Abstract

‘The Gift’ is the English title of a small book first published in French in 1925 by sociologist Marcel Mauss, which catalyzed an ongoing debate linked to a wide range of scholarship. Mauss’s gift theory included the Māori example of the ‘hau of the gift’ which Mauss explained as a spiritual force, seeking to return to its original owner or place of origin. This article brings a critical Māori perspective to Mauss’ notion of the hau of the gift, in an indigenous philosophical response to Eurocentric social science that combines critical discourse analysis (CDA) with Kaupapa Māori theory and principles of research. The paper introduces Mauss’ arguments about gifting, and the role of hau in those arguments, before turning to a close examination of the concept of ‘hau’ as presented in the original Māori letters, the primary data used by Elsdon Best to write his anthropological articles, from which Mauss developed his ideas about hau. These letters, which sparked the whole debate, are material artefacts of the cross-cultural educational relationship between Tamati Ranapiri as teacher, and Elsdon Best as student. Common-sense Māori readings of Ranapiri find no mystery in what he wrote about hau, but reinforce the significance of his correspondence, from the perspective of Kaupapa Māori versions of the history of Māori education.
Kaupapa Māori research (KMR) is an Indigenous research approach that is decolonizing and transformative. Interpretive description (ID) is a qualitative methodology used to generate knowledge relevant to the applied health disciplines. In this article, we discuss how we combined KMR and ID to investigate the experiences of Māori (the Indigenous peoples of New Zealand) with aphasia and their whānau (extended family). This is novel because it is the first time these two approaches have been combined. In the context of aphasia research, we discuss how they work together in theory, and the synergy Kura kaupapa Māori provide a unique primary school education system that immerses children in Māori language and culture. Interviews with founding members from the first Auckland kura give a critical...