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Tōku reo tōku ohooho

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I found my way into Linguistics by a slightly unorthodox route. Right from the start of my secondary schooling at Otago Boys' High School in Dunedin, I knew that learning and studying languages was what interested me. Those were still the times when about half of the third-form intake automatically took French, and the top stream, Latin. I found I had a certain flair for these subjects, and enjoyed them immensely. I later added German, and gained a Junior Scholarship at the end of the upper-sixth year in English, French, German, Latin, and Mathematics. This was all a puzzle to my parents, who had no particular interest or ability in this direction. Since we were assisted immigrants who arrived in NZ in the 1950s, and I had thus no real contact with my other relations who stayed in the UK, I have no idea whether any cousins, or uncles and aunts shared my bent.

After school, I attended the University of Otago, and in my first year took French 1, German 1, Latin 1, and Russian 1. Of these languages, only Russian was an *ab initio* course; all the others assumed some years of study at school. However, it quickly became clear to me that the modern language programmes were really centred on study of the literature, and since I never worked out quite how to perform in this area in ways that seemed to be required, I looked around for another way to complete a BA without forfeiting a year. Greek was also a language which could be taken from scratch, so I approached the Classics Department with the request to enter Greek 2 directly, if I could acquire enough elementary Greek over the summer. Luckily, the department agreed, and I completed my BA with both Latin and Greek as major subjects. At that time, Linguistics was not available as a subject at Otago, but the professor of French taught one paper on French Linguistics, which I was able to incorporate in my degree, and which gave me an introduction to phonetics and some historical linguistics.

While both the Latin and Greek programmes entailed reading texts, the approach to the Classical Literature placed the emphasis on understanding the texts fully, and especially in the case of poets such as the tragedians, Horace and Virgil, and of Cicero's oratory, gaining an appreciation of their skill with their languages, and of the social and political environment in which the works were produced. Each level also had papers on Ancient History and Art.

In 1966, I completed an MA (Hons I) in Greek by papers, which was the normal pattern at this time, and after 18 months as a junior lecturer in the department, I went to Zurich on a Swiss Government scholarship. There I was lucky enough to arrive in the last semester when it was possible to enroll and proceed to the doctorate without having to gain a Lizentiat first. This was ideal in that I was taken to be a senior student right away and could begin dissertation work immediately without the complicated

and time-consuming business of getting my MA recognised as equivalent to a Zurich Lizentiat. It did entail however that as well as writing a dissertation I had also to prepare myself for doctoral level examinations in three subjects. Mine were Greek Language and Literature, Latin Language and Literature, and Indo-European Linguistics.

Prof. Dr. Ernst Risch was my *Doktorvater*, and was immensely supportive of my study stay in Zurich. He suggested a thesis topic which he thought I could complete in the two years of funding I could rely on. He was also my teacher for all the linguistic courses I attended in Latin, Greek and IE, as well as a single-semester course in contemporary issues in general linguistics.

My dissertation was an analysis of the dialects used in a body of inscriptions from the 3rd century BC found on the island of Kos. All the inscriptions were in response to the Koans' request to have the Asklepios sanctuary on the island recognised universal as inviolable, the texts exemplify a range of dialects used epigraphically at that period. This period is also of particular interest in Greek dialectology as it was the time when the Attic-based Koine was beginning to influence and then replace the epichoric dialects. After completing the doctoral examinations at Christmas 1970, I returned to a lectureship in Classics at Otago.

After about three and a half years, I resigned and returned to Europe, to Germany this time, where possession of a UK passport meant no difficulty with work permits etc. In Munich I taught Latin, and English, and occasionally some Greek, at a private *Gymnasium*. It turned out that I had a considerable amount of spare time, so began haunting the University and its library. This was the point at which I decided not to stick just to Latin and Greek or even IE, but to branch out, and decided that for a New Zealander, Māori and Polynesian languages were an obvious group to try to get to know.

Throughout my time overseas, both in Zurich and then in the second period away, I had stayed in touch with Professor Agathe Thornton, who had been my teacher at MA level. Otago had been trying unsuccessfully for some time to appoint someone to teach Māori, and unbeknownst to me, Professor Thornton had persuaded the University to offer me what amounted to a Post-Doctoral Scholarship to continue my own study full-time in Munich, and then to spend a year at Bruce Biggs' Māori Studies and Linguistics section in the Anthropology department in Auckland. If at the end of that time, Otago offered me a position, I was bound to take it. Obviously, both Prof. Thornton and Otago went out on a limb for me at that time, and I am eternally grateful to them both. I like to think the gamble paid off for Otago; it certainly did for me!

Returning to Otago in 1976, I began teaching first year Linguistics, one paper on description, the other a brief introduction to Historical Linguistics and Sociolinguistics, using the recently published Trudgill introduction as the text. The faculty then asked me to teach a beginners' course in Māori, which I agreed to do on condition that this move had the approval of local Ngāitahu people, and that the University would continue to try to make a full appointment in Māori. I taught beginners' Māori five times, before an appointment in Māori was made, and the appointee took over that task and develop the programme. The experience of standing in front of a class and having to make up example sentences and dialogues on the spot I regard as the first of the three situations which eventually made my spoken Māori fluent.

The second was appointment as a foundation board member of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) on its establishment under the Māori Language Act 1987. Almost the first decision made by the board was that all meetings and business would be conducted in Māori! The association then and ever since with figures such as Tīmoti Kāretu and Wharehuia Milton has been a constant inspiration both through their knowledge of Māori language and culture and through their commitment to their maintenance and development.

The third was appointment in 1990 to Waikato, where I was half and half in the Māori Department and a faculty appointment in Linguistics. At that time, the language policy for the Māori Department was Māori for all functions and domains, from formal classes except the very first language courses, to departmental meetings, to casual socialisation. For the Māori Department over the years, I taught a paper at third year on the grammar of Māori, and papers at 500-level on linguistic research on Māori, and on traditional Māori prose literature, of which there is a real wealth, but of which my feeling is that students, and even many staff, are scarcely aware.

In Linguistics, I was joined after one year by Terry Crowley, and together we were able to mount a programme for Linguistics as a major subject for BA and BSocSci. In 1997, we were joined by four applied linguists and two teachers of ESL to form the Department of General and Applied Linguistics. The applied linguists taught graduate programmes essentially in language teaching, however, General Linguistics, staffed by only two teachers, was never able to mount courses above BA-level. Both Terry and I did from time to time have the opportunity to supervise for higher degrees and were frequently involved in examination at that level for other universities. One case that stands out in my mind in this connection is Julie Barbour's project, for which I assumed the role of chief supervisor on Terry's death. Hers is an excellent thesis, and I am grateful to have been involved in its preparation.

Throughout my teaching career, I have mainly taught Descriptive and Historical Linguistics, the latter being the branch I have most enjoyed, and the one where my background in the Classical languages could inform my teaching most. Since returning to NZ in 1976, my research interest has focused on Māori and to a lesser extent Eastern Polynesian languages most closely related to it. While in the South, I concentrated to quite an extent on what records they are of the variety of Māori spoken in the region in earlier times. My membership of Te Taura Whiri awakened for me an interest in all aspects of the maintenance and development of endangered minority languages, and this area has been the main focus of my publications since then. Almost all my work in this area and on Māori grammar has been directed at local audiences interested in the structure of the language or its survival rather than intended to be a contribution to linguistic knowledge more widely. Perhaps the only big piece of work aimed at an international readership was my CUP book *Māori: a linguistic introduction* 2007.

Since 2004, I have been a member, with Catherine Watson and Peter Keegan at Auckland, and Margaret Maclagan and Jeanette King at Canterbury, of the MAONZE (Māori and NZ English) team, which won Marsden funding for two periods, 2004-6 and 2008-10, to study in depth the changes in the pronunciation of Māori over the period ca.1880 to the present, and their interaction with contemporary changes in NZ English. This project continues to run, though now on much reduced funding. I have

benefitted greatly from the chance to collaborate with these colleagues over the years and have enjoyed the experience immensely.

Because of my relative isolation at both Otago and Waikato, I could meet up with colleagues from other universities primarily only at conferences, and while thus getting to know their particular interests, I have no great insights to provide about how Linguistics as a subject has progressed in NZ over the period of my involvement. That said, it has been very good to observe that language documentation, especially in Vanuatu, has become an increasing area of interest for colleagues and students. This interest stems at least in part from Terry Crowley's activities there.

At home here, it's been very interesting and heartening to follow, and even to contribute to in small ways, the growth and range of concern with the Māori language in ways other than "official" linguistics. There have been important theses on Māori by scholars such as Pat Hōhepa and Tāmami Reedy, but equally significant if not more so have been all the initiatives primarily undertaken by Māori in areas like education and broadcasting which promote all aspects of the language. The only thing I would have liked to see, especially given the importance of dialect loyalty in discourse about Māori, is a major study of what regional variation still exists.

One final comment is that in my view the NZ Linguistics community has been throughout this period an extremely friendly and supportive one; I know of Australians who regularly attended LSNZ conferences precisely because of this atmosphere, which was in strong contrast (they said) to what they found at home. My sincerest thanks to all of my colleagues over those years.

Reference

Harlow, Ray 2007. *Māori: a linguistic introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.