



## ***Talking the language to death: Observing Hawaiian language classes***

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### **Abstract**

In the late 19th century, when the United States began its illegal occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom, the teaching of languages was dominated by an approach—grammar translation—that has been associated with élitism and cultural dominance. Since then, there have been major developments in language teaching. Among these has been the development of “communicative language teaching” (CLT), an approach intended to encourage learners to use the target language for genuine communication in culturally appropriate contexts. However, analysis of a sample of Hawaiian language lessons taught in the second decade of the 20th century revealed little evidence of any of these. Instead, an approach reminiscent of aspects of grammar translation was very much in evidence, with teacher talk, often in English, occupying over half of the lesson in each case, and with considerable evidence of confusion, frustration and minimal participation on the part of many of the students. What this suggests is the need for a comprehensive review of all those factors that have an impact on the teaching and learning of Hawaiian, including, in particular, curriculum design and teacher

training. It is no longer possible to accept that while language teachers talk, often in the language/s of colonisers, language death continues to stalk those indigenous languages that have so far failed to succumb.

## Keywords

communicative language teaching, grammar translation, Hawaiian language teaching, language death

## Introduction

Located in the subtropical zone of the central northern Pacific Ocean and consisting of high volcanic islands and low-lying atolls, Hawai'i is the most isolated archipelago in the world. The aboriginal people of the Hawaiian Islands (*Kānaka Maoli*) are Polynesians who are estimated to have first colonised the Islands between 300 and 800 CE from the Marquesas or Society Islands, more than 2,000 miles (3,200 km) south. They brought with them their language, which evolved into what is now known as Hawaiian (*ka 'ōlelo Hawai'i*) (NeSmith 2012, 13). Prior to the start of the 20th century (and throughout the first two decades of the 20th century), most *Kānaka Maoli* were Hawaiian monoglots.

In 1810, King Kamehameha the Great of Hawai'i Island conquered the eight inhabited islands of the archipelago and united them under his rule. In 1840, King Kamehameha III established the first Constitution of what was then called the Hawaiian Kingdom and formed the government as a constitutional monarchy. In 1843, Great Britain and France became the first countries to recognise the sovereignty of the Kingdom.

On January 17, 1893, supported by United States Minister John Stevens and a legion of heavily armed U.S. marines, a small group of naturalised white Hawaiian subjects and foreign nationals living in Honolulu revolted in a coup against the government of Queen Lili'uokalani and declared a Provisional Government. The rebel government held Lili'uokalani in house arrest at 'Iolani Palace for one year in 1895 (Lili'uokalani 1990, 267). As a consequence of negotiations between the heads of state of the Hawaiian Kingdom and the United States regarding the return of power and restitution to the Hawaiian Kingdom government, Queen Lili'uokalani temporarily assigned her executive power to the American President (United States House of Representatives, 53rd Congress, 1894-1895, 461). Sanford Dole, a son of American citizens resident in the Kingdom, was named President of the Provisional Government by coup conspirators. One year later, the Provisional Government's name was changed to the Republic of Hawai'i. On March 9, 1893, United States President Grover Cleveland charged James Blount with launching an official investigation into the events surrounding the coup. Following several reports on the matter by Blount, United States Secretary of State Walter Gresham concluded that there had been a violation of the treaties of friendship between the Kingdom and the United States (United States House of Representatives, 53rd Congress, 1894-1895, 459-463). In December 1898, President Cleveland agreed that Queen Lili'uokalani and her government would be restored to power in exchange for amnesty for the coup insurgents. This was followed by two executive agreements—the *Lili'uokalani assignment* and the *Agreement of restoration* (Sai 2008, 120-125). However, as a result of political stonewalling in Washington, the United States has, to this day, failed to enforce these agreements.

Between 1894 and 1898, Republic leaders repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, lobbied the United States Senate to annex the Hawaiian Islands (Coffman 2009, 268; Silva 2004, 145-

159). In 1898, however, the United States declared war on Spain and moved to capture all of its overseas territories. In violation of its neutral status, it used Kingdom territory as a military base from which to launch attacks on Spanish-held Guam and the Philippines. In that same year, the United States Congress, under the presidency of William McKinley, issued a joint resolution (a unilateral action), known as the Newlands Resolution, in which the United States declared the Hawaiian Islands a U.S. territory. Since that time, as Sai (2015, 5), notes:

The United States [has] remained in Hawai'i and [has] implemented a policy of denationalization in order to conceal the prolonged occupation of an independent and sovereign state . . .

[The] world has been led to believe, through intentional manipulation of historical facts, that the United States acquired the independence and sovereignty of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

Beginning in the first two decades of the 20th century, American citizens migrated in large numbers to the Hawaiian Islands. In 1959, the U.S.-installed territorial government conducted a plebiscite in which residents who participated voted to become a state of the United States. This was not surprising in view of the fact that by that time, resident United States citizens outnumbered Kingdom subjects. The United States subsequently declared the Hawaiian Islands to be the 50th state of the United States.

In 2001, a three-member arbitration panel of the Permanent Court of Arbitrations at the World Court at the Hague in the Netherlands verified that the Hawaiian Kingdom remained an independent and sovereign State (*Larsen v Hawaiian Kingdom* 2014, 566). In March 2010, the United States District Court in Washington acknowledged the legitimacy of the *Lili'uokalani Assignment* (United States District Court for the District of Columbia 2010, 2-3). Nevertheless, the United States continues to refuse to enforce the Assignment. In May 2014, The Permanent Court of Arbitration Case Repository at the Hague, Netherlands registered a dispute between a Hawaiian Kingdom national and the Hawaiian Kingdom government, with the Kingdom registered as a state and the respondent in the matter (*Larsen v Hawaiian Kingdom*, 2014), and in January 2017, the Permanent Court of Arbitration initiated a fact-finding commission to pursue the matter to which the Hawaiian Kingdom is party as a nation state despite its current political status as an occupied state (*Government of the Hawaiian Kingdom v Lance Paul Larsen* 2017).

In 1894, in a statement reported by Blount, the Reverend Dr Charles McEwen Hyde (Department of State Foreign Relations of the United States 1894, 825) made the following observation:

The Americanization of the islands will necessitate the use of the English language only as the language of business, of politics, of education, of church service; and open the wide field of English literature.

In 1896, the rebel Republic of Hawai'i government enacted into law Act 57, in which it refused to support Hawaiian-medium education. By the first decade of the 20th century, all official schooling was conducted through the medium of English.

The U.S. occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom territory and its control over the citizenship and education system effectively had the result of suppressing the use of Hawaiian as the lingua franca in favour of American English. As Schütz (1994, 350) has observed, the aims of the occupying U.S. forces included English monolingualism for Kingdom subjects. Thus, Nogelmeier (2010, 59) notes that despite the huge cache of Hawaiian language literature

that accumulated throughout the 19th century, perhaps the largest of any Polynesian peoples of the era, there was, by the early 1900s, a widespread fear that the Hawaiian language would be lost to extinction (12, 59).

Throughout the governance of rebel forces, and during most of the 20th century, Hawaiian language and culture were stigmatised through pro-American and pro-English legislation, and social and political conditioning. Thus, by the mid-20th century, most *Kānaka Maoli* did not wish to be known as Hawaiian speakers or practitioners of traditional Hawaiian culture (Moore 2010, 11). This led to the atrophy of Hawaiian-speaking communities. Indeed, by the last decade of the 20th century, the Hawaiian-speaking population had been reduced to fewer than 1,000 people, with the privately owned Ni‘ihau Island (estimated fewer than 100 permanent residents) and Ni‘ihau families living on the west side of neighboring Kaua‘i Island (estimated 200 persons) being the only place left in the Hawaiian Islands where a community of native speakers of Hawaiian continued to operate. That community today numbers approximately 200–300 people. Apart from the Ni‘ihau community, there are now very few native speakers of Hawaiian, perhaps even fewer than 50. Of those, most are older than 60, and many of them will have had little opportunity to use the language for decades (Reinecke 1988, 124; Schütz 1994, 365). By the latter half of the 20th century, Hawaiian had become a foreign language to the vast majority of *Kānaka Maoli*. This was not, however, the end of the matter.

The 1970s marked the beginning of a Hawaiian Renaissance (Kanahale 1982, 10, 36). By the 1980s, enrolments in courses in Hawaiian language were rising steadily, with a boom in enrolments being experienced in the 1990s. By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, English native speakers (including *Kānaka Maoli* and others) who had learned Hawaiian as an additional language probably numbered between 2,000 and 3,000.

In 1984, the first Hawaiian immersion preschool was opened in Kekaha, Kaua‘i (Kamanā & Wilson 2001, 149), and Hawaiian immersion schools have now been established on every island except Lāna‘i. The majority of teachers in these schools are, however, not themselves native speakers of the language, but graduates who learned the language in high schools and/or post-secondary institutions. It is therefore clear that the future of Hawaiian language and culture now depends, to a very considerable extent, on the teaching and learning of Hawaiian in schools and tertiary-level institutions. There is currently no detailed and coherent national or statewide language curriculum for Hawaiian language. Nor is there any agency devoted to the development of proficiency-based Hawaiian language testing, the development of teaching resources, or the establishment and oversight of preservice and in-service Hawaiian as an additional language (HAL) teacher training. It is therefore particularly important to know *what* language is being taught in these institutions and *how* it is being taught. The research reported here aimed to begin to address that issue. It was underpinned by the following question:

How is a sample of Hawaiian language lessons taught in tertiary educational institutions in Hawai‘i positioned in relation to major changes and developments that have taken place in the area of the teaching of additional languages since the beginning of the 20th century, and, in particular, since the middle of that century?

### **Major developments in language teaching since the heyday of grammar translation**

By the end of the 18th century, the approach to language teaching that we now refer to as “grammar translation” began to emerge in European grammar schools. Grammar provided

both the organising principle of language learning and its main content. Translation, often of documents considered to be of historical and/or literary significance, provided evidence of mastery of the language (Neuner & Hunfeld 2003, 19). As exemplified in the works of some of the proponents of the approach, grammar translation involved lessons that were made up of a combination of grammatical rules and paradigms, lists of vocabulary items for memorisation, and exercises in the form of sentences for translation (Howatt 2009, 472). As early as the end of the 19th century, grammar translation, which has been described as “a method for which there is no theory” (Richards & Rodgers 2001, 6), was being challenged by members of what has come to be known as the “Reform Movement” in language teaching (Howatt 1984, 169). The Reformists believed in the importance of learning everyday oral language and were concerned about the lack of relevance of grammar translation in a context in which foreign languages were increasingly being learned for practical purposes (Stern 1983, 89). Some of the members of the reform movement advocated using only the target language as the language of instruction; others did not (Howatt & Widdowson 2004, 187-209). However, since teaching wholly or in large part through the medium of the target language became increasingly popular, many strategies for conveying meaning without recourse to translation were developed. These include, for example, the use of real objects (realia: such as pieces of fruit or household objects), pictures, drawings, gestures, mime, timelines (positioning in relation to lines representing different time zones) and concept questions (breaking concepts down into parts and associating each part with a specific question). They also involve ensuring that new structures are introduced in the context of familiar structures and vocabulary (Nock 2014, 224-225).

Initially, the ideas of the Reformists had little real impact on language teaching. This was, in part, because much language teaching was designed to reinforce élitism, cultural dominance, colonialism and expansionism. In European universities, the teaching of classical languages was seen largely as an intellectual exercise, one that helped learners develop the capacity to think clearly and logically while gaining some understanding of the history and culture of the West. In this context, “culture” was initially understood almost exclusively in terms of “high culture”, that is, in relation to the attributes, attitudes and beliefs of the most privileged members of society (see, for example, Arnold, 1869). Later, the concept of culture was extended to include shared values, beliefs and behavior (at whatever “level” of society). As Nock (2014, 37) observes, in the context of U.K. colonialism and U.S. expansionism, language teaching often had overtly political aims with which grammar translation, which was often less concerned with language learning than it was with the promotion of cultural assimilation through exposure to significant texts, was largely consistent:

The teaching of the language of the politically dominant group (often English) had two main cultural aims. The first of these was to extend “membership of a select, educated middle-class group” (Graddol 2006, 38). In such a context, a literary canon that focused on what came to be known as “high culture” had an important role to play. The second cultural aim applied to the colonized more generally. The aim here was to ensure cultural commonality, to replace existing languages, values, beliefs and behavior by those associated with the dominant group (ibid, 82). From this perspective, the teaching of dominant languages could be construed as a form of linguistic and cultural imperialism (see Phillipson 1992).

By the middle of the 20th century, however, many changes in attitudes and values had taken place, partly in relation to the impact of World War II and its aftermath. As Fester (2014, 14) observes:

Events leading up to World War II, together with the war itself and its aftermath, led to further interrogation of the contemporary relevance of an approach to the teaching of languages (grammar translation) that was not oriented towards their day-to-day use and that was, in addition, underpinned by an élitist concept of culture as cultivation (improvement/superiority), one that came to be associated with colonial and expansionist agendas (NeSmith 2012, 35), and, in particular, with the increase in nationalistic propaganda that had preceded the outbreak of war (Valax 2011, 15-16).

Two important developments that had a direct impact on language teaching and, in particular, on promoting the ideals of the Reformists and providing them with a firm theoretical foundation, were the development of structuralism within linguistics and of behaviourism within psychology. Linguistic structuralism treated human languages as formal systems in which meaning is derived from contrasts within the system, such as the contrast between word classes that may occur after prepositions and determiners and those that may not (see, for example, de Saussure 1916). Out of linguistic structuralism grew the structural language syllabus, a syllabus type in which structure played a central role, with grammatical constructions being introduced cumulatively, starting with those considered to be most useful and/or least complex (Krahnke 1987, 15). Thus, lessons focusing on the simple past tense in its regular form (e.g. She danced) would be likely to precede those that focused on irregular forms of the simple past tense (e.g. She ate) and these would, in turn, be likely to precede lessons that focused on present perfect and past perfect aspect (e.g. He has danced; He had danced).

Central to behaviourism was the belief that learning depended fundamentally on imitation, repetition and conditioning. Out of this philosophy grew audio-lingualism, a language teaching method that was based on a combination of imitation, practice and feedback. Thus, for example, students would typically do exercises that involved copying a sample sentence (e.g. The North Sea is cold) and then replacing an element of that sentence with other elements that are grammatically congruous (e.g. The North Sea is cold/ warm/ freezing/ vast/ huge/ enormous/ tiny). This process often resulted in sentences that, while grammatically correct, had no basis in reality, being patently untrue, unacceptable or nonsensical. The audio-lingual method became very influential from the 1940s onwards (Lightbown & Spada 2003, 9) and together, the structural syllabus and audio-lingual methodology dominated much language teaching in the middle decades of the 20th century.

By the 1970s, both the structural syllabus and audio-lingual methodology were themselves subject to challenge as behaviourist psychology gave way to mentalist approaches to psychology, in which thought processes played a central role, and as structural linguistics began to be augmented by developments in pragmatics, discourse analysis and sociolinguistics that focused on how context (both linguistic context and social context) impacts language use.

A raft of proposals for new approaches to language syllabus design that attempted to take account of these new developments began to appear. These included situational/topic-based syllabuses, notional-functional syllabuses, lexical syllabuses and task-based syllabuses.

In situational/topic-based syllabuses, aspects of language are introduced in relation to their probability of occurrence in particular situations or in the context of particular topics (Ur 2000, 178). Examples of textbooks designed according to this syllabus type are *Situational English* (Commonwealth Office of Education, 1967) and *New Concept English* (Alexander,

1967). Fester (2014, 30) discusses some of the problems associated with this type of syllabus:

One of several problematic assumptions underlying syllabuses of this type is the assumption that the interaction between situations (e.g. at the post office/bank) and language selection is largely deterministic; a second is the difficulty of deciding which situations should be prioritized in particular instances (Wilkins 1976, 83 & 84). Perhaps even more significant is the danger that the emphasis on an association between particular linguistic constructions and particular situations will mask the importance of structural productivity. Furthermore, as Alexander (1967, xxvii) observed, it is, in the early stages, possible to use very few structural patterns, something that reduces the credibility/ authenticity of the situation. . . . Finally, it is important to note that it is very difficult to distinguish clearly between situations and topics and to delineate topic boundaries, with “topics having an unfortunate tendency to merge into one another and subsume other topics” (Long and Crookes 1993, 23).

Notional-functional syllabuses (Wilkins 1976) focus on notional, functional and modal meanings. *Notional meanings* (notions) are ideational or propositional meanings, that is, meanings that can be expressed through the interaction between lexis and grammatical systems (e.g. certain types of prepositional phrase can express or encode the notion of location). *Modal meanings* modify propositional meanings, indicating that an event is, for example, possible or probable, or that a certain course of action is obligatory or recommended. *Functions* are meanings that relate to what people actually do with language (e.g. promise, insult, warn) and are generally expressed through a combination of sentences or utterances and the contexts in which they occur. Thus, for example, in certain contexts, a sentence indicating that a particular vase is on a high shelf may be function as a warning; in other contexts, it may simply function as a piece of information about location. An example of an English language textbook underpinned by a notional-functional syllabus type is *Strategies 1* (Abbs & Freebain 1977). Among the problems associated with attempts to implement this type of syllabus has been a tendency to prioritise functions over notions (Breen 1987, 90) and, hence, to underestimate the important role that structure plays in linguistic communication. In addition, decontextualised phrases and sentences have often been treated as if they are examples of particular functions although, except in the case of certain formulaic functions such as greetings, the same utterance can have a range of different functions depending on the context in which it occurs (Crombie 1988, 284).

In lexical syllabuses, the primary focus is on vocabulary and the role it plays in structuring discourse (Sinclair & Renouf 1988). Words and groups of words (lexical chunks) are selected for inclusion at various stages of language courses on the basis of what corpus-based studies of natural language use reveal about their frequency of occurrence and usefulness in particular contexts. The assumption is that “grammar is the outcome of lexical structure” (Hoey 2005, 1) and will, therefore, necessarily be accommodated within a syllabus that is lexically driven. It should be noted, however, that there are very few examples of textbooks based on this syllabus design concept, one exception being *The Collins COBUILD English Course* (J. Willis & D. Willis 1989). This may be, in part at least, because corpus-based studies generally omit discourse features (Widdowson 2003, 75) and, in part, because they tend to place over-reliance on the memorisation of predigested chunks of language rather than on the ability to use language structures productively.

The precursor of what is now commonly referred to as the task-based syllabus was Prabhu’s (1987) “procedural syllabus”, a syllabus made up of a list of tasks (e.g. planning a picnic) rather than a list of the language that would or might be required in order to

complete these tasks. No attempt is made in advance of lessons to plan their linguistic content. There have been many different proposals concerning the types of task that could or should feature in task-based syllabuses. In fact, these proposals actually include almost “anything the learners are given to do (or choose to do) in the language classroom to further the process of language learning” (Williams & Burden 1997, 167). It has been claimed that this type of syllabus confuses means and ends (Crombie 1988, 287), with tasks being a means towards an end (thus belonging to the methodological component of the curriculum) rather than an end in themselves (which their inclusion as syllabus components would suggest). For this reason, a distinction is sometimes made between *task-based learning*, in which language syllabuses are themselves made up of tasks, and *task-supported learning*, in which tasks are used to support the learning of whatever is included in the syllabus, such as notions, vocabulary, discourse features and so on. (Loschky & Bley-Vroman 1993, 154-156).

There were, in addition, proposals relating to skills-based syllabuses, such as, for example, writing syllabuses that centred on different genres such as explaining and arguing (see, for example, Swales, 1990). There were also syllabus design proposals that combined aspects of various different syllabus design types, such as the core and spiral syllabus, in which notional, functional and situational specifications spiral around a grammatical core (Brumfit 1980). Thus, for example, while initial units might be primarily functional and later ones primarily notional, there might also be a focus throughout on structure so that there is “progression through the economical, generative grammatical core” (5). Another syllabus type based on combining aspects of various other proposals is the proportional syllabus suggested by Yalden (1983), in which an initial structural phase is followed by a number of communicative phases that might involve, for example, a primary focus on functions or on aspects of discourse structure (such as ways of signalling linguistically that events occur sequentially). Finally, there might be a specialised phase in which aspects of language use that are of particular importance in the context of, for example, business transactions are highlighted.

One of the major developments in approaches to language teaching itself has been what is generally referred to as “communicative language teaching” (CLT), which emerged out of concepts of communicative competence/communicative competences (see, for example, Hymes 1971) and focused on replacing teacher-focused lessons by student-centred ones, in which learning through communication was prioritised. Fundamental to CLT are, according to Littlewood (1981, 6, 77-78), a number of principles—*the meaningfulness principle* (language should be used meaningfully), *the communication principle* (activities should involve genuine communication), and *the task principle* (language should be used to carry out meaningful tasks). In its early stages, CLT typically took a “strong” form that largely neglected linguistic structure; in its later stages, it has generally taken a “weaker” form in which grammatical rules are taught inductively (Howatt 1984, 279); that is, the students are encouraged to work out grammatical patterns for themselves on the basis of examples. Most recently, CLT has sometimes been associated with task-based learning, although a task-supported approach appears to be much more common. While some tasks might be defined as being communicative, others involving, for example, copying and repetition, would not. In attempting to introduce some clarity into this area, Littlewood (2004, 322) has provided the following task type outline:

*Communicative tasks* – involve practicing language in a context where new information is exchanged. They may involve *structured communication* (where pre-taught language is elicited) or *authentic communication* (where different language choices are equally likely).

*Pre-communicative tasks* – pay some attention to meaning but do not involve the exchange of new messages.

*Non-communicative tasks* – focus wholly on the structure of language.

The aim of this overview has not been to attempt to persuade readers that any one of the proposals or developments to which reference is made is necessarily superior to others. Rather, it has been to provide an outline of these proposals or developments and, in doing so, to draw attention to the fact that there is something important that all of them have in common. All of them represent a rejection of grammar translation, which, with its focus on written texts, grammatical rules, translation and often cultural assimilation, has dominated much language teaching since the 19th century. All of them also represent a rejection of that focus on linguistic structure to the exclusion of other aspects of language and on learning by imitation and repetition (the structural syllabus and audio-lingual methodology) that dominated much language teaching in the first half of the 20th century. Finally, all of them are predicated on the belief that context (linguistic, personal and social) plays an important role in language use and must therefore also play a role in language teaching and learning.

### Background to the study

It was in the context outlined above that a research project was launched, the overall aim being to determine what is currently happening in relation to the teaching and learning of the Hawaiian language in Hawai'i. That research project included questionnaire-based surveys (involving both teachers and college-level learners of Hawaiian), semi-structured interviews (involving tertiary institution teachers of Hawaiian), and the analysis of samples of textbooks and language lessons (NeSmith, 2012). Reported here is one aspect of that research project—the analysis of a sample of four language lessons taught by four different teachers in four different tertiary institutions in Hawai'i (see Table 1 for further detail concerning the lessons).

**Table 1** Classes involved in the lesson observation

Category	Course level	Meeting times	Gender of the teacher	Length of time as a teacher of Hawaiian	No. of students	Length of observation
Class 1	Year 1, semester 1	1 x 55 minute session each weekday	Female	25 years	11	55 minutes
Class 2	Year 1, semester 1	1 x 120 minute session twice weekly	Male	1 semester	13	1 hour
Class 3	Year 1, semester 2	1 x 60 minute session each weekday	Female	11 years	10	1 hour
Class 4	Year 1, semester 1 (accelerate course) <sup>1</sup>	1 x 120 minute session twice weekly	Male	5 years	19	1 hour

The lesson analysis reported here inevitably draws attention, on occasion, to aspects of teacher and student behaviour that are indicative of the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the teaching in relation to student learning. There are, however, many different reasons why teachers may be more or less effective in general or on particular occasions, including, for example, the usefulness of the training they have received, if any. It is therefore important to stress that it is not our intention to make judgments about the competence of individual teachers. We would regard any attempt to do so as wholly inappropriate. We would also regard it as inappropriate to provide examples of what we consider to be “best practice”, since a range of different practices may be equally effective depending on context. The aim of the research reported here was not to highlight aspects of teacher effectiveness or ineffectiveness. It was to determine how the observed lessons were positioned in relation to major changes and developments that have taken place in the area of the teaching of additional languages since the beginning of the 20th century, and, in particular, since the middle of that century. Our findings in relation to this issue inevitably raise a number of matters of considerable importance so far as the ultimate survival of the Hawaiian language is concerned.

### Reporting on the findings of the study

The lessons were analysed in relation to a number of focus points that were based on a review of literature that sought to identify critical aspects of differing approaches to the teaching of additional languages.<sup>2</sup> An overview of the findings of that analysis is provided below under four main headings: *achievement objectives*, *teacher talk and student talk*, *task and activity types*, and *culture*.

In lesson transcript extracts below, T = teacher; Ss = student/s. Comments and translations provided by the authors to assist readers in interpreting the extracts are enclosed in round brackets.

#### *Achievement objectives*

Lesson 1 had a lexical and grammatical focus. This included revision of words for family members (e.g. *kaikua'ana*: *older sibling of the same gender*) and the introduction and practice of questions and answers about family relationships (e.g. *He kaikua'ana kou?*; *Do you have an older sibling of the same gender?*). The teacher used a large colour photograph of a family as a visual aid.

Lesson 2 had a primarily grammatical focus, including: subject and object pronouns (e.g. *au/wau*: *I*; *'oe*: *you, singular*); locative prepositions (e.g. *ma luna*: *above, on top of*); possessive markers (*kā/ko*: *owner*); locative sentence patterns—positive, negative and interrogative (*Ai au ma PN1 i kēia pō*: *I'm in P1 tonight*); and equative sentence patterns—positive, negative and interrogative (e.g. *'He kumu 'ōlelo Hawai'i 'oe?*; *Are you a Hawaiian language teacher?*). There were six handouts. Three provided grammatical information and substitution exercises; two of them (for homework) included information tables, yes/no question prompts and spaces for responses; on the last was the lyrics of a song composed by the teacher to demonstrate the structures included in the lesson. Towards the end of the lesson, the focus moved to a textual one, with this song being taught to the students by the teacher, accompanied in traditional fashion by playing a 'ukulele.

Lesson 3 had a textual focus and a grammatical one. The textual focus centred on the memorisation and repetition of a traditional chant; the grammatical focus involved a review

of locative prepositions (e.g. *i*: *in/ at/ on/ by/ towards a place*; *iā*: *towards a person or thing*) and grammatical markers (e.g. *'ami lauka*: indirect object marker).

Lesson 4 had a grammatical focus, the emphasis being on locative sentence patterns—positive, negative and interrogative (e.g. *'Aia ke kumu i ka papa*: *The teacher is in the class*).

Thus, all of the lessons included a grammatical focus, with one (Lesson 1) also including a lexical focus and two (Lessons 2 and 3) also including a textual focus.

In all cases, language focus points were introduced in a decontextualised way, with meanings being transmitted largely through translation and with imitation and repetition playing a major role. The chant that was the focus of the first part of Lesson 3 had no bearing on, and no relation to, the grammar that was in focus in the second part of Lesson 3. While the song that was introduced towards the end of Lesson 2 was intended to illustrate the grammatical forms introduced earlier in the lesson, these forms were initially introduced in a decontextualised way.

#### *Teacher talk and student talk*

In all four of the lessons, the time devoted to teacher talk (up to 75% of lesson time) was considerably greater than that devoted to student talk. In all cases, much of the teacher talk involved the provision of explanations (often very lengthy) in English and/or the translation of Hawaiian words, phrases and sentences into English. Translation was, in fact, the primary means by which the meaning of newly introduced language was communicated to students and the primary means by which the teachers determined whether the students had understood (see extracts 1–4).

**Extract 1–T:** Because it's *kaikunāne* only refers to a woman. . . . a female. A girl's brother, yeah? (*Lesson 1*)

**Extract 2–T:** Now, there's another way of saying this, but for now, we'll just stick to this. [Starts writing the locative sentence pattern on the whiteboard.] So, you're always going to start off with *'aia*, then the *piko*, who, who you're talking about, *'i* or *'ma* and then where. Okay? So, we use this *pepeke* (grammatical sentence) when we want to say, um, something is at . . . something is at a certain place or something is at a certain time. Okay? So, that's why we . . . um (inaudible) to express where or when something is we use the *pepeke henua*. Okay? (*Lesson 2*)

**Extract 3–T:** So, now we just have an *'ami* (preposition) that is called 'for'. It doesn't really have a name . . . or anything; at least, I don't know. But, this *'ami* is 'for'. So, it'll have the same function in the structure. Yeah? *Po'o* (head word), *piko* (subject), *'awe* (prepositional phrase), and we can pretty much find it starting the *'awe*? Okay, so let's, uh, move on. (*Lesson 3*)

**Extract 4–T:** Here's another word, which is *'hō'ike*. It means show something. So, that's another word for this. *Hō'ike*. . . . So, we have a *kuisa* or a *'hō'ike*. That is, 'Show me your knowledge' on this little piece of paper. First of all, write your name on the top, please 'cause otherwise I'll have a hard time figuring out who you are. Okay? So, I'm gonna say some of these . . . (*Lesson 4*)

On those few occasions when the teachers used Hawaiian to explain or give instructions, they almost always immediately translated what they had said or were about to say into English or paraphrased it in English. When they asked the students about the meanings of Hawaiian words, they did so in the context of questions framed in English. Indeed, code switching between Hawaiian and English, involving a movement backwards and forwards between the two languages, dominated the lesson delivery of all four teachers (see extracts 5–8).

**Extract 5–T:** And so, these are some words that I selected from the first few *mokuna*, the first few chapters of this text, and I picked them because I want us to use these today and try to make up some sentences . . . (Lesson 1)

**Extract 6–T:** He aha ka mana'o? What does it mean? (Lesson 2)

**Extract 7–T:** Okay. All right. *Hamani* (transitive verbs). Actions that need a receiver. Okay. Ready, go. (Lesson 3)

**Extract 8–T:** Those are names of things. Those are *i'oa* (proper nouns). (Lesson 4)

The teachers did not encourage the students to use the Hawaiian language to communicate authentic information about themselves. In fact, some of what the students were encouraged to say was unlikely to be of any genuine interest and was sometimes self-evident, false or even absurd (see extracts 9 and 10).

**Extract 9–T:** Oh, my goodness. Okay. Now, what's left to ask her? I can only ask her about *kaikunāne* (brother of a female) Okay. So, let's go ahead and ask her. (Lesson 1)

**Extract 10–T:** Okay, so, the first one is *He wahine 'oe* (Are you a woman)? . . . [Students begin asking each other the questions indicated on the worksheet] . . . I no think anybody is seventy, so no need ask somebody who is seventy. Unless you like pretend somebody is seventy. (Lesson 2)

In the case of Lesson 4, although English was spoken for over half of the lesson, the teacher occasionally spoke in fluent Hawaiian to a few members of the class, presumably those whose existing target language proficiency was considerably higher than that of the other students in the class and, in fact, considerably higher than that upon which the lesson was predicated.

In Lesson 1, the teacher, unable to elicit a correct response, simply abandoned her attempt to encourage the students to use a particular construction (see extract 11 below). In Lesson 3, the teacher, evidently confused and frustrated, passed responsibility for devising useful ways of learning vocabulary to the students (see extract 12 below). In Lesson 2, the teacher expressed relief at the end of the lesson following a long exchange in which the students repeatedly failed to produce a correct Hawaiian utterance (see extract 13 below).

#### **Extract 11**

**T:** So how do you say 'I don't have an older brother?'

**Ss:** 'A'ohe kaikua'ana ko'u.

**T:** 'A'ohe kaikua'ana,

**Ss:** Ko'u

**T:** And for right now, unfortunately, it's not *ko'u*. But these are so confusing, just getting these terms down, that we're going to forget the . . . how you say "I have" part. We're just going to say, "No got older brother". And that's going to be enough for us right now. We'll come back and do the whole thing. So, we're going to sort of kind of shorten it up. Okay? So, in this case, we just say '*A'ohe kaikua'ana* (there is no older sibling of the same gender). (Lesson 1)

**Extract 12–T:** Uh, no. I want you to use this . . . I want you to use the word in a sentence. Uh, so, actually, one of these sides . . . yeah, should not . . . Sorry. Sorry everybody. I'm trying to think of a creative way to make you learn vocabulary this time. Um, so . . . 'Cause usually I just tell you: Go home and study this piece of paper. But we've got to figure out something a bit more inventive. I tell you what. Since you guys are so smart, you guys figure it out. One of you is going to come up with a good solution. (Lesson 3)

**Extract 13**

**T:** Okay. [Student points to the baby in the picture] No, no. Which one is *kaiku* . . . [Teacher looks at the other male group member] Come on, *kaikua'ana*, do your thing. It's "brother for a girl".

**S:** Oh, brother for a girl.

**T:** Okay? So, good thing we're not doing all these kids. *He* . . .

**S:** So what am I supposed to do?

**T:** You tell me that this girl has a brother.

**S:** He *kaikunāne ko kēia* . . . *kēia kaikamahine*. Oh. '*Ehia* . . . Oh, wait. no. '*O wai nā*... '*O wai ka inoa o kaikua* . . . *kaikaina* . . . *ke kaikamahine* . . . I don't know . . . *ke kaikaina*.

**T:** Oi vay. *Auē* (Oh, no). Come on, *kaikua'ana*. You need to [inaudible]. Tell him how it should be said. [Students talk inaudibly to each other.]

**S:** '*O wai ka inoa o kaikua'ana* . . . Your, your, your . . . Oh. *Kou kaikaina?*

**T:** Whew. Okay. Go home. *Pau* [done]. Thank goodness. (*Lesson 2*).

For most of the time, in all four classes, the students' contribution to the lessons was confined to listening (often to lengthy grammatical explanations delivered in English), repeating words, phrases and/or short sentences in Hawaiian, answering questions addressed to them by the teacher, often in chorus and often, where responses were in Hawaiian, with a single word of agreement or disagreement (e.g. '*ae* : yes; '*a'ole*: no). In Lesson 3, the students spent much of the time chorusing a list of words along with the teacher (see extract 14 for an example of this). Towards the end of the lesson, they largely stopped contributing orally, leaving the teacher to continue on alone, their active contribution, with the exception of a few questions in English, being reduced to zero towards the end of the lesson.

**Extract 14–T and Ss:** *ka ukana*, *ka hapahā* (the quarter), *ka hapalua* (the half), *ka hō'ike* (the show, test), *ka hui mokulele* (the airline), *ke kahua mokulele* (the airport), *ke Kalikimaka* (the Christmas), *ke kamu* (the gum), *ke kekona* (the second, in telling time), *ke kuene* (the flight attendant, waiter/waitress), *ka lewa* (the air, atmosphere), *ka minuke* (the minute), *ka moa 'awapuhi* (the ginger chicken), *ka mokulele* (the airplane), *ka paisi* (the purse), *ke pailaka* (the pilot) . . . *ke pihi* (the button), *ka paka* (the tobacco), *ka papa manawa* (the schedule), *ka pua aloalo* (the hibiscus), *ka 'auinalā* (the afternoon, from about midday to late afternoon), *ka 'ēheu* (the wing), *ka 'ōhua* (the passenger), *ka char siu* (Chinese barbecued meat) . . . (*Lesson 3*)

In spite of repeated and lengthy explanations by the teachers, on those few occasions when an individual student attempted to use Hawaiian for something other than the expression of agreement or disagreement, they were generally unsuccessful, something that sometimes led to obvious signs of frustration on the part of the teachers (see extract 13 above).

**Tasks and activities**

As indicated above, student contribution to the lessons was largely confined to listening (often to lengthy grammatical explanations delivered in English), repeating, and answering questions addressed to them by the teacher, often in chorus and often, where responses were in Hawaiian, with a single word of agreement or disagreement. In Lesson 3, there were no other tasks or activities involving the Hawaiian language; in Lesson 4, the only other activity in which the students took part was a test in which they were expected to

create sentences using words supplied by the teacher and/or translate or correct sentences supplied by the teacher, none of these sentences being thematically linked.

In Lesson 1, in addition to telling stories in English in groups (something that seemed to bear little relation to the overall aim of the lesson), the students attempted, amid frequent interruptions from the teacher, to state the relationships between members of a family represented in a photograph and to interview individual class members about their siblings. Had the students been more able to use the language being practised accurately and appropriately, and had there been fewer interruptions by the teacher, these activities would have been very similar to the type of repetition and replacement exercise commonly associated with audio-lingual methodology, the aim being to practise using specific vocabulary in the context of a particular construction rather than to communicate authentic information (see extract 15).

**Extract 15–T:** They can have *kaikua'ana* (older sibling of the same gender) and they can have *kaikaina* (younger sibling of the same gender). Okay? So we say: *He kaikua'ana ko S2* (S2 has an older sibling of the same gender). May I ask all of you. So, now what are you gonna do? *E ka papa, he kaikua'ana ko S2?* (Does S2 have an older sibling of the same gender?) What do you have to do? Turn to him.

**S:** Ask him.

**T:** Ask him. You ask him this . . . everybody.

**Ss:** *He kaikua'ana kou?*

**T:** And your answer. I didn't hear. Yes or no?

**S:** Oh, *'A'ole* [no]. *'A'ole* [no].

**T:** Okay, what should he be saying? If he don't got.<sup>3</sup>

**Ss:** *A'ohe. 'A'ohe. 'A'ohe. (Lesson 1)*

In Lesson 2, an attempt was made to encourage the students to interview one another. They were, however, expected to ask questions to which the response was self-evident (e.g. *He kumu 'ōlelo Hawai'i 'oe?: Are you a Hawaiian language teacher?*). The main aim of the task—the writing of complete sentences exhibiting particular structures—could therefore have been achieved without the interview, making the task largely redundant and certainly not communicative in the sense in which that word is used in the context of CLT.

### *Culture*

Overall, in the lessons observed, there was little evidence of effective integration of linguistic and cultural learning. In Lesson 1, one of the activities (conducted, however, wholly in English) involved students acting out sibling roles in traditional Hawaiian culture. In Lesson 3, a chant introduced at the beginning of the lesson was both culturally and linguistically authentic, although the language of that chant was explained in English, and the students were simply invited to repeat and memorise it. In the case of Lesson 4, there was very little culturally relevant content, the one exception being the fact that the teacher drew attention to the possibility of sometimes using traditional Hawaiian words (e.g. *hō'ike: test*) rather than English equivalents (e.g. *kuisa: quiz*). In Lesson 2, however, some of the questions in an interview activity were culturally relevant (e.g. *'Ai 'oe i ka poi: Do you eat poi?*), and the teacher, using an instrument common in Hawaiian music (a *'ukulele*) in the context of a traditional melody, taught a song he had composed himself (using the language that had been taught). Overall, in spite of some attempts to introduce students to Hawaiian cultural norms, the constant use of the English language throughout the lessons served to reinforce the dominant position of English in Hawaiian society. This was

particularly evident in the case of Lesson 1, in which the students were asked to act out the type of relationship that Hawaiian siblings might have using the English language and in a context in which they seemed to be largely unfamiliar with Hawaiian sibling behaviour.

## Conclusion

All four of the lessons analysed were teacher dominated. The teachers occupied a considerable amount of the talking time in class, speaking mainly in English and often including lengthy explanations of aspects of the structure of Hawaiian, which were sometimes compared with aspects of the structure of English. They relied heavily on translation, particularly in introducing new grammar and/or vocabulary and in checking on student understanding. Student speaking activities generally involved little more than repetition of words, phrases and sentences modelled by the teacher. In many respects, therefore, these lessons were reminiscent of grammar translation (see, for example, Howatt 2009). There were, however, two major differences. First, although a traditional chant was used in one of the lessons and a song composed by a teacher in another, historical written texts played no role in any of the lessons. Instead, as advocated by adherents of the Reform Movement from the end of the 19th century onwards, the emphasis was on everyday oral language (see, for example, Stern, 1983). Second, instead of being first presented in a textual context, the language in focus was decontextualised, being made up of individual words, phrases and sentences. That language was then practised through repetition (individual and choral), which often involved a sentence frame in which one or more words were varied as the lessons progressed. In this respect, these lessons included aspects of audio-lingual methodology, a methodology that had its roots in behaviourist psychology and began to find its way into language teaching from the 1940s onwards (see, for example, Lightbown & Spada 2003). Also evident in these lessons was the impact of structural linguistics and, in particular, the impact of the structural syllabus, with its emphasis on vocabulary lists and the cumulative introduction of structures, which dominated much language teaching in the mid-20th century (see, for example, Krahnke 1987). So far as culture is concerned, while attempts were made to introduce aspects of Hawaiian culture into the lessons, the constant use of the English language by the teachers served to reinforce the dominance of English culture in Hawai'i and, hence, acted as a reminder of the cultural imposition that has dominated Hawaiian life since the coup of 1893 by U.S. forces that ousted the Hawaiian Kingdom government.

The mentalist turn in psychology and the contextual turn in linguistics that have characterised much scholarly thought since the mid-20th century and have had a very considerable impact on language teaching were nowhere in evidence in these lessons. There was, for example, no evidence of the impact on lesson content of syllabus types that are topic-based/situational (e.g. Ur 2000), notional-functional (e.g. Wilkins 1976), lexical (e.g. Sinclair & Renouf 1988), task-based (e.g. Prabhu 1987) or skills-based (e.g. Swales 1990), or indeed, of those that combine aspects of some or all of these (e.g. Brumfit 1980; Yalden 1983). Above all, there was no evidence of the impact of CLT, with its emphasis on the inductive presentation of structure—the meaningful use of the target language and learning through communicative tasks—that is, through tasks that involve communicating genuine information for authentic purposes (see, for example, Howatt 1984; Littlewood 1981, 2004).

If all of the efforts to save the Hawaiian language from extinction that have taken place since the 1970s are to bear real fruit, the teaching of the language needs to progress beyond an approach that combines aspects of the grammar translation approach that is

particularly associated with the heyday of European colonialism and U.S. expansionism and with aspects of that audio-lingual methodology that is particularly associated with a period during which behaviourist psychology and structural linguistics held sway.

Language policy and planning appear to be largely absent in the Hawaiian Kingdom. In a context in which the native language and culture of these islands is at risk, one in which there are dangerously few remaining native speakers of the Hawaiian language, this is a serious omission that needs to be addressed urgently. In the absence of a coherent language policy and effective language planning at all levels, the Hawaiian Islands is likely to remain as one of the last bastions of monolingualism in a multilingual and multicultural world.

Establishing a language policy and effective language planning, important though they are, is likely to take a considerable period of time. There is, however, little time remaining in which to address the issues that have been highlighted here. It is important, therefore, to consider those things that could be accomplished more quickly, some of which are outlined below.

Currently, there is no detailed and coherent national or statewide curriculum for the teaching and learning of HAL, one that addresses issues of objectives setting, language content, methodology, teaching materials and language progression. Nor is there any agency devoted to the development of teaching resources, language testing and teacher training for HAL. Establishing an agency staffed with personnel who have appropriate expertise and experience and are charged with undertaking research and development activities in these areas could be the first stage in fully professionalising the teaching and learning of HAL. Even if such an agency were initially small in size, providing it with the status of a national research and development agency would help it to attract people with the appropriate expertise and the funding required for growth and ongoing development.

Such an agency could be established relatively quickly. It might, however, be several years before its activities bore fruit in the form of professionally designed curricula, teaching materials, teacher training programs and proficiency-based language testing. In the meantime, there are measures that could be taken that would be likely to lead to a more immediate improvement in the current situation. For example, a small group of internationally recognised experts in the teaching of additional languages could be commissioned by the Department of Education to work in collaboration with those with expertise in Hawaiian language and culture to develop a short, practically oriented training course for teachers of HAL and to train a group of teachers to deliver that program throughout the country. That program, possibly similar in type to the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA), a program developed by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate that now has world-wide recognition, could be delivered on a full-time or part-time basis in various locations throughout the Hawaiian Islands at times suitable for HAL teachers in schools and tertiary level institutions, the funding for attendance coming largely from the professional development resources of these schools and tertiary institutions themselves, possibly supplemented by government grants.

Although the development and delivery of an in-service program such as the one proposed above could have an immediate, positive impact on the teaching and learning of HAL, there is clearly a need, in the longer term, for the development of more comprehensive preservice and in-service training programs that include assessed practica overseen by language teaching experts. Ultimately, it is to be hoped that both schools and tertiary

institutions will require all teachers of HAL to provide evidence of having participated successfully in training programs. However, it is important to bear in mind that it is not the provision of training itself that matters, but the quality of that training.

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<sup>1</sup> In this accelerate course, material that is generally taught over two semesters in the first year is taught in a single semester.

<sup>2</sup> These were: *learning environment; instructions; lesson shape/structure; resources; treatment of errors; achievement objectives; communicative orientation; use of the target language (including appropriate grading of language by the teacher); student contribution; concept introduction and concept checking strategies; texts, tasks and activities; and culture*.

<sup>3</sup> Note that native speakers actually do sometimes use 'A'ole in this context.