

The impact of national standards assessment in New Zealand, and national testing protocols in Norway on indigenous schooling

Kamil ÖZERK*

University of Oslo and Sami University College, Norway

David WHITEHEAD

University of Waikato, New Zealand

Received: March, 2012 / Revised: May, 2012 / Accepted: June, 2012

Abstract


This paper first provides a critic of the implementation of compulsory national assessment protocols internationally, and then nationally through a review of the implementation process used for the introduction of National Standards in New Zealand, and National Testing in Norwegian mainstream schools. It then reviews the impact of these two assessment regimes on indigenous Māori and Sámi - medium schools in the context of historic policies of marginalisation and assimilation. Finally, it notes the crucial role of each national government in securing funding for the production of culturally responsive National Standards and National Testing in the effort of both indigenous groups to protect their languages and cultures.

Keywords: Māori, Sámi, national assessment, cultural responsiveness

Introduction

[Negotiating National Standards] - it's about protectionism. It's about cultural fragility and a social conscious that goes beyond an educational one. (Rau, 2010, personal communication with the second author).

A The impassioned statement by Rau¹ embodies the key thematic thread that runs through this paper. It epitomises the ethos of the Māori-medium national standards planning team that she lead and of the many people who have lobbied on behalf of Sami for culturally responsive National Testing (NT). The advent of NT in Norway and National Standards (NS) in

*  Kamil Özerk, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Oslo, Postboks 1092 Blindern 0317 Oslo Norway, Phone: +47-22855347; FAX: +47-22854250 E-mail: Kamil.Ozerk@ped.uio.no

New Zealand has presented indigenous people with yet another challenge to their language and culture, at the same time as both are under threat. But it is a challenge that they rose to and won.

Winning their right to sustain and grow their language and culture is crucial. In 1997, David Crystal estimated that 80% of the world's 6,000 or so living languages would die within the next 100 years (Crystal 1997, p. 17). In New Zealand, Benton (1979) had predicted that without changes to language policy, the death of the Māori language was a certainty. The efforts of Sámi in Norway and Māori in New Zealand to save their languages from the contextual background to this paper. The more specific context is the impact of NS and NT on the survival and revival of these languages.

The primary objective of our research was to describe the response of Māori and Sámi educators to the implementation of national assessment protocols. Their response exemplifies the clash between the political and educational hegemony of a dominant culture, and as Rau (2010) states, indigenous ways of knowing. More fundamentally, it is about power relationships and issues of social justice played out between majority and indigenous institutions and cultures (Bell 2003; Corson 1993; Corson 1995; Cummins 1996; Cummins, 2000). In both countries, the threat to translate assessments from the language of the dominant culture into the languages of the indigenous cultures presented a further threat to indigenous ways of knowing.

Our research design utilised primary source documents, including newspapers, the Internet, and official education documents from government institutions. Additionally, it utilised books and peer reviewed articles about the social, educational and political history of the two indigenous groups. An important primary source were semi-structured interviews with Cath Rau, the coordinator of the *reo matatini* team negotiating the design and implementation of *Nga Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori* (the Māori-medium National Standards), one of her research team members, with key Sámi educators and with academics opposed to the introduction of national assessment protocols in both countries. Also utilised, were the combined experience of the authors who have worked with Māori and Sámi educators over many years. Primary source documents were crucial given the unfolding nature of the conflict between Māori and Sámi, and the New Zealand and Norwegian educational authorities.

This paper describes attempts by Māori and Sámi to save their languages, within the broader context of decisions by their respective national governments to introduce national assessment. It outlines the social, political and educational contexts of Māori and Sámi as a necessary pre-requisite to an understanding of their response.

International Contexts

Ravitch (1995) notes that conservative governments, internationally, argue that national assessment protocols improve achievement by defining content and performance standards, that they provide for equality of opportunity and provide accurate information to students, parents, teachers and administrators. More insidiously, Governments, internationally, also use national assessment protocols to reinforce the control of dominant cultures over indigenous minorities. Community leaders in both countries were cogent of the 'equality' and 'accountability' philosophy underpinning national assessment protocols internationally and of the impact those philosophies have on education. Sharples (co-leader of the Māori Party), echoes these concerns thus:

The government policy to introduce national standards would mean that parents would choose schools based on the standards they achieved. It will

mean that some schools will be low in support from the community. They are going to lose roll numbers; teachers will not go there. (Waatea News, 2009)

International experience supports Sharples' concerns. In England around 50% of students fail to achieve five A-C grades (pass grades) in English and mathematics in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and the scale of this failure is associated with social class and school composition (Bell 2003; Krashen 2010). Typically, the reaction of schools with high levels of failing students is to: (i) specify the curriculum in ways that target the test (Gewirtz 2002), and (ii) fabricate results (Ball 2001). Of equal concern, especially for indigenous students, is the diversion of 'time, energy and funding which could be better employed in advancing clearer goals of educational and social justice' (Thrupp 2008, p. 203).

In the United States, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 mandated that all states conduct standardized testing in reading and mathematics in grades three through eight, with associated penalties if schools fail to increase grade scores to appropriate levels. What is perhaps most insidious about this psychometric regime is that categories of scores are made public by race and ethnicity. The intentional design of the US tests is to be racially and ethnically neutral, ostensibly to construct a 'fair' test. In reality, constructing tests unconnected to the prior knowledge and values of indigenous and migrant minority students is to discriminate against these students (Krashen 2010; Nichols & Berliner 2007). This is an example of equality resulting in unequal treatment.

The response of US teachers has been to teach to the test. The test becomes the default curriculum. As Lipman (2004) notes this shift can undermine the critical literacy goals of bilingual schools. She describes one predominantly Mexican-American elementary school that was forced to shift from using their students' cultural capital to develop critical literacy, and focus instead on test preparation. It is unsurprising, therefore, that in such a culturally compromised, unresponsive system African-American and Hispanic students in Texas drop out of school early (Haney 2000). Māori and Sámi community leaders were fearful of similar consequences for their people. In the three northernmost counties of Norway in which the majority of the teenagers with Sámi background live and go to school, a recent survey show that one find the lowest proportion of students who completed and highest proportion who drop out of secondary high school (SSB-2010).

The National Contexts

New Zealand. The introduction of NS (seen as a more acceptable version of national testing) in English medium schools fulfilled a promise by the incoming 2008 National conservative government to set assessment benchmarks in reading, writing and mathematics based on a range of measures selected by each school. Work previously undertaken to develop the draft *English Language Learning Progressions 1-4 and 5-8* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008) provided the government with a platform on which to base the reading and writing standards, and by 2009 the *Progressions* had been revised to sit alongside the development of the new NS. Given the sensitivity of the New Zealand Ministry of Education to the perceptions associated with data from international measures, the NS were based, in part, on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development rationale that underpins the *Progress in International Student Achievement* (PISA) and the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS) tests. This strategic move was linked to concerns around New Zealand's performance on these tests and can be viewed as another example of teaching to the tests.

Norway. In similar fashion, results from PISA were used as a potential justification for the introduction of National Testing (NT). Like New Zealand, NT was seen as a means of

providing information to facilitate pedagogical development and of providing authorities and parents with information which might encourage dialogue. According to the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training in Norway (NDET 2010), NT are designed to provide information as to how far students have acquired the basic skills in accordance with the competence targets in the subject curricula. Norwegian NT, introduced in 2004 was an outcome of a unanimous decision of Parliament, although the Red-Green parties expressed concern about the publication of league tables on the Internet. The tests are mandatory for all students, except Special Education students, linguistic minority children who have a limited Norwegian language background, and the Sámi students.

According to the Directorate for Education and Training (DET, 2010), the tests in mathematics and reading are not tests in the subjects of mathematics and Norwegian, but in mathematics and reading as basic skills, regardless of subject. The test in English (as a foreign language) is related to the competence targets in only one subject, English, and focus on comprehension, vocabulary and grammar.

Consistent with the 2010 parliamentary decision, students in the 5th and 8th grades sat NTs in reading, mathematics and English and for the first time, students in the 9th grade sat the 8th grade tests in reading and mathematics.

Sámi students have never participated in NT. Norwegian students are administered NT in their first language, and their competency is assessed against the Norwegian curriculum. On the other hand, the Sámi people have their own Sámi subject curricula, and contrary to language policies forced on many other indigenous people, the Sámi Educational Authorities goal was the construction of NT in the Sámi language, based on the cultural sensitive Sámi subject curricula. However, until recently, the main complication had been that the political will and funding requested by Sámi Educational Authorities to develop these tests. Representation to secure funding from The Directorate of Education and Training began in 2004, but failed because the Directorate's preference was to *translate* the Norwegian tests into the Sámi language - a cheaper option. The Sámi people oppose this strategy. Based on principle, they demanded equal opportunities in the form of NT in the Sámi language, developed by Sámi experts.

The existence of three distinct Sámi languages in Norway: Northern Sámi, Lule Sámi and Southern Sámi have further complicated the introduction of NT in all the Sámi Languages in Norway. While all three language varieties stem from the original Sámi language, geographic isolation and the social-political processes during the last several centuries resulted in three distinct languages with their own orthography. Consequently, and to a greater extent than in New Zealand, there are complications around administering test in Norwegian.

The impact of national standards on non-indigenous schools

The introduction of majority language, national assessment protocols in both countries has been fraught with chaotic professional development, confrontation between teacher unions and educational authorities, and boycotts. In Norway, the under-registration of student in some municipalities was as high as 20-25%, because they were given dispensation from taking the tests. In New Zealand, total immersion Māori schools were given a one-year dispensation. Opponents of NS (New Zealand Assessment Academy, 2009; Thrupp, 2008) and of NT (Adresseavisa, 2008; Beck, 2010; Solvoll, 2010) claim that schools ask weak students to stay home on the testing day, because they are afraid they might degrade results, and that schools revert to 'drilling' rather than co-construction teaching. Critics of national assessment protocols in both countries argue that it will not improve teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, or ameliorate the confounding socio-economic variables that impact on learning. In New Zealand, Thrupp (2008) argues against the implementation

of NS given that the concern is with the tail of underachievers, and given data already exists enabling the identification of these students year-on-year. He also notes that predictable cultural changes stemming from the implementation of the assessment protocols are beginning to emerge in non-indigenous schools, internationally. These changes, which can be seen in Norway and New Zealand, include:

- Changes in how schools are judged by parents and the public. (Teacher unions in New Zealand are fighting to prevent the publication of league tables that have become a feature of the Norwegian system);
- Changes in the work of teachers, principals and school board members, and in what it actually means to be these things. (Teachers, internationally, are changing what they teach, how they teach and how they report to parents, sensing that the measure of their worth and value will be based on their students' performance on national assessments);
- Greater anxiety around NS/NT performance in classrooms, staffrooms, among senior management, and at board meetings. (During 2011, approximately 20% of New Zealand schools refused to implement NS);
- Narrowed teaching focus. (In New Zealand, professional development funding has been removed from the arts and physical education and re-directed into literacy and numeracy development);
- Changes in the work done by students, and what it actually means to be a learner. (Students are introduced to assessment-linked lesson objectives and performance exemplars, that determined and constraint what is taught and learned);
- Changes in teacher education. (In New Zealand, numeracy and literacy are beginning to dominate teacher education at the expense of the arts);
- Changes in education policy. (NS/NT has become the focus of political commentary, emphasizing targets for raising the achievement of the long 'tail' of failing students).

The impact of national assessment on indigenous schools

Declarations, internationally, describing human rights and fundamental freedoms are less emphatic when describing linguistic human rights (Skuttnap-Kangas, 2000). Similarly, at a national level, Māori and Sámi languages have official status, but governments promulgating laws that establish national assessment protocols serve to threaten this status. Their conditional respect for indigenous languages echoes the 'opt-out' clauses that apply to international proclamations on indigenous languages. Language policies associated with national assessment follow the same conditional tone – a case of granting Māori and Sámi extensive language rights, but when it comes to national testing, initially leaving them with few rights.

In addition to this general concern, a more specific focus on the response of Māori and Sámi peoples to national assessment requires an understanding of student achievement, the contemporary educational aspirations of these groups, and of their sensitivities borne out of past injustices. This focus is best understood when situated within their respective historical, social and political contexts. In this respect, there are common themes associated with the history of both Māori and Sámi. Both suffered the usual deleterious effects of colonization that resulted in political disenfranchisement, misappropriation of land, morbidity from introduced diseases and socio-economic marginalization and assimilation policies (Waitangi Tribunal, 1986; Walker, 1990 ; Jensen 1991; Keskitalo 1997; Magga 1992). Before issues

associated with educational reform are addressed, we explore three of these themes; marginalization, the ideology of assimilation and the ideology of autonomy.

Marginalization

In recent times, the marginalization of Māori was an outcome of Government's deficit-based educational policy of the 1930s. This policy limited the Māori curriculum to technical subjects (Strong, 1931), because a more extensive curriculum was viewed as beyond the present or future needs of Māori. According to Strong, the prevailing view was that 'Māori boys would make good farmers and the Māori girls' good farmer's wives' (p. 192). However, during the cultural revival of the same period, Māori questioned this policy and their opposition prompted government to permit selected elements of Māori culture to be included within the curriculum of Native Schools². These inclusions reserved the right of Māori to value their *tikanga* (Māori customs and traditions). Most noticeably, however, Māori language was not one of the Governments selected elements. Similar themes resonate in Norway. A two-century-long educational policy saw Sámi children enrolling in schooling, as Hoëm (1976) puts it, 'on the same terms as their counterparts'.

The ideology of assimilation

The assimilationist approach to Māori education in the 19th and 20th centuries is seen in policy that made funding for Māori education contingent on the use of English. Assimilation policies through the 1950s, and integration agendas from 1960, prompted a reaction among Māori evident in their opposition to a multicultural approach in the 1970s, and their support for a bicultural approach in the 1980s (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Māori also voiced concern around the delivery of *taha Māori* (Māori perspective) within a Westernised curriculum framework, taught mainly in English, which Rau (2005) claims 'further cemented the majority culture as the reference point for defining minority cultures' (p. 405), and which Jenkins (1994) describes as a concession to Māori aspirations for self-determination.

Given long-standing assimilation policies by the dominant culture in Norway, the modern history of the Sámi bears striking resemblance to that of Māori. According to many commentators, the 'Norwegianization' policy in relation to the Sámi speaking students was deliberate and well planned (Greller, 1996; Nergaard, 1994; Niemi, 1997; Niemi, 2002; Özerk, 1993; Özerk, 2009; Stordahl, 1996). This assimilation policy was articulated by Lutheran missionaries who arrived in Samiland during the 17th century, established Christian schools and encouraged Sami to speak Norwegian. The provision of some sort of formal education to all Norwegian students, regardless of their home-language, goes back to the first half of the 1800s. This type of official equality has dominated educational policy in Norway during the last 150 years. As in New Zealand, this type of equality functioned as assimilative and was ultimately oppressive. Since the language of education in Norway was Norwegian and English in New Zealand, during this period, one also can talk about a policy of 'mechanical equality' (Özerk, 1993) that aimed to eradicate linguistic differences between the Sámi minority and the Norwegian majority and between Māori and the colonists. According to some researchers (Phillipson, 1988; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988), such a policy, where the minorities are discriminated against based on their language, is *linguicism* (Phillipson, 1992).

An ideology of equality perversely results in unequal treatment, and different measures and provisions for Sámi and Māori, but authorities did not recognize this during the post-Second World War period from 1945 through to the 1970's, (Hernes & Knudsen, 1976; Özerk 1993; Telhaug, 1994). In Norway, from the 1950s through to the 1970s, authorities directed attention towards the provision of 'equality in opportunity', also called 'equality in resources'. The intent of this new approach to equality was to make the educational possibilities of all students independent of their families' socio-economical status, geographic affinity or

language background. Authorities directed effort toward establishing public measures to make students' educational opportunity and school success independent of income and language background. The main objective was to provide every child, including Sámi, free Norwegian language school books, free transport, different scholarship opportunities for boarding (where the language of instruction was Norwegian), and if it were necessary, individual special education in order to give them the chance to achieve results which were compatible with their abilities, potentials and interests. The aim of this assimilationist approach was to assist Sámi access education within the existing system that operated in Norwegian.

Further, Sámi people had the opportunity to ask for translators, free of charge, to access the public services and public institutions other than the school. All these services were offered in Norwegian. The rationale behind this practice was two-fold. First, it was to create the Norwegian conception of 'equality' between people with different backgrounds. The officials tried to practice this type of equality by providing those groups who, in some or other way were different from the mainstream majority, 'compensatory measures'. Second, it helped those who do not belong to the mainstream majority, to compensate for what they were 'lacking' in meeting the demands of the mainstream majority school and other public institutions.

With regard to Sámi speaking students, education was predominantly in Norwegian, although consistent with the existing conceptions of equality, this was questioned from an indigenous perspective in 1970s, but substantial changes in the educational and language policies with social justice and educational development on Sámi terms did not exist until the mid 1980s (Magga, 1992).

The ideology of autonomy

Unlike the parliamentary process in New Zealand that continues to deny Māori autonomy, the Sámi gained political, but not financial autonomy in 1987. In that year, an amendment in the Norwegian Constitution accorded Sámi people the right to establish a consultative parliament, the Sámidiggi, with 39 seats elected by all Sámi people. Further, amendment paragraph § 110A to the Norwegian Constitution produced significant changes to the lives of Sámi people. It states:

'It is the State's responsibility to provide the conditions necessary for the Sámi people to be able to safeguard and develop their language, culture and livelihood'

(First author's translation)

Included in the Samediggi responsibilities are:

- To maintain and revitalize the Sámi language;
- To fund bilingual public services;
- To maintain and develop Sámi culture, businesses and cultural institutions;
- To protect Sámi cultural heritage sites;
- To develop curriculum documents for the education of the Sámi children from pre-school to secondary school;
- To develop or/and to fund development of teaching aids, textbooks and digital educational resources for the teaching of Sámi in their language.

The Samediggi Childhood, Care and Education Committee and Language Committee, have oversight of these responsibilities, the later functioning as an advisory body on all Sámi language related issues including the maintenance, spreading, revitalization, and development of Sámi languages.

Through a democratic process, the Samediggi has established policies aimed at replacing the assimilative, and so called 'Norwegianization' policy, with policies of equality, social justice and revitalisation (Greller 1996; Nergaard 1994; Niemi 1997; Özerk 2009; Stordahl 1996). The Samediggi has similar aspirations for their people as the Māori Party has for their people. However, unlike Māori, the Samediggi has autonomy, or as described by Māori, *tino rangatira*.

Educational reforms for Sámi

Two significant reforms during 1996-1998: a) A curriculum reform which resulted in a new *Curriculum Document for the Education of the Sámi Children*, which was a first in Norwegian history. b) The adoption of a new *Law of Education* in 1998 gave 6–16 year old Sámi speaking children in compulsory education, the right to be taught in Sámi languages regardless of where they live. This included Sámi children living in the nine municipalities of the core Sámi areas. These developments were important attempts at reversing the language shift, stopping the language decay and revitalizing the Sámi language within the basic school system. Based on these changes we may talk about a basic school reform process carried out predominantly by the Sámi people, and on the Sámi people's terms. Together, these initiatives prompted Corson (1995, p. 80) to state that 'Norway's language policies, developed at a national level; for Sámi peoples, are among the most comprehensive and most effective in the world'

Despite these reforms, there has been a decline in the number of Sámi speakers. The 1970 census counted about 10,500 people with Sámi as their first language (Smith, 1984). A more detailed analysis of the 1970 census data (Auberg, 1978) concluded that there were about 28,000 out of 40,000 Sámi background people with some degree of command of the Sámi language. However, since the 1980s, demographers have variously asserted that the population of the Sámi people was between 18 500 and 20 000 (Hajdu & Domokos, 1980). According to Korhonen (1988), there were about 20,000 people with Sámi background in the 1980s, but only half could speak the Sámi Language. In 2010, there were 905 children of age 1-5 in Kindergarten, and 1,043 students of 6-16 years of age with Sámi language as their first language in the compulsory school system (Statistics Norway, 2010). Some 940 of those students also had Sámi as the medium of instruction.

Educational reforms for Māori

Without the kind of parliamentary authority provided to the Sámi, the first *te kōhanga reo*³ (Māori language immersion preschool) was opened in 1981, and by 1996 there were 767 such schools catering for over 14,000 students. However, by 2006 this number had declined to 9,493 students (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2006). Later *kura kaupapa Māori* (elementary) and *wharekura* (secondary) schools were established, but again, attendance at these schools continues to decline. Part of this decline is due to the deleterious impact on urbanization on Māori language.

The 1960s and 1970s was a period of rapid Māori urbanization. Prior to the Second World War, 10% of Māori lived in urban areas, but by 2001 this had increased to 82%. A decline in the use of *te reo* (the Māori language) paralleled the cultural dislocation associated with this urbanization. In 1979, Benton predicted the death of the language, a prediction repeated in later publications (Benton 1983; Benton, 1989). It was this realization, together with the

Māori Language Act of 1987 that recognized Māori as an official language, that prompted the development of Māori-medium schools. Despite these efforts, the number of fluent speakers of Māori continues to decline. By 2001 it was estimated there were 22,000 highly fluent speakers of Māori, and that 58% of Māori adults could speak a few words or phrases (Te Puni Kokiri, 2001).

In October 2010, Waitangi Tribunal⁴ chairman Justice Joseph Williams stated that *te reo* was 'approaching a crisis point' (New Zealand Press Association, 2010). The proportion of Māori students in Māori-medium education had dropped from a high point of 18.6 percent in 1999, to 15.2 percent in 2009, and the total number of students in Māori-medium education had fallen every year since 2004. Some 9600 fewer Māori children under six years of age attended *te kōhanga reo*, and 5700 fewer students were taught in *te reo* in 2009, compared to 1999. The proportion of Māori able to speak *te reo* conversationally also declined, with 8000 fewer speakers in 2006 compared to 2001 levels.

As May and Hill (2005) note, a confounding effect associated with this decline, that bears on aspirations to revive Māori language, is that many Māori parents have insufficient knowledge of *te reo* and *tikanga* (Māori customs and traditions) to support their children's learning in immersion schools. Additionally, they note that if children do succeed in an immersion setting, they are still likely to face problems transitioning to English medium schools.

Despite the work of educational authorities in both countries, and the establishment of immersion and bilingual schools⁵, the preservation and expansion of indigenous languages in both countries has been unsuccessful. While Māori / Sámi participation in all sectors of education has increased, disparities between indigenous and non-indigenous participation and achievement remain (Te Puni Kokiri 1998). By the end of the century, in both countries, the conclusion was that:

- Traditional indigenous knowledge and methods of teaching that knowledge had been undermined;
- Career options for Māori and Sámi had been limited;
- Resistance, negativity, and apathy towards school and education had developed;
- The educational aspirations of Māori and Sámi had been lowered;
- Teachers' had lowered their expectations of Māori and Sámi achievement;
- Indigenous peoples were over-represented in delinquent behaviour, and likely to leave school with less formal qualifications, thus limiting their participation in tertiary education.

(Hood 2007; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2006; Simon 1998; Hoëm 2007; Jensen 1991)

Despite massive investment in Māori-medium education in New Zealand, and decades of professional support, there has been little correction in these disparities since they were first statistically identified over 40 years ago (Hunn, 1960; New Zealand Ministry of Education 2002).

While there have been significant changes in language policy in Norway, this has been insufficient for Sámi to recover from the damaging effect of *linguicism*. The challenge now is to stabilize language decay, re-vitalize both languages, and deliver back the languages to those indigenous students who are monolingual in the language of the dominant culture.

The dominant cultures in both countries view national assessment protocols as a panacea for language revitalisation.

National Standards for Māori students

Consistent with that view, a key rationale for the introduction NS in New Zealand was that the process would improve academic achievement among the long tail of under-achieving students. Māori students are over-represented in this tail. For example, Flavell (2007) notes that in 2006, forty percent of Year 11 (mostly 15 year old) Māori students did not meet the literacy and numeracy requirements for level one of the New Zealand Curriculum. PISA data support these data and indicate that indicate Māori achievement in reading is lower than that for non-Māori. By 2005/2006 PIRLS data indicated that the mean score for Māori was significantly lower than the international mean. There was no change in this achievement profile between 2001 and 2005/2006. Rather than improving performance among Māori students, Flavell (2010) warned that the introduction of NS for Māori students had the potential to further stigmatise Māori academic achievement. The consensus among Māori is that National Standards are unlikely to revitalize the Māori language.

The reaction of Māori to NS is unsurprising given the historical, social and political context, the efforts of Māori to exert greater control over their students' education, and their determination that this education should not be at the expense of their own language and culture. At a meeting of more than 200 Māori educators from English-medium and Māori immersion schools in July 2010, a vote of no confidence in the English medium NS was carried, along with a call for these standards to be trialled (Māori News and Indigenous Views, 2010). Māori principals also voiced concern that the English medium NS were not written from a Māori world view (Te Akatea Māori Principals Association, 2010), had not been trialled (a view shared by other education sector groups), had no regard for the identity of the Māori child, and would marginalise the potential of Māori students. Further, concerns voiced by Māori and other academics (Glynn 1985; Metge, 1983), Māori principals and the Māori Party co-leader Pita Sharples were, that the introduction of English-medium NS in Māori immersion schools would label students as failures and increase the perception of low-decile⁶ schools and communities as failing.

Faced with pressure from their coalition partner, the Māori Party, the majority National Party agreed to delay the introduction of NS in Māori immersion and bilingual schools until 2011.

The development of National Standards for Māori immersion schools

As the described context suggests, the historic basis for the rejection of NS by Māori immersion schools included:

- Historic struggles aimed at gaining sovereignty over the education of their children;
- Historic failure of Māori students within the English medium system;
- Philosophic differences between Māori and English medium education.

Their call for a set of indigenous NS was a means of mitigating risk associated with the unilateral imposition of English-medium translations of NS by the Ministry of Education.

In response to Māori and the Māori Party in an electorate-dependent coalition with the National Party, the Ministry of Education released funding for the development of Māori-medium NS. The developers of these standards decided on a set of non-negotiable components, driven by the shared belief that NS should not under-mine their *kaupapa* (the conceptualization of Māori knowledge). Consequently, initial progress toward the development of Māori -medium NS was dependent on the Ministry of Education acceptance

of a set of non-negotiable positions from the Māori developers. Final acceptance of these was due to skilled liaison between the Māori development group and the Minister of Education. The non-negotiable components included:

- Acceptance of 'progressions' in place of pass/fail 'standards';
- The inclusion of oral language to the sample of literacy domains, achieved by marginalising *mātakitaki* (visual language) a key component of Māori culture;
- Linking assessment to the time a student had been in immersion education (rather than their age or class/year);
- Assessing students each year, but less regularly than in the English medium context;
- Reporting or 'sign-posting' to parents in plain language every two years, up to Year 10, rather than Year 8 as in the English medium setting, until achievement data needed for annual sign-posting is available;
- Building the capacity of *whānau* (extended family) to understand pedagogical and assessment discourse;
- Directing the focus of Māori-medium NS on who the system is serving the least.

After three months work, the final draft of *Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori* (NWRM) (The Māori Medium National Standards) (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010a) was completed in December 2009. This was achieved by a small group of developers, lead by Cath Rau, who had worked together many times.

From March to December 2010, some 14 facilitators gathered information from 43 Māori-medium schools about the implementation of Māori-medium NS through case studies and other projects. This information was crucial given the relatively smaller evidence base for Māori medium education. Data gathering was also required to ensure the final version of NWRM were set at the right levels, and aligned to *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* (Māori-Medium Curriculum) (New Zealand Ministry of Education 2010c).

Feedback from this information-gathering process indicated that the NWRM was viewed by Māori teachers as a positive step for their students, *whānau* (extended family) and schools, and indicated that parents and *whānau* wanted to be involved in their children's education. Feedback also indicated some concerns about the alignment of NWRM with *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, and that some Māori held fears around the use of league tables. The Māori-medium NS was implemented during 2011.

The broad aim of the Māori-medium NS is to realise student potential, an aim similar to that of the English-medium standards. However, unlike the English-medium standards, the developers avoided a direct translation of the curriculum, and instead developed, from scratch, a culturally responsive assessment protocol that focused on the preservation of *tikanga* (Māori customs and traditions), and on what makes Māori-medium school unique.

The process used to develop the Māori-medium NS is based on 'strengthening teacher confidence and capacity to make professional judgements about learners' (Rau 2005:6). Although the developers feel their standards will be 'acceptable' when they are regarded as equal to English-medium measures, this does not signal that Māori are deferring acceptance of their language, education and culture to that of the majority culture.

The development of National Tests for Sámi immersion schools

Linked to the Norwegian *Knowledge Promotion Reform* of 2006 was the decision to establish NT in reading (in Norwegian), mathematics and English (as a foreign language). Like NS in New Zealand, and internationally, the Norwegian test protocol was designed to hold the education system accountable, and to obtain some degree of evidence about the health of the system over time (Hall & Özerk, 2009). As the Norwegian Directorate of Education, 2010 – Parent Brosjyre states:

The results of the tests will provide information that schools and local and central authorities will use in their work of improving the quality of education.
(p.1)

During 2011, the content of the National Tests in mathematics was translated into Northern Sámi, Southern Sámi and Lule Sámi languages, allowing all students in the country take the same test. The National Test in English is the same for all children in the country. Since 2007, the Sámidiggi has been insistent that the National Reading test should be based upon the competence aims laid down in the Sámi Curriculum. However, at the beginning of 2008, the Norwegian Government authorities signalled their intention to translate the National Reading Test from Norwegian into Sámi languages, something unacceptable to Sámi Parliament and the Sámi Educational Authorities. This was also the position taken, briefly, by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, a move that seen as the dark side of negotiations with indigenous peoples. In a meeting between Sámi educational authorities and the Norwegian educational authorities on 2nd of December 2010, the Sámi representatives said their last word on this three years old dispute, restating their position that translation from the Norwegian was unacceptable to the Sámi Educational Authorities. A break-through came in January 2011 when the Norwegian Minister of Education signalled he would recommend to Government that funding be provided to Sámi to allow them to construct NTs in Sámi.

A comparative analysis

Both Māori and Sámi share similar histories of assimilation, marginalization, and the deleterious impact of an educational hegemony that have shaped their response to national assessment protocols. Both cultures have shown persistence and determination to resist these threats to their cultures. Their success is evident in culturally responsive curriculum. In the case of Māori this is evident in a culturally responsive set of NS, while Sámi have a parliament vested with responsibility to sustain indigenous languages.

National assessment protocols present a challenge to the language, culture and ways of knowing of Maori and Sami. Consequently, the response of Māori and Sámi, who were subjected to similar colonizing histories, has been one of suspicion and aggression toward their hegemonic educational masters. Additionally, both cultures face the challenge of ameliorating the potential impact of governments' looking for 'equable' accountability, and cost-effective means of providing national assessment protocols. Both cultures have challenged the assimilative policies of their national governments implicit in national assessment protocols, and replaced them with revitalisation policies. In the case of Māori these policies were based on non-negotiable components for NS.

Different political arrangements have facilitated Māori, and until recently, frustrated Sámi in realizing of their goal of developing culturally responsive assessment protocols. Sámi seemed to be in a stronger position to achieve their goal given their political parliamentary autonomy. In contrast, Māori were in a precarious coalition arrangement with a conservative national government, both dependent on the whims of the electorate, and in the case of Māori, stability within caucus. Given these arrangements, it is curious that Sámi have a long

history of protest against NT, whereas the debate between Māori and educational authorities over NS was quickly resolved. This may be a case of political opportunism. Despite their efforts in the political arena, both cultures face a decline in the number of fluent speakers, and in the involvement of their children in language-immersion schools. This is a situation national assessment protocols are unlikely to improve.

In late 2011, the recommendation of the Norwegian Minister of Education to the Norwegian Government was accepted and it was agreed that the Sami People should construct national tests in reading and in the Sami language. The development of these tests has been contracted to the Sami University College. The first meeting to discuss practical issues related to the development of the tests took place 30th August 2011. The first administration of these tests is scheduled for the Fall of 2012.

To their great credit, the developers of the Māori and Sami national assessments seem to have avoided the negative aspects of the US and English assessment protocols. Māori have negotiated culturally responsive NS and are developing the exemplars and instrumentation required for the validation of these standards. Sámi, with an enviable history founded on a proactive language policy, have won the same type of opportunity as Māori. As Rau (2010) suggests, without a culturally responsive set of national assessment measures, the cultural fragility and social consciousness of indigenous languages and cultures remains under threat.

• • •

Acknowledgement

The second author is indebted to Cath Rau, coordinator of the *reo matatini* team negotiating the design and implementation of *Nga Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori*.

Notes

1. Cath Rau, is coordinator of the *reo matatini* team negotiating the design and implementation of *Nga Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori*. Rau is a specialist in Maori language and culture regeneration. She has either developed or contributed to a wide range of significant Māori language/literacy development initiatives both at national and local levels, authored numerous teaching and learning materials for use in schools delivering in the medium of Māori and recently published *Assessment in Indigenous Language Programmes* in the *Encyclopedia of Language and Education* (edited by Nancy Hornberger, Springer, 2008).
2. Until the 1860s, the government [subsidized church schools](#) for the Māori. By the 1860s, three-quarters of the Māori population could read in Māori and two-thirds could write in Māori. The Native Schools Act of 1867 offered secular state-controlled primary schools to Māori communities who petitioned for them. In return for providing a suitable site, the government provided a school, teacher, books, and materials. The act required that English be the only language used in the education of Māori students, and Māori were generally strongly supportive of their children learning English as they saw benefits in being able to work with Pākehā (Pākehā is a Māori term for New Zealanders who are not of Māori blood lines). The Native Schools remained distinct from other New Zealand schools until 1969, when the last 108 Native Schools were transferred to the control of education boards.
3. Te Kōhanga Reo is a total immersion Māori language family programme for young children from birth to six years of age.

4. The Waitangi Tribunal (Māori: *Te Rōpū Whakamana i te Tiriti*) is a [New Zealand](#) permanent commission of inquiry established under the [Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975](#). It is charged with investigating and making recommendations on claims brought by [Māori](#) relating to actions or omissions of [the Crown](#), in the period since 1840, that breach the promises made in the [Treaty of Waitangi](#).
5. A Māori immersion school is where all students at the school receive over 80% of their instruction time in Māori language. A Māori bilingual school is where all students at the school receive over 12% of their instruction time in the Māori language.
6. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students.

References

- Aubert, V. (1978). *Den Sámi ske befolkning i Nord-Norge/The Lappish Population in Northern Norway. Artikler 107*. Oslo: Statistisk sentralbyrå/Statistics Norway.
- Ball, S. J. (2001). Performativities and fabrications in the education economy: Toward the performative society, *Australian Educational Researcher*, 27(2), 1-23.
- Beck, C. (2010). Oslo skolen fritar en av fire elever. *Aftenposten* 31.11.2020.
- Bell, D. (2003). November 20. *Inequality and education. Must urban schools fail?* Anniversary lecture of Ofsted. Report entitled *Access and achievement in urban education*.
- Benton, R. A. (1979). *Who speaks Māori in New Zealand*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Benton, N. (1983). The Māori language in New Zealand education, *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 1, 75-83.
- Benton, N. (1989). Education, language decline and language revitalization: The case of Māori in New Zealand, *Language and Education*, 3, 65-82.
- Bishop, R. & Glynn, T. (1999). *Culture counts. Changing power relationships in education* Dunedin: Dunmore.
- Corson, D. (1993). *Language, minority education, and gender: Linking social justice and power*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Corson, D. (1995). Norway's "Sámi Language Act": Emancipatory implications for the world's aboriginal peoples, *Language in Society*, 24(4), 493-514.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*. Los Angeles: California Association for Bilingual Education.
- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Flavell, Te-U. (2007). *Māori Education - not achieved*. Thursday, 15 February 2007, 5:06 pm Speech: The Māori Party. <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0702/S00296.htm>
- Flavell, Te-U. (2010). Māori Party congratulates ERO on Bold Report. <http://www.infonews.co.nz/news.cfm?!=1&t=92&id=58849>
- Gewirtz, S. (2002). *The managerial school*. London: Routledge.
- Glynn, T. (1985). Contexts for learning: Implications for mildly and moderately handicapped children. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, 11(4), 257-263.

- Greller, W. (1996). *Provision and regulation of Sámi languages*. Aberystwyth, UK: Centre for Educational Studies.
- Hajdu, P., & Domokos, P. (1980). *Urali Nyelvrokonaink*, Budapest: Tankönyvkiado.
- Hall, K., & Özerk K. (2008). Primary curriculum and assessment: England and other countries. *The Primary Review Research Survey*, 3(1), Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Haney, W. (2000). The myth of the Texas miracle in education. *Education Analysis Policy Archives*, 8(41), <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v9n2.html>
- Hernes, G., & Knud, K. (1976). *NOU 26: Utdanning og ulikhet*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Hoëm, A. (2007). *Fra noaidiens verden til forskerens : misjon, kunnskap og modernisering i sameland 1715-2007*. Oslo: Novus Forlag.
- Hoëm, A. (1976). *Yrkesfelle, sambygding, same eller norsk*. Oslo: Novus Forlag.
- Hood, D. (2007). *Retention and achievement of Māori students in secondary schooling*. Report to Te Kotahitanga. Hamilton: University of Waikato.
- Hunn, J. K. (1960). *Report on Department of Māori Affairs: with statistical supplement, 24 August*. Wellington: Government Printer.
- Jenkins, K. (1994). Maori education: A cultural experience and dilemma for the State a new direction for Māori society, ed. E. Coxon, K. Jenkins, J. Marshall, & L. Massey, 175-183. *The politics of learning and teaching in Aotearoa-New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmor.
- Jensen, E. B. (1991). *Fra fornorskningsspolitikk mot kulturelt mangfold*. Trømso, Norway: Nordkalott.
- Keskitalo, J. H. (1997). Sámi post-secondary education-ideals and realities. In *Sámi culture in a new era*, ed. H. Gaski, 155-171. Karasjohka, Norway: Davvi Girji OS.
- Korhonen, M. (1988). The Lapp language. In *Handbuch der orientalistik 8: The Uralic languages: Description, history and foreign influence*, ed. D Senor, 41-57. Leiden.
- Krashen, S. (2010). October 24, Value-added evaluations should not be used at all. *New York Post*.
- Lipman, P. (2004). *High stakes education: Inequality, globalization, and urban school reform*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Magga, O. H. (1992). Sámi past and present and the picture of the world. Paper presented at the 3rd circumpolar cooperation conference, November 30-December 3 in Rovaniemi, Finland/Soumi.
- Māori News and Indigenous Views (2010). TangataWhenua.com <http://news.tangatawhenua.com/archives/6071>
- May, S., & Richard, H. (2005). Māori-medium education: Current issues and challenges, *Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 8(5), 377-403.
- Metge, J. (1983). *Learning and teaching: He Tanga Māori*. New Zealand: Department of Education.
- Nergaard, J. I. (1994). *Det skjulte Nord-Norge*. Oslo: Ad Notam Gyldendal.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education (2002). *Ngahaeata matauranga: Annual Report on Māori Education 2000/2001*. Wellington: Group Māori.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education (2006). *Nga haeata matauranga: Annual report on Māori education*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education (2008). *The English language learning progressions 1-4 and 5-8*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- New Zealand Assessment Academy 2009. Towards defining, assessing and reporting against National Standards for literacy and numeracy in New Zealand. http://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/10092/3565/1/12615174_NZAA%20National%20Standards.pdf

- New Zealand Ministry of Education (2010a). Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori. <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInitiatives/NgaWhanaketangaRumakiMāori.aspx>
- New Zealand Ministry of Education (2010b). ISTEP programme. www.minedu.govt.nz/~media/.../NgaWhanaketanga/ISTEPresentation.ppt
- New Zealand Ministry of Education (2010c). *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- New Zealand Press Association (2010). Māori language on brink of crisis - Waitangi Tribunal <http://nz.news.yahoo.com/a/-/top-stories/8165480/Māori-language-on-brink-of-crisis-waitangi-tribunal/>
- Nichols, S. L., & David, C. B. (2007). *Collateral damage: How high-stakes testing corrupts America's schools*. Cambridge: Harvard Education.
- Niemi, H. (1997). Active learning by teachers. In *Active learning for students and teachers. Reports from eight countries*, ed. D. Stern and G.L. Huber, 174–182. Frankfurt am Main: OECD.
- Niemi, H. (2002). Active learning - a cultural change needed in teacher education and schools, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18(7), 763-780.
- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2010). *Information about the national tests 2010 - To parents who have children in the 5th, 8th and 9th grade*. Oslo: Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.
- Özerk, K. (1993). *From språkbad to språkdrukning-from immersion to submersion*. Norway: Oplandske Bokforlag.
- Özerk, K. (1993). Likhetbegrepets pedagogisk sosiologiske status, ed. K. Özerk, *Temaer i Minoritetsrettet Pedagogikk*, 26-47. Haslum: Oris Forlag.
- Özerk, K. (2007). *Literacy instruction and integration: The case of Norway*. Vallset: Oplandske Bokforlag.
- Özerk, K. (2009). li oidnosis, ii ge mielas - muhtin sápmái-guoski bohtosatskuvlaodastusa "Máhttolokten" evalueremis. In *Sámi oahpahus, sámi dutkan, sámi ásahus : Sámi allaskuvla 20 jagi*. Guovdegeaidnu: Sámi allaskuvla, eds. J. H. Keskitalo, K. Nystad and T. Pettersen eds, 135-144. *SámioAhpahus Sámi Dutkan Sámi Ásahus*. Guvdegeaidnu: Sámi University College.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University.
- Ravitch, D. (1995). *National standards in American education: A citizen's guide*. Washington, DC: Brookings.
- Rau, C. (2005). Literacy acquisition, assessment and achievement of Year Two students in a total immersion in Māori programmes, *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 8(5), 404-432.
- Sameskolstyrelsen (SamS) Sámi School History. <http://www.sameskolstyrelsen.se/english/>
- Simon, J. (1998). *The native schools system 1867-1969*. Auckland: Auckland University.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (1988). *Vähemmistö, kieli ja rasismi*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). *Linguistic genocide in education – or worldwide diversity and human rights?* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Smith, C. (1984). Om samenes rettstilling. *NOU: 1984:18 Norges offentlige Utredninger*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Solvoll, R. (2010). Mener prøveresultatene "dopes". *NRK-Nordland* 04.11.2010.
- Statistics Norway (2010). *Sami statistics*. http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/00/20/nos_d443_en/4
- Stordahl, V. (1996). *Same i den moderne verden*. Karasohka: Davvi Girji OS.

- Strong, T.B. (1931). The education of South Sea Island natives. In *Māori and education: or the education of natives in New Zealand and its dependencies*, ed. Patrick M Jackson, Wellington: Fergusson and Osborn.
- Te Akatea Māori Principals Association (2010). *Kia hiwa ra, Kia hiwa ra!*<http://www.teakatea.co.nz/>
- Te Puni Kokiri (1998). *Progress towards closing social and economic gaps between Māori and non-Māori: A Report to the Minister of Māori Affairs*. Wellington: Te Puni Kokiri.
- Te Puni Kokiri (2001). *National Māori language survey*. Wellington, New Zealand: Te Puni Kokiri.
- Telhaug, A. O. (1994). *Utdanningspolitikken og enhetsskolen*. Oslo: Didakta.
- Thrupp, M. (2008). National standards for New Zealand's primary and intermediate school pupils, *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, 17, 199-218.
- Waatea News (2009). <http://tvnz.co.nz/politics-news/sharples-wary-education-standards-3346734>
- Waitangi T. (1986). *The Wananga capital establishment report*. <http://www.waitangi-tribunal.govt.nz/reports/viewchapter.asp?reportID=39e13093-2f4d-4971-aca0-28e811572755&chapter=4>
- Waitangi Tribunal 2010. *The Waitangi Tribunal*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waitangi_Tribunal
- Walker, R. (1990). *Ka whawhai tonu mātou: Struggle without end*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin.