

**Nō ngā hapori ngā mātauranga: Whakahokia te rangahau ki ngā hapori.
Acknowledging our research responsibilities to our language communities.**

Dr. Awanui Te Huia

Language research is founded on the lives and histories of our communities. Tauutuutu or reciprocity is central pillar of ethical Māori language research practices. Our hapori (communities) are the holders of knowledge, and we as researchers and academics are seeking to understand more about a subject that our community is expert in. As a wahine Māori, having engaged in Māori language research for most of my academic career, I have come to appreciate a few flaws in my own research, which I think resonates with many academics who engage in research with endangered language communities. Being a Māori academic means that my first priority is and should remain the obligations and responsibilities that I have to my community from which my research is informed.

Despite the enduring efforts of Māori communities, te reo Māori remains an endangered language. The gains that we have seen in terms of Māori language growth and maintenance have come because of the efforts of our communities. Through research enquiry, our hapori gift us their stories, personal lived experiences, their hopes and aspirations for the future. However, as Professor Linda Smith (2021, p. 1) notes, “the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary”. How do ensure that, as either insiders, or as outsiders, we are not inadvertently engaging in research practices that reinforce the status quo in a long history of extractive research practices?

In recent times, we have seen overtly how politics can shape how research is framed, which research is valued, and the metrics that quantify whether research will be acknowledged or dismissed by those in positions of authority. We are keenly aware of our H index’s, we often feel the pressures to submit our research to highly ranked journals that sit behind paywalls inaccessible to the communities whose voices sit within the papers. I am also guilty of publishing in academic text books and journals that are inaccessible to our communities. The question remains, is it possible for us to hold dual accountability and take actionable steps that prioritise both? Can we appease the needs of the institution, while also prioritizing our responsibilities to our communities from which our language research is derived?

If we are to engage in research in ways that recognizes the responsibilities that each of us have to our communities, we must first critique our own research assumptions and practices. Without consistent critique, we risk becoming a cog in the system of knowledge creation for the sake of knowledge creation without consideration for the communities whose lives our research is founded upon. In this keynote, Dr. Te Huia addresses concepts such as tauutuutu, drawing from Kia Tōnuitia te Reo, a national Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga research project she leads. She challenges some existing assumptions that language researchers may be grappling with surrounding ethical research practices, positionality and dual responsibilities.

