

My PhD project combines two research fields: language ideologies and creolistics. I concentrate on two creole varieties, both of which are spoken on Pacific islands, were lexified by English and have emerged within the last 100 to 150 years. These varieties are Tok Pisin, which serves as a *lingua franca* in Papua New Guinea (PNG), and Hawai'i Creole, an important marker of local identity in the 50th state of America. The two languages – and the metalinguistic debates they have inspired in the past and keep inspiring in the present – are remarkably well suited for a comparison, since the functions and the prestige that the respective communities attribute to these varieties differ greatly, according to the linguistic literature (e.g. Siegel 2008, Tryon and Charpentier 2004). Whereas Tok Pisin is regarded as a 'successful' creole, a *lingua franca* par excellence that has gained the status of a national language in PNG, Hawai'i Creole is usually portrayed as a neglected variety, a stigmatised language that is looked down upon and considered mere 'broken English' by its own speakers.

The initial goal of the research project was thus to find out how these different images were formed and changed in public discourse. Indeed, the collected data, which spans across more than six decades, revealed a number of interesting insights about the transition of particular language ideologies and reoccurring themes from colonial (or, in the case of Hawai'i, quasi-colonial) to post-colonial contexts and discursive practices (cf. Foucault 1972). What the analysis also demonstrates, however, is that the perceptions of the two varieties tend to be more similar than represented in the narratives of a high-status Tok Pisin and a low-status Hawai'i Creole put forward in the academic literature. Both have (limited) prestige in particular domains, both are ascribed a high degree of authenticity, and both have a number of functions in private and public communication. In some contexts, Hawai'i Creole even seems more accepted by the community than Tok Pisin. In other words, while the former appears to be more 'successful' than generally regarded, the latter does not quite live up to its image. The main questions I am currently focussing on is 1) how these discrepancies between the (academic) representation and the actual use of the two varieties came about, and 2) what impact the work of scholars (and their engagement in metalinguistic debates) actually has on public discourse.