



**GEM** GEO-LITERACY  
EDUCATION IN  
MICRONESIA

# Geo-literacy and Language

Expressing Action & Direction



An important part of exploring geo-literacy is looking closely at how language encodes the ways we think about our places, how we move about in the world, and how we interpret materials that orient us, like maps and globes.



# Part 1: Action Words

- Review the following images in sets A, B, & C
- For each set, what is an action phrase that describes what someone would do in that place or scenario?
  - What would an expert do? e.g., navigators, farmers, fishermen, weaver
- For each phrase, highlight the main action verb and provide the English translation



# Set A



Example in Mortlockese: *aúsaleng nganei púngúpúngún nó* –  
listen to the crashing of waves

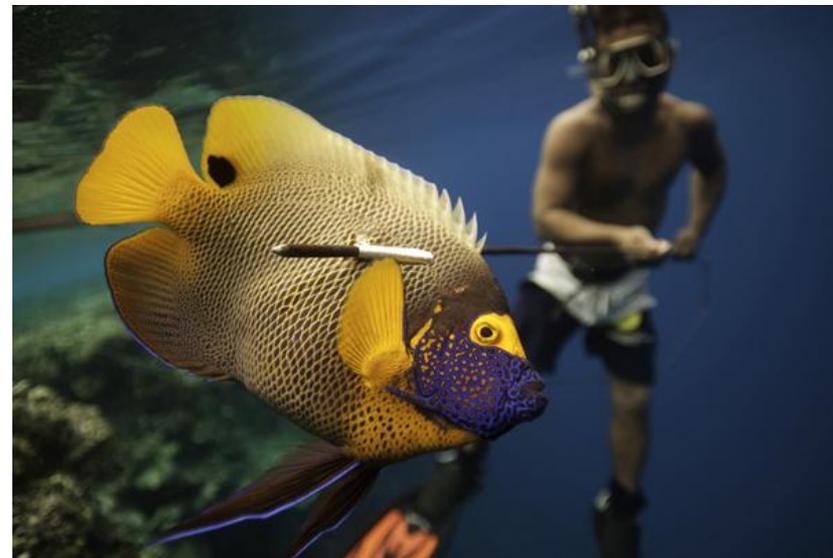


# Set B



Example in Pohnpeian: *idawehn* – “to follow,” whether it be a beaten path (especially if you're new to a place) or a person who knows the place

# Set C



Example in Marshallese: *ruñļok* – dive under water



## Part 2: Direction Words

1. Pick 2 places on your home island/atoll that are far away from each other.
2. Select a verb that means 'go,' or any other kind of movement (walk, move, travel, sail, run, drive, journey, etc.)
3. If you're in **Place A** and you're saying that you'll 'go' to Place B, what is the phrase in your language?
4. If you're in **Place B** and you're saying that you'll 'go' to Place A, what is the phrase in your language?
5. **Highlight the elements** (words, suffixes, prefixes, etc.) in the examples that reference directions: upward, downward, landward, seaward, outward, inward, northward, southward, eastward, westward, etc.
6. Provide the **English translations** for the two verbs/phrases; no need for complete sentences for this activity.



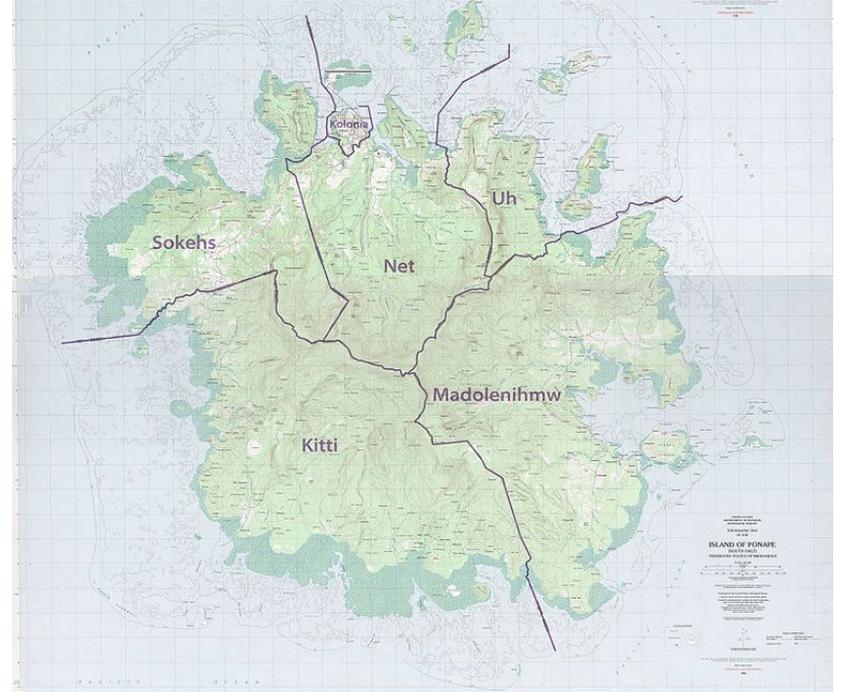
# Part 2: Example in Pohnpei

Place A = Nett

Place B = Kittu

A > B = kodihla (go downward)

B > A = kodahla (go upward)





# Part 2: Example in Pollap

Place A = Úreytip

Place B = Apwúkúw

A > B = yáfetá (swim upward)

B > A = yáfetú (swim downward)





# Part 2: Example Special Case

From Weno to a nearby inhabited island (regardless of cardinal direction to that island), the term is *sáánó* or *sááná*

- Tonoas, Fefen, Parem use *sáánó* or *sááná*

From Weno to Fono or Piis-Paneu is not *sáánó*, it is *sááwu*

- There is a specific cultural/historical relationship between the two islands
- e.g., Fono used to be a part of Weno but was separated. Both islands were once considered children of Weno. The name Fónó refers to the act of raising or nurturing a child, whereas Piis refers to caressing a child.





# Application of Geo-literacy

## Questions to Consider

How did you learn the correct usage of those direction terms?

How do you teach it to others?  
(not just teaching children; also adults)

How does this knowledge help you when you go to new places?  
(both within the Pacific or other islands, and even to other continental locations like the US)

- Geo-literacy has to be acquired.
- We need to be intentional teachers of geo-literacy practices to others.
- Geo-literacy is a part of lifelong learning.