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NATIVE AMERICAN VOICES: A READER

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HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Leanne Hinton

... Last fall I made my first-ever trip to Hawai'i, and spent three fascinating days touring the Hawaiian Pūnana Leo (preschools) and Kula Kaiapuni Hawai'i (the elementary and high schools), where the Hawaiian language is the language of instruction in all grades. This program, creating a new generation of fluent speakers and thus saving the Hawaiian language from extinction, is by far the most ambitious and advanced language revitalization program in the United States, and has much to teach the rest of us.

HISTORY OF HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE LOSS

Hawai'i, our newest state, was an independent monarchy until the end of the 19th century. The loss of Hawaiian independence began in 1887, when a group of businessmen with ties to the United States and the support of American troops established the "Bayonet Constitution." In 1893, Queen Liliuokalani was deposed, again with the support of American marines. In 1898 the "Republic" of Hawai'i was set up, and soon after that it was annexed to the United States. The Hawaiian people thus lost their power and autonomy.

As for the language, until the political events that led to annexation, Hawaiian was not only the primary language of the islands, but also the main language of the schools. Hawai'i created the first high school west of the Rockies (taught in Hawaiian), and the literacy rate (in Hawaiian) was among the highest in the world. The Hawaiian people had long been aware of the advantages that knowing English could give, and strong efforts had been made by the royal family to give Hawaiians the opportunity to learn English. In fact, in the late 19th century, the Hawaiian princess Pauahi founded the Kamehameha schools,

prestigious private schools that can only be attended by children of Hawaiian ancestry. The schools were initiated with English as the language of instruction, so that Hawaiian children would learn to speak that language of such economic importance.

But once the control of Hawai'i was lost to its people, a problem not foreseen by the royal family occurred: it was now the Hawaiian language that children had no opportunity to learn. The story is a variation on a theme well known to Native Californians. The Bayonet Constitution cut out funds for Hawaiian-language education, and finally, English-only legislation in 1896 closed down the Hawaiian-language schools completely. Teachers visited homes to tell the parents not to speak Hawaiian to their children, one of the many factors that soon led to the loss of Hawaiian even as the language of the home. Out of a population of 200,000 people of Hawaiian heritage, the 1990 census lists less than 9,000 speakers, almost all elderly. (There is one exception to this trend: on the tiny island of Ni'ihau, privately owned and closed to the public, Hawaiian is still spoken natively by all age groups and used as the language of daily communication among the two hundred people there.)

LANGUAGE IMMERSION SCHOOLS

The 'Aha Pūnana Leo was established in 1983 by a small group of educators determined to have their own children and those of other interested families educated in the Hawaiian language. A few of these families had also made the decision to use Hawaiian as the language of their home (even though they themselves knew Hawaiian only as a second language). They developed a series of preschools inspired by the Maori "Language Nest" model, where no English would be used in the classroom, and all education would take place in the Hawaiian language. Once the lead-group was old enough,

"Hawaiian Language Schools," by Leanne Hinton, *News from Native California*, 10:4 (Summer 1997). Reprinted with permission of the author. Portions of the original and notes have been omitted.

Hawaiian-language classrooms were established in the public schools. The Pūnana Leo actually began while it was still illegal to use Hawaiian in the schools. It took a three-year campaign at the state legislature by parents and community members to change the laws, thus ending eighty years of outlaw status for the language. From the small beginning of a single preschool, 'Aha Pūnana Leo has grown to have nine preschools scattered among the islands; there are also a public laboratory high school outside of Hilo, thirteen public elementary schools that have Hawaiian-language tracks, and even one K-12 public school that has all-Hawaiian instruction (Ānuenue School near Honolulu).

I had the opportunity to visit several schools on O'ahu and Hawai'i in November 1996. I will try to write about my experiences here more or less in the order that I experienced them.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Hawai'i—my first visit to this state that doesn't seem like part of the United States at all, because it's too far away, too exotic, too fragrant with tropical flowers. It's November, close to Thanksgiving. I have spent a couple of days with my family visiting old friends in Kawaihae, where they have a bamboo farm, and I have become happily accustomed to the pleasant tropical breezes wafting through their beautiful indoor-outdoor house. I have not previously been able to make contact with any of the schools I want to visit, but after speaking with a long chain of friends and friends of friends, the right person is contacted at last. Nāmaka Rawlins, director of the 'Aha Pūnana Leo, gives me permission to visit the schools, and a wonderful adventure begins. I leave my family exploring the beaches and volcanoes of Hawai'i without me, and head off.

WAIMEA PUBLIC SCHOOL

My first visit is to the combined kindergarten/first grade class at Waimea Public School. I come into the spacious, comfortable classroom during lunch break and introduce myself to Kumu Iakona, the head teacher (*Kumu* is a title of address meaning teacher), who makes me feel welcome. The room has a set of low tables with several children's chairs around each. There is also a big rug at the front of the schoolroom, where the class spends most of their time when they are not doing individual projects. Around the walls are numbers, the alphabet, and captioned pictures, all in Hawaiian. Even the screen

on the computer shows all Hawaiian words; when I glance at it, it is showing a Hawaiian-language home page on the Internet.

There are many books around the classroom. The one that captures my attention is out on a table for teacher use: the 1995 edition of *Puke Hua'Ōlelo' Mānaka Kaiāo—New Words*. This bilingual dictionary, with a new edition put out every couple of years, is the most important language reference work for teachers in the schools. In order to teach all the subjects that must be taught, thousands of new words have to be developed that were never uttered in Hawaiian before. A quick look through the dictionary shows new Hawaiian words for such concepts as electric current, bank account, jet stream, interactive (computer), fax, and pogo stick. Kumu Iakona explains to me that there is a Lexicon Committee that gets together every month in Hilo to make up new words or accept new words sent in by teachers from all over the islands. It is important for all of the schools to use the same new words, rather than making up their own, because the new words will be in books and curriculum materials developed centrally in Hilo and sent out to all the schools. Still, sometimes different islands have their own words—for example, a type of edible sea urchin is *hā'uke'uke* on the island of Hawai'i, *hā'ue'ue* on Maui, and *hā'kue'kue* on Ni'ihau. Ni'ihau, the one place where Hawaiian is the medium of communication for all topics, has coined many of the words that are now in the new words dictionary.

Kula Kaiapuni Hawai'i, the name of the Hawaiian language immersion schools, is a new phrase—*Kula* is from English "school" and has been a part of the language since the early 19th century, but *Kaiapuni* is a new word meaning environment.

In a few minutes the kids come in—about fifteen of them—accompanied by another teacher, who turns out to be a parent helper named Pualani Colburn. All the schools I will visit have parent volunteers helping actively; family involvement is one of the keys to success in the Hawaiian language program. The children sit down on the rug at the front of the schoolroom. They talk quietly until everyone has settled in, and then the teachers begin the session with a Hawaiian song accompanied by percussion on an *ipu* (a gourd instrument), and the children get up and dance to it. Hawaiian music and dance are a very important part of the curriculum at all grade levels. The dances often tell stories, with the beautiful hand and arm movements being a kind of sign language.

The song and dance focus the attention of the class and unite them. When the song is over, one girl comes up with objects and coupons in an envelope. From the back of the room, and with no English being spoken, I can't tell what they are—but I know it is show-and-tell time. The teacher describes the objects and starts a discussion. The whole discussion takes place in Hawaiian, even though not all the children are fluent yet. While some of them have a couple of years of Hawaiian language education at preschool, others started learning Hawaiian only about two months ago when the school year began. Some of the kids seem to be thinking about how to say what they want to say, and the teachers encourage them, saying, "And then what?" (in Hawaiian, of course), or providing a word or phrase. At one point, the children get to talking about Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer. Between Rudolf and the subsequent discussion of Thanksgiving, I know I must still be in the United States after all.

The discussion turns to the coming holiday: the English word "Thanksgiving" is uttered by a few students. The teachers tell the class the Hawaiian way to say it: *La Ho'omaika'i*. Later, No'eau Warner, one of the founders of the movement, tells me that when first starting to set policy, they discussed whether to reprimand children for speaking English, as their grandparents had been reprimanded for speaking Hawaiian. The psychological damage inflicted by that old policy was obvious, and they decided that when a child spoke English, the teachers would just answer in Hawaiian, possibly repeating in Hawaiian what the child had said, for the child's benefit. This policy works well—there are a lot of happy, talkative children here, speaking fluent Hawaiian or on their way to it.

One teacher sets up a table while the other continues the class discussion. A student comes to the teacher who is setting up the table and describes how sore her loose tooth is making her mouth, all in Hawaiian. Pretty soon I understand what the teacher is setting up—she is putting dabs of toothpaste on paper towels for the students to use. Two by two, the students get their toothbrushes and come to brush their teeth while the others watch a Hawaiian-language video about traditional food preparation.

A FEW ABBREVIATIONS IN HAWAIIAN

kk	for <i>kuaka</i> "quart"
klk	for <i>Kelekia</i> "Celsius"
klkal	for <i>kilokalame</i> "kilogram"
kp	for <i>kapua'i</i> "foot"

During the video and toothbrushing, Kumu Iakona tells me about how they help parents learn the Hawaiian language, sending them a sheet every week with words and phrases they can use with their kids at home. This week's sheet is based on the word *'ō lelo* "to speak":

'ō lelo hou
to repeat
e 'ō lelo Hawai'i kākou!
Let's all speak Hawaiian! (us inclusive, three or more)
he aha kāna 'olelo?
What did he/she say?
hiki iā 'oe ke 'ō lelo hou?
Can you say it again?

The feeling in this room—like all the schools I visit—is warm, nurturing, and relaxed. I would love to stay all day, but all too soon it is time to leave, for I have another stop to make—the Waimea Preschool, about eight miles outside of town.

WAIMEA PRESCHOOL

At the preschool, the children are napping—a disappointment to me! But it gives me a chance to look around and talk with the teachers and parent helpers. This preschool opened in 1995. The preschools are private, not part of the public school system; and it is the parents and local educators who must have the vision and do most of the work to begin a preschool, finding the site and the funding themselves. Once all the local arrangements are made, the 'Aha Pūnana Leo, centered in Hilo, will train the teachers and provide the curriculum. The vision for this school started in 1990. It took five years of hard work and planning before it could open.

The teachers and parent volunteers here—as in all the schools I visited—are warmly enthusiastic about their work and deeply dedicated to the survival of Hawaiian language and culture. They admit to being what they tell me are called "university speakers," having learned their language in the college classroom. And it is here that I first hear of some of the inevitable conflict that comes with language revitalization: lots of the *kūpuna*—the Hawaiian word for elders—really don't like to hear the language spoken that way, the teachers tell me.

Later I will learn more about this conflict: there are two ways in which university speech differs most obviously from the speech of the *kūpuna*—one is in intonation, and the other is vocabulary. I see that

dictionary of new words in a prominent place in every classroom I visit. There is a much larger dictionary in existence of traditional vocabulary, but it is the new words that the teachers need most in the classroom. If so much of the vocabulary learned by the children consists of new words made up in the last ten years, the kūpuna must sometimes feel that they are hearing a foreign language!

The teachers tell me about a few activities that take place in a typical day in the Pūnana Leo. They open and close the day with a traditional song and prayer, and the same before lunch. Singing, the teachers tell me, is the most important activity in the school; the children pick up more Hawaiian language through singing than through any other activity, and once you start singing you have their complete attention.

Many different things can happen at the Pūnana Leo—sometimes the kūpuna will come in to talk or show the kids how to make things. Sometimes special activities are planned. But always, in the morning after the prayer, there is work with the calendar and the weather. A child is asked each day to go look out the door and then come tell the class what the weather is like. Is it sunny? Raining? Foggy? (Weather changes so quickly in Hawai'i that it may have changed since the children got to school.) I can see around the walls the evidence of other activities the children engage in: there are pictures colored by the children, with Hawaiian labels printed laboriously by three- and four-year-old hands just learning to write; photographic posters with small colored circles and squares stuck to them (this looks like language practice, where children are told "put the orange circle on the milk"); Hawaiian-language books, including some old favorites such as *The Little Engine That Could*, with the Hawaiian version printed on labels and pasted over the English text; and of course a giant collection of musical instruments—sticks, rattles, gourd drums, and clapper sticks of all shapes and sizes.

The family base is the most important feature of the Pūnana Leo. Those books are made up by the parents, who receive the labels bearing the Hawaiian versions from Hilo and then paste them into the books. A very beautiful, large set of brightly colored building blocks is in one corner—one of the fathers made it. Parents must volunteer eight hours a month in the classroom; they clean and disinfect toys, help the teachers during classes, and make learning materials and toys. They also attend a once-a-week, two-hour evening class in Hawaiian, where they learn

things they can say to their kids, in school or at home. They have all been taught the meaning of the Hawaiian-language signs around the classroom. A teacher translated one of them for me:

*E'olu'olu
E wehe i nā kāma'a
Mahalo!*

Please remove your shoes—thank you!

Finally it is time for the children to wake up. The teachers wander about the room among the mats that the children are sleeping on, calling out gently, "*E ala mai*" (wake up). While this is going on, one teacher puts on a tape of a group singing a Hawaiian song with "*E ala mai*" in the chorus. The children sleepily put away their bedding and then come to the rug and sit down, yawning. A story book is read to them as they wake up. Much as I wish I could stay longer, I must leave: two of the teachers are giving me a ride to Hilo.

Throughout my trip in Hawai'i I hear English and what the Hawaiians call Pidgin—an English-based creole—everywhere except in these special schools. Most of the time, teachers and the more dedicated parents who have sent their children to the Pūnana Leo speak to each other only in Hawaiian. This is important for people trying to save endangered languages: people who know the language have to make a commitment to speak it to each other, and not be tempted back to English by the presence of English speakers in the conversation. Thus, on the drive to Hilo, my hosts speak to me in English but to each other always in Hawaiian. Through such discipline, the language begins to make its way back into public again.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO

Bill (Pila) Wilson, one of the leaders of the Hawaiian language program at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, meets me in Hilo. He puts me under the charge of one of the students, Ola, who shows me the workroom for the Hawaiian language program. She shows me the program ClarisWorks, all in Hawaiian—they have an agreement with the company that if they buy a copy of the English version, they get the Hawaiian version with it for free. Ola runs the Hawaiian language newspaper on campus, named *Nā Maka O Kana*, The Eyes of Kana (Kana is a demigod who can stretch his body to reach all the islands). It was founded for the immersion schools, and goes to students, parents, and teachers from preschool to

college level. Four thousand copies per month are printed, with one of the immersion schools featured each month. This month's issue also includes information on making Christmas decorations and a serialized portion of the story of Kana.

The workroom and nearby storerooms also house some important archives—Hawaiian-language newspapers from the 19th and early 20th century, used for developing materials for history classes; and fifteen years' worth of a weekly radio show ("Ka Leo Hawai'i," hosted by Larry Kimura, another leader of the Hawaiian language movement and a professor at Hilo) that aired from 1972 to 1989 and consisted of interviews of Hawaiian Native speakers. This is the largest collection of Native Hawaiian in existence, and is used a great deal in advanced Hawaiian classes. There is also a collection of videos on Hawaiian culture, all in the Hawaiian language, and copies of the books being produced or translated at a feverish rate for the schools. I see translated copies of *Charlotte's Web*, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, and other popular children's books that are state-required reading in the public elementary schools. Other books are traditional Hawaiian literature collected and produced for Hawaiian language arts classes.

The University of Hawai'i (at Hilo and at Mānoa) trains all the teachers who teach in the immersion schools; most of them did not know the Hawaiian language until college age. At the University you can take beginners' through advanced Hawaiian language classes, Hawaiian linguistics, Hawaiian history, and Hawaiian cultural studies such as fish net making, hula, and chant (*oli*). Here you learn vocal styles (high, low, and vibrating), composition, different Hawaiian song types, and *kaona*—metaphor and indirectness—two of the most important literary devices in Hawaiian song. A new master's program in Hawaiian studies, due to begin in fall 1997, will be taught entirely in the Hawaiian language. Teacher certification, which used to be done only in English, will now be done in the Hawaiian language as well.

A HAWAIIAN-SPEAKING HOME

In the evening, Pila and his children Hulilau (tenth grader) and Keli'i (eighth grader) take me out to dinner. At my request we go to a cafe that serves poi (even though it is mainly a Chinese restaurant), so that I can try that traditional Hawaiian food. (I love it!) Hulilau and Keli'i are fine young people, responsible and articulate, with a strong social awareness. They both go to the Hawaiian-language high school

in Hilo, Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u, named after a famous Hawaiian, Joseph K. Nawahī. After supper we go to their home, where I have been invited to spend the night. We arrive about the same time as Pila's wife, Kauanoe Kamanā, who is the senior teacher at the high school. This is one of the first families to decide to run an entirely Hawaiian-speaking household. In the same pattern I have found in the schools and on my car trips, they speak only Hawaiian to each other at all times. To me, they will speak English, but they do not accommodate to my presence when speaking to each other. Nevertheless, I never feel excluded. During family conversations, one of the children will turn to me from time to time to translate; and in the morning when the family sits in a circle to read from the Hawaiian-language Bible, I am invited to sit with them and try reading a paragraph myself.

This consistency in speaking only Hawaiian to each other is one of the most important habits to form for language revitalization. Endangered languages often lose out to English (or other dominant languages) when, because someone in the household does not speak the endangered language, the rest of the household switches to English. The threatened language loses its final stronghold, and the children growing up there will not learn to speak it.

NĀWAHĪOKALANI'ŌPU'U HIGH SCHOOL

The next morning we all head out to the high school after a breakfast of Hawaiian pancakes. The school has 48 teenagers attending, with fifteen teachers (seven full-time). My poor daughter is in a California high school with a much different teacher-student ratio, and I am jealous! A sizable number of the children went to the same Pūnana Leo preschool and have known each other throughout their education. The tenth-graders are the "lead class," the group from the very first year of the founding of the Pūnana Leo. Right now, of course, because the program is still young, the tenth-graders are the oldest children in the school. The school is preparing for them to become eleventh-graders, and then twelfth—the curriculum is being prepared right now at Hilo. And the school is growing—each year it will have more students.

At 7:40 A.M., one of the seventh graders blows the conch shell. The traditional Hawaiian instrument for the call to assembly is used at the school instead of a buzzer. The students enter the assembly room and sit on wooden benches, while Pila escorts me to a bench on the side. After the morning chant, Pila introduces me, and then a student sings for me, as a guest of the

school, a welcoming chant and presents me with a lei. (This is the third time that I have been "lei-ed" this trip; I find myself completely charmed. At Pila and Kauano's home, I saw dried leis hanging over baby pictures of their children. I saved my leis too, and they hang now in a place of honor at home in Berkeley.) After that, the students go to their classes, and I am invited to wander about and watch. The most memorable period is spent observing Kauano herself give a lesson in traditional chant to the seventh graders. She tells me that chanting almost disappeared in Hawai'i under the hostility of missionaries and the government; but she learned it later in life as it was preserved by some teachers of hula, and now through her classes (as well as classes elsewhere), traditional chant is coming back alive. She teaches the students how to chant in a very strong, full voice. Today she is teaching a chant from the old traditional literature, the voice of a goddess singing, "I am standing here on the bank on one side. I've been waiting a long time, I want to cross over. I have great longing to cross. It's cold, it's cold here, it's cold and damp."

At the high school, some classes are taught in English—including, ironically, the Japanese foreign language class, whose teacher does not speak Hawaiian. 'Aha Pūnana Leo recognizes the need for having some education in English. Despite the new Hawaiian-language master's program in Hawaiian studies at the university, it is understood that most of these children will receive much or all of their university education in English. It is not the goal of the parents and teachers to see all their children major in Hawaiian studies. As Pila says, they want these children to become doctors, or lawyers, or storekeepers, or carpenters—they want the Hawaiian language to spread into all walks of life in Hawai'i, so that doctors, nurses, and their patients, storekeepers and their customers, will talk to each other in Hawaiian.

I also get to see the main office, located at the high school, where Hawaiian-language materials and books are produced. Books of all kinds are in boxes ready to ship out to the schools. This is also where the labels for converting books to Hawaiian are produced. In another room there is state-of-the-art computer and video equipment for the production of educational videos.

PŪNANA LEO O HILO

My last visit on the island of Hawai'i is to one more preschool, Pūnana Leo o Hilo, the first Pūnana Leo school on the island. Here I feel like I already know

many of the staff, for they are all on a video about the Hawaiian language program that I show regularly to my classes in Berkeley. I meet Nāmaka Rawlins, the director of the whole wonderful Pūnana Leo program, who first gave me permission to begin this odyssey. Nā'ilima Gaison, the head teacher, is telling a story to the children, full of songs and dance-like hand motions which the children do along with him. His expressiveness and the raptness of his students mark him as a master storyteller. Later he explains the curriculum to me. The daily routine goes like this:

7:15	Snack
8:30	Exercise
9:00	First circle
9:15	Class
10:00	Second circle
10:30	Playtime and structured activities
11:30	Lunch
12:30	Nap
2:30	Art
3:00	Story
3:15	Snack
3:30-5:00	Play and structured activities, while parents start coming to take the children home

Nā'ilima also explains the curriculum, which progresses from the self in ever-widening circles: self, family, school, community, the island, Hawai'i, the world.

I can't help but notice that "the United States" is not one of the levels mentioned. Hawai'i is culturally and ecologically distinct from the other states. More tourists visit Hawai'i from Asia than from the U.S. mainland. The Nāwahi High School kids have to take a foreign language, and the one that is taught at the high school is Japanese. And we must remember that it was just about a century ago that political power was wrested from the hands of the Hawaiian queen, and Hawaiians are justifiably bitter about the loss of their independence.

Nā'ilima explains some of the different circles: for the "self," the children learn body parts, hygiene, basic needs, and concepts of independence. "Family" includes the whole extended family, and cultural values such as helping, respect, and giving thanks. "Community" is about different places, safety, transportation, and community helpers. For "the island," they learn about the land and sea, plants, animals, and weather. For Hawai'i, they learn about famous people, the history of the state, multi-ethnic culture, and current events. For "the world," they learn about

world history, culture and events, and about how Hawai'i fits into the world as a whole.

It is here at the Pūnana Leo o Hilo that the California connection comes into focus. First of all, I ask Nā'ilima if he knows Cody Pata, a young Nomlaki man who came to Hawai'i as a teenager and spent several years learning the language and teaching in the Pūnana Leo. "Oh, Pueo!" says Nā'ilima, revealing Cody's Hawaiian name. "Yes, he worked with us. How's he doing?" Also, here and at the high school, I meet again the wonderful ladies who came to California a few years ago for a language conference: Ululani Morales, 'Ekelela Aiona, Ō'pūlani Alkino, Leilani Camara, Wailana Purdy Ka'ai, Kaleihōkū Kala'i, and lastly, Lolena Nicholas, a Native speaker from Ni'ihau.

Hilo is not the only place on the islands where language action is going on; there are Pūnana Leo and elementary schools on several other islands as well. On O'ahu, there is even a Hawaiian immersion public school that goes from kindergarten through the twelfth grade (well, tenth grade right now, and heading to twelfth as the lead group matures). I fly from the island of Hawai'i back to O'ahu after visiting Pūnana Leo o Hilo, and have supper in Honolulu that night with several of the faculty of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, who are also key in the Hawaiian language movement—No'eau Warner, Laiana Wang and his family, and Kathy Davis, a colleague of theirs in the ESL department. Laiana tells me about a grant they have received recently from the Administration for Native Americans to bring the language beyond the schools into daily community life. They are planning recreational activities like cookouts and a volleyball series, where the Hawaiian language will be used while having fun.

ĀNUENUE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Through No'eau's help, I am able to go the next day to Ānuenue School, the K-12 public school where Hawaiian is spoken in all the classrooms. *Ānuenue* means rainbow, and appropriately, there is a beautiful rainbow over the school as I drive up. I am just in time for the morning chant, which the children sing in the schoolyard. After checking in at the office, I visit a first-grade class. Roll is called, and as their names are called the children come, one by one, to sit on the floor at the front of the room. One child seems to be the teacher of the moment: he points to the calendar and asks what day of the week it is, and then

points to each day of the month and the children count the days all the way to today: November 27th. This kid is a good teacher. He asks all kinds of questions I can't follow, but the other children know exactly what is being asked and answer clearly in chorus. Then the grown-up teacher, who has been observing from the back of the room, comes to the front and starts asking more questions. She has the children count the number of boys and the number of girls in the room (six of each), and then has them add the two to find out how many students there are altogether. She has them count by fives. Once the math session is over, the class launches into a discussion of the *Mayflower*, the pilgrims, and the origin of Thanksgiving. And again, all of this, throughout the morning, is in Hawaiian. After a while the teacher sends the children off to get pencils and clipboards, and gives them pictures of the *Mayflower* and other Thanksgiving themes to color. She writes some sentences on the board for the children to copy under their pictures.

I wander off to the kindergarten room, where the children are in their circle, discussing different kinds of fruits. Then they go to their desks—each child has his own desk, but they are linked in groups of six. They get their crayons from their cubbyholes and start coloring pictures of fruits that their teacher has handed out. Some children finish their pictures, and the teacher gives them folders of another project they have already started—the familiar Thanksgiving turkey with cutouts of the children's own hands for tails. One child starts humming "Jingle Bells" (the spirit of Christmas season seems to be just as strong here as elsewhere), and pretty soon he starts singing it softly, using Hawaiian words. Other children join in as they color, and after a while there are at least six children singing "Jingle Bells" in Hawaiian. As they color, I look around to see what is on the walls. Two things catch my attention: one is a poster with the numbers written like this:

Numbers	Nāhelu
1	'ekahi
2	'elua
3	'ekolu
4	'ehā
5	'elima
6	'eono
7	'ehiku
8	'ewalu
9	'eiwa
10	'umi

Another is a "weather circle," a large cutout circle on the wall in four quadrants: rain, sun, clouds, and wind. Each day at circle time, they put a dot-sticker on the appropriate weather, and at the end of the month they can see how many days were rainy, how many were sunny, and so on.

Next I go to the seventh-grade room, where the children are studying Native Americans. There are world maps with pointers to the Aztec, Maya, and Inca taped on. Another map focuses on the Pacific and has arrows pointing from the South Pacific islands to Hawai'i along the path of migration.

I make quick stops at other rooms, and tarry longest in the science classroom, where Mahakoa Lujan teaches science. He is obviously a talented and charismatic teacher, and the students love him. He talks with me at some length about the science curriculum, and shows me a fine set of Hawaiian-language books showing general science centered around the Hawaiian Islands—meteorology, marine and terrestrial wildlife, oceanography. Once again the issue of new words comes up. Mahakoa tells me his ideas about how new words ought to be designed, citing "explanatory value" as the most important principle. He points out a poorly designed word: the word for carbon dioxide, which was merely given a Hawaiianized pronunciation: *karabiner diokesaside*, or its even more Hawaiianized variant *kalapona kiokekakike*. The original word in English (based on Latin roots) clearly shows that there are two (di-) oxygen molecules to one carbon, and Mahakoa thinks the Hawaiian word ought to be similarly explanatory.

Mahakoa's viewpoint is part of an ongoing debate in the Lexicon Committee about scientific terminology in general. One school of thought is to invent individual Hawaiian terms based generally on Hawaiian morphemes, as is done with other words. The other school of thought asserts that this is a unique set of international terms that scientists use in all languages, with the speakers of each language modifying them slightly to meet their pronunciation and writing traditions. Proponents of the second school of thought also argue that there are so many of these terms, and they are being invented at such a rapid pace, that Hawai'i cannot keep up with inventing new words for them. It would also be a major problem for science teachers to have to commit all these new words to memory, whereas simply committing the international terms to Hawaiianized pronunciation can be done readily and even spontaneously.

At lunch I talk with a number of ninth and tenth graders, including 'Ānela Lopez, tenth grader and student council president. When I ask this outgoing, intelligent deep thinker about her college plans, she replies "University of Hawai'i" without hesitation. "Why would I ever want to leave my beautiful Hawai'i?"

I talk with her, as I have with other tenth graders, about their thoughts on the Hawaiian language. I have heard children, especially those of high-school age, talking a great deal of English (or sometimes Pidgin) to each other. There are at least two theories given to me about why the children do this—probably both of them correct. One is that the kids who went to public schools, even if they were in Hawaiian language classrooms, got into the habit of using English with their non-Hawaiian-speaking friends on the playground, and this habit then transferred over to the Hawaiian-speaking kids as well. The other theory is that the teens talk English to each other as a kind of teen rebellion, to point out their growing independence from the older generation of people who have been running their schools and lives. In either case the question is, what does this usage of English portend for the future of Hawaiian? Despite this practice of speaking English to each other frequently, everyone said "Hawaiian, of course" when I asked what language they thought they would speak when they married and had children.

One of my colleagues is fond of saying that the future of a language lies in whether the teenagers are using it with each other; whatever they speak to each other will become the language of their future homes. But I realized after talking with these teenagers that it is not that simple. One might wonder how many of these children will really end up speaking Hawaiian in the home—certainly many obstacles will be in the way. But in case of doubt, it is important to remember that some of these children have grown up in households where their parents committed to using Hawaiian as the language of the home, even when they didn't learn it until they were college age. Thus these children have a model of conscious decision making about the home language, and will probably use this model themselves. But the decision will be theirs: each generation will have to make its own decision, and each generation is sure to view the situation differently from the preceding one. Some of the high school students I spoke with fear that their knowledge of English is inadequate for good college-level writing. Perhaps they will find that it is not a problem after all when they attend college; but if it is, it may well be that they will want their children to have a better education in English. Perhaps, once Hawaiian is well established in the home, the next

generation will experiment with a model that is closer to bilingual education, aimed at a thorough education in both languages. It is impossible to tell now what these children will decide, but I am looking forward to finding out!

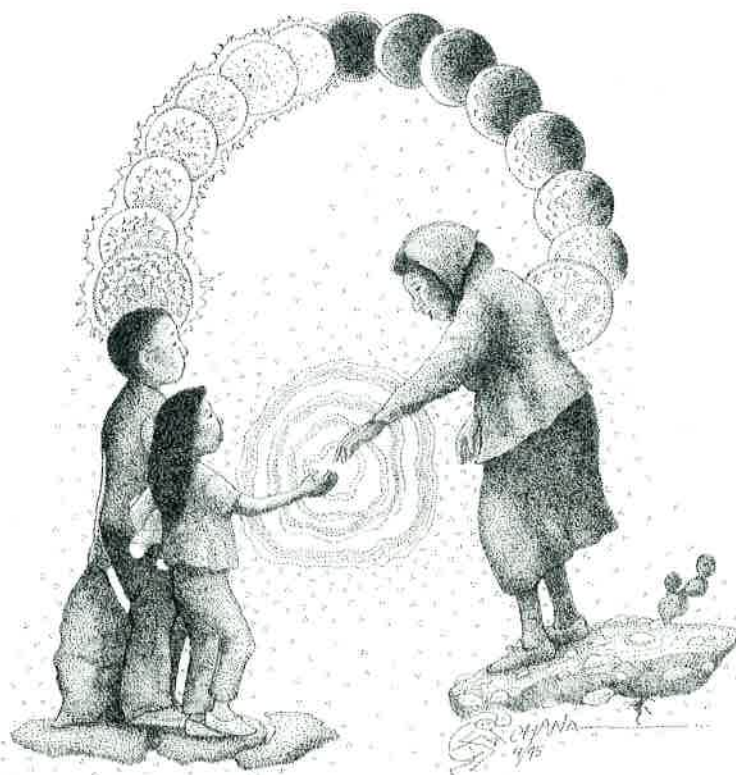
FINAL REMARKS

The Hawaiian language immersion program is by far the most successful language revitalization program I have seen in the United States—indeed, it is one of the three or four major success stories in the world. Like anything else that involves a group of people, it has problems: in this case, factionalization, controversy over language modernization, and constant battles with state agencies.

Right now, one big problem is determining who gets to attend the Hawaiian-language classrooms in the public schools. Many families want their children in this program, not only because of the Hawaiian language and culture, but because of positive academic and social aspects of the program. The state wants a lottery system to decide who gets to attend

the Hawaiian immersion classes. This would mean that children who attend the Pūnana Leo preschools could find themselves displaced by English-speaking children when they get to public school. Leaders in the Hawaiian language movement take the view that everyone is welcome, but that children who enter school already speaking Hawaiian and using it at home should have the first priority, with others included if there is room. They argue that Hawaiian-speaking children today are just as likely to lose the language when put into English-speaking classrooms as their elders were. They also note that families who have not already begun to support Hawaiian language use in the home before kindergarten are much less likely to support full use of the language in the home, community, and even the school.

The tough, brave people I met will fight this one through, and will then come up against other problems. But their persistence has created a great program, and it has created a fine future for their language. As Pila said to me, "If we hesitated every time something became controversial, we wouldn't get anywhere."



"Completing the Circle," by Leonard F. Chana, Tohono O'odham artist.
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