THE PERPETUATION OF THE CHAMORRO LANGUAGE IN GUAM: AN EXAMINATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND GUAM’S MEDIA

MA PORTFOLIO SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDIES

MAY 2009

By
Madonna Lea Castro-Perez

Thesis Committee:
Yuko Otsuka, Chair
Wimal Dissanayake
John Mayer
Nihi ya ta kuntinuha muna'la' i lengguahi-ta fino' Chamorro, un lengguahi ni rigalun Yu'os para hita ha ni manaotao Chamorro, i manaotao este na tano'! Debi di ta u'usa sesso yan di'ariu. Mungga manmamahlao! Mungga manma'anao! Mungga manmaleffa! Biba fino' Chamorro!

Biba Manamorro!

“Let us continue to keep our Chamorro language alive, a language that was gifted to us by God for us — the Chamorro people, the people of this land (Northern Mariana Islands)! We should use it often and daily. Don’t be ashamed! Don’t be scared! Don’t forget! Praise (or cheers) to Chamorro language! Praise (or cheers) to Chamorro people!

- Archbishop Anthony Sablan Apuron
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Guaha bula na' taotao siha na' malago yu' para ma na'i grasia. Finenina Si Yu'os Tata gi langhet, sa guiya ha na' la'la'la i tano yan hita.

I mainana-hu, si Mary yan si Leandro: Hu gof agredesi na' un chamorrui-yu deske ti nene-yu.

I parentes-hu siha: Gof suete yu' na' patgon, sa man gaige hamyus siha para un giha' yu' mona' i karera-hu.

I chelu-hu, si Anthony: Maolek hao na' che'lu, sa gaige hao guini todo i tiempo, masea ti un na'i yu ni i-phone.

My dearest committee members: My sincerest gratitude for being a part of my thesis project, for reading and editing my paper, and for your support.

Dr. Yuko Otsuka: Infinite thanks for being the chair of my thesis committee, your patience, and talking long hours with me on Chamorro language maintenance.

Dr. John Mayer: Much gratitude for your knowledge on Samoan and Hawaiian language maintenance and your input on my research.

Dr. Wimal Dissanayake: Thanks for supporting my strange ideas, your lectures on the global vs. the local, and your optimism.

Michelle Dimeo: Thanks for your prayers, proofreading my papers, and trying to not be so “hegemonic.”

Magda: Si Yu’os Ma’ase for loaning me your beautiful pictures for Chamorro Pop and for your encouragement.

Sissy & Greg: Si Yu’os Ma’ase for my niece, Avry and for my future niece as well.

Sonny: Your minimalist ways inspires me, so there’s only one word to express my gratitude to you — thanks!

My friends and family (Bobak, Coco, Colleen M, Familian De Leon Guerrero, Familian Eron, Familian Goyu, Familian Makaka, Familian Siket, Jan P, JimBo, Julian, Pickerens, Sita, i che’lu-hu si Steph Gumataotao De Leon Guerrero, the CPISers, the future St. Terence II, Vince Camacho, and my Cali friends): Thanks for your support and the good food, because without that I wouldn’t have survived grad school.
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About the Portfolio Project

In addition to my paper, I created a website as the project portion of my thesis. This webpage is a collection of data and analyses on Chamorro language from different outlets in Guam’s media and politics. It is recommended that this website be viewed in concert with the reading of this paper to enhance ones’ understanding of the content area. The name of the website is Chamorro Pop and currently can be found here: http://web.me.com/chamorropop/chamorropop. The web address will eventually change to www.chamorropop.com. As I want this website to be for everyone, I will not call Chamorro Pop “my website,” but refer to it as “the website” or simply, Chamorro Pop. This website serves to inform and promote unique methods of enhancing Chamorro language maintenance. My website is an ongoing project, and I foresee it as a forum for the discussion of ideas on the facilitation of Chamorro language maintenance and a window of opportunity to rant.
Introduction

“Ginen i más takhilo’ gi hinasso-ku,

i más takhalom gi kurason-hu yan i más figo’ na nina’ siñá-hu.

Hu ufresen maisa yu’ para bai prutehi yan hu difende,

i hinengge, i kottura, i lengguâhi, i aire, i hanom yan i tano’ Chamoru.

Ni' irensiâ-ku direchu ginen as Yu'os Tâta.

Este hu afitma gi hilo' i Bipblia yan i banderâ-hu, I banderan Guahan.”

The above is the Inifresi “offer” pledge that was written by Dr. Bernadita Camacho-Dungca and honored by Chamorro activist group, Nasion Chamoru. Inifresi means to offer oneself up or to offer help to someone or something. The pledge is also memorized by students taking Señot (Mr.) Peter R. Onedera’s Chamorro language class at the University of Guam. The recitation of the Inifresi by Chamorro activist groups and students taking Chamorro language courses signify its importance towards the growth of Chamorro language and culture. I begin my paper with the Inifresi, because it constantly reminds me of why I am doing my research on the perpetuation of Chamorro language, media representations of Chamorro, and most importantly – the constant fight to keep our language alive. Language, in particular, is the key component of my project, my life, and my culture — which is why I believe it is my duty as a Chamorro to protect and defend the language.

1 “From the highest of my thoughts from the deepest of my heart and with the utmost of my strength. I offer myself to protect and to defend the beliefs, the culture, the language, the air, the water and the land of the Chamoru, which are our inherent God given rights this I will affirm by the holy words and our banner, the flag of Guam.”
I’m interested in the maintenance of Chamorro language in Guam, because of my upbringing and experience with the language within my generation. I grew up in a small village in the central part of Guam called Sinahānña.² Sinahānña was where I was taught Chamorro and still continue to learn about it. I was raised on Pāle Kieren Street, which is relatively close to St. Jude’s Catholic Church and the friary. I’m the youngest in the family. By the time I turned five, all of my siblings were attending college in California. The geographic separation between my siblings and I meant that I could only hang out with my parents, their friends and relatives. My father was born during World War Two and my mom was born at the end of the war. Since I was born in the mid 1980’s, my parents’ age meant that I was poksai bihu “raised old” or raised by old people.

My parents were strict and pious Catholics that almost everything I did involved praying. Mundane things like praying before meals, driving by a Catholic Church, before entering the halom tano “inside land” or jungle, and even staying at home because of a typhoon all required praying. Essentially, I discovered that by praying in Chamorro prior to simple things that I did, I was learning and practicing the language. Through the Chamorro language, I learned so much of where I come from, my lineage, my culture and custom. Being poksai bihu meant that my parents, especially my father forbade English at home. My father believed that the Chamorro language is something that reminds us of who we are and where we come from. Based on my father’s teachings, I want to advocate the perpetuation of Chamorro language and argue how it should be regarded not only as a marker of our identity, but a treasure that we can always keep forever.

² Legal spelling of Sinahānña is Sinajana. I used the spelling of Sinahānña, because there’s no letter “j” in the Chamorro alphabet and the spelling resembles the pronunciation of the village. Please check out the “Forever Sinajaña” entry on Chamorro Pop for a picture of my village.
My first semester in the Pacific Islands Studies Graduate program at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa was something that I was not expecting to experience, and I mean this in a good way. At my undergraduate school, I majored in two areas of studies: Political Science with a concentration in International Relations and History with an emphasis on Europe, which taught me to formulate my thoughts and ways of learning in a strictly Western perspective. By Western perspective, I mean citing acclaimed Western scholars to support my arguments and write in a strict standardized format. As a Chamorro, who was raised and taught in a Chamorro-sense, it was difficult for me to grasp the English language. Even though my family spoke to me in both English and Chamorro, the English my parents spoke was still comprehended with a Chamorro-sense.

Since the English spoken at home was not the same type of English used at school, I frequently received low scores in English courses.

In school, I was given the impression that English was the only language that was worthy enough to appease the academic community. Not until my graduate school experience in the Pacific Islands Studies program was I exposed to other academic scholars who have used their own indigenous languages to support and inspire their research. Being a student in Pacific Islands Studies, I realized that our own voices do matter and whether or not that voice is expressed in our respective languages, our indigenous voices do have as much accreditation as the Western voice.

Chamorro, the indigenous language spoken in Guam and the Common Wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) is faced with imminent threats of language death. Language to me is vital in keeping our culture alive. The art of language is a means of communication and

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3 For instance, in Chamorro puno i kandet (pooh-nu-e-can-dit) means “turn off the light,” but literally means “kill the light.” When my parents tell me to “turn off the light” in English, they usually say “kill the light.”
because of this it is attached to culture. Language is part of our identity that makes us unique. Since language distinguishes us, it also marks our attachment to our place. Chamorro language, for instance, marks our origin of place to be the Northern Mariana Islands. In fact, the Government of Guam and the United States Federal Government recognize Chamorro and English as the official languages of Guam. However, in Guam, being fluent in both Chamorro and English is rare. Only 22.2% of the population in Guam speaks Chamorro (CIA 2007). Currently, Guam is estimated to have a population of about 178,430, which means that less than 39,000 people speak Chamorro. The low rate of people speaking Chamorro indicates that the indigenous language of Guam is declining.

In my generation, throughout the Pacific, English is seen as the preferred language. How we come to know that English is the language of choice is through policies implemented by the government, television shows conducted in the English language, and websites that cater to the English speaking community. Television shows, street signs, clothing apparel, magazines, pop culture, and internet network sites like Myspace and Facebook are some examples of media that supports the usage and preference of the English language. Television, print media and the internet are the three main types of media that heavily influence the preferred language of choice.

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4 One does not have to be ethnically Chamorro to speak Chamorro.

5 According to the CIA's statistics the following are what Guam's population indicated as their ethnic background: Chamorro 37.1%, Filipino 26.3%, other Pacific Islander 11.3%, white 6.9%, other Asian 6.3%, other ethnic origin or race 2.3%, mixed 9.8%. See CIA's online World Fact Book for current statistics.

6 According to Sandra Chung, "the Chamorro population in the Mariana Islands was 72,127 in 2000 (57,373 in Guam and 14,754 in the CNMI), the number of speakers of Chamorro was just 44,907 (30,708 in Guam and 14,199 in the CNMI). The decline is steeper for younger generations. Although the Chamorro population aged 5 to 17 years was 20,730 in 2000 (16,079 in Guam and 4,651 in the CNMI), the number of speakers of Chamorro in this age range was just 8,903 (4,326 in Guam and 4,577 in the CNMI). (Chamorro is also spoken by many Carolinians in the Mariana Islands, a fact presumably recorded in, but not obvious from, these data.)" (Chung 2007, B-2).
“English has become associated with material gains and a more modern life, and this is reinforced through television, radio, and the school curriculum” (Fiamalua 1998, 38). Media is an open space to brand products. Therefore, by making Chamorro act as a product, we could brand it to make the language more appealing to the youth. Thus, I look at the impact of electronic media on Chamorro language in Guam and how technology can be beneficial in perpetuating the usage of Chamorro.

The U.S. brought in electronic media to Guam, which became the dominant tool in persuading Chamorros to acculturate to American life. Day (1985, 163) argues that the decline of the Chamorro language is an instance of a linguistic genocide, because “[it] is the result of cultural contact between two unequal societies – unequal in terms of economic resources, military strength, and international prestige.” In the case of Guam, the United States emphasizes its power through the use of media outlets like television, radio, and newspaper. In this paper, I investigate factors that contribute to the decline of Chamorro by analyzing media and government actions towards the language and looking at the issues of revitalization and preservation of Chamorro in Guam.

The United States was successful in making English look appealing. We should consider using similar strategies to make Chamorro language look appealing as well. By just making our language be heard in Chamorro language classes, we are restricting ourselves in opening up other spaces for our language to exist. However, seeing someone speak Chamorro on television is empowering. Since Chamorro language dialogue rarely exists on television, having it broadcasted via television makes the language seem like it is useful in modern times and not just for those from tiempon tinaki “time rusty” or the old, ancient, way back when times. Chamorro
language does not necessarily have to be correlated to the *manamko* “those who are old” or old people, but to the youth as well. Media technology essentially opens the doors of resistance and allows the Chamorro language to be used in a different medium. Rather than pointing out the problems in our language, we should use what we have now and brand it to make it popular and *sexy*.7

**History of Chamorro Language Oppression**

From 1668 to 1898, Spain was in charge of governing Guam. Spain recruited soldiers from Mexico to implement Spanish rule on the island that it introduced the Spanish language and culture amongst Chamorros (Garcia 2006). During Spain’s administration on Guam, the country chose high political officials and elites that were of Spanish origins to govern the island. This implied that Chamorros could not attain any high political positions unless they spoke Spanish fluently. “In the minds of the Spaniards, they were on the islands in order to civilize the populace. Even though they respected the people, they did not consider the knowledge of the natives as amounting to anything significant, especially with regard to language. As a result they advanced their own language and even though they did not adamantly impose their language directly on the people, it became evident that they convinced the people that Spanish was a more complete and more elegant language than Chamorro” (Kuenta Report: Kumision I Fino’ Chamorro 1983, 21). The interaction of Chamorros and Spanish personnel influenced the

7 At the 2009 School of Pacific Asian Studies Graduate Student Conference, I had a conversation with Greg Dvorak, who was the Guest Speaker and discussed about the idea of making Pacific Islands look popular. Dvorak talked about the difference between branding and advertising. According to Dvorak, the idea behind advertising is to make something look appealing, even though it’s cheap and low in quality. Whereas in branding, the concept behind the product is made to look “sexy” and appealing, so people want to buy it and be a part of it. Branding has a psychological effect on people, so the products seems to be a bit more personal and tempting for the potential buyer.
Chamorro language in that Chamorros adopted some Spanish words and integrated them into their vocabulary. The presence of Spain impacted Chamorro language in that it evolved into a mixture of Spanish and Chamorro words. However, Spain’s ruling was not as severe as the United States, which caused the plummet of Chamorro language.

Spain perceived the conversion of Chamorros to Catholicism as a way to become affiliated with the country and most importantly — to be acculturated into Spanish culture. This assimilation into Spanish culture made it simple for Spain to govern Chamorros. In 1668, Spanish Catholic missionaries like Paleʻ “Father” Diego Luis De San Vitores and other Jesuit priests introduced the Catholic religion to Guam. One technique that missionaries used to convert Chamorros was through the usage of the Chamorro language. According to the Archbishop of Guam, the Most Reverend Anthony Sablan Apuron mentioned that “the ‘fathers,’ who brought the faith to the Marianas, had to grapple with the natives and had to find ways in which to enter their mindset and culture. That they did by learning and speaking the native language in order to win the people over and in order that they may impart the faith that is Catholic” (Apuron 1996, 1). Since Catholic missionaries wanted to connect with Chamorros, they printed and translated prayers into the Chamorro language. Archbishop Apuron perceived Catholic missionary efforts of conversion as a vital influence in the preservation of the Chamorro language.

Catholic missionaries opted to use Chamorro as the language of conversion. According to Archbishop Apuron, Paleʻ San Vitores wanted to preach in Chamorro because he believed it was a way “to identify with the Chamorros [and] it is important that he identify with them

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8 Herein, I will be referencing Archbishop of Guam, the Most Reverend Anthony Sablan Apuron as Archbishop Anthony Apuron or Archbishop Apuron, because I grew up calling him by those names.
through the heart. And when you speak the language of the heart, you will have touched them.

And when you have touched them, then you have won them over” (1996, 2). The fact missionaries foresaw Chamorro language as a way to entice Chamorros to the Catholic faith, the language was seen as something valuable. Thus, Spanish missionaries translated Catholic prayers into Chamorro and have published them on books. Father Roman Maria de Vera, for instance, was one of the leading Catholic missionaries in Guam, who used Chamorro language as an advantage in the conversion of Chamorros.

Father de Vera “became the acknowledged expert in the Chamorro language among the Catholic missionaries. All missionaries after him had to learn the language from de Vera and pass a final test by him before they were allowed to minister among the people. As literacy increased on Guam, de Vera appreciated the importance of publishing religious works in Chamorro. By the end of his tenure on Guam, he had translated more than 30 religious works into Chamorro, the first being printed in 1920, five years after his arrival. This was the largest output of literature in Chamorro produced by any individual up to that time, and for many years afterwards. He also published a Chamorro-Spanish dictionary in 1932” (Forbes 2007, 1). Father de Vera’s written and missionary works were a contribution to the maintenance of Chamorro language. Archbishop Apuron further supported the usage of Chamorro language in the Catholic faith by creating “two volumes of music in Chamorro and English...to help preserve the Chamorro language and to help others appreciate the native language by providing the translation of it” (Apuron 1996, 5). Today, the tinayuyut “prayers” or Chamorro Catholic prayers are currently used and are present in the lisåyu or “rosary” and at the five o’clock am daily masses at the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral Basilica in Guam.
In fact, some Chamorro elders like my Uncle Val and Auntie May consider the tinayuyut as *i mas tâdung na’ Chamorro* or “the deepest part of the Chamorro language.”

Spanish missionaries were successful in converting Chamorros that about 85% of today’s population in Guam are Catholics (See CIA World Fact Book for recent statistic updates.). However, Spanish missionaries were less effective in making Chamorros assimilate to Spanish culture. According to Archbishop Apuron, the Catholic Church was not the only institution that took a vital role in Chamorro language maintenance. Chamorro women, also took prominent roles in keeping Chamorro language alive within the household. “In fact many a times, it was the Chamorro women, the mothers, who kept the language alive teaching it to their young children, especially in the homes. The historian Garcia notes that ‘this effort of acculturating the Marianos to the Spanish system, however, did not work as the Marianos, trained as they were in a long tradition of oral education, continued to teach their children their native language” (1996, 3).

Archbishop Apuron proved an excellent point that mothers or parents are one of the key components in maintaining Chamorro language.

In retrospect, home is the place, where children are reared and encouraged to speak a language. Ultimately, parents are the ones who decide what language their children will speak at home. Robert Underwood, who is the former Congressman of Guam to the United States, also recognized that speaking English at home contributed the decline of Chamorro language speakers. Underwood mentions two major factors that contributed to the current low rate of

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9 *I mas tâdung na’ Chamorro* could also be interpreted as the old and ancient way of speaking Chamorro. Personally, whenever I hear the lisâyu or attend the five am mass at the Hagatña Cathedral, I feel like I’m in a different time period. The type of Chamorro used in the tinayuyut sounds eloquent and exquisite like Shakespeare. Thus, it is understandable why my Uncle Val and Auntie May see the tinayuyut as *i mas tâdung na’ Chamorro*.

10 Garcia is referring to the Marianos as the Chamorro people.
Chamorro speakers. One is the educational policies that were implemented by the local and federal government and the other is speaking English at home. These factors nonetheless imply a certain ideological meaning on English and Chamorro languages. Underwood argues for a need to re-examine the behavior and aspirations of Chamorro people towards the English language. The ideology of English was created through productions of media, government policies, educational institutions, and conduct of businesses, which all took part in shaping the minds of Chamorro people in constructing meaning(s) of the English language. The creation of the ideology of English in Guam is pertinent to understanding the demise of the Chamorro language and how it could be used in constructing a positive ideology for Chamorro.

The initial policy for mandating English was created after the secession of Guam to the United States in 1898 through the Treaty of Paris. The United States Navy was given the responsibility of governing the island and in 1902 it implemented legislations that enforced Chamorros to assimilate into American culture. According to Anne Perez Hattori, who is a distinguished Chamorro scholar that specializes in Guam’s history, argued that “the navy was also instructed to assimilate the Chamorros, and this part of the task was typically referred to as ‘Americanization’ or ‘modernization’” (Hattori 2007, 9). Thus, policies, such as the English-Only rule, became integral in assimilating Chamorros into American culture. In fact, Underwood stated that:

“for the first half of the twentieth century, Guam was ruled by Navy Officials who saw their duty as the cultural, political and social transformation of the Chamorro people (US Navy, 1950). A major cornerstone of this effort was the teaching of English. It was in the rationale utilized to support English (which involved the defamation of Chamorro) that
gave English much of its long-term ideological impetus and hold over the people of Guam” (Underwood 1989, 76).

The Naval administration on Guam used education as the impetus of supporting the English language. The Navy required the English language to become the language of instruction in public education.

“In a formal way, it is clear that the Chamorro language was repressed and that no room was given to it in order to develop and grow in the family of languages. It was during this time also that the people of the land were beginning to accept the idea that Chamorro was a useless language and that it was a language for the ignorant since education and knowledge was identified as being nearly identical with knowledge of the English language” (Kuenta Report: Kumision i Fino’ Chamorro 1983, 23).

The Navy’s execution of the English-Only policy in schools implied that Chamorro language is not useful in education and that English is the key to academic and work success.

The English-Only rule also made it mandatory to publish all government documents and job applications in the English language. The policy also required everyone to only speak English in public areas and all forms of businesses to be conducted in English. In a report dated February 20, 1899, Lt. Vincendon Cottman recommended to “[m]ake American the business as well as the official language.” This is the first recorded mention of the language police under the U.S. flag for Guam (Kuenta Report: Kumision i Fino’ Chamorro 1983, 23). The U.S. Navy’s legislative action made it mandatory and necessary for Chamorros to learn the English language and to adopt it as their primary tongue. “The attitude of U.S. educators and leaders at the time was that any second language, specifically Chamorro, was detrimental to learning
English” (Guam Department of Chamorro Affairs 2003, 15). The Navy’s English-Only legislations created an ideology amongst the Chamorro people that English was required in order to have a job, a good education, and to get by in the global economy. (See Palomo 1987 for more information on U.S. policies towards Chamorro language in Guam.)

Captain R. C. Smith, who was the Governor of Guam from 1916 to 1918 further supported the idea that English was better than Chamorro when he implemented legislations that downgraded Chamorro language. According to the Kuenta Report 1983: Kumision i Fino’ Chamorro:

“Captain Smith produced regulations with regard to language. Smith wrote that there is some progress in the English language in the sense that no one can be employed in government unless they use English during working hours. He also mentions that no businessman will be given a license unless someone in the store knows how to speak English. All these ideas about language were made law on July 1, 1917, when Smith proclaimed General Order Number 243. The law stated that English is the official language of the island of Guam and that all the office workers must speak English during working hours. It also required all administrators or assistant administrators who are being paid more than 64¢ a day to speak English at work” (Kuenta Report: Kumision i Fino’ Chamorro 1983, 24).

The publication of the *Guam News Letter* further supported Captain Smith’s General Order Number 243. In May 1909, the Navy published Guam’s first-ever newspaper entitled the *Guam News Letter*, which further supported the English-Only rule. Initially, the first few issues of the newsletter were printed “in both English and Spanish, which marked an attempt by the
Navy to interest the native Guamanians. But analysis of those issues shows little news of concern to the natives. Thus, to the native Guamanian population, still struggling with learning the ways of the Island’s new overseers, the value of the *Guam News Letter* was questionable” (Teare 1980, 9). According to Jacqueline Korona Teare, the first set of issues of the newsletter had information, such as explorers reaching the North Pole and a baseball game between the Navy Pay Department and the hospital staff, which were all targeted towards U.S. personnel stationed in Guam. Thus, the newsletter served the interests of U.S. military personnel and not to the indigenous population.

The *Guam News Letter* was replaced with the *Guam Recorder* in March of 1924 and was used to downgrade Chamorro language and culture. The *Guam News Letter* was a space for the Navy to create images of Guam and of the Chamorro people. In fact, Hattori has mentioned that:

“A 1911 *Guam News Letter* article nonchalantly commented, ’We have taught Guam to wash her face’ (GNL, Sept-Oct 1911, 2). In this navy publication, the statement was not headlined, not boldly exclaimed, not highlighted in any conventional journalistic manner. Rather it was tucked away in mid-paragraph toward the end of a two-page article that outwardly addressed the desire of the navy to develop the island’s economy...The 1911 statement can be decoded in a number of ways. Not only did it infantilize Guam as if it were a child in need of basic lessons in grooming, but it also feminized the island, through the use of the pronoun *her* and the personification of Guam as a submissive disciple embracing the lessons of an enlightened – presumably male, empowered, and authoritative – instructor” (Hattori 2004, 39).
Hattori’s analysis of the *Guam News Letter* shows the Navy creating an image of Guam and Chamorro culture as something inferior in relation to American culture. The blatant expression of “We have taught Guam to wash her face” demonstrated that in the early twentieth century, the United States did not consider Guam to be up to par with its standards for modernization (Hattori 2004, 39). Traditional Chamorro knowledge such as treating sickness and farming were not acceptable to the U.S. Navy. The quote implies that the United States did not approve of the lifestyles of Chamorro people.

In fact, the July 1912 newsletter published a cartoon called “More like his Dad Every Day,” which had a picture of Uncle Sam depicting the United States and a brown skin dwarf representing Guam.11 The cartoon had a drawing of Uncle Sam standing on a platform entitled “advancement” and a bald headed, brown skin, midget wearing a dress that had the word, “Guam” in the front and standing on top of three platforms that had the inscription of: “electric plant and water works system, educational system, good roads, hospitals, telephones, and ice plant.” According to Hattori:

“the image not only reduced the Chamorro people to mere children under the training of a superior patriarch, but did so in a particularly racist manner, emphasizing the primitiveness and dark color of the child. Once again Guam is feminized: whereas Uncle Sam wears pants, the child wears a dress. The different clothing that encodes Guam as feminine, combined with the racist and infantilizing aspects of the cartoon, suggests that the island is receptive to the masculine guidance of the paternalistic navy” (2004, 40).

11 Please refer to Hattori’s online article on "The Cry of the Little People of Guam": American Colonialism, Medical Philanthropy, and the Susana Hospital for Chamorro Women, 1898-1941," for an example of the "More like his Dad Every Day" cartoon.
Hattori’s assessment of the U.S. Navy’s publication of the *Guam News Letter* and its perception on Guam could further be understood through Edward Said’s notion of “Orientalism.” The theory of orientalism is a theoretical construct in which the West or the Occident develops through writing, research, or any forms of scholarship of the “other.” Orientalism is the idea of how the West interprets or makes meanings of other cultures in relation to its own; and how those meanings are created to understand the Orient or the other and vice versa with the West. For instance, with the case on the state of the Chamorro language in Guam, the cultural products used by America, the West had images of Chamorros, the other, that contributed to the meaning-making process of the ideology of the English language. This is what Underwood observes that the ideology of English is one key reason for the demise of the indigenous language.

Thus, there is a need for a re-examination of the ideology of English; such as deconstructing the meanings and representations of the English language and how those particular meanings make sense to Chamorros. In fact, Said stated that “the Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles” (Said 1979, 2). The policies created by the U.S. Navy serve the interest of the United States Government and further emit impressions on the importance of English in society. Navy publications such as the *Guam News Letter* and the *Guam Recorder* help promote the English language as a necessity. In fact, Underwood has stated that:

“during the first two decades of American rule, the goals with respect to English and
schooling were rather limited. One early Navy governor wrote that the object of schooling was ‘to have the child of the present generation to express itself [sic] in English and to know how much change is due from a $2 bill after a purchase at the traders’” (Underwood 1989, 78).

The above statement made by the Navy governor reveals the type of agenda that America perceives is good for the welfare of Guam. The fact that the Navy official said that it is important “to know how much change is due from a $2 bill after a purchase at the traders” shows that participation in a global economy is good for the individual. The statement also implies that Chamorro language is frowned down upon and not viewed as something needed. Furthermore, “the English language was slated to be a major feature of this social reformation, and a kind of English language ideology emerged to promote the desired changes. In prewar Guam, the Navy-operated Guam Recorder was the major vehicle for the dissemination of this ideology to the general public” (Underwood 1989, 78). The Guam Recorder was used as a tool to support and promote the English-Only regulation. In fact, “many articles appeared in the Guam Recorder which exalted the English language to the detriment of the Chamorro language. Some writings promised the people that if they speak English only then could they advance and be counted as truly educated people” (Kuenta Report: Kumision i Fino’ Chamorro 1983, 25). By doing so, the Navy publication would write articles that show the disadvantages of Chamorro language and the advantages of the English language. Underwood critically finds that:

“In an effort to personalize the value of English, the Guam Recorder printed a short piece by a Chamorro principal who argued that the ‘success of any business, professional mechanic or laboring individual is usually measured by his ability to speak or write
English distinctly, fluently, concisely and forcefully.' He also wrote that Chamorros ought to speak the language of ‘our foster country,’ and that ‘economic self-sufficiency’ will result from everyone doing his or her share in using English. The argument is taken to its maximum by the incredible statement that citizens and teachers who do not improve their English are ‘really committing criminal deeds to the public and especially the future generations’” (1989, 78).

As a result, the Guam Recorder created negative representations of Chamorro language and positive representations of the English language. The Guam Recorder and the Guam News Letter, created an ideology that would shape the behavior and attitudes of Chamorro speakers towards the English language. Text and pictures emit certain kinds of representations that construct a type of conception of what Chamorro and English is respectively. It is important to understand what these representations are intended for and why they are created. Through the deconstruction of representations of cultural products, such as television, newspaper, public policy, they allow one to further define the product’s meaning.

The kinds of representations created by images are important, because it allows for the meaning-making process to take place. The act of creating meaning(s) of an image is vital because “culture is the way we make sense of things and gives meaning to. Culture also consists of maps of meaning which are things that allow us to make sense of the world” (Representation and the Media 2002). Thus, the Navy publications make a simple meaning of the English language that it is the key for success. For Chamorros, the American conception of success meant that education ties with economic wealth and status. In order to be educated, however,
one has to know the English language. Knowledge of the English language meant success in school and success in school was interpreted as being economically successful.

The printed news material by the Navy strengthened the belief that English meant success. Underwood also acknowledged that:

"An English language ideology had emerged over time, and all officials since the arrival of the Americans to the present basically subscribe to it. The ideology recommended English for the following reasons: (1) English offered the sure route to school success, (2) English was necessary for the development of a modern society on Guam, (3) English would give individuals good jobs and economic success, and (4) English would provide evidence of assimilation and attachment to America" (Underwood 1989, 78).

The widely distributed publication of the Guam Recorder further demonstrated that its messages created a sense of what is suppose to be the accepted form of identity. In fact, Donald R. Browne stated that "the general expectation was that minorities would wish to become like the majority in dress, language, and even, if possible, skin color and hair style. So equipped, they would be in a better position to enjoy the benefits of majority society membership" (Browne 1996, 13). Hence, it was the goal of the United States Navy to entice Chamorros that American culture was beneficial to survive in the contemporary world. Browne also explained this type of mentality through the theory of cultural imperialism, which means

"that certain nations are major exporters of their own cultures and that the ideological aspects of such exports are semipurposeful: individuals and companies (and, sometimes, governments) engaged in the act of exporting movies, radio and television programs, and other media do so not only for economic reasons but also in the belief that such exports
will help to introduce audiences in other countries to different, and probably ‘superior,’
values and lifestyles – or, in the case of news services, a ‘North-dominated’ picture of
world events” (1996, 10).

Thus, the United States Navy’s publications of the Guam Recorder demonstrated that it
considered the English language as “superior” than the indigenous language spoken in Guam.
In fact, “it was written in the Guam Recorder that all progress which will be enjoyed on Guam
will ultimately come from the English language. The Chamorro language was said to be
impractical while English was the number one language of the world” (Kuenta Report: Kumision
i Fino’ Chamorro 1983, 25). Due to this sentiment, Chamorros gradually accepted English as
one of their main languages that Chamorro became a language spoken by the minority. Since
English became widely used and spoken in Guam, Chamorros believed that American culture
was far more useful than theirs, which simply caused the gradual deterioration of the Chamorro
language.

How English became the dominant language in Guam could best be explained through
Browne’s theory of cultural dependency in that minority cultures depend on the majority culture
for model descriptions on what is normal and natural to society. Browne describes this type of
dependent characteristic of small nation-states as cultural dependence, which is “based on the
premise that receivers of imported material may not be aware of their dependency and may feel,
or come to feel, that it is quite natural for their cars to come from Japan, their powdered milk
from France, their movies and TV programs form Great Britain or the United States” (1996, 11).
Images of Chamorros created by the United States Navy were often shown as inferior to
American culture and frowned down upon. Chamorro language was also considered to be useless and was discouraged by the United States Government.

The U.S. made use of media to further demonstrate that English language meant to succeed and to have the “all American dream” — economic wealth. Hence, it is our duty to protect and defend our own meanings of ourselves, so the usage of modern technology is beneficial in creating positive representations of ourselves. Images of Pacific cultures created by electronic media, such as television, the internet, and radio become the vehicle of communication that transmits stereotypical generalizations of Pacific Islanders and their cultures. Depictions of brown skinned Pacific Islander people wearing grass skirts in the 21st century, happy-go-lucky type of attitude, incompetent, and primitive become the generalized characteristics of the Pacific and its people. As students studying Pacific Island cultures, we look deep into the images portrayed by the outsider, but rarely notice the usage of indigenous languages. Language is important in understanding one’s culture and it is also another way in which we create images of ourselves. In fact, the Indigenous Language Institute Symposium in November 2002 acknowledged that “culture and language are tied together...One must have a living language to have a lasting culture” (Indigenous Language Institute 2002). This statement emphasizes that language is a vital marker that identifies us and represents who we are and what we are as Pacific Islanders.

Government of Guam’s Actions Towards Decline of Chamorro Language

Government policies like the English-Only rule and massive publications of the Guam Recorder in English were all detrimental for the welfare of Chamorro language. The United
States Navy’s education policies on banning Chamorro from being spoken in classrooms were effective that it deeply affected the number of children that could actually speak the indigenous language. “A cultural watershed was passed sometime in the late 1960s when English began to replace Chamorro as the main language in a majority of island homes” (Rogers 1995, 245). In the 1960’s, parents, grandparents, activists, and indigenous politicians realized that there was a great decline of people speaking Chamorro. Underwood accessed that programs and legislations created by the Government of Guam, such as the *Kumision i Fino’ Chamorro* “Commission the Language” or Chamorro Language Commission and the implementation of “P.L. 14-55… [which] mandated the instruction of Chamorro in Guam’s public schools were mere expressions of a need to revive the language” (Underwood 1989, 73). In the late 1970’s, there was a movement promoting the preservation of Chamorro language and culture and brought to the attention of policy makers.\textsuperscript{13}

Politicians pushed to *preserve* the Chamorro language because of the wide acceptance that the language was dying or as Day would define Chamorro as a language that is undergoing a linguistic genocide, because “[it] is the result of cultural contact between two unequal societies – unequal in terms of economic resources, military strength, and international prestige” (Day 1985, 163). The United States having military bases throughout the world, having one of the highest

\textsuperscript{12} P.L. is an acronym for Public Law.

\textsuperscript{13} Chung has addressed that “informal observations by educators and others suggest that the vast majority of Chamorro children now enrolled in primary and secondary schools in the CNMI do not speak fluent Chamorro. Many do not speak Chamorro at all. It is distinctly possible that the language maintenance situation in the CNMI today resembles the situation in Guam in 1975” (Chung 2007, B-2). To address the decline of Chamorro speakers, a Chamorro Language Conference or *Tetset Konferensian Chamorro* is held in the CNMI every year since 2005. At the *Tetset Konferensian Chamorro*, “Judi Castro of Dandan Elementary School said English is not the primary language of most CNMI residents. There’s a great number of children who no longer understand and cannot speak Chamorro, Castro said. This, she added, starts at home where the Chamorro language is seldom spoken” (Erediano 2008, 1).
GDP per capita, and its well-known reputation amongst nations were all features of a dominant state. Whereas Guam is a small island in the Pacific that has no military bases, has a comparably low GDP per capita, and no colonies, is not considered equal to the U.S.

Thus, after World War Two Chamorros had this mindset that they needed the United States to protect them, preserve them, and to lead them into greater economic opportunities. By doing so, Chamorros accepted American culture and replaced Chamorro with English as their first language. English became the language of survival. This mentality ultimately was part of the contribution for the decline of the Chamorro language. Due to this unfortunate characteristic that was occurring in Guam, people interested in maintaining the Chamorro language pushed the Government of Guam to pass legislations that would keep the language from dying. “The first step taken by the Government towards Chamorro language preservation was the creation of the Chamorro Language Commission. The Commission was established in 1964 to standardize and preserve the Chamorro language” (Kuenta Report: Kumision i Fino’ Chamorro 1983, 1). The Government of Guam created institutions such as the Guam Arts and Humanities Agency (known as KAHA), Department of Chamorro Affairs (DCA), and the Kumision i Fino’ Chamorro (Chamorro Language Affairs) that were intended to preserve the Chamorro language and culture. KAHA was made to promote and fund local artists in the island, primarily artistic projects that are attributed to Chamorro heritage.14 “[Kumision i Fino’ Chamorro] was eventually absorbed into the organizational structure of the Department of Chamorro Affairs.

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14 Initially, KAHA was a separate organization from DCA, but became a part of DCA around 2007. Coincidently, in 2007, the acting director of KAHA, Sylvia Flores was appointed by Governor Felix Camacho to be the acting director of DCA as well. Since Flores was both the acting director for DCA and KAHA, the Board of Directors for DCA decided to make KAHA and other government-funded organizations that dealt with the preservation of Chamorro language and culture, to be administered by DCA.
through Public Law 25-69, it nevertheless made its mark in Guam history during its more than thirty-year tenure as the island’s foremost authority on indigenous language policy” (Taitano 2007, 1). Bill No. 56 was introduced by the Guam Legislature in 1999 to create the Dipattamenton I Kaohao Guinahan Chamorro “Department of Chamorro Affairs.” The bill was signed by Governor Carl T.C. Gutierrez on July 8, 1999 and was made into law as Public Law No. 25-69. Bill No. 56 (now P.L. 25-69) states the purpose of the Department of Chamorro Affairs:

“authorized activities of the Corporation are to assist in the implementation of an integrated program of the preservation, development and promotion of the Chamorro Heritage of Guam, for the public benefit and to provide specific services to the Chamorro people. It is intended that this Corporation be a catalyst in the preservation, development and promotion of language, arts, humanities, historic and cultural preservation, research, restoration, presentation, museum activities and support programs significant to Guam’s history and culture, and to enhance the future of the Chamorro people of Guam” (1999, Section 87103).

The Government of Guam frequently used the word “preservation” as a way to maintain the Chamorro language. One particular way in which the Government of Guam considered a great means to preserve Chamorro was through the education system. In fact,

“the first Chamorro language instruction in the public schools occurred during post wartime with the introduction of the Prugraman Kulehon Mandikike’ in 1969 at J.P. Torres Elementary School and Price Elementary school, a program funded by the Federal Government’s ESEA Title VII Bilingual Education Act. It was the very first time that
the Guam Public Schools used the Chamorro language in school since over 400 years of colonization. This project was followed by another Federal program ESAA Title I in 1973, which was more widespread in its provisions to ‘save’ the indigenous language of the Chamorro peoples. Locally, this program was referred to as the ‘Chamorro Language Mandate’ and was locally funded in 1977” (Guam Department of Chamorro Affairs 2003, 15).

The Guam Public School System (GPSS, formerly known as the Guam Department of Education) requires students to attend Chamorro language classes at least once a week. During Chamorro language class, the students learn Chamorro orthography and cultural arts and crafts. The difference between learning Chamorro and other major languages like French and English, is the lack of textbooks. One way that Chamorro language teachers taught the language is through arts and crafts. For instance, during my time at C.L. Taitano Elementary School, my fourth or fifth grade Chamorro language teacher dedicated two to three weeks in learning about the *tronkun niyok* “tree coconut” or coconut tree. The teacher would show the class the different types and stages of a coconut. While doing so, the teacher would incorporate Chamorro legends of the *tronkun niyok* and bring up her own personal stories that are related to the *tronkun niyok*. In addition, the teacher will introduce animals that are indigenous to Guam like the *ayuyu* “coconut crab.” The last day of learning about the *tronkun niyok* was concluded with learning how to cook *bukayu* “coconut candy.” The *tronkun niyok* lesson plans were unique, because they

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15 When I was in the fourth and fifth grade I attended C.L. Taitano Elementary School in Sinahâñña, Guam. The first thing the Chamorro language teacher taught the class was the alphabeton Chamorro “alphabet Chamorro” or Chamorro alphabet.
were taught in a Chamorro perspective. There are no text books involved in learning Chamorro, but the use of nature and recitation of legends.16

The disadvantage of Guam’s mandate of Chamorro language in schools is that they are only offered as a language class and not used in any other subjects. The limitation of Chamorro language instruction to one class restricts the language from being used in other fields of study like Mathematics, Science and Music. By only teaching Chamorro Language via arts and crafts, it makes the language seem that it is the only place to use it. The Government of Guam should consider re-thinking its public law on the mandate of Chamorro language and allow Chamorro to be present in other fields of study.

Furthermore, Underwood has mentioned that “the zenith-like rise of concern over Chamorro in the hitherto English-only schools of the Marianas may be more of a political and social movement than the sudden recognition of an educationally valuable tool” (Underwood undated, 1). Based on Underwood’s argument it seems that government policies on mandating Chamorro in public schools is a way to promote the language and culture of the Chamorro people and to further gain visibility. The other intention of promoting Chamorro language in public schools is to demonstrate that Guam has a unique and separate culture from the colonizer. However, former Governor of Guam, Carl T.C. Gutierrez perceives that “our culture is our identity and our pride; a most valuable social and economic asset” (Gutierrez 1999, 2). Gutierrez’s statement implies that Government of Guam sees Chamorro culture and language maintenance as an investment for Guam. Particularly, marketing Chamorro language and culture

16 According to my cousin, Joseph Aguon, he remembers Chamorro class being fun and kind of like a kick-back class. Perhaps the reason why Aguon perceived Chamorro class to be “kick-back,” was because the language was not always taught like other subjects like Social Studies and Science, but the chance to teach in an original and creative perspective like having gupots or parties, learning how to weave, dance, and sing in Chamorro.
in the tourism business like cultural shows and souvenirs. This kind of marketing strategy creates this idea that Government of Guam is struggling to re-gain the island's language and culture, but at the same time uses tourism as an excuse to maintain Chamorro language and culture. After many years of Americanization and the gradual demise of the Chamorro language, indigenous Chamorro politicians are realizing that it is essential to maintain the language and the culture, because it is what separates us from the United States.

**Resistance Towards the Ideology of the English Language**

"There's a place I'll never forget and I'll promise to make it more better. Even when the power's out. I know I couldn't live without my island, our island of Guam. It's a place you just gotta love... Forget what you heard, it was probably fake: Guam is not over run with brown tree snakes and you know what really hurts? Everyone thinks we wear grass skirts on my island, our island, of Guam. It's the place I'll really, really love. The place I always think of. Even though the cost of living is high. Guam will always be my island, your island, our island" (Malafunkshun 2000).

The above is the “Our Island” song composed and sung by Guam’s famous Disc Jockeys (DJs): Chris Barnett, Andy Wheeler, and Julius “Ceasar” Santos. The three DJs together form the hip television show on Guam called *Malafunkshun*. The song reminds me of the type of
generalizations I come across about Chamorros and the lifestyle on Guam. Hollywood movies and American news media are the main institutions that take part in creating these types of generalizations of Chamorros, Chamorro language, and culture. Underwood's analysis on the ideology of English still applies in contemporary modern day Guam. However, Chamorro language and culture are still practiced. Despite the low percentage of Chamorro speakers, there is still an attachment to Chamorro language and culture. At the same time, people in Guam still recognize English as a language necessary for survival. The creation of the Chamorro Language Commission, publications of Chamorro literature, such as the Hale'-ta series, Chamorro radio channel, 102.9 KISH FM, and even the television show, Malafunkshun are just a few examples in which Chamorro is still used. Although, the United States Navy implemented policies such as the English-Only rule to further enhance the assimilation process of Chamorro people, it did bring in technology, which could be used to promote Chamorro language. Thus, with today's technological society, Chamorros can have a comeback and use the resources that were brought in by the United States. Through the usage of television, newspapers, magazines, internet, etc, Chamorro language can become more vital in different forms and allow for new and positive creation on the ideology of the Chamorro language.

The Government of Guam is striving to keep the indigenous language of the island and looks at preservation as a way to continue the existence of Chamorro. In evaluating the word, preservation, it sounds like something which is locked up and kept from being felt, touched, and used. "Preserving" the Chamorro language implies that only a select few are allowed to explore the language. This is how young people in Guam were perceive Chamorro: Chamorro is only

17 Please consult Chamorro Pop website for access to Malafunkshun's home webpage.
spoken to or by the elites, such as politicians, respected elders, and academics (See Guam Department of Chamorro Affairs 2003 for more information.). The preservation of the Chamorro language makes it seem as if it were to be displayed in a linguistic museum, which could only be watched and not for everyday use (See Bevacqua’s web blog on Language Revitalization posts.). How can a language continue to exist if the younger generation feels intimidated to use the language? Thus, it is my presumption that revitalization is an alternate route in perpetuating the Chamorro language in Guam.

Revitalization is a way in which the Government of Guam can look at reviving the Chamorro language. Revitalization is also a different avenue that allows for creativity and one to use the Chamorro language in any shape or form. One way in which the community in Guam can further the continuance of Chamorro is media participation. In fact Browne has stated that:

“There is virtually no ‘hard’ (scientific) evidence to indicate that the initiation of an indigenous language media service helps to restore or revive its usage, but all stations broadcasting substantial amounts of such languages certainly have the hope and expectation. There is some anecdotal evidence: increased interest on the part of young people (and their parents) in taking formal study courses in the languages and increased amounts of popular music, live and recorded, in the languages. It is also probably that each medium of communication through which the languages are used has its effect on every other medium. Language classes stimulate listening to indigenous media; indigenous media provide an important outlet for popular music; popular music heightens interest in learning the language” (Browne 1996, 169-170).
In the 1980’s, the Director of Guam’s Department of Education (DOE), Dr. Katherine Aguon suggested to the *Pacific Daily News* (PDN) to have “a twofold approach to raising consciousness of the Chamorro language and culture” (Simpson 1980, 1). Dr. Aguon’s suggestion resulted to the collaboration of KUAM radio, PDN, and DOE for the promotion of Chamorro language and culture via Guam’s newspaper and radio. KUAM radio agreed to give DOE some air time to have weekly Chamorro language lessons. Currently, Guam’s Chamorro radio station, KISH 102.9 allows Dr. Aguon to give daily Chamorro lessons. The lessons are very short, which has Dr. Aguon saying at least one phrase in Chamorro then translated into English.

Growing up in Guam, my parents would always have the Chamorro radio station on while driving. I remember finding the Chamorro language lessons boring, because the teacher’s voice was monotonous and they were not interesting to me. The main reason why I was disinterested in the Chamorro language lessons on the radio was, because they were not appealing to my childhood taste and Dr. Aguon’s lessons seemed to gear more towards the older crowd. Needless to say, the radio station still airs Dr. Aguon’s Chamorro language lessons. The key issue is to try and make radio broadcasted Chamorro language lessons entertaining for the youth. Perhaps KUAM should consider revamping its radio broadcast of Chamorro language lessons to make it more appealing to the younger generation.

Initially, PDN proposed the idea of publishing the Peanuts’ cartoon strip into *fino’ Chamorro* “language Chamorro” or Chamorro language, “because of its popularity and because it has already been successfully translated into a wide variety of differing languages with

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18 Presently, DOE is called GPSS or Guam’s Public School System.
success” (Simpson 1980, 1). Clotilde C. Gould and Roger Faustino were the creators of the Chamorro language comic strip, *Juan Malimanga*. The story of the character, Juan Malimanga is actually a folklore about a Chamorro prankster named Juan Mala, who tricked a Spanish soldier that his stick can turn dirt into gold. The folklore of Juan Mala inspired Gould and Faustino for the creation of *Juan Malimanga*. Gould stated in her letter to John Simpson, the managing editor of the PDN that “after much deliberation, research and actual attempts at translation, we have come to the conclusion that it would be too difficult and a disservice to the Chamorro culture for us to translate *Peanuts*. The cultural bias in *Peanuts* simply does not relate to Chamorro culture and attitudes regarding humor” (Gould 1981, 1). Gould’s letter to Simpson was persuasive that PDN accepted *Juan Malimanga* and published its first cartoon strip on May 11, 1981. *Juan Malimanga* became a success and is still featured in the Comics Section of the PDN.19

Despite *Juan Malimanga*’s success, the comic strip seems to appeal more to the older generation and is less appealing to the younger generation, my generation. During my childhood years in Guam, my mom would read *Juan Malimanga* daily and would always have an outburst of laughter after reading the comic strip. My mom’s laughter enticed me to read *Juan Malimanga*, but after reading it I could not understand why she found it funny. I understood what the characters were saying, but I did not comprehend why my mom found the dialogue hilarious. According to my mom, she found *Juan Malimanga* amusing because the comic’s story related to an incident that happened during her time or *tiempon tinaki*. Since I was not alive during my mom’s time, *Juan Malimanga* did not pertain to me, but to my mom’s generation, the

19 Señot Onedera’s students occasionally contribute to the *Juan Malimanga* cartoon strip.
old generation.\textsuperscript{20} Thus, \textit{Juan Malimanga} was catered more to the older generation, but not so much to the younger generation.

There is a generational divide in the usage and promotion of Chamorro language. Government of Guam is still latching on with the old or \textit{tiempon tinaki} ways of promoting Chamorro language. What needs to be addressed is that the broadcasting of Chamorro language lessons on radio and the publication of \textit{Juan Malimanga} have been done since the 1980’s. The youth in each generation have different ways of entertaining themselves, so there is a constant need to change tactics in promoting indigenous languages. The promotion of the Chamorro language in Guam is stuck in a certain time period that it becomes less interesting as each generation is born. John Mayer, who is the current Chair of the Indo-Pacific Languages and Literatures Department at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa mentions that the youth of today are part of this newly developed culture called the “i-culture” (pers. comm. April 2009). The “i-culture” is associated with the engagement of the internet, ipod, iphone, or any technological device that is popular and used frequently. The interesting part of “i-culture” is that the majority of participants are the youth. Since the youth of today are engaged in this “i-culture,” Government of Guam should consider developing new techniques in promoting the Chamorro language.\textsuperscript{21}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{1} The interaction of my mom and I reading \textit{Juan Malimanga} was when I was in elementary school, so that was when I was between the ages of five to ten years old. From my recollection, the \textit{Juan Malimanga} that I remember reading was during the late 1980’s to early 1990’s, which was the beginning years of the comic strip. Today’s \textit{Juan Malimanga} is different, because some jokes in English are translated into Chamorro.

\bibitem{2} One way that Government of Guam can appeal to the youth’s “i-culture” is by creating a Chamorro language website. The website should be specifically targeted towards the young audience and possibly incorporate web participation within Chamorro language lessons.
\end{thebibliography}
The Government of Guam has a creative approach of teaming up with other media sources to create an awareness of Chamorro language and culture, but the government should also look at other outlets to make Chamorro language appealing to the younger generation. As a young Chamorro, who enjoys being entertained by television shows, film, and internet, I foresee media technology as an innovative and promising approach in tackling the Chamorro language situation in Guam. The hit television show, *Malafunkshun* is one example that appeals to the younger generation, and at the same time makes an awareness of Chamorro language and culture. *Malafunkshun* is a band consisting of three Disk-Jockeys (DJs) that create and perform skits that are satires of the Chamorro culture, language, and politics in the island of Guam.

The name of the show is a pun on the word, *malfaction* and was intentionally spelt wrong to mock the way Chamorros would pronounce English words and also to address the idea that the show is not perfect and is intended to be *Malafunkshuned*. According to Andy Wheeler, the show’s name “came from Chris’s uncle who used to tease him when he was working in the ranch. Chris apparently wasn’t very good at ranch work and his uncle described that as ‘malafunkshun’. It’s something that doesn’t function correctly and it’s become like a neat description that Guam folks use everyday. It’s crazy how the meaning of it [has] developed and its popularity as a catchphrase grew” (Manansala 2007, 6). *Malafunkshun* was originally aired in 1999 on Guam’s number one radio station, HIT Radio that was also known for playing the latest music hits on the island. Two of the DJs are ethnically Chamorros from Guam and the third DJ is caucasian, what makes the show unique is that the two are giving an inside critique of their culture. *Malafunkshun*’s radio show eventually became so popular that KUAM, which is Guam’s

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22 Please refer to *Chamorro Pop* for more information on *Malafunkshun*. 
only televised news station, offered the DJs a spot on its channel. The Malafunkshun television show could be comparable to the characteristics of the hit American late-night show, Saturday Night Live.

Malafunkshun's televised show became such a success that young people started to mimic and copycat the characteristics of the skits. These particular characteristics that Malafunkshun created intentionally make a mockery of Chamorro language, culture, and people. According to Chris Barnett:

"what sets apart Malafunkshun from the other media in Guam is that we do not cozy up to the power structure. We don’t fear being put in check. I’ve been fired before by other radio stations so that doesn’t faze me. We didn’t say anything that hasn’t been said around the barbecue. People listen to us vent about political issues that are important in their lives. When I was growing up in radio, I was told that emotion is good. We tell jokes but we also talk about important political realities that affect people’s lives. We want to show our leaders that we know about our problems and we can’t take it anymore. We humanized the politicians and the listeners loved it” (2007, 6).

Barnett’s comment is true that listeners love the show, because of its comedy and approach in informing people about politics in Guam. The show’s popularity seems to be an enticement for children to soak in the stereotypes and associate them as something that is Chamorro. The images that Malafunkshun manufactures are based on the Chamorro concept of the chaud, which is a term given to someone that speaks broken English, uneducated, does naïve actions, gets into trouble with the law, and is poor. Thus, if one was not able to proficiently converse in English and was not educated, then the person would be called a chaud. The term,
*chaud* was initially used during the early 20th century with the impact of the English-Only policy. The images that young children consume from *Malafunkshun* are not necessarily the true depictions of Chamorro language, culture, and people; but more of a portrayal of what the show defines as Chamorro.

*Malafunkshun*’s songs and skits about Chamorros are popular among both the young and old generations, because they capture the essence of what Chamorro language and culture are. In “The Global in the Local,” Arif Dirlik talks about the local acting as a form of resistance against the Global. That is, the local brings in a sense of nostalgia of one’s past and heritage, which drives the support of social movements. In retrospect, the Chamorro language is the catalyst that brings up the nostalgia of Chamorro culture. The reason why *Malafunkshun* is a success is because their skits, songs, and humor create a sense of nostalgia of what is Chamorro. Each generation has a different perception of what is Chamorro and *Malafunkshun* sort of summarizes the different mentalities between each age group. For instance, the actors identify old people as the ones speaking Chamorro and the young people as the group that barely knows Chamorro. The Chamorro language that is used by *Malafunkshun* are usually *chat fino’* “bad words”. Interestingly, young people who are not fluent in Chamorro consider *chat fino’* something that is normally accepted in society. However, the older generation that is fluent in Chamorro would consider these slang words to be disrespectful. *Malafunkshun* was able to make *chat fino’* used as slang or silly and/or offensive phrases to describe something mundane or used as expressions.

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23 Again, back to Dirlik’s theory on the local acting as a resistance towards the global.

24 An example of *chat fino’* is *larña* or a word used to sometimes express the vulgar “f-word.” In *Malafunkshun*, characters of the show will often use *larña* to describe certain reactions. Some children interpret this word as using it as “oh,” “geez,” and of course, the “f-word.”
Young Chamorros’ response to Malafunkshun suggests that although they are not fluent in their indigenous language, young Chamorros are still attached to their cultural heritage. Malafunkshun is a show that infuses Chamorro culture and American pop culture by adopting the satirical theme of the American television show, Saturday Night Life. Mike Perez describes the acceptance of both American and Chamorro cultures as a form of hybridity, “dialectic cultural rearticulation by colonized people of their indigeniety – that involves a reconciliation of traditional culture yet coming to terms with outside cultures” (Perez 2004, 65). Thus, Malafunkshun is a media space that allows young Chamorros to identify themselves as both Chamorro and American, a hybridity that creates a new Chamorro identity.

Through the use of electronic media, Chamorros are able to create a voice for themselves and allow themselves to create positive representations of their own language and culture. The popularity of Malafunkshun is an example of how media can be effective in making Chamorro fun and appealing. The use of Chamorro in media further supports the importance of the indigenous language and advertises the necessity of Chamorro. The presence of Chamorro language in media is a reminder that Chamorros and their culture still exist and are relevant to modern life. Activist organizations such as Nasion Chamoru (Chamorro Nation), Fuetsan Famalauan (Strength of Women), and Famoksaiyan (time to paddle forward, sense of nurture/time and place) use the Chamorro language as a marker of their identity and resistance against

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25 Malafunkshun also has a segment in their show called the “Che’lu Challenge,” which is similar to the American tv show, “Fear Factor.” The “Che’lu Challenge” has the DJs performing stunts that are related to Chamorro culture. For example, one segment of “Che’lu Challenge” had Chris Barnett, one of the main Malafunkshun DJs given the challenge of eating chada guerra or balut “boiled chicken egg that still have a baby chicken inside.” See Chamorro Pop for access to Malafunkshun’s direct website, which has the “Che’lu Challenge” video.
the U.S. hegemonic power. Bringing Chamorro language on electronic media reminds us of what was and is Chamorro and discourages us to rely on the West’s generalizations of us.

As evidenced by the popularity of the show, *Malafunkshun* has succeeded in making Chamorro as something that is popular amongst young people, although *Malafunkshun*’s use of *chat fino* is frowned upon by the elders. If *Malafunkshun* is able to do this, then perhaps, the media and the government should team up in creating another television show that would counteract *Malafunkshun*. Perhaps, a television show that juxtaposes pop culture and the Chamorro language (not just in the form of *chat fino*) amongst young people, could further the perpetuation of the Chamorro language. By promoting Chamorro language through television, the language could be considered hip and necessary amongst the younger generation. After all, the children are the ones that determine the fate and future of the Chamorro language, because they decide how they want to use the language, be the language, feel the language, and most importantly – to identify themselves as Chamorros.

**Our Language is who we are**

“Well am I? This is a question that others ask,

but has no answer.

I am my language,

I am an ode, two odes, ten.

This is my language.

I am my language.
I am words’ writ:
Be! Be my body!
And I become an embodiment of their timbre,
I am what I have spoken to the words:
Be the place where my body joins the
eternity of the desert.
Be, so that I may become my words” (Darwich 2003, 91).

Throughout this paper, I explained how US Navy policies and government actions inhibit the
decline of Chamorro language speakers. However, the colonial contact, also brought some
positive attributes like the introduction of electronic media technology. The Chamorro language
situation in Guam is not all that special. The experience is common throughout the Pacific. In
this section, I show how the Chamorro language situation in Guam relates with some Pacific
Islands and how maintaining indigenous languages is not only a way to maintain our cultural
identity, but provides the chance for self-determination and decolonization to further evolve.

The United Nations (UN) believe that indigenous languages are important and do matter
in our global community. “Language issues are central to UNESCO’s mandate in education,
science, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information” (UNESCO
2008a). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
proclaimed the year 2008 as the International Year of Languages and February 21st as the
International Mother Language Day. UNESCO recognizes that indigenous languages are
essential in social, economic, and cultural life to one’s respective country. “Linguistic factors
play a strategic role in the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (Millennium Development Goal 1) as the ability to obtain a livelihood, to participate in social and public life and to engage in dialogue is dependent, to a great extent, on language skills” (UNESCO 2008b). The idea that language maintenance is a plausible approach to alleviating the world’s poverty and starvation is astounding.

UNESCO has a creative approach in making indigenous languages have a place in the world. The UN acknowledges that language ties in with culture and that therefore, it is crucial to maintain indigenous languages. One of the main issues in Pacific Islands Studies is the need for Pacific Islands to decolonize, for which self-determination is a prerequisite. Self-determination is the right to choose the political status, government body, and other things that are decided collectively by the people for the wealth of the nation. We must not forget who we are, where we come from, and the allegiance we owe to our ancestors and land. Language is the foundation that helps us move along the path to self-determination. Therefore, language maintenance is intensely needed to provoke the idea of self-determination.

There are over 6,000 languages spoken in the world and at least half will soon be extinct (UNESCO 2008c). In the Pacific Islands region alone, over 1,300 languages are spoken throughout 20,000 to 30,000 islands. The majority of Pacific Islands are or were previously controlled by powerful nations like the United States or France. Colonization heavily impacted the decline of indigenous language speakers in the Pacific. Colonial presence in the Pacific demanded Pacific Islanders to assimilate with the cultural ways of their colonizers. “The early colonialists and missionaries came with the mind set that the indigenous languages were inferior

26 Scholars in Pacific Islands Studies estimate at least 20,000 islands are in the Pacific. The exact number of islands in the Pacific region is unknown. See Ethnologue’s Country Index for more information: http://www.ethnologue.com/country_index.asp?place=Pacific.
to their own languages and needed to be standardized and codified along the lines of traditional European grammars” (Fiamalu 1998, 4). Ultimately, by colonialists enforcing their own language as the preferred language, it not only makes indigenous languages look inferior, but also insignificant.

Through the promotion of colonial languages or global languages, the deterioration of indigenous languages were imminent. The language of the colonizer became the language of choice within indigenous communities. Frantz Fanon, who was a deep thinker on issues of decolonization, agreed that “there are mutual supports between language and the community. To speak a language is to appropriate its world and culture” (Fanon 2008, 2). The choice of language is one factor that usually determines one’s attachment with a respective country.

Colonial presence in the Pacific has influenced Pacific Islanders’ decisions in their choice of language. There are two major types of language shifts — forced and voluntary (cf. Otsuka 2007). Forced language shift basically involves the coercion of people to speak a specific pre-determined language. Voluntary language shift, however, involves people making a choice as to what language to speak. One characteristic of forced language shift is the implementation of language policies by the colonial power. Through legislative rules, colonial powers imposed their languages on Pacific Islanders, which contributed to language shift.

The language situation in Hawai‘i is similar to the history of Chamorro language oppression in Guam. Much like how Catholic missionaries translated prayer books into Chamorro, Christian missionaries in Hawai‘i heavily publicized their teachings through print media as well — the newspaper. “The medium that allowed readers to range beyond the rather restricted diet of primers, catechisms, and textbooks was the Hawaiian language newspapers, the
first of which *Ka Lama Hawai‘i*, came from the new press at Lahainaluna in mid-February 1834 (Schutz 1994, 171). The unique aspect of missionary’s colonization was that indigenous languages were used to entice Hawaiians and Chamorros to comply with Christian and/or colonial teachings. This technique of colonization was partly attributed to the fundamental ideals of the Noble Savage, a primitive man untouched by civilization that was considered weak, vulnerable, and in the perfect state of being.

In Guam, during the 1920’s when the US Navy was the governing body, an English-Only policy was strictly put into effect and required everyone to use the English language in conducting business, applying for government jobs, public education and access to healthcare. Since all government funded programs required the knowledge of the English language, Chamorros had to quickly adapt to their English spoken world. The mandatory English-Only policy essentially forced Chamorros, who had little or no knowledge of the English language, to have limited or no access to public benefits and medical care. Since Chamorros needed medical care, an American education and a job to survive in an American-governed society, the English-Only policy essentially created a forced language shift amongst Chamorros (ct. Hattori 2004 for further discussion on US Navy Health policies).

Hawai‘i also experienced a similar English-Only rule. The US military rule required civilians to know English to participate in welfare and education programs. Those who had little or no knowledge of the English language had limited access to government sponsored programs. For instance, “in 1896, the rebel government, which at that time called itself the Republic of Hawai‘i, enacted into law, Act 57, which banned the Hawaiian language in public and private schools...With the intense increase in pro-American sentiment and military development after
1898, native Hawaiian culture and language were turned into the pariah of the Hawaiian Islands” (NeSmith 2008). Essentially, Hawai’i’s Act 57 and Guam’s English-Only policy created this impression that English was the only way to succeed and to participate in an American governed society. Because English was legally required to partake in various public agencies like public schools and welfare programs, these policies forced Chamorros and Hawaiians to chose English as their main language.

English-Only policies were fatal to the welfare of Chamorro and Hawaiian languages. Much like how Guam had a public outcry in the late 1960’s for the need to maintain the Chamorro language, Hawai’i also had similar public reactions. “The decline of the Hawaiian language caused great concern, not only among the small number of pure Hawaiians, but also among the much larger number of part-Hawaiians (representing some 20% of Hawai’i’s population). A Hawaiian renaissance movement began in the 1960s and 70s, parallel with other national and international movements for oppressed and indigenous people’s rights” (Warschauer & Donaghy 1997, 351). The Hawaiian renaissance essentially influenced the revival of Hawaiian language and culture, which encouraged the development of several Hawaiian language programs like the Hawaiian language radio program called Ka Leo Hawai’i and Hawaiian language immersion schools. “Ka Leo Hawai’i allows an opportunity for all—Hawaiian speakers and non-speakers—to bring the Hawaiian language into the home once more, via radio…” (Schütz 1994, 363).27 Radio broadcasting was just a small step that Hawaiians used to help perpetuate their language.

27 Guam has a similar program like Ka Leo Hawai’i that broadcasts Chamorro language lessons on the radio. However, unlike Ka Leo Hawai’i, Guam’s Chamorro language program is aired daily on KISH 102.9 FM, a Chamorro music station. In addition to the Chamorro language lessons, KISH 102.9 predominantly airs Chamorro music in fino’ Chamorro and occasionally the DJs have conversations in Chamorro.
The revitalization of Hawaiian culture, in particular, came hand in hand with the revival of the Hawaiian language. During the missionary era in Hawai‘i, colonialists discouraged Hawaiians from conducting their own cultural practices like the hula. “Reports of the late 1830s show the extent to which some Hawaiians had been pulled away from their own culture and religious beliefs” (Schütz 1994, 347). Although missionaries perceived the hula to be obscene, Hawaiians use the hula as a beautiful way to tell the history and stories of their people and land. “George S. Kanahele, often credited with bringing the movement to the attention of the public..... mentioned] that another way to tell if a people are serious about reviving their culture is to see whether they are studying their language” (1994, 361). Kahele’s statement is valid that revival of culture coexists with the revival of language as well.

In fact, during the 1970’s a group of three local Hawaiians: Ed Ka‘ahea, Rap Reiplinger, and James Grant Benton formed a comedic theatrical group called Booga-Booga. Booga-Booga was famous for using pidgin comedy and juxtaposing with local culture. “It was 1974 when Booga-Booga began, a time when the Hawaiian renaissance embraced such island entertainers as Sunday Manoa, Olomana and Gabby Pahinui. Booga Booga folded into the new island identity. The use of ethnic humor and pidgin recognized a different way of life” (Oi 1999, 1). Booga-Booga’s entertaining performances could also be compared with Malafunkshun’s humor. Much like how Booga-Booga used pidgin and teased local people, Malafunkshun did the same thing as well, but in reference to Guam’s local culture. Both Booga-Booga and Malafunkshun created a sense of nostalgia of local culture and language. Since Booga-Booga and Malafunkshun reminded people of their identity, their past, their history, and about themselves; promotion of the
revitalization of Hawaiian and Chamorro cultures and languages were also present in the comedic performances.

Hawaiian language maintenance efforts were made largely towards the education of the youth. “In 1987, in light of the Hawai‘i State Constitution mandate (Article X, Section 4) to promote the study of Hawaiian culture, language and history and the persistent requests of parents and Hawaiian community leaders, the Department of Education established the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program, Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai‘i” (Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai‘i 2008, 1). Hawaiian immersion schools are available to pre-school and K-12 education. One particular aspect that Hawaiian immersion schools require is for parents to make a commitment to promote Hawaiian language at home. By doing so, parents have to attend Hawaiian language courses and encourage children to speak Hawaiian (See Conklin 2005 for more information on Hawaiian language immersion schools.). The Hawaiian language immersion program is funded by the state. In contrast, in Guam, Chamorro language immersion schools lack the financial support of the local government. Guam has two Chamorro language immersion schools — Chief Gadao Academy and Sagan Fina’ na’ guen Fino’ Chamorro. According to Chief Gadao Academy’s mission statement, their belief is that education can best be fulfilled through the knowledge and education of the ancient Chamorro culture and the similarities between Chamorro culture and principles (Chief Gadao Academy 2009, 1). Chief Gadao Academy is a private school that is open for K-12 grade and has limited enrollment. Sagan Fina’ na’ guen Fino’ Chamorro is a day care center for children under five years old.

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28 According to the Guam Pacific Daily News’ online information on Chief Gadao Academy, the student to teacher ratio is 4:1, and the school has a total enrollment of 15 students. (See Chief Gadao Academy for more information.) This is comparatively small to Hawai‘i’s immersion schools, which has a far greater enrollment rate than Guam’s.
Language immersion schools are a community effort and have to be widely supported by other sources like media technology. Children determine the fate of the state of their respective languages, so new techniques in maintaining indigenous languages have to be created to appeal towards the younger crowd. The internet, for instance, is a ubiquitous form of technology that majority of the youth use daily. Since the internet is widely used by the youth, there should be an effort to promote Chamorro language maintenance on the world wide web.

Hawai‘i, for instance, has the Hale Kuamo‘o, a center for Hawaiian-medium education and culture at the University of Hawai‘i, Hilo that created Leoki (Warschauer & Donaghy 1997, 352). Leoki is a computer program that changes the computer system’s language into Hawaiian. Hale Kuamo‘o’s computer program is original and creative, because it forces computer users to learn Hawaiian and most importantly, makes Hawaiian feel like it is a part of an every day activity. Hale Kuamo‘o has convincing thoughts that “computer education is just so exciting for our children. In order for Hawaiian to feel like a real living language, like English, it needs to be seen, heard and utilized everywhere, and that includes the use of computers” (Warschauer & Donaghy 1997, 353). This same mentality that Hale Kuamo‘o presents on computer education should also be considered in maintaining the Chamorro language. The youth of today enjoy using the computer, because it is just one of their few ways of being entertained. In the tiempon tinaki days, radio and comic strips were used to promote Chamorro language. However, I foresee advance media technology like the internet and television as the current youth’s primary sources of entertainment.

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29 For instance, common computer names like “file,” “alert,” “command,” etc are changed to Hawaiian. See Warschauer & Donaghy for a visual example of Leoki.
Language, whether spoken, danced, or written is what allows us to express ourselves. The language that we speak marks our identity and affinity towards our country. Thus, speaking an indigenous language in a hegemonic nation-state like the United States, France or Great Britain could sometimes be looked upon as something unnecessary. Similarly, if one’s island is governed by a hegemonic nation-state, knowledge of the colonial language, such as English is required when attending public schools, applying for welfare and participation in any governmental programs. Since it is necessary to speak and write in English, it makes it difficult for a person speaking an indigenous language to understand that his/her language is equally important to his/her world.

In addition to legislations, the living environment or lifestyle also has to be considered to be a factor contributing to language shift. Our environment deeply shapes our decisions as to what language to speak and to affiliate ourselves with. Essentially, the environment that we live in encourages a form of language shift - voluntary. In a voluntary language shift, people have a choice in deciding which language to chose. Globalization, in particular, is one of the major causes of a voluntary language shift (Otsuka 2007, 448). Majority of imports in the Pacific come from the United States, United Kingdom, and France, which require knowledge of English or French to conduct business and to better understand the imported product. These foreign imports correlates to Browne’s theory of cultural imperialism. Foreign companies advertise products through a colonial perspective and create a notion that colonial lifestyle is attractive (See Browne 1996 for more information on cultural imperialism.). Mass Marketing of foreign imports creates a space that allows the colonial power to advertise its culture and language.
Majority of advertisements shown via electronic media are mostly conducted in the language of the colonizer. Television, radio, internet, and print media all provide a portal that gives a representation of our islands and people. The things we see and read influences our notions of what is normal and abnormal in society. It seems like we depend on popular forms of media like television and magazines, to provide us a guideline in how to behave, act, and speak. Richard A. Benton, in his Statement to the Waitangi Tribunal in support of the Claim of Nga Kaiwhakapumau it e Reo Waiwhetu Marae, stated: “Like people all over the world, Maori families now have to cope with an extra and very powerful source of linguistic influence in the form of the television set” (Benton 1985, 7). Benton supports the claim that electronic media sways people’s decisions as to what language is considered the norm.

The main weapon used on colonies to comply with orders is through emphasizing the idea that colonial culture, values and language are crucial to one’s survival and existence in the world. What better way to reiterate the necessity of colonial culture than by marketing it as something cool and needed. “The result of this increased contact with the American society was an expanded view of the utility of the English language. It was a major crossroads in the shift of emphasis from Samoan to English. The desire for employment and educational opportunities abroad acted as the catalyst increasing the desire to learn English and, conversely, reducing the incentive to learn Samoan” (Fiamalua 1998, 29). Fiamalua makes an interesting analysis that the intermingling of colonial pop culture (or what’s considered popular for the colonizer) creates this incentive to learn more about the English language, rather than the indigenous language (Samoan).
For example, the US Navy’s presence in Guam in the early twentieth century reiterated the importance of American culture and language through newspaper publications and most important, public education. “Early naval governors including Leary and his successor, Seaton Schroeder, made the case that a transformation needed to be made in the people. Schroeder noted that schools could help the people ‘attain the standards of civilization and morality that rule in the more enlightened parts of the world’” (Underwood 2008). In fact, the US Naval governor, Schroeder believed that Western education was the best way for Chamorros to be “civilized” implies that our ways of doing things are insignificant in the world. Our ways include: our language, our culture, and our ways of thinking. As a Chamorro, I find Schroeder’s comment utterly offensive.30 As demonstrated by Schroeder’s barbaric remark, the type of laws passed in Pacific Islands suggests colonial thoughts and mental depictions of Pacific Islanders.

Laws enacted can sometimes suppress indigenous people from conducting their own forms of culture. The limitation of practicing one’s culture and language is a denial of one’s

30 In addition to Schroeder’s thoughts on civilizing Chamorros and the unimportance of Guam to the world, I have also experienced similar criticisms. During a Post 1945-US/Japanese relations Political Science class at my undergraduate school, my professor (name to be withheld for privacy reasons) constantly elaborated on the importance of Japan to the United States. However, the professor failed to mention about Guam’s presence in the Pacific and how it affects US/Japanese relations. The only thing the professor taught the class about Guam was that it was a US military base. One day, the professor showed the class statistics on Japanese media coverage on different parts of the world. I noticed the Pacific and Guam were not part of the professor’s statistical analysis, so I asked him/her: “What about Guam?” I wanted to know why Guam was not part of the professor’s research and what were his or her thoughts on Guam in US/Japanese relations.

After asking the question, the professor looked at me for a while and then asked the class that was composed of a hundred or more students, “Does anybody in here know about Guam?” To much surprised, everyone in the class was quiet for a brief five seconds, but felt like eternity to me. The silence must have surprised everyone in the class that students responded to the professor’s question with an outburst of laughter. I was embarrassed. The laughter led me to believe that my question was stupid and inconsequential to US/Japanese relations. Nevertheless, the professor seemed to agree with the class’ answer that he/she responded to my question: “There’s your answer, since nobody knows about Guam, then it’s not important to study it.” The professor’s response offended me and quite frankly, I was mad.
human right. For instance, a Kenyan human rights activist, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o was issued a warrant for his arrest for writing a book in his indigenous language, Gikuyu. Wa Thiong'o states:

“In my view language was the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation (wa Thion’go 1986, 9).”

The words of wa Thiong'o support the notion of mental subjugation as a form of colonization. Public policies, government programs, and other forms of colonial empowerment contribute to the colonization of indigenous people. Forms of mental subjugation towards indigenous people are occasionally ignored, because they are embedded in everyday life. Mundane acts of life like watching television, surfing the internet, and attending school all promote Western ideology.

The truth is that Western ideology is unavoidable because of its pervasive presence in our environment. The relationship between our islands and our colonial protectors further supports colonial culture. The political status is another index that shows our attachment with the colonizer. Guam, for instance, is an unincorporated U.S. territory, which basically means that the island is a colony of the United States. The political status not only determines the affiliation of one’s respective country, but what the colonial country perceives of its colonies.

Political status of one’s island also suggests the types of government funding that are available to Pacific Islanders. The US Federal Government offers a scholarship opportunity called the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship Program (FLAS) for graduate students studying “modern” foreign languages or any discipline involving international studies. The

31 The FLAS brochure used the adjective, modern to describe the type of foreign languages that could be funded by the US Government. I find it interesting that the brochure was not explicit in describing what are “modern” foreign languages. It seems that certain languages could only be funded, but have to be of interest to US agenda. For access to brochure, please go to website at: http://www.ed.gov/programs/iegpsflasf/brochure-flas.pdf
FLAS grant was created to support students studying a language and/or foreign region that is considered “critical” and strategic for US foreign relations. Critical languages or languages that are deemed beneficial to US foreign agenda are the only types of languages funded. Since Chamorro is spoken in the Northern Mariana Islands, where both Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are considered part of the United States, Chamorro is not considered a critical language. According to Mayer, Chamorro and Hawaiian are not foreign languages, but Chamorro like Marshallese could possibly be exempted from the restriction.

Critical or not, Chamorro and other indigenous languages should still be considered a worthy language to fund. Funding programs like the FLAS is just an example of what the United States considers to be suitable for its agenda. Ultimately, the goal of the United States is not necessarily to “civilize” and/or modernize its colonies, but to gain approval from them. Thus, through publicity actions of promoting English language and American culture through written and electronic media and government programs, it creates a mentality that English is the only way to succeed and live a normal life.

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32 I used the word, critical because US Federal government often uses critical to describe something that is important to US-foreign relations. The fact US government uses the term, critical languages, there’s an underlying presumption about US thoughts on foreign languages. Languages that are critical seem to present this notion that countries, where critical languages are spoken are either a threat to the US or are considered as amicable allies. However at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, the Pacific Islands languages funded under FLAS are: Tongan, Tahitian, Samoan, Maori and Marshallese. “The Marshallese language is the only Pacific Island language that is considered critical to US interests” (John Mayer, pers. comm. April 2009).

33 When I first entered graduate school at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, I inquired about the FLAS scholarship. I was not encouraged to apply for FLAS, because Chamorro was not listed as one of the Pacific Islands languages funded under FLAS. Maori, Marshallese, Samoan, Tahitian and Tongan are the only Pacific Islands languages funded under FLAS. I asked if Chamorro could be funded, because it’s an indigenous language from Guam and the CNMI. I was further notified that since Guam is a territory of the United States, it is considered part of the US, hence not foreign. Therefore, due to Guam’s political status, I was discouraged from applying to the FLAS scholarship.
Since the US government controlled public media, it allowed certain avenues, such as television shows, radio broadcasting, and print media to have positive representations of English language and American way of life. In a sense, these positive images of English language and American culture implied a kind of identity that is acceptable. The identity that is or was created meant that to be American meant to be free; to be American meant to be wealthy; to be American meant to succeed; to be American meant to speak English; and most importantly, to be American meant to have a place in the world. This mentality of being “proud to be an American, where at least I know I’m free” was embedded in our conscience. In order to be American, we have to be part of this so-called Americanness politically, socially, physically, and mentally.

With all the publicity on being American, we somehow ignore what is important to us individually and collectively as an island-nation. If we don’t focus on what is important to us and to our island, then how can self-determination be achieved? If self-determination were to happen, then it will be one step closer to gaining independence. What is often ignored in the mind of Chamorros (not including activists) is the idea of Guam becoming independent. Perhaps the reason behind the United States’ role in promoting the English language is so we could forget who we are, to attach ourselves to the colonizer. However, attaching ourselves to the colonizer, we stray from the path towards independence.

Not until the creation of the United Nations (UN) after World War Two did the idea of independence begin to merit closer thought. The UN’s mission encouraged each of its member

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34 I remember when I was attending elementary school in Guam, I was taught to sing patriotic songs for a U.S. holiday like President’s Day or Veteran’s Day. I remember one particular song entitled “Proud to be an American, God Bless the USA” by Lee Greenwood that was taught at my school. My classmates and I were required to memorize the song and sing it at an event, where the Governor of Guam will be attending the performance. All I could recall of the event was thinking about being happy that I’m an American, but at the same time I wondered why residents of Guam were not allowed to vote for the US President.
countries to release their colonies and to promote independence. The concept of decolonization soon became a common trend within political agendas in Pacific Islands. Colonial powers want to gain control of their colonies, so “mental subjugation” took into affect for people to comply to colonial rule. Implanting the idea that American way of life is “sexy” and attractive seduces people into believing that what is American is good. The use of language contributes to this branding of American culture. If English is the only language used to promote American culture, then it makes it seem that indigenous languages do not matter.

Those of us who are currently living in an American-governed colony, should also recognize that being American is not only “being free,” but having equal opportunities available to us. Our language and culture should not suppress us from being American. After all, there is no official language in the United States. However, with the exception of Hawai‘i, which has both Hawaiian and English as the official languages. Having English-Only policies and forcing indigenous people to adopt English are in a sense not being “free.” “To be American does not mean that one eliminates one's cultural identity and ethnic heritage. One can hold on to one's traditional culture while learning about and living in the culture of the new land so one can advance like others” (Peang-Meth 2009, 1). How we portray ourselves is up to us. By using tools given to us by colonial powers like electronic media, we could essentially prevent our languages and cultures from being extinct.

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35 In fact, Belau (or Palau) became independent from the United States in 1994. Currently, Belau is one of the few Island nations in the geographic area of Micronesia that became independent after colonial rule.
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Voice of the People


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PRINT OUT OF *CHAMORRO POP*

WEB ADDRESS:
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"Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our minds."
-Robert Nesta Marley

What is Chamorro pop? Anything that's popular and hip-hopolar that pertains to Chamorro language. I'm a huge fan for the perpetuation of indigenous languages. Made in Sinajana, Guam, I hope to show my love and advocacy of our language through this website. Education policies on preserving Chamorro are good, but making our language seem pop-ish to young people like me, would be even cooler. Hopefully this website could be like a forum for us to think of ways to perpetuate our language.
Kuentos means talk, chit-chat, and gossip in Chamorro. This kuentos page is a space for everyone to talk about anything related to Chamorro and other indigenous languages.

Chamorro is sexy
Wednesday, March 18, 2009
I never thought to use the word, sexy, because it just sounds so risqué. It wasn’t until I was at the 2009 School of Pacific Asian Studies Graduate Student Conference, where I met Greg Dvorak, who is... 
More... | No Comments

Chamorro Language at Work
Tuesday, January 20, 2009
Yay! This is so cool that Advance Management, INC. (AMI) is encouraging its employees to learn Chamorro language. I think it would be great if every business on the island will participate in this... 
More... | No Comments

Chamorro Language Lessons via Youtube
Tuesday, December 9, 2008
Check this out, teaching Chamorro via youtube.com. I like the accessibility and convenience of posting videos on learning Chamorro language. However, it would be nice to make it a little bit more...
Happy Thanksgiving!
Thursday, November 27, 2008
The only thing I like about Thanksgiving is the plethora of food that I will see, cook, smell, and eat. Every year, I always get to bring home balutan or left over food from the Thanksgiving...

More... | 1 Comment

i fuetsan i taotao
Wednesday, October 15, 2008
Kuentos Archive

Chamorro is sexy
Wednesday, March 18, 2009
No Comments

Chamorro Language at Work
Tuesday, January 20, 2009
No Comments

Chamorro Language Lessons via Youtube
Tuesday, December 9, 2008
No Comments

Happy Thanksgiving!
Thursday, November 27, 2008
1 Comment

i fuetsan i taotao
Wednesday, October 15, 2008
No Comments

Pantosta!
Tuesday, September 23, 2008
No Comments

Gossip at the mútaí
Thursday, September 11, 2008
No Comments

Chamorro MTV
Wednesday, August 27, 2008
No Comments

Malafunkshun’s Chaud
Tuesday, August 12, 2008
No Comments

Håfa Fökai?
Monday, August 4, 2008
No Comments

Hurau Film
Sunday, July 20, 2008
No Comments

i inifresi
Friday, July 4, 2008
No Comments

Forever Sinajâña
Tuesday, June 17, 2008
No Comments

Uncle Kiko & Chamorro Alphabet
Wednesday, June 4, 2008
No Comments

Guam’s Invisibility
Tuesday, May 20, 2008
No Comments

2008, the International Year of Languages
Sunday, May 4, 2008
No Comments
2008, the International Year of Languages

Sunday, May 4, 2008:

I just discovered that United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated the year, 2008 as the International Year of Languages. (Yay!) In honor of my most recent discovery, I'm going to commence this Kuentos page with an introduction to my thesis project:

Chamorro and English are the two official languages in Guam. According to the Central Intelligence Agency's The World Factbook, about twenty percent of the population speaks Chamorro. The low rate of Chamorro speakers in Guam indicates that the language is declining. This is interesting because Chamorro is the indigenous language spoken in the Mariana Islands and less than half of the population in Guam speaks Chamorro. Thus, for my thesis, I will be investigating factors that contribute to the decline of Chamorro by analyzing media and government actions towards the language and looking at the issues of revitalization and preservation of Chamorro in Guam.

According to Robert Underwood, a current educator at the University of Guam, positive attitudes and behaviors towards the English language contribute to the decline of Chamorro. The influence of government policies and media take part in shaping and developing meaning towards English and Chamorro languages. The crux of my thesis is looking at what kinds of meanings are created towards English and Chamorro languages and this is why I choose to do Plan B thesis portfolio, because it will give me the opportunity to create a written position paper and a project that maybe of use to others interested in indigenous language maintenance. My position paper will be discussing the issues of language maintenance of Chamorro in Guam and looking at other case studies in the Pacific that are conducive for understanding the language situation in Guam.

One reason why I chose to do a project is because it will allow me to do my research on analyzing Chamorro language in a different medium. The project portion of my thesis portfolio will be analyzing representations of Chamorro language in Guam's media and government policies. For my project, I will be creating a webpage that is a collection of data and analyses on Chamorro language from different outlets in Guam's media and politics. I feel that this webpage project is a way to inform and promote unique ways in enhancing Chamorro language maintenance.

The main reason why I choose to research on Chamorro language maintenance is because of my upbringing. "Munnga maleffa i kustumbre-mu" or "never forget your custom" was the advice I constantly heard from my mom. I thought my mother was
crazy for telling me to not forget about my heritage because I could never picture myself losing my Chamorro upbringing. While studying for my undergraduate degree at the University of California, San Diego, I realized why my mother always told me "munnga maleffia i kustumbre-mu." I was living in an environment that was filled with Western thought and culture that was popular and important in life of my peers. My consumption of Western mainstream culture somehow almost made me dismiss my Chamorro custom and the persistent reminders of not forgetting "i kustumbre-hu" or "my custom" brought me back to my Chamorro identity. Listening to my mom and others speak Chamorro was like a reminder of who I am. Perhaps the reason why I needed to be reminded is because as a Pacific Islander living in the U.S. continent, I felt that we were invisible.

For me, language is important because it shows that our culture and identity are alive. According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith, who wrote Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples mentions that as indigenous scholars, it is our responsibility to promote the indigenous voice and our work to become a form of activism. In light of Smith's words, I believe that recognition of our own languages is a way for our voices to be heard and mostly to become visible. In retrospect, I see my work as a form of activism that language maintenance is vital in making us visible and also as a way of taking in my mother's advice of "munnga maleffia i kostumbre-mu."

Keywords: media, advocacy, thesis project
I just recently committed myself to being the coordinator for the New Graduate Student Orientation (NGSO). I had no idea how much work would be involved in planning an orientation for over 350 students! The orientation is three months away and I’m already freaking out! Anyways, I was given a tour of Graduate Division and was introduced to the Dean and Associate Dean. The meet and greet felt so formal and elite like that I was reminiscing my undergraduate experience.

During a Post 1945-US/Japanese relations Political Science class at my undergraduate school, my professor (name to be disclosed for privacy reasons) constantly elaborated on the importance of Japan to the United States. However, the professor failed to mention about Guam’s presence in the Pacific and how it affects US/Japanese relations. The only thing the professor taught the class about Guam was that it was a US military base. (How cruel!) One day, the professor showed the class statistics on Japanese media coverage on different parts of the world. I noticed the Pacific and Guam were not part of the professor’s statistical analysis, so I asked him/her: “What about Guam?” I wanted to know why Guam was not part of the professor’s research and what were his or her thoughts on Guam in US/Japanese relations.
After asking the question, the professor looked at me for a while and then asked the class that was composed of a hundred or more students, “Does anybody in here know about Guam?” To much surprised, everyone in the class was quiet for a brief five seconds, but felt like eternity to me. The silence must have surprised everyone in the class that students responded to the professor’s question with an outburst of laughter. I was embarrassed. The laughter led me to believe that my question was stupid and inconsequential to US/Japanese relations. Nevertheless, the professor seemed to agree with the class’ answer that he/she responded to my question: “There’s your answer, since nobody knows about Guam, then it’s not important to study it.” The professor’s response offended me and quite frankly, I was mad.

The most upsetting part of this class was the professor is a faculty member of the International Relations Pacific Studies (IRPS) program at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and he lacked the effort to recognize Guam as an area that is important to study in Asia-Pacific relations. To me, IRPS will encompass not only Asia, but also islands in the Pacific. At the IRPS campus, there’s a mural on one side of the IRPS library building that has a painting of Asia and the Pacific. The Asia section of the painting looked complete, but the Pacific was definitely incomplete. The only countries that were painted on the Pacific portion of the map were Australia and New Zealand. What happened to the rest of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia?

The mural disturbed me, because I felt that Oceania did not matter in academia. I asked one IRPS worker why islands of the Pacific were not included as areas of studies in the IRPS program and the response I received was that majority of Pacific islands are colonies of hegemonic nation-states, so IRPS doesn’t consider them integral in Asia-Pacific region, because of their political affiliation with a hegemonic nation-state (e.g. USA, France, or Great Britain). The IRPS worker also informed me that Japan and Indonesia are located in the Pacific Ocean and therefore, they’re part of the Pacific. The justification made by the IRPS worker still did not make sense to me, because Guam is in the Pacific Ocean too, so why isn’t it part of an area of studies in the IRPS program? The response and incomplete mural reminded me of the idea that Pacific islands are a big doughnut hole in the world.

The invisibility of the Pacific reminds me of a Krispy Kreme glazed doughnut. Imagine the world representing the tire-shaped, glazed doughnut and in the center is the Pacific, an empty non-existing part of the doughnut. Sadly, but true, the center of a glazed Krispy Kreme doughnut represents Pacific Islands in the IRPS program. The fact the Pacific section of the mural is incomplete, it makes it seem that Pacific islands are invisible to the rest of the world. The invisibility of Guam and other Pacific islands makes me feel that we’re inconsequential. I posted the Colbert Report: Know Your Protectorate - Guam, to show the kind of ignorance I come across as a Pacific Islander student.

Keywords: education, IRPS, doughnut

Add a Comment
My Uncle Kiko, who’s my mom’s first cousin lives across the street from me. Growing up in Sinajáña, my mom would tell me to go to gima Uncle Kiko or Uncle Kiko’s house and get some fátada or “chocolate meat.” There’s no chocolate in fátada, but pig’s blood and fatty parts of the pig that make it oh so mungge’ or delicious that it could potentially kill you. Uncle Kiko talks a lot, so he will take any opportunity to tell me about his philosophies of life and other stuff he has on his mind. During one of my excursions to gima Uncle Kiko, he talked about how important it is to know the Chamorro alphabet.

“You know, na’ gof impotante para un tungo’ put i alphabeton CHamorru. or “you know, it’s very important to know the Chamorro alphabet. Ginnen un tungo’ i alphabeton Chamorro, pues siempre mas chadek un tungo’ tumugi, dilettera, yan kuentos gi fino’-ta. or “If you know the Chamorro alphabet, then it will be faster for you to write, spell and speak in our language.” (Uncle Kiko)

At the time I heard my uncle’s philosophy on learning Chamorro language, I didn’t really care. I didn’t understand why would I need to know how to pronounce letters in order to spell the word correctly. My uncle’s advise didn’t come into play until I took a Chamorro independent course with Dr. Untalan, which I wrote a short analysis on the story of the trongkun fuego or flame tree. While I was writing my essay on i trongkun fuego, I constantly looked up Chamorro words in the dictionary to see if I was spelling the word correctly. Unfortunately, all the researching into the dictionary, did not help me in spelling the word correctly.

Keywords: Uncle Kiko, education
“Hey, Baby Doll, go fan and get me látan dudu.”
(Látan dudu is a tin can like a folger’s coffee can filled with ice and water.)
- my Auntie Bobbie

I had an unusual childhood and it was all spent in the central part of Guam in the village of Sinajáña. My father was born before World War Two and my mother was born right when the war ended. By the time I was born my father was forty-five years old and my mom was thirty-nine, so according to some of my relatives I was poksaí bihu or raised by old people. This meant that I was raised in a household that spoke Chamorro at home. It was very rare and it is still rare for children in Guam to be speaking Chamorro. Thus, my parents were my foundation in my passion for the Chamorro language. My dad was originally from Tumon, which is like the Waikiki of Guam. However, my mom was originally from Harmon, but her family moved to Sinajáña after typhoon Karen hit her village and destroyed their homes. According to my mother, Sinajáña was one of the first sites in Guam to be modeled and developed after American suburbia. This quaint little Chamorro village had paved roads, house designs that were influenced of American middle-class architecture, a park, baseball field, elementary school, fire station, and of course, a Catholic church.

My mother’s parents Teresa and Santiago Castro purchased a house in Sinajáña and my grandfather, who was a carpenter, helped with the design and the construction of the house. Almost every wood piece in the house was crafted by my grandfather, whether it was the door, the coffee table, the chairs, the dining table or even the bilen or structure for the nativity scene, they were all made by him. This house still stands and is filled with fond memories of my grandparents’ hard work, the escape from typhoon Karen, my mother’s fight with Auntie Nakrina (who is our next door neighbor), my chelu’hu’s (brother’s) boonie dog named Burn, and the place where I closely identify myself as a Chamorro.
In Sinajña, my mom’s family still kept the nuclear family ties; this allowed easy access for me to wonder across the street and talk to my Uncle Kiko. Every time I went to my Uncle Kiko’s house, I was told stories of Harmon, his childhood, my grandparents, and of his godson, Frankie. As a child, I was curious about why things happened. Whenever I would ask my mother, she would always respond “Sa Si Yu’us ha finatinas” or “because God made it that way.” This was my mom’s usual response to every question I asked. When I wanted a different opinion, I would go to my Uncle Kiko and he would usually explain his answer in a story. His stories were told in Chamorro and were filled with descriptive phrases and explanations of why Chamorros act the way they do today and how some of our ancient traditions have become embedded in our Catholic faith as well.

Through my Uncle Kiko’s stories, I began to understand the importance of our Chamorro language in our culture, faith, and everyday life. Through language, we have a deeper sense of who we are, where we come from, and our own ideological way of thinking. Thus, my fond childhood memories of growing up in Sinajña and listening to my Uncle Kiko’s stories have contributed to my interest in researching on the preservation and revitalization of the Chamorro language.

Keywords: Uncle Kiko, Education, Community Involvement, Sinajña
The "Inifresi" pledge gives me hope and inspiration for the future of our Chamorro language and culture. Inifresi means to offer oneself up or to offer help to someone or something. Whenever I hear the Inifresi pledge it reminds me why I want to advocate for the perpetuation of the Chamorro language and it is "to protect and to defend the beliefs, the culture, the language, the air, the water and the land of the Chamoru." Above is a video of some kids reciting the Inifresi and being very cute. "Children are our future" and it's great that people like Ivegafria, who posted the inifresi youtube video are encouraging children to embrace Chamorro language.

Keywords: Community Involvement

Add a Comment
Last year, my cousin, Bobak and I went to the Hawaiian Studies Center to watch a “Chamorro film.” The film was shot in Guam and the dialogue was spoken in Chamorro. The film, Hurau lasted for about one minute and I seriously thought the clip was a trailer and not the actual film. The advertisements promoting Hurau just described the film to be Chamorro, but not indicating the time. I guess Bobak and I had a different idea of what film is. Since we’re so accustomed to watching films that are over an hour long, we thought that Hurau was not yet finished.

In my opinion, Alex Munoz, who’s the filmmaker for Hurau was clever in making the film short. After watching the clip, I couldn’t get enough of the film that I wanted to see more. I have to admit that this was my first time watching someone speak Chamorro on the big screen and it was very refreshing. I guess that’s one reason why I wanted Hurau to last longer.

While watching Hurau I was looking at the scenery and trying to figure out where the film was shot in Guam. Towards the end of the film, the camera showed a glimpse of one of the hotels in Tumon Bay. At first, I was kind of confused as to why the cinematographer chose to shoot the scene of the hotel, when it’s an anachronism.
I didn’t follow how the hotel and Hurau made sense in the same context. I brought this up to Bobak and he made sense as to why the hotel is in the scene. According to Bobak, Hurau came back from time, because of all the destruction modernization and colonization has brought to our island. By briefly showing the hotel in the background, it reminds us that there’s still time to change and move forward with our heritage. Our language and culture doesn’t stop at Hurau’s time, but will forever perpetuate.

Keywords: Media, Munoz, film

Add a Comment
Two years ago, my mom flew to Oahu with me, so she can help me get settled before school started. We stayed at Waikiki at a hotel that served muffins and bananas as a continental breakfast, fully loaded room with kitchen, but no elevators. The hotel was ghetto fabulous and my mom was having a ball talking to random strangers whom she believed to look like Chamorros. During my mom’s stay in Waikiki, she was obsessed with Leonard’s malasadas that she insisted on waking up at 6 o’clock in the morning to get some for breakfast.

My mom didn’t want to rent a car, so walking from the hotel to Leonard’s was at least a 30 minute walk, but walking with my mom would take an hour. Even though the walk was long, my mom still wanted her malasadas, so we’ll go on this pilgrimage to Leonard’s and on our way we’ll stop at several stores. One of the stores that we stopped by was the Fökai store on Kapahulu. At the Fökai store, my mom saw a t-shirt that had a silhouette of people and a phrase that said “Fökai Familia.” As soon as my mom read the t-shirt, she was brabu or mad. Immediately, my mom was interrogating the sale’s clerk with questions like: “Do you know what Fökai means?” “Who made this t-shirt?” “Who owns this company?” “Where’s the manager?” (FYI: The letter, ô is not in the Chamorro alphabet. Perhaps, the Fökai brand placed the two dots on the o as decoration? I’m not sure, but the two dots on the letter, o makes the word, fokai appealing.)

My mom didn’t like how the t-shirt said “Fökai Familia,” because to my mom and her generation (those born during or shortly after WW2), fokai is chat fino’ or a bad word. Fokai is rarely ever spoken. unless the person saying it really means that he/she is
going to beat up or kill somebody. My mom understood the phrase, "Fōkai Familia" as something like "f*ck family" or "kill/beat up my or your family." To my mother, family means something sacred and powerful and nobody should be wearing a shirt that promotes the idea of beating up someone's or one's family. However, to the Fōkai clothing company, fokai was used as an adjective in the "Fōkai Familia" phrase, so the phrase is just supporting the brand, not necessarily the actual meaning of the word.

What I found fascinating about this Fōkai store experience with my mom was that we each had a different understanding of what fokai meant. My mom's generation viewed fokai as something derogatory and inappropriate for a young person like me to use. However, to my generation, we interpret fokai as something else. I associate the Fōkai brand/logo as something that's affiliated with Guam and Chamorro culture. Due to the Fōkai clothing company's stylish clothes, they promoted this idea that fokai is not derogatory, but a word that can describe a simple fight.

Nevertheless, the makers behind the Fōkai brand are young and created a clothing company that embodies the idea of promoting Guam and its pop culture. Through the hip, stylish and creative clothing gear the Fōkai brand made, it essentially made the word, fokai popular. Now, I see other t-shifts like Fotten Ga'ga, 671, 670, and Chamorruboy that represents Chamorro or the Marianas. Through these clothing companies, I believe it's like a way of preserving the language through a t-shirt. Using Chamorro words as brand names made this space for younger generation to use the language. It's kind of like a different way of speaking the language, but at the same time using art to make Chamorro popular.

Keywords: chat fino', fokai, pop
"I'm a chaud for life."
- anonymous

Malafunkshun’s Chaud

Tuesday, August 12, 2008

What does chaud mean? The meaning of chaud will depend on what generation you fall under. For my mom’s generation (post WW2), chaud to her is someone that speaks broken English, uneducated, does naïve actions, gets into trouble with the law, and is poor. According to UrbanDictionary.com, chaud means a redneck Chamorro. However, to my generation, chaud could mean a lot of things. Chaud could mean cool, crazy, someone who’s young and speaks Chamorro, and basically anything. Chaud is like a multipurpose/multifunction word and honestly, I think it’s hard to define it. Guam’s popular television show, Malafunkshun uses the word chaud to define someone or something from the South, speaks little or broken English, and sticks to the ancient traditional customs of Chamorro culture.

Malafunkshun is a band consisting of three Disk-Jockeys (DJs) that create and perform skits that are satires of the Chamorro culture, language, and politics in the island of Guam. The name of the show is a pun on the word, malfunction and was
intentionally spell wrong to mock the way Chamorros would pronounce English words and also to address the idea that the show is not perfect and is intended to be Malafunkshuned. Malafunkshun was originally aired on Guam's number one hit radio station, 98-Jamz that was also known for playing the latest music hits on the island. Two of the DJs are ethnically Chamorros from Guam and the third DJ is haole, which makes the show unique in that two people ethnically Chamorro are giving an inside critique of their culture. Malafunkshun's radio show eventually became very popular that KUAM, which is Guam's only locally televised news station offered the DJs a spot on its channel.

Malafunkshun's televised show became a success that young people started to mimic and copycat the characteristics of the skits. These particular characteristics that Malafunkshun created on Chamorro culture, language and people are intentionally built to make a mockery of Chamorro. The show's popularity seems to be an enticement for children to soak in the stereotypes and associate them as something that is Chamorro. The images that young children consume from Malafunkshun are not necessarily the true depictions of Chamorro language, culture, and people; but more of a portrayal of what the show defines as Chamorro.

Malafunkshun's popular songs and skits on Chamorros are likened by the young and old generation because the show gives them representations of what is Chamorro language and culture. The reason why Malafunkshun is a success is because their skits, songs, and humor create a sense of nostalgia of what is Chamorro. Also, Malafunkshun does a good job in artistically creating local comedy from Guam. Each generation has a different perception of what is Chamorro and Malafunkshun sort of summarizes the different mentalities between each age group. For instance, the actors identify old people as the ones speaking Chamorro and the young people as the group that barely knows Chamorro. The Chamorro language that is used by Malafunkshun are usually slang words, which is interesting because young people who are not fluent in Chamorro consider the slang words as something that is normally accepted in society. However, the older generation that is fluent in Chamorro would consider these slang words as disrespectful.

Due to the popularity of the show, Malafunkshun was able to make Chamorro as something that is popular amongst young people. If Malafunkshun is able to do this, then perhaps, the media and the government should team up in creating another television show that would counter act Malafunkshun. Perhaps, a television show that juxtaposes Chamorro language and popular culture amongst young people could further the perpetuation of the Chamorro language. It is the hope that by advertising Chamorro language through television, the language could be considered hip and necessary amongst the younger generation. After all, the children are the fate and the future of the existence of Chamorro, because they decide if they want the Chamorro language to be part of their marker of identifying themselves as Chamorro.

Keywords: chaud, malafunkshun, media
Chamorro MTV

Wednesday, Aug. 27, 2008

In the CNMI, there's a television station called Marianas Music Videos (MMV) that helps local artists produce their work and broadcast it on television. MMV started by The above music video is called "Daggao Hulu' i Kainnao-mu" or throw your hands in the air and it was also produced by MMV. I think that's great that a television station supports local artists.

Keywords: media. CNMI

Add a Comment
Gossip at the māta'i

Thursday, September 11, 2008

Growing up in Guam, my parents and I will attend at least one māta'i or funeral every week. There’s a standard protocol when it comes to attending the māta'i. First we pray, lineup to view the dead, give our condolences to the grieving family and then we pray again. After we’re done praying, we go to the reception area, where the family of the māta'i provided food. At the reception that’s where I will find people gossiping. Through various stories and news that I’ve eavesdrop as a kid, I discovered that gossip is the oldest method of receiving information, but still effective in language maintenance.

Gossip is a double edge sword. Admit it: We love gossip, but we don’t like hearing the bad side of ourselves. The fact is, we can’t escape gossip, it’s all around us like air. Gossip is addicting, which is why there are products that cater to selling gossips. Products like People magazine, National Enquirer and television shows like Entertainment Tonight and Extra all depend on celebrity gossip for their businesses to survive. I’ve heard the term, “sex sells,” but I think gossip sells better.

As a kid, I was taught that gossip is bad and we shouldn’t talk about others. If gossip is so bad, then why do people still find it addicting? The New York Times’ Have you Heard? Gossip Turns Out to Serve a Purpose talks about how gossip is used to verify the norm in society. Basically, hearing gossip makes us understand what is and isn’t accepted in society. It’s kind of like reading PerezHilton and finding out that what Chris Brown did to Rihanna was inappropriate. Although gossip can sometimes have a negative connotation attached to it, in some ways it can be effective in promoting good thoughts like praying for the sick, saving the earth and perpetuation of indigenous languages.

Yes, gossip can be useful in maintaining indigenous languages. For example, whenever I’m in a public place with my cousins and they don’t want anyone to hear their opinions, well converse in Chamorro. It’s kind of like the idea of wanting to talk about something private in a public place, but the only way to do that is through speaking a language that a small fraction of the world’s population knows about. Or if I’m at a māta'i and I want to know what the elders are talking about, then I have to know Chamorro to understand the conversation. If someone wanted to participate in the elders’ conversation, then Chamorro has to be spoken. The fact is that by wanting to know what is being gossiped about at the māta'i, then knowledge of the Chamorro language is necessary. By making Chamorro a necessity to participate in mundane acts of society like gossiping, then it entices others to speak and learn the language.

Since gossip is so addicting like Kinder Bueno Chocolate, it’s sometimes difficult to control ourselves from hearing/talking about it, which is why talking/hearing gossip in Chamorro could make the language addicting as well. In retrospect, by making Chamorro necessary through the use of gossip, it entices language learners to buy into the idea that Chamorro is popular and therefore there’s a need to know the
Gossip is a window of opportunity for Chamorro to be marketed as something appealing and sexy that everyone wants a piece of. If gossip can sell, then Chamorro can be sold as well.

Keywords: gossip, sexy

Add a Comment
"Munnga gumimen kafe, sa siempre na madora hao!" ("Don't drink coffee, or else it'll make you dumb.")
- my mom

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

I love pantosta! Pantosta is one of my favorite foods to eat for breakfast. The steps in making pantosta is kind of like making bread. First, mix all the ingredients to make the pantosta. (Unfortunately, I don't know the ingredients, but I kind of have an idea how pantosta is made.) Second, kind of knead the dough like bread, then take some in your hand and either spin it like a braid, twist it like a pretzel, or make it long like the picture above. After making the preferred shape, put the shaped dough into the oven and bake until it gets hard and toasted. Once the dough gets toasty, then it's time for the item to cool and viola out comes a pantosta! For more info about pantosta, check out Paula Ann Lujan Quinene's Guam Food blog. (Beware Quinene's blog will make you mahalang or missing for Chamorro food.) Nevertheless, I love pantosta and reminiscing about it brings me back to my childhood memories of eating breakfast before going to school.

Growing up in Guam, my mom would usually give me pantosta and chá (hot tea) for amotsa (breakfast). Most people prefer pantosta with cafe or coffee, but I prefer it with chá. Since my mom got me used to drinking chá for i amotsa-ku or my breakfast, I have to have it with pantosta. As a kid, I wasn't allowed to drink coffee, because the elders said it will make kids dumb. Thus, my mom chose chá as the acceptable beverage for pantosta. Chá, of course, is bitter, so I would put at least 2-3 tablespoons of sugar to sweeten it up. Dip the pantosta in the very mames or sweet...
chá and the combination makes it addicting.

For elementary school, I attended St. Francis Catholic School in Yoña, Guam. On my way home from school, my mom will sometimes stop at this bakery that specializes in only making pantosta. My mom says we're related to the lady, who makes the pantosta and it's a shame that I forgot her name. (Forgive me, but it's been like 13 years since I visited the pantosta lady.) I have to say that the pantosta bakery in Yoña is the best on the island. I've tried other types of pantosta around Guam, but nothing can compare the pantosta made in Yoña.

Keywords: food

Add a Comment
i fuetsan i taotao

Wednesday, October 15, 2008

Alex Munoz, who is the writer and director for the future film, i fuetsan i taotao or the strength of the people will be doing casting calls in Guam, Hawaii, and San Diego. I'm very impressed with Munoz's film techniques and particularly his involvement with the Chamorro community. Munoz also did a short two minute film called Hurau Returns Home and the dialogue is in Chamorro!

PS: Click here for more info about i fuetsan i taotao

Keywords: Media, Munoz, Film, Community Involvement

Add a Comment
Happy Thanksgiving!

Thursday, November 27, 2008

The only thing I like about Thanksgiving is the plethora of food that I will see, cook, smell, and eat. Every year, I always get to bring home balutan or left over food from the Thanksgiving festivities. Anyways, I was wondering what to do with my left over turkey instead of warming it up and eating it with rice, so I found this really cool recipe on youtube.com

I had no idea that turkey could be turned into a kelaguen dish as well. Usually, when I'm at fiestas or parties, I'll skip the BBQ meat section and head towards the guihan or fish. However, if I see turkey, I will try and get dibs on the dark meat area. This Turkey Calamansi Kelaguen Recipe looks so mungge’ or delicious that I want to make it. It's too bad there's no leftover turkey for my balutan, so hopefully I'll try and remember this dish next year.

Keywords: Food, Community Involvement

1 Comment  

mayo
Chamorro Language Lessons via Youtube

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Check this out, teaching Chamorro via youtube.com. I like the accessibility and convenience of posting videos on learning Chamorro language. However, it would be nice to make it a little bit more interactive. In addition to saying a phrase in English and then translating it into Chamorro, how about showing sentence structure and breaking down noun, verb, subject verb agreement formula in constructing Chamorro sentences. Also, I still have to agree with my Uncle Kiko, Chamorro Alphabet should be the first lesson learned in teaching and learning Chamorro.

Keywords: Education, Community Involvement

Add a Comment
Chamorro Language at Work

Tuesday, January 0, 2009

Yay! This is so cool that Advance Management, INC. (AMI) is encouraging its employees to learn Chamorro language. I think it would be great if every business on the island will participate in this similar Chamorro language program like AMI's. It's nice to see the involvement of private enterprises taking action in promoting the perpetuation of our language.

Keywords: Community Involvement

Add a Comment
I never thought to use the word, *sexy*, because it just sounds so risqué. It wasn’t until I was at the 2009 School of Pacific Asian Studies Graduate Student Conference, where I met Greg Dvorak, who is an alum of my department and he told me about branding versus advertising. While conversing with Greg, he talked about the need to make Pacific Islands stand out and be attractive. According to Greg, the idea behind advertising is to make something look appealing, even though it’s shitty. Whereas in branding, the concept behind the product is made to look *sexy* and appealing, so people want to buy it and be a part of it. Branding has a psychological effect on people, so the product seems to be a bit more personal and tempting for the potential buyer. Throughout our conversation, I realized that Greg loves the word, *sexy* that he’s practically branding it in academia. *Sexy* does have a potential in academic analysis and I can see how it could be used in branding Chamorro language. At first, I was kind of shocked that he tainted my academic ears with the word, *sexy*; but I got used to it. *Sexy* is not only provocative, but it could also mean “cool,” “attractive,” “so good type of feeling that I can’t let go,” and maybe even, “oh la-la.” Whatever you think is hot or “oh-la-la-ish” then that’s basically sexy. I must say that Greg is the only scholar that I know of, who can make the word, *sexy* sound so academic. Scholars beware, Greg is bringing sexy back to academia.
Going back on Greg’s discussion on branding versus marketing, I was trying to think of ways in which we can brand Chamorro language. Chamorro is sexy to me, but how can we make it be appealing towards others? I remember having a discussion with Yuko, who’s the chair of my thesis committee about ways in which Chamorro language can be considered hip and cool amongst the youth. One suggestion that was said was having a few hot Chamorro men speaking Chamorro and they will be kind of like the Backstreet Boys or ‘Nsync. Or have a celebrity speak Chamorro and promote the idea that the language is popular and cool to use. Honestly, as much as I love the idea of having Robert Pattinson speak Chamorro, it might be very expensive. However, if we somehow have the media promote the popliness or sexiness of Chamorro, then that will be just as effective.

However, one thing that floats in my mind is whether or not media can promote the sexiness of Chamorro language sans the chaudness?

Keywords: Dvorak, sexy, chaud, media

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