Research Paper

The Discursive Construction of Identity in Minority Language Media: The First Person Inclusive Plural Pronoun kākou as a Membership Category in Hawaiian Video Clips

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This paper examines language employed in Hawaiian language videos produced by a recently emerging media initiative in Hawai‘i in order to describe how the media discourse constructs for its audience a sense of what it means to be native Hawaiian. More specifically, the analysis relies on insights from membership category analysis to demonstrate how a specific linguistic resource, the first person inclusive plural pronoun kākou, serves as a means for reinforcing traditional aspects of a native Hawaiian identity. Discussion of the analysis centers on the role that discourse on a media initiative of an endangered language can contribute to the revitalization of that language.

Key words: minority language media, membership category analysis, pronouns, Hawaiian identity and culture, Hawaiian media

少数言語メディアにおける言語による「ハワイアンらしさ」の構築
——人称複数代名詞 kākou という成員カテゴリー——

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本稿は最近ハワイで顕著になり始めたハワイ語メディアで使用されている言語を見ることによ り、ハワイ先住民であるということがどのように表象されているかを考察するものである。具体的には 成員カテゴリーの観点から、一人称複数代名詞 kākou の使用により伝統的なハワイ人としてのアイデ ッティティがどのように構築され補強されているかを検証する。絶滅の危機に瀕する言語のメディアへ の出現は復興運動に直接関わり貢献することを見ていく。

キーワード：少数言語メディア、成員カテゴリー、人称代名詞、ハワイ文化とアイデンティティー、ハ ワイ語メディア

1. Introduction

Hawaiian, the indigenous language of the Hawaiian Islands, is listed as critically endangered in the UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger (also see 大原・サフ ト, 2014). It is, however, currently the object of a strong revitalization movement that has been receiving considerable attention throughout the world (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; Hinton, 2015; Lomawaina & McCarty, 2006). The revitalization movement has mostly focused on the establishment of schools taught through Hawaiian, but there have also been advances made in other areas of society, including the media. One such advancement is the emergence of an initiative termed ‘Oiwi TV, which provides local cable programming and also a website, both of which con-
sist of clips in English and Hawai’ian that promote the Hawaiian language and culture. This paper examines the language employed in some of the Hawaiian language clips in order to describe how the media discourse constructs for its audience a sense of what it means to be native Hawaiian. More specifically, the analysis relies on insights from membership category analysis (Sacks, 1992; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 2007) to demonstrate how a specific linguistic item, the first person inclusive plural pronoun hākou, serves as a resource for reinforcing traditional aspects of a native Hawaiian identity.

In focusing on the usage of a pronoun in Hawaiian media broadcasts, this paper is meant to make a general contribution to research on media discourse, particularly research that focuses on the role of pronouns in the construction and emphasis of certain public identities (Cramer, 2010; Dam, 2015; Roitman, 2014). In addition, this paper speaks to research on minority language media that has discussed the role of the media in the promotion of minority languages (Cormack & Houri
gan, 2007; Hartley, 2004; Riggins, 1992). As Cormack (2007) notes, Fishman (1991, 2001), a leading figure in the study of endangered languages, was skeptical about the role that the media could play in preserving endangered languages. He referred to the media as a social domain that, because it tends to be dominated by majority languages, can do more to prevent older generations from passing down their languages than to support them (also see discussion in Cormack, 2007). Nonetheless, researchers have also displayed optimism about the potential of the media to assist in language revitalization, suggesting that indigenous media can: 1) increase the domains in society in which the language is used; 2) heighten awareness of the language and enhance prestige and positive attitudes; and 3) become a tool for empowering the native community to define for themselves the way that images of the language and culture are disseminated into society (Cormack, 2007; Pietikainen, 2008; Riggins, 1992). Emerging research emphasizing the positive contributions of minority media includes descriptions of television broadcasts in Inuit in Canada (Santo, 2004), commercial radio and also documentary films in Navajo (Pe-
terson, 1997, 2013), broadcast and print journalism in Sami (Pietikainen, 2008), and local television and radio in Basque (Ramírez de la Piscina, 2010), among others. By showing how the pronoun hākou allows Hawaiian language media to reinforce a traditional native Hawaiian identity, this paper furthers the argument for the development of media through minority languages. To move toward the analysis, a brief history of Hawaiian language endangerment and revitalization is offered in the next section.

2. Hawaiian endangerment and revitalization

The arrival of the British sailor Captain James Cook to Hawai’i in 1778 is frequently described as the event that introduced Hawai’i to the western world. Prior to that, the Hawaiian language flourished as the language of business, politics, and education in the islands (Wilson, 1998). Hawai’i was furthered subjected to outside influence when missionaries began arriving in 1820 to spread their Christian beliefs. In order to do so, the missionaries developed a writing system for Hawai’ian, which had previously been strictly an oral language. One of the outcomes of the adoption of a system of writing is that native Hawaiians developed in a very short period of time a strong literacy in their own language. It was suggested that by 1850, nearly the entire adult population was able to read their mother tongue of Hawaiian (Kloss, 1977; also see Huebner, 1985 for discussion). In fact, one of the interesting aspects of discussing the potential role of the media in the current revitalization movement is that there was at one point a robust tradition of print media in Hawai’i with over one-hundred Hawaiian language newspapers created between 1834 and 1948 (Nogelmeier, 2010; Wilson, 1998).

The usage and prestige of the Hawaiian language, however, was in steady decline in the late 1800s as growing western prominence in Hawaiian business, politics, and education continued to place more value on English. An American led coup in 1893 overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy, resulting in the decision in 1898 to include Hawai’i as a US territory. English-only legislature in 1896 banned Hawaiian as a medium of education, with Hawaiian-speaking children being punished for
using their native tongue in school. An increasing number of speakers of Hawaiian decided to teach English, not Hawaiian, to the younger generations. Likewise, Hawaiian language newspapers were gradually replaced by English publications. Throughout the 1900s, Hawaiian continued to decline with fewer and fewer young people learning the language. It was reported, in fact, that by the 1970s and 1980s, there were less than 50 children speakers of the language (Kimura, Kamanā, & Wilson, 2003).

The 1970s, though, saw a renewed interest in the Hawaiian culture and led to a period termed the Hawaiian Renaissance (Wilson, 1998). This period was marked especially by efforts in Hawaiian music and dance, but there was also more attention given to the language. Efforts at the political level led to the declaration of Hawaiian as an official language of the state (together with English) in 1978 and also to the reversal in 1986 of the ban on Hawaiian in education. Meanwhile, the first pre-school taught through Hawaiian opened in 1984, which resulted not only in a number of pre-schools throughout the islands but also in a system in which students can start being educated in the language soon after birth and continue through elementary school, junior high school, and high school, as well as undergraduate and graduate school at the university level (Wilson & Kamanā, 2001). In what is being termed a P-20 initiative (pre-school through grade 20), it is now possible to be educated all the way through the doctoral level in Hawaiian (Wilson & Kamanā, 2014). Whereas there were once less than 50 child speakers of Hawaiian, there is now a growing movement with over 2,000 children educated in Hawaiian (Wilson & Kamanā, 2013).

However, the development of a dynamic revitalization movement has not come without controversy. As the number of immigrants increased in Hawai‘i from not just the west but also various parts of Asia, the mixing of ethnicities has made it increasingly difficult to identify just who is native Hawaiian. In order to ensure that certain government-led initiatives were limited to the category of “Hawaiian”, public officials employed blood quantum classifications to make determinations of ethnic identity (Halualani, 2002; Kauanui, 2008).

This has resulted in concerns about who should be leading and involved in the revitalization movement (Trask, 1999; Warner, 1999). Moreover, questions have been raised about the authenticity of the reemerging culture in light of a tourist industry that has turned aspects of culture such as the hula and flowery leis into products for non-Hawaiian consumers (Diamond, 2013; Lyons, 2010; Trask, 1999). This paper does not attempt to answer questions about “true” identity and cultural “authenticity”, but it does describe how, within a sometimes contentious revitalization movement, the first person inclusive plural pronoun  hākou can serve as a resource in the media for creating ties to certain aspects of identity and culture.

3. ‘Ōiwi TV

‘Ōiwi TV is an initiative that makes use of both older (television) and newer (Internet, social media) technologies. ‘Ōiwi TV’s productions are shown locally on television in Hawai‘i on Oceanic Time-Warner channel 326 and are also housed on the website ‘Ōiwi TV2. According to its website, “‘Ōiwi TV produces top-quality documentaries, news and multimedia content from a uniquely Hawaiian perspective” that are “shaped by our aspiration to revitalize and affirm a positive native Hawaiian worldview.” The notion of shaping and/or constructing a native Hawaiian perspective is further emphasized on the website: “‘Ōiwi TV’s vision is to reestablish the Native Hawaiian worldview to a place of authority in Hawaiians, Hawai‘i and the rest of the world.” Not all of the videos feature speakers of the Hawaiian language, but the website states that, as of September 30, 2016, 1,250 videos have been produced, 925 of which are in the Hawaiian language. Some of the videos are of considerable length, approximately one hour, but the majority of the videos on the website are much shorter clips, in the range of three to seven minutes.

To be clear, it should be noted that of the Hawaiian videos, many consist of a mixture of English and Hawaiian, a result of the fact that many of the people interviewed in the videos are not fluent speakers of Hawaiian. Often, a video will begin with a narrator speaking Hawaiian as part of introducing the topic, then feature interviews
with different people, some of whom might speak Hawaiian and some English, and then return to the narrator for further explanation in Hawaiian. Frequently, the videos also show English subtitles that make them understandable to non-Hawaiian speakers. Likewise, some of the English parts of a video provide subtitles in Hawaiian.

As videos that feature both visual images and spoken language, there are numerous resources employed toward the goal of promoting a Hawaiian worldview. The choice of topic, for instance, is one way a video can do this. Many of the videos focus on the relationship between people and the land and also between people and the ocean, which is suggestive of the emphasis placed in the Hawaiian worldview on protecting and making a living from nature. There is also a heavy concentration on language and also the arts, including music and dance. Within the Hawaiian language as well, there are numerous resources for promoting a Hawaiian way of thinking, including vocabulary, proverbs, and grammatical patterns used to construct actions such as chants and songs that also appear in the videos. The decision to focus on pronouns in this paper is not meant to suggest that these other aspects are not important; rather, it is meant to demonstrate the important role that the first person inclusive plural pronoun plays in this particular media initiative.

For the purpose of this study, 15 of the shorter video clips featuring Hawaiian were transcribed. Due to space restrictions, excerpts from all of the transcribed clips cannot be shown in the analysis. To be consistent, the analysis focuses on the speech of the narrators, a decision based on the idea that the narrators frequently design their speech for the viewing audience. Such an analytic focus will make it possible to demonstrate how the narrators use pronouns to keep viewers focused on specific aspects of Hawaiian culture and identity.

4. Pronouns in Hawaiian and in the videos

Prior to providing transcripts of some portions of the video clips, it is important to note that the Hawaiian language has some distinctions in its pronouns that differ from other languages such as English and Japanese. Hawaiian is a Polynesian language that has been placed in the larger language family of Austronesian. It shares with other Polynesian languages and some Austronesian languages, as well as various languages throughout the world, distinctions in its pronouns between inclusive and exclusive forms and between dual (2) and plural (3 or more) referents. The table below shows the basic pronouns in Hawaiian.

Prior studies focusing on the grammar of Hawaiian have mostly listed the distinctions in the pronouns without considering the interactional effects and outcomes of pronoun usage in actual discourse (i.e., Elbert & Pukui, 1979). The same is true of research on pronouns in Austronesian languages. Lichtenberk (2005) suggested that the inclusive-exclusive distinction in Austronesian pronouns may be related to in-groupness and politeness but does not work with data from natural interaction nor from the media.

As the table 1 indicates, the English equivalent for all of the dual and plural first person pronouns in Hawaiian would simply be “we” in the nominative form. The point has been made that English speakers, despite just the one “we” form, can use prosody and other grammatical markers to distinguish an inclusive and exclusive “we” (Fairclough, 1989; Scheibman, 2004). Inigo-Mora (2004) has, in fact, shown how English “we” functioned in discourse in the British Parliament to include and exclude participants based on the con-

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text in which it was used. Similarly, Dam (2015) focused on pronouns in Danish, which like English does not have an overt inclusive–exclusive distinction, and demonstrated how it worked to create an inclusive community based on gender.

It is therefore possible to use pronouns for inclusivity and exclusivity in languages that have neither inclusive–exclusive nor dual-plural distinctions. Nonetheless, it is still the case that a language such as Hawaiian with both pronoun distinctions makes it possible to display even more overtly who is to be included or excluded in the content of their speech. Excerpt (1) provides an example that features both the inclusive and exclusive first person plural forms. It is taken from the very beginning of a clip introducing a new TV program that focuses on the teaching of the Hawaiian language²⁶.

Excerpt (1): New Program (http://owi.tv/apl/‘aha’i-‘ōlelo-ola-may-30-2010/)

1 Narrator: E nā hoa ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, aloha nui kākou.
2  Eia nō mākou, ko ‘Āha‘i ‘Ōlelo Ola ma käia
3 ‘āina moena pāwehe nei ‘o Mokulē‘ia kahi e
4  pa‘a wāikio ‘ia nei kā kākou polakolamu a‘o
5    i ka ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i hou loa
6    ‘o Ka Leo ‘Ōiwi.

1 Narrator: To our friends who speak Hawaiian,
2   greetings to us all. We from ‘Āha‘i ‘Ōlelo Ola
3    are here at this beautiful place called
4   Mokulē‘ia the place where they are making
5     the video of our new program to teach
6 Hawaiian that is called Ka Leo ‘Ōiwi

The narrator begins in line 1 with the greeting aloha nui kākou that makes use of the first person plural inclusive form. Despite the awkward sense of the English translation “greetings to us all”, this usage of kākou is a very common way in which Hawaiian speakers greet large groups. As an inclusive plural form, the narrator’s usage of kākou places herself together with the addressees of the greeting in one inclusive group. In this particular case, the addressees of the greeting include the viewing audience. Note, though, that the pronoun quickly switches in line 2 to the exclusive plural form mākou as the narrator explains the whereabouts of her group, which is called the ‘Āha‘i ‘Ōlelo Ola. In this case, the “we” refers only to the group currently at the place known as Mokulē‘ia. The viewing audience is not there and thus should not be included in the reference, hence the exclusive form mākou. Yet, as the narrator continues to explain their purpose for being in that place, she once again switches to the inclusive form hākou in line 4 to note that they are there for the making of “our” new program called Ka Leo ‘Ōiwi. In producing hākou, she prefaces it with the possessive marker kā in order to construct the program as belonging to the inclusive group that contains herself as well as the audience.

Based on this first excerpt, there are two points of emphasis. First, the usage of the inclusive plural form hākou in this particular media context places the viewing audience together with the narrator in an inclusive community. In other words, although the narrator might be speaking into a camera in the presence of only a few of her crew, her usage of hākou creates an inclusive community with whomever is on the viewing end, as long as those viewers understand Hawaiian. This is true even if an individual viewer is watching the video clip online by her/himself. As the plural and inclusive pronoun, hākou places the isolated viewer into a constructed community.

Second, the expression of hākou together with a possessive marker such as kā constructs a relationship of possession such that the inclusive group is seen as possessing whatever is connected to the pronoun kākou. In Excerpt (1), the possessive marker kā and kākou were used to construct the language program as belonging to a community that includes the viewing audience. This idea of possession will occupy an important place in the remainder of the analysis since hākou is frequently used in the videos together with a possessive marker. Grammatically, possessives are formed in Hawaiian by the usage of a separate morpheme, either an a or an o following a noun and preceding the pronoun or a kā or a ko before a pronoun that
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is immediately followed by a noun. For example, “our house”, where the word hale is used to mean ‘house’, would be expressed as either hale o kākou (lit. ‘house of us’) or ko kākou hale (‘our house’). Excerpt (2), which is taken from a video describing how February was to be designated as Hawaiian language month in Hawai‘i, offers another example.


1 Narrator: I loko nō o kēia paipai ‘ana, ua kāhiko ‘ia nō
2 kā kākou ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i me kekahī lei hou aku
3 o ka lanakila ma kēia piha makahiki he
4 kanakolu o ke aukahi ho‘ōla ‘ōlelo
5 Hawai‘i ma lalo ho‘i o ka ‘Aha Pūnana Leo.

1 Narrator: In being recognized this way,
2 our Hawaiian language was bestowed another
3 honor in this year that marks the thirtieth of
4 the movement to revitalize Hawaiian under
5 the guidance of the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo.

As a part of describing the honor of being recognized in lines 1–2, the narrator employs the possessive marker kā followed immediately by kākou, thus constructing the Hawaiian language as “our” Hawaiian language. Like excerpt (1), the inclusive plural form kākou creates an inclusive community for the viewers, which means that the combination of the possessive kā and kākou frames the Hawaiian language as belonging to this constructed community.

If we consider that the narrator is speaking in Hawaiian and thus addressing an audience of Hawaiian speakers, this connection of kākou to the Hawaiian language makes sense. “Our” Hawaiian language would thus also belong to the audience since they represent the community of Hawaiian speakers. The analysis here, though, is going to take this point one step further and claim that the first person inclusive plural pronoun kākou, when connected in this way to an aspect of society such as language, serves as a reference to a specific group of people, namely the group “native Hawaiian”. This would then make it possible to argue that by constructing the language as belonging to kākou, the narrator is doing more than just making her narration relatable to the audience. She is actually reinforcing to them the point that language is something that should belong to people who are native Hawaiian. The next section develops this point by considering how kākou can represent the category of “native Hawaiian” in this media discourse.

5. Kākou as a membership category

Pronouns such as kākou do not consist of any inherent referential meaning. They only gain meaning through usage within context. Such terms have been referred to as deixis and/or shifters because to whom or what they actually refer changes from usage to usage. In Excerpt (1), for example, the narrator’s usage of mākou refers to a specific group of people in that situation (the members of the group ‘Aha‘i ‘Ōlelo Ola), but in other situations with other speakers the same pronoun mākou will refer to a completely different group. The same is true of kākou; it is always inclusive of the addressee(s) when it is employed, but exactly who is included will vary from context to context and from speaker to speaker.

How, then, can kākou come to be understood in the videos as a reference to the specific group “native Hawaiians”? To suggest that it is such a reference is to claim that kākou functions as a kind of membership categorization device that invokes a culturally familiar category, namely “native Hawaiian”. There is in fact an analytic framework, termed Membership Category Analysis (MCA), that studies such devices and their deployment in social interaction. MCA grew out of the work of Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff (Sacks, 1992; Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 2007) who observed that participants employ membership categorization devices such as “teacher”, “woman”, “man”, “terrorist”, “athlete”, “American”, “Japanese”, “gambler”, etc. to place individuals in pre-established cultural categories.
based on their common-sense knowledge that they apply in the moment-by-moment construction of social interaction. In short, a participant’s deployment of a device such as “American” or “native Hawaiian” to describe someone is based on the participant’s understanding of the prior existence of such a category and her/his inferences at that particular interactional moment. The argument to be developed here is that the common sense knowledge deployed by narrators in the video include the knowledge that kākou can in certain instances refer to “native Hawaiian”.

In prior research, pronouns have not necessarily been treated as membership categories devices, but there is a precedent for making a connection between pronouns and categories. Bushnell (2014) suggests that a Japanese teacher’s usage of the pronoun “we” to explain decreased usage of honorific language by Japanese speakers serves, through the process of metonymy, as an overt formulation of the category of “Japanese”. The current analysis does not employ the concept of metonymy, but it does follow Bushnell in considering how a specific first person plural pronoun may function as an explicit invocation of a cultural category.

In describing the inferences made by participants, Sacks noted that categorization devices are often paired in interaction with activities, given the name category-bound activities, that seem to have a “natural” connection to the categories being invoked. In one of his most cited examples, “the baby cried, the mommy picked it up”, the connection of the actions “cried” and “mommy picked it up” to the “baby” enable the interpretation that the category device “baby” refers to a “stage-of-life” category as opposed to a category that is meant as a maturity level (as in “don’t be such a baby”) or intimate relationship (as in “how are you, baby?”). Moreover, although it is not made explicit that the category device “mommy” makes her the mother of the “baby”, our common sense knowledge that a mommy picks up her own baby when s/he cries leads us to the inference that this particular “mommy” is the mother of the “baby”. That speakers and hearers in interaction use the connection between activities and category devices to find meaning in interaction is part of the human inferential system deployed on a daily basis.

In order to build on this idea of category-bound activities, I would suggest that inferences arise not only when category devices are connected to certain activities but also when they are linked to aspects of society and culture that support the understanding of those categories. More specifically, the claim is that when kākou is connected via possessive markers to aspects of society that are recognizably “Hawaiian”, this can lead to the inference that kākou is serving as a reference to “native Hawaiian”. Excerpt (3) begins to unpack this claim. It is taken from the very beginning of a video that focuses on the work of a particular private school system in Hawai‘i, referred to as Kamehameha Schools, to protect and preserve the land in an area known as Kohala on the Big Island of Hawai‘i.

Excerpt (3): Kamehameha Schools (http://oiw.tv/ks/kohala-becomes-a-field-school-for-grad-students-and-residents-alike/)

1 Narrator: He kuleana ko nā kula o Kamehameha e
2 mālama i ko kākou mau ‘āina a wahi kūpona
3 a puni Hawai‘i pae ‘āina. ‘O ke ‘ano o ko lākou e ho’okō ai i ua kuleana nei, ‘o ia ho’i ke
4 kāelele nui ‘ana ma luna o kekahal papa-hana
5 hou loa a lākou i pili ho’i i ka mālama kūpono
6 ‘ana i nā kumu waiwai a me nā ‘āina aloha o
7 kākou ma o nā ha’awina o ka ho’oma’a, ka
8 ho’omalu, ka ho’omana a me ka ho’omau ‘ana
9 aku i kēia ‘ike.

1 Narrator: Kamehameha schools has a responsibility to
2 protect our land and places of the ancestors
3 around the Hawaiian island chain. How
4 they carry out that responsibility, it is
by placing an emphasis on a specific new program of theirs that focuses on the proper protection of the natural resources and also our beloved land through a plan that focuses on the concepts of “practice”, “protect”, “empower”, and “preserve”.

Using kākou and the possessive marker ko in line 2, the narrator describes in lines 1–2 the responsibility of Kamehameha Schools to protect “our land”. As the inclusive plural pronoun, kākou constructs the land as belonging to a group that includes the narrator and the viewing audience. Soon after in line 4, the narrator shifts to the third person plural pronoun lākou to refer to how they, namely Kamehameha Schools, are going to carry out this responsibility. She again employs the third person plural lākou in line 6 to mention “their” program, but she returns to the inclusive plural kākou with the possessive morpheme o in line 8 to emphasize that Kamehameha’s new program is for the purpose of protecting “our” beloved land.

This excerpt thus contains an interesting sequence of switching between the pronouns kākou to lākou. Yet, this is not a mere “us-them” contrast because Kamehameha Schools is known in Hawai‘i to be a school for students of Hawaiian ancestry. Instead, this is a description of a how a smaller group of native Hawaiians is doing work to preserve the land for the larger group of native Hawaiians. That kākou serves as a reference to the category “native Hawaiian” is evident not just from the link to Kamehameha schools but also due to the connection made through the possessive markers to the land. Part of the common sense knowledge of someone born and raised in Hawai‘i, particularly someone of Hawaiian ancestry, is the importance of land to the Hawaiian culture and to a Hawaiian identity. This is apparent from the following quotation:

The land is not viewed as a commodity; it is the foundation of their cultural and spiritual identity as Hawaiians. They trace their lineage to the lands in the region as being originally settled by their ancestors. The land is a part of their ‘ohana and they care for it as they do the other living members of their families (McGregor et al., 2003, p. 107).

The inclusion of land as part of the ‘ohana, the Hawaiian word for family, speaks to the importance of the land to native Hawaiians. It also further suggests the possibility that the usage of kākou in Excerpt (3) in connection to the land invokes the common sense knowledge that in a Hawaiian worldview there is a very intimate relationship between the land and native Hawaiians.

The claim, then, that kākou is understood as a reference to the category “native Hawaiian” is based on a mutually informing relation between the pronoun kākou and the aspect of society to which it is linked. On the one hand, the explicit connection of kākou to land accesses the common sense knowledge of the importance of this linkage to native Hawaiians and thus helps viewers hear kākou as “native Hawaiian”. On the other hand, the link to kākou aids in the understanding of land as not just any land but specifically as “Hawaiian land”. This mutually informing relationship is meant to capture the inferential process used by participants in interaction: the categories that are invoked inform understanding of the aspects of society to which they are attached and the social aspects invoked inform understanding of the categories. In terms more specific to a Hawaiian context, this connection between kākou and the surrounding talk draws on the common sense knowledge possessed by people born, raised, and educated in Hawai‘i that certain aspects of society such as land are closely linked to their identity as Hawaiians. Moreover, by invoking the relationship between kākou as “native Hawaiian” and aspects of society, the narrators of these video clips are able to reinforce to their viewing audience the importance of an aspect of society such as land to the group of native Hawaiians. The next sections shows how the narrators employed kākou to reinforce further the importance of land as well as other aspects of society such as language and genealogical relations.
6. Kākou and the reinforcement of the importance of land, language, and genealogy

Given the importance of land to the native Hawaiian traditional view of the world, it is not surprising that the video clips on ‘Ōiwi TV frequently employ kākou to make this connection. Excerpt (4) provides another example. It is taken from a video focusing on the efforts of one high school chemistry teacher to allow his students to learn from nature.

Excerpt (4): Teaching chemistry through culture (http://oiwi.tv/ks/teaching-chemistry-through-culture/)

1 Narrator: He ho’a’ilaona ka holomua nui ‘ana o kēia
2 pāhana i ka waiwai a ko’iko’i o ke a’o ‘ana ma
3 o ka hana pū ‘ana me ko kākou ‘āina. Me ia
4 mana’o i mana’o ai kekahi mau kumu a’o ‘o
5 ka mokupuni ‘o Hawai’i e ho’omau aku i ke
6 kūkā kama’ilio ‘ana no nā Ala e ho’onui ‘ia ai
7 kēia ‘ano kaila a’o

1 Narrator: The progress of this project is a sign of how
2 important it is to continue teaching and
3 working with our land. With that in mind
4 some teachers now believe that the island of
5 Hawai’i is the place to continue discussing
6 and searching for a way to increase this
7 way

As the narrator discusses the progress of this particular teacher’s project in lines 1–3, she employs the possessive marker ko together with kākou in the middle of line 3 to construct the land (‘āina) as “our” land. Due to the connection being drawn to an aspect such as land, it becomes possible for kākou to be understood by the viewing audience as a reference to the category of “native Hawaiian” and for the land to be seen as belonging to this category. Moreover, by accessing this common sense knowledge of the connection of land to native Hawaiians, the narrators in this excerpt and also in the previous excerpt (Excerpt (3)) are reinforcing the importance of the land to a native Hawaiian worldview. In other words, by using the possessive markers to construct the land as belonging to native Hawaiians, the narrators in the last two video clips are sending a message to the audience a sense that this is “our” land.

In addition to land, kākou is used frequently in the video clips to construct other aspects of society such as language as belonging to native Hawaiians. Like the land, the Hawaiian language occupies an important place in the Hawaiian worldview. This view is represented in the traditional proverb i ka ōihe Hawai‘i ke ola, which translated literally means “the life of a Hawaiian person rests in the Hawaiian language” (Wilson, 1998). Also like the native Hawaiian relationship with the land, the Hawaiian language is something that has been lost over time, leaving a hole in the identities of native Hawaiians. As Kahumoku (2003) notes, the endangerment of the Hawaiian language led to the muting of native voices in most aspects of society and resulted in the deempowerment of the native Hawaiian population.

Excerpt (2) above offered one example where kākou and a possessive marker were employed in the phrase hā kākou ōihe Hawai‘i “our Hawaiian language” to emphasize that the Hawaiian language belonged to the inclusive community of the viewing audience. Excerpt (1) also spoke to the importance of language by drawing a link between kākou and a new language program that was devoted to the teaching of Hawaiian. The understanding in such a case is that “our new program to teach Hawaiian” is a program that will benefit native Hawaiians because it might help them learn and pass on their language. Excerpt (5) provides another example highlighting the importance of language from a video clip focusing on contributions of a particular native speaker of Hawaiian, Lolena Nicolas, to Hawaiian language education.

Excerpt (5): Gift of Knowledge (http://oiwi.tv/oiwitv/a-gift-of-knowledge/)

1 Narrator: ‘O ‘Anake Lolena Nicolas kekahi ma ka
2 ‘ikoi o ka pahu ikaika ‘ana i ka ho‘ola hou ‘ia
3 o kā kākou ‘ōlelo makauhine ma ke kana-
kolu
4 a ‘oi paha makahiki.

1 Narrator: Aunty Lolena Nicolas is one of those who
2 has been at the core of promoting the
3 revitalization of our mother tongue for thirty
4 and even more years

In putting kākou together with the possessive kā in line 3, the narrator in this excerpt employs the term ‘ōlelo makauhine which literally means “mother language”. Usage of this term further emphasizes the importance of this language to the inclusive community created by the usage of kākou, it is “our” mother language. In a similar way that kākou could be heard as the category “native Hawaiian” when combined with land, so too can this usage of kākou be understood as the same category. The connection made by the narrator draws on the common sense knowledge of viewers concerning the place of the Hawaiian language in society and in the Hawaiian worldview. At the same time, this connection makes it possible for the narrator to use this media outlet to reinforce this piece of knowledge to the viewing audience, that is, that the Hawaiian language is a crucial aspect of a native Hawaiian identity.

One further aspect of society frequently observed in the ‘Ōiwi TV discourse in connection with the pronoun kākou is genealogy. As noted earlier, native Hawaiians feel a familial relationship with the land. Likewise, they hold a close and even spiritual connection to their ancestors and also to their future generations. Such a connection is expressed in the following passage from a person of Hawaiian ancestry interviewed by the Hawaiian educator Manulani Meyer:

I’m really deeply connected to my mother and ancestors and all the Hawaiians that came before us. And in me I have some of that cellular, molecular structure and memory of long ago. How comforting (Meyer, 2001, p. 127).

The employment of a cellular metaphor suggests how strongly the belief is in this ancestral connection. Similar to the land and language, there is a sense that changes in Hawaiian society based on the influx of new people to the islands have resulted in a loss of understanding of the notion of what the family means in traditional Hawaiian culture (see discussion in Handy & Pukui, 1972; Pukui, Haertig & Lee, 1972). In the video clips, the narrator makes use of this connection to emphasize the idea that these genealogical connections should be important to native Hawaiians. Excerpt (6) offers an example from the same clip as Excerpt (5) and shows a connection drawn between kākou and children.

Excerpt (6): Gift of Knowledge (http://oiwi.tv/oiwitv/a-gift-of-knowledge/)

1 Narrator: I loko o kēia mau makahiki he kana-
kolu i
2 hala iho nei ua kūkulu a ho‘opa’a hou ‘ia
3 ‘onaehana kula e ho‘ona’auao ia ai kā
kākou
4 mau keiki ma o ka ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i piha.

1 Narrator: Within these thirty years that re-
cently
2 passed a system of schools was put into place
3 so that our children could be educated entirely
4 through the Hawaiian language

The usage of kākou at the end of line 3 of this excerpt is prefaced by the possessive marker kā and also followed by the plural marker mau and the word for child keiki. With the plural marker, this is a general reference to “our children” (in-
stead of a specified child or group of children), which makes use of the common sense knowledge of the importance of family in Hawaiian to make this hearable as “our native Hawaiian children.” This interpretation is further buttressed by the fact that the content of the talk is focused on edu-
cation through the Hawaiian language. The link between kākou and children likewise is heard as a connection that reinforces the importance of the
next generation of children (as well as the language) to native Hawaiians. It is the children that will carry on the language and culture and thus it is important, especially given the loss of the traditional meaning of family, that native Hawaiians understand that this next generation of children “belongs” to them.

The next excerpt is similar in that it focuses on a generational relationship except here it is to an older generation. It occurs as the narrator is explaining how the members preparing to go on an extended voyage on the canoe Hōkūle’a employed a variety means to prepare themselves.

Excerpt (7): Voyage of the Hōkūle’a (http://oiwi.tv/hokulea/ka-ipu-a-ka-hoakele/)

1 Narrator: aia ka waiwai o ua mau pono lako kino i ko
2 ka ‘aukai ‘imiloa mākaaukau po’o. A e like me
3 ka ‘ōlelo o ko kākou po’e kūpuna, “A’ohe pau
4 ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho’okahi.”

1 Narrator: The value of preparing the body in those
2 ways is present in the heads of those voyagers.
3 Just like the words of our ancestors,
4 “Knowledge can come from many sources.”

In the middle of line 3, the narrator utters kākou with the possessive marker ko and then continues on in line 3 to make a connection to the po’e kūpuna (“ancestors”). By framing this as the ancestors belonging to kākou (“our ancestors”), this connection accesses the common sense knowledge of the importance of ancestral relationships to native Hawaiians as a part of leading viewers to understand that the reference of kākou is to the category of “native Hawaiian”. Also informing this understanding is the usage of the common Hawaiian proverb ‘A’ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho’okahi (“Knowledge can come from many sources”) at the end of this excerpt. This is a proverb that Hawaiian speakers know, and it is therefore relatively easy for viewers to see that it would have been passed down from older generations of native Hawaiians.

One last short example that emphasizes genealogical connections is seen in the excerpt below, which makes use of the Hawaiian term for genealogy (mo‘okū‘auhau). It is from a video clip describing an annual fund raising event to promote the Hawaiian language preschools.


1 Narrator: A ua ʻike ʻia ka waiwai o ke ʻo mau o ko kākou moʻokū‘auhau ma loko o ka mākia o
2 kēia makahiki ʻo “He moʻopuna ʻōlelo ola”
3 1 Narrator: And the importance of perpetuating 2 our genealogy can be seen in this year’s theme
4 which is “Grandchildren of a living language”

Once again employing kākou with a possessive marker, the narrator constructs at the beginning of line 2 the genealogy as belonging to kākou. Like the kākou employed in the previous two excerpts, this usage plays to the knowledge possessed by Hawaiian speakers of the importance of genealogy to the Hawaiian worldview and thus is hearable as a reference to the category “native Hawaiian”. Simultaneously, because it explicitly constructs the genealogy as belonging to kākou, it promotes the importance of genealogy to the audience. This is in fact part of the message being relayed by the narrator to the viewing audience, namely, the necessity of perpetuating the Hawaiian genealogy.

7. Discussion

Employing eight excerpts of data, the analysis described how narrators in video clips from the media initiative ‘Ōiwi TV were able to underscore through the discourse certain aspects of what it traditionally means to be native Hawaiian. Focusing especially on usages of kākou, the analysis showed that this inclusive plural pronoun allowed narrators to construct a community inclusive of themselves and the viewing audience. Moreover,
when this constructed community is connected via possessive markers to aspects of society such as land, language, or genealogy, kāhō functions as a reference to the category of “native Hawaiian” and enables the narrators to reinforce the importance of such aspects of society to this category of people.

It should be stressed that the analysis has not attempted to make any type of statement about what should be considered as traditional elements of the Hawaiian culture or a Hawaiian identity. As noted earlier, native Hawaiian identity has been a controversial notion in Hawai‘i, as people have sometimes been forced to “prove” their “nativeness” through blood quantum and lineage documents in order to gain access to certain social privileges (Halualani, 2002; Kauanui, 2008; Trask, 1999). The concept of traditional culture has also been a point of contestation as questions have arisen about the authenticity of aspects of Hawaiian culture presented to and consumed by the outside world (Diamond, 2009; Lyons, 2010; Trask, 1999). While these issues concerning culture and identity certainly necessitate further study, the focus of this analysis was on the way in which the narrators used available linguistic resources such as kāhō and possessive markers to construct within the discourse a sense of what should be important to native Hawaiians. Through MCA, the analysis was concerned with describing how kāhō became “visible” as a device for referring to “native Hawaiian” and thus became a resource for claiming certain aspects of society as belonging to this category. Thus, while the analysis itself does not make claims about the constitution of authentic identities and cultures, it is suggestive of the role that the minority media can play in light of questions surrounding an endangered language such as Hawaiian. By employing linguistic resources such as pronouns and possessive markers, the media can construct for viewers a sense of those aspects of society—land, language, and genealogy—that should “belong” to them and constitute an important part of their identity and culture.

To be sure, research on minority language media has emphasized that it is difficult to gauge the type of effect the usage of an endangered language in the media will have on its status in society (Cormack, 2007; Cormack & Hourigan, 2007). Cormack (2007, p. 63) writes, “just because television programmes or websites use a minority language, that does not mean that they are therefore necessarily useful for language maintenance. At the end of the day, to be useful in this way, media must encourage actual language use.” In this sense, it is true that this paper focused on the usage of language in discourse and did not attempt to measure the degree to which the videos are being consumed in Hawaiian society.

At the same time, though, the analysis is suggestive of at least three possible ways that a media initiative such as Ōiwi TV can contribute to the Hawaiian revitalization movement. First, the excerpts of data show that the Hawaiian language is indeed being employed in a media outlet that is available both on television and online. As noted earlier, despite a strong tradition of Hawaiian language in the print media in the 1800s, the current revitalization movement has been focused primarily on providing educational opportunities in Hawaiian. Ōiwi TV thus represents an additional domain of usage of Hawaiian and is hopefully a precursor to further media initiatives and perhaps expansion into other social domains.

Second, the creation of an initiative such as Ōiwi TV empowers native Hawaiians to control how they are portrayed in the media. It allows the leaders of Ōiwi TV to select the topics to broadcast, and also, as the analysis indicated, to choose the language and discourse in such a way that would construct Hawaiian identities and reinforce specified aspects of tradition and culture. It is here especially that the first person inclusive plural pronoun kāhō becomes such a valuable resource. By functioning as a device for invoking the membership category “native Hawaiian”, it enables the narrators, while they report on various topics, to make connections to certain aspects of culture and identity for the viewing audience. Especially in light of the degree to which aspects of culture and identity such as the land, language, and genealogy have been lost due to colonization in Hawai‘i, the ability of the narrators to make use of a readily available resource such as kāhō to construct a sense of what it means to be Hawaiian
can potentially be a contributing aspect of the revitalization process.

Third, by using the pronoun  hākou  in such a way, the narrators of the videos provide a model for their viewing audience in terms of their language usage, particularly how an aspect of language such as  hākou  can be employed to create inclusive communities that are connected to important aspects of culture and identity. Since the Hawaiian language revitalization movement consists of speakers of various abilities, these video clips thus stand not only as reports of important information but also as tools from which other speakers may learn. This is not to say that all speakers of Hawaiian will necessarily want to employ the language in the same way, but the excerpts of video presented in this paper do provide easily accessible examples of how a Hawaiian speaker can employ  hākou  as a resource to construct and reinforce aspects of society that are important to a Hawaiian identity.

8. Conclusion

This paper centered on a description of how the first person inclusive plural pronoun  hākou  serves as an important resource on a recently emerging media initiative in Hawai‘i. In terms of media research in general, Hawaiian language media is hardly the first to employ pronouns in resourceful ways; research has focused on how pronouns function in the media in English (Cramer, 2010), French (Roitman, 2014), and also Danish (Dam, 2015), to name just a few. Still, as noted earlier, Hawaiian pronouns consist of overt distinctions between inclusive and exclusive as well as dual and plural forms that are not found in the many of the language previously studied. As shown in the analysis, this distinction made it possible for narrators of the video clips to employ the first person inclusive plural form  hākou  to place themselves in inclusive community with the viewing audience. This subsequently allowed the narrators to construct certain aspects of society as belonging to this constructed community. Further research of not just  hākou  but also other pronoun forms in the Hawaiian media may reveal additional functions associated with the inclusive/exclusive distinction. Moreover, it would be interesting to examine media discourse in other languages, for example, Māori, that also have inclusive/exclusive and dual/plural distinctions in their pronouns. Likewise, while this paper focused primarily on one specific pronoun as it appears with possessive markers, it would be fruitful to examine other linguistic resources that are employed in the discourse of ‘Ōiwi TV. As one of the rare media initiatives that currently employs Hawaiian, it will be important to continue to examine how the use of language on ‘Ōiwi TV contributes to the revitalization of the language.

Endnotes

1)  http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/
2)  http://oiwi.tv
3)  Found on the “about” link at http://oiwi.tv/about/
4)  ibid
5)  ibid
6)  Some (but not all) of the clips have already been transcribed on the website.
7)  For many of the clips, the narrator is the same person. Each clip has one narrator and in the 15 clips transcribed for this paper, there were a total of three different narrators. All of the three are female and accordingly the pronoun “she” will be used in the analysis to refer to the narrators’ speech.
8)  All of the excerpts of data to appear in the analysis are from clips that include English subtitles that translate the Hawaiian content. For the translations of the excerpts used here, I have mostly employed the English subtitles as is, except in a few cases where the translations have been modified to include words or concepts left out of the subtitles.
9)  There are a series of conditions that determine whether  a or o  and  hā or ko  will be used. For explanation of those conditions, see Wilson (1976).

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