



**LESSONS LEARNT FROM MĀORI LANGUAGE TEACHING IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND**

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Abstract

Ko tereo Māori tepoutokomanawa o teMāoritanga / The Māori language is the foundation of all things Māori. Tereo Māori/ The Māori language is the ancestral tongue of Māori people, the early inhabitants of Aotearoa. In this article I will argued in the context of teaching languages that adequate consultation with teachers and communities, consistency between the advice provided in the curriculum guidelines document, the resources made available to teachers, and adequate pre and in-service training are some of the foundational prerequisites paramount to ensure language maintenance, retention and revitalization. As a way forward to help strengthen policy, and inform Indigenous language teachers, a reflection on lessons learnt in the New Zealand context and some useful Indigenous language strategies will be provided.

Keywords: Tereo Māori, Curriculum Guidelines Documents, Language Resources, and Language Teaching Strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Language revitalization efforts have played a significant role in many communities and these efforts in order to be successful need to be lead, shaped and directed by the people of those communities (Ne tle & Romaine, 2000; Hinton, Steele, Vera, 2002; McLaughlin, 1988). Burnaby (2007) also concurs that, “the Aboriginal community must be the central decision maker in any initiative on Aboriginal language maintenance” (p. 31).

Indigenous languages are gifts; are sacred, and are healers. The Assembly of First Nations (2007) state in their language strategy that, “Languages are a gift from the Creator which carry with them unique and irreplaceable values and spiritual beliefs that allow speakers to relate with their ancestors and to take part in sacred ceremonies” (p. 3). Grey morning (1999) describes Native American languages as being sacred, “We have been given something sacred, and we recognize its sacredness” (p. 11), Lang declares, ‘our language i a gift from the Indian Gods” (2000, p. 15) and Little bear (1990, p. 8) see’s “our native languages nurturing our spirits and hearts.”

The Māori and Indigenous people of New Zealand acknowledge their language as a treasure (taonga)(Waitangi Tribunal, 1986) and, is subject to the protections guaranteed under the of TeTiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi), a treaty signed in 1840 by Governor Hobson on behalf of the British Crown and a number of Māori chiefs (Waitangi Tribunal, 1986).

Since 1987, tereo Māori has been an official language of New Zealand, however, its future is, very far from secure and there are over two thirds of Māori students currently attending schools in which English is the main language of instruction. Therefore, instructed language learning plays a significant role in the revitalization agenda. Schools in New Zealand are now required to offer a language other than the language of instruction to pupils in Years 7 to 10 (11 to 14 years of age); these schools are not required to include tereo Māori in their language offerings. Curriculum guidelines documents for a number of foreign languages have been available for many years, the curriculum guidelines document for the teaching and learning of tereo Māori in English-medium secondary schools was not available until 2009 (Ministry of Education, 2009).

While there clearly are some extremely competent teachers of the Māori language, the agency responsible for reporting on the quality of education, the Education Review Office (ERO) (2008) has identified problems with the teaching and learning of tereo Māori in English-medium secondary schools. The problems relate not to teachers' proficiency in the language but to their limited pedagogical knowledge. May (2013), also alludes to this in his article and states that; “Even when teaching personal and resources are ostensibly not such a major challenge, the subsequent effectiveness of pedagogy is not necessarily guaranteed” (p. 41). As ERO has

indicated, this raises questions about the initial training of teachers of tereō Māori and the ways in which all schools manage and support them (Education Review Office, 2008).

In the United States, a growing body of evidence points to the ways in which Indigenous language learners and teachers have struggled (Johnston, 2002; McCarty, 2008; Peter, 2007). These struggles include the diminishing number of fluent speakers, certified language speakers, and learners that find the language learning process demanding, (Greymorning, 1999; Hermes & King, 2013; Hinton, 2011; May, 2013), and frequently a mismatch between the expectations and the reality of language learning. In Canada, Battiste (2000) talked about the struggle to promote and empower Aboriginal people, “The existing curriculum has knowledge to help them participate in Canadian society, but it has not empowered given Aboriginal new Aboriginal identity by promoting an understanding of Aboriginal worldviews, language and knowledge” (p. 192). In 2012, to redress this and the legacy of residential schools, the Commission of Canada produced the report on ‘Truth and Reconciliation, Calls for Action’, which states; “Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them (2012, p. 2).

This article will discuss Indigenous language revitalization strategies, in particular, the importance of community involvement and consultation in curriculum guidelines documents, and secondly, the appropriateness of resources to support the language teachers and the curriculum guidelines document. Thirdly, it will highlight some of the struggles that language teacher’s encounter and will provide some useful strategies to help teachers develop their language proficiency and pedagogy.

The Broader Research

This article is part of a doctoral thesis, whose aim was to investigate how tereō Māori taught in English-medium secondary schools in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This involved using a triangulated approach in which language teacher cognition studies (involving questionnaires and interviews) were combined with analysis of teaching resources, and an analysis of a sample of lessons taught in English-medium secondary schools.

The History of the Education System and the Teaching of Tereō Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand

In the New Zealand education system, three different agencies have primary responsibility for different aspects of schooling - the Ministry of Education (MoE) the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the Education Review Office (ERO). The MoE is responsible for oversight of the development and delivery of the national curriculum; the NZQA is responsible for developing policy and procedures relating to national educational assessment; and the ERO are responsible for reporting on the quality of education in schools, including evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Colonization has entailed the imposition of an alien educational infrastructure of policies and laws (including the Education Ordinance Act 1847 and the Native Schools Act 1858), including a tradition of prioritizing the English language for over one hundred and fifty years. Battiste (2000) calls this, “Cognitive imperialism, also known as cultural racism, is the imposition of one worldview on a people who have an alternative worldview, with the implication that the imposed worldview is superior to the alternative worldview.” (p. 192-193).

In 1972, a group of young Māori academics called Ngā Tamatoa (The Young Warriors) delivered a petition with 30,000 signatures to the New Zealand government (Brooking, 1988, p. 191), seeking the inclusion of the Māori language in the school curriculum. In 1976, the first bilingual school in Rūātoki was established. Ngā Tamatoa members also played an important role in the establishment of the Kōhangareo (language nest) movement, the pre-school programmes incorporating Māori language and culture. The reintroduction of the Māori language into primary and secondary schools, the development of bilingual units in English-medium schools, the introduction of Māori Studies into polytechnics and universities, and the establishment of Māori tertiary institutions (Walker, 2004, pp. 210-212).

From the Kōhangareo movement, parents demanded the establishment of the Māori-immersion schooling, Kura Kaupapa Māori and Whare Kura (primary and secondary immersion schools in which Māori philosophy and language played a central role), ensured language retention for those children who attended Kōhangareo. Kura Kaupapa Māori (Māori Immersion Primary School) support the “commitment to Te Aho Matua/ Māori principles for life as a working philosophy for all aspects of school life” (Education Review Office, 1995, p. 3). Kura Kaupapa Māori are seen as providing a holistic Māori spiritual, cultural and educational environment where Māori values and beliefs are important features, an environment in which everything that takes place supports the revitalization of tereō Māori and one in which the overall operation of the school rests with whānau/family.

In English-medium secondary schools (13 - 18 years of age) the approach and philosophy is very different, tereō Māori is only offered through a bilingual unit, or as a taught ‘subject’ or ‘option’ with limited contact teaching hours, this, despite more than two thirds of Māori children attending these schools. Therefore, English-medium schools by default have a huge contribution to make to the maintenance, retention and the revitalization of tereō Māori.

The Curriculum Guidelines Document for the Teaching and Learning of Tereō Māori in English-Medium Schools

Widespread efforts to modify curriculum and instruction in schools serving Native students have taken place very infrequently (Freng, Freng, & Moore, 2007; Reyhner & Jacobs, 2002). In New Zealand, it was not until the early 1980s that an attempt to achieve consistency in New Zealand language documentation within the context of the emerging New Zealand Curriculum Framework (2007a) began.

All of the language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines documents that have been released by the New Zealand Ministry of Education (formerly, Department of Education) from 1987 onwards claim to be communicative in orientation. While there are varying conceptions of what is meant by communicative language teaching (CLT), the outlines provided by Littlewood (1981, pp. 6, 77 & 78) and Nunan (1991, pp. 279-295), which centre on placing emphasis on learning to communicate by interacting in the target language in authentic contexts, are widely accepted.

These outlines are consistent with the following definition provided in the New Zealand curriculum document for the teaching and learning of French (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 16), “Communicative language teaching is teaching that has a function over and above that of language learning itself. Any approach that encourages learners to communicate real information for authentic reasons is, therefore a communicative approach”. It is relevant to note that an exploration of the synergies between Māori pedagogy and communicative language teaching (Crombie & Nock, 2009) clearly indicated that they are complementary.

Ministry of Education Resources Relating to the Teaching and Learning of Tereō Māori in English-Medium Secondary Schools

Peter (2003) states that, “learners need to be surrounded by “good” materials...these resources derive from the curriculum and lessons. Resources should include books, visuals, tapes, multimedia, realia, and things from the environment” (p. 21). I analyzed three Internet-based resources provided by the Ministry of Education and the findings relating to the analysis of these resources are outlined below.

Teketeipurangi

TeKeteIpurangi (TeKeteIpurangi (n.d.a)) is a bilingual online educational portal for teachers, school managers and the wider community. It provides the gateway to a series of lesson plans and a list of resources intended to support the teaching of tereō Māori and tikanga Māori (Māori culture) (TeKeteIpurangi, (n.d.b)). These include a list of books and articles on language teaching, some language learner task-types, and sample tasks, examples of learner and teacher assessment checklists, learner goal setting and learner strategies, high frequency vocabulary lists, lesson plans and a grammar progression outline.

So far as the detail of the lesson plans are concerned, there are several points that emerge strongly. The lesson plans:

- are generally sentence-based and non-communicative;
- rely heavily on translation;
- do not clearly indicate what the main teaching points are intended to be;
- do not accommodate any revision of familiar language and integration of that introduced language;
- language with newly
- activities are sometimes cumbersome and time-consuming while appearing to make little overall contribution to learning;

Include, in some cases, language that is inappropriate in general or inappropriate in relation to the Achievement Objectives (MoE, 2007b) with which it is said to be associated.

Some teachers are likely to find that some of these lesson plans fill in gaps in their programmes, something that may be particularly useful for relief teachers (so long as they have not been used before with the same students). Some of them are likely to provide teachers with some useful ideas, overall, limited contribution towards assisting teachers to move towards the approach recommended in the curriculum guidelines document or to build coherent progression into their programmes.

Ka Mau Tewehi

Ka Mau teWehi (TeKeteIpurangi, (n.d.c)) is a video-based teaching resource made up of short video clips in tereō Māori accompanied by translations, exercises and ‘talking heads’ which are intended to explain aspects of the Māori language and culture in English. Made up of twenty units of work and related to levels 1 and 2 of the draft (Ministry of Education, 2006) curriculum guidelines document (not the final version).

While Ka Mau te Wehi appears, at first sight, to be a useful resource in relation to the realization of the curriculum guidelines document, it turns out, on closer inspection, to be considerably less useful than might seem to be the case. Even though there are links between each video-clip and the lists of achievement objects that appear at a particular level (e.g. Level 1) of the curriculum guidelines document, the actual relationship is,

with a few exceptions, tenuous at best. The language is generally not presented in a way that obviates the need for translation. That language is, often inauthentic, contextually inappropriate, and sometimes simply wrong. There is little attention given to the value of revision and careful integration of familiar and new vocabulary and constructions. The activities associated with the video clips, which rely heavily on the use of English, generally take the form of non-communicative exercises.

While there is a focus on 'new words' in the language content lists, structural and discursive aspects of the language are not included and, on those few occasions where explanation of language focus points is provided, that explanation is generally considerably more complex than is required at the stage of learning at which it occurs. While the idea of providing video clips to accompany aspects of the curriculum has considerable potential, this particular resource would appear to be of limited value and is likely to reinforce an approach that prioritizes translation.

TeHiringaite Mahara

The last of the MoE resources analysed (now available only in archived form) is TeHiringaite Mahara (The Power of the Mind) and includes 'relief teacher packs' and 'supplementary resources'. This resource is intended for teachers of tereō Māori and for teachers in general who wish to include Māori language and culture in their programmes (Gardiner & Parata, 2007, p.2). This dual focus is problematic since the needs of teachers of tereō Māori will inevitably be fundamentally different from those of teachers whose aim is to integrate some aspects of Kaupapa Māori (Māori philosophy) into school programmes overall.

The relief teacher packs include some basic introductory material relating to sounds, basic greetings, numbers and ages, place names and locations/ origins, and words and sentences involving family relationships (including use of possessive markers). These materials include sound recordings, handouts, basic line drawings, some colourful cartoon characters, and a few photographs. There are often also extension activities that involve personalization and activities that students are likely to enjoy (e.g. finding winning lottery tickets by matching numbers and words). However, the primary emphasis is on individual words (sometimes in the form of word lists with translations) and sentences. The supplementary resources section consists of a series of lesson plans, which largely involve reading and listening comprehension and/or written or spoken responses to questions based on visual stimuli (e.g. a Performing Arts Festival poster). The exercises are often of the same type as those included in the relief teacher packs (crossword puzzles, word find puzzles, gap filling, unjumbling words, multiple choice, etc.). In general, these resources appear to be based on the assumption that students will have already been introduced to much of the language included/ required and therefore involve language practice rather than the introduction of new language.

While TeHiringaite Mahara resources are likely to be useful in the context of relief lessons, their heavy reliance on translation and lack of any overall progressive framework makes them largely inappropriate as anything other than a very occasional addition to the teaching/learning curriculum.

Whilst it is noteworthy that the Ministry has produced these resources, unfortunately, they fall short on what Peter's (2003) alludes to, that, 'good' material needs to derive from the curriculum and lessons, in addition to that, resources need to provide different contexts for the realization of the Achievement Objectives outlined in the curriculum guidelines document. The three Internet-based resources made available by the Ministry of Education provide some support for teachers of tereō Māori, largely as supplementary materials. They appear locked into approaches to language teaching, learning, and language description that reflect a theoretical and methodological orientation that was particularly characteristic of the mid-20th century (linguistic structuralism and audio-lingual methodology) and, in some cases, that orientation towards grammar translation that was in its heyday considerably earlier. These resources, therefore, cannot be consistent with either, research-based findings as they relate to teaching resources or the recommendations relating to teaching approach made in the relevant curriculum guidelines document.

Resources and Strategies for Teachers of Indigenous Languages

Crombie (2010, p. 220) has observed that what really matters so far as a curriculum guidelines document is concerned "is the processes involved in bringing it to life in the classroom". A number of publications have signaled how this might best be done in the case of the curriculum guidelines document relating to the teaching and learning of tereō Māori in English-medium schools. In the first of these, Johnson (2003), demonstrates how a core integrated skills lesson, which introduces new language (core) through all four skills - reading, writing, listening and speaking (integrated skills) - could be developed that relates to the first part of one of the AOs (Communicate about likes and dislikes, giving reasons where appropriate). She includes a lesson plan that outlines the expected outcomes, the language focus points, the topics, socio-cultural aspects and text-types included (i.e. posters, simple email messages and a questionnaire) as well as learning and assessment activities and resources (i.e. posters, flashcards, cue cards, game boards, game cards, task sheets). She then works through the lesson stages. Every stage of the lesson (planning, design and delivery) clearly illustrates principles that apply in the design of other lessons.

The article by Johnson (2003) explores the development of core lessons, for new language. In another article, Johnson and a colleague (Johnson & Houia, 2005) explore the development of spiral lessons in which the focus is on practicing newly introduced language in communicative contexts and integrating it with existing language competencies. Another article of interest, written by Johnson and Nock (2009), advises teachers about how to create lessons for young learners (years 1–8) using the curriculum guidelines document for the teaching and learning of tereō Māori in New Zealand schools. The focus is on an Achievement Objective that appears at level 1: Use and respond to simple classroom language (Ministry of Education, 2007). In that article, communicative approaches and examples of ways in which teachers can design communicative language lessons that are fun and are appropriate for very young learners are provided.

Each Stage of a Sample Lesson and Lots of Controlled and Freer Practice Activities are Included (e.g. A Word Game and a Crossword Puzzle).

In Lee's (2009) article, she describes the use of narrative as a traditional teaching strategy/tool, "Pūrākau, a traditional form of Māori narrative, contains philosophical thought, epistemological constructs, cultural codes, and worldviews that are fundamental to our identity as Māori" (p. 1). In ancient times, Māori lived in a tribal kinship society, with extended family groupings sometimes numbering up to 20 or 30 people; *The basic social unit in Māori society was the whanau, an extended family which included three generations. At the head were the kaumatua and kuia, the male and female elders of the group. They were the storehouses of knowledge, the minders and mentors of children* (Walker, 2004, p. 63).

It was these kaumatua and kuia, the elders of the tribal kinship who were the primary caregivers and educators of the children, and the grandchildren, while the parents were the hunters and gatherers. Pūrākau was a staple in the life of a Māori child and was an essential component of their education and upbringing; it was through pūrākau that Māori knowledge, history, culture, language, values, and genealogy was transmitted.

Hinton (2003, p. 90) also suggests using storytelling as one kind of "lesson proper" particularly for the teacher- learner with limited fluency; engage the assistance of an elder to help develop a unit or units or for a special occasion invite the elder to come to class and tell the story. There are multiple strategies that can be utilized when storytelling, the use of realia and pictures to convey meanings, culture, simple sentences, and vocabulary. Practice the words heard, draw pictures or get the students to role-play the story. With a similar thought, Cantoni (1999, p.54) advocates using Total Physical Response-Storytelling to teach American Indian languages, utilizing vocabulary already taught and providing opportunities for students to listen, recall, role play, read and write.

Many researchers in the area of language revitalization will agree that the supply of culturally relevant, culturally appropriate and communicatively creative resources are a critical component in supporting Indigenous language teachers (Burnaby, 2007, Hinton, 2003, Lee, 2009, & Peter, 2003). It must also be mentioned here that the development of these resources needs to continue and with the support of the community, the schools and their leadership as well as policy makers.

Lessons to be Learnt Document Experience from the Tereō Māori Curriculum Guidelines

This section concerns some of the lessons that can be learned from the tereō Māori document experience.

Curriculum Guidelines Document

Curriculum Guidelines

A review of experiences relating to the curriculum guidelines document for the teaching/ learning of tereō Māori in English-medium school settings has highlighted a number of issues relating to the design of language curriculum guidelines documents more generally. The first of these relates to the fact that the word 'curriculum' is used in a variety of different ways and so it is important the way it is used should be clearly indicated. As Finney (2001, p.70) observes:

The term curriculum is open to a wide variety of definitions; in its narrowest sense it is synonymous with the term syllabus, as in the specification of the content and ordering of what is to be taught; in the wider sense it refers to all aspects of the planning, implementation and evaluation of an educational program, the why, how and how well together with the what of the teaching-learning process.

Decisions about what should be taught are both complex ones, as Takurua and Whaanga (2009) observe, teachers, who are already overworked and will have varying amounts of experience and expertise, are left completely unsupported in making decisions about what language to teach in relation to the AOs (Ministry of Education, 2007b), and when to teach it. The decisions they make impact on their students' ability to cope should they move from one school to another. They also impact at the higher levels, on their students' ability to meet assessment expectations, these expectations being set, in the absence of exemplars in the curriculum guidelines document by the NZQA (NZQA, n.d.), a separate body from the MoE.

What this indicates is that genuine consultation with teachers and communities, consultation that includes responding appropriately to what they say, is of critical importance, as is the necessity of attending to the advice

of those professionals who are appointed to design curricula. McLaughlin (1988, p. 22) in addressing Navajo literacy wrote, "Community members must be involved collaboratively in making curricular and administrative decisions." Otherwise, the inevitable result will be the inconsistency, the added pressure on teachers to decide on the suggested language focus points, and suggested vocabulary (the what) and when to teach these, and a lack of transparency that characterize the teaching/ learning of tere Māori in English-medium schools in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Design of Resources

Just as important as the curriculum guidelines documentation itself is the design of teaching/ learning resources. Language students need a wide range of authentic materials, activities and text-types. Students' learning experiences need to be contextually and culturally appropriate and communicatively oriented and students need to be given opportunities to use the language introduced productively, that is, to practice using it in contexts that allow for experimentation and genuine personalization. Above all, the language introduced to students needs to be appropriate in terms of the wants, desires and expectations of the communities, of the people, and in the context of this article, appropriate in terms of the Achievement Objectives in the curriculum guidelines document. If, all of this is to happen, curriculum guidelines documents need to include, a wide range of high quality teaching resources designed by teams of professional language educators with proven experience and expertise. To add and support this, our communities are a huge resource, some examples of Aboriginal language development strategies are, to engage and invite elders to become involved, engaging the community and incorporating culturally appropriate behaviours into materials and teaching strategies for Aboriginal children (Assembly of First Nations, 1990; Leavitt, 1991; Stairs, 1991).

Resources need to make a significant contribution towards assisting teachers, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) 1990 survey emphasized, that teachers usually work in isolation and have to create most of their resources themselves, therefore, are stressed for resources. Resources also need to be communicative, avoid having to use translations, accommodate any revision of familiar language or the integration of newly introduced language and they need to be able to bring the curriculum guidelines document alive in the classroom. Teachers in New Zealand in order to move towards the approach recommended in the curriculum guidelines document or to build a coherent progression into their programmes need support and training.

Teacher Training

McDonough (2002) has noted that not only teachers, but also teacher trainers require appropriate training, and Borg (2006) has commented on the fact that experience should not be confused with expertise. The people with proven expertise in the specific area of language education should be conducting language teacher education. As previously mentioned the Education Review Office (2008) has identified limitations in the pedagogical knowledge of tere Māorit teachers, and has raised questions about the initial training of teachers of tere Māori and the ways in which all schools manage and support them. Language teachers in general need training that is specific to the teaching of languages and they need to have confidence that the information and guidance they are provided with meets their real needs (Wang, 2007), needs which, as Smith, Cram, Smith and Tunks (1998) note, are technological and cultural as well as pedagogic.

In a discussion of a teacher-training model for Indigenous languages, little bear (1996) maintains that record ingelders not only advances a language, but that language documentation is essential to curriculum development: Those who are serious about preserving their languages must act now. They have to start tape-recording and video-taping their elders, to begin developing curriculum for language development. (p. 236).

He explains the importance of collecting language data to assuring that a body of language is available for teachers and that teachers are provided with the necessary classroom knowledge to use this body of knowledge effectively. Hinton et al (2002) attest and support the opportunity for the teacher-learner (a teacher who is also learning the language at the same time as the students) to be given a chance to develop their own language fluency before being thrust in front of the students. This may involve the help of an elder as a mentor to develop conversational fluency over a number of months or even years. Additional and personal development by the teacher-learner to work with linguistic documentation to increase their vocabulary and their grammatical accuracy is highly recommended.

Thus, in the New Zealand context, there is an immediate need for effective in-service training for teachers of tere Māori and for effective pre-service training for all prospective teachers of the language. I believe that an opportunity for open debate on the types of knowledge and skills that trainers should be able to demonstrate and how oversight of that training is managed is needed. Perhaps in the first instance, a steering committee made up of language teachers and experts in language teaching and learning (from Aotearoa and beyond) could be set up. In the context of genuine consultation with communities and teachers of tere Māori, this committee could ensure that every aspect of what is available is reviewed, revised and redesigned, starting from the curriculum guidelines document, and moving through materials production, the training of teacher trainers and teacher training it.

Conclusion

It is noted in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (1993, p. 14) that "[all] who learn tereō Māori help to secure its future as a living, dynamic, and rich language". Unfortunately, it is clear that in the New Zealand context there is still a lot of work to be done. It is, however, important work, to ensure that children in English- medium secondary schooling are provided with an opportunity to experience the Māori language as a living, dynamic and rich language, or that the teachers who attempt to provide opportunities for them to do so are adequately supported and trained. The situation as it relates to the teaching and learning of other Indigenous languages in other countries may be equally dire. This is a matter of serious concern at a time when so many languages are being lost to future generations.

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