

Place-based narratives among new speakers of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i

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Abstract: Place has long been central in the linguistic and cultural practices of indigenous people. This chapter examines how new speakers who are engaged in the revitalization of the ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i express their connections to place in relation to their learning and use of the language. In doing so, they espouse language ideologies about Hawaiian that depart from conventional ideologies about learning languages which typically highlight the practical and economic benefits of learning a globally relevant language. Drawing on positioning frameworks and narrative analysis (Bamberg 1997, De Fina 2013), I analyze narratives taken from interviews with new speakers of Hawaiian to better understand how they position themselves as learners and speakers of that language. Their narratives reveal that they are often positioned in a liminal status because Hawaiian is not a language that is associated with western forms of socio-economic mobility. However, these new speakers challenge this liminality by expressing how the Hawaiian language connects them to the land, to their ancestors and to their communities in ways that embrace *ea*, a Hawaiian term that relates to the linkage of life-breath-sovereignty. Through their stories, they reject dominant economic and linguistic discourses of liminality and authenticate themselves through narratives about language learning, place and belonging from a Hawaiian worldview.

Please provide keywords

new speakers, language revitalization, identity, place, genealogy, place-based epistemologies,

1. Introduction

This chapter explores the role of place in narratives of language learning among speakers of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, the Hawaiian language. On the one hand, place refers to speakers’ cultural, political, and physical affiliations with the Hawaiian archipelago and their engagement with language and place-bound knowledge systems and practices that have historically been central to Hawaiian ways of life. On the other hand, the role of place is more metaphorical, as it describes the oftentimes liminal status of Hawaiian language learners with reference to the last remaining elders and the small population of first-language speakers from the island of Ni‘ihau. Moreover,

while thousands of people have learned Hawaiian since the 1980s, new speakers of this language are often seen as ‘wasting their time’ since the language is not associated with socio-economic mobility, as tied to the free market. Hence, their choice to dedicate themselves to helping to revitalize Hawaiian is seen as one that will get them ‘nowhere.’ In the narratives of language learners that recount their dedication to learning ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, both aspects of place come into play, thereby creating opportunities for speakers to assert their Hawaiian identities and to express a response to their linguistic liminality.

While place matters for everyone, it is of particular importance in those indigenous communities where the efforts to reclaim language, land, and political autonomy are still a site of struggle. Language revitalization efforts have played a role in greater self-determination in indigenous communities, as language rights are inherently a part of minority rights in every context around the globe (May 2013). Revitalization programs that employ place-based and culturally-sustaining frameworks illustrate successful ways forward for language learning and more holistic engagement with the social, ecological and sociopolitical contexts to which languages belong (Jansen *et al.* 2013, McCarty and Lee 2014).

Indigenous ontological frameworks have always positioned people and the environment as overlapping and interacting (e.g., Memmott and Long 2002). However, work in the fields of applied linguistics and sociolinguistics has yet to deeply examine the relationship between language and place among language learners involved in language reclamation efforts. For Hawaiians, language and place are deeply intertwined since the loss of language occurred alongside the dispossession of land and the loss of political sovereignty. The colonization of Hawai‘i by the United States led to the near extinction of Hawaiian in the twentieth century, and assimilationist ideologies pervaded education and government, leading many families to devalue

Hawaiian and embrace English, the language that was believed to lead to greater potential for socioeconomic prosperity. In the 1970s, people began to revitalize the language, and after a great deal of hard work and lobbying for language rights, the language is now being learned by thousands of people across the state of Hawai‘i.

The role of place in the learning of Hawaiian deserves attention particularly because most language learners are *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). New speakers are central to the re-establishment of Hawaiian across as many domains of life as possible (Warner 1998). It is important to better understand how these new speakers relate their own language learning and use to place in order to better understand their investments, desires, and visions for using the language in a society that has suffered tremendous cultural damage but which is also experiencing linguistic and cultural revitalization.

New speakers’ language proficiency and cultural knowledge is often compared to the remaining elders’ who speak ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, and to a group of about 100 speakers from 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, by a family who promoted the maintenance of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i. At present, it is estimated that there are approximately 1,000 mānaleo¹, 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 U.S. Census (ACS 2015). Since the majority of Hawaiian language users are in

¹ Following the practices of scholars, indigenous and otherwise, who write about Native Hawaiians and indigenous people, I do not italicize Hawaiian to avoid othering the language and its speakers (cf. Goodyear-Ka‘opua *et al.* 2014)

fact new speakers, it is important to understand how they position themselves in the physical, cultural and linguistic landscape of Hawai‘i. While mānaleo are automatically identified as authentic speakers of Hawaiian and are typically sought out for their cultural expertise (NeSmith 2002; Wong 1999), it is possible for new speakers to also express legitimate identities as speakers of Hawaiian.

2. The marginalization and authentication of new speakers

Previous work on sociolinguistic authenticity has shown how nostalgia plays a strong role in identifying speakers as representative of a certain place and of a given language. A linguistically authentic identity is often tied to a rural lifestyle that is ‘stuck in time,’ monolingual, and devoid of cross-cultural or even cross-dialectal contact (Coupland 2001). This vision has impacted the models for Hawaiian language learning among new speakers as well, which in turn contributes to the view that new speakers’ Hawaiian language is somewhat contrived. Wong (1999) notes that although new speakers are the majority, as a group they are in a difficult position since materials widely used in Hawaiian language teaching are informed by texts from the late nineteenth century, which leave them with archaic models. In thinking about the learning of Hawaiian for the future, Wong asserts that “[i]n the negotiation of what authentic Hawaiian is and will be, it is necessary to involve input from Hawaiian communities, whether they speak Hawaiian or not” (1999, p. 112). Higgins (in press) demonstrates how new speakers who use Hawaiian as much as possible across all domains often find themselves in a perplexing dilemma when they use their University Hawaiian with native speakers. These new speakers use both archaic and newly coined vocabulary items, and native speakers who are unfamiliar with these forms treat them as mistakes or as misguided efforts to speak the language.

While the study of authenticity has focused largely on the linguistic features of a language or variety, this chapter explores this topic from a more discursive perspective by examining how new speakers of Hawaiian narrate their reasons for learning and speaking Hawaiian as related to place-bound Hawaiian cultural practices. Drawing on Bucholtz (2003) and Bucholtz and Hall's (2004) concept of *authentication*, I examine how narratives place these participants' language learning in a Hawaiian worldview which highlights one's physical, social, and spiritual connection to land and sea, and therefore which challenges the liminality of being a new speaker of a language that is not associated with upward socio-economic mobility.

Authentication is a discursive process that reveals how identities are activated. The study of authentication requires close attention to the sociolinguistic "processes by which authenticity is claimed, imposed, or perceived," which can include the use of particular sociolinguistic variants that are emblematic of a social identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2004, p. 498). Authentication can also be claimed on a more metalinguistic level, as illustrated in Bauman's (1992) analysis of the legends about the *kraftaskáld*, an Icelandic poet thought to have magical powers. Bauman found that in the opening and closing parts of their narratives, speakers established their rights as tellers by pointing out how they have come to know the stories, a discursive move "akin to the art of antique dealer's authentication of an object by tracing its provenience" (1992, p. 137, cited in Bucholtz and Hall 2005 p. 602). Similarly, in the interview data examined in this study, new speakers of Hawaiian articulate their own authenticity in part by locating their language learning desires in a Hawaiian worldview which is deeply connected to the land and to cultural practices that have a long history in Hawaiian traditions. While it is of course possible for Native Hawaiians to express these convictions without the Hawaiian language, the narratives produced

by new speakers indicate that rooting themselves in the Hawaiian landscape culturally and linguistically is a crucial part of their reclamation process.

3. Language and place in indigenous contexts

The relationship between language and place has always been central to the use, maintenance and revitalization of indigenous languages. Tragically, the forced removal, relocation, and loss of land among indigenous people have threatened place-based forms of knowledge along with language endangerment in these communities. Indigenous communities are losing their access to local ecological knowledge such as particular methods for fishing and harvesting of plants for medicinal purposes when their land rights are taken away, and this lack of access is intricately tied to the maintenance and loss of indigenous ways of knowing, including indigenous languages (Kame‘elehiwa 1992, Maffi 2005). Language revitalization is therefore often tied to traditional cultural practices for the purpose of maintaining land rights and protecting an indigenous way of life in the face of dominant languages, non-indigenous education systems, and economic systems that threaten indigenous lifestyles. Land-based practices are key for the maintenance and reclamation of language and culture since institutional spaces are more challenging to reappropriate. The most promising efforts involve protecting and revitalizing the use of indigenous languages in traditional domains while also working to normalize the use of these languages in new realms. As research on Native American languages in North America has shown, efforts to resist the homogenizing forces of global languages like English require not only maintenance of indigenous languages in traditional domains, but also the “re-emplacment” of these languages in new domains such as schooling (McCarty *et al.* 2012).

In ka pae ‘āina Hawai‘i, or the Hawaiian archipelago, place is central to Native Hawaiian worldviews (Oliveira 2005, Pukui *et al.* 1974). While the concept of place in Hawaiian culture is deserving of lengthy discussion, I summarize the work of Native Hawaiian scholars who have addressed place directly to offer a brief introduction to this complex topic. As a non-Hawaiian scholar, I find it crucial to rely on Native Hawaiian scholarship to attempt to convey the key concepts for a wide readership. Kana‘iaupuni and Malone (2006) explain that Hawaiian epistemologies and well-being are tied to the land and sea in four key ways. First, Native Hawaiians see land as integral to their spirituality. Their cosmology explains that the archipelago was born from Papahānaumoku (earth mother) and Wākea (sky father), who gave birth to kalo (‘taro,’ a root vegetable), and ultimately the Kānaka Maoli, or Native Hawaiian people. Nature thus requires guardianship by Native Hawaiians since the land, wind, and rain are primordial ancestors (p. 285). Second, Hawaiians have strong physical ties with land, as evident through ceremonial enactments such as burying both the afterbirth and the body of a deceased person in the same place in order to bring the relationship with the land full circle. Subsistence farming of kalo (‘taro’) and fishing as key resources for food also tie Native Hawaiians physically to the land. An expression that summarizes a widely shared Native Hawaiian perspective on the land is aloha ‘āina, aloha ke akua, aloha kekāhi i kekāhi (‘love and respect the land, love and honor God, love and look after one another’) (McGregor 2007). Third, land is political and serves as a means to actively remember the past and the disenfranchisement of the Hawaiian people. Aloha ‘āina is a political stance, as it emerged in the 1970s as a movement to reclaim lands that were taken from Native Hawaiians by the United States government, including Kaho‘olawe, an island that was used by the US Navy for target practice. Native Hawaiians identify land as a key site for self-determination and are active in efforts to reclaim lands and to protect wahi pana (‘sacred

places’). A great deal of land was ‘ceded’ to the U.S. government as a result of events following the military-backed overthrow of the monarch, Queen Lili‘uokalani, in 1893, and many sacred places are on land currently occupied by the U.S. military and other federal and state entities.² Finally, place is intricately tied to one’s genealogy. In Hawaiian practice, genealogical chants identify family lineages and histories of the ali‘i (‘royalty’). Introductions in writing and speaking still include reciting a lineage of the place where one was born and the place of one’s ancestors, including mention of a particular valley, wind, mountain, or body of water (Kana‘iaupuni and Malone, 2006, p. 291).

These interconnected elements are also expressed as *ea*, a concept that has come to be translated as ‘sovereignty’ but which also refers to the linkage of life-breath-sovereignty, which is at the heart of Hawaiian genealogy and Hawaiian epistemology. Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua (2014) explains, “[u]nlike Euro-American philosophical notions of sovereignty, *ea* is based on the experiences of people on the land, relationships forged through the process of remembering and caring for *wahi pana*, storied places” (p. 4). She cites Davida Kahalemaile’s 1871 speech to offer a more expansive meaning of *ea* (2014, p. 5):

1. Ke *ea* o na i-a, he wai. 2. Ke *ea* o ke kanaka, he makani. 3. O ke *ea* o ka honua, he kanaka. . . . 4. Ke *ea* o ka moku, he hoouli. . . . 5. Ke *ea* o ko Hawaii Pae Aina . . . Oia no ka noho Aupuni ana.

[1. The *ea* of sh is water. 2. The *ea* of humans is wind. 3. The *ea* of the earth is the people. . . . 4. The *ea* of a boat is the steering blade. . . . 5. The *ea* of the Hawaiian archipelago is the government.]

² Other sacred sites such as Mauna Kea, the mountain on Hawai‘i island that marks the meeting point of heaven and earth, remain under the control of the state government.

³ Davida Kahalemaile was an organizer of *Ka Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea*, an event commemorating King Kamehameha III’s act of restoring Hawaiian sovereignty after a British captain claimed the islands for Great Britain in 1843. *Ka Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea* was a national holiday celebrated on July 31 thereafter (Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua 2014, p. 4)

In sum, Goodyear-Ka'ōpua explains that ea is “the mutual interdependence of all life forms and forces” (p. 5) Ea refers to the Hawaiian people’s right to live a life that is anchored in the physical and spiritual environment. These ideas about place as essential to the well-being of the Hawaiian people are evident in research that examines how ea relates to a range of measures, including better health outcomes (Oneha 2001) and to improved educational outcomes as a result of culturally relevant, place-based education (Kana'iaupuni *et al.* 2017).

4. 'Ōlelo Hawai'i: From past to present

Language revitalization efforts have led to substantial success since the 1980s for 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, a language which had lost nearly all speakers by the 1970s. In the nineteenth century, Hawaiian was still the chief language used across the islands in schools, homes, and the community (Wilson and Kamanā 2001). However, due to western contact and disease, an estimated 91% of the population was decimated by the 1850s (Stannard 1989, p. 70).

Ultimately, American businessmen who were the children of missionaries worked to acquire land, and in 1893, they schemed with U.S. military forces to overthrow the Hawaiian monarch, Queen Lili'uokalani. The illegal government banned Hawaiian as a language of schooling in 1896, and in 1898, the Republic of Hawai'i was formed through annexation. 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, discouraged many families from speaking to their children in Hawaiian in the first half of the twentieth century (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. 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. After a great deal of lobbying, 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 *et al.* 2007). Thanks to the tireless efforts of many, there are now over 20 immersion programs operating as stand-alone and within-school , including public charter schools. 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 was sold to foreigners in 1864 who supported the maintenance of Hawaiian. The transaction pre-dated American occupation of Hawai‘i, which led to the preservation of the language there.

5. Data collection and participants

The five narratives analysed in this study are taken from face-to-face interviews that were recorded with individuals from across the State of Hawai‘i in the form of histories of family language use. They are part of a larger project consisting of/including 110 narratives about family language transmission in Hawai‘i. The participants were all university students who were recruited through a call for research participation as well as via personal social networks. Interviews were carried out by a team of four researchers, including the author and three research assistants. Three of the researchers are malihini (‘newcomers’) and Caucasian, and one research assistant is multi-ethnic, with Japanese, European, and Hawaiian ancestry. Interviews were conducted in English, though Pidgin and Hawaiian were also used occasionally, particularly by the interviewees. The interviews probe into how and why various languages such as Hawaiian,

Cantonese, Portuguese, Japanese, and Pidgin (the creole language of Hawai'i that resulted from sugar plantations) had been added, maintained, revitalized, or lost in each generation. In preparation, participants were asked to research the language history of their parents and grandparents and to ask their family members about their language histories. Each interview began with the participant's language history. During the 30-60 minute interviews, the participants worked with the interviewer to sketch their linguistic family trees, while the interviewer made notes about the linguistic repertoires used by each family member. Along the way, questions were asked about what domains family members used their languages in, who they spoke to and in which languages, and why particular languages were or were not transmitted along generations. The purpose of the questions was to elicit stories that would shed light on language maintenance and language shift in families, so no attempt at cross-checking the factuality of the statements was made. No questions explicitly asked about the relationship between the Hawaiian language and a Hawaiian worldview. However, most of the participants incorporated these themes into their explanations about why they or their family members had chosen to learn the language.

After initial coding for place-based themes across the data, I selected five participants whose interviews provided rich data with substantial narrative detail about the role of place in their use of and regard for 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (see Table 2). The new speaker participants are typical in that many are college students who have committed to learning and studying Hawaiian language and culture as adults. This population also includes a smaller proportion of non-traditional students, such as Koa, who returned to college in his forties to pursue his college degree. I also included one participant, Gina, who has Native Hawaiian ancestry and who learned Hawaiian in childhood, but who has not chosen to study Hawaiian as a young adult. By way of

comparison, her narratives illustrate the range of worldviews and ideological perspectives towards articulating a Hawaiian cultural identity through the Hawaiian language.

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	O'ahu	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
Hi'ilei	F	25	A, F, H, P	Moloka'i	3 years high school B.A. in Hawaiian	Mother uses vocabulary Grandparents fluent
Krysta	F	20.	H, F	Moloka'i.	2 years high school 2 years university	Grandparents fluent
Gina	F	20	A, C, H	Maui	2 years Pūnana Leo	Mother, uncle learned as adult Great grandmother fluent

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

6. Analysis

I draw on Bamberg's (1997) framework for positioning, which examines the ways that speakers represent themselves and others in the storied world of characters and plots (Level 1), in the storytelling world of the interview (Level 2), and in the macro-context of Discourses (Level 3) which are formed through history, personal and collective experiences, and the circulation of media. Positioning is a useful analytical approach to the study of place in relation to Hawaiian, as it reveals the sense-making practices that speakers engage in when discussing their reasons for learning and committing to the Hawaiian language. In narrating their past experiences, speakers thereby construct characters for themselves and others in interviews. Positioning Level 1 thus

sheds light on who they used to be, and what sort of ties they had or did not have with Hawaiian. When the participants step out of the storied world to comment on the characters and plot, they position themselves in Level 2, often shifting their footing (Goffman 1979) to make evaluative comments that help to see how they view their past and present selves as well as other characters and places in their narratives. Positioning Level 3 is particularly useful to the analysis here, as it allows us to see how speakers construct a Hawaiian worldview that is shared among a wider population. In this way, when new speakers of Hawaiian invoke place-based practices as a means of expressing their motivations for Hawaiian language learning and revitalization, they are articulating “collective positioning processes” (De Fina 2013, p. 46), thereby mobilizing and also reifying Level 3 Discourses about Hawaiian epistemology such as aloha ‘āina and ea as ways of knowing that are interlinked with Hawaiian genealogy and the Hawaiian language.

7. Findings

In presenting the analysis of narratives, I first illustrate how the new speakers told stories about their reasons for committing to learning and speaking Hawaiian which illustrate various aspects of ea. In all cases, an intimate experience with land, genealogy, sovereignty, and traditional Hawaiian practices on the land figured prominently. I then compare these narratives with stories about Hawaiian language and lifestyle as told by one Hawaiian participant who had not committed to the Hawaiian language. I include these perspectives as a point of comparison to demonstrate how the speakers’ portrayals about Hawaiian language and lifestyles reveal an important epistemological difference. This contrast sheds light on the ways that new speakers of Hawaiian understand their relationship to that language in a context where instrumentalist and globalist ideologies of language learning dominate. For the first set of data, I selected excerpts

that provided insights into why the speakers invested in Hawaiian language and culture. I then grouped these into themes related to the principles of *ea*, discussed above. For each data excerpt, I make use of relevant narrative tools from positioning frameworks to help illustrate how the speakers expressed their identities vis-à-vis the principles of *ea*. See the appendix for transcription conventions.

7.1. Narrating ea: Connections to the land

The first example comes from Koa, a college student who at the time of the interview was earning his B.A. in Hawaiian. He was a middle-aged student who had three children, two of whom attended Hawaiian immersion schooling. Though Koa's own paternal grandparents were fluent speakers of Hawaiian, they only spoke to Koa's father in Pidgin and English, thereby leading to language shift in the course of one generation. Like many other Hawaiian families, Koa's grandparents did not transmit Hawaiian to the next generation due to the pressure to adopt an American lifestyle and to succeed in English-medium schooling. As a result, Koa only learned Hawaiian after he started to attend college, after his children were born.

In the interview, Koa spoke a mix of English and Pidgin. He positioned himself as someone who primarily valued the convenience that Pūnana Leo, a Hawaiian-medium preschool, offered his daughter. Preschool in Hawai'i is often difficult to obtain for families since there is more demand than supply, and because of the high cost of tuition. However, Koa's family had an opportunity to receive financial support, making the preschool free. In (1), Koa characterizes his old self as someone who was in support of the pre-school not so much because of the language, but more because of the free tuition. After voicing his former self's inner speech, he shifts his

footing to underscore his lack of enthusiasm and to note his old view that Hawaiian pre-school was really just a convenient solution rather than a choice to embrace his culture.

(1) Koa: So it was like for me, in the beginning it was like two birds with one stone. ‘Oh okay it’s free edu- free preschool and learn Hawaiian eh, cool.’ But I wasn’t really enthusiastic. It was just, just for go school.

In the interview, Koa further contextualized his own personal history through constructed dialogue involving his old self and friends and acquaintances who were Hawaiian language supporters. In (2), he animates them as critiquing him for not speaking Hawaiian (“Oh, you don’t know how to talk Hawaiian, eh?”), and then presents his past self as someone who responded by drawing attention to the importance of “talk[ing] money,” or prioritizing making money over other values.

(2) Koa: You know, everybody “Look, oh you don’t know how to talk Hawaiian eh?” “You guys gotta talk money nowadays talk money” that’s how I was. “We don’t talk Hawaiian, we talk money.”

Int: What does talk money mean?

Koa: Yeah, just nonsense. Go work always making money instead of learning about something.

After the interviewer asks for clarification of “talk money,” Koa shifts his footing to his present-day self to evaluate that point of view as “just nonsense” that involves a life focused on making money instead of other more valuable pursuits.

Since Koa was the main caretaker of his young daughters, he took them to the Hawaiian preschool and fulfilled the requirement that parents work at the school and participate in parent nights, which required learning some Hawaiian. This role led him to experience a significant

shift in his thinking on Hawaiian. In (3), he explains how his value system shifted away from one guided by the economics of language and schooling. He narrates how his unemployment, that was due to job injuries, gave him the opportunity to change his outlook on life and embrace the Hawaiian language.

(3) Koa: And my youngest daughter, she went to Pūnana Leo and that's when I was always laid up, I was always at home. I started hanging out at the school, like going on field trips, working on their garden. That was the main thing, they had this Hawaiian garden and being unemployed, I started I had to see like 'aw man what I gon do?' I started fishing starting farming, just trying to provide. And then just everything just kind of, Hawaiian everything hit me one time just like. My dad put it the best. He like, "The reason why you broke your leg and all of this Hawaiian stay come yet." So I just I said "Yep, I tried the American way, I'll just try the Hawaiian way." For me it's been more enjoyable.

In (3), Koa describes his transformation as emanating from fishing and farming, practices which are decreasingly valued by most in Hawai'i due to the normative values linked with a presumed pathway involving higher education, socio-economic mobility and white collar professional employment. He frames his past experiences and outlook as "the American way," and he labels a lifestyle of subsistence farming and fishing as "the Hawaiian way," which he evaluates more positively.

In (4), Koa continues with his self-reflection, comparing his past lifestyle with his Hawaiian one by describing his typical day after his daughters joined the preschool. This lifestyle is governed by connections with his family and his natural environment, whereas the "American way" is presented as a routine way of life that is only tied to a pre-set schedule.

(4) Koa: In the morning I could take my daughter to school and I could be able to go surf in the same morning I could come back like after lunch like work in their garden. And then later on that night we'd have makua ('parent') night where the parents are required once a week to kind of, like a open house night just to get the parents more involved. So just that whole day I felt like 'wow.' Instead of before, my days were just like get up, go work, come home, drink beer, eat, sleep, same thing. Whereas now my schedule- if there's surf go surf, if it's too hot go rest, later on come back and work. [...] That's when I started learning 'oh this is what they mean the Hawaiian style.' Do things according to what you have not, "What? Oh, two o'clock. Oh you got to do this."

Other new speakers of Hawaiian made direct ties to land and sea-based practices in describing Hawaiian lifestyles. Krysta, a 20 year old undergraduate, explained her decision to study Hawaiian in both high school and college as a result of being "in touch with her Hawaiian culture" due to the rural nature of the island of Moloka'i, where she is from. Moloka'i is one of the least populated islands with a high percentage of Native Hawaiian residents. It also receives the fewest tourists per year and hence is relatively isolated from outside contact.

(5) Int: Can you tell me about why you chose to study Hawaiian in high school and college?

Krysta: Because like- I am really in touch with my Hawaiian culture like- I mean living on Moloka'i all we, like- it's totally different yeah? It's just like, country [...] It's really nice, and all we do is fish, we hunt, like catch our own food and that's like, the Hawaiian values you know. We take our resources from the land. And that's

how we like, survived back in the ancient Hawaiian days. So, I mean, my Hawaiian culture is really important to me.

Krysta relates her home island's lifestyle as relatively undifferentiated from the past where people lived off of the land and the sea. She explains her reasons for studying the language in school as resulting from her deep connections to this lifestyle. In (6), however, Krysta conveyed a narrative where she encountered questions from others about the value of Hawaiian when she was a student at a university in Honolulu. She recollected a discussion in an introductory linguistics class which brought up similar voices to the voice of Koa's former self that devalued Hawaiian since it is not a language that can be spoken elsewhere.

(6) Krysta: I like, remember in class we talked about how like, monolingual and multilingual, [...] at the end, our conclusion was just like it's- Hawaiian's not that like, important because only people in Hawai'i speaks Hawaiian. Like, you can't really use Hawaiian in like, the mainland. You would probably want to learn like want to learn like, Spanish or like, Japanese or Chinese. But I told them that I'm still going to learn Hawaiian anyway.

In (6), Krysta shares a memory from when her linguistics course examined the benefits of monolingualism or multilingualism in societies. She recounts the overall class sentiment as devaluing Hawaiian since it is not associated with socio-economic mobility and has no utility on the continental United States, thus making other more global foreign languages such as Spanish, Japanese, or Chinese better choices. However, she responds to this unified sentiment by emphasizing her dedication to Hawaiian in spite, and actually because of, its 'restricted' relevance to Hawai'i. Rather than accepting the liminal status of the language based on what it

can do for her later in life, she asserts the value of it for her own cultural identity and connection to her physical environment.

7.2 Narrating ea: Connections to Hawaiian genealogy

Koa expressed fulfillment through learning Hawaiian since the language is part of a bigger system shared by other Hawaiians from the distant past to the present. In (7), he links his current identity to the genealogy of people he is tied to who may have also gone through transformations of their own, but who also lived the Hawaiian lifestyle he describes. He described his past perspectives as including bad decisions, but expresses that knowing where he came from gives him a sense of direction.

(7) Koa: So with the Hawaiian, it kind of gave me better understanding of myself, where I come from, and for me mostly it was why I do some of the stupid things that I do. But then now I kinda, I learn that ‘okay it’s not normal what you doing but you come from a long genealogy of people that you know kinda, might have done things like that back in the day, but now you come from that. Now you know you living now. Now you know what you gotta do.’ [...] For me, it just gave me balance.

Through his narratives, Koa articulates a past self who made mistakes and who had become too focused on a life governed by finances and mundane activities. In (7), he uses constructed dialogue to express his current worldview by talking to himself in inner speech. Learning Hawaiian and choosing a lifestyle more connected to family and his environment has led him to state “Now you know you living now.” In returning to Level 2 positioning at the end

of excerpt (7), his comment that his new life has given him balance resonates with the concept of *ea* as a form of personal sovereignty freed from the more schedule-based, American lifestyle he used to live.

Similarly, Jason, a 28-year-old undergraduate who began studying Hawaiian as an undergraduate, expressed a calling larger than himself that was connected to his ancestors in describing his reasons for studying the language. Though he was born and raised in Florida, his curiosity about his father's Hawaiian side of the family led him to a wider discovery about his *kuleana* ('responsibility') to his ancestors. He described how events related to Hawaiian sovereignty movements in the early 2000s involving the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the federal government led him to this discovery. The *Kū'ē* Petitions that he mentions refer to the efforts by members of the Hawaiian Kingdom to prevent the annexation of Hawai'i as a U.S. territory in 1897.⁴

(8) Jason: And then there was an event I think where the head of OHA (Office of Hawaiian Affairs) went ahead and sent a letter to Secretary of State Kerry asking about Hawaiian sovereignty of the Hawaiian Kingdom and all of that. So then I starting looking into all of that and then I looked into the *Kū'ē* ('opposition') petitions and I saw my ancestors' signature. Then and all of a sudden I felt an overwhelming sense of responsibility all of a sudden come into my life. [...]

Int: How did you get that information?

⁴ More than 21,000 signatures (95% of native born residents of Hawai'i) were obtained on the petition and delivered to the U.S. Congress, which temporarily prevented the Congress from reaching a two-thirds majority of votes to pass it in 1897. However, the Congress voted for annexation the next year as part of a crisis involving Cuba and the Philippines under the Newlands Resolution on the logic that the U.S. needed to annex Hawai'i to create a fueling station in the Pacific for the war against Spain in the Philippines (Silva 2004, p. 160).

Jason: Just searching online. The documents, the Kū'ē petition were made available online. I forget how I found that link but I went through all the photocopied pages and then I found the signatures of my great grandparents. And you know, that document is written in Hawaiian and in English so yeah, ever since then something clicked. (.) And it's like okay, now it's not about whether you're comfortable identifying with it or not. You have a responsibility, you have to come back, and so at that point I started looking seriously into coming here.

In (8), Jason's recognition of his great grandparents' names on the petition against annexation is the start of his development of a genealogical perspective on his relationship with Hawaiian. Despite living in Florida and having almost no Hawaiian perspectives shared in his family, he experienced an "overwhelming sense of responsibility" towards his ancestors. The Hawaiian and English bilingual petition made something click, and he felt a sense of responsibility to return to Hawai'i, a place he had only previously briefly visited in childhood.

As a highly proficient language learner at an advanced level at a university on Hawai'i island, Jason pointed out how his access to Hawaiian history and the Hawaiian language shaped his perspectives even more. Though he also has Celtic ancestry on his mother's side of the family, he explained how the history of the Hawaiian people and the loss of language informed his connection to the language.

(9) Jason: And then also gradually kind of understanding the history of, of loss and everything and I guess it just, it became more precious in that sense [...] yeah, I mean I value all parts of my heritage and, and consider all of them important but I

kind of have come to value them through a Hawaiian lens. If that makes sense, that kind of Hawaiian sense of place, that sense of moku ('island) of how the genealogy is sort of, how I now take that kind of mindset and view all sides of my heritage through it. So, I value it all but it's all through this context of being Hawaiian.

In (9) this participant refers to "a sense of moku" ('island'), to articulate how he understands his place in the world as the mindset he views his own heritage and his worldview through. His use of moku references the creation story of the Hawaiian people in which the multifaceted nature of ea invokes the spiritual connection among land, sea, sky, and life.

7.3. Narrating ea: Connections to the community/sovereignty

Next, I provide excerpts from an interview with Hi'ilei, a 25 year old doctoral student from Moloka'i, who echoed some of the same voices from Koa's and Krysta's narratives in explaining other people's reactions to her choice to study Hawaiian for her bachelor's degree. She had learned Hawaiian for three years in high school and then earned a Bachelor's degree in Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, a program renowned for its strong, immersion-style instruction in Hawaiian language and culture. In response to the critique, she expressed more community-based practicality in knowing Hawaiian and Pidgin and being from Hawai'i. Now an aspiring archaeologist, Hi'ilei expects to work in Hawai'i as an expert on Hawaiian land and history to help Hawaiian people make claims about sacred places and also to reclaim lands taken from them. In (10), she responds to the critics in her narrative by explaining how being a Hawaiian and Pidgin language speaker is needed to work in the community to be accepted by others. She rejects the capitalist orientation to investing in language learning but

then frames the Hawaiian language as a commodity in Hawai‘i, arguing for the appropriateness of the language for many local purposes.

- (10) H: That’s what I heard when I told people I was going into school for Hawaiian studies. “Why going to Hawaiian studies for? What you gonna be when you grow up? You’re not gonna make money.” Or “What’re you trying to be when you grow up?” And that wasn’t- it wasn’t- that’s not what I was trying to do, you know. I wasn’t going to Hawaiian Studies to get a job out of it, but I can see how Hawaiian Studies could be of an asset because, I mean, I don’t wanna say we’re a commodity but we are. Hawaiian language speakers, um, working in these different disciplines, definitely, because we live in Hawai‘i. You need to know the language. You need to know how to talk to the people here in Hawai‘i on a level that they’ll be comfortable with, and majority of the times if you’re working with- in rural areas with, um, kama‘aina (‘long term residents’) local people who talk Pidgin, who are comfortable hearing Hawaiian and like revert to that as their comfort then of course they’re not going to go send somebody that’s not from Hawai‘i to talk to them, if that makes sense.

While others presented the value of Hawaiian as largely meaningful at a personal level, Hi‘ilei articulates a more community-centric logic for its value. In (10), she draws attention to the comfort that people in Hawai‘i feel, particularly in rural areas, with others who speak their languages.

A bit later in the interview, she related her concern for the community to her own investment in Hawaiian. In (11), she ties her convictions to the study of Hawaiian directly to the betterment of the Hawaiian people. After voicing the inner speech of her younger self who was choosing to study Hawaiian, she changes her footing to describe the larger political movement for Hawaiian sovereignty, including Native Hawaiians' rights to manage their own cultural resources in a genealogically-informed way.

- (11) Hi'ilei: I mean, to me it was always 'Kay, I'm gonna get my foundation in Hawaiian, the language, and then use something else that I do as the tool to better our people.' Yeah, basically using the- I guess fighting fire with fire against- everybody's- I mean, it's- the cat is out of the bag. Everybody's fighting for sovereignty now here ((laughs)). So this is just our part in that and trying to manage our own cultural resource man- oh at least for me as an archeologist, I want to be able to manage our cultural resources in Hawaiian, through the perspective of our kūpuna, ('elders'), and that lens.

In discussing her training as an archaeologist, Hi'ilei explains how she will be able to serve Hawaiians by helping to be in control of cultural resources. She acknowledges political struggles in Hawai'i, as there are multiple and fragmented groups seeking different forms of political leadership in the Native Hawaiian community. However, she clarifies her take on sovereignty as more connected to having the power to utilize a Hawaiian lens in personal and professional life. In (12), she explains that using the Hawaiian language is essential to this form of sovereignty in

her own field and that doing so is also an act on behalf of the Hawaiian people. She pauses in her narrative to change her footing, stating “yes you can,” arguably to naysayers in academia and in the larger community in Hawai‘i who question the utility of Hawaiian in this realm of life.

- (12) Hi‘ilei: I just feel that I’m in this academic route as a tool to better our people? If that makes any sense, like, that’s- I guess that’s another reason why I went into anthropology is because I want to do anthropology and look at archaeology through, um, this Hawaiian perspective, through this lens, even with language. If you can do archaeology using Hawaiian language, “yes, you can,” and that just moves us a step closer toward sovereignty. And not sovereignty in a sense of political sovereignty, but sovereignty in a sense that we as a people can be still be functioning, and do things independently, and have control over these resources, um, because we have to act in this Western realm, but we can still maintain our identity as a Hawaiian culture and Hawaiian people.

7.4. Comparing epistemologies

As a point of comparison, it is revealing to briefly examine interview data with other Hawaiian individuals who were not actively learning and using Hawaiian, and whose worldviews reflected their associations with the language. One case in point is Gina, a 20 year old college student from Maui who attended Pūnana Leo immersion as a child for preschool. She also attended Kamehameha School, a private, college-preparatory high school for Native Hawaiian students, but she had chosen to study Spanish for four years while there and two years

of Sāmoan in college. Her mother and her sister both received degrees in Hawaiian Studies, and her niece was in an immersion preschool as well. Though Gina was quite familiar with elements of Hawaiian culture, she did not actively engage in any specific cultural practices. She had decided on a pathway that would take her to California in the near future, after graduating with a Bachelor's degree in communications. She did express that she would eventually return to Hawai'i, given the importance she attached to family ties. In asking Gina (about) what she might imagine for her future hypothetical children, were she to return to Hawai'i, she cast Hawaiian immersion and Hawaiian epistemologies as deficient.

(13) Int: What do you think about immersion schools or other possibilities?

Gina: I like it, um I just like how they tea- like, the way that they teach the students is like really, really important like as Hawaiians. And just like in general. But um, like if I was to have kids well, I don't know, but I would like want to have them in Hawaiian immersion but I like, um my, high school education at Kamehameha. Just cause it was more like college prep. Like more (.) like not just, like one frame of mind, but you saw more things as you got older.

Gina acknowledged the importance of Hawaiian identity through Hawaiian language teaching in immersion settings. However, in imagining her own children in the future, she prefers seeing them in a mainstream educational system that would put them on the pathway to college education, which would presumably not lead to majoring in Hawaiian Studies. She then

characterizes the pathway to Hawaiian as “one frame of mind,” and presents the alternative of college preparatory education as offering “more things” as preferred.

A bit later in the interview, Gina described people like her sister – that is, immersion graduates and people who major in Hawaiian language or Hawaiian Studies – as people who “stick to” the language, and as not “branch[ing] out,” arguably negative attributes that position them as provincial and unsophisticated (Excerpt 14). As they have dedicated their lives to Hawai‘i and Hawaiian language and culture, Gina characterized them as limited by their place-bound affiliations.

- (14) Gina: But like they came to college to stick to like Hawaiian. Cause they didn’t like branch out. [...] I don’t know if it’s the same on O‘ahu. But like on Maui, a lot of the Hawaiian immersion kids like stayed home and they like live at home and they do like their Hawaiian stuff there.

A final excerpt illustrates a unique scenario in Gina’s family which seems to blend all the right elements for her. She characterizes her mother’s cousin as “super into Hawaiian stuff.” Importantly, she and her family all speak English, and the husband went to Stanford. In spite of these attributes, Gina describes them as “native” and their lifestyle as living “off the land,” which she then evaluates as an anomaly since they are also “really smart.” She shifts her footing to clearly describe these characters in her family as unusual through her evaluation, “I know it’s weird.” For Gina, then, this combination of attributes is unusual – through providing this outlier example, she constructs those who commit to Hawaiian lifestyles as living place-bound lives as having a narrow range of academic and professional interests.

- (15) Gina: I have one aunty that's like super like into Hawaiian stuff. [...] She's like my mom's cousin. She's like really into Hawaiian stuff but then, like she speaks English and like her, like, kids are like, her husband went to Stanford and like they're really smart. But like, they're, like native. Like they live off the land. (.) I know it's weird.

This brief examination of one Hawaiian person's who did not invest in the Hawaiian language suggests that cosmopolitanism derived from mobility is at odds with the values that the new speakers expressed in their interviews. As seen in the narratives of Koa, Jason and Hi'ilei most clearly, the new speakers interpreted their connection to Hawai'i and Hawaiian as providing them with greater satisfaction and fulfillment, rather than reducing their life choices.

8. Coda: Indigenous epistemologies in a modern world

The narratives from the new speakers of Hawaiian shed light on the ways in which Kānaka Maoli ('indigenous') perspectives on language and its relationship to being Native Hawaiian shape the speakers' investment in learning and using the language. Far different from global foreign languages, which are often learned to enhance one's linguistic capital, the narratives illustrate how the learning of Hawaiian is not only a connection to one's heritage, but a form of embodying a Hawaiian worldview. For the four new speakers, learning Hawaiian was centrally tied to their commitment to living a Hawaiian life. For some time, heritage language studies have acknowledged the more personal relationship that heritage learners may have with their family's languages, thus leading them to express different dispositions in the classroom compared to foreign language learners who do not have a heritage connection to the language (e.g., Leeman, 2015) and to show a range of affiliations with their languages because of their personal histories (e.g., He, 2006). Still, nearly all of this research involves languages which are

not endangered, such as Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese. The reclamation of Hawaiian among learners with Hawaiian ancestry is rather different because of its endangered status and since Native Hawaiians are actively working to strengthen their communities through collective efforts that are tied to Hawaiian cultural practices. These new speakers are committed to the language because of its role in connecting them to the land, to their Hawaiian ancestors, and to the forms of knowledge that support the autonomy of the Hawaiian people within the occupied territory where they live. While their narratives point to the difficulty of asserting a Hawaiian linguistic and cultural identity in the context of the English language and American economic and political dominance, their stories also reveal a confidence and comfort in their affiliations with a Hawaiian way of life.

Future studies of Hawaiian speakers may find more complexity with regard to the role of language among Native Hawaiians who are committed to living a Hawaiian worldview. As Gina noted in her discussion of her mother's cousin, it is possible to live an indigenous lifestyle without knowing Hawaiian. However, for those who are committed to learning the language deeply, it seems that the principles of *ea* are essential.

Appendix

Transcription conventions

(.)	pause
“talk”	reported speech
‘talk’	inner speech
,	continuing intonation
-	cut-off
<u>talk</u>	emphasis
((talk))	non-verbal actions
[...]	ellipsis

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<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.
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