Ngā pumanawa tautono hei awhina I te ako reo Māori: Applications to support the learning of Māori language

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After the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, te reo Māori gradually became a minority language in Aotearoa. This has continued for many years and is still evident even today (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). In 1986, Sir James Hēnare stated to the Waitangi Tribunal "Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori (The language is the life force of mana Māori)" (as cited in Ka'ai, 2004). This statement by Hēnare captures the essence of te reo Māori, that the loss of language influences the loss of cultural pride, prestige and identity. However, since the 1970s, many initiatives have been developed to support the revitalisation of te reo Māori, including the establishment of the Māori Language Commission and Te Puni Kōkiri (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2011). As a result of these initiatives, resources are now being developed to support the learning of te reo Māori, including the use of technology.

Introduction

Since the arrival of tangata whenua (the indigenous people of Aotearoa), te reo Māori has encountered many obstacles and periods of uncertainty. A once dominant language in Aotearoa, te reo Māori today is not spoken as it was prior to the mid 1850s (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2014). Before the arrival of European migrants, te reo Māori was the only language spoken in Aotearoa. Although a range of dialects were spoken amongst iwi (tribes), it was an oral language whereby forms of *waiata*, *whakataukī* and *whakatauāki*, *haka*, and *pūrākau* were used to transmit history, knowledge, wisdom, messages and provocations through generations. For Māori, their language was a gift from the gods given to them as a way of communicating with the spiritual, natural and physical worlds (Barlow, 1991).

As more and more British migrants began to settle in Aotearoa, differing views and perspectives relating to the use of te reo Māori hindered its growth and development. Due to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the statements outlined within the English version, the British Crown proclaimed sovereignty over Aotearoa, giving the Queen of England the right to rule. This also enabled the British Crown to establish a government that developed laws and policies that affected the use and development of Māori language and culture (Stafford & Williams, 2006; McMurchy-Pilkington, 2001; Berryman & Woller, 2011). During the period of assimilation, many Māori children were discouraged from speaking their native language, and at times physically punished for doing so. Later, however, the use of Māori language in schools was seen as a way to promote equality and the coming together of two cultures in one nation. Despite this turnaround many teachers felt that they did not have the knowledge or

understanding to speak te reo Māori. As a result teachers continued to discourage the use of te reo Māori within the school environment. These practrices, along with many others, not only devalued the status of te reo Māori in Aotearoa, they impacted on the right for Māori to assert their tino rangatiratanga (chiefly authority and autonomy) (Spolsky, 2003; Hokowhitu, 2004).

During the mid 1970s, Māori recognised the danger of losing their language and the effect this would have on their people and culture. Māori initiated a range of language recovery programmes, including (but not limited to) Te Kōhanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori, Te Rautaki Reo Māori and Kura Reo. "Major initiatives launched from the 1980s have brought about a revival of te reo" (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2014). Māori also celebrated a significant milestone in 1975, whereby te reo Māori was declared an official language of Aotearoa (Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori, n.d.).

Although policies have been put in place to support the revitalisation of te reo Māori, recent statistics highlight that the use of Māori language in Aotearoa has continued to decline in the past fourteen years. Statistics New Zealand (2013) reveal that in 2001 approximately 25% of Māori could engage in conversations relating to everyday things in te reo Māori. By 2013, conversational use of te reo Māori had declined to approximately 21%, indicating an estimated 4% decrease over twelve years. Research (Ritchie, 2003; Ritchie 2012) also highlights that the use of Māori language in a range of early childhood services needs development. Today, approximately 5% of early childhood teachers are Māori; however, this does not indicate whether Māori teachers can speak te reo Māori to a level where they can support other staff and children. In addition, many teachers fear using Māori language inappropriately or feel they need more support in learning about Māori language and culture to support it in a meaningful way.

Recovery programmes developed from the early 1980s continue to operate today with an emphasis on the use of technology to support the learning and development of Māori language across Aotearoa. With the support of Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori, Te Māngai Paho, Te Puni Kōkiri and other organisations, the learning of te reo Māori via technology has increased significantly in recent years. Today we are fortunate to have access to Māori television and Te Reo, a range of Māori language radio stations, as well as Māori language learning programmes via the Internet (Te Māngai Paho, 2014; Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori, n.d.). With the continuous development of smartphones and tablets, a surge of applications promoting Māori language and culture has also emerged. As a result, increasing access and interaction for learners of Māori language and culture are now available (Victoria University of Wellington, 2014). There follows a listing of the resources now available and accessible for early childhood teachers wishing to learn or improve their language usage in Te Reo.

Irirangi

In 1982, the first *iwi* radio station, Te Upoko O Te Ika, began broadcasting in Wellington. Subsequently, many Māori radio stations began operating across radio waves in Aotearoa, including Radio Ngāti Porou - Te Reo o te Iwi and Radio Waatea - Urban Māori Radio and so on. By 2011, 27 iwi radio stations

were broadcasting across AM and FM radio waves, focusing on supporting the revitalisation of Māori language and culture (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2011). In February 2012, a free application titled "Irirangi" was developed and funded by Te Māngai Paho. Irirangi supports the live streaming of 21 Māori *iwi* radio stations via iPhone and iPad. Once downloaded, the *iwi* radio stations are listed and available to listen to at any time of the day. All Māori radio stations have individual websites where the user can locate on-air programmes. The benefits of this application is that it enables users to broadcast *waiata* Māori, learn new *waiata*, or hear traditional *waiata* Māori. This application can also be utilised to listen to local news and events, thus enabling the user to keep up to date with current events pertaining to the local rohe (region).

Te Kete Tikanga Māori: Māori Cultural Toolkit

The Kete Tikanga Māori was developed by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise with the support of Air New Zealand, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, Te Puni Kōkiri and Tourism New Zealand. It was developed to support *whānau* and those seeking to learn more about Māori language and culture. Te Kete Tikanga Māori supports users by exploring key aspects relating to Māori culture and language, including (but not limited to) the pronunciation of the Māori alphabet, where iwi (tribes of Aotearoa) are located, whanaungatanga (family connections), the *marae*, customs and protocols relating to *pōwhiri*, numbers, colours, time, body parts. Within the application, advice and support is provided including aspects to consider prior to visiting a marae (a traditional meeting place for Māori). What is also significant about this application is that all Māori words have an audio playback function. Audio playback can be accessed by tapping on any Māori word, phrase or song and it will be played back using correct Māori pronunciation. Once downloaded, the application can be used without being connected to the Internet. To progress through sections of the resource, the user is able to choose aspects within the contents page or proceed through each page. This application is free to download.

Milly and Molly - Te Pataka

Begun in 1994, today the stories and concepts behind Milly and Molly have evolved significantly. From a knotted double ended doll to an array of stories promoting diversity and acceptance, Milly and Molly are there to support the journey of the reader. Today there are over 40 Milly and Molly stories, translated into over 34 languages. Te Pataka a Milly me Molly is an application that provides 16 books of well known Milly and Molly stories translated into te reo Māori. Te Pataka a Milly me Molly was digitally developed and translated by Kiwa Media Limited in collaboration with Gill Pittar (author), Cris Morell (illustrator) and other content owners. Once the application is downloaded, the user is then able to download each book, which will automatically be added to the bookshelf. The application is designed to be interactive, so that the user engages with the stories and the language. One option is to have the book read back automatically, or tap on words individually. This application also enables the user to record their own voice as the stories progress. Accessing other language versions of Milly and Molly would be beneficial to those who are not familiar with te reo Māori. Te Pataka a Milly me Molly is only available via iTunes (iPhone and iPad).

iMarae

iMarae is a collaborative initiative developed by Te Wānanga o Aotearoa in 2013. iMarae was designed to support learners in understanding key elements relating to kawa and tikanga (protocols and customs) associated with *marae*, *hui* or any type of Māori cultural scenario. iMarae is a free application that explores aspects relating to te ao Māori (the Māori world) including a karakia (prayer), a hīmene (hymn), a pōhiri/pōwhiri (welcoming ceremony), a mihi (greetings), traditional *waiata*, useful links (including Māori dictionary, other Wānanga) and much more. Similar to Te Kete Tikanga Māori, iMarae is written in both English and te reo Māori, and includes an audio playback function, thus supporting pronunciation. The information provided within iMarae is in-depth and supports the user in understanding the relevance of what is being explored. Once downloaded, the application can be used without Internet connections. iMarae is available via iTunes (iPhone and iPad).

Māui and his first journey

Māui and his first journey was developed as part of a wider initiative titled Whakatipu. Many *iwi* consider Māui to be "a demi-god, one who was born some generations after the initial fusion between celestial and earthly elements, and a man who was gifted with supernatural powers" (New Zealand Ministry of Justice, n.d.). Whakatipu is an initiative aimed at supporting parents on their parenting journey, focusing on kaupapa Māori (Māori philosophies and theories) and child development. Thus, "Māui and his first journey interweaves positive parenting, child development and brain development information into the traditional *pakiwaitara* about Māui growing up" (Strategies with Kids Information for Parents, 2014). Māui and his first journey is a free application that was developed by Flightless Ltd., for Strategies with Kids Information for Parents [SKIP] and Āhuru Mōwai, Family and Community Services.

Narrated in English and te reo Māori by Amster Reedy, Māui and his first journey explores the birth and life of Māui. Each page provides parents and *whānau* information relating to brain development (a brain icon indicates a brain fact), and tips to support parents (two hands, palm face-up, indicates a parent tip). For example, babies can hear 10 weeks prior to birth or attachments can be formed during prenatal development. The story begins with Māui nurtured within the womb of his mother Taranga and continues through to his learning and development. An *oriori* and key Māori words are repeated throughout the story, supporting the notion of repetition and Māori views of the child being a taonga (treasured gift). Māui and his first journey is beautifully illustrated and digitally animated with movement and sounds reflecting the natural and physical worlds. This application is available via iTunes or the Internet.

He aha te pikitia?

He aha te pikitia is an interactive application that tests the user's knowledge of common Māori words, such as colours, animals, numbers, nature, clothing and food. This application is beneficial for those who are beginners or those who want to have a bit of fun using te reo Māori. Upon downloading the application,

the object of the game is to guess what the picture hidden behind boxes is. As the game progresses, the picture will gradually unveil. However, not all boxes can be removed. This challenges the user to discover the word using only what is seen. This application also takes into account macrons that are needed within many Māori words; therefore, the user must use correct spelling for the formation of the words. He aha te pikitia is a free application available for iPhone and iPad.

Puna

Recently Te Kura Māori, of Victoria University of Wellington's Faculty of Education, released their second application supporting the learning of Māori language. Designed to support those who are beginning their Māori language learning journey, Puna is a free application that can be downloaded via iTunes or Google Play. Puna was developed mainly in te reo Māori; however, the plan is that Te Kura Māori will develop English translations. Within Puna, the user is able to develop their knowledge using a range of words and phrases within a range of categories. Categories include kai (food), kura (school), tinana (body), kākahu (clothes), wā (time) and kāinga (home). Upon downloading the application, the user is able to use the teaching guide (the small woven basket at the bottom of the screen) to learn how the modules operate. *Kia rite* enables the learner to develop knowledge of vocabulary, *wero hinengaro* enables the learner to test their knowledge, *wero mahara* enables the learner to test their memory, *wero tuhi* enables the learner to test their spelling skills, and *wero whatu* enables the learner to test their observational skills. These modules are explained in English with corresponding pictures to help locate the modules. Within *kia rite*, the option to write the word is available by selecting the pencil at the bottom of the screen. The option to hear or record is also available. Navigating through words can be done by tapping on the picture. The pronunciation of the word will play for every picture.

Other recent applications

Māori language experts are aware of recent statistics and the need to support Māori and non-Māori in learning te reo Māori. However, it is evident that the development of Māori language with the use of technology is progressing. There are a range of websites that provide up to date information relating to the development of applications supporting the learning and use of Māori language, including a website developed by Karaitiana Taiuru (2015). Karaitiana (2015) provides a list of Māori language and culture applications with a brief overview of each application (as stated in the iTunes store). Searching within iTunes or Google play may also reveal applications, including the following:

1. **Kura** – First Māori language application developed by Te Kura Māori of Victoria University of Wellington's Faculty of Education

2. **Te Reo Māori – Māori Dictionary** – Developed by AUT

3. **Te Pūmanawa – Learn Māori Language** – Supports the learning of Māori language and culture

4. **Aki** – A Māori language vocabulary and phrase application developed by the University of Otago

5. **Hika** – A Māori language learning application that is fun and interactive. Developed by Hika Group.

Web references for applications

Irirangi

1. **iTunes** – https://itunes.apple.com/nz/app/irirangi/id503717519?mt=8

Te Kete Tikanga Māori: Māori Cultural Toolkit

1. **iTunes** – https://itunes.apple.com/nz/app/te-kete-maori/id741995399

2. **Google Play** – https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=nz.govt.nzte.teketetikanga&hl=en

Milly me Molly - Te Pataka

1. **iTunes** – https://itunes.apple.com/nz/app/milly-molly-maori-library/id466383091?mt=8

iMarae

1. **iTunes** – https://itunes.apple.com/nz/app/imarae/id714489807?mt=8

Māui and his first journey

1. **Online** – http://whakatipu.org.nz/maui/

2. **iTunes** – https://itunes.apple.com/nz/app/maui-and-his-first-journey/id603827522?mt=8

He aha te pikitia?

1. **iTunes** – https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/guess-the-pic-he-aha-te-pikitia/id739088084?mt=8

Puna

1. **iTunes** – https://itunes.apple.com/nz/app/puna/id928989316?mt=8

2. **Google Play** – https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=nz.co.littlemonkey.puna

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