

Te Reo Māori in the New Zealand Parliament: A Ceremonial or Civic Language?

LAW 702 - Mary Drakeford

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Hon Dr Pita Sharples (Minister of Māori Affairs): The Māori language is a treasure of tribes and Māori people and an important part as well of the cultural identity of all New Zealanders. (NZPD, Vol. 700, p. 19524).

Introduction

Te Reo Māori¹, the Māori language, has seen many changes in its rates and forms of use in New Zealand society since the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840. Following a decline in use throughout much of the 20th century, there has been an increase in discussion about the future of Te Reo², particularly since 1986, when the Waitangi Tribunal acknowledged that Te Reo Māori is a “taonga”, or valued possession, under Article II of the Treaty of Waitangi, and that the Crown has a responsibility for its preservation.

In broader New Zealand society, there have been many initiatives to foster the use of Te Reo, particularly through the introduction of the Māori Language Commission/Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Māori. Initiatives have included the annual celebration of Māori Language Week since 1975 and increased funding in the Budget for Te Reo education. In spite of these initiatives, Statistics New Zealand found that the number of Māori who could converse in Māori had dropped to 21% of the population in the 2013 Census from 25% in 1996, while a 2009 Newshub report noted that “Despite more New Zealanders classifying themselves on census forms as being able to speak Maori, the proportion of the Maori population able to converse in te reo is dropping.”

At the same time, New Zealand English has incorporated increasing numbers of Māori words. A *New Zealand Herald* report on the use of Māori loanwords found that a large number of Māori words had been introduced into everyday vernacular. Pita Paraone, a New Zealand First

¹ In this paper there is variation in the stylisation of “Māori”. Current orthography guidelines use a macron, but historically it was rendered as “Maori”. I have used “Māori”, but retained the source style in direct quotes and in the titles of legislation.

² There is also variation in the capitalisation of “Te Reo”. Other than direct quotes, I have chosen to use the capitalised version, in line with the style used in the Hansard.

member and a former chief executive of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori said in 2014 that "Words such as mana, whanau, hiko and hapu are examples of everyday use. We should also remember that the use of Maori words is not confined to New Zealand." The report further noted that the Dictionary of New Zealand English includes "746 words of Maori origin with about 69 per cent names of flora and fauna, 18 per cent are connected with social culture and 13 per cent material culture." (New Zealand Herald, Maori one of most borrowed languages, 2014).

White (2016) describes the importance of Te Reo to Māori as:

The language is heavily intertwined with the culture. The use of te reo Maori has a major impact on the ability to perceive the world through te ao Maori³. It is important to note that there is reasonable accessibility for MPs to use te reo Maori in Parliament. Its position as an official language of New Zealand allows for speeches and questions to be asked and answered in te reo Maori.

Although members now have the right to speak in Te Reo in Parliament, the use of this right is restricted by member proficiency, and, perhaps for some parties, ongoing questions of the accessibility of debate in Te Reo for the non-Te Reo speaking public. Most recently, this concern received extensive national media coverage in November 2017 when Dr Don Brash, a former leader of the National and ACT parties, criticised the use of Te Reo greetings on the public radio broadcaster, RNZ. Dr Brash said he was "utterly sick" of the use of Te Reo, as "'Not 3% of people listening to RNZ at that time will have the faintest clue what he's talking about. ... It's an insult to 98% of its audience" (RNZ, 2017).

In New Zealand and around the world, there is increasing recognition of the role that language plays in the status of and opportunities facing indigenous people. This was highlighted by de Varennes (2012):

"[L]anguage has an tremendously important role as both gatekeeper and doorway: indigenous peoples may be excluded or disadvantaged where a government limits or refuses to allow the use of an indigenous languages within the institutions of the state and relations with the public, or a doorway can be opened in both education and advancement when the use of an indigenous language can serve to empower members of indigenous communities."

For the use of Te Reo in the House to move past ceremonial or incidental use (through loan words) and become a civic language of New Zealand, it needs to be used in the everyday

³ "The Māori world"

operation of the House and in substantive debate. Stephens and Monk (2012) define a civic language as “the language of the enactment of state law, of government, administration, politics and the economy. This language ultimately determines the rights and obligations of New Zealand citizenship. Almost exclusively, English is the civic language of New Zealand.” Ahu (2012) argues that for Te Reo to become “a civic language, and in particular a functional language of New Zealand law, it must be used freely and effectively in the primary law-making institutions of the state; namely, in Parliament and the courts.” This position is supported by Stephens (2012), who says:

There is no question that te reo Māori is capable of being a language of legal enactment and legal consequence; it was used as such many times in the Nineteenth century. ... It may also be possible to argue that the use of Māori in the House has indirectly generated more use of Māori in civic discourse outside the House. At the time of writing, Māori-speaking MPs ... feature regularly on Māori language broadcast media to discuss, analyse, defend and critique political action and inaction.”

This paper aims to look at the use of Te Reo Māori in the New Zealand Parliament and whether the initiatives and changes that Parliament has used to promote the use of the language have resulted in an increase in Te Reo being used within Parliament as part of substantive debate—as a civic language. In this paper I consider the history of the use of Te Reo in Parliament, and investigate how it was used in 1986 and 2016—as a primarily ceremonial language or as a civic language used to advance debate in the House.

History of Māori culture and language in Parliament

Since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the place of Te Reo in New Zealand has faced inconsistent treatment in Parliament, in Māori communities, and in the wider society.

Māori representation in Parliament has been entrenched since 1867—13 years after the first New Zealand Parliament—when four Māori electorates were established. This guaranteed four of the 70 seats in Parliament to Māori members. This number increased after 1993, and since 2002 there are seven Māori electorates out of a total of 120 seats in Parliament. Māori voters today can choose to be on either the general electoral roll or the Māori roll—those on the Māori roll are eligible to vote for the Māori electorates.

As not all Māori members from 1867 were fluent in English, an interpreter was appointed to Parliament in 1868. Other actions were taken to support Māori members, including publication of Standing Orders in Māori⁴ and, until 1906, a translation of the Hansard into Te Reo⁵.

In the twentieth century, accommodation and support for members speaking in Te Reo declined. Deputy Speaker Guinness ruled in 1901 that without leave of the House, Māori members could not have their time limits extended to accommodate interpretation, and following a reduction to one interpreter, Speaker Lang ruled in 1914 that Māori members must speak in English if they are able to, saying “[A]lthough there is no Standing Order on the subject, it is not proper, nor is it consistent with the dignity of the House, for the honourable member to speak in Maori unless his speech is interpreted.” (NZPD, vol.163, 1913, p.362). After 1920 no interpretation services were made available in the House, so, following on from Speaker Lang’s ruling, use of Te Reo was permitted only when members themselves provided an immediate interpretation. In 1951, Hon Eruera Tirikatene sought leave to speak in Te Reo on the Maori Social and Economic Advancement Amendment Bill, suggesting that he could then translate his comments to the House. This request was rejected by Speaker Oram, who explained “I do not think he should address the House in Maori. It is laid down clearly that any member who can address this House in the English language should do so.” (NZPD, vol. 296, p. 1193).

Attitudes towards Te Reo started changing in the 1970s and 1980s with a wave of social activism, and in 1985 the 41st Parliament introduced Standing Order 151⁶, “Speeches in English or Maori—A member may address the Speaker in the English language or the Maori language.” At the time, Minister of Maori Affairs, Hon K.T. Wetere said ““Indeed, on many occasions Maori and pakeha members have used the Maori language for ceremonial reasons ...Maori would probably be used during a debate on any Bill that had a Maori connotation.” Dr Bruce Gregory (Northern Maori) suggested “the essence of the Maori input that would arise as a result of the Standing Order we are discussing would be essentially ceremonial in nature, so translation would not be so very important. As Maori members of the House would certainly appreciate—and, I should like to think, many other members of the House—it is the ceremonial aspect of speaking Maori that is important, rather than the content of the speech ...”. (NZPD,

⁴ Ture Whakahaere Korero Me Nga Tikanga Mahi a Te Whare i Pootitia, Mo Nga Mahi a Te Katoa

⁵ Niu Tireni — Nga Korero Paremete — Nga Whai Korero a nga Mema Māori

⁶ Now listed as Standing Order 108

vol.464, 1985, p.5898). Despite these comments from Māori members that the use of Te Reo in the House was likely to be primarily ceremonial in nature, Hon V.S. Young expressed concern in the 1986 Address in Reply debate that the change to Standing Orders would increase the use of Te Reo in substantive debate at the expense of English: “While it is desirable for the Maori language to be spoken among Maori people, and that the community as a whole has a knowledge of it, it should not be at the expense of the English language. ... The Maori language should not be developed at the expense of the English language, because one will not help raise the socio-economic status of the Maori people by making the English language expendable.” (NZPD, vol. 469, p. 376).

Further opposition can be seen to this legitimization of Te Reo in written question 101 from 29 May 1986 (NZPD, vol. 471, p. 1801).

Mr Townshend (Kaimai) to the Minister of Maori Affairs; How does he intend to accommodate the use of Maori as an official language to deal with terms, nomenclatures, and technical descriptions for which there is no Maori language, and does he intend to legitimise pidgin Maori that has been developed over the years from English?

Hon. K.T. Wetere (Minister of Maori affairs) replied: The Maori language is undergoing a continuous and continual evolution to take account of modern technology, and, as the language is basically descriptive, very few circumstances are envisaged whereby a technical term or nomenclature or any other term could not be adequately described by word-pictures. As part of the ongoing process to deal with any new terminology or the use of transliterations, it will be the responsibility of the Maori Language Commission, in consultation with tribal and other interested groups, to standardise new words.

In 1986 the Waitangi Tribunal acknowledged that Te Reo is a “taonga” under the Treaty of Waitangi, and stated that the Crown has a responsibility for its preservation. Te Reo Māori was formally made an official language of New Zealand in 1987, with the passing of the Maori Language Act. This Act also conferred the right to speak Maori in certain legal proceedings and established the Maori Language Commission (later renamed Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori), with the aim of promoting the use of Te Reo Māori. While this was a large step forward for Te Reo Māori in becoming a civic language, it was not until 1997 that Speaker Kidd ruled that “when a member speaks in Māori that member does so as of right.” (NZPD, 1997, Vol. 562. p. 3192). Interpretation became widely available for members in 1999, when an interpreter was

appointed; this interpretation became more accessible for members and the public in 2010, when simultaneous interpretation was introduced in the House and made available for members and on Parliament TV.

In terms of policy, the Government released its revised Māori Language Strategy in 2003, seeking to increase the use of Te Reo in New Zealand, particularly by Māori. In 2011 the Waitangi Tribunal released *Ko Aotearoa Tēnei* (“This is New Zealand”), its report into the place of Māori culture, identity, and traditional knowledge in contemporary New Zealand law, government policy, and practices. The report was the tribunal’s response to Wai 262, commonly referred to as the “Indigenous Flora and Fauna and Cultural and Intellectual Property Claim”. The report found that the Māori Language Strategy was not working and recommended that Te Taura Whiri have an expanded role and authority in pushing the use and proficiency of Te Reo in New Zealand.

An updated bill, the Māori Language (Te Reo Māori) Bill, was introduced in 2014 to replace the 1987 Act. The new legislation, passed in 2016 as *Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori*, aimed to strengthen the recognition of the Māori language and the leadership roles of iwi and Māori. The Māori and English texts have equal authority, while the Te Reo text will have precedence in the event of a conflict in meaning. The then Minister for Māori Development, Hon Te Ururoa Flavell, described how the legislation would give effect to Te Reo being a language of the legal process, saying, in Te Reo, “In regard to the Crown, it is in terms of the legal processes, and ours is to increase how the Māori language is used in Government departments: firstly, to speak the language more; secondly, to communicate more in the Māori language and to strengthen its use in all situations in the country.” (official translation, NZPD, vol 713, p. 10599).

Research

With the changes in Parliament since members were again allowed by right to speak in Te Reo Māori, I wanted to look at whether its use in the House had increased and whether that use was primarily ceremonial or whether it was used for substantive or civic functions. My hypothesis is that since 1985 the use of Te Reo in the House has increased and that the proportion of it used for substantive debate has grown.

Method

I recorded all instances where Te Reo Māori was spoken in full sentences in the New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) for the years 1986 (vol 469-477) and 2016 (711-719). As discussed previously, New Zealand English has incorporated many Māori words and phrases—such as greetings, short phrases, and simple nouns and verbs—while the wider society has a broad understanding of some key Māori concepts, such as whānau (extended family), tangata whenua (indigenous people; literally “people of the land”, and taonga (treasures), which have an important basis in law. For this reason, only full sentences or extended phrases that required translation were included in my research.

Choice of data-sets:

In order to make the most accurate and relevant comparison, the years 1986 and 2016 were chosen for analysis.

1986: The decision to allow members to speak in either English or Te Reo was made in mid-1985. The first full calendar year in which this was in operation was 1986.

2016: This was the most recent full non-election calendar year. Conveniently, as New Zealand Parliaments have a 3-year duration, the 30-year interval meant that the same stage in the election cycle (the year before an election) was able to be looked at.

Assessment criteria.

- All such uses of Te Reo were recorded, by date, along with the member, whether the contribution was made during question time, whether the contribution was made in a

debate focused on Māori issues⁷, the number of sentences in Te Reo, and whether the segment in Te Reo was substantive or ceremonial.

- Uses in question time were counted as one sentence per question and one sentence per answer.
- Ceremonial uses included greetings, acknowledgments, whakatauki (proverbs), and karakia (prayers)- i.e., anything that did not have a direct impact on the debate or running of the House. Substantive contributions referred to the legislation or topic being debated, advanced an issue, or affected the operation of the House—e.g., points of order. All contributions made during question time were deemed to be substantive. Segments that were primarily ceremonial but had a substantive aspect were recorded as being substantive.
- Information about members who spoke in Te Reo was also recorded, noting whether they were ministers of the Crown, represented Māori electorates, and whether they identified as Māori. This identification was recorded from members noting their whakapapa (genealogy) in the House or on their official websites, or from media reports.

Limitations

Hansard in 1986 did not record the debates of the committee of the whole House, only the committee's resolutions; however, these are included in the 2016 Hansard. I made the decision to include 2016 contributions recorded in the committee stage because, although this was a very small number (under 20; under 3 percent), their inclusion in the Hansard represents a record of what the public is able to reference.

Another challenge is the variance in sitting patterns and sitting hours. Geiringer et al (2011) shows that the use of urgency has decreased since the introduction of MMP, and since Standing Orders in 2011 began allowing the use of planned extended sittings, which have most frequently been used for advancing Treaty settlement legislation. The inclusion of Written Questions in the NZPD in 1986 also means it is not relevant to compare the number of pages of NZPD as a marker for the amount of House time. Speaker David Carter informed the House in the adjournment debate that it had sat for 535 hours in 2016 (Carter, vol 719, 14 Dec, adjournment debate). The Journals of the House records Parliament sitting for 1120 hours from 1986 to mid-1987—extrapolating from this, Parliament sat for 746.5 hours in 1986. The scope of

⁷ Treaty of Waitangi settlement legislation, Māori Purposes bills, legislation governing Māori trust boards, Te Ture Whenua Māori/Māori Land Act, Te Pire mō Te Reo Māori/Māori Language Bill

this study did not allow me to investigate this further and incorporate the variance in sitting hours into my analysis.

Results

Between 1986 and 2016 there was a drastic (5933%) increase in the number of speeches where members spoke at least one full sentence of Te Reo Māori, and a 8400% increase in the number of speeches that made substantive contributions in Te Reo. The tables below show how those contributions were distributed across the different categories that were considered.

Table 1: Categorisation of the Te Reo contributions made in Parliament in 1986 and 2016

		Number of speeches using full sentences of Te Reo Māori							
		Total		Ceremonial		Substantive (all)		Substantive (10+ sentences)	
		1986	2016	1986	2016	1986	2016	1986	2016
Total		12	712	10	544	2	168	1	99
Topic	Māori focused	5	330	4	221	1	109	1	92
	General	7	382	6	323	1	59	0	7
Electorate type	Māori	7	222	5	145	2	77	1	61
	General or list	5	490	5	399	0	91	0	38
Ethnicity	Māori	8	546	6	390	2	156	1	99
	Non-Maori	4	166	4	154	0	12	0	0
Role	Ministerial	7	67	5	30	2	37	1	20
	Non-Ministerial	5	645	5	514	0	131	0	79

Table 2: Proportional distribution of Te Reo contributions in 1986 and 2016

	1986	2016
Percentage of speeches featuring Te Reo that used it for substantive debate	16.7%	23.6%
Percentage of speeches that used Te Reo for substantive debate that had 10 or more sentences of Te Reo	50.0%	58.9%
Percentage of total speeches using Te Reo that were made by Māori members	66.7%	76.7%
Percentage of substantive contributions in Te Reo made by Māori members	100.0%	92.9%
Percentage of substantive contributions given in debates on Māori topics	50.0%	64.9%

Table 3: Distribution of contributions in Te Reo by political party in 2016

Party	Number of members	Party's proportion of all speeches using Te Reo	Party's proportion of all speeches using Te Reo substantively	Number of speeches using Te Reo in substantive debate per party member
ACT	1	0.1%	0.0%	0.0
Greens	14	24.3%	24.4%	2.9
Labour	32	32.3%	29.2%	1.5
Māori Party	2	12.1%	31.0%	26.0
National	59	25.7%	7.1%	0.2
New Zealand First	12	5.5%	8.3%	1.2
United Future	1	0.0%	0.0%	0

Question Time

Question time was exclusively in English in 1986, so a direct comparison cannot be made.

The results from 2016 show a total of 29 overall questions (question consisting of primary question and answer and supplementary questions and answers) had at least one of the questions asked in Te Reo, with 45 individual questions (across both primary and supplementary questions) asked in Te Reo. Of the 29, 24 had only the primary question—the

question given on notice—asked in Te Reo. All 45 individual questions were asked by members of either the Green Party or the Māori Party.

In comparison, eight overall questions had at least one of the answers given in Te Reo, with 29 individual answers (to primary and supplementary questions) given in total. These came from the two Ministers of Māori ethnicity recorded speaking Te Reo in the House, Hon Te Ururoa Flavell (Māori Party) and Hon Hekia Parata (National).

Of the total of 1154 questions on notice in 2016, 29 (2.5%) were asked in Te Reo; and of the answers to those 1154 questions, 8 (0.7%) were given in Te Reo. The Hansard page on the New Zealand Parliament website shows 5,275 non - question time speeches recorded in 2016, which range from brief one-sentence closure motions to 20-minute speeches on debates. My data shows that 2.5% of those speeches contained substantive contributions in Māori, echoing the rates seen in oral questions.

Waiata

I also counted the the number of times waiata were recorded in the Hansard. Waiata are recorded with an editorial comment when visitors in the public gallery perform a Māori song, generally in recognition of Treaty settlement legislation or in honour of maiden or valedictory speeches. No waiata were recorded in 1986; 21 were recorded in 2016. Although this paper is primarily focused on substantive contributions, the representation of Māori culture in proceedings of Parliament is useful for considering the broader context of the changes in the use of Te Reo.

Discussion

It is clear that there has been a significant increase in both the number of instances of Te Reo Māori being spoken in the House and the number of times it was used as part of substantive debate, affirming the hypothesis that the use of Te Reo in substantive debate has increased since 1986, with 23.6% of the speeches recorded using Te Reo having a substantive element in 2016, compared to 16.7% in 1986. The majority of uses, both substantive and ceremonial, were from Māori members, although there was also a large increase in the number of uses from non-Māori members.

Question Time

Question time is not only one of the Opposition's best opportunities to hold the Government to account; it is one of the most publicly accessible and accessed aspects of Parliament, with repeated replays on Parliament TV and greater media coverage than other House time. As such, it is a good marker of what the New Zealand public sees of members' use of Te Reo in the House, and can be used by parties to communicate their values and priorities to the voting public. The Green Party and Māori Party's use of Te Reo when asking questions, especially the primary questions on notice, reinforces those parties' policies on Te Reo and Māori issues generally. This can be seen in the broader patterns of use within parties—proportionally, the Māori Party and, to a lesser extent, the Green Party had significantly higher rates of substantive use of Te Reo than other parties.

In a contrasting example, in 2017, in the lead-up to the election campaign, Rt Hon Winston Peters, the leader of the New Zealand First Party, accused Hon Te Ururoa Flavell of hiding behind the Māori language when giving his answers in Te Reo. Although Flavell was allowed under Standing Orders to speak in Te Reo, and simultaneous interpretation was available, Peters argued that listeners on the radio may not be able to understand his answers (Stuff, *Winston Peters takes issue with the use of Te Reo Maori in Parliament, 26/07/2017*). This objection allowed Peters to reinforce with the public his stance opposing “special treatment and separatism” (New Zealand Herald, *Peters unveils NZ First treaty policy, 22/07/2005*).

Hon Hekia Parata's use of Te Reo in her answers was in situations where the primary question was delivered in Te Reo, or where the matter being discussed was specifically focused on Māori issues. Similarly, Flavell's answers in Te Reo related to his ministerial roles concerning Māori development and wellbeing. It is natural that a greater proportion of questions than answers would be given in Te Reo, as there is a larger number of members allowed to ask questions than there is of Ministers able to answer them (94 compared with 27, as at December 2016). I note that of the total speeches that used Te Reo in 2016, 90.6% were made by non-ministerial members. Answering questions also requires a greater degree of proficiency in the language, particularly for supplementary questions, which are not on notice.

New Zealand's other official language, New Zealand Sign Language, was used twice in Parliament in 2016 (no use recorded in 1986—indeed, the language received official status in 2006), with both instances used to briefly acknowledge New Zealand Sign Language Week. In 2016 the New Zealand Parliament had one Deaf member, Mojo Mathers, who used exclusively

English when speaking in the House. It is an interesting point of comparison when considering the volume and content of Te Reo spoken, highlighting the relatively significant volume of Te Reo used by members.

Treaty Settlements

Of the substantive contributions made in Te Reo in 2016, 64.9% were on Māori-focused topics—primarily, Treaty of Waitangi settlement legislation and the updated Māori language legislation. In 1986, this number was 50%, with one speech using Te Reo given on the Maori Language Bill.

The importance of speaking in Te Reo during debates on Treaty settlements was expressed by former Māori Party member Hone Harawira: “And language is a big issue. Because within the language, there’s everything. You cannot truly understand your history unless you can understand it in the language by which it was handed down, generation to generation.” (Hone Harawira, *Diversity in Parliament: Listening to the voices of minorities and indigenous peoples*. Ed. E. Powley, UNDP, 2010). Marama Davidson, in the debate on Te Pire mō Te Reo Māori/Māori Language Bill, also expressed her thoughts on the value of using Te Reo in debate: “Another valuable benefit of this type of legislation before the Committee is the actual debate and discussion that is heard and seen being carried entirely in the Māori language, is it not? Absolutely! This is the real effect of legislation like the Māori Language Bill.” (official translation, NZPD, vol. 12, p.10205).

The National Government of 2008-2017 aspired to achieve “all historical Treaty of Waitangi settlements by 2014. In line with this goal, the progress of Treaty settlements has increased significantly. A rapidly increasing volume of Treaty of Waitangi settlement bills has resulted.” (Christopher Finlayson, correspondence with Speaker, February 2011). Although the 2014 goal was not met, Finlayson reaffirmed his commitment to the process in a 2014 editorial that noted that fewer than 50 settlements remained (New Zealand Herald, Chris Finlayson: Treaty settlements working for the betterment of us, 2014).

With a large proportion of the substantive contributions being focused on Treaty settlement legislation, it raises a question of how the volume of Te Reo may change once all settlements have been resolved. While considering the future of Māori people and culture after settlement, Sheryl Lightfoot (2010) argues that:

“Once Maori grievances are settled, they are expected to take their places next to other New Zealand citizens as ‘one people’ under ‘one law’ – the Crown’s law. This understanding of reconciliation, which is shared by both major political parties, thus attempts to effectively retain the colonial order in New Zealand and presumes the superiority of Pakeha culture and government.”

It would require a concerted effort by members and Parliament to maintain and increase the volume of substantive contributions in Te Reo once settlements are resolved. In addition, the majority of the waiata recorded in 2016 celebrated the passing of different stages of Treaty settlement bills (waiata also followed maiden and valedictory speeches by members). Once Treaty settlements have been resolved, the frequency of waiata in the House, which are a significant ceremonial aspect of Māori culture in Parliament, may decrease markedly.

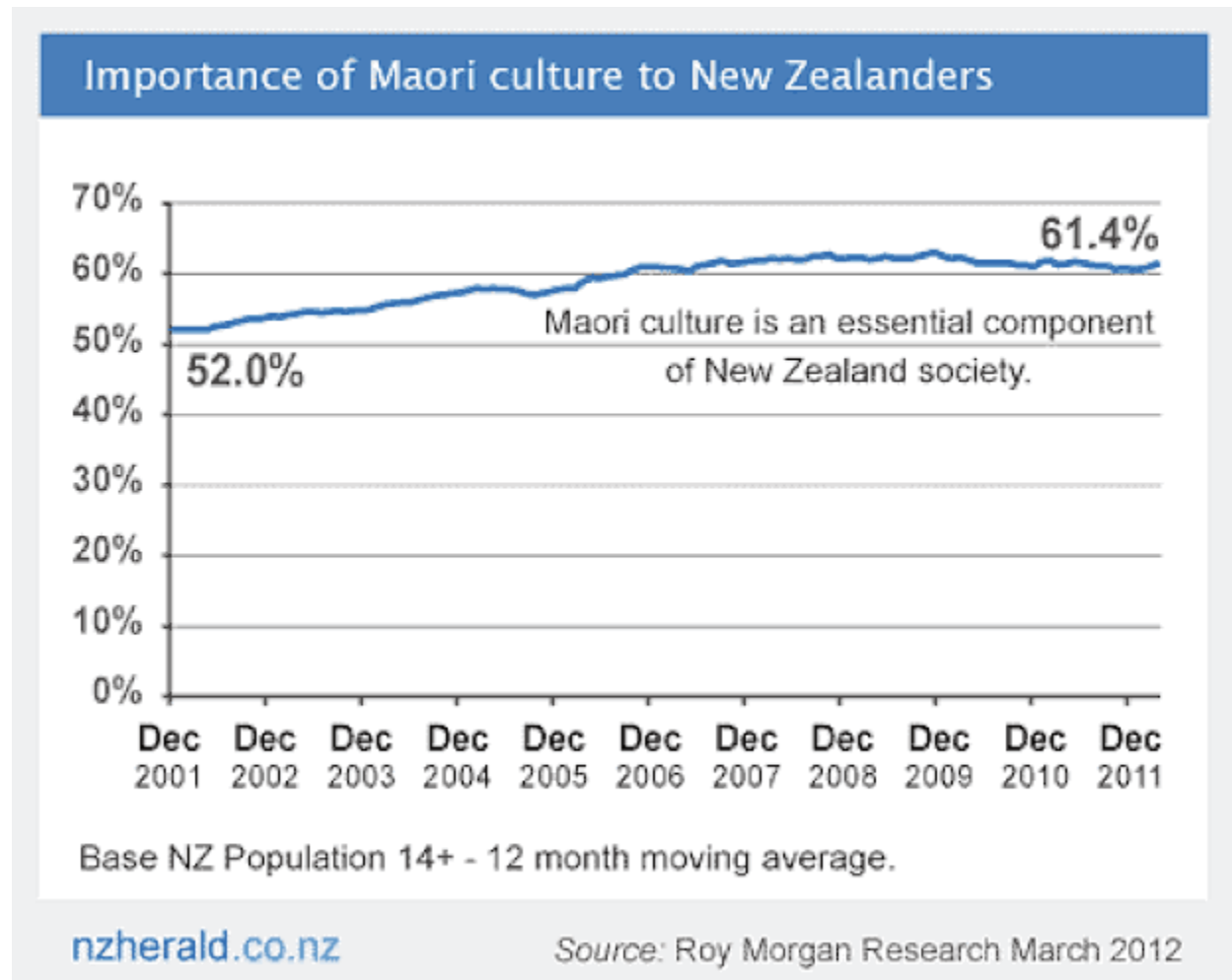
What has influenced the changes

The increase in both the use of Te Reo and the use of Te Reo substantively in Parliament between 1986 and 2016 has been influenced by changes in society and changes in Parliament’s processes.

In Parliament, a number of actions have been taken to support and encourage the use of Te Reo by members. As discussed earlier in this paper, these include changes to Standing Orders and Speaker’s rulings, the provision of interpretation, and the increased number of Māori electorate seats. These changes have sought to normalise and integrate Te Reo into the running of the House, increase Māori representation, and support members with translations and assistance with Te Reo, enabling them to communicate effectively with other members and with the public in the Māori language when they choose to.

Although New Zealanders’ proficiency in Te Reo has decreased since 1996 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013), attitudes are increasingly positive regarding the place of Te Reo and Māori culture in society. Dr Paul Moon argued in 2012 "It's a demographic fact, a cultural fact and a social maturity fact that increasingly we will begin to see that aspect of the culture as integral to New Zealand society" (Maori culture increasing in importance to NZers, New Zealand Herald, 2012). It follows that voters are likely to consider parties and candidates’ positions on and proficiency with Te Reo and Māori culture among other factors when electing their Parliament.

Figure 1: The changing attitude of New Zealanders to the importance of Māori culture. (New Zealand Herald, 2012)



Future research opportunities

In many ways, this paper has raised more questions than it answers. It would be valuable to analyse additional years—especially those following major changes within Parliament, such as the provision of interpretation (1997) and simultaneous interpretation (2010)—to see how the rate of use changed each year and which initiatives significantly affected this.

My personal observations of members' use of Te Reo in the House in 2017 indicated an increased rate of use compared to 2016, especially from the beginning of the 52nd Parliament in November. With several new Māori and Te Reo-speaking members, and a Māori presiding officer (Assistant Speaker Adrian Rurawhe, who represents a Māori electorate), a number of procedural exchanges in the House have been conducted entirely in Te Reo. It would be an

interesting point of comparison in the future to include the data for 2018 or 2019 (to match the stage of the election cycle considered in this paper) and see whether this trend has continued.

Conclusion

The use of Te Reo Māori in the New Zealand Parliament has increased significantly since Standing Orders were changed in 1985 to allow members to speak in either Te Reo or English, with an increased proportion of those speeches being used to contribute substantively to the debate, affirming the tested hypothesis. The major change I observed was an increase in the volume of Te Reo used, though the majority of contributions continued to be ceremonial in nature, and delivered by Māori members on Māori-focused topics. In the 30-year period between the two years I looked at in my research, Parliament took active steps to foster the use of Te Reo by members. While it is not clear, from the research in this paper, which specific steps have had the most impact, the cumulative effect has been significant.

Stephens and Monk (2012) argue that the civic development of the Māori language should not be ignored or undervalued:

“There should be no illusions that the granting of a limited type of institutionalisation of the Māori language within Parliament is any more than a step in the right direction. Nevertheless the example afforded to us by the New Zealand Parliament shows it can be done.”

The growth in the use of Te Reo in substantive debate in Parliament , a forum of the public's values and goals, is encouraging for the future of Te Reo as a civic language.

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