustu** plei futbawl. Ai **yustu** tink so. Yu **yustu** plei dere.

Future Marker:

The future tense is marked by the word **gon** which is placed before the verb to indicate that something has not occurred yet.

Ex: SAE: I'm going to buy a car.

HAL: I **gon** bai wan ka.

She's going to miss the prom.

She **gon** mis da prom.

2.6 Auxiliary Verbs (Aspect)

In Pidgin, auxiliary verbs occur before the main verb to indicate the action of the verb in terms of the temporal flow of the event. The main auxiliary verbs in Pidgin are: *ste* (stay), *stat* (start), *pau* (finish (ed))

Progressive Aspect of *ste* (stay): most commonly the 'ing' form indicating that something is occurring.

SAE

'What are you eating?'

Like you are a somebody

How are you?

When it got to me, everyone waited.

HAL

Wat yu **ste** it?

Like you **stay** somebody (Lum 1990:35)

How yu **ste**?

When get to me, everybody **stay** waiting (Lum 1990:11)

2.7 Postmodifiers

In Pidgin “postmodifiers” are words that are used to modify or classify a preceding word or group of words in a particular way. This is a unique feature in Pidgin, one which has no counterpart or parallel in Standard American English.

The most common postmodifiers: (taim) time, said (side), kine (kind), gaiz (guys), foks (folks), and dem (them)

HAL Examples:

Bifo **taim** (before time) meaning ‘in the past’

Smawl kid **time** (small kid time) means ‘when we were little kids’

Dauntaun Hilo **said** (downtown Hilo side) *said* describes place

De wen bai enikain no nid **kine** staffs (They bought many kinds of things they don’t need) *kine* classifies (anykind no need).

Da einjel **gaiz** (the angel guys) gaiz modifies angel as plural (angels)

Kaerol **dem** wen go shaping yestade. (Carol and the others went shopping yesterday) dem after the noun means ‘and other associated people’

2.8 Multifunctional Words ‘Da Kine’

In Pidgin the most multifunctional of all words is *kine* (kind). This word functions as a postmodifier and a noun. It also can mean ‘kind of’ or that other kinds exist. When combined with the word ‘any’, da kine becomes enikain (anykind) which means many kinds of, anything, or everything.

SAE Examples:

1. They cut down all the trees that don’t give good fruit...
2. They took out many kinds of scrapers and a strong brand of paint thinner.
3. Hey Marie! Where is that thing?
4. Would you like to tell a story about Hawaii’s history, those good old days...and why we are so poor now?

HAL Examples:

1. All da trees dat no give good kine fruit, dey cut um down...
2. Dey took out anykine scrapers and some real strong kine paint thinner. (Lum 1990:39)
3. Ey Marie! Wheah da kine? (Sasaki & Sakata 2005)
4. You like talk story bout da kine Hawaii, dem good ol dayz...an we so poa now, ass why? (Shulz, 2000)

2.9 Degree Modifiers

Pidgin demonstrates the comparative (larger, better, etc..) with the following words: mo (more), tu (too), ril (real), kinda (kind of), and sam (some).

Examples:	SAE	HAL
	bigger	mo big
	better	mo betta
	too good	tu good
	real hungry	ril hangri
	kind of big	kinda big
	so lame	so haole
	really small	sam smawl

2.10 Adverbs (time)

In Pidgin a unique set of adverbs describe time in ways that are fundamentally different than in Mainstream American English. Some of these adverbs include: *aefta* (after), *evritaim* (every time), *sem taim* (same time), and *bambai* (“eventually”).

SAE:

Learning Latin is the hard part. Everything else is easy *afterwards*.

My little sister *always* gets spanked.

I don't know how he can talk and eat at the *same time*

After a while the other girls came.

HAL:

Learning Latin da hard part. Everyting else duck soup *afta*.

Mi smawl sista *evritaim* get lickens.

Ai dono hau hi kaen tawk aen it *sem taim*.

Bambai da odda girls wen come.

2.11 Negation

The Pidgin language uses four negative markers in comparison to Standard English which has only one negative marker, not. Each negative marker in Pidgin has specific rules for the kinds of situations in which it can be used. The four Pidgin negative markers are: nat (not), no, neva (never), nomo (no more).

Examples:

SAE

My sister isn't a bus driver.

No, I don't want to play.

They weren't listening

There isn't any food in the house.

HAL

Mai sista **nat** wan bas jraiva

Nah, I **no** like play. (Lum 1990:14)

De **neva** ste lisiin.

Nomo kaukau in da haus.

2.12 Multiple Negation

The complex system of negation in Pidgin also incorporates the use of multiple negation, just as with AAL and MxAL. As with many other language varieties, the use of multiple negatives intensifies the negative sentiment communicated.

Examples:

Standard American English

1. She never brings any food.
2. They didn't do anything.
3. I don't like anyone.

Hawaiian American Language

1. Shi **neva** bring **no** kaukau.
2. De **no** du **nating**.
3. I **no** like **nobody** (Yamanaka 1997:164)

2.13 The copula (to Be)

In Pidgin the copula (be) is not present along with the proposition (to). This gives a distinctive character to HAL syntax.

SAE

Now you are talking.

Gee, your boy is a big boy, isn't he?

We aren't going to scold you.

No, I am not talking about that.

HAL

Now you talking. (Yamanaka 1999:70)

Ho, your boy, big boy, eh?

We not going scold you (Yamanaka
1997:48)

No, I not talking about that (Yamanaka
1999:81)

2.14 Topicalization

Topicalization in English grammar is the placement of the topic at the beginning of a sentence. In Pidgin the subject of the sentence is followed by a pronoun referring to the same subject.

SAE:

1. My father didn't like to go to work.
2. My sister hoards the sunflower seeds.
3. Weightlifters don't do too much.

HAL:

1. Mai **fada**, **hi** no laik go wrk.
2. Mai **sista**, **shi** da bos of da sunflowa sids.
3. **Weitliftas**, **dey** no do tumach.

2.15 Yes/No Questions

Yes and No questions in Pidgin are signaled by the intonation placed at the end of the question. As with MxAL mainstream English speakers often mistake these questions as statements.

SAE:

1. Are **you** going to the game?
2. Do **you** want to come?
3. Can I play?
4. Do **you** want to help me finish?

HAL:

1. You going da **game**?
2. You like **come**?
3. Ai kaen **plei**?
4. You like help me **finish**? (Lum 1990: 72)

2.16 Exclamations

Pidgin is characterized by the particular use of the following exclamations:

SAE:

1. 'Oh, thank you, doctor!'
2. 'Gee, your boy is a big boy, isn't he?'
3. 'Man, he really cracked me up.'
4. 'Hey, there is no Latin word for gecko!'

HAL:

1. '**Oh**, tank you, docta!'
2. '**Ho**, your boy, big boy, eh?'
3. '**Ho**, he really crack me up.'
4. '**Eh**, no mo one Latin word for gecko!'

Hawaiian American Language

Semantics

**THE LEVEL OF MEANING
OF INDIVIDUAL WORDS AND WORD RELATIONSHIPS IN
MESSAGES**

Hawaiian American Language

Pragmatics

**THE LEVEL OF LANGUAGE
AS IT FUNCTIONS
IN VARYING SOCIAL CONTEXTS.**

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