

JULIAN WILCOX

Exemplar Māori-language learner

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Abstract

Adult Māori-language learners are an under-researched yet crucial part of efforts to revitalise te reo Māori. This paper presents and analyses a qualitative case study of the learning journey of Julian Wilcox. As an exemplar learner, Julian's story helps to shed light on the factors that led to his development of proficiency in te reo Māori and these insights may have implications for other Māori- and Indigenous-language learners. We have used a framework based on the literature to analyse Julian's story (narrative inquiry). This framework consists of three themes of successful adult Māori-language learning. Those themes are identity factors as motivation, relationship building and transferable skills.

Keywords

Māori-language learning, narrative inquiry, success factors, language revitalisation

Introduction

In spite of a plethora of community and government-sponsored initiatives to revitalise

te reo Māori, it remains an endangered language, and there is much work yet to be done if it is to survive as a living world language (Kawharu, 2014). While there is an abundance of

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international studies which focus on instructed second-language acquisition (SLA) and its usefulness as a tool to develop proficiency (see Ellis, 2005, for a comprehensive review), there is very little on how Māori adult learners experience learning te reo and virtually no research into how to maximise their language-proficiency development. Chrisp's (2005) study into Māori families and the factors that support or hinder intergenerational language transmission of te reo Māori and Te Huia's (2015) more recent study on motivation for adult Māori-language learners offer some important insights which will be elaborated in the literature review section below.

The lack of attention in the academic literature to adults learning te reo means that this study makes a significant contribution to current literature in the field of Māori-language learning specifically and Indigenous-language learning more generally. Since the survival of te reo is far from secure, research that seeks to make sense of the experiences of learners who have successfully developed proficiency in te reo is needed now more than ever. This paper represents a humble contribution to that agenda by suggesting some ways that learners' efforts in (re)learning te reo Māori may be optimised. Julian's case is presented as a narrative to shed new light on what it takes to achieve success as an adult Māori-language learner. In the phenomenological tradition, the primary purpose of the study is to better understand the participant's own perceptions of the factors that led to his success as an exemplar Māori-language learner.

Literature review

This review is structured around the aforementioned three themes of successful adult Māori-language learning. These themes first emerged through the qualitative analysis of the experiences of a cohort of 17 exemplar adult Māori-language learners in the first author's unpublished PhD study (Rātima, 2013). That

study sought to identify the factors that lead to success for adult Māori-language learners through in-depth interviews with exemplar learners. Interested readers may refer to the thesis for a full description of that study and for a substantial historical background to Māori-language learning and teaching in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Māori identity as motivation

Chrisp's (2005) research into families' efforts to re-establish intergenerational language transmission found that many of the Māori adult participants were anxious about having their ignorance of te reo made public because they linked te reo so intimately with their own identity as Māori. In other words, Māori motivation to learn te reo can be complicated. Having an identity as a Māori may be a motivation to learn te reo and at the same time a source of anxiety.

Motivation in SLA research has long been theorised as an integrative and instrumental dichotomy (Dornyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006; Gardner, 1960, 1980; Skehan, 1991). Integrative motivation refers to the learners' desire to integrate with target-language speakers. Instrumental motivation refers to the learners' perception of the economic or social rewards they may gain access to as a result of developing proficiency. In the Māori-language learner context two recent studies have found that these theories from SLA were inadequate for theorising the Māori-adult language-learner experience since most learners are not motivated by instrumental factors. In the first study, the first author observed the way that most of his Māori-language learner participants had a strong community service ethos connected to their identities as Māori (Rātima, 2013). Rātima accordingly proposed "social service theory" in order to account for Māori learners' desires to become better contributors to their Māori-speaking communities. Social service theory holds that as learners become more competent Māori speakers, their service to Māori-speaking

communities increases, as does their motivation to keep advancing their *te reo*. In the second study, of adult Māori-language learners, Te Huia (2014) rejected the traditional dichotomy of integrative and instrumental motivations in favour of a relational framework for language motivation. She argued that since Māori are most often represented as affiliating with an interdependent culture, where the sense of self is given meaning through relationships with significant others, then their motivations should be theorised in a similar relational style.

Relationship building

Brown (2007) has described SLA as second-culture learning, meaning that for language learners to advance they must take on certain linguistic and cultural aspects of the target culture in order to develop proficiency. This can involve a certain amount of uncertainty, disorientation and ultimately cultural adaptation as learners integrate new linguistic and cultural aspects into their ways of thinking, speaking, being and knowing. This cultural adaptation occurs as a result of the learners' relationships with key significant others (language mentors, fellow learners, etc.). Relational epistemology (Thayer-Bacon, 2003) provides a theory of knowledge that helps to account for this change. This theory assumes learners are social beings who construct knowledge on the basis of their experience with others. With Indigenous peoples these relationships may represent engagement with the living or the non-living, or with the environment (Chilisa, 2011).

Transferable skills

In her study of new immigrants and their English-language-learning experiences, Peirce (1995) found that successful adult learners often appeared to bring aspects of their other identities and skill sets (as parents, as professionals, as community leaders, etc.) into the

English-language-learning environment to their benefit, both linguistically and socially.

In restaurant was working a lot of children, but the children always thought that I am—I don't know—maybe some broom or something. They always said "Go and clean the living room." And I was washing the dishes and they didn't do nothing. They talked to each other and they thought that I had to do everything. And I said "No." The girl is only 12 years old. She is younger than my son. I said "No, you are doing nothing. You can go and clean the tables or something." (Martina, an immigrant English as a second language learner working in a Canadian restaurant, quoted in Peirce, 1995, p. 22)

Here Peirce shows how Martina transferred her identity and skill as a mother to put her colleagues in their place and to force them to relate to her in a different way to what they had been (as a lowly non-English-speaking worker). In doing so she managed to relate to her fellow workers in a way that raised her social status and helped her to find the words to express herself as an equal.

Research design

This paper uses narrative inquiry to tell Julian's story in the form of a co-constructed narrative. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) have defined narrative inquiry as follows:

Narrative inquiry is . . . a process of collaboration involving mutual storytelling as the research proceeds. In the process of beginning to live the shared story of narrative inquiry, the researcher needs to be aware of constructing a relationship in which both voices are heard. (p. 4)

While this is Julian's story, both authors collaborated to tell and retell the story and the basis

of the telling is the relationship between the researcher (Matiu) and the participant (Julian) as collaborators. Julian shared the story with Matiu. Matiu then drafted a narrative. Julian further participated by commenting on drafts and making suggestions as to how the story might be told. This technique is important for making sense out of qualitative data, for honouring Julian's voice in the telling, and for interpreting the meaning of the data from the participant's own point of view (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

The question of generalisability may not be an appropriate one for qualitative studies. Instead, the real value of a narrative inquiry can be measured in terms of Eisner's (1998, p. 40) three criteria for success in qualitative research: (1) coherence—does the story make sense? (2) insight—does the story reveal new knowledge or better understanding about the phenomenon? and (3) instrumental utility—is the story useful in some way? Next, the narrative created was analysed thematically (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) according to the three themes: identity as motivation, the primacy of relationships and transferable skills/transferable identify. These three themes were drawn from the earlier thematic analysis of the stories of 17 exemplar Māori-language learners from the first author's PhD study (Rātima, 2013). They are used in this paper to help illustrate the insights gleaned from Julian's story.

This study follows a growing number of Māori and Indigenous researchers utilising qualitative research to tell "our stories". Lee (2009) has labelled her approach to narrative inquiry as *pūrākau*: a traditional Māori term for story, or "myths and legends". She argued that narrative inquiry approaches like *pūrākau* undermine control over research by the powerful and the elite and can make space for the voices and the wisdom of those being researched, in her case Māori teachers. In particular, this study follows Bishop (1996) in acknowledging the part both authors' stories have in the co-construction of meaning. Bishop

carried out a meta-analysis of five research projects he was involved in as a researcher. He used narrative inquiry to develop an understanding of how the concerns for Kaupapa Māori were addressed within the decision-making processes of a cohort of Māori researchers and educational practitioners. He negotiated a series of formal semi-structured in-depth interviews as conversations with his colleagues.

Julian Wilcox, te korokoro tūi—the orator

Julian Wilcox is a gifted Māori orator. He has been a Māori-language broadcaster for radio and television as well as university lecturer. Julian has a high profile as a regular master of ceremonies for Māori community events and festivals the length and breadth of the country. He is eloquent in both Māori and English and his passion lies first and foremost with *te reo Māori* and *te ao Māori*.

Julian is an artist. His oratory is his canvass. He pours countless hours into the constant refinement of his technique. He is a scholar with an insatiable appetite for knowledge. He is constantly engaged in research to broaden his knowledge base and to make connections between and within fields of interest.

The first author worked alongside Julian from 2001 to 2006 in the Faculty of Māori Development at the city campus of Auckland University of Technology, where they became friends. Even though the first author is older, Julian was more often the mentor and role model in the friendship. Julian is dedicated to his craft and driven by the quest for the perfect performance. For the most part, his decisions and sacrifices are made either consciously or unconsciously in service to this higher sense of purpose.

Julian grew up in Wellington as one of three siblings; his parents were proud, strong Māori role models. However, like many urban Māori-speaking parents of their generation, they never

spoke Māori to their children at home and they rarely took their children back to their Te Arawa, Tūwharetoa and Ngā Puhi marae while growing up. They did, however, send Julian to Te Aute College, a Māori boarding school, hoping to awaken within him an appreciation of his Māori heritage. Julian stressed that he did not have a strong sense of himself as a Māori prior to attending Te Aute College.

Te tū ki mua i te whakaminenga— Performing for an audience

At Te Aute, Julian began to learn te reo. There were regular opportunities to display his knowledge, or lack thereof. Some early experiences were awkward and embarrassing and had a profound effect on Julian's motivation to learn:

Ka mea mai tētahi o ō mātou kaiako . . . kōrero Māori anake koutou katoa i tēnei wā. Nā te mea he whakahihī ahau, he tangata whakapehapeha i ahau anō, i whakaaro ake au ā, ka pai. Nō reira, i puta te whakaaro i a au me haere au ki te wharepaku. Kia pai ai taku tū i mua i te aroaro o ngā ākongā me kī ake “Me haere au ki te wharepaku” i roto i te reo Māori. E rua ngā kupu i āta mōhiotia e au ko te “wharepaku” me “haere”. Nō reira, ka tirohia te tikinare, ka rapu atu i te kupu “au”, ka rapu au i te kupu “me” e noho mai hei rerenga kōrero tōtika. Nō reira, ka tū atu au ka mea atu: “Matua.” “E, he aha tō take?” “Wharepaku me au [both laughing], “wharepaku me au” [laughs] Ka huri te kauramua rā ka mea, “Whakaāe katoa ana au ki tēnā, engari he aha tō take?” [both crack up]. [laughs] Me taku whakamā, riri ki ahau anō, nā taku whakamā ka kī taurangi ki au anō, e kore au e patua e te whakamā haere ake nei haere ake nei.

One of our teachers said . . . everyone will speak only Māori for this period. Since I was arrogant, I was full of myself, I thought, oh good. So, it occurred to me that I should go

to the toilet. To look good in front of the students, I needed to say “I need to go to the toilet” in te reo Māori. I only really knew two words; “wharepaku” [toilet] and “haere” [go]. So, I looked in the dictionary, I looked up the word “au” [I], I looked up the word “me” [should/need] to make a correct sentence. So, I stood up and said: “Sir.” “Yes, what do you want?” “Toilet I am” [both laughing], toilet I am” [laughs]. The old man turned to me and said, “I agree completely, but what do you want?” [both laughing]. And I was so embarrassed, and angry with myself, I was so embarrassed that I promised myself I would never again allow myself to be so embarrassed from that day on.

This quote is important for several reasons. It gives an insight into one motivating factor for Julian to learn te reo: to avoid future humiliation. It reveals one of his key personality traits: his self-deprecating sense of humour. It also demonstrates one skill important to his prowess as an orator: the ability to craft a story. The story is brief but it contains the key elements of a good story: character development, plot and moral. The character's epic failure and humiliation lead us to focus on the moral or message to the story: shame can be a great teacher; it is not necessarily something to recoil from because if we can learn a lesson, we can use the shame as motivation to improve ourselves.

Te hiahia ki te kāinga—Longing for home

At age 16, Julian was sent by his mother to live in the United States, to “see the wide world”. His time in “white middle-class” America was somewhat traumatic. He did not like the cultural differences he experienced. Over time, he became increasingly homesick for Aotearoa, and he yearned for the Māori language and culture. Three months into a planned six-month stay, his aunt passed away from cancer and for Julian this was a crisis point:

I whakapā mai tōku whaea ki au me te kī mai kua mate te tuahine o tōku pāpā. Na, nōna te ingoa o taku tamahine. Ka mea au “Kua wehe au i Amerika ināianei.” Ka mea a Mum, “No no, e toru marama ka whaiwāhi koe ki te hoki mai.” I mea atu au, “No, kua hoki tika atu i tēnei wā.” Ka mea mai taku māmā, “Kāore koe i te whakarongo mai ki au.” Ka mea atu au, “Hoatu te waea ki tō hoa [sly laugh], hoatu te waea ki tō hoa, kua mutu tā tāua kōrero.” Ka kohukohungia au e taku māmā, kātahi ka whiua atu te wāea ki tana hoa ki taku pāpā. Ka mea mai taku pāpā ki au, me tana tangi, i te hinganga o tana tuahine, ka mea mai ki au, “Kua kore e āhei bro. Ko te tangihanga āpōpō.”

My mother contacted me and told me my dad’s sister had died. The one whom my daughter is named after. I said, “I am leaving America right now.” Mum said, “No no, you can come back in three months’ time.” I said, “No, I am coming back right this moment.” My mother replied, “You are not listening to me.” I said, “Give the phone to your husband [sly laugh], give the phone to your husband, our conversation is over.” My mum gave me a good telling off, then she threw the phone to her husband, to my dad. My dad said to me, and he was crying, because he had just lost his sister, he said to me, “Can’t do it bro. The tangi is tomorrow.”

In the wake of that moment, Julian made another promise to himself: to return to Aotearoa, to return to his school, and to dedicate himself to te reo and tikanga Māori. Before Te Aute, he had in his own words been raised as an “ignorant Pākehā”; he saw no value in te reo and no reason to learn it. His time at Te Aute opened his eyes to the accomplishments of some of the great Māori leaders of the past and the present. They became his new heroes and since te reo and tikanga Māori were integral to who they were and what they had accomplished, Julian came to place great value on those attributes.

His time in the United States exposed him to what he described as some of the worst aspects of Pākehā culture:

I kore e pai ai ki te whenua o Amerika, ko ngā tāngata o reira!!! Hahaha! He ao kē, he tāngata kē! He taonga te whakahihī, he mana tō te whai rawa. Ko Amerika hoki te tīmatanga me te mutunga o ngā mea katoa. E hoa, he rerekē noa atu ērā tū āhuaranga ki ngā taonga nui i pai ki a au.

I did not like America, it was the people there!!! Hahaha! It is a different world, and the people are different! Arrogance is a virtue, money is revered. They think America is the beginning and the end of all things. My friend, all of those things they value are completely at odds with the things I hold dear.

He came home feeling that he had seen enough of Pākehā culture. He had a good command of the English language; he had done well at school; now it was time to turn away from te reo Pākehā and tikanga Pākehā and towards te reo Māori and tikanga Māori.

Ngā manu kōrero—Competitive speech-making

Turning away from English soon hit a snag, however. As an aspiring young orator, Julian wanted to represent his high school at the national Māori speech-making competitions in the te reo Māori category. But at the regional competitions, there could be only one speaker per category per school. Julian was not selected for the Māori-language category. Instead, he was recognised for his talent with the English language and his teachers put him forward in that category. He first won the regional competition, and then the national one. When he returned with the trophy the entire school celebrated the victory. He was happy but not content. The experience only hardened his resolve to prioritise Māori language and culture

and that continues to be his primary focus to the present day.

Language mentors

Julian experienced many forms of instruction through learning te reo, including classes at school, Te Taura Whiri kura reo, classes at university, wānanga-ā-iwi, and interaction with mentors whom he accompanied to many hui on numerous marae around the country. Julian felt that some of these experiences were more valuable than others in terms of developing his proficiency in te reo. Perhaps most valuable for Julian were his relationships with two of his language mentors, Hēnare Kīngi and Iris Whanga.

Mēnā he tino maringanui ana te tangata ki tētahi pou whakawhirinaki, pou whakahihi rānei i aia anō, ko te reo Māori tāna i tipu ake nei, kāore i tua atu i te mau-ā-taringa. Nā te mea kei kona tērā tangata ia rā ia rā hei haumarua i a koe. He pērā rawa i aku mahi me te kaumātua nei me Henare Kīngi. E rima ngā rā i te wiki ka noho atu au ki a ia, kei te ora tonu te kaumātua rā, kei ngā rāngi whakatā ka haere au ki te whare o te kuia nei Iris Whanga. Kua mate noa atu tērā kuia iāiane nei. He mokopuna nā Kāwiti. Ka roa taku noho atu koia te kaumātua rā, kātahi ka tīmata, ka rerekē noa ake tōku reo nē. Ka taurite ki tō te kuia te kaumātua nei, āe nā te mau-ā-taringa i pēnā ai, me te kaha tata o tō māua noho tētahi ki tētahi . . . engari ko te mate kua auaura ngā mea pēnā, ngā mea mātau pēnā me te kaumātua nei e taea ai hei pou whakawhirinaki mō te tangata. Engari kāhore i tua atu i tērā huarahi ki au.

If a person is lucky enough to have someone to depend on, or to energise them, who grew up speaking te reo Māori, there is nothing better than learning by listening. Because if that person is there every day to mentor you. That's how it was with this elder and I, with Hēnare Kīngi. Five days a week I stayed with him, he

is still alive that old man. In the weekends I would go to the old woman's house, to Iris Whanga. She passed away a long time ago. She was a granddaughter to Kāwiti [a revered northern chief]. So I lived with those elders for a long time. Then it started, my reo began to change. It became like the old woman and the old man, yes and it was learning by listening that made it happen, and because we were so close to one another . . . but the problem is, people like that are all occupied supporting others. But that is the best method in my view.

Time with these two elders, both native speakers of te reo, talking with them and listening and watching them speak Māori in formal and informal settings, but above all else being a companion to them and developing an attachment to them, led to Julian's language becoming like theirs. They were so kind to him and put so much energy into him that their names remain at the top of a very long list of his all-time favourite teachers.

Te hiahia—Motivation

Julian's primary motivations tend to lead back to his sense of himself as an orator and to the endless quest for the perfect performance. The time he invests in his study of the language is to him a small price to pay for the sense of elation he gets from the delivery of a moving and powerful oratory. He is like a moth to the flame. On the one hand, he seeks to avoid the burn of shame; on the other hand, he is drawn to the spotlight that oration provides. He is addicted to the danger that the "war of words" represents, and acutely aware of the consequences of a flawed performance:

Ki te kore au e whakamahara e whakapau kaha rānei ki te whakangungu i a au anō ia rā ia rā, tērā tētahi wā ka ākina au kia tū, kua kore ā mātau mea. Kua kore rānei e oti i a au he tātai tōtika atu ki te hunga e whakaeke mai,

kua hē rānei tētahi kōrero ka pahawa anō i te waha. Nā ka patua tōku iwi e te whakamā.

If I don't worry about or work hard at preparing myself every day, a day will come when I will be asked to speak, and we will have nothing. Or I won't be able to make an appropriate connection to the people coming on, or I will say something in error that might cause offence. Then my people will be humiliated.

In formal Māori speech-making, the orator never speaks on his or her own behalf. They are always the representative of a people, the hosts or the guests. Their primary task is to make connections between the hosts and guests. To make an error or to give a poor performance reflects badly on the people you represent. A powerful motivation for Julian as an orator is to represent his people as well as he possibly can. Hence his motivation is grounded in his sense of community.

Summary

Julian's passion for te reo began at Te Aute College where he was first inspired by stories of the great leaders of Māoridom. He soon realised that so many of them were great orators and this is what he wanted to be too. His longing for home while overseas threw fuel on the fire of his yearning for te reo and tikanga Māori. A close bond between himself and his mentors advanced his proficiency and his appetite for learning. For Julian the learning itself was its own reward, but it was not his only motivation. His early success with public speech-making led him to seek further challenges on the public stage. Like all orators he was drawn in by the thrill and the danger of putting one's skills to the test before an audience. In the quest for the perfect performance, he developed a formidable work ethic that over time helped him to advance his proficiency. He has never lacked confidence; even in the face of humiliation, he can see humour. His confidence is based on

a belief in his own ability, a commitment to learning from his mistakes, and, most of all, a commitment to delivering the best performance he can. Not just for himself but for those he represents.

Three themes of effective Māori-language learning

Identity as motivation

Much has been written about motivation for SLA and it is generally thought that for second-language learners to be successful they need to have both integrative and instrumental forms of motivation (Dornyei et al., 2006; Gardner, 1960). In the case of Māori recovering their own languages, it has been argued above that explanatory theories based on social service and the relational aspects of motivation are more appropriate. Te Huia (2015) found in her study of the motivation of Māori-adult learners of te reo that having a positive personal or collective identity as a Māori was powerful motivation for learners regardless of their level of proficiency. Julian certainly had such motivation to learn te reo Māori. He developed a strong Māori identity through his parents and their decision to send him to Te Aute. Exposure to strong and learned Māori-speaking role models and to the stories of the heroes of Māoridom provided Julian with a powerful and enduring source of motivation to develop his language proficiency. That motivation to learn was triggered into action at a point of crisis. The passing of his aunt while he was on exchange in the United States pressed home for him the significance of his language and culture. Julian's case also provides further support for the validity of social service theory (Rātima, 2013) because, as he expressed, one of his primary and enduring sources of motivation to keep learning te reo is to represent his people as best he can through his oratory.

The primacy of relationships

Indigenous scholars have suggested that relationships with the living and the non-living are important for understanding learning and motivation with Indigenous peoples (Chilisa, 2011; Te Huia, 2014). While the loss of loved ones, often the cultural repositories of knowledge, can provide the catalyst for action, Julian's story suggests that a learner must also be willing and open to making significant lifestyle changes in pursuit of Māori language and culture. After his aunt passed, Julian made a promise to himself that he would turn away from the Pākehā language and culture he felt he had been raised in and towards the pursuit of te reo Māori, a pursuit in which he is still engaged to the present time. This decision shaped every aspect of his life, including where he chose to live and the kinds of employment he sought. The types of transformations Julian was willing to undergo are not just linguistic transformations but also sociocultural ones requiring new relationships and new patterns of socialisation.

The theory of relational epistemologies holds that learning (including language development) requires the building and maintenance of social relationships (Thayer-Bacon, 2003). The opportunity to establish relationships with fellow learners and competent Māori speakers was crucial to Julian's success as a developing speaker. To this day he speaks fondly of the two elders who were so instrumental in developing his language. He considers the closeness of those relationships as well as the frequency and regularity of their interactions as the reason why his language eventually became "like theirs".

Transferable skills/transferable identity

Having a strong identity as Māori, being open to change, and having good relationships with mentors and fellow learners are all important. However, Julian's story also demonstrates an

ability that appears to be common amongst successful second-language learners (Peirce, 1995): he was able to transfer skills from another part of his life into the context of the target-language learning. Prior to the decision to commit fully to the Māori world, Julian had already distinguished himself as an orator, in English. He was a national speech-making champion at secondary school. The skills required to achieve such an award include a commitment to word craft, memorisation, poise, analytical and critical thinking, performance, persuasiveness, and an ability to read and respond to an audience's reactions. This skill set aligned well with many of the requirements of formal Māori speech-making. As Rewi (2005) found in his work on *whaikōrero*, Māori oratorical skill requires the marrying of personal qualities, such as mana and charisma, with linguistic skills and cultural knowledge. Julian was able to transfer this skill set to the Māori-language-learning context to great effect. Peirce (1995) has described this process of transfer in terms of identity and power relations. She argued that additional-language learners achieve success when they are able to bring aspects of their identities from other parts of their lives and apply them to social situations, where they interact with target-language speakers to elevate their status as desirable people to speak to. As a prize-winning orator in English, Julian certainly made for a desirable person for his fellow Māori-language learners and his mentors to engage with. It is logical to conclude that Julian's mentors would have seen great potential in him as a future Māori orator.

Conclusion

This paper has analysed Julian's story thematically in order to elaborate three themes of successful Māori-language learning. The first theme, Māori identity as motivation, highlights the development of a strong Māori identity as a core component of Julian's desire to learn te reo. This sense of identity has been connected

to a community service ethos (social service theory) expressed in Julian's desire to represent his people through formal Māori oratory to the best of his abilities. The second theme, the primacy of relationships, was played out in Julian's relationships with his language mentors. His closeness with them over time led to his language becoming "like theirs". That process is better explained by theories of a relational nature such as that of relational epistemologies because language knowledge and skills develop out of key relationships with significant others. The third theme, transferable skills/transferable identity, means that learners tend to experience success when they are able to transfer aspects of their other identities (as parents, as professionals, as leaders, etc.) into the target-language learning context. Julian was already an accomplished orator in English prior to committing himself to learning te reo. Part of his phenomenal success is due to his ability to apply what he already knew about oratory in English towards becoming an accomplished Māori orator.

The authors offer these reflections on Julian's story as a humble contribution to extend what is already known about Māori and Indigenous-language learners. Their hope is that this paper will inform and inspire adult Indigenous-language learners everywhere to take up or persevere with learning their languages. The ultimate goal is to produce more proficient speakers. These speakers are needed now more than ever if Indigenous languages are to survive and thrive as vehicles for carrying the aspirations of Indigenous peoples forward into the future.

Glossary

Aotearoa	New Zealand, the North Island of New Zealand
hui	meetings, gatherings
Kaupapa Māori	Māori approaches
kura reo	week-long residential marae-based immersion language programme
mana	authority, power
marae	Māori ancestral meeting houses
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent, non-Māori
pūrākau	story, myth, legend
tangi	funeral
te ao Māori	the Māori world
te reo Māori	the Māori language
Te Taura Whiri	Māori Language Commission
tikanga	customs, culture, protocols
wānanga-ā-iwi	tribal-based residential Māori-language courses
whaikōrero	Māori oratory

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