Changes in the phrasal lexicon of Māori: mauri and moe

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Abstract

Māori, the indigenous language of New Zealand, has been in considerable contact with English for over one hundred years. Over that time there have been documented changes in the pronunciation, grammar and lexicon of Māori. As a result we would also expect evidence of changes to the phrasal lexicon. A study of the words mauri and moe in the Māori language over the last 150 years shows that older formulae are becoming more restricted in their use and that formulae calqued from English have also appeared.

Keywords: Māori; phrasal lexicon; formulae; language change; formulaic genre.

1. Introduction

Māori is an indigenous language which has been in considerable contact with English for over 150 years. As a consequence of this language contact, Māori has become an endangered language (Harlow 2007). However, unlike many other endangered languages Māori has been well documented throughout the time it has been in contact with English, with good dictionaries and grammars and increasing access to a wealth of archival material, with much of this written by Māori themselves (Orbell 1995: 19).

However, despite the good level of documentation there has been not been much investigation on the extent and features of the phrasal lexicon of Māori. Nevertheless, with the scale of documented material available in Māori it is possible not just to document features of the historical phrasal lexicon but to compare this with usage today, in other words to investigate changes in the phrasal lexicon over time.
1.1. The Māori language

Māori is a member of the Austronesian family of languages and is spoken by the indigenous inhabitants of New Zealand, a group of islands in the South Pacific. An expansion of Polynesian settlement across the Pacific lead to the discovery and settlement of New Zealand by Polynesian voyagers about 800 years ago (Sutton 1994). Since the arrival of European missionaries and whalers and sealers from the beginning of the 19th century, and large scale European settlement from the 1840s onwards, the Māori people and their language have been in increasing contact with English language and culture.

Massive urbanisation by Māori in the middle of the 20th century lead to English becoming the language in which Māori children were raised (Benton 1991). This shift lead to a break in the intergenerational transmission of Māori which has been somewhat staunched by a range of successful language revitalisation initiatives introduced from the late 1970s (Reedy 2000). The most well-known of these are the Māori medium education initiatives kōhanga reo (pre-school language nests) and kura kaupapa Māori (primary schools) (King 2001; King 1999). In summary, we can say that most Māori were monolingual speakers of Māori in the 19th century, increasingly bilingual in the first part of the 20th century, and increasingly monolingual in English until the 1980s.

However, despite revitalisation initiatives, the numbers of competent speakers of Māori is low. Although 24% of the Māori population of 565,000 can speak some Māori (Statistics New Zealand 2007), it is estimated that only 14% speak the language well or very well (Te Puni Kōkiri 2008: 22) and that these levels are not high enough to retain the vitality of the language (Bauer 2008). There are only a few communities where Māori is still the language of communication among older adults.

Many of those involved in revitalisation efforts, particularly in urban areas, are second language speakers of Māori. Even present day elders who were raised in Māori environments until the end of their teenage years, have not generally had a continuous or full access to community socialisation in Māori during their adult lives. For younger speakers today the domains where Māori can be used, and are being used, are quite restricted. As in other similar revitalisation situations, the language of peer socialisation for young people is largely English (Lewis & Smallwood 2010).

As a result of the close relationship with English, it is not surprising that there have been a number of documented changes to the Māori language over the last 150 years. The pronunciation of Māori has changed considerably over
this time period with many of the changes attributable to the effect of New Zealand English (Harlow & Keegan et al. 2009). Grammatical changes have also been noted (Kāretu 1995), as well as changes in vocabulary as new words were required with the advent of Māori medium schooling in the 1980s (Harlow 2007: 212–16). There is also awareness that the close association of the Māori language with English has implications for Māori syntax and forms of expression (Kāretu 1995: 7).

1.2. Terminology

Terminology used in this paper follows definitions by Kuiper (2009). This study focuses on phrasal lexical items (PLIs), and in particular, formulae. A PLI is a structurally complex lexical item with syntactic structure. In other words, it is a grouping of two or more words which has ‘syntactic categories which determine where they may be used in sentences’ (Kuiper 2009: 5). The phrasal lexicon of a language comprises the PLIs of that language. A formula is a type of PLI which has non-linguistic conditions of use, that is, cultural knowledge which determines when and how it can appropriately be used. It is worth noting that not all PLIs are formulae. A formulaic genre is a variety of a language in which a significant amount of the discourse consists of formulae. Formulaic genre may be written or spoken, and include formats such as newspaper death notices and rugby commentaries.

1.3. The phrasal lexicon of Māori

The phrasal inventory of native speakers of any language is huge. Various estimates for English, for example, range between ‘the same order of magnitude as the single words of the vocabulary’ (Jackendoff 1995: 137) to the phrasal vocabulary being ‘more numerous than words by a ratio of at least 10:1’ (Mel’cuk 1995: 169). While we have no estimates about the extent of the phrasal lexicon of the Māori language we would expect that, before colonisation, it was considerable, especially in a number of formulaic genre, some of which are still practised today. What is also to be expected is that as a result of the contact between Māori and English that there will have been appreciable changes in the content and extent of the phrasal lexicon.

The Māori Language Commission has produced a book of idiomatic and formulaic phrases which notes the important role of formulae in the character of the Māori language.
These formulaic expressions are the vine of the Māori language, the tendril that holds together and conveys a person’s thoughts to the wider world.

This book was intended to increase the phrasal lexicon of proficient second language speakers and its existence indicates awareness that the phrasal lexicon of younger speakers is restricted.

Taking into account the situation of the Māori language as outlined above, we can put forward three hypotheses of how the phrasal lexicon of Māori may have been altered through the increasing contact with English and the more restricted use of Māori over the last 150 years:

1. That many Māori PLIs will not be used as frequently as formerly;
2. That new PLIs will have been calqued from English;
3. That overall the numbers of PLIs in Māori will have decreased.

The first two hypotheses are the subject of this paper. The third hypothesis is, of course, impossible to test conclusively. However, its accuracy can be deduced from the fact that a number of activities which are likely to have had associated formulaic genres, such as traditional bird-snaring (Best 1942), Māori birth rituals (Best 1904), certain types of weaving (Wallace 2009), are no longer practised. Considering that some of these activities were attended by ritual it is highly likely that they were characterised by a range of formulae. Although new genres have appeared in the Māori language it seems unlikely that the teaching of mathematics, for example, would be associated with much formulaic language. Furthermore, while some new genre such as broadcast rugby commentaries in Māori contain formulae, it is not clear that these are much more than calquing from English.

2. Corpora

The ability to study changes in the phrasal lexicon over time is facilitated by access to an increasing number of searchable corpora (many of which are available online). The analysis presented here includes material from two quite different corpora of the Māori language: the Māori newspaper corpus and the Māori Broadcast Corpus.
The Māori newspaper corpus (Niuepa Māori) is a written corpus comprising issues of 34 Māori newspapers printed between 1842 and 1932. The corpus contains approximately 10 million written words, about 85% of which is in Māori (Curnow 2002). The corpus comprises newspapers from three main sources: the government, Māori themselves, and religious organisations. Although there are overlaps, the newspapers from these three sources largely fall into three time bands: government 1842–1877, Māori 1862–1913 and religious 1898–1932. Results from the analysis presented here are shown in three time bands which closely align with these dates. The corpus is available online (Keegan et al. 2001) at www.nzdl.org/niupepa.

The Māori Broadcast Corpus (MBC) contains 1 million words transcribed from oral broadcast speech recorded in 1995 (Boyce 2006). Although a proportion of this corpus will be scripted or semi-scripted material the majority is unscripted spoken language. Both corpora are searchable: the newspaper corpus is searchable online and the broadcast corpus, available on CD, is searchable using proprietary concordance software.

3. Loss of PLIs – the case of mauri

We will examine the loss of PLIs in Māori through an analysis of the changing uses and meanings of the word mauri in 19th and 20th century sources.

3.1. Definition of mauri

In order to discuss changes in the use of mauri it is necessary to begin with defining mauri in English. However, definitions, especially for this particular word are problematic. For our purposes at this point we will accept modern definitions of the word, the main ones being ‘life principle’ (H. Williams 1971), ‘life force’ (Hikuroa et al. 2010) and ‘life essence’ (Barlow 1991). The nature of these definitions of mauri will be discussed in Section 3.4.

Both humans and natural resources have mauri. In the case of fishing spots, forests and other natural resources the mauri resides in a physical object such as a special stone (Best 1922). With humans, the mauri resides inside the person, thus lending itself to metaphysical translations, as above.

Contrary to much modern use of the term, the most important aspect of a mauri in 19th century was not that a mauri existed, but what state the mauri was in:

Anything that supported human existence had a mauri (life force) whose condition was an index of success. A mauri for a fishing ground,
for example, represented the life in fish. *Mauri* are now often conflated with *wairua*, which describes an immortal soul, but formerly the difference between them was absolute: *mauri* were mortal.

(Head 2006: 138)

If the condition of *mauri* was important, we can assume that there would be PLIs to describe the condition of the *mauri*, and, furthermore, that there would be positive and negative descriptors.

3.2. *Mauri* in the 19th century

The two main 19th century sources which we will use to study the word *mauri* are the Māori newspaper corpus and dictionary entries for the word *mauri* in successive editions of the Williams’ dictionary of Māori.

An online search of the newspaper corpus revealed 573 tokens of *mauri* but a large proportion of these were rejected. This is because the newspapers have been digitized using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and are estimated to be 75–96% correct depending on the varying quality of the original image (Keegan et al. 2001). Because the online resource also has facsimile copies of each page of the newspaper it was possible to check the word in context. This check revealed that many of the tokens identified by the online search software were mistakes made by the OCR software, most commonly mistaking the words *Māori* or *mauria* for *mauri*. A number of tokens (175) were also eliminated due to the repeated use of one of the formulae in a newspaper banner (*Te Wānanga*). Examples of names (17 examples) or references to a time in the month (11) were also omitted from the analysis. There were only two examples of the word *mauri* referring to a physical object.

In total, 245 examples of *mauri* in the newspaper collection were analysed for this study. As expected, the majority of these tokens (225) were PLIs and only 20 were mono-morphemic. Despite the low numbers of single word uses of *mauri* it is interesting to note that these have increased over time, especially in the last time period (70% of mono-morphemic tokens occurred in the final time period).

*Mauri* was used in PLIs and formulae with three collocates: *oho* (to startle, surprise), *tau* (to become calm) and *ora* (to be healthy, alive). This accords with expectations, as these words describe a *mauri* in various states of ease or unease.

Of the three collocates *oho* was the most frequent, occurring 122 times (54%), then *ora* occurring 53 times (24%) and *tau* occurring 50 times (22%). The reason for *oho* being the most frequent collocate is perhaps
because a startled or surprised *mauri* is more worthy of comment than one which is calmed down or healthy.

The frequency of the three main collocates over the three time periods is shown in Figure 1. These three time periods roughly equate to the main periods of publication of the three types of Māori newspaper: those published by the government or allied sources, those published by Māori themselves and those published by religious groups and individuals.

*Oho* is the most frequent collocate with *mauri* in all three time bands. However, within each time period, the proportion of tokens of *oho* has reduced from 81% to 56% to 44% over the three time bands. In contrast, the proportion of tokens with *ora* has increased over time. The next three sections will examine how these three collocates are used with *mauri*.

### 3.2.1. Use of *mauri* with *oho*

The use of *oho* with *mauri* refers to a *mauri* that has been awoken or startled, and is the most frequent collocate of *mauri* in the newspaper database. The first occurrence of *oho* with *mauri* occurs in the Māori newspapers in 1843. In the first edition of Williams Dictionary published by William Williams in 1844 the entry for *mauri* gives two examples with translations, repeated as examples (1) and (2) below, both of which are PLIs using the word *oho* (1844: 139).

(1) *Ka oho taku mauri i te pū-hanga o te pū.*

*TAM startle my mauri cause the shoot-NOM of the gun*  
‘I got a fright when the gun discharged.’

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![Figure 1](https://example.com/figure1.png)  
*Figure 1. Frequency of collocates of *mauri* in the Māori newspapers by time period*
These sentences are representative of those found in the newspaper corpus, the typical form of which is shown in example (3). Optional elements are indicted in round brackets, alternative elements are indicated by a forward slash.

(3) \( (\text{TAM}) \ oho \ (rere) \ (\text{TAM}) \ \text{DET/POSPRONOUN} \ mauri \ (o \ \text{NP}) \ (i \ \text{NP}) \).\]

This formula generates a wide range of possible expressions with some typical example phrases shown in examples (4) to (6).

(4) \( \text{TAM} \ oho \ \text{taku} \ mauri \).
‘I got a fright.’

(5) \( \text{TAM} \ oho \ \text{ana} \ \text{taku} \ mauri \ \text{i te tae-nga} \ o \ \text{te rongo} \).
‘I was startled when I heard the news.’

(6) \( \text{TAM} \ oho-rere \ \text{ana} \ \text{te mauri} \ o \ \text{ngā mokopuna} \).
‘The grandchildren got a big fright.’

Twenty-three percent of all the tokens of \( oho \) occurring with \( mauri \) included a result phrase introduced by ‘\( i \)’ indicating what caused the \( mauri \) to be startled. An example of this sort of sentence is shown as example (7).

(7) \( \text{TAM} \ oho \ \text{ana} \ \text{taku} \ mauri \ \text{i te wehi} \).
‘I was startled with fear.’

Forty-six percent of the tokens were the compound, \( ohomauri \), which first appears in the newspapers in 1857. This word is used both as a noun and verb as shown in examples (8) and (9) respectively.

(8) \( \text{TAM} \ oho-mauri \ \text{ana} \ \text{rātou} \).
‘They were startled.’
3.2.2. Use of mauri with tau. With 50 occurrences, the word tau (or variations thereof) was the least common collocate of mauri in PLIs in the newspaper database. The word tau indicates that the mauri has been calmed or settled down. The first occurrence of tau with mauri was in 1862, over twenty years after the first example with oho. Considering that the meaning of tau is to calm or settle down, it is perhaps not surprising that it is the least frequent collocate as the fact of a mauri being awoken or startled (oho) is far more noteworthy than the reverse state. Like oho, tau occurred in very productive constructions, the basic form shown in example (10) with sample examples (11) and (12).

(10) (TAM) tau DET/POSPRONOUN mauri (o NP) (ki reira/raro).

(11) Kua tau te mauri o te tangata.
   TAM settle the mauri of the man.
   ‘The man calmed down.’

(12) Ka tau taku mauri ki raro.
   TAM settle my mauri to below
   ‘I calmed down.’

Example (12) shows an interesting calque from the English phrasal verb ‘to calm down’ with ‘down’ being rendered by the phrase ki raro which traditionally would refer only to a physical location. A phrase with ki indicating the location of the action occurs in nine of the 50 examples. In fifteen of the 50 examples the variant tatā was used instead of tau.

3.2.3. Use of mauri with ora. The word ora (to be healthy or alive) was the second most frequent collocate of mauri in the newspaper corpus with 53 occurrences. Unlike oho and tau which occurred in PLIs which could be varied in an infinite number of ways by the writer, ora was found in the compound mauri ora. Furthermore, this compound was used in two formulae: the phrase tihe mauri ora, and in a proverb.

Tihe mauri ora was the most frequent formula with 35 occurrences, excluding the 175 tokens from the banner heading to the Māori newspaper Te Wānanga (1874–1878), shown in Figure 2. The phrase Tihe mauri ora (sneeze of life) is one of a number of tauparapara (incantations to begin a
speech) used in the formulaic genre of whaikōrero (oratory). The purpose of the tauparapara is to claim the right to speak. The first written occurrence of this formula was in 1859.

There were 12 tokens of the proverbial use of mauri ora, the first occurring in 1875. The proverb takes the form shown in example (13), where the word noho can be in variation with the word māngere (laziness) and mate with the word matekai (hunger).

\[(13) \text{Mauri mahi, mauri ora; mauri noho, mauri mate.} \]

mauri work mauri healthy mauri sit mauri die

‘Hard work leads to good health, idleness to affliction.’

Sometimes the proverb appears in a shortened form as mauri mahi, mauri ora. Considering the relative lateness of its first occurrence, the sentiments expressed in the proverb and that the proverbial use of mauri ora was high in religious newspapers it seems likely that the proverb was coined after colonisation.

This proverb is not in common use today. However, another version of it, shown as example (14), where tama replaces the word mauri, was the rallying idea behind Ngā Tamatoa, the Māori activist group of the 1970s.

\[(14) \text{Tama tu, tama ora, tama noho, tama mate.} \]

‘To stand up is to live, to sit down is to die.’

3.3. Mauri in the 20th century

We will now move to the use of mauri in the Māori Broadcast Corpus (MBC) (Boyce 2006). In contrast to the 19th century written newspaper material this corpus consists of transcripts of broadcast speech recorded in 1995. This corpus contains 157 tokens of the word mauri, 32% of which are PLIs. This is in direct
contrast to the 19th century material where 92% of the tokens were PLIs. Figure 3 shows the different types of occurrences of *mauri* in both corpora.

We might have expected more examples of PLIs in the oral rather than the written corpus, and in fact the reverse is the case, suggesting that the change over time is even more pronounced than shown here.

A further difference is the relative proportions of the three collocates *oho*, *ora* and *tau*. In the 19th century material *oho* was the most frequent collocate (54%), followed by *ora* (24%, 66% of these being accounted for by the formula *tihe mauri ora*), with *tau* being the most infrequent collocate of the three, accounting for 22% of the occurrences of *mauri* as a PLI.

In contrast, the most frequent collocate of *mauri* in the MBC is *ora* (86%, all of which are examples of the formula *tihe mauri ora*). There are only 2 examples of PLIs using *oho* and 5 examples using *tau*.

*Tau*, which was the least frequent of the 3 collocates in the newspaper corpus has now become more common than *oho*. Furthermore it now appears in compounds, all but one of which is the form *mauri tau* which is defined as ‘absence of panic’ (Moorfield 2005: 85).

\[(15) \textit{Ko te¯rā te wā i kite i te mauri tau.} \]

\[\textit{EQ that the time TAM see DO the absence of panic} \]

‘That was when we saw the absence of panic.’

Thus the overwhelming use of *mauri* in PLIs in modern speech appears to be accounted for by the formula *tihe mauri ora* and the compound *mauri tau*.

![Figure 3. Percentage use of mauri in PLIs and as a mono-morpheme in the Māori newspaper corpus and the Māori Broadcast Corpus](image)
A search of recordings in the MAONZE (Māori and New Zealand English) corpus (King et al. 2011) confirmed this finding. This corpus contains recordings of the Māori and English speech of three groups of male and female Māori born from the 1870s through to the 1980s and recorded at various times from 1938 to 2009. Amongst the speech of the 69 speakers in this corpus there were nineteen examples of mauri, and while 11 of these were PLIs, 6 were the compound mauri tau. There is only one example of the formula tihe mauri ora in the MAONZE corpus but this is not surprising since it contains very little oratorical material.

3.4. Defining mauri

So how did the change in the use of mauri come about? When we look back to the first four editions of the Williams’ dictionary of the Māori language the entries for the word mauri are short with the only change over time being the addition of other obscure referents (such as ‘poles’, ‘moon on the 29th day’, etc.). The examples given in the dictionary to illustrate usage were PLIs using oho (see examples (1) and (2)).

However, there was a big change between the 4th and 5th editions of the Williams’ dictionary (W. Williams & W. Williams 1892 and W. Williams & H. Williams 1917) when the entry for mauri increased from 10 lines to a whole column. In the preface to the 5th edition Herbert Williams explains Eldson Best’s important role in this huge expansion.

The most important contribution, in volume and in character is that made by Mr. Elsdon Best … He not only supplied a very large number of words, new meanings and examples … but has also … rendered valuable assistance … [with] his esoteric knowledge of the Māori being of the greatest weight.

(W. Williams & H. Williams 1917: viii)

As was common at the time, dictionary definitions focussed on the monomorphemic use of a word, rather than the use of a word in PLIs. This practice helps to obscure the importance of the phrasal nature of many words and ignores the fact that we often parse PLIs only as far as we need to extract meaning (Wray 2002).

The original definition of mauri in the Williams dictionary published in 1844 (W. Williams 1844) was ‘heart’ and this meaning had survived up to, and including the 4th edition of the dictionary in 1892. This definition had been derived from the meanings of the two examples given in the dictionary
For if a gun was discharged (example (1)) was it not the heart that became startled enough to beat faster? However, under Best’s interrogation, *mauri* became more metaphysical, and defined as ‘life principle’ reflecting Best’s interest in defining and differentiating metaphysical words like *hau, manawa* and *mauri* (Best 1922).

Nowadays the word *mauri* is defined as ‘life essence’ or ‘life principle’ (Moorfield 2005: 85). Best’s definition has remained the accepted meaning of *mauri* and has influenced several generations of Māori and non-Māori commentators (Holman 2010: 272–8).

Also included in the expanded dictionary entry of 1917 were three compound word forms of *mauri* of the form *mauri* + adjective: *mauri tau* (‘absence of panic’), *mauri rere* (‘panic stricken’) and *mauri ora* (also defined as ‘life principle’). These forms continue to be cited in modern dictionaries like *He Pātaka Kupu* (Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori 2008) and *Te Aka* (Moorfield 2005).

Nevertheless, there is some indication that the concept of *mauri* still retains some sense of the early use in a range of PLIs which comment on the state of a *mauri*. For example Te Kipa Kepa Morgan (Morgan 2006) has developed a ‘Mauri Model’ to assess the state of natural resources within ecosystems. This model is based on the concept that the *mauri* of natural resources can fluctuate both positively and negatively and that this can be assessed.

3.5. Summary

Over the last 150 years the use of the word *mauri* has changed greatly. Examples from the 19th century reveal that *mauri* most commonly occurred in PLIs with three collocates. The PLIs associated with two of these collocates, *oho* and *tau*, were capable of great variation as circumstances required. At the end of the 20th century the word *mauri* is less frequently used in PLIs, apart from the formula *tihe mauri ora* which has been retained because of its use in the formulaic genre of oratory. This is one formulaic genre which is still strong in Māori culture and in which the formulae are still being learned intergenerationally. Other modern uses of *mauri* tend to be of the compound form *mauri* + adjective, in particular, *mauri tau* (‘absence of panic’). The most frequent collocate from the 19th century, *oho*, occurs infrequently today with *mauri*.

Accordingly, changes in the use of *mauri* over time provide evidence to support the first hypothesis stated in Section 1.1:

1. That many Māori PLIs will not be used as frequently as formerly.
The fact that the most common modern use of mauri is in a PLI associated with a formulaic genre suggests that formulaic genre have an important role in the maintenance of a language’s phrasal lexicon.

We also predict that other Māori words which have had productive collocates might now be more likely to have formed compound words with these collocates. With the shift to English, words in Māori have a tendency to be learnt separately as individual lexical items, and this has no doubt influenced these changes. In addition, due to the circumstances surrounding the language today, younger speakers have restricted access to a full phrasal lexicon which is expressed through a multiplicity of genres, styles, and a wide range of social contexts.

4. New formulae: the case of moe

The second hypothesis concerning the likely changes to the phrasal lexicon of Māori over time was that new PLIs would enter Māori via calquing from English. We will examine this by examining formulae associated with death, an aspect of Māori culture attended by many rituals (Oppenheim 1973). In particular, we will examine Māori eulogies which historically contain a good deal of formulaic language, much of which is also expressed in song (Orbell 1995: 36).

As shown in the previous section, the most unchanging use of mauri over time was with the formula tihe mauri ora from the formulaic genre of whaikōrero. Eulogies to the dead are another such genre so we would similarly expect this genre to be reasonably resistant to change and resilient in its phrasal repertoire.

4.1. Māori eulogies

Eulogies in Māori (poroporoaki) address the dead person directly, unlike the convention in English which is to talk about the deceased rather than to talk directly to them. In Māori culture, following death the spirit of the dead person travels north to the top of the North Island (Te Reinga), from there travelling to Hawaiki, the homeland of the Māori (Orbell 1995). The role of the speaker in addressing the dead person is to encourage the deceased’s spirit to depart on this journey. As a consequence there are many formulae used in poroporoaki which focus on saying farewell and encouraging the spirit to depart (Oppenheim 1973:16; Salmond 1975: 183–4). The verb haere ‘to go’ is the most frequent word used in this context. Best (1905: 171–172) cites a number of examples as typical forms. Some of these are given in example (16).
4.2. Speaking about death in English

In English, death is often spoken of euphemistically. Nowadays people don’t die, they ‘pass’ or ‘pass away’ or ‘pass over’. Historically, one of the main metaphors for death in English is DEATH IS REST. It is common to see on older headstones in cemeteries the abbreviation R.I.P. (Latin: ‘requiescet in pace’), commonly expressed in English as ‘rest in peace’. This formula is also not uncommon in modern day death notices in newspapers.

A similar metaphor used in English is DEATH IS SLEEP. This metaphor has a long lineage, occurring in pre-Christian Greek and Latin literature. Ogle (1933) notes that,

in Hebrew literature, as represented in the Old Testament, as early at least as the sixth century B.C., the dead are often ... denoted as “those asleep”, and death as “a sleep” ... Passages from the Old Testament play an important part in the establishing of a tradition which appears in the New Testament, in the Greek and Latin Fathers, and in the liturgy of the Greek and Latin Church.

(Ogle 1933: 89–90)

Accordingly, there are many examples of the DEATH IS REST and DEATH IS SLEEP metaphor throughout the Bible, particularly in the Psalms.

The euphemistic use of ‘sleep’ for ‘death’ is not limited to the Bible. The English language contains a very wide range of euphemisms for death, including a range of metaphors of sleep, some religious and some not. Well over 200 euphemisms for death, including almost twenty involving sleep or rest, have been identified as being used in English in the 19th and early 20th century (Pound 1936: 197).

If the idea that DEATH IS REST and DEATH IS SLEEP have been calqued into Māori we would expect to see words like moe (to sleep), takoto (to lie down) and okioki (to rest) to be used in eulogistic forms. Due to the
difficulty in examining all three of these words the analysis will, for the most part, restrict itself to moe.

4.3. The meaning of moe

The Māori word for ‘sleep’ is moe. Like English, it also has the meaning ‘to sleep with’. However, it appears that historically this word wasn’t associated with death. The form moe is common amongst related Polynesian languages and there is little suggestion that moe referred to death in any of these languages (Tregear 1891: 246; Greenhill et al. 2010).

In the Williams’ dictionaries, the entry for moe does not include the meaning ‘to die’ until the 5th edition in 1917 (W. Williams & H. Williams 1917). In the first two editions (W. Williams 1844, 1852) the only translations of moe are ‘sleep’ and ‘dream’, and in the third edition (W. Williams & W. Williams 1871) ‘marry’ enters. This late entry of the meaning ‘die’ for moe in dictionary sources suggests that this meaning has been calqued from English. In an early collection of written texts in Māori first published in 1854 (Grey 1971) the word moe appears 103 times (Harlow 1990) but in only one of these instances does it mean ‘to die.’

4.4. Moe in the 19th century

Although traditionally the word moe does not seem to have referred to death, there are relatively early examples of this word’s use in death notices and obituaries in Māori newspapers. The first use of moe to mean ‘died’ or ‘dead’ was in 1855 in an obituary written by a non-Māori.

(17) Ka mutu ēnei kupu āna ka moe ia.
    TAM end these words his TAM die he
    ‘When these words of his were ended he died.’

There are many examples such as this where moe was used synonymously with, and often alongside, conventional words for death such as mate. The majority of examples of moe being used for ‘died’ or ‘dead’ were made in a religious context such as in example (18) from 1858 where moe is overtly linked to Christian faith.

(18) kia moe i runga i te whakapono
    TAM die at on DO the faith
    ‘to die in faith.’
Formulaic uses of *moe* began to appear at about the same time, particularly in phrases used to address the deceased. The formula *moe mai* first appeared in 1855. *Mai* is a directional particle, untranslatable in these examples, which indicates a metaphorical orientation towards the speaker.

(19)  
\[\text{Moe mai e Pā!}\]  
sleep hither **voc** sir  
‘Sleep, o sir!’

Over the whole newspaper corpus there were 32 examples of *moe mai*. The formula was used both in vocative and declamatory statements, in both reports about death and *waiata tangi* (laments). The postposed deictic particles *nā* (NEAR) or *rā* (DIST) were frequently included in the phrase.

(20)  
\[\text{moe mai rā i roto i te puku o tō maunga}\]  
sleep hither **DIST** at inside at the belly of your mountain  
‘sleeping there in the belly of your mountain’

In 1876 the first printed example of the formula *moe ... i te moenga roa* (‘sleep ... the long sleep’) appeared in the Māori newspapers. In all there were 105 occurrences, with most appearing after the beginning of the 20th century. The structure of the formula is shown in example (20).

(21)  
\[\text{TAM moe (SUBJ) i te moenga roa (o te NP)}\]

In eleven of these occurrences, the word *takoto* (to lie down) was substituted for *moe*. This formula is a close match with one of the euphemisms for death identified by Pound: sleeps the long sleep / is sleeping the final sleep (1936: 197). In Māori the formula is usually expressed in a very simple form but variation and extension facilitates a wide variety of expression. In nearly all instances this formula followed English convention in being used to talk about the dead person rather than addressing them directly. Thus the Māori version calques both the sentiment and its cultural context.

Māori calques of other well known English euphemisms cited by Pound also appear occasionally in the newspaper collection. ‘Sleeps the sleep that knows no waking’ is calqued into Māori as *moe i te moenga roa kāore nei he korikoringa*. The formula ‘asleep in Jesus’ is rendered *moe ana i runga i a te Karaiti*. 
4.5. Māori literacy and print culture

At this point it is necessary to outline some of the features of Māori introduction to literacy and the effect of the development of a print culture in the Māori language. Literacy in Māori was introduced with the missionaries who by 1830 had substantially developed the phonemic orthography we know today (Parkinson 2003: 38). Māori literacy rates were high and knowledge of the Bible and associated writings spread very quickly. By 1845, when the missions reached their greatest geographical expansion, there must have been, on a numerical basis, a copy of either a Bible or a Prayer Book for every adult member of the population, believed to total about 100,000 (Barrington and Beaglehole 1974: 28). The importance of Christianity in shaping Māori thought in the second half of the 19th century is reflected in the fact that ‘there was no post-1840 Māori leader with aspirations beyond the tribe who was not both literate and Christian’ (Head 2005: 60).

The advent of Māori newspapers in 1842 which encouraged subscribers to submit letters and other material saw the extension of Māori literacy into the beginnings of a rich print culture in Māori. A characteristic of such contributions was the direct translation of formal oratorical conventions to the written page (Kāretu 2002). Where material was written by Europeans, there would often have been a literal translation of English concepts into Māori (Paterson 2006: 49). Applying this to the death notices, many of these writings are likely to be English ideas, structures and formulae, translated into Māori by writers whose first language was English.

Even when the author of an obituary or letter was Māori there was potential for influence from both by the style and vocabulary of other writing in the paper and expectations of what was acceptable for publication. When the writer was a member of a faith, it was likely that their use of language would also be affected by the language used in that faith.

4.6. Moe in the 20th century

The MBC includes some poroporoaki, in particular from the introductions to the documentary television programme Waka Huia. In these situations traditional exhortations involving the verb haere are used alongside expressions using moe. The formula moe mai (rā) occurred 26 times in addressing people who had died. It was not uncommon for the formula to be repeated as in example (22) as repetition plays an important role in Māori oratory (Salmond 1975: 164).
The formula could also be used in a variety of ways to introduce supporting statements. An illustration of this is shown in example (22).

(22) moe mai, moe mai, moe mai rā
sleep hither sleep hither sleep hither DIST
‘Sleep, sleep, sleep there’

The compound moenga roa occurred 19 times in the MBC corpus, but unlike the examples from the Māori newspapers, takoto (‘to lie down’) and okioki (‘to rest’) were more frequent collocates than moe.

(23) te hunga kua mate kua moe mai ki te pō roa
the people TAM die TAM sleep hither to the night long
‘the people who have died, who have passed away to the long night.’

Although example (25) illustrates a vocative use of this formula the majority of occurrences in this corpus are declamatory. However, vocative examples of all these formulae occur in collections of poroporoaki recorded from 1950–1970 (Rewi 2010; Brooke-White 1981) indicating that these calqued forms have entered into the formulaic genre of poroporoaki and been passed down through several generations to the present day to be included in the range of formulae on hand for an orator to use when required.

4.7. Summary

The development of newspapers printed in Māori led to a print culture in Māori and extended the formulaic genre of poroporoaki to the similarly formulaic English genre of the death notice and obituary. Accordingly, when reporting about deaths in the newspapers Māori correspondents combined features of both Māori and European tradition. There was often a direct addressing of the deceased in accordance with Māori convention. But conventions of the written death notices in English such as details of when and
where the person died and any relevant circumstances of their death were also adopted.

Early records suggest that the meaning of moe was originally limited to the meanings of ‘sleep’ and ‘to sleep with’. The Māori newspaper corpus demonstrates an increase over time in the frequency of the use of moe to refer to death. The formula moe mai (rā) was adopted into the vocative formulae of poroporoaki. Another formula, moe … i te moenga roa, reflecting Christian thought and calqued from an English formula, is used in a more English manner in reporting about a death. These are calques from English where the metaphors DEATH IS SLEEP and DEATH IS REST are well known and associated with biblical literature. The introduction of moe into the group of formulae available in the formulaic genre of poroporoaki is an example of calquing from English, of not only the form but also the cultural context. In that this calque is strongly associated with Christianity provides further evidence of the important role that Christianity has played in Māori culture (Head 2005), particularly through Christian metaphor (King 2007).

Thus the extension of moe into the formulaic genre of poroporoaki confirms the second hypothesis with regard to changes in the phrasal lexicon of Māori over time: that the phrasal lexicon will have incorporated calques from English, in this case formulae and the non-linguistic cultural elements surrounding their use.

5. Discussion

There has been much change in the Māori language over the time that it has been in close contact with English. With regard to changes in the phrasal lexicon of Māori through an examination of the use of the word mauri we have found evidence of loss of PLIs and a preference in modern Māori for compound words. The PLIs which are most likely to be resistant to change are those associated with formulaic genre, like oratory and eulogy which are still practised today. These verbal rituals continue to be passed down intergenerationally, and formats and formulae associated with them remain substantially similar to that contained in early records.

However, formulaic genre such as these can still admit new forms. A strong influence in this regard has been biblical metaphors, as the Bible was the first and most dominant source of written Māori in the 19th century. Biblically based metaphors such as DEATH IS SLEEP have been calqued into Māori resulting in the verb moe (‘to sleep’) taking on the meaning ‘to die’. Formulae which parallel English phrases have also become part of the
formulaic genre of eulogy. Furthermore, both form and functions of this metaphor in English have been adopted into Māori.

All languages change over time, and this dynamism is a feature of both vocabulary and the phrasal lexicon. Language contact provides a context where a minority language can be greatly affected by a language of wider communication. Documentary sources of Māori which are now readily available and searchable allow us to chart aspects of change in the phrasal lexicon of Māori as it has been in increasing contact with English. We suggest that the lexicographical impulse to define words with little regard for their phrasal contexts has assisted in the loss of PLIs which could be infinitely adapted for each situation. Those PLIs which tend to be retained are compounds along with formulae associated with formulaic genre. Conversely, the important role of Christianity in Māori culture and society is underscored by the adoption of biblical formulae into Māori. Undoubtedly similar processes have affected the phrasal lexicons of other indigenous languages during colonisation. These processes of change confirm the notion that ‘culture was’ and is ‘transmitted by formula’ (Moon 1997).

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Note

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