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A Retrospective Case Study of Kiribati Identity Through Language Camp Participation

A thesis

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of the requirements for the degree

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Abstract

This retrospective study examined the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps, which was funded by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples in 2022 and 2023, as part of a broader context of Pacific language and cultural revitalisation in Aotearoa, New Zealand. I-Kiribati methodology and thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, combined with Maroro (dialogue, reminiscing, or storytelling), were used to examine the experiences and perspectives of five participants from various age groups.

This study examined how I-Kiribati participants in two Ueen Kiribati Language Camps describe their cultural identity and the effects they reported from participation in the language camps that reinforce their sense of cultural identity and contribute to their cultural confidence. The immersive experience included both theoretical and practical workshops, facilitated by elders and older members. The findings challenged the assumptions that a sense of belonging depends on speaking the language fluently, having a single I-Kiribati identity, and living in Kiribati. The camps offered a supportive environment where dual, multiple, and diasporic I-Kiribati could gather and share experiences, and reconnect with each other, their language and culture. This research contributes to the ongoing discussions around language and cultural revitalisation, emphasising the need for community-led initiatives to sustain Pacific languages. The findings also have the potential to inform educational strategies and funding policy decision making and support other Pacific communities delivering similar programmes.

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I-Karatia 2:20

Ao ai tiaki ngai ae I maiu ngkai, ma Kristo ae maiu I nanou; ao arou ae I maiu iai n te rab'ata, I maiu n onimakinan Natin te Atua, are E tangirai, are E anga Ngaia buku.

This thesis marks five years of personal and family change—a journey of spiritual, academic, and cultural growth. I could not have completed it without God's love and provision, and the unwavering support of my incredible dad, John; my loyal sister, Vicki; my beautiful children, Gabrielle, Mateo, and Hope; and my darling Jimmy. A special thank you to my Aunty Louisa, Uncle Jack, Aunty Kaetaeta, Uncle John, Aunty Nikinam and Uncle John for all your tangira, guidance and cultural advice over the years.

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To the participants who shared a time of Maroro with me—Kam rabwa! Your honesty, laughter, and tears are treasured. I hope this work honours your stories and gives back to our communities.

Finally, e bati au tangira to those from whom I inherited my Katei ni Kiribati—Tibu Tetimra ma Teiro, tinau nei Babera, ai tariu—the Clewa Lallees. Our blood, our bond—always.

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Glossary of I-Kiribati and Māori words

Te taetae ni Kiribati	English words
I-Kiribati	People from Kiribati
Kabwarabure	Confessing wrongdoings
Kaotan te Karinerine	Demonstrating respect
Kariaiakaki	Acceptance and belonging
Katibanakoan Mama	Avoiding Shame
Maneba	Meeting hous
Maroro	Dialogue, reminiscing or storytelling
Rabakau Mairouia te Roro Rimoa Nakon te Roro Ngkai	Intergenerational transmission of knowledge from elders to younger ones
Rekerekeu	Prior connections
Te Kabutiman	Engagement arrangements
Te Katei ni Kiribati	The way of being I-Kiribati
Te Kukurei ma te Mamanikangare	Humour and light-hearted interactions
Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki	Important relationships
Te Tonati	Donuts
Tibwangan te Utu	Family responsibility
Waa	Canoe
Kupu Māori	English words
Harakeke	Flax
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	The Treaty of Waitangi
Tikanga Māori	Māori customs, values, and practices
Tuakana/Teina	Older/younger

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research

"Taeka n Rabakau: Kateira ma rabakaura bon kinaakira"

Our culture and knowledge are our identity - Kiribati proverb

1.1. Introduction

The overarching purpose of this retrospective research was to determine the benefits and potential impact of a Ueen Kiribati Language Camp for its participants and how they describe their cultural identity. It also examined the effects they reported from participation in the language camps that reinforce their sense of cultural identity and contribute to their cultural confidence. My interest in this topic comes from various aspects of my life: my professional role in the primary and now tertiary education sectors, my position as a co-organiser of the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps, my personal experience navigating a dual English and I-Kiribati cultural identity, and my role as a mother with children who identify with multiple I-Kiribati identities.

I am the daughter of one of the first I-Kiribati families to immigrate to New Zealand in the early 1970s. My paternal heritage is English, and my maternal heritage is I-Kiribati. Born in Auckland in the mid-1970s, my family moved to the Solomon Islands for my father's work, where we became part of a large Kiribati community. My first languages were Te Tae Tae ni Kiribati, (the language of Kiribati) and Solomon Pijin. We returned to Aotearoa, New Zealand when I was nearly six, and I started assimilating into the local culture at school while being raised in Te Katei ni Kiribati (the way of I-Kiribati) at home. Over time, I lost

fluency in Te Tae Tae ni Kiribati, often replying in English, even though my mother spoke to me in I-Kiribati. This early experience of cultural and linguistic negotiation contributes to how I position myself as a researcher.

1.2. The Context for the Present Study

As I-Kiribati living in Aotearoa, New Zealand continue to navigate their identities, there is a growing need to develop strategies for revitalising and maintaining culture and language to strengthen cultural identity and enhance cultural confidence. Internationally, language camps have been effective in supporting learners to acquire new languages. Aswad's study of an English camp in Indonesia (2017) stated, "English is taught through various activities, games, songs, etc. Students can gain both new knowledge and experiences. As we can see that English camp as effective method to teach English well" (p.236). Similarly, Porter and Castillo's study (2023) of 60 non-native English-speaking learners found that "by the very nature of immersion language learning, students are exposed to the target language at all times in many contextual settings. It is thus possible for them to acquire the language in a more natural way" (p.156).

Here in Aotearoa, New Zealand immersive Māori language experiences for both Māori and non-Māori (Legge, 2010), known as Noho Marae (overnight stay at a Marae) facilitate learning that is based on Māori customs and practices. Edwards and Tauroa (2007) explain:

> Epistemological voyaging: thinking about a Māori-centric curriculum. Noho marae provide the opportunity for educational teaching and learning theory and practice that take place in sites where tikanga and āhuatanga Māori are the principles of

social relations in the operation of human interaction and intergenerational teaching, and where learning is contextualised to a space and place. These sites can frequently include, but are not limited to, schools (after school hours), halls, and marae proper.

Likewise, this community-led case study by Ueen Kiribati presented in this thesis explored how Kiribati individuals, particularly those with multiple identities or living in the diaspora, experience a Kiribati Language Camp. Like Noho Marae, the camp provided a culturally immersive environment that nurtured identity, language acquisition, and a sense of belonging.

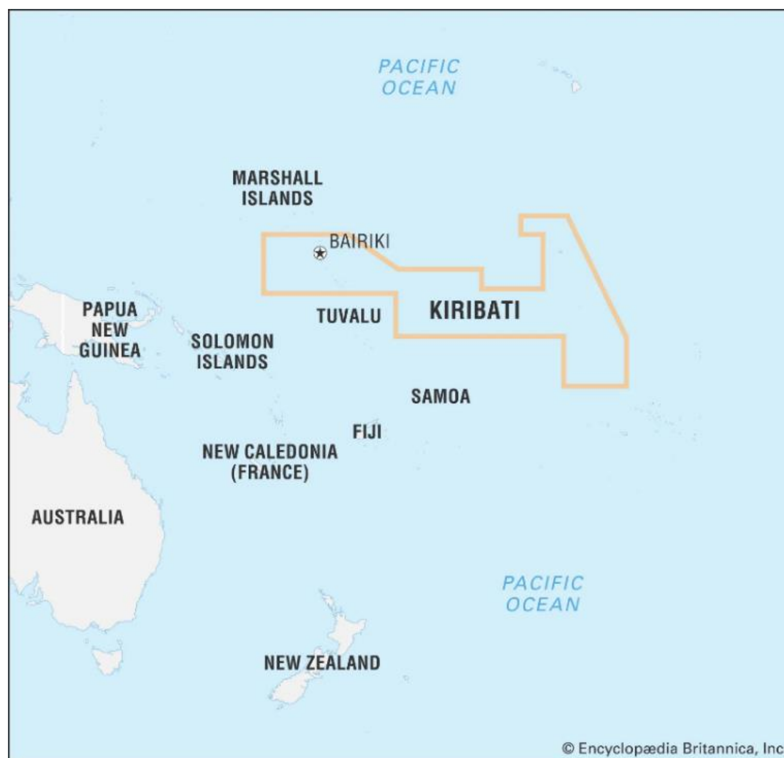

Figure 1: Map of the Kiribati (Source: Foster & Macdonald/Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024).

The Republic of Kiribati, previously known as the Gilbert Islands and locally referred by the local people as "Tungaru", is located in the Central Pacific, Micronesia. Its identity,

language, and culture are unique among other Pacific nations (Burnett & Bond, 2020). Kiribati consists of 33 atolls with a population of approximately 133,000 people (see Figure 1). Many atolls currently inhabited. Most of these atolls are low-lying and at risk of rising sea levels due to global warming (BBC News, n.d.).

1.3. Key Historical Dates

Key historical dates for Kiribati include Britain's declaration of a protectorate over the Gilbert Islands and the neighbouring Ellice Islands, which were combined to form The Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony in 1892. In 1975, Britain separated the colony into two distinct territories: the Gilbert Islands and the Ellice Islands. In 1979, the Gilbert Islands became an independent republic within the Commonwealth, known as Kiribati (a transliteration of Gilbert). The Ellice Islands gained independence as Tuvalu in 1978 (BBC News, n.d.).

1.4. Pacific Migration

Inter-Island migration in the Pacific has been a longstanding practice since pre-colonial times. The ancestors of Oceania viewed their world as a "Sea of Islands" rather than as "Islands in the Sea". They developed outstanding navigational skills and the spirit to traverse the waters that connected their island groups (Hau'Ofa, 1994), an expertise also found by Grimble and Maude (1989), who observed the following when describing I-Kiribati migrants:

> The people had, in fact, a sea sense that we do not possess to anything like the same degree, and it was obviously this gift more than any other agency that guided their migrant ancestors safely to land across a vast and strange ocean where their star lore could no longer serve them. (p. 73)

> The people had, in fact, a sea sense that we do not possess to anything like the same degree, and it was obviously this gift more than any other agency that guided their migrant ancestors safely to land across a vast and strange ocean where their star lore could no longer serve them. (p. 73)

1.4.1. Immigration to Aotearoa, New Zealand

Consistent with this spirit, of inter-island migration, the first immigrants from Kiribati moved to Aotearoa, New Zealand in the early 1970s and established the original Kiribati Group in the early to mid-1970s. These immigrants were not part of the formal immigration agreements between Aotearoa, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. Instead, they included expatriates and foreign volunteers who had worked in Kiribati and married I-Kiribati women.

The Watson, Williams, Humphry, Fleetwood, Packham, Dreaver, and Chung families formed the original I-Kiribati community in Aotearoa, New Zealand. They settled in various locations, including Auckland, the East Coast of the North Island, and Wellington. Additionally, the Butcher family from this community later moved to Australia (L. Humphry, personal communication, February 29, 2025). These couples started families, further expanding the group.

Unique to these families were their dual or multiple cultural identities: the female partner was I-Kiribati, and the male partner, an expatriate or foreign volunteer, was of English, New

Zealand Pākehā, and Chinese descent. A significant and enduring memory from my attendance was from 1981 when the original Kiribati community formed a group to celebrate the first Aotearoa, New Zealand - Kiribati Independence on the 12th of July. We gathered in the home of John and Nikinam Fleetwood in Pakuranga, Auckland. A small audience watched the Kiribati flag rise, and us children performed traditional dances.

The next significant wave of immigration from Kiribati to Aotearoa, New Zealand occurred in the mid-to-late 1980s, with the introduction of the third category[1], the Pacific Access Category (PAC). This visa set quotas for people from Tonga, Fiji, Tuvalu, and Kiribati to gain residency in Aotearoa, New Zealand (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, n.d.). With the arrival of new I-Kiribati workers, the original Kiribati group adapted to include them. Eventually, the original group grew to a point where individuals and families decided to make subgroups. Among these was a group originally known as the Bay of Plenty Kiribati Group, which later became the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group after breaking away from the original Kiribati group.

1.5. The Establishment of Ueen Kiribati

The Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group consisted of some families from the original Kiribati Group and several families who integrated from the later phases of immigration. A unique characteristic of this group was its effort to provide a sense of belonging to first-generation Aotearoa, New Zealand-born children with dual or multiple I-Kiribati cultural identities, as

[1] Category 1 Quota Scheme and Category 2 Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Scheme

well as those in the diaspora (L. Humphry, personal communication, February 28, 2025). Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group officially formed in the mid-to-late 1990s to access funding and has since become a well-established organisation. The group elected a President, Secretary, and Treasurer to oversee event management, fundraising, and annual meetings. The Ueen Kiribati Group nominated me as Secretary in 2022 to support administration.

The members of Ueen Kiribati nurtured a sense of community and family that was essential for developing a strong cultural identity. Regular gatherings were significant because many of the original couples did not have immediate family support, and for many, English was a second language. The group recreated communal living and social structure, operating as a microcosm of a small village in Kiribati, incorporating cultural practices such as collective responsibility, cultural transmission, and language maintenance. As children we often helped with meal preparation, fishing, and other basic tasks, such as making their parents cups of tea. I hold fond memories of spending a lot of time playing volleyball with mixed-age teams, card games, and occasionally traditional Kiribati games on the beach.

1.6. Loss of Identity, Language and Culture

Today, Aotearoa, New Zealand is home to over 3,000 I-Kiribati people who, like many immigrants, have moved here in search of a “better life”. Maintaining the I-Kiribati language, culture, and identity has been challenging because English is the primary language spoken in schools, often becoming the preferred language for children of I-

Kiribati heritage. In recent times, the Aotearoa, New Zealand government has acknowledged that the revitalisation and maintenance of language is important for Pacific People (New Zealand Government, n.d). Our Pacific languages matter because they tell the story of who we are. Language, culture and identity are essential to the well-being and longtime success of Pacific people in Aotearoa. (New Zealand Government, n.d).

Like I-Kiribati, other Pacific Peoples face similar struggles in navigating life within another culture, balancing their Pacific identities, languages and cultures while adapting to life in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Currently, nearly 400,000 Pacific people reside in Aotearoa, New Zealand, with two-thirds of them born in the country. Forty per cent speak at least one Pacific language (Stats NZ, 2023). The proportion of Pacific language speakers in Aotearoa, New Zealand has decreased from 2013 to 2018 (Stats NZ, 2018).

In 2019, the Ministry of Pacific Peoples (MPP) established the Pacific Community Languages Fund (PCLF) to support Pacific community groups in delivering language initiatives. This fund intends to revitalise, maintain, and increase the number of speakers of Pacific languages, thereby strengthening their identities and enhancing cultural confidence (2022, MPP).

In alignment with these goals, The Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group launched the Language Camp initiative in 2022 to address the need for revitalising I-Kiribati identity, language, and culture. The Group successfully applied for the Pacific Community Languages Fund (PCLF)

through the Ministry of Pacific Peoples (MPP). It hosted the first Kiribati Language Camp in January 2022, followed by a second camp in January 2023.

1.7. The Ueen Kiribati Language Camps

Designed to revitalise language, culture, and identity, the camps offered a three-day immersive experience with theoretical and practical workshops tailored for members of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group. As part of these workshops, the organisers invited grandparents and elders to share their cultural knowledge and encouraged other members to contribute their expertise across various disciplines (See Appendix H).

1.8. Research Purpose and Central Questions

Focusing on Aotearoa, New Zealand -born first-, second-, and third-generation I-Kiribati youth and those living in the diaspora, the overarching purpose of this retrospective study is to determine the benefits and potential impact of a Kiribati Language Camp for its participants. The central research questions guiding it were:

1. **How do Kiribati participants in two Ueen Kiribati Language Camps describe their cultural identity?**
2. **What effects do participants report from participating in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp that reinforce their sense of cultural identity and contribute to their cultural confidence?**

This study aimed to identify and document effective strategies for cultural and language revitalisation evident in the two Ueen Kiribati language camps held in 2022 and 2023. These strategies may be used to strengthen cultural identity and enhance the cultural confidence of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group through planned workshops and immersive camp experiences in the future.

These strategies may also have broader implications for supporting Pacific communities living in the diaspora, as well as Aotearoa, New Zealand-born Pacific Peoples who maintain strong cultural ties. In doing so, the study contributes to the growing body of literature that elevates Indigenous voices, promotes cultural revitalisation, and reinforces both cultural identity and confidence. The Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group committee and elders supports this retrospective research as part of the overall evaluation and sustainability of the camps.

1.9. Overview of Chapters

Chapter Two, the Literature Review, focuses on cultural identity among Abakati, (Half-caste/dual identity) individuals and the Pacific diaspora in Aotearoa, New Zealand. It examines research on international English and French language camps for Additional Language Learners (ALL), highlighting themes, benefits, and limitations of immersive

experiences. Following this, the study presents an analysis of Māori cultural and language programmes and Pacific bilingual programmes for Tongan and Samoan communities.

Chapter Three, Methodology, describes the qualitative methods used to explore the central research questions, which seeks to understand the benefits and potential impact of camp participation on participants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews combined with “Maroro” (dialogue, reminiscing or storytelling) with five members of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group incorporating Taona Tabon Inaim, a respectful Kiribati cultural practice.

Chapter Four, Findings, presents findings from interviews with five members of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group in the Bay of Plenty, New Zealand which addresses my central research questions. The analysis revealed two major themes: the first explores “Te Katei ni Kiribati”, (the way of being I-Kiribati) and its related minor themes, while the second examines “Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki”, (meaningful relationships) and its related minor themes.

Chapter Five, the Discussion and Conclusion, are briefly restates the findings and then discusses the findings in relation to relevant literature and theory. Any variations are identified and discussed. Following that, the implications and significance of the findings are discussed, along with strategies suggested for responding to them.

In the next chapter I present the Literature review, which examines existing research and relevant to this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This retrospective research examined how Kiribati participants from two Ueen Kiribati Language Camps described their cultural identity and the effects of participation that reinforced this identity and strengthened their cultural confidence. The overarching purpose was to determine the benefits and potential impact of a Kiribati Language Camp for its participants. This literature review examines relevant research in two areas. The first area reviews literature concerning cultural identity, particularly in relation to Pacific communities in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Given the apparent lack of research on Pacific Language Camps, the second area examined existing international research on language camps for Additional Language Learners (ALL) to identify relevant findings under the heading Immersive Language Camps for ALL (Section 2.4.). This review seeks to identify key themes, benefits, and limitations present in these language camps, as well as the effectiveness of culturally immersive experiences for additional language acquisition and the learning of intercultural practices for ALL.

Following this, I will examine Māori immersive cultural and language experiences alongside Pacific language education programmes for Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa, New Zealand under the heading “Immersive Cultural and Language Experiences” (Section 2.5). The focus will include how these immersive experiences and language programmes contribute

to cultural identity and cultural confidence for individuals working to maintain or revitalise their indigenous language and culture. I will also mention “Marawen te Rabakau”, a Kiribati Immersion Unit for Years 1–8, based at Finlayson Park School in Manurewa, Auckland, New Zealand, although there is currently no academic literature available on this programme.

2.2. Cultural Identity

This section will examine cultural identity from a broader context, focusing on the Pacific regions, specifically Polynesia, Melanesia, and, more closely, Micronesia, where Kiribati is located. It will then specifically address the cultural identity of I-Kiribati, born in Kiribati, Pacific identity for those living in in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and finally, New Zealand-born I-Kiribati, who have dual or multiple cultural identities or live in the diaspora.

Firstly, cultural identity needs a multifaceted approach and requires a clear definition of sociological terms. According to Schwartz et al. (2006) cultural identity is a specific aspect of social identity that connects individuals to their culture. It is the sense of unity a person feels with their own cultural group which influences how they think, believe, and act, not just towards their own group, but also towards other cultural groups.

Schwartz et al.'s (2006) study affirms Durie's (2006) study which measured Māori well-being and identity. Durie (2006) found that active participation by Māori in their Māori world created a stronger sense of cultural identity. He claimed, "Māori are more able to

participate in society as Māori if they have a secure cultural identity" (p. 8). In fact, the measurement of a secure cultural identity hinges around involvement with the range of institutions, activities and systems that underpin Māori society. Indicators include participation in marae, involvement in Māori networks, and knowledge of whakapapa.

2.2.1. Cultural Identity and Family

For Pacific Peoples, forming a strong cultural identity is linked to secure family and village ties. Teariki and Leau (2024) reviewed 86 texts which were published between 1990 and 2023. Teariki and Leau (2024) used shared principles of Pacific worldviews to inform their research on public housing, urban regeneration, and well-being in Aotearoa, New Zealand. They described "Family" as central to Pacific worldviews, "for Pacific Peoples, the notion of collective family, bound by kinship ties, goes beyond simply the concept of the nuclear family" (p. 139).

In Micronesian communities, including those of Kiribati, establishing a strong cultural identity is closely connected to family ties and communal bonds. Hezel's (2013) ethnographic research focused on Micronesian communities, including the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Palau, and Guam, conducted over several decades, involved observing and interacting with participants. Hezel (2013) examined Micronesians' cultural and social identity, emphasising the profound significance of an islander's social identity. He noted that "tight family cohesion is essential if its members were to succeed in a traditional society, just as harmony was a critical element for survival

at the village and island level" (p. 26). For Micronesian communities, family is central to their identity, therefore it requires individuals to conform to the social group, sometimes at the cost of their personal fulfillment (Hezel, 2013).

Further, family is not the nuclear family structure known in the West, which consists of a mother, father, and children. It also does not fit the “clan” definition either; “The clan is composed of hundreds and hundreds of people, usually spread over several islands; its members don’t interact regularly and many of them don’t know one another at all” (Hezel, 2013, p. 26).

The Micronesian notion of family emphasises the extended family rather than the nuclear and is embedded in traditions with strong ties to matrilineage; it represents an individual’s origins and functions as their most fundamental source of identity. Members of the extended family share responsibility for working the land and raising children (Hezel, 2013). The phrase “I am because, we are” (Hezel, 2013, p. 32) encapsulates this well. Thus, any breakdown in the family relationship can be dire and lead to individuals feeling that life is not worth living. Henzel (2023) describes, "loss of a job, failure in school, personal disgrace, or even the death of a loved one will seldom lead to suicide in the islands" (p. 31).

Lowe (2003) supports this notion of family at the core of Micronesian identity and adds that tension can arise when there is a misalignment between personal pursuits and traditional

family expectations. Through ethnographic research methods, Lowe (2003) examined the role of the family in shaping Chuuk[2] adolescent's social and personal identities. Through participant observations and interviews with forty individuals over 11 months (1996–1997), the study found that an emotional crisis emerged from "the incongruence in their pursuit of valued personal and social identities within the family, community, and peer group" (Lowe, 2003, p. 187). Consequently, young people who faced more incongruity in their engagements across their various social environments were at greater risk of experiencing stress affecting their overall well-being.

Similar findings were reported in Norton's (1993) comparative analysis, which employed a qualitative approach. Norton's (1993) study of Fijian, Ni-Vanuatu, and Māori community groups, examined how Pacific Islanders construct their group identities when impacted by social change or conflict. The study found that an alignment between social practices and cultural discourse reinforces a sense of cultural identity, while a misalignment weakens it (Norton, 2013). In other words, when the individual's behaviour matches what is culturally acceptable or cultural values, their sense of cultural identity is strengthened.

Across the Pacific, particularly within Micronesian cultures like Kiribati, the I-Kiribati way of life is centre around the extended family known as "Utu". As Burnett and Bond (2020) explain, "This essentially means decisions and actions are based around what benefits the

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[2] Traditionally, the area now known as the Federated States of Micronesia was made up of four distinct island states known as Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. Each with its own language, culture, and historical naming traditions.

whole, as opposed to the individual. This contrasts with Western cultures where individualistic values are often promoted” (p. 332).

Burnett and Bond's (2020) qualitative research aimed to explore how Pasifika and I-Kiribati individuals in Aotearoa, New Zealand navigate and express their complex identities and to understand the processes of cultural construction and the negotiation of multiple identities within the Aotearoa, New Zealand context. Utilising a Kiribati methodology, the study involved seven semi-structured interviews conducted in mid-2017 and early 2018 with five tertiary students of Kiribati descent who completed their secondary education in Aotearoa, New Zealand (Burnett & Bond, 2020). The study reinforced that the family connection is essential for fostering a strong cultural identity, and the community plays a significant role in addressing the exclusion experienced by some I-Kiribati youth living in Aotearoa, New Zealand (Burnett & Bond, 2020).

2.2.2. Cultural Identity and Land

In addition to strong familial connections, Pacific Peoples believe their relationship with the land shapes their cultural identity. Hezel, (2013) describes:

> Land is a symbol of collective identity. Land is a marker of the extended family. Land is the element that binds generations of family to one another. Land is the source and the final resting place for the individual. Land is the identification tag for the individual. (p.34-35)

Similarly, Shibata’s (2022) study synthesises existing literature and case studies to

examine the impact of climate change on Pacific Island communities. With the threat of land loss due to rising sea levels, Shibata emphasised the threat to these communities' cultural traditions and social systems. Shibata (2022) explains metaphorically, that for many Pacific Islanders:

> land is both a spatial and temporal concept that reinforces a sense of belonging which links present and future generations to the ancestors of the past...land is the umbilical cord that is buried in the soil where the ancestors live and an inseparable link to life itself. (p. 23)

Building on the notion of Pacific identity being connected to land, Teaiwa's (2014) study, used an interdisciplinary approach to examine the significant impact of the mining of phosphate on the environment of the island of Banaba[3] and the indigenous Banaban people between 1900 and 1980. The land was eventually declared uninhabitable, which led to the Banaban people's forced relocation to Rabi Island in Fiji.

Teaiwa (2014) highlights the deep connection between people and land, explaining that many Pacific languages link the two "metonymically, ontologically, and spiritually: vanua in Fijian, aina in Hawaiian, and whenua in Māori" (p. 7). Micronesian people also regard their connection to the land as a crucial representation of their shared identity through these multiple lenses (Teaiwa, 2014).

Connection to the land significantly shapes I-Kiribati cultural identity, with links between

[3] Banaba is an island in Kiribati

land and people reflected in the Kiribati language. Teaiwa (2014) explains that the phrase, “Te aba” refers to both the land and its people, indicating an ontological unity between them. Further, "when speaking of land, one does not say “au aba”, my land, but rather, “abau”, me-land (Teaiwa, 2014, p. 7). Te aba links people to each other, their ancestors, their history, and their environment (Teaiwa, 2014). This inseparable relationship could be problematic when translating the term land into English and potentially lead to misunderstandings in a Western context.

Further illustrations are found in Gheuens' (2017) thesis which explored connections between the I-Kiribati people, their land, and their identity. Gheuens’ (2017) qualitative research across several islands in Kiribati, investigated how residents perceive changes in the landscape, their sense of identity, and the challenges they face now and in the future. The study found that "landscape is more than just physical surroundings, encompassing qualities of heritage, memory, skills, knowledge and learning, and there is a strong link between landscape and identity for Kiribati islanders" (Gheuens, 2017, p. 3).

For Pacific Peoples, specifically Micronesians, including those from Kiribati, family is central to cultural identity. This identity is also firmly embedded in strong connections to the land, which in turn shapes a person's sense of place and belonging within their community.

2.3. Pacific Identity in Aotearoa, New Zealand

As Pacific Peoples have made Aotearoa, New Zealand, their home, they continue to face ongoing challenges in maintaining their cultural identity, including how they are perceived and labelled by others. Teariki and Leau's (2023) literature review, mentioned earlier, asserts a preference for the term "Pacific Peoples" over "Pasifika" to acknowledge cultural uniqueness. "Pacific Peoples" offers the unique epistemologies of Indigenous Pacific Peoples, who maintain unique identities, languages, and cultures (Teariki & Leau, 2023).

Aligning with this notion, Burnett and Bond (2020) state that in Aotearoa, New Zealand, "[notions] of a collective or pan-ethnic Pasifika identity have largely been informed by Aotearoa, New Zealand's relationship with the Pacific, in particular the sub-region of Polynesia" (p. 327).

Further, Thomsen et al. (2018) examine the Living Standards Framework (LSF) from a Pacific worldview. Thomsen et al. (2018) explain that the term “Pacific” does not simply refer to the Pacific Island migrants currently living in Aotearoa, New Zealand; rather, it embodies a mindset and a way of perceiving the world and how we interact with it. Within Aotearoa, New Zealand, the Pacific community consists of Polynesians, Melanesians, and Micronesians, with the largest group being the Polynesians. Since the first generation of immigrants, multiple generations of Pacific Peoples have been born in Aotearoa, New Zealand (Thomsen et al., 2018), and the context of Aotearoa, New Zealand has changed over this time. Agee et al (2013) point out identity formation in Aotearoa, New Zealand:

> Early [Pacific] adolescents in Aotearoa, New Zealand today are grappling with the questions "Who am I?" and "How do I belong?" in a distinctly different cultural context from that of past generations because Aotearoa, New Zealand is more racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse than ever before. A notable demographic change between the 1991 and 2006 censuses was the increasing ethnic diversification of the Aotearoa, New Zealand population. (p. 5)

Cultural identity is constantly evolving. This makes it essential to examine more closely how Pacific communities, particularly those in the diaspora who hold dual or multiple identities, navigate and construct their sense of self.

2.3.1. Abakati/Half-caste and the Diaspora

Colonialism and migration histories have shaped diverse cultural identities in the Pacific diaspora (Hermes, 2018). The introduction of new languages and cultures has resulted in dual and multiple identities for many Pacific Peoples, a reality also reflected in Aotearoa, New Zealand. This section examines the dual or multiple identities of Pacific Peoples living in Aotearoa, New Zealand. For I-Kiribati, the term “Abakati” (related to the English term half-caste) describes I-Kiribati with dual or multiple identities. Complexities and nuances within the term Abakati can vary greatly depending on how individuals navigate and express their Abakati identity.

Similar terminology is used across the Pacific to describe “mixed blood” and its implication as a racial determinant (Hermes, 2018). "Afakasi in Samoan, hafekasi in Tongan, hapa in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, hapkas in Tok Pisin and kai loma in Fijian are all used to

describe a half-caste identity of mixed Pacific Islander heritage" (Hermes, 2018, p. 655). The most commonly used term in Aotearoa, New Zealand research is the Samoan word afakasi, primarily because the researchers are Samoan.

In Aotearoa, New Zealand, many people identify with dual or multiple ethnicities. Among census-taking nations, Aotearoa, New Zealand is one of the few countries that allows individuals to identify with multiple ethnic groups. Since the introduction of the ethnic group question in the 1991 census, an increasing number of people in the Aotearoa, New Zealand population have reported belonging to more than one group (Culbertson & Agee, 2007).

Historically, the underlying assumption is that those with multiple ethnicities have a weaker sense of cultural identity or group attachment than a single ethnicity. However, Culbertson and Agee's (2007) research does not support this. Their research in Aotearoa, New Zealand, interviewed eight mixed Samoan Afakasi adult males in their 30s and 40s to explore their identity journeys (Culbertson & Agee, 2007).

The research revealed that the role of family and community was essential in shaping participants' understanding of their identities from an early age. The emerging themes in the Afakasi men's self-perceptions, included the influence of early family experiences, an early awareness of difference, expressing identity through language, ethnic identity quantification, belonging, and identity confusion (Culbertson & Agee, 2007). The

participants described their identity journey as a process that involved discovering their family histories over several years. Some participants had spent time with grandparents on trips between Aotearoa, New Zealand and their respective islands, whilst others had little experience with the islands (Culbertson & Agee, 2007). Several participants who grew up experiencing conflicts between their parents' different cultures or who were particularly aware of how their mixed heritage complicated their lives expressed a desire for their parents to have made different choices in their marriages (Culbertson & Agee, 2007).

The study asserted, "the dominant New Zealand discourses almost automatically alienate people who carry more than one identity in their bodies and psyches" (Culbertson & Agee, 2007, p. 78). Describing experiences and the struggles with negotiating Afakasi (dual and multiple Samoan identities) identity, the authors claim that “some [individuals] resolve this tension easily, and others do not" (Culbertson & Agee, p. 79). The study concluded that despite the challenges, with support from their families and communities, Afakasi men can navigate their complex identities through connection and belonging.

Another study by Agee and Culbertson (2013) explored how parents and grandparents influence and contribute to the identities of Afakasi youth by transmitting cultural practices and values. Thus, these relationships contribute to a sense of belonging and support youth in negotiating their dual or multiple cultural identities. Agee and Culbertson (2013) suggest "that young people seem increasingly comfortable with identities that are complex and even temporarily fluid" (p. 48).

Similar struggles exist for I-Kiribati living in Aotearoa, New Zealand who identify with dual or multiple cultural identities. Abakati implies that identity can be fragmented into parts, diluting one's Kiribati identity (L. Humphry, personal communication, 2025). This reflects a historical approach in the Aotearoa, New Zealand census, which used blood fractions to determine if a person was Māori (Moeke-Pickering, 1996).

Embracing her dual identity as Afakasi, Page-To'oala's article (2023) explores her professional identity as a counsellor reconciling her dual identity. Page-To'oala claims to merge the Western concept of the "drama of embrace" by theologian Miroslav Volf with the Samoan concept of Teu Le Vā, which prioritises the nurturing of the sacred space between people (Page-To'oala, 2023). She states, "I have found myself connecting and disconnecting within these three spaces as I navigate each context – Pākeha, Samoan, and Afakasi" (Page-To'oala, 2023, p. 25).

2.3.2. Kiribati Diaspora in Aotearoa, New Zealand

I-Kiribati individuals in Aotearoa, New Zealand, also navigate their cultural identity while experiencing diaspora. Cohen (2022) defines diaspora:

> focusing on four basic features of a diaspora – members of a defined group have been dispersed to many destinations; they construct a shared identity; they still somewhat orient themselves to an original 'home'; and they demonstrate an affinity with other members of the group dispersed to other places (p. 1)

The diaspora can greatly impact the cultural identity of I-Kiribati immigrants and their Aotearoa, New Zealand-born children. While they seek to integrate into the Aotearoa, New Zealand culture and society, I-Kiribati individuals may find it challenging to maintain their unique Kiribati identity, language and culture. Traditions and practices may be less practiced and maintained, such as coming-of-age ceremonies or Te Katei ni Kiribati (the way of being I-Kiribati) (L. Humphry, personal communication, 2025). Burnett and Bond (2020) add that "a lack of Kiribati language skills meant that it was difficult to identify as an I-Kiribati person, especially compared to family members who were more proficient" (p. 331).

In a study concerning diaspora and I-Kiribati immigration to Aotearoa, New Zealand, Dixon (2017) employed a retrospective analysis to examine the diaspora of individuals connected to Nikunau Atoll in Kiribati. The study was based on a wide range of sources including observations, literature and historical recounts and direct engagement with individuals. Dixon found that kinship and similar relationships are foundational to today's diasporic communities and have significantly contributed to the successful migration of I-Kiribati families to Aotearoa, New Zealand (Dixon, 2017).

For Pacific People living in the diaspora, creating art can be a way to connect with their homeland while adapting to their new environment. "Pasifika Navigators" a collection of poems written in 2023 by students from Naenae College includes an emotive poem by a

Year 12 student known as T.M.. In this poem, the impact of climate change on Kiribati and the potential loss of land, culture, and identity are explored.

> my origins
> just sand and ocean
> an island.
> Family tell me
> I am also blood and bones.
>
> Tinau [my mother] said, "Connect to the deep sea."
>
> Struggles that are overlooked by a big world
> known as a country sinking, only to some.
>
> But is so special to a small group of people
> an ancestral land that dug many ancestors
> who are now considered the old, a past.
>
> But built this culture
> from afar where I can call the unseen
> An unknown country, I name home…
> Kiribati." (T.M., 2023, p. 12-13)

The following lines in this poem, "Family tell me" and "An unknown country, I name home… Kiribati" (T.M., 2023, p. 12-13) reflect the strong connections to homeland that many I-Kiribati youths living in the diaspora in Aotearoa, New Zealand, have yet to visit.

Within the Aotearoa, New Zealand context, I-Kiribati identity is influenced by Aotearoa, New Zealand Pākehā and Māori cultures through the processes of assimilation and acculturation. Bhugra and Becker (2005) explain:

> An individual's cultural identity may be lost during the assimilation process as he or she moves within the host society. Acculturation, a process that may be voluntary or forced, requires contact between culturally divergent

> groups of people and results in the assimilation of cultural values, customs, beliefs and language by a minority group within a majority community. During the acculturation process, both the immigrant and host cultures may change. Changes in attitudes, family values, generational status and social affiliations can occur in both the majority and minority cultures as the two interact; however, typically one culture dominates" (p. 21).

Migration results in diaspora, assimilation, and acculturation, interconnected concepts that illustrate how cultural adaptation and change occur for I-Kiribati individuals as they negotiate their identities and work to revitalise and maintain their language and culture. For this reason, Kiribati Language Camps are important initiatives in supporting I-Kiribati individuals living in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

2.4. Immersive Language Camps and Cultural and Language Experiences

The second part of this literature review, which focuses on language camps, is divided into two sections. The first section examines immersive language camps for Additional Language Learners (ALL) who are learning English and French, specifically camps that support language acquisition through immersion (continuous exposure and engagement) in the target language. The second section examines immersive Māori cultural and language experiences or programmes for Māori and non-Māori in Aotearoa, New Zealand for the revitilisation or maintenance of language and cultural practices. This section also discusses Pasifika bilingual programmes for Tongan and Samoan communities and how their languages have been retained.

2.4.1. Immersive Language Camps for Additional Language Learners (ALL)

Research on global language camps predominantly centres on acquiring the English language for Additional Language Learners (ALL), with some attention given to learning French and other languages. This section of the literature review will examine English and French camps to identify key findings related to common themes, benefits and limitations of immersive language camps in acquiring a second language and fostering intercultural practices for ALL.

2.4.2. English Language Camps

English language camps are becoming more popular for ALL. These camps offered students an immersive camp setting to practice and improve their English skills through various activities which included games and group discussions (Muda et al., 2024).

Muda et al. (2024) conducted research to evaluate the effectiveness of the English Language Camp for low-intermediate English learners at Padungsat Vitya School in Pattani, Thailand. A total of 49 students were selected to participate in this study through a selective sampling process. Participants were low-intermediate English learners aged 16 to 17 years who attended a 3-day camp covering 12 essential communication skills. The data was collected through a set of questionnaires, including 10 positive statements, rated on a 5-point Likert scale from '1' (Extremely Disagree) to '5' (Extremely Agree). Participants completed the questionnaire at the beginning and end of the English language camp (Muda

et al.,2024).

Findings from this study revealed that the English language camp positively influenced students' self-assessed English proficiency across all measured items as low-intermediate learners. Improvements were found in the students' ability to give step-by-step instructions, tell time, and in pronunciation. The questionnaire responses, which compared the start and end of the three-day camp, showed that the participants' confidence grew. This suggested that "the immersive and intensive nature of the camp provided a conducive environment for language learning, allowing the participants to practice and improve their English language skills in a practical and supportive setting" (Muda et al., 2024, p. 243). Muda et al. (2024, p. 243) found that the students showed considerable improvements in their practical communication skills but needed more work on grammar.

Although the camp resulted in positive outcomes, there were several limitations including the subjective nature of self-assessment which may not accurately reflect actual progress. Question 9, assessed whether individuals could "ask questions correctly to obtain the information needed," showed the least improvement, which suggests that more time or a targeted approach may be necessary. The study did not measure how proficient the individuals were in English before attending the English camp. Finally, the short duration of the camp did not allow for long-term progress observations (Muda et al., 2024).

Muda et al.'s (2024) study reflects Aswad's (2017) quantitative research which compared the English achievement of two groups; an experimental and control group among Indonesian students who attended an English camp during the summer holidays. The findings further demonstrated the benefits of language camps in language acquisition.

The two groups in Aswad's (2017) English camp research had 29 students in the experimental group and 28 students in the control group. The research used a speaking performance test, where students demonstrated how to make or operate something. The test included instructions and guiding questions to help them focus on the activity and the required discourse (Aswad, 2017). The students took this speaking performance test before and after the language camp to measure the effect of the camp: the control group took the test at the same times but did not participate in the English language camp.

Aswad (2017) suggests that the positive effects on language proficiency were due to a unique opportunity for participants to use English for authentic purposes, building positive relationships during camp. Aswad (2017) stated:

> One of the primary manifestations of authentic use of language at this camp was in the building of relationships. Participants revealed that relationships were developed and strengthened on multiple levels: student-to-student, teacher-to-teacher, and teacher-to-student (Aswad, 2017, p. 235).

Another interesting finding was that the English camp significantly improved students' English proficiency, through humour and fun activities. The students noted that the humourous communication incorporated in the classroom made the students enjoy the learning process; many felt more comfortable speaking up, asking questions during lectures, and sharing their opinions in front of the class (Aswad, 2017). Through humour and fun engaging activities, the immersive experience helped develop essential language skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students participated in collaborative tasks and games supporting interactions and relationship building (Aswad, 2017).

Although the findings indicated significant improvements, it was acknowledged as a limitation that the emphasis on fun games may have hindered English learning. "One important factor observed in the planning process is that station teachers [were] are asked to design fun activities. This can lead to unwanted results because teachers focus upon fun activities at the expense of good English practice appropriate for the level" (Aswad, 2017, p. 239).

2.4.3. French Language Camps

Literature regarding the acquisition of French also indicates that language camps significantly improve young learners' language skills and cultural immersion. Gascoigne (2009) states that “the language camp concept is not a new one. Camps have been in existence for decades” (p. 3). Gascoigne (2009) examined the effects of a week-long camp at the University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) during the summer of 2007. The camps were

organised daily into three two-hour language parts: French, German, and Spanish. The camp catered to students entering the 4th and 5th grades only [around 9 to 11 years old] with a maximum of 22 students (Gascoigne, 2009).

Through an online survey, phone calls, and face-to-face discussions, it was shown that language camps offer many benefits, including the following: The immersive French language and cultural setting led to significant language acquisition, and the students who attended reported an interest in continuing to learn French after the camp. The data revealed that the camps were a fun and positive experience for both the instructors and participants (Gascoigne, 2009).

There were some limitations however, which included the extensive time required for curriculum development and planning, as the three teachers involved were University instructors with no elementary teaching experience. In addition to this, the camps were resource-heavy, needing a venue, instructors and funding. Gascoigne (2009) identified another limitation, suggesting that extending the duration of the camps may have supported more in-depth language acquisition.

To add to the literature relating to French and English Language Camps, there is also a range of research on effective residential language camp programmes in Aotearoa, New Zealand. This section examines Māori immersive cultural and language experiences

alongside Pasifika language retention and bilingual education in Aotearoa, New Zealand

2.5. Māori Immersive Cultural and Language Experiences

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the revitalisation of Te Reo Māori (Māori language), Aotearoa, New Zealand's indigenous language, began to gain momentum. On the 1st of August 1987, the New Zealand Government passed the Māori Language Act 1987 making Te Reo Māori an official language of New Zealand (Wakefield, 2017). During the 1980s, Māori medium education initiatives included Kōhanga Reo (Māori early childhood centres) and Kura Kaupapa Māori (Māori-medium Primary and Secondary schools) were established. Hohepa (2015) discussed:

> ‘Māori centred’ schooling places “Māori at the centre; it recognises structural (as well as cultural) dynamics and locates them as pivotal to addressing Māori educational underachievement (1998: 174). The stance of Kōhanga Reo as a whānau education provision and Kura Kaupapa Māori as a compulsory schooling provision is that Māori knowledge and cultural values and practices are their core. (p. 113)

Even with ongoing challenges, Māori-medium education initiatives have played a key role in the Māori language revitalisation in Aotearoa, New Zealand over the past thirty years. In recognition that education alone cannot revive a language, May and Hill (2018) state that, "in more recent years, attention has shifted away from education to iwi (tribal) and whānau (family) initiatives as a means of fostering greater intergenerational family transmission” (May & Hill, 2018, p.312). Māori tribes have been given more power to manage their language by “facilitating a focus on family intergenerational transmission alongside education” (May & Hill, 2018, p. 313).

In addition, Noho Marae (stay on a marae), along with Māori-medium education initiatives, increased in popularity to support Māori cultural practices and educational efforts. In 2012-2013, an evaluation of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa[4] social work degree, Te Tohu Paetahi: Ngā Poutoko Whakarara Oranga BSW[5] was conducted at the Tauranga campus. This evaluation examined how wānanga (Māori Tertiary education) delivered at noho marae can enhance student learning by fostering relationships with this important indigenous space and engaging with tribal knowledge in a bi-cultural social work program (Coley et al., 2019). The participants in this research were Kaiako (teachers) and Tauira (students) who were involved in Te Tohu Paetahi, social work degree. The data was collected through reflections from Māori and non-Māori tauira who shared their perspectives on their and Kaiako.

> Both kaiako and tauira experiences shared here indicate that trusting in this relationship exposes non-Māori to a whole different cultural truth and social order, and potentially rectifies an imbalance, allowing for healing of both parties to occur. It may not always be a comfortable space, but it offers a unique and meaningful opportunity for healing, for learning and for growth (Coley et al., 2019, p. 4).

Further findings concluded that, "on the marae, tauira share a deeper sense of connectedness to each other, one where they feel supported on their learning journey. This energises and activates them to take a leap of faith, to believe that they can contribute and support others" (Coley et al., 2019, p. 2).

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[4] Māori Tertiary education provider
[5] Bi-culturalism in practice

In another study that described notions of transformational learning, Legge (2010), a lecturer at the University of Auckland in the Faculty of Education, Physical Education, described how an immersive Marae experience benefited the educator and the student. Legge, who described herself as a “Pākehā teacher” working with the Treaty of Waitangi partnership, identified the need for her students to gain greater exposure to the diverse aspects of the Māori culture.

In response to this need, all year-two BPE degree students in semester one experience a “close encounter” with Māori culture over a four-day marae experience. From this experience, Legge used an auto-ethnographic narrative research approach to write stories developed from snapshots to convey her students' experiences. "In my mind's eye, pictures generated from events and people during many marae stays have come together as metaphoric snapshot much like in a photograph album" (Legge, 2010, p. 4).

Legge (2010) initially observed resistance found in the dialogue from the students, implying that some students felt confronted with having to participate in unfamiliar activities, which would take them away from the safety of the familiar. Many perceived risk instead of adventure but moving students out of their comfort zone created opportunities to gain a new perspective on Māoritanga and cultural differences. For some students, the marae experience required them to navigate between the Māori and Pākehā worlds (Legge, 2010).

In this setting, the Māori language and traditions were central to the experience, and benefits emerged during the student's stay at the marae. The students practised Māori

protocols and traditions, making them more familiar with the culture. The experiential activities emphasised the importance of the natural world to Māori and their connection to tūpuna (ancestors or grandparents). For some students, including Māori, this awareness highlighted limited family connections in comparison. This understanding prompted students to determine ways to support Māori student identity in secondary schools (Legge, 2010).

The students also engaged in discussion with tangata whenua (people of the land), who taught local history and shared their reflections on the impact of colonisation. Some students confronted by this new knowledge and experienced a sense of helplessness while admitting their previous biases and stereotyping of Māori (Legge, 2010). At the end of the marae experience, students felt conflicted between wanting to stay together longer and the need to return to their homes. They were uplifted by the strong relationships that had developed over the four days. This sense of connectedness to one another is illustrated in a later article, where Legge (2010) stated:

> Learning is through role play and group discussions to share and understand values such as tika correctness, pono-truth and aroha love and empathy. Waiata (song) is used to support the korero while metaphoric storytelling is the mainstay that underpins the learning activities. Mau rakau (Māori martial art) and hand games teach physical activity from a Māori perspective and help to create a tight group who can synchronise their moves. Staying on the marae and sharing their whakapapa allows the BPE students to build trust and become more open towards one another (p. 2).

Māori immersive experiences, such as Noho Marae, improve language and cultural

understanding for both Māori and non-Māori individuals. Similar benefits are found in the strategies used for the acquisition and maintenance of Pacific languages and culture within the Pacific bilingual education initiatives in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The following section shifts the focus to the current state of Pacific language retention. Educational strategies that promote bilingualism in Pacific communities will also be explored.

2.6. Pacific language education in Aotearoa, New Zealand

According to May and Hill (2018), the Samoan and Tongan groups, in Aotearoa, New Zealand, hold the highest level of language retention with over 60% of people in each community being proficient in their home languages. In contrast, other Pacific groups show significantly lower rates of retaining their Pacific languages. There are several factors that contribute to these results, particularly the church's role in specific Pacific communities. In cases where the church played a central role to Samoan and Tongan communities, language use is continued. "Where it is less central, as is the case for the Cook Islands Māori and Niuean communities, that language domain is not so readily available." (May & Hill, 2018, p. 314)

The second factor involves the ongoing migration to Aotearoa, New Zealand from Samoa and Tonga and the intergenerational use of language. Although the Samoan and Tongan communities are seeing an increase in the proportion of Aotearoa, New Zealand-born Pacific individuals, recent immigration outweighs this growth (May & Hill, 2018).

May and Hill, (2018) make reference to Fetui and Malaki-Williams' (1996) study on the use

of the Samoan language which concluded that maintaining the Samoan language is important for “the self-esteem, confidence and identity of Samoan youngsters [in Aotearoa, New Zealand], as well as making them appreciative and aware of their cultural heritage” (1996: 234)” (p. 315).

During the significant growth of Māori-medium education initiatives, May and Hill (2018) note that the first Pacific People bilingual education programmes in Aotearoa, New Zealand began in 1987. The initial two Pacific bilingual programmes were focused on the Samoan language and were established in schools located in Auckland, which is Aotearoa, New Zealand’s largest city. Since then, Pasifika bilingual and immersion education has expanded considerably. According to the Ministry of Education (2023), "Around 2,600 students are learning in Pacific bilingual and immersion education for 51% or more of the time spent at school in 44 Pacific bilingual and immersion units” (p.7).

Tuafuti and McCaffery’s (2005) paper examined one of these Samoan bilingual language programmes, A 10-year project focused on developing Samoan bilingual education at Finlayson Park Primary School, in Manurewa, Auckland (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005). The authors discussed and analysed bilingual/immersion education initiatives aimed at improving the academic success of Pacific students in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Their discussion suggested that the bilingual/immersion education models are critically important but not enough (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005). A critical empowerment approach is

also necessary to address the broader issues and power dynamics that influence the development of first-language education models for minority students in Aotearoa, New Zealand and elsewhere (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005). Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005) define empowerment as the "collaborative creation of power" (p. 488). This definition suggests that empowerment for Pacific People promotes academic, cultural and linguistic success (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005). Further, Tuafuti and McCaffery (2005) asserted:

> [Holistic] integration of empowerment, partnership and bilingual education theories and models, allied with the Pasifika communities' visions and beliefs, will raise the academic achievements of Pasifika children, reduce disparities and maintain Pasifika languages, cultures, identities, beliefs and values. (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2005, p. 498)

Since Tuafuti and McCaffery's (2005) research was completed, Finlayson Park Primary School, in South Auckland, now offers the only bilingual Kiribati language unit in Aotearoa, New Zealand called "Marawen te Rabakau". Launched in 2020, the unit provides full immersion and bilingual education for I-Kiribati students from Years 1 to 8 (Education Review Office, 2025). The unit was initiated to support the maintenance of the Kiribati language and culture within the growing I-Kiribati community in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The programme lead, I-Kiribati teacher, Taeang Erika, celebrates how well supported this unit is by the school and community (Te Reitaki Trust, 2020). Although there is currently no academic literature specifically focused on Marawen te Rabakau, it remains an important example of grassroots efforts to revitalise Pacific languages, specifically the Kiribati language, within New Zealand's education system.

An additional discussion by May (2005) used census data, Ministry of Education (MOE) reports and existing research to highlight that no national policies to support Pacific bilingual/immersion education in Aotearoa, New Zealand. May (2005) stated that, "within 60 years of [Pacific] migration to New Zealand, [and] despite this ongoing presence of Pacific languages in Aotearoa/New Zealand, there has been very little accommodation with respect to developing bilingual/immersion education in these languages" (May, 2005, p. 370).

Since May's (2005) discussion was written, the MOE has launched the strategic framework Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030 in 2020 to improve educational outcomes for Pacific learners and their families. Cooper et al.'s (2024) critical policy analysis examined the language and assumptions behind educational policy to reveal how it affects the way schools engage with Pacific families. "The concerns raised highlight the need for policymakers, researchers, leaders, and teachers to collaborate and champion relevant perspectives, concepts, pedagogies, and languages to support Pacific children in their homes, ECE settings, and schools for a more inclusive education" (Cooper et al., 2024, p. 491).

In conclusion, this literature review has defined cultural identity and explored how individuals from Pacific communities negotiate their multiple cultural backgrounds. Exploring cultural identity is important for this study because if we are to understand the effects of language camps for the I-Kiribati community, we need to first understand how

participants describe their identity.

Given the limited research on Pacific language camps, the review also drew on international research of immersive language camps for Additional Language Learners (ALL). These studies offered understandings into the benefits, limitations, and overall impact of immersive environments for language acquisition.

Finally, this review examined Māori and Pacific immersive language and cultural programmes in Aotearoa, highlighting how these initiatives have contributed to the revitalisation of Indigenous languages and to strengthening a sense of cultural identity and confidence. Together, these bodies of literature show a gap in the literature concerning Kiribati descriptions of cultural identity and support the need to understand the potential impact and significance of the Kiribati Language Camp experience.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological approach used to determine the benefits and potential impact of the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp by examining how I-Kiribati participants in two Ueen Kiribati Language Camps described their cultural identity and what effects participants reported from participating in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps that reinforce their sense of cultural identity and contribute to their cultural confidence.

Five members of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group took part in this retrospective research concerning their experiences and reflections on Kiribati language camps held in 2022 and 2023. Data collection was guided by the Kiribati methodology Taona Tabon Inaim, using semi-structured interviews combined with Maroro approach that emphasised respectful dialogue. Thematic analysis, underpinned by reflexive practice, was used to identify key themes. Ethical considerations included careful management of bias and power dynamics through IBRLA processes (Bishop, 1996) while trustworthiness was ensured through participant transcript reviews and feedback from supervisors and a Pacific advisor.

3.1.1. The Structure of the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps

To fully understand the methodology of this study, it is important to first understand the structure and organisation of the workshops. The camps lasted for three days each and took place at the end of January. The elders and older participants organised and delivered workshop sessions tailored to the group's needs. I-Kiribati language workshops were held

in both the morning and afternoon, emphasising their importance for participants' attendance. The participants, children, adolescents and young adults (between the ages of 18 – 25 years), learnt alphabet sounds, words, and phrases through lessons supported by elders and older members modelling language, videos, songs, and action songs to aid language acquisition.

Practical workshops were well attended and included activities such as weaving bracelets, making hanging decorations, and weaving a square ball used for hacky sacks on the beach. Harakeke (flax) were used instead of the traditional pandanus. Other practical sessions involved cooking traditional foods like Te Tonati (a Kiribati doughnut), contemporary children's dance, traditional dance, and group stick dance workshops. The practical workshops took place both before and after the language workshop sessions.

Theoretical workshops were led by elders in a lecture format with time for questions. These covered traditional knowledge and customs, including the technical skills required to build Te Wa (canoe), traditional ocean navigation, dance as a spiritual and artistic expression, and the composition of songs through spiritual and ancestral connections. The theoretical workshops were held in the evening, after dinner, in a quieter setting.

3.2. Qualitative research using Pacific approaches

According to Aspers and Corte (2021) “qualitative research as an iterative process in which improved understanding to the scientific community is achieved by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon studied” (p. 600). Saris et al. (2023) noted that "qualitative research primarily uses words or texts to provide insights into an issue, process, experience, or social group" (p. 63). By these definitions, Qualitative research is well-suited for this study as it improved my understanding by allowing me, the researcher, to engage deeply with participants' experiences, integrate theory, and draw new conclusions.

3.2.1. Pacific paradigms

This study aligned the Pacific paradigm, a framework grounded in Pacific values, knowledges and ways of life. It emphasised relationships, collective identity, culture, community, and spiritual connections. The research process respected and valued the participants by authentically and accurately retelling their cultural stories and experiences, for example, through Talanoa (Tualaulelei & McFall-McCaffery, 2019). Tualaulelei and McFall-McCaffery (2019) explain, "the privilege that we as researchers have in naming, voicing, languaging, critiquing and idealising Pacific cultures in our research approaches comes with responsibilities" (p.199).

This study also acknowledged I-Kiribati collective ways of knowing and being. It privileged I-Kiribati knowledge systems to honour the lived experiences, cultural values, and voices

of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group community. This approach aligned with national research guidance that calls for culturally grounded methodologies. The Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2001 stated that "research needed to improve achievement for and with Pasifika students. Key issues included the need for more research regarding the inequitable access to, participation in and outcomes for Pasifika learners throughout all educational sectors." (Anae, 2010, p.3). Similarly, the "Educational practices that benefit Pacific learners in tertiary education" research report states, "the Guidelines acknowledge that research should be community-driven by Pacific people. Pacific models of contexts that promote success and well-being for Pacific peoples and communities are important in the development of research methods" (Chu Cherie et al., 2013, p. 48).

Saris et al. (2023) state that Pacific research principles help researchers better understand relationships and worldviews in qualitative research concerning Pacific communities. This can be seen in the integration of qualitative approaches into Kaupapa Māori and Pacific research. Saris et al. (2023) argue that the relationship between Indigenous and qualitative research approaches is always changing.

Researcher Positionality

Positionality in this research required me, the researcher, to reflect on my identity because my social and cultural identities can influence and affect the research process. Fasavalu and Reynolds (2019) explain that:

> positionality generally involves “the stance or positioning of the researcher in relation to the social and political context of the study” (Rowe, 2014, p. 628). Thus, by definition, positionality is concerned with relationships. One’s position may be understood in a range of ways including by reference to concepts such as insider/outsider. (Fasavalu & Reynolds, 2019, p. 11)

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study holds personal significance, as my interest is deeply grounded in my I-Kiribati identity and my understanding of being bicultural within an Indigenous country, Aotearoa, New Zealand. As mentioned earlier, I was born in Auckland in the mid-1970s and later moved to the Solomon Islands, where I learned my first language, Te Tae Tae ni Kiribati, within a strong Kiribati community. When I returned to Aotearoa before the age of six, I quickly adapted to English at school. However, I gradually lost fluency in Kiribati and often responded in English, even though my mother spoke to me in I-Kiribati.

Throughout my teenage and early adult years, I struggled to fit in culturally. I often felt “too white” in Kiribati and “too brown” in England. However, I found a sense of belonging with my “cousins” in Aotearoa, New Zealand, who were also negotiating dual identities. These cousins were not always be blood relatives, but they were descendants of the first generation of immigrants from the 1970s.

Now, as a mother, I am committed to sharing our stories and maintaining our I-Kiribati language and culture for future generations. It was in this context that an elder from the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group suggested that our group apply for the Ministry of Pacific Peoples Language Fund to host a language camp. My cousin Sandra Humphry and I

completed the application, and we successfully secured funding for our first camp in 2022.

Smith (2021) discusses the experience of being both an “insider” and “outsider” in research and explains that "when Indigenous Peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed" (p. 250). Smith's chapter exemplifies the importance of Research for Māori, by Māori and with Māori. Equally, the implications as an I-Kiribati researcher using Kiribati research methodology, where possible, initiates research for I-Kiribati, by I-Kiribati, and with I-Kiribati.

Further, Smith (2021) explained the implications and risks for researchers who work within the “insider” frame:

> The known methodological risks are seen from one perspective to be about the potential for bias, lack of distance and lack of objectivity, and from another research perspective to be about the potential to see the trees but not the forest, to underplay the need for rigour and integrity as a researcher and to conflate the research role with an advocacy role. There are other risks, however, in terms of the relationships and accountabilities to be carried by an insider researcher. Unlike those borne by their colleagues, these extra responsibilities can be heavy, not just because of what people might say directly but because of what researchers imagine the community might be saying. (p.285)

As an “insider” researcher, I position myself as an I-Kiribati/English woman, organiser, participant and Secretary of Ueen Kiribati, educator and a parent. It is therefore important to manage potential methodological risks because of my position. Smith (2021) cautions that researchers can blur their roles, which may lead them to overstep ethical boundaries. My obligation to my relational responsibilities to the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group go beyond academic requirements. As an insider, I must represent the community with

accuracy and integrity; therefore, their positive feedback and evaluation of this research is essential. Reflexivity in the research requires critical reflection on my position, values, biases and assumptions and how I interpret and analyse the data.

While I have reflected on my possible position as an "outsider" in this research, due to my status as a student researching, I argue that my cultural connections, shared experiences, and continued involvement with the community position me as an "insider".

Clery et al. (2015) compare insider/outsider research:

> Outsider researchers often conceptualized research as a detached "practice of studying others" (White and Tengan 2001, 388). Thaman (2003, 5) argues that outsider researchers have been so fundamental to representations of the Pacific that the region as it is currently understood has been "produced politically, socially, ideologically, and militarily by westerners." Without the inherent accountability found within lived relationships, outsider researchers in the Pacific have often misrepresented and interpreted others from an anonymous distance and for their own benefit. In contrast, insider researchers face the consequences of the representations, promises, and products of research every day. (p. 309)

3.2.2. Case studies

A case study was selected to examine the benefits of the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps to better "understand complex social phenomena" (Yin, 2014, p.4). The bounded nature of a case study clearly defined the research into language camps that occurred in 2022 and 2023. The study involved five participants from the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group, which included: a grandparent, a parent, a young adult, a youth and child who provided insights into the impact of the camp on their cultural identity and cultural confidence. These boundaries ensured the study was manageable and culturally and contextually grounded.

Using a case study of the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp allowed me, the researcher, to examine how the participants in the Ueen Kiribati Language camp expressed and explored their cultural identity and how they described the benefits and challenges of the Ueen Kiribati Language camps held in 2022 and 2023.

3.3. Participants

The Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group consists of several generations with diverse I-Kiribati identities; therefore, representation was an important consideration in the selection process. I aimed to recruit various age groups and identities to draw out the rich experiences and perspectives for the data. I sought to recruit an elder, specifically a grandparent who had immigrated to Aotearoa, New Zealand, in the 1970s. I also wanted to include a second-generation participant, while the remaining participants were third-generation individuals: an adult, a teenager, and a child, all of mixed I-Kiribati identities. Details of the participants are:

Name (pseudonym)	Age range	Ethnicity	County of Birth
Liana	60-70	I-Kiribati	Kiribati
Sara	40-50	I-Kiribati/English	New Zealand
Eva	20-30	I-Kiribati/English/NZ Pākehā	New Zealand
Teina	15-20	I-Kiribati/Māori	New Zealand
Warren	8-10	I-Kiribati/English/NZ Pākehā	New Zealand

Table 1: Participants' Demographics by Age, Ethnicity and Country of Birth

Name (pseudonym)	Generation	First Language	Primary language spoken at home
Liana	1st	I-Kiribati	English
Sara	2nd	I-Kiribati	English

Eva	3rd	English	English
Teina	3rd	English/Māori	English/Māori
Warren	3rd	English	English

Table 2: Participants' Demographics by Generation, First Language and Primary Language

Table 2: Participants' Demographics by Generation, First Language and Primary Language

I contacted each potential volunteer via a messaging app to ask about their willingness to participate in the research (see Appendix A, B & C). I then emailed each participant who provided informed consent. The two participants under 18 participated with parental consent. I informed the participants that they had the right to withdraw their consent at any point during the process (see Appendix D). I then organised a suitable time to meet in the participant's home to conduct the interviews. Following the interviews, I reminded participants that they could withdraw their consent regarding the information shared until they confirmed the accuracy of their transcriptions. Participants had the option to withdraw their data at any time by emailing or calling me, up until they had verified their interview transcript. However, all participants opted to remain in the study.

3.4. Pacific Data collection methods

In this section I outline the Kiribati data collection methods used in this research to ensure respect of participants and validity of findings. These include "Taona Tabon Inaim" and "Maroro".

3.4.1. Taona Tabon Inaim

Taona Tabon Inaim literally means to sit on the edge of your mat. Burnett and Bond (2020) explain:

> to sit on the edge of an inai (mat) indicates you are adopting a low and humble position. In this case, the researcher positions themselves underneath and below the participants thereby respecting the position of the participants as producers of valuable and legitimate knowledge in contrast to how data have often been collected in the past. (p. 330)

This formal cultural practice in Kiribati was used prior to engaging in any research conversations. Taona Tabon Inaim was vital for creating a positive and reciprocal relationship between me, the researcher, and participants (Korauaba, 2012, cited in Burnett & Bond, 2019). This Kiribati methodology is a cultural practice used by families during formal visits, particularly when discussing sensitive issues between them. This can include "Te Kabutiman", engagement arrangements between families or "Kabwarabure", the confessing of wrongdoings (Burnett & Bond 2020).

Taona Tabon Inaim is a pre-arranged visit for peace and blessings. "Te orinai" (the mat), is important for I-Kiribati and represents their home, economic, and political status. Sitting on the edge of the mat is a humble and respectful position (Burnett & Bond, 2020). In I-Kiribati culture, how individuals interact and communicate with each other is determined by age, gender, and social status. For example, when a younger person interacts with an elder, they are expected to show respect by following instructions without arguing (L. Humphry, personal communication, January 30, 2025).

The application of Taona Tabon Inaim (Korauaba, 2012, cited in Burnett & Bond, 2019) and engaging in a time of Maroro before commencing the interviews established a respectful relationship between the participant and me, the researcher. During the pre-arranged visit

to the homes of the participants, I brought a gift, a plate of food, and a mat to sit on (see Section 3.4.2 below).

This process reflected the cultural significance of the research, which acknowledged the participant as a knowledge holder sharing their knowledge and skills with me, the researcher, through mutual connection. The research supported the intergenerational transmission of language and cultural practices, contributing to the maintenance and revitalisation of these practices. The guiding principles within this study were respect and humility, which underpin Te Katei ni Kiribati (The way of being I-Kiribati).

3.4.2. Semi structured interviews combined with Maroro

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews combined with Maroro with five participants. Maroro is dialogue, reminiscing or storytelling between I-Kiribati people and often occurs during community meetings or gatherings. The semi-structured/Maroro interviews enabled me to use a set of questions as a guide, while also allowing flexibility for the discussion to develop based on how the participants interpreted the questions. For the purpose of collecting data, Maroro was used to ensure culturally grounded interviews (see Appendix E & F).

Due to the lack of literature on Maroro, the concept of "Talanoa" shares similar principles with this I-Kiribati practice; therefore, this section will explore and make comparisons to

"Talanoa" as a culturally responsive research methodology for studying Pacific People. To begin with, it is important to define as provided by Robinson and Robinson (2005):

> Talanoa is a traditional Pacific Island [verbal] deliberation process that goes round in circles; it does not follow a straight line, aiming towards a final decision like many Western processes… While the philosophy of Talanoa is centred on an open-style of deliberation, focusing on respect, tolerance, flexibility, openness and fairness, the role of ceremony and protocol are just as important as the process itself. Talanoa is underpinned by unwritten rules and etiquette, with the philosophy of the concept being passed verbally from one generation to the next. (Robinson and Robinson, 2005, p. 14)

Building on this, Vaioleti (2013) notes that in Talanoa, researchers acknowledge and prioritise culture before engaging in their work. Cultural considerations remain important throughout the entire Talanoa process. Vaioleti (2013) states, "[Talanoa] requires protocols that acknowledge hierarchies such as age, gender, social rank, and genealogy because Tongan ways of being are still heavily influenced by old religions" (p. 195).

With its increasing popularity in culturally grounded Pacific research, several factors are important to consider when using Talanoa, which can relate to the use of Maroro. Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2014) point out that empathetic depth is required when using Talanoa as a method, "Talanoa is often treated as synonymous with 'informal open-ended interviews' and tends to gloss over the deep empathic understanding required in such exchanges" (p. 319).

Similarly, Fa'avae et al. (2016) discuss the tension between using Talanoa, a Pacific research method as described in literature and its actual practical application. He states:

> I approached Talanoa as though it was another, more Indigenous name for friendly interviews with Tongans carried out in Tongan and English. I tended to overlay my existing knowledge about, say, interview methods onto what are called Pasifika methods. I followed interview practices that were structured and systematic. Talanoa, however, is not like that. I knew this in theory, but not in practice. (Fa'avae et al., 2016, p.139)

As noted, Talanoa research methods align closely with the principles of Maroro. Maroro was used as the interview method, encouraging participants to share their insights openly. During the interviews, participants used English predominantly and I-Kiribati for some specific terms. A set of questions guided the interviews; however, older participants had more freedom to direct the interview, as appropriate in I-Kiribati custom, while younger participants followed my lead. By conducting the interviews this way, I honoured Kiribati protocols determined by age, gender, and status.

An example of this was evident during the interview with the elder, Liana. Liana communicated that she would feel more comfortable sitting on the couch rather than on the mat, so initially, we both sat on the couch together. As the interview progressed, I began to feel increasingly uneasy because we were sitting at the same level, so I decided to move down to the floor resulting in Liana being in a “higher position” to me. As the researcher and younger individual, this action immediately restored a physical posture of humility both physically and culturally. Conducting the interviews using Maroro honoured Kiribati protocols by prioritising connection and flexibility in timing and scheduling. Practices from Taona Tabon Inaim, such as bringing a gift, food, and a mat to sit on, were

also important for authentically facilitating Maroro.

3.5. Data analysis

The five interviews were recorded on an audio recording app on my phone. Due to the use of I-Kiribati words throughout each recording, I manually transcribed each interview. I then wrote reflections in a journal document (see Appendix G), which posed eleven questions for me to reflect on. The questions included, “Describe a time of Maroro, was it beneficial, and why?” and “What measures were taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the collected data?”. I employed reflexivity by critically reflecting on how my biases, beliefs, and experiences may influence the research process using a model developed by Bishop (1996) called ‘Indigenous, Bi-cultural, Relational, and Localised Approach’ (IBRLA). I completed an IBRLA form, on each participant. As I am well known to the participants, it was crucial to continually review how data was interpreted and analysed to preserve the integrity and validity of the research.

3.5.1. Thematic Analysis

To analyse the data collected through the interviews using Maroro (dialogue, reminiscing or storytelling), I employed thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) note, “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (p.79). Recurring themes emerged from the data, describing the participants' experiences and identities,

which I colour-coded. I then grouped similar comments and arranged them in a table for comparison.

3.6. Ethical considerations

3.6.1. Personal Relationships Community Involvement

My close personal relationships with the participants, guided me towards being mindful of the challenges of remaining objective in this research and the potential biases that could influence the research. Practising the principles of Te Katei ni Kiribati meant prioritising the interests of the group over my own. I was also held accountable during my regular meetings with my supervisors who provided me with feedback.

It was also vital for the research to align with the needs and priorities of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group. To ensure cultural sensitivity, I collaborated with Kiribati leaders and members of the Ueen Kiribati Group to seek guidance on protocols, traditions, and practices that were outside my own understanding. The research idea developed through discussions with group members at the end of both camps.

3.6.2. Power Dynamics

I-Kiribati cultural power imbalances could have emerged based on age, gender, and status, which might have resulted in me, the researcher, influencing some participants' responses. For example, a power imbalance results when an elder instructs a child because culturally, the child mush show compliance to the elder. However, as the

researcher, I valued the participants in this research as the holders of important knowledge, so, despite of the traditional cultural power dynamics that I would normally adhere to, I demonstrated respected the participants as the experts.

3.6.3. Trustworthiness and Cultural Validity

To ensure the research's trustworthiness and cultural validity, I took several measures throughout the research process. After the interviews, I transcribed the audio recordings into separate documents. Due to the use of I-Kiribati words throughout the audio, I manually transcribed each interview. I then sent the participants a copy to review and approve. They were given the opportunity to make changes or omissions. I also met with either or both supervisors fortnightly to receive critical feedback and to ensure the academic integrity of my research was maintained. Throughout the process, reflexivity was woven throughout my practice to reflect on my positionality, assumptions, biases and any other influencing factors that might impact the research. I also followed cultural protocols and respectful practices.

In summary, ethical considerations arose due to my role as Secretary of the Ueen Kiribati group, being related or having personal relationships to the participants. This positionality required careful consideration to manage potential conflicts of interest, biases and assumptions. The five sections in the IBRLA forms included reflective questions such as, “Who will benefit from power sharing arrangements?” and “Whose realities and experiences are legitimate? Using an IBRLA form demonstrated my commitment to

conducting research that was not only methodologically sound but also culturally respectful and responsible.

3.7. Chapter summary

This study recruited five I-Kiribati participants through informed consent from the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group. The research aimed to determine the benefits and potential impact of the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp by examining how participation related to the participants' sense of cultural identity and contributed to their cultural confidence. The data was collected using a Kiribati methodology Taona Tabon Inaim through the principles of Maroro when interviewing, which involved culturally respectful dialogue. Thematic analysis informed by reflexive practice identified reoccurring themes in the study. Ethical considerations included managing bias and power dynamics through IBRLA forms. Trustworthiness was maintained through participant transcript review, supervisor feedback, Pacific advisor feedback, reflexivity, and a commitment to cultural protocols.

In Chapter 4, I will present the findings from the study, focusing on key themes that emerged from participants' experiences at the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1. Introduction

This retrospective research was a case study of how participants describe their cultural identity and reflect on the impact of their participation in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps (2022, 2023) on their cultural identity and cultural confidence. The research questions guiding this study were:

1. **How do Kiribati participants in two Ueen Kiribati Language Camps describe their cultural identity?**
2. **What effects do participants report from participating in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp that reinforce their sense of cultural identity and contribute to their cultural confidence?**

The five participants interviewed for this retrospective study are members of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group based in the Bay of Plenty, New Zealand. The participants' ages reflected the intergenerational ages of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group members who attended the camps. Thematic analysis identified two major themes relating to the two research questions, and related minor themes. The two major themes represented broad concepts, while the related minor themes function as elements for understanding the major themes.

The main themes that the participants discussed were "Te Katae ni Kiribati" (the way of

being Kiribati) and “Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki” (Meaningful Relationships) which will now be presented in section 4.2 and 4.3.

In alignment with I-Kiribati protocol, this chapter records the elder's comments first, followed by other participants in order of their age. However, if a participant's data differs from the others, this order may not necessarily be followed.

4.2. Te Katei ni Kiribati — The Way of Being I-Kiribati

In our discussions about the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps, we explored how participants defined their cultural identity by describing their understanding of being I-Kiribati in Research Question 1. The participants defined their cultural identity by describing their understanding of being I-Kiribati, establishing a starting point that allowed comparisons to be made after the camps. The participants explained their cultural identity as Te Katei ni Kiribati (The Way of being I-Kiribati) in multiple ways, and how their identity impacted all activities and interactions in their everyday lives.

The main themes that the participants discussed were Te Katae ni Kiribati (the way of being Kiribati). Some participants reflected on their identity, with questions such as "Who am I?". They shared the importance of close relationships and feelings of acceptance within the group. The participants discussed the importance of maintaining their language and the

trauma linked to its loss. Other themes included the role of both theoretical and practical workshops, engagement with Te Tiriti o Waitangi as Indigenous People, along with some participants sharing their immigrant experiences of integrating into Aotearoa New Zealand. The variety of ages within the group provided opportunities for intergenerational transmission. Participants also felt it was important to plan to gather yearly and maintain the consistency of language camps.

The first major theme that emerged from the study was:

Te Katei ni Kiribati (The Way of being I-Kiribati) as cultural identity.

Cultural identity within this Kiribati camp context is how one considers themselves as I-Kiribati. This concept has internal significance in reflecting on "Am I I-Kiribati?" and "Do I belong?"

The major theme of Te Katei ni Kiribati centred around cultural identity, with several related minor themes that reflect the way of life of being I-Kiribati. These themes include "Kaotan te Karinerine" (demonstrating respect), "Karinean Katei" (honouring traditions and customs). "Tibwangan te Utu" (familial responsibilities) emerged as a strong obligation to support family, alongside the concept of "Katibanakoan Mama" (avoiding shame), which is particularly important for guiding how individuals interact with each other to avoid offence. "Te Kukurei ma te Mamanikangare" (humour and lighthearted interactions) were essential for maintaining connections. Lastly, the contributions of participants in the workshops reinforced cultural identity.

One participant was born and raised in Kiribati, while the remaining four were born and living in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Regardless of their birthplace, all participants shared that Te Katei ni Kiribati was an embedded practice. Liana, Sara and Warren shared similar views on what Te Katei ni Kiribati means to them. Liana expressed that Te Katei ni Kiribati defines an individual, it influences every aspect of her life. She shared:

> Te Katei ni Kiribati defines who you are. The way you speak, how you greet people, how you cook your food, the way you present to visitors. Te Katei ni Kiribati speaks of who you are. (Liana)

In contrast, Sara acknowledged that her understanding of Kiribati was limited; however, she felt aware of the reasons she behaves as she does because she is I-Kiribati. Sara reflected:

> I've had some kind of Kiribati exposure or have some kind of Kiribati understanding but mine is quite limited. When we are together as a family, with Grandma and Grandad, the I-Kiribati in our lives is a little thread that we probably don't appreciate. It's only when we're in a group situation that we say, "Oh, actually [we behave this way] because we are I-Kiribati." (Sara)

Similarly, Warren emphasised the importance of culture within his family, affirming its value in maintaining his cultural identity:

> It is important for my family to understand our culture. (Warren)

Eva and Teina explained their understanding of Te Katei ni Kiribati, focusing more on the formalities and etiquette.

> Te Katei ni Kiribati is a concept that is inclusive of protocol but also 'the way of being' [engaging in] lighthearted interactions. When I think of the Kiribati way, I do think more towards the other more serious side where there are a bunch of rules of 'don't do this, don't do that'. You don't want to run too fast when someone is sitting on the floor right there or have your feet near anything where the food's going to be prepared. (Eva)

> My dad does a lot of mirimiri (Māori massage), and he does it at home as well. He'll do it in the lounge and whenever we want to walk around to get around someone, he'll always tell us to say, "matauninga" (excuse me/forgive my rudeness). (Teina)

Te Katei ni Kiribati was at the heart of all the participants' cultural identity. It played a crucial role in shaping the participants' sense of belonging to the Kiribati culture because understanding Te Katei ni Kiribati, influenced their interaction with others and maintained cultural traditions and practices.

Four participants identified that they were navigating the intersectionality of dual cultures. Of those four, Eva and Warren identified as I-Kiribati/NZ Pākehā, Sara as I-Kiribati/English and Teina as I-Kiribati/Māori. Eva and Warren felt that their Kiribati culture had a stronger influence on their cultural identity than their NZ Pākehā culture. Sara felt that due to various factors in her upbringing, she had held more of a Pākehā worldview until recently. Teina identified more closely with her Māori identity but acknowledged the overlapping of these dual identities. She believed that much of Tikanga Māori[6], and Māori worldviews

[6] Māori customary values, principles, and practices

aligned with her understanding Te Katei ni Kiribati.

4.2.1. Kaotan te Karinerine — Demonstrating Respect

All the participants emphasised the importance of Kaotan te Karinerine (demonstrating respect) as contributing to their sense of cultural identity. Demonstrating respect involves understanding the hierarchical and patriarchal social systems that determines behaviour and interactions within I-Kiribati society. This system is primarily determined by age and gender and status, with the order of importance influenced by political, vocational, or village status and familial or friendship relationships. At the heart of Te Katei ni Kiribati is respect, which is demonstrated through an understanding of how to behave and interact appropriately within one's social standing.

As mentioned, Sara felt that her Te Katei ni Kiribati was not always evident in everyday life. However, she could integrate within I-Kiribati group gatherings because she could follow protocols and traditions. Sara provided two examples from her daughters to illustrate respect. The first was reminding them to bend down when walking past others, and the second was to address their aunty with a title correctly. Sara said that both of these practices were demonstrated during the camps and commented:

> My kids would never bend down in front of others. They never say "matauninga" (excuse me), they just walk right through. When I'm with people, I always bend down without realising it. But then I didn't realise that my kids don't know it's a bad thing [to not bend down] until we go somewhere and its very Kiribati. I'm like, "Oh, girls, girls, girls."

> My girls have just been with their Aunty Bianca over the holidays, and one big thing that we've noticed is that she's always like, "Bianca, that's not my name to you. It's Aunty Bianca." It's a sign of respect when you talk to someone in that position hierarchy. That's very, very strong, in the Kiribati way. (Sara, 2024)

The participants found this concept of demonstrating respect so ingrained that acting otherwise felt almost impossible. Eva shared an example of doing the dishes at camp to demonstrate respect to her elders or more senior adults:

> [If I was doing the dishes, I would think] Tough luck, I would just do it. There's no way I would come in and say, "right, I'm taking charge, Aunty you're drying dishes" like no way! That would bring shame [on me]. I just go in and I know my place. (Eva)

Demonstrating respect in Te Katei ni Kiribati determines all interactions by which individuals avoid confrontation and show humility. As an I-Kiribati immigrant to Aotearoa, New Zealand in the early 1970s, Liana explained that showing respect by not questioning or disagreeing with an authority figure can have negative consequences:

> In the early days when we first came to New Zealand, we disadvantaged ourselves a little bit because we were respectful; our culture, our Katei ni Kiribati, is of respect all the time. The fact that you don't speak your mind if somebody is your boss, or your senior hinders who you are a little bit. That's because of our Katei ni Kiribati. You lower yourself and be humble. So, sometimes, it does disadvantage you, but in the long run, if you use your Katei ni Kiribati to its fullest, it will benefit you. It's a very strong culture, a very strong Katei ni Kiribati, and people will respect you for using it. (Liana)

The participants explained that demonstrating respect is essential for understanding Te Katei ni Kiribati and reinforcing cultural identity.

4.2.2. Karinean Katei — Honouring customs, traditions and practices

Preserving cultural identity involves Karinean Katei (honouring traditions and customs). These practices celebrate or mark important life events such as a female's first menstruation, weddings, and the umbilicus detaching from a newborn. Other traditions and customs are considered sacred knowledge, typically kept within families and not shared with outsiders. These include practical skills such as building Te Wa (a canoe) and making dancing gear or the more spiritual custom of invoking songs from the spirit world.

All the participants indicated that learning and maintaining traditions and customs was important to their cultural identity. Liana gave an example of the customs dancers must follow to prepare for a formal event:

> [When you are preparing to do a traditional dance] you don't go outside for three days in the sun. You don't show yourself [until] you are actually dancing in the maneaba. There are positions that you should be in and not, as in who stands at the end and who's in the middle. So, it's not just about the dancing gear, it's about what you do.
>
> We still celebrate Te Moan Oraki ni Naine (a woman's first menstruation) and Te Baka ni Buto (the umbilicus detaches from the baby). (Liana)

Warren described how traditional weaving skills are culturally meaningful to his family, and he associates his culture and identity with woven items. During our interview, he pointed out various woven items in his home. "[Grandma] makes hats, bags and mats." (Warren)

Liana also discussed going against strict cultural norms to preserve traditional and customary practices within the Aotearoa, New Zealand context. She raised the concern

that if families continue to be gatekeepers of their knowledge, future generations will not have access to it, and these practices will be lost forever. As an immigrant to Aotearoa, New Zealand, Liana also shared that I-Kiribati needed to adapt to suit the Aotearoa, New Zealand conditions and materials. Now recognised as a New Zealand Master weaver, Liana gave the example of how I-Kiribati can use traditional weaving methods using local Aotearoa, New Zealand materials such as flax instead of pandanus. She modelled this during a weaving workshop at both camps. Liana explained:

> [If I share my knowledge outside my family] I joke with them [and say], “I'll have to kill you all.” They all laughed, but I said, “but you know, my thinking is, if we don't give this information out and teach people, we're going to be buried with it. So, what's the use of that?” We thought of weaving and how that is such an integral part of Kiribati. You can't sleep without your mat; you can't eat without your baskets to keep your food. You can't have shelter on your roof without the weaving we thought right, weaving, we're going to carry on with the weaving and use whatever material. The excuse was there's nothing to use. There's no pandanus leaves to use, well you don't have to just use pandanus leaves to carry on. So, we learned about how the Māori used it and all the protocol around it and there was the very beginning of our weaving workshops. (Liana)

'The participants explained that practicing and preserving traditions and customs contributes towards cultural identity; however, passing on these practices is essential for revitalising and maintaining them, even if it's outside one's family.

4.2.3. Tibwangante Utu — Familial responsibility

Three participants highlighted how fulfilling the family's expectations and responsibilities upheld Te Katei ni Kiribati and contributed to their cultural identity. The participants expressed a strong obligation to meet Tibwangante Utu (familial responsibilities) in

everyday life. These responsibilities include showing hospitality, supporting younger siblings, caring for grandparents, providing financial assistance, and teaching family members about protocols and traditions. Gender can also determine responsibilities; for example, typically in Kiribati, the females care for children and prepare meals. In comparison, the male adults represent the family in village discussions, and younger males are responsible for climbing coconut trees to cut toddy.

This expectation of family members was also evident during camp. For example, the eldest male of the group oversaw praying before meals, and the children, teenagers, and young adults contributed to meal preparations and service to adults. Familial responsibilities evolve as the individual ages and increases in hierarchy. As stated, elders and older I-Kiribati will be responsible for teaching cultural practices to younger family or community members.

As a parent, grandparent, and elder of the Ueen Kiribati group, Liana felt a strong familial responsibility to impart Te Katei ni Kiribati to her children and grandchildren. She explained, "I teach my Katei ni Kiribati because I see it as who I am. So, I want them [my children] to learn it because I think of it as so beneficial and so respectful. So, it's my part to teach my Katei ni Kiribati." (Liana)

Regarding respectful practices, Liana added, "I would say "do it is way", to my children. If they were walking between people, they would know that they are to bend down and walk

slowly. So that kind of thing infiltrated my life here [and therefore my children's lives] because it came from me."

As the oldest daughters in their families, Eva and Teina felt a greater sense of familial responsibility to assist and show hospitality to guests than their younger siblings. Both Eva and Teina observed:

> As the oldest daughter, there is a lot more expectation of me to show up to things more than there is for my siblings... [I have to] be there and I smile and sit there and chat and put it put on a happy face and present the facade...there is more of a pressure on me to get on [with guests] and make something that everyone can eat. (Eva)
>
> "[Being the oldest] sometimes my parents will want me to help out with stuff more than the other kids." (Teina)

The participants explained that in Kiribati's collectivist society, familial responsibility is an obligatory concept that encompasses caring for the family, the intergenerational transmission of traditions, and maintaining protocols.

4.2.4. Katibanakoan Mama — Avoiding Shame

When examining cultural identity, three participants emphasised the importance of Katibanakoan Mama (avoiding shame) towards oneself and one's family in their interactions and conduct. These participants understood that an individual's actions reflect the family or community, and adhering to social norms and values benefited the collective.

While Liana emphasised that showing humility avoids shame, Eva focused more on obeying instructions and not placing her opinion above those more senior than her:

> You actually wait. You show people that you kind of know how to do it, or word passes on that you know how to do something and then they'll invite you to come and share. (Liana)

> The Kiribati way is that when someone tells you to do something you cannot say no. [Shame] it's more to conform. When it comes to people who are obviously older than you, or more relevant in that situation to you, I wouldn't put my opinion above an older Aunty for example because that would be like, "oh, shame, who do you think you are?" This is because she's more senior and very knowledgeable. (Eva)

Warren shared Similar thoughts regarding being obedient to his elders, specifically his mother, "When my mum asks me to dance, I feel shy, but I still dance, because I feel like I have to." (Warren)

4.2.5. Te Kukurei ma te Mamanikangare — Lighthearted interactions & Humour

Three participants emphasised lighthearted interactions and humour as important aspects of understanding their cultural identity through Te Katei ni Kiribati (the way of being I-Kiribati). They discussed the importance of incorporating humour, during some formal events. Liana recalled the light-hearted formalities of welcoming guests into the village at the traditional meeting house called the maneaba. She also added that while the host is receiving the guest, there can be an element of uncertainty in determining the guest's intention.

Liana compared the I-Kiribati welcome to the traditional Māori welcoming process onto a marae, where visitors observe a series of steps. Both processes allow the visitor to integrate into the community hosting, but the marae experience felt more ceremonious and formal to Liana. She commented:

> I look back on our culture of welcoming people onto a maneaba and maybe compare it to people being welcomed on to marae. I think we're very eager to please our visitors and to make them comfortable and happy. So, when we do things to welcome them, we present them with flowers, the most perfumed of flowers in Kiribati the softest songs and we smile. It’s almost a little bit informal in that we want them to feel comfortable because there must be so uncomfortable walking in a strange place among strange people. It's a very soft welcome. In the meantime, we are working out their intentions. (Liana)

Eva also referred to her experience and knowledge of Tikanga Māori[7] and compared it to her grandmother’s lighthearted interactions. Eva described:

> Te Katei ni Kiribati is a concept that is inclusive of strict protocols but also ‘the way of being’ [engaging in] lighthearted interactions. In comparison to tikanga, I feel, in Kiribati it's a bit more lighthearted. I don't know whether that's my own personal experience with my grandmother being the most familiar full Kiribati person that I know, and she was such crazy silly fun. (Eva)

Liana also described laughter to communicate support or encouragement but may appear as ridicule to those unfamiliar with this practice. She gave an example when her daughter, who had learnt Te Taetae ni Kiribati (the Kiribati language), was speaking to a group of I-Kiribati people. Someone once laughed at Liana's daughter, who then felt hurt and responded defensively. Liana explained to her daughter that the group were laughing because they were impressed that she could speak so fluently and that it was novel to

[7] Māori customs and protocols

hear. Liana stated, “That when someone's laughing, almost coming alongside you, it's not laughing at you”.

Liana explained that laughter and humour can calm emotions in tense situations:

> I think it's (laughter) to break the emotion, it's to calm the emotion. Somebody falls off a ladder and everyone laughs. In many places, even in a very formal setting, there will always be some humourous anecdotes being said or told or some silly dancing. I think it's to break the formalities and sometimes just ease (the situation). (Liana)

Sara's father, an Englishman who had lived in Kiribati, also integrated humour to make connections with the local I-Kiribati. He was so proficient in the Kiribati language that he could entertain with humorous stories at gatherings. Sara remarked, "Dad enjoyed making everyone laugh and you know he's always said, "it's such a gift to be able to make people laugh in their own language."

The participants' responses in semi structured interviews showed that lighthearted interactions and humour are essential aspects of Te Katei ni Kiribati. Although this concept includes strict protocols, lighthearted interactions and humour are equally necessary for how I-Kiribati express their cultural identity. Laughter can be a sign of support and a way to ease tension; humour is a helpful means for non-Kiribati to connect with I-Kiribati and non-I-Kiribati.

4.2.6. The contribution of workshops

The purpose of the camps was to revitalise language, culture, and identity by offering language and cultural workshops to the Ueen Kiribati group during a three-day camp experience. The organisers had expected that the workshops would directly impact supporting and building the group's cultural identity; however, only two participants felt this was the case. Sara's cultural identity was enhanced when she discovered a new appreciation for the depth of Kiribati culture. She also reaffirmed Liana's earlier example about not gatekeeping knowledge when she described how the canoe and songwriting cultural expert shared his family's sacred expertise. Sara reflected:

> The workshops that I took the most away from were the ones with the canoe and songwriting cultural expert. That's because I had no kind of appreciation that there was that kind of depth. Yes, they believed in gods, but I didn't really appreciate the complexities and the layers and depth that that is there. Just tapping into some of the things that the cultural expert shared with us as a group and for him to do that, I appreciated that he opened himself. I was like, "Wow, there's this whole other side that I just chose to not be aware of or was not aware of and never really seen, but it was like, wow, there we go!" (Sara)

Eva felt the conversations and opportunities to ask questions were valuable for enriching her cultural identity, and the workshops were a conduit for these conversations. She stated:

> What's cool about the workshops is it brings up conversations and an opportunity to ask a question that you've always wondered. A conversation you probably might not have had. And then I sit there, and I think about it and then I have questions about it. So, it's expanding my knowledge more. Weaving was my favourite workshop. Aunty was so incredible at weaving that I was more watching her and thinking "wow I can't fathom that". I feel like (my cultural identity) got added too. I learnt a bit of history about things and some new skills. (Eva)

By contrast to Sara and Eva, Teina and Warren explained that the workshops had less impact on their cultural confidence. Teina said, “[My cultural identity was affected a] little bit, but not really.” and Warren said, “I feel a 5/10 [in my identity being I-Kiribati] before and after the camps, so there was no change.” Before attending camp, they felt their cultural identity had already been established within their family unit. Liana, a cultural expert, shared a similar perspective, understandably, as she was raised in Kiribati and only immigrated to Aotearoa, New Zealand as an adult.

The workshops achieved the intended outcome for two participants; however, three believed that although they may have acquired new skills, their families and home settings had directly transmitted their cultural identity that being, I-Kiribati/Māori, I-Kiribati/NZ Pakeha and I-Kiribati.

4.3. Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki — Meaningful Relationships

The second major theme relates to Research Question 2: What effects do participants report from the 2022 and 2023 Ueen Kiribati Language Camps in relation to cultural identity and cultural confidence? It focuses on Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki (meaningful relationships) and their role in strengthening cultural confidence. Within the context of the Kiribati camp, cultural identity is expressed as confidence in one’s behaviour and interactions as an I-Kiribati, particularly in how individuals present themselves to others, asking, “Do I act I-Kiribati?”

It includes several related sub-themes that explore how I-Kiribati individuals in Aotearoa, New Zealand, engage with their community and broader society. These themes include Kiribati Cultural Immersion, Te Taetae ni Kiribati (speaking the Kiribati language), Kariaiakaki (being accepted and a sense of belonging), Iai Riki au Itera (the intersectionality of identities) and Karienean Abau (integrating into Aotearoa, New Zealand culture in partnership with Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

4.3.1. Defining Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki — Meaningful relationships

In our discussions about the Kiribati Language camps, we explored how they enhanced participants' cultural confidence. The participants described their cultural confidence as being primarily influenced by Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki (meaningful relationships).

Meaningful relationship markers included experiencing a Kiribati cultural immersion, speaking the Kiribati language, being accepted by others as I-Kiribati, acknowledging the intersectionality of identities, integrating into Aotearoa, New Zealand culture in partnership with Te Tiriti, and participating in workshops.

Four participants described the dynamics of being at camp with family and other Ueen Kiribati group members of all ages. They shared:

> I just thought (at the camp) I'm getting to hang out with my cousins. This is going to be amazing. I just can't wait. And it just felt like it was going to be, like, recreating a little bit of our, you know, of our times we had when we were young, when we grew up and we shared those things. And my girls never get to experience that kind of like on mass kind of communal living. (Sara)

> It's the people. It's also being put into groups with people you might know, but you don't spend much time with. Same with the groups for games. I would hang out with people the same age as me or say my mum or my aunties, but in those scenarios, I think would hang out with some of the younger kids that are the same generation as me, but I'm just much older than them and I don't really have much of a connection with. I like hanging out with that [Kiribati] side because there are a lot of people who go who are family and there's a lot of extras who you only see once a year only because of that. So yeah, like when the Aunties and all those cousins are going to be there, I like to go along because it's an organised thing and everyone's going to be there. (Eva)

> I was nervous I guess because the camp was familiar. I wondered, 'who were these people?' So, in the beginning, yes, I was uncomfortable but then I saw familiar faces, some aunties and I was like, OK, I can actually relax a bit. The connections OK, yeah, the connections [I would look forward to next time] (Teina)

> All of my family were going so, we could go meet up with family. Because there's mostly people that I know. (Warren)

4.3.2. Kiribati Cultural Immersion

When commenting on what they learned from the camps, participants noted the importance of learning about Kiribati culture through being immersed in it during the camps. For example, Liana pointed out that gathering was important for staying connected. Sara enjoyed recreating the experience of communal living, and Eva valued being immersed in the daily activities of being together.

> Not only did we all meet because of what we want to learn about Kiribati and how to keep it going and sharing but also as a connection, because we're all scattered around, and I think and that's very much part of our Kiribati culture is the getting together. So even though it's only once a year, it's vital that we do those kinds of things. (Liana)

> It just felt like it would recreate a little bit of the times we had when we were young,

> and we grew up and shared those things. My girls never get to experience that kind of on-mass communal living. (Sara)

> I feel like that would not be very Kiribati. To me was the most Kiribati part of it was everyone's sitting down with a cup of tea at the end of the day to Maroro. At the end of the day, I like to just sit there and listen to my mum talking about old stories or telling funny stories about Kiribati or even just listening to an Auntie talk about anything. I like to just sit there with a hot drink at that time there's a lot of laughter. There's something really familiar and nostalgic about it that makes me feel really at ease and comfortable sitting there and hearing all my aunties laughing and being silly. (Eva)

The immersive experience benefited the group by modelling Kiribati's communal living and intergenerational structure. Te Reiki ae Kakariki (meaningful relationships) strengthened cultural confidence as the participants engaged in these activities and practices. Intergenerational transmission of knowledge through formal workshops occurred, but the immersive experience also allowed the participants to engage in incidental and informal knowledge exchanges between older to younger participants.

4.3.3. Te Taetae ni Kiribati — The language of Kiribati

Four participants discussed the impact of Te Taetae ni Kiribati (the language of Kiribati) workshops. Liana believed that the group members felt comfortable taking risks and experimenting with the I-Kiribati language because the workshops and camp settings were safe environments. She observed, “I think people were comfortable, even if they weren't confident enough with their language” (Liana).

Of those four participants, Sara shared her experience of losing her I-Kiribati language due

to what she described as trauma caused by her reluctance to leave Kiribati as a young child to return to immigrate to Aotearoa, New Zealand. There was an expression of grief when she shared her sentiments on Te Taetae ni Kiribati and being 'tongue-tied' and unable to speak. The camps were significant to her in reclaiming her cultural confidence. Sara identified:

> The trauma of not wanting to leave Kiribati but not having a choice because I was little. And then just being ripped away and then somehow, I don't know. I think maybe a defense mechanism for me was just to forget it [Te Taetae ni Kiribati] all. We went back and we spent 3 months with my grandparents on an outer island called Abemama. My brother just picked it (the language) up so naturally. Everything (for me) felt so hard, and I got sick. Everything was just a struggle for me there. But I just couldn't [speak], I couldn't. Nothing formed. I should have been able to speak, because that was my first language that I spoke, my formative language was built on those blocks. So, it's really interesting to think that somewhere that's all tapped in, but it's blocked off somehow. I don't dream in it, but I am definitely tongue tied. I'm definitely tongue tied. (Sara)

Sara saw the benefits of the language workshops for her daughters, “[My girls] really enjoyed it [language workshops] and we learned lots” (Sara).

Eva shared her exposure of Te Taetae ni Kiribati (the language of Kiribati) as a child growing up. She compared how reading I-Kiribati text was difficult because the letters didn't always fit the sounds similarly in Te Reo Māori (the Māori language).

> I've always known the Kiribati language my whole life it wasn't necessarily spoken full time in our home. I feel like it was more when I was younger, but then maybe when Mum had my two youngest brothers, she was busy and didn't use it as much. But she always sang Kiribati songs at home. The most common phrases she would use were when she was telling us off.
>
> I did really enjoy the language workshop, one of the things that always gets me about the language is how things are spelt versus how they're said, that always

> blows my mind. I could not pick up, my mum's Bible and try and read it. It's just so overwhelming that, if I hear it read out or spoken. Yeah, it's more natural to me, but to read it is so different to how it sounds because I know in Te Reo Māori it's similar, there were some things that just don't fit in the English language. (Eva)

Teina expressed her enthusiasm for learning languages and found the language workshops to be the most beneficial of the workshops she attended. She made links between language acquisition and cultural confidence. Because of her involvement with Kapa haka (traditional Māori performance) and her ability to speak Te Reo Māori, Teina felt connected to her Māori side.

> Words I really wanted to learn more words [at the workshops].
>
> I learnt it [Te Taetae ni Kiribati] from my Nan and Dad. Nan forgets we can't speak Kiribati, so she just does, that's how we learn.
>
> The reason I am connected to my Māori side the most is because I speak [Te Reo Māori] all the time at school and home. (Teina)

The participants explained that growing competency in communicating in Te Taetae ni Kiribati supported their cultural confidence because it connected them to the culture more deeply. Trauma was the possible reason one participant could not produce their I-Kiribati language.

4.3.4. Kariaiakaki — Being accepted and a sense of belonging

When discussing the impact of the camps, participants discussed the reassurance of engaging with other I-Kiribati with similar backgrounds and having family attend. They noted that at times, the content created a vulnerable context, which meant a sense of

belonging was vital to feeling safe. It was also important to foster a sense of belonging for the long-term sustainability of these camps, not only to encourage current members to return but also to attract new members.

One participant, Liana, raised the importance of welcoming new members to Ueen Kiribati group.

> I think welcoming new ones into the group maybe and a thing of what we need to think about as well because I like the fact that we can share, but there are so many groups that people can belong to. I think going to a group that you feel comfortable with is important. We are very comfortable with each other and when we come together, there's no need to introduce each other, although we still do, because it's good for the kids to kind of get to know newer ones. I think that comfort of knowing who we all are.
>
> I found that the ones who weren't so confident with their identity, culture or language, didn't feel ashamed if they said something and it was not quite right. Nobody was going to laugh at them, but maybe if we did laugh, you've heard this about the Kiribati way, we laugh with each other and then correct whatever you're saying. (Liana)

Three participants, Sara, Eva and Warren commented on the presence of family aiding acceptance. Sara enjoyed the familiarity of knowing most of the camp members. Eva described how safe she felt, making mistakes in the camp setting and Warren shared how his family were attending:

> The camp was a safe space where I feel like I couldn’t do that (a dance) in a room full of full Kiribati people. A safe space to kind of get things wrong and make mistakes. For example, at my Granny's funeral, I felt like the easiest thing to do was to sit there and not move because there were so many things I might do wrong. Whereas at the camp it is OK, I can if I do something wrong someone's not going to tell me off. (Eva)

All of my family were going so, we could go meet up with family. (Warren)

One participant, Teina, was initially apprehensive about the unfamiliar environment and unsure who would attend. She stated, “I was nervous I guess because the camp was familiar. I wondered, who were these people?’ So, in the beginning, yes, I was uncomfortable but then I saw familiar faces, some aunties and I was like, OK, I can relax a bit” (Teina).

Participants' comments on the effects of the camps showed that cultural confidence increased when the participants felt accepted by other members of the group and felt a sense of belonging. Being among immediate and extended family members and close family friends fostered this safe environment.

4.3.5. Iai Riki au Itera — The Intersectionality of Identities

Participants also discussed the intersection of their identities when discussing the effects of the camps. Four participants identified as I-Kiribati and one other culture. One participant, Liana, married an Englishman and immigrated to Aotearoa, New Zealand in the 1970s, so she navigated her husband's English and Aotearoa, New Zealand cultures. She shared, “My husband is from England, and we met in Kiribati and decided to immigrate and didn't want to go to England because it was too far. So, we picked New Zealand.”

Sara raised the concern that being asked 'where one is from' could imply one doesn't belong. She stated:

> Before I would have said I'm from New Zealand; because we lived in Fiji. Now I say I'm from Kiribati. That is, I suppose I've come to appreciate that is probably where a lot of my core values belong to Kiribati. I'll always reference my dad (English), but I start with Kiribati first. When people ask my Mum, she gets quite bristly about it because, "Where do you come from?" is so loaded. Either way, it means they (the person asking) thinks you don't belong. (Sara)

Eva discussed the struggle to identify herself:

> I say that I am part Kiribati, to say I'm a quarter is so oddly specific. If I was half, I would say half, but I wouldn't say quarter because it's like that feels like I'm getting too into the details. But I don't find it offensive because I know that people do get offended and say "don't say you're half caste. Ah, that's awful. If I say I'm from Kiribati and they're going to look at me and think I am white still. (Eva)

Teina reflected on her identity commenting, "I'm from Matakana but we're also, partly from Taranaki and then I'm from Kiribati. So, I kind of say, "Oh I am Māori and then I say like where I'm from on my Māori side and then I pretty much just say I'm Kiribati [too]. The youngest participant Warren had a more straightforward view, "I'll would say I come from Kiribati." (Warren is also NZ pakeha)

Iai Riki au Itera (the intersectionality of identities) for I-Kiribati is complex and influenced by many factors, particularly within the context of Aotearoa, New Zealand. The participants navigate dual or multiple identities while expressing their connections to Māori culture. Liana, who relocated to New Zealand in the 1970s, navigates her own I-Kiribati culture with that of her husband's English Pākehā culture. Sara has developed a stronger connection to

her Kiribati heritage and shares how questions like “Where are you from?” can be exclusionary. Eva prefers to say she is “part Kiribati” rather than using fractions, as she is aware that others may question her identity based on her appearance. Teina identifies as both Māori and Kiribati, although she is more proficient in Te Reo Māori, and Warren, the youngest participant, describes his identity as I-Kiribati. Their accounts illustrate the diverse and personal ways they identify themselves in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

4.3.6. Karienean abau — Partnership with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

While discussing the effects of the camps, four participants shared about Karienean abau (integrating into Aotearoa, New Zealand culture in partnership with Te Tiriti o Waitangi) and with Māori. Liana and Sara addressed Te Tiriti o Waitangi directly. Teina noted similarities between her Kiribati and Māori cultures. Sara voiced her experience of discrimination in the 1970s, and Eva said she is often mistaken for being Māori. Earlier, in the Humour & Lighthearted Interactions section, Eva also mentioned Tikanga Māori (Māori customary values, practices, and protocols) when she compared her understanding of the formalities of Tikanga and Te Katei ni Kiribati.

Liana, a Master weaver, hosts weaving workshops and exhibitions throughout Aotearoa, New Zealand. As mentioned in the Avoiding Shame section, Liana communicated the importance of being invited to teach rather than assuming a position of holding all the knowledge and skills of weaving. In an earlier section Liana spoke of allowing Māori and other participants to share first, which avoided shame, but more importantly

demonstrated respect. She shared: "We actually ask them, "Does anybody know how to do it? Can we share this is how we revised and learned this method. Do you know a different way?" and you will be surprised how many people actually will come up." (Liana)

Observing protocols for Māori weaving was of equal importance for Liana. When she and her weaving partner began to explore using harakeke, they first approached Māori to consult on protocols and practices. This approach ensured Liana, and her partner upheld Te Tiriti Protection principle of preserving traditional Māori ways. Liana explained:

> When we first started, doing the weaving workshops, it was mainly to talk about Kiribati and to encourage new Kiribati (immigrants) to keep their language and culture. So even though we tried so hard, we couldn't keep the language going. What can we do that's practical, whilst we reminisce about Kiribati? Then we thought of weaving and how that is such an integral part of Kiribati; you can't sleep without your mat; you can't eat without your baskets to keep your food. You can't have shelter on your roof without the weaving we thought right, weaving, we're going to carry on with the weaving and use whatever material. The excuse was there's nothing to use. There's no pandanus leaves to use, well you don't have to just use pandanus leaves to carry on. So, we learned about how the Māori used harakeke (flax) and all the protocol around it and that was the very beginning of our weaving workshops. We had to connect with Tangata whenua to learn from them how to use the material.
>
> We made Te Tai (head dancing gear). Māori would say "So you're using harakeke?" I said "yeah, but this is our traditional head gear."
>
> When we did the Kiribati armour we asked our male elder to ask the spirits of this land to bless our work because we're working in a place that is not our land. If they went to Kiribati and do their own things in our land without acknowledging us, we would feel offended. It's not safe to be in somebody's land and not acknowledge them. (Liana)

Cultural exchanges between Kiribati weavers and their Māori counterparts aligned with the Te Tiriti Partnership principle. Liana and her weaving partner compared weaving

techniques with Māori and discussed Māori migration from the Pacific Islands. Te Tiriti Participation principle of inclusive education between I-Kiribati, Māori and other participants was evident during Liana's weaving workshops. Liana shared:

> We would be comparing how to use the pandanus leaves or the coconut leaves because obviously their ancestors would have used coconut leaves before, they came here to New Zealand. They would have had to learn how to use different materials, so they were interested in how we did things because it's very similar. Our fishing baskets are the very same way they construct their backpacks.
>
> They [Māori] were interested in how we did things with pandanus, and coconut leaves while we were learning how to do things with the harakeke. There was a lot of interaction as well, because then they would say, "Oh, so that would be why we had to plait harakeke leaves to make it look like the coconut leaves as you cut the coconut leaves." So, they plaited it to be on both sides and then you can make a basket with them. So yeah, there was a lot of comparing. (Liana)

As highlighted, Liana talked about the similarities between cultures; Teina, who feels strongly connected to her maternal Māori culture, affirmed this. She identified similarities between Te Katei ni Kiribati and Te Ao Māori (The Māori Worldview) when she stated, "There are similarities between tikanga Māori and Te Katei ni Kiribati." (Teina)

Sara introduced another perspective when she shared the indirect consequence of racism and marginalisation of Pacific peoples during the Dawn Raids of the 1970s. She compared how Māori have faced similar issues with Treaty grievances. Sara suggested that her parents did not want to be associated with the negative connotations of an "overstayer" because they legally lived in Aotearoa, New Zealand. In part, she felt this response was a form of being whitewashed. The issue of racism threatens all three principles: partnership, participation and protection. Sara shared:

> I never really thought about the dawn raids and how it impacted us because we felt so far away that it didn't feel like it impacted us, but I knew the term 'overstayer'. It's like people with a Treaty now, people are like, "oh, but back then, getting a gun was a good trade and people should just be happy they did this, that's fine". You've got this racism that doesn't really get acknowledged.
>
> My gut feeling is my mum probably would have supported the [principles that instigated] the Dawn Raids, for people who are overstayers because that was what the law was. Everyone has a chance and off they should go [back to their countries] if they don't follow the rules.
>
> This influenced the way that we lived our lives because we wanted to show everybody that we didn't want to be tarnished by anybody else. So, I feel like we lost our 'Being Kiribati' because we wanted so much to be white just to prove that we weren't like everybody else [overstayers]. (Sara)

Eva's comments related to people identifying her culture because of her olive skin colour and wearing a Māori taonga. She reflected:

> What's really common for me living in New Zealand is when people ask me 'where I'm from', it's because they assume that I am Māori, so I do tell them I am from Kiribati because they're looking at me like 'you're not fully white, are you? And they always assume that I'm Māori, especially because I wear a greenstone a lot. (Eva)

I-Kiribati participants living in Aotearoa, New Zealand, try to maintain their cultural identity while interacting respectfully with Māori, in partnership with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Liana's weaving workshops uphold Māori values and also function as a platform for cultural exchange with Māori. Teina found similarities between Kiribati and Māori ways of being. Sara shared her experiences of grief and trauma due to leaving Kiribati as a child and also reflected on her understanding of the Dawn Raids. Eva mentioned that she is often mistaken for Māori because of her appearance.

4.3.7. The contribution of workshops

The workshops gave the participants opportunities to build Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki (meaningful relationships) during shared experiences and the exchange of cultural knowledge and practices. During the workshops, the participants engaged in practical learning experiences such as; Te Tae Tae ni Kiribati (the language of Kiribati), traditional cooking, weaving. They also, listened to elders who shared about cultural and spiritual practices such as; canoe building and song composing. The participants shared their how the workshops impacted their knowledge, understanding and cultural confidence:

> [Camp meeting expectations?] Yeah, definitely. And more, you know, it was catching up with the cousins it was. It feels like you belong and, but also it was. I learnt lots and I you know I. Yeah, it just it's. I loved. I loved the experience and I loved. You know, obviously just hang out with my cousins, but it was a deeper level of hanging out with the cousins, you know? (Sara)

> I definitely felt more confident after the second camp. The familiarity of the camp the second time helped also. I think anytime I immerse myself in anything to do with Kiribati culture, I aways feel inspired by it. I always feel inspired to learn more about it or get into the language more or I mean especially dance like. I always feel inspired to learn new dances and stuff after things like that. I would like to have more dance workshops, proper traditional dance workshops. (Eva)

> I relate it [the skill] to myself, but maybe more so my granny. I think a lot about what her life would have looked like growing up and how all of this stuff would have related to her. How she would have done things. She wore a grass skirt and no top. I don't necessarily think about this stuff in relation to me. I think about in relation to her and then how through her it comes down to me [generationally]. *Camp safe place to get things wrong, Kiribati and other like pakeha and Māori, they are learning as well.* (Eva)

Workshop participation was not the central mechanism for increased cultural confidence. Instead, interactions and engagement in meaningful relationships facilitated growth

through conversations, questioning, storytelling and exploring culture. The participants determined Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki (meaningful relationships are important) and were established with family members and formed with others who shared their Kiribati heritage.

4.4. Chapter Summary

The participants in the study shared a variety of experiences related to their cultural identities and cultural confidence. These responses address the first research question demonstrating the participants' understanding of what Kiribati identity means for them within the Aotearoa, New Zealand context and how this informs their interactions within their community and broader society. The participants shared their diverse heritages, migration stories, and experiences whilst navigating dual or multiple identities, including Māori, English, and New Zealand Pākehā.

Some participants, like Liana and her English husband, chose to immigrate to Aotearoa, New Zealand, because it was closer to Kiribati than England. Sara has been on a journey to reclaim her language and embrace her Kiribati identity, stemming from the trauma and grief of having left Kiribati as a child. She values what the Ueen Language Camps offers her children. Eva attributes much of her Kiribati identity to her relationship with her grandmother from Kiribati. She acknowledged her multiple identities and discussed notions about being abakati (half-caste). In contrast, Teina and Warren described their

identities more simply, Teina, acknowledging both her Māori and Kiribati heritage and Warren, his Kiribati heritage. Overall, the findings reveal how personal, familial, and societal influences shape how I-Kiribati individuals in Aotearoa, New Zealand, navigate, express, and celebrate their cultural identities.

The participants in the study shared a variety of experiences related to the effects of the camps on their cultural identities and cultural confidence. Their responses demonstrated their understanding of what Kiribati identity means for them within the Aotearoa, New Zealand context and how this informs their interactions within their Kiribati community and broader society within Aotearoa, New Zealand. The participants shared their diverse heritages, migration stories, and experiences whilst navigating multiple identities, including Māori, English, and New Zealand Pākehā.

Participation in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps helped reinforce cultural identity and contribute to cultural confidence among the participants which addressed the second research question. The immersive language and cultural experiences within intergenerational relationships provided the participants with a safe space to explore their I-Kiribati identity. These shared experiences encouraged the participants to affirm their sense of belonging and express their identity as a community. Overall, the findings indicate that individual, familial, and societal influences shape the way this group of I-Kiribati individuals in Aotearoa, New Zealand, navigate, express, and celebrate their dual, multiple, and diasporic cultural identities.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This retrospective research was a case study on how five members of a Kiribati Language camps (2022 and 2023) described their cultural identity and how they perceived the impact of two language camps on their Kiribati cultural identity and cultural confidence. The camps aimed to revitalise language, culture, and identity by providing theoretical and practical workshops to the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group during a multi-day immersive language and cultural experience. The overarching purpose of this study was to determine the benefits and potential impact of a Kiribati Language Camp for its participants. The research questions guiding this were:

1. **How do Kiribati participants in two Ueen Kiribati Language Camps describe their cultural identity?**
2. **What effects do participants report from participating in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp that reinforce their sense of cultural identity and contribute to their cultural confidence?**

Having presented the findings in relation to these 2 research questions in Chapter 4, in Chapter 5 I focus on discussing 2 themes in relation to existing literature. The two main themes identified were: “Rabakau Mairouia te Roro Rimoa Nakon te Roro Ngkai” (the intergenerational transmission of culture) through “Te Katei ni Kiribati” and “Rekerekeu” (prior connections) expressed through the concept of “Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki”.

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to existing literature and points out what is new. The principles of Taona Tabon Inaim (Korauaba, 2012), discussed in Chapter 3, are grounded in an I-Kiribati methodology meaning “to sit at the edge of the mat.” This principle guided me, the researcher, to demonstrate humility by recognising participants as holders of knowledge rather than treating them as mere subjects (Burnett & Bond, 2020).

The first theme examined the intergenerational transmission of culture through Te Katei ni Kiribati (the way of being Kiribati). This theme illustrated the passing down of language and culture from elders and older participants to younger members of the camp. The second theme focused on the importance of prior connections through Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki (meaningful relationships). This theme explored how prior connections made through family or friendship ties affected the participants' experiences and sense of belonging during their camp experience. Together, these themes offered an understanding of how participation in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp reinforced cultural identity and strengthened cultural confidence for the participants.

Other findings adapt Dr. Epeli HauʻOfa's metaphor in 'Our Sea of Islands' (2017) to reframe the concepts of Pacific identity and interconnectedness. This study reimagines these ideas by comparing the workshops to atolls and the immersive multi-day camp experience to the reef, and beyond the reef, the sea represents the context of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Opportunities for future research will be suggested and an acknowledgment of the study's limitations. The thesis concludes with final words.

5.2. Theme 1: Rabakau Mairouia te Roro Rimoa Nakon te Roro Ngkai — Intergenerational Transmission of Culture through Te Katei ni Kiribati

As described in Chapter 4, one way participation in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp reinforced participants' sense of cultural identity and contributed to their cultural confidence is by creating opportunities for interaction between different generations through the practice of Te Katei ni Kiribati. The findings indicate that the camps allowed the Rabakau Mairouia te Roro Rimoa Nakon te Roro Ngkai (intergenerational transmission) of culture, from elders and older participants to younger participants.

The following section discusses the intergenerational transmission of culture through Te Katei ni Kiribati. It also discusses the demonstration of respect for elders and older participants, teaching how to avoid shame in interactions across age groups, while encouraging humour and light-hearted exchanges. Finally, it shows how the camp setting reinforced familial responsibility.

Yates (2022) defines "Te Katei n Kiribati" as "the Kiribati philosophical worldview, including core values, beliefs, and customary practices" (p. xi). This concept was raised by all the participants, who affirmed that a sound understanding of Te Katei ni Kiribati, contributed to

their cultural identity. The participants explained that Te Katei ni Kiribati influences all aspects of their daily lives; even those born in Aotearoa, New Zealand, emphasised that Te Katei ni Kiribati remains a deeply embedded and lived practice. Liana, an elder, explained, "The way you speak, how you greet people, how you cook your food, the way you present to visitors. Te Katei ni Kiribati speaks of who you are."

Liana's role as an elder, along with other older participants, played a crucial role in the transmission of culture, specifically, Te Katei ni Kiribati. This was true even for the participants born in Aotearoa, New Zealand, who emphasised the importance of Te Katei ni Kiribati as a practice deeply embedded in their cultural identity. Elders and older participants modelled and affirmed Te Katei ni Kiribati explicitly within workshops and practised through their daily interactions. According to Hershberger (2014), cultural transmission "facilitates the transfer, via teaching and imitation, of the knowledge, values, and other factors of a civilisation that influence behaviour" (p. 1).

These findings align with Schwartz et al. (2006) who's paper presents the relationship between acculturation and identity and examined the experiences of nonwhite, non-Western immigrant people moving to Western nations. Schwartz et al. (2006) describe cultural identity as a factor that influences how they [individuals] think, believe, and act. This idea is reinforced by Durie (2006), who asserts that active engagement in the Māori world is strongly associated with a secure cultural identity.

Three participants demonstrated a deeper understanding of Te Katei ni Kiribati and expressed that they identified more strongly with their Kiribati identity than with their Pākehā (New Zealand European) identity. In contrast, one participant felt less connected to Te Katei ni Kiribati describing her identity as being influenced more by her Pākehā upbringing (see Chapter 4 and Trauma). Four participants discussed navigating the intersectionality of their dual cultures, including one who identified the overlap between Tikanga Māori, or "Māori customary practices" (Broughton et al., 2016, p. 107), and Te Katei ni Kiribati.

The findings of the research presented in this thesis show that the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps reinforced the participants' sense of cultural identity and contributed to their cultural confidence is by creating opportunities for interaction between different generations through the practice of Te Katei ni Kiribati. The findings indicate that the camps allowed the intergenerational transmission of culture, from elders and older participants to younger participants.

The following minor theme explores how the demonstration of respect is passed down through generations helps explain how the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp reinforces cultural identity and strengthens cultural confidence through the practice of Te Katei ni Kiribati.

5.2.1. Kaotan te Karinerine — Demonstrating respect

Central to the practice of Te Katei ni Kiribati, is the principle of demonstrating respect (L. Humphry, personal communication, January 30, 2025). The participants agreed that when they demonstrate respect, they reinforce cultural values of Te Katei ni Kiribati. The Micronesian social system (including Kiribati) emphasises respect as a core value based on age, gender, and status, with particular importance placed on showing respect for elders and older individuals Hezel (2013).

All participants identified respect as essential to being I-Kiribati and vital for strengthening cultural identity and highlighted the importance of showing respect at Kiribati cultural events and gatherings during the Kiribati Language Camps. Participants expressed respect through culturally specific behaviours, including bending down when walking between others, using appropriate titles, and serving elders. These practices align with Hezel's (2013) observation that respect is shown by, "keeping one's body bent and the head low. The distance symbolising respect was also horizontal so that people attempting to show respect for someone would stand off a bit to avoid crowding" (p. 90).

Henzel (2013) also notes that when Micronesians (including those from Kiribati) find themselves in unfamiliar environments with strangers, they tend to be hesitant to speak openly. They take a cautious approach to assessing social dynamics, learning about relationships and positions on topics, as well as identifying safe subjects to discuss to avoid offending anyone. One participant described initially being cautious and assessing

social dynamics but quickly relaxed upon discovering familiar connections and family ties.

The participants' responses showed that in the language camp setting, respect also involves demonstrating humility and following cultural norms by not challenging elders or those in authority. Behaviours that demonstrate respect were taught by the elders and older individuals and reinforced within the family unit and community setting. This reflects Hezel's (2013) assertion that "the patterns of respect behaviour learned within the family are practiced in broader society" (p. 92). Participants' comments about withholding from sharing their opinions around employers or elders align with Hezel's (2013) observation that silence can show respect, whether by not disagreeing with authority or by refraining from interruption.

Sara provided a similar example, describing how she teaches her children to demonstrate respect by bending down when moving between people, particularly elders. This practice resonates with Hezel's (2013) observations, "a child… was in no position to refuse the older person to whom he owed respect… After all, age was very important in Micronesian culture. It had just as much bearing on who was entitled to respect in the family as it did in the culture at large" (p.89). Lowe (2003) made comparable observations, noting that in Chuuk[8] as in many Pacific societies, power dynamics in families and villages are based on age and gender. Younger individuals must show respect to their elders, older siblings, and

[8] Chuuk is one of four Federated States of Micronesia

cross-sex relatives. Fulfilling the needs of those in higher status, who are expected to support those of lower status in return.

Similarly, in other Pacific and Māori cultures, individuals observe respectful practices such as lowering their heads and bodies as they walk past people to demonstrate humility and respect. I-Kiribati show respect for elders and authority figures through their interactions and service. While this respectful approach may sometimes disadvantage I-Kiribati individuals in cultures outside their own, as Liana reported in Chapter 4, staying true to Te Katei ni Kiribati ultimately earns the individual honour.

The findings from the language camp suggest that learning a language extends beyond acquiring new vocabulary and grammar. Participants at the multi-day Kiribati Language Camp experienced an immersive environment where they also learned about practical aspects and non-verbal cues, such as body language. These elements are crucial for effective and culturally respectful communication.

Further illustrating the importance of familial structure and respect, Forrest et el. (2021) stated:

> Familial terminological distinctions are particularly important to Pacific peoples and represent yet another example of the omnipresent and edictal nature of Pacific cultural framework. So much so that when individuals meet for the first time there occurs a recitation of broad family genealogies until a point of recognition is reached (Lee, 2003). This occurs so that once familial links are established all parties may observe the proper protocols governing the hierarchal nature of family society. (Forrest et el., 2021, p. 435)

Several participants agreed that showing respect is central to Te Katei ni Kiribati and is so ingrained in their culture that behaving otherwise felt inconceivable. By contrast, some participants believed demonstrating Te Katei ni Kiribati in a Western (specifically Aotearoa, New Zealand) context resulted in short-term limitations but was beneficial in the long term because it earned respect from others. Sara identified gaps in her children's understanding of specific respectful behaviours, even after the language camp, such as bending down and Eva felt strongly that shame was a consequence of disrespect.

In Chapter 4, one participant discussed the challenges with the practice of not questioning authority or 'speaking up,' especially in Aotearoa, New Zealand, where individuals are often encouraged to express their opinions. Nonetheless, upholding Te Katei ni Kiribati principles continues and is just as important in Kiribati and for I-Kiribati living in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Consequently, the Kiribati Language Camps create a safe space for the intergenerational cultural transmission of respectful behaviours, offering opportunities for elders or older members to share insights and model how to demonstrate respect to younger members both in workshops and informally throughout the immersive camp experience.

These findings indicate that the language camps have an important role in education about respect that is intergenerationally transmitted as a cultural value and serves as a means of maintaining social order, as age, gender, and status influence how individuals interact. Behaviours demonstrating respect within Te Katei ni Kiribati are culturally form a deeply

ingrained practice. Showing respect helps shape and strengthen the cultural identity of I-Kiribati people, especially those navigating dual identities in Kiribati and within Aotearoa, New Zealand context. Understanding respectful expectations helps individuals engage appropriately within the hierarchical and patriarchal structures of I-Kiribati society (Hezel, 2013).

5.2.2. Katibanakoan Mama — Avoiding Shame

Data from the participants reflections on the benefits of participating in a Kiribati Language Camp also indicated that the intergeneration transmission of culture included elders and older participants demonstrating and modelling, to younger participants, how to avoid shame in interactions across age groups. Three participants emphasised that cultural identity is connected to understanding how to avoid behaviours that bring shame to oneself or one's family. In contrast to the respectful behaviours previously discussed, Katibanakoan Mama, (avoiding shame) means demonstrating humility instead.

As reported in Chapter 4, an elder and expert in her traditional Kiribati craft of weaving, emphasised the importance of allowing one's reputation to speak for itself and waiting to be recognised for one's expertise. The elder believed in showing humility over self-promotion and demonstrating this by waiting for one's skills to be recognised before being invited to contribute. Demonstrating respect and humility can bring honour to the individual and extended family or community.

As in other collectivist societies, shame can be used as a social means to maintain order and unity. Te Katei ni Kiribati requires individuals to follow the requests or instructions of those in senior positions. By doing so, the individual avoids shame and contributes to maintaining social harmony. Liana illustrated this in her response in Chapter 4, regarding weaving, she waits to be invited to share rather than being the immediate expert.

Several participants noted that saying "no" or refusing a request from a more senior person, particularly family members, can bring shame. As cited in the literature review, Hezel's (2013) study of Micronesian communities involved observations and discussions conducted over several decades. Although the study did not specifically mention Kiribati, it remains relevant because Kiribati shares many cultural values as a nation located in Micronesia. Hezel's (2013) study highlighted that the value placed on avoiding shame is far more nuanced than simply refraining from rude behaviour. Hezel (2013) examined the cultural significance of silence and indirect communication within Micronesian communities, explained in terms of the "strong aversion of islanders to offending anyone" (p. 81).

Building on this, Borala Liyanage and Walker (2021) examined the ideological complexities surrounding feelings of shame related to teaching and learning, as well as the use of English in Kiribati. Six education professionals were interviewed to gather their perspectives through open-ended interviews. This research was conducted as part of a collaborative development project between the governments of Kiribati and Australia. This

project aimed to create employment opportunities for I-Kiribati youth (Borala Liyanage and Walker, 2021). The study stated:

> Here we adopt the view of Scheff (2001: 266 & 268) that shame is “the feeling of a threat to the social bond … crucially involved in the structure and change of whole societies.” As a means of social control, the anticipation of shame is arguably as powerful as the experience of shame itself (Scheff 2001). (Borala Liyanage and Walker, 2021, p. 5)

Findings from the participants’ reflections on the Kiribati Language Camp shows evidence of not refusing a request from someone more senior being a demonstration of respect, initially declining an offer is a practice that helps avoid appearing rude. In Hezel's (2013) study, he recounts how he offered a young man from Chuuk (Micronesia) food after a day's work. Despite being hungry, the young man politely declined. What Hezel had overlooked was the social cue that implied he should insist the young man eat until he agreed. "[the young man's] no was simply good manners in an island society in which it is thought rude to appear greedy. So yes doesn't always mean yes, nor does no always mean no. If "truth" is conditional on the maintenance of smooth relationships with the parties involved, how do we find the answer to the questions we might ask?" (Hezel, 2013, p. 81).

Additionally, Hezel explains that verbal cues are not the only, nor even the most important, way to interpret responses. "Timing can reveal a great deal, too. When the pause before the inevitable yes is a beat longer than usual, this could be a signal that the person might have trouble holding up his end of the bargain" (Hezel, 2013, p. 81).

The participants' responses revealed variation in how shame is understood and navigated, shaped by age, gender, and social status by the participants of the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp. An elder in the group shared her thoughts on avoiding self-promotion and upholding humility to prevent any feelings of shame, as she is already an established expert. Another participant expressed concerns about not overstepping her boundaries as a woman in her late twenties, while another, associated shame more with the idea of disobeying his parents.

The Ueen Kiribati Language Camps provided a culturally safe environment where participants could observe and practice appropriate behaviours. The findings, suggest that the participants already had an understanding of specific cultural practices related to shame, which could further explored during workshops. Participants can also gain valuable insights through everyday interactions and observations of others, during the immersive camp experience. Eva's comment about her exchange with her Aunty at camp illustrates this idea. As a collective society, not offending, which would cause shame, is vital to a sense of belonging and maintaining harmonious relationships.

An individual's cultural identity is closely connected to their community, so an awareness of how to avoid shame is essential for understanding Te Katei ni Kiribati. Avoiding shame and showing respect and humility work in partnership and guide how an individual interacts socially within the Kiribati context. This understanding is also important to uphold within the Aotearoa, New Zealand context when the individual is among other I-Kiribati

people, such as in the camps.

5.2.3. Te Kukurei ma te Mamanikangare — Humour and light-hearted interactions

As presented in Chapter 3, several participants shared that Te Kukurei ma te Mamanikangare (humour and light-hearted interactions) were an important way they expressed their I-Kiribati identity and created a sense of belonging particularly in a group setting.

Findings from the reflections of participants in Kiribati language camps also indicated that elders and older participants demonstrated and modelled, to younger participants, how to avoid shame in interactions across age groups. The intergenerational transmission of culture involved elders and older participants engaging in light-hearted interactions and humour with each other and with younger participants. While there are formal elements of Te Katei in Kiribati, enjoying humorous stories, light-hearted exchanges, along with laughter are also essential for understanding I-Kiribati cultural identity.

Humour and light-hearted interactions serve to welcome guests, provide support and encouragement, calm emotions in tense situations, and help individuals connect with one another. Participants also reported that beyond social interactions, humour also plays a helpful role within a language learning context; the literature review revealed the benefits of incorporating humour in a language camp.

This finding is similar to that of another study on a language camp. Aswad's (2017) study found that integrating humour in communication made the learning process more enjoyable for students, as they felt more comfortable speaking up, asking questions during lectures, and sharing their opinions in class. Aswad (2017) reported that the students' English proficiency improved significantly. Identified limitations in the study, stated that an overemphasis on fun games may have interfered with English learning, as "teachers focus upon fun activities at the expense of good English practice appropriate for the level" (p. 239).

In contrast, humour within Te Katei ni Kiribati is not centred on designing fun activities but rather represents a way of being that is relational and cultural. This aligns with Hereniko's (1994) cultural analysis explores the traditional role of clowns in Polynesian cultures, where humour and jest operate as powerful tools for social and political commentary. Hereniko (1994) noted that the clown's role was to amuse the chiefs "by providing an alternative view of humanity that was normally suppressed in the interest of group harmony and cohesion" (Hereniko, 1994, p. 1).

The participants' responses suggest that through Te Katei ni Kiribati, humour and light-hearted interactions involve more than just entertainment; rather, they function as a social practice to welcome, support, encourage, calm tensions, and build relationships. Participants explained that the camps provide a culturally safe space for participants to

develop an awareness of the nuanced use of humour and light-hearted interactions, which can result in affirming their cultural identity.

This finding suggests that the role of humour in English language camps may contrast with the role of humour in the Kiribati language camp. Kiribati Language workshops may contrast Western practices, where humour may be limited to fun activities. Therefore, the findings suggest that the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps provided opportunities for the intergenerational transmission of the complexities and nuances of I-Kiribati humour and light-hearted interactions.

5.2.4. Tibwangan te Utu — Familial responsibility

Another minor theme of the first major theme in this discussion is that The Ueen Kiribati Language Camps afforded participants opportunities to observe and engage in roles aligned with Tibwangan te Utu (familial responsibilities). This intergenerational transmission occurred through shared practices and direct instructions given by elders and older participants to younger participants.

The findings presented in Chapter 4 revealed that fulfilling the family's expectations and responsibilities upheld Te Katei ni Kiribati and contributed to the participant's sense of cultural identity and cultural confidence. These responsibilities included showing hospitality, supporting younger siblings, caring for grandparents and providing financial assistance. In addition, gender can also influence these responsibilities.

A deep sense of Tibwangan te Utu, familial responsibility emphasises the importance of family to the I-Kiribati identity. As mentioned in the literature review, Hezel (2013) noted that "tight family cohesion is essential if its members were to succeed in a traditional society, just as harmony was a critical element for survival at the village and island level" (p. 26). For Micronesian communities, “family” is central to their identity; thus, it requires individuals to conform to the social group, sometimes at the cost of their personal fulfilment (Hezel, 2013).

This study found that participants expressed a strong sense of obligation to fulfil familial duties in everyday life and within the day-to-day operations of the camp. These responsibilities include showing hospitality, helping younger siblings, caring for and serving parents and grandparents, and contributing financially to the family. As discussed in Chapter 2, roles within Kiribati society are assigned based on age, gender and social status. This perspective aligns with the assertions made by Burnett and Bond (2020), who argue that "decisions and actions are based around what benefits the whole, as opposed to the individual. This is in contrast to Western cultures where individualistic values are often promoted" (p. 332).

This collectivist concept can pose challenges for individuals, especially adolescents, when their personal goals differ from community expectations. As identified in the reviewed literature, an "emotional crises of young people in Chuuk often emerge[d] from the

incongruence in their pursuit of valued personal and social identities within the family, the community, and the peer group" (Lowe, 2003, p. 187).

Further, according to Lowe (2003), “family” is at the core of Micronesian (including those from Kiribati) identity, and tension can arise when there is a misalignment between personal pursuits and traditional family expectations. The findings from participants’ reflections on the Kiribati language camps suggested possible tensions between Kiribati and dominant Western/Pākehā forms of Aotearoa New Zealand culture. One participant spoke of her responsibility to pass on Te Katei ni Kiribati to her children and grandchildren, to ensure they upheld Kiribati values which might be different to the Aotearoa, New Zealand culture.

At the Kiribati Language Camp, participants had the opportunity to reinforce their cultural identity and confidence by embracing traditional familial roles. At the same time, they could reflect on the tensions that may arise between their individual values and those of the collective, as well as between the collective and the dominant cultural context of living in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

5.3. Theme 2: Rekerekeu — Prior Connections through the Concept of Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki

Another way participation in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp reinforced participants’ sense of cultural identity and contributed to their cultural confidence was by creating

opportunities for I-Kiribati with Rekerekeu (prior connections) to gather together guided by the concept of Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki (meaningful relationships). The participants explained that prior connections among participants prompted faster development of feelings of acceptance and belonging which resulted in creating a safe learning environment. With established relationships through close family relations and friendships, there was an unspoken understanding of familial responsibility and roles. Further, the shared attributes of their dual and multiple I-Kiribati and diasporic identities contribute to a sense of unity.

The following section examines the prior connections established through Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki (meaningful relationships). It also examines how participants experience acceptance and a sense of belonging, alongside their familial responsibilities. Finally, it demonstrates how the camp setting enabled unity among individuals with intersecting identities. Through prior connections, participants agreed that Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki (meaningful relationships) supported their learning during the camp experience by cultivating a sense of Kariaiakaki (acceptance and belonging).

5.3.1. Kariaiakaki — Acceptance and Belonging

Kariaiakaki, (acceptance and belonging) among I-Kiribati participants of the Ueen Kiribati Cultural Group, is crucial for reinforcing cultural identity and strengthening cultural confidence. The sustainability of these camps depends on the yearly return of participants to build on the knowledge and experiences acquired from previous camps. The findings

revealed that the participants' prior connections provided a safe space for exploring language and engaging in cultural practices, and importantly, a desire to return yearly.

This sense of belonging and acceptance reflects findings from Hitotuzi's (2020) study which examined English immersion camps for pre-service and in-service EFL teachers in the Brazilian Amazon. The study showed that participants improved their language and cultural skills because of their immersive experiences. The study found that:

> campers may interact with their peers with a certain degree of confidence, which may increase as more positive feedback on their sense of belonging is provided. It appears that this will happen faster or more consistently when there is clear demonstration of acceptance, and when they manage to make more friends within the group of campers." (Hitotuzi, 2020, p.60)

The already established familial and friendship connections, some of which had been cultivated over decades, deepened the immersive camp experience. Many members of the Ueen Kiribati group have forged strong relationships through shared family ties or migration experiences dating back to the 1970s. The participants expressed a sense of reassurance by having family and close friends at the camps, particularly during times when the workshop content or camp interactions made individuals feel vulnerable. The participants felt accepted and safe which encouraged them to take risks in their learning. One participant was initially apprehensive about the unfamiliar environment but felt at ease once she recognised family members. Another participant was concerned about the camps' sustainability and felt strongly that the current Ueen Kiribati members needed to continue to be welcoming and inclusive of new members outside their family and close

friendships.

The benefits of familiar relational settings align closely with Maihi's (2016) study, which examined how urban Māori families experience their culture through wānanga. Applying Kaupapa Māori theory, Maihi (2016) focuses on themes of identity, cultural confidence, and family. Maihi (2016) states:

> ...to be confident in our Māori identity and to be confident in our ability to learn with it and give ourselves the space. Whānau members all agreed that learning in a whānau setting is beneficial; we can support and nurture one another as we are familiar with one another, and there is a feeling of unity already prevalent. (p. 86)

One participant added that connecting with others with dual or multiple I-Kiribati identities created a sense of unity because of shared experiences and similar worldview. Her reflections resonate with Forrest et al.'s (2021) study who observed that "Pacific families are like fishing nets, the strings of which link together all families, villages, and districts" (p. 429).

5.3.2. Iai Riki au Itera — The Intersectionality of Identities

Closely linked to Kariaiakaki (acceptance and belonging), participants' prior connections developed from their historical and shared experiences of navigating the Iai Riki au Itera (intersectionality) of their I-Kiribati identities. The findings showed that four participants described themselves as I-Kiribati with dual, multiple or diasporic identities. Sara and Eva commented on how they have navigated their dual and multiple I-Kiribati identities.

Sara felt that she has strengthened her connection to her Kiribati heritage but finds questions like "Where are you from?" to be exclusionary while Eva prefers to say she is "part Kiribati" to avoid being judged based on her fair appearance. Sara and Eva's comments reflect Keddell's (2006) study, which examined how Samoan-Pākehā participants living in Aotearoa, New Zealand reconcile their mixed cultural identities. Keddell (2006) emphasised how selected characteristics of each culture constructs a sense of belonging. Keddell (2006) argues:

> The combination of both Pakeha colonial demands for authenticity and the Samoan essentialism this engenders and encourages contributes to the participants feeling "…like you weren't 100% Samoan, but you weren't 100% Pakeha either…". (p. 51)

Established prior connections meant that the participants entered the camp environment with an understanding of some of the challenges other members face regarding language and identity. These connections supported participants to engage confidently with the camp's workshops and day-to-day operations. Prior connections provided a culturally safe setting that aided in reducing feelings of anxiety, isolation or exclusion.

Sara, for example, felt she would relate to others who had experienced a similar intersection of cultures, "such as someone with Tongan/English heritage". Sara's view highlights the differences between Pacific People born in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and those born in their Pacific countries. Macpherson's (1999) study, which explored the diasporic identity of Samoan migrants in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Macpherson (1999) noted, "Ethnic identities formed in different sets of circumstances by individuals of

common descent will reflect these. An immigrant generation's ethnic identity will, for these reasons, frequently differ from that of their overseas-born children." (p.51). This finding seems to be unique to the current study of Kiribati Language Camps and is not observed in research on other camps, such as English, French, or Māori immersion.

I-Kiribati with dual or multiple cultural identities may use the term Eiteran I-Kiribati (part I-Kiribati) to describe their cultural heritage. This term is one I have frequently heard among I-Kiribati groups, especially during my visits to Kiribati. However, some perceive Eiteran I-Kiribati as more derogatory than descriptive, with a caveat that the term may carry unintentional negative connotations. Given this context, people might experience feelings of exclusion or a sense of not belonging. In some cases, if the individual appears fair, being "Eiteran I-Kiribati" may help claim I-Kiribati heritage proudly; therefore, this term holds a positive meaning. However, if one is introducing themselves in a maneaba (meeting house), one would mention their other identity briefly then go into detail about their I-Kiribati connection. This is so the group listening can trace a connection back through the generations. (D. Levet, M. Overy & T. Raoren personal communication, December 18, 2024).

During consultation, about the term Eiteran I-Kiribati, the general feeling shared aligned with I-Kiribati scholar Teaiwa (2014), who explained:

> In the culture of my father's people, te I-Banaba, from the central Pacific Islands of Kiribati, there is no such thing as being part Banaban. You either are or you aren't Banaban. Mixed blood does not lessen one's claim to being Banaban or one's authority as Banaban. (p. 44)

Prior connections formed through shared lived experiences and the intersectionality of identities align with the concept of Third Culture Kids (TCKs). Research finds that TCKs describe their sense of belonging as being more connected to people than to places. "TCKs are defined as those who have accompanied their parents for work or study overseas during their significant developmental years, before 18. They are often described as people who build relationships to all of the cultures they have lived in but not having a full ownership in any" (Tan et al., 2021, p. 81).

De Waal and Born (2021) examined twenty TCKs, aged between 26 and 70 years, who expressed their experiences through the free-verse poem "Where I'm from". The research used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study revealed that most TCKs felt more connected to the cultures they grew up in (host culture) rather than the parents' home culture. De Waal and Born (2021) found that “TCKs defined their belonging more in terms of personal relationships than in terms of geographical locations. This study shows that TCKs’ sense of belonging seems more related to the question who than where I am from” (p. 67). The importance of prior connections helps I-Kiribati individuals understand their cultural identity and sense of belonging. De Waal and Born (2021) explain:

> The interrelated questions “Where do I come from” and “where do I belong” are poignant for TCKs while growing up. In their adult lives, the response to the question of Where I’m from becomes even more difficult to answer for those having repatriated to their home culture (Sussman, 2000). To answer these two questions, one must explore both the concepts of cultural identity and of belonging, and the relationship between those two concepts. (p. 68)

The findings confirmed that prior connections, guided by Te Reitaki ae Kakawaki, (meaningful relationships) made learning at the camps for the participants easier to access and safer to experiment. The participants shared experiences, which included intersecting identities, revealed that their identity is continually evolving. Similar findings in Macpherson's (1999) study of New Zealand-born Samoan identity reveals:

> At the intersection of all of these developments the elements of 'new' Samoan identity is evolving. This is not, however, some aberrant outgrowth of the 'real' Samoanness. As these developments are seen and emulated in Samoa, they begin to transform the 'real' culture. At the same time, the 'real' culture continues to place constraints on what can develop. Samoan culture exists not in one place or the other but in a space between them where all of the different ways of being Samoan are contested and mediated. (p. 58)

While this finding aligns with previous research about evolving identities, no previous research concerning the outcomes of language camps seems to have identified this area in their findings. It is an area for future investigation in relation to language camps relating to other Pacific languages.

5.4. Reimagining "Our Sea of Islands" Through Language Camps

The findings in Chapter 4 indicate that another way participation in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp reinforced participants' sense of cultural identity and contributed to their cultural confidence was through the workshops and the camp's multi-day immersive experience, which offered explicit teaching of language, cultural practices, and knowledge in a safe learning space. The extended time participants spent together appeared to

deepen intergenerational relationships and facilitate a connection to I-Kiribati identity.

The following section humbly draws on and reimagines Hau'Ofa's (2017) metaphor, "Our Sea of Islands", through the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps. Firstly, this section will discuss the metaphor and ideas behind the concept and then make comparisons to the workshops and immersive camp experience, as well as the broader context of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

In his essay, Hau'Ofa (2017) presents a grassroots decolonising argument that challenges the political and economic decision-makers and how these powers have shaped Oceania. Hau'Ofa (2027) advocates for "ordinary people, peasants, and the proletarians" (p. 2) and condemns the historical colonial practices that have undermined Pacific cultures. He notes, "in relation to Oceania, derogatory and belittling views of indigenous cultures can be traced back to the early years of interaction with Europeans" (Hau'Ofa, 2017, p. 3).

Hau'Ofa (2017) argues that Pacific nations, especially those in Polynesia and Micronesia (including Kiribati), have been imposed with a limited view of themselves, both geographically and economically, resulting in a dependent, powerless and unable to self-support. Hau'Ofa (2017) acknowledges that he initially agreed with this value system, stating, "Polynesia and Micronesia, are much too small, too poorly endowed with resources, and too isolated from the centres of economic growth for their inhabitants ever to be able to rise above their present condition of dependence on the largesse of wealthy

nations" (p. 4). As he reflected, Hau'Ofa (2017) began to challenge the narrow view.

Hau'Ofa (2017) experienced a shift in his thinking and asserts:

> “But if we look at the myths, legends and oral traditions, and the cosmologies of the peoples of Oceania, it will become evident that they did not conceive of their world in such microscopic proportions. Their universe comprised not only land surfaces, but the surrounding ocean as far as they could traverse and exploit it, the underworld with its fire-controlling and earth-shaking denizens, and the heavens above with their hierarchies of powerful gods and named stars and constellations that people could count on to guide their ways across the seas. Their world was anything but tiny” (p.7)

In order to discuss and explore findings from the present study, I suggest the metaphor “Our Sea of Islands” is adapted to fit the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp narrative, to illustrate the three parts: the atoll, the reef and the sea beyond (see Figure 3). “The atoll”, or land surface, represents the workshops, while the safety of the “surrounding reef” symbolises the multi-day immersive camp experience that connects the workshop content and participation. The study further reimagines the “surrounding sea” metaphor to introduce the idea that beyond the reef, there are the rough waters which reflect the challenges of maintaining Kiribati language and culture in the Aotearoa, New Zealand context.

The following section discusses how participation in the workshops and engagement with the content reinforced cultural identity and cultural confidence. This section first presents the findings from the workshop participation, then introduces the Te Tae Tae ni Kiribati (the language of Kiribati) workshops. Following that, the importance of Karinean Katei

(honouring traditions and customs), as well as how participants view themselves as Karienean abau (Treaty partners) in, Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi).

Figure 2: Adapted and reimagined from "Our Sea of Islands" (Hau'Ofa, 2017) through Language Camps.

5.5. Our Sea of Islands — Workshop as an Atoll

For the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp, the metaphorical adaptation of "Our Sea of Islands" (Hau'Ofa, 2017) places the "atoll" as a symbol for the workshops, while the "surrounding reef" represents the safety of the immersive camp experience. The reef connects the workshops' content, while the "rough waters" beyond it represent the challenges I-Kiribati participants face maintaining their language and culture in the Aotearoa, New Zealand context.

The organisers consulted participants before the camp began to identify their learning interests and invite facilitators to lead workshops that aligned with those interests. The

group members were able to select workshops of interest that reinforced their cultural identity and strengthened their cultural confidence. The planning process involved collaboration between the elders, such as Liana, and their areas of expertise, as well as the expressed interests of the group.

During workshops, elders and older participants planned and delivered a range of workshops to address the group's needs. The organisers offered Kiribati language workshops in both the morning and afternoon, prioritising them as important for participants to attend. The participants, mainly children and young adults, had lessons on alphabet sounds, words, and phrases. The workshops included videos, songs, and action songs to support language acquisition.

Practical workshops were well attended, including activities such as weaving bracelets, creating hanging decorations and weaving a square ball to play hacky sack on the beach. The participants used harakeke (flax) instead of the traditional material, pandanus. Other workshops included cooking traditional foods such as Te Donati (a Kiribati doughnut), contemporary children's dance, traditional dance, and group stick dance workshops.

Theoretical workshops were delivered by elders in a lecture-style format, with opportunities for questions at the end. The topics covered honoured traditions and customs, including the highly technical skills required to build Te Wa (canoe), traditional ocean navigational skills, traditional male and female dancing and the composing of songs

which requires evoking spiritual and ancestral powers.

Liana, an elder, focused on sharing cultural knowledge and skills with others, thereby affirming her belief in the value of knowledge sharing rather than knowledge gatekeeping. A noticeable variation emerged in how participants experienced the camp's impact on their cultural identity. As reported in Chapter 4, Sara and Eva felt that the camp had a positive impact on their cultural identity, while Teina and Warren, the youngest participants, experienced minimal change. Teina and Warren felt confident in the cultural identity they had already gained from their family and home environment. One interesting finding was Sara's newfound appreciation for the depth and complexity of traditional beliefs, which she had not previously recognised.

The formal workshops facilitated new cultural learning and language acquisition. Building on this, Teina expressed interest in the language workshops and continued seeking opportunities to learn the language after the camp ended.

5.6. Reimagining Our Sea of Islands — Multi-Day Immersive Experience as the Reef

The participants emphasised that spending time with family and the group, engaging in conversations and storytelling, and experiencing cultural immersion which were all strong aspects of the Kiribati Language Camps reinforced their cultural identity. These relationships helped participants feel accepted, connected, and supported in their identity

as I-Kiribati.

As discussed in Chapter 2, language acquisition was supported in an immersive camp environment. Muda et al.'s (2024) study of English language camps for Additional Language Learners, (ALL) revealed that students in an immersive environment have more opportunities to practice and improve their English skills. This was achieved through a range of activities, including games, group discussions, and cultural exchanges. During the three-day camp, participants' reported that "the immersive and intensive nature of the camp provided a conducive environment for language learning, allowing the participants to practice and improve their English language skills in a practical and supportive setting" (Muda et al., 2024, p. 243).

In a related but culturally specific context, the literature review discussed Coley et al.'s (2019) study on Noho marae (live-in experience on a marae). Coley et al. (2019) noted that "on the marae, tauira share a deeper sense of connectedness to each other, one where they feel supported on their learning journey. This energises and activates them to take a leap of faith, to believe that they can contribute and support others" (p. 2).

In an earlier Noho marae study, Legge (2010) observed that the Māori language, protocols and traditions were central to the university students’ experience which helped them become more familiar with the Māori culture. The students reported that they felt uplifted by the strong relationships that developed over the four-day stay.

Gascoigne's (2009) study, which explored the effects of a week-long camp at the University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) during the summer of 2007 showed that while short-term camps have shown positive outcomes, Gascoigne (2009) suggested that extending the duration of the camps may have provided more in-depth language acquisition.

Gascoigne (2009) identified limitations, including the extensive time needed for planning by the teachers. In his study, the three teachers involved were university instructors with no elementary teaching experience. The teachers found that curriculum development required significant time and effort, and the camps required careful resourcing to find a venue, instructors, and funding (Gascoigne, 2009). The Ueen Kiribati Language Camp faces similar challenges, workshop facilitators not necessarily trained teachers, but rather knowledge keepers who share their cultural expertise. Like Gascoigne's (2009) study, the organisers of the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp encountered issues such as finding a suitable venue to host over sixty members. Significant effort is required to raise funding, ensuring the camps remain free and accessible to all.

While Gascoigne (2009) identified practical and resource challenges in the Nebraska-Omaha language camps, in the Kiribati Language Camp examined in this thesis, Liana, Sara, and Eva's comments reveal that the immersive camp experience made a positive cultural and emotional impact. All the participants emphasised the benefits of language immersion, intergenerational connections, and reciprocity, an emphasis that reflects the

aims of Māori educational movements. As May and Hill (2018) explain, "The new model would thereby give greater powers to Māori tribes for the health of their language and to facilitating a focus on family intergenerational transmission alongside education" (p. 313). May and Hill (2018). During the 1980s, Māori medium education initiatives, including Kōhanga Reo (Māori language immersion early childhood settings) and Kura Kaupapa Māori (Māori language immersion schooling) were established. Kaupapa Māori models in education highlight the potential of the traditional concept of “whānau” (family). A notable example of this is Kura Kaupapa Māori, which illustrates how whānau supports social change in primary education Smith (1995).

Expanding on this, May and Hill (2018) examine a shift from formal education to iwi and whānau-led initiatives for intergenerational language transmission. They point out that Māori communities are increasingly empowered to manage their language revitalisation efforts, focusing on whānau-based learning alongside formal education.

The findings of the current study of a Kiribati Language Camps align with previous findings about Māori language learning experiences. The responses are complementary perspectives that reveal different aspects of the cultural experience at the camp. Liana emphasised the importance of gathering together in Kiribati culture. Sara focused on intergenerational connections and on recreating the communal living she experienced for her children. Eva highlighted the value of informal social interactions, specifically Maroro (dialogue and reminiscing), and opportunities to bond. Together, the participants'

responses highlight the multifaceted nature of how the camp supports the Kiribati diaspora in developing a sense of belonging and cultural identity in a very similar way to research findings concerning Māori language learning experiences. (Legge, 2010).

Both this study and Legge's (2010) research demonstrate that a balance between structured workshops and informal, family-like interactions is essential for revitalising language and culture. Findings from the present study, together with similar research concerning Māori language learning experiences, show that creating a balance of structured workshops and informal, family-like interactions is essential to revitalising language and culture. The responses from participants about this immersive structure of the Kiribati language camp reflect the Māori idea of whānau-centred learning. These findings emphasise the need for future camps to maintain both valuable immersive learning opportunities; however, planned workshops are equally important and support broader cultural and language acquisition.

Overall, the participants reported that participation in the Kiribati Language Camp reinforced their sense of cultural identity as I-Kiribati, living in New Zealand with diverse identities or in the diaspora. To add, the “surrounding reef,” a metaphor for the multi-day immersive camp experience, offered a safe and inclusive space for participants to experiment and strengthen their cultural identity. Collectively, the Ueen Kiribati group followed cultural traditions and fulfilled daily routines and responsibilities to ensure the

smooth operation of the camp. The members participated in language and cultural workshops, learning traditional stick games and dances, and between these sessions, they had opportunities to take part in various sporting activities.

Liana felt that connection and community gatherings are important in Kiribati culture, recognising that the camps provide this experience, even if they occur only once a year. Sara agreed with this, noting that such experiences are infrequent for her daughters. Eva valued the informal moments, like sharing tea and stories, describing them as very familiar, comforting, and at the heart of being Kiribati. The Ueen Kiribati Language Camps affirmed Indigenous ways of knowing, experienced in the safety within the "surrounding reef," a metaphor for the multi-day immersive camp environment that links workshop content with active daily participation.

5.7. Te Taetae ni Kiribati — The Language of Kiribati

Findings showed that participation in Te Taetae ni Kiribati (The Language of Kiribati) workshops reinforced participants' sense of cultural identity and contributed to their cultural confidence through facilitated basic language workshops. The participants reported that they reconnected with I-Kiribati culture through the I-Kiribati language and shared experiences of language. The importance of Kiribati language acquisition connects to broader examinations of Pacific identities in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Anae (1998) highlights that, for example, Samoan language plays a key role in an individual's sense of connection to their culture. Anae (1998) states:

> What they do tend to share is the belief that New Zealand-born children are not true Samoans. They cannot be because they have not mastered the knowledge's, skills and language that are at the centre of Samoan identity. (Anae, 1998, as cited in Macpherson, 1999, p. 57)

Participants emphasised the importance of both the emotional and technical aspects of Kiribati language acquisition. One participant emphasised that the camp allowed her to comfortably use the language, even if she lacked confidence. Two participants addressed the challenges of reading and writing in Te Taetae ni Kiribati, with one finding it difficult to translate some words and phrases into English. These understandings support Cameron's (2014) findings who explains preserving the Kiribati language also preserves cultural identity. He also stated that many concepts are difficult to translate into other languages accurately. Cameron's (2014) study, which explores how the people of Kiribati imagine their lives after climate-induced migration.Cameron states:

> The Kiribati language is a verbal medium of communicating their culture and plays a large role in reproducing their identity, as well as maintaining social resilience. Without their language, their ways of thinking and communicating can change because many words and concepts cannot be directly translated (Cameron, p. 85).

Teina expressed an enthusiasm for language learning, and noted that the workshops were the most beneficial part of the camp. She linked language acquisition to cultural confidence and felt a strong connection to her Māori culture through her involvement in Kapa Haka and her proficiency in speaking Te Reo Māori. For Teina, forging stronger connections to her I-Kiribati identity, meant "learning new words". Her experiences and direct links to language and culture resonate with Anae's (1998) research. Anae (1998)

found that Samoan-born individuals and elders viewed the Samoan language as a crucial marker of Samoan identity. Those who could not speak it were often considered fiapālagi, which reflects Pākehā influences (Anae, 1998, cited in Chang & Collie, 2022).

However, as presented in Chapter 4, Sara's contrasting experience, explained that she believed she lost her I-Kiribati language due to the trauma of leaving Kiribati as a child to return to New Zealand. She described this loss as a defence mechanism and described how her grief caused her to become "tongue-tied and unable to speak [I-Kiribati]." However, she later reflected that participating in the camps helped her reclaim her language and rebuild cultural confidence.

To conclude this section, Suaalii-Sauni (2017) quotes this Samoan statement taken from a speech by His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi given in 1971:

> If I were to forget you, let my tongue be glued to my mouth, for if I forget my language, I will forget Jerusalem. If I continue to use Hebrew, I will not forget my true home ... The beauty and power of this biblical saying is the message it carries about heritage and home. Language defines a people's distinctiveness. Language brings to life the foundations and characteristics of a people; their home and nation. Language communicates and expresses suffering, love, remorse, as well as values and traditions. Without [our Samoan] language, we will lose that which is unique, sacred and dear to us [as Samoans]. (Suaalii-Sauni, 2017. p.1)

5.8. Karienean abau — Partnership with Te Tiriti o Waitangi

As described in Chapter 4, participation in the workshops at the camp encouraged an understanding of the Treaty partnership principles, reinforcing participants' I-Kiribati

cultural identity and strengthening their cultural confidence.

The participants in this research who are from the I-Kiribati diaspora in Aotearoa, New Zealand, emphasised the importance of maintaining strong connections to their homeland, Kiribati, while negotiating how to retain that identity in the host culture. Four participants shared how living in Aotearoa New Zealand has shaped their I-Kiribati cultural identity. Liana and Sara directly referenced Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi), while Teina identified the similarities between her Kiribati and Māori cultures. Eva mentioned that she is often mistaken for Māori because of her fair appearance. She also compared her understanding of the formalities of Tikanga Māori (Māori customs, values, and practices) to those of Te Katei ni Kiribati.

As an I-Kiribati elder and a master weaver, Liana regarded the Te Tiriti o Waitangi as an important framework for understanding her place in Aotearoa, New Zealand. When she and her weaving partner began working with harakeke (flax), they first sought guidance from local Māori to ensure they followed the appropriate protocols and practices. For Liana, beginning with an understanding of how Māori weave was a respectful and culturally appropriate starting point.

Liana's responses demonstrated a desire to engage with the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as part of her diasporic identity and reflect the importance she placed on observing protocols related to Māori weaving. This approach ensured that Liana and her

partner upheld the Te Tiriti o Waitangi principle of protection, which includes the preservation of traditional Māori practices.

Liana also participated in cultural exchanges to compare weaving techniques with Māori, allowing both groups to discuss the materials they used for weaving and explore connections, such as Māori migration from the Pacific Islands and the use of harakeke for Māori and coconut leaves and pandanus for I-Kiribati.

Further connections to Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Māori ways of being became apparent when Liana and her weaving partner asked their I-Kiribati male elder to seek the blessings of the spirits of the land for their work. Liana emphasised the importance of acknowledging Māori, remarking that failing to do so would be disrespectful and spiritually unsafe.

Liana discussed how she related to the Māori culture. Likewise, Teina, who has a strong connection to her Māori culture through her maternal side, reported similarities between Te Katei ni Kiribati and Te Ao Māori. Both Liana and Teina's reflections aligned with Dr. Melani Anae's (PMN News, 2022) discussion of vā, a Polynesian concept that describes the social and sacred spaces of relationships, between Māori and Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In her presentation, Dr Anae (PMN News, 2022) stated, "Pacific People should take an interest in the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty of Waitangi is a philosophical reference point

for understanding the vā: social and sacred spaces of relationships between Māori and Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa." She discusses the historical connections between Māori and Pacific peoples, highlighting the Tuakana/Teina relationship, which represents the older/younger sibling dynamic between the two groups. In this context, Pacific People living in Aotearoa, New Zealand, are considered the Teina (younger siblings), while Māori are the Tuakana (older siblings). By comparison, when Māori travel to the Pacific, they take on the role of Teina (PMN News, 2022).

This sense of respect for and acknowledgment of Tangata Whenua (the people of the land), as described by Liana and Teina, contrasts with a different yet related experience shared by Sara. In her parents' efforts to settle and integrate into Aotearoa, New Zealand, Sara described that she felt she had experienced a form of "whitewashing." Within the Aotearoa, New Zealand context, the term “whitewashing” can draw on similarities in Milne's (2013) study explaining Tatum's five-stage model of racial identity development, which builds on earlier work by Cross and Helms, Milne notes that "individuals take on negative stereotypes believing it is "better" to be White, seeking to assimilate into the dominant culture and rejecting their own." (p. 51)

Because Sara's parents were legally residing in Aotearoa, New Zealand, she believed that they did not want to be associated with the negative connotations of being labelled an "overstayer". "Overstayer" referred to Pacific immigrants who were residing in Aotearoa, New Zealand, illegally due to their visa status expiring. This term was coined during the

1960s and 1970s. Following World War II, Aotearoa, New Zealand, faced a labour shortage that led to the recruitment of immigrants, including workers from the Pacific, excluding those from Kiribati. With the economy improving and a reduced demand for Pacific Island workers, many did not have their visas renewed and were therefore required to return home. Police disproportionately targeted illegal Pacific immigrants and detained them. Some arrests took place in the early morning hours and became known as the "Dawn Raids".

Sara's comments about her family wanting to distinguish themselves from the label of "overstayers" aligns with themes in Macpherson's (1999) study which was conducted in Aotearoa, New Zealand, focusing on Samoan migrants. Using a qualitative methodology, Macpherson (1999) explored how Samoan identity was constructed and expressed within a diaspora context. Macpherson (1999) states:

> The third sub-identity was simply to align with pālagi critics and to distance themselves publicly from 'young, stupid FOBs' ('fresh off the boat') who are giving us 'good Samoans' a bad reputation. This apologist response involved insisting that their conduct was as unacceptable to other Samoans as it was to the host. (p. 56)

While Liana and Teina’s comments do not contradict Sara’s, they highlight the diverse ways in which members of the I-Kiribati diaspora navigate the notion of belonging in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Eva's comments were not about Te Tiriti o Waitangi; instead, she noted that people often assume she is Māori, "I do tell them [people] I am from Kiribati because they're looking at

me like 'you're not fully white, are you? And they always assume that I'm Māori, especially because I wear a greenstone a lot." Eva's response echoes Tongan artist, Dyck's (2014) comment in a personal interview, regarding her German Tongan identity within the Aotearoa, New Zealand context. She reflects, "People would just look at me and assume that I was Māori—"Oh, she's got a bit of brown skin, must be Māori"—and I would say, "Well no, I'm not," and my teacher said, "Well how can you show that you're not?" (Dyck, 2014, as cited in McGavin & Fozdar, 2017).

These examples illustrate the assumptions made about cultural identity as based on appearance and the ongoing negotiation of an individual's ethnic identity in the multicultural context of Aotearoa, New Zealand. As Manuela and Anae (2017), explain that New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders may strongly embrace New Zealand's customs and traditions without explicitly identifying as New Zealanders. Manuela and Anae (2017), discuss three constructs that describe an individual's relationship to their cultural environment:

> ethnic identity, which refers to how much one sees oneself as part of a specific ethnic group, is similar to acculturation, the process of adapting to a new culture, and cultural orientation, one's attitudes and involvement with various cultures. Of the three, ethnic identity requires constant affirming and reinforcing. (p. 129)

Reflecting on these findings, as outlined in chapter 2, existing studies on language camps primarily focused on language acquisition and, specifically in the case of Noho Marae, on language and cultural revitalisation. However, there appears to be a lack of literature supporting the benefits of language camps, particularly regarding how non-Māori

Indigenous language camps facilitate meaningful connections with Tangata Whenua (the people of the land) and engage with the complex intersectionality of participants' identities within Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Equally, language camps are often developed to support the acquisition of dominant languages such as English or French for individuals who do not speak these as a first language and who do not come from countries where these languages are commonly spoken.

5.9. Karinean Katei ma Aroaro — Honouring customs, traditions and practices

Two participants reported that their participation in the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp reinforced participants' their sense of cultural identity and contributed to their cultural confidence through workshops which actively Karinean Katei ma Aroaro (honour customs, traditions and practices). Despite the camps being beneficial in supporting cultural identity, three participants reported that they did not significantly deepen what was already reinforced in their family environment.

While cultural practices are often embedded from an early age within families and cultural contexts, they can also be introduced through planned experiences. As mentioned in the literature review, Legge (2010) discusses the immersive experience of E Noho Marae

(Marae stay) for Bachelor of Physical Education students, Auckland University. Legge (2010) commented:

> During this time, students engaged in Māori tikanga (customary practices) through experiential learning on the marae. This engagement allowed them to understand Māori traditions and cultural norms better (Legge, 2010). Learning is through role play and group discussions to share and understand values such as tika correctness, pono-truth and aroha love and empathy. *Waiata* [song] is used to support the korero [talk] while metaphoric storytelling is the mainstay that underpins the learning activities. *Mau rakau* [carry a weapon] and hand games teach physical activity from a Māori perspective and help to create a tight group who can synchronise their moves. (Legge, 2015, p. 2)

I-Kiribati readily share general customs and traditions but treat more specialised skills and knowledge with sacredness and mystery. There is a longstanding tradition of gatekeeping specialised skills and knowledge, a practice that continues to this day (L. Humphry, personal communication, January 30, 2025). When required, families are often called upon to share the expertise they have mastered over many generations. This knowledge is closely guarded within families and is only transmitted through generations.

These insights highlight the crucial role older members and elders play in transmitting culture to younger generations and shaping their understanding of Te Katei ni Kiribati. During the camp, however, the elders went against tradition by holding workshops to share knowledge that is typically gatekept.

As mentioned, the weaving skills were shared during the practical workshops, a skill which can be traditionally only shared within an individual's family. During his interview, I

observed Warren paused to show me various woven pieces displayed in his home. He demonstrated how traditional woven items hold cultural significance for his family, which he connects his culture and identity. He stated, "[Grandma] makes hats, bags and mats." Warren's response aligns with Jacobs and Marea (2019) study which explores how a child's play reflects her early experiences in Kiribati. With input from her mother and grandmother, it highlights the importance of recognising family knowledge in early childhood settings to support belonging and meaningful learning. Jacobs and Marea (2019) state:

> Collecting the flowers, connecting with the sand, folding blankets, and singing to babies were just some of the ways of knowing and being from her experiences in Kiribati that Mee carried with her into the playgroup. Unfortunately, these ways of knowing and being are less visible or diminished when people do not understand the significance of how children negotiate meaning by drawing on the experiences and knowledge/s of their families and communities. (Jacobs & Marea, 2019, p. 55)

Warren's connection to his I-Kiribati culture and identity through woven items draws links to McSweeney's (2018) study which examines a British Museum project that collaborated with UK communities, including the Kiribati diaspora, to co-research and analyse the collections. McSweeney (2018) observed:

> [the participants] were drawn to objects that reflected not just their own lived experiences but also ones that could, they felt, represent the skills, characteristics (resourcefulness, resilience, ingenuity despite limited resources) and traditions of Kiribati culture that still remain active today. Through engagement practice we know communities often find connections with familiar objects in museums' historical archives. (McSweeney, 2025, p. 104)

Not only does Warren connect to his culture through his Grandmother's woven objects and the practice of weaving, but the intergenerational transmission of culture is at play. This shows how Indigenous people learn from on another across generations. Haines et al. (2017), for example, examine how Indigenous elders from the Ngarrindjeri community in

South Australia transmit knowledge. “Elders who are chosen as knowledge keepers are given the responsibility of passing on their knowledge to the future generation” (Haines et al., 2017, para. 4).

There were six elders who attended the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps, including two English husbands. The elders' valuable expertise was demonstrated in weaving and cooking workshops, as well as in theoretical workshops about canoe building and song composition. During times of Maroro (dialogue and reminiscing) outside the workshops, the elders shared stories about their upbringing in Kiribati and various cultural experiences.

Tensions can arise between the obligation to preserve knowledge within a family lineage and the modern challenges of losing valuable knowledge as elderly family members become reluctant to share outside their immediate families. These challenges emphasised the need to carefully negotiate between I-Kiribati ways of sharing knowledge and Western models of sharing. In the Findings Chapter, Liana addressed this by joking that elders traditionally risk danger when sharing knowledge outside their families. However, she emphasised that if they do not pass it on, the knowledge will die with them, so it is better to teach others than let it be lost.

5.10. Contribution of findings in relation to language camp research

Findings from the research presented in this thesis indicate that Language camps can be necessary spaces where Indigenous and diasporic identities intersect. They create opportunities for learning from each other and help strengthen cultural belonging. This current research makes a unique contribution by highlighting how the Kiribati Language Camps build relationships with Māori, who are the Tangata Whenua and explores how I-Kiribati participants experience their cultural identities.

Another contribution of this study is its focus on an Indigenous language camp designed by and for Indigenous People, aimed at revitalising and maintaining their own language and cultural practices. This develops the understanding of language camps to include not just language skills and cultural practices, but also their broader impact on culture and relationships particularly for Indigenous Peoples living within the context of another Indigenous culture.

5.11. Implications of Findings

Based on the findings presented, this section discusses the implications of the study. It focuses particularly on future Kiribati Language Camps and, more broadly, on Pacific or Indigenous language camps for Indigenous Peoples revitalising and maintaining their language and culture. These implications aim to reinforce and contribute to the cultural

identity and confidence of the participants attending these camps.

5.11.1. Implication: Mairouia te Roro Rimoa Nakon te Roro Ngkai — Intergenerational Transmission of Culture through Te Katei ni Kiribati

To strengthen the cultural identity and confidence of participants at the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp in Aotearoa, New Zealand, it is essential for elders and older members to not only attend the camps but to participate in leading theoretical and practical workshops by sharing their traditional knowledge and skills. This requires the elders and older members to share knowledge, skills and practices with the broader community, going beyond just family. However, in line with highly specialised or sacred practices, such as song composition, elders may choose to share only certain parts of their knowledge theoretically and with discretion, rather than in a practical workshop.

This reframing of cultural accountability and knowledge sharing aims to ensure that traditional practices are passed on to future generations. Theoretical and practical workshops offer participants a meaningful opportunity to access knowledge beyond their experiences, particularly living outside Kiribati and their family's area of specialisation.

Explicit teaching from elders and older participants in both theoretical and practical workshops can support the intergenerational transmission of cultural values, as seen in Kaotan te Karinerine and Katibanakoan Mama (showing respect and avoiding shame). Along with workshops, the daily immersive experience offers the group members

opportunities to observe respectful cultural practices, such as bending down when passing by individuals and learning to avoid behaviours that might cause shame. Societal structures based on age, gender, and status influence the nuances that lead to shame.

Additionally, the intergenerational transmission of cultural practices during workshops enables elders and older participants to explain the structure and importance of familial responsibilities. The responsibilities can be reinforced in everyday interactions, to support the group members to fulfil these roles. An example might be prompting children to make tea for their parents or elders, or to help with camp chores like doing the dishes. Older siblings may also take on caregiving roles for younger ones. As discussed in Chapter 2, gender significantly influences how these tasks are assigned and carried out.

5.11.2. Implication 2: Rekerekeu — Prior Connections

Humour and light-hearted interactions are essential aspects of Kiribati culture and Te Katei ni Kiribati, however, while these moments cannot be forced or staged, the camp creates a shared space where individuals can naturally engage in humorous banter. Their prior connections add depth to the stories, experiences, and memories that individuals can draw upon together.

As shown in the findings, the participants' sense of acceptance and belonging provided a safe space for exploring language and engaging in cultural practices. The existing family and friendship connections eliminate the need for an extended time of introductions and a

Maroro while the individuals become acquainted with each other. To ensure the camps continue sustainably each year, current members must be welcoming and inclusive of potential new members, as the elder cautioned. This involves providing activities that encourage new connections between existing and new members.

Closely linked to Kariaiakaki (acceptance and belonging). The participants' shared dual, multiple, and diasporic identities helped forge their prior connections before the camp began. The findings indicate that inviting new members with similar I-Kiribati identities can encourage a sense of acceptance and belonging. The current and new participants shared experiences of navigating their identities within the Aotearoa, New Zealand context help create a common understanding.

Workshops and opportunities for Maroro to explore the intersectionality of their identities would be beneficial, with elders and older participants sharing their cultural narratives through discussions that tell their stories. Creativity sessions or other practical workshops could help individuals address the challenges they face with their identity, resulting in strengthening their cultural confidence.

5.11.3. Implication 3: Our Sea of Islands — Workshop as an Atoll

Structured theoretical and practical workshops offered participants opportunities to learn the Kiribati language and engage in cultural activities such as dancing, cooking, weaving, and sharing traditional knowledge. The participants gained a deeper understanding of I-

Kiribati values, practices, and knowledge systems that are embedded within Kiribati culture. Additionally, unstructured and incidental learning experiences, such as meal preparation, eating together, playing games, storytelling, reminiscing, and sharing laughter, were equally as valuable.

The findings emphasise the importance of creating a safe space to experiment learning Te Taetae ni Kiribati without judgment. Tualaulelei and Taylor-Leech's (2021) study of a Samoan–English bilingual kindergarten (a'oga amata) in southeast Queensland, Australia. Found that:

> The notion of 'safe spaces' describes places where bilingual learners can enact their identities, feel a sense of belonging, and successfully learn (Conteh & Brock, 2011, p. 349). We distinguish the idea from 'cultural safety', which we discuss in detail in Tualaulelei & Taylor-Leech (2021). Jones Diaz et al., (2018) use the term 'meaningful spaces' to describe sites where "participants feel that they can express themselves through their own linguistic and cultural practices, knowing that those around them share common language, culture, and life experiences" (p. 29)." p. 76)

Inclusive approaches to encourage multiple opportunities for the participants to practice language formally and conversationally would be benefical. This is evident in Oyazimxon's (2024) study on teaching English inclusively which involved strategies that promoted active participation, respect for diverse cultures, and ensured accessibility for all students. Oyazimxon (2024) notes "in inclusive English Language Teaching, differentiated instruction not only supports language development but also ensures that all students feel respected and valued for their unique contributions, irrespective of their backgrounds" (p. 223).

For group members who find oral language easier to access than written language, activities such as paired conversational practice, songs, and games might be more suitable to begin with rather than learning the written text. This aligns with Israel's (2013) observation that "language acquisition has a profound relationship with music in that they can both develop and support each other" (p. 1362). Further, Huyen and Nga's (2003) study of Vietnamese secondary school students learning English vocabulary, found that using games to teach vocabulary in English as ALL improved learner motivation, engagement, and retention. Huyen and Nga's (2003) noted that "many experts of language teaching methodology also agree that playing games is a good way to learn vocabulary" (p.5).

After engaging in oral language activities, facilitators can support reading in I-Kiribati by explicitly teaching sounds along with their corresponding letter representations. Any confusion between English and I-Kiribati letter-sound relationships can be addressed through group discussions, which help prevent individuals from feeling singled out or ashamed.

To help address feelings of trauma associated with language loss, learning Te Taetae ni Kiribati alongside Maroro (dialogue or reminiscing) can facilitate storytelling. This strategy can help unpack themes of loss and grief. Resources could be created, such as video recordings to use in later workshops to discuss language trauma, grief and loss. Thompson (2016) affirms the role storytelling:

> For I-Kiribati, oral storytelling is a key part of the cultural identities of Kiribati families, who are the custodian of family traditions, spiritual practices and cultural

> identity. Irrespective of how stories are told, a common view among many researchers of narrative analysis agree that stories have an important role in providing valuable insights into the meanings that people attribute to life events (Thompson, 2016, p. 85).

The significance of the findings from the Kiribati Language Camp highlights several implications to support the participants' cultural identity within the Aotearoa, New Zealand context. To promote the principles of Te Tiri o Waitangi, the camp organisers could facilitate collaborative workshops with Māori to learn practices such as protocols for using harakeke or seeking blessings for cultural events. Inviting local iwi to bless the camp at the beginning would be an important step in modelling this respectful process. Identifying connections with Kiribati protocols may also reinforce this understanding.

Like a previous section concerned with the intersectionality of identities, workshops that validate and celebrate the similarities and differences between Te Ao Māori and Te Katei ni Kiribati may support participants in navigating their dual or multiple identities. Activities may include comparing Māori and Kiribati vocabulary and stories, as well as exploring cultural connections. A time of Maroro (dialogue or reminiscing) to share how their identities intersect, co-exist or conflict to draw strength from both cultural identities.

To help protect against stigma or past trauma (such as the Dawn Raids), workshops could offer opportunities for participants to learn about early Pacific migration stories during the Dawn Raids, followed by a focus on Kiribati migration. This strategy would promote both cultural understanding and affirmation of identity.

Adding to the previous section concerning the intersectionality of identities, this section on Partnership with Te Tiriti further explores ways to support the development of identities through workshops that discuss and share experiences related to labels (including Abakati/half-caste) and the process of racialisation in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Eva experienced racialisation based on her physical appearance, particularly because others perceived her as looking Māori.

5.11.4. Implication 4: Our Sea of Islands — Multi-Day Immersive Experience as the Reef

The metaphorical adaptation of "Our Sea of Islands" (Hau'Ofa, 2017) is used in the Kiribati narrative with an atoll representing the workshops and the "surrounding ocean" symbolising the immersive camp experience that connects the content. For the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp, the study reinterprets the ocean metaphor by highlighting two areas: within the reef and beyond.

The findings and literature emphasised that a multi-day, culturally immersive experience optimised the benefits and potential impact of the Ueen Kiribati Language Camp for its participants. These extended immersive experiences supported participants in engaging with Te Katei ni Kiribati (the way of being I-Kiribati) through observation and practice. These included demonstrating respect including avoiding shame, honouring customs, traditions and practices, and engaging in humour and light-hearted interactions within a I-Kiribati

cultural context. These findings aligned with Itaia's (1984) assertion that "I-Kiribati are known to others through their way of life, Te Katei ni Kiribati, the unique identity which distinguishes them from others." (as cited in Borovnik, 2007, p. 231).

The camps provided a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment, particularly supportive of those with dual, multiple, or diasporic identities, as well as different levels of language proficiency and cultural knowledge.

5.12. Opportunities for future study

Observations of the long-term impact and benefits of the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps on language acquisition for participants who attend consistently over several years would be an opportunity for future study. This strategy would also be beneficial for tracking the progress of younger participants, identifying the elements that best meet their needs and motivate them to return yearly.

Another area of research can examine outside factors that impact the language camp's success and sustainability, including consistent and adequate funding, which is often affected by Government policies. These policies support or hinder language and cultural revitalisation initiatives by Pacific People and can directly impact families experiencing financial constraints, creating accessibility issues that prevent them from attending.

Successful camps help build a case for advocating dedicated, ongoing funding to preserve and promote Pacific languages and culture.

The final recommendation for future research is a comparative study on the revitalisation and maintenance of language initiatives by other Pacific communities living in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The findings from this study can inform the structure and strategies to support other Pacific communities when developing similar language camps.

5.13. Limitations of the study

As discussed in Section 3.7, to ensure that the data collected reflected a diverse range of experiences and perspectives, the recruitment process for participants aimed to be inclusive of the various ethnic and generational backgrounds within the Ueen Kiribati group. A limitation of this study was the small sample size. In the future, it may be valuable to consider a larger sample size of participants, which may offer insights relevant to other similar settings, particularly for other Pacific groups living in Aotearoa, New Zealand. A larger sample size would also improve the study's validity and reliability.

The validity in the research considers my biases as discussed in the subsection 3.9.1. that may have influenced or disrupted the collection and analysis of the data. Section 3.5 addresses this through the practice of reflexivity and my commitment to cultural protocols.

5.14. Final words

To my knowledge, this is the first research conducted on a language camp for a Pacific community in Aotearoa, New Zealand. It builds on previous studies highlighting the benefits of language camps for English and French learners, as well as research on noho marae for learning te reo Māori, while addressing a gap in understanding the experiences of the Kiribati diaspora and how they perceive their identity.

This study contributes to the existing body of research on cultural identity, language revitalisation, and cultural confidence within Pacific communities in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Its findings have implications for educational practice and policy aimed at supporting Pacific identity, language, and cultural maintenance, particularly for communities negotiating dual or multiple identities in diasporic contexts. It also has the potential to advocate for language and cultural revitalisation and maintenance funding initiatives.

This study has highlighted the crucial role of elders and older participants in the intergenerational transmission of language and culture at the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps. Through both theoretical and practical workshops, participants were able to strengthen their cultural identity and confidence by engaging with Kiribati language, traditions, and customs.

Regardless of prior connection to Kiribati or level of language proficiency and cultural

knowledge, the camp served as an entry point into I-Kiribati culture for all participants. For the participant who grew up in Kiribati, the camp provided a platform for cultural transmission through shared experiences, skills and knowledge as an elder. At the same time, those born and raised in Aotearoa, New Zealand, found the camp an accessible and meaningful way to connect with each other and their cultural heritage.

The camps supported language and cultural learning within an inclusive environment that recognised the diverse I-Kiribati identities including dual, multiple or diasporic. The participants deepened their sense of cultural identity and belonging within the I-Kiribati community and felt encouraged to participate in structured workshops at their own pace.

In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, the camps emphasised the importance of honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and nurturing Treaty partnerships between I-Kiribati and Māori communities. This reflects the complex reality of the Kiribati community as an Indigenous group working to revitalise and maintain their language, culture, and identity within the broader cultural context of living in Aotearoa, New Zealand alongside Māori. These cultural identities do not exist in isolation; rather, they interact and influence one another.

The Ueen Kiribati Language Camps create a safe learning environment for I-Kiribati individuals with dual, multiple or diasporic identities. Although, having prior connections is beneficial, the camps are inclusive and welcoming, aimed at promoting sustainability. Intergenerational transmission of culture plays a vital role with these effort ensuring that

future generations can embrace and celebrate their Kiribati cultural identity and build a sense of belonging as they grow in their cultural confidence.

Appendix A: Letter to participant

Te Kura Toi Tangata
Dvision if Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240
New Zealand

Phone +64 7 262
0500 www.waikato.ac.nz

Appendix A: Letter to participant

Title: Revitalising i-Kiribati identity and cultural confidence: An examination of a Kiribati Language Camp.

Ko na mauri [name],

I am writing to invite you, [name] to be part of a research project which is a retrospective examination into the elements that contributed to the 3-Day Kiribati Language Camps (January 2022 and January 2023) and the impact of this event had on your sense of Ikiribati identity and cultural confidence.

This research is being conducted by me, Emma Packham a Master of Education Student at Waikato University, I am also the co-organiser of these camps.

What is involved?

The research involves a 90-minute face-to-face session in your home (or suitable venue) or by video call if face-to-face is not possible from early February 2024 to late March 2024. I will use the Taona tabon inaim and Bon tii imarenara, two formal iKiribati practices, as methodologies. I will bring a mat and some food to share so we can begin with a time of maroro to create a comfortable space for our interview. You will receive some predetermined questions before my visit. These questions will be semi-structured, which allows for an opportunity to maroro (like Talanoa, it is a Pacific-specific qualitative approach to data collection, which is culturally based).

What data will be collected and how will it be used?
I will be collecting data in the form of reflective journaling that I make, at the end of sessions, transcribing some discussions, and keeping fieldnotes. Once analysed, the data will be written up for my thesis towards my Master of Education. My findings might be used for academic journals, presentations, and some community and professional publications. You will be made anonymous as part of this process, although it is always possible your identity could be guessed by those reading the article I write.

Participation

Your will be given an information sheet with details about what the research involves, and an opportunity to ask questions before they decide whether they would like to participate. There will be no pressure to participate, but if you do, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You can withdraw from the research at any time by contacting me up until the day you confirm your interview transcript. If you have any queries or complaints, you can contact me or my supervisors (contact details are below). You can also contact the

Division of Education Ethics Committee (fedu.ethics@waikato.ac.nz) if you have any concerns which you would prefer not to raise with me.

Please let me know if you have any questions, [name].

Ko nang batin rabwa,

Emma Packham

Emmapackham2020@gmail.com
Ph. 021 160 8858

My supervisors are:

Dr. Nicola Daly nicola.daly@waikato.ac.nz
Hoana McMillian hoana.mcmillan@waikato.ac.nz
Dr Hennah Stevens (Pacific Adviser) hennah.steven@waikato.ac.nz

Permission

I [name] have read the information sheet about the proposed research '**Title: Revitalising i-Kiribati identity and cultural confidence: An examination of a Kiribati Language Camp'** and I give my permission [name] to be a participant.

Name

Date

Appendix B: Letter to the participant (minor under 16)

Appendix B: Letter to participant (16 years old or under)

Title: Revitalising i-Kiribati identity and cultural confidence: An examination of a Kiribati Language Camp.

Ko na mauri [Name],

I am writing to invite you, William to be part of a research project which is a retrospective examination into the elements that contributed to the 3-Day Kiribati Language Camps (January 2022 and January 2023) and the impact of this event had on your sense of Ikiribati identity and cultural confidence.

This research is being conducted by me, Emma Packham a Master of Education Student at Waikato University, I am also the co-organiser of these camps.

What is involved?

The research involves a 90-minute face-to-face session in your home. I will bring a mat and some food to share so we can begin with a time of maroro to feel comfortable before I ask you questions. I will send you my questions before I visit. These questions have no right or wrong way to answer them, you don't have to answer anything you find tricky or too hard. Your mum or dad will be in the room with us as you answer my questions.

What data will be collected and how will it be used?
I will be writing down the things you say at the end of sessions and keeping notes. I am interviewing four other people and once I have worked out what the interviews tell me I will write a book about it. Some of the things I find out might be interesting for other people to hear about or use. I will not use your real name, but it might be possible your someone to work out who you are.

Participation

I will give your parents an information sheet which explains my research. Your parents and you will have an opportunity to ask questions before you decide if would like to join this research. I have already talked to your mum who has given me consent to ask you questions, but you can decide if you want to or not. You will be asked to sign a consent form. You can take yourself out of the research at any time, your parents can call me up until the day you and your parents check the notes I have made about your interview. If you are not happy about anything, tell your parents and they will look at the information sheet to help you get help.

Please let me know if you have any questions, [name].

Ko nang batin rabwa,

Emma Packham

Emmapackham2020@gmail.com
Ph. 021 160 8858

My supervisors are:
Dr. Nicola Daly nicola.daly@waikato.ac.nz
Hoana McMillian hoana.mcmillan@waikato.ac.nz
Dr Hennah Stevens (Pacific Adviser) hennah.steven@waikato.ac.nz

Permission

I [name], have read the information sheet about the proposed research '**Title: Revitalising i-Kiribati identity and cultural confidence: An examination of a Kiribati Language Camp**' and I give my permission [name], to be a participant.

Name

Date

Appendix C: Participant Information Letter

Title: Revitalising i-Kiribati identity and cultural confidence: An examination of a Kiribati Language Camp.

Ko na mauri [name]

I am writing to inform you, about my research project which is a retrospective examination into the elements that contributed to the 3-Day Kiribati Language Camps (January 2022 and January 2023) and the impact of this event had on your sense of Ikiribati identity and cultural confidence.

This research is being conducted by me, Emma Packham a Master of Education Student at Waikato University, I am also the co-organiser of these camps.

What is involved?

The research involves a 90-minute face-to-face session in your home (or suitable venue) or by video call if face-to-face is not possible from early February 2024 to late March 2024. I want to use the Taona tabon inaim a formal iKiribati practice, as methodology. I will bring a mat and some food to share so we can begin with a time of maroro to create a comfortable space for our interview. You will receive some predetermined questions before my visit. These questions will be semi-structured, which involves predetermined questions but allows for an opportunity to maroro (like Talanoa, it is a Pacific-specific qualitative approach to data collection, which is culturally based). I will make contact again for you to confirm your interview transcripts.

What data will be collected and how will it be used?

I will be collecting data in the form of reflective journaling that I make, and I will also record and transcribe our discussions. Once analysed, the data will be written up for my thesis towards my Master of Education and may be used for academic journals, presentations, and some community and professional publications. You will be made anonymous as part of this process (you can choose your own pseudonym) although it is always possible your identity could be guessed because of the particular context of the Kiribati language camp and the small Kiribati community.

Participation

There is no requirement for you to participate in this research if you decide it is not for you. But if you do consent to participate, you can withdraw from the research at any time by contacting me, no questions asked. You can withdraw from the research at any time by contacting me up until the day you confirm your interview transcript by emailing or phoning me (see details below). If you have any queries or complaints, you can contact me or my supervisors, my supervisors' details are below. You can also contact the Division of Education Ethics Committee (fedu.ethics@waikato.ac.nz) if you have any concerns which you would prefer not to raise with me.

How will I know what you find out?

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings from this research, please give an address in your consent form for this to be sent to you.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me before you decide whether you wish to participate. I am happy to talk or have a Zoom meeting, whichever suits you best. If you have a question or a complaint which you would prefer to discuss with someone else, please contact the Division of Education Ethics Committee (fedu.ethics@waikato.ac.nz).

If you wish to participate, please fill out the consent form and rerun it to me by email.

Ko nang batin rabwa,

Emma Packham

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My supervisors are:

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Appendix D: Informed Consent

Title: Revitalising i-Kiribati identity and cultural confidence: An examination of a Kiribati Language Camp.

I [insert name] have read the Participation information sheet and understand that my participation in this research will involve the following:

- One 90 minute session: one face-to face in your home at a time that is suitable from early February 2024 to late March 2024.
- Prior to the commencement of the interview, the researcher, Emma Packham and I will have an intial time of maroro to establish connection and a mutual space of respect. This requires Emma to bring a mat and food to share with me.
- Folllowing this, Emma will explain that it is safe and important to share as honestly as I can about my experiences.
- Emma will explain confidentiality issues and I will be given information on this after the interview.
- Respond to predetermined questions and open discussions about how I experienced the Ueen Kiribati Language Camps and how both camps impacted my sense of Kiribati identity and cultural confidence?
- Completion of a written reflection made by Emma, at the end of each session.
- The researcher, Emma, will keep fieldnotes during each session in relation to our discussions.
- Online and face to face discussions wll be recorded and transcribed.
- My data may be reported in the researcher's, Emma, thesis towards her Master of Education. The findings might be used for academic journals, presentations, and some community and professional publications. I will be made anonymous as part of this process, although it is always possible my identity could be guessed by those reading the article written.
- My data will be kept on a password protected computer or in a locked office for 5 years.
- My identity will be kept anonymous in any writing or presenting about this research
- I may withdraw from this research at any time by contacting Emma, and withdraw my data at any time up until the day I confirm my interview transcript.

Signed________________________

Date__________________

Address for summary to be sent to ____

Emma's supervisors are:

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Appendix E: Semi-Structured Indicative Interview Questions

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Indicative Interview Questions

Title: Revitalising i-Kiribati identity and cultural confidence: An examination of a Kiribati Language Camp.

Main Question
What elements contributed to developing a three-day Kiribati language camp?

Related questions:
1. How did the participants, including the cultural experts, parents, and children, experience the camp?

2. How did the camp impact the participants' sense of Kiribati identity and cultural confidence?

Thank you for participating in my research project. I am going to be asking you questions related to your participation in the 2022 and 2023 'Ueen Kiribati' 3-Day Language Camps that you attended. These first questions relate to your experience at the first camp. These questions are indicative which means you may answer multiple questions within one answer, so I won't have to interview you on all of them. Your discussions will guide the interview. You can add to any of your answers at any time.

1. Tell me about your family and your position in the family.
2. Have you ever visited or lived in Kiribati? If so for how long?
3. How long have you lived in NZ?
4. Can you speak I-Kiribati? If so, how well?
5. How have you learnt the I-Kiribati language?
6. Tell me about your understanding of 'te katai n Kiribati' (The way of being I-Kiribati)
7. Can you identify which aspects of your upbringing was 'te katai n Kiribati'?
8. If you asked about your cultural heritage, where do you say you are from?
9. How did you find out about the 'Ueen Kiribati' Language Camp?
10. Why did you feel it was important to attend?
11. Did you know many other group members?

12. Leading up to the camp, what were your feelings about attending?
13. Did you have preconceived expectations about what you would experience at camp?
14. Did you want to contribute to the camp, if so – in what way?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

At the first camp these workshops were made available:

a. Language workshops - basic sounds and words in I-Kiribati
b. Storytelling
c. Traditional games
d. Dancing
e. Cooking - donut making
f. Weaving – with Master weavers
g. Therapeutic Massage
h. Canoe building – with a renowned Songwriter

16. Which of these workshops did you find most beneficial and why?
17. What suggestions would you make to improve these workshops or your experience?
18. Did you think it was beneficial engaging in these workshops at a camp rather than day workshops, why?
19. At the end of the camp, can you summarise your overall experience?
20. Did the camp meet your expectations? Please explain.
21. Has your knowledge about Kiribati culture changed? How so?
22. Has your understanding of what it means to be Kiribati changed? How so?
23. How did the camp impact your sense of identity?
24. Did the camp impact your cultural confidence?
25. Did the camp encouraged you to do further develop your Kiribati identity?

These next questions relate to your experience at the second camp.

1. Why did you decide to attend the second camp?
2. When you compare how you felt before the first camp and the second camp, were there any changes you observed?
3. Since the last camp, have you engaged in other I-Kiribati cultural experiences?

At the second camp these workshops were made available:

a. Language workshops - words and phrases in i-Kiribati
b. Songs for children
c. Storytelling
d. Traditional games
e. Dancing
f. Cooking - donut making
g. Weaving – with Master weavers
h. Songwriting – with a renowned Songwriter

Repeat Questions 15 – 25

7. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix F: Semi-Structured (Maroro) Indicative Interview Questions for Minor Participants

Title: Revitalising i-Kiribati identity and cultural confidence: An examination of a Kiribati Language Camp.

Thank you for participating in my research project. I am going to be asking you questions about the 'Ueen Kiribati' 3-Day Language Camps that you went to in 2022 and 2023. These first questions are about your experience at the first camp. As you answer a question, you might cover some of the other questions so that means I won't have to ask you all of them. You can add to any of your answers at any time.

1. Tell me about your family and your where you are in the family. (oldest son etc)
2. Have you ever visited or lived in Kiribati? If so for how long?
3. How long have you lived in NZ?
4. Can you speak I-Kiribati? If so, how well?
5. How have you learnt the I-Kiribati language?
6. Tell me about your understanding of 'te katai n Kiribati' (The way of being I-Kiribati)
7. Do you think your family feel it's important that you understand 'te katai n Kiribati'? (explain as needed)
8. How would you answer this question: 'where do you say you are from?' (explain cultural heritage if necessary)
9. How did you find out about the 'Ueen Kiribati' Language Camp?
10. Why did you feel it was important to go?
11. Did you know many other group members?
12. Leading up to the camp, what were your feelings about attending?
13. Did you have any ideas about what the camp might be about before you went?
14. Did you want to show anybody or teach anybody something I-Kiribati at the camp, if so – what?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

At the first camp these workshops were made available:

i. Language workshops - basic sounds and words in I-Kiribati

j. Storytelling

k. Traditional games

l. Dancing

m. Cooking - donut making

n. Weaving – with Master weavers

o. Therapeutic Massage

p. Canoe building – with a renowned Songwriter

16. Which of these workshops did you like the most and why?
17. What would make the workshops better?
18. Did you think it was good having a camp instead of day workshops, why?
19. At the end of the camp, what did you get out of it?
20. Did you think the camp went as you thought it might? Tell me more.
21. Has what you know about Kiribati culture changed? How so?
22. Does your understanding of what it means to be Kiribati changed? How so?
23. How did the camp changed how you feel about being I-Kiribati?
24. How did the camp helped you feel more confident saying you are I-Kiribati?
25. Did the camp encouraged you to learn more about what it means to be Kiribati?

These next questions relate to your experience at the second camp.

4. Why did you decide to attend the second camp?
5. When you compare how you felt before the first camp and the second camp, were there any changes you observed?
6. Since the last camp, have you engaged in other I-Kiribati cultural experiences?

At the second camp these workshops were made available:

a. Language workshops - words and phrases in i-Kiribati

b. Songs for children
c. Storytelling
d. Traditional games
e. Dancing
f. Cooking - donut making
g. Weaving – with Master weavers
h. Songwriting – with a renowned Songwriter

Repeat Questions 15 – 25

7. Is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix G: Reflective questions for the researcher post interview

Reflections – Set reflective questions for each participant

1. Describe the time of maroro, was it beneficial and why?
2. Were there any deviations from the original plan, and if so, why?
3. Did I encounter any challenges during data collection?
4. How willing and engaged were the participants during data collection?
5. Were there any factors that influenced participant responses (e.g., social desirability bias)?
6. How did I establish rapport and trust with participants?
7. What measures were taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the collected data?
8. Were there any instances of missing or incomplete data, and how were they addressed?
9. Did I adhere to ethical guidelines and principles throughout the data collection process?
10. Were there any ethical dilemmas encountered, and how were they resolved
11. How did these challenges impact the quality or quantity of the collected data?
12. Were there any limitations or biases in the data collection process that need to be acknowledged?

Colour coding Key:

Acceptance in relation to other iKiribati
Language – can I speak or not and why?
Trauma
Te katae ni Kiribati – a knowing, protocol, humour
My identify – who am I?
Relationships are important for identify and confidence.
My culture is unique
Te Tiriti / the way of being a NZ (respect of the homeland as an immigrant)

Appendix H: IBRLA Framework – Examining Power Relations

IBRLA Framework – Examining Power Relations

Initiation	Who initiated the interview? How is the relationship established? Whose interest/experiences are paramount? How is power sharing initiated?
Benefits	Who will benefit from power sharing arrangements? In what way will our Kiribati community participate in power sharing?
Representation	Whose cultural reality is current? In what ways do interaction processes facilitate authentic 'voice'?
Legitimation	Whose realities and experiences are legitimate? What authority does the relationship have? How do we know this?
Accountability	Who is the participant accountable to? Who is the researcher accountable to? How is this accountability demonstrated? How do we know this?

Appendix I: Spreadsheet image of Ueen Kiribati Timetable 2023

Tia Taurooi Waara n ara Katei - Let us give strong binding to our canoe with our Kiribati culture				TE WA VIDEO
1/13/2023 (Kanimabong)	Time	Event	Details	
	4.00pm	Arrival	Sandra & Emma check people in Parking - behind the lodge at the bottom. Set up - Cabin allocation Refreshments - nibbles and tea/coffee/juice Go over the 'Housekeeping' displayed - What are camp rules - evacuation etc - teams for jobs - Meals, dishes, toilets etc - Camp admin to talk Emergency procedures	
	5.30pm (flexible)	Team 1 - Te Aneang Tataro National Anthem Dinner	Tataro to bless and open up our weekend Barbeque and Salads (rolling dinner)	
	8.00pm	Te Mararo - Evening gathering: Language Bite	Introductions, Icebreakers, getting everyone into teams. Kahoot	
		Seven Min Storytime -	Tell a story or read a story about/from Kiribati Hot drinks and baking and fruit available	
	10.30pm	Lights out - yeah right!		
Sat 6th Dec (Kaonobong)				
	6.00am 7.00am 7.30am	Team 2 - Te Kiaro Breakfast Prep Serving Dishes	Tataro to bless the food -	
	9.00am	Activity options: 1. Cooking - Te tonati, katinibin and Te bekei 2. Weaving and Bibiri kaue, dancing costumes		
	10.30am	Morning Tea - Language bites		
	11.00am	Free Time Beach etc	Maybe a picnic at the beach?	
	12:30	Team 3 - Te Tabio Lunch at the camp or beach		
	1:30 PM	Activity options: 1. Cooking - Te tonati, katinibin and Te bekei 2. Weaving and Bibiri kaue, dancing costumes	1. Sandra, Mateo & Tia (children) 2. Aunty Louisa & Aunty Kaetaeta	
	3.00pm	Afternoon Tea - Language bites	Hot drinks and baking and fruit available (Tetaake)	

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