Literature Review

Quality in Immersion-bilingual Early Years Education for Language Acquisition

FINAL REPORT, August 2011

M. Skerrett with A. Gunn
University of Canterbury
Milestone Report for Ministry of Education
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction........................................................................................................... 4
1.2 Findings.................................................................................................................. 4

# INTRODUCTION

2.1 Aims and scope of the literature review............................................................... 10
2.2 Report Structure ................................................................................................... 11
2.3 Glossary .................................................................................................................. 12

# CONTEXTUALISING BILINGUAL/IMMERSION EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 14
3.2 Bilingualism and immersion issues......................................................................... 15
3.3 Education aims of bilingual/immersion education............................................... 25
3.4 Summary ............................................................................................................... 29

# METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 33
4.2 Accessing the literature ........................................................................................ 34
4.3 Empirical studies discussion ................................................................................. 35
4.4 Summary ............................................................................................................... 45

# PASIFIKA IMMERSION/BILINGUAL EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

5.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 49
5.2 The current context of Pasifika immersion early years education ...................... 49

# MĀORI IMMERSION/BILINGUAL EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 55
6.2 The current context of Māori immersion/bilingual early years education ......... 55
6.3 Whānau, hapū and iwi considerations ................................................................... 64
6.4 Summary ............................................................................................................... 68

# QUALITY IMMERSION FOR MĀORI AND PASIFIKA LEARNERS

7.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 73
7.2 Māori and Pasifika immersion early years education ........................................... 73
7.3 Summary ............................................................................................................... 79

# FOSTERING BILINGUALISM AND BILITERACY

8.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................. 82
8.2 What teachers need to know and their role in immersion education ............... 82
8.3 How much immersion education is needed in early years education for bilingual outcomes? .......................................................... 83
8.4 Does this differ if the target language is not spoken at home? ............... 84
8.5 Summary ............................................................................................................. 85
9 STRONG LANGUAGE FOUNDATIONS .................................................................. 88
  9.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 88
  9.2 What constitutes ‘strong language foundations’ in the early years .......... 88
  9.3 Strong language foundations, culture and identity ..................................... 89
  9.5 Summary ............................................................................................................. 91
10 QUALITY ECE IMMERSION FOR EARLY SCHOOLING .................................. 93
  10.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 93
  10.2 Support structures .............................................................................................. 93
  10.3 Challenges and strategies for teachers ............................................................... 97
  10.4 Useful strategies for parents .............................................................................. 100
  10.5 Outcomes .......................................................................................................... 103
  10.6 Summary ............................................................................................................. 105
11 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS ................................................................. 108
  11.1 Language, Power and Pedagogy ................................................................. 108
  11.2 Language, Culture and Identity .................................................................... 110
  11.3 Research Implications ..................................................................................... 113
12 REFERENCES ........................................................................................................ 116
APPENDIX A: Prior collated documents ............................................................... 122
APPENDIX B: Empirical Studies .......................................................................... 124
Quality in Immersion-Bilingual Early Years Education for language acquisition!

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kei roto i te tamaiti te pito mata e moe ana,
waiho mā te tohunga/kaiako e whakaara
Nā Te Wharehuia Milroy, 2011

1.1 Introduction

The literature review was guided by the following four research questions:

1. What counts as quality immersion early childhood education for Pasifika and Māori learners in Aotearoa New Zealand?
2. How is bilingualism and biliteracy fostered through quality immersion early childhood education programs?
3. What features of quality immersion early childhood education are likely to lead to ‘strong language foundations’?
4. What can be learned from quality early childhood education immersion for early school success?

1.2 Findings

Māori and Pasifika immersion early years education created a seismic shift for bilingual education in this country. There is now a full stream of Māori immersion education spanning the non-compulsory (early years) and compulsory (primary through to secondary) sectors. Studies of other indigenous languages (Hawaiian and Cherokee) found similar shifts. However, in the New Zealand context, public policy
has been slow to keep up with the pace of change, much less support or work with these flax-roots movements. Referred to as ‘leaden-footed’, the slow pace of Crown response and responsibility has stymied advancements. So the difficulties associated with these movements are typically politically constructed problems not linguistic.

Controversy exists where there is misinformation about the nature of languages and what constitutes bilingual education. According to Garcia “Monolingual education has at times been used as a way to limit access and legitimate the linguistic practices of those already in power” (2009, p. 12) and that the tensions surrounding bilingual education often have to do with dominant groups protecting their power. In the New Zealand context education (spanning both the non-compulsory and compulsory sectors) has been dominated by monolingual English policies and practices. Debate still rages about whether Māori, one of the two official written and spoken languages, should be compulsory in schools. There is no debate about the value and place of English. Heritage language education is interventionist education, with transformational aims. It intervenes in the general exclusion and failure of many Pasifika (including Māori) children in mainstream education. Further ideological clarification can help to overcome some of the general education and language policy and planning failures, insecurities about the value of indigenous languages and cultures and practices around heritage language education. Heritage language education is supported on ideological and pedagogical grounds:

- Ideologically, it is an aspect of language rights, which are a component of human rights and a way of protection from discrimination by language.
- Pedagogically, it aims to make seamless the progression of children and young people through the education sector without disadvantage.
- Academically it aims to improve academic performance and to develop positive attitudes in speakers about their linguistic and cultural identities and heritage/s.
- Intergenerationally it aims to sustain transmission of language/s, motivated by pride in Pasifika languages, by increasing public (institutions) and private (homes and communities) domains, critical for the survival and maintenance of language/s.
- Culturally and linguistically it aims to uphold diversity in the world.
This analysis establishes that the view gaining greater acceptance among linguists and language activists is that the rights and desires of the linguistic community about the introduction and duration of heritage language/s in education must outweigh the concerns of the state. The apprehension about the cost of provision often entertained by governments does not count the social cost of not doing it, of which the educational failure of the minority students is only a part (Annamalai, 2006).

Garcia’s (2009) main thesis is that bilingual education is the only way to educate children in the twenty-first century. It is inclusive in its pluralistic visions and reconceptualising understandings about language and bilingualism. It transforms the lives of children and adults throughout the world. She argues that socio historical positioning, geopolitical forces and language ideologies all interact to sustain different kinds of bilingual education policies (and different educational options and practices) in different places throughout the world.

Heritage language revitalisation and education has the added goal of not only creating bilingual children as an outcome, but saving or revernacularising language. Therefore, as Garcia (2009) argues, what continues to separate two kinds of program goals\(^1\) has to do with the broader general goal of bilingual education – the use of two languages to educate generally, meaningfully, equitably, and for tolerance and appreciation of diversity – as distinguished from the narrower goal in general education of second- or foreign-language teaching an additional language as a subject. That is an important distinction. For indigenous children their indigenous language/s should be neither thought of as a second language, nor a foreign language but a birthright and a resource.

In the context of Māori language education it is argued that te reo Māori is the terralingua of Aotearoa New Zealand. Māori interests in the language are not the same as the interests of any other minority group in New Zealand society in its own language. Findings provide clarification around

\(^1\) Commonly thought of in New Zealand as immersion (bilingual) education and mainstream (English) education
• Treaty-based education: Māori heritage programs and curriculum ought not to be a translation of the English, but stand on an equal footing with equal support and resourcing. That is the Treaty obligation in education with implications for curriculum design, assessment, research and development.

Quality\(^2\), fostering bilingualism (and biliteracy) and strong language foundations all intersect and are combined in this section of the review with the wider geopolitical context.\(^3\) What the combined factors might look like include:

• Teacher expertise with languages and a capacity to draw upon resources from within the language contexts (and communities) in which they work;
• Language policy planning, curriculum research, development and resourcing, qualified teachers and additive approaches;
• The optimum percentage for quality early years immersion/bilingual education in the New Zealand context being between 90 to 100 percent in the target language;
• The knowledge that immersion programs hold the greatest potential to increase intergenerational, mother-tongue transmission in the home, family, neighbourhood and community;
• Relationships between early years educational settings and homes and community (hapū and iwi) are central to the success of the programs;
• The transmission of world views through the revitalisation and maintenance of language/s in heritage language programs is an integral element;
• That language shapes, and is shaped by, culture and identity;
• That Pasifika peoples are not homogenous and their interests in heritage language maintenance (and/or revitalisation) in Aotearoa and their home-bases must be supported to prevent and/or reverse language shift;

\(^2\) Bearing in mind that the notion of quality in early years education is problematised; so too the notion of quality in immersion education because children bring a variety of language practices to the setting/s which interact with the language practices of the setting which are syncretised—changing their own and those of the centre.

\(^3\) Sections 7-10 deal with the discrete review questions.
• There are coordination and research functions incumbent upon government to ensure provision is appropriate and meets the needs and demands of Pasifika communities;

• Specially designed teacher education programs which will ensure early years education remains culturally and linguistically connected to Pasifika communities in Aotearoa, and their Pasifika roots, promoting Pasifika world-views and identities;

• As with te reo Māori, it is important that Pasifika languages be supported so that their status is raised in order that children see their heritage language has power and prestige, and a place in the wider world, in the same way that English does;

• The importance of ongoing clarification around what constitutes quality bilingual education and strong language foundations in Aotearoa/New Zealand;

• The finding that by 24 months, bilingual children had already acquired a vocabulary in each of their two languages and gained some experience in switching between them advancing their metalinguistic awareness has implications for promoting heritage language from birth and practical implications for educators and parents;

• Promoting the benefits of bilingualism including the notion that it is good for all children;

• That bilingual individuals enjoy cognitive and social advantages over monolinguals;

• That bilingual education is transformative of colonial practices as children gain ways of expression and access different ways of being in the world;

• That bilingual education is different from other language education programmes that teach a second or a foreign language as a subject.

Where relevant, the international studies are used as the starting point from which to draw inferences about what works in bilingual settings and where the gaps may be. The relevance of these studies combined with the localised empirical studies and
literature, highlight knowledge gaps worthy of future research. The findings included general research implications:

- **Policy Development** - heritage language education-based policies will provide the basis for ongoing planning for bilingual/immersion early years education for Māori and Pasifika languages. Policies must target bilingualism and biliteracy if bilingual outcomes from schooling are a desired end-goal.

- **Community Development** - Future research should examine the different impacts that schools and families have on children’s ability to stay bilingual and how the characteristics of the home and programs may coincide to support or inhibit early learning. Iwi developments and education plans should, as a special consideration, must include research and development plans for early years education.

- **Initial Teacher Education Development** - Failure to meet the demands of quality immersion/bilingual teachers has impacted on both the numbers of centres and quality provision in EYE. This accounts significantly for decline in participation in the Māori immersion sector. Lack of suitable ITE programs and the lack of qualified teachers for Pasifika centres were also noted.

- **Professional development** - The review highlighted the paucity of research in EYE with regard to helping teachers determine precisely what interventions and which instructional accommodations and adaptations are most beneficial for bilingual children. It is suggested that the indicators of quality immersion, bilingualism and biliteracy, strong foundations and school success contribute to the development of a set of competencies for teachers.

- **Resource Development** - An ongoing cycle of research and development, including research into the language levels and needs of children and appropriate resources in the target age groups, is an integral part of continuous improvement. This will help to build up best evidence about what works in immersion education; assist with strategic resourcing and targeted professional learning of teachers; and will improve outcomes for children and whānau.
2 INTRODUCTION

This section of the review covers the aims and scope of the literature review and report structure which overviews the broader context of bilingualism and bilingual education. This section also provides a glossary summarising the key concepts.

2.1 Aims and scope of the literature review

The review aims to build on existing work commissioned by the Ministry of Education (MOE) relative to issues of bilingual and immersion education in Aotearoa New Zealand (May, Hill, & Tiakiwai, 2006; Meade, PuhiPuhi, & Foster-Cohen, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2004). It summarises and synthesises relevant empirical work on immersion and bilingual early childhood education (ECE) and into the early years of school or what has been termed early years education (EYE)\(^4\). The review evaluates the quality of these studies; and addresses questions about how quality bilingual and immersion early childhood education relates to ‘strong language foundations’ and ‘early school success’. Knowledge gaps worthy of future research are also noted.

The scope of this review is to generate further understandings of how quality immersion early childhood education contributes to ‘promoting bilingualism’ in Aotearoa, ‘strong language foundations’ and ‘early school success’. For the purposes of literature searching, we used bilingual* as equally and as frequently as immersion*. This increased the likelihood that we would find recent relevant studies about bilingual/immersion early childhood education programs. In order to provide some ideological clarification about the debate around percentage of language required as the language of the curriculum in order to achieve bilingual outcomes, we took the question to our consultation group for comment (Canterbury University ‘Taster’ Hui, December 3, 2010). Feedback there strongly recommended that for both Pasifika and Māori contexts we only consider evidence from early childhood education programs.

\(^4\) For the purposes of this review, the terms early childhood education and early years education are used intermittently to reflect the years which span both the compulsory and non-compulsory sectors, that is approximately the first eight years of a child’s life.
education programs which were immersion - where at least 80% - 100% of the teaching time was in the target language.

2.2 Report Structure

This literature review is divided into the following sections;

i. Executive summary

ii. Introduction

iii. Contextualising bilingual/immersion EYE

iv. Methodology, summarised studies and discussion

v. Pasifika immersion/bilingual EYE

vi. Māori immersion/bilingual EYE

vii. What counts as quality in the early years

viii. How bilingualism and biliteracy is fostered through quality

ix. Features of quality immersion programs leading to strong language foundations

x. Implications of quality ECE for early schooling

xi. Final Discussion and Conclusions

xii. References

xiii. Appendices
2.3 Glossary

**Bilingualism** – simultaneous or successive acquisition of two languages

**Infant bilingual** – young child who learns two languages simultaneously from birth

**Child bilingual** – older child who learns a second language successively

**Bilingual education** – an educational program with bilingual aims that uses two languages as the media of instruction at some stage during the program

**Biliteracy** – bilingual speakers’ ability to read and write in two languages

**Thresholds theory** – academic proficiency transference across languages

**L1** – the first language/s a person learns and uses in the family

**L2** – the second (or subsequent) language/s a person learns

**Immersion education** – a form of bilingual education, where L1 majority language students are taught predominantly through an L2, usually a minority (heritage) language, in order to become bilingual and biliterate in that language as well as the majority language

**Language interdependence** – the widely accepted view that the level of competence that a child attains in their L2 is dependent to a large extent on the level of competence already achieved in their L1

**Submersion programs** – where L1 minority or heritage language students are taught solely through a majority language in a society as an L2. Though often confused with immersion education, a form of bilingual education, it is clearly not, as eventual monolingualism in the majority language is its key aim and students’ L1 is excluded from the teaching and learning process

**Subtractive bilingualism** – a deficit view of students’ language/s, where the students’ L1 is seen as interfering with the learning of another language, rather than supporting it. The aim is to subtract L1 generally on entry into the compulsory sector

**Additive bilingualism** – a context in which two (or more) languages are valued, encouraged, and used at some stage in the teaching and learning process.

**Heritage model** - Considered additive bilingualism; this model, most often associated with indigenous language revitalisation and education initiatives, provides a strong bilingual approach, and tends to be situated somewhere in between maintenance and enrichment models in terms of the L1/L2 status of their students.
**Syncretised talk** – children practising many different types of talk such as vocabulary and terminology learnt at school or home in their play (both at school and home)

**Syncretisation** – young children showing ability to *syncretise* talk from different domains (home and school), languages (narrative styles) or literacies through play activities
3 CONTEXTUALISING BILINGUAL/IMMERSION EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

3.1 Introduction

As background to the research plan the Ministry of Education (MOE) and researchers gathered a range of reports and materials relevant to immersion and bilingual education in Aotearoa. Thinking specifically about Pasifika and Māori early childhood education, a report of those initial documents was included in the first milestone report, a copy of which is included in APPENDIX A.

This section of the review focuses on distinguishing heritage models of immersion in early years education from other models and why it is important to do so. It provides further ideological clarification for the New Zealand context and additional definition around bilingual-immersion early childhood education relevant to the Māori and Pasifika context; it overviews some of the benefits of being bilingual; the types of language and programs supporting bilingual development; and some of the implications for parent/s, wider whānau and teachers. It is noted that the heritage language of New Zealand is te reo Māori. Its home base is this land and it is mapped onto the whole of this land. Te reo Māori is the terralingua or language of the land. Nonetheless, what happens in education with te reo Māori is likely to have similar implications for Pasifika languages. The English-medium context of most New Zealand schools contributes to Pasifika language shift, which often begins as early as a child’s first year of school. The 2006 census (Statistics New Zealand, 2006) found that there were more than 140,000 speakers of Pasifika languages in New Zealand, of whom the vast majority were Sāmoan speakers. There were also large numbers of Tongan, Cook Islands Māori and Niue language speakers. In the New Zealand Sāmoan and Tongan communities, in particular, Pasifika languages are still widely spoken and are a regular part of people’s lives but many Pasifika languages are threatened—the extent to which must be the subject of further research.

---

5 The term teacher assumes a teaching qualification for teaching in the early childhood sector as well as the compulsory sector
3.2 Bilingualism and immersion issues

Defining bilingualism

The term ‘bilingualism’ has been a very difficult one to define, and controversial in pedagogical terms. There is confusion in the use of the term bilingual, what it means and why it is important. Baker’s (1993) definition of bilingualism is of a child who is able to speak two languages fluently. However the concept of ‘fluency’ raises the question of when somebody could be considered fluent, so the controversy continues. Some commentators assert bilingualism begins at the point where a speaker of one language can produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other language; whereas others suggest bilingualism commences when a person begins to understand utterances without necessarily being able to produce them.

The focal point of the controversy is the degree of fluency one should reach before claiming to be bilingual and when the benefits of being bilingual will therefore accrue. The notion that bilingualism simply means having access to two languages, and placing all bilinguals on a continuum from equi-linguals to just beginning to acquire a second language, in a sense negates the fluency debate. Saunders’ (1988) qualification however, is of relevance to this review in that those who have very little proficiency in more than one language are still essentially monolingual and that balanced bilinguals are roughly equally skilled in their two languages. Although they may not be perfect in both languages (one could be more dominant in one language), there is a balance between the two languages in terms of domain usage and the range of purposes for which they would use language in meaningful contexts or in their daily lives.

Infant/Child Bilingualism

Of significance in the bilingualism debate, and especially in the sense of accruing benefit, is that it is somewhat difficult to make the distinction between infant bilingualism and child bilingualism. According to Saunders (1988), an infant bilingual is one who has a simultaneous acquisition of two languages from birth. A
child bilingual is one who has successive acquisition of two languages. That is, the child acquires first one language within the family and then acquires a second language through preschool and/or the early school years.

Although there has been some disagreement concerning the cut off point between first-language acquisition and early second-language acquisition there is an arbitrary cut off point between infant bilingualism and child bilingualism of three years where one language has become relatively well established before exposure to the second occurs. In other words, if an infant child has not had exposure to another language from birth and before the age of four years, s/he will not be classified an infant bilingual because s/he will not be learning those two languages simultaneously from birth. The infant’s first language has already been fashioned. The implication is that a monolingual child of three years will not adapt as easily to an immersion context in a different language as a bilingual child of the same age having had simultaneous acquisition from birth. It is not the intention of this review to provide the minutiae of infant/child language development, but Guasti (2004) provides further interesting insights;

Children achieve linguistic milestones in parallel fashion, regardless of the specific language they are exposed to. For example, at about 6-8 months all children start to babble...to produce repetitive syllables like bababa. At about 10-12 months they speak their first words, and between 20 and 24 months they begin to put words together. It has been shown that children between 2 and 3 years speaking a wide variety of languages use infinitive verbs in main clauses...or omit sentential subjects..., although the language they are exposed to may not have this option. Across languages young children also over regularize the past tense or other tenses of irregular verbs (p. 4).

Whilst there are individual differences in the language learning of infants and young children, there are some broad patterns and similarities of infant/child language learning across languages (Guasti, 2004). The distinctions between infant and child bilinguals were also noted in the studies. Skerrett-White (2003) found the distinction between infant/child bilingualism relevant for Kōhanga Reo where concerns about the dominance of English among older monolingual English-speaking children were noted. Those children who had Māori language support in the home or committed parents in the Kōhanga Reo were better equipped to handle ‘te reo Māori anake’
(100% Māori immersion) domains. With whānau actively involved, or ‘on board’, the children, especially infants and toddlers seemed more settled and acquired te reo Māori rapidly and effortlessly. So did the pakeke (adults). With such commitment from their parents children were able to build upon and sustain lengthy conversations in te reo Māori, discuss topics with more depth and use increasingly more complex language structures. English monolingual children without such support on entry to Kōhanga Reo between three and four years of age could not. The difference was noticeable. Policy was eventually developed to the effect that children over the age of three years with no previous contact with te reo Māori (and where there was no willingness on the part of their own whānau to attend and learn alongside the tamariki) were advised to seek other models of early childhood education. This was considered not only in the best interests of the child/ren concerned, but to ensure the immersion philosophy (and practices) operating within the Kōhanga Reo were maintained and sustained.

According to Saunders (1988), those children who become bilingual before four years of age have significantly increased chances of being able to make use of their two languages. They have an earlier awareness of the arbitrariness of language in that they can analyse it more intensively; they can separate out meaning from sound earlier; they have a greater adeptness at divergent thinking; greater adeptness at creative thinking; greater linguistic and cognitive creativity and concept formation; and greater social sensitivity than their monolingual counterparts or child bilinguals. Research into those children who became bilingual before the age of four years compared with those who became bilingual after that age found that not only were the ‘before fours’ markedly superior to monolinguals, but they were also significantly superior to later child bilinguals (Balkan, cited in Saunders, 1988).

It is also an important point to consider that for an infant bilingual, s/he is learning the two languages simultaneously as if s/he is learning one. S/he does subsequently learn to differentiate between those two languages according to the needs of the social situation. However, it is difficult to state categorically when this might occur as language inputs, outputs and social setting must be considered when discussing matters of differentiation.
Thresholds Theory

It is argued that the further a child moves towards balanced bilingualism (i.e. high levels of bilingual proficiency in both languages), the greater the likelihood that certain cognitive advantages will accrue (see Ramírez et al., 1991 & Thomas and Collier, 2002 cited in May, 2010). However, when bilinguals are in subtractive bilingual contexts, these advantages may be attenuated and possibly even reversed. A key theory that addresses these countervailing patterns for bilingual students, at least partially, is the thresholds theory, first postulated by Cummins, (1976) and expanded on by Toukomaa and Skutnabb-Kangas, (1977). The thresholds theory was created to address the observation that academic proficiency transfers across languages, such that students who have developed literacy in their first language (L1) will tend to make stronger progression in acquiring literacy in their second language (L2). Therefore, the use of the students’ L1 as a medium of instruction will not detract from their learning an L2, in fact it is likely to enhance it.

Thresholds theory remains important for two reasons.

1. It sought to account for why minority students often fail to cope academically and linguistically when they are submerged in a school environment where their L2, or weaker language, is the language of instruction.

2. Contrary to the ‘time on task’ notion (that is, the greater the quantity of instruction in L2 the better the educational outcome), instruction through a minority L1 does not appear to exert any adverse consequences on the development in the majority language and may, in fact, have considerable positive effects (Cummins, 2000 cited in May, Hill, & Tiakiwai, 2004).

The thresholds theory explains why many children from minority groups continue to fail in school. It also helps to explain why early studies into bilingualism found largely negative effects of bilingualism. It was argued that a principal reason for the findings of these early negative studies, aside from their methodological limitations, was that the minority language children in these studies often failed to develop a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the school language [L2] to benefit fully.
from their educational experience. Whereas children in the Ramírez, Yuen and Ramey (1991, cited in May, 2010, p. 297) study clearly demonstrated that they made better academic progress when remaining in strong, additive bilingual education programs.

Benefits of being bilingual

Research overviewed in *Ka Hikitia: Key evidence* (Ministry of Education, 2009a) shows there are many benefits to speaking more than one language, including the ability to think more creatively and laterally, an appreciation of differing world views, a stronger sense of self and cultural identity, and a capacity to participate in more than one culture. It is important for students to get an early start in high quality immersion education and that they stay in a quality immersion setting for at least six years if they are to become fully bilingual and accrue advantage from being bilingual (May, 2010).

*Increased Cognitive and Meta-cognitive Skills*

Research suggests that if bilingual children have a reasonable degree of balance between their two languages, their overall intellectual development is not hindered. On the contrary, it is enhanced (Baker, 2006; Cummins, 2000; Garcia, 2009; Hornberger, 2006; May, 2010; Skerrett-White, 2003). There is much debate over the role of language in relation to the cognitive development of the individual child, namely whether language shapes the cognitive development of the child or whether cognitive processes shape language development. Perhaps it is a moot point to theorise the extent to which conceptual development or thinking shapes language development or vice versa, the extent to which language development shapes thinking and the mind. Suffice it to say that they are intricately and inextricably connected and intertwined. Much of the current literature on bilingualism asserts that the child in the process of developing two linguistic codes (language systems) has improved meta-linguistic awareness and consequently improved meta-cognitive awareness (Baker, 2006; Hornberger, 2006). Meta-linguistic awareness, an awareness of knowledge and skill of language as a formal system with meaning develops in the preschool years and facilitates later literacy skills.
**Increased meta-linguistic skills**

There has been a shift in attitude towards bilingual education due to findings that the simultaneous acquisition of two languages is linked to, and can accelerate, the development of meta-linguistic/meta-cognitive processes (J. Cummins, 2000). Flora’s (2010) finding that bilingual children are able, from an early age, to differentiate between their two linguistic systems, is significant. According Flora (2010) “bilinguals are better at learning additional languages, even if those languages bear little resemblance to the ones they already know” (p.78-79). They are able to analyse languages on a meta-linguistic level, detecting whether a speaker avoids redundancy and whether he or she follows conversational rules, such as not interrupting, more readily than do their monolingual peers. According to Flora this ability probably derives from the fact that bilingual children intuitively understand that any given language is just one form of communication, a means to an end. Bilingual children’s ability to differentiate supposes a meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive awareness that language is a symbol system which generates different meanings. According to Skerrett-White (2003), Māori bilingual children recognise early that the word ‘ngeru’, ‘tori’ or ‘poti’ is just a label, because it has another label—‘cat’. Therefore as bilingual children are increasingly accessing two linguistic codes, they are developing advanced meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic abilities because they have a dual repertoire to label and organise reality in a flexible, symbolic way. In other words, bilingual children are not locked into seeing the world through one set of labels or symbols, but have multiple perspectives or ways of viewing and constructing reality. Examples were given of young Kōhanga Reo children playing and being inventive with language.

**Nimble brains**

Flora (2010) went on to claim was made that there can be no doubt that speakers of more than one language have nimble brains (Flora, 2010, p. 78). Further, it is argued that

---

66 The term ‘bilingual children’ is used here in a generic sense and does not make the distinction between infant bilinguals and child bilinguals but is inclusive of both.
Infants as young as 4 months who live in bilingual environments can distinguish between two languages, monitoring lip and facial movements. Babies also show a strong preference for the language their mother spoke during pregnancy...Contrary to conventional wisdom, bilingual children are not delayed in language acquisition. In fact, words learned before age 5 have an added emotional kick, regardless of how many languages are learned. Because the child’s brain is developing so quickly, across so many regions, the words learned during this critical period carry thick visual and emotional associations...Bilingualism enhances attention and cognitive control in kids and adults. Also bilinguals are better at learning additional languages, even if those languages bear little resemblance to the ones they already know.

Further research into toddler bilingualism claims that a second language gives toddlers ‘an edge’. In the Canadian context Poulin-Dubois, Blaye, Coutya and Bialystok (2010) found that by 24 months, bilingual children had already acquired a vocabulary in each of their two languages and gained some experience in switching between English or French. They also found that the cognitive benefits of bilingualism come much earlier than reported in previous studies. These new findings have practical implications for educators and parents, and it is further argued that exposing toddlers to a second language early in their development provides a bilingual advantage that enhances attention control. And the latest research out of Harvard University from Professor Maria Polinsky asserts that bilinguals are less likely to get Alzheimer’s disease (Polinsky, 2010, February). Clearly bilingualism facilitates and enhances meta-linguistic and meta-cognitive awareness in young children because of their increased ability to decontextualise language from the object to understanding that it is a code or symbol for that object. It is not the object. This is the process of being able to decontextualise language as disembedded thought, a formal thinking operation of moving beyond the bounds of ‘human sense’ or context to reasoning or thinking without it (the context). Bilingual children develop this ability to abstract because of their enhanced meta-linguistic awareness.

Cummins (2004) also argues that bilingual children have better academic development, cognitive skills and meta-linguistic awareness than their monolingual peers. Bilingual children are more aware of an arbitrary link between the object and its name, and more proficient at breaking words into syllables and phonemes. He argued they had better concentration, and more developed skills in the synthesis and abstraction necessary for reading. Fishman (2001) also discussed the benefits of
being bilingual, and to emphasise the genuinely creative, innovative and enriching gains of bilingualism. Bilingualism promotes a more analytic approach to language.

_Bilingual and multicultural education_

A negative attitude towards Māori and Pasifika languages and their place in New Zealand society appears regularly (see the latest Waitangi Tribunal Report, 2010). This attitude has been institutionalised, especially in the education sector. It is apparent among new intakes into initial teacher education in the mainstream universities, reflected in the question “but aren’t we a multicultural society?” Hornberger (2006) provides further ideological clarification around this issue particularly in terms of bilingual education and its relationship to multilingual/multicultural education. She argues at its best it is:

1. multilingual in that it uses and values _more than one_ language in teaching and learning;
2. intercultural in that it recognises and values understanding and dialogue across diverse lived experiences and cultural worldviews; and
3. education that draws out the knowledge/s students bring to the educational setting.

Hornberger’s analysis makes the bilingual/multilingual dichotomy redundant. She places bilingual education on the multilingual continuum. She also legitimates and validates the heritage knowledge/s and language/s that is located in communities and how that can be brought into the educational setting through bilingual programs. Heritage/majority language bilingualism provides an awareness of self (and thus a determination of self) and also of others, other culture/s, values, meta-ways of thinking and knowing.

Communicative Competence including BICS versus CALPS

The term _communicative competence_ was coined by sociolinguist Dell Hymes in 1967 who argued that communicative competence is “…that aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate
meanings interpersonally within specific contexts” (Brown, 2000, p. 246). More recent research distinguished between *linguistic* and *communicative* competence, to highlight the difference between knowledge of language *form*; and knowledge that enables a person to communicate *functionally* and interactively. Cummins (2004) proposed the distinction between cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) and basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS). CALP is that dimension of proficiency in which the learner manipulates language outside the immediate interpersonal context. It is what learners use in classroom contexts – in exercises and tests. BICS is the communicative capacity that all children acquire in order to be able to function in daily interpersonal exchanges. Later modified by Cummins to include context (*context-reduced* and *context-embedded* communication), the classroom resembles CALP because a good share of the classroom and school-orientated language is context reduced; whereas face-to-face communication with people (outside of the classroom) is generally context embedded and resembles BICS.

Both parents and teachers need to know the importance of the BICS/CALP distinction and how to help children to adjust from BICS to CALP in both early childhood immersion centres and schools. Therefore, whilst the culture of the early childhood setting and the school classroom is decidedly different it need not be so distinct as to create barriers on transitioning between programs and settings; early childhood to primary. Skerrett (2010b) argued that

*Transition across culturally congruent settings at the best of times can be disquieting even for those children and young people who share the same or similar cultural relationships. Transition across cultures and languages into settings which are socio-historically incongruent for many children and young people (and their whānau) are times of vulnerability with much anxiety. Mismatches in cultural congruency can directly affect children's emotional, social, and academic experiences of school.*

Further, that parents need to know that conversational proficiency (BICS) provides a strong foundation for the cognitively academic (CALP) demands of learning in both Kōhanga Reo and school. For academic success CALP language needs to be developed. The BICS/CALP distinction is an important one for whānau, whose priority is the revitalisation of the Māori language, to understand. Durie (2001) touched on this issue. He asserts that education is equally about preparing people to
actively participate as citizens of the world, which simply recognises that “...Māori children will live in a variety of situations and should be able to move from one to the other with relative ease” (p. 4). Moreover, that if fluency in te reo Māori has been achieved but there is no preparation for work or for participating in a wider society, then a disadvantage has occurred (p.5).

Likewise, Skerrett-White (2003) puts forward an argument for moving beyond BICS in Kōhanga Reo. She states that the construct of symbolic worlds (cultures) through the use of language/s can be further elaborated to include the many and varied graphic representations of language-in-culture in the form of ‘print’ (books) as well as other culturally representative symbols (e.g. kōwhaiwhai [painted scroll symbols], tukutuku [ornamental panels signifying different natural phenomena], whakairo [carved representations of history] and states;

These symbols all form part of the resplendent ‘whāriki’ or weaving that shapes the mind and, of course, provides a foundation to the complex critical literacy and biliteracy functions. These ‘critical’ functions are concerned with shaping human lives (Freire, 1972) and, as a consequence, have an underlying political agenda of societal transformation. The development of print literacy being representative of oral language and thought is an important mode of meaning-making in today’s societies. It follows, therefore, that the development of biliteracy (dual print literacies) in Kōhanga Reo is equally important (p.269-270).

Of course teachers must also be knowledgeable of the BICS/CALP distinction. This distinction must be reflected not only in the program and teacher knowledge, but their own language abilities. Recently Skerrett (2010a) argued that to be an effective teacher you need both, the academic language and the social usage language. The dualism could be helpful to explain why, in the New Zealand context, taking proficient speakers of te reo Māori and putting them into classrooms may not be an effective strategy in terms of building academic skills, because they will not have the CALP proficiency in te reo Māori. Conversely, taking a teacher who lacks Māori language proficiency and up-skilling them in the Māori language to a CALP level, without the social language use and connection to community may not be an effective strategy either.
All teachers in early childhood bilingual/immersion educational settings need to understand the distinctions and dimensions of this BICS/CALP dualism and what it means for their practice. They need to have both the social and academic language proficiencies of te reo Māori; and the social and academic language proficiencies of English (Skerrett, 2010). Such knowledge and proficiency goes some way to ameliorate the technicist approach language learning and teaching and the ‘taken-for-granteds’ associated with traditional mainstream colonial-type provision of Aotearoa/New Zealand. It enables them to mediate (and uphold) the divergent cultural ‘tikanga’ underpinning the languages. Without those dualistic proficiencies it would be very difficult for immersion teachers to assist their students to reap the benefits of being bilingual and able to transfer what they learn between the target (reo Māori/Pasifika) and English languages. In other words, academic transfer of knowledge and language skills between the target language (Māori or Pasifika language/s) and English is complex and should be considered when planning language programs; when planning entry and exit from those programs and when planning for the introduction of English.

3.3 Education aims of bilingual/immersion education

Māori immersion settings are bilingual settings, not because they use a two way immersion approach at some point in the program, but because they are supporting bilingual children as an outcome (Skerrett-White, 2003). At some point English will be introduced into the program. Depending on the context and the status of languages, there are many different types of bilingual settings, some using early or late immersion, and total immersion across different time periods, dual medium and so on. For Māori and Pasifika immersion education there is an expectant result that the children will reach cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) levels in the target language and English. As discussed earlier, the major debate in Aotearoa is when to introduce English? May (2010) looks at the aims of bilingual education in his overview of the broad models of bilingualism and which educational approaches are most effective in relation to teaching and learning for bilingual outcomes.
Defining bilingual education

May (2010) argues that the term bilingual education needs to be clarified because of the widely different understandings of what such an education actually constitutes. He states

\[ \text{At one end of the continuum are those who would classify as bilingual any educational approach adopted for, or directed at bilingual students, irrespective of their educational aim (fostering bilingualism or monolingualism) or the role (if any) of first language (L1) and second language (L2) as languages of instruction. In other words, simply the presence of bilingual students in the classroom is deemed sufficient to classify a program as bilingual. At the other end of the continuum are those who distinguish clearly between nonbilingual, weak, and strong bilingual programs (p. 293).} \]

Further, there are three broad models of bilingualism; transitional, maintenance and enrichment models. For the purposes of this review the focus is on enrichment models as strong additive programs.

The Additive Approach

Cummins (2000) argues strong and uncompromising promotion of first language and literacy is a crucial component of the total immersion approach, but that a both/and rather than an either/or orientation to both first and second language (L1 and L2) acquisition should be adopted. That is, additive approaches to bilingualism. Part 1 of the May, Hill and Tiakiwai (2004) report to MOE focuses on the debates about the cognitive, social and educational effects of bilingualism. It concludes that existing research points unequivocally to the cognitive, social and educational advantages of bilingualism when an additive approach to bilingualism is taken. An additive approach is one that aims to preserve languages for, at the least, bilingual outcomes. It aims to build on the language/s base that children (and their whānau) entering into the educational setting seek to maintain and sustain, for, at the very least, bilingual outcomes. Additive bilingualism presupposes that bilingualism is a benefit and resource, both for individuals and the wider society.
The Heritage Model as an Additive Approach

According to May (2010) immersion models that teach majority language students predominantly through a minority language, such as French-immersion programs in Canada or Māori immersion programs in New Zealand are clearly additive bilingual programs, since some curricular instruction in the majority language (English, in both cases) almost always occurs at some point prior to the end of the program, even in those programs with very high levels of immersion in the minority language. (p. 294). He overviews three broad models of bilingualism that are consistently included in the various bilingual research typologies. These are transitional models, maintenance models, and enrichment models. In addition to these three broad models, there are also what have come to be known as the heritage models most often associated with indigenous language education initiatives, such as Maori medium education in New Zealand, Navajo language education in the United States, Quechua language education programs in Peru, and the Sa`mi language education in Norway, among many. (p. 293). For the purposes of this review the focus is on the additive enrichment and heritage models.

Enrichment models are generally (but not exclusively) associated with teaching majority language students (such as L1 English speakers) through a minority L2 target language, e.g., French immersion in Canada. The broad L1/L2 distinction between maintenance and enrichment approaches is a useful form of shorthand in the research literature. However, it does not necessarily help us to identify clearly where a heritage language model of bilingual education might fit in.

As indicated above, the heritage model is most commonly associated with indigenous language revitalization efforts. May further argues that while some indigenous language programs are aimed at students who still speak the indigenous language as an L1 (and may therefore be regarded as L1 maintenance bilingual programs), many also cater to students with a mix of L1/L2 speakers of the language (Maori in New Zealand, Hawaiian), and some have only L2 speakers (or rather, learners) of the language. As such, heritage programs can also clearly be regarded as an additive and strong bilingual approach, and tend to be situated somewhere in
between maintenance and enrichment models in terms of the L1/L2 status of their students. It is important to draw the distinction between the language revitalisation goals of the Māori heritage language programs and the language maintenance goals of Pasifika heritage language programs when discussing heritage languages and language ratios. May asserts that in Māori-medium education in New Zealand, the overwhelming majority of students are first language English speakers. This is also true of Kōhanga Reo. Such is the extent of the sociolinguistic disruption. It is necessary, therefore, that both early childhood and school programs target the minority (te reo Māori) language as the medium of instruction for at least 90% of the time—at least in the early years (for the first eight years). May (2010) argues the program may begin as a 90:10% program in the early years (with 90% in the minority or target language and 10% in the dominant language) changing gradually to a 50:50 program by year 4 of the student’s schooling for those seeking an early exit or to transition to English medium. May asserts this 90:10% ratio in the early years provides for a strong program. However, Skerrett-White’s (2003) research clearly argues for the 100% reo Māori immersion approach (standard for Kōhanga Reo) being the optimum percentage constituting an additive program for early childhood bilingual/immersion programs in the New Zealand context.

Submersion Programs

Whilst submersion or subtractive programs are not the focus of this review, discussion of same provides a useful distinction between subtractive and additive models. Subtractive models may also be referred to as transitional models where the child’s home language is replaced by language of the centre or school (May, 2010). This occurs when students are submerged in a dominant language. The educational setting attempts to subtract the child’s home language in order to replace it with a school language. Cummins (2000) argued that this creates a situation of imbalance between the languages and puts the child at risk of educational failure. Contrasted with additive programs (where properly understood, planned and implemented immersion programs represent an appropriate form of enrichment bilingual education for all students,) balanced bilingualism will result with no apparent cost to the child's personal or academic development. It is generally agreed that total immersion is best
for the early childhood years and that early immersion is better than late immersion if bilingualism with its attendant benefits is the objective of the language program.

May, Hill and Tiakiwai (2006) argue that for bilingual education to be effective, the whole school, led by the principal, needs to believe in, and promote, the value of being able to speak and write fluently in both Māori and English. That is, they need to adopt an additive approach. Further, that becoming biliterate is the key educational advantage that students in Māori-medium education will have over students in English-medium contexts. Skerrett-White (2003) also found this and developed an alphabet system and song for Kōhanga Reo to enhance Māori literacy skills to contrast with the later learning of English literacy. The research shows that ideally teachers are fluent in both languages and that they also know how to teach a second language.

3.4 Summary

It seems most of the difficulties or problems associated with bilingual programs, schooling for bilingual children, and bilingualism are really politically constructed problems; socio-cultural not linguistic. Controversy exists where there is misinformation about the nature of languages and hidden political agendas. Further ideological clarification has been given where Māori and Pasifika immersion education is positioned and the distinction between Māori as tangata whenua revitalising te reo Māori and Pasifika heritage languages. The main points from this section highlighting some of the distinctions, issues and complexities around the term ‘bilingualism’ and ‘bilingual education’ can be summarised as follows:

- The main aim of heritage language programs in Aotearoa/New Zealand is to advance Māori/English bilingualism, Pasifika/English bilingualism.
- *Bilingualism* has been a very difficult term to define.
- The *thresholds theory* addresses the observation that academic proficiency transfers across languages; such that children in immersion programs who have
developed literacy in their heritage L1 will tend to make stronger progression in acquiring literacy in their L2 (English) (Cummins, 1976).

- Thresholds theory helps to explain why submersion (subtraction) programs fail minority language students (Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1977).
- Thresholds theory also asserts that instruction in L1 does not appear to exert any adverse consequences on majority language but in fact has positive effects (Cummins, 2000; Ramírez et al. cited in May, 2010).
- Although balanced bilinguals may not be perfect in both languages (one could be more dominant in one language), they are roughly equally skilled in their two languages (Saunders, 1988).
- The further a child moves towards balanced bilingualism the greater the likelihood that certain cognitive advantages will accrue (May, 2010).
- An *infant bilingual* is one who has a *simultaneous* acquisition of two languages from birth (Saunders, 1988).
- A *child bilingual* is one who has *successive* acquisition of two languages (Saunders, 1988).
- Children who become bilingual before four years of age have significantly increased chances of being able to make use of their two languages; they are markedly superior to monolinguals, but they were also significantly superior to later child bilinguals (Saunders, 1988).
- There is an arbitrary cut off point between *infant bilingualism* and *child bilingualism* of three years where one language has become relatively well established before exposure to the second occurs (Saunders, 1988).
- Cognitive, social and educational *advantages* of bilingualism accrue when an *additive* approach to bilingualism is taken (Baker, 2006; Cummins, 2000; Garcia, 2009; Hornberger, 2006; May, 2010; Skerrett-White, 2003).
- There are many benefits to being bilingual; bilingual children are able, from an early age, to differentiate between their two linguistic codes/systems (Baker, 2006; Cummins, 2000; Garcia, 2009; Hornberger, 2006; May, 2010; Skerrett-White, 2003).
- Cognitive benefits of bilingualism come much earlier than reported in previous studies (Poulin-Dubois et al., 2010).
- Bilingual children have better academic development, cognitive skills and meta-linguistic awareness than their monolingual peers (Cummins, 2004, Fishman, 2001).
- Bilingualism promotes a more analytic approach to language (Fishman, 2001).
- In the New Zealand context at least 90% immersion in the target language (100% for Kōhanga Reo) is optimum for quality early bilingual/immersion education (Skerrett-White, 2003).
- Parents and whānau need to have accurate information about bilingual education programs and aims to help them make the best decisions for their children (May et al., 2006).
- Participation in bilingual/immersion education provision for a minimum of eight years (ECE inclusive) is best before exiting (if so desired) to English immersion only programs.
- Family support, and use, of the target language (te reo Māori in heritage language programs) in the home environment is important in order to support the education setting-both early childhood and the school sector (Skerrett-White, 2003).
- Partnerships between whānau, Māori communities, kura schools and government should be productive.
- Submersion programs create situations of imbalance between the languages and put the child at risk of educational failure (Cummins, 2004; May, 2010).
- Māori immersion settings are bilingual educational settings (Skerrett-White, 2010).
- Bilingual settings are multilingual in that they value and use more than one language (Hornberger, 2006).
- Heritage/majority language bilingualism provides an awareness of self (and thus a determination of self) and also of others, other culture/s and their value systems (Hornberger, 2006).
- Aims of bilingual education must be aligned to bilingual outcomes.
- Failure to distinguish between conversational (BICS) and academic (CALP) aspects of proficiency has resulted in the creation of academic difficulties and power imbalances (Cummins, 2004).
- Support that second language learners require to succeed academically is a recurring issue for educational policy (Cummins, 2004).
• Language proficiency of the teachers affects language proficiency of students.
• CALP (cognitive/academic language proficiency) is that dimension of proficiency in which the learner manipulates language outside the immediate interpersonal context - it is what learners use in educational settings.
• BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) is the communicative capacity that all children acquire in order to be able to function in daily interpersonal exchanges.
• Both BICS and CALP language are important for early childhood educational settings, BICS being the foundation for CALP language.
• Additive heritage bilingual programs are crucial; longer-term bilingual programs being significantly more effective (May, Hill & Tiakiwai, 2006).
• Family support and use of target language in the home environment, essential for early childhood (Skerrett-White, 2003).
• The heritage model is most commonly associated with indigenous language revitalization efforts (May, 2010).
• Heritage programs of Māori generally have a mix of L1/L2 speakers and some have only L2 speakers/learners.
• Majority of students in Māori immersion education are first language speakers of English. This has implications for programs – e.g., 90:10% reo Māori:English ratio in early years, 100% immersion Māori for TKR.
• To be effective bilingual/immersion settings, the whole school, led by the principal, needs to believe in, and promote the value of being able to speak and write fluently in both languages.
• Further research needed for further bilingual education to be successful in New Zealand context; particularly around Pasifika languages in the Pacific homelands, the prevention of language shift in the New Zealand education system and when to introduce English into bilingual/immersion programs.
4 METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 Introduction

This review used an interpretive narrative analysis of primary studies to read for evidence of what counts as quality in immersion and bilingual early childhood education programs. Many of the studies, particularly those unique to Aotearoa New Zealand were qualitative in nature or reported thematically. It was decided that an interpretive synthesis, reporting to the main research questions in the review was a suitable approach for this work. The MOE asked for particular attention to be drawn to New Zealand studies, published works and those reporting primary research.

The scope of the review was:

- To locate contemporary evidence (2004-2010) on language acquisition and immersion and bilingual education in the early years;
- To evaluate the quality of the evidence and report on key findings and claims;
- To extrapolate from the evidence features and components of quality bilingual and immersion ECE that is linked to ‘language acquisition’, ‘creating a strong language foundations’, ‘early school success’.

Four research questions posed by the Ministry of Education provided domains for the inquiry:

i. What counts as quality immersion early childhood education for Pasifika and Māori learners in Aotearoa New Zealand?

ii. How is bilingualism and biliteracy fostered through quality immersion early childhood education programs?

iii. What features of quality immersion early childhood education are likely to lead to ‘strong language foundations’?

iv. What can be learned from quality early childhood education immersion for early school success?

A number of sub-questions for each of these domains were posed. The discussion of research evidence in sections 7-10 of the review responds to those sub-questions.
4.2 Accessing the literature

In the first instance two research assistants conducted an extensive series of electronic database searches via the University of Canterbury library. The approach used systematic searches of key words across several large electronic databases (EBSCOhost: Education databases, Psychology and Social Sciences; Proquest: Education Journals, Education ERIC; Web of Science: Current Contents Select; Science Direct: Social Science, Psychology; Te Puna; JStor: Antropology, Education, Language & Literature, Linguistics, Sociology). Additionally, the New Zealand Council of Educational Research Thesis database was searched. In sum a total of 916 search strings were explored yielding 68 papers of interest.

Summary tables of the papers were then produced by the research assistants noting author, date, study focus, research method, key findings, study limitations and notes of relevance in relation to any of the reviews four broad domains. These were then reviewed for a close match to the domains of inquiry. Through this process we excluded 39 of the original papers on the basis that they were tangential to the main thrust of this review: they focused more on English language learning, middle childhood and later, children with disabilities and therapeutic interventions than quality immersion and bilingual early childhood education. Several more pieces were scholarship rather than empirical works and therefore were excluded from the summary/review process. However these were useful in the general discussion of quality immersion and bilingual early childhood education.

We also found studies through our reading of the references lists of the papers gathered during the search process, and we include. We have included several pre-2004 studies reporting New Zealand based research with Pasifika and Māori children. The work was not included in the May et.al. (2004) literature review, but it did attest directly to the aims of this review. Other than this, the primary empirical studies reported on were all published between 2004 and 2010 and serve to expand our understandings of quality immersion and bilingual education in the domain of early childhood education.
4.3 Empirical studies discussion

This section of the review is a discussion of the relevant empirical work on immersion and bilingual early years education and addresses issues of:

i. Quality immersion early childhood education;
ii. Bilingualism and biliteracy through quality immersion early childhood education programs;
iii. Strong language foundations; and
iv. Transitions for early school success.

The discussion of the studies is reported within the specific domain issues listed above. For referential ease, the studies appear in alphabetical order at Appendix B (in summary form). The findings relative to the four key domains bring together what we have learned from the recent evidence about bilingual and immersion EYE and the contexts of Māori and Pasifika immersion EYE in Aotearoa New Zealand. The domains, whilst considered discrete domains for the purposes of this review, at times overlap with commonalities at the intersections. For example, quality immersion early years programs (see 4.3.1) will be building strong language foundations (see 4.3.3). The following domain issues assist with answering each of the four research questions at Sections 7-10.

4.3.1 Quality immersion early years education.

Taking Vygotsky’s idea (as cited in Gregory, 2005) that if play provides children opportunities to practice what they already know, and Gregory’s (2005) idea that playful talk then is an essential part of that process; further development of the idea clarifies how playful talk provides children opportunities to develop their language and thinking. They do this by verbalising what they know and what the think in ‘thinking-out-loud’ processes which provide further opportunities for their peers and teachers to talk and reflect together in the creation of knowledge. This process advances young children’s metalinguistic (and associated metacognitive) awareness.
Hayes’ (2005) study suggests pedagogy of ‘negotiated curriculum’ which allows for clarification of ambiguity when it occurs in the teacher/learner relationship. Negotiated curriculum promotes mutual engagement in meaningful contexts. The ‘hidden’ curriculum and often ‘taken for granted’ aims and goals of teaching and learning are made explicit in the negotiation. In order to promote use of the target language, it is also important to design activities which require language use and, wherever possible, provide naturally occurring constraints. For example provide people, place and topic domains so it is clear for children who they can speak the target language to; where and when to speak it and what the topics of conversation are in “kōrero Māori anake” domains.

Apart from the usual indicators of quality; teacher qualifications and remuneration, teacher/student ratios, accessibility, affordability, program design and delivery, resources, Iokepa-Guerrero and Rodriguez de France’s (2007) research into Punana Leo added the dimension of ‘world views’ being an indicator of quality. Further, that through ongoing research and development the relationships between language, world-views and identity shaping praxis can be clarified. Quality is understood to be ‘learning /living-in-culture’, through interactions with knowledgeable adults; and opportunities to explore and play in language and culturally rich environments.

Targeted professional development (Mara & Burgess, 2007) can help to create the shift in teaching style from ‘directives’ to participating ‘with and alongside’ children. This shift from archaic ideologies of teacher-in-control and all knowledgeable (therefore all powerful) to socio-cultural practices where children are viewed as able and capable learners (not blank slates) is vitally important. It is a knowledge creation in participatory events pedagogy or ‘ako’. Shift in pedagogical practice necessitates a shift in curriculum design from being fixed, preplanned, prepackaged, abstract and often irrelevant; to curriculum being culturally and community connected, child-generated, and meaningful in the moment. This is a ‘system-centred’ versus ‘child-centred’ shift; where the child is not seen as the object to be moulded to fit the system, but a shaper of the system through system responsiveness. Reciprocal relationships become the heart of the learning/teaching encounter and teacher professional development the mechanism facilitating the shift from antiquated
practices to pedagogically relevant ones. Buysse et al. (2009) also found that professional development focussing on teaching strategies was effective for improving both the overall quality of teachers’ language and literacy practices whilst proving beneficial to the development of children’s phonological awareness.

The importance of countering dominant discourses simply by understanding how they operate in productive ways is critical. Understanding how they maintain dominant structures is the first step to disrupting them in counter-colonial heritage language education. Paradis and Nicholadis (2007) argue that, in the French/English bilingual context, English dominant children were more likely to use English in French contexts. In the Māori/English context, or Pasifika language/English context, English language will dominate, especially if there is weakened heritage language proficiency. Excellent role models of the target language is a given, in both the educational setting and the community. This has implications for the proficiency of both teachers and the wider whānau.

Podmore et al. (2006) argues that through teacher questioning and modelling, children’s language was supported and extended. Open-ended questions provide the opportunity for engagement and discussion which includes increasingly more complex language structures and a richer repertoire of vocabulary.

To conclude this section, Skerrett-White (2003) argues that Māori immersion settings are the manifestation of tino-rangatiratanga (Māori self-determination) through reversing language shift efforts; that is the revitalisation, maintenance and protection of te reo Māori. Such settings mediate the often debilitating effects of colonisation whilst simultaneously advancing relationships of engagement in genuine partnerships with whānau, hapū and iwi Māori. These are the major principles underpinning Māori expectations of a Treaty-based education system; whakamana to tātou reo Māori, protection and partnership. Treaty-based education draws on Treaty principles clarified in law7 as acceptance of the two Treaty texts (Māori and English—that they are not translations the one of the other and do not necessarily convey exactly the

same meaning); partnership (requiring each side of the partnership to act towards the 
other with the utmost good faith and creating responsibilities of the Crown which are 
analogous to fiduciary duties); between Māori and the Crown; and the duty of the 
Crown to extend active protection of taonga Māori. Te reo Māori is a taonga, the 
active protection of which means the duty of the Crown is no light one. It is infinitely 
more than a formality.\(^8\) The duty to act reasonably and in the utmost good faith is not 
one–sided. Bishop (2008) discusses how colonisation was a one–sided process and 
the exclusion of Māori through New Zealand’s educational institutions calls for 
Māori autonomy because of the difficulties of breaking away from the relationship of 
dominance. Treaty-based education, in terms of curriculum design, means 
acceptance of diversity; diverse realities, diverse knowleges and diverse languages- 
that one is not a translation of the other. Māori knowledge and language is valid and 
legitimate, underpinned by Māori values and world views in a kaupapa Māori frame. 
The kaupapa Māori aims of tino-rangatiratanga (determination from within whānau, 
hapū and iwi) then are an indicator of quality in immersion settings.

4.3.2 How bilingualism and biliteracy is fostered through quality programs.

Quality immersion programs prove valuable to children’s learning and development 
through advancing their language development (Barnett et al. 2007); giving them 
plenty of opportunities to use te reo in meaningful contexts, advancing understanding 
and listening skills (Cooper et al., 2004); increasing their understanding of cultural 
values and sense of identity associated with language development (Mitchell et al., 
2006); focussing on their oral language development and early literacy skills (Páez et 
al., 2007).

Reyes and Azuara (2008) argue the links between bilingualism and biliteracy cannot 
be separated. They both support each other. Children’s access to more than one 
writing system can increase their ability to differentiate between those writing 
systems or advance their meta linguistic awareness. This can develop at an early age.

\(^8\) ibid. at 643.
Their research focused on the literacy events during interactive play and learning with peers and other family members. It highlights the need for research in families and communities in this area of bilingualism and biliteracy development in order to create alternate (and more nuanced) strategies for evaluating children’s biliteracy knowledge. The valuing and evaluating what happens in homes and communities and the intersections with school literacies can thus serve as a counter to deficit theorising and provide teachers with a more accurate picture of the bilingual/biliterate knowledge and skills of young children.

Similarly Skerrett-White’s (2003) research discusses the links between bilingualism and biliteracy as being entrenched. She argues the reason why reversing language shift (RLS) is difficult, and often not successful (aside from the fact that it is always having to unfairly compete with a dominant language), is because people do not know what to do and they do not know the difference between mother-tongue (vernacular) acquisition, its use and transmission. This is an important distinction. They forget how they learnt the language, how it was used and how to pass it on to children.

The process of passing on language to children was documented in Kōhanga Reo alongside the development of resources designed and structured to meet the biliteracy demands of reversing language shift efforts via the revernacularisation of te reo Māori in whānau. In order to successfully regenerate te reo Māori there needs to be an increase in the linguistic (and cultural) domains where te reo Māori can be spoken and written. Moreover, just speaking the heritage language in the Kōhanga Reo or at home is not enough to ensure its maintenance. It needs to be spoken in both places and its written systems need to be supported in both places.

Skerrett-White asserts it is important that children learn to read and write in the target language in order to appreciate that the heritage language, like the dominant English language, is a ‘fully-fledged’ medium of communication with status. Children learn early on that books are important. Books are a major way of getting worldly knowledge, increasing vocabulary and learning increasingly complex language structures. Reading introduces children to new concepts, fantasy and can
help children to gain deeper understandings of their own feelings and experiences. A Māori alphabet (te arapū Māori) was developed in Kōhanga Reo in order to support and promote the emergent literacy skills of their bilingual children and advance their phonological and metalinguistic awareness. She drew on a critical literacy theory in the advancement of tino rangatiratanga which promotes powerful children leading powerful lives; bilingual/biliterate children who are able to walk competently and confidently in both their Māori and Pākehā worlds; children who have a sense of well-being, connectedness, who are creators and who are members of strong Māori communities; children who know their Tūrangawaewae; future leadership.

_Bilingualism and biliteracy is fostered through programs which_

- focus on advancing target language (both oral and written) with plenty of opportunities to *use* the target language;
- create meaningful contexts which support increased understanding;
- model active and responsive listening;
- support distinct cultural values which promote cultural identity;
- pay attention to early literacy development;
- understand how bilingualism and biliteracy are interrelated and support each other;
- promote research into literacy events in families and communities;
- promote spoken and written systems in both the education setting and the home through sharing resources;
- Create and share literacy tools like Te Arapū Māori as a means of exploiting and advancing the phonological and metalinguistic awareness of bilingual children;
- Draw on critical theory in education programs that enable children to make meaningful connections to literature and through literacy activities which reflect their language/s, cultural values and knowledge/s and feelings.
4.3.3 *Features of quality immersion leading to strong language foundations.*

Cirino, Pollard-Durodola, Foorman, Carlson and Francis (2007) argue the importance of teachers’ oral language proficiencies whilst Durán, Roseth and Hoffman’s (2010) state that just maintaining immersion environment is important, noting that strong heritage language learning can have later positive impacts on reading achievement in English.

The Han and Huang (2010) study shows that the ability to understand two cultures intimately is likely to help children appreciate diversity and get along with peers and teachers. Schools with staff knowledgeable in second language acquisition and supportive teaching environments were rated as having better behavioural and emotional well-being students.

Mitchell, Royal-Tangaere, Mara, Wylie’s (2006) noted that strong settings for both Pasifika and Māori were those with qualified kaiako and who worked with families in assessing, planning and evaluating their programs; working the curriculum through the heritage language. Factors associated with children’s language and cultural identity development were teacher fluency, involvement of fluent heritage language speakers in the Program, language resources and maintaining the immersion environment. Other structural variables such as low child to adult ratios and small group sizes were related positively with ‘strong’ language and culture variables.

Analysis of the wider societal discourses is critical in order to understand the status accorded to heritage language programs. Pacini-Ketchabaw and Armstrong de Almeida’s (2006) study of discourses that shape immigrant parents’ and early childhood educators’ views sheds light upon how broader disciplining structures of, for instance, media, teacher education and government policy, shape individuals’ and their practices of heritage language maintenance in early childhood education. For example they state discourses of seeing English is “a must” whilst heritage language proficiency is spoken of “as a desire” reflects curriculum (and policy) development as English a compulsory (therefore State responsibility) and the heritage language as
non-compulsory (therefore individual responsibility). Therefore the broader societal discourses around language daily affect families and early childhood educators’ negotiation of language in the context of ECE.

Peter and Hirata-Edds (2006) examined the role that classroom observation coupled with a formal language assessment played in identifying undeveloped aspects of the children’s Cherokee language skills and targeting specific techniques. For example, through assessment they found teachers need guidance on how to balance natural, comprehensible input with ‘pushed output’ or planned opportunities for communicative practice. Enhanced understandings of assessment’s role in informing decisions about what and how to teach, teachers redefined immersion as both staying in the language and providing opportunities for developing their communicative competence or ‘pushed outputs’. Resources which adequately support a language-focused curriculum is an issue. The lack of resources made it difficult for teachers to provide interesting, age-appropriate and comprehensible stimuli necessary for preschooler outputs.

Peter’s (2007) study highlighted how an “ideology of contempt” for indigenous languages contributed to language shift to English, so ideological clarification is the first step to overcoming prior language planning failures, anxieties, insecurities and hesitations about the value of indigenous languages and cultures. He stated the obvious, that without a solid foundation in second-language acquisition, linguistics, and language pedagogy, it was difficult for the teachers to implement something they know so little about. He reiterated the importance of children speaking the heritage language at home with their parents emphasising the need for a joint home/educational setting language revitalisation effort.

4.3.4 Quality early childhood education immersion for early school success.

If bilingualism and biliteracy are the program aims, and the benefits of bilingualism are to accrue, then immersion continuation is best on transition to prevent heritage language loss (Tagoilelagi-Leota et al. 2005). McCaffery and Tuafuti’s (2003) findings show how a Samoan immersion program assists students to achieve higher
reading levels by year 6 than those of Samoan children attending English language dominant settings, with Samoan literacy impacting positively on English literacy outcomes. It is also noted that the children in the study had completed three years of intensive literacy instruction in their first (Samoan) language before the introduction of English reading, yet they still managed to reach chronological age norms in English some two years later.

Skerrett (2010b) looked into transitions in order to deepen understandings about successful transitioning of Māori learners to school. The relevant transition sites for the purposes of this review included Māori learners transitioning from Māori immersion centres to Māori immersion and English programs. The research finds that transition across culturally and linguistically congruent educational settings is critical for ākonga Māori. When there is incongruency there is ākonga vulnerability and whānau anxiety. Mismatches can directly affect children’s emotional, social and academic experiences of school. Further, that bilingual English/Māori speaking (BEMS) identities as a bilingual program outcome ought to be promoted. Information on transitioning across languages and cultures must be readily available to whānau enabling whānau to make better informed decisions alongside their tamariki/mokopuna. It is argued that language is a cultural identifier. All educational settings must acknowledge the importance of Māori linguistic and cultural norms, the significance of their functions and incorporate them into their transition policies and classroom programs. There are a variety of linguistic and cultural norms that can assist with successful transitions including

- Poroporoaki
- Pōwhiri
- Haka Pōhiri
- Kawe Tamaiti
- Taonga Tuku Iho
- Karakia/Waiata
- Mana Whenua
- Cultural Connect and
- Creating Cultural Connections (p. 5-7).
Some helpful strategies for whānau included;

- Keep dialogue opened up – with children, centres and/or schools
- Promote and/or learn te reo (to support tamariki/mokopuna)
- Promote valuing te reo
- Take that time with tamariki/mokopuna
- Be involved in what is happening with children at school
- Work alongside centres/schools to be an equal partner in the transition process
- Be pro-active in enrolment processes
- Be involved in policy development around transitions
- Participate in professional development programs co-ordinated by kura/centres

Recommendations included;

- That centres/schools acknowledge as well-informed and important, the information and funds of knowledge that parents and feeder schools and early childhood centres bring about learners to school transition.
- That an awareness campaign be launched to promote the importance of transition, particularly from, in and out of, Māori/English bilingual/immersion language programs.
- That the media be used with maximum efficiency to promote bilingual English/Māori speaking BEMS students.
- That information be made available, including through professional development programs, to upskill whānau in their understanding of key transition factors which promote successful transitions for learners.
- That centres/schools be encouraged to establish relationships with whānau and iwi, and to develop and foster the three-way relationships among centres/schools (including individual teachers), ākonga and whānau.
- That centres/schools be encouraged to foster relationships between ākonga, such as tuakana/teina relationships, for learners transitioning into and between learning centres/schools.
- That centres/schools have appropriate (and shared) credit model assessment procedures and learning programs which take into account the special language abilities of bilingual English/Māori speaking students, i.e.,
acknowledging their ability as bilingual students rather than their inability in English speakers.

- That resources be developed which promote and assist with smooth transitions across all domains of transition.
- That programs be established which integrate whānau members into in their children’s learning, particularly in the years around transition points.
- That whānau (including ākonga) alongside committed knowledgeable teachers with sound knowledge of second language acquisition pedagogy be involved in the development and implementation of transition programs.
- That transition programs be regularly evaluated and updated to remain current, relevant and effective.
- That centres and schools be encouraged to include more Māori visual arts (whakairo, tukutuku) into their surroundings.
- That these recommendations concerning transition for Māori learners contribute to the development of a set of cultural competencies for teachers.

4.4 Summary

*Quality immersion early years education includes*

- Opportunities for children to ‘think-out-loud’;
- Pedagogy of negotiated (rather than impositional) curriculum;
- Provision of clear language domains (people, place, topic);
- Ongoing research and development;
- World-view and identity shaping praxis;
- Language-in-culture praxis with knowledgeable adults;
- Opportunities to explore and play in language and culturally rich environments;
- Targeted teacher professional development focussing on language strategies e.g. shifting teaching styles from using directive language to more collaborative word-play language; and improving teacher/student language and literacy practices;
- Dominant language and cultural discourses are disrupted through information sharing;
Focus on heritage language proficiency;
Teacher questioning and modelling complex language and richer repertoire of vocabulary;
Treaty-based education (notably two main streams-immersion Maori, immersion English being discrete, not translations of each other); protection and genuine partnerships; underpinned by tino rangatiratanga aims.

*Bilingualism and biliteracy is fostered through programs which*

- focus on advancing target language (both oral and written) with plenty of opportunities to *use* the target language;
- create meaningful contexts which support increased understanding;
- model active and responsive listening;
- support distinct cultural values which promote cultural identity;
- pay attention to early literacy development;
- understand how bilingualism and biliteracy are interrelated and support each other;
- promote research into literacy events in families and communities;
- promote spoken and written systems in both the education setting and the home through sharing resources;
- Create and share literacy tools like Te Arapū Māori as a means of exploiting and advancing the phonological and metalinguistic awareness of bilingual children;
- Draw on critical theory in education programs that enable children to make meaningful connections to literature and through literacy activities which reflect their language/s, cultural values and knowledge/s and feelings.

*The features of quality immersion leading to strong language foundations include;*

- High teacher language proficiency in both target (and other) languages;
- Maintaining the immersion environment through the curriculum;
- Teacher knowledge of second language acquisition, linguistics and pedagogy;
- Teachers understanding the benefits of being bilingual and ability to promote those understandings;
• Qualified staff who continue to upskill themselves through professional development;
• Staff who continually liaise and collaborate with families in assessment; planning and evaluating programs;
• Fluent heritage language speaking elder involvement in the program;
• Language-in-culture understandings;
• Low adult/child ratios;
• Small group sizes;
• Understanding of how the wider societal (media, teacher education, government policy) discourses, particularly ideologies of contempt, impact on the value and status accorded to heritage language programs in order to mediate them;
• Role of assessment (particularly classroom observations of children’s language) in informing decisions about what and how to teach;
• Strong connections to community in joint home/education setting language revitalising efforts.

Quality early childhood education immersion for early school success includes:
• Bilingual communications (newsletters and so on) between centre and homes;
• The continued use of the heritage language throughout the early years creating culturally and linguistically congruent educational settings;
• Proximity of bilingual classrooms which facilitate collaboration and teamwork amongst the teachers;
• Include more visibility through the visual arts of cultural icons;
• School leadership fostering shared positive understandings of program goals and commitment to bilingual and biliteracy visions within the whole school community (including administrative staff);
• The incorporation of linguistic and cultural norms into transition policies and classroom programs, including (but not limited to) poroporoaki, pōwhiri, kawe tamaiti, taonga tuku iho, karakia, waiata;
• Promotion of the importance of transitions across programs including the promotion of BEMS students;
• Professional development directed at both teachers and whānau members together;
• Tuakana/teina relationships across settings be promoted;
• Effective credit model assessment strategies i.e., acknowledging bilingual students’ abilities rather than using monolingual (English-only) assessment strategies;
• Development of transition programs through policies and which are regularly evaluated;
• That all of the above indicators of quality immersion, bilingualism and biliteracy, strong foundations and school success contribute to the development of a set of competencies for teachers.
5 PASIFIKA IMMERSION/BILINGUAL EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

5.1 Introduction

This section of the review provides an overview of the current situation of immersion/bilingual Pasifika early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In addressing the overall question of what counts as quality for Pasifika immersion/bilingual early childhood education the following key question structures this section of the review:

- What can we learn from the evidence for Pasifika immersion early childhood education?

5.2 The current context of Pasifika immersion early years education

*The language context for Pasifika early childhood services in Aotearoa New Zealand*

With respect to current understandings of Pasifika languages in New Zealand, data from the 2001/2006 census shows that in six of the seven major island groups (Cook Island Māori, Fijian, Niuean, Samoan, Tokelauan, and Tuvaluan) the ability of Pacific peoples to speak Pacific languages in an everyday context in New Zealand is declining (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). In contrast, and with an increase of 1 percentage point between the 2001 and 2006 census, just over 61% of Tongans living in New Zealand are able to hold an everyday conversation in Tongan. In spite of this, the stability of the Tongan language in general has been argued as experiencing voluntary language shift (Otsuka, 2007) highlighting in effect that all Pasifika languages are experiencing challenge from the dominance of English in the Pacific Region. In all language groups those born overseas are more likely to speak their heritage language in comparison to those born in New Zealand. However recent claims have suggested that Pasifika children (in Auckland) are “overwhelmingly still speakers of their own languages and are bilingual” (Hunkin, Tuafuti, McFall and McCaffery, 2010, p.1) despite the fact that signs of serious erosion amongst Pacific Languages proficiency in school aged Pasifika children in New Zealand having been noted since the early 2000s (McCaffery, et.al, 2003). Citing data from the Auckland
based Pacific Islands Family Study, these researchers report that for children aged 6 years, 77.5% were bilingual, 22% spoke only English and .05% spoke only a Pacific heritage language. The numbers of non-heritage-language-speaking children are greatest amongst the New Zealand Cook Island Māori and Niuean populations, most agree that this will have significant negative consequences for language retention in the future (Unknown, Nuie and Cook Island Māori languages threatened, 2010).

Most of New Zealand’s Pasifika population resides in the North Island (Statistics New Zealand, 2006) with the Auckland region containing the majority of the Cook Island Māori, Fijian, Samoan, Tongan and Tuvaluan peoples. Ninety-six percent if the Niuean population lives in the North Island and the majority of New Zealand resident Tokelauans live in the Wellington region. Of those Pasifika peoples living in the South Island (7% of the total population), most live in Canterbury. Clearly this has implications for bilingual early childhood education policy and planning in Aotearoa.

The Pasifika population in New Zealand is youthful with a median age of 21.1 years. In 2006, 38% of Pacific peoples were aged less than 15 years. The heritage language proficiency of Pasifika peoples residing in New Zealand varied amongst the seven largest island groups as follows: 16% Cook Island Māori; 25% Niuean; 29% Fijian (12% of under-five-year-olds); 40% Tokelauan (16% of under-five-year-olds); 61% Tongan; 63% Samoan; 71% Tuvaluan. With a larger proportion of the total population of all but one of the seven major island groups (Tuvalu) residing in New Zealand the maintenance and future development of the Pasifika languages is inextricably linked to the New Zealand education system and to quality immersion and bilingual early childhood education.

Planning for bilingual and immersion Pasifika early childhood education

Strategic planning in both the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs impacts on planning for Pasifika bilingual and immersion services early childhood education in New Zealand.

Successive education plans from the Ministry of Education (2009c) have aimed to increase the participation of Pasifika children in quality early childhood education
services that are inclusive of family and culturally and linguistically responsive. The current 2009-2012 *Pasifika Education Plan* (Ministry of Education, 2009c) contains three broad goals for early childhood education based on those from the early childhood strategic plan *Pathways to the Future* (Ministry of Education, 2002). The first focuses on participation and school preparation; the second on the quality of early childhood education experiences; and the third on culturally and linguistically responsive and effective engagement between Pasifika parents and early childhood education services. Also supporting the attainment of these goals was the 2005 *Promoting Participation Project* (Ministry of Education, 2005). In the context of a general lack of progress “by the New Zealand state in substantially [emphasis in original] addressing the social and political aspirations of other minority groups, particular with respect to institutional/educational support for their languages and cultures” (May, 2005, p.369), policy planning in the Ministry of Education has been criticized for its lack of support for Pasifika languages and bilingual education planning (McCaffery & Tuafuti, 2003). Recent policy changes to curriculum support materials for Pasifika languages in mainstream education settings are also a challenge for heritage language maintenance (Hunkin, Tuafuti, McFall & McCaffery, 2010; Leo Pacific: Coalition of Pacific Languages in Education, 2010; McCaffery & McFall-McCaffery, 2010). Education has been cited as one of the key factors for language proficiency (Davis & Starks, 2005) with evidence that the maintenance of Cook Islands Māori is hindered by English language dominance in the schooling of young Cook Islanders.

From the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) perspective, prominence is given at present to heritage language use and growth, with current policy centering on the promotion of Pacific languages and cultures. Furthermore, plans towards the development of bilingual primary schooling for Pasifika languages and the ongoing development of the *Mind Your Language* websites for heritage language learning in Cook Islands Māori, Tokelauan and Niuean feature. The *Auckland Pacific Strategic Plan 2009* contains goals around participation in education at all levels and the attainment of high-level language, literacy and numeracy skills (p.7). But in general, the provision of bilingual/immersion education in primary schools in New Zealand has been “the result of discrete local initiatives at the school / community level”
For language revitalisation and heritage language maintenance, comprehensive and strategic education policy planning, nationwide is required.

**The current situation of Pasifika early childhood services**

In teacher-led early childhood services in 2010, 8.3% of teaching staff identified as Pasifika (Ministry of Education, 2010c). The percentage of Pasifika early childhood teachers who are registered is reportedly increasing at a faster rate than other early childhood education teacher groups (Ministry of Education, 2011). Noted as contributing to this increase was the introduction of policy for additional funding for teacher supply initiatives from 2004. 132 licensed services were identified as Pasifika services, most of which were located in the Auckland region. Of these services, the majority were designated education and care services (123), the remainder were designated kindergarten (n=7), casual education and care (n=1) and playcentre (n=1). The number of Pasifika services increased by 19 between 2009 and 2010. The Ministry of Education describes Pasifika services as ‘immersion’ (teaching in a heritage language for 81-100% of the time) or ‘bilingual’ (teaching in a heritage language for 12-80% of the time). The following table (Table 1) shows the relative proportion of immersion and bilingual services between 2002 and 2009.

---

**Number of Pasifika language services and enrolments by level of learning as at 1 July (2002 to 2009)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bilingual: 2% - 80%</th>
<th>Immersion: 81 - 100%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of services</td>
<td>Enrolments</td>
<td>Number of services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2,013</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2,021</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2,246</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1,872</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2,167</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2,222</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2,118</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2,008</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. While services can teach in multiple pasifika languages, a service is only counted once, and at its highest level
2. Excludes kihkanga me and homestay services
3. Counts services based on the language of communication used by teaching staff during the formal programme at an ECE service
4. Enrolments relate to the entire service

---
The data indicates a slow increase in the numbers of ‘bilingual’ services relative to ‘immersion’ services however enrolments in immersion settings have increased whist those in ‘bilingual’ settings have remained relatively constant over the period. The heritage languages used in the services are noted as: Cook Islands Maori, Fijian, Niuean, Samoan, Tokelauan, Tongan and Tuvaluan. The numbers of bilingual services in each of those language groups is indicated in following table (Table 2).

**Number of services by Pasifika language of communication as at 1 July 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pasifika Language</th>
<th>Bilingual: 12%-80%</th>
<th>Immersion: 81%-100%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands Maori</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niuean</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelauan</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvaluan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 - in this table, more than one language may be recorded per service so double counting has occurred for bilingual services
2 - excludes kohanga reo and homebased services
3 - counts services based on the language of communication used by teaching staff during the formal programme at an ECE service

Combining data with data gathered in 2010, the Ministry of Education reports the following about heritage language use in teacher-led Pasifika early childhood services:

- Pasifika languages were used as the language of communication for at least 12% of teaching contact time;
- Of the total number of services, 52 were immersion (81-100% of teaching contact time) involving 1,720 children. Thirty immersion services used Samoan as the language of communication, 16 used Tongan, two used Cook Island Māori, and three used Niuean.
- The remaining 81 services were identified as bilingual (12-80% of teaching contact time) involving 2,800 children. Fifty-six bilingual services used Samoan as the language of communication, 14 used Cook Island Māori, four used Tongan, three used Niuean, three used Tokelauan, and one used Tuvaluan.

*Pasifika children’s participation in early childhood education*
2010 Ministry of Education data regarding participation rates in early childhood education for Pasifika children notes an increase in numbers of Pasifika children at school entry having participated in early childhood education (an increase of 1.9 percentage points since 2008 to 85.3%) however attendance at early childhood education for Pasifika children is still low in comparison with children of other ethnicities (Ministry of Education, 2010). The 2006 summary report on *Quality in Parent/Whānau Led Services* (Mitchell, Royal Tangaere, Mara & Wylie, 2006) indicated that Pacific parents desired the use of their heritage language and culture in their early childhood education services. According to McCaffery and McFall-McCaffery (2010), 8.3% of Cook Island Māori, 2% of Niueans, 83% of Tongans and 90% of Samoans desire bilingual education at early childhood level.

The Ministry of Education holds a current target for the number of Pasifika children aged two to four years enrolled in licensed early childhood education (not specifically immersion/bilingual services) to increase by 2000 children from the 1 July 2008 enrolments (Ministry of Education, 2011). They note the particular positive effect upon enrolments of the 20 hours Free ECE policy.
6 MĀORI IMMERSION/BILINGUAL EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction

This section of the review provides an overview of the current situation of immersion/bilingual Māori early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In addressing the overall question of what counts as quality for Māori immersion/bilingual early childhood education the following key question structures this section of the review:

- What can we learn from the evidence for Māori immersion early childhood education?

6.2 The current context of Māori immersion/bilingual early years education

The language context for Māori early childhood services in Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa/New Zealand is officially a bilingual nation. Both te reo Māori and English are the official spoken/written languages and offer unique academic (bilingual and bicultural), educational, economic, social and linguistic benefits for all New Zealanders (Ministry of Education, 2009a). Te reo Māori as a vibrant language supports the development and celebration of our national identity and enhances the mana whenua of Māori as tāngata whenua (people of the land). Using the same rationale that underpinned the Waitangi Tribunal Report 262 Te Reo Māori (Waitangi Tribunal, 2010), that is in order to consider the narrower issues at hand it is necessary to provide information on the full ambit of the context within which Māori language education resides. That helps with mapping the terrain as te reo Māori is not as vibrant as it ought to be and increased understanding (at both micro and macro levels) will assist revernacularising efforts and exploit the unique benefits vibrancy offers.

Waitangi Tribunal (2010). Pre-publication Waitangi Tribunal Report 262 Te Reo Māori.

55
This Report (Wai 262) (Waitangi Tribunal, 2010) finds that te reo Māori is approaching a crisis point (p. x), that the language overall is in worrying decline. The Tribunal thus broadened the focus to the wellbeing of te reo Māori generally (rather than a focus on dialect). The diminishing proportions of younger speakers means that the older native speakers passing away are simply not being replaced. Further, that since 1993, the proportion of Māori children in early childhood education attending kōhanga reo has dropped from just under half to under a quarter. At school, the proportion of Māori children participating in Māori-medium education has also dropped. It argues that if the peak proportions of the 1990s had been maintained there would today be 9,600 more Māori children attending kōhanga reo and an extra 5,700 Māori school children learning via the medium of te reo.

However, at the 2006 census there were 8,000 fewer Māori conversational speakers of te reo than there would have been had the 2001 proportion been maintained. Policy failures, one of the most notable being the lack of teacher supply (and concomitant resources) to meet the demands has meant the revitalisation efforts since the 1970s have been carried by Māori community efforts. It argued that the reo ‘movement’ has been “…weakened more by the governmental failure to give it adequate oxygen and support than by any Māori rejection of their language” (p. xi). The teacher supply has been an issue for over two decades.

The Wai 262 Report argues that the bureaucracy’s efforts to put in place measures to deal with and encourage the Māori language renaissance have been “[d]ecidedly leaden-footed” (p.58) and that the explosion in the numbers attending kōhanga reo in the early 1980s should have instantly signalled supply and demand issues. Failure to meet the demands of quality immersion/bilingual education has accounted for the eventual decline in student numbers and not the failure of the language movement.

The Treaty interest

Having established that the health of te reo remains fragile at best, The Waitangi Tribunal (2010) turned to consider the Treaty interests and simply questioned
whether the principles of the Treaty can ever be achieved if there is not a recognised place for the language of one of the partners to the Treaty. Simply put, there is a Crown obligation to take what steps are reasonable to assist in the preservation of te reo Māori. It must see Māori and te reo as not somehow external to itself, but a core part of the society it represents – and thus a key influence over how it conducts itself. Further, the Crown has now endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2010. The Tribunal argued for adequate resources to be made available to implement policies so that there is no gap between rhetoric and reality and stated

> the Crown must therefore recognise that the Māori interest in the language is not the same as the interest of any minority group in New Zealand society in its own language. Accordingly, in decision-making about resource allocation, te reo Māori is entitled to a ‘reasonable degree of preference’ and must receive a level of funding that accords with this status (p. 52).

The decline in Kōhanga Reo numbers and participation of Māori in immersion/bilingual education demonstrates the gap between the rhetoric and reality—all in spite of the fact that the Māori population is growing at a faster rate than non-Māori. These are major implications and concerns for quality immersion education provision.

**Reo Levelling System in Immersion Education**

An immersion leveling system is the mechanism used to calculate the funding for the compulsory sector only. Four levels of immersion (and associated funding) are defined for planning and monitoring purposes (Ministry of Education, 2007). These are:

- Level 1: 81-100 percent immersion
- Level 2: 51-80 percent immersion
- Level 3: 31-50 percent immersion
- Level 4: 12-30 percent immersion
No such levelling or funding allowances apply or are available to early childhood services, contexts or teachers. There are considerable inequities here for Māori immersion teachers in the early childhood sector, culminating in a claim being lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal by the Kōhanga Reo National Trust (January 2011, I. Tawhiwhirangi, personal communication).

**Indicator Descriptions for ECE**

Two indicator descriptions have been commonly used to represent the early childhood Māori immersion and bilingual sector; namely the percentage of centre-based licensed services that are:

- Māori bilingual (i.e. Māori is used as the language of communication 12-80% of the time); and
- Māori immersion (i.e. Māori is used as the language of communication more than 80% of the time).

Research shows that Māori language use in the 12-80% indicator description does not amount to levels above the threshold or where there are sufficient levels of ‘language interdependence’. In the case of lower levels of immersion it is hypothesised that the benefits of bilingualism do not accrue. In the context of te reo Māori revernacularisation, the Level 1 primary school domain is deemed to be the most appropriate.

**The current situation for Māori participation rates in EYE and teacher education**

*Ngā Haeata Mātauranga* (Ministry of Education, 2009b) provides an overview of the early childhood education (ECE) sector. In 2008, 90.4% of Māori children attended an ECE service prior to starting school which demonstrates an increase in the number of children attending ECE over the past 15 years. However, data show Māori children are still less likely to attend ECE services for sustained periods of time than their non-Māori peers, and research shows that for parents of Māori children, the availability of culturally-appropriate services is an important factor in deciding whether to participate in ECE (44% of parents with a Māori child rated this as important or extremely important, compared to 18% of parents with a Pākehā
The majority of Māori children (76 percent) participating in early childhood education do so in mainstream early childhood services.

In terms of quality, in 2007/08 the MOE continued to focus on this area, stating that high-quality ECE is marked by adults’ responsiveness to children and an intellectually stimulating, language-rich environment where children have the opportunity for dialogue and to use complex language. It provides activities that are suitable and engaging, and opportunities to problem-solve. The adult–child interactions involve sustained shared thinking and open-ended questions to extend thinking. These are important factors in Māori language learning.

More Māori children are enrolled in Māori immersion services than in Māori bi-lingual services. The proportion of Māori enrolments in Māori bi-lingual and/or immersion services is shown in Figure 1 below. While the proportion in immersion services has fallen over time (from 17.1 percent in 2002 to 12.5 percent in 2009), the proportion in bilingual services has risen (from 10.7 percent to 16.7 percent).

**Figure 1:** Percentage of Māori enrolments (in centre-based, licensed services excluding Casual Education and Care Services) that are in Māori bi-lingual and immersion services

![Percentage of Māori enrolments graph](image)

The decline in early childhood Māori immersion provision, TKR, has meant that there has been a drop from 33% of Māori children enrolled in 2001 in TKR to 24%
in 2009. There is still currently less than a quarter of the total of Māori enrolments in EYE in immersion/bilingual settings.

*Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success, 2008-2012*

This strategy (Ministry of Education, 2009a) aims to transform the education sector, ensuring Māori are able to enjoy education success as Māori and having access to quality Māori language education options. Any learners that access Māori language education must be assured that they have the necessary support structure and resources available to enjoy and achieve a quality education. A framework for achieving this outcome has been developed, now referred to as the Māori Language Education Framework which supports a strategic investment approach to, among other things:

- increase the number of high-quality, effective Māori teachers proficient in te reo Māori;
- increase effective teaching and learning of and through te reo Māori;
- increase visibility of te reo Māori in nationwide media and schools to promote the currency and relevance of te reo Māori; and
- to strengthen Māori language education research.

*Ka Hikitia* highlights the importance of children developing strong learning foundations early in life. It notes that successful learning in the early years is necessary for achieving at school and in later years. *Ka Hikitia* seeks the best start in life and education for Māori children through:

- participation in high quality early childhood education;
- effective transition to school;
- strong literacy and numeracy foundations; and
- effective partnerships between home and service or school focused on learning.
**Te Aho Matua**

Te Aho Matua is a guiding philosophical document with pedagogical principles underpinning kaupapa Māori theory and practice written by Katarina Mataira in 1987. Anecdotal evidence shows that many Māori immersion ECE contexts (mainly Kōhanga Reo) adhere to the philosophies of Te Aho Matua. Now enshrined in legislation as an amendment to Section 155 of the Education Act 1989, it promotes Māori/English bilingualism in Aotearoa cultural contexts for linguistic enrichment. The children have access to two phonologies, two graphologies – two complete, distinct language codes and an awareness of the domains that those codes occupy. Indeed, this aspect of the relationship between te reo Māori and te reo Pakeha is reflected in Te Aho Matua as expressions of respect for all languages, te reo Māori being validated as the child’s first language and the language of teaching and learning in the Kōhanga Reo.

**Success for Māori children in early childhood services**

This evaluation conducted by the Education Review Office (2010) focused on the extent to which services:

- responded to the aspirations and expectations of parents and whānau of Māori children; and
- focused on realising the potential of Māori children to become competent and confident learners.

It follows an earlier study by ERO, *Māori Children in Early Childhood: Pilot Study, July 2008*. It confirms some findings of the pilot study, in particular that many services:

i. stated that they “treated all children the same” and lacked strategies that focused upon Māori children as learners;
ii. included statements about values, beliefs and intentions in centre documentation that were not evident in practice;
iii. did not use effective processes to find out about the aspirations of parents and whānau of Māori children; and
iv. lacked adequate self-review processes to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision for Māori children (p. 32)
The findings show that many early childhood services have processes to consult and communicate with the families of children who attend the service but only 13% were highly responsive to the aspirations of the parents and whānau of Māori children. In most services, philosophy statements were written for *all children*, with no specific reference to values and beliefs for Māori children and their whānau.

Although ERO found that many services’ philosophy statements referred to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, only a few made specific reference to what this meant in practice (p. 43). The challenge for services was to understand the need to shift management and educators’ thinking and practice from having processes for all children (and their parents and whānau), to understanding the need to listen and respond to whānau expectations for their children.

In terms of relationships with iwi Māori, a few services made links with local iwi and/or had the support of a kuia or kaumatua to advise management and educators on bicultural practice and to share their knowledge of local history. In some services, educators work at developing relationships with *all* parents, and do not see the need to do anything different for the parents and whānau of Māori children. In a few, relationships were not strong with parents and this impacted on the extent to which whānau were involved. Developing and maintaining respectful relationships is crucial for services that want to be more responsive to whānau aspirations and expectations. The relationships between managers, educators, whānau and children are central to an environment that is both responsive to Māori children and their whānau.

The review asserts that teaching strategies used by educators varies in how well they assist Māori children to become successful learners. A strong feature in the highly focused services was the time educators spent in getting to know individual children and their whānau. Effective educators spend time building relationships with Māori children (and their whānau) and being interested in their lives, not just while attending the service but also as part of the community in which they live.
Educators also value what children bring to their learning situation. They acknowledge children’s prior experiences and have high expectations for them as learners. Services embrace the concept of ako in their practice and work from the premise that ‘we are all learners and teachers here’. Educators also recognise opportunities to foster tuakana/teina relationships between older and younger children.

Quality educators follow Māori children’s interests. This can lead to connections being made with people in the wider community. By focusing on these interests, educators strengthened links with children and their whānau and promoted children’s cultural identity in positive ways.

Educators in services that are highly focused on supporting Māori children are willing to step outside their comfort zone and take risks in their teaching. They embrace te reo Māori, tikanga and values and strengthen their own knowledge and skills through their relationships with whānau. The belief that Māori children need to walk confidently in both Māori and Pākehā worlds underpins their teaching.

Assessment practice varied widely across the services in this evaluation. In services that were highly focused on supporting Māori children, assessment information reflected the rich learning experiences of those children and involved sharing information between whānau and educators (p. 55). The focus of the recommendations are concerned with consultation and communication with whānau; self-review; professional development, planning and assessment. Whilst this review was not about immersion education, the quality indicators are relevant across both immersion Māori and English settings in terms of relationships, curriculum being connected to the learners and socio-cultural assessment tools being used. The importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and linking into whānau Māori, hapū and iwi Māori are also highlighted and dealt with in the next section.
6.3 Whānau, hapū and iwi considerations

6.3.1 Introduction

This section of the review provides an overview of whānau, hapū and iwi considerations. It focuses specifically on the following key questions:

- What is the place of whānau, hapū, iwi in immersion education?
- What do whānau, hapū and iwi need to know to support quality immersion and bilingual ECE for bilingual outcomes?

6.3.2 What is the place of whānau, hapū, iwi in immersion education?

Iwi and hapū planning for the Māori language

According to Te Rautaki Reo Māori: Māori Language Strategy (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2003) the Government supports the growth of the Māori language through the provision of funding and advice about language planning for whānau, hapū, and iwi Māori. Iwi partnerships facilitate opportunities for iwi to be full participants in the education system alongside learners, parents, education providers including early childhood settings, and the MOE. When all these parties work together much more can be achieved for and with Māori. The relationships allow iwi to proactively develop and implement local solutions to meet the specific education needs of learners in their communities. The focus is on learning contexts that are meaningful and relevant for learners and their whānau, and developing excellent practice to support Māori educational achievement.

Te Taura Whiri’s publication, A Guide for Iwi and Hapū to the preparation of Long-term Māori Language Development Plans (Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Māori, 2000) stresses that language revitalisation is a long-term process. Some experts have suggested that language revitalisation can take up to 60 years in favourable conditions. It will take time to increase knowledge of te reo, and to change the way that people perceive Māori, that is, to ‘resocialise’ people to see Māori as an ordinary medium of communication. In recent surveys, Māori people have indicated
overwhelming support for the revitalisation of the Māori language. The Māori language activities undertaken in a range of fields indicate the large degree of goodwill towards the language that exists in the Māori community and wider society. However, the Māori language needs more than goodwill and positive attitudes if it is to survive as an ordinary medium of communication. People must choose to speak Māori on a regular basis, as a normal feature of their everyday lives. Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori believes that iwi and hapū are in a unique position to transform the determination of people for the Māori language into positive results. Long-term planning and action will support this process.

Iwi and hapū are powerful structures in Māori society and provide focal points for Māori leadership and activities. Many important community institutions are directly controlled by iwi and hapū including marae, church groups and land trusts. Many iwi have reclaimed the control of significant communal assets. Iwi and hapū can be motivating forces in encouraging Māori people to think about the place of the Māori language in their lives, and to increase their use of Māori on an everyday basis. Each iwi and hapū has a unique heritage and each exists in unique circumstances.

**Iwi Partnerships**

Iwi have a key role to play in informing, designing, developing, implementing and evaluating initiatives to advance Māori educational outcomes. This will happen through the contribution they make to strengthening identity, language and culture of Māori learners throughout the education system. According to *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga* (Ministry of Education, 2009a), iwi and Māori are the repositories of expertise and excellence in Māori language. Evidence clearly identifies that language is the essence of culture. Te reo Māori is the vehicle through which Māori culture, spirituality and thought are expressed. It is through this vehicle that speakers can access and journey into te Ao Māori. It is on this basis that iwi (hapū, whānau) should have the kaitiakitanga roles of mātauranga Māori. Put simply, iwi has the right to definition over knowledge and knowledge generation through its own processes. The important role of whānau in teaching and learning te reo Māori is included as a key role for whānau in the government’s Māori Language Strategy and
this can be further supported by the sector-wide implementation of *Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success* (Ministry of Education, 2009a).

**Māori Aspirations for the Māori Language**

In an unpublished report *Māori Aspirations for the Māori Language*, prepared from iwi Māori language and education plans it stated clearly that “Māori want Māori to speak te reo Māori” (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2008, p. 1). The bibliography listed nine iwi plans (although Ngāi Tahu and Tūhoe were cited in the body of the document making reference to 11 iwi plans).

- Hauraki
- Te Tai Tokerau
- Whanganui
- Ngāti Whātua
- Ngāti Kahungunu
- Te Tau Ihu o Te Waka a Maui
- Taranaki
- Te Hiku o te Ika - Te Rarawa
- Tauranga Moana
- Raukawa
- Ngāi Tahu
- Tūhoe

There are several major themes arising out of the plans. It is beyond the scope of this review to go in to all the iwi plans individually, suffice to say that there are major concerns among the hapū and iwi regarding language shift and the status of te reo Māori. Language is seen as central to culture. Simply put if language erodes, so too does culture. Cultural wellbeing underpins success as Māori and a secure identity. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu so poignantly stated

> *Our language is the cornerstone of our identity. Without it we lose the ability to express our unique culture, to compose a waiata for the birth of a child, to welcome our guests and to farewell our loved ones.*
The future health and vibrancy of our culture is inextricably tied to the fate of our language (cited in Te Puni Kōkiri, 2008, p. 1).

Te Reo Mauriora

In April 2011 a review conducted by an independent panel of Māori language experts known as Te Paepae Motuhake (2011) was released, called Te Reo Mauriora. Using a UNESCO 2009 framework for determining the state of a language in terms of its vitality, and drawing on relevant statistics the panel considered te reo Māori to fit somewhere between ‘definitely endangered’\(^9\) and ‘severely endangered’\(^10\) according to intergenerational transmission measures (p. 17). It considered sustainability requires the merging of the current educational focus with a focus on growing the language in homes and documented three central themes that arose from discussions with Māori communities which were (i) the language of the home; (ii) iwi, hapū, families and communities being the principal drivers; and (iii) improving the quality of language used by Māori language teachers.

The review contrasts state obligations (already acknowledged and incorporated into legislation) with whānau, hapū and iwi responsibilities; that they go hand-in-hand. However, the report argues that, at least at the macro tribal level, many iwi prioritise other issues over te reo Māori and its revitalisation; even when they may have the resources to support te reo. This is a common concern that came through in the consultation process; the tribal governance priorities often being to foreshore, forestry and other corporate issues rather than a concern for the survival of te reo Māori. At the micro level of whānau there was also a concern; with the pressures and demands of everyday life often getting in the way for many would-be reo supporters. The review states “The issues around the urgency of the language revitalisation effort were largely unknown or ignored at both the macro and micro levels and critical awareness varied at best”. However, it also compares the New Zealand context with the Welsh; the Welsh language being put on an equal basis with English following entrenchment in legislation, such acts making significant contributions to Welsh

\(^9\) Definitely endangered: children no longer learn the language as a mother tongue in the home

\(^10\) The language is spoken by older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to the children or among themselves
language revitalisation and maintenance. A number of recommendations were made, one being to link education and broadcasting programs more closely with Māori language homes (p. 47).

6.4 Summary

The Context of Māori Language Education

This particular project falls under the auspices of *Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success* in that it contributes to its goals and objectives for Māori language in immersion/bilingual EYE. A series of “levers” for success were identified in *Ka Hikitia*, one being “setting and resourcing priorities in Māori language education” (p. 27). There is a noticeable gap in terms of effective languages policy in early years education; a shortage of resources and teacher education programs for Māori immersion/bilingual education (thus a lack of suitably qualified teachers); and a dearth of information sharing encouraging growth of the immersion/bilingual sector. That immersion education in Aotearoa–an official bilingual nation (de jure); with an official bicultural curriculum for the early years; and a commitment to Treaty-based education–has been in decline for the early years; and a commitment to Treaty-based education–has been in decline over the last 20 years seems to suggest a disjuncture, maybe even an absurdity, between the theory and practice.

The Wai 262 Report argues that the bureaucracy’s efforts to put in place measures to deal with and encourage the Māori language renaissance have been “...decidedly leaden-footed” (p.58) and that the explosion in the numbers attending kōhanga reo in the early 1980s should have instantly signalled supply and demand issues. Failure to meet the demands of quality immersion/bilingual education has accounted for the eventual decline in student numbers and not the failure of the language movement. Whilst the Māori language education function of the Māori Language Strategy also extends across early years immersion education, it appears not to be working. The decline or, at best, the flattening off of growth has its roots in some of the same issues identified as contributing to declining participation in kōhanga reo. These are multiplex issues; one of which is the competing interests between languages. But Māori language is the terralingua. As the Waitangi Tribunal (2010) argues, the
Crown simply must recognise that Māori interests in the language are not the same as the interest of any other minority group in New Zealand society in its own language. Further, “... in decision-making about resource allocation, te reo Māori is entitled to a ‘reasonable degree of preference’ and must receive a level of funding that accords with this status” (p. 52). This is also in line with its official status.

As Te Paepae Motuhake (2011) suggest, it is difficult to break the shackles of colonisation, with the intergenerational assimilative propaganda machine feeding parents through schools and the media that Māori language has no value; that it is simply akin to another foreign language in its homeland. This view promotes the idea that Māori has little place in the fabric of New Zealand society. Reversing language shift requires a corresponding reversing mind shift which can also occur through media campaigns as well as as other societal institutions.

The ERO evaluation (Education Review Office, 2010) demonstrates how educational practices are still assimilatory with a general one size (one language) fits all strategy. They found that most EYE services had processes for consulting and communicating with families but only 41% were using such processes to identify and respond to the aspirations and expectations of whānau (p. 33). Only 13% were highly responsive to the aspirations of the parents and whānau of Māori children. In most services, philosophy statements were written for all children, with no specific reference to values and beliefs for Māori children and their whānau. Philosophy statements were written for all children, with no specific reference to values and beliefs for Māori children and their whānau.

Assessment information reflected the rich learning experiences of those children and involved sharing information between whānau and educators (p. 55). Appropriate assessment (and evaluation) practices are no different in immersion settings. Assessment needs to be connected to the learners and learning outcomes. The evaluation focussed on the need for services to focus on Māori children as successful learners (p.61) which is also an important pedagogical consideration.
Research shows that Māori language use in the 12-80% indicator description does not amount to levels above the threshold or where there are sufficient levels of ‘language interdependence’; where the languages (and language learning) intermingle and are linked. In the case of lower levels of immersion it is hypothesised that the benefits of bilingualism do not accrue.

The place of whānau, hapū and iwi in education

Another of the “levers” for success identified in Ka Hikitia is “Increasing whānau and iwi authority and involvement in education” (p.27). The strategy document goes on further to state that:

- Parents and whānau play a critical role in supporting their children’s learning right from the start; and
- Learning is more effective when whānau and iwi are valued partners in the education process and when educators, whānau and iwi are open to learning from and with one another.

The notion that authority and involvement of whānau, hapū and iwi in education are particularly relevant and important factors in improving educational success. Further we agree that increasing whānau authority is critical. Here we read increasing whānau authority to mean increasing their understanding of how the schooling and education systems work and being able to critically engage with education so that they may understand the implications of local policies, school cultures and pedagogical strategies for effective immersion education.

There has been a shift in some of the language used in educational literature from “parental involvement” to “collaborations and partnerships”. Partnerships and collaborations imply that both sides of the partnership or collaborations can contribute equally in education. Much of the previous emphasis in educational literature on parental involvement has been about assisting parents to assist their children learn at home what is taught at school. That is more an assimilatory model which is unidirectional and impositional rather than a two-way model which syncretises knowledge/s, values and language/s of the home and educational setting.
In the context then of whānau, hapū, iwi and school partnerships, whānau and iwi involvement needs to contribute to changing what and how students learn.

Whilst whānau, hapū and iwi involvement can be seen as a focus of some of the iwi education partnerships in a broad sense, in terms of language Te Paepae Motuhake (2011) identified shortcomings on the part of some of the tribal leadership to centralize the revitalizing aims of te reo Māori. Whilst the State does have a fiduciary responsibility there needs to be a more co-ordinated approach with iwi Māori retaining the rights to determination in the knowledge that a one-size fits all approach will not work; iwi Māori are not homogenous and will be at different points on the continuum of intergenerational language revitalisation. As Te Paepae puts it, Māori need to be the architectural designers of their programs.

The Context of Immersion Education and the place of Iwi Māori

In response to the questions; what is the place of whānau, hapū, iwi in immersion education, and what do whānau, hapū and iwi need to know to support quality immersion and bilingual ECE for bilingual outcomes; it is clear whānau Māori were the drivers for change in the establishment of Kōhanga Reo in the early 80s and the schooling and tertiary extensions of the 90s. These initiatives combined created a whole stream of Māori immersion education for bilingual/bicultural outcomes in accordance with Durie’s (2001) Māori Education Framework. Future drivers include:

- Education policy in EYE immersion/bilingual education, developed with iwi involvement and priorities set accordingly, especially in terms of resourcing, to catch up with the practices;
- Iwi Māori have long highlighted the issues of teacher knowledge and Māori language teacher shortages. These must be addressed through teacher education programs and graduates;
- Media campaigns be developed and launched emphasising value of Māori language, especially through intergenerational transmission in the home, highlighting benefits academically, linguistically, economically, socially, and globally;
- Professional development for teachers focusing on the importance of ongoing communications and responsiveness to aspirations of whānau and wider iwi Māori;
- Significance of culturally appropriate assessment processes being connected to learners and their communities being centralised in the learning/teaching process i.e., that it informs the teaching and learning not the reverse;
- Immersion levels in EYE less than 90% are ineffective (unless children are totally immersed in te reo Māori in the home);
- As the Playcentre movement facilitated language shift from Māori to English among young Māori children in the 40s and 50s, so too can quality EYE immersion centres help reverse the shift back to Māori in the homes;
- Authority and involvement of whānau, hapū and iwi, particularly those knowledgeable in immersion education generally, early years advancement specifically, is important for increased understanding and improving educational success;
- Iwi/educational setting partnerships more effectual when they are sensitive, fair and just;
- In the 1980s when Kōhanga Reo and its extension Kura Kaupapa Māori commenced the idea was to bridge the language gaps between the Māori language speaking elders and young children. Many of those elders have now passed on. Immersion settings have, for a variety of reasons, gone into decline. Māori language is still endangered. Iwi Māori have to now re-set their priorities and resources in order to prevent language death.
- Iwi Māori are not homogenous. Knowing how to cater for the wide and varied needs of whānau, hapū and iwi in the knowledge that they are not the same is an important consideration.
- Combined with State support a priority has to be for Māori communities to commit to speaking te reo by increasing Māori language domains.
7. QUALITY IMMERSION FOR MĀORI AND PASIFIKA LEARNERS

WHAT COUNTS AS QUALITY IMMERSION IN THE EARLY YEARS FOR PASIFIKA AND MĀORI LEARNERS IN AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND?

7.1 Introduction

In this aspect of the review we consider the evidence of what counts as quality immersion/bilingual early childhood education relative to Māori and Pasifika immersion/bilingual early childhood education provision in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Dalli, White, Rockel, and Duhn’s (2011) literature review on quality early childhood education for under-two year olds problematises the notion of ‘quality’ and its historical, cultural and paradigmatic embeddedness. Moreover, it reminds us that quality is not a universal concept but value/culture based. They identified some ‘structural’ elements of quality (whilst also noting that it is a ‘multi-faceted construct) in order to explore what this may mean for infants and toddlers in early childhood (including bilingual) settings in New Zealand. Notions of ‘quality’ as relative, perspectival, locally constructed and complex provide a conceptual framework for the current literature review.

7.2 Māori and Pasifika immersion early years education

What can we learn from the evidence for Māori and Pasifika immersion early years education?

Building upon what counts as quality early childhood education in general, for immersion/bilingual education, additional factors relative to language goals and teaching and learning programs and practices for bilingual/biliteracy learning are critical for success. Whilst Māori have indicated overwhelming support for the revitalisation of te reo Māori, and there is the wider goodwill for a language-in-culture strategy, te reo Māori needs more than goodwill to survive as an ordinary medium of communication (Māori Language Commission, 2000). Education policy in the early years immersion/bilingual education must be developed alongside iwi involvement and priorities set accordingly, especially in terms of resourcing. There are no Ministry of Education based language policies for heritage language learning
relative to New Zealand’s Māori or Pasifika communities. The current *Pasifika Education Plan* (Ministry of Education, 2009) articulates goals for participation in any form of formal early childhood education, for the quality of early childhood education experiences, and for culturally and linguistically responsive and effective engagement between Pasifika parents and early childhood education services. The actions noted in the plan to be implemented by the MOE are devoid of any direct reference to heritage language planning or promotion. If any steps toward coherent planning for immersion/bilingual Pasifika early childhood education are to be taken, policy development, built on consultation with relevant communities will be critical. An overarching approach with parallel trajectories for the seven major Island groups seems warranted because the current status of those heritage languages differs markedly. Before any steps towards using empirical evidence to change practices could realistically be taken, the aspirations of those language groups must be articulated and used for planning. How the factors below can be realised for each of the target language groups will require a differentiated approach.

7.2.1 *To achieve quality in immersion/bilingual Māori and Pasifika early childhood education we must plan for:*

Teacher factors include:

- Professional development for teachers focussing on importance of ongoing communications and responsiveness to aspirations of families.
- Centralise in the teaching/learning relationships the significance of culturally appropriate assessment practices being connected to learners and their communities.
- Bilingual teachers, who speak, read and write to high levels of proficiency in the target heritage language/s.
- Teachers as pedagogical leaders and who are knowledgeable about second language acquisition techniques and linguistics.
- Teachers who provide opportunities to explore and play in language and culturally rich environments.
- Teachers who are committed to the aims of immersion/bilingual education.

Program factors include:
• The implementation of additive Program approaches for each of the target heritage languages and support for the use of the heritage language for at least 90% of the time as the language of the curriculum.
• Awareness of clear language domains (people, place, temporal and topical).
• Strategic (smart) resourcing and use of support materials in target language, particularly for using these in play-based programs where socio-cultural teaching strategies are adopted. For some teachers this may mean re-education in socio-cultural pedagogies and it will most likely mean for all teachers that they are supported to learn how best to utilise the skills of other language models (e.g., elders) and also assist others (e.g., parents) when working alongside communities.

Policy factors include:
• Bilingual education policy for heritage languages in New Zealand that reflects collaboration with the Ministry of Education and relevant stakeholders with differentiated planning for the respective languages.
• The designation, at least in the early years, of bilingual/immersion programs narrowed to only those that teach/use the target language for more than 90% of the time (i.e. heritage language programs).
• Research and development around qualification planning for initial and ongoing teacher education that targets L1 heritage language learning and teaching for both Māori and Pasifika languages.
• Curriculum support materials policy that targets the range of languages and that seeks to educate personnel working with children on how best to use these to advance bilingualism and biliteracy development in the early years.
• Research, develop and launch media campaigns emphasising the value of Māori and the wider Pacific languages, especially through intergenerational transmission in the home, highlighting the benefits academically, linguistically, economically, socially and globally.
7.2.2 If quality immersion/bilingual early childhood programs are to support the development of strong language foundations (language, culture, identity) then they must recognise:

Teacher factors:

- And employ teachers who realise the importance of a language-in-culture pedagogy evident in the deep structures of their program. To support the development of strong language foundations teachers and must be continually developing their own bilingualism, use the target language in a range of domains and teach through the medium of the target language. This will require significant investment in ongoing research and teacher professional development, their access to heritage language resources, especially print resources, for their programs.
- Have teachers who engage children in ways that make conversation paramount, who use increasingly complex language structures and where they can expand children’s vocabularies and knowledge by providing opportunities to think and act in accord with the children’s cultural norms.
- Have teachers who model for children and their parents the value of being bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. These are strategies that can also be supported through the involvement of other adults in the early childhood program through a pedagogy of negotiated (rather than pre-packaged impositional) curriculum.
- Have teachers who attend targeted teacher professional development sessions focussing on language strategies e.g. shifting teaching styles from using directive language to more collaborative word-play language; and improving teacher/student language and literacy practices.
- Have teachers who make use of knowledge and apply understandings about bilingualism, bilingual and bicultural development in the early years.
- Have teachers that employ a world-view, identity shaping praxis.

Program factors:

- That base learning contexts on language play which encourages children to ‘think-out-loud’.
• That make use of socio-cultural teaching strategies in their language planning which focuses on language development.

• An additive language approach in which the target language is used for most of the time (i.e., more than 90%).

• Incorporate cultural practices associated with the target language group.

• That involve strong language models from the community to augment the use of the target language in the early years program. Children need to hear the language used in every-day events inside and outside the program so it becomes a communicative community language.

• That show being bilingual and biliterate as assets in the modern world.

• Information for parents and communities that advises them of the value of having their children in immersion/bilingual early childhood education programs that focus on heritage language learning and development underpinned by cultural values and practices that build unique world views, and strong cultural identities.

Policy factors:

• A possible re-designation of bilingual/immersion programs narrowed to only those that practice the language for more than 90% of the time (i.e. L1 heritage language dominant programs).

• Development of ongoing teacher education policy that assists teachers to maintain and strengthen their own capacity to teach for bilingual / biliteracy outcomes in the early years and that builds teacher capacity for planning, evaluation and assessment practices situated in the cultural and language practices of their L1 target language (again, overarching policy with differentiate provision for each of the seven main language groups is likely to be required).

7.2.3 If quality immersion/bilingual early childhood education is to contribute to early school success then it must support:

Teachers:

• understand what Treaty-based education means for all streams of education.
in the early years settings they must collaborate closely over individual children’s (and their family’s) transitions, which will include information about options and may include the facilitation of communication between the family, child and school.

- to advance the sharing of assessment information from early childhood education and the use of that data for ongoing learning as children transition into school.

- to spend time in each others settings (early childhood teachers visiting primary settings, primary teachers visiting early childhood education settings) so that children are scaffolded effectively between settings.

**Programs:**

- are Treaty-based and that help children to transition to culturally and linguistically congruent classrooms – particularly in relation to curriculum instruction so children can at least comprehend expectations in the classroom.

- that see the buddying up of children upon school entry so peers can act as a resource for children transitioning into the new context.

- that transfer artefacts such as learning portfolios from the early childhood education context into school and the use of these (which implies therefore some teacher education for primary teachers in the interpretation and application of assessment for learning resources from early childhood education for school entry).

- that implement language policy for bilingual / biliteracy development.

**Policies:**

- that result in the development of more immersion/bilingual primary education settings in New Zealand (and which could be planned so as to be geographically proximate to early childhood education settings).

- that support teachers to develop and implement effective language/s policies for their classrooms and with their parent communities and wider iwi.

- planning for primary teachers ongoing professional development in bilingual/immersion education, and bilingualism and biliteracy development so they can build on children’s early childhood development in this domain.
7.3 Summary

Factors of quality immersion/bilingual early years programs discussed in this chapter are associated with program characteristics, teacher knowledge and practice, the relative balance between target languages for instruction and quality contexts for transition. The chapter provides evidence of what teachers need to know to support quality immersion/bilingual early childhood programs; the teacher’s role in quality immersion/bilingual early childhood education;

We have a sound understanding from the literature of what quality immersion early years education looks like. It is where the teachers speak, read and write fluently in the target language and where that language is used for the majority (at least 90%) of the time by teachers, other adults and by children in high quality programs. The present designation of early childhood programs as bilingual in which as little as 12% of the curriculum is operationalised in the target language is therefore problematic. This review has provided further ideological clarification around the issue of percentages in immersion/bilingual education.

Achieving quality in immersion/bilingual early childhood education means striving for goals that exceed those for achieving quality in a general sense. Quality immersion/bilingual early childhood programs rely upon particular teacher expertise with languages, differentiated teaching, the ability to teach in the target language, and a capacity to draw upon resources from within the language contexts (and communities) in which they work. Teachers need to put understandings of bilingual development to use as they strive to match parent/family efforts for the promotion of literacy and language learning in young children. Quality immersion early childhood involves language policy planning, curriculum research, development and resourcing, qualified teachers and additive approaches to programming.

*What can teachers do to support quality immersion/bilingual early childhood education?*
• Be knowledgeable about Treaty-based education and the language contexts of New Zealand and the wider Pacific
• Be knowledgeable about the impact of dominant (often monocultural) discourses and colonisation of the Pacific
• Focus on heritage language use in curriculum development, program design and praxis
• Underpin their practice with the cultural practices of the children, families, communities
• Work alongside families and their goals for children’s bilingual development and support the attainment of these
• Plan for additional adult (quality language models) involvement in the program to improve adult to child ratios
• Take an additive approach to bilingual education
• Maintain an accurate picture of children’s individual language abilities
• Access, develop and use a range of high quality heritage language resources
• Be attentive to the deep and surface structures of program design which centralises the importance of relationships and which encourages pushed-out heritage language use
• Develop and implement language policy alongside families
• Be knowledgeable about second language teaching and learning theories and strategies in the early years and use those language-in-culture teaching strategies
• Be knowledgeable about bilingual development in the early childhood years
• Be bilingual and continue to improve own ability to speak, read and write fluently in target language/s
• Model being bilingual and biliterate with the children and the families
• Provide pedagogical leadership
• To continually access professional development as a member of the profession of teaching

What can parents do to support quality immersion/bilingual early childhood education?
Understand the broader goals of immersion/bilingual education and the socio-political context in which settings operate e.g., how dominant discourses can undermine the ‘kaupapa’ in order to make informed decisions

- Expect teachers to use the heritage language in the curriculum
- Talk to the teachers about cultural practices that will support your child’s learning, world views and identity
- Share your goals for your children’s bilingual development
- Be actively involved in the educational settings you choose for your children
- Help your child’s teachers access a range of high quality heritage language resources (including print resources)
- Help your child’s teachers develop and implement language policies at the centre
- Model being bilingual and biliterate (wherever you are at) when you are at the centre and talking with the children and teachers there
- Be knowledgeable about the philosophy of the setting, the reo, tikanga, values, policies and program
- Help with policy development and program planning including assessment practices
- Speak (read and write) with and alongside your child/ren in the home
- Know that your role is key to supporting the education of your children and be part of the partnership
8  FOSTERING BILINGUALISM AND BILITERACY

HOW IS BILINGUALISM AND BILITERACY FOSTERED THROUGH QUALITY IMMERSION EARLY YEARS EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

8.1  Introduction

This section of the review focuses on the fostering of bilingualism and biliteracy within quality immersion/bilingual early childhood educational contexts, specifically domains of teacher knowledge/practice; and language/s balance. It responds to the overarching question of ‘How is bilingualism and biliteracy fostered through quality immersion early childhood education programs?’ The following key questions for the review are addressed in this chapter of the report:

- What do teachers need to know to support quality immersion early childhood education for bilingual outcomes?
- What is the role of the early childhood teacher in supporting bilingual outcomes through immersion education?
- How much immersion education is needed in early childhood education for bilingual outcomes?
- Does this differ if the target language is not spoken at home?
- Does the theory that a minimum of 50% teaching is needed still hold?

8.2  What teachers need to know and their role in immersion education

Defining the terms ‘bilingualism’ and ‘bilingual education’ is difficult. May (2010) clarifies the term bilingual education because he asserts that it has widely different understandings of what such an education actually constitutes. He states that at one end of the continuum there are those who would classify teaching bilingual students as bilingual education, irrespective of their educational aims (fostering bilingualism or monolingualism). At the other end of the continuum are those who distinguish between assimilatory (subtractive) programs and strong bilingual (additive) programs (see Section 3 for further clarification). Teachers need to understand the distinctions
between weak and strong bilingual education in order to differentiate provision in order to make links with the program aims.

Following May, Hill and Tiakiwai (2006), bilingual education in the primary sector is “…where subjects are taught in two languages and students become fluent speakers and writes in both languages by the end of their schooling” (p.3, emphasis added). It is important to distinguish between the subjects-based approach of the primary sector and the language-in-culture socio-cultural approach of the early years sector. It is also important to draw the distinction between the language revitalisation goals of the Māori heritage language programs and the language maintenance goals of Pasifika heritage language programs when discussing heritage languages and language ratios. However, there may be some assumptions in the idea that Pasifika heritage language programs are maintenance programs as the shift from heritage languages to English continues to dominate the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. May asserts that in Māori-medium education in New Zealand, the overwhelming majority of students are first language English speakers. Whilst this may also be the case with many young children in Kōhanga Reo, and a growing likelihood that this is also the case for some Pasifika languages, there are also a number who are L1 speakers of their heritage language/s. Wider (macro-level) scoping research will paint an accurate picture. At the micro level however, teachers need to be able to scope the language needs of their students through appropriate assessment procedures and ongoing research in order to have clear theoretical bases for their planning, program, evaluation and implementation purposes. They need to be able to offer further to supports to those children (and their families) whose L1 is English, but who are committed to language revitalisation.

8.3 How much immersion education is needed in early years education for bilingual outcomes?

In response to this question and bearing in mind the context of English language dominance and deficit colonial discourses (which impact daily on attitudes and values) around Pacific (including Māori) languages leading to languages shift, in order to produce bilingual outcomes it is necessary that both early childhood and
school programs target the minority (heritage) language as the medium of instruction for at least 90% (100% for Māori medium EYE) of the time—at least in the early years and continuing for the duration of the first eight years of a child’s life. This is necessary for eventual bilingual outcomes (May, 2010) if balanced bilingualism (and associated benefits) is the aim. Further, May suggests that the program begin as a 90:10% program in the early years (with 90% in the minority or target language and 10% in the dominant language) changing gradually to a 50:50 program by year 4 of the student’s schooling for those seeking an early exit or to transition to English medium. That means transition after eight years is an early exit. There is no reason why provision in a 90:10% heritage/other language split or indeed a 50:50% split could not continue, as is the case with Māori immersion into Wharekura, or the secondary schooling extension of primary. May asserts the 90:10% ratio in the early years provides for a strong program. Skerrett-White (2003) argues for a minimum of 90%, but preferably the 100% reo Māori immersion approach (standard for Kōhanga Reo) being the optimum percentage constituting an additive program. The theory that a minimum of 50% immersion in early years education (at least for heritage language revitalisation programs) does not hold.

8.4 Does this differ if the target language is not spoken at home?

May (2010) adds immersion models that teach majority language students predominantly through a minority language, such as Māori and Samoan immersion programs in New Zealand, are clearly additive bilingual programs, even in those programs with very high levels of immersion in the minority language (p. 294). What have come to be known as heritage models, most often associated with indigenous language revitalisation, clearly are additive. They have a strong bilingual focus even though the language of the home may be different to the language of the educational setting. The Māori language shift to English is a good example. For the majority of students, the language is no longer spoken in the home/s. As suggested earlier, that may well be the case for other heritage language programs in New Zealand. Depending on the L1/L2 status of their students, heritage models can be situated somewhere in between maintenance and enrichment models. Clearly teachers need to be aware of the revitalisation/maintenance aims of the program, and the L1/L2 status
of their individual students in order to pitch their program and teaching at the appropriate levels whilst also considering the role/s (if any) of L1 or L2 as languages of instruction. The language of the home will determine the L1/L2 status of the students. This means the program of the educational setting has to be well-planned for effectiveness. It also means that revitalisation efforts of the educational setting have to be linked to revitalisation programs in the home setting. As Skerrett-White (2003) argues the reason why reversing language shift (RLS) is difficult, and often not successful (aside from the fact that it is always having to unfairly compete with a dominant language), is because people do not know what to do and they do not know the difference between mother-tongue (vernacular) acquisition, its use and transmission (especially for revitalization aims). Nor do they distinguish between infant/child bilinguals. These are important distinctions and considerations for teachers and parents. To effectively contribute to bilingualism and the development of biliteracy, in an additive approach, quality early childhood programs must focus on the use of heritage languages for interactional teaching/learning purposes and the cultural (home and community) practices that must accompany (support) such an approach. The aims of heritage language revitalization programs must be via a language-in-culture praxis.

8.5 Summary

This synthesis combined with the literature (Section 3) the studies (Section 4) and the Māori/Pasifika contexts (Sections 5-6) include the following components for fostering bilingualism and biliteracy through quality immersion EYE programs:

What teachers need to know include (but not limited to):

- focus on advancing target language (both oral and written) with plenty of opportunities to use the target language;
- create meaningful contexts within programs which support increased understanding;
- model active and responsive listening;
- promote cultural values and identity through language use;
• pay attention to early literacy development;
• understand how bilingualism and biliteracy are interrelated and support each other;
• promote research into literacy events in families and communities so as to capitalise on social literacy and avoid deficit theorising;
• promote spoken and written systems in both the education setting and the home for example through sharing resources;
• Research, create and share literacy tools like Te Arapū Māori as a means of exploiting and advancing the phonological and metalinguistic awareness of bilingual children;
• Draw on critical theory in education programs that enable children to make meaningful connections to literature (through its careful selection and development) and through literacy activities which reflect them (their language/s, cultural values and knowledge/s and feelings).
• At least 90% immersion in the target language (although some researchers argue that 100% immersion is the mark of quality);
• High adult to child ratios and small group sizes;
• Qualified teachers with high levels of language proficiency in the target language and in English;
• Promote an additive approach to bilingualism and biliteracy development;
• The importance of promoting and transmitting indigenous worldviews through language;
• How to develop appropriate language/s policies;
• The use of socio-cultural teaching strategies, particularly: meaningful experiences, co-construction, scaffolding, joint-attention and the achievement of intersubjectivity.
• Importance of whānau, hapū and iwi links in knowledge that iwi/educational setting partnerships more effectual when they are sensitive, fair and just; and
• Iwi Māori are not homogenous. Knowing how to cater for the wide and varied needs of whānau, hapū and iwi in the knowledge that they are not the same is an important consideration.

What parent/s need to know include (but not limited to)
- Importance of getting involved in educational settings and the program especially heritage language speakers of high proficiency;
- The role/s of educational settings and how they can support them;
- Prioritise speaking the target language/s in the home;
- How to support language and literacy in the home;
- The benefits of becoming bilingual and especially before four years of age i.e., the distinctions between an infant bilingual and a child bilingual.
- The impacts of colonisation and the politics of language shift for example as the Playcentre movement facilitated language shift from Māori to English among young Māori children in the 40s and 50s, so too can quality EYE immersion centres help reverse the shift back to Māori in the homes.

*What whānau/hapū and iwi need to know include (but not limited to):*

- In the 1980s when Kōhanga Reo and its extension Kura Kaupapa Māori commenced the idea was to bridge the language gaps between the Māori language speaking elders and young children. Many of those elders have now passed on. Immersion settings have, for a variety of reasons, plummeted into decline. Māori language is still endangered. Iwi Māori have to now re-set their priorities and resources in order to prevent language death.
- Authority and involvement of whānau, hapū and iwi, particularly those knowledgeable in immersion education generally, early years advancement specifically, is important for increased understanding and improving educational success;
- The imperatives of reversing language shift and the necessity to research and develop language/s policies, especially for the early years sector;
- The importance of language education strategies for the early years being part of the wider education strategies;
- How to work effectively with educational institutions for active protection of taonga Māori.
9 STRONG LANGUAGE FOUNDATIONS

WHAT FEATURES OF QUALITY IMMERSION ECE ARE LIKELY TO LEAD TO ‘STRONG LANGUAGE FOUNDATIONS’?

9.1 Introduction

This section of the review focuses on the notion of strong language foundations and the question of how immersion/bilingual early childhood education can foster strong language foundations. Discussion of the evidence focuses specifically on the following key questions:

- What constitutes a strong language foundation in immersion early childhood education?
- What is the relationship between building strong language foundations, culture and identity?

9.2 What constitutes ‘strong language foundations’ in the early years

In the studies we reviewed, strong language foundations are constituted in the general sense as the learning of one’s ‘heritage language’ and the concomitant development of ‘strong culture and identity’ (Cooper et al. 2004; Mara & Burgess, 2007; Mitchell, et al. 2006; Peter, 2007; Podmore, 2006; Skerrett-White, 2003; Skerrett, 2010a). Working within the cultural values and practices of the language communities involved supports the acquisition of strong language foundations. Accurate interpretations and understandings (both verbal and non verbal) rely on and simultaneously shape broader cultural understandings (Mitchell et al., 2006). In sections 7 and 8 of this report the importance of teachers understanding children’s bilingual context/s was noted as a feature of quality immersion and bilingual early childhood programs. Identifying strategies that allow a wide range of adults to participate as members of the extended community of learners is therefore necessary if strong language foundations are to be supported in early childhood education (Iokepa-Guerrero & Rodriguez de France, 2007; Gregory, 2005, Mara & Burgess, 2007; Peter, 2007; Skerrett-White, 2003). The research indicates that oral language development lays the foundations for formal literacy knowledge. The studies support
the notion that immersion programs are important for producing strong language foundations in the early years.

Children who are building strong language foundations in quality immersion/bilingual early childhood education are likely to syncretise language of the home and centre talk; children will willingly engage in meaningful learning/teaching conversations and activities where the use of the target language is authentic, natural and becoming increasingly more sophisticated; they will use different languages relative to different language domains (people, place and topic); recognise divergent languages in print resources and become adept at participating in the full range of literacy practices through their heritage language.

Strategies from other studies that have also been identified as important for building strong language foundations are “reading to children, guiding writing, and telling and retelling stories” (Tagoilelagi-Leota et al., 2005, p.475); and providing quality print resources (wall posters, books and the like) ensuring variety, choice and interest for children (Burgess, 2004, as cited in Mara & Burgess, 2007). Overall strong oral language proficiency is a clear indicator of a strong language foundation.

9.3 Strong language foundations, culture and identity

What is the relationship between building strong language foundations, culture and identity?

The review explores literature focussing on the relationships between building strong language foundations, culture and identity. The Pasifika Education Plan 2009-2012 (Ministry of Education, 2009c) focuses on increased participation in early childhood education for Pasifika children and families, the quality of service provision, and cultural and linguistic responsivity. This review responds to the latter two goals.

Proficiency with heritage languages results in access to indigenous worldviews. Mara and Burgess (2007) write, “a group’s own language acts as a repository of cultural value systems and knowledge” (p.5), the language acts therefore as a central force in the maintenance of cultural heritage and identity.
Children in the Cooper et al. study (2004) were fully cognisant that their experience in immersion education settings had facilitated a deep sense of pride in their cultural heritage and influenced their identity formation. In the early childhood education context, Mara and Burgess (2007) noted the positive impact on Samoan preschoolers sense of identity that came with participation in immersion early childhood education. As seen in the Hāwaiian and Cherokee experience, immersion education has the greatest potential for for increasing intergenerational mother-tongue transmission of language and flow on effects for identity, well-being and community development. Investments in early childhood education were critical to reversing language shift. Han and Huang’s (2007) study also claims that children in settings where strong language foundations are a focus will likely experience enhanced self-esteem, social and behavioural health.

Mitchell et al. (2006) found that Māori and Pasifika parents were not homogenous in their needs and aspirations for their children’s education. However there was a strong desire for teachers to maintain heritage languages, and to provide opportunities for children to socialize and become prepared for school. In the study, parents of children attending A’oga Amata wanted bilingual outcomes in Samoan and English from their children’s early childhood education experience.

Education in and through te reo Māori is a key contributor to achieving the strategic outcomes of the Māori Education Strategy, evidence of which noted that strengthening of identity, language and culture being the critical ingredients for the success of “Māori Enjoying Success as Māori” (Ministry of Education, 2009a). The beginning of the Kōhanga Reo movement was not just about language revitalisation but to address issues of sociocultural disruption and concerns of identity loss. The importance of Māori children developing their identity as Māori through language revitalising efforts was a focus of Skerrett-White’s (2003) research in Kōhanga Reo. She found that the child’s sense of being, of belonging, his or her feelings of self-satisfaction and happiness, is protected and nurtured through language and culture, and fundamental to their growing positive self-identity. The child’s identity is their tūrangawaewae; it is enscribed in the landscape, in the waters and the sands, in the
mountains and the valleys, strengthened with spiritual links to Ranginui and Papatūānuku.

9.5 Summary

Features of quality immersion leading to strong language foundations

Strong language foundations are related to having a strong cultural identity and to speaking in the heritage language. Acknowledging that language acts as a cultural repository for concepts and understandings about oneself, one’s world and others has clear benefits for learning, well being and development. Significant emphasis therefore on teachers capacity to teach in accord with bilingual/immersion education principles and practices and to support infant and young child bilingualism is warranted. This section of the review, in combination with the literature, the studies and the Māori/Pasifika contexts include the following features of quality immersion program leading to strong language foundations:

- High teacher language proficiency in both target (and other) languages;
- Relevant teacher qualifications – namely teacher knowledge of second language acquisition, linguistics and second language pedagogy;
- Teachers understanding the benefits of being bilingual/biliterate and bicultural and ability to promote those understandings;
- Maintain immersion environment (with appropriate strategies) through the curriculum vis-à-vis a language-in-culture praxis;
- Teachers understanding importance of engagement in meaningful conversations with children full of open-ended questions and opportunities for pushed-out conversation
- Teachers who continually liaise and collaborate with families in planning and evaluating programs;
- Fluent heritage language speaking elder involvement in the program;
- Low adult/child ratios;
- Small group sizes;
• Understanding of how the wider societal (media, teacher education, government policy) discourses, particularly ideologies of contempt, impact on the value and status accorded to heritage language programs in order to mediate them;
• Role of assessment (particularly classroom observations of children’s language) in informing decisions about what and how to teach;
• Strong connections to community in joint home/education setting language revitalising efforts.

*What parents should know and do to support the development of children’s strong language foundations*

• Continually develop own language proficiency in target language if that language is not a native language;
• Speak as much as possible to children in the target L1 language;
• Participate in the early years program and use the target L1 language for speaking, reading and writing in that context;
• Recognise and accept children’s spontaneous use of English conversation and how to capitalise on code-switching;
• Recognise and accept that learning English may lag behind learning the target L1 language but that this will not impact negatively in the long-term on their academic abilities or bilingualism/biliteracy development;
• Play with children at the centre and use the target L1 language in that play;
• Read books written in the target L1 language with children when joining in the early childhood program;
• Play with words and help children to extend their vocabulary;
• Have conversations with their children about languages, the purpose, benefits and importance of their involvement in bilingual education;
• Model being bilingual and biliterate.
WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM QUALITY ECE IMMERSION FOR EARLY SCHOOLING?

10.1 Introduction

This section of the review focuses on what can be learned from quality immersion/bilingual early childhood education for early schooling. Discussion of the evidence focuses specifically on the following key questions:

- What supporting structures, resources and approaches are needed for quality immersion education at school entry?
- What challenges exist for moving out of immersion early childhood education into English medium schooling? How might the challenges be ameliorated?
- What are the useful strategies to support whatever choices parents make? What do parents/whānau need to know about transition and what can they do to support their children?
- What are the outcomes for children when successfully transitioning into like immersion programs? What are the implications when children are transitioning across to incongruent language programs?
- What evidence do we have that being bilingual makes a difference to early school success?

10.2 Support structures

What support structures, resources and approaches are needed for quality immersion education at school entry?

The development of language/s policies in education is critical to supporting any future immersion/bilingual education planning that expands on what children may have experienced in immersion/bilingual early childhood education. Without effective education policy (based on empirical research) on heritage language learning for our Māori and Pasifika children in early years education, responses to
the questions of how best to provide quality programs for early school success will remain ah hoc and localised (McCaffery & Tuafuti, 2003, Skerrett 2010a).

As noted in the studies we reviewed, language proficient teachers are critical to the attainment of quality immersion/bilingual early childhood education. If teachers can read, write and speak with a high level of proficiency in the target heritage language and in English, they provide much needed support for the provision of immersion/bilingual programs, and can assist towards the goal of bilingual/biliteracy outcomes from schooling. This means that all teachers need to be qualified and have in-depth understandings of bilingual development; of how to teach for bilingual/biliteracy outcomes; and of how to work with diverse communities. This is especially so if heritage language communities are to be called upon to support language, literacy and learning aims (a noted feature of quality immersion/bilingual education). Where multiple languages are in use in any given community the task is more complex as the provision of heritage language speakers who are trained teachers is more difficult to ensure. As previously noted in this review (see s. 6.4), iwi Māori have long highlighted the issues of teacher knowledge and Māori language teacher shortages. These must be addressed through teacher education programs and graduates. Professional development for teachers focussing on importance of ongoing communications and responsiveness to aspirations of parents and the significance of culturally appropriate assessment processes being connected to learners and their communities must be centralised in the learning/teaching process i.e., that it informs the teaching and learning. The implications for initial and ongoing teacher education are far reaching.

If high quality literacy outcomes are to be promoted, the provision of high quality literacy resources in support of Te Reo Māori and the languages of the seven main Pacific Islands language groups must be prioritised. In a recent study commissioned by the Ministry of Education to evaluate Māori language resources for immersion programs it was found that educational resources that validate Māori identity, tikanga and te reo Māori, and that accurately and positively reflect the readers’ lives and values through text and images are an important part of the educational experience for ākonga Māori (Skerrett & Hunia, 2010). The key findings (applicable also to wider Pasifika languages) included suggestions that:
• the voices of young children, and the issues relevant to their lives, need to be heard and reflected in the content and design of resources;

• the publishing process itself can be an effective tool for educating young people about the power of the media;

• that the facilitation of reading should be prioritised in design (layout) and formatting (typefaces, text, images and so on);

• that publishers research the areas of content for incorporation into printed resource materials (i.e., what is popular, essential, current issues including promoting te reo Māori and wider media links); and

• That publishers keep abreast of current theories around second language acquisition (Aotearoa context) as it relates to literature and reading, for example issues around comprehensible input.

Working towards continuity in experiences between immersion/bilingual early childhood and early school experiences can be supported by the transitioning of children with familiar adults, or with peers and/or by the adoption of familiar early childhood centre pedagogical practices at school. Research into successful transitions of Māori learners to school; how children can be supported; and how parents, teachers and whānau can also be supported in transitions across educational settings found:

• Transition across culturally and linguistically congruent educational settings is critical for ākonga Māori. When there is incongruency there is ākonga vulnerability and whānau anxiety. Mismatches can directly affect children’s emotional, social and academic experiences of school. This is an area which schools have a special responsibility to address;

• The relationship of language to how cultural and linguistic identities are shaped in ākonga Māori is complex. All teachers need to understand those complexities in order to support ākonga Māori transitions. Combined with the relationship to academic achievement, these are areas for further research;

• Bilingual English/Māori speaking (BEMS) linguistic identities must be promoted. Information on transitioning across languages and cultures should
be readily available to whānau. This would enable whānau to make better informed decisions alongside their tamariki/mokopuna;

- Immersion education is bilingual education.
- Language is a cultural identifier. All educational settings (Māori immersion and English immersion) must acknowledge the importance of Māori linguistic and cultural norms, the significance of their functions and incorporate them into their transition policies and classroom programs. The recognition of mana whenua - the tikanga that connects people to place, needs to be acknowledged and valued. There are a variety of linguistic and cultural norms that can assist with successful transitions.

They include (but are not limited to)

- Promoting BEMS Ākonga
- Tikanga Māori
- Poroporoaki
- Pōwhiri
- Haka Pōhiri
- Kawe Tamaiti
- Taonga Tuku Iho
- Karakia/Waiata
- Mana Whenua
- Cultural Connect and
- Creating Cultural Connections (Skerrett, 2010b, p. 5-7).

Effective approaches to immersion/bilingual education are those that lead to children reaching the point where they are able to use two languages for academic purposes is noted by May et al. (2006) and where the benefits of bilingualism accrue (see Section 3.2) for balanced bilingual outcomes. In the New Zealand context this involves students being in immersion education for the duration of their early childhood education and up to year four of their schooling to be able to cope well academically. At some stage English must be introduced formally as an academic language. Most children will already have some oral proficiency in English by year four but exactly
when to introduce children to formal academic English has long been the subject of debate. Further research is needed here. Certainly to get beyond conversational use and into the realm of using English for academic purposes learners will need to be taught how to *read and write in English*. One way of ensuring students become fluent in their heritage language as well as English is to begin primary schooling with a split of a minimum of 90% of teaching in the heritage language and 10% in English and to move this to a 50/50 by year four of the student’s schooling (May, 2010). Another way is to begin with a 100% immersion in L1 but to introduce the teaching of English as a subject a few years later. In New Zealand there is a whole stream of Māori immersion where students are immersed in te reo Māori right through to completion of their secondary education, with English being taught as a subject. They are generally fluent speakers of English. One Kura Kaupapa Māori has introduced Spanish formally into the curriculum in the same way they have introduced English.

10.3 Challenges and strategies for teachers

*What challenges exist for moving out of immersion early childhood education into English medium schooling? - How might the challenges be ameliorated?*

One of the major challenges is when to formally introduce English into the curriculum in immersion programs or indeed, when to exit heritage language immersion and enter English programs. Glynn, Berryman, Loader and Cavanagh’s (2005) article canvassed a research program on transition. Teachers and community were concerned that their students (highly literate in Māori) experienced difficulties in reading and writing in English on entry to secondary school. It stated “…when kura kaupapa Māori succeed in producing students who are fluent speakers, readers and writers of Māori, these students can encounter problems on transition to mainstream secondary schooling where they may be assessed in English, and found to have serious deficiencies in English literacy” (p. 434). There are parallels here with the transition from early childhood education to primary schools with the importance of the linguistic interdependence principle being apposite: What is it that communities (teachers and whānau) need to know?
If children are transitioning from heritage language immersion EYE into English medium schooling then the aim of bilingualism (to an academic proficiency in the target heritage language and in English) as an outcome of schooling is likely to be compromised. This is because generally English medium programs in New Zealand are subtractive bilingual programs with teachers knowing very little about bilingualism, its benefits or second language acquisition pedagogies. The studies indicate that subtractive bilingualism in English dominant education settings hinder bilingual/biliteracy development with the loss of the target language in favour of English studies (Barnett et.al, 2007; Kan & Kohnert, 2005; Pàez, Tabors & Lòpez, 2007). As discussed in section 3 of this report and in relation to thresholds theory, faced with the transition to English medium settings any cognitive advantages that may accrue for children as a consequence of their emergent early years language development is likely to diminish (in a very short time) in the New Zealand context. The Tagoilelagi-Leta et al. (2005) study found that language transfer is halted on entry into an English program.

In addition, where children are placed into English medium schooling after attending immersion/bilingual early childhood education, they are expected to not only learn the language of instruction but to learn curriculum content in the new language. There is the potential for children to be struggling linguistically but for this to be interpreted as low academic proficiency. For a student who is an L1 speaker of a minority language on entry into a program where the language of instruction and introduction to formal academic reading and writing is in L2, then not only will there be L1 attrition and/or loss, but their academic abilities compromised and long term academic success compromised (Cummins, 2000). Teachers who can use the child’s heritage language as the medium of instruction are able to ameliorate this issue. Mara and Burgess (2007) state strategies for language learning, “oracy, memorization and cultural literacy” (p.6) used within A’oga a le Faifeu (and a’oga amata) are noted for their potential use in primary schooling to support the continued success of Samoan speaking children as they transition from Samoan language dominant early childhood education services to English language dominant settings. Furthermore, Siilata and Barkhuizen’s (2004) study found that for children in
Pasifika families, that the transition to school could be supported when students differing cultural knowledges were reflected in the classroom.

Differences in the pedagogical approach of immersion/bilingual education programs in comparison to mainstream programs can be challenging for children to negotiate when moving from early childhood education to school. For instance McCaffery et al. (2003) note, “traditionally, children in Samoan society are seen but not heard… in addition literacy activities… are often first introduced in a religious setting (Sunday School, Bible studies) where any form of questioning of the test or the issues it raises is considered completely unacceptable and not seen as Fa’asamoa” (p.83). So, if children have been in education settings where particular forms of teaching are used and where culturally specific practices form routines for structuring the child’s day, the mainstream practices in the new classroom can be confusing and children’s responses to them, misinterpreted e.g., the active use of silence as a communication strategy (Tuafuti, 2010). As noted throughout the report, teachers must become familiar with children’s specific bilingual context and work closely with families and others who know the child (e.g., their early childhood teachers) if they are to differentiate instruction during transition that will support the child’s shift to school.

Teachers (and whānau) need to recognize that transition into English medium schooling for the emergent bilingual child from early childhood education will contribute to heritage language loss. However, challenges can be ameliorated which include some useful strategies (alongside previous strategies already mentioned in sections 7-9) for teachers to help children in transition:

- Show respect for the language base that children come to school with;
- Create well-planned/resourced transition programs/classes/orientation/camps;
- Initiate and/or be involved in mana whenua protocols e.g., pōwhiri, poroporoaki;
- Develop and implement policies that encourage the use of Māori and Pasifika languages;
• Demonstrate genuine interest in and liaise with Māori and Pasifika communities, their funds of knowledge, and build into programs incorporating elders;
• When ākonga that come in transition are really knowledgeable, teachers must acknowledge and build on that knowledge (not dismiss it);
• Promote whanaungatanga strategies (peer interactions);
• Set up activities early in transition;
• Promote activities/resources e.g., Duffy Packs (packs with high frequency words, flash cards, activities, resources promoting Māori literacy e.g., Te Arapū Māori CD) for transition in EYE;
• Research, develop and use appropriate assessment procedures/tools;
• Promote collaboration across EYE educational settings;
• Participate in professional development programs (both for self and alongside ākonga/whānau).

10.4 Useful strategies for parents

What are the useful strategies to support whatever choices parents make? What do parents/whānau need to know about transition and what can they do to support their children?

Continuity between contexts (e.g., bringing familiar practices and processes from early childhood education to school) and strong relationships has been noted as important for successful transition to school (Gorinski & Fraser, 2006; Peters, 2010). The evidence from the Cherokee and Hawaiian studies suggests that even when the target language is not well supported in homes, transitioning into quality immersion/bilingual early childhood education can lead to high-quality outcomes. In those Cherokee and Hawaiian contexts it was found that the focus on young children’s language learning and concurrent provision of quality immersion early childhood education led to an unprecedented community interest in language revitalisation. By strengthening links between education settings and homes/communities, intergenerational transmission was increased and this in turn
impacted positively on the quality of language models, teaching and therefore possible outcomes.

In order to support successful transitions to school parents can help teachers understand the contexts from which their children are coming from. Both parents and teachers have been shown to appreciate strong links between homes and school and they equate this with learner success in school (Podmore & Sauvao, 2003). If transitioning into an English program, how much English is spoken at home? What is expected of the child in terms of heritage language use relative to English? Do other children at home speak predominantly in English or in the heritage language? What are the parents’ goals for their children’s long-term bilingual proficiency? If teachers know what parents’ goals are for their child’s continued bilingualism they can actively support those at school. If parents’ desire continued bilingualism for their child, even if she or he is attending an English language dominant school, then they must recognise that their child’s language learning will require active support at the whānau/community level, as well as social and legal support from the dominant language community and at the policy level (Cooper, Arago-Kemp, Hogden & Wylie, 2004).

If parents are English speakers as well as speakers of the target heritage language, they can assist their children in accessing the English dominant curriculum by helping them interpret instructions from school (which of course relies upon teachers producing and sharing information for parents regularly). Just as teachers who can speak, read and write with proficiency in English and in the target language are required for quality immersion/bilingual education programs, if children are being expected to come to terms with instruction and content in English at school, parents or older English speaking siblings can assist transitioning children to comprehend what’s being asked of them at school. Clearly, the quality of relationships between teachers and families will be paramount. Parents should expect clear and regular communication from teachers about what their child is learning and is expected to produce as evidence of learning (e.g., homework tasks, reading and so forth).
Parents need to know that children from immersion early childhood programs who go on to schools where the heritage language is also used as the medium of instruction experience continued strong heritage language and literacy growth (Cooper et.al, 2000; Skerrett-White, 2003); stability/security in socio-emotional development (Han & Huang, 2010); language outcomes (in English and in the heritage language) at or above age average (McCaffery et.al., 2003) and the formation of strong cultural identities (Cooper et.al., 2000; Mara and Burgess, 2007).

Podmore, Wendt Samu and The A'oga Fa'a Samoa (2006) claimed that children’s sense of belonging was enhanced when they transitioned from the immersion early childhood centre into a bilingual classroom. Successful transition was achieved when: children were transitioned to school with others; a familiar adult bridged the settings with children by for example, accompanying for a period at school; children were able to transition into a bilingual environment where their heritage language dominated; children were paired with a familiar peer upon school entry. Furthermore, language policies, such as those noted in the Richmond Road study (Podmore et.al 2006) can assist transitions, and Siilata and Barkhuizen’s (2004) study found that the successful transition to school for children from Pasifika families can be facilitated when the classrooms in which students transition to recognize and incorporate students differing cultural knowledge. The continued involvement of families working in partnership with teachers is also critical to supporting children’s learning as they move from early childhood settings into school. Skerrett’s (2010b) research highlighted some strategies for parents and whānau which include:

- Keep dialogue opened up – with children, centres and/or schools;
- Discuss different options with children;
- Listen to children’s views and their preferences around transition;
- Promote and/or learn te reo (to support tamariki/mokopuna);
- Promote valuing te reo;
- Be involved in what is happening with children around transition and school;
- Work alongside centres/schools to be an equal partner in the transition process;
• Be pro-active in enrolment processes;
• Become aware of any transition procedures and/or programs that exist and assist;
• Be involved in policy development around transitions;
• Ask critical questions and discuss any issues if unsure about processes, choices or programs;
• Participate in professional development programs co-ordinated by kura/centres.

Additionally, the literature and studies show it is important to:
• Share relevant cultural practices and bilingual education goals with the children’s new teacher as they prepare for the child’s transition;
• Spend some time in the new classroom with your child helping him or her learn the culture of the class if possible;
• Attend hui;
• Recognise and accept that if transitioning to English dominant schooling that bilingual and biliteracy outcomes will be compromised;
• If transitioning into a diverse language program, ask your child’s teacher to buddy up your child with someone they might know or with someone who speaks the same language;
• Help your child share their early childhood learning portfolio with their new teacher and if required, act as a translator if the child’s new teacher doesn’t speak the same language as him or her;
• Help your child interpret instructions from his or her teacher about what is to be learned at school;
• Keep engaging in the literacy practices of reading, speaking and writing in both the target L1 and in English with your child on a regular basis;
• Expect communications from teachers to remain in touch with the school developments, program and policies, e.g., homework expectations.

10.5 Outcomes
What are the outcomes for children when successfully transitioning into like immersion programs? What are the implications when children are transitioning across to incongruent language programs? What evidence do we have that being bilingual makes a difference to early school achievement? What is the relevance of that evidence for the NZ context?

It is generally agreed that children with strong language foundations in their heritage language/s can, with continued support for learning in the heritage language, transfer skills to learning English at a later stage (Cummins, 2000). Furthermore the notion that heritage language proficiency strengthens second language acquisition and that bilingualism pays later cognitive benefits has long been established (Barnett et.al, 2007; Cooper, et.al, 2006; Durán, Roseth & Hoffman, 2010; Tagoilelagi-Leota et.al, 2005).

Podmore, Tapusoa & Taouma note that an immersion approach in early childhood education is strongly supported as “high levels of heritage language use in early immersion settings produces better academic achievement and more native-speaker-like proficiency” (2006, p. 74). Their views are consistent with the general position that children with strong heritage language proficiency in early childhood will have a sound foundation for later academic success and strong basis for second language acquisition, that is if they transition to an additive program (Barnett, et al., 2007; Hornberger, 2006; McCaffery, et.al, 2003; Mara & Burgess, 2007; May, 2010; Skerrett-White, 2003). Furthermore, balanced bilingualism and its associated cognitive benefits are likely to result from participation in immersion and additive bilingual early childhood education programs.

Barnett et al. (2007) note other studies that show bilingual children later surpassing monolingual children in skills of cognitive processing and oral language proficiency. As noted in the previous paragraph, these authors also comment that children’s heritage language proficiency can have positive benefits for later reading in English (see also Duran, Roseth & Hoffman, 2010).
10.6 Summary

It is well-documented that the transition process into the compulsory sector has a strong influence on the ongoing success of a child, both in terms of self-concept as a learner and their academic achievement. However, despite there being well established factors for supporting bilingualism and bi-literacy during transitions, these remain times of vulnerability for bilingual learners, especially as choices to move from immersion/bilingual ECE into education settings where English language dominance does not occur are limited. The studies show that where learners are transitioned into formal education settings in which the target language is subordinate, language decline and a catch-up phase (whereby learners are expected to abandon existing language and literacy skills and to rapidly replace these with English) occurs. In this type of educational environment children are likely to be seen as deficit as they have to draw alongside their monolingual English speaking counterparts. This situation in the New Zealand context has led to successive generational and socio-cultural disruption (Skerrett-White, 2003) and will continue to do so unless schools address these issues of cultural capital, pedagogical, language and literacy, assessment and general academic incongruencies. Implications, therefore, for ITE and ongoing PD are particular areas of concern.

Transitional times also provide important opportunities for establishing productive and collaborative school–whānau relationships. The transfer from quality bilingual / immersion early childhood education into schooling is a time of critical importance for later bilingual/biliteracy outcomes from schooling. It is not the case that children in all regions in New Zealand have the chance to build on their early childhood experience at school in bilingual/immersion programs. There are particular challenges for transition and for learning that must be met in these circumstances. If not the goal of bilingual outcomes from schooling is likely to be lost. However, with strong collaboration between teachers in settings where bilingual programs do continue, and where there is transfer of cultural and linguistic capital between settings, children’s bilingual development can be supported and extended. Some of the wider school supports include:
• Bilingual communications (newsletters and so on) between centre and homes;
• The continued use of the heritage language (between 90-100% of the time) throughout the early years creating culturally and linguistically congruent educational settings;
• Proximity of bilingual classrooms which facilitate collaboration and teamwork amongst the teachers;
• Include more visibility through the visual arts of cultural icons;
• School leadership fostering shared positive understandings of program goals and commitment to bilingual and biliteracy visions within the whole school community (including administrative staff);
• The incorporation of linguistic and cultural norms into transition policies and classroom programs, including (but not limited to) poroporoaki, pōwhiri, kawe tamaiti, taonga tuku iho, karakia, waiata;
• Promotion of the importance of transitions across programs including the promotion of BEMS students;
• Targeted resourcing;
• Professional development directed at both teachers and whānau members together;
• Tuakana/teina relationships across settings be promoted including transitioning with peers or small groups;
• Effective credit model assessment strategies i.e., acknowledging bilingual students’ abilities rather than using monolingual (English-only) assessment strategies;
• Development of transition programs through policies and which are regularly evaluated;
• Effective teaching practices and relevant cultural practices being shared with childrens’ new teacher/s as they prepare for the transition;
• Sharing language policies across transitions including discussions with families about likely implications of this for children’s continued bilingual development;
• Facilitate communication of the family’s language aims to the child’s new teacher.
• Make connections between children who may have been at the centre previously and who are now in the school where the children are transitioning into;

• Have children show the teacher his or her learning portfolio and support him or her to converse with their new teacher about what he or she knows and can do – this may require you to act as a translator if the child’s new teacher does not speak the target L1 language;

• Language proficient teachers who focus on expansion of children’s vocabulary: the size of one’s vocabulary at school entry is related to later success in reading;

• Oral language proficiency transition classrooms for L1 (English) speakers transitioning into heritage language programs and vice versa.

• Ongoing research and development, particularly around language thresholds and resource development.
11 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Language, Power and Pedagogy

Peter’s (2007) study argued that of all the Cherokee Nation language programmes, the preschool language immersion programme holds the greatest potential to increase intergenerational, mother-tongue transmission in the home, family, neighbourhood and community. Further, as is the case with all colonised indigenous societies, an “ideology of contempt” for indigenous languages contributed to language shift to English, so ideological clarification is the first step to overcoming prior language planning failures, anxieties, insecurities and hesitations about the value of indigenous languages and cultures. The difficulties associated with bilingual programs, schooling for bilingual children, and bilingualism are really politically constructed problems not linguistic (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995). Controversy exists where there is misinformation about the nature of languages and what constitutes bilingual education. According to Garcia “Monolingual education has at times been used as a way to limit access and legitimate the linguistic practices of those already in power” (2009, p. 12) and that the tensions surrounding bilingual education often have to do with dominant groups protecting their power. In the New Zealand context education (spanning both the non-compulsory and compulsory sectors) has been dominated by monolingual English policies and practices. Heritage language education is an interventionist approach, with educational transformational aims.

Heritage language education is supported on ideological and pedagogical grounds. Ideologically, it is an aspect of language rights, which are a component of human rights and a way of protection from discrimination by language. Pedagogically, it aims to make seamless the progression of children and young people through the education sector without disadvantage. It also aims to improve academic performance and to develop positive attitudes in speakers about their linguistic and cultural heritage. Intergenerational transmission of language motivated by the pride of minorities in their language by use in a public domain is critical for the maintenance of language and cultural diversity in the world. The view gaining greater acceptance among linguists and language activists is that the rights and
desires of the linguistic community about the introduction and duration of heritage language/s in education must outweigh the concerns of the state. The apprehension about the cost of provision often entertained by governments does not count the social cost of not doing it, of which the educational failure of the minority students is only a part (Annamalai, 2006).

In the context of Māori language education it is argued that te reo Māori is the terralingua of Aotearoa New Zealand. Māori interests in the language are not the same as the interests of any other minority group in New Zealand society in its own language. Findings of the Waitangi Tribunal show that the explosion in the numbers involved in Māori immersion education in the 1980s should have instantly signalled supply and demand issues but responses have been decidedly ‘leaden-footed’. It is time for change. Treaty-based education draws on the legal Treaty principles defined as acceptance of the two Treaty texts (Māori and English); partnership (requiring each side of the partnership to act towards the other with the utmost good faith and creating responsibilities) between Māori and the Crown; and the duty of the Crown to extend active protection of taonga Māori. Implications for a Treaty-based education system are; national pride (in our two official written and spoken languages), equal partnership in our education streams and active protection of te reo Māori as a national treasure. Acceptance in law that “the two Treaty texts are not translations the one of the other and do not necessarily convey exactly the same meaning” implies an acceptance of the same tenet in education Language is a cultural identifier. As Fishman (1996) states “A language long associated with the culture is best able to express most easily, most exactly, most richly, with more appropriate over-tones, the concerns, artifacts, values, and interests of that culture” (p.81). Māori heritage programs and curriculum ought not to be a translation of the English, but stand on an equal footing with equal support and resourcing. That is the Treaty obligation in education with implications for curriculum design, assessment, research and development.


12 (ibid)
As Iokepa-Guerrero et al. (2007) found, the notion of ‘quality’ includes the transmission of Hawaiian world views through the revitalisation of the Hawaiian language and culture so too did Skerrett-White (2003) provide further ideological clarification around the relationship of language to culture. She argued that

*As in the relationship of an index to its book which signifies where the book provides its content themes, its key elements and their whereabouts, likewise a language indexes its culture. It provides a key to its cultural understandings and practices, its internal operations and it also allows its speakers to learn and engage with each other in the cultural environment with its resources (p.264).*

11.2 Language, Culture and Identity

In the context of Pasifika language education it is argued that Pasifika peoples are not homogenous. Their interests in heritage language maintenance (perhaps even revitalisation aims) in Aotearoa New Zealand are critical due to the impact of language shift from the various Pasifika languages to predominantly English. Measures have to be taken to support their heritage languages and halt or reverse language shift. For example, one recent measure taken by the Cook Islands Government is in the area of languages policy Posted in November, 2009 UTC¹³;

*The Cook Islands government says to be eligible for permanent residency, applicants must be able to speak conversational Māori. The Immigration Minister, Sir Terepai Maoate, says the policy, which has been approved by cabinet, has been long overdue and is in line with the recommendations of the 2003 Immigration Advisory Committee. Sir Terepai says this move also supports the aspiration as a nation to preserve Te Reo Kuki Airani. He says he is sure the people of the Cook Islands will support the initiative. The Committee said the requirement is consistent with policies in New Zealand and Australia where applicants need to meet a standard of English language before they can acquire permanent residency or citizenship. News Content © Radio New Zealand International, PO Box 123, Wellington, New Zealand.*

With Pasifika languages there is a coordination and research function encumbent upon the government to ensure provision is appropriate and meets the needs and demands of Pasifika communities. This function also involves monitoring the health of Pasifika languages, including in their home lands, as well as undertaking periodic stocktakes of programs in New Zealand to ensure they are effective and remain connected to their cultural and linguistic antecedents. New Zealand has a particular responsibility to support Pasifika languages both here and in their regions. Specially designed teacher education programs can be co-ordinated to have practicum visits done in both New Zealand and the home base countries before the newly graduated teachers move into EYE settings. This will ensure EYE remains connected culturally and linguistically to their Pasifika roots, and promote Pasifika world-views and identities. It is appropriate to raise one critical question here – is there provision in EYE for Pasifika language children to learn te reo Māori and for Māori to connect their language base with its antecedents – Pasifika languages? As with te reo Māori, it is important that Pasifika languages be supported so that their status is raised in order that children see their heritage language has power and prestige, and a place in the wider world, in the same way that English does.

**Conclusions**

The review aims to provide as comprehensive as possible an update of the evidence on quality immersion/bilingual early years education. As with any review of evidence, what counts as valid and legitimate in the final synthesis is only made possible through processes of careful consideration and exclusion; ideological clarification and tight definitions; partial readings and interpretations; connections between theories (old and new) and current practices. The review provides a snapshot in time. Whilst the review has been structured so that each section in response to the research questions is discrete, there may appear to be overlaps or repetition in parts because of the intersections between the four research questions. It is also the case that while there are no particular epistemological hierarchies presented here; there are some notable findings which include:
• Achieving quality in immersion/bilingual early childhood education means striving for goals that exceed those for achieving quality in a general sense. Quality immersion/bilingual early childhood programs rely upon particular teacher expertise with languages, differentiated teaching, the ability to teach in the target language, and a capacity to draw upon resources from within the language contexts (and communities) in which they work. Teachers need to put understandings of bilingual development to use as they strive to match parent/family efforts for the promotion of literacy and language learning in young children. Quality immersion early childhood involves language policy planning, curriculum research, development and resourcing, qualified teachers and additive approaches to programming.

• Defining the terms ‘bilingualism’ and ‘bilingual education’ is difficult. May (2010) clarifies the term bilingual education which has widely different understandings of what such an education actually constitutes. In New Zealand immersion programs are bilingual programs with bilingual aims and outcomes; the optimum percentage for quality early years immersion education in the Aotearoa New Zealand context being between 90 to 100 percent in the target language.

• There has been a shift in some of the language used in educational literature from “parental involvement” to “collaborations and partnerships” and “assimilatory models” to “whānau models” which syncretise knowledge/s, values and language/s of the home and communities within the educational setting/s. After Peter (2007) if EYE immersion programs hold the greatest potential to increase intergenerational, mother-tongue transmission in the home, family, neighbourhood and community, relationships with EYE settings and homes are key. In the context then of Māori and Pasifika whānau/families (hapū and iwi) and EYE partnerships, whānau/families partnerships are significant, especially in heritage language programs.

• It was noted that an immersion approach in early childhood education is strongly supported as “high levels of heritage language use in early immersion settings produces better academic achievement and more native-speaker-like proficiency” (Podmore et al. 2006, p. 74). These views are consistent with the general position that children with strong heritage
language proficiency in EYE have sound foundations for later academic success and successive language/s acquisition if they transition to additive programs. Further, balanced bilingualism and associated cognitive benefits are likely to result from participation in immersion and additive bilingual EYE programs.

11.3 Research Implications

Where relevant, the international studies have been used as the starting point from which to draw inferences about what works in bilingual settings and where the gaps may be. The relevance of these studies combined with the localised empirical studies and literature, have highlighted knowledge gaps worthy of future research. They are:

11.3.1 Policy Development

As a starting point is it clear that education-based policies for language provision will necessarily provide the basis for ongoing planning for bilingual/immersion EYE for Māori and Pasifika languages. Policies must target bilingualism and biliteracy if bilingual outcomes from schooling are a desired end-goal in New Zealand schooling.

11.3.2 Community Development

Future research should examine the different impacts that schools and families have on children’s ability to stay bilingual (Han & Huang, 2010). It is also important to determine how characteristics of the home and EYE program coincide to support or inhibit early learning. Iwi developments and education plans should, as a special consideration, develop research plans for language development in early years education.

11.3.3 Initial Teacher Development

Failure to meet the demands of quality immersion/bilingual teachers has impacted on both the numbers of centres and quality provision in EYE. This accounts significantly for decline in student numbers in the Māori immersion sector. There is a noticeable shortage of teachers and teacher education programs for Māori and Pasifika immersion/bilingual education (thus a lack of suitably qualified teachers).
The Waitangi Tribunal (2011, p. 29) Report raised the issue and noted newspaper headlines which have regularly touched on the reo Māori teacher shortages:

‘Teacher crisis jeopardises bilingual classes’
*Dominion Sunday Times*, 30 September 1990

‘High personal cost for kura kaupapa principals’
*Kia Hiwa Ra*, November 1996

‘Demand at all levels for bilingual Maori teachers’
*Evening Post*, 30 January 1997

‘Bilingual teachers in hot demand’
*Sunday Star Times*, 4 August 2002

‘Call for boost in Maori teacher tally’
*Press*, 11 July 2007

It is worthwhile to note there is no ITE program for immersion education in the South Island. Initial teacher education (programs and numbers of graduating teachers) then is a critical issue.

11.3.4 Professional Development

The review highlighted the paucity of research in EYE with regard to helping teachers determine precisely what interventions and which instructional accommodations and adaptations are most beneficial for bilingual children. For example: research projects which accompany professional development programs to assess how much lag time is reasonable to expect between implementation of new practices and evidence that these practices result in improved outcomes for children; or research which focuses on curricular and instructional approaches to support oral language and literacy development. Furthermore, research is needed linking instructional quality and/or teacher characteristics which are likely to have an effect on student achievement in bilingual settings. It is suggested that the indicators of quality immersion, bilingualism and biliteracy, strong foundations and school success contribute to the development of a set of competencies for teachers.

11.3.5 Resource Development

An ongoing cycle of research and development, including research into the language levels and needs of children and appropriate resources in the target age groups, is an integral part of continuous improvement. This will help to build up best evidence about what works in immersion education, assist with strategic resourcing and targeted professional learning of teachers will improve outcomes for children and whānau.
REFERENCES


Flora, C. (2010). Double Talk: There's no doubt that speakers of more than one language have nimble brains. Meet four bilinguals whose languages paved the way to multifaceted lives. Psychology Today.


APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A: Prior collated documents

Extracts from *Milestone 1 Report* over-viewing the collated background documents prior to agreed research plan

The MOE *Discussion Point 1* document (Ministry of Education, 2010d) was a useful overview of issues around mita (dialect), broad spread of revitalisation versus high value prioritised communities; shared community visions and the effect of funder based requirements for compliance; focus on target language or on speaker communities; and reliance on technology or speaker communities. Iwi and hapū were noted as powerful structures in Māori society and for providing focal points for Māori leadership and activities. Such issues will be examined with a view to stakeholder knowledge of and involvement in, the decision-making regarding the importance of these issues for the advancement and implementation of bilingual education as well as which languages will be used and how they will be developed.

Ruakere Hond’s (Hond, 2010) *Effective Practice Examples 1, 2 and 3: Raukawa Reo Strategy* discusses issues of iwi-based reo revitalisation and made important links to localised identity, culture and language importance and ‘buy-in’ from community when traditional knowledge and whakapapa are based on networks of connection and centred around local histories and dialect. Example 3 makes the point that even whānau from outside the region are more than willing to learn and be engaged in Taranaki-based knowledge. A key question for the present literature review is therefore: What is the place of whānau, hapū and iwi in immersion education?

The MOE (Ministry of Education, 2010e) Aide Memoire regarding the update of Māori language expenditure and the Māori language review discussed the MOE’s prioritising of the design and development of a Māori Language in Education Strategy and overall Māori Language Strategy. It is not known if this proposed Māori Language in Education Strategy will be available for this review but if so, it would be timely and relevant.
The MOE Education Report: *Proposed Review of the Māori Language Sector*, dated 29 May 2010, (Ministry of Education, 2010f) noted the Vote Education investments in Māori language and also that MOE makes the single greatest investment in Māori language of all government departments (estimated in 2006). However, this point alone is not helpful because of the ambiguity around whether the investment is in Māori language as a subject or whether it includes the funding of Kōhanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori and Wharekura. Distinctions (and implications) may need to be covered in the review as it intends to address issues of support structures and resources needed to assist quality immersion education. Accurate proportional (to sectors) Vote Education expenditure on Māori language review information will also be useful to identify (and perhaps target) the use of resources for Māori language in education delivery.
APPENDIX B: Empirical Studies

For ease of reference we have listed the study summaries in alphabetical order.


The effects on three-and four-year-old children’s learning of two-way immersion (TWI) and monolingual English immersion (EI) in High-scope early childhood programs was the focus of this study. Children attended either a TWI or EI early childhood Program. In the TWI Program children were taught in an English speaking classroom one week and a Spanish speaking classroom the next, students who spoke primarily English were integrated with those whose primary language was not English (57% of these children spoke primarily Spanish at home, 37% primarily English and 5% another primary language). The TWI Program operated 8 hours a day with the EI Program operating 6 hours, both types of Program had ‘wrap-around’ childcare to extend the day to 10 hours. In Program quality, teacher qualifications and experience, the programs were comparable. Programs were rated using environment rating scales and literacy environment rating scales with no significant differences found between the TWI and EI Program environments. However significant differences in the teachers uses of children’s primary language and support for children’s cultural background were seen in an inter-classroom comparison of the three classroom types (TWI English, TWI Spanish, EI settings) with teachers in the TWI Spanish classrooms found to use Spanish more frequently and to incorporate the cultural background of children than the teachers in the other two classroom types.

Children’s vocabulary, cognition and emergent literacy skills were tested on two occasions (fall and spring) during the first pre-school year via a range of standardized measures (the English language and Spanish language versions of The Peabody picture vocabulary test; the Woodcock-Johnson psycho-educational battery-revised; a phoneme deletion test, rhyme recognition and alphabet recognition test). All children were shown to make substantial gains on English language measures of vocabulary development, literacy and mathematics. These results compared
favourably with other general studies of preschool children’s academic progress in early childhood programs with high standards. The TWI Program was found to provide better support for both Spanish dominant and English dominant children’s Spanish receptive vocabulary learning without loss of English language development. This finding provides further support for the notion that bilingualism per se is valuable to children’s learning and development. With respect to the comparison of Program types, the authors report that both approaches appear to have worked comparably when judged by the English language measures, but for the Spanish dominant children in the TWI Program, there were much larger gains in Spanish receptive vocabulary. In comparison the Spanish dominant children attending the EI Program lost ground during the year relative to age norms. The authors warn that a failure to find significant differences between programs on other measures should not be taken as no differences, citing the modest sample size as relevant, and “nearly significant” (p.289) effects of the EI Program on Spanish letter identification were found to be intriguing. The authors conclude that high quality early childhood education using either TWI or EI approaches can substantially benefit ELL children.


This randomised, controlled study was conducted to assess the effects of a professional development Program on classroom practices and child outcomes related to the language development and early literacy skills in both English and Spanish. The professional development consisted of research-based instructional practices designed to complement the curriculum and scaffold learning for dual language learners (DLLs). The results showed that intervention led to measureable improvements in both the overall quality of teachers’ language and literacy practices and greater gains in children’s phonological awareness skills in their primary language.

There have been three major conclusions found in research syntheses that apply primarily to school-age children but also point to promising practices with younger
children enrolled in ECE programs. Research syntheses with mounting empirical evidence also supports the following (see Maschinot, 2008, cited at p. 195):

- The first conclusion is the importance of supporting the child’s primary language – it being widely recognised that learning two languages at the same time does not cause confusion or language delays in young children but in fact actually facilitates ELL;
- The second conclusion is that an effective curriculum and sound instruction serve as the foundation of learning for every child;
- The third conclusion concerns the importance of differentiated instruction and accommodations for children who require additional supports to learn e.g., providing extra practice with vocabulary words, instruction in small groups in book-reading activities, allowing children to play games that emphasise phoneme segmentation or blending.

The article argued that ECE programs are largely unprepared to address the diverse educational and linguistic needs of young children and their families (p. 196). The study, conducted with 55 lead teachers and 193 Latino pre-K DLLs and their families, addressed two primary research questions:

1. Do teachers in pre-K classrooms receiving the Nuestros Ninos intervention make greater improvements in their classroom practices related to facilitating language and literacy learning than teachers in control classrooms?
2. Do Latino DLLs in pre-K classrooms receiving the Nuestros Ninos intervention make greater gains in language and literacy skills than their peers in control classrooms?

The findings suggest that initial attempts to design professional development programs focussing on instructional strategies was more effective for improving teaching practices related to language and literacy than for enhancing children’s outcomes in these areas. An explanation was put forward that additional time may be needed before any improvements show. It is acknowledged that the effectiveness of professional development relies on a chain of causal evidence with several critical links:

1. Evidence that teachers acquire new knowledge and skills;
2. Evidence that teachers apply such knowledge and skills as intended; and

In ECE there is still much that is unknown about each one of these causal linkages in professional development. One of the major limitations of this research for the purposes of the current literature review is that the study was conducted in monolingual English programs with monolingual English-speaking teachers with bilingual Latino students rather than in immersion programs so caution must be expressed with a view to transferability of the results, reflected in the pointers for further research.


This study investigated the relation of teacher characteristics (including teacher quality as defined below) to classroom instructional variables and to bilingual students’ literacy and oral language outcomes at the end of the kindergarten year. This study was conducted as part of a large, longitudinal project focusing on language and literacy development in young bilingual learners from kindergarten through second grade.

It was argued that conceptions of teacher quality and related characteristics vary across studies but typically include content knowledge as well as pedagogical skill. It was contended that discussions of teacher quality in bilingual classrooms must also address language of instruction and the oral-language proficiency of the teacher (pp. 341-342). Studies have consistently reported positive associations between teacher quality and characteristics and student achievement. Teacher characteristics also include academic skills, years of teaching experience, participation in professional development activities, classroom activity structure and knowledge of reading-related skills. Student outcomes in this study included letter naming, word reading, and phonological awareness and oral language composites in both languages.
(Spanish and English). Studies were cited which found primary-grade teachers’ literacy knowledge is also a facet of teacher quality that is related to student achievement. Other factors are time on task, student engagement and percentage of time in small-group instruction (pp. 342-343).

The study is about the effect of teacher quality and associated teacher characteristics on student language and literacy achievement in bilingual kindergarten classrooms. Effective teachers were found to:

- have more student engagement;
- have more student time on task;
- have students who saw themselves as more capable of completing class work;
- change their instructional behaviours to incorporate more effective instructional and organizational practices;
- focus on academic activities such as oral language development, phonemic awareness and letter-sound instruction;
- incorporate explicit teaching e.g., spend more time in content-based instruction;
- capitalise on transitions e.g., did not lose instructional time in lengthy transitions unrelated to reading e.g., disciplining students, making announcements, having students line up to go to restroom, being out of the classroom and dispelling chaotic disruptions;
- incorporate vocabulary development;
- enhance learning.

It was hypothesized that instructional quality and teacher knowledge would be related to time on task, student engagement, and use of a small-group formats but the variety of teacher characteristics as defined would predict outcomes for bilingual kindergartners. The results of the study highlight that “…the predominant language of the teacher interacted with outcome language… For letter naming and word reading, these “Spanish-Spanish” outcomes were higher than all other instructional language and outcome groupings; for oral language, the difference between Spanish and English outcomes was amplified when the predominant teaching language was Spanish relative to when it was English. In addition, for letter naming and word
reading, there was a main effect of language of instruction such that outcomes in both languages were higher with predominantly Spanish instruction relative to predominantly English instruction, after considering all other factors” (p.360).

The results also highlight the importance of bilingual students’ teachers’ oral language proficiency, both in the language of a given outcome as well as in the other language. This was one of the most notable findings regarding student outcomes in relation to the language of instruction and the definition of a quality teacher as having the ability to close within-classroom achievement gaps. Being able to do so requires teachers to differentiate instruction based on knowledge of individual students’ strengths and weaknesses (which for bilingual students include their initial literacy and language status in both Spanish and English). It was further argued that barriers to enacting differentiated instruction include;

a) teachers’ lack of understanding of how to individualize instruction based on assessment data;

b) the adoption of curriculum materials oriented toward whole-class instruction and difficulty identifying when it is possible to form small groups;

c) uncertainty about how to manage and academically engage students who are not in the small group that is the focus of instruction by the teacher at a given time; and

d) lack of available professional development and mentoring to teachers that address these areas (pp. 361-362).

Within bilingual settings, in particular, teachers of English language learners must be able to respond to varied levels of student oral language proficiency and vocabulary and concept knowledge by scaffolding instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. Drawing on the work of Gersten and Baker (2000), Hickman, Pollard-Durodola and Vaughn (2004) (cited at p. 362) it means “…structuring classroom environments so that students are able to participate in lengthy discussions using complex syntactical and verbal exchanges in order to develop academic language…However, such interchanges are likely mediated by teachers’ capacity to respond to their own level of proficiency in both Spanish and English in order to promote active learning and provide meaningful feedback” (p. 362)

This study of children’s development and progress in kaupapa Māori education settings followed a sample of children aged between five and 11 for a 4-year period. Data pertaining to 33 tēina (participants who were aged around 5 years when the study started) from 13 kōhanga reo, their parents and kaiako contribute findings of relevance for this literature review. The report of the study provides descriptions of children’s use of te reo Māori and involvement in tikanga Māori; describes the kaupapa Māori education environments the children participated in (including the transition between kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori); and attends to questions of home/school relationships that support children’s learning.

The kōhanga reo that children attended had rolls of between 24-29 and 3-4 full-time staff, with a higher adult:child ratio than required by regulation (1:5.5). In addition to the full-time workers, eight of the 13 had part-time staff, ten had regular kaiāwhina support. Of the kaiako, their median years teaching was 13 years, and teaching experiences were all in kōhanga reo. Ten of the kōhanga reported that they enrolled children and families from multiple iwi; in four settings 90-100% of the children were reported to be first language speakers of te reo Māori; in another five, no children were reported to have te reo Māori as their first language. The language of instruction in the kōhanga was te reo Māori, over half the kaiako had te reo Māori as their first language. Around half of the children had more than 3-years experience of kōhanga reo and most experienced a stable peer group (that also transitioned to kura).

Most kaiako reported that the main philosophy and purpose of their kōhanga was to teach te reo Māori me ōna tikanga, although Te Korowai or Te Whāriki were also mentioned as central to the philosophy of some. The creation of an environment in which children could flourish, one of awhi, tautoko and manaaki was also cited by kaiako as a main purpose of kōhanga. Parents held similar views with 94% maintaining that the purpose of kōhanga was to maintain te reo Māori me ōna
tikanga. 74% of parents expected that by the time their children left kōhanga that they would be able to speak te reo Māori fluently (for their age). Other valued learning from kōhanga was writing (39% parents expected this); counting (19% parents expected this); being ready for kura (16% of parents expected this); and socializing with other children (13% of parents expected this). The maintenance and quality of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga was the main influencing factor for parents’ choice of kōhanga. Preserving children’s reo Māori me ōna tikanga was a key factor in deciding to send their children from kōhanga to kura kaupapa Māori although pragmatic influences were also noted (e.g., location, other whānau already attending).

Children’s views on what they liked and disliked about kōhanga were gathered through interviews; various activities were noted. Reluctance, however, by children to respond to interviewer questioning limited their responses. When asked about what kinds of things they did at kōhanga to help out, most of the children talked about awhiwahi. Older children in the study reported benefits of their education in terms of “strengthening their own identity and knowledge in te reo Māori”, those in middle childhood understood a main purpose of their schooling, which was also enjoyable, to be learning te reo Māori. Children’s self reports on their use of te reo Māori and of English in four contexts (home, kura, with friends and at the shops) were mixed. However 97% of tēina reported that they enjoyed speaking te reo Māori. Parents of all children’s perspectives of their children’s use of te reo Māori indicated it was a ‘normal part of life’ (52%) and that it was ‘loved’ (32%). They noted the spontaneous use of te reo Māori by their children when with other te reo Māori speakers (86%), with kaumatua (67%), and with siblings or other family members (45%). Parents of 68% of tēina said English was their children’s preferred language at home. The most frequent reason for codeswitching from English to te reo Māori was who it was the children were talking to and their competence in te reo Māori or English.

With respect to reading and writing, kōhanga reo were a key source of books for use at home to support reading and te reo Māori learning. Three-quarters of parents reported that tēina could recognize letters and sounds, 97% of tēina were able to
recognize their name in print, 88% of parents said their children attempted reading in te reo Māori at home. Ninety-one percent of tēina parents said their children could write their own name, 41% said they could write other words in Māori. With respect to tikanga and identity, more than 50% of tēina could name their kōhanga reo, few tēina could identify for interviewers their iwi, maunga, awa or marae. Kaiako perspectives on children’s language and literacy capabilities were also gathered in the study. All tēina were reported to be able to use and understand some te reo Māori.

Children’s scores on several assessment tasks were reported: ngā tikanga aimed to explore children’s understandings of marae protocol; te kōrero focused on children’s oral language and their ability to synthesise and present information; papa kupu hono focused on cultural understandings, vocabulary and writing skills; tuhituhi was an assessment of writing (given only to older children in the study); pāngarau provided information about mathematics skills and problem solving. The overall trend in data for the tēina cohort indicated that “children who were using te reo Māori more tended to have higher scores for tasks which focused on language understanding, and use including listening skills (p.147-148).


This article documented an approach to second-language learning and teaching in a Program developed six years prior to make discoveries about the education of young children through putting theory into practice. Drawing on brain research literature and early learning theories, the notion of the “…early years as being a window of opportunity, especially for the acquisition of language” (p. 89) was apposite.

A two-way immersion Program where children are taught in either of the two languages was not feasible in Vermont as it was noted that “…two-way immersion requires a nearly equal number of children already fluent in one of the two languages” (p. 89) and nor was a total immersion model (100% immersion in the target language). The model decided on was a dual language Program where children were immersed in two languages throughout the day. There were two
teachers in each classroom, one English-speaking and the other the second-language-

speaking (Spanish) exclusively – that is one teacher-one language. Proficiency in the
target second language is the desired outcome.

Choice of the second language is a major consideration. Several factors come into play:

- Presence of the second language and culture in the community;
- Parental preference;
- Access to learning materials (p. 90)

In this case Spanish was chosen bearing in mind the above considerations and a

teacher exchange Program commenced. As the Program developed there was a

concern that the children’s Spanish proficiency (outputs) was not to the level of their

understanding of concepts. With vocabulary development, however, observations

were made of children assimilating new Spanish and English words with equal ease.
The authors report that their language skills increased with children making

comparisons between the two languages and demonstrating a growing awareness of

how languages work, furthering their bilingual understanding. It was noted that “The

occasional children for whom Spanish was not a second language, but a third, proved

very able language learners, both in vocabulary acquisition and in language structure.

Such children appeared to be more open to the fluidity of language and never
developed rigid language notions.” (p. 92). The laboratory school Program created

great interest with further research and assessment instruments being developed. It

was also reported that there were countless stories of siblings and friends speaking

Spanish outside of the school Program with some three-year olds translating Spanish

into English for parents.


comparing English-only and transitional bilingual education on Spanish-speaking

preschoolers’ early literacy development. Early Childhood Research Quarterly,

25(2), 207-217.

In this longitudinal experimental-control design study, the authors sought to test the

hypothesis that heritage language instruction enhances English language learners

(ELL’s) heritage language development without significant detriment to
development of English language proficiency. Thirty-one Spanish-speaking preschoolers aged 38-48 months and who attended a Head Start preschool Program were randomly assigned to either an English only (EO) or transitional bilingual education (TBE) classroom at a Head Start Program site. The children’s language status as Spanish-speaking was established via parental declaration of this upon enrolment and the results of a family language background survey. The TBE classroom was lead by a native bilingual Spanish-speaking teacher with a monolingual English-speaking teacher heading the EO class. Both classes were also staffed with bilingual teaching assistants although the assistant in the EO classroom spoke only English.

The independent variable between the classrooms was the language of instruction with Spanish being the only language of instruction in the first year of a two-year Program in the TBE setting. For the TBE children, their educational experience was therefore immersion in their heritage language for the year. All curriculum and thematic planning in the classrooms occurred jointly and the same schedules were followed in each. Measures of comparability between the classrooms ameliorated the possibility that treatment effects were confounded by differences between the teachers.

English and Spanish language versions of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-4 (PPVT-4), combined with Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey-Revised (WMLS-R), and Early Literacy Individual Growth and Development Indicators (EL-IGDI) were used to measure dependent variables of children receptive and expressive vocabularies, letter word identification, alliteration and rhyming in English and in Spanish. Testing in English and in Spanish occurred at the beginning and end of the year except that the EL-IGDI’s were tested three times with a mid-way point test. The researchers, with the assistance of graduate students, a community interpreter and one of the Head Start teachers administered the tests, analyses testing the fidelity of language use, the statistical validity of data and comparing TBE and EO classrooms in relation to the dependent variables described above were conducted.
In the TBE classroom significantly higher growth on Spanish oral vocabulary and letter-word identification measures were found. Results of the English versions of these tests were found to be similar in both classrooms. Furthermore scores on the English version of the WMLS-R letter-word identification subtest remained essentially the same between groups however the TBE children demonstrated significant gains in Spanish. Strong gains in Spanish expressive vocabulary were found in the TBE classroom but no differences were noted between groups on measures of English or Spanish receptive vocabulary. Poor performance on comprehension and rhyming/alliteration tasks was found. Both sets of test scores were questioned on the basis of instrument design relative to the population being studied (e.g., the comprehension test relied on independent reading in a population of four-year-olds). In sum, the study provided evidence of the TBE classroom (which is immersion education in its first year) had the potential to increase Spanish language learning and early letter-word identification at no apparent cost to English language and literacy development. A finding of importance given the increasing evidence base that strong heritage language learning can have later positive impacts on reading achievement in English.


This study illustrates the importance of ‘playful talk’ in bridging home and school discourses. It demonstrates how school discourse may be taken home and transformed into ‘home talk’ through play. It also shows the importance of providing the interspace for children to bring home talk into classrooms during socio-dramatic play. The paper also illustrates the role of family members, particularly siblings and grandparents, in enabling young children to construct bridges between home and school during play activities; and stresses the importance of teachers in recognizing children’s different linguistic and cultural resources in their classroom practices and provision (p. 223). The question posed is: what do young children show us about what they can do as they take school talk home and home talk to school, and what can we learn from them?

It is argued that the interplay between home and school talk is much more evident than we may think and that children do not make divisions between ‘home’ and
‘school’ talk as adults may do (p. 224) but in fact “bridge the school– home discourse divide” (p. 226). At home, children practise in play many different types of talk such as vocabulary and terminology, literary and scientific discourse, procedural language and cultural links (p. 233). At school, if given the opportunity, they bring their home languages, cultural and literary practices which constantly inform their play and, therefore, may be a resource for school. Gregory refers to this as syncretism. As young children show ability to syncretise talk from different domains (home and school), languages (narrative styles) or literacies through play activities, so too do emergent bilinguals excel in their metalinguistic awareness of blending their languages to produce imaginative use of metaphor. Such syncretism does not just mean “…the blending of languages and cultures from different domains, but is a creative process in which children reinvent culture as they draw upon diverse resources, both familiar and new” (p. 225). The focus of syncretism is on the creativity of transformation and not on fossilised forms of language transference. Children “…create for themselves radical forms of teaching and learning, blending discourses at will” (p. 226).

The examples in this study show the importance of providing opportunities in bilingual settings for peer interaction and experimentation with words through socio-dramatic and role play in both their home and the target school language (p.232). It is recognised that “…language and experience are intimately and inextricably linked” (p. 233) and so there is a need to provide young children with actual experiences, so that they automatically link the appropriate language with the objects, feelings, etc. associated with those experiences (p. 233). Teachers also need to find out about the playful talk taking place at home which often takes place during imaginative play in imaginative areas that are provided. Moreover, it is important never to assume that parents are the only—or indeed the major—mediators of school-talk at home but that young children learn through talk with grandparents, siblings, peers and other mediators in the community. It is argued that if we are to build upon home resources and further exploit emergent bilinguals’ advanced metalinguistic awareness, it is essential to find out who these mediators are and what children might be learning with them. Finally, Gregory makes a compelling statement promoting playful talk that “If, as Vygotsky claims, play provides the opportunity to practise what we
already know, then we must recognise playful talk as an essential part of this” (p. 233).


This study investigated the relationship between children’s language and their behavioural and emotional well-being during their early school years in the United States, using data from an ECE longitudinal study of children who originated from Asian countries. Children were drawn randomly from a nationally representative sample of roughly 1000 private and public schools in the United States. The present study included 12,580 children (1520 children with family roots in Asian regions and 11,060 US-born, non-Hispanic children). Information on children’s language proficiency at school entry and the language spoken between parents and the child at home was collected. Immigrant (non English speaking) children will account for most of the growth in the US school aged population by 2050. The rise in the number of English-language-learner students (ELLs), along with their academic struggles, has sparked debate about how to improve these children’s school performance.

Policies have focused on academic achievement. However, children’s emotional and behavioural well-being should not be overlooked, because children who are suffering in these areas are also likely to suffer academically. The early school years is a pivotal time and as children progress through the school system they may receive “failure feedback”. This can result in decreased confidence in abilities (or future success) and can put them on negative educational trajectories. These patterns may be felt more acutely by immigrant children who are often experiencing not only their first non-familial social environment but also their first new cultural environment. The ‘natural’ conclusion is that English-only instruction is the best way to improve Ell’s communication with their peers and teachers but this is not necessarily the case.

More than two decades have passed since researchers began to document what they call the *immigrant paradox*: bilingual immigrants doing well in American society (often in spite of resource constraints etc), but which success is often not sustained by later (monolingual English-speaking) generations who may lack self-esteem and stronger family cohesion and the ability to access the positive “cultural capital” in
their families and communities. The results challenge the notion that a rapid shift to monolingual English fluency is best for immigrant children.

Specifically, this study looked at how being bilingual may shape Asian children’s long-term emotional well-being and how bilingualism may be a strength that policymakers can draw upon in their efforts to promote children’s success in school. Behavioural problems were drawn from teacher-reported survey data and included externalizing (the frequency of arguing, fighting, getting angry, acting impulsively, and disturbing ongoing activities) and internalizing (the apparent presence of anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, and sadness) behaviours (p. 832).

Discussion concluded that most Asian children who spoke a non-English language were doing as well as their white English-monolingual peers, if not better, on their behavioural trajectories. They had the lowest levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviours by fifth grade. It was argued that “This is not surprising given that, in addition to having no problems with English in the school environment, bilingual children receive extra benefits from the cultural resources in their families and ethnic communities (p. 835), Furthermore, that “The ability to understand two cultures intimately is also likely to help children appreciate diversity and get along with peers and teachers” (pp. 835-836).

Previous research has shown that being able to speak the parents’ language helps to improve the parent-child relationship and immigrant adolescents’ self-esteem and mental health. The findings in this study extend this line of research, establishing a direct link between bilingualism and behavioural and emotional wellbeing during the early school years. Although the results support the long-held finding that family background plays a significant role in shaping children’s experiences and future trajectories, the school environment is clearly important as well. This is especially so for ELLs children, whose feelings and actions are affected by the language feedback that they receive from their teachers and peers.

The growth rate of problem behaviours was slowest in fluent bilingual and non-English-dominant bilingual children compared with other monolingual children. By
contrast, problem behaviours increased at a significantly faster rate in non–English-monolingual children, who had the highest level of problem behaviours among all children by fifth grade. The study concluded that by fifth grade, fluent bilingual and non–English-dominant bilingual children had the lowest levels of behaviour problems, whereas non–English-monolingual children had the highest levels of both behaviour problems. It was extrapolated from the data that there were emotional and behavioural benefits to being bilingual.

Despite the limitations (e.g., teacher bias possibly skewing results), it was clearly demonstrated that there is some emotional and behavioural benefit to being bilingual and that parents should be encouraged to speak their native language with their children. It was argued that schools should be encouraged to nurture bilingualism, not just English. Schools with staff knowledgeable in second language acquisition and supportive teaching environments were rated as having better behavioural and emotional well-being students.


This Centre of Innovation study (Ministry of Education, 2002) at Wycliffe Ngā Tamariki Kindergarten (WNT) set out to explore relationships between a kindergarten and Upu Amata (a Samoan immersion early childhood education setting) with specific reference to bilingualism, information and communication technologies and the notion of community of learners. With respect to the bilingualism aspect of the study, three research reports are of relevance for this literature review. The final report of the project (Haworth et.al., 2006a), and two additional published papers (Haworth, Cullen, Simmons, Schimanski, McGarva & Woodhead, 2006b; Cullen, Haworth, Simmons, Schimanski, McGarva & Kennedy, 2009).

In the project’s focus on bilingualism, three (English speaking) teacher researchers supported by a senior teacher and two research associates studied factors influencing Samoan children’s bilingual development. Furthermore they explored how best to enhance Samoan children’s bilingual development in the context of trilingual
(English, Samoan and Te Reo Māori) kindergarten Program. Between four and six Samoan children, aged between 4-5 years and who spoke Samoan at home, attended a Samoan language early childhood centre in the mornings (Upu Amata) and WNT in the afternoons. The three teachers along with two teacher aides (one of whom spoke Samoan) regularly included English, Samoan and Te Reo Māori as languages of instruction in the kindergarten Program. The teacher researchers used observations (including audio and video recordings of children’s interactions), field notes and reflective journals to collect data in three action research cycles, with each cycle inquiring more deeply into the overarching research focus of how learning might be enhanced for all children at WNT and in partnership with Upu Amata.

The findings of the Haworth, Cullen, Simmons, Schimanski, McGarva & Woodhead (2006b) paper focuses on the interweaving of adult and child roles in the development of bilingualism and mediators of bilingualism in the WNT context: adults, peers, cultural tools, language and the children. Data that illustrate the “mutual interdependence of the acquisition and learning processes” (p.300) are shared. The researchers’ conclude that a notable finding of the WNT study was the ability of “adults and young children to work collaboratively (emphasis in original) towards bilingual development, skillfully interweaving the processes of acquisition, learning and teaching” (p.306). They also write of the importance of co-construction and scaffolding for effective bilingual development. The paper highlights the importance of teaching and of the influence of mediators for bilingual development in early childhood education.

The Cullen, Haworth, Simmons, Schimanski, McGarva & Kennedy (2009) paper reports more fully on the language and literacy learning aspect of the WNT study, with particular reference to the teacher’s strategies. In the context of an additive approach to bilingual education (Baker, 2006), the Samoan children were able to acquire English language whilst simultaneously maintaining their heritage language proficiency. The authors assert that it was through the engagement of socio-cultural teaching strategies that strong language foundations for these children were built. Data illustrating children and teachers’ uses of various cultural tools in the kindergarten environment (ICTs, a recipe book, Samoan language resources, and
documented assessments) to build linguistic competencies in Samoan, Te Reo Māori and English are shared. Identifying that “the project did not have a specific focus on identifying linguistic outcomes of the Program” (p.54) the authors nonetheless claim that the enhancement of heritage language fluency through children’s dual participation in an immersion and an intercultural early childhood education setting seemed “likely to support the development of more equally balanced bilingualism that will later accrue associated cognitive benefits” (p.54).


In a year long ethnographic study of a dual language (Spanish-English) kindergarten classroom, Hayes’ (2005) paper focuses on efforts made by a teacher to design an environment supportive to children’s use of the Spanish language. Twenty-one children, 10 of whom were designated native Spanish speakers, 11 native English speakers participated in a classroom where Spanish was the language of instruction in the mornings and English in the afternoon. The fluent bilingual Spanish-English teacher was of the view that immersion education was the best context for language learning, and she saw effective language learning situations as the kind that required speakers to practice language skills in demanding contexts. She therefore set out to provoke shared play experiences that were child initiated in the hope that children would use conversations in Spanish to mediate collective play activity.

Data for the study were gathered via a range of typical ethnographic methods: participant observations; informal and formal interviews; field notes; formal classroom observations (video taped) and informal discussions with children and the teacher and document analyses. Most classroom observation focused on a less teacher directed aspect of the Program called ‘Centres time’ in which children worked largely in child-centred group activities with minimal direct teacher intervention.

The study found that left to their own devices, children tended to not speak freely in Spanish during child-centred group activity, preferring instead to engage in what Haye’s described as, “collective silent play” (p.98). Despite the teachers efforts to
provide resources and materials that she hoped would promote conversation between children and collective group play, the children largely refrained from converting the ‘Centres time’ experience into a shared play scenario mediated by conversation. However, when play became troublesome and children contested each others roles the researcher noticed conversation emerge. Deeper analysis revealed that the most developed and complicated conversations occurred when routine was disrupted and the children had to negotiate ambiguous play or conflicting agendas. The implication for Program design is that for negotiation to emerge, teachers should be planning play spaces to “foster the emergence of conflicting agendas or ambiguous play situations” (p.104). The children had to achieve intersubjectivity during their negotiations, their mutual engagement in activity proving the factor that supported heritage language use. The paper concludes with three key suggestions for Program design to foster heritage language development:

- Engage children in meaningful conversations rather than, or in addition to, the discourse patterns typical of teachers (i.e., asking testing questions, directing behaviour);
- Design activities for the children where the goals of the activity, from the children’s perspective, afford or require language use;
- Provide systematic and, whenever possible naturally occurring constraints to use the target language.


This study examined the lexical development of nine Samoan-English bilingual children as they transitioned from predominantly Samoan speaking homes into English medium early childhood education settings in Australia. Primarily designed to test a composite scoring assessment process for distinguishing between language difference and language disorder, the study also considered how early sequential bilingual (ESB) Samoan-English children develop L1 and L2 during their first year of preschool. It is this aspect of the study that has relevance for the present review.
Nine 4-year-old children who attended English medium early childhood settings for 2.5 days a week were selected for the study from a larger cohort of 18. Eligibility for selection was determined by parental reports and interviews that determined that the Samoan language was the primary language in the children’s home from birth to 2 years of age. An English speaking monolingual comparison group was also recruited. A *receptive vocabulary task* and a *picture-naming task* in English and Samoan were developed specifically for the study. The tasks in English were administered (in English) to both groups whilst they attended their early childhood centre. A week later, and also at the centre, the bilingual children completed the Samoan language tasks (in Samoan). A review assessment that replicated the original took place 6 months later.

Key findings from the study showed the trajectory of the bilingual children’s heritage language lexical development continued to grow during the 6-month period, especially in respect to receptive language. However their mean expressive language scores stayed relatively constant over time. The authors hypothesise that the growth in Samoan language receptivity was due to the strong language foundation at home and in the children’s immediate Samoan community (especially via church and sporting networks) and that the contrasting expressive language scores were due English language dominance and parental encouragement of their children to speak English rather than Samoan outside the home. No significant differences between the rates of bilingual children’s English and Samoan receptive lexical development were seen, however significant growth in English expressive lexical efficiency was found. The authors comment that over the six-month period, English had clearly become the dominant expressive language.

When comparing the bilingual children’s *composite scores* (a measure across L1 and L2 to establish overall semantic composition) with the monolingual English speaking children’s scores there was no difference between the groups at the time of the original or the second test. The authors note that even though this finding has been established in other studies, further research investigating the validity of comparing composite bilingual to monolingual norms is necessary.

The first Punana Leo Hawaiian language immersion Program started in 1983. This article describes the Aha Punana Leo language immersion programs and other culturally relevant programs focused on providing quality services to children and their families in Hawaii. The notion of ‘quality’ includes the transmission of Hawaiian world views through the revitalisation of the Hawaiian language and culture. Although immersion schools are sanctioned in law (from ECE to university) the government “does not offer additional support for the school’s advancement” (p. 41). In 1997 Hawaii enacted legislation to create the Good Beginnings Alliance (GBA) which, in 2004, conducted a study (the first of its kind) into issues considered to affect quality of programs and delivery. They were:

- Information on child care centres;
- Parent commitment;
- Program design and delivery (characteristics of which included qualified teachers/caregivers with specific ECE training, adequate language stimulation, responsiveness, low ratios of adults to children, better wages, accreditation, staff turnover, among other variables).

Among other things, the report called for action: to improve staff qualifications and specialised ECE training; to develop a plan to avoid fee increases to families while working on increased compensation for staff and reduction of staff turnover; to support ongoing research and planning as well as policy and system development; and to engage funders to coordinate resources for workforce development.

Participation in Punana Leo is voluntary and requires parental involvement in the way of time contribution, financial assistance, attendance at weekly language sessions and attendance at monthly governance meetings. It has been asserted that these programs have been successful in their language revitalisation, academic and family involvement goals because “…part of their staff is composed of former students and parents” (p. 44). Success is judged in terms of Hawaiian language revitalisation and it was asserted that families should have access to quality ECE programs of their choice. Quality in such contexts is understood as providing
opportunities for children to learn and live in their culture, to have good interactions with knowledgeable, supportive adults, as well as giving them opportunities to explore and play in language and culturally rich environments.


Nineteen children aged between 3.4-5.2 years participated in a study designed to analyse receptive and expressive vocabularies in L1 (Hmong) and L2 (English). Using specifically designed picture naming and picture identification tasks in Hmong and English, preschool teachers of the children (who were bilingual Hmong and English) were trained in the testing procedure. They conducted four individual testing sessions (two in English and two in Hmong) with participating children on four different days. The children were split into a younger (than 4.4 year-old) group and older group for comparative purposes (to investigate the potential effect of development). Regression analyses supported the authors’ use of chronological age as the major factor for determining the groups; all testing was done while the children attended the early childhood education setting.

Key findings indicated that the composite vocabulary scores of the bilingual children in both groups were always higher than single language scores. There was evidence of rapid L2 growth in the older cohort and a stabilisation of L1 lexicon was observed. For both groups receptive language (Hmong) was greater than expressive; but for English no such differentiation was observed.


This one-year action research project sought to explore the encouragement and strengthening of children’s Samoan language and literacy learning in the context of a bilingual Samoan language early childhood centre (a’oga amata). Interview, observation data (including video tapes of children engaged in literacy learning
experiences), environment rating scales and field notes provided data for the study. The researcher teachers simultaneously engaged in the research process and professional development as they worked in partnership with the community to focus on children’s learning.

The study’s participants were a registered teacher and three other educators who were in-training at the time of the study, parents and caregivers along with 32 over-two-year-old children, half of whom lived in households where the Samoan language was the main language. In the homes of the other 16 children both English and Samoan were in frequent use. At the start of the study 50% of parents reported that their children could speak in Samoan using sentences and words, another 25% reported their children could understand Samoan even if they did not use it.

Measures of the language and literacy practices and aspirations before and after professional development provided evidence for the study. Key findings (reported by the teacher researchers and also confirmed by the professional development (PD) facilitator observations of practice) included a shift in teaching style away from directing children and towards participating with them in curriculum activities; more child initiated play; increased opportunities for children to practice writing skills; and more responsiveness from teachers towards children’s writing and storytelling activities. Positive shifts in scores on ratings of process quality were also observed after the PD intervention and an increase in children’s use of Samoan language was also found. In this respect, even though it was not an express focus of the study, the researchers noted an increase in the length of children’s sentences in Samoan and more confidence in the children to express themselves in the Samoan language. Changes in the quality of print resources available to children in the Samoan language were noted, parents reported an increase in literacy activity and cultural awareness of their children. The study highlights how teachers’ increased attention to quality literacy practices in immersion early childhood education can impact positively on children’s acquisition and use of heritage language. Further it provides evidence of how immersion early childhood education can strengthen children’s cultural identities.
This paper presents findings from an ethnographic study of a bilingual unit (Samoan – English) in a South Auckland primary school, Finlayson Park. Discussing the background, development and student outcomes of what is described as New Zealand’s “first full ‘dual medium, dual literacy’ bilingual unit, in which both English and Samoan are used as the medium of instruction and for literacy teaching” (p.81), the article provides evidence of improvement in children’s reading capabilities (in both Samoan and English) as measured by the school’s achievement data in combination with evidence of literacy and language gains generated in earlier studies that involved children from Finlayson Park school.

O le Taiala is a five classroom bilingual unit serving children in year levels 1-8 (approximately 5-12 years of age) and whose teachers were “appointed for their teaching expertise and knowledge in both Samoan and English” (p.86). Qualitative data about the unit was gathered through “reflective empowerment activity… and action research” (p.82) strategies that included interviews, observations and participant observations, completed by researchers working in collaboration with senior managers and teachers of the unit.

Earlier studies (not considered separately in the context of this review) are reported to have found that O le Taiala students achieved “significantly higher levels of oracy and literacy in both languages than their counterparts… [suggesting the] average reading age for all classes was above the chronological age of the children” (p.92). Furthermore, the Program was found to assist students to achieve higher reading levels by year 6 than those of Samoan children attending English language dominant settings, with the O leTaiala student’s Samoan literacy impacting positively on their English literacy outcomes. The children “had completed three years of intensive literacy instruction in their first language, Samoan, before the introduction of English reading, yet still managed to reach chronological age norms in English some two
years later” (p.95). The paper then combines this evidence from Finlayson Park’s achievement data that that authors argue show O le Taiala students “consistently reading at levels at or above their English chronological reading ages and grade-age norms” (p.96). The authors note that achievement data for Samoan students attending Finlayson Park who are not in the bilingual unit, showed higher than average scores on reading achievement than Samoan children nationally. The data on students reading levels was obtained through the same measure in all three studies (the Informal Prose Inventory – IPI, now called the Informal Reading Inventory – IRI) however the variability of IRI measures available limit the ability of researchers to compare results across different schools. Furthermore the IRI used in the authors’ Findlayson Park study was a Samoan language version in its early development.

Factors associated with the success of O le Taiala in raising achievement relative to language and literacy included:

- the purposeful engagement of families and school personnel over issues of student achievement. Principal to this was the bringing together of Ulimasao (the Samoan Bilingual Education Association) with the school’s teacher and parent community, and the PD opportunities that arose from this;
- O le Taiala actively give recognition to all aspects of students lives, working in support therefore of fa’asamoa;
- Bilingual communication between O le Taiala and homes (official notices, newsletters and so on);
- The continued use of the heritage language throughout the 8 years of schooling which had positive effects for English language learning;
- The physical location of the unit’s classrooms relative to the rest of the school which facilitated collaboration and teamwork amongst the teachers of the unit;
- School leadership (professional and policy work) that lead to shared positive understandings and commitment to bilingual and biliteracy visions within the whole school community.


An aspect of this study which set out to find out explore the contributions that parent/whānau led early childhood education settings made to children’s learning specifically considered licensed Pasifika and Māori immersion and bilingual early
childhood education settings. Of particular relevance to questions of quality immersion and bilingual early childhood education programs, the data from phase two of the study prove most relevant. In this part of the project background information about services was gathered and ratings of process quality (generated by the application of a rating-scale during observations of teaching and learning during two half-day visits) were combined with data produced from discussions between researchers and parents/teachers, surveys of parents/whānau and educators. In the 6 participating Kōhanga Reo and 6 Pasifika centres approximately 30% of parents responded to the survey, the parents associated with the Kōhanga were predominantly Māori and those associated with the Pasifika centres predominantly reflected the culture of the centre.

Four relevant and distinct outcomes of early childhood education that parent/whānau led immersion and bilingual early childhood education were found to contribute to were:

Te reo and tikanga Māori
- Children learn and understand te reo and tikanga Māori and develop a sense of their Māori identity
- Support for Māori parents’ te reo, tikanga Māori, and cultural identity

Community language and culture
- Children learn and maintain their community language and culture
- Support for parents’ community language and culture

‘Strong’ Kōhanga Reo were evaluated as those with early childhood qualified educators, or educators in training towards Kōhanga Reo or early childhood qualifications; educators who were involved in professional development; educators with more experience; and families who were regularly involved in assessing, planning and evaluating the Program. With respect to ‘strong’ ratings of children’s language learning in te reo Māori and the development of children’s cultural identities, factors associated with kaiako fluency, kaumatua involvement in the Program, trained educators, whānau involvement and satisfactory language resources that operated immersion programs were noted as significant.
With respect to the Pasifika services, key findings indicated that immersion settings were those that most strongly supported language development and cultural understandings. Well-established Pasifika centres with a high level of fluent heritage language speakers and who delivered the curriculum through the heritage language were also assessed as ‘strong’ centres. Structural variables such as low child to adult ratios, educator training and small group sizes were related positively with ‘strong’ language and culture variables on the rating scales.


This study of discourses that shape immigrant parents’ and early childhood educators’ views of language maintenance among young immigrant children sheds light upon how broader disciplining structures of, for instance, media, teacher education and government policy, shape individuals’ and their practices of heritage language maintenance in early childhood education. Situated in Canada and within a population pool with an 8% ethnic minority (New Zealand’s Māori and Pasifika populations are approximately 15% and 6.9% respectively, Statistics New Zealand, 2010a, 2010b), the study shows how both teacher and parental understandings of children’s language development were mediated by a discourse of monolingualism that positioned English language as the legitimate and natural language for children in early childhood to learn.

At first the authors used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the kinds of messages about language that early childhood educators and immigrant families were exposed to in Government (settlement) resources and the media. They then sought to explore whether those discourses became ideological and how they mediated views around language of parents and early childhood educators. Working with a participant group of 54 immigrant families and 10 early childhood educators, in-depth interviews and focus groups were audio taped and transcribed. The transcripts were subjected to content analysis and CDA as the researchers attended to how participants spoke about English and minority languages.
It was observed that parents had taken up the broader Governmental and media discourses and that English had “been constructed as the language of legitimacy” (p.319). Extensive data excerpts illustrate parents talking differently about English and heritage languages, with the dominance of English seen, for instance, English language proficiency for children is spoken of as “a must” (p.320) whereas heritage languages were spoken of “as a desire” (p.320). In spite of parents expressed desire to raise bilingual children, when asked about their children’s language development, only their English language proficiency was spoken of; both parent and teacher participants constructed heritage language learning as the responsibility of individuals rather than early education settings. From the perspective of the teachers, the presence of non-English speaking children and families in early childhood services was viewed as a barrier to practice. The teachers’ spoke of challenges and under-resourcing, regularly constructing language as synonymous to culture and thereby negating any possibilities of acknowledging the role of language in the reproduction of social differences and inequality. For the literature review this study exemplifies how broader societal discourses around language affect families and early childhood educators’ negotiation of language in the context of early childhood education daily.


This comparison study of oral and early literacy skills in bilingual Spanish-English and monolingual Spanish speaking children in the US and in Puerto Rico reports differences in bilingual and monolingual children’s language and literacy development as they entered and exited pre-kindergarten Head Start programs. A sample of 319 children in the US and 144 children in Puerto Rico were recruited to the study. The bilingual children came from predominantly Spanish speaking homes and attended English language dominant early childhood settings. Comparable mean ages for both cohorts at the time of testing were achieved (children in the US cohort has a mean age of 4.43yrs at T1 and 4.97yrs at T2; the comparison cohort were aged 4.48yrs at T1 and 4.97 at T2), instruments were a specifically designed phonological awareness task (with both an English and a Spanish version) and English and Spanish versions of *The Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised* (WLPB-R)
a standardized test of English language proficiency with measures in oral and written languages and reading. The test compares bilingual children’s oral language proficiency with monolingual children’s norms, a less than ideal comparison. Testing occurred at the children’s preschool at two intervals approximately 6 months apart. The bilingual children completed both the English language and Spanish language tests.

Findings related to early literacy indicated that at the end of pre-kindergarten the bilingual children performed more strongly in Spanish than in English on the phonological awareness task however the authors suggest this may have been due to a function of the lack of instruction in phonological awareness in the Puerto Rico settings; bilingual children scored below average at T1 on the WLPB-R letter-word identification and dictation tests in comparison to monolingual norms on both the English and Spanish tests, no substantial gains in English letter and word recognition or spelling and writing performance between T1 and T2 were observed. When comparing bilingual children’s relative performance on the two tests however, scores in English were “slightly better, by the end of pre-kindergarten there is a considerable difference in these scores in favor of English, partially accounted for by their loss of skill in Spanish” (p.99). With respect to the oral language dimension of this study the bilingual children’s scores remained essentially the same between T1 and T2 with a small increase in English vocabulary and decline in Spanish; in comparison with monolingual norms, the vocabulary scores were “more than two standard deviations below” (p.99). Similar results were observed on the memory for sentences test except that in this measure small gains in English and Spanish scores were observed between T1 and T2. The study found that the bilingual children on average scored better on early literacy tests in comparison to oral language tests in both languages even though their literacy scores were below monolingual norms. The authors argue that these data support a need to focus in early childhood education on bilingual children’s oral language and early literacy skills, especially in light of the fact that bilingual children’s heritage language decline in substractive environments is rapid and this means “there will not be an opportunity for children to learn these skills in their first language and then transfer them to English” (p.101).

Paradis & Nicoladis (2007) studied the impacts of sociolinguistic context and language dominance on bilingual children’s language choice. Eight French-English bilingual children aged between 3.6 and 4.11 years were video-taped at home on two separate occasions. Two different adult interlocutors who spoke either English or French interacted with the children over the course of an hour during free-play activities. Interlocutors for each of the sessions were selected relative to the children’s background in the hope that this would replicate a typical context and interlocutor for the languages based on the child’s experience. For example, a child whose home language was French dominant was observed in the French language session playing with a parent, but for the English language session, with an unfamiliar adult. Results of the study suggest that older preschool children do engage in discourse separation when in a language dominant setting. Furthermore, that children display language choice patterns consistent with those of their bilingual community. Children in the study were more able to adhere to the language of their interlocutor when she or he was speaking the child’s dominant language. However English dominant children were more likely to use English in the French context in comparison with French dominant children’s use of French in the English dominant context. For heritage language learners the implications of interlocutors proficiency with the heritage language are plain.


This paper describes a study of the backwash effects of assessment on practices of teachers in a Cherokee Immersion Preschool in which teachers use only Cherokee throughout the day with their monolingual English-speaking students. Specifically, it examined the role that classroom observation coupled with a formal language assessment played in identifying undeveloped aspects of the children’s Cherokee language skills and targeting specific techniques teachers could use to encourage
children to communicate more effectively in the Cherokee language (p. 643). Assessment results “…provide teachers with information they need to determine the goals of their instruction and to make rational educational decisions” (p. 645).

The findings indicate that, when used appropriately as a pedagogical tool rather than as a determination of Program success or failure, and when combined with the more informal and ongoing documentation of children’s daily language use, the preschool immersion language assessments have the potential to positively impact on the practice of preschool teachers and ultimately the ability of the immersion preschool to produce new speakers of Cherokee. (p. 645)

In terms of using assessment to inform teaching, the authors’ observations of the teachers’ interactions with the preschoolers revealed possible reasons why the children were not progressing as rapidly as hoped after five months in an immersion Program. It was hypothesised that comprehension skills were higher than verbal skills, substantiating the notion of a ‘silent period’ (Krashen, 1986 cited at p. 650). However, a Hawaiian Punana Leo Preschool Immersion example showed how after just five months in their Program most of the children could express themselves [in Hawaiian] very well. It was acknowledged that children’s progress was contingent on the quality and quantity of the language input they receive and opportunities to use language (p. 651). That provided one possible explanation for the preschoolers’ limited Cherokee productive skills after five months of immersion - a lack of ‘accessible and sufficient’ language. Classroom observations revealed that teachers relied heavily on rote vocabulary drills to teach lists of words but often did not provide opportunities for children to use the language in meaningful contexts. Comprehensible input is not sufficient for successful language learning but opportunities for ‘pushed output’ language must be provided (Swain, 2000 cited at p. 651). The implications for the Cherokee Immersion Preschool were that simply ‘immersing’ children in the Cherokee language may not have been enough for them to achieve the goal of sociolinguistic competence. Teachers needed guidance on how to balance natural, comprehensible input with output or planned opportunities for communicative practice.
Another possible explanation for the limited Cherokee production was that the preschool was not equipped with resources to adequately support a language-focused curriculum. The teachers worked diligently to develop resources but they simply could not produce materials as rapidly as the children were consuming them and stated “… unlike teachers of commonly taught languages such as Spanish, French or English, the Cherokee preschool teachers did not have an abundance of books, songs and games at their disposal, tools proven to be highly effective for early childhood language learning” (p. 651). This made it even more difficult for teachers to provide interesting, age-appropriate and comprehensible stimuli necessary for preschooler outputs.

Professional development was provided for the teachers and workshops introduced, the topics of which were;

- Using the immersion curriculum in a communicative way (to present strategies for implementing the curriculum in a way that encourages the development of productive language skills);
- Introduce theory and techniques for immersion language teaching (to familiarise teachers with the principles and techniques to go beyond physical response toward genuine communication);
- Developing and using materials that encourage language production in an immersion context (to present strategies for creating and using materials that tie in to the curriculum and that focus on specific language skills);
- Communicative language teaching: using games and songs for productive language (to demonstrate fun language teaching techniques that encourage children to produce meaningful language);
- Language assessment: the Cherokee Preschool Immersion Language Assessment Tool and other tools for assessing language (to familiarise teachers with the purpose of assessment and structure and use of the developed tool and to present informal ways to assess the children’s language development) (p. 653).

Teachers were encouraged to begin using language logs to document which the children were saying. There were many observed changes which included;
• encouraging children to replace things they said in English with comparable Cherokee expressions;
• requiring children to tell about things rather than to simply name them;
• consistently providing praise, feedback and modelling;
• encouraging children to take on the role of teacher;
• using language in a variety of forms that require not only physical responses, but oral responses, as well;
• providing opportunities for children to initiate conversations with one another;
• creating new games, songs, stories and using them to reinforce language;
• documenting children’s daily language use in language logs; and
• using books and pre-literacy activities to encourage greater orality from the children (p. 654).

With enhanced understandings of assessment’s role in informing decisions about what and how to teach, teachers redefined immersion as both staying in the language and providing opportunities for developing their communicative competence or ‘pushed outputs’. It was noted that teacher training workshops alone could not account for the improvement in the preschoolers’ language skills but rather that when teachers understand the goals, benefits and responsible uses of assessment, and learn to develop and implement effective assessment strategies, they are more likely to positively influence children’s language learning and better prospects for the future of the Cherokee language. (p. 656-657).


This article reports on a naturalistic inquiry into the micro- and macrosociocultural dimensions of reversing Cherokee language shift. It is argued that of all the Cherokee Nation language programs, the preschool language immersion Program holds the greatest potential to increase intergenerational, mother-tongue transmission in the home, family, neighbourhood and community (p. 323).
As is the case with all colonised indigenous societies, an “ideology of contempt” (p. 325) for indigenous languages contributed to language shift (from indigenous language to the language of the colonisers). As stated “…an ideology of contempt is grounded in the misconception of the primitiveness of Indigenous languages, in the belief in a social-Darwinian “survival of the fittest” view of language…” (p. 325). It also leads to the perception that bilingualism was onerous, undesirable and a lowering of the status for the indigenous language with regard to the seemingly more prestigious dominant (in this case English) language. This in turn contributed to a “sense of shame about heritage languages among Indigenous peoples and a desire among some of the older generations to assimilate to the dominant culture” (p. 325). After Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998, cited at p. 326) it was proposed that ideological clarification is the first step to overcoming prior language planning failures, anxieties, insecurities and hesitations about the value of indigenous languages and cultures. Moreover, that often the community must be convinced that the language is truly endangered and the implications of language loss before support and commitment can be garnered (Kwachka, 1999 cited at p. 326).

The scope of their inquiry included centre observations, self-reflection sessions, language assessment pilot, parent and community focus groups and a survey distributed tribewide to determine general attitudes toward preschool immersion. Emerging themes provided a gamut of micro- and macrolevel aspects of the sociocultural context within which the immersion centres was positioned to allow for a more indepth understanding of the actors involved, the ends they hoped to achieve, the means through which they would achieve those ends, the behaviours influenced through revitalisation activities and the overall results in terms of reversing language shift efforts and the more far-reaching effects of the preschool project.

In terms of the second-language achievement of the preschool children, it was found that comprehension of spoken Cherokee was not dependent on contextual or paralinguistic cues, such as gestures, though there was a lag in the verbal skills as opposed to comprehension. As far as teacher effectiveness was concerned, limited teacher exposure to the principles and practices of language teaching through
immersion and time to adequately prepare were contributing factors. It was reiterated “…without a solid foundation in second-language acquisition, linguistics, and language pedagogy, it was difficult for the teachers to implement something they knew so little about” (p. 331), resulting in feelings of frustration.

It is interesting to note that even though the approach was commensurate with immersion’s goal of a natural language-learning environment, “…teachers did not engage children in the kind of verbal wordplay or structured language practice that one might expect in an ‘unnatural,” second-language-learning classroom. It also created an imbalance in the kind of language that teachers used most often with the children – direct verbal commands, as opposed to language that encouraged children to respond meaningfully or initiate communication” (p. 331-332).

Tribal leadership indicated that there is a great deal of support at the highest levels for Cherokee-language revitalisation in general and early childhood language immersion in particular. The language was seen as a symbol of self-determination, a means to exert sovereignty and a ‘linguistic and cultural rights’ issue. Chief Hastings Shade declared that the wisest long term investment for maintaining their unique cultural integrity and identity would be through investment in the Cherokee language.

At the macrosociocultural level the findings noted that community support for early childhood immersion reflects a clarification of prior ideological positions where the focus was primarily on adults and adolescents with not much success in terms of promoting the continued use of language in the homes and among children. This support culminated in a “…record amount of spending for cultural programs, including language development initiatives and immersion classes”, resulting in an extensive multilayered language revitalisation agenda “…and a heightened status for the Cherokee language” (p. 336).

It was found that the focus on young children and the early immersion preschool was a crucial turning point in the reversing language shift (RLS) efforts and marked the beginning of an unprecedented interest in language revitalisation and the
strengthening of the link between schools and the home-community intergenerational transmission. However, it also found that the RLS goals were not fully attained. Mandatory language classes for all parents enrolling their children in the preschool did not happen, with the result that only a few parents attended language classes and none of them volunteered in the classrooms or stayed for any length of time to learn beside their child. Further, very few attempted to use Cherokee at drop-off or pick-up times, and over time fewer and fewer attended parent meetings. One teacher commented “I don’t think the parents are doing enough to reinforce the language at home…For them to speak it is for them to go home, speaking it at home with their parents” (p. 338). But, as the Hawaiian RLS advocates found, connecting with a group of young parents who are involved in RLS and who are learning the language themselves results in “…producing parents who are experienced in providing in-kind and governing assistance to a joint language-revitalization effort…” and excitement at the results (Wilson & Kamanā, 2001, p. 153 cited at p. 338). It was stressed that RLS immersion programs must be coupled with other efforts which promote the transmission of indigenous languages in the home (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1999, cited at p. 338).


This round one Centre of Innovation study (Ministry of Education, 2002) at A’oga Fa’a Samoa, a Samoan immersion early childhood education centre situated on the grounds of Richmond Road primary school in Auckland sought to explore language and language continuity during the transition to school of children from the early childhood setting. Via an action research methodology that utilized tools of focus group interviews, analysis of critical incidents, diary records, child interview and parent surveys, the study’s findings speak to themes of language and cultural continuity, transitions and communities of learners (A’oga Fa’a Samoa Teachers, Management & COI Focus Group, 2005; Podmore, Wendt Samu, Taouma, Tapusoa
Podmore, Tapusoa & Taouma’s (2006) report focuses on several dimensions of the A’oga Fa’a Samoa study: teachers’ strategies for teaching language; children’s cultural identities; parental views on Samoan language learning and language continuity. Data show how through teacher questioning and modelling, the children’s use of the Samoan language was supported and extended (increased vocabulary). Interviews with children who were transitioning to school were interpreted as showing children’s “strong identity with fa’asamoa” (p.77) and the architecture and design features of the building said to also influence “children’s sense of belonging and their identity” (p.81). Parent surveys indicated a valuing of the language with 32/36 families rating Samoan language in a survey as “really important to them, or a high priority” (p.82). The majority of parents surveyed also desired their children to speak Samoan and reported that their children’s language proficiency was increased as a consequence of attending the centre. When asked about transition to school, parents in focus group interviews were interested in the issue of language continuity with mixed responses about the effects of transition on their children’s proficiency with the Samoan language.

The unique aspect of this project for this literature review relates to the location of the early childhood centre relative to the primary school and the benefits this brought to building upon children’s strong language foundations for early school success. Being situated on the same site, teachers, families and children could plan for language continuity for the children coming from the immersion early childhood education setting to the bilingual classroom where a 80:20 Samoan:English language practice had (during the later stages of the study) been implemented. Furthermore, a practice of transitioning teachers with groups of children between sections of the early childhood centre and between the centre and school proved beneficial for children’s sense of security and belonging as they entered into unfamiliar surrounds. This meant that for those children, they could draw upon histories of shared experiences and language competence as they worked together to make sense of the new environments they encountered.

This article explores the relationship between emergent biliteracy and growing up in a biliterate environment with two focus questions:

1. What knowledge of biliteracy do young bilingual preschool children develop in the early years?
2. How do context and specific language environments influence the development of biliteracy in young Mexican Spanish-English bilingual children?

The authors report data from a multiple-method research project with 4-5 year-old bilingual children. Results indicated that the children were developing knowledge and metalinguistic awareness about print in both their Spanish and English languages. Their families demonstrated a wide variety of communicative practices and ways in which they used written materials. The authors propose a model of emergent biliteracy that integrates the different cultural contexts that foster biliteracy development in young children. The research contributes to the development of an ecological model of emergent biliteracy that recognizes the dynamic and complex interactions among home, school, and neighbourhood contexts (p.374). This model serves as a heuristic device that allows researchers and teachers to consider how different linguistic and cultural spaces affect children's biliteracy development in the environments where they are growing up bilingual.

Moll, Saez and Dworin (2001) argue that children's understanding and inventions of written language are not individual; but that they reflect the cultural conventions and ideologies within the social contexts of which they are a part (cited at p. 374). Although the focus in this study is early biliteracy development, the authors recognised that bilingualism and biliteracy cannot be separated. They influence and shape each other and therefore it is important to consider both phenomena and the languages as they interact.
Previous studies have confirmed that preschool children develop environmental print awareness (EPA) “…integrating their existing knowledge with contextual cues in the environment to understand and make sense of, or read, print in signs, logos, or product labels” (p. 376). So they develop EPA through natural interactions, whereas they develop concepts of print related to books through multiple experiences with print (and books). It was also found that when children have access to more than one writing system, children's ability to distinguish between different written scripts is found to develop at an early age (p. 376).

The children in this study lived in a predominantly bilingual and bicultural neighbourhood with a strong presence of Mexican culture. Signs and announcements were typically printed in both Spanish and English (e.g., at the supermarket, local library, tax offices, clothing store). The children, who were either Spanish monolinguals or Spanish dominant, and their families, were exposed to bilingual print in their environment. Although English was the language of instruction in the preschool program, about 40% of the classroom interactions were in Spanish. The teacher (bilingually trained) also invited the Spanish-speaking parents into the classroom to interact with the children in order to support the children's native language development even though they were within the parameters of a state-level English-only law and concordant district policies.

Based on the hypotheses that bilingual children develop their bilingualism and biliteracy skills as they construct meaning from environmental print and learn about conventions and concepts of print in two languages with alphabetic scripts, it was found in this study that children do not construct meaning on their own but rather transform and build on it while actively participating in literacy events during interactive play and learning with peers and family members. The researchers argued that this finding was something they could not have observed from conducting classroom literacy tasks alone. The case studies provided evidence that these emergent bilingual children's development of biliteracy is dynamic and mediated by their immediate socio cultural contexts. It is highly situated and is influenced, mediated, and transformed in particular ways during peer and family interactions. They highlighted the need for research in families and communities around the
development of bilingualism and biliteracy to avoid deficit theorising and stated “We would have assumed that they lacked several basic early literacy concepts; however, observation in their natural home environments allowed us to identify concepts that were emerging (p. 392). They argued a need for more detailed examinations of the different linguistic environments and activities that support the development of biliteracy and how these might vary by culture or home language.

The findings contribute toward;

- the development of a theoretical model focusing on the ecology of emergent biliteracy in early childhood. This model considers not only what children learn but also how they learn their native language at home and their second language at school and in the community;
- the field of biliteracy by adopting an ecological perspective to interpret young children's pathways to biliteracy.

The ecological model of emergent biliteracy needs to account for time and place-specific influences from home, community, and school and how these influence children's literacy development. It should also acknowledge that children's development is dynamic, malleable, and influenced by naturalistic opportunities in the environment that tap into any child's potential to acquire multiple languages and literacies. The model yields benefits to the field by challenging deficit perspectives that tend to devalue bilingualism and biliteracy as impediments rather than potential assets in academic achievement and that “…stereotype Mexican immigrant families as failing to provide stimulating home environments that prepare children for formal literacy learning at school” (p. 393). The ecological model also has implications for pedagogical practice, in terms of helping ECE and school teachers to “…provide more effective instruction, to understand children's individual ways of responding to school activities and assignments, and to recognize alternate and more nuanced strategies for evaluating children's biliteracy knowledge” (p. 393).

In 2010 Skerrett conducted a literature review for the New Zealand Teachers Council the purpose of which was to outline what the research literature tells us about the influences on te reo Māori proficiency of teachers graduating from initial teacher education (ITE) programs for Māori medium education. The research literature shows that the nature of te reo Māori proficiency of graduating teachers is affected by a very wide range of factors which spring from the general socio-political, historical and linguistic conditions and policies of the context/s concerned. These wider socio-political influences often impinge upon the extent to which an ITE provider can give effect to its aims through its programs. Nevertheless, the literature strongly suggests that the development of a full heritage language system in any country requires consistent and large resources focussed on it.

In terms of programs the research showed that in effective bilingual programs students become bilingual (able to move competently and confidently between Māori and English) and biliterate (able to read, write and learn in both Māori and English) with a strong sense of identity linked to this place. It argued that all teachers in heritage language programs need to understand the features of second language acquisition, and the distinctions and dimensions of the dualism surrounding the term ‘bilingualism’ (bilingualism as a method versus outcome, or as a means to an end). They need to have both the social and academic language proficiencies of te reo Māori; and the social and academic language proficiencies of English. They need to also understand the pedagogical implications of having those proficiencies.

Skerrett (2010) argued that whānau, hapū and iwi are powerful structures in Māori society and provide focal points for Māori leadership and activities. All stakeholders should be involved in the decision-making regarding implementation of bilingual/immersion education as well as which languages will be used and how they will be developed. Political processes should enable implementation through legislation, policy development and allocation of resources; while grounded, localised processes provide flax-roots solutions, commitment and linguistic community support. This implies authentic, respectful relationships of engagement, with decentralisation of educational decision-making, through genuine partnerships with whānau, hapū and iwi Māori, particularly those who have historically
disengaged in education. Much needed research can assist at all levels of engagement.

Promoting bilingual/immersion programs is important. The reservations around Māori language education and often the belief that te reo Māori may be a liability for children and young people to progress and get jobs is similar to reservations held in other indigenous communities. Such attitudes have often been ingrained subliminally in their minds by the negative articulation of the value of their language by the dominant language speakers (Annamalai, 2006). That is part of the colonial experience. This reservation will disappear when they are convinced that such fears and beliefs are unfounded empirically. The realisation by the whole community that Māori immersion education is not exclusive of acquiring knowledge and skills in English language education, but that they actually enhance language acquisition knowledge and skills beyond even bilingualism, will support Māori language awareness and regeneration.

Some of the relevant key findings of the literature review are:

1. The development of a full heritage language system in any country requires consistent and large resources focussed on it.
2. The development of te reo Māori as a language of modern media and education in a global context has led to a huge and sudden extension of the language into new areas and uses. This rapid expansion can also lead to a growing backlog of unmet needs for example specialised dictionaries, and other reference, teaching and learning resources, and for experts in various fields. There is a shortage of these in immersion programs.
3. In terms of programs the research showed that in effective bilingual programs students become bilingual (able to move competently and confidently between Māori and English) and biliterate (able to read, write and learn in both Māori and English) with a strong sense of identity linked to this place.
4. It is vital to have consistency of support allowing for uninterrupted use of the language in education and work aiming for intergenerational transmission in homes, schools and communities for successful heritage language programs.
5. Heritage language programs often suffer from a lack of consistent, long term resourcing in comparison with the majority language education systems (i.e. the mainstream English language system in New Zealand). Internationally agreed human rights principles oppose such discriminatory practices.

6. Genuine participatory engagement through partnerships with whānau, hapū, and iwi Māori is also essential to a high quality heritage education programs. Culture is integral to language and bilingual/immersion programs cannot be conceptualised as “translations” of English ones.

7. Māori immersion programs are in their infancy and require substantial research and development in the context of partnerships with whānau, hapū, and iwi Māori to ascertain what are the best structures, processes and content for them.

8. Teachers should have both the social and academic language proficiencies of the target language (Māori and/or Pasifika) and equivalent social and academic language proficiencies in English.

9. Teachers need to incorporate good practices in bilingual teaching and learning and knowledge of second language acquisition methodologies into their organisation and teaching.

10. There is no widespread understanding of the nature of bilingualism and how it comes about and is maintained. Promoting bilingual/immersion programs is important.


Recent transitions research conducted by Skerrett (2010) titled *Ngā Whakawhitinga! The Transitions of Māori Learners* is an evaluative study, the purpose of which is to deepen understandings about successful transitioning of Māori learners to school. The research was carried out across the six regions of Te Waiariki, Kirikiriroa, Horowhenua, and parts of Te Waipounamu including Ōtepoti and Ōtautahi included the following primary research questions:
1. What do ‘successful’ transitions from early childhood education to primary school, primary school to secondary school and Māori medium settings to Kura and Wharekura look like for Māori learners?

2. How can akonga be best supported to transition as successfully as possible?

3. How can teachers, parents, family and whānau be best supported so that children transition successfully between different educational settings?

Findings included

- Transition across culturally and linguistically congruent educational settings is critical for ākonga Māori. When there is incongruency there is ākonga vulnerability and whānau anxiety. Mismatches can directly affect children’s emotional, social and academic experiences of school. This is an area which schools have a special responsibility to address;

- The relationship of language to how cultural and linguistic identities are shaped in ākonga Māori is complex. All teachers need to understand those complexities in order to support ākonga Māori transitions. Combined with the relationship to academic achievement, are areas for further research;

- Bilingual English/Māori speaking (BEMS) linguistic identities must be promoted. Information on transitioning across languages and cultures should be readily available to whānau. This would enable whānau to make better informed decisions alongside their tamariki/mokopuna;

- Teachers also need to understand the features of second language acquisition, and the benefits of teaching and learning a second language. The length of time in immersion programs is critical if the outcome is to produce BEMS ākonga. Immersion education is bilingual education. Teachers, to be effective, must have both the social and academic language proficiencies of te reo Māori; and the social and academic language proficiencies of English. They also need to understand the pedagogical implications of having those proficiencies;

- Language is a cultural identifier. All educational settings (Māori immersion and English immersion) must acknowledge the importance of Māori linguistic and cultural norms, the significance of their functions and incorporate them into their transition policies and classroom programs. The
recognition of mana whenua - the tikanga that connects people to place, needs to be acknowledged and valued. There are a variety of linguistic and cultural norms that can assist with successful transitions.

They include (but are not limited to)

- Promoting BEMS Ākonga
- Tikanga Māori
- Poroporoaki
- Pōwhiri
- Haka Pōhiri
- Kawe Tamaiti
- Taonga Tuku Iho
- Karakia/Waiata
- Mana Whenua
- Cultural Connect and
- Creating Cultural Connections (p. 5-7).

Some strategies are included in the following rubric:

**Rubric: Helpful Strategies for Successful Transitions for Ākonga Māori**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies for Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Showing respect for te reo Māori (me ōna tikanga)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create well-planned/resourced transition programs/classes/orientation/camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Initiate and/or be involved in Māori protocols e.g., pōwhiri, poroporoaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Implement policy that encourages use of te reo Māori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Showing genuine interest in and liaise with Māori communities, their funds of knowledge (tamariki/ mokopuna/whānau/iwi) and build into programs incorporating kaumātua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recognition and use of ākonga prior knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When ākonga that come in transition are really knowledgeable, teachers have to acknowledge and build on that knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Allowing ākonga to use their own group learning strategies (one of which may including singing in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promote whanaungatanga strategies (tuakana/teina academic and social relationships)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create mentor programs for younger/anti-establishment tamariki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Setting up activities early in transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Keep reo Māori ākonga together (working in association with whānau)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Discipline fine if paired with care ethic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promote activities/resources e.g., Duffy Packs (packs with high frequency words, flash cards, activities, resources promoting Māori literacy e.g., Te Arapū Māori CD) for transition between ECE and compulsory sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research, develop and use appropriate assessment procedures/tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promote cross-sectoral collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Participate in professional development programs (both for self and alongside ākonga/whānau)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Strategies for Whānau

- Keep dialogue opened up – with children, centres and/or schools
- Discuss different colleges with rangatahi before they so they are actively involved in the process and have a sense of choice
- Listen to their views and preferences
- Promote and/or learn te reo (to support tamariki/mokopuna)
- Promote valuing te reo
- Take that time with tamariki/mokopuna
- Be involved in what is happening with children at school
- Share own experiences of schooling
- Work alongside centres/schools to be an equal partner in the transition process
- Be pro-active in enrolment processes
- Become aware of transition programs and assist
- Be involved in policy development around transitions
- Participate in professional development programs co-ordinated by kura/centres

A number of recommendations were made which included the following which are relevant for the purposes of this review:

- That centres/schools acknowledge as well-informed and important, the information and funds of knowledge that parents and feeder schools and early childhood centres bring about learners to school transition.
- That an awareness campaign be launched to promote the importance of transition, particularly from, in and out of, Māori/English bilingual/immersion language programs.
- That the media be used with maximum efficiency to promote bilingual English/Māori speaking BEMS students.
- That information be made available, including through professional development programs, to upskill whānau in their understanding of key transition factors which promote successful transitions for learners.
- That centres/schools be encouraged to establish relationships with whānau and iwi, and to develop and foster the three-way relationships among centres/schools (including individual teachers), ākonga and whānau.
- That centres/schools be encouraged to foster relationships between ākonga, such as tuakana/teina relationships, for learners transitioning into and between learning centres/schools.
- That centres/schools have appropriate (and shared) credit model assessment procedures and learning programs which take into account the special language abilities of bilingual English/Māori speaking students, i.e.,
acknowledging their ability as bilingual students rather than their inability in English speakers.

- That resources be developed which promote and assist with smooth transitions across all domains of transition.
- That programs be established which integrate whānau members into their children’s learning, particularly in years around transition points.
- That whānau (including ākonga) alongside committed knowledgeable teachers with sound knowledge of second language acquisition pedagogy be involved in the development and implementation of transition programs.
- That transition programs be regularly evaluated and updated to remain current, relevant and effective.
- That centres and schools be encouraged to include more Māori visual arts (whakairo, tukutuku) into their surroundings.
- That these recommendations concerning transition for Māori learners contribute to the development of a set of cultural competencies for teachers.


This study focuses on reversing language shift (RLS) efforts via the revernacularisation of te reo Māori (the Māori language) was conducted in Kōhanga Reo. Fishman’s (2001) graded intergenerational disruption scale (GiDS) and the Māori educational frame provide conceptual frameworks for the meaning-making, cultural and symbolic relationships of language to culture and identity. This qualitative case study involves three young children and their families who are committed to the intergenerational transmission of te reo Māori, the threatened indigenous heritage language of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Observational data illustrating these bilingual, biliterate, bicultural, bicognitive and bilateral children and their use of sophisticated language for increasingly complex purposes is analysed. This study identifies how children’s learning dispositions for shared reference with adults (who are active listeners and thoughtful speakers in meaningful activities [Carr, M., 2000, 2001]) are part of the deep structure of a unique cultural context successfully supporting language revernacularisation. In addition the study
develops critical insights into how RLS can be viewed as the linguistic arm for furthering Māori aspirations of tino rangatiratanga and has further implications for language planning, pedagogy and praxis in Kōhanga Reo. Findings included:

- An endorsement of Māori/English bilingualism (additive approach – not subtractive).

- Māori literacy advancement is critical to later biliteracy development.

- Promotion of critical language awareness is an imperative.

- Teachers must be able to make the pedagogical links between language, identity, pedagogy and power.

- Teachers must be knowledgeable about second language acquisition theories and able to put them into practice.

- That Māori immersion settings are the manifestation of tino-rangatiratanga through reversing language shift efforts. They mediate the often debilitating effects of colonisation.


This study of Samoan and Tongan children in South Auckland considered various measures of language, literacy and vocabulary proficiency during the children’s transition to and first year of schooling. Their data indicated that the children (4.6 years – 6.0 years), who had been considered incipient bilinguals in the early childhood education context experienced rapid heritage language decline (over the first year) when they entered into monolingual English classrooms with scores on the modified School Entry Assessment “Tell Me” Test showing an initial shift upwards for L1 followed by a decline to pre school proficiency levels by age 6. Their English language scores also increased at age 5.0 but continued to do so, so that by age 6.0 the children in the study were scoring higher than the national mean. The authors
note the importance of these data for establishing that “attendance at the Pasifika early childhood education centres was associated with development in both language and literacy in both the home languages… and in English” (p.475). For the purposes of this review it is important to note that if bilingualism and biliteracy are aims, then the language of instruction at school entry is clearly critical to development: the monolingual L2 context can impact negatively on heritage language proficiency.


Vine’s (2003) case study of Fa’afetai, a five-year-old Samoan-speaking boy entering an English-speaking primary school classroom focuses on sociocultural teaching strategies that assisted English language learning at school. As a micro-ethnographic study, close readings transcripts of one-to-one interactions between Ms Nikora (the teacher) and Fa’afetai are used to illustrate the means by which teacher and child co-constructed meaning (in English) in the social studies curriculum, via episodes of joint attention. Strategies of: establishing a shared context for meaning, deliberately opening up the classroom floor for Fa’afetai to access, revisiting learning, referring to shared knowledge (e.g., picture books) and prior shared experiences in the data show how Fa’afetai’s English language learning emerged via concrete utterances heard and reproduced in communication with others. The study is important for illustrating how teachers in mainstream settings, who do not share the heritage language expertise of new entrant children, can work effectively with sociocultural teaching strategies to deliver the curriculum and assess learning. It is silent on heritage language learning and bilingualism per se.