

You are cordially invited to attend a seminar on:

*"They get free pupus over here!":
Construction of local identity
in Hawai'i Creole TV
advertisements*

By

Professor Mie Hiramoto
National University of Singapore

Date: Friday, 16 October 09

Time: 11.00am to 12.00pm

Venue: HSS Seminar Room 1 (HSS-B1-08)



Abstract

Use of non-standard speech varieties in advertisement is a relatively recent phenomenon. In Hawai'i, pressure from conservative groups limited the media exposure that the local English dialect, known as Hawai'i Creole (HC), received. However, advertisers are increasingly realizing that HC, while decried as being 'broken English' by its detractors, is viewed in a positive light by many local people, and that refusal to use HC in ads effectively isolates those who feel strong ties to local language and culture.

This study posits that the characters and traits shown in local television commercials are manipulated to embody certain preconceived notions of the 'ideal' or 'average' local person. While these traits in general and the use of HC in particular, may be authentic to some extent, they represent a wealth of subtle criteria for implicit 'membership' in the local community consciously tailored to fabricate a synthetic relationship with the audience. Characters possessing these qualities serve to bait the audience with notions of fun, success, and higher socioeconomic class representative of the advertiser's ideal consumer, while retaining enough localness to still be accessible.

About the Speaker

Mie Hiramoto is an Assistant Professor of Linguistics at the Department of English Language and Literature at the National University of Singapore. Her research interests include language contact and linguistic change, with particular interest in Japanese spoken outside Japan and Hawai'i Creole. She also works on language, gender, and sexuality issues, with special interest in the identity construction in scripted speech such as anime, movie translations, and comedy performances. Her current research focuses on translation of popular anime shows in English from Japanese, with a special focus on Japanese Women's language, and also second dialect acquisitions of Japanese immigrants in North America.

All are welcome.