TE TUMU
SCHOOL OF MĀORI, PACIFIC & INDIGENOUS STUDIES

Manawa whenua, wē moana uriuri, hōkikitanga kawenga
From the heart of the land, to the depths of the sea;
repositories of knowledge abound

Author: John Birnie

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Online interaction in *te reo* Māori by beginner/intermediate adult language learners using Facebook and Skype

John Birnie

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the possible benefits of online interaction for beginner/intermediate adult learners of *te reo* Māori (the Māori language), and the implications of online interaction. The research centres round a five week project in which eight adult learners of *te reo* Māori interacted on Facebook and Skype, with weekly topics and support and guidance provided by the researcher/facilitator. The project clearly showed benefits, including the opportunity for practice in *te reo* Māori, enjoyment of interaction (particularly on Facebook), linguistic extension through interaction, and provision of a community for isolated learners. Most participants who took part in Skype calls enjoyed them, though it was evident that some Skype calls would have benefited from being more structured and time limited. Some participants also found Skype calls, or the prospect of them, stressful. Findings from the project suggest that linguistic and technical support, along with good moderation and careful grouping of participants, could add significantly to benefits of online interaction, and that the interaction among the participants suggests improvements that could be made in online interaction, and for teaching the Māori language to adult students.

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Ehara taku mahi i te mahi takitahi, nō reira; he mihi nui ki a Tangiwai, taku kaiarahi mō tēnei mahi rangahau; ki a koutou kua whai wāhi i te mea nei, ā, ki a koutou kua tautoko i ahau i tēnei tau. Tēnā rā koutou katoa.

This is not the fruit of only one person's work, so, warm thanks to Tangiwai, my supervisor; to those who took part in this study, and to all who have supported me this year; my heartfelt thanks to you all.

> Writers who work in Kaupapa Māori research talk openly about research that has to be transformative – it has to produce positive change instead of simply reproducing the 'same old same old' status quo.
>
> (Writer unknown) http://www.rangahau.co.nz/research-idea/ (accessed April 15th 2011)

> Recognize achievement in incremental progress. And be patient. Learning a language takes time.
>
> Muriel Saville-Troike, *Introducing Second Language Acquisition.*

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Conventions and glossary

Māori words or passages are written in italics, except for the words "Māori" and "Pākehā"; words or short phrases are followed by a translation in brackets, and longer passages are translated below. Proper names are not italicised.

The following words, phrases or terms are frequently encountered throughout this dissertation.

Frequently encountered words

te reo Māori   the Māori language (sometimes simply referred to as "*te reo*")

Pākehā   non-Māori New Zealander of European extraction

tauiwi   non-Māori New Zealander

mihi   Greeting or acknowledgement, but often used within this project for a semi-formal description of one's *whakapapa* (family tree) and background.

Kōhanga Reo	Māori language settings (early childhood education services) affiliated with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust.[1]
Kura Kaupapa Māori	Māori language school settings based on Māori philosophies.[2]
Wharekura	Māori-medium secondary settings based in and on Māori education philosophies.[3]
Te Wānanga o Aotearoa	a Māori-based tertiary provider, guided by Māori principles and values; in 80 locations throughout New Zealand.
Te Taura Whiri i *te reo* Māori	a commission set up under the Māori Language Act 1987 to promote the use of Māori as a living language and as an ordinary means of communication (also known as, and referred to in this project as, the Māori Language Commission).[4]

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[1] Ministry of Education: Glossary of Terms.
http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/PolicyAndStrategy/KaHikitia/StrategyOverview/Glossary.aspx

[2] Ministry of Education: Glossary of Terms..

[3] Ibid.

[4] Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori: About us. http://www.tetaurawhiri.govt.nz/english/about_e/about.shtml

| Kura Reo | Māori immersion language schools for intermediate/advanced learners, funded by the Māori Language Commission. |

Levels of Māori language skill

In this project, the four main levels of Māori study at the University of Otago are used. They are named after books in the "Te Whanake" series by John Moorfield.

Stage 1	"Te Kākano" (beginner level)
Stage 2	"Te Pihinga" (lower-intermediate level)
Stage 3	"Te Māhuri" (upper-intermediate level)
Stage 4 (postgraduate):	"Te Kōhure" (advanced level)

"Facebook" terms

To post	Placing a message on a Facebook page (technically a "status update," but commonly referred to as "posting").
post (noun)	A message placed on a Facebook page.
comment	A function on Facebook which allows a person to place a comment or observation on another person's post.
"Like"	A function on Facebook which allows a person to instantly

express approval or acknowledgment of another person's post or comment on Facebook (a "thumbs up" sign appears, linked to the name of the person who "liked" the item).

Introduction

As a long-time Māori language learner and teacher who is also Pākehā, I have been conscious of the lack of opportunity to interact in *te reo* Māori with other people. I was also aware that many other adult learners of the Māori language face the same difficulty, whether they are Māori or *tauiwi*. However, I frequently use internet sites which broadcast audio and video programmes in Māori, and also frequently use the internet to access written and visual resources for my language study. I am also a frequent user of social media sites such as Facebook and Skype and believed there was enormous potential there for learners of *te reo* Māori to both learn new things, and put their language into practice using these social media. I decided it would be worthwhile investigating the effects of online interaction in *te reo* Māori for adult learners, who are often separated from others by geography, or by other commitments, such as work and family.

This project was begun under the more ambitious title "Moving up to the next level in *te reo* Māori." Although that was the long-term aim of online interaction, it seemed presumptuous, and I have decided on a more modest title. Certainly the response of most participants to the online interaction was positive, and the potential of online interaction partially realized, but the path of language learning is a long one, and there are more lessons to be learned from this project than triumphs to be related. However I think that my initial belief, that informal online interaction in *te reo* Māori had much to offer, was supported by the interaction which occurred and by the responses I received to the activities.

I was a secondary school teacher for more than twenty years, and retired from teaching in 2010. I taught English and Drama for most of my teaching career, with the occasional Māori language class, but from 2005 till 2010 I taught mainly Māori language in Dunedin mainstream secondary schools. I have been learning *te reo* Māori since my early twenties,

more recently through the University of Otago where I have done the main language papers up to Stage 4 level, and also through Kura *Reo*. Despite all this Māori language study, I would only describe myself as a moderately competent Maori speaker, and by no means fluent. I am definitely an on-going language learner myself.

I have also studied several other languages, most recently Spanish, spurred on by my daughters, who have both spent time recently in Central America. In semester 1 of 2011 I also studied a Stage 3 paper in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) at the University of Otago. My Spanish studies and SLA studies have both been major influences on my choosing this field of research.

Factors which led to the topic choice

In the same year I started this project, I was marker and occasional tutor for a paper called Conversational Māori (MAOR110), the beginner Māori language course available at the University of Otago. I was struck by the fact that so many bright young New Zealanders and foreign students were learning the basics of Māori language, then not being followed up, or having nowhere to use their language in an informal setting. Of course many students study this particular course for practical reasons, as a requirement for other studies, and have no intention of continuing with the language, whereas those who are genuinely interested may return to do further papers in the language, but despite this it seemed wasteful to teach this substantial cohort of students without making some effort to keep them engaged or learning informally afterwards.

In a wider context, I was also aware of a number of my friends and acquaintances who had studied *te reo* Māori in the past but who were not currently using the language. Even as a reasonably advanced student myself, I found few opportunities to use my *reo*, except in conversations with fellow students and/or co-workers at Te Tumu (the Māori Department at

the University of Otago), or occasional conversations with old friends or teaching colleagues. I was aware of efforts to get people together physically for Māori language conversation, but knew this was often unsuccessful. Even within the same city, it is never easy to get a group together unless the individuals in it are very strongly motivated. However, as a frequent user of Facebook and Skype, I was intrigued with the possibility of using these media to increase interaction in *te reo* Māori. I have also been impressed with the simplicity of communication on both these media, and consequently decided to focus my research project on the use of social media to encourage interaction among adult language learners in *te reo* Māori.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. In Chapter 1 I describe the context of this research task within the Master of Indigenous Studies degree, and I also explain several key ideas I decided to explore in this project. I then describe the planning of the research task. In Chapter 2 I describe the process of recruitment, provided details of the participants, and explain in more detail the set-up and management of the project. In Chapter 3 I review the relevant literature on the revitalization of *te reo* Māori, current concerns about the health of *te reo* Māori, and issues facing adults who are learning the language. I then examine the literature on Second Language Acquisition (SLA), specifically the concept of interlanguage and the benefits of interaction. This chapter also covers literature on the role of social media in SLA. In Chapter 4 I present the findings from the project on the perceived benefits and implications of online interaction in *te reo* Māori. Finally, in Chapter 5 I consider the implications of the findings, and make recommendations for further action and research.

Chapter 1: Formulation and set-up of the project

In this chapter I will place my research in the context of indigenous issues, and suggest this research task fits broadly within a framework of "kaupapa Māori" research. I also explain how using a qualitative research method shapes this particular project. Following this I explain several key ideas explored in the project; I then describe the planning of the research task.

MIndS degree – context of the research

I believe it is important to place this research project in the context of indigenous research and Māori research. The most immediate link is that this dissertation is a compulsory component of a Master of Indigenous Studies degree from the University of Otago; the other compulsory element is a full-year paper, INGX501, which was delivered online and dealt with indigenous issues from all around the world. This paper provided a theoretical underpinning for indigenous studies, as well as a wealth of international examples. My dissertation has few of the external trappings of an indigenous studies project, but certainly deals with an indigenous issue; in this case, working out how to facilitate the use of the indigenous language of Aotearoa / New Zealand, in a situation where adult learners are often comparatively isolated. It also comes under the broad heading of indigenous language revival.

Principles of Māori research

This project deals with the use of social media to assist in practical implementation of Māori language revival, but is not fully embedded in the Māori/indigenous community. Four of the eight participants in this study are Māori, four are not, and despite the Māori participants facing their own psychological and social pressures as language learners, all the

participants share many similar difficulties as learners of Māori in an overwhelmingly monolingual (English speaking) environment. However, despite this research having a wider span than Māori alone, I was concerned to have my work grounded in culturally appropriate principles of Māori research.

In the wider context, Linda Tuhiwai Smith has pointed out that research has historically paid scant attention to Māori ways of knowing, and is often linked to colonialism.5 By contrast, Smith (1999) promotes the concept of Kaupapa Māori research (research owned and driven by Māori for Māori ends; my explanation).[6] Smith (1996) identifies the key principles of whakapapa (genealogy), *te reo* Māori, tikanga Māori (Māori customs), *rangatiratanga* (control over resources) and *whānau* (family in the broadest sense) as integral to such research.[7] I would not be comfortable, as a Pākehā carrying out a modest research task such as the present one, in claiming that this project is an exact match with "kaupapa Māori research," but examination of my project in detail shows some links. The project is centred in promotion of *te reo* Māori, acknowledges Māori ways of relating (such as exchange of *mihi*), is actively promoting empowerment of speakers/learners of *te reo* Māori (*rangatiratanga*), and is developing *whanaungatanga* (being part of a family in the broadest sense, in this case a language community). I believe that this research task, though it may not sit directly under the roof of "kaupapa Māori research," at least fits comfortably beside it.

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[6] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, cited in International Research Institute for Māori and Indigenous Education, Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pomare, *Māori Research Development: Kaupapa Māori Principles and Practice: A Literature Review,* Te Puni Kōkiri (2000),18.

[7] Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1997), cited in http://www.rangahau.co.nz/research-idea/31/. (Accessed 25th April 2011).

Another widely expressed concern in indigenous research is ownership of the research, and queries over who will benefit from it.[8] My response to this, in regards to my own research project, is that in the broadest sense this research belongs to the wider group of Māori language learners, and is intended to eventually benefit all who are working towards learning the language in an environment which makes it difficult to achieve easy success. Quite apart from the principles of 'Kaupapa Māori' research, however, adherence to generally held academic principles of research place this project on a sound footing (principles such as respect of participants' privacy and dignity, avoiding pressure on participants, and giving the opportunity to opt out at any stage). Supervision under 'Te Tumu' (the Māori department at the University of Otago) has provided a mechanism for guidance and support with regard to Māori values and principles, and the Māori participants have not expressed any misgivings about the topic or the conduct of the research project. The Ngai Tahu Research Committee of the University of Otago has also examined the proposal and has requested a copy of the final document.

The issue of a non-Māori researching a Māori issue deserves closer examination. Māori academic Graham Smith (1992) proposed a set of foundation principles for *tauiwi* (non-Māori) researching in a Māori situation.[9] First was the *tiaki* model (mentor model); secondly, the *whāngai* model (adoption model); thirdly, the power sharing model; and finally what he called the "empowering outcomes" model. In conducting this project and researching this topic I endeavoured to cover at least three of these four roles. Mentoring the participants was a priority, and we clearly worked towards using the power of the group interaction to build participants' language skills. This generated their own agency, which

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[8] A. Mead, cited in *Māori Research Development: Kaupapa Māori Principles and Practice: A Literature Review*, 18-19.

[9] Graham Smith, cited in *Māori Research Development: Kaupapa Māori Principles and Practice: A Literature Review,* 18

fits the power sharing model. Another key element of the project was to examine ways participants could become more independent and confident users of the language, which points to the empowering model. Overall, I felt satisfied that from the beginning through to the conclusion, my research fitted within Graham Smith's model of *tauiwi* researching in a Māori situation.

The project in the context of Qualitative Research

This project clearly fits firmly in the category of qualitative research. It is best described as an instrumental case study, which is carried out to gain insight into a broader issue (in this case, examining the effectiveness or otherwise of online interaction for adult learners of *te reo* Māori). This dissertation tells the story of people interacting in a particular setting, in this case, and the information gathered reflects the description that Ken Springer gives of this process:

> The information obtained from qualitative research is expressed in narratives rather than numbers. The qualitative narrative consists of highly detailed descriptions of people, environments and institutions, with emphasis on peoples' interactions and experiences as well as the meanings they construct.[10]

This does mean that in analysing the data collected (in this case the record of Facebook interactions and transcripts of Skype calls, along with the responses of participants to these events) that numbers only tell part of the story and that participants experience is paramount. The small sample of participants has its weakness; Springer points out that it may be difficult to generalise from the results of a case study, but that "researchers address

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[10] Ken Springer, *Educational Research: a Contextual Approach*, Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2010), 382.

these issues by relating their results to published theories and findings."[11] It will be apparent that I do just that.

Key ideas explored in this project

I approached this project fresh from a paper on Second Language Acquisition, and from experience as a second language (Spanish) learner myself. I also had observed for many years the process of language learning as a high school teacher and occasional teacher of adults. I decided to explore through this project some of the ideas which had impressed themselves upon me; the following section deals with these ideas.

Fear of "getting it wrong"

I was aware that embarrassment about "getting it wrong" is a significant factor for learners of *te reo* Māori, particularly for adults, and more particularly for ethnically Māori learners. The Māori Language Commission exerts pressure on the Māori speaking community to ensure Māori language use is as correct as possible, which is of course an excellent aim, but I suspect it has the effect of repressing use of the language among some learners. There is an unfortunate and sometimes accurate perception amongst learners that poor use of Māori will expose them to disapproval and belittling from some in the wider community of *reo* Māori users; I refer to this in more detail in Chapter 3. I decided that in this project there would be maximum encouragement of communication and interaction, at the expense of quality of language if necessary. There would be no overt correction, but an attempt to encourage people as much as possible by encouraging participants to acknowledge each other's contributions with "Likes" and comments.

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[11] Springer, Educational Research, 407.

'Interlanguage" as a possible encouraging concept for Māori language learners

My reading on Second Language Acquisition had led me to the concept of 'interlanguage.' This is a key concept in modern Second Language Acquisition.[12]The concept acknowledges that learners are forming their own personal grammar framework, and that the language user's output demonstrates the structure of this framework in each individual. Interlanguage contains input from the user's first language and the target language, with significant input from the first language. Interlanguage is inevitably a simplified system, in which rules are learned then applied, sometimes in situations where they are not appropriate. Interlanguage tends to move from plateau to plateau rather than in a smooth progression. It is essentially a creative process, and a necessary step to language acquisition.

This concept seemed to have liberating potential for Māori language learners who may have excessive concerns about being tika (correct), at the expense of being willing to communicate and risk being incorrect. I decided to include an edited, "user-friendly" passage about interlanguage to encourage language interaction (see appendix for text).

The importance of interaction in Second Language Acquisition

In my Second Language Acquisition study I had been struck by the importance of interaction for language acquisition. I suspected that active interaction is perhaps an under-utilized aspect of many Māori language courses (by contrast it was a strong feature of Spanish 1 from the very beginning, and conversation with a teacher and another student were included very early on in the assessment tools). This reading reinforced my desire to use social media to generate interaction amongst language learners, and once again I edited

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[12] Muriel Saville-Troike, *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 40-43. These pages all deal in detail with the concept of interlanguage.

some material on interaction to provide encouragement to the participants in my project (see appendix for text).

Eventually the project took the following shape; I decided to run a project for five weeks, in which I would place adult learners of *te reo* Māori in a "secret" or hidden Facebook group, and encourage them to interact by providing a different topic each week to encourage fresh interaction, along with some vocabulary assistance (idioms, relevant vocabulary, sentence patterns and so forth). I decided I would also match participants each week for a brief Skype call, based on the topic of the week. My focus would be on examining the participants' satisfaction with online interaction, their perception of how the online interaction helped them to learn *te reo* Māori, and on the extent the online activities encouraged them to continue using and studying the Māori language.

Here are the research questions I decided on:

1) What benefits can be gained from online interactions for beginner/intermediate adult learners of *te reo* Māori?

2) What are the implications of online interaction for second language learning?

Conclusion

In this chapter I placed my research in the context of indigenous issues, and explained how project fits with the concept of "kaupapa Māori" research. I also explained how a qualitative research method shaped theproject. Following this I explained the significance of several main ideas explored in the project, and finally I described the planning of the project. In the next section I will describe how I conducted the project.

Chapter 2: Methodology

In this chapter I provide a detailed profile of the participants. I then explain how I recruited participants, how I set up the project, and how I administered the project through to its completion.

The Participants

Below is a summary of key information about the participants, mainly taken from an initial questionnaire. All have been given nom-de-plumes.

Table 1: Participants

Nom-de-plume	Iwi	Gender	Age	Occupation	Estimated level of skill in *te reo* **Māori** (my informal assessment) (1 low, 4 high)
Lara	Pākehā	F	59	Tertiary lecturer	1/2
Mary	Pākehā	F	40	Teacher/ administrator	2/3
Rena	Māori	F	39	Researcher	1/2
Pita	Māori	M	53	Teacher	2/3
Sam	Pākehā	M	66	Counsellor	3
Lucy	Pākehā	F	52	Publication editor	4
Pania	Māori	F	39	Teacher	1/2
Ana	Māori	F	23	Student	4

Summary language profile of participants

Lara: Lara studied stage 1 Māori in 1994 at university, then did night classes for two years at the local branch of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. She did a 10 week course in the Te Ataarangi

method in 2011, and loved it. Lara found learning Māori difficult, especially listening, but was generally positive, and she was already trying to use a little every day at start of project.

Mary: Mary completed Stage 2 (Te Pihinga) at university. She had positive experiences of learning *te reo* Māori, especially in W____, where she worked as an art teacher, and did an evening course on the local culture and history. She was frustrated at the lack of opportunity to interact in the Māori language where she lives.

Rena: Rena did a Stage 1 paper in *te reo* Māori in the 90s, and attended a Te Ataarangi class. She had a positive experience of learning Māori, and found it easy to learn, but struggles to find time to do further courses. She is motivated to continue on and learn further.

Pita: Pita completed Stage 2 ("Te Pihinga") at university, but it was outside his comfort zone (the immersion in *te reo* was too intense for him). Since then he has done level 1 and 2 (certificate level) at a local Te Wānanga o Aotearoa evening class; he enjoyed the *whanaungatanga* (feeling of being part of a family) there. He struggles with listening, and is *whakamā* (shy/embarrassed) about speaking *te reo* Māori.

Sam: Sam did a Diploma for Graduates at university in the 90s (about Stage 3 level). He sometimes uses Māori in his work situation, mostly in formal settings. He prefers conversation (Skype) to Facebook, but rarely gets to converse with anyone.

Lucy: Lucy studied *te reo* Māori to Stage 4 ("Te Kohure") at university, finishing in 2004. She was concerned at seeing her skill in *te reo* diminishing with lack of use.

Pania: Pania has done Stage 1 and Stage 2 in *te reo* Māori at university, has been involved as *kaiawhina* (helper) at Kohanga Reo, has taught in a bilingual unit for 2 years, and attended Te Ataarangi. However, she feels like a failure as a language learner; she struggles to speak and understand *te reo* Māori, and feels judged and belittled because of this, despite being a

competent mainstream teacher. She has virtually given up on *te reo* Māori, and only speaks to people she knows well, choosing to concentrate on making sure her children have the language (her four children attend *kura kaupapa*).

Ana: Ana attended *kōhanga reo* as an infant, and has been taking Māori classes on and off for 10 years (she says some teachers were "intimidating'' which is why her learning was intermittent). She studied *te reo* Māori to stage 3 ("Te Māhuri") at university, and is quite competent, but sometimes struggles to use her language in everyday situations.

Recruitment

I naively thought that recruiting would be a reasonably straight-forward process. It proved to be otherwise. The original plan was to recruit ten people from personal contacts, and to only use people within my proposed range, which was people who had studied "Te Kākano" to "Te Pihinga" (or an approximate equivalent) but who were not currently studying *te reo*. I had to widen my net to include people with more *reo*, and to include several who were still studying *te reo*.

Initially I contacted three people to whom my supervisor had mentioned the project. One, (an older Māori man) was interested, but he was not confident with computer use, although he was definitely keen to participate in a face-to-face interactive group. One other student on the same MIndS course expressed an interest, but soon realized that her own workload would be excessive if she took part. One older woman decided not to participate because of uncertain health; however she was extremely helpful with providing addresses from a *reo* Māori course she had attended (Te Ara Reo, a course from Te Wānanga o Aotearoa). This woman's two email lists was the basis of my initial search.

One woman (Lara) promptly agreed, and stayed on throughout the project. She was one of several academics in the list. Several other academics were keen to participate but declined because they were very busy. One Maori man in his 40s in the list was approached, but after some discussion, he declined to participate. He had never used Facebook or Skype, and the idea of conversation with strangers was daunting. He was still keen to participate in some sort of face-to-face group.

Academics and staff at Otago University were also helpful, pointing me in the direction of colleagues who might be interested. I initially turned down one woman (Lucy) because her skill level in *te reo* Māori was too high (though I asked her again later, and she enthusiastically joined up). She accepted my response graciously, and pointed me in the direction of seven possible colleagues; several expressed interest, but some were still studying *te reo* Māori. Three (including Rena) agreed to join up, though the other two pulled out in the first week of the project because of workload pressures.

I placed a notice with tear-off slips on walls of Te Tumu (the Māori Department at Otago University) and on noticeboards around the university. I visited also visited several classes in Te Tumu to recruit. There was a good deal of interest, though no participants eventuated (I was approached by two, including one young woman who joined the project briefly then withdrew because of workload pressures). Several students in these classes suggested other people to contact.

I initially only intended taking people who were not currently studying *te reo* Māori, but it turned out that this parameter was making recruitment very difficult. As an example of this, I rang a well-known and active worker in language revival in Christchurch (Charisma Rangipunga), who said that most of their interested people were continuing to learn. Incidentally, Charisma also suggested that I look for participants in the *kaumātua /kuia*

(elderly) age group. She pointed out that many were becoming users of Facebook for contact with their children and *mokopuna* (grandchildren). As it turned out, I didn't really follow up this suggestion.

I then sent an email to the local Māori secondary teachers email group (many were friends and colleagues of many years standing, as I had been a teacher of *te reo* Māori for several years in Dunedin). Two responded; one joined initially but pulled out soon after the project began because of family and work pressures. One (Pita) stayed; he was still learning *te reo* Māori through Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, so strictly speaking he was outside my original criteria, but he was a good participant and stayed through to the end (he was the only Māori male in the final project group). Several others expressed an interest in taking part but were too good (though I may have taken them in hindsight). At this stage I approached a personal acquaintance and ex-colleague (Mary) about the project. She agreed to join.

I sent an email to Victoria University, who forwarded it on to their contact list and to the Māori department at Auckland University. I then contacted the administrators at tangatawhenua.com, and they kindly allowed me to post on their Facebook page. This source yielded several responses, including people from Te Wānanga o Raukawa (a Māori based tertiary provider) and an extremely competent speaker from Australia. Both were too good for my project, but the woman from Te Wānanga o Raukawa assured me she would pass it on to their contacts. I then advertised on the Facebook page of The Māori Language Commission; this drew a few "Likes" and comments, but no responses. At this stage, my wife advertised about the project in her workplace and amongst her counseling contacts; this yielded one more participant (Sam - a person whom I already knew but hadn't thought of as a possible participant).

By the end of August it was two weeks after the time I had hoped to start, and I had assembled 10 participants. I started the group on 1ˢᵗ September. On the same date two participants (university academics) withdrew, mainly because of work pressure. I went ahead with the eight confirmed participants, and started contacting others who I had initially turned down, either because they were still learning *te reo* Māori, or because their level of *te reo* Maōri was too high. I contacted a student in "Te Kākano" who had been keen from the start. She officially joined on 6ᵗʰ September, but withdrew on 9ᵗʰ September, citing the pressure of university work. On 16ᵗʰ September, near the start of week three another participant withdrew, once again because of work pressure and family issues.

At one stage the project was semi-stalled. We were down to six participants, and there were minimal postings. I saw the need for some more confident people who would post more readily, to help provide a *tuakana-teina* (older sibling/younger sibling) dynamic, and to keep the flow going. I called Lucy, who had earlier been very enthusiastic about the project. She had done "Te Kōhure" (a stage 4 *reo* Māori paper), so she was well outside the original intended range of participants. She immediately agreed to take part. I also contacted Ana, a student at Victoria University, who had also been very keen to participate from the start. She had done "Te Māhuri" (Stage 3), and was about to do "Te Kōhure" next year. She also agreed readily. These two provided an immediate boost, posting *mihi* promptly, and grasping the need to respond and interact with people by commenting and "liking" other people's posts. These two provided a steady fresh input, without which the project may well have foundered.

The final participant (Pania) was added early in the third week of the project. She was a teacher who was a friend of another participant (Mary).

Set-up of the project

I used a "secret" Facebook group (only group members knew about the group and could post and read material on the group's Facebook page). I had previously set up a practice group with my daughter and a former colleague. I experimented with posting and using Facebook "docs." Initially I had planned to put all material directly on the Facebook page, including English instructions, but decided to go for documents being sent as attachments to emails. I really wanted to keep the Facebook page as the site for interaction in *te reo* Māori only (one participant later suggested it may have been better if I had put the support documents on the Facebook page). Later I figured out how to set things up as Google docs, and made them available that way (though there is no evidence that anyone accessed anything as a Google doc). It hadn't occurred to me till a few days before I was going to start that I needed to make Facebook friends of all the participants. It took a little time to do this.

I was very concerned about maintaining privacy on Facebook, more so perhaps than many of my participants, who generally seemed quite relaxed about it. As an older male, I was not comfortable with knowing too much detail of other people's lives. I blocked off everyone's personal updates, using Facebook's privacy settings, and informed everyone that that was what I was going to do. I told everyone how to block off my personal updates as well. This did demonstrate that I could run the group as a language learning exercise without being too aware of the participants' private lives, and the situation was the same for them.

Organizing Skype recording

Several participants had barely used "Skype", and some had not used it at all, and did not have accounts. I also wanted an audio recording of the Skype calls and to have a free, user-friendly way to accomplish this, and to make it easy for people to send files to me. After mixed results using mikes and the built in Soundrecorder and Audacity (free to download, but

a little daunting), I was eventually steered in the direction of software solutions while investigating buying a microphone. I experimented with several free download programmes (including PrettyMay, Powergrammo, Pamela, and MP3 Skype Recorder). I eventually chose MP3 Skype Recorder for its ease of use and practicality, and ease for finding files (all files are automatically given a detailed, intelligible label, and stored in a file which could be dragged immediately on to the desktop for later attachment to email). However, in fact only four Skype calls were made. One was done on a video/audio recording programme (Ecamm Call Recorder) on a Macintosh computer. The other three were recorded on Garageband (the method I suggested for Macintosh users) by separate participants.

Managing the project

Email as main communication method

My main means of communication was by email. I talked to all participants not personally known to me on the phone before they joined the project, but I still have not met several of them. Occasionally I would ring people for special reminders, but email communication seemed to work well, though at the end of the project I discovered at least one participant rarely checked his/her email; I suspect others were in a similar position. I also mailed out several key documents (information on the project and consent forms, and later on weekly surveys and the initial and final questionnaires, along with stamped addressed envelopes) as well as providing them as email attachments.

Initially I emailed out consent forms, official information about the project, and some detailed information about general principles of the project. A little later I sent out an email with the following documents: one each on Interlanguage and Interaction, an initial questionnaire, general information on the project, information about recording Skype calls, and *Ko te wiki tuatahi* (information on week 1 topic).

Table 2: Weekly topics

Week 1	*Mihi atu, mihi mai* / Greeting each other
Week 2	Ngā mea pai ki ahau / Things I like
Week 3	Mena kua wini au i te "Lotto" / If I won "Lotto"
Week 4	*He tangata rekareka ki ahau* / A person I find interesting
Week 5	*Te wā tino pai ki ahau (o te rā, o te wiki, o te tau)* / My favourite time (of the day, of the week, of the year)

Each week I would send out a new topic, and attach a document with some vocabulary, sentence patterns, and *kīwaha* (idioms*)*. The quantity of information varied considerably from week to week. For example, for week one (*Mihi atu, mihi mai* / greeting each other) I provided only translations of instructions, as I assumed most students could comfortably write about themselves, whereas for week four (*He tangata rekareka ki ahau* / A person I find interesting) I provided a lot of words and phrases to describe people.

Arrangements for Skype calls

I arranged Skype calls by pairing participants off and giving each person the email address of his or her partner. I did this because I wanted to preserve a level of privacy for people by not giving out phone numbers, but it did make arranging the Skype calls rather cumbersome. In hindsight, I would have made it a precondition that people were willing to share phone numbers with other participants to arrange calls. Some participants did not answer the request email from their partner, and for others it was difficult to arrange a time. For those who did make contact, there were occasional technical issues. I fielded one phone call from Mary about recording with Garageband; I was able to help, as I had practised it myself beforehand, and the call went ahead smoothly. Two participants had two Skype calls, and several others ended up just having one.

Pita found the prospect of the Skype process very stressful; I assured him that he did not need to do it if it was a problem to him, as the bigger issue for me was that he needed to enjoy his language learning experience. I later discovered another participant, Rena, had found her first Skype call very difficult. Others enjoyed the experience, and two agreed to continue calling after the project ended.

All the phone calls were considerably longer than the suggested 3- 5 minutes. I suspect it felt rude for people to make so brief a call. Apart from that, I hadn't really thought about the fact that conversations would often be hesitant, with long pauses, recasting, clarification and so on. Conversations between more competent speakers went more smoothly, naturally enough.

Role of facilitator – extent of contribution

Initially I intended to only post a *mihi* (personal greeting) then leave it up to the participants. However, I quickly decided to add comments and acknowledge participants' posts as they appeared, as I felt it was important to provide encouragement to those who were posting. There was a general positive response by participants to the level of contribution I made, although it would have affected the dynamic of the group, and may well have deterred participants from reaching out to others more.

After the five week project was finished, I posted out hard copies of the final questionnaire to all participants. It took some time and a number of reminders before I received them all back.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided details about the participants and their background and level of language skill, followed by details about setting up and administration of the project. Recruiting proved harder than I had anticipated; I had to be more flexible about my original criteria, and it was regrettable that I was not able to get a better gender balance for the project, but overall I believe I was able to gain enough material to consider the project

worthwhile, and to provide a reasonable sample of adult learners of *te reo* Māori. In the next

chapter I move on to a discussion of the literature relevant to this research project.

Chapter 3: Literature review

I begin my literature review with a brief examination of Māori language in the context of language revival worldwide and in Aotearoa/New Zealand, leading into an examination of literature on the various factors specific to adult learners of *te reo* Māori. The review continues with material on principles of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), especially as they apply to this particular project. Finally there is a review of literature on the use of social media for education, and more specifically to facilitate second language learning.

Language revitalization

This project fits within a broader movement to revitalize and ensure the on-going health of the Māori language, and is part of a much wider concern for indigenous / endangered language revitalization around the world.[13] The Māori language was until recently included in the endangered list, and although fears of its demise have been allayed, there is still very real concern about the long-term health of the language, especially because of the lack of interactive use of the language in most Māori homes. In the next section I will briefly outline the history of the fall and rise of *te reo* Māori, then follow with a look at literature on the status of the Māori language in the last ten years.

Brief accounts of the history of *te reo* Māori are common in academic writing; I have used Bernard Spolsky's account as the basis for this summary, mainly because he writes not only from a linguacentric viewpoint, but acknowledging the wider framework of decisions and accomodations about language use by Māori and Pākehā. He views the history of the language not as "colonial language destruction followed by postmodern rescue efforts" but as

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[13] Leanne Hinton and Kenneth Hale, *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* (San Diego, California: Academic Press, 2001), 3.

part of "an accommodation with each other, politically, socially, economically, culturally, and linguistically."[14]

In the 1850s, Māori was spoken by all native New Zealanders, and Europeans who came to New Zealand generally learnt some Māori to deal with them. Māori embraced literacy in their own language after their language was written down, and mission schools were supported by Māori and settlers each for their own purposes (Māori wanted to obtain Māori knowledge for Māori ends). After the land wars of the 1860s, the government passed the Native Schools Act in 1867, which was intended to establish Maori village schools that would teach through the medium of English. Spolsky believes this was a crucial element in language loss; he states that "The Native Schools created a new and English-dominated domain built in the very heart of Maori village life."[15] The long-term effect was a shift of Maori speakers from monolingualism, through bilingualism, to English monolingualism for the majority of Māori.[16]

Spolsky sums up the key factors in the loss of the Māori language as changes in the demographic balance, in the pattern of settlement, and in the process of acculturation.[17] Māori have been significantly outnumbered by *tauiwi*, the shift to urban areas from a rural existence has made language retention more difficult, and many Māori have adopted a similar way of life to Pākehā. Outside concentrated areas of Māori population, language retention was difficult, and the huge shift in the Māori population from rural to urban areas from the late 1940s to the 1970s meant Māori were far more likely to be mixing regularly with English speakers. Spolsky cites Benton's survey, conducted between 1973 and 1978, which showed

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[14] Bernard Spolsky, "Reassessing Māori regeneration," Language in Society 32:4 (2003): 553,554. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4169286 Accessed 21/05/2011

[15] Ibid., 558.

[16] Ibid., 557.

[17] Ibid., 558.

that English was rapidly replacing *te reo* Māori. Benton found that in most North Island communities, most Māori adults could still speak and understand the language, but that English tended to be the language of the home, especially around children.[18]

However, starting in the late 1970s, significant change occurred. Adult Māori began to learn their own language, often with the assistance of Te Ataarangi, the language-learning method pioneered in New Zealand by Katarina Mataira in 1980. Te Kōhanga Reo began a few years later; by the end of 1983, there were 148 Kohanga Reo, and 819 by 1994.[19] In 1985 the first Kura Kaupapa Māori was opened, and later Wharekura began offering Māori language immersion at secondary school level. The Māori Language Act of 1987 made *te reo* Māori an official language of New Zealand, and the Māori Language Commission was set up in the same year.

Throughout the 1990s the increase in *te reo* Māori in education appeared to be continuing, at least until the mid 1990s, when a decline started to show in the number of children attending Kōhanga *Reo*. It later turned out that 1999 had been the peak year for the proportion of Māori students involved in Māori pre-tertiary immersion education (still a comparatively low figure at 18.6%).[20] Even so, early in the new millenium it seemed all was progressing well for *te reo* Māori; increasing numbers were learning the language at tertiary institutions (particularly at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa), a Māori language strategy was launched by the government in 2003, and in 2004 Māori Television was launched.[21]

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[18] Bernard Spolsky, "Reassessing Māori regeneration," 559.

[19] Ibid., 561.

[20] Waitangi Tribunal, *Pre-publication Report: Wai 262 Te Reo Māori*, (2010), 36. http://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/scripts/reports/reports/262/056831F7-3388-45B5-B553-A37B8084D018.pdf (accessed 29th April 2011)

[21] Waitangi Tribunal, *Pre-publication Report*, 47.

Current concerns about the health of *te reo* Māori

A key issue is whether Māori language use is on the rise, or even maintaining previous usage, or whether it is on the decline. After the grassroots (or flaxroots) efforts from the 1980s on to revive the Māori language, there was a feeling abroad in New Zealand early in the new millenium that the previously endangered Māori language was on a steady path of recovery. This can be partly attributed to a report in 2006 from Te Puni Kokiri claiming to show that use of the Māori language was on the increase.[22] However, a contrary view soon came to prominence, mainly triggered by an influential article on the topic by linguist Winifred Bauer. She makes a strong case for the unreliability of Te Puni Kokiri's Māori language surveys, and for the need to still be very much concerned for *te reo* Māori having a future at all.[23] The Waitangi Tribunal (2010) found her analysis of the situation both convincing and disturbing, and had their own concerns for the health of the Māori language, mainly based on diminishing numbers in Māori immersion education.[24]

Bauer explains in detail why the Te Puni Kokiri report (2006) is based on poor methodology and is marred by poor presentation of what figures exist.[25] However, her concerns for the language went further than dissatisfaction with the statistics; she also believed that the lack of numbers speaking Māori indicated that the 'dilution effect' (speakers being spread too thinly throughout the population) would make it difficult to maintain the language. Her suggested solution was to concentrate effort on the communities where Māori is spoken more widely, to

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[22] Te Puni Kokiri. *Te Oranga o te Reo Māori 2006: The Health of the Māori Language in 2006.* Available at http://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/in-print/our-publications/publications/the-health-of-the-maori-language-in-2006/download/tpk-2008-health-maori-language-2006.pdf (This version accessed 24/1/12 and may be different from that quoted in Bauer's article).

[23] Winifred Bauer, "Is the Health of Te Reo Māori improving?" *Te Reo* 51, (2008): 33.

[24] Waitangi Tribunal, *Pre-publication Report: Wai 262 Te Reo Māori* ,40-41.

[25] Bauer, "Is the Health of Te reo Māori improving?" 34-61.

ensure maintenance of a Māori speaking community. [26] Bauer certainly makes a strong case for her suggested strategy, but I believe a wider view can be taken, that a level of community can be maintained without physical proximity, and that the steadily increasing use of social media also has a role to play in developing a different kind of community – a community of interest, separated by geography but united in the desire to speak and to learn *te reo* Māori. It would be naive to think this is the whole answer, but social media seem to have at least some role to play in creating a community of Māori language speakers.[27]

As mentioned previously, one of the key concerns of the Waitangi Tribunal about the Māori language is the reversal of a trend for Māori to engage in Māori immersion or bilingual education.[28] Not only has there not been maintenance of numbers in such education, but there has been some slippage since the highs of the 1990s. The issue of immersion/bilingual education for children and youths is outside the scope of this project, but the picture is of a language which is not making the headway which most people believe it is making. Despite the resounding success of Māori television and radio, the reach of *te reo* Māori within Māori themselves remains small, and despite a group of young speakers coming through schools and Kura *Reo* skilled in poetic and rhetorical language as well as in practical language, there is still a frustrating lack of wide uptake of the Māori language, amongst Māori and in society at large.

In the light of these concerns, in 2010 the government appointed Te Paepae Motuhake, a commission of people knowledgeable about Māori language issues, to develop new strategies to strengthen *te reo* Māori; their report was presented in 2011 and expressed the

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[26] Bauer, "Is the Health of Te Reo Māori Improving?" 63-67.

[27] For example, the Facebook group "Te Mana o te Reo Māori," a Facebook group started by Paraone Gloyne and open to the public, with 2012 members as of 7th February 2012. It features lively discussions on issues concerning te reo Māori, mostly in te reo Māori, by very competent speakers.

[28] Waitangi Tribunal, *Pre-publication Report: Wai 262 Te Reo Māori*, 21-31, especially 31.

commission's concern about a number of issues in relation to the Māori language, including poor on-going intra-family transmission of the language.29 Academic and Māori language expert Wharehuia Milroy has also shared his extreme concern at the lack of up-take of the Māori language by Māori themselves, despite the multitude of paths by which a person can access the Māori language at present.30 Te Paepae Motuhake and Wharehuia Milroy are in agreement that increasingly entrusting iwi with control of promoting and ensuring the health of the Māori language will have the desired effect.31 A major part of the Waitangi Tribunal's suggested strategy also centres on a strengthened Māori Language Commission playing a major role, by providing leadership, and operating with increased powers to compel change, especially in the public sector.32

In my opinion there are a number of positives in the current situation. Māori are fortunate in having a strong traditional literary base (although little is written in contemporary Māori except for teaching and *kapahaka* purposes), extensive broadcasting access, some strong speaking communities, and an increasingly robust group of young speakers from mainstream education or Māori immersion schooling. In many respects Māori are fortunate in having a wide range of learning options, though there is some resentment among Māori at having to pay to learn the language previous governments had a role in suppressing.[33] There is a range of ways to learn Māori available, from courses run by universities and other tertiary providers, night classes, and extensive audio-visual material available on television, along

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[29] Te Paepae Motuhake, *Te Reo Mauriora - Te Arotakenga o Te Rāngai Reo Māori me Te Rautaki Reo Māori: Review of the Māori Language Sector and the Māori Language Strategy*. (2011), 5. http://www.tpk.govt.nz/_documents/te-reo-mauriora.pdf (accessed 14/4/11)

[30] Chris Winitana, *My Language, My Inspiration* (Wellington: Huia Publishers (2011), 311,312.

[31] Winitana, *My Language, My Inspiration*, 315, and Te Paepae Motuhake, *Te Reo Mauriora*, 7.

[32] Waitangi Tribunal, *Pre-publication Report: Wai 262 Te Reo Māori*, 71-75, 89.

[33] Stephen Chrisp, "Māori intergenerational language transmission," *The International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 172, (2005), 165. http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.otago.ac.nz/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ufh&AN=16634845&site=ehost-live&scope=site (Accessed 19/11/2011).

with written and audio-visual material readily available online. The foundation certainly seems to be there for a strong revival of the Māori language. In the end, however, the main problem which emerges internationally for endangered languages is the absence of communicative situations in which the language is used meaningfully.[34] In my opinion, the situation is much the same in New Zealand as well.[35]

Issues facing adults learning *te reo* Māori

In this section, I will focus on issues of success and difficulty in revitalizing *te reo* Māori, especially in connection with adults. Ian Christensen (2002) deals with barriers to use of *te reo* Māori and possible solutions. Stephen Chrisp (2005) gives a telling portrayal of the considerable difficulties Māori adult learners face. I believe the conclusions he reaches, and the recommendations he makes are still highly relevant.[36] Matiu Ratima and Stephen May (2011) echo many of the issues raised by Christensen and Chrisp, and examine ten factors which help or hinder adults in achieving proficiency.

It is important to note that Christensen's study is based around Māori as ethnic Māori, and that one should not assume that the same barriers which adult ethnic Māori experience will always be experienced by *tauiwi* language learners, although one could reasonably expect some carry-over. In fact my research, despite its very small participant base, points to *whakamā* (shyness) being much more of an issue for Māori than *tauiwi* learners, for example.

Christensen's article is based on part of a programme called the Hoe Nuku Roa, which consists of a Baseline Study on the circumstances of a group of Māori households. This study

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34 Hinton and Hale, *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, 16.

35 Ian Christensen, "Māori Language Revitalisation and Maintenance: Issues and Insights," *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics* 7, (2001), 26.

36 Chrisp, "Māori Intergenerational Language Transmission," 178, 179.

began in 1994, and covers health, education, socio-economic status, and involvement with Māori culture and language. Christensen's survey showed that school had replaced home as the primary source of Māori language learning, as the generation of parents in the study period were not up to the task.[37] Children in immersion environments tended to outstrip their parents' language skills, which created an uncomfortable dynamic for many parents.[38] There was a strongly perceived lack of learning material at the time of the study, though from my experience as a Māori language teacher from 2005 to 2010, this situation has improved considerably.

Parents and adults in Christensen's study lamented the lack of opportunities to speak Māori in the wider community, despite the fact most cohort study participants were heavily involved in the Māori community.[39] The study points to the considerable value of non-formal learning, so provision of a rich linguistic environment seems all the more important outside as well as inside school. [40]

Christensen's study looks at pathways to proficiency, and for this, Te Ataarangi and *marae* based classes were ranked as important, though few had actually attended the latter. But the main factor which mattered to everyone was being around the language in an informal setting, and there was widespread frustration that this did not seem to be happening. Christensen concluded that course providers needed to ensure that informal opportunities for interaction were built in around actual courses to fulfil the learners' needs.[41]

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[37] Christensen, "Māori Language Revitalisation and Maintenance," 21.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., 26

[40] Ibid., 22.

[41] Ibid., 26.

All the second language speakers found it hard to get over a threshold of confidence to use their language skills.[42] Some learners felt judged; some had received criticism. Another significant factor was reluctance to cause shame for other Māori who did not speak *te reo* Māori. It was also often felt to be bad manners to speak *te reo* Māori in front of Pākehā. Many did not feel confident using the language in situations like the supermarket, or at work. But the main deterring factor was the lack of people to communicate with.[43] It does seem to me that social media have the potential to significantly expand language learners' immediate circle, and although it would be unrealistic to think that such communication can replace conversation with friends and family, there are clearly benefits to be gained from reducing speakers' isolation by these means.

The issue of quality of language emerged strongly in Christensen's study. His participants clearly expressed a genuine desire to hear and produce high quality Māori, with learners aspiring to produce it, and proficent speakers lamenting its lack.[44] One can only applaud this desire to hear and read quality language, but one unfortunate effect is that issues of quality are acting as a barrier to intergenerational interaction in Māori, for both the fluent and the learners,[45] which is doubly unfortunate, as fluent speakers have a vital role in language revitalisation.

The next relevant article dealing with the experience of adult language learners came out in 2005, though some of the material in it had appeared in a 2002 Te Puni Kōkiri report. Stephen Chrisp's article is mainly focused on intergenerational transmission of *te reo* Māori,

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[42] Christensen, "Māori Language Revitalisation and Maintenance," 29.

[43] Ibid., 33.

[44] Ibid., 26-28.

[45] Ibid., 28.

but shines a good deal of light on the experiences of adults learning Māori as a second language. His conclusions point to a need to ease the path of adult Māori language learners, to build their confidence, and to acknowledge the realities of second language learning.[46]

Chrisp (2005) states in his first conclusion that "Māori adults should be encouraged to recognize existing Māori language skills, and supported so they can increase their confidence in their preexisting skills."[47] I believe this is still a key issue. For example, several of the participants in my project had done years of study of *te reo* Māori, but had minimal confidence in using what they had learnt. This is not really surprising as most of the participants in my project had little interaction in conversational Māori in their everyday lives, and were understandably struggling to communicate as well as they would wish. It is important to acknowledge, however, that they did have a grounding they could build on.

Part of Chrisp's second conclusion is that learning institutions need to be more responsive to Māori learners' desire to learn language they can readily incorporate into everyday life.[48] I believe this is still an issue, from my experience.

Chrisp (2005) goes on to urge Māori language education providers to "recognize and acknowledge the complex identity issues for Māori learning Māori as adults, and the resultant anxiety."[49] I believe some providers do this particularly well (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa is one organization which appears to be more successful than most in this, according to anecdotal evidence and Pita and Lara, two of the participants in my project). Chrisp goes on to express as a possibility that these complex identity issues are a significant reason why many Māori do

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[46] Chrisp, "Māori Intergenerational Language Transmission," 178,179.

[47] Ibid., 178.

[48] Ibid., 179.

[49] Ibid.

not pursue *te reo* Māori more vigorously, and recommends that "mechanisms should be developed to support these people to work through these dilemmas."[50] I am not aware that this issue has yet been systematically addressed.

Chrisp also discusses the value of "leads."[51] These are people who motivate others and provide safe environments for adults to learn and practise their language (Lucy was an example from my project). He urges targeted training and funding to support such people.

Chrisp continues by urging that safe language environments be established, where people can learn without fear of criticism. He cites Wānanga *Reo* (language schools generally) as learning environments, but refrains from specifying that they are always perceived as 'safe' environments. My personal experience at Kura *Reo* has been a mix of feeling safe and feeling exposed, and Chrisp quotes one person in his study as experiencing Kura *Reo* as an anxiety-inducing environment.[52] In comparison, perhaps, an online environment, such as this project provides, has the potential to be more 'safe,'[53] with a certain amount of distance strengthening the safety aspect, though at times some participants still felt exposed.

Chrisp (2005) next addresses the fact that fluent speakers need encouragement to be better informed about the difficulties adults learning Māori are facing, to enable them to better support those who are learning.[54] I believe that this is an excellent proposal, and that it should

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[50] Chrisp, "Māori Intergenerational Language Transmission," 179.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., 176.

[53] See also the article by Kissau et al, which deals with French learners' diminished anxiety in an online environment. Scott Kissau, Heather McCullogh and J. Harvey Pike, "Leveling the playing field: The Effects of Online Second Language Instruction on Student Willingness to Communicate in French," *Calico Journal* 27:2 (2010). http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.otago.ac.nz/ps/i.do?action=interpret&id=GALE|A219449923&v=2.1&u=otago&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&authCount=1. (Accessed November 2011).

[54] Chrisp, "Māori Intergenerational Language Transmission," 179.

start at the top, with The Māori Language Commission and the Kura *Reo* for which they provide funding through *iwi* organizations. I believe these Kura *Reo* have the potential to be a less daunting environment without compromising the quality of the language they are teaching.

The final two recommendations Chrisp (2005) makes are about raising awareness in Māori adults of the process of second language learning, and specific information on Māori language use, intergenerational transmission, and language revitalization.[55] I agree that both these recommendations have enormous value, and that better awareness of the second language acquisition process has potential to be liberating for learners. Further, there is real potential for more sophisticated thought about how *te reo* Māori use should be increased. Currently, the Māori Language Commission advocates that Māori speakers use the language "*i ngā wā katoa, i ngā wāhi katoa*" (all the time, in all situations). This is an excellent goal, but more targeted encouragement, along with wider vocabulary assistance, may well bear better fruit.[56]

The next significant article relating to adult Māori language acquisition was by Matiu Ratima and Stephen May (2011), who examined ten factors influencing adults' language proficiency, all of which are to some extent relevant to this project. The first two are aptitude and age of beginning language learning, neither of which can be changed at adult level, so are of no particular relevance here. The third factor is motivation, concerning which they make the interesting observation that "Motivation reliably correlates with L2 [second language]

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[55] Chrisp, "Māori Intergenerational Language Transmission," 179.

[56] For example, see the the rugby related vocabulary support provided by Kotahi Mano Kaika during the Rugby World Cup in 2011 (this organization provides excellent vocabulary support for families especially). http://www.kmk.maori.nz/downloads/.

learning outcomes over time."[57] The fourth factor they looked at was learner strategies; they found that learner strategies have an effect, and that good learners have a number of skills and good awareness of the learning process and of their own learning styles.[58] As mentioned earlier, however, Chrisp has called attention to the need for awareness of learning skills for language work, and it is unclear if most adult Māori language learners are well equipped in this regard.

Ratima and May (2011) refer to Chrisp's 2005 study, which found fear and anxiety were present in many adult second-language Māori language learners. Chrisp (2005) identified psychological barriers to Māori parents' language learning; they often had unrealistically high expectations of what they should be able to achieve, and a tendency to be hard on themselves.[59]

Interestingly, Ratima and May (2011) are quite frank about the difficulties adults face in learning Māori:

> … adult *te reo* learners will face adversity in order to develop high levels of proficiency in the target language. This adversity is often expressed as anxiety and is related to perception of the learner as an inferior. The power of and over language resides with the dominant group or with target language speakers. That power must be met with assertion and agency from learners in order for gains to be made.[60]

They make this statement in the context of learning other languages as well, having given examples of the power and status issues involved in learning a new langue, so one should

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[57] Matiu Ratima and Stephen May, "A Review of Indigenous Second Language Acquisition: Factors leading to proficiency," *Mai Review*, 1 (2011), 7.

[58] Ratima and May, "A Review of Indigenous Second Language Acquisition," 7.

[59] Chrisp, "Māori Intergenerational Language Transmission," 161.

[60] Ratima and May, "A Review of Indigenous Second Language Acquisition," 12.

not read too much into this. However, if it is acknowledged that language learning can involve complex pressures, as the article suggests, steps should be taken to ensure that learning *te reo* Māori is made as anxiety-free as possible, at both the culture level and at the institutional level. In fact, it is difficult to come up with "assertion and agency" as a vulnerable learner; it is only as a group of learners that any worthwhile "assertion and agency" is likely to result. Some language learning environments can be tough on an adult's ego (from personal experience I would include the Kura *Reo* funded by the Māori Language Commission among these). It appears to me that lessening barriers to adults' learning *te reo* Māori should be a priority, and that attention should be paid to power and dominance issues, to ensure language learners feel as comfortable as possible in a vulnerable situation.

Ratima and May continue by commenting favourably on Browne's study (2005), which examined *wairua (*spirit) and the way the *reo* and *wairua* worked together to reinforce each other as a Māori student progressed. Ratima himself is personally positive about the link and believes it is a definite help factor which deserves further investigation.[61]

Ratima and May also point to geographical dispersement as a factor in language maintenance. They point to the success of Tokomaru and Ruatahuna as two towns with substantial Māori speaking populations, which have managed to maintain bilingual communities. They also recognise that with improved travel, language users can meet for specific purposes and occasions such as tribal events, and that community Māori-based networks based around things such as schools and urban *marae* have a major role in encouraging Māori language use and informal language learning.[62] I would also assert, however, that social media also have a part to play in linking geographically dispersed language users.

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[61] Ratima & May, "A Review of Indigenous Second Language Acquisition," 12, 13.

[62] Ibid., 13,14.

Ratima and May also deal with the issue of status of the language. They point out that *te reo* Māori has high status as a heritage language, and as a symbol of identity, and although its economic and social status is less high in everyday life, this status is a powerful motivation for language learning.[63] Certainly in a broad band of the New Zealand population, among both Māori and *tauiwi*, knowledge of Māori language earns respect. *Te reo* Māori clearly held a high status for participants in my project, even though some had very mixed feelings about the language as a result of the difficulties they had encountered during the language learning process.

Ratima and May finish their article by pointing out that little is known about adult Māori learners' experience of learning;[64] however, some of what they do say about adults learning is sobering, and cause for concern. If, as they say, adult learners will encounter substantial difficulties and barriers in learning, especially in regard to power relations between learners and fluent speakers (experienced by learners as inferiority), then these difficulties should be faced up to and addressed.

General principles of effective Second Language Acquisition

I move now to more general principles of language learning, and how these principles relate to the present project. Much of this material was gleaned from LING319 - Second Language Acquisition, a Stage 3 linguistics paper at the University of Otago, taught by Dr Anne Feryok. Throughout this section L1 refers to the learner's original language, and L2 refers to the language being acquired.

A good place to begin is with a set of ten principles of language learning articulated by Rod Ellis (2005), who is acknowledged as one of the leaders in second language acquisition both

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[63] Ratima and May, "A Review of Indigenous Second Language Acquisition," 14,15.

[64] Ibid., 17.

in New Zealand and internationally. His "Principles of Instructed Language Learning" are widely promoted in primary and secondary level government-sponsored education websites in New Zealand.[65] The principles are related more strictly to language instruction, but the relevance of the principles in a less formal learning context is readily apparent.

Ellis's first principle is that instruction needs to ensure that learners develop both a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and a rule-based competence.[66] Social media interaction online gives generous opportunities to be exposed to both of these types of language, especially as social interaction features heavy use of formulaic expressions.

His second principle asserts the primacy of meaning. In this project, the natural, informal format of Facebook and Skype communication means that genuine negotiation for meaning has to take place. Ellis distinguishes between semantic and pragmatic meaning; semantic meaning is the meaning of the words, whereas pragmatic meaning is highly contextualized and arises in communication. In fact, there were numerous occasions during the project where the language as written or spoken (semantic meaning) would at times be inadequate to make the meaning clear, but the context as part of a wider conversation (pragmatic meaning) made the meaning clear. This meant that participants were able to make an attempt with their language use with reasonable confidence that they would be understood.

Ellis's third principle states that "Instruction needs to ensure that learners also focus on form".[67] Ellis states that this can be done through wide-ranging grammar material, or in

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[65] New Zealand Ministry of Education website: *Learning Languages – principles and actions that underpin effective teaching in languages.* Available at http://seniorsecondary.tki.org.nz/Learning-languages/Pedagogy/Principles-and-actions Accessed 12th January 2012).

[66] Rod Ellis, "Principles of instructed language learning," *System*, 33, (2005), 210. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.otago.ac.nz/10.1016/j.system.2004.12.006 (Accessed 3/6/2011). Formulaic expressions are groups of words which are commonly used for a specific sense, and for which the grammatical explanation may not be obvious. Rule-based competence involves knowing how to use the rules of the language to construct new statements or utterances.

[67] Ellis, "Principles of instructed language learning," 212.

response to situations. This project is clearly situation based, but learners could pick up messages about form (such as grammar) from the conversation or Facebook posts of more experienced speakers, or from recasts in Facebook comments or spoken recasts of grammatically incorrect material.

His fourth principle says that "Instruction needs to be predominantly directed at developing implicit knowledge of the L2 while not neglecting explicit knowledge."[68] Ellis points out that implicit knowledge is held unconsciously, and accessed rapidly and easily, and as a result it is available for use in rapid, fluent communication. He states that most researchers believe implicit knowledge is the key to competency, and communicative tasks play an integral role in this. On the other hand, explicit knowledge (knowing about features of the language and having the meta-language to describe them) is helpful, too, but less essential. The communicative nature of social media ensures that implicit knowledge is paramount in my research, while explicit knowledge is very much in the background. This was especially evident in Skype interchanges, but also in Facebook communication.

Ellis's fifth principle, that "Instruction needs to take into account the learner's 'built-in syllabus,'"[69] is perhaps less relevant here, referring as it does to the natural progression that occurs in learning language.

Principle six states that "Successful instructed language learning requires extensive L2 input,"[70] and in this project a steady provision of peer-quality language is generated, taking advantage of multiple contributors to provide stimulation and new vocabulary. In the partially

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[68] Ellis, "Principles of instructed language learning." 214.

[69] Ibid., 216.

[70] Ibid., 217.

assisted social media group formed for this project, the vocabulary assistance was valued highly, and examples of other ways to express things were valued too.

Ellis's seventh principle says that "Successful instructed language learning also requires opportunities for output,"[71] and of course this is one of the major emphases of this project. Ellis points out that production also generates helpful feedback, and that having to produce language makes speakers think about the grammar of the language they are producing.

Principle eight is particularly relevant to this project; it states that "The opportunity to interact in the L2 is central to developing L2 proficiency." [72] This project was centred on interaction, and as Ellis points out, social interaction is the matrix in which language acquisition takes place. In the notes on this principle, Ellis recommends tasks rather than exercises to generate interaction, and of course tasks (as well as spontaneous interaction) are central to this project.

Principle nine states that "Instruction needs to take account of individual differences in learners," [73] and this became apparent in this project. Some participants were stimulated and encouraged by more advanced material appearing, while others were daunted. Individual levels of skill were important in organising Skype calls, in particular.

The final principle states that "In assessing learners' L2 proficiency it is important to examine free as well as controlled production." [74]Although strictly speaking assessment was not really a focus of this project, it was clear that more open tasks such as Skype calls gave a more accurate overview of each person's language ability, and enabled more appropriate matching of partners or expectations of language output.

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[71] Ellis, "Principles of instructed language learning," 218.

[72] Ibid., 219.

[73] Ibid., 220.

[74] Ibid., 221.

These principles obviously have a bearing on the interactive, activity-based tasks which formed the basis of this project. There were sound reasons to expect the activities to be useful in encouraging some acquisition of language as well as enjoyable and motivating for continuing with *te reo* Māori.

Interlanguage, and its role in language acquisition

One key aim of this project, which ties in to Chrisp's (2005) recommendation that learners need to be aware of the process of language learning, [75] was to inform participants about interlanguage, a significant concept in Second Language Acquisition. In this project I explained the concept to participants to encourage them to value their interim grasp of *te reo* Māori, and to encourage them not to feel embarrassed about their basic level of language skill.

Larry Selinker (1972) first referred to interlanguage, using this term for the interim grammars moving towards the language being acquired (L2).[76] It is considered to be a creative process, and interlanguage is regarded as a third language system in its own right, which differs from both L1 and L2 during its development. Interlanguage is generally regarded as being systematic, or governed by rules (consisting of the student's current internal grammar). It is also dynamic, and changes frequently, usually from plateau to plateau rather than in a smooth, linear way. Interlanguage is also variable; although it is systematic, differences in context may affect it. Finally, it is important to recognize that interlanguage is a reduced system, in form and in function. It uses less complex grammatical structure, and covers smaller communicative needs.

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[75] Chrisp, "Māori Intergenerational Language Transmission," 179.

[76] Muriel Saville-Troike, *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*, 40-43. These pages all deal in detail with the concept of interlanguage.

Patsy Lightbown (2000) says of interlanguage:

> The learner creates a systematic interlanguage which is often characterized by the same systematic errors as the child learning the same language as a first language, as well as others which appear to be based on the learner's own native language.[77]

She says of this principle: "This generalisation is at the heart of modern SLA research." [78] She gives examples of situations where students are averse to using certain forms or vocabulary because the use of them clashes with their built-in grammar, usually unconsciously. These issues can be identified, and explicitly taught, but there is a clear phenomenon at work, and students should not be made to feel inferior because of it.[79] Saville-Troike (2006) states that one of the most likely causes of errors is interlingual (between language) factors.[80] Clearly learners should expect carry-over from L1, and acknowledge that it is a powerful force, but that there is no shame in having the influence of one language on another. Ultimately, working through stages of interlanguage is a journey to quality or excellence, but it is a bumpy, uneven journey. If learners are told to expect this, they may deal with the dips and plateaux better when they encounter them.

Interestingly, even though some measure of quality is the ultimate aim, the international picture of target level of competence varies considerably between groups of learners. For example, people who are learning English do not always want to have completely native speaker accents or capability, perhaps because they may feel pretentious speaking that way, or do not wish to identify too strongly with the social characteristics of the main group of

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[77] Patsy Lightbown, "Anniversary Article: Classroom SLA research and second language teaching," *Applied Linguistics*, 21:4 (December 2000), 441. http://applij.oxfordjournals.org.ezproxy.otago.ac.nz/content/21/4/431.full.pdf+html (Accessed 24th April 2011).

[78] Lightbown, , "Anniversary Article," 441.

[79] Ibid., 441, 442.

[80] Saville-Troike, *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*, 19 (in context of 18-20).

language speakers.[81] This may explain why Māori often maintain a distinctive style of speaking and vocabulary in English, as a means of identifying with their own group. But the situation in *te reo* Māori is quite different; Māori speakers almost universally aspire to a high quality of Māori speech.[82] This high level of aspiration is to be admired, but the intermediate stages of the linguistic journey are not always comfortable ones, and the journey may be eased with more realistic ideas about the difficulty of adjusting to the pattern of a new language.

The importance of interaction in SLA

In this section I examine more closely the research on the importance of interaction in second language learning. Mackey and Gass (2006) write about what is referred to as the 'Interaction Hypothesis' as follows:

The basic tenet [of the Interaction Hypothesis] is that through input and interaction with interlocutors, language learners have opportunities to notice differences between their own formulations of the target language and the language of their conversational partners. They also receive feedback which both modifies the linguistic input they receive and pushes them to modify their output during conversation.[83]

Their simple visual model of the process involves three intersecting circles, consisting of negotiation, feedback, and recasts. These lead to attention and noticing, and finally to language acquisition. Negotiation typically happens if there is a communication breakdown. The participants ask and answer questions, rephrase each other's statements, ask for more

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[81] Saville-Troike, *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*, 104, 179-180.

[82] Christensen, "Māori Language Revitalisation and Maintenance," 26-28.

[83] Susan Gass & Alison Mackey, "Input, interaction and output: An overview," *AILA Review*, 19:1 (2006), 3. http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.otago.ac.nz/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&hid=14&sid=ae29c09a-4417-46e3-99e4-291596ec8e81%40sessionmgr10 (Accessed 13th May 2011).

information or clarity, and confirm if they have understood. As they do so using the target language, they unconsciously and consciously acquire information (feedback) about the language as well as the topic they are negotiating. [84] Feedback (as used in this hypothesis) is usually negative, to show when a form or word deviates from what would be expected. [85] Such feedback varies on a spectrum from implicit to explicit. It can at times be ambiguous, or difficult to interpret. Recasts are a reformulation of another person's words, either as a confirmation check or to correct. They are widely used, though there are varying views on their usefulness. [86]

Gass and Mackey pinpoint the function of interaction in this passage:

> In general, the argument is that interaction provides a forum for feedback, which serves to alert learners to problems, providing them with opportunities to focus their attention on language. That is, interaction may prime learners to "search" for more information, to be more sensitive to future input e.g., uses of a word, structure, pronunciation, spelling, or to be more aware of their hypotheses about language. [87]

But the key point about interaction is that it has been shown by considerable empirical research to contribute to learning (Gass and Mackey cite numerous authors in this regard). By generating opportunities for interaction through social media, opportunities are created to develop language skills, overcome isolation, and hopefully increase motivation to continue with *te reo* Māori.

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[84] The Skype calls in this project illustrate this process – see "Findings," 77.

[85] Gass and Mackey, "Input, interaction and output: An overview," 4.

[86] Ibid., 9.

[87] Ibid., 12.

The role of social media in second language acquisition

In the final section of this literature review, I will examine the literature on the role of social media in second language acquisition. I will look at research on the current technology for interaction online, research on online interaction in a learning context, and the theories which are helpful for explaining the effects of this online interaction.

There is now considerable research exploring knowledge acquisition through computer assisted learning and social learning, particularly since the rise to wide-spread use of Web 2.0 technology, and social media in particular. Michael Thomas (2009) explains the concept of Web 2.0 technology by comparing it with what went before:

> Whereas Web 1.0 connected information together, and led to the development of search engines, Web 2.0 connects people, and thus underpins fundamental changes in the way millions of people who use blogs, Wikis, and podcasts, communicate and access their information and mediate their world through digital technologies on a daily basis. [88]

Much of the research I encountered shared a common theme; that it was too early to really tell to what extent Web 2.0 is able to transform learning, but that it was possible to see indications and directions, and enormous future potential.

The social context of online learning

Online interaction and learning needs to be seen in a broad social context, and in an article on social software and participatory learning, McLoughlin & Lee (2007) focus especially on the social trends at work in terms of multiple career paths and flexible working hours that are

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[88] Thomas, Michael, ed. *Web 2.0 and Second Language Learning*. (Hershey, New York : Information Science Reference, 2009), xx.

driving the demand for online learning.[89] They go on to say that "learners are active participants or co-producers rather than passive consumers of content, and so … learning is a participatory, social process supporting personal life goals and needs."[90] They quote Klamma et al thus: "Emergent new Web 2.0… concepts and technologies are opening doors for more effective learning and have the potential to support lifelong competence development."[91]They also point to the ready uptake of such online communication by groups of self-managing learners in groups open to anyone who wishes to participate. [92]

Davies (2011) also points out that the role interaction plays in the use of social media ties in with theories of interactive learning, and comments that Mitchell and Myles (2004) claim interaction "is not only useful, but is the essence of learning."[93] Social constructivism places social interaction and cooperation as central to learning; individuals construct meaning out of the input they receive during interaction.[94] Davies claims that online interaction can in some ways be more beneficial than face-to-face interaction. [95] This possible advantage of online interaction (particularly in connection with SLA) is backed up by evidence from other studies, which indicated less anxiety about communication in another language in online

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[89] Catherine McLoughlin & Mark J.W. Lee, 'Social software and participatory learning: Pedagogical choices with technology affordances in the Web 2.0 era." Accessed 19/11/11: http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/procs/mcloughlin.pdf, 664

[90] Ibid., 664.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Renaud Davies, "Second Language Acquisition and the information age: How social software has created a new mode of learning," *TESL Canada Journal*, 28:2 (2011), 12. http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.otago.ac.nz/ps/i.do?action=interpret&id=GALE|A260944117&v=2.1&u=otago&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&authCount=1 (Accessed 18/11/2011).

[94] Davies, "Second Language Acquisition and the information age," 12.

[95] Ibid., 15.

learning, and more willingness to communicate (one such article will be examined in more detail later). [96]

Davies alludes to Vygotsky, and his theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the area between what can be achieved by an individual unaided and an individual working with an instructor or more competent peers. This idea has been recast as "scaffolding" in which one's understanding is raised by interaction with someone operating at a slightly higher level. Davies points out that social learning also improves empathy, provides a sense of belonging and improves communication skills, and that online interaction fulfils those functions. [97]

Davies also points out that it is particularly difficult to organize adults into face-to-face situations, and that such situations cannot always meet students' needs quickly, whereas feedback and information can often be gained far more quickly online.[98] He quotes Everhart (2006) as saying that in a learning situation, interaction and learner-centredness were better in online situations, and Kissau et al's study (2010) supports this conclusion.[99]

Distance learning and CALL (computer assisted language learning)

Robert Blake (2009) looks at distance learning and the use of computer assisted language learning (CALL). He emphasizes the importance of sound facilitation and planning for worthwhile use of interaction online:

> The potential benefits of collaborative exchanges, whether set in the classroom or managed online, as always, depend more on sound pedagogical design of the

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[96] Kissau et al, "Leveling the playing field," 279, 290.

[97] Davies, "Second Language Acquisition and the information age," 13.

[98] Ibid., 14.

[99] Kissau et al, "Leveling the playing field," 279- 280, 285-286.

tasks the participants are asked to perform rather than the actual locus of the learning event. [100]

Blake notes that distance learning courses increasingly are being devised using chat tools that incorporate synchronous video, audio, and text exchanges with a principal emphasis on interactive communication. He does point out, however, that despite the rise of distance learning as an education option, most language teachers would agree that ultimately face-to-face teaching is best, especially for students who want to reach a higher level of "pragmatic and socio-linguistic competence, let alone advanced linguistic competence."[101] Of course, for many people a mainstream language course is not an option for practical reasons (work and family commitments, for instance), and there are those who are interested in maintaining and learning a language in a much less structured setting. Interestingly, Blake observes that the successful online student tended to be "an adult learner who was highly motivated, mature, and focused on learning,"[102] a profile very similar to participants in my study.

Asynchronous and synchronous online communication

Blake has relevant observations to make about the two types of interaction used in this project; asynchronous (not at the same time) or in this case, Facebook interactions, and synchronous (at the same time) or in this project, Skype conversations. He says that asynchronous interaction is known for equalizing communication and encouraging participation, as it avoids the more complicated dynamics of face-to-face communication, where certain individuals can dominate.[103] He does point out that effective use of asynchronous communication relies on good preparation, and gives a list of pointers to make

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[100] Robert Blake, "The Use of Technology for Second Language Distance Learning," *The Modern Language Journal*, 93, Focus Issue (2009), 823. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.otago.ac.nz/doi/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2009.00975.x/pdf (accessed 15/11/2011).

[101] Blake, "The Use of Technology for Second Language Distance Learning," 824.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid., 825.

it work well; the pointers are from the Sloan Consortium (2006).[104] The key points are active management, providing good orientation, emphasizing interaction, and giving prompt feedback; [105] these are all things I endeavoured to do in managing the Facebook interaction in this project

An example of tandem learning using Skype

A study by Mullen (2009) of Japanese–American tandem language learning, where students of different languages were paired up to communicate using Skype, dealt with several issues relevant to this project.[106] The facilitators of the study realized it would work better if it was task-based, with an emphasis on communication, and if it was goal-oriented, and made maximum use of the communication from the native speaker in each task. The study found that task-orientation, maximum autonomy (for participants to find and contact other partners within a set group), and making the conversations count for credit had beneficial effects, with the task-based approach making the most positive difference.[107]

Blake also examines the issue of learners operating as partners or having a role in tutoring each other. He states that the evidence is clear that e-tutoring is superior to e-partnering in terms of achieving growth in language learning. By contrast, my project had minimal direct corrective role, either facilitator-to-participant, or participant-to-participant, but may well have profited from having such roles in use. In fact, he says that "The debate no longer hinges on either teacher-centered or learner-centered, but rather on student agency with well-thought-out and well-planned expert assistance."[108] One could assume that in a similar

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[104] Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2006). *Making the grade: Online education in the United States*, 2006. Needham, MA: The Sloan Consortium (2007).   Available from http://www.sloan.org/publications/survey/index.asp (Retrieved 11/1/12).

[106] Tony Mullen, "Skype-Based Language Learning and Web 2.0," in *Web 2.0 and Second Language Learning,* ed. Michael Thomas, (Hershey, New York: Information Science Reference, 2009), 101-118.

[107] Ibid., 112-113

[108] Blake, "The Use of Technology for Second Language Distance Learning," 832.

project to mine, better language learning results would come from peer tutoring and facilitator tutoring as well, though it would be interesting to see the effect this would have on interaction (possibly negative, but not necessarily).

Another issue raised by Blake is the potential role of what is called iCALL (Intelligent Computer Assisted Language Learning), in which a computer program analyses a learner's output and provides correction and even remedial activities.[109] Some such programs exist (for example , 'e-tutor,' for teaching German), and they provide genuine interaction with the student and the opportunity to examine form and do something about it. Blake states that attention has been drawn away from such programs by the meteoric rise in social media use, but I agree with Blake that iCALL programs would have enormous benefits.

Online interaction may lessen anxiety for language learners

Another study (previously mentioned) by Kissau, McCullough and Pyke (2010), on the challenges of putting a small group of language learners online in a French language course, has some interesting insights relevant to this project. The study focuses on their willingness to communicate, and indicates that the two main factors affecting this are perceived competence and anxiety; these two factors will diminish interaction, remove the opportunity of learning from interaction, and create a vicious circle.[110] The authors of this study cite several other studies that indicate that online interaction is less threatening, and hence more interaction results for anxious language learners. [111] This observation is interesting, in view of the fact that I had at least two participants affected by embarrassment anxiety, which may well have been even worse in a face-to-face setting.

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[109] Blake, "The Use of Technology for Second Language Distance Learning," 828, 829.

[110] Kissau et al, "Leveling the playing field," 278.

[111] Ibid., 279-280.

An example of various Web 2.0 tools combining for SLA

One positive example of use of a variety of technologies in a tertiary education setting is "Listening Plus," an English language course run in Brazil. Carla Arena's (2010) article (about her own course) says that they have avoided the limitations of the usual LMS (learning management system, such as Blackboard) by attaching other Web 2.0 tools in what has been called a Mash-up LMS or Modular LMS (a "loosely coupled system").[112] In this way they avoid what is sometimes called the "walled garden" approach that academia so often takes in blocking off access to web-based tools apart from the officially used system. Students have apparently responded positively to the highly interactive experience, and I believe the richer language learning environment provided would generate a better experience for learners.

Finally, in a recent article Keegan, Keegan and Laws examined the availability of online resources for te reo Māori. Most relevant to this project is the e-Wānanga Learning Management System (LMS) which has been increasingly used by Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, a tertiary provider based in Whakatane.[113] This LMS has increasingly enabled bi- or multi-lingual interaction amongst students and staff at their institution, and its implementation is imbued with Māori culture, including *karakia* (prayer), *mihi*, *whakapapa* and *waiata* (song).[114] It is a constantly evolving system, and obviously has enormous potential. However, the authors do say that although there is a great deal of material available on the internet for people who want to learn *te reo* Māori, there is little opportunity for them

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112. Arena, Carla. "Listening Plus: A Social Approach to Learning English Online." TESL-EJ, 14.2(September 2010), 2-3. http://tesl-ej.org/pdf/ej54/int.pdf (Accessed 19/11/2011).

[113] Peter Keegan, Te Taka Keegan and Mark Laws, "Online Māori rResources and Māori Initiatives for Teaching and Learning:current activities, successes and future directions," *MAI Review*, 1 (2011), 5. www.review.mai.ac.nz/index.php/MR/article/viewFile/365/605 (Accessed 10th January 2012).

[114] Ibid., 8.

to actually use it.[115] That may be so in one sense, but I believe this project gives some examples at least of how to use social media as a vehicle for interaction in te reo Māori. The tools for interaction are available to us; we just need to avail ourselves of them.

Conclusion

I have briefly outlined the history of the Māori language, and dealt with the various factors which impact on adult learners of *te reo* Māori, with some emphasis on the negative aspects and the potential of online interaction to lessen these negative factors. I then dealt with principles of SLA, including interlanguage and interaction, and showed how this project engages with these key ideas. Finally I have provided an outline of research on the implementation of online or computer assisted learning, especially for SLA, and given some idea of issues that arise in such learning. It is apparent that the there is considerable research on online interaction but little directly on adult informal use of Facebook and Skype in a structured but informal situation for second language learning, and particularly for the Māori language. The literature does however seem to suggest that there are advantages for language learners in the process, and that the future holds even more potential for social media as tools for connecting scattered language learners, and for building learners' confidence in the language they are learning. In the next chapter I examine the findings from this research project.

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[115] Keegan et al, "Online Māori Resources and Māori Initiatives for Teaching and Learning," 10.

Chapter 4: Findings from the project

Introduction

In this chapter I present the responses of my participants in the Final Questionnaire on their interaction on Facebook and Skype. I then return to the original research questions and present participants' comments that relate to them. Following this I examine specific issues that arose relating to Facebook and Skype as social media. I then present details of the actual interaction that occurred on both Facebook and Skype.

Table 3: Summary of participants' responses in Final Questionnaire – Facebook

Facebook	Very poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Very good	Excellent
How would you rate your overall experience of Facebook interaction in this project?		1	3	2	3	
How would you rate your enjoyment of Facebook interaction in this project?		1		4	2	1
How would you rate the effectiveness of the interaction on Facebook in helping you learn Māori?		2	3	3		
How would you rate the effectiveness of the interaction on Facebook in encouraging you to continue learning Māori?		1	1	2	4	1

Table 4: Summary of participants' responses in Final Questionnaire – Skype

Two participants did not have any calls – only six responses instead of eight.

Skype	Very poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Very good	Excellent
How would you rate your overall experience of Skype interaction in this project?	1	1	1	2		1
How would you rate your enjoyment of Skype interaction in this project?	2			2	1	1
How would you rate the effectiveness of the interaction on Skype in helping you learn Māori?	2		3	1		
How would you rate the effectiveness of the interaction on Skype in encouraging you to continue learning Māori?	2			3	1	

Table 3 shows that the response to Facebook interaction was generally positive, and that participants had a high level of enjoyment of Facebook interaction, but that Facebook was not viewed so positively in terms of helping participants learn *te reo* Māori. However, Facebook interaction was highly rated as a means of encouraging participants to continue to learn *te reo* Māori.

Table 4 shows that responses to Skype were more complex. Two participants were negative about Skype (though one did not participate in a Skype call), and the responses show more of a spread in ranking the Skype experience, from considerable enthusiasm to negativity. Four of six participants enjoyed their Skype experience, and four were positive about its effect on encouraging them to continue learning *te reo* Māori. The response to Skype interaction's effectiveness in helping participants to actually learn *te reo* Māori was less positive, with three responses at the "Adequate" level.

Participants were invited to comment on each of their responses, and I draw from these comments to expand on their responses to the original research questions, and later to discuss in more detail the issues relating to Skype and Facebook.

Responses to the research questions

The original research questions were:

What benefits can be gained from online interactions for beginner/intermediate adult learners of *te reo* Māori?

What are the implications of online interaction for second language learning?

In this section of the findings I initially focus on the first of these questions, dealing with the benefits in the order of importance that emerges from the study. I will then concentrate on the second question, looking mainly at the problematic or negative implications of online interaction which emerged from this project. Most of the information in this section was taken from the Final Questionnaire,[116] which asked for participants to respond in detail to aspects of the project, including direct comment on the research questions. However, relevant comments on the benefits of online interaction have been taken from various parts of the questionnaire; my concern has been to present the story which emerges overall from the responses of participants. Participants Ana and Sam provided shorter answers to several questions than the other participants, and Ana in particular did not always comment in the boxes where comment was invited after aspects of Facebook or Skype interaction were ranked on a scale from "Very poor" to "Excellent"; as a result their voice is less present in the wider comments.

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[116] See appendix.

Benefits from online interaction

It is worth pointing out that the participants, when asked if they would be interested in "continuing with an informal online project (using Facebook and possibly Skype) after this project ends," all expressed willingness to do so (one said "Maybe," five gave definite assent, and two were very keen to participate in a similar activity). Despite issues that some had with one or other type of social media (Facebook or Skype), they all agreed that there were benefits to be gained.

The opportunity for further practice of what had been learnt elsewhere was the benefit which drew the most comments:

> There is a space for people to use *te reo* they have learnt in an additional setting: Ana
>
> For *kōrero* (speaking, communicating) the more frequent the interactions the more effective the learning, therefore online interactions are another opportunity for this: Pita
>
> Facebook is a valuable tool for class members to practise communicating with one another: Pita
>
> [The] more you participate, [the] more you learn!: Lara
>
> It's good for overcoming the resistance to practice: Sam
>
> It is a great setting for practising use of the language. The more you do it, the more you start using *reo* in other settings: Rena

Enjoyment of the process of interacting in *te reo* Māori in an informal way was seen a significant benefit, particularly with Facebook. Five participants specifically stated that they looked forward to reading other participants' posts and were genuinely interested in each other's lives, and even those who provided minimal posts themselves agreed that they liked reading what others had written.

I enjoyed seeing other people's contributions, and discovering I could understand: Sam

I enjoyed reading what others had put on... if the Facebook continued I would continue to read it and post comments where appropriate. I hope it does in some form as I'd love to have another go: Pita

Really enjoyed participating, even tho' I didn't "comment" much; some comments made me smile: Lara

Very exciting to see who posted, and what they posted, and if I could still understand what was going on: Pania

Very good [enjoyment] until I stopped posting and felt guilty about it: Rena

Seeing a response to their Facebook post was important, and the "conversations" which sometimes ensued engendered interest and pleasure.

I think the communication was most effective when people responded to each other's comments – it was nice to get comments and feedback: Mary

Five participants commented that the experience extended them, and that it exposed them to new words, expressions, and ways of expressing things.

I needed to use my Māori dictionary a few times to understand comments added by more fluent speakers, so that was extending my learning – by learning new *kupu* (words): Mary.

Continuing would ensure every week you thought of how you would explain your theme...Need to think about responses for written language... always learn new words, new nuances: Lara

Four participants found being part of a "*reo* community" a major benefit. They were conscious of their isolation and sometimes frustrated with it, and appreciated having a small group to interact with.

[The] Biggest benefit is creating a community in the absence of one... Just nice to feel inside a *reo* community again no matter how small! ...Very difficult to find opportunities and even more so as a Pākehā: Lucy

It's great to know there is a community out there: Sam

It is a good way for people interested in furthering *Te reo* to connect and communicate: Mary.

[There was] potential to enhance "commonalities" and understand each other. Got to "know" others despite never meeting some: Lara

Although some were put off Skype or found it daunting, others enjoyed Skype calls, and saw considerable potential for the future in Skype.

I enjoyed the challenge of trying to communicate in *te reo* with another person [on Skype]: Mary

It was good, I enjoyed it ... it was encouraging... it has a lot more potential than Facebook: Sam

Three participants commented positively about being able to participate at times that suited them, particularly with Facebook.

Easily accessible, own time, own place...: Lara

Using Facebook made it very flexible ... great being able to contribute when it suited me: Mary

[You] can interact in your own time: Ana

Participants pointed out that there were positive as well as negative sides to having several levels within the group. Rena and Sam, who contributed little on Facebook, read other people's posts with interest and enthusiasm. Lara found the presence of more capable speakers positively influenced how she expressed things. For Pania, having more confident people posting meant that was able to observe without participating initially before choosing

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to join in.[117] In Skype conversations, having a more competent speaker was useful; for example, Lucy was able to conduct a conversation with Lara, providing considerable assistance in keeping the flow of conversation going. However, there was a strong negative aspect to having different levels in the group; I will deal with this when I discuss the second research question.

For three participants, online interaction made them look at their own learning processes, personal issues around the language, and thinking about social media.

> [Facebook interaction] changed my thinking about correctness of language. Forces you to ask the question; is Facebook English medium only?: Pania

> Learnt lots about usefulness of Facebook as a learning tool... Facebook as social media is becoming an opportunity for discussion and why not for language acquisition?... A great experience and I learnt as much about technology as *te reo*: Lara

Pita in particular worked through a number of issues regarding his preferred way to interact, and the possible potential of online interaction.

> I am a little disappointed that my "fear of Skyping with a stranger" also impacted on my Facebook involvement. This really highlights both to myself and this project the impact loss of confidence can have on learning: Pita

> Will be suggesting it [online interaction] to a group I know who are learning *te reo*. I will use a site set up for *te reo* to interact more with some friends I am on this journey with: Pita

> I haven't learnt much *reo* but have learnt a great deal about myself and what I need to do: Pita

Sam commented on the value of online learning for confidence building:

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[117] A good example of this is a public Facebook group I have referred to earlier, called "Te Mana o te Reo Māori."It is mostly used by very competent Māori speakers, but with more than 2000 "Friends" who mainly read and observe, and no doubt learn, as I do, from the discussions of better speakers.

> [It's] just the idea that one can do it… one can come up against the idea that you can't do it [but] if others can, you can: Sam

Lucy commented on the value of online interaction for language maintenance, especially as she lacked communication opportunities.

> Without practice, it fades so I see it as hugely valuable for language maintenance especially... There is no question that this project gave me a critical "pick me up" with my *reo*. I had been feeling very detached and mournful at seeing my *reo* fade: Lucy

Finally, Rena found her interest in learning *te reo* Māori rekindled:

> An interesting benefit was the way it has inspired me and reminded me that I want to get cracking to learn *te reo*: Rena

Implications of online interaction for second language learning

The positive implications have mainly been covered in the first research question, so this section mainly deals with negative or problematic aspects. At this stage I mainly outline negative implications that arise, and suggest solutions in the "Discussion."

Having different levels in a group can cause a drop in confidence in those who are less competent, or perceive themselves as less competent. Less confident people tend to want to communicate with people they know, and feel particularly exposed in Skype calls, or fearful of the prospect of them.

> [The Facebook interaction] wasn't at my level and this reduced the effectiveness: Pita

> From my experience care needs to be taken to reduce the potential for "loss of confidence" and "Frustration to communicate fully what you want to." [It may be] better wth known people? With similar levels: Pita

It was easy to avoid participating because I had no personal connection to any of the participants. If I had friends who were participating I would have engaged more: Rena

[Found Skype call difficult / challenging] conversing with a stranger and realising the depth to which I lack *te reo* knowledge: Rena

Rena found her Skype call "stressful and awkward" and felt incapable of conversing. My guidelines had suggested 3-5 minute calls, and a close focus on the topic, but I failed to monitor the calls closely enough to realise the impact of this call (which Rena found "disempowering").

Having different levels in the group could sometimes be frustrating for the more competent as well. For example, both Lucy and Mary expressed the wish to engage in Skype calls with someone better than themselves, to extend their skills and provide more of a challenge. Lucy and Ana in particular found that the Facebook interaction did not really extend them either.

[Facebook interaction] simply made me "think" again but not too challenged beyond that: Lucy

I would have liked one conversation where I was matched up with a person who was more fluent in *te reo* than me. I would have been extended more. In both Skype conversations I needed to take the lead in asking *pātai* (questions): Mary

Several participants expressed concern over the low level of participation, and felt that a drop in motivation was perhaps inherent in such a project.

Good as a short-term project. Probably hard to stay motivated if it was a longer-term project: Mary

I have a concern that it loses momentum without strong guidance…it might prove difficult over long period of time: Lucy

Two participants had concerns with the Facebook interaction, one with the disjointed type of interaction occurring, and one with the level of contribution.

> [I] felt we were having private conversations with John, and watching others conversation… I felt I was having communication with myself, as opposed to communicating with others, so posting was risky, hard to tell if I was on track. Everyone telling own *kaupapa* (subject/topic): Pania

> Some participants stopped contributing. How do you get everyone to participate? As long as there was a few of us contributing that was OK: Mary

There was some concern that the support documents were not easy to access (they had in fact been sent as email attachments), and two participants were not aware of the support documents offered; Rena suggested providing links to language resources that could help with the weekly topic, and making better use of Facebook's notes functions and messaging to provide tips, vocabulary and information.

Finally, it became clear that good training was needed in all technical aspects, to avoid comparatively simple issues working to the detriment of interaction; for example, Lara's "comments" did not always appear on the Facebook page, and one participant did not manage to get Skype going. Technical assistance would have helped (although I made it clear that people could ring me for assistance, and I provided some technical support documents). One participant had concerns about the privacy settings, as someone's group posts appeared on her wall (once again I had provided a document to clarify privacy settings, though I may have made an error there).

Participants' response to administration of the project

The project was quite labour-intensive for me as researcher and facilitator, with a good deal of communication by email required with participants to set topics and provide vocabulary support. Fortunately participants were generally very positive about the administration of the

project and the level of communication from facilitator to participants. They appreciated the structure provided, the vocabulary support, and the ongoing encouragement and prompting they received. For my part, I was very appreciative of the way these busy adults fitted the project into their lives, and I appreciated their keenness to develop their use of the Māori language, and to contribute in some small way to research about *te reo* Māori.

Summary of Facebook and Skype interactions

In this section the interactions on Facebook and Skype are examined in some detail. Table 5 gives an overall picture of the numbers of interactions which occurred, and Table 6 gives each individual's number of contributions.

Table 5: Number of Facebook interactions by topics - summary

Topic		Number of Posts	Number of Comments	Number of 'Likes'
Topic 1	*Mihi* atu, *mihi* mai (Greeting each other)	8 (plus 1 JB)	7 (+ 8 JB)	4 (+ 1 JB)
Topic 2	Ngā mea pai ki ahau (Things I like)	4 (plus 1 JB)	1 (+ 3JB)	2 (+ 4JB)
Topic 3	Mena kua wini au i te Lotto (If I won Lotto)	4 (plus 1 JB)	1 (+ 3 JB)	2 (+ 4 JB)
Topic 4	He tangata rekareka ki ahau (He tangata rekareka ki ahau)	2 (plus 1 JB)	4(+ 4 JB)	5 (+ 3 JB)
Topic 5	Te wā tino pai ki ahau (o te rā, o te wiki, o te tau) / My favourite time (of the day, of the week, of the year)	1 (plus JB)	0	3
Other topics	Fathers' Day; macrons on Facebook; rugby games; difficulty of knowing where to place macrons; thanks for Skype calls / arranging Skype calls; neologisms, new interesting and unusual Māori words; encouragement to others to participate; other languages/countries; weather; difficulties of being a mother; concern about project; dancing, and favourite types; thanks and acknowledgments at the end.	11 (+4 JB)	8 (+13 JB)	4 (+ 6 JB)

Table 6: Individual Facebook contributions during the project

Name	Number of Posts	Number of Comments	Number of "Likes"
Lara	6	Attempted, didn't appear	0
Mary	5	8	7
Rena	1	1	0
Pita	4	1	0
Sam	1	0	0
Lucy	5	6	3
Pania	8	3	0
Ana	3	7	15

Participation of Individual participants

(See Methodology for a profile of participants)

Lara: Lara was a willing participant, on both Facebook and Skype. She expressed herself confidently, and although her grammar was often flawed, the meaning of her posts was always clear in context. She would post spontaneously without reference to the topics (eg on Rugby World Cup games). She tried to post several comments, but they did not go through (I occasionally had the same problem myself). She had two Skype calls, one with Mary and one with Lucy.

Mary: Mary was an active participant from the beginning. She responded readily to other posts with comments, and had two Skype calls (which she recorded on Garageband, after calling me for technical help) with Rena and Lara, and tried to arrange others without success.

Rena: Rena posted her *mihi* early, then responded to a question I put out to the group (about Father's Day). She had one Skype call, which she found difficult and "disempowering," as she found it so hard to communicate. She did not participate further afterwards, but continued to read other people's posts for a number of weeks. She is still very motivated to learn *te reo* Māori.

Pita: Pita posted early, and interacted with participants he knew personally, but was put off by his perception of the high level of language skill of other participants (although he had done 'Te Pihinga' and was currently involved in a Māori language course through Te Wānanga o Aotearoa). He disliked Skype, and asked to be excused from the roster for Skype calls. He later stated that his dislike/fear of Skype had impacted on his willingness to interact on Facebook too, and that he would have appreciated an opportunity to do it again with a fresh start.

Sam: Sam posted early, but did not participate on Facebook again after his initial *mihi* (greeting). In discussion later he said that he did not enjoy Facebook at all, finding he got swamped with material (on Facebook generally), but that he took an active interest in the posts. He enjoyed Skype, and had a good conversation with Lucy, a participant on a similar level.

Lucy: Lucy was an active and encouraging participant. She posted and commented readily on Facebook, and had two Skype calls, one with Sam and one with Lara (she was required to provide a strong lead in the conversation with Lara).

Pania: Pania posted quite readily (with help from her daughter) on the set topics and in spontaneous posts. She was concerned that her posts were appearing where they shouldn't, as she was embarrassed about her language skills. Pania did not manage to set up Skype properly, so she had no calls on Skype.

Ana: Ana participated readily, usually with brief but relevant posts. She frequently commented, or continued a thread of conversation, and used "Likes" readily. She participated less in the last two weeks. She was disappointed that she had no Skype calls (she got no replies to her emails to arrange calls).

Details of Facebook interactions

Topic 1 – Mihi atu, mihi mai (Greeting each other)

For this topic there were posts from all eight participants (plus one from me), seven comments (plus eight from me) and four "Likes" (plus one from me).

A *mihi* (formal personal greeting) typically identifies a person by geographical features, tribe, family, and finally as an individual. It is usually done in a standard format, and even beginners can usually do it.

This topic was spread over 18 days. This was a period of fluctuating membership, with two withdrawals one day into the project and another a few days later, and the addition of three participants (Lucy, Ana and Pania) two weeks into the project.

I initially expected each person's *mihi* would generate comments and "likes," but this took a while to develop. In fact, a typical Māori response to a *mihi* can be to comment on the *hononga* (links) to the speaker in the person's identification of his/herself. Certainly in my advice/instructions to the group I had urged them to comment and to "like" generously.

Participants posted quite readily at the start. All were familiar with the Māori *mihi* format. I added a comment to all *mihi*, and added something designed to inspire further comment (for example, for one participant whose father had been a soldier both here and overseas, I made a remark about the number of places children in the military ended up living in – this did not

trigger a response). However, when Mary's *mihi* which appeared, Pita (who knew Mary), added a personal greeting, and developed more of a conversation.

After little discussion had been engendered in the posts thus far, I added a question to my comment on the fourth *mihi*, to invite the person posting to reply. By the Pania posted her *mihi* (well into week three) I was directly encouraging others to add a comment / greeting:

> *Ākuanei ka puta mai ngā mihi a ētahi atu ki a koe (karawhiua e hoa mā! :)*
>
> Soon you'll receive greetings from some others– go for it, guys!)

Pania had expressed some nervousness about the process:

> *He iti taku mohio o te reo, me tino whakama au, no reira kaore koreo maori au ia ra, ia ra*: Pania
>
> I'm not very competent at Māori; I'm really shy about it, so I don't speak Māori every day.

There are a number of linguistic flaws in how she expressed this, but the meaning was perfectly clear, and Lucy and Ana responded promptly and reassuringly:

> *Kaua e whakamā, P. Ka whakawhanake tō reo ia rā, ia rā*: Lucy
>
> Don't be shy, P. Your language will develop day by day.

And from another participant:

> *Kaua e āmaimai - Kia kaha tonu e hoa :)* : Ana
>
> Don't be anxious about it – just give it your best shot, friend.

Topic 2: Ngā mea pai ki ahau (Things I like)

For this topic there were four posts (plus one from me), one comment (plus three from me), and two "Likes" (plus four from me).

Only three of the original members and one added member posted on this topic. The first post (from Lara) did not appear for several days into the second week; I had been waiting to see what came up on the topic rather than "leading off". I quickly added a post of my own after the Lara's appeared, to maintain the impetus, and gave the group another prompt a day later when no other posts had appeared:

> *He aha ngā mea pai ki a koutou, e hoa mā?*
>
> What things do you like, guys/friends?

A day later I added another indirect "prompt";

> *He pai ki a koe te whutupōro? Anei ētahi kupu, he kōrero mō Richard Kahui, he whakataukī, te mea, te mea...*
>
> http://www.kmk.maori.nz/downloads/RWC/Support-Your-Team.pdf
>
> Do you like rugby? Here are some words, a story about the All Black Richard Kahui,   a   proverb,   and   various   other   things… http://www.kmk.maori.nz/downloads/RWC/Support-Your-Team.pdf

The link was to a Māori language website, run by Kotahi Mano Kāika for Ngai Tahu.

Pita's post on the topic appeared a day later; Ana and I "liked" it, and Mary and I commented. I was the only person to "like" or comment on Mary's post, the last one on this topic, near the end of the third week.

All this time, however, other interactions were occurring, related to *mihi*, to what someone had done on Fathers' Day, to rugby and rugby games (the Rugby World Cup was on at the time), and to Skype calls and issues with macrons. Included in this were some humorous and good-humoured interchanges about a possible Māori word for Skype.

Response from the final questionnaire shows that although there was still less interaction based around other people's posts than I had expected or hoped for, participants were actually taking an active interest in what other people liked, and were reading what other participants wrote.

By this time Rena and Sam had ceased to post or comment, though both had participated in a Skype call.

A note on recasting / correcting

I had done some rephrasing/recasting of vocabulary in my responses or comments (for example, using the word *Airani* for *Airangi* for the word 'Ireland', and adding *te* (definite article "the") before things I liked. I wasn't sure if it was having any effect, and was reluctant to put people off by too much correction, so I did less as the project went on.

Topic 3: Mena kua wini au i te Lotto/(If I won Lotto)

This topic elicited four posts (plus mine), one comment (plus three of mine), and two "Likes (plus four of mine).

This topic generated several lively exchanges and some good-humoured word play.

The first post (from Pita) was early in week three, and showed a good grasp of the language, although Pita said in the final questionnaire that he was deterred by other people's apparent better ability:

> *Mena kua wini au i te Lotto, ka haere māua ko A__ ki te tāone ki te inu waina.*
> *Kotahi, e rua rānei. Nā te mea, ki te whakāio i tōku puku āmaimai. E kī ana te*
> *Tari o Lotto, e hoko ana te nuinga o ngā toa i ētahi ika me rīwai parai!* : Pita

> If I won Lotto, A___ and I would go to town for a wine. One, or maybe two. It would be to settle my nervous stomach. According to the Lotto office, most winners buy some fish and chips!

This quickly drew two 'likes' (from Ana and I). Posts from Ana, Lucy, Lara and Pania appeared over the third and fourth week. Interchange of comments tended to be with Lucy and Ana, the more competent speakers, though Pania was involved to some extent. The final post on this topic, from Mary, triggered a conversation about the difficulty of learning Spanish, then about a preference for Hawai'i over Finland as a place to visit, then about the similarities of Hawaiian to Māori.

At the same time, participants were interspersing posts and humorous comments on new words, and on words we made up (such as *Haipe* or *Kaipe* for Skype), along with interesting words in Māori, what was happening in our day, and other side issues. Although on the actual set topic there was not a lot of everyday interaction, on the side topics the group was finally achieving the sort of interchanges I had expected and hoped for, though I still had a big role in commenting and keeping the interchange going.

Topic 4: He tangata rekareka ki ahau / A person I find interesting

For this topic, there were only two posts (plus mine), although there were a number of comments which amounted to posts on the topic (one from Lucy, and one from Ana). There were four comments (plus four from me) and five "Likes" (plus three from me).

A language issue arose here. When setting the topic, I consulted with my supervisor on the best word for "interesting"; the word which came up first in the dictionary (*whakamere*) I had never used and rarely seen. My supervisor suggested *rekareka*, and I made it clear in my (bilingual) instructions that it did not have to be someone you liked, just an interesting

person. The topic was more challenging, and deliberately so, though I had provided extensive vocabulary to assist the participants.

By the end of week four, no one had posted, so I did, to get the impetus going (on the Māori radical politician, Hone Harawira). This generated a response from Ana about a television programme he had appeared on, a question about if I'd seen the programme, and a comment from Mary about Hone Harawira:

> *He tangata hātekēhi ia, i ētahi wā he kiriweti, engari he tangata kaha ki te whawhai* : Mary
>
> He's a hard-case guy, sometimes he's quite stroppy/hot-tempered, but he's a good fighter.

By now comments and posts on topics were beginning to blend into one another in a more naturalistic way. Lucy posted on *"He tangata rekareka"* as part of a comment on another topic, and the final post on this topic (from Mary) the final day of the five week project; she said she liked the topic.

One person said that he/she was reluctant to share his /her political opinions with the group (although this had not been asked for).

Topic 5: Te wā tino pai ki ahau (o te rā, o te wiki, o te tau) / My favourite time (of the day, of the week, of the year)

There was one other post on this topic apart from mine, no comments, and three "Likes."

Lara posted on this topic midway through week five:

> *Kia ora koutou, te wā tino pai ahau o te wiki, kei te wā whakatā. Kei te wā whakatā ka kite au i ōku hoa mā, ka haere ki te toa, ki te Mitre Tekau (Mitre 10), kei te hoko ahau te whare paipaitia*: Lara

Hello everyone, the best time is at the weekend. At the weekend I see my friends, I go to the shop, to Mitre 10 to buy things for fixing up the house.

Some language errors are evident in this post; there would normally be a "*ko*" (pointer word) before "*te wā tino pai,* " and similarly before the words "*te wā whakatā.*" In the next sentence, the word "*Kei*" should be replaced by "*I*"; "*Tūtaki*" (meet) would be better than "*kite*" (see), and the "*mā*" is not needed. But Lara was communicating in *te reo* Māori, to an audience of maybe eight, and her writing drew a "Like" from another more competent participant. Lara wrote 80 words about her weekend, all comprehensible to her readers. She continued thus:

> *Kei te wā whakatā ka waea au ia taku tamāhine (kei te kāinga ki te Ingarangi). Kei te Skype e tāua te kōrero. I horoia ngā kākahu e au i tērā Rāhoroi ina ki te mahi ahau ki Rātahi*: Lara

> In the weekend I phone her my daughter (at home in England). We talk on Skype. I did the washing (clothes) last Saturday because I work on Monday.

Once again her *reo*, though flawed, is perfectly comprehensible. Prepositions are often wrong, the definite article *te* is not needed before the name of a country (*Ingarangi)* but her word choice is good, she uses the passive tense correctly (*i horoia ngā kākahu e au*), and writes "*i tērā Rāhoroi*" (last Saturday) correctly.

The only other post was mine, which I put up at the second-to-last day.

In this final week postings had diminished considerably, though there were still interchanges going on about earlier topics (the last post about the week three topic appeared in the last week), as well as "signing off" with mutual greetings, some encouragement to participate from Lucy, and participants asking and answering a few last questions of each other. Some participants also directly thanked me for letting them be involved:

> *He tino nui taku mihi ki a koe, John. Kua whakaohotia anōtia tōku hinengaro e pā ana ki te reo rangatira o ngā motu nei...* : Lucy

> Warm thanks to you, John. My mind has once again been awakened concerning the original language of these islands...

and from another participant:

> *Tēnā koe Hone. He tino nui tō tautoko me tō awhi ki a mātou. He uaua tēnei mahi, engari he mea nui ki ahau te ako te reo Māori...:* Mary

> Thank you John. You've been really supportive and caring to us. It was difficult, but it's important to me to learn Māori...

On the third to last day, Pania posted a message of real concern that there weren't enough posts, that my research project would not work out, and that her language and technical skills weren't up to the task. It was all in *te reo* Māori; the grammar was less than perfect, but the concern was real. I sent her two brief messages of reassurance, including this:

> *He pai koe hoki hei tauira! Ko koe te momo tauira i kimihia e au mō tēnei rangahau!* John

> You are just fine as a student / participant! You are just the sort of participant I was looking for!

And shortly afterwards, a supportive "Like" appeared from Ana.

Details of Skype calls

There were only four calls made altogether. Lucy, Lisa, Sam, Mary and Lara ended up having Skype calls; of those, Lucy, Maya and Lara each took part in two calls.

There were significant problems arranging Skype calls. I would email both partners, give each one the others email address and leave it to them to arrange the calls, but some people were by their own admission not good at checking their emails, and one person found the

idea of a Skype call too daunting. I was reluctant to nag participants, who were all busy people, but closer moderating of the process would have helped.

I also neglected to scrutinise the Skype calls closely enough. When a Skype call had been recorded and the file sent to me, I briefly checked the file and got onto other business. If I had checked the calls beyond the first few sentences, I would have realised the calls were too long, which contributed to these becoming burdensome. Detecting this problem at an early stage may have made a substantial difference to the success of the Skype calls.

Despite this, five of the six participants who made Skype calls were quite positive about them, and Lucy and Lara arranged informally to make more regular calls to each other.

Below is a brief description of the four calls:

Skype Call 1 – Lucy, Lara
5/9/11
17 mins

Lucy was conversing with Lara, an academic who had admitted finding *te reo* Māori difficult, but had a very willing attitude. Lara struggled to make herself understood when the conversation turned to a more complex narrative (for example, when discussing when a baby was born and when she was going to visit the young mother, or had visited). However, Lucy was a good guide and provided prompts, recasts, and vocabulary items when needed. Here is an early example:

> Lucy: *E hia ngā tau kua ako koe i te reo?*
>
> How long have you been learning the language?
>
> Lara: *E hia ngā tau... Oh e hia ngā tau um kei te ako i te reo Māori oh um toru tau:*

[Repeats question] ... oh, three years.

Lucy: *Oh Ka pai. Ka ako koe i te whare wānanga?*

Oh good. Are you studying at university?

Lara: *Āe... te Wānanga o Aotearoa. Me te Ataarangi ki te rākau ... tekau wiki Te Ataarangi a tērā tau.*

Yes, at the Wānanga o Aotearoa. And with Te Ataarangi using sticks... ten weeks next year.

Lara was trying to say "*i tērā tau* (last year), and there was some confusion around the word *wānanga*, but Lucy generally manages to grasp what Lara is saying. Another example of their interaction:

Lucy: *Tokohia āu tamariki?*

How many children do you have?

Lara: *Ko rua tamariki. Ko E___ toko tamahine. Ko S___ taku tame.*

(Two. E___ is my daughter . S____ is my son).

Lucy: *Tama.* (corrects tame to tama)

Lara: *Tama. Ko E___ rātou ko L___ ko A___ taku moko...*

(My son. E___ and L___ and A____ are my gr...)

Lucy: *Mokopuna.* (Grandchildren)

Lara makes a number of errors ("*Ko rua tamariki*" instead of "*Tokorua aku tamariki*", "*toko*" for "*taku*" or "*tāku*", "*tame*" for "*tama*"), but the meaning is clear, and Lara responds readily to prompts and correction.

The two callers enjoyed the experience enough to decide to continue to do this in future outside the project. Lucy did admit in her final questionnaire, however, that she also really wanted peer-to-peer conversation, or to talk with someone with better language skills.

Skype Call 2 – Mary, Rena
11/9/11

19 mins

There were clear differences in language ability in this call; Mary was clearly more competent, whereas Rena (a Māori academic in the health field who had not studied Māori for a number of years) at times struggled to put sentences together.

> Mary: *He aha te kaupapa o te kōrero? He mihimihi? Mihi... Nō hea koe?*
>
> So, what's the topic? Greetings? Greeting... where are you from?
>
> Rena: *Nō P_____. Ko O___ te kāinga ināianei.*
>
> From P___. I live in D___ now.
>
> Mary: *I tipu ake koe ki P____?*
>
> [repeats question] Did you grow up in P___?

At this stage the first small misunderstanding arises (the meaning of *tipu* –to grow up). Conversation resumes, with occasional breaks into English:

> Mary: *Nō O_____ engari i whānau au ki B___. I rere mātou ko taku whānau ki Aotearoa a long time ago.*
>
> I'm from D___ but I was born in B____. My family flew/escaped here to Aotearoa a long time ago.
>
> Rena: *E hia ngā tau i kāinga koe i Aotearoa?*
>
> How many years have you lived in Aotearoa?

Mary: ...*Toru tekau mā rima tau i noho ki konei. Tokohia tō tamatāne? That doesn't make sense… tō tama.*

I've lived here for 30 years. How many boys do you have?..... How many sons?)

Rena: *I roto i taku whānau e rua ngā tama. Ko O_____ rātou ko H____. E iwa ngā tau o O____. E rima ngā tau o H_____ .[Laugh]... I meant to study up this week.*

In my family there are two sons. There's O____ and H_____. O____ is nine. H_____ is five...

There are a few errors here (*toko-* usually goes before numbers of people, and two names are linked with *rāua* rather than *rātou*), but thus far both participants were managing to converse, and if they had simply had a conversation about their families and children, all would have been well (I had suggested 3-5 minute conversations).

However, the conversation turned to the length of time one person had spent at university, the recent international rugby game, and various other topics, and Rena was soon out of her depth. Rena said later that the conversation discouraging rather than enjoyable for her.

Skype Call 3 – Lucy, Sam
19/9/11

11 minutes.

The call was made near the end of the third week of the project. They were quite comfortable and good-humoured conversing, although at times they had to negotiate for understanding. Sam admitted, when talking about the date he had last formally studied Māori:

Sam: Kua maumahara – nineteen ninetyfour. Kua ngaro te nuinga o ngā kupu... kua rere atu. Koroua haere te hinengaro... kua maumahara ētahi.

I remember... nineteen ninetyfour. Most of the words have gone ... they've disappeared. My mind is getting a bit old... I remember some.

There were faults in the grammar, but the meaning was clear, if a little hesitant. In fact, in most standard questions, Sam's grammar was quite accurate. The speakers discussed the length of time they had been learning the language, their occupations (there was a humorous exchange about Sam's profession, and another about the need to keep the researcher happy by keeping to the topic). In fact, it was a genuine conversation, with genuine interest shown in each other's situation.

Skype call 4 - Mary and Lara

13 minutes

4/ 10/ 2011

Mary initiated and recorded this call, which was rather hesitant, but showed some genuine communication occurring, and was conducted in a positive way, despite occasional communication problems. The two participants exchanged *mihi* and information about each other's family (topic 1), then talked about things they liked (topic 2).

Initially Mary had trouble understanding some of Lara's *mihi*, as Lara was using some Kai Tahu variants (eg *tōhoku* for *tōku* (my), and *ikoa* for *ingoa* (name)), and Mary recast several of Lara's statements after she has struggled to initially understand them; for example, she corrects Mary's use of *ā tērā wiki* (next week) to *ī tērā wiki* (last week) once she understands the context, and Lara appears to catch on to the grammatical error she has made.

Mary goes on to introduce the second topic (things I like). Lara does not initially grasp the topic, but readily responds once she understands. Mary responds with delight when she realizes that Lara (59) is still playing netball. The conversation briefly becomes more free-flowing, with Lara spontaneously responding when she hears about Mary's favourite dance style, flamenco.

> Lara: *He ātaahua te kanikani!*

That's a beautiful dance (style)!:

Mary: *He uaua tēnā momo kanikani…. He tino pai hoki.*

That type of dancing is difficult … it's great, too: Mary

Mary checked the time, and sees it is well over the suggested five minutes; the two affirm (in Māori) that the main thing is that they have had some practice using *te reo* Māori, and that the purpose is to build confidence, then they wrap up the conversation. Maya's daughter has tagged on to the conversation, and all three end up saying "*Pō mārie*" (Good night) to finish off. Clearly both are keeping it shorter, and getting something out of a more focused conversation.

Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the responses of my participants in the Final Questionnaire on the effectiveness of their interaction on Facebook and Skype. The main features of these were a generally positive response to Facebook, with higher ratings for enjoyment and encouragement to continue learning *te reo* Māori than for actually learning the language via Facebook, and a mixed reception for Skype, with only four of the six being positive about Skype interaction. I then returned to the original research questions and presented participants' comments that relate to the questions. Key features of these responses are appreciation of the opportunity to practise *te reo* Māori in a different environment, enjoyment of personal interaction (especially on Facebook), being extended in one's knowledge through interaction, and being involved in a community of Māori language users. Following this I examined specific issues that arose relating to Facebook and Skype as social media key factors here were the importance of appropriate matching of participants, the need to satisfy both partners in *tuakana/teina* (more competent/less competent) grouping, the need for careful moderation of groups to avoid problems, and the need for quick access to assistance (either information or technical assistance). I then presented details of the actual interaction

that occurred on both Facebook and Skype. In the next chapter I draw some conclusions from the findings from this project, and suggest some actions that would improve the teaching of *te reo* Māori to adults and improve the experience of adult Māori language learners.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter deals with possible ways to improve online interaction in *te reo* Māori for adults, along with suggestions for improving the teaching of *te reo* Māori for adults. In this section I will examine issues which relate specifically to the different nature of Facebook and Skype as interactive sites, and will suggest ways to overcome the difficulties which may arise.

Correction of errors in Facebook and Skype

Part of learning a language is having errors corrected by someone else, or self-correcting. In this project there was some recasting on Facebook and Skype and some vocabulary provision in Skype calls by more competent speakers, but there was little effort made to correct anyone's language. After all, interaction was the main focus, and it has been noted earlier that despite errors, virtually everyone's meaning was apparent, mainly through assistance from context clues.

However, I would suggest that for Facebook, the example of other language users would provide a model for the less competent, and that the 'message' or 'chat' function could be used to provide private correction either at the same time or later. For Skype, the most common means of correction was recasts (expressing the previous speaker's sentence in a more correct form). Lara in particular responded quite readily to these in her Skype conversation with Lucy and Mary. Ultimately, however, as in real life, a constant flow of good examples of language is the best way to guide a learner towards increasing competence.

Quick access to support material while using Facebook or Skype

It only occurred to me after the project was finished that inserting a hyperlink to take the participant straight to support material, or to use the document function in Facebook were the best ways to provide instant access to vocabulary lists or other support for that particular site (although I did in fact use one hyperlink when encouraging people to look up a site on Māori

words relating to rugby while the Rugby World Cup was on). In fact, most internet users are quite comfortable with having several tabs open and switching from one to another, or switching from a document window to a browser window. The easier the process can be made, the better, and it is worth carefully considering ease of access to vocabulary assistance when designing social media interaction.

Need for technical support

Facebook is quite straightforward, and little technical help is needed, though it takes a little work to set up privacy settings for all the people in a secret group so that their personal interactions with other people are blocked off. Skype can cause more issues; one participant did not manage to get a Skype call going, and recording the calls caused some delays, although in most circumstances one would not be recording calls anyway. Familiarity with the sites removes most of the problems, and the "Help" sites online are excellent for answering questions. Targeted support documents, easily accessed, for specific situations could remove many technical difficulties.

Grouping of participants

Two people in my project were definitely put off by a perception that other people's language was superior to their own, though both also appreciated the exemplars provided by other participants at times. Two of the more competent participants expressed frustration at not getting a Skype call with someone closer to their level, and while both were willing to be 'helpers' to others at times, they both really wanted to interact with people better than themselves in order to extend themselves more. The sensitivities of people who are struggling needs to be taken seriously, quite apart from the fact that it can be time consuming and frustrating to look up words. More competent speakers also need chances to branch out more. Pania suggested a badge system (such as that used by koreromaori.com) to identify people's different skill levels.

In terms of specific communication breakdowns, I would suggest that simply posting a question mark on Facebook, or "Whakamārama mai!" (Explain) may well indicate that someone doesn't get the other person's point, and the question mark would suggest to the more competent speaker that he/she needs to rephrase his/her thoughts more simply. The key thing is that there should be some sort of agreed signal to indicate a need for clearer communication of an idea. Good facilitation, with avenues for prompt feedback, and willingness to be flexible in rearranging groupings as required could aid smooth running of such groups.

Communication breakdowns in Skype calls

There were issues of breakdown in communication which applied specifically to Skype calls. A free conversation can be too demanding for beginners, and in a language learning situation, these breakdowns can be embarrassing and potentially dissuade participants from making calls, as happened in this project. The most obvious way to avoid them is to keep the conversations task-focused and brief, to make necessary vocabulary readily available, and to have specific strategies to deal with them (for example, a hand signal to give an indication to switch briefly to English, or using vivid markers and paper to quickly sketch a picture to help with the meaning of a word). A task could be as simple as asking and answering a set of questions.

Ideas for further action or research

Finally, apart from the specific project-related observations I have made about issues in online interaction that arose and possible remedies for them, I have also made some general observations about how the Māori language is generally taught, the need to support, nurture and value adult learners, and the need to assist such learners with readily available relevant material and vocabulary support that relates to their everyday life and issues, so they can

become confident speakers, readers and writers of *te reo* Māori. Some of the ideas have been present in my thoughts for some time, and were only brought into sharper focus by this research project. I acknowledge that these suggestions are not easy to justify without a level of research into their validity which is beyond the scope of this report; however, I believe there is enough evidence to raise the issues as suggestions at least.

Need for a stronger focus on interaction in Māori language courses

In my experience (which may be somewhat dated) Māori language courses for adults sometimes do not have a strong informal conversation component (though I have been assured by some teachers that this is not always the case). For example, often people begin learning Māori with a *mihi* (a detailed formal identification of oneself), which is an important cultural use of language in a Māori setting. Often such a *mihi* is not the occasion for active further interrogation of the speaker, whereas in other languages a more active question/answer routine is more common when meeting other people. Consequently perhaps, such question answer routines are not well known by most students of Maori, whereas in most other language this function has early prominence (for example, as a learner in Spanish 1 at The University of Otago, I was exposed to interactive conversation very early on). This lack of easy social question/answer skill was clear in the Skype calls, and may reflect a less interactive style of teaching in previous years; however, beginner speakers did find it difficult to answer questions and to identify the meanings of questions (although I appreciate that I have only worked with a tiny sample in this study).

I would suggest that question/answer routines be introduced more early into Māori language courses, to enable a more relaxed interaction even amongst beginner speakers. Having a lack of confidence in what should be simple interchanges may well be a factor in inducing whakamā (shyness/embarrassment). Students (especially adults) need to feel confident in

using basic language from the early stages, otherwise they will shrink from interaction – the very thing that will build their linguistic skill.

Acknowledgement needed for issue of whakamā (shyness/embarrassment) for adult Māori who are learning *te reo* Māori

The issue of whakamā (shyness/embarrassment) for adult learners, and particularly Māori adult learners, is well documented by Christensen (2001), Chrisp (2005), and Ratima and May (2011). Māori adult learners find themselves under pressure in several ways when they are learning the language. As older people, they are expected to be more competent; as Māori, they feel they should be able to grasp the Māori language with reasonable ease. Unfortunately, the literature confirms that at times they encounter more competent speakers who take a justified pride in their ability but are not always understanding of others not as competent: also, some younger people who are more competent can be belittling and dismissive of people who are not as far on in the journey of learning the language. Not only that, there is also a major (and justified) push amongst the Māori speaking community to see quality language being spoken.

I also believe that it is a mixed blessing that *te reo* Māori has been venerated and referred to as a taonga (treasured object) rather than as a taputapu (tool, or useful object), which is the mental model held by users of most other languages. Respectful adults are reluctant to 'get it wrong' in *te reo* Māori, and this holds them back from the free interaction which would help them reach a good skill level.

I believe it is vital for Māori adults to feel safe when using their new language skills, and that the leaders in the Māori language community need to take a lead in encouraging adults to use their language, and to accept that mistakes are an inevitable part of learning, and that it often takes a good deal of time and practice before a person can dispense with a pattern from his or her first language (almost universally English in New Zealand) and adopt the true Māori way

of expressing something. There is a need for heightened awareness of SLA issues, and awareness and acceptance of the concept of interlanguage, including valuing the intermediate stages of language learning.

Lack of readily available vocabulary about everyday life for adult learners

It seems to me that there is a lack of readily available vocabulary about everyday life for adult learners. For example, one participant talked about doing house improvements, which is a major focus of many New Zealand adults, both Māori and Pākehā; being able to express herself confidently about that would be a positive step for her. There is also, I believe, a lack of readily available examples of vocabulary for many other aspects of everyday adult life such as workplace issues, detailed and nuanced conversation about relationships with partner and friends, issues with children and teenagers, talk about mainstream and Māori politics, and so on. When adults venture to talk about such things, they do so tentatively because they do not have models to work from. Active provision of such language should be a priority to enable adult learners to confidently interact about their own world and their own lives. This could possibly be a good priority for The Māori Language Commission.

Adult learners need to be nurtured and valued

The participants in this project were intelligent adults, most in the 30 to 60s age group, and with active work and social lives and a level of influence in the community. They had taken the trouble to learn Māori, at some financial expense and the expense of a good deal of effort. With the exception of one person who was dispirited by what appeared to her to be her failure to really learn Māori, most were really keen to engage in the Māori language, to get better at it, and to engage at least to some extent in Māori society. Unfortunately, that although such people receive respect in the wider community for their efforts, I believe that they tend to receive the message from the more competent Māori speaking community that they are not

good enough more often than they receive acknowledgement that they have made substantial steps towards learning the Māori language.

There is a substantial number of people with some knowledge of *te reo* Maori out in the community, and I was surprised at the number of adult language learners I approached about my project who expressed real enthusiasm about the possibility of online interaction in *te reo* Māori, or any convenient means they could use to increase their interaction in the Māori language. I would suggest that a conscious effort be made by those actively promoting *te reo* Māori on the larger stage (in particular the Māori Language Commission) to engage with such adults, to get them involved in online groups or other linking methods, and to actively nurture them, rather than neglect this substantial source of energy, enthusiasm and good will towards *te reo* Māori.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have pointed to possible ways to improve online interaction in *te reo* Māori for adults, along with suggestions for improving the teaching of *te reo* Māori for adults. The main improvements for online interaction revolve around careful grouping, support both linguistic and technical, along with good structuring and moderation of interaction for maximum benefit. The main suggestions I make for improving the teaching of *te reo* Māori to adults are: including a stronger interactive element into language programmes, acknowledgement of the issue of whakamā for adult Māori language learners, improved provision of information about second language acquisition, provision of vocabulary specific to adults' needs, and active nurturing of adult learners.

As far as this project overall is concerned, the experience of the participants was generally positive. Most found a good level of enjoyment in Facebook interaction, and encouragement to continue learning the language, and although there were some negative reactions to Skype

interaction, most of those who engaged in it enjoyed it and saw potential in continuing with it. The results of this project indicates that whakamā is a significant factor for some adult learners of *te reo* Māori, and that the "complex identity issues for Māori learning Māori as adults" raised by Stephen Chrisp deserve further attention.118 This project also bore out the tenet that good structuring, support and moderation of interaction, on Skype in particular, yields better results than leaving the interaction unstructured. Finally, I believe that the interest of participants in continuing with online interaction in *te reo* Māori is indicative of its potential, that this project indicates that online interaction can help reduce language learners' isolation and provide benefits, and that online interaction by adult learners of *te reo* Māori should be actively explored and supported in the future.

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118 Stephen Chrisp, "Māori Intergenerational Language Transmission", 179.

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Appendices

Qualitative questions from Final Questionnaire

General questions about Facebook as an interactive site

How would you rate Facebook as an interactive site for informal language learning?

 Comment:

Do you have problems with using Facebook with people you do not know personally?

Comment:

Do you have other privacy issues with the use of Facebook as an interactive site for language learning?

Comment:

Any general comments on the use of Facebook as an interactive site for language learning?

Can you suggest other online interaction methods that would work better?

Comment:

General questions about Skype as an interactive tool

How would you rate Skype as an interactive tool for informal language learning?

Comment:

Do you have problems with using Skype with people you do not know personally?

Comment:

Did the technical issues with making and recording Skype calls put you off using it?

Comment:

How big a problem was organizing Skype calls with your partner?

Comment:

Did you prefer making Skype calls with or without the video camera?

Comment:

Online interaction in general

Here are the research questions which guided this project:

1) What benefits can be gained from online interactions for beginner/intermediate adult learners of *te reo* Māori?

2) What are the implications of online interaction for second language learning?

From your experience in this project, what comment would you make on this question?

1) What benefits can be gained from online interactions for beginner/intermediate adult learners of *te reo* Māori?

Comment:

From your experience in this project, what comment would you make on this question?

Comment:

2) What are the implications of online interaction for second language learning?

Comment:

Do you have any comment to make about your level / quantity of involvement during the project?

Comment:

Are there any other general comments you wish to make about the project?

Comment:

Finally – would you be interested in continuing with an informal online project using Facebook (and possibly Skype) after this project ends?

Comment:

Information for participants on Interlanguage and Interaction

Interlanguage

"Interlanguage" is a technical term for the intermediate state of a learner's language as he or she moves from his/ her first language to the target language. Development of interlanguage is a creative process, which happens as you use your own inbuilt ideas about what grammar should be, combined with what you learn about the new language as you go along. "Interlanguage" is influenced by both the first language and the target language, but in fact interlanguage is like a language with rules of its own, which change constantly as you learn more.

As you learn a new language you learn new rules and apply them. In fact sometimes you apply them in places you shouldn't, but that's all part of learning!

The main way you really learn what your own interlanguage is when you are producing language by yourself – not when you are doing language exercises from a book, for example. Producing your own language brings out the ideas you have about how *te reo* Māori is formed – both right ones and wrong ones! But as you go on, interacting with other people, and being exposed to more examples of good Māori will bring change to the level of your language. That change isn't usually a nice steady climb – it tends to go from plateau to plateau – but it's progress, all the same!

Another point about interlanguage is that it's a reduced system, with less complex word use and less complex grammar. That changes with time, but it's inevitable – and it makes for an interesting challenge expressing yourself when you don't have all the words and grammar you would like at your disposal!

So – why am I making a point of talking to you about interlanguage? The main reason is that it's inevitable that your language will be different from that of an expert or Māori language expert – especially when you're producing language by yourself. But even though your "interlanguage" is different from an expert's language, it's a vital stage on the way to a better grasp of *te reo* Māori. You should feel proud that you are on the journey of learning *te reo* Māori. So – don't hold back – use what you've got with pride, and see what happens as you continue on. Kia kaha rā!

Interaction, and why it's so important

Rod Ellis, one of the leaders in second language learning, says that the opportunity to interact in the target language is central to developing skill in that language. Some people think that interaction just helps to make using the language more automatic, but it goes deeper than that. Not only do you practise what you already know – you find yourself having to work out how to make yourself understood, you receive feedback about whether your language is understandable or not, and you get pushed to change your language to make yourself clear.

So what types of interaction help you to learn a language? First, you need to have times when you are sorting out what something means with someone – what Ellis calls "negotiating meaning." You also need to have the opportunity to start small and build up your language bit by bit – and during this project we will try to give opportunities for both these things. This whole project is built on interaction, whether writing for other people, reading their responses, and commenting on what others have written – and of course there is constant interaction in the Skype conversation.

So – don't be shy, interact as much as you can, and see what happens to your language as you go along. Interaction is a powerful element in language learning!