
UNDERGRADUATE LINGUISTICS AND HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS

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Abstract

For students of linguistics at the University of Waikato, in Aotearoa/New Zealand, human research ethics has been something of a mystery. Delayed until graduate study, allocated to a generic Research Methods class, or even encountered for the first time in the preparation of an application for Human Research Ethics approval, ethics has been viewed as a separable module of learning, closely tied to graduate study, but less relevant to our undergraduate students. In this paper, the argument is put forward that ethical learning can and should be incorporated into the undergraduate linguistics curriculum. Two sets of ethical principles that could inform such a curriculum are presented, followed by the description of a pedagogic strategy that can be used to ensure that students graduating with a linguistics degree take with them an understanding of ethical considerations relevant to their discipline.

1. Introduction

Formalised ethical processes are comparatively new within tertiary institutions in New Zealand, established only following recommendations made by the Cartwright Inquiry (Cartwright 1988).¹ Today, while ethical considerations are undeniably relevant to our graduate students who are engaged in human research, it is less evident that our undergraduate students need to know about human research ethics. After all, many of our students will complete their

undergraduate degrees, and from there enter the work force without ever conducting human research projects.

As linguistic researchers, we are engaged in a human science, and many of us require ethical approval for the research that we conduct; however, our attention has long been fixed on the complexities of data analysis. One result of this is that our human data sources are often rendered invisible in our research reporting. Our fixation on data extends through to introductory linguistics and sociolinguistics textbooks, where ethical considerations are largely absent. Meyerhoff (2011: 44), who draws the student's attention to issues of consent, and Burridge and Stebbins (2016: 53-54), who ask students to consider participation, and the representation of project participants, are two recent exceptions to this general pattern.

In this paper, I assert that ethical learning **is** relevant to our undergraduate linguistic students (section 2). Not only do our institutions dictate that our students develop an understanding of ethics, knowledge generation in our discipline depends on observations of the linguistic behaviour of our fellow human beings. Because linguistic research is diverse, creating a stream of ethical learning for our undergraduates is likely to present challenges. In section 3, I consider two sets of ethical principles that could serve as the basis for ethical learning. In section 4, I suggest teaching and assessment strategies that can be used to embed ethical learning in the undergraduate linguistics curriculum. I illustrate practical methods that I have developed for linguistics students at the University of Waikato to provide opportunities for ethical learning to take place. In section 5, I offer a summary of the paper, and recommend that linguistic researchers in New Zealand engage in discussion and consultation on the relevance of ethical principles to our research as a means of informing our pedagogies.

2. Motivations for developing ethical awareness in undergraduate linguistics students

2.1 *Compliance with Institutional Regulations*

Waikato University students are bound by *Student Research Regulations*. The regulations apply whenever their activities involve “an inquiry of an investigative, experimental or critical nature which is driven by a question, hypothesis, or intellectual position capable of rigorous assessment, and the findings of which are open to scrutiny and formal evaluation”, and when

these activities result in the production of “any intellectual or creative work published, exhibited, presented, or performed in a written, spoken, electronic, broadcasting, visual, performance, or other medium” (University of Waikato 2008a: *Student Research Regulations*). Broadly speaking then, we can see every student who is participating in tertiary study at Waikato as being engaged in research activities throughout their course of study. Indeed, it would be concerning if they were not.

When student research involves collecting information about and from other human beings, students are further bound by Waikato’s *Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations* (University of Waikato 2008b). These regulations define when and how students and staff must seek approval for their research activities, and how they must conduct themselves personally through the research process, as representatives of their host institution. The regulations state that when staff or students are interacting with members of the wider community, “the staff member or student concerned is representing the University, and must therefore be mindful of the importance of professional conduct, with a view to upholding and enhancing the University’s, as well as their own, reputation.” (University of Waikato 2008b: Appendix 1) There is thus an institutional requirement that staff and students alike engage with ethics as they pursue research topics involving human participants.

Of specific relevance to undergraduate students, there is an expectation that students who graduate with a major in Linguistics, either through the Bachelor of Arts or the Bachelor of Social Science, will possess the attribute of ethical awareness, as relevant to the discipline of Linguistics.² Even if our undergraduate students are not asked to conduct their own research with human participants, they will be learning about linguistics from the research of others, and that research necessarily involves our fellow human beings as providers of language data. Documented graduate attributes or degree learning outcomes, whether generic or discipline specific, motivate at least some level of engagement with ethical issues.

It appears then, that compliance with institutional regulations obliges me to engage with ethical considerations, both with regard to my own research activities, and with regard to the educational outcomes of my students.

2.2 Compliance with Disciplinary Regulations

In addition to institutional compliance, there is also an expectation that our students’ activities comply with existing professional and disciplinary codes.

There is currently no such professional or disciplinary code for linguists in New Zealand; however, there has been some interest in developing a set of ethical research guidelines. Meyerhoff, Brown, Barbour and Quinn (2013) presented a discussion paper at the biennial *Linguistics Society of New Zealand Conference* hosted by the University of Canterbury, to consider this matter. The paper was driven in part by the perceived need to support research practitioners through the ethical review process. It was thought that applicants and research ethics committee members alike might usefully refer to a set of ethical guidelines to better articulate and understand linguistic research. The paper was received positively, although as yet no formal consultation process has been set up to develop the guidelines. Should such a process be initiated, there would be room to consider our responsibility for developing ethical awareness in our students, among other matters.

In the absence of discussion about what constitutes ethical process and practice for linguists in the context of New Zealand, linguistic researchers are able to refer to numerous ethical statements and guidelines from other parts of the world, whether they be specifically concerned with linguistics, derive from neighbouring disciplines such as anthropology and applied linguistics, or be more generic statements that are broadly concerned with human research. In addition to describing ethical principles and how these should be enacted in research, such statements commonly articulate the importance of providing ethical training for students. The first excerpt below comes from the Linguistics Society of America's *Ethics Statement*.

Section 4: Responsibility to students and colleagues

Linguists should ensure that their students receive instruction in the ethical practices appropriate for their field. (Linguistics Society of America 2009)

The American Anthropological Association offers stronger guidance towards providing ethical training for students in their *Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibility*.

Section 7: Maintaining respectful and ethical professional relationships

In their role as teachers and mentors, anthropologists are obligated to provide instruction on the ethical responsibilities associated with every aspect of anthropological work. They should facilitate, and encourage their students and research staff to engage in dialogue on ethical issues, and discourage their

participation in ethically questionable projects. (American Anthropological Association AAA 2012)

While adherence to a local set of guidelines for ethical linguistic research is not possible for linguists in New Zealand, there are many resources available to draw on, including clearly stated expectations that researchers will pass on their ethical understandings to students.

2.3 Best Practice

Alongside compliance, and in many cases overlapping with it, my personal experiences and beliefs motivate me to bring ethical considerations into the undergraduate linguistics classroom. Since my student days, I have transitioned from a position of good intentions to one of strong and informed convictions. As a student of linguistics in the early to mid-1990s, I carried out human research as part of the coursework for both my bachelors degree at the University of Waikato and my masters degree at the University of Auckland. I recorded speakers in controlled tasks to test hypotheses, analysed their data, and reported it back to my lecturers in a written format. I wrote a linguistics dissertation on field data collected for an earlier anthropological study. These activities clearly fall under the definition of research, and I was certainly engaged with human participants, even if secondarily in the case of my dissertation. During those years, however, I was not involved in any discussion of research ethics, or at least, I have no lasting memory of ethical concerns around my projects. Just over twenty years ago, Human Research Ethics committees were up and running in both tertiary institutions. It seems however, that their attention had not yet turned to student research. Most likely, linguists at the time were just coming to terms with the implications of newly established ethical review processes for their own research activities.

Around a decade later, in 2004, I was required to apply for formal ethical approval for my doctoral project on the Neverver language of Malekula Island, in Vanuatu. With no background in ethics, I initially engaged with the approval process in total ignorance of how ethical considerations might be relevant to my work. My naive understanding was that basic linguistic research was inherently harmless, and that because I had been invited into the community to conduct research, the community would be delighted to support my project. After all, I wasn't planning to do any secret recordings; I just wanted to learn about nouns and verbs. This starting point left me with a long

way to go in developing my ethics application, and a steep learning curve in the field as I encountered the reality of being a young female researcher in a patriarchal society with no social power beyond that which I was assigned by association (Barbour 2013).

Doctoral students at Waikato now have a six-month period of provisional enrolment to develop their research projects and complete the process of ethical approval where relevant, before they can apply to be formally enrolled. Ethical learning has trickled down into honours and masters degrees, with graduate students often being required to take a research methods paper with an ethics component as part of their studies. Last year, my faculty introduced a formal procedure to delegate the review and approval of undergraduate coursework projects to teaching staff, to enable students to engage in low-risk research activities.

3. Guiding Ethical Principles

If we accept that ethical learning should be a part of an undergraduate linguistics curriculum, we then need to consider the nature of the ethical principles that our students could usefully be exposed to. Like other aspects of the curriculum, the question of what our students need to learn has multiple answers. Guidance comes from existing statements on ethical conduct, and we may choose to frame our understanding of ethical principles in the dominant western world view. This world view is articulated in the Hippocratic Oath, the Nuremberg Declaration, the Helsinki Declaration, and more recently in documents like the Canadian *Tri-Council Policy Statement*. Alternatively, we may look to indigenous statements, such as *Te Ara Tika*, and frame our understanding of ethics within a more specific world view.

3.1 *The Tri-Council Policy Statement [TCPS2] (2010)*

The Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans [TCPS2] was jointly authored by members of three national bodies: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The second version of the statement was released in 2010. In TCPS2, respect for human dignity is considered fundamental and relevant to all types of human research.³ Respect for human dignity is articulated through

three core ethical principles, these being Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare, and Justice.

The principle of **Respect for Persons** “recognises the intrinsic value of human beings ...[encompassing] the treatment of persons involved in research”, either directly, or through their data or biological materials. It focuses on the obligation that researchers have to respect the autonomy of individuals, and their right to make informed decisions about participation. It extends to cover the protection of children, whose autonomy is developing, as well as the protection of those members of society with impaired or diminishing autonomy. (TCPS2 2010: 8-9)

In the TCPS2, **Concern for Welfare** “recognises that research has impacts on participants”, and particularly acknowledges that the welfare, or quality of a person’s life experiences can be affected by research. Guided by concern for welfare, researchers should identify and minimise potential impacts of research on participants. Such impacts can include effects on aspects of health, as well as impacts on the physical, economic and social circumstances of participants (TCPS2 2010: 9-10)

Finally, the principle of **Justice** recognises the need for fair treatment of participants by the researcher. Guided by the principle of justice, researchers are directed to ensure that participants have an equitable share in both the benefits and the burdens of research participation, where benefits include access to the outcomes of research projects. Researchers are directed to pay particular attention to vulnerable populations. (TCPS2 2010: 10-11)

The core ethical principles of TCPS2 are not intended simply to inform the writing of a successful ethics application, but also to inform the researcher’s conduct of their research project as a whole. In the conclusion to the section on core ethical principles, the authors of the Canadian document comment that, “applying the core principles will [...] maintain free, informed and ongoing consent throughout the research process and lead to sharing the benefits of the research.” Ethical conduct is seen as having impacts beyond the project itself, in that researchers have a responsibility to the general public also, “to build and maintain the trust of ... the public in the research process.” (TCPS2 2010: 11)

3.2 *Te Ara Tika*

Published in the same year as the Canadian guidelines is the more locally relevant document *Te Ara Tika: Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics: a*

Framework for Researchers and Ethics Committee Members (Hudson et al. 2010). This is a multi-authored document that was prepared for the Health Research Council of New Zealand, and forms a major component of the latest *Guidelines for Researchers on Health Research Involving Māori* (Health Research Council of New Zealand 2010). Like the Canadian document, *Te Ara Tika* identifies core ethical principles. These principles derive from a Māori world view, and there is perhaps a stronger emphasis on research relationships and responsibilities than we find within Western academic traditions. Nonetheless, respect for human dignity is clearly central to the conduct of ethical research within a Māori world view.

In the research context, **Manaakitanga** establishes respect for persons, and places social and cultural responsibility on the researcher to ensure that respect for persons is maintained. We might see this principle as supporting the protection of participants.⁴ **Whakapapa** considers “the quality of [research] relationships and the structures or processes that have been established to support these relationships” (Hudson et al. 2010: 6). We might see this principle as allowing for enhanced participation in research, participation that extends through the life of the project and beyond, at the same time attending to the ongoing protection of participants. **Mana** considers equity and justice. This principle requires researchers to acknowledge “issues of power and authority” in relation to research (Hudson et al. 2010: 13). Particularly, researchers must consider project outcomes, and who has the right to determine these. This principle can guide researchers to develop research partnerships with their participants.

The fourth principle, **Tika**, considers the validity of the proposed research. In *Te Ara Tika*, “the design of a research project is a critical determinant in whether the research is successful in achieving proposed outcomes, benefiting participants and communities, and bringing about positive transformative change” (Hudson et al. 2010: 8). This fourth principle encompasses research methodology, and is typically handled outside of the ethical review process. Instead, research design is described as ideally being dealt with through the peer review of research proposals, prior to application for ethical approval (see e.g. Tolich & Smith 2015: 216). In *Te Ara Tika*, research design is considered inseparable from the ethical constitution of the project.

The authors of the TCPS2 take the position that human research must be informed by ethical principles, and that these principles need to be enacted through or embodied within the research process. The authors of *Te Ara Tika* go further, taking the position that human research must be informed by ethical

principles, and that these principles will underpin the research design, be enacted through the research process, and be evident in the project outcomes. In a sense, *Te Ara Tika* offers a more holistic view of ethical research, rather than one that is driven by regulatory compliance.

4. Ethical learning through research experiences

In the linguistics classroom, research ethics can be taught in dedicated lectures which tick the compliance boxes, ensuring that our students exit their tertiary experience with an understanding of ethical issues relevant to our discipline. My preference however, is to combine the formal presentation of ethical principles with a more practical approach to ethical learning. I create opportunities to expose my students to human research experiences, and encourage them to develop an awareness of ethics through their own research to reinforce theory-based understandings. These opportunities move from autoethnographic research, to single-participant project work, and eventually to data collection from a small sample.⁵

4.1 Starting with Autoethnography

Autoethnographic research provides “a method for exploring, understanding, and writing from, through, and with personal experiences in relation to and in the context of the experiences of others” (Adams, Jones & Ellis 2014: 23). For undergraduate linguistics students, autoethnography allows them to make connections between their own lives (personal experiences), and disciplinary understandings expressed in the technical literature (the experiences of others). Because students are asked to speak from their own experiences, they can be guided to produce material that is relevant to the discipline of linguistics, and they are thus empowered to participate in the discipline. Classroom discussion tasks transfer smoothly into written assessment, exemplified in four summary descriptions of tasks used in *LING132 Introduction to Linguistic Communication* and *LING203 Language, Society and Culture*.

- a) *LING132* – describe linguistic markers of your identity. Link each marker to the observations in the sociolinguistic literature (Holmes 2013).
- b) *LING132* – write a personal Ethnography of Communication for a cultural, religious or sporting/hobby event that you have participated in recently (Saville-Troike 1989; Wardhaugh 2010).

- c) *LING203* – describe a personal experience of language acquisition. Explain the experience in terms of the reading on language acquisition (Fromkin et al. 2015).
- d) *LING203* – explain the different types of person reference (Stivers 2007), and illustrate each type with an example from your own person reference behaviours.

In autoethnographic activities, students are not simply required to describe a personal experience that focuses on language. They must link their experience to the literature under study. There is therefore, an element of interpretation to their autoethnographies, not merely the telling of a story. Further, there is also the potential to critique technical material, by identifying mismatches between published accounts of language behaviour, and the lived experiences of students.

No formal ethical approval is required for students to discuss, write up, and reflect upon their personal experiences. There are however, still opportunities for ethical awareness to be developed through these tasks. Autoethnography places students in the role of “researched”, where they are generating their own linguistic behaviour, or accounts of their behaviour, for inquiry. At the same time, students assume the role of “researcher”, where they are required to interpret their behaviour in specific ways. These dual roles introduce students to the complexities of qualitative research.

In terms of ethical principles, autoethnography requires students to attend to the principle of respect for person, particularly with regard to representation. The person to be respected is the researched self. Students have to make choices around which of their personal experiences they will use to represent their researched self. As they position themselves in their writing, students eliminate options which they feel may be inappropriate or even potentially harmful representations of the self in the tertiary context. As Adams, Jones and Ellis (2014: 19) note, “doing autoethnography requires researchers to foreground research and representational concerns throughout every step of the research and representation process”.

Ethical learning around respect for person can be enhanced by drawing students’ attention to their decision making processes. While students are engaged in second-year autoethnographic writing, I include a classroom discussion task which asks them to identify communicative behaviours that they would comfortable to have observed by researchers. At the same time, they notice that there are also aspects of their communicative behaviour that

they would not want to make available for research. While there is often debate around whether and what kinds of intimate verbal encounters might become research data, through our discussions, my students become aware that they have boundaries, and that their classmates also have boundaries around aspects of their lives. They recognise that the researcher's gaze could potentially be intrusive and unwelcome.

4.2 *Engaging in Single Participant Projects*

From autoethnography, the next step in the research progression is a single-participant project, located in *LING203 Language, Society and Culture*. I ask my second year students to collect linguistic and cultural commentary from a speaker of another language. For many students the project provides an opportunity to learn more about a heritage language, or the language of a close friend or colleague. The project is run over a six week period, during which time the student arranges to meet with the speaker several times. Together they work through a series of research topics. The final output of the project is an extended report or research portfolio on linguistic and cultural behaviours and categories, representing the information that the student has learned from the speaker, seen through an anthropological linguistic lens. Students are cautioned about over-generalising from their data. Most demonstrate a clear understanding of the limitations of this type of research, often reinforced by the mismatch between the lived experiences of their participant, and published information that students may “search up” as they progress through their projects. The report ends with a reflective section where student discuss the challenges and successes of the project work.

Much has changed in terms of ethical approval from when I conducted undergraduate research in the 1990s. Waikato University now requires formal written ethical approval for coursework research projects where a human participant is involved. Requirements differ depending on the level of the course. At second year the lecturer completes the application process on behalf of the student cohort. To set up second year ethical approval, I have to supply a full application to the Chair of the Ethics Committee, outlining the project in the context of the paper. The application includes a disciplinary justification for completing coursework research at second year level, and specific reference to how the students will be introduced to ethical principles during the course. The full project rubric, 6 pages in length, is also included. The project rubric serves as the information sheet for participants, so that the nature of the project is fully disclosed to potential participants before they sign

on. The application also includes a generic consent form, which each student completes by filling in the participant's name and language, and collecting the participant's signature.

In addition to the basic documents for an ethical application, I also include a report template. I have developed this over a number of iterations of the course to guide the interpretive lens through which my student researchers view and present their data. The report template provides me with an opportunity to model conventions around presenting linguistic data from languages other than English. The paper outline for the course, detailing the place of the research project within the course content as a whole is supplied, and finally I submit a formal request for delegated authority to manage the student research projects myself. In exchange for delegated authority, I undertake to ensure that students receive training in research ethics through dedicated lectures, as well as training in research interviewing, through in-class activities. I require students to submit their signed consent forms with their projects. Final course grades are withheld until the consent forms are received.

Although the request for delegated authority to approve course work research involves a lot of paperwork, the learning opportunities for the students, both in terms of research experiences and in terms of ethics, far outweigh the time needed to complete the approval process. In terms of ethical learning, principles that derive from the Māori world view apply comfortably to this research project. Students conduct their research from the established principle of respect for person (*manaakitanga*). They add to this by building a research relationship on top of an existing social relationship (*whakapapa*). This new relationship involves two roles. The student is required to take the role of "learner" and the participant is offered the role of "expert". In the expert role, the participant is handed control over the flow of information to the student researcher. Every research area covered in the project includes a set of sub-topics. Participants are invited to choose the sub-topics that they feel most interested in and comfortable about discussing. From the outset of the project, students understand that they must return their research reports to their participants (*mana*). In that way, issues of representation remain at the front of their minds in writing their reports, and they are obliged to honour the choices of their participants, and faithfully report the information that they have been offered.

The only exception to the sharing of project outputs is the reflective section at the end of the project. This section is shared only with the lecturer, and in it students are asked to describe the research techniques they employed, and

the successes and challenges that they encountered during the project. We spend time in class discussing the importance of taking responsibility for the unfolding project, and consider how a researcher's inexperience and lack of knowledge can lead to difficulties in research. "My participant's language was really hard" can be rephrased as, "I had difficulty in hearing the difference between some of the sounds of language X, and I had to ask my participant to repeat words many times. I found this a bit embarrassing." The final section of the report concludes with a description of how students have enacted ethical principles in the way they have conducted their research project.

One of the most important outcomes of these projects, whether they are heritage language projects conducted in New Zealand, or Skype interviews with friends or family in different parts of the world, is the positive effect on both researchers and participants. It comes through in the detailed descriptions of almost-forgotten preparations of indigenous plants as food, recounted during walks with grandma or aunty. It is evident in the accounts of the induction into key participant roles at kava ceremonies. It is demonstrated through the meals that participants voluntarily prepare to recreate and share the smells and tastes of home. When the framing of the project is successful, the result is engaging and empowering for both parties.

4.3 Conducting multi-participant research projects

Linguistics students progress into *LING304 Sociolinguistics*. In their third year of study, they conduct a sociolinguist research project. Recently, this has involved a topic in cross-cultural politeness. Students are given the choice of studying different types of politeness features in a single language for comparison with English, or studying one politeness feature in a set of different languages. They are required to develop their own research tool, drawing heavily on published research. They may choose to use a questionnaire, or a semi-structured interview schedule. The numbers of participants, and the length of the research tools are kept small, so that the project can be approved, data collected, and the write-up completed within the timeframe of the course.

In the past few years, *LING304* has been taught either by Dr. Nicola Daly or Dr. Andreea Calude. I hold delegated authority to review the research project for this paper and have seen the process of ethical approval shift considerably. In the first few years when I was involved with this project, predating Nicola and Andreea's involvement, I simply met with the lecturer to discuss the proposed list of student topics. Together we would anticipate and head off potential difficulties, such as the student who wanted to learn

about profanity in language X. Now, the process for ethical approval is much closer to the process that our graduate students go through. The lecturer and I create a partial ethics application, and supply this to the Chair of the Ethics Committee. We also provide a generic information sheet and consent form for the research, the paper outline, project rubric, and a letter requesting formal delegated authority. Delegated authority is then given with the understanding that I will teach a lecture on research ethics and that the classroom lecturer will support the development of appropriate research tools.

Having been introduced to research methodology and research ethics, student researchers then select their topic, customise their ethics application form, information sheet and consent form, and develop their research tool. They submit all of their documents to the lecturer, and when she is satisfied, the paperwork is sent through to me as the delegated reviewer. Because the ethics process is supported or scaffolded through the provision of nearly-complete model documents, students have the benefit of working with a full set of ethics paperwork for their projects. The task of gaining ethical approval, ordinarily rather time-consuming for both students and teaching staff, is made manageable for coursework research.

The place between research methodology and research ethics is somewhat uncomfortable. Already, I have noted that *Te Ara Tika* treats research design as being intertwined with research ethics, while the Western academic tradition separates research design from ethical considerations (§3.2.). In their third year research projects, linguistics students are twice scrutinised for the research tools that they develop, as both the lecturer and the delegated reviewer may offer critique. The lecturer's critique tends to focus on the student's engagement or lack thereof with the literature, and she examines whether or not the student is asking robust questions. My interest as the delegated reviewer attends to how the research instrument will be employed by the student, and in how participants may respond to it. I evaluate whether the student is planning to ask questions in a manner which is likely to lead to productive responses. I often meet with students who are planning to carry out semi-structured interviews to discuss ethical research conduct and to share tips on successful data collection. I check the applications for compliance with regulations and when I too, am satisfied that the the project is meaningful, and that the student is sufficiently prepared, the project is formally approved and the student can begin to arrange data collection.

Like the autoethnographic tasks and the single-participant projects that precede it, the third year sociolinguistic project embeds ethical learning in the

disciplinary objective to engage students in research as a means of knowledge enhancement and production. By third year, the expectation of compliance with institutional ethics regulations is overtly stated and pursued through the review process which replicates the full ethical review of graduate and staff research projects, and yet is supported so that it can be managed within a semester.

Ethical principles arising from a Western world view are comfortably relevant to the multi-participant sociolinguistic research projects. The principle of respect for persons is applied in seeking the informed consent of participants, in the attention students give to the representation of their participants' identities, and the careful disposal of research materials at the conclusion of the assessment period. The principle of concern for welfare is applied in the attention students give to the linguistic and personal needs of participants, and in the representation of research data in such a way that does not negatively impact on the participants and their speech communities. The principle of justice is applied again in the attention given to the needs of participants, and also in the return of research data to participants at the conclusion of the project, as a way of allowing participants to benefit from their engagement with research.

Where the single-participant projects conducted by second-year students of linguistics are only loosely guided by disciplinary agendas, the sociolinguistics research projects respond strongly to disciplinary agendas. The student researcher's chosen topic develops understandings of topics raised in lectures, and responds to parameters identified by sociolinguistics as being relevant. While student interests and their social networks drive the selection of languages to be included in the projects, the eventual participants are conceptualised as "providers of data". Ethical learning takes a different shape from that which is available at second year.

5. Summary and recommendations

In summary, the inclusion of ethical learning in the undergraduate linguistics curriculum can be motivated by institutional requirements, disciplinary expectations, and personal pedagogic beliefs. The selection of ethical learning components can be guided by generic "Western" ethical principles which are well established in the international literature, as well as by local

expressions of ethical principles. Where sociolinguistic research is perhaps more appropriately guided by more generic models of ethical research, the locally relevant principles articulated in *Te Ara Tika* have been found to fit anthropological linguistic research projects more comfortably.

While it is possible to respond to ethical learning motivations by teaching dedicated lectures on the ethics of linguistic research, in this paper I have advocated a more practical programme, where ethical learning is embedded in guided research activities that develop our students' understanding of the discipline of linguistics, and offer genuine opportunities for knowledge creation. Today, course work research requires careful planning and institutional approval. The processes for gaining approval are likely to vary considerably from one institution to the next. Regardless of the ethical hoops we may be required to jump through before course work human research can begin, such research enables our student to be made aware of, and reach a practical understanding of ethic considerations relevant to our discipline.

Finally, the absence of ethical research guidelines for linguistic researchers in New Zealand is problematic and could even be construed as a lack of disciplinary interest. Tolich and Smith (2015: 218), in a recent work on Ethics Review in New Zealand, recommend that the Royal Society of New Zealand assume "responsibility of *all* ethics review in New Zealand" and in doing so, create "a single code of ethics for health and social research". Should this come about, and such a document be developed, the appropriateness of the guidelines to the various sub-disciplines of linguistics is likely to emerge as an area where significant consultation is required. In this paper, I have touched on socio-/anthropological research. Many linguists, including myself, also work in other sub-disciplines of linguistics. The ethical principles that are central to one type of research activity are likely to be only loosely relevant in other areas. Respect for persons is an obvious starting point, but how that principle is, could be, or should be enacted in different types of research, and conveyed to our students at all stages of their tertiary education, is a discussion that I welcome.

Notes

- 1 Judge Dame Sylvia Cartwright, in "The report of the cervical cancer inquiry", recommended that the independent review of human research be conducted for the protection of research participants, saying that "ethical assessment for all

research projects must be developed to meet modern standards” (Cartwright 1988: 213)

- 2 The University of Waikato’s Graduate Attributes for the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Social Sciences are internal documents and as such references are not available. These documents are both under review through the unfolding Curriculum Enhancement Project. On its linguistics webpage, Victoria University of Wellington lists among its graduate attributes for linguistics students “intellectual integrity” and an understanding of “the ethics of scholarship” (2010). The University of Canterbury aims for its BA graduates, including linguistics majors, to have “*an in-depth discipline-based knowledge* within their majoring programmes and a broad knowledge of the social world including its ethical, bicultural and multicultural aspects” (2007 (2015), italics original).
- 3 Respect for Human Dignity appears as a core ethical principle in multiple statements of ethics, although it is often packaged in different ways. It can be seen in Australia’s *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007, 2015) as Respect for Human Beings, in the American Anthropological Association’s (2012) *Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibility* (Principle 1. Do no harm, Principle 3. Obtain informed consent and necessary permissions); in the Royal Society of New Zealand’s (2012) *Code of Ethics* (Principle 5.1. Respect for Colleagues, Principle 6.1. Respect for Communities, Principle 7.1. Protection of the wellbeing and privacy of individuals), in the Linguistics Society of America’s (2009) *Ethics Statement* (Section 2. Responsibility to individual research participants, Section 3. Responsibility to communities), in the British Association for Applied Linguistics’ (1994, 2006) *Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics* (Section 2. Responsibilities to informants).
- 4 The interpretation of the four ethical principles in *Te Ara Tika* derives from the document itself, as well as from my understanding of how these principles might apply in research. The conceptual links that I have made of Manaakitanga/Protection, Whakapapa/Participation, and Mana/Partnership are deliberately simplistic. While the explicit link between Manaakitanga and Protection is made by the authors of *Te Ara Tika* (Hudson et al. 2010: 10), as researchers engage more closely with participants, collective participation is emphasised, ultimately enabling research partnerships to develop (Hudson et al. 2010: 11-12). Thus, I understand Manaakitanga as encompassing all three principles of Protection, Partnership and Participation, with an emphasis on Protection.
- 5 Although the ethical learning discussed in this paper is located overtly in the socio-/anthropological linguistics stream, there are opportunities throughout Waikato University’s undergraduate linguistics programme to incorporate ethical learning. Our students are expected to fairly represent, acknowledge, and formally cite the contributions that others have made to their assessment activities. Steps taken to avoid plagiarism of peers and academic sources alike constitute ethical conduct in the tertiary context.

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