CAN COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING HELP SAVE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES?

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In the year 2001, at least 6912 distinct human languages were spoken worldwide. Many linguists now predict that by the end of our current 21st century – the year 2101, only about half of these languages may still be spoken… At the current pace, we stand to lose a language about every 10 days for the foreseeable future (Harrison, 2007: 3-5).

Harrison's words are poignant in an era of increasing globalisation, and the importance of maintaining distinctive cultural and linguistic identity is a message that resounds with proponents of *te reo* Māori (the Māori language) in contemporary New Zealand society. This article examines how Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methods can contribute to the revitalisation of indigenous languages, specifically Māori, Tahitian, and Hawaiian, in the L2 (second language) tertiary learning context. The need for this has arisen because of the continually decreasing numbers of fluent Māori speakers in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Current methods of Māori L2 teaching are appear to be having little or no effect on reversing the decline: the emphasis on explicit grammar rules and translation, characteristic of many current tertiary Māori L2 teaching methods (as demonstrated in this article), appears to produce good grammarians and not proficient speakers. This article therefore starts from the premise that CLT may offer a way forward assuming that the production of fluent speakers is the goal. While *te reo* Māori is the primary focus used in this article, Hawaiian and Tahitian examples are also used to illustrate the potential contribution CLT may provide to the revitalisation of indigenous languages worldwide as everyday languages of communication. In this discussion we provide a theoretical overview of CLT, and some classroom methodologies that can be meaningfully implemented within tertiary L2 syllabi. *Te reo* Māori is firstly contextualised in historical and political discourses since the early colonial presence in New Zealand in the 1800s. This links to examining pedagogies of current tertiary Māori language courses today, to illustrate existing approaches to the teaching of Māori. We then turn to explore the various L2 teaching methodologies that have been employed in language classrooms over the past century, which enables us to discuss the emergence of communicative approaches in language teaching from the 1970s onwards. A discussion follows on a selection of example CLT lesson activities that

could be implemented for L2 teaching. Finally, we consider some of the critiques and limitations of communicative approaches. These are important to note because of the material confines of the university lecture theatre, and the associated limitations of time and resources.

CONTEXTUALISING *TE REO MĀORI* IN HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL DISCOURSES

It is well established that the worldwide epoch of colonisation has precipitated a deluge of immediate and multigenerational disadvantage upon indigenous groups. From the first colonial presence in New Zealand nearly two centuries ago, the indigenous Māori population have experienced a raft of negative societal impacts, with a genesis stretching far back to the initial economic isolation of the Māori people, triggered by mass land alienation on behalf of the settler government (Asher et al., 1987; Houkamau, 2010: 182; Kawharu, 1977; Kawharu, 2014; Tapsell, 2014; Williams, 1999). This often intentional series of acts, executed through legal and institutional means, extended to the isolation of te reo Māori as a mode of communication. Today's reality is that *te reo* Māori is a severely endangered language (Te Paepae Motuhake, 2011: 17, 31), and as Sophie Nock explains

> [*t*]*e reo Māori* and *tikanga Māori* [Māori cultural values] have been under constant attack since the beginning of European colonisation of New Zealand (Nock, 2005: 48).

A more material point of origin, however, begins with the 1847 Education Ordinance Act. This mechanism of the colonial Government stipulated that funding for local schools (that Māori children attended) was contingent upon English being the exclusive medium of instruction (Nock, 2010: 86; Te Paepae Motuhake, 2011: 29). This was solidified a decade later in the 1858 Native Schools Act, which strictly enforced English as the language of the classroom, simultaneously heralding in physical (and often violent) punishment for children who reverted to Māori in the schoolyard (Waitangi Tribunal, 1993: 8). As expressed in the WAI11 Report,[1]

> …it was clearly at least a practice widely followed that during the first quarter of this century Maori children were forbidden to speak Maori in school, even in the playground, and that they were punished if they did so (Waitangi Tribunal, 1993: 9).

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[1] WAI11 is the alphanumeric code for the Report of the Waitangi Tribunal on the Te Reo Maori claim.

Benton's (1997) comprehensive 1970s language survey in the North Island represents the ripening of this fruit, discovering that Māori had become an overwhelmingly marginalised language, occupying only ceremonial and religious spaces (such as the *marae* (community ritual plaza of ancestral significance), and which was distinctly absent from all other arenas of life – most notably the schoolroom curriculum. Nearly four decades on, this sentiment persists and is elaborated at length in Merata Kawharu's 2014 edited collection of essays, *Maranga Mai! Te Reo and Marae in Crisis?* (Kawharu, 2014; Tapsell, 2014).

Despite this background, the 1970s also saw a host of significant initiatives aimed at the revitalisation of *te reo* Māori and Māori culture, including language initiatives such as Kōhanga Reo (preschool language immersion centres) and Kura Kaupapa (Māori language immersion primary schools) (Nock, 2010: 189-190). Widespread protests and petitions to Parliament during this era spearheaded by Ngā Tamatoa (The Young Warriors) regarding the state of *te reo* Māori, and the Government's failure to protect the language under Article Two of the Treaty of Waitangi (Nock, 2010: 188), resulted in the passing of the 1987 Māori Language Act and the ascension of *te reo* Māori to an official language of New Zealand (Te Paepae Motuhake, 2011: 33). It ostensibly appears that these watershed events were fertile soil for the regeneration of Māori as a community language. Based on everyday surface observations, this may appear to be true: numerous Māori words and hybridised phrases have entered the mainstream New Zealand vernacular (as well as the newsreaders' scripts), such as "kia ora" ("good health to you" / "hello"), and "don't do a half-pai job" ("don't do a half-*good* job, i.e. 'comprehensively complete the assigned task without demonstrating incompetence'). However, the current rates of those fluent in Māori markedly belie these optimistic assumptions.

Māori language statistics indeed paint a drastically different picture: Statistics New Zealand reports a steady decline in the proportion of Māori able to converse in *te reo* Māori, from 25% in 1996, to 24% in 2006, to 21% in 2013 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). 'Converse' in this context means "to hold an everyday conversation in the Māori language" (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Although snippets of Māori are becoming commonplace in the wider New Zealand consciousness, the self reported rates of fluency are continually diminishing. In light of this, it is no wonder that it has become common rhetoric in contemporary scholarly arenas that Māori remains an endangered language (Kawharu, 2014; Nock, 2005; Nock, 2010; Te Paepae Motuhake, 2011). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* supports these concerns. UNESCO identifies Māori as a "vulnerable" language, that is, a

language endangered because its use is restricted to specific domains such as in the home (Moseley, 2010). Similarly, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* notes that Māori is a "threatened" language, occupying "mostly… legal domains" (Lewis et al., 2014).

The current situation for Hawaiian is equally grim. Hawaiian is considered "critically endangered" by UNESCO (Moseley, 2010), with as few as 2,000 fluent speakers of Hawaiian today, down from 37,000 native speakers in 1900 (Lewis et al., 2014). By contrast, Tahitian is currently spoken by roughly 45% of the French Polynesian population as their first language, and more than 80% of the population converse in Tahitian and use it as a *lingua franca* (Leclerc, 2013). In 2002, 31% of households in French Polynesia spoke a Polynesian language within the home, a figure that has steadily dropped to 30% in 2007 and 28% in 2012. In 2012, French overshadowed the remaining 70% of households as the primary language of the home (Institut de la statistique de la Polynésie française, 2014). Like other former colonies, the Tahitian language is further threatened by the development of a French / Tahitian pidgin (Paia and Vernaudon, 2002). Moreover, Peltzer (2009) has identified a shortage of Tahitian language teaching materials, and that such materials for Polynesian languages other than Tahitian are almost non-existent. Challenges in teaching Tahitian in a tertiary context highlight this. In an article reviewing Tahitian language courses at the University of French Polynesia, Tuheiava-Richaud (2012) explained how students excelled in the oral module of the course, but struggled in the written component. Tetahiotupa (2004) suggested that this is because Tahitian is an oral language, and argued for alternative methods of instruction, such as through music. The evidence thus suggests that Māori, Hawaiian, and Tahitian are all in a precarious state of decline.

Within the New Zealand context, this has in part triggered the reallocation of state spending for the revitalisation of the Māori language, particularly in the fields of education, broadcast media, and cultural arts initiatives. In the 2008/2009 financial year, over half a billion dollars was invested in Māori language activity, the majority in education (Te Paepae Motuhake, 2011: 55, 57). Despite this significant expenditure, concern was raised over a "lack of evaluation of the quality and growth of te reo" and an "insufficient number of Māori language teachers" (Te Paepae Motuhake, 2011: 57-9). The declining statistics of fluency may suggest this money is not being spent wisely. This begs the ultimate question: why are we spending so much with so little to show for it? Indeed, as Chairman of the Māori Language Commission Erima Henare noted in 2009, the Government needs to "get more return for the money it spends on language initiatives" (Tahana, 2009). Thus, more refined, innovative, and efficient approaches need to be implemented to ensure that Māori becomes

revitalised and transmitted intergenerationally to the youth of tomorrow. This article offers a humble contribution towards addressing this crisis, specifically focussing upon exploring alternative language teaching pedagogies (through CLT) within the university setting. The following section will discuss current tertiary Māori language programmes available in New Zealand (and their respective pedagogical orientations), and then examine the historical developments of L2 teaching worldwide.

PEDAGOGIES OF CURRENT TERTIARY MĀORI LANGUAGE COURSES

Numerous tertiary providers in New Zealand offer Māori language courses, and this section discusses a selection of them with particular regard to the classroom methodologies employed by such programmes. The majority of this information has been sourced from online programme overviews, from wānanga, universities, or polytechnics.

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa offers a range of different courses, with certificate, diploma, and Bachelor level qualifications. '*Wānanga*' refers to forums of higher learning, and in this context the term has been used as a rough equivalent to 'tertiary education institute'. There are numerous other Wānanga providers in New Zealand. The Certificate in Te Ara Reo Māori Level 2 is an introductory paper to *te reo* Māori and some elements of *tikanga* Māori (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, 2015a). It is an accelerated course, teaching across a variety of different contexts, from *whakapapa* (cultural identity), to telling the time, geographic direction, and modes of travel. Teaching methodologies include group work, study activities, tutorials, and self-directed study. Highlighting the use of language in culture is particularly helpful for beginners, to provide an immediate contextualisation of spaces where *te reo* Māori is commonly used. However, this approach is narrowed in the Level 4 certificate of this programme, which focuses more closely upon the grammatical dimensions of *te reo* Māori. The following syllabus is taken from the Te Wānanga o Aotearoa Te Ara Reo Māori Level 4 webpage, which indicates that students will learn:

- …advanced sentence structures used in a variety of contexts;
- reremahi (active sentences);
- whakakāhoretanga (negatives);
- rerehāngū (passive sentences and instructions);
- he aha ki tua (future events);
- kupu takitahi (prefixes);
- 'A' and 'O' categories;

▪ [and] itemising, comparing and degrees of quality (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa 2015b).

This is vastly different from the Level 2 course outline, and suggests a heavy emphasis on grammar and syntax.

The **Auckland University of Technology** (AUT) Māori language courses are based upon the Te Whanake series, a collection of instruction textbooks for *te reo* Māori from beginner to advanced levels (Auckland University of Technology, 2015). In ascending order of complexity, these papers consist of Te Kākano I & II, Te Pihinga I & II, Te Māhuri I & II, and Te Kōhure I & II. Māori Studies at the **University of Otago** and the **University of Canterbury** employ the same programme in teaching *te reo* Māori (University of Canterbury 2015; University of Otago, 2015),[2] and during the first authors undergraduate study at the University of Otago, he completed all of these papers. The second author at the time of writing is a language teacher employed to teach on the same University of Otago Māori language programme. We will briefly discuss our experiences of the classroom pedagogies of these language course.

First we must acknowledge the strengths of the Te Whanake series of textbooks and resources. We currently know of no other resource for teaching any indigenous language of equal quality in terms of the breadth, depth and variety of resources including books, animations, podcasts, teacher resources, student study guide resources and more. We are also well aware that internationally other indigenous peoples look to this series as a model for developing their own resources. The essence of our critique of the Te Whanake series and of the way it is used at Otago University is as follows: currently Māori language teaching at Otago is dominated by a structured syllabus. Our argument is that the time has come to revise that approach and replace it with a communicative or functional syllabus.

A structured syllabus is one that is based on teaching a stipulated list of grammatical structures along with their accompanying rules of syntax. A communicative syllabus is more concerned with stipulating what kinds of communicative real world tasks students ought to be able to perform (language functions) as the basis of a curriculum. We believe that everyday

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[2] This webpage is an exhaustive list of all of the Māori Studies papers offered at the University of Otago, with hyperlinks to each individual paper. The specific paper codes for Te Kākano I & II, Te Pihinga I & II, Te Māhuri I & II, and Te Kōhure, are as follows (in consecutive order): MAOR111, MAOR112, MAOR211, MAOR212, MAOR311, MAOR312, and MAOR431.

language proficiency is more likely to develop from the latter kind of syllabus then from the former.

Below are some of the first author's critiques of his experience of the Otago Māori language courses as a student:

From my introductory to advanced papers, there was a consistently dogmatic concentration upon grammatical and phonological accuracy. This tended to erode the confidence of myself and my peers, and many would often become frustrated with the apparent imbalance between the technical dimensions of language that were being taught, and the lack of opportunities for genuine communication in Māori. I also felt the content of the course was largely out-dated, and should instead have provided us with scenarios that we would likely encounter beyond the classroom in contemporary settings. While grammar and syntax are critical components of any language, they are not the only elements of communication. Moreover, after I had completed the Te Whanake series, I still struggled to effectively communicate and participate in the negotiation of meaning with native interlocutors. This became a material concern for me during my Masters research where I wrote:

> …I have often found that when I speak Māori to native speakers and people of my kin communities, people are either confused or do not understand me. I have come to realise that this is largely due to the style of *te reo* I was taught to speak (through the academy), which is more grammatically-focussed. In essence, where I spoke 'book-Māori', many people in my *hapū* spoke colloquial Māori (which I am still learning) (Aikman-Dodd, 2015: 24).

At the time of writing the second author is a Senior Lecturer within the Otago University Māori language programme and following is a summary of his experience of teaching on the programme.

I have taught now on the Māori language programme at Otago for 3 years across all the language levels (first year to fourth year). With the exclusion of the fourth year post graduate course, a typical lesson for any of the courses starts with a technical description of the structure of a particular kind of expression and is often followed up with many decontextualized examples of how to translate the particular expression from the target language into English or from English to the target language. After that there will often be some form of individual, pair or group exercise, sometimes communicative in nature,

sometimes not, to help reinforce the correct use of the structure. My problem is that I don't see this approach as helpful for developing proficiency in communication. The majority of our students who are good Māori language communicators tend to come to us already with some proficiency in te reo. Relatively few develop this kind of proficiency as a result of successfully completing our courses. My experience as a teacher on this language programme resonates with the experience of the first author written about in the preceding section.

The following section is a summary of discussion with a graduate of Te Reo Māori programme at the University of Waikato:

Te Tohu Paetahi (TTP), a *te reo* Māori programme at the **University of Waikato** (University of Waikato, 2015), employs similar teaching methods to the ones described at Otago University. TTP is an immersion Bachelor of Arts programme in which all papers are taught through the medium of Māori, including language and culture papers. The first author spoke to Emma McGuirk, who is an experienced English language teacher trained in CLT approaches, some important perspectives were raised. Firstly, she acknowledged the excellent teachers (one of whom was Sophie Nock) and the numerous benefits of learning within a full immersion environment. However, when Emma completed this course in 2010, TTP had a strong focus on grammatical and written accuracy, which became a significant deterrent for some of her classmates (in like fashion to both author's experiences at the University of Otago). Emma went on to explain that although the immersion environment created many opportunities for listening and speaking in Māori, the writing and grammar tasks – which were the major component of final exams – often required translation back and forth into English. Filtering Māori through English in this manner throughout the course (at the beginning levels) hindered the acquisition of the language, and altered the shape and style of *te reo* that was used within the classroom. With the exception of basic introductory courses, the temptation to use English as an aid to instruction must be strongly resisted. Emma acknowledged that a key challenge facing Māori language teachers is that locally raised New Zealand students all share the same L1 (English),[3] and so they frequently revert to it when communication for a given situation in *te reo* fails. This is in contrast to New Zealand ESOL environments in which international students from diverse L1 backgrounds, of necessity, use English (their target language) as the *lingua franca* of their classroom. When the majority of

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[3] 'L1' refers to a person's first language, that is, the language they have the most fluency in.

students share an L1 background, however, advantages arise which can be capitalised upon. For example, learners will often make similar mistakes in L2 acquisition, which can be addressed on a whole class basis with specially designed resources. Also, there are numerous opportunities for *te reo* Māori students to practice speaking outside of the classroom, and to bring native speakers into the classroom to support language teaching. Therefore, lessons can be planned to maximise students' abilities to talk about everyday situations inside and outside of the classroom (in Māori) and thus reduce their need to keep reverting back to English.

Approximately 25% of the students enrolled alongside Emma in 2010 "dropped out" from the programme, despite all of them being highly motivated to gain and improve fluency in *te reo* Māori. Some of these students explained to Emma that the fast pace at which the course was moving through new grammar content, the large amount of written work, and the emphasis on accuracy over fluency, were contributing factors to their withdrawal (McGuirk, 2015). These examples, from both the University of Otago and the University of Waikato, demonstrate the erosion of learner confidence and motivation precipitated by such teaching methodologies, and the failure of these types of approaches to provide learners with the necessary skills to engage in meaningful communication in real-world situations. Our present focus upon communicative language teaching seeks to challenge such methods, in producing more fluent speakers of indigenous languages.

The **University of Hawai'i** (2015a; 2015b) offers courses in both Hawaiian and Tahitian. The Hawaiian language programme divides the teaching emphasis between the linguistic dimensions of the language, such as phonology, morphology, and syntax. It is difficult to fully grasp the methodologies employed in both the Tahitian and Hawaiian language programmes, given the limited information available online. What can be garnered from both, however, is that grammar-oriented approaches remain dominant within the methods of teaching. Each stage of the **University of Auckland** (2015a) Māori language courses, from 100 to 300 level, are divided into separate papers focussing on written and spoken skills respectively. Correct pronunciation and grammatical precision appear to be prominent throughout these papers. For instance, a 300 level paper "…includes practical exercises in transcription and translation of selected recordings and texts, and grammatical analysis" (University of Auckland 2015b). Other papers in this programme are, however, aimed at the development of communicative competence.

The **Victoria University of Wellington** is distinct in its approach to teaching *te reo* Māori, with a variety of papers that range from classical Māori through to its use in a modern context. Papers are offered from 100-300 level which apportion emphasis upon "oral, aural,

reading and writing skills" (Victoria University of Wellington, 2015), with some examining the use of Māori in different contexts, such as historiography and classical texts. Similarly, the Māori language courses at the **Unitec Institute of Technology** (UIT) differ greatly from the general template discussed thus far. They are offered either as Mātauranga Māori electives, or *te reo* evening classes (Unitec Institute of Technology, 2015a & 2015b). The evening classes are specifically designed for people who work during the day, and to accommodate this, the lessons are intended to be short and efficient. The Mātauranga Māori electives are more broadly focused on Māori language and culture, and the majority of the course structure is aimed at developing students' language skills. From the onset, both of the UIT courses appear to promote a communicative approach to language teaching, and provide culturally contextualised *te reo* classes. The intermediate evening language course, for example, offers the following description: "Extend your language knowledge and cultural awareness to feel comfortable in a Māori environment" (Unitec Institute of Technology, 2015b), and the introductory electives course explains that

> …[t]his course offers an introduction to the basic language structures and vocabulary at a communicative level. It focuses on vowels, consonants, diphthongs, blends and the correct pronunciation of Māori (2015a).

These instances represent more innovative approaches to L2 teaching, and may suggest more communicative methodologies. Of course it is difficult to say this definitively within the parameters of this study. The following section will review historical trends in teaching methods within language teaching classrooms over the past century. After that we will return to discussing CLT pedagogies, and how they can materially provide for tertiary *te reo* courses.

L2 TEACHING: PAST AND PRESENT

Second language teaching has undergone a series of transitions throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and this section aims to examine some of the key stages in this development. Each of these approaches to language teaching reflects changing suppositions and understandings of how learners acquire a target language. We examine each of these chronologically in turn.

Early assumptions of language learning (prior to the 1950s) endorsed a heavily mechanical view of the operation of a language. By extension, therefore, it was assumed that mastering the grammatical and structural dimensions of the target language was the primary route to achieving written and spoken adequacy (Nock and Crombie, 2009: 17; Richards,

2005: 3). An approach to language teaching that emerged from a mechanistic concept of language was the **grammar-translation** method (Larsen-Freeman, 1986), in which students would be required to directly translate passages from the target language into their native tongue. With such an emphasis on word-for-word translation, Nock and Crombie identify that learners were led to falsely believe that ideas, notions, and concepts within languages were universally translatable to their counterparts (2009: 17). Other classroom methods, as Richards explains, included providing learners with a series of grammatical rules. Learners would then proceed to practice these rules during teacher-controlled opportunities by constructing syntactically correct sentences (Richards, 2005: 5-6), which also included a strong emphasis on accurate pronunciation. It was argued that stressing grammatical and phonological precision in this manner would shield against permanent errors in the learner's baseline speech (Richards, 2005: 6). Not only does such an approach decontextualise language and isolate it from its designed functionality (i.e. to communicate), but it also fails to recognise the deeply culturally embedded nature of languages. Moreover, this is in stark opposition to later CLT pedagogies, which have at their heart an "insistence on the inextricable relationship between language and culture" (Nock and Crombie, 2009: 24). Acquiring only grammatical features in speech development constrains an L2 learner's development (Ellis, 1993: 92), and can lead to 'fossilised errors', or linguistic and social mistakes that are difficult to unlearn. This demonstrates the defective nature of a purely grammar-translation focused teaching methodology.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the rise of **audiolingualism**, or the **audio-lingual habit theory**, also known as the aural-oral method in the United States, and the **Structural-Situational** approach in the United Kingdom (also termed 'situational language teaching') (Richards, 2005: 6). These methods of language teaching largely emerged beneath the prevailing notions of behaviourist learning psychology and structural linguistics (Nock and Crombie, 2009: 18; Savignon, 1983: 20), such as the belief that phenomena (like culture and language) could be isolated, analysed, and treated as mutually intelligible components of a wider system. For example, structural linguists would study specific sentences, interrogate what grammatical rules were in operation in those sentences, and effectively ignore the wider context of the text or speech (Nock and Crombie, 2009: 18). Repetition exercises and substitution drills were principal methods of L2 teaching informed by audiolingualism. Students would "produce correct sentences", avoiding errors at all cost "…through controlled opportunities for production (either written or spoken)" (Richards, 2005: 3). As Savignon (1983) explains, structure (phonological, grammatical, and so on) was a principal focus

within the audio-lingual method, in which learners would graduate consecutively from repetition to substitution drills, until they had successfully mastered the phrase, dialogue, or otherwise. "Spontaneous expression [in the audio-lingual method]", she wrote, "should be delayed until the more advanced levels of instruction" (1983: 20). The following, from Jack Richard's and Theodore Rodger's *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (2001: 64-5), describes a typical L2 lesson informed by the audio-lingual theory:

1. The teacher recites a model dialogue containing relevant structures (or it is played on a tape). Students (without aid of their textbooks) then execute a series of drills, either individually or as a group, repeating segments so as they commit the dialogue to memory. From the outset, the teacher pays fine attention to phonological and grammatical accuracy, correcting mistakes as soon as they arise.

2. Within the confines of the dialogue, sections are substituted and modified to fit with the students' interests or their own personal situations.

3. Select phrases are repeated (in the form of drills), both individually and as a group. The teacher provides very little grammatical explanation.

4. Using the dialogue as a guide, writing, reading, and vocabulary-based activities then follow.

5. The process is then repeated for maximum retention.

Lessons following the situational approach employed the P-P-P sequence: "Presentation, Practice, Production" (Richards, 2005: 7), a very similar methodology to audiolingualism. A new section of grammar or syntax would be introduced ('Presentation'), through means of a dialogue, and the teacher would explain the rules surrounding the grammatical structure. In a controlled environment, students would practice the structure through repetition and substitution drills ('Practice'). Finally, students would modify the structure to fit with their own circumstances or interests, to achieve memorisation of the introduced pattern ('Production') (Richards, 2005: 7). From the outset, Richards identifies that the P-P-P method (and by the same token, audiolingualism) has been the subject of much critique over the past several decades (2005: 8, see also Ellis, 1993; Nock and Crombie, 2009; Nunan, 1987; Savignon, 1991). In criticising such methodologies, Savignon has continually reiterated throughout her work of the need to provide L2 learners with opportunities for genuine real-world communication (1972; 1983; 1991: 262).

Moreover, Nock and Crombie (2009: 18) note that the substitution method outlined above is very limited in scope, because only certain modifications are possible within any given sentence. "She likes rugby" cannot be substituted with "she wants rugby", for example. Moreover, the overarching focus on structure can overshadow the possibility that the content of the dialogue may have little real meaning for students. This reinforces a key criticism of the audio-lingual method: if L2 learning is geared towards genuine communication, how does such an approach help students achieve real-world competence in the target language (Ellis, 1993: 92; Nock and Crombie, 2009; Nunan, 1987: 141; Savignon, 1972: 8-9; Savignon, 1991: 261-2)? Savignon aptly points out that the "end goal" for the learner, say, for example, the ability to communicate effectively in the target language within the student's chosen vocation, is not taken into consideration (1983: 20). More broadly, Ellis stipulates that learners do not learn a language – that is, become confident and competent enough to communicate in the target language – through repetition and memorisation. L2 learning, as Savignon helpfully summarises, is a continual process of negotiating meaning in which the technical dimensions of language are "but *one* [her emphasis] of the constituents in this complex interaction" (1972: 9; 1991: 262 [her emphasis]). Skehan epitomises the discredited nature of these pedagogical orientations in explaining that

> [t]he belief that a precise focus on particular form leads to learning and automatisation (that learners will learn what is taught in the order in which it is taught) no longer carries much credibility in linguistics or psychology (1996: 18).

LANGUAGE = CULTURE
Another poignant critique of audiolingualism is that the wider cultural context from which dialogues, phrases, and sentences are positioned, are considerably removed during the teaching process. In like fashion to the grammar-translation method propagating the assumption of a 'universality of cultural concepts', using the learner's native tongue to filter the target language creates a significant disjuncture between the spoken language and the culture to which it belongs (Nock and Crombie, 2009: 18). This frustrates a learner's ability to competently communicate in any target language, as they become quickly divorced from the wider background of social rules that are embedded within a language. In other words, knowing *what* to say and *when* to say it (in terms of appropriateness) – cardinal pillars of learning a language – are lessons learned within a language's cultural framework (Berns, 1990: 29-32; Hymes, 1971). Furthermore, the New Zealand Ministry of Education's *An Introduction to the Concept of Intercultural Communicative Language Teaching and*

Learning: A Summary for Teachers (2010) recognises the integral link between language and culture (pp. 24-30). They explain that every linguistic constituent of a language implicitly belongs with cultural knowledge and cannot be isolated from it in the processes of language teaching. Communicative approaches, in distinction from audiolingualism, can help realise this by providing opportunities for genuine social interaction that are "experiential and interactive" in nature (Ministry of Education, 2010: 25). For example, different greetings in Māori are more appropriate in certain circumstances, such as with colleagues at work, friends during the weekend, or family and elders upon the *marae*. Each of these instances is an exploration of cultural norms and boundaries, and highlights the culturally embedded nature of language that must be present in L2 teaching right from the beginning. By the same token, Berns (1990) notes that sociocultural diversity embedded within a language must be taken into account in designing appropriate L2 teaching methodologies. Teaching a language divorced and separated from these cultural contextualisations, it is argued, can propagate prejudicial perspectives and stereotyping. Richard's assertion that "communication is a holistic process" (2005: 24) is pertinent here, reminding us that language exercises need to provide occasions for learning both the linguistic and social rules of language use.

Throughout the methodologies outlined so far, the role of the teacher has been paramount. Power was centralised within the hands of the teacher, and all classroom activity was informed by this direction (Nock and Crombie, 2009: 19; Savignon, 1983: 20). Relinquishing this power and providing learners with more autonomy in L2 learning environments is an underpinning tenet of CLT, and we now turn to examine the informing philosophies of communicative competence.

The emergence of 'communicative competence'

Communicative approaches to language teaching represent a more recent stage in the evolution of L2 teaching. The term 'communicative competence' arose as a sociolinguistic theoretical construct to examine the interrelationship between culture and language (Berns, 1990: 29; Richards, 2005: 9). Communicative approaches in L2 teaching can be linked with the increasing numbers of immigrant workers in Europe during the 1970s, and their language requirements. The work of renowned linguistic anthropologist Dell Hymes is fundamental to communicative approaches in language teaching. He explicitly recognised the role of our social conditioning in the acquisition of language (1971, 1980). Hymes stipulates that the social dimensions of life, from which we are immersed in since birth, provide us with a comprehensive series of rules regarding language use and appropriateness (1980: vi). These

rules are implicitly understood, and are not a series of instantly accessible written codes. Rather, they are rules we know how to follow in everyday interaction with members of our own cultural community, but they may be difficult to articulate (see Paulston, 1974: 352 for a comparative gloss on this). Similarly, a speaker may be fluent in Māori, but not necessarily confident in explaining the grammatical and technical dimensions of *te reo*. In discussing Hymes, Margie Berns notes that such 'rules of engagement' are discovered through ethnographies of communication, where careful investigation is made upon one's experiences during real-world language interaction (classic Malinowskian observations) (Berns 1990: 30). A Hymesian perspective, therefore, conceptualises lessons in language as lessons in social behaviour (Savignon, 1991: 264).

Savignon's description is helpful:

Communicative competence may be defined as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting – that is, in a dynamic exchange in which *linguistic competence* must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors (Savignon, 1972: 8 [her emphasis]).

Linguistic competence is what is about the accuracy of what is actually said, or rather, the actual utterance expressed by the speaker (Chomsky, 1968); communicative competence, by distinction, is about the ability to identify the underlying meaning within those utterances (Paulston, 1974: 350). Communicative competence in L2 teaching represents a significant shift away from grammatically oriented methodologies. At its heart, communicative competence is geared towards L2 learners acquiring the ability to effectively communicate in their target language (Paulston, 1974; Richards, 2005; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Savignon, 1972; Savignon, 1983; Savignon, 1991). This necessitates a purposeful syllabus with specific consideration to what learners want to use the target language for, once they leave the artificiality of the classroom (Berns, 1990: 43). Migrant workers becoming proficient in the language of their chosen vocation exemplifies this. Moreover, the specific type of language required in different workplaces inevitably varies. Compare, for example, the dialect of English required for lecturing at a university in distinction to fruit picking in the orchards of Central Otago. These examples also reiterate that language learning is an exercise in understanding social meaning, as each of these spaces contains idiosyncratic words, idioms, colloquialisms, and phrases. To summarise, communicative competence concerns a learner's acquisition of a second language to the extent that they can effectively communicate in the arena in which they want or need to use the target language.

Communicative Language Teaching attempts to apply the values contained within the notion of communicative competence into the classrooms of language teaching. Since its initial implementation in the 1970s, it has undergone a series of significant developments over time. CLT has been widely used in teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Savignon has also successfully employed this methodology for adult learners of French (Savignon, 1972). Her research demonstrated that CLT methods significantly contributed to teaching French L2 learners, in contradistinction to earlier teaching styles. Pedagogically, CLT is informed by a number of intellectual fields, because of its emphasis on the social, linguistic, and psychological dimensions of language teaching. The philosophical underpinnings have likewise evolved alongside these movements, and we elaborate on some of the established principles in contemporary CLT discourse below.

MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION

L2 learning, as Richards (2005: 24) identifies, is about engaging learners in "meaningful communication", where communication refers to the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning (Savignon, 1991: 262; Nunan, 1987). Lessons based around this approach should employ exercises that provide real-world opportunities where students can participate in the negotiation of meaning between one or more interlocutors (Richards, 2005: 24). From the outset, CLT methodologies are aimed at providing learners with a repertoire of useful language skills that can be immediately employed upon graduating from the course. In this way, using language is considered a creative and spontaneous enterprise (Savignon, 1983: 23), and classroom activities need to align to this reality. During teaching, meaning-oriented activities supersede the narrow focus on mechanics as represented through substitution and repetition drills. Meaningful communication extends to the belief that the target for second language speakers should be competence in communication, and not native speaker competence. As the Ministry of Education (2010: 34) acknowledges, attaining native speaker competence is an unrealistic goal that may also prove to be assimilationist in its execution. As the Ministry goes on to explain, a key element in communicative competence is the ability to negotiate meaning across cultural boundaries, a skill which may get lost if the ultimate aim is native speaker proficiency (Ministry of Education, 2010: 34). This is also pragmatically difficult to implement in language courses, particularly given the demands and constraints of time in L2 programmes.

Savignon's 1972 study of implementing communicative approaches in adult French language courses – *Communicative Competence: An Experiment in Foreign Language*

Teaching – urged learners to use language in creative ways, instead of regurgitating memorised patterns. This required learners to capitalise upon all of the linguistic and non-linguistic resources at their disposal, such as body language, to aid in the communication enterprise (Savignon, 1991: 264-5). Indeed, language use in real-world situations encompasses much more than linguistic utterances. During class activities of Savignon's study, the primary emphasis was the transmission of meaning to interlocutors, where short interactive activities were held between a learner and a fluent speaker of French. While it was expected that during the course of such exchanges grammatical and phonological errors would arise, students would not be interrupted and corrected so long as the meaning was sufficiently communicated to the counterpart speaker (1972: 25). This is in stark contrast to earlier audiolingualism methodologies, which helps to reinforce the notion that communicating meaning is the principal element of any language, and that communicative competence should be at the forefront of language teaching pedagogies. Moreover, when Savignon compared her student's test results to those in more traditional L2 courses, she noted that her students fared no less in accuracy tests and "significantly surpassed [their peers] … in four unrehearsed communicative tasks (1991: 265). The evidence suggests that communicative language approaches in L2 teaching are worthy of our attention for developing fluency amongst indigenous language communities. For Māori, Hawaiian, and Tahitian, this perspective is reinforced by Nock and Crombie's 2009 work that examines synergies between CLT and Māori pedagogies, as well as NeSmith's (2012: 40) recognition of CLT's contribution within the Hawaiian context.

LEARNER AUTONOMY

Learner autonomy is a further central component of CLT, where the desires of the learner are fundamental to course design and instruction (this repeats my earlier discussion of needs analysis in the design of L2 courses) (Berns, 1990; Richards, 2005; Savignon, 1991). As has been established, traditional methodologies such as audiolingualism privileged the role of the teacher by concentrating classroom authority within their hands, with the students in a subordinate position during exercises and activities. Comparatively, CLT disrupts this by situating the teacher in a facilitative role, where they promote a positive learning environment interspersed with opportunities for students to engage in communicative language activities. This is known as the shift from "teacher centred instruction" to "learner-centred instruction" (Richards, 2005: 25-27). As Savignon explains, breaking the student / teacher dichotomy in language classrooms in this way is crucial to L2 teaching methodologies, falling within the

broader philosophical movement of individual empowerment (1991: 264). Nock and Crombie summarise this sentiment by stipulating that

> …[c]ommunicative language teaching is learner-centred. The learner is at the very core of communicative language teaching as it is acknowledged that language education is education that necessarily involves every aspect of a learner's being and personal development (2009: 26).

CLT recognises that the path towards language acquisition can be an arduous and gradual process, and that different learners will operate at different paces: language learning is not a 'one size fits all' phenomena. The teacher's role is not invisible, however, but is considered more of a guide to classroom interaction. Within this paradigm, teachers are considered co-learners that likewise engage in the exploration of culture and the negotiation of meaning (Ministry of Education, 2010: 28; Richards, 2005: 28). The co-construction of meaning reflects core characteristics of the traditional Māori concept of *ako*, which endorses a collaborative approach in L2 teaching and puts emphasis on the teacher's role as a facilitator instead of an authority figure (Nock and Crombie, 2009: 24-5). Each individual learner inevitably possesses different strengths and weaknesses in language acquisition, and has their own attendant desires and needs for acquiring the target language. This diversity in learner characteristics is something teachers need to be sharply cognisant of, from course structure to one-on-one activities (Richards, 2005: 26-7). As Savignon aptly summarises,

> [t]he selection of methods and materials appropriate to both the goals *and* context of teaching begins with an analysis of both learner needs *and* styles of learning (Savignon, 1991: 266 [her emphasis]).

In order to provide this tailored, individualised approach, L2 teachers need sufficient resources, support, and time for lesson planning and activity design. These are challenges to be negotiated when attempting to manoeuvre CLT strategies into tertiary *te reo* courses, with the ultimate goal of increasing the proficiency of indigenous language speakers.

Derivatives of CLT
It is also important to note the development of other methodologies that have branched off from the ideological underpinnings of CLT, namely Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and Task-Based Instruction (TBI). The explicit focus of CBI is upon content: the subject matter of a conversation and the transaction of information. It is through content that the technical and mechanical dimensions of language are taught, and not the reverse (characteristic of traditional approaches). Learners, therefore, are

…simultaneously language students and students of whatever content is being taught. The subject matter is primary, and language learning occurs incidentally to the content learning (Krahnke, 1987: 12).

TBI expands on these notions by providing tasks that mirror what the learner will use the language for, such as applying for a job, navigating government bureaucracy, or reading a course textbook. In this way, TBI is much closer in design to the communicative approaches examined thus far (Krahnke, 1987). As Krahnke explains,

> The defining characteristic of task-based content is that it uses activities that the learners have to do for noninstructional purposes outside of the classroom as opportunities for language learning. *Tasks* are distinct form other activities to the degree that they have noninstructional purpose and measurable outcomes. Tasks are a way of bringing the real world into the classroom (1987: 57 [his emphasis]).

Examining linguistic elements (in the actual teaching of the language) only occurs when the need arises, and is considered secondary to the performance of the task (Krahnke, 1987: 18). Krashen's 'acquisition theory' is an informing philosophy for TBI, which stipulates that exposure to language through experience instead of instruction, is the primary route to fluency in a language (Krashen, 1982). Within a teaching syllabus, tasks should be carefully matched to individual student capability, reflecting real situations that learners would likely participate in after completion of the course. Therefore, using language to convey information through a task is essentially a means to an end instead of an ultimate goal (Powers, 2008: 73; Ramirez, 1995). Ramirez (1995) provides a series of key points to be aware of in creating relevant tasks for an L2 course syllabus (Powers, 2008: 73; Ramirez, 1995). Initially, the purpose of the task needs to be clear, whether that be investigating the present tense, or searching and locating information in a text. A second consideration concerns content, that is, what the learner will be required to do in performance of the task, such as asking the price of something or making a phone call. The method of the task and how it needs to be accomplished, and the location of the task (within, for instance, the classroom, home, or at a restaurant) are the final two considerations (Powers, 2008: 73). These underpinnings of TBI, and their strong link with CLT, are capable of informing the architecture of tertiary L2 *te reo* courses. The benefits of such methods suggests that they may have a materially contribute to indigenous language revitalisation, specifically aimed at increasing the numbers of fluent Māori, Hawaiian, and Tahitian speakers. I examine this

more closely in the following section, and also review the criticisms and disadvantages of these methodologies.

CLT CLASSROOM EXERCISES

The comprehensive corpus of work by Richards, Ramirez, Krahnke, Savignon, and Berns provides a robust framework for L2 classroom activities, and we examine a short series of examples that may be applied within tertiary *te reo* courses today (as well as in other L2 programmes). Richards (2005: 14-6) identifies the importance of providing activities aimed at promoting language fluency, and fluency is considered the natural flow of language during genuine communicative interaction. Fluency task work can be supported with accuracy activities (which focus on correct use of language), but Richards reminds us that teachers need to strike a balance between employing these two types of instruction (2005: 16). As mentioned earlier, too much focus upon accuracy can erode learner confidence.

Role-play improvisation

Role-plays can promote fluency by providing opportunities for improvised language use. A specific situation is described to students, such as a car accident. Learners assume the roles of either the drivers of the vehicles, witnesses to the crash, or the police. Other examples might include going to a petrol station for vehicle servicing or maintenance. This illustration involves the station attendant, the driver, and perhaps other customers on the forecourt. It is within the confines of such situations that students must creatively use their language skills to communicate meaning and negotiate difference between themselves and their fellow interlocutors in the role-play. Here, the objective is to develop fluency through unrehearsed situations. These role-play examples can be implemented in tertiary *te reo* courses, and may also extend to circumstances such as asking for directions, or learning how to cook a particular meal.

Language tasks

Language tasks are also important CLT classroom exercises. Krahnke (1987: 60) provides three levels of tasks appropriate to different learner capabilities – from elementary through to advanced – and he provides the following illustrations. Language tasks for beginners include creating profiles of classmates and teachers, preparing and executing a class outing, and filling in bureaucratic or institutional forms. An intermediate task may involve designing a campus handbook that new students to the course might use in exploring their university, polytechnic, or wānanga. Places of relevance such as printing centres, food courts, libraries, and sports clubs could be pinpointed on a map, with some helpful hints

provided along the way (for instance, identifying which centres or libraries have free refreshments available). This type of task provides the added purpose of being useful beyond the L2 course, permeating into other areas of the student's life. Advanced tasks include preparing a mini-ethnography from the learner's home community, which may include local foods, swimming areas, and historical places of interest. The more advanced the task, the more significance the language use becomes for the learner. These are only a few examples of activities that can be incorporated into an L2 syllabus, and these can be adapted to suit different contexts.

Information-gap and information-transfer activities

A common occurrence during communication is the need to acquire and provide information, and this transactional method is reflected in information-gap exercises. Richards' illustration is of a 'spot-the-difference' type task (2005: 20), where students are paired, and each has a similar picture that contains subtle differences to its counterpart. The aim of the task is to figure these differences and report back on them. Information-gap exercises can likewise be incorporated into role-plays, where for example the customer at the petrol station may request pricing information for confectionary, or directions to the toilet. Information-transfer activities, by distinction, require learners to take input information and translate that into a different format. For instance, students may read a descriptive paragraph, and be required to draw the scene using the paragraph as their guide. Both of these templates encourage students to think laterally about the situation and use their language skills creatively in approaching the task. They are communicative in nature because of the unrehearsed nature of their engagement with other interlocutors, reflective of real-world scenarios. This also encourages learners to *think* in the target language, instead of toing and froing from L2 to L1 and back again. This discussion, and the examples provided, demonstrate the superiority of CLT approaches over grammar translation and audio-lingual methods, where the learning objectives are communicative in nature. The CLT activities described above are not exclusive to courses where the syllabus is communicative. Many university courses, including the ones at Otago University include these types of activities in their curriculum. However, courses with a structured syllabus tend not to include the functions of these activities as the basis for the syllabus nor do they include them as forms of assessment. Instead grammar-translation courses tend to list linguistic specific structures as the basis for the syllabus and they priortise decontextualized grammar and translation tests for formal assessment. This is where we believe a CLT syllabus can contribute to the

revitalisation of indigenous languages by increasing the numbers of proficient speakers of Māori, Tahitian, and Hawaiian, by offering more contextualised and communicative forms of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

CRITIQUES OF CLT AND TBI

The methodologies and L2 classroom activities outlined thus far have given rise to a number of criticisms, and I discuss two of the principal critiques below. CLT methodologies are often charged with **ignoring grammar and linguistic accuracy**. In the past, CLT advocates reined in traditional L2 methodologies because of the parochial emphasis on grammatical competence, and it is possible that some consider that this reflects a disregard for the formal aspects of language (Savignon, 1991: 268). However, as Savignon points out, linguistic form and the grammatical dimensions of language are of necessity incorporated into communication (1991: 268), a testament supported by Canale and Swain (1980). Learners gradually develop the ability to use grammar correctly, because communicative competence can be impaired in situations of grammatical inaccuracy. "I went to the shop", and "I am going to the shop", for example, convey completely different information. By a similar token, the meaning of "kei te oma ahau" [I am running] differs greatly from "i oma ahau" [I ran]". Nevertheless, as Savignon earlier mentioned, grammar and vocabulary represent but one dimension in the multifaceted nature of language acquisition (1972: 9), as communication incorporates much more than mastery of linguistic mechanisms. The broader response to this critique is that communicative methods approach L2 teaching from a different standpoint to that of earlier audio-lingual systems. Negotiating meaning extends to other skills within the learner's repertoire (such as social behaviour), and these are equally as important in mastering the ability to effectively communicate in the target language. Savignon's 1972 research showed that students taught with CLT methods were at no disadvantage in terms of accuracy when compared with students taught through grammar-translation methods. Savignon's success would suggest that grammatical correctness is not necessarily sacrificed within CLT approaches in the fashion argued by critics.

Wider critiques concern the **implementation of communicative strategies** into situations where residual elements of traditional methods are still prominent. In classrooms where the teacher is confined by the same textbook and resources, and confronted with a different teaching strategy, incorporating communicative approaches into course design can be very difficult (NeSmith, 2012: 41). Most university language courses have five to six hours of class time per week. English CLT courses typically dedicate 20 to 25 hours per week

to language teaching. These time limitations are likely to hinder implementing communicative strategies within university language programmes, and course designers must be mindful of this. Moreover, NeSmith's review examines the apparent disjuncture between L2 teachers' beliefs and understanding of CLT, and the actual methodological approach they take within their classrooms (2012: 37). Nunan's (1987) research concurs with this, in which he noticed a "great deal of 'traditional' language work" contained in courses with a supposedly communicative orientation. His work identifies a persistent problem: within the classroom, there may be very few opportunities created for genuine communication. While courses may ostensibly appear to be communicative in nature, they might not reflect this in actuality (Nunan, 1987: 141, 144). NeSmith's remark, that it will take time for teachers to become familiar with communicative strategies, is fitting here (2012: 43). Nunan's concluding observation, that teachers are the ultimate agents of change within the idiosyncrasies of their L2 classrooms, is a reminder that dedication and steadfast endeavour to ensure student success is required from a grassroots as well as an ideological level (1987: 144). This is an appropriate reminder for the revitalisation of indigenous languages, and the ways and means which we invest in the pursuit this goal.

CONCLUSION

The threatened nature of Māori, Hawaiian,Tahitian and a host of other indigenous languages, provides great impetus for educators to look to Communicative Language Teaching as a tool for the revitalisation of indigenous world languages. Courses that prioritise grammar, translation and linguistic accuracy may unwittingly impede learner confidence and motivation. It is crucial that the dominance of grammar and translation is challenged in order for indigenous languages to live again as a genuinely communicative languages of the world. The success of CLT pedagogies, evidenced by L2 English programmes around the world suggests the same success might be possible if it were to be meaningfully implemented within existing indigenous language courses. Meaningful communicative language teaching requires communicative principles to be implemented holistically, from the syllabus through to the classroom pedagogy, and to the formal assessment. Adding in a communicative exercise here and there to a grammar syllabus will not suffice. The ultimate goal is to give rise to a generation of confident speakers of indigenous languages, able to communicate with friends, family, and the community. While there are a number of methodological and pragmatic limitations to be conscious of, such as the confines of existing classroom frameworks, and the hegemony of current teaching practices, CLT stands poised to help

mitigate the decline and to offer more innovative approaches to the revitalisation of indigenous languages.

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