PAI KA LEO: Raising Hawaiian Language Through Its Music

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Socio-Political Context

- Overthrow: 1893
- Hawaiian medium education outlawed: 1898
- Language Decline: 1898-1980s
- Cultural Revitalization "Hawaiian Renaissance": 1960s-present
- Language Revitalization: 1980s-present

Pūnana Leo History / Today

- Formed and first Pūnana Leo Preschool established in 1983
- Law outlawing Hawaiian medium education repealed in 1986
- Today: 11 Preschools on 5 islands

Pūnana Leo o Hilo: Ka Honua (The Environment)

The Piko: Morning Protocol

- Sounding of the pū
- Ancient and modern compositions in ancient styles
- Modern Hawaiian songs w/‘ukulele
- Christian Hymns
- ‘Ōlelo A’oa’o – short lessons

Lina Poepoe: Active Learning Circle
Music As Pedagogy

- An adaptation of classical Hawaiian education methods
- Mele and performance used as a vehicle for transmission of knowledge
- Hawaiian poetic devices assist in retention of knowledge

Example 1: “Nā I’a ‘Ono Ė”

He ʻōpoʻi kūa, he iʻa ʻu nā mai ʻē
E ʻai kākou, a, ka ʻono Ė
He ʻōpoʻi kūa, he iʻa ʻu nā mai ʻē
E ʻai kākou, a, ka ʻono Ė
He ʻōpoʻi kūa, he iʻa ʻu nā mai ʻē
E ʻai kākou, a, ka ʻono Ė

This limpet, a shellfish
Let’s eat, it tastes so good.

This is an octopus, a sea creature with suction cups
Let’s eat, it tastes so good.

This a sea urchin, a spiny sea creature
Let’s eat, it tastes so good.

This is an eel, a slippery sea creature
Let’s eat, it tastes so good.

Example 2: “Kuʻu Kumu”

He kālā au no kuʻu kumu
Nānā au e ʻaʻo mai
Ina ʻaiakula ka wāhine
Nānā au e ʻaʻo mai
Nānana, halalele
a kaʻi waʻa lilo

He kālā au no kuʻu kumu
Nānā au e ʻaʻo mai
Ina ʻaiakula ka wāhine
Nānā au e ʻaʻo mai
Ulī ka lani, ulī ka lani
a ola ka kumu

I am a branch of my teacher/tree
Who supports me
If the wind is strong
He teachers me

Sway about, sway about, until all becomes calm again
I am a branch of my teacher/tree
Who encourages me
If the rain is heavy
He teaches me

The heavens weep, the heavens weep
and the earth lives

Example 2: Advanced grammar in childrens’ song

- Common SL Learner usage
  Nānā – e aʻo mai – iāʻu
  Subject – verb phrase – object

- Native/Advanced Speaker usage
  Nānā – au – e aʻo mai
  Subject – object – verb phrase

Example 3: Transmission of Cultural

- Two children misbehave during performance of song for aliʻi (chief)
- Students corrected after music performance, ask for and receive forgiveness
- Lessons continue...
Conclusion

- Demonstrates power of music as pedagogy, transmission of
  - Language skills
  - Other subject content
  - Culturally appropriate context and behavior