

Ka Baibala Hemolele

Advantages and disadvantages of
using a Bible translation for analysis of
'ōlelo Hawai'i morphosyntax

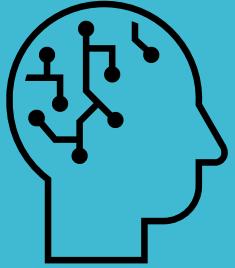
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and Conservation*

University of Hawai'i-Mānoa; March 7, 2025

1. Introduction

1. Introduction



The problem → how to obtain authentic linguistic data for 'ōlelo Hawai'i ('ŌH)?

- Chomsky (1965:3) – “Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.”
- L1 speakers of 'ŌH: currently very few outside of the Ni'ihau community (NeSmith 2019).

1. Introduction

Author	Data source
Hawkins (1979)	3 oral (1 from Ni'ihiwai); written: Pāka'a (Nakuina, 1901), Ka'ala (Kapu, 1904), newspapers Kū'oko'a, Uluhoi
Hawkins (1982)	Andrews, Alexander; 'ŌH texts from 1840 to 1920
Carter (1996)	McGuire 1938 (an L1 speaker); Fornander Collection; Nākuina 1902 (L1); Hale'ole 1863 (L1)
Cook (1999, 2002)	McGuire, Kamanā & Wilson (1990), Elbert (1959), E&P (1979), P&E (1986), Hopkins (1992), Cleeland (1992); newspapers
Baker (2012)	Novel length texts published in newspapers from 1863 to 1924
Medeiros (2013)	Fieldnotes from three kūpuna speakers located in Kaua'i and Honolulu.
Medeiros (2021)	Elbert & Pukui (1979), Hawkins (1979, 1982, 2000); fieldnotes from two Ni'ihiwai speakers.

1. Introduction

Goal: Contribute to the maintenance of 'ŌH via descriptive linguistic research.

Studying a minoritized language also raises awareness of it (Sallabank 2013:60).

By raising awareness of 'ŌH to newcomers, locals, and all segments of the population of Hawai'i we can "...transform attitudes and ideologies that have traditionally marginalized and destabilized it" (Solomon 2024:156).

1. Introduction

Positionality:

I aim for my research to be a collaborative effort between myself and the Hawaiian community (v. Charity Hudley, Mallinson & Bucholtz 2024:239).

As an outsider, it is not my place to make decisions or offer opinions regarding language policy and planning (Warner 1999, NeSmith 2005).

1. Introduction

Roadmap:

- Section 2. How did we get the Baibala? (Lyon 2017)
- Section 3. The Baibala as a source of data: Advantages & disadvantages.
- Section 4. Case study #1 – Subject marker 'o.
- Section 5. Case study #2 – Negative markers '*a'ole, mai*.

2. How did we get the Baibala?

Lyon, K. (2017) – No
ka Baibala Hemolele:
The making of the
Hawaiian Bible.
Palapala 1:113-151.

I kinohi...

(In the beginning...)

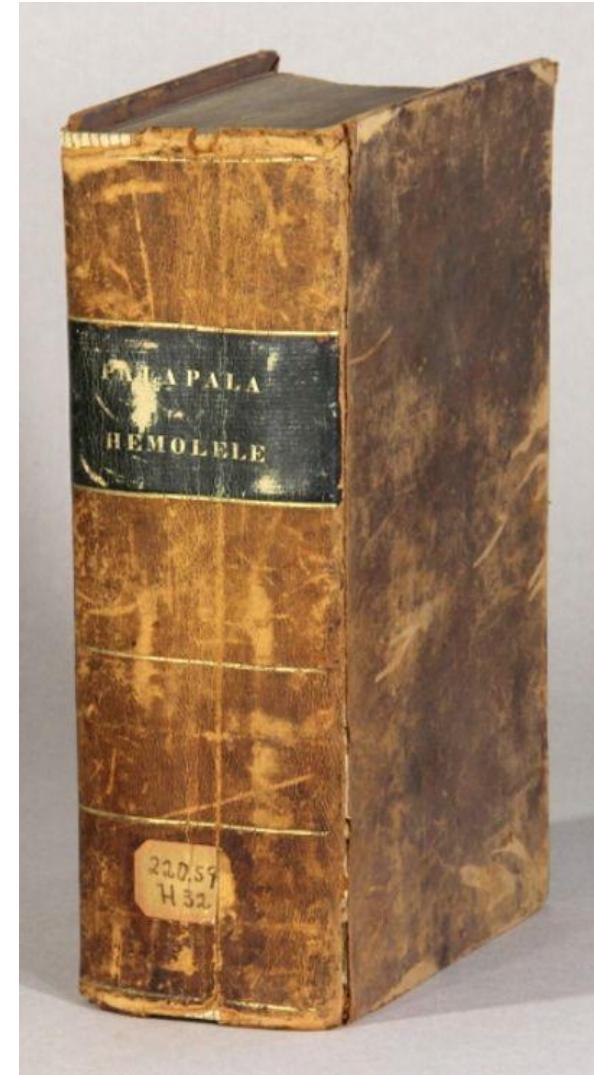
Time period: 1826-1839.

Participants:

- 5 Hawaiian scholars (*ali'i* & *kākā'ōlelo*)
- 4 American ministers

Process:

- Ministers – rough translation from original languages
- Hawaiians – turned awkward 'ŌH into how it should be “correctly expressed”

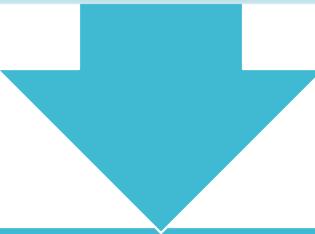


Hawaiian advisors



Kēlou Kamakau, Ulumeheihei Hoapili, J.A. Kuakini,
John Papa 'Īī, Davida Malo

“each one a profound scholar in the language
and oral literature of Hawai‘i” (Lyon 2017:114)



“The missionary translators were responsible for the
accuracy and fidelity of the translation, but it was the
Hawaiian scholars who crafted the language.” (Lyon
2017:127)

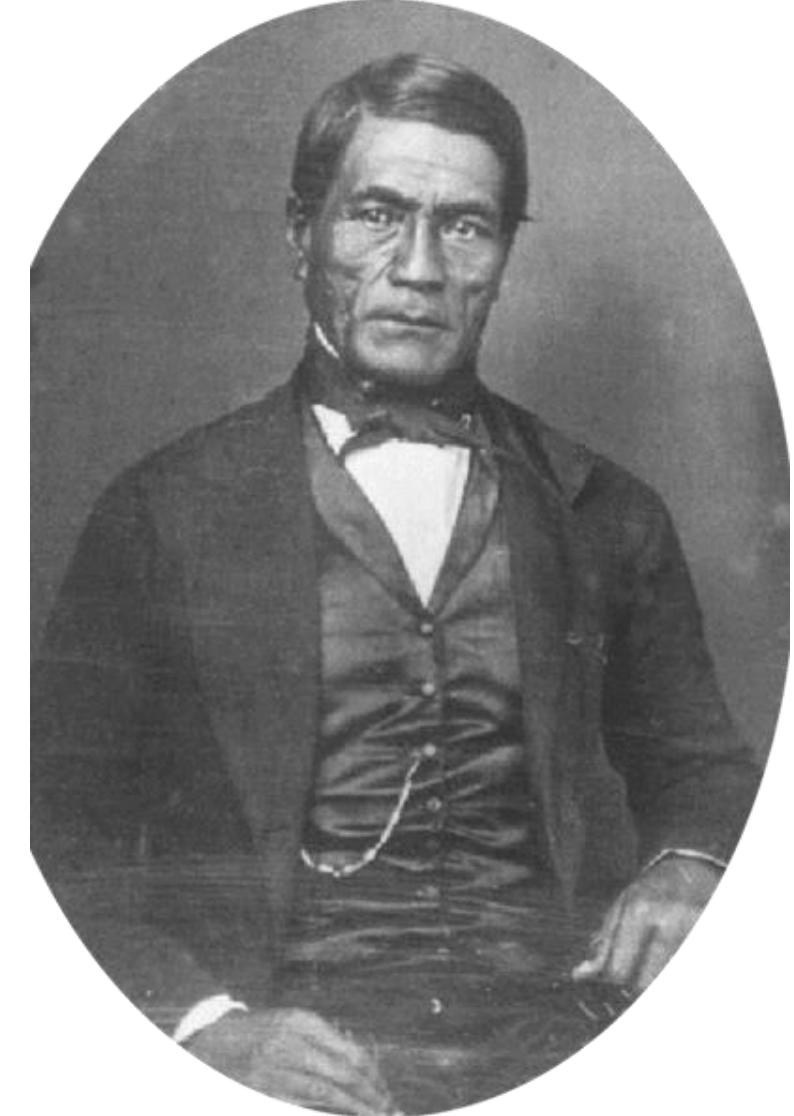
Hawaiian scholars

John
(Keoni/Ioane)
Papa 'Ī

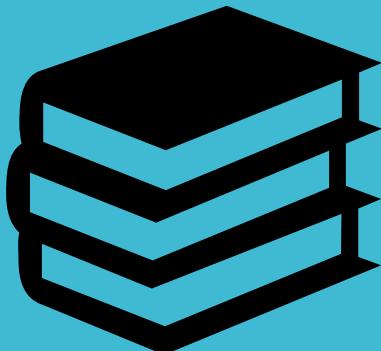
- w/ Hiram Bingham
- Matthew, Mark, Luke (1828-1829)
- Colossians, I/II Thess., I/II Tim., Titus, Philemon, Hebrews (1832)

Ulumeheihei
Hoapili &
Davida Malo

- w/ William Richards and Lorrin Andrews
- Acts (1829)
- I Corinthians (1831)
- James, I/II Peter, I/II/III John, Jude, Revelation (1832)



Legacy and impact



The Baibala was widely accepted and highly popular.

- NT reprinted 8 times in the 19th century; several more times in 20th.
- Entire Baibala reprinted 8 times from 1868-2012.

Kūpuna on *Ka Leo Hawai'i* – Baibala used for learning 'ŌH; were required to read passages aloud to their parents and grandparents.

“We cannot ask Malo or Hoapili how to say a thing, but we can, through the Baibala, learn how they actually did say a great many things.” (Lyon 2017:141)

3. Advantages & disadvantages

Ka Baibala Hemolele as a source of linguistic data

Advantages

Ka Baibala Hemolele as a source of linguistic data



Resolves the ideal hearer-speaker problem; all Hawaiian participants were L1 speakers, with little proficiency in English; trustworthy data; lived around the same time.

Different versions can be compared (1839 vs. 1868 vs. 2012); including side-by-side. --
<https://baibala.org/>

Audio reading available; narrated by Kuuipolani (Ipo) & Keola Wong (Lyon 2017:n35).



OPTIONS
[[click here for more information](#)]

MOKUNA XVI.

- 🔊 1 ¶ A laila ‘ōlelo maila ‘o loba, ī maila,
- 🔊 2 He nui nā mea like a‘u i lohe ai:
He po‘e hō‘olu‘olu ho‘opilikia ‘oukou a pau.
- 🔊 3 He hope anei nō nā hua ‘ōlelo makani?
He aha ka mea ho‘āla mai nei iā ‘oe, i ‘ōlelo mai ai ‘oe:
- 🔊 4 E hiki nō ia‘u ke ‘ōlelo aku e like me kā ‘oukou;
Inā paha ua noho ‘oukou ma ko‘u wahi,

Version
[2012 Edition](#)
[1994 Edition](#)
[1868 Edition](#)
[1839 Edition](#)
[English Comparison](#)

 **Audio**
[on](#) | [off](#)
[Select verses](#)

KEKAHUNA.

B. C. 977.

^apau. 12.
mo. 7. 27. &
12. 8. 9. 10.

^bHal. 39. 5. 6.
& 62. 9. &
144. 4.
mo. 12. 8.
• Rom. 8. 20.

^cmo. 2. 22. &
3. 9.

^eHal. 194. 5.
& 119. 90.

^fHal. 19. 5. 6.

^gIoa. 3. 8.

^hIob. 38. 10.
Hal. 104. 8. 9.

MOKUNA I.

Oka lapuwale o na mea a pau. 12 Ka noonoo ana
o ke kahuna ma na mea a pau loa.

O NA olelo ^a a ke kahuna, a ke
keiki a Davida, oia ke alii ma
Ierusalem.

2 ^bLapuwale o na lapuwale, wahi
a ke kahuna; lapuwale o na lapu-
wale, ^cpau loa na mea i ka lapu-
wale.

3 ^dHeaha ka uku i ke kanaka i
ka hana a pau ana i hana'i malalo
iho o ka la?

4 Hele aku la kekahi hanauna, a
hele mai la kekahi hanauna; ^eaka,
ua manu no ka honua.

5 ^fPuka mai ka la, a napoo ka la,
a wikiwiki aku la ia ma kona wahi
i puka mai ai.

6 ^gPuhi aku la ka makani i ke ku-
kulu hema, a huli mai la ia i ke ku-
kulu akau; huli ae la ia io, a io; a
hoi hou ka makani i kona wahi i
puhi ai.

7 ^hKahe aku la na muliwai a pau
i ke kai, aole nae i piha ke kai; i

kahi a lakou i kahe mai ai, malaila
lakou e hoi hou aku ai.

8 He mea luhi na olelo a pau, aole
hiki i ke kanaka ke hai aku; aole
i ana ⁱka maka i ka ike ana, aole
hoi i piha ka pepeiao i ka lohe ana.

9 ⁱO na mea mamua, oia na mea
e hiki mai ana; a o na mea i hana-
ia, oia na mea e hanaia mahope aku
nei: aohe mea hou malalo iho o ka
la.

10 No kekahi mea e hiki anei ke
olelo mai, Eia! he mea hou keia?
he mea no ia i ka wa kahiko ma-
mua loa o kakou.

11 Aole i hoomanaoia mai na mea
kahiko; a o na mea e hiki mai ana,
aole e hoomanaoia ia mau mea e ka
poe mahope aku.

12 ^jOwau o ke kahuna, ua no-
ho au i alii maluna o ka Israela ma
Ierusalem.

13 Ua haawi au i ko'u naau e irni,
a e huli me ka noeau i na mea a
pau i hanaia malalo iho o ka lani.

^kHe mea kaumaha loa keia a ke

B. C. 977.

ⁱSol. 27. 20.

^kmo. 3. 15.

^jpau. 1.

^kKin. 3. 12.
mo. 3. 10.

Advantages

Ka Baibala Hemolele as a source
of linguistic data



Digital images of
original printed
text easily
accessible.

Advantages

Ka Baibala Hemolele as a source of linguistic data

Linguistic interference from Hebrew/Greek very unlikely given the nature of the process and the background of the Hawaiian consultants.

Parallel English NASB Biblical text handy for researchers with low proficiency in 'ŌH.

Clicking on a word gives a dictionary definition.

John 10

a'u e 'ōlelo aku nei iā 'oukou, 'O ka mea komo 'ole ma ka puka i loko o ka pā hipa, akā, e pi'i a'i i.

ma ka puka, 'o ia ke kahu o nā hipa.

'i puka nona, a ua ho'olohe nā **hipa** i kona leo; a kāhea aku ia i kāna po'e hipa ma ka inoa, a ala

i po'e hipa pono'i ma waho, hele i

aku i ke kanaka 'ē, akā, e holo lākou.

kēia 'ōlelo nane iā lākou; 'a'ole na

ou maila 'o lesū iā lākou, 'Oia'i'o,

le mai ma mua o'u, he po'e 'aihue

nā e komo kekahi ma o'u nei, e ol

ai ia e 'aihue wale nō, a e pepehi

Hipa maika'i: 'o ke kahu hipa mai

ho'olimalima 'ia, 'a'ole ho'i ke kah

ā, a holo akula; a hopu maila ka

īlio nae ia lākou, a no opuenu akula i ka po'e nipa.

Dictionary lookup via wehewehe.org

hipa [Hawaiian Dictionary (1986) (Hawai'i)]

1. vs. Var. of *hepa*, imbecilic.

2. n. Sheep. *Eng.* (Ioane 10.2.) Hulu hipa, wool. 'Ili hipa, sheepskin. 'Ilio kia'i hipa, sheep dog. 'I'o hipa, mutton. Kahu hipa, shepherd.

[View **hipa** on wehewehe.org](#)

Disadvantages

Ka Baibala Hemolele as a source of linguistic data

| Bible | [Search](#) | About the Bible | Contacts |

[Search ▶](#) | Word Search | Verse Search |

Enable case sensitive search

show summaries in search results

Whole Bible
 Old Testament
 The Law (Genesis - Deuteronomy)
 History (Joshua - Esther)
 Poetry (Job - Song of Solomon)
 Prophets (Isaiah - Malachi)

--
 Genesis
 Exodus
 Leviticus
 Numbers
 Deuteronomy

15149 verses matched the query.

Customize search
 2012 Edition
 1994 Edition
 1868 Edition
 1839 Edition
 All Editions

Untagged database can yield
too many results.

Disadvantages

Ka Baibala Hemolele as a source of linguistic data

- Informal or low register variants unlikely to appear.
- Data not manipulable like spontaneously elicited data.



- (1) 'A'ole i hele 'o ia.
- (2) 'A'ole 'o ia i hele.
- (3) Mai hele 'oe.
- (4) Mai 'oe hele.

Disadvantages

Ka Baibala Hemolele as a source of linguistic data

Could be perceived as devaluing the participation of L1 speakers (and L2 as well).

Using a Western (settler-colonialist?) text to study a non-Western language?

4. Case study #1: Subject marker 'o

Maddox (2023, To appear)

4. Case study #1: Subject marker 'o

(5) A **'o** 'Isema'ela, ua ho'olohe ho'i au iā 'oe nona.
and 'o Ishmael TAM hear INT 1SG OBJ-PERS 2SG POSS
'And as for Ishmael, I have heard you.' (Genesis 17:20)

(6) Ho'opio iholu **'o** Iosua i nā kūlanakauhale.
capture DIR 'o Joshua OBJ PL city
'Joshua captured all the cities.' (Joshua:11:12)

Hawaiian 'o = topic, preverbal

Hawaiian 'o = subject marker, postverbal

4. Case study #1: Subject marker 'o

(7) **Ko Hone** i kite i te taahae.
ko John TAM see OBJ the thief
'It was John who saw the thief.' (Bauer 1993:220)

(8) I tīhore a **Pita** i te hipi.
TAM skin PERS Pita OBJ the sheep
'Pita skinned the sheep.' (Harlow 1986:297, cited in Pearce 2021:219)

Māori *ko* = focus, preverbal



Māori *ko* = subject marker, postverbal



Results

1) Analyze the structure of 'o-cleft constructions: biclausal vs. monoclausal.

2) Account for the historical change of 'o as a topic/focus particle to a subject marker due to loss of personal article *a* before subjects.

3) Show that the change that took place in Hawaiian also occurred in other Polynesian languages such as Tahitian.

4. Case study #1: Subject marker 'o

4. Case study #1: Subject marker 'o

AMBIGUITY

Clefts with full and contracted relative clauses.

(9) 'O Keoki **ka mea e** kōkua nei iā Pua.

'o Keoki the one TAM help DIR OBJ-PERS Pua

'Keoki is the one who is helping Pua.'

(10) 'O Keoki **ke** kōkua nei iā Pua.

'o Keoki TAM help DIR OBJ-PERS Pua

'It is Keoki who is helping Pua.'

(11) 'O lākou **ke** loa'a ia'u.

'o 3PL TAM find OBJ-PERS-1SG

'They are the ones who find me.' (Proverbs 8:17)

4. Case study #1: Subject marker 'o

ANALOGY

Object marker *i* + personal article *a* > *iā*.

(12) Nānā iā Pua / iā Maui / ia'u.
look OBJ-PERS Pua OBJ-PERS Maui OBJ-PERS-me
'Look at Pua / Maui / me.' (Elbert & Pukui 1979:133)

(13) Lawe a'ela 'o 'A'arona iā 'Eliseba.
take DIR 'o Aaron OBJ-PERS Elisheba
'Aaron married Elisheba.' (Exodus 6:23)

	Stage I Māori/Old Hawaiian	Stage II Contemporary Hawaiian
Left periphery	$ko/\text{'o}_{[+focus]} + XP$; $ko/\text{'o} = \text{Prep}$	$\text{'o}_{[+focus]} + XP$; $\text{o}' = \text{Prep}$
Object nominals	$i_{\text{Prep}} + a_{\text{Det}} + NP_{[+proper]}$	$i_{\text{Prep}} + a_{\text{Det}} = i\bar{a} + NP_{[+proper]}$
Subject nominals	$\emptyset_{\text{Prep}} + a_{\text{Det}} + NP_{[+proper]}$	$\text{'o}_{\text{Prep}} + \emptyset_{\text{Det}} + NP_{[+proper]}$

4. Case study #1: Subject marker 'o

4. Case study #1: Subject marker 'o

- Analysis -- 'o replaced the personal article *a* before proper proper/pronominal subjects due to:
 - 1) reanalysis of 'o-clefts as monoclausal;
 - 2) analogy between proper subjects and objects;
 - 3) ambiguous strings of ['o + null determiner (personal article) + noun] after loss of the personal article.
- Cross-Polynesian patterns 'o cognates and the personal article *a* support the prediction that if the personal article *a* is lost, the cognate is coopted to replace it.

5. Case study #2: Negative markers

Maddox (2024)

5. Case study #2: Negative markers

Negation with 'a'ole

(14) Ua hele ke kanaka.

 TAM go the man

 'The man has gone.'

(15) 'A'ole i hele ke kanaka.

 NEG TAM go the man

 'The man has not gone.'

5. Case study #2: Negative markers

Negation with *mai*

(16) E hele 'oe!
 TAM go 2SG
 'Go!'

(17) **Mai** hele 'oe!
 NEG go 2SG
 'Don't go!'

5. Case study #2: Negative markers

Two-way allomorphy

Negation under 'a'ole: *ua* > *i*.

Imperative mood triggers *mai*
instead of 'a'ole.

5. Case study #2: Negative markers

Goal: determine distributional differences between
'a'ole vs. *mai*.

Claim → Allmorphs reduce to negatives belonging
to distinct categories

'a'ole = verb

mai = negative head

5. Case study #2: Negative markers

Verbal properties of 'a'ole - (I)

(18) Proto-Polynesian **ka kore* > 'ŌH 'a'ole

- 'A'ole - 'a > 'ole; 'ole can take verbal prefix (*ho'o*).

(19) E **ho'olohe** 'oukou i ka 'olelo a lēhova.

TAM hear 2PL OBJ the word of Jehovah

'Heed the word of the Lord.' (Jeremiah 19:3)

(20) E **hō'ole** aku ana ho'i i ke Akua ho'okahi.

TAM deny DIR TAM INT OBJ the God only

'And deny our only God.' (Jude 1:4)

5. Case study #2: Negative markers

Verbal properties of 'a'ole - (II)

- Only 'a'ole (not *mai*) triggers i TAM particle.
- 'A'ole parallels the modal verb *pono* in allowing subject displacement.

(21) Pono 'oe e kākau i kou inoa i kāu mau mea.
should 2SG TAM write OBJ your name on your PL thing
'You should write your name on your things.'
(Hopkins 1992:226))

(22) 'A'ole au i mana'o e pono au ke hele aku.
NEG 1SG TAM think TAM should 1SG INF come DIR
'I did not think that I should come to you.' (Luke 7:7)

5. Case study #2: Negative markers

Mai as a negative head

- Strict order: *mai* + V; nothing intervenes
- TAM particles absent; *mai* = Neg/TAM hybrid morpheme?

(23) Mai ho'opoina 'oe.

NEG forget 2SG

'Do not forget.' (Deuteronomy 25:19)

(24) Ua ho'opoina 'oe i ke Akua.

TAM forget 2SG OBJ the God

'You have forgotten God.' (Isaiah 17:10)

5. Case study #2: Negative markers

Mai as a negative head

- A possible path of grammaticalization: Adv > Neg_[+Imperative]
- *Mai* = *almost*; “imminence marking particle,” always preverbal (Elbert & Pukui 1979:63, Pukui & Elbert 1986:220-221).

(25) Mai hā'ule ke keiki.

NEG fall the child

‘The child almost fell.’ (Elbert & Pukui 1979:63)

(26) You almost fell! (but you didn't) > You're about to fall! >
Don't fall!

Conclusion

Two case studies demonstrate that the Baibala can serve as a rich source of authentic (written) L1 data for research on 'ŌH, despite some challenges.

- A tagged corpus for linguistic research of 'ŌH is much needed.

Next steps →

- Continue to build relationships with the Hawaiian community.
- Make research useful for speakers and learners of 'ŌH.
- Keep learning 'ŌH!

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