

A Radio Maori Language Course with ICT Applications

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Abstract

The language of the Maori, the indigenous people of Aotearoa (New Zealand), is under threat. One of the strategies to counter this trend has been the development of tribal radio stations that primarily broadcast in the Maori language rather than the dominant language, English. This poster presentation focuses on a radio Maori language course produced and delivered jointly by Radio Kahungunu and a local polytechnic, EIT Hawke's Bay. The course was delivered simultaneously online to four other Maori radio stations in other regions and rebroadcast there by the respective local Maori radio station. In 2003, the free course attracted over 7,000 enrolments.

The poster focuses on 'Korokoro Kiwaha', an intermediate level course comprising 40 x 30-minute Maori language lessons. The series of lessons is based around an ongoing radio serial with conversational dialogues written around the lives of a set of Maori-speaking characters. The poster will outline the methodology employed in the design of the student workbook and in the delivery of the pre-recorded lessons through the airwaves and internet.

Some of the teaching delivery methodology is not new e.g. listen to the dialogue; listen again, repeating in the gap after each sentence; and listen again, speaking along with the characters. However what was new for Radio Kahungunu around the year 2000 was the use of simple 'paste and copy' software, whereby digital dialogues are easily made to repeat themselves by simply copying and pasting them lower down.

What is new today, for 'Korokoro Kiwaha' is that, theoretically, it can be made even more accessible to learners across the globe, and for a fraction of the price. The course material and content is already set. The dialogues may need to be re-recorded. However, they can then be put online and easily accessed by anyone; and the textbook can also be converted to a digital online version – hence no publication costs and distribution restrictions!

[Readers of this poster might be interested in a presentation entitled "Using ICT to Enhance Maori Language Teaching", which describes a research project utilizing the recorded conversations of native speakers as language teaching resources. The 'Korokoro Kiwaha' methodology will be a useful template for Maori language courses using these recorded conversations – rather than the simulated voices of actors using simulated dialogues and situations.]