How can RLS succeed after the first generation? A Māori case study

Jeanette King, George Ann Gregory, Nichole Gully

University of Canterbury, University of Maryland University College, Core Education

---

Fishman 1991

'What is RLS and how can it succeed?' (Fishman, 1990)

1. RLS needs to be part of a wider ethnocultural goal
2. Importance of home/neighbourhood/community

Generation 1: young adults in 1980s

Generation 2: young adults in 2000s

Generation 3: ….

Background

- Indigenous language of New Zealand
- Māori = 15% of NZ pop or 4.5 million
- 14% of Māori can speak Māori 'well' or 'very well'
- 25% can conduct a basic conversation

Background

- Shift away from Māori occurred post 1920s
- Revitalisation initiatives began in 1980s
  - Immersion schooling – kōhanga, kura
  - Broadcasting
  - Largely urban, largely second language speaking adults
- Treaty settlements late 1990s >

Generation 1 – 1980s

1. Wider ethnocultural goal

Acquisition and use of te reo Māori bec[a]
journey of personal transformation (Kin
2009)

*Māori Language Week protest march
1980*

Generation 2 – 2000s

1. Wider ethnocultural goal

Tribal treaty settlements

Passing of Ngāi Tahu Claims
Settlement Act 1998

Study

- Questionnaire – 162 respondents
- Older group, 77, > 30 :
  - Second language learners
  - Conscious decision
- Younger group, 85, < 30:
  - Raised as speakers of Māori
  - Choice of parents
- Questioned about motivation
 List the three main reasons why you are committed to speaking Māori

Focus of commitment

- Self (identity, work, wellbeing)
  - For my own self identity
  - To double my job opportunities
  - So I can understand when I go to Māori gatherings
  - For my own wellbeing
- Others (family, tribe, community)
  - To teach my children the language
  - For the survival of my tribe
- The language
  - For the survival of the Māori language
  - The language is beautiful – it's a treasure

Overall

Reported Motivators
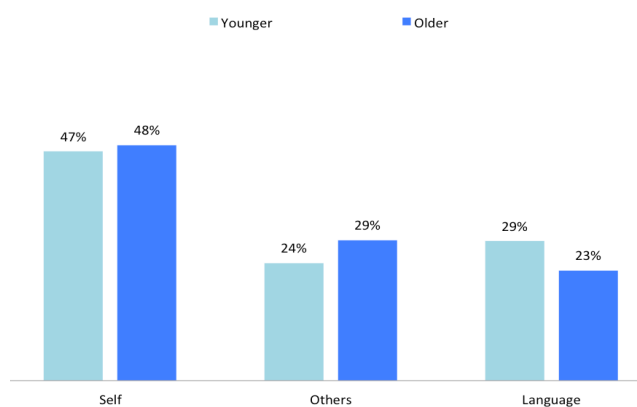
■ Younger   ■ Older

Summary

- Both younger and older groups report similar motivations
  - Importance of identity and wellbeing to motivation
- Language in the home highly correlated with the presence of children
- Language use in the home a strong predictor of language use outside the home
- Older group more likely to be speaking Māori at home

Generation 1 – 1980s

2. home/neighbourhood/community

Immersion schooling initiatives

Schools as communities /

extended families

(Metge, 1995)

Pukeatua kōhanga reo 2005

Generation 2 – 2000s

2. home/neighbourhood/community

- Emphasis in Māori language planning:
- National level
  - Māori Language Week themes – home (2008), community (2009) and parents (2015)
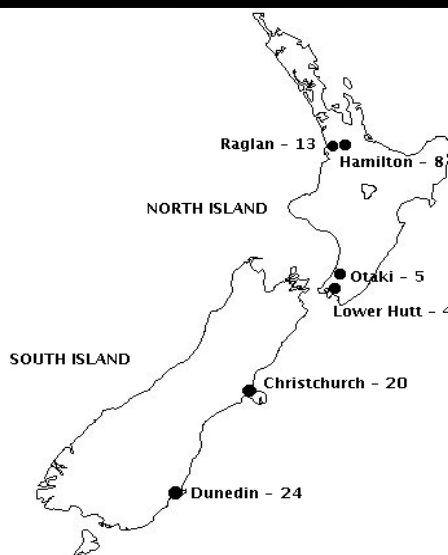- Tribal level
  - Ngāi Tahu - Kotahi Mano Kāika

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (1996)

Kotahi Mano Kāika

Study

- 72 participants - 64 interviews transcribed
- Ethnicity: mainly Maori
- 42 females, 30 males
- Most aged 11-50
- 6 locations around New Zealand
  - 2 in the South Island
  - 4 in the North Island

Raglan - 13
Hamilton - 8
NORTH ISLAND
Otaki - 5
Lower Hutt - 4
SOUTH ISLAND
Christchurch - 20
Dunedin - 24

Results

Types of communities:
- School
- Tribe
- Like-minded people

Communities provide:
- Opportunity
- Motivation
- Sense of normalcy

Types of communities

- I mean, back here in *Whangaroa*, we don't, or I don't, detach the community from the school. (RF01)

- It's more like the tribal bases. This area has three tribal - strong tribal affiliations. It was the coming together of those three tribes. (OF01)

- I mean I have first cousins who don't have the same level of passion for the language that I have … and so, yeah, community is really important. But it's the way that community is organized and inspired by the same thing, unity of purpose and so on and so forth, yeah. (LHM03)

Roles of communities

- I'm trying to organize a poker night in *te reo Māori* … just try and nurture those everyday life events, but in *te reo Māori,* …using the language everyday … not just using it as a token ceremonial language. (DM07)

- You can only grow so far in your home, so you'll get to a point where in that little community of your immediate family there is no more learning to be done there. So you need an outside community where there is no limit to your learning. (DM03)

- That's really important I think because [using the language] just becomes natural. It becomes natural to the community because that's been going on for quite some time. You just don't blink an eyelid to it really. (RF01)

Communities of practice

- Speech competitions (Manu kōrero)
- Kapa haka competitions (performing arts)

Papesch (2010)

Summary

- Communities have an important role in language revitalisation
- Communities evolving over time > from passion to practice
- Many types of communities from national > tribal > local
- Role of communities to support and encourage language use and development

Discussion

1. Wider ethnocultural goal:
   - focus on identity needs
2. Communities:
   - National and tribal initiatives to encourage and reinforce
   - Can aid in motivation
- Change over time – revival linguistics (Zuckermann & Walsh, 2011)

What does success look like?

What is the aim of RLS?

- Diglossia? (Fishman, 1991; Chrisp, 1997)
- Young Māori speakers are most likely to use Māori with younger age groups

Acknowledgements

Research assistants: Briar Tuiali'i, Emma Rolleston

References

Chrisp, S. (1997). Diglossia: a theoretical framework for the revitalisation of the Māori language. *He Pukenga Kōrero: a journal of Māori Studies, 2*(2), 35-42.

Fishman, J. A. 1990. What is Reversing Language Shift (RLS) and how can it succeed? *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 11*(1&2), 5-36.

Fishman, J. A. 1991. *Reversing language shift*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

King, J. (2009). Language is life: the worldview of second language speakers of Māori. In J. Reyhner & L. Lockard (Eds.) *Indigenous language revitalization, encouragement, guidance & lessons learned*. Flagstaff: Northern Arizona University, pp. 87-98.

King, J. (2014). Revitalising the Māori Language. In P. K. Austin & J. Sallabank (Eds.), *Endangered Languages: beliefs and ideologies in language documentation and revitalisation* (pp. 215-230). Oxford: Oxford University Press/British Academy.

Metge, J. 1995. *New Growth from Old: the Whānau in the Modern World.* Victoria University Press, Wellington.

Papesch, T. R. 2010. Composing Māori, composing tradition in Kapa Haka. *Symposium of the Māori Performing Arts*. Auckland, AUT University.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. (1996). *Kotahi Mano Kāika*. Retrieved from http://ngaitahu.iwi.nz/culture/kotahi-mano-kaika/

Zuckermann, G. & Walsh, M. (2011). 'Stop, Revive, Survive!: lessons from the Hebrew revival applicable to the reclamation, maintenance and empowerment of Aboriginal Languages and cultures. *Australian Journal of Linguistics, 31*(1), 111-127.