

HIGHLIGHTS OF LEAST DECREOLIZED SAMPLES OF HAWAIIAN CREOLE¹

Samples taken from three subgroups: sugar plantation workers at Ewa, Oahu; sugar plantation workers at Puhi, Kauai; friends, relatives, and acquaintances of MF45H in Hilo and South Kona; this turns out to be the descending order of decreolization. All except two were between 40 and 60 years of age, “members of the working class,” most were Filipinos, all were male. Are men more basilectal than women?!

VP: TENSE-ASPECT MARKERS

bin [bIn] [wIn] [wEn] Originally a marker of the anterior aspect, “as it mutates to *wen*, grows to be less and less confined to the anterior category, and is eventually no more than a morphological variant for English simple past.” There are five instances in the Vinyl Flooring Story [to be added later].

stei as “nonpunctual” marker has virtually disappeared from Oahu, and is on the retreat elsewhere. Its loss means “that there is no distinction between timeless iteratives of the *he works every day* kind, and nonanterior punctuals such as *he worked last Friday*: from *i stei wok* and *i wok*, these fall together as *i wok*. This encourages the use of the anterior marker as a simple past, to disambiguate where necessary, and the loss of a distinctive anterior effectively brings down the creole system in ruins—soon it has nothing to distinguish it from English.”

- continuative nonpast: ai no kea hu stei hant insai dea, a gon hant, ‘I don’t care who’s hunting in there, I’m goint to hunt’ (MF45K)
- continuative past: wail wi stei paedl, jan stei put wata insai da kanu—hei, da san av a gan haed sink! ‘While we were paddling, John was letting water into the canoe—hey, the son of a gun sank (it)!’ (MF45K)
- habitual/iterative nonpast: MF48K: ei, bil dawta raf, yu no. MF45K: raf bagaz. MF48K: raf grlz—dei stei fait. ‘Eh, Bill’s daughters are tough, you know.’ ‘Tough buggers.’ ‘Tough girls. They fight (habitually).’
- habitual/iterative past: mi, ai taid bat—wan yia ai stei kam ap evri dei. ‘But I’m really tired; for a year I’ve been coming up every day.’

go predominantly as “irrealis” marker, although also for habitual, imperative, “go and.” (See Vinyl story, line 20 [to be added later] for irrealis example.) “*Gon* too serves to indicate irrealis, but refers more specifically to future events that have an estimated high probability of occurrence, rather than spreading over into conditionals, *if*-clauses, etc. as the “pure” irrealis *go* does. However, there is considerable overlap between the two markers: den ai gon get ap twelv oklak mai waif go teik mai kloz gon tro mi aut, ‘If I got up at twelve (midnight) my wife would take my clothes and throw me out.’ (MPR58O)

1. Bickerton, Derek. 1977. *Creole syntax*, vol. 2 of 3 volumes, *Change and variation in Hawaiian English*. Final Report on National Science Foundation Grant No. GS-39748. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Social Sciences and Linguistics Institute.

Modals include *can* and *used to*, exclude almost completely *do*, *did*, *will*, *could*, and show “disputed” modals such as *might*, *would*, and *must* with intermediate frequency.

Copula: “All speakers insert the copula in some environments, though there is no environment for any speaker in which it is obligatorily inserted.” “Insertion before nouns is markedly commoner than any other form of insertion.” Locative (\pm *stei*) environments show next highest percentage. Adjectives and participles show the lowest rate of insertion. Contraction and deletion/insertion are two different processes. Where predicate fronting occurs, the copula seldom occurs; the *aes* which may occasionally appear in its stead has only a historical relationship to *that+is*:

- inverted subject and predicate only: *aeswai hambag, si, dis*, ‘You see, that’s why this is nonsense (MF45H); *hu, da tawl, daet grl*, ‘Wow, how tall that girl is!’ (MF45K)
- *aes* appears in position vacated by subject: *aes you on tu, ei, da wan yu stei nau*, ‘The (house) you’re living in now is yours too, isn’t it?’ (MF45H); *aes aw kamishan laen, daet*, ‘That is all Commission land.’ (MF45K)
- embedded questions or answers to questions also rarely show overt copula: *you no hau mach wan baeg?* ‘You know how much a bag (is)? MF48H); *ai tink ai no waet faemli daet*, ‘I think I know what family that (is).’; *ai dono wea iz fawt ruga*, ‘I don’t know where Fort Ruger is.’ (MF45K)

Negation: basilectal forms = *no, no kaen, no mo*; mesolectal forms = *nat, neva*; acrolectal forms = *don, kaenat, kaent, didn*. (See table 1). “The result of decreolization, at this stage, is not the replacement of basilectal forms by forms closer to English, but a steady increase in the amount of variation present—which again suggests, in the quite recent past, a creole much more homogeneous than one can find today.” “As table [2] shows, the difference that divides Oahu from Kauai is greater than that which divides Kauai and Hawaii. Negation in Kauai is still predominantly by basilectal forms.”

NP ELEMENTS

Indefinite articles (*wan/a*)

- **specific reference:** *wen mari wan hauli nrs*, ‘He married a haole nurse.’ (MF45H); *hu stei upsteaz? wan wahine, shi wrk ap in da nrs pleis*, ‘Who lives upstairs?’ ‘A woman, she works in the nursing home.’
- **nonspecific reference:** *if wan kid, yu no, no gon bi smat wid me*, ‘If it’s a kid, you know, he’s not going to get smart with me.’ (MF48K)
- **‘per’:** *a gon meik ten dala wan aua*, ‘I’m going to make ten dollars per hour’ (MF45K)
- **idioms:** *ai stei kam mo rli, ae, meik it a point tu kam rlia*, ‘I arrived earlier, eh, made a point of coming earlier’ (MF45Hb); *get a kapl av gaiz stei araun*, ‘There are a couple of guys who are around’ (MF45K); *ai don giv a shit* (MF36O)
- **abstract nouns without concrete referents:** *yu no wen dei luk at yu dei kawl yu wan pank—aes a big ofens, ae?* ‘You know when they looked at you and called you a punk, that was a great insult, wasn’t it?’ (MF48K)
- **existential-possessive (*get/deaz/haev*):** *get wan wait haus oa dea*, ‘There’s a white house over there.’ (MF42H); *luk laik yu haed a baed nait*, ‘It looks as though you had a bad night.’ (MPR58O); *deaz a big baenyin chri*, ‘There’s a big banyan tree.’ (MF500)

Table 1: Negative Forms in the Middle-Aged Group

Speaker	<i>no kaen</i>	<i>no mo</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>nat</i>	<i>neva</i>	<i>don</i>	<i>kaen-at</i>	NC/ NM	<i>kaent</i>	<i>didn</i>
MJ52H	3	2	9	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
MF45Ha	12	7	25	1	8	-	-	-	-	-
MF42H	3	2	10	2	1	-	1	-	-	-
MF45Hb	10	7	35	6	4	-	1	-	-	-
MF47H	11	6	19	4	4	-	-	-	-	2
MF50H	4	3	7	4	9	2	1	-	-	-
MF45K	22	12	45	14	8	5	2	-	-	-
MF36O	4	9	32	25	9	16	30	2	4	-
MF48K	13	9	36	3	10	4	1	1	1	1
MF50O	2	9	15	23	4	19	18	1	6	1
MPR58O	9	6	37	17	14	9	2	5	11	1
	93	72	270	102	71	55	56	9	22	5

Table 2: Categorical Distribution of Negative Forms (by %)

Island	basilectal	mesolectal	acrolectal	N
Hawai'i	78.1	20.6	1.8	175 - 46 - 3
Kaua'i	73.3	18.7	8.0	137 - 35 - 15
O'ahu	36.2	27.0	36.8	123 - 92 - 125

Table 3: Distribution of Negative Forms of *kaen* (by %)

Island	<i>no kaen</i>	<i>kaenat</i>	<i>kaent</i>	N
Hawai'i	95.1	4.9	-	39 - 2 - 0
Kaua'i	89.7	7.7	2.6	35 - 3 - 1
O'ahu	17.4	58.1	24.5	15 - 50 - 21

Zero article used for true nondefinites: generics, and NPs that have no concrete referents: as tu bin get had taim reizing dag, 'The two of us had a hard time breeding dogs.' (MF48K); evri taim he kawf, gon get rtkweik, 'Every time he coughs, there's going to be an earthquake' (MF45H); bat nobadi gon get jab, 'But nobody will get a job.' (MF45K); mi ai get raesh, ae, ai yus srten sop,

“As for me, I get a rash, eh, if I use (a) certain soap(s).” (MF48K); kaenejan waif, ae, get, ‘He has a Canadian wife’ (MF45H); he get jaepani waif, ae, ‘He has a Japanese wife’ (MPR58O); wen kam imrjensi laidaet, ‘When an emergency like that happens.’

Kain

- *enikain* ‘anything, everything’
- *dakain* as substantive: yu get dakain? ‘Do you have what-you-may call it?’
- *dakain* as modifier: dakain fish, ‘That sort of fish.’
- adjectival forms based on *enikain*: fanikain kaukau, ‘odd food’, hadkain wud, ‘(fairly) hard wood’, etc.

GENERAL SYNTAX

Left-movement rules: o, dis primo bia? nat baed, dis wan, ‘Oh, this is Primo beer? This beer isn’t bad.’ (MF42H); o, a wen go ril maed wit him. slai kain dakain. ‘Oh, I got really mad at him!’ That one’s the sly sort.’; sambadi bin stei wid gan. an da ada said, ei, waz. ye, dei bin stei, stil hant, doz gaiz. ‘Some people were there with guns.’ ‘They were on the other side, right?’ ‘Yeah, those guys were still hunting there.’

Aeswai-bikaz often confused by pidgin speakers, but not by creole speakers; *aeswai* often post-posed: bat, kaen wawk, ei? not dip, ei? no, waz, waz lo taid, aeswai. ‘But, you could walk, couldn’t you? It wasn’t deep, was it?’ ‘No, (it wasn’t deep) because it was low tide.’

Relativization: no relative markers: ai get di ada kaet stei autsaid, ‘I have the other caterpillar (tractor) which is outside there’ (MF42H); yu no dakain go prich, ‘You know the sort of people that preach’ (MF50H); we lend am mani, da gai hiz in a beta braekit, ‘We lend money to the guy who is in a higher income bracket.’ (MF45H)

Serial verbs: laikV, chraiV, Vto/and, kamV, look see, walk go, mek pau: ai tel hi go kam ap go mezha dis go mezha dat, ‘I told him to come up and to measure this and that.’ (MF45H)

Multiple negation: no mo nating trak, ‘There wasn’t any truck at all.’; yu nat gon luz nating, ‘You aren’t going to lose anything.’ no kaen shawt-cheing nobadi, ‘You can’t shortchange anyone.’