TALANOA: DIFFERENTIATING THE TALANOA RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FROM PHENOMENOLOGY, NARRATIVE, KAUPAPA MĀORI AND FEMINIST METHODOLOGIES

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Abstract

The Talanoa Research Methodology (TRM) is now arguably the most prominent research methodology applied across the Pacific. This article seeks to build on the TRM first described in 2002, examining some of the fundamental dimensions of TRM, highlighting its fluidity and broad utility in different research situations. It will also compare and contrast TRM to Phenomenology, Narrative, Kaupapa Māori and the Feminist philosophies to clarify and differentiate its characteristics and allow more researchers to consider it for use as a research methodology.

1. Introduction

This paper re-visits some of the fundamental philosophies underlying the TRM first explored in my earlier work (Vaioleti. 2003b, 2006, 2011). Deepening this conversation, this paper describes different types of talanoa (methods), some of the diverse research settings in which they can be applied, highlighting its fluid quality, and suggested protocols guiding its appropriate application. Finally, this paper seeks to provide further practical insight,

comparing and contrasting TRM with other research philosophies and their respective methodologies, including Phenomenology, Narrative, Kaupapa Māori and the Feminist philosophies to provide a better basis to understand and effectively apply TRM.

2. Talanoa, context history and its place in Pacific worlds

> Why hound me with a question when you don't care for an answer, why play
> for a pair when there is only one dancer …..
>
> Lora Marie Muna Vaioleti

This extract reflects the conclusion I reached after discovering that my previous research approaches involving Pacific participants in the early 2000's did not align with their way of thinking, being, their language and culture. As a result, I endeavoured to develop a methodology that was better aligned to Pacific worldviews, a methodology that would better enable the researcher to authentically experience and capture the phenomenon being researched.

I draw my discussion, analysis and synthesis of talanoa from Tongan culture, the product of oral tradition that can be traced back to BC, and even before the age of the classical Greek Civilisation. Churchward (1959: 379) stated that 'tala' means to command, tell, relate, inform and announce while describing 'noa' as common, of no value, without thought or without exertion. Talanoa, through Churchward's definition, can be referred to as a conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas, be it formal or informal. Talanoa as a process is used in multiple ways to obtain information, including interviewing, and for finding out how people are feeling about things (Otsuka, 2005; Tovale, 1991). It is an activity used for creating and transferring knowledge. As a notion, its use is guided by a set of beliefs and frameworks described later in this article. Tongans, Samoans, Fijians and other Pacific communities in the Pacific, New Zealand, Australia, the United States and wherever the Pacific diaspora is located use variations of the talanoa (Vaioleti, Morrison & Veramu, 2002; Vaioleti, Morrison & Vermeulen, 2002).

In Samoa, Matatumua, a senior matai title of the Lefanga village and director of the Samoan environmental NGO, Matuaileo'o Environmental Trust Initiative (METI), reported that taleanoa (similar to talanoa), is an ancient multi-level and multi-layered critical discussion, or free conversation (Vaioleti, Morrison and Vermeulen, 2002). Talanoa was also described as the

method by which business and agency leaders receive information from the community, that they use to make decisions about civil, church and national matters (Vaioleti, Morrison and Vermeulen, 2002). Similarly, when working in Fiji, we found that talanoa was used by communities in social and economic discussion and for disseminating information by government departments, NGOs, and village leaders (Vaioleti, Morrison and Veramu, 2002).

Talanoa itself is a Pacific phenomenon that incentivises many in Pacific nations to frequent clubs, activities and prolonged kava parties, as a good, engaging talanoa can lift peoples' spirit to an elevated level of happiness, connectedness and spirituality (Manu'atu, 2002). As well as the emotional and spiritual potentials of talanoa, it is also a mode of communication that is integral to the way in which many Pacific peoples learn, relate to each other, narrate and tell stories (Tavola, 1991; Vaioleti, Morrison and Veramu, 2002).

3. Talanoa and research

Otsuka (2005: 3) found that talanoa was 'commonly practiced by Pacific Islanders (sic), such as ethnic Fijians' and observed that talanoa 'stems from their culture in which oratory and verbal negotiation have deep traditional roots'. It was in the early 2000s that I proposed that talanoa is a culturally appropriate means through which Pacific peoples can describe their own experiences in research, and I provided philosophies to guide it. However for some researchers, it can become burdensome when it comes to talanoa being wholly accepted as a methodology in mainstream institutions, with challengers citing reasons of theoretical fuzziness, subjectivity and inefficiency (Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba, 2012; Sualii-Suani, 2012; Linita Manu'atu, talanoa[1], Sept. 2014).

Yet for TRM, it shares a phenomenological approach to research with Grounded Theory, Naturalist Theory and some ethnographical research approaches. Phenomenological approaches focus on what the meaning of the lived experience of the phenomenon has for the persons being studied (Patton, 1991). One advantage of a phenomenological approach is that peoples' common sense can be heard (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). For Pacific research, this is a compelling argument for using talanoa.

The alignment of both the researchers' and participants' emotional and spiritual state, and importantly, a levelling of power is achieved as the participant is enabled to share this 'common sense', and the researcher can

acknowledge this at the level (world/s) of the participant. I will return to this discussion later in this paper, under talanoa and phenomenology.

For Halapua (in Farrelly and Nabobo, 2012: 2) talanoa is also a philosophy involving 'an open dialogue where people can speak from their hearts and where there are no preconceptions'. Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2012) advocate empathy is central to the effectiveness and authenticity of talanoa as a research methodology. I agree with Halapua, Farelly and Nabobo that in TRM the kau ngā fa'u (co-constructer of knowledge, participants) will speak freely from their heart, and thus empathy must be integral to the application of talanoa. TRM also allows the kau ngā fa'u to contribute to the planning of talanoa and definition and redefinition of meanings (see *talanga* later in this paper). Commonly in the talanoa and TRM process, the kau ngā fa'u and researcher take leadership at different stages of the encounter to reach the collective goal/s. The researcher is expected to encourage and draw out contributions from the participant when necessary. It is important to appreciate that an outcome of talanoa based research must benefit Pacific peoples and their interests, with accountability back to the fonua and the ancestors, therefore the researcher still has a clear leadership role in carrying out TRM.

The encompassing concept of fonua will ensure that the application of TRM will be authentically aligned to — and respectful of — participant's cultures and processes. For Pacific peoples, Thaman (1995: 1) stated, 'Polynesians… generally have cultural identities and world-views which emphasize place and their links to the vanua/fonua (inadequately translated as 'land'), as well as networks of exchange and/or reciprocal relationships.' 'Epeli Hau'ofa (talanoa, May, 2004 in Vaioleti, 2011) extends the definition of physical characteristics to embrace people, their culture and ways as an extension of fonua itself.

Fonua, then, may include worldviews, ways of being, language and culture. Extending this into research methodology, and Tongan phenomena, fonua can be defined further to knowing and aligning the TRM with the anga fakafonua (culture or rites of Tongan people) which include knowledge ('ilo fakafonua (Tongan knowledge)), values (mahu'inga fakafonua (Tongan values)), language (lea fakafonua (Tongan language)) and ways (founga fakafonua (Tongan ways). If TRM is carried out with other Pacific or even non-Pacific peoples, what is appropriate to the fonua of those participants should be central to the architecture and operationalization of TRM. Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2012: 1) stated the following about talanoa and vanua (Fijian term for fonua):

Talanoa is an embodied expression of the vanua concept. Highlighting the connection between talanoa and empathy is vital in ensuring… practitioners and other Pacific researchers are implicitly aware of the political dimensions, cultural appropriacy, and socio-ecological impact of their research methods.

Deep appreciation of the concept of fonua, and understanding its connection to TRM is a prerequisite to the appropriate use of TRM. If the researcher has based their research concepts and methods solely upon their own knowledge system, they will find use of the TRM challenging. The imperative exists for the researcher to perceive and understand the information (experience, phenomenon) received from the participants, from the participants' worldview, perspective and understanding.

I will now discuss TRM in relation to some established methodologies and philosophies in order to clarify the qualities and elements of TRM further.

3.1 Narrative methods and talanoa

Talanoa shares similarities with a narrative approach to research, especially with reference to the process used to obtain information. In talanoa however, culture is a central and significant factor. 'Narrative is a western methodology based on peoples' own stories. Narrative inquiry is stories lived and told' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 20). Narrative research involves 'learning to live, tell, relive, and retell stories of relational knowing as narrative inquirers, that is stories in which our ideas are not owned but shared, reshaped, recomposed and renown through relationship and conversation' (Clandinin et. al., 2006: 24).

Telling one's own story implies that culture is embodied in the process by both contextualising the narrative and recognising significant cultural factors in the narrative dynamic. Culturally significant factors emerge as a result of the narrative. Talanoa, through its protocols, can provide the conditions and then provide the methods that allow what Clandinin and Huber (2002: 161) described as 'narrative understandings of knowledge and context … linked to identity and values, providing stories to lived by, lived and shaped in places and through relationships' in the context (culture) in which it is used.

In talanoa, culture is understood and taken into consideration before the research engagement and continues to be dominant throughout the process of talanoa. For example, if talanoa is used with Tongan participants, it requires protocols that acknowledge hierarchies such as age, gender, social rank, and genealogy because Tongan ways of being are still heavily influenced by old

religions. The consideration of old religion and Pacific spirituality is reflected in the concept of relational vā (space) that separates as well as connects those involved in research. In some cases, these vā may be tapu (spiritually restricted), for example between a male researcher and a female participant, or in talanoa with an older person. To make these cases noa (neutral) requires culturally appropriate intervention, by observing contextual matters and following protocols and behaviours described later in this paper.

Talanoa, as it is for narrative research varies according to a range of contextual factors. Both are well suited to study subjectivity and identity, largely because of the importance given to the use of imagination and the expectation of researchers involvement in co-constructing participants' stories (Mitchell and Egudo, 2003). For me, TRM diverges from narrative research in the centrality of indigenous spirituality and fonua. Acknowledging, or empathising with the participant's fonua (Thaman, 1995; Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba, 2012) is an unlikely consideration in the interpretive thrust of Narrative Enquiry. TRM stands in contrast to ethnography and textual analysis for the same reason.

Talanoa is more than both Narrative Enquiry and analysis. To emphasise this point, Nabobo-Baba states that '… talanoa is not all about 'what you say' or even just about 'how one says it'. She went on to say that '…others remind us that in Fiji, even silence is far from empty: it is a way of knowing: there is eloquence in silence… a pedagogy of deep engagement between participants' (Nabobo-Baba, 2006: 94). The success of talanoa, and thus TRM, is dependent on how accurately a researcher can recognise participant actions and non-actions, what is said and unsaid in combination with how they are or are not said, and then affirming and interpreting those through the cultural ways, fonua, of the participant.

Knowledge of interconnectedness and the enhancement of fonua for Pacific peoples, is an inherent part of culture. For Tongan people as it will be for other Pacific peoples, ancient knowledge has been passed down through successive generations by oratory and visual means; through performances, stories and symbols. As stated earlier, talanoa usually only occurs with those with whom one is connected in age, social level, and in gender in a created cultural space (vā). In this space the participants interact with reference to their own realities, guided by their aspirations, rules and in their familiar cultural milieu.

3.2 Kaupapa Māori research and talanoa

Kaupapa Māori research (KMR) is a term given by Māori to research that is centred on Māori culture and paradigms, is used for the benefit of Māori, with emancipation of their knowledge as its aim. It provides strategies that empower Māori to have control over their knowledge creation, life and cultural wellbeing (tino rangatiratanga) and operationalizes self-determination (Bishop, 1991; Smith, 1992, 1997). Its philosophical base is collective and it acknowledges Māori aspirations for research. It advocates for control over the decision-making processes, governance over the ways in which the research is to be carried out, while developing and implementing a Māori theoretical and methodological base for research (Bishop, 1996; Bishop and Glynn, 1999). Bishop & Glynn (1999: 105) stated that, 'integral to this movement has been the realisation of the importance of meaning and interpretation of peoples' lives within their cultural context'.

KMR provides a strong reference for a new way to guide Pacific research. As Bishop (1994, 1996; Bishop and Glynn, 1999) argues with regard to power issues for Māori in research, a new Pacific research approach such as TRM should ensure control of Pacific knowledge creation by Pacific peoples or those whom they empower through endorsement. What Bishop (1996) suggests KMR offers for Māori, I suggest TRM also offers for Pacific peoples in acknowledging Pacific research aspirations. It is part of a larger project to develop and implement a Pacific theoretical philosophical base that is collective and is orientated towards privileging Pacific preferences for research.

3.3 Feminist perspectives and talanoa

In much the same way that KMR is acknowledged as an emergent critical theory in Aotearoa/New Zealand, feminist knowledge, theories and research methodologies need to be acknowledged as critical for pushing boundaries globally around the power relations that affect knowledge, our understandings and actions (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). Feminist philosophies suggest that the study of humans in any community that is not situated in their historical, cultural and political contexts will distort realities for those in power, those marginalised as well as men and women. In this sense it is likely that both feminist research and KMR can be said to belong in the phenomenological research family (Bishop and Glynn, 1999).

However, based on women's experience of marginalization in many societal structures, feminism has successfully challenged dominant patriarchal systems

and paved the way towards emancipation of a voice for women and inclusion of different worldviews and participatory approaches into research paradigms. Despite its multi-dimensional and inclusive perspectives, the feminist theories even laid challenge to the phenomenological approach by taking the inquiry to another level. It asked how gender and the power relations surrounding gender, shape and affect women's knowledge, understandings and actions (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002).

The challenge from feminist research to the overarching discursive approach of phenomenology, in order to assert its difference within research approaches on behalf of women, was a defining moment for me. Maguire (1987: 76) added to these dialogues by saying that 'Feminism allowed me to see the male bias common to both dominant and alternative (qualitative) paradigms'. Some criticised Freire's respected work on praxis, emancipation and critical literacy, mainly for its silence on gender analysis and constant use of the generic masculine pronoun (Boler, 1999: 49). It must be acknowledged that even within the feminist movements there are ongoing issues and debates about power. For example, defining feminist knowledge and a feminist approach, defining women's issues and who decides what feminism is has been critiqued and labelled as predominantly western middle class perspectives (Boler, 1999; hooks, 1982, 1989).

Nevertheless, the challenge in the 1960s and 1970s by critical theories (led by feminism) to modernism, and its belief in objective, empirically based, rationally-analysed truth that is knowable (Repko, 2008: 98), together with its associated positivist research models, occurred at a time when protests were felt throughout the western world on a number of issues. These included the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, indigenous rights and the rights of women (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002; Smith, 1999; Sprague, 2005). Such upheaval in global society also led to an upheaval in knowledge and knowledge creation in the context of culture in academia. This led to the very process of research being challenged.

The women's experience of marginalization in many societal structures has resulted in a successful challenge of dominant patriarchal systems, paving the way for the emancipation of the women's voice, and therefore the inclusion of different worldviews and participatory approaches into research paradigms. Feminist philosophies suggest that the study of humans in any community must be situated in their historical, cultural and political contexts. In this sense, feminist research, KMR and TRM can be said to share cultural and

contextual characteristics with phenomenological research. I credit some of the acceptance of TRM on the pioneering works of the international feminist movement, and later in New Zealand, to the challenge delivered by KMR to dominant powers in mainstream institutions.

There exist fundamental differences however between TRM and the feminist struggle for emancipation from a mainstream patriarchal system, and with KMR's political and cultural struggles. Feminist perspectives have been identified as being of predominantly the western middle class (Boler, 1999; hooks, 1982, 1989) and therefore are still heavily influenced by rationality and positivism. Talanoa on the other hand emerged from Pacific epistemology, therefore is influenced and shaped by values of 'ofa (compassion, deep love driven by connectedness), empathy, values of Pacific fonua which are different to those of KMR political aims.

However, the increasing consciousness about oppressed and marginalised groups, as well as the inadequacies of the power of the State and its institutions to identify their issues for these group, led to challenge for the inclusion of their way of thinking and seeing in research (Bishop and Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1999; Taufe'ulungaki, 2000). It is the theoretical framework of KMR and the groundswell support for a culturally appropriate research framework for New Zealand and the clarity and courage that drives feminism to question dominant patriarchal and established assumptions that fired my imagination and gave me the courage to imagine the possibility for a Pacific research method.

Within TRM, there are several methods. Skilful use of different methods individually or simultaneously should make rich authentic information available from the use of TRM.

4. Talanoa methods, different elements and dimensions

Talanoa is a concept that covers different dimensions that can be utilized singularly or simultaneously to ensure that the significant, seemingly insignificant, most subtle and discreet elements of culture and experience that make up the totality of a phenomenon, available for the research. Depending on the intention of the researcher and the direction of the talanoa, one dimension of the talanoa may be dominant although others will be employed fluidly, interchangeably to set and maintain a good atmosphere, pass or obtain information holistically, prod or triangulate while observing all technical and cultural protocols during the data collection or data co-construction. Based

on Tongan protocols, dimensions of the talanoa that are likely to be used in a TRM study are:

4.1 Talanoa vave

Vave translates to fast, brief or quick. This is a quick and perhaps surface verbal exchange between two or several people in order to confirm or reconfirm some understanding or some other common matters. It may be casual and last for only a few exchanges. Its purpose may be to inform, report, inquire about certain matters or clarify some details.

It is usually held with minimal formality because of the good relationship and understanding between those involved or because of time or other constrains. It may just be a more polite way of acknowledging or a way of securing commitments for a deeper and more formal talanoa at a later stage. For researchers, it is a way to remind, maintain connection or ensure shared understanding and lay the foundation for a more objectified talanoa such as faka'eke'eke and talanoa'i at a later stage.

4.2 Talanoa faikava

Faikava is the process in which kava is prepared to drink at a gathering. Such gatherings are usually for those who are part of a particular region, people of common interest or those who belong to a church. A faikava can consist of 4 or more people sitting around in a circle with the kava prepared at one point in the circle. This part of the circle is usually the closest to the entrance and directly opposite the most senior person of the group who would monitor the cultural activities of the occasion including the talanoa.

In talanoa faikava, it is common for one person to speak at a time, and while he speaks, everyone listens and reflects until it is the next person's time to contribute. One topic is interrogated at one time until what needs to be covered has been completed. Because of this shared interest amongst people in a faikava, talanoa will be more aligned to a focus group process.

4.3 Talanoa usu

'Ana Mo'ungatonga (talanoa, Dec, 2010) stated that talanoa usu is '...me'a fa'u pe...' (just a construction), a fabricated story. She further suggests that '...'oku 'aonga ia ke fa'u ha founga ke fakatefito kiai hano fakamata'i ha 'uhinga 'oku faingata'a hono fakamatala'i...' (it is used as a metaphor for scaffolding those involved in the talanoa to more important or key information that maybe difficult to explain without reference to its wider context). She

went on to say '...*koe hiva usu koe hiva ia 'oku fa'u hake pee, tae tu'ungafasi pea 'oku fai ia ke fakamatala ha fo'i ngaue ma'ongo'onga pe ha talanoa 'oha feitu'u pe kolo...*' Hiva usu or usu songs are ones that are constructed informally and contextually (ie. without formal arrangements, pre-determined scales), describe a phenomenon, to praise or explain an extraordinary deed or to describe the significance of an area or a town.

Experts in talanoa usu will capture appreciative participants as these experts are skilled in humour, in various contextual constructions to suit different topics appropriate to participants' background, age, gender and rank. In a contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand situation, it is an engagement to share, to create a sense of mafana and malie (Manu'atu, 2002) that can lift participants to another level of spiritual fusion and enlightenment, for pleasure and perhaps just filling time before another engagement. For researchers, it is an ideal way to build trust for other more objectified talanoa such as faka'eke'eke, talanga and talanoa'i.

4.4 Talanoa tevolo

Talanoa tevolo engages the emotion, spirit and the mind in a way that most other talanoa cannot. It is a talanoa that is often about sharing of supernatural visitations, dreams or visions of people who have passed on (Ana Moungatonga, talanoa, Jan., 2011). A researcher is very likely to come across it if the kau nga fa'u is comfortable and authentic about the topic of the talanoa and those taking part in the talanoa. This talanoa is fundamental to understanding the Tongan personality, relationships, values and knowledge as it strikes at the heart of their epistemology.

As epistemology can include how knowledge is legitimated, most Tongan people may still consider dreams, visitations from ancestors and visions to be a source of legitimated knowledge or truth. This being the case, when researchers engage Tongan people, this cultural background must be included in their considerations; as Heidegger suggests, this is their world (Steiner, 1978).

4.5 Talanoa faka'eke'eke

Talanoa faka'eke'eke is the closest to an interview. 'Eke implies the act of asking direct questions. Faka means the 'way of' and 'eke'eke implies verbal searching or even relentless questioning. Such talanoa could manifest in the act of questioning and depending on the answer for that question, more probing questions are formed. The questions connect or build on the answers

given by a kau nga fa'u in order to identify or uncover certain knowledge, understanding or a point. In such an approach, the researcher is the one that determines the direction of the talanoa. In this case talanoa faka'eke'eke resembles much of qualitative research approach or it can be an instrument to further quantitative research.

Because this talanoa has a more objective aim, it is economical, efficient and likely to be dominated by the researcher with less opportunity to truly interact at a more personal level with the kau nga fa'u. The knowledge gained from this approach to talanoa is more likely to miss social context and other dimensions that may capture a full phenomenon. However, one can employ pō talanoa to gain more data on social issues if they were missed by talanoa faka'eke'eke. Faka'eke'eke is the term given to police detective's structured investigative procedure in Tonga.

4.6 Pō talanoa

Pō implies night or evening which points to this type of talanoa's origin. In village life in Tonga from the ancient times and before the time of televisions, after the evening meal friends, relative and neighbours would visit each others' house to chat, evaluate the day's activities, tell stories, discuss family matters as well as more secular matters such as sharing plans and hopes for the days ahead. Manu'atu (2002: 194) describe pō talanoa as:

> …Cultural and political practice of Tongan people where space in time is created to connect to the contexts of their experiences through discussions and talking with others. Through po talanoa, the people come to know questions, find out, hear about, and become aware of and extend their experiences and knowledge about their world and their relationships to it. In my view a key to the practice of po talanoa is the capacity of people to connect with each other within a context of whether it is kinship, a work experience, common knowledge or faith or whatever.

Pō talanoa is talking in an everyday occurrence. It may be about politics, church matters, children, television, school, political matters, the lack of things to do. At one level it may be what we might readily identify as 'conversation' and can be held anytime, both day and night. In TRM, pō talanoa is vital for establishing connections and putting the kau ngā fa'u or the researcher for that matter at ease so that deeper and searching talanoa such as talanoa'i and tālanga can be implemented effectively.

4.7 Talanoa'i

Talanoa'i is a verb; it is active; it is purposeful with a particular aim or focal point, which may be an outcome. It implies high-level analysis and synthesis. Such, it implies also that those involved in talanoa'i have complementary expertise in the area of focus or topic of a talanoa and have similar status and other backgrounds. Talanoa'i then is a more rigorous process guided by its purpose/s.

Talanoa'i can be used to problematize issues in order to examine them closely and from different angles. It may even take the form of a robust debate but with the normal respect for age, gender and others cultural conventions. Talanoa'i may develop along a pathway that reflects the objectives of Bloom's Taxonomy involving recall, application, deep analysis, co-construction to produce some judgement on a particular issue. Talanoa'i could use deductive reasoning and other processes that may resemble mathematical or scientific analysis. These are all possible in informal or highly competent focus group discussions in their endeavour to talanoa'i solution/s for a complex issue or truth.

In talanoa'i the researcher is not a distant observer but is active in the talanoa process and in defining and redefining meanings in order to achieve the aim of what is being talanoa'i. Talanoa'i is more suited for stripping layers of history and hurt that may have led to tension, damaged relationships or even conflict. Talanoa'i is expected to encourage contributions from participants just as participants may demand of the researcher or even the other way around. This is normal for talanoa where participants (or researchers) can take leadership at different stages of the encounter in the active pursuit of the best possible knowledge, solution or a final consensus. Both researcher and participant/s are integral to co-construction of the new solutions or knowledge.

4.8 Tālanga

Tālanga is a talanoa process that is dialogical and involves both the acts of speaking and listening. Tālanga can be used to challenge. The two approaches of tālanga are kau'italanoa and taungutu. Kau'i-talanoa can mean "joining a conversation which one is not expected to" (Vaka'uta, 2008). This may be a result of exclusion based on rank, gender, age or class. Kau'i-talanoa is used to disrupt, challenge the authenticity or fact of a talanoa. It is used by outsiders or less powerful individual or groups to invite themselves into a talanoa. At another level, tau-ngutu (literally 'fighting or warring mouth') is talking or arguing back, a more forceful way of stating opposing views (Vaka'uta,

2008). For this reason, tālanga is in the language of Hegel, antithesis to the established protocols of talanoa. It can be used to challenge a process or findings during and even after the talanoa process.

Kvale (1996) outlined cases where researchers have discussed how participants resist the interviewer's role by 'fighting back' and disagreeing with assumptions embedded in interview questions and other approaches, a contrasting perspective to 'warm, empathic, and caring interviews,' that, they argue, 'neglect real power relations' (2005: 170) in research dialogues. What tālanga does here is to show that within methods even in oral traditions, inbuilt sophistication extends the provision of checks and balances to arm participants with ways to challenge perceived abuse of power or injustice during a talanoa research process. Tālanga then can contribute greatly to the validity and reliability of TRM approaches.

5. Graphical representation of the fluid dimensions of talanoa and application

Talanoa as mentioned elsewhere in this article, is a collective term for many dimensions which when used skilfully, will initiate a sense of bonding, focus on a topic, while other elements contribute to maintaining the mālie (enjoyment, authenticity), triangulations of information, testing the other participant's mental agility and alertness, or to entertain. Opposite is figurative attempt to show the different elements or dimensions of talanoa and impress the complex fluidity of talanoa.

In the following figure, talanoa is the backdrop and within are the dimensions of talanoa vave, talanoa usu, talanoa faikava, po talanoa, talanoa faka'eke'eke, talanga and talanoa'i. Each dimension is a cluster with undefined boundaries that merge back into the talanoa collectve. This indicates oneness with the other dimensions. The researcher can use one or more dimensions simultaneously as is appropriate to encourage or assist a participant to re-construct or re-capture the full richness of the experience being studied. This means that the researcher may initiate a talanoa research project with a 'talanoa vave' to secure 'talanoa faka'eke'eke' (face-to-face interview) with a participant at a later stage. It is possible to use one or all of the dimensions of talanoa concurrently depending on how the research develops.
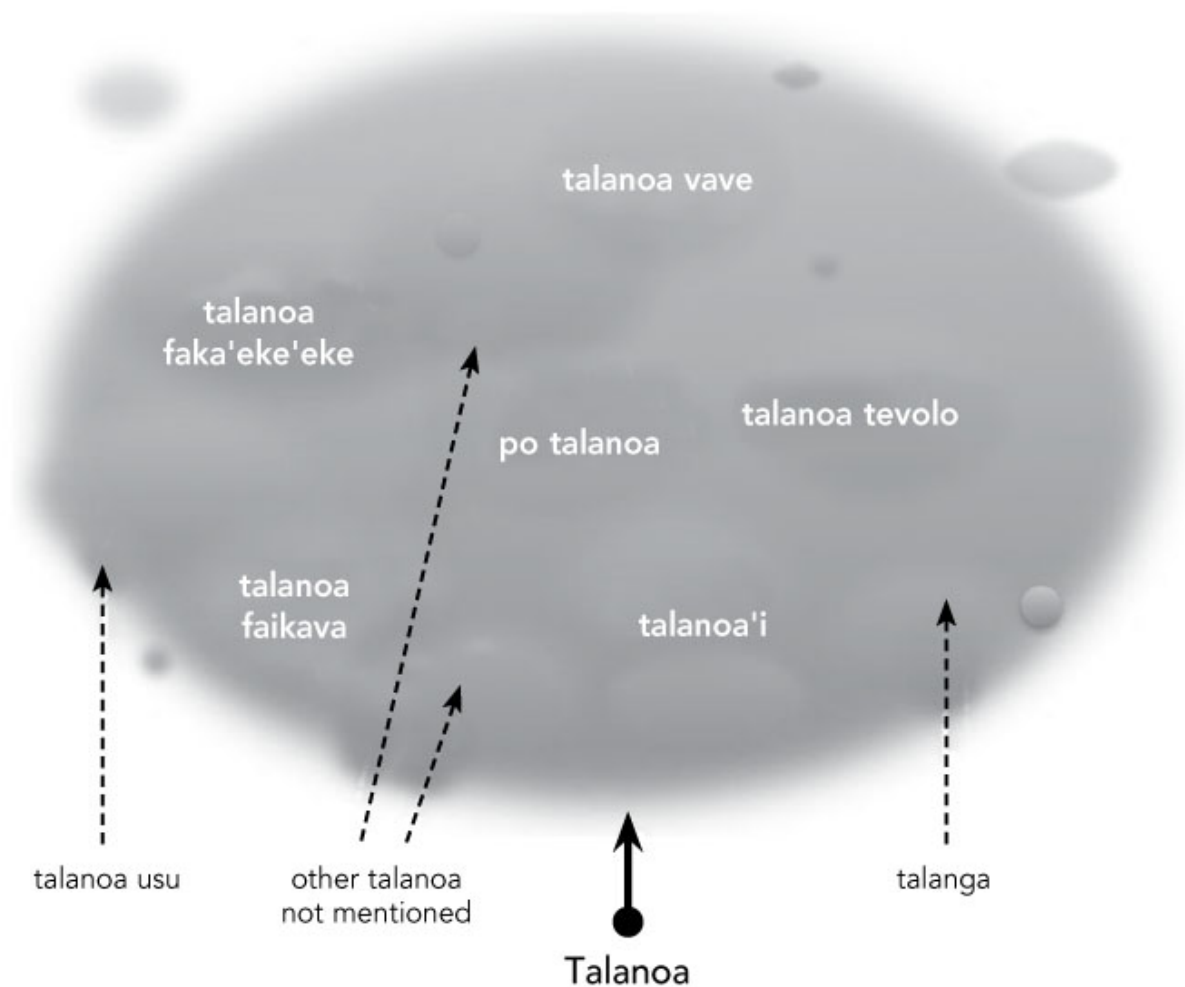
Figure 1: The dimension or elements of talanoa

6. Phenomenology and talanoa

When TRM is used to study a phenomenon, talanoa attempts to understand it through the eyes of the participants. One talanoa dimension or several simultaneously can be used as the researcher feels appropriate to encourage or assist a participant to re-capture the phenomenon being studied in its truest form. For that reason, the multiple approaches of talanoa, would be a culturally, spiritually, intellectually and sophisticated method for explicating the meaning, structure and essence of the experience (phenomenon) as the phenomenon appears to them. Talanoa faikava may be a good start for a talanoa and if there is some point that is not clear, either the researcher or the participant/s can use talanoa faka'eke'eke to clarify the point or alternate talanoa'i and talanoa usu in order to relax all involved in the talanoa while layering meaning in the reconstruction of the phenomenon being studied.

Moustakas (1994) one of the earlier writers on phenomenological research posited that research should focus on the wholeness of experience and a search for the essence of experiences. The French philosopher Merleau-Ponty, raised some concerns about how earlier thinkers had missed the fundamentals of bodily knowledge (Dreyfus, 1999) in their theorizing. For talanoa, cultural interplays during talanoa such as moods, emotions, silence, deep and reflective thoughts, eye and body movements are all parts of the talanoa. Behaviors are integrated and inseparable parts of the phenomenon the participants experience. It is in the application of talanoa in its many flexible and fluid multilevel manifestations that draw out and allow researchers and participants to construct and describe experiences and phenomena in their richest and most authentic forms.

With the many dimensions of talanoa, it can be complex, fluid, multi-layered and at the hands of skilled researcher and participants, it can range in a long continuum from free to critical and highly-structured discussion. Talanoa's application is reflected by the traditions of phenomenologists such as that of Heidegger (1996) who insisted that the observer of a phenomenology couldn't separate herself from the world being studied. I mentioned earlier that a talanoa properly administered will put both the researchers and participant/s in a state (of mind, heart, emotion) and power level that enables the participant to share authentically what is common sense to Pacific peoples and for the research to hear and understand those in the level (world/s) of the participant/s. For TRM researchers, 'being in the world' of the participant is vital for the authenticity of TRM outcomes as the participants are entrenched in their worlds and the researcher is the one that must travel there.

Heidegger articulated a type of contextual entrenchment that groups, and in this case Pacific peoples, are likely to experience with the composite, in-der-welt-sein or simply 'dasein' which is a 'being-in-the-world' or the meaning of 'being' (Steiner, 1978). For Pacific peoples in New Zealand, I align with the interpretation of dasein by Dreyfus (1991) in the application of TRM to Pacific research. Researchers must see and appreciate the subject of their research from the perspectives of Pacific peoples. Phenomenologically, for Pacific peoples in NZ the world is here, now and it is everywhere around them.

For a large number of these Pacific peoples in NZ, their dasein includes their fonua, a residual pride in the initial discovery of the Pacific, and still maintaining their own language and culture. In NZ they will experience: connectedness with Maori, will benefit from aspects of 'first world' modernity, perhaps have greater access to healthcare and means to carry out their

obligation to their children, families and church in the Pacific and NZ. In addition, Pacific peoples face negative aspects of being in NZ, including an awareness of belittling social attitudes. They are totally immersed within this world, and after all, how could they be anywhere 'else'? The complexities of these Pacific peoples' worlds that TRM researchers must empathize with and appreciate.

Talanoa creates level entry, and the chance to be a continuing part of Pacific participants' world/s. I therefore posit that the researcher is part of the participants' world, and therefore party to the description of any phenomenon under research. I also posit that once a researcher accepts this seemingly uncomfortable position, they can start the strategies such as bracketing without depriving themselves or participants from fully experiencing the phenomenon being studied to minimise negative impacts on the process and the outcome of the research.

This can be carried out while immersed in the world of the phenomenon researched (Incubation), creating spaces to be aware of what is around (Illumination), expanding their knowledge of the experiences (Explication), reflecting on their actions and learning, before constructing a finding that brings together the patterns and relationships to describe the phenomenon (Creative synthesis). The final stage of this research will be how the participants will talanoa'i (evaluate) the true alignment to their experience, its usefulness to them and how the institutions and community will judge its worth. The flexibility of talanoa and its coverage of a wide range of research areas as measured by Bloom's (1956) taxonomy, allowing it to capture a fuller richness of phenomena as set out below:

Bloom's taxonomy	Vaioleti's Talanoa dimensions	Adoption of Moustaka's (1994) phenomenological analysis
Evaluation	talanoa'i	Evaluation: by the participants, peers and community
Synthesis	talanga	Creative synthesis
Analysis	talanoa faka'eke'eke	Explication
Applied	talanoa tevolo	Illumination
Understanding	talanoa usu,	Incubation
Knowledge	talanoa vave, talanoa faikava	Immersion

It will pay to mention here that although there will be much data and information constructed from the above applications of talanoa, how those will be classified, analyzed, synthesized will be the focus of another paper and are not included in this article.

7. Protocol/Ethics

Axiology or Value Theory includes the disciplines of ethics, pragmatics and aesthetics. As discussed in other parts of this paper, integral to talanoa is cultural operationalization of appropriate ethics, spirituality, time and space (Vaioleti, 2006, 2011). Furthermore, and in line with KMR values, the rights and welfare of the participants are paramount (Bishop, 1997). However for talanoa, it will be presumptuous for researchers or institutions to assume that they have power over participants in a talanoa research relationship. As mentioned in Vaioleti (2006), and in this paper under 'talanga' talanoa is not just about 'warm, empathic, and caring interviews,' participants can taungutu (fight back), exercise power over research activities, even terminate the talanoa if they are culturally or spiritually offended. For this reason, application of axiology is expected from both researchers and participants.

Researchers must act in such ways that preserve the cultural, spiritual, physical dignity of all that is involved (Cohen, Lawrence & Morrison, 2001), both researcher/s and participant/s. Cavan (1977) cited in Cohen, Lawrence & Morrison (2001: 56) stated that, '...ethics is a matter of principles, (and) sensitivity to the right of others. Being ethical limits the choices researchers can make in the pursuit what they may see as the truth'. Researchers must be cautious, respectful — to observe and respect the fonua they are working in as discussed under talanoa and phenomenology. For example, for Tongans and to a certain extent Samoans and other Polynesians, there are different dialects and indirect metaphoric languages used for talanoa with chiefs, titled holders and high-ranking clergies. Women, older people, brothers and sisters, if present together, are paid special considerations to ensure the vā (relational space) between the researcher, participant and between participants are respectfully maintained. Seeking of good advice is recommended if a researcher needs to conduct research within such relational spaces.

For a researcher to learn and describe a Pacific phenomenon, it is imperative that ethics (protocols) to guide the research emerged from Pacific worldview/s to protect the integrity of participants and their phenomenon as

well as researchers. The essence of the Pacific participants' culture, language, spirit, the reputation of their ancestors, their village and even their island nation (fonua) can not be separated from their stories or what a researcher may base their findings. The engagement of TRM, the development of the findings and the end application of the research must respect and benefit Pacific peoples.

In these cases, the protocols discussed in Vaioleti (2006: 29-31) such as faka'apa'apa, anga lelei, mateuteu, poto he anga and 'ofa fe'unga, based in 'anga faka-Tonga (Tongan processes and ways) can be adapted to suit other Pacific groups. These protocols must guide TRM. Established guiding ethics for the use of talanoa emphasises that while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better. Talanoa should be pragmatic, and when it loses malie (aesthetics, authenticity, spirit) or no more new information is forthcoming, then it should cease.

8. Conclusion

This paper compared and contrasted TRM to Phenomenology, Narrative, Kaupapa Māori and the Feminist methodologies to clarify its characteristics and allow more researchers to consider using it as research methodology. It also revisited the fundamentals of talanoa when used in TRM, which can include speaking freely from the heart, casual conversation, interview, debate, focus groups, critical discussion, fluid and multi-layered exchanges, always grounded in empathy and contextual protocols. This paper also discussed how TRM should put both the researchers and the kau ngā fa'u in a state (of mind, heart, emotion) and power level that enables the kau ngā fa'u to share authentically what is common sense to them and for the researcher to understand those from the level (world/s) of the kau ngā fa'u.

Talanoa Research Methodology was developed using Tongan concepts and cultural values that are better aligned and more respectful of Tongan and other Pacific cultures and worldviews. It was developed as part of a larger project to implement a Pacific theoretical philosophical base that is collective, and spiritually-based on contextual ancestral and fonua considerations. This orientation towards privileging Pacific preferences for research yields more authentic, relevant and longer term research benefits. These cultural considerations, foundations and higher architectural vision may have led to the

growing utilization of TRM across the Pacific, suggesting that TRM is now the most prominent and relevant Pacific research methodology (Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba, 2012).

Note

1 Similar to personal communication carried out with the culturally appropriate respect and empathy referred to by Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2012).

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