

# International Linguistic Association

## *Monthly Lecture Series*

**Saturday, December 7, 2024. 11 AM – 12:00 PM (EST) on Zoom**

**Dr. Thomas Kettig**  
*York University, Canada*

### **The sounds of Hawaiian: Language status and current research**

#### **Abstract:**

‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i is the aboriginal Polynesian language of the Hawaiian Islands. After a precipitous decline in the 20th century, Hawaiian is now actively revitalizing and has several thousand fluent speakers. Though long of interest to phonologists for its unusually low number of consonant phonemes, highly restrictive (C)V(V) syllable structure, and (purportedly) free allophonic variation between [t] and [k], the acoustic phonetic properties of Hawaiian are only starting to come into focus for linguists. Archival recordings of the radio show Ka Leo Hawai‘i, which featured interviews with Hawaiian-speaking elders from 1972 to 1988, have been particularly important for research into pre-revitalization pronunciation.

In this presentation, I will provide a short history of Hawaiian and an overview of its status today. I will then explore the phonological structure of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i before detailing recent work on the acoustic phonetics of the language. I conclude with thoughts on future research directions as well as possible pedagogical applications of linguistic work in a revitalization context where most learners have little direct contact with ‘traditional’ native speakers.

**Date & Time: December 7, 2024 at 11:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

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## About the Speaker

### Dr. Thomas Kettig



**Thomas Kettig** is an Assistant Professor of Linguistics in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics at York University in Toronto. His research focuses mainly on Hawaiian and English and touches on endangered language description, sociolinguistics, quantitative experimental methods, theoretical phonology, historical linguistics, and acoustic phonetics. He has carried out postdoctoral research in forensic phonetics at the University of York, doctoral work on Hawaiian vowels at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, and research on variation and change in English vowels at the University of Cambridge and McGill University.

More information about Thomas Kettig [here](#).

You can also follow him on X [@tkettig](#)