RESEARCH REPORT

TE HĀ O TE REO: TEACHING THE BEAUTY OF THE MĀORI LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Drawn from a talk presented at the 2019 Viva Lingua Viva indigenous languages event in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, this article presents the findings of a qualitative case study focused on a 10-week Māori language programme, *Te Hā o Te Reo* ('the essence of the language') offered to staff at a New Zealand university. The article reports on some of the pedagogical practices employed in the course through a discussion of interview data collected for a wider study on the experiences of non-Māori students of te reo Māori as a second language. Our analysis presents insights from a sample of adult student participants and from the courses' chief designer and teacher. A focussed consideration of four key classroom practices suggests a teaching approach based on three Māori-specific pedagogical principles (*Whanaungatanga*—relationship-based learning; *Koakoa*—joy, humour; *Kaupapa Māori*—Māori principles and worldview), which are found to shape both course content and classroom management in ways that are well aligned with students' needs and expectations.

RESUMO

Extraído de uma palestra apresentada no evento de línguas indígenas Viva Lingua Viva 2019 no Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, este artigo apresenta os resultados de um estudo de caso qualitativo focado em um programa de língua maori de 10 semanas, Te Hā o Te Reo ('a essência da língua ') oferecido a funcionários de uma universidade da Nova Zelândia. O artigo relata algumas das práticas pedagógicas empregadas no curso por meio de uma discussão de dados de entrevistas coletados para um estudo mais amplo sobre as experiências de alunos não maori de te reo maori como segunda língua. Nossa análise apresenta percepções de uma amostra de alunos adultos participantes e do designer-chefe e professor do curso. Uma consideração focada de quatro práticas chave de sala de aula sugere uma abordagem de ensino baseada em três princípios pedagógicos específicos Māori (Whanaungatanga - aprendizagem baseada no relacionamento; Koakoa - alegria, humor; Kaupapa Māori - princípios e visão de mundo Māori), que moldam ambos o conteúdo dos cursos e o seu gerenciamento em sala de aula, de forma bem alinhada com as necessidades e expectativas dos alunos.

INTRODUCTION

In the current New Zealand sociolinguistic landscape, *te reo Māori* ('the Māori language') is enjoying a high status in society and positive acceptance by the majority of non-Māori New Zealanders (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2019; DE BRES, 2011; TE HUIA, 2016; DUDER, 2017). As a result, remarkable numbers of non-Māori are deciding to learn it (DINE, 2018; NEMEC, 2017; MORGAN *et al.*, 2019), resulting in "jam-packed classes and waiting lists now common," with "Māori language teachers from Auckland in the North Island to Dunedin and Invercargill in the South reporting being unable to meet demand for their services and free classes routinely draw*[ing]* hundreds of students." (3)

Drawn from a talk presented at the *2019 Viva Lingua Viva* indigenous languages event in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, this article discusses a qualitative case study focused on a 10-week te reo Māori programme, *Te Hā o Te Reo* ('the essence of the language') offered to staff at a New Zealand university. Through a discussion of interview data collected as part of a wider investigation of the experiences of non-Māori adult students of te reo Māori as a second language, the current article reports on some of the pedagogical practices employed throughout the course as described, discussed and assessed by a sample of student participants and by the courses' chief designer and lead teacher.

The article discusses four key teaching practices in this course: *Papa Whakakōrero*: 'a board to create conversation'; *Tuakana-teina*: 'elder sibling-younger sibling' collaborative learning; *Mihi*: a distinctively Māori manner of introducing oneself to others, and *Te Hā o Te Reo*: teaching the essence of the language. For each of these practices, we include a description, an assessment of its value and usefulness on the part of the instructor, and finally a reflection on its impact and effectiveness according to both the students' testimonies and the instructor's observations. The article includes an interpretation of the teaching approaches observed in the course as grounded in three culture-specific pedagogical principles (*Whanaungatanga*—relationship-based learning, *Koakoa*—emotional regulation through humour and enjoyment, and *Kaupapa Māori*—Māori principles and worldview), which are found to shape both course content and classroom management in ways that are well aligned with student's needs and expectations. We conclude with some considerations about the opportunities that lay ahead for the teaching of te reo in organisational settings in New Zealand.

1. THE CONTEXT

Māori in New Zealand are known as the *Tangata Whenua*, 'the people of the land'. It was only with the arrival of the first white explorers to New Zealand (Abel Tasman in 1642 and James

Cook in 1769), that Māori came into contact with European languages and culture. For the first half-century of European settlement, the Māori language remained the main language spoken across the land, and in 1840 the Treaty of Waitangi was jointly signed by more than 500 Māori chiefs representing numerous tribes around the country and by representatives of the British Crown. The Treaty had been envisaged as a step towards unity and peace; instead, it sparked years of conflict between Māori and Pākehā ('New Zealand Europeans'), as Māori sought to hold on to their land and local authority. Due to the years of war and disease that followed, and to the later educational policies that actively suppressed the use of te reo Māori, the language became endangered, and soon approached extinction.

The resurgence in te reo started in the 1970s with Māori language education initiatives such as *Te Kōhanga Reo* (Māori language immersion preschools), *Kura Kaupapa Māori* (Māori language immersion schools) and *Te Ataarangi* (community-based language classes and immersion gatherings). Since the officialisation of te reo in 1987, the Māori Language Commission has been promoting te reo as an ordinary means of communication, and *Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Māori* has set quality standards for written and spoken Māori, producing research which informs policy related to the promotion, maintenance and growth of the language. With the advent of Māori broadcasting in the 1990s, came the establishment of *Te Māngai Pāho* (the Māori Broadcasting Funding Agency) and of *Whakaata Māori* (the Māori Television Service) as well as of *Te Reo*, a television channel solely dedicated to te reo programming. Since the early 2000s, revitalisation among Māori families has also been supported by *Kotahi Mano Kāika, Kotahi Mano Wawata*, a 25-year strategy which aims to have at least 1000 speaking te reo Māori by the year 2025.

Recently, the terms *normalisation* and *re-normalisation* have begun to take their place alongside *revitalisation* as part of discourses that espouse the idea of te reo as the original language of New Zealand, advocating its return to normal everyday use by all New Zealand citizens (HIGGINS, 2018; NELSON, 2018) irrespective of their ethnic affiliations. As te reo's public visibility has grown, so have policies and spaces encouraging the uptake of te reo by the general public, which has resulted, in the last few years, in record numbers of New Zealanders enrolling in courses of te reo (with non-Māori learners abundantly outnumbering Māori), a trend further encouraged by the current *Maihi Karauna* (Crown's Māori Strategy Policy) 2019-2023, which includes as a key objective, reaching one million New Zealanders being able to speak te reo Māori by the year 2040 (TE PUNI Kōkiri, 2019).

The course described in this article is an initiative that emerged in the current context, as a part of a New Zealand university's plan to become a *Tiriti*[1]-led institution. In this regard,

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1 *Tiriti* refers to the Treaty of Waitangi, signed on February 6, 1840, and considered to be a founding document in New Zealand. The Treaty is described as "an agreement, in Māori and English, that was made between the British Crown and about 540 Māori *rangatira* (chiefs)". https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/treaty/the-treaty-in-brief.

the current strategy states a commitment to promote the determination of Māori-led aspirations, the active use of te reo Māori, the vitality and wellbeing of all people and our environment in order give full and authentic expression to the eminence of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*. In its first few pages, the strategy presents the goal of integrating more effectively what is considered a founding document of New Zealand as a nation as having a beneficial impact—and one it is advisable to act promptly upon—on New Zealand society at large:

> As a *Tiriti*-led University we are committed to demonstrating authentic leadership in a contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand as we uphold *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, the founding document of our nation, and its principles through our practice. The university embraces this not just as an obligation but as a real opportunity for the nation and its peoples. The University will champion new strategies for advancement and integration of te reo Māori and Māori knowledge.

The idea of the 10-week introductory course *Te Hā o Te Reo* sprung from conversations in 2018 between the university's leadership team and staff at *Te Pūtahi a Toi* - School of Māori Knowledge, where formal te reo courses are part of the different accreditations offered at the university and a new set of free online courses on Māori language and culture, *Toro Mai*, has been recently launched to great success. The *Te Hā o Te Reo* initiative aimed to contribute to the new vision for the institution as a *Tiriti*-led university, with the goal to provide academic and professional staff with introductory tools to begin integrating te reo Māori in their professional life. Thus, it was decided that the content of the course should consist of familiarisation with the language through practice of te reo pronunciation (*whakahua kupu*); salutations and greetings (*mihimihi*); self-introduction (*pepeha*), conversation (*kōrero ā-waha)* and using idiomatic phrases *(kīwaha*). The emphasis of the course was on advancing staff's language skills but also, importantly, on providing training on cultural practices and considerations around events that mark tertiary education contexts.

Classes were conducted on Wednesdays from 12 to 2pm, a space that has traditionally been kept free on the university schedule to allow for committee or general meetings, events, visits, etc. The total duration of the course was 10 weeks during which two instructors alternated their teaching. The emphasis of the course was on conversation skills, with lists of vocabulary and interactive activities around a language board that promoted repetition, construction, validation and exchange. Every week the instructors assigned written homework which was reviewed together in class the following session. The goal of the homework was to reinforce and consolidate of what had been presented and practiced the previous class.

2. METHODOLOGY

Our study centres on students' experiences while completing *Te Hā o Te Reo*, an intensive 10-week Māori language programme offered for staff at a New Zealand university since June 2018. The programme has had four iterations to date, with a total number of enrolled participants of 105 staff.

Participants in this study are all adult university staff, both academic and administrative. They belong to the first and second cohorts in the *Te Hā o Te Reo* programme and were recruited through an invitation included in an online survey which formed the first, quantitative part of a wider study.

Semi-structured interviews (ROBSON, 2011) were conducted with 12 participants. The interviews took place at the participants' convenience and lasted an average of one hour. Participants were free to select from a range of possible venues or name a venue of their own choice. They all opted to be interviewed on campus in one of the authors' office, which had been purposely reconfigured to accommodate the authors and the participant around a round table in a relaxed, amicable atmosphere. The interviews were conducted in a conversational style following a loose schedule of open-ended questions designed to inquire about the participants' background, their language learning motivation and their experiences during the course. Throughout the interviews, learners were encouraged to contribute personal stories and insights, allowing for an emphasis on personal narratives.

For the current article, data was further collected from the designer and chief te reo instructor Associate Professor Hone Morris. Through his responses to a single semi-structured interview, Morris provided his own insights as to the reasons for his choices regarding the pedagogical tools, techniques and resources used in this programme, as well as his own reflections on the success of the programme and its ramifications.

The analysis of the transcripts was conducted using a thematic approach (BRAUN; CLARKE, 2006). Inductive thematic analysis was carried out using manual coding techniques where individual codes were allowed to emerge without the limitations of a pre-existing template. The codes were subsequently organised into themes and subthemes, which provided an initial interpretation of the data. The findings and excerpts hereby included emerged from a consideration of themes and subthemes associated with the participants' reporting of their classroom experiences. In the discussion of the findings that follows, all participants' names, with the exclusion of the lead teacher, Hone Morris, are pseudonyms.

3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis of responses from our interviews with *Te Hā o Te Reo* participants highlighted four key practices implemented throughout the course that were readily identified by both students and tutors as highly effective to promote student engagement, participation, motivation and a sense of collaborative joy in learning. Further explanations of such practices by the course designer, helped in tracing these practices back to three fundamental pedagogical principles related to culture-specific Māori perspectives on community relationships, family structure and the importance and intrinsic value of Māori knowledge and culture. With the help of Morris, we identified three such principles as the pedagogical axes that structure and support the teaching of te reo in this course:

> *Whanaungatanga*—relationship-based learning: learning is supported, expanded and enriched by building collaborative, supportive and meaningful relationships with teachers and peers. The Māori pedagogical practice of *whanaungatanga* –developing, maintaining and strengthening relationships sustains and structures the teaching, which appears modelled from the context of family or *whānau* (STUCKI, 2010).
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> *Koakoa*—Emotional regulation through the creation of an ongoing supportive rapport with the class, sustained by respect and humour (STUCKI, 2010). Tutors are constantly using humour to signpost and deflect tension, to maintain a positive, non-threatening environment that, as a circle, includes everyone. Replacing the words "no" or "incorrect" by modelling correct alternatives is another teaching practice employed to avoid stigmatization and support risk-taking in learning.
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> *Kaupapa Māori*: The teaching of Māori principles and worldview through myths, narratives and songs in class contributes to enriching the curricula, engaging students and fostering a sense of enjoyment and belonging. Storytelling and *waiata* (song, music) appear as frequent effective teaching methods in Māori instruction settings (STUCKI, 2010).

Four key teaching practices are the focus of our discussion below. We provide a description of each practice followed by comments about its value and impact according to both course designer and students (which include one of the authors). We then reflect on each practice and its links to the Māori principles described above and to Māori culture more generally.

3.1. PAPA WHAKAKŌRERO: 'A BOARD TO CREATE CONVERSATION', 'A BOARD TO CONVERSE'

This educational tool consists of a foldable laminated board with boxes in each four corners signalling the different subject positions in Māori language. The board is used with colour-coded cards with pictures that show people, actions and places. Asked about how the board came to be, Morris related that it was initially created by Dr Ian Christensen, a former university lecturer and a well-known creator of Māori educational resources.[2] In

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2 For a complete selection of these, see the publishing house website at: https://kupengahao.co.nz/.

2004 Morris revised this tool and extended it to include the five verb types in the Māori language. The cards now are colour coded to reflect transitive, intransitive, passive and stative verbs. The whole set includes a teacher's manual, 11 sets of cards and a DVD with 30 lesson sequences. The board package has proved a very commercially successful pedagogical resource for te reo instructors, having been used and sold for over 15 years, with a new revised edition from 2019.

Two dynamics unfolded when the board was being used in class. The first is that groups of four or five students had to sit together around a table, physically situating themselves in a communal situation that fostered a playful sense of enjoyment and friendly competition as if the group was playing a board game. The second dynamic is related to how students's focus was diverted to the board and its cards during practice, helping to relieve tension from the student whose turn it was to produce the next line of dialogue or practice structure. Overall, these contributed to spontaneous peer-support, feedback and cooperation towards the production of coherently structured, intelligible dialogue.

The board is organized mainly around the three positional options in the Māori language: the person speaking, the person spoken to and a third, syntactically dual person. The cards that accompany the board do not have any written text on them, only images of places, actions or people. This works, as the teacher explained, to drive the focus on the spoken word by modelling dialogues and then practicing repetition in order to learn and reinforce the relationship between words and their meaning. Without ready access to written te reo to produce exchanges using the board, students were encouraged to recall and use vocabulary that had been previously learned and previously reviewed to become available for specific uses. The task of constructing exchanges without any written model motivated collaborative relationships where the students who more easily grasped the structure of te reo and those who had more vocabulary knowledge helped one another produced language as requested by the instructors. It is precisely this collaborative context where the traditional Māori *tuakana-teina* buddy system (see below) finds an ideal environment to structure and support te reo learning, promoting cooperation and, as students' testimonies show below, evokes feelings of pride in assistance and achievement.

The use of the board and cards proved very popular among students, with several of them confessing to keeping boards at their offices in order to use them in groups for extra practice during the week. Their comments on the board show the extent to which they identified and valued its value for oral modelling and repetition:

> I guess repetition was good to, so that you had the boards and you always just had to add a tiny little bit, even though I couldn't do any of my exercises without my pieces of paper, there's a lot of repetition in it. (Hannah)

> We had those boards, and you actually spoke to the person, so you actually got to talk to someone. (Catherine)

> And hearing them saying something in different way and then go oh yeah that it does make sense or have a discussion and debate what's the right way of structuring a sentence. (Frances)

> And the ways that things are developed, like the sheets, where you can see the physical placement of things, it's really helpful and really visual, and a lot of it was oral to which makes it easier. (Becky)

The board appears as a language teaching tool that reflects te reo oral tradition (te reo written counterpart emerged only recently as a result of contact with non-Māori), where Māori history and culture are passed on mainly as oral narratives, proverbs, idioms, poems and songs. The use of this tool prompts students to pay attention to sound and images, without resorting to the written word. The principles of *Whanaungatanga* and *Kaupapa Māori* animate the dynamics of group conversations co-constructed by the participants, with each member contributing different elements. References to Māori names and values provide cultural context and relevant content to these conversations. Ultimately, the group dynamics of the board were found to foster team-work, collaborative learning and encourage the characteristic Māori mentoring philosophy of elder sibling/younger sibling learning relationships or *tuakana-teina*.

3.2. TUAKANA-TEINA: "ELDER SIBLING-YOUNGER SIBLING" COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

The *tuakana-teina* relationship, "an integral part of traditional Māori society[3]," assumes that the more experienced person (traditionally an older sibling or family member) will support and guide a younger, less experienced *teina*. What is important, however, is that this exchange can switch directions any time, and contributions from the younger participant are just as valuable in helping the older one.

This relationship is one of the main principles of teaching and learning in Māori culture. The teacher commented to us that there are specific words in te reo to signal different levels of understanding and one of those, *tauira*, is currently used for 'student'. However, *tauira* also means 'model', 'pattern' and 'example', making it explicit through language that, in Māori culture, learning involves modelling to and copying, following and learning from others. The interactive and game-like dynamics of the board seamlessly align with a *tuakana-teina* collaborative environment where more proficient speakers support and guide those who are still coming to terms with the structures of the language. The repetitive pattern of the use of the cards on the board further contributes to peer relationships where cooperation and support are stimulated. Peers were rotated all the time in the hope that, as the teacher explained, "people would get to hear different voices, different ways of saying things," bringing a novel element each time and helping maintain high levels of energy in

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3 Taken from the NZ Ministry of Education webpage. The cooperative principle that underpins this learning practice is further exemplified thus on the page: "For example, the student who yesterday was the expert on *te wā* and explained the lunar calendar may need to learn from her classmate today about how manaakitanga (hospitality) is practised by the local *hapū*." https://tereoMāori.tki.org.nz/, retrieved March 10, 2020.

the classroom. Another important aspect to be mentioned is the fact that the board and cards were designed to role-model the different exchanges, without any emphasis on the written word. Acting himself as a participant in a role-model situation, the teacher would ask for help from the more advanced students to show the class what they were expected to do in order to support and work together with their peers.

Overall, the *tuakana-teina* functions as the putting together of a co-constructed puzzle, where pieces can be unevenly distributed but where everybody holds at least one that all the others need to complete the whole picture. Stronger students reported pride in being able to help others, whom, in turn, felt grateful for their peers's help.

Students' testimonies reflect their awareness of a specific collaborative context, one that was created in the supportive relationships they were building with their tutors and their peers:

> The way that we were set up was in pairs, mainly in a *tuakana/teina* relationship which means older and younger siblings, but it can mean the more knowledgeable and the less knowledgeable, or the more confident and the less confident. So, whoever you're sitting with someone, just by the act of trying to help them, you learn as well. So, I felt that I was still learning and encouraging people and just trying to sit with that and not be rushed. (Frances)
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> Everybody is in here at different levels of knowledge, but we are all the same. (Loretta)

The *tuakana-teina* relationship is integral to the Māori concept of *whanau*, or family, and as such is rooted in the associated Māori teaching and learning principle of *Whanaungatanga*, which posits that in a teaching context with students of mixed ability, those who know more must be willing and ready to share with those who are just beginning, to the end benefit of both. Mutual support and co-constructed learning contribute greatly to creating a learning environment where students perceive themselves as equal to each other, which in turn supports both cooperation and risk-taking.

3.3. MIHI: A DISTINCTIVELY MĀORI MANNER OF RELATING TO OTHERS

The Māori dictionary provides this definition for the word *mihi*: "to greet, pay tribute, acknowledge, thank[4]." In academic settings, a *mihi* is a welcoming ceremony and/or speech where the community both greets and situates itself in relation to visitors or newcomers. To introduce oneself with a *mihi* means to acknowledge our origins, our ancestors, our culture, and at the same time, to situate ourselves in our current geographical and social contexts.

As one of the specific learning objectives of *Te Hā o Te Reo*, the students expected to compose and present a personal *mihi* to the class. This seemed to be a source of anxiety for

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4 https://Māoridictionary.co.nz/search?&keywords=mihi.

a few students, but it also provided the group with a tool to measure their progress and to experience a sense of achievement.

Mihi is one of the foundations of Māori culture. In an academic context, where teachers meet students and vice-versa, at conferences, with international visitors or staff travelling overseas, *mihi* symbolises one's "indigenous passport". Learning to do a *mihi* means to be willing to recognise and acknowledge the indigeneity of New Zealand, the indigenous element in our culture. The teacher explained that the *mihi* he designed for the course was an authentic Māori greeting and introduction, so that staff could confidently share their *mihi* in Māori contexts and/or with Māori people in attendance. He felt strongly about this element of authenticity, and told us he aimed to train students to weave a non-threatening point of entry to Māori culture, a "protective cloak to embrace the Māori point of view". In this sense, *mihi* teaches elements of Māori culture beyond the language alone, but it also teaches students about themselves from a Māori perspective: given that in the *mihi* one has to trace one's origins, not only in terms of genealogy but also of geographical belonging, it is always about one's relationships with the collective and the land as for Māori, Morris explained, "I am the mountain and the mountain is me."

A final point about the *mihi* was the fact that interviewed students considered the *mihi* as a difficult challenge, but also as a tool to gauge their progress, a perception that, as the quotes below exemplify, both intimidated and motivated them:

> I really enjoyed having to learn my *mihi*, and I liked getting to present it and seeing people's reactions to it, that was a really good exercise 'cause it was short and it was kind of constrained by the fact that it was only gonna be so long but it was a real chance to practice saying the right words, getting them, having them memorised, pronouncing them correctly… (Karmeline)

> You know the fact that people have to give *mihi* and other people need to give *whakamihi*… it just means that you have to try. And of course no one is going to shame people for their pronunciation or anything like that, so I think once it's clear as a really good. (Becky)

> …and that's quite motivating, the people that jumped up and did the *mihi*, ahm, and did more than what was asked for. On the one hand that's quite motivating, you go, oh, maybe I could! (Loretta)

The *mihi,* greeting and introduction, was proposed as the single compulsory assignment of the course. A practice rooted in *Kaupapa Māori*, the teaching of Māori principles and worldview, constructing and delivering a *mihi* was presented and perceived as an achievable goal towards which students could work in order to begin their journey into Māori culture. Students had to stand up and deliver their personal mihi in te reo in front of the entire group. This obligation carried both an invitation and a challenge, and students responded to this with some anxiety, but also anticipation and pride.

3.4. TE HĀ O TE REO: TEACHING THE BEAUTY OF THE LANGUAGE

This practice refers to the range of culture-specific narratives (myths, proverbs, customs, historical accounts) that the teacher shared with students throughout the course, integrating these into the teaching of both lexicon and grammar.

The teacher explained that this approach was a conscious decision on his part, as an educator who not simply teaches the language (*te reo*) but also "its beauty". He explained that Māori was traditionally and oral-only language that garnered its sounds from the environment. In order to transmit this knowledge to his students, some years ago he changed his teaching methodology from solely teaching the language to sharing "how beautiful the language is".

Morris believes that, as people learn the sounds and the meanings behinds names of places and practices, they become more engaged and learn to love the culture they are discovering. Students recognised this and enjoyed learning the layers of meaning behind words like for example *mokopuna* ('grandchildren'), which literally means 'face tattoo' (*moko*) of the ancestors (*tūpuna*)', a beautiful metaphor for lineage and ancestry. Morris gifted us another example of underlying meaning, this time of the origin of the word *kōrero* ('conversation'). The word refers to the journey of one's breath, *te hā*, to one's *korokoro* ('throat'), coming to your tongue, *arero*, to create *korero* ('conversation'), as essentially a type of breath—friendly, loving, aggressive—one brings to their speech from the soul.

All these culture-specific narratives enriched the learning experience for students, allowing them to discover some of the layers of meaning underlying names, practices and customs that form part of their everyday environment:

> I think it's really interesting, the stories behind them and the stories behind the te reo Māori names, not just the English names and I think Hone is really good at communicating the beauty of the language, I like how poetic it is. It gives you a little bit of background about the place, a bit of history, there's a story and I like stories. (Hannah)
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> Hone would go off and tell stories and I think possibly that took up more time, by the end of some of the 2 hours we'd think we hadn't done X, Y and Z because he spent too much time talking about other stuff, but I like the other stuff… He'd just be talking about tikanga, so things like that, or the meaning behind words, where they came from and why they had that meaning. (Amelia)
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> One of the things that I really liked how Hone explained the context and the origins of stuff. By understanding the basic origins of stuff and how the root words are derived makes it easier to understand. (Barry)
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> What I most enjoyed was Hone talking about the local places and telling you the meanings of words. It really resonated with people, it makes you really interested to learn about things rather than simply rote learning a language. I think that's one of the things that Hone is really good at, demonstrating how practices and relationships are clearly present in the words, and I thought that was really brilliant because you're much more likely to remember things like that as well. So as a language learning tool it is fantastic let alone the fact that it gives you an insight into the culture. (Becky)

Students reacted very favourably to *Kaupapa Māori*-inspired teaching and sharing of Māori stories, anecdotes, music and history. The teaching of te reo in the course advances the wider objective to familiarise students with Māori culture, its values and the richness of

its heritage. Language as integral part of *kaupapa Māori* (Māori worldview and value system) is shared with students as means to introduce them more generally to the indigenous culture of New Zealand.

4. CONCLUSION

> Hone was really welcoming and really happy to keep on explaining stuff and everyone else wanted to be there, there was just this really positive sense in the room of, like, we've chosen to be here, we want to do this, it felt really supportive and nice. (Karmeline)

The quotation above encapsulates the sense of enthusiasm and connectedness that emerged from the overall students' responses in this study. Such positive perceptions of the teacher and of the course as a whole are clearly reflected in how *Te Hā o Te Reo* continues to draw students by word of mouth, as former learners share with others their positive experiences of discovering the richness of Māori culture and the beauty of te reo.

Having discussed some of the teaching structures and practices implemented in the course, our study has highlighted how these have deliberately hinged on three key pedagogical axes inspired by Māori-specific cultural principles to encourage student engagement and meaningful learning, and to contribute to the presence of te reo and Māori culture in New Zealand. Ultimately, *Te Hā o Te Reo* emerges as a clear illustration of a successful initiative in terms of engaging non-Māori learners of te reo in an organisational setting at a time in New Zealand history when the demand for teaching initiatives such as this is growing.

As the popularity of te reo continues to rise, and the value of the language is no longer exclusively associated with Māori domains, the current New Zealand context offers a rare opportunity for the emergence of initiatives that promote the integration and the teaching/learning of te reo Māori within organisations in both the private and the public sector. While research has already highlighted the significance of engaging with te reo Māori from the point of view of non-Māori learners (BERARDI-WILTSHIRE *et al.*, 2020; NELSON, 2018), the benefits of the integration and teaching/learning of te reo in workplace settings extend well beyond those enjoyed by individuals, and have instead the potential to positively impact workplace communities, entire organisations, and society as a whole. Within institutions and corporations, for example, a more widespread knowledge of te reo and related *tikanga* ('customs and values') can promote better engagement with customers, stakeholders and Māori staff, enhancing workplace relations, cultural wellbeing and overall job satisfaction (HAAR *et al.*, 2019, p. 4). Incorporating Māori in the workplace can also be "good for business, both externally and internally" as "it shows the organisation is willing to embrace the culture

of Aotearoa" (HAAR *et al.*, 2019, p. 5) and to assist in the development of networks and ca-pabilities in favour of Māori and of New Zealand's economy and wellbeing as a whole.

Last but not least, the normalisation of te reo Māori across organisations has a key role to play in the revitalisation of the language, as "language revitalisation has a better chance of success when it is emerges from local communities, spreads to important societal do-mains ,i.e. government, education, media, communities) and receives on-going and targeted support from the larger national non-indigenous community and government" (SIMONS; LEWIS, 2011; cited in HAAR *et al.*, 2019, p. 7). For Māori language to flourish, it needs to be "an embedded, natural feature of everyday life in Aotearoa" (PIHAMA *et al.*, 2015, p. 33), and this would involve te reo being "seen, heard, and spoken in homes, workplaces, schools, busi-nesses and throughout the public sector" (HAAR *et al.*, 2019, p. 8).

Needless to say, any significant progress in the integration and teaching/learning of the Māori language in organisations across the country needs to rely on a community of cham-pions and leaders across the national indigenous and non-indigenous communities. *Te Hā o Te Reo* is a clear example of a successful initiative by such agents of change.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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