Justin: Hello everyone I’m Justin,

Nicole: I‘m Nicole,

Rusdy: I’m Rusdy,

Ian: And I’m Ian, and this is the Talk Anykine Podcast. Today we will be talking about Pidgin as a language and the negative stigma that was associated with using it back then and even today. Today many locals and University teachers are trying to destigmatize it in the public and professional settings since it is now recognized as an official language of Hawai’i.

Ian: The definition of Pidgin is a grammatically simplified form of a language, used for communication between people not sharing a common language. Pidgins have a limited vocabulary, some elements of which are taken from local languages, and are not native languages, but arise out of language contact between speakers of other languages.

Rusdy: The origin most of us know is during sugar cane plantation time in Hawaii where the workers were a mix of migrant and local workers. For them to communicate among each other Pidgin was created. A little mix of various languages like Portuguese, Hawaiian, Cantonese and even American English.

Nicole: I had asked some members of my family how they feel about Pidgin in a professional setting- since I know they use Pidgin almost all the time- and I would even go so far to say that it is their first language.

Nicole: For my parents, there are still insistent on the notion that "People who talk Pidgin sound stupid and ignorant", which I found very interesting because I consider Pidgin to be their first language since they always default to Pidgin whenever they are around friends and family.

Nicole: For my dad, he only spoke Pidgin until his twenties, so it was very hard for him to get people to take him seriously in the workplace, so he told me and my sister he had to rewire his brain so that he would speak "proper english"- which was a super challenging for him, that is why today he is super proud that me and my sister can’t speak Pidgin without sounding like a haole since he didn’t want us to speak Pidgin anyway.

Ian: Yeah, I remember when my parents discouraged the use of Pidgin when I was younger because it made me sound unintelligent right. They wanted me to speak proper English so I could get a good job. However there is an obvious difference as to when to use english and Pidgin. My friends don't care if we use Pidgin or not, it depends on the group we are talking to because if we are talking to locals then it's fine they understand us, but if we are talking to people

from the outside they might not understand Pidgin.

Nicole: I also spoke to my younger cousins- who are high school football players- since they speak Pidgin constantly. But then, when I asked them if they would speak Pidgin in a professional setting they said no, quote: "If the person I was talking to was a local then I would speak Pidgin, but if they were haole then I would speak "proper english" so they can understand me".

Nicole: Which I think was pretty interesting like it goes along with your point, that people from the outside might not understand look at the way or the people disapprove of Pidgin it is mostly the older generation because they are kind of scared of sounding unintelligent or unprofessional, but for the younger generation they seems to be more concerned about communication issues whenever they speak Pidgin.

Nicole: So honestly, it seems like most of the stigma and pushback against Pidgin derives from the older generations, because for me I can't think of any peers or fellow college students who are against this recent push for Pidgin to become more accepted in professional settings or academia.

Rusdy: Throughout middle and high school it was prevalent to hear Pidgin among many classmates from different grades, ages or even ethnic groups. From my end it just rubbed off onto me the accent and shortcutting of words through the friends I had at the time. But in most cases I just code switch from Pidgin to proper English whenever I'm with my friends or when I'm back home and talk to my parents. When some of my friends do try to talk Pidgin it often leads to them trying to elaborate more of what they just say or have some disgust to their face right after as it seems they feel dirty and such after using Pidgin in general. For this has been not a thought for me as it went through or even over my head until now I revisited it recently.

Justin: Yeah I've also heard a lot of Pidgin spoken throughout my years in middle and high school. I rarely speak Pidgin since most of my friends and family don't speak it, but I've feel like I've heard enough Pidgin to the point where I can understand what is being said most of the time. Most conversations that I've had with Pidgin speakers involve us going back and forth between Pidgin and English since I feel better speaking English and they obviously feel better speaking Pidgin.

Rusdy: From my end I feel Pidgin should be more susceptible even as language in general you shouldn't be ashamed of as this applies to many forms of languages if it is something you are very comfortable to use than so be it.

Nicole: As a local who can't speak Pidgin without a haole accent, I think Pidgin should be

embraced and even taught in schools. We all know that there is a stigma attached to the use of Pidgin, which is honestly kind of weird considering the majority of Hawaii locals speak Pidgin. I think if you want to see Pidgin becoming more accepted, we should actually talk about Pidgin rather than telling students to speak “proper English”- which in itself is a subjective statement.

Justin: Yeah I feel that Pidgin should be encouraged more, since it is a part of Hawaiian culture. No one should feel discouraged to speak their language due to other people’s perceptions on it or due to the already placed negative connotations.

Ian: I think that Pidgin should be encouraged, not necessarily taught, since peers do that for us. Pidgin should be able to be spoken in public without people having to worry about the negative stigma that follows it. Only in a professional setting does it become an issue. Local markets, sure it's easy to talk Pidgin or even understand, however when you start to get into foreign markets or even the markets in the US it becomes difficult because no one really knows what Pidgin is they don’t understand what Pidgin is and they can’t understand when we speak it

Rusdy: To me I feel the way to go about with Pidgin is yeah let it be acceptable to be used in from early age to high school. Schools being the home of most student’s learning shouldn’t be deterred from what language they used in general but to an extent. Like knowing there will be a language barrier that needs to be brought down. But applying this to professional settings like workplaces and such if it is okay of course with everyone around, people you talk to and so on where it can be professional and casual a lot of times. But on the other hand I can see it should be more looked over as to who or the listener at the time being applied to for example like overseas business or international as they wouldn’t know what the person using Pidgin would be saying overall.

Nicole: Yeah I think having discussions and discourse that revolves around Pidgin or Creole English in general is a good starting point. For me, my interest in advocating for Pidgin only started after taking the Pidgin course offered at West Oahu and some college history classes. The biggest issue is that we don’t get to have these conversations in high school or even middle school- I actually had to wait until college to fully understand the history behind Pidgin. So, again, I think that having open conversations regarding Pidgin could help it become more accepted- and instead of disregarding Pidgin as a language it can open talks of how to code switch and code-switching in general since a lot of people who lived in Hawai’i speak more than one language.

Justin: Yeah I also think (again) that by encouraging Pidgin at a young age they may feel more comfortable and help push it to be more accepted. Especially for those people who regularly speak Pidgin or whose lives are surrounded with Pidgin, if we were to encourage speaking it more at a younger age, they may feel more comfortable and confident speaking it later on in their

life.

Ian: When I was young I wasn't really allowed to talk Pidgin. But today I use Pidgin regularly with my parents and friends. I use Pidgin with my friends in a joking manner and sometimes normally depending on the subject we are talking about. Even in college I use Pidgin with both students and teachers. I have even had teachers allow Pidgin in essay writing when formal english is the standard for writing essay, it has a nice change of pace especially a culture been suppressed is now being encouraged.

Ian: We will be going into the group talk part of the podcast. This is where we will be discussing and free talking with each other about what we just went over. To start off, I wanted to go back to what Nicole said where she wanted Pidgin to be taught in schools. I don't necessarily agree with teaching it per say, as when I hear someone wanting to teach something in school, I imagine it like it being taught as a language course like a Japanese language or Spanish. While I understand yes, it is important to understand Pidgin, learning Pidgin is done through experience rather than being taught in school. You don't go to school to be taught Pidgin. I can understand if you were to teach it, or not even teach it, just go over it in maybe like a Hawaiian history course, cause I feel like Pidgin isn't a large enough subject to be taught in its own subject, you feel?

Nicole: Yeah I get you, but honestly I feel like, I kinda feel that teaching Pidgin shouldn't just be limited to Hawaiian courses in high school, because if you think about it right, we're taught William Shakespeare is part of our English material even though nobody speaks that way anymore. Nobody refers to him, nobody makes references to Shakespeare writing, but we're forced to learn sonnets. So for me, I'm thinking maybe we could replace all the Shakespearian content in school with Pidgin. Its like something, you use Pidgin more than Shakesperian. How do you feel about that?

Ian: We use Pidgin more than Shakespearian, but I feel like I said, there's not enough to go over Pidgin to make it its own course. Definitely replacing something might be in the right direction, but you don't get Pidgin sonnets you know.

Nicole: Yeah, but I mean not...

Ian: I just don't think, I understand you can go over where it came from, how it was made and stuff, but that's not big enough to be its own subject.

Nicole: Yeah, I'm agreeing with you.

Ian: If it was a section in Hawaiian history, absolutely.

Nicole: I'm agreeing with you in terms of it shouldn't be its own course,

Ian: Yeah.

Nicole: But I think it shouldn't just be limited to Hawaiian history. You should also instead of only having it a part of the Hawaiian history curriculum, you could have it a part of the English curriculum, and replace Shakespeare because Shakespeare or To Kill a Mockingbird for example, that's a high school staple right. But we could go over history...Pidgin. Writings, texts, poems instead of To Kill a Mockingbird. You know what I'm saying?

Ian: I feel like there's not enough text…

Nicole: Well I mean if you think, there actually is a lot of text, but it's not circulated in the public.

Ian: Like mainstream media.

Nicole: Yeah, there actually is a lot of text, but people don't know about it because it's not advertised at all, and Pidgin is being…

Ian: The exact reason why Pidgin is discouraged.

Nicole: Yeah, 'cause Pidgin is seen as the inferior language, and going back to like how a lot of the older generation thinks that speaking Pidgin makes you sound ignorant. A lot of people don't acknowledge Pidgin works as professional, or they don't think it sounds good. It could be a great piece of work that's just written in Pidgin, but they won't acknowledge it. So I think if we have works like that, and there's also the Pidgin coup at Manoa. They do a lot of Pidgin works, I think we could also use that in English curriculum. You know, just food for thought.

Rusdy: Okay. I agree.

Ian: Would it be right to put it under the English curriculum though? Since it's not necessarily English? Or would you have it under its own thing?

Nicole: I think it should be because why are we learning about...you know it's weird that we learn more about, again I am going to keep bringing up To Kill a Mockingbird and Shakespeare because we learn more about the history behind that versus things that students in Hawai'i actually experience.

Ian: No no no. What I mean is, because Pidgin is Cantonese, it's Portuguese and everything. I feel like English isn't the right label for it because it's not English.

Nicole: Or it's not gonna be taught as like a sub-subject in English. It'll probably be a lesson plan for maybe a week.

Ian: Not necessarily English but literature.

Nicole: Yeah literature. I think that…

Rusdy: Yeah I think literature.

Ian: Okay.

Nicole: Yeah that's a better label for it. Yeah you're right.

Justin: I would argue that you could also put it as its own thing because we've got other subjects that are in its own category like Japanese, Korean, Chinese. So I think you could make an argument that you can have Pidgin as a stand alone topic, but there wouldn't be much diversity in it. It would just be like one or two classes.

Nicole: Yeah, I see where you're coming from. But like, I kinda also want to see Pidgin as its own class, as somebody who took a college Pidgin course. But I think maybe that would be step two. Step one would be having Pidgin replace some of the English literature curriculum. And then once there's more content to be had, and it's a little bit more acceptable, we could move forward with maybe having Pidgin be its own stand alone course.

Rusdy: Yeah. It's like having an initiative. Pushing a subject like this it's like very minor at the time, but it can with the support of the academic system pushing this subject out for people to take interest in. It will be slow of course, but it's just the initiative of putting out Pidgin as a subject to learn for many who are ignorant or maybe just curious overall.

Ian: Okay. Yeah, the more we discuss it, the more I can agree with slowly incorporating it. And speaking of slowly incorporating it, we can talk about the negative stigma. How do we begin removing that stigma and reincorporating Pidgin into the public?

Nicole: I think what we were talking about just now, like having it in schools and stuff. I think that's maybe the only or best course of action because I know when I started school right, a lot of kids spoke Pidgin, and teachers told them not to. And as social educators, a lot of kids would listen. A lot of people would be like "oh we shouldn't speak Pidgin", even though we speak it all

the time at home, it's not a good thing, where it's just like opening up the discussion of Pidgin in schools instead of maybe saying "don't speak Pidgin", just be like "oh, you can say it after", or like "hey, we're going to use this now". Like teaching code switching is more what I'm trying to say.

Rusdy: Okay, okay.

Nicole: Instead of just totally disregarding Pidgin, just teach them how to code switch. Maybe that would be more useful. And then as I mentioned before, a lot of kids speak more than one language, especially if they're Hawaii residents, they speak maybe Tagalog at home, English in school. People who speak Pidgin could do the same. It's just a good skill set that kids can have, so this is to me, a double win, where we're letting Pidgin become more accepted, while also teaching children how to code switch.

Rusdy: Oh okay. Good take, good take.

Ian: Code switching is definitely a skill that would be very beneficial not only to people in Hawaii, but in general and in schools everywhere else because for those students who speak two languages, or bilingual, or even English is not their first language, it would be really nice for them to learn how to switch languages on the go rather than having to I guess not necessarily think about what they're going to say before they say it, but you know, so it's faster for them to get into the rhythm when talking to different people.

Rusdy: Yeah, just even incorporating. Most cases, they're learning English, and most cases, there's going to be little pauses where we're trying to figure out what word, on the go what to use. For example, Pidgin just helps you shortcut conversation, just save some breath and all such. So it should not be different from any other language, as already we acknowledge Pidgin as its own language for Hawaii.

Ian: Justin, do you have any thoughts on this particular subject?

Justin: I mean I feel like we've talked about this already. Just more like, if we want to eliminate this negative stigma, I think at least just encouraging it when they're younger, I think can be beneficial, just so that it can give them more confidence, or maybe boost their self-esteem when they're in certain places. Or even if it's just them around their friends or family, just being comfortable speaking what they want to speak, I think could be very beneficial.

Rusdy: Yeah I strongly agree with that. At the end of the day, it's their mother tongue, and they should be okay with what they want to speak, or being comfortable with, instead of feeling that they're inferior and such at the end of the day and so on.

Ian: I think it's safe to say that all of us here are comfortable code switching I guess. Because I speak, well I don't know if I can say I speak, but I definitely try to speak Pidgin, speak English, and there's an obvious place and time to use either or, and I think rather than us having to learn code switching later on, it's definitely better if they were, or code switching as a skill is taught earlier, so that kids don't struggle through their middle school years, or even elementary years when trying to deal with language barriers.

Ian: As far as casual settings go, I don't think there's really much to talk about, or as far as to do with removing negative stigma, 'cause in a casual setting, no one really cares I guess if you're speaking Pidgin, just depending on who you're talking to. However, when it comes to professional settings, how would the whole stigmatism and all of that, how would that work in a professional setting? Is there even a way to make it so that Pidgin is normal in the workplace, or how would this go about?

Nicole: I think this is where code switching would come in. I noticed that a lot of times, even though Pidgin is looked down on in professional settings, I actually feel more comfortable with people who talk to me in Pidgin, than I am with people who only speak 'standardized English'. I feel a little maybe more intimate with people, or I'm like a little more comfortable with people who speak Pidgin, like all right. I can kinda trust this person, or you know what I mean. I just feel a little bit more comfortable, and like "oh I can also talk Pidgin to this person". Again, I think this is where code switching comes in since I think as long as what you say pertains to a certain level of professionalism, I mean again that idea in itself is subjective, but I mean you can sound intelligent while also speaking Pidgin. It's just more like knowing who, the kind of people, your audience, who you're talking to, making sure that they also are okay with you speaking Pidgin, and there's a time and a place kinda thing. Again it's just I think for professional settings, it just kinda depends on your ability to assess the situation and your ability to code switch.

Ian: So it can be seen as, kinda similar to speaking slang I guess with your co-workers.

Nicole: I don't want to necessarily say slang. I feel like, I mean this is just kind of like a little thing, but I just don't really think, yeah I wouldn't say slang, just 'cause slang is kinda...like Pidgin is its own thing you know. Slang is...I don't know how to explain it. Nevermind. I take it back.

Ian: No, but I understand not associating with it. What I mean is that the closest thing we would know to, like comparing to would be speaking slang in the workplace rather than formal English. Because then it's like switching between Pidgin and formal English would be like switching between slang and formal English kinda thing I guess.

Nicole: Yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah I see what you mean yeah.

Ian: It's more, what's it called, you can definitely relate, it's more relatable, there we go. It's more relatable than having to think about speaking a different language in the workplace cause that typically doesn't happen.

Nicole: I mean you could also kinda see it as workplace jargon right, like business…

Ian: Yeah, true.

Rusdy: Yeah, that's true, that's true. 'Cause like, all formalities and such when working, most cases, you do have to work around for example, your cubicle, your team, and always just constantly being precise on what to say, not to put yourself at a weird position. If you come off very comfortable, just Pidgin in general does help break that I guess wall where you can just be casual among your peers and co-workers and such. Even among your boss too, just depending on the workplace itself, 'cause like I can see that always happening at like mechanics or even nurses. They just casually talk to each other, like disregarding all the medical terms or car terms, and just rely on Pidgin and such "ey, help me with this car bro" or "oh, can you pass me the scalpel". It's just like that kind stuff is just like shortcutting, is its own language to help out, make I guess time doable, since everyone is just stuck in and like clocked in, and it just helps out a lot. Like casual talk in general.

Nicole: So do you think that, for you, do you, can you only see Pidgin being used in casual speech? Or can you see it being used in customer service or…

Rusdy: Yeah, I can see it a lot. For example, at hotels, many do showcase Pidgin, and many of the tourists do nod their head they understand, 'cause overall, it's still using English language. But in more so, in a simplified form like shortcutting again. Even in presentations, even at like West Oahu for example, some of the faculty do present in Pidgin, and it's very enlightening to hear, and it's just casual across. You see everyone wearing aloha wear, and I guess the theme is just Hawaii in general. It's just what's behind the whole culture, the formalities, we are all treated equally like we're family and stuff. It's just there, the lively feel, the vibe, it's just there's no have to be strict certainty around us. We're all family. That's what it does bring when you speak Pidgin in most cases.

Ian: Now, when you mentioned culture, could you think we could incorporate a sort of like Pidgin thing into tourism, where they decide to use Pidgin more often with tourists to get them more accustomed to hearing Pidgin? Or do you think that isn't a necessarily good idea?

Rusdy: For me, I feel like that's heading towards commercialization, and with that saying, we already do sell the word 'aloha' to many and 'mahalo' as like a product itself. And as you can see with the ABC stores as it is, they're already selling the image of leis or artificially crafted leis, so I think if we incorporate Pidgin more, it can create a bridge for being noticed because I feel like Pidgin is a minority language that not much people even know of. They just assume we're talking broken English, but they don't have the right word for it, or in most cases, they only know it as 'creole English' and such. But from my stance, I feel that's a different topic as itself, and it can, it's really gray. There's different takes on it, but I would possibly like to see the incorporation of Pidgin in some forms of talks, but it can get to an extent.

Nicole: Yeah, no I agree with you Rusdy. I think, I mean it'd be interesting but I feel like it will definitely be commercialized, you know like commodified. You know that's not necessarily what we're going for. I mean I guess it would be good for exposure, but again I think for now at least, we should mostly kinda focus on people here who actually use it, 'cause I feel like a lot of times like with the lei thing you mentioned, like they don't really know the significance of it, or they don't know the significance behind the word 'aloha' or the shaka, anything like that, and so they'll probably just be using it, and it'll lose its significance and meaning. I could just be reading too much into it, but yeah I still agree that it could just be more commercialized. It'd be more like...

Rusdy: Yeah it's really hard. It's really gray.

Nicole: Yeah.

Ian: I guess it depends on who you're talking to.

Nicole: Oh yeah, 'cause I can see it being overly, I don't know.

Ian: I guess it would be less commercialized, more educating. I guess.

Rusdy: Yeah, it can enlighten people.

Nicole: Like I wouldn't mind educating...yeah, yeah.

Ian: There's a fine gray line between commercializing and educating.

Rusdy: Yes, exactly yes. It's just how you approach it.

Ian: Right.

Rusdy: It can be like an infomercial for Hawaiian Airlines.

Nicole: Yeah.

Rusdy: They can just talk Pidgin on the commercial like “Aloha. Welcome to Hawaii”, and they just have an example of a dialogue between father-son and so on, so on. It doesn’t have to be father and son but just an example of conversation, and they’re like...

Ian: Like a snippet.

Rusdy: “oh wow, interesting how they talk like this”, and so on and so on, and introducing the accent or shortcutting words. Yeah.

Nicole: Like yeah, I think exposure like that, our use of Pidgin like that is great. I would love to see it actually, but…

Ian: ‘Cause the only reason why I bring this up is because I noticed Tokai students, occasionally they’ll come over to UH West and they’ll ask for help. I don’t know which class it is, but…

Nicole: Oh, with Pidgin words.

Ian: Yeah with Pidgin words. Right, they’re getting exposed to Pidgin, and it’s kinda nice that they’re being exposed to it, so it’s kinda like that idea, but on a bigger scale.

Nicole: Yeah, I mean I don’t necessarily think that it’s a bad idea. It does sound really fun, and especially if they’re going to be here, they might as well how the locals speak. And I think it’d be good to be educated on it. I’m just more worried about, again like Rusdy said, the modification…

Ian: It depends on how it’s done.

Nicole: Yeah, I think already we know, I know this is kinda two different things, but how haole people say “oh think of luau and hula as a party theme”, and they’ll wear hula skirts and say they’re Hawaiian, or they’ll do like a half-assed dance and call it hula, but it’s not. I’m kinda also scared to also see people starting to use that and go “oh you know, I was taught Pidgin when I went Hawaii for like two days. Don’t worry, I got it”, and you know they start saying, like those are just the kinda things I’m scared to see.

Ian: So do you think there should be a type of ownership for it then?

Nicole: No, that's where it's kinda hard.

Ian: Right.

Nicole: I don't want to be the one gatekeeping it. Like I don't want to gatekeep it, but it's also always a worry to see something…

Ian: I feel like it's always a worry with anyone's culture right.

Nicole: Yeah. Yeah, no that makes sense.

Ian: Because there will always be those people that do that.

Nicole: Yeah, but that's why I guess it's hard. I mean in terms of exposure, I think it would be good.

Ian: I feel like, for at the moment, that would be the closest to putting it into a professional setting I guess. 'Cause I don't feel like you can necessarily put it into a business or a professional setting, but the whole like Polynesian Cultural Center type of deal, where it's educating/commercializing I guess would be the closest to putting it into professionalism until it gets normalized.

Nicole: Yeah, yeah.

Rusdy: Yeah, I feel with the whole Cultural Center itself though, it feels like it's a packaged culture.

Ian: Hundred percent.

Rusdy: Like, you're paying for like a ten minute brief segment of what is not really full of information. Well in a sense, you go, you sign up, you see some of the showcase of artifacts and such, clothing and how people present themselves, the workers particularly, and then at the end, it just ends up mostly with a luau and so on, like a luau show, or even like a full feast. So, it's hard.

Ian: Anymore thoughts on the subject?

Ian: Okay. If that's the case, to basically sum up to what we've come to agreement, or more of a conclusion to, it's very difficult to incorporate it into I guess not society, but like professional settings very quickly. It has to start out with the younger generation. It has to be a generational

thing like it was, so the older generation had it, and it was a very casual thing, then it was suppressed. So we have to start with the new generation, cultivate it that way.

Rusdy: Yeah, I agree.

Ian: If that's the case, then thank you for listening to this podcast. This is Talk Anykine, and hopefully, we'll talk to you again soon.