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Pacific Languages in Diaspora

Editors: Luafata Simanu-Klutz, Akiemi Glenn, and Serge Tcherkezoff

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This issue's cover features the work of Yvonne Neth:

YVONNE NETH was born on the island of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to Pohnpeian and Chamorro parents. She spent her growing years both on Pohnpei and on the island of Saipan in the Northern Marianas. Yvonne attended university in Honolulu, majoring in cultural anthropology, and also earned her FAA commercial pilot's license during her years in Hawaii. She returned to Pohnpei in 2009, and worked as a co-pilot for Caroline Islands Air. Eventually, the FSM Government employed Yvonne as their Aviation Operations Inspector for the nation's Division of Civil Aviation. After three years,

she shifted from this position and became the Vice-Director for Island Research and Education Initiative (iREi), a not-for-profit non governmental organization dedicated to producing culturally-relevant educational materials for Micronesia's students and conducting anthropological, environmental, and geological research in the region. Yvonne has collaborated with professionals throughout the Pacific region and has helped develop a multitude of educational products for Micronesia.

Artist's discussion of her featured works:

"Woman with Veil": This is a commissioned piece. It was a gift to the wife of an expat, who had given me her photograph to work from and who hand-crafted the wooden frame to go with this art piece. Some time later, I received an email from this same man, informing me that during their move, they found the artwork missing from their belongings. Since that email, I have not heard from him of any update so it may be that this artwork is still missing from them.



"Pohnpeian Elder" & "Elder of the Outer Islands": I work mainly with historical photographs, researching through archives during Micronesia's "Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands" time, archives published in anthropological journals and library directories. I found the photographs of these two elders striking and chose to recreate them at a larger scale. Most of the time, the descriptions for the photos are minimal, sometimes having only the location or year scribbled as a description. For the "Pohnpeian Elder," the description read that he was attending an "aging ceremony" on the island of Pohnpei; I have asked several older Pohnpeians about this and they say it may have been a ceremony to recognize the elders of the community. The "Elder of the Outer Islands" description read of a man from an outer island of Chuuk, wearing a poncho, standing in a canoe house. I found the significance of this photograph in the locally made poncho and shell earrings, items no longer worn today. The two photographs shared an element of time, one ever-moving, shifting and evolving of all things, including our cultures.



"Youth of the Outer Islands": Historical capture of the local embellishments of a young man from an outer island. There is fierceness here that infers manhood comes too early, though perhaps out of necessity.



To Our Readers

What can we make of Pacific Islander language practices and policies in the diaspora? In this special issue, anthropologists, educators, linguists, literary scholars, musicologists, social workers, and sociologists address this question by analyzing how and why Pacific Islanders maintain, transform, devalue, or protect their languages across Oceania and the greater diaspora. Guest edited by Luafata Simanu-Klutz, Akiemi Glenn, and Serge Tcherkezoff, this volume especially reveals how the urban landscapes of the diaspora have partly shaped Pacific Islander language practices and policies in the Anglophone and Francophone Pacific. In this respect, some of the most robust debates about mono-, bi- and multi-lingual fluency have surfaced in metropolitan areas like Auckland, New Zealand, and Honolulu, Hawai'i. Given the relatively large numbers of Pacific Islanders in these locales, it is no surprise that these diasporic communities have led the charge for language survival. As several contributors reveal, churches, community groups, grassroots movements, and social clubs in such cities have increasingly come to bear the responsibility for making legible and legitimate Pacific Islander languages in the public sphere. In light of these observations, they suggest that the "home" alone cannot function as the principal site for the transmission of one or more languages from one generation to another. The forums on Marshallese and Sāmoan language practices organized, respectively, by Jessica A. Schwartz and Luafata Simanu-Klutz nicely explore this matter, as does our community spotlight on the Tokelauan non-profit organization Te Lumanaki o Tokelau I Amelika in Mililani, O'ahu.

Conversely, state apathy, ignorance, or racism has likewise stifled the everyday and official usage of several Pacific Islander languages, as with Chamorro, Māori, and Native Hawaiian or Kānaka Maoli. For instance, in their article on language practices by millennial Chamorros in San Francisco, Michaela Ruiz and Genevieve Leung found that the youth generally lack the native speaking proficiency of their parents and grandparents. Attributing these violent linguistic shifts to the U.S. colonization of Guam, Ruiz and Leung therefore call on our readers to expand the language maintenance resources for Chamorro speakers. Extending this point further, Halaevalu F. Ofahengaue Vakalahi and Ofa Ku'ule Lanimekealoha Hafoka demonstrate in their essay on Polynesian elders and language transmission in Hawai'i that

new research and policies must also account for spirituality and dual/hybrid identities if indigenous languages are to thrive in the future. In the French context of New Caledonia, Anne-Laure Dotte, Stéphanie Geneix-Rabault, and Leslie Vandeputte would describe these challenges in terms of “linguistic insecurity” or the manner by which speakers of indigenous and migrant languages feel marginalized by monolingual ideologies. In their case, they show how French language dominance has differently affected the maintenance of Bislama and Iaai/Drehu languages in Nouméa’s sociolinguistic landscape. Rounding out these discussions is a self-reflexive article on the theorizing and teaching of Pacific languages by David Welchman Gegeo. Drawing from his research in the Solomon Islands, he examines language change and language conservation in the Pacific. And although we received no submissions from the Chilean territory of Rapa Nui, an island in Polynesia where Spanish is the lingua franca, we want to thank our guest editors for putting together a remarkable and balanced collection of articles and forums.

We are also excited to feature the beautiful artwork of Yvonne Neth on the cover of our issue. As an artist of Pohnpeian and Chamorro heritage, she has greatly promoted Micronesian creative expressions at the regional and international levels. We are likewise pleased to feature an important public forum on Native Hawaiian juvenile justice that occurred at UCLA on January 30, 2017. Once again, we want to acknowledge Katherine Irwin, Wayde Lee, and Karen Umemoto for sharing their knowledge with our readership.

We at *Amerasia Journal* are most saddened to close this issue on a bittersweet note. On March 21, 2017, our editorial board member and colleague Teresia Teaiwa passed away in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. In her capacity as a Senior Lecturer at Victoria University, she tirelessly advocated for women’s and indigenous rights in Fiji, Hawai’i, Kiribati, Okinawa, West Papua, and elsewhere. Teresia was also a generous scholar, a fantastic program builder, an astute teacher, and a stellar community organizer. It is fitting, then, that we print her forum, “Black and Blue in the Pacific: Afro-Diasporic Women Artists on History and Blackness,” as a tribute to her exceptional ability to engage multiple academic fields, no less Asian American Studies, Pacific Islander Studies, Women’s Studies, and, as this last publication attests, African American Studies and African Diasporic Studies.

—Keith L. Camacho

Pacific Languages in Diaspora

Luafata Simanu-Klutz and Akiemi Glenn

*‘O le tama a le tagata e fafaga i ‘upu, ‘a’o le tama a le manu e fafaga
i lau o lā’au.*

A human child is fed words while the young of an animal is fed leaves¹

Lāuga / Opening Oratory

‘Ua logo i tino matagi lelei

Benevolent winds embrace the body

‘O lenei galuega sa fauao, faupō,

This work, constructed day and night

‘Ua mǎe’a i le alofa o le Atua.

Is completed with God’s help.

‘Ua tātou ‘ae’ae ai nei i ni fa’alumaga fa’alemāfaufau a le ‘au
tusitala,

We celebrate now the intellect of our writers,

O ‘upu e lē pala,

Words will not rot,

O le gagana fo’i e feso’ota’i ai tagata. Tulou!

Language itself is a tool that links all humans.

O lenei tusi ua fa’apitoa mo gagana a tagata Pasefika ua aumau
i atunu’u i fafo

This special issue is about Pacific languages in diaspora

O se taeao lea mo tagata Pasefika

Is a historical moment for the native people of the Pacific.

LOAU DR. LUAFATA SIMANU-KLUTZ is an Assistant Professor of Samoan Language and Literature at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa. She promotes the importance of language proficiency in sustaining cultural and physical environments.

DR. AKIEMI GLENN teaches Tokelauan language at Te Lumanaki and is the director of research and evaluation at Te Taki Tokelau. She holds a Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, with a specialization in Pacific language revitalization.

E manatua ai le taeao o le Tala Lelei na taunu'u mai ma le gaga tusitusi

We remember another moment in history when the Good Word and writing arrived.

Tatou te si'i ai la le vi'iga i le Atua ona o lana ta'ita'iga lelei,

We lift our voices in praise of God for his guidance

Ua taunu'u ai ma le manuia leni galuega.

This work is completed successfully.

Tulouna le mamalu o le Ofisa o le *Amerasia Journal* i le afio o fa'atonu o leni tusi, afioga i matua o faiva o Dr. Keith Camacho ma Dr. Arnold Pan.

Respect and deference to the editors of *Amerasia Journal* at UCLA's Asian American Studies Center.

Fa'afetai mo le vala'aulia o i matou e fa'afoeina leni galuega fa'apitoa.

Thank you for inviting us to compile this special issue on Pacific Languages in Diaspora.

Tulouna fo'i fa'asausauga a le 'au faitau ma le 'au su'esu'e;

Deference to you, the subscribers and readers;

atonu e fa'atupu manatu leni talanoaga i matā'upu tau gaga a tagata Pasefika ua alaala nei i nu'u i fafo.

We trust that the contributors will enhance your understanding of the Pacific peoples and their languages in diaspora.

Afai e iai se upu e sasi, pe lē mālū fo'i i lau fa'afofoga'aga, ia lafo i nu'u le 'ainā,

If any word is out of line and dissonant, please cast it to uninhabited lands.

Ia aogā leni tusi mo oe.

May this issue be useful to you.

Manuia lau faitau.

Happy reading.

Soifua.

Wherever and whenever Pacific islanders congregate, they engage in ritualized greetings, which in certain islands is done only by orators or talking chiefs. In Sāmoan culture, an event is framed by *lāuga*, or highly ritualized speeches with standard components such as *tūvaoga* (metaphysical and metaphorical opening), *pa'ia ma mamalu* (honorifics), *taeao* (significant events

in the past), *'autū* (purpose of the event), and *fa'amatafi lagi ma le māvaega* (well wishes for the rest of the day and farewell). For the purposes of this journal, the above *lāuga*, in Sāmoan, is to welcome you, the reader, to the voices of Oceania, where language and culture not only keep us rooted to our ancestral spaces, but also help us filter new experiences in places with very different social and cultural foundations. This *lāuga* does just that, and more. It also delivers our appreciation to Keith and Arnold at UCLA for inviting and allowing us to share what has been happening to diasporic languages and cultures from the Pacific.

This volume is by no means exhaustive; however, it is important in that it reveals how very little research has been done about PI languages and their heritage speakers in diaspora. Generally speaking, there has been much research about other diasporas—Jews, Greeks, Chinese, to name a few. Nonetheless, this is a significant addition and we hope that this will motivate more research and more grassroots contributions from native and/or heritage voices.

Fa'afetai tele.

Pacific Languages in Diaspora

Oceania is one of the most linguistically diverse, but least populated regions on Earth. It covers an area about one-quarter the surface of the globe and is home to some 1,300 distinct languages—roughly 20 percent of the languages in the world—but only 14 million inhabitants. In short, Oceania concentrates the richest linguistic diversity on our planet in the area with the lowest population density. The histories of Oceanic peoples have been shaped by traditions of voyaging and exploration in some of the most remote regions of the Earth, and recent histories of colonialism and globalization have continued the trend, creating significant demographic movements, new diasporas, new communities, and new cultural and linguistic practices. For culture historians, language has been a key tool in unraveling the connections between Pacific Island peoples and, as the contributions in this special issue suggest, language is still fundamental to understanding contemporary Pacific Island societies.

When European sailors arrived in Polynesia in the eighteenth century, they were struck by the cultural and linguistic similarities they encountered as they visited islands separated by great expanses of ocean. In his journals, English voyager James Cook wrote of the peoples he met throughout the Pacific.

[N]othing is so great a proof of their all having had one Source as their Language, which differ but in a very few words the one from the other, as will appear from the following Specimens, which I had from Mr. Banks, who understands their Language as well, or better than, any one on board.

There are some small difference in the Language spoke by the Aeheinomowearns and those of Tovy Poenammu; but this difference seem'd to me to be only in the pronunciation, and is no more than what we find between one part of England and another.

[W]e have always been told that the same Language is universally spoke by all the Islanders, and that this is a Sufficient proof that both they and the New Zealanders have had one Origin or Source, but where this is even time perhaps may never discover.²

While it is unlikely that “the same Language [was] universally spoke[n]” in the sense that we conceive of languages today, or that pronunciation was the only difference between these varieties, Cook’s observations of the commonalities between Pacific Island societies and languages were due to the actual significant historical and contemporary relationships between the groups. Had Cook and his crew traveled to the west, they would have no doubt marveled at the perhaps less overt, but noticeable, connections between the languages of the Polynesians and other peoples there.

Because Europeans had not known of the existence of the Pacific Islands until the modern period, they marveled at how peoples who they regarded as primitive voyaged between such isolated landmasses. Though they were perhaps unaware at the time, Europeans had stumbled into the bigger picture of one of the most intrepid population migrations in human history, whereby humans had populated every habitable island in the vast expanse of the Pacific. In the view of early scholars, the “isolated” communities of the Pacific held promise as laboratories for testing theories of the emerging social sciences influenced by thinking from the Enlightenment period.

The people of Oceania were sorted by the eighteenth-century Europeans who traversed the area and created cultural divisions among Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia based on the physical appearance of their islands and of the Islanders themselves; consequently, such identities have been tough to decolonize. Euro-American voyagers eventually recognized the profusion of islands that shared an apparent origin in Polynesia (“many islands”), the related groups that inhabited geologically similar

islands in Micronesia (“small islands”), and the common phenotypes of the inhabitants of Melanesia (“dark islands”). These three major culture areas are still widely used by scholars and others working in the Pacific, but it becomes more and more apparent that overlapping between these culture areas has been more pervasive than some outsiders thought. The phenotypes of Melanesians (a neologism based on ancient Greek *mélas* for “dark” and *nésos* for “island”) reminded Europeans of Africans in the Atlantic world and, according to some reporters, the islands appeared black from a distance as European ships were sailing by. These islands flank the western equatorial line north and south; they are Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, the Bismarcks, Solomon Islands, and Fiji. They make up the region known as Near Oceania. Micronesia is predominately north of the equator and includes many atolls, islands of coral at the edges of sunken volcanoes, and larger raised coral islands. Micronesia comprises islands with various political affiliations, many under the control and influence of the United States; Guam, Saipan, Tinian, Rota are parts of U.S. territories and have been used as military bases since the Second World War. Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae), and the atolls of the Marshall Islands are part of an arrangement of semi-independence under the Compacts of Free Association signed with the U.S. in the late twentieth century. The island nations of Kiribati and Nauru are also part of Micronesia, and are the only two groups south of the equator.³ The Polynesian islands are mostly located south of the equator, and they include mainly resource-rich volcanic high islands like Hawai’i, Sāmoa, and Tonga, though Polynesian peoples also inhabit atolls like those in the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tokelau, the northern Cook Islands and Marquesas Islands, and the continental island of Aotearoa-New Zealand.

Epeli Hau’ofa, an anthropologist born in Fiji to Tongan parents, has written that the Pacific is a “sea of islands” where the ocean has historically connected people and served as a thoroughfare. Instead of being stunned that similarities in culture and language endured over distance like Cook and his contemporaries were, Hau’ofa’s vision reversed the move to separate Oceanic peoples into distinct Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian groups. Instead, as the evidence of language practices would suggest, Pacific Island peoples are linked by their history, the geology, and geography of their islands, and by their

cultural orientation to voyaging, exploration, and population movement. The notion of what constitutes a people—and what constitutes a single language—is a longstanding problem in the social sciences and the language sciences, and the history of ancient and modern migration in Oceania complicates these problems in dynamic ways.

In the aftermath of World War II, many Pacific Island communities found themselves in new relationships with the European powers that colonized and missionized them. Throughout the twentieth century, through organizations like the United Nations, some Pacific islands became independent nation states, while others like American Sāmoa and Hawai'i, or New Zealand's holdings in Tokelau have remained politically dependent on larger states. Like the terms for the culture "divisions" of the Pacific, the term diaspora also comes from ancient Greek. *Diaspeirein* is a combination of the forms for *dia*—"across"—and *speirein*—"scatter"—as of seeds in the wind. In modern usage, however, diaspora refers to the dispersal of ethnic or cultural groups as a byproduct of political, social, or environmental motivators. There are three criteria with which social scientists identify diasporas: firstly, a population must be displaced from an agreed-upon homeland and now live in two or more regions; secondly, the presence away from the homeland must be long-lasting, though it may involve movement between the homeland and the new region; and lastly, there is a continuous social, economic, or cultural exchange between the spatially disconnected diaspora communities.

Population movement is a recurrent theme in Pacific history. Although discrete societies and language groups have also been long established, interregional contact and exchange has continued for hundreds of years. The disciplines of historical and comparative linguistics, along with cultural anthropology and oral tradition, have been instrumental in the creation and maintenance of a pan-Pacific identity. Part of this new identity is associated with the idea of the peopling of the Pacific as the result of a large and ancient diaspora. Recognizing the history and development of the Pacific overall as a history of diaspora can inform the analysis of the migrations and movements in the modern Pacific, even though contemporary diasporas have diverged from the traditional patterns of movement discussed above.

Pacific Islanders relocate to larger nation-states because the histories of colonialism and forced migration that have intervened

between the present and the pre-European contact period have reshaped the currents of human resettlement in the Pacific Ocean. Pacific Island communities are part of the fastest growing diasporas in the world. While diaspora is a widespread phenomenon in human history, the motivations for relocation in twenty-first century Oceania and the consequences of migration are not just part of a quest for more resources or the expression of an inherited wanderlust. Although Pacific migration in the modern era is motivated by the pursuit of resources, identity is a simultaneous, and not subordinate, motivator, as the papers in this issue show. Instead of trying to recognize diaspora as part of a linear history of migration in the Pacific, a view of concentric diasporas informs how members of communities can concurrently create and re-create their identities through the medium of language. Language is a salient feature that individuals and communities manipulate across distance for political and social means.

Changing Needs and Reversing Language Shifts

This special issue about research and viewpoints on Pacific languages in diaspora suggests that transformations of social and physical environments inevitably change language and linguistic structures and functions. Such transformations also demand a creative approach to bridging the gaps in communication between native and heritage speakers, or immigrants and the diasporic or local-born, respectively. In “Nouméa at the Crossroads of New Caledonian Multilingualism: Diasporas and Linguistic Norms,” Anne-Laure Dotte, Stéphanie Geneix-Rabault, and Leslie Vandeputte shed much insight on language use among three diasporic communities—namely, Drehu, Iaai, and Ni-Vanuatu—in Nouméa, New Caledonia. While we especially appreciate their treatment of how these diasporic communities practice their languages in a “monolingual francophone surrounding,” their study also reveals the obvious diglossia occurring in Nouméa, an issue that comparably resonates with other Pacific communities in the English-speaking countries of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. The authors also remind us that the hegemonic nature of the mainstream language, such as French in Nouméa, leads to minority insecurity in *in situ* settings. We find in New Caledonia an ongoing subjugation common in third-world rural areas by urbanites whose modern achievements have given them license to deem outer islanders or villagers far from town as intellectually and materially backward.

As the authors suggest, “[f]or domestic diasporic communities speaking Iaai and Drehu, institutional pressure produces norms that blame speakers and make them feel insecure. Consequently, in Nouméa they do not feel legitimate to speak their language especially with homeland interlocutors.” New Caledonia has no plan for the linguistic institutionalization of non-Kanak immigrants, such as those from Vanuatu, who find the freedom to use Bislama and their own native languages in a new environment to navigate inevitable changes in syntax and meaning.

The cultural structures of diaspora also define language choice. It is evident that during the postwar years, the lure of the urban centers for better education and employment opportunities rapidly pushed the Pacific onto a world stage, a world for which many of its inhabitants were and are still fully unprepared. On this world stage, the languages of former colonizers used for wider communication—English, French, Spanish, Portuguese—took on a greater currency in the new economic and cultural marketplaces shaped by the currents of migration and movement. The initial waves of migrants were bilingual in both their respective mother tongues and the languages of wider communication; they often engaged in what Murray Chapman calls circular migration, wherein individuals and communities pursued education in cosmopolitan centers and returned home to work there. Circular migration has now become the norm for many Pacific Islanders, made easier by advances in same-day travel via airplane for what would have been long ocean voyages, strengthening the distribution of economic resources throughout kinship networks through remittance and cultural structures, like the Sāmoan *fa’alavelave*.

Even Pacific migrants with limited ability to communicate in European languages of wider communication are aware that adjustment options in new or temporary homes are impacted by language comprehension and production ability. Early waves of Pacific Islander migrants felt the need to assimilate quickly into their adopted homes. The lure of a better education and good paying employment necessitated this. Soon enough, however, the immigrants sought comfort zones in which they could continue to hear their native tongues and cultures. This was made possible in the 1970s and 1980s with the establishment of churches as surrogate villages where they could perform rituals and kinship economics in their own languages. For some such spaces, longevity has been possible insofar as there is an active and organic supply of immigrants from the home islands.

In spite of the fact that the diasporic generations become less fluent or fluid in the ancestral cultures, it is at these sites that immigrant families hope to pass on ancestral traditions and customs. Halaevalu Vakalahi and Ofa Hafoka's contribution to this issue "Beyond Words: Polynesian Elders and Language" highlights the critical role that Polynesian grandparents play in multigenerational households in Hawai'i. Such spaces speak to the perpetuation of an island ethos in diaspora, in that the family is still the core unit of survival and that language perspectives and practices point more to their contribution to the maintenance of cultural values and traditions, rather than whether one is fluent or not. Here, the grandparents are very clear that in order to survive in the tough education and economic landscape of places like Hawai'i, English proficiency is critical, while for native culture maintenance, one does not need to be fluent. This perhaps allows a huge sigh of relief for the insecure local-born or heritage speaker who constantly feels insecure when in the company of native speakers. Over time, it appears that the institutionalization of the native tongue in places like New Zealand and Hawai'i is an accommodation for which many heritage speakers have been hoping.

As with other groups, Pacific immigrant parents with limited proficiency in the host language and culture eventually rely on their youngsters to mediate their relationships with mainstream populations, adding urgency to younger generations' assimilation into the host culture's way of life. With each subsequent generation, members find themselves unable to speak and/or understand their parents' first language (L1). This is particularly true of families in which parents as native speakers and their diasporic-born offspring mutually possess low proficiency in each other's L1—that is, for their children, their first language is that of the host society. At the same time, these youth routinely have less access and incentive to maintain their heritage languages, experiencing tensions between the demands of kinship networks to be linguistically innovative in learning and mastering languages of wider communication and being required to communicate in traditional ways within families and their immigrant communities. These vectors of push and pull are the crux of what makes the state of Pacific Island languages in diaspora such a rich site for understanding the mutability of identities, and how traditional values and modern knowledge are disseminated across networks and across distances of time and space.

This issue's offering by Michaela Ruiz and Genevieve Leung, "(Re)Constructing and (Re)Locating Guam: Chamorro Millennials, Ethnolinguistic Identities, and Prospects for Language and Cultural Maintenance in the Diaspora," reveals a strong desire by Chamorro millennials to learn the Chamorro language. This is illustrative for islanders who do not grow up in traditionally multigenerational households where elders speak the heritage language. As they reach adulthood, many millennials now show an interest in taking university language courses when they are available. As a result of postmodernity and globalization, 9/11 in the U.S. and the refugee crises in the Middle East have sparked institutional mandates on foreign language as a graduation requirement; consequently, there has been a rising interest among Pacific Islanders for to learn their heritage languages. Certain PI languages are now available at K-16 levels in New Zealand; Sāmoan is available in certain high schools in Hawai'i, and it is definitely taught at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Tongan, Tahitian, Chamorro, and Māori are also available at UH. Chamorro is offered, albeit on a pro bono basis because it is seen not as a foreign language in the U.S. and, therefore, instructors do not receive financial support for teaching it.

To a large extent, pride in one's ethnicity as well as nationality, which was missing during older generations, has become evident. Most PI students who enroll in heritage languages courses see this as a way to become comfortable with their hybrid identities, particularly the ethnic side, which has been misconstrued by mainstream society as insignificant. More often than not, PI millennials born and raised in America identify more as members of the "other" ethnic group when asked about their identity; at the same time, a reluctance to either vocalize or deny a dominant national identity comes with this pride in one's ethnicity. When probed further, there can be a seeming hesitancy or frustration at being identified as an American. With roots in the islands, where being an American means security and wealth, diasporic islanders appear ambivalent about their Americanness.

Nonetheless, what has come into focus in recent years is that second and younger generations have found that learning their ancestral languages and cultures is integral to shaping what they are as citizens of their natal countries. A millennial Sāmoan from California attending the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, who was part of the second generation of his family's migration to the

U.S., reported to us he is now enthusiastic to learn his heritage language, for no other reason but that it is his right to do so. This student chose to study at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in part because it has the only Pacific Islands languages and literatures programs in the whole nation.

Two forums on Marshallese and Sāmoan language prospects and practices in the United States elaborate and confirm the nuances of group approaches toward resolving heritage language issues. In "Marshallese Language and Diaspora," Jessica Schwartz facilitates an excellent roundtable of Marshallese organizers and teachers, all of whom have ties to the Marshall Islands and their diasporic community in Springdale, Arkansas. The roundtable discusses matters of Marshallese language use and preservation. The forum conducted by this issue's guest editor Luafata Simanu-Klutz presents a continuum of views from Sāmoans of all ages residing in New Zealand, Hawai'i, or the continental United States. While all agree on the importance of understanding and producing Sāmoan in diaspora, the reasons are complex and responses vary from language being a generally good quality to possess (although not critical to survival), to a passionate and resounding yes as to why Sāmoan should be learned regardless of where one lives. Sāmoans in New Zealand appear to have more clarity about what they are in diaspora: Sāmoan and New Zealander, or in the words of Lupematasila Dr. Melani Anae of Auckland University, the New Zealand-born. In the words of Neil Ieremia, the famous CEO of Black Grace and choreographer of Sāmoan ancestry in NZ, his identity was not only shaped by his parents' culture, but also by the streets on which he grew up, surrounded by different Pacific Islanders, Māori, and pakeha.

New Zealand-born Islanders—mostly Polynesians—institutionalized native languages through "language nests," which originated in Māori communities and emerged as church-driven "nests." Such a move has resulted in national policies and the consequential revival or reversal of language shifts for Māori, Sāmoan, and other PI languages. The Māori renaissance—or sovereignty movement—of the mid-1970s and government subsidies for the arts led to PI church communities adopting the language nest approach, which immersed interested preschoolers in culture and language. By the 1990s, Sāmoan was made available as an elective in high school; yet without bridging at the middle school-level between preschool and high school, proficiency was

an elusive goal. Recently, corrective policymaking has made Sāmoan available from preschool to college. Pacific Islanders in New Zealand, particularly Sāmoans, are competent bilinguals. Such efforts resonate with what Fishman has recommended as an ecological approach to language maintenance, in which family, neighborhood, and community are integral components of a successful program.⁴ Exemplifying Peter Mühlhäusler's notion of linguistic ecology, the NZ language curriculum approach allows for organic language acquisition in the learners' local cultures and environments. Appropriately, then, language materials in most NZ Sāmoan language nests are created along the lines of what the learners live and breathe on a daily basis; ancestral culture is reflected in the way the *vafealoa'i*, or respect system, is taught, with artifacts representing the old ways.

Island churches in places like New Zealand have been incubators and maintenance vehicles for heritage languages. In the United States, however, start-ups lack longevity due largely to a lack of policies for PI languages in the schools, or wealthy island philanthropists who could shower funds on these initiatives. Thus, efforts across the years for language schools have been unsustainable, though this has not stopped spiritual philanthropists from trying. Perhaps the most promising language nests to date are two grassroots-driven language and culture programs for the Tokelauan and Sāmoan languages. Aptly enough, Te Lumanaki o Tokelau i Amelika—"The Future of Tokelau in America"—language school is featured in our Community Spotlight in this issue. Founded as a family program in the early 2000s, the Tokelauan school started at the founders' home. Initially offering programming just on Saturdays, staff have had to seek creative ways to sustain interest among students and families, and to convince their community of why Tokelauan is worthy of maintenance in the diaspora. It appears that the major sustainability issue for Pacific languages is the lack of real time to learn the language—one-day-a-week is hardly sufficient to achieve proficiency.

Other island groups also feel the same commitment to continue speaking the ancestral languages, with churches serving as surrogate villages and language nests. As already mentioned, this is working for many islanders in a place like New Zealand, though not so much in the United States, since there is no governmental support at any level; additionally, PI communities do not have the means that other ethnic and religious groups who have the numbers and wealth do to establish longevity. PI parents

and grandparents see their languages as vital to the maintenance of their ancestral cultures for their children, who suffer a loss of values and beliefs—and potentially their identity. Moreover, in the case of the Sāmoans, language must be sustained in its various registers in order for the children to understand the correlation between words and respect. The opening oratory is a good example of how language shifts do not and should not mean language loss, but rather adjustments to sustain currency. In order to keep the peace in interpersonal relationships, their children must know what language to use when speaking to those in authority, such as elders, church ministers, government officials, and strangers. Also based in Hawai'i, Le Fetuao is a Sāmoan language nest that has largely depended on outside funds. It has now been incorporated by the Department of Education as an after-school language program in one of the elementary schools in Waipahu, O'ahu. Children are socialized to observe and listen and learn what is appropriate or inappropriate language. To keep the peace, children must understand that "*e pala le ma'a*"—"stones rot"—but "*e le pala le tala*"—"words do not."

In the words of Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese, the Head of State of the independent nation of Sāmoa, language is both about the oral traditions whispered down from generation to generation, and about the gossips whispered about and around with the intention to hurt and humiliate. It's the difference between *tala tu'umumusu*—stories, hence knowledge, whispered down from ear to ear—on the one hand, and *tala taumumumusu*—or gossip whispered around with the intention to hurt, on the other hand.

New Directions in the Study of Language in Pacific Diasporas

It is our hope that this issue will initiate conversations both in communities and among academics about some of the critical issues facing Pacific Island languages in diverse contexts that are rapidly changing. For some linguistic anthropologists, the central question of the language sciences is "Why talk?"—that is, why do human communities invest so many resources, biological, cultural, in this mode of connection? In the current moment, we may add another layer to that query and wonder, "Why talk in Pacific languages?," especially in a world that incentivizes their obsolescence.

The twenty-first century has already positioned us to observe ever more urgent pressures on the currents of Pacific population

movements, such as accelerating climate change threatening the small islands of the Pacific. What colonization accomplished in displacing populations and extracting resources of our region, global sea level rise and ocean acidity are poised to complete in the immediate decades. What kinds of pressures will speech communities of climate refugees face as they resettle in new territories? Will they follow the same patterns of migration staked out by earlier Pacific migrants in the twentieth centuries, settling in former colonizing countries, or will their settlement open up new veins of language contact never before developed in the culture history of Pacific peoples? As the papers of this issue show, language shift in the Pacific occurs at a swift rate and has many complex causes and consequences. What can we anticipate as our communities move into new social engagements in a world with scarcer and scarcer material resources, and more and more entangled cultural commitments?

In this new world, the social climates Pacific Islanders have inhabited have also changed. Via social media, multiple generations keep in touch despite the distance, especially using platforms like Facebook and Snapchat. Writing, a technology introduced by Europeans into the Pacific, was quickly adopted throughout the region in the nineteenth century, and scholars such as Niko Besnier⁵ have accounted for the ways writing and communicating with distant kin radically altered the social and affective economies of the Pacific. In past centuries, writing was an asynchronous form of communication. What happens now, when instantaneous text messaging serves as an important site for the maintenance of community and affective bonds among kin? Facebook also has the potential to bring language usage into semi-domains, as the audiences for posts may be in-group members, but also others for whom Pacific languages may not be intelligible. These kinds of rapid interactions in semi-public and private communication underscore their potential as a hyper-space for language innovation and accelerated language change. We hope that there will be more language scientists, anthropologists, and creative artists who engage with the tensions among transferrals of heritage knowledge between generations and the moments of rupture, creativity, and linguistic innovation that arise at every turn.

Notes

1. Sāmoan proverb.

2. James Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavor, 1768-1771*, Nos. 34-37 (London: Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1955).
3. Kiribati is partly north and partly south of the equator.
4. Peter Mühlhäusler, *Linguistic Ecology: Language Change and Linguistic Imperialism in the Pacific Region* (New York: Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2003).
5. Niko Besnier, *Literacy Emotion and Authority: Reading and Writing on a Polynesian Atoll* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).


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