

The use of Māori words in National Science Challenge online discourse

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As one of the most salient characteristics of NZE, the steady flow of words of Māori origin has attracted the attention of NZE speakers and linguistics scholars alike, dating as far back as the 1940s (Anderson, 1946). However, one area that seems to have escaped scrutiny is that of digital technologies.

This paper presents data relating to the use of Māori borrowings as they occur in a corpus of scientific discourse on the websites of the eleven *National Science Challenges* (NSCs) and their associated Twitter feeds. We report findings in relation to three questions:

(1) Which borrowings are being used?

(2) How might we classify them in terms of cultural/core loans (Myers-Scotton, 2002) and semantic classes (Macalister, 2006)?

(3) How does the use of these loans compare with the loans we find in other genres?

We find that the use of Māori borrowings in our National Science Challenge Corpus differs substantially in both types and tokens to other corpora, such as the Wellington Spoken and Written Corpora (Bauer, 1993; Holmes et al., 1998). We also find that Māori borrowings make an appearance among the ten most frequently occurring words for just over half of the eleven NSCs. However, when studying the most frequent ten borrowings within each NSC, these exhibit a fair amount of variation (across the eleven NSCs, we find 69 distinct types).

The study of Māori borrowings in online discourse provides a fruitful avenue of inquiry into the ways NZE is being further influenced by te reo Māori.

References

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Data source

National Science Challenge Site: <http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/science-innovation/funding-info-opportunities/investment-funds/national-science-challenges>