

***TIA E LILI KE MAU***  
**Regeneration of *Vagahau Niue*: A case study of Niue youth  
through the *Ekalesia* in Niue and in Auckland, New Zealand**

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## ABSTRACT

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As languages evolve and change at a rapid pace globally, efforts for the revitalisation of endangered Indigenous languages have become increasingly present in Pacific migrant communities. This is certainly the case with the Niue community in New Zealand, where larger numbers in recent times, are now living outside of the island homeland thus exceeding the population on Niue.

The regeneration of the *Vagahau Niue* (Niue language) through the church in particular, is prompting active solutions to be implemented within the Auckland Niue community including language maintenance. This research will examine the importance and significance of the *Ekalesia* church in the regeneration of *Vagahau Niue* for youth both in the homeland of Niue, and within Auckland, New Zealand. A closer look at the church as a language domain and youth, as carriers of the Niue language and language revitalisation activists, will also be examined in this study.

This thesis will be presented back to the Niue community as a resource that will help contribute to the revitalisation of *Vagahau Niue*, not only for the generation of today, but for those generations to come in the future.

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## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. K. M. A.', is written on the page.

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testament to the Proverbs 31 woman that you were. Our conversations we had about your old days in the islands are memories that I will keep forever. Your knowledge of the culture, especially weaving, crocheting and the example you led as a humble servant of God; continues to inspire and motivates me each day. You will always have a special place in my heart and I am privileged to be dedicating this thesis to you.

I conclude with a presentation of this *lili* (this thesis) to the Niue community in Auckland, New Zealand and in the homeland of Niue with a plea; that we encourage our youth to participate in our churches, to have conversations in the language locally, nationally and internationally; to inform, discuss, and promote the *Vagahau Niue* as valuable not only in the homeland of Niue but also in the ‘new home’, New Zealand and the diasporic communities around the world. As a wise woman once taught me, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). I am blessed and humbled to have sought the riches of Heaven to be able to gift this thesis as a memory of love and sacrifice.

***“Ka kia kumikumi fakamua e kautu he Atua, tō mui mai ai e tau mena he lalolagi”***

***– Mataio 6:33.***

Kia tū tagaloa e fakalofa noa he Atua

Iehova he vāha loto

Kia monuina.

---

## PREFACE

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### **Writing conventions used in this thesis**

#### ***The use of biblical references***

As this research is grounded around the significance of the church as a domain for language revitalisation, biblical references have been used as examples of reference that have been pivotal in my personal journey with *Vagahau Niue*. It is by no mistake that the biblical quotes are proverbs that have grounded my life throughout my upbringing. In reflection, these verses signify a personal story about my spiritual walk and how *Vagahau Niue* has evolved for me over time. I want to provide readers a snapshot into the importance of the church and ways in which the language can be regenerated within a spiritual space.

#### ***The use of Niue sayings and proverbs***

The use of Niue sayings for the beginning of each chapter has been purposefully used as a way of creating a cultural connection to readers in order to highlight the importance of language within academic writing. The Niue sayings and proverbs are also metaphors for the themes that have emerged in the literature and in the findings. The phrases will also be listed in the glossary alongside the abbreviation of words used throughout the research.

#### ***Writing Vagahau Niue***

All Niue words have been italicised. The first time the word has been used, a translation is provided in brackets. The word will also be listed in the glossary.

#### ***Western and Indigenous***

The word Indigenous has been spelt with a capital 'I', except where it is part of a direct quote. This convention is used by many Indigenous authors, "as it corresponds with the term 'Western' (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2010, p.5).

### ***Translations of direct quotes in Vagahau Niue***

I support the view of Ka'ai-Mahuta (2010) in her doctoral thesis where she states, '...I do not believe in translating the words of others, as much of the meaning can be lost in translation' (p.4). Ka'ai-Mahuta also cites Finnegan (1992),

Is translating a 'local text into a Western language a form of neo-colonialism? What if such translations start being accepted and circulated as literary works in their own right?

...it is easy to start from stereotypes of foreign speech, and import these, perhaps unconsciously, into the translations (p.229).

Therefore, there are several quotes written in *Vagahau Niue* which have not been translated into English. Where this has occurred, I have made every effort to imply the meaning of the quote in the surrounding text. This is an accepted research technique that can be found in Ka'ai (2008). *Ngoingoi Pēwhairangi: An Extraordinary Life*.

### ***Glossary***

A glossary is provided with all of the Niue words found in this thesis. The glossary will provide the English translation of the Niue term used throughout the thesis. In addition, a list of Niue proverbs with the English translation and a list of abbreviations for the names of companies or schools that are used throughout the thesis are also included. The first time the word is used, an abbreviation of this word is provided in brackets.

### **Chapter Outline**

#### ***Chapter One:***

This chapter provides an insight into the author's personal journey with *Vagahau Niue* and how the research is located and understood within a Niue world-world view. It is a stem off acknowledging and encouraging Pacific world-views within academic writing. As language is linked to culture, this research encompasses Niue values, principals, structures, attitudes and practices towards *Vagahau Niue*. For this reason the Indigenous framework of The Lili Model integrates a Niue world-view as an important element to Pacific communities.

***Chapter Two:***

This chapter describes the Niue context and how the *Vagahau Niue* has evolved over time. From the time of the early missionaries, the influence of Christianity in Niue has been a huge factor in how the language was taught and learnt and how the language is spoken today. Furthermore, with factors such as colonization, migration and New Zealand being the ‘new home’ for many Niue families being catalysts for language shift, it is right to assume that the fact New Zealand’ has become the ‘new home’ away from home has made it that much more important for language revitalisation efforts to occur, especially within the multi-cultural society we live in.

***Chapter Three:***

This chapter reviews the global literature on language maintenance and revitalisation and more specifically, related to migrant and minority language communities. This is followed by a review of the literature of the Niue language and its maintenance in New Zealand which sets the context for the study.

***Chapter Four:***

This chapter provides the approaches of Pacific research specifically on Pacific concepts and world-views, creating an Indigenous framework that helps to anchor this research in Niue culture. The use of the Pacific methodology *talanoa* to conduct the interviews was a way of removing any distance between the researcher and the participant, which allowed for their experiences to be shared in a comfortable and Niue led space. As noted, the ‘voices’ of the three groups were significant and are presented separately to ensure these different ‘voices’ are heard.

***Chapter Five:***

This chapter draws together the findings of the youth and their views about the value of *Vagahau Niue*, which is inclusive of the generational influence such as identity. The factors influencing the Niue language maintenance is also discussed in this chapter specifically the Western influence and technology and the notion that times are changing where there is a Niu-generation on the rise and the need to retain them and maintain language and cultural ties for the benefit of their future.

***Chapter Six:***

The purpose of this chapter is to present the detailed findings of the research and to highlight the views of ministers and church elders pertaining the importance of the church for the maintenance of *Vagahau Niue* for youth and generations in the future.

The themes of influence, tradition and change were underlying themes that encompassed the views from both ministers and the church elders in regards to the maintenance of *Vagahau Niue* and the church acting as a foundation for language learning as well as the maintenance of cultural practices moving forward.

### ***Chapter Seven:***

This final chapter presents the analysis of the findings of Chapters five and six. The themes have been taken from the findings of the youth with the church ministers and elder's views incorporated and compared with that of the youth voices. Furthermore is how the researcher's Indigenous framework model 'The Lili Model' is able to tie this research together producing a context that is Indigenous to the *Tagata Niue*. The researcher hopes that this thesis is able to produce a 'new song' through the encouragement of involving youth within the church in order to maintain not only Niue *Aga fakamotu* but more importantly, *Vagahau Niue* for the generations to come.

### ***A Special Note about the Vagahau Niue Online Dictionary***

The researcher is well aware of the limited resources that are available that encourages active participation in learning and speaking *Vagahau Niue*. It is for this reason that the researcher committed to leading out the digitised version of the *Tohi Vagahau Niue* edited by Wolfgang Sperlich (1997). It is a current work in progress that will be readily available for users of the Niue language within the coming months. This work on the online dictionary will benefit the language because a digital tool can reach Niue diaspora globally. It will be an important resource that can be used in the future, and hopefully will encourage more young people to actively use the language in the different aspects of their lives.

The conversion of the online dictionary into an app for Apple and Android devices is also envisaged which will increase accessibility and usability of the language.

*Salamo 40:3*

*Kua tuku mai e ia e lologo fou ke he haku a gutu, ko e fakahekeaga ke  
he Atua ha tautolu; to kitia ai he tokologa, ke matakutaku foki a  
lautolu, mo e tua a lautolu kia Iehova.*

Psalms 40:3

He taught me to sing a new song, a song of praise to our God. Many  
who see this will take warning and will put their trust in the Lord

---

## GLOSSARY

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The Niue words, phrases and translations provided have been sourced from the *Tohi Vagahau Niue* (Dictionary) and the *Tohi Tapu* (Niue Bible).

<i>Afine Niue</i>	Niue woman
<i>Aga fakamotu</i>	culture
<i>Aho he maama</i>	Gospel Day
<i>Aho Tapu fanau</i>	White Sunday
<i>Aoga Niue</i>	Niue early childhood centres
<i>Ekalesia</i>	church/congregation
<i>Faifeau</i>	minister
<i>Fakafetuiaga</i>	gathering
<i>Fakalilifu</i>	respect
<i>Fakalofa tote</i>	small gift
<i>Fakatautonu</i>	acknowledgement
<i>Fono</i>	meeting
<i>Fonomotu</i>	conference for all Niue
<i>Fuata</i>	youth
<i>Fuata Niue</i>	Niue youth
<i>Hifiulu</i>	traditional haircutting ceremony
<i>Kau lologo</i>	choir
<i>Kotofa</i>	responsibility
<i>Kotofa totou tohi</i>	responsible for reading the bible
<i>Kotofa liogi</i>	responsible for offering prayer
<i>Kotofa lauga</i>	responsible for giving a sermon
<i>Lauga</i>	sermon
<i>Laumalie</i>	essence, spirit, wairua
<i>Lili</i>	round woven pandanus mat made up of concentric yet connected circles emanating from the ‘eye’ or centre
<i>Lologo</i>	song
<i>Mata</i>	eye

<i>Matakau fuata</i>	youth group
<i>Matakau FCW</i>	woman's group
<i>Matohiaga</i>	genealogical heritage
<i>Matua</i>	Parents/Elder
<i>Matua tupuna</i>	elderly
<i>Motu</i>	people of the island
<i>Niu Silani</i>	New Zealand
<i>Noa</i>	freely, openly
<i>Puga</i>	limestone
<i>Tafiti</i>	strangers/people from a distance
<i>Tagata Niue</i>	Niue person
<i>Tala</i>	command, tell, relate, inform, announce
<i>Talanoa</i>	talk together
<i>Tāoga (Niue)</i>	treasure
<i>Taonga (Māori)</i>	treasure
<i>Tau tala tuai he tau tupuna</i>	ancestors stories
<i>Te Kōhanga Reo</i>	immersion Māori language early childhood centres
<i>Te Kura Kaupapa Māori</i>	immersion Māori language primary schools
<i>Tia</i>	to weave, to knit, to crotchet
<i>Tiakono</i>	deacons/church elders
<i>Tipuna (Māori)</i>	ancestors
<i>Tohi tapu</i>	bible
<i>Tohi Vagahau Niue</i>	Niue dictionary
<i>Totogi</i>	payment
<i>Tupuna (Niue)</i>	ancestors
<i>Vahega tiakono</i>	church elders
<i>Vaka</i>	canoe
<i>Vagahau Niue</i>	Niue language
<i>Whare Wānanga</i>	Māori-centred tertiary providers

*Ha kua iloa e au e tau manatu kua manatu ai au kia mutolu, ko e tau manatu ke he monuina, ka e nakai ko e malaia, kua pihia mai a Iehova, ke foaki atu kia mutolu e fakahikuaga ne ha i ai e amaamanaki- Ieremia 29:11*

I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for- Jeremiah 29:11

*“Kia tua a koe kia Iehova mo e haau a loto katoa; ka e aua neke falanaki a koe ke he hau a pulotu. Kia manatu e koe a ia ke he hāu a tau puhala oti, ti fakahakohako ai e ia hāu a tau puhala” – Fakatai 3:5-6*

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths – Proverbs 3:5-6

*ka ō a mutolu ke he tau aoga, vagahau Palagi, ka liliu mai ki kaina ti Vagahau Niue*

when you go to school you speak English, when you come home you speak Niue

*lata e tama kō ke nofo i Niu Sila, ai lata moe motu nei ha tautolu*

that child should stay in New Zealand, she's not used to our island

*totou e tohi tapu mo e liogi ke he Atua*

read your bible and pray to the Lord

*fakatumau ke vagahau e Vagahau Niue*

keep persevering to speak the Niue language

*Hau a koe i fe ma mea? Hau au he tau siale, ti kō fe tau siale? Kua kaiha tuai e gogo*

where, my child, have you come from? I have come from picking the frangipani flowers, so where are they flowers? They have been stolen by the bird

*Ko e vahā loto mahani mitaki ko e fakaveaga he mafola ko e uho he matutakiaga he taha ke he taha fakafetuiaga*

Good relationships are the foundation of peace, which is precious in connecting one another

*Fakalilifu ke he tau mamatua tupuna*

Respect your elders

*Kia taofi e koe ke mau e tau kupu ne fakaako atu ai a koe, aua neke tiaki e koe; kia omaoma a koe ki ai; ha ko e hāu a moui haia – Fakatai 4:13*

Take hold of my instructions; don't let them go. Guard them, for they are the key to life – Proverbs 4:13

*Kua manamanatu e tagata ke he hana loto he puhala ke fano ai a ia; ka e fakatonu e Iehova e mena ke fina atu a ia ki ai - Fakatai 16:9*

We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps – Proverbs 16:9

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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AUTEC	Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
ECE	Early childhood Education
EKN	<i>Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue</i>
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LMS	London Missionary Society
NHS	Niue High School
NPS	Niue Primary School
NYN	Niue Youth Network
PIPC	Pacific Island Presbyterian Church
USP	University of the South Pacific
VNT	<i>Vagahau Niue</i> Trust

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# CHAPTER 1

## KO E VAGAHAU NIUE KO E HAAKU A TĀOGA MAHUIGA

*My treasured language: Vagahau Niue*

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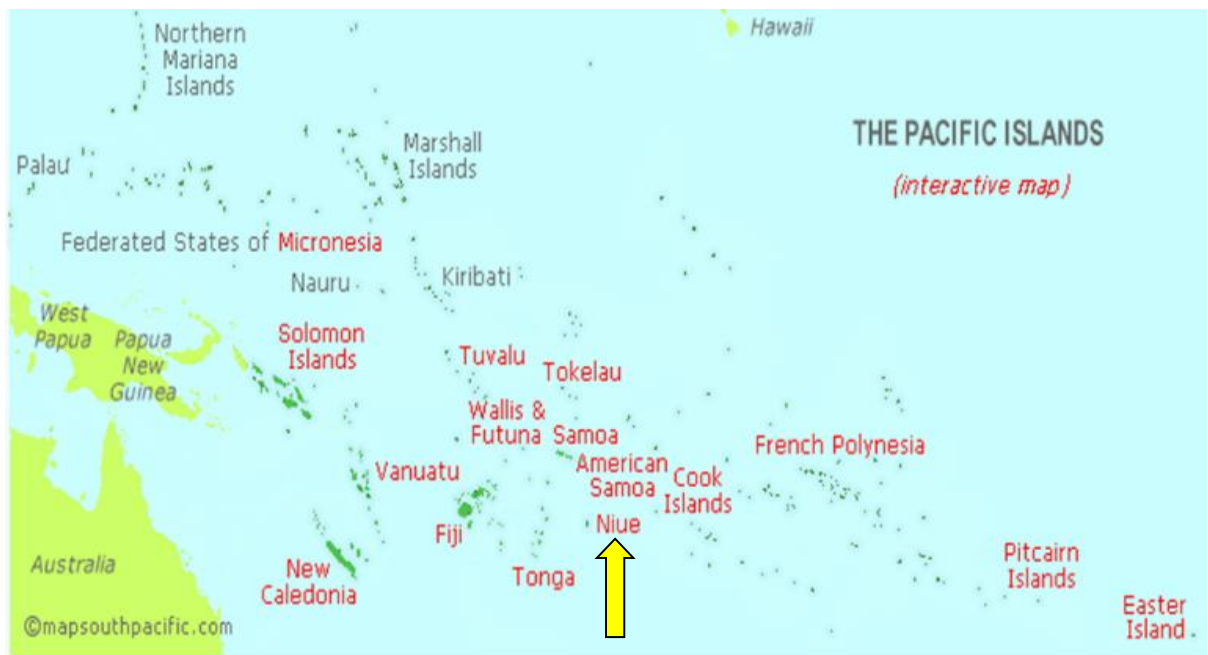
### 1.1 Introduction

Languages are essential to the functioning of any society as a means of communication. Our languages lie at the heart of our cultures, a branch of culture which is an aspect that defines the identity of an individual. We express our culture, and our way of life through our languages, a language so unique that gives us a sense of belonging, one's passport and blueprint to who we are as people. Furthermore, it is through language that a large extent of our cultural heritage is passed onto subsequent generations. The *Vagahau Niue* is the essence of my unique culture, my identity, my *matohiaga* ('genealogical heritage'). This chapter introduces the importance of *Vagahau Niue* to the researcher as a *Niu Silani*-born Niue and how the research is located and understood within a Niue world-view.

### 1.2 The island of Niue

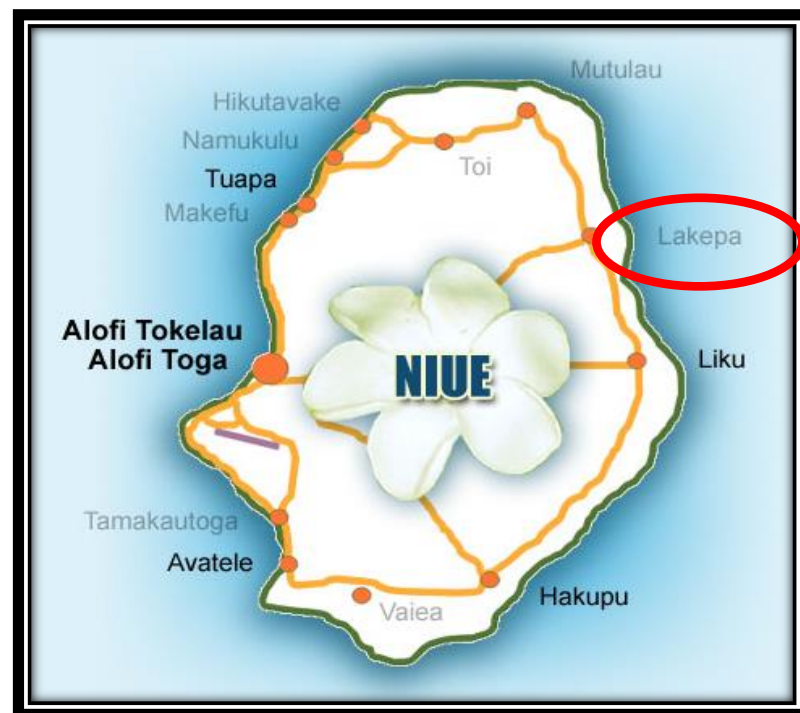
Niue, a small island in the South Pacific (see map 1) has often been described as the 'Rock of Polynesia'. It is 1,500 miles northeast of New Zealand and is one of the world's largest coral atolls. It is also one of the realm countries of New Zealand along with the Cook Islands and Tokelau, and is a self-governing state in free association with New Zealand, "retaining the Queen in right of New Zealand as its Head of State" (Townend, 2003, p.583).

## Map 1: The Pacific Islands



(Source: mapsouthpacific.com)

Figure 1: Niue Island and the 13 villages



Source: Learn Niue (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2017)

The origins of the island's name Niue is defined in the *Tohi Vagahau Niue* as a term central to Niuean physical and spiritual culture; it is used in many senses, literal and figurative, [and] that Niue itself is derived from *niu*, *ē* which means “behold the coconut palm” (Sperlich. 1997, p.241). The origins of Niue embody a rich history of

knowledge and culture, and beholding the coconut palm captures a symbolic reference to beholding the Niue people and its culture gaining a deeper and more meaningful perception of this island nation as not only people of the Pacific, but navigators in what is known as ‘our sea of islands’ (Hau’ofa, 1993). *Vagahau Niue* is the people’s lifeboat for survival both within the homeland and the different diasporic communities around the world. It is the *vaka* (canoe) that connects the past, present and the future.

### 1.3 Researchers Origins and Personal Journey with *Vagahau Niue*

I am a daughter of Niue and of Aotearoa, New Zealand. My parents were born and raised in the village of Lakepa on the island of Niue (refer to Figure 1), and migrated to New Zealand in the mid-1970s for what was known as a ‘better life in the land of milk and honey’ for education and employment opportunities. I am the youngest of two sisters and one brother, and come from a long line of *tupuna* (ancestors) who were enriched with the culture and most especially with the language. My family are the most important people in my life and I was privileged to have grown up with my maternal grandparents and great-grandparents, who instilled the knowledge of the language and culture through prayer and especially through song. I have also been fortunate to be immersed in a church family that has encouraged my language learning and has been my second ‘home’ for the use of *Vagahau Niue*. I have grown up with a love for the church and all the elements that has made it uniquely special to my identity as a New Zealand-born Niue woman. This is exemplified in the following proverb:

*Kia tua a koe kia Iehova mo e haau a loto katoa; ka e aua neke falanaki a koe ke he hau a pulotu. Kia manatu e koe a ia ke he hāu a tau puhala oti, ti fakahakohako ai e ia hāu a tau puhala – Fakatai 3:5-6*

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths – Proverbs 3:5-6

I am a daughter, sister, god-mother, aunty, cousin, friend and a *Afine Niue* (Niue woman), and with these come my rights and responsibilities to teach and speak to my nieces and nephews in the language of their *tupuna*, so that they may be enriched by the same experiences that I grew up with.

Despite being born in Auckland, I have been fortunate to have been immersed in the Niue language from a very early age through conversations within the home with my

parents, as *Vagahau Niue* was the language of the home, as well as attending a Niue language nest from a toddler up until the age of five. My mother was a firm believer in using the *Vagahau Niue* within the home and educating my siblings and I through family prayer evenings, as well as reinforcing the following teaching, that, “*ka ō a mutolu ke he tau aoga, vagahau Palagi, ka liliu mai ki kaina ti Vagahau Niue*” which translates, “when you go to school, speak English, but when you come home you speak in *Vagahau Niue*”. As a child, I did not fully understand the extent of the meaning contained within this one little sentence, but as I grew older, this memory became engrained in my mind, and I began to understand the huge significance of this teaching, and the wealth of cultural knowledge embedded in the very essence of the Niue language.

Postgraduate study sparked my interest in researching *Vagahau Niue* at an academic level. I came to university straight from high school, and was set on becoming an English teacher in Japan. It was not until I pursued postgraduate studies that I realised I wanted to contribute to Pacific research, and importantly, focus on undertaking research on and about Niue including the treasure of *Vagahau Niue*. A return trip to Niue when I was 16 years old awakened something inside me. Despite growing up in a Niue speaking home, the trip made me realise that the way Niue people in the homeland viewed their identity was different to my experiences as a *Niu Silani*-born Niue. I had assumed that my experiences of knowing and learning the language and culture from my family, and particularly my parents who are migrants from Niue were the same thus cementing my identity and knowledge of Niue language and culture. However, I found out that was not the case back in the homeland. As a *Niu Silani*-born Niue, this title automatically disadvantaged me in the way I was perceived by native-Niue people, as it was assumed I did not understand the language, let alone know how to speak it. It was only on a trip to Niue in 2007, and a visit to the hospital for my mosquito-bitten legs, that changed my views of being identified as a Niue. An elderly woman joked to her grand-daughter by saying “*lata e tama kō ke nofo i Niu Sila, ai lata moe motu nei ha tautolu*” which translates into, “that child should stay in New Zealand, she is not used to our island”. This was to be the catalyst for my journey where I began to question my identity and all that was taught to me during my childhood. This was an island that my parents, grandparents and ancestors were born and raised, which I assumed should have

allowed my safe passage on the island despite being *Niu Silani*-born; and that I would be acknowledged as an *Afine Niue*.

I had previously thought that given my parents' commitment to ensuring me and my siblings all spoke and understood the *Vagahau Niue* that it would be the same for all other Niue families, but this was not to be. Our daily home life was based on the spiritual values of putting God first in everything that we did in order to grow spiritually and to be able to harvest the rewards of the hard work that was put into the different things we were doing. The common children's song in the Niue language "*totou e tohi tapu mo e liogi ke he Atua*" which encourages us to read our bible and pray every day, became integral to our upbringing. In hindsight, this principle was not the case for other Niue families and how they raised their children. I pondered what my life would be like without *Vagahau Niue*, and the saying "*fakatumau ke vagahau e Vagahau Niue*" (keep persevering to speak the Niue language) which I had never taken much notice of until now, became hugely significant to me. It was as if our forefathers predicted that there may come a time when our language could be endangered. I began to think of the lives of the generations to come, the youth of the present day and what it might mean for them not to have their native language, given that the *Vagahau Niue* is at the heart of the Niue culture. I then realised that without the Niue language, much of what I had learnt growing up including cultural ceremonies and practices, genealogies, and *tau tala tuai he tau tupuna* (ancestor's stories) would cease to exist. Many events in my life had a specific formal ritual whether it was through the church or social gatherings; it highlighted the beauty of the words of the Niue language and culture, which made it uniquely significant to my identity.

### ***1.3.1 The turning point***

I became aware that rapid language loss was occurring for the Niue language in New Zealand and that for future generations of Niue people it was only a matter of time before *Vagahau Niue* was going to be influenced by the English language daily. It was clear that unless steps were taken now, *Vagahau Niue* was in danger of slipping away without people even realising it, which would be a loss to Niue as a community and as an island nation moving forward. I was eager to see what was happening in the community that could be seen as a driver into reviving the language. I found that the only place where youth were exposed to the language was through the church. This

discovery spurred my research focus, as I wanted to find out how the identity of Niue youth in New Zealand and in the Niue homeland was contingent upon their relationship through the *Ekalesia Niue* church and knowing *Vagahau Niue*. I wanted through this research, to gather qualitative information through interviews with a range of people to complement the quantitative data contained in the census and similar surveys; as well as expand on the limited research written on and about the Niue language in order to inform Niue communities of the reality of language loss that is occurring towards *Vagahau Niue*. I know that research of this kind would be particularly important with youth who are the future speakers and teachers of *Vagahau Niue*.

#### **1.4 Research Focus**

When Pacific peoples first migrated to New Zealand, they worshipped together in churches such as the Pacific Island Presbyterian Church (PIPC). They played a key role in helping new migrants settle into life in New Zealand, but few seemed to approach the task with as much vigour and commitment as Newton PIC. Founded in 1947 in Edinburgh St, Newton (Misatauveve, 2012), it was New Zealand's first ethnic Pacific church that gathered Cook Island, Niue and Samoa people for fellowship and worship. Towards the end of the 1970s as Pacific Island communities grew in number, they began to build their own churches where they could worship in their mother tongues and in their own way (Macpherson, 2012). From this influence, many churches were established within Auckland and other regions around New Zealand. Specific to Auckland, 13 churches under the umbrella of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (2001) are active in their services using *Vagahau Niue*; through the singing of hymns, reading of the bible, prayers and sermons in the mother tongue language. The role of the church in the late 1940s provided spiritual guidance for Pacific families and communities specifically, as a source of identity, and as mediators between the Pacific and the New Zealand ways (Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi, 2003).

The church worship can be seen as more meaningful in the mother tongue language, as stated by Edwards (2009) that “if religion is a central pillar in the identity and culture of a group whose language is at risk, it makes sense to exploit its strength and to suggest that it is uniquely expressible through the threatened tongue” (p.112). In the case of the *Ekalesia Niue* church, events such as *Aho Tapu fanau* (White Sunday) and *Aho he maama* (Gospel Day) are some of the important events in the church calendars,

as children get to participate by singing songs and reciting bible verses as well as sharing their *lauga* (sermon) in the Niue language, which not only acknowledges the language use but helps to nurture them spiritually. This not only allows children and youth to be exposed to the language and encourages the use of the language, but it shows the significant role of the church as a vehicle in the retention of *Vagahau Niue*.

A brief survey of the literature showed that there had been little research on the role of the church in language maintenance today. According to Fast (2007), to access authentic spiritual experiences an “implicit definition of the church as ethnically homogenous with the healthiest churches [has to have] members [who] are confident of their ethnic identity, and use their cultural resources including language to access a spiritually authentic worship” (p.72). In New Zealand, there are various religious denominations that are represented in the Pacific, who call on the financial and labour resources of their communities, which also include members that have moved to New Zealand (Bathgate & Pulotu-Endemann, 1997). They suggest that within New Zealand, the local ‘Island’ church is an institution, each with its own Pacific ministers, that are integral and important as part of the life of Pacific communities. In many cases the congregation of a particular church is focused around “a specific ethnic entity (e.g. the Samoan or Cook Islands populations)” (Bathgate & Pulotu-Endemann, 1997, p.104), where language and religion have been the “two most important markers of ethnonational identity” (Edwards, 2009, p.10).

For this study, I decided to focus on capturing the voices of Niue youth because they are the future carriers of the Niue language in New Zealand and in Niue. At the same time, it was important to explore the views of the Niue church ministers and Niue church elders as well because these are the groups who have identified having *Vagahau Niue* as their first language, and have had the church play a big part in their upbringing back in the homeland. It was not an intention of this research to compare the views of these three groups, but instead to get a range of views which could provide a basis for the discussion of methods and practices that can be influential in the church, which will begin to support the maintenance of the Niue language here in New Zealand, and in Niue the homeland within this cultural and spiritual space.

## 1.5 Research Aims

The research aims are to explore the views and capture the voices of *Niue fuata* (youth), *Niue faifeau* (church ministers) and *Niue tiakono* (church elders) of *Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue* (EKN) and the Presbyterian Church (PIPC) about the important role of the church for the regeneration of *Vagahau Niue* for youth in Auckland New Zealand and in the homeland of Niue. The research question asks; how is the identity of Niue youth in New Zealand and the Niue homeland linked to knowing the Niue language and their relationship through the *Ekalesia*? Additionally, a further aim to this study is to create spaces where dialogue is able to be expressed about the importance of the church and the different cultural values that may contribute to the maintenance of the Niue language and culture for the benefit of the future generations. Significant to this study is the importance of language maintenance and the language shift that is occurring at a rapid speed. This case study of the Niue community in Auckland, New Zealand and in the homeland of Niue, will add to the global discussion relating to the security of minority and migrant languages, endangered languages, and help to raise awareness of the significance of the role of churches as important language domains for the regeneration of minority and migrant languages today. This research will also increase knowledge about the experiences, perceptions and opinions of a group of Niue youth, Niue minister's and Niue church elders in Auckland New Zealand and in Niue the homeland today about *Vagahau Niue*. The information will provide a foundation of knowledge about the Niue people and their lived experiences of learning *Vagahau Niue* and the role it has with the *Ekalesia*. Furthermore, this case study being the first of its kind for the Niue language represents a snapshot in time – a critical time for how *Vagahau Niue* in New Zealand and in Niue is declining in this changing society. Although this study is Niue-focussed, findings may resonate with other Pacific languages, as well as other minority and diasporic language communities who are trying to find ways of maintaining their languages. This is especially important given that New Zealand is evolving into a unique and vibrant multicultural and diverse nation, which is striving to achieve equity as well as embracing cultural diversity (Ministry for Culture & Heritage, 2005). This research will also make a significant contribution to the knowledge of the importance of our Pacific cultural values and practices in the church, as factors that can assist youth with developing and moulding their individual identities.

## **1.6 Methodology**

### **1.6.1 Introduction**

A qualitative approach using phenomenology will be employed for this research project. Denscombe (1998) describes this as being concerned with a phenomenon that is “something known to us through our senses (seen, heard, touched, smelled, tasted)” (p.97). The use of the Pacific methodology *talanoa* is chosen as an appropriate method to conduct the interviews, and The Lili Model is also appropriate in terms of providing a cultural anchor from which to interpret the data.

To capture the voices of *Ekalesia Niue fuata*, *Ekalesia Niue faifeau* and *Ekalesia Niue tiakono* the use of social phenomenology as a research method seemed appropriate as it provides a qualitative, pragmatic, interpretive approach and is grounded in the lived experiences of people (Marschall & Rossman, 2006).

### **1.6.2 Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is a research method that focuses on people’s perceptions, attitudes and beliefs, feelings and emotions, and the meanings people attach to particular objects, events or phenomena. The field of social phenomenology is solely related to the disciplines of sociology, psychology, education, business studies, and health studies, and originates from the social phenomenology of Alfred Schutz in 1962 (as cited in Denscombe, 1998; Patton, 2002). It is less concerned with the essence of experience, but rather on how humans give meaning to their experiences. The important aspect of social phenomenology is its concern with the ways people interpret social phenomena. This research aligns well with social phenomenology as it aims to explore how members of the Niue community make sense of their experience of the church, that is, personal perceptions of the *Vagahau Niue* and the role the church plays in the regeneration of this language (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) states that social phenomenology is a holistic approach that explores people’s values, belief system, knowledge and their understandings of the past, the present and the future. This approach is very much in line with the Pacific world-view and a relationship between what was, what is now, and what is to come.

### ***1.6.3 A Pacific World-view***

Hau'ofa (1994) reminded us that our ancestors have a tradition of settlement on Oceania spanning over 2000 years, evidenced by their oral traditions, narratives and cosmologies and they did not conceive of their world in such small proportions. They believed they were all connected and part of a much larger sphere which included the ocean and heavens. Their universe comprised not only of land surfaces but the surrounding ocean as far as they could exploit it, and the heavens above with their star constellations that they used to navigate their way across the ocean. He argued that they saw their environment as a 'sea of islands' all connected. Ka'ai (2017) in a presentation at a Ministry of Pacific Peoples *fono* (meeting) said,

Hauofa recognised the importance of our Oceania origins and the way our ancestors moved with ease across the Pacific like 'island-hoppers' armed with the tools of language and cultural knowledge and values which are located within a specific Indigenous world-view.

### ***1.6.4 An Indigenous Framework***

For the purposes of this research, it is important to locate this research in a Niue world-view as language is inextricably linked to culture. Many models have been developed by Pacific scholars as a way to ensure that their research is located within a Pacific cultural lens including Konai Helu-Thaman's metaphor of Kakala (1992), Teremoana Hodge's Tivaevae (2000), Pulotu-Endemann's Fonofale model of Health (1995), Koloto's (2001) Pacific cultural competency framework (Health Research Council, 2005; Koloto, 2003), and Tamasese, Peteru and Waldegrave's documentation of the traditional Fa'afaletui (2005). Similarly, as this research is about *Vagahau Niue*, the researcher has developed a model from a Niue lens called The Lili Model that is grounded in Niue culture and anchored by Niue values in a cultural framework to which the data will be analysed.

### 1.6.5 The Lili Model


Figure 2: The Lili Model



(Source: Personal Collection, 2017)

From a Niue world-view, this research encompasses the values that are important to *Vagahau Niue*. The researcher's Indigenous framework is visually presented by the *lili* (round woven pandanus mat made up of concentric yet connected circles emanating from the 'eye' or centre) that has been in the process of a *tia* (to weave, to knit, to crochet) significant to a Niue woman's artistry and skill of weaving. Importantly, the *lili* is an artefact that gives recognition to the Niue people and their language and culture, as the weaving experience demonstrates the notion of 'binding', togetherness, unity, continuity, interconnectedness of a community of weavers and how they come together to share in knowledge and in language. The circles are symbolic of the ongoing practices of traditions and culture that are embedded within the Niue world-view and it is this concept that the methods and methodology are being employed within this study, acknowledging both Western and Indigenous, as a bridge that connects the researcher to her roots here in Aotearoa and in the homeland of Niue.

## 1.7 Summary

PARTS OF THE LILI	NIUE CONTEXT	RESEARCH METHOD
	<p><i>Moui Fakagaaga-</i> The centre of the <i>lili</i> represents the <i>spiritual journey</i> that is inclusive of the church, the domain where the Niue language is the dominant language both in Auckland and in the homeland.</p>	<p><i>Ko e Vagahau Niue ko e haaku a taoga mahuiga (My treasured language: Vagahau Niue)</i></p> <p>This chapter introduces the topic and the researcher's journey with <i>Vagahau Niue</i>, and the context in which this research is framed.</p>

This chapter provides the foundation from which to understand the researcher's origins and personal journey with *Vagahau Niue* and the importance of locating this research within a Niue world-view. It is no secret that Pacific research is continuing to emerge within academia, which allows Pacific world-views to be considered as important elements to Pacific communities and their stories. The ability to understand and appropriately apply cultural values and practices that underpin Pacific peoples world-views and perspectives, have been demonstrated through the Indigenous framework of The Lili Model. This model helps to integrate or acknowledge Niue values, principals, structures, attitudes and practices towards *Vagahau Niue*. As a Pacific woman, but more importantly an *Afine Niue* within academia, the researcher recognises that it is imperative to showcase the uniqueness of *Vagahau Niue*, not only as a *tāoga* but as a marker of identity for the generation of Niue scholars that follow in the future.

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## CHAPTER 2

### NIUE NUKUTŪTAHA: MAKA HE PASIFIKA

#### *Niue Island: Rock of the Pacific*

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*“Hau a koe i fe ma mea? Hau au he tau siale, tikōfe e tau siale? Kua  
kai hā tuai e gogo”*

Where, my child, have you come from? I have come from picking the  
frangipani flowers, so where are the flowers? They have been stolen  
by the bird

#### **2.1 Introduction**

For many Niue people living in New Zealand, the island of Niue is seen to be the ‘heart’ of Niue language and culture (Head, 2000) – in its purest form. It is the homeland and our origin of how our “ancestors navigated the world to get to our country, how they established our Niuean mother tongue, our own unique language” (Head, 2000, p.153). Anecdotal reports surround the ideology that Niue people have of the island home as the place where the language will continue to be kept alive and will thrive as there are plenty of Niue people still living on the island. However, this may not be the case, and efforts may need to be taken in order to ensure the survival of *Vagahau Niue* both in Niue and in New Zealand. This chapter reviews the place of the Niue language in Niue (the homeland) and in New Zealand (the new home).

#### **2.2 Part One: Niue – Nukutūtaha (the homeland)**

Niue’s history falls into four defined periods: pre-Christianity, Christianity, the Colonial era and self-government. The documentation of Niue’s history as well as its language was primarily oral and was passed down through the generations. It has only been since the period of New Zealand governance that a great deal of literature has been compiled on Niue’s history, and the factors that have contributed to the health of the Niue language today. On the island homeland there is an estimated 1600 people residing on the island (Statistics Niue, 2012), and approximately 14,000 worldwide in the year 2000 who were able to speak their native language (Moseley, 2010).

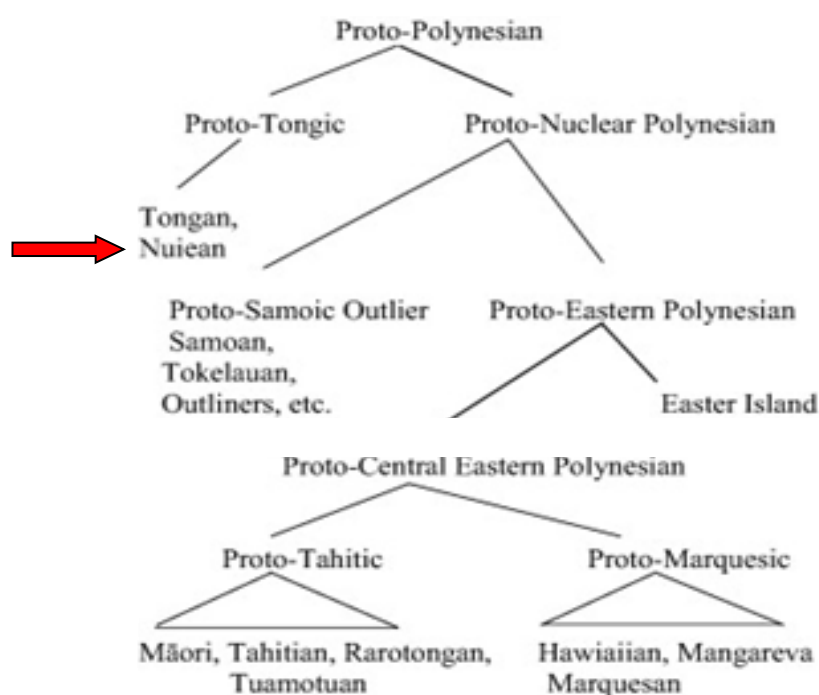
### **2.2.1 History of the Niue language**

The history of the Niue language itself goes back to the early missionaries in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century between the years 1830 and 1861. The written language of *Vagahau Niue* was heavily influenced by the missionary John Williams of Samoa who helped to write the Niue language. The origins of the language during the pre-Christianity period were not well documented, and it was only through the oratories of the Niue *tupuna* to their families that the knowledge about the origins of the language was able to be passed down through the subsequent generations.

### **2.2.2 Vagahau Niue: A Proto-Polynesian language**

*Vagahau Niue* is the native language of Niue. It is one of two official languages alongside English. The Niue language is a branch of the subgroup tongic which is a daughter language to the ancestral Polynesia (Besnier, 1992). The tongic group consists of just two languages which is the Tongan and Niue languages (see Figure 3). Besnier states that “they (Tongan and Niue) are closely related to one another (see Table 1), but differ from other Polynesian languages in a significant way, particularly in morphology (p.247). The Proto Polynesian languages can be seen in figure 4, as languages that stem from the ancestral language and are referred to as daughter languages that constitute a “linguistic family” (Otsuka, 2005, p.4). Furthermore, Pawley (as cited in Otsuka, 2005) proposes that “Proto-Polynesian was developed from Pre-Polynesian, which was spoken not on a single island, but by a network of several Western Polynesian islands including Tonga, Samoa, Uvea and Futuna” (p.7).

**Figure 3: Model of Proto-Polynesia language sub-grouping**



(Source: Harlow 2007)

**Table 1: Tongic languages (Niue and Tongan) and Samoan**

<b>Niue</b>	<b>Samoan</b>	<b>Tongan</b>	<b>English</b>
Fakamatala	Fa'amatala	Fakamatala	Explain
Pehē	Na'o	Pē	Only
Fetū	Fetū	Fetu'u	Star
Manako	Mana'o	Manako	Want

(Source: NZTC International 2015)

### **2.2.3 Dialects and registers**

Languages are constantly changing, and no languages are able to remain the same over a period of time (Otsuka, 2005) as languages come into contact with different people, countries and situations. In reference to the dialects of Niue, there are two main dialects; the older *Motu* dialect (the people of the island) from the north of the island, and the *Tafiti* dialect (the strangers –or people from a distance) from the south. The dialects differ from “spelling variations due to the often only slight differences in pronunciation” (Sperlich, 1997, p.25). The differences as stated by Smith (1903) concerns the “infrequent use of the passive form of the verb” (p.178).

Table 2: Differences in vocabulary and forms for *Motu* and *Tafiti* dialects

<b>Vocabulary(v)/ Form(f)</b>	<b>Motu (Northern part of the island)</b>	<b>Tafiti (Southern part of the island)</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
(v)	Matā	Volu	scrape/scrapper
(v)	kautoga	Lala	Guava (plant)
(f)	nei	Nai	this/here/these
(f)	Maona	malona	to be broken
(f)	Likiliki	Ikiiki	Little/small

(Source: Sperlich 1997)

The Niue language has two distinct registers; first, the formal and respectful registers used during formal gatherings, church services or conversations with ministers, elders, or individuals of status; the second is the informal register that is usually reserved for the general public, and can be heard within families or amongst peers where familiarity and comfortability takes priority. Pronunciation can either be spoken with vocabulary of the *Motu* and *Tafiti* dialects (refer to Table 2). These different forms of the Niue language (formal Niue and informal Niue language) highlight the importance of language as encapsulating elements of *fakalilifu* (respect) and *Aga fakamotu* (culture), as well as the meaning. Head (2000) stresses the importance that the *Vagahau Niue* language holds not only for the Niue culture, but for the whole existence and identity of the Niue people. She states “our Niuean language is the essence of our unique culture, our identity, our *matohiaga* ‘genealogical heritage’” (p.149). It is the language that distinguishes Niue people from others, and is the foundation for Niue and its governance. Head (2000) believes that,

... [the] language lies at the heart of our culture. We express our culture, our way of life through our Niuean language, a language so unique only Niuean people understand and appreciate its value, the subtleties, the harmless innuendos, the secret language” (p.150).

The words of *Vagahau Niue* express different emotions of sadness, love, and repentance and “is a vital medium for transmitting values and culture. Confidence and proficiency in one’s first language contributes to self-esteem, a sense of identity and achievement throughout life” (Tauevihi, 2000, p.356). Head (2000) further adds that the significance of knowing *Vagahau Niue* means developing a sense of belonging, as it is

the “passport and blueprint of being part of one’s group” (p.150). According to McKay and McKay (1987) “a people’s own language is a symbol of their ethnic identity as well as a repository of much of their cultural heritage, its loss threatens the life and vitality of culture” (p.66). The well-known chant used to open this chapter, is used as a metaphor between the island homeland and the Niue people, to symbolise the changing factors that have caused language shift as well as the threat for its survival.

## **2.3 Change factors**

### **2.3.1 Colonisation**

Before the establishment of the British Protectorate, apart from the church, there had not been any successful unifying agents that were able to bring sovereignty to the island. The first influencers of the Niue language came with the arrival of the missionaries in the late 1840s. The Samoan missionary Paulo not only brought the bible to the people of Niue, but also introduced skills which emulated the Samoan practices, where the Niue people were able to build houses with the use of *puga* (limestone) which was to help establish and build the first chapel of Niue in the village of Mutalau. According to Smith (1903), “Paulo, a native Samoan, and evidently a man of superior character, became very popular and won the hearts of the Niuē people; he taught them many things (from his Samoan culture), amongst others to build churches and the substantial lath and plaster houses” (p.86), According to Bertram and Watters (1984), “the missionaries had a profound effect in shaping the Niue society and its values and directing the welfare of its people” (p.183). Furthermore, they were instrumental in documenting the Niue language. They formalised the alphabet (Walrond, 2014) between 1846 and 1890; they translated the *tohi tapu* (bible) and it was the first *Vagahau Niue* document translated into the New Testament in the year 1868 (Tāoga Niue, 2016).

The arrival of the London Missionary Society was not only the messengers of peace for the spiritual good news, but they introduced their Westernised influences and values from other Pacific states to the Niue people. Nosa (2009) expresses that “many of Niue’s Indigenous cultures and customs have been shaped by elements of the world-view and lifestyles of the early Polynesian colonists” (p.179). This development gained national prominence as Niue opened its doors to international cultural and economic influences (Spolsky, 1988), inclusive of the English language. Head (2000) argues that

“we inherited English from our colonial heritage, a legacy of English made more challenging as the language of power that will open doors and guide us to the future which guarantees success” (p.146). Nosa (2009) strengthens this view by arguing that the “colonial relationships between Niue and New Zealand has led to the influx of Western philosophies concerned with gaining social and economic opportunities found in Aotearoa” (p.182). Such an example is the education system in Niue which is free and compulsory for all Niue children, however is limited in both resources and teaching facilities (Nosa, 2009). As there are only three formal educational institutions on the island which is two government schools; Early Childhood Education and Niue Primary School (ECE/NPS) and the Niue High School (NHS), as well as the University of the South Pacific Extension centre Niue (USP) which offers education at the tertiary level, the young people growing up on Niue are mindful that the “desire to remain at home in Niue is strongly linked to the availability of employment” (Nosa, 2009, p.182).

However, the Niue census of population and households in 2011 showed that there was a slightly lower percentage of 35 percent of people that were leaving the island for employment (Statistics Niue, 2012). On the other hand, the number of people leaving Niue to pursue education showed just over 50 percent of the population. This is strengthened by Statistics Niue (2012) who state that the migration is “emerging as the main driver of Niuean population dynamics, and population losses usually involving the younger population groups” (p.10).

### ***2.3.2 Niue and the church***

Many theories have been presented about the origin of the people of Niue. According to Tāoga Niue (2016) “early Niueans talked about the people from an unknown land, while others have suggested that the people of Niue originated from as far east as South America” (p.2). During the pre-Christianity era, the traditional kinship system in place meant that Niue was ruled by the people and relied on the strength of purely social factors. However, post-Christianity saw the beginning of the influence of external factors to the island during the spreading of the gospel (Tāoga Niue, 2016). In the year 1858, the London Missionary Society (LMS) established itself as the national church of Niue, to ensure the same practices and regulations for all congregations for the fair appointment of church leaders (Tāoga Niue, 2016). The arrival of the first European representative of the (LMS), Rev W George Lawes saw a number of Niue people being

taught to become pastors in order to return the Samoan missionaries to their respective homelands, while maintaining the gospel by their own people, in order to ensure the autonomy of the island remained with the Niue people. In 1885, 18 years after the translation of the new-testament into the Niue language, the first *Vagahau Niue* book of Hymns was compiled and published by Rev Frank Lawes following Paulo's work from the Samoan Language Hymns (Tāoga Niue, 2016). The changes that occurred to the island made it much more difficult to maintain what was originally authentic to the Niue people. According to Hau'ofa (1993),

The effects of colonial rule on the thinking and attitudes of Pacific people about our own languages is still very strong. We were conditioned to think that everything west is best, and we advocate the same in the education of our children to the cost of our language and culture. Pacific languages are seen as backward and unenlightened and our past traditions and languages are irrelevant for solving current issues and problems (p. 129).

On the contrary, religion has remained one of the key elements of island life. Recent times have seen the *Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue* church remain the most dominant religious denomination of the resident population who are still using *Vagahau Niue* during the majority of the services. According to Statistics Niue (2012), the percent of residents that identified as being part of the *Ekalesia* denomination (refer to Table 3) showed a consistency from the year 1997 of 64 percent, with a gradual increase to 67 percent after more than a decade, even though there has been a decrease in the total population between 1997 and 2011 at the last census.

Table 3: Percent of resident population affiliated to the *Ekalesia* denomination 1997 - 2011

Year	Total Population	<i>Ekalesia</i> (%)
1997	2,088	64
2001	1,736	63
2006	1,538	62
2011	1,460	67

(Source: Statistics Niue 2012)

### 2.3.3 *The Migration*

Guided by the assumption that English was a tool for getting ahead, many Niue families have migrated to New Zealand in the search for better educational opportunities for their families. Tuhega (1977) believes that the views of employment opportunities, relatively high income and the addition of a better education system for children were the main reasons that attracted the increase of Niue migrants from the homeland to the shores of New Zealand. Having to migrate their families to New Zealand, children of Niue families have been able to obtain valuable education as well as gain employment opportunities that would have not been possible if they had remained in Niue. However, it has also meant that the third generation of Niue people are New Zealand-born, and have grown up surrounded in an immersed lifestyle and culture of the dominant Western society, including speaking and communicating in the dominant English language.

The impact of this migration has been described by Connell (2002) as being “both a catalyst and a consequence of social and economic change” (p.75). The migration was made easier when Niue became a self-governed state in free association with the New Zealand government in 1974, which allowed for Niue people to be granted New Zealand citizenship more easily (Nosa, 2009). This development heightened the increase and influx of migrants to New Zealand, especially as a continuum from the number of Niue nationals that had already left the island following the opening of the Niue airport in 1971, which Nosa (2009) describes as a transportation route that made the movement in and out of Niue more easier for individuals who were able to leave at an increased rapid rate. The migration to New Zealand in search for a better life economically, has meant the influence of “Western philosophies concerned with gaining social and economic opportunities” (Nosa, 2009, p.182) have been applied to the ways in which the Niue culture, values and especially the language are being practiced in New Zealand and in Niue today.

Concerns for language maintenance have been taken seriously in order to increase the number of speakers of *Vagahau Niue* for the future of the language. Even though Niue transnationals have migrated to English speaking countries (such as New Zealand and Australia), the language on the home island is still being supported and maintained today as demonstrated in the *2011 census of Niue's population and housing* (Statistics

Niue, 2012), where the statistics revealed 75 per cent of residents aged 4 years and older indicated that their mother tongue or first language is *Vagahau Niue*. Of the remaining 25 per cent, although *Vagahau* is not their first language 41 per cent of them already know how to communicate in the *Vagahau*, where 49 per cent were willing to learn and 10 per cent were unwilling to learn. This was further supported by the census, that revealed 79.6 percent of the residents claimed to be fluent and or proficient in speaking the *Vagahau*, with a further 12.7 percent or 168 people who were able to speak basic Niuean, with 7.7 percent indicating that they could not speak any Niuean at all (Statistics Niue, 2012).

The *Vagahau Niue* is prominently used within domains of daily life for the Niue people as illustrated by the 2011 census, and can be further analysed with the statistics showing 46 percent of the population that use the Niue language as the main language spoken in the home (see Table 4). This is an encouragement from the 2006 census where only 175 households had *Vagahau Niue* as the main language, but has increased to 44 households in 2011 which is a difference of 9 percent (refer to Table 5). Furthermore, the “offset was seen in the households that mostly used Niuean and English as the main language in the household” (Statistics Niue, 2012, p.59) as it decreased by 54 households with a change in 11.6 percent who were bilingual.

Table 4: Languages spoken in Niue household's 2011 census

Main languages spoken in households	Niue	Niue and English	Niue and others	English	Other	Total
Total	219	151	23	53	31	477
%	46%	32%	5%	11%	6%	100%

(Source: Statistics Niue 2012)

Table 5: Change of languages spoken in each household 2006-2011

Languages spoken in households	Niue	Niue & English	Niue & Others	English	Other	Total
Number change	44	-54	5	19	-11	3
Change in %	9.0%	-11.6%	1.0%	3.9%	-2.4%	

(Source: Statistics Niue 2012)

Contrary to the statistics, it is not surprising that the language is increasingly being influenced by globalisation and migration. In the past, the language was supported and strongly maintained in all 13 villages of Niue, however, with the introduction of technology as well as the influence of an English-speaking generation within these villages today, the question must be asked, how will the health and wellbeing of *Vagahau Niue* continue to be supported so it is no longer on the list of vanishing and endangered languages?

## **2.4 Part Two: *Niu-Silani* (the new home)**

In reviewing the place of *Vagahau Niue* in New Zealand today, I begin first with a discussion of the Niue population in New Zealand including factors which influence language maintenance. This is followed by a brief account of the challenges faced by the *tangata whenua* (people of the land) in maintaining the Māori as the Indigenous language in New Zealand - some factors which are of relevance to the Niue situation. Lastly, some research about Niue language maintenance in New Zealand today is discussed. This includes Government policies and activities established by the Niue community, especially within the *Ekalesia* churches that have been established for the fellowship of Niue people living in the city of Auckland, and the endurance of the *Aga fakamotu*, where *Vagahau Niue* is central within this space.

### **2.4.1 *Pacific people in New Zealand***

Pacific people have been migrating to New Zealand in ‘search for a better life’ for many years. In New Zealand, the Pacific ethnicity made up the fourth-largest major ethnic group in 2013 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013) behind the European, Māori and Asian ethnic groups. The results of the 2013 Census showed the growth in numbers and proportion in the population. The census revealed that “7.4 percent of the New Zealand population (295,941 people identified with one or more Pacific ethnic groups (see table 6), compared with 6.9 percent (265,974 people) in the 2006 census” (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Furthermore, Statistics New Zealand (2013) revealed that almost two thirds (65.9 percent) of the Pacific population was located in the Auckland region.

Table 6: Pacific Peoples by Ethnicity in New Zealand, 2013 census

Ethnicity	Population
Samoan	144,138
Cook Islands	61,839
Tongan	60,336
Niue	23,833
Fijian	14,445
Tokelau	7,176
Total population living in NZ	295,941*

(Source: Census 2013)

\*Note: figures add to more than the total as people were able to identify with more than one ethnic group

#### 2.4.2 Niue people in New Zealand

According to the 2006 Census, Niue people were the fourth largest Pacific population ethnic group in New Zealand making up eight percent of New Zealand's Pacific population (Statistics New Zealand, 2007), where a majority of the population (77.7 percent) identified as residing in the city of Auckland (Auckland Council, 2015). Furthermore, in the latest 2013 Census, the Niue population made up the highest proportion of New Zealand born with 78.9 percent compared to the other Pacific nations (Stats NZ, 2014). However, it must be noted that from this population, 25 percent of Niue people (5,190) are recorded as being able to "hold an everyday conversation in Niuean" (Statistics New Zealand, 2007, p.5). In an effort to demonstrate the growing concern of Niue speakers despite the increased number in the population, Table 7 illustrates the comparison between the two population groups of Niue born Niue and New Zealand born Niue in New Zealand who were competent in speaking in *Vagahau* over the course of the 2001 census and the 2013 census.

Table 7: Niue speakers of the language in New Zealand, 2001-2013 census

Population Group	Percentage of the Niue population who are competent in speaking in <i>Vagahau Niue</i>		
	2001	2006	2013
Niue-born Niue	61%	63%	60%
New Zealand-born Niue	12%	11%	7.5%
n=	5,628	5,190	4,548

(Source: Statistics New Zealand 2002, 2006, 2013) Ethnic Group Profile, Niuean

Table 7 above reveals that while the language competency of the Niue-born group remained constant at 60 percent during the three census periods, the New Zealand-born group registered a 3.5 percent decrease in the seven year period between 2006 and 2013 (Statistics New Zealand, 2007, 2014). This is a significant decline, especially as predicted that with the New Zealand-born Niue population continuing to increase and the number of Niue language speakers declining, steps are needed to be taken in order to reverse this trend immediately. In addition, The Royal Society of New Zealand (2013) draws mentions to the fact that there is no official status for languages that are native to New Zealand that includes the languages of the realm. As stated:

There is no official status for languages not native to the New Zealand mainland, but to which New Zealand could be seen to have a responsibility, such as the associated state and territory languages: Cook Islands Māori, Tokelauan and Niuean. The question of whether there should be any defined responsibilities for these languages further than those set out in international conventions is still unresolved. (p.3)

This makes it more difficult to address language maintenance among communities whose languages are declining as we speak, as there is no autonomy for those languages within New Zealand. With the rapid decline of speakers of *Vagahau Niue*, there are concerns that the rapid decrease will occur sooner than anticipated. Drawing from the revitalisation efforts of *Te Reo Māori*, the following section will address such languauge shift trends that have occurred and may be of use to the revival efforts of *Vagahau Niue*.

#### **2.4.3 Māori – Tangata Whenua (people of the land)**

Although Māori are the Indigenous people of New Zealand, they have encountered the challenges of drastic language shift. According to Flavell, 2012; Henare, 1985; and the Waitangi Tribunal WAI 11 claim, 1986, “if the language dies the culture will die and something quite unique will have been lost to the world” (as cited on p.1). Māori place high regard on the language and believe that it is of great importance as it is a *taonga* (treasure), that has been the language of the *tipuna* (ancestors) who were believed to be the first Polynesians that migrated to New Zealand in the thirteenth century AD (King, 2003, as cited in Smith, 2004, p.4). According to Ware (2010) the effects of colonisation had “devastating effects on Indigenous cultures and language” (p. 24) and saw a deprioritisation of culture that was highly accepted in mainstream New Zealand

society at that time. This was clearly demonstrated in the significant decline in the number of Māori language speakers (Angelo & Perham, 2015) as a result of the shift away from using *te reo Māori* which began in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century after the New Zealand wars. This went hand in hand with the assimilationist policies that were practiced in New Zealand at this time, such as the “suppression of the language in schools (e.g. Native Schools Act 1867) and the government’s policy of placing Māori families in predominantly non-Māori suburbs during urbanisation which followed World War II” (De Bres, 2011, p.364). In a post-colonial context, Albury (2015) suggests that the shift to the majority language (English) by minority speakers was done so for employment opportunities and negotiations for land ownership.

As steps were made to rejuvenate the language in the early 1980s, several other actions were implemented through education, which resulted in successful outcomes including *Te Kōhanga Reo* (immersion Māori language early childhood centres), *Te Kura Kaupapa Māori* (immersion Māori language primary schools), and opportunities at tertiary level for Māori to study at *Whare Wānanga* (Māori-centred tertiary providers). Through these actions and others that followed, Māori was officially recognised as an official language through the Māori Language Act 1987, which ensured that the Māori language could be used in Parliament and in the Court systems. However, presently the statistics of the number of fluent Māori language speakers has decreased, with a reported 125,352 speakers able to use the language (Statistics NZ, 2013) out of a population of 598,602 (21.3 percent of the total Māori population) indicating that the process of maintaining *te reo Māori* will be an ongoing effort heading into the future, as *te reo Māori* is seen as an “interconnected feature in need of maintaining cultural distinctiveness” (Te Huia, 2014, p.24) where there is a renegotiation and reclamation of the past.

## **2.5 Vagahau Niue in New Zealand**

### ***2.5.1 Vagahau Niue in the community***

Today the value of *Vagahau Niue* is second priority to the English language, as the “Niuean community strive to attain the English language” (Head, 2000, p.149) for the benefits of gaining employment and education opportunities, as well as integrating their families into a society where English is used as the frequent medium in everyday conversations. Simons and Lewis (2011) state that in order “to reverse language shift,

the community must work to bring those [traditional] functions back” (p.4) in order to add new functions that will be able to strengthen the position of the language. Pennycook (2007) further adds that everything happens at a local level despite its popular practice globally (i.e language revival within communities), it happens locally.


Efforts to maintain *Vagahau Niue* for children in the 1970 and 1980s during the period of migration, came with the establishment of Niue language nests, an approach that was inspired by the immersion Māori language nests called, *Te Kōhanga Reo*, to form the Pacific early childhood centres such as the *Aoga Niue* (Niue early childhood centres). With support from the Ministry of Education, over 70 Pacific Early Childhood Education (ECE) services (Meade, PuhīPuhī & Foster-Cohen, 2003) have been established. To date, there have only been seven Niue language nests established, which all began as full-immersion centres, and then changing to bilingual centres in order to combat the change in government funding. The first *Aoga Niue* (based now in Mangere, Auckland) was formed in the late 1980s, as a way of nurturing and maintaining the Niue language and culture, to achieve the maintenance of *Vagahau Niue* as the first language for Niue pre-schoolers. Additionally, the Vagahau Niue Trust (VNT) was set up by the former Director of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Dr. Colin Tukuitoga, as a way of focussing on the strategic protection and maintenance of *Vagahau Niue*. Under the auspices of VNT, the Niue Youth Network (NYN) was formed in 2015 as a youth branch to VNT and their purpose was aimed at encouraging *Fuata Niue* (Niue youth) to embrace the love of being Niue and to encourage the everyday use of *Vagahau Niue*. This group also provided network opportunities that connected Niue youth in New Zealand.

As described by Valdés (2005), the youth grow used to placing themselves as native language listeners rather than speakers of the language as they do not get enough opportunity to “hear, practice and use their heritage languages in meaningful conversations in real life settings” (Wyman, 2012, p.8). This is further evident in a study conducted by Starks (2006) where her findings revealed that “Niuean is spoken more by the older generations than to the older generations” (p.380). She further suggests that the “younger the speaker, the greater the likelihood of a lower proficiency in the community language” (Starks, 2006, p.379). In contrast, the Niue language is also supported by radio broadcasting. Radio 531pi has served as the radio station for

Pacific communities for 23 years, with a fuse of Pacific news, views, information and talk back radio. The Niue radio station, *Niue Ogo Motu* is a community-based station that promotes *Vagahau Niue*, culture and Niue heritage once a week. These community-based initiatives help support the maintenance of the language currently; however, a large domain that continues to support the language and culture is the *Ekalesia Niue* church in Niue and the PIPC in Auckland New Zealand.

The spiritual aspect of Niue tradition plays a vital role in the upbringing and maintenance of spiritual and cultural values for both nationals and transnational Niue people in the island homeland and in New Zealand. The migration not only provided economic stability, but it also allowed the migration of the practices and traditional worship of the *Ekalesia* church in the homeland. Under the umbrella of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 13 *Ekalesia* have been established by transnationals, as spaces of worship and have continued to maintain the ties and kinship that were important during their upbringing in the church life, which are currently being practiced within these specific church domains outside of the homeland.

## 2.6 Summary

PARTS OF THE LILI	NIUE CONTEXT	RESEARCH METHOD
	<p><i>Fakapaāa</i> – The third circle of the <i>lili</i> represents the <b>migration</b> of the Niue people to New Zealand. The <b>church</b> became the place where Niue people congregated as a place of familiarity with their homeland. It is both important on Niue and here in Auckland, as a way of maintaining cultural ties and traditional values with the island homeland.</p>	<p><i>Niue Nukutūtaha: Maka he Pasifika (Niue island: Rock of the Pacific)</i> – This chapter refers to the <b>context of Vagahau Niue</b> in terms of the status of the language in Auckland and back on Niue. This is inclusive of the language shift that has occurred with the language in both countries.</p>

It is clear that *Vagahau Niue* is integral to Niue identity and culture. Both in Niue and New Zealand, the importance of the language is highly valued, as the words of the Niue language are more than just a vehicle for communication. They symbolise the value of

*fakalilifu* (respect) which is central to the Niue culture and *Aga fakamotu* (culture) by which relationships are maintained between people and within communities. In Niue, *Vagahau Niue* is viewed as an important *tāoga* (treasure) that has been passed down through succeeding generations to the present day, in which efforts are being implemented in order for its survival. Changing factors such as colonisation has had a ripple effect on the survival of the language, with the missionaries playing a huge role in the life of the Niue people and more importantly its impact on the language. The migration in the 1970s for what was known as a ‘better life’ saw a rapid decline in the population on the island, but as demonstrated by the 2011 census (Statistics Niue, 2012), the number of language speakers who remained on the island showed a positive trend.

The fact that ‘New Zealand’ has become the ‘new home’ away from home, has made it that much more important for language revitalisation efforts to occur, especially within the multi-cultural society we live in. The church, a domain that can be viewed as a repository of knowledge for *Aga fakamotu* (culture) and the immersion of *Vagahau Niue* is a key factor for what can be the driver for language regeneration into the future. It is for this reason that the exploration of this domain and its significance of language use is the focus of this thesis. Both these Niue worlds give way to strengthening the learning and development of *Vagahau Niue* as a driver for the future of Niue language; for children, for heritage and most importantly for ourselves.

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## CHAPTER 3

### FULUHI KI TUA KE KITIA MITAKI A MUA

#### *Looking to the past informs the way we move forward*

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“Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean” (Hau’ofa, 1994, p.16)

#### 3.1 Introduction

Language is central to everything we do. In our schools, workplaces, and communities, we come into contact with different languages and individuals who are diverse in both language and culture. The understanding that we have for the nature of language is “key to our understanding of ourselves and our place in society” (Clark, Eschholz, & Rosa, 1998, p.ix). In many countries and communities however, the increasing contemporary globalisation has had a dramatic impact on the diversity of languages worldwide. Historical events, colonisation, imperialism and migration of populations have always led to the demise of languages as one language becomes more economically and socially advantageous to speak than another. In the twentieth and the twenty first century, dominant languages like English have increased its presence within countries. It is now estimated that of six thousand plus languages currently spoken worldwide, probably half of these languages will become extinct during the next century (UNESCO, 2008). According to Crystal (2004), "the extent and rate of the ongoing loss in the world's linguistic diversity, is currently so cataclysmic that it makes the word 'revolution' look like an understatement" (p.47). *Vagahau Niue* is included in the list of vanishing languages and has been tagged “definitely an endangered language” (Moseley, 2010, p58).

This chapter reviews the global literature on language maintenance and revitalisation and more specifically, that related to migrant and minority language communities. This is followed by a review of the literature of the Niue language and its maintenance in New Zealand which sets the context for the study. In New Zealand, *Vagahau Niue* is both a migrant and minority language. In this chapter, the terms “mother tongue” and heritage language” are used, and refers to the minority or migrant language.

### **3.2 Part One: Language**

Languages are fundamental to any society as a vehicle for communication. Languages can be defined as a “device for saying things, and translation is the process whereby a speakers says something in a different way, that is, in a different language” (Grace, as cited in Taumoeofolau, Starks, Davis, & Bell, 2002). Languages also help us to learn about the world that surrounds us, and the means of expressing feelings such as joy, excitement, anger, disappointment, and sorrow. We use it to “affect the feelings and behaviours of others – for directing, instructing, approving, disagreeing, and pleading” (Tauevihi, 2000, p.354). Taumoeofolau et al. (2002) insists that languages can only be understood if more attention is paid to its relationships with the external world. Breinig (2006) adds that a language is about truly knowing what the philosophical and spiritual underpinnings are of that language in order to use these languages in different settings. This, in hindsight, may be due to the fact that words are the principal prime carriers of wisdom and knowledge, culture and history, and are able to surpass time in order to connect the past, present and future. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) believes that “through language we receive the cultural heritage of the past, and by language we shape it anew, reworking, selecting, rejecting, and recreating it together with other people” (p.2).

In contrast, Nettle and Romaine (2000) argue that “a language is not a self-sustaining entity. It can only exist where there is a community to speak and transmit it” (p.5). Globally, languages such as the Welsh language are facing a dilemma amongst the current generation in regards to trying to realise the “fulfilment of a fully functional bi/multilingual society through creating new opportunities for language choice within the public, voluntary and private sector of the economy” (William & Evas, 1998, p.1). William and Evas (1998) believes that the “essence of regenerating Welsh as a community language will inculcate a shared responsibility for its condition among all that speak it” (p.3), and allowing it to be normalised in order for it to be used as a vehicle for normal communication in the widest possible range of domains.

#### ***3.2.1 Significance of language***

The significance of language as well as language learning often implies the meaning of “living the experience upon which the language is based” (Breinig, 2006, p.116). She alludes to the idea that “can a language be truly re-stored if the new learners far away do not grasp the deeper, cultural meanings of a word-and if they are not living the

language deeply in their daily lives?” (p.116). Dave Tournier supports this idea through a quote in an interview in 2009 (as cited in Eira, 2011) where he states that:

Language is culture, culture is language , language is land, land is language, family, language, language family- it’s that spiral stuff again, one can’t live without the other and when people realize that, they may have a better understanding, and will understand why language is so important to us, to revive these languages. (p.135).

Therefore, Niue people in homes, churches and communities where the *Vagahau Niue* is used is testament to the language being a ‘lived experience’. It informs their whole way of life including their behaviour, relationships, customary lores and ceremonies e.g. *hifiulu* (traditional haircutting ceremony).

### **3.3 Language as a human right**

The right to use one’s own language is a human right. The United Nations has recognised this in various treaties and declarations and makes specific reference to rights and responsibilities in relation to Indigenous languages (languages that are native to regions and are specifically spoken by the native people of countries, i.e. the Māori language in New Zealand), minority languages and learning and using one’s mother tongue (United Nations, 1966; United Nations, 1992). Notable outcomes include; The Universal Declaration of Human Rights – General Assembly of the United Nations (1948), The Kari-Oca Declaration entitled ‘Indigenous Peoples’ Earth Charter (1992), and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (United Nations, 2008). The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples outlines in Articles 13, 14 and 15 that Indigenous people have the right to use their languages. Article 13 stipulates that Indigenous peoples have the right “to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons”. Article 14 gives Indigenous people the right “to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages”, and Article 15 states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages” (United Nations, 2008, p.7).

Yet, despite these international fora and their declarations, language health continues to be an on-going challenge for Indigenous communities worldwide. People need proficiency in their own languages for important social and cultural reasons such as intergenerational communication and security of personal identity (The Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013). Rationales for revitalising Indigenous endangered languages also include the maintenance of Indigenous cultures, the importance of maintaining linguistic diversity, and issues of social justice (Fishman, 1991; Krauss, 1992). In addition, research has documented the importance of language revitalisation to communities' wellbeing, continuity and development. In 2008, the New Zealand Human Rights Commission published a paper to promote discussion on language policy. Importantly, the paper advocates that:

Languages are an important national resource in terms of our cultural identities, cultural diversity and international connectedness. They are vitally important for individuals and communities, bringing educational, social, cultural and economic benefits. They contribute to all three national priorities of national identity, economic transformation and families' young and old (p.1).

*Vagahau Niue* is a language from an island that is under the realm of New Zealand which enables its citizens to be New Zealand citizens. Therefore, it is vital that future generations of Niue people have an opportunity to know and learn their language that will help to inform their identity by making a strong connection between culture and cultural identity (Tsunoda, 2005).

### **3.3.1 National Languages Policy**

In 1990 the then Labour government announced its intention to introduce a comprehensive and articulate national languages policy. In 1992, the two part Waite report titled *Aotearoa: Speaking for ourselves –A discussion on the development of a New Zealand languages policy*, a report commissioned by the Ministry of Education, is a document that highlighted the importance of maintaining community languages in New Zealand (Waite, 1992a; Waite, 1992b). This report argued that there needed to be an “elementary framework to prioritise, implement and monitor language policy development in New Zealand” (Human Rights Commission, 2008, p.1). Waite (1992) suggested that there needed to be structures that were put in place to ensure language security, which included the development of curriculum materials and frameworks for

use in language maintenance programmes. Therefore, Pacific language curriculum statements were developed based on the 1992 New Zealand Curriculum Framework. The Samoan language was the first in 1996, followed by the Cook Islands curriculum in 2004, the Niue curriculum in 2006 and the Tongan curriculum in 2007.

In 2007, the Labour-led Government, supported by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA), ran the *Mind your language* programme in order to address the growing concern for Pacific language maintenance and revival. The programme began with the languages of those of the realm countries, Tokelau, Cook Island Māori and Niue (Tuafuti & McCaffery, 2009). According to the Human Rights Commission (2008), “all Cook Island Māori, Niuean and Tokelauan people living in New Zealand should have the opportunity and support to learn and use their heritage language” (p.4).

### **3.4 Language maintenance**

Languages are defined by Nettle and Romaine (2000) as being intimately connected with humans, cultures and the environment. Paulston, Chen and Connerty (1993) provide three definitions for language revitalisation, language revival, and language reversal. Firstly, language revitalisation gives the meaning of “imparting of new vigour to a language still in limited or restricted use, most commonly by increased use through the expansion of domains” (p.276). Secondly, the literal meaning of language revival is being able to give new life to a dead language after discontinuance and allowing it to have a normal means of communication in a speech community. In addition, language reversal can be viewed as the turning around of present trends in a language as it is acknowledging how the old language provided a “desired historical, cultural, literary and, perhaps religious, affinity with the original community” (p.277). In terms of language maintenance, the aim of it must be to “preserve active use, discourse, functioning patterns of transmission, and other supporting ecological factors” (Mühlhäusler, 1992, p.178). In preserving languages, Mühlhäusler (1992) suggests it is “often seen involving putting them into man-made artificial environments such as grammars and dictionaries, high literature, or giving language kits to surviving speakers” (p.164). However, Mühlhäusler (1992) also draws contrast on the idea that “Pacific languages and cultures are still underdeveloped and underprivileged, and that learning English or another Western language is the best way of getting out of this handicap” (p.169).

On the other hand, O'Rourke (2015) argues that the aim of revitalisation movements is very often “not only to maintain the language amongst surviving language speakers, but also to modernise it and generate new uses for it in spaces where it is no longer spoken” (O'Rourke, 2015, p.76). Similarly, Mühlhäusler (1992) argues that reserving and developing domains for the exclusive use of a language may indeed be the best way of successfully isolating it from being taken over by other languages. O'Rourke (2015) draws upon the notion that there is a need to “preserve speakers (native speakers) as representatives of the last surviving speakers whose origins can be traced to a bounded, homogenous speech community, within a particular territory and historic past” (O'Rourke, 2015, p.76). In addition, the survival of minority languages can be as a result of the numerical strength of the speakers for the language. Taumoeofalau et al. (2002) believes that “communities who maintain their language often are communities that maintain strong links with their homeland, as minority communities often depend on their home countries as a source for linguistic revitalization” (p.20). This is as a result of having a higher proportion of the population who speak the language that reside in home countries, thus creating greater opportunities to hear and speak the home language.

### ***3.4.1 Transnationalism***

The agents of transnationalism have placed a particular emphasis on the role of international migration and “their networks and remittances, and through forging connections between churches in the North and South” (Kurien, 2014, p.109). In Kerala India, the impact of transnationalism on the home community has had profound effects, especially on the religious institution of the home country that had remained true to the values and teachings of the original Mar Thoma faith. With the introduction of new religious practices within the home community, migrant members have introduced methods within the home community such as “financial and social remittances” (Kurien, 2014, p.110) as a result of the economic position that they have established for themselves outside of the home community. The growth of the Southern Christianity as expressed by Kurien (2014) was a consequence of “transnational religious connections of these churches with the global North, particularly in the United States” (p.109) causing the existing establishment of the Mar Thoma religious practice to resist the change of the ways of worship and the values that the Mar Thoma faith upheld. Kurien (2014) implies that “hierarchical and centralized transnational organizations are often

not effective because they find it difficult to deal with the cultural differences between the home country and the locations where the religion has been transplanted” (p.111). Spickard (2004) points out that the cultural differences are able to undermine centralised transnational religious organisations.

For Pacific languages, resettlement, migration and urbanisation have dramatically changed the range of languages that most traditional languages of the Pacific have to be in a relationship with. However, for language maintenance to be successful within language communities, Perley (2013) believes that Indigenous ancestral voices need to be remembered as "timeless resources for all the meaningful relations that integrate stories, landscapes, spirituality, and relationships as living Indigenous worlds" (p.143). The term "Indigenous" signifies the "populations who have deep histories in particular landscapes whose languages have helped them negotiate symbolic relations of sustainability and renewal" (Perley, 2013, p.162). Perley further believes that ancestral voices continue to be heard in every word, phrase, or expression uttered in Indigenous languages, and are never in the remote mythic past for Indigenous communities, who have maintained intimate connections to their ancestral homelands as it echoes along the “river valleys, the mountains, and across all landscapes as reminders of continuity and possibility” (p.162). Woolard (2008) mentions the ideology of authenticity as a way of being able to “locate the value of the language in its relationships to a particular community” (p.304). In the area of Manukau, which is located in Auckland, New Zealand, it is viewed as a "linguistic enclave, a place where the community language has the potential to be spoken on a regular basis inside and outside the home" (Taumoevalau et al., 2002, p.24). This supports the idea Perley (2013) provides as he states that "Indigenous communities are poised to remember their languages with their landscapes and spirituality through their stories" (p.157).

### ***3.4.2 Differences of traditional and contemporary***

International networks and the economic affluence of the population as a result of emigration to new diasporic communities have caused problems for the established denomination Mar Thoma. Spickard's discussion of cultural differences in this context, are important as changes were made to the Mar Thoma church in an attempt to “bridge the cultural and linguistic gap between Kerala-born and foreign-born members” (p.119). Spickard (2004) predicts that religious economies are expecting to see change

as a result of leadership attempts to deal with religious competitions from other organisations. Specifically, the Mar Thoma leaders have attempted to bring change within the established churches in Kerala. However, they have been “constrained by the tradition, structure and mission of their churches’ (p.110), where the “leaders of churches are limited by the constitution, structure and tradition of their organization, but also by their dependence on pastors and lay members” (Kurien, 2014, p.127). The Bishop of the North America and European diocese advised youth to attend general meetings and express their opinions, since the church “would be able to change only with their active participation (p.120). As a result, Kerala churches oriented toward English speaking services that were similar to the evangelical churches in America, where the attraction seemed to be the “informality of the worship, the ‘singing from the heart with the use of musical instruments” (p.127). The youth were attracted to this style of worship, and it became difficult for the Mar Thoma leaders that were established in America to cater to the youth through traditional ways of worship as they did not have strong English skills or the knowledge of the American context to understand the lives of the youth.

### **3.5 Language transmission**

As defined by Perley (2013), language is the “broader semiotic code through which a community of speakers remembers all the social relations that make Indigenous worlds vital and viable” (p.162). In order for languages to survive language loss, children must be able to “learn their language as a first language and then pass that on to their own children in the way that it was transmitted to them” (Breinig, 2006, p.110). Spolsky (2012) alludes to a similar idea by stating that “the loss of natural intergenerational transmission is recognised as the key marker of language loss, and it is much more likely to occur within the family” (p.4). Fishman’s (1970) model of immigrant language, sets out a three-generation theory where in three parts, demonstrates the movement of generational transmission, where the first generation of immigrants have added knowledge of the new environmental language to their home variety. Following this, is the second generation who have likely grown up bilingual and have been able to transfer between their home language and the dominant language of the community that they are a part of. The third generation was commonly monolingual in the dominant local language with little if any knowledge of the heritage language. This is caused by what Sallabank (2012) argues as having people all over the world stop “speaking

minority languages and shifting to languages of wider communication” (p.104), which creates a "displacement of the minority languages by the majority language" (Templin, Seidl, Wickströma & Feichtinger, 2016, p.8).

International organisations such as the European Union are “actively working to save and stabilize endangered languages" (Fernando, Valijärvi & Goldstein, 2010, p.49), in ways which are “re-introducing and/or strengthening the minority language in at least some domains in order enhance the chances that it stays vital" (p.9). However, at present, this concept is being difficult to achieve as individuals are voluntarily choosing to change to the majority language and are not willing to pass the minority language on to the next generation.

### ***3.5.1 Intergenerational transmission***

Mühlhäusler (1992) believes that for a language to be maintained over any length of time, intergenerational transmission of the language must be actively sought. International research has shown that language shift can be completed by the third and fourth generation (Fishman, 2001). This is due to what has been occurring frequently within Indigenous home communities known as language shift, where there are usually two types; forced, or external, and voluntary, or internal (Otsuka, 2007; Shameem, 2000). Forced, or external, shift refers to the imposing of another language other than the mother tongue on a speech community, but also extends to the effects of globalisation and even political pressure (UNESCO, 2008). Examples of forced language shift include Hawaiian, Māori and Moriori (Otsuka, 2007). By contrast, voluntary, or internal, language shift denotes a personal choice made by the speaker of a language to adopt another or often dominant language over the mother tongue. The reasons for voluntary shift usually surround notions of prestige and socioeconomic success. Templin et al. (2016) draw similar comparisons by discussing that children within families whose parents are speakers of a heritage language, are having parents choose a “language repertoire depending on their own languages, and their emotional attachment to those languages as well as on the communication values of all the languages at hand” (p.11). The emotional attachment relies upon the "general prestige or cultural status of the language in the society" (Templin et al., 2016, p.12), in terms of the higher the status of the language the greater the willingness of its speakers to pass their language on to the next generation. Templin et al. (2016) continues by arguing

that when nations or a country reduces its efforts to maintain the minority language beyond a certain value, the status of that language decreases.

In contrast, generational transmission from parents and grandparents are crucial to the maintenance of language, but are not encouraged. An example of this, is through Breinig's (2006) personal experience about the Haida language, in that her parents were native speakers of the language but had an expectation for their children to respond in English as they "recognized the value of the new language for their children's future" (p.111). Like Breinig's experience, Bangladesh grandmothers in London who are first generation immigrants are trying to maintain the "linguistic and cultural identity of their grandchildren both by translanguaging and by actual informal Bangla teaching" (Spolsky, 2012, p.7). Their involvement in language transmission is because they are the generation who are likely when language shift occurs will maintain the proficiency of the heritage language. Templin et al. (2016) provides the thoughts that "the probability that a child will speak in their heritage language strongly depends on the amount of language conversations that it is exposed to" (p.10). If the "minority language can be preserved in the form of a relatively large number of bilingual individuals, [then the] language minority is able to pass cultural values linked to the minority language to the next generations while communication possibilities throughout the society are assured" (Templin et al., 2016, p.9).

### **3.6 What is lost when a language is lost?**

As noted, a language serves as many functions. It does not exist for its own sake, nor is it limited to just a tool for communicating information (Nhat, 1994) and more recently sharing cultural knowledge (Mühlhäusler, 1992). Languages serve as expressions of facts, ideas or events and knowledge about the world that people share. In addition, the words that we use can reflect the attitudes, beliefs and opinions not only of ourselves, but of others (Kramsch, 2008).

#### **3.6.1 Identity**

Language bears the definition of being a "tool for communication and language as a carrier for cultural identity" (Templin et al, 2016, p.9). Woodward (2002) strengthens this by describing how identity can be viewed as a metaphor of a personal investment, that on a massive scale, people are going to full lengths in that they are "willing to die

or protect their own identities, but it is always socially located (p.vii). Bhavnani and Phoenix (1994) similarly argue that “identity is not one thing for any individual...rather it may be a place from which an individual can express multiple and often contradictory aspects of ourselves” (p.9). Giddens (1991) states that “to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going”(p.54). In light of this, Woodward (2002) shares that this creates an “awareness of the twin dimension of ‘roots’ and ‘routes’” (p.135). The Report of the ‘Life in the United Kingdom’ by the Advisory group in 2003, stated that “we do not imply that identities are never fixed, in fact identities are often more fluid than many people suppose” (Mills, 2005, p.255). Furthermore, the fact that there are diverse identities that are trying to be maintained, the presence of English “enables integration of diverse linguistic communities” (Mills, 2005, p.257) which hinders how language is important to an individual’s identity. In the revitalisation context of the Irish language, O’Rourke (2015) argues that instead of Irish being viewed as a “repository of authentic cultural or national identity... [It] can become a resource which can potentially belong to anybody irrespective of group membership” (p.77). However, Woolard (2008) draws note that the link between authenticity and identity can however “constrain the acquisition and use of a minority language by a larger population” (p.315).

Fishman (1991) also draws on the link between language and identity and states that “destruction of a language is the destruction of a rooted identity” (Fishman, 1991, p.4). This link is illustrated by Zentella (1997) in her study of the importance of Spanish in constructing the identity of the Puerto Rican people. Zentella claims that although scholars try to extend the definition of the Puerto Rican identity, language is essential. She cites Rosario (1983) who states that “being Puerto Rican entails the live conservation of the common language of our people” (Rosario, 1983, as cited in Zentella, 1997, p.305). The relationship between language and identity is not only evident in Indigenous communities, as discussed above, but also in migrant and minority groups. An example here is Hatoss and Sheely’s (2009) study which confirmed the interconnectedness of language and identity. In this study, respondents stated that their mother tongue was integral to their expression of identity and for maintaining their social networks not only in Australia - their new home- but also in Africa (p.142).

Despite the strong arguments claiming the necessary function language plays in the construction of ethnic identity, Edwards (1996) proposes that language is not a necessary component to retain identity. Rather, he sees identity to be a multifaceted concept, and that language is but one of a number of indicators of identity (Edwards, 1996, as cited in Ngaha, 2007, p.31). In other words, identity does not rely on just one indicator, but several overlapping ones. There is a deep connection between language and identity, however complex this connection may be.

### **3.6.2 Culture**

Research also indicates that language is also a vital component of culture, and using a language not only ensures the survival of that language, but also the related culture. Indigenous language loss as described by Warner (1999) is “terminal” (p.72). Similarly, Hinton (2001) suggests that “when an Indigenous group stops speaking its language, the language disperses from the face of the earth” (p.3). McCarty (2003) alludes to the idea that “when even one language falls silent; the world loses an irredeemable repository of human knowledge” (p.148). Nettle and Romaine (2000) support this by stating that “every language is a living museum, a monument to every culture, it has been a vehicle to. It is a loss to every one of us if a fraction of that diversity disappears when there is something that can have been done to prevent it” (p.14). Furthermore, Perley (2013) believes that “culture is something that is alive and ever-changing” (p.163), and if there were to come a time where the extinction of language occurs within Indigenous communities, there is a possible threat that there will be “the extinction of culture and identity as well” (p.146). In addition, Dyson, Hendricks and Grant (2007) suggests that “it is not machinery that transforms society, repairs institutions, builds social networks or produces democratic culture; it is people who make things happen” (p.173) which usually requires an element of spirituality behind the history to be actively strengthened in a community on order to make its presence felt in a long-lasting manner.

The factors for reduced language speakers within a community are due to the “growing silence of the Indigenous language within the community” (Perley, 2013, p.144). Perley (2013) believes that “we as language experts, advocates/activists, and community members are the ones who provide the crucial breath of language vitality” (p.162) for language survival to necessitate cultural and identity survival. The dawn of the twenty

first century has seen the world's linguistic and cultural diversity become “under assault by the forces of globalisation - cultural, economic and political forces that work to standardise and 4rt homogenise” (p.148). In this notion, when shifting a conceptualization such as ‘emergent vitalities’, it helps to place the "community of speakers, their cultures, and their identities as mutually interdependent aspects of Indigenous languages that emphasizes possible futures for Indigenous language, cultural, and identity" (Perley, 2013, p.147). Furthermore, Mills (2005) adds that the loss of language is a potential loss of family values, and that the heritage language is a representation of community as a crucial identifier of the bond to the immediate and diasporic group.

### **3.7 Part Two: Research on Niue language in New Zealand and in Niue**

#### ***3.7.1 Historical background on the status of the Niue language***

In 2007, Race Relations Commissioner, Joris de Bres, expressed serious concern about the decline of Pacific Island languages where the majority of a Pacific nation’s population lives in New Zealand. He claimed that the 2006 census showed that only 17% of Cook Islanders, 24% of Niuean’s and 41% of Tokelauans living in New Zealand were able to speak their mother languages (Human Rights Commission, 2008). These percentages had dropped a further 1- 4% since the previous census in 2001 as the Scoop Independent News (2007) published a press release for the Human Rights Commission stipulating that:

This is particularly worrying because when you look at the total number of Niueans, Cook Islanders and Tokelauans living in New Zealand and their home islands, 91% of Niueans, 73% of Cook Islanders, and 83% of Tokelauans live in New Zealand. Only around 2,000 Niueans and 1,400 Tokelauans live in Niue and Tokelau, compared to 22,000 and nearly 7,000 respectively in New Zealand. The critical mass of the populations lives in New Zealand. Action to halt the decline and maintain the languages therefore has to be taken here in cooperation with the Pacific Islands concerned. These languages are at risk not only in New Zealand but in the world. (paragraph.3)

Migration of Pacific Islanders to Pacific-rim countries, including New Zealand, has resulted in the subsequent minoritisation of their own languages as the dominant language of the adopted countries is English. Increasing emigration from the islands also endangers languages in their country of origin as speech communities become

increasingly diminished and ageing. Consequently, these languages are under considerable threat and on a trajectory similar to that of *Te Reo Māori*. As described by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (2012) that:

For some years now, Census data and Pacific communities have been telling the same story: the number of fluent Pacific language speakers is declining. While data records the decline, communities have brought the story to life, sharing their concerns about what the loss of heritage language means, and their desire to address this (p.4).

Niue is one of the three realm countries of New Zealand and as such, New Zealand has a responsibility to Niue people despite having no rights of control. The Scoop Independent News (2007) on behalf of the Human Rights Commission explained in a press release that:

Because these countries have a special relationship with New Zealand, and their people effectively have New Zealand citizenship status, the New Zealand government has a particular responsibility for their language protection and maintenance in the global context. Language is an important part of identity and culture (paragraph.4).

Furthermore the *Pacific Languages Framework* states in the first principle that the support for languages should be “led and owned by communities: leadership and ownership and promotion of Pacific languages lies with Pacific communities. The role of Government agencies is primarily to “support Pacific communities to achieve their language aspirations” (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2012, p.4). In addition, the second principle adds that there should be a reverse in language skills where the decline of “Pacific languages must first be slowed, stopped and then reversed to achieve revitalisation” (p.4).

### ***3.7.2 Relationship between Niue and New Zealand***

The migration from Niue to New Zealand became a response to a “deep seated form of social change” (Bertram and Watters, 1984, p.199). Many of the young people seem to perceive the mainland as the attractive ‘core’ and “saw Niue as the poor periphery” (Bertram & Watters, 1984, p.197). Townend (2003) explains that New Zealand has become the “point of reference for Niueans in matters social, economic and political” (p.585). New Zealand gave an entitlement for citizenship to the Niue people that made it easier for people to move back and forward between Niue and the mainland. To the

Niue people, citizenship is seen as “their best insurance policy” (Townend, 2003, p.586). Furthermore, Townend (2003) argues that for Niue, it would “wish to preserve its current status of self-government in free association with New Zealand” (p.606), however, it would come with conditions that New Zealand would need to be “sensitive to Niue’s fragile situation, [and vice versa] Niue would need to respect New Zealand’s desire to get to grips with its own constitutional arrangements” (p.604). The relationship between Niue and New Zealand has also produced the perceptions of identity where a Niue person is conscious of being a Niue person with a distinctive culture, because they also see themselves as a New Zealand citizen and Niue as part of New Zealand (Bertram and Watters, 1984, p.199). McCarty (2003) adds that it is through our mother tongue that we come to know, represent name and act upon the world (p.148).

In a similar context, Starks (2006) explains that "the role of language appears to be a central feature of Niuean identity" (p.386). The Niue community in New Zealand has a strong sense of ethnic identity and are "keen for the Niuean language to play a key role in part of what it means to be Niuean" (p.387). Furthermore, Starks adds that the younger speakers are associating the “Niuean language with traditionalism and traditionalism is associated with things of the past” (p.386). Mühlhausler (1992) strengthens this argument by stating that “just as languages need a home in which they can live and develop, speakers need a home, a place where they belong and that gives them a sense of identity” (p.171).

### ***3.7.3 Language and identity***

Language as described by Edwards (1995) is "highly significant as a marker of identity in maintaining group boundaries and, therefore, can act to maintain a group's sense of its ethnicity” (p.126). Methods such as narratives are used as a means of analysis of the relationship between language and identity, as they allow individuals the freedom to express themselves in their own unique way (Mills, 2005; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). In contrast, Edwards (1994) claims that "when language has lost its communicative role, it often maintains a sentimental or emotional grip on the group and may persist for a considerable period of time" (p.128). In the context of the Niue language and people who have a special status or those who acquire the language are represented in a relatively small light in New Zealand. As a result of this, the English

language has had a predominantly strong influence in the Niue community both for Niue and New Zealand-born, as the view of it by Niue parents is its importance for achieving academic and economic success for their children as well as being able to integrate into New Zealand life smoothly. The language and identity shift for migrant communities then becomes the result of having to acquire the dominant language as a means of access to goods and services (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). This complexity is supported by Spolsky (1988) who shares that a community that acquires English risks losing their culture, identity and traditional values, which can be a salient reminder. This applies to *Vagahau Niue*, given the central place of the Niue language to the Niue culture. Hunkin-Tuileufuga (2001) states; “the relationship between language and culture is like oxygen to human survival – without one, the other will not survive” (p.197). Be that as it may, Starks (2005) states that a language shift from *Vagahau Niue* to English in New Zealand is more likely to occur given the strong views of younger participants, that English is needed if they are to succeed socially and academically in the New Zealand context (p.537).

Moreover, in Edwards (1994) view, the loss of a language does not in itself entail a loss of identity nor lead to an erosion of group boundaries, as the language continues to have a symbolic or emotional appeal that “reflects and conveys its culture more felicitously and succinctly than any other language” (May, 2001,p.133). Tabouret-Keller (1998) and Mill (2005) both agree that language has to bring into focus the way that language is able to create people’s identities and that terms by which this identifies individuals are able to be expressed. This will hopefully serve as a powerful symbol that connects and mediates the individual identity and the social identity of communities and their members in helping to “position the respondents in time and space” (Mills, 2005, p.261). Mühlhäusler (1992) agrees that the detrimental developments for many of the small languages occurring at a rapid pace, is the shrinking of domains in which they could be used.

#### ***3.7.4 Language in the community and domains***

The realities of rapid language shift have spurred “native communities to institute full heritage language immersion as a tool for language recovery, cultural survival and academic enrichment” (McCarty, 2003, p.152). These community based efforts have allowed for Indigenous communities to “protect and promote their distinctive diversity

in homogenising times” (p.160). These efforts enable a change in the perception that there should be English-only pedagogies, and moves towards a “vision of democracy in which individuals and communities create and recreate themselves through multiple languages and discourses” (p.160). This vision holds the promise of creating a much more “critically democratic, linguistically and culturally rich society” (McCarty, 2003, p.160) for everyone to live in which are to be well rooted in the principal of social justice. By doing so, McCarty (2003) expresses that “Indigenous language revitalisation confronts not only a colonial legacy of linguistic genocide, and cultural displacement; but mounting pressures for standardisation” (p.159).

The domains in which a language is used directly influence the maintenance of that language. Spolsky (1988) has long urged immigrant groups to maintain their mother tongue in their homes while they, and their children, are learning English, and this has been supported by Taumoevalau et al. (2002) and Starks (2005). However, Starks emphasises that linguists, community members and schools must advocate for the consistent use of community languages in the home, not only when children are learning their language, but throughout their whole childhood years. It is natural for families to be drawn to their unique ethnic cultural patterns however; this produces problems with immigrants where their culture differs from that of their new environment. Each identifiable domain where language is used and spoken has its typical participants, and each participant may have their own beliefs about language choice. The different domains, in which language is spoken in, will have different language practices, different beliefs about the values of the varieties that make up the “sociolinguistic ecology of the community and each may attempt to manage or influence the language practices and beliefs of others” (Spolsky, 2012, p.5). Spolsky (2012) further adds that an example of this is the religious domain, where there is a “special place for the Divinity as a key addressor (author of sacred texts) and addressee (target of prayers), or commonly known as clerics and congregants” (p.4). Within the domain of family, the key participants are parents, (with somewhat differences between mothers and fathers) as ‘parents sometimes try to preserve their heritage language by modifying their children’s language environment’ (p.5) where the children naturally gravitate to different ways of speaking and how they are being spoken to (dependant on their gender, birth order and age).

### **3.7.5 Role of the church**

Fast (2007) has alluded to the idea that “essentializing ideology connecting to language and identity contributes to a definition of church on ethnic terms, while an ideology of inclusion and solidarity insists on separating church from ethnic identity” (p.73). There is little research on the role of the *Ekalesia* Niue Church in language maintenance today. According to Fast (2007), in order to access authentic spiritual experiences an “implicit definition of the church as ethnically homogenous with the healthiest churches [has to have] members [who] are confident of their ethnic identity, and use their cultural resources including language to access a spiritually authentic worship” (p.72). In New Zealand, there are various religious denominations that are represented in the Pacific, who call on the financial and labour resources of their communities, which also include members that have moved to New Zealand (Bathgate & Pulotu-Endemann, 1997). In Niue, before the establishment of the British protectorate, there were not really any successful agents that were able to unify the villages on the island apart from the church. Missionisation had a profound effect in how Niue society was shaped and the values and direction it had on the welfare of its people (Bertram & Watters, 1984), through the translation of the bible and the introduction of the hymn book. According to Fast (2007), “many Western missionaries held on to the ideology that the church “connects the vernacular with deep identity and spiritual authenticity, thus functioning to contain diversity within the church through the idealization of ethnically homogenous, monolingual congregations” (p.68). In the study of South-western Burkina Faso, Mennonite missionaries have tended to focus on the bible translation and literacy of local languages. Other church leaders have defined church as “multi-ethnic yet crucially inclusive” (Fast, 2007, p.72). Similarly, Shameem (2000) found that at the regular religious and social gatherings of the Indo-Fijian community, which purportedly aimed to help Indo-Fijian teenagers to maintain Fiji Hindi, the adults usually spoke Fiji Hindi while the teenagers mainly spoke English.


Within New Zealand the local ‘Island’ church is an institution, each with its own Pacific ministers, that are integral and important as part of the life of Pacific communities. In many cases the congregation of a particular church is focused around “a specific ethnic entity (e.g. the Samoan or Cook Islands populations)” (Bathgate & Pulotu-Endemann, 1997, p.104). When Pacific peoples first migrated to New Zealand, they worshipped together in churches such as the Pacific Island Presbyterian Church

(PIPC). Towards the end of the 1970s as Pacific Island communities grew in number, they began to build their own churches where they could worship in their mother tongues and in their own way (Macpherson, 2012). Fast (2007) has made references to the church through missionaries and church leaders, where they have defined it as “ethnically homogenous, with the healthiest churches being those whose members are confident of their ethnic identity, and use their cultural resources, including language, to access authentic spiritual experiences” (p.72). In addition, Fast (2007) believes that the healthiest churches are those who’s “members ethnic identity does not cause a barrier to fellowship, and languages that index particular ethnic identities therefore pose a potential threat” (p.72).

### ***3.7.6 Niue Youth and the revitalisation of Vagahau Niue***

In creating a strong Niue youth identity through language given the influence of English as the dominant language, technology, and other factors such as migration and resettlement in a foreign country away from the main populous of Niue-speaking families and communities, it is critical for native speakers of the language who are ‘normally’ parents and grandparents of the youth, to find ways to connect and engage with each other which are non-threatening and respectful of both generations. This is reflected by McIvor (2009) who states that “communities must be supported to develop ‘whole community’ approaches [and that] languages are established as living, working languages in families and communities” (p.7). On the other hand, Anthony, Davis and Powell (2003) believe that it is important to continue modernizing Indigenous languages by incorporating contemporary expressions and concepts in order to capture young people’s attention and interest without having to revert to English. This is a critical factor in ensuring the revitalisation of *Vagahau Niue* and its return to being a healthy Pacific language that can be removed from the UNESCO list of endangered languages.

### 3.8 Summary

PARTS OF THE LILI	NIUE CONTEXT	RESEARCH METHOD
	<p><i>Tala tuai</i>– The fifth circle of the <i>lili</i> represents the <b>history</b> of the <i>Ekalesia</i> church in Auckland and on Niue, and the significance it has for the Niue people in both communities.</p>	<p><i>Fuluhi ki tua ke kitia mitaki a mua (Looking to the past informs the way we move forward)</i> – This chapter captures the <b>literature review</b> for this research. It incorporates existing knowledge on the topic within the wider context of language regeneration and other endangered Indigenous languages. It also examines the church as a language domain.</p>

While some languages go through some sort of shift, some languages experience at a much more rapid pace. Although global frameworks may give rights to languages, minority groups in particular struggle to maintain their languages, both in their own countries as in their new homes. There are various factors that hinder maintenance of languages such as the reduction of functional domains for language use, and the attitudes home communities may develop for their heritage languages in favour of more dominant languages such as English.

Language plays a key tool for communication; it is the primary expression of cultural identity. Language sets us apart in a multicultural society like New Zealand. Sadly, throughout the world the survival of minor languages has become a challenge for families and communities. The languages of the Pacific, such as *Vagahau Niue*, are struggling for its existence in the Western world, even in New Zealand. Perley (2013) states that “remembering the voices of the ancestors is an invocation of those voices, by bringing the past into the present” (p.265), for the survival of the future.

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## CHAPTER 4

### KO E TAU AGA FAKAMOTU KE ATIHAKA E VAGAHAU NIUE

#### *Nurturing the Niue language through culture*

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*“Ko e vahā loto mahani mitaki ko e fakaveaga he mafola ko e uho he matutakiaga he  
taha ke he taha fakafetuiaga”*

(Niuean Working Group, 2012, p.6)

“Good relationships are the foundation of peace, which is precious in connecting one  
another”

(Niuean Working Group, 2012, p.6)

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In order to capture the voices of Niue youth, Niue church ministers and Niue church elders, who are the minority, those voices who exist outside the mainstream dominant society– it was decided that emphasis would be given to the theoretical framework of social phenomenology, specifically on the social phenomenology of Alfred Schütz, which is based on what Jesus et al. (2013) describes as “understanding the action of individuals in the social world, having as reference the relationships among subjects in everyday experiences” (p.736). This chapter will consist of two parts. Part one will present the research methodology selected for use in this study and the reasons why this methodology was chosen. Part two will outline how the research was carried out and some of the questions that arose in this process.

#### **4.2 Part One: Methodology**

##### ***4.2.1 Phenomenology***

Phenomenology is a research methodology that falls into the category of qualitative research. It focuses on people’s perceptions, attitudes and beliefs, feelings and emotions, and the meanings people attach to particular objects, events or phenomena (Duckham & Schreiber, 2016). Phenomenology is concerned with the interaction of human experiences, where the phenomenon is generally “oriented toward the natural world – [using the] sensory experience in what people see, feel, hear, taste and smell” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p.8). Duckham and Schreiber (2016) further add that “one would not use conscious intention to gain understanding but instead would focus on

lived experience as a path to understanding phenomena” (p.59). It is less concerned with the ‘essence of experience’ but rather on how “people make sense of their worlds through multiple methods that are interactive” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p.8). According to Jesus et al. (2013) “every person, during his whole life, sees the world from the perspective of his own interests, motives, desires, ideological and religious commitments” (p.736), which allows for new understandings and theories to be developed (Morse & Richards, 2002) as this is an important aspect of social phenomenology that concerns the way people interpret social phenomena. This approach is very much in line with the Pacific world-view which sees new research paradigms using Pasifika epistemological underpinnings in order for final research outcomes to be achieved successfully (Sauni, 2011). Patton (2002) focuses on the idea that the phenomenon which is the focus of social phenomenological research, may be in the form of an emotion, a relationship, a programme, an organisation or even a culture. Therefore, for this research, the phenomenon focuses on the question that is, how important through the *Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue* and PIC churches is the regeneration of *Vagahau Niue* for Niue youth in Auckland, New Zealand, and in Niue as the homeland? The aims are to explore how humans make sense of experience (that is; their perceptions of *Vagahau Niue* through the church) that will help to transform their experience, “bringing a body of knowledge that is available and accessible according to the biographical situation of the subject” (Jesus et al., 2013, p.737). This is largely due to the fact that languages are associated with people and their ability to acquire language and in this case specifically, the social phenomenon of knowing a language is associated with being embedded in cultures and Indigenous peoples identities.

Moreover, Lancy (1993) describes social phenomenology as a holistic approach which captures peoples “lived experiences of the social world and the meanings people give these experiences from their own perspectives” (Corti & Thompson, 2004, p.326). The researcher chose this research focus largely because of the reports of language loss in Niue communities in New Zealand, more specifically in Auckland, as well as the language shift in the homeland. So the question is then asked, how important is the role of the different *Ekalesia* churches to Niue youth, Niue church ministers and Niue church elders for the maintenance of the Niue language and the relationship it creates within these religious domains?

#### **4.2.2 Key assumptions**

First, according to phenomenology, the reality of day to day encounters is a “philosophical tradition that focuses on understanding essential features of the world” (Duckham & Schrieber, 2016, p.55). How people interpret their world is a result of how they would construct their world, and their lived experiences. According to Eatough and Smith (2008), our understanding of phenomena is always due to the existing knowledge that we develop through our experiences. In line with this, Niue and Pacific people are likely to have had different experiences and world-views to other groups, especially from the dominant mainstream society. As described by Patton (2002);

Initially, all our understanding comes from a sensory experience of phenomena, but that experience must be described, explicated and interpreted. Yet, descriptions of experiences and interpretations are so intertwined that they often become one. Interpretation is essential to an understanding of experience and the experience includes the interpretation. Thus, phenomenologists focus on how we put together the phenomena we experience in such a way as to make sense of the world and, in doing so; develop a world view (p.106).

Secondly, within a qualitative and phenomenological research paradigm, the experiences of all individuals involved in the study are taken as significant data in their own right. Hammersley (1992) argues that qualitative research is reliable data that is taken from the point of view of the people that are studied, rather than having it presented from the perspective of the researcher. This allows every person to have their unique and own realities, as well as their own truths that are seen as being significant in their own right. As described by Morse and Richards (2002), qualitative methods “seek to discover understanding or to achieve explanation from the data instead of [coming] from prior knowledge or theory” (p.2). In this instance, this will show the importance of these experiences and encounters as being important, valid and significant. Kielborn (2001) adds that these experiences help to give meaning and understanding of the social phenomena around us, with as little disruption to the natural setting as possible. Therefore, it is the intention that the idea of people’s different experiences and values will be regarded with the utmost importance to this study. As Spradley writes (as cited in Appleby, 2015), “I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as

you explain them” (paragraph.1). As a researcher, this is paramount in order to create new knowledge and develop on new insights.

From a phenomenological perspective, no event or occurrence will be trivial or unimportant. The perceptions of the Niue *fuata*, *matua faifeau* and *tiakono* consulted for the purpose of this study, will be and are, significant; the intention of this study is for their voices to be heard. The purpose is not to look for universal understandings from these participants, but more to gain an understanding that is "exhilarating, deeply-moving and can change the researcher's world-view" (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p.11). The research aims are to capture what these three groups believe the important role of the *Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue* and the PIC churches is for the regeneration of *Vagahau Niue* for youth in Auckland New Zealand and in the homeland of Niue, with the intent that their truths and realities will assist the maintenance of the Niue language in the future.

The third dimension of phenomenology that is important to this study is the assumption of what Patton (2002) describes as an essence or essences to shared experiences. This means that the phenomenon being encountered is not only an experience of an individual but is a shared experience with *magafaoa* (family), *faituga* (church) and *komuniti* (community groups). The participants in this study may have differing views and experiences, but it is being identified as a Niue individual and the passion for *Vagahau Niue* which provides a sense of solidarity with the experience that they all share. Therefore, the different knowledge that each individual will contribute to this study, will be analysed and compared in order to identify the essences of the phenomenon that it will be possible to “transform data into information that can be used” (Rossman & Rallis, 1998, p.11). In hindsight, the essence of this study will be focussed on the perceptions of the importance of the church and the different elements that can enable language regeneration for youth in Auckland and in the homeland of Niue.

### **4.3 Pacific methodology**

When conducting Pacific research it is important to consider Pacific knowledge systems and conceptual frameworks. There is considerable advocacy for the use of Pacific methodologies that according to McFall-McCaffery (2010) “provide for

perspectives of Pacific peoples to be represented in culturally appropriate ways” (p.2). Thaman (1998) emphasises this notion by adding that Pacific approaches are based on Pacific world-views, values, knowledge systems and ethical principles. Laenui (2000) proposes that this is a crucial development in new ways of knowing and by being able to restore ancestral teachings, values, and goals that were once lost. In addition, Nabobo-Baba (2004) also emphasises the importance of Pacific researchers to develop and utilise their Pacific ways of knowing as "contemporary phenomena of our chants, genealogies, stories, landscapes and names suggesting centuries of interdependence and networking exchanges among our Pacific peoples" (p.17).

According to Smith (2004), in order to build capacity and capability of Pacific research, there needs by definition to be a “building of networks, synergies, and collaborations within and across parts of the Pacific as well as building the researchers and the systems that support research within and across Pacific communities” (p.14). In her view, Smith (2004) argues that the “Pacific has been authored by non-Indigenous Pacific scholarship in such ways that have marginalised the Indigenous knowledge systems of the Pacific and Pacific authority over its own knowledge” (Smith, 2004, p.5). Similarly, Kurtz (2013) suggests that in order for authentic Indigenous research to be developed and led by “Indigenous scholars, researchers and community members” (p.219), non-Indigenous scholars, researchers, and community members need to be included in order to develop their understanding of Indigenous knowledge and theories.

In contrast, Berryman, SooHoo, and Nevin (2013), suggest that "traditional Western research frameworks have given little regard to participants' rights to initiate, contribute, critique, or evaluate research" (p.1). Vaiolati (2006) in agreement argues that for Pacific peoples, “the historical pattern of data collection, knowledge creation and theorising has been established by outside researchers gathering Pacific peoples stories. They then try to make sense of the stories, and retell them, from their own sense-making stances” (p.22). Smith (1999) draws on this with the example of the Māori people, who have long been researched using western produced theories which have not only dehumanized them but have privileged Western ways of knowing and undervaluing the strength and validity of the Māori language, knowledge, and culture. As suggested by Bishop and Glynn (1999) in these cases, the researchers will become the tellers of the researched stories, the narrators and the people who decide what

represents the narrative. Similarly, Pacific researchers “endeavouring to create Pacific knowledge with their own people, must strictly adhere to research methods that are foreign to them” (Vaiotei, 2006, p.23). Vaiotei further notes that:

Research methodologies that were designed to identify issues in a dominant culture and provide solutions are not necessarily suitable in searching for solutions for Pacific peoples, whose knowledge and ways of being have unique epistemologies, as well as lived realities here in Aotearoa (p.22).

Sanga (2004) is in agreement and emphasises that Indigenous Pacific research is based “on a set of a presupposition that are based on specific ideas of time, space, self, self-image, and attitudes towards others” (p.43). In the Pacific world view, time is seen as integral to relationships where “Pacific peoples see their ancestors, including those long gone, as members of their worlds and masters of their environments” (Sanga, 2004, p.43). Furthermore, he sees Pacific people as diverse who “have their own worlds that they influence and control” (p.43). This places them in a space that is distinct from one another, but more importantly, is different to other peoples that are not of the Pacific. In acknowledging that Pacific people have different backgrounds, experiences, and views, Sauni (2011) suggests that the:

. . . patterns of individual and group behaviour, Pacific values, Pacific notions of time, Pacific understandings of knowledge and its value, ownership for things tangible and intangible, gender class and age relations are all important aspects which need to be considered and should be included when conducting research involving Pasifika peoples (p.54).

In addition, Rigney (as cited in Smith, 2005) believes that “decolonizing methodologies privilege Indigenous knowledge, voices, experiences, reflections, and analyses of their social, material and spiritual conditions” (p.87). By doing so, it increases the presence, visibility, and voice of Indigenous people (Brown & Strega, 2005; Kovach, 2005; Smith, 1999a) while protecting Indigenous knowledge.

#### ***4.3.1 Pacific methodologies in the now***

Now that Pacific world-views and knowledge systems are receiving what Sanga (2004) believes as greater “global, regional, national and local attention, so too does the call for recognition of these systems” (p.41). In addition to this, Tupuola (1994) emphasises that there is a need to move away from the perception that Pacific

methodologies are unscholarly. Smith (2004) advocates for a Pacific research community that depends on engaging with the right people in the right place and at the right time. She notes that:

Building a research community is an important part of building research capacity and research culture. The purpose of a research community is that a researchers need to communicate and contest ideas, they need to operate in a system where some basic values about knowledge and research are understood and shared, they need an informed audience, they need leadership and mentorship, they need rewards and acknowledgments, they need to be assured that their pursuit of knowledge is understood by at least one community other than their own families and that they need to nurture students or emerging research into a social system and finally they need to know their basic literature or body of knowledge. In other words, they need to breathe, talk, drink and eat knowledge and research and scholarship. It can be conceptualised as simply a group with who, a Pacific researcher can share conversations about their ideas and research activities (pp.8-9).

Accordingly, Berryman, SooHoo, and Nevin (2013) express that as Indigenous researchers, we "are answerable to our participants and the trust they invested in us and the co-determinations of the purpose, benefits, and dissemination of the research" (p.19). It is noted by Asiasiga (2007) that at present, Pacific research is framed within a Western cultural context, which reflects the position of Pacific people and researchers as a minority group on the margins of society (being viewed in a negative context). Asiasaga (2007) notes that:

. . . decisions about what is considered knowledge and what should be researched are made for us and not by us. Standpoint theory suggests that the knowledge of those located at the margin rather than the center is important because that has been 'excluded from ruling relations of power' and the position of exclusion offers quite a different perspective (p.95).

In addition, Smith (1992) develops this idea further by arguing that non-Indigenous researchers have the "power to distort, make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate, and to draw conclusions based, not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value judgments and often downright misunderstandings. They have the potential to extend knowledge or perpetrate ignorance" (p.53). This ultimately puts Pacific researchers into a position of "‘straddling two worlds’: between the traditional knowledge of the Pacific world, and that of being a migrant and minority in the new world" (Asiasiga, 2007, p.175), as they face the dilemma of "advocating for Pacific research, yet are also products of Western education and research" (Thaman, 2000, p.51). As a result of this,

Mila-Schaaf and Hudson (2009) propose the idea of a ‘negotiated space’ where mediation between Western and Pacific ways of knowing can take place, as the ‘negotiated space’ can be seen as a connection with intersecting interests and negotiations in between different ways of knowing and meaning making it "a negotiated space between epistemologies" (p.7). They argue that this space allows Pacific people to “establish connections- as well as ‘breaks’- from dominant Western ways of thinking” (p.8). In light of this, Pacific researchers are arguing recognition of the need for Pacific strategies to address Pacific challenges in what is necessary as a result of Pacific research that has been historically underpinned by Western values, beliefs and methodologies (Smith, 1999). This has been done by exploring and documenting different models (i.e. Teremoana Maua-Hodges Tivaevae model, 2000; Konai Helu-Thaman’s metaphor of Kalala, 1992).

#### ***4.3.2 Indigenous framework –The Lili Model***

**Figure 4: The Lili Model**








Source: Personal Collection, 2017



The *lili* is a round mat that has been woven or plaited using pandanus leaves and is used as table-mats or as a wall decoration. They are sold at show-days in Niue weaved carefully by the Niue woman (figure 2). The *lili* has been selected because of its cultural significance to this research. Importantly, it is an artefact that is made by communities in Niue, so it gives recognition to the Niue people and their language and

culture, including their resilience in migrating and resettling in New Zealand. The circles symbolise the methods and methodology being used in this study, both Western and Indigenous, as well as the topic itself, acknowledging the *Ekalesia* church and the Niue youth. Every second circle of The Lili Model symbolises a specific aspect of the research. This is depicted below.

Table 8: Parts of the *lili* and corresponding research methods

PARTS OF THE LILI	NIUE CONTEXT	RESEARCH METHOD
	<b><i>Moui Fakagaaga</i></b> - The centre of the <i>lili</i> represents the <b><i>spiritual journey</i></b> that is inclusive of the church, the domain where the Niue language is the dominant language both in Auckland and in the homeland.	<b><i>Ko e Vagahau Niue ko e haaku a taoga mahuiga</i></b> ( <b><i>My treasured language: Vagahau Niue</i></b> ) This chapter introduces the topic and the researcher's journey with <i>Vagahau Niue</i> , and the context in which this research is framed.
	<b><i>Fakapaēa</i></b> – The third circle of the <i>lili</i> represents the <b>migration</b> of the Niue people to New Zealand. The <b>church</b> became the place where Niue people congregated as a place of familiarity with their homeland. It is both important on Niue and here in Auckland, as a way of maintaining cultural ties and traditional values with the island homeland.	<b><i>Niue Nukutūtaha: Maka he Pasifika</i></b> ( <b><i>Niue island: Rock of the Pacific</i></b> ) – This chapter refers to the <b>context of Vagahau Niue</b> in terms of the status of the language in Auckland and back on Niue. This is inclusive of the language shift that has occurred with the language in both countries.
	<b><i>Tala tuai</i></b> – The fifth circle of the <i>lili</i> represents the <b>history</b> of the <i>Ekalesia</i> church in Auckland and on Niue, and the significance it has for the Niue people in both communities.	<b><i>Fuluhi ki tua ke kitia mitaki a mua</i></b> ( <b><i>Looking to the past informs the way we move forward</i></b> ) – This chapter captures the <b>literature review</b> for this research. It incorporates existing knowledge on the topic within the wider

		context of language regeneration and other endangered Indigenous languages. It also examines the church as a language domain.
	<p><i>Aga fakamotu</i> - The seventh circle of the <i>lili</i> represents <b>Niue culture</b> embedded in the language and the significance of these values in the carrying out of data gathering. It also encompasses cultural events and rules that are significant to the church.</p>	<p><i>Ko e tau Aga fakamotu ke atihake e Vagahau Niue (Nurturing the Niue language through culture)</i> This chapter describes <i>talanoa</i> as the <b>Indigenous methodology</b> to gather data and The Lili Model, used to analyse data and identify significant themes from the data.</p>
	<p><i>Atuhau Fooou</i>– The ninth circle of the <i>lili</i> represents the <b>youth</b> that are living in Auckland and on Niue.</p>	<p><i>The Niu-Generation: Ko e tau fuata ko e tali he fakamauaga he Vagahau (The Niu-generation: the answer to the revitalisation of the Niue language)</i> This chapter discusses the <b>findings of the youth on Niue and in Auckland, New Zealand</b>. This chapter is significant as the 2013 census showed that Niue had the highest percentage of New Zealand-born Niue, compared to the other islands of the Pacific with 78.9%.</p>

	<p><i>Atuhau fakamua atu</i> – The eleventh circle of the <i>lili</i> represents the <b>Niue-born generation</b> living in Auckland and Niue.</p>	<p><i>Tau pou malolō: Ko e takitaki mitaki ke milino e atuhau (Pillars of strength: Great leaders to calm the generation)</i></p> <p>This chapter discusses the <b>findings of the Niue deacons, elders and ministers</b>. The significance of this chapter is to show how important the older Niue native-speaking generation is to the preservation of the Niue language, especially within the church.</p>
	<p><i>Puhala fakagahua-</i> The twelfth circle represents the ways in which the <b>church is significant</b> in the revitalisation of <i>Vagahau Niue</i>.</p>	<p><i>Ko e lologo foou: A niu-song</i> – This chapter captures the analysis and discussion of key findings from the three participant groups, and concludes with some recommendations for the church, Niue youth and Niue community to consider implementing to ensure the health and wellbeing of the <i>Vagahau Niue</i>.</p>

The Lili Model is a cultural artefact that symbolises the Niue language and customary practices. It serves as a symbolic Indigenous resource that not only integrates the views of the participants, but also weaves their voices into the *lili* itself.

In order to align this study with the concepts of Pacific research, the dialogue with the Niue participants will employ the *talanoa* (talk together) methodology as a culturally appropriate way to carry out the research, as a methodology that transcends “views and experiences...that inform, challenge and validate our way of thinking. Through this

approach of sharing we are empowering, enabling, informing, encouraging to re-create and refine our experiences for the purpose of being open to transformation” (Filipo, 2004).

#### **4.4 Talanoa**

In the Pacific, the concept of *talanoa* is to talk together and belongs to the phenomenological family (Vaiotei, 2006). Vaiotei defines it as being philosophically based, that is, “collective, oriented towards defining and acknowledging Pacific aspirations, while developing and implementing Pacific theoretical and methodological preferences for research” (p.25). The *talanoa* represents a similar approach to narrative research, with a direct contrast to a question-answer type survey methodology and is a strategy most Pacific people are familiar with which “removes the distance between researcher and participant” (Vaiotei, 2006, p.25). Vaiotei (2006) insists that *talanoa* allows for Pacific people to help "identify the issue, then co-create knowledge and solutions for themselves" (p.32), and in doing so, supports Pacific people to feel as if they have had meaningful engagement in the research process.

##### **4.4.1 Story, telling, and conversation**

The *talanoa* method is also referred to by Havea (2010) as interconnected events such as story, telling and conversations. Havea (2010) explains that these three events are "not *talanoa* without the other two...each cannot eventuate without the other two” (p.11). The *talanoa* method can include conversations between people, family and village discussions, reconciliation processes, as well as cultural and ceremonial formalities. The *talanoa* allows people to engage in “social conversation which may lead to critical discussions or knowledge creation that allows rich contextual and inter-related information to surface as co-constructed stories” (Vaiotei, 2006, p.24). Moreover, it can be seen as a form of face-to-face semi-structured interviews that encourages a priority for relationship building so that participants are assured that what they share during the *talanoa* is significant, important and valued. This is in line with the Western idea of establishing a rapport – where Clandinin and Connelly (1994) highlight the importance of the relationships between researchers and their audience cannot exist without first building relationships between researchers and participants in order to raise the expectations that researchers and participants have of each other, that

“promotes mutual accountability, which adds to the trustworthiness and quality of the research” (Vaiotei, 2006, p.26).

#### **4.4.2 Fostering Relationships**

As previously mentioned, *talanoa* is about nurturing the social bonds and fostering relationships between the researcher and participant that "holistically intermingles researcher' and participants' emotions, knowledge and experiences" (Vaiotei, 2006, p.24). For this research, *talanoa* was the most ideal and appropriate way for the researcher to establish the relationships of the participants in this study, and build the respect and understanding of the knowledge these participants were able to contribute to, not only as individuals but as Niue people. According to Vaiotei (2006), a successful *talanoa* constitutes, *tala* (command, tell, relate, inform, announce) and *noa* (freely, openly) which creates the space and the conditions to do this. In this case, when a person comes to a *talanoa*, there is always an underlying understanding that there will be talk, chat, and discussion of an important issue with the difference being there is no rigid framework to these conversations that comprise of a vast wealth of knowledge of their past, their present, and their future hopes and aspirations. Māhina (2004) proposes: “*folaloa ē falaka e alea ē kainga*” (roll out the mat openly and provide a front for our competing but interlaced points of view to passionately fight it out in our joint intellectual struggle). By definition this saying highlights the *talanoa* as creating the opportunity to “probe, challenge, clarify and re-align views” (Vaiotei, 2006, p.25).

#### **4.4.3 Anchored by cultural values**

The methodology of *talanoa* resonates with the traditions of Pacific culture as being based on oratory and verbal negotiations which have deep traditional roots to the Pacific. According to Vilitama (2015) the concept of *talanoa* in the Niue context can be described as a value of *vahaloto* which has to do with “time and place, as well as the space between and among people” (p.258). He further adds that the concept of *vahaloto* is a “time of conversing, exchanging ideas, and using words and song to mark the occasion and create, exchange and share meaning” (Vilitama, 2015, p.258). The concept of *talanoa* in this case allows for Niue people to have their histories which are through oratory, songs, liquidity transmitted for generations to come (Vilitama, 2015).

In being able to employ the *talanoa* methodology with the research participants of this study, the researcher was able to give them the *fakalilifu* (respect) that they deserve, regardless of role or status. The flexibility of the *talanoa* also ensured that there was sufficient time for participants to raise their own issues and concerns and be comfortable doing so within the space we were in. Acknowledging and respecting that the participants had various experiences with the language or during times where they used the language made the research that much more significant and important where the values that they placed on their experiences were highly monumental to the discussion. By doing so, it allowed the researcher to understand the “*laumalie* (essence, spirit, wairua) of concepts, notions, emotions or expressions” (Vaiolleti, 2006, p.32) shared by the participants, that will in turn have considerable impact to the study.

#### **4.5 Ethical considerations**

Before the fieldwork and *talanoa* took place, approval from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) was sought in accordance with the Guidelines for the approval of ethics committee in New Zealand. Pursuant to this application, the following processes were adhered to: informed and voluntary consent by the research participants (see Appendix A and B), respect for the rights of privacy and confidentiality for the participants and the data provided by the participants, minimising harm, truthfulness, including limitation of deception through consistent consultation, full and open transparency regarding the purpose, use and forms of data provided by the participants, as well as social and cultural sensitivity to be demonstrated at all times towards each participant and their knowledge and life experiences. In addition, storage of all audio recorded interviews and transcripts recorded have arranged to be stored in a locked cabinet with the supervisor in WB409 on level 4 of WB Building. Six years after completion of this thesis research, all audio recordings and transcripts will be destroyed by being shredded.

#### **4.6 Part Two: Research process**

##### **4.6.1 Sample**

As mentioned, this thesis is a qualitative study which comprises of a small sample size, compared to a quantitative study which focuses on large sample sizes that are selected at random. As Ritchie, Lewis, Elam, Tennant and Rahim (2014) describes, small sample sizes are selected purposively for in-depth study, where they have "particular

features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and questions which the researcher wishes to study” (Bryman, as cited in Ritchie et al., 2014, p.113). The aim of this study is to present a small number of in-depth case-studies where the information is rich in detail and the researcher will be able to draw out questions which underpin this study.

In terms of sample sizes, the aims were to have a larger youth sample size (those of who are usually the unheard voices), and a smaller minister and church elder sample group. In the case of this research, a total of ten participants were sought after. For the youth, the researcher anticipated involving up to five Niue youth. The eligibility criteria for this group included: they must identify as being of Niue descent, be of an age between 18-24 years old and are active members of an *Ekalesia* church in Auckland, New Zealand, and in the homeland Niue. The researcher hoped for a balance of male and female, a mix of youth born in Niue and those born in New Zealand, and with those who spoke the language and those who were passive speakers of the language. The researcher viewed these factors to be of importance to not only Niue language learning, but because it provided a glimpse as to how the youth can be the carriers of the Niue language into the future.

For the ministers, the researcher aimed to locate two ministers, with ministries in the island homeland of Niue, as well as in Auckland, New Zealand. The church elders sample was to comprise of those who were ordained in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand as well as members who were ordained or are part of the *Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue* (under the auspices of the Congregational Christian Church of Niue) (World Council of Churches, 2017). The *talanoa* aims were to capture the views of these three groups not with the view to compare them, but more to the point was to be able to identify differences as well as similarities amongst and between these groups which could be used for further discussion.

#### **4.6.2 The church**

The churches that the participants were a part of, were purposely chosen as either *Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue* (EKN) churches in the homeland as this church represents 67 percent of the total population in the 2011 census (Statistics Niue, 2012), and churches under the umbrella of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PIPC) as the

partner church that Niue migrants first attended. As shown in the two tables below (Table 9 and Table 10) the *Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue* denomination is the most popular among the residents on the island. Likewise, with the Niue population in New Zealand, the Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed churches were the popular religious affiliations over the three census years. However, in 2013 the number of people attending the Presbyterian Church declined from 48 percent to 27.2 percent which is a 20 percent difference in the number of Niue people identifying with a religion in New Zealand from 2006 and 2013.

Table 9: Percent of resident population in Niue affiliated with the *Ekalesia* denomination 2001 -2011

Year	Total Population	<i>Ekalesia</i> (%)	n = people
2001	1,736	63%	1,093
2006	1,538	62%	953
2011	1,460	67%	978

(Source: Statistics Niue 2012)

Table 10: Percent of Niue population in New Zealand identified as Presbyterian for the Census 2001, 2006, and 2013

Year	Total population	<i>Presbyterian</i> <i>/Congregational/Reformed</i> (%)	n = people
2001	20,100	49%	9,849
2006	22,473	48%	6,774
2013	23,883	27.2%	6,153

Source: Statistics New Zealand (2002; 2007; 2014)

## 4.7 Recruitment

A snowball sampling technique was used to locate the sample. For the Niue participants, initial contact was made with the Director General of Social Services in Niue, as a point of reference for the guidelines for carrying out research in Niue. As the researcher entering unknown territory, they were conscious of being transparent and seeking the right permission for the research to be carried out, with the intention that the information provided was going to be used primarily for research. The researcher was most fortunate to have communicated using the *Vagahau Niue* as a means of locating potential participants that were to be important voices towards this study. By

doing so, sound advice was provided by the director, with a request that a copy of the thesis upon completion was sent to the homeland as a resource for *Tāoga Niue*, a Government Department that supports and promotes the use and preservation of the Niue culture, language, and tradition (Tāoga Niue, 2016). Once ethics approval was received, contact was made with the two ministers in Niue, as well as a contact that was recommended by one of the Auckland participants. Participation in this research was on a voluntary basis. The specific research requirements for potential participants were that:

- The participants had to identify as being of Niue descent
- The participant attends an EKN or PIPC church
- The participant is a minister or holds a role within the EKN or PIPC church (e.g. church elders, youth leader etc).
- The participant is aged between 18-24 years to participate as a youth participant

The rationale of these terms took into consideration that the ministers were of key significance within their parishes or *Ekalesia* and they had a sound knowledge of the Niue language as well as the Niue culture. The youth were considered between the ages of 18-24 years as the group where language shift was occurring and who were likely carriers of the language. The specific request for this age bracket was from the experiences of the researcher who was aware of the declining population of language speakers in Auckland as demonstrated in the census statistics (see Table 7).

#### **4.7.1 *Tau matua faifeau (Church Ministers)***

Three ministers were sought after for this research, two in Niue and one in Auckland, who all agreed to partake in the research. The meeting with one of the ministers in Niue provided the chance for the researcher to outline the aims of the research, and get consent for their participation. This discussion allowed for an open conversation to take place, whereby the researcher was welcomed into the cultural space, where a rapport was established that was based on their work in the ministry and the researcher's journey through postgraduate studies. Meeting with the minister, brought about a mutual exchange of ideas that helped frame the researchers indicative questions for the research. Furthermore, the minister suggested that another minister from the outer village on the island be consulted, especially given his experience in the Niue language

and the history that he had about Niue and the church which he considered was of profound significance. The researcher followed up this suggestion and the minister agreed to participate, increasing the minister sample to three instead of the initial two.

#### ***4.7.2 Tau matua tiakono (Church Elders)***

When research is to be carried out with the Niue and other Pacific communities, there are processes and protocols that must be adhered to. It was initially discussed that a female minister would be consulted as a minister's voice as well as a voice for woman within the church. However, due to time constraints and availability, this was not possible. Therefore, two female church elders were consulted. This is highly significant, especially in the Pacific churches as there have been challenges to the “traditional male dominance of religious and lay leadership and governance structures” (Macpherson, 2011, p.4). As suggested by Macpherson (2011) it is the more “conservative Pacific-based churches, which restrict the formal influence of women within church governance” (p.4) as their traditional histories have informed the role of women within the church, as keepers of domestic duties. It is therefore important that female church elders were sought after, in order to gain a contrasting perspective compared to their male counterparts.

#### ***4.7.3 Tau fuata (The Youth)***

The youth sample for the youth in Niue was selected through a contact that was recommended by one of the participants in New Zealand. It was then; the contact was made via social media, as a professional address was not given. Through this encounter, the Niue contact (who was previously a committee member on the Niue National Youth Council) was able to provide two potential participants through their networks, and a meeting was held on the researcher's trip to Niue to discuss the research and the expectations of the youth who participated. A similar process was done with the youth in Auckland through community networks. The researcher was able to have contact with youth that attended the yearly *fonomotu* (Niue general meeting for churches under the PIPC as well as the EKN), and it was through this encounter that the researcher was able to locate potential youth participants that had met the criteria. Informal discussions were made about their education and the research in which they were interested in finding out more. It was at this point where engagement was sought and permission was

requested for their participation. This formed the group of five youth whose voices were critical for the success of this study.

#### 4.7.4 The final sample

The final sample then comprised of five youth (two from Niue and three from Auckland New Zealand), two church elders and three ministers (see Table 11 below).

Table 11: Research participant characteristics

Research Participants		Male (M)	Female (F)	Birthplace		Niue language First    Second		Total
<u>Youth</u>								
Youth 1	(Y1)	M		New Zealand		✓		
Youth 2	(Y2)		F	Niue			✓	
Youth 3	(Y3)		F	Niue		✓		
Youth 4	(Y4)	M		New Zealand			✓	
Youth 5	(Y5)	M		New Zealand		✓		5
<u>Elders</u>								
Elder 1	(E1)		F	Niue		✓		
Elder 2	(E2)		F	New Zealand		✓		2
<u>Ministers</u>								
Minister 1	(M1)	M		Niue		✓		
Minister 2	(M2)	M		Niue		✓		
Minister 3	(M3)	M		Niue		✓		3
TOTAL		6	4	6 - N	4 - NZ	8	2	10

## 4.8 Data Collection: Talanoa

### 4.8.1 Talanoa

For each participant, interviews were arranged to take place in public spaces or within their homes with an accompanied support person, as part of the Researcher's Safety Protocol (see Appendix C). Following discussion with the Niue contact for the youth participants, the interviews were held at the Niue High School (NHS) for (Y1) and within the home (Y2) as they were both school leavers on exam leave. For the three youth in Auckland, interviews were arranged to be carried out during the month of January 2017 as it coincided with the schools and universities still on holiday over the

Christmas break. In this case, the *talanoa* allowed for flexibility should the participants require the additional time.

Both the elders preferred to be interviewed during the weekend (E2), and in the evening (E1) so as not to collide with their work schedules as they had returned back to work following the festive season. The *talanoa* for E1 took place at the meeting room at McDonald's (Manukau, Auckland) as she was happy to share her knowledge and information in that space. Likewise the *talanoa* for E2 occurred at her home during a Saturday afternoon. For the ministers, both M1 and M2 stated that they would like to be interviewed together at the Millenium Hall in Alofi Niue Island as they were meeting at the location for a meeting later that day. M1 did not want the researcher to travel to the outer village and assured the researcher that it was convenient for the interview to take place at the hall. So a group *talanoa* session was held at the Millenium Hall which spanned nearly two hours. The *talanoa* with M3 took place at the Hollywood Café in Manukau, Auckland, and this interview lasted for an hour-and-a-half in duration.

#### **4.8.2 The *talanoa* process**

It was important that each *talanoa* was digitally recorded in order to ensure that the richness of every conversation was captured. These files were then transcribed and returned to each participant for checking and where indicated, changes were made. The process of recording was vital to ensure that the views of the participants were captured and provided a sound platform for their views to be shared in which the researcher believed could only be achieved through the process of recording and transcribing. These recordings are kept confidential. The researcher has sole access as the primary researcher. In addition, when the researcher and participant came together within a space to *talanoa*, it was not lost on the researcher that they were sharing their time and knowledge. The *talanoa* sessions were not restricted to any time limit but were free to carry on until it came to a point where it can be said, “*kua galo e humelie*” (the sweetness is lost) in this case the connection or the subject of the *talanoa* had been exhausted (Vaiioleti, 2006). Most of the *talanoa* in this study lasted around an hour, and only a few lasted nearly two hours – in which the flexibility of the *talanoa* allowed this.

#### **4.8.3 Cultural significance**

As in all Pacific cultures, acknowledgment must be given to God as a means of putting him in his rightful place. Niue people begin and end all *fakafetuiaga* (gathering) with a prayer and so each *talanoa* for this study opened and ended with a prayer as an offer of thanksgiving and for guidance during the *talanoa*. A prayer is a culturally appropriate way to begin any Niue meeting, function, *talanoa*, or gathering of any kind, and signifies the coming together in fellowship or being within the space of cultural importance. In order for a successful *talanoa* to be achieved, the researcher had to ensure that the rapport they had created or the relationships that they were fostering with the participants were valuable and significant; where their truths had essence or substance. This relationship was achieved in three ways; firstly, through the choice of language that they could use during their interviews, secondly, by establishing initial conversations (i.e. family, church, and village) that were used to break the ice providing an insight into the researcher's life and vice-versa. Lastly, there was the recognition of cultural reciprocity through offering a small gift as a token of appreciation for the participants' time, energy and knowledge sharing.

#### **4.8.4 Choice of language**

With regard to the *talanoa*, an opportunity was given to each participant as to the language they preferred to conduct the interview in. The researcher was able to converse with the participants in either *Vagahau Niue*, English or in both. All three ministers and one elder (E1) used *Vagahau Niue* throughout the duration of their *talanoa*. Two of the youth (Y1 and Y3) used the Niue language also, with occasional phrases in English. One of the youth (Y5) and the elder (E2) used a mixture of both English and *Vagahau Niue*. Of the remaining two youth (Y2 and Y4), they asked to have their interview in English.

#### **4.8.5 'Breaking the ice' and reciprocity**

In a bid to create a rapport with the participants, initial conversations took place at the commencement of each *talanoa* where we shared our respective backgrounds. In most cases, finding out that we had mutual friends and relatives in common, and their knowledge of the members of the church the researcher helped to forge a connection that enabled participants to feel at ease. This took away any anxieties and encouraged commonalities to be the premise of the *talanoa* encounter. Lastly, at the conclusion of

each *talanoa*, a *fakalofa tote* (small gift) was given to each research participant that signified a mutual reciprocity between the researcher and the participants. It was not by any way a *totogi* (payment) but as a *fakatautonu* (acknowledgment) of their time, energy and knowledge that they had shared. This was a token to thank them for what they had sacrificed in order to help and participate in this study. The *fakalofa* was in the form of monetary value, and although small, it was a token that was unexpected but much appreciated and accepted by each participant.

#### **4.9 Data Analysis**

Each *talanoa* was transcribed and returned to the research participants to read and make changes or seek clarification, if necessary. Once the participants were happy with their transcripts, they signed and returned them in order for me to proceed with the analysis of the data. Communication between the researcher and the research participants for checking interview transcripts was done in person and via email at the discretion of the participant[s]. The researcher then proceeded with the analysis of the data.


##### ***4.9.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis***

An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse the data. As stated by Eatough and Smith (2017) “Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is concerned with the detailed examination of personal lived experience” (p.193). According to Roberts (2013) any interpretation of the data is solely based on what the participants have expressed in their interviews (in this case *talanoa*), in which the role of the researcher is “to endeavour to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them” (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p.3). This required the researcher to engage in an interpretative relationship with the *talanoa* transcripts, in which they had to read and re-read the transcripts looking for themes, connecting themes and applying potential themes to the other interviews which were critical to achieving an interpretation of the experiences (Quinn & Clare, 2008). The transcripts were read numerous times in order to generate initial themes. During the first few readings, the researcher noted down on the side margins, the views of the participants which revealed a similar relationship to the research question. As the researcher gained more familiarity with the data in that each reading produced new insights they began highlighting emerging themes, using different highlighters for each theme in relation to

the research question. Once this was completed, a master list of themes with quotes from the *talanoa* was created using the research question list as a guide.

Following this step, the researcher had to identify possible connections between the themes which involved a more theoretical ordering of the data. During this process, some themes stood out as individual themes, whereas others formed clusters of interrelated themes which emerged during this process of analysis. The researcher was very conscious that the themes highlighted were of significance to the research topic, and new insights were being formed in order to elevate the research topic into a new space. The last part of the process was applying these themes across all three participant groups to see if there were any differences or commonalities of experience, and applying these back to the relevant literature.

#### 4.10 Summary

PARTS OF THE LILI	NIUE CONTEXT	RESEARCH METHOD
	<p><i>Aga fakamotu</i> - The seventh circle of the <i>lili</i> represents the <i>Niue culture</i> embedded in the language and the significance of these values in the carrying out of data gathering. It also encompasses cultural events and rules that are significant to the church.</p>	<p><i>Ko e tau Aga fakamotu mo atihake e Vagahau Niue (Nurturing the Niue language through culture)</i> This chapter describes <i>talanoa</i> as the <b>Indigenous methodology</b> to gather data and The Lili Model, used to analyse data and identify significant themes from the data.</p>

This chapter has highlighted the approaches of Pacific research, which the researcher has applied to this study. The researcher has drawn on Pacific concepts and world-views, creating an Indigenous research framework that helps to locate this research in for analysis through a Niue cultural lens. They used the Pacific methodology of *talanoa* to conduct the interviews as a way of removing any distance between the researcher and the participant that allowed for their experiences to be shared in a comfortable and Niue-led space. The *talanoa* sessions were with ministers, youth, and elders and produced significant data that was analysed using the IPA process. The building of a rapport with the participants was crucial as the researcher wanted the participants to

feel safe and comfortable and be in a space that they knew was unknown territory not only for them, but also for the researcher. As a first time researcher, networking and establishing ties in the homeland and with youth, was significant and prompted a desire to do justice to their experiences for their time and effort that they had given toward this study. It helped that I am a fluent speaker of the Niue language and through my upbringing in the language, I am aware of the appropriate cultural protocols to respect in the interview process. As noted, the ‘voices’ of the three groups were significant and are presented separately in this thesis to ensure these different ‘voices’ are heard. Chapters five and six will summarise the findings of all three groups.

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## CHAPTER 5

### THE NIU-GENERATION: KO E TAU FUATA KO E TALI HE FAKAMAUAGA HE VAGAHAU NIUE

*The Niu-generation: the answer to the revitalisation of the Niue  
language*

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*Kia taofi e koe ke mau e tau kupu ne fakaako atu ai a koe, aua neke tiaki e koe; kia  
omaoma a koe ki ai; ha ko e hāu a moui haia – Fakatai 4:13*

Take hold of my instructions; don't let them go. Guard them, for they are the key to life  
– Proverbs 4:13

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the views of youth interviewed about the value of *Vagahau Niue*. Questions and discussion included themes such as the generational influence, identity, as well as factors influencing Niue language maintenance. Other factors also featured such as Western influences such as the dominance of the English language and the importance of the use of technology to Niue youth within the church. The findings from the Niue youth highlight the rise of a 'Niu-generation' and presents the idea of how churches can retain and maintain *Vagahau Niue* for generations to come by adapting to the needs of youth. This chapter begins with a brief profile of the sample youth.

#### 5.2 The youth

As seen in Table 12 below, the youth group comprised of three males and two females. Their ages varied between 18 and 24 years of age. As discussed, the focus of the study is on youth because these are the years where language shift occurs and youth are important as carriers of the language. Three of the participants (Y1, Y4, and Y5) were New Zealand born and described themselves as living in a nuclear family; however, Y1 although born in New Zealand, was raised primarily in Niue. Two of the participants (Y2 and Y3) were born in Niue; however, Y3 travelled to New Zealand to further her tertiary education, and has not returned back to Niue since arriving to New Zealand in 2010. It is also noted that two of the participants have other ethnicities, but they identified themselves as being of Niue descent because their parents were fluent speakers of *Vagahau Niue* or they were raised in a Niue language speaking home. The churches these participants attend are also set out in Table 12. This is important given

that the focus of this study is the relationship between youth and the maintenance of *Vagahau Niue* through the *Ekalesia*. Two of the youth (Y1 and Y2) were members of the EKN church which conducted their services in the Niue language, with minimal English. Whereas, the other three youth (Y3, Y4 and Y5) attended PIPC churches that are multicultural in nature, but had dedicated language services in the Niue language.

Table 12: Student group background information

	<b>Y1</b>	<b>Y2</b>	<b>Y3</b>	<b>Y4</b>	<b>Y5</b>
<b>Male/Female</b>	Male	Female	Female	Male	Male
<b>Age (years)</b>	19	18	22	21	24
<b>Birthplace</b>	New Zealand	Niue	Niue	New Zealand	New Zealand
<b>Place of residence</b>	Niue	Niue	New Zealand	New Zealand	New Zealand
<b>Nationality</b>	Niue	Niue	Niue	Niue/Tongan/English	Niue/Cook Island
<b>Church</b>	EKN Liku	EKN Alofi	EkalesiaParnell	EkalesiaNewton	Ekalesia Mangere
<b>First language</b>	Vagahau Niue	English	Vagahau Niue	English	Vagahau Niue
<b>Main home language</b>	Vagahau Niue	Vagahau Niue, English	Vagahau Niue	Vagahau Niue, English	Vagahau Niue
<b>Proficiency in <i>Vagahau Niue</i>, self-identified (1 low, 10 high)</b>	9-10	5-6	9-10	4-5	9-10

*Vagahau Niue* was the first language for three out of the five youth (Y1, Y3, and Y5), and the main language spoken at home. The other two youth (Y2 and Y4) responded that a combination of *Vagahau Niue* and English was spoken in their home. Despite the youth language proficiency being at a high level of fluency, the majority felt it was much more comfortable to carry out the *talanoa* in the English language, but were comfortable with switching between the two languages in order to explain what they wanted to say in reference to their responses.

### 5.2.1 The youth voices

A number of points preface this discussion. Firstly, these youth said that our *talanoa* was the first time that they had been approached to discuss *Vagahau Niue* and their

experiences within the *Ekalesia* church, in regard to expressing their thoughts on how the church can be an important foundation for the *Vagahau Niue* language revitalisation process. The *talanoa* generated some very passionate discussion as the five youth were keen to have their voices heard in such a way that would be beneficial not only to the language but to the culture also. Secondly, the *talanoa* revealed some differences in views between the New Zealand-born and Niue-born youth as well as differing perceptions each had of the ‘other’, regardless of living in New Zealand or in Niue.

### **5.3 The value of Vagahau Niue through the church**

The youth valued the importance of the church as a positive influence towards promoting *Vagahau Niue* and highlighted the value of the generational influence (specifically *Matua's*) on the knowledge and transmission of the language and culture. Furthermore, they also placed value on the importance of *Vagahau Niue* as part of their identity, for communicating, for its relationship to culture, and for the way language reinforced their ‘sense of belonging’. These were two main themes that were highlighted very clearly in the youth responses and will be further discussed in further sections below.

#### **5.3.1 Generational Influence**

Each of the five youth viewed the church as being a place of influence, for the promotion of *Vagahau Niue* language and culture. The views of all youth discussed the differences of traditional and contemporary worship within Auckland New Zealand and in Niue, with the main factor being the level of influence that grandparents and parents had on the upbringing of their church life, thus encouraging their individual spiritual growth as well as helping them with understanding and learning the language.

#### **5.3.2 Church as an influence**

Two of the New Zealand-born youth (Y1, and Y5) together with the Niue-born youth (Y2 and Y3), described that the Christian faith played a vital role in their upbringing as well as enhanced their language learning:

*Church has definitely played a big part in my life. It's something we've been through with our mamatua's. It's not only church, it's Sunday school as well, it wasn't a choice we could make like not to go, it was a must that we go. (Y5)*

*Annual church events was a must to attend; whether it was Sunday school or White Sunday, it was compulsory as an upbringing within the church. Learning new words added to my pre-existing knowledge of the Niue language. (Y2)*

*...being raised in the way of life of attending church was quite strict, in a way that we can't miss church, it was something very important to my parents and for me as well. Maō lahi e tau fakaakoaga he tau mamatua haaku. I always remembered my dad saying omai noa ni e falu kō, for the sake of coming, ka ko mutolu ko e tau tama fakaako, ko e manako haaku ke fai maamaaga a mutolu ka e ko e nakai ō noa ni he tapu. (Y3)*

For Y3, the way of life was influenced by her father's 'tough love' approach for his children. Y3 discussed that the value her father had placed on attending church was in order to understand the importance of church life as being so much more than just attending church but to have a;

*...deeper connection with God, and understand the sermon, ke maama e kakano uho he lauga. (Y3)*

Similarly, the two youth living in Niue, highlight that the church has helped to shape their lives as the church and cultural practices along with the words from the bible have helped not only for worship and knowing how to pray, but has also served as life lessons and teachings towards their life, where they state;

*...ko e tau liogi ne lagomatai au he hoko mai he vahā loa. Mahuiga ke tapuaki I mua he Atua, mo e fakaako mai e kupu he tohi tapu. Kua maeke ke uta e tau fakaakoaga ia tuku i loto he moui haaku...ke tuku mau ni ke he loto. (Y1)*

*Being exposed to the language in the church acted as like a place to learn the language. (Y2)*

Furthermore, Y4 explains that the Ekalesia church was the only place that was able to encourage his language use and expose him to the Niue culture as he explains;

*It hit me like I needed to attend the Niue church because that's where the Niue hymns are sung, that's where the preaching is in Niuean. I wanted to be immersed in that so that I could feel Niuean again. (Y4)*

In contrast, Y1 believes that language can only be done through self-learning of the language, and being able to have the choice to speak the language.

*The encouragement to use the language comes only from parents both in the home and in the church. (Y1)*

### **5.3.3 Keeping to tradition to respect the past**

In hindsight, the youth responses also highlighted the significance of the differences between traditional and contemporary worship. For two of the youth (Y2 and Y4), their views about traditional worship questioned whether there needed to be a change in the way of traditional worship or in the way that the Niue services were structured in order to cater to the young people who were immersed in a society that had a modern influence in their interactions. They stated that;

*...the Ekalesia church that I'm attending is heavy with the language and only caters to the old people, like for the younger generation they're switching off during church services because they can't access what's going on, that accessibility is all in Niuean, and it's all slow and old. (Y4)*

*Some churches are becoming more modernised in order to get the young people involved and into the church. Because the church services are not in basic Niue language, so it's difficult for the children or young people to understand the language. Especially as there is a new generation who are different – kids now a days have their own opinion on things. Like for the youth now, they're becoming more modernised in terms of their worship, like with the use of musical instruments. (Y2)*

Moreover, the youth views (Y2, Y4 and Y5), see traditional worship as being culturally respectful to their matua's as a means of appreciating their knowledge. They state that;

*The church was the place where I learnt the value of respect, ko e fakalilifu ke he tau fakaakoaga he tau mamatua, ai maeke ke hiki. It's being able to remain true to traditional cultural practices and customs. Don't try and change just because the times have changed, it's what our parents are accustomed to. (Y3)*

Y4 also resonates with this notion by discussing the importance of respecting the knowledge of our matua;

*It's being respectful of their knowledge, in the way that you would show respect in the space that you walk in, being respectful of the way you hold yourself and present yourself. (Y4)*

*For me the importance of the church brings about our grandparents teachings, like we seem say a song we can remember, like something we'll listen to, and some of us love music and love our traditional hymns, like especially hymns from our own villages that have been taught to us, or we have picked it up from our mamatuas. (Y5)*

This view is also strengthened by Y2 and Y4 who insist that one of the most important values is to respect elders;

*I was brought up in the church where you are taught to respect elders, treating them with respect and using the Niue language with them is pretty unique and special. It really helped me and so it became a pre-existing knowledge or like it was natural to converse in the Niue language with elders. (Y2)*

*Being able to be in the Ekalesia church for me, I get to be around our matuas, which has made me speak the language more. I would just give it a go, so that if I was wrong, they could hopefully correct me. I picked up little phrases like monuina e aho, so little things like that I kept working on and improving on. (Y4)*

The youth responses further highlighted the value afforded respect that was extended to the language. Being able to respect the matua's were pinnacle for some youth as repositories of knowledge of both the Niue language and culture, and being able to learn the differences of formal and informal language. For Y3 and Y5 they expressed that the formal church language is a different type of language which they described as a;

*...fakalilifu language. It wasn't slang or everyday language...ko e fakafetuiaga tutala mo e Atua, nakai ko e talanoa, tuga he fano ke he vao. (Y3)*

For Y3 and Y5, being able to tell the difference in meaning between formal language and everyday language enhanced the Niue language for them. They expressed this by drawing a particular focus on church youth services or special events where *kotofa's* (responsibility) were given out such as *kotofa totou tohi* (bible reading), *kotofa liogi* (prayers) and *kotofa lauga* (giving the sermon). They said;

*...as I grew up, yes I knew the language, but it was how I could go to church and speak in front of the people at church, especially ka fai kotofa...I had to try to get used to speaking in a formal way in front of a crowd...it was as if the feeling changes for me.(Y5)*

*...it was another way of contributing to what I already knew, like the language at church was really formal and I got to learn that through youth services and activities at the church, it was as if it was normal that the kind of formal language that was also spoken was important and relevant (Y3)*

In addition, for Y3, Y4 and Y5, registering the language in a formal setting should be appropriate to the setting and or occasion. They explain;

*If we were brought up in a different way I would not appreciate more than what I'm doing now, especially when it comes to the language. Like ko e faituga koe mena fakatapu, ko e tau vagahau i loto he faituga ko e fakatutala mo e Atua, nakai ko e tala noa, tuga he fano ke he vao. (Y3)*

*You like really have to be respectful of the language, and knowing which language to use in which setting. You shouldn't bring the kind of language used at a informal Niue function into a place like the church..because what does that say to the kids when they hear it? You know, and it doesn't really reflect our matua's and what they taught our parents does it?. (Y4)*

*...understanding what people were talking and relating to, it was easy for me, like say what elders say at church when referring to the young people, I understood what they were trying to get through regardless of formality. There were different types of things they would say but had a sense of respect around their words, so I knew when it was formal and informal and I would respond accordingly. (Y5)*

Furthermore, Y5 highlighted that for him, language learning began within the home and was encouraged when he attended church activities as he explains;

*...for me church activities like the preschool, and youth, church services, white Sunday get together's, the kotofa's at church, which is the practicing during the week if it was a bible reading, practicing the lauga, prayer to have perfect for the day all helped me with how I learnt the language, and the way I was taught to use the language. (Y5)*

For Y3, she believed that living in a modern society should not take away the value from what is culturally appropriate and respectful to Niue. She expressed;

*If you value who you are, and that part of you, the part that church plays, you need to embrace it because no one's coming to do it for you...church really plays a big role in my way of life. I am able to express who I am as a Niuean and that's something very special to me.(Y3)*

## **5.4 Identity**

For four of the five youth, they saw *Vagahau Niue* as playing a huge part in their feelings of identity and sense of belonging as they expressed;

*Language is a huge part of your identity, when our matuas die, the only thing that will probably survive is the language, the thing that is going to be passed on, we're the only ones who speak the language and sing our songs.(Y4)*

*Kua lata a koe ke iloa e tau Aga fakamotu mo e Vagahau Niue, ke maeke ke matafeiga a koe ko e Niue. Ko e tau fakafetuiaga mo e faituga ke he tau puhala lologo, tau koli, tau tala tū fakaholo, aofia mo e tau matohiaga he tau tupuna, kua mua atu e mahuiga ke lata ai mo e fakamauaga he Vagahau Niue, (Y1)*

For Y1, knowing the culture and language helps to be identified as a Niue. The relationship between the church and language or fellowship with the church through songs, dances, genealogies and traditional stories all help with the maintenance of the language as he describes;

*...ke fakatumau e Vagahau Niue ke lata mo e tau atuhau i mua, lata ke iloa e tau puhala kehekehe nei ha ko e taha vala moui he Tagata Niue a ia. (Y1)*

Furthermore, he acknowledges that even though he was born in New Zealand, having moved to Niue at three years old and living there for most of his life has allowed him to be proud of his culture and language as he states;

*...fiafia kua nofo ā au i hinei...kua maeke ke matafeiga e au ā au ko e Niue, hakua leva he nofo ke motu. (Y1)*

Y1 has strong beliefs about living on the island that has allowed him to see the significance of being immersed within different language environments. He explains that without the language you cannot go anywhere in Niue and that it is vital to know the culture and language in order to know who you are as a Niue person. However, for some youth, (Y4) they find it hard to identify as a Niue as they may not be able to speak the language. He argues that;

*...some of our youth can't identify as Niuean, because they can't grasp the language, but then vice versa, if you don't have the language you can still think you are Niuean regardless of whether people say. People can't object to your genealogy and your tupunas. If you're Niuean blooded you are Niuean, you can claim that ancestry, regardless of how little and how much you know about it...the way I see it, it shouldn't be about your skill of the language but the effort and heart that you put into wanting to be Niuean. (Y4)*

In contrast, Y3 believes that the church plays a significant role in language maintenance and is able to be continued in the homeland as they are grounded in the church, as she expresses;

*If they want to learn the language and culture this is where they'll get it. For Niue youth in Niue, the language is able to be kept alive in the church because it's Niue, and they're grounded in church. (Y3)*

#### **5.4.1 Culture**

As is well documented, language, identity and culture are inextricably linked. One of the New Zealand-born youth (Y4) speaks strongly to this notion as he expresses that the Niue language and culture are one of the same thing and that it should not be separated. He states;

*Our whole culture interweaves so different values influence or contribute to our culture and language. It shouldn't be separated into language and culture. It interlinks and I feel that it's blurred and grey and when those areas aren't defined or locked down, then it has an effect on language and it has an effect on culture, but that's my personal opinion (Y4).*

Similarly, for Y1, the church and the language have a cultural connection, as in his experience, the church has helped him with his knowledge and use of the Niue language where he has become fluent in using the language and is confident with the different types of words that are used during services within the church. He explains that;

*If the language is done more often, you experience a lot of things and become more knowledgeable with the different Niue words. Fiafia ke fakaaoga e vagahau ke he motu hakua nonofo a tautolu ke he motu Niue, ti need ke fakaaoga e vagahau motu...ui e tau matua fakaaoga e Vagahau Niue hakua nonofo i Niue. (Y1)*

For Y3, having been raised in Niue and moving to New Zealand for further study, has seen an appreciation that language and culture go hand in hand and that the church encouraged her use of language as well as her knowledge of the culture. She expressed that;

*...around the church is everything that has helped me to develop who I am as a Niue person. Youth services especially helped build my confidence to use the language as well as learn the values that have contributed to my identity as a Niue woman. I think that's the same with Niue youth and kids, that they should become involved in the church and language to have an understanding of being Niuean and what it is like as well as knowing how to speak the language properly will help them with the foundation of building their spiritual growth. (Y3)*

Similarly, Y5 adds that churches should be keeping the youth involved in the church as a way of keeping them connected to their identity and allowing the church to be seen as a domain that can teach the youth the language and culture. He suggests that;

*..keep us involved within the church, so we can say yeah we want to learn the culture and the language. Like the fekau's in the church..don't look at children and say oh na tote e tama ia, ai lata ke age ai taha kotofa, or nah tote gaia e tama ia, ai tuku hifo e higoa ke lata ai mo e kotofa e. (Y5)*

#### **5.4.2 Sense of belonging**

*Vagahau Niue* and more specifically the church were also seen to reinforce a sense of belonging. Three youth remarked about being involved with the church or having a relationship with the church through language which appeared to be their way of reinforcing what they had in common – being proud of being Niue. They expressed that;

*...the church keeps us fuata's or me myself involved with the work of the church, in that way we know yeah we belong to this Ekalesia, like we may not attend church every Sunday, but then we still know oh yep we belong. Having a sense of belonging, different to everything else helps us young ones become involved in the church, the language and the culture. (Y5)*

*For me, the Ekalesa church had an impact on my life as a young adult. I grew up as a Catholic and attended different evangelical churches, however, I never really thought I belonged to the Ekalesia church. Like during white Sundays I would stay back and shy away because I felt like I didn't know enough. When I went to Niue for a trip for a show that I did, and when we performed everything clicked into place for me in terms of culture and language. I came back to New Zealand and was more passionate about the language, so I knew I needed to attend the Ekalesia church because that's where the Niue hymns are sung, that's where the preaching is in Niuean. (Y4)*

*For me I was raised in a family that have strong connections to the Christian faith, which was based in Niuean which helped me to strengthen the use of my Niue language. Being part of the youth community, you get to experience working as a team, sharing your thoughts, and getting to know them...it's like fellowshipping with Christ altogether using the language, which is cool. (Y2)*

#### **5.5 Factors influencing Vagahau Niue maintenance**

One of the New Zealand-born youth (Y4), speaks about the historical impact of colonisation on the language and the repercussions of assimilating to the English language. Similarly, all of the youth found that the English language and the Western

influence through technology have affected the way in which the new generation is responding to church services. These factors will be discussed below.

### **5.5.1 Western Influence**

The history of cultural oppression in Niue was not lost on one of the youth participants. For Y4 he recalled stories of his aunty not being allowed to speak in the Niue language and being punished if they were caught doing so. The lesson learnt through this experience as recalled by Y4 was that;

*The lesson learnt was traumatic and having that ingrained into your head, your mentality to want to speak the language would most likely change. They just listened and then conformed, but that was a different time, setting and circumstance, but that has now resulted in this generation having identity issues. (Y4).*

Y4 quickly realised that as soon as his parents came to New Zealand, they defaulted to the English language and only used the Niue language to each other when they should have been speaking it to their children. It is no secret that the English language has become a global language that has played a huge role in the shift of language that is currently being used by the new-breed of Niue generation in Niue and Auckland, New Zealand. All the youth saw English as being the main factor that affected language use and language security in the homeland of Niue and in Auckland as the youth were becoming reliant on English translations to understand sermons as well as church songs.

*...the Niue language is slowly being lost because the English language is being spoken more often. Once the English language is used, then there becomes confusion, it's important to keep the culture alive. (Y1)*

*Kids nowadays understand English than they do Niuean. (Y2)*

For the youth that live in New Zealand, their thoughts were that;

*...not much encouragement is given to Niue youth in New Zealand to actually know how to speak it [Vagahau Niue], as time goes on, the youth will need to understand why they're in church, and they can't understand it in the Niue language, so will look to an English explanation to understand the different meanings. (Y3)*

*...at my church the youth sing English songs during our Niue services, for me it's diluting the language cos they say Niuean is too hard. (Y4)*

*...like meetings at church, unless it's like tau fuata, it's never in Niuean, it's always in English, but like when a matua speaks then it's in Niuean or both in Niuean and English. It should be the same right throughout I think. (Y5)*

### **5.5.2 Technology**

The reluctance of some children to attend church has been highlighted by Y1 and Y5 where they state that;

*...like just looking at the church I attend, I reckon kids just come to church for the sake of coming to church. They come to church and then go home. There is nothing within our service that'll actually attract or get their interest in wanting to enjoy the service. Because our services are done in Niuean, some of the kids and youth don't really take much notice and will be on their tablets or phones. (Y5)*

*Some kids now go to church for the sake of going...they don't know the significance of going to church. I think this is caused by technology like tablets and phones which are pulling kids away from the church, or are not having an interest in the church. Like there is no enthusiasm or appeal that is leading them to the church. (Y2)*

*...I know for my little cousin, she switches off and plays on her phone, and that's because she can't access what's going on, that accessibility for her is all in Niuean. (Y4)*

## **5.6 Times are changing: A Niu-generation**

The church, for most of the youth, is seen to be an important influence in maintaining the language and the culture. However, their views also highlight that youth are becoming a generation that is moving with the changes of society and that there is an urgent need for churches to become more invested in trying to retain youth in order to maintain the language and culture. They suggest that;

*...once young people turn the age of 18 they start to think they're an adult. Ui pehē kua manatu fuata tei or fia fuata tei e tama ka hoko ke he 18 e tau. (Y1)*

*...we understand the modern times kua maama e tau hikiaga he tau magaaho. But it's rare to see Niue kids remain connected to the church, ke lagomatai e tau gahua he faituga. It's difficult to see youth coming together to the church, because the churches in New Zealand, or here in Auckland aren't really playing a big part in encouraging the youth to maintain the Niue language, (Y3)*

*There can be a change, but now, I reckon, things can change only if people are willing to make a change to it. But then at the end of the day, it's entirely up to the youth, whether they're interested or not. (Y5)*

*I feel like the church is slowly eroding. People are just dying, or when a matua dies then the whole family stops coming to church, then I think why? Don't you want to carry on your matua's legacy? But then I think maybe they don't know how to or weren't taught, there's no succession plan for when matuas die. Niuean's are living in the here and now rather than thinking about the future and the next generations to come. (Y4)*

Y3 explains that there will be vast differences in how the church can be the catalyst for the maintenance of *Vagahau Niue* both in Auckland and in the homeland of Niue. On the other hand, Y4 suggests that fostering positive encouragement in the church is vital for youth and their sense of knowing the language and being in a place of belonging, and adds that;

*...we're a different generation, we need to start being more vocal especially living in this multicultural society. I think our Niue churches may be influenced by other cultures moving into the future. It looks like soon we're going to be looking to other churches to see how they are doing their churches and copying it and then we're not going to know what's authentic or Niuean anymore...I feel it's up to us [youth] to reverse the change, and I don't think it's too late to reverse that change. (Y4)*

### **5.6.1 Moving through change**

For the three youth living in Auckland, they expressed that churches may need to find ways of interacting better with the youth or young people within the Ekalesia. Y3 believes that ministers are key to bridging the gap between the old people and the youth and she explains that;

*...ministers are in a position that can influence what happens in churches, no one else is going to come and teach...they're the ones that are leading the services, so it's their role to encourage the youth. (Y3)*

This is as a result of what Y3 sees in the Ekalesia in that she associates with those *kids* who know or can speak *Vagahau Niue* and therefore have an advantage, but for those that don't have the language, she asks, what are the churches doing for them? Furthermore, she adds that the young people are relying on the English language in order to understand what the minister is saying. She adds that;

*...ko e akoako ke fakamalolo as they are the ones ne lahi e maamaaga. They should be more proactive in encouraging language use. If no one has the idea, or the minister's don't, then it's not really helping the language.*

*Ministers are leading the people, they should be encouraging the youth too, to be more involved in youth services. (Y3)*

Similarly, Y4 notes that there needs to be a collaboration between youth and the *oldies* in order to bridge the gap. He suggests that ministers should appoint a *Vagahau Niue* teacher in the church and take the kids for 15 minutes of the service. He states that from his experience;


*The church is a stable place and a core place where your family flock to, it's a centre, and it can be used as an educational centre or in an educational way. Sunday schools may help, at present it's dent and dying, and not really engaging the kids. There is no buy-in from the youth either. Basically, it's the whole mentality of we tell you what to do and you do it, rather than us working together in collaboration. (Y4)*

In addition, Y5 believes that youth involvement in the church is important if language and culture are to be maintained. He argues that there needs to be a change to involve the youth because they are next generation, and seeing them in churches understanding and acknowledging the language will be of great impact to the language moving forward. He states;

*...churches like only have one youth night and then church. Like youth nights kids come because it's like games and whatever, there's not like a lesson . Like it doesn;t have to be a full on Niue lesson, like start small, take it slow, week by week using things like talahau e kupu e, mo e kupu e. (Y5)*

Y4 summarises these thoughts by saying, “we should strive to maintain and retain our language and culture in whatever way possible; whatever shape or form. By doing so, we are allowing our next generation to follow in pursuit of what our matuas envisioned for us”.

## 5.7 Summary

PARTS OF THE LILI	NIUE CONTEXT	RESEARCH METHOD
	<p><i>Atuhau Fooou</i>– The ninth circle of the <i>lili</i> represents the <b>youth</b> that are living in Auckland and on Niue.</p>	<p><i>The Niu-Generation: Ko e tau fuata ko e tali he fakamauaga he Vagahau</i>  <i>The Niu-generation: the answer to the revitalisation of the Niue language</i></p> <p>This chapter discusses the <b>findings of the youth on Niue and in Auckland, New Zealand.</b> This chapter is significant as the 2013 census showed that Niue had the highest percentage of New Zealand-born Niue, compared to the other islands of the Pacific with 78.9%.</p>

The purpose of this chapter was to present the detailed findings of the research and to highlight the youth perspectives of language and the church linked to the literature. Key findings emerged from the data collected and they have been discussed accordingly. The next chapter will present the findings of the ministers and elders.

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## CHAPTER 6

### TAU POU MALOLO: KO E TAKITAKI MITAKI KE MILINO E ATUHAU

*Pillars of Strength: Great leaders to calm the generations*

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*Kua manamanatu e tagata ke he hana loto he puhala ke fano ai a ia; ka e fakatonu e  
Iehova e mena ke fina atu a ia ki ai- Fakatai 16:9*

We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps –Proverbs 16:9

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews with church ministers and elders. It analyses their perceptions about the influence of the church as a vehicle for the retention of *Vagahau Niue* for youth living in the homeland of Niue and in Auckland, New Zealand. Three ministers and two church elders contributed their views on the place of the church as an important language domain for the maintenance of the Niue language. They also openly discussed aspects of Niue culture that have changed over time and their views on how the church can be a change agent for the Niue language and culture in the future. The data for this research was collected and analysed in the fourth chapter and will now be presented thematically. It is important to note that the elders *talanoa* were carried out individually, whereas two of the three Niue ministers preferred to be interviewed together and the third interviewed by himself.

#### 6.2 Church leaders Talanoa findings

Table 13 below provides data about the backgrounds of the church leaders; three ministers and the two church elders which undoubtedly influenced their views about *Vagahau Niue* and the *Ekalesia* church. As seen, the group comprised of three male ministers with two being ministers in Niue and one carrying out his ministry in Auckland. All of these participants were born in Niue and each considered *Vagahau Niue* to be their first language. M3 was the only minister to have migrated to New Zealand in the year 1972 as a young adult. In contrast, the church elders comprised both of females with E2 being the only one born in New Zealand, and E1 migrating to New Zealand in 1985.

While each said *Vagahau Niue* was their first language, three of the five said that English and *Vagahau Niue* were spoken in their homes. However, for the purpose of this research four out of the five church leaders (M1, M2, M3 and E2) carried out the *talanoa* in both English and *Vagahau Niue*, whereas E1 used *Vagahau Niue* during the whole *talanoa* encounter.

Table 13 Minister group background information

	M1	M2	M3	E1	E2
<b>Home background</b>					
<b>Male/Female</b>	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female
<b>Birth Country</b>	Niue	Niue	Niue	Niue	New Zealand
<b>Village</b>	Tuapa	Hakupu	Alofi	Tuapa	Lakepa
<b>Migration to New Zealand</b>	N/A	N/A	1972	1985	N/A
<b>Ekalesia</b>	EKN	EKN	PIPC	PIPC	PIPC
<b>First Language</b>	Vagahau Niue	Vagahau Niue	Vagahau Niue	Vagahau Niue	Vagahau Niue
<b>Main language is spoken in home</b>	Vagahau Niue	Vagahau Niue/English	Vagahau Niue	Vagahau Niue/English	Vagahau Niue/English

### ***6.2.1 Looking to the past informs the way we move forward***

When asked what had made the ministers decide to go into the field of theology or become ministers, M1 and M3 explained that they came from families where generations of their family were ministers. M1 explained that he grew up amongst a people or family of faith; a faith that was based on what his parents believed in and what he was curious to learn growing up. He states:

*Mai he vahā tose mo e tupu hake ke he Ekalesia ko e tau manatu hakaao ia ke he tau lologo mo e tau liogi tuga pehē, ko e heigoa e lologo, liogi kia hai e tau liogi, ti lalahi fakahaga. (M1)*

M3 had a similar experience. He described his experience as a minister's son and how he learnt over the course of his childhood that there were different teachings in the ways of how life went in the islands, meaning the homeland of Niue. He states;

*...loga lahi e puhala ke fakaako aki e moui hakaao e manatu ia kehe tau tagata mo e ha lautolu a tūmaiaga kehe mahani he fakaholoaga he moui, tau puhala ō tapu, tau puhala he fakaako e tau fanau he tau magafaoa takitaha he maaga, tau puhala takafaga, tau puhala fakafelauaki kehe tau manatu ke he tau magaaho fono. (M3)*

In his view, by growing up in the church he was able to learn a lot of life lessons, not only from his father but also by the village people in the years that his father was the resident minister. This resonates with M1 who shares that:

*...ko e magaaho ia, ko e tau fakaakoaga ki loto he fale tapu, maeke ke fakaoga ke he tau momoui, ti ko e tau magaaho ia ne kamata ai e tau momoui ke iloa ko hai a Keriso, ko e Atua ko e ha mautolu a matua. Uta pihia e tau manamanatuaga mo e tau fakaako. (M1)*

These experiences were all part of growing up in the village and went hand in hand with the significant and important role that the church played on life growing up in the island homeland.. Similar experiences were offered by New Zealand-born E2 whose upbringing in the church was through her mother where she states:

*...ko e haaku a fakaakoaga fakakerisiano mai he haaku a matua fifine mai he tose, ko e ō ke he tapu mo e fanogonogo ke he lauga he akoako, lologo e tau lologo tapu, mo e tauteute ai e tau tapu fanau kahā. (E2)*

Collectively these church leaders revealed an interesting shared perspective of the *Vagahau Niue* and the youth in relation the EKN and the PIPC churches which they consider will support, sustain and maintain the Niue language. These church leaders represent the voices that are often seen as gatekeepers of the language who are trying to maintain tradition. However, these church leaders acknowledge that change is happening within their churches and that in order to maintain both youth, language and culture, that important discussions need to take place.

### 6.3 Value of Vagahau Niue through the church

In discussing the value of the church in relation to the survival of *Vagahau Niue*, this group of church leaders used words such as influence, tradition and change. They expressed their thoughts on the important role of the church and how the church was significant as a foundation for their upbringing. They shared how the different activities they experienced through the *Ekalesia* influenced the way they used *Vagahau Niue* both in a formal setting and an informal setting. It was from these experiences that this group of church leaders were able to identify at an early age growing up in the church that there were two sides to the Niue language. As explained by M1 who states;

*Ko e tau magaaho ia, we start to learn ua e faahi he vagahau Niue kā, taha e vagahau lilifu fakaaoga e tau matua i loto he tau fakafetuiaga, tau taonaga, tau kaiagahau, ti kehe e vagahau normal language that we use outside. Ko e kamata fakahaga ia e tama lahi ki loto he ekalesia, maama foki e ia e tau puhala vagahau, how to speak vagahau Niue, mo e vagahau fluent Niue language, ti ai taumaleku ai ha kua fai fakaveaga he tama moui hake he Ekalesia/faituga.(M1)*

For M1 his experiences of growing up in the church had positive effects not only on his upbringing, but also how these teachings were significant in developing his love of the language and the influence the church had in harnessing the language.

#### 6.3.1 Church as an influence

The shared views of both M1 and M3 was that the church can be seen as a place of influence, a place that is able to impact change for young people in terms of what they believe is important and also to maintaining cultural ties as well as maintaining the language. For all the ministers and one of the elders, church has played a significant role in their childhood where they describe the church as being a sacred place. He states:

*...we have to respect the church ha kua iloa tei e mautolu, iloa tei e tau fanau ē, ko e fale tapu, sacred house, ai maeke ke fakahanoa.(M1)*

This opinion was also supported by the other two ministers. They explained that;

*...fa mui au he tua he haaku a matua he magaaho vahā tama tose, mo e fanogonogo au ke he tau fakatutalaaga he tau matua tuga e tau mamatua tiakono he hili e tapu he tau magaaho afiafi, kamata mai he lima e tau haaku, ti lahi hake au, ti motua ke he maaga ia. (M3)*

*...tupu hake au he Ekalesia mai he vahā tose, oatu ke he tau aoga aho tapu mo e boys brigade ne kua lagomatai ke he haaku ā iloaaga he Vagahau Niue. (M2)*

*...haaku a moui tose lahi hake I Niue, fanau i Niue I loto ke he Ekalesia...manatu au, he magaaho nā, kua kehekehe pihia e tau gahua he Atua, ka e nakai kehe e Atua ne tapuaki ki ai, ko e kehe nī e higoa he tau lotu ne matutaki ki ai, (E1)*

E1 mentioned that they realised from an early age that even with different religions around the ways of worship and the carrying out of church duties (i.e. eldership) was almost always for one God regardless of what religion you affiliated to (i.e. *Ekalesia*, Mormon, Catholic etc.). This is supported by M1 who explains his view about the church as a sanctuary, a place of peace where lessons are taught and learnt. His attendance at church growing up was a ritual and was important to the lives of him and his siblings growing up on the island. He states:

*Our minds started opening up and we come to know Christ the Saviour, God the Father, he's the protector for everything, hake fakahaga he tupuhake ki loto he Ekalesia. We didn't know there was something outside apart from church, we go to school and learn particular things, but most of the time, the church is the main focus. It was more like a ritual...ai fai mena ne fakalavelave mai ke he moui he ikiiki. (M1)*

For M1, the teaching from his parents to respect the Sabbath was always through instruction that everything was to be put away on Sunday to attend church. This became a teaching that he was grateful for, as he explains:

*...tuku oti e tau mena ki tua kae ō tapu he ikiiki, ha ko e falanakiaga he tau fanau ha mautolu ke he tau matua, kia mautolu ne mumua hake foki ki loto he Ekalesia.(M1)*

### **6.3.2 Importance of the bible, church hymns, and songs**

The influence of the church for the ministers and elders in regards to language learning was through the bible, church hymns and songs. As expressed by M1 and M2 there were no resources to learn the language back in their childhood and they were highly reliant on the bible as a resource that enhanced their language learning outside of the home environment. They state:

*In those days we had very few books. It was only the bible ke kumikumi e tau tohi he tapu. That's how we learn, ka pehē kumi mai e tohi e, kumi. It does help us to learn the language, and to know the meaning and how deep are*

*the words. Haia malolo e tohi tapu fakamua ke fakaako e vagahau Niue he tagata. (M2)*

*Moui hake e tama, no resources. Most of the time to learn the language, you listen to the preacher/pastor, the way we preach, and say the words, mo e tau kupu he tohi tapu. Loga e tau kupu Niue ne tatai ka e kehe e tau kakano.(M1)*

M1 explained that learning the bible during Sunday school and having assignments on different key verses of the bible also helped with his language development, as his experience with the young people in his village church showed:

*...ko e fakaaoga e Vagahau Niue ke he Sunday school. Koe falu a magaaho age e au e tau assignment ke tohi hifo e ha lautolu a tau manatu he lesson, poke verse from the bible, tuaga he moui, age taha magaaho ke tali ai e lautolu. Manatu au, ko e tau puhala ni ke futi mai e tau fuata mo e ha lautolu a maamaaga ke he tau tala he tohi tapu. (M1)*

Moreover, the importance of the bible for the learning of the language was also described by M3 as teaching the congregation about sustaining the language. He notes that:

*...ko e totou aga he tohi tapu he magaaho tapuaki, koe na mahani a tautolu ke totou fetaleaki, do the readings responsibly, ti pehe au, ko e taha puhala ia ke fakaako aki e tagata ke totou, fakaako aki e tagata ke fanogonogo, fakaako aki e tagata ke mau loto e tau kupu he tohi tapu ne totou ki ai, mua atu he fakamauaga he vagahau, (M3)*

On the other hand, E1 shares that the bible can also be used as a resource of comfort and that the words can be meaningful which can in turn help with life's struggles. She suggests that:

*...haia e tau mena mahuiga ia, tuga e totou he tohi tapu, ke lahi e aoga mo e hokulo e tau kupu ki loto, ke fakamafana aki e tau loto ha tautolu ha ko e mena uaua ni ka ha e mena mitaki mo e nakai mitaki kia tautolu he vahā nei. Ko e haia oti ni e tau mena fulufuluola i loto he tohi tapu, ke fakamafana aki e tau loto ha tautolu ke liu lagaki hake foki ki luga, kua eke ke lololole, ti maeke mogo ia ke totou taha kupu mai he tohi tapu, ke fakamalolo aki ha tautolu a loto. Haia haaku a tau manatu, mo e fakaako foki ke fakamau e vagahau ke tumau e hololoa he vahā kua galo aga ia foki mo e tau atuhau ha tautolu. (E1)*

In a similar notion, E2 describes that the bible written in *Vagahau Niue* has enhanced enjoyment in reading the bible and states :

*... like back in the day when I was growing up, you got to enjoy learning the bible in Niuean, and you got to enjoy singing all the Niue hymns. (E2).*

Similarly, the role that songs and hymns play in how the Niue language is retained is also an important feature of the church. M3 puts emphasis on this idea by expressing that:

*...ko e tau lologo mo e tau kakano he tau kupu ke fakailoa e tagata anoiha pehē e maamaaga mo e tau puhala he Ekalesia he tau aho ne kua mole, fakailoa ke he tagata e hokulo he vagahau mo e maamaaga e tau kupu ne fakaaoga ke he lologo. (M3)*

He believes that the words of songs are able to create a deeper meaning through the language which can inform future generations of the way the Ekalesia is functioning today. There are different words in the Niue language being used in the church as a way to express lessons in life.

### **6.3.3 Traditional vs Contemporary worship**

All the ministers and elders shared similar views about the differences between traditional and contemporary worship within Auckland, New Zealand and in the homeland of Niue. For M2, he expressed that the traditional ways of worship were due to the church being;

*...the law of the land, mai tuai. Ke he tau matua ne nonofo ke he tau magaaho ia ko e tau puipuiaga hagaao ia ke he tau fakatufono he faituga ko e tō lahi e fakaeneene, ti muitua nī e tau fakaako ia kia au mo e tau fanau he vahā ia. (M2)*

M2 explains that the pastors during his upbringing just followed the traditional way of worshipping. He adds that:

*Our pastors before us, we just followed the traditional way of worshipping, which was to stand in the pulpit and preach and we still doing that up to now. That's how I grew up, in that type of worship and I'm still doing that type of worship, ai fai hiki e tau puhala tapuaki. (M2)*

In contrast, this traditional way of worshipping was different for M3 growing up in the Ekalesia in Niue where he expressed his surprise when the young people were asked to leave the church every single time during the sermon as the minister only wanted to

preach to the adults. He explained that he found it odd to have asked the youth and the children to leave the service as he thought it was important as there was only one time to worship on the island and in order for the young people to understand and continue knowing how the church life worked they needed to remain in the services. He explains this below by stating;

*...ko e magaaho ne fai fekau ai e tau fanau ke ō kehe, ka e lauga e tau akoako ke lata mo e tagata lalahi ni hokoia, taha vala ia ne kitia au, kehe lahi e vala ia, fekau e tau fuata mo e tau fanau ke ō kehe, ka ko e ha tautolu a motu taha nī e magaaho tapuaki mo e fakamahani he tau fanau mo e tau fuata ke fakamatutaki ke moui tapuaki. (M3).*

Furthermore, he explained that his experiences growing up in the *Ekalesia* in Niue was highly influenced by the London Missionary Society (LMS) and expressed that the missionaries were domineering in their ways of worship. He explains;

*...ko e loga e fekehekeheakiaga he tau Ekalesia, ha ko e mena kehe a Niue, fakamalu e Ekalesia ha Niue ke he puipuiaga he Ekalesia ne tupu mai ai ko e Congregational, ko e LMS (London Missionary Society), ko e tau puhala ia ne takitaki aki e moui lotu ke he motu ha tautolu, tali mai he magaaho tau tau ia. (M3)*

However, the traditional way of worshipping is becoming more difficult to maintain as expressed by M1 and M2, as the young people are drawing towards a more contemporary style of worship. The two ministers in Niue explained that young people today perceive the church in a different light. They explain;

*Ko e magaaho nei, kua mole e tau generation. Ko e generation foou a ē, kua kehe tei e ha lautolu a tau manatu ke he moui tapuaki ke he lahi. Kua maeke tei ke kalaga moe koli ki loto he faituga. Ti pehe ko e taha puhala foki a ia ke fakaheke ke he Atua, that's another way of praising God, tu ki luga mo e fiafia. (M2)*

*...the young people are wanting to have an upbeat way of worship...they have different views of the life of the church. Tuga pehē, taha mena ne kua hiki ke he moui tapuaki ko e fakaaoga e tau musical instrument, piano. Fakaaoga e tau kofe. The youth now, they like to perform action songs in the church, vaha ia ko e no no, vale e tau matua, uta ki fafo e tau mena ia. (M1)*

M1 explains that young people find it acceptable to stand and shout to the Lord in the church as a way of praising God. Furthermore, M2 explained that it is getting difficult

for ministers to navigate between keeping the old and young people happy at the same time. He explains:

*...ko e ha mautolu a gahua ko e matua akoako ke fanogonogo ke he tau fuata mo e tau mamatua tupuhake moua taha tali ne kua maeke ke gahua he matakau ua nei. It's listening to the young people and comparing it with the views of the old people...ke kitia ko e heigoa e mena kua lata ke hiki. (M2).*

He highlights that it is not about making a change to destroy the foundational principles of the church, nor is it about making changes for the sake of the young people; as M2 puts it, it is about trying to find common ground.

#### **6.3.4 Language simplicity**

The traditional ways of worship with *Vagahau Niue* are expressed by the ministers as being difficult for the young people to understand. For M2 and M3 they highlight that the language that is used during services is formal and that the new generation of youth and children that are attending the *Vagahau Niue* services are finding it difficult to comprehend. M2, in particular, believes that;

*...the words and meanings are changing for the young people...tuga e tau kupu he tohi tapu. Uka lahi e tau ti fanau ke maama e kupu tuga e 'uhoaki' poke 'kitiala'. Ko hai e tama he vahā, ne foaki ai e magaaho ke fakaako e tau kupu he tohi tapu. (M2).*

M1 explains that the new generation of Niue youth do not understand what is written in the bible, and when the preacher uses these words during their sermons, the meanings and sounds of the words become different, and can be difficult to understand. Similarly, for M3, they feel that parents have a different way of speaking during worship and he shared the example of his conversation with his father urging him to simplify the language and to use words that would be easier for the young people to understand. He explained that;

*...ai tatai e fakaaogaaga he vagahau, ha ko e vagahau ki Niue, ko e kehe e tau vagahau he tau matua he magaaho tapuaki, poke magaaho folafola ai ke he finagalo he Atua. Kehe e vagahau he magaaho ia, ti falu a kupu hokulo lahi, ti ai mukamuka lahi ke tau fanau he vahā tau fanau ikiiki ke maama...manamanatu au magaaho ne lahi ai ti tutala foki au ke he haaku a matua taane ne fai folafola e finagalo he Atua, ke fēfē ke fakaaoga e tau kupu ne maama e tau atu fuata, ke maeke ke futiaki mai a lautolu ne nakai maama mitaki, ti taute pihia foki e matua haaku, kua logona e matua fai kakano haaku a ole ki a ia. (M3)*

M3s plea to his father was in order to attract the young people or those who were not able to understand the sermons properly and this did not allow them to be involved fully in the worship. E2 suggested that by using simple words for the youth to understand would benefit their language learning and she states:

*...you can make a simple word simple for the child and adult to understand, um it's best to be simple, then to complicate the word, so you'd wanna like fakaaoga e kupu that says I'll understand and you understand at the end of the day, but if we try use a kupu that only the tupunas' and only the matuas' know then it will be hard. It's best to just keep it simple especially for the youth.(E2)*

She further adds that the language that is delivered in the sermon from the minister at her church helps with her language learning as she expressed;

*I guess with our ministers conducting the services in Niuean is a credit to us, because they're delivering it in the Niuean language and when they do deliver it, it's easy and it's simple to when it comes to their sermon.(E2)*

However, the same cannot be said for M1 and his views with how the young people are trying to understand the language spoken in the church. He responded by saying;

*...ko e magaaho nei, he haaku a kitia ke he tau atuhau, ko e ha lautolu a tau fakauka ke maama e tau kupu ne kua tohia ke he tohi tapu. Falu maama, falu ai maama, ti ko e heigoa ne kua lata ke taute ke fakamukamuka aki e ha lautolu a maamaaga he tau kupu Niue? (M1)*

In light of this, M1 has seen the struggle for young people to understand the formal language within the church, but he also truly believes that the church can only act as a foundation and as a guide for how to live a life of purpose.

### **6.3.5 Culture**

For this group of ministers and elders, the culture and language are important factors within the church and have played a crucial role as to how the church and its cultural practices have evolved over time. M1 suggests that the church and culture go side by side, as he states:

*Uta fakalataha ni, church and culture go side by side. Ka mate taha tō mate foki taha, kaeke ke mate agamotu, tō oti ā ia e Vagahau Niue. Ko e agamotu,*

*moui hake ki loto he Ekalesia... for the Ekalesia, a person should know and be encouraged to use the language to be able to identify as a Tangata Niue.* (M1)

As mentioned by M1, culture and church are held in high respect by the *matua tupuna*. They in hindsight, are seen as vehicles to knowing or being identified as a tagata Niue (an Indigenous Niue person). For M1, he describes the *Ekalesia* church as becoming important during past times as the old people remained true to the cultural protocols of the church (i.e. the way of dressing and behaving). He states:

*Ko e tau vaha fakamua koe mau ni ke he tau fakatufone he lotu. Ko e mena haaku ne kitia he vaha ia, fai tagata ne leoleo ke he faituga, koe tū totoko, when you walk into the church, ka ai fai pulou e fīfine, turn around and get out, tau taane, ka ai fai fītiua, ai hū mai. On Sunday especially aho fakamanatu tau rules or regulations fakamanatu you have to wear all white/taute tea. Ai maeke a koe ke tui e short sleeve, koe tau fakatufono haia he ekalesia. Mau gaia e tau taofiaga ia he tau tupuna of the rules and regulations of the church.* (M1)

This is further supported by E1 who explains that when they were growing up, the protocols around dress attire for church were held in sacred regard, as she stated:

*Fakamua i Niue, ko e mena fakatapu lahi e tau tauteuteaga ka ō ke he tapu, ai maeke ka ha e tau fīfine ke tui e tau fihui, mo e tau aho fakamanatu, ko e masi ke tui e tau mena tui tea, ha ko e aho fakamanatu.* (E1)

This is similar to the experiences of E2 who also shared her experience growing up and learning about what to wear and what not to wear to church in comparison with the freedom that the new generation has now. She states:

*Ka finatu a koe ke he faituga, tau fīfine, masi ke tui e tau tapulu sisi, ka ko ē mogonei, atuhau ai mogonei, say the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ko e fakaatāina no nī e ha mena tui, tau fihui, tui e tau tights, tui e tau shoti, lafi ki luga foki, tau mata fakatufono ka hā he faituga. Ha tautolu i Niue kaha, he tau fīfine, ka oti e kolisi, magaaho ia haau ke tui e pulou ka finatu he faituga, a ē mogonei e atuhau, kua atā ni e fakaatāina ke he tama fīfine, ka manako ke tui, tui. So when you think about it, in reality, in church, you should wear a hat, because your head is sacred and you should respect that.* (E2)

In line with the cultural protocols is also the value of *Vagahau Niue*. M1 explains that for members of the Niue *Ekalesia*, it is important to know the language in order for its

survival in the future. M2, M3, E1, and E2 state that in order to learn the language, it must be used and shared on an everyday basis. They state:

*...iloa e vagahau motu kaeke ke fakagahuahua ke he tau moui tagata. Ka ai taute, galo, (M2)*

*...fakamau e vagahau Niue ke lata mo e tau Ekalesia, ko e tau tagata ni I loto he tau Ekalesia mo e agamotu ke fakatumaui e vagahau Niue mo e agamotu I loto he tau Ekalesia, tuga he Ekalesia ha mautolu, mamafa lahi e tau matua fekafekau mautolu ke he agamotu mo e vagahau. Ko e toka agaia e tau puhala Niue i laua ke fakaako mai e tau tagata I loto he Ekalesia ke he tau agamotu. (E1)*

E2 further insists that as church leaders, the way of speaking *Vagahau Niue* changes when speaking in front of a congregation than when speaking in an informal setting. She states:

*Ka e mau agaia e tau mahani motu, ko e vagahau mo e tutū foki. Ka tutū foki ke tala I mua he tuga e tau fakapotopotoaga ha ko e mena ia foki ne uka mo e vihu ka hā e tau gahua tohi kupu, ha ko e kehe e vagahau I mua he fakafetuiaga, ke he e vagahau mai ke he kapitiga ki tua he pelē he malē polo, ti haia ko e tau mena ke fakamau aki e vagahau Niue, fīfili e tau kupu ke talahau ke he tau toloaga, pihia foki ni e tau kupu fiafia mai ki tua. (E2)*

Similarly, M3 shares his views on the uncertainty of the use of *Vagahau Niue* and the church in the future as he cannot determine whether current *Ekalesia* church members and their families will continue to attend the church. He explains that the *Ekalesia* is an important place that uses the *Vagahau Niue* that allows for an acknowledgement of Niue identity in all aspects of church life (i.e. *kau lologo* (choir), *matakau fuata* (youth group), *Matakau FCW* (woman's group) and the *vahega tiakono* (church elders). He mentions that;

*...ko e Ekalesia ni mo e haana a tau hagahaga vagahau, ke puipui aki e maamaaga he tau tagata Niue, ko au ko e tagata Niue (identity). Kaeke ke kautu e tau takitaki anoiha ke he vagahau ke taofi ai e vagahau, aoga e vagahau, fakagahua e vagahau ke he tau fakafetuiaga kehekehe tō tumau e vagahau. (M3)*

M3 suggests that if *Vagahau Niue* is to be maintained in the future, church leaders must continue using the language in all aspects of church ministry as role models of the language for the members of the church and importantly, for the youth.

## 6.4 Factors influencing Vagahau Niue maintenance

These church leaders had much to say about factors influencing the maintenance of *Vagahau Niue* today. Specifically they highlighted the role that the English language played in regards to how youth were responding to their Niue-led services as most of the young people were responding heavily in the English language. Furthermore the Western ways of worship such as the use of musical instruments and more upbeat tunes to church hymns have seen youth gravitate towards a more contemporary way of worshiping rather than the traditional. These factors as well as the presence of technology will be further discussed below.

### 6.4.1 Western Influences

Over time, Western influences such as contemporary worship, formal church attire and the use of technology (i.e. powerpoints) have had a stronger presence within the church, as described by M1, who states that:

*Amanaki tei e tau agafakamotu ha tautolu ke backslide ki tua...outside influences are impacting the ways in which cultural church laws are being seen now. Now it's your right to wear what you want, pule ni a koe ke he haau a taute, tau influence mai i fafo.(M1)*

M1 refers to church members and what they deem is culturally appropriate attire to wear during church services. M2 states that Western influences apply also to the use of powerpoint presentations to connect with young people. He states that the old people respond to this by saying:

*...uta e tau mena ia, ai liu foki ke tamai ke faituga. (M2)*

This means that the old people in Niue, basically reject the use of powerpoint and modern technologies in worship. However, for the younger generation, the old people's views have little to no impact as the use of powerpoint and other resources during services is a welcomed addition in their view, as it makes them feel included. Furthermore, compositions in *Vagahau Niue* with modern tunes is what appeals to the younger generation to sustain cultural values and the language as shared by M3:

*Tokologa foki ne fatifati e tau lologo ke he tau leo faka vahā nei (modern tunes) ti maeke mogoia e tau lologo ia ke integrate certain influences that we*

*live in NZ, from what we hear from the environment that we are in to help sustain those cultural values that we have, such as the language, in terms of uses and in terms of practice, and to me they are very important factors...ko e lau lahi he tau lologo he tau tapuakiaga he aho nei, mo e falu a magaaho lologo papalagi, mo e tau lologo ke fakaagaaga aki e tau fuata ke maeke a lautolu ke moua taha matutakiaga ke he tapuaki. So that they know they are part of the worship. (M3)*

Songs in *Vagahau Niue* are not the only things to be influenced by Western principles. The appointment of female elders in New Zealand under the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand has seen a number of women be ordained as church elders. E2 offers insight to this change in culture in which she says:

*Specific cultural practices that stand out for me is like, we have to think back, like how they used to not have a woman as an elder, and when that door did open, that was one door that I guess opened which I was longing to be open, I finally took the opportunity to become an elder. However in Niue, it wouldn't happen, they won't allow you, cos at the moment they're still going through that process where they don't allow woman to be an elder, they've just finally opened up the door for woman to be a minister, but to become an elder, I don't think so. You'll probably be fighting tooth and nail just to try and get through that door to become an elder, but in New Zealand, I guess it's not about being a Niuean, but because we're under the umbrella of the Presbytery, so they open up doors to both male and females to become an elder so yeah to me that's kind of like a bonus. (E2)*

This Western influence is not only limited to the cultural practices of the church but has an even greater impact on the influence of the English language. As argued by the ministers and church elders, it has become difficult to communicate using *Vagahau Niue* during church services as the language is seen as difficult by the young people. They share:

*...ko e vahā nei, kua lahi ni ka hā he tau fanau ke manako ni ke vagahau fakapalagi ki loto he tau tapuakiaga, ti ko e falu a magaaho, tau fanau pehē ko e ai alaala e tapuakiaga ha kua lahi ni e vagahau fakaniue, ka ko e ha mautolu a tapuaki, ua e vagahau ne fakaaoga. Ko e vagahau fakapalagi ni mo e vagahau motu, ke maama e tau matua, mua atu foki e tau fanau. (E1)*

*tokologa e tau fuata ne fanau he motu nei ko Niu Silani, ti ko e taha ni e vagahau ne fai fakaaoga e lautolu ko e vagahau palagi. (M3)*

E1 and M3 explain that there is a large number of New Zealand-born Niue youth that live in Auckland, however, the only language that they are comfortable in communicating in is the English language. M2 further adds that:

*The new generation, they don't understand the words in the bible, they speak English all the time. (M2)*

Similarly, E2 explained that young people are becoming more complacent in regards to the language in her view. She argues that youth are making a choice to speak the English language, rather than learning the Niue language. She states:

*It was the teaching of how important the Niue language is; see for me now it's benefitted me. English will always be there, but Niuean won't, so you know we hear the Niue language is dying uhh no it's not, you know the Niue language is not dying because I'm still speaking it, I'm trying to learn more as well, um I guess it's just an excuse when people say, oh I don't know how to speak it, but it's you don't want to speak it, they choose not to speak it, they rather just stick to English. (E2)*

In trying to combat the influence of the English language from becoming permanently embedded within the church, ministers are opting to balance the services in both English and Niue. They state:

*...ko e tau puhala ne fae lali ke fakamau aki ke vagahau, ko e haaku a mahani he magaaho nei, 50 e pasene he vagahau papalagi ke lata mo e tau fuata mo e tau fanau, 50 e pasene ke he vagahau faka Niue. Ti pehe haaku a talahauaga he puhala ia, lagomatai e tau fuata mo e tau fanau ke maama e lauga, ka lauga fakaniue, kaeke ke 50 e pasene he fakaniue, 50 e fakapapalagi, ti ai fakatepetepe foki ha ko e mena ne fa kitia ki ai, fa galo noa e tau fuata he vahā loto kaeke kua nakai mui tua. (M3)*

*...but now the new generation. That's one of the issue we be doing now in my parish, you have to preach in Niuean. Only small part of the sermon in english (M1)*

M2 also adds that:

*If you are going to sermon in English, then do it in English. If in Niue, then Niue. Ka pehē haakū a manatu ko e tau puhala ne lali. Ko e vagahau Palagi ne fai kamata ke hū mai ke he tau tapuaki ha ko e tau fanau, mo e ha lautolu a tau maamaaga ke he tau kupu Niue. (M2)*

## **6.5 A combined effort**

It became clear that this group of ministers and church elders found that the presence of youth in church is slowly diminishing and that in order to retain both the young people and the cultural practices within the church, changes must take place. M1 and E1 clarifies that any change must be change for the good and not simply to change the

practices of the *matuas* and that the church can achieve this through demonstrating the cultural practices to children and young people that will be beneficial to their lives. They state:

*Tau puhala ni a ia ke fakamau e vagahau motu ha tautolu, fakakite age ke he tau fanau he magaaho nei, ha ko lautolu foki ka ha ne kitia e tau mena ke lata mo e tau momoui ha lautolu. (E1)*

*...manako a mautolu ke hiki ke fai mitaki...ai ko e hiki ke moumou e tau aga he tau matua. (M1)*

M1 explained that in order for children and youth to understand how the language can be used within the church, the youth need to be given the chance to lead the service. M1 believes:

*...ko e puhala naia ke develop e Vagahau Niue ki loto he tau tapuakiaga. (M1)*

Similarly, E1 explains that language can be maintained as it is an intrinsic part of the culture of the church that has been passed down from generations of parents. She states:

*Maeke ha ko e mena ko e Ekalesia ni ka ha ne pipi aki e tau fakaveaga he agamotu, ha ko e ekalesia ne taofi e tau tupuna fakamua ti hoko mai kia tautolu he vahā nei, mau agaia foki ka ha ki loto he falu a tau ekalesia e tau agamotu mai he tau mamatua fakamua, ke hoko mai ke he vahā nei. (E1)*

In contrast, both M3 and E1 believe that parents must ensure *Vagahau Niue* is being used in the home so that a domain that is historically a cultural sanctuary, could extend the language learning process for youth and young children to the home. They state that:

*I guess it's really up to the parents as well, like you know the teachings start first at home, so it's really how you've been brought up, physically, spiritually, and if you can balance that, life will go the way that you want. If you don't balance it, then I guess your life spiritually and physically will just come to a dead end kind of thing. (E2)*

*...kua kalofia foki e manatu ia he fakaaogaaga he kaina ha ko e haaku a kitia, nakai fakaaoga e tau matua e Vagahau Niue ki kaina, ti ai logona tumau e tau fanau ke mahani e tau teliga he vagahau ke taofi e tau kupu po ke maama foki e hokulo he vagahau, ti vahagau ni e tau matua he vagahau papalagi, tau magaaho*

*ia ne fa halataki e tau puhala akonaki ke he tau fanau, ha ko e vagahau e matua he vagahau niue, ai maama mitaki e tama kua talahau e matua he ha? Ha kua akonaki he vagahau Niue, ka e vagahau Palagi ki kaina he tau magaaho talanoa. (M3).*

## **6.6 Looking to the future**

M2 believes that using the Niue language in church is likened to continuing to teach the word of God. He states “*fakamalolō ke fakamatala e Vagahau Niue*” (M2). Furthermore, M2 believes that if a person knows how to speak the Niue language then they will also know and understand the language in the bible. Both ministers in Niue believed that putting the bible as an e-copy on the internet may possibly encourage and enhance the use of the language and “*may be the way forward for language maintenance*” (M1). Furthermore, M2 believes in having a revised copy of the bible that will incorporate more basic Niue words that children and young people will be able to understand. These solutions can be done through what he describes as:

*...fakaaoga e technology he vahā, tuga e commentary poke tau leo tapaki ke fakamaama e kakano he tau verse he tohi tapu. (M2)*

M2 shares his view of the the use of technology by stating that it can encourage the use of the Niue language. Examples such as animations or cartoons that show the parables in the bible can appeal to the younger generation. In contrast M3, says that the church can help by increasing the use of the language and be able to communicate with other Niue speaking members. He states:


*...kua fano foki a koe ke he tapu ke logona e vagahau, fano foki a koe he tapu ke fakamau e matutaki haau mo e tau tagata kehekehe ke he vagahau. Ka ai fevagahauaki e tau tagata ne ō he tapu ke he Vagahau Niue, ti ai mau e vagahau, ai malolō e moui lotu, haana kakano, ai tokologa e tau tagata ka omai he lotu ne famaamaaki a lautolu kā tutala, ko e fakaaoga nī e tagata he vagahau Niue, palagi, Niue, palagi. Ti ai hagahaga mitaki lahi ka eke pihia, Ka e kaeke ke fakaaoga ni ke he Vagahau Niue hokoia, tō hagahaga mitaki, mo e taofi fakamalolo aki e Vagahau Niue ha tautolu. (M3)*

E1 supports this point of view by highlighting through her own experiences that it is the decision of each Niue individual to maintain the Niue language and be able to do the same with their families, their children, and other Niue people that they are affiliated with. By doing so the Niue language and culture is able to flourish and can be passed on to generations to come as she says;

...ko e mena ko tautolu ni ka ha, ko e tagata ni mo e vagahau, ke fakatumau e vagahau. Ai maeke taha mai he motu kehe ke hau ke vagahau e vagahau ha taua mo e fakamalolo a taua. Taua ni ke fakamalolo ha taua a magafaoa mo e tau fanau ke uta atu ki mua e tau agamotu ha tautolu. Mua atu mo e haaku a vagahau. (E1)

Through the experience of E1, her thoughts on maintaining *Vagahau Niue* and the Niue culture is strongly supported by the notion that as Niue people we should be strongwilled in our desire to maintain the *Vagahau Niue* and Niue culture in order to not be complacent as to where the future of the language is heading. By doing so, the youth are able to be a part of the language revitalization process that can be of significant impact for the future.

## 6.7 Summary

PARTS OF THE LILI	NIUE CONTEXT	RESEARCH METHOD
	<p><i>Atuhau fakamua atu</i> – The eleventh circle of the <i>lili</i> represents the <b>Niue-born generation</b> living in Auckland and Niue.</p>	<p><i>Tau pou malolō: Ko e takitaki mitaki ke milino e atuhau (Pillars of strength: Great leaders to calm the generation</i> This chapter discusses the <b>findings of the Niue deacons, elders and ministers</b>. The significance of this chapter is to show how important the older Niue native-speaking generation is to the preservation of the Niue language, especially within the church.</p>

The minister and church elder group value *Vagahau Niue* highly and its place within the church context. The themes of influence, tradition and change were underlying themes that encompassed the views from both ministers and the church elders in relation to the maintenance of *Vagahau Niue*, and the church as a foundational platform for language learning as well as the maintenance of cultural practices. The influence of the bible and church hymns were key to knowing and understanding the language, as the majority of the participants were born and raised in Niue. Their experiences were

therefore traditional and as times have passed they have seen the influence of contemporary styles of worship attracting a younger audience who are opting for a more modern way of worship inclusive of modern tunes for songs written in the Niue language and the inclusion of musical instruments. The church leaders expressed a strong belief that changes need to happen in the church in order to retain the youth within the churches. However, any changes will need to acknowledge traditional values and practices of the *matuas* that will work in favour with what the young people also want. To do this, M1 believes that involving the youth in leading church services is one way to keep them in the church and learning the language. Furthermore, by using technology is also a way of engaging with the youth such as creating digital animations of the stories in the bible in the Niue language thus bringing learning the Niue language into the digital age.

However, all five of the participants believed that Western culture, particularly the presence of the dominant language English was creating a difficulty for young people to fully embrace and understand the Niue language within the church, as they have become reliant on using the English language in their interactions with each other and also within the church. The purpose of this chapter was to present the detailed findings of the research and to highlight the views of ministers and church elders pertaining the importance of the church for the maintenance of *Vagahau Niue* for youth and generations in the future.

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## CHAPTER 7

### KO E LOLOGO FOOU

#### *A Niu-song*

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*Kua tuku mai e ia e lologo fou ke he haku a gutu, ko e fakahekeaga ke he Atua ha tautolu; to kitia ai he tokologa, ke matakutaku foki a lautolu, mo e tua a lautolu kia Iehova – Salamo 40:3*

He taught me to sing a new song, a song of praise to our God; many who see this will take warning and will put their trust in the Lord – Psalms 40:3

#### **7.1 Introduction**

This study aimed to explore and document the views of Niue youth, ministers and church elders on the important role of the *Ekalesia* church in the regeneration of *Vagahau Niue* for youth in Auckland, New Zealand and in the homeland of Niue. Emphasis was placed on how they valued the language through the *Ekalesia*, factors influencing the maintenance of *Vagahau Niue*, and what they believed was necessary to happen within churches today to not only retain youth, but also to maintain the culture and most importantly, the Niue language for the future. This chapter will explore the themes that are emerging from the data, the juxtaposed tensions between the older Niue people and the youth caught in a web of traditions that they all respect but a yearning by youth for inclusion and the love for their language.

#### **7.2 Analysis of Emerging Themes from the Data in relation to the research question**

Several themes have emerged from the data including: formal and informal language, use [or not] of technology and other Western influences into church worship, the traditional service versus adapting to a more contemporary or modern context, youth and the ageing Niue population. It is clear that tensions exist between the traditional and the modern church and the youth and older generations in terms of their expectations of how the church should or, could evolve as a bastion for the revitalisation of *Vagahau Niue*. The fact is that the Missionaries as discussed in Chapter 2, helped the Niue language evolve through the church between 1830 and 1861 with the translation of the Bible into the *Vagahau Niue*; making it a written language for the first

time, thus transforming the language while still ensuring that the culture was retained. One hundred and fifty six years later, it is proposed that the church has the capability to transform the language again in the modern world while still retaining the culture through developing an intervention such as a Niue language revitalisation and maintenance programme for its membership. There is evidence in the findings to suggest that this type of programme is relevant and timely as a catalyst to attract youth engagement back to the *Ekalesia* and into learning the *Vagahau Niue*.

The findings of this research identify many variables which help us understand the factions and conflicts which have led to the decline of youth attending church and their lack of engagement with the *Vagahau Niue*. It is left to an ageing group of Niue people who are predominantly native speakers to champion the language. However, history tells us that this approach can be futile in that an already endangered language needs to be nurtured by all sectors of its society and a multi-pronged approach is often the best way forward.

The research question asks; how is the identity of Niue youth in New Zealand and the Niue homeland linked to knowing the Niue language and their relationship through the *Ekalesia*? The data and the emerging themes have shown the importance of the church and its focus on language and culture including cultural values; do contribute to the maintenance of the Niue language and culture. Youth clearly have expressed that their language is a part of their identity as *tagata Niue*; and that this is very important to them as is the church. However, evidence also shows that in a declining population of youth engagement in Niue-language church worship, that it is encumbant on the church to embrace the thoughts and needs of the youth in relation to modernising church worship through informal language and technology to ensure the language is transmitted to future generations. Therefore, the role of churches is significant as a language domain for the regeneration of minority and migrant languages today. Although this study is Niue-focussed, findings may resonate with other Pacific languages, as well as other minority and diasporic language communities who are trying to find ways of maintaining their languages. This certainly is of considerable significance for languages of the ‘realm countries’ that is, the Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue.

### 7.3 Recommendations and Interventions

Table 14 below proposes a series of interventions to help the church be the bastion that it was in the 1800s but in this instance, to replenish the numbers of the youth population in the preservation and revitalisation of the *Vagahau Niue*. What is required is a unified and consensual approach by all parties with a primary focus on how the church can be a strong platform for the regeneration and revitalisation of the *Vagahau Niue* on Niue and in Auckland, New Zealand.

Table 14: Identifying possible language revitalisation interventions

Youth Perspective	Perspective of the older generation	Proposed Interventions in the church
<p>Language use in the home is informal and compatible with Niue youth</p> <p>The introduction and use of technology such as powerpoints in the church is high on the list of priorities for youth remaining engaged with the church</p>	<p>Language use in the church is formal and appealing to the older generation but incompatible with Niue youth</p> <p>Technology is frowned upon by the older generation who are often traditionalists in terms of the style of worship they like.</p>	<p>Translation of the Bible into informal language that is compatible with youth</p> <p>Introduce a Niue-language church service designed just for youth using ‘language of the home’</p> <p>Host a series of lectures or workshops for the elderly on the health and wellbeing of the <i>Vagahau Niue</i> to increase their understanding about the plight of the Niue language</p> <p>The establishment of a church youth-group where youth are encouraged to compose lologo (songs) to sing at their youth service</p> <p>The establishment of a Niue-youth choir to sing only songs written in <i>Vagahau Niue</i></p> <p>Support of the launch of the <i>Tohi Vagahau Niue</i> online (dictionary) and the conversion of the dictionary to an app for Apple and Android devices</p> <p>Participation in the annual Niue youth rally including performances (dance and song)</p>


		<p>Establishment of an annual Niue cultural festival for traditional performances</p> <p>Encourage the youth to attend the free Niue language classes through the Pacific Education Centre</p> <p>That Ministers champion the <i>Vagahau Niue</i> in Niue homes amongst native speakers of the language so that the transition for future youth into the traditional services is easier for them to make.</p> <p>That Ministers and community lobby Pacific Members of Parliament and the Ministry of Education for immersion education in the <i>Vagahau Niue</i> 0-5 years ECE; primary, and as a secondary school subject.</p>
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#### 7.4 The Lili Model

The Lili Model places the *Vagahau Niue* at the centre of this research. The Lili Model shows how the *mata* (eye) is a representation of the *Vagahau Niue* and that each of the circles represent factors of Niue concepts that work hand-in-hand with the Niue language. This includes features such as the tagata Niue and their spiritual journey with the language; the migration from the island homeland and resettlement in a new country; the history of *Vagahau Niue* and the church; the importance of Niue culture; Niue youth, the church and the language; the Niue-born generation and their role in the regeneration of *Vagahau Niue* through the *Ekalesia*.

The use of The Lili Model brings *Vagahau Niue* into a space that is surrounded by values that are important to Niue communities in Auckland and in the homeland of Niue. This research has intended to show that both the Niue context and the analysis of the data are in accord with each other and therefore, the proposed interventions can be adopted by both groups to ensure the *Vagahau Niue* survives for all time.

## 7.5 Summary - A new song

PARTS OF THE LILI	NIUE CONTEXT	RESEARCH METHOD
	<p><i>Puhala fakagahua-</i> The twelfth circle represents the ways in which the <b>church is significant</b> in the revitalisation of <i>Vagahau Niue</i>.</p>	<p><i>Ko e lologo foou: A niu-song</i> – This chapter captures the analysis and discussion of key findings from the three participant groups, and concludes with some recommendations for the church, Niue youth and Niue community to consider implementing to ensure the health and wellbeing of the <i>Vagahau Niue</i>.</p>

Each of the youth, ministers and church elders in this study indicated that our *talanoa* was the first time they had thought about, let alone talked about *Vagahau Niue* and its importance through the *Ekalesia* in Auckland, New Zealand and the homeland of Niue. It was evident from the conversations, that the church plays a definite role as a domain for language revitalisation in Auckland and in the homeland of Niue.

These groups were also appreciative of the fact that they felt their ‘voices’ had been heard. It is now time for the Niue community here in Auckland and in the homeland of Niue, to begin working together with the youth and the elderly to build a place of worship for the language and culture that recognises the contemporary style of worship that the young people are drawn to while ensuring space for traditional ways of worship to retain what is culturally authentic in Niue worship. It is vital that these conversations take place not only for the youth but for generations to come in the future. As the *Ekalesia* has been influential in the life of all participants, it is obvious that apart from the home, the church can be viewed as a strong language domain where language and culture can be paramount in supporting Niue language revitalisation efforts.

*Niue ko e haku motu fakahēle, tō ai nimo tukulagi au a koe.  
Pete he paēa fano he lalolagi, tō ai nimo tukulagi au a koe.  
Kua foaki atu e au e lili nei, mo e hāku a loto katoa. Mai he haaku a loto fakatokolalo, kua  
foaki atu e au e haaku a taoga mahuiga. Ko e lologo foou. Kua tuku mai e ia e lologo foou  
ke he haku a gutu, ko e fakahēkeaga ke he Atua ha tautolu; to kitia ai he tokologa, ti  
matakutaku foki a lautolu, mo e tua a lautolu kia Iehova.  
Haleluia!*

My precious homeland Niue, I will never forget you.  
Even if I travel all around the world, I will never forget you.  
I present to you this *lili* I have made with a sincere heart. I offer my precious gift with a  
humble heart: A new song. A new song he taught me to sing, a song of praise to our God.  
Many who see this will take warning and will put their trust in the Lord.  
Hallelujah!

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Participant Information Sheet

##### Talanoa

#### Date Information Sheet Produced:

#### Project Working Title

Regeneration of Vagahau Niue: A case-study of youth and the Ekalesia Niue church In Niue and Auckland, New Zealand

#### An Invitation

Fakālofa lahi atu. My name is Nogiata Tukimata and I come from the village of Lakepa Maleloa, Niue Island. I am a Masters student in the Language Revitalisation programme at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), and I extend an invitation for you to take part in this research project. Your participation is purely voluntary and you are able to withdraw at any time.

#### What is the purpose of this research?

The aim of this research is to show how important the relationship is between the *Ekalesia* church and Niue youth both in the homeland of Niue and Auckland, and the maintenance of the *Vagahau Niue*, as a language that is under threat.

The primary research question is as follows: How is the identity of Niue youth in New Zealand and in the Niue homeland rely upon their relationship with the *Ekalesia Niue* church and knowing the Niue language? The research will look at the views of Niue ministers, elders and youth about how the role of the *Ekalesia Niue* church can be seen as an important place to learn and use *Vagahau Niue* in order to maintain the language. The research will also focus on how the identities of Niue youth and their knowledge of the language can be used as a key to maintain for future generations.

These areas will be highlighted through the use of conversations/interviews to capture the voices of members of the Niue community mainly within the church as a way of giving a deeper and meaningful approach that is influenced by the lived experiences of people (Marschall & Rossman, 2006). Central to the research is how members and ministers of *Ekalesia Niue* view the church as a way of not only maintaining *Vagahau Niue* but also the cultural practices for the benefit of the language in the future.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have been identified to participate in this research because you align with the following criteria:

- you identify as being a Tagata Niue
- you attend an *Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue* or PIC church
- you are a minister or hold a role within the *Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue* or PIC church
- you identify as being a Niue youth because you are aged between 18-26

### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

In order to participate in this research project, you need to complete and sign the consent form. The interview will be held at a venue, where you the participant will feel comfortable.

### **What will happen in this research?**

For the purposes of gathering information for this research, there is the option of taking part in a *talanoa*. The *talanoa* will be done face-to-face and take approximately one hour which will be done to fit around your activities and environment. After the *talanoa*, the information given will be written up as a document by the researcher and will be given back to you to check and to confirm its use. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are able to withdraw from the *talanoa* process at any stage. If you do decide you do not wish to be a part of the *talanoa* you can ask that your contribution is destroyed and will not be used and no reference to them be included in the final publication. You can request specific parts of the written document to be removed and destroyed.

### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

All interviews will be carried out according to key Pacific values and norms. There is no known risk of discomfort that will be experienced by the interviewees. However, the participants are completely free to stop the interview or their overall participation in the research at any time if they chose to do so.

### **How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

As already mentioned above, you have the option of not answering any of the questions asked. You also have the option of withdrawing from the interview at any time.

### **What are the benefits?**

Your participation will be beneficial to current and future communities, especially with the Niue community. This research will increase knowledge about the experiences, perceptions and opinions of group of Niue youth, Niue ministers and Niue church leaders and elders in Auckland New Zealand, and the Niue homeland about *Vagahau Niue*. This information will set a foundation of knowledge about how the Niue people value their language and the role that the church plays to maintain it. Furthermore, this case study represents a moment in time- a critical time for the Niue language in New Zealand and back in the homeland as to how the language can be revived for the future generations of Niue people. In addition, the findings from this research may also be used within

academic publications as well or as a resource for academic presentations at conferences or symposiums.

### **How will my privacy be protected?**

Your individual responses will be confidential to the researcher. You will also have the choice of being named in the final report. To protect your privacy, electronic data will be stored separately from hard copies of data in locked cupboards with the primary supervisor. The recordings and hard copies of the data will be destroyed after six years.

### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

The only cost to participate will be your time. Interviews will be conducted face-to-face and take approximately one hour.

### **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

After an initial meeting to discuss the parameters of this research, you will be provided with an information sheet and a consent form. Once you have read this information sheet and the researcher has answered any queries you may have, you may then sign the consent form.

### **Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

As stated in the consent form, you will receive a one two-page summary of the findings of the thesis.

### **What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Professor Tania Ka'ai: email [tkaai@aut.ac.nz](mailto:tkaai@aut.ac.nz) , phone +64 9 921 9999 ext 6601.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz) +64 9 921 9999 ext 6038.

### **Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

#### ***Researcher Contact Details***

Nogiata Tukimata

Email: [nogiata.ukimata@hotmail.co.nz](mailto:nogiata.ukimata@hotmail.co.nz)

Tel: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 6573

#### ***Project Supervisor Contact***

Professor Tania Ka'ai

Te Ipukarea, AUT University, New Zealand

Email: [tkaai@aut.ac.nz](mailto:tkaai@aut.ac.nz)

Tel: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6601

***Approved by the Auckland University of  
Technology Ethics Committee on 31<sup>st</sup>  
October 2016, AUTEK Reference number 16/372***

## Pepa fakailoaaga

### Talanoa

#### Aho ne taute ai e pepa fakaaailoaaga:

#### Matakupu fakagahua:

“Ko e mahuiaga he Ekalesia ke he fakamauaga he Vagahau Niue ke lata ai mo e tau atu fuata ne kua nonofo ai kehe motu ko Niue mo Okalana, Niu Silani”

Uiina atu:

Fakālofa lahi atu. Koe higoa haaku ko Nogiata Tukimata. Hau au he maaga fulufulola ko Lakepa Maleloa, Niue. Ko e haaku a tau fakaakoaga he aoga pulotu ko AUT University, ne taute ai e taha pepa ne fakahigoa ko e Masters of Arts in Language Revitalisation. Kua maeke ke uiina atu fakalaulahi kia koe ke eke ai mo taha tagata ke lata mo e kumikumiaga nei, Ko e haau a taliaaga ko e haau ni ā fakafili. Pihia foki ka manako a ko e ke ai fakahoko haau a tau fakatutalaaga kehe kumikumiaga nei, ko e taliaaga mo koe.

#### Ko e heigoa e mahuiga he kumikumiaga nei?

Ko e kakano he kumikumiaga nei, ke fakalaulahi e mahuiga ke he vaha loto he faituga *Ekalesia* mo e tau atu fuata ne kua nonofo ke he motu ko Niue pihia mo e maaga ko Okalana he motu ko Niu Silani, mo e fakamauaga he *Vagahau Niue*.

Ko e hūhū he matakupu nei ne pehe: Ko e heigoa e mahuiga he iloa e tau fuata ne nonofo he motu ko Niu Silani pihia mo e motu ko Niue e kakano he vaha loto he Ekalesia mo e fakamauaga he *Vagahau Niue*? Tō maeke e kumikumiaga nei ke kumi e tau puhala gahua mai he tau manatu he tau matua faifeau Niue, tau matua tupuna/tiakono Niue, pihia mo e tau fuata Niue. Tō maeke e kumikumiaga nei ke hūhū foki ke he iloaaga he *Vagahau Niue* ha koe vagahau kua lahi e mahuiga ke he tau momoui he tau tagata Niue ke he atuhau foou pihia ke he tau atuhau he tau tau i mua.

Tō maeke ke fakaaoga e puhala *Talanoa* ke moua ai e tau leo he tau matakainaga Niue, ke eke ai mo e matakupu he kumikumiaga nei. Ko e kakano he taute he puhala pehē nei, ke moua e hokulo he tau fakakakano ke he tau fehagai fakatagata ki loto he faituga kehe fakamauaga he *Vagahau Niue*, pihia mo e tau gahua Aga fakamotu.

#### Ko e hā ne kua uiina au ke eke ai mo taha tagata kehe kumikumiaga nei?

Kua hoko e uiina kia koe ke eke ai mo taha tagata he kumikumiaga nei hakoe:

- Niue atātā a koe
- Kua fakafetui a koe mo e *Ekalesia Niue* po ke PIC
- Ko e faifeau Niue / tiakono / matua tupuna ki loto he *Ekalesia*
- Kua tū e tau 18 -24 ke eke ai ma e hukui he tau fuata

### **Talia fēfē au ke eke ai mo taha tagata he kumikumiaga nei?**

Maeke ia ko e ke eke ai mo taha tagata ki loto he kumikumiaga nei kā fakapuke mo e fakamooli e pepa consent form. Ko e tau fakatutalaaga tō fakahoko ke he kaina ne kua fia manako e matakainaga ke fakahoko e tau fakatutalaaga ki ai.

### **Ko e heigoa ka taute he kumikumiaga nei?**

Ko e kakano mo e mahuiga he puhala moua fakailoaaga ke he kumikumiaga nei, ko e haau ā taliaaga kehe *talanoa*. Tō maeke e tau fakatutalaaga *talanoa* ke fakahoko moe tagata kumikumi ke he taha e tulā he haau a aho hā ko e tau momoui lavelave kua fakafitā a koe ki ai. Ka oti e tau fakatutalaaga *talanoa*, tō uta e tagata kumikumi ke taute fakamitaki to liuaki atu ke fakakia e koe, ke talia poke ai talia ke fakaaoga kehe tohiaga fakahiku he kumikumiaga nei. Ko e haau a taliaaga he kumikumiaga nei, ko e haau a fifiliaga fakatagata, mo e maeke ia koe ke ai fakahoko haau a fakatutalaaga. Ka ai talia a koe ke eke ai mo tagata ki loto he kumikumiaga nei, maeke ia koe ke manako ke he haau a tau tali ke ai fakaaoga mo e liuaki atu ki a koe.

### **Ko e heigoa e tau fakakaupāaga ke lata ai mo e kumikumiaga nei?**

Tō fakaaoga e tau Aga fakamotu ne kua tonuhia ke he motu ha tautolu ko Niue ki loto he he tau fakatutalaaga. Tō nakai fai mena ka hopokia ke he tau tagata ne kua talia ke he tau fakatutalaaga. Kaeke ke fai, tō maeke e tagata ne kua fakalataha ke he tau fakatutalaaga ke fakaoti haana a fakatutala poke haana taliaaga kehe kumikumiaga ka fia manako.

### **Tō maeke fēfē e tau fakakaupāaga nei ke taute fakamitaki?**

Ko e haau taliaaga, kua hake ni he haau a loto. Maeke ia koe ke ai tali e tau hūhū he tagata kumikumiaga, pihia foki tō maeke ia koe ke ai fakahoko haau a taliaaga ke he fakatutalaaga. Tō ai fai hūhū ka hūhū atu ki a koe ke he magaaho nei.

### **Ko e heigoa e tau mena ka puna mai ai he kumikumiaga nei?**

Ko e haau a taliaaga ke he kumikumiaga nei tō maeke ke fakaaoga ke he tau atuhau i mua, mua atu ke he tau Niue kua nonofo ke he motu ko Niue mo e maaga ko Okalana. Koe kumikumiaga nei tō maeke foki ke fakalaulahi e pulotu mo e tau fakamaama ke he manatu he *Vagahau Niue* mai he tau fuata, tau matua faifeau pihia mo e tau matua tupuna / tiakono ki loto he tau *Ekalesia* i Niue mo e maaga ko Okalana, Niu Silani. Ko e tau manatu nei tō maeke ke fakalaulahi e tau pulotu he tau tagata Niue, mo e ha lautolu ā fia manako ke fakamau e *Vagahau*.

### **Puipui fēfē haaku a fakapuipuiaga tagata ki loto he kumikumiaga nei?**

Ko e haau a tau tali fakatagata tō nofo hifo ni mo e tagata ne taute e kumikumiaga. Tō maeke foki ia koe ke manako ke fakaaoga e higoa haau ke he tohiaga fakahiku he kumikumiaga nei. Ke maeke ke puipui e haau a fakapuipuiaga tagata, tō tuku e haau a tohiaga hila kehe taha poko ne kehe mai ia haau a original copy. Ko e tau tapaki moe original copy he haau a tau fakatutalaaga to nakai maeke ke fakaaoga ka oti e ono e tau.

### **Ko e heigoa e tau totogi ke lata mo e haaku a magaaho kua foaki ke he kumikumiaga nei?**

Ko e totogi nī he kumikumiaga nei ko e haau a tau magaaho kua foaki. Ko e tau fakatutalaaga tō fakahoko kehe taha e tulā mo e tagata kumikumi.

### **Ko e heigoa haaku a magaaho ke tali atu ke he uiina nei?**

Ka oti e fono fakamua ke lata ai mo e kumikumiaga nei, tō foaki atu e pepa fakailoaaga mo e pepa fakamooli ke lata ai mo e haau a taliaaga ke he kumikumiaga nei. Ka oti he totou e koe e pepa ua nei, mo e hūhū e koe e tau hūhū ke he tagata kumikumi, tō maeke ia ko e ke fakamooli ke he pepa ne fakahigoa pepa fakamooli.

### **Maeke nakai a au ke moua e fakailoaaga mai he tagata kumikumi kehe tau manatu fakahiku ki loto he kumikumiaga nei?**

Ko e tonuhia ke he hūhū nei, haia he pepa fakamooli, ne pehe tō moua e koe taha summary he thesis ka oti he fakatoka.

### **Ka fai hūhū a au ke he kumikumiaga nei, kō hai ka matutaki a au ki ai?**

Ka fai hūhū a ko e ke lata ai mo e kumikumiaga nei, matutaki fakahako a koe ke he takitaki he kumikumiaga nei ko: Professor Tania Ka'ai: meli hila [tkaai@aut.ac.nz](mailto:tkaai@aut.ac.nz), numela foni gahua +64 9 921 9999 ext 6601.

Tau hūhū ke lata ai moe tau puhala ne kua fakaaoga ki loto he kumikumiaga nei, matutaki fakahako ke he Executive Secretary of AUTC, Kate O'Connor, meli hila: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), numela foni gahua +64 9 921 9999 ext 6038.

### **Matutaki ā au kia hai ka fia manako fakailoaaga foki ke lata ai moe kumikumiaga nei?**

Fakamolemole ua galo e pepa fakailoaaga pihia mo e pepa consent form. Ka fia manako a koe ke he fakailoaaga foki, matutaki ai ke he matakau kumikumiaga nei:

#### ***Tagata Kumikumiaga:***

Nogiata Tukimata

Meli hila: [nogiata.tukimata@hotmail.co.nz](mailto:nogiata.tukimata@hotmail.co.nz)

Meli hila gahua: [ntukimat@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ntukimat@aut.ac.nz)

Numela telefoni gahua: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6573  
921 9999 ext 6601

#### **Tagata matutaki i Niue:**

Gaylene Tasmania (Director General of Social Services)

Niue Public Service Building, Fonuakula, Alofi, Niue.

Numela foni gahua: (+683) 4286 E: [Gaylene.Tasmania@mail.gov.nu](mailto:Gaylene.Tasmania@mail.gov.nu)

#### ***Takitaki he kumikumiaga:***

Professor Tania Ka'ai

Te Ara Poutama, AUT  
University, New Zealand

Meli hila: [tkaai@aut.ac.nz](mailto:tkaai@aut.ac.nz)

Numela telefoni gahua: +64 9

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 AUTC Reference number 16/372**

## APPENDIX B

### Consent Form

#### Talanoa Interviews

**Project title:** *Regeneration of Vagahau Niue. A case-study of youth and the Ekalesia Niue church in Niue and Auckland, New Zealand*

**Project Supervisor:** *Professor Tania Ka'ai*

**Researcher:** *Nogiata Tukimata*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated October 2016
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that my responses may be used in the final report. The material can only be used with this written consent.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that following the transcription of interviews, I will be provided a copy of the transcription, and have the opportunity to add or take anything out before the final copy is agreed to.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this projects at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one):  
Yes ☐ No ☐
- ☐ I wish for my identity to remain confidential in the research (please tick one):  
Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....  
.....  
Date:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016, AUTEK Reference number 16/372***

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

# Pepa Talia

## Fakatutalaaga Talanoa

*Matakupu he kumikumiaga: “Ko e mahuiaga he Ekalesia ke he fakamauaga he Vagahau Niue ke lata ai mo e tau atu fuata ne kua nonofo ai kehe motu ko Niue mo Okalana, Niu Silani”*

*Takitaki: Professor Tania Ka'ai*

*Tagata Kumikumi: Nogiata Tukimata*

- Kua totou mo e maama e au e tau fakailoaaga ke lata ai mo e tau kumikumiaga ne kua tohia ai ke he pepa fakailoaaga he aho 28 he mahina Mē 2017.
- Kua maeke ia au ke hūhū e tau hūhū ke he tagata kumikumi mo e moua e tali ne kua tonuhia ki ai e tau hūhū
- Kua maama e au kaeke ke talia e au ke he fakatutalaaga nei, kua talia e au ke tapaki haaku a tau tali mo e tohi hifo e falu a tau tali ke eke ai mo e tau kumikumiaga ke he matakupu.
- Kua maama e au ko e haaku a tau tali ke he tau hūhū tō maeke ke fakaaoga ke lata ai mo e matohiaga he kumikumiaga nei. Kaeke kua talia e au, tō foaki e au haaku a taliaaga he pepa nei.
- Kua maama e au, ko e haaku a talia kehe tau fakatutalaaga, ko e haaku a magaaho ne foaki ke lata ai mo e tau kumikumiaga. Ka eke ke ai talia au ke he tau fakatutalaaga ke he ā magaaho, tō maeke ia au ke ai fakalataha ke he kumikumiaga nei.
- Kua maama e au ka oti e tau fakatutalaaga moe tagata kumikumi, to tohi ai e ia e tau tali haaku ke he tau hūhū, tō maeke ia au ke moua e matohiaga ke hiki tau hūhū fakamua, tō liuaki atu kehe tagtaa kumikumi.
- Kua maama e au haaku a taliaaga kehe kumikumiaga nei. Ka eke ke ai talia e au ke fakahoko e tau fakatutalaaga, tō fai fakatāaga kehe tau tali ne kua tuku atu kehe tagata kumikumi, ke ai maeke/ po ke maeke ke fakaaoga e tau tali ke lata ai mo e tau kumikumiaga kehe haana a tau fakaakoaga.
- Kua talia e au ke eke ai mo taha tagata ke he kumikumiaga nei.
- Manako au ke moua e taha pepa ka oti e tau kumikumiaga (Fakamolemole hika taha)
 

Ē ○
Nakai ○
- Manako au ke fakaaoga haaku a higoa ki loto he kumikumiaga fakahiku (Fakamolemole hika taha)
 

Ē ○
Nakai ○

Haau a fakamooliaga: .....

Haau a higoa : .....

Haau a numela foni (ka fia manako tala foki) :

.....

.....

Aho:

***Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016, AUTEK Reference number 16/372***

*Note: Fakamolemole ti toka taha lomi he pepa nei ke lata mo koe.*

## Researcher Safety Protocol

### Talanoa Interviews

*Project title:* Regeneration of *Vagahau Niue*: A case-study of youth and the Ekalesia Niue church In Niue and Auckland, New Zealand.

*Project Supervisor:* Professor Tania Ka'ai

*Researcher:* Nogiata Tukimata

I, as the Primary researcher am aware that the standard practice at AUT University is that it is not acceptable to use my home to conduct research with participants. The interviews will take place in the participant's home or chosen environment of dwelling.

During all stages of this project, particularly the data collection (interview) phase, the method of conducting the interviews will be in accordance with key Pacific cultural values and norms including:

- Establishing a connection through ties to the community
- Showing respect to elders and knowledge bearers
- Recognising Pacific etiquette, such as removing shoes prior to entering someone's home, wearing appropriate attire etc.
- Acknowledging religious protocol, such as beginning and ending the interview with a prayer (if the participant calls for this)
- 

### Guidelines and arrangements when conducting Interviews with Participants

- ☐ Arrange for the Primary Supervisor and Postgraduate Administrator to have a final and confirmed schedule of interview times and locations including exact addresses.
- ☐ Ensure that the researcher's mobile phone is fully charged and available for use in the field.
- ☐ Ensure that the researcher is well and hydrated, wearing the appropriate clothing for the weather and the environment.
- ☐ Ensure that the researcher has the appropriate equipment needed to conduct the interview (i.e writing pad, pens, recorders)
- ☐ Researcher makes contact with the Primary Supervisor and local Niue contact via mobile phone text message/phone call immediately **prior** to the interview to inform her that the researcher has arrived at the interview location safely and is about to commence interviewing.

- Researcher makes contact with the Primary Supervisor and local Niue contact via mobile phone text message/phone call immediately after the interview to inform her that she has safely left the interview location.
- If the confirmation text message or phone call from the Researcher to the Primary Supervisor/ local Niue contact does not eventuate, the following steps will be taken until such time the Researcher has been located:
  - The Primary Supervisor/local Niue contact will call the Researcher.
  - The Primary Supervisor/local Niue contact will contact the Researcher's immediate family in case the Researcher has made contact with them or they know of her whereabouts.
  - The Primary Supervisor/local Niue contact will attempt to physically locate the Researcher, if necessary, through driving to the interview location. If this step is necessary, the Primary Supervisor will first inform the Postgraduate Administrator and will also ensure that she has someone else accompanying her.
  - The Primary Supervisor/local Niue contact will notify the police of the missing Researcher.