

– ARTICLE –

New Land, New Opportunities, New Language: Māori Television and Migrants Learning Te Reo

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Abstract

Te reo Māori is one of the official languages of New Zealand. Many migrants from non-English speaking nations, however, are surprised at the monolingualism of New Zealand and the apparent tokenism in use of te reo. Often migrants arrive ready to acquire a level of te reo Māori because of their own multilingual background. This paper explores the extent to which Māori Television provides cultural resources for migrants to increase te reo skills and vocabulary and to engender an interest for further engagement with te reo Māori, and suggests that engaging in learning te reo contributes to Māori Television's language revitalisation outcomes. Improved understanding of the distinctive use of te reo Māori within the everyday lexicon of New Zealand English contributed to a sense of belonging for many of the participants. All of these findings suggest the level of support migrants can offer Māori language revitalisation initiatives may be unrecognised.

Te reo Māori is one of the official languages of New Zealand. Many migrants from non-English speaking nations, however, are surprised at the monolingualism of New Zealand and the apparent tokenism in the use of te reo. Migrants arrive in New Zealand ready to engage with a level of te reo acquisition because they often come from sophisticated multilingual backgrounds where speaking and understanding many languages on a daily basis is not uncommon.

Viewing Māori Television is one way such expectations can be fulfilled. This paper, taken from a larger quantitative and qualitative research project of 70 migrants, presents findings from the qualitative section comprised of 25 participants from a range of ethnic backgrounds talking about their experiences of and observations on their engagement with te reo Māori via Māori Television in either focus group discussions or one-on-one interviews.

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Research by Te Māngai Pāho (*Māori Broadcast Funding Agency*) demonstrated that 'Māori programming, and Māori Television specifically, continues to play an important role in terms of both providing opportunity and, more importantly, helping to improve both te reo ability and understanding of Māori culture' (TNS Conversa 2015, 27). Understanding the extent to which language and culture go hand in hand was highlighted by a Māori Broadcasting Language Impact Evaluation Report (Māori Television 2017)¹ that found 30 percent of non-Māori were receptive to te reo Māori and had increased their understanding of Māori culture as a result of Māori Television's digital and linear offerings. These results suggest that the broadcaster has used its multi-platform media to its strategic advantage, and should therefore reassure the government funders² that the broadcaster is contributing to the revitalisation and protection of te reo Māori. But are the government funders also aware that Māori Television has the potential to offer new migrants cultural resources, such as 'valuing, embracing and speaking te reo',³ as a way to understand the entangled historical and contemporary relationship between Pākehā and Māori?

While the Treaty of Waitangi provided the legal basis for Māori Television, it took more than 30 years of political agitation for the broadcaster to emerge. Unreservedly Māori Television tells Māori stories, made by Māori for Māori. But the broadcaster also attracts non-te reo-speaking and non-Māori audiences, diverting them away from 'mainstream media providers by using new and novel content as the bait' (Smith 2016, 70). Māori Television, with its strategic direction based on inclusivity, defines this audience as 'Māori and Non-Māori viewers who are receptive to Māori language and culture' (Māori Television 2015, 17).

Participants in the current study are members of what Māori Television would define as their 'receptive' audience. For such audiences, there are numerous popular generic-style programmes with a Māori twist, such as Māori-themed cooking or musical talent quest shows, that offer an alternative to mainstream programmes, as well as news and current affairs, international films, family-oriented mainstream films and documentaries. While many programmes are exclusively in either English or te reo, some programmes, such as *Kai Time on the Road*, have a language-learning component (subtitles or immediate translation by the presenter). Programmes with different language-learning components reflect a tension for the indigenous broadcaster between, on the one hand, catering for Māori audiences (some of whom are te reo speakers) as well as a broader audience, and, on the other, the need to fulfil the expectations of government funders (Smith 2016).

Migrant participants in this study reported engaging with te reo Māori via Māori Television for different reasons and experiencing different types of outcomes from that engagement. These results suggest that passive language acquisition experienced by the participants could be considered a successful outcome for Māori Television under the rubric of promoting the revitalisation of te reo Māori.

Research Procedure

Research findings cover the results of a television audience study where focus group participants viewed New Zealand's indigenous public broadcaster, Māori Television, for two months in 2015 from the first week of February to the last week of March. In the larger research project, an initial online snowball survey gathered quantitative data on general viewing habits. This survey invited respondents to provide their details if they were interested in further research through involvement in focus groups.

The range of minority ethnicities involved in the qualitative section of the survey was limited by the online reach of the snowball methodology. However, I had sufficient numbers of minority ethnic participants to create four distinct groups based on how they identified themselves: 1) Those from the PRC (People's Republic of China); 2) Indian, Fijian Indian, and Sri Lankan; 3) Eastern European; and 4) Western European. All the participants had been resident in New Zealand for between one and ten years. Each focus group met face to face before and after the viewing period, and communicated during the two months' research period via Facebook group discussions. Interviews were also held with those participants who, because of time pressures, could not make a commitment to be part of the focus-group discussions.

Participants watched a range of on-air and on-demand programming that interested them on Māori Television.⁴ They also viewed on-demand programmes that either fellow Facebook group members shared or I had posted to encourage participants to discuss guideline questions, such as how participants perceived a difference between 'mainstream' and Māori television, whether the broadcaster contributed to a better understanding of a Māori perspective on issues and concerns, the extent to which they found a connection between their own and Māori culture, and whether Māori Television helped with understanding te reo. Using a mixed-method approach, the study used data from the quantitative online survey, focus-group discussions and interviews.

In total, there were 70 respondents to the quantitative online survey, 16 of whom committed to the two-month interactive focus-group research, and another nine agreed to be interviewed about their viewing experiences. Some of the 25 interview and focus-group participants provided quite poignant comments that captured in a few expressive words a theme that many others also raised. For this article comments were selected from 10 of the 25 participants because they are representative of themes that emerged from all four focus groups and the nine interviews.

Thematic analysis of the discussions and interviews revealed that many participants felt Māori Television helped them to address issues of belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand in three main areas: learning te reo, understanding to some extent the intentions of the Treaty of Waitangi, and finding a commonality between some aspects of their own cultural values and those of Māori.

Reasons for Engaging in -on Māori Television

This section looks briefly at three main reasons the study group gave for watching Māori Television — entertainment, te reo as a cultural requirement for living in New Zealand, and acculturation — and considers the extent to which participant's exposure to Māori Television and te reo contributed to a passive learning of the language, intentionally or unintentionally. Passive language acquisition is discussed more fully below.

Entertainment was the first reason given. Some programmes also contributed to a form of 'passive' language learning.

I do like the Māori language show [the drama, *Kōrero Mai*]. They repeat words. I did like that but generally, no, it hasn't help me learn the language, it just helped me learn a few words and recognise them. Maybe I need to consciously try to learn the language but I didn't, but I like the show and its contents. (Rahul, Indian)

In Rahul's case, even though he is not actively learning te reo Māori, he is identifying and recognising some limited vocabulary.⁵ While *Kōrero Mai* might be designed explicitly to offer language learning through a drama format, other prime-time Māori Television-produced programmes, such the popular comedy drama *How to Find Me a Māori Bride*, are examples of implicit language-learning opportunities through the use of English subtitles for selected key words such as *wero* (*challenge*), referring to the difficulty protagonists had in finding a Māori bride.

Many migrants come from countries where more than one language or dialect is spoken or understood as part of everyday life. Living in New Zealand's predominantly monolingual country is unfamiliar to them. This could be one reason some participants felt strongly about the second reason for language learning through Māori Television — wanting to learn te reo Māori, both as an official language and as a cultural requirement for living in New Zealand.

As a migrant, I felt a need to learn te reo the first year I came to New Zealand. I come from a culture where learning a foreign language is compulsory. I studied four at one point of my schooling years. I am a believer that 'in order to enter a world, one needs to enter its language'. I cannot remember who said that, but it is wise. (Laure, French)

I came here expecting to learn Māori as on Immigration New Zealand's website it says te reo Māori is an official language. I was quite surprised when I arrived, it was quite monolingual. (Shahi, Indian)

However, unsupportive mainstream attitudes⁶ discouraged some migrants, even when the desire to learn was present. Sally had enrolled in te reo language courses but ended up feeling despondent about continuing because of a feeling that her efforts were

unsupported in her workplace and day-to-day interactions. However, in the course of being involved in this research project, viewing Māori Television and sharing with her focus group, her interest was renewed in gaining more te reo fluency and vocabulary.

For me, I feel more affirmed and encouraged to study te reo. In the business world no-one mentions learning Māori but as a schoolteacher, you are. Sometimes I did feel am I wasting my time learning Māori but after watching Māori Television I just feel a lot more affirmed and strengthened to pursue language, whereas if I was in the business world I would have no encouragement. It's strengthened my hope that learning te reo is a good thing. (Sally, North American)

Sally's experience shows that although some migrants' expectation of learning te reo Māori is supportive of a more general acceptance of Māori language and culture amongst migrant groups, it can be undermined by a lack of support from mainstream society. According to Fishman (1991, 1997), successful long-term adoption of a minority language in a country depends on a mix of real political will together with cultural support. In the media cultural support for te reo predominantly comes from Māori Television, with some limited, and arguably token, support in the form of off-peak programming from state-owned Television New Zealand.⁷

Political will is less obvious. For example, in 2015 New Zealand's then Prime Minister John Key responded to a schoolgirl's suggestion that New Zealand has a Māori language month rather than the usual Māori language week by suggesting it would be boring (Fagan and Day 2015). Although Key later defended his statement by saying that a month would lose the intensity of the annual week, Māori academic Rawinia Higgins (2015, 18:20) in the video of her conference presentation suggests Key's position reinforces the view that 'te reo is still considered as not being important, nor is it part of any vision to see a functioning bilingual New Zealand'.

Widespread revitalisation of te reo Māori amongst mainstream New Zealand also may not be what some Māori want. Although not specifically referring to migrants' learning te reo Māori, Ngaha's (2011) study on Māori attitudes towards non-Māori learning te reo found that Māori participants overall were not in favour of compulsory acquisition and had mixed feelings about non-Māori learning the language. She discovered that some Māori were concerned about the mispronunciation of te reo and that many words can only be translated appropriately in a particular cultural context — a context non-Māori are unlikely to fully understand. Some of Ngaha's (2011) participants, based on their experience of a Pākehā history of cultural appropriation and disrespect for Māori, were particularly against non-Māori using the language.

Ambivalent feelings about non-Māori learning te reo became apparent in the current study. One participant, who had previously learned some of the language, was sensitive to the fact that speaking te reo might be seen by Māori as cultural appropriation and used by non-Māori for questionable reasons. She did not feel she wanted to use te reo

Māori to give her a sense of belonging; rather she wanted to use the language as a statement to demonstrate her political support for the revitalisation of Māori language and culture to redress the imbalances of on-going colonialism.

I don't use te reo I have learned for a sense of belonging, it is more a political statement. I can understand it but for myself, I find it more problematic – a bit more into the slippery slope of appropriation stuff – using it to give yourself a sense of belonging or mana. It's just a personal thing. (Jessica, German)

Another participant felt keenly the sensitivities of some Māori surrounding non-Māori speaking the language.

I've taken some te reo classes, it was a beginners' class and once I used it [teaching students] and I could see in some eyes it was, 'how dare you use my language' and then I stopped. They didn't say it but I felt it was like 'you're just a foreigner'. I thought this is not my territory – I was just learning it because I like learning languages. (Laure, French)

Irrespective of debates about whether or not non-Māori should learn te reo, Māori Television continues to be bound by its founding legislation to be inclusive of all audiences and its language strategy concurs with Higgins' call for an overall strategic vision for Māori that is inclusive of non-Māori. She says, 'we cannot get locked into some sort of binary position that keeps Māori in and non-Māori out' (Higgins 2015, 32:18).

In this present study, although migrants from Western Europe felt this sense of censure most, it was not shared by everyone.

Māori is pronounced quite similarly to Chinese so it has been easy for me to learn some Māori, words and phrases. I then practice with Māori work colleagues and they are very happy. (Charlie, PRC Chinese)

I often find in my work in community development I am working with Māori. I pick up some words here and there especially after watching Māori Television. Sometimes I struggle with remembering how to pronounce te reo but they are very encouraging and help me. (Lucia, Hungarian)

This study did not address in what ways Māori might feel towards different ethnicities learning te reo. Possibly Māori may be more supportive of visibly different migrants speaking te reo. Veracini (2012) suggests shared migrant and indigenous experiences of being 'othered' by the dominant settler-colonial culture can potentially lead to shared alliances. For example, Māori and Chinese shared many commonalities as a result of negative experiences from 'mainstream' New Zealand (Lee cited in Mutu 2009). However, a study by West-Newman (2015) found Māori attitudes to new migrants are possibly more nuanced. Her study was based on Māori attitudes to refugees and,

although there are no immediate parallels to the migration experience of the participants in my study, Newman-West makes the observation that ‘those [Māori] who were most sympathetic towards refugees tended also to draw a parallel between the newcomer’s situation and their own as a colonised people who at times had felt like refugees within their own country’ (West-Newman 2015, 17).

Likewise, migrants from non-Western origins often experience the exclusionary effects of structural and systematic practices from on-going settler colonialism. Hence, it may be that Māori are more supportive of those migrants, who share a similar marginalisation in New Zealand, to learning te reo. More research is needed in this area to examine what, if any, differences there are in responses by Māori to various migrant groups learning and speaking te reo.

The third reason participants gave for language learning through Māori Television is that te reo assisted with a sense of acculturation. The study found that learning te reo had the potential to provide emotional benefits for migrants and a sense of psychological adjustment to living in a new country. Charlie, a migrant from the People’s Republic of China (PRC), said he wanted to understand some of the language because it helped him to engage with the history and culture of an integral, but minority, host culture in New Zealand.

In describing his experience, he used the term ‘acculturation’ that Liu, Gallois and Volčič describe as ‘a process whereby immigrants are integrated into the host country environment and [it] is essential to being able to move between two cultures and in and out of different cultural world views effectively as the circumstances and situations demand’ (Liu et al. 2010, 210). The important point here is that acculturation is a process where there are significant variations at the individual level in how people acculturate — culturally and psychologically — and how well they adapt to this process (Sam and Berry 2010). Bennett, Bennett and Alan (2003) describe a continuum of attitudes from ethnocentric stages of denial and defensiveness towards other cultural views to ethno-relative stages of adaption and integration and an increasing ability to adapt behaviour and communication inter-culturally, as reflected by this participant below.

The more I understand and pick up words from Māori Television means sometimes when I go to work the next day I can start a conversation with my Māori colleagues practising what I have learned. So it does help. I feel that learning some te reo helps me to feel I belong. It helps me navigate my way in terms of identity. I say ‘navigate’ because we struggle with our own ethnic world and the nationality of being a New Zealander and living amongst a very diverse community. (Jenny, Fijian Indian)

Charlie and Jenny work in what might broadly be called social service environments where they interact with Māori colleagues and clients. In contrast to Ngaha’s (2011) study, they both observe that the acquisition and reinforcement of even limited te reo

vocabulary through Māori Television, when used in interacting with Māori, facilitates the formation of relationships within an intercultural space.

While much of the literature contextualises acculturation as migrant interaction with a host culture, less has been written about integration into a bicultural host nation. Jenny describes this complex issue as ‘navigation’ where a migrant is not only dealing with the host cultures of Māori and Pākehā but also other ethnic migrant groups. Since acculturation is a process, there are many nuanced differences between adaptation and integration. Jenny’s ‘navigation’ suggests she has the conscious ability to adapt behaviours to different cultural norms in her environment.

Bennett et al. (2003) describes adaptation as more about an individual shifting cultural reference points and being intentionally able to change their behaviour as the situation demands. They see this conscious act of adapting as a type of ‘intercultural empathy which involves temporally setting aside one’s own world view’ (Bennett et al. 2003, 251). On the other hand, a fully integrated person is ‘one who can perceive events in cultural context to include their own definitions of identity. For these people the process of shifting cultural perspective becomes a normal part of self and so identity itself becomes a more fluid notion’ (ibid). Jenny appears to feel a tension between adaptation and integration by referring to her identity as a ‘struggle’. Her experience demonstrates the importance of resources for migrants, such as Māori Television, to facilitate a feeling of a ‘sense of place’ in the context of some of the negativity from mainstream media and culture towards migrants in New Zealand.

Assessing the Results from Engaging with Language Learning

Participants discovered a range of language outcomes through engaging in Māori Television programming. The issues they raised can be divided into two main themes — passive language acquisition, and participant awareness of the lack of political status of te reo Māori in New Zealand.

The first theme, passive language acquisition, can take many forms. Its potential value is not about an individual moving directly from *zero* proficiency to *active* fluency but about generating increased awareness and support more broadly. The subsequent shift to more active language use is then easier to achieve (Higgins 2015).

Passive language acquisition is not viewed as successful when using a conventional language-proficiency scale. Higgins argues that an alternative measure of success is the extent to which passive language skills are acquired. The Zero-Passive-Active (ZePA) model of Māori language revitalisation can be used to understand how increased visibility and access to language examples can shift individuals along a trajectory of language use (such as learning phrases, words and correct pronunciation) without the expectation of proficiency (Higgins 2015). The ZePA model highlights how an individual shifting from a position of *zero* language knowledge, to a *passive* level and finally to an *active* level can strengthen the language’s position in society.

The main difference between the ZePA model and other language regeneration models is a refocusing away from an attempt to lift zero-language speakers to being proficient active-language users. Rather, its focus is to generate increased awareness and support for language regeneration in the belief that an eventual shift to active use is easier to achieve. As Higgins says, 'its consummate contribution encourages acceptance and appreciation of the language' (Higgins 2015, 27:36).

Higgins (2015) believes the ZePA approach has the potential to normalise the use of te reo and move towards a more meaningful official recognition. This model has recently been incorporated into Te Māngai Pāho's language revitalisation policy to address how specifically its goals might be met (Te Māngai Pāho 2015b).

Māori Television's language strategy does go some way towards the normalisation of te reo amongst its audiences. While some programming and the exclusive te reo channel encourages 'active speakers', many programmes are produced to encourage right-shifting attitudes and language use.

The shift from Passive to Active means a commitment to operationalising the conscious: transferring the thought to action. We believe there is a greater need to recognise the significance of right-shifting people from a position of Zero to Passive, when there is a strong propensity to become predisposed with right-shifting from Passive to Active. (Higgins and Rewi, 2014, 33)

Participants in my research were not active speakers but the study found several indicators of right-shifting language acquisition — passive to active — from watching Māori Television, particularly because of the use of subtitles⁸ and translations. Participants reported Māori Television had reinforced their existing vocabulary, improved their pronunciation, and increased their understanding of the meaning of individual te reo Māori words.

I have learned some important phrases through my work and I know what mana, mauri, whānau, taonga, manaakitanga, wānanga mean. So when I hear these words, or phrases with these words, in programmes ... I know what is meant and it reinforces that some of them represent familiar concepts found in my own culture. (Mita, Fijian Indian)

I also liked how the reporter's comments were in Māori and translated in English [with the subtitles] — it is indeed a good way to remember Māori words and to practise them in sentences. (Sally, North American)

This type of passive ad hoc language acquisition did not seem to improve fluency in a way that could be measured on a proficiency scale, but could be viewed as successful according to the ZePA model. Some referred to the difficulty of becoming more fluent because of the general lack of tolerance or normalisation within mainstream society.

It is difficult to learn te reo from Māori Television because there are not many opportunities to practise the language but it has helped my pronunciation and learn a few key words that I see often. (Alice, British)

I have sometimes been able to catch an episode or two of Tōku Reo [a television series for beginners of Māori language]. I think they introduce new Māori words and concepts in a very accessible way in the programme, the problem though is retention because of lack of usage and visibility of te reo in the mainstream. (Mihili, Sri Lankan)

Mihili demonstrates here one of the difficulties of minority language revitalisation. The lack of visibility of te reo, observed not only by migrants, could be seen as confirming some of the objections against the 1986 Wai 11 claim for the official recognition of te reo Māori. These objections included beliefs that te reo Māori could not meet the needs of a modern society, that most of New Zealand cannot understand or speak it, that the majority should not be forced to adopt the values and standards of a minority, and that official recognition is an empty gesture (Waitangi Tribunal 1986). Although these comments were made 30 years ago, these types of sentiment, as Higgins (2015) points out, are still expressed by some of those in influential positions, such as former Prime Minister John Key (Fagan and Day 2015).

However, there are other signs of language revitalisation within the nation. Te reo Māori is increasingly being inserted into New Zealand's everyday lexicon and, as Macalister (2005, viii) suggests, that is precisely what makes the New Zealand form of English distinctive. Julia De Bres' (2006) study over a twenty-year period (1984-2004) found an increase in the use of Māori greetings by news presenters, all of whom were non-Māori. Mulholland (2006) observed that te reo Māori had begun to penetrate nearly every aspect of cultural and political life from education and government institutional signage, to the business and service sectors, to New Zealand's iconic nightly television soap opera *Shortland Street*. More recently a 2009 Te Puni Kōkiri (*Ministry of Māori Development*) survey found a steady improvement since 2000 of non-Māori attitudes towards the Māori language. For example, the number of non-Māori who believed not enough te reo was being spoken had risen from 30 to 38 percent (Te Puni Kōkiri 2009, 6).

The participants of the current study had already noticed the use of Māori place names and some te reo Māori words used in the everyday lexicon of New Zealand.

Seeing buildings with Māori names and having Māori place names and hearing the odd word when people are speaking always made me curious about the language. So when I started hearing te reo on Māori Television it just started making me more curious and I would look up some of the words. (Alice, British)

Hearing te reo on Māori Television does help. When you look at the use of the English language today in New Zealand, when New Zealanders speak, they often incorporate quite a few Māori words. (Jenny, Fijian Indian)

Perhaps most importantly, and in support of the ZePA model, the participants reported an increased interest in active learning of the language.

I would like to know more — for me, it is both personal interest in the language as well as political ... It helps me connect to the land and history of New Zealand as I'm a migrant and want to feel a sense of roots here ... I feel a sense of mana when I use the language that I don't feel with English — plus I like the idea of uplifting Māori to a place of respect in our society beyond just a 'formality' ... I like the idea of Māori being a required language in our schools – to cultivate a sense of identity, mana, pride, and connection in all New Zealanders. (Sally, North American)

De Bres (2011) suggests the attitudes and behaviours of majority language speakers play a significant role in the long-term success of minority language initiatives. The emphasis of the participants in the current study were consistent with non-Māori New Zealanders attitudes and behaviours that support Māori language efforts, such as 'attention to pronunciation of Māori words, use of Māori words, and speaking Māori' (De Bres 2008, 40).

Some of the desired outcomes from Māori language promotional campaigns and the principal campaign of Māori Language Week as identified in De Bres' (2008) work are also being met by the 365 days of the year Māori Television is viewed by non-Māori audiences. According to a Te Māngai Pāho commissioned report, the fact that one in four non-Māori view Māori Television programming on a weekly basis (Te Māngai Pāho 2015b, 13) suggests that Māori Television could be promoted to non-Māori audiences by the Māori Language Commission and Te Puni Kōkiri.⁹ The effect of such a proposal should be considered as positive attitudes to te reo by migrants may contribute to an increase in the long-term support of language revitalisation initiatives.

The second theme resulting from language learning by participants in the study was a growing awareness of the lack of political status of te reo Māori.

Higgins (2015) suggests many of the negative attitudes expressed by those opposed to the official recognition of te reo in the Wai 11 claim (Waitangi Tribunal 1986) remain widespread within New Zealand. Migrant participants readily observed these negative attitudes towards te reo within both the mainstream media and wider society and raised the issue of backlash to the use of te reo in mainstream media, and tokenistic approaches to active learning opportunities. Jenny recognised the ambivalent attitude a relentlessly monocultural nation has towards te reo Māori when a weather presenter uses a few te reo words for place names in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her observation referred to a tweet from a TV3 News weather presenter, Kanoa Lloyd, referring to

weekly complaints about ‘slipping odd Māori words’ into weather forecasts, such as using Māori names for the country, and for the North Island and South Island (Lloyd 2015)¹⁰.

The classic example of this for me was on [mainstream channel] TV 3 last week. The weather presenter had been using te reo in her report but it did not go down well with mainstream New Zealand. It's great that TV 3 stood by her. Te reo is one of the official languages of New Zealand. I think it is very strange because on mainstream news there is always a welcome in te reo so why do viewers not like te reo being used on the weather? I think this is an example of the official recognition of Māori culture but, in reality, mainstream New Zealand do not want to know, or be challenged too much by an indigenous presence. (Jenny, Fijian Indian)

Laure found from both her own and her children’s experiences that beyond token offerings it was difficult to progress with learning te reo.

I took classes offered by the Community Education programme when I first arrived in New Zealand — a shame this programme is no longer subsidised. Quickly I became frustrated because only beginners’ classes were offered. From beginners, one could not move to an intermediate level. That made me think that the teaching of te reo is not taken seriously. This thought was confirmed when my kids went to school and only learned the colours and a few numbers in te reo ... Te reo is an official language here and should be taught widely if not made compulsory. Two languages are better than one. (Laure, French)

Like Jenny, she thought that many from the monolingual English mainstream find the official status of te reo Māori challenging despite its legal standing. Laure discovered that viewing Māori Television with its language-learning opportunities provided an antidote to the general lack of learning opportunities she experienced elsewhere. For Laure and Jenny and other participants the normalisation of the language on Māori Television is a direct contrast to the majority of mainstream programming. Many of the participants experienced the loss of the everyday use of their own language, and so were perhaps painfully aware of how some Māori might feel about the status of te reo.

Māori have had to learn English — like most of us — so it is only fair that Pākehā and migrants learn, or at least try to learn, te reo. I strongly feel that bridges between cultures can be built through the teaching and learning of languages ... the idea of making te reo compulsory to create a sense of connection between all New Zealanders is very appealing to me too. I am sure it would work! I like the quote from Cioran: ‘On n’habite pas un pays, on habite une langue. Une patrie, c’est cela et rien d’autre’ [*One does not inhabit a country but a language: A country is this and nothing else*]. (Laure, French)

However, there was also concern that the presence of Māori Television might limit its widespread acceptance of te reo.

So, while the Māori channel is a great source and reflection of indigenous perspectives, it may also have the effect that things like te reo do not become normalised and integrated into the mainstream. Hence you can have ... programmes in te reo all day long without anyone raising an eyebrow but as soon as someone utters a few words in te reo on a mainstream channel they are criticised and threatened. (Jessica, German)

Jessica makes explicit the inherent tension in language rejuvenation policies where language must firstly be nurtured and normalised within a safe environment before being accepted by the wider community.

Conclusion

Migrants in this study demonstrated a positive attitude towards te reo and an interest in engaging in the language-learning and reinforcement opportunities offered by Māori Television. Despite studies such as Ngaha's (2011) revealing a reluctance by some Māori for non-Māori New Zealanders to speak te reo (and it is unclear from what limited research there is whether this includes migrants), De Bres' (2015) more recent research shows that minority groups are willing to learn te reo. Further investigation amongst such groups is needed to determine whether positive attitudes are also engendered from language-learning formats other than Māori Television.

Migrants' interest in learning te reo may mean they engage, consciously or not, with ideological issues such as national identity and belonging. Many of this study's respondents found issues of identity in Aotearoa New Zealand were addressed to some extent by engaging in the language. Learning te reo Māori is one small way of facilitating a shifting of national identity to a Treaty-based relationship between Māori and Pākehā.

There are similarities between my findings and studies related to Pākehā engaging in learning te reo Māori. Huygen (2011) found Pākehā learning te reo allowed an engagement with ideas related to decolonisation. Hepi's (2008) research also links Pākehā learning te reo with the concept of a Pākehā identity that involves a relationship with te ao Māori. Te Huia's (2016) research on a similar theme of Pākehā learning te reo found that Pākehā became more aware of discrimination toward Māori.

My findings suggest migrants experience a related unsettling of dominant discourses and that migrant engagement with te ao Māori can contribute to the ongoing conceptualisations of Aotearoa New Zealand's imagined national identity. As media academic Jo Smith notes, this is where the political potential of indigenous television lies: in offering to 'expand the existing vocabulary for understanding cross cultural and intra-cultural encounters' (Smith 2011, 727).

Understanding cross-cultural encounters that include using te reo between Māori and all tauwi (*foreigner, non-Māori*) in the context of a multicultural nation could shift ideas about how a nation views itself. As Conversi (2012, 65) suggests,

[Nations] could be identified with, and build their cultural core around a shared common language, [because this] places them in an advantageous position in a modern world where it seemed to be the most stable element amongst the chaos of continuous and unpredictable cultural change.

Although Conversi is arguing for one language, his argument is equally applicable to New Zealand's two main languages, English and te reo Māori. The State has already signalled this potential when it declared te reo Māori as an official language, although its implementation as a functioning and widely used language has remained vexed. There is the possibility of legislative requirements for compulsory learning but, as Fishman (1997) warns, punitive measures to achieve language revitalisation raise questions about the long-term resilience of minority languages. Where minority language regeneration has been most successful, such as Quebec, Wales, Catalonia and Estonia, it has resulted more from widespread cultural support than from punitive requirements. In these places, it is the link between the cultural nature of language and national identity that has been successfully joined with political will and the resources required to make language revitalisation a reality.

It is not the intention of this article to suggest Māori Television should expand its responsibilities on its multi-platform delivery portals to provide cultural resources to migrants. While Māori Television is not a panacea to acculturation issues, it is not insignificant that this study found the broadcaster's content was one of many resources that provided migrants with the confidence to engage in intercultural, day-to-day, ordinary interactions with Māori and understand issues through a Māori lens. It also found that Māori Television's language revitalisation strategies contributed to migrants' achieving an acceptance and appreciation of the language. It is timely that greater recognition is given to migrants from a range of geographical and ethnic backgrounds as receptive, engaged and supportive audiences of Māori Television.

Notes

¹ The evaluation was a joint venture between Māori Television and Te Māngai Pāho and research was conducted by independent Kantar TNS and Colmar Brunton.

² Māori Television receives direct and indirect funding from Te Māngai Pāho, the Government's Māori Broadcasting Funding Agency, which is the major provider of funding for programmes produced by, or for, our channels. Te Māngai Pāho provides

direct funding for internally produced programmes and indirect funding for commissioned programmes on a contestable basis. Māori Television's ability to achieve its programme-related outcomes is dependent on continued access to agreed programmes and sufficient levels of funding administered by Te Māngai Pāho' (Māori Television 2015, 11). 'Occasionally New Zealand on Air and others (including Te Māngai Pāho) contribute additional funding to the cost of producing specific programmes broadcast by Māori Television' (Māori Television 2015, 24).

³ Māori Television's vision is for te reo to be 'valued, embraced and spoken by all New Zealanders' (Māori Television 2016).

⁴ Participants discussed 'Rethink' *Nga Pari Karangaranga o te Motu, Te Hau Awhiowhio, Te Kaea, Native Affairs, Kuia and Kowhao Rau, Kaitiaki Wars, Get your Fish, Kai time on the Road, Ako and Korero Mai, Hioho, Hunting Aotearoa, Fusion Feasts, Paepae, Te Matatini, Whaikorero, Te Araroa: Tales from the Trails.*

⁵ Television is seen as a tool for the revitalisation of minority languages (Bell 2010; David 2010; Lysaght 2010).

⁶ A focus on negative mainstream attitudes towards te reo can often be found in mainstream media, such as the reported vitriolic backlash to broadcaster Kanoa Lloyd's use of te reo outlined in this chapter, and other examples such as the difficulties of raising children to speak te reo because of 'ugly attitudes to the Māori language'. See http://www.nzherald.co.nz/rotorua-daily-post/news/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503437&objectid=11465489

⁷ With off-peak Māori language programming consisting of *Mōrena*, a daily morning 20-minute English/te reo lifestyle programme; *Te Karare*, a 20-minute late-afternoon English-subtitled news programme; and *Marae*, a 30-minute Sunday morning current affairs programme.

⁸ Education theorists (d'Ydewalle and Pavakanun 1997; Neuman and Koskinen 1992) established that subtitled audio-visual material is a powerful pedagogical tool in helping to improve listening and comprehension of second and other language learners.

⁹ These two government agencies have been engaged for some time in language-policy planning that targets non-Māori New Zealanders (De Bres 2011).

¹⁰ The ensuing storm of criticism from some members of the public received widespread mainstream media coverage in both New Zealand and Australia (*NZ Herald* 2015; *RNZ* 2015; *SBS News* 2015) and suggests that Pākehā intolerance of te reo Māori in broadcasting is symptomatic of the domination of the English language and cultural environment. As Simon Day (2015) explains, this push back by some Pākehā could be their reaction to the increasing presence of te ao Māori since the Māori renaissance and the normalisation to some extent of the place of Māori in popular culture.

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