

## **The dynamics of Hawaiian speakerhood in the family**

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### **Abstract**

While the majority of studies on *new speakers* (O’Rourke 2015) focuses on language use in educational and community contexts, the family is becoming an increasingly relevant site as well since new speakers are now incorporating their reclaimed languages into their home life. This article reports on how people of Native Hawaiian ancestry express their speakerhood with regard to their use of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, or the Hawaiian language, in the context of the family. It explores Hawaiians’ stances towards different ways of speaking Hawaiian with regard to authenticity, an issue which has been found to be central among new speakers of minority languages in other contexts (e.g., Costa 2015; McLeod and O’Rourke 2015). Drawing on interview data with six Hawaiians, this article investigates Hawaiian speakerhood by focusing on how the participants view linguistic authority and *translanguaging* (García and Li Wei 2013) in family settings. The article offers insights into the range of linguistic practices and sociolinguistic authenticities in families that may enhance continued language regeneration efforts.

**Keywords:** new speakers, Hawaiian, authenticity, family language policy, translanguaging

### **1. Introduction**

This article examines the various forms of “sociolinguistic stancetaking” (Jaffe 2015) that people of Native Hawaiian ancestry express with regard to their use of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, or the Hawaiian language, in the context of the family. Family language practices have been found

crucial to the maintenance and revitalization of indigenous and minority languages (Fishman 1970; Spolsky 2009), but little research thus far has examined how families use and view languages such as Hawaiian, which have experienced disruption and language shift to a majority language for one or more generations. Most speakers of Hawaiian today qualify as *new speakers*, or individuals who did not have significant exposure to the language in the home, but who learned it through language immersion or revitalization programs, most often as adults (O'Rourke et al. 2015). While this term is not widely used in an emic fashion among speakers of Hawaiian, most speakers are indeed second language learners who acquired the language as adults. Many speakers are familiar with the term "University Hawaiian," a way of speaking Hawaiian that can be associated with inauthenticity, as it stands in contradistinction with the remaining elders' way of speaking 'Ōlelo Hawai'i. At present, it is estimated that there are approximately 1,000 *mānaleo*, a recently coined word that refers to native speakers of Hawaiian (NeSmith 2002), while there are over 18,000 speakers of Hawaiian in the State of Hawai'i, according to the the U.S. Census (ACS 2015).

The concept of the new speaker is a helpful departure point for exploring Hawaiians' stances towards different ways of speaking Hawaiian with regard to authenticity and legitimacy, issues which have been found to be central to new speakers of minority languages in other contexts (e.g., Costa 2015; McLeod and O'Rourke 2015). Drawing on interview data, I investigate the ways that Hawaiian speakers make sense of their Hawaiian speakerhood in the context of the family. The findings show an impressive array of speakerhood in family life, ranging from depictions of "fragmented Hawaiian," or speaking English and Hawai'i Creole infused with Hawaiian vocabulary, to the use of Hawaiian for specific cultural activities, to striving to speak Hawaiian in the style of the last remaining elders. In many minority and

indigenous language contexts, traditional, monolingual forms of language that have been transmitted from elders without interruption are often viewed as having the utmost authority (Coupland 2003; Jaffe 2015; McCarty, Romero and Zepeda 2006; Wyman 2012), and the same sentiments are sometimes found in the present study. However, it is also the case that language regeneration can lead to new registers, vocabulary, and other linguistic innovations that in turn illegitimate traditional, dialectal and rural forms of speech (Frekko 2009; McLeod and O'Rourke 2015; Woolard 2016). Additional dynamics emerge with regard to speakerhood because of the multilingual contexts in which speakers navigate their worlds. Like other multilingual speakers of indigenous and minority languages, Hawaiian speakers engage in *translanguaging*, or the use of all of their linguistic resources to participate in and make sense of their multilingual worlds (García & Li Wei, 2013). For people who engage in translanguaging, discrete boundaries between languages are not necessarily evident or important, particularly in everyday interactions such as those in the home. This raises the question of how speakers of languages like Hawaiian, for which there is a strong interest in reclaiming, revitalizing, and normalizing, view translanguaging.

As Jaffe (2015: 42) points out, “Deciding who ‘counts’ as a ‘new speaker’ or assuming a new speaker identity is an act of sociolinguistic stancetaking that is embedded in ideological formations, social projects, and imaginaries. These in turn are part of a larger process of defining and creating communities of minority language practices.” Given the number of speakers who are reclaiming minority and indigenous languages around the world, it is important to better understand how speakerhood operates in the home since it is arguably a key site for intergenerational language transmission for future generations of speakers. This is especially true in Hawai‘i, where many graduates of the immersion education system that developed in the

1980s are now raising their own families in Hawaiian. The new speaker paradigm offers a new way of framing speakers who are increasingly common in today's modern world due to dislocation, oppression, and marginalization, and economic, social, and political pressures which encouraged assimilation among previous generations to dominant and majority languages and cultures. Studies on new speakers are very recent and have mainly examined indigenous minority contexts in Europe, exploring how speakers of languages such as Galician (O'Rourke and Ramallo, 2013), Basque (Ortega et al., 2015), and Breton (Hornsby 2015) negotiate the challenges of learning and speaking a language that was not used as a home language. Since people working to revitalize Hawaiian have focused on the family as a crucial site for its revitalization and transmission, it is useful to understand the nature of Hawaiian speakerhood in the family context, and what implications this may have for revitalization efforts at large.

## **2. Hawaiian: From past to present**

Hawaiian is a Polynesian language that belongs to the Austronesian language family. It developed after people from the Marquesas settled on the Hawaiian archipelago in approximately 300 CE (Schütz 1994). Christian missionaries from the United States arrived in 1820, and their efforts to translate religious texts and convert Hawaiians to Christianity led to the growth of widespread literacy in Hawaiian, including the production of hundreds of Hawaiian newspapers. Though people valued opportunities to learn English, Hawaiian was the chief language used across the islands in schools, homes, and the community until the events of the second half of the 1800s (Wilson and Kamanā 2001). Ever since Captain Cook visited Hawai'i in 1778, the Hawaiian people had been devastated by foreign diseases, with an estimated 91% of the population decimated by the 1850s (Stannard 1989: 70). Ultimately, American businessmen

who were the children of missionaries worked to acquire land, and in 1893, they schemed together with U.S. military forces to overthrow the Hawaiian monarch, Queen Lili‘uokalani. After taking control of the government, the illegal government banned Hawaiian as a medium of instruction in 1896, and in 1898, the Republic of Hawai‘i was formed through annexation. At that time, Hawaiian was still the main language of everyday oral and written communication among Hawaiians, and many of the new residents who worked the sugarcane plantations who had come from China, Japan, Portugal, and elsewhere in the latter half of the nineteenth century learned Hawaiian to some degree (Bickerton and Wilson 1987). At the turn of the century, the plantation workers developed a pidginized Hawaiian as a language of wider communication, and this language ultimately developed into the language known as Hawai‘i Creole, known locally as Pidgin, which is now a widely used and predominantly English-lexified creole. Hawaiian continued to be spoken, and Hawaiian newspapers were published until the 1930s. Nevertheless, pressure to assimilate to an American way of life, coupled with the imposition of English in schooling, led many families to no longer speak to their children in Hawaiian (Wilson 1998). After World War II, Hawai‘i became the fiftieth state of the U.S., and all efforts that had previously supported the teaching of Hawaiian in public schools were discontinued.

Following the American Indian Movement and the U.S. Civil Rights movements, a Hawaiian Renaissance emerged in the 1970s that led to the reclamation of Hawaiian cultural practices previously banned by missionaries and the U.S. government, including ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, hula, voyaging, song, and Hawaiian medicine. Hawaiian became an official language of the state in 1978, and in 1983, the first ‘*Aha Pūnana Leo* (‘language nest’) immersion preschool was established by a group of parents on Kaua‘i (Kawai‘ae‘a, Housman and Alencastre 2007). In 1986, parents led the efforts to rescind the 1896 law banning Hawaiian in schools, and the

following year, public Hawaiian immersion programs were established. There are now over 20 immersion programs operating as stand-alone and within-school programs, including public charter schools. Parents who enroll their children in Pūnana Leo preschools are expected to learn Hawaiian so that they can support their children's language development, and classes for parents and gatherings are regularly held to this end. While many parents of children enrolled in immersion programs initially identify as lacking proficiency in Hawaiian (Yamauchi, Lau-Smith, and Luning 2008), the number of parents who identify as Hawaiian language speakers has visibly grown in recent years due to the number of immersion graduates who are now parents (Schultz 2014). Census estimates from a 5-year survey ending in 2013 report 18,610 speakers of Hawaiian in the state (ACS 2015), a figure that includes an estimated 100 people on the island of Ni'ihau, an island that never lost Hawaiian as the dominant language in all domains of life, including schooling, since it became privately owned in the 1830s, before U.S. occupation.

Today, residents and visitors alike are regularly exposed to some degree of Hawaiian in the form of signage, greetings, address terms, and through participation in or observation of cultural practices such as hula, lei-making, outrigger canoeing, surfing, and Hawaiian medicine. Since place names and street names are often in Hawaiian, residents are familiar with Hawaiian pronunciation norms, and school children are required to learn about Hawaiian language and culture through "Hawaiiana" classes in public education. Hawaiian is widely taught as a second language in K-12 settings, and it is the most popular additional language in the University of Hawai'i system. Even among local people who do not claim to know Hawaiian, Hawaiian vocabulary is infused into everyday interactions in Hawai'i English, as in "Are you pau ('finished')?" and in Hawai'i Creole, as in "Da keiki like eat" ('the children want to eat'). Other

than English and Hawai'i Creole, the most commonly spoken languages in the highly multilingual state are Ilocano, Tagalog, Japanese, Spanish, and Hawaiian (ACS 2015).

The boundaries between languages are contestable, of course, and as the data show, this is especially true for Hawaiian and Pidgin. Pidgin has traditionally been seen as a marker of both working-class and non-white identity in Hawai'i, and it is also seen as a prominent language spoken by Native Hawaiians (Drager and Grama 2014). Pidgin is frequently meshed with English and Hawaiian in casual conversation, though it is often seen as a language that is subordinate to these languages.

### **3. The question of authenticity among new speakers**

Linguistic mistakes, language mixing, and second language features are often seen by new speakers and native speakers alike as markers of inauthenticity. This view of linguistic deficiency emanates from a *language rights* ideology in which a particular ethnic group is understood to have a natural, primordial link to a language, a shared culture, and a territory, and is part of an ideology that valorizes the native speaker by associating it with a historic and an authentic past, unmarred by disruption from other languages (May 2013; Woolard 2016). This ideology holds firm in Provence, France, where *néo-locuteurs* of Occitan are placed in a deficit discourse even in academic discussions of the language. As young, urban speakers who are reclaiming this language, they are seen as artificial with reference to older, rural speakers, for whom Occitan is the dominant tongue (Costa 2015). In the Gaelic new speaker context in Scotland, this “preservationist rhetoric” (McLeod and O'Rourke, 2015: 153) shows up in attitudes among new speakers themselves towards their own second language accents. Similar tensions between linguistic insecurity and legitimacy have been reported among new speakers of

Corsican (Jaffe 2015), who refrain from speaking in villages where Corsican was widely spoken to avoid embarrassment, and by new speakers of Galician in Spain (O'Rourke and Ramallo 2015).

Research on minority and indigenous languages has shown how common it is for speakers to engage in *translanguaging* (García and Li Wei 2013), or the use of all of one's linguistic and semiotic resources to engage in activities. In contrast with purist perspectives on language which involve policing the boundaries between linguistic codes, translanguaging is "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages" (Otheguy, García and Reid 2015: 283). While some studies have shown that parents and children alternate languages as a strategy to negotiate their power relations (e.g., Gumperz 1982; Li Wei 1995) other more recent work has shown how children and parents draw on family languages to engage in creative language play (Canagarajah 2012) and to support literacy development in home languages and in English (Alvarez 2014; Song 2015). Despite the reality of dynamic, translingual, and ever-changing linguistic practices among native speakers themselves, the ideologies circulating around new speakers are based on a sociolinguistics founded on a form of authenticity which is built on purism and essentialism (Bucholtz 2003: 400).

This language rights ideology that anchors language to history and to place is increasingly complicated, however, by competing forms of legitimacy. Some new speakers see themselves as simply a different kind of speaker altogether, compared to the native speakers. Many are aware that the recently coined vocabulary they use (and which native speakers do not know), provides them with a form of linguistic capital often associated with being more highly



educated and upwardly mobile (McLeod and O'Rourke 2015), and they defend the need to create new words in the name of modernization. New speakers also tend to take an activist role in language and culture revitalization, which is less common among the native speakers, and this grants them a certain degree of cultural authority. While such viewpoints can lead to an ideological cleavage between the types of speakers, it is clear that more, rather than less, dialogue and engagement with each other is needed. One new speaker of Gaelic drew attention to the need for greater flexibility among both new speakers and native speakers, while still deferring to native speakers as the source of good models for language learning (McLeod and O'Rourke 2015: 168):

Native Gaelic speakers still aren't sufficiently accustomed to learners of Gaelic and you can understand why, as it's quite a new thing for people to be learning Gaelic [...] But, on the other hand, as I said, there are misunderstandings on both sides. [...] learners are quite fond of new words and talking about things that older people – native speakers – wouldn't often discuss in the language. And they use this new language in front of native speakers and that doesn't work too well. [...] there's a need for Gaelic learners for many reasons and learners need native speakers – they're the people who have a good example of the language and it would be beneficial for both groups, I think, if there was less misunderstanding on both sides.

### *3.1 Authenticity and Hawaiian*

In Hawaiian language regeneration, authenticity has also emerged as an issue in the context of standardizing and developing the language. Framing the concept of authenticity as a social construct, Wong (1999) critiques the various approaches that Hawaiian language educators have

taken in valuing different what he calls liberal and conservative approaches. As an example of a conservative approach, Wong critiques the reliance on “book Hawaiian” from nineteenth century texts to create standards in university level classes for communicative competence among contemporary language learners, noting that such texts do little for meeting current learners’ communicative needs. He points out how the standardized forms of “University Hawaiian” differ from the ways native speaking elders speak the language, and asserts the deference to texts as a continuing form of colonization wrought by the missionaries and the forms of literacy they produced in Hawaiian. As an example of a liberal approach, he critiques the Hawaiian Language Lexicon Committee at the University of Hawai‘i, Hilo for inventing new words without the approval of native speakers, and for creating novel words through combining morphemes of existing Hawaiian words (e.g., *kawaūea* ‘humidity’ from *kawaū* ‘moisture’ and *ea* ‘air’) (1999: 106).

The type of Hawaiian taught at university level featuring an array of new vocabulary is referred to as “neo Hawaiian” by NeSmith (2002), who details the differences between this variety and what he calls “traditional Hawaiian” (see Table 1 for examples).

Table 1. Sample differences in Traditional and Neo Hawaiian (adapted from NeSmith 2002)

<u>Linguistic feature</u>	<u>Traditional Hawaiian (TRAD)</u>	<u>Neo-Hawaiian (NEO)</u>
Phonology	final unstressed /i/ and /e/ distinct	final unstressed /i/ and /e/ homophonous <i>(hoihoi hoehoe)</i>
Lexicon	multi-word expressions common <i>(kapu holoi ‘sink’)</i>	newly coined words common <i>(kinika ‘sink’)</i>
Morphosyntax	verbs can be active and stative <i>maopopo ia‘u</i> (‘It is known by me’) <i>maopopo au</i> (‘I know’)	some verbs are limited to stative form <i>maopopo ia‘u</i> (‘it is known by me’)

Growing up as a second language speaker of Hawaiian, NeSmith reports feeling deficient because of his neo Hawaiian speaking status, in spite of being a fluent speaker (2002: 10):

“Today, however, despite being able to speak Hawaiian, whenever I interact with native speakers, I am often reminded of my limited knowledge of the language because I do not speak as they do. I know only a fraction of what my grandmother knew.” Still, he argues that Neo-Hawaiian speakers create their own speech communities with their own linguistic norms through interacting with one another, and he calls for more efforts to engage speakers of traditional Hawaiian with new speakers to reduce the linguistic divisions between the two groups.

In her research on new speakers, Snyder-Frey (2013) argues that for Hawaiian, the concept of *kuleana* (‘responsibility’) mitigates primordialist understandings of authenticity with regard to Hawaiian. Instead of worrying about the correctness or authenticity of their language, the Hawaiian speakers she engaged with highlighted their responsibility to reclaim Hawaiian not just for personal reasons related to their own personal identity projects, but as “a connection to one’s *‘ohana* [‘family’], in that acts performed out of *kuleana* are often specifically credited to the urgings of an elder or a discovery about one’s family” (2013: 7). Compared to western uses of the concept of responsibility, *kuleana* is not seen as a burden among Hawaiians, nor is it an action one takes as an individual. Instead, the *kuleana* of learning and using Hawaiian is part of an ongoing performativity of living a Hawaiian lifestyle and using the language to affirm connections to family, tradition and culture. She explains that Hawaiians determine ethnic identity largely by genealogical criteria that is much more inclusive, and that being Hawaiian is also based on one’s behavior and practices that affirm Hawaiian values, including an emphasis

on kin-based social groups, sharing resources, and generosity (Meyer 2001; Osorio 2001). This performative orientation to Hawaiian identity mitigates the importance of a single form of Hawaiian language authenticity and allows for more flexible forms of taking part in one's *kuleana*. She illustrates this point with an example (2013: 7):

Standing on a pier in Hale'iwa with a group of Hawaiian students on a hot afternoon, I witnessed a suggestion to *lele kawa* ('cliff jump into the ocean,' a traditional practice for warriors before battle, and popular pastime among children) turn into a linguistic discussion. Both young men were advanced Hawaiian-language students, but used different terms for this activity – the other being *lele kaula*. Without judgment, they compared terms and sources, one having come from a native-speaking *kupuna* ('elder'), the other from a nineteenth-century Hawaiian-language newspaper. Professors, books, dictionaries, fellow students, and even Hawaiian-language media would also all be acceptable points of origin, and be accepted as backing for one's word choice.

These different perspectives on authenticity, correctness, and identity illustrate the complexity of speakerhood for Hawaiian language speakers. While primordialist notions of the native speaker circulate in schooling contexts where Hawaiian is taught and learned, it is less likely that native speakers will have a role in family language policy and practice. Therefore, it is important to consider the dynamics of speakerhood in this key domain of social life.

### *3.2. Authenticity and new speakers in the family*

This article contributes to current research on *family language policy* (FLP) (King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry 2008), a field of study that explores language ideologies, language practices,

and language learning outcomes for family members. Much FLP research has examined heritage language learning among minority languages in families with parents who make efforts to maintain heritage languages with their children (e.g., Curdt-Christiansen 2013; Lanza and Li Wei 2016). However, research on families in which new speakers are engaged in regeneration is currently limited. Family life is briefly mentioned in this research, as in the case of Jaffe (2015), who notes that adult learners of Corsican are often motivated to learn the language in order to keep up with their children or grandchildren's Corsican-medium schooling. Pujolar and Puigdevall (2015) found that new speakers of Catalan generally reserved Catalan for interactions outside the home and reported a preference to promote bilingualism with their children by continuing to speak Spanish.

Smith-Christmas (2014, 2015) provides the most in-depth research on the dynamics of new speakers in FLP. Her research on Gaelic FLP in one family on the Isle of Skye, Scotland includes the use of the language by Peigi, a mother of two children who learned the language as an adult in spite of having Gaelic-speaking parents. Though Peigi and her native-speaking mother-in-law used monolingual varieties of Gaelic with the children at playtime and story time, the other family members, including their English-dominant father, created an impediment to this FLP through dual-lingualism, or the occasional use of Gaelic by adults and English by the children. The other family members did not initiate conversations with the children in Gaelic, and they communicated with one another in English as well. Smith-Christmas (2014) explains that despite the avowed FLP that valued Gaelic, the practices of the second-generation adults modeled language shift for the youngest generation in the family.

Since thousands of new speakers of Hawaiian are now having children of their own and are encouraging greater use of Hawaiian in the home, it is important to investigate how

authenticity is negotiated in these contexts, and to learn more about the different ways that new speakers use Hawaiian in the family. As the number of Hawaiian language learners continues to grow in school-based programs, we need to better understand how speakerhood is constructed in contexts beyond schooling and to consider the implications for Hawaiian language regeneration.

#### **4. Methods**

Since 2013, interviews were recorded with individuals from across the State of Hawai'i in the form of narrative histories of family language use, with attention to how and why various languages have been added, maintained, revitalized, or lost in each generation and among each family member. At the time of writing, 110 interviews have been collected with 27 participants identifying as ethnically (part) Hawaiian. All participants are multi-ethnic, typically identifying three or more ethnicities in their past three generations, the most common of which are Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, and Anglo-American. The interviews were carried out by a number of researchers including myself and a small team of research assistants, several of whom are residents of Hawai'i. Only one of the interviewers has Hawaiian ancestry. Most participants were recruited through classes at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and others were recruited through contacts in order to ensure more even representation of various ages and islands of residence. In preparation for the interviews, participants were asked to research the language history of their parents and grandparents. They were encouraged to ask their family members about their language histories, and many followed through on this task. During the 30-60 minute interviews, the participants worked with the interviewer to sketch their linguistic family trees, making note of the linguistic repertoires used by each family member of up to five generations, including their own, their parents, their grandparents, their great grandparents, and their children

and grandchildren, if relevant. If participants did not have children, they were asked what their preferences would be for their children, if they chose to have them. All participants were willing to provide answers to this question.

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded according to demographic categories and language outcomes. Of the 27 Hawaiian participants, 17 qualify as new speakers of the language, having studied Hawaiian at the high school or university level. The remaining participants had either never learned Hawaiian or had studied it briefly. According to the 17 new speaker participants, they achieved spoken fluency and written competence in Hawaiian through their educational experiences, though some of them have lost some of their proficiency over time. Several participants gained advanced proficiency due to advanced study of Hawaiian and through using the language as much as possible in the home and in educational and community settings. I selected six speakers who represent the spectrum of new speaker participants to explore the ways that they claim varying degrees of speakerhood (see Table 2). The analysis takes a comparative and thematic approach to the six interviews in order to examine the dynamic nature of speaking Hawaiian in the family. To analyze how authenticity is expressed in speakerhood, I consider the *stances* (Du Bois, 2007) that the participants project toward the ways of using Hawaiian in their home contexts. Stance refers to the alignments that speakers express towards various objects, and can include expressions of stances toward others' stances. In this case, I consider how participants expressed stances toward the Hawaiian language that they and their family members speak.

Table 2. Participants

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Ethnicities</u>	<u>Raised</u>	<u>Hwn lg education</u>	<u>Hwn of previous generations</u>
Koa	M	42	A, H, J	‘Oahu	Pūnana Leo (parent) B.A. Hawaiian	Father receptive knowledge Grandparents fluent

Jason	M	28	A, H	Florida	B.A. in Hawaiian	Father “used phrases” Grandmother fluent
Pi‘ilani	F	25	A, F, H, P	Moloka‘i	3 years high school B.A. in Hawaiian	Mother uses vocabulary Grandparents fluent
Lori	F	21	A, C, H	Kaua‘i	2 years university	Grandmother fluent Aunt learned as adult
Pualani	F	20	A, H, P	Moloka‘i	5 years jr-high school 1 year university	Mother uses vocabulary Grandmother fluent
Gina	F	20	A, C, H	Maui	Pūnana Leo (as child) 2 years high school	Mother, uncle learned as adult Great grandmother fluent

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Note: A = Anglo; C = Chinese; H = Hawaiian; J = Japanese; P = Portuguese

## 5. Findings

In examining the dynamic nature of Hawaiian in the family, I consider the participants’ stances towards different kinds of speakerhood which emerged, guided by constant comparison analysis of the interview data (Glaser & Strauss 1967). After interviews were transcribed, a constant comparison across interviews with new speakers revealed three key themes linked to the question of authenticity: 1) translingual practice as normative; 2) a desire to separate Hawaiian, English, and Pidgin; and 3) conflicts between traditional Hawaiian, as spoken by elders, and University Hawaiian, the standardized variety. I examine the participants’ views on authentic linguistic forms of Hawaiian, first focusing on how they respond to translanguaging. I then consider what responses they report on more monolingual, standardized, and prescriptive forms of Hawaiian, which are typically the effect of formal Hawaiian language instruction. Throughout, I pay attention to the FLPs that are enacted to encourage Hawaiian and to negotiate tensions between different expressions of speakerhood.



### 5.1 Hawaiian as translingual practice

Each of the participants described some members of their family, and sometimes themselves, as partially fluent in Hawaiian. Their stances toward translanguaging involving Hawaiian, English, and Pidgin varied across time and generation.

A first illustration comes from an interview with Koa, a 42 year old speaker of Hawaiian was earning his degree to become a Hawaiian language teacher. He was a father of three, and his two youngest children were attending Hawaiian immersion, which they began at Pūnana Leo, an immersion preschool. Though Koa had not experienced a desire to speak Hawaiian as a younger adult, his experiences as a parent in the immersion community led him to have a personal reawakening that led him to study Hawaiian in pursuit of a new career; he had previously worked in the construction industry. He characterized the Hawaiian he encountered as integrated with English and Pidgin in his childhood growing up in Wai‘anae, a rural town on the west coast of ‘Oahu with a high Native Hawaiian population.

(1)

1       K:     Mostly one word, like uh, *kau kau* (‘eat’), *au au* (‘bathe’), *moe moe* (‘sleep’), just  
2             basic words I guess I wasn’t really like- wasn’t where we could learn how to  
3             speak and understand Hawaiian, but we knew a bunch of different words.

4       I:     How do you separate words like *kau kau* and *au au* from Pidgin, or how do you  
5             feel about calling it Hawaiian versus Pidgin?

6       K:     See only now I thinking about linguistics and language since I’ve been here. But  
7             for like most of my life I actually thought it was- I guess we live out in Wai‘anae

8                   so long, just surrounded by everyone. Most everyone speaks, spoke the same, so it  
9                   wasn't like Hawaiian English or Pidgin, it was just how we spoke. So, but now  
10                  thinking back for me, the Hawaiian integrated with Pidgin - was part of our  
11                  Pidgin.

In (1), Koa explains how his way of speaking was a language infused with Hawaiian vocabulary but was also comprised of English and Pidgin. As a future Hawaiian language teacher, he has recently studied linguistics, and this new perspective on language has made him re-examine the language boundaries that he never questioned before, a way of speaking he describes as “just how we spoke.”

Lori, a 21-year old university student with primarily Chinese and Hawaiian ancestry, grew up on Kaua'i with a maternal grandmother who was fluent in Hawaiian but who did not transmit Hawaiian to her own children due to anti-Hawaiian sentiment. Nevertheless, after interest in Hawaiian regeneration grew in the 1970s, one of Lori's aunts learned Hawaiian as an adult and became a hula teacher with her own *hula halau*, or hula school. Lori's aunt spoke only Hawaiian with her own son, who Lori described as “like a brother.” She spent a lot of time with this cousin, which gave her the opportunity to be exposed to Hawaiian in her home life while also studying Hawaiian at university. She reported that this led to her ability to speak Hawaiian fluently.

Lori explained that she had practiced hula and learned ukulele from her grandmother. In describing how she stopped practicing hula as a child because she “got into other things,” the stance she expresses toward her knowledge of Hawaiian showed a clear restriction to the cultural domains of chanting and singing *mele* (‘songs’) in Hawaiian, practices that are part of hula.

(2)

- 1 I: Did you ever do hula?
- 2 L: Yeah I did when I was like five. But I stopped cause I got into other things.
- 3 I: Do you remember learning Hawaiian through hula?
- 4 L: Just the chanting and songs and stuff.

In spite of the limited domains Lori expressed knowledge of Hawaiian in, her strong connection to her grandmother also meant that she learned Hawaiian words and phrases outside the world of hula which formed part of her family's translingual practices.

(3)

- 1 L: She would use like words, sometimes, I don't know if it was slang cause, some of
- 2 the Hawaiian words she taught us doesn't actually mean like what she said it
- 3 meant.
- 4 I: Can you think of an example?
- 5 L: Okay this is kind of a weird example. But like my mom and my grandma always
- 6 used to describe girls who are slutty as *mane'o* which literally means itchy. So
- 7 like my mom would say that girls are always dressed so itchy right now. Which
- 8 means slutty, and she would use it like *mane'o* but in actuality it does not mean
- 9 slutty at all it means itchy. So stuff like that.

The association between Hawaiian cultural practices and Hawaiian language was also quite strong in an interview with Gina, a 20-year old who grew up on Maui. She had learned

Hawaiian in immersion preschool and later in high school but had since lost proficiency in the language and had even chosen to study other languages in college. Though Gina no longer cultivated her Hawaiian language abilities, she described her older sister's home language practices as strongly connected to her investment in Hawaiian identity and Hawaiian culture, which Gina explained was the reason for her sister's FLP of speaking as much Hawaiian as possible, mixed into English and Pidgin. Her older sister had not experienced Hawaiian immersion as a child. Nonetheless, her circle of friends in high school was strongly Hawaiian-identified, which in turn led her to earn a degree in Hawaiian studies, where she focused on *lā'au lapa'au* ('Hawaiian medicine'). Gina highlights translanguaging practices when illustrating how her sister talks to her two-year old daughter.

(4)

1 G: She speaks Hawaiian every once in a while. She's not fluent. She actually is uh  
2 she teaches her daughter in Hawaiian, little things like so you'll tell "oh Leilani  
3 where's your *lima*" like instead of hands.

Gina reported that her sister intends to enroll her daughter in Hawaiian immersion, and that she and her partner try to speak as much Hawaiian as possible in the home. In interpreting her sister's commitment to Hawaiian, Gina makes a connection between the language and a commitment to Hawaiian culture, which entails staying on the islands.

(5)

1 G: I think it's just like the kind of person that she was like, she started in like high

2 school when she went to public school and hanging with like this, a group of  
3 friends and she realized the importance of Hawaiian [...] now that's what she is  
4 like she hangs out with people that are...like that. But like they came to college to  
5 stick to like Hawaiian. Cause they didn't like branch out. [...] On Maui, a lot of  
6 the Hawaiian immersion kids like stayed home and they like live at home and  
7 they do like their Hawaiian stuff there.

Her stance toward her sister's life choices is somewhat negative, as she portrays people like her sister as people who don't "branch out" but who anchor themselves where they grew up. This portrayal contrasts with how Gina described herself, since she reported plans to live in California for some time before returning to Hawai'i to raise a family.

While Gina associated efforts to speak Hawaiian with a restrictive Hawaiian way of life, others noted that translanguaging involving Hawaiian was an act of expressing sophistication. Given the changes in societal stance toward the value of Hawaiian since the 1970s, the parents of the new speakers in this study had opportunities to take up new stances toward Hawaiian that were possible because of their children, who were more fluent. This was apparent in the interview with Pualani, a 20-year old from the island of Moloka'i, which is one of the smaller and least populated islands in the state and which has a high proportion of Native Hawaiian residents. Though her grandmother spoke Hawaiian, her mother was not taught the language, and Pidgin was the primary language of the home and community, while English was the language of schooling. Pualani learned Hawaiian in middle and high school for five years, and she majored in Hawaiian studies in college, where she became an advanced speaker. In describing her mother's linguistic repertoire, she commented that her mother only knows Hawaiian vocabulary, and she sees her mother's use of Hawaiian as an attempt to "act cool." While Pualani is a fluent speaker,

it is clear from her report of her family dynamics that her mother makes an effort to participate in speaking Hawaiian in the form of translanguaging.

(6)

1 P: She knows little bit like Hawaiian words but [...] But not sentences like nothing.

2 I: Okay, some basic Hawaiian maybe.

3 P: Yeah you know so she can act cool and throw in some words here and there. And

4 we're like "okay Ma, got it."

### *5.2 Separating Hawaiian from English and Pidgin*

While translingual practices are granted authentic status for members of their own generations and family members older than them, these practices were generally treated as problematic for their own children, particularly among new speakers who had developed advanced fluency in Hawaiian. One such person is Pi'ilani, a 25 year old from Moloka'i. She was inspired to study Hawaiian after her older sister began learning the language in school. She follows suit and studied Hawaiian for three years in high school, and then went on to major in Hawaiian at the University of Hawai'i, Hilo, which has a well-known immersion program that now includes both master's and doctoral level studies entirely in Hawaiian. Her decision to major in Hawaiian was influenced by her grandmother, who was a fluent speaker but who did not transmit Hawaiian to her children. She explained that her own learning of Hawaiian in school led to a home connection that encouraged her to commit to learning Hawaiian.

(7)

1 P: Literally right before she passed away, my cousin and I were at her house doing  
2 our Hawaiian language homework from high school. So, we're practicing with  
3 each other and saying little sentences and my grandma was- she was on her  
4 deathbed by this point, and she just sat up and she said, um and in Hawaiian, she  
5 said that, um, just "*ho'omau*" or to continue, and just keep saying that. And then  
6 that was at least our, our responsibility after, or at least that's how I felt it was it  
7 was. It was my *kuleana* ('responsibility') to, to keep the language alive in my  
8 family. So that's why I went that route.

Pi'ilani married a Hawaiian immersion graduate from Moloka'i who is now a Hawaiian language teacher at an immersion school, and Hawaiian is their language of the home. While living in Hilo with her husband, Pi'ilani lived in a mostly Hawaiian-speaking environment due to the resources of the university and the student population there studying advanced levels of Hawaiian. Her son was born while she was a student, and because he attended Hawaiian immersion daycare and preschool, he was not exposed to English until after age two. Upon graduation, Pi'ilani decided to continue her studies by entering a doctoral program in anthropology at a university on 'Oahu, where she had her second child. Her mother moved from Moloka'i to 'Oahu to help take care of Pi'ilani's daughter, and because her mother did not speak Hawaiian, this reconfiguration of family life made Pidgin the main language in her daughter's environment. This led to language mixing as a primary means of expression for her daughter.

(8)

1 P: My options for childcare were very limited and instead of having her go with

2            somebody else we had my mom come here and my mother isn't fluent in  
3            Hawaiian and [...] and so my mom talks to her in Eng- or Pidgin [...] and we talk  
4            to her in Hawaiian and her words come out "*heloha*." ((laughs)) [...] so we don't  
5            know like what does that mean, like what's her first language. But at this point  
6            she's catching on quicker to Pidgin English words than Hawaiian.

Her daughter's production of "heloha" is a blending of English "hello" and Hawaiian "*aloha*," which represents the kind of language mixing that she notices her daughter producing.

Since Pi'ilani's husband works at an immersion school on Moloka'i, their son lives with him there, and attends school with other children who often speak English to one another. This has led both Pi'ilani and her husband to worry about threats to their son's Hawaiian fluency.

(9)

1        P:        So, he's using more English words and I don't want to have to force him to talk  
2            just Hawaiian because that's gonna make him wanna learn more English [...] Um  
3            but I'm worried about that. Like that is my biggest concern right now. Because  
4            he sees English as like this um forbidden language so, of course I wanna eat from  
5            that fruit right? So I, I'm trying to make it seem like "okay it's alright for you to  
6            talk English son but just know that you're you know um that Hawaiian is the  
7            language in this house" type thing. And I'm trying to- I'm really struggling to  
8            bring more Hawaiian back into his, his daily speech.



Here, Pi'ilani frames English dangerously as a "forbidden fruit" that she allows her son to use, but very cautiously. In conveying how she handles this situation, she conceals her anxiety from her son by stating "I'm trying to make it seem like 'okay it's alright'." She presents English as an acceptable language for her son, but makes it very clear that Hawaiian is expected in the home.

Koa also took action to impose more strict boundaries around Hawaiian and English in his home. Though he had grown up with a very fluid repertoire, he felt that charting out spaces for Hawaiian was needed since he experienced challenges in terms of linguistic authority with his children, even though they attended a Hawaiian immersion school. For example, he responded to his youngest daughter's interest in English-medium storybooks by imposing Hawaiian books as a prerequisite to English stories.

(10)

1       K:     For some reason she's, she's, she's pushing me to teach her to read more English.  
2             So what I do, "okay you gotta read this Hawaiian book" because I have a lot of  
3             children, Hawaiian- Hawaiian children books. "You read this and then I'll read  
4             you this other book." So she- it works out good. She read em fast. "Okay now you  
5             gotta read my book."

His stance toward his daughter's interest in English is presented as nonsensical ("for some reason"), and in the interview, rather than comment on his daughter's interest in English, he expresses how many Hawaiian children books that he can offer her. Importantly, Koa describes the English books in neutral terms, but refers to the Hawaiian books he wants his daughter to read as "my book."

Later in the interview, Koa explained that he has created a FLP of having ‘Ōlelo Fridays, a practice promoted by immersion programs for support of the language. In response to the question of whether his children who attend Hawaiian immersion take their own initiative to speak Hawaiian to one another, he describes how he enforces Hawaiian FLP on occasion. He also notes how his own children challenge his linguistic authority, drawing on their own understanding of Hawaiian grammar from their immersion schooling. Koa’s Hawaiian grammar is still largely influenced by Pidgin and by the translingual norms of Hawaiian-infused Pidgin that he grew up with. In acknowledging that linguistics is important for learning a new language, Koa implicitly rejects the more natural and translingual ways of using Hawaiian from his home community and embraces a more academic basis for authentic speakerhood.

(11)

1       K:     I always try to enforce it. sometimes I’ll do like ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Fridays or  
2             whatever, a whole evening where the kids speak Hawaiian. My daughter won’t  
3             speak.

4       I:     Okay, yeah.

5       K:     So I don't know, but she’s at that age. She tell me that we all speaking it wrong.  
6             Well, I speaking it wrong. My Hawaiian is kind of like, I call it Hawaiian Pidgin  
7             it doesn’t follow the correct, what’s that word, syntax, word order. I kind of use  
8             like subject verb object.

9       I:     It’s like English.

10      K:     With Hawaiian words instead of Hawaiian, verb subject object. I just learned,  
11            they kind of told us in Hawaiian 101 but it never really sunk in til I took

12                    linguistics. I was like “ah you know if you like learn a new language you should  
13                    take linguistics first.”

### 5.3. *The limits of prescribed linguistic authority*

While new speakers made efforts to preserve the use of Hawaiian in the home, they also commented on the complexity of which kinds of Hawaiian should be promoted in the home, as compared to in schooling contexts. Similar to NeSmith (2002), they reported feeling conflicted by the standardized University Hawaiian that they were taught since it was quite different from the Hawaiian of elders who were considered native speakers of the language. Jason, a new speaker who was born and raised in Florida, but who came to the University of Hawai‘i, Hilo to learn and major in Hawaiian, recognized this conflict after only three years of learning the language. His interest in better understanding the political battles of his family’s past generations over rights to land and to self-governance led him to research Hawaiian history from newspapers, and he had spent many hours during his studies reaching out to elders to learn more about their experiences. He took the stance that the Hawaiian of the elders was the most authentic, and he strived to speak as they did, particularly with regard to pronunciation.

(12)

1            J:        One concern that we definitely have is pronunciation and making sure that we’re  
2                    trying to be as close to the native speech of our *kupuna* as possible. However,  
3                    sometimes um that I mean it’s clear that we see nowadays that [being a University  
4                    Hawaiian speaker] is a problem that we have to the point where that’s identifiable  
5                    where people say that’s not the Hawaiian I grew up with.

6 I: Is that okay sometimes or is it always a problem?  
7 J: (sighs) It's, it's both because on level, we're living in a new time and Hawaiian  
8 has been gone for- almost gone to such an extent that we're having to build, not  
9 only are we rebuilding the language but we're also rebuilding context for the  
10 language. So, you know nowadays we have newscasters who speak Hawaiian like  
11 Amy Kalili, uh and you know her pronunciation is very clear, her pronunciation  
12 is very um, it's correct, it's exact, but it's sometimes criticized as university  
13 Hawaiian. Because it has that sound. It doesn't sound like the kind of Hawaiian I  
14 want to speak.

In contrast, Pi'ilani explains that she accepted the logic behind the standardized form as a means of working to preserve the language for a larger community. However, it is clear that she has qualms about this logic since she follows this point up immediately by portraying speakers in Hilo as overly prescriptive due to their "cringe" responses towards variation and errors in Hawaiian. She then upgrades her questioning of College Hawaiian by turning to the *kupuna*, or elders, who in turn offer a correction based on the idea of social appropriateness.

(12)

1 P: I struggled through this all throughout college, language standardization, because  
2 there I was forced to College Hawaiian. Very structured, very "this is how you  
3 say it." And, it didn't necessarily jibe with the way I heard my grandmother say it.  
4 And then I learned that in order to revitalize the language and to get people on the  
5 same track, you need to learn it in a standard form and then you can go back and

6 change it. [...] Which I had a hard time like dealing with because my whole thing  
7 was “as long as Hawaiian is being spoken, we should be happy.” You know what  
8 I mean. Then there’s this people in Hilo where you say one wrong verb and  
9 they’re like- they’re looking at you like “what are you saying?” They cringe.  
10 Yeah they cringe! You’re butchering the language. But, and then there’s, you go  
11 and you talk to the *kupuna* (‘elders’) and they don’t know what you saying  
12 because you speaking College Hawaiian. And they’re like, “you’re speaking, like  
12 a proper English to somebody who speaks Pidgin.” It’s that same relationship.

By comparing College Hawaiian to the misuse of “proper English” to a Pidgin speaker, P’ilani also invokes the subordination often experienced by Pidgin speakers in Hawai‘i with reference to English. English was imposed as the language of prestige by Caucasian outsiders, and Pidgin in turn became the language of the underclass. Her comment overtly suggests that speaking College Hawaiian to elders is therefore a similar act of subordination.

The pressure of speaking Hawaiian correctly or perfectly also emerged in Pualani’s account of her younger cousins’ linguistic practices, all of whom attend Hawaiian immersion and live near each other on Moloka‘i. She explained that when they were encouraged to speak Hawaiian in the home, they hesitated to speak, and she believed this was out of fear of making mistakes.

(13)

1 P: And it's so weird like we have um a bunch of my younger cousins, they're all  
2 learning Hawaiian like so they're all in immersion now. But when they're

3           together, and my cousin is like, okay ‘*ōlelo Hawai‘i wale nō* (‘only speak in  
4           Hawaiian’) just talk Hawaiian, they're like- they're shame.  
5    I:       Really?  
6    P:       Or they no like talk. And, (whispers) I don't know why. Like it's still like- why?  
7           maybe they're scared they're going to say something wrong.

In sum, while the new speakers acknowledged the benefits of having a standardized Hawaiian to draw upon to assess their own proficiency and to create a community of speakers, they also acknowledged some tensions that older and younger generations felt by trying to live up to a very exacting standard.

## **6. Implications**

García (2011: 7) describes *language sustainability* as “the capacity [of languaging] to endure, but always in interaction with the social context in which it operates.” In the context of indigenous languages like Hawaiian, the maintenance, loss, or reclamation of the language is therefore always emplaced within social, economic, and political conditions. Language sustainability offers a highly contextualized framework for exploring how whether and to what degree speakers invest in Hawaiian, and how new generations of speakers relate their language use to the expression of a Hawaiian cultural identity. This is particularly important since research on indigenous languages and youth has shown that the language learned and used by young people and new generations of speakers is often seen as problematic since it differs from the more traditional ways of speaking of past generations and elders (McCarty et al. 2013; O’Rourke 2015; Wyman 2013).

For the new speakers in this study, the use of Hawaiian within translanguaging was viewed as a natural and normal form of language sustainability in narratives of their past, and it was also framed as a form of *cultural continuance* (Ortiz 1992), or a way of understanding how people not only maintain languages, but also how they continue their linguistic and cultural practices with new forms and functions. The participants' and their family members' partial knowledge of Hawaiian was portrayed as an authentic way of being Hawaiian in a social and political context that had made it almost impossible to maintain the language. No contemporary or previous generations were depicted as less Hawaiian due to a lack of language abilities. Nonetheless, the interviews revealed the high level of scrutiny the new speakers felt if the Hawaiian that they spoke in the present differed too much from the more standardized, College Hawaiian. The authority of their speakerhood is ironically more difficult to achieve in the present, as is the authority of the speakerhood of their children, who they see as ultimately responsible for Hawaiian renaissance.

At the present, there is little discussion of whether and how varieties of Hawaiian might be given a place in Hawaiian language education. It is acknowledged that College Hawaiian and the Hawaiian of the elders differs, but the speakerhood accorded the most power currently is the variety that has been standardized among new speakers and which disallows translanguaging. In the field of language teaching, there has been increasing attention to the nature of language variation at social and regional levels with regard to global languages such as English (McKay and Bokhorst-Heng 2008), and with reference to heritage language education on languages such as Spanish (Leeman 2014). In addition, there has been a great deal of research on translanguaging in language teaching and learning contexts which has powerfully illustrated the benefits of allowing speakers to draw on all of their linguistic resources when engaging in

learning activities (Creese and Blackledge 2015). It is possible that Hawaiian language education can also consider these directions, though due to the continuing status of Hawaiian as an endangered language that is still at the early stages of revitalization and normalization, it is understandable that such ways of thinking about language are not yet taking center stage. At the same time, since Hawaiian language learning in schools is increasingly linked to family life, where new speakers are raising children with attachments to both University Hawaiian and their grandparents' ways of using the language, these issues will become increasingly necessary to address.

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