



Revitalising Indigenous Languages

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Abstract

The National Māori Language Institute (see <http://teipukarea.maori.nz>) and The International Centre for Language Revitalisation (see <http://languagevive.org>) at AUT University, Aotearoa/New Zealand are committed to the revitalization of Indigenous languages. This side-event will focus on the work being carried out in the Institute and the Centre including: the creation of digital resources, collaboration

with Indigenous communities, educating and upskilling future language revitalization strategists and supporting the right to language.

[TITLE SLIDE – SLIDE 1]

Part 1: Introduction (Prof)

E ngā mana, e ngā reo

Ngā ihoiho o ngā maunga whakahī

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou.

I wish to acknowledge the Indigenous people of the land we stand upon, and to Te Puni Kōkiri and the NZ Mission to the United Nations for co-sponsoring this event today.

I would like to introduce the members of our group to you before we commence as this will help contextualize our work.

[SLIDE 2]

Professor Wharehuia Milroy is a Fellow of the International Centre for Language Revitalisation and an Adjunct Professor to Te Ipukarea – The National Māori Language Institute, but most of all he, along with Professor Tīmoti Kāretu, are the inspiration

for the establishment of the Institute and are loved and respected elders and repositories of Māori knowledge.

Dr Rachael Ka‘ai-Mahuta is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Development. She is also a senior researcher in the Institute and Associate Director for the International Centre where she provides strong leadership and mentoring of emerging researchers.

Tania Smith is the Executive Assistant for both the Institute and the Centre. She is also studying toward a Master of Philosophy degree.

Josephine Poutama, Toiroa Williams, John Pelasio and Kelly Aroha Huata are postgraduate students enrolled in a Master of Arts in Māori Development. They are also part-time researchers in the Institute and the Centre working on significant projects while being mentored by more senior researchers.

Regan Paranihi, Storme Hitaua and Cambell Te Paa are all undergraduate students in Māori Development, Communication Studies and Business.

These students and researchers also comprise Poutama Māori Performing Arts Group – an important arm of the Institute.

[SLIDE 3]

Both the Institute and Centre focus on addressing language endangerment through documentation, pedagogy and revitalisation to empower learners and transform communities. Our primary tool is technology. But I will speak more about the history and function of the Institute and the Centre later.

As you know, the cultural imprint of socialisation determines our perspectives on the world in which we live. Each individual is socialized as a member of a specific cultural group. Thus, each person learns to see the world in a particular way. The language learned during this process is important because words are used to describe our view of physical and spiritual reality.

This presentation will focus on the work being carried out in the Institute and the Centre including: the creation of digital resources, collaboration with Indigenous communities, educating and up skilling future language revitalization strategists and supporting the right to language.

[SLIDE 4]

Part 1: The Right to Language (Rachael)

Kia ora koutou katoa kua rāpoi mai i tēnei rā.

Personal Introduction

The following quote by Alan Bell resonates with me in terms of the history of my language, *te reo Māori* (the Māori language):

Languages die because they are no longer spoken. This happens because their speakers die out without passing them on to the next generation. Only rarely is this because of the extinction of an entire society or race. Usually it happens because from generation to generation (it takes only three or four) the speakers shift to another language. Languages do not die natural deaths. They do not fade away without outside influence. Languages are killed by other languages (Bell 1991: 67).

[SLIDE 5]

I would like to begin my presentation with the story of *te reo Māori* within my family.

The last native speaker of *te reo Māori* in my family, my great great grandfather, died 14 years before I was born. With his passing, *te reo Māori*, as a language learnt through

intergenerational transmission, was lost to my family. Legislative and societal attacks on the language impacted on the status and perceived value of the language, not only in Pākehā (New Zealanders of European descent) families but also in Māori families. My great great grandfather was a school teacher, and I believe that his decision not to speak *te reo Māori* to his family was a direct result of his first hand knowledge of the New Zealand State education system, the policies of assimilation and language domination, and the subsequent State-endorsed individual acts of violence, racism and discrimination against Māori children who spoke *te reo Māori* at school. My great great grandfather wanted to protect his daughters and ensure their well-being.

I was fortunate to be born at a time when the Kōhanga Reo (Māori immersion pre-school) movement was in its infancy. My mother learnt *te reo Māori* as a second language and became passionate about reviving the language in our family. As a new parent, educator and Māori academic, my mother supported the Kōhanga Reo movement as both a viable education option for Māori parents and as a tool for language revitalisation. As a child, I attended Kōhanga Reo and my mother would speak to me in *te reo Māori*. However, the primary language of our home was English, as the other members of our household could not speak the language. My mother persevered; she would seek out

any opportunity for me to have contact with speakers of the language, and when the time came, she sent me to Kura Kaupapa Māori (Māori language immersion school). My mother gave me the gift of my language.

As I reflect on the history of language loss and revitalisation in my family I mourn the loss of my great great grandfather's language knowledge, I feel saddened by the choices he felt compelled to make; I lament the fact that my great grandmother and my grandmother have never known their mother tongue; and I feel enormous gratitude to my mother for her commitment to ensuring I was given access to my language and my birthright. Finally, I feel a great sense of responsibility to ensuring the survival of the language within my family.

[SLIDE 6]

The Right to Language

'Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori' – Sir James Hēnare uttered this famous saying when speaking before the Waitangi Tribunal on the Māori language claim in 1985. It translates to “the language is the life force of mana Māori”. *Mana* has many definitions, including separate identity and autonomy - *mana* through self-determination and control over one's own destiny.

[SLIDE 7]

With that in mind, there are several articles in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that address the right to language:

Article 8 – addresses the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation.

Article 13 – the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations our languages.

Article 14 – the right to provide education in our own languages, and to have access to education in our own languages.

Article 16 – the right to establish our own media in our own languages.

There are other treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), and statements, such as the Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Rights in Education (1993) that proclaim the right to language.

[SLIDE 8]

Language revitalisation in the 21st Century

Whilst the language revitalisation movement has achieved much, reviving *te reo Māori* is an ongoing challenge that requires constant and immediate attention, so all-pervading is

English in the wider-community. The goal of intergenerational transmission through *te reo Māori* being the dominant language of the home is yet to be realised for the majority of Māori families.

Globalisation has been compared to colonisation in terms of language dominance and subsequent homogenisation. However, digital technology, a hallmark of globalisation can be exploited and developed to aid in language revitalisation efforts.

[SLIDE 9]

Parallels can be made between the state education system and digital technology in terms of Indigenous communities harnessing a common tool of language domination and using it for our own purposes. Immersion Māori language schools have been very successful in reversing language shift. Our work in the Institute and Centre aims to do the same with digital resources.

[SLIDE 10]

Part 2: History of Te Ipukarea (Prof)

Personal Introduction

I grew up in a family that was shaped by a cultural landscape drawn from both a Māori and Pacific heritage. Where I come from we say that it only takes three generations to lose a language. My family was committed to changing this. Consequently, with my family's support and the support of my elders and mentors from both my Māori and Pacific cultures, I have spent my entire adult life being involved in various initiatives for the revitalisation of the Māori language in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This includes:

- Becoming involved in the Te Kōhanga Reo Movement initially as a mother to stop language loss in my family; since my baby graduated from Kōhanga, and over the last 25 years, I have been called upon by The National Kōhanga Reo Trust to help them a range of jobs including accreditation applications, reviews and more recently as an expert to give evidence at the WAI2336 Claim against the Crown based on my research and knowledge of Kōhanga;
- Becoming involved in the lobbying of government for the establishment of Kura Kaupapa Māori and later Wharekura;

- Working with my tribal community to establish a Kura Kaupapa Māori in that community; this Kura still exists today over 25 years later, and all of the teachers are trained and qualified and are from my tribal community;
- Indigenising the university academy through: a) establishing culturally rich spaces to research and teach our language and culture, and celebrate Māori identity; b) creating policies and processes which recognize te mana o te reo, that is the status of the Māori language as an official language since 1987 and the obligation the university has to honour this.

[SLIDE 11]

So it is that Māori have fought for the survival of the Māori language, in response to colonisation for over 170 years, because it is the life-blood of our culture. However, the quest to keep Māori a living language has and continues to be an arduous one; but there is no room for complacency as language decline is still very much a threat.

[SLIDE 12]

Te Ipukarea – The National Māori Language Institute

Te Ipukarea - The National Māori Language Institute was established in 2008 to promote excellence in scholarship,

teaching and research in the Māori language. It is a collaboration of community and tertiary Māori language providers who are motivated by Indigenous values and principles of sharing knowledge and expertise to ensure the Māori language and culture survive.

The Institute addresses the need for a coordinated and determined approach to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Māori language education and of raising the status of the language by taking full advantage of modern technologies.

[SLIDE 13]

Malcom X said ‘The future belongs to those who prepare for it today’. Using technologies to archive te reo Māori is helping to ensure that the language is available for future generations in a medium which is relevant to them. Digital technologies therefore, are tools which complement our ancient and traditional knowledge system in the preservation of our memories, of our past traditions and epistemologies, of our artifacts and our treasures.

Te Ipukarea is a space for undertaking research which recovers our histories, reclaims our lands and resources, restores justice, and preserves our language and traditions while growing a

cohort of qualified dynamic scholars who will be well equipped to continue the work of the Institute and the Centre in the future.

[SLIDE14]

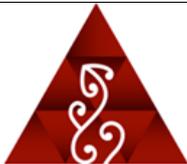
Te Whare o Rongomaurikura – The International Centre for Language Revitalisation

Te Whare o Rongomaurikura, The International Centre for Language Revitalisation was established in December 2010, and is the global arm of Te Ipukarea. It was established in response to international enquiries and requests from language groups interested in the work being developed by Te Ipukarea for the revitalisation of the Māori language, and in particular, the use of technology.

[SLIDE 15]

The Centre is nestled inside the Institute. Thus a synergy exists between the Institute and the Centre.

[SLIDE 16]

 <p>TE IPUKAREA</p>	 <p>International Centre for Language Revitalisation</p>
<p>Creating Digital Resources for Te Reo Māori</p>	<p>Creating Digital Resources for Pacific Languages</p>

Building Capacity – MA Te Reo Māori	Building Capacity – MA Language Revitalisation (MALR)
Publishing in Te Reo Māori	Publishing in the Field of Language Revitalisation
Advocating for Te Reo Māori	Advocating for the Right to Language

Part 3: Insight into the work we do (Rachael)

I will now highlight just a few of the projects and resources to come out of the Institute and the Centre.

[SLIDE 17]

He Pātaka Mātauranga

One of the projects we have undertaken is called He Pātaka Mātauranga. It reflects the significance and validity of Māori knowledge and the importance of the role we place on the repositories of this knowledge. We brought together key repositories of Māori knowledge and language from throughout the country who were interviewed and recorded. Their interviews offer insight into various topics, including customary

lore and tradition, identity, leadership, and thoughts on the place of modern technology in the Māori world. The elders were also asked about their childhood, for instance, how they were named and their favourite games as children. The footage captured provides a rich resource, not only of cultural knowledge, but also of the language spoken by native speakers of Māori. Their interviews are streamed online and are free-to-access.

Sadly, some of the elders who participated in this project have since passed on; however, their stories and knowledge will live on in their communities.

[SLIDE 18]

Tāmata Toiere

Tāmata Toiere is a project dedicated to recording and disseminating *waiata* and *haka* (Māori song and dance). *Waiata* and *haka* have been likened to the archives of the Māori people, preserving important historical and cultural knowledge. However, many of these *waiata* are being lost through time and with them, our knowledge regarding the meaning of the words. This is exaggerated by the fact that *waiata* contain the highest form of language, utilising proverb and figurative speech.

The aim of the Tāmata Toiere website is to provide comprehensive information about *waiata* and *haka* and to

highlight the importance of the knowledge contained within them. The site has the capacity to hold print, images, and media files, both audio and visual. Included in this are: the lyrics, an explanation of the context behind the composition and the reasons it was composed, a biography of the composer, an audio file, a video file, any photos of relevance, and a list of references for further study. The website is free to access and all of the songs have the consent and approval of the composers, or the families of the composers, to be on the site.

[SLIDE 19]

Te Whanake digital resources

The *Te Whanake* series is a set of learning resources to develop Māori language ability from beginner through to advanced levels. The series, created by Professor John Moorfield of Te Ipukarea, evolved out of the need for Māori language resources for teenagers and adults that reflect modern methods of teaching second languages. It contains a comprehensive set of hard copy print Māori language learning resources, including:

- four textbooks with complementary study guides;
- recorded audio and video listening and speaking exercises to accompany each chapter of the four textbooks;
- three teachers' manuals; and

- a Māori dictionary and index to the content of the series for learners and teachers.

[SLIDE 20]

The most recent development for the *Te Whanake* series is the incorporation of online resources.

The online digital resources include:

- animations with self-directed learning materials
- language exercises as podcasts and streamed videos
- streamed Māori language television programmes
- and, forums for learners to exchange ideas

These websites are all bilingual and free to access. Recently the entire suite of *Te Whanake* resources, both print and digital, has been released as a single integrated app for use on iPads and tablets.

[SLIDE 21]

Te Aka and the Dictionary of Cook Islands Languages Online

Hard copy print and online dictionaries are important tools for both second language learners and fluent speakers of a language. Dictionaries can be especially useful when learners do not have ready access to fluent speakers to clarify meanings and other

information – a situation common for learners of endangered languages.

Since December 2006, the Te Aka hard copy dictionary has an enhanced online version, including photographs and sounds, which is free to access. The online version enables new entries, meanings, photographs and sound recordings to be added at any time using the administration website. Once the new entry and information has been saved it is instantly available to the world on the public website.

This is the most comprehensive and popular online Māori language dictionary. For the year ending 23 October 2013, the website had received: 2,011,789 visits from 213 countries (typically 8000 visits per day mid-week), peaking at 13,190 visits on one day. From those visitors the average number of dictionary searches per day was 35,000 and the average visit duration was 5 minutes 38 seconds (Te Aka Google Analytics). There were 847,816 unique visitors. This was a 19% increase in visits over the previous year. The mobility and convenience of an online dictionary is one of its major advantages. These figures show the potential for online dictionaries to increase the accessibility of language resources. Te Aka is now also available as an app. for iPhones and Android phones.

As there is no restriction on size for online dictionaries, they can contain much more information than a hard copy print dictionary. For example, encyclopaedic information, sample sentences, illustrations, audio and video clips, image files such as diagrams, maps and illustrations can also be included which can aid visual learners if used judiciously. Online dictionaries have the potential to contain all the information a user may need as it can be constantly upgraded, and be made public at any stage.

[SLIDE 22]

The online Dictionary of Cook Islands Languages went public very early, despite only a limited number of entries at first. The project started with the language of Mangaia and the dictionary was launched in 2012 on the island of Mangaia with all of the community present. We are currently in the process of adding the languages of Rarotonga, Atiu, Aitutaki, Mitiaro, Mauke and Manihiki. This process has involved a team of Indigenous researchers and postgraduate students working with the nominated language experts from each island. The first phase was completed last year, when we visited Rarotonga. During the two week-long stays we had the privilege of meeting the group of language experts, most of whom are elders, and beginning work on compiling their words. We have just recently

completed another trip and we have yet another planned for later in the year. There is still much work to be done.

[SLIDE 23]

REO Online

The REO Online Language Learning System is an online tool to help develop fluency in endangered, minority and Indigenous languages. It is a digital repository of language material and cultural knowledge, a system of learning activities and a social network for language learners, teachers, students and advocates.

[SLIDE 24]

REO is the Māori term for language and voice. The term REO was chosen for its simplicity and what it conveys in terms of providing a ‘voice’ for endangered languages.

The system is based on the idea that language learning is a social and community based activity. REO is being designed with a wide range of learners in mind; from the casual, self-directed learner to students enrolled in a formal learning situation

Additionally, REO supports informal and formal involvement from fluent speakers in the wider community and provides a younger generation with examples of quality language and

cultural knowledge that they will require to function as Indigenous citizens in the modern age. The core of REO is the language-learning curriculum. This curriculum is delivered through a range of features that are designed to enrich the learning experience. Key features of REO include:

- A sophisticated social networking system that affords a wide range of social interactions around language learning and creates an online community to extend and reinforce the physical one;
- A dynamic dictionary tool that enables quick access to definitions, usage and other information during the learning process;
- A progress and evaluation system that automatically tracks and evaluates a learners progress through the curriculum; and
- The ability to chat with other learners and language experts during the learning experience.

A beta version of the system is currently being piloted with the Hawaiian language in association with the University of Hawai‘i West O‘ahu. Feedback from the group will inform the improvement and refinement of the system.

REO Online is a priority for the Centre in 2014. In the last year we have had some great progression with the system. In 2013 the language group from O’ahu, Hawai’i was successful in acquiring some funding to populate their system with content. The Hawaiian contingent has also be working hard alongside our development teams, Divergent and VO2 Wed Design, to streamline REO Online’s functions and user interface.

Another positive update is that we are also close to a completed *Te Whanake* version of the system. The hope is that REO Online: *Te Whanake* will be the flagship of the project, where it will be able to showcase the full potential of the REO Online Language Learning System when it has the benefit of having a robust collection of language learning content.

[SLIDE 25]

Part 4: Building capacity – educating and up skilling current and future language revitalisation strategists (Prof)

Both the Institute and the Centre offer Masters Degrees that are offered through video - conferencing as is the case with the MA in Te Reo Māori and, online as is the case with the MA in Language Revitalisation. Our motivation for offering the two Masters programmes in these ways is based on the following:

- 1.0 To expect people involved in the revitalisation of their languages within their communities to move away from their homes to pursue a higher degree is unrealistic;
- 2.0 To take these people away from their communities invariably leaves huge gaping holes in the communities they serve and often the communities do not recover;
- 3.0 Offering these programmes online or through video-conferencing enables these students to remain in their communities AND gain a higher qualification at the same time. They can also share ideas and experiences with other people involved in language revitalisation and create a strong network of scholars from other countries to communicate with;
- 4.0 The majority of the assignments in these programmes are designed to enable the students to conduct research within and for their communities such as writing a draft language plan, developing digital language resources, writing research proposals, learning to apply Indigenous research methodologies, etc.
- 5.0 Offering these programmes helps us to create a cohort of language revitalisation strategists who are equipped with a blend of academic and experiential knowledge to then train others in their own communities.

[SLIDE 26]

The Master of Arts in Language Revitalisation Online is a combination of 120 points of papers (compulsory and electives) and a 120 point thesis or exegesis (an exegesis consists of a written narrative and artefact such as a documentary, art piece etc).

The Ecology of Language Revitalisation

A critical examination of the sociolinguistic language ecology in which endangered languages or languages in need of revitalisation are located

Educational Agency in Language Revitalisation

A critical reflection on the approaches to language acquisition policy and on the critical home-school nexus in language revitalisation, and in particular, the potentially transformative curricular content of teacher education.

Research Methods in Language Revitalisation

The methodologies for researching indigenous communities and indigenous languages are examined and critiqued. Students are guided through fieldwork enquiry and methods, narrative inquiry, quantitative and qualitative research processes, ethical considerations, researcher's identity in selection process, cross-

sectional design, longitudinal design, case studies, group studies, action research and social network analysis.

ELECTIVE PAPERS

Language Endangerment

Evaluating and examining revitalisation efforts, utilising case studies of language endangerment.

Language Planning

An analysis of the macro and micro issues through an examination of the role of ideology, democratization, human rights, language economics in status and acquisition planning, with a particular focus on their own speech community.

Language Policy

Students will reflect critically on the interactions between agency (including subaltern agency), ecology, legislation and language policy.

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The MA in Language Revitalisation is one significant way we can help communities by building the human resource, and by doing this we are in fact educating future language revitalisation strategists who in turn can then educate their own respective communities.

Part 5: Conclusion (Prof continued)

[SLIDE 28]

Ngugi wa Thiong'o aptly stated,

Language is a communication system and carrier of culture by virtue of being simultaneously the means and carrier of memory...Language is the clarifying medium of memory or rather the two are intertwined. To starve or kill a language is to starve and kill a people's memory bank. (2009, p.20)

[SLIDE 29]

The Māori performing arts is one vehicle for the expression of language. I am pleased to introduce Poutama – Māori Performing Arts Group who will perform a few items that reflect the significance of the Māori language and culture in a contemporary context.

POUTAMA PERFORMS

It is fitting that we conclude with this whakataukī coined by Professor Tīmoti Kāretu:

Tōku reo, tōku ohohoho ~ Tōku reo, tōku mapihi maurea ~ Tōku reo, tōku whakakai marihi, meaning, My language, my token of

high esteem ~ My language, my object of affection ~ My language, my precious jewel.

Tēnā koutou katoa.

[SLIDE 30]

Q & A