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Translanguaging as a decolonising approach: students' perspectives towards integrating Indigenous epistemology in language teaching

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Abstract: This study explores how translanguaging has been enacted in a university-wide curriculum transformation project in an additional language programme in Aotearoa New Zealand. Its aim is to reveal students' perspectives on integrating Indigenous epistemology into the curriculum of a beginner-level Chinese course. The survey data, collected from 155 students, show that most students react positively to the idea of embedding Indigenous epistemology into language teaching through a translanguaging assessment design. Moreover, students' translanguaging practices in their digital multimodal compositions demonstrate that they can enact translanguaging to enable the coexistence of different bodies of knowledge while learning an additional language. Based on these findings, I suggest that language teaching should integrate place-based worldviews that are meaningful to all local students. It is also important to adopt translanguaging as a decolonising approach to facilitate a pluriversal epistemological stance that promotes plurilingualism in language education. The nexus between translanguaging and decoloniality needs to be explored further, as does the possibility for cross-civilisational learning through translanguaging.

Keywords: assessment; decoloniality; digital multimodal composition; Indigenous epistemology; translanguaging

1 Introduction

Recent research on translanguaging has highlighted the porous nature of the boundaries between both named languages and the worldviews and epistemologies embedded in the languages people use (Heugh 2015; Leung and Valdés 2019;

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Turner and Lin 2020). As a novel concept in applied linguistics, translanguaging has gained immense popularity in the past decade while being widely misinterpreted as an advocate of validating students' L1 in L2 teaching. According to Li and García (2022), translanguaging emphasises transcending the binary view of named languages as socially constructed codes with clear boundaries that are associated with particular racial groups with different levels of power. By unsettling the academic concepts used to sustain modern language teaching, translanguaging seeks to disrupt the “colonial matrix of power” (Mignolo 2007), which controls not only the salient resources but also our way of knowing and being.

While an increasing number of studies have challenged the boundaries of named languages over the past decade (Otheguy et al. 2015), little has been revealed about how epistemological diversity is embodied through translingual practices in additional language teaching, which has long been dominated by proficiency-driven monolingualism and neoliberal instrumentalist worldviews (Kramsch 2019; Phipps 2019; Ushioda 2017). Scholars such as Kubota (2020) and Sembiente (2016) call for the adoption of alternative conceptualisations of language use, learning and teaching within the field of applied linguistics. Such attempts have vast potential to be developed into paradigm-shifting approaches to decolonising the educational systems in settler colonial states while extending efforts to revitalise Indigenous language and culture by extending them from within Indigenous communities (May 2005) via broader societal engagement involving teachers and students of all cultures and ethnic backgrounds (New Zealand Government 2019).

In 2019, the New Zealand government launched a major educational reform. One of its objectives is to raise *mātauranga Māori* (Stewart 2022), the Indigenous knowledge of Māori people, to an equal status with Western knowledge through a wider and deeper application in the policy, design and decision-making processes in school education (Ministry of Education 2019). In higher education, multi-staged institutional initiatives have been planned and introduced by faculties and academic course leaders to explore and engage in the transformational changes necessary to continually support Indigenous students' success in education and the integration of Indigenous worldviews and knowledge into Western curricula. Many universities have recently issued statements supporting the equal status of Indigenous cultures and knowledge. They have declared their commitment to Māori worldviews and actively seek meaningful ways to reflect this in their teaching, research, and development plans. Moreover, educators and course developers have been encouraged to explore transformative approaches to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into learning designs and the classroom environment.

During the efforts to revitalise Indigenous language and epistemology over the past four decades, many Māori words and concepts have entered New Zealand society and academic discourse (Calude et al. 2020). An increasing number of government sectors and research disciplines have embedded Māori epistemological frameworks as guides for their decision-making processes and research designs to innovate beyond colonial capitalism (Vunibola and Scobie 2022). As a result, in official documents, formal communications, and linguistic landscapes, translanguaging practices involving te reo Māori (Māori language) represent a distinctive feature of language use in New Zealand (Wang 2021). However, thus far, no additional language programme (languages other than English or te reo Māori) has systematically explored a transformative approach to embedding Indigenous worldviews in teaching, content development, and assessment design. The deeply entrenched monolingualism in additional language instruction has left no room for nontarget language use, let alone the role of cultural concepts from an engendered language. How might an additional language course integrate Indigenous worldviews? How could translanguaging be enacted in a language course driven by pluriversal epistemologies, and what are students' perspectives towards such a transformative approach to additional language learning?

To address these questions in this study, I shed light on the intersection of translanguaging and decoloniality by providing research insights via my evaluation of a recent curriculum transformation project implemented in an Asian language course at a New Zealand university. First, I engage in theoretical and empirical discussions on translanguaging and its potential roles in decolonising language teaching to break through the barriers of neocolonial monolingual ideologies. I then apply a decolonial framework to contextualise this research by identifying the core Indigenous concepts that enable delinking from colonial knowledge systems and their taken-for-granted ways of thinking, being, and teaching. I conclude this work by describing how I embedded Indigenous worldviews as the guiding principles in my own course. Students' multimodal digital compositions and their course feedback are analysed to reveal their responses to the course's novel translanguaging stance.

2 Literature review

2.1 Translanguaging as a decolonising approach

Translanguaging can be viewed as a new ontological orientation towards language and language use. It acknowledges the diversity and coexistence of all semiotic repertoires and criticises the hegemonic ideological regimes of monolingualism

that serve nation-state interests (Leung and Valdés 2019; Li 2018; Li and Lin 2019; Otheguy et al. 2015). Translanguaging affirms multilingual speakers' hybridised and cross-boundary linguistic repertoires (García and Li 2014) and recognises the complex, fluid, and permeable nature of languages (Toohey 2019; Turner and Lin 2020). Moreover, it rejects the normative colonial-era ideologies that project monolingualism as a universal standard for theorising languages. In the area of language education, translanguaging offers a theoretical foundation for challenging the rationale of "language x only" policies and beliefs (Li 2018) and the underlying logic of bi-/multilingual immersion programmes (Wang 2020) where the purist monolingual view of languages is often deemed more effective and professional and shuttling between languages is often strictly prohibited or frowned upon (Kramsch 2019). To disrupt these artificial and ideological boundaries, many studies have used translanguaging to validate a plurilingual and liberating view of languages and language teaching (e.g., García et al. 2017). Over the past decade, numerous studies have thus illustrated how translanguaging can enhance pedagogical practices in many educational contexts where monolingualism has been normalised through untenable assumptions concerning language learning (Cenoz and Gorter 2021; García and Li 2014).

In this study, I seek to advance the field of translanguaging research by defining translanguaging as a decolonising approach in language teaching. This is an empirical response to Li and García's (2022: 2) call to view translanguaging as a decolonising project that can "undo the process through which the knowledge base and linguistic/cultural practices of colonised people was obliterated". In recent years, researchers in language education have started to explore how to use a decolonial approach to address the root problems that have shaped and maintained the imperial and colonial view of languages as products of colonialism with distinct boundaries. Many applied linguists have engaged in critiquing the perceived universality and centrality of Western knowledge in language education (Canagarajah 2022; Kramsch 2019; Phipps 2019; Reagan and Osborn 2019). That is, they have challenged the predominant Eurocentric knowledge system in language teaching and made a clarion call to harness decolonial creativity to enable the harmonious coexistence of different worldviews and bodies of knowledge in a curriculum, a discipline or even an educational system (Hokowhitu et al. 2020; Wang 2023).

Decoloniality can be understood as activity that makes visible the invisible, unmuting the muted. It is an attempt to find new ways to combat the effects of Western imperialism (Mignolo and Walsh 2018). Decoloniality suggests that "even in the absence of colonial governments, many people across the globe continue to suffer from colonial relationships in and with the West" (Criser and Malakaj 2020: 85). In contemporary research on decoloniality, this term is often used as an epistemological

frame that requires delinking from the colonial mentality that projects monolingualism as the norm. According to Canagarajah (2022: 453), delinking is a process that “leads to decolonial epistemic shift and brings to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding”. Essentially a decolonising project, translanguaging enables transformative praxis to provide a liberatory voice that valorises pride in students’ identities as multilingual speakers (García and Li 2014). It also opens a window on the coexistence of alternate ways of thinking and being (Meighan 2020). García and Leiva (2014: 211) argue that translanguaging in the classroom concerns “bringing into the open the often-concealed exchanges among people and releasing subjugated histories” rather than simply learning a new way of doing and being via one’s linguistic resources. Using *ubuntu*, a concept based on an African value system, Makalela (2019) discusses a valuable case of integrating a place-based worldview that exemplifies translanguaging as a regime for transformative practices when enhancing multilingual students’ epistemic access and identity position. The concept of *ubuntu* can be interpreted as “I am because you are” in African knowledge systems, providing a philosophical basis that implies people are interdependent and that “languages are interwoven in a system of infinite dependent relations” (Makalela 2019: 238). Hence, this example indicates that although translanguaging appears to be a new invention of recent decades, it corresponds to the Indigenous epistemologies and worldviews among peoples and cultures in the Global South.

More discussions and explorations are therefore needed to expand the knowledge on translanguaging as a decolonising project. Recently, a journal has dedicated a special issue (Ndlangamandla and Chaka 2020) to the role of translanguaging in Indigenous education and its transformative potential, from the perspective of decoloniality, to facilitate more “pluriversal epistemologies and practices” (Canagarajah 2022: 1). Accordingly, translanguaging has been shown to serve as an epistemological tool for all students, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, or gender, to access learning not only through colonial and imperial languages and knowledge systems but also those of colonised and oppressed peoples. By doing so, students have opportunities to access and build “webs-of-understanding” (Bagga-Gupta 2017: 106). Nevertheless, as Canagarajah (2022: 27) argues, “policy-makers and teachers in the Global North fear that diversity leads to disharmony and unintelligibility” (Canagarajah 2022: 27), which can unsettle the “colonial matrix of power”. However, in the literature on translanguaging and decoloniality, there is a lack of discussions on the intersection of translanguaging, decoloniality, and the Global South (Ndlangamandla and Chaka 2020). More research thus needs to be performed to reveal “to what extent translanguaging theory is embedded in decoloniality” (Chaka 2020: 33). Overall, then, the transformative potential of translanguaging in Indigenous language and culture

revitalisation, language education, and sociolinguistics remains underexplored and undertheorised (Makalela 2019).

2.2 Decolonising additional language teaching: a Chinese case

Chinese language teaching has been frequently criticised for being “unmodern” or “not Westernised” among students in Western countries (e.g., Moloney 2013). Chinese pedagogies are described as outdated and somewhat inadaptable to the Western context, causing student demotivation, disengagement, and discomfort, hindering students from becoming proficient in Chinese within a similar timeframe needed for European language proficiency.

I argue that this research orientation that deems Chinese teaching insufficiently “Westernised” is problematic in two ways. First, it indicates a binary view of the world as either Western or non-Western, modern or unmodern, implying the Western and modern are superior to the non-Western and unmodern. To comply with the colonial perspective in applied linguistics research, many scholars have focused on identifying the “problems” in Chinese teaching, how far it lags English teaching, and how to use Western approaches to fix these problems (Gong et al. 2020). There has been little interest in exploring the value of traditional Chinese methods or an inclusive or integrated model that acknowledges the coexistence of both Western and Chinese teaching approaches. Another concern with the binary view is based on its overgeneralisation of the concept of “Western” countries, which treats all English-speaking countries as a homogenous group in which only Anglophone cultures are visible and foregrounded, eliding all the diverse local knowledge and value systems many migrants and minority groups speaking languages other than English have contributed. As Toohey and Smythe (2021) argue, such binary thinking is particularly inequitable in settler colonial states where Indigenous peoples’ ways of being and thinking are rarely taken into consideration in any research conducted in so-called Western countries.

A significant turn in Chinese pedagogical research and development followed the introduction of the total immersion approach in the 1990s. Here, a group of scholars introduced the American Middlebury Model into Chinese language teaching as the most innovative pedagogy that could ensure that students learn more effectively in an absolute monolingual environment (Wang 2014). Thus, over the past two decades, numerous Mandarin immersion programmes have been established across K–12 in the United States and many other parts of the world. To attract more Western students to study in China, many Chinese universities have normalised monolingual ideology’s role as the overarching principle in pedagogy

and policy development as well as language teacher training (Wang 2015). Indeed, some of today's Mandarin immersion programmes still require students to pledge that no other languages except the target language will be used. Taking a critical perspective, Wang (2020) has noted a significant gap between the monolingual policy implemented in Chinese language programmes and the reality of classroom interaction, which involves the use of a great variety of semiotic resources by both teachers and students to obtain a deeper level of understanding of the ecological environment of a target language. The rigid monolingual mindset that has developed over time in Chinese teaching has thus prevented teachers from having meaningful dialogue with their students on real-life topics, especially during the initial stage of Chinese instruction. This has also limited teachers' ability to explore transformative pedagogies by imaginatively drawing from various epistemological frameworks (Toohey 2019), i.e., to unlock the potential of Chinese language pedagogies to bring innovative contributions to applied linguistics. Accordingly, I argue that a decolonial perspective is urgently needed to dismantle the monoglossic ideology in additional language teaching and allow more transformative and sustainable pedagogies to merge by offering equal space and respect for place-based knowledge, in contrast to simply attempting to crack into the Anglocentric world (Wang 2021).

2.3 Integrating Indigenous epistemologies

In recent decades, Indigenous knowledge has been successfully applied in science, health care, agriculture, education and many more fields by communities and governments in Africa, South America, and Asia (Boven and Morohashi 2002; Zidny et al. 2020). Meanwhile, these successful cases have shown that decolonisation cannot be performed by Indigenous groups alone. For Indigenous knowledge to be promoted and used in the educational system for transformative praxis (Freire 2017), concerted efforts involving governments, community organisations, media, academia, researchers, and curriculum developers are needed.

Indigenous epistemology is a term that is used internationally to denote any knowledge traditionally held by Indigenous peoples and communities. Mātauranga Māori is one such body of knowledge in Aotearoa New Zealand. It comprises the traditions, values, concepts, philosophies, worldviews and understandings that derive from uniquely Māori cultural points of view. Scholars of Māori ancestry have forcefully argued that protecting mātauranga Māori is integral for contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand, where biculturalism lies at the centre of its social and educational organisations. As a national-level effort,

the goal of integrating Indigenous epistemology into the educational system is to unlock the innovation potential of Māori knowledge, resources and people to help New Zealanders create a more inclusive country. The last decade thus witnessed many initiatives in the public sector to integrate Māori epistemology as guiding principles into innovation, sustainability, and development efforts.

The Indigenous language of New Zealand, the Māori language, is one of the most well-known languages that is classified as endangered. Via revitalisation efforts that started in the early 1980s, initiatives such as “language nests” have successfully improved the social status of the Māori language in society and inspired other Indigenous revitalisation projects worldwide (King 2018). Using corpus linguistics methods, Calude et al. (2020) reveal a strong presence of Māori words in recent science-related national web content. They argue that the use of Māori words in science content functions as a national identity building tool, used by authors to signal the growing cultural awareness of Māori traditions and concepts among academics, scientists, teachers, and professionals in educational settings. Māori words such as Aotearoa (New Zealand), hui (meeting), kai (food), kōrero (talk or talking), and aroha (empathy or love) frequently appear in New Zealand English without a translation (Wenman 2020). It is not only unusual for a dominant language to borrow words from an Indigenous language but even more rare for them to be integrated to fill lexical gaps in English to denote similar concepts in regards to Māori epistemology and cultural traditions. The coexistence of English and Māori words in media and official documents therefore signifies a unique place-based translanguaging practice. Using *Te Whāriki*, the national curriculum for early childhood education as an example, Wang (2021) has illustrated how such translanguaging involving Māori words and epistemology has been normalised in New Zealand’s educational sector and how this decolonising translanguaging can facilitate the application of Indigenous knowledge in formal knowledge that used to be described only in English.

Central to Māori epistemology is whanaungatanga, i.e., an extended family-like relationship, a relationship that through shared experiences and working together provides people with a sense of belonging. For Māori people, whānau or family is the most important relationship in the world. Bishop et al. (2014) have demonstrated the centrality of whanaungatanga in learning and its positive impact on attendance, engagement, and achievement using large-scale research involving 1,263 teachers. This concept refers to the relationships among people, their relationships with the environment, and the relationships between people and the nonphysical spiritual world—all are based on shared experiences. Both Indigenous ontology and the posthuman perspective thus emphasise a relational worldview in which objects depend on others rather than existing independently from others. Hence, Toohey and Smythe (2021) have argued that a decolonising

approach should be applied to challenge the monolingual mindset in language education.

In New Zealand, even though many classroom teachers have spontaneously used Māori language and cultural concepts in their everyday teaching practices, little research has examined students' attitudes, especially in the dominant educational context. Therefore, the aim of this study is to answer three research questions: What are students' perspectives towards (1) translanguaging and (2) embedding Indigenous worldviews in an additional language course? (3) How is translanguaging enacted in an assessment that embeds Indigenous epistemologies?

3 The study

3.1 Research context

This study was conducted in the New Zealand higher education context. In 2019, a faculty-wide pilot project named Ako Arts was launched to encourage course directors and teaching staff to explore transformative ways to embed Māori cultures and principles into curriculum design and classroom teaching. This project highlighted the reciprocal relationship between teaching and learning while building equal and mutual relationships between teachers and students. Beginning in 2019, as the course director of a large year-one language course, I started to explore Māori language and cultural concepts as an observer of the Ako Arts project. In 2020, the focal university launched a new strategic plan (2020–2030) using a Māori language title—*Taumata Teitei*, which can be interpreted in English as “pursuing excellence, despite uncertainty”. One key priority for the university's future is to incorporate mātauranga Māori into its curriculum. Based on my prior involvement in the Ako Arts project and following consultation with Māori experts, I made my first decolonising attempt to embed mātauranga Māori in my course and conducted a survey of students. Phipps (2019: 5) has suggested that this requires “people who are able to embark on such a journey and return with tales to tell of what happens when decolonising is attempted in foreign languages learning”. To share my experiences with a wider audience, I wrote this article.

This study was conducted in a Mandarin Chinese programme at the research site. This Chinese language programme has been the largest university-level Chinese programme for European students curious about China since it was founded after the Second World War. At the research site, additional language teaching is organised under rigorous learning standards, entailing proficiency

acquisition is the major learning outcome. The curriculum aligns with the Common European Framework of References for Languages. Language acquisition courses at the focal university are fast-paced, proficiency-driven, and exam-focused.

3.2 Participants

The participants involved in this study were 155 students in a beginning Chinese course. A total of 83.9% of the focal group's students were aged between 17 and 21 years. There were slightly more female students (52.3%) than male students (45.2%). The two major student groups were Asian (61.3%) and European (28.4%). A total of 3.2% of students identified themselves as Māori and Pasifika. Despite these diverse ethnic backgrounds, 74.8% of students reported speaking English as their first language. Over half (51.6%) of the participants were first-year university students. Regarding their prior exposure to Indigenous language and culture in New Zealand, 42.4% reported that their schools emphasised Māori language and culture, while 48.9% felt their schools did not emphasise Māori cultures. A total of 8.7% of students were international students with limited exposure to Māori culture before enrolling at the university.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

The data were collected and analysed in the following steps: Two weeks before the new semester began, I published the course on Canvas and instructed my students to familiarise themselves with the course content and assessment details, integrating Indigenous language and culture in the syllabus. One week before teaching began, I invited students to participate in a precourse briefing session where I introduced why and how Māori epistemology was embedded into the course. After this introductory session, I organised a focused group interview with 12 students who volunteered to share their understanding of and perspective on embedding Māori epistemology in the course. The focused group interview lasted 1.5 h. I then immediately analysed the meeting notes and developed a survey of 10 questions. The questionnaire (see Table 1) includes three sections—students' prior knowledge of Indigenous language and culture (3 questions), their attitudes towards integrating Indigenous worldviews (4 questions), and their attitudes towards language use (2 questions). The questionnaire was designed using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. At the end of the second week, once open enrolment was officially closed, this anonymous questionnaire was released on Canvas to all 161 students enrolled in

Table 1: Results of the student attitude survey.

Question	Mean	SD
Prior knowledge of Indigenous language and culture		
1. I know (some) basic words in te reo Māori.	3.393	1.104
2. I can speak (some) te reo Māori.	2.270	1.009
3. I am familiar with Māori culture.	3.090	1.094
Attitudes towards integrating Indigenous worldviews		
4. I am delighted to see that a language course integrates Māori culture.	3.427	1.032
5. Using Māori culture makes the course more authentic for the local context.	3.719	0.953
6. I do not support the use of Māori concepts in the assessment description.	1.389	1.106
7. I can tell there are similarities between Chinese and Māori culture.	3.101	1.001
8. I am not sure how Māori culture will help me learn Chinese.	3.416	0.939
Attitudes towards translanguaging		
9. It is not necessary to use Māori words. An English explanation is enough.	2.809	1.096
10. I do not like seeing different languages mixed together.	1.674	0.898

the course. In total, 155 students returned responses. The return rate was thus 96.3%. In addition to the survey results, the data I evaluated in this study included students’ learning evidence and their reflections on a graded assessment that required them to produce a video project.

4 Embedding Indigenous epistemology in assessment

The assessment title is “My mihi/pepeha and my whānau”, which can be interpreted in English as “Introduction of myself and my family”. An introduction of “mihi/pepeha” was provided to students unfamiliar with Māori terms, as shown in Figure 1. In Māori, mihi is used by non-Māori people, whereas pepeha is a more traditional self-introduction protocol that Māori people use to acknowledge the connections they have with their ancestors.

The assessment is designed for students who have finished the first two lessons in the *Integrated Chinese* (Volume 1) textbook. These two lessons include approximately 60 new words for students to use in greetings, introducing their name, where they are from, and their family members. In particular, these two lessons focus on introducing the Chinese kinship system, which is highly developed and drastically different from that of English. Kinship terms are core learning content in almost all available Chinese language textbooks (Wang 2016). Moreover, family is a core concept in the Chinese cultural system, corresponding to

What is mihi/pepeha

A mihi/pepeha is an introduction that might take place at the start of a meeting in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is used to connect with other people in the room and to let others know who you are and where you are from. The structure of mihi in te reo Māori is similar to the form of self-introduction in Chinese. A standard mihi structure is provided, as well as its English and Chinese equivalents:

- *Tēnā koutou katoa.* (Greetings to you all) [大家好]
- *Nō (place name) ahau.* (I am from xxx) [我是xxx人]
- *Ko (family name) te whānau.* (My last name is xxx) [我姓xxx]
- *Ko (your name) ahau.* (My first name is xxx) [我叫xxxx]
- *Tēnā koutou katoa.* (Thank you, everyone.) [谢谢大家]

A mihi is for non-Māori people, whereas a pepeha is for Māori people. Please let us know if you want to learn a full Māori version of pepeha introducing your mountain [山], river [河], marae [会堂], waka [船], iwi [部落] in Chinese. We will invite an expert and organise a workshop for you.

Figure 1: Screenshot of the introduction to mihi/pepeha on Canvas.

Māori culture, which centres around the concept of whanaungatanga. A guiding principle was therefore provided to help students design their video project, as shown in Figure 2.

The assessment is designed following the Māori epistemology of whanaungatanga. Integrating this Indigenous epistemology, Māori words are introduced in the assessment description, where some are used independently (such as mihi/pepeha) and others interchangeably (such as whānau) with their English (family) and Chinese equivalents (家, jiā). The intent of the above guiding principle is to show students that this assessment is designed to provide them with an opportunity to reflect on their relationships with their families rather than simply focus on their technicist acquisition of Chinese kinship terms. Specifically, students were asked to produce a video project to introduce themselves and their families and were clearly instructed that using their home language to engage their family in their video would not result in a grade reduction. This assessment design is intended to expand intangible Māori epistemology into a liberating action plan to break through the monolingual barriers in language learning. It is also intended

Whanaungatanga [亲如家人的关系]

This activity draws on the Māori concept of whanaungatanga. Whanaungatanga is about family or whānau sharing knowledge, resources, and life milestones with each other. With our whānau, we learn how to establish connections with the world and bring the world back to our whānau by sharing our experiences with them. The concept of whanaungatanga and whānau are central to both Chinese and Māori cultures. What about your culture? In this vlog, you are expected to show whanaungatanga with your whānau.

Figure 2: Screenshot of the guiding principle for the assessment activity on Canvas.

to deepen students' understanding of the importance of *jiā* in Chinese culture (Xu 2021) and the common values shared by the Chinese and Māori worldviews (Ma'auga and Liu 2021).

In this assessment (20% of the course grade), students were expected to create a 2 min vlog to introduce themselves and their family. To enable this transformative change in the course, I used a digital multimodal composition, a new form of assessment that has recently been introduced in Chinese language teaching to enable students to enact a positive change in society (Wang and Li 2022). In completing this assessment, students were instructed to prepare a script following a storyboard to guide their filming. For their 2 min vlog, students were required to use approximately 150 Chinese characters, speaking steadily and fluently at a speed of 70–80 characters per minute, and to provide subtitles for all the languages that were spoken. Students' video projects were assessed on five aspects—design (30 points), content (20 points), presentation (20 points), pronunciation (20 points), and a brief reflection report (10 points), which they used to provide feedback on this assessment design.

5 Findings

5.1 Students' perspectives

The survey data show that students had an adequate level of awareness and understanding of the Indigenous language and culture. Table 1 shows that most students claimed they were familiar with basic Māori words (Q1), although many acknowledged they could not speak the Māori language (Q2). Students' prior knowledge of the true history of New Zealand and its relationship with Indigenous people provided the basis for embedding Māori concepts—using equivalent Māori terms—directly in the assessment descriptions, which students normally read more carefully to acquire an accurate understanding of the requirements. The results (Q3) indicate that half of the students were familiar with Indigenous culture, and that this familiarity more or less corresponded to their schooling background. The finding that students have some awareness of New Zealand, as a bicultural country, can help guide progressive scholars and teachers to further explore how to use translanguaging approaches to promote the coexistence of different bodies of knowledge.

The second section of the survey results shows that most students embraced the idea of integrating Indigenous knowledge into this additional language course (Q4), demonstrating their high level of acceptance of pluriversal epistemologies in this higher education context. In particular, students found that integrating

Māori concepts had transformed the course, rendering it more locally relevant and respected. Students tended to believe that the use of Māori language and culture increased the authenticity of the course via its efforts to revitalise Indigenous language and cultures in Aotearoa New Zealand (Q5). Almost all students agreed with the principle of *whanaungatanga*, i.e., the Māori concepts used in the assessment description (Q6). Regarding the intersection of Chinese and Māori cultures, their perspectives were neutral (Q7), indicating that students need more information to connect different cultures and value systems cohesively in such a course. Similarly, the results of Q8 show that students viewed language learning as a competency-driven task. They did not see how embedding Maori epistemology could lead to proficiency gain. Māori words and culture in a language course were viewed more as learning context than learning content. This was probably because a Māori concept was used as the guiding principle of the assessment, not as content tested in the assessment itself. That is, since their macro neocolonial higher education context continuously emphasised exam-driven learning, these students had been educated to uphold an instrumentalist view of language learning (Kramsch 2019; Kubota 2016).

The last section of the questionnaire revealed students' negative attitudes towards the "x language only" ideology (Q9) and the purist view of language use (Q10). These results revealed that the students who were positive about translanguaging might be more open to translanguing practices in the formal language learning environment.

5.2 Students' vlogs and reflections

Students' vlogs demonstrated that a trans-semiotic stance was naturally enacted in their digital products. Their translanguaging practices appeared natural and purposeful. It is thus clear that the translanguaging design in the assessment not only expanded students' opportunities to maximise their efforts in demonstrating their learning achievements but also opened spaces for them to show their respect and love for their families by directly involving them in their university projects. Figure 3 is a screenshot from a student's vlog. When introducing her family, the student contextualised her story with Māori epistemology.

This student's video screenshot might appear to be "codeswitching" in a teacher's view, but it is a good example that illustrates how translanguaging was enacted between the named languages (Chinese and Maori) to enable a localised worldview when learning an additional language. It demonstrates how New Zealand's Indigenous language and philosophies can travel through the porous boundaries of named languages to enable a pluriversal worldview in language teaching.



Figure 3: Screenshot of a student’s translanguaging practice.

Finally, students’ reflection reports explained how this project helped them reflect on their relationships with their families by involving them directly in their university studies. Their reports showed how this project deepened their understanding of families in different cultures while learning Chinese as an additional language. During this project, some students played a “teacher’s” role, mobilising their entire repertoire to teach their family basic greeting words to make their vlog more engaging for their audience. For example, one student wrote that

My family and I thought that doing this project was a good experience in terms of learning and reminiscing about family memories, and we enjoyed it. And, I had a great time teaching Chinese to my family, little by little :).

Students obtained their family’s consent before filming and then used their home language to engage their parents, grandparents, siblings or extended family in their video by teaching them to say *nǐ hǎo* or a Chinese kinship term that describes their relationship. Students appreciated the opportunity to involve their family in their university life.

Furthermore, students reported that they had reflected on the similarities and differences among the cultures behind the named languages. Students observed that Chinese and the Indigenous culture emphasise genealogy and family ties. When using Chinese, one’s family name is placed before one’s given name(s) to honour one’s ancestors; Māori self-introduction follows a similar structure but highlights the natural world, e.g., a mountain or river where one’s ancestors grew up. For example, as one student shared,

Chinese and Māori language/culture have a strong emphasis on roots and relationships. In a mihi/pepeha, you share your origins. The surname is said first in Chinese; thus, both show a person's roots. Whanaungatanga/关系* is vital for family and business relationships. In contrast, English lacks any emphasis on roots or relationships. (*关系, guānxi, relationship)

In terms of students' submitted vlogs, these showed their strong understanding of Chinese kinship terms and sentence structures related to introducing family members' name, work, and nationality. Having their family directly involved in this filming made them more careful to accurately use kinship terms to convey the correct meaning.

6 Discussion

This study has provided valuable evidence that shows translanguaging, both theoretically and practically, enables and empowers a decolonising attempt in additional language teaching in a settler colonial country. The data presented in this study also indicate that most students react positively to the idea of embedding Indigenous epistemology into language teaching. Their purposeful translanguaging facilitates the coexistence of diverse worldviews while learning a new language. Therefore, any attempts to decolonise language teaching require the use of translanguaging as both a theoretical and methodological tool to reject any neocolonial ideologies that project monolingualism as a universal standard for theorising language teaching methodology (Li 2022). Moreover, this study shows that translanguaging could encourage more transformative practices for additional language education because it has great potential to destabilise language hierarchies and create spaces for increased hybrid language use and enhanced cross-civilisational learning (Sembiente 2016).

In contrast to previous translanguaging studies, which have focused on minority speakers, this research highlights the value of translanguaging as a decolonising project in a mainstream educational context involving all students (Li and García 2022). As Turner and Lin (2020) have asserted, translanguaging theorisation must move beyond being a theory that is only intended for minority groups. Although 3.2% of the students in this study had Māori or Pasifika backgrounds, they were not its particular focus. Instead, all students received the same instruction and completed the same assessment in the course. Hence, by bringing translanguaging into a mainstream context, this study helps extend translanguaging theory “from a subaltern to a majority theory” (Turner and Lin 2020: 423). In New Zealand, the challenge of social justice is not only a matter of protecting the Indigenous ways of being and doing within the Indigenous

community but also a matter of engaging and interacting during the evolution of national culture and society, regardless of whether people are Indigenous. Moreover, the study's results have revealed that New Zealand university students understand the social value of integrating Māori epistemology into university curricula.

The findings of this study therefore demonstrate that students are sufficiently receptive to an assessment design involving diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds. The students' survey data reveal that their perspectives towards translanguaging are generally positive, possibly due to an increased awareness of the importance of revitalising Indigenous language and epistemology through local schooling. Students' translingual practices in their digital multimodal compositions show how they can naturally enact purposeful translanguaging to enable the coexistence of different bodies of knowledge. It is thus evident that using a multimodal digital composition rather than a traditional oral test assessment design creates a liberating space for students to engage in trans-semiotic communication, challenging the "x language only" ideology that permeates additional language teaching.

One key finding of this study is the importance of cross-civilisational learning through translanguaging. Yang (2021) argues that there is a strong desire for cross-cultural learning between individuals and nation-states to foster peace and sustainable relationships in higher education settings. He mentions that many scholars with a decolonial perspective have tried to find ways out of the dominant ideology of culture or civilisation clashes but have failed to engage in much meaningful dialogue or transformation at the practical level. Reflecting on such failures, Yang (2021: 53) acknowledges that they "nee[d] to be followed by something real and substantial: the internalisation of the values of different civilisations within one person". Hence, in this study, instead of viewing different languages and cultures as separate or contradictory in their education, students in my language course demonstrated that they could integrate multiple linguistic and epistemological resources into one holistic learning experience. For epistemological diversity to be normalised, it is thus necessary to break through the boundaries of named languages and bring knowledge from the East, the West, and the Indigenous together in language education.

Furthermore, this study has empirically demonstrated how moving decolonial efforts forward entails disrupting the monolingual mindset, as it leads to an inability to accept alternative ways of being, thinking, and doing. Monolingualism is a neocolonial mindset that breeds racism, ignorance, and stereotyping. Therefore, additional language programmes should critically examine their prescribed teaching approaches by taking a decolonial stance to nurture a paradigm shift towards transformative translanguaging. Students' vlogs have provided valuable evidence

of how students can bring meaningful and purposeful semiotic resources together for harmonious meaning-making. Similar to Meighan's (2020) efforts to decolonise English language teaching, this study has also shown that learning from Indigenous worldviews can inspire new and innovative ways of using and learning languages. It is thus important to continue to search for new metaphors to live by, through which "we can form more sustainable and transformative relationships with people, our communities, our ancestral heritage, and nature" (Meighan 2020).

Another point of discussion entails reconceptualising the goal of language learning. Kramsch (2019: 52) has called for a decolonising approach in additional language education based on fundamentally changing its educational goals. She argues that rather than limiting it to enhancing one's standing among national elites or gaining a competitive advantage in the global marketplace, this aim should be reoriented towards bringing about "peace and mutual understanding". Educators and teachers must understand that emphasising a competency-driven instrumentalist view of language teaching may not solve our current predicaments, such as low enrolment or high attrition rates. My findings also support Phipps's (2019: 85) assertion that the "technicist acquisition of level, skill, and competency" lacks the humanising depth needed to bring about transformative changes. More research is needed to explore the impact of different worldviews and epistemologies on additional language education. Such exploration will shift the field of language teaching from control, instrumentality, and imposition towards the relationality, ethics, and coexistence valued by Indigenous communities and many civilisations (Canagarajah 2022).

In New Zealand and other settler colonial states, the mission of additional language teaching in the 21st century must address the reconciliation of student learning and experiences through the lens of Indigenous education. Although higher learning institutions throughout New Zealand have established frameworks that address indigeneity through the infusion of Indigenous perspectives, any transformative praxis is extremely rare, and many existing attempts have been criticised for being tokenistic. More theoretical work is therefore needed to guide teachers and students in re-examining their curricula and assessment methods.

7 Conclusion

In this research, I have offered novel insights for additional language teaching in settler colonial countries by using a decolonial perspective to explore alternative conceptualisations that can enable a pluriversal epistemological stance in language teaching. It is my hope that this study can extend the fields of language teaching in terms of considering how translanguaging corresponds to

decoloniality for effective transformative change. However, more research is needed on the nexus between translanguaging and decoloniality to enable the potential for cross-civilisational learning to be realised in language classrooms.

Future research should thus continue exploring ways to promote active student learning through Indigenous scholarship and further develop translanguaging as a decolonial method to facilitate the integration of placed-based worldviews that are genuinely meaningful to local students. At the practical level, my findings emphasise that it is important to include practitioners, researchers, administrators, curriculum developers, and classroom designers in such decolonial attempts. The student survey I developed and analysed in this study can be used by other language programmes to investigate students' preparation for and attitudes towards translanguaging and integrating alternative worldviews in a course.

Finally, I admit that, in many aspects, this research may seem contestable in regard to our competency-driven language teaching practices. It is, however, a starting point for the many people interested in learning and using pluriversal worldviews in their teaching. I hope this research initiates discussions, reflections, and even critiques among colleagues in additional language teaching on our taken-for-granted educational goals.

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