Tao e Umu ke moho

Receptive Bilingualism of *Vagahau Niue*: A Case Study of Lived Experiences from First-generation New Zealand-born Niue Living on A Distant Shore, Aotearoa.

By

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TAU MANATU HAFAGI

Abstract

Receptive bilingualism, a relatively modern concept of the overarching topic of bilingualism, is defined by scholars as having a comprehension of a language but the production of it not (Romaine, 1989; Fishman, 1991; Rehbein et al., 2012; Radley et al., 2021). The case study of the Niue community, and more importantly, first-generation New Zealand-born Niue, helps to formulate and raise awareness of the significance of receptive bilingualism as a changing factor that impacts the revitalisation of minority and migrant languages today.

Language revitalisation and maintenance contribute significantly to *vagahau Niue* (Niue language) in its ability to communicate and understand the language that encourages the deepening of the *vahaloto* (space, between time or space) (Vilitama, 2015) through exploration and celebration, and where cultural identity can be connected. As language maintenance and revitalisation are associated with the holistic well-being of native speakers and the communities in which they are immersed, protecting the continued vitality of *vagahau Niue* is important for the renewal and regeneration of cultural practices, traditions and behaviors. As this study is the first for receptive bilingualism of *vagahau Niue*, it signifies a critical point in time for how *vagahau Niue* is rapidly declining in a changing New Zealand society.

This study, located in an Indigenous (Niue) framework, combines a Niue-centred methodology with a Pacific paradigm through the Niue concept of *tutala* (to converse) – in which 15 voices of lived experiences from the views of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa are seen as a cultural marker of identity and as part of the revitalisation process where maintaining *vagahau Niue* is critical for future use and future generations. The Niue model of the *'Umu'* (earth oven) is used as an Indigenous symbolic reference for the research process and with the *tutala* interviews, as it lies at the heart of communal life and for its capacity to exercise a representative metaphorical role. The *'Umu'* as a symbol is described by Vilitama (2015) as "being laden with rich themes" (p.212) that will help to analyse the data of the research through thematic analysis of both quantitative and qualitative datasets.

Research findings revealed that receptive bilingualism impacted the participants through Fishman's (1972) domains of language use, in which the findings established that the participants viewed their family structure as the fundamental domain of where their understanding of *vagahau Niue* came from and signified the role of their grandparents and

parents as being critical to their upbringing and knowledge with the language. In turn, the participants determined that other domains of language use assisted with their receptive skills, such as the church, classroom setting, and the influence of digital technology.

The overall empirical findings for this research contribute to the limited scope of literature about receptive bilingualism and identify new tensions in receptive bilingualism among minority languages that are yet to be discussed in the literature, as well as how language maintenance pertains to the identities of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue, are impacted by receptive bilingualism – a way forward for *vagahau Niue* language revitalisation for the generations of Niue in the present, and subsequent Niue generations in the future.

FAKAMATAPATUAGA

Dedication

Lakepa. Niue. Okalana. Niu Silani.

Keno mo Fine Tukimata – Haaku a tau matua fakahelehele, tau faiaoga fakamua, ne fenoga a mua ke he motu ne toka ai e huhu mo e meli. Nakai iloa e mua e tau amaamanakiaga ma e tau momoui he ha mua a tau fanau.

Figure 1

Researcher's Parents

FAKAAUE LAHI MAHAKI

Ke he ha mua a tau momohe miti, tau manako ke eketaha mo e fakatolomaki ki mua e tau fakaakoaga. Hanei, kua liuaki atu e au e tau monuina ha mua, tau fakaakoaga, tau hātaki, mo e tau kupu fakamalolō, kua oti tuai e fenoga nei, kua kautu ai, kua hoko ke he tapunu, kua oti tuai e poitufi he tau fakaakoaga. Tau kupu haau ma mum *'ko e tau monuina ha nā he tau aloalo lima ha mutolu'* ko e kamataaga he tau kupu nei ke he haaku a moui.

Mai he tapunu he tau mouga, ke he kelekele he ata he mate, ke he tau puhala ne fakatau ō a tautolu, ke he moana puke lahi, motu ke he tafiti, motu ke he taha motu, matapoko ke he taha matapoko, tau pou malolo ke he tau pou ka fakatū – kua lukuluku mai e mua au mai he vahā. Fakaaue, fakaaue lahi mahaki.

Ke he lalolagi ko e tau mamatua a mua, ka e kia au ko mua ko e lalolagi. Mokoina e au a mua. Fakaaue Lahi xx

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Gracious and heavenly father, I give you thanks and praise for your love and grace over my life and through my education. Thank you for your guidance and promise to lead me safely through this PhD journey from beginning to end - the pinnacle of academic studies to glorify your kingdom. You, Lord, deserve all the praise for your strength, for allowing me to have faith, to lean on you during times of struggle and adversity, and for inspiring and helping me to bring this PhD to fruition. May you continue to surround us with your love from now until forever, Amen.

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grant you good health as you continue to teach and inspire the *Rangatahi* here in Aotearoa and all Pacific students that you both cross paths with.

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My pillars of strength – Haaku a tau tupuna fakahelehele: *Fakaaue ke he haaku a tau mamatua tupuna kua foa ai e hala mai he kamata-aga; Nena Moka, Nena Sifa, Olu Mene, Grandpa Hei, Aunty Nogi, Uncle Iata, Nena Isi, Papa Motu, and Nena Peta. Fakaaue ke he ha mutolu a tau akonaki ke fakamau e vagahau Niue, ke kumikumi fakamua e kautu he Atua to lafilafi mai e tau mena he lalolagi. To nakai nimo, to nakai galo a mutolu mai he haaku a moui. Mohe milino a mutolu ke he kautu he Atua.*

My family and village: *Fakaaue lahi Mahaki ke he haaku a magafaoa laulahi, kae mua atu ke he haaku a tugaane ko Epi Hakeagatoa, mo e haau a tau iloilo hagaao ia ke he matutakiaga he ha tautolu a tau magafaoa. Oue tulou! Pihia ke he haaku a magafaoa ki loto he kaina. Haaku a tau mamatua Keno mo Fine Tukimata, mo e haaku a tau lafu – Andrea, Pita, Jeff mo Betty, ka e mua atu ke he haaku a tau fanau he kaina Maua mo Rauine**.** Thank you for all the support and prayers. No words will ever be enough to show my gratitude for all you sacrificed so that I could study and give back to our parents. I appreciate your patience and for allowing me this time to complete my PhD journey; I am truly grateful and blessed to have a loving and supportive family that has been alongside this journey from the beginning. *Ko e Atua ni ke foaki fakagalo atu kia mutolu e tau monuina ma e tau momoui ha mutolu.* Maua and Rauine, I hope that this pursuit of education will inspire you both to reach for the stars and beyond and to have no limits on your dreams and goals; I love you both xx. To my family, I love you all, *mokoina e au a mutolu.* This thesis is our thesis. This achievement is ours; this win is our win.

Ke fakaoti, ko e haaku a liogi ma e haaku a atuhau mo e atuhau foou, kia eketaha mo e fakamalolō ke tolomaki ki mua mo e tau gahua, tau fakaakoaga mo e tau mena ne tutupu ke he vahā. Kia takiofa mo e fakaaoga e Vagahau Niue, ko e taoga ne foaki mai e Atua ma tautolu. Kia tupuolaola moui e Vagahau Niue ki loto ia tautolu.

I pray for my generation and the next to pursue excellence in their work, education, or other fields. May we treasure the Niue language that God has given to us as a gift in which the Niue language can continue to thrive within us.

Monu! Monu! Monu Tagaloa!
Iehova he vahā loto,
Kitu Kitu Eaaa

TAU FAKAMATAPATU TALA

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FAKAMOOLIAGA HE KUMIKUMIAGA

Attestation

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Nogiata Tukimata

19 July 2024

TAU PUHALA TOHI NE FAKAAOGA KI LOTO HE KUMIKUMIAGA

Preface

Writing conventions used in this thesis

The use of the Research Model: Umu Model

The researcher intentionally used the *Umu* Model to name the different chapters, weaving the Niue voice throughout the thesis. This was done to prioritise the Niue view in academic research in the hopes of decolonising colonised methodologies.

Writing vagahau Niue

I am of Niue descent. Niue terms are used throughout this thesis. However, these terms represent cultural concepts and practices found throughout Polynesia and, in some cases, the wider Pacific region. The use of *vagahau Niue* honours the language and positions *Tau Aga Fakamotu ha Niue* (Niue cultural traditions) epistemological frameworks as the guided ways of knowing in the thesis.

The translation of Niue words and phrases in this thesis are translated for meaning depending on the context. Niue words incorporated into the text are written in *italics* with an accompanying English translation in brackets; subsequent mentions of Niue words are included without translations. The glossary section provides a list of translations for all Niue words used in the thesis.

Niue people/Niue – While the use of the term "Niuean" about the people of Niue was commonly used during the *tutala* with the participants, Pasisi (2019) shares that the 'term' is a "bastardisation of the language and the correct term to use is simple 'Niue' or 'Niue people' or 'Tagata Niue'" (p.10). For this reason, instances where 'Niuean' is used are only identified when directly quoting from an external source or reference.

Capitalisation

Language names are always formed with *vagahau* ('language [of]') and the name of the country where the language originates (generally speaking). *Vagahau* is only capitalised if it is at the beginning of a sentence, while the country name is always capitalised. The writing convention of *vagahau Niue* throughout this thesis will follow this rule.

Use of kupu Māori and additional words of the Pacific

Within the thesis, *kupu Māori* (Māori words) and additional words of the Pacific have been used to define critical concepts unfamiliar in a Niue worldview. For this reason, these words have been incorporated into the text accordingly in *italics* with an accompanying English translation in brackets. Subsequent mentions are then included without translations.

The glossary section provides translations of all non-Niue words used in the thesis. Definitions for *kupu Māori* have been sourced from the *Te Aka Māori Dictionary* (https://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/) and Pacific scholars (Vaioleti, 2006; Naufahu, 2018) for all additional Pacific terms and concepts.

Western, Indigenous, and Pasifika

Throughout this thesis, I have adopted the word 'Western' as a term referring to peoples and cultures of European descent and societies heavily influenced by and connected to Europe. The word Indigenous has been spelt with the capital 'I', except where it is part of a direct quote. Many Indigenous authors use this convention to give it status, "as it corresponds with the term 'Western' (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2010, p.5).The umbrella term "Pasifika" has been used by the New Zealand government to describe the ethnic makeup of people migrating from the Pacific Islands to Aotearoa/New Zealand. The origination of the word Pasifika is from the Niue language (Chu, 2016). Within this thesis the term 'Pasifika' is used interchangeably with 'Pacific' where Bedford and Didham (2001) state that the term 'Pacific' has been commonly and widely utilised at all levels of society including educators, policy makers, community workers, the media, and institutions.

Glossary

A glossary is provided with the Niue, Māori and additional Pacific words found in this thesis. The glossary will provide English translations of all terms used in the thesis. In addition, there is a list of abbreviations for the names of organisations or specific roles used throughout the thesis. The first time the word is used, an abbreviation of the word is provided in brackets. This is followed by Niue proverbs used in the thesis to ground critical experiences.

***Ko e tau Fakatai mo e tau Talahauaga* (Niue Proverbs and Expressions)**

As this research is grounded in *vagahau Niue,* Niue proverbs have been used as examples of references that have been pivotal to my journey with *vagahau Niue*. It is by no mistake that these proverbs resonate as life mottos that have grounded me throughout my childhood, and upon reflection, these proverbs signify personal testaments which I hope can resonate with readers and their journeys with the Niue language. I have translated the proverbs used in the

narrative -see below- but I have also added a translation of these proverbs as footnotes to ensure non-Niue readers can understand the meaning in which they are used.

Translations of proverbs

Ālo e fohe ki tua, ke holo e vaka ki mua
Thrust the paddle backwards to propel the canoe forward

Fuluhi ki tua, ke kitia mitaki a mua
Turn backwards to see the front well

Niue Expressions

Kia lalā mouga e Vagahau Niue ti hahamo ke he tapunu
Put the Niue language on your shoulders and, with all your might and power, carry it to the highest peak

Kia loga ai hau a tau aho ke he motu kua foaki ai he Iki ko e haau a Atua kia koe
May you have countless days in the land that the Lord your God has given you

Kia omaoma a koe ke he haau a matua taane mo e haau a matua fifine
Respect your father and mother

Kuku ke mau e vagahau haau
Hold on tight to your language

Fakataufata e mafiti he gutu mo e gahua he tau lima
When you speak with authority, make sure you follow through with actions.

Ethics approval and consent
This research received approval from the AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on 11 May 2020 for three years until 1 September 2023. However, due to the implications of COVID-19, this period was extended until 1 May 2024 with Ethics Approval Number 20/120. All research was conducted in accordance with the approval rules, regulations, and guidelines. The recordings and transcripts have been stored in an archive within Te Ipukarea. The consent forms from each participant are kept with the researcher and stored away safely.

Fakamahao ke he mataulu he kumikumiaga (Overview of the thesis)

Fakatokatoka he tau Veveheaga

In this thesis, each *veveheaga* (chapter) is guided by part of the process of preparing and making an *Umu* (Vilitama, 2015). Within the introductory sentences of each chapter is a definition of the headings and subheadings and an explanation of the contents of that chapter. An overview is provided below for each *veveheaga*:

- **Chapters 1 and 2: Pulega mo e fakatokatoka – Fakatokatokaaga / Kumikumiaga he fekau**
- **Chapters 3, 4 and 5: Tolo ke faiumu – Talaga e fekau mo e fakatokatoka / Tauaki mo e uufi e umu / Tao e umu ke moho**
- **Chapters 6, 7 and 8: Fetuiaga – Fuke e umu / Ko e fakamaopoopoaga he fekau/ Taonaga**

Veveheaga Taha: Pulega mo e fakatokatoka – Fakatokatokaaga

This chapter provides an insight into the author's journey with *vagahau Niue* and how the research is located and understood within a Niue worldview as a stem of acknowledging and encouraging Pacific worldviews within academic writing. As language is linked to culture, this research encompasses Niue values, principles, structures, attitudes and practices towards *vagahau Niue.* For this reason, the Indigenous framework of The *Umu Model* integrates a Niue worldview as an essential element to Pacific communities.

Veveheaga Ua: Pulega mo e fakatokatoka – Kumikumiaga he fekau

Chapter Two reviews the literature in three sections, specifically regarding language shift and maintenance, focusing on bilingualism and receptive bilingualism. The use of Joshua Fishman's (1970) Graded International Disruption Scale (GIDS) helps to determine and evaluate the position of endangered languages, particularly *vagahau Niue,* which currently sits as definitely endangered language (Moseley, 2010). The second section examines the literature on bilingualism on a global scale, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of bilingualism and the attitudes towards bilingualism. This will be followed by a critical focus on where *vagahau Niue* sits concerning receptive bilingualism. The third section will present research on *vagahau Niue* and the value of the Niue language as the focus of this study.

Veveheaga Tolu: Tolo ke faiumu – Talaga e fekau mo e fakatokatoka

Chapter Three presents the research design and describes the research using a mixed-methods approach. This chapter also explores the importance of Pacific research through a Pacific paradigm and Niue-centred methodological framework that is highlighted alongside Western theories to clarify the key features of a Niue approach to research.

Veveheaga Fā: Tolo ke faiumu – Tauaki mo e ufi e umu

Chapter Four presents the research methodology and outlines the Indigenous (Niue) approach taken in this research. The research methods, which include the design and planning of the study, are implemented, and a discussion of sampling, data collection, and data analysis will follow—furthermore, the insight into the *Umu Model* grounds this research accordingly.

Veveheaga Lima: Tolo ke faiumu – Tao e umu ke moho

Chapter Five presents the findings of this research, responding to the research questions posed in Chapter One through a description of the receptive bilingualism experiences of 15 New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa. Findings are presented thematically to describe participants' upbringing, the generational influence of understanding *vagahau Niue,* the importance of receptive bilingualism, and how language attitudes have influenced language acquisition and use for many participants. This is then followed by research question two, which looks at the identities of New Zealand-born Niue and how this impacts their relationship with *vagahau Niue* because of receptive bilingualism. Findings also draw on the implications this has on maintaining the language moving forward.

Veveheaga Ono: Fetuiaga – Fuke e Umu

Chapter Six draws on the key findings from Chapter Five through a critical discussion about the extent to which New Zealand-born Niue can revitalise the language through their receptive bilingualism skills. The difference in attitudes was a key finding rooted in different underlying ideals, ideas, and social and cultural goals of participants, parents, and grandparents. Interestingly, most of the participants in the study valued *vagahau Niue* as an identity factor. Moreover, the interactions in domains outside the family, such as the church, the classroom and digital technology, provide further prospects for learning the language. However, these are effective without support from fluent speakers of the Niue language to encourage receptive speakers to use the language. This critical discussion is supported by the insights from the participants, as well as relevant literature.

Veveheaga Fitu: Fetuiaga – Ko e fakamaopoopoaga he fekau

Chapter Seven is split into two parts. The conclusion outlines the aims of this research and the significant findings that have influenced receptive bilingualism. The theoretical contributions identified in this research are discussed alongside the methodological implications and the future of *vagahau Niue* for future generations.

Veveheaga Valu*: *Fetuiaga – Taonaga

Chapter Eight presents the research's conclusion. It concludes with future recommendations, limitations of this research, and suggestions for future research, with the researcher's reflections urging consideration of receptive bilingualism as a stepping stone for language revitalisation efforts.

VEVEHEAGA TAHA

Pulega mo e fakatokatoka – Fakatokatokaaga

An Introduction

Kia lalā mouga e Vagahau Niue ti hahamo ke he tapunu[1]

1.1 Introduction

This research has been undertaken within Te Ipukarea Research Institute within the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies at AUT. Te Ipukarea's research focus is represented by four *pou* (pillars), and three of these *pou* are significant to my background and, more significantly, to this thesis. These are Te Whare o Rongomaurikura, Centre for Language Revitalisation, in which my background is grounded within the field of Indigenous language endangerment, language revitalisation and language documentation; Taonga Tuku Iho, which represents traditional knowledge, including oral traditions and arts; and Te Moana Nui - the pou that situates research inside Epeli Hau'ofa's 'Sea of Islands', with an emphasis on comparative studies, well-being and policy. The *whakataukī* (proverb) that guides the strategic approach is *'whakatepea te kō',* (to work in unison so nothing is missed) which includes the research and community-based agenda woven together within this space. Te Ipukarea is more than a learning space; it is a community where Indigenous worldviews and epistemologies are cultivated within the academy. In this case, I want my research to evolve within a community of Indigenous knowledge and be able to discover new means of understanding. *Pulega mo e fakatokatoka* means to plan and prepare. This chapter provides an insight into the author's journey with *vagahau Niue* and how the research is located and understood within a Niue worldview as a platform for acknowledging and encouraging Pacific worldviews within academic writing.

1.2 A Culturally Located Thesis

Grounding this research in a Niue worldview is imperative, as language is intricately connected to culture and identity. The advancement and progression of Pasifika research methodologies in the context of Pasifika research has gained momentum, contributing to the decolonisation of Western research methodologies that have often dominated and been prevalent in Pasifika contexts until recently. Pasifika researchers in Pacific contexts (Fa'avae et al., 2016) have encouraged using research methods that reflect participants' lived experiences and realities instead of reproducing what is typically viewed as Western research methods.

[1] "Put the Niue language on your shoulders and, with all your might and power, carry it to the highest peak"

For this reason, Indigenous models by Pacific scholars have been developed as a means of safeguarding Indigenous research that is located within a Pacific cultural lens. These include the metaphor of the Kakala (Helu-Thaman, 1993), the Fonofale Model of Health (Pulotu-Endemann,1995), the Tivaevae Model (Maua-Hodges, 2001), the Pacific cultural competency framework (Koloto, 2003; Health Research Council, 2005), and the documentation of the traditional Fa'afaletui (Tamasese et al., 2005). The first model or framework for Niue Indigenous models was developed by Nelisi (2004), who introduced the *Vaka* Model through education in 2004. This model propelled and encouraged the development of Niue models and methodologies by Niue scholars in the coming years that would inform our ways of research, which include the *Fakatupuolamoui* Framework (Tavelia et al., 2012); *Tutala* approach (Vilitama, 2015); *Umu* Model (Vilitama, 2015); *Vahāloto* concept (Vilitama, 2015); *Lili* Model (Tukimata, 2017); *Hiapo methodology* (Pasisi, 2020); *Mata Lili* Model (Togiatama-Otto, 2019; *Togo Chasm* concept (Tiakia, 2022); *Matalili* Health Framework (Lau et al., 2023); and the *Hihi* Framework (Matenga-Ikihele, 2023).

As this research focuses on *vagahau Niue*, the researcher has adopted a Niue model from a Niue cultural lens primarily used in Vilitama's (2015) doctoral thesis titled *On Becoming a liquid church: Singing the Niuean 'Fetuiaga Kerisiano' on a Distant Shore'*, called the *Umu* (earth oven) Model framework. The *umu* serves as an essential cultural marker in the lives of *tau Tagata Niue*, who lives on the island and here in Aotearoa*,* New Zealand. Therefore, the *Umu* Model will anchor this research as a way of weaving together the different chapters that align with the processes of the *umu*, as well as be instrumental in the analysis of the data. As this thesis is titled, *'Tao e umu ke moho,'* the concept of this metaphor can be defined as making sure the *umu* is well-cooked as an analogy to "bring a task to its proper end" (Ministry for Pacific People's 2022, para. 10). Vilitama (2015) also shares this proverb, implying 'finish what you have started' or "do not start what you cannot finish lest shame is brought upon the family" (p.230). The significance of this title is the beginning and ending of the researcher's journey through tertiary study. As the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is the pinnacle of academic research, this proverb provides a deep and meaningful significance to the researcher, that not only is the *umu* a significant marker of cultural resemblance, but is also a representation for future research, and more so for future Niue scholars.

Furthermore, the *Umu* Model will be used as an Indigenous symbolic reference for '*talanoa*' (gossip, informal talk) or, in the Niue perspective, '*tutala*' (to conversate, talk freely), as it lies at the heart of communal life and for its ability to represent a metaphorical role in the process of the *umu.* The *umu* is described by Vilitama (2015) as a symbol that is "laden with rich

themes" (p.212) that will help to unpack and analyse the data of the research through thematic analysis of both quantitative and qualitative datasets. The Niue language is listed in Moseley's (2010) The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Atlas of the World's Languages as an endangered language, where this research is highly significant because of its contribution to understanding the plight of *vagahau Niue* in Aotearoa New Zealand, and may provide critical solutions in addressing the decline in the number of speakers but also highlight a starting point for receptive speakers of the Niue language through a range of interventions.

1.3 Positioning the Researcher

1.3.1 I am a daughter of Niue and Aotearoa

I was born in Auckland, New Zealand, to migrant parents from the island of Niue. I am also the youngest of one brother and two sisters, coming from two vastly different but similar families to my parents. My mother comes from a family of fourteen children, one of seven on her mother's side and one of seven on her father's side. By comparison, my father is the youngest of six brothers, one of five from his maternal side and one of two from his paternal side, and, at the time of writing, I can count over 60 first cousins between my parents' families (Figures 2 and 3). My mother, the second eldest on her mother's side and the eldest of her father's children, had migrated in the early 1970s by air to New Zealand intending to complete her high school education; instead, she arrived in New Zealand and went to work to provide for her family that was residing at 32 Collingwood Street Ponsonby Auckland at that time (Figure 4). My father, in comparison, migrated to New Zealand in the late 1960s and completed his intermediate schooling and the first two years of his high school education in Auckland. Unable to complete his senior years at high school, he left during his fifth form year and went on to work different factory jobs where chasing the New Zealand 'dream' of making money for the family featured prominently amongst many Pacific migrants. These are two different experiences of the New Zealand way of life; however, these experiences did not come at the cost of either parent losing their language, culture and identity.

Figure 2

Researcher' s paternal extended family

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2024

Figure 3

Researcher's maternal extended family

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2022

Figure 4

Researcher's Mother's family home in Ponsonby, Auckland

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2023

My first language is English, and my second language is *vagahau Niue.* I was a product of receptive bilingualism growing up, and as a first-generation New Zealand-born Niue, my language learning journey has not come without its challenges and obstacles. From a young age, my parents were adamant that they would speak only *vagahau Niue* to my siblings and me, whether we understood and responded or not. My eldest sister was fortunate to have been raised with my paternal grandmother (Figure 5), where *vagahau Niue* became her first language. However, even though she was afforded this blessing, she too had difficulty navigating between English and *vagahau Niue*, especially when she began primary school.

Figure 5

Researcher's late paternal grandmother

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2022

This did not stop my parents from speaking to us in the language though, their decision to nurture us in *vagahau Niue* and *tau aga fakamotu* (culture of Niue) was based on the Niue proverb *'kia lalā mouga e vagahau Niue ti hahamo ke he tapunu'*[2] Through the nurturing of these words, stories and songs, my siblings and I are blessed to know our history, where we have come from, the many hands that have paved the path for our existence, and our place in our Niue communities domestically and on the island. This was made slightly easier because we were always surrounded by our maternal great-grandparents and grandparents (Figures 6 and 7) growing up and into our formative years. They were our strong pillars of language who never once defaulted to English because of our limitations in *vagahau Niue.* My great-grandmother's words of wisdom were always a reflection from a spiritual lesson where she would say, *'kia omaoma a koe ke he haau a matua taane mo e haau a matua fifine'*[3], '*kia loga ai hau a tau aho ke he motu kua foaki ai he Iki ko e haau a Atua kia koe'*[4] and *'manatu ke fakavē tumau e tau momoui ha mutolu ke he Atua'*[5]*.* These lessons tied us to the language, but as children, their meaning was always lost on us. However, reflecting on these words now while writing this thesis, it is apparent that lessons of respect, not taking for granted the time we have here on earth, being grateful for the many blessings that we are fortunate to have from God, have been blessings in disguise when we first heard these prophetic words as children. These were lessons that have grounded my cousins and me in our culture and who we are as New Zealand-born Niue living here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Figure 6

Researcher's maternal grandmother and great-grandmother

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2021

[2] Put the Niue language on your shoulders and with all your might and power carry it to the highest peak'
[3] 'Respect your father and mother'
[4] 'May you have countless days in the land that the Lord your God has given you'
[5] 'Always remember to make God the foundation of your lives'

Figure 7

Researcher with her late maternal grandmother

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2021

Our family homestead in Mangere (Figure 8) was the heart and soul of *vagahau Niue,* and we were constantly surrounded by our *magafaoa laulahi (*extended family) during holidays, family gatherings, family visits, and Sunday lunches. *Vagahau Niue* was always spoken, and as children, we were immersed in an environment where our receptive bilingual skills were being nurtured and brought to the fore.

Figure 8

Researcher's previous family homestead located in Mangere

Note. Researcher's family's former homestead. Ray White Manukau, 2015

In my *magafaoa* (family) and language learning journey, I have seen language shifts happening around me. Fewer speakers of *vagahau Niue* amongst first, second, and third generations of New Zealand-born Niue are unable to connect to their ancestral language. I think about when I was born, *hehele haaku a pito ke he motu nei ko Aotearoa*[6] Moreover, my *fonua* (land, womb, placenta) was buried at our family homestead, with the belief that I would reconnect myself to the land, or as believed through our *tupuna* (ancestors) that the *fonua* is put back in the earth where man had originated from. As described by Vilitama (2015) "*fonua* in its etymology refers to both land and placenta" (p.239). He alludes to the sacred ritual of returning the *fonua* to its natural *kaina* (home) from the perspective of Tahitian theologian Celine Hoiore, which Vilitama (2015) explains as;

> …*fonua* is a place of life-formation and sustenance. By burying the placenta and the *pito* (umbilical cord) in the family land, symbolises the fact that the person was born and rooted in that particular place. The practice recognises that wherever that person goes, s/he will always have a perdurable connection to the *fonua.* That inherent link will have the *pito* calling back its owner. (p.239)

However, there is a second umbilical cord in which my *matua tupuna fifine*[7] (great-grandmother) shared *ko e agaaga ne nofo i loto ia koe*[8] which she believed was the *vagahau Niue* – something that spiritually connects my umbilical cord back to the *fonua* – a place to stand, through kinship, through my *matohiaga* (identity) and my birthright. On my recent trip to Niue, I sat on the steps of the home of my maternal great-grandparents (Figure 9), and I reminisced on what life would have been like for my mother and her siblings growing up in that home. As I sat, I remembered a common Niue proverb that says *'fuluhi ki tua, ke kitia mitaki a mua'*[9] which implies 'look to the past to see the future'. My language journey has always been a part of my past, present and future, regardless of where I am, I can feel my *agaaga* (spirit) being one with the land, and where I feel the hopes of those before me, illuminating the path forward and affirming the tender whispers of language reclamation; *'kuku ke mau e vagahau haau'*[10]. On reflection, I have come to realise that my language ties me to a place of

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6 The reference to this signifies the cutting of the researcher's umbilical cord in this land of Aotearoa. The cutting of the umbilical cord symbolises new life and creates a connection between Niue and New Zealand for the researcher and her journey within two worlds.

7 parent in the Niuean kinship system, "matua" is frequently used without specifying 'male' (father) or 'female' (mother); the equivalent of the common English plural 'parents' is expressed as "tau matua" or "tau mamatua"; "matua" also refers to relatives known in English as uncle and aunt and may extend to all relatives of the same generation; "matua" can also be used as a term of endearment for anyone of the same or older generation. Niue Language Dictionary. (2024). *Tohi Vagahau Niue: Matua.* https://www.dictionaryniue.com/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&keywords=matua&dictionary=Action

8 The spiritual umbilical cord that lives inside of you, an expression shared by the researchers' great-grandmother in how to navigate *Vagahau Niue* in the different diaspora, through being spiritually connected by the umbilical cord and how this is placed back into the land.

9 'Turn backwards to see the front well', a common proverb of looking to the past to ensure you see the future.

10 'hold on tight to your language'

belonging, regardless of distance and location. *vagahau Niue* is my birthright and whether I am in Niue or here in Aotearoa New Zealand, my language allows me to be in a place where I can stand proud and be who I am: my authentic self. My *matohiaga* ties me to *Lakepa Maleloa, Makefu and Alofi–Niue*. However, my *fonua* ties me to Tāmaki Makau Rau (Auckland), Aotearoa New Zealand, with which I proudly opened this chapter.

Figure 9

Researcher's maternal great-grandparents home in Niue Island

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2023

1.3.2 The Land of Milk and Honey

My *magafaoa* are the most important people in my life and are at the core of everything I do. I have also been privileged to have grown up with both sides of my family, more so with my maternal grandparents and great-grandparents being constant reminders of the hope that the migration to New Zealand *'ke he motu ne tafe ai e huhu mo e meli'*[11] was going to be one of success, which in hindsight it was. I spoke English constantly as a child growing up, as it was easier to communicate what I wanted, and became more prominent in my years of schooling. However, the rule of only speaking in *vagahau Niue* at home did not change for my parents - this was intentional for them in that one day, *vagahau Niue* would become a way of life, a

[11] The land of milk and honey was considered as a promised land of natural abundance and endless opportunity in Bell et al. (2017). *Land of milk and honey*? *Making sense of Aotearoa New Zealans/* Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press.

cultural norm in our household. This was made stronger with our upbringing in the church; my mother invested in our spiritual upbringing by taking my siblings and me to all the Niue language services, teaching us the hymns in the language, helping with reciting our verses for our *Aho Tapu fanau* (White Sunday[12]), prayers for the *Tapu Hololoa* (Prayer week[13]) and taking us to our Wednesday youth evenings, as well as enrolling my brother, sister and me into the Niue-language nest Fitilagakali Aoga Niue that was established by Reverend Eveni and his late wife Betty Lagaluga at the Mangere Pacific Island Presbyterian Church (PIPC) church premises (Figure 10), all of which has strengthened my language learning to what it is today. In these and other ways, being an *afine Niue* (Niue woman) and speaking *vagahau Niue* has become an essential part of the blueprint that has moulded my identity as a daughter, sister, godmother, aunty, cousin, friend and *afine Niue* here in the land of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Figure 10

Researcher's sister Betty Tukimata with her namesake and minister's wife the late Betty Lagaluga at the Niue language nest Fitilagakali Aoga Niue

Note. Language nests were influential for the early learning of *Vagahau Niue*. As captured for the Niueans in the Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 2005

[12] Annual event where each village lead the service with the children, through church hymns, bible verses, sermons, and scripts from the bible. This day usually coincides with the celebration of Mother's Day.

[13] A week of prayer giving thanks to God during morning services from Monday to Friday of the first week of January. The prayer week is in celebration of the journey into the New Year for many Niue churches (Ekalesia). Source. Taoga Niue. (2021, December). *Kalena he tau matagahua talahaua fakamotu ha Niue: Niue Calendr of significant events.* Source: https://taoganiue.nu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/KALENA-HE-TAU-MATAGAHUA-TALAHAUA-FAKAMOTU.pdf

1.3.3 Reclaiming the Life Essence

Maintaining my *vagahau Niue* has had its fair share of struggles while growing up, especially being in a predominantly English-speaking society. I intuitively realised that within the process of reclaiming my language, I had not learnt the language, I had re-awakened it within me. This is because it is in my DNA, my *vagahau* (language) is not just a physical practice, it has a life essence, because as an *afine Niue,* my DNA is a makeup of my *matohiaga,* and having awakened my language within, I have also re-awakened all those places within me where I knew my language existed and the connections that it had with my ancestors and those that came before me. I have come to realise that my language has always been a part of me, part of the makeup of who I am, and what defines me. It has taken some time to get to where I am content with my language use, and I have learnt that a lot of my learning of *vagahau Niue* was about getting rid of the noise, that is, the 'you were born in New Zealand so you do not understand the language' assumptions; the embarrassment of not knowing how to respond to my parents at the age of 12, the navigation between speaking and understanding, and the positive and negative attitudes from fluent speakers. I found out while growing up that knowing my language and the background noise and assumptions, were symptoms of oppression, which snowballed into how I viewed language. I can recall my mother sharing her first year of high school back in Niue, where she and her peers were punished for speaking in the language, especially in the land it comes from. She recounts that:

> …ko e ulu faiaoga Mr Robertson ne ui, ai fai gahua ka moua I Niu Silani ka fakaaoga e *vagahau Niue*, ti ko e mena ia, ka moua taha ia mautolu he *vagahau Niue*, kua o fai a mautolu ke tohi e teau laini 'I must speak English[14] (Fifineua)

Upon reflection on this story and the weight it carried for my mother and her peers at that time, I could not begin to fathom the traumatic effect this must have had on not only her but those around her. The idea that the Niue language would not get you employment or would not be recognised in employment opportunities saddened me, and I realised that the generations that have been on the receiving end of these perspectives are the very generation that this thesis is based on. In the process of reclaiming my language and going through the process of language revitalisation, I have broken through the oppressions that my mother might have considered continuing once she migrated to New Zealand, and even though this has not directly affected my journey personally, it is still the reality for many other first-generation New

[14] The translation of this quote is that the principal at that time was Mr Robertson, and he said that there were no job opportunities for us in New Zealand that used the Niue language. So, if we were caught speaking in the language, we had to write one hundred lines saying, I must speak English.

Zealand-born Niue living here in Aotearoa New Zealand. I strongly believe that if it were not for my parents and their foresight to ensure that my siblings and I spoke *vagahau Niue* daily, I would not be the active speaker I am today. I have grown to appreciate and love *vagahau Niue* more as I got older, as well as the cultural nuances attached to learning the Niue language. I have also taken pride in sharing this gift of language from our ancestors and those who paved the way for *vagahau Niue* to be part of the make-up of who we are as Niue people here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. I feel that helping to preserve my language, is a commitment and obligation (England, 1992; Bell, 2014) that has been placed on me by God, my parents and my Niue community, to fulfil during this journey. This study aimed to document research to raise awareness about *vagahau Niue* and the number of receptive speakers of our language, which I have seen as a personal challenge to achieve. This is because I need to gain a better understanding of receptive speakers of *vagahau Niue* and their reasons for not acquiring the language more prominently, and for this reason, I need to return to where the origins of this journey began for me – My why.

1.4 Position of Research

Hau'ofa (1994) provides a stark reminder that our *tupuna/tīpuna (*ancestors) were navigators of the Pacific who settled on Oceania that spanned over 2000 years, which has been evidenced and documented by oral traditions, cosmologies and narratives, where they did not see their world through the scope of a small lens. They believed they were part of a larger sphere that was all interconnected to the heavens and the ocean, and where the universe included the land and the surrounding *moana* (ocean) and its vastness across the Pacific. The heavens were the pathway of navigation guided by their constellations of stars, helping to direct the path across the *moana puke lahi* (vast ocean). Hau'ofa writes that our *tupuna* viewed their surrounding environment as an interconnected 'Sea of Islands'. In a presentation to the Ministry of Pacific Peoples *fono* (meeting), Ka'ai (2017) expressed;

> Hauofa recognised the importance of our Oceania origins and the ease with which our ancestors moved across the Pacific like 'island-hoppers' armed with the tools of language, cultural knowledge, and values located within a specific Indigenous worldview.

The knowledge collected from *tau tagata Niue* (Niue people) has formed a significant proportion of the theoretical framework in this thesis, therefore it is important to acknowledge and adhere to the voices and knowledge of the diasporic community, which was drawn from 15 participants. All the participants who consented to be interviewed for this research, come

from migrant parents and grandparents and have assimilated into life as a New Zealand-born-Niue here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

1.4.1 The Status of Vagahau Niue in Aotearoa

My master's study, completed in 2017, explored the lived experiences of Niue youth, ministers' and church elders both in Niue and Auckland, New Zealand as a comparative study that focused on the *Ekalesia* (church/congregation) church as a language domain for language revitalisation. Encouraged by the Statistics New Zealand Census data (the years 2013 through 2018) demonstrated that *vagahau Niue* language shift was occurring at a rapid speed. The study's overarching assumption was that if the church as a language domain can be utilised for language revitalisation, then there was a possibility that the Niue language and its speakers would have more of a presence than what was shown in the statistics trends. The findings from my study showed that *vagahau Niue* would still be spoken by parents and the older generation, however, as those parents slowly passed on, there was no continuum of the language for the generations that followed. I focused specifically on speakers of *vagahau Niue* during my study, whereas for this research I focused solely on receptive bilinguals – individuals who have "no productive control over a language, but can understand utterances in it" (Romaine, 1989, p.10).

Looking at the data seven years later, a decrease in speakers has shown that *vagahau Niue* has a decline in active language users who can maintain the language or converse about everyday things. Table 1 below shows that over 12 years, from 2006 - 2018, there has been a 9.5% decrease in the number of speakers of *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand, with a majority of language speakers aged over 50 years. However, this is a stark contrast to the rapid increase of the Niue population (Figure 11) who were born and are currently living in New Zealand (Figure 12) from 77.3% (23,880) in 2013 to 81% (30,867) in 2018 which is an increase of 12.7% (6,987) of Niue people over five years.

Table 1

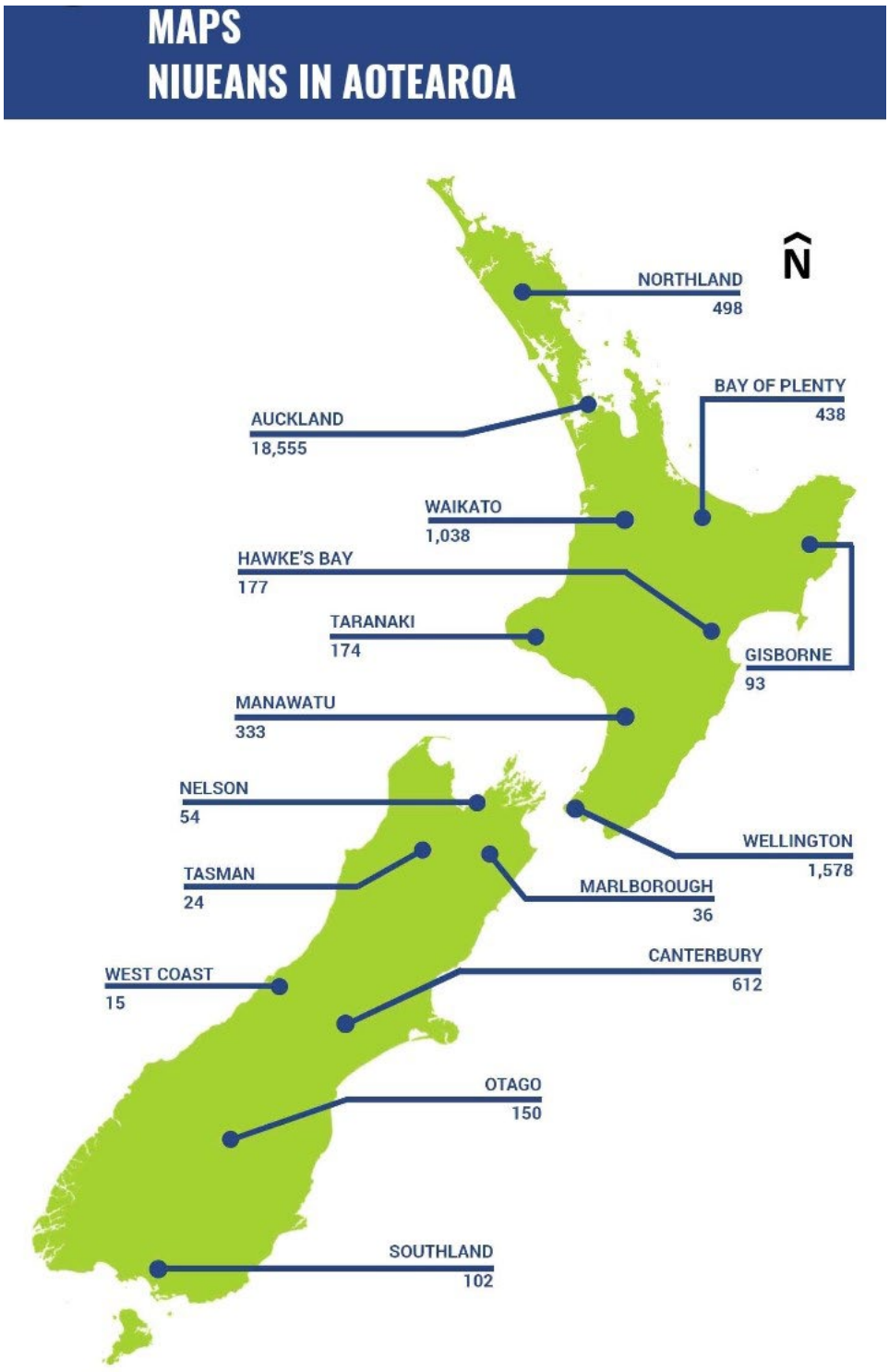
Per cent of Niue resident population in New Zealand by birthplace and speakers for Census 2006, 2013, and 2018

Year	Total population	Niue population by birthplace - NZ born (%)	n=people	Niue population by speakers (%)	n=people
2006	22,473	72.4%	16,275	23%	5,190
2013	23,880	77.3%	18,468	19%	4,548
2018	30,867	81%	25,011	13.5%	4,182

Note. Reprinted from Tia e lili ke mau. Regeneration of Vagahau Niue: A case study of Niue youth through the Ekalesia in Niue and Auckland, New Zealand (p.23), by N. E Tukimata, 2017, Tuwhera. Copyright 2017 by Nogiata Ediff Tukimata. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 11

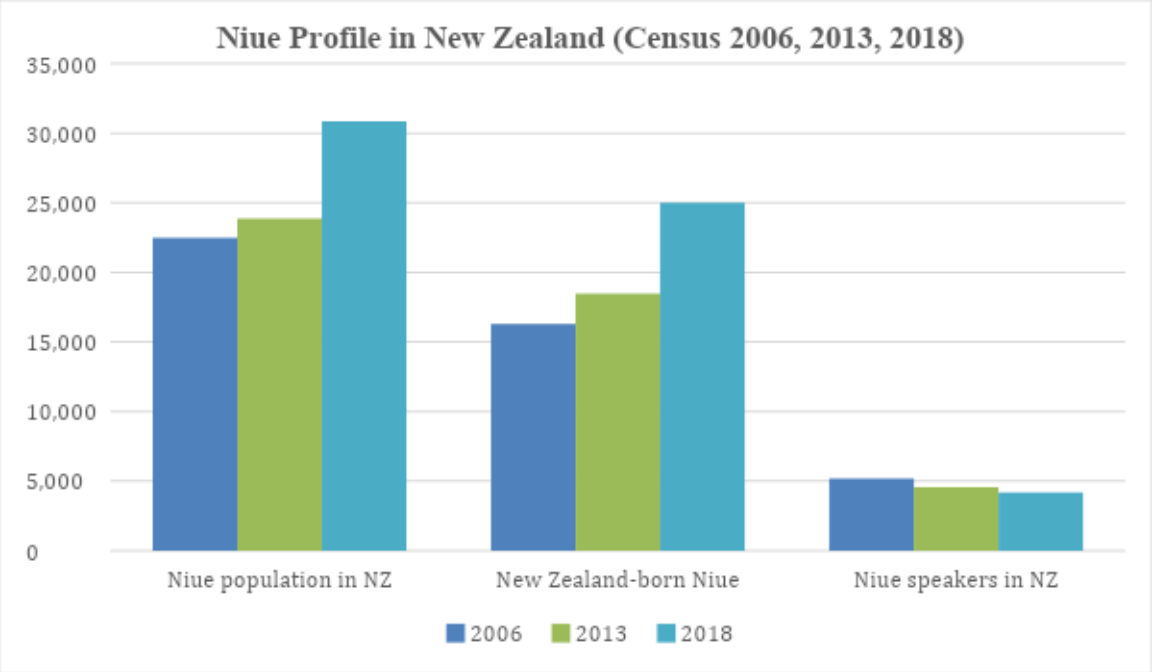
Niue population living in Aotearoa by region



Note. The Talanoa Mai App is an interactive learning resource for Oranga Tamariki staff to support their day-to-day work when engaging with Pacific children, young people, and their families. Copyright 2019 by Oranga Tamariki.

Figure 12

Niue profile in New Zealand by total population Niue speakers



Note. Niue's profile in New Zealand has been taken from the Niue Profile from Statistics New Zealand. Copyright 2019 by Statistics New Zealand.

It is suggested that this variety of age grading is a “typical marker of intergenerational language shift away from the community language and towards the dominant language” (Bell, 2014, p.56). Furthermore, additional data (Tables 2 and 3) show that the commonly dominant language, English, was spoken among 72.4% of the population who were able to speak the language, as demonstrated in Figure 13, which showed an increase in speakers of one language, in which for the majority of the Niue population if we were to assume only spoke in one language, this would be English.

Table 2

Per cent of the number of languages spoken by the Niue ethnic group over time 2006, 2013, and 2018

Number of Languages	2006 (%)	2013 (%)	2018 (%)
None	3.8	2.9	4.1
One language	**65**	**70.5**	**72.4**
Two languages	26.8	23	20.6
Three languages	3.4	2.8	2.2
Four languages	0.7	0.6	0.5
Five + languages	0.1	0.1	0.1

Note. Data on the number of languages spoken by the Niue ethnic group after the 2006, 2013 and 2018 censuses from Statistics New Zealand, 2018. Copyright Statistics New Zealand, 2018

Table 3

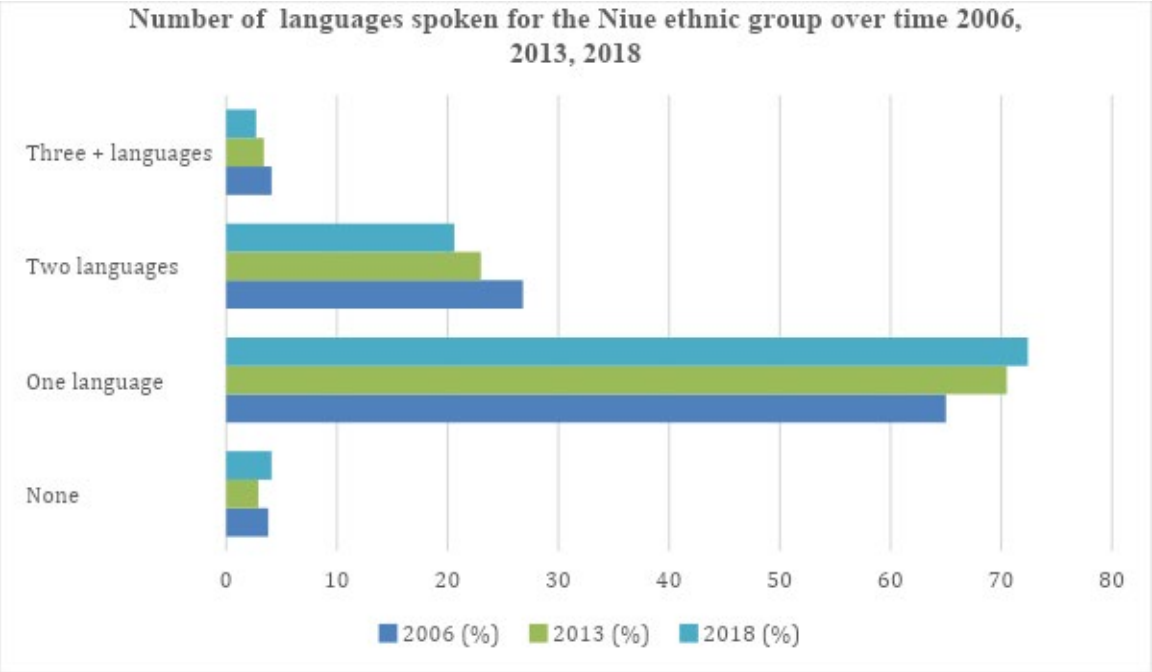
Number of languages spoken, by age group, for the Niuean ethnic group, 2018 Census

	Under 15 years (%)	15–29 years (%)	30–64 years (%)	65 years and over (%)
None	10.6	0.2	0.2	0.2
One language	76.4	81.2	64.4	47.3
Two languages	11.5	16.4	31.0	45.2
Three languages	1.3	1.6	3.4	5.3
Four languages	0.2	0.4	0.9	1.9
Five languages	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2
Six languages	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Note. Data was taken from Niue's profile of the number of languages spoken, by age group, for the Niuean ethnic group, 2018 and taken by Statistics New Zealand in 2018. Copyright Statistics New Zealand, 2018.

Figure 13

Languages spoken over the Census years 2006, 2013 and 2018 by Niue population in New Zealand



Note. Data was taken from Niue's profile of the number of languages spoken over three years, 2006, 2013, and 2018, and taken by Statistics New Zealand in 2018. Copyright Statistics New Zealand, 2018.

The statistical data clearly show that *vagahau Niue* language use is declining, which suggests that New Zealand-born Niue intergenerational transmission is slowing. Monolingualism in English is becoming an evident reality of many *tagata Niue* in New Zealand. This poses a severe threat to the intergenerational transmission of *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand, as over time, the number of New Zealand-born will increase while native language use declines, providing the reason for *vagahau Niue* being endangered.

1.5 Research Gap

Upon looking at the data raised in 2018 regarding *vagahau Niue*, questions were posed: Why were *vagahau Niue* language loss and shift occurring concurrently? What were the factors contributing to these language shift patterns? Upon data analysis, further questions were asked: Were these trends occurring in isolation, or was this happening with other migrant languages not only in Aotearoa, New Zealand, but worldwide? Global research indicated that languages, particularly minority languages, are becoming lost at a rapid pace, with researchers fearing approximately 7,100 of the world's languages spoken are at risk of dying. Moreover, researchers (Lewis et al., 2016; Stanford & Whaley, 2010) agree that the survival of the world's living languages (between 30 and 50 per cent) is not guaranteed into the next

century. Furthermore, Krauss (1992, as cited in Lewis et al., 2016) predicted that the Pacific, also known as the most linguistically diverse region in the world with over 1,313 languages, is in danger of losing 90 per cent of these languages (Lewis et al., 2016) with fears this number will increase in the next 30 years, which in aligning with global language trends, is broadly considered that a significant number of these languages will not survive. This begs the question; how can receptive bilingualism act as a starting point for speakers to move from receptive to active speakers of *vagahau Niue*?

1.5.1 Receptive bilingualism a way forward for vagahau Niue

Pacific languages in New Zealand and the state it is researched and documented have increased in the last 20 years (Bell et al., 2001; Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, 2001; Taumoefolau et al., 2002; Amituanai-Toloa, 2010), with a vast amount of this research about bilingualism globally and nationally. Bilingualism can be referred to in terms of categories and scales, which are defined by (Bialystok, 1991; Romaine, 1995) as ideal versus partial bilingual and co-ordinate versus compound bilingual, which is related to factors such as proficiency and function. A 'balanced' bilingual or 'ideal' bilingual are terms used as synonyms for a 'complete' bilingual, where the definition of these terms is often used to quantify other kinds of bilingualism referred to as underdeveloped or inadequate. For 'balanced' bilingualism, the definition includes people with no productive control over a language but can understand its utterances. In contrast, linguists use expressions such as 'passive' or 'receptive' bilingualism in these cases.

Regarding this research, receptive bilingualism will be set as a relatively modern concept of the over-arching topic of bilingualism, which, as defined by scholars, is a comprehension of a language being possible, but the production of it is not. Therefore, receptive bilingualism draws out a substantial imbalance in language use, as fluency in the native language is favoured over acquiring the second language that is only ever understood. Furthermore, as a modern concept of the overarching topic of bilingualism, receptive bilingualism is not only limited in the literature on receptive bilingualism in a global context but is near to non-existent regarding receptive bilingualism amongst New Zealand-born Niue speakers living in New Zealand.

The case study of the Niue community in New Zealand helps to formulate and raise awareness of the significance of receptive bilingualism as a changing factor that impacts the revitalisation of minority and migrant languages today, in hopes of providing a depth of knowledge on Niue people and their lived experiences understanding and learning the role *vagahau Niue* has across the contemporary New Zealand diaspora – ultimately the home away from home.

1.6 Research Aims and Significance of the Research

This study is the first of its kind not only for *vagahau Niue* but also for Pacific languages in Aotearoa, New Zealand, where it signifies a crucial time, especially in the decline of *vagahau Niue's* use in a changing society. This research aims to examine the factors of receptive bilingualism that affect the relationship first-generation New Zealand-born Niue have with *vagahau Niue* and the implications that this may have on maintaining the Niue language moving forward. The primary research questions are as follows;

1. **What factors of receptive bilingualism affect New Zealand-born Niue and their understanding and use of *vagahau Niue?***
2. **how do the identities of New Zealand-born Niue impact their relationship with *vagahau Niue* as a result of receptive bilingualism? What are the implications of this for the maintenance of the language?**

Furthermore, this study aims to seek the lived experiences and capture the voices of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa – about their views and perceptions of *vagahau Niue* as a cultural marker of identity and as part of the revitalisation process for the language.

The research spotlights the identities of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue and how these impact their relationships with the language due to receptive bilingualism, ultimately demonstrating possible implications for the regeneration of *vagahau Niue* for their language learning journey. Even though the research focuses on the Niue community, as the largest Pacific population with New Zealand-born Niue, findings will likely resonate with other diasporic and minority language communities, including Pacific language groups, in finding possible solutions for language maintenance and revitalisation of native languages. This is particularly significant given New Zealand's vibrant, unique, diverse, and multicultural nation, which has strived to achieve equity and embrace cultural diversity (Ministry for Culture & Heritage, 2005).

The significance of this study is quite profound; as the first of its kind within academia and, more specifically, with a Pacific language in a minority group here in Aotearoa, this research aims to shed light on the importance of revitalising *vagahau Niue* from the perspective of a receptive bilingual. Therefore, this research is essential for several reasons; firstly, this study will set a knowledge base that consists of understanding factors that have influenced *vagahau Niue* and its use or lack thereof among New Zealand-born Niue. There is a feeling or an unspoken perception that if you do not speak in *vagahau Niue,* you are not a *tagata Niue*,

regardless of the birthright you may have inherited from your parents. This creates internal cultural tension amongst New Zealand-born people as they attempt to navigate through knowing and understanding who they are as Niue people living in Aotearoa and how they identify themselves in a culturally diverse landscape. Secondly, this research serves as a harsh reality to the Niue community in New Zealand on the role and value of *vagahau Niue* from a receptive speaker's perspective, and the intergenerational cultural trauma that has been passed down from parents to their children, and how this has affected their language learning journey growing up in Aotearoa.

Furthermore, in the field of Pacific languages and the significance of Pacific knowledge, practises and cultural values in the communities in which we live, the interactions we face can be seen as features that can aid *tau tagata Niue* with developing and moulding their identities in an ever-changing society. As this case study is looking at the Niue community in Aotearoa, the findings will indicate where this research can contribute to the global discussion around how to safeguard minority and migrant languages, as well as endangered languages effectively, that will help raise awareness of the significance of receptive bilingualism for *vagahau Niue's* language revitalisation efforts. The light shed on this body of research will highlight the reasons where language starts and stops and how to revitalise it with receptive speakers in mind, ultimately exploring the stories that should underpin the statistics as demonstrated in Figure 11 and Table 2 above.

Lastly, in line with the cultural diversity goals of New Zealand, this research aims to,

a) Contribute significantly to the knowledge about the place of New Zealand-born Niue in their respective Niue communities, especially as a case study of how the identities of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue understanding *vagahau Niue* can be used as a critical marker for language maintenance among a diasporic population, and,
b) Assist in informing national language policy and decision-making for receptive speakers of minority languages in Aotearoa.

In addition, this study helps contribute to the knowledge base of global bilingualism, which is researched and documented by Indigenous people(s), particularly about the linguistic experiences of diasporic and minority communities. The importance of this research also lies in the view that micro-level research of *vagahau Niue* use is still limited and uncommon in Niue communities and the diaspora.

1.7 Methodology

1.7.1 Introduction

This study's design follows qualitative and quantitative approaches to highlight the plight of current *vagahau Niue* trends amongst New Zealand-born Niue. As noted, research on receptive bilingualism is limited in terms of case studies and literature, and the reality of *vagahau Niue's* use has depended on statistical data and anecdotal recounts of *vagahau Niue*. Overall, the statistics provide a baseline for language loss, with even less on actual *vagahau Niue* use and understanding the elements that impact language sustainability and use. Therefore, this case study intends to bring meaning to *vagahau Niue's* language use and the statistics that reflect this by researching the lived experiences and perceptions of *Tagata Niue* to understand the language and, more specifically, their expectations. It was essential to focus on first-generation New Zealand-born Niue because of their place in the 'in-between' of knowing and understanding the language but not being active speakers of *vagahau Niue.* This allowed for an in-depth insight into the issues impacting the limited use of the language as a way of encouraging steps forward that enable language revitalisation efforts amongst this target group of speakers.

For this mixed methods study, I use qualitative (phenomenology) and quantitative methods (survey research) to create connections between constructing knowledge and different ways of understanding informed by a Pacific worldview lens. This is described as concerned with a phenomenon that is recognised through our senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting (Denscombe, 1998), which ensures the integrity and cultural validity of the study (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001; Du-Plessis & Fairburn-Dunlop, 2009; Gegeo, 2009;). To capture the voices of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa, the use of the research method, social phenomenology, is appropriate to implement within this study, as it provides an approach that is qualitative, interpretive, and pragmatic that is grounded in the lived experiences and realities of people (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). More specifically, the use of the Pacific methodology *talanoa,* but in the Niue context, is in the concept of a *tutala* (Vilitama, 2015), which was chosen as an informed and appropriate method to carry out the interviews, as well as the use of the sampling method in the form of an online survey for an in-depth look into the Niue demographic and their views of *vagahau Niue* here in Aotearoa. Furthermore, using the Niue-centred framework through 'The *Umu* Model' is appropriate as a framework that provides a cultural anchor from which to structure this thesis and interpret the data.

1.7.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a research method that draws on people's attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, feelings, emotions, and the meanings they attribute to specific phenomena, objects, and events. In social phenomenology, the focus areas relate to education, sociology, psychology, health studies, and business studies and originate back to 1962 from philosopher and social phenomenologist Alfred Schutz (as cited in Denscombe, 1998; Patton, 2002). Its concern is more with how humans give meaning to their lived experiences and less with the essence of experience, an essential aspect of social phenomenology, as it concerns social phenomena and peoples' interpretation of them. In alignment with social phenomenology, this research and its objectives were to draw insights into how the Niue community made sense of their lived experiences, more so with their views of *vagahau Niue* and how the role of receptive bilingualism is significant to the revitalisation of the Niue language (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) views social phenomenology as a holistic approach that gives insights into how people perceive their new knowledge, belief systems, values, and understanding of the past, present and future. This approach aligns well with the Pacific worldview and the interconnectedness of what was, what is now, and what is yet to come.

1.7.3 Survey Research

Survey research is a fundamental method of data collection and analysis that has significantly impacted various fields of discipline, such as social sciences, market research, and public opinion polling. It describes and explores human behaviour, which is often used as a topic for surveys related to psychological and social research (Singleton & Straits, 2009). Survey research, as defined by Check and Schutt (2012), is often used to "explain trends or features of large groups about a set of predetermined questions from a sample of individuals through their response to questions" (p.160). This enables valuable data to be received that can inform decision-making, policy development, and program evaluation. Surveys can help identify social trends, consumer preferences, and public opinions on important issues.

This is further supported by Ponto (2015), who explains that survey research also helps gain information that describes the characteristics of a large sample of individuals of interest. These are usually through census surveys where the information provided is reflected on the personal and demographic characteristics that can "determine a high-quality research process and outcome" (Ponto, 2015, p.168). As part of a mixed methods approach, survey research uses quantitative research strategies (i.e., questionnaires with items numerically rated) and qualitative research methods (using open-ended questions) to gather information from data from large populations. In this research, the use of survey research was used to determine

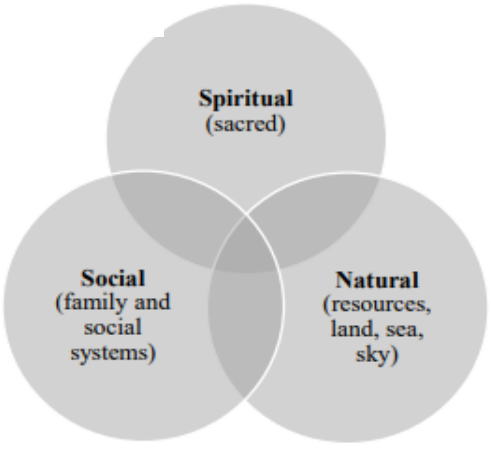
the demographic of Niue people living in Aotearoa to highlight current vital trends that help to identify locations of residence as well as exposure to *vagahau Niue* within the different cities across New Zealand to determine factors that may be catalysts in language revitalisation efforts and solutions that can assist in the revitalisation of the Niue language in the current cities they reside in. In part, survey research, in this instance, is a valuable and authentic approach to research that has helped to explore constructs and variables of interest, especially in the Niue context here in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

1.7.4 A Pacific Worldview

To understand the lived experiences of New Zealand-born Niue in this study, it was essential to see these from a Pacific worldview. The definition is three interdependent and interconnected elements of a holistic approach that consists of spiritual, social and natural environments. Most Pacific people view their position in the world as connecting spiritually or sacredly through the *Atua* (God), who created people (social systems) and the natural environment (resources). As demonstrated in Figure 14, the Pacific worldview is described by Tui Atua (2007) as being able to "understand the environment, humans, the animate and inanimate – all-natural life – as having its sources in the same divine origin, imbued with the life force, interrelated, and genealogically connected" (p.3). These three elements are a representation of the importance of life which Du Plessis and Fairbairn-Dunlop (2009) describes as being able to maintain harmony – in which a "balance between these elements is central to achieving a good life" (p.111).

Figure 14

The Pacific Worldview



Note. The Pacific world-view for the sustaining of families and communities by Du Plessis & Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2009; Fairbairn Dunlop et al., 2014.

In the context of Pacific peoples, Sanga (2004) proposes that reality is somewhat subjective in the Pacific worldview, as *tupuna* (including those long gone) are rulers of their environment

and members of their world. Consequently, Pacific Indigenous systems are grounded on collective and life experiences with a purpose, which have been built over generations, including the past, present and future (Health Research Council, 2014). This is supported by Tui Atua (2003), who states that;

> I am not an individual but an integral part of the cosmos. I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies. I am not an individual because I share a 'tofi' (an inheritance) with my family, village and nation. I belong to my family, and my family belongs to me. I belong to my village, and my village belongs to me. I belong to my nation, and my nation belongs to me. This is the essence of my sense of belonging (p.51)

Furthermore, Nabobo-Baba (2004) shares that as Pacific researchers, it is crucial to create and develop Pacific traditions of knowing that acknowledge the contemporary phenomena of our stories, genealogies, chants, landscapes, and names, "suggesting centuries of interdependence and networking exchanges among our Pacific peoples" (p.17).

1.7.5 An Indigenous Framework

For this research, it was important to ground this study in a Niue worldview, where Brown (1987) expresses that language is the road map of culture. It navigates the path of where its people have come from and provides a destination to where they are going. In my master's research, I created 'The *Lili* Model*'* (a woven pandanus mat made up of concentric yet connected circles emanating from the 'eye' or centre) that depicts the process of *tia* (to weave, to crochet), which is significant to a Niue woman's artistry and skill of weaving (Tukimata, 2017). The *Lili* Model was a cultural artefact that weaved the participants' experiences through 'binding', coming together, unity, continuity, and interconnectedness that shared experiences in knowledge, language, and culture. The *Lili* Model was significant to the ongoing practices of culture and traditions encompassing a Niue worldview and how these cultural practices are significant within an academic context. For this research, the *Umu* Model is used as the Indigenous Framework to ground the thesis's structure and the methodology anchored from within a Niue lens. This model is adapted from Vilitama (2015) in his doctoral thesis, where he describes the *umu as* a hermeneutic that interprets the Bible and other texts (written or oral) - for the *fetuiaga* (a neologism for Church, act of uniting, koinonia, communion) today. He states that;

> Although it is a 'way of life' (a culture), it is presumption – not intentional – that the *umu* event is also a methodology: it is a way of doing things not just for the conveyance of values from one generation to another. It outlines the principles for communal reading. The *umu* can serve as a lens for seeing or ways of reading the

> Bible and thus [re]structuring (*umu foou*), [re]freshing (*umu fakamafana*) and [re]interpreting (*umu hila*) the Niuean story (p.236)

For this research specifically, the *Umu* Model becomes a lens for seeing or ways of interpreting data that [re]structures, [re]freshes, and [re]interprets *vagahau Niue* and its current status.

1.7.6 The Umu Model

The *umu*, as described by Vilitama (2015), is an "integral part of Niuean life" (p.227) and focuses on family and community. Significant cultural Niue events guarantee the preparation of an *umu*, which is often associated with ceremonies, a celebration of welcoming and farewelling, or any gathering of the Niue community – even a funeral will constitute putting on an *umu*. It is "inherently communal, [and] its preparation involves the *magafaoa,* and the *maaga* (the village/community)" (Vilitama, 2015, p.227). Two examples of the *umu* are offered by Vilitama, where a standard *umu* involves only the immediate family and a feasting *umu* embraces community involvement and is traditionally the main form of cooking. The work involved in making an *umu* is adapted by Vilitama (2015) of a traditional wedding feast. This example and its phases will be used to inform the chapters of this research (see Table 4) and involves three parts: *pulega mo e fakatokatoka* (planning and preparation), *tolo ke faiumu* (convergence in the *umu* making) and *taonaga* (celebration) (Vilitama, 2015).[15]

Table 4

The Umu Model

UMU MODEL		
Umu process	**Niue context**	**Research Method**
Pulega mo e Fakatokatoka	**Aku fakatokatoka**	Introduction and literature review
Tolo ke faiumu	**Tafu** **Tauaki** **Ufi** **Tao**	Research design and methods, Findings & Analysis,
Fetuiaga	**Fuke** **Taaki**	Discussion, Conclusion & Recommendations

Note. Adapted from Vilitama (2015)

[15] Matagi Vilitama gives an elaborate example of the *umu* process, using the celebration of a traditional wedding feast to explain what is involved in the working of the umu. See Vilitama, M. (2015). *On becoming a liquid church: Singing the Niuean 'Fetuiaga Kerisiano' on a distant shore*, (p.227) [Unpublished doctoral thesis, Charles Sturt University] Sydney, Australia.

The Niue model of the *umu* serves as an essential cultural marker in the lives of Niue people living on the island and here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. As described by Vilitama (2015), “the practice of the *umu* seeks to encourage the building of character. It attracts the virtues of a considerate relationality along with a desire to form identity” (p.233). In Table 4, each phase is significant to a different thesis structure. The first phase of *Pulega mo e fakatokatoka* will examine the introduction and literature review, known as chapters one and two. The next phase, *Tolo ke faiumu,* is captured in chapters three, four, and five, which is the research design and methodology, findings and analysis, and the final stage of the *umu* process is *Taonaga*, which will be used for the conclusions and recommendations. By peeling back, the layers from the *umu* and analysing the findings and conclusion, the themes are fleshed out from both the online survey and *tutala* discussions, which will be necessary for the Niue language moving forward. The celebration or coming together of the findings will hopefully be a step towards a change in language revitalisation initiatives for *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand and the Niue diaspora worldwide.

1.8 Overview of the thesis

Chapter Two reviews the literature in three sections, specifically regarding language shift and maintenance, focusing on bilingualism and receptive bilingualism. The use of Joshua Fishman’s (1970) Graded International Disruption Scale (GIDS) helps to determine and evaluate the position of endangered languages, particularly *vagahau Niue*, which currently sits as an endangered language (Moseley, 2010). The second section examines the literature on bilingualism on a global scale, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of bilingualism and the attitudes towards bilingualism. This will be followed by a critical focus on where *vagahau Niue* sits concerning receptive bilingualism. The third section will present research on *vagahau Niue* and the value of the Niue language as the focus of this study.

Chapter Three presents the research design and describes the research using a mixed-methods approach. This chapter also explores the importance of Pacific research through a Pacific paradigm and Niue-centred methodological framework that is highlighted alongside Western theories to clarify the key features of a Niue approach to research.

Chapter Four presents the research methodology and outlines the Indigenous (Niue) approach taken in this research. The research methods, which include the design and planning of the research, are implemented, and a discussion of sampling, data collection, and data analysis will follow—furthermore, the insight into the *Umu* Model grounds this research accordingly.

Chapter Five presents the findings of this research, responding to the research questions posed in Chapter One through a description of the receptive bilingualism experiences of 15 New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa. Findings are presented thematically to describe participants' upbringing, the generational influence of understanding *vagahau Niue*, the importance of receptive bilingualism, and how language attitudes have influenced language acquisition and use for many participants. This is then followed by research question two, which looks at the identities of New Zealand-born Niue and how this impacts their relationship with *vagahau Niue* because of receptive bilingualism. Findings also draw on the implications this has on maintaining the language moving forward.

Chapter Six draws on the key findings from Chapter Five through a critical discussion about the extent to which New Zealand-born Niue can revitalise the language through their receptive bilingualism skills. The difference in attitudes was a key finding, and these were all rooted in different underlying ideals, ideas, and social and cultural goals from the participants, their parents, and grandparents. Interestingly, most of the participants in the study valued *vagahau Niue* as an identity factor. Moreover, the interactions in domains outside of the family, such as the church, the classroom and digital technology, provide further prospects for learning the language. However, these are effective without support from fluent speakers of the Niue language to encourage receptive speakers to use the language. This critical discussion is supported by the insights from the participants, as well as relevant literature.

Chapter Seven is split into two parts. The conclusion outlines the aims of this research and the significant findings that have influenced receptive bilingualism. The theoretical contributions identified in this research are discussed alongside the methodological implications and the future of *vagahau Niue* for future generations.

Chapter Eight presents the research's conclusion. It concludes with future recommendations, limitations of this research, and suggestions for future research, with the researcher's reflections urging consideration of receptive bilingualism as a stepping stone for language revitalisation efforts.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a grounding to understand the researcher's upbringing and personal journey with *vagahau Niue* by positioning this research within a Niue worldview. It is vital to the researcher that from the outset, this research is viewed from a Pacific lens and that conventional research approaches are acknowledged but will not be dominant in the writing

of this thesis. As Pacific research continues to emerge within academia, Pacific worldviews become important elements for consideration within Pacific communities, narratives and stories. In this chapter, appropriate cultural practices and values are demonstrated in the Indigenous framework of the *Umu* Model, which underpins the Niue people's worldviews and perspectives. This model helps integrate and acknowledge *tau tāoga tokiofa a Niue* (Niue values), attitudes, principles, structures and practices towards *vagahau Niue.* As an *afine Niue* and Pacific woman in academia, it is crucial to spotlight the uniqueness and beauty of the Niue language, not only as a *tāoga* (treasure) but a representation of the generation of *pulotu Niue* (Niue academics) that will follow in the future.

VEVEHEAGA UA

Pulega mo e fakatokatoka – Kumikumiaga he fekau

Learning from the literature

Ālo e fohe ki tua, ke holo e vaka ki mua[16]

2.1 Introduction

An ancient Chinese proverb wisely states that; 'to learn a language is to have one more window from which to look at the world'. In this context, language becomes a powerful tool of communication, a window into our unique perceptions of the world, a distinct reality. It is through the practices of speaking, writing, or reading a language that these realities are experienced, each language offering a different lens. Language is not just a means of understanding knowledge but also a way of being, and as languages are diverse realities, learning a new language is consequently a new reality. The knowledge of acquiring different languages opens many possibilities for communicating, interacting, and understanding people living in other parts of the world. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that knowing more than one language is not just a skill but a powerful asset for effective communication, empowering us to bridge cultural gaps and connect with diverse communities.

This chapter, *Pulega mo e fakatokatoka – kumikumiaga he fekau* reviews the literature in three key sections that underpin the thesis topic specifically regarding language shift and maintenance, focusing on bilingualism and receptive bilingualism. The first is a comprehensive literature review of global language maintenance and shift research. By employing Joshua Fishman's (1970) Graded International Disruption Scale (GIDS), we can discern and evaluate the status of endangered languages, with a particular focus on *vagahau Niue*, which currently resides in what Moseley (2010) identifies as an endangered state. The second section scrutinises the literature on bilingualism on a global scale, shedding light on the pros and cons of bilingualism and the societal attitudes towards it. This will be succeeded by critically examining receptive bilingualism and *vagahau Niue's* position in this context. The third section will present research on *vagahau Niue*, emphasising the unique cultural insights that the Niue language offers as the central focus of this research.

[16] "Thrust the paddle backwards to propel the canoe forward"

2.2 Global research on language maintenance and shift

As the world gradually becomes globalised, Indigenous languages have become increasingly at risk of becoming severely endangered and extinct. Given the communication and increased industrialisation of superpower nations such as China and the United States, the presence of major languages and cultures in both Western and Eastern has seen the overshadowing of many Indigenous and local languages. Research globally has revealed that the loss of language occurs dominantly in-migrant communities, especially with large numbers that live outside of the home country (Garcia, 2003). Specific to this are bilingual and multilingual communities. Gal (1979) explains that language decline occurs when speakers consciously decide to use a language, they are comfortable with rather than their mother tongue. In this instance, many migrant communities face issues at different levels relating to language adjustment, which includes language loss. This loss is demonstrated in what Tannenbaum and Berkovich (2005) express as the loss of one's significant culture and nation, "internal sense of harmony, familiarity, and quite often, loss of one's mother tongue" (p.290). The yearning to acculturate and assimilate into the new host country is what Clyne and Kipp (1997) and Canagarajah (2008) explain as the reason for language use and maintenance being affected, especially in families.

Fishman (1991) argues that intergenerational socialisation has severe consequences due to losing the mother tongue language. This is because language is the driving force behind the transmission of cultural heritage and values of a specific community. Therefore, the irrecoverable loss of a unique culture, history and ecological knowledge can occur when a language is lost (UNESCO, 2003). For minority languages globally, global languages such as English are a severe threat to linguistic diversity, as their influence assists in the erosion of these minority and Indigenous languages. Examples of this are described by Krauss (1992) as native Indigenous and tribal cultures and languages such as Africa, Asia, North and South America, and the Pacific, where these regions are the most at risk of having their languages disappear. In Australia, for example, of the 250 Aboriginal languages once spoken, 150 are extinct, and 70 are engendered. In Papua New Guinea, of the 860 languages spoken, a third of these are declining in use and are being replaced by Tok Pisin and English. Additionally, in Western Europe, the Celtic languages of Welsh, Irish, Brenton and Scots Gaelic are also at risk, regardless of government policies to revive them (Ostler, 1999).

As a result, these languages fall into the state of 'endangered languages', which are languages at risk of no longer being used as their speakers shift to another language or die out. This is commonly known as a 'language shift' and is a movement of languages (mainly Indigenous,

migrant and minority) gaining prominence over others. However, considering these risks, language preservation is seen as an effort to maintain language and ensure that the Indigenous languages of a community are held as the primary (or continually present) form of communication.

2.2.1 Language Maintenance, Sustainability and Socialisation

According to Nettle and Romaine (2000), languages are links between humans, cultures, and environments. Reports suggest that less than 7,000 languages are actively being spoken worldwide, with Hoffman (2009) describing that nearly four-fifths of the earth's population can speak one of 83 languages. The 6,000 languages that remain fall into 'endangered language' status, which is defined as "languages and ways of speaking that threaten to become obsolete in the face of modern communicative age… [and is] at risk of losing all of [their] speakers" (Hoffman, 2009, p.12). To counter this, Mühlhäusler (1992) suggests that language maintenance needs to sustain the functioning patterns of transmission, active use, discourse, and "other supporting ecological factors" (Mühlhäusler, 1992, p.178). This usually involves placing languages into artificial environments such as dictionaries and grammars, high literature, "or giving language kits to surviving speakers" (Mühlhäusler, 1992, p.164). Doing so produces what O'Rourke (2015) states as revitalisation movements that enable language maintenance amongst surviving language speakers by generating and modernising new uses in spaces where minority languages are no longer spoken. Furthermore, there is a need to preserve native speakers that can act as "representatives of the last surviving speakers whose origins can be traced to a bounded, homogenous speech community, within a particular territory and historic past" (O'Rourke, 2015, p.76).

Moreover, Mühlhäusler (1992) suggests that developing and reserving exclusive use of language domains ensures that language can be successfully isolated from being overtaken by other dominant languages. The strength of the number of speakers of the native language can achieve the survival of minority languages. Taumoefolau, Starks, Davis and Bell (2002) believe that language communities that can maintain their mother tongue are usually minority communities that maintain strong connections with their island homes, as the migrant communities are usually dependant on their native homelands as a "source for linguistic revitalisation" (Taumoefolau et al., 2002, p.20). This is due to a high number of the population who use the language residing in their home countries, creating better opportunities to speak and hear the home language. In contrast, Mühlhäusler (1992) argues the idea that minority languages and cultures, such as islands in the Pacific, are still underdeveloped and underprivileged when it comes to language maintenance and that to "get out of this handicap"

(p.169), is to learn English or another Western language. Pauwels (2005) suggests that several factors and forces must promote language maintenance to be prominent within language revitalisation efforts. This includes introducing language maintenance into an individual or society at an early point of immigration of the mother tongue language, as this ensures endangered languages can be adopted as their dominant language. To keep Indigenous languages alive, linguistic enclaves must be maintained so that language maintenance can take hold within self-sufficient communities. These include but are not limited to parochial schools confined within a community, which can also lend itself to religious or community-based language education, as opposed to the secular majority found outside these enclaves. Finally, language maintenance ensures that exposure to people is preserved before they emigrate out of an enclave, as a way for them to maintain the connection to the previous language once they become immersed into language environments usually dominated by other languages. Research shows that the determining factor underpinning language maintenance is attitudes towards the language and ethnic communities. These attitudes are closely linked to ethnic identity, motivation, and, in particular, support from parents to use or learn a language. Significant evidence and weight of opinion on these factors determine whether individuals or groups can keep an Indigenous language alive in themselves and the community in the face of evolving and changing communities.

2.2.2 Attitudes to Language

A pertinent factor in language use is the view on the value and prestige of minority languages, specifically for social and economic mobility (Jones & Morris, 2007). It is argued by Wardhaugh (2010) that people are likely to place more prestige on the language spoken by the majority or languages that have been identified as language from powerful countries such as the United States or China. The other languages (in this case, minority or Indigenous languages) are placed with low prestige, with some speakers denying that they have any knowledge of their minority languages. Canagarajah (2008) suggests that negative attitudes towards migrant languages are often a result of colonial attitudes, where global languages like English are usually perceived as having a higher status. Parents are often torn as the influence of upward socioeconomic mobility for their children becomes a priority. In this case, minority languages are often not preferred for employment and job advancement, particularly in the diaspora, where languages such as English are heavily valued in these contexts (Chiang, 2009). Moreover, Kaplan (1994) argues that public attitudes toward other languages, other people, and the matter of difference may need to be adjusted, as this is a critical factor of language shift where the importance of language attitudes and ideologies have been “observed to take place even when members hold very positive attitudes toward the language” (Gafaranga,

2010, p.246). This is evident in the attitudes of parents towards teaching their children in their native language, where the study of Judeo-Spanish speakers in Turkey (Selone & Sarfati, 2013) implied that speaking in both Judeo-Spanish and French would hinder the academic success of their children in school, so Judeo-Spanish was avoided as a home language. Similarly, the study of the Navajo community in the United States (USA) showed the reluctance of parents to permit their children to learn Navajo, as they feared that the language would impede their children's academic pursuits and achievement in English (Begay, 2013). Similarly, McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010) highlighted that the low status of Pacific languages in education enabled a language deficit in which students were not permitted to use their mother tongue languages in schools. As a result, speakers of other languages and their cultures were viewed as having problems rather than being resources.

Joo's (2009) study highlights this point through the experiences of the Korean community in the US, in which a deficit-model view of minority languages was challenged; where Korean parents were often regarded as being incompetent and inactive in how they taught their children to maintain their heritage languages as a result of their misunderstanding of minority languages. However, this was not the case, as the parents in the study considered their heritage language to be an essential way of maintaining the ethnic identity of being Korean, which they regarded as an important factor in the lives of their children and continually made efforts to foster the learning of the Korean language both inside and outside of the home. In contrast, the attitudes to language for Indigenous minorities, migrant and diasporic communities are likely to differ in how they view the importance of language maintenance, which is emphasised by 'Aipolo and Holmes (2010), who state that;

> A number of New Zealand minority groups, such as the Samoan community (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1984), the Dutch (Kroef, 1977; van Schie, 1987), and the Dalmatian community (Stoffel, 1982), have demonstrated that in New Zealand, as elsewhere, the attitude of the minority group to the ethnic language is a crucial factor in accounting for the rate of shift to English (p.514).

They allude to the idea that "if we do not love our language, our language won't love us" ('Aipolo & Holmes, 2010, p.519).

A considerable body of evidence (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, 1988; David & Dealwis, 2006; Kaplan, 1994; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010) further highlights that attitudes to the heritage culture and language have a strong influence on the maintenance of language. In understanding language attitudes, reflection needs to be on the value of a language and what makes it essential. According to Edwards (1985), some valuable qualities that can be

considered are knowing that there are greater employment possibilities and community acceptance from the minority groups that speak their native language. However, some factors devalue a language, including the embarrassment that some children feel when their parents use their minority language in public when children just quickly want to conform and use the dominant language. Gardner (1985) highlights that there needs to be an attempt to create a positive relationship between language and culture, as this is consistent with achievement in a language, alongside having the motivation to practice the language and participate in that culture. Furthermore, Romaine (1989) draws on the idea that political issues negatively affect attitudes towards languages and that, in this instance, creates tension that affects the homeland's ties about language maintenance. Romaine (1989) states that “the language of the oppressive regime and try[ing] to assimilate to the new culture as quickly as possible” (p.42) is often rejected by refugees as a direct result of the issues that stem politically.

Additionally, motivation to use the language has been viewed by research as an emerging indicator that is strongly related to how language is learnt and maintained successfully. Much research has centred on the difference between instrumental and integral motivation. Integrative motivation is defined as having an interest in and liking a language and those who speak it, which stems from having positive attitudes toward the target language group and the potential and desire to participate with that group. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, involves practical feelings, such as knowing that language can improve one’s opportunities for employment. Many researchers in this field allude to integrative motivation as a more powerful factor in promoting language maintenance. However, Clyne (1981) points out that for German and Dutch language maintenance, a significant factor for acceptance of the language is if language learning is part of the school curriculum or examination. Additionally, this is essential in maintaining critical languages outlined by the National Language Policy of 1987 for teaching in the Department of Education. In hindsight, it is clear that both types of motivation can play a role in maintaining language.

2.2.3 Language Sustainability

The concept of endangered languages has been an important topic documented in the research literature for many years; however, Standford and Whaley (2010) suggest that the guiding metaphor behind it has not been without its shortcomings. Many scholars have projected that the discourse of sustainability should be viewed as an alternative to how languages are perceived in biological terms and concerning them being a more valuable source of culture (Bastardas-Boada, 2005, 2007; Stanford & Whaley, 2010) that is situated in a specific ecological relationship with other languages. This is a result of languages being not

purely biological but fundamentally cultural. Standford and Whaley (2010) believe that to view languages as cultural resources, they must consider not only their current use but how sustainable they are over time. Therefore, an ecologically oriented approach to language sustainability looks further than maintaining a language for its speakers. It pursues long-term sustainability, specifically for minority language groups whose language systems are often products for language revitalisation or maintenance efforts.

The origins of term 'language sustainability' was first used by Norwegian-American linguist Haugen, who defined the pre-requisite of language sustainability as "studying the interactions between any given language and its environment" (Haugen, 1971, p.19). Haugen's approach spread widely in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s, reaching vast research fields, including language acquisition and foreign language learning. Haugen's (1971) definition and use of language sustainability have been adopted by many scholars, such as Wendel (2005), who defines that language sustainability's ultimate approach is to consider the "complex web of relationships that exist between the environment, languages, and their speakers" (p.51). This is evident in the language sustainability approach applied to numerous disciplines and linguistic fields. For example, in education, a breakthrough article published by Ladson-Billings (1995) provided a theoretical statement for using culturally relevant pedagogies, later developed by Paris (2012), who turned Ladson-Billings' study into a culturally sustainable pedagogy. Paris' view went further than young people's responsive or relevant cultural experiences. It provided ways that supported young people to sustain the "cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence" (Paris, 2012, p.95).

To fully consider the connection between factors such as languages, environment and speakers, one must consider the foundations of human relationships and purposes, where a language is only sustainable as long as it is used, regardless of changing (social) environments and circumstances. To directly ensure language sustainability, Ehala (2014) suggests that language transmission must occur from one generation to the next, not only depends on the motivation from parents to transmit the language to their children from birth but must be a daily practice, particularly in the home. The sustainability of *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand is vital to consider in this instance, as the rate at which language shift is occurring is at a rapid speed, where efforts are already in place to try and maintain *vagahau Niue* (and Pacific languages) in Aotearoa. According to MacPherson (2011), linguistic shift from the heritage or minority language to a dominant language is a "measurable indicator of the

unsustainability of the associated community and subtractive bilingualism leading to monolingual and mono-cultural outcomes" (p.165).

2.2.4 Language Socialisation

Language socialisation is a lifelong process incorporating learning the way of life and culture (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Wilson & Kamana, 2009). Grinevald and Bert (2011) suggest regular contact with a community of speakers who follow a rigid communication rule that dictates which language to speak, to whom, when, and where. Baron (1992) highlights that research on language socialisation reveals children who can speak in the dominant language are more reluctant to speak the minority home language, even in the home, as their self-consciousness around their peers influences their language choice when choosing which language to speak. The process of language choice, as expressed by Grosjean (2010c), is a bilingual phenomenon where the language choice of an individual is closely related to who they are and how they relate to their larger social world (Pierce, 1995). The negative aspects of this generally come from what Caldas (2007) suggests as the external pressure of society to conform, and not necessarily from within the family environment. Being a dual language speaker implies the idea of being able to address people in an alternate linguistic and socio-cultural context that results in bilinguals being able to correct what Wilson and Kamana (2009) believe is a language with the social codes that run with any given language. Grinevald and Bert (2011) agree by suggesting that speech communities are "sociolinguistic entities rather than purely linguistic ones" (p.56) which "sought human factors in the work on endangered languages" (Grinevald & Bert, 2011, p.63). In this instance, Fillmore (1991) describes social settings as an advantage where target language speakers outnumber learners and where they can maximise interaction between the two groups that will allow bilinguals to acquire languages for a range of purposes in different situations and among different people in a structured way. Meinhof and Golasinski (2005) explain that the "discourse analysis of 'real language' is an interpretive, context-sensitive, qualitative reading of texts which requires at all times an understanding of the socio-political contexts of the speakers, and a detailed reading of the wider discursive context where micro-phenomena occur" (p.15).

Furthermore, Fillmore (1991) explains that social and cognitive characteristics contribute to the variation in language learning. However, Tytus (2018) argues that this was not always the case as he states that many early studies did not consider factors such as the status of being socially economic, as well as having the ability to understand instructions in English, or the frequency of language use. Wei et al. (2002) stipulates that social change in the last two decades has been the catalyst for the increased opportunities for individuals to become

bilingual, which has led to job opportunities and greater social mobility (Grosjean, 2010d). In agreeance, Grinevald and Bert (2011) suggest that the attributes of endangered language communities through urbanisation and migration within a country have been through mobility and transnational migrations, which have resulted in economic hardship, persecution, and wars. In hindsight, Grosjean (2010d) argues that it is more difficult for society to comprehend bilinguals as assets to a nation regarding what they can offer to cross-cultural communication and their understanding of how they move toward a more monolingual country. This results from bilinguals often being perceived as cultural and linguistic hybrids who are in contact with themselves or, as implied by Pavlenko (2002), as individuals who have shifting linguistic loyalties that involve shifting political allegiances and moral duties.

2.3 Language Shift

As languages change and evolve globally, Sallabank (2013) suggests that there has been a substantial incline in the interest in minority languages and the phenomena of language endangerment, shift and loss in the last several decades. In addition, research and literature exploring linguistic diversity worldwide and the language revitalisation and maintenance efforts of minority languages have increased rapidly in places where dominant languages are imposed on their use (Standford & Whaley, 2010). Much of the literature has been positioned within language endangerment, which has been central in raising public awareness about the reality of language diversity shrinking (Standford & Whaley, 2010). As language shift continues for many minority languages, scholars have developed language models that measure the linguistic vitality of languages and ways of revitalising them.

Language shift is defined as the occurrence of when a community slowly loses its ability or desire to speak in their mother tongue language and its functions in replacement for a majority language – one that is spoken by vast amount of people outside of the community (or provided them with greater communicative and socio-economic opportunities). Language shift usually occurs as a result of low status and the pressure of economic disadvantage, which is suggested by Hale (1992) as being the most significant triggers for language death, and unfavourable demographics and institutional neglect or opposition, particularly in education (Bell, 2014; Holmes, 2013). It is suggested by May (2013) that there is an uneven contest for minority and majority languages, the outcome of which is almost inevitable, encouraging language shift and further loss for minority languages. Many factors influence a minority group to shift from using one language for a range of purposes to using another as a means of communication, as a result of the desire to be a part of a greater community or as a need or want for the material resources that the majority culture outside of the enclave wants (Hoffman,

2009). Pauwels (2005) describes this as the change (gradual or not) by a speaker, a group of speakers, and a speech community that uses the dominant language in some aspects of life but then shifts to the “dominant use of another language for all spheres of life” (p.719). This results in the “language, and many cultural and symbolic associations that go with it, becoming much less of a factor in these smaller native cultures” (Pauwels, 2016, p.720).

Since ancient times, migration has played a massive part in human history, where transnationalism, as part of the migration trend, has contributed to how language shift, maintenance and educational achievement are understood (McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010). Bell (2014) lists the process of language shift within migrant groups as an example, as in the case of the Indians in Mozambique, Polynesians in California, the Chinese in Australia, and the Japanese in Peru. Additional examples include Welsh, Irish, and Scottish Gaelic speakers who have shifted their use to English to secure employment and social well-being since relocating to England, Wales and Ireland. According to Spolsky (2011), a language shift is not as simple as a simple dual shift; instead, it is a steady process that involves environments such as domains, participants, topics, and occasions. Furthermore, May (2013) alludes to the idea that “both internal push and external pull factors are invariably involved” (p.155). More often, speakers of a language are not always aware of language shifts due to the nature of the process that can occur over several generations.

As mentioned, throughout world history, different examples of language shifts, big and small, have occurred for many minority and heritage languages. Romaine (2002) draws on the diminishing of the Irish language that began in the mid-20th Century when the Irish traded English to achieve economic mobility in England. This was similar to many African languages, such as the Unami language of the Lenape tribe, which went through a language shift as a result of the increased Anglicizing of Africa (Hoffman, 2009). In many of these societies, powerful languages have been used for trade and economic mobility, leaving smaller cultures to fend for themselves against the more significant nations. Additionally, official policies and legislation have been created to restrict or prohibit the use of some languages, which Romaine (2002) describes as “facilitating assimilation into other cultures at the expense of the native culture’s unique language” (p.2). The creation of such policies has created a more globalised community that encourages homogeneity and limits the uniqueness of Indigenous and minority cultures for the success of the majority. By doing so, these policies and cultural shifts have created what now have become endangered languages.

2.3.1 Reversing Language Shift (RLS)

To reverse the erosion of many of the world's languages, a language revitalisation movement is gaining momentum around the world, which has garnered support from more and more literature on language revitalisation that has been developed in the 1990s because of languages becoming endangered and at risk of being extinct or in some cases die. To assess the position of endangered languages, Fishman (1970) created the GIDS scale (Table 5), in which the extended version of Fishman's GIDS suggests a ten-tier scale to reverse language shift, where the higher the GIDS rating, the lower the intergenerational transmission and maintenance of a language community or network (Fishman, 1991; UNESCO, 2011).

Table 5

Fishman's Expanded Graded International Disruption

LEVEL	LABEL	DESCRIPTION	UNESCO
0	International	The language is used internationally for a broad range of functions.	Safe
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, government at the nationwide level.	Safe
2	Regional	The language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services.	Safe
3	Trade	The language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders.	Safe
4	Educational	Literacy in the language is being transmitted through a system of public education.	Safe
5	Written	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community.	Safe
6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.	Safe
6b	Threatened	The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children.	Vulnerable
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children	Definitely Endangered
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.	Severely Endangered
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.	Critically Endangered
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community. No one has more than symbolic proficiency.	Extinct
10	Extinct	No one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes.	Extinct

Note. Adapted from Fishman (1991)

Fishman (1991, 1997) emphasises that the most relevant to this study and the critical stages of RLS are the sixth b and seventh stages, which are concerned with the intergenerational transmission of a language. Fishman (1991) believes that the survival of a language can be achieved if it is transmitted among all generations, especially within the family, which is the

core of language maintenance. He alludes to the idea that families are vital to both these stages as a “natural boundary that serves as a bulwark against outside pressure, customs and influences” (Fishman, 1991, p.4).

By doing so, the expectation is that through the family, communities will not need to rely on other institutions and the government for resources and policies for language maintenance of their heritage languages. Canagarajah (2008) suggests that it is around the sixth b stage that language maintenance efforts are introduced or implemented by the government, local community, media, schools and other social institutions. It is emphasised by Fishman (1991) that without the functionality of the family in protecting and maintaining the mother tongue language, other domains and the lower stages on the GIDS scale will not be effective. Furthermore, extra careful attention and full appreciation of the language are required for the crucial stage of daily intergenerational and informal interaction to be achieved successfully (Fishman, 1991).

On the other hand, many scholars and academics have been critical of Fishman’s GIDS scale, which they argue that there is too much emphasis placed on language and language management (Spolsky, 2004; Wodak, 2011) explain that this ultimately distracts the attention that should be given to social and economic factors which are likely to be the crucial factors of changes in language shift. Furthermore, Simons and Lewis (2011) acknowledge that language endangerment is a crucial problem today. However, they note that the GIDS scale is heavily weighed on the ‘safe’ side of the scale and only distinguishes three stages of endangerment (Stages 7 to 8a and 8b). Similarly, Williams (1992) maintains that the scale does not factor in power, struggle and conflict between and within communities when measuring the vitality of language endangerment. Moreover, Penfield and Tucker (2006) emphasised that the focus placed on the negative aspect of the problem lends itself to overshadowing the positive aspects of language reversal and revitalisation of prominent state-recognised languages such as Hawaiian and Te reo Māori. For example, in Hawai’i, there has been an increase in the number of speakers of the *‘ōlelo Hawai‘i* (Hawaiian language), which has created a population of multigenerational speakers despite having a generational gap existing between elders and children (Galloway, 2012).

For *vagahau Niue,* Table 5 above demonstrates that the language sits at stage level 7, which is definitely endangered where the child-bearing generation has knowledge of the language and can use it among themselves; however, they are not transmitting it to their children. This can be a direct result of the migration from Niue to New Zealand over the last 60 years, which

has impacted the number of speakers of the language. As demonstrated in the 2018 Census (see previous Table 1), 13.5% (4,182) of the Niue population who currently reside in New Zealand can speak in *vagahau Niue*, in comparison to the 19% (4,548) of Niue speakers identified in the 2013 New Zealand Census, and 23% in the 2006 Census. Over 12 years, a 9.5 per cent decrease in the number of speakers of *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand has been identified, where most of these speakers are aged over 50 years. In addition, a framework proposed by UNESCO identifies language vitality through nine factors;

1) intergenerational transmission;
2) absolute number of speakers;
3) proportion of speakers within the total population;
4) shifts in the domain of use;
5) response to new domains and media;
6) availability of materials for language education and literacy;
7) governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use;
8) language attitudes;
9) type and quality of documentation, where intergenerational transmission is at the top of the list.

(UNESCO, 2011, p.7-12)

Considering this framework, language maintenance and shift must be researched at the micro-societal level to recognise and understand the motivations of individuals vital to language use and language choice. However, to thoroughly understand the motivations and values of an individual, this must be explained and understood from a macro-societal view, which Karan (2011) explains as the point in which each individual must be treated as belonging to a family and society. This results in each family becoming part of a larger community that influences the language use, choice and acquisition of a specific heritage language.

2.3.2 Language Acquisition

Language acquisition is a creative process where children are not provided with information about grammar rules, meaning they can “extract rules of grammar from the language they hear around them” (Fromkin et al., 2003, p.343). This is demonstrated in the observations of children who acquire different languages under different social and cultural conditions. Research suggests that the stages of development are similar and that there is usually a universal understanding of individuals who acquire language. Examples of these claims are seen through research on deaf children of deaf signing parents, in which they go through stages in their acquisition of sign languages that mirror the spoken languages acquired by children. A combination of these factors has led many linguists, such as Fromkin et al. (2003), to believe that “children are equipped with an innate template or blueprint for language, known

as the universal grammar; and this blueprint aids the child in the task of constructing a grammar for his or her language" (pp.343-344).

Many academics have firmly based their theories about language acquisition on the idea that we become knowledgeable about language due to the language spoken and heard around us. Although we are prone to speaking in more 'grammatical language' (a language with fewer errors and mistakes) around children, they can be exposed to adult-to-adult speech, including ungrammatical and incomplete sentences and slips of the tongue. This is what Fromkin et al. (2003) prove as children having their language knowledge built in from infancy, in which Fantini (1985) agrees that "two languages permit the child to enter into and acquire the world views of two communities…and for these views to exist in harmony rather than in conflict" (p.197). Furthermore, Fantini (1985) alludes to the idea that language is a child's passport to enter a social group or cultural community.

In addition, positive attitudes are highlighted by Fantini (1985) as being essential by those who surround children as a key to how children grow up, as well as adjusted individuals who are comfortable in either community. Upon reflection, when considering language maintenance, the most fundamental issue that needs to be considered is the family's support to continue using the ethnic language. This is due to what Edwards (1985) believes is the most direct cause of language loss: the lack of transmission to children. A study by De Houwer (1999) explored the role of parents' beliefs in an attempt to discover the link between bilingual developments. Findings from her study found that parents' *impact belief* was able to influence their children's language progress, in which this belief was defined as parents being able to exercise some control over their children's linguistic acquisition and functioning. As children go through the stages of their language development, each stage is equally important in achieving native-like proficiency in one or more native languages to which they have exposure. The communication pyramid, seen in Figure 15, describes the language development process, demonstrating that the skills lower down in the pyramid support the development of skills higher up. All skills continue to develop alongside each other as the child progresses.

Figure 15

Communication pyramid and the stages of a child's development

Note. Small Talk Speech Therapy (2023)

As a result of this, the age at how and when the language is acquired, as well as the amount of use it has been given over the years, is described by Grosjean (2010b) as the “impact on how well a language is known, how it is processed, and even the way the brain stores and deals with it” (p.26). It can be noted that the most significant difference between early and late bilingualism is in how they are acquired, which has to do with the age of acquisition. Fillmore (1991) argues that age is essential for language learning because the older the learner is, the easier it is to obtain new forms and structures as they have developed into better learning strategies and cognitive abilities. On the other hand, the heritage language learnt by an individual, acquired as a child, will differ from every other language learnt, as there will be no other means to compare it with, in terms of another language, as it is guaranteed that the child will acquire this first language in a more social context. This applies to the linguistics of the language, including phonetics, sounds, enunciations, and additional processes by which the child learns to speak. The second and subsequent languages learnt will be compared to the first language regarding differences, sound, and language patterns in the words.

In an attempt to define the shift in language as a result of changes in age and political climate, Grinevald and Bert (2011) suggest that cross tabulating the date of birth of the speakers determines whether the endangerment of language sat at endangered, very endangered, or extremely endangered when the speaker was born, as a way of determining how much

exposure there was to the language. Grinevald and Bert (2011) define this as the process of language obsolescence - where a comparison is drawn between old and young fluent speakers. Romaine (1995) suggested that as speakers age, regular changes in the patterns of language choice become more prominent as social circumstances become more of an advantage for younger learners compared to older language learners. As a result, the interaction with the target language becomes more accessible in a way that supports language learning (Grinevald & Bert, 2011). Furthermore, the present conception of language that the United States initially constructed is argued by Makoni and Pennycook (2007) to consolidate political power and missionaries eager to evangelise colonised populations.

The change in the political climate has drawn an increased awareness of language rights by both Indigenous and immigrant communities (Wei et al., 2002), which has been viewed by Grinevald and Bert (2011) as "endangered language communities pressing for legal demands for the recognition for their ancestral territories [and languages]" (p.55), demonstrating how intricately intertwined both concepts are in endangered language communities and in the success of Indigenous language maintenance that has drawn on the robust relationship between a particular geographic location and the use of a language (Wilson & Kamana, 2009). Consequently, because of this, bilingual individuals not only struggle to navigate the societal prejudices towards the languages that they acquire but also with his or her self-identity (Wei et al., 2002).

2.4 Bilingualism

Languages surround us during each waking moment of our lives. Our use of language is a form of communication of our emotions and thoughts, the way we interact with others and how we relate to our way of life, but it is also a way of comprehending our general surroundings. Grosjean (2010a) highlights that the study of bilingualism has a long history and is "indeed present in practically every country in the world, in all classes of society, [and] in all age groups" (p. xiv). Early researchers in the field have contributed a wealth of knowledge to studying bilingualism, as Grosjean (2010a) highlighted, which has changed the views on bilingualism. These researchers include Einar Haugen, Uriel Wienreich, William Mackey, and Wallace Lambert, whose literature has shaped bilingualism as we see it today.

Bilingualism, as stated, is a worldwide social phenomenon that has been described by many academics as having an impact on the world's population today (Wei et al., 2002). With more than half of the world being bilingual (Grosjean, 2010a), bilingualism is not as rare as one may think upon first hearing the word; it is a natural phenomenon worldwide. However, the

definition of bilingualism and how it differs from bilinguals is challenging. It has been a point of discussion for many years due to the multi-dimensional aspects that bilingualism entails, as stated by many linguists, educationalists, and psycholinguists. Saunders (1988) draws on the experience of a well-known researcher of bilingualism, Joshua Fishman, in which he states that “more than half of the world’s population today uses more than one language while engaging in activities basic to human needs” (p.1) that grows within “specific historical, political, and economic contexts” (Wei et al., 2002, p.9). Grosjean (2010b) further emphasises that the essence of true bilinguals lies in how they “master two languages in early childhood and who can move back and forth between them smoothly and effortlessly” (p.19) or has knowledge of ‘two first languages’ or ‘bilingual first language acquisition’ (Meisel, 1990).

Furthermore, bilingualism cannot be described in a single argument, as its definition varies depending on the context in which it occurs. Some might consider it as an equal capability to being able to communicate in two very different languages. In contrast, others will argue that even though one can communicate in two languages, there is a likelihood that there will be a weakness in one of the languages, where even those who have been bilingual since birth and started learning how to speak have no doubt become stronger and more confident in one of the two languages they possess. Several definitions of bilingualism have been provided by researchers such as Bloomfield (1933), who defined bilingualism as having the native-like control of two languages, where the idea of bilingualism is often linked to the notion of code-switching, as a person should be able to speak using two or more than one variety of a language. Similarly, Weinreich (1953) explains that bilingualism is also the ability of a speaker to use two languages alternatively. The definition of a bilingual can often be categorised as either a ‘balanced’ or ‘ideal’ bilingual under ‘complete’ bilingualism. These terms are often used to measure other types of bilingualism that have been referenced as underdeveloped or inadequate, compared to ‘balanced’ bilingualism, which includes people who have no productive control over a language but can understand utterances in it, where linguists have termed this with expressions such as ‘passive’ or ‘receptive’ bilingualism.

Haugen’s (1953) definition of bilingualism pinpointed the capabilities of a speaker in how they communicate and understand an additional variety of a language. By doing so, bilingualism occurs only when an individual of a particular variety can communicate effectively with an additional variety. In all of these definitions, there is not an agreed definition of the traits of a bilingual person, in that most bilinguals are then referred to in terms of scales and categories, such as partial versus ideal bilingual, coordinate versus compound bilingual, which Bialystok (1991) refers to these as factors relating to function and proficiency (Romaine, 1995). Grosjean

(2010d) admits that bilinguals can communicate with people in different countries and cultures. Inadvertently, however, characteristics of monolingualism have been used as a template to define and characterise bilingualism and multilingualism in linguistic studies. As highlighted by Wei et al. (2002), “bilingualism is presented on cases to evaluate theories that are developed based on monolingual evidence” (p.9). This is further supported by Grosjean (1985), who argues that it is “important to stress how negative - often destructive - the monolingual view of bilingualism has been, and in many areas, still is” (p.71). This has led to an ‘irregular’, ‘fractional’ and ‘distorted’ view of bilingualism, which is becoming outdated in the light of rapidly growing, multipronged, interdisciplinary research. Grosjean (1985; 1989) highlights evidence of this, expressing that the monolingual or fractional view of bilingualism is through the notion that a bilingual is two monolinguals in one person. This leads to an “underlying assumption of competition, [where] one language is threatening the other” (Baker, 1992, p.77), therefore putting language activism in a central position (Grinevald & Bert, 2011).

As suggested by Wei et al. (2002), bilingualism prods society to re-evaluate the relationship between diversity and unity and to come to terms with the idea of a harmonious co-existence between different linguistic and cultural groups, as an attempt to observe the obligations and rights of each other. The case studies of the Hopi people in Navajo in the United States, Yup’ik in Southwestern Alaska, and Mexicano in Mexico prove that the principles of youth activists whose activism is not limited to their Indigenous languages but embody their translanguaging practices and bilingualism that are claimed as being authentic and valid (Garcia, 2009). This work results in Indigenous youth leading the re-emergence of language practices that differ from the pre-colonial era and can restore a secure future for Indigenous life practice in the 21st century as a result of “dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging” (Garcia, 2009, p.380), much to the advantage of Indigenous communities.

According to Hoffman (1991), a significant feature of the multi-pronged topic of bilingualism centres the point of difficulty when attempting to define bilingualism from one dimension, as it is not stagnant but is fluid in the context in which it occurs. Hamers and Blanc (2000) draw on a similar notion by highlighting that multi-dimensionality can be viewed as a weakness of bilingualism because when defining it, only one dimension would be considered, ignoring other sides of bilingualism. For example, Sherkina-Lieber (2020) draws on competency as a definition of bilingualism without considering the other significant dimensions, such as comprehension and proficiency. Baker (1992) believes that bilingualism should be viewed in a more holistic view as a way of integrating viewpoints of bilingualism that allow “two languages to co-exist in a positive, helpful and mutually reciprocating beneficial manner”

(p.78). This can be described as part of Schumann's (1978) 'acculturation model' of bilingualism. Second language learning can be defined as social factors of integration into the community and personal feelings of assimilation. Grinevald and Bert (2011) argue that the stance and response to external events of bilingualism confront a language community with the loss of an ancestral language. The demand to recognise identities and rights binds the consciousness of endangerment that usually comes from communities. This is highly problematic for Indigenous communities as finding what it means to have an identity is a constant struggle as a result of Western contact (Charles, 2009).

2.4.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Bilingualism

Bilingualism enables new opportunities for both society and the individual. For an individual bilingual, Wei et al. (2002) argues that knowing two languages has become increasingly seen as an asset as the 'communication world gets smaller'. This is particularly true in what Tytus (2018) believes as "bilingualism to be greatly advantageous, not only in terms of socio-cultural and economic benefits but also global adaptation and to a smaller extent personal and cognitive advantages" (p.216) for bilingual speakers. Romaine (1995) supports this by arguing that a "person learns the two languages in the same context, where they are used concurrently so that there is a fused representation of the language in the brain" (p.79). Grosjean (2010d) supports this further by suggesting that bilingualism encourages divergent thinking - which has cognitive benefits for adults. In reflection, bilingual children become sensitive to the language behaviour of the adults they are with (Grosjean, 2010b), allowing bilinguals to build up very different emotive and affective meanings associated with each language (Romaine, 1995). Tytus (2018) expresses that bilingualism becomes a variable over time that can produce a mental training method with a protective mechanism, which is particularly important at the later stages of life.

On the other hand, Grosjean (2010d) expresses that bilingualism is linked to the ability to communicate where social and cultural dimensions of bilingualism can be advantageous for speakers of more than one language in everyday life. One of the many exciting things about this worldwide phenomenon is that bilingual people can provide a new and different perspective crucial to how we express ourselves and our emotions. This is further supported by Garcia (2009), who states that "languages are not conceived as separate autonomous systems, but as language practices tapping all points of the continua that make up a bilingual repertoire" (p.378). This is particularly true as demonstrated by Garret and Baquedano-Lopez (2002), who explain that the language socialisation model explicitly addresses the issue of language use for individuals and how they situate themselves to others, which acknowledges

the dynamic relationship between children and the communities within which their languages develop. Further research has reported that bilingualism fosters “open-mindedness, different perspectives on life, and reduces cultural ignorance” (Grosjean, 2010d, p.100), leading to more significant job opportunities and improved social mobility.

In contrast, the disadvantages of bilingualism are also essential to consider in the argument. Caldas (2007) argues that bilingualism is not a desired characteristic, which is supported by Grosjean (2010a), who explains that “many bilinguals do not consider themselves to be bilingual and are critical of their language competence” (p. xv), therefore “being brought up bilingual does not guarantee anything” (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004, p.110). Similar opinions by Wei et al. (2010) have highlighted that being bilingual is not enough in itself and that for society to offer different groups within the nation bridge-building potential for bilingualism, there needs to be e a cross-fertilisation between cultures, with groups beyond the artificial borders of a nation. Numerous causes contribute to the emergence and dominance of bilingualism, as well as various optional or compulsory factors. These causes are what Grinevald and Bert (2011) describe as language attrition, in which factors within a particular endangered language community situate the individual speaker at a particular time and phase in the process of language shift and language loss.

Critical factors, such as emigration, economic trade and colonisation, have contributed to the dominance of bilingualism over monolingualism (Baker & Jones, 1998). Emigration is a significant factor in being bilingual, where emigrants move from their home countries to new countries for several reasons. Some of these examples include escaping the presence of war or poverty within their home countries in search of a better life in foreign linguistic communities, which results in being forced to learn the language of the host countries to have a broader reach across different opportunities and employment availability. Saunders (1988) draws on two critical factors that motivate people to learn a second language and be immersed in a new culture and environment: commerce and trade. In most commercial markets and economic businesses, bilingual individuals interact with customers in various multicultural areas. For example, 86.3 per cent of emigrants in Australia speak more in their second language than in their home or mother tongue to communicate in these different cultural environments. As a result, Wei et al. (2002) suggests that the rise in economic well-being promotes the reduction of linguistic diversity.

Because of these advantages and disadvantages, bilinguals must unconsciously decide which language to use and how much of the other language is needed; therefore, they should not

learn the languages equally. This, in turn, demonstrates a strong imbalance that favours the language being used more often over the second/home language in daily interactions.

2.4.2 Language Choice

As described in the previous sections, language choice is ultimately defined by factors identified by Edwards (2009) as attitudes and beliefs towards a language, the influence of parents on children, parents from different ethnic backgrounds, status issues, and the presence of older family members. All these factors inevitably increase motivation to use the minority language. Garcia (2015) draws on this by explaining that the "ecology of language is determined by the people who learn it, use it and transmit it to others" (p.57). This is supported by Kukutai (2007), who argues that assimilation and retentionist approaches revolve around the motivations and preferences of the minority parent, reflecting the more general assumption that it is the minority parents' job to 'pass on' the minority ethnicity. For example, David and Dealwis (2006) describe that the choice of language of the minority Telegu community in Sarawak consisted of both an intra-generational and inter-generational language choice in the home domain. The findings of this study highlighted a shift in the patterns of language use by the early descendants of the Telegu community in Sarawak. This resulted from a society placing a premium on English and Malay in all official and unofficial domains, where there is hardly any realistic use for the Telegu language.

This similar notion is demonstrated by 'Aipolo and Holmes (2010), who highlight in their study of the Tongan language that in different settings, evidence showed that the addressee has an important influence "not only on choice of language but, more interestingly, on the amount of English introduced or the amount of code-switching or mixing" ('Aipolo & Holmes, 2010), p.510). Similarly, Gafaranga (2010) highlights that children are inclined to adopt the language of the person who addresses them, which is usually a significant aspect of talk organisation. Gafaranga (2010) explains that talk organisation is "when a child implicitly asks the adult participant to repair his or her choice simply by flagging it as the only aspect of talk organisation where they are not in line with each other" (p.258). This is due to language preference being a membership categorisation device, which Gafaranga (2010) explains as the language choice of speakers who consider each other's preferences in which they categorise each other in terms of language preferences. This is evident in what David and Dealwis (2006) suggest as a factor of exogamous marriages where the language choice in bilingual families is determined by mothers, whose language choices are usually determined by socio-economic considerations (Forrest, 2018). This is further supported by Biddle (2012; Biddle & Swee, 2012) regarding Australian Indigenous languages, which are determined strongly by the

location of where people reside and the characteristics of their communities. Furthermore, Lewis and Simons (2010) suggest that institutional and societal choices are critical in influencing how parents decide their language behaviour concerning their children.

On the other hand, Hatoss and Sheely (2009) allude to the idea that the critical motivation influencing language choice is to advance personal benefit. For example, Hatoss and Sheely (2009) describe the experience of a Sudanese refugee background; they explain that "youth use a multitude of languages in their daily life in the Australian community. While they are strongly attached to their mother tongue language and consider it to have a strong identity function and a strong cultural attachment, they are also highly motivated to learn English and to fit into the host Australian social environment" (p.141). This is further supported by Kang and Kim (2012), who highlight that the language choice and development faced by minority heritage learners often stagnate or even regress in proficiency and use in the home once formal schooling begins (Kang, 2010; Kondo-Brown, 2005; Wong-Fillmore, 2000), where the "medium request is usually a conversational strategy that facilitates language shift because it promotes the adoption of a monolingual French medium" (Gafaranga, 2010, p.266). Furthermore, findings from a study by Liu et al. (2009) suggest that it may be crucial for children from immigrant families to become proficient in English and retain their home language to encourage shared ethnicity. In this instance, 'Aipolo and Holmes (2010) explain that for Tongans, "a shared ethnicity, rather than educational level, was the best predictor of language choice" (p.507) that appears to be a more "important factor in predicting language usage for this generation group, than the participants' occupation alone" ('Aipolo & Holmes, 2010, p. 512).

2.4.3 Attitudes to Bilingualism

It is vital to explore language's role in how people perceive the world, express themselves, and connect with culture to understand better and contextualise the relationship between bilingualism and attitudes.

Barron-Hauwaert (2004) mentions that "having a positive attitude to language use, combined with a bilingual mother, improves the chances of the child becoming bilingual" (p.119). Garcia (2009) defines attitudes as the internal feelings, thoughts, and tendencies in an individual's behaviours in different contexts. They are challenging to measure and significant in their ways of thinking as they influence the behaviours of different individuals and groups, which Garcia (2009) alludes to as "the labour of retaining Indigenous cultural and language practices is hard work" (p.380). It is considered that language attitudes have a pivotal role in second language

learning or the loss of the native language. It is indicated in research by (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; McLaughlin, 1978) that an individual is bound to learn a language faster and better than others if his or her attitudes towards that language are positive.

Grinevald and Bert (2011) suggest that rather than focusing on the loss of language, it might be best to "focus on the survival and resistance [of a language], and acknowledge those that have safeguarded the languages, in whatever form, up until today" (p.61), as a result of communities having been by definition "traumatised into abandoning their language" (Grinevald & Bert, 2011, p.63), therefore causing a shift in power between different languages used (Romaine, 1995) as bilinguals can make dynamic interferences even in the most monolingual of situations, as a result of the influence of the other deactivated languages (Grosjean, 2001). The impact of the ideologies and attitudes of the surrounding communities has seen languages survive better in diasporic communities than back home due to increased wealth, changed attitudes and or ideologies (Grinevald & Bert, 2011). On the other hand, research by McLaughlin (1978) demonstrated that monolingualism in the United States has traditionally been the norm and that bilingualism has been regarded as a liability and a social stigma. This hostility toward bilingualism has nothing to do with language as such but has been directed as culture, as bilingualism epitomises a foreign way of thinking and carries alien values. As expressed by Nicholas (2009), "…words have a home in the context of culture - in the course of daily activities, in social institutions...they have meaning with these contexts" (p.330).

In a case study on the Hopi people, Nicholas (2009) demonstrates that "the development of an emotional commitment to Hopi ideals - [is] cultivated through the myriad social, cultural and religious practices that comprise the Hopi oral tradition - otherwise known as affective enculturation" (p.321). These practices provide the context of language as cultural practices through cultural and linguistic experiences. This stance is shared by Nicholas (2009), who;

> …places an emphasis on active participation in the Hopi religion, customs, and traditions as leading to the acquisition and demonstration of appropriate cultural standards of conduct and attitude in everyday life while moving toward a deeper understanding of the purpose and meaning of cultural traditions in the Hopi way of life. (p.321)

Wilson and Kamana (2009) stipulate that the Hopi ritual bridges "the past and present by recalling the people's moving through different worlds to their contemporary situation" (p.371). Consequently, Dorian (1982) believes that the boundaries of the community and knowing where to draw the line in terms of the different types of speakers that should be included or

not is ambiguous, especially knowing if there is a consensus about who belongs and who does not belong to the language community. Grosjean (2010d) expresses this idea through bilinguals, who identify as bicultural but do not have a sense of belonging to any cultural group. Instead, they feel alienated from their cultures, especially at specific turning points in their lives, as the inner self is a subject that can be approached only from within (Haiman, 2005).
It is understood that many academics perceive bilingualism as a language shift and that intergenerational transmission of language/languages will be declining. Furthermore, central to these concepts is the underlying theme of receptive bilingualism and how, contrary to these themes (as noted above), receptive bilingualism needs to be understood in a much broader context to understand how this would impact the endangered Indigenous languages we see today; especially with a focus on the current language for this study, *vagahau Niue.*

2.5 Receptive bilingualism

As previously mentioned, receptive bilingualism is a phenomenon that is still understudied. It involves understanding a language without the production of speech, which depends on fundamental linguistic questions, such as what it means to know a language and how the linguistic knowledge is accessed in comprehension versus production. Definitions of receptive bilingualism research have been found in various fields concerning bilingualism, each with an immensely diverse population of receptive bilinguals with limited communication between these fields. Within the linguistics field specifically, dedicated research to receptive bilingualism by Rehbein, et al. (2012) provides one of the most inclusive definitions, stating that the "mode of bilingual communication allows interactants to employ a language or a language variety that is different from their partners but can still be used to understand each other without the help of any additional *lingua franca"* (Rehbein et al., 2012, p.249). In this instance, the definition is only about the mode of communication without specifying proficiency.

Furthermore, Radley et al. (2021) define receptive bilingualism by way of receptive bilinguals in that a receptive bilingual is a person with native fluency in one language and can understand but cannot speak a second language (this is often the language of one or both of their parents). Many second-generation immigrant populations are considered receptive bilinguals in native English-speaking countries, where they can understand their mother tongue but are only able to respond in English. Limited research has been documented on the number of people who are receptive bilinguals, and it is these people who will often refer to themselves as monolingual, as they are not confident enough in their language ability to cite bilingualism. However, they are still on the spectrum of bilingualism. Romaine (1989) draws on a similar

concept by defining receptive bilinguals as individuals who have “no productive control over a language” (p.10)…but are “able to understand utterances in it” (Romaine, 1989, p.10). In language shift/loss studies, receptive bilingualism is considered a stage where a generation of receptive bilinguals does not produce speech or pass the language to the next generation (Fishman, 1991).

There have been differences in terminology and definitions between fields due to their specific focus on language. In the Receptive Multilingualism (RM) field, the concern is primarily with comprehension of Mutually Intelligible Languages (MILs), which emphasise many languages that can be understood due to their similarity to the languages already mastered. RM is defined as a mode of communication (rather than a proficiency type) because this does not preclude various proficiency levels. On the other hand, ‘receptive bilingualism’ emphasises proficiency in one specific language. Determining who is receptively bilingual, however, is not straightforward. Sherkina-Lieber (2011) argues that receptive bilinguals are not necessarily incapable of producing speech in their receptive language, nor are they able to comprehend every detail. A more severe problem is that receptive bilingualism is applied to diverse populations; however, all fit the above definitions. Examples include; English-dominant non-fluent heritage speakers understanding Inuktitut (Sherkina-Lieber, 2011), speakers of non-mutually-intelligible Russian and Estonian understanding each other’s language learned as a second language (L2) (Bahtina, et al., 2013), Turkish speakers understanding closely related Azerbaijani without previous exposure (Sağin-Şimşek & König, 2012), speakers of Germanic languages understanding other Germanic languages, varying in similarity to their first language (L1), with or without previous exposure (e.g. Gooskens & Swarte, 2017), L1 speakers of Dutch using their L2 knowledge of German to understand their third language (L3) Danish (Swarte, Schüppert & Gooskens, 2013), and many others. However, how comprehension is achieved and what knowledge it is based on varies significantly between them. Given this, there is a need to bring receptive bilingualism studies together without mixing them up. Even though all these examples involve receptive bilinguals communicating in receptive bilingualism mode, not all generalisations for one type are extendable to others. On one hand, similar terms refer to different populations. On the other hand, these populations are typically studied within different fields, with little systematic comparison.

Comprehension of MILs is studied in the receptive multilingualism field; receptive bilingual’s understanding of an L2 (L3, L1) dissimilar to the language(s) they know sometimes is also studied within receptive multilingualism or the L2 field. Receptive bilinguals understanding a heritage language are mainly studied within the Heritage language field, with some exceptions.

More communication and mutual enrichment between these fields are necessary to further the understanding of the nature of receptive skills without usable productive skills. In previous literature, different receptive bilingualism types have been mentioned, for example, Rehbein et al. (2012), but without much detail regarding the differences. Considering all receptive bilingualism types, there is an awareness that there will be differences, but finding what they have in common is still understudied and unwritten.

The active and passive role played by parents is distinguished by Gardner (1985) as including parental encouragement to succeed, as well as monitoring the performance and reinforcement of success (where negative active roles include an agreement that language learning is a waste of time or an intrusion on more subject area). Moreover, the latter passive role includes parental attitudes toward the second-language community, weakening or reinforcing the integrative motive. Gardner (1985) reinforces that the passive role of parents supports parental attitudes and reactions to language community, and this is what children remember when they reflect on how their parents encouraged language learning and maintenance. The support of parents must be considered when it comes to language maintenance, as the central cause of language attrition or loss is the failure to transmit the language to the next generation.

2.6 Vagahau Niue Language Research

2.6.1 Value of vagahau Niue

The literature has highlighted the significance of our native and heritage languages as the catalyst for culture (Meinhof & Golasinski, 2005). Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001) alludes to the relationship between language and culture as an analogy of oxygen being needed for human survival; without one, the other cannot survive. A substantial amount of literature has drawn its focus on the core relationship between language and identity, where in the case of *vagahau Niue,* the language and its value to Niue people sit at second priority to the English language, as suggested by Head (2000) that the “Niuean community strive to attain the English language” (p.149), for employment and educational gain, as well as integrating their families into a society where English is a frequently used medium in daily conversations and interactions. The efforts to maintain the Niue language for children in the 1970s and 1980s, during what was known as the period of migration, saw Niue communities establishing *Aoga fakamahani ma e tau fanau ikiiki* (preschool/language nests) as an approach inspired by complete immersion Māori language nests (Te Kōhanga Reo). Over the last 40 years, only seven Niue language nests have been established. These nests started as full-immersion centres and grew into bilingual centres to move with the changes and obtain government

funding. The first *Aoga Niue he tau fanau ikiiki* (Niue Early Childhood Centre) a school – based in Mangere, Auckland, was formed in the late 1980s as a means of maintaining and nurturing *vagahau Niue* and *tau aga fakamotu* (Niue culture) to achieve language maintenance of the Niue language as the first language for Niue toddlers. As suggested by Simons and Lewis (2011), to add new functions that could help strengthen the position of the language, "communities must work to bring those [traditional] functions back" (p.4) that would be able to reverse language shift successfully. Moreover, Makoni and Pennycook (2007) argue that everything happens locally, such as language revival within communities, which occurs at a local level despite its widespread practice globally.

It is defined by the Ministry of Education (2023) that "*Vagahau Niue* [is a] language that has its way of expressing meaning, and that each has intrinsic value and special significance and mana for its users" (para.3). Valdés (2005) encourages this point by suggesting that the youth grow used to positioning themselves as heritage language listeners rather than speakers of the language, as Wyman (2012) states that they do not get enough opportunity to use, hear, and practice their native language in meaningful interactions and conversations in natural life settings. This is evident in a study carried out by Starks (2006), whose findings revealed that "Niuean is spoken more by the older generations than to the younger generations" (p.380), where she concluded that there is a greater likelihood of a lower proficiency in the community language if the speaker is younger. However, the Ministry of Education (2023) has highlighted that *vagahau Niue* is crucial for learning the importance of the strength of the language from different viewpoints, which can lead to a reflection of Niue people towards their heritage language(s) and identity. This results in *vagahau Niue* encountering information and conveying ideas that recognise the uniqueness and irrecoverable knowledge embedded within language (Tauevihi, 2000). Through this, Niue speakers and, more so, young Niue speakers can comprehend the importance of preventing language loss for present communities and future generations, which can ensure the continuity of intergenerational transmission.

The ability to communicate and understand how *vagahau Niue* contributes to language revitalisation and maintenance enables exploration, celebration and an in-depth look into the *vahāloto* (space, between time or space) through which cultural identity is connected, that supports cultural knowledge and transfer of the wellbeing and identity of Niue speakers. As language maintenance and revitalisation are concerned with the well-being of native speakers and the communities in which the language is used, protecting the ongoing vitality of the Niue language enables not only a revival of cultural traditions but also of cultural behaviours, and

how Niue people relate to their families, friends and members of their community. Through this, the value of *vagahau Niue* will be able to embrace the community and their connection to cultural identity through language, ultimately strengthening resilience, confidence and a sense of belonging.

2.6.2 Identity and Culture

The languages used in everyday life, identified by Meinhof and Golasinski (2005) as the language of belonging, play a significant role in constructing and confirming multiple identities. As Watson-Gegeo (2004) explains, our speech is part of our identity and cannot be separated from our social contexts or identities. It is context-sensitive and continually evolves across space and time (Caldas, 2007). Linnekin and Poyer (1990) suggest that Pacific people frame their identities based on the setting they are in, a point of contention explored by scholars of the Pacific Island Diaspora (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990; McGrath, 2002; Tiatia, 1998; Tupuola, 2004). These scholars have highlighted that different context require people to express different relationships to cultural knowledge (Gershon, 2007). Tupuola (2004) provides insights on navigating social interactions effectively and structuring identity in different contexts, requiring a wide range of non-overlapping skills. Anae (2004) observes that the paths in which people can use these social skills to shift in the diaspora have consequently changed, and the types of knowledge needed by an individual to claim an identity have evolved and changed over time.

Grinevald and Bert (2011) underscore the role of language in the reconstruction of identities by bilingual adults and the absorption of elements of another culture by acquiring a new language. Meinhof and Golasinski (2005) further suggest that “language constructs ethnicity here and now, rather than universally or permanently” (p.18), a concept closely associated with nation, class, ethnicity, and culture, all of which contribute to a person’s self-identity (Fishman, 1986; Garret & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002). Wilson and Kamana (2009) highlight that “language is the vehicle that human groups use to maintain continuity of identity while modifying their economic systems and other features of their lives” (p.370). Tiatia (1998), in her book Caught between Cultures, presents a diagram (Table 6) that illustrates the binaries in the relationship between Western structure and the traditional format of diasporic communities.

Table 5

Binaries between Western and traditional structure

Sāmoan/ Tongan / Niue Culture	Western System
Communalism	Individualism
Unquestioned obedience and respect for seniority	Critique
Understand and speak the mother tongue.	Speak the English language.
Church and extended family obligations first	Education/Work First
Fa'a Sāmoa/ Anga faka Tonga/ Faka Niue	Fa'a palagi
'You are palagi'	'You are a Pacific Islander'
Don't ask, do it	'Ask before you go ahead.'

Note. Adapted from Tiatia, 1998, p.71

Tiatia's (1998) dialogue shines a light on Pacific youth raised in both the Western structure and the traditional home structure, as well as the challenges and complexities of the two ways of living. She interviewed and documented youth recounting their upbringing in both systems as being 'caught between cultures'. Similarities were identified from all the participants interviewed by Tiatia through their personal experiences. She identified ideas of confusion, tension, and cultural rejection. These views may leave some secure in their self-identity. In contrast, as shared by many young people in the diaspora, others are confused about the ability to have 'time out' as a reaction to the difficulty of identity. For most youth, this involved leaving the church and rejecting parental authority.

Nicholas (2009) draws on the case study of Hopi youth by raising the questions of the impact of language shift on the identity formation of Hopi youth and the role of the Hopi language in defining and asserting their social and personal identities as Hopi society members as Hopi citizens in the broader sense. This is further highlighted by (Erikson, 1968; Hill & Holmbeck, 1986; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986; Steinberg, 1997; Caldas, 2007) that to achieve a model for language acquisition, individuals tend to seek their own identity by separating from their parents and other authorities within the context of their peer groups. This allows for the construction of identities and the choice to concentrate on aspects of narratives using linguistic resources (De Fina, 2007). Learning an additional language can provide the most affluent access to another culture. For the Niue language, it allows for communication with people from the Niue culture to discover authentic spoken and written expressions of the language. In a way, speakers of *vagahau Niue* can gain insight into Niue culture, which provides a firm foundation for intercultural acceptance and respect and an appreciation for diversity. As *vagahau Niue* speakers gain insights into how their own 'cultural lens' shapes their views and

ways of doing things, this helps deconstruct cultural stereotypes that allow for an appreciation of the rich knowledge speakers contribute to the learning environment (Nicholas, 2009).

Meinhof and Golasinski (2005) express that “the entire linguistic repertoire that is capable of constructing the speaker’s identity within the particular context of the telling” (p.17) enables “discursive construction of national, regional or local identity that positions oneself as part of a particular ethnic, regional or local group” (Meinhof & Golasinski, 2005, p.15). This allows bilinguals to move to a new linguistic and cultural environment that allows the reflection on their linguistic and cultural heritage and an opportunity to develop new identities that will allow linguistic confidence to emerge (Caldas, 2007; Wei et al., 2002). However, this adds to the common fear of the loss of one’s traditional ethnicity over the years. An example of this is for a bilingual child, the different type of language background of each parent (i.e., one parent is Mexican, and the other is Chinese) contributes to the fear parents have when their children have to choose their ethnic preference. In this instance, children do so based on the most accepted and popular values, usually dependent on the societal environment in which they currently live, causing them to lose a part of themselves over several years. This is supported by what Starks (2005) suggests that a language shift from *vagahau Niue* to English in New Zealand is likely to occur, given the strong views of younger participants – that English is needed to succeed academically and socially in the New Zealand landscape. While this is true, we sometimes do not realise that we evolve in many ways and adapt to other cultural practices to an extent throughout our lifetime until it is called to our attention.

Furthermore, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) highlight that language goes hand-in-hand with culture and that one cannot co-exist without the other. Language is the vehicle we use to connect our beliefs, emotions and ideas. It communicates our position in the world we live in and informs our history and our culture. When a language disappears, it removes the ability to communicate one’s identity, making the world smaller. Edwards (1995) describes language as “highly significant as a marker of identity in maintaining group boundaries and, therefore, can act to maintain a group's sense of its ethnicity” (p.126). The narratives shared can be seen as a means of analysis of the relationship between identity and language, which (Mills, 2005; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) argue allows individuals the autonomy to express themselves in a way that is unique to them. On the other hand, Edwards (1994) claims that "when language has lost its communicative role, it often maintains a sentimental or emotional grip on the group and may persist for a considerable period of time" (p.128). In *vagahau Niue,* speakers with special status in the community or those who use the language are usually represented in a relatively small light in New Zealand. This has caused the English language

to have a predominantly strong presence in the Niue community both for Niue and New Zealand-born, as the view from Niue parents is that it is an essential tool for achieving academic and economic success for their children as a way of integrating into the New Zealand way of life smoothly. This causes what Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) identify as an identity and language shift for minority communities acquiring the dominant language to access goods and services. This complexity is supported by Spolsky (1988), who addresses that communities that utilise English in day-to-day interactions and conversations risk losing their culture, identity and traditional values, a salient reminder for *vagahau Niue*, given its centrality in the Niue language and culture.

The loss of a language is alluded to by Edwards (1994), who believes that language loss in itself does not involve an identity loss, nor does it lead to the destruction of group boundaries, as language can continue having an emotional and symbolic appeal that "reflects and conveys its culture more felicitously and succinctly than any other language" (May, 2001, p.133). Tabouret-Keller (1998) and Mills (2005) agree that language is a crucial factor that identifies people and creates their identities, which will hopefully serve as an influential symbol that mediates and connects the individual and social identity of communities and their members in helping to "position the respondents in time and space" (Mills, 2005, p.261). This is strengthened by Mühlhäusler (1992), who agrees that the rapidly shrinking of domains where languages could be used is occurring, which is detrimental to many minority languages.

2.7 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to present the literature on language maintenance and language shift and the importance these have on receptive bilingualism against the global literature on bilingualism. The process of endangered languages relies heavily on the relationship between language maintenance and language shift, where language maintenance involves how languages are being prevented from becoming languages that are extinct or sleeping, which keeps a significant aspect of Indigenous cultures alive through the promotion of language maintenance. In addition, the sense of ethnic identity of an individual and community has been demonstrated to be influential in maintaining language.

The identity issues have been viewed as emotional and highly personal, interwoven with an individual's personality. The extent to which an individual identifies with his/her background is instrumental to the motivation placed on maintaining a native language; as language and culture evolve together, they influence one another in the process. By doing so, language is enabled and works alongside culture to provide how culture is shared and passed from

generation to generation, contributing to personal, community, national, and global identities. For *vagahau Niue* specifically, learning about culture through language creates an awareness of one's identity and how it is created and continues to evolve, as prior knowledge of the culture and language will vary, as no two journeys are similar. Regardless of these differences, continuous learning in a subject that prioritises and celebrates language, culture and identity will help support the well-being of individuals, *fānau* (children), and the community.

On the other hand, language shift is influenced by societal factors and the increased presence of globalisation, which has positioned Indigenous languages to an endangered status. This highlights that language shift does not occur in isolation and that in most cases, as stated by Garcia (2003), language shift is primarily present in migrant and minority language groups. As this review aimed to explore the status and value of *vagahau Niue* - an endangered language listed in UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Languages* (Moseley, 2010), and the health and well-being of its active status in New Zealand, it is essential to consider how this is perceived through the lens of language maintenance and shift. Grinevald and Bert (2011) argue that the response to external events challenges a community with the loss of an ancestral language. The demand to recognise identities and rights binds the consciousness of endangerment that usually comes from communities. This is highly problematic for Indigenous communities, who are in a constant struggle to find what it means to have an identity as well as have access to a native language that is influenced by Western contact (Charles, 2009).

This is true for the Niue community in New Zealand, as a minority language group; the statistics show that *vagahau Niue* language use is declining rapidly due to the dominant language of English. However, this statistic does not consider receptive speakers of the language. As reviewed, the literature has revealed that the field of receptive bilingualism is steadily developing over time through the work of previous scholars such as (Grosjean, 2008; Haugen, 1953; Lambert, 1990; Mackey, 1953; Wienreich, 1953) and to name a few. This review helps to identify a gap in the literature where the overall research can contribute to a new body of knowledge and ultimately lay the foundation and pave the way forward for language regeneration efforts specifically for New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the relationship they have with *vagahau Niue.* This research, as the first of its kind for a Pacific language in Aotearoa-New Zealand, is a stepping stone and a catalyst for other Pacific, Indigenous and or minority languages that are going through revitalisation efforts nationally or around the world today.

VEVEHEAGA TOLU

Tolo ke faiumu – Talaga e fekau mo e fakatokatoka

Designing the point of departure

3.1 Introduction

In her thesis *Veitalatala: Mātanga `o e Talanoa*, Toluta'u (2015) states;

> Remember the path you have travelled, and if it is a hazardous path, then you should turn towards a path on which it is smoother to journey. This PhD charts unfamiliar waters, yet it also journeys along the same *hala toka kovi* (a rough road) or *hala toka lelei* (a flat road) that the *hou`eiki fifine* (Tongan women) who form its focus experience (p.39).

Similar to these *hou'eiki fifine* who migrated to new countries, my pathway and the journey to knowing the destination was not pre-determined. However, like them, I have a clear purpose for my path. In this respect, Toluta'u (2015) reminds us of the reality that research is a "process of seeking explanation and meaning" (Williams & Orman, 2010, p.1) that we ascertain when we explore and discover a new way of generating knowledge or "contribute to human experience" (Scrivener, 2000, p.6). Chapter Three entitled, *Tolo ke faiumu – talaga e fekau mo e fakatokatoka,* sets out the design of this study, which has two parts to it. Importantly,chapter three has a critical focus on a Pacific approach to research through a Pacific paradigm and specifically a Niue-centred methodological framework that helps to clarify the key features of a Niue-centred approach to research. Chapter Four will then focus on the research methodology as the second part of the design employed for this study, specifically the *Umu* Model framework underpinning this research. As noted in Chapter Two, research on Niue language shift and maintenance has relied solely on the statistical data and the value of *vagahau Niue* for Niue people. As a result, the statistics have provided valuable insight into language shift and loss on actual *vagahau Niue* use and the factors impacting this and bilingualism, specifically receptive bilingualism.

This research aims to validate and justify the statistical data of *vagahau Niue* language use in Aotearoa, New Zealand, by detailing people's views and lived experiences of language comprehension use, but more specifically, the expectation or desire to be more competent in their language use. I saw the importance of focusing on first-generation New Zealand-born

Niue as a reflection of the statistics demonstrated in Table 7, where the New Zealand-born Niue percentage increased from 2013 to 2018 by five per cent, from 78.9% to 83% in 2018.

Table 6

Percentage of Birthplace of Niue population, 2006, 2013 and 2018 Censuses

Birthplace for the Niue group, 2006 - 2018 Censuses			
Birthplace	**2006 (%)**	**2013 (%)**	**2018 (%)**
New Zealand	74.1	78.9	83
Australia	0.6	0.8	0.9
Pacific Islands	24.5	19.8	15.1

Note. Adapted from Tukimata (2017). Copyright 2016 by Statistics New Zealand.

The statistics show that for New Zealand-born Niue living in New Zealand, the language spoken does not reflect this, as seen in Tables 8 and 9, where the majority of Niue knowing how to speak in one language has increased over 12 years from 65% in 2006 to 70.5% in 2013, and then 72.4% in 2018. Suppose we were to assume that first-generation New Zealand-born Niue is within the 30 - 65+ years age range. In that case, the number of speakers decreased from 64.4% to 47.3%, knowing only one language and 31.0% knowing two languages, which makes them bilingual.

Table 7

Number of languages spoken by Niue ethnic group, 2006, 2013 and 2018 Censuses

Number of languages spoken by the Niue ethnic group, 2006-18 Censuses			
	2006 (%)	2013 (%)	2018 (%)
None	3.8	2.9	4.1
One language	65	70.5	72.4
Two languages	26.8	23	20.6
Three languages	3.4	2.8	2.2
Four languages	0.7	0.6	0.5

Note. Adapted from Tukimata (2017). Copyright 2019 by Statistics New Zealand.

Table 8

Number of languages spoken by age group for the Niue ethnic group, 2018 Census

Number of languages spoken, by age group, for the Niue ethnic group, 2018 Census				
	Under 15 yrs (%)	15-29 years (%)	30-64 years (%)	65+ years (%)
None	10.6	0.2	0.0	0.0
One language	76.4	81.2	64.4	47.3
Two languages	11.5	16.4	31.0	45.2
Three languages	1.3	1.6	3.4	5.3
Four (+) languages	0.2	0.4	0.9	1.9

Note. Adapted from https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-ethnic-group summaries/niuean Copyright 2023 by Statistics New Zealand.

As highlighted in Chapter One, the research intends to examine the factors of receptive bilingualism and their effects on understanding *vagahau Niue* for first-generation New Zealand-born Niue. It will also examine how the identities of New Zealand-born Niue impact the relationship with *vagahau Niue* as a result of receptive bilingualism and the implications of this for the maintenance of the language. By doing so, prominence will be given to the voices of New Zealand-born Niue and their lived experiences with the language as bearers of the future carriers of *vagahau Niue.*

For this study, I employed a mixed methods approach (Taherdoost, 2022) that connected the ways of knowing and how knowledge is constructed through a Pacific worldview. I believe this ensures that (Du Plessis & Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2009; Gegeo, 2009; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001) insist on a study's cultural integrity and validity. The mixed methods approach supports the Niue worldview of social employment in generating knowledge.

Impetus

As I reflect on the concept of Niue *aga fakamotu,* I am fortunate to know I grew up in Aotearoa, New Zealand, with parents who migrated from the Rock of Polynesia, who travelled in search of economic stability for their families, and now for my siblings and I. The predicted rise of Pacific communities living in Aotearoa, New Zealand, over the next few decades draws meaning on the politics of language and identity, which will potentially be even more important, adding to a complex and diverse cultural community in a globalised world.

For this reason, it is essential to record and document the stories and narratives of New Zealand-born Niue, as this became a concern for me as an *afine Niue,* born and raised here

in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The experiences of how New Zealand-born Niue understand *vagahau Niue* but cannot speak the language piqued my interest, especially in a multicultural country such as New Zealand, where they have integrated and adapted their lifestyles into the New Zealand culture for most of their lives. Importantly, I needed to understand their upbringings and how they navigated change in their identity, cultural practices, language comprehension and acquisition, and how they raised the future Niue generation in the multicultural diaspora outside the homeland. There is minimal research and documentation on receptive bilingualism. How these factors affect identity, so I felt it was essential to use language revitalisation practice to contribute to this area of research as an approach to gaining insights and experiences into the limited transmission of *vagahau Niue*.

In the first instance, this involved *fakafetuiaga* (to have fellowship, gathering, assembly) as well as *tutala* with my *tagata Niue* within my Niue community as a practical approach to gaining insights into their views of *vagahau Niue* and where they see the language in the future. It was important for the researcher to initiate these conversations as a way of expressing the values of *fakalilifu* (respect), *fakaalofa* (love/present/gift), and a *loto fakatokolalo* (heart of humility) to ensure that this research is not only authentic to a Niue worldview but is a collective effort with the Niue community. As a result, I gained invaluable insights into the importance of language and what it would mean if the language was no longer spoken amongst generations of Niue in the future. The worldviews and teachings of my people have been a prominent reminder of the importance of this research and the need to maintain our *vagahau* for the benefit of our children in the future. These experiences and values continue to influence my decision-making as it relates to *tau fakaakoaga ne tonu mo e hako* (true teachings that are just)[17] for this research.

3.2 Research Approach

In Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1990) ground-breaking text 'Decolonizing methodologies', she alluded to the fact that in research, the first consideration should be to ensure that an appropriate process is adhered to before attempting to address the research question. For this study, that process is positioned in a Pacific paradigm guided by a Niue-centred methodology, outlined briefly in Chapter One and demonstrated in Figure 16 below. However, to theoretically locate this mixed methods research, Merriam and Tisdale (2015) believe that

[17] There is no direct Niuean translation for the English "virtue". The closest word would be mahani hakohako: mahani refers to "manners", and hakohako means "correct". However, mahani hakohako is a direct translation of the English word "integrity" we find in the Bible (Psalm 41:12; Proverbs 11:3;19:1). Another variant for virtue could be mahani tututonu which is translated "righteous manners" (Proverbs 8:18). See Vilitama (2015) p.232.

it is vital to first ground the beliefs about ontology (nature of reality) and epistemology (nature of knowledge) through a Pacific worldview. The paradigm, or set of beliefs and values, that guide this thesis is what Tracey (2013) explains as interpretive constructivism, a theory that has no one observable reality but rather, a blend of reality and knowledge that is socially constructed through interaction and communication, that is usually dependant on context. Willis (2007) assumes that the goal is usually to understand a particular situation or context rather than what a positivist approach presumes, which is the discovery of universal rules or laws.

Figure 16

Research Process

PARADIGM	METHODOLOGY	METHODS
Pacific	*Umu*	*Tutala* (Interviews) Survey Research

Similarly, the Asian-inspired philosophy of yin yang has progressed our understanding of mixed methods research, with the concept of yin yang together providing what Fetters and Molina Azorin (2017) believe is "an integrated understanding of the whole and seeking balance through cooperation" (p.2). This allows an introduction to another alternative paradigm to Eurocentric thinking, which, although it is Niue in origin, the *Umu* Model framework is a common practice among the Pacific Islands, for which the fundamental cultural values are based on community and relationships, and the collective rather than an individual representation (Vakalahi, 2011). Integrating and weaving the phases of the *umu* from diverse perspectives leads to what Tashakkori and Teddlie (2008) suggest as a meta-inference, which is an overall understanding from a holistic standpoint. Similarly, Chilisa's (2012) work on alternative Indigenous research methodologies has recognised that these are about finding connections, which include the relationships between researchers and communities, which are often disengaged in Western research, which in hindsight lends itself to a participatory research approach that is usually co-designed.

It was outlined in chapter one that this research aimed to explore the views and capture the voices of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa – about their views and perceptions of *vagahau Niue* through receptive bilingualism as a cultural marker of identity and as part of the revitalisation process for the language. This study acknowledges that our realities are recognised and connected through society's ideological and cultural categories

and that receptive speakers of the language actively use the traditions and tools of the environment they have grown up in (including language) to create and build their unique understandings of the world.

3.2.1 Pacific Research Paradigm

The use of the term paradigm can be defined as a way of viewing the world and organising knowledge, in what Kuhn (1970) suggests is "about the nature of legitimate problems and methods" (p. viii) in his work as a natural science history lecturer. After spending a year with them, Kuhn (1970) found that the intense disagreements between social scientists were due to the differing opinions resulting from competing paradigms, which he decided to explore further. Kuhn (1970) concluded that a paradigm is the "entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by members of a given community" (p.175). This definition can be understood as a lens instructing how researchers and scholars view the world while limiting what they see. Furthermore, Kuhn (1970) explains that if a paradigm is no longer accountable for how information is perceived, a 'paradigm shift' occurs, in which the community of researchers must alter and realign their perceptive lenses. According to Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery (2019), they suggest that what is perceived as a legitimate topic or problem that is worth researching becomes redefined, and along with that, new or revised approaches to inquiry evolve" (p.189). This is accurate in Kuhn's (1970) notion of paradigm shift, especially for Pacific research paradigms, as a modern phenomenon where its emergence has been due to Indigenous people having been able to create knowledge and understanding of their realities but have struggled to gain recognition in the academy (Tualaulelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019).

3.2.2 Pacific Worldview

There is a belief that the Pacific worldview functions from a particular epistemological standpoint, basis, or cultural framework (Thaman, 1998; Cunningham, 2000; Nabobo-Baba. 2004; Smith, 2004; Vaioleti, 2006). A Pacific worldview, as suggested by Thaman (1998), gives primacy to Pacific approaches that are based on values, knowledge systems and ethical principles. Given these underlying propositions, (Ruwhiu & Cathro, 2014; Mahuika, 2008) highlight that Pacific worldviews cannot be linked only with Western frameworks that have at their forefront opposing assumptions, such as seeking universal truths. However, it can be seen in a position similar to what is understood by other Indigenous peoples who share in the struggle for sovereignty against a history of colonisation but is less likely to be understood from the standpoint of Western epistemology (Nakata, 2006; Ka'ai, 2012).

Pacific scholars have recognised several factors encompassed in a Pacific worldview, usually termed a Pacific paradigm, and linked to a Pacific research approach (Smith, 1999; Sanga, 2004; Kurtz, 2013). In this instance, Pacific scholars have endeavoured to create effective Pacific methodologies by "creating designs co-authored with Pacific people to further Pacific causes within their communities" (Ponton, 2018, p.1) that incorporate cultural beliefs and values. It is described by Naepi (2015) that there has been an increased shift to Pacific-centered research methodologies, from a Eurocentric way of carrying out research, where from an ontological perspective, the Pacific worldview forms its basis on Pacific people and how they interpret themselves with others, and in the ways of harmonious relations existing, where Ponton (2018) expresses Pacific communities having had a multitude of time-honoured practices in place. In addition, Ponton (2018) highlights that the Pacific world-view encompasses perspectives from an epistemological and axiological standpoint that honours "knowledge from all stakeholders (participants, researchers, paradigms) and what is of value (cultural competency, empowerment, maintenance of familial connections) to name a few" (Ponton, 2018, p.2).

To understand New Zealand-born Niue's experiences, viewing these from a Pacific worldview was important. This is described by Teariki and Leau (2024) as being holistic and embodying three interdependent and interconnected elements of Pacific peoples, who perceive their standing in the world as being connected spiritually or sacredly (God) who created social systems (people) and with resources (natural environment). Therefore, the Pacific worldview, as stated by Tui Atua (2007), is one that "understands the environment, humans, the animate and inanimate – all natural life – as having its sources in the same divine origin, imbued with the life force, interrelated and genealogically connected" (p.13). Moreover, Tui Atua (2003) suggests that;

> I am not an individual; I am an integral part of the cosmos. I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, seas and the skies. I am not an individual, because I share an inheritance with my family, my village and my nation. I belong to my family, and my family belongs to me. I belong to my village, and my village belongs to me. I belong to my nation, and my nation belongs to me. This is the essence of my sense of belonging (p.51).

Du-Plessis and Dunlop (2009) suggest that to maintain harmony and achieve a good life, these three elements must be reinforced to validate what is essential in life. For Pacific peoples, reality is idiosyncratic to context in how it is "experienced…particularistic to time and space…it is local…it changes" (Sanga, 2004, p.44) and involves ancestors (inclusive of those who have departed) as rulers of their environment and members of their world (Sanga, 2004). In light of

this, Pacific Indigenous systems rely on collective and purposeful life experiences that have been built over time, including the generations of the past, present and future (Health Research Council, 2014).

3.2.3 Standpoint Epistemologies

In Gegeo and Watsons-Gegeo's (2001) article titled 'How we Know: Kwara'ae Rural Villagers Doing Indigenous Epistemology', they review the theories of knowledge, which includes nature, sources frameworks, and limits of knowledge. They explain that agents of epistemology are "communities rather than individuals" (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001, p.58), where knowledge is created by communities rather than collections of individuals, where Nelson (1993) believes is where communities are epistemologically equipped before individuals knowing. The concept of Indigenous epistemology is what Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001) believe differentiates between other people's knowledge and the insider's cultural ways of theorising knowledge. In this study, Indigenous epistemology is defined as the ways of creating and thinking, theorising and reformulating knowledge practised by Niue communities outside the homeland – through media communication and traditional discourses.

The concept of Indigenous epistemology centres on the process of knowledge construction that an ethnic or cultural group validates. For this thesis, the cultural group identified is made up of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue who represent a snippet of the thoughts and behaviour of Niue communities in New Zealand. It was critical to understand the varied interpretations and seek different meanings of receptive bilingualism to comprehend the differences in epistemologies that result from each standpoint. As a result of this and from a Pacific standpoint, Indigenous ways of creating knowledge have achieved three things;

1. Being able to understand the full potential and diverse meanings of Indigenous epistemologies;
2. Justifying its use within this thesis and;
3. The significance it has to my cultural understanding. Being able to capture the knowledge within this cultural group, I have created a new understanding and way of knowing, which has been vital to my thesis.

3.3 Mixed Methods

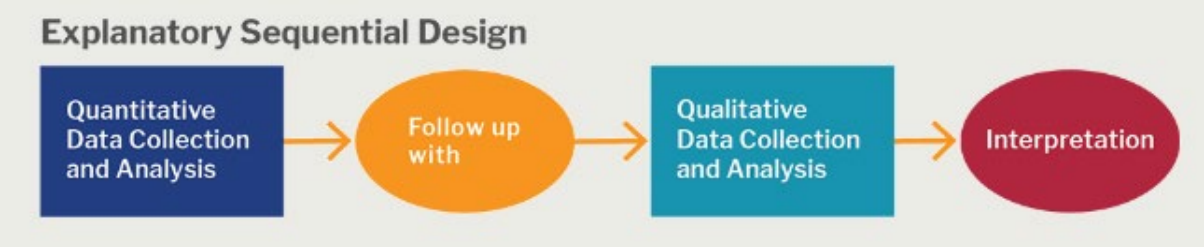
A mixed methods research design involves collecting and analysing data from a quantitative and qualitative approach, which Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) believe is a relatively new

design. Current literature has focused on the worldviews and theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of mixed methods research as a diverse methodological approach beyond what is required when combining qualitative and quantitative methods in a scientific inquiry. The epistemological and ontological challenges of working across multiple paradigms have been identified over the past couple of decades by Shannon-Baker (2016) as ‘paradigm wars’ in social science.

A mixed methods approach was chosen for this research because it combines and integrates strategically complex qualitative and quantitative research methods that draw on each other’s strengths. According to the Harvard Catalyst (2024), mixed method approaches permit researchers to utilise a variety of methods that combine both inductive and deductive thinking, which offsets limitations of exclusive qualitative and quantitative research through a balanced approach which capitalises on the strengths of each data type, that enables a more in-depth understanding of issues and potential resolutions (see Figure 17). Furthermore, mixed methods have been used to produce a “robust description and interpretation of the data, make quantitative results more understandable, or understand the applicability of small-sample qualitative findings” (Harvard Catalyst, para. 1). Furthermore, McChesney (2021) notes that “combining qualitative and quantitative methods offers researchers the ‘best of both worlds’ as they seek to understand research problems in more than one way” (p.96).

Figure 17

Basic mixed methods research design



Note. The Harvard Catalyst (2024)

By integrating both methods, in-depth and rich insights from a much smaller number of participants are attained, which can offer what Greene (2012) identifies as “dialogic opportunities” (p.757) that can create a better understanding of significant social phenomena as it pertains to the legitimacy of multiple responses to critical issues, that invite dialogue.

3.3.1 Culturally Responsive Research

This research fits solidly into a mixed-methods approach as a rare approach for Indigenous, culturally responsive, and decolonised forms of research. According to Levac et al. (2018);

> From Indigenous perspectives, mixing methods can contribute to the process of decolonization by challenging colonial categorizations. Mixing methods fosters multi-directional idea sharing, which can in turn lead to new data collection tools and new theoretical frameworks and contributes to the work of bridging between knowledge systems, particularly by privileging Indigenous knowledge and/or intentionally re-balancing power. (p.12)

In this instance, employing quantitative and qualitative research approaches was essential, as culturally responsive research has been solely qualitative. This included face-to-face methods such as focus groups, interviews, *wānanga* (to meet, discuss, deliberate and consider) (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020), *pūrākau* (myth, ancient legend, story) (Lee, 2009), *talanoa*[18] (conversation/talk together) (Vaioleti, 2006), and *talaloto* (a person's testimony of constructed knowledge or lived experiences) (Naufahu, 2018), which was in line with the core functions and principles of culturally responsive research. In comparison, quantitative methods have been associated traditionally with what (Berryman et al., 2013; Smith, 2005) state as the (post) positivist paradigm and the dominance of Western influence that culturally responsive research tries to resist. However, to disrupt this association and open up a much broader range of possibilities for culturally responsive forms of research, quantitative research approaches need to limit or have no association with a (post) positivist paradigm. This includes limiting the use of quantitative approaches in Eurocentric ways and only harnessing its use to align it with the self-determination and social justice that is foundational to *kaupapa Māori* (Māori approach) and Indigenous research (Smith, 1999), where these approaches are likely able to be incorporated in mixed methods research.

Recent examples in New Zealand demonstrate that the use of a mixed methods approach within culturally responsive research includes work from scholars such as Ford (2010), Diamond (2013), Si'ilata (2014), Richards (2017), and Milne (2020). The incitement here is that exploring mixed methods in culturally responsive research may further attest to some of the benefits recommended by Levac et al. (2018) above. As a Niue researcher, I will draw on Niue and Western knowledge processes to capture the spirit and authenticity of what Tracey

[18] Vaioleti (2006) describes *Talanoa* in this respect as referring to a conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas or thinking, whether formal or informal. It is almost always carried out face-to-face. Tala means to inform, tell, relate and command, as well as to ask or apply. Noa means of any kind, ordinary, nothing in particular, purely imaginary or void. In Vaioleti T.M. (2006). Talanoa research methodology: A developing position on pacific research. *Waikato Journal of Education, 12*, 21-34. https://hdl.handle.net/10289/6199

(2013) describes as multiple experiences of the participants. This allows me to move past the blinds of disciplines (Warne & McAndrew, 2009) and to look through a conceptual and interdisciplinary window to a world of research that involves Pacific knowledge construction. For this research, the mixed methods process adds precision to the complexity of the mean-making process and richness, depth, and breadth to the study overall.

3.3.2 Survey Research

Survey research is the "collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions" (Check & Schutt, 2012, p.160). Ponto (2015) suggests that survey research can offer diverse methods of recruiting participants, collecting data, and utilising several instrumentation methods. As a quantitative research method, surveys can use questionnaires with numerically rated items, which Singleton and Straits (2009) explain as being able to describe and explore human behaviour, which is most often used in psychological and social research.

For this research, surveys were primarily used to collect information that described the characteristics of a large sample of individuals of Niue descent living here in Aotearoa and their use of *vagahau Niue.* This survey was to reflect the demographic and personal characteristics of a range of Niue people across the country, and it intended to obtain opinions on language use and language maintenance for the Niue language to support the qualitative interviews as part of the mixed methods approach. The survey implemented strategies detailing a representative sample (whom to include), survey method (what and how to distribute) and when to initiate the survey as a way of ensuring what Ponto (2015) describes as a research process and outcome of high-quality. The strength of surveys is what Glasow (2005) and McIntyre (1999) highlight as the ability to collect information from a large sample of a specific population or cultural group that describes the sample's composition. Moreover, Glasow (2005) outlines that the advantages of surveys include the number and the types of variables that can be studied, which require minimal investment to develop and administer and are comparatively simple for creating generalisations (Bell, 1996). Similarly, surveys can prompt information about attitudes that are usually difficult to measure using observational techniques (McIntyre, 1999).

Given the variety of options in employing survey research as a quantitative method, it was vital for me to understand the possibility for bias in the results of the survey, in what Pinsonneault and Kraemer (1993) note as [surveys that are] generally unsuitable where an understanding of the historical context of phenomena is required. As a result, biases occur in either lack of

response from intended participants or in the nature and accuracy of the responses (Bell, 1996). To alleviate bias, strategies were employed to counteract the common types of errors that occurred in research, which can be seen in Table 10 below;

Table 9

Sources of Error in survey research and strategies to Reduce Error

Sources of Error in Survey Research and Strategies to Reduce Error		
Type of error	**Source of error**	**Strategies to reduce error**
Coverage error	Unknown or zero chance of individuals in the population being included in the sample.	Multimode design
Sampling error	Individuals included in the sample do not represent the characteristics of the population.	Identified population of interest, diverse participant recruitment strategies, a large, random sample
Measurement error	Questions/instruments do not accurately reflect the topic of interest, and questionnaires/interviews do not evoke truthful answers.	Valid, reliable instruments; pre-test questions; user-friendly graphics, visual characteristics
Non-response error	Lack of response from all individuals in the sample	User-friendly survey design; follow-up procedures for non-responders

Note. Information from Dillman et al., (2014), Singleton & Straits (2009), Check & Schutt (2012)

3.3.3 Qualitative Interviews

A qualitative approach was also suitable for the general aim of this research, as it allows varied practices and perspectives for creating knowledge, which leads to what (Morrow, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; Patton, 2015) describes as how people create and understand the meanings of their experiences. An essential function of qualitative research is an in-depth view of a phenomenon, and for this research, I was concerned with exploring the narratives and experiences of participants who were first-generation New Zealand-born receptive speakers. Hatch (2002) alludes to the idea that qualitative research acknowledges and accepts the social setting in which a person places themselves as being not unique but complex and, therefore, applies to several contexts. Merriam (2009) supports this by

highlighting that the qualitative approach considers how people construct their experiences, their realities and the meanings that they assign to these realities (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, to explore the lived experiences of receptive speakers in New Zealand, a qualitative design was used featuring the *tutala* research method (Vilitama, 2015). The *tutala* method was used for several reasons; firstly, it is a tool mainly used for communication amongst Niue communities, and secondly, to ethically provide the participants with their desire for anonymity due to their background and residential location.

As noted, many studies on language maintenance have depended on statistical data to analyse trends of language shift and maintenance, whereas most qualitative studies are central to people's experiences. It is highlighted by Morrow (2007) that qualitative methods enable researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon as a way of being able to probe deeper into complex processes that “illustrate the multifaceted nature of human phenomena” (Morrow, 2007, p.211), that can draw on context-specific perspectives and characteristics that emerge from participants. A qualitative research design for most of this study was to ascertain language use factors and whether social or other factors impact New Zealand-born Niue and their receptive use of *vagahau Niue*. From my perspective as a researcher, a qualitative approach has allowed me to have an in-depth understanding and knowledge of experiences that are not otherwise observable. In this instance, Flick et al., (2004) suggest that participants can present what Maxwell (2013) explains as perspectives of the phenomena from an ‘inside out’ approach (which, in this case – language and receptive bilingualism), which has been driven significantly from a process orientation to the world. The qualitative approach, with its ability to delve into the complexities of human phenomena, is a crucial tool in this research, offering unique insights and potential solutions to the issues at hand.

This is summarised in what Maxwell (2013) identifies as five goals of qualitative research, which have been applied to this research. These include 1. exploring people’s realities; 2. investigating individual people’s meanings as a result of their experiences; 3. considering the setting in which they understand this meaning; 4. considering the context and how this influences the process in which they experience these meanings, and lastly, safeguarding the researcher and making sure that they are aware of the potential risks that are uncovered from any unanticipated factors (Maxwell, 2013). The flexibility of qualitative interviews allows for fluidity. It helps to facilitate the presence of participants' practices and cultural beliefs – which, in this instance, involve first-generation New Zealand-born receptive speakers – in the research process.

3.4 Planning and Design

For this study, the researcher intentionally considered that the participants would share a common interest in the research topic and are likely to be considered a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As suggested by Denscombe (2008), the community of practice occurs on several levels, with the social factors being essential to how these groups contribute to their choice of a mixed methods approach. Harrits (2011) suggests that a quantitative component may provide an observer or 'objective' view, and the qualitative component a subject-interpretive one that can complement each other. Furthermore, Shannon-Baker (2016) believes that quantitative methods can provide generalised knowledge related to the physical world, and qualitative knowledge can create an understanding of causal relationships or particular events that are likely to add meaning.

In the planning and designing of this research, once a comprehensive research question was created and a Niue approach was established, discussions took place with New Zealand-born Niue living nationally. This was to assist in finding potential participants for the *tutala* outside of the Auckland region, as I have only been involved with my Niue community in Auckland. Further consultations were needed to recruit outside of the region. The survey was designed to assist in carrying this out. Furthermore, I hoped that further consultations with potential participants for both the interviews and survey would be able to provide a deeper meaning of the anticipated encounters that I would face during the research process as a means of minimising potential risk or harm and managing preventable issues as a result of this research.

3.4.1 Interviewing the Participants

Each *tutala* needed to be recorded digitally to capture every conversation's richness. I recorded all audio data on a digital recorder that would be easy to upload to a desktop or laptop for analysis. When approaching and conversating with the participants in the comfort of their homes or locations comfortable for them, as well as online through the Zoom platform, I was wary that for most of the participants, this was a new experience, which could be viewed as potentially intimidating (Toluta'u, 2015). Therefore, I intentionally designed the *tutala* to ensure participants could speak freely and that the questions were open-ended to allow the *tutala* to flow naturally without any limits or restrictions. Following the *tutala* with the participants, the files were transcribed and returned to each participant for feedback and any quotes they wanted to omit for the final write-up, in which changes were made where they indicated. The recording process was critical in ensuring that the participants' voices were captured and enabled a secure platform that encouraged their views, which, in hindsight, could

only be achieved through recording and transcribing. As the primary researcher, I had sole access to these recordings, which were confidential for ethical purposes.

In addition, when coming together with my participants in space for *tutala,* I was conscious of the time and knowledge they were sharing with me. I intentionally created the *tutala* sessions without having any restrictions or time limits, and my participants were comfortable to continue in the *tutala* until the point of '*kua galo e humelie* [19]' was exercised, where, in this instance, the subject or connection of the *tutala* was exhausted (Vaioleti, 2006). Most of the *tutala* in this research lasted around an hour, whereas only a few lasted two hours – the *tutala* flexibility allowed this.

3.5 Chapter Summary

For the design of this research, the primary researcher intended to prioritise and ground this research in a Niue-centred methodology that has provided a framework on which the development of the research questions was based, which served as a mechanism to anchor the research within a Pacific worldview. This chapter has outlined in detail the cultural tenets of the Niue-centred research paradigm that have been significant in the design of this research. A Niue-centred framework was explained in light of crucial Western theories, including constructivism and Indigenous standpoint theories, that included an alternative worldview to this traditional Western paradigm. As a result, Pacific research was believed to be a vital approach for this study in its capacity for resistance in light of dominant hegemonic social structures and knowledge that assists in devaluing, marginalising or excluding Pacific values, knowledge, and individuals. Pacific research also emphasises and celebrates difference through different epistemological and ontological perspectives, lived experiences, understandings, and shared values with those who value and identify as Pacific.

As this research used a mixed methods approach, the Niue-centred framework gives validity for other religious, cultural, and philosophical contexts to be considered in a similar light. By doing so, I envision that this will open doors for other researchers internationally to explore the relevance of using mixed methods research in their Indigenous contexts and philosophies in a culturally appropriate way. The following chapter re-introduces the Niue-centred framework for this research to spotlight the importance of Indigenous methodologies in locating Pacific research written and documented by Pacific for Pacific.

[19] The sweetness is lost as described by Vaioleti (2006) as the connection or subject of the *tutala* has been exhausted.

VEVEHEAGA FĀ

Tolo ke faiumu – Tauaki mo e ufi e umu

Embracing the entrance to the point of departure

"Ka tugi e koe e afi, ti kitia e koe e milino he afi, iloa e koe, kua tugi mo e fakatokatoka e koe e umu mo e loto meā"[20]

4.1 Introduction

***Tolo ke faiumu – tauaki mo e ufi e umu* is the second layer in the research methodology. The process of the *faiumu* is one of particular importance, as it is about quality assurance. It ensures the *umu* materials have been divided appropriately to ensure the food is cooked, and importantly, that the *umu* is well covered, ensuring that the steam does not permeate outwards, thus ensuring the *umu* is cooked to perfection. For this reason, this chapter is important to which I infer an all-encompassing approach to the research that goes in-depth into discussing methods and presents a robust method of carrying out specific research approaches. This study's methodology comprises cultural theories and concepts underpinning the processes and tools I have employed in developing this thesis. Therefore, this research encapsulates a Niue-centred methodology within a Pacific paradigm that provides a framework which guides clear aims in improving the position of Niue while giving prevalence to a Niue worldview in the way of guaranteeing full respect and participation of New Zealand-born Niue throughout the research process and its outcomes.**

4.2 Niue-Centred Framework

Therefore, this thesis is situated in a Niue-centred framework, as it implores the ways of knowing, doing, and being. It is methodologically composed of authentic Niue approaches to accessing, processing and creating knowledge. This framework has allowed me to draw on different knowledge concepts, systems, and designs and reference Pacific culture, traditions, and knowledge systems. The term 'Niue-centred research' is used to identify research that ponders on Niue issues, knowledge and lived experiences, which ultimately lie at the core of the research process. For this thesis, 'Niue-centred' research has been adapted specifically

[20] "When you light the fire, and you see the calm of the fire before it turns into a flame, you know that you have prepared and the *umu* with a clean and pure heart, by doing so, it is ensured that the *umu* will be well-cooked"

to what Vilitama (2015) describes as a methodology through the analogy of the *umu.* He stated that the *umu* becomes a;

> Hermeneutical tool to interpret the Bible and other texts – written or oral – for the *fetuiaga* (celebration) today. Though it is a way of life (a culture), it is a presumption – not intentional – that the *umu* event is also a methodology; it is a way of doing things not just for the conveyance of values from one generation to another. (p.236)

The approach shares in the goals of Niue culture that focuses on improving the position of Niue research in communities, which Smith (1999) shares in the opening of her text on Indigenous research methods that the term "'research' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary" (p.1). Despite this, the past decade has seen a rise and growth of Indigenous research methodologies, which (Smith, 1999; Tipa & Panelli, 2009; Mertens et al., 2013;) believe has encouraged the emergence of Indigenous researchers with the ability to carry out research in a culturally safe and suitable way to do so, which empowers and gives voice to their communities.

Niue beliefs, values, oral narratives and history form the basis of this research, with the *umu* Model used to understand traditional construction within the thesis. Utilising what Vilitama (2015) describes as the *umu* being a "construction of a Niuean hermeneutic [that] is set within this emerging tradition of island interpretation" (p.226) helps to transform the *Umu* Model into a gateway and cultural lens. This creates the base from which I can describe, explain, critique and analyse the data collected for this study, which aligns well with a Pacific paradigm.

4.2.1 Ko e Fakatokatokaaga he Fekau[21]

From a Niue worldview, it is crucial to make sure that the research questions developed can address areas of concern towards the community of interest and oppose the attempts of non-Indigenous researchers to push or advance Western theories (Smith, 1999) in areas of Indigenous topics. A desire to revitalise *vagahau Niue* has been spurred by statistics provided by Statistics New Zealand demonstrating an increase in population for New Zealand-born Niue; however, this has produced a declining number of people who can speak the language. Furthermore, personal discussions before carrying out this research revealed that the decline in the number of *vagahau Niue* speakers was a concern for Niue language advisors and experts. This is evident in the rapid increase in the Niue population here in Aotearoa and a rapid decrease in the number of Niue able to speak two languages (see previous Tables 7, 8 and 9). For this reason, Niue's knowledge of language revitalisation and research becomes

[21] Translation of subheading "The layout of the methods"

vital to suggest ways of acquiring Indigenous knowledge space and thinking approaches within the Niue diaspora.

To engage with this research, the following research questions were created:

1. What factors of receptive bilingualism affect New Zealand-born Niue and their understanding and use of *vagahau Niue?* and
2. How do New Zealand-born Niue's identities impact their relationship with *vagahau Niue* because of receptive bilingualism? and
3. What are these implications for the maintenance of the language?

From the outset of this study, the desire to understand factors of receptive bilingualism affecting New Zealand-born Niue and their understanding of *vagahau Niue* was crucial in how I envisioned my methodology. As a methodology, the *umu* is intended to view research through a Niue lens. It is critical to theorise our Pacific people's beliefs and values, but more so with the Niue communities living in Aotearoa.

Additionally, discussions with language experts in academic and professional roles across New Zealand took place to engage with knowledgeable advisors in the area of interest. As a collective, these individuals had a wealth of knowledge in Indigenous methodologies, language revitalisation efforts, and cultural identity, more specifically, to provide comments and feedback on the methods and objectives employed in this study. A core outcome of these conversations was mindfulness to favour Niue voices and their essential stories rather than prioritising fluent speakers of the Niue language who have the advantage of knowing *vagahau Niue*. This was intended to consider the experiences of Niue as the homeland and the appeal of understanding the language from the viewpoints of New Zealand-born Niue rather than Niue-born Niue who live in New Zealand.

Furthermore, to ensure a clear insight into the demographic of Niue in New Zealand, an online survey was created to look at the health and well-being of *vagahau Niue* by understanding if first-generation New Zealand-born Niue could converse in *vagahau Niue* or not. This online survey was streamlined through the Pacific Education Centre (PEC), where 200 responses were received. The option to partake in a face-to-face interview was offered at the end of the survey. This allowed for further consultation with interested participants. Out of the 15 participants chosen for the interviews, five came from interested participants who had filled out the survey. By doing so, interviewees' participation was much smoother, with initial understanding already achieved.

4.3 Research Process

4.3.1 Gaining Access: Sampling and Recruitment

At the start of this research, an overarching question was posited: What does it mean to be Niue? This question aligned with the concept of identity (Smith, 1999; Webber, 2009; Houkamau & Sibley, 2014), which is described as a contested terrain for many Indigenous peoples. While a detailed review of Niue people and their migration to Aotearoa, New Zealand, lies outside the capacity of this research, the Niue participants selected were those who self-identified as Niue and those who had completed the online survey as part of the recruitment for first-generation New Zealand-born receptive speakers.

I was always mindful that the ideal way to engage with the participants for this research was to gain access through existing networks, which sought to be an effective and fruitful way of participant recruitment; in this instance, a mix of snowball and purposive sampling was used. Smythe and Giddings (2007) define snowball sampling as a method that is commonly used when participants might be challenging to source, which in turn allows for an individual or advisor to assist in bridging the connections to those who meet the research criteria (Smyth & Giddens, 2007). During early consultations with these advisors, they proposed potential names of participants who fit the criteria and would be interested in participating. This was also similar during interviews when participants would reference other potential candidates they knew who would be interested in participating in this study. These recommendations included Niue living in the South Island and other individuals they thought would have different views on language that involved receptive speakers living in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

4.3.1.1 An Invitation to Participate

Participant recruitment for the online survey was done through the PEC. An initial letter was sent to the PEC's previous Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in September 2020 (see Appendix 1) to request that the online survey be advertised and streamlined through the PEC website. A response was given on the same day, relaying that the request would be put forward to the Academic Board of the PEC for their approval to streamline the online survey through their website. As the PEC has a massive following with Pacific language online courses available, it was only fitting that permission was sought through the CEO for the online survey to be completed through the PEC website. This diverse recruitment strategy helped expand the sample size and ensured adequate coverage of the intended population (Glasow, 2005). Furthermore, upon receiving approval from the AUTEC to advertise participation on the PEC

Facebook page, a flyer was created (see Appendix 2) to draw in interest from learners within the Niue language course at the PEC, a strategy that garnered 245 responses over two weeks.

4.3.1.2 Survey Sample

The target population for the online survey was New Zealand-born Niue living across the North and South Island of New Zealand. This population is based on annual resident population estimates for New Zealand. The target population includes New Zealand-born Niue residents living in New Zealand, including Waiheke and Stewart Islands. The target population excludes Niue living in New Zealand, New Zealand-born Niue living abroad, other ethnic groups, Niue residents who live in remote areas that are difficult and costly to travel to, and minors under 18.

4.3.1.3 Tutala by Numbers

For the most part, recruitment for the *tutala* used purposive sampling, where individuals were sought out specifically to meet the criteria of potential participants. Participants were contacted through email invitations to participate in the research, with attached copies of the participation information sheet and consent form (see Appendix 3 and 4). In a few instances, the email invitation was the initial contact of communication made by the researcher with potential participants, whereas, on the other hand, efforts were made to meet and communicate with potential participants before any formal requests were sent for participation. Smythe and Giddings (2007) envisioned that if individuals did not want to participate, they could respond through email or choose not to respond.

From the original 25 email invitations sent to participants for their participation in this research, 15 were interviewed (Table 11). Four of the ten participants who could not participate in the interviews agreed to be a part of the research at first glance. However, interviews could not be organised and finalised in the month that followed the initial invitation. Six potential candidates chose not to respond to initial emails that requested participation in this research. The participants who agreed to participate in this study agreed on a mutual time and place to have the *tutala,* which was in their home or a comfortable location. Interviews were carried out between July 2020 and January 2021, and the duration was from 30 minutes to two hours, with an average of 65 minutes across all 15 participants. The most extended interviews were conducted with working professionals and elder members, while more introverted participants were shorter, averaging 40 minutes.

Table 10

Demographic information of New Zealand-born Niue interviewees

Demographic information	Participants (n)	%
Number of interviewees	15	100
Gender		
Female	10	67
Male	5	33
Age range		
30 – 40	6	40
40 – 50	6	40
50 – 60	2	13
70+	1	**7**
Demographic information	**Participants (n)**	**%**
Location in New Zealand		
North Island (Urban)	10	67
North Island (Rural)	2	13
South Island (Urban)	2	13
South Island (Rural)	1	7
Children		
Children	14	93
No children	1	7

4.3.4 The Final Sample

Of the 15 interviews, 11 of these interviews took place face-to-face, with four of the interviews conducted through the online platform Zoom. This was because of the COVID-19 lockdown, which limited the number of face-to-face interactions allowed during this time. It was considered an appropriate interview method, safeguarding individuals uncomfortable with face-to-face interactions. Furthermore, O'Carroll (2013) believes that research has demonstrated the comfort and familiarity of many Pacific people with online forums and social media platforms, where researchers have now considered the importance of online platforms in light of any absence of face-to-face- communications (Pohatu, 2005). The idea of given interactions gives importance to what (Pohatu, 2005; Hall, 2014) suggests as the development

of reciprocal and respectful relationships regardless of the forum. The remaining 11 interviews were held at the participants' homes and at locations deemed comfortable and suitable by the participants. The overall sample size for this research consists of individuals who identified using a set criterion which I used to invite participants, which is outlined below:

- First-generation New Zealand-born Niue
- Their parent(s) are/were speakers of *vagahau Niue*
- They can understand *vagahau Niue* but cannot/are limited in their response to the language.
- They live in New Zealand

Most of the 15 participants were from the North Island, with three out of the 15 residing in the South Island. As most of the Niue community resides in the urban areas of the North Island, it was not difficult to realise that most of the Niue population resided in Tāmaki Makau Rau, with Pōneke (Wellington) and Kirikiriroa (Hamilton) following behind. For this purpose, it was appropriate that most of the *tutala* would be conducted with Niue living on the North Island; however, it would not diminish the voices of those who resided on the South Island.

4.3.5 Ethical Considerations

Before carrying out fieldwork and the *tutala* interviews, approval was sought from AUTEC in line with the ethical approval procedures of the ethics committee in New Zealand. Under the ethics application, the following processes were adhered to: Informed and voluntary consent by each of the research participants was sought and obtained; the rights of confidentiality and privacy for the participants and the information shared by the participants were respected; open and detailed transparency regarding the purpose, use and information shared by the participants; level of trust established early on – which included a limitation of dishonesty through consistent consultation; minimising harm for the researcher (a researcher safety protocol was created – see Appendix 5); as well as cultural and social sensitivity that was carried out at all times towards each participant and the life experiences and knowledge that they held. Additionally, all recorded audio *tutala* and transcripts were agreed upon by the primary researcher and supervisor to be stored with the primary supervisor in a locked cabinet in WA611 on level 6 of the WA Building (AUT) city campus for up to six years, in which at this point following the conclusion of this study, all transcripts and audio recordings will be shredded and destroyed.

4.4 Data Collection

Ethics approval from AUTEC was granted on 11 May 2020 (see Appendix 6) with conditions that were met with detailed responses to safeguard the identities of the survey participants. As a result, the online survey invitation was sent to the PEC on 02 September 2020 for participation interest. Once the survey was made live on 07 September 2020, 70 completed surveys were received within the first two days, and by the end of the week, 150 surveys were received online. The online survey was kept live until 16 September, and 245 surveys were received. The amount of responses received for the online survey is a reflection of the need for Niue research to be conducted for the benefit of advancing Niue research within academia as described by Fetters and Molina-Azorin (2017) that Indigenous research through qualitative and quantitative elements can lead to an integration of "a new whole or a more holistic understanding than achieved by either alone" (p.293).

4.4.1 Survey Research

The data collection period took over a week, from the 7th of September 2020 to the 16th of September 2020. The online survey was answered by 245 individuals who, when completing the survey, were current students enrolled on the *vagahau Niue* language course run through the PEC. The estimated target response rate for the online survey was 81 per cent, with the completed response rate reaching 72 per cent. The target response rate was calculated by dividing the weighted percentage of eligible individuals who responded (n=245) by the estimated total number of eligible individuals (t=300). In contrast, the achieved response rate was calculated by multiplying the weighted percentage of eligible individuals who responded to the fundamental questions (n=219) by the target response rate (n = 219/245 = 0.89 x 0.81 =72%). The survey questions were conducted through Microsoft Forms, averaging a response time of six to seven minutes. The survey was made up of 16 questions that consisted of four components referred to as domains: core personal demographic information, ability and fluency in the Niue language, frequency of the Niue language being heard, and resources that will assist in language learning of *vagahau Niue.*

4.4.2 Tutala Interviews

Additionally, according to many scholars (e.g. Mitchell, 1993; Juntunen et al., 2001; Boulton et al., 2004; Humphries & Truman, 2005; McNicholas & Humphries, 2005; Cheng & Jacob, 2008; Asmar & Page, 2009; Burgess & Dyer, 2009; White, 2010; Mercier et al., 2011; Reid, 2011;), they suggest that for many data collection approaches, a popular method is the use of interviews that is employed as a way of imploring the perspectives and lived experiences of Indigenous peoples. Semi-structured interviews were considered a suitable data collection

tool for the qualitative part of this research for two reasons. Firstly, Bell and Willmott (2015) share that"semi-structured interviews can access the social worlds and experiences of participants" (p.xxiv). This is supported by Karatas-Özkan and Chell (2015), who identified that the strength of semi-structured interviews lies in their capability to express the views and experiences of participants in more depth whilst "remaining sensitive to the 'situatedness' of their experience" (Karatas-Özkan & Chell, 2015, p.7). Secondly, Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010) state that even though semi-structured interviews are driven by a set of questions about the topic of interest, the researcher can follow participant responses as a way to discover and explore what is important to participants, which the flexibility of the *tutala* allows this. This allows for natural conversations that may lead to what Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010) describe as unanticipated but potentially rich avenues for inquiry. This was necessary given the possibility that participants would have experienced the perceptions of being receptive bilinguals in a period where the revitalisation of *vagahau Niue* has become critical to the identities of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue and the generation that has followed.

Additionally, this data collection tool was considered coherent with the overall methodology for this research (Vilitama, 2015). The presence of semi-structured interviews in the form of a *tutala* allowed participants to express their views, aspirations, and lived experiences, which has enriched their position in the research process *tolo ke faiumu – talaga e fekau mo e fakatokatoka* (convergence in the *umu* – Planning and preparation) that has encouraged the *tutala* to be guided in meaningful ways.

4.4.3 Indicative interview questions

As this research considered heavily the experiences of first-generation New Zealand-born receptive speakers, it was necessary to have interview questions that prompted thinking on the factors that influenced language use as well as the effects of receptive bilingualism on identity. The following questions are presented in Table 12 below.

Table 11

Indicative interview questions for first-generation New Zealand-born Niue

Pulega mo e fakatokatoka	*In your view:* • Being born in New Zealand, what does *vagahau Niue* mean to you? • What was Vagahau Niue like for you growing up? • Where did the support for your understanding of *vagahau Niue* come from? • Does having the ability to understand *vagahau Niue* help or hinder you? Give some examples of why.

	• Receptive speakers are often not acknowledged as being speakers of the language. Do you think a way forward is for *vagahau Niue* language speakers to be more inclusive of receptive speakers? If so, why? If not, why not?
Tolo ke faiumu	• What are some of the barriers that have limited/ stopped your use of *Vagahau Niue*? • Does understanding *vagahau Niue* help you identify as a *Tagata Niue*? If so, why? If not, why not? • What does understanding *vagahau Niue* (but being unable to respond in *vagahau Niue*) mean to you and your identity?
Fetuiaga	• Where do you see your use of *vagahau Niue* in the future? • What would assist you in transitioning from being a receptive speaker of *vagahau Niue* to being a productive speaker of the language? • Can you think of any resources, such as digital tools, that you would use to help you make this transition?

The sequence in which the questions were asked differed across the *tutala* as some participants responded to multiple questions during their responses, which helped the researcher to transition between the different questions with ease. Participants sometimes spent time probing more deeply into a specific theme, resulting in limited time to speak on other questions in the indicative interview questions. However, this was not seen as a limitation of the research. Instead, participants could share to great lengths how significant specific themes were to them personally or what they were familiar with.

4.4.4 Respectful Introduction

As a researcher, I believed it was important for the participants to feel a sense of comfort with my research. Even though the research was guided by formal Auckland University of Technology (AUT) ethics protocols, the research needed a culturally appropriate approach rather than merely seeking informed consent. As the researcher, I established a safe space by greeting the participants and engaging in small conversations before the tutala to show respect for the Niue custom. This was followed by opening and closing the tutala with a liogi (prayer) to create a space where the participants shared lived experiences or thoughts were given freely and on their terms. Being courteous while communicating with elders was pivotal, especially with somebody who regarded me as a stranger. The tone of my voice and outward presentation were also essential to make the participants feel safe and comfortable in my presence and not feel overwhelmed and anxious by my actions, words and gestures. My overall approach was to allow the participants to feel at ease with the proposed outcomes and aims of the research and to know that their shared experiences were received with gratitude and appreciation.

4.4.5 Engaging in Tutala

Before carrying out the *tutala,* participants received a participant information sheet and consent form (Appendix 3 and Appendix 4). They were given the chance to seek clarification and ask questions about the aims or purpose of the study. This was applied in some cases, and it was my responsibility as the primary researcher to provide a thorough background to the research to ease any doubts the participants may have had regarding the research aims. A significant amount of time was dedicated to getting to know the individual participant before the beginning of each *tutala* as a way of building rapport with the participants, where they would feel comfortable enough to share their lived experiences, as well as provide opportunities for reflection and explanation and be able to draw on a shared understanding and discovery from their responses. The organic, flexible and adaptive nature of *tutala* allowed me, as the researcher*,* to explore in depth the viewpoints and lived experiences of the participants, which made the interaction much more meaningful and allowed for significant interpretations of the responses to occur.

The *tutala* process differed between the participants, which depended on the nature of the existing relationship and the comfort with which rapport was established during the *tutala.* Roulston (2010) expresses that the quality of interview information relies heavily on the participant's ability to recall, interpret, and relay their experiences accurately and their commitment to revealing their honest experiences to the researcher. This is further discussed by Holsten and Gubrium (1996), who suggest ways of drawing responses from participants, such as oral narration and determining participant responses simultaneously. This occurred on a few occasions during the *tutala,* as I shared my personal experience with the participants to get their perspectives or provided examples of issues identified by other participants to examine the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with their sentiments. These were often a welcome and valuable starting point for participants' narratives.

4.4.5.1 The Limits of Engaging in Tutala

Researchers have several challenges and limitations to using qualitative methods; in reflection, my view on the thesis research process demonstrated many challenges encountered during this study. For example, the data quality that resulted from the *tutala*, where to an extent, depended on the interviewer's ability and skill level. For example, according to Kvale (1996), interviewers should engage in ongoing clarification and interpretation with participants regarding meaning throughout the interview. During the data collection phase, and in some cases, this felt more challenging than others. An example of this was in one *tutala; efforts* were made early in the interview to gain clarity on receptive

speakers not often acknowledged as being speakers of the language that the participant expressed. However, the interview continued when this did not prompt a solid response.

Another challenge I was confronted with as a researcher was how I viewed personal disclosure of my individual views and how much I was willing to reveal my perceptions and impressions of what was discussed (Arendell, 1997). In some *tutala,* I was emotionally connected and strongly agreed with the views of the discussion. However, other times, it left me with feelings of disagreement, especially during tutala, where participant perceptions of language not being essential to learning, as we are in a *'pālagi'* (European) society, were discussed. During these times, I sought to question this view. However, I found that the conversation quickly turned into a discussion about the positive impacts of language learning rather than directly addressing the prior misconception. In this case, it was deemed that we should not pursue this area further in the *tutala.*

4.5 Data Analysis

The statistical analysis method (Loehnert, 2010) for the survey research was cross-tabulation and benchmarking. Cross tabulating the data allowed for sifting to occur and uncovering its meaning. Furthermore, cross tabulating the data allowed for a break in the data according to the subgroups within the research population and the sample and comparing the relationship between one variable and another. Considering this, utilising reliable types of data and methods of analysis has meant that I have been able to refer to my initial results as a benchmark for future research.

4.5.1 Aggregating the Numbers

The analysis of the survey data results began by turning the individualised responses into aggregated numbers. These were made into different count sheets using Microsoft Excel. Individual responses to the 16 questions were counted and aggregated into pivot tables, as shown in Figure 18 below.

Figure 18

Example of individual responses from survey respondents aggregated into pivot tables

3	Count of What age group are you?	Column Labels				
4	Row Labels	European	Maori	Other Ethnicity	Pacific Peoples	Grand Total
5	17 - 24	1	5		26	32
6	25 - 34		10	1	57	68
7	35 - 44	1	4	2	46	53
8	45 - 54	2	3	1	52	58
9	55+		5	1	28	34
10	**Grand Total**	**4**	**27**	**5**	**209**	**245**

Note. Data extracted from researcher's online survey carried out in 2020

4.5.2 Cross-tabulation

Once each question and response were added to the assigned columns, insights from the survey results were placed into a Word document table to quantify the results and produce percentages to analyse the survey results without bias and to see any correlations (Table 13). This process allowed for context to be added to the numbers and to question the thoughts of different groups of people and the factors likely to affect a single outcome.

Table 12

Cross Tabulation of responses from online survey respondents as identified by age

Data	Response	%
25 - 34	59	34.30%
45 - 54	37	21.51%
35 - 44	35	20.35%
17 - ...	27	15.70%
55 - 64	13	7.56%
Other entries	1	0.58%

Note. Results that created a cross tabulation from the online survey that included age range, response rate and overall percentage

Being able to change the numbers into percentages allows for ease of comparison. In saying this, it is easy to recognise precisely what 34.30% may mean; however, how do we ensure it is correct? The solution to this is through the creation of benchmarks.

4.5.3 Formulating Benchmarks

Setting benchmarks has been vital to ensuring the data makes sense and determining the percentages. For this survey as this survey was completed within a short period, it comes away from a longitudinal analysis, and different benchmarks were formulated to make comparisons between the results. As this survey was created to identify New Zealand-born Niue living in New Zealand, questions unrelated to the study were omitted from the analysis (Table 14).

Table 13

Benchmarks of responses formulated for data analysis

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
What age group are you?	Where were you born?	What gender are you?	Where do you live?	Rate your ability/fluency (t...	Do you think Vagahau Niu...	Does anyone in your home...	Would you like to raise yo...	If you answered yes to qu...
245								
17 - 24	Niue	Male	Urban city - North Island	8	Yes	Siblings;Parents;Grandpar...	Yes	
17 - 24	Niue	Female	Urban city - North Island	8	Yes	Children;Siblings;Parents;...	Yes	- More books in Vagahau ...
17 - 24	New Zealand	Female	Rural community / town - ...	9	Yes	Siblings;Parents;Grandpar...	Yes	- Support by family memb...
17 - 24	New Zealand	Female	Urban city - North Island	10	Yes	Siblings;Parents;Grandpar...	Yes	/
17 - 24	New Zealand	Female	Urban city - North Island	2	Yes	Grandparents;	Yes	A clear guide and tips/tec...
17 - 24	New Zealand	Female	Rural community / town - ...	3	Yes	Parents;Grandparents;	Yes	Being able to speak it myself
17 - 24	New Zealand	Male	Urban city - North Island	5	Yes	Siblings;Parents;Extended ...	Yes	By speaking niuean and En...
17 - 24	New Zealand	Female	Urban city - South Island	1	Yes	No one in the home;	Yes	Classes maybe?

Note. Original dataset of responses from an online survey

4.5.4 Thematic Analysis

Furthermore, the approach to data analysis utilised in this study was aligned with what Braun and Clarke (2006) described as thematic analysis in that it aimed to highlight and identify trends and patterns across data sets (or, in this instance, a selected group of transcripts). Conversely, it is crucial to consider that a well-defined analytical framework was not the critical concern (Panoho, 2013) for this research that aligned with a Pacific paradigm. However, the priority was on capturing precisely and transmitting the language experiences of speakers of receptive bilingualism. However, there is no guideline or a set way of carrying out analysis in a Pacific way, specifically with thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Academics, Braun and Clarke (2006) have noted that thematic analysis can be seen as a methodology in itself, as it can be used as a tool for analysis within the broader paradigm of Pacific research and with a Niue-centred methodology that can identify, analyse, and report patterns within the data. It is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) that a theme is being able to capture the importance of a pattern in the data that relates to the research question, that represents some "level of patterned response meaning within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.82).

The themes identified through thematic analysis can be observed directly from the data (semantic), or they may refer to underlying issues (latent), which, in each case, can be identified based on the judgement of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As a result, it was essential to consider that while themes have been developed from the data, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that they are constructed rather than integral within the dataset itself.

Before the data analysis, I was knowledgeable about the scope of methodological literature, having already carried out a preliminary literature review on potential methodologies. Additionally, I was intensely aware of the need to be able to stipulate detailed descriptions of participants' perspectives and lived experiences as a result of the questions that I developed on the influence of language and identity for New Zealand-born Niue living on a distant shore, here in Aotearoa. In Table 15 below, a sequential six-step process for thematic analysis is offered by Braun and Clarke (2006), who acknowledge that the analysis process is recursive and usually requires constant movement between the phases.

Table 14

Thematic data analysis process

Familiarising myself with the data	Correcting interview transcriptions, reading and re-reading the data, and noting initial thoughts.
Generating initial codes	Assigning codes to interesting features of the data. Collating data relevant to each code.
Searching for themes	Grouping codes and data extracts into potential themes. Summarising and paraphrasing codes and relationships between them.
Reviewing themes	Summarising and paraphrasing themes and reviewing methodology and research questions.
Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine and define themes and label each.
Producing the report	Selection of format for re-presentation of findings and extract examples. Producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Note. Adapted from Braun & Clark (2006)

The researcher transcribed interviews as an initial step to understanding the context of the interviews and gaining a rich interaction with the interviews, with the knowledge that time had passed since the initial interview. Upon completing the transcribing of the interviews, they were re-read while listening to the digital recordings to confirm and accept the accuracy of the transcripts and revise any errors that may have been overlooked or missed in the initial transcribing. Once the transcripts were all reviewed and correct, they were sent back to each participant through email for feedback or comments. A timeframe of four weeks was offered to participants for any responses upon receiving their completed transcripts, in which they could note any preferred additions or changes to their transcripts. Of the 15 transcripts returned to participants, 12 responded, with three requesting to omit minor quotes from their transcripts. These changes were about information that could compromise the anonymity of the participants or was dissimilar to the precise aims of this study. Following the responses

and feedback from the participants about their transcripts, or after the four-week timeframe, reading and re-reading transcripts were necessary to become familiar with the data.

4.5.5 Initial Generation of Codes

The data analysis was carried out manually. The first analysis stage consisted of generating initial codes from the data inductively. Various codes can be assigned to different data extracts during this point, resulting in a substantial number of initial codes being considered, as shown in Table 16 below.

Table 15

Example of initial categorisation of data extracts and codes

Name	Codes
"…so, growing up, my dad never encouraged language. He would always say you don't get a degree in Niuean. I think being in New Zealand and coming to New Zealand and having to assimilate into this culture, that was my dad's way of success, is when you come here, you forget all the things that you learnt in the islands, and that kind of trickled down to me…" (Tala)	• Perceptions of success • Transmission of language • Generational language trauma

Coded headings and subheadings were highlighted using different-coloured highlighters and entered into a Microsoft Word document with all the relevant data extracts to identify themes within the transcripts.

4.5.6 Searching for Themes

The different themes were developed by considering the relationships between the initial codes compiled from the data. In Microsoft Word, this consisted of copying and pasting the coded headings and data extracts to group similar codes together. The 'styles' feature allocated themes and codes to different principal themes. Using the 'navigation pane' meant I could identify the number and variety of codes throughout the analysis.

For qualitative research, Braun and Clarke (2006) note that "writing is an integral part of analysis" (p.86), which during this phase was particularly true. As demonstrated in Figure 19 below, summaries of the codes and extracts and the links between codes were written and re-written for clarity, which helped to identify the connections between the different codes and to see whether the extracts were relevant to the assigned theme or whether they needed to be created under new themes. According to Boyatzis (1998), paraphrasing and summarising data into one's own words allow for conscious and unconscious data processing.

Figure 19

Examples of summarising for analysis

> Most participants felt that knowing and understanding *vagahau Niue* is only one aspect of what makes up the identity of a *tagata Niue*. Being able to be in a safe space where you can use the language has always been hard because most of the time it is our own people and family who are our worst critics (#01, #04, #09). The belief is that you have the decision whether to take the positive and negative stance on how you are viewed as a *tagata Niue*. For most of the participants (#02, #05, #06, #09, #10, #13, #14 and #15) are actively taking ownership for learning *vagahau Niue* because there are tools in place to learn the language.

The importance of this is what Braun and Clarke (2006) describe as not "necessarily dependant on quantifiable measures" (p.82) nor frequency; rather, the research questions and Pacific paradigm help to define what was measured as being meaningful as a way of generating relevant themes. Once several themes were identified across the first three transcripts, Braun and Clarke's (2006) first three steps of familiarising, coding, and searching for themes were repeated for the remaining ten transcripts.

4.5.7 Re-presentation of Findings

The findings and the presentation were concerned with the reflection in Research Question One, which was to capture accurately and exemplify the experiences of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue with receptive bilingualism and their understanding and use of *vagahau Niue*. Secondly, in light of the limited literature on receptive bilingualism (Rehbein et al., 2012; Radley et al., 2021; Sherkina-Lieber, 2011), I deemed it was necessary to filter out the receptive bilingualism contextual factors that shape the identities of New Zealand-born Niue (Research Question Two). This was a way of highlighting how New Zealand-born Niue identities impact their relationship with *vagahau Niue* because of receptive bilingualism, as well as the implications of these impacts on the maintenance of language, to demonstrate how these factors are constructed and preserved.

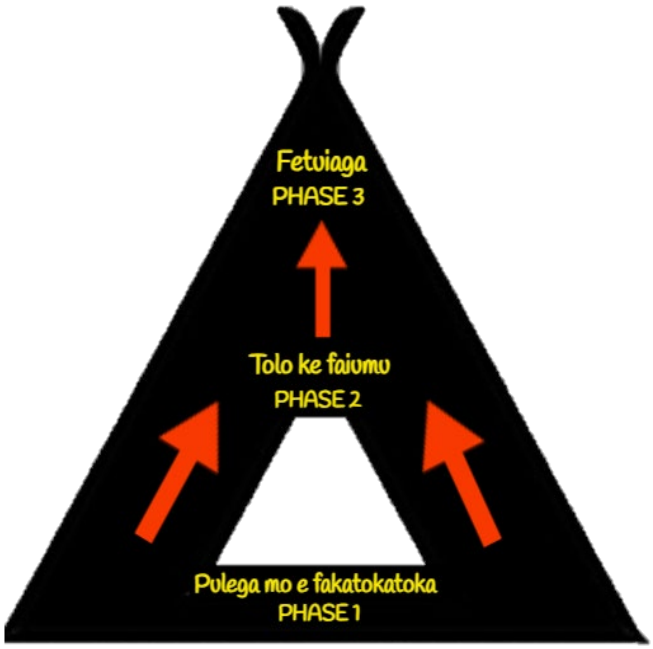
4.6 *Umu* Model Framework

While inside this written thesis, it is possible to come across specific methods and structures that resonate with the principles of Indigenous research, such as the thesis' design of this study is centred on the ideals and principles of the *umu.* The culturally specific event of the *umu* is described by Vilitama (2015) as an earth oven at the point of departure. It is significant because it lies at the heart of communal life, an essential part of Niue life. This is due to its ability to exercise a representative metaphorical role as a focus for the family and community, in which Vilitama (2015) describes the *umu* as a "conduit that links the present to the past and

the future. It is a place where the present can peep into the mystery of the past, or the past could be studied, revised, lived and inform the shaping of the future" (Vilitama, 2015, p.240). For this thesis, the example used for the *umu* will be adapted from Vilitama's example of a traditional wedding feast and encompasses three stages, which can be seen in Figure 20 which are *pulega mo e fakatokatoka, tolo ke faiumu*, and *fetuiaga*.

Figure 20

Digital image of Umu Model



Note. This figure is a digital image of the depiction of the tent formation that is used before the burning of the umu. It is made of the collected wood and formed in a triangle shape for the fire, once burnt, to be distributed among the rocks, paper and wood. Copyright 2021 by Nogiata Tukimata.

The *umu,* in retrospect, is a traditional cultural event laden with rich themes and is a method where its capacity for such is enabled through what Vilitama (2015) describes as a way of reading and speaking out of an immediate cultural practice significant to any research. Notably, the *umu* is a cultural practice that extends between generations of *Tagata Niue,* both in Niue and here in Aotearoa. The different phases of the *umu* represent the different approaches and methodologies employed in this research, focusing on the Niue lens influencing the research design that anchors the research within a Pacific worldview.

4.6.1 The Point of Departure

Vilitama's thesis (2015) outlines in depth the process of creating the *umu* in which the traditional process is to *iihi e manava he kelekele*[22]*.* The *fonua* (land, womb, placenta) is then dug into or exposed to the earth to fit in the *umu.* This process is symbolic in what Vilitama (2015) identifies as an analogy of "looking back into the place of our birth and origin" (p.240). In this instance, the *umu* can be seen as a "lens through which we look back and connect with the creator as well as an act of [re]connecting with the past and to the *tupuna* (ancestors) and their wisdom" (Vilitama, 2015, p.240). The significance of the *umu* and *fonua* and their associated notions allows for an understanding of the concepts and mechanisms that relate to the relationships and interconnections that "conjure up the image of the *pepesa* (community) *umu fetuiaga* (fellowship of the *umu*) or *aiga* (household of life)" (Vilitama, 2015, p.242).

The *umu* is rooted firmly in the *kelekele* (below/under)[23] as an analogy for the lifecycle. Vilitama (2015) describes the *umu* as not only about giving life but is also connected with the end of life. Creating an *umu* mainly involves banquets and celebrations as a time to come together to celebrate joy and happiness for milestone events such as weddings, haircutting and ear-piercing ceremonies, and coming-of-age birthdays. However, the *umu* is also concerned with pain, particularly funerals. Back in the homeland, the community gathering around the *umu* supports the family as they prepare and offer hospitality to guests and mourners. In the same way, the act of cutting open the *fonua* for the *umu* is similar to how the land is opened to receive the body of the deceased, which Vilitama (2015) describes as "*kua iihi e manava he kelekele, kua liuaki ki ai haana tino"*[24]*.* The practice of the *umu* and its traditions pursues the encouragement of character building, as it draws on the qualities of a "considerate relationality along with a desire to form identity" (Vilitama, 2015, p.242), in which the researcher serves as a lens for interpreting the data and therefore "[re]structuring (*umu foou),* [re]freshing *(umu fakamafana)* and [re]interpreting *(umu hila)* the Niue story" (Vilitama, 2015, p.236).

4.6.1.1 Embracing the Point of Departure

As the *umu* has been described as an earth oven, the first point of action is that it needs to be dug out. In performing this action, as a researcher and academic, I resonate with what Viltiama (2015) describes as "I am earthing myself by digging deep into the past and looking towards

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[22] the traditional umu is made by iihi e manava he kelekele (literally, 'cutting open the womb of the land') Vilitama, 2015, p.240.

[23] a Niue word for 'land' used interchangeably with *fonua,* although it carries no reference to placenta as does *fonua. Kelekele* can also mean 'below' or 'under'. Vilitama, 2015, p.242.

[24] the womb of the land is ripped open to receive back her own. This Niuean proverbial saying resonates with Job's understanding of the life cycle in relation to land as fonua. "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there! The Lord gives and the Lord takes away! Blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1.21) Vilitama, 2015, p.242.

the future. I am not carrying out this task alone, I am doing it in the company of others" (p.236). Through this process, various elements can emerge that will help to articulate the proposed interpretative method during the data collection and analysis phases. These elements include and are described by Vilitama (2015) as;

> The process of earthing(digging), recognising the mode of *tala/tutala* (talk-conversation, story-telling and orality), revealing the importance of the hard work of *pona/pipi fataua* (tying/binding/loosening)' and finally observing the hospitality of *taonaga/faiagahau* (banquet/feasting/celebration). (p.236)

Underpinning these elements are core principles that Vilitama (2015) describes as;

> *fakaalofa* and *feofanaki* (love and hospitality), *foaki-momoi* (giving, offering, sharing), *fakalilifu/fakatokolalo* (respect, humility), *fekafekau/gahua* (service, work), *fakauka* (persistence/perseverance), and *kau fakalataha* (unity, togetherness). These are said to be the fruits of digging around the *umu.* (p.237)

In retrospect, each one of the "elements refers back to something which is both actual and metaphorical in the art of the *umu* – and by extension, how this core cultural event might serve the task of doing academic research in this [or any] particular context" (Vilitama, 2015, p.237).

4.6.2 Faiumu: Making of the Niue umu

The *umu,* as described in the opening paragraph of this section, is an earth oven whose point of departure lies at the heart of communal life. Vilitama (2015) described the umu as an analogy to the lifecycle. Table 17 outlines the *umu* process, the Niue context, and the corresponding research method, each with significance and meaning. With the *umu* as the point of departure, beginning and ending, it can be seen as the circle of life itself.

Table 17

Umu Process and Corresponding Research Methods

UMU MODEL		
Umu process	**Niue context**	**Research Method**
Pulega mo e Fakatokatoka	*Aku fakatokatoka*	Introduction and literature review
Tolo ke faiumu	*Tafu* *Tauaki* *Ufi* *Tao*	Research Design and Methodology, Findings and Analysis
Fetuiaga	*Fuke* *Taaki*	Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

4.6.2.1 Pulega mo e Fakatokatoka

The *umu* preparation part consists of *tau pulega* (family meetings and arrangements). For the celebration of a wedding, the *uta vagahau* (traditional engagement) is a fundamental part of *pulega* as it includes the involvement of both sides of the extended families in the intended union. The *pulega,* in this regard, can include much of the wider community and is typically a time where intense debates and negotiations occur that "reflects genealogy and status of families within the social structure of the community" (Vilitama, 2015, p.228). When planning the wedding celebration, the date and venue may reach a consensus during the pulega phase. On the week of the celebration, the whole community gathers at the family homes of the intended wedded couple, ensuring that the final preparations for the *faiumu* (the convergence and making of the community *umu*) are completed, which includes gathering the produce, chopping firewood, collecting and heating rocks for the *umu* and digging the *umu* pit *(aku e umu)*[25]. This is where "life begins with the opening of the *fonua"* (Vilitama, 2015, p.242) and laying the rocks and wood. This relates to the chapters of this research, particularly the introduction and literature review, where the researcher presents the topic, her *vagahau Niue* journey, and the context in which this research is located. Furthermore, the literature review

[25] The convergence and making of the community *umu* that includes harvesting the produce, chopping firewood, collecting heating rocks and digging the *umu* pit.

seeks to identify the gap in research knowledge, such as receptive bilingualism among first-generation New Zealand-born Niue.

4.6.2.2 Tolo ke Faiumu

The second phase of the *umu* process is the period of the *faiumu*, which sees families and the community come together to make the *umu.* The commencement of this phase can occur on the night before the ceremony with the *maaga* (village, community) and *magafaoa laulahi* gathering at the homes of the families, bringing *galue* (feast collection of food, cooked or uncooked, prepared for various important social occasions), which includes gifts, and several contributions of a carton of chickens, large fish, pigs, baskets of taro and other land produce (Figure 21). Vilitama (2015) alludes to the idea that this is a reciprocal practice that is based on the value of *kua liligi mai ke liligi atu*[26]. The phase of *tolo ke faiumu* underpins four critical Niue practices of making the *umu*.

Figure 21

Land produce given as galue for the celebration

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2023

[26] Vilitama (2015) alludes to the idea that this practice is reciprocal and based on the principle that it has been poured in so it can be poured out. Similarly, this concept is elaborately shared by Pahe Faitala in the study of fakaalofa, "generous giving/sharing". He concludes that giving and reciprocity comprise the heart of Niuean social and spiritual identity. The word fakaalofa, in its etymology, refers to "love", but it has multiple meanings depending on the context. A gift (noun), for instance, can be understood as fakaalofa; even the act of giving (verb) itself can be defined as fakaalofa. See Faitala, P. (1983*). Christianity in Niue Context* [Unpublished Bachelor of Divinity thesis] PTC, Suva, pp.56- 59.

This is through *tafu,* where the fire is lit and is then fuelled with firewood where the rocks are heated, which Vilitama (2015) explains as representing "the influence and lasting impact the fire (life) has on the immediate environment" (p.243). However, the fire would burn and eventually 'die out' with time (age), noting that the impact of the heat is used to cook the food for the celebration/banquet. This is then followed by *tauaki aki e tau maka mo e āo e tau maka ki fafo*[27], which is where the rocks being heated are parted and brought out of the *umu* while the wrapped food is placed inside the *umu* and laid under the hot rocks. The practice of *uufi* (to cover) is the process where "the *umu* is covered with leaves then buried with soil" (Vilitama, 2015, p.242). The final step in this phase is *tao* in which the process of the *umu* is to cook or *tao e umu ke moho*[28].

The process of lighting the *umu* is symbolic of what Vilitama (2015) describes as the "unfolding of humanity from its birth out of the *fonua"* (p.242), where the "ignition of life [is] signified by the lighting of the fire and its delicate beginning. The fire grows and intensifies as it is fed with firewood symbolising the input of the surrounding community" (Vilitama, 2015, p.242). In my experience with lighting the *umu* with my *olu mene* (maternal great-grandfather), he had a saying: *"ka tugi e koe e afi, ti kitia e koe e milino he afi, iloa e koe, kua tugi mo e fakatokatoka e koe e umu mo e loto mea"*[29]. This was an unspoken truth where the meaning became a lesson learnt over time, in which the *umu* that was cooked well and was not seen as *mē e umu*[30], was an *umu* that was prepared with a pure heart and with pure intentions. Similar notions can be seen through the design and methodology of this research, where understanding the *umu* methodology created a foundation to which I could anchor my research, which was different to what the *umu* was metaphorically intended and written for in Vilitama's (2015) thesis. By understanding the different phases of the *umu,* I could implement the *umu* process that was suitable for my topic and design a framework that situated and prioritised Niue values, traditions and concepts within the scope of the research.

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27 This process is where the heated rocks are parted and taken out of the *umu* to place the wrapped food within the *umu* under the hot rocks.

28 Vilitama (2015) provides the definition of this to Ensure that the umu is well cooked - meaning, "bring a task to its proper end". It can also mean "finish what you have started", implying "do not start what you cannot finish lest shame is brought upon the family". The umu normally takes up to three hours to cook depending on its size. It is a time of waiting. This waiting (fakatali) for the umu to be cooked is not passive. Waiting for the umu is not always a comfortable time. See Vilitama, 2015, p.230.

29 An expression shared by the researcher's great-grandfather, where its meaning is if when you light the fire, and you see the calm of the fire before it turns into a flame, you know that you have prepared and the *umu* with a clean and pure heart, by doing so, it is ensured that the *umu* will be well-cooked.

30 The act of the *umu* being '*mē'* is that it is slightly cooked. Varied meanings are shared, however the researcher's experience with her great-grandfather who explained this expression was that the process leading up to lighting the *umu* was not done with a pure heart or with pure intentions – therefore the *umu* did not cook properly.

4.6.2.3 Fetuiaga

The third and final phase of the *umu* process is the *fetuiaga* or *taonaga* itself. This involves the *fuke* (uncovering) of the *umu,* where all the layers placed on the *umu* are peeled back one by one, and the *umu* is opened to reveal the cooked food underneath (Figure 22). The removal and uplifting of the rocks from the cooked food is when the cooked food is moved to the banquet area, where it is tabled and arranged for guests that attend the celebration. At this stage of the *umu* making, the *umu* now assumes the banquet formality, in what Vilitama (2015) describes as the;

> …dynamics around the fire, sweat, smell and dirt suddenly change to one that involves worship, word, feasting, singing, dancing, and exchanging gifts. The mood, colours, aesthetics, fragrance, and movement now reflect a *fetuiaga* that can be experienced as *koinonia*, a communion of a *fetuiaga fiafia* (joyful community). In this *taonaga*, the distinction between appointed leaders and the *timotua,* host and guest, fades – the *fetuiaga* becomes flexible fluid. (p.231)

Figure 22

The process of removing the layers from the umu or known as fuke e umu

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection

The unveiling of the *umu* mirrors the concluding chapters of this thesis, the unpacking of the findings, and the analysis of the *tutala,* the discussion, conclusion and recommendations that become the food that is placed at the banquet and prepared for the time of feasting. The *fetuiaga* becomes a time of coming together and a time of celebration. Like the celebration, the conclusion and recommendations are a time of bringing together the richness of the findings and weaving the different themes to ensure that the research questions have been answered.

The *Umu* Model framework symbolises the cultural practices of making an *umu* using *vagahau Niue* and traditional practices. This acts as an Indigenous practice symbolic to Niue, integrating Western theory and weaving the participants' voices through the *umu* making itself. In being able to align this study with the ideas and principles of Pacific research, the conversations with the Niue participants employed the *tutala* method as a culturally suitable approach to carry out research and as a methodology that Filipo (2004) describes as exceeding experiences and views that "inform, challenge and validate our way of thinking. Through this sharing approach, we are empowering, enabling, informing, encouraging to re-create and refine our experiences to be open to transformation" (p.181).

4.6.3 Tutala

For this research, I aimed to ensure my approach resonated well within the *umu* framework. I considered Havea's approach of *Talanoa* (to have a conversation, to relate to something, or to talk story) (Tunufa'i, 2016) through Niue's equivalent *tutala,* in what Vilitama (2015) describes as a;

> hermeneutical principle of the *umu fetuiaga*. *Tutala* comes from an all-encompassing term *tala* as a root or *vaka* (root word), *tala* is the origin of *tutala* (to talk), *talanoa* (gossip, informal talk), *fakamatala* (speech/reflection), *talatala* (talking/chatting), its associated affixes. However, *tutala* is a generic form that covers a raft of terms under orality. (p.259)

As a result, *tutala* was seen as being culturally appropriate in communicating with the participants, as a comprehensive enquiry that strengthened the value of applying a Pacific knowledge-sharing tool to research Pacific knowledge. It was crucial to consider culturally appropriate methods when conducting fieldwork, especially before entering participant homes, to ensure the *tutala* process was collaborative and safe for sharing stories. This established good rapport and positive interpersonal relationships with the participants. The use of *tutala* was also significant as it integrated the practices and holistic nature of Pacific interaction and communication, which Vaioleti (2006) describes as a philosophical base that is "collective, [and] oriented towards defining and acknowledging Pacific aspirations" (Vaioleti, 2006, p.26).

Moreover, *tutala,* as a traditional method of information gathering and story sharing, views the realities of people as being socially constructed (Geoff, 2006), which encompasses the "essence of creative conversation and [in]formative sharing" (Vilitama, 2015, p.260). Furthermore, Vilitama (2015) provides the definition of *tutala* in both singular and plural functions, where *tala* is "singular as in '*tala e tala'* (tell a story) and *tutala* being plural as in *'hau ke tutala'* (come and talk and have a conversation)" (p.260-261). The use of *tutala* in the *umu* framework is informal and less prescriptive around the *umu.* Vilitama (2015) states that the *tutala* around the *umu* is;

> …more liberating and less boring/inhibiting than in the restricting and limiting environment of the church. It is more encompassing than the institutional chapels. It is woven within the life story of the community, married with elders' spoken texts and preserves a sense of dignity and respect, which is at risk in Havea's use of Talanoa. (p.261)

In addition, the use of *tutala* was used to protect against the well-reported practice that is argued by Simati-Kumar (2016) as "minority groups, such as Pacific people, [having] been subjected to disempowering research" (p.19). This notion is further supported by Vaioleti (2006), who suggests that Western researchers have created and claimed what they assume are the realities of their participants based on their own Western biases or perspectives. Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001) have argued that Pacific researchers are emerging as strongly accentuating research strategies and Indigenous epistemologies grounded in people's beliefs, values, ways of knowing, and how they perceive the world.

Regardless of Western views that oral history is made up of myths, the concept of *talanoa* and, more so, *tutala* has been significant in moulding the identities of Pacific people. During this process, the stories mean more than storytelling and are shared to build and connect knowledge, traditional history and wisdom (Halapua, 2000). Moreover, the relationship between the participants and the researcher is cultivated in the *tutala*, which warrants an enriching and smooth dialogue that nurtures flexibility and inspires critical discussions. The tutala method enables a spiritual relationship between participants, which nurtures and strengthens the *vahaloto,* central to how Pacific people function socially (Vilitama, 2015). Furthermore, the *tutala* approach allows participants the space and time to reflect and honour their journeys (Ka'ili, 2005), which creates a mutually empowering experience that gives the participants equal responsibility for what is discussed and how this is discussed. Additionally, as a researcher, I was mindful that my knowledge of *vagahau Niue* and *tau aga fakamotu* would facilitate positive dialogue and encourage effective *tutala*, as participants were able to

be in a space where they were comfortable in expressing themselves from a bilingual and cultural perspective.

4.6.3.1 Anchored by Cultural Values

The *tutala* methodology anchored the participants' views in this study in a culturally appropriate way. This was done by giving them the *fakalilifu* they deserved, irrespective of role or social standing in the community, and ensuring enough time for participants to raise any concerns or issues they had towards the research. The fluidity and flexibility of the *tutala* allowed for this, as it was an essential way of establishing rapport and comfortability in our space. This was emphasised by the acknowledgement and respect given to the participants and the countless experiences they encountered with the Niue language, specifically during times when they understood *vagahau Niue*, which in hindsight made the study that much more significant, where their values that they placed on their experiences with the language were monumental to the discussion. This enabled me as the researcher to appreciate what Vaioleti (2006) described as the "*laumalie* (essence, spirit, *wairua*[31]) of concepts, notions, emotions or expressions" (p.32) that were shared by the participants, which significantly impacted the study. Furthermore, I was also conscious of the appropriate cultural protocol to adhere to and respect during the *tutala* process, which included providing food during face-to-face interviews to show reciprocity for the time given. At the end of each *tutala*, a *fakaalofa* (gift) was presented to all participants involved in the study, not as a *taui* (reward), but rather as a *fakatautonu* (acknowledgement) of the energy, time, and knowledge that they willingly shared towards this research, as well as a way of expressing my gratitude for all they sacrificed to participate in this study. The *fakaalofa* were given through Pak n Save gift vouchers; although small, all participants appreciated the gesture. Following the thesis examination, I will summarise the research findings and disseminate this to the participants as a token of my appreciation.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has re-introduced the importance of a Niue-centred methodology for this research by reinforcing through the principal and subsequent research questions connected to the Niue-centred framework. Ethical considerations are discussed along with the recruitment process and the participants' final sample. Semi-structured interviews were conducted through *tutala* with participants from a set criterion, who mainly identified as first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

[31] noun. spirit, soul - spirit of a person which exists beyond death. It is the non-physical spirit, distinct from the body and the mauri. To some, the wairua resides in the heart or mind of someone while others believe it is part of the whole person and is not located at any particular part of the body. The wairua begins its existence when the eyes form in the foetus and is immortal. Source: Te Aka Māori Dictionary https://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/

Additionally, using *tutala* to conduct the interviews provided a comfortable Niue-led space for participants to share their experiences and express their views of receptive bilingualism. It removed any sense of un-comfortability and distance between the researcher and the participant in the process. This enabled the *tutala* with first-generation New Zealand-Niue to produce essential data that used thematic analysis to analyse critical findings, as well as build a sense of rapport with the participants to ensure the participants felt comfortable and safe in a space that was unknown territory, not only for them but, for myself as the researcher.

As a way of contributing to a contextual understanding of receptive bilingualism for first-generation New Zealand-born Niue, Chapter Five highlights the findings and analysis from the perspectives of all participants with support from the survey research findings. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight tie together the findings from Chapter Five through the discussion of the findings, linking this to the literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two to provide a critical discussion and recommendations concerning the degree to which receptive bilingualism impacts the maintenance of *vagahau Niue* among first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa, and actions that could be implemented to achieve this.

VEVEHEAGA LIMA

Tolo ke faiumu – Tao e umu ke moho

The voices upon the point of departure

"It is not too late to reclaim your language. Whether in a safe space that encourages mistakes or in uncomfortable environments that allow for improvements, taking the opportunity to learn from it and move forward is key…"

5.1 Introduction

Tolo ke faiumu – tao e umu ke moho lies at the heart of the *umu.* This is the period of time that the *umu* is cooking. It is a time of waiting and reflection on the *faiumu* process; and a time for conversation between the people who have been a critical part of the *faiumu* processreaching agreement that the correct preparation has been followed with authenticity and intentionality. In retrospect, this chapter presents the findings from the perspectives of 15 New Zealand-born Niue participants, in retaining the relationships between the nested stories about *vagahau Niue* and their lived experiences as receptive speakers of the language. The themes enabled discussion and produced questions around the themes of upbringing, the influence of different parent generations, bilingualism, attitudes to language, culture and identity, language acquisition, and language environments. The findings from the 15 participants highlight factors of receptive bilingualism that have impacted the relationship between *vagahau Niue* and how New Zealand-born Niue see their identities in the home away from home context. The following section outlines the profiles of the participants involved.

5.2 Atuhau Fakamua ne fanau he motu nei ko Niu Silani[32]

The total number of participants in this study included ten females and five males (Table 18). They all varied in age, with the youngest participants in their mid-30s, with the oldest participant in her early 70s. As highlighted in Chapter Three, the aim of the research lies with first-generation New Zealand-born Niue as the generation where language shift has occurred, as children of migrant Niue parents, and where *vagahau Niue* can be maintained as a result of these receptive speakers. Most of the participants resided in the urban areas of the North Island, with three of the participants (Mele, Fine and Ioane) living in the South Island. This was a result of the concentration of the Niue population being in the main urban cities of the North Island, which include Auckland, Wellington and Hamilton. The villages that the participants represented were spread across the island from *Motu* (north) to *Tafiti* (south) with eight out of

[32] Translation of 'First-generation New Zealand-born

the 15 participants coming from 2 or more villages. It is also noted that only one of the participants (Sina) does not have any children, so her experiences with intergenerational transmission have stopped with her.

Table 17

Participant Demographic Profiles[33]

Name	Gender Male (M) Female (F)	Age Range	Location in New Zealand	Village(s) from in Niue	Children Yes (Y) No (N)
Mika	M	30 – 40	North Island (Rural)	Alofi	Y
Tala	F	30 – 40	North Island (Urban)	Alofi, Tamakautoga, Mutalau	Y
Mele	F	40 – 50	South Island (Urban)	Alofi, Avatele, Tamakautoga	Y
Lofa	F	50 – 60	North Island (Urban)	Alofi	Y
Sifa	F	30 – 40	North Island (Urban)	Hakupu & Lakepa	Y
Lupo	F	40 – 50	North Island (Urban)	Alofi & Lakepa	Y
Sina	F	30 – 40	North Island (Urban)	Mutalau & Lakepa	N
Misi	M	40 – 50	North Island (Urban)	Tuapa & Lakepa	Y
Manogi	F	40 – 50	North Island (Urban)	Mutalau	Y
Fine	F	50 – 60	South Island (Rural)	Liku/Lakepa	Y
Eva	F	70 +	North Island (Urban)	Tamakautoga	Y
Ioane	M	40 – 50	South Island (Urban)	Makefu	Y
Iakopo	M	30 – 40	North Island (Rural)	Tuapa	Y
Mataio	M	40 – 50	North Island (Urban)	Alofi	Y
Ligi	F	50 – 60	North Island (Urban)	Alofi & Makefu	Y

5.2.1 Tau Leo he Atuhau Fakamua nei[34]

The discussion of this findings chapter is prefaced by several points, all of which are underpinned by the voices and perspectives of first-generation New Zealand-born that describe their upbringing, the generational influence of understanding *vagahau Niue,* the importance of receptive bilingualism, and how language attitudes have influenced active language use for many of these participants. Firstly, participants were advised that the *tutala* interview was the first opportunity that they had received to speak about and share their lived

[33] The individual participant names are omitted and the use of Niue pseudonym names are to protect their identities.
[34] The voices of the participants that are first-generation New Zealand-born

experiences with *vagahau Niue* as receptive bilinguals. This specifically related to being asked to express their thoughts on how being raised as first-generation New Zealand-born Niue were exposed to *vagahau Niue*, and how the importance and significance of *vagahau Niue* has been maintained within their nuclear families, wider extended families, and in their communities. The *tutala* generated some very passionate discussions as all participants saw the *tutala* as a realisation of the importance of language, and how they viewed their current language use with not only their families but more importantly with their children, and the effects of being receptive speakers have had on the transmission of language and culture. Secondly, the *tutala* revealed differing perceptions of identity as *tagata Niue* and whether receptive bilingualism played a role in maintaining language amongst these first-generation New Zealand-born Niue.

5.3 Growing up in the Land of Milk and Honey

This section details the participants' upbringing and family dynamics with *vagahau Niue*. Participants' accounts of their upbringing and their early years have been predominantly categorised by land of opportunity and differences in generational upbringings.

5.3.1 Land of Opportunity

The land of opportunity and the migration from the island home were significant reminders of the ultimate dream: to follow the pursuit of happiness for many of the participants and their parents. For Misi, he believed that his language was impacted by the 'Kiwi way of life' and that they were not forced to learn *vagahau Niue*, which resonated with what Ligi notes;

> *…I think, my parents were quite lenient and not wanting to push vagahau Niue on us because they saw the opportunities that we had here in New Zealand were quite significant with the English language (Ligi)*

This is further supported by what Tala shared about her father being against learning the language as he wanted her to become culturally assimilated to the New Zealand way of life. She shared;

> *So, growing up my dad never encouraged language at all. He would always say you don't get a degree in Niuean, and I think being in New Zealand and coming to New Zealand and having to assimilate to this culture (Tala)*

In comparison to this experience, several of the participants shared their experiences when they returned to the homeland of Niue and how they learnt the language as part of being immersed in the country. Mika, Misi, and Iakopo shared that they returned to Niue and stayed

for some time between five months and a year, during which they experienced two different ways of life. They shared;

> *So, I went to Niue in 1995 and stayed there for a year, and yeah, I grew out my hair as well – and it was buzzy to realise that I was living a whole different culture. The way of life was very different to how I experienced life here in New Zealand. I wasn't afforded the luxuries back then, it was just go to the bush, clean around the house and live a simple life (Mika)*

> *When I went back to Niue in 1990, I ended up staying there for five months. I picked it up [the language]. But that's because I had to, you know, and it was much better for me then. But I don't know what's going on with my brain, but, you know, trying to learn it now, and maybe I just put too much pressure on myself. But those five months, you know, for the matua (elderly parent) that are here today, it's one thing in Niue because it's around you every day (Misi)*

A similar notion is mentioned by Tala and Iakopo who drew on the fact that being able to understand the language in New Zealand, became a different concept in Niue, as they shared;

> *…we would always go back to Niue and then always sit there listening to conversations and picking up some words but not understanding (Tala)*

> *I can remember, our first-ever trip to Niue, and we were beginning to understand the different phrases from Mum, and when we went to Niue, man they were going like super-fast when they were talking, I got lost, and couldn't keep up until my aunty asked me a question, and I just stared at her blankly because I didn't know what to say. Then she asked my mum if I could understand, to which mum said a little bit, so, for me that was different and scary too (Iakopo)*

Furthermore, Manogi shared that New Zealand as the land of opportunity is only a place of birth as she alludes to the idea that;

> *So, I think being born here is just my place of birth, but my roots are in Niue. Because that's where they [parents] were born and their grandparents were born. So yeah, that's how I feel as a Niuean standing up today (Manogi)*

Additionally, for Manogi; New Zealand as the 'new home' represents what a lot of Niue that live in other diasporic communities resonate with, as they shared;

> *Upbringing in the language speaks to a lot of New Zealand-born Niuean, not only in New Zealand but also ones who obviously live or were born overseas like in America. I've got family in America who know nothing about their culture but have been to Niue and would love the opportunity to speak in the language, it's understanding what it's been like for them, and allowing them to have their thoughts around it [language] regardless…(Tala)*

> *So, I think being born here is just my place of birth, but my roots are in Niue. Because that's where they [parents] were born, and their grandparents were born. So yeah, that's how I feel as a Niuean standing up today (Manogi)*

5.3.2 Western Upbringing vs Cultural Upbringing

The Land of Opportunity also describes the differences in upbringings between Western and cultural experiences among many of the participants, where the church was a home of significance for both Lofa and Mataio. They shared their early memories of language learning around extended family, as Mataio's experience describes;

> *My upbringing was very much with the extended family. I was very much influenced by the Niue way of being brought up, and going to church, otherwise, my schooling has all been in New Zealand (Mataio)*

He further goes on to explain that *vagahau Niue* was a way of life that was heard daily. Mataio shared that;

> *…we would go to church on Sunday at Newton. That was what life was about in those days, and language played a big part in that – and for me, vagahau Niue was a way of life, that's pretty much what I heard on a daily basis, my pop and Nena would speak to me in the language and I would try to respond in VN, and when they knew I had made a mistake, they would nicely correct me and say, this is the word you say. So, I was fortunate to have grown up with that and been immersed in that (Mataio)*

This is further supported by Lofa who explained that a lot of the church services she attended growing up, were in *vagahau Niue,* where she was able to understand but found it difficult to paraphrase or articulate what was shared. On the other hand, Ioane's upbringing was heavily influenced by the Western world, as a result of being adopted. He shared that;

> *So, vagahau Niue for me growing up was an interesting thing, because my biological parents had given me to my mum's sister, whom I call mum now, but back in the day, I was like what you would call adopted to my aunty/mum. No papers, no courts or lawyers, just given, and my mum married my dad who is from Atiu in the Cook Islands, because they weren't able to have kids, so I was the youngest of my biological parents, so was gifted to my parents and they became my parents or mum and dad, and so with that, my mum even though she was born in Niue, came here when she was two - and again she was gifted to her uncle Tom and his wife who resided down in the South Island (Ioane)*

In this regard, Ioane is culturally blended with his father coming from the Cook Islands, and his mother also being a by-product of adoption, so his upbringing was a blended one, with three cultures intertwined including Niue, Cook Islands and New Zealand. This is similar to the idea that language was not important to learn, as Sifa mentioned;

> *For me, growing up, it was constantly around me. But, you know, when you grow up in a Western world, people don't speak it, so you're like, oh, that's not important. You think in the back of your head, oh, that's not important, we don't speak that at school (Sifa)*

She also shared that because no one was learning the language, what was the point of learning it? She explained that;

> *…mine came from laziness, and I always tell people I'm lazy, and so why do I bother? So, growing up, I never really appreciated it until I got older (Sifa)*

The appreciation for learning and using *vagahau Niue* came when Sifa was much older and saw the significance of the language. In contrast, Mele was not able to engage in the language, even if her family were able to, as she noted;

> *Yeah, I wasn't engaging in conversations, like my family would engage with each other. My mother's family was brought up in Niue, the first five were born in Niue and they had the language and heard it (Mele)*

However, Mele shared that her upbringing and understanding of the language, came by way of cultural song and dance, whereas a child, the actions were perceived as just simple movements, however, following the practice of those actions, Mele realised the meaning behind those actions. She reminisced;

> *I remember when I was little, and I remember getting dressed up and dancing for a Niuean wedding. However, also when I was five, I remember being dressed up in pink and white and singing 'tuku e tau lima fakatali', I remember singing that, I think with the other little Niuean kids in my age group we did an item for a concert. I remember there were six of us Niuean kids, and I remember singing that song. When we did this meke, I was doing the taro actions, chopping down the coconuts you know, and then singing the action songs and then we're like oh yeah, we know what we're doing, and that's why this hand is doing this…(Mele)*

Learning through song and dance was also experienced by Misi, who has seen similar experiences being transmitted through his children, where he describes that;

> *…when we were kids, we were doing little Niue performances, and it stopped there. See, our kid, pretty much from the moment they started church, through school, even up to this point, yeah, they've just been involved. We never had that, you know, to continue it. I'm sure we could have done cultural dances here and there (Misi)*

By experiencing the differences between a Western and Cultural upbringing, Mele alluded to the idea that this creates a sense of validation where there is an appreciation of values. She noted that;

> *I think for people like me, born in New Zealand, brought up with English, so it's kind of like you have been exposed to that, but that doesn't make you any less and you can still do this and then you appreciate the values that you're taught, and why you've*

been taught that way, it becomes very fulfilling because it does validate who you are (Mele)

5.3.3 Difference in Generational Upbringing

The differences in generational upbringing come by way of the participants having been raised or nurtured by one or both of their grandparents in their early years of childhood. Lofa, Misi, Manogi, Eva, and Mataio acknowledged the efforts of their grandparents to use the language with them at a young age. They shared;

…but for the first, maybe three or four years, we lived with our grandparents. So, you know, I remember when we would share food, just hearing the language, and church was an important part as well (Lofa)
But because of our upbringing and being first generation born in New Zealand, in terms of trying to learn the culture itself through my parents, I mean, you're a child, but when Nena would speak, I would respond and I'd understand her, and mum was the same. Unfortunately, my grandfather passed on. So, a lot of it was just through my nana and I remember back when we were kids, my Nena wanted to stay with us because we were still little toddlers, whereas most of my cousins, they were like 15, 20 years ahead of us, and so nana was always talking to us and not realising it, (Misi)

So, I had the language at a young age, the importance is right up there, because that was the first language that I spoke, even though I was born here. I think I was fortunate enough to live with Nena and be raised by her to have that (Manogi)

Being able to speak to my grandparents was very special, I learnt at a very early age and it was part of our home life but we also spoke English. My father wanted us to learn English for school. It was an important part of my childhood and helped me communicate with my parents and wider family. Primarily my parents and grandparents and to a lesser extent church. In later life, it has been mainly from church and exposure to the wider family as my parents are deceased (Eva)

So, I grew up with my grandparents, my parents returned to Niue when I was one, and I was blessed to have lived and grown up with my grandparents who were fluent speakers of vagahau Niue. With that, I grew up speaking in the language with my grandparents, and when they did things like the umu or the different foods, they would teach me the different language you use to describe what the food was, or what the process was (Mataio)

He further shared that his grandparents were important people in his life and that his experiences with them were treasured memories as he shared;

It came from my grandparents; they were my pride and joy, and I was happy to have learned what I needed to learn from them. The language was important to them, and my Nena would pray the longest prayers and cover everything from family to church, to those who were sick, she made sure that I was listening – sometimes I did, but then other times I didn't. But that was where my understanding of the language came from, and she continued being this prayer warrior for my family – and then we went to church, Nena would speak with all her little friends, and then we would sing songs, and then she would always knock my head when I wasn't listening to the lauga, but in those times, I didn't understand what the minister was preaching about, because

it was real formal and sounded very sacred, way different to how my Nena spoke, so that was different, but I think she ensured I had some connection to my language even if it was a tiny bit (Mataio)

In the same light, Ioane and Mataio relished the idea that knowing and understanding *vagahau Niue* was their connection with their grandparents. He explained that in some way the language is the lifeline that keeps him connected to his grandparents, which is a piece of them that he can hold on to in their memory. Furthermore, both Ioane and Mataio regret that they did not continue using the language and shared;

I continue to try little phrases just so I can keep that connection I had with my grandparents (Ioane)

…there weren't connections made with me and my grandparents [besides the language], so that in itself made me sad to think of all the work and effort my grandparents instilled into me when I was growing up with them went out the window…(Mataio)

He further explained that once his grandparents passed, the life he knew where language should have played an important role, became less and less important, as his parents did not feel the need for him to continue learning the language as important. By doing so, Mataio described a real sense of resentment towards his parents as he mentioned;

I think going through different upbringings – just made it really difficult to continue learning the language or even using it, and I said to my mum once, why she didn't continue speaking to me as Nena did, and she said because you didn't need it. I didn't need it, man that was hard to hear, especially coming from her, and looking back now, I feel like that was robbed from me – and I became like everyone else…and I don't want to say I resent my parents for not continuing that language learning but I do, because then I wouldn't have to try to prove being Niue if that makes sense (Mataio)

The influence of parents and their decision not to transmit or limit the transmission of *vagahau Niue* is shared by Mele, and Manogi who shared;

…I remember being 15 or 16 and asking my parents why I didn't learn vagahau Niue, because I wasn't speaking it at home because of that generation. And my mum said, you know what? When I spoke to you when you were little, you would giggle, and it became very hard. And we're like well we didn't know any better. She goes, Yeah, but like I said she was colonised, and she said when she was at school and when she spoke Niuean, she got the cane on the hand. That's how they responded to when she was in school in Niue. But looking back now, they didn't speak to me, they just spoke around me, and I thought okay. I also think that my uncles and my aunties of my parents, my mum's younger siblings, they're just like me, you know we're all in the same boat here… (Manogi)

Yeah, it was just coming back and having to live with my parents where they didn't do vagahau Niue, and so that changed my perspective again to what vagahau Niue is. It was different, so I didn't get a chance to keep using it (Manogi)

Similarly, for Lupo, Sina and Ligi their parents were speakers of the language and spoke in the language which provided exposure to the language, however, both parents were lenient on language learning and did not force the language on these participants. As they mention;

They spoke to us in Niuean at church as well, so we had a little bit of an understanding of what they were speaking, but the barrier was speaking more Niuean at home, because then out and about was always English for us (Lupo)

When we went to our grandparents' house during the holidays, it was just the Niuean language. But then, that's pretty much the only exposure I got to the Niuean language, from was parents and my grandparents (Sina)

But for me growing up, my parents were speakers of vagahau Niue and that allowed us to have some exposure to the language which, as I said, my parents were quite lenient on us not to force us into that, but then I think it became the norm or comfortability around language use to not be as prominent in the home (Ligi)

On the other hand, Fine shared that her upbringing with her parents was all in the language and stated;

Growing up and listening to my parents converse in total Niue immersion was a natural way of responding. English was my parent's second language (Fine)

This resonated with what Misi shared as having consistent exposure to the language that his children now have, would have resulted differently in his upbringing and his use of *vagahau Niue*, as he shared;

I think the kids have been exposed, which is in a good way because, as I said, if I had that same exposure when I was young, up until the point they're doing it today, maybe things would have been different (Misi)

5.3.4 New Zealand born vs Niue born

The differences in generational upbringings were also a result of the different landscapes in which *vagahau Niue* was spoken or understood. For the New Zealand-born participants, Mika described that you could tell the difference between everybody's upbringing regarding the language. This is supported by Tala, Mele, Sifa and Sina who shared that;

…it was hard because obviously growing up with two parents who are fluent and then a family who converse in Niuean, you expect to get the best of both worlds, but that wasn't the case, because my parents, didn't want me to learn the language (Tala)

> *…we're all speaking English, but my mother's siblings, would all speak Niuean to each other. So yeah, she had her New Zealand-born siblings and her Niuean-born siblings and I mixed in with her New Zealand-born siblings and that's how we engaged (Mele)*
>
> *The grandparents, aunties, uncles, mum, dad. And then when it came to us kids, we understood, but then just responding was a different story, because you were like, why do we have to speak this at home, and then you go to school and you speak English, and that's where I think the cross-culture of being an Islander, from Niue, and then you speak English at school, and then you get confused (Sifa)*
>
> *When we were little, Mum and Dad would always speak Niuean to us, but, um, at school and stuff like that, you're just surrounded by English. And then, being little, it was only mum and dad (Sina)*

Moreover, Lupo mentioned that if she and her siblings were taught from a young age, English should be used for school as a second language, and *vagahau Niue* should be the first language that should be spoken when you first walk through the door. Then the significance and impact would be greater, and she and her siblings would be better off now that they are older. In contrast, Mele indicated that she was raised with the *vagahau Niue* being spoken to her; however, she could not grasp the acquisition of it, and she mentioned it was just her 'own block'. Furthermore, Lofa and Misi alluded to the idea that once adult or parenthood was reached, the language settings where language was used or heard became limited, as they shared;

> *…once you become a young adult or parent there are limited opportunities outside of say church settings. I think there's a place, you know, for the church to be looking at other opportunities to use vagahau to hear vagahau Niue, even like the singing practices (Lofa)*
>
> *…although I knew I was a Niuean, I didn't recognise everything about Niue to be considered culturally everything that is Niue. I mean, Mum and Dad would do umu's every Sunday, and that was about all the connection we had (Misi)*

Ioane's unique language experiences, particularly when he was younger and would visit his family in Auckland, were a source of fascination. He would be spoken to in the language and receive responses from his siblings, a stark contrast to his language exposure at home. This intriguing dynamic sparked his interest and curiosity.

5.3.5 Language Experiences

The language experiences of several participants and their upbringings were important in their family life within the home and school environments. As mentioned by Iakopo, his mother only started speaking in the language at the age of six, as English was the only language that was heard up until that point. He explained;

So vagahau Niue for me growing up, was hearty and my parents always used to speak it to me and my brother, and when they first spoke, we started laughing because we didn't understand what they were saying. It was almost like an alien language, because out of the blue, they would say things like go get the shoe, and we would be like aye? Only to find out that the shoe was going to be our worst enemy. But things like that, mum would break out in random Niuean sentences if she meant business – and for some strange reason, when she would growl at us in Niuean – there was more impact in her words, than if she told us off in English. So, for me, that was a bit of a shock to the system, when I first started hearing Niuean, and then from then on, Mum and Dad would have their conversations in the language (Iakopo)

Similarly, Ligi heard *vagahau Niue* daily, and it was instilled in her siblings from a young age. She described her experience as;

Vagahau Niue has played a big part in the life of my family and I think my siblings and I growing up, were fortunate to have our mum and dad talk to us in vagahau Niue, it was a language we heard daily, and at one point of our lives it was instilled in my siblings and me from a young age, and I think when you grow up and you hear your parents talking in the language, you'd want to at least have some want [for the language] as well (Ligi)

This was highlighted by Lofa who shared that *vagahau Niue* was a part of everyday life as it was her first spoken language in her first five years of life, where she shared;

I was probably speaking all vagahau Niue in terms of conversing with my elders, especially my grandparents and extended family (Lofa)

On the other hand, Tala mentioned that when she was young and the language was being used, her instant reaction would be whether the response would be in English or not, as a means of communication outcome between herself and the speaker. This is similar to Sifa's experience, where she shared;

When we were younger, Mum and Dad spoke to us in Niuean, but we couldn't speak the language back to them, so it was a bit of a barrier for us. They tried, but we didn't make the effort or the time to speak it and help Mum and Dad out. It's hard now because our kids need to speak the language back to their parents, which is a barrier for us as parents ourselves (Sifa)

The lack of effort from Sifa to use the language is a stark contrast to Ioane, who found his different upbringings in the different parts of New Zealand contrasting, as he mentioned;

…far different from my upbringing when I was younger, and I'm grateful that I could do that because for a long time, you feel like a part of you is missing - and I didn't know what it was and how to fill that void. But being around my family and

aunty and uncle, they were great teachers, and they didn't force me to learn; I wanted to - for my knowledge and for wanting to know who I was…(Ioane)

He alluded to the idea that a part of him was missing when he wasn't culturally in touch with the language and culture. A similar notion by Mele was that the language was never conversed in, but she acknowledged the importance of it. She described that *vagahau Niue;*

…was always like this mysterious thing to me because my parents, when they wanted to talk about things that they didn't want me to know, they would use their little secret code language, and I would go with it when I was little (Mele)

On the other hand, Fine remembered that her mother's English was very limited. Therefore, she was very fluent and comfortable speaking in her native tongue. Furthermore, Fine recounts that her dad preferred speaking in Niue to all his children and grandchildren at home, and from a young age, she was taught a valuable lesson that her father would recite;

Ko au ko e Tagata Niue, ai ko e Tagata Palagi, vagahau Niue tumau he nofo he kaina" In translation, I'm a man from Niue, I'm not a Pakeha, always speak in Niue when you are at home. From this, as a child growing up, I thought my dad was being rude, and now when I reflect on my adulthood, what he meant was to revitalise the language in the family line for the future generations to come (Fine)

In light of this, the importance of language learning has impacted Ioane and Lupo at a later stage of their life, as Ioane explained;

I think my upbringing had a big impact on my use of the language, and I don't think I understood that impact until I got older, and going to Niue events where you see all your aunties and Nena's and they're talking to you in the language, and you're literally just overwhelmed, that was me (Ioane)

Similarly, Ligi believes that she is fortunate to understand the language. However, she noted that;

…not being able to speak it as fluently as I'd like, it's just something that I wish I could have continued in my 20s, in my 30s, even in my 40s, because I look at my parents and my aunties and uncles, and they're not getting younger, and so too isn't the language (Ligi)

Similar sentiments are mentioned by Ioane, who acknowledges that his upbringing didn't afford him the advantage of learning the language, but moving forward, he makes considerable efforts to try and learn and speak the language as a way of appreciating;

> *…that this is a part of me, it's who I am, it's where I come from. So, hoping to be semi, if not fluent, in vagahau Niue (Ioane)*

For most of the participants, their upbringings have shaped who they are today and how they view *vagahau Niue.* They are receptive bilinguals who have been impacted and influenced by different generations.

5.4 Generational Influence

The participants' accounts highlight the generational influence of language and their ability to spotlight the influence of grandparents, parents, and intergenerational immersion. The benefit for future generations sheds light on bridging generations and the ways of teaching and learning.

5.4.1 Grandparents Influence

The influence of grandparents on language support and understanding was highlighted by six participants and their upbringing, having grown up with one or both of their grandparents. Many of the memories shared were of grandparents' influence, which encouraged using the language (a memory that resonates well with the researcher and can be seen in Figure 23 below).

Figure 23

Researcher's grandparents

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2024

As shared by Tala, she remembers that nena was the person who encouraged her to speak. She shared;

Yup, so my Nena. She was the one who always encouraged me to speak. and every time I went to Niue, she would always say, " Why don't you speak, but she would never do it in a judgemental way. She was always loving and would always encourage me. I think for me, it was hard because my Nena spoke English, but obviously, I wasn't always able to communicate with her in Niuean, and I think that was one of my regrets (Tala)

Tala shared her regret for not speaking in the language to Nena during this *tutala;* Tala emotionally shared that this was difficult for her to understand, as Nena was one of her most important maternal figures. She mentioned that she doesn't want the same cycle repeating itself with her own children, which she shared;

Yeah, I think obviously she was my biggest advocate for my understanding, and then that does push me to learn and then obviously for my kids, I don't want them to go through what I went through, yeah, and that's something that plays on my mind as well, but then for them also to know that the language isn't the only part of what makes you Niuean, but yeah definitely my Nena, 100% my Nena, she's the one (Tala)

This is further supported by Misi, who reminisces about speaking confidently when he grew up with his Nena, a sentiment similar to the one shared by Mika, who is fortunate to have had both his grandparents around. He further shared the impact of his grandparents on other Niue families and stated;

Everybody is drawn to my grandparents, and they're kind of like the rock of everybody's families, and so I feel that still having them around and still sharing those experiences have been a blessing full stop (Mika)

The ability to share experiences with grandparents has also demonstrated a sense of appreciation by Mika and Sifa, who shared;

My nan kind of wants to show off to her friends, and she knows that some of us can't understand Niuean, but she still talks to us in Niuean, nah being able to understand it is helpful in certain situations like talking about things like that, giving your grandparents or elders some pride knowing that they taught you something and that you've taken away something growing up around the language (Mika)

…, and it makes me appreciate Nana. It makes me appreciate, like all the time we had a grandmother and a grandparent, it makes me appreciate a lot more. And then now it's made me appreciate my parents because I'm older. I'm like, well, they've been telling us for years, but I've only just realised that now (Sifa)

Her appreciation of having her grandmother also presented the realisation of her appreciation for her parents. She stresses the idea of not wanting her children to forget who they are by reminding them that;

…that they [grandparents] came here on hard labour, hard-working money and stuff like that. So, I don't want them to think they did that all for nothing. So, it's just letting them know, you know, they do have roots. But at the end of the day, it's entirely up to them on how they take it in and stuff (Sifa)

Furthermore, Mika shared that even though his Nena still speaks the language to his siblings, their lack of understanding of the language becomes difficult and hinders the transmission of language as shared;

But yeah, my nana to this day still speaks to us in Niuean, and I know what she's talking about, but man, I feel like when my siblings and younger cousins who haven't been exposed to the language, I'm like these guys will drown when asked to go and do something (Mika)

Similarly, Sina's experience of understanding the language felt forced as she shared her upbringing of spending the school holidays at her grandparent's house, where she remembered;

So, I spoke with my Nena and Grandpa because that's where I felt I was forced to speak Niuean. Nah, honestly. I honestly felt I was forced to speak Niuean because we were there for two weeks, right? And because Nena and Grandpa would always only speak Niuean, we had no choice, well I had no choice but to learn it and speak it to them, even if it was just the basics because I had to try and figure out how to communicate what I wanted with them because one they don't understand English or what I'm trying to say, and I don't know, it just made sense to speak Niuean to them, respectfully as well (Sina)

One of her fondest memories was when her grandmother would remind her to keep speaking in the language and not to stop speaking. She described her experience;

…then, on the next school holiday, we were back to speaking Niuean at Nena and Grandpa's house, and it's a good memory to look back on 100%. But I remember nena, every time we used to leave, she would be like make sure you keep speaking Niuean eh, don't stop speaking Niuean (Sina)

Moreover, Sifa mentioned how her nena used the language through growling or tellings-off. She shared;

I remember my Nana speaking it to me, I remember my Nana growling me in that language, but I don't know what it means (Sifa)

Similar memories were shared by participants in this respect, with Manogi sharing the change in how language has been used over time. She mentioned that;

You know, what I learned from my Nena is totally different to how they're using vagahau Niue now (Manogi)

She further explained that the experiences of using *vagahau Niue* were different in the different homes that she was brought up in. For her parents, English was all she heard, and she believed that the only way to understand and know the language was through the influence of grandparents, where she stated;

So that's all I heard when I went to live with them, and so that's all you can rely on is your grandparents (Manogi)

This is further supported by Lofa and Misi, who agreed that having people or *matua* (elderly parents) encourage language use is significant. They shared;

…having other like-minded individuals who want to champion the vagahau Niue language as well as having people, you know, our matua who are holders of the language to be more encouraging and enabling there to be space where we can come together and do meaningful activities, so yeah just creating that space for the use of vagahau Niue, for vagahau Niue to be promoted and utilised, is a good way to bring different generations together (Lofa)

Those older generations need to understand that we're in this period now, where it's struggling. So, they should be encouraging it at every opportunity (Misi)

Creating a safe space for language learning is a sentiment that resonated with many of the participants who informed the *tutala.*

5.4.2 Parents Influence

As the influence of grandparents was essential to the support and understanding of the language, parents' influence was equally crucial to participants, as was how they viewed *vagahau Niue*. Their parents influenced Lofa, Fine, Iakopo, and Ligi's support for the language. They shared;

…it definitely came from my parents, who had a big part in my life, as well as my grandparents and the church (Lofa)

The support was through the influence of my late parents, who were great mentors and who supported and shaped my cultural values, traditions, and beliefs. It was also other Niue elders were on hand to correct my pronunciation (Fine)

…Again, the support came from my parents, but it wasn't easy initially because I always wanted to speak English. I can vividly remember my mum telling me; one day, son, you're going to have some kids of your own, and they need to know who they are and where they come from. If you don't know anything else, at least know the language so you can tell people where you come from (Iakopo)

Again, my parents supported my understanding. Like I said, they spoke to us in the language. But then we didn't really understand when we were younger, so they always spoke to us in English. So, there wasn't like a consistent language acquisition, if you want to say (Ligi)

However, for Ioane, Iakopo, and Ligi, even with their parents speaking to them in the language from a young age, their comprehension of the language did not register, and English became the default language as a means of communication. This was evident for Lupo and Ioane, who shared that;

I think the support would've been from them first, but they only spoke to us more in English than they did in Niuean, so every second word was probably Niuean, or every second sentence was in Niuean, but the majority of it was in English to us, and so I think the support was there through my parents, but it wasn't prominent to the point where we were made to speak the language (Lupo)

So, my mum was spoken to by her dad and my grandad Tom in the language, and she grew up speaking VN, and so did her mum. When I was gifted to her, mum only used English in the home and sporadically dropped Niue phrases here and there, but it wasn't consistent (Ioane)

Furthermore, Mika, Sifa, Lupo, Misi and Ligi felt their parents needed to put more pressure on them to speak or use the language. They explained that;

…well, my mum didn't push too hard, but my nana spoke it a lot in the household, but there was always just that conflict of man. I'm just going to speak English because it's easier for me without my mum putting pressure on me to learn it, and then that would have helped out. I guess if my parents just put a bit more pressure on us, then it could have helped us understand (Mika)

…like, me, Dad and mum didn't push us, but they wanted us to learn it. But we were just seva, pretty much. And that's what it came down to, so it's up to you if you want to learn. But they always say it's up to you if you want to learn. So, everything that Dad said is now kind of like biting me in the ass because he was thinking about the future (Sifa)

I guess with Mum and Dad, that wasn't really put on us; they didn't ask us to speak in Niuean, like when you come through those doors, you need to speak Niuean, so yeah, there was never a push. But looking back now, that would've been one of the best teachings for us, and so with the barriers, the confidence to speak it – that wasn't there (Lupo)

If my parents had done the same, then I dare say our kids would be culturally in touch, speaking it, because it's been ingrained, and that's probably what's lacking with me; for them, it was their everyday living; it wasn't ingrained with me, it was bits and pieces (Misi)

I guess the support for my understanding comes from my parents, but I feel they should have, I guess, pushed it on us. Even though I know that they didn't want to. But I think, looking back now, it would have been so beneficial to have that (Ligi)

These experiences contrast with what is shared by Tala, Mele, Lofa, and Misi, who believe that as much as their parents wanted to transmit the language, their past experiences of language use were a negative experience, alongside not having enough knowledge to carry on using the language. Their thoughts were that;

> *…yeah, I guess my parents just had to do what they had to do, and I think at the time, maybe it was more about fitting into this country rather than keeping the culture alive for me in this country (Tala)*

> *…they were told not to speak it, but I remember my parents and everyone around me speaking it at home, but not to me… So that's what she grew up with. So, she didn't bother to speak to us, and they would quite happily speak to each other like I said. So, it was like two worlds, you know, and we grew up in two worlds, and that was it, and we had a little English little colonised Niuean, and then we have Niuean, and that's how we moved, and it's amazing how you can even grow up like that (Mele)*

> *…as a child, I didn't have to have permission like it was around me. As a child, you follow your parents, and whatever they say goes (Lofa)*

> *…it was divided because Mum wanted to, but Dad didn't. Because Dad felt that it would hinder our education in New Zealand. But I just felt that my father wasn't informed enough. So, personally, I do put it down that my father wasn't informed enough, wasn't educated enough to question, why isn't that we let our kids speak the language? And for mum, she did her best. Nana would always speak to us. I think, for me personally, it's there, but it's just trying to release it and be fluent (Misi)*

Moreover, Sifa realised as an adult the importance of language and the significance of parents as language teachers. She shared;

> *I didn't realise it until you got older. When your parents speak to you, you don't realise how important that language is until you get older, and then realise, oh, wow, I should have learnt it, or I should have paid a bit more attention and stuff like that…I've got my mum and dad. I'm like, why am I getting some stranger? I'm paying someone else, but I've got Mum and Dad at home; they're free of charge, they're there, and Mum always said it's better to learn from the people who are alive than dead and people who have seen it or have experienced it. And I never thought about it. And I didn't think about it. I thought, oh my god, my teachers are right in front of me (Sifa)*

Furthermore, Sifa explained that she is encouraging her children to learn from her parents in the same way she should have when she was younger. She explained that;

> *...I'm learning as much as I can from my parents now, and with the girls and all the other grandkids, they're learning from mum and dad. It's mainly from Mum and Dad, but you know, dads always told us, when you get older, you're going to want to learn this, and Mum did say that, but you know, you didn't consider it. And it's actually come full circle now, it actually has, it's bitten me in the ass, and you know what? At least now I can say I'm still embracing it. I speak Niue to the kids, and they understand (Sifa)*

In contrast, Tala feels that *vagahau Niue* is the language of her parents and not hers. She shared that;

> *…obviously, vagahau Niue to me is just the language that my parents speak I never saw it as a language that I speak because, obviously, my first language is English, but my mum and Nena used to try to speak in the language, but I was like nah English is fine (Tala)*

Moreover, Misi believed that parents had a big part to play in transmitting the language and drew on his experiences with his parents, who had two different language teaching styles. He shared that;

> *…whereas my mum and dad - dad speaks it, he understands it, but he doesn't engage it. Whereas my mum, she does…and I guess they do have a big part to play because they won't be on this planet for much longer. You know, and I look at my parents, dad never spoke to me. I don't think he's ever spoken Niue to me; mum did, you know, and yeah, it starts in the family (Misi)*

The idea that language learning started in the family was also shared by Ioane, Iakopo and Mataio, who expressed ample opportunities to use the language within the home. They shared that;

> *So, funnily enough, the support for my understanding came from my biological parents/aunty and uncle - and from when I finished college and then moved up to Auckland to go to university, I was surrounded by my aunty and uncle and family, I would go to family events, dinners and that's all they spoke. So, it wasn't long before I started to catch on to different words and phrases, and for me, that was big because I was learning, and I was immersing myself in wanting to know the language (Ioane)*

> *…I started thinking about all the times that Mum and Dad spoke to me in the language. Yes, Mum and Dad would have their own conversations in the language and then from time to time, they would ask us to go and get something from the room or the kitchen in Niuean – and we would start picking up those little phrases, not really taking much notice that we were actually learning the language, and looking back now- you don't realise the impact of those kinds of teachings, until you sit down and actually think about it (Iakopo)*

> *…I think that was on my parents, but then that was on me too. I moved overseas for a good 10 years and didn't have any exposure to any Niue communities or Niue people. So, coming back to New Zealand, I had to pretty much re-assimilate myself back into life (Mataio)*

5.4.3 Intergenerational Language Transmission

The impact of intergenerational language transmission can be viewed in how parents communicate with their children in a minority language, which plays a critical role in shaping their children's capacity to acquire it. As depicted in Figure 24, the intergenerational

transmission of *vagahau Niue* was an essential aspect of communication between the three generations.

Figure 24

Intergenerational transmission across three generations of Niue women

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2014

Moreover, Misi and Manogi believed that driving the language teaching by parents and embracing it can allow future generations to grow it themselves. She shared that;

> *I actually enjoy it when they do speak to you. Yeah. Because, you know, any conversation in Niue is learning. Sometimes I might, I'll try and remember little phrases (Misi)*

> *…I feel that there's more for them to come, but we have to drive that as well, you know, from what we get from our parents, what we get from them, and what we have to pass on to them [children] so that they can grow it themselves. Even with them, the next generation also supports us because they're part of Polyfest; they get to learn all this rich language, but where will they use it? (Manogi)*

This similar teaching is acknowledged by Sifa, Lupo, and Ligi, who believed that children could learn from their grandparents if they could do so. They believed that;

> *…there's a lot more, but it's knowing the older people who actually can teach the kids to do it…(Sifa)*

> *…our kids need to speak Niuean, especially just trying to encourage them to try and speak it at home, but it is what it is these days: you speak it, you don't speak it. But you know, if you have your parents, go learn from them because it's something you want to pass down to your kids (Lupo)*

…I see my grandchildren and children, and they know how to sing in VN, and they know the songs, and I'm so fortunate that they have grown up with my parents. My parents speak to my children, and they're still speaking to them in the language. So, for my kids, they've never seen language as anything but a window or lens into culture. And I feel like, if I was in that same position when I was younger with my parents, I'm pretty sure I would have been afforded the same advantage (Ligi)

5.4.4 Benefits for Future Generations

The stories and experiences of the participants and their views on where they see their language use of *vagahau Niue* in the future are reliant on the benefits their language use and knowledge will have on future generations. For Sifa, Sina, Manogi, and Ioane, learning the language is for their children's benefit and the legacy they carry on in the future. They share;

Vagahau Niue is definitely important. And moving forward, if there were any way we could help our kids, I would be all for it…because the language is important for this generation (Sifa)

Well, I'd hope to pick it somehow up again, not just for myself, but I guess it would be for the generations to come. Like my nieces and nephews, and if I ever have kids (Sina)

You know, we don't have to know everything, but you start with this, and it's going to get better for you and your children because that's what we're here for: our children. It will benefit them as well, as long as you stand up, use it, and be proud of it. Even if it sounds a little bit broken or mispronounced, you must be using it…but again, I need to stop talking about it a lot and actually do something about it because I've got it. And I say I've got it, and I'm using it and stuff. But my next step is to use it more around my children. What is that going to look like for me? Because I feel what I have enough of is a good portion of my vagahau Niue in my hands, yeah, enough for me to give them a little bit. But I want them to grow it themselves because it'll look different and be used differently for their generation (Manogi)

…it's for the benefit of my kids as well. So, they know they have a cultural grounding which they can be proud of, especially when they take part in Niue things or stand in front of Niue people (Ioane)

For Misi, the encouragement of the younger generation needs to be prominent, and he alludes to the fact that;

I think that's probably what it is that I am now, speaking English; yeah, I can revert back. That's probably my default., But staying on track and learning it is just doing better. And if it's one way to keep it alive, yeah, then why not? Embrace it more often, regardless of what age you're at. With the younger generation, we certainly need to encourage them better…and as I say, not to take it away from Niue, but I get the impression with Niue people, they're not driven to want to have their kids speak it; generation to generation (Misi)

Similar sentiments are shared by Mataio, who feels that he has let his children down due to his inability to speak the language. He takes accountability for knowing and speaking in the language with his future grandchildren. He shared that;

> *To be honest, I see my vagahau Niue at a point where I'm comfortable saying sentences or phrases in VN to my grandkids. I feel as if I've let my kids down because I don't speak the language, and I can blame my parents for not continuing that for me, but I'm doing it, or I did the exact same thing as they did to my kids. So, now I'm in this bind where I'm trying to encourage my grandchildren to join Niue sports or events so that they have some exposure to the language and to the culture. It's hard, but if we want to maintain and save our language and everything that encompasses what language and culture represent, we must make an effort to pass that down to our kids and grandkids because they are the next generation (Mataio)*

On the other hand, Eva sees using *vagahau Niue* as a stopping point for her generation. When asked where she saw her language use in the future, she replied,

> *That's a sobering question because fewer and fewer speak it, and my future generations (daughter and grandchildren) are not speakers at all. The language will be lost, making me sad and upset; it will die with me (Eva).*

Furthermore, Manogi questioned what having the language meant for her children and the generations that followed. She draws on the idea that if you want to be identified as a *Tagata Niue,* the language needs to be used in every way possible. She believed that;

> *Other than the Polyfest, which they've done, other than the cultural groups they're part of, which use vagahau Niue, what else will I do for them? Because I have this, which is a little bit more, I have a bit more vagahau Niue than the kids. What else am I going to do to advocate for them, to say, hey, you know, if you want to be identified as a Tagata Niue, how about you start using it, whatever way you want to use it (Manogi)*

Additionally, Mele echoed what Manogi shared by mentioning that this generation is great and lucky as they have been exposed to the Niue *lologo* (song) and *koli (*dance) through their involvement in the Polyfest. Manogi adds that these avenues have helped in learning *vagahau Niue* and shared that she will continue to learn the language and culture to pass her knowledge on to her children in the hope of better transmitting language and culture to future generations.

5.5 Receptive Bilingualism

The concept of receptive bilingualism as a theme drew on the participants' different experiences. These views have been categorised into the advantages of receptive bilingualism on New Zealand-born receptive bilinguals and the impact on identity and cultural knowledge. Mika, Sifa, Fine and Ligi highlighted that understanding *vagahau Niue* is complex,

and education on the importance of language is pivotal for language use. Furthermore, these participants expressed that not understanding the concepts and contexts of language use affects more than just language knowledge. They stated that;

> *I wish that there was more education regarding how important our language is to us (Mika)*
>
> *…when you listen to them now, it's like, man, this is what they were trying to tell us. But at the time, it wasn't enforced. It was more like, you go to school, the Palagi teach you, you come home, we teach you Niue. And then when you go to school, you get confused. When I saw other Niuean kids at school, none of them spoke Niuean or understood. And I said, man, I had more of an understanding than they did. And I didn't think, oh, so I thought, oh, they're not learning it. Why do I have to learn? So that was my mentality back then. That's how it was for me (Sifa)*
>
> *Understanding the vagahau is complex. I can understand some vagahau in Niue and being surrounded by my parents, oldest sibling, extended families and Niue community. The core understanding of vagahau in Niue for me is learning from the competent and confident speakers (Fine)*
>
> *I also feel that if we don't understand the concepts of vagahau Niue and the contexts in which we use the language, how are we supposed to navigate who we are? (Ligi)*

Mika draws on this point by acknowledging a desire to embrace the language a little bit more in terms of holding a conversation. However, he feels that understanding the language gives him an advantage. He shared that;

> *I wish I had embraced that a bit more, maybe a little bit more. I can understand certain things and stuff like that, but in terms of being able to hold a conversation, I can't really do that. but being able to understand still gives me an advantage over many other people…I feel like I'm at an advantage and being fortunate enough to experience these kinds of things about a lot who haven't. being able to understand it if I were to go back, it just gives you that feeling where you know I've got a point on the board (Mika)*

Lofa further supports this, who feels confident engaging in spaces where *vagahau Niue* is spoken. She said that;

> *I think that understanding vagahau Niue, I feel confident enough to engage in that space. I have a good understanding. I may not be able to converse as confidently as, say, someone who was born on the island and has been brought up to speak it (Lofa)*

In contrast, Fine and Eva believed that the lack of exposure to Niue people and people's understanding of her (Fine) language use usually gets mismatched when responding to what was initially said. They shared that;

I think that understanding what vagahau Niue means, I know what's been said does not normally match what has been actually said when replying. It is more of a mismatch when I do not comprehend in the Niue vagahau full knowledge (Fine)

I don't use it every day because I don't have exposure to Niue speakers or Niueans daily. The exceptions to that are when I am at church or at family gatherings where we speak it freely (Eva)

5.5.1 Advantage of Receptive Bilingualism on NZ-born Receptive Bilinguals

Seven of the participants viewed receptive bilingualism as a way of knowing oneself, making familial connections between different families, knowing the language, and contributing to the community. It is shared by Mika, Lofa, Iakopo and Ligi that;

Being able to understand it definitely helps when you're at a place, or at functions and things like that, or you are surrounded by your grandma or elders that speak Niuean, and if you can do a task that is in Niuean, it helps show your grandparents that you're holding onto something that's there (Mika)

Yeah, I think it has helped me like I've had to as a New Zealand-born being brought up and trying to retain and use the language. I've had to rely on my own understanding (Lofa)

The ability to understand the language helps me when I want to know who my family are, or I want to be able to identify other Niueans, or I'm around my aunties and uncles; that's when understanding vagahau Niue helps me because I'm able to have at least some understanding about what they're talking about (Iakopo)

if you're able to understand a language that really resonates with those who are actually speakers of the language (Ligi)

Ioane further supports this, sharing that learning from elders would be ideal for moving from receptive to fluent speakers. He expressed;

I think it's being in environments that actually use the language and can assist with correcting my mistakes. I'm happy to speak with elders in the language as long as I'm not being ridiculed for trying. I feel that's the best way to learn, especially in the society that we're living in, and the influences that we come across. We need to embrace our matua and cherish their legacies and their knowledge in whatever shape or form. For me, that'll be the best way to learn and to move from being a receptive speaker to a fluent or nearly fluent speaker (Ioane)

Furthermore, Sifa and Misi acknowledged the advantage of understanding the language in contributing to how people view your identity. They explored the idea that;

…I'm Niuean, and they're like, oh no, I don't understand it. I'm like, bro I have an upper hand. Like, I feel really good (Sifa)

…however, many people can learn; it does make you feel that you have something to contribute to, in terms of that you can understand it for the good part (Misi)

Moreover, Sina and Fine believed that understanding the language is an advantage to not having to reinvent the wheel when it comes to language learning and that the population of Niue people who can understand the language can encourage the language to thrive. They shared that;

> *It's not like you're starting from square one, to teach someone to understand it. So, at least we have some knowledge or understanding of it…but I reckon if the percentage of Niueans that understand it is higher than, or more than the people that speak it. Imagine everyone who learnt it and then watched the language thrive. (Sina)*

> *Receptive speakers are adjusting to try and attempt to use the vagahau rather than not using the vagahau Niue. On a personal note, everyone is different and skilful, but if you are attempting to lalilali/try, then I believe the more experienced person will redirect and put you on the right track (Fine)*

Similarly, Lupo shared that her children were receptive speakers of the language but could not converse in the language. She made mention that;

> *But like me, the kids can understand it, but they can't speak it. They're a bit like me, a bit shy to speak the language just in case they might say something wrong, or they're not confident enough to speak the language, but they love to speak it, and I guess we can only try (Lupo)*

5.5.2 Impact on Identity and Cultural Knowledge

The advantages of receptive bilingualism also significantly impact identity and cultural knowledge in multifaceted ways, whether through cultural practices, behaviours, or song and dance (Figure 25). As shared by Mika, Mele and Manogi, understanding *vagahau Niue* meant that;

> *Knowing and understanding the language and stuff like that really helps me feel a bit better about myself, in that I at least know something in the culture in ways that a lot of Niueans haven't been that fortunate enough to experience (Mika)*

> *I understand the importance of understanding the language and everything about it and why we are the way we are…because sometimes it's missing for us, and it's still a big part of us, and people want it (Mele)*

> ***…****it taught me a little bit more to understand the vagahau Niue is within yourself; it's up to you how you're going to either bring it back or use it. Yeah, it's entirely up to you. But learning it to be an educator has helped me understand more about how important it is to know what our identity is (Manogi)*

Figure 25

Cultural war dance performed by New Zealand-born Niue youth within the church environment

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2015

Furthermore, Lofa, Sifa and Manogi emphasised the idea that understanding the language meant having an understanding of cultural practices. They shared that;

> *…just understanding, being around it and seeing the elders sharing. It was quite formal like obviously you have your food and, you know, social time, but then there would always be a time of speech-making, and it always will be like starting off a gathering with prayer and ending the gathering in prayer again (Lofa)*
>
> *As I said, there's no use going to learn the New Zealand culture, Māori culture, the Cook Island culture when I don't know my own culture (Sifa)*
>
> *I think they [children] have an understanding of their culture, being part of Polyfest, being part of the church, and being part of a Niuean community. I think they have that understanding, which is great, and I feel that, at this stage, it's enough because they're young…(Manogi)*

However, Iakopo and Mataio argued that understanding the language is only a foot in the door, as it does not reflect your identity. They expressed that;

> *I think it just allows you a foot in the door; I mean, understanding the language is good, but I don't think it contributes to how you see or how people see your identity (Iakopo)*
>
> *I want to say it sets me apart, but then I can't really say that because I can only understand the language and speak a little bit (Mataio)*

5.5.3 Significance of Vagahau Niue

Vagahau Niue's significance is that it represents culture, community, land and family. It was shared by Mika, Sifa, Manogi, and Ligi that;

> *…the significance of vagahau Niue and understanding it definitely helps you in situations when you're at functions, and you're surrounded by your elders. But I think hold onto our language because it's really important (Mika)*

> *Vagahau Niue is quite important and being able to understand it's made me appreciate it. It made me appreciate, like, wow, this is, like, what mum and dad had, ancestors, great-great-great grandparents had, but at the time you think, oh, it's nothing (Sifa)*

> *…like with anything you do in your life, vagahau Niue is not different; it is important (Manogi)*

> *I didn't really see the significance of using the language back when I was younger. But I feel like now that I'm older, and we live in a day and age where our parents are not getting any younger, the language is still a big part of who they are (Ligi)*

Additionally, Mika and Mele identified the significance that *vagahau Niue* has during language weeks and being able to find avenues for language learning. They shared;

> *I feel like we're more at an advanced stage than a lot of islands and stuff like that. Definitely as the smaller islands, but I feel like that's the only difference; I feel like the Niuean language has more of a push, especially when it comes to Niuean language week, where everyone comes out and represents (Mika)*

> *So, I think it's really important, but people need to put in time and find those avenues (Mele)*

In contrast, the significance of *vagahau Niue* among the participants was the need for the language to continue following the passing of language teachers through grandparents. Misi, Manogi, and Ioane share;

> *…Nena was always there, and it obviously was very sad when she passed on. Because from that point on there was nothing. Nothing, they just died – and it's sad to think about, but so did the language (Misi)*

> *I don't think they have those people encouraging them to stand up for who they are; they should do that for the next generation (Manogi)*

> *…and I always wondered about it, but I didn't really push it on my mum in case it wasn't something she wanted to know about. So, that's what VN was like for me growing up (Ioane)*

5.5.3.1 Engagement

During the *tutala,* six participants shared that engagement in the language occurred through different mediums, whether in the home, church or through parents and grandparents; the engagement varied amongst the participants. Mele and Sifa shared that the language surrounded them at a young age. However, there was a lack of engagement or a lack of discipline to learn the language, as they explained;

> *Yeah, it was all around us, but because we didn't have that engagement, I did ask my mum and said, how come you didn't converse with us in Niuean? (Mele)*
>
> *The support was definitely there; it was all around me, no doubt, but I didn't think it was very important at the time, now that I've gotten older. I'm like, oh man, I should have paid a bit more attention to stuff like that. It wasn't forced on us, but it was definitely there. (Sifa)*

Furthermore, Sina and Manogi believe that their future use of *vagahau Niue* is to know the basics, but at the same time know enough to pass it on to the future generation. They shared;

> *I hope to pick it up, and even for the basics, I'll be fine with that. You don't have to be in a full-on conversation. You know? But, yeah, the basics, I think. I feel like I know the words and how to speak it, but it would probably just be the confidence actually to speak it (Sina)*
>
> *But I feel at the moment it's not enough. Yeah, not enough, so it's easy enough for me to bring my children in line with where I am, you know, in using the vagahau Niue. Yeah, I really believe I can better myself in my life until I leave, that there's going to be more for me. But I'm working on it, and I want it to be more (Manogi)*

Misi and Iakopo shared that the language needed to be engaged more frequently through Niue resources and speakers of the language. They stated;

> *…you need to engage it more often, regardless of your age. With the younger generation, we certainly need to encourage them better (Misi)*
>
> *…it would be to immerse myself in Niue resources, videos, songs, and speeches so that I can be held accountable for my language learning. I also think I need to talk more with fluent speakers, which can be with my parents when we call them; instead of just saying hello, say fakaalofa atu – having a starting point. (Iakopo)*

Ioane, who explained that his children can understand the language, supports this. However, there are no outlets or language spaces where they can practice speaking. On the other hand, Manogi expressed that even with different language environments, if the opportunity to return to the homeland to learn the language is available, where would the support come from? She shared;

So, if you go to Niue to learn your Niue, where are you going to get it? Is it in the classroom? Is it with your family? You would hope that it would be with the family that you're living with. But if they're English-speaking, then it would be super difficult. I have all these nieces and nephews that don't speak vagahau Niue, and it's like you don't know how to speak right? And then you think why did I come here? And why is there all this criticism of you and me? You don't speak Niue, you don't walk Niue, and things like that (Manogi)

Furthermore, Mataio agreed with what Manogi shared, as he explained that his experience of speaking in the language was always met with criticism rather than encouragement or gentle correction. He expressed that for fluent speakers to be inclusive of receptive speakers, it must be done with the intention that it will help rather than be a hindrance. He shared;

I say yes, but only if it's going to help us, and I say that because you get some fluent speakers that speak to you in the language, but it doesn't feel genuine, it just feels more like a chore for them. That's the vibes I used to get when I spoke with my Niue aunties that came from Niue when they spoke to me, and I tried to respond – there was no correcting me; if anything, it was more of a critique than gentle correction, and I didn't need that, so it pretty much put me off aye (Mataio)

This sentiment is similar to Ligi and Iakopo, who expressed that even though they can understand the language, the same understanding can also be a hindrance because of the pressure to produce language. They expressed;

I was asked a while back if I was able to understand what people were saying in Niuean, and then why couldn't I respond? For me, I was like, yeah, why can't I? (Iakopo)

I feel like we place a lot of pressure on ourselves to know the language, to speak the language, but understanding it is a good starting point to knowing if you can speak the language (Ligi)

5.5.3.2 Language Realities

The participants viewed the realities of the use and understanding of *vagahau Niue* in two groups. For those who can speak and those who can understand, this thought is summed up by Ligi, who shared;

That becomes hard in itself, and then there's just this separation of those who understand, those who don't, but those who understand can speak, and those who can understand but can't speak. So yeah, there's just this weird in-between in terms of those that actually can speak the language, can understand the language, can't understand the language, and so that for me, that question is hard to answer because it's yes, it does help, but then no, it doesn't when it comes to things like conversing to other fluent Niue speakers. So, I guess it's more so navigating between different language realities (Ligi)

By trying to navigate different language realities, Lupo, Misi, and Manogi share that there needs to be a starting point between understanding and using language not only for their benefit but for their children's as well. They expressed;

> *…we try our best to speak it back to Nena, and sometimes it's wrong, but she understands what we're trying to say, and it's a good starting point. The kids are actually trying to speak more Niuean when they're growing up now, and they're realising you should be speaking in Niuean, and their dad's like yes, you should be speaking Niuean to the kids (Lupo)*

> *Learning from parents, I would use that as a tool. I would tell myself I've got to speak. I'll put conditions on it; I'm not allowed to speak English. And I think that is probably a good starting point, and I think everything else should fall in place (Misi)*

> *Because even though I don't use it, I understand it and every opportunity I can, I will use it, so it's a very good starting point. I know I can do better and I've done a lot thus far, but it's just for me at the moment, for me to know as much as I can for myself, so that I can give that to my children, the starting base that I have and hopefully that they grow it themselves and so on and so on so that we don't lose our vagahau Niue, because everyone has a starting point (Manogi)*

Mika, Eva, and Ligi believed that the starting point could be to surround yourself with people who know and have the language and be immersed in resources that promote the language. They shared that;

> *…eventually we don't want to lose our culture and language going forward as well, so yeah just a message out to anybody, if you can take advantage of those who have the language around you, then do it (Mika)*

> *Being involved in things that expose me to Niue speakers and being immersed in the language, such as community events, as well as having access to better resources that promote the language (Eva)*

> *So, I feel that receptive speakers should be acknowledged as speakers of the language, and fluent speakers should lead that because they have the advantage of knowing and speaking the language. It shouldn't be a case of knowing how to speak the language and then keeping it in the confines of your personal use, but it should be shared with speakers who are trying to learn the language or have some understanding of the language (Ligi)*

5.6 Attitudes to Language

Language attitudes cannot be observed directly but are demonstrated through actual behaviour – for example, how people treat speakers of other languages (avoidance, approach) or in their desire (or not) to learn another language. Combining one's speech to conform to another's speech suggests a "positive attitude" toward the other's speech. Divergence can suggest an intention for the opposite outcome. For Mele and Lofa, they believed that there

should be a growth in language and that there should not be a limit to those who can speak the language. They expressed that;

> *…it's really hard to hear your voice speak Niuean but I think the more that we get used to it and say it and get those opportunities to talk, it'll become more normalised (Mele)*

> *The language should grow, and I think we shouldn't limit vagahau Niue to those who can actually speak it because that just limits what we want to achieve; what is the ultimate goal, aye? (Lofa)*

She further expresses the need for the language to be more accessible and shared;

> *So, in everyday use of the Niue language, it'll be nice to make it more accessible and relevant and make it more accessible for our young people as an example (Lofa)*

In contrast, Sifa, Sina, and Misi believe that the attitudes of fluent speakers towards receptive speakers of the language are personal opinions and that receptive speakers should be celebrated rather than discouraged. They believe;

> *It's just dependent on how you make it and perceive it to people. Because sometimes they say words don't hurt. But for some people, words mean a lot. So, if someone says something to you, you're not full, it can hinder them for the rest of their lives. And then it's either up to you if you've got a strong backbone, you take it in. If you don't, it's entirely up to you (Sifa)*

> *…then that says a lot more about them than it does about you. If you know the value of your Niue knowledge without knowing how to speak the language, then can't that be seen as a positive instead of pushing it to be a negative? (Sina)*

> *and that's how I pretty much treat the opinions of others. It's all it is – an opinion. You don't have to take it to heart, it's not personal. I do what I do for my growth…(Misi)*

This is further supported by Lofa and Sifa, who shared their experience of using the language and the impacts of knowing the language. They shared;

> *I may say something wrong, and then I get laughed at after, and you know, after the laughter, I'll then be corrected, which is what you want, aye? But it's being able to be in a safe space to say, oh yeah, okay, yup, I stuffed it up then, but I can learn from it, and then move forward, rather than being laughed at and then not learning from it (Lofa)*

> *…because I thought it's not cool to be Niuean. Like, I'm being honest. And then I thought, what's Niue going to do for me in the future? Is it going to get me a job? No, the English language is. So, you kind of weigh up things and stuff like that (Sifa)*

5.6.1 Language Influence Over Time

The differences and similarities of *vagahau Niue* have evolved. It is shared by Mele, who alluded to the idea that;

…it's funny looking at the language and how it affects different stages of a person's life (Mele)

This is supported by Sifa, who alludes to the idea that for her language use to evolve or be used consistently, an understanding of language starts in the home and needs to be realised. She stated that;

And like I said, everything starts at home, so that's where I want to see my future. It starts at home and then can go out and be proud of who you are. Like that's what Mum and Dad said; no use going out there, fia know the Māori, know the anthem, ka e ailoa ke tutala Niue, ailoa ke holoholo e tau kapiniu, it's just a sense of security, stability, just little things like that. But yeah, that's where my future is, like if it doesn't lie within home, amongst family and friends (Sifa)

Similarly, Fine wants her grandchildren to be taught in the language within the home. She shares that;

Moving forward, I want my grandchildren to learn the language, whether in the home or allow them to fakaako or expose them through the vagahau Niue in song. That will be a really good step for them (Fine)

5.6.1.1 Language Differences versus Similarities

The differences and similarities of the language are explained through six of the participant's experiences. For Mataio, a case of loss in translation demonstrated a negative attitude toward language learning. He expressed;

…one of my aunties started breaking out in vagahau Niue, and I just stared at her, because she was talking so fast, and then when she figured that I was lost in translation if you wanna call it, she said, 'Oh fakalofa te', and that to me had one of two meanings, either – it's unfortunate he doesn't know how to speak, or what a shame his parents didn't teach him (Mataio)

This experience was similar to the experiences of Tala, Mele, and Lupo, who found it difficult to speak to others and preferred simple conversations instead of the technicalities of the language. They shared;

My husband is just too technical, oh you say it more like this, and I'm just like I'm not gonna remember that, it has to be a simple, everyday conversation for me, otherwise, it's just gonna put me off, which is why I always said "I don't understand, can you repeat it in English?", like that was just my go to, I literally would say that (Tala)

…what I learned is that we've put it at the back and in this class, we run, it has been put right in the forefront. And sometimes it makes you think about who you are, where

you come from, what you're doing, how you give back to your people, and what's going to happen in the future (Mele)

you don't know if you're saying the right words or not, and if that's how you really say it, or if it's wrong. But sometimes it is hard trying to speak it to others (Lupo)

This can usually be seen as a barrier for many receptive speakers of *vagahau Niue.*

5.6.2 Barriers versus Benefits

The barriers to understanding and learning the language were highlighted under five key sections: lack of confidence, embarrassment, ignorance and laziness, living outside of the community, and internal language and cultural barriers. These were contrasted with the benefit of building confidence for the future. As Tala, Lupo, and Manogi shared, they were stopping them from pushing themselves to learn the language. They expressed that;

…I have no excuse, to be honest, to not learn and to try and push myself to learn, it's just my own self stopping me (Tala)

I guess if I spoke it fluently, it definitely wouldn't have been a barrier for anybody, even our children, but because we were English-spoken, could've been better if we were Niuean speaking it at home than going out to speak it to others (Lupo)

It's yourself. You know your Niuean and you want to learn your Niuean. So, let's do something about it because you can. Barriers could mean having access to people who take vagahau Niue classes. So, it's really yourself and where you want to take your vagahau Niue, as well as having access to our people (Manogi)

5.6.2.1 Lack of Confidence

The lack of confidence in using the language was expressed across the different *tutala*. Mele, Sina, Eva, and Iakopo expressed a lack of confidence in speaking the language. They shared;

I think for me, honestly, it's just a lack of confidence. I just don't feel that confident just to speak. If I were to stand up in front of a room full of Niueans, I could just read, but I couldn't just go and speak Niuean (Mele)

But yeah, I think confidence is a big barrier for me, and not trying to butcher words and sentences and stuff like that (Sina)

On the other hand, I feel hindered in that my understanding of vagahau Niue is sometimes limited like if I had to speak at a public event, I lack the confidence to speak it freely for fear of not being understood or my pronunciation being incorrect (Eva)

I think it's also a lack of confidence – like fear, the confidence to speak in the language is always one of the first thoughts in my mind: am I going to say this right? Am I going to answer it correctly? What are they thinking? It's that voice in my head that always puts those seeds of doubt and then my confidence ends up on the floor (Iakopo)

This is further supported by Tala, Lupo, and Ligi, who expressed that the confidence levels or shyness to speak the language is not supported by the lack of resources in the home. They expressed;

> *…obviously my own confidence levels, and I guess not really having many resources at home (Tala)*

> *…because the confidence isn't there for me…and sometimes it's ma (shy) to speak it because you don't know if you're saying the right words or not, and if that's how you really say it, or is it actually wrong (Lupo)*

> *I also think that having the confidence to speak the language or being shy to actually voice something in vagahau Niue, in case I get it wrong (Ligi)*

Additionally, the confidence to use the language is in the fear of making mistakes. Sian and Ioane shared;

> *But nah, it's honestly, it's a confidence thing. Like you know the words, or I know the words, but it's just when you pronounce it and stuff like that, you're scared that a fluent Niuean person that you're talking to is going to be, like, what? What are you saying? Do you know what I mean? That's what I mean by, like, the confidence and having it, yeah (Sina)*

> *I also think just the confidence of speaking it well, scares me, because again you don't know if you're going to be speaking it right or wrong, or you end up swearing, and I freak out when I'm put into those kinds of situations, where I want to speak but my confidence levels won't let me, that's another barrier I think for me, is gaining the confidence, and just getting out of my own head and yeah (Ioane)*

Furthermore, Mele and Ioane also mentioned that not having full confidence hinders knowing/understanding or becoming fluent. However, it can also help as a means of communication. They expressed;

> *I think it's just not having the full confidence to converse, to know and be fluent (Mele)*

> *I can't confidently respond and back myself, so I think that might be a hindrance, but I think it helps me more as a communication factor (Ioane)*

5.6.2.2 Embarrassment

Three participants mentioned the factor of embarrassment. They felt that the opinions of others made them embarrassed and feared that similar feelings would be passed down to their children. Tala, Sifa and Sina shared;

> *…, as I got older, same kind of experience and the same kind of responses, but I think for me it was more like I was never embarrassed that I don't speak, I think it just made me sad that people still thought that way (Tala)*

You don't want to be embarrassed by someone who is a full Niuean, and then they can tell you in Niuean, oh, you're not from here, or you don't know how to speak it, or you don't even know where you're from. Or have you ever been to Niue? You know, it's little things like that. I don't want them to be embarrassed about it like how I was (Sifa)

…because it's embarrassing when people are like are you a Niuean? And then they start talking Niuean, and then I don't talk it back, and then they're like oh, and I'm, like I don't know how to speak Niuean, but I understand it (Sina)

5.6.2.3 Ignorance and Laziness

Laziness and ignorance were two barriers that were echoed among four of the participants. Tala shared that choosing not to learn the language was not intentional and highlighted that living in New Zealand, *vagahau Niue,* is not the first language. On the other hand, Sifa, Iakopo, and Mataio expressed that laziness was a difficult barrier for them to learn the language. They expressed;

I think back then, you know, the support was there. It was just plain black and white. It was right in front of me, but like I said, just being plain ignorant, you're so young and naive, I didn't think it was important. I was very ignorant, seva, lazy, and didn't think it was important. There were always excuses. Oh, I never taught it, no one spoke it at home, pure laziness for me, and if you ask my parents, they'll say, oh, yeah, she was seva, she didn't want to learn, she wanted to be a fia palagi, because I thought, oh, it's not cool to be Niuean. But now I'm beginning to embrace it. And as you get older, it doesn't make you any less or anymore (Sifa)

I also think, sometimes I get too lazy and comfortable speaking English, I don't challenge myself enough to actually attempt to say phrases or sentences in Niuean, and I'm pretty sure if I was able to at least say some phrases or sentences, I'm sure my mum would be happy as (Iakopo)

I also think it comes down to laziness, which reflects my lack of motivation. I think for me then that was another barrier because I saw it as not being beneficial for me, which looking back now, doesn't seem right to do (Mataio)

5.6.2.4 Living Outside of the Community

A further barrier the three participants shared was not being immersed in Niue communities during their upbringing. Mele shared that she and her siblings grew up with no language, even though the language was around them. This was supported by Iakopo who shared that;

I also think that living away from family when we were younger, we didn't have that exposure to speak the language or no one to speak the language with, and that's continued as I've got older and moved away from concentrated areas of Niue people (Iakopo)

Ligi draws on similar sentiments and explained that;

I think some of the barriers that have limited my use of vagahau Niue is being in a community or in a place where there's not many people that I can talk to. But if I could have you know, a community of people that I could practice vagahau Niue, then I reckon I would be able to transition smoothly from being a receptive speaker to being a productive speaker, but that's a long way to go, maybe a long-term goal for me (Ligi)

Furthermore, she added that communities of Niue speakers should be able to include receptive speakers of the language as a stepping stone to knowing and actively speaking the language. She shared that;

I guess part of communities, and they're considered/if not, should be considered as those that do understand the language. But whether or not they are part of that community of speakers, that's yet to be seen. So, yeah, I feel like actual speakers of the language should include them because they are a good stepping stone into actually knowing and actively speaking the language (Ligi)

5.6.2.5 Internal Language and Cultural Barriers

For many participants, internal language and cultural barriers impacted the language learning of Tala, Lofa, Sifa, Lupo, Sina, Ioane and Iakopo. They shared that;

Like I can understand when people say, 'Oh, she doesn't understand how to speak', so then that puts me off as well, and then I always thought 'How come I can't understand but have cousins who are New Zealand-born as well but they understand better than me?', and I don't know what that is for them but for me, that always played on my mind too (Tala)

I feel confident like just thinking about delivering on the radio, I use a script. I have tried to speak off the cuff, and you can tell that my delivery is from a NZ-born. Like a matua would be able to say, oh, she's New Zealand born, she's not a native speaker (Lofa)

Yeah, it just gets into the too-hard basket, and then you're like, you know what, I'm not even Niuean, I'm whatever you want me to be, yeah. And then it does make you second guess yourself as a person (Sifa)

I'm always aware of when I use Niuean because it's not fluent, so I think that in itself is a barrier, the inner voice saying you're going to say the wrong word and things like that, so yeah (Lupo)

…because on the one hand, you're like hearty Niuean, but then on the other, you can't speak the language, so can you say you're Niuean? And you know those are two different worlds that you have to navigate, and I usually have those silent cultural battles in my head, but yeah, half and half for me (Sina)

I freak out when I'm put into those kinds of situations, where I want to speak but my confidence levels won't let me; that's another barrier, I think for me is gaining the confidence and just getting out of my own head (Ioane)
the confidence to speak in the language is always one of the first thoughts in my mind: am I going to say this right? Am I going to answer it correctly? What are they thinking? It's that voice in my head that always puts those seeds of doubt (Iakopo)

5.6.2.6 Benefits of Language Use

The benefits of language use are through the support from parents and elders of the language for the benefit of future speakers. Lofa and Manogi expressed that building confidence in language use is essential to progress. They shared;

> *…build up the confidence and then come back and bring what you've learnt and share it. It's learning and championing vagahau Niue, especially for our younger ones. Me, I want to support my daughter to know vagahau Niue, because she's been brought up in New Zealand (Lofa)*

> *…because you've just got to use it, so you build your confidence in using it. Sometimes, all you need is your mum or dad, who knows the language (Manogi)*

In addition, Sifa believes that everyone that knows another language is unique. She states that;

> *I think that's what makes everyone unique is knowing another language, and it's getting more and more popular. If you know how to speak another language, it's like considered gold (Sifa)*

In hindsight, this can be a way forward for the language, as shared by Sifa, who believes that the Niue language needs to survive in the world and be a living language. She shared;

> *We need this language to survive in the world. We don't want it to be a dying culture or a dying language; it's the last thing we need. We can't be just of Niue culture but don't know the Niue language… so I hope our vagahau Niue doesn't end up the same as well. I want it to go far and stuff like that, so it's entirely up to the generations who teach them (Sifa)*

5.6.3 Mentalities

The different mentalities shared by the participants resulted from being New Zealand-born Niue, who is a receptive speaker. Sina, Ioane and Ligi shared that the perceptions of others are usually a deflection of what is happening in their own lives. They shared that;

> *For me, I think that's wrong to have that kind of thinking, but I guess that's just their opinion, and if people have that sort of perspective like if you don't know how to speak, you're not just Niuean or any language for that matter – then that says a lot about them, then it does about you (Sina)*

> *I think it's just getting over the different mentalities that some of our matua have when they speak to us, and there's a little bit of an understanding but then they throw in a shady comment like they don't understand, who are their parents (Ioane)*

> *I usually get the, oh, you don't speak the language. And then there's this eerie silence, and I don't think I've thought about the significance of that type of thinking, you know (Ligi)*

This way of thinking usually disheartens Tala as she expressed that these types of mentalities used to play on her mind a lot as a child. She expressed;

> *I'm proud to be Niuean, but I'm also anti-Niuean, just because of their mentality, if that makes sense. You know it disheartens me when they say things like are you a real Niuean? Like what's a real Niuean? Do you know what I mean? I think when I was younger it used to play on my mind a lot (Tala)*

A similar experience was shared by Sifa, Sina and Iakopo who described that Niue people usually took them at face value and automatically assumed that they did not understand the language. They shared;

> *…because they do what they know, they only venture to who they know and what they know, and if it works for them, it works for them; it doesn't cater to the fuller community. And that's the other thing with Niue; they interrogate who you are, where you're from, who your mum and dad are, and if you have been to Niue. And then it puts me off, and that's why I don't go to many Niue functions or workshops because they try and connect the dots to see how you're related (Sifa)*

> *…because if Niueans speak to me in vagahau Niue, and I don't respond, they automatically assume I don't understand (Sina)*

> *…especially when you introduce yourself to other Niueans, but then not really because people take you at face value. They won't start talking to you or asking if you're Niuean until three or four questions in (Iakopo)*

Tala echoed a similar sentiment when she explained that New Zealand-born Niue are not given the empathy or compassion to understand where they come from. She explained;

> *when you know they can't identify, they don't know our experience of being a NZ-born Niuean, and there's no empathy or compassion or doesn't even feel like there's any understanding of where we're coming from, and it's not like we purposely choose not to learn the language or you know what I mean? And then I always think don't just come in with your negative attitude if you have an idea to suggest, then come in with something that's gonna be productive (Tala)*

She adds that by raising her children in the language, her husband, a fluent speaker, wants her to teach them the language. She stressed that;

> *He always says we have to do something then, but then his mentality is we have to do it together, meaning me, but then I was like, yeah but you're the fluent one I'll take the lead from you like I can teach what I know, but you are the fluent one, so then there's that as well (Tala)*

5.6.3.1 Plastic Niue versus True Niue

The idea of Plastic Niue against True Niue was a sentiment that was perceived by four of the participants. Mika highlighted that he was made aware of the differences between Niue people, in which he identified himself as being a Plastic Niue. He shared that;

> *Yeah, it's definitely made me a bit more aware of there is a difference between us that are well plastics, and others that are true Niuean's you know, and there's some of us you know that's never been to the island, and those are some of the heartiest ones who represent Niue hard (Mika)*

Similar views were shared by Lupo, who identified herself as a 'plastic Niuean'. She expressed that if you have the advantage of being a fluent Niuean, bless you for speaking the fluent language, but for those who are unfortunate to speak the language, that is where the barrier is. However, Misi and Ioane shared that the upside of being a Plastic Niuean is proving others wrong about how they have perceived you. They shared;

> *Yeah, people are going to see me as plastic; it's common, you know. But, you know, for what I do, for what I'm currently doing, trying to better it, they don't know that, and that's how I pretty much treat the opinion of others (Misi)*

> *…it's so funny because I used to be the most plastic Niue out there, but here I am, wanting to learn, wanting to know, and I think having this understanding of the language is a starting point to actually knowing the language and knowing how to speak it (Ioane)*

Further sentiments are shared by Sifa, Lupo, Sina, and Mataio, who explained that pre-conceived perceptions are mentalities that have hindered receptive speakers. They shared;

> *…as you get older, it doesn't make you any less or any more Niuean. And, when they ask you, you'll be, like, oh, when did you become the Niuean consulate to tell me that I'm Niuean or not? Do I ask you, are you allowed to have many kids? You know, are your kids full Niuean? you know, I think it's people's opinions of you (Sifa)*

> *Like I said before, it's a mentality that's sort of like an unconscious bias if anything – because it's like saying if you don't have kids, you don't have the right to advise on parenting kind of thing – and that's what's sad, because as much as you try to use the language, it will take one negative comment to undo all those efforts of you trying (Lupo)*

> *and then they'll start talking bad about you, and then because you don't know how to respond you just keep quiet, and I think it's at those times when I like to feel sorry for myself and be like, why would you want to be Niuean, if this is the judgement you know? (Sina)*

> *I couldn't respond because I didn't know how to, so again that formed more pre-conceived notions in my head about who am I. Am I this, or am I that, yeah, those things played a lot in my head (Mataio)*

5.6.4 Mindsets

The influence of mindsets, like mentalities, was through the perceptions of changing the mindsets of pre-conceived perceptions. For Mataio, the influence of his parents not wanting him to learn the language was because they did not see the benefit of the language for social opportunities. Mataio reflected;

> *…my parents didn't want me learning VN, because they saw it as an obstacle to getting jobs and education in New Zealand. My dad said that there was no need for it because we were in a 'Palagi land'. So, I gradually stopped conversing, and my parents started to speak English more (Mataio)*

Moreover, Tala and Sifa believed that the mentality of being a New Zealand-born Niue results from the mindsets of language speakers, in that there needs to be more encouragement than negative mindsets. They suggested that;

> *Just having a little bit more encouragement, don't be so negative, change your mindset. Like I think that's the thing, once when you do something positive and you're like yes this is so good, and then it just takes one person to bring the negative buzz into it and then you're like that's not what this needs right now, that's not what we need now for our next generation (Tala)*

> *I hope it improves the stability of the Niue people and not just the stability but the mindset. I think it comes down to mindset, so if you don't get it taught at home or anywhere it's pretty much lost there. I think people will say, oh, because you're New Zealand-born, you haven't been there, you're definitely not Niuean. But I said, even if I was to go to Niue, what would that make me? Am I fully Niuean if I do make it to Niue? Not really, because they'll still treat you as an outcast (Sifa)*

Furthermore, she highlights those fluent speakers of the language carry the mindset of their grandparents. She shared;

> *It's like they can't be happy for you, they can't embrace what you bring to the table, because it's like, oh, that's a waste of time. Oh, you're going to be another doctor, another nurse, another teacher? It's little things like that, and it hinders, hey, can you just let it go? If that's what they want to be, let them be that. But it's like the generation that they grew up because there was no mindset, they learned that from their grandparents (Sifa)*

This view is echoed by Lupo, Manogi, and Ligi, who shared that we should not presume the narrative of receptive speakers and should not be critical of pronouncing their Niue words. They highlighted that;

> *So yeah, good for those who are fluent speakers, but I guess don't pass judgment until you've actually spoken to someone who is learning the language, that's trying to speak or respond with the language (Lupo)*

The only problem I have there is they're quite critical of pronunciation and getting it right the first time. I guess it's the changing their mindset when it is their turn to teach (Manogi)

…any language is sometimes our own people, and take it with a grain of salt, because as much as our people love us, when it comes to knowing how to speak the language, knowing how to say things in a certain way in VN, that might not be the case for actual speakers of the language. And so, it becomes quite grey in terms of language and in terms of speaking the language. And for me, that's really like sad to see (Ligi)

5.6.4.1 Language to Fear or Not?

For half of the participants, the fear of making mistakes, the fear of judgement, and the pressure to perform defined whether or not the Niue language was to be feared. For Ioane and Iakopo, the fear of making mistakes weighs heavily on their minds. They shared;

…because again you don't know if you're going to be speaking it right or wrong, or you end up swearing, and I freak out when I'm put into those kinds of situations (Ioane)

…mentality I think, is trying to push past the fear of judgement, the fear of making mistakes, and I guess the fear or judgement from Niueans if you don't say a certain word right, or if your sentences don't make sense. For me, like I said before, the pressure to produce language always gets me anxious because I don't want to butcher the words, but then I want to at least show that I know at least something in Niuean, that's one. (Iakopo)

This is further supported by Tala, whose biggest fear is that her children will be thought of in the same light as she was growing up. She expressed that;

I think it just made me sad that people still thought that way, you know and then obviously when I had kids that was my biggest fear (Tala)

Similarly, Iakopo stressed his desire not to speak in the language as he did not want to be put under pressure to try to perform well by being able to string along actual sentences in the language that may have either been right or wrong. Furthermore, Mika shared his experience of an online Niue language class where he felt nervous because;

…you can't escape kind of, because you feel uncomfortable, and like it's good pressure but at the same time it's like those ones where like I'm never coming back again because it was too much pressure (Mika)

On the other hand, Sina shared that there was no pressure to speak in *vagahau Niue* at home. She alluded to the fact that;

…there was no pressure that we had to only speak Niuean and no other language, whereas if that pressure, like, how Nena and grandpa were, like, you only speak Niuean or whatever, if that was the same sort of thing in church or at home, then that'll be a different story (Sina)

5.6.5 Old versus Young Generation

The difference between the generation of old and young was the views from participants who wanted to bridge the gap between the old and young generation regarding language learning, where increased support from fluent speakers could be a way forward. Manogi and Ioane that shares it;

I feel fluent speakers can support us, because they're the ones that hold the language, and a lot of them are our older generation (Manogi)

I think that it might be a good start to have at least some kind of support from fluent speakers of the language (Ioane)

This is further supported by Sina, who explains that fluent speakers of the language should be open to critique when receptive speakers attempt to learn or use *vagahau Niue.* On the other hand, Manogi shared the view that the older generation is, at times, too critical of the language and should encourage learners to be open to opportunities for language learning. She shared;

…if you pick it up and you pick it up wrong, you know, you get put down or made fun of, and it shouldn't be like that, because we're born here, you know, and it's going to be tricky for us to kind of revive vagahau Niue and change the stats if our older generation are doing that to, you know teach us the vagahau Niue. It's been too critical, but definitely, they can help us, you know, in the way of books and stuff to start the generation even like mine, you know, because we're still, I can say, struggling, you know, to use our vagahau Niue and providing opportunities for us where we can use it. You know, where we have our traditions (Manogi)

Lofa supports this view, explaining that there is still a gap between fluent and receptive speakers. She stated that;

Yeah, and even Niue Island itself I think there seems to be well in the past, perhaps, maybe it's eased from it, but there was almost like people being gatekeepers or holding onto the good thing. They're not sharing or buying into the vision. I love that there's more content available, stories and that coming through, but I think that there is still a gap (Lofa)

In addition, Tala believed that young people could contribute so much to language retention, as they are resources in themselves. However, support from fluent speakers is needed for the younger generation to flourish with and in the language.

5.6.5.1 Encouragement for Engagement

Encouraging to engage in any language can be viewed as aligning with a critical factor known as relatedness. This means having positive relationships with the people around you, whether friends or family – these relationships help you thrive and find meaning in what you are doing. Tala and Mele believe this can help by;

> *Just having a little bit more encouragement, don't be so negative, change your mindset, then maybe we're able to engage more. We need positive encouragement; we need constructive feedback to thrive in the language (Tala)*

> *…just appreciating being Niuean even more, because like I said, they talk about this place, this place and that place. So that's how I think of myself too, when I go through any situations in the workplace, I always think about my grandmother, where I am, and then the future which is my granddaughters (Mele)*

The views from Tala were a result of her language use not being encouraged enough at home, which resonated with Sifa and Misi, who shared;

> *but yeah, it's just, there's just not much encouragement or support from fluent speakers or those that know the language, because they just do what they know (Sifa)*

> *But in today's society, even our matua's are still speaking English and there's no encouragement, especially with our church. They still speak English. And I think it's a detriment to our younger generation and people like myself. If the encouragement is there to do it, I'd engage (Misi)*

On the other hand, Sina believes that it is best to continue using the language, regardless of the language not being at a standard of fluency that might be acceptable. She shared;

> *…I guess it's just having those conversations and, you know, for it to become natural. Yeah, if you don't know how to pronounce something and you're just saying it too palagi, like, all good. Like, just keep going with it, sort of thing, so that's one (Sina)*

5.6.6 Pushing the Problem versus Solution-based

A number of the participants shared that they would prefer to be embraced as receptive bilinguals rather than be outcasted or categorised as New Zealand-born Niue. Tala, Lupo and Ioane shared;

> *…but I think I've come to realise that it is what it is, but then I'm taking more of ownership now because there are tools for me to learn (Tala)*

> *I think that if fluent speakers can embrace those who understand Niuean instead of minimising or discrediting the amount of Niuean they know, just because they're not*

speaking full sentences or conversating in Niuean, then I think we'll be in the best position to have more fluent speakers (Lupo)

I think it's just getting over the different mentalities that some of our matua have when they speak to us, and there's a little bit of an understanding, but then they throw in a shady comment like they don't understand, who are their parents. They don't realise, I understand what they're saying, I just can't confidently respond and back myself (Ioane)

Furthermore, Misi alluded to the notion that he had heard that if you do not know how to speak Niuean, then you are not Niuean. He expressed;

I think people who do say it that way, I don't know if it's in a condescending way, but they're actually not helping the situation. Because it's like flicking it off, it's not my problem, it's kind of like an easy way out, you know like you do you, go to Niue, learn the language…(Misi)

5.6.6.1 Influence of Choice

The influence of choice to learn the language is considered by Sifa, Misi and Manogi as a personal choice. They shared;

…yeah. like, it's up to you if you want to learn it. So, if you want to play a sport, you learn it. If you want to learn a new hobby, you go learn it. But, it's exactly like your language. If you want to learn it and you want to embrace it, you go learn it, or you take into consideration the steps to learn something (Sifa)

…well, it's obviously upon you if you want to upskill yourself and get better in whatever language you want to learn. You've got to take that on yourself, and I think the Niue people, we can be so blasé about things. I don't know what it is, but, you know, with other cultures, you only have to look at Tongans and Samoans, and how dedicated they are (Misi)

I'm driven myself, but that's just for me because I want to be in a good position, whatever, to go, this is what I can do for you, son, son and daughter so that to give you that, that's what you're going to pass on to your children. And I mean, it's their choice (Manogi)

Similar thoughts were further expressed by Misi who shared that;

Unfortunately, for me, vagahau Niue, I mentioned that big gap, and I think it'll probably remain with me. How far I take Niue, is very limited. It's probably just going to be in the conversations I have with my wife and small conversations at church, I don't see myself getting into full-on conversations in Niue (Misi)

On the other hand, learning *vagahau Niue* for Sifa was a hindrance when she was younger, as she did not see its attractiveness as cool. However, her language learning priorities changed as she got older due to her children. She explained;

I think it hindered me when I was younger because I didn't see it as cool. But now that I'm getting older, I feel like it's definitely there. It's right in front of my eyes and it's free. It doesn't cost anything. And I think that's the thing, just mentality is it's up to you if you want to learn it or not, and for me, I'm learning it and learning more because I have kids. I guess you have to stop being a bit selfish and stop thinking about yourselves and give something that is already instilled in you. But you have to let the kids realise they are from somewhere, not nowhere. So, yeah, that's another reason, you know. It doesn't hinder me, but I'm limiting myself and the future because of my choices. Like my poor choices, I don't want my kids to fall back on it because I'm like, oh, that's not cool, because I don't want them to think it's not cool. I want them to embrace it, yeah (Sifa)

5.7 Language Environments

The environments in which language is heard and spoken are shared by the participants as being heard in language environments such as the home, church, school and education environments. This included how language acquisition in these spaces was seen as encouraging New Zealand-born Niue to learn the language for the future. Mele shares that language environments need to be created that are safe and good and that create or promote a strong sense of trust. This is further supported by Lupo and Ligi, who allude to the idea that if the language is heard, it will be spoken. They shared that;

…if I hear it, I'll speak it; if I don't hear it, I won't speak it at all, but to respect our elders, definitely speaking it to them, and you can only try (Lupo)

I feel like it's just speaking with speakers of the language. If I'm able to immerse myself into an environment or a setting where I can hear the language, or I can hear VN on a daily basis, or maybe not on a daily basis, maybe once or twice a week, then I know that I'm accountable for having to learn the language (Ligi)

This contrasts with what Mika, Lofa and Manogi share, who shed light on the Niue arts and crafts space being a cultural hub for learning culture and language. They shared that;

I had an opportunity right then and there to speak you know but if someone explained it to me properly that I was gonna be there for a certain time, then take some time to learn and take something away from that trip kind of thing, that would have been a huge thing that I would've overcome, and been like oh yeah, I need to stay for a bit and take what I can from this trip (Mika)

…using the arts and crafts space, there's a real interest, even between boys and girls, to learn their culture through arts and even performing arts and crafts. For the Arts and Cultural Festival in Niue, we need more opportunities like the festival, having more material, resources, and reading material (Lofa)

Back home, this is something they've been brought up with and been around. So obviously it's going to be different for us if we have to learn it, because we have to go to learn it, you know, whereas it's not in our home (Manogi)

Furthermore, Misi notes that for *matua* who has come from Niue to New Zealand or who travel to another country, it is;

…prudent for them to understand this is a different environment now. And, you know, you can't expect what you would get away with in Niue to be the same here, you know? (Misi)

5.7.1 Home Environment

The home environment for many participants was where they heard the language from a young age. Sifa mentioned that v*agahau Niue* was significant at home, and everything starts there. She added that she sees her language use in the future more prominently used in the home, in which she expressed that you will be able to go out and be proud of who you are. This view is further strengthened by Mika, Lofa and Sifa, who shared that;

…other than English, vagahau was being used more in the household between my Nena and my mum (Mika)

…very much back when I was very young all my teaching, there wouldn't have been an Early Childhood Centre; it was all in the home (Lofa)

So, at home, the home life was vagahau Niue. I always remember because my grandad used to get angry, and they're like, don't speak in English, speak in Niuean (Sifa)

Further encouragement from Sifa to learn the language at home was spurred on by the fact that she feels she has left it too late. However, she believes you are never too old to learn anything, especially for yourself and your kids. Similarly, Lupo and Sina highlight that the home, specifically their parents, were instrumental in how they understood the language. Sina shared that *vagahau Niue* was spoken only at home with her mum and dad and that;

…the support was pretty much if we spoke a lot of it at home with our parents then we were going to be better off (Lupo)

In contrast, Lupo, Misi, Mataio and Ligi shared that English became the language of the home as;

…just in the home, Mum and Dad spoke to us more in English than in Niuean, because we just didn't understand what they were saying (Lupo)

… you see there are kids in the home, and it freaks me out when I see little five-year-olds who are speaking it fluently, and I'm over here all in English (Misi)

So, English became the language in the home – and vagahau Niue was heard occasionally if my parents spoke to their siblings, or if we were out and about and we saw Niue people that my parents knew (Mataio)

…but then I think it became the norm or comfortability around language use to not be as prominent in the home then it should have been because we were always defaulting to English (Ligi)

The home environment was essential to the participants regarding how family connections were pivotal to knowing and understanding the language. Tala, Sifa, Sina, Manogi and Fine drew on the idea that utilising family for language learning has equipped them with the knowledge of how they understand *vagahau Niue.* They shared that;

> *…utilising the people in my house, and having more everyday conversations with them, and then taking the opportunities that are already made available (Tala)*
>
> *So, for me, I'm not limited. There are resources there and I have family. I have mum and dad, grandparents, have cousins. You know you have family, and they're there (Sifa)*
>
> *I think just making an effort to speak with my Nena, and my mum and dad, and if it's wrong, then at least I'm learning, but I'm giving it a go (Sina)*
>
> *...There was no external support for how I understood the language. It was basically just from your family unit (Manogi)*
>
> *I was often self-taught and revisiting the vagahau in prints through the Niue Star newspaper and bible reading by listening to my mum as she would read the bible daily. But it was also through the visual support aligned in the Niue bible and familiarity with texts and prints in vagahau Niue with Christmas cards and my dad's handwritten letter to his sister (Fine)*

Furthermore, the preference for face-to-face conversations was highlighted by three of the participants (Mika, Tala, and Lofa) who expressed that;

> *I feel like a one-on-one conversation would be best to use to have those kinds of conversations (Mika)*
>
> *I think if we put it down to keeping it simple and having those face-to-face conversations, that'll be ideal because we need to start somewhere. We can't be overcomplicating it for learners, because then it gets too overwhelming, I feel, and then that can deter people (Tala)*
>
> *For me, learning the vagahau, was very much the face-to-face interactions with family (Lofa)*

5.7.2 Church Environment

The church environment was seen as an environment where language was strengthened from a young age and language can continue being revitalised and learnt (Figure 26).

Figure 26

The importance of the church environment for language revitalisation. The researcher, during this year's 2024 annual White Sunday.

Note. Tukimata Personal Collection, 2024

Tala believes the church is an underutilised resource; you can always know, hear, and learn the language. She remembered her dad always took her to church when she was younger. She shared;

> *…so I never had the opportunity to go to a Niuean church and be in the language that way, but I feel like once I went to church, it wasn't a traditional Niue church, where they run it how they would in Niue, but just being able to sing the songs, that made me feel connected and I love singing the songs, you know I think that's what maybe could've helped me if I was in the church at a younger age, but that's fine, but I feel like yeah just not being around it enough (Tala)*

This view is also shared by Lofa and Fine who shared that;

> *So, every Sunday, you know, we'd go to church. I was brought up hearing the language, singing it, and just being in social gatherings as well. (Lofa)*
>
> *Attending church was another way of building and extending the vagahau Niue, especially for me and my siblings (Fine)*

On the other hand, Mele, Sina, and Ligi felt that the church, even though it is seen as a language hub, there were times during their upbringing when the language was only spoken to speakers of the language or where only English was used during their services. They expressed that;

> *You know we went to church and Niuean language was around us, but I can say for all of us, from my aunties to us and my uncles, we would just go sit at the back of the church and this language skill is going all around us, but we weren't engaging in*

it because even though it was all around us but we weren't being spoken to it, and I'd just listen to my Nana and my mum and my grandpa and my granddad. They will all be talking Niuean around me. That's the big thing for me is to speak back, and it does take time. Because I think my vagahau Niue will be good, and I will have it in the church setting, but it will never be one hundred per cent, it will never. I can try my best, but I just know that it's my weakness and that's all I know (Mele)

I mean, at church, they would speak Niuean and stuff, but it's not a thing where you have to speak Niuean, you know what I mean? But it just never continued like that so yeah, that's why, look at me now, I just don't speak any Niuean (Sina)

But also, we did go to church and because I grew up in a Catholic church, we didn't have those kinds of support from our church in terms of language, I think that we were English mostly (Ligi)

Misi, Manogi, and Mataio shared similar views, and they realised on reflection that the church environment was necessary for their language learning. They shared;

See, admittedly, today, even with coming to church, I still feel a little apprehensive about it, even though I've got good people around me and I look at our reverends, they speak it, and that always triggers me (Misi)

For me personally, I've just got to personally tap into it in a way that I can translate it, I guess. And I've been thinking about it, that if I go to church then I shouldn't speak English. It's a challenge. It's more of a challenge rather than, because there's only going to be good that comes out of it. And like you say, if you make mistakes, you learn from them (Manogi)

I always say I need to go back to church, because I saw the importance church had on my upbringing when I was younger, and being able to go back will allow me to be surrounded by matua that speak and sing in vagahau Niue. It'll be an experience to go back into that space and immerse myself in the language and the different traditions that come with church life (Mataio)

5.7.2.1 Learning vagahau Niue through the Church

Language learning through the church can be seen through reading the bible, singing songs, and engagement with elders or namely 'church parents' For Mika, Tala, Lofa, Misi and Mataio, they shared that reading the *tohi tapu* (bible) and referencing it alongside the English bible, is a good place to start. They shared;

…even with the tohi tapu, I want to try and read it again, because that was simple. I guess a good way of trying to hold the language again (Mika)

For me, it's to read the Niue bible and then the English bible, that's a good place to start as well, you read the English one and then you read the Niuean verse and then you kind of link it up in that way (Tala)

…when it comes to sharing say, a verse from the bible, I rely on the English bible, so I'll use the English bible and then that helps me to look at what the text is in the Niuean translation, and then work it in from there (Lofa)

Learn the bible, the bible is definitely a good tool to have and to read, and some words I don't even know what they mean, but you just read it to try and understand it, but yeah definitely a tool that every kid should read a bible, you actually learn some words in there, and then you can see what it means in the English bible… (Lupo)

I also think learning the bible is a good way to learn; that's what my Pa used to say – sit with a Niue bible and an English bible and cross-reference between the two. It'll be hard, but hey, at least it's something I guess (Mataio)

In line with reading the bible, Mele, Lofa and Ligi also drew on singing songs to practise the language. They expressed that;

…and I think the singing of the songs too, and that's a big thing because when you're singing a song, you're not just singing a song, you're actually learning those words to the song (Mele)

you know going to Sunday school and singing songs, easy to learn songs. Just trying to think because there wouldn't have been a lot of resources apart from the Bible and the hymn book (Lofa)

and you see young people in churches or you see them singing hymns and not in the language – how cool would it be to sing a song in Niuean, you know what I mean? (Ligi)

Furthermore, Tala and Lofa shared that learning from the *matua* was an advantage of going to church as they encouraged the use of the language. They shared that;

…I know of other people who didn't know the language but went to church and just spoke with the old people, and they were the ones that taught them how to speak, not their parents, like the matua's at church, and they just said they had a more loving way of teaching you, and they kind of when they corrected you, it was 'no you say it like this, not like this, and they said practice it and do it again, and I thought that was so cool (Tala)

Some of our Niuean matua's who have a teaching background or even the minister has been encouraging with us learning the language (Lofa)

5.7.3 Educational Environments

The participants have alluded to the classroom setting through the different education mediums as a critical tool for language learning. Mika shared that understanding language is all about education, and shared;

…I always feel like it's about education aye, you know you should always try and educate the person, you know if you want that person to learn something, then you should educate them in some sort of way (Mika)

This is further supported by Lofa, who highlights the creation of an exchange programme with the high school in Niue. She shared;

> *…but even in education settings, and social settings, wouldn't it be nice if there was some sort of programme? I know that this used to happen back in Niue, but there used to be exchange programs for our senior students in colleges you know the best thing to do would be to go to Niue and spend time on Niue and build up confidence (Lofa)*

On the other hand, Lupo shared that for her children, learning *vagahau Niue* is a barrier as it is not an option in the high school that they are attending. She mentioned that;

> *it's a bit of a barrier because it's not an option at school as well for them, so it would've been ideal if they had it as an option for them at school like the Samoans do with the Samoan language as a subject (Lupo)*

5.7.3.1 Vagahau Niue Language Classes

Participants also drew on the benefits of *vagahau Niue* language classes in person and online. Mika, Tala and Mele shared their experience attending the Niue language courses offered at institutions such as the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Pacific Education Centre (PEC). They shared that;

> *I did one of the Niuean language courses in 2014 in Manukau; we did the Pasifika Niuean language; it was for two months or something like that; it was like a 10-week course, and even then, it was hard trying to remember that stuff and get it back (Mika)*

> *I did the Niuean language classes because my friend's mum took the classes and it was helpful like it was actually really helpful and I was learning a lot, but then I realised that you have to keep going and you have to keep using it to maintain it. You can't do a six-week course and then say I can speak the language…and for me, I saw that when I took them, it's just me getting out of my comfort zone and pushing myself to be part of those groups (Tala)*

> *We've got the vagahau Niue classes here where I work because we know how important it is for our kids, and we know that the kids are over here, and they want to learn the language (Mele)*

Furthermore, Mele, Lupo, and Iakopo expressed that they will keep trying to use the language and immersing themselves in it through *vagahau Niue* classes in person and online. They shared that;

> *I will definitely still keep trying. I'll still do my classes, I'll still study my notes, and I think I'll still try to talk (Mele)*

> *I know there are classes online, which I know I should be encouraging our kids to join, but they don't offer it to our younger ones (Lupo)*

I also think joining Niuean language classes online might help the transition. I've always been scared to sign up, but maybe this has given me the push that I need. I think, honestly, just immersing myself in the language will definitely help me (Iakopo)

In addition, Sina believes that if there was a digital app that supported language classes, then there is a possibility that receptive speakers could move from understanding the language to acquiring the language. She expressed that;

…yeah, I think if I can do those online classes and then have some sort of app support what I've learnt in class, I think it'll start the process of going from, hey, I understand, so I can actually hold a conversation. Wouldn't that be cool (Sina)

Moreover, Sifa questioned her attendance at the language classes and questioned others who attended. She shared her experience by stating;

I questioned myself: What am I going to get out of it? Because I've had people go in and they said, oh, they learn about their lineage and where they're from, and I said, well, do you not know where you're from? Like I said, are you confused? Do you need a map? And they look at me because I'm a bit sarcastic, and they're like, oh, you're so sad to the culture. I was like, why do you need someone else to tell you who you are? I said, you should know who you are (Sifa)

5.7.4 Language Acquisition

Language acquisition of *vagahau Niue* was seen as another way of encouraging New Zealand-born Niue to learn the language for the future. Sina stated that;

it's all about trying, and I'm hoping that I'll get to a point where I can use vagahau Niue with my Nena and have not just a one-way conversation but ask her how she is in Niuean. For me, that'll be such a cool experience to go through that and have her be proud to speak to me in the language because I would know enough to be able to respond. That's where I hope to see my vagahau Niue in the future, and sooner rather than later, because my Nena isn't getting younger (Sina)

On the other hand, Ligi revealed that there was an absence of language acquisition with her parents. She shared;

There wasn't an active language acquisition with our parents, and I think if they had spoken to us in the language and continued that - then I reckon I would have been somewhat comfortable in not only understanding the language but also speaking it. So, for me, yes, they spoke to us in the language. And yes, we understood some things, but then other times, they just kind of resorted back to speaking in English because it was way easier to communicate with us as children (Ligi)

This is a view shared by Ioane, who believes that Niue speakers, at times, do not want to place pressure on themselves to speak the language and resort to the default language of English. He suggested that;

> *You'll be lucky if a fluent speaker would speak to you if you said you're Niuean. I think speakers of Niuean don't want to put that pressure on us if we don't know how to speak it, so they'll just resort to English – and then it becomes an English-speaking conversation, which is fine, but it would've been cool to at least attempt having a conversation in Niuean. So, I think, to allow people like me to have at least some chance of knowing the language or using the language, maybe fluent speakers can speak to us, and if we respond in English then carry on in vagahau Niue (Ioane)*

5.7.4.1 Exposure – A 'How to' on Moving from Learning to Actively Speaking

Exposure to the language was found to be detrimental to learning *vagahau Niue,* as shared by Misi and Manogi;

> *…you just need to be exposed to it, in whatever shape or form. Whether that's around your parents, your families, your grandparents, that's all you need…(Misi)*

> *I totally agree you need to be around people who use the vagahau Niue, and if you can't be, I think you should go and find yourself around those people. I mean, because it's entirely up to you. I feel you just need to be around anybody that's going to be using the vagahau Niue, and you just use it with them, even if it's like your three words. And that's it; I was told hako, hepe vagahau, because you've just got to use it, so you build your confidence in using it (Manogi)*

In contrast, Iakopo and Mataio found that the relocation from populated Niue areas was difficult when trying to learn the language and that being immersed in a different country signified the value of language to communities and societies. They shared that;

> *…my mum and dad moved down South when I was 3, and there weren't many Niuean families or people in the area we were living in at that time that we were able to have those language experiences with, so vagahau Niue was only heard between mum and dad, and the occasional visits we had to Niue (Iakopo)*

> *I also think that when I was overseas, I would go somewhere without learning how to speak in the local language, and as much as it was difficult to do at first, I needed to learn how to speak in the language because that was the only way of communicating and to which I believe puts an emphasis on the gap of cultures (Mataio)*

Furthermore, Mika, Tala and Manogi believe that being exposed to the language means having a starting point. They stated that;

> *I mean, you need a starting point, right? So, taking something more of a comfortable approach for the speaker, I feel that's something that would definitely help, those different avenues, different methods, all those right tools (Mika)*

100% yes because we need to start somewhere. I mean, if we're not being inclusive of any form of learning or understanding, then where are we expected to start? We can't all start at the advanced level; you know, we have to start somewhere, and I think that needs to be encouraged more. I think there are obviously different aspects of language (Tala)

I am at a point now where I say, yeah, I've got all this, and it's substantial, and I need to start doing something with it. And doing something with it is gifting my children with the vagahau Niue. So, they have some of it, and then whatever they're going to hold on to and continue to use will look differently to what I've given them or what Nana's given them (Manogi)

5.7.5 Technology

Many participants expressed that technology, especially online technology and digital tools, was a great way to advance language learning. Mika and Lupo shared;

Yes, technology and the way we're moving and with the right tools (Mika)

I also think online technology is the way forward for a lot of people learning the language, whether it's on your phone, or your computer, at the push of a button, you can learn songs, phrases, mannerisms and things like that, which I think is really cool (Lupo)

This is further supported by Sina who suggested that because online technology has quickly evolved, digital tools need to be maximised in terms of engagement and exposure. She shared;

Yeah, I reckon with technology nowadays and the way that it's always just everywhere in people's faces and stuff. They should really like capitalise on doing something online, like with the classes and stuff like that (Sina)

Similar sentiments were shared by Lupo, who stated that;

Online classes, online tutoring for the students, for our young families as well, just learning the basics, definitely would be a bonus to have that. I also think online technology is the way forward (Lupo)

5.7.5.1 Digital Tools/Apps

For a large majority of the participants, using digital tools or digital apps was considered an avenue for language learning. Mika, Mele, Sina, and Iakopo expressed that having an app with an audio translation would be of benefit when it comes to listening to the language and how it is spoken. They shared;

Pretty much, if we had an app, even if it's like a basic dictionary, with like audio translation or how to say the word, like the proper pronunciation of how it's said, and

even if we had like some sort of thing where we can update that app and put like familiar phrases that we would often use, that would help a lot. You could constantly have it on repeat in the car and stuff like that. Even with an app that has songs or even traditions, regarding technology, that's where it's at and how people can do the classes through Zoom (Mika)

But yeah, I think a hundred per cent Niuean things are good digitally for everyone because digital makes everyone evolve, and it's fast for that generation, too (Mele)

Yeah, so probably more of that stuff, and like translation apps – like say if you got stuck in Niue, or at a Niue event, and you needed to get home. However, you didn't know how to say that and, so you could just put something into like a google translate type of thing, and then it translates what you wanted at a touch of a button. That will cool, I reckon (Sina)

I think digital apps – whether it's speaking apps or visual apps, can all be relevant in learning the language. But I also think maybe a mentor-type app that allows you to join a forum where you can practice conversation skills with a fluent speaker, or you get paired with a fluent speaker, and they can monitor your progress and language use. Just digital tools that can provide speaking practice (Iakopo)

Furthermore, Mika suggested that digital tools are what will attract people to want to learn the language and make it easier when they need a Niue translation. Tala and Ioane share similar views by stating that;

…we're moving into a new space and the digital world, and it's not always gonna be pieces of paper, that don't work for everybody. So, making it accessible for everyone might just be the way to go (Tala)

Maybe have a platform where all Niue people can come together and just talk with each other, like a chatroom but for language (Ioane)

In addition, Lakopo expresses that for his proficiency in the Niue language to be at a standard where he can transmit the language with ease, he needs to start with the basics. He shared;

I want to actively pursue in terms of learning and immersing myself in the different resources and tools online or in person. I want to be at a place where I'm comfortable in my Niuean so that when my daughters ask me to teach them Niuean, there's no hesitation on my part. I think if I start with the basics, I can learn and work my way from there (Iakopo)

Moreover, different digital apps were suggested to be of importance when it came to language learning. Mataio shared his thoughts about an app that was able to respond in the language. He mentioned;

I think an app of some sort, one that can respond to you in vagahau Niue, because it's cool to have ones that tell you words and stuff, but if you don't know how to say it properly with the different stresses, then you might end up saying something

different or offensive. So, making sure that there are digital tools that are not only user-friendly but are friendly too, something like that would be good (Mataio)

Additionally, Fine highlighted platforms such as YouTube and the Talanoa app as an online learning tool for language revitalisation. She shared;

…the Talanoa app is a productive tool to maintain and revitalise the vagahau Niue. Also, being able to revisit via YouTube things on the Niue culture, language, values and traditional occasions, such as the haircutting and ear-piercing ceremonies (Fine)

On the other hand, Mele and Ligi felt that digital apps and online technology can only do so much. Mele said she would prefer a more interactive approach to language learning;

I mean, I like digital, but I think I like more of interactive learning. So, I would prefer to come to a class, but that's not to say that that's not for everyone. I think digital is good for still a lot of people (Mele)

Um, I feel like apps can only do so much. But I think that what it can do is just help you understand different words or different concepts, but I think if there was a digital tool that can converse with you in the language, that would be such an amazing app I feel, for language learning (Ligi)

5.7.6 Social Media

Mele and Lofa also considered using social media as a platform where there are different ways of extending the language. Mele shared that;

…I think now we're in the digital age, and social media has created different ways of extending the language. I think we should include receptive speakers. You can use vagahau in terms of the spoken, but then there are other ways you can bring out vagahau, like through music, poetry and other forms to extend the language, and I feel social media can attract those audiences (Lofa)

Furthermore, Mele explained that even though she still wants to learn *vagahau Niue*, the distraction of social media usually hinders her progress. She mentioned;

I also think digitally, for me, there's too much competition; that's the only thing. I want to learn my vagahau, but I know I'll get distracted by social media. But the thing is, it's not just social media; it's still Niuean stuff, but it's not the language, but it's still the Niuean stuff that I go to, but the problem is, it's Niuean stuff in the English language, so it's like both (Mele)

Lofa further adds that encouraging *matua* (parents/elders) to use social media to help them feel confident using digital tools is one way they can then use similar tools to teach the language, sing songs, say prayers, and share stories.

5.8 Identity

The participants perceived identity as a critical marker that connected them with their parents, their homeland, and how they were identified in New Zealand. Tala, Sifa, Sina, Eva, Ioane, Mataio and Ligi share that *vagahau Niue*;

> *…is the language from our motu and the language that my parents speak, basically just the language from our Island, and I guess it identifies us as Niueans in New Zealand (Tala)*
>
> *…it's not for validity or anything, but at the end of the day, it's who you are. If you know how to, if you know where you come from, and you know where you're from, and you can back it up, that's fine (Sifa)*
>
> *I guess it means having a language that ties me to my parents and grandparents, but it also gives me a sense of identity in some way (Sina)*
>
> *…means holding on to traditions, belonging to Niue, maintaining my culture my values and linking me back to my family (Eva)*
>
> *…to me is the beginning and the end of who I am. So, yeah, you can say it's part of my identity and where I come from in Niue, but it's also the language of my ancestors and who I am; it gives me an ID, and it spotlights who I am – a New Zealand-born Niuean (Ioane)*
>
> *…to me is a part of my identity; it's how I used to communicate with my parents and grandparents when I was younger, but it's also the language of my ancestors (Mataio)*
>
> *… is, I think, an important aspect of culture and how we identify the different ties we have with our parents and their migration to New Zealand. It is a part of who I am. So, that means that I need to make an effort to at least embrace the language and be able to use the language of my parents (Ligi)*

Being able to embrace language as a critical identity marker provides a sense of appreciation and a desire to acquire the language. As shared by Mele, Lofa, Eva and Ioane;

> *It just gives you a deeper appreciation of who you are, and it allows you to think of what you are as a Pacific person and how you can take that to your professional workplace, and it makes you appreciate that that is your gift (Mele)*
>
> *So, all those sorts of key markers, you know, I've grown and come to appreciate and, in a way, it's supported me to understand vagahau Niue but also how a Tagata Niue goes about being part of who they are in different settings with other Niuean's (Lofa)*
>
> *When people ask me where I am from, I always say Niue and the language is part of my identity in the world (Eva)*
>
> *I actually wanted to - for my own knowledge and for wanting to know who I was and having the weight of knowing or understanding the language was able to back that up (Ioane)*

On the other hand, Lupo, Misi, Iakopo and Ligi shared that language is only a part of identity and should not define the makeup of a person's whole identity. They shared;

> *So, if we talk about identity, it's all these things that make who we are as Niueans, and I know, yes, my Niuean is limited. However, I've found that it can actually help me because then it motivates me to want to try and use the language more, just so that I'm not being lumped in with that 1 per cent of you don't know how to speak the language…(Lupo)*
>
> *That's probably what kept me in touch, that I was Niuean – my Nena and somewhat the language. But to identify, I didn't see it (Misi)*
>
> *…I don't think [understanding language] contributes to how you see or how people see your identity, and identity is such a broad thing; it's the makeup of who you are physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually, but also culturally. So, even if I am afforded the opportunity or the advantage of understanding the language, it doesn't necessarily mean that my identity is complete because I can understand the language (Iakopo)*
>
> *For me, language is a part of who I am as a person, as a Niue person here in New Zealand. And yes, I can't speak it as fluently and I understand it, but that doesn't make up my whole identity as a Niue woman in New Zealand, you know what I mean? (Ligi)*

This resonated with Tala, Lupo, Sina, Manogi, Iakopo and Ligi, who expressed that you can still identify as being from Niue, regardless of not being able to speak the language or being limited in language. They firmly believed that;

> *if I think about my identity, it never takes away from it, like I'm proud to be Niuean, but in terms of not being able to speak, yeah it is hard. It's kind of how I still feel connected to my identity, but it doesn't take away if I don't know how to speak it (Tala)*
>
> *You can't say that I'm not Niuean because I don't speak the language fluently because, for me, even knowing basic phrases or words and songs is a good starting point which helps to make up who I am as a Niuean (Lupo)*
>
> *…in terms of my identity, that's quite deep. I still identify myself as a Niuean, regardless of if I don't speak it. Maybe not so much if I don't understand it, but because I do understand it, I still feel like I would be like, nah, I'm Niuean (Sina)*
>
> *I do and that's enough for me to say, hey, I'm Niuean, and sure I don't know your academic stuff, but what I know is still Niuean to me and it makes me a Tagata Niue. You know, we don't have to know everything, but you just start with this, and it's going to get better for yourself, for your children because that's what we're here for, our children (Manogi)*
>
> *For me, that was quite honest and made me really think about the importance of knowing who you are, or at that time, knowing who I was (Iakopo)*
>
> *So, it's important to me that the language can tell who we are and how we identify who we are, and that's where I see myself with vagahau Niue use in the future (Ligi)*

This similar sentiment is alluded to by Mele, Sifa, Manogi and Eva, who shared that embracing the language is a way of knowing who you are. It is about reclaiming your identity and embracing the reasons for the migration of parents and grandparents to New Zealand. Furthermore, knowing and understanding the language is having an identity as a result of being receptive to the language. Mele, Sifa, Manogi and Eva shared;

> *I like them to see it as an opportunity to come back and connect and reclaim your identity and know who you are and know where you come from and know that there will always be that connection there (Mele)*
>
> *So, for me, embracing it is a big part. Because it just shows them for me, a bit of stability. You know, just knowing where they're from and stuff. And knowing that their grandparents and great-grandparents came here for better, for a better life. Not come here for no reason (Sifa)*
>
> *…because you need to know who you are. You know, when you stand up to other educators, other people, your peers, and if you know that, then you can stand up quite proudly and go, yes. With the vagahau Niue I have, it might be little, but it's still part of who I am and I can identify with it because I know it (Manogi)*
>
> *It helps me in that I think it enables me to have a unique perspective of who I am in NZ and I can tell others about it when I meet them (Eva)*

In addition, Sifa and Fine's identity is usually mistaken for that of other cultures because of their physical appearance or surname. They expressed;

> *My culture always gets mistaken, and a lot of people will say, oh, where is Niue? Or, oh, where is that? Oh, do you have a language? Like, it's quite sad to see (Sifa)*
>
> *The responses I still get today are either when they mistake me for a Māori because of my appearance or a Cook Islander because of my surname. When I do reassure them that I am a descendant from Niue they would think differently when I always start the day with a greeting in the morning, Fakaalofa atu (Fine)*

5.8.1 Communication

Vagahau Niue, a significant part of my identity, was also revealed as a means of communication with parents and speakers of the language in the different Niue communities. Ioane shared that understanding the language helps as a communication factor that can help his *vagahau Niue* develop over time. He shared that;

> *I see my vagahau Niue improving with time, and I mean that in the ways of speaking - not limiting myself to just phrases, but attempting to conversate with other Niue speakers (Ioane)*

Further sentiments were expressed by Sina, who indicated that understanding the language can be seen as a one-way conversation. She stated;

I guess at least it can be a one-way kind of conversation, say if an elderly Niuean person was speaking to me. At least I would comfortably feel, like, oh, yeah, I can help them because I understand them. Whereas, even though I can't speak it back, there are always ways where you can kind of navigate to communicate with them. Do you know what I mean? Like, yeah at least it's just a one-way convo where I can at least help where I can (Sina)

She provided an example of her elderly Nena who can only speak in *vagahau Niue*, and shared;

For example, my Nena – only speaks Niuean, and there were times when she needed to communicate things in English that she wouldn't know how to say, and then I would jump in and say some basic words like ko e hā? And then she would respond, and yeah it took time, but at least she was able to communicate in a language that she was comfortable in. So, things like that, being able to understand helps me in those kinds of situations (Sina)

Additionally, Lupo, Manogi, Fine and Eva share their views on understanding the language;

I think it can be both. It helps me in the sense that I know how to communicate with my partner's mum and with my mum who are both in their 80s – and I think being able to understand the language just adds to that part of your identity alongside culture as well (Lupo)

Because it allows you to be able to communicate with people that are within your community, and it allows you to understand more about your culture, and it allows you to be part of that culture, as well as understanding your vagahau Niue (Manogi)

…knowledge about diverse cultures and languages that promotes respect, understanding, and appreciation of different ways of communicating (Fine)

Being able to communicate with other Niueans is so important and our language is unique. For me, this makes me feel like I belong to a group of people who are special (Eva)

Furthermore, Manogi, Iakopo and Ligi noted that language learning is an opportunity to learn who you are and communicate values, beliefs, and customs as an essential social function. They highlighted that;

It will benefit them as well, as long as you stand up, use it, and be proud of it. Even if it sounds a little bit broken, or a little bit mispronounced, it's important that you're using it (Manogi)

…because we're all trying to learn who we are, and I think for the most part, it's being open to communicating with us in the language if the opportunity were to happen (Iakopo)

As a means of communicating values, beliefs and customs, it has an important social function and fosters feelings of group identity and solidarity (Ligi)

Moreover, Mele believes that learning the language through active communication can be achieved through song and dance. She suggested that;

> *I think song and dance are really important, because you know those actions and the songs, they just go hand-in-hand. That's what the language comes through; song and dance. So, we get to learn English, and the song and dance, and the actions, which are all still part of the Niue language (Mele)*

5.8.2 Layers of Identities

The views and perspectives from the participants about identity were that identity consists of different layers. Lofa shared the significance of language as necessary, as it is a part of who she is, part of her identity and heritage. Furthermore, Tala shared that it is challenging to unpack identity because it is complex and fluid with different layers, whereas Mataio and Ligi expressed that;

> *…being able to understand vagahau Niue that's just another layer on top of being identified as Niuean, because even if I'm not fluent, I still have some piece of the language that runs through me, and no one can take that away or say otherwise (Mataio)*

> *Everything else that is not culture and language comes from my other half. So, when you say understanding vagahau Niue but not being able to speak it, it really shouldn't define, like fully define who we are as Niue people; it doesn't define who we are or who I am because that's just only one part of my identity and it's not a makeup of my whole identity (Ligi)*

Similarly, Mele, Iakopo and Ligi noted that it is okay to have differences in identity and other factors that make up your identity. They shared;

> *Yes, definitely, language is important for your identity, but it's also okay to have differences in identity, like through the crafts and the arts, and what people are making to wear I guess, you know that's also part of identity, even though the language is key, there are other ways of creating your identity (Mele)*

> *However, if you can't trace your roots or ancestors then does understanding the language have any weight to your identity? There are all these things that I think about, when it comes to my identity, if you asked me how being a son, a husband, or a father contributes to my identity, my answer would be different compared to understanding the language and what that means for my identity (Iakopo)*

> *So, culture and language only make up maybe a quarter or a half of my identity; yes, it's fundamental to cultural identity - but I say take that with a grain of salt because it's the language of our ancestors, grandparents, parents, but it's also not what should make up your whole cultural identity (Ligi)*

Similar perceptions were shared by Sina, who acknowledged that even though her cultural identity is that of a Tagata Niue, she also has an identity at work and home. Ligi shared a similar thought when she expressed;

> *I think when it gets to the point where you try and find your identity, it's being able to do that in a culturally acceptable way (Ligi)*

Sina, Manogi, and Ioane drew on their cultural identities as *Tagata Niue* by highlighting that *vagahau Niue* means knowing who you are and where you come from. It is culturally important, especially for *matua* (parents) and where they have originated from. They shared;

> ***...****in the way of understanding. I think it's how you value a piece of your culture, and with language and the Niuean language especially, it's important as a marker of where you come from… (Sina)*
>
> *So, I've always used that as my kind of identity basis. I don't say, oh, I'm Kiwi-born, whatever, whatever. I always say, yeah, I'm Niuean. So, it's funny how people think I was born in Niue. And I say, oh no it's my parents, but that's who I kind of like identify with there. Even though I was born here, my parents have that culture, the vagahau Niue, and the Niuean culture (Manogi)*
>
> *…it's important to have an aspect of culture that you can identify with, or people can identify with you (Ioane)*

5.8.2.1 Evolving Identities

Two participants (Sifa and Ioane) expressed that identity(ies) change over time. Ioane alluded to the fact that;

> *…whether it's from a cultural perspective, or familial perspective, or a biological perspective, our identities are always evolving and it's changing. I feel like my identity has changed as the years go by, and so my identity can't remain stagnant in one place, and so being able to understand VN, it encourages the development of my identity, which is big for me, because I feel like my life goes through different seasons, and with that, the ability to know language, or speak in the language is important to a certain part of my identity…I understand enough vagahau Niue to identify myself as coming from Niue - but that may change in 10, or 20 years, and I have no control over that, all I can worry about and focus my energy on is the here and now, and what identity looks like presently (Ioane)*

On the other hand, Sifa argued that as a New Zealand-born Niue, you are only taken at face value. She shared;

> *Like, they'll just see you as a New Zealand-born Niuean and you're pretty much not considered Niuean. So, either way, even in New Zealand or in Niue, you're not 100% yet (Sifa)*

5.8.3 Sense of Belonging

Our participants shared a sense of belonging as a factor in knowing who you are and how to navigate the difference between being New Zealand-born and being a *Tagata Niue.* Sifa, Lupo, Sina and Eva share it;

> *Vagahau Niue helps create the person, like where they're from, like a lineage (Sifa)*
>
> *Vagahau Niue to me is identity, it's a part of who I am and what makes me different (Lupo)*
>
> *Yeah, I'm Niuean, but for me, I'm, like, oh, yeah, kind of, but kind of not because I don't know how to fluently and confidently speak Niuean, so I think in that sense it would be awesome to know where you stand – because on the one hand, you're like hearty Niuean, but then on the other, you can't speak the language, so can you say your Niuean? And you know those are two different worlds that you have to navigate, but I mean I'm proud to be Niuean anyway (Sina)*
>
> *Yes, I think we need to be more inclusive so that others feel more confident to learn and speak vagahau Niue. For there to not be a sense of separation of church and "us" and "them" regardless of where you're born (Eva)*

Mele, Sifa, and Misi, in their narratives, underscored the profound effects of colonization and living in a Western world on their perception of language and culture. Their experiences highlight the urgent need for advocacy in preserving *vagahau Niue* and fostering inclusivity (Sifa).

> *But again, sometimes it's not appreciated in New Zealand and this culture that we've been colonised from, it's just not appreciated (Mele)*
>
> *Like, you're half and half because it's the Western world. You don't know what's Niue going to do for me in the future? Is it going to get me a job? No, the English language is. So, you kind of weigh up things and stuff like that (Sifa)*
>
> *For me, I've often thought that in some ways I haven't earned it, and I put it down to how when Nana passed away, and up until, geez, we started coming back to church, that's a big gap, and that gap was pretty much just the New Zealand way of life (Misi)*

Furthermore, Tala and Lofa shared that it is not too late to reclaim your language, whether in a safe space that encourages mistakes or in uncomfortable environments that allow for improvements; taking the opportunity to learn from it and move forward is critical. They shared;

> *I think when I was younger, it used to play on my mind a lot. I mean, it plays on my mind a little bit now, but I think I've come to realise that it is what it is, but then I'm taking more of ownership now because there are tools for me to learn, and hello, I live with three people who speak fluently, there are no excuses for me now as an adult, and I mean that's a hard one because if I think about my identity, it never takes away from it like I'm proud to be Niuean (Tala)*

…I think it's also being able to be in a safe space to say, oh yeah, okay, yup, I stuffed it up then, but I can learn from it, and then move forward, rather than being laughed at and then not learning from it (Lofa)

For four participants, having a point of difference and allowing children to know where they are from creates a sense of belonging. As shared by Sifa, Manogi, Mataio, and Ligi they expressed;

…you have to let the kids realise that they are from somewhere, not from nowhere (Sifa)

So, vagahau Niue, to me, is my identity. I guess that's what I put it down to. It's who I am and who I understand to be (Manogi)

Understanding the language sets me apart from every other person from the Pacific. I'm always proud to be from Niue (Mataio)

Vagahau Niue, I guess, means a place of belonging; it means who I am in the community that I live in. I think being born in New Zealand, vagahau Niue has played a big part in the life of my family (Ligi)

In retrospect, having a sense of belonging can be viewed in both a positive and negative light. Regarding the positive aspect, Sifa, Ioane, Iakopo and Ligi shared that;

But at least I know where I'm from. And all I need to know is where I'm from and my parents and stuff. And how it works and stuff like that. If I know the basics, then I'm fine (Sifa)

I can put in the effort to try and learn and speak and do it with the knowledge that this is a part of me, it's who I am, it's where I come from (Ioane)

You know what, I go back to what mum had said to me about one-day having kids of my own and allowing them to have an identity. That resonated with me, because nowadays, culturally it's hard to establish yourself in different communities because you need to have some type of connection to your roots (Iakopo)

Because even though I understand vagahau Niue, I can understand vagahau Niue and say, yes, I'm a Tagata Niue, or I'm from Niue, and that kind of gives me some type of grounding, in terms of my culture, and in terms of my language (Ligi)

However, Mika, Lofa and Sifa shared the negative aspect of identity and being a New Zealand-born Niue, where they expressed;

I kind of learnt to live and accept that I'm not as grounded as some of the other Niueans are, but that doesn't take away the fact that I can't represent…but yeah, I was trying to decide whether I was worthy of being Niuean or not, because over the years and recently I just kind of learnt to accept the fact that this is who I am and this is how I represent Niue in my way and I would love to take a chance to go back or learn or take something from it, but at this point I'm just happy to be who I am and the way I represent our island (Mika)

…you know they help us not to take to heart that if you don't speak Niuean, then you're not Niuean or that you can't call yourself Niuean, being able to rise above all of that stuff, all of that rubbish talk and just think about yourself and what is it that you want? What do I want? If you're passionate about something, you'll find ways and people to help you (Lofa)

Even if you know who you are, you can get kind of confused because you'll fly the Niue flag, and then they'll look at you and go, oh, you want to be Niue, but you don't know how to speak it, because like I said face value, your skin colour, you have to be a certain criterion to be full Niuean. It's either born in Niue, speak fluent Niue, and know how to do Niue things. And if you don't fit that, you literally are a nobody. And it sucks. It sucks because it makes you feel like if I'm a nobody in Niue, I might as well be something else…(Sifa)

Tala and Sina shared similar views, where Tala highlighted that her father rejected all cultural factors, as he wanted her to succeed in New Zealand. They shared;

…that was my dad's way of success, is when you come here, you forget all the things that you learnt in the islands and that kind of trickled down to me (Tala)

I wouldn't say, oh, nah, I'm a New Zealand-born Niuean – I feel there's just a lot of negative connotations if you put NZ in front of Niuean. It shows that yes you have some sort of Niuean, but NZ is a priority, if you get what I mean? And I think that if we're trying to move away from having like us vs them in terms of NZ-born vs Niue-born, I think that will contribute to our identities here in NZ (Sina)

In hindsight, Sifa and Manogi shared that knowing your cultural identity allows you to accept how to embrace other cultures and identify who you are to others, especially if you are learning the language. They shared;

…*as your cultural identity, but now I'm definitely for it, but now that you get older and you see the world embracing different cultures, it's like, man, I'm here for a reason but it's not late, but I think, me accepting it, it took me, I think, to become a mother, to learn to accept who you are, you know, and that's a kind of good opening thing for me. I had to accept, like, this is my life, this is who I am, I can't be something I'm not, but no I'm up for it (Sifa)*

That's all I need to have to say that, you know, that I am, and that I don't need to use the language to identify as Niuean because I'm learning it…because they know, and they identify as Niue, because of who they're around, and how they're raised, but yeah, just someone getting up and going, hey, you've got to do this. You've got to do this now (Manogi)

Furthermore, being able to understand the language also created a sense of loss for Mele and Mataio, who acknowledged that not having a grasp of the language is;

it's not a nice feeling, it's like a hole in your heart, and if you don't have it, it feels like something's missing aye. It's really important because if something is missing, it can sometimes feel like the loss of a language, which is a loss of this Indigenous culture,

so you have to find connections in spaces or in places where Niue is alive and active (Mele)

Like I said before, it hindered me because of my knowledge of vagahau Niue. I wasn't considered enough to be taken seriously as a Niuean, and if I look back to when I grew up, years after living with my parents, I was just seen as a Palagi or a boy that had some Niue connection (Mataio)

5.8.4 Culture

The culture and language are important factors that have gone hand-in-hand with identity. Sifa and Sina shared the importance that language means culture and identity and is a big part of one's own culture. Tala supported this view by sharing that language is multi-faceted and that;

the language is one aspect of our culture, but for me anyway, I just felt like it's not the only thing that makes me Niuean. I don't go around going, 'Oh, I don't understand, so, therefore, I can't say that I am a Niuean', and I think that's one of the biggest things about the conversations that I see online is that you have no right to call yourself a Niuean if you don't know how to speak the language (Tala)

Similar sentiments were also shared by Lofa and Sifa, who expressed that;

I think we're all buying into this vision of wanting to revitalise the language, and language is part of the culture, our culture and it doesn't stand still. You know, life changes and so should the language (Lofa)

Yeah, for me, just understanding it is a big part of your culture. Like, you don't realise it until you see someone else and you're like, man, they're young. They know how to speak the language. Oh, man, they're really young (Sifa)

Additionally, Mika, Mele, and Manogi drew on the importance of cultural traditions, and they shared their thoughts around cultural traditions such as;

…haircutting ceremonies, going to the island, being able to live there for a year and experiencing things like that. Those are the things I take away, and I appreciate the fact that I had those experiences, whereas there are a lot of people I know that haven't even got to experience any of that (Mika)

Because we get to learn those songs and we get to do the cultural stuff, and we get to do it alongside the kids and the youth, and that's our way of giving back to our people (Mele)

You know, we should be able to use it in our traditions and stuff like that. We need more of that so that we can be encouraged to use our vagahau Niue (Manogi)

Moreover, Mele and Sina shared that even though they were allowed to engage in cultural traditions, the language was subsequently missing from these interactions, allowing silent cultural battles to be present. They shared;

Like you see, we still have the Niue food, the Niue culture, the Niue songs, and we still ate taro and takihi and the faikai, and we cut the banana leaves outside, and BBQ outside did the umu, but yeah, it was the language that was missing from all this (Mele)

Yeah, me and my siblings were able to do the different cultural stuff when we were younger, but then as you grow older and you become less and less involved in those cultural traditions, you start having those cultural battles in your head…am I Niuean enough, am I not (Sina)

5.8.4.1 Cultural Connections

The participants shared a significant cultural connection with people and the community. Mataio shared that it is crucial to understand that *vagahau Niue* is;

…is part of the cultural landscape that makes up who we are as Niue in NZ. It's also embracing the language in a country that has gone through oppression and trying to regain their right to use their language. Vagahau Niue has become more than just language, it's become the connection between our people of Niue and here in NZ (Mataio)

In addition, Eva, Iakopo, and Ligi shared that it is culturally hard to establish yourself in different communities because you need to have some connection to your roots. Ligi highlighted that being away from these cultural connections that tie her to her family is difficult for her. She explained;

I don't have those connections or those ties, those familial ties where I stay at the moment. So, it's difficult, but it's, in a way, helping me to start learning and using the language, which I feel is important moving forward (Ligi)

Furthermore, Sifa and Misi emphasise the need to have good cultural people surrounding you for your identity to be culturally relevant in New Zealand. They share that;

So obviously with culture, even just embracing the food, the different songs, how culture is included in how they dance, even just learning words like colours, numbers. It's just making them realise that they are from somewhere. They're not just from New Zealand like you don't want to be categorised as just a New Zealand born-Niuean, but at least have some sort of inkling or some sort of connection back to home, even though we've never been there (Sifa)

I think having good cultural people around you to encourage it will eventually or hopefully help with how you identify yourself…(Misi)

Moreover, Manogi questioned if Niue communities are doing enough and are accessible to future generations. She posed the question;

Are our Niue communities getting out there and making vagahau Niue, whatever, accessible to our generation and the next generation after that? You know, the

people out there going, vagahau Niue, instead of driving it to say like hey guys, this is important for you to learn now because this is who you are. Do you know who you are? And I think we probably need more people that are out there advocating going, hey, learn it, learn it now (Manogi)

5.8.4.2 Cultural Knowledge

The view of acquiring cultural knowledge as part of acknowledging identity was views shared by six of the participants (Mele, Sifa, Manogi, Iakopo and Ligi). Manogi and Iakopo alluded to the importance of sharing culture and traditions and not having them hidden away. They shared that;

You know, because we've all been given a culture for a reason, and it's not to hide it away. Yeah. It's actually for you to come and express who you are out into the world or wherever you take yourself (Manogi)

Understanding language means allowing for culture and its traditions and shared values to be conveyed and preserved (Ligi)

This is further supported by Mele and Sifa, who expressed those traditional teachings and lessons are a big part of how you identify yourself. They expressed that;

…your traditional learnings are still a big part of you, and maybe the white may not have an appreciation for it, but we have an appreciation for it (Mele)

…but I think for most is to learn the Niue language and have a fair idea of, you know, the protocols and what you can and can't do. And I think just knowing where you're from and just knowing all the background, it gives you just that sense of pride in knowing your culture (Sifa)

For Manogi and Iakopo, as their children become curious about wanting to know more about their culture and the origins of where they come from, they believed that they need to make an effort to learn the language, and shared;

I have to drive that Niuean language so that they can pass it on to their children because it must be part of who they are and where they come from (Manogi)

I think now that I'm at an age where my daughters want to know more about their culture and where they come from, I have to make the effort to learn as well, and that's not denying them of their rights, it's allowing them to reclaim what's theirs (Iakopo)

Similarly, Sifa expressed that seeing people of her culture move forward in life, do well, and do good for the community is a way of bridging those cultural connections with the upcoming generations.

5.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented distinct voices of New Zealand-born Niue that contribute to a contextual understanding of receptive bilingualism amongst first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The themes of upbringing and generational influences were pivotal as the foundation of support for participants in understanding the Niue language. The influence of grandparents was paramount to the participants on how they viewed and understood *vagahau Niue* as language and cultural advisors and teachers.

A significant finding was the importance of *vagahau Niue* for New Zealand-born Niue and how they viewed and valued the language considering their receptive skills. The barriers highlighted in the findings found that language attitudes were vital in determining participants' views on the lack of confidence, mentalities and mindsets, and how they used and understood *vagahau Niue.* As a result, language shift and maintenance have become increasingly important in understanding the thoughts and views of New Zealand-born Niue as receptive learners/speakers of the language and the role of receptive bilingualism in the changing society we currently live in.

Furthermore, the views and voices of the participants who shared their different language environments were important to know as they provided valuable insight into how language acquisition occurred in the different environments that the participants were a part of. In addition, technology and digital tools were seen as critical tools that could assist receptive speakers in transitioning from understanding *vagahau Niue* to speaking or using it. Similarly, the theme of identity and culture sheds light on the participants' sense of belonging and their views on the cultural connections and knowledge that were imperative to their identities here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Overall, this chapter sought to present the comprehensive findings of this study in detail, which highlighted the perspectives of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue and the matter of receptive bilingualism as a way forward for *vagahau Niue* revitalisation for current generations of today, as well as subsequent generations of *tagata Niue* to come.

VEVEHEAGA ONO

Fetuiaga – Fuke e umu

A Critical Discussion

"*Fakataufata e mafiti he gutu mo e gahua he tau lima*"[35]

6.1 Introduction

Fetuiaga – Fuke e umu, is a time of celebration related to the unveiling of the *umu*, that is, the opening and removal of the different layers within the *umu* to ensure the *umu* is cooked. This process outlines the key findings from the previous chapter through a critical discussion about the extent to which New Zealand-born Niue can revitalise the language through their receptive bilingualism skills. The discussion of the findings is drawn together from the voices of all 15 participants in this study. These participants vary in upbringing, attitudes to language, culture and identity, and lived experiences with *vagahau Niue,* which are all essential aspects that have impacted the understanding and maintenance of the Niue language for the participants, as well as the differences in views in how to maintain the language for the future.

The chapter is structured into four parts, beginning with a perspective from a New Zealand-born caught between cultures due to upbringing and generational influences. The second part will draw on the value placed on *vagahau Niue* and the reasons for the limited use of the language, with a specific focus on attitudes towards language use. The third part discusses the factors that influence *vagahau Niue* and the understanding of the language for the participants, that looks at additional domains of language interaction, such as the home, school, church, and digital technology, and how these language hubs can challenge and enable the preservation of *vagahau Niue* to move from a state of receptive bilingualism to being bilingual. Woven, in this chapter, will discuss how these factors impact the identities of New Zealand-born Niue living here in Aotearoa. The chapter concludes with how *vagahau Niue* can be sustained into the future with positive approaches for maintaining the Niue language identified in the findings.

6.2 Caught between cultures: A New Zealand-born Niue perspective

The understanding of receptive bilingualism, as it relates to *vagahau Niue,* can be distinguished as the effects of language shift through the influence of generational impacts

[35] 'When you speak with authority, make sure you follow through with actions'

and different upbringings. As shared by Fishman (1991), it is in language shift/loss studies that receptive bilingualism is considered a stage in language shift, where a generation of receptive bilinguals (in this case, New Zealand-born Niue) does not produce speech and does not transmit the language onto the next generation. As explained by Otsuka (2007) and Shameem (2000), language shift can go through forced or external, and voluntary or internal phases; for the participants in this study, the language shift internally or voluntary denotes personal choices made to adopt the dominant language whereas ideas of socioeconomic success and prestige surround the reason for the voluntary shift.

As a result, the findings revealed the importance of understanding *vagahau Niue* as a result of voluntary shifts. For the participants, the most critical impact that has impacted their understanding of *vagahau Niue* is the role of grandparents and parents and their upbringing in what was known as the 'land of milk and honey'. The concept of the 'land of milk and honey' has been described by Bell et al. (2017) as a promised land of natural abundance and endless opportunity. For many of the participants, their upbringing with the language was regarded as two populations differentiated by birthplace, Niue-born Niue (parents and grandparents) and New Zealand-born Niue (participants), which can also be seen from the 219 responses from the online survey in Table 19 and (Figure 27).

Table 18

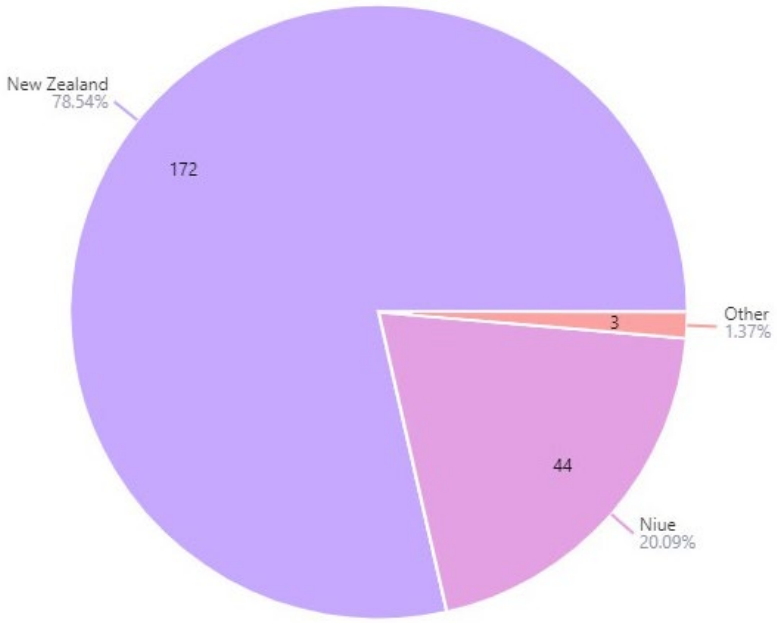
Responses from the survey research of place of birth

Data	Response	%
New Zealand	172	78.54%
Niue	44	20.09%
Other	3	1.37%

Note. The researcher's online survey was completed in 2020 from PEC respondents.

Figure 27

Pie Chart of survey participants and their country of birth



Note. Results of the responses to the place of birth question from the researcher's Niue online survey

As a reflection of this, Fishman's (1970) model of immigrant language sets out a three-generation theory that describes the movement of generational transmission in three parts. Firstly, it is when first-generation immigrants have added knowledge of the new environmental language to their home language use. This is followed by the second generation, who have likely grown up in bilingual homes, where they can transfer between their home language and the dominant language of their community. The last of the generational theories is when the third generation is commonly monolingual in the primary local language with minor knowledge of the mother tongue. A stark reminder of this is shared by Templina et al. (2016), who highlights that "the probability that a child will speak in their heritage language strongly depends on the number of language conversations that it is exposed to" (p.10). For this study, receptive speakers' involvement in language transmission is because they are the generation who will likely maintain the comprehension and proficiency of *vagahau Niue* if a language shift occurs. This is supported by the findings from the survey research (Table 20 and Figure 28) that reveal the ability and fluency of New Zealand-born Niue speakers that ranged from a rating of 1- not being fluent, 5 – has some understanding of the language and 10 – fluent in the Niue language.

Table 20

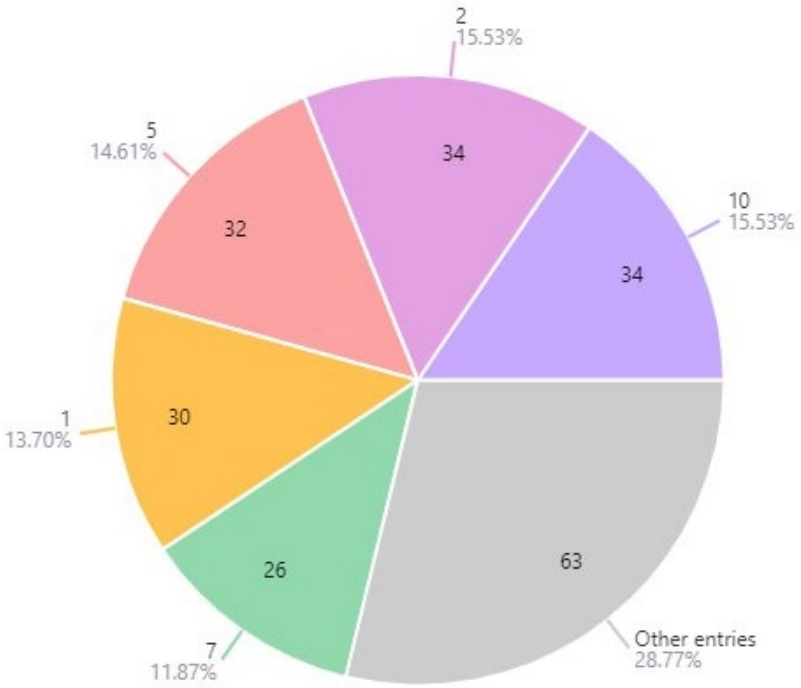
Responses from online survey of ability and fluency in Vagahau Niue

Data	Response	%
1..	34	15.53%
2	34	15.53%
5	32	14.61%
1	30	13.70%
7	26	11.87%
Other entries	63	28.77%

Note. Researcher's online survey responses for the question of ability and fluency in *vagahau Niue*

Figure 28

Results from online survey respondents in level of ability and fluency in vagahau Niue



Note. Researcher's online survey responses on the question of ability and fluency in *vagahau Niue*

The results show that 14.61 percent of New Zealand-born Niue can understand *vagahau Niue,* whereas 15.53 percent are not fluent.

6.2.1 Family Unity or Division?

Close relationships and connections to grandparents were found to significantly correlate with understanding the Niue language, as other studies have also indicated (Perley, 2013; Templina et al., 2016). Several participants found that the Niue language was the only connection to grandparents and how they saw and valued *vagahau Niue.* For six participants, language is the lifeline that keeps the connection to grandparents as a sense of validation and an appreciation of the values taught. Many of the memories and stories shared were of the influence of grandparents being encouragers of the language, as shared by Perley (2013) that the voices of our ancestors need to be remembered as "timeless resources for all the meaningful relations that integrate stories, landscapes, spirituality, and relationships as living Indigenous worlds" (p.143). This aligns with Gardner's (1985) view that the active role of grandparents and parents is to encourage and reinforce success and monitor performance. However, in the same view, two participants shared that their parents took on negative active roles, which included voicing to their children that language was irrelevant to learning and intruding on the cultural assimilation of the New Zealand culture. This fact aligns with what Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) allude to as a language shift, which is why language speakers must attain the dominant language to access goods and services.

Similarly, Templina et al. (2016) suggest that heritage language-speaking parents are choosing for their children a "language repertoire depending on their own languages, and their emotional attachment to those languages as well as on the communication values of all the languages at hand" (p.11). In this respect, most of the participants in this study shared that when they were younger, they shared a similar emotional attachment to *vagahau Niue* as their parents. However, the current issue that was highlighted as if *vagahau Niue* could be maintained in the current landscape, for most of the participants' families, their parents saw the dominant language as being more than a means to communicate (Bastardas-Boada, 2005, 2007; Ehala, 2007, 2014) as they alluded to the language being a way of achieving economic and academic success for their children, as well as be a language that was able to integrate their lives into the New Zealand way of life more smoothly. This is particularly true for three of the participants, who shared that the comprehension of the Niue language their parents spoke became challenging to comprehend at a young age, which, as a solution, their parents defaulted to English as a means of communication. The findings demonstrate that English has predominantly strongly influenced the Niue community for Niue-born and New Zealand-born Niue. As identified by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), the English language has become a predominantly strong influence in migrant communities, where parents view the achievement of academic and economic success for their children as being more important than retaining

their native language. The complexity in this is stated by Spolsky (1988), who shares that a community that uses English risks losing its identity, culture and traditional values, which can be a relevant reminder for not only fluent speakers of the language but for receptive speakers also as seen in Table 21 and Figure 29.

Table 20

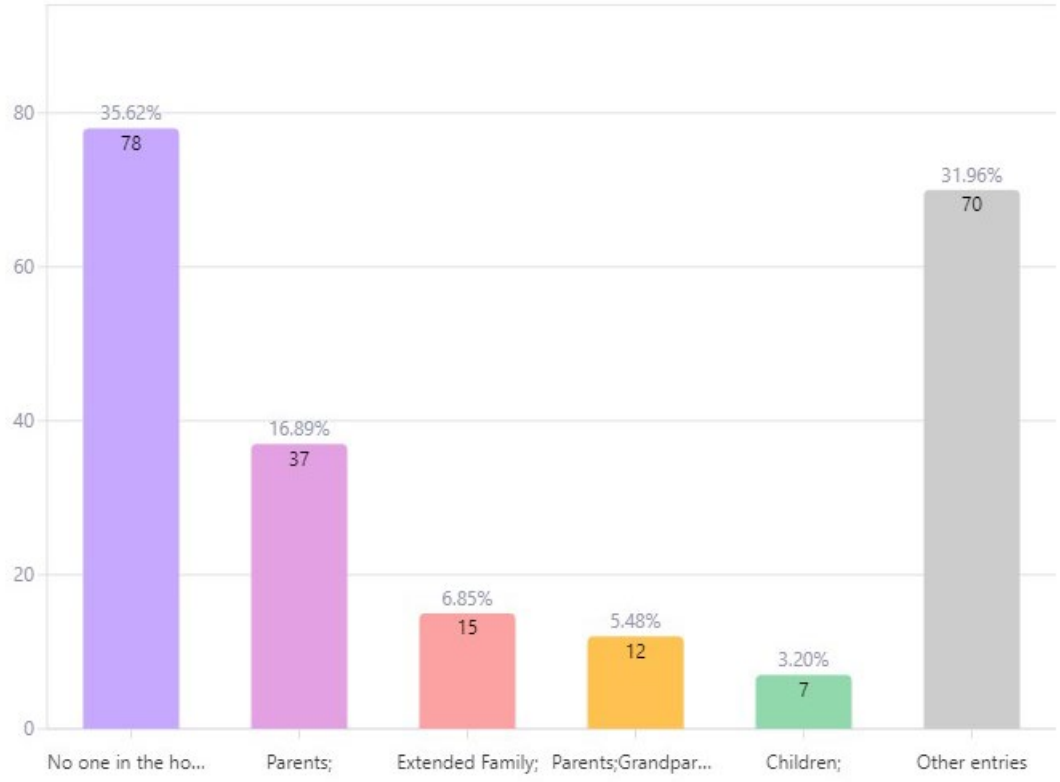
Online survey responses for the different speakers of vagahau Niue in the home

Data	Response	%
No one in the hom...	78	35.62%
Parents;	37	16.89%
Extended Family;	15	6.85%
Parents;Grandparents;Extended Family;	12	5.48%
Children;	7	3.20%
Other entries	70	31.96%

Note. The researcher's online survey responses to the question of speakers in the home

Figure 29

Results of survey participants and members who speak vagahau Niue in the home



Note. Researcher's online survey responses to the question of the different speakers in the home environment

Gardner (1985) believes that the receptive role of parents is a result of their attitudes toward the second language community, which reinforces or weakens the motive of integration. In this instance, intergenerational language transmission was seen as having a significant impact on the participants' upbringing, to which four participants shared that the influence from parents was vital to how they understood and viewed *vagahau Niue and* how this has been transmitted to their children. Furthermore, intergenerational language transmission has been seen as a way of allowing participants' parents to communicate effectively with them in *vagahau Niue,* which has played a critical role in shaping their capacity to acquire the language. Two of the participants believed that encouraging and driving the language teaching by their parents to their children is allowing them to embrace it and grow it themselves. Gardner (1985) supports this by sharing that the reactions of parents' attitudes towards the language community are usually what is remembered the most by children upon reflection of their parents' encouragement to learn and maintain the native language, which the findings will reveal further in this chapter.

6.3 Value of vagahau Niue

The value of *vagahau Niue* is notable between values that are intrinsic and extrinsic; the intrinsic value of *vagahau Niue* involves identity and culture, as well as spirituality; and the extrinsic value consists of communication with other *tagata Niue* at church, as well as its importance through education. This can be termed as 'Indigenous reference', which is the inter-relationships of these values (Tui Atua, 2007; Fonoti, 2011), in which for this study, the majority of the participants have implied that they value the importance of *vagahau Niue* for its relationship to identity and culture, which mirrors Ehala's (2014) perspective, that the value of language lies in allowing members of a community or society not only to transmit or exchange information but to express their collective identity. Additionally, some participants had similar values, impacting how they transmitted and maintained *vagahau Niue*. Participants raised with their grandparents placed more importance on the intrinsic values of *vagahau Niue* and less on the functional value of communicating in the Niue language.

6.3.1 Spirituality

The participants in the study saw that the Niue practice of spirituality played a significant role in their upbringing and the maintenance of cultural and spiritual values as New Zealand-born Niue lived in Aotearoa, New Zealand. They shared the impact and significance of the church as a 'home' that housed language and culture through their different interactions with the *matua* of the church and through the singing of hymns. The significance of the church is that *vagahau Niue* was strengthened at a young age for many of the participants, and the language

has continued to be revitalised and learnt. Four participants shared the belief that the church is an underutilised resource where there is always access to know and learn the language through bible readings, singing of hymns and songs, and engagement with elders known affectionately as ‘church parents’.

According to Perley (2013), the voices of our ancestors can be heard in every word, expression, or phrase spoken in Indigenous languages, as they echo along the “river, valleys, the mountains, and across all landscapes as reminders of continuity and possibility” (p.162), in which never occur in isolation within Indigenous communities, especially with communities who have maintained close connections to their ancestral homelands. This aligns with two perspectives from the participants who shared that learning from the *matua* was advantageous to attending the church, as they encouraged the use of language and invested in current and future generations through their ways of teaching and learning.

6.3.2 Identity and Culture

According to Fishman’s (1991) argument, “When you talk about language, most of what you are talking about is culture…the way of life, the way of thought, the way of valuing, and human reality” (p.72). In the findings of the research, this was alluded to firmly in the *tutala* with the participants, as all participants believed that the critical relationship between identity and culture was language, which other minority language research has also alluded to (Hunkin-Tuiletufuga, 2001; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Watson-Gegeo, 2004; Wilson & Kamana, 2009; Grinevald & Bert, 2011). As further argued by Templina et al. (2016), language carries the definition of being a “tool for communication and language as a carrier for cultural identity” (p.9). In this regard, two related points were raised by the participants in this research. The first question was whether you needed to be able to speak *vagahau Niue* to ‘be a *tagata Niue’*, and secondly, if it was necessary to understand *vagahau Niue* to be identified as a *tagata Niue.* These two matters are discussed in individual contexts for ease of discussion.

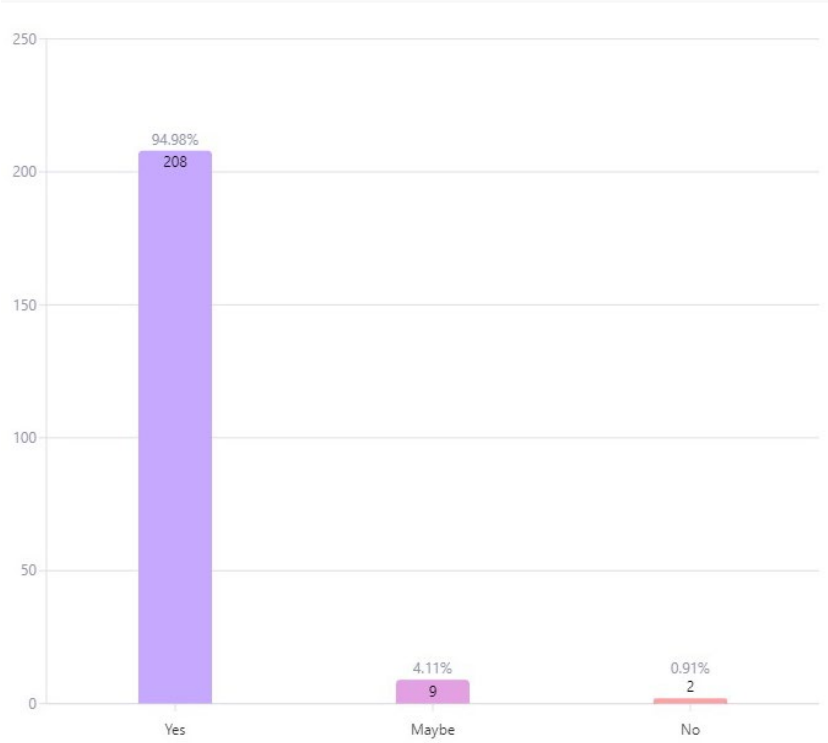
6.3.2.1 Do you need vagahau Niue to ‘be a tagata Niue’?

Most participants distinguished between what they labelled as a ‘true’ Niue or a ‘plastic Niue, based on their language ability. Views about the significance of a *tagata Niue* were not straightforward among the participants, resulting in differing views, especially among participants and their age groups. In the survey responses, 94 per cent of the respondents agreed that *vagahau Niue* was a part of identity here in New Zealand (Figure 30), with only two responses disagreeing and nine unsure if the Niue language was important (Table 22). Hatoss and Sheely’s (2009) study confirmed the interconnectedness of language and identity.

Participants highlighted this notion in this research by suggesting that their mother tongue was essential to express their identity.

Figure 30

Per cent of survey responses for the importance of vagahau Niue to identity



Note. The researcher's online survey responses to the question of *vagahau Niue* are important to identity.

Table 21

Survey responses for the importance of vagahau Niue to identity

Data	Response	%
Yes	208	94.98%
Maybe	9	4.11%
No	2	0.91%

Note. Researcher's online survey responses for the importance of *vagahau Niue* to identity

Seven of the participants admitted that the idea of being a 'plastic Niue' is a psychological attitude that has been preconceived over the years. In contrast, one participant felt those beliefs and attitudes are based on unconscious bias that fluent speakers have developed towards receptive language speakers. Furthermore, one of the female participants admitted

that she identified herself as a ‘plastic Niuean’, as she did not have the advantage of being a fluent speaker. Canagarajah (2008) argues that negative attitudes towards native languages are often a result of colonial attitudes. Additionally, Kaplan (1994) and Gafaranga (2010) believe that public attitudes toward other languages, other people, and the matter of difference may need adjusting, as this is an essential factor of language shift where language ideologies and attitudes are seen as necessary in the way it has been “observed to take place even when members hold very positive attitudes toward the language” (Gafaranga, 2010, p.246). Interestingly, two male participants believe that the upside of being a ‘Plastic Niuean’ is proving others wrong about how they have perceived you and should not equate with being a ‘true Niue’ but an ‘improved or better’ *tagata Niue*.

On the other hand, four participants found that pre-conceived perceptions of receptive speakers have changed as they have got older; as one of the participants explained, understanding the language does not make you any less or any more Niue. Furthermore, two of the participants tempered their views and suggested that perhaps the mentalities of fluent speakers of the language need to be more positive, where encouragement needs to be present rather than harmful mindsets, and that to move from being a receptive speaker of the language to an active speaker, a person’ Niue-ness should not be measured by use or fluency of the language, but more on the knowledge of, and understanding of the language, as well as active involvement in *tau aga fakamotu.* Additionally, this raises the question of whether one can be fully identified as a *tagata Niue* without a strong command or limited use of *vagahau Niue*. As demonstrated by most participants' views, *vagahau Niue* was seen as an integral part of their identity; however, it was not a defining element of their identities. This can be strengthened by what Edwards (1996 as cited in Ngaha, 2007) suggests, that is, language is not necessarily a factor that retains identity; instead, he sees “identity to be a multifaceted concept, and that language is but one of several indicators of identity” (p.31). One participant argued that it is challenging to unpack identity because it is complex and fluid with different layers.

Conversely, identity does not depend on just one element but multiple overlapping ones, where there is bound to be a deep connection between language and identity, however complex this connection may be. This is further supported by research that aligns with Pacific languages and identities in New Zealand (Holmes et al., 1993). Furthermore, some participants argued that being a *tagata Niue* is more than using and speaking *vagahau Niue*; instead, it is a way of reclaiming your identity and your language; it is about thinking and feeling as a *tagata Niue* and having knowledge and appreciation of the opportunity to learn who you

are, where you come from, and *tau aga fakamotu* that is important to identity. This resonates with Canagarajah's (2008) study, which concluded that the Tamil identity was "redefined in terms of cultural rituals and not language" (p.169).

Moreover, three of the study participants held that the status of speaking *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand had weakened because 'everyone speaks English in New Zealand'. For one of the male participants, the influence of his parents in not wanting him to learn the language was because they did not see the benefit of the Niue language for social opportunities and saw it as an obstacle to employment and education opportunities in New Zealand. He reflected that his dad pushed the idea that 'there was no need for it because we were in a Pālagi land'. This perception and many similar like it has severe consequences for the maintenance of *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand, as described by Fishman (1991), who states that the "destruction of a language is the destruction of a rooted identity" (p.4), about the link between language and identity. This is important given that the Niue population has the highest birth rates of New Zealand-born Niue compared to the other Pacific islands living in New Zealand. This also resonates with a pertinent language use factor described by Jones and Morris (2007) as the view of prestige and the value of the minority language, specifically for social and economic mobility.

6.3.2.2 Is Understanding vagahau Niue enough to be Identified as a tagata Niue?

Undoubtedly, the attitudes of fluent speakers hindered their language use for the participants. New Zealand-born Niue are not given the empathy or compassion to understand where they come from and why there is a lack of language acquisition. As noted, one participant found a misunderstanding regarding fluent speakers and receptive speakers, where there is no acknowledgement of being able to understand the language but criticism of not being able to speak in the language. Two of the participants firmly acknowledged that the advantage of understanding the language could be a means of contributing to how people view your identity, as well as not having to reinvent the wheel when it comes to language learning, as receptive speakers already have a foundation to learn to speak the language especially if they were encouraged.

While most of the participants felt that *vagahau Niue* was significant to identity, many also understood their parent's hopes for them not to acquire the language; three participants felt that they did not get a fair opportunity to learn *vagahau Niue* as a result of their parent's decision to not carry on the language with them. As demonstrated in the findings, the trauma of the experiences faced by parents of the participants who are Niue-born Niue, where they

were not allowed to use the language, has pre-empted what language transmission could have done for the first generation of New Zealand-born Niue speakers today. The influence of choice was prominent in how receptive speakers learnt and understood the language during their upbringing. The attitudes towards a language and parental language choices were detrimental to what Edwards (2009) described as the motivation to use minority languages. Many participants did not believe that being fluent in *vagahau Niue* was vital to understanding the core beliefs and values of *tau aga fakamotu* and mentioned that it is not too late to reclaim your language. Two female participants shared whether it is in a safe space that encourages mistakes to be made or in uncomfortable environments that allow for improvements. Whatever the context, the critical factor is about taking the opportunity to learn from your experiences and moving forward confidently.

6.3.3 Communication

Nine of the participants viewed *vagahau Niue* as being a key feature of communication with others, particularly with parents and speakers within the community, akin to other studies of speech communities in the diaspora (Wu, 2007; Canagarajah, 2008; Rehbein, ten Thije & Verschik, 2012;). Two participants highlighted that understanding *vagahau Niue* was a way of communicating with their elderly mothers and grandmother[s], who they mentioned would not be around for much longer. Furthermore, the eldest participant spoke about feeling unique if one could communicate in the language. She mentioned feeling like she belongs to a group of extraordinary people through the language. Much like the studies of (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Wilson & Kamana, 2009; Grinevald & Bert, 2011), they posit that the communities of speakers in regular contact with one another are more likely to follow a more or less established rule of communication that dictates which language to speak, to whom, where and when. This results from what Edwards (1985) suggests: a lack of transmission to children directly causes language loss. This was highlighted by most of the participants, who expressed some guilt about not being able to communicate in *vagahau Niue*, particularly with members of their family and church family, and cited feelings of isolation and being left out of family conversations.

6.3.4 Education

Two of the participants in this study found that there was not enough education on the significance of maintaining the Niue language. For one of the male participants, his father was mindful of the language being a hindrance to his education in New Zealand, and this participant felt his father was not informed enough to question why he did not allow his kids to speak the language. This resonates with the studies from Chiang (2009), Begay (2013), and

Seloni and Sarfati (2013), where they suggest parents are often torn about transmitting the language, as the importance of achieving upward socioeconomic mobility for their children is usually a key priority for them. More often than not, the native languages are not the favoured language for advancing employment opportunities, particularly in the diaspora.

For example, the parents of Judeo-Spanish in Turkey and the Navajo community in the USA were hesitant for their children to learn their native languages, as they feared that acquiring the native language was going to hinder the academic pursuits and success in their children's school, so they avoided it as a home language (Seloni & Sarfati, 2013). For most of the participants in the study, the absence of *vagahau Niue* in education during their upbringing was seen as a barrier, as there were already limited domains where they could use the language. As the education sector has evolved, *vagahau Niue* has recently been approved as a New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) approved subject. However, this has only been rolled out at certain schools in South Auckland. One female participant believes that if the option was offered at the high school her children attend. *Vagahau Niue's* language use would be used more frequently and acquired more prominently, as she argues that these students are likely to excel academically because they would be culturally secure.

Research also shows that schools are now playing a more significant role in how Pacific languages are taught (including *vagahau Niue*) in New Zealand, predominantly for Niue young people and children who come from English-speaking homes (McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010; Wilson, 2010). This was due to the low status of Pacific languages in education. McCaffery (2010) highlighted a language deficit and that speakers of minority languages and their cultures were seen as problems rather than the language and cultures being seen as resources. In this study, participants shared that the dominance of English was viewed as more critical academically and economically, which has been evident in the rapid language shift to English.

Moreover, the weakening status of *vagahau Niue* and other Pacific languages in New Zealand can be due to the lack of prestige given to minority languages. Studies by Jones and Morris (2007) and Wardhaugh (2010) draw on the idea that the language used, and the value and prestige placed on minority languages is mainly a result of economic and social advancement. For Wardhaugh (2010), the prestige bestowed upon minority language communities is only if the language is spoken by the majority or those who identify as the dominant cultural group. It is no secret that the minority language is, by default, given low prestige, as some speakers deny having any knowledge of the language. For three of the participants in this study, the

attitudes of fluent speakers towards receptive speakers of *vagahau Niue* impact the prestige factor receptive speakers place on the language, as their attitudes are usually negative rather than positive. Participants shared that the minority language should be celebrated rather than discouraged.

6.4 Factors Influencing Receptive Bilingualism of *vagahau Niue*

Multiple factors have influenced *vagahau Niue's* receptive bilingualism across the fifteen participants. The patterns of receptive bilingualism include family structures with grandparents and parents and other domains where receptive bilingualism is affected, such as the home or family, religion, education, and digital technology. Furthermore, the barriers that influence receptive bilingualism include the changing environments, the internal and external barriers, and encouraging a starting point for the participants who have all found that at some point in their lives, they have had to navigate between two worlds – being New Zealand-born and being Niue. These factors contributed to the sense of belonging that the participants expressed as critical factors that influenced their identities here in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

6.4.1 Receptive Bilingualism in Action

The advantages of receptive bilingualism for seven participants were that it was a way of knowing who you are, the familial connections between different people and families, and the significant impact on identity and cultural knowledge. Fishman (1972) lists the following spaces of language use (domains) where receptive bilingualism can be used and practised. These include the home or family, religion, and education. As a result of my study, I have added digital technology, such as digital apps, to this list. Given the importance of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue as the generation that is concerned with language maintenance and intergenerational language transmission (Fishman, 1991; Spolsky, 2012), the discussion in the following sections will begin with the patterns of receptive bilingualism and the influence of grandparents and parents in the transmission of the language.

6.4.2 Patterns of Receptive Bilingualism

The patterns of receptive bilingualism among the participants varied at different stages of their lives and have either continued or have become stagnant in the transmission to their children or the second generation of New Zealand-born Niue. Across the participants, there was not a singular pattern of receptive bilingualism. However, there were distinct differences in how language was taught and understood. Perley (2013) suggests that migration, resettlement, and urbanisation have been the catalyst for a wide range of languages dramatically changing, specifically in the way Pacific languages interact with other traditional languages of the Pacific.

In many cases, the differences were due to upbringing with the language, the navigation of Western and Cultural worlds, and the influence of grandparents and parents in transmitting the Niue language.

6.4.2.1 Family Structure

The findings confirmed that eight participants praised their grandparents' or parents' impact on their understanding of *vagahau Niue*. Many shared memories were that grandparents were 'encouragers and enablers' of language and language use - whether in the home or the community. Four participants shared that embracing and understanding the language was a way of knowing who you are and appreciating the reasons for the migration of grandparents and parents to Aotearoa, New Zealand. One of the participants shared the regret of not having learnt how to speak the language while her grandmother was alive, which differed with the view of one of the male participants who shared that when his Nena would speak in the language, he was able to respond and understand what she was saying. The eldest participant in the study felt the significance of being able to speak to her grandparents, as she learnt from a young age that it was part of her home life. These participants felt they needed to continue using the language to honour their grandparents as their language teachers.

This study confirmed the findings in the literature review that the role of grandparents was vital in maintaining the heritage language within the family (Clyne, 1991; Morris & Jones, 2008; Braun, 2012). In the earlier section discussed (in 5.1.1), six of the participants had the chance to live with their grandparents or at least one grandparent at different stages of their childhood and adolescent years, and they all described that this was a key factor for understanding *vagahau Niue* within the home. Interestingly, most of these participants highlighted that when their grandparents left their homes or sadly passed on, they noticed their use of *vagahau Niue* dwindled and began shifting to English. On the other hand, studies from Tiatia (1998) compared Western and traditional household structures and the difficulties between the two ways of living. For many participants, the nature of *vagahau Niue*, who spoke to them early on, was mostly instructive or disciplinary. This finding is evident in a study carried out by Kearney, Fletcher and Dobrenov-Major (2011), where they argue that minority languages are used mainly to direct behaviour; in the case of this study, apart from directing behaviour, the participants found that the opportunities to communicate using *vagahau Niue* were limited (Head, 2000; Nosa, 2009; Tauevihi, 2000).

One participant shared his upbringing as being heavily influenced by the Western world, as a result of being adopted. As his parents came from different ethnicities, he remembers the

dominant presence of English in the home, resulting in the struggle to transmit both heritage languages into his daily conversations. This significantly caused the participant to feel very isolated as he grew up and lived on the South Island, where there was nearly no exposure to Pacific communities, specifically Niue communities. This is the reality for most of the participants in the study as they are married to different ethnicities. So, the dominant language takes precedence over the minority language. The statistics for Niue families in New Zealand have shown increased multiple or blended ethnicities within Pacific communities. This is a critical issue for Niue families to recognise and warrants further research in negotiating and reconciling which language to use and teach in families with multiple identities.

6.4.3 Other Domains of Receptive Bilingualism

The findings in this research also revealed additional domains of receptive bilingualism that the participants interacted with, as outlined in Fishman's (1972) study, including home or family, religious and education domains. I have added digital technology, identified in the findings, and how this influenced the language used between the participants and their interactions with their family members. In this study, participants shared the domains they engaged with using *vagahau Niue* and how these domains can be used *for* New Zealand-born Niue to continue language learning in the future (Table 23).

Table 22

Vagahau Niue domains of interaction

Participants	Home/Family	Church	Language classes/education	Digital technology (Apps, social media)
Mika	✓		✓	✓
Tala	✓	✓	✓	
Mele		✓	✓	
Lofa	✓	✓		
Sifa	✓			
Lupo	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sina	✓			✓
Misi	✓	✓		
Manogi	✓	✓		
Fine	✓			✓
Eva	✓	✓		
Ioane				
Iakopo			✓	✓
Mataio		✓		✓
Ligi	✓	✓		

Note. Domains of interaction identified by the *tutala* participants

Vagahau Niue was learned by most participants at home with their families. This is followed closely followed by the church. Language classes and digital technology were not as extensively used as language domains, but recent language revitalisation tools have been established to learn the language. Looking across the domains of receptive bilingualism concerning the participants, one can get insight into the domains that have been significantly important for these New Zealand-born Niue. It is encouraging to know that many participants still hear *vagahau Niue i*n the main domains of the home and church. On the other hand, *vagahau Niue* language classes and the use of digital technology, language use and understanding were confined to the duration of the course programme and did not extend into other domains. Furthermore, the need for digital technology and the creation of digital apps were seen as critical resources and tools to encourage language learning and further comprehension of *vagahau Niue.*

6.4.3.1 Church

Eight out of the fifteen participants were part of a Niue-speaking church, and one participant was a devout Catholic and attended their local Catholic church, where the service was conducted in English only. Most participants spoke highly about their church being culturally strong in *tau aga fakamotu* and *vagahau Niue*, an essential indicator of culture and language. For most participants, the church highlighted *vagahau Niue* and culture, which were well represented and provided a deeper understanding of how these can provide opportunities to learn and practice the language.

This contrasts with a finding from three of the participants. They felt that for those who attended church, the language was only spoken to speakers of *vagahau Niue* and did not include receptive speakers because, at times, English was the only language used during the services. This can be seen as the Western influence that was shared by the church ministers and elders in Tukimata's (2017) study, where it was observed that using *vagahau Niue* during church services had become difficult because of the views from the young people that the language was difficult to learn and understand. On the other hand, the remaining participants identified the significance of the church domain as a place where the language can be learnt through the bible, hymns, and *matua*. They shared that reading the Niue bible and singing the hymns was a good starting point and a lesson from their grandparents to save the language. This is supported by two female participants who shared that learning from the *matua* in the church was an advantage, as language would always be heard in church, and *matua* continued to encourage them to use *vagahau Niue.*

Out of the participants who were a part of the study, one participant who did not attend a Niue-speaking church took time to explain her situation in that the decision to attend an English-speaking service was deliberate. Her parents favoured attending the Catholic church, which had a handful of Niue members, rather than attending a Niue-speaking church as they wanted her and her siblings to "find comfort in being treated as children of God, regardless of race, sex and culture" (Fuatagaumu, 2003, pp.215-216). Undoubtedly, the participant expressed that she missed out because her parents chose not to attend a Niue church. She further discussed her admiration of the young Niue people who went to Niue churches, who appeared to her as being competent and confident in *vagahau Niue,* as well as the culture, through learning songs and reading the Niue bible, and which she sometimes yearned to have along with the cultural knowledge.

6.4.3.2 Education

For three of the participants, they felt that the classroom setting could be used as a tool for language learning. However, during their upbringing, *vagahau Niue* was not introduced to the school system from early childhood through high school. The maintenance of *vagahau Niue* for children occurred in the 1970s and 1980s – when there was an increase in migration. During this time, Niue language nests were established, that was inspired by full-immersion Māori language nests known as *Te Kōhanga Reo* – from which Pacific early childhood centres later became popular amongst minority communities such as the *Aoga Niue he tau fanau ikiiki*. For Niue language nests, only seven have been established in Auckland. These all started as full-immersion centres and later changed to bilingual centres to evolve with the changes in government funding, specifically within the early childhood sector. The first *Aoga Niue he tau fanau ikiiki* (now based in Mangere, Auckland) was established in the late 1980s to ensure the Niue language and culture were being nurtured, as well as to retain the *vagahau Niue* as the first language for Niue pre-schoolers during that time, where the influx of Niue into the community increased.

A further development is that *vagahau Niue* has recently, within the last five years, become an approved NZQA subject within high schools. However, not all high schools have this as a subject option, which was highlighted by one of the participants. She feels that if her children could take *vagahau Niue* as a subject, their language use at home and school could be strengthened. Furthermore, bilingual units have recently been established at three primary schools in Auckland, allowing for what is forecasted to be a smooth transition from the early learning years to high school, thus fostering the Niue language. Most participants identified the years in high school when receptive bilingualism took hold. As a result, they changed their

families from predominantly being productive speakers of *vagahau Niue* to only being able to understand the language. This view supports the argument by Mufwene (2003) that the school's role is an ecological factor that can promote language endangerment.

Three participants found that *vagahau Niue* language classes offered a short-term reprieve for learning *vagahau Niue*. They highlighted that a 10-week course was ideal if language learning was going to be continued outside of the classroom, where most of the time, they had forgotten the content. One of the participants who completed a six-week language course found the classes helpful. However, the realisation for her was that she needed to continue to use the language to maintain it. She maintains that you cannot do a six-week course and assume fluency in the language. One of the younger participants expressed the need for a digital app that supported the language classes following the completion of each lesson or after the course. Future research may look at ways to create a language class-app partnership that will work alongside language maintenance and teaching.

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6.4.3.3 Digital Technology

The influence of digital technology and social media on the New Zealand-born Niue generation in this study was worth considering regarding effective language acquisition. A significant finding was that technology permeated the different language domains for participants and was perceived as instrumental to learning *vagahau Niue*. One of the participants suggested that digital tools need to be maximised in terms of engagement and exposure, as technology has become a resource that has quickly evolved and should be capitalised on.

This is further supported by one of the female participants, who suggests that online technology has quickly evolved, where it is now pertinent that digital tools need to be

maximised in terms of engagement and exposure. This sentiment was shared by six participants who offered recommendations of different digital apps that would assist in language learning. Participants described digital apps with audio translations of words, mentor-receptive speaker apps, and a chatroom-inspired app specifically for speakers of *vagahau Niue.* The participants agreed that these would be beneficial in transitioning from being a receptive speaker to an active, productive speaker, and down the track, further a future fluent speaker confident in their language and culture. In addition, one female participant mentioned that learning from YouTube was another useful digital tool she had utilised with her children and grandchildren to revisit and learn about things related to the Niue culture, language, values, and traditional occasions such as haircutting and ear-piercing ceremonies. On the other hand, two participants highlighted the negative aspects of digital technology by suggesting that digital technology is not a permanent fix for learning *vagahau Niue* and that more interactive learning should occur in the home, church and community.

Similarly, social networking or social media was considered by two participants as being a platform that extended the Niue language in different ways. For example, Facebook as a means of communicating with friends and family, specifically with those living in the homeland and abroad, was essential to the participants, similar to Lee's (2013) research findings. This contrasts with another participant who felt that social media was a distraction and usually hindered her progress in the language. Her thoughts are that social media is used to promote Niue things in Niue and other Niue diaspora, albeit it is Niue things in English and not in *vagahau Niue.* There is also the view of using social media influencers to attract receptive speakers to the language to create innovative spaces for language learners and a 'buy-in' from New Zealand-born Niue who understood *vagahau Niue*. The participants in the study alluded to the significance of digital technology and social media as influencing language use and acquisition in the future. The influence of digital technology on *vagahau Niue* and its preservation among future generations merits further research.

There is the view that using social media influencers to attract receptive speakers to the language created innovative spaces for language learners and would create a 'buy-in' from New Zealand-born Niue who understood *vagahau Niue*. Given the significant uptake of digital technology and the use of social media amongst the participants in the study, the influence of technology on the Niue language and its maintenance among future generations warrants further research.

6.4.4 Barriers to Receptive Bilingualism

The barriers to receptive bilingualism identified by the participants included having a lack of confidence to speak the language, embarrassment to use the language for fear of being scoffed at, ignorance and laziness, and the internal language and cultural barriers of *vagahau Niue.* Four of the participants in the study expressed that the lack of confidence to speak in the Niue language in public was due to fear of being limited in vocabulary to express themselves, the fear of not being understood, and even the fear of mispronunciation of words. The fear of speaking the language well resonated with most participants as they did not want to disappoint their parents and grandparent[s] by saying something wrong.

Similarly, three of the participants felt that the opinions of others created a feeling of embarrassment when they attempted to use the language, a feeling that they did not want to pass down to their children and to the generations that followed. They insisted that the feeling of embarrassment also contributes to the ignorance and laziness of using the language. Several participants expressed that support for acquiring and using the Niue language was present in the home. However, the participants all agreed that when they were younger, they were naïve in knowing and understanding the importance of the language being the dominant language in the home. They often defaulted to speaking English. This was due to the comfort of conversing in English and the accessible communication in English. However, regret was apparent when they grew older and saw the significance of language and culture for their children's identities.

Additionally, internal language and cultural barriers were impacted significantly, as the participants expressed their struggle to straddle two identities in Aotearoa, New Zealand. They had to bear the negative perceptions and views of fluent speakers who used the phrase ‘they don’t understand the language’ and ‘if you can’t speak in *vagahau Niue*, you’re not a ‘*Tagata Niue’.* For many participants, these phrase lines have created a sense of accountability and ownership to learn the language and avoid passing this on to their children and the generations that follow. Two of the participants have held on to the teachings of their parents, who taught them that their future children need to have an identity, a place of belonging, a connection to their roots and their ancestors, and ultimately, a grounding in the different communities that they become a part of. This is contrasted by three participants who shared openly that often, at times, in some ways, they have not earned the right to have a sense of belonging in the Niue world. This resonated with two participants who acknowledged that receptive bilingualism has created a sense of loss in that not using the language can make one feel as if a part of you is missing, primarily as the loss of a language also reflects a loss of Indigenous culture.

To counteract these views, the participants of this study believe that knowing you have a sense of belonging allows for an acceptance of how to embrace other cultures and, more so, how to navigate between being a New Zealand-born and being a *Tagata Niue*, regardless of time and space.

6.4.4.1 Changing Environments

Physical home locations and changing environments were other factors related to the cohort of participants and their receptive bilingualism. Five participants' upbringing and living locations are in rural areas of the North and South Islands. This has created varied environments, generating challenges regarding receptive bilingualism and language maintenance efforts. For example, one participant shared that moving from an urbanised city in Auckland to Christchurch was not only a culture shock but created barriers for him to learn *vagahau Niue*, as he found himself in a place where there were limited Pacific people and fewer numbers of Niue living in his area. This caused him to feel outcasted when he went to school, exacerbated by the fact that he was the only 'brown-coloured boy' in his class—similarly, participants whose upbringings were also challenged in different parts of Auckland and Wellington. One of the participants who grew up on the North Shore highlighted that they were called 'Pā̄lagi town', which impacted their opportunities to speak *vagahau Niue* in the home and be immersed in Niue communities. Even though this was not relevant for all participants in the research, the physical home location change may impact language maintenance, which requires further research.

6.4.4.2 Encouraging a Starting Point

For many participants, language acquisition was seen as encouraging New Zealand-born Niue to learn the language for the future. Three participants argued that exposure to the Niue language means having a starting point to work off. They agreed that there needs to be a level of comfort where receptive speakers can trust the spaces they are in - for them to use or produce language actively. These sentiments are further supported by one of the female participants, who mentioned that 'giving the language a go' would be a significant step for how she communicates with her grandmother and to feel the sense of pride she has due to the interaction in the language. In contrast, the male participant who resides in the South Island expressed the idea that fluent speakers are mindful of putting pressure on receptive speakers, so they resort to using English as a means of communication.

However, most participants shared that it was imperative to be surrounded by the language to learn the language. This can be achieved by being around people who use *vagahau Niue*,

whether with parents, families, grandparents or friends. The most important thing was to be around the language and to be engaged in it, to use as many Niue language resources as possible and to be around speakers of the language regardless of age. Many academics argue that age should not be a factor for language learning. The older the learner is, the easier it is to attain new forms and structures, which can develop better cognitive abilities and learning strategies (Fillmore, 1991). In addition, views on encouragement differed among participants. One of the male participants argued that fluent speakers should include receptive speakers when attempting to use the language, with the view that it is better and kinder to help rather than to hinder.

6.5 *Vagahau Niue* Sustainability for the Future

The study findings have identified four key points that ensure the sustainability of receptive bilingualism in *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand; these are outlined below but are not prioritised. First, the maintenance of *vagahau Niue* in Aotearoa, New Zealand, was seen as critical to reversing the language shift. Second, the preservation of language and culture is done through the continual role of the Niue church. Third is using classroom settings for more interactive learning of *vagahau Niue.* Fourth is digital technology and social media and the potential influence this has on the future language maintenance of *vagahau Niue.*

6.5.1 Mahuiga he Magafaoa[36]

For most of the participants in this study, their involvement was seemingly a first in any academic setting. Many participants expressed that before this study, they had not considered their language practices, and more so about their receptive skills. They also did not believe they could influence the language maintenance of *vagahau Niue* amongst their families and communities, however, they did acknowledge the family environment was an important factor in their upbringing. Most participants had assumed receptive bilingualism and specifically receptive speakers were not considered actual 'speakers' of the language and that intergenerational transmission and language use of *vagahau Niue* occurred only among fluent and native speakers. Fishman (1991) believed that for a language to survive, it must be transmitted among all generations and that the role of the family is the key to active language maintenance. He suggests that the family or home is central to both these stages and has an authentic periphery to act as a gatekeeper against external pressures, influences and customs. For the participants in this study, the role of parents and grandparents was crucial in how they acquired and understood *vagahau Niue*. As research from Garcia (2015) shows,

[36] The subheading is translated as the importance of the family as a key finding for the participants in their upbringing and understanding of *vagahau Niue.*

the core issue when thinking about language maintenance is the support from family for the continued use of the ethnic language, and where everyone is treated as belonging to a society and family (Karan, 2011). This results in individual families becoming a part of a wider community, ultimately affecting language use, acquisition and choice.

A few of the participants realised that from a young age, it was almost near impossible to restrict the prevalence and presence of English in Niue homes in New Zealand because of parents prioritising and privileging the Aotearoa New Zealand way of life over language and culture. This has been detrimental to receptive speakers' language acquisition once they have entered their formative years. This aligns with Mühlhäusler (1992), who argues that minority cultures and languages are still underprivileged and underdeveloped and that dominant views saw that to "get out of this handicap [learning a heritage language], is to learn English or another Western language" (p.169).

The critical role in language socialisation lies with the family, which participants in this study saw as paramount for language acquisition. This confirms the studies by Baron (1992), Peirce (1995) and Grosjean (2010c) that the family is a healthy language domain that provides both the strategies and properties to retain *vagahau Niue* and that receptive speakers who speak in the societal language are more reluctant to use the native home language as their self-consciousness around their peers influences their language choice when choosing what language to speak in.

6.5.2 Mahuiga he Faituga[37]

This study has confirmed that the Niue church is still viewed as a vital language hub for preserving the Niue language and culture (Tukimata. 2017; Vilitama, 2015). Participants have shared that their understanding of *vagahau Niue* was based on their lived experiences of the church services they attended with their parents and grandparents. The research findings found that participants who attended a Niue church as a child and as an adult have a greater chance of hearing and speaking *vagahau Niue* beyond the family domain, providing further opportunities to continue Niue language use outside the home. Four participants shared that attending a Niue church has helped them practice their receptive skills and how they can present or recite their *liogi* (prayers) or *lauga* (sermon) in *vagahau Niue.* Furthermore, Fishman (1991) alludes to the idea that without the family's functionality in maintaining the native language, other domains will not be effective in language maintenance.

[37] The subheading is translated as the importance of the church as a key finding for the participants in their upbringing and understanding of *vagahau Niue.*

6.5.3 Mahuiga he tau Vahega Niue[38]

Many participants alluded to the idea that most of their teachings growing up were that English was only spoken at school and that English needed to be acquired to get employment and educational opportunities. The parents of the participants saw *vagahau Niue* as the language of the migrant generation and that it did not need to be transmitted to their New Zealand-born children. However, these same participants have invested in Niue language classes to maintain their language, culture, and who they are as New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa, New Zealand. As shared by one of the participants, she embraced the Niue language classes to continue the importance of her Niue identity with her children. Research on speaking and understanding a mother tongue, nationally and globally, has found that both these factors are fundamental in securing identities, which can increase academic security (Chiang, 2009; David & Dealwis, 2006; McCaffery & Tuafuti, 2003).

Many of the participants in this study shared that the discipline to learn *vagahau Niue* during their younger years was not forced on them, which in turn meant that during their years of formal schooling, their focus became less on learning the home language and more on mastering and acquiring the English language. One participant explained that when she was younger, she believed that '*vagahau Niue* was not cool, as no one else was learning it, so what was the point in learning?' This attitude to the language from this participant has changed as she has come full circle and is now actively seeking the language to connect her children with the language and culture and ensure their identities in the future. For language classes to be practical in the community and be able to add cultural authenticity to *vagahau Niue* teaching and learning programs, language knowledge bearers are needed who can foster relationships with *vagahau Niue* speakers that will make it easier to provide learners with genuine contexts. Learners can deepen their understanding of how language and cultural practices are interconnected through these opportunities.

6.5.4 Mahuiga he tau Lākau hila ki Luga he Pūlagi[39]

It is important to note that a significant finding in this research was the effects of digital technology and social media on language acquisition and understanding and the work needed to sustain *vagahau Niue* amongst first-generation New Zealand-born Niue. Most participants believe that digital language apps, online *vagahau Niue* classes, and social media are resources or tools necessary for Niue language learning moving forward. Furthermore, most

[38] The subheading is translated as the importance of Niue language classes as a key finding for the participants in their upbringing and understanding of *vagahau Niue*.
[39] The subheading is translated as the importance of digital technology as a key finding for the participants in their language acquisition and understanding of *vagahau Niue.*

participants were unaware of the impact of the rise of digital technology and social media on their language use and understanding and the effects this has had on how they communicated with their families and Niue communities. Moreover, digital technologies and social media are what Fitzgerald and Debski (2006) describe as “both domains where all people from different walks of life are socialising, [and is] being used as a medium which is reshaping the more ‘traditional’ ethnic mass media activities” (p.88). The reality of this in the society we are currently living in is that we are in a digital age that has influenced how we communicate and function in our lives, where it has now become even more difficult to stop the rising influence of the English language and other influences that have impacted receptive bilingualism so heavily. Further research can be carried out to explore the potential impact of digital technology and, more so, digital apps and social media platforms in growing the levels of *vagahau Niue* language maintenance and transmission.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter critically discusses the trends of receptive bilingualism, and the value placed on receptive speakers of *vagahau Niue*, which emerged from the voices of the 15 participants in the previous chapter of the findings. The language maintenance and receptive bilingualism of the Niue language among first-generation New Zealand-born Niue is a complex and challenging phenomenon that requires further research.

Overall, the findings have aligned with research on maintaining language and language loss within minority and migrant language communities across generations (Fishman, 1991; Li, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 2000; Joo, 2009). It is suggested that most New Zealand-born children will become English-dominant by the second and third generation if the native language is not effectively supported. This research has highlighted and confirmed that *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand is weakening and, consequently, is at serious risk of being lost (UNESCO, 2003). The fragile nature of many first-generation New Zealand-born Niue, who have found it difficult to maintain *vagahau Niue* in a challenging environment, where Niue language use and receptive bilingualism of the Niue language is proving difficult to work against, especially in Niue communities. However, with adequate support from receptive bilinguals, as identified in Fishman’s (1991) GIDS, the maintenance of *vagahau Niue* in Aotearoa New Zealand remains possible.

For this research, it was anticipated that there would be a relationship between how *vagahau Niue* was understood and valued and their identities as a key to language maintenance of the Niue language (Mühlhäusler, 1992; Taumoefolau et al., 2002; Pauwels, 2005). However, the

findings indicated this was not the case, as all 15 participants valued *vagahau Niue* differently (in terms of importance and significance to transmit) and how they viewed this as necessary for their identities here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The changes in attitudes were all deeply rooted in various underlying ideas, ideals, and social and cultural goals; where some participants expressed that the older generation (parents and grandparents) valued *vagahau Niue* for its ability to communicate with other Niue people, whereas the participants in the study as the younger generation revealed that they valued *vagahau Niue* as a factor of identity. They raised critical questions about identity and recommended that capabilities in learning *vagahau Niue* should not be the critical factor determining being a *Tagata Niue* but a contributing factor towards understanding the complexity of Niue identity.

Many participants' receptive knowledge of *vagahau Niue* is a critical way to revitalise the Niue language; it is like a stepping stone that should be encouraged, garnered and harnessed. Most participants alluded to the notion that understanding the language is an advantage that they have, which can assist in helping others understand how they learn *vagahau Niue* and how this can be transmitted to their children. Many emphasised the importance of knowing the language that allows their children to have a place of belonging, a sense of identity, and a cultural connection to *tau aga fakamotu* and *vagahau Niue.* The research findings also show the actions needed to maintain language in *vagahau Niue*. The views from the participants on the importance of receptive bilingualism in this transition have highlighted that intentional efforts are required if the Niue language is to thrive. This includes constant use of the language, a change in mindsets and attitudes, and the encouragement of digital technology through digital apps to extend language learning to preserve and enrich *vagahau Niue.* Furthermore, the interactions and the opportunities to learn *vagahau Niue* can be supported by acquiring the language in additional domains outside the family/home, such as the church and classroom. However, these approaches will not be practical if there is no adequate support from fluent speakers of *vagahau Niue*, as the encouragement from fluent speakers to encourage receptive speakers to use the language is seen by participants as a way of transitioning from being receptive to being an active productive and fluent speaker of *vagahau Niue*. This goal is seen as being achievable for the future.

VEVEHEAGA FITU

Fetuiaga – Ko e fakamaopopoaga he fekau

A conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the threads of this research are drawn together. *Fetuiaga – Ko e fakamaopoopoaga he fekau,* refers to the celebration of the event of the *umu* is coming to an end, and aligns with the last two chapters of this thesis which reflect on the outline and aims of this research together with the significant findings that have influenced receptive bilingualism. This chapter opens with an outline of the study before answering the research questions at the start of this thesis. This will then be followed by a discussion of the theoretical contributions of this study, along with the methodological implications. Furthermore, this thesis has provided empirical findings to the limited body of knowledge relating to receptive bilingualism in *vagahau Niue*, among minority languages that are yet to be discussed in the literature, and how language maintenance that pertains to the identities of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue are impacted by receptive bilingualism.

7.2 Outline of the research

This research study aimed to explore the factors of receptive bilingualism that affect the relationship of 15 first-generation New Zealand-born Niue with *vagahau Niue* and the implications that these may have on maintaining the Niue language moving forward. The research posed two questions which asked,

1. What factors of receptive bilingualism affect New Zealand-born Niue and their understanding and use of *vagahau Niue?*
2. How do the identities of New Zealand-born Niue impact their relationship with *vagahau Niue* as a result of receptive bilingualism? What are the implications of this for the maintenance of the language?

In addition, the researcher intentionally explored this research through the voices of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa as a cultural marker of identity and as part of the revitalisation process for *vagahau Niue.*

This research adapted a Niue framework (Vilitama, 2015) to receptive bilingualism, which is positioned in what Pacific scholars identify as a Pacific paradigm (Thaman, 1998; Cunningham, 2000; Nabobo-Baba, 2004; Smith; 2005; Vaioleti, 2006) located in a Niue-centred methodology (Vilitama, 2015). The mixed methods approach used statistical analysis (Loehnert, 2010) through an online survey that garnered 219 responses and employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis of 15 semi-structured *tutala* interviews with New Zealand-born Niue who ranged in age from mid-30s through to 70-years old, residing in different cities in the North and South Island of New Zealand.

7.2.1 Conclusions

This study of receptive bilingualism by first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa, New Zealand, represents one of the three realm nations under New Zealand and the highest population of New Zealand-born Niue (Statistics New Zealand, 2019; Tukimata, 2017) currently residing in New Zealand. The statistical evidence supports national data on the patterns of language shift in *vagahau Niue,* which is occurring rapidly among New Zealand-born Niue. The findings that have emerged from this research are likely to resonate with other Pacific languages in Aotearoa, as well as minority ethnic language communities living nationally and abroad, who may be struggling in the face of sustainability of their native languages.

7.2.2 Factors Influencing Receptive Bilingualism of Vagahau Niue

Research question one sought to identify the factors of receptive bilingualism that affected New Zealand-born Niue and their understanding and use of *vagahau Niue.* Although there were variations in the patterns of receptive bilingualism (age and different domains of interaction) among the research participants, the rapid speed of language shift was seen across all 15 participants.

Firstly, evidence of language shift was worrying as most participants had been exposed to *vagahau Niue* for a large part of their upbringing, having grown up with their grandparents, whom they shared and who were instrumental in maintaining the Niue language. Secondly, most participants lived in the central urban regions of New Zealand: Auckland, Wellington, and Waikato, where accessibility to the Niue language is not scarce. If these patterns of vulnerability and receptive bilingualism have been found in pockets of Niue communities in the popular urban cities of New Zealand, then a further question would be, is the same pattern occurring in smaller Niue communities in other parts of New Zealand, more specifically, rural areas of the North Island, and regions in the South Island, where the

participants who lived in these parts of New Zealand found it difficult to access the language as there were limited domains where they were able to learn the language.

The notion of the prestige placed on *vagahau Niue* was of considerable significance, contributing to the Niue language's status. The lack of prestige of the language is considered by (Jones & Morris, 2007; Wardhaugh, 2010) as only having value of minority languages if it is beneficial for economic and social advancement. Many of the participants' parents placed low prestige on *vagahau Niue* during their upbringing as they saw it as not beneficial for employment and education opportunities. As a result, transmission has not occurred for receptive speakers as they place similar prestige on the language, especially with their children. This point warrants further research.

Furthermore, the factors influencing receptive bilingualism among the participants can be seen through additional domains of interaction or stated in Fishman's (1972) domains of language use. The findings confirmed that the participants viewed their family unit as a critical domain of where their understanding of *vagahau Niue* came from and signified the role of their grandparents and parents as being critical to their upbringing and knowledge of the language. In turn, the participants determined that other domains of language use assisted with their receptive skills, such as the church, classroom setting, and the influence of digital technology, which will be discussed.

7.2.2.1 Family

As the researcher of this study, I concluded that if *vagahau Niue* was to be retained, it needed to start in the family. In my opening chapter, I shared my journey as a product of receptive bilingualism. I acknowledged my upbringing with my grandparents, as well as the efforts of my parents to ensure that the Niue language continued within our home. For many of the participants, this was a similar reality that they faced. However, unlike my upbringing, the participants shared that they did not have the extension of the language within their own homes, and they felt disabled regarding how fluent speakers of *vagahau Niue* viewed them. This was a result of how their family structure was formed, with *vagahau Niue* seen as being maintained effectively in a three-generational family structure, where the participants in this study considered the significant role of their grandparent(s) in ensuring *vagahau Niue* was taught and used, as being highly important. With this, and according to the participants, they felt that once their grandparents left or passed on, their understanding of *vagahau Niue* became extremely limited, ultimately causing them to shift to using English.

The participants in this study and their upbringing were seen as a significant factor in drawing the impact of generational influences on language use. The memories shared were pertinent to how the participants viewed their language use and their limitations on acquiring the Niue language. This was contrasted with a male participant who shared the influence of the Western culture on his upbringing, where geographical locations hindered his access to the language. As a *tama hiki* (adopted child), he was not afforded a privileged cultural upbringing and, therefore, was envious of his biological siblings who grew up with the language. This suggests further research around the identities of adopted children and their relationship with *vagahau Niue* to bridge the gap between generations, a topic of interest ideal for future studies.

Moreover, the change in environments is a significant factor along with intermarriage, to which the dominant language will take precedence, and the minority language is either rarely heard or is just heard in other domains such as church. This is important to consider as language domains for *vagahau Niue* are becoming more limited as the population of Niue in New Zealand increases. It may be helpful to note that further research on integrating, negotiating and prioritising which language(s) to teach and use in their families may be needed to counter this issue.

7.2.2.2 Church

The findings demonstrated that participants revealed that the church was well represented as a foundational platform for language learning and maintaining cultural practices among the different generations. The influence of the bible and church hymns were vital to knowing and understanding the language, as most of the participants felt that their upbringing in the church, including reading the bible and singing the hymns, was a good starting point and a valuable lesson that was passed down from their grandparents in a bid to save the language. The impact has been profound from the participants' views and the work carried out on the role of churches in language maintenance (Vilitama, 2015; Tukimata, 2017). Promoting *vagahau Niue* during church services and events has ensured that the Niue language is kept alive and relevant in a rapidly changing world. Not only does this empower those who attend Niue-speaking churches to express their faith and cultural identity in *vagahau Niue*, but it also helps to strengthen their sense of belonging, a theme noted through the findings of this research.

However, a significant finding from three of the participants was that the English language was impinging into this former stronghold of Niue culture and identity, as well as *vagahau Niue*, as the church becomes less and less attractive for not only first-generation New Zealand-born Niue but also second and third generations. An implication of this is the likelihood that Niue

churches in Aotearoa, New Zealand, are perhaps evolving and changing. This begs the question: Will Niue churches still be able to be the bastions of *vagahau Niue* and *tau aga fakamotu*? Moreover, what about the remaining participants who are not members of Niue-speaking churches? How can the church be a language hub of revitalisation for these receptive speakers? This issue is interesting and may warrant further research.

7.2.2.3 Education

For most participants, language nests and bilingual units were not established during their upbringing, nor were *vagahau Niue* classes formed as classrooms for language revitalisation. Most participants viewed *vagahau Niue* as being used, learned in the home, and followed up by the church. They attended mainstream schooling, which emerged as a significant finding in that their transition into formal mainstream schooling saw English as the medium of instruction, which impacted the status of *vagahau Niue*. As aptly expressed by one of the participants' "…I thought they are not learning it, why do I have to learn?". This view resonated with the other participants as they expressed that there was little or near to no support for *vagahau Niue* in primary schooling in the last 40-50 years, and language nests were only established in the 1980s. Moreover, the education setting has only recently branched into bilingual units in primary schools, with only three active bilingual units in Auckland.

Similarly, within the high school setting, *vagahau Niue* has only been approved by the NZQA as a subject within the last five years. Most participants, now parents and grandparents, have expressed their desire for their children to learn *vagahau Niue* at school if on offer. However, as most live away from the high schools offering *vagahau Niue* as a subject, this is not viable for them and their children. Their desire for their children to learn the Niue language in high school was because they noticed that during their years of secondary schooling, receptive bilingualism changed their families from predominantly being productive to only being receptive. They do not want the same experiences repeated in the next generation and have sought their children to take advantage of the Niue language within the education space if and when the opportunity presents itself (Mufwene, 2003).

Moreover, participants shared that they participated in *vagahau Niue* classes only as a short-term solution for learning the Niue language, as most of what is taught need to be used to maintain the language. One participant who completed a six-week language course found that you cannot do a language course, regardless of the duration of the course, and assume fluency. She expressed, 'That just doesn't happen.'

7.2.2.4 Digital Technology

The impact of digital technology on the receptive bilingualism of *vagahau Niue* among the participants was a significant outcome of this study. Digital technology was viewed as altering the amount and nature of personal communication, and participants shared that it was only a matter of time before digital technology became a permanent fixture in language learning. This is due to the advancements in digital technology; with the rise of smartphones, tablets, and other portable devices, language learning has become more accessible and convenient. This was pertinent to the suggestion by one of the participants, who mentioned that digital tools can increase engagement and exposure if maximised correctly.

Furthermore, the impact of digital technology on receptive bilingualism has been viewed as largely positive, with many participants sharing that they benefitted from the convenience, interactivity and personalised nature of digital learning tools. Furthermore, the participants shared that digital technology had the potential to make learning *vagahau Niue* more engaging and more accessible, especially in communities where English was predominantly present. Looking ahead, the future of digital technology on receptive bilingualism, particularly for minority languages, will likely continue evolving as new tools, techniques, and platforms emerge. For the learning of *vagahau Niue*, the findings have suggested that as digital technology continues to advance, it will be essential for speakers (both productive and receptive) to stay informed, adaptable, and critical of how digital technology can both enhance and potentially hinder receptive bilingualism.

The presence of social media as a platform that could extend *vagahau Niue* in different ways could be explored further. Participants expressed that Niue social media influencers can be used to attract receptive speakers to the language to create innovative spaces that offer a ‘buy-in’ from New Zealand-born Niue who are receptive speakers of the language. It is clear to see that a critical domain that has emerged for language maintenance and receptive bilingualism is the presence of digital technology and social media, where the impact and power of technology as a vehicle for communication is a possible reality that cannot be evaded and is likely to influence the sustainability of *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand. Considering this, I propose adding this language domain to the interaction domain (Fishman, 1972), as the quantity of *vagahau Niue* utilised in this domain is not well documented and should be for future research.

7.2.3 Receptive Bilingualism of Vagahau Niue among First-generation New Zealand-born Niue

Research question two sought to identify how the identities of New Zealand-born Niue impact their relationship with *vagahau Niue* because of receptive bilingualism and the implications of this for the maintenance of the language. Many of the participants connected firmly to their cultural identities. They saw the value of being receptive bilinguals as an advantage for themselves, their children, and their grandchildren.

Second, although most participants highly valued *vagahau Niue* for its connection to culture and identity, their ability to be receptive language speakers was met with views of being a 'plastic' Niue. This was in response to whether *vagahau Niue* needed to be acquired to be identified as a *Tagata Niue.* The attitudes of fluent speakers were significant in how participants viewed their language use. This is important to consider as attitudes to language are an essential factor of language shift, where language attitudes and ideologies have a positive outcome if members have positive attitudes toward the language (Gafaranga, 2010). This is due to the crucial role that the attitudes of fluent speakers play towards receptive speakers in how they shape the dynamics of language maintenance, language revitalisation, and overall language attitudes within the community (in this case, the Niue community). The findings demonstrated that participants saw the attitudes of fluent speakers as often holding significant power and influence over the language community. The participants further alluded that fluent Niue speakers are typically seen as gatekeepers of language knowledge, cultural heritage, and linguistic authenticity. This is highly problematic as their attitudes towards receptive speakers (the participants) can significantly impact the inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability of the Niue language moving forward.

Moreover, the participants shared that the attitudes of fluent speakers could also be considered a barrier to receptive bilingualism, as it reflects the interplay of power dynamics, cultural identity, and linguistic diversity within Niue communities. In saying this, positive attitudes can inspire collaboration, inclusivity, and empowerment among speakers of all proficiency levels, while negative attitudes can create barriers to language learning and community cohesion. By fostering understanding, respect, and support among fluent and receptive speakers, Niue language communities can work together to preserve, promote, and celebrate their linguistic heritage for future generations. Studies by Edwards (1985) have explored the fact that the lack of transmission to children is a direct cause of language loss. Perspectives from participants highlighted feelings of regret for not being able to

communicate in the Niue language, especially with members of their families both within the home and at church.

A considerable finding was that understanding the language should not make you less or more Niue. The participants expressed that the mentalities of fluent speakers need to change, and they need to be more positive and encouraging to move receptive bilinguals from receptive speakers to active, productive speakers. Most participants viewed questions about the importance of *vagahau Niue* as not being a defining element of their identities. Research (Edwards, 1996, as cited in Ngaha, 2007) supports this by identifying that "language is not a necessary component to retain identity" (p.31). For example, some participants argued that being a *Tagata Niue* is more than just speaking *vagahau Niue; it* is a way of reclaiming your identity and language and being able to think and feel like a *Tagata Niue.*

Furthermore, views from the participants found that the importance of using *vagahau Niue* has weakened because everyone speaks English in New Zealand. Many participants shared that the Niue language did not benefit employment and education opportunities. Therefore, the English language was pushed onto them, which had profound implications for preserving *vagahau Niue* in Aotearoa New Zealand. Fishman (1991) shares that the link between language and identity is engrained in the "destruction of a language is the destruction of a rooted identity" (p.4). Many participants have expressed that the importance of knowing the language allows for generational transmission to create a sense of belonging, identity, and a cultural connection to culture and language. It is clear that for *vagahau Niue* maintenance and receptive bilingualism to assist in this transition, careful and deliberate efforts are required to sustain the Niue language but also to help encourage its use for the generation of Niue today, tomorrow and for the future.

7.3 Contributions to Theory and the Future of *vagahau Niue* in New Zealand

Overall, this study has made meaningful and unique contributions to the receptive bilingualism of *vagahau Niue*. It considers the potential of extending bilingualism to include receptive bilingualism for language maintenance purposes. Despite the literature focusing predominantly on bilingualism, the research identifies how receptive bilingualism in *vagahau Niue* is significant and how the identities of New Zealand-born Niue are viewed here in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

A fundamental assumption in this research examined how receptive bilingualism could be a starting point for New Zealand-born Niue speakers to move from receptive to active and productive speakers of *vagahau Niue.* Pulling together the findings from this research, Fishman (1991) alluded to the idea that migrant languages were likely to be lost over three generations, which is a strong likelihood for many Niue families in Aotearoa, New Zealand, unless deliberate actions are taken. It is critical at this point that the choices made by first-generation New Zealand-born Niue today will significantly influence *vagahau Niue's* use in New Zealand in the future.

Moreover, most of the participants in this research valued *vagahau Niue* as highly intrinsic, especially in terms of family unity, culture, spirituality, and identity. Many of the upbringings shared by the participants highlighted the importance of family life growing up with grandparents being language champions of the language and how their teachings and valuable lessons have been instrumental in how they have tried to transmit the language from one generation to another. As identified in the literature, little information has been documented based on the number of people who are receptive bilinguals. The findings have identified that most participants felt that they were more monolingual in *vagahau Niue* because they were not confident enough in their language ability to cite bilingualism, let alone receptive bilingualism, even though they are identified on the spectrum of bilingualism.

Another critical contribution to receptive bilingualism and how this affects the identities of New Zealand-born Niue was questioning whether being fluent in *vagahau Niue* was a defining element of a '*Tagata Niue'.* This resulted from the influence of the New Zealand way of life on the day-to-day realities of the participants and how they saw themselves grounded in the New Zealand context. It can be said that New Zealand-born Niue are weaving new ways of identities in New Zealand (Meinhof & Golasinski, 2005; Tiatia, 1998; Tupuola, 1994) in which the ability to speak in *vagahau Niue* may not be seen as attractive. Further research is warranted on the need to explore how *vagahau Niue* can function as a mechanism that establishes individual and cultural identity (Lewis et al., 2016; Stanford & Whaley. 2010), as well as the impacts this will have on *vagahau Niue* use in the future within the New Zealand diaspora and beyond.

The findings were a call to action towards the restraints identified in the literature review for the imminent rise of language shift of migrant and minority languages (Garcia, 2003) because of the English language, which has eroded Indigenous languages down into endangered status. This was evident in the research on how parents viewed the importance

of achieving academic success for their children in English as a priority and were opposed to learning *vagahau Niue* as an element of identity and belonging (Spolsky, 1988; Charles, 2009). As the literature review aimed to explore the status and value of *vagahau Niue* and the health and well-being of its active status in New Zealand, it is essential to consider how this is viewed through the lens of language shift and maintenance and that one cannot function in isolation without the other.

7.3.1 Methodological Contributions

This research has highlighted the underwhelming use of Indigenous methods in receptive bilingualism, especially among Indigenous communities and people. Despite the demand for attention in the context of receptive bilingualism (Romaine, 1989; Fishman, 1991; Rehbein, ten Thije & Verschik, 2012; Sherkina-Lieber, 2020), Mahuika (2015) and Smith (1999) believe that the Indigenous methodologies account for the cultural and historical impacts of culture and language. According to Mertens et al. (2013), developing Indigenous methods as an authentic method of research, especially in an academic institution, provides culturally appropriate tools for Indigenous researchers in higher education that help to support efforts that value and recognise more diverse methods of knowledge within academic spaces (Stewart & Reeves, 2013), which this study has established is important for Pacific within academia.

The Niue approach to receptive bilingualism that has been employed in this research encompasses perspectives from an interdisciplinary view that has been instrumental in placing Pacific voices and knowledge at the forefront of the research (Thaman, 1998; Du Plessis & Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2009; Fairbairn-Dunlop et al., 2014;). According to (Durie, 1996; Henry & Pene, 2001; Forster, 2003; Tui Atua, 2003, 2007), a Pacific worldview is defined as being holistic, identifying the relationships between humans, other living creature, and their environment, as well as acknowledging the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and soul, and how it binds together the past, present and future. The blend of a Pacific paradigm with a Niue-centred methodology contributes to a Pacific worldview rather than being used in isolation in an ‘either/or’ approach to research. At length, Pacific approaches have been discussed and documented well in health and education literature, as seen by scholars (Anae, 2004; Fairbairn-Dunlop et al., 2014).

For this study, Pacific methodologies have served as a ‘grand theory’ that allows a meeting point with other Pacific scholars that can assist in establishing Pacific academics with the mainstream institution. The Niue-centred methodology for this thesis was developed initially

within the field of theology (Vilitama, 2015) and has not been significantly used in language revitalisation or the academy to explore receptive bilingualism of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa, New Zealand. As demonstrated in this thesis, a Niue-centred framework was helpful as a guiding tool for the research design process, which included creating *tutala* questions and assessing the different contributions to research. Subsequently, it was determined through this research that there is a greater need for Pacific-centred approaches to ground Indigenous and Pacific research within the academy.

7.3.2 The Future of vagahau Niue in New Zealand

The findings of this research indicate that *vagahau Niue* is moving towards a fragile state here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. As a cultural minority language group in New Zealand, *vagahau Niue* is easily at risk of being exposed to the dominant English language, if not already. Fishman's GIDS (1991) currently places *vagahau Niue* at a definitely endangered status; with the increased rate at which language shift occurs amongst Niue families, it could move to a moribund or critically endangered status. This is a stark reminder that deliberate and urgent action is needed to maintain and sustain the Niue language for the years to come.

7.3.2.1 From maintenance to sustainability: A way forward?

The research findings have successfully highlighted an urgent call to action for the future resuscitation and revitalisation of *vagahau Niue*. One of the ways to achieve this is by revolutionising the focus of research regarding language acquisition and planning, looking past language maintenance, and drawing a focus on the language sustainability of *vagahau Niue* for the future. According to (Garcia, 2011; Makalela, 2016), language sustainability is innovative, dynamic, and requires forward-thinking, as it entails a renewal of processes that can further develop and enrich past language practices to cater to the needs of the present while looking towards the future.

Similarly, the core focus of language maintenance programmes and literature in New Zealand has involved the issue of practical ways to support language, in that for language maintenance to be achieved, something needs to be maintained. This has been evident in the research findings, which highlighted that a majority of the participants were not actively using *vagahau Niue*, whether it was through writing, reading, or conversing in the Niue language; language use was absent, which ultimately has a significant impact on the future sustainability of the Niue language moving forward, that is in and of itself is a red flag and needs to be addressed.

The language sustainability of *vagahau Niue* also requires that the language be used within changing environments and across different generations of language speakers, in which effective action and a better understanding of how to sustain the language in the current climate are required. If Niue communities are serious about *vagahau Niue* in the future, which this research has unveiled, it requires the involvement of first-generation New Zealand-born and their families; they are crucial to these efforts. To achieve this, positive encouragement is required within the different domains of interactions where *vagahau Niue* is used, particularly in the family/home, church and through digital technology. The role of the family is described by Fishman (1991) as being the primary domain for socialisation and intergenerational transmission of a language, which is fundamental to the intergenerational sustainability of any minority language, which requires the lead role to be played by parents and families (Ehala, 2014).

7.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has attempted to highlight the importance of the findings in light of receptive bilingualism, which can be potentially relevant to other minority languages in Indigenous communities nationally and worldwide. The limited research on receptive bilingualism in *vagahau Niue* indicates similar experiences between Niue and other heritage languages in language maintenance and revitalisation. Therefore, future research could explore more community-based research that engages Indigenous communities in research, that is, for the community, and by the community, that involves collaboration with community leaders, elders, and speakers of the language to co-create research agendas and methodologies. Furthermore, the community could leverage off technology and digital resources to create accessible language tools, such as mobile apps, online courses, and digital archives of Indigenous languages, that can help to support both receptive and active language learning. By implementing these strategies, future research can contribute significantly to the preservation and revitalisation of not only *vagahau Niue,* but of Pacific and Indigenous languages globally, as a way to ensure they remain a vibrant part of our cultural heritages in the different diasporic communities we live in.

VEVEHEAGA VALU

Fetuiaga – Taonaga

The way back to the point of departure

8.1 Introduction

The *Taonaga* is the final celebration that draws on bringing the *umu process* to a close, to be able to celebrate the preparation, convergence of the *umu* as well as the coming together and celebration of the *umu.* This final chapter provides the study's recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for proposed future research and heeds the call to bring practical measures to increase language use and maintenance into focus. It also provides the researcher's reflections urging consideration of receptive bilingualism as a stepping stone for language revitalisation efforts. The way back to the point of departure, draws on the lived experiences of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue (Chapter Five) and the key factors that influence receptive bilingualism (Chapters Six and Seven), this chapter presents the extent to which Niue communities in New Zealand and the diaspora can support language maintenance, through receptive speakers, to construct meaningful identities in the societies that they live. The conclusion of this chapter involves the researcher's personal reflections and final remarks on carrying out the research.

8.2 Recommendations

The following section contains the recommendations for the sustainability of *vagahau Niue* based on the research findings. These begin from the perspectives of the family and community and then consider a call to action at a national level.

8.2.1 Practical Recommendations

8.2.1.1 Family

The heart of the sustainability of *vagahau Niue* lies within the *magafaoa.* The key focus of cultural belonging and identity, as well as the concept of socialisation and language transmission (Li, 2012; Spolsky, 2012), is undoubtedly the strength of the *magafaoa*. This is evident in the research findings, which have added to previous research on language maintenance, by insisting that the factors beyond the family unit, such as educational, migration and language policies, the homeland and economy, are not able to sustain *vagahau Niue* without being able to secure intergenerational transmission in the home and family (Fishman, 1991; Pauwels, 2005).

Significant efforts are needed to ensure deliberate, regular, and intentional actions to sustain the Niue language. These can include elders and parents championing language use to encourage their children to speak it whether it is correct or not. The hope for parents and families is to foster a love for *vagahau Niue* for its values, its beauty, and its possibilities so that future generations of Niue speakers can acknowledge the importance of speaking in *vagahau Niue,* which is the core of Niue knowledge, values, and belief systems. Moreover, the potential for digital technology and social media to support language sustainability is a beacon of hope for the future of *vagahau Niue.* The recent development of apps such as the *Fakaako e vagahau Niue* app, which is dedicated to supporting the Niue language, is a step in the right direction. These steps need to be for Niue and be able to be shown in a positive light rather than against English, which New Zealand-born Niue will likely resist. Furthermore, a more precise understanding needs to be developed of how to use this domain effectively as a catalyst for *vagahau Niue's* sustainability in the future.

8.2.1.2 Community

It was evident in the findings of this study that many New Zealand-born Niue and Tagata Niue were unaware of the language shift of *vagahau Niue* occurring in New Zealand due to not being able to recognise the rapid shift trends happening within families, homes and communities. It was suggested that these conversations needed to be initiated in community groups and churches, which would strengthen and educate receptive speakers and their families to be exposed to the language and have the opportunity to attempt using *vagahau Niue* outside of the home. This may result in the community being strengthened by Niue families who are proud and confident in their culture, language and identities.

Moreover, Niue churches were considered to play a vital role in raising awareness in the community around the Niue language shift, which is vital for the continued role that *vagahau Niue* sustainability will continue to play for Niue families and communities. On the contrary, it is also essential to consider the impact that English has within churches and to ensure that deliberate approaches by way of supporting New Zealand-born Niue to use *vagahau Niue* during church services, programmes, and activities are done so effectively. This will encourage the use of the language and hopefully will keep New Zealand-born Niue engaged in the church.

Furthermore, another significant implication for community influence is to find approaches to better utilise more of the *vagahau* and cultural advisors among members of the Niue community. One possible initiative could be the establishment of a *Aoga vagahau Niue* (Niue

language school) which can be an immersive 12-week to one-year language learning programme designed to promote and revitalise *vagahau Niue.* A program that mirrors the *Kura Reo* (Māori language full immersion programme often held throughout the year for one-week) that has been a powerful tool for preserving and promoting the Māori language and culture. They provide a supportive and immersive environment for learners to develop their language skills and connect with their heritage, which has seen success in developing fluent speakers and helping receptive speakers of te reo Māori for over 30 years to transition into becoming productive speakers of the language. This is due to the immersive environment that encourages speakers to speak and hear only Māori in a safe environment, that has helped to develop both receptive and productive language skills. As this thesis places an important emphasis on receptive bilingualism, it is imperative that this recommendation be considered, as the benefits include language revitalisation and cultural connection, where a deeper understanding of Niue culture, traditions, and values, can strengthen cultural identity and fosters a sense of pride and belonging. Moreover, a *Aoga Vagahau Niue* can help to build strong, resilient, communities that value linguistic heritage that can bring together people of all ages and backgrounds, fostering a sense of community and mutual support. In addition, learning a new language can be a rewarding and personal experience, that boosts confidence and allows new opportunities for personal and professional growth. A community-led initiative will assist in what is the current resurgence of community-led *vagahau Niue* classes enticing New Zealand-born Niue, specifically among the middle-generation (40 years and up) to learn *vagahau Niue.* This community-led *Aoga Vaghau Niue* would be particularly beneficial for New Zealand-born Niue living here in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and their children, especially with the rapid growth of non-Niue-speaking and multi-ethnic families.

Furthermore, the increasing demand for *vagahau Niue* resources, particularly in digital form, is a testament to the language's adaptability and the community's dedication to its preservation. The proposal for Niue language digital resources to be accessible online and through various forms of technology, which other Niue diasporic communities could utilise, is a progressive step towards the evolution of the language. This approach also harnesses the cultural and linguistic knowledge and expertise of Niue community members for language revitalisation.

8.2.1.3 National

The sustainability of *vagahau Niue* in Aotearoa, New Zealand is suggested by May (2009) to consider the value of the Niue language not only in its capacity to be intrinsic to *tagata*

Niue but also for its significance socially and socioeconomically for individuals, communities, and the wider New Zealand society. As Aotearoa New Zealand moves toward being a culturally diverse nation, as well as the New Zealand population proliferates, Chen (2015) and Harvey (2016) suggest that it would be in the best interest of Aotearoa New Zealand to acknowledge and reinforce the cultural and linguistic richness of super-diversity, as super-diversity encompasses a culturally rich knowledge and worldview that must be incorporated into larger knowledge systems. This comes from past arguments for language maintenance policies based solely on cultural identity to be considered, as it has not previously gained traction at a policy level. This study is a timely wake-up call for actions to sustain and future *vagahau Niue.*

8.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Despite representing an age spread over five decades, the participants in this research were predominantly quadragenarian (those aged between 40-50 years). This was due to the sample criteria being dedicated to first-generation New Zealand-born Niue, as the generation that has given birth to the future carriers of the Niue language and as the generation that knew the Niue language well enough amongst themselves, however, did not transmit this to their children (otherwise known as receptive bilinguals). The concern is that no active measures are in place to support receptive speakers of *vagahau Niue*, as many currently identify as non-speakers. Consequently, language maintenance and shift must be researched at the micro-societal level to understand the motivations of individuals that are essential to language use and language choice, which is instrumental for future language revitalisation efforts. These key factors impact the language maintenance of *vagahau Niue* for Niue people in New Zealand and warrant future research.

Moreover, the findings in this research were attained through an informative process with myself as the primary researcher and may need further interpretation in other language contexts. Furthermore, in line with this study being grounded in a Niue-centred methodology, findings are not envisioned to be generalised with other Indigenous or Pacific languages. Additionally, in this research, the participants and I recognised the role that New Zealand-born Niue have with *vagahau Niue* and the relevance of having them as a starting point for language maintenance moving forward (Mühlhäusler, 1992; Taumoefolau et al., 2002). This research has identified a significant case for language use and acquisition, focusing on the critical impact language domains play on these key factors. The challenges, opportunities and environments within different language domains on a global scale, as well as for Niue living in Aotearoa, New Zealand; have seen language acquisition and use significantly

impact the participants in this research. However, it is within these environments and among these individuals that ongoing change in language revitalisation will be a matter of subject in the not-too-distant future.

In addition, a doctoral thesis, and the purposes of analysis and evaluation, requires emerging researchers to “find static, unchanging pieces of data to fit snugly together” (Mika, 2012, p.1089). Therefore, as the primary researcher, despite bringing together the contextual factors for analysis and the lived experiences in this thesis, I also recognised the need for the critical relationship between New Zealand-born Niue and their receptive skills of *vagahau Niue* as an evolving and dynamic one, that is constructed constantly through everyday practice (Mitra, 2015), which was initially viewed from a singular perspective as the primary researcher. Moreover, it is interesting to note that many of the experiences highlighted by the participants in this study are not new and have been noted by Indigenous scholars nationally and internationally over the last two decades (Tupuola, 1994; Tiatia, 1998;).

While language shift and maintenance have emerged from research with first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living in Aotearoa, these insights are potentially relevant for receptive bilinguals in other minority languages. Although limited, the research on global receptive speakers indicates similar experiences between Niue and other Indigenous cultures within language maintenance and among Indigenous communities. Furthermore, future research could observe the impact and presence of receptive bilingualism for other Pacific and Indigenous languages globally. Specifically, it would be interesting to examine how receptive bilingualism is experienced amongst second and third-generation New Zealand-born Niue living outside of the homeland in other Niue diasporic communities worldwide, and how these are negotiated within their particular environments.

Lastly, I stand with scholars in the language revitalisation field in arguing for a better understanding and prioritisation of Indigenous languages as well as practical efforts for revitalisation (Krauss, 1992; Mühlhäusler, 1992; Paulston et al., 1993; Nettle & Romaine, 2000; O’Rourke, 2015;). I explicitly argue for the inclusion of receptive bilingualism studies by way of identifying its role in language revitalisation efforts of Indigenous languages, as well as calling for a focus on the voices and aspirations of the Indigenous within receptive bilingualism by way of acknowledgement and privileging Indigenous methodologies and culturally appropriate tools, to carry out genuine collaboration and consultation with Indigenous people, communities and researchers.

8.4 Reflections of the Researcher

The insights of this research have indicated that changes are required for language maintenance approaches to Indigenous languages that acknowledge New Zealand-born Niue receptive bilinguals of *vagahau Niue* here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Continued assumptions that not speaking *vagahau Niue* does not make you a *Tagata Niue* ignore the inclusion of receptive bilinguals as speakers of the language and the limitations this poses for receptive bilinguals in the second and third generations to maintain *vagahau Niue* in the future.

It was evident that the role of the *magafaoa* and the connections with Niue, both inside and outside of the home environment, served as a way of supporting the cultural identities of the New Zealand-born Niue participants and their views of cherishing and considering *vagahau Niue* as a valuable part of knowing and understanding. My relationship to my identity as a Niue woman has been supported through the appreciation and learning that I have gone through in this research, both from the literature written by Indigenous scholars, as well as from the rich *tutala* I was fortunate to be a recipient of, especially with those who bear the future carriers of *vagahau Niue.*

As noted, and described in the introductory chapter, the thesis title *'Tao e umu ke moho'* was the beginning and end of my journey through the tertiary sector, and the PhD is the celebration of the pinnacle of academic research. Whether through extraordinary foresight or divine intervention, this title has been valuable for this thesis in clearing and paving the way, identifying ways through, and the quest for new knowledge in its many forms, as well as through countless areas and avenues. As an emerging academic, I share aspects of the journey shared by the participants and the need to continue using *vagahau Niue* by whatever means possible regarding receptive bilingualism as a way forward or starting point to revitalise and maintain the Niue language. I join them in their aspirations and hopes for more inclusiveness, encouragement, and improved language outcomes for language acquisition and use for themselves and their children. I anticipate making small contributions in any way I can to pursue language maintenance of *vagahau Niue*.

8.5 Tau Kupu Fakaoti[40]

This research, the first of its kind, was an enriching process, although intense, was worth all the shared rich stories, which I consider the only way suitable to carry out a study of this

[40] Final words

magnitude. The Pacific paradigm, guided by a Niue-centred methodology, effectively captured the nuances of meaning entrenched within receptive bilingualism. The choices on language acquisition were explored, and more specifically, the integral changes in how language is used and understood – in line with the nature of receptive bilinguals and the relationship they form with *vagahau Niue*. For this research, the Niue language was spotlighted through the narratives and lived experiences of first-generation New Zealand-born *tagata Niue* and the use and value they placed on *vagahau Niue,* factors that are significant to the language sustainability of *vagahau Niue* here in Aotearoa, New Zealand. As previously noted, New Zealand-born Niue and Niue communities must unite to lead sustainability efforts for *vagahau Niue* to flourish in New Zealand, Niue, and worldwide. Resourcing a *Aoga vagahau Niue* in my view seems to be an initiative which could bring together the whole community - the elderly and carriers of language and culture, to the very young who will be the future carriers of our language and culture. To conclude, this research has indicated clearly that we must put *vagahau Niue* on our shoulders and, with all our might and power, carry it to the highest peak, where it is at this highest peak, and we will find our why.

Kia lalā mouga e Vagahau Niue ti hahamo ke he tapunu[41]*.*
Tao e umu ke moho[42]

[41] "Translation "Put the Niue language on your shoulders and, with all your might and power carry it to the highest peak
[42] Translation "finish what you have started or 'do not start what you cannot finish lest shame is brought upon the family" (Vilitama, 2015, p.30)

TAU TOHI LAGOMATAI

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FAKAMAOPOOPOAGA HE TAU KUPU FAKAAOGA

Glossary

Kupu Māori

Atua	God
Kaupapa Māori	Māori approach
Kirikiriroa	Hamilton
Kura Reo	Language school
Kupu Māori	Māori words
Moana	ocean
Pōneke	Wellington
Pou	pillars
Pūrākau	myth, ancient legend, story
Tāmaki Makau Rau	Auckland
Te Kōhanga Reo	Māori language nests
Te reo Māori	the Māori language
Tīpuna	ancestors, grandparents - plural form of tīpuna and the eastern dialect variation of tūpuna
Wairua	spirit, soul
Wānanga	to meet and discuss, deliberate and consider
Whakataukī	proverb
Whakatepea te kō	to work in unison so nothing is missed

Tau Kupu Niue

Afine Niue	Niue woman
Agaaga	spirit
Aho Tapu fanau	White Sunday
Aiga	household of life
Aoga fakamahani ma e tau fanau ikiiki	preschool/language nests
Aoga Niue he tau fanau ikiiki	Niue Early Childhood Centre
Aoga Vagahau Niue	Niue Language School
Ekalesia	Church/congregation
Faiumu	convergence & making of the community umu
Fakaalofa	love, present, gift
Fakafetuiaga	a fellowship, gathering or assembly
Fakalilifu	respect
Fakamatala	speech/reflection
Fakatautonu	acknowledgement
Fakatokolalo	humility
Fakauka	persistence/perseverance
Fekafekau/gahua	service/work
Fānau	Children
Feofanaki	hospitality
Fetuiaga	neologism for Church, the act of uniting, koinonia, communion, relationship, celebration
Fetuiaga fiafia	joyful community
Foaki momoi	giving / offering/sharing

Fono	meeting
Fonua	land, womb, placenta
Fuke	uncover
Galue	feast collection of food, cooked or uncooked, prepared for various social occasions
Hau ke tautala	come talk and have a conversation
Kaina	home
Kau fakalataha	unity / togetherness
Kelekele	below / under
Koli	traditional dance
Lili	woven pandanus
Lauga	Sermon
Liogi	prayer(s)
Lologo	song
Loto fakatokolalo	heart of humility
Maaga	village / community
Magafaoa laulahi	extended family
Magafaoa	family
Matohiaga	identity
Matua	parent in the Niuean kinship system
Matua tupuna fifine	great-grandmother
Moana	ocean
Moana puke lahi	vast ocean
Motu	people from the Northern side of Niue
Olu mene	maternal great-grandfather
Pālagi	European
Pepesa	community
Pona/ Pipi fataua	tying/binding/loosening
Pulega mo e fakatokatoka	planning and preparation
Pulotu Niue	Niue academics
Tafiti	people from outside. Stranger name given to the Southern part of Niue and only used as such
Tafu	ignite the fire
Tala	to talk
Tala e tala	tell a story
Talaloto	to tell all, reveal or share honestly. A personal testimony of the lived reality experiences of an individual
Talanoa (Niue definition)	gossip, informal talk
Talatala	talking/chatting
Tama hiki	adopted child
Tao	to bake
Tāoga	treasure
Taonaga/Faiagahau	banquet/feasting/celebration
Tapu Hololoa	prayer week
Taro	root vegetable
Tau Aga Fakamotu	culture of Niue
Tau Aga Fakamotu ha Niue	Niue cultural traditions
Tau kupu Fakaoti	final words
Tau pulega	family meetings/ or arrangements
Tau Tagata Niue	Niue people

Tau taoga tokiofa a Niue	Niue values
Taui	reward
Tia	to weave, to crochet
Tohi Tapu	Bible
Tolo ke faiumu	convergence in the umu making
Tupuna	ancestors
Tutala	to conversate
Uufi	to cover
Umu fakamafana	warm oven [re]freshing
Umu fetuiaga	fellowship of the umu
Umu foou	new oven [re]structuring
Umu hila	gas oven [re]interpreting
Umu	earth oven
Uta vagahau	traditional engagement
Vagahau Niue	Niue language
Vagahau	Language
Vahā	the space in between
Vahaloto	space, between time or space
Vahega	classes
Vaka	canoe, root, vein, vessel
Veveheaga	chapter

Additional Pacific words

Hala toka kovi	a rough road
Hala toka lelei	a flat road
Hou`eiki fifine	Tongan women
Laumalie	spiritual
ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi	Hawaiian language
Talanoa	conversation/talk together
Talaloto	a person's testimony of constructed knowledge or lived experience

FAKAMAOPOOPOAGA HE TAU KUPU FAKAAOGA

List of Abbreviations

AUT	Auckland University of Technology
AUTEC	Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
GIDS	Graded International Disruption Scale
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
L3	Third Language
MIL	Mutually Intelligible Language
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
PEC	Pacific Education Centre
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PIPC	Pacific Islands' Presbyterian Church
RM	Receptive Multilingualism
RLS	Reversing Language Shift
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America

FAKAILOAAGA LAFI KI LUGA

Appendices

Appendix 1

Official Letter to CEO of PEC

Tuiloma Gayle Lafaiali'i
Chief Executive Officer
Pasifika Education Centre
Westfield Tower Level 3
Westfield Mall, Manukau

9th September 2020

Fakaalofa lahi atu Tuiloma,

Re: Online survey

Thank you once again for considering the request for the online survey to run through the PEC website as well as the Facebook platform. Please find attached the online survey flyer (pdf file) as well as the link for the survey. If you have any additional queries, please do not hesitate to get in contact via email nogiata.tukimata@hotmail.co.nz I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Survey-link:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=DQSIkWdsW0yxEjajBLZtrQAAAAAAAAAAAANAAbCdjIpUMUFCSEEyOFAyVVM3TjJHNDE5SDM4UlU0Mi4u&fbclid=IwAR2afThROBoJjV1q3Xdz_AxMye4AN-iBK1hygRx71Le-n0oBuKz5J9U6M4s

Iehova he vaha loto

Mafola mo e monuina

Nogiata Tukimata
PhD candidate

cc. Mr Ron Viviani – Chair, PEC Board
Professor Tania M. Ka'ai – Director, Te Ipukarea Research Institute, AUT

Appendix 2

Flyer for online survey participation

FAKĀLOFA LAHI ATU!

SEEKING ALL NIUE LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND FOR RESEARCH

KO AU KO E NIUE – A SURVEY ABOUT YOUR USE AND UNDERSTANDING OF *VAGAHAU NIUE*

Are you a speaker of *Vagahau Niue*? Are your parent(s) speakers of *Vagahau Niue*? Can you understand *Vagahau Niue* but are limited in your response using the Niue language? If you responded YES to one of these questions, please keep reading ☺

I am conducting research looking at the health and wellbeing of *Vagahau Niue*, by understanding if first generation New Zealand-born Niue are able to converse in *Vagahau Niue* or are not able to respond at all using the language. Your participation will contribute to understanding the plight of the Niue language in New Zealand and its future health and wellbeing. It may also provide critical solutions in addressing the decline in the number of speakers of the Niue language through a range of interventions.

For more information get in contact with the primary researcher, or to take part in the online survey, please visit
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=DOSIkWdsW0yxEjajBLZtrOAAAAAAAAAAAANAAbCdjIpUMUFCSEEyOFAyVVM3TjJHNDE5SDM4UlU0Mi4u&fbclid=IwAR109QPnTeFejHYK9DAz4ZyUs8xyRSXB3d6MSHHNT_0WP-fna_y7hvNdHlo

AUT
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TĀMAKI MAKAU RAU

This study has been approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 11th May 2020, AUTEC Reference number 20/120

TE IPUKAREA

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time.

Online survey responses are anonymous

Contact Details

Nogiata Tukimata

(Primary Researcher)

nogiata.tukimata@hotmail.co.nz

Mobile: 021 115 0772

Appendix 3

Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Tutala (Interviews)

Date Information Sheet Produced:

- 20th March 2020

Project Working Title

Tao e umu ke moho: Receptive bilingualism of *Vagahau Niue:* A case study of lived experiences from first-generation New Zealand born Niue living on a distant shore, Aotearoa New Zealand.

An Invitation

Fakaalofa Lahi Atu. My name is Nogiata Tukimata and I am a Doctoral student in Language Revitalisation at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). I extend an invitation for you to take part in this research project. Your participation is purely voluntary, and you are able to withdraw at any time.

What is the purpose of this research?

The study you are being asked to take part in aims to look at the health and wellbeing of *Vagahau Niue*, by understanding if first generation New Zealand born Niue can converse in *Vagahau Niue* or are not able to respond at all using the language. This research has been approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on 11 May 2020.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been identified to participate in this research based on the following criteria:

(1) You are a first-generation New Zealand-born Niue
(2) Your parent(s) are speakers of *Vagahau Niue*
(3) You understand *Vagahau Niue* but cannot/are limited in your response in the language
(4) You live in New Zealand

How do I agree to participate in this research?

In order to participate in this research project, you need to complete and sign the consent form. The interview will be held at a venue, where you the participant will feel comfortable.

What will happen in this research?

For the purposes of gathering information for this research, there is the option of participating in a *Tutala*. The *Tutala* will be conducted face-to-face and take approximately one hour which will be scheduled to fit around your activities and environment. The interview will be audio

recorded and transcribed by the researcher. After the *Tutala* the information given will be drafted as a transcript by the researcher and once transcribed, the interview transcript will be returned to you for checking and final sign off. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

What are the discomforts and risks?
All interviews will be conducted according to key Pacific values and norms. There is no perceived risk of discomfort that you will be experience as the interviewee. However, you are completely free to stop the interview or your overall participation in the research at any time if you choose to do so.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?
As already mentioned above, you have the option of not responding to any of the questions asked. You also have the option of withdrawing from the interview at any time.

What are the benefits?
This research will increase knowledge about the experiences, perceptions and opinions of a group of first-generation New Zealand-born Niue across the country about your experiences with *Vagahau Niue* as users of the language. As stated by Moseley (2010) the Niue language is listed as an endangered language in UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Language*. Therefore, this research is significant because it will contribute to understanding the plight of the Niue language in New Zealand and its future health and wellbeing. It may also provide critical solutions in addressing the decline in the number of speakers of the Niue language through a range of interventions.

Furthermore, this information will set a baseline of knowledge about how Niue people value their language and the linguistic affects that come with understanding their native Niue language (*Vagahau Niue)* but are receptive speakers of it. Furthermore, this case study represents a snapshot in time - a critical time for the Niue language in New Zealand as to how the language can be regenerated for the future generations of Niue people.

How will my privacy be protected?
Your individual responses will be confidential to the researcher. You will also have the choice of being named in the final report. Should you not want to be named, a pseudonym will be applied. Electronic data will be stored separately from hard copies of data in locked cupboards with the primary supervisor. The recordings and hard copies of the data will be destroyed after six years.

What are the costs of participating in this research?
The only cost to participate will be your time and your invaluable knowledge. Interviews will be conducted face-to-face and take approximately one hour.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?
After an initial meeting to discuss the parameters of this research, you will be provided with an information sheet and a consent form. Once you have read this information sheet and the researcher has answered any queries you may have, you may then sign the consent form.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?
As stated in the consent form, you will receive a one-two page summary of the findings and an e-copy of the thesis document.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?
Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Tania Ka'ai: email tkaai@aut.ac.nz, phone (+64) 9 921 9999 ext 6601.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Dr Carina Meares, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* +64 9 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?
Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Nogiata Tukimata
Email: nogiata.tukimata@hotmail.co.nz
Mobile: 021 115 0772

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Professor Tania Ka'ai
Te Ipukarea Research Institute,
AUT University, New Zealand
Email: tkaai@aut.ac.nz
Tel: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6601

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *11th May 2020*, AUTEC Reference number *20/120*.

Appendix 4

Participant Tutala consent forms

Consent Form

Tutala (Interviews)

Project title: *Tao e umu ke moho*: Receptive bilingualism of *Vagahau Niue:* A case study of lived experiences from first-generation New Zealand born Niue living on a distant shore, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Project Supervisor: *Professor Tania Ka'ai*

Researcher: *Nogiata Tukimata*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 20th March 2020
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that my responses may be used in the final report. The material can only be used with this written consent.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that following the transcription of interviews, I will be provided a copy of the transcription, and have the opportunity to add or take anything out before the final copy is agreed to.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐
- ☐ I wish for my identity to remain confidential in the research (please tick one):

  Yes ☐ **No** ☐

Participant's signature :

Participant's name:

Participant's contact details (if appropriate):

Date :

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 11th May 2020 AUTEC Reference number 20/120

Appendix 5

Researcher Safety Protocol

Researcher Safety Protocol

Tutala Interviews

Project title: Tao e um ke moho: Receptive Bilingualism of Vagahau Niue: A case study of lived experiences from first-generation New Zealand-born Niue living on a distant shore, Aotearoa.

Project Supervisor: Professor Tania Ka'ai

Researcher: Nogiata Tukimata

I, as the Primary researcher am aware that the standard practice at AUT University is that it is not acceptable to use my home to conduct research with participants. The interviews will take place in the participant's home or chosen environment of dwelling.

During all stages of this project, particularly the data collection (interview) phase, the method of conducting the interviews will be in accordance with key Pacific cultural values and norms including:

- Establishing a connection through ties to the community
- Showing respect to participants and their stories
- Recognising Pacific etiquette, such as removing shoes prior to entering someone's home, wearing appropriate attire etc.
- Acknowledging religious protocol, such as beginning and ending the interview with a prayer (if the participant calls for this)

Guidelines and arrangements when conducting Interviews with Participants

- ☐ Arrange for the Primary Supervisor and Postgraduate Administrator to have a final and confirmed schedule of interview times and locations including exact addresses.
- ☐ Ensure that the researcher's mobile phone is fully charged and available for use in the field.
- ☐ Ensure that the researcher is well and hydrated, wearing the appropriate clothing for the weather and the environment.
- ☐ Ensure that the researcher has the appropriate equipment needed to conduct the interview (i.e. writing pad, pens, recorders)
- ☐ Researcher makes contact with the Primary Supervisor via mobile phone text message/phone call immediately **prior** to the interview to inform her that the

researcher has arrived at the interview location safely and is about to commence interviewing.

- Researcher makes contact with the Primary Supervisor via mobile phone text message/phone call immediately **after** the interview to inform her that she has safely left the interview location.
- If the confirmation text message or phone call from the Researcher to the Primary Supervisor does not eventuate, the following steps will be taken until such time the Researcher has been located:
  - The Primary Supervisor will call the Researcher.
  - The Primary Supervisor will contact the Researcher's immediate family in case the Researcher has made contact with them or they know of her whereabouts.
  - The Primary Supervisor will attempt to physically locate the Researcher, if necessary, through driving to the interview location. If this step is necessary, the Primary Supervisor will first inform the Postgraduate Administrator and will also ensure that she has someone else accompanying her.
  - The Primary Supervisor will notify the police of the missing Researcher.

Appendix 6

Ethics Approval from AUTEC

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

19 May 2020

Tania Ka'ai
Faculty of Te Ara Poutama

Dear Tania

Ethics Application: 20/120 Tao e umu ke moho: Receptive bilingualism of Vagahau Niue: A case study of lived experiences from first-generation New Zealand born Niue living on a distant shore, Aotearoa New Zealand

Thank you for submitting your application for ethical review. We are pleased to advise that the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) approved your ethics application at their meeting on 11 May 2020, subject to the following conditions:

1. Clarification about how this research will be conducted in light of the public health alerts that are in place;
2. Clarification about how the participants are being recruited, including;
    a. How many invitations for the survey will be sent;
    b. How the advertisements are being distributed and targeted;
    c. How statistical significance is being assured;
    d. How legal minors will be either excluded or managed;
3. Clarification about the researcher's relationships with the community church, youth group and kapa haka and whether the researcher intends to research her own whānau. This needs to be reflected in the Information Sheet;
4. Clarification about the impact of such a small community on the levels of confidentiality that are possible in this research, and inclusion of advice about this in the Information Sheet;
5. Clarification about the location of the interviews and whether or not it will include participants' homes. If so, a researcher safety protocol needs to be provided;
6. Clarification about how face to face data collection will happen for those outside Auckland;
7. Provision of an assurance that the data and Consent Forms will be stored separately and securely on AUT premises under the control of the supervision team;
8. Provision of an assurance that participants will be given a one or two page summary of the research findings once analysis has occurred;
9. Revision of the Information Sheet as follows:

d. Inclusion of advice about the benefits of the research for the participants, the researcher, and the wider community;

e. Use of the current wording about concerns as given in the Information Sheet exemplar;

10. Provision of the finalised survey showing the formatting that the participants will see and including:

a. An Information Sheet as the initial block of the survey;

b. Appropriate bracketing for the demographic data to assure anonymity and use of Statistics New Zealand level one categories, especially for ethnicity;

c. Provision of more appropriate advice around the ability to withdraw.

Please provide us with a response to the points raised in these conditions, indicating either how you have satisfied these points or proposing an alternative approach. AUTEC also requires copies of any altered documents, such as Information Sheets, surveys etc. You are not required to resubmit the application form again. Any changes to responses in the form required by the committee in their conditions may be included in a supporting memorandum.

Please note that the Committee is always willing to discuss with applicants the points that have been made. There may be information that has not been made available to the Committee, or aspects of the research may not have been fully understood.

Once your response is received and confirmed as satisfying the Committee's points, you will be notified of the full approval of your ethics application. Full approval is not effective until all the conditions have been met. Data collection may not commence until full approval has been confirmed. If these conditions are not met within six months, your application may be closed and a new application will be required if you wish to continue with this research.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

We look forward to hearing from you,

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: nogiata.tukimata@hotmail.co.nz; Dean Mahuta