

**Vendredi 31 mars 2016**  
**Programme Pidgins et Créoles en contact**  
Fédération Typologie et Universaux Linguistiques

9h30 accueil

10h00 Christoph Neuenschwander - **“I Understand Pidgin”: Negotiating Ownership in the Commodification of Hawai’i Creole**

12h00 déjeuner sur place

14h00 Kees Versteegh - **Stating facts in basic communication: Assertions in early pidgins**

**Campus CNRS Paris-Villejuif, Salle 511, Bâtiment D**, accès <http://www.vjf.cnrs.fr/sedyl/venir.php?langue=fr>  
Se munir d'une pièce d'identité pour obtenir un badge d'accès à l'entrée.

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Christoph Neuenschwander (Univ. Bern)

**“I Understand Pidgin”: Negotiating Ownership in the Commodification of Hawai’i Creole**

Hawai’i Creole (locally known as ‘Pidgin’) has come a long way, from being called an „abomination in the sight of the Lord” (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin* 1962), to what Christina Higgins’ (2015: 145, 146) observes to be a “prestige shift” that has turned the creole into “a language that embodies *Local-style* pride.” This development is evidenced in the fact that Hawai’i Creole is increasingly used in political propaganda to express local interests and in the marketplace to advertise local products or local business (cf. Higgins 2015, Hiramoto 2011). In other words, it is commodified (cf. Heller 2003).

While previous research has primarily been concerned with the commodification of HC in *selling* other products, in this paper I argue that much can be learned about the role of the creole by taking this investigation one step further and turning our attention to HC *as a product*. Higgins (2015: 149) distinguishes between “commodification purposes in the tourism industry” and those that target “Local consumers”, but many commercial items that have HC as the primary selling point – such as Pidgin stickers, t-shirts with Pidgin prints or the famous *Pidgin to da Max* dictionary – address both a local and non-local audience. These items accommodate both the local community’s claim to HC as an identity marker that sets islanders apart, and tourists’ desire for an authentic yet intelligible experience of the Hawaiian ‘other’. The present paper explores not only how this is accomplished, but also links these Pidgin products in a historiographical approach (Blommaert 1999) to metalinguistic discourse, as well as discusses implications for the current status and role of HC in Hawai’i.

**References**

- Blommaert, Jan (1999). The debate is open. In Blommaert, Jan (ed.), *Language Ideological Debates*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1-38.
- Hiramoto, Mie (2011). Consuming the consumers: Semiotics of Hawai’i Creole in advertisements. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*, 26.2, 247-275.
- Heller, Monica (2003). Globalization, the new economy, and the commodification of language and identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7.4, 473-492.

Higgins, Christina (2015). Earning capital in Hawai'i's linguistic landscape. In Tupas, Ruanni (ed.), *Unequal Englishes: The Politics of Englishes Today*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 145-162.

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Kees Versteegh (University of Nijmegen)

### **Stating facts in basic communication: Assertions in early pidgins**

The particle *fi* is used in Classical Arabic as a local preposition, 'in'; it has the same meaning in the contemporary Arabic dialects, but in addition it is used in some dialects as an existential verb, 'there is, there are'. In Arabic-based first stage pidgins, such as Gulf Pidgin Arabic and Pidgin Madame, *fi* seems to have acquired a number of additional functions. It does not only denote nominal predication, location and possession, but is also used in combination with a verbal form. In the literature, various proposals have been made to explain the function of *fi* in this combination, which is usually interpreted as having an aspectual meaning. The present paper adopts the model of the Basic Variety (Klein and Perdue 1997) as a framework for the analysis of these early pidgins. A comparison is made between the use of *fi* in Arabic-based first-stage pidgins and that of the copular/existential verb in the Basic Variety of different languages. On the basis of this comparison it is suggested that the general function of *fi* is to serve as a linking particle between topic and focus, marking the sentence as being assertive rather than modal.