Exploring goals and motivations of Māori heritage language learners

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Abstract

Motivations of Māori heritage language learners are explored within this qualitative study. *Te reo* Māori (the Māori language) is currently classed as endangered (Reedy et al., 2011), which calls for the exploration of the motivational experiences of Māori heritage language learners. A total of 19 interviews with beginner, intermediate and advanced level learners were conducted. Results demonstrated how Māori heritage learners were motivated to learn due to their cultural heritage connection to the language and to other ingroup members. This study explores some of the motivations why Māori heritage language learners learn te reo Māori. For this group of indigenous language learners, cultural and language revitalisation are tied to language motivation. Furthermore, the ability to participate in cultural practices was central to language motivations.

Keywords: motivation; heritage language; te reo Māori; indigenous language revitalization

1. Introduction

There is a pressing global necessity to understand ways in which minority and indigenous languages can be retained and maintained for future generations (Simons & Lewis, 2011). Krauss (1992) predicted that "the coming century will see either the death or doom of 90% of mankind's languages" (p. 7). Unfortunately, Krauss's predictions made over twenty years ago appear to be coming true. Using

longitudinal data, Harmon and Loh (2010) found that from a sample of 1,500 languages globally, 20% of those languages had declined between 1970 and 2005.

One possible way of assisting the process of language revitalisation is through understanding the motivations of individuals who hold an ancestral connection to the language. Te reo Māori is the indigenous language of New Zealand with 21.3% of Māori indicating that they are able to hold a conversation in te reo Māori (Statistics New Zealand, 2014a). This figure has declined by 3.7% since the 1996 census data was collected. Although research about motivations of second language learners of globally dominant languages is plentiful, very few studies explore the motivations of indigenous people who are attempting to learn their heritage language. The motivations of Māori heritage language (HL2) learners will be the focus of the current study.

2. Heritage language learners

Second language learners of globally dominant/colonial languages, such as English, Spanish, and French have been the predominant set of learners that research has focused on to date (Noels, 2001; Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand, 2003). HL2 learners are distinguishable from learners of other languages by the birthright connection that they have with the language (Wiley, 2001). There are many varying descriptions of what encompasses a HL2 learner. For instance, Fishman (2001) explains that those individuals with a family connection to a language (including immigrant, indigenous and colonial languages) are equally defined as HL2 learners. In comparison, Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) discuss HL2 learners as being those students who are studying their first language in a school setting, such as learners of Japanese who have Japanese ancestry.

Heritage learners may include second or even fourth generation immigrants who still refer to their nationality as being tied to their ethnic heritage. Similarly, Valdes (2005) discusses the complexities of how the term is applied, where definitions of *heritage language* include the learner's mother tongue, her first language, second language, and dominant language in the home. *Heritage language learner* has been applied to linguistic minorities whose languages are often endangered, where a key concern is the pressure for cultural maintenance (Fishman, 2001). Authors have suggested that it is possible for the term *heritage language learner* to include both those who have some level of proficiency in the HL2 as well as those who want to learn their ancestral language (Wiley, 2001). For the purposes of this study, the term *heritage language learner* will be applied to Māori, indigenous to New Zealand, who are in the process of learning te reo Māori as their second language.

3. The position of Māori as heritage language learners

Indigenous people who are also HL2 learners are likely to be coping with the intergenerational impacts of colonisation. New Zealand is unique among other colonial nations due to the Treaty of Waitangi, which established equal legal status between the Crown and Māori (Orange, 2004). Although the Treaty of Waitangi provides New Zealand with the foundation for an equal bicultural relationship, Māori continue to experience the detrimental effects of colonisation and disproportionate levels of negative social value (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006; Robson & Purdie, 2007). Pratto and colleagues (2006) explain that "negative social value is disproportionately left to or forced upon members of subordinate groups in the form of substandard housing, disease, underemployment, dangerous and distasteful work, disproportionate punishment, stigmatisation, and vilification" (p. 272). Each of the factors above are experienced disproportionately by Māori in New Zealand (Borell, Gregory, McCreanor, Jensen, & Barnes, 2009; Department of Corrections, 2007; Education Counts, 2011; Robson & Purdie, 2007).

Being in a position of social and economic disadvantage has a negative impact on language revitalisation. Memmi (1965) indicates that members of the colonised group who are complicit in the process may begin to despise cultural markers (including language) that associate them with their cultural group. Furthermore, having high proportions of negative social value can be linked to the availability of time and resources to commit to HL2 learning.

The current state of the Māori language decline and the devaluation of the language can be directly linked to a series of systemic practices of colonisation enforced by the Crown. Such practices included the psychological and physical abuse forced upon Māori children in state funded schools (Waitangi Tribunal, 1986), and the refusal of the government to fund schools where English was not the language of instruction (Yensen & McCreanor, 1989). Fishman (1996) has also linked confiscation of land, which Māori suffered immensely from, to the loss of minority languages. Given the historical context of the Māori language loss, HL2 learner experiences and motivations are likely to differ from language learners of globally dominant languages. The motivation for wanting to engage in HL2 learning is likely to be tied to the obligation to maintain the language for future generations, which is not a pressure experienced by learners of globally dominant languages. Furthermore, indigenous HL2 learners firstly need to overcome the social devaluation of the language and the identity complexities associated with being a second language learner of a language that has personal and cultural significance.

4. Motivation due to a desire to access a Māori cultural worldview

Māori are currently in the process of revitalising te reo Māori. The processes of language revitalisation are likely to contribute to Māori HL2 learner motivations. Language is a means of providing individuals with a window into the culture of their ancestors (Wa Thiong'o, 1986). In situations where access to cultural knowledge is limited, there may be a heightened desire by members of a culture who are attempting to access this knowledge to do so via the language. Māori knowledge and language are not currently forms of knowledge that are widely understood by, or accessible to, all Māori in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2014a). The cultural values and language that dominate the majority of New Zealand public domains are those that belong to the *Pākehā* (New Zealand Europeans). Māori who engage in learning their HL2 may be motivated due to the emotional connection that they feel toward the speakers of the language (including those living and deceased). This heritage form of motivation differs perhaps from standard integrative motivation in the sense that Māori learners maybe aiming to learn more about *themselves* through accessing a view of the world through the eyes of their ancestors. Similar to the concept of investment (Norton, 1997), Māori may be motivated to invest in the process of language learning in order to achieve a set of cultural resources, including access to a worldview that reflects the cultural ideologies of their ancestors as well as those of the contemporary Māori culture.

A potential added bonus of learning their HL2 is the improved ability to engage in cultural frame-switching (Benet-Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002). Just over half of all Māori identify as being of dual ethnicity (Statistics New Zealand, 2013) with Pākehā (or New Zealand European) being the most common dual identity. The process of negotiating multiple identity pressures is complex and requires a great deal of cognitive resources (Phinney, 1989; Ting-Toomey, 2005). Those who view their dual identities as integrated have reported more positive psychological adaptation (Benet-Martinez & Hariatatos, 2005). Integration of both cultural frameworks is measured by assessing how much an individual sees the two cultures as compatible versus oppositional. In a study of bicultural participants, Benet-Martinez and Hariatatos (2005) found that low levels of proficiency in either of the languages contributed to individuals reporting that the two cultures were distant or oppositional from/towards each other. As the demands of cultural frame-switching are expected of nearly half of all those who identify as Māori, being bilingual may assist Māori in the process of identity negotiation between specifically Māori and mainstream governed environments.

Māori are regularly forced to engage in mainstream domains that are dominated by Pākehā cultural values and norms. Engaging in Pākehā dominant

spaces maybe thought of as normative for many of Māori. Due to processes of colonisation, not all Māori have equal access to Māori governed domains (Durie, 2001). Māori may need to learn to reengage in Māori spaces, and the language could potentially provide the grounds for such reengagement.

Part of cultural revitalisation includes the continuation of cultural practices that require te reo Māori as a means of maintaining such practices. Many of these responsibilities fall on *kaumātua* (respected elders) (Waldon, 2004). However, with the success of Māori language teaching initiatives, there are a number of Māori HL2 learners who have begun taking on such roles (Gloyne, 2014). The responsibilities of HL2 learners are likely to differ substantially from the responsibilities of L2 learners of globally dominant languages, or languages where the pressures associated with language decline and revitalisation are not central concerns. The desire to fulfill cultural roles that require high levels of language proficiency are likely to motivate some of Māori to improve their Māori language skills.

The roles that parents play in the process of language revitalisation are also thought to contribute positively, particularly when parents *use* the language as a main means of communication (Fishman, 1989). Simons and Lewis (2011) found that of 7,103 current living languages globally, 19% are not being learned by children. The breakdown of intergenerational transmission is a major sign of language endangerment (Fishman, 1989). Members of endangered language communities who are parents may be motivated to improve their language skills in order to transfer their language to their children, which is likely to be the case for Māori HL2 learners as found by Chrisp (2005). One in three Māori are currently under the age of 15, and, at the other end of the spectrum, merely 5.6% are aged over 65 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). As most of the native Māori language speakers are aged over 65 years, these statistics highlight the need for intergenerational transmission of te reo Māori.

In addition to the cultural transmission motivations noted above, an aspect of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) may provide insight into why parents may be motivated to be part of a group who use te reo Māori as a main means of communication. Social identity theory posits that individuals are motivated to view themselves positively in comparison to other groups. If Māori parents wish to be thought of as valued members of their cultural ingroup, they may wish to use their decision to speak te reo Māori within the home as a means of providing positive distinction (Brewer, 1991) from parents within the community who may not use te reo Māori with their children. On the other hand, non-speaking members (including parents) of a Māori family some members of which do speak the language may be motivated to learn te reo Māori as a means of enhancing positive ingroup relationships by reducing ingroup difference and promoting shared values.

Although past language policies have focused on promoting the collective desire to improve language revitalisation at a national or tribal level (O'Regan, 2014), King (2007) suggests that Māori language learners are more likely to be motivated by factors that are more closely linked to the learner. Māori HL2 learners may be more likely to be motivated by their immediate environment, including the desire to up-skill due to the expectations of their social relationships. For instance, if being a member of a social group includes being a target language speaker, the individual may be motivated to meet the expectations of their significant others.

Supplementary to motivations outlined above, Māori HL2 learners may see instrumental value in learning te reo Māori. For instance, knowledge of te reo Māori may assist individuals to gain employment, particularly in the public service sector. Jackson and Fisher's (2007) research, which involved the dissemination of filler CVs to employers, supported the assumption that employers place value on the knowledge of te reo Māori. Findings indicated that Māori high-merit CVs (for instance, a Māori who had achieved well academically) were preferred over non-Māori high-merit performers. The preference for high-merit Māori over high-merit non-Māori was attributed to the ability of Māori to undertake culturally specific roles in the workplace, and, in particular, their ability to communicate in te reo Māori. Conversely, Māori with low academic merit were less likely to be preferred for employment over low merit non-Māori irrespective of the level of Māori language proficiency. These results indicate that although employers place value on te reo Māori, organisations are unlikely to prioritise abilities in te reo Māori over academic credentials. Employers' preferences for high-merit Māori with Māori language abilities is likely to benefit Māori who have achieved within the tertiary education environment.

This research aims to explore the goals and motivations of learners of te reo Māori and has been designed to be exploratory. While specific hypotheses cannot be tested, given that te reo Māori is endangered, Māori HL2 learners are likely to be motivated by cultural preservation reasons, for instance, decisions to use te reo Māori with their children. Furthermore, as there are a great number of Māori cultural roles that require the use of te reo Māori and a relatively small group of highly proficient Māori language speakers available, it is possible that these role responsibilities will contribute to advanced level learners being motivated to improve their language skills. Primarily, the main aim of this study is to better understand the motivations of Māori language learners who have a range of levels of language proficiency.

5. Method

All participants were second language learners rather than native speakers and were of Māori descent. Participants' proficiency ranged from beginner-intermediate level through to advanced level. They had a variety of tribal affiliations and only two participants were living in their tribal region at the time interviews were held. Participants were also asked to choose a pseudonym. Having a pseudonym, rather than a participant number, was thought to provide the reader with greater connection to the participant quotes.

Beginner to intermediate level learners (n = 11; 5 females and 6 males) were undergraduate students at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand in either 100 level (n = 5), 200 level (n = 3), or 300 level (n = 3) courses. The mean age of beginner level learners was 26.8 years. Although two participants in this group were professionals, the majority were students with incomes typical of a student population. Advanced level learners (n = 8; 5 females, 3 males) were graduates of Te Panekiretanga o te reo Māori, a course designed to enhance the language abilities of already proficient speakers. These participants had a higher mean age of 37.1 and were all working professionals.

Participants were also asked whether they would like to be interviewed in te reo Māori or English. All advanced level participants chose to use te reo Māori intermittently during interviews; however, only one participant solely spoke te reo Māori throughout the whole interview. In contrast, beginner to intermediate level learners very rarely used te reo Māori during the interviews. The author provided the translations of the interviews, which were checked by the participants to ensure that the intended meaning was captured correctly. The translations of Māori language texts are noted as footnotes.

Historically, Māori communities' experienced adverse effects in response to participating in Western scientific research that vilified, misrepresented, or plainly ignored Māori people and their knowledge systems (Jackson, 1998; Kingi, 2005). Due to these problematic research practices, Māori researchers have become increasingly encouraged to undertake research in a manner that is consistent with Māori cultural expectations. Having meaningful relationships with participants is congruent with the Kaupapa Māori methodology principle of *Kanohi Kitea* (Smith, 1989), which literally translates as 'a face that is seen.' Participants were engaged with the view that the relationship would be maintained after the completion of this study. It was important to ensure that the participants were not made to feel pressure to participate, and standard ethical guidelines were followed. The School of Psychology Human Ethics Committee at Victoria University of Wellington provided ethical approval for this study.

Students opted to participate in the study after being informed about the nature of the research during their regular class times. Interviews with undergraduate participants were held on campus in culturally appropriate spaces (such as Māori language tutorial rooms or an an indigenous psychology research area) where positive student directed interactions had taken place. One participant was interviewed at their work place due to convenience. As the author was a member of the Māori Studies Department, given the relatively small number of students in the school, undergraduate students who chose to participate were fairly familiar with the interviewer. Students were made aware that their participation in this study was not at all linked to grades that they might receive in Māori Studies courses that they were enrolled in.

Advanced students were also familiar with the interviewer due to shared interests te reo Māori language education. The interviewer had been involved with Māori language training where many of these participants were also in attendance or were teachers. Relationships with the advanced learners may have positively impacted on the data as participants may have been more open during their discussions with the interviewer than with someone who they were less familiar with. In contrast, the relationship between the interviewer and the beginner to intermediate level participants may have led to participants sheltering some of their experiences for self-preservation reasons. Furthermore, some participants may have responded in a way that they thought was pleasing to the interviewer given that the researcher was a member of the HL2 speaking community. For instance, they may have focused more attention on aspects of their motivations that highlighted their ingroup commitment rather than motivations that were less socially redeemable. Although this was not obvious within the data, it is a possible research limitation.

Initially, it was thought that data from both sets of learners would be analysed separately. Therefore, the interview schedule that was used for interviews with advanced level participants included a number of added questions. They were questions about whether these participants had experienced changes in motivation throughout their learning process. During the data analysis phase, it was clear that there were common elements that overlapped both sets of learners. Interview schedules were developed using a review of literature as well as informal discussions with Māori language learners, teachers and experts. The semistructured interview schedules were designed to explore factors relating to language motivation and to investigate how social relationships influenced participants' choices to continue learning te reo Māori to high stages of fluency. Generally, interviews were 58.40 minutes in duration, with an average of 7032 words per transcript. Interviews were recorded using an Olympus Voice-Trek V-51 Digital Voice Recorder. Transcripts were coded with NVivo software.

Each interview recording was first listened to once, where the main points were written down. The recording was then transcribed where additional points that emerged from the recordings were also noted. The transcript was then checked for accuracy and imported into the NVivo software programme, which assists in the management of large quantities of qualitative data. The interviewer was fairly familiar with the transcripts prior to coding. The transcripts were analysed individually. Individual sematic nodes were created; for example "desire to improve communication" or "desire to adequately fulfill cultural roles." Semantic nodes were created from observing meaningful patterns from within the data. Once there were a large number of semantic nodes, nodes that captured similar concepts and were specifically related to the aim of the present research were then grouped together. These clusters were combined to create an overarching theme, consistent with thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes that have been highlighted in this study include those that were commonly reported, as well as being relevant to the overall research aim. Within each of the themes, clusters were reviewed to ensure that codes within a theme fit well together. Furthermore, the multiple themes were reviewed once more to ensure that they fit well together to answer the overarching research aim. Themes were also crossexamined for distinctiveness. On a few occasions, the clusters within a theme were distinct enough to justify subthemes within a larger theme. Finally, themes were defined and labeled to identify the essence of the theme as a whole.

Although many of the experiences discussed by each of the participants were unique to their personal lives, there was generally an idea or concept that tied the quotes within a theme or subtheme together. The quotes that have been selected highlight a point prominent idea that was communicated within the data.

6. Results

The results were grouped into three major themes. These included *Māramatanga:*[1] cultural enlightenment and understanding, followed by *Ngā Takohanga:* responsibilities of Māori HL2 speakers and learners, and, finally, *Whaia te ara:* exploring HL2 motivations of Māori with advanced levels of Māori language abilities. Nodes for the theme Māramatanga were largely made up of participants' desires to connect with *whakapapa* (both living and departed), the role that language plays as a platform for developing relationships with te reo Māori speakers, and the enhanced understanding of the culture.

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[1] 'Enlightenment, insight, understanding, light, meaning, significance,' and 'brainwave' are the meanings provided by Māramatanga (n.d.).

The theme Ngā Takohanga literally translates into English as the 'multiple responsibilities.' Parental responsibilities were discussed by participants as being a major consideration given the endangered nature of te reo Māori. Participants were motivated to improve their language skills in order to provide sound support to their children (or imagined children). Leadership responsibilities in cultural contexts were substantial for both undergraduate and advanced levels of language learners; however, pressure to undertake cultural roles was especially prolific for those who had reached high levels of proficiency.

The final theme Whaia te ara literally translates into English as 'pursuing the path.' Despite the fact that many of the learners had reached high levels of language proficiency, they continued to be motivated to improve their skills. This theme was also divided into two subthemes: instrumental and relational motivations, and language specific motivations. Instrumental and relational motivations were largely tied together. In an environment where te reo Māori is being revitalised, those who have skills are sought after professionally (Jackson & Fischer, 2007) but also by their communities in order to fulfill cultural roles. The subtheme language specific motivations largely consisted of learners wanting to gain a level of understanding of the language that is comparable to native speakers. The desire to learn new vocabulary, idioms, and proverbial sayings was high amongst those with high levels of proficiency. Each of these themes will be discussed in detail as follows.

6.1. Theme 1, Māramatanga: Cultural enlightenment and understanding

The theme Māramatanga includes discussions about how an increase in knowledge contributed to HL2 learners' overall sense of belonging and identity. The word *māramatanga* was chosen as Māori HL2 learners commonly described its multiple meanings. The language provided participants with both a greater feeling of connectedness between speakers of te reo Māori and cultural awareness. These feelings were described in the following excerpt: "*It was a whole opening, and the more the world opens to you, the more better you feel*" (Mahinaarangi, advanced).

Language also provided learners with the tools to engage with others at a relational and cultural level. An example of this is explained in the following excerpt:

> *I'd love to be fluent. I'd love to be able to just be really comfortable to just enter into a room and just chat really easily . . . I just want to be able to really communicate and understand people, because I think that there's more to a language than just words, . . . the concepts behind it, so if you communicate with someone in that language you understand them in a deeper level as well.* (Ana, undergraduate)

Similar to the quote above, Hong, Benet-Martinez, Chiu, and Morris's (2003) research indicated that developing skills in multiple languages provides individuals with enhanced cognition to perceive information from multiple cultural viewpoints. Some Māori learners within this study appear to be developing a greater depth of understanding about the HL2 speaker community and the culture more broadly.

A positive aspect of learning te reo Māori was that learners were able to communicate with greater cultural intimacy. The knowledge of te reo Māori allowed them to understand what was being said, which at a practical level enhanced emotional security.

> *Our grandparents and great grandmother had a house there and their house was a reo Māori house . . . As kids running around and playing amongst that I think there was an invisible motivation that came through. I call it like a spiritual tie between . . . I wanted to unlock the māramatanga to know . . . why they were laughing or swearing, or whatever, or getting heated. . . . So that was a high motivation for me I think. I may not have understood it back then, but now I definitely can relate to that.* (Pānia, advanced)

For those participants who were exposed to te reo Māori in the home, their desire to learn te reo Māori came through indirect exposure to the language. Positive role models who spoke the language contributed to motivation. Furthermore, the deep connection participants have with te reo speakers was highlighted. The intimacy of the relationship between the term *mother tongue* and a HL2 has been emphasised by Padilla and Borsato (2010), which is most definitely the case for many Māori learners of te reo Māori who participated in this study.

For some Māori language learners in this study, te reo Māori provided them with the ability to connect with their ancestors and significant others through the use of imagery that the language provided.

> *My grandfather . . . when I used to hear him speak on the marae,[2] he blows me away, . . . and there's the motivation right there, I want reo like my grandfather's. I want to know how he feels when he speaks. I want to know the thought processes he goes through in order to create a world within his words. I want to know why he does it. You know all of those things. I want to know how he feels when he gets up and speaks on his marae.* (Puawai, advanced)

There is an element of pride in being able to speak on one's own marae. The cultural significance of being able to understand the internal thought processes of older generations is also embedded within this quote. Furthemore, being able to fulfil the role and expectations in a cultural sense is also likely to be a motivational driver at this higher stage of proficiency.

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[2] *Marae* is used here to refer to a customary Māori communal space.

6.2. Theme 2, Ngā Takohanga: Responsibilities of HL2 speakers and learners

The second theme, Ngā Takohanga, was broken into two subthemes, parental responsibilities and leadership responsibilities. Those with leadership and/or parental responsibilities often reported that these specific roles were tied to their motivation to become more proficient in te reo Māori.

6.2.1. Theme 2, Subtheme 1: Parental responsibilities

Participants reported feeling responsible for the language choices they made when raising their children. Notably, seven female participants reported that children contributed to their language motivation irrespective of whether or not they were mothers at the time of the interview. Three males also signaled that their children and families motivated them to improve their language, but only in cases where the male was already a father at the time of the interview. Perhaps the social expectations placed on women to be the cultural providers for their children enhanced this gender divide (Syed, 2001).

> *I think ultimately too, I want to know that my reo is correct, that I'm not making any mistakes, 'cause when I use it when I have kids or anything and I want to use it with them, or I want to speak to them in te reo, I don't want to screw them over or anything.* (Te Rina, undergraduate)

Participants' heritage connection to te reo Māori meant that their language responsibilities to their children were high. Being able to correct their children was consistent with "good parenting." Hēni explains:

> *When I spoke poorly* [in English], *my father would always correct me, no matter how many people were there. . . . Once my daughter engaged in this* [Māori language] *environment, and the more we committed to speaking Māori to her, I thought, oh gosh, I don't want to get a stage where she's speaking really poorly and a) I don't know she's speaking poorly, and b) wouldn't have a clue as to how to correct her, because if she'd done that in English, I'd know and correct her straight away. . . . I thought oh good grief, I can't let her become an experiment, I've got to engage, learn and always keep a step ahead of her, otherwise if I can't do that, then I've failed her of sorts.* (Hēni, advanced)

Speakers without children understood how having children benefited the language outcomes of fellow students.

[my friend] *could kōrero te reo ki te kāinga ki tāna tama, i taua wā hoki, i whānau mai tāna tama.*[3] *And I was thinking, that's more of a motivation for yourself as a parent as well. You're wanting to nurture your child in this language. And you've got to have more, and be more fluent.* (Mahinaarangi, advanced)

It was well understood by participants that the goal of the parent was to nurture their child. While participants varied in the level of active support that they received by their parents, most participants described that their parents influenced their decision to learn te reo Māori in some way. Some participants recalled not having the ability to communicate with their parents in te reo Māori, while others had parents who were native speakers. However, generally te reo Māori was not the main language of communication. Hoani describes a childhood memory:

Maumahara tonu au i hoki atu au ki te kāinga, e kite atu au i taku pāpa e tunu kai ana, kātahi ka mea atu au ki taku pāpa "E pāpa, he tangata kōrero Māori koe?" Nā te mea ko tētahi o āku tino kaupapa i te kura tino pai ki ahau ko te reo Māori. Kātahi, ka whakaatu atu tāku mahi, mahi kāinga ki a ia, i te kimi āwhina kia tutuki pai taku mahi kāinga. Engari, kite atu au te kūare, te kore mōhio, te matakohore, i a ia e whakaaro atu ana, i reira i toko ake te whakaaro, e kī, kāore taku pāpa e tino mōhio ana ki te kōrero Māori. I kite atu hoki te pōuri i roto i a ia i taua wā tonu. Nā, mai i aua wā, tae noa ki ēnei rangi tonu, kua kī ake au ki ahau anō, kia kore rawa āku tamariki e tupu ake pērā ana.[4] (Hoani, advanced)

The interaction described above is highly emotional for those Māori HL2 learners who can relate to similar experiences. It is the perspective of a child seeing his father's anguish as he reveals to his son that he cannot speak his HL2.

For participants who were parents, being unable to engage with their child in te reo Māori was an uncomfortable experience. Timothy explains how he felt about not being able to communicate basic concepts or instructions to his children using te reo Māori prior to learning:

I think it's just 'cause te reo Māori is a strong language. You know, it's my own language, it's my family's language, and for me to not be in the mix, it's just sort of heart breaking really. . . . to be outside the bubble you know. Everyone starts having

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[3] 'Speak the language at home to her son at that time, when her son was born'

[4] 'I still remember returning home and seeing my father cooking dinner, I asked him "Dad, do you speak Māori?" because one of my favourite topics at school was the Māori language. Then I showed him my work, I was looking for guidance to complete my homework properly. However, I saw then as he was trying to work it out that he didn't really understand, at that point I realised, oh, my father doesn't really know how to speak Māori. I also saw the sadness that resided in him at that time. So, from that point in time till now, I've said to myself, my children will never grow up that way.'

> a big *kōrero*,[5] *and you're just outside the bubble. You don't even know what's going on.* (Timothy, undergraduate)

Being 'outside the bubble' is an image that is easy to conjure. Not being able to communicate in one's own HL2 is likely to be highly damaging for individuals who feel unable to change their situation. For instance, McIntosh (2005) explains,

> for many Māori, the inability to converse in *te reo* also works to exclude them in different fora. This lack of ability is heightened in an environment where the language is being revitalised. The sense of shame experienced by those who are non-speakers is very real. (p. 45)

However, of note is that the participants of this study all had access to language-learning facilities and were engaged with language learning.

Participants were motivated by a desire to continue their cultural heritage through using the language with their children.

> *I guess for me it's very personal, being Māori and being able to converse in my mother tongue. You know, and not just for me, but for my children, and I want to be able to develop that that desire within my own family, with my cousins and their kids*[.] (Hori, undergraduate)

Māori parents who choose to learn te reo Māori are likely to be doing so due to reasons related to cultural preservation or maintenance. Responsibilities that many Māori HL2 learners, who are also parents, feel toward their children significantly contribute to Māori language motivation.

6.2.2. Theme 2, Subtheme 2: Leadership responsibilities

The second subtheme concerns the leadership responsibilities that came with being an HL2 learner in a situation where the health of the language was at risk. Participants who had been placed in leadership positions reported experiencing significant pressure to take on roles, particularly as the language was a necessary skill required in order to feel adequate in such roles.

> *Some of those responsibilities within my cousins, and within my generation are directed towards me as well. Having um, having achieved within my whānau[6] some of the things I've done, people sort of naturally look up to you, but um, you know I look at that as being part of the Pākehā[7] world and so on. But I need to, for my own um,*

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[5] 'Discussion'

[6] 'Family'

[7] 'New Zealand European/mainstream New Zealand'

um identity and peace of mind, I have to expand my Māori knowledge of tikanga[8] and te reo, so that in the future I just don't have half of it, I have the whole package. (Hori, undergraduate)

Language achievements the HL2 learners made were shared by significant others. The performance-based roles that participants were asked to enact were roles that held *mana*.[9] Because of the honour that HL2 learners felt toward performing such roles, the roles were also very stressful for many HL2 learners especially when the HL2 learner's language skills were limited.

[I thought] *I won't have to do it, then one day, my tutor came up to me* [and said] *"I want you to do the mihi,[10] I want you to do the whaikōrero,"[11] I said to him, "I don't want to do it. I'm not capable of doing it and I'm not going to do it in front of them."* (Timothy, undergraduate)

The public performance aspects of formal Māori cultural roles were difficult for beginner level speakers to take on. With little formal training in the art of whaikōrero, it was common for participants to describe feeling daunted by the challenge. Many beginner-level participants, particularly males, reported how formal cultural roles contributed to them wanting to improve their language skills. Aotea says:

I want to be able to stand up on any marae, introduce myself properly, whakapapa[12] myself appropriately . . . I just don't want to get up and say tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou[13] this is why I'm here and sit down, I want to be able to pay the right respects. (Aotea, undergraduate)

The ability to connect with others through relationships (including *whakapapa*[14] relationships) is a central feature discussed by participants. Having the ability to achieve this successfully is not only reliant on the knowledge of such relationships but also on having the language to accurately articulate how parties are connected. These values are linked to Durie's (2001) observations that Māori preferences for collectivism are still active within Māori language speaking domains.

There were pressures to perform in formal situations for both genders' roles. The pressure of having to speak during formal occasions motivated some participants.

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[8] 'Customary protocols'

[9] 'Prestige'

[10] Introductions or greetings

[11] Formal speech making

[12] 'Ancestry'

[13] A basic formal greeting

[14] 'Ancestral'

My husband would have been [motivated by] *the death of his father, and that happened two years before our daughter was born. . . . Births and deaths are triggers in a cultural context. Most people arrive at a tangi[15] and yeah, surprised to find, I can't mihi, I can't haka,[16] I can't really engage in the formalities or a process of sorts.* (Hēni, advanced)

Having the ability to farewell the dead in culturally appropriate ways is likely to incite motivation. Those who do not have the language skills to engage in these contexts can feel excluded and unable to participate during these intensely emotional times (Edge, Nikora, & Rua, 2011).

Many advanced level Māori HL2 learners in this study, who had been selected as leaders within their group, explained that as they began to gain higher levels of proficiency they also began to feel the pressure associated with their role responsibilities. The responsibilities that accompanied higher levels of language proficiency meant that advanced learners were taking on roles as a result of their language progress: "*Here* [as my language skills increased], *the motivation started to change a little bit because it was more about trying to take a lead role in my whānau, my extended whānau on my mum's side*" (Herewini, advanced). The more proficiency individuals had, the greater their responsibilities became. They were often singled out for the language skills they had acquired.

Especially when the older you get, the more responsibility does fall on your shoulders and when we did Te Panekiretanga, it came as a real shock as how little fluent speakers, kaikaranga,[17] kaiwhaikōrero[18] there are out there, 'cause we had to research your own marae, hapū,[19] whatever. And go around, who actually knows how to karanga[20] in every situation, ahakoa te kaupapa.[21] Whakapapa,[22] ngā pao[23] and all of that kind of stuff, you could really count them on one hand. It never used to be like that, it's more of a responsibility, your reo is a huge responsibility. (Mahinaarangi, advanced)

As a result of becoming HL2 learners and the fact that they were exposed to a number of people who worked in the area of Māori language revitalisation,

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[15] A formal Māori funeral ceremony

[16] Ceremonial cultural dance

[17] Literally translated as "caller - the woman (or women) who has the role of making the ceremonial call to visitors onto a marae, or equivalent venue, at the start of a pōwhiri (ceremonial welcome)" (Kaikaranga, n.d.).

[18] The person tasked with "formal speech-making - formal speeches usually made by men during a pōwhiri and other gatherings" (Kaiwhaikōrero, n.d.).

[19] 'Subtribe'

[20] 'To call or summon, used in the context of pōwhiri'

[21] 'Irrespective of the occasion'

[22] 'Ancestry'

[23] *Ngā* is a plural version of 'the,' and *pao* in this case describes "a short, impromptu topical song" that is sung in response to a given occasion (Pao, n.d.).

some participants noted that they had a heightened sense of awareness about the dire state of the language. For many speakers, they were one of few within their immediate family, or wider community, who could conduct particular cultural roles using te reo Māori. Moreover, as advanced learners became more proficient in te reo, the number of native speakers who could guide or mentor them became more limited. Being made aware of the health of the Māori language meant that many advanced-level speakers were left with an immense sense of responsibility for the maintenance and revitalisation of the language.

6.3. Theme 3, Whaia te ara: Exploring HL2 motivations of Māori with advanced levels of Māori language abilities

The third theme was divided into two subthemes, instrumental motivations and language-specific motivations. Instrumental motivations were commonly coupled with relationally based motivations whereby individuals were able to use their skills in order to support others to learn te reo Māori. The second subtheme was the commonly discussed desire to be "more native" in language delivery. These are discussed in the following two subsections.

6.3.1. Theme 3, Subtheme 1: Instrumental and relational motivations

A positive outcome for many participants who had advanced levels of proficiency was that they were able to gain employment opportunities that supported their language development.

> *Reo opportunities, learning is earning* [laugh] *. . . Because it can provide you with good money. . . . Educational opportunities. Numerous opportunities. Just so much, and that's filtered down to my own kids who are teachers as well.* (Riria, advanced)

Many participants in this study were educators or involved with education. Given that there are so few highly fluent te reo Māori speakers, their skills are in high demand in the community but also from employers, as demonstrated by Jackson and Fischer (2007). Employers emphasized in this study that the ability of Māori to use te reo Māori was a key reason for the prioritisation of selecting high-merit Māori over non-Māori. Mahinaarangi explains a benefit of her language proficiency: "*Higher pay cheque* [laugh] *and more access to other speakers, that would be the hugest* [benefit]" (Mahinaarangi, advanced). Humour was often a means of explaining that pay was a motivation to continue to improve language abilities. Having access to other speakers not only motivated individuals to improve, but it also enabled them to increase their proficiency.

The types of careers participants were employed in were "other" focused roles. For instance, Pānia explains how her self-improvement in the language is directly linked to her relational connection with other learners:

> *Now that I'm more proficient and fluent in te reo, my motivation is to be the best that I can, to continue to be the best that I can be with te reo and then pass on that reo knowledge to others who are willing to learn. I understand the power that you feel as a person because you've unlocked a door to your cultural heritage.* (Pānia, advanced)

Advanced learners had often chosen teaching- or education-based vocations as a way of sharing their knowledge with others.

6.3.2. Theme 3, Subtheme 2: Language-specific motivations

Increasing language competence through increased knowledge about language features such as *kīwaha*, [24] *whakataukī*, [25] and dialectal differences were raised as aspects that sustained motivation at higher levels of proficiency.

> *That basic* [motivation] *is still with me now. How can I communicate better, and I still use those techniques they taught me . . . when I've got to prep to do a whaikōrero, hopefully, like I say, my vocabulary is improving and my ability to select my appropriate whakataukī are improving over time. So my basic core motivation is to be, get better, and to be a better practitioner and also to be a better teacher.* (Matiu, advanced)

There was a view that HL2 learning was continuous, and that there was no end to improving their language skills. Wanting to sound as much like a native speaker as possible was a key component of mastering language fluency.

> *So native, as close to native delivery of te reo as possible. Saying things like, tutukī[26] as opposed to tūtuki,[27] the stress on the word can make a big difference. Knowing several words for one thing.* (Pānia, advanced)

> *When you become more fluent, you are looking for better ways of saying the same thing. You're always listening out for how more native speakers say it and a more figurative way of saying something rather than your black and white stuff. That's my motivation now is how I'm going to get better and trying to aim to be more eloquent.* (Mahinaarangi, advanced)

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[24] 'Colloquialisms'

[25] 'Proverbial sayings'

[26] 'To be finished or complete'

[27] 'To collide or stumble'

7. Discussion

This study was designed to explore the range of factors that contributed to Māori HL2 learner motivations. The results of this study confirmed that some Māori HL2 learners hold a number of cultural roles and responsibilities, and that the language is central to many Māori HL2 learners' ability to successfully enact such roles. Unlike learners of globally dominant languages, Māori HL2 learners have an immense sense of obligation toward maintaining the language for future generations. The fact that Māori learners are aware of the possibility of language death is unavoidably linked to their motivation to initiate language learning behaviour and to improve their language abilities even if they are already proficient.

In cultures where the language is endangered it becomes much more than a means of communication. As Padilla and Borsato (2010) explain, "not only does language serve as a means of interpersonal communication between members of the group but also it can be used to effectively establish boundaries between the in-group and out-group" (p. 12). Motivations to learn te reo Māori also come from a desire to be considered a valid and valued ingroup member of the language speaking community, as observed in similar research by Vedder and Virta (2005). Those who are supported to achieve higher levels of proficiency are likely to experience some of the positive emotions associated with ingroup membership status and feelings of belonging. Furthermore, the language abilities of proficient Māori HL2 may allow them to participate in cultural engagements where te reo Māori is the main form of communication. Being able to participate meaningfully in Māori language environments is likely to enhance the degree to which Māori HL2 members feel that they have a right to their ingroup membership.

Through repeated contact with the target language group, it is likely that learners' decision to improve their language abilities is reaffirmed and positively rewarded. Similar to the concept of language investment (Norton, 1997), Māori HL2 learners receive a set of symbolic and material resources as a result of their personal decision to learn the HL2. The capacity of already proficient learners to accumulate resources due to their language abilities could account for why some Māori HL2 learners continue to improve their language skills despite being already competent language speakers.

In contrast to the experiences of highly proficient Māori HL2 learners is the fear and anxiety experienced by Māori HL2 learners with limited language abilities. A difficulty for Māori HL2 learners with limited language skills is the fear and anxiety attached to being in spaces where they are expected to know the language. As Māori language abilities are commonly associated with ingroup membership (for instance, being able to claim a Māori identity) (Kāretu, 1993;

McIntosh, 2005), when individuals do not possess functional levels of Māori language, they may equate such linguistic limitations with an inability to claim a Māori identity. For instance, those with low Māori language skills may presume that others may view them as inauthentic members of the cultural group (McIntosh, 2005). Heightened levels of anxiety in language speaking contexts are likely to prevent Māori with limited or no Māori language skills from being positively engaged with the culture due to a perceived threat to their identity (Penetito, 2011). Future research could perhaps investigate the perspectives of Māori who choose to withdraw from language domains to contribute to a better understanding of these experiences.

The goal of cultural and language revitalisation is something which is commonly acknowledged by language planners and those involved with language revitalisation. As, Kāretu (2008) explains, "for fear that our ancestors exclaim: 'The language was completely thriving during our time, what on earth did you do to it?,' what might you say in response to your ancestors, or your own descendants when their time comes?" (p. 2).[28] Māori HL2 learners' goals for language revitalisation were motivating for some participants in this study. However, the desire to satisfy their immediate identity needs and the shared goals of their language-learner community were more urgent (or pertinent) than the larger goal of language revitalisation. There appeared to be a bi-directional relationship between language revitalisation and individual-level motivations in that by using the language revitalisation is also being implemented, which is consistent with King's (2007) findings.

The results of this study were similar to HL2 studies that have indicated that women take on additional cultural maintenance responsibilities (Syed, 2001). New Zealand census data showed that 12% of Māori women are able to converse to a high degree about everyday events at a high level of proficiency, while only 9% of Māori males are able to do the same (Statistics New Zealand, 2014b). The gender difference may be related to findings from the previous research (Kalafatelis, 2010) signifying that child-rearing responsibilities are considerable language-learner motivations for Māori women. If women are motivated to use the language for functional purposes, including day-to-day integenerational transmission, this could contribute to the gender discrepancy in HL2 acquisition.

Those with even minimal language skills reported that the language proficiency they had acquired provided them with an alternative worldview. This study affirms that language abilities enhance new forms of holistic thought

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[28] The translation is the present author's. The original quotation is as follows: "Kei kī hoki ō tātou tīpuna ā taua wā rā, 'I te ora rawa atu te reo i te wā i a mātou i aha kētia e koutou?' He aha tāu ka urupare atu ki a rātou, ki ō uri rānei ā te wā ki a rātou?" (Kāretu, 2008, p. 2).

(Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001) that resounded with traditional Māori concepts to a considerable degree (Durie, 2001). The ability to switch cultural frames (Hong et al., 2003) effectively was perhaps an outcome for Māori HL2 learners as they internalised the cultural values of their Māori community.

As most participants were already familiar with Pākehā behavioural norms, the ability to adapt in Māori contexts was positive for both psychological adaption and for relationship building. Similar to identity negotiation theory put forward by Ting-Toomey (2005), research could explore whether Māori HL2 learners develop skills to engage in identity negotiation more readily than monolingual Māori speakers of English. Furthermore, Māori HL2 learners may enhance their ability to negotiate cultural orientations dependent on the cultural values prioritised in their varying language environments.

A limitation of this research was that the experiences of those who had perhaps attempted to learn te reo Māori and had withdrawn from the process of learning were not included in this study. The views of these individuals may help to provide insights as to why some Māori disengage from the learning process. It is possible that Māori who are not supported through having strong relational ties with the culture may find it difficult to sustain the motivation to continue. Taking into account the concept of investment (Norton, 1997; Norton & Toohey, 2001), it is likely that those who are highly invested in being viewed as culturally mandated ingroup members of the language speaking community would have more to gain from improving their language skills.

This study does not assume that language motivations of Māori are directly transferable to the motivations of other indigenous populations or to HL2 learners globally. The experiences of colonisation that indigenous peoples have been subjected to are likely to influence language learning motivation in a number of distinct ways. However, what indigenous HL2 communities have in common (as observed by Fishman, 2001) is the low numbers of speakers. For indigenous HL2 learners to progress in becoming proficient target language speakers, it is necessary to develop relationships with the speaker population outside of the classroom. For some learners, this process may inadvertently assist in the process of cultural knowledge sharing and thus contribute to the wider goal of indigenous cultural maintenance and/or revitalisation.

8. Conclusion

Research findings from this study can be linked to universal experiences of second language learners in the sense that learners may develop increased levels of motivation due to the current or future rewards that they receive from the target language community. However, what distinguishes Māori HL2 learners, indigenous to

Aotearoa, New Zealand, is their cultural and spiritual connection with both the language and the past and present speakers of that language. The history of colonisation that has directly influenced the current state of te reo Māori is one which has contemporary consequences for Māori HL2 learners and the future of the language as a whole. The process of reclaiming a Māori identity is also deeply entrenched in the politics surrounding language motivation. In order for Māori HL2 motivations to be better understood, it is vital that the historical colonial context of language oppression, and that the contemporary efforts of revitalization, be considered.

When exploring HL2 learner motivations more broadly, perhaps what many HL2 learners globally share in common is the ability to use the HL2 as a vehicle for informing its language speakers about the values of HL2 communities (both living and deceased). Furthermore, the personal nature of language learning for HL2 learners may have implications for social identity at an individual level and the confidence to claim ingroup membership at a collective level. Those who are able to connect with their identity and heritage culture through the act of language learning are likely to be empowered to create further bonds with the target culture. These questions could be explored further in future research that focuses specifically on the role of HL2 learners' cultural identity processes at both the group and individual level.

Acknowledgements

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