

# ***ECE teachers voyaging in plurilingual seas, Implications beyond New Zealand***

Peter Keegan, Val Podmore, Helen Hedges, & Nola Harvey

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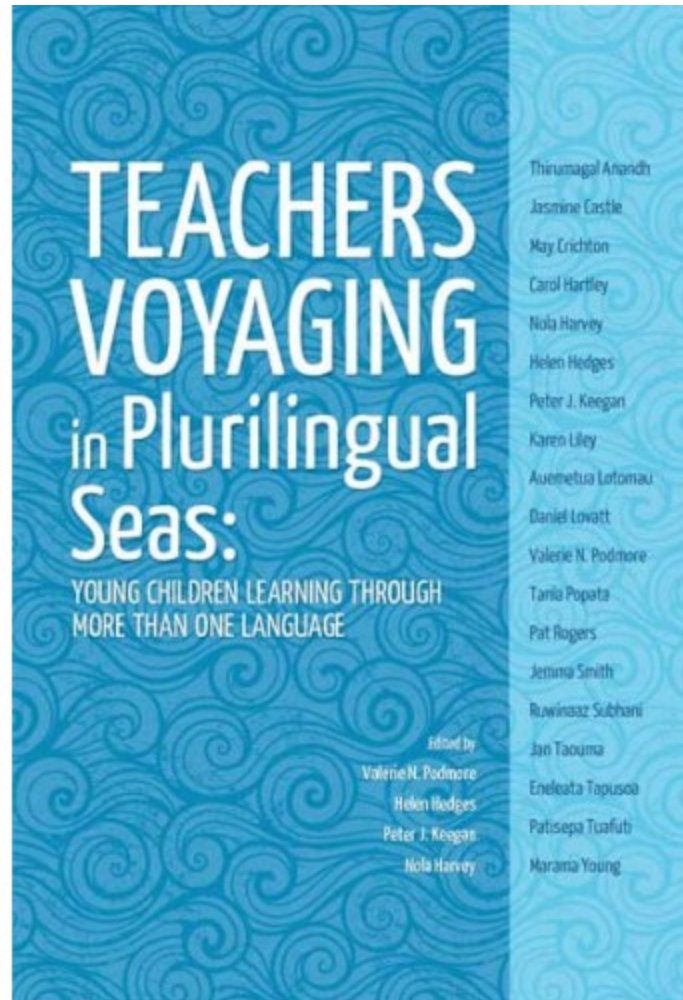


**THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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NEW ZEALAND

**EDUCATION AND  
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NĀU I WHATU TE KĀKAHU, HE TĀNIKO TAKU





# Ethnicities & languages

- Learners in Aotearoa-New Zealand are increasingly likely to speak more than one language.
- This trend is most evident in the Auckland region.
- The 2013 census data provide our evidence.



# Ethnicity in New Zealand in 2013

Ethnic group	Auckland		New Zealand		Auckland as a proportion of NZ
	Count	%	Count	%	%
European	789,306	59.3	2,969,391	74.0	26.6
Māori	142,767	10.7	598,602	14.9	23.9
Pacific peoples	194,958	14.6	295,941	7.4	65.9
Asian	307,233	23.1	471,708	11.8	65.1
Middle Eastern / Latin American / African	24,945	1.9	46,956	1.2	53.1
Other	15,639	1.2	67,752	1.7	23.1
Total people specifying ethnicity	1,331,427	110.8 <sup>a</sup>	4,011,402	111.0 <sup>a</sup>	33.2
Not elsewhere included	84,123		230,646		36.5
Total people	1,415,550		4,242,048		33.4



# Top 12 languages spoken NZ 2013

Language	Auckland		New Zealand		Auckland as a proportion of NZ
	Count	%	Count	%	%
English	1,233,633	95.6	3,819,969	97.8	32.3
Samoan	58,200	4.5	86,406	2.2	67.4
Hindi	49,518	3.8	66,312	1.6	74.7
Northern Chinese	38,781	3.0	52,263	1.3	74.2
Māori	30,927	2.4	148,395	3.8	20.8
Yue	30,681	2.4	44,625	1.1	68.6
Sinitic	30,282	2.3	42,750	1.1	70.8
Tongan	26,028	2.3	31,839	0.8	81.7
Korean	19,365	1.5	26,373	0.7	60.8
French	17,433	1.4	49,125	1.3	35.5
Tagalog	14,925	1.2	29,016	0.7	51.4
Afrikaans	13,992	1.1	27,387	0.7	51.1
<b>Total people stated</b>	<b>1,316,262</b>	<b>134.1<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>3,973,359</b>	<b>101.7<sup>a</sup></b>	



# Trends, challenges, and opportunities

Our study covered a wide range of languages, including te reo Māori, Pasifika languages, English, and all languages children spoke at home.

Given the increasing responsibilities ascribed to ECE centres by policy and curriculum, the issue arose as to what teachers and families might consider *valued outcomes* for *children who learn in more than one language*.



# Prior research

International research emphasises heritage/home languages for cognitive learning outcomes.

NZ importance of sustaining te reo Māori language and culture (Ritchie & Rau, 2006)

NZ COIs: immersion in Māori and Samoan in two ECE centres

- Languages used for learning cf learning languages per se
- Importance of language for cognitive learning, identity
- Still to understand pedagogical practices and parents' aspirations

Guo (2005) and Chan (2015) found that Chinese parents want children to learn English at English-medium centres

Brooker (2002) – inclusion poorly understood and enacted by teachers

Schofield (2007) – students teachers' understandings of diversity and ways to support languages weak

Skerrett and Gunn (2011) – importance of relationships between ECE centres and homes/communities vital to continuing and valuing bilingual households



# Credit based perspectives

*Learning a language and becoming bilingual is... "also about understanding another culture/s and developing multiple identities" (Baker, 2011, pp.71-72)*

Our research is underpinned by credit-based theoretical concepts:

- Additive bilingualism (Cummins, 2009; Garcia, 2009)
- Funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005)





# Language diversity & learning

Languages we live and learn with come from the communicative requirements/demands of home – family and whanau, with friends, centre/school, or at play.

Selective or circumstantial bilinguals-

Simultaneous or sequential bilinguals-

Not second language learners but 'childhood bilinguals' and '**emerging bilinguals**' to better characterize the dynamic interplay between age and circumstances of learning (McGroarty, 2011).



# Dynamic nature of languages and bilingualism

Fundamental diversity – constant dynamism – no single view: Opportunities and challenges for bilinguals

Languages as psychological refuge

Languages as resistance (social-psychological resistance, armed conflict – goals of military conquest and colonization – survival for monolinguals)

Languages as resources (positive and negative)

Languages as a problem (New Zealand?)



# Benefits of bi/multilingualism

## Linguistic benefits

1<sup>st</sup> language development facilitates 2<sup>nd</sup> language learning

Interdependence Hypothesis (Cummins, 2001, 2011)

- Positive transfer from the 1<sup>st</sup> language.
- Maximum cognitive engagement and identity investment (Cummins, 2009)
- Teaching/learning for conceptual transfer – between and amongst languages (Garcia & Wei, 2014)



# Benefits of bi/multilingualism

## Self esteem

Bilingual children have diverse linguistic and cultural knowledge, skills, resources & potential (Baker, 2011; Cummins, 2009).

When children feel good about being bilingual, confidence, security and self esteem will develop and often be enhanced.

Intellectual, linguistic and cultural gains from being bilingual are linked to a healthy self esteem and well being in childhood (Jones Diaz, 2014; Genesse, 2008).



# Identity/ies

Language is a significant marker of identity (Jones Díaz, 2014; May, 2012).

Questions of identity are linked to how we understand ourselves and others.

Children's identity construction is a 'work in progress', undergoing change and renegotiation and languages learning is part of this process.

Being bilingual or multilingual means having more than one identity.

Language, identity and culture are inextricably linked and impact on life course opportunities (Garcia, 2011).



# Language diversity & learning

- Languages and literacies are key cultural tools for learning and teaching (Moll, et al., 1992; Vygotsky, 1978).
- This study documents the diversity of the language experiences of children, and their families, in four early childhood centres within the Auckland region.



# Research questions

1. What languages do children from participating early childhood education centres use in their learning in the centre and at home?
2. What experiences and outcomes for children who learn in more than one language in the early years are valued by parents, teachers, and children?
3. How might the opportunities and challenges for children who learn in more than one languages be addressed in educational practice?



# Research design

The research was designed to contribute new findings of benefit to children who learn in their heritage language and/or in more than one language, and their families and teachers.

The research drew on:

- *qualitative approaches*
  - observations, focus group interviews, and
- *quantitative approaches*
  - census data, questionnaires, Observer XT analyses.





# Four partner early childhood centres

- *Te Puna Kōhungahunga* a Māori-medium centre, operates on a whānau model.
- *The A'oga Fa'a Samoa* a Samoan-immersion early childhood centre.
- *Mangere Bridge Kindergarten* an English-medium kindergarten with families who speak a range of Pasifika languages and Hindi.
- *Symonds Street Early Childhood Centre* an English-medium centre with families who speak a wide range of Asian and Pasifika languages.



# Summary of valued experiences

Each centre's research findings are strongly rooted in their own philosophy and defining character:

- Whānaungatanga (Culturally appropriate Relationships )
- Holistic development including identities and spirituality
- Belonging and identities
- Relationships



# Overarching principles and threads

- Themes across all four centres strongly connect to principles and strands of *Te Whāriki* (NZ ECE Curriculum).
- Parents and teachers value fostering children as learners who are strong in their identities, through engaging with their languages and cultures.



# Engaging with funds of knowledge and an additive approach to bilingualism

Curriculum and instruction focused on empowerment, understood as the collaborative creation of power, start by acknowledging the cultural, linguistic, imaginative, and intellectual resources that children bring to school. These resources reflect the funds of knowledge abundantly present in children's communities (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Educators can explore with individual children and parents how these resources might be developed and expanded in classroom interactions. If our image of the child includes her capacity to become fluently bilingual and biliterate, we will orchestrate our interactions to communicate this potential to the child (Cummins, 2001, pp. 653-654).

*Cummins, J. (2001). HER Classic Empowering Minority students: Framework for intervention. Author's introduction. Harvard Educational Review, 71(4), 649-655.*

# Summary

- Four ECE centres catering for bilingual/multilingual children in different ways (depending on staff, resources)
- Languages/cultures/identities are resources to be acknowledged and valued
- Examples useful for both New Zealand and overseas.



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