Chapter 7

A Discourse Analytic Approach to Practices of Hawaiian Language Revitalization in the Mass Media:
Style, Bivalency, and Metapragmatic Commentary

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ABSTRACT

Scholars of language policy and planning (LPP) have recently started using ethnographic and discourse-analytic methods. Examining the collaborative sense-making activity of language users can shed light on how they construct their version or versions of reality by using semiotic resources, creating intertextual links, and referring to language ideologies. This study investigates an under-researched area in LPP: spoken discourse in media talk, specifically in media involved in indigenous language revitalization in Hawai'i. Using audio recordings of Ka Leo Hawai'i (The Hawaiian Voice) broadcast from the 1970s for over 25 years, the study explores the multilingual practices of the hosts, the guests, and the call-in listeners of the translingual contact zone of this Hawaiian language radio show by analyzing these participants' metapragmatic comments on the use of English and their bivalent utterances.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars in the field of language policy and planning (LPP) have taken various approaches to the inherently sociolinguistic issues involved in the acquisition and maintenance of indigenous languages in the postcolonial era. In the 1990s and early 2000s, many studies moved beyond the field's early focus on policy when they started adopting "ethnographic and discourse-analytic methods to examine LPP pro-

cesses 'on the ground'" (Hult & Johnson, 2015, p. 2). In other words, they began to analyze how policy is connected with language practices in real-world contexts. The kind of analysis pursued in the present study pays close attention to what reality people construct through spoken discourse in the moment-by-moment development of interaction. The intention is to reveal the collaborative sense-making activity through which people construct their version or versions of reality by using semiotic resources, creating intertextual links (Johnson, 2015), and referring to language ideologies (Ajsic & McGroarty, 2015). In this way, the study explores how language ideologies are manifested in heterogenous linguistic practices in an indigenous language revitalization context.

While LPP research was once limited to examining policy documents, the more recent work in this field has expanded its analytical scope to a broader range of domains that include classroom interaction (Martin-Jones, 2015) and language use in new media (Kelly-Holmes, 2015), among others. This study investigates an underresearched area in the field of LPP: spoken discourse in media talk (Hutchby, 2006). It focuses on radio, which has remained one of the key mass communication media. Although there is little research on radio in the context of indigenous language revitalization, a pioneering study by Cotter (1999) analyzed an Irish radio station, *Raidió na Life*, and found that although the station's mission was to promote the use of Irish, the speakers preferred switching between Irish and English (for whatever reason) if the other choice was to create dead air. In other words, the main belief or language ideology that drove the radio station's practices was that speaking Irish would help revitalize the language, but that being silent due to searching for the right word in Irish and refusing to speak English would be of no help. This is an interesting finding because it is usually believed that revitalizing a language requires using it exclusively and avoiding using the language of power, and because other Irish radio stations did not adopt the same strategy as *Raidió na Life*. In short, Cotter's study highlighted the complexity of language ideology within Irish communities that shared the same goal of revitalizing their language.

The present study has two aims. First, it examines metapragmatic commentary in a Hawaiian language radio show that was ideologically committed to speaking exclusively in Hawaiian. Starting in 1972, the program interviewed Native Hawaiian elders and documented their speech and cultural knowledge. In other words, the goal of the program was to produce rich linguistic and cultural materials that could be used to revitalize Hawaiian. At the time, the language had few young speakers and was on the brink of extinction. In fact, the audio recordings of the program became an important asset for the community, and they have long been used in various educational contexts in Hawai'i for the purpose of learning how Native Hawaiian elders talked as well as about traditional knowledge, indigenous epistemology, and so forth. In this sense, this radio program has become inseparably tied to issues of the acquisition and maintenance of Hawaiian, as the analysis presented below highlights. Second, in addition to exploring metapragmatic commentary, the present study also argues that the participants of the show stylized themselves with various semiotic resources, especially with bivalent and translingual items that belong simultaneously to multiple languages. The radio program participants were, by so doing, securing the space for creative language use on this show where the exclusive use of Hawaiian was, institutionally and morally, expected. The study's claim is that such creative language practices reinforced the energy and excitement of the Hawaiian-speaking communities, thus contributing to it in a positive way.

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