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The power of folk linguistic knowledge in language policy

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Abstract Just as an expanded view of language policy now affords agency to many more actors across society than authorities and linguists alone, it also accepts that the dispositions these agents bring to language affairs influence language policy processes and outcomes. However, this paper makes the case that language policy may also be guided, to some degree, by what these societal agents of language policy claim to *know* as facts in linguistics, regardless of the empirical accuracy of their knowledge. Drawing on an analysis of qualitative data from folk linguistic research on Māori language revitalisation, the paper discusses instances of the policy ideas and discourses of a cohort of young New Zealanders relying on what they claimed as facts about revitalisation. By bringing a folk linguistic perspective to language policy theory, the paper argues that space should be made to accommodate the power of folk linguistic knowledge in language policy theory.

Keywords Folk linguistics · Language policy theory · Claimed knowledge · Māori · Language revitalisation

Introduction

The range of approaches in language policy scholarship that enjoy current popularity accept that polity members themselves—even where they have no linguistic training—can be important language policy agents. Across society, polity members interpret, apply, and contest language policies from above as well as design, negotiate and implement their own policy for local purposes—such as in the home, in classrooms or in workplaces—in reference to compounding societal

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influences (King et al. 2008; Shohamy 2006; Spolsky 2004). Accordingly, the critical turn in language policy—and indeed in applied linguistics more generally—have theorised dispositions towards languages as pertinent influences in the formation and reception of language policies at any level (Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech 2015). Polity members have views about the value of languages (Spolsky 2004), about whether and how linguistic diversity should be realised (Schiffman 1995, 2006), and indeed about policies themselves (Baker 2006).

This paper seeks to make the case that language policy processes may be informed not only by dispositions, but also by what individuals who are not trained in linguistics claim to *know* as linguistic facts. This is indeed likely, because the vast majority of language policy makers are, after all, not linguists. For example, a bilingual parent may choose to raise a child monolingually, not because of negative affect towards a particular language, but because the parent has understood—regardless of empirical accuracy—that bilingualism creates a cognitive deficit in child development. In so far as people who have no expert linguistic training but nonetheless claim linguistic knowledge, hold evaluative positions on matters of language in society, and hold agency in managing language affairs, they can be considered *folk linguists* (Preston 2005, 2011). Using this definition, this paper reports findings from a qualitative analysis of the claimed folk linguistic knowledge, dispositions, and aspirations of a cohort of New Zealand youth vis-à-vis the revitalisation of the Māori language (also known in New Zealand as Te Reo). It shows that individuals often claim to *know* facts about language revitalisation processes and policy. The paper proposes that people may use such knowledge to inform their own reasoning on how language situations should be managed. Having established the influence of claimed knowledge, the paper brings the tenets of folk linguistics to language policy scholarship to consider whether and how the power of folk linguistic knowledge may be accommodated within language policy theory.

Folk linguistics and language policy: a salient relationship

Wilton and Stegu's edited volume of the AILA Review (2011) committed to highlighting and defending the relevance of folk linguistics to the applied linguistics discipline. The notion is that even people who have not undergone professional linguistic training construct and offer knowledge in linguistics, as well as hold socially and culturally-informed biases, opinions and attitudes to language. The epistemological starting point is a relative one, in that folk perspectives on language reflect 'dynamic processes which allow non-specialists to provide an account of their worlds' meaning folk linguistic research serves to 'expose the processes of their thinking about language' (Preston 1994: 285). As much as language is a social phenomenon humans engage in, cognition about language will include both claimed knowledge as well as dispositions. What is more, engagement in linguistics already occurs across society at various professional levels. Paveau (2011) reminds the field that even lawyers are, in effect, analysts of semantics and syntax and therefore pseudo linguists, and that comedians who portray accents are folk phonologists. It is therefore not difficult to imagine that where language policy is performed in the

community, then non-linguists may claim to know some facts about language and use these.

Language policy scholarship already relies on the folk linguistic discipline if not by another name, but only in so far as folk linguistics concerns dispositions, such as valued-laden opinions and attitudes. The important role of dispositions has been increasingly recognised in studies of language policy (Shohamy and Spolsky 2000). Already in the 1980s, Ruiz (1984) described political perspectives towards languages as perceiving languages as a resource, a right, or a problem to be fixed. Dispositions have found a home in language policy scholarship such that attitudes and beliefs are theorised either as an element of, or a pertinent influence on, language policy processes (see for example Schiffman 2006; Spolsky 2004). For example, people may claim one language to be more desirable to learn than another, or that a language should or should not be used in certain settings, and this can guide their behaviour.

Studies that have explored dispositions affecting language policy are many. Seminal works include King (2000) and Hornberger (1998) in the cases of Quechua speakers in Ecuador and Peru, which revealed, through an ethnography of language policy, socially-oriented and evaluative perspectives of language in society. Other studies have explored folk dispositions specifically on language policies, such as Marley's (2004) investigations of Moroccan attitudes to the state's Arabic/French bilingual education policies, Bell (2013) in the case of attitudes to language revitalisation in Australia, and McEwan-Fujita's (2010) study of affect in Scotland. These studies positioned public dispositions towards language vis-à-vis official policy, not in the least to critically hypothesise the likely success or failure of official policy.

However, from a holistic perspective, only part of the folk linguistics discipline's contribution has typically been applied in language policy research. This is perhaps because researching inexpert knowledge has attracted criticism from positivist perspectives on scientific research (Paveau 2011) with the argument that it should be replaced by empirical fact. This is disappointing. Firstly, this does not acknowledge that what the folk claim to know may be empirically sound and evidenced. Secondly, as long as non-linguists inform sociolinguistic studies, then their knowledge about language—empirical or otherwise—is of interest. For the sake of illustration, these examples from online discussion fora show that non-linguists can, and do, claim truths about language matters:

> One of my friends mentioned to me recently that children who grow up bilingual (like me and many other Asian-Americans) usually aren't strong (Lara 2011).

> I don't know Indonesian very well but from the little bit I've studied it seems to be relatively simple phonologically and grammatically. It probably ranks with Spanish, Haitian Creole, Modern Norwegian and even conversational German as one of the easier languages in the world (Brennus 2006).

> The Australian accent is the result of a drunken slur caused by the heavy drinking of the early settlers (Pearlman 2015)

Where such claims are actioned or used to inform language choices, then they must be seen as influential. What is more, a critical turn has taken place in sociolinguistics to analyse how 'social structure and discourses form and inform individual behaviour' (Johnson 2013: 32), which now sees actors and institutions across society as agents of language policy (see for example Hornberger and Johnson 2007; Pennycook 2006; Shohamy 2006; Spolsky 2004).

Given folk knowledge can play a 'critical role in language maintenance and change' (Benson 2003: 37), it is somewhat surprising that language policy research has not routinely investigated what is *known* parallel to what is *felt*. Similarly, folk linguistics has not yet extended its purview to language policy. To date, folk linguistics research has commonly sought to reveal what communities know and feel about dialectal variation (Preston 1986, 1993a, b, c, 1996b, 2011), but has also extended its interest to language acquisition (Chavez 2009; Horwitz 1988; Pasquale and Preston 2013), the role of nationalism in folk theories of language (Meadows 2014), and pragmatics (Llewellyn and Harrison 2006; Niedzielski and Preston 2009; Verschik and Hlavac 2009). Earlier scholarship discussed the application of claimed linguistic knowledge in home language maintenance, without bridging this explicitly to language policy theory. De Houwer (1999) reflected on parents discussing child language acquisition processes to inform family language decisions, and concluded that parents often claim to hold a degree of influence on how their children acquire language. In similar work, Mertz (1989) discovered parents who stopped using Gaelic with their children based on their understanding that this would impede their English language acquisition.

Little reference has been made to folk linguistics in language policy theory. This is understandable, given language policy theories have been developed with inspirations from fields other than folk linguistics, such as critical theory (for example McCarty 2011; Tollefson 1991) and anthropology (for example Hornberger and Johnson 2007; Johnson 2009; McCarty 2011). Schiffman (1995, 2006) has referred to the folk linguistics discipline, but does so by equating folk linguistics with attitudinal studies. More recently, in Albury (2014a), I sought to bridge the gap between the folk linguistics and language policy fields by way of the *folk linguistics of language policy* research paradigm. With its starting point in applied linguistics rather than critical theory, social psychology or anthropology that characterise other approaches (see Ricento 2006; Johnson 2013 for an overview), this examines what non-linguists *know* about linguistic matters, how they *feel* about language, and how they harness these to *perform* language policy.

Theory and method

I applied a folk linguistics perspective to understanding language policy (Albury 2014a) in the case of language revitalisation in New Zealand. A large scaleonline survey collected the folk linguistic knowledge, beliefs, and aspirations of youths

aged between 18 and 24 years at the University of Otago, who self-identified as Māori, Pākeha (European New Zealander), or both, and who self-declared to have no professional or academic experience in any type of linguistics (other than second or foreign language study). Defining the *folk* is problematic because it calls for a contestable definition of who counts as expert and inexpert in linguistics (see Paveau 2011 for a critical discussion). For example, even public servants and ministers who create and apply language policies need not be trained linguists, but may be afforded subject-matter expertise. In the case of this research, students of linguistics were excluded from the research. A total of 1297 responses were received: 1090 Pākeha, 54 Māori, and 153 Māori/Pākeha.

The survey was both quantitative and qualitative. The survey solicited levels of agreement, using a five-point Likert scale, to six statements that proposed folk linguistic *knowledge* and 20 statements that proposed folk linguistic *disposition*. The *knowledge* statements sought (dis)agreement with what language revitalisation actually means and comprises, and the *disposition* statements solicited attitudinal responses to topical discourses, arguments, and objectives in language revitalisation. The statements all concerned the value, rationale, and actors of language revitalisation (based on a wide range of revitalisation scholarship and theories[1] and on discourses in New Zealand sociolinguistics)[2] and on the various ways languages can be managed. The latter were theoretically grounded in Hornberger's (2006) language policy and planning (LPP) framework that sees language policy interventions as falling under the purview of planning the *status*, *corpus*, or the *acquisition* of a language. After each statement, respondents were invited to provide qualitative text to nuance their scaled attitudinal response. In addition, two final qualitative questions asked respondents to carry out language revitalisation policy, in this case as hypothetical policy bosses of the state. Here, they were asked to describe what sociolinguistic situation would indicate that Māori language revitalisation has occurred, and what they see as immediate language policy priorities.

Defining knowledge and dispositions

It pays to discuss how the terms *knowledge* and *disposition* were applied for the purposes of the qualitative data from New Zealand and for this paper more broadly. Language policy scholarship often refers to *beliefs,* sometimes when discussing *dispositions* (see for example King 2000; King et al. 2008; Spolsky 2004), whereas in English the term *belief* also includes fact-oriented concepts, such as *knowledge, understanding,* and *assumption* (Philip Lief Group 2013). These are akin to folk knowledge. This distinction is reflected in Preston's (2013) folk linguistic theorising

[1] (Albury 2014a; Armstrong 2012; Baker 2011; Conklin and Lourie 1983; Fishman 1990, 1991, 1993, 2000, 2001; Hinton 2003; Rata 2007; Romaine 2006, 2002; UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages 2003; Walsh 2005).

[2] (Albury 2014b; Auditor-General 2007; Bauer 2008; Chrisp 2005; Degani and Onysko 2010; Deslie McClutchie 2007; Gilchrist 2011; Harlow 2005, 2007; Higgins 2013; Hill 2013; Houkamau and Sibley 2010; Kolig 2000; May 2005; May and Hill 2005; Ministry of Education 2013; Ministry of Māori Development 2003; New Zealand Parliamentary Library 2000; Office of the Minister of Maori Affairs 2014; Reedy 2000; Squires 2005; Te Puni Kōkiri 2014; Te Taura Whiri n.d.).

on *language regard* whereby personal responses to a linguistic phenomenon call on culturally and socially-informed evaluative positions, as well as cognitive processes of description, analysis, and classification.

I therefore avoid the term *belief* and instead rely on Ernest's (1989) understanding, whereby *knowledge* is thought-based cognition and *dispositions* are affective. I therefore see folk linguistic knowledge as claimed logics, facts and commonsense pertaining to language. On the one hand, claimed knowledge may be deeply rooted in culture whereby an item of knowledge is an expression of ontology. This is evident where different societies understand a common phenomenon by way of different ontologies, giving rise to incompatible facts (Kukla 2013). For example, indigenous knowledge in botany or meteorology is oftentimes incompatible with empirical western science (Brush 1996). On the other hand, knowledge may be incidental. It may be culturally-detached and comprise, for example, ontologically inconsequential assumptions, (mis)understandings, and reported speech from perceived knowledge authorities. I would hypothesise here that incidental knowledge is more malleable than ontologically-dependent knowledge. This may have been the case, for example, in the claimed knowledge Mertz (1989) and De Houwer (1999) discovered. Whether ontological or incidental, claimed knowledge is a matter of social constructivism concerning 'social conventionalisations, perception and knowledge in everyday life' (Flick 2004: 88). This posits that 'all our knowledge of the world, in commonsense as well as in scientific thinking, involves constructs, i.e. a set of abstractions, generalizations, formalizations and idealizations' (Schütz 1962). Rather than facts being seen as the property of knowledge-authorities, I treat them as those used by the folk to make sense of their worlds, even if these are empirically questionable, because claimed knowledge can form local truths and guide cognitive processes.

Dispositions are evaluative and subjective, and include attitude. Studies of language attitude especially emerged with the work of Labov (1966) who examined psycho-sociological responses to English varieties in New York, of Lambert et al. (1960) who examined dispositions to English and French, and of Giles (1970) who examined evaluative reactions to accents. Subsequent works are vast and various, such as evaluations of a language's attractiveness, and the integrity of its speakers (Eisenchlas and Tsurutani 2011). Attitude surveys, opinion polls, language use surveys, and social network analyses may all be useful approaches to reveal feelings about linguistic topics, including policy (Baker 2006). However, attitudes are responses to specified stimuli and not necessarily systematic. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) see attitude as a 'psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor' (p. 1). Here, a respondent is presented with an idea or product, and evaluates it. However, some area exists between attitudes and knowledge where dispositions are systematic and less susceptible to change than attitudes or folk knowledge. For example, moral orders, such as that it is best to be kind to your neighbour, are not attitudes but feelings that structure behaviour (Brown 1988). I would add, however, that folk dispositions are likely to be less malleable than knowledge because dispositions can run especially deep (Pajares 1992) or be manifestations of compounding societal ideologies. Knowledge, however, can exist independently without a value-laden premise (Nespor 1987).

This poses the question of whether language ideology intersects with knowledge and dispositions. Ideology is distinguishable in that ideologies are held by a particular collective and are not idiosyncratic, other than where an individual holds a competing ideology held by an outside collective. For example, Durkheimian social psychology sees ideology as "'historical 'mentalities'" that are identifiable through "'anthropological approaches' to 'world views' and 'belief systems'" (Blommaert 2006: 510), meaning they are necessarily shared. Blommaert (2006) describes language ideology as 'the unspoken assumptions that, as some kind of "social cement", turn groups of people into communities, societies, and cultures' (p. 510). Feasibly, this cement might include shared knowledge as much as it includes shared dispositions. This seems to be supported by Schieffelin et al. (1998) who see language ideologies as 'not about language alone. Rather, they envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality and to epistemology' (p. 3), whereby aesthetics may be seen as attitudinal, morality as structure-giving belief, and epistemology as knowledge. Ideology may therefore encompass both folk linguistic knowledge and dispositions held by a collective, but it may not capture the specific cognitive nuances of an individual. For example, an individual's claimed knowledge or disposition may be traceable to an ideology held by that person's peer group, and language ideology research may seek to account for that ideology. However, a person's attitude to a specific stimulus may be idiosyncratic and claimed knowledge may be hear-say, a misunderstanding, or a unique interpretation not relevant to a collective's ideology. What is more, even where ideology does encompass knowledge and disposition, this does not remove the value of considering how they play distinct roles in language policy.

Identifying knowledge and dispositions

In many cases, free text comments made by respondents at various stages of the research survey were identifiably constructions of knowledge or disposition that appeared to premise policy ideas. Subsequent to a process of coding the qualitative data, Jaffe's (2009) summarised topology of stance-taking was used to delineate claimed knowledge from dispositions. Accordingly, dispositions were identified as holding propositional content including appraisal, evaluation, attitudinal stance or assessment. For example, 'the government has more important matters to spend time and resources on, the education system has more important stuff to teach' (Māori/Pākeha) was categorised as a statement folk linguistic disposition. Respondents were not obliged to give free text commentary after each Likert-scaled response. Nor is it the case that all respondents presented knowledge, that all responses were clear, or that comments could be categorised (meaning it is not possible to measure and compare rates of presenting knowledge versus dispositions). Nonetheless, reasoning did often appear in an individual's folk linguistic commentary whereby descriptions of an ideal sociolinguistic situation and ideas for policy action were supported to varying degrees by knowledge and dispositions they had claimed through the survey.

Items of folk linguistic knowledge were identified as constructions of fact that formed an epistemic stance (Jaffe, 2009). The process of identifying folk linguistic

knowledge also drew on Preston's (1996a) theory of *folk linguistic awareness* that frames the parameters and depth of folk linguistic knowledge. Folk linguistic awareness can be firstly measured by its *availability*: the extent to which the folk have the ability to comment on a particular matter. This is an indication of whether or not, and to what extent, a topic in linguistics has become sufficiently prominent that it has entered the realms of folk discourse. In my research, particularly *available* folk linguistic knowledge included the normativity of Māori dialectal variation. For example:

> Looking at the different dialects allows us to see how tribes moved around NZ. Just like te reo gives Maori their own sense of identity, each dialect give each tribe a sense of identity (Māori/Pākeha).

Folk linguistic awareness also concerns *accuracy*: whether or not claimed knowledge is empirically correct. While empirical accuracy is not necessarily the primary concern of folk linguistic research, it may be a useful area of inquiry where inaccurate knowledge has social repercussions. In any case, notably *inaccurate* commentary was given, in some cases, about a wide range of topics. This included that Māori language is a compulsory subject in the New Zealand school curriculum, that it is commonly a first language amongst ethnic Māori, and that bilingualism is a rare phenomenon globally.

Preston also refers to *detail*, that is the extent to which items of knowledge become discussed in their specifics rather than in generalised terms. Many respondents offered *detail* about the value of or rationale of for language revitalisation. However, given *detail* concerns an individual's discursive engagement, it was often realised and augmented with opinions, meaning *detail* sometimes spanned both facts and evaluations. For example, a participant offered particularly detailed commentary about the purpose of revitalising the Māori language:

> It is not a valuable skill in the economy to know Māori, the only people that speak it are a hand full of New Zealanders, probably 0.0000003 % of the Earth's population can speak it so it's a terrible tool for economics compared to say English, Spanish or Mandarin which are the 3 biggest languages. No it's not a part of New Zealand's national identity, New Zealand is an English speaking country, I doubt even 1% of Kiwis can speak Māori fluently. No you don't have to speak it to be Māori. The vast majority of people who identity as Māori can't speak it fluently so no. Bilingualism doesn't make people smarter, it may be a smart thing to learn another language such as Spanish or Mandarin however wasting time and energy in learning a language that almost nobody speaks is definitely not smart (Pākeha).

Finally, folk linguistic awareness also refers to *control.* For Preston, this refers to the extent to which a folk linguist can apply knowledge of a different language variety to imitate another's dialect or accent. Here, this did not play a role in identifying items of knowledge.

Agency of folk linguistic knowledge parallel to disposition

The paper now offers examples from the data where both folk linguistic dispositions and folk linguistic knowledge were identifiable. This serves to illustrate that the respondents not only held evaluative opinions about language revitalisation in New Zealand, but also claimed linguistic knowledge that they saw as relevant to that policy process.

In the first instance, the survey design and analysis allowed the folk linguistic knowledge, dispositions and aspirations of the respondents as a collective to be identified, such that the perspectives of the respondents could be thematised. The results of this work have been presented elsewhere in greater detail (Albury 2015). In general, the three cohorts responded similarly. Large majorities in each cohort asserted that language revitalisation primarily involves raising the status of the Māori language and increasing rates of language acquisition. In particular, they claimed that societal bilingualism is a natural sociolinguistic state in other nations, that the vitality of the Māori language does not depend on the reinstitution of Māori language transmission in New Zealand homes, that classrooms are the primary site for language revitalisation, that the language indexes a broader New Zealand identity than a Māori one alone, and that the language has been codified in law as a right. The cohorts were much less likely to claim that language revitalisation requires planning the Māori language corpus. Instead, they rejected that Māori language vitality demands codifying a standard or widespread Māori language literacy, explaining that Māori is an oral language and that standard languages and dialects cannot coexist. This knowledge was supported by a broad range of dispositions. The cohorts strongly agreed that although language revitalisation is a worthwhile endeavour, the language should not infiltrate New Zealand's formal domains. They also juxtaposed cultural reasons for revitalising Māori against the economic instrumentality of English, suggested that societal language attitudes need improvement, and argued that all New Zealanders—Māori or otherwise—should participate in the language revitalisation process.

The respondents drew on their folk linguistic knowledge and dispositions to construct ideal sociolinguistic outcomes for language revitalisation and to propose policy actions. Having claimed that corpus planning is not part of language revitalisation, the respondents generally did not propose any initiatives that would manage the Māori corpus. Instead, their preference for dialectal maintenance led to ideas to promote, protect, and teach dialects in the interest of maintaining tribal identities. The claim that revitalisation means status planning inspired a range of policy ideas, but these were nuanced by the respondents' dispositions that afforded prestige to English for economic reasons. For example, respondents proposed that a goal for the language is to become used in informal interactions, cultural ceremonies, Māori homes, in bilingual media, and in New Zealand's linguistic landscape. Accordingly, their aspirations for language acquisition—albeit perceived as a pivotal element of revitalisation—were low. The vast majority claimed that language revitalisation will have occurred when there is a large, interethnic pool of

low-proficiency Māori language speakers, and when English conversations use more Māori loanwords.

However, folk linguistics research need not focus on shared perspectives, but can instead examine knowledge and dispositions as they inform an individual's own linguistic reasoning. To this end, this paper now concentrates on knowledge and shows that it was as influential, if not more influential, in constructing the folk linguistic commentary, regardless of whether this knowledge is idiosyncratic or is traceable to a broader ideology. The interest here is in identifying to what extent matters of knowledge played a role in an individual's reasoning. In some cases, individuals appeared to give greater weight to their dispositions than to their knowledge. For example, a Pākeha respondent:

- claimed *knowledge* that the Māori language 'is important to Māori and does play a role in cultural identity and Māori do have a right to it… the only way people are going to maintain it is through parent/child interaction, if it's not spoken at home there is no other reason to speak it'.
- asserted the *disposition* that the language 'is a complete waste of time and resources especially when more important stuff could be taught to a greater extent such as Sciences, Maths and English'.
- envisaged no end state of revitalisation because it 'cannot be revitalised' on the basis of its lack of instrumental value.
- proposed, if he/she became Prime Minister, to 'abolish it. Remove all government support for it, remove it from schools, remove it from mainstream media'.

These policy ideas were identifiably grounded in his/her feeling that the language is not worth New Zealand's investment and should have no future. The strength of the folk linguistic disposition was such that it trumped his/her knowledge-based explanation that the language in fact holds special relevance to Māori and that it has been codified as an ethnolinguistic right. This knowledge was overshadowed by a disposition against the language.

However in some cases the relative strength of knowledge and dispositions could not be ascertained. For example, a Māori/Pākeha respondent:

- claimed the *knowledge* that 'being bilingual is a gift and aids learning ability', that 'many other countries teach their native language and it is compulsory regardless of whether you are indigenous or not', and that 'I have seen little evidence that [the state of the language] is improving'.
- asserted the *disposition* that 'Te reo is a very important part of NZ's indigenous Māori culture' and that 'it is important for all New Zealanders'.
- envisaged an end state of revitalisation whereby 'a good chunk of NZers can speak/understand it'.
- proposed to 'make it compulsory in schools up until the age of at least 14'.

In this case, items of folk linguistic knowledge and dispositions all appeared supportive of Māori language revitalisation in different ways. Whereas knowledge

asserted the need for and benefits of Māori language acquisition, disposition supported a rationale for revitalisation. In light of both, the respondent's proposed policy actions and desirable sociolinguistic situation were logical relative to the expressed knowledge and dispositions, but not identifiably attributable to one or the other. In any case, it cannot be concluded that the respondent's folk linguistic knowledge did not play a role, because its influence cannot be ruled out. The same can be argued in the following example whereby a Pākeha respondent:

- explained that 'historical efforts to eliminate Māori language have had long-lasting effects on cultural identity for Māori themselves—feelings of dislocation from their own culture, while often not belonging to Pākeha culture either—has had a detrimental effect on Māori sociopolitical progress'.
- offered the opinion that 'culture needs to be kept alive in the modern world and revitalising is a good way to do this'.
- proposed to 'introduce [Māori language] as a compulsory language at primary and secondary school'.
- argued that revitalisation will have occurred 'when more than half of Maori feel comfortable conversing in te reo'.

Again, the alignment between knowledge and dispositions means both knowledge and disposition (or one or the other although it is unclear which), guided the subsequent policy ideas.

However, in some cases it was clear that folk linguistic knowledge and dispositions guided policy ideas equally. For example, a Māori/Pākeha respondent commented that

- that Māori 'needs to be spoken everywhere to maintain the language', as a fact of revitalisation.
- offered the opinion that 'it isn't economically valuable'.
- proposed to 'increase the use in education. Make it compulsory for people to learn it in school. Create a system that means it would be beneficial to learn to get a job'.
- explained that revitalisation will have occurred 'when the media can use it and everyone understands (as the media is viewed by everyone'.

In this instance, the respondent appears to harness matters of both knowledge and disposition to propose policy. The explanation that revitalisation requires a greater pool of speakers is coupled with an opinion that the language currently lacks economic value. This culminates in a policy solution that addresses both concerns. The content of the respondent's policy ideas cannot be traced only to knowledge or only to disposition.

It was evident in some cases that a respondent's folk linguistic knowledge was so instrumental in guiding policy ideas that disposition did not influence their policy proposals or descriptions of an ideal sociolinguistic future. For example, a Pākeha respondent:

- explained that language standardisation 'just doesn't work that easily when languages are oral like te reo is. They way that speech changes is a product of where they come from'.
- gave the view that dialects 'should be encouraged because it gives information as to the progression of a language'.
- proposed to 'implement articulation courses for young people'.
- envisaged revitalisation to have occurred 'when 50 % of our population has middle to advanced level proficiency'.

It is especially interesting that the respondent relied on a Māori ontology of language. This is evident in the explanation that the language does not require orthography and that dialectal variation indexes Māori identities and history. This emphasis on oral language led to a proposal to improve Māori language pronunciation.

In another example, a Māori/Pākeha respondent:

- explained that the language is endangered because 'there are less and less full Maori's to spread the language' and that 'you need to learn things when you are young'.
- offered the opinion that 'there are other important issues at the moment' beyond language revitalisation and that 'non-Maori shouldn't have to learn a language they aren't a part of'.
- described language revitalisation as 'when more Pākeha use it'.
- proposed to 'make it compulsory at school until year 11, and promote it at the work place'.

Here, the claimed knowledge seems to subscribe to a European ethnolinguistic assumption that a lineal relationship exists between language and ethnic identity (Blommaert et al. 2012), and applies this to ethnic Māori. However, given the respondent claims the Māori gene is disappearing, s/he instead proposes that revitalisation now requires Pākeha participation. This is despite the decisive opinion that the language is relatively unimportant and that Pākeha should not be compelled to learn the language. The respondent's policy ideas are only understandable if agency is granted to what he/she claimed to know.

In this final, example, a Māori participant offered no claimed knowledge relevant to the state of the Māori language or its revitalisation. Instead, the respondent:

- offered the strong view that 'there are bigger problems facing NZ' but 'te reo Māori is an important part of our national heritage'.
- described revitalisation as when 'people of all ages speak it as they do English, in random conversations'.
- proposed to 'talk to experts about how to revitalize te reo Māori'.

The participant appears cognisant of his/her perceived lack of expert knowledge, and therefore proposes sourcing expertise. This is despite two dispositions that could support or reject revitalisation but were not harnessed to inform policy ideas.

Instead, it seems the respondent perceives an impetus for policy to be informed by expert knowledge rather than disposition.

Accommodating folk linguistic knowledge in language policy theory

Having shown that language policy ideas can be informed by folk linguistic knowledge to an equal or even greater degree than by dispositions, it seems likely that language policy researchers will encounter folk linguistic knowledge in their data. For example, ethnography (Johnson 2009) may see knowledge appropriated or contested, educational language policy (García and Menken 2010) may reveal claims about how langauge acquisiton occurs, and postmodernism (Pennycook 2006) welcomes alternate langauge ontologies. A question is whether bringing the tenets of folk linguistics to language policy creates new theoretical opportunities or implications for language policy theory.

As Ricento (2006) reminds us, no grand theory of language policy exists. However, bringing the tenets of folk linguistics to language policy raises the question of whether existing language policy theories can accommodate folk linguistic knowledge. My hypothesis is they likely cannot, and this is to be expected given different language policy theories have stemmed from different traditions and seek different objectives, and because the relationship between folk linguistics and language policy has been limited. Johnson (2013) offers a valuable overview of currently popular conceptualisations of language policy, and this serves as a useful context for substantiating my claim. Spolsky (2004) takes a sociolinguistic view to see language policy as comprised of three elements which, I argue, does not accommodate folk linguistic knowledge but does accommodate folk linguistic dispositions. For him, language policy includes *language management* (efforts to change language behaviours), *language practices* (unregulated patterns in choosing a language variety) and lastly *language ideology or beliefs* which he defines as 'beliefs about language and language use' (p. 14). The interest for this paper is what Spolsky means by *beliefs*. His discussions bias evaluative positions, attitudes or disposition, as he defines *beliefs* as 'beliefs about appropriate language practices' and 'assigning values and prestige' (p. 14). Interestingly, Spolsky treats beliefs and ideology synonymously as consensus on evaluative positions. This hints that Spolsky's interpretation of belief is akin to *systematic* beliefs that exist collectively. The definition does not give agency to folk linguistic knowledge, but could be easily expanded to do so.

Schiffman's (1995, 2006) anthropological approach comes close to holistically accommodating folk linguistic perspectives. He sees language policy to be a product of a community's unique *linguistic culture*, whereby linguistic myths can exist amongst a collective. He points to French linguistic culture that claimed erroneously that France operated an official, purist national language policy. No such policy actually existed until the 1990s, but the conviction was so firm and shared that it became a constructed fact. Schiffman (2006) defines linguistic culture as the collective 'ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths, religious strictures, and all other cultural "baggage" that speakers bring to their dealings with language

from their culture' (p. 112). In as far as myths may be believed facts, then Schiffman's view of language policy accommodates folk linguistic knowledge where it is shared or perceivably part of ideology. The relevance of myths as folk linguistic knowledge was also seen in my New Zealand research where a Pākeha respondent subscribed to a long-standing myth that the term Pākehā is derogatory. He explained:

> I am offended that you refer to Europeans as Pākeha - this translates to 'white pig'…I don't think that Europeans should be referred to as Pākeha at all. After all, how much better is this than calling a coloured person a Nigger? (Pākeha).

From an empirical perspective the origin of the word is actually unclear, but Ranford (n.d.) explains it was probably never derogatory, but derived from pakehakeha (those who came from the ocean) or from pakehakeha (human-like beings with fair skin). However, folk linguistic knowledge need not be a myth nor incorrect, and may also be hear-say or an idiosyncratic (mis)understanding. Schiffman lists *ideas* separately from value-laden terms, such as *attitudes*, *prejudices* and *values*. In operationalising this distinction, it seems plausible that ideas encompass knowledge. For example, the Oxford Dictionary (2015) suggests that an idea may be 'a concept of pure reason, not empirically based in experience'. Where this reason and experience are not evaluative, then Schiffman's definition might accommodate the influence of folk linguistic knowledge. This is, however, an extrapolation, and Schiffman's definition could be augmented to more explicitly define *beliefs* or *ideas* as including folk linguistic knowledge or reasoning.

McCarty (2011)'s ethnographic approach appears to give some role to folk linguistic knowledge in so far as knowledge may contribute to 'modes of human interaction, negotiation and production mediated by relations of power' whereby 'the 'policy' in these processes resides in their language-regulating power; that is, the ways in which they express normative claims about legitimate and illegitimate forms and uses' (p. 8). The interest here is in *normative claims.* Conceivably, normativity may reside both in what is known and in what is felt to be normal. Normative knowledge did indeed arise in my research. When asked about the role of intergenerational language transmission in saving the Māori language, one Pākeha respondent claimed 'how else will it be passed down????'. Others constructed language loss on the basis of language evolution that is normative, and built arguments on an ontological position that languages are instrumental rather than cultural phenomena. It therefore appears that McCarty's definition of language policy may be equipped to identify folk linguistic facts that are normative. Again, however, a claim can only be normative where is perceived as normal by a collective such that it can influence social structures. This means ad hoc or non-normative knowledge is unlikely to be accounted for by her conceptualisation of language policy, or only in so far that it becomes subject to power regulated by those who do hold the normative knowledge.

A similar argument can be made about Tollefson's (1991) approach based in critical theory to language policy as 'the institutionalization of language as a basis for distinctions amongst social groups' (p. 16). Tollefson (2006) does not offer components of policy, but instead explains that core notions of critical theory are at

play, namely power, struggle, colonisation, ideology and hegemony, and resistance that relate to collectives rather than indiviudals. For example, Tollefson sees *power* as concerning the relationship between social structure and individual agency. Without a doubt, colonisation as a project included the imposition of new social structures on indigenous peoples and the importation of foreign ontologies of language. Where cultures and ontologies come into contact and this contact is examined, it seems entirely feasible that Tollefson's critical definition is indeed concerned with what a collective claims to know, based in a shared ontological tradition. My own research produced insights that support this claim. The vast majority of respondents proposed policy solutions and sociolinguistic situations that subscribed to a European ontology of language vitality and governmentality. Nonetheless, some respondents proposed returning the Māori language to its oral roots and argued against a written standard. They explained, for example, that 'Maori was originally an oral language and survived before colonisation so it can be revitalised most effectively through being spoken' (Pākeha).

Johnson (2013) concludes by offering his own definition of language policy that draws on various traditions to comprise *official regulations*, unofficial or *covert mechanisms, policy processes*, and *policy texts and discourses*. Like Schiffman, he notes that linguistic myths can exist in a community. He also sees unofficial and de facto policies as connected to language *beliefs* and *practices*, and describes *beliefs* as having a regulating power. Given this paper has discussed the salience of folk knowledge in guiding folk discourse and behaviour, then the operationalisation of *beliefs* in this context could indeed include folk linguistic knowledge, although Johnson does not state this. The same argument can be applied to his term *policy processes.* Here, Johnson sees policy as a verb, whereby policy is not a product but a process of creation, interpretation, appropriation and instantiation. Where these processes rely on some claimed linguistic knowledge, then this too must be part of his policy definition. Finally, Johnson also refers to policy as *texts and discourses* whereby he emphasises the influence of ideologies and discourses unique to specific *contexts*. Johnson does not further define ideology or the parameters of discourse. However, in so far as specific societal *contexts* might include normative claims or commonsense knowledge, as seen with McCarty's (2011) definition, then folk linguistic knowledge may be relevant here too. Accommodating folk linguistic knowledge in his definition does, however, currently require extrapolations and could be achieved by adding further definition to the terms used.

It appears then that language policy theories cannot uniformly accommodate the potential influence of folk linguistic knowledge in determining or influencing language policy, but do tend to accommodate the influence of dispositions. By shedding a folk linguistic light on language policy research, however, I believe that not theorising claimed knowledge in language policy processes can endanger the integrity of research. For example, my research in New Zealand revealed a strong disposition across the cohorts against making Māori language a compulsory school subject. Accordingly, participants refrained from proposing this in their policy ideas. A language policy analysis that gives weight only to beliefs may have attributed these attitudes to an ideology that is inimical to revitalisation. However, this would have been flawed. By analysing folk linguistic knowledge, I found that

many respondents understood Māori language teachers to be in short supply or that compulsion in the education system creates hostility amongst parents and students. For them, compulsory education was ideal, but they did not think it was possible at the current time. These matters of claimed knowledge were often the main justifications for their attitudes against compulsory language study, rather than a disposition against revitalisation. This therefore calls for the incorporation of folk linguistic knowledge into language policy theories. Any theories that give agency to folk linguistic dispositions should, in my opinion, also give agency to folk linguistic knowledge. By the same token, any theory that appears to accommodate knowledge where it is shared, normative, or contributes to a collective's ideology should be expanded to also accommodate knowledge that is held by an individual that may, or may not, be shared more broadly, such as knowledge that is reported speech, a unique interpretation, or hear-say.

Conclusion

This paper has been an attempt to (re)ignite the interests of language policy researchers in what the many societal agents of language policy might claim to know as facts about language and linguistics, and how they bring these to policy processes. As this paper illustrated in the case of New Zealand, and by recalling previous seminal works from De Houwer (1999) and Mertz (1989), matters of folk linguistic knowledge—distinct from matters of affect—can and do inform language policy discourses and ideas of individuals who are not trained linguists. This knowledge may be shared, normative, and accommodated by a broader ideology, or it may be an individual's unique cognition based on unique experience in language topics. In any case, knowledge may be used to justify discourses and policy ideas.

Identifying what any individual claims to know, and confidently accounting for such knowledge, is by no means a perfect science. In this paper, knowledge and dispositions were identified through an analysis of stance-taking, but this does not preclude any individual later reconstructing, for example, an expressed opinion as a matter of fact. Nor does it theorise the legitimacy of knowledge, how and where expertise may be constructed or attributed, or the creation and promulgation of knowledge for covert policy intentions to manipulate a polity, as Shohamy (2006) discusses. The paper has, however, asserted that more cognition than disposition is at play in language policy processes, and showed this with examples of policy ideas from New Zealand.

By bringing the tenets of folk linguistics to language policy scholarship, the paper argues that language policy theories appear to give influence to dispositions but are yet to comfortably account for the influence of folk linguistic knowledge in language policy reasoning. As such, conceptualisations of language policy that give influence to affect should also make space for the influence of folk linguistic knowledge. Similarly, theories of language policy that give agency to ideology and normative claims held by a collective including matters of knowledge should also make space for the power of an individual's own, potentially idiosyncratic knowledge informing an individual's policy discourses and ideas. With these

changes, we may be better equipped to theorise and understand the raft of influences in language policy processes.

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