

## Kükupa, Koro, and Kai : The use of Mäori vocabulary items in New Zealand English Children's Picture Books

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### **1. Introduction**

When a linguistic form from one language is used in another language, such words are known as borrowings or loan words (Crystal 2003: 56). The English language is renowned for its large capacity for borrowing and it has been suggested that the growth in internationalism in recent times has led to people seeking new words to indicate their local identity (Crystal 1995; Crystal 2003). Certainly this is the case of New Zealand English, the most distinctive aspect of which is borrowings from te reo Maori (Deveson 1991). In 1984 Deveson estimated that most New Zealanders have a passive knowledge of at least 40-50 borrowed Maori loan words (Deveson 1984). This figure has been recently revised by Macalister to 70-80 such words (20,-,63.). A study of the frequency of Maori loan words in New Zealand English in New Zealand *School Journals* of the 1960s and 1990s showed an incidence of around 6 words per 1,000 (Macalister 1999). Kennedy and Yamazaki (1999) also found borrowed Maori words at a rate of 6 per thousand words. Macalister (2006b) has examined the use of Maori loan words in New Zealand English across a 150 year period from 1850-2000. He examined a corpus of a little under five and a half million words from three sources: Newspapers, parliamentary debates and *School Journals*. Across the three sources there was an increase from 3.29 words per 1,000 in 1850 to 8.8 per thousand in 2000. Macalister lists the reasons for this change as including urbanisation of the Maori population between 1945 and 1975, which created more contact; the changing status of the Maori language with the kOhanga reo movement; the establishment of the Maori Language Commission (Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori) and legislation of Maori as an official language of New Zealand in 1987.

This paper examines the incidence and typographical characteristics of Maori borrowings in a small corpus of 13 New Zealand English children's picture books, a genre not previously examined in this respect, published by a Wellington-based publishing house between 1995 and 2005. The purpose of children's book can be seen as threefold: to introduce language, to entertain, and to introduce other's reality (O'Connell 2006.) An important aspect of the way in which children's literature introduces children to language is the introduction of new vocabulary (Temple & Snow 2003). The incidence of Maori loan words in such picture books has implications for the passive and productive knowledge of this vocabulary on the part of both the child and the adult reader, thus having implications for the changing face of New Zealand English.

## **2. Methodology**

All of the children's fiction picture books written in English and published by Huia Publisher<sup>1</sup> between 1995 and 2005 were analysed in terms of the frequency of Maori vocabulary items in proportion to the total words of the text. The Maori local words were also categorized using the system developed by Macalister(1999) and used in other studies.

Following the practice of Macalister(2004), lexical units were counted rather than individual words. Thus *Te Urewera* and *ti kouka* were each counted as one lexical unit. Longer phrases which were considered to be code switching were not included (e.g., *Haere rā, e Koro, haere rā* in *Haere* by Tim Tipene, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> "Huia (NZ) Ltd was established in 1991 by Robyn and Brian Bargn and is based in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. The business employs about 25 staff." (Huia Home page 2007).

Table 1: Frequency of words of Maori vocabulary items in children's picture books published by Huia publishers between 1995 and 2005.

Year of publication	Title of publication	Author	Frequency of Maori borrowings
1995	*Roimata's Cloak(g)	Esther Tamehana	.090
1997	*The Sandman	Esther Tamehana	.058
1997	*Whirikoki and his Seal	Mere Clark	.047
1998	Rangi and His Dinosaurs	Katerina Te Heikoko Mataira	.039
2000	*The Puriri Tree	Merito Tawhara	.063
2000	*Timo and the Kingfish	Mokena Potae Ready	.074
2001	*Taming the Taniwha	Tim Tipene	.090
2002	The Little Kowhai Tree	Witi Ihimaera	.030
2003	*Oh, Hogwash Sweetpea!	Ngareta Gabel	.035
2004	*Koro's Medicine	Melanie Drewery	.044
2004	*Cuzzies find the Rainbow's Eng(g)	Tommy Kapai	.046
2004	*Cuzzies meet the Motuhua Shark(g)	Tommy Kapai	.052
2005	*Haere	Tim Pipene	.043
		Mean Frequency	.056

Note: An asterish indicates the use of macrons on Maori vocabulary; (g) indicated the use of a glossary

Proper nouns have been included in the present analysis because previous research in this area (Macalister 2004) suggests that the use of proper nouns is an important indication of interaction between language and society.

### **3. Findings and Discussion**

The findings of this study relate to the frequency of Maori loan words in the text of the 13 children's picture books, the proportion of words in vocabulary categories, the way in which borrowings are typographically represented, and the use of pictures with referents which encourage discussion using borrowings. These areas will each be examined in turn.

#### **3.1 Frequency**

Previous research has shown an incidence of about 6 Maori vocabulary items per 1000 words (.006) of running text (Kennedy & Yamazaki 1999; Macalister 1999). Macalister's study used a corpus from *The Schools Journal* in which topics are varied. Topics covered in books published by Huia reflect Maori and Pacific experiences, stories and aspirations in Aotearoa New Zealand (Huia Home Page 2006), and so we might expect a higher incidence of Maori loadwords in this corpus. Another study which uses a more comparable corpus in terms of topic might be Macalister's (2004) analysis of Hansard records in which debate concerning Maori issues only was analysed for frequency of Maori vocabulary. This analysis showed a frequency of 25 percent 1000 words (0.025). In the present study results show that incidence of borrowed Maori vocabulary in the children's picture books examined was substantially higher than these previous studies (see Table 1), ranging from 30 items per 1000 in Witi Ihimaera's *The Little Kowhai Tree* (2002) to 90 items per 1000 in Tim Tipene's *Taming the Taniwha* (2001) and Esther Tamehana's *Roimata's Cloak* (1995). The incidence across the 13 books was 56 per 1000 words.

It is possible that the higher frequency of borrowed Maori items shown in Table 1 is due to the repetitive nature of the language in children's books. In other words, there are few types which are repeated often, leading to a relatively high frequency. The number of vocabulary types for each book is examined below in Table 2.

As is shown in Table 2, the number of types ranges from 3 in *Rangi and the Dinosaurs* to 18 types in *Koro's Medicine*. Six of the 13 books do have low numbers of types (four or fewer) which are repeated frequently. However, this repetition is likely to affect the other words in the text to an equal extent.

Table 2: Maori vocabulary types in children's picture books published by Huia publishers between 1995 and 2005.

Year of publication	Title of publication	Author	Frequency of Maori borrowings
1995	Roimata's Cloak	Esther Tamehana	18
1997	The Sandman	Esther Tamehana	11
1997	Whirikoki and his Seal	Mere Clark	8
1998	Rangi and His Dinosaurs	Katerina Te Heikoko Mataira	3
2000	The Puriri Tree	Merito Tawhara	4
2000	Timo and the Kingfish	Mokena Potae Ready	4
2001	Taming the Taniwha	Tim Tipene	4
2002	The Little Kowhai Tree	Witi Ihimaera	4
2003	Oh, Hogwash Sweetpea!	Ngareta Gabel	4
2004	Koro's Medicine	Melanie Drewery	18
2004	Cuzzies find the Rainbow's Eng(g)	Tommy Kapai	12
2004	Cuzzies meet the Motuhoa Shark(g)	Tommy Kapai	14
2005	Haere	Tim Pipene	11

Another possible reason for the increased incidence of borrowed Maori

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Vocabulary in this collection of books is the fact that all of the authors are Maori in ethnicity (Brian Bargh, personal communication, 17 April, 2007) and the books published by Hula reflect Maori and Pacific experiences (Huia Home page 2007). Most of the books in this study make reference to themes of special significance to te ao Maori. For example, *Taming the Taniwha* shows the special relationship between a grandson and his grandfather and incorporates the use of a pounamu to reflect achievement and mana. In *Timo and the Kingfish* Timo meets Tangaroa (the God of the Sea) and is introduced to the practice of giving something to Tangaroa in exchange for the first catch from the sea. *Koro's Medicine* also has the relationship between a boy and his koro (grandfather) central to the story and through the relationship introduces the reader and listeners to the concept of Maori medicine – rongoa. In *Haere* the practices around birth and death are featured, as well as the concept of whanau (family). Thus the themes in these books do lend themselves to a higher incidence of borrowed Maori vocabulary in comparison to *The School Journal* which includes stories representing a range of cultural perspectives.

A related and possibly relevant factor is the fact that several books (seven out of the 13) were first written in Maori and were later translated into English. This include *Roimata's cloak*, *The sandman*, *Whirikoki and his Seal*, *Rangi and his Dinosaurs*, *The Puriri Tree*, *Timo and the Kingfish* and *Oh, Hogwash, Sweatpea!* It is possible that this influenced the incidence of borrowed Maori items in the text of these books. The average use of borrowed Maori items in these six books was 58 per thousand, compared to 51 per thousand in the six books first published in English. Thus, while there is a difference, it is not large, and it is not possible to know from this small sample whether this is statistically significant.

### **3.2 Lexical categories**

Macalister (1999, following Kennedy and Yamazaki 1999) categorized borrowed Maori lexical items into three main categories: Flora and Fauna, Proper Nouns, and Tikanga Maori. He showed a shift from the journals of the 1960s which used words mainly referring to history and artefacts, to the journals of the 1990s in which borrowed Maori vocabulary is used more frequently to denote community and social interaction. Macalister suggests that this shift possibly reflects a change from regarding Maori as an historical culture of anthropological interest to representing it as a living culture. Table 3 shows the percentage of borrowed Maori words in these three categories.

*Table 3: Proportion of vocabulary token in children's picture books published by Huia Publishers between 1995 and 2005.*

Year of publication	Title of publication	Author	Flora and Fauna	Proper Nouns	Tikanga Maori
1995	Roimata's Cloak	Esther Tamehana	21%	49%	30%
1997	The Sandman	Esther Tamehana	8%	72%	19%
1997	Whirikoki and his Seal	Mere Clark	0%	80%	20%
1998	Rangi and His Dinosaurs	Katerina Te Heikoko Mataira	0%	100%	0%
2000	The Puriri Tree	Merito Tawhara	5%	95%	0%
2000	Timo and the Kingfish	Mokena Potae Ready	0%	100%	0%
2001	Taming the Taniwha	Tim Tipene	0%	80%	20%
2002	The Little Kowhai Tree	Witi Ihimaera	100%	0%	0%
2003	Oh, Hogwash Sweetpea!	Ngareta Gabel	11%	83%	6%
2004	Koro's Medicine	Melanie Drewery	35%	43%	23%
2004	Cuzzies find the Rainbow's Eng(g)	Tommy Kapai	0%	65%	35%
2004	Cuzzies meet the Motuhoa Shark(g)	Tommy Kapai	7%	83%	10%
2005	Haere	Tim Pipene	0%	43%	57%

Note: Some rows add to more or less than 100% due to rounding.

Of the 13 books in the present study, only five have less than 10% in the Tikanga Maori category, and nine have 60% or more in the Proper Noun category. In 12 of the 13 books 80% or more of the Proper Nouns referred to people's names rather than place names. So the categories of borrowed tokens in the current corpus of 13 books also trend towards using vocabulary relating to Tikanga Maori and to people. These trends are aligned with Macalister's (1999) suggestion that Maori are being reflected as a living social community.

### **3.3 Text presentation**

While frequency, token numbers and categories of borrowed Maori words tell us something about the characteristics of New Zealand English as used in the children's picture books in this study, another avenue of interest is the way in which these words are dealt with typographically. When dealing with written texts, the presentation of the text can say something about the status of the borrowed word (Macalister 2000). This section will examine how the borrowed Maori words are treated in the text in terms of italicisation, glossing and the use of macrons.

#### 3.3.1 Italicisation

Italics are often used to indicate a word or phrase which is foreign. Macalister's (2000) investigation of italicisation in *School Journals* shows that this was widely practiced in the 1960s. However, in the 1990s italics were used for emphasis as well as to indicate borrowings from languages other than Maori. He points out that this indicates words of Maori origin have been accepted as part of NZE. None of the 13 books in the present corpus used italicisation for borrowed Maori vocabulary items, which is indicative of either an expectation that the reader will know the item, or in the case of the use of a glossary, a reluctance to mark the words in any way. Indeed Huia confirms that it is their house style to not use italics for Maori words in English text (Robyn Bargh, personal communication, 26 April, 2007). This second approach probably allows for several audiences, ranging from those for whom the words are already part of their lexicon, to those for whom the words need some explanation. It can be argued that the lack of italicisation in some way allows for normalisation and acceptance of the vocabulary item. Once the glossary has been referred to and the reader remembers the meaning, there is nothing on the page being read to visually mark it as being any different to other words on the page.



### 3.3.2 Glossing<sup>2</sup>

Glossing is used when an author or an editor assumes a word's meaning may not be understood by some readers. Glossing can be given in the margin, as a footnote, or as an endnote. It can be embedded (e.g. 'the kākahu was a beautiful cloak made from kereru feather', Tamehana 1995); it can be a tautological gloss (e.g. *a kowhai tree*); or a glossary can be included, usually at the back of the book (Macalister 2000). Macalister lists a range of motivation for glosses: to make the meaning more transparent; to assist in acceptance of lexical borrowing; to remove a sense of foreignness; and to add colour. In *The School Journals* examined by Macalister, glossing was more common in the 1960s than in the 1990s. The most common form of glossing among the 13 books examined here is the use of an embedded gloss, which makes the meaning of the word more transparent without the reader having to consult a glossary. This form of embedded glossing was done in many of books to some extent: 'One day Roimata decided to visit her kuia, her grandmother, who lived at the foot of the mountain' (Tamehana 1995), and "'Ae, this is proper medicine," said Koro. "It's rongoa - Maori medicine"' (Drewery 2004). Three of the 13 books also made use of glossaries (*Roimata's Clock*, *Cuzzies find the Rainbow's End*, and *Cuzzies meet the Motuhoa Shark*). As mentioned above, the non-use of italics in conjunction with glossing (either embedded or as a glossary) could be seen as assisting in the acceptance of the borrowing.

### 3.3.3 Use of macrons<sup>3</sup>

Macalister (2005) describes three ways in which Maori words are written in New Zealand English: with macrons, with double vowels, or without either. His dictionary of Maori words used in New Zealand English follows the third practice. However, he acknowledges that New Zealanders are likely to need information about correct macronisation in order to aid pronunciation. The Maori Language Commission (Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Maori) promotes the use of the macron at all times in "all but a handful of cases" (Maori Orthographic Conventions, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Books which include glossaries are indicated by a (g) in Table I

<sup>3</sup> Books which use macrons are indicated by an asterisk in Table

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The Huia house style with regard to macrons is to follow the style set by Te Taura whiri i te Reo Maori unless the number of Maori words in the text is very low (Robyn Bargh, personal communication, 26 April, 2007). Eleven of the 13 books in the present study used macrons in the Maori vocabulary items with long vowels, two did not: The Little Kowhai Tree used two items in which the long vowels were not given macrons (kowhai and kotuku) and the Puriri Tree used one item without a macron on the long vowel (Hemi). In both cases it could be argued that these items were used without macrons because they have widespread acceptance in written New Zealand English without the use of a macron.

As discussed above, Macalister (2000)'s findings showed that word of Maori origin were more frequently identified as being foreign by either italicisation and/or glossing in the 1960s than in the 1990s in which words of Maori origin appear to be treated as an integral part of New Zealand English. The same can be said of children's picture books in the current study. An interesting contrast to this is the use of macrons which marks the Maori vocabulary items as being different to the other New Zealand English items. However, macrons are necessary to make a distinction between phonemes in the borrowed item, to ensure their correct pronunciation, and to ensure the correct meaning of the word is applied. Indeed the sustained use of macrons may in fact result in the normalization of this orthographic practice in New Zealand English. Alternatively, this practice may also lead to the development of a convention whereby a writer uses macrons to indicate their familiarity with the source language like the practice in formal written English associated with borrowed French word (e.g. café and après) when accents are used by some writers and not others.

### **3.4 Illustrations in picture books<sup>4</sup>**

When reading picture books to children, it is common practice to also spend some time discussing the illustrations (Temple & Snow 2003). In this study, it is noticeable that aside from the read text, there are many additional Maori text tokens and potential referents in the illustrations. For example, in *Oh Hogwash Sweetpea*, (Gabel 2003) a picture book is represented in the illustration on page 3 with a Maori language title *Te Taniwha i te Kura*. On the same page a knowhaiwhai pattern is used to a blanket on the bed. On another

page there is a wall clock with a paua shell surround, the little girl (Sweetpea) wears hair ties which are little pois, and her mother wears a bone pendant. A few pages further along there are three kete hung on the wall, and on another page there are Maori language flashcards on the floor next to where the little girl is playing (including *tiki, kete, anga*).<sup>5</sup> In Tim Tipene's *Taming the Taniwha* (2001) the main character's mum wears a t-shirt with *kia kaha* on it, there is the word *huka* on the sugar bowl on the table. On the door of school is the phrase *Nau mai. Haere mai*, and in the classroom is an alphabet frieze showing *I* for *ika*, and *H* for *heihei*. In Tommy Kapai's rhyming books about the *Cuzzies* (2004) there are also many pictorial uses of borrowed Maori words. In the rainbow book, the children wear t-shirts with *aniwaniwa* on them, and the car's registration is *car pai* (which is also a pun on the author's name - Kapai). There is a street sign on *Ornanu school* and both the main characters wear a carving - one bone and one pounamu. In the shark book, the children have *ika* on their t-shirts and the boat is called *waka pai*. So in a very real sense, these books are not only promoting the use of borrowed Maori words in the New Zealand English text by the reader and the listener, but they are also allowing for discussion of pictures which incorporate such items and play between the languages (e.g. *car pai*).

#### 4. Conclusions

The 13 New Zealand English children's picture books examined in this study use a higher frequency of borrowed Maori vocabulary items than has been found in previous studies of New Zealand English. These loan words are presented orthographically without the use of italics, but they are often marked by the use of macrons. The higher incidence of borrowed Maori vocabulary items in the New Zealand English picture books in this study may be due to the ethnicity of the authors, a focus on *te ao Maori* in these books, and the language in which book were originally written. Whatever the reason, this increased incidence of borrowed Maori items may be reflecting the characteristics of New Zealand English by reflecting a higher usage of borrowed Maori items in the New Zealand English of young New Zealand picture book readers and listeners. It may also be encouraging increased use of borrowed Maori vocabulary by introducing this vocabulary to young New Zealand picture book readers (and maybe also into the vocabulary of the adult readers). Of course it is possible that it is doing both at the same time.

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<sup>5</sup>This book was originally written in Maori and the illustrations from the Maori edition were used for the English edition too.

For readers whose New Zealand English already includes a high frequency of borrowed items, this higher incidence may serve to motivate the readers to identify and feel more comfortable with these books and, for Maori children in particular, gives voice to and reaffirms their linguistic heritage. This can only have positive implications for reading enjoyment and motivation. Galda and Callinan write "[i]f children never see themselves in books, that omission subtly tells these young people that they are not important enough to appear in books, that books are not for them" (2002: 277). In this case I interpret the use of language that a child is familiar with as a way of "seeing themselves in books", and thus the message that books are relevant to them is being sent.

For the second group of readers whose vocabulary does not already include the particular borrowed Maori items, these books may increase their receptive, if not also their productive vocabulary. Thus these books are in a position to have a powerful effect on the ever-changing face of the variety of English spoken in New Zealand, all the more so because they are potentially affecting the vocabulary of adults (as readers) and children (as readers and/or listeners) at the same time.

With regard to future progression of this research, an examination of the use of borrowed Maori lexical items from an earlier era would make for an interesting comparison. Additionally, it is the intention of the researcher to interview authors and editors of a subset of the books examined in this study to explore the decision making process around the inclusion of borrowed Maori vocabulary items (indeed these interviews are already underway). It is also intended to examine the receptive and productive knowledge of children who read these picture books to see how this compares with the findings of Macalister (2006) that adult New Zealanders know between 70 and 80 borrowed Maori vocabulary items. Given that across the 13 books examined in this small study 100 different lexical types are used, it is projected that the number of Maori words understood by children may be larger.

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