

Language is a Place: A Re-examination of Indigenous Metaphors

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Abstract

The paper examines assumptions in analyzing metaphors, particularly those produced by speakers of indigenous languages in the English language, and uses an approach to analyzing metaphors based upon Universal Algebra pioneered by Indurkha (1991). Selected examples from Navajo, Māori, and Scottish Gaelic are analyzed and presented with problems associated with translation, merging of cognitive domains, and possible universal metaphors. The final discussion makes suggestions and examines possible solutions to avoiding native language speaker assumptions in dealing with metaphors in English produced by indigenous people.

Introduction

In 2005, as I listened to the participants in my New Zealand study narrate their experiences with the Māori language in English, I was struck by the metaphors they used. I interviewed 74, mostly Māori, people about their experiences with the Māori language. I was fortunate because the participants included a range of ages from children to elders and were fairly evenly divided between those who started their language journeys as children and those who started as adults. These interviews also started my own journey in understanding how indigenous people use metaphors to express cultural cognitive domains in a majority language. In 1980, Lakoff and Johnson rerouted the study of metaphors into the fields of cognition and linguistics by redefining philosophy and cognition (1999), and those observations have dominated the discussion since. Indurkha (1991), however, articulated some of my own observations while reading Lakoff and Johnson (1980), by noting the tacit nature of many of their conclusions. Danziger described the assumptions this way: ‘The tendency to believe that categories conventionally imposed by one’s particular cultural and linguistic tradition actually label preexisting and natural units of reality is widespread across human societies’ (2005: 64).

Danzinger’s (2005) observation describes a common inability of speakers of a language to objectively perceive their own language while also suggesting that language itself imposes restrictions on how the physical universe is described. I encountered this phenomenon in my first metaphor analysis in which I connected metaphors used by two Māori leaders to their respective cultural and physical backgrounds. The readers/reviewers of the submitted article upon which the analysis was based (Gregory, 2010), however, interpreted the meaning of the metaphors based upon their own cultural and physical backgrounds. Keesing (1985) accurately described this phenomenon in his criticism of how ethnographers re-interpreted (or projected their own source models) what indigenous people told them into their own metaphorical images.

Keesing also pointed out that cognition cannot be inferred from language. For example, using the phrases ‘the sun rises’ and ‘the sun sets’ does not necessarily mean that the speaker believes the earth is flat (1985: 210). In my study of 2005 and in King’s (2007) dissertation study, many of the participants were Māori second language speakers. In fact, all of the participants in King’s study were adults ‘newly fluent’ in the Māori language. The task of understanding metaphors used in both studies was compounded by the possibility that their metaphor usage was predetermined by their dominant language of English. King (2007) herself

grabbled with the possible origins of some of the key metaphors, e.g. language is a path, concluding that some may have more than one possible origin. She relied heavily on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) assumptions in her analysis.

Another consideration in analyzing metaphors used by indigenous people in English is related to standardization of languages. While Lakoff and Johnson analyze the abstraction of language from its contexts, the reality is that English words and their meanings are well documented and have reasonably strong agreement on those meanings. Certainly, people do use words in new ways, which reshapes the language, and dictionaries attempt to document and grow with the changes. Indigenous languages, however, are usually not standardized and are generally context bound and may represent the cognitive model of a single speaker. One of the languages examined here, Māori, has some history of written usage, several dictionaries, and a Māori Language Commission to reflect a consensus on the meanings of words: That language is moving into some standardization.

Indurkha (1991) also observed a lack of preciseness in the definitions used to discuss metaphors. While Indurkha (1991)'s model agrees basically with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, 1999) premises about the origin of language being ground in physicality, his model originates from the principles of Universal Algebra applied to the study of metaphors. I find his definitions simpler, clearer, and more broadly applicable than Lakoff and Johnson's (1980). Instead of *source domain* (concrete) and *target domain* (abstract), Indurkha (1991: 5) proposed *cognitive models*, symbolic systems capable of interacting with environments and *environments*, 'part of the external world in which the cognitive agent resides'. In his model, a *cognitive agent*, a 'natural or artificial system capable of interacting with its environment using symbolic systems' form a connection of cognitive models to the environment to make them 'referential or meaningful'. There are **cognitive agents** who interact with **environments** to create **cognitive models**. These three ideas are simple to apply in an analysis. An environment seems to have two components—its actual physicality and the culture developed within that physicality.

Specifically, Indurkha (1991) was concerned about generating a model that explained the origins of new metaphors. To this end, he described three metaphor modes: syntactic metaphor, suggestive metaphor, and projective metaphor. It is the later that allows generation of new metaphors. He described the process of creating a synthetic bristle paintbrush that spread paint in the same manner as one that used natural bristles. The breakthrough came when the

researchers completely disregarded ‘the structuring of the target environment under the target model and projecting the source model on it anew’ (Indurkha, 1991: 20). In this particular case, that meant envisioning a paintbrush as paint pump (Indurkha, 1991:21). Suggestive metaphors work by analogy: ‘In this mode, the cognitive agent is not very familiar with the target environment’ (Indurkha, 1991: 16). The example he presented was training students about electromagnetic rays and their effects through the analogy of a military maneuver. In his paradigm, most metaphors are classified as syntactic metaphors as they have conventional interpretations.

Earlier Studies

Before the proliferation of linguistic studies into metaphor usage, there were others of a phenomenon called American Indian/Native American English. At that time (1980’s and 1990’s), nobody considered these unique phrasings as metaphorical. One example of these unique phrasings, *had a baby for him*, was often used by Navajo women when referring to a baby’s father. This phrasing reflects the Navajo clan system with the mother’s clan as the primary clan—‘born to’—and the father’s clan as the secondary clan—‘born for.’ This latter phrasing contrasts with the cognitive models more commonly used by American English speakers expressed through *had a baby by him* and *had a baby with him*. The phrasing choices also reflect the cultural environments of the two groups, culture being one of the limiting factors in relating to a physical environment (Indurkha, 1991; Danzinger, 2005).

In traditional Navajo culture, women have babies on behalf of men because men cannot make their own babies whereas *by him* (now a bit dated) identifies the man as the agent and indicates the women being the effect. The phrase *with him* indicates a more modern notion of men and women participating equally in conception and child-rearing. Another difference between Navajo culture and greater American culture is the notion of paternity. Traditionally a Navajo man must take economic responsibility or the child is not his: ‘...the children—however much he admitted to biological fatherhood—were not really his: “He just stole them”’ (Kluckhorn & Leighton, 1974: 318).

Walk in beauty is also an English phrase representing a Navajo concept of living a life in balance. The Navajo phrase is *hózhóogo naasháá doo*. The first part of the phrase is based upon

the Navajo word *hózhó* that is glossed as ‘well’ but often used by non-native speakers of Navajo as ‘beauty’. The translation already presents a problem for duplicating the Navajo cognitive model. In English, *beauty* generally refers to an individual perception of the aesthetics of physical objects as in the phrase *beauty is in the eye of the beholder*. Balance for most American English speakers conjures up an image of scales or equations—one side equals the other. In contrast, the Navajo concept is more akin to the balance of a gyroscope than a scale (Frank Peshlaki, personal communication, 11 Nov 1990).

Walk in this phrase does not refer to bipedal traveling on a linear path, but refers to living and maintaining all aspects of one’s life—for example, self, family, groups, all people, all life, the environment, and spiritually. It is multi-dimensional. One Navajo speaker explained that energies of life are always changing, so the balance is ever-shifting (Roberta Begaye, personal communication, 23 Dec 2017). To achieve this balance, a Navajo person calls on the Yei (Holy People), who have more power, to create the positive energy to live life in balance. The Yei are “saintly almost to the point of a god” (Esther Yazzie-Lewis, personal communication, 23 Dec 2017). The Yei, however, do not actually create the balance for the person. Living life in balance represents Navajo spirituality.

The heart of the meaning of the phrase *walk in beauty* lies in the use of *in*, which seems to conform to Lakoff and Johnson’s (1999) assessment of *in* as a metaphor for container. This excerpt from a Navajo prayer illustrates that concept as each line represents beauty as being in a position in relation to the speaker.

Beauty is before me
 And beauty behind me
 Above and below me hovers the beautiful
 I am surrounded by it.
 (Babock, 1973: 49)

These positions also represent the Navajo sense of position relative to the four cardinal directions, another unique aspect of the environment. The syntactic metaphor, *walk in beauty*, is a conventional metaphor for a Navajo because the ‘source cognitive model has a conventional cognitive relation’ (Indurkha, 1991: 7).

At first glance, *walk in beauty* seems suggestive of the journey/path metaphors that are frequently used to describe life (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). However, that could only be true if all

the groups being compared share similar environments: ‘The *environments* are parts of the external world in which the cognitive agent resides’ (Indurkya, 1991: 5). Different environments can be seen in the Māori metaphors of *journey/path* when participants in my study and King’s (2003) study discuss their experiences with the Māori language and the Navajo phrase *walk in beauty* and use of *way* to describe many of their ceremonies—Blessing Way, Enemy Way, Night Way, for example. King (2003: 8), relying on some earlier works, suggested that there might be a universal indigenous worldview represented in the metaphors of journey and path and cited the Navajo use of *way* as an example. Later in this article, I discuss what might be a universal metaphor, but in this particular case the two ideas—path/journey and way—do not equate.

At the most basic level, the environments of the two groups differ considerably. The Māori reside in New Zealand, having immigrated there by seafaring vessels about 1000 years ago. Kupe was the first Māori explorer to arrive. Today, modern Māori can trace their lineage to a specific *waka/vessel* of immigrants and a specific *tipuna/ancestor*. Some Māori can recite their entire *whakapapa* or genealogy. This ability is done with a sense of pride. The actual physical environment of the Māori includes rivers, low mountains, and green, lush bush as well as the ocean, and the Māori identify and may introduce him/herself by naming their mountains and rivers, locating their place of origin. Māori have cultural roots to the land as well as the sea.

The journey metaphors in my New Zealand interviews appear to originate from Māori origin stories: *we took that path, I was on a different path, where my journey has come from*. However, those who learned the Māori language as adults were more likely to use these metaphors than those who learned the language as children. King (2007) analyzed these metaphors using the parameters set by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Since her participants were all English dominant speakers, that was absolutely correct. And as an English speaker herself, these assumptions must have felt very comfortable. According to the Māori, their original homeland is Hawaiki. At death, the spirit returns there. The *tangi*, one of the most important ceremonies, provides a *path* for the spirit to go to Hawaiki (Edward Ellison, personal communication, Jan 27, 2005). Here is a reference that seems to come from Māori culture, but the person who gave me this data was an English dominant speaker.

The Māori have a rich ceremonial life that includes the *powhiri*, being welcomed on a marae, and the *tangi*, the funerary ceremony. A *powhiri* follows strict protocols, but the protocols may vary among the *iwi* (tribes), and also depending on who has sufficient Māori language

knowledge to conduct certain parts of the ceremony. Until the powhiri has been conducted for a new person, that person has the bit of the coloring of an enemy. An integral part of the ceremony is the exchange of songs.

Navajo, also called Diné (People of the Surface of the Earth) (Downs, 1972: 96), live in the desert Southwest among four sacred mountains—Mount Blanca near Alamosa, CO, Mount Taylor north of Laguna Pueblo, NM, San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff, AZ, and Mount Hesperes in the La Plata Mountains of Colorado—that define *dinetah* or the traditional Navajo land. While physical data suggest an arrival time as early as 900 AD, Navajo creation stories have them emerging from three previous worlds into the fourth world. They created elaborate curing ceremonies intended to restore balance in a person's life. Generally, these ceremonies last multiple days and involve the chanting of some part of the Navajo Creation story, the recitation of which recreates those parts of the universe (Downs, 1972; Kluckhorn & Leighton, 1974; Wyman, 1983). Ceremonies are always conducted in a *hooghan* (hogan), a traditional Navajo home.

In the checkerboard region of the Navajo Nation, it is easy to tell which families practice Navajo traditions by those with a hoghan, usually in addition to a European American style home. When introducing themselves, a Navajo states his/her relationship first to the mother's clan, second to the father's clan, and finally to the clans of the two grandfathers. This introduction allows others immediately to know if they are related to the speaker. Traditionally, to be Navajo, a person must be born within the four sacred mountains.

To make understanding of the original intent of utterances even more difficult, meanings are changed in translations. Even languages as closely related culturally and historically as French and English, there are problems (Granger & Swallow, 1988) whereas languages representing diverse cultures as Arabic and English (Ali et. al, 2012) and Chinese and English (Wang, 2010) present another set of problems. While there have been more recent translation studies, the study that is most pertinent to this study is by Keesinger (1985), who clearly illustrated how this happens in his discussion of the words *mana* and *tapu* present in Polynesian languages and the translation the two words by ethnographers. Both words were originally verbs, but became translated as adjectives. *Mana*, originally a stative verb meant 'to be effective, true, realized,' for example through prayer, a transitive verb as in 'mana-ize' a garden or war canoe, and an abstract noun derived from the stative (Keesinger, 1985: 203). This became translated by

theologians as ‘an invisible medium of power that humans sought from ghosts, spirits, and god’ (Keesinger, 1985: 203). I have heard it used by some Māori as an attribute. *Tapu* underwent similar changes. The changes made by the ethnographers continue to influence the use and understanding of these words, particularly by young, urban Māori who grew up speaking English. Because of several hundred years of interaction with English speakers and the forced use of English in schools--students were caned for using the Māori language in New Zealand schools, it may be impossible now to completely separate the cognitive models. The Navajo, on the other hand, had little contact with English speakers until after WWII. It has only been recently that Navajo children are now coming to school as English dominant. And in more remote places, Navajo is still the dominant language.

Because the Māori *journey/path* and the Navajo *way* metaphors reflect familiar target environments, these metaphors represent syntactical metaphors with conventional meanings for each respective group. On the other hand, for English speakers *walk in beauty* becomes a projective metaphor: The English speaker must disregard source environment for these English words in order to gain a new perspective (Indurkha, 1991: 20-21). The Māori *journey/path* metaphor cannot be compared to the use of *way* in the translated phrase Navajo *way* as interaction between the two cognitive agents and their respective environments differ significantly.

Places and Spaces

In 2005, I interviewed 74 people about their experiences with learning in the Māori language during a Fulbright Senior research grant. I was hosted by the Aotahi: School of Māori and Indigenous Languages at the University of Canterbury during the time I collected the interviews and was able to have conversations with Dr. Jeanette King about my observations. The King (2007) study consisted of 32 second language speakers that she described as newly fluent, and her dissertation provided an important context for understanding the metaphors that I heard.

In 1999, Lakoff and Johnson analyzed *in* as a container metaphor. This usage certainly works for the translated phrase, *walk in beauty*. And the analysis seems to fit many of the examples related to speaking the Māori language.

I'm fluent *in* Maori.

If I wanted to communicate with him, then it had to be through the medium of Maori or he basically snubbed me, would not take any notice until I used the appropriate words *in* Maori.

Everything is totally learnt *in* Maori.

Only *within* te reo, *in* the Maori, you know, you get the nuance of the feeling.

That was basically my experience with Maori language—growing up *in* it.

secondary learning *in* Maori, total immersion *in* Maori

The only television programs we watched were broadcast *in* Māori.

Although all these examples were spoken by interviewees who learned Māori as children, these are conventional metaphorical uses of *in* by English speakers. Even the eldest Māori speaker used similar conventional metaphors when speaking of the Māori—‘we talk *in* Māori’. Its ubiquitous usage suggests the imposition of English on the cognitive model, regardless of environments or cognitive agents.

Despite the imposition of the English language on the cognitive model, there are a few phrases that challenge this model.

I came from a small community *in* the far north.

I can understand this phrase from the Lakoff and Johnson (1999) analysis, but I also understand this as just a location. Several interviewees mention the North Island as the home of the language or the place where the language lives—‘it’s quite fluent up there’. Of course, the North Island is bounded by oceans, but, in most instances, the interviewee is thinking of a specific location. Such uses seem to differ from the phrase milk *in* a bottle wherein the concept includes the entire bottle and not a specific place in the bottle. The physicality of the environment appears to dictate differences in the cognitive models.

Place holds significance to more than one indigenous group, which may suggest it as a universal metaphor. Basso (1996) examined the relationship between language and place among Western Apache, a group closely related to the Navajo. The Western Apache cognitive models are so tied to the physical environment and the language that the relationships serve to create appropriate cultural behavior.

Ultimately, it is a model of how two symbolic resources—language and the land—are manipulated by Apaches to promote compliance with standards for acceptable social behavior and the moral values that support them.

Place of birth is so important to the Navajo that traditionally anyone born outside the four sacred mountains was no longer Navajo. Even when applying for educational scholarships, applicants must show ties to the land by naming his/her Chapter House, representing a community.

The importance of land to a Māori is in knowing his/her mountain and river.]Also in the world view, Māori were the land. It was part of them by direct descent from the earth mother' (Keenan, 2012: 7). With the increased immigration of Pakeha (non-Māori) settler, Māori land was taken to make room for these immigrants. The loss of land is paralleled by the loss of language (Durie, 1997; May, 2002). Consequently, language became a substitute for the loss of land (Keenan, 2012), and language revitalization/retention is intrinsically tied to interaction with land/mother earth (Durie, 1997). The elevation of language as *taonga* (treasure) put it on par with land. This observation was confirmed by King's (2007) analysis of the Māori language as treasure, noting that the Māori language became elevated to a treasure under the terms of Treaty of Waitangi that guaranteed the possession of Māori *taonga* (treasure).

Another metaphor using *in* suggests a relationship between language and land: "Being rooted *in* my own...sense of security *in* my own language and customs." The complex metaphor contains two *in* phrases that seem to follow *being rooted*: *being rooted in* my own sense of security and *being rooted in* my own language and customs. As a result, there seems to be a sense of land attached to this metaphor from the use of *rooted*. According to Indurkha (1991), the metaphorical relation generated by a syntactic metaphor may cause parts of the target environment to become fused, which is what seems to have happened here. It is my contention that some uses of *in*, at least among some participants in my study, refer to place and not container

Sometimes the connection between the land and the language was stated overtly. This interconnection can be seen in the narrative of one elder, who when asked about his experiences with the Maori language launched into a narrative about the loss and reclaiming of the land where he resided. For him, the two were synonymous: 'Experiences with the language—well, it's been a real hard battle.' He followed this with a brief history of contact with all its losses, including people and land. After summarizing, he moved into the revitalization period: 'But this

was—this bit of land here was the first bit of land to actually come back to the people (Tex Rickard, personal communication, March 7, 2005).

You know Maoris have fought for years and years for their land. And the government took no notice. This [land] was confiscated during the Second World War for an emergency landing strip. And there were twelve families living just in the back of this building here. There were twelve families living there. They had small farmlets that sort of kept the people going. Of course, they [government] took their *marae* away. They just put a bulldozer through it and took it away, knocked all the houses down and didn't rebuild any houses. It's just as well that our people took their relatives in—no house, just took them in, except my wife's mother. She refused to move.

The elder brings the narrative around to getting the land back and rebuilding the *marae*, which is where one of the first *kohunga reo* (language nest) was established, thus reconnecting the land to the language. This story illustrates Keenan's (2012: xxii) statement that for the Māori land symbolizes the past and present. The oral traditions of the Ngai Tahu clearly show the connection between the language and land through the stories about Tane (Te Maire Tau, 2003).

And Tane...was the one who knew
all the incantations and all things of
wisdom connected to (Creation Story: 51)

Tane creates humans from the land.

Indeed it is the dew, the essence
of the incantations that restores life and
you [humans] quickly adorn
and flow here within this
realm [land] supported by Tane, this
realm [land] raised by Tane. (Kia Whia Koutou: 69)

Language, land, and people are linked through Māori stories. Language is land, a suggestive metaphor (see Indurkha, 1991: 16), connects ideas via analogy.

Land, Place, Domain, and Territory

Language is intrinsically tied to physical environments, or places. The idea of place resonates among speakers of other threatened languages. One gentleman from a small island in the former Empire of Okinawa stated that his language, which had no name, could not live anywhere except on that island (Satorou Nagakawa, personal communication, May 2, 2008). In language revitalization, *domain* is the place where a language lives (Richards et.al, 1985: 87). One Māori explained domain this way.

...if you keep it [Māori language] enclosed, it just becomes stagnant...it needs a community to use it all the time to stay alive. (K. Cassidy, personal communication, Jan 24, 2005)

For most Maori participants, their encounters with the Māori language occurred in specific places: *whanau* (family), community, school, and *marae*. Family as a place for language to reside holds a central role for intergenerational transmission (Fishman, 1991). This principle is central to the language revitalization approach of the largest *iwi* (tribe), the Ngāi /Kāi Tahu, which is to have 1,000 homes using the language as a family language—*Kotahi Mano Kāika, Kotahi Mano Wawata* (1000 Homes, 1000 Dreams) (Anderson, 2017/2018).

Traditionally, the *whanau* (family) consisted of an extended family social unit that shared a common ancestor. The *whanau* was the place where initial learning took place for many who learned the language as children. Today, the term *whanau* is sometimes applied to Māori language classrooms. In this way, the term connects family and school.

My first experience was at home from my mother.

There was a household of four generations. So I spoke Maori as an infant.

One of the most experienced things I've learned is speaking it at home.

When I was younger, I grew up with my *poiko*, my grandparents, and they were fluent Māori speakers.

For the most part, those who mentioned learning the Māori language first in the home were thirty years or older. This grouping reflects the fact that in the 1970s most Māori realized that children were no longer growing up speaking the language (Spolsky, 1995). The adult participants in this study often represented the last generation to acquire language from family. The one exception is a child who had two parents who had made a conscious effort to speak only Māori in the home: One parent learned his language via intergenerational transmission and the other learned her language via school experiences.

In many ways, the Māori have pinned their hopes on preserving and revitalizing the language via schools (Whatarangi Winiata, personal communication, Feb 23, 2005). The earliest efforts were *kōhanga reo* pre-school programs. In the original models, elders who still spoke the language fluently were brought together with young children and their mothers to facilitate language transmission. This model has since evolved into more structured pre-school programs. These language immersion programs were followed by primary school programs and eventually secondary immersion school programs. At the same time, tertiary institutions also began to offer papers (courses) in the Māori language.

At school, me and my next-door neighbor Trent, we sort of just have our own private conversations in Maori.

Me and my little sister, both went in, like, immersion classes for Maori until I was twelve.

We went to a Maori school, myself and my brothers.

I went to *kohunga reo*.

And I'm on this course [immersion class for educators] to uplift my own ability in the Maori language so that I can share that with my teachers and with the children at my school.

Needed to fill up my degree with some papers, and thought, oh, I might do Maori language.

I've been to this school my whole life. And this is a very like Maori-orientated place.

Māori language programs in schools are Stage 4 in Fishman's reversing language shift (Fishman, 1991). While the number of Māori language programs continues to increase, the number of speakers of the Māori continues to decline (May, 2005; New Zealand Govt., 2013). As Fishman (1991) warned, having a threatened language in school is insufficient for revitalization. Usage must extend into families and communities.

Community

Founded in 1979 by Dr Kāterina Te Heikōkō Mataira and Ngoingoi Pewhairangi, Te Atārangi was one of the first community Māori language programs and first language programs aimed at adults. Using Gattegno's Silent Way (2010), it focuses primarily on spoken language. Like family, community is an important domain or place for a language to live. Community as an

extension of family for intergeneration transmission is Stage 6 in Fishman's (1991: 130) reversing language shift.

I grew up in the Hokiana, where it's everywhere basically.

You've got to a point where in that little community of your immediate family where there is no more learning to be done there, so you need an outside community where there is no limit to your learning and you can learn off this one or that one or off this one and it [Māori language] doesn't stagnate.

And living here in *Whangaroa* is amazing because there's quite a few speakers here, mostly second language learners but who are really dedicated. There's a strong network of people and children coming up with some language.

Because I came from a small community in the far North, I imagined when I went on to university that everyone spoke Māori.

Often these communities were constructed of like-minded people who were dedicated to learning the Māori language and have been organized around a variety of activities, including theater (Halba, 2010).

Marae

Traditionally, the *marae* was the courtyard extension of a porch of a *whare tupuna*, an ancestral meeting house. Its spiritual purpose is to join Papatuanuku (land) and Ranginui (sky). It is a place where humans can commune with their ancestors. '[T]he marae represents the core, the very essence of their genealogical identity to the surrounding lands, which they interpret as *mana o te whenua* (supreme ancestral authority of and over the lands)' (Tapsell, 2002: 142). 'If we go back to the origin of it, it was a defined area used for sacred rituals of worship. Today it is used to refer to the whole complex of buildings as well as the open space' (Turi Hollis, personal communication, Mar 26, 2018). Originally, a *marae* was either *iwi* (tribal) or *hapu* (sub-tribal) centered. With immigration to urban areas, *marae* may represent non-tribal or immigrant groups. Early language revitalization efforts originated on *maraes*, and, for many, the *marae* is the one place they heard or used the Māori language.

My grandmother used to take me to the meeting houses, and I would sit alongside her and listen to the language being spoken.

Wherever they went were the places I went, visiting lots of marae around New Zealand and meeting lots of family, drinking lots of cups of tea, eating lots.

And so there was this revival in the seventies, and we started to see signs of that on our marae.

I teach them also to sit and greets people on all the maraes and that thing.

The marae is the home of ceremonial uses of the Māori language. For the Ngāi/Kāi Tahu, this was one of the remaining places where the language still lived.

Navajo Places

Place is also important to the Navajo people and language. Sacred sites are places where important or mythological events took place (Kluckhorn & Leighton, 1974: 204). As mentioned previously, four sacred mountains mark the traditional boundaries of *dinetah*, and only those born within these boundaries may be truly called *Diné* or Navajo. The sense of place is very important in the history and the telling of the history. These sacred places represent the past and hold the identity of the people (Basso, 1996). As described earlier, Navajo ceremonies are conducted in the Navajo language and take place in a hoghan. The hoghan represents the physical environment: ‘Its thick walls keep out cold in the winter and...heat in the summer’ (Kluckhorn & Leighton, 1974: 88). The opening to a hoghan faces east where the sun rises. If a person dies in a hoghan, the doorway is closed up and a hole is made in the wall to allow the ghost of the dead person to leave. The hoghan is then abandoned.

The hogan occupies a central place in the sacred world also. The first hogans were built by the Holy People, of turquoise, white shell, jet, or abalone shell. Navajo myths prescribe the position of persons and objects within; they say why the door must always face the rising sun and why the dreaded bodies of the dead must be removed through a hole broken in the hogan wall to the north (always the direction of evil) (Kluckhorn & Leighton, 1974: 89).

In addition to the close relationship between the physical environment and culture, each indigenous group in the U.S. represents an indigenous nation that has its own government. The Navajo Nation has its own elected Council and President. One of the unique features of Navajo government is the chapter house, which acts somewhat like a marae representing a specific community or location. Traditionally, Navajos did not live in communities, but in extended family patterns as the stark environment rarely supported a large group of people in a specific location. A chapter house, an essential part of Navajo self-government, meetings are conducted in the Navajo language. ‘The Navajo language is what shapes our government: It is spoken in

our chapter houses, our Council, our schools, ... everywhere on the Navajo Reservation' (Yazzie, 1992). Similar to many other indigenous groups, efforts to revitalize the Navajo language have moved into school settings.

As with the Māori language, Scottish Gaelic language revival began in the 1970s. Presently, however, no communities probably exist that use Scottish Gaelic as the 'default community language' (Armstrong, 2013: 3), and the territory of language use has shifted from the Highlands and Northern Isles further south to an urban area belt in the Lowlands between Edinburgh and Glasgow. For Scottish Gaelic speakers, *territory*, or the place where the language is spoken, is important. In interviewing threatened language learners of Scottish Gaelic, Armstrong (2013) found that all of them grew up hearing and sometimes speaking Scottish Gaelic. This situation mirrors the experiences of many the Māori in my study who were thirty years and older.

These Scottish Gaelic threatened language learners employed territory metaphors with the territory being home community or family. Anderson (2013: 12) labeled this 'language community as physically extensive *territory*.'

Participants in the Armstrong (2013: 6) study described family experiences with Scottish Gaelic involving nearby relatives who spoke the language and vacationing in areas where the language was spoken. Some places where the language could be heard were Gaelic church services, Gaelic schools, and Gaelic-speaking pubs.

Domains, or places where the languages are spoken by each group represent their respective environments—the physical and the cultural. Because of language revitalization efforts, school environments continue to play an important role while threatened languages in more traditional ceremonial environments, such as the tangi and powhiri of the Māori, the Blessingway and Enemyway ceremonies of the Navajo, and the Scottish Gaelic church services, persist. The pub represents a uniquely Scottish place for language revitalization.

Discussion of Place

On the surface, there appear to be many similarities among speakers of these threatened languages when discussing place. However, each group comes from very different physical environments and cultures. What creates the sense of similarity is that all have been described in

the English language. When I am speaking to another English speaker about my cats, each of us has our own images of those cats. In essence, we are only discussing the abstraction and not the actual cats, unless, of course, the other person knows my cats. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) acknowledge that metaphors supply only partial understanding. It might be easy to see similarity between a marae and a hogan. Having experienced both, I have to disagree. While metaphors allow us to communicate in general terms, there are still many ways for misunderstandings to exist.

Discussion

I have been asked what the solution is to finding more accurate understanding of metaphors. Certainly, using Indurkya's (1991) paradigm to analyze metaphors using the principles of Universal Algebra can be used to by-pass researcher assumptions about language. Apparently, being able to speak two languages does not necessarily provide researchers sufficient insight to accomplish accurate translations as demonstrated in the translations of *manu* and *tapu* (Keesinger, 1985). The meanings of metaphors in the same language can vary depending on the speaker, especially when the speakers come from different cultural and physical environments as illustrated in the uses of *in*.

In many ways, language has proven to be a clumsy way to communicate. It would be so much easier if the people communicating could just get each other's ideas in their entirety without reducing the ideas to words. Consider the question do you have a dog? Each person who hears this question has a unique concept of a dog. In fact, that question might trigger a flurry of mental pictures of dog, depending on how many dogs the person has interacted with.

Understanding this phenomenon does not solve the problem of expressing metaphors from one language into another. There is absolutely no way, for example, to understand the Navajo phrase *walk in beauty* without having experienced the physicality of the Navajo Nation. This begs the question about perpetuating indigenous languages outside those physical environments. The improbability of doing this is echoed by the Scottish Gaelic speakers when they associate the language with *territory*, by Māori language speakers when they identify the places where the language lives for them, and by Navajo speakers when they describe where

Navajo language is spoken. Conversely, lacking the cultural and physical environment of the English language helps to explain why Navajo children have problems with literacy in English.

I once worked with a young Navajo man with understanding English words. It sometimes took hours of research just to get a clear concept of one word because it had its roots in Greek or Roman culture, embodying those cultural ideas. He also had to learn Judeo-Christian ideas and historical references in the meanings of words. In short, he had to learn a whole new culture with roots going back more than 2,000 years. In some ways, English speakers in former British colonies have also been removed somewhat from the culture and physical environment of English. In the UK, high school students are able to read English literature from Old English to Modern English. There are simply too many assumptions about English speakers that may not be true at all.

While English words have documented histories and agreed upon definitions, indigenous language lack this. Even Scottish Gaelic is without a comparable literary history to English because it was superseded by French and then by English by the Middle Ages. One consequence of the lack of literature is less agreement among speakers about the meanings of words. I ran into this when consulting with Navajo speakers about the metaphor *walk in beauty*. I was given a slightly different definition from each speaker, giving me diverse perspectives on its meaning. Knowing the background of each speaker helped me with understanding the somewhat differing explanation.

In the case of Māori, there are many dialects. While there is a Māori Language Commission that determines the definitions of Māori words, not all Māori language speakers agree with its decisions. This came up in a discussion with one of my interviewees in terms of the correct Māori word for *homosexual*. He explained that the Māori language actually had a term, but the Language Commission had chosen a word that really meant ‘a close relationship between two friends of the same sex’.

One of the assumptions about language and metaphors is the shared cultural and physical environments of the speakers. In the case of the Navajo language--the Navajo Nation has almost $\frac{3}{4}$ million citizens and the largest land size of any domestic American Indian nation in the United States, the physical environment and culture varies. The Navajo Nation spans across four states—Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico—with the bulk in Arizona and New Mexico. In New Mexico east of Gallup, lies the checkerboard area where Navajo land is interspersed

with land owned by non-Navajos. There is less population concentration in Utah and Arizona than in New Mexico with no Navajo communities in Colorado. Additionally, some Navajos participate in Christian, Mormon, and Native American Churches along with Lakota Sun Dances.

For the Māori, each *iwi*, or tribe, has its own dialect, and the dialect of the largest *iwi*, the Ngāi Tahu, has a different phonological system as well as vocabulary. While many Māori *iwi* are associated with the ocean, the Tuhoe, the people of the mist, live in a large forest in the mountains. Since contact with Christianity, many Māori participate in Christian churches and Bible-based Māori religions like the Ringatu with a recent resurgence among young people of involvement in just traditional Māori activities.

Ideally, the person translating metaphors has experienced the cultural and physical environments of both languages at least in some form. Western European based cultures have moved more and more toward scientific approaches with fixed parameters and formulas. That's the direction in which Induhyrka (1991) has tried to move the study of metaphor. Even with using a more scientific approach and trying to be objective in the analysis, the understanding of particular metaphors seems to lie with individual understanding of the language/languages involved. Given that language, culture, and physical environments are constantly changing and each of us experiences those things uniquely, an insightful researcher's best guess based upon all the evidence may be all that can be expected.

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