

NON-MĀORI TEACHERS TEACHING MĀORI LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH-MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS: WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER – HE WAKA EKE NOA

SUMMARY - FULL TEXT AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:

http://www.alicepatrick.co.nz/sites/default/files/docs/Phd_chapters_lals_final.pdf

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH | HE WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA

Alice Patrick's PhD thesis examined the role of non-Māori teachers in teaching te reo Māori in English-medium primary schools, as per the expectation in the *New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007). Her research investigated non-Māori teachers' beliefs and practices about Māori language in English-medium primary schools – and it also explored what Māori language materials those teachers were using (or wanting).

There were three empirical data sources – an online questionnaire (n=40), classroom observations (n=4), and teacher interviews (n=4).

Because of her topic being important to Māori, and therefore worthy of research, Alice chose to be guided by kaupapa Māori¹ values as an ethical base for her research.

FINDINGS RE CLASSROOM PRACTICE

The findings showed some consistency across four case study teachers whom Alice observed and interviewed, in terms of their stated beliefs and their actual classroom practices (e.g. ensuring the learning of te reo was enjoyable, incorporating aspects of tikanga, demonstrating good pronunciation, and being positive about te reo). However, there were also inconsistencies across the four teachers. In their practice, they did not necessarily follow through on their beliefs about the importance of facilitating group work/practice opportunities, using Māori language materials, and drawing on students' prior knowledge/experiences.

¹ Pertaining to Māori knowledge, skills, attitudes

What became evident during the research was that there were contributing factors that influenced the teachers' practice (e.g. lack of quality resources and associated professional development, insufficient support from school leaders and parents, and too little time).

FINDINGS RE RESOURCES

As well as classroom observations and interviews associated with the four case study teachers, Alice sought the views (online) of 40 English-medium primary school teachers about the characteristics of 'quality' Māori language resources. Their top three priorities were: real-life contexts, user-friendliness, and inclusion of tikanga – followed by audio support, English translations/glossaries, visual appeal, multimedia, teachers' notes, and alignment to the Māori language curriculum guidelines (*Te Aho Arataki Marau*).

The 40 online teacher participants reported that, in the future, they would like to see resources being developed that:

- incorporate information technology (e.g. Māori language games/multimedia),
- help them to use Māori language in the classroom,
- provide pronunciation support,
- facilitate shared reading experiences (e.g. big bilingual books), and
- provide information about their local area.

IMPLICATIONS

Alice's research has contributed to the literature, as few studies have examined the teaching and learning of Māori language in English-medium primary schools. Furthermore, it contributes to the wider kaupapa of Māori language revitalisation by validating whānau aspirations/expectations in terms of their tamariki/ mokopuna receiving reo Māori tuition, supported by quality Māori language materials. The study also provides an evidence base for the Ministry of Education (and resource developers) regarding the creation of resources for English-medium primary schools – and the need for teachers to receive quality PD.

Importantly, the research findings highlighted a relationship between Māori language provision and Māori student achievement. That is, the participating teachers believed that providing Māori students with access to te reo Māori in their English-medium primary schooling enhanced their likelihood of educational success.

The research has implications for the practice of teachers, school leaders, and PD facilitators in English-medium primary school settings – as well as resource developers who work in this space. There are also implications for NZ primary school students, in terms of recognising the benefits that ensue from their learning of te reo (cognitive, social, cultural, societal, linguistic, and vocational) – especially for Māori students, in terms of having their language and culture validated, so they can stand strong and be successful in both te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā.

Hence the significance of the government’s goal around making Māori language universally available in schools, with one million New Zealanders speaking basic reo by 2040.

CONCLUSIONS | HE KUPU WHAKATEPE

Teachers could be better supported by having quality, user-friendly Māori language resources suitable for English-medium primary school settings. The lack of such resources can impact on a teacher’s practice, even when they have good intentions and believe it is important to teach te reo.

Teachers also need PD to:

- become familiar with resources,
- upskill their Māori language proficiency,
- increase their knowledge about second language acquisition, and
- enhance their understanding of tikanga.

Additionally, they need more time within the busy classroom curriculum to accommodate te reo Māori teaching and learning – with more encouragement and support from school leaders and whānau.

FINAL WORD: HE KŌRERO TĀPIRI

Tōku reo, tōku ohooho. My language is my awakening

Te reo Māori is the Indigenous language of Aotearoa NZ – unique to this country, and a taonga under the Treaty of Waitangi. It provides a window to another world, another perspective, another set of values. By teaching Māori in English-medium settings, non-Māori primary school teachers are demonstrating their respect for Māori culture and Māori people.

Moreover, as stated above, the learning of te reo Māori benefits all students – linguistically, cognitively, socially, culturally, in the future workforce, and as a marker of national identity. But there are particular benefits for Māori students. Having their language, culture and identity validated provides a platform for overall achievement at school – which is important in light of historical differential achievement, due to failures of the education system. The provision of quality Māori language materials in English-medium primary schools can contribute to the vision outlined in the Ministry’s Māori Education Strategy, *Ka Hikitia*; namely, Māori students achieving and enjoying success as Māori.

The aspiration for the future is that our tamariki/ mokopuna (Māori and non-Māori) will have access to an effective, incrementally progressive Māori language programme in English-medium primary schools, unlike current and previous generations exposed to a limited and repetitive repertoire of colours, numbers, songs, greetings etc.

For this to happen, we need to address teacher capability and resource development. English-medium primary teachers need help, in the form of PD, to upskill their reo proficiency and familiarise themselves with theoretical knowledge associated with second language acquisition. They also need quality Māori language resources (specifically written for an English-medium audience in primary school settings). These resources need to: reflect real-life contexts, incorporate aspects of tikanga, be user-friendly, provide audio support, and include English translations/glossaries.