

MAORI LOANS IN NEW ZEALAND ENGLISH FROM A LANGUAGE ECOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

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Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine Maori borrowings in New Zealand English through the lens of language ecology. It is argued that Maori loans in English are not simply historical substratum traces of contacts between indigenous and transported cultures, but significant markers of bicultural society in contemporary New Zealand. The findings demonstrated a substantial amount of the Maori loans in New Zealand English, a high degree of their assimilation and involvement into word-formation processes, ability to combine with various derivational morphemes to produce etymologically hybrid structures, active semantic adaptation and functional relevance for institutional and non-institutional communication settings. The above-mentioned facts provide evidence to suggest that the substratum elements appeared to be highly competitive in the multicultural setting created by the invasion of the English-speaking culture in New Zealand. Among the positive effects of such competition was that indigenous cultural markers were able to occupy a broad niche in the genetically diverse New Zealand community, thereby realizing communicative complementarity between two cultures in contact.

Keywords: loan/borrowing, New Zealand variety of English, Maori language, communicative complementarity, ecology of language.

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1. Introduction

The issues of multiculturalism, language diversity and contact have always been topical matters to linguistics and contributing disciplines. In contemporary studies, the ecological perspective to language, from which it is interpreted as an essential constituent of sociality (*Garner, 2004: 62-69*), is necessitated by the increasing globalization, development of a lingua franca, and destruction of the old linguistic and cultural order in the world. Arising from these circumstances are key research topics, such as principles and ethics of language policy (*Oakes, Peled, 2018: 2-7, 23-43, 135-158*), multiculturalism and multilingualism (*Molek-Kozkowska, Pogorzelska, 2017: 3-18*), reinforced role of English as a global lingua franca and the majority language in certain countries (*Holmes, Dervin, 2016; Cunnins & Danesi, 1990, 1-81; Ricento, 2000: 25-106; Oakes, Peled, 2018: 77-100; Mair, 2003*), cultural diversity and hybridization (*McCormik, 2004*), endangered minority languages and their revival (*Kendall, 2008*), intercultural society and shared identity (*Chandra, 2007*).

Being a constituent of “pluricentric” English (*Leitner, 1992*), New Zealand variety has become the major language on the islands, developed its norm, and “is currently gaining in local

prestige and is now something that many younger New Zealanders claim as part of their identity” (Starks, Harlow, Bell, 2005: 13). New Zealand English is also distinguished by loans from Maori, the indigenous language of the region, providing additional evidence of “mixed heritage and acculturation within mainstream New Zealand society” (Fozdar, Perkins, 2014: 134). Despite a growing number of multidisciplinary publications on language policy in New Zealand with particular attention to the maintenance of the Maori language as a valuable source of indigenous culture and a condition of Maori identity revitalization (Grenoble, Whaley, 2005 : 51-54; Heriman, Burnaby, 1996: 62-99), significant findings about history, structural and semantic features (Hay, 2008: 67-73; Holmes, 1997: 65-101) or functioning (Onysko, Calude, 2013; Trye et al., 2020) of Maori loans in New Zealand English, their communicative value remains unresolved. This aspect requires a detailed analysis because cultural importance of a loan depends “not only on the act of being borrowed from one language into another, but also on speaker’s (writer’s) desire to use the concept that the word denotes” (Calude, Steven, Pagel 2017: 2).

It is hypothesized that Maori loans in contemporary New Zealand English are not simply substratum traces of contacts between indigenous and transported European cultures, but significant markers of contemporary bicultural society in New Zealand. Not only have the vitality of the Maori culture and language emerged as the increase in the scope of indigenous loans in New Zealand English and their assimilation, it also led to a considerable extension of the communicative capacity of loans through a number of functions they realize.

The purpose of this study was to approach Maori loans in New Zealand English from a language ecology perspective and analyze indicators of Maori substratum vitality in the contemporary bicultural community of New Zealand.

Maori words used in New Zealand English were selected from regional dictionaries (Hayward, 2016; Orsman, 1997) and texts relating to various discourses mainly covering a period of the last 70 years. The selected borrowings (900 in total) were interpreted by the structural, semantic, contextual and cognitive methods to discover features signaling cultural and cognitive impact of Maori component.

2. The changing nature of Maori substratum in New Zealand English

New Zealand English is a relatively young variety that started its evolution at the end of the eighteenth century with the arrival of navigators and first migrants from Britain who recorded a handful of words from Maori in their diaries and journals to satisfy onomasiological needs and fill linguistic and cultural lacunae. A small portion of vocabulary was borrowed in the late 1770s and 1880s with reference mainly to artifacts and key concepts of Maori culture (*tangata whenua*, *whare*). There were also isolated loans into such lexico-semantic fields as flora and fauna (*kumara*, *kune-kune*, *whai*). The earliest borrowings entered English through historical sources, remarkable accounts of discoverers, botanists, etc. For instance, the word *kutu* “a louse” was first recorded in the journal of Joseph Banks, who joined Captain Cook’s voyage in the Endeavour as a natural historian to explore the Pacific and study the nature of New Zealand: “January 1771 <...> Specimens of Language South Sea Outou Malay Coutou a louse” (Beaglehole, 1962: 240). Like in many other contact cases, early Maori loans were restricted to place-names or words referring to unfamiliar local realia, and had “relatively little lexical effect on their superstratum” (Lotz, 2012: 27).

Generally, not until the middle of the nineteenth century, did the spheres of Maori loan application considerably extended beyond the domains of nature (*hoki*, *horopito*, *inanga*, *koreke*, *kowhai*) and items of Maori culture (*kai*, *kaitaka*, *ngeri*, *papa-kainga*, *waipiro*, *whakapapa*) to include referents relating to social interactions (*runanga*, *taonga*, *tahae*, *Wairau*), agricultural and industrial

activities (*Raro, rua, taiepa, waerenga, Whakatanes, whata*). The names of Maori artifacts and social concepts became recognized as cultural values and symbols. For instance, the meaning of *waka* “a Maori ocean-going canoe” shifted to “a symbol of ancestry” as the ancestry concept binds Maori with other Oceanic cultures by evoking the idea of a “collective we” (Finney, 2003: 133), which with time has become of paramount importance for Pakeha (non-Maori descent) New Zealanders: “Pacific <...> has important implications for New Zealand’s cultural identity and economy” (Hayward, 2016: 239). This concept has been gradually gaining centrality in the New Zealand anglophone worldview.

One of the most notable changes lay in the formation of etymological hybrids combining Maori bases and word-formative elements well adopted in English. Examples that follow are systemic, registered and quoted in Orsman’s Dictionary (Orsman, 1997: 415, 424, 430, 432, 476-479, 566, 569, 811, 903, etc.). Coinages included derivations formed by affixes with a wide range of meanings: causative (-i)fy – kiwify); resultative (-i)zation, -(i)cation – Maori(-i)zation, Maorification); processual and operational (-ing, de- – korero-ing, de-kutu); transformative and perfective (-ed – tapued); qualitative including simulative (-like, -style – kauri-like, kiwi-style), relational (-based, -istic – whanau-based, whanauistic), characterising (-ish – kutieish); agentive and occupational (-er – tangi-er). Less productive affixes were added to indicate more abstract concepts such as realm, state, condition collection, or quality of being (-hood, -ness, -dom – kiwihood, kiwiness, Pakeha-Maoridom); adherence, sympathy or antipathy, loyalty and acceptance, preference (-ism, -phile, pan-, pro-, philo-, anti-, half-, part-, non- – pai marireism, kumaraphile, etc.). In concise, affixation was to encode social and cultural interactions, stereotypical portraying of life and people, collectibles redolent of New Zealand culture, positive or negative judgements about social groups and activities, New Zealand style and ideology regarded as a whole.

In hybrid compounds and word combinations, Maori items precede English stems to form subordinate structures and manifest classifying features of denotata: substance, material, ingredient (kawakawa tea, kumara chips), habitat (kauri snail, kowhai moth), purpose or application (runanga house), place of origin (Taranaki wool) and style (Taranaki gate).

Etymological hybrids with Maori stems preceded by English modifiers are much less frequent and confined to the names of plants, animals and other natural objects distinguished by their colour (red kowhai, scarlet ~, yellow ~), geographic spread (mountain akeake), size and structure (tree manuka).

The semantic assimilation of Maori loans in New Zealand English follows various paths including changes in denotation (widening and narrowing of meaning), changes in connotation (elevation and degradation of meaning), metaphoric and metonymic shifts: *wahine* “a Maori woman or wife” > “a Pakeha woman or wife”, *tiki* “a flat grotesque figure of greenstone” > “used as symbolic of New Zealand”, etc. These and other instances (*kapai, korero, mana, marae, rangatira, taipo, tapu, whare*, etc.) demonstrate how the categories referred to by Maori names are being expanded to embrace the items of both Maori and non-Maori experience, and to mirror Maori-Pakeha interactions in structures, meanings, and functions of loans.

To sum up, the substratum elements appear to be highly competitive in the multicultural setting created by the migration of the English-speaking culture to New Zealand. Among the positive effects of such competition is that indigenous culture markers have been able to occupy a broad niche in the genetically diverse New Zealand community. The vitality of Maori words in English is determined by communicative complementarity between native and Maori components in New Zealand culture, among other factors. That can be traced through the functional potential of borrowings from Maori.

3. Communicative complementarity as an indicator of Maori words vitality

Since the 19th century Maori loans has occurred in Maori and non-Maori contexts –*kapai, korero, mana, marae, rangatira, taipo, tapu, whare* (Orsman, 1997: 393, 424, 465, 482, 655, 806, 813, 904-905). Such usages show a particular result of loans' functional extension (Kozlova et al., 2020) when they successfully realise a range of purposes. Those include informative (or nominative), expressive, evaluative, and ethnic (differentiating and integrating) functions, to name but a few.

Firstly, new senses and usages in the life of Kiwi English speakers are realised by hybrid English-Maori recent coinages. For example, new terms have appeared in social sphere to reflect traditional Maori values and life-style as they are being shaped by contemporary social factors: kaumatua flats “permanent accommodation for senior citizens” (Kaumatua Flats), non-nuclear whanau “extended family embracing even friends and other members; contrasted to ideal whanau including several generations united by the common ancestor to perform a common goal” (Towards Healthy..., 2017: 11). Hybridization in the newly coined terminology is an effective way to operate informatively in the process of communication.

Secondly, Maori words and expressions find their ways into professionally-oriented spheres where they are a dominant part of specialist language. According to Quigley (Quigley 2011: 7), 35% of words used in the documents of New Zealand's public sector during 1984–1994 were of Maori origin.

In fishery and fish trade, native names and hybrids are gradually substituting vague names of earlier usages. The name Akaroa cod is more often employed today than cod which was applied to whatever species was cheap and plentiful in the market. Terminological precision achieved with the help of the Maori component Akaroa in Akaroa cod “red cod in Canterbury” is an attempt to distinguish the red cod from other species and “improve its market image” (Breadstock, 2005:1).

Thirdly, it is noteworthy that Maori loans in New Zealand English enjoy cross-discursive usage, i.e. they go far beyond everyday, informal communication and are found in various institutional and non-institutional contexts (*ibid.*). Realizing their functional potential, some Maorisms are in the state of working together with their English-based correlates. For instance, the term *kōhanga reo* “full immersion in Maori language and values for pre-schools” literally means ‘language nest’ (< *kōhanga* “nest; birthplace”, *reo* ‘language’). In pedagogical, educational, scientific, mass-media, political, and fictional types of discourse, its English equivalent often plays a supplementary role being employed as a gloss while the Maori version is preferred in discussing the matters of dying languages revitalization and language deprivation of indigenous communities: “*Kōhanga Reo (language nests) began in 1982 as a grassroots movement, to provide a total Māori language immersion program for young children and their families, staffed by adults speaking only Māori*” (Raghunathan); “... *Māori revitalization started in the 1980s with the kohanga reo ('language nest') movement*” (Bell, 2014: 71), “*Kohanga Reo: language nest (pre-school)*” (Kouka, 1999: 129).

Metge's research on borrowings closely related on Maori thinking revealed a high frequency with which loans “crop up in conversations and appear in newspapers in ordinary type without glosses” (Metge, 2009: 1). Not glossed usages are particularly significant as newspaper writers leave Maori items without definitions or explanations. Evidently, they expect readers to understand them.

Fourthly, Large amounts of Maori words, which are used in spoken and written English, are registered various types of dictionaries to reflect the unique component of communication culture in the country, register the common language of the community, and enhance more detailed treatment of Maori concepts (Bardsley, 2011; Cryer, 2006; Hayward, Shaw, 2016; Thorne, 2009).

4. Conclusions

Since the 19th c. New Zealand English has been developing as a distinct national variety in the pluricentric system. Maori loans are an essential part of New Zealand lexis exhibiting its uniqueness and bicultural features. From a linguistic point of view, Maori borrowings are highly assimilated items. They demonstrate productivity in morphological and semantic derivation, frequency of usage, and cross-discursivity. The fact that Maori loans are registered and richly illustrated by various types of dictionaries brings evidence of speakers' competence in indigenous culture. In cognitive and cultural terms, it can be stated that Maori concepts and values have been recognized, processed, and adopted by the English-speaking community, integrated into the English-speaking worldview and contributed into the bicultural heritage of New Zealanders. From a language ecology perspective, the results proved that Maori substratum in New Zealand English shows a high degree of vitality indicated by usage in various social spheres, institutional and home daily communication, inside and outside Maori setting. It is likely, that New Zealand, a country with English as the major language, will continue towards construing bicultural society, and foster the ongoing applications of Maori loans and new coinages.

The approach outlined in this study should be applied to indigenous loans in other national and nativized varieties of English in order to compare their communicative capacity and contribution in developing inclusive cultures in multiethnic societies sharing one or several major languages.

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