



Exploring the Applications of *Ba-* *theory to Hawaiian Society and* *Hawaiian Language Interaction*

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Revitalizing Hawaiian

- With the Hawaiian language in which I know and work, there is a grassroots theory about the best way to keep the language alive.
- It is a theory that resonates well with the notion of *ba*.

Ma ka hana ka 'ike (knowledge lies in actual practice)

- It centers on the idea of practice-practice of course of the language in classrooms, but more specifically through actual contexts in which the language is put into use.

Ma ka hana ka 'ike (knowledge lies in actual practice)

- It is through this practice that the language and culture of Hawaiian will be preserved.

A Great Fear

- With this practice, there is also a fear, however. The fear is that the practice of language and culture in a land dominated by English can change the Hawaiian language and culture into something that is no longer Hawaiian, it would be Hawaiian words that would express English thoughts.

From Silverstein (2004)

- It is a truism that cultures are essentially social facts, not individual ones; they are properties of populations of people who have come to be, by degrees, tightly or loosely bounded in respect of their groupness, their modes of cohering as a group. **Cultures are historically contingent though, as experienced, relatively perduring values and meanings implicit in the ways people do things and interact one with another.**

From Silverstein (2004)

- Such doings, as events, have value and meaning only insofar as they are patterned—the textually oriented word is “genred”—so that even as they are participating in them, people in effect negotiate the way that events are plausibly and(un)problematically instances of one or more such patterns. **So, culture being manifest only in such sociohistorical facts, anything “cultural” would seem to depend on the contingencies of eventhood that, in complex ways, cumulate as genred norms of “praxis” or “practice.”** Yet, in the event culture is always presumed upon in the course of that very praxis, even as it is always potentially transformed by people’s very doings and sayings.

Ho'i i nā kūpuna (Return to the ancestors)

- In order to overcome this fear of transforming the language and culture of Hawaiian, there has been an effort to rediscover the practices engaged in by the Hawaiian ancestors and to put those back into practice again.

Ho'i i nā kūpuna (Return to the ancestors)

- One of the cultural meanings “implicit” in Hawaiian practices of old is the connectivity of the person to the world around them- the inseparability of the individual from their own histories, their presents (including the land and other people), and also their futures.

Hawaiian Creation Myths

- *‘O Wākea noho iā Papahānaumoku
Hānau ‘ia ‘o Hawai‘i he moku
Hānau ‘ia ‘o Maui he moku*

Wākea mated with Papahānaumoku

Born was Hawai‘i, an island

Born was Maui, an island

Hawaiian speeches: Jamaica Osorio

- *‘O Elroy Thomas Leialoha Osorio he kāne*
- Elroy Thomas Leialoha was the man/husband
- *‘O Claire Ku‘ulei Kei he wahine*
- Claire Ku‘ulei Kei was the woman/wife
- *Noho pū lāua a hānau ‘ia ‘o Jonathan Kei Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio he kāne*
- They mated and Jonathan Kei Kamakawiwo‘ole was born, a man

- *‘O Jonathan Kei Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio he kāne*
- Jonathan Kei Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio was the man/husband
- *‘O Mary Carol Dunne he wahine*
- Mary Carol Dunne was the woman/wife
- *Noho pū lāua a hānau ‘ia ‘O Jamaica Heolimeleokalani Osorio he wahine*
- They mated and Jamaica Heolimeleokalani Osorio was born, a woman

Emphasis on genealogy/connectivity

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 - 1) their parents (at least)
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 - 2) where they were born
- The emphasis here is on the connection of a person to their ancestors and to the land.

Emphasis on genealogy/connectivity

- From the beginning of an interview conducted in 1970 by Clinton Kanahahele:

- CK: *John Campbell, ma hea 'oe i hānau 'ia*

“John Campbell, where were you born”

JC: *Waiāpuka, Kohala Waiāpuka
ma Kohala nei nō.*

“Waiāpuka, Kohala, Waiāpuka in Kohala.”

Emphasis on genealogy/connectivity

- From the beginning of an interview conducted in 1970 by Clinton Kanahahele:

- CK: *‘O wai nā mākua*

“Who are your parents?”

- JC: *Ko‘u makuahine, ‘o Emalia*

Ha‘ina, no Hamakua ‘o ia

“My mother, (she) is Emalia

Ha‘ina, she is from

Hamakua”

Emphasis on genealogy/connectivity

- From the beginning of an interview conducted in 1970 by Clinton Kanahale:

- CK: *A kou makuakāne*
“And your father”

JC: *Niel Campbell he haole ‘o ia
haole piha haole, mai kaleponi
mai ‘o ia*

“Niel Campbell, he is a Caucasian
a full Caucasian, Caucasian, he is
from California”

More linguistic/cultural practices

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- “Ho'oponopono is rooted in ancestral and spiritual identification as 'aumākua or deified ancestors of Hawaiians who feel the painful discord among the peoples” (Ka'imikaua 2009)

Ho'oponopono

- “Any miscommunication therefore must be addressed for improving connectivity between sentient beings. It is important to understand that Hawaiian ideology uses a system’s theory in which all living things are interrelated and connected to one another” (Ka‘imikaua 2009: 197).

Emphasis on genealogy/connectivity

- This emphasis on connectivity to ancestors and to the land is reflected in the *Kumu Honua Mauli Ola*, the Native Hawaiian Educational Philosophy that was published in 2009 based on meetings among Hawaiian scholars and native speakers of the language.

Kumu Honua Mauli Ola

- This statement was meant to serve as a guide for future education of Hawaiians through the medium of Hawaiian.

Emphasis on genealogy/connectivity



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- This connectivity is attained through a Hawaiian life force that is maintained in our bodies

Connectivity

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- Our head, or our brain, connects us to the spiritual world, including the gods and the ancestors that help us know what is appropriate and inappropriate.
- Our mouths, tongues, and ears allow us to use language to make connections to others- Hawaiians believe that language gives life (to ideas, to beliefs, etc.)

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- It is our guts (*na'au*) that we hold our traditional knowledge. This is another connection from ancestors that guides us to know how to exist as (Hawaiian) humans

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- 1) The head through which we are connected to the gods and spiritual beliefs
- 2) the navel (placenta) which binds us to the land and to our ancestors
- 3) the reproductive organs which connect us to each other and future generations

Connectivity from body to body

- “Through these centers, we exist in relationship to one another as members of a group of people among whom are shared the elements of spirit, language, physical behavior, and traditional knowledge” from the English translation of the *Kumu Honua Mauli Ola*.

Connectivity from body to body

- There is no belief in this dualism of the western world, that there is a separation between body and the environment. A body in Hawaiian is not considered separate but as one part of this connectivity with the past, with the spiritual world, with other bodies, and with future bodies.

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- More specifically, I am thinking of how we collect data and then present it in a transcript form that separates the participants from each other.

The “Data” Problem

- This not only leads us to objectify our data and separate it from the context in which it occurs but it also encourages us to view the participants as individuals who are making individual utterances on a line-by-line basis. We are, in fact, taught to make transcripts that separate our participants into individuals.

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- Perhaps we might consider that our process of data analysis is just us in our western *ba*, in other words, us engaging in an interdependent relationship with our data that we have been taught to do in our western-style academia.
- I have a few excerpts of Hawaiian data appear to provide fairly clear examples of repetition.

Example 1 (from data in 1970)

- Interviewer: *kama'āina nō 'oe i kēia 'āina. lō'ihī kēia noho ['ana*

familiar Emp you at this land long this staying

“You are familiar with this land. You have been here long”

Elder:

[‘ae

yes

lō'ihī lō'ihī lō'ihī kēia- ko'ū noho 'ana ma kēia 'āina

long long long this my staying at this land

“Yes, long, long, my staying here on this land has been long”

Example 2 (also data in 1970)

- Interviewer: *Ma laila kanu 'ia ke kalo*
at there plant PASS the taro
“The taro was planted there”

Elder: *kanu 'ia ke kalo*
plant PASS the taro
“The taro was planted”

((one comment about the river that provided water))

Interviewer: *Ma mua kahe mau kēlā kahawai*
at before flow constantly that river
“That river flowed constantly before”

Elder: *Wai kahe mau, kahe mau, 'a'ole loa'a i ka*
'āina kanu

water flow constantly flow constantly not reach to the land plant
kalo i kai

taro at ocean

land
“The water flowed constantly, flowed constantly, it did not reach the
where taro was planted by the ocean.”

Example 3 (Kimura 2012)

1 LK: *Ua pa'a paha i ka mau'u*

Past stuck maybe in the grass

“It was maybe stuck in the grass”

2 FS: *Ā ua pa'a i ka mau'u. Aia ma ne'i*

A past stuck in the grass Loc. at here

“A, it was stuck in the grass. Right here.”

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- Anybody trained in western style discourse analysis will recognize these 3 examples as repetitions.
- In fact, anybody raised and educated in the west would be able to see these as repetitions, partly because we have been taught that just repeating what others say makes us look “bad”, as uncreative and anti-individualistic.

Repetition??

- But what if that was not the case in Hawaiian? What if by doing our analytic dance and separating the speakers into individuals and showing the world how much repetition exists, we are actually missing the point? What if it did not matter where an idea came from in a Hawaiian perspective, only that ideas emerge and they do so through the connectivity of the people?

Repetition? Cultural Practice of Connectivity?

In this sense, if we can re-orient ourselves away from seeing these as repetitions in a western sense, this cultural practice of repeating in interaction may be one further (linguistic) place where the connectivity among Hawaiians was expressed in the past and could possibly be in the future.



Cultures are historically contingent though, as experienced, relatively perduring values and meanings implicit in the ways people do things and interact one with another.

Finally

- Hawaiian culture and interaction, through its (ideological) rejection of the separatism between individual bodies and the world around them, supports one of the central ideas of *ba*.

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- Hawaiian culture and interaction, through its (ideological) rejection of the separatism between individual bodies and the world around them, supports the idea of *ba*.
- In fact, I am really excited about this application of *ba* to Hawaiian because of the emancipatory possibilities- in other words, that the framework of *ba* might allow us to view the Hawaiian emphasis on connectivity as a regular aspect of our shared world rather than as something exotic and unusual in comparison with our (academic) infatuation with individuality